

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF RABBI

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12 March, 1974

Rabbi N. Lamm,
The Jewish Center,
131 West 86th Street,
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10024,
U.S.A.

Dear Norman,

Thank you so much for your letter and enclosures which I read with special interest. The sermons, though in the nature of things somewhat depressing, show your usual mastery of thought, analysis, expression and homiletics. They mirror an assessment of the American reaction to the War rather different from what I have observed in the Anglo-Jewish community, where indifference, let alone hostility, were very little in evidence. I felt the contrast myself when I briefly visited America for the marriage of our son in Detroit at the time of the Cease-fire. I am now looking forward with particularly eager anticipation to your contribution at the Hebrew University Conference. This must have been quite a fascinating and stimulating experience.

On the Mafdal front, our discussion has been overtaken by events culminating in the, to my mind, rather humiliating capitulation of its ill-advised stand. The whole episode reeks with inconsistency, short-sightedness and sheer folly. I am enclosing a statement I circulated among my colleagues which will indicate my position, lonely and subject to no end of abusive attacks as it was.

From all the evidence I have, your information on the Rav's attitude is not altogether accurate. My information from Fabian and other sources is that, presumably capitulating to the agitation fanned by Lubavitch, he took the initiative in pressing Goren to forbid the Mafdal to join the coalition - a decision which may, I fear, be rued for years to come. I also gather, contrary to what you write, that Yosef, far from threatening to fall out with Goren over his refusal to countenance the Mafdal's joining the Government, in fact adopted the far more reasonable attitude of leaving the political decision to the party itself.

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CONTINUATION PAGE.....2.....

TO: Rabbi N. Lamm
FROM: Chief Rabbi Dr. I. Jakobovits


DATE: 12 March, 1974

As I intimate in my statement, I believe the solution now lies in taking the whole issue out of the political arena and placing it into the hands of the Rabbinate where it properly belongs. In ~~add~~luding to the proposal you mentioned to me over the telephone, I hope the Rav will now show the same courage and determination to implement it as he did in what I can only regard as his misguided stand on the formation of the Government.

Please keep me advised on further developments, especially your intriguing reference to your current efforts "to soften the Conservative and Reform groups to prepare them for the proposal now under discussion".

With cordial regards,

Yours as ever,


Dr. I. Jakobovits
Chief Rabbi

Encl.