

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF THE UNION

Jews in British North America began working together in the second half of the eighteenth century, but even after the achievement of American independence, they were never eager to organize communally on a continental basis. After an unsuccessful attempt by the Reverend Isaac Leiser and the Reverend Louis Salomon in 1841 to unite American Jewry, nothing was accomplished until 1859, when a number of East-Coast congregations established what was in effect a secular union. Patterning itself on the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the group called itself the Board of Delegates of American Israelites. The furtherance of religion was beyond the ambit of its direct concern. The first at least potentially nationwide religious body was brought into being in 1873 at Cincinnati largely through the efforts of Rabbi Isaac M. Wise. Cincinnati was then still one of the great American Jewish centers, and the new Union of American Hebrew Congregations—initially it included fewer than thirty congregations—was limited almost solely to synagogues in the South and West.

The East-Coast Jews, most of them members of the Board of Delegates of American Israelites, would at first have nothing to do with Wise and his western Union. But Wise persevered. In 1875, the Union created the Hebrew Union College, and then, in 1878, amalgamated with the Board of Delegates of American Israelites. The larger Union was now a truly nationwide institution with international interests. It carried on the philanthropic, civil libertarian, and political defense work which the older Board of Delegates had pursued in the United States, Eastern Europe, and North Africa; it initiated an enthusiastic program of settling natives and immigrants on the soil; and it began, in matters of religion, moving slowly toward the left, abandoning its original design of steering a middle-of-the-road course between the Orthodox and the religious leftists. Administratively, the permanent paid staff of the Union was tiny; there was an executive, a secretary, and possibly a bookkeeper.

After the turn of the century, there were great changes in the direction and the goals of the Union due almost entirely to the organizing genius of Rabbi George Zepin, a brilliant graduate of the He-

brew Union College. Russian-born Zepin, who was brought to the United States as a child of four, was appointed director of the Department of Synagog and School Extension in 1903; he became the real builder of the Union, attempting to encompass in its reach almost every phase of American Jewish life and activity. Synagogues, Sunday schools, and teachers' academies were encouraged and established. Tracts of a religious, historical, and apologetic nature were published and distributed by the hundreds of thousands. A department of education developed under Dr. Emanuel Gamoran speedily became the largest publisher of Jewish educational material in this country. Regional rabbis were employed and chaplains appointed to create new congregations and to visit summer resorts as well as penal and eleemosynary institutions in order to help and to edify. As early as the first decade of the century, efforts were made to work closely with university youth; student congregations and societies were established and subsidized. Mindful of the needs of the Russian émigrés, Zepin and his associates labored to found synagogues and schools in order to hasten their acculturation. Coopting rabbis, Zepin set up commissions on synagogal rituals and on architecture, education, and social action. In the decades of the 1920's and 1930's, this indefatigable worker energized national federations of sisterhoods, brotherhoods, and youth. When he retired in 1941, there were already 300 congregations in the Union.

The decade of the 1940's was crucial for World Jewry and for the Union, too. Hitler conquered much of Europe, 6,000,000 Jews disappeared in the Nazi Holocaust, a decimated European Jewry necessarily ceased to play a central role in the Jewish world, and the Republic of Israel, the Third Jewish Commonwealth, emerged with aspirations to exercise World Jewish hegemony. While the new State of Israel was coming into being, the American Northeast was amply documenting itself as the financial, if not the cultural, center of the world. The United States was patently the most powerful country in the world, and American Jewry, following in its wake, proceeded to take over the reins of leadership of World Jewry. The Jews on this continent in the 1940's were a new lot—not "Germans," not "Russians," but *Americans*, though most of them were of East European origin, ritually and ceremonially nostalgic, wealthy, acculturated,



Isaac Mayer Wise
The founding father



Courtesy, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, New York

George Zepin
Builder of the Union

and resentful of Mid-Western American Jewish leadership. The religious liberals among them believed that the "West"—Cincinnati—had dominated United States Jewry long enough. They were successful in asserting themselves. The embodiment of this protest, this quiet revolution, was Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, the Union's new director, who succeeded in transferring the Union headquarters to New York City in 1951.

Carrying on Zepin's work with vigor and competence, Eisendrath more than doubled the number of congregations in the Union in the course of the next three decades. The rising generation, the children and grandchildren of the older East European stock, moved to the left religiously and culturally, joining the new Reform synagogues by the thousands. The sisterhoods grew in size and scope; the brotherhoods assimilated the older Jewish Chautauqua Society and moved into university educational work. The youth movement expanded, creating summer camps all the way from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Two new Union auxiliary federations were brought into being, the National Association of Temple Secretaries (since 1959 known as Temple Administrators) and the National Association of Temple Educators. A series of new imaginative magazines rose—and fell—in the attempt to win and hold the attention of the evermore highly literate members of Reform congregations. Interfaith Institutes of Judaism began to flourish, anticipating the new ecumenical movement that would be spearheaded at Rome in the late 1950's by Pope John XXIII and Vatican II.

The world of the 1940's was a world that shrank to small dimensions as space and time were almost annihilated. The Imperium Americanum, marching along the road to its new manifest destiny, confronted hosts of political and economic problems. Taking cognizance of these challenges, Eisendrath and his staff fought vigorously and unremittingly to further social welfare in every corner of the world as well as in the United States. As human beings and as Jews, they struggled to bring to birth a new world which would manifest the quality of mercy in dealing with the Remnant of Israel. Here in the United States the Union protested against involvement in Vietnam and championed civil liberties, the separation of church and state, the care of the aged, the eradication of poverty, true freedom

for Blacks, and religious liberty for all. As post-Holocaust Jews, the leaders of the Union developed very close relations with the State of Israel—without, however, subjecting the Union spiritually to the Israeli Orthodox establishment. This emphasis on social action was not without its hazards. Under Zepin, the laity had dominated the scene; under Eisendrath, the rabbinical leadership in the Union moved ahead aggressively, assuming *and* exercising the right to speak out on all political and economic matters of ethical import. On the whole, the rabbis prevailed. That is to say, they—not the lay leaders—defined the policy of the Union.

Today, after a century of experience, the Union, despite its problems, its financial difficulties, and its Jewish religious rivals, still stands out as one of the most impressive bodies in all Jewish history. It continues to be influential and highly respected by Jews and Gentiles. The measure of its success in America is reflected in the fact that the pattern of its structure—its institutions, federations, organizations, and even its goals—has been closely emulated by some 2,000 congregations of Orthodox and Conservative Jews.

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In compiling this “documentary,” the effort has been made to avoid the use of basic legal records. Such skeletal documents, the bony structure of the fair body, are very important, but they frequently fail to reflect the nature, the character, the ethos, and the heartaches of an institution. Like the Union of the fifty American states, this Union with its hundreds of synagogues and its hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children, is a virile, pulsating being. The selections that follow are an attempt to catch the swing and the cadence of a full-blooded vital entity.

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Isaac M. Wise and his associates met tremendous resistance when they attempted to create a union of congregations. He had made many enemies. Some of the East-Coast rabbis, men of culture, learning, and distinction, hated him for his autodidacticism, his toughness as an opponent—and his success. Among those who despised him was the Reverend Dr. David Einhorn, a religious radical and one of the leading rabbis of the East.

In 1919, on the centenary of Wise's birth, the Central Conference of American Rabbis met in Cincinnati. The following statement was to have been read to the assembly. It had been prepared by Rabbi Samuel Wolfenstein, of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, a well-known social worker and friend of Wise. Wolfenstein was then sick, and it is probable that his brief memoir was never read publicly:

There are but a few people living today who will remember that Dr. Wise, when he considered issuing a call for a Union of American Hebrew Congregations, had contemplated issuing the call only for the congregations of the West and the Middle West. I do not remember whether this appeal appeared, nor whether Dr. Wise recognized in time, notwithstanding the fact that the Eastern congregations would hardly join, it would be a grave mistake to issue such a call. The call was issued boldly asking every American congregation to join this contemplated Union.

There was but one of the large Eastern congregations that might have replied. There, Dr. Wise had some old, influential friends; that was Temple Emanu-El of New York. Everywhere the rabbis stood in the way; [Benjamin] Szold in Baltimore; [Marcus] Jastrow in Philadelphia; [David] Einhorn in New York; they were to be won first.

To me was assigned the task to win Einhorn for the cause. I wrote to him, arranging to meet him at his home. I had never met him before. He received me kindly, but said from the start—we were speaking German—: “*Sie wollen ich soll scholium machen mit Wise! Wie!*” [You want me to make peace with Wise! How!]

That was pretty plain. And then he started on a harangue of the character of Dr. Wise—his treachery—telling me of the rabbinical conferences that had been held in Philadelphia and later on in Cleveland, all of which were events quite well known to me. I let him do all the talking, until he had finished, not leaving a white thread on Dr. Wise. When finishing, he asked me: “How can you go hand in hand with such a man? I have a son-in-law in St. Louis [where Wolfenstein served as rabbi of Temple B'nai El during the 1870's], and I have heard some very nice things said of you.”

I interrupted the Doctor here, saying that I had listened pa-

tiently to him and that now I wanted him to listen just as patiently to me.

“When I arrived here in this country, only a few years ago, I was a stranger. Dr. Wise extended a hearty welcome to me through his papers and invited me when coming to Cincinnati to be his guest.

“I made use of the invitation and one nice day I called at the house of Dr. Wise. I received a very hearty welcome and remained at the house over night. Being an early riser, I had left my room and found my way into the library. I had hardly settled myself there with some interesting books, when Dr. Wise made his appearance. ‘What’s the matter?’ said he. ‘Are you an early riser? That is fine; you can come with me to the market. I have marketing to do today.’

“It was in early May and on a beautiful morning, when we left the house, Dr. Wise carrying a large market basket. We had hardly gone a few steps, when the Doctor was stopped by an elderly gentleman. I went on, not wanting to intrude; turning around though after a while, I saw the Doctor slip a bill to the man and hastening to reach me. Just at my right, however, stood a little elderly lady, whom I had not noticed, but who seemed to have some very urgent business with the Doctor. Another bill slipped from the pocket of Dr. Wise into the outstretched hand of the little lady.

“How many more times these performances were repeated, I had not fully a chance to observe, but when we reached the first market stand, offering quite a variety of luscious fruits and vegetables, Dr. Wise turned to me, asking me whether I had any money with me. He accepted a five dollar bill, but telling me not to forget to ask the bookkeeper for it when we would come to the office.”

I had hardly finished when Dr. Einhorn shook my hand.

“You have an appointment, as you told me, with the president of my congregation. You had better go for he is a very punctual man. You can tell him that Dr. Einhorn will not say a word for nor one against the congregation joining the Union.”

He kept his word. The congregation joined the Union, and is today one of its powerful members under the guidance of Rabbi Sam Schulman.

What was to me the greatest achievement, and Dr. Wise told me so himself, that from that day on there did not appear a harsh word

about Dr. Wise in the New York papers; neither did *The Israelite* [which Wise edited in Cincinnati] mention Dr. Einhorn but in the most reverential manner, as the eulogy which Dr. Wise wrote at the death of Dr. Einhorn will testify.

To me the dear Doctor spoke in the most loving terms of [Samuel] Hirsch and Einhorn. It was on his seventieth birthday anniversary, when I approached him, on his retirement planned by the congregation to make him Rabbi Emeritus, when he turned to me, saying:

“See what they have done to Hirsch and Einhorn [who had been forced out of their active careers]. They could be with us today and now they are in their graves. An irreparable loss to Reform Judaism. No Rabbi Emeritus for me.”

And there was none. He died in harness [in 1900]. Here at this very sacred spot [the Plum Street Temple] he expounded the word of God but a few hours before his great soul left this earth.¹

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One of the chief barriers to the formation of a union was the fear of the individual congregations that their religious autonomy would be delimited. The original constitution of 1873 makes it quite clear, however, that the new Union would not concern itself with the conduct of the individual synagogue. The goal of the Union was to include all American Jewish congregations irrespective of their philosophy or theology. Thus the following excerpts of the 1873 organic statute make no reference to Reform Judaism:

PREAMBLE

The congregations represented in this convention, in faithful attachment to the sublime principles of Judaism, and in consciousness

¹ Typescript copy in American Jewish Archives (AJAr). The Wolfenstein statement actually read in 1919 at the Cincinnati meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis is altogether different. Apparently, the Wolfenstein-Einhorn memoir was considered too personal to be published, and the printed one was substituted, as found in the 1919 *Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook*, XXIX, 218–21.

of Israel's sacred duties, feel impressed with the conviction that in order to discharge these obligations more effectually, a closer union of the congregations is necessary. To this end, under the protection of benign Providence and the laws of our country, we hereby establish this sacred covenant of the American Israelites, as set forth in the following:

CONSTITUTION

Name

Article I.—The body hereby constituted and established shall be known as “The Union of American Hebrew Congregations.”

Object

Article II.—It is the primary object of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to establish a Hebrew Theological Institute—to preserve Judaism intact; to bequeath it in its purity and sublimity to posterity—to Israel united and fraternized; to establish, sustain, and govern a seat of learning for Jewish religion and literature; to provide for and advance the standard of Sabbath-schools for the instruction of the young in Israel's religion and history and the Hebrew language; to aid and encourage young congregations by such material and spiritual support as may be at the command of the Union; and to provide, sustain, and manage such other institutions which the common welfare and progress of Judaism shall require—*without, however, interfering in any manner whatsoever with the affairs and management of any congregation.*

Membership

Article III.—Any Hebrew congregation of the United States, lawfully organized, may become a member of “The Union of American Hebrew Congregations”²

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² *Proceedings of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations* (Cincinnati, 1873 [?]), I, 22–23.

When, in 1878, the Union absorbed the Board of Delegates, it enlarged its scope of activity and began to concern itself with the civic and political defence of Jews both here and abroad—all this in addition to furthering the religious life of the Jew in this land. This alteration of goal is reflected in a constitutional change:

Section 2. It shall be the duty of the Union to keep a watchful eye on occurrences at home and abroad, concerning the civil and religious rights of Israelites, and to call attention of the proper authorities to the fact, should any violation of such rights occur, and to keep up communication with similar central Israelite bodies throughout the globe.³

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By 1889, when the Union nursed the hope of establishing branch schools throughout the country and the persecuted Russian Jews were pouring in by the thousands from Europe, the constitution was once more amended:

Objects

Section 2. The objects of the Union are:

A. To establish and maintain institutions for instruction in the higher branches of Hebrew literature and Jewish theology, with the necessary preparatory schools in such cities of those states as may hereafter be designated.

B. To establish relations with kindred organizations in other parts of the world, for the relief of the Jews from political oppression, and for rendering them such aid for their intellectual elevation as may be within the reach of this Union.

C. To promote the religious instruction of the young by the training of competent teachers, and generally encourage the study of the Scriptures and of the tenets and history of Judaism.

All this, however, without interfering in any manner whatsoever with the worship, the schools, or any other of the congregational institutions.⁴

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³ *Proceedings*, I, 422.

⁴ *Proceedings*, III, 2280–81.

In 1946, after the close of World War II, still another amended constitution proclaimed to the world—what had long been evident—that the Union was a congeries of “liberal” synagogues. It was quite obvious by then that the organic statutes of this national religious body would change with the times to reflect the needs and wishes of succeeding generations:

PREAMBLE

The congregations represented in this Union of American Hebrew Congregations affirm their faithful attachment to Judaism and their adherence to its liberal interpretation, and unite to discharge their responsibilities under the protection of benign Providence.⁵

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In the summer of 1883, when the Union was ten years old, it held a great celebration in Cincinnati. This was also the year the first class graduated from the Hebrew Union College, and the joy and solemnity of the occasion were heightened by a convocation of rabbis, the Rabbinical Literary Association. A banquet was planned at the Highland House, and a supervisor was employed to make sure that the dinner was kosher. Unfortunately, the liberal-minded mashgiah whose duty it was to maintain kashrut limited himself to the exclusion of pork products. Seafood, equally forbidden by Jewish tradition, abounded at the banquet. A number of the guests, traditional in observance, left the room in a huff or quietly refrained from eating the trefa (“unclean”) food. The historic importance of this “Trefa Banquet” is that the Orthodox-minded were now convinced that they could not work with the Reformers. When, in 1885, the liberals adopted the radical Pittsburgh Platform, those who wished to conserve the old way of life seceded and established the Jewish Theological Seminary Association and a seminary of their own. By 1887, therefore, there were two organized national Jewish religious bodies in the United States, the Reformers and the Conservatives.

⁵ 71st–73rd Annual Reports of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Oct., 1947, p. 287.

The menu that helped trigger the break is reprinted here from the Cincinnati Enquirer of July 12, 1883, complete with its misprints and omissions. It is preceded by a brief reminiscence of Dr. David Philipson, a graduate of the first class who was present at the dinner. Seven spiritous liquors were served, and there can hardly be any doubt that when the guests arose from their substantial repast, most—if not all—of them were comfortably obnubilated. That was indeed a heroic generation.

I have lived through many great moments, but never have I seen a company so exaltingly excited as the men and women at the close of this first ceremony of ordination in the United States. Men wept for joy and women threw their arms around the necks of the participants in the ceremony. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to recapture the ecstasy of that thrilling moment. It was a high point in the career of Reform Judaism in the United States.

The convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, whereof this rabbinical ordination was the peak, closed with a great dinner at a famed hilltop resort, The Highland House. Knowing that there would be delegates from various parts of the country present who laid stress upon the observance of the dietary laws, the Cincinnati committee engaged a Jewish caterer to set the dinner. The great banqueting hall was brilliantly lighted, the hundreds of guests were seated at the beautifully arranged tables, the invocation had been spoken by one of the visiting rabbis, when the waiters served the first course. Terrific excitement ensued when two rabbis rose from their seats and rushed from the room. Shrimp [clams, actually] had been placed before them as the opening course of the elaborate menu. "The best-laid plans of mice and men oft gang alee," the great Scottish poet had written. And so it was here. The hosts had, as they thought, provided for just such eventualities by engaging a Jewish caterer. But he failed in the emergency. This Highland House dinner came to be known as "the terefa banquet." The Orthodox Eastern press rang the changes on the terefa banquet week in, week out. This incident furnished the opening to the movement that culminated in the establishment of a rabbinical seminary of a conservative bent. . . .

MENU

	Little Neck Clams (half shell)
Amontillado Sherry	
	Potages
	Consommé Royal
Sauternes	
	Poissons
	Fillet de Boef, aux Champignons
	Soft-shell Crabs
	a l'Amerique, Pommes Duchesse
	Salade of Shrimps
St. Julien	
	Entree
	Sweet Breads a la Monglas
	Petits Pois a la Française
Diedescheimer	
	Relevee
	Poulets a la Viennoise Asperges Sauce
	Vinaigrette Pommes Pate
Roman Punch	
	Grenouilles a la Creme and Cauliflower
	Roti
	Vol au Vents de Pigeons a la Tyrolienne
	Salade de Laitue
G. H. Mumm Extra Dry	
	Hors D'Oeuvers
	Bouchies de Volaille a la Regeurs
	Olives Caviv, Sardeiles de Hollands
	Brissotins au Supreme Tomatoe
	Mayonaise
	Sucres
	Ice-Cream
	Assorted and Ornamented Cakes
	Entremets
	Fromages Varies
	Fruits Varies
	Cafe Noir ^s
Martell Cognac	
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^s David Philipson, *My Life as an American Jew* (Cincinnati, 1941), p. 23; *Commentary*, Feb., 1966, pp. 75 ff.; *Jewish Messenger*, Aug. 10, 1883, p. 5, c. 5.

The conventions of the Union have always been interesting if not exciting, and as the following selection from David Philipson's memoirs would indicate, the New York meeting in 1911 was no exception:

The year 1911 found me busily engaged, not only in my own congregation [Bene Israel (Rockdale)] and city [Cincinnati], but throughout the country. In the first month of that year the biennial convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations took place in the city of New York. It was the largest attended convention of the organization that had ever taken place. Doubtless, it was the lure of the metropolis that attracted men and women from all parts of the country. The feature of that convention was the great banquet at the Hotel Astor on the evening of January 18. There was eighteen hundred guests at this function. The great drawing card was the announcement that Theodore Roosevelt was to deliver the chief address at the dinner. The ex-President of the United States had been in practical retirement ever since the disastrous defeat of the Republican candidates in the November election of 1910. Mr. Roosevelt had supported with all his mighty power these candidates. When the electorate snowed them under by a great majority, Mr. Roosevelt took the defeat greatly to heart and retired from the public scene to his home at Oyster Bay. Some wag suggested that because of T. R.'s depression on account of the defeat, the name Oyster Bay should be changed to "Blue Point." But, however that might be, Roosevelt had not appeared publicly during that entire time.

When the New York Committee of Arrangements, headed by Jacob H. Schiff, secured Roosevelt to speak at the banquet, this was considered, in newspaper parlance, a "scoop." Mr. Schiff was the toastmaster at the dinner and the speakers, besides Mr. Roosevelt, were William Sulzer, the Governor of the State of New York; John Gaynor, the mayor of the city of New York; Prof. [Francis] Brown, of the Union Theological Seminary; the Hon. Oscar S. Straus, ex-U.S. Minister to Turkey and ex-Secretary of Commerce and Labor; and myself as representing the rabbinate. Naturally, the chief interest of the diners centered on the address of the ex-President. When he was introduced by Mr. Schiff, the welkin rang with applause and

cheers. His address was not worthy of the occasion. He rambled for fifty minutes. The entire address consisted of incidents in his public career in which he had contacted Jews. The address was punctuated with the first personal pronoun. Among other happenings in his presidential term, he narrated the following in words somewhat like this:

“When I was President, a new Cabinet office was created, the Department of Commerce and Labor. I had in my Cabinet at that time several Protestants, and a Catholic, the Hon. Charles Bonaparte, the Secretary of the Navy. I felt that it was only proper that the Jews should also be represented. I wanted the best man possible. I considered all the public men of the Jewish faith and I finally came to the conclusion that the man who was of Cabinet caliber more than any other was the Hon. Oscar S. Straus, of New York. And I appointed him, to the apparent satisfaction of all parties.”

Great applause greeted this statement of the speaker. Now, to understand the following it must be stated that Mr. Schiff was deaf in the ear that was turned to Mr. Roosevelt. He apparently did not hear the tribute that had been paid by the ex-President to Mr. Straus. For, when he introduced Mr. Straus, he said:

“Some years ago, when Mr. Roosevelt was President, I received a telegram from him one day asking me to come to Washington, since he desired my counsel in an important matter. Naturally, I proceeded to Washington at once and went to the White House offices. When the President saw me he said, ‘Mr. Schiff, I appreciate greatly your prompt response to my telegram.’

“I said, ‘Mr. President, your request is a command and, like a good soldier, I obey at once.’

“Then said he: ‘Mr. Schiff, you doubtless know that a new department is being contemplated, the Department of Commerce and Labor. Now, I have in my Cabinet a number of Protestants and a Catholic. I have the feeling that the Jews should be represented in my official family and I have asked you to come here and advise me as to who you think the best man of your faith for the place.’ I thereupon suggested the name of Oscar S. Straus.”

The speaker had scarcely mentioned this name than pandemonium broke loose. There was applause, cheers, and laughter. The

speaker was nonplussed. His face was a study. He was not conscious of having said anything particularly striking and brilliant. Owing to his deafness, he had not heard Mr. Roosevelt's version of the Straus appointment. This was really the climax of the evening.⁷

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In carrying out the Union's work as an overall American Jewish religious, cultural, civic defense, and social welfare organization, Rabbi George Zepin dispatched rabbis to visit various penal institutions throughout the country. The following letter was addressed to Jerome Rosen, a regional rabbi appointed by the Union. It was sent by a Jew incarcerated in a penitentiary:

August 10, 1919

Dr. J. Rosen,
The Inn,
Charlevoix, Michigan.

Dear Rabbi:

I am taking great pleasure indeed in writing a reply to your long expected letter which reached me the other day, and I have read it over many times. I can hardly express in writing the joy it brought to me. I praise every word of advice in it knowing how sincere it is given and you can trust in me that I am paying every bit of heed and respect to it.

I am patiently waiting for the greatest day in my life, when the doors of freedom will reopen for me and the tongues of the people will not talk of me as one of the bad class, but as a good citizen who is looking towards the future of his country and the benefit of humanity. Until then I have to live in imagination, and hope that the Almighty will forgive me for my evil doings and help me turn, or write the new leaf of which you are speaking.

I am now looking towards our coming [high] holidays, and as I am writing this letter I can picture some of them which I spent with my beloved parents.

⁷ Philipson, *My Life*, pp. 219-20.

I can picture when I was fourteen years of age; it was then Yom-Kipur [Day of Atonement]. How my mother looked over me as one of her most precious jewels, how she helped me when I put on my new knee pants suit, a white collar and a new tie, and how proud she was to walk to the synagogue with me. I can remember how my father purchased for me a seat next to his and while praying I used to look up where my mother was seated, and just like yesterday I can see her face a little pale but her eyes were red from crying. Then she would look at me and give me a pleasant smile; I understood her meaning, I knew that she was praying for me more than for herself. I knew that all she was asking in her prayers was that God might make a strong man of me, a good man, and a man to be worthy of being her son, and I tried hard not to let the thought slip from my mind.

Long after that day, every time evil entered my mind I would always picture my mother's delicate face and imagine that she was aware of the wrong step I intended in taking, then strange words would wander through my thoughts, words that I heard her say ever so often: "Whenever you are in doubt of any step you wish to take consult your mother." But time came when my mother was far beyond my reach and without consulting her or anyone else I used my own judgement which at the time was crude and poor, and I now realize how better off I would have been had I not used any judgement at all.

I have to stop writing about this because for every word I write I shed a tear, yes my heart is paining and I cannot bare the thought. There is a song that we often sing in church entitled "Never Give Up," and it certainly struck the right spot. . . .

There are several Hebrew boys in here one of which has spent three seasons without seeing any outside Hebrew person. His name is J . . F . . . He wrote a letter to a lady by the name of Mrs. C . . . of Seattle. She is head of some Hebrew organization. In his letter he asked her to come or send some one to see him. Yet he received no reply. So I wrote a letter to her asking her to be so kind as to send us three praying books which will answer our purpose for our coming Rosh-ashono [New Year] and Yom-Kipur. I hope I did not ask too much of her and that she will oblige us. I am glad you wrote to Rabbi K . . . about me.

I am working in the paint shop and am still doing some drawing and modeling in my spare time. I am also attending school. I am looking towards the December parole meeting, and I wished some one was here to speak a good word about me and help me make the meeting.

I do not wish you to write to my mother. I will write to her myself when I am free and not before, because I know she could not stand the news of my misfortune. In your next letter please send me the date of our coming Rosh-ashona and Yom-Kipur.

Nothing else at present except that an early reply would be greatly appreciated. Trusting that the reading of my long letter will not tire you, I close with sincere wishes and great respect.

Yours,
F. M.⁸

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One of the wisest and most important decisions of Rabbi Zepin as executive secretary of the Union was to appoint Dr. Emànuel Gamoran the head of the department of education. Gamoran, a professional educator of great competence, was the man who, more than anyone else, was responsible for introducing graded curricula and excellent textbooks into the Jewish Sunday schools of this country. As a fervent Zionist, he brought a strong "ethnic" spirit into Reform Jewish life through the books that he edited. All this was done against tremendous odds, for the generation of the 1920's was oriented toward de-ethnicization and anti-Zionism.

The following autobiographical fragment describes how this brilliant young man came to work for the Union and went on to become its most distinguished educator:

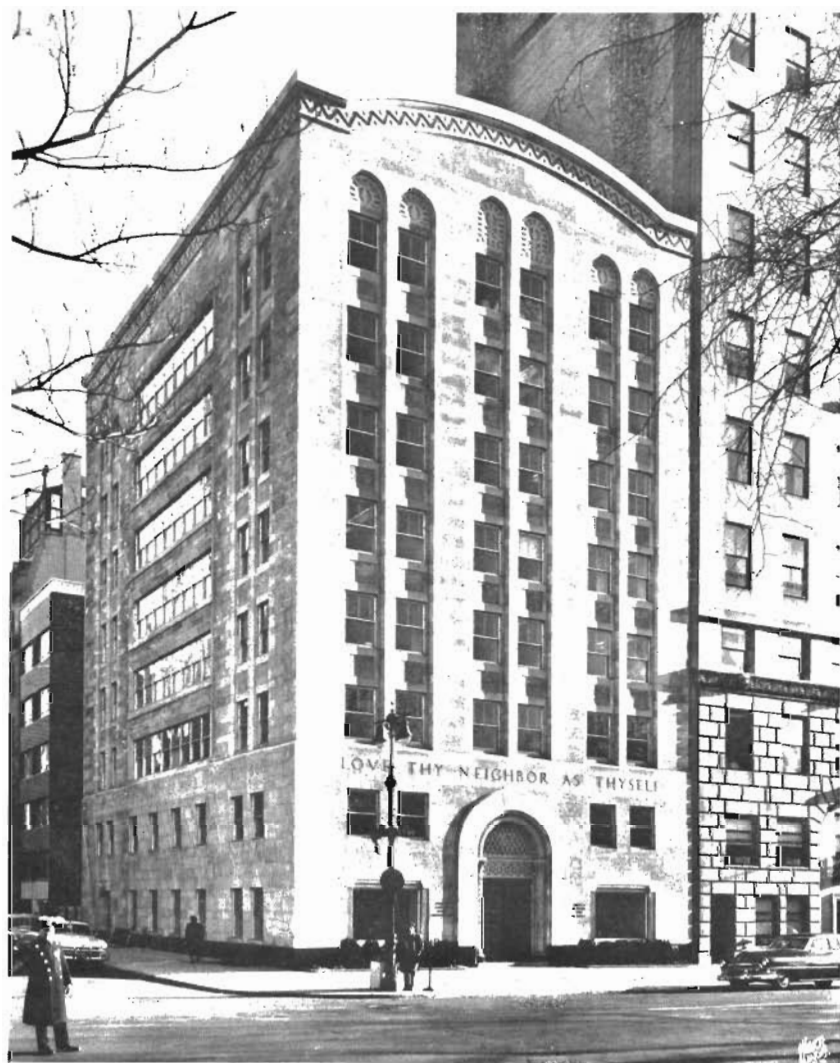
It was the Fall of 1922. I was registered at Teachers College, Columbia University, where I was completing my work for the doctorate. I had already passed the final examination which is usually known as the final oral where several of the professors listen to you

⁸ Union of American Hebrew Congregations Papers. Copy in AJAr.

as you "defend your thesis," when one day I received a letter from Rabbi George Zepin from Cincinnati, asking me to make an appointment with him and to meet him in New York City where he was coming for a visit. I was happy to meet him and we had a very interesting discussion in which I learned the following story: Rabbi Zepin was looking for someone to help the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis in their educational work. He consulted Professor [John] Dewey at Columbia University who recommended me to him and advised that he interview me, but to make sure, said he, he should speak first to Dr. [William Heard] Kilpatrick, . . . who was then Professor of Philosophy of Education at Teachers College, having taken over the position previously held by Professor Dewey. He said Professor Kilpatrick knows the group that is interested in Jewish education and that is studying at Teachers College.

At that time there was a group of men connected with the Bureau of Jewish Education in New York City who were working for their doctorate, and they took an active part in the social activities of Teachers College. I for one became the president of the Jewish Forum which represented the entire Jewish group at Columbia. To make a long story short, Rabbi Zepin invited me to come to the office in New York, and we chatted concerning Jewish education in America. I expressed my interest and told Rabbi Zepin that I was glad to hear from him, but when he invited me to come to Cincinnati to take charge of the Sunday schools of the country I politely refused. He wanted to know why. I answered and said, "I do not believe in the Sunday school. It will not help us sufficiently to perpetuate Judaism in America. Secondly, I am not interested in leaving New York and in going to Cincinnati. Thirdly, I am engaged to be married, December of this year, and my bride is looking forward to our leaving in June for a year's study and travel in Europe and in Palestine."

That ended our conversation this time, but two months later I received another communication inviting me to see Rabbi Zepin again. This time Rabbi Zepin brought with him Professor Henry Slonimsky, who was at that time Professor of Ethics and Pedagogy at the Hebrew Union College. Professor Slonimsky, after listening



The House of Living Judaism, the headquarters of the Union
on New York City's Fifth Avenue

to my reaction, said, "Well, you are not the only one that doesn't believe in the Sunday school. We are all trying to intensify Jewish education. If you accept, you will help us to intensify, and the Sunday school will become, we hope, a more intensive school." However, there was a third meeting which followed in about a month, and at this meeting I consented on the following conditions: I said, "First, I shall start work now and for the first six months stay in New York City till the end of July or August and get acquainted with the group. Secondly, there must be an understanding that my bride and I will, after staying in Cincinnati for a year, be given a leave of absence without salary so that we can go for our trip. Thirdly, the group should know that I am a Zionist and that I maintain my position and while I shall be glad to abide by the suggestions that the Board of Editors may want to make concerning Jewish education, they should agree that before they make any decision they should listen to my point of view. I shall abide by their decision but only after they've heard my presentation." These three conditions were all agreed to before I accepted and so therefore I officially became Director of Education on January 1, 1923, and some time in August came to Cincinnati to assume my work in the Cincinnati office.⁹

* * * *

During the late 1930's, while Gamoran was directing the educational program of the Union, a leaflet entitled Crystal Gazers was published. It reflected the goals of the Commission on Jewish Education, which Gamoran served and dominated:

Crystal Gazers claim to be able to foretell the future. We're not crystal gazers, neither do we read palms, but we do have sixty-three years of experience behind us. That's why we can foretell what will happen if your children aren't properly adjusted to their religious and social problems as Jews. They won't understand their Jewish heritage. Judaism will seem like a burden and a handicap to them. If they encounter prejudice, they will wonder why they have to be

⁹ Original typescript in AJAr.

subjected to such an unhappy lot by mere "accident of birth." Their self-respect as Jews and as individuals will be at low ebb. They will always carry with them a secret "inferiority complex" which will rob them of the complete happiness to which every man, woman, and child is justly entitled.

As intelligent fathers and mothers, you want to avoid this. But how? There is a way—it is to make your child thrill from the time he is a mere tot to the romance and beauty of being a Jew, to stimulate pride in the glorious achievements of his people, to attach him by emotional bonds to the beautiful customs and ceremonies of his people; and when he grows older, to teach him the loftiness of Judaism's ideas and ideals.

Whether you know it or not, you are a member of a team. The religious school to which you send your child is one member of this team; the home in which your child is growing up is another. Both members of this team are equally important. Nothing can be accomplished without good schools on the one hand, and good Jewish homes, on the other. You can't let your child come out of an enthusiastic, glowing religious school and into a frigid Jewish atmosphere at home. Violent temperature changes aren't good—we're positive of that.

And that is just where we come in. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations doesn't make the brilliant touchdown runs which the crowds cheer, but we are always right there helping the team to win the victory which is so necessary if we Jews are to remain Jews and to face life confidently.

This is what we do: for the school our Department of Education publishes books; all kinds of books and lots of them. For little tots, lovely Bible tales, attractively told and beautifully illustrated; for older children, books about the thrilling history of the Jews, books about the glory of our contribution to civilization, books about the ideals for which we have stood throughout the ages, and books on how to live richly and happily as a Jew today.

But that is not all. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, so we also publish assembly programs in which your children may reenact the experiences of our people, games combining fun with facts, plays to make holidays fascinating, handwork suggestions,

arts and crafts programs, debating manuals, and a host of other things.

Our Commission on Jewish Education consists of more than two dozen Jewish leaders who devote themselves to the task of determining what is necessary to make the school interesting and effective.

We don't neglect the "Home Team" either. We devote a good share of our work to adult education. We make available literature and study materials for parents, suggestions for a Jewish home library, works of art to beautify your home, suggestions for holiday observances in the home, and the like—just about everything necessary to make for a well-rounded Jewish life.

As we say, we're not crystal gazers—but we do know that if you'll use our services to cultivate Jewish values within your home and help your children to cultivate them, you'll find you're living a well balanced life and that you've made the way easier for your children.¹⁰

* * * *

The Union has long been partial to surveys. As far back as 1876 the Board of Delegates, while still independent of the Union, made a statistical study of the country and estimated that there were about 250,000 Jews in the United States. No attempt, however, was made to discover what they believed and practiced. In 1930, seeking to understand its own clientele the better to serve them, a Union commission conducted a survey of Reform Jews and their beliefs in eleven large cities, each sheltering more than 50,000 Jewish inhabitants. The reader of this study may well ask himself today: "Forty years ago, what did Reform Jews think of Zionism, the Hebrew language, Jewish ceremonies, bar mitzvah, intermarriage, anti-Semitism, Sunday services? What changes have I witnessed in the last generation?" The following Summary of Findings will answer these questions and many others, too:

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This section aims to set forth briefly the outstanding findings reported in the two preceding sections.

¹⁰ Leaflet in AJAr.

1. Seventy percent of Temple members are over forty years of age.
2. One-fourth of our total constituency are graduates of colleges or professional schools. As generation succeeds generation, this proportion grows larger.
3. Temple membership is recruited almost exclusively from among persons of better-than-the-average financial status.
4. Temple membership is tending to be composed more and more of native persons as time goes on.
5. The proportion of Jews of East-European origin or parentage who belong to Reform Temples is increasing rapidly, as compared with those of German origin or parentage.
6. Temple members have an average of two children per family, only 8 percent having four or more children. The birth rate among natives and college graduates is much lower.
7. Religious education among our constituency has been very widespread, but not very intensive.
8. Native members of Reform Temples have been better educated religiously than the foreign-born members.
9. Less than half of our Temple membership received any instruction whatsoever in Hebrew.
10. Instruction in Jewish history, religion, and ethics has increased from generation to generation among our constituency, while instruction in Hebrew has decreased.
11. Three out of every four children of school age among our families are attending religious schools.
12. Three out of every four children old enough to have been confirmed have actually been confirmed.
13. One-third of the children who have been confirmed are attending (or did attend) Post-Confirmation or Religious High School classes.
14. Younger Temple members are giving more of their children a religious education than are the older Temple members.
15. College graduates, professional men, and those with a higher financial status tend to send fewer of their children to religious school, but they keep them there longer than the rest.
16. Those who had the least religious education send the largest proportion of their children to religious school and vice versa.

17. Confirmation appears to be still largely independent of religious schooling. Even among those who send the smallest proportion of their children to religious school, confirmation is almost as prevalent as among the others.

18. Jewish periodicals are read regularly in two-thirds of the homes of our constituency.

19. Almost all of our families maintain affiliations with Jewish cultural, philanthropic, and social institutions besides the Temple. The average number of types of affiliations per family is 4.5.

20. Natives affiliate more with Federations, while the foreign-born affiliate more with individual philanthropic institutions.

21. Fraternal orders are most popular among older men, the foreign-born, married men, and those who are not college graduates.

22. Zionists are present in one out of every five of our families.

23. The higher the financial status of our members, the larger the number of their institutional affiliations.

24. Almost all of our homes have a Bible and a prayer book.

25. One-half of our homes have books on Jewish subjects, like history, Bible, religion, etc., in their libraries. Books of fiction for children are found in one-third of the homes having young children.

26. The only ceremonials universally observed among our constituency are Temple attendance on Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur and for Kaddish at Yahrzeit [memorial prayer on the anniversary of a death].

27. Although most Temple members attend Temple for Sabbath services occasionally throughout the year, only 30 percent attend regularly. Temple attendance on the Jewish holidays like Passover, Shavuoth [Pentecost], and Succoth [Tabernacles] is considerably less frequent or widespread.

28. Women strongly predominate among worshippers at all Temple services, especially on the Jewish holidays.

29. Only 10 percent of our men ever remain away from business on Saturdays for religious reasons. On the holidays, which come only several times a year, a much larger proportion remain away from business.

30. Temple attendance is only one-half as widespread among the younger men as among the older men. Natives, college graduates, and professional men also attend less frequently than the others. Re-

ligious education does not tend to increase the frequency of Temple attendance among our constituency at all.

31. All forms of home worship, such as private recitation of prayers, holding family services, and saying Grace at mealtimes are observed very little, generally, and much less among the younger members than among the older ones. Having children recite bedtime prayers is an exception to this finding, being practiced regularly in a large percentage of the homes where young children are present.

32. All home ceremonials connected with Sabbath and holiday observance are practiced with increasing frequency as we turn from the oldest to the youngest of our Temple members. Where young children are present in the home, this type of observance rises markedly in frequency.

33. In general, ceremonial observance appears to be influenced negatively by secular education, nativity, and financial status, and positively, except in the case of home or Temple worship, by religious education.

34. The groups which attend Temple least, namely young men, college graduates, professional men, and natives, are most in favor of revising the prayer book and are least in favor of responsive reading. Silent prayers and meditations seem to be preferred to other forms of prayer.

35. Congregational singing is strongly favored by our constituency. Women desire it more, and natives and professionals less.

36. Sentiment is evenly divided on the desirability of having a cantor.

37. The introduction of more Hebrew into the services was quite strongly and uniformly opposed. Even those who had advanced Hebrew training were unfavorable to its extension in the service.

38. Our constituency favors sermons on books and plays most, on political and economic subjects next, and on purely religious subjects based on the Bible, least. The only group which rated sermons on purely religious subjects first was the small group of thirty-three men who had a theological seminary education. Opposition to this type of sermon was greatest among young people, natives, single people, and professionals.

39. Sunday services are favored by two out of three of our constituents.

40. Sentiment on free pews was evenly divided on the whole, although younger men and college graduates favored it and those having a high financial status opposed it.

41. Most members strongly favor sending their children to the religious school and just as strongly oppose increasing its sessions to twice a week.

42. More than half of the parents favor teaching children Hebrew, while only one-fourth of the children in the religious schools actually receive instruction in that subject.

43. There is a strong desire for adult classes for instruction in Judaism.

44. Sentiment is definitely opposed to the substitution of the community Seder [ritual meal] for the home Seder on [the first night of] Passover.

45. The problems most frequently discussed in the homes of our constituency are those dealing with organized religion (such as touch upon the Rabbinate, Temple services, the religious school, etc.), and those dealing with abstract religion (concerning God, the soul, the hereafter, etc.). Next in importance is the problem of anti-Semitism, followed by intermarriage and assimilation, Orthodoxy and Reform, and Palestine.

46. Native members discuss anti-Semitism much more frequently than foreign-born members.

47. Discussion of the problems of intermarriage and assimilation is two and one-half times as frequent among single responders as among the married.

48. Among the factors which cause our constituents to feel Jewish, Jewish birth is ranked first and upbringing in a Jewish home is ranked second. The conviction that Judaism still has the capacity to make important contributions to civilization is ranked third. Convictions as to Jewish superiority are not a very potent cause of Jewish feeling among our constituency.

49. The better the religious education of our constituents, the more the force they ascribe to it as a cause of Jewish feeling.

50. On our Jewish Knowledge Questionnaire covering important topics in Jewish history, Bible, and ceremonials, the average score of our constituency was the same as the average score of the confirmands of 1928 in New York City.¹¹

* * * *

In the Summary of Findings published in 1931 it was noted that 20 percent of Reform Jews in the large cities were pro-Zionist. Actually, most Reformers were and long had been strongly anti-Zionist. They had seen no future for Jews in a semiarid Ottoman Palestine; they worried about the problem of dual loyalty—to America and to Zion—and believed that the Mission of Israel was to further an ethical universalism rather than a political nationalism. Conditions in Eastern Europe were particularly bad, they realized, but could not almost any Jew immigrate to the United States? Before World War I, the gates were still wide open. In 1898, at the first biennial council of the Union to meet after Herzl's creation of a movement for political Zionism, the Reformers adopted this anti-Zionist statement:

While we are aware of and deplore the abject conditions to which many of our brethren are subjected in foreign lands, and which have naturally, but unfortunately, aroused in some of them a yearning for a re-establishment in Zion, yet we delegates of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in convention assembled, in view of the active propaganda being made at present for the so-called Zionistic movement, deem it proper and necessary to put ourselves on record as follows:

We are unalterably opposed to political Zionism. The Jews are not a nation, but a religious community. Zion was a precious possession of the past, the early home of our faith, where our prophets uttered their world-subduing thoughts, and our psalmists sang their world-enchanting hymns. As such it is a holy memory, but it is not our hope of the future. America is our Zion. Here, in the home of religious liberty, we have aided in founding this new Zion, the fruition of the beginning laid in the old. The mission of Judaism is spiri-

¹¹ *Reform Judaism in the Large Cities—A Survey* (Cincinnati, 1930), pp. 47–51.

tual, not political. Its aim is not to establish a state, but to spread the truths of religion and humanity throughout the world.¹²

* * * *

By 1937, the picture for European—and for American Jewry, too—had changed radically. America, once the Promised Land, had been virtually closed to Jewish newcomers since the mid-1920's. Preaching to millions over the American radio during the sad days of the Depression, Father Charles E. Coughlin was undermining the sense of security of the American Jew. Hitler was persecuting and destroying the Jews of Germany. One of the few lands open to European refugees—in part at least—was Palestine. Realizing that the Land of Israel was the only real haven in the world for their oppressed coreligionists, the Reform-oriented Central Conference of American Rabbis, meeting in Columbus, Ohio, committed itself to support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, although the political aspect of the hoped-for homeland was not stressed.

That same year (1937) the Union, which had been consistently hostile to Zionist political aspiration, now stated that it was in sympathy with the creation of a Jewish spiritual and cultural center in Palestine. Six years later, in 1943, during the terrible days of the Nazi Holocaust, as the American Jewish Conference met to deliberate on the fate of Europe's Jews dying by the millions in German extermination camps, the Union passed the following resolution: (Note that there is still no commitment to a Jewish state. That issue was avoided. It was not until the rise of the Republic of Israel in 1948—capped by the successful issue of the Six-Day War in 1967—that the Union unequivocally affirmed its solidarity with the people of the new Jewish state.)

Because of the fact that Jews have been bound by historic and spiritual ties to the Holy Land, and because of the unprecedented need of finding a permanent haven for so many uprooted Jews of Europe, the Union reaffirms its positive sympathy with and eagerness to cooperate in the upbuilding of Palestine, as stated in its reso-

¹² *Proceedings*, V, 4002.

lution adopted at its 35th Biennial Council in New Orleans in 1937:

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, in Council assembled, expresses its satisfaction at the progress made by the Jewish Agency in the upbuilding of Palestine. We see the hand of Providence in the opening of the gates of Palestine for the Jewish people at a time when a large portion of Jewry is so desperately in need of a friendly shelter and a home where a spiritual, cultural center may be developed in accordance with Jewish ideals. The time has now come for Jews, irrespective of ideological differences, to unite in the activities leading to the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, and we urge our constituency to give their financial and moral support to the work of rebuilding Palestine.

Since the adoption of this resolution, the situation of world Jewry has tragically deteriorated, and the part that Palestine must now play has become correspondingly more significant.

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations expresses the hope that the American Jewish Conference will attain agreement also on the following objectives:

1. Provision shall be made for large-scale immigration into Palestine regulated, in cooperation with the Jewish Agency for Palestine, by such a concert of nations as shall be established after the war.

2. Palestine shall remain under the stewardship of this concert of nations until it shall become possible to establish self-government without jeopardizing the rights or status of any group in Palestine.

3. Such a government shall be democratic and nonsectarian, modeled upon the governments of the democratic nations. There shall be complete separation of Church and State. The inviolability of the holy places of the various religions shall be guaranteed.¹⁸

* * * *

The regional rabbis whom Rabbi Zepin sent into the big cities, into the immigrant ghettos, and the distant hinterland were really home missionaries. They did more than visit the prisons and the insane asylums; they traveled everywhere bringing the "gospel," the Jewish

¹⁸ 68th-70th Annual Reports of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Dec., 1943, p. 108.

gospel, to hundreds and thousands. Their work is reflected in the following statement, published probably sometime in the 1940's:

Mister Jacobs is Hungry.

Mr. Jacobs lives in the little town of Tucktaway, in Iowa (or is it Texas?). He owns a prosperous store, is a director of the local bank, and has a very fine, comfortable home—and yet he is hungry—insatiably, incessantly hungry. Sounds incredible, doesn't it? And yet, it is absolutely true. Stranger still, there are nineteen people within a radius of fifty miles of Tucktaway who suffer from the same curious malady as Mr. Jacobs—they are all hungry. Yes, they are all hungry—for Judaism! They comprise four families, the only Jews in the vicinity. They are stranded, cut off from all contact with their Jewish brethren, starved for Jewish knowledge and Jewish fellowship. They see the Sabbaths and holydays come and go, but for them there is no Temple, no services, no sermon—nothing. They see their children growing up without any Jewish training whatsoever. They know that outside, in the larger cities, there is Jewish inspiration and stimulation, but in their own sphere, there is only a void. That is why they are hungry, hungry for a Jewish word, hungry for the sight of a Jewish face.

Put yourself in Mr. Jacobs' place. Imagine yourself without a temple, a rabbi, a religious school, a sisterhood or brotherhood; without any Jewish organization or institution—in fact without any of the things which you take almost for granted, like the air you breathe. How would you feel? What would you want more than anything else in the world?

You would want just what the Union of American Hebrew Congregations is now offering to Mr. Jacobs, and thousands of isolated, hungry Jews like him. And you would feel grateful beyond description when our Regional Rabbi came to visit you.

But what is a Regional Rabbi? And what does he do?

A Regional Rabbi is a modern version of the old circuit rider. He travels around the country hunting out lost Jews and bringing the light of Jewishness to them. When he arrives in a town he conducts Sabbath or holyday services, usually in the living room of someone's house; he organizes a small religious school for the children of the vicinity, training some mother to conduct the class; he supplies text-

books and materials (which the Union publishes) with which to teach the children. He helps solve any problems which may be troubling these forgotten Jews, and he does many other things.

But perhaps the best thing he does is to listen. He listens while these people pour out their hearts and bare the hunger for Jewishness which has gnawed there all the years. Then the Regional Rabbi talks, carrying messages of hope and inspiration, bringing news of the Jewish world and renewing the flickering flames of Jewish light till they burn brightly once more.

Is this work worthwhile? We leave it to you to judge. We have three Regional Rabbis covering the entire country—one in the North East, one in the South West, and one in the Middle West. We ought to have a dozen. Once in three or four years is entirely too seldom for these visits to Mr. Jacobs and the others like him—and there are many like him whom we do not reach at all. More thousands of stranded Jews, all hungry for the Jewishness which is denied them.

Our Regional Rabbis have other duties too. (We have to use their time for many important jobs for which we have no one else available.) They also visit all large cities on their routes, helping the rabbis with their religious school problems, their brotherhood and sisterhood work, their youth programs, and their problems of congregational administration. In addition, they work in the state universities among the Jewish students, aiming to bring some Jewish influences to bear upon their lives; they go to hospitals and other institutions to bring a word of cheer to Jews who are there; they address Jewish and non-Jewish organizations wherever there is a need.

This is the work of our Regional Rabbis, our modern circuit riders, our ambassadors of good will and enlightenment to stranded Jews. We confess we are not doing even a small fraction of what we could do along these lines—if we had your help. . . .¹⁴

* * * *

During World War I and World War II, the Union worked closely with the agencies that sent Jewish chaplains into the army.

¹⁴ *Stranded*, a leaflet published by the Union, no date, probably the 1940's. Copy in AJAr.

In World War II, there were about 500,000 Jews in the armed forces of the United States. Most of these soldiers and sailors had the opportunity to avail themselves of the services of chaplains. The work of these rabbis is reflected in a Union pamphlet published in the early 1940's. It was written by Rabbi Norman M. Goldberg, then a chaplain in the United States Army:

I was in the station hospital at Camp X for a period of two weeks. My clerk came to see me every day.

"Is there anything you want?" he would ask me. The first three days I was too sick to answer, but on the fourth day I mustered up enough strength to mutter, "For goodness sake, Pat, get me a chaplain."

"But, sir," interrupted my clerk, Patrick J. McGillicuddy by name, "you are the only Jewish chaplain on the post. What shall I do?"

"Get me a chaplain," I whispered hoarsely. "Any chaplain."

Poor Patrick, frightened by the fit of coughing which followed my plea, rushed out of the hospital to the Camp Chapel. Twenty minutes later he returned with Major H., the Catholic chaplain.

Chaplain H. greeted me, "You look better. Is there anything I can do for you? Any message for your wife?"

"I'm all right, Chaplain," I replied weakly. "Please call my wife long distance and tell her I am feeling fine. Oh, yes, reverse the charges, please."

As the saying goes, "All's well that ends well." A week later I was out of the hospital and at my desk in the Chapel.

Then I began to think seriously along the line of "Without Benefit of Chaplain." What kind of an army would it be without chaplains? If a soldier needed a chaplain and if no chaplain were available, what would the soldier do? I, an Army Chaplain, had asked for a chaplain. I reasoned, what about the soldier far from home, family, and friends? There must come a time when he needs a chaplain, too.

I pondered the "cases" which had come across my desk during the past two years. Only I don't think of them as "cases" but as "soldiers' problems."

The chaplain and the soldier have a great deal in common. The soldier deals with the chaplain directly on a man to man basis. He doesn't have to get his sergeant's permission to see the chaplain. The office door is open from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M., and when that door closes, the chaplain is available at his quarters at any time of the day or night.

The soldier knows that the chaplain is there to serve him as religious leader, counselor and adviser, intermediary and friend. In the early days of basic training, the period when the adjustment from civilian life is made, the soldier meets the army chaplain and learns the nature of a soldier's duties in the army.

It is a compliment to the Chaplains Corps when one soldier tells another, "Listen, bub, I don't know what to advise you. If you got troubles, go see the chaplain!"

"Without benefit of chaplain" it could be adjusted, too, but someone would have to take the time and gather together the loose threads. It's all in the day's work for the chaplain.

Look, soldier, let's try to establish the fundamental reason for the chaplain's presence in the army.

Sometimes, it is explained as follows: the chaplain is the link between the soldier and civilian life. He is the representative of, the emissary of the synagogue, cathedral, or church. He is your rabbi, priest, minister in uniform.

The chaplain in the army is commissioned to help and serve you, whether or not you had church or synagogue affiliation on the outside. If you want to see him, you don't have to call his secretary for an appointment. He'll be at the office when you call, or he will have left word as to his whereabouts.

He is glad to be able to devote himself and his talents to the officers and men of "his command."

That uniform which you and he wear with so much pride is a bond of understanding which, you will find, brings you together on a common basis, a common footing. We are working for the same "Boss." We are a part of a great fraternity, the army of the United States. We are brothers. . . .

Soldier, maybe you haven't a worry or a problem in the world. I truly hope you haven't. Perhaps you can live through your army ex-

perience without benefit of chaplain. I do not say that you can't. Nevertheless, I invite you to join us in the fellowship of worship and service. I do invite you to become another link in the chain of our faith.

Wherever you go in the service, over here or over there, inquire if there is a Jewish chaplain. If there is one, seek him out, make yourself known to him. Don't hesitate to call on him. Remember he is in the army to serve you. He wants to serve you. Help him do it.¹⁵

* * * *

In the 1940's, the Reform Jews of the United States began to establish Institutes of Judaism for the Christian Clergy, some of which were sponsored by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations conjointly with the Central Conference of American Rabbis. A local rabbi would invite all the Christian clergy in the area to attend an all-day session addressed by a Jewish scholar. For the most part, the lecturers emphasized Jewish history, theology, ceremonial, and ritual. Occasionally Jewish specialists would speak on the Jewish origins of Christianity and the historical relationships between the two faiths. Propaganda and homiletics were sedulously avoided; the approach was liberal, scientific, and critical. Although fundamentalists were not always happy with what they heard, the Jewish scholars were on the whole well received and at some of these meetings where lunch was served Catholics and Protestants, Whites and Blacks, sat down together for the first time.

The passages that follow are excerpted from an undated leaflet of the Union, published, it would seem, in the 1940's:

INSTITUTE ON JUDAISM

FOR THE CLERGY

Sponsored by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis

¹⁵ Norman M. Goldburg, *Without Benefit of Chaplain* (Cincinnati, 1943 [?]), pp. 2-5, 7-8. Copy in AJAr.

WHEN RELIGIONS MEET

Religion must play its vital role in solving the problems of the post-war world. With mutual respect and sympathetic appreciation of each other's worth, the leaders of all creeds can fulfill this obligation together on a united front.

Better understanding among all peoples and all faiths is the watchword of the hour. This is one of the first and finest fruits of the democratic forces and ideals.

The Institute on Judaism seeks to meet these needs. Its underlying purposes are:

UNDERLYING PURPOSES

To spread Authentic Knowledge of Jewish Beliefs and Practices.

To Replace Lack of Information and Misinformation Concerning Judaism by Facts and Authoritative History.

To Foster Sympathetic Understanding Based on Knowledge and Appreciation of the Jewish Faith and People.

To Emphasize the Common Origins and Ideals Inherent in Both Judaism and Christianity.

These purposes may be best carried out by a widespread dissemination of reliable information by those who are the chosen leaders and teachers in the community and who, by precept and example, may lead many into the paths of good will.

To promote knowledge and understanding as indispensable elements for the mutual appreciation of Christian and Jewish viewpoints is education in its broadest sense. As such, it is an important prerequisite to enlightened brotherhood in any community.

The Institute on Judaism has been held in all sections of the country. It has been well received and widely attended and, in the opinion of those who have participated, has demonstrated its undoubted value. . . .¹⁶

* * * *

In 1962, two of the Union's staff, Rabbi Eugene J. Lipman and Albert Vorspan, published a book entitled A Tale of Ten Cities. In

¹⁶ *When Religions Meet* (Cincinnati [?], 1940's [?]). Copy in AJAr.



Maurice N. Eisendrath
Leader with a prophetic conscience



Courtesy, Bernard Postal, New York City

Chaplain Herbert C. Brichto, later a member of the Hebrew Union College faculty, conducts a Hanukkah service in Korea. ca. 1950

a press release commenting on the book, the following analysis of Jewish-Christian relations might lead one to believe that the Institutes of Judaism of the 1940's and 1950's had done very little to bring Jews and Christians closer together. This is a moot question. The ecumenical movement ushered in by Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council of that same year certainly opened the way for a dialogue between all Jews and all Christians, a dialogue that incontestably improved relations between the three religious groups:

Recent decisions of the United States Supreme Court demonstrate that America is not a Christian nation but has become a religiously plural society which is now in its post-Protestant phase.

There is little ongoing communication among Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish religious leaders in any of the cities studied, even in the face of bitter community conflicts on such issues as birth control, divorce, racial relations, and church-state issues.

Atheists and secularists are in danger of becoming second-class citizens as a result of the increasing conformity of American religious life.

Issues of separation of church and state represent the most pervasive and explosive sources of interreligious discord in every community. . . . The struggle for public funds for sectarian institutions is the biggest reef in the sea of American interreligious life.

Self-segregation is a mounting problem among Jews and Catholics, and is developing rapidly in the Protestant community as well.

The much-advertised process of dialogue is still limited to a few communities and is conducted mostly on the level of leadership. . . .

Religious groups exercise a virtual veto over some aspects of the legislative process in several cities and states. Examples cited include Roman Catholic dominance of political life in Boston and, to a lesser extent, in New York City affecting birth control, divorce, and Sunday closings, as well as Jewish influence on humane slaughter and church-state legislation in New York City.

The persistence of anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism indicates that religious bigotry is still widespread and deeply embedded in American life.

There are deep ferments within the Roman Catholic community, reflecting opportunities for greater liberalism.

Protestantism in America has lost its vibrant confidence in its own values. . . . Hard work, self-reliance, sobriety, and thrift are still respected values. But the America of the 1960's places a higher premium on consumer consumption, social security, and organizational teamwork.

American Judaism has an unparalleled opportunity to project its humane and compassionate values into the general life of the total society:

For the first time, perhaps in history, a Jewish community has the freedom and the economic resources to devote itself, in good measure, to the general health of society rather than to concentrate its energies exclusively, as was essential in the past, upon fighting for its own security and survival.

Interreligious education is still both superficial and inadequate in all major faiths.

Religious tension is an inevitable aspect of religious pluralism, reflecting legitimate competition among the faiths as to the values which should constitute the good society. The need is not to sweep these conflicts under the table but to avoid coercion and to develop rules of fair play and continuing interreligious conversation.

The faith groups, by and large, do not join together in joint action, even on issues where they tend to agree on the principle, such as racial equality and liberalized immigration policy.

The emergence of right-wing extremism has exacerbated interreligious relations, particularly in Los Angeles, as the Jewish community and the liberal Christian community find themselves in bitter confrontation with some fundamentalist Protestant and some super-patriotic Catholic groups on this issue. The Jewish group in virtually every community . . . shows a larger concern with civil liberties and freedom of expression than do other faith bodies.

A far greater problem than the occasional abuse of religious pressure is the failure of religion to make fuller use of its latent power in shaping the ethical conscience of America and impelling public-spirited citizens to righteous action in building a better society for all men. . . .¹⁷

* * * *

¹⁷ News Release, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1962. Copy in AJAr.

In the preceding release on A Tale of Ten Cities, the Union pointed out that Lipman and Vorspan were concerned about "the failure of religion to make fuller use of its latent power in shaping the ethical conscience of America." What had the Union been doing to build "a better society for all men"? Periodically, it issued statements describing its departments and their activities. It is, of course, not easy to determine how successful the Union was in approaching the goals it had set for itself. The following descriptive account appeared in the 1940's:

This is The Union of American Hebrew Congregations:

1. It is the combined energy, activity, and leadership of 310 congregations in the United States and Canada, representing more than 60,000 families.

2. It is the Commission on Information about Judaism which has printed and distributed more than 500,000 copies of a series of morale-building pamphlets to the men in the armed forces. Since the beginning of the war, it has also distributed more than 200,000 copies of its *Popular Studies*. These studies also reach thousands of molders of public opinion.

3. It is the Jewish Chaplain who is our public relations man in the army camps and naval stations. The Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Union have succeeded in providing more than 50 percent of the Jewish chaplains now serving. We cooperate with the National Jewish Welfare Board.

4. It is the Commission on Jewish Education (set up by the Union and the Central Conference of American Rabbis) which creates textbooks for children, young people, teachers, and adults for our Liberal religious schools. These books are used also by more than 750 additional Conservative and Orthodox schools. The Commission also publishes material for pre-school children and for the education of parents. Recently, it has launched the American Institute for Jewish Studies to stimulate Jewish education among youth and adults. It publishes [the periodical entitled] *The Jewish Teacher*, arranges institutes for adults and teachers, and plans programs of state and regional teachers' associations.

5. It is the Department of Synagogue Activities which stimulates

congregational life, encourages the observance of ceremonies in synagogue and home, and furnishes information and guidance to rabbis and congregational leaders to enrich the synagogue program.

6. It is the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods providing and implementing a far-flung program for stimulating lay participation and responsibility in the synagogue's religious, educational, and social activities. The Federation also conducts the program of the Jewish Chautauqua Society which supplies authoritative speakers on Jewish history, ethics, and religion to thousands of non-Jewish students and teachers in the United States and Canada.

7. It is the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods—embracing 390 Sisterhoods in six countries—which maintains the Hebrew Union College Scholarship and Religious Education Fund, distributes cultural program and educational materials on modern Jewish problems, creates study materials for Jewish parents, maintains a fund for new religious school textbooks, and inaugurates special religious broadcasts. This is the largest Jewish women's religious organization in the world.

8. It is the National Federation of Temple Youth, leading our young people into a greater area of service and devotion to religious ideals.

9. It is the magazine, *Liberal Judaism*, an illustrated monthly journal to foster progressive Judaism—for the advancement of the spiritual and cultural ideals of Israel and mankind.

10. It is a great religious institution cooperating with and helping to maintain the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Synagogue Council of America, and the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

11. It is your religious voice on the American scene.¹⁸

* * * *

The same forces which in 1937 pushed Reform from the left to the center, from anti-Zionism to pro-Zionism, moved it also from the classicism of its nineteenth-century founders to the Neo-Reform of

¹⁸ *Time to Add Strength to Strength* (Cincinnati [?], 1940's [?]). Copy in AJAr.

the mid-1960's, from universalist ethical abstracts to increasing ceremonial and ritual practice. German barbarities, American anti-Semitism, Zionist nationalism, all these worked to intensify a Reform Jewish interest in symbols and folkways. As early as 1937, the Union, meeting at New Orleans, made a plea for traditional customs, Jewish music, cantors, Jewish choir singers, Hebrew hymns, and the recitation of the kiddush, the blessing over the Sabbath wine. This appeal for a return to the ancient paths of the pre-Reform fathers was strengthened when the "Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism" were adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis at Columbus that same year.

In 1950, a Union Committee on Reform Practice thought of preparing a guide or code of religious conduct. Because this was such a controversial issue, it was shunted aside, and the decision was made for the Committee to confine itself to a survey of congregational and home practices. The 1950 Committee questioned only rabbis and synagogal presidents, but its findings were fortified in depth in the early 1950's by a Brotherhood survey which fixed the actual nature of lay religious practice. In 1953, Rabbi Morton M. Berman, Chairman of the Committee on Reform Practice, reported on the Brotherhood Survey, passages of which are reprinted here:

The Movement in New Trends Is Not a Return to Orthodoxy

The strong opposition to the adoption of an authoritative code is one of the significant proofs that the acceptance of ritual and ceremonial practice cannot be regarded as a return to Orthodoxy. What we witness here is a voluntary undertaking on the part of congregations led by laymen and rabbis to meet the needs of people for symbolism and ceremonialism as part of religious experience. We see in the new trends the exercise of the basic Reform principle of the right to change, to go back, if need be, as well as forward, if the needs of the people, the times and the conditions of life require such change. The unorthodoxy of the current movement is clearly manifest in the modifications of practices and ceremonies and the innovations which Reform congregations and individuals permit themselves in order to achieve the most meaningful kind of symbolism and ceremonialism. . . .

A Guide Preferred

The wide variety of practice in Reform congregations and the numerous modifications of old rite and custom and the many new innovations unrelated to tradition suggest how deep-rooted are both the principles of choice and change which are not permitted to Orthodoxy. It is felt that a guide will help to reduce what is regarded by many as anarchy in Reform because of the wide variety of practices and the countless variations in the practices themselves. It is felt, further, that a guide used on a voluntary basis will help to bring about some reasonable order without crystallization of the practices in a new kind of orthodoxy, destroying the principles of choice and change. A guide, it is also maintained, will meet the fundamental need to make possible more intelligent choice of practices, wider understanding of their meaning, and more effective performance based upon the tested and tried experience of congregations and their members. A guide is the preference of 86 percent of the laymen and 89 percent of the rabbis, together with their most representative leaders who expressed themselves directly on this matter. . . .

Naming of Children

Rabbis have made up for the loss of the opportunity to preserve the rite of circumcision as a religious experience by providing increased opportunity for naming children at a Sabbath service. Thus we find that not only girls are named in great numbers on a Sabbath following birth but boys, the naming of boys being an innovation to compensate for loss of the opportunity of Brith Milah of the ceremony in connection with circumcision. . . .

Bar Mitzvah and Confirmation

Bar Mitzvah [boys admitted to spiritual adulthood at the age of thirteen] is today practiced in congregations served by 92 percent of the rabbis who responded to the questionnaire. . . . Forty-one percent of the laymen endorsed the [new] ceremony of Bas Mitzvah [for girls thirteen years of age]. . . .

It was clear from the responses by the laymen that they did not look upon confirmation [generally in the mid-teens for girls as well as boys] as displaced by Bar Mitzvah. . . .

On Marriage

Laymen appeared to be more eager about some traditional practices in connection with weddings than are the rabbis. Twenty-four percent of the laymen or four times the number of rabbis (6 percent) would insist upon a Chuppah [traditional canopy] for a wedding ceremony. Sixteen percent of the laymen would ask for a hat to be worn at the ceremony as against 9 percent of the rabbis, and 40 percent of the laymen would ask that a glass be broken [at the ceremony's conclusion, an ancient practice], while only 20 percent of the rabbis would expect it to be done. In 1950, 90 percent of the rabbis indicated that they were ready to accept a request to officiate at a wedding where Chuppah, wearing of a hat, and breaking of a glass were required, thus demonstrating the rabbis' readiness to meet the needs of their people. . . .

On Mixed Marriage and Inter-marriage

In the matter of mixed marriage, namely, that of a Jew to an unconverted Christian, laymen showed considerably less opposition than the rabbis. Fifty-three percent of the laymen and 87 percent of the rabbis were opposed to mixed marriages. In 1950, 9 percent fewer rabbis were opposed (78 percent). Curiously, only 84 percent of the laymen would sanction an inter-marriage if the Gentile was converted, while 99 percent of the rabbis indicated they would sanction it.

On Death

When practices in connection with death are considered, we note that 60 percent of the laymen and 86 percent of the rabbis favor holding Minyan [daily worship] services for the dead [during the mourning week]. . . .

Attendance at Worship

The tabulations on synagogue attendance at worship produced by the survey provide, for the first time, some highly interesting responses. Thirty-two percent of the laymen reported attending every Sabbath. Thirty percent of the laymen reported once a month, and

26 percent of the laymen replied "seldom," and 12 percent indicated that they attended only on [the autumnal] High Holy Days. . . .

Synagogue Practices

The use of the [pulpit] robe by the rabbi has increased 9 percent since 1950. Ninety-three percent of the rabbis now wear a robe, and 88 percent of the laymen give their approval. Sixty percent now wear either a talith [traditional prayer shawl] or a stole, a gain of 16 percent over 1950, and 27 percent wear a hat [during worship], an increase of 9 percent over 1950. . . .

The number of cantors has increased according to the report of the rabbis. Thirty-four percent of the congregations now have them. . . .

An increase is also indicated in the number of congregations that light candles at the Friday evening service. . . . Eighty-nine percent of the rabbis report that the Kiddush [wine blessing] is also sung in their synagogues, a gain of 1 percent over 1950. . . .

Fifty-eight percent of the rabbis report a Torah service on Friday evening, a non-traditional practice. . . . The number of women asked to assist in the service in the congregations has increased by 32 percent since 1950. Eighty-two percent of the rabbis reported that they now invite women to assist in the service, while only 50 percent did so in 1950. This, too, is a non-traditional practice. Seventy-two percent of the laymen expressed their approval. Only 21 percent of the rabbis report that women are called up to share in the reading of the Torah, but 37 percent of the laymen and 68 percent of the rabbis approve of the practice.

Dancing After the Friday Evening Service

It is difficult to judge whether the figures on dancing in the synagogue after the Friday evening service suggest a trend in that direction. Only 10 percent of the rabbis report that that practice is now present in their congregations. However, an equal number of laymen (40 percent) and rabbis (42 percent) indicate that they would permit dancing in the synagogue after the Sabbath service.

Home and Private Practice

Ten percent of the laymen indicated that they do not work on the Sabbath. Whether this can be accounted for by religious reasons

was not made clear. Eighty-two percent of the laymen responded that they smoke on the Sabbath as against 62 percent of the rabbis who do so. . . .

Dietary Laws

Eight percent of the laymen and 10 percent of the rabbis observe dietary laws in the home. . . .

On the Observance of the Holidays

Fifty-two percent of the laymen and 93 percent of the rabbis fast on Yom Kippur [Atonement Day]. An equal percentage of laymen (94 percent) and rabbis (93 percent) prefer the traditional [sounding of the ram's horn called] Shofar on Rosh Hashanah [the autumnal New Year]. Three percent of the laymen and 17 percent of the rabbis have an outdoor Sukkah [booth or tabernacle] at home to celebrate the Sukkoth Festival.

On Passover

Seventy-four percent of the laymen, or 20 percent less than the rabbis (94 percent), have a Seder [ceremonial meal] on [the first night of] Passover. . . .

On Hanukkah

Eighty-one percent of the laymen indicated that they light lights [candles] on [the midwinter festival of] Hanukkah, and 90 percent of them do so for [the entire] eight days. . . .

On Christmas in the Jewish Home

Twenty-one percent of the laymen said that they had a Christmas tree in their homes. Only one rabbi reported the same practice in his home. . . .

On Social Affairs on Friday Nights

Reasons for low attendance at Friday evening services in some congregations are suggested by the replies to the question: "Do you believe in social affairs outside the synagogue on Friday nights?" Fifty-seven percent of the laymen and 9 percent of the rabbis answered affirmatively to this question. Sixty-four percent of the lay-

men and 11 percent of the rabbis gave their approval to dinners on Friday nights. Forty-nine percent of the laymen and 2 percent of the rabbis approved of card playing on Friday nights. Fifty-two percent of the laymen and 5 percent of the rabbis endorsed dancing outside of the synagogue on Friday nights. . . .

Hebrew Education

Seventy-four percent of the laymen want Hebrew education for their children. . . .

Religious Education

All rabbis and all but twelve individual laymen want religious instruction for their children. . . .

On Jewish Books

The limited number of Jewish books in laymen's homes would not suggest a wide interest in Jewish cultural matters. . . .¹⁹

* * * *

An analysis of this same Brotherhood Survey appeared as a Union news release and is also reproduced here. Although duplicative in part, it offers the reader a very brief summary of what was a very extensive and important report:

SURVEY SETS TRENDS OF REFORM JEWS ON RELIGIOUS VIEWS

Temple Brotherhoods at Parley List Attitudes of U. S. Membership

St. Louis—(JTA)—The 15th biennial convention of the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods heard a report on the attitude of Reform Jews in this country toward intermarriage, Jewish education, religious ceremonies, and synagogue observances. The report, based on a survey conducted by the National Federation

¹⁹ Morton M. Berman, *Survey of Current Reform Practice of Laymen*, April 22, 1953 (mimeo). Copy in AJAr.

among members of Reform congregations, established the following facts:

1. Virtually all of America's Reform Jews want religious education for their children. The survey revealed that 66 percent want one day a week; 22 percent two days; 8 percent three days; and 4 percent four days.

2. Almost 75 percent want their children to be taught Hebrew; 51 percent want one day of Hebrew education a week, 34 percent two days, and 15 percent want more. Only one out of eleven American Reform Jews believe in Jewish parochial or day schools.

3. Bar Mitzvah, the traditional rite of inducting a boy of thirteen into the congregation, is practiced in varying degrees in 92 percent of the Reform temples, and 77 percent of the laymen answering the poll endorse this practice. The recently instituted rite of Bas Mitzvah for girls has spread to the extent that it is now observed in 35 percent of Reform congregations, and 41 percent of the Reform Jews answering the poll endorse this practice. More than 60 percent of the Reform temples confirm their children at the age of fifteen or older.

4. Eighty-four percent of the congregations light candles at Friday evening services; and an even greater percentage of the laymen, 90 percent, want this practice. Eighty-nine percent of the rabbis report that the Kiddush is sung in their temples, and 88 percent of the laymen like this practice.

5. A Friday night Torah service, a non-traditional practice, is conducted by 58 percent of the rabbis reporting, but 77 percent of the laymen reporting approve this practice.

Views on Domestic Affairs

With regard to marriage ceremonies, the survey showed that 56 percent of American Reform Jews prefer that marriages be held in the temple, as against 29 percent in the home, and 15 percent in public places. Eighty-four percent would sanction a marriage of a Jew with a former Christian who has been converted to Judaism. However, 53 percent are opposed to marriages between Jews and unconverted Christians.

Only 24 percent would insist upon the use of a chuppah for a

wedding, and only 16 percent would ask the rabbi to wear a hat during the wedding. Forty percent would expect that a glass be broken at the ceremony. Only 4 percent believe that a religious divorce is necessary, in addition to a civil divorce. Seventeen percent of those replying said they would employ only a mohel [traditional circumciser] for circumcision. Forty-three percent said they would insist upon a rabbi being present if a surgeon was employed.

One of the most interesting revelations of the survey is the large number of people who indicate that they attend temple services weekly. In fact, the same number of Reform Jews now attend services weekly, namely 31 percent, as attend monthly, and the percentage attending occasionally is much smaller, 26 percent, and those who attend solely on the high holidays, only 12 percent. Friday evening services are now conducted in the congregations of 92 percent of those reporting; 48 percent worship on Saturday morning and 8 percent on Sunday morning.

Other Findings

The survey reveals that 59 percent of Reform families say a blessing over the candles in their homes on Sabbath eve; 26 percent make Kiddush; 18 percent say grace before meals, but only 4 percent after meals. Only 7 percent say a prayer on awakening in the morning, but 33 percent pray at night before retiring. Only 2 percent use phylacteries. Only 8 percent keep kosher households; 20 percent won't mix milk and meat; 24 percent won't eat pork, but only 8 percent won't eat shellfish.

On the Sabbath, the vast majority of Reform Jews, 88 percent, keep their businesses open, 90 percent work, 99 percent ride, and 82 percent smoke. Seventy-four percent have a seder in their homes on Passover eve, 93 percent eat Matzoh [unleavened bread] during Passover, but 59 percent also eat bread. Twenty-one percent of the Reform Jews reported that they have Christmas trees at home, but only 54 percent are opposed to this practice. On the other hand, 81 percent kindle Chanukah lights in their homes, and 75 percent exchange Chanukah gifts. Forty-seven percent have m'zuzzahs [traditional amulets] on the doors of their homes.²⁰

²⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, Milwaukee, Nov. 20, 1953.

It will be noted that in his report to the Union General Assembly on April 22, 1953—excerpted above—Rabbi Berman made a plea for a Guide to Reform Practice. Three years later, the Pennsylvania Council of the Union met at Bedford Springs and wrestled with the same theme. Rabbi Louis M. Youngerman, of Allentown, addressed himself to this subject and opposed the adoption of a guide. The following excerpts are taken from his paper:

One of the most characteristic features of Judaism has been its emphasis upon deed rather than creed. Our faith has concerned itself much more with the way a person lives rather than with his profession of faith or observance of ceremonial. . . .

As human beings we are responsive to all sorts of stimuli. We do not live in a rarified atmosphere of pure philosophical speculation. . . . Religion, being the expression of man's longing for communion with his God, must have some external visible expression in the form of ritual and ceremony. We enjoy pageantry and drama. We love color, display, and performance. We demand it in every area of our lives. There is no reason to exclude it from our religious activity. Rather we should seek to utilize this perfectly natural need to enrich our lives. However, we must bear in mind that whatever devices we employ, be they ceremonies or rituals or pageants or dramas, they are nothing more than mere instruments by which we attain a greater appreciation of the fundamental religious values which are to be found in Judaism. We must never allow ourselves to be deluded into believing that these devices have any intrinsic merit. . . .

Within recent years, the complexion of the membership in our Reform congregations has changed considerably. More and more people come to us with Orthodox or Conservative backgrounds. In most cases their religious education was very nominal. Nevertheless, there exists a vague, often ill-defined, nostalgic attachment to a wide variety of ceremonials, the meaning of which they either never knew or [which] has long since been forgotten. In response to an ever increasing demand from its adherents, Reform Judaism, through its established institutions, has re-evaluated its previous [negative] attitude toward ceremonialism. In addition to the innovations intro-

duced earlier, and which are now familiar to us, such as the late Friday evening service, Confirmation, etc., many additional [traditional] ones are now being incorporated. I cite the additional Yizkor [memorial] service on the Day of Solemn Assembly [the eighth day of the Sukkoth festival] and the Havdalah service [concluding the Sabbath at nightfall Saturday], just to mention one or two. Both the aforementioned ceremonies and the latter have always been in the nature of suggested practices [for Reform Jews]. They were the result of the thinking of individual rabbis and laymen. Those which emanated from the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations never were considered "laws" [as they are for Orthodox and Conservative Jews]. There was no authority behind them other than the respect for the validity of the thinking of those who created or introduced the ceremonials. . . . Adherence to or compliance with suggested ritual practice was purely voluntary. . . .

Assuming, for the moment, a positive answer to our question of whether Reform Judaism should have a "guide" of practice, it must be clearly understood that by a guide we do not mean a "code." The latter implies legality and enforcement. In Reform Judaism we have no body that has any legal power. . . .

At the present time there are in reality a number of "guides" to Reform Jewish practice. One of the better known is *A Guide for Reform Jews* prepared by Dr. Abraham J. Feldman. . . . Dr. Feldman compiled this "guide" in response to requests from members of his congregation in Hartford who were confused by the chaotic condition which exists today in the area of Jewish religious practice. In his introduction he says, "It is not 'official,' neither is it all-inclusive. . . ." There is the two-volume book on *Reform Jewish Practice*, written by Dr. Solomon B. Freehof [of Pittsburgh], which is quite extensive. There is in preparation a comprehensive guide by Rabbis David Polish [of Evanston, Ill.] and Frederic A. Doppelt [of Fort Wayne, Ind.—their guide appeared in 1957]. In addition, there are the responsa, answers to ritual questions, issued by Drs. [Israel] Bettan [of the Hebrew Union College faculty] and Freehof. . . .

Since we seem to have a number of adequate guides, what, then,

is the purpose of another one? In what way will it, or should it, differ from those now in existence? The proponents of a new guide feel that it should come from the Central Conference of American Rabbis or the Union of American Hebrew Congregations or a combination of the two. That would make it "official." Once it is prepared, all Reform Jews would know what is expected of them. We should all know what to do.

It is precisely at this point that I feel that the dangers inherent in any "official" documentation of Reform Jewish practice must be stated clearly. The moment that anything is labeled official, it is charged with an air of authority. People are afraid to challenge it. Once the authority becomes entrenched, it is extremely difficult to dislodge it. This is particularly true in the realm of a pronouncement by a religious body which has about it an aura of sanctity. There is nothing inherently wrong in a guide which would lead us through the maze of ritual observance. However, I cannot help but feel that the danger that it will degenerate into a "code" militates against its usefulness. A code is about the last thing that I would ever want to see established in Reform Judaism.

There is yet another danger inherent in the establishment of an official guide. This deserves more than passing mention. Reform Judaism's outstanding characteristic has been its dynamism and viability. Its flexibility within the framework of traditional Judaism has enabled it to exert a tremendous appeal for those of our faith who are seeking a mature religious expression unhampered by a stultified and rigid external superstructure. It is true that these people desire rituals and ceremonialism. However, we must not confuse this type of ceremonialism incorporated in a liberal religious outlook with the immature concept of a religion which tells us when we *must* perform certain given rituals. There are far too many religions in our society which have sacrificed their idealism on the altar of the ceremonial. The *prevailing* practice is not the *final* practice. It may serve a given need at a particular time. It can also become the stumbling block upon which a desirable expression of a future religious need may falter. . . .

Let us not be hasty in our desire for official guides. As laymen, do

not ask for something which is predigested for you and handed down to you ready-made. As rabbis, we should not seek to make our own task easier by invoking authority. Go to your rabbi, ask him for instruction, explanation, and interpretation. Together we will be able to select those rituals and ceremonials which meet our need. Thus will our lives be enriched, our actions ennobled, and our faith strengthened.²¹

* * * *

Under the caption of Synagogue Practices and Bar Mitzvah and Confirmation, Rabbi Berman reported in his 1953 address that more and more women were assisting in divine services, reading from the Torah, and entering Judaism formally through the new rite of Bat Mitzvah ("Daughter of the Commandment"). Actually, women had long been accepted and had played a not unimportant part in the developing Reform religious polity. Ever since the 1950's, they have served not only as presidents of synagogues, but also as acting-rabbis. In 1972, Sally Priesand was formally ordained a Rabbi at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.

In 1923, the Union declared categorically that women may serve on its national Executive Board. As far back as 1876, indeed, Moritz Loth, the first president of the Union, agitated for the founding of a Young Ladies' Hebrew Seminary. It was his hope that such a school, sponsored and supervised by the Union, would offer the daughters of Israel a Hebrew and classical education including instruction in music and the arts.

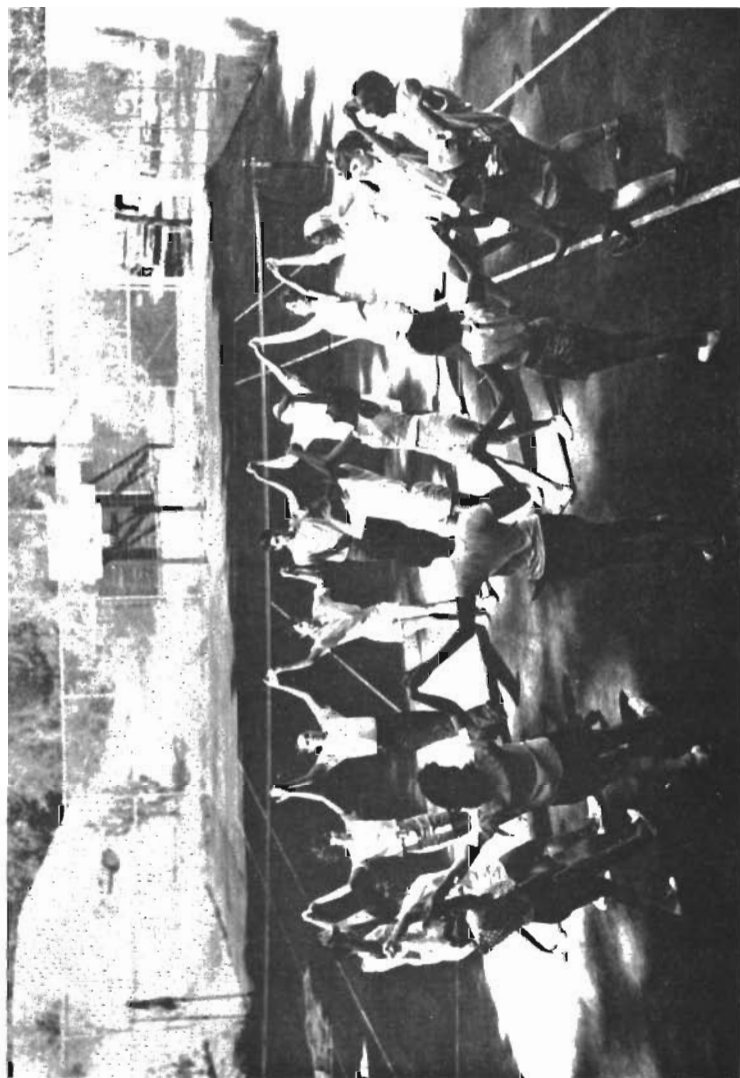
It would thus appear that Reform Judaism has accorded religious equality to women, but it is not equally clear that Reform Jews have completely emancipated all Reform Jewish women. At least this is the plaint of some rabbis' spouses who stoutly maintain that they are often subjected to unjust criticism by their husbands' congregants. These poor women, who suffer because of their high visibility, found it possible to air their troubles in a Union release sent to the press in 1954:

²¹ *Highlights of the Proceedings, Biennial Regional Conference, Pennsylvania Council, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Saturday, November 10–Sunday, November 11, 1956. Bedford Springs Hotel, Bedford, Pa., pp. 4–7. Copy in AJAr.*



Courtesy, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, New York

A Torah Scroll is presented to President John F. Kennedy in 1961



Courtesy, Rabbi Leslie L. Freund, San Antonio, Texas

Folk dancing at a Union camp in New York State

POEM BY RABBI'S WIFE WHO
CAN "TAKE CARE OF HERSELF"
APPEARS IN NATIONAL MAGAZINE

Others Also Take Up Cudgel for Rabbinical Spouses

A poetic reply to a rabbi's wife who bemoaned her lot is published in the current issue of the magazine, *American Judaism*, official publication of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Last year, an anonymous rabbinical spouse wrote in the magazine, which circulates among the 160,000 families affiliated with Reform Jewish congregations, about "the juicy pin-pricks and the wounds which often make the rabbi's wife long for a divorce, if not from her husband, at least from his current congregation."

Complaining that it was hardly possible for the wife of a rabbi to satisfy her flock, the writer, who called herself A. Rebbitzen ["A Rabbi's Wife"], declared that the "congregational grapevine" often "spreads the news of her pregnancy before she herself is aware of it," and frequently contains exaggerated reports of her management of the home. "The congregational censors know," she wrote, "that the daily contents of the rabbinical garbage pail would feed a family of four; the living room drapes were as good as new, but she said she was tired of them; and did you notice the hat she wore in temple on Yom Kippur!"

Appearing with the original article was a retort by Mrs. David L. Zielonka, wife of the rabbi of Congregation Schaarai Zedek of Tampa, Florida, who wrote, "My life has been one of dignity and satisfaction, and I am sure this is true of most women in the same position. Hence, I don't think the author is a true spokesman for the rest of us."

The exchange evoked more comments which appear in the current issue of the magazine. Mrs. Sanford E. Rosen, whose husband is the rabbi of Temple Beth El in San Mateo, Calif., asserts, "The author's focus is all wrong. True, the rabbi's wife sees a few people at their worst, but she sees so many more at their best that she must deem herself, on the whole, very fortunate indeed." Mrs. Nathan Hershfield, wife of the spiritual leader of Temple Emanuel, Gastonia, N.C., thought the picture of the "rebbitzenate" was "quite ac-

curate," but that her tribulations were no different than those of "anyone in the public eye." A strong rejoinder came from Mrs. Bernard Baskin, rebbitzen at Anshe Shalom Congregation, Hamilton, Ontario, who cried out, "We can only surmise that McCarthyism [the anti-liberal political agitation of the 1950's] has affected her stability."

But the most thorough reply to the article came in the form of a poem, written in the Ogden Nash manner, which declares to the magazine's 160,000 readers that "This Rabbi's Wife Can Help Herself!" The poet is Helen A. Wilner, whose husband, Dr. Herbert J. Wilner, is rabbi of Congregation Ahavath Sholom, Bluefield, West Virginia. The poem:

THIS RABBI'S WIFE CAN HELP HERSELF!

There is always a great deal of comment in our worship houses
Concerning the activities of the rabbis' spouses.
For the most part 'tis the opinion consensus that ours is a sorry lot,
And that our chances of pleasing our husbands, our congregations,
and still retaining our sanity are not so hot.
For example, if the rebbitzen's dresses are smart instead of so-so,
Then the whole congregation begins to think the rabbi is getting too
much dough;
But if, God forbid, she should go to the A&P on a Friday morning
shabbily,
Then everyone immediately starts treating her crabbily.
And if you stay at home and tend to your business and your babies,
and Sisterhood responsibilities should shirk,
The hue and cry goes up: "She doesn't do a bit of work!"
It goes without saying that everyone knows how much you pay your
maid, what's in your garbage pail; but most of all you despair of
it
When everyone in town knows you're pregnant before you are even
aware of it!
On the other hand, rabbis are pretty swell guys, and put this in your
bonnets:
I'll bet none of you have ever received from your husbands on your
anniversaries written-to-order sonnets!

They say we have no privacy, we live in a glare of publicity;
 But let me tell you, any gal who denies she loves it is guilty of fla-
 grant duplicity.
 In conclusion, had my husband chosen garbage collection as the
 work of his life,
 Then I should be proud and happy to be the garbage collector's
 wife!²²

* * * *

Confirmation for girls was not a creation of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations or American Reform Jewry. Girls were enjoying that religious privilege in this country as early as 1847 in Temple Emanu-El of New York City, but actually it was in 1817, in the short-lived liberal Berlin synagogue, that girls were first permitted to participate in this beautiful ceremony of affirmation. The 1950 Berman Survey revealed that boys and girls belonging to congregations of the Union were being confirmed in the United States between the ages of thirteen and sixteen, most of them at fifteen. In 1959, one of the young girls, a student at Temple Israel in Akron, Ohio, wrote an essay entitled "What Reform Judaism Now Means to Me." It is reprinted here in its entirety:

WHAT REFORM JUDAISM NOW MEANS TO ME

Now that I am in the Confirmation Class, I am learning to understand and accept Reform Judaism.

Up until this year, I really had my doubts about some customs associated with Reform Judaism. I just could not accept the fact that the yarmulka [skullcap] and talis [prayer shawl] were not worn; that there was an organ, of all things, in a synagogue. I had also heard Temple Israel referred to as a "church."

Truthfully, I felt skeptical about the temple, since my grandparents are devout Orthodox Jews, and my earlier training was along traditional lines.

Coming to temple for my Jewish education made me suspicious

²² News Release, Union, Sept. 1, 1954. Copy in AJAr.

of what my teachers were trying to teach, and I did not give Reform Judaism a fair chance.

The critics tend to think of Reform Judaism as the creed of the uninformed, disinterested, and lukewarm Jews.

Actually, Reform Judaism is the outgrowth of Orthodoxy. In a changing age, men of reason questioned the necessity of following practices which originated in the distant past, many of them superstitious.

Reform Judaism discarded many such beliefs and practices, but held to what is basic and meaningful in Judaism. Reform modified and "reformed" some of the observances and practices to adjust them to the times and to assure them of continuity.

Actually, there is no biblical commandment pertaining to the wearing of a hat at worship. It is merely a custom dating back to the Babylonian captivity. Originally, in Palestine, Jews did not worship with their heads covered. Only the priests did so.

The organ enhances the beauty of our services. There is a passage in the Bible explaining that piped music accompanied the service.

Yes, and what about our temple being a "church"?

Such remarks are made in jest or ignorance. We must learn to tolerate them and keep in mind that those making the remarks are uninformed about Judaism in general, and of our branch of Judaism in particular. Such may sound off with: "Why, there's hardly any Hebrew!" and: "Of all things the pages in your prayerbook run in the non-Jewish way [left to right]!" But our way of Judaism is modern in practice and thinking. We feel that it is far better to understand our prayers than just to recite Hebrew without any understanding of the content.

Oh, yes, and as for men and women sitting together, we prefer the Western way in our Western world to the Eastern fashion of men and women sitting apart.

An aspect of Reform Judaism that particularly appeals to me is the fact that we are presented with facts and permitted the freedom to decide for ourselves what can reasonably be accepted.

In my earlier years at Sunday School, I can recall being told that Reform Judaism was a result of the Jew, after being free from the ghettos, wanting to be more like his Christian neighbors. This left

me with an entirely wrong impression. Somehow to me this implied that Reform Jews were trying to get as far away as possible from their Judaism without losing complete identity.

Today, however, I realize that this is not the case. Ours is the modern way of Judaism which fits our needs and times. Yet we need also to make clear to our friends, Jewish and non-Jewish, that we do believe and accept Judaism as our creed.

To sum it all up, let us all be proud as we say, "We are American Reform Jews."

Jacqueline Friedman, Confirmation Class, Temple Israel, Akron, Ohio.²³

* * * *

In the Summary of Findings of the 1930 survey by the Union, items forty-five and forty-six list the concern of that generation with anti-Semitism. Of course, 1930 ushered in the decade of the Troublesome Thirties: in America, economic depression, German Bundists, and American Hitlerites; in Germany, the brutal suppression of Jewish security; and in Russia, the liquidation of Yiddish culture—an ominous foreshadowing of even sadder days to come. American Jewry had been fighting Russian Judeophobia—in particular, Russian mistreatment of American Jewish citizens—ever since the 1860's. Beginning in that decade, the Board of Delegates raised its voice also against Russia's inhumane exile of thousands of her Jewish subjects. Ever since 1891, the Union, carrying on the work of the Board of Delegates, protested to the United States Congress and the Presidents against the harassment of Russian Jews and the refusal of the Czarist government to endorse the passports of American Jewish citizens and permit American Jews to travel to Russia. Together with the B'nai B'rith and the American Jewish Committee, the Union made every effort to induce the Congress and President William Howard Taft to abrogate the commercial treaty America had signed with Russia in 1832. In this effort, American Jewry had been successful. Beginning again in the 1950's, United States Jewry

²³ Union of American Hebrew Congregations News Service for Temple Bulletins, April, 1959, pp. 9–10. Copy in AJAr.

—and the Union—began a campaign to make the world conscious of the plight of Soviet Jewry. It was the hope of the Americans that the Soviet Union would be compelled by an outraged public opinion to emancipate its Jews or to permit them to emigrate.

Early in 1959, the Combined Campaign, the fund raising arm of the Union and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, issued a press release attacking the Soviet Union's First Deputy Premier, who was visiting this country. In November, 1971, the General Assembly of the Union, meeting in Los Angeles, adopted a resolution denouncing the Russian government for its persecution of Soviet Jewry. Both statements follow:

SUPERMARKET MATERIALISM—1959

The Soviet Union's First Deputy Premier, Anastas I. Mikoyan, made it a point of his recent cross-country tour of the United States to do some window shopping, and was so intrigued by the American supermarket that he visited at least two of them. He had a look-see, also, at an American automobile plant, and other American industrial wonders, including a number of catered hotel banquets. The record shows, however, that Mr. Mikoyan altogether avoided what is perhaps one of the most prominent features of the American landscape—our houses of worship. He never went near one of them, church or synagogue. Mr. Mikoyan, you see, was more interested in our supermarkets. Back home, however, Mr. Mikoyan and his colleagues have a somewhat greater interest in matters religious. They have cut the Jews down to a single rabbinic seminary—in Moscow; have yet to permit Jews to publish a prayer book; and allow no religious materials to enter the USSR from America, Israel, or elsewhere. Meanwhile, our own tasks ought to be clear. Let us go on strengthening ourselves with all our might—our temples and through the Combined Campaign for American Reform Judaism, our central national institutions, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.²⁴

²⁴ *Combined Campaign for American Reform Judaism, Temple Bulletin Briefs*, February-March, 1959. Copy in AJAr.

SOVIET JEWRY—1971

We salute our fellow Jews in the Soviet Union. Undaunted by the anti-Semitic policies of the Soviet Government, they have ever more vocally and visibly affirmed their identity with the Jewish people and their Jewish heritage. Their struggle for civil and human rights has stirred the admiration of all men of conscience and has given living testimony to the eternity of Israel [the Jewish people].

We protest the monstrous trials in Leningrad and elsewhere in the Soviet Union where our fellow Jews are being harassed and punished for asserting their Jewish identity and their love of the Jewish people.

WE THEREFORE URGE PRESIDENT NIXON TO CALL UPON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE USSR IMMEDIATELY:

1. to cease the anti-Semitic policies of systematic discrimination, imprisonment, trial, intimidation and vilification;
2. in consonance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to permit the emigration of those Jews who wish to leave the Soviet Union;
3. in consonance with the rights guaranteed in the Soviet Constitution, to grant to those Jews who choose to remain in the Soviet Union the basic human rights to teach, practice, and preserve their faith and culture.

We further urge President Nixon, during his forthcoming [May, 1972] visit to the Soviet Union, to make these issues among the top priorities of his discussions with Soviet leaders.

We appeal to the United Nations to speak more forcefully against the discrimination and denial of human rights to which Soviet Jews are subjected.

We urge the government of the United States to use its position of influence with the Soviet Union and in the halls of the U. N. [United Nations] as well as with the other nations to make clear to the Soviet government that discriminatory treatment of Jews is morally intolerable and politically deleterious.

We call upon the American Jewish community, in particular the UAHC and its congregations, to intensify their activities in support of the rights of Soviet Jewry.

We strongly support the Soviet Jewry Relief Act [of 1971, introduced into the United States Congress on March 4, 1971, by Representative Edward I. Koch, of New York City] as an additional means of aiding the aspirations of Soviet Jews who wish to emigrate to countries other than Israel.

We call upon the UAHC to create a National Ad Hoc Committee on Soviet Jewry and further call upon every constituent congregation to establish a Soviet Jewry Action Committee so as to apprise its members of the variety of ways we can and must affirm our solidarity with our Soviet brethren.

Particularly, do we pledge our support to the newly reorganized American Conference on Soviet Jewry. We encourage those of our constituency who sit on local and regional federations and welfare fund allocation committees to approve the allocation of larger shares of communal funds to the important work of the Conference.

We call upon all who are united by the cause of human freedom to join in the struggle to win freedom for Soviet Jews. Let oppression turn from its evil ways and the gates of truth open wide 'til justice and humanity prevail.²⁵

* * * *

The fight which the Union and its cohorts have waged in opposition to the Soviet cultural war against its own Jews is but one of the struggles which the Union and its predecessor agency, the Board of Delegates, have been carrying on against bigots for over a century. In 1905, at its Chicago meeting, the Union protested sharply against the ruffians who were assaulting Jewish immigrants on the streets of New York and Chicago. In 1919, Rabbi Zepin was busy opposing those snobs who, blatantly excluding Jews from summer resorts, advertised publicly, "No Hebrews Wanted." In 1923, through its Board of Delegates, the Union issued a public statement condemning President Abbott Lawrence Lowell of Harvard for his attempt to limit the number of Jewish students at that university.

More serious problems of prejudice and violence were encoun-

²⁵ *Resolutions Adopted by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 51st General Assembly, Los Angeles, Cal., Nov. 5-9, 1971, pp. 5-6.*

tered in the late 1950's when religious and political reactionaries began defacing and bombing schools, homes, churches, and synagogues. Together with a host of other agencies, the Union carried on a campaign against these outrages. In 1959, when Senator John F. Kennedy was a candidate for the Presidency, some conservative Protestant religionists opposed him because he was a Catholic. The Forty-fifth General Assembly of the Union, then meeting at Miami Beach, took cognizance of this anti-Catholic sentiment and issued a strong statement against all religious tests for public office.

A year later Rabbi Eisendrath, the president of the Union, found it advisable to write a general epistle to the congregational officers maintaining liaison with him in New York; he warned them not to take hasty unilateral action against those Christians who breached the wall between Church and State by introducing religious elements into the public school system. In 1961, when the Catholic Kennedy was already in the White House, a large number of Reform Jews met with the President and presented him with a Torah, a Scroll of the Law, reputed to have been brought to this country by Isaac M. Wise, the prime founder of the Union. After the presentation by Rabbi Eisendrath, President Kennedy responded in a simple but striking statement.

The 1959 resolution insisting on freedom of religion in the selection of candidates for office, the 1960 letter of Eisendrath warning his constituents against any tactless action in repelling Christian church encroachments in the public schools, and the response of President Kennedy to Rabbi Eisendrath after accepting the gift of the Torah are all reprinted here:

The Realm of Personal Conscience—1959

The Union is profoundly interested in healthy interreligious relationships in American life. In addition, we are vitally concerned with the maintenance of religious liberty for every citizen.

Therefore, we express our dismay over statements made and positions taken by a few religious groups in outright opposition to the possible nomination for President or Vice-President of the United States of any person of the Roman Catholic faith. Without expressing any partisanship in favor of, or in opposition to, any political

party or candidate for any political office, we adopt the following principles which we deem essential to the preservation of a meaningful freedom of religion in the selection of persons for public office:

1. We oppose all religious tests for office, and deem the suggestion that the profession of any religious belief or disbelief should automatically disqualify a person from holding any office, to be fundamentally at variance with our democratic principle that religion lies within the realm of personal conscience.

2. The separation of church and state, to which we are wholeheartedly dedicated, is a concept developed in American life for the purpose of supporting and enhancing meaningful religious freedom, and any position taken in the name of the separation of church and state that derogates religious freedom and encourages religious bigotry subverts the very purpose and intent of that concept.²⁶

* * * *

Challenging the Celebration of Christmas

December 1, 1960

Dear UAHC Liaison Chairman:

December is the month in which rabbis and congregational Boards are most frequently beset with problems of Christological instruction in the public schools, of intimidated, bewildered children, and of highly emotional requests by outraged parents that "something be done about it."

The intensified campaign of religious bigotry which marked the recent presidential campaign may bring in its wake an increase in religious observance of one stripe or another either in triumph or reprisal over the results of the campaign. It is important for congregational leaders to review once again their own attitudes and to consider the pattern of action to be followed should a serious incident arise.

²⁶ *Where We Stand . . . Social Action Resolutions Adopted by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations* (N. Y., 1970), pp. 53-54.

We have faced this problem with candor and courage over the past years and have a fund of experience and knowledge from which to draw. We know that many of our children are deeply offended by Christmas plays and carols and stories which involve them in an active role and have them paying homage to a faith which is not theirs. Parents are revolted by the spectacle and cannot accept with calm and equanimity such a violation of our cherished American principle of separation of church and state.

Experience has taught us one critical lesson. The month of December is not the month to attempt a massive onslaught on such Christmas celebrations. Frequently, when school officials are approached in the calm of the spring or early fall, such celebrations can be eliminated or their Christological aspects mitigated. The same people faced by the same request in December, asked to cancel plans already in the process of implementation, feel they must defend their action and frequently cloak their defense in the aura of religious zealotry.

We have also learned from bitter experiences of the past that individual parents should not, in their anguish or anger, confront school officials and make demands upon them, which may be justified, but which will inevitably be misconstrued as an attack upon Christianity whenever presented without careful preparation and by more authoritative auspices than just parents.

There is so much deep emotion lying so close to the surface when the Christmas celebrations are challenged that the reaction to this challenge may bring forth the most shocking wave of abuse and unsuspected bigotry. We have, to our deep sorrow, seen this very thing happen so frequently, we are now much wiser and infinitely sadder. We know by now what to avoid.

We do not, however, always know how to proceed. In many instances our calm representations presented by rabbis and respected lay leaders in a proper tone and relaxed atmosphere have produced the results we seek. On other occasions, our early efforts have been in vain, and only after repeated attempts have we won some faint concessions to the sensitivities of Jewish children and the basic American principle of separation.

Officially the entire American Jewish community has taken a firm

stand on the issue of the observance of religious holydays in the public schools. We oppose the celebration of Chanukah or Passover in our public schools as fervently and for the same reason of principle as we oppose Christmas and Easter observances. The home and the house of worship, not the public school, are the proper sources of religious instruction.

The entire issue has been dealt [with] with much clarity in our Issues of Conscience pamphlet entitled "Religion and the Public Schools" and merits reading by Board members concerned with these issues. The position of the three branches of Judaism articulated through the Synagogue Council of America and of the local and national Jewish community relations agencies joined in the NCRAC [National Community Relations Advisory Council] on the whole issue of religious holiday observance in the schools has been prepared and broadly circulated. . . .

It is my fervent hope that your congregation, in concert with other congregations and communal agencies in your community, has been working and will continue to work toward the reduction of stress and anxiety caused by the lack of adherence to the principle of separation in your public schools.

Should an incident arise involving your congregants, I hope that your leadership will bear in mind the lessons we have learned and that the incident will be handled with the tact and wisdom required to minimize it rather than allow passions and indignation-run-amok to exacerbate the situation and sully community relations. The UAHC will, of course, be happy to send additional information and to share the experiences of other congregations in this area.

With kindest greetings, I am

Cordially yours,
Maurice N. Eisendrath²⁷

* * * *

[President Kennedy Responds to the Gift of a Torah Scroll—1961]

I want to express my great satisfaction in welcoming you to the White House again, and to tell you how grateful I am for your gen-

²⁷ Maurice N. Eisendrath, N. Y., to the Congregational Liaison Chairman, Dec. 1, 1960. Copy in AJAr.

erosity. These Torahs I know have special significance for you, and particularly this one, which is so intimately associated with the founder [of Reform Judaism] here in the United States, one which is brought from Europe and which has been part of your life. So I am doubly appreciative to you for being willing to part with it and present it to us here today.

I think, as the Rabbi said, that the significance of this ceremony is not merely a gift of an ancient document, but that in a very real sense the great issue today is between, as he said, the supremacy of the moral law which is initiated, originated, and developed in the Bible, and which has special application here today.

I have never felt that we should attempt to use the great impulse towards God and towards religion, which all people feel, as an element in a cold war struggle. Rather, it is not an arm, it is the essence of the issue—not the organization of economy so much but as the supremacy of moral law, and therefore the right of the individual, his rights to be protected by the state and not be at the mercy of the state.

In the Inaugural Address, which the Rabbi mentioned, I said that the basic issue was the rights the citizen enjoyed did not come from the state but rather came from the hand of God. And it is written here. And it is written in the Old and the New Testaments.

So I am grateful to you, and I want you to know that in coming here today I think it symbolizes the happy relations which exist between all religious groups, and must continue to exist in this country, if we are to be worthy of our heritage.

So, Rabbi, I am grateful to you. There is no gift which could please me more—and I am delighted to welcome you. . . .²⁸

* * * *

Jews have always been interested in the separation of Church and State; they know full well that where there is an established church, Judaism and the Jew are disabled. If only because he is a member of a minority group, the American Jew in particular has furthered interfaith relations and, at a relatively early stage, began to devote himself to social goals. As far back as 1885, American Jewish reli-

²⁸ *A Higher Destiny* (N. Y., 1961 [?]). Copy in AJAr.

gious liberals pleaded the cause of the poor in the "Pittsburgh Platform." Undoubtedly, that generation was influenced by the early American social reformers who had appealed for peace, prison reform, temperance, and the manumission of slaves. Certainly, the Jewish leaders, too, were aware of the writings of the Christian Socialists, the Utopians, and the Marxists. By 1930, the Union, moving cautiously, was committed to the need for some social action and had already established a Commission on Social Justice. In a report on "social betterment," Milford Stern, its chairman, set out to define the relationship between Reform Judaism and social improvement:

In America, Reform Judaism is reviving the prophetic emphasis, and the inevitable dominant aspect of this emphasis is social justice. Years ago, Dr. Emil G. Hirsch [Rabbi of Chicago Sinai Congregation] impressively enunciated the need of a Jewish stand on social problems, pointing out that "it is our duty to participate in the great task of modern times, to solve on the basis of justice and righteousness the problem presented by the contrasts and evils of the present organisation of society." The Central Conference of American Rabbis has for some years been facing unflinchingly many of the great social questions and problems of the day. Its Commission on Social Justice is working hand in hand with the like commissions of the other great organised churches, both Catholic and Protestant. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations has a laymen's Commission on Social Justice which concerns itself with principles rather than with cases, and which is in duty bound to foster the efforts of the Rabbinical Commission through cooperation and financial assistance. This laymen's Commission on Social Justice is specifically directed to pronounce and preserve the traditional sympathetic attitude of Judaism toward all who suffer wrong and injustice and toward progressive efforts in the field of social welfare. In America there is emerging a definite tendency towards making social justice an integral part of the Jewish religious life and teaching, giving social justice status on a plane of equality with Jewish theology and Jewish education. Thus, in America, [religiously] Liberal Jews are at least making an approach toward prophetic social consciousness; we are at least beginning to feel that man's religious life and economic life are indissolubly bound together. . . .

This machine age requires the antidote of strong social striving. In the clash of industrialism against religious idealism, there is danger that we may lose our bearings and forget our higher objectives. Now, as never before, we require the upward look of religion to recover our sense of direction. Now more than ever we need to emphasise the connection between religion and those two principal phases of social betterment which we commonly term social service and social justice.

Our impulse for social betterment finds its primary source in our religion. The socialisation of life is not a mere incident of the Jewish religious scheme, but it is central and essential thereto. In the Jewish law, charity and justice are synonymous. In fact, there is no equivalent for charity in the Hebrew tongue. *Zdokoh*—righteousness—is the term covering all acts of benevolence.²⁹

* * * *

Radical changes occurred in the period after World War II. European hegemony collapsed; England and France became second-class powers; Russia and China emerged as formidable empires threatening even America's world leadership. And because there was restlessness in all lands and constant economic dislocations, post-Holocaust American Jewish Reform leaders were certain that American Jewry—and all Jews everywhere—could survive only in a world of peace and justice. Now, with the incubus of German Nazism off their backs, Reform Jewry threw itself into the battle for social amelioration.

Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn, of Boston, an outstanding American liberal, addressed himself to the problem of the Negro in a speech to the Union Assembly at Toronto in May, 1957:

A phase of this [Negro] problem which, I believe, has received too little attention from both Jews and Christians is what the wrong kind of compromise does to its perpetrators. Let me be specific. Last September, when mob violence forced cancellation of school integration plans in Clay, Kentucky, a *New York Times* reporter de-

²⁹ Milford Stern, *Summary of Report on "Social Betterment," Monday, July 21, 1930* (no date, no place, London [?], 1930 [?]). Address to the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

scribed a fourteen-year-old blonde girl whose eyes were filled with hate as she exploded: "I'd rather be an idiot than go to a school with a nigger in it!" From what we know of small communities in the South generally, I don't suppose it is unreasonable to assume that this girl and her family probably belong to a church. In that church they have been exposed, week after week, to the notion that all men are created in the image of God and that it has been enjoined upon us to love our neighbor as ourselves. Yet her social surroundings have impelled her to prefer being an idiot to attending school with some of her neighbors who are in God's image.

What can religion possibly mean in the life of that girl? What can the professed ideals of Judaism mean to any one of us who declares an entire area of Jewish ethics to be out of bounds? How long will it be—once we admit the legitimacy of excluding from the dictates of religion any problem which causes us too much discomfort or distress—how long will it be before religion will have been relegated to the inconsequential corners of life? How long before all religion—not just this immediate part of it, but all religion—is reduced to pious platitudes which no one seriously expects to see applied to life's real problems? Or how long before our souls become corroded with an intolerable burden of inner guilt which few of us will be able to sustain in health?

I plead tonight, dear friends, not just for the Negro, but for ourselves—for us and our precious Judaism. I have yet to hear a single Jew, in or out of this Union, say that segregation is morally right. The most I have heard even from the most vociferous of its Jewish defenders is that its abolition poses extremely difficult and dangerous problems for Jews who live in the South. I believe them. But I have sufficient confidence in my fellow man to believe that every Jew who knows Judaism and defends segregation does so with a sick heart. I plead and pray tonight for healthy hearts and clean consciences, whatever the price may be.³⁰

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³⁰ *Addresses and Discussions. Joint Evening Meetings and Banquet, 44th General Assembly, Union of American Hebrew Congregations and 21st Biennial Assembly, National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods* (Toronto, Canada, 1957), pp. 16-17.

As the following account reveals, some member congregations of the Union in the late 1960's began to take seriously the pious injunction of the Psalmist (41:1): "Blessed be he that considereth the poor."

Temple Beth Israel of San Diego, California, ran a most unusual day camp in its religious school classrooms last summer. Fifty children, two-thirds of whom were either Negroes or Mexican-Americans, attended for free a three-day-a-week program for six weeks. A trip to Sea World, a tour of North Island, a train trip to Del Mar, and a day with the San Diego Chargers were among their outings. Some of the white children were offspring of congregational members, some were not. The staff also was integrated—racially, religiously, and across class lines. Members of the congregation contributed money, food for lunches, equipment, art supplies, books, gym shoes, and gasoline for the camp bus. Plans are underway to enlarge the program next summer. . . .²¹

* * * *

It was, in large part, during the post-World War II decades that individual Blacks joined synagogues, and thousands of others began establishing synagogues of their own. It was then that certain questions were posed by white Jews: "Are these Negroes Jews? Are they to be accepted into the fellowship of the Union?" The unequivocal response was the following resolution adopted at the Union's San Francisco biennial in November, 1965:

NO COLOR BARRIERS IN UAHC

The UAHC has taken many courageous stands in behalf of full equality for all Americans in the civic and social life of our country. It has called upon all Americans, Jews and non-Jews, to eschew all forms of segregation and discrimination based upon race and color. It is in this spirit, therefore, we reiterate the traditional stand of Re-

²¹ *Feedback. The Network of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Linking the UAHC with its Member Congregations and its Member Congregations with Each Other* (N. Y., 1968 [?]).

form Judaism that there are no color barriers to the acceptance in the Union of American Hebrew Congregations of congregations composed of Reform Jews. Therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the UAHC invite qualified Jewish congregations, regardless of the racial ancestry of their respective memberships, to seek affiliation with the Reform movement, and we urge all constituent congregations to likewise invite individual Jews, regardless of their racial ancestry, to affiliate with them as members.³²

* * * *

The special emphasis that Reform Judaism laid on social action as an imperative of the faith became very apparent beginning with the 1940's. Biennial after biennial addressed itself to the needs of the hour. There were pleas for medical care for all, especially for the aged; school segregation was condemned; demands were made that the civil rights laws be enforced; the ethical issues in the relations between management and labor were stressed; and there was a constant cry for world peace. As the following resolution adopted in 1969 testifies, the stark tragedy of the war in Vietnam grievously distressed the delegates to the Union's assemblies:

VIETNAM

In 1965, the UAHC General Assembly called for a cease-fire and [for] negotiated settlement of the war in Vietnam.

Now, four years and countless lives later, this bloody and brutalizing war drags on, with its incalculable toll. Discussions in Paris are taking place, but with little promise of breaking the diplomatic impasse.

Believing that new initiatives are required to bring about an early end of the unconscionable slaughter in Vietnam, we urge our government to:

1. Direct an immediate stand-still cease-fire in Vietnam and the withdrawal of all United States military presence no later than December 31, 1970, from Vietnam and those combat and supporting

³² *Where We Stand*, p. 69.

troops in other Southeast Asian countries used in support of the war in Vietnam;

2. Use the full weight of our influence to seek the development of a coalition government in South Vietnam which will be broadly reflective of all elements and groups of that country, making it absolutely clear that any obligation is to the people of that tragic land and not to the preservation of an unrepresentative government by a clique of repressive generals in Saigon;

3. Since the war has destroyed families, maimed mothers and children, and laid waste the countryside in Vietnam, we must recognize the moral obligation to bring aid and relief to the very people who have been injured in this war. The war in Vietnam has devastated not only that troubled land. The future of the entire world demands an early end to this nightmarish horror.

We urge the North Vietnam government and the National Liberation Front, in the name of human decency, to make known the list of American servicemen who are held prisoners, and to allow communication between them and their families.³³

* * * *

Jews have been moving out of the core city ever since the eighteenth century, when they left the Battery in New York and started moving north on Manhattan Island. The American Jewish quest for greener pastures has continued down to the present day. There will always be a more attractive residential area beckoning to Jews moving up the socioeconomic ladder. In the years after World War II, thousands in the big cities left their homes to build a new, more opulent life in the suburbs. There, following a pattern laid down for them by other Jews and the Protestants before them, Jews found it advisable to join a "church" of their own and send their children to the Sunday school. This continuous flow to the beautiful peripheral areas and the problem of religious affiliation find reflection in the contents of a leaflet distributed by the Union in the 1950's or 1960's:

³³ *Where We Stand*, p. 96.

Why I Joined a Reform Temple

A Letter to My Brother

Dear Joe:

It is almost two months now since we moved to Sunrise Heights, and every day has been exciting for Martha and the kids and for me, too. Of course, the work at the plant keeps me on the jump, and we're still fixing up the house. That's why it has taken me so long to answer your letter and the question you asked: "Why did you join a Reform temple?"

To give you the answer, I have to tell you the story of how our temple was begun about five years ago by the "old settlers" who were the first to arrive here.

When the first twenty-five families reached here, they got together in their living rooms and started talking synagogue. Everyone was agreed on having a synagogue even though most of them had had little connection with temple life before, except for vaguely remembered bar mitzvahs and visits to their parents' shuls [traditional synagogues] on the holidays. But here in the suburbs they were determined to have a congregation of their own.

But what kind of a congregation should it be? Orthodoxy was ruled out for the accent was on modernity. Besides, as someone said, how would it look to drive up to an Orthodox synagogue on Friday night? And in the suburbs you have to drive.

Reform or Conservative?

Then, the fireworks began between those who wanted to go Reform and those who argued for Conservatism. I wish I had been in Sunrise then. They had meetings almost every night, and were they hot! There were arguments everywhere about prayer books and yarmelkes, kashrus [dietary laws] and holidays, Hebrew for the kids and [instrumental] music at services. Things remained at a standstill, and all the time new families were moving in and asking, "Where is the synagogue?"

Before long there wasn't a living room that could accommodate the meetings. So they moved to the town Fire Hall. One night they

invited a Conservative rabbi to talk to them, and many of them were convinced that Conservatism was the ideal middle-of-the-road to follow. Next they had a Reform rabbi come and they peppered him with questions until after midnight, and a half-dozen fellows drove him to the station just to ask him a few more questions.

Out of the questions they began to discover that Judaism had a meaning that was deeper than ceremonies, that prayer and God and social responsibility and study were values that a Jew ought to be concerned about, that “hats on” and “hats off” was not as important as a course of study for the kids that would make sense and make them good Jews.

Gradually, most of them came to feel that the real “middle-of-the-road” is Reform, because in a Reform congregation certain variations in practice (which are secondary) do not clash with adherence to principles (which are primary). In a traditionalist setup, however, both adults and children would be taught certain premises which would be disregarded at home. This would have resulted in a situation where the members would have been forced by circumstances to pay no attention to some of the things stressed by their rabbis. That way, as one of the men said, lies schizophrenia.

A Decision Is Reached

Well, the day of decision arrived. About 150 Sunrisers filled the Fire Hall. Motions were made and amended fast and furiously, and at times everyone spoke at once. Finally, a series of motions were adopted. First, there would be a synagogue, Temple Sinai by name. Secondly, it would be Reform [i.e., a member of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations]. Thirdly, nothing Jewish would be alien to its program.

When we came to Sunrise, a committee called on us from Temple Sinai. They brought Martha a potted plant and also a little folder with the Friday night blessings. They invited us to join them at services on Friday evening. And we did.

We Attend Services

It was the first night that Martha and I were out together since we moved to Sunrise. The Temple Sinai ladies provided Martha with a

list of baby sitters. It wasn't easy to get one on Friday night. But it was worth the trouble. The services were fine. They used a prayer book I could follow with ease. They had a choir of their own members and they made a joyful sounding noise. It wasn't hard to join with them, since everybody did, when we came to the *Sh'ma* ["Hear, O Israel, the Lord Our God is One"] and other places in the prayer book. The rabbi had a good sermon. It made sense, although quite a few of the people gathered in groups afterwards, and some didn't altogether agree with him. This didn't bother the rabbi. We had a Social Hour afterwards and met a lot of people, two of our next door neighbors, and, whom do you think, Bill Corwin whom we knew at Cornell. He married that Hertzberg girl and he's "religious" too now, so he told me. In fact he's editor of the Temple Bulletin. We see Bill and Susan fairly often at temple now and we really enjoy being with them.

We Join the Temple

But back to the rabbi—at the Social Hour, after tea and cakes (all homemade and very good, too), the rabbi starts a discussion and invites questions, and does he get them! The sessions are really lively and that first night Martha and I came home just "full of Shabos [Sabbath]." When the membership chairman called we just had to say, "Send us an application card."

I can't say we lived happily ever afterwards, but so far we like Temple Sinai Reform Judaism. Bob and Carol go to the religious school, and believe it or not, Martha lights the Sabbath candles and I have to make kiddush and bless the kids or they'll think something is wrong. It felt funny at first, but I must admit that I like it now. It does something to you to know it's Shabos. Once a week I have to get home early. The kids are all dressed and polished like red apples. We all go to temple together for family night.

And We Like It

And I haven't even written about our Study Circle and the Parents' Workshops or Martha's Hebrew course. And they are trying to get me on the Building Committee. I joined the Reform temple be-

cause I like it, I can understand it, it satisfies a real need and I find it better to work at being a Jew than to take it for granted.

Love to Ethel and the kids.

Your brother
Dan³⁴

* * * *

The French have a clever phrase: "The more things change, the more they remain the same." A few months after the Board of Delegates was organized in 1859, it had to raise money to help the Jews of Morocco who had been exiled by their government. Now, over a century later, the Jews are still concerned about the fate of their coreligionists in most Moslem lands. American Jewry was annoyed in the days after World War II to discover that American Jewish citizens on United States government installations in Arab lands were expected to manifest a passion for anonymity. Moslems have generally looked askance at Jews; the rise of the State of Israel was traumatic, especially for the Arabs among them. Traditionally Jews have nearly always occupied a low, often a degraded position, in Moslem life, society, and religious thought; they were second-class citizens, at best. The American government and its State and Defence Departments cater to this prejudice because of the need for Arab oil.

The following telegram reflects the cautious American policy and Jewish indignation aroused by that policy:

December 17, 1963

President Lyndon B. Johnson,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

We are deeply disturbed and shocked by report in *New York Times* of December 17 that a film about you produced by United States Information Agency deleted the appearance of a rabbi because of "possible Arab objections." If true, this is incredible that a documentary on American life should be censored by an agency of

³⁴ *Why I joined a Reform Temple* [no date, no place]. Copy in AJAr.

the U. S. Government in order to capitulate to the prejudices of Arab nations. Is pretending that Jews do not exist in America the price our government is prepared to pay to placate and appease the hatreds and passions of Arab powers? We cannot believe the U. S. can maintain its dignity and leadership by such ignoble retreats. We urge you to authorize an immediate investigation of this incident so that the damage to American honor and self-respect may be quickly repaired.

Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath
 President
 Union of American Hebrew Congregations³⁵

* * * *

The Union had its problems not only with the Arabs, but also with the Israelis. Orthodoxy, virtually the established "church" of the Jewish state, is hostile to Reform and Conservative Judaism and wary of all other religious groups. Political considerations—mainly the need for a coalition—has compelled the leftist Israeli government to tolerate the preferential status of Orthodox religionists and to consent, albeit grimly, to the disabilities fastened by Orthodox officialdom on other Jewish denominations. Reform and Conservative rabbis are not recognized officially in Israel; they cannot solemnize marriages, authorize divorces, or perform other rabbinical functions (though Christian and Moslem clergy in Israel are not denied the right to serve their own followers). Thus, to a certain extent, Jewish religious liberals are in "exile" in their own "homeland." As early as June, 1950, the then president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis protested—in vain—against this religious discrimination. Fifteen years later, the president of the Union, too, addressing his Board of Trustees, raised his voice against the still prevailing disqualifications imposed on fellow-Jews who have contributed millions to maintain the very Israeli state which in turn subsidizes Orthodoxy:

Liberty for All—In Israel Also

One of the mountain peak achievements of the United Nations

³⁵ Union of American Hebrew Congregations Papers. Copy in AJAr.

was the admission into its membership of the State of Israel. We have watched with pride the development of this young nation and have been especially gratified by its far reaching program of supporting the purposes of the UN, particularly in extending aid to other new nations.

We have, however, become increasingly concerned and, more recently, alarmed by ever greater evidence of those forces within Israel which are paying little heed to some of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the very [United Nations] charter to which Israel has subscribed. We have spoken many times of the failure to accord full freedom of religion to *our own* Liberal cohorts in Zion. But it is not solely with our own Progressive Jewish cause that we must be concerned. We must also be sensitive to—and indignant about—the flagrant denial to others of those religious liberties we Jews have perennially and passionately sought for ourselves. Thus, we should all have been roused to righteous protest by a recent outrageous and blasphemous violation of such religious freedom. A Christian Scientist was denied the right to address a gathering in that purportedly all-Jewish city of Tel Aviv. When I first read the report of this incredible episode, I could scarcely believe that it could be authentic, notwithstanding my own first-hand observations of the handicaps suffered by our World Union [Reform] congregations in Israel. I therefore sought, and have received, confirmation that boycotts and other pressures *were* exerted to cancel the scheduled lecture and to intimidate any who might subsequently allow their premises to be used for such a purpose. The shabby excuse given in far fetched justification of this throttling of free speech and religious liberty was: “Christian Scientists are a fifth column both in the field of education and religion.” This smacks all too familiarly of the allegation hurled at our brother Jews in so many lands—in Nazi Germany, in the Soviet Union today, as well as by anti-Semites here in America.

Although we must continue scrupulously to avoid intrusion into the internal affairs of the sovereign State of Israel, nevertheless, how can we in all consistency mass our protest meetings, mobilize our proposed boycotts, call upon the Christian Church to align itself with us in our outcry against the discrimination suffered by our brothers behind the Iron Curtain and, at the same time, in the inter-

est of an altogether superficial Jewish unity, remain silent in the face of such a stark and crude violation of that freedom of religion for which our forbears suffered centuries-old martyrdom?

I therefore call upon this Board of Trustees to voice its vigorous protest against the persistent stranglehold of political Orthodoxy in the land of Israel, and to call upon all other Jewish organizations, such as the Presidents' Conference [Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations] . . . to bring our cumulative influence to bear upon such a *hillul hashem* [religious desecration] as the heinous transgressions in Israel against our Jewish and human right to freedom of conscience and its expression.³⁶

* * * *

The Jewish state, notwithstanding its diffident reception of Reform Judaism, has not lacked for devoted supporters among Reform Jews. The Six-Day War of June, 1967, in particular fortified the sense of identity with Israel which many Reform leaders felt. A few months later, in November, the Union published for the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism a study guide entitled Israel and American Jewry: 1967 and Beyond, which included a rather lengthy statement by Rabbi Richard G. Hirsch, of the Union's staff. Excerpts from Rabbi Hirsch's statement appear below:

The key to Jewish survival is . . . recognition of the State of Israel—recognition of its significance for Jews. That heightened recognition is another lesson of the Middle East crisis of May and June 1967. . . .

The War of 1967 has dramatically demonstrated that Israel in reality has become more than Israel in anticipation. The living experience has altered, and even improved on the theory. For twenty years, Israel has been an inspiring light, and our vision has become readjusted. The threat to extinguish the light made the remembrance of darkness more vivid. Israel has come to assume a significance far beyond the "insurance policy" role against anti-Semitism. The possi-

³⁶ Report of Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, President, to the Board of Trustees, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, N. Y., May 22, 1965, pp. 9-10. Copy in AJAr.

bility that the Arabs could carry out their threat to destroy Israel meant that something beyond the lives of fellow Jews was at stake. The life of the Jewish people as an entity was being threatened. The inexpressibly profound reaction of American Jews was in response not only to danger confronting Jews, but to the danger confronting all that for which Jews stand. In June of 1967, it became clear that the destiny of "Am Yisrael" [the Jewish people] was inseparable from the destiny of "Medinat Yisrael" [the State of Israel].

What the State of Israel is to American Jews and what it will yet become are difficult to define. Israel is the product of many sources of inspiration and tragedy, having different meaning for different people. Since the 19th century rebirth of Zionism, its supporters have been embroiled in controversy concerning the character, purpose, direction, and meaning of a Jewish state. Let the debates continue. The process of defining and redefining our essence and existence is integral to the character of the Jewish people. It is not necessary to resolve all the ideological questions to know that, however defined, what happens in Eretz Yisrael has a capacity to stir Jews as no other phenomenon or institution can.

The majority of our young intellectuals on college campuses who, in the past, have moved into the Civil Rights Movement and later into the Peace Movement with a passion bordering on religious fervor were either indifferent to or repelled by Jewish institutional life and the synagogue. To be sure, not all our young people were moved in June 1967. Some, in the more liberal groups such as Students for a Democratic Society, even were critical of Israel. But the vast majority of our youth identified as Jews as never before. Let us recognize frankly that, for many Jews, what neither the synagogue nor the Hillel Foundation nor the Jewish Community Center could do, Israel was able to do, at least for one brief moment. Let us recognize that for many Jews, the State of Israel seven thousand miles away offers a more tangible expression of Jewishness than the synagogue on the next block.

The foregoing is not intended as a criticism of American Jewish institutional life. Rather it is intended to motivate us to accept the new role which Israel has come to play in our lives, and the new potential for enriching American Jewish life. It is no diminution of

the synagogue to say that the Jewish soul expresses itself poignantly through what happens in the State of Israel. Rather than fight it, let us try to understand it, accept it, and exploit it. . . .

The task of American Jewish leadership should be to assess the meaning of the recent events and to channel the passions aroused into constructive programs of enduring significance.

Let us begin with Reform Judaism.

Both Reform Judaism and political Zionism trace their origins to Neo-Messianism, but the moods were diametrically opposite. . . .

Reform Judaism, originating in unbounded optimism, and political Zionism, originating in profound pessimism for Jewish survival in the Diaspora, were destined to clash. In retrospect, the clash was greatly responsible for the limited appeal of Reform Judaism to the Eastern European Jew in America. The Eastern European Jew fled from Europe to escape persecution, persecution which he had suffered because he had been considered a member of a strange and alien nation. He came to America, and Reform Judaism in effect told him that he was not a member of a nation or a people, but only a member of a religion; that the land of Israel for which he had prayed, the land which his brothers at that very moment were attempting to restore, that sacred land of Israel should be of no special concern to him. Small wonder that the Eastern European Jew accused the Classical Reformers of perverting the basic character of Judaism by eliminating its ethnic and folk elements.

Had Reform Judaism remained static, had it continued to stand on the [anti-Zionist] platform created at Pittsburgh [in 1885], the movement today would have inevitably degenerated into a splinter sect similar to that represented by the ideology of the American Council for Judaism. Fortunately, Reform Judaism did not retain its anti-Zionist stance. . . .

But though the Reform rabbis changed their stance in the 1930's and the UAHC adopted a pro-Zionist position in the 1940's, even now in the 1960's, the Reform Movement has yet to embrace the full consequences of Israel's impact. We have yet fully to appreciate that the contemporary "new look" of Reform Judaism is in great measure derived from the inspirational impact of Israel. To be sure, there have been many factors which have influenced Reform Judaism in the last generation—the renewed interest in religion, the high

status of the Jew in American society, the rise of an indigenous generation of American Jews, the increasing relevance of religion in the social arena—but the development of the Jewish homeland has been the single most important factor. Israel has restored balance and perspective to Reform Judaism, necessitating the strengthening of our ties with K'lal Yisrael [the entirety of the Jewish people]. Israel has enriched the consciousness of Jewish peoplehood and has made Jewish history and culture more vivid.

American Jewish culture, as we know it, is by and large either the product of the European shtetl [the Jewish village] or of the process of adjustment to America by European Jews. But the nostalgic return to the past through a *Fiddler on the Roof* and the works of a Bernard Malamud and an Isaac Bashevis Singer are not enough to sustain the American Jew. We need also the stimulus which comes from Israel, just as Israel needs the stimulus which comes from the Diaspora. The revival of Hebrew as a spoken tongue has given new meaning to Hebrew as a “holy tongue.” The growing shift to the Sephardic pronunciation has made of Hebrew an expression of contemporary life, even for those who may not understand it any better in Sephardic than in Ashkenazic. The Jewish festivals, all of which are associated with Eretz Yisrael [the Land of Israel], have assumed a new significance as the Israeli seasons of the year and the pattern of Israeli observances become known to every Jew. In sum, the reality of a Jewish state, and of the life lived there by fellow Jews, has infused new life into Reform Judaism and implanted new idealism, purpose, and hope in American Jewry. . . .

Reform Judaism as a movement and Reform Jews as individuals both draw sustenance from and give nourishment to Israel. But the relationship of Reform Judaism to Israel has never been developed to its full potential. Israel is a living laboratory of the Jewish soul. Until now, the Reform Movement has entered the laboratory hesitantly, gingerly making small experiments here and there. The recent crisis [of the Six-Day War] has proven the value of the laboratory. Israel, the people, the land, and the state are essential to the continued creativity and development of Reform Judaism.³⁷

³⁷ *Israel and American Jewry, 1967 and Beyond: A Study Guide for Program and Action* (N. Y., 1967), pp. 110–14. Copy in AJAr.

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations has, in reality, several departments of Jewish education. One of the most important is the Jewish Chautauqua Society, sponsored since 1939 by the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods. Its rallying cry is: "Understanding Through Education."

Originally the Jewish Chautauqua Society, founded in 1893 by Rabbi Henry Berkowitz, was an organization dedicated to the dissemination of the knowledge of Judaism. It carried on its cultural work in large and in small towns, established a correspondence school, published textbooks, and, like the non-Jewish Chautauqua Society from which it took its name, carried its message to popular assemblies of men and women eager to steep themselves in the religious traditions of their fathers. Finally, the Jewish Chautauqua Society found its primary métier in sponsoring lectures to university audiences both during the summer and during the regular academic terms. The speakers it sent out directed themselves in particular to non-Jews who wished to know more about Judaism, its history and its culture.

Great changes have taken place in the work of the Chautauqua in the last generation. These new tasks and accomplishments are recounted in some detail in a pamphlet published in 1966-1967:

COLLEGES

Guest Lectures

The objective of modern education is knowledge of the world and its people. At college students develop their attitudes and philosophies of life. The [Jewish] Chautauqua Society, feeding a thirst for knowledge, has been invited by 1,517 colleges to assign 600 rabbis to lecture about Jews and Judaism at chapels, assemblies, religious emphasis weeks, and in the classroom. A record number of 635 assignments were filled by JCS last year. More than a million students and teachers of all faiths were addressed at these engagements, ranging from a day to a week. Of these, 152 colleges were served for the first time. Included were 155 Catholic colleges, ninety-eight of which were new. *I shall light a candle of understanding in your heart which shall not be put out.*

Resident Lectureships

The resident lectureship program continues to expand substantially, resulting from requests from colleges for more study of Judaism in depth. JCS has sponsored sixty-eight fully accredited courses on Judaism, thirty-six of which were conducted last year as a regular part of the college curriculum. Many of the students enrolled in the courses, taught by rabbis placed on the faculty, are future teachers and ministers whose influence will relieve thousands of people of preconceived notions and prejudices about Jews and Judaism. JCS has budgeted to sponsor fifty-four resident lectureships next year; fifty-one already have been negotiated. Twenty-three courses will be taught at leading Catholic universities. Requests to establish many more of these courses are being received. *Who understands his lesson will not forget it readily.*

Books

To follow up the rabbis' visits, the Society donates authentic Jewish reference books to college libraries. Since this phase was introduced, 57,184 books of Judaica have been given on request to 1,431 colleges. Last year 3,546 volumes were presented to 205 universities; seventy-seven for the first time. These book gifts frequently result in invitations to send rabbinic representatives to colleges not previously served by JCS. The recommended JCS Book List, which currently contains 157 titles, is compiled by a committee of recognized Jewish scholars. *Without knowledge, how can there be discernment?*

Christian Youth Camps

Friendship through understanding is the result of one of the warmest human relations experiences of the interfaith adventure. The practice of the Society to assign rabbis on request as teacher-counselors to 425 Christian church summer youth camps is generally regarded by educators and theologians as an important contribution to the strengthening of the American way of life. Each summer JCS reaches 43,500 young people at these one to two week engagements. Last year, on request, the Society assigned fifty rabbis to

140 camps from coast to coast. For many of these children it was the first time they ever met a Jew—least of all a rabbi—and their preconceived prejudices and impressions were dispelled before they could become deeply ingrained. *Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.*

Motion Pictures

JCS extends its influence to the mass audience by producing motion pictures on universal ethical themes. To date, seventeen films have been produced for television and group showings. Public service time has been donated by 525 stations for 13,000 telecasts of these films. . . . *While Judaism is for the Jew, its creed and its ethics are for mankind.*³⁸

* * * *

Though the temple brotherhoods and the Jewish Chautauqua Society were engaged in a task of nation-wide scope, they were by no means the largest branch of the Union. The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, established in 1913, was the largest Jewish women's religious organization in the United States. Now, in the 1970's, the NFTS has well over 600 affiliates. What do they do? They do everything the Union does; there is almost nothing in which they are not interested and in which they are not active. This eager band of more than 100,000 women serve Jewish and humanitarian causes all over the world. They are in the forefront of many important social causes, work for world peace, and further good will between Jews and Christians. It was the sisterhoods who built the Hebrew Union College dormitory in Cincinnati and even today finance scholarships for the rabbinical students. They subsidize new congregations, help religious schools, work with youth, publish a beautiful art calendar, and dispatch pilgrimages to Israel. Much of the money for their cultural and religious programs comes from the sale of "Uniongrams," message blanks which the women use instead of commercial letter paper.

Typical of the philanthropic social welfare in which they are engaged is their concern for the blind. As far back as the 1920's, they addressed themselves to the needs of the sightless and, in 1931, be-

³⁸ *Jewish Chautauqua Society* (N. Y., 1966–1967). Copy in AJAr.

came the chief sponsor of the Jewish Braille Institute of America, an agency ministering to the cultural and religious needs of the thousands of Jewish blind in this country. The Institute publishes a magazine and has built up a circulating library of thousands of braille volumes in English, Yiddish, and Hebrew. It prepares blind boys and girls for bar mitzvah and bat mitzvah. Through long hours of fatiguing and exacting labor, members of the sisterhoods, competent brailleists, have succeeded in creating this library for the blind. The Institute prepares tapes, long-playing records, and books with large type not only for Jews but for others, too. They were happy to transcribe a textbook for a Catholic parochial school in Maine. The sightless now have access to prayer books and educational texts for college use. If a blind bride so desires, she may send away for a transcribed or even a talking cookbook. As they practice these deeds of loving kindness, the sisterhoods have not failed to turn for help to women in Orthodox and Conservative synagogues.

In 1965, Mrs. Irving E. Hollobow, the president of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, related how the Jewish Braille Institute of America came into being:

On the eve of the first World War in 1914, Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Minister, said: "The lights are going out all over the world. I shall not see them lit again in my lifetime." Sir Edward was a prophet. The thirty years war which followed from 1914–1944, from Hohenzollern to Hitler, not only created general havoc for the Jews in East European villages and cities, it snuffed out the lights of entire populations so that the world of Sholem Aleichem is no more, and its only self-contained Jewish communities are cemeteries.

For a young graduate of Hebrew Union College, Rabbi Michael Aaronsohn of Cincinnati, a soldier in the First World War, Lord Grey's prediction had personal meaning. He returned from the war totally blind and wrote of his experiences with evocative sensitivity in his book, *Broken Lights*, which became a braille "best-seller." Among his profoundly moved readers was an extraordinary blind man, Leopold Dubov, now of blessed memory, who immediately began an avid correspondence with Rabbi Aaronsohn. In the course of his writing, Mr. Dubov related to his correspondent both a frustration and a dream.

For the Jewish blind, Mr. Dubov lamented, the lights had been out since creation. While they could read in braille what Chaucer had thought of the Jews in the *Canterbury Tales*, what Shakespeare had said in the *Merchant of Venice*, and Dickens' character portrayal of Fagan in *Oliver Twist*—of Jewish literature, culture, religion, and scholarship, there was nothing [in braille].

Rabbi Aaronsohn was fired by Leopold Dubov's vision of a Jewish Braille Institute of America to end this blackout for the Jewish blind. He brought this vision to the delegates of the April, 1931, convention of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods. They responded as one and enlisted themselves and the entire Sisterhood membership of NFTS as shock troops ever after to the end of making the dream a reality. On that day, more than thirty-four years ago, the Jewish Braille Institute of America was conceived. The evidence of how well they succeeded is all about us. Throughout the United States, Sisterhood volunteers contributed countless hours of devoted braille transcription to the new Jewish Braille Institute library. Beginning ten years ago, volunteer groups and individuals—both men and women—began recording the more than eleven hundred complete titles in the Institute's Jewish Talking Books library.

Further, we have ardently welcomed as allies, throughout all the years, our sisters of the [Conservative] National Women's League of the United Synagogue of America and the Women's Branch of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America—as well as other men and women of the American community. Together we serve the sightless interested in Judaica regardless of nation, race, or creed.

This cooperation was established so that the Jewish Braille Institute of America might truly be Jewry's official ambassador for the Jewish blind of the world. Through the dedication of Jews and non-Jews alike, men as well as women, the Jewish Braille Institute of America has restored to the Jewish blind everywhere the once broken light of their cultural and religious heritage.³⁹

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³⁹ *The President's Packet*, Summer, 1965. From the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (N. Y., 1965). Department on Human Relations, pp. 1-2.

The work of one group of braillists in Washington, D. C., is described in some detail in the following selection:

“Volunteer Braille Services” was organized in Washington, D. C., in May, 1958, by Mrs. Edward Blumberg and eight other certified braillists. Housed rent-free by Temple Sinai of Washington, whose Sisterhood and Brotherhood in addition have provided it with two braille machines and an air-conditioning unit, the group has now expanded to thirty-five braillists with a total membership of 300 supporting and working members. This year alone, 460 volumes have been transcribed—more than 22,000 pages of textbook material for children, and more than 12,000 pages of adult reading matter. Yearly classes are held for the purpose of training sighted persons to become qualified braillists; reader service is furnished for blind college students, business, and professional people; brailled volumes from all over the United States are shellacked for the Library of Congress. This group represents a true community inter-faith effort, with Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish women working together to supply needed brailled material for the blind without regard to race, color, or creed.⁴⁰

* * * *

One of the jobs of the sisterhoods was to work with youth, and, as noted above, the Chautauqua sends rabbis as teacher-counselors to Christian church summer youth camps. What does the Union do for its own youth?

Here in America there has been a Jewish youth movement of sorts since the 1850's. Influenced by the rise since 1851 of the Young Men's Christian Association in this country, Jews, imitatively and almost immediately, began organizing Young Men's Hebrew Associations. Yet, aside from the name, the two had little in common. The Christian associations were originally philanthropic societies, organized from above, to further the spiritual welfare of Christian youth. The Jewish clubs were primarily social and cul-

⁴⁰ *The President's Packet*, Fall, 1964 (N. Y., 1964). Department on Human Relations, p. 1.

tural; in a sense, they were more of a youth movement than the coeval Christian groups. Young Jewry wanted to be by itself, to think for itself, to emancipate itself, in a degree, from the parental reins. Ever since the middle of the nineteenth century, then, there have been Jewish youth groups and clubs—dozens, if not hundreds, of them. Almost every American national Jewish organization of the 1970's has a youth arm.

The Union, too, established a department for its youth in 1933, organized the National Federation of Temple Youth in 1939, and in the 1940's set out to win the new generation for Judaism. It was a difficult task, and it is by no means easy even at this distance to determine what success, if any, rewarded their efforts. The account which follows outlines the plans and hopes of that generation for the Jewish youth of the future:

FLAMING YOUTH

Youth is called a lot of things these days. "Flaming Youth" is probably one of the most widely used of all the expressions—and it's not always intended as a compliment. Yet in a certain sense we want a flaming youth. We want our young people to be kindled and to glow with the bright light of enthusiasm and devotion. We want them to be aflame with the desire to meet courageously the social, cultural, and religious problems which face them both as Jews and as human beings. We want their pride and loyalty for the faith of their fathers to flame brightly in their hearts, warming their souls and easing the pathway which they have to tread through life.

But those of you who have adolescent children know how hard it is to kindle these flames. We often think we have the flame well lit when the child is in the religious school, only to see it flicker and perhaps even die down almost completely during the years after confirmation. There is that tremendous gap between confirmation and adulthood, which is so hard to bridge, when non-Jewish interests and activities loom so large in our children's horizon.

What can we do to hold our youth? Frankly, we don't know yet—but we are trying mighty hard to find out. That is a big part of the job of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. To do it right

we have set up a Youth Department headed by a trained director, who devotes all his time to the problems of youth.

How is he tackling his job?

First of all, through education in its most literal sense. That's why we publish pertinent and comprehensive literature on the history of our people—their glorious achievements in the fields of religion and ethics—books on contemporary problems that face the Jew—books on Jewish philosophy. That's why we prepare practical programs—material suitable for forums, panel discussions, study circles, plays—for our young men and women.

And then we realize the importance of education in its broader sense. We have created a series of regional and state youth organizations [the National Federation of Temple Youth] which give our young people a common purpose—knowledge of self, development of unity, a deepening of their ideals, perpetuation of Judaism.

We know how perplexing life's problems can be to young men and women at college—away from home. That's why we seek to arouse their interest in all things Jewish while at university. We strive to develop bonds of fellowship between Jewish students—to inspire them with love and loyalty for their religion—to guide them when they need help—to offer a common meeting ground where they may come—with common problems—and may find inspiration.

Yes, we want a flaming youth! A youth flaming with ardour for its people and its religion. We want to help them to understand themselves—so that they may be able to live the good life—to live in harmony with themselves and their fellow-men. We want to put into their hearts and minds and consciousness the fruit of two thousand years of a magnificent Jewish heritage, so that they in turn may interpret the Jew and Judaism to the rest of the world. . . .⁴¹

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Thirty years—a generation—later, the youth problem was still actual, present in an even more exacerbated form. Some Jewish youths—highly visible, though few in number—have openly re-

⁴¹ *Flaming Youth* (Cincinnati, 194?). Copy in AJAr.

belled against the ethical, religious, social, and moral standards of their parents. Initially, they documented their rebellion through long hair, beards, informal and bizarre dress, outer symbols of inner protest. A few—but far too many for their distraught fathers and mothers—have left their homes to live in communes, often in slums; many have experimented with sex and drugs; hundreds if not thousands have severed the ties that bound them to the past. They have no desire to “identify” as Jews; they swell the ranks of those who intermarry. They do not always know what they seek, but of this they are sure: they have rejected the past and are searching, often blindly, for new ways and new hopes.

In a serious effort to help and to hold its youth, the Union began, in the 1950's, to establish camps where it hoped to indoctrinate the new generation with the ideal of service to a common and universal humanity. The NFTY (National Federation of Temple Youth) program has been successful. Of that there can be no doubt. Thousands of young men and women have gone forth from these camps as dedicated human beings. Most of them remain good Jews. A brief description of what some Jewish youngsters of the early 1960's were attempting to do is related in a State of the Union Message of its president for the year 1963:

Youth Serves Mankind

Perhaps our richest opportunity to recapture a living faith for our time lies in our program for youth. Here, more than anywhere else, we can take advantage of the experimental mood and test the newer techniques of worship and education. Nothing is really too startling for the young to see and to try. Nothing is too imaginative or daring. Any risk of trial and error can be essayed. Consequently, there are few facets of our Union program that afford us the opportunity of awakening Jewish consciousness, intensifying spiritual aspirations and moral sensitivity, as our Union camp program.

In little more than a decade, we have seen the phenomenal growth from a single campsite at Oconomowoc [in Wisconsin] to six of our own camps, with other regions still justifiably protesting their alleged “stepchild” or “second-class” status because of the denial of such camps to their areas. Our camp properties have grown from

fourteen acres of God's natural wonderment to more than 1,400; from a staff of less than twenty to one of more than 300 trained and dedicated men and women; from serving only 250 youthful members of our movement to more than 6,000 children and adults yearly. Despite this phenomenal advance, the crying need is still not only for more of such regional camps, but especially for one UAHC camp to be devoted wholly to national sessions—board meetings, model youth groups, institutes, Kallahs (study sessions), Hagigahs (art festivals), for experimental projects where both youngsters, and oft-times their parents, too, are moved for the first time to commune with God and to communicate with, rather than merely talk at, man.

From these "Yeshivoth [religious schools] under the sky" have come more rabbinic students for our seminary than from any other source, recruited from our own Reform ranks; more students for our colleges of Jewish studies, more future teachers for our movement. From our camps has come a new Motzi [blessing over food]—a fresh, creative, and moving ritual which has sprung from the hearts of our young people—which is becoming the accepted blessing before the meal in an increasing number of congregations and homes; from our camps have come new hymns and a new spirit of ecstasy in God's presence; a new sense of mitzvah [good deed], of duty; of obligation, to "love one's neighbor as oneself" and to struggle against crushing poverty, degrading prejudice, against all forms of injustice, and world devastating war and moral apathy. From our camps comes the hope that lies in the future—the bright hope of a true Judaism through fulfillment of Mitzvah—if we will but dare to put flesh on this vision of greatness both by supplying the necessary funds which this must command, and by giving our youth the supportive moral strength "to pursue justice" and excellence by personal involvement, participation, and the example of their elders.

Through the NFTY Mitzvah Program, ten young men performed hard manual labor in Puerto Rico for four weeks this summer past. . . . In cooperation with the Puerto Rican government, these young men helped Puerto Rican families, who had been living in shacks in the hills, build new permanent homes. They lived with these families. At night they sang our Jewish folksongs and heard the folk mu-

sic of Puerto Rico; they taught English to their hosts and received instruction in Spanish in return. The families of these young people . . . paid for their own trips and board. They demonstrated that it is not alone in Israel that there are Negev's [deserts] to settle and Emeks [swampy valleys] to drain. It would be difficult to convey to you the glowing enthusiasm of this earnest and truly dedicated group of ours. It bears out what I said earlier concerning the need youth has for a challenge—a real challenge to their buoyancy of spirit, their strength of muscle, their adaptability, their toughness of mind and body. There is a chain reaction at work for constructive deeds just as there is in destructiveness. To those jaded adolescents who find their outlet only in racing cars and damaging property, each riot begets more of the same. But to the morally oriented youth of our NFTY, the Puerto Rican experience whets their appetite for further service to their fellow men.⁴²

* * * *

In this period of the 1970's, there have been many marriages in the United States between Jews and Gentiles. Yet, most Jews who marry out do not leave the faith. Very many of the men who take Christian wives remain loyal, nominally at least, to their ancestral religion. Frequently, their wives, even though unconverted, attend the synagogue and associate primarily with Jews. Many Christian-born women who marry Jews, or Christian men who marry Jewish women, become converts; hundreds of them enter Judaism annually in formal ceremonies of conversion. Under the auspices of the Union, a School for Converts was established in New York City, and there are similar courses in other cities. Many of these proselytes become zealous and devoted adherents of their newfound faith.

The following article tells us a great deal about these men and women who enroll in the Union's New York school, what they study and what they are expected to do:

⁴² Maurice N. Eisendrath, *The State of Our Union, Message of the President, 47th General Assembly, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Chicago, Ill., Nov. 16, 1963*, pp. 14–16. Copy in AJAr.

ENROLLMENT INCREASING AT SCHOOL FOR CONVERTS

By Ben Gallob

The only permanent year-around School for Converts to Judaism in the United States—and probably in the world—has recorded a steady growth in enrollment throughout its fifteen years from 150 candidates in 1954 to an estimated 600 this year [1969] at its New York City site. More than 1,800 non-Jews in the New York area are known to have converted to Judaism in that decade and a half.

The school was started by Rabbi Daniel L. Davis, director of the New York Federation of Reform Synagogues, an agency of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Reform congregational body. Classes are held in the chapel of the House of Living Judaism in Manhattan, which houses the offices of the UAHC and the Reform Federation. The 150 candidates of the school's first year were enrolled in four classes. There are now fourteen classes annually, including three this summer. The first summer class was started in 1965 with nineteen students. Class size is geared to the sixty-person capacity of the chapel, which was deliberately chosen as the classroom site for its religious significance to the would-be converts.

In 1963, the program acquired a volunteer coordinator, Mrs. Richard M. Stern, wife of the leading Reform rabbi who is still active, in retirement, as a member of the UAHC executive board and also as an honorary vice president of the New York Reform Federation.

Mrs. Stern, a speech professor at Hunter College, who came out of retirement to become coordinator, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that one of her first efforts was to set up better record-keeping procedures.

She reported that more than 90 percent of the candidates have Christian backgrounds, with Roman Catholics the largest single group. The average age of registrants is under thirty. Between 85 and 90 percent seek conversion out of a desire to marry a Jewish spouse. Generally there have been about sixty women to forty men in the New York program. Asked about Blacks and Puerto Ricans, Mrs. Stern noted that a religious background form which all candi-

dates are asked to fill out has no such categories. She added that it was her impression that there had been some candidates in those categories in each class during her six years as coordinator. For the 1964–67 period, 1,467 candidates filled out cards, of whom 1,354 were Christians and 113 non-Christians. There were 744 Roman Catholics during that period, 119 Lutherans, 109 Protestants, two Quakers, two Buddhists, two Moslems, two Cherokee Indians, one Hindu, and one Shintoist. The listings included a scattering of Disciples of Christ, Dutch Reform, Unitarians, Christian Scientists, Eastern, Greek, Russian, and Syrian Christians. Nationalities have included Canadians, Brazilians, British, Belgian, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Pakistani, Lebanese, Turkish, Chinese, Japanese, and Israeli.

The conversion process begins with a mandatory personal interview of the would-be candidate (and of the betrothed) by a Reform rabbi, who must satisfy himself about the sincerity of the applicant and that the applicant understands both the advantages and disadvantages of becoming a Jew. Applicants are accepted by the school only on recommendation of a Reform rabbi. Candidates under twenty-one must have written approval from their parents.

Candidates attend nine weekly sessions, along with their Jewish partners, whose attendance is required. Each session lasts seventy-five minutes, taught by Reform rabbis and some rabbinic students. The candidate is presented with the basic principles of Judaism, a brief history of the Jews, a summary of the Jewish Holy Days, and a description of the major Jewish institutions. Stress is on the theme that to be a Jew, one must lead a Jewish life.

Students are told that they are expected—concurrently with the instruction—to attend services at the synagogue of the referring rabbi. They are also told that both the conversion rite and the marriage, if there is one, are to be performed by that rabbi and that the couple, or the individual convert, is expected to join the referring rabbi's congregation.

There are no examinations. A \$25 registration fee is charged, which covers instructional material—three textbooks and a variety of UAHC and Central Conference of American Rabbis pamphlets. Circumcision is not required or immersion in a ritualarium

(mikve). More than half of the registrants complete the course, Mrs. Stern reported. From January, 1954, through spring of 1968, 3,726 persons recorded enrollment and 1,874 completed the course. From 1954 to 1963, 978 graduates were reported by the participating rabbis as having converted. From 1964 to 1967, 853 enrollees were reported as converted, a total from 1954 to 1967 of 1,831 converts to Judaism.

There have, of course, been additional conversions since 1967, including some from graduates of prior years, but specific figures are not yet available from the rabbis who have made the subsequent conversions. Both Rabbi Davis and Mrs. Stern believe that the great majority of New York graduates do convert. There are similar courses under Reform auspices in ten other cities, including Boston, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Detroit, and Los Angeles, but these are on a much smaller and less consistent scale.

On completion of the course, the candidate receives an attendance certificate, a copy of the Reform conversion ceremony procedure, and a copy of the marriage rite procedure. In the conversion rite, the convert is required to state publicly that he has given up his former faith and severed all other religious affiliations; to pledge loyalty to Judaism and to the Jewish people "amid all circumstances and conditions"; to promise to join with the Jewish spouse to create a Jewish home and to participate actively in the life of the synagogue and the Jewish community; and that, if children are born, they will be raised in the Jewish faith. Generally, two witnesses are required for the rite.

Two questions are usually raised about the program. One concerns the sincerity of the would-be converts, since only 10 to 15 percent seek to be Jews out of a stated belief or hope that Judaism offers spiritual satisfaction and comfort found lacking in their present religion or in living without religion. Mrs. Stern's response is that there is no valid reason for believing that love for a Jew is a less honorable and sincere motivation for conversion than that of the individual who reports he is unsatisfied with the religion in which he was reared and wants to try Judaism.

The other question is the degree to which converts actually move into the Jewish community to establish Jewish homes and become

active Jews. Mrs. Stern said lack of funds has prevented follow-up studies. However, she added, based on visits to synagogues and other impressionistic information, she believed that converts do lead steadfastly Jewish lives as active and valued members of their adopted Jewish communities and that women converts who join the synagogue are usually better educated and more active Jewishly than their born-Jewish peers. Information on family formation, which could be expected after fifteen years of conversions—most of them for marriage—is similarly lacking, Mrs. Stern added. Rabbi Davis has declared that the program has made a major contribution “in keeping within the household of Israel hundreds of families that might otherwise be lost to us.”⁴³

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The issues of the Union's Feedback, published in the early 1970's, contain many interesting items on various Reform congregations throughout the country. They provide a fascinating commentary on Jewish religious life in this decade and illuminate the close relations that now exist between many Christian churches and Jewish congregations:

Congregational News

From UAHC Camp-Institute in Cincinnati, thanks to its director, Herzl W. Honor, comes the following lovely story: The confirmation class of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation held a retreat at the Union Camp Institute in Zionsville, Indiana, on the theme “Why I Am A Jew.” In order to highlight the theme, Rabbi David Horowitz, the assistant rabbi, invited a couple, Jimmie and Charlene Tullis, who had chosen to convert to Judaism, to discuss their reasons with the teenagers. The Tullises, both [former] Protestants, had made a study of religions and decided on Judaism. After completing the required course of study for converts, Jimmie and Charlene together with the rabbi decided to hold the conversion ceremony and Jewish wedding at camp during the confirmation retreat.

The confirmands witnessed the conversion and then questioned

⁴³ *Detroit Jewish News*, July 25, 1969, p. 9.

the newly Jewish couple on their reasons for selecting Judaism. The Tullises explained that Reform Judaism, with its emphasis on morality and ethics and deeds rather than faith, seemed to be more rational and satisfying. The campers then made a beautiful chupah [wedding canopy] and transformed the Rec[reation] Hall of the camp into a lovely wedding chapel. The Tullises, who had been married several years, wanted a Jewish wedding, and so Rabbi Horowitz officiated with the participation of the confirmands, the Tullises, and their friends. It was a meaningful experience. . . .

Temple Beth Aaron, Billings, Mont., through its rabbi, Dr. Samuel Horowitz, has the following lovely story: About fifteen or sixteen years ago, when David Howlett was twelve or thirteen years old, he was invited to witness the bar mitzvah of one of his schoolmates. David had been active in the youth group of the First Congregational Church. He was so inspired by the bar mitzvah that he began to study Hebrew at Temple Beth Aaron. After acquiring a considerable vocabulary, he began to teach elementary Hebrew in its religious school. Several years later, while a student at the University of Montana, he suggested to the director of the School of Religion at Montana University that he contact Dr. Horowitz to teach Judaism at the university. Dr. Horowitz did, sponsored by the JCS [Jewish Chautauqua Society] from 1965–1970. David is at present an Oxford Fellow, about to receive his Ph.D., in languages. He visited Israel during the summer of 1967 and, while there, was frequently asked why he wasn't in the Israeli army. He had all he could do to convince his questioners—in Hebrew, of course—that he was only a tourist, and a Christian at that. . . .

Temple Beth El, Knoxville, Tenn., enhances the teaching of comparative religion in its religious school by requiring its ninth-grade class to visit a minimum of six community churches: Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Methodist, Southern Baptist, and African Methodist Episcopal. This provides for the students to spend the entire morning at these churches, attending their peer group Sunday school class, the worship service, and meeting with the host clergyman for an informal discussion. The students' teacher and hosts meet together to plan the scope of discussion for the combined classes, and in many cases a team teaching approach is uti-

lized. In other instances, the classes swap teachers for a portion of the morning session. The text by [Milton G.] Miller and [Sylvan D.] Schwartzman, *Our Religion and Our Neighbors*, is used, and the "live" exchanges with neighboring churches give it even greater vitality. . . .

Temple Beth Aaron, Billings, Mont., in a city of 85,000, has the only active synagogue in that and adjacent states, a radius of over 500 miles. In the spring of 1969, a bar mitzvah was held in Missoula for the son of a professor at the University of Montana, at the latter's home. The Torah was borrowed from Helena, where an active Reform congregation of 100 families had been flourishing at the turn of the century. The Holy Ark [housing the Torah scroll] was [a portable] one which the rabbi had used [as a military chaplain] in India during World War II. The area, Rabbi Samuel Horowitz of Temple Beth Aaron pleads, needs a circuit-riding rabbi. Lecture tours that he makes to various colleges, under the auspices of the Jewish Chautauqua Society, help. But for the Billings congregation, however, that vast stretch of territory would be a Jewish wilderness. Is there an adventurous rabbi available for the circuit? . . .

Temple Micah, Washington, D.C., has signed [with a church] an official agreement, enthusiastically endorsed by both congregations, to "work, study, plan, and worship under a single, spiritual roof." Since 1966, Temple Micah has been sharing only the worship hall of St. Augustine's Chapel on a landlord-tenant basis. The new venture provides for shared use of all quarters in the structure for a five-year period, with a review after three years, and the hope that the mutual benefits of their broadened spiritual dimension can lead to a permanent partnership. St. Augustine's Chapel has approximately 200 members and is a long-established congregation. Temple Micah was founded in 1963, originally as the Southwest Hebrew Congregation. A joint committee will coordinate programs and the use of facilities by the two congregations, as well as use of the quarters by secular community groups.⁴⁴

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⁴⁴ *Feedback* (N. Y., 1970 [?]), pp. 3-5; (N. Y., Spring, 1971), pp. 1-2.

In this late-twentieth-century age of addiction, the Union, too, is addicted, as it has always been—to surveys. This time, in 1971, it employed Leonard J. Fein, a social scientist, and a team of researchers to study the Union in depth. This, the most intensive review of Reform Jewish religious thinking and practice that had yet been made, embraced not only adults, but also young men and women. The work was done with an eye to the future, but the results make it possible to gauge the past also. What changes have taken place in the Union's vast "parish" after a generation of Neo-Reform! Among many themes, statistics, and conclusions, the Long Range Planning Committee reveals the differences between the grown-ups and the young in their attitudes toward intermarriage, the State of Israel, anti-Semitism, the synagogue (temple), and the rabbi. What follows here is a very brief excerpt from Dr. Fein's lengthy report:

The introductory chapter also includes a broad statistical profile of the respondents. The single most striking finding here is the extraordinary level of educational attainment among the adult respondents, 60 percent of whom have at least four years of college (compared to 11 percent of the total American adult population). . . .

The study also finds that only 34 percent of the adult respondents were raised in Reform households, that a majority have only a minimal Jewish education (44 percent report Sunday school only, and 17 percent report no formal Jewish education at all). . . .

The beliefs and practices of Reform Jews are described. . . . The major finding here is that there is enormous variety in both behavior and in belief, both among temples and within temples. . . . The large majority [of Reform Jews] report that they take part in a Passover seder and light candles on Chanukah, 62 percent report having a mezuzah [traditional amulet] on their door (the high is 80 percent in one temple, the low 40 percent in another); 50 percent light Sabbath candles (the range among the temples is from a high of 68 percent to a low of 38 percent); 50 percent read some Jewish publication other than their temple bulletin (the range is from 71 percent to 31 percent); over a third belong to no Jewish organization other than their temple; 10 percent have Christmas trees in their homes (the range here is from 29 percent to 1 percent); 31 percent attend

religious services only on the High Holy Days, while, at the other extreme, only 7 percent report weekly attendance and another 17 percent report attending "a few times a month." . . .

There is a substantial gap between old and young on every item of specifically Jewish interest. Thus, for example, while 32 percent of the adult respondents hold that it is essential, in order to be a good Jew, that one contribute to Jewish philanthropies, only 4 percent of the young respondents agree; while 75 percent of the adults hold it essential or, at least, desirable that one marry within the Jewish faith, only 43 percent of the youth agree. . . .

We find also that there is no apparent segregation of Jewish belief into "religious" and "cultural" components. Those respondents who displayed a relatively high interest in, and commitment to, Judaism tended to do so across the board rather than selecting out one or another of the major "approaches" to Judaism for endorsement. In this, as in other ways, the evidence supports the conclusion that erstwhile points of significant difference between Reform Jews and other American Jews are not now significant. Comparison of our data to other studies shows quite clearly that Reform Jews are very much in the mainstream of current Jewish beliefs and understandings.

The chapter on beliefs and practices also includes a report of the answers to two hypothetical questions, one dealing with the distribution of the respondent's charitable dollar, the other with his preferences among several summer camps to which he might send his child. The first shows a distinct preference among adults for Jewish charities and especially the UJA [United Jewish Appeal] and the respondent's temple. Among young people, there is a dramatic increase in support for political, as distinguished from welfare, causes, although they, too, accord a major allocation to the UJA. Local Jewish federations are not favored philanthropic objects. As to summer camps, all respondents indicate a clear preference for a cosmopolitan, intercultural camp setting or, as a second choice, a recreational camp, as distinguished from camps with a distinctive substantive Jewish orientation.

The chapter closes with the observation that the one area of overwhelming consensus among all respondents concerns the possibility

of anti-Semitism in America. Respondents were asked whether they agreed that "anti-Semitism will never be a major problem for American Jews." Only 7 percent of the respondents (in both the youth and adult populations) agreed with the statement. Given the wording of the statement, disagreement does not necessarily reflect a lively anxiety concerning the possible imminence of serious anti-Semitism in this country. It does, however, suggest that awareness of the possibility of anti-Semitism remains a factor, perhaps an important factor, in shaping the Jewish understanding. . . .

With respect to intermarriage, the study reports a major gap between the generations. While a substantial minority of adults do not appear particularly concerned with intermarriage as a "problem," most express both ideological and personal concern. Young people are much less concerned ideologically. But, although the young appear, in the main, to hold that intermarriage is not an ideological problem (e.g., 61 percent do not agree that "intermarriage is bad for the Jewish people"), the large majority report that the religion of a prospective mate would be a matter of important personal concern. One-third of the young would not marry a non-Jew under any circumstances, or unless the non-Jew were to convert, and another 54 percent would consider such a marriage only if they were certain they themselves could remain Jewish. . . .

With respect to Israel, the report finds that more adult respondents attach importance to the relationships between American Jews and Israel than to a number of other "problem" areas, such as Jewish education, intermarriage, or "theological confusion." Indeed, only the "alienation of Jewish youth," among the items in the survey, was regarded as more important by adult respondents. And among young people, relationships with Israel were deemed more important than any other single item.

Over four-fifths of adults and two-thirds of young people believe that, in order to be a "good" Jew, it is either essential or desirable that one support Israel. This is the single most heavily endorsed item of specifically Jewish content in the entire survey (except for the importance of "accepting one's Jewishness"). . . .

Several series of questions were devoted to the views of respondents concerning their temples. The general finding is that the tem-

ple is not, for most of its members, an object of important emotional investment.

The three major reasons people say they joined a particular temple are the quality of its rabbi, their belief in Reform ideology, and the quality of the religious school. A very striking finding here is that friendship patterns do not appear to play a leading part in the determination of temple membership. Indeed, 60 percent of all adult respondents report that they have few, if any, close friends among the members of their temple. It appears that the temple is perceived chiefly as the site of certain desired services, rather than as the site for significant communal experience.

Worship services are not viewed critically. Forty percent of the respondents "like them very much," and most of the rest are neutral rather than dissatisfied. A major difference between young people and adults, in this connection, is that almost half of the young felt the opportunity for participation in the worship service was inadequate, while 80 percent of adults were satisfied with the level of congregational participation.

In examining the rabbinic role, the report reveals that the single most important qualification people seek in a rabbi is his capacity to relate to young people. This is followed by his abilities as an educator, as a family counsellor, and as a giver of sermons. Other aspects of the rabbinic role, such as interfaith activities, scholarship, involvement in social action, administrative ability, and interest in socializing with temple members, are viewed as much less significant, at least by adult respondents. Young people are rather more interested in "where a rabbi stands" than in "what a rabbi can offer."⁴⁵

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Yet, after presenting this elaborate study in a substantial volume, the Union did not hesitate to summarize its history, work, and accomplishments, soberly, if not without pride, in less than 200 words. Despite its brevity, it is an impressive statement:

⁴⁵ Leonard J. Fein, *et al.*, *Reform is a Verb: Notes on Reform and Reforming Jews* (N. Y., 1972), pp. 135-38.

WHAT UAHC DOES:

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations is America's oldest federation of congregations, today comprising some 700 Reform temples in the United States and Canada . . . a membership of more than 1,000,000 people.

It prepares curricula, textbooks, and another educational materials, trains teachers for your congregation's religious school, and conducts research into teaching methods to provide the finest, most stimulating religious education for your children.

It publishes the magazine[s] *Keeping Posted* and *Dimensions* and sponsors television and radio programs of Jewish content.

It sponsors seven summer camps of Living Judaism, based on a program of Jewish education and culture for youth.

It provides assistance to congregations in all areas of temple administration.

It establishes and makes loans to new congregations.

It is the largest publisher of Jewish textbooks in the country.

It originated the national federation[s] of Reform Judaism's sisterhoods, brotherhoods, and its vigorous youth groups.

It sponsors powerful programs in the fields of social action and interfaith harmony such as the Religious Action Center in Washington, D. C., a center of study for clergymen of all faiths in cooperation with Harvard Divinity School, and its Institutes on Judaism for members of other faiths.

These activities help make American Reform Judaism a dynamic force, a strong and eloquent spiritual voice, a living body of families and congregations, ideas, and ideals.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ *What UAHC Does*. Leaflet. Reprinted in *The Temple Bulletin, Rodef Shalom Congregation, Pittsburgh, Pa.*, May 24, 1972, p. 8.