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THE STRUGGLE FOR UNITY:

Attempts at Union in American Jewish Life

1654 - 1868

T H E S I S

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Rabbinical and M.H.L. Degrees

by

Joseph Buchler

April 28, 1947

Referee: Dr.Jacob R.Marcus

To

V I C K Y

PREFACE

The recent attempts to establish the American Jewish Conference as the central body of American Jewry have brought forward a problem which has beset Jewish life in this country for over a century and a half. Since that first effort in 1790, when five American Congregations attempted to send a joint letter of congratualtion to Washington on his inauguration, and failed, there has been a long record of similar attempts and failures. Problems and situations have arisen; sometimes they have been solved without unity, sometimes with, but more often they merely solved themselves or were passed over by the stream of events. Only here and there can we point to occasions when the American Jewish community was able to set aside the many differences and disagreements in its ranks, and rise to some form of effective unity. That unity is desirable and even necessary for the welfare of the American Jewish community has been almost universally agreed upon. But how it can be achieved best is a matter of great debate. It is the purpose of this study to examine the efforts which have been made in the past, to see when there was success, and when there was failure. And, if we are at all able, we would want to discover what were the factors which made for success, and what were the causes more often of failure.

The writer wishes to express his appreciation to Dr.Jacob R.Marcus, who first approved the idea of this study, and who during the entire period of its writing, was most helpful and ready with his advice, suggestions and encouragement. Thanks are also due to Mr.Maurice U.Shappes for his

kind suggestions. The author is indebted to the ~~Libraries~~ of the Hebrew Union College, the Jewish Theological Seminary, and Congress for use of periodicals and other works. While it is impossible to list all the secondary sources which were of great help in organizing and working out this study, the writer wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to the works of Mr. Hyman B.Grinstein - "The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York", and Dr.Alan Tarchish - "The Rise of American Judaism", both of which were most useful to the auhor in pursuing this study.

Joseph Buchler

Cincinnati, Ohio

April 28, 1947

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INTRODUCTION

Coming individually or in small groups, Jews settled in different parts of America, and occupied themselves primarily with the business of earning a livelihood, and only as a second thought did they concern themselves with the problems of living a Jewish life in a new and different environment. There were no Jewish institutions at first -- no synagogues, schools, cemeteries, no organizations of any kind -- in fact, no Jews! As in ancient Israel, each man did that which was right in his own eyes. Even after congregations had been organized, and religious leadership secured, there was little,if any,unity among the several communities. One formal attempt, in 1790, to effect a joint action of all the congregations then in the United States, ended in failure. No further attempts were made until 1841.

I

In the middle of the 17th century, Jews began coming to America(to the colonies which later formed the United States). For almost a century and a half, the immigrants were chiefly Sephardic Jews. Although some worked as artisans, most of them came with sufficient capital to set up as merchants and traders. Often, retail trade and intra-colonial commerce was closed to them, so these Jews tended to engage in inter-colonial commerce, and sent their merchandise to the West Indies and Europe.

By the outbreak of the revolution, there were important Jewish communities in several cities. Jews had

settled in New Amsterdam(later New York) in 1654, Newport 1658, Philadelphia 1734, and Savannah 1733. Some had come to Charleston as early as 1700, but the community grew chiefly after 1740 when Jews moved there from Savannah. These immigrants were chiefly Spanish and Portugese Jews, but they had come by way of Brazil, Holland, England, as well as from other colonies. In both Savannah and Philadelphia there were German Jews in sufficient numbers to think in terms of their own congregations.

Communal organization consisted chiefly in the Congregation. Shearith Israel of New York was the oldest, organized in 1680. In Newport, Yeshuat Israel was organized in 1700, and after 1750, with the arrival of some families of great wealth and culture from Lisbon, it became for about 25 years the center of Jewish life in America.[1] Other congregations came into being in Philadelphia(Mickve Israel) 1747, Charleston(Beth Elohim) 1750, and Lancaster(Shaaray Shomayim) 1776. This congregation, however, went out of existence in the 1800s. In the rest of New England, where religious rights were denied to Jews, and in Maryland and Virginia, there were no Jews to speak of before the revolution.

What contact was there between Jews in different parts of America? Except for commercial connections, and some correspondence between individual congregations, the various Jewish communities were isolated from each other. The growth of colonial commerce, with Newport as a center, was largely due to the unusual family connections of the Sephardic Jews who came from Lisbon to

Newport in 1750. These immigrants had direct contact, through family relationships, with Portugal, the West Indies, New York, Boston, Leicester, Providence, Richmond, Wilmington, Savannah, Charleston, and New Orleans. "When we realize that inter-colonial trade was very small in those days, chiefly because the inhabitants of the different colonies were strangers to each other, we can begin to grasp the phenomenal success of the Jewish merchants of Newport during the years 1760 - 1776...."[2] Of Aaron Lopez' dealings with merchants in Georgia, South Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York and New England, a great deal was with Jewish merchants. Among his clerks, working for his agents in Boston, were Joseph de Lucena, Jonas Phillips[3], David Lopez,Jr. and Abraham P. Mendes.

We can hardly doubt, that this inter-colonial intercourse, while of a commercial nature, did not also serve as a medium of exchange of Jewish information. Ships of Jewish registry, manned sometimes by Jewish officers and men, and carrying Jewish agents back and forth among the colonies, must also have carried the latest news about congregational affairs, family news, and general information of concern to the Jews of this vast new continent.

We know that these merchants felt a certain bond of interest and mutual responsibility for each other. In 1655 Abraham Lucena and other Jewish merchants petitioned the Director-General and the Council of New Amsterdam "for themselves, and in the name of others of the Jewish

nation, residing in this city.....that your noble worship(Peter Stuyvesant) .....will allow and consent..... that they may.....travel to and trade on the South River of New Netherlands....."[4] In 1670, Jacob Lucena of Hartford was fined 20 pounds for Sabbath breaking, and the fine was reduced to 15 pounds on the intervention of Asser Levy of New York "out of respect for his wishes."[5]

The second form of contact between congregations in different cities was only very slight before 1800, there being only 7 congregations in the country by that date.[6] These inter-congregational contacts usually were in the form of requests for financial aid, or for the loan of a sefer torah, or some other form of assistance. Since New York had the oldest, and for a long time, the strongest congregation, its Jews received numerous requests for aid from Jews in other communities. Thus in 1775 and again in 1792, Charleston Jewry sought financial aid to erect a synagogue. Newport in 1760 and Reading in 1761 asked Shearith Israel for the loan of sefarim. On the other hand, Savannah deposited its sefer torah with Shearith Israel for safe-keeping.[7] Charleston's Jewish community was closely tied to the old New York congregation. In 1767, several New York Jews were named trustees of the Beth Elohim cemetery.[8]

In its earlier days, however, the New York community needed the assistance of the Jews in other parts of America and the world to establish and maintain its synagogue. Thus in 1729, when Shearith Israel built its Mill Street Synagogue, it received aid from Curaco, and from individual Jews in London, Boston, and Barbados. In 1817, when

this synagogue was rebuilt, a circular letter was sent to congregations or individuals in Boston, Albany, Wilmington, Baltimore, Rishmond, Norfolk, Charleston, Savannah, New Orleans, Montreal, London, Amsterdam, Kingston, Curaco, Surinam, and St.Thomas. Replies from American communities included gifts from Baltimore and Boston.[9]

These connections between the various synagogues and communities were, on the whole, few and far between. They were most frequently of a simple nature, a letter and an answer exchanged between two communities, congregations or individuals. Whatever action was involved was either the decision of an individual for himself(e.g. to contribute money) or the action of a Congregational board at most. As was stated above, only on one occasion was there a formal attempt on the part of several congregations to act jointly on a single matter. This attempt came with the inauguration of the first president of the newly formed republic. The whole affair, while not greatly important, bears study since it reveals how, in the simplest and most obvious matter, there was room for disagreement. We shall see that ultimately the six congregations could not work out a joint plan of action, and so,not one, but several letters of congratulation were sent to President Washington.

Washington's inauguration took place on April 30, 1789, and from all parts of the country letters and memorials came in offering him congratulations and pledges of loyalty. It seemed only proper that the Jews, having been active in the patriot cause(as well as on the British side),

should record their sentiments and express their attitude to the new republic and its first chief executive. It seems that Shearith Israel, as the oldest congregation, took the lead and sent a circular letter to the other congregations, suggesting that they act in concert in this matter. Apparently the Savannah congregation had anticipated this letter and sent its own memorial to Washington, before hearing from New York. The correspondence between Washington and the Savannah congregation is not dated, and so we cannot be sure. The letter from Savannah refers to the lateness of their action. "Our eccentric situation, added to a diffidence founded on the most profound respect, has thus long prevented our address....." The letter is signed:

LEVI SHEFTAL 10
in behalf of the Hebrew congregations.

At any rate, we have a letter, dated June 20, 1790, from the trustees of Shearith Israel to the Newport congregation, which states that the trustees have agreed to send a circular letter to the different congregations for the purpose of "addressing the President of the United States, in one general address, comprehending all the Congregations professing our Holy religion in America, as we are led to understand that mode will be less irksome to the President then(sic) troubling him to reply to every individual address...." The letter continues to invite the Newport congregation to join in this address, and asks that they send a draft letter, so that the ideas of the several congregations can be included in one memorial. The letter concludes with a complaint that the "Georgians"

(the Savannah congregation) have gone ahead and acted on their own -- "have officiously come forward without any previous notice", and sent a letter to the President. The letter is signed:

Isaac Moses Pars.Prest. ll
Solomon Simson.

The reply of the Newport congregation, signed by Moses Seixas, is most amusing and interesting. It begins with a criticism of the letter from New York, as to its vagueness of address, its form, heading and content. Seixas satirically states that he would have been puzzled as to the source of the letter, had he not known the gentlemen who had signed it . He concludes that it must be from the Board of Shearith Israel and intended for the attention of "Kaal Kadosh Yeshuat Israel of Newport, Rhode Island." (The letter had been addressed simply to "the Congregation of Rhode Island".) In answer to the request to join in a memorial to the president, he states that the Congregation hesitates to do this. Since they are"so small in number,* it would be treating the legislature and other large Bodies in this state with a great degree of indelicacy, for us to address the President of the United States previous to any of them."** Next he asks why the New York congregation, so large and so importantly located, had delayed this long in

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* The Newport congregation suffered from the British attack on the city, and was reduced greatly in size and influence.

** Rhode Island had only ratified the Constitution in May of 1790.

sending a memorial to Washington. The only possible excuse might be that they had waited for Rhode Island to ratify the constitution and thus be able to include all the congregationsiin America in one address. So, in order that they might employ this excuse, the Newport congregation agrees to be included in the address! They forego the sending of a draft letter, since they "are sensible it can be well composed at your place" but "should be glad to be favored with a copy thereof in advance of its being presented...." Finally Seixas refuses to agree that any blame attaches to the Savannah congregation, since New York had waited so long, the Georgians might easily have thought that no action was being taken, and had a perfect right to go ahead on their own. Seixas concludes with an apology: "You'll excuse my language. The honor of Israel, and the dignity of my native Congregation, may perhaps have excited me to write with more freedom than was actually necessary."[12]

Probably in response to a request for a draft letter, such as was made to Newport, Charleston sent such a letter to Shearith Israel through a "Capt.Shaffield". This draft letter, which has been mistakenly taken as an actual memorial to Washington,* was addressed to Mr.Isaac Moses.

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* L.Hühner, in "The Jews of South Carolina from the earliest settlement to the end of the American Revolution."[13] expresses the belief that Charleston, in addition to being included in a general address of four congregations, sent a separate memorial of its own, which he presumes was answered by Washington. The answer, he states, "is in all

Having received no reply from New York, the Beth Elohim congregation sent a letter to New York, dated November 20, 1790, asking what had become of their letter, and whether any general address had been sent to the President or not. It concludes with the request not to be included in any general letter if it has not yet been sent, since"we think it has been too tardy in the delivery." The letter is signed:

Philip Hart, P.P.[14]

Meanwhile, on August 17, 1790, during a visit of President Washington to Newport, the congregation addressed a memorial letter to him, which was presented personally by Moses Seixas. This letter is dated August 17, 1790, and the oft-quoted reply of Washington was sent soon after.[15] Whether the Newport congregation also felt that joint action had been abandoned, or whether it merely siezed the oppor-

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likelihood the letter said to have been destroyed in the fire of 1838." It is hardly likely, however, that this letter, dated July 15, 1790, and found in the Charleston Yearbook for 1883, was ever sent to Washington, since the Congregation would not have written to New York in November of 1790, asking to be excluded from the address, and asking what action had been taken, had they already sent a letter of their own. They would most likely have referred to the sending of their own letter. Instead they refer to a draft, sent July 15th, as a suggestion to the New York Congregation. There seems little room for doubt that Charleston cooperated with the three other congregations, and did not,like Savannah and Newport, act separately.

tunity of Washington's visit to present their letter, which seems more likely, we do not know.

By November, however, around the time that Charleston inquired as to the original New York plans, the Philadelphia congregation grew impatient, and informed Shearith Israel that they were about to send a memorial of their own to the President. We have a letter, dated November 25th, sent by the trustees of Shearith Israel to Mr. Manuel Josephson, Parnas of Mickve Israel congregation, asking that they include the congregations in New York, Charleston and Richmond in their letter to the President. In addition they state: "Our congregation would be highly pleased to have their intentions mentioned, and the reasons why he was not addressed by us we waited the authority to include all our brethren on the continent -- the corresponding with them and their answers delayed our intentions until just previous to his departure,* the present appearing a most favorable time are most happy in uniting with your congregation for this purpose. The letters from South Carolina and Virginia will be forwarded by this conveyance for your inspection."[16] It is no wonder that the Newport congregation had asked for a copy of the memorial before it was presented. They must have been sensitive about the use of the English language around New York!

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* The capital of the United States had just been moved from New York to Philadelphia.

Finally on December 13, 1790, more than a year and a half after Washington's inauguration, a joint letter from the congregations in Philadelphia, New York, Charleston and Richmond was sent to Washington by Manuel Josephson "for and in behalf and under the authority of the several congregations aforesaid."[17] Josephson presented the memorial personally and explained verbally "the reason of your(Shearith Israel) congregation's seeming remissness in not having paid their respects before." So Josephson reported in his letter to the trustees in New York, and the text of the President's reply was enclosed in the form of a newspaper clipping.[18]

Thus ended the first attempt at unity among a group of Jewish organizations in the United States. Inefficiency, resulting in delay, as well as misunderstanding, and the factor of personalities, were chiefly responsible for its failure. There had been no pressing need for unity, and so there was no real success. Actually the era of Sephardic ascendency in American Jewish life ended without any effective unity among the various groups and communities. The Sephardim had met the basic problems of adjustment to the American scene, had won for themselves as Jews, the right of settlemeмt, including complete civil and religious rights, in most parts of the country. Except for Maryland, the several states had granted full and equal rights to Jews by the time the revolution was over. These things were achieved without any unified action. It was to be a long while yet, before the complexities and needs of Jewish life would give rise to a real struggle for unity.

Although there had been Ashkenazic Jews in America all through the 18th century, and among them individuals of great distinction and ability, it was not until the 19th century, that they came to these shores in great numbers. The reaction that set in with the Congress of Vienna was keenly felt by the Jews of Central Europe. The brief era of Napoleon was over and the Jews were pushed back into the ghetto. In Germany, Austria and Bohemia, Jews began to pick up and journey westward, across the old continent and the ocean, to a land of open spaces, where there was opportunity to rise above the restrictions of ghetto existence. America had need of these newcomers, for she too was moving westward. The German Jew found little difficulty fitting himself into the economic life of his new home. The picture of the Ashkenazic Jew as the immigrant peddler, pack on back, is more than a symbol. It is a fairly accurate picture of the role which he played. Not equipped for tilling the virgin soil of the developing west, he was prepared to deliver the goods, to bring household necessities to the new towns and villages. The peddler became the retailer, the department store owner and the wholesaler of an expanding commerce.

Such attractive opportunites as America offered, were bound to draw ever greater numbers of Jews from Europe. At the end of the 18th century, there were no more than 3000 Jews in America. A careful estimate, based on all available statistics, puts the figure at 2000. By 1826, the Jewish population had jumped to 6000, and in 1840 it stood at 15000. By 1855, after the reaction following the failures of the European revolutions of 1848, it had soared to

75000. The New York community, consisting of 400 Jews, at the most, in 1800, was close to 30,000 by 1855. By 1860, there were Jewish communities of over 1000 in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, San Francisco, Cincinnati, New Orleans, Albany, Louisville, St.Louis, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Boston, and Chicago.[19]

The Ashkenazic Jews who swelled the populations of these cities were quite different from their Sephardic brethren, in more ways than merely their religious customs. They came for the most part with few possessions, and with no wealth. America, too,was different. It was beginning to take on a distinctive character. Even though sectional differences were great, a newcomer was already regarded as a foreigner and an immigrant. Despite their rapid adjustment, there were many problems connected with the arrival of these immigrants. Language difficulties, economic hardship, social cleavage between the Sephardic aristocracy and the Ashkenazic plebeians, these were but a few of the problems that began to complicate the picture of Jewish life in America. There had been no more unity in the 18th century, but the lack of it, coupled with a growing antagonism between various groups, became more noticable as Jews became more numerous, and Jewish communities larger and closer to each other. That there was little intercourse between the handful of Jewish congregations in 1790 made little difference. They were small and far apart. But when these communities expanded, and new ones grew up in the areas which had separated them, the lack of unity began to have consequences. We shall se that there were religious problems, which were beyond the scope of

the single congregation. There were matters of philanthropy and social welfare, the care of the poor and the burial of the dead, the collection of funds for Palestine, and the religious training of youth, which could be dealt with but poorly and ineffectively on the basis of the congregation as a sovereign unit.

The number of Jewish congregations in America grew almost proportionately with the size of the Jewish population. From 6, in 1790, it jumped to 19 in 1840, 36 in 1845, 64 in 1850, and 90 in 1855. In New York alone there were 21 congregations in 1855, in Philadelphia 5, in Cincinnati 4, and in Baltimore 3.[20] Alongside the old Sephardic congregations there were now German, English, French, Bohemian, Polish, Dutch, and Russian congregations. The newcomers seemed intent on preserving the differentia of their varying national and religious backgrounds, and more than one congregation broke off from another and came into being as a result of the most minor and seemingly trivial differences among the members.

The complete anarchy in Jewish life was the result of certain important differences between the old world and the new. In no field of activity did the spirit of American freedom have more profound meaning and consequences, than in the development of organized religion. The various denominations and sects, which in Europe had strong national and social roots, when transplanted to America seemed almost meaningless. The various national Protestant movements of Europe took root in America, but here their differences and reasons for separate existence seemed far less significant. So too, with the various Jewish commu-

nities that established themselves, particularly in the large centers like New York. With their distinctive minhagim, based on their places of origin, they tended to group themselves according to the cities and sections of Europe from which they stemmed. Where each European community had had one congregation or Gemeinde, with authority to control all aspects of Jewish life, here in America there was logically no limit to the number of congregations that might spring up in one city. Since many worshipped without professional leadership, there was not even the financial limitation of having to support a minister or Chazzan. There could be little central Jewish authority in a city with several congregations, and even within a congregation, there could be little discipline or control, since any unfavorable censure might result in a revolt of one segment of the membership, and the formation of yet another congregation. Only the oldest and strongest congregations could maintain their authority, and even they felt the result of this spirit of independence in religious affairs which was so characteristic in America.

The situation as it existed in New York was typical, on a smaller scale, of the conditions which prevailed throughout the country as regards inter-congregational affairs. "In matters of real importance each synagogue was a law unto itself, and each jealously guarded its rights from the encroachments of any other group.....Attempts to persuade the synagogues to collaborate on communal projects almost invariably failed.....This was so because each synagogue considered itself as an independent entity, whose interests came before those of any other synagogue or of other Jews

in the community at large. If it chose to cooperate with other equally independent entities.... it did so; if not, no power on earth could change its course."[21]

Actually, there was some cooperation, as there had been in the previous century. Older congregations assisted newly organized groups to raise funds and build their synagogues, also to secure chazzanim. They lent or gave ritual objects to their younger rivals. During the '40s and '50s so many requests came to the older New York congregations for assistance of all kinds, that some were completely disregarded.[22] Requests for charity came so often, that the congregations felt obliged to state their policy on the matter. Thus the Anshe Chesed trustees, in 1838, voted that they "do not think themselves empowered to send money to a place for charity, where there is a kehillah."[23] But in emergencies, such as fires and epidemics, special collections were taken up by all the larger synagogues, often with the aid of the Jewish periodicals. Often congregations made direct contributions to sister congregations who were unable to cope with the emergency situation in their own community. New Orleans, particularly, required such assistance.

However, all these forms of assistance and inter-congregational contact were on a more or less individual basis. We shall presently concern ourselves with the various attempts made to get congregations to cooperate on a broader scope, in some cases, even to the extent of foregoing a measure of their own sovereignty. This movement toward unity, which had its beginnings in such varied

projects as providing matzos for the poor, establishing schools of higher Jewish learning, uniting to voice a protest against discrimination, was a slow and laborious one. It was no less difficult to persuade congregations to act together rather than individually, for the sake of efficiency, economy and effectiveness, than it is today to get sovereign nations to submit to a world organization for the sake of peace and general security.

CHAPTER I

THE ROLE OF THE PERIODICAL

The movement for unity in American Jewish life received great impetus from the Anglo-Jewish periodicals which began to make their appearence in the '40s. THE OCCIDENT, THE ASMONEAN, THE ISRAELITE, and the MESSENGER all advocated the union idea in their editorials, news articles, and editorial correspondence. It is not easy to say whether the several editors had taken up their journalistic activities because they felt within themselves the impulse toward unity, or whether their position as editor, with its many contacts and broad view of Jewish life in America, made them proponents of the idea. It may have been a little of each. There can be no question that the information which came to the editorial offices, in the form of letters, announcements, resolutions, articles and organizational business, all tended to give the editor a clearer idea of the chaotic state of Jewish affairs in this growing country. If he had had no feelings on the matter at the outset, they must have grown on him as the months passed by, and if he had taken up his pen with the purpose clearly in mind to draw together the divergent streams of Jewish life, experience could only have strengthened his belief in the necessity for some definite action to achieve his goals.

In addition to the general theme of unity, there were many concrete projects which seemed to demand more or less unified support, and as the editor lent his support to

these projects, he was continually forced to express the need for closer contact, greater cooperation, and better understanding among the many different organizations and groups of American Jewry. As more and more Jews came to this country, the need for additional institutions was felt. Organized charity, beginning with the synagogue, had to go further. There were unaffiliated Jews, and generally they were the ones who needed aid, so that some philanthropy outside the synagogue was required. A Jewis hospital, a home for the aged, widows and orphans, a school for higher education along Jewish lines, these were projects which no single congregation could undertake. In supporting these causes, the editors had to urge unity of action. And even when, as in New York, there were several benevolent organizations, the very fact that there were several, gave rise to problems of overlapping and duplication of efforts. There was an obvious need for some form of cooperation, but as the officers and trustees of the individual organizations could hardly be expected to relinquish even a little of their precious authority, it was necessary for the periodical to drive home the pressing need for unification and joint action.

Attempts were made along various lines to coordinate organizational activities, to effect a super-agency which could prevent waste of funds and efforts, but most of these attempts failed. It became the task of the periodical to point out the cause of failure, to derive lessons from the repeated failures, and bring these to the attention of the Jewish public. Of course, in the role of critics of Jewish

life, the editors frequently parcelled out the blame according to their own position and prejudices. Each of the periodicals, with the exception of THE ASMONEAN, had a position of its own to maintain. Both the OCCIDENT and the MESSENGER were staunchly orthodox, while the ISRAELITE was as strongly committed to reform. The MESSENGER, following the English tradition of its editor, advocated political action by Jews as Jews, while the OCCIDENT consistently opposed political activity except by Jews individually, and as a journal, never took any stand on political questions. The ISRAELITE'S position on this matter was not so clear, Wise sometimes advocating and sometimes opposing political action by Jewish groups. In any case, the efforts toward unity were encouraged or attacked, their leadership praised or damned, at least in part, according to the point of view of the editor and the tendency of the particular movement in question. That this involved contradictions was no serious problem as far as the editor was concerned, and in all likelihood, it made little difference to the readers. Consistency was probably no more highly rated in the '40s, '50s, and '60s of the last century, than it is today!

I. The Occident

Isaac Leeser began publishing the OCCIDENT in Philadelphia in 1843. It appeared monthly, except for two volumes which came out weekly, until 1868. Almost from the very first number, Leeser began advocating the cause of union. This was no new idea for him, since already in 1841 he had taken a prominent part in an attempt to organize a

congregational union and ecclesiastical authority. Reflecting on the chaotic religious conditions, Leeser wrote in 1843, "It is a far greater evil....that different towns do not combine to effect a general object because, as they aver, the imaginary lines of separation place an insurmountable obstacle in the way of a union of the disjointed members which now constitute the American congregations." At the very outset, Leeser stated his opposition to reform and his contempt for its advocates. "Mere tryos in religious knowledge make reforms in a system of which they scarcely know the first principles." The purpose of a union was to be religious only. "We do not ask that they deliberate on political concerns, of which foreigners are not as well calculated to judge as natives; but on matters relating to them as members of the household of Israel. Why should there not be a FEDERATIVE UNION which..... leaves every synagogue or every city perfectly at liberty to manage its own internal affairs, without the smallest control by others."[24]

In 1848-49, the OCCIDENT devoted a great deal of space to plans for a religious union, and though the project failed, Leeser did not give up the idea. In 1853 he presented a comprehensive program for American Jewry, including schools, improvement(not reform) of worship, pulpit instruction, and a federal union of congregations. In this program he included several favorite ideas of his, a Board of Deputies to settle local disputes between congregations, and an ecclesiastical authority to establish authoritative norms of Jewish practise. In addition he

urged the idea of travelling missionaries and a Jewish publication society.[25] A few months later he called for a meeting of "elders and ministers" to deliberate on the establishment of a congregational union, and of course, a central religious authority.[26]

When finally the time seemed at hand, and the occasion favorable, Leeser devoted articles and editorials urging the fullest possible cooperation in the Cleveland Conference of 1855. He used his magazine especially to push the orthodox groups, most particularly the Sephardim, to support the union idea, and help guide the younger congregations, not abandoning them to "the active and eager reformers". Referring unquestionably to the attitude of Shearith Israel of New York, he said that the orthodox congregations, in "wrapping themselves in their mantles of silly dignity or false pride" were only "abandoning the good ship of Judaism to the fortunes of wind and tide, without rudder or compass."[27] Again in 1859, when the Board of Delegates idea came up, although Leeser was not in perfect agreement with the purpose of its promoters, he gave it full support in his editorials, and became a leading figure in the actual organization of the Board.

II. The Asmonean

The Asmonean, started in New York in 1849, was more clearly committed to the cause of unity than any other Jewish publication which appeared during the 9 years of its existence. Its editor, Robert Lyon, was not a religious leader, and the paper made no attempt to assume the role of a religious journal. Its interests were far broader,

embracing all the secular aspects of Jewish life, and also dealing with contemporary problems and politics, with no particularly Jewish emphasis at all. But like THE MESSENGER, it followed the tradition of English Jewry, with its established principle of centralized authority and control. In his very first editorial statement, the editor said that "the ASMONEAN would be devoted to the advocacy of a Congregational union of the Israelites of the United States, and the general dissemination of information relating to the people. Its columns would be open to all..... Emanating from a zealous desire to incite the cultivation of unity of action, between the learned and the philanthropic of Israel, and of diffusing among our brethren a better knowledge of the principles of the Jewish faith, the paper comes into existence perfectly unfettered and unpledged."[28] Lyon was as good as his word and his paper was open to, and used by, spokesmen for all groups and parties in American Jewish life.

Lyon made it a point to secure "the patronage and support of the ministers and the presiding officers" of all the congregations in New York City at the time he began publishing.[29] "We had the honor of achieving this heretofore unsuccessful task. We opine and believe it will be admitted we created the germ of the Great Hebrew Union which will exist in this city hereafter. It was the first occasions on which the heterogeneous masses composing our city's congregations had been publicly united....."[30] This unity was only on paper, but it was at least a beginning, and under the circumstances, something to be proud of.

Lyon was rather optimistic, and in an answer to Wise, expressed the conviction that the union idea was sure of success.[31] In a mild criticism of Leeser, Lyon said that the ASMONEAN supports the union, an Ecclesiastical Board, and a Theological Seminary, but does not demand praise as the originator of these notions.[32]

Though the ASMONEAN was by no means pro-reform, it had less objection to changes in the ritual because they altered the orthodox practise, than because they violated the principle of uniformity. In May of 1850, reporting a congregational action aimed at changing the ritual, Lyon made the following observation: " We trust, for the sake of preserving unity in the services of our congregations, that due care will be taken to make no unauthorized alteration.....We strongly demur to any one congregation of the many now existing in our city, taking separate action on this subject.....(we are) not opposed to an inquiry as to the propriety od modifying existing formulas, but whatever is advisable to be done should be uniform; power of legislation in religious matters should be vested in a duly constituted authority, and the people.....have the right to nominate and create that authority.....If any alteration is demanded by time and circumstances let it be clearly shown, let the action be uniform and authorized, that it may be respected."[33] In practise of course, such a procedure would tend to halt reform, and yet for a good while both Wise and Lilienthal favored this principle, and only when experience proved that reforms would never receive the sanction of the orthodox, no matter howwell buttressed by

Talmudic arguments, did they relinquish this ideal.

The divergences in practise and belief were among the most glaring examples of the chaotic state of affairs, and the ASMONEAN advocated that an ecclesiastical authority was necessary to define Orthodox Judaism and give validity to its definition. As an example of the extremes to which congregational individualism could go, Lyon reported that the Charleston, S.C. Sunday School was discussing what creed of Judaism should be taught. On the way to a teachers' meeting, one of the ladies explained to her friend that the teachers were going to settle certain principles - "we are about to vote on the Messiah and the Resurrection." The report continues that it was carried by a vote of 10 ![34]

Though theological and abstract religious questions were not by any means ignored by the ASMONEAN, it was the practical aspect of unity that received the greatest emphasis. With a steady stream of immigrants arriving, the problem of philanthropy was always great. Financial panics only aggravated the situation. The ASMONEAN quickly recovered from its false optimism of 1849, but it never gave up the struggle to achieve cooperation among the many organizations. The panic of 1857 must have been extremely severe in its effects, but Lyon was well aware by this time that even the gravest need did not have too much influence for unity on the trustees of the various organizations. "We fear it will be futile to recommend unity of action to our charities, even for this winter. Consolidation of the various Boards into one general relief committee would be the more effective method of action.....We strenuously advise

consolidation, for in it lies strength and efficiency, while separation into nationalities fritters away the power of a community like the Hebrews of New York is expected to exercise."[35]

III The Israelite

After having contributed to both the OCCIDENT and the ASMONEAN, Isaac M. Wise began his own organ, the ISRAELITE, in Cincinnati in 1854. One of his first editorial projects was to call for a school of higher learning "on the pattern of the German universities....in order to promote science and the interests of Judaism among our fellow-citizens."[36] Shortly afterwards he suggested that a Jewish widow and orphan home should be established as a national institution, receiving nation-wide Jewish support. In this connection he stated that a representative union might suggest that the asylum could be better located "above the mouth of the Ohio, than near New Orleans" for reasons of economy and climate.[37] There can be no doubt that any union in which Wise was active would have to make such a suggestion! The fact that there were plans and work done for such an institution near New Orleans made little difference to Wise.

Wise took an active part in the Cleveland Conference and the Israelite carried the call, as well as strong editorials urging cooperation in the venture, and later numerous articles about the proceedings, and evaluations of the conference and the synod idea. After his disappointment at not being able to unite the orthodox and the reform leaders, Wise turned his attention more and more to the progress of reform in the west. Commenting on reforms

initiated by the Detroit congregation(Bethel), Wise says that he sees the spirit of the Cleveland Conference growing. "We for our part have not the least doubt that at least the western congregations(and the west grows fast) will in a few years be a united body in Synagogue, Synod, Orphan Asylum and College. We have plenty of intellect and wealth on our side of the Alleghenies to carry out what we conceive to be beneficial to the sacred cause of Judaism."[38]

As far as reform was concerned, Wise was right in expecting its growth to be strongest in the west. In the fall of 1863 Wise reported after a tour of the west that in Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Louisville, as well as in Cincinnati, reforms were in evidence. These western reform congregations were growing in strength, while, of the five reform congregations in the east - Albany, Baltimore, Charleston, New York, Philadelphia,- only those in New York and Philadelphia were growing numerically. The idea of a union(along reform lines) had only been frustrated in the east. The college project, the synod idea, and the attempt at a uniform liturgy, had all been defeated in the east. Wise has "therefore come to the conclusion that it is impossible to effect a union with our eastern contemporaries." He therefore advocated a union of congregations in the Mississippi valley.[39]

Although Wise had been most eager for a union of all groups along moderate reform lines, and had some willingness to compromise in order to include all but the extremes

on both sides, he saw from experience that only a union of those who had some point of view in common, could be expected to succeed. A union of the different parties , he held, was utterly impracticable, and every attempt to establish it would only widen the breach rather than heal it.[40] So he bent all his efforts to achieve unity among the reform groups of the west. He saw that reform needed some regulation and control, some systematic progress. "How do we reform? We do it single-handed.....We do not struggle to maintain Judaism, we work to maintain a congregation, each by himself.....We need the following objects: uniform liturgy, a catechism for schools, and for confirmands; a board of examiners to protect the congregations against bogus ministers and teachers, a college, and a female academy."[41]

As was said above, there was no consistency in the utterances of the union proponents. Thus in a sermon for Sukkos, 1865, Wise urged a close union of American congregations for "no other except religious purposes." He proposed the synod as a means of keeping congregations in America in close touch with the progressive intellect of the world. "Every American congregation should have a law on its statute books, that it must be represented annually in the synod or conference of congregations. This will preserve Judaism in America."[42] Here there is no thought of uniting only the western or the reform group, but an all-embracing union to preserve Judaism.

IV The Messenger.

The Messenger appeared first in 1857 in New York City as a student venture. It was published by the pupils

of Rev.Samuel M.Isaacs, minister of Shaaray Tefilah. "Isaacs himself wrote the leading articles; his son and several of his other pupils wrote the rest of the material.[43] By this time, the various projects such as a College, a union of charities, a congregational union, had all been envisioned and championed. Isaacs atthe outset lent his support to them. He called for an "Israelitish College", a general meeting of Israelites convoked by the Presidents of all the charitable societies and Congregations, for the sake of aiding the poor.(This was the time of the panic of 1857)[44]

Isaacs' rather original point of view was on the matter of a secular Board of Representatives. He argued that, though Jews"have the means to make their power felt" politically, they neglect the opportunity. Referring to the Mortara Affair, he pointed out that the lack of any statistics on American Jewish life made effective joint action more difficult to achieve. The Board of Deputies of British Jews was not able to inform all the congregations of what had happened, and so many did not take action at all, and some took notice of the event only after great delay. " The communication(from the Board of Deputies) was, however, of such a nature as to secure cooperation, and for the first time we have demonstrated what we are capable of performing, when united.....It is high time we unite for national purposes - and that can readily be accomplished if our various congregations would only join together for that cause." He then outlined a plan for organizing an American Board on the British pattern. His main

emphasis is that the influence and power of the Jewish group, in dealing with its own problems of existence and security is far less than it might be were the various Jewish groups united. "We are all strangers -- hold our very existence by the slightest of tenures....." Let us contribute to "the amelioration of our own people, by uniting them for every purpose destined for their own welfare, and for entitling them to the respect of those among whom they are destined to dwell...."[45]

Though this was Isaacs' main and original theme, he was also a staunch supporter of orthodoxy, and saw a need for unity "to support intact the pillars of our faith, which the votaries of novel ideas are now endeavoring to undermine...."[46] Nevertheless, where there were issues which transcended party lines in religious, he was the first to brush aside such differences, as well as those between the various nationalities, and between the native and the foreing-born, to find a common ground for joint action. Isaacs and Lyon were in this sense most consistent, and also most realistic. The very presence of so many groups, the splintering of the Jewish population along so many different lines, the continuing growth of the Jewish population in the east, made these men particularly conscious of the urgent need for unity.

V.

In addition to keeping the goal of unity before the Jewish reading public, the periodicals served the additional function of summarizing the causes of so many failures, and commenting on the main obstacles to the progress of

the union idea.

The most obvious difficulties in the path toward unity were the differences in language and national background of Jews coming to this country. Leeser noted this early in his journalistic career. The lack of a knowledge of English made it extremely difficult to reach all the Jews through the medium of the written word.[47] Lyon found the same problem a few years later. The Jews, he said, are "split into sections upon all subordinate questions, while they are all Hebrews, orthodox in ceremonies and in rituals, they separate themselves into coteries, fettered and enslaved by the practises and opinions of the land of their nativity.....This is the main cause of the institution of so many synagogues, of the founding of so many charities, ...and it must readily be observed and conceded that this disunion is not an element of strength, but of its opposite, of weakness." Lyon pointed out that the Meshivas Nephesh society, then 30 years old, had with all its funds and with an efficient board, failed in all that time to achieve its avowed purpose of establishing a hospital. "They dispense funds, but the good done is not proportionate to the efforts and money expended.[48]

Isaacs in the MESSENGER saw the problem of language and nationality differences, but this was only one factor among several which stood in the way of progress. The conflict between economic groups -- the poor versus the rich-- was a strong element in this complex problem. The native Jews, generally better off economically, expressed hostility and antipathy for the foreign-born immigrants, who were

usually unencumbered by wealth or possessions. Isaacs strongly attacked those who withheld their benevolences from certain charities which served the needs of other than "Americans".[49]

Wise's insight was perhaps the keenest on this problem. He saw that the Israelite in America had no background for this venture in union on a voluntary basis. In addition to the language problem, which was inevitable when two-thirds of all Jews were foreigners, there was the matter of provincial prejudices. "Besides all this, we are passing through a transition period from Judaism of the ghetto to the religion of free men.....In such a period, union is almost impossible, for the time being. Some cling to their traditions and endeared habits, others hurried beyond all limits, and in between both ends all shades of opinion are placed. These are the causes of our disunion and (public) silence."[50]

In addition to these general factors, there were certain specific conflicts which split American Israel into two or more camps. The ritual question, together with the whole reform-orthodox dispute was largely responsible for preventing an all-embracing congregational union. Differences of opinion in respect to portions of the ceremonial law, said Isaacs, "with us are suffered to lead to most disastrous consequences, to absolute division and schism in the community...." He urged patience and kindness in dealing with those of different opinions, since having nothing to do with them(the reformers) will not change them or win them over. Only friendly relations

can lead to unity.[51] Wise took up the same problem from the opposite point of view. The reason that concrete efforts at unity fail is that they are based on the hope that reform could be throttled. In order to effect a union reform had to be recognized as the status quo. The legality of reform had to be admitted, and then union on a wide scale would be possible. "Remove the vexatious ritual question to the general satisfaction and level the road to union, or else it will level itself and leave you(the orthodox party) out in the cold."[52] In another connection he said, "This much is sure: whenever 100 congregations shall be liturgically united under the Minhag America.....the basis for a lasting union of the American congregations is laid out, upon which all superstructures of synod, college, seminary, etc.,will easily be reared."[53]

The attempts at congregational union met their greatest obstacle in the fear that the right of the individual congregation to govern itself might be abridged. It was always necessary to premise any plan or program with a disavowal of any intentions to interfere in the internal affairs of the organizations expected to join. The reform groups feared the orthodox might gain the upper hand, and vice versa. Sectional differences, east against west, also became factors in the unity movement, but most frequently sectionalism was a mask for personal rivalry. Arguments against the west were likely to be attacks on Wise, and criticism of the east was usually fear of the orthodox or the extreme reform leadership. When the Board of Delagates was finally organized, the cry went up that New York

was trying to dominate the rest of American Jewry. Isaacs in reply said, "we are content to acknowledge that New York is but one city in this republic, we do not wish to claim(what it has been insinuated) that New York should lead the rest of mankind."[54]

In 1859, after the Mortara Affair had brought home the need for union, the MESSENGER was very active in trying to form a national organization which might be ready at all times to deal with such problems. Though eventually a measure of success was achieved, and the Board of Delagates established, the task of organization was far from easy. Commenting on the difficulties, Isaacs wrote: "But this quarrel between opposite sections.....of Israel in America, is far from being the only cause that tends to keep us disunited. We lack community of interest, as well as harmony of feeling. We are all too independent of each other.....there is no tie to unite us, to bind us more strongly together.....If the agitation regarding some momentous question originates in New York, our brethren of the Quaker City shake their heads, put on an ominous look, and express their conviction that success is out of the question.If they make up their minds to follow one course, and we are determined to follow upon another, it is altogether impossible to hit upon a compromise, so neither party succeeds in accomplishing anything.....look at New York itself. It seems advisable to the officers of one congregation to set about to establish a certain institution.....they send out invitations to all(other New York) congregations to confer with them on the sub-

ject. How many of the 17 congregations deign a reply? Only 8! And the question on which united and general action was asked happened to be of national importance. For a wonder there appeared to be unanimity in the proceedings last winter, relative to the Mortara case; and such a wonder, it seems, dare not to be repeated twice in the same year."[55]

The periodicals made a great contribution to the cause of unity. Probably their role of critics of and commentators on Jewish life was less decisive than their function as a clearing-house for information. Quoting Jewish periodicals from abroad, they tried to furnish a pattern for organizational developments here. The attempt at setting up an ecclesiastical authority by the Hungarian Jewish community,[56] the reactions of the French and Italian, as well as the German communities to the synod idea,[57] were quoted and discussed. But even more important, the items on the establishment of new congregations in America, the annual reports of the hospitals, benevolent societies, and mutual aid groups, and the correspondence from various cities, spread out on the pages of the Jewish papers, did much to give the reader a new and much broader picture of the growth of Jewish life in America. From his limited experiences with one congregation, one lodge or one charity, he broadened his understanding and saw the problems of dozens of similar organizations in his own and other cities. And when special problems came up, he learned

of them chiefly through the pages of his particular Jewish weekly or monthly, and perceived their broader scope only through the perspective of the editor. More than any other agency in this period, the newspapers broke down the barriers between the various groups and the various points of view in Jewish life.

CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNINGS - LOCAL ATTEMPTS AT UNITY

Before any union could take place on a national scale, there was bound to be some experimentation along local lines. The older Jewish communities, particularly New York and Philadelphia, where there were several congregations and philanthropic organizations, tried in different ways to effect city-wide unions. Sometimes, but not always, the periodicals took the lead; in other instances, one of the groups directly involved in the problem initiated the efforts. Occasionally one of the charities called on the others to confer on a pressing matter - some temporary emergency - and this led to a general meeting, the appointment of a committee of all the trustees and, when the venture was successful, to effective joint action. The existence of many congregations gave rise to conflicts of one kind or another. Ritual questions, the validity of divorces, shechitah, problems of dual membership, responsibility for aiding the poor and burying the dead, all required some consultation among the several congregations. Thus there was a measure of progress toward union as these problems were worked out.

In both New York and Philadelphia attempts were made, beginning around 1855, to coordinate and in part to consolidate the philanthropic activities of the community. To appreciate better the need for some community-wide approach to the situation, we might list here the organizations in New York in 1855 as complied by Robert Lyon.

7 charitable organizations
4 ladies " " (attached to synagogues)
2 charitable and mutual benefit organizations (attached to synagogues)
17 mutual benefit societies(" " ")
7 lodges of the I.O.B'nai Brith
19 congregations[59] (with 10 buildings erected as synagogues)

In commenting on this list, Lyon said: "we are obliged to acknowledge that no unity of action or interchange of sentiment exists among our societies. Each society is an independent organization, irresponsible to all, excepting its own members, and in a majority of cases, assumes an indifference to outside impressions."[60]

The first concrete steps toward bringing some order out of this chaos came in the form of cooperation between two of the largest charities, the Hebrew Benevolent and the German Hebrew Benevolent Societies. The former was founded in 1822 by Ashkenazic Jews, members of Shearith Israel who later seceded and joined B'nai Jeshurun. It was considered the charitable organization of the English and Polish Jews. The German Hebrew Benevolent Society was organized in 1844 by German Jews. Some of the members of the older society joined the new group, thus curtailing the income of the former. For a long time the two societies existed side by side, and though the German Hebrew Benevolent Society limited its charity to German Jews, the Hebrew Benevolent made no such distinctions,[61] and there was overlapping and duplication. As

early as 1849, there was cooperation between the two societies. To save expenses, and thus increase their revenue, the two groups united their committees on arrangements for the annual banquet and agreed to a joint function, which was reported as a great success.[62] The following year there was a successful attempt at raising funds jointly through a concert, managed by a joint committee.[63] This cooperation, though very successful, did not lead as some had hoped, to amalgamation. Almost ten years later, after both the ASMONEAN and the MESSENGER had raised the question of the value of so many independent societies, and such waste of effort and funds, there was an attempt at merging the two groups. On April 3, 1859, The Hebrew Benevolent Society adopted a resolution to merge the two societies. The plan included the resignation of both sets of officers, an election for new ones, a merger of the funds, and a joint committee to work on the By-laws to adjust whatever constitutional difficulties there were.[64] On April 15th, the German Hebrew Benevolent Society ratified these plans at a membership meeting, and the two largest and strongest philanthropic organizations in New York were one.[65] At least among the German, English and Polish Jews, there was some unity, and a great deal of duplication was now to be avoided in the distribution of funds.

The distribution of <u>matzos</u> to the poor was an annual venture in which almost every organization took part. In March of 1855, the editor of the ASMONEAN reported as the first concrete step unity among the New York congregations

a meeting of representatives at the home of Dr.Raphall, the Rabbi and Lecturer of the B'nai Jeshurun congregation. The representatives of about ten of the congregations (about half) and the editor of the ASMONEAN were present.[66] J.I.Joseph of Shearith Israel presided and Rev.S.M.Isaacs of Shaaray Tefilah was secretary. The Anshe Chesed congregation, while agreeing with the principle of joint action, declined to be represented, as its Board had already spent money to buy matzos for this year. The Board stated, however, that they "should be very much pleased to see all the congregations acting in cooperation for the future, where and whenever a common interest is at stake..." In his editorial, Lyon appealed to the German Hebrew Benevolent Society and the Temple (Emanuel) and the smaller congregations to join this movement, even if only with a token contribution to signify their approval of a concert of action.[67] The attempt at joint action was at least a partial success, and on May 18, 1855, the Passover Distribution Committee of the New York Congregations published a treasurer's report and also a resolution adopted to continue the committee and to meet again in February, 1856.[68]

There is no report, however, of any further concerted efforts in the matter of Matzos distribution until 1858. On February 1st of that year, there was again a meeting at the home of Dr,Raphall. This time 13 congregations were represented and Asher Kursheedt of Shearith Israel presided while S.M.Isaacs was again secretary. In addition to resolving on joint action, they appealed to the Presidents of the Benevolent Societies to join this movement,

and then adjourned to March 1st.[69] At this meeting the Hebrew Benevolent Society and one more congregation were represented. The chairman however, informed the delegates that his congregation(Shearith Israel) had voted that it was"inexpedient to join in this movement." He was prevailed upon to remain as chairman, although he had offered his resignation. Rev.J.J.Lyon, of Shearith Israel, explained that although his congregation expected to act independently, he was authorized by individual members to place before the committee offers amounting to 1400 lbs. of matzos. Altogether 11,000 lbs. were pledged for distribution.[70] The MESSENGER pointed out in its appeal for funds for the joint committee that the situation this year(1858) was quite different, and that not just poor widows and beggars would need aid, but the "sturdy mechanic, who is willing to work, but whose hands have found no employ from the scarcity of work."The need was far greater, and of a different nature; funds were required that these people might be made to "enjoy their festival".[71] It is interesting to note this differentiation in the type of aid which must be rendered to those in different social strata. The idea that a family, normally self-supporting and independent, must be given a different type of aid from that given to those always in need, is a rather advanced social concept.

In addition to the special Passover situation, the general problem of philanthropy, the need for some way of coordinating activities and saving efforts and funds, was repeatedly taken up by the ASMONEAN and the MESSENGER.

During the panic of 1857, the Hebrew Benevolent Society adopted a resolution to establish an open committee which would solicit contributions. It asked other organization's officers to meet with its own directors to plan the method of solicitation.[72] On October 25th, the Presidents of the Jews' Hospital, the Education Society, the German Hebrew Benevolent Society, the Young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Society, and the Hebrew Benevolent Society met in response to the call. Mr.Joseph of the Education Society proposed that a united appeal be made at a Thanksgiving Day Service in each of the synagogues in the city. The funds were to be collected in the synagogues by the respectively affiliated charities. The suggestion was opposed by the Education Society(though individual members of the Board favored it), by the Jews Hospital, and by the German Hebrew Benevolent Society.[73] That apparently ended the matter!

In August of 1858, the MESSENGER renewed the struggle for a union of charities and called for one strong central charitable association, representing all the smaller organizations, which should establish a fair and effective system of dispensing relief.[74] In November, Isaacs urged that all the present societies(of which only the Hebrew and the German Hebrew Benevolent Societies were useful anyhow!)be amalgamated. A letter to the editor, which apparently called forth the editorial, demanded a union of all local congregations in a Board of Representatives to coordinate city-wide Jewish activities. More than 20

individual charites were functioning, said this writer, and still the poor were in want. The charities ought to be combined, and Shechitah needed regulation.[75] In spite of the efforts of both Isaacs and Lyon, and the several attempts at combining the New York charities, the only concrete step taken was the merger of the two leading societies in 1859. The other groups continued to act independently and hap-hazardly for the remainder of our period(to 1868).

In Philadelphia, where by 1856 there were only 6 congregations and proportionately fewer charities, the movement for a consolidation of charities was more successful. On June 1, 1856, a conference under the auspices of the Fuel Society of Philadelphia was called "to consolidate the various charity funds, for the purpose of relieving the poor more promptly...."Delegates from 4 of the congregations and 7 of the charities responded to the invitation. Leeser was elected chairman and E.H.Weil secretary. A committee was appointed to draft a constitution and present its report to a meeting on July 6th, to which all the charities and congregations not yet represented were to be invited. The plan which was drawn up and presented July 6th, included honorary executive officers, a division of the city into districts, committees for each district, to investigate claims, a local office, etc.and was to embrace all the charitable efforts within the limits of the constitutions of the existing organizations. The July 6th meeting, however, was poorly attended, although two new

delegates were present, and action was deferred to a meeting to be called between Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur.[76]

This meeting took place on October 5th, but the attendence was not much better. The plan was presented, but in order to suppress it, A.Hart, President of the Portugese congregation(Mickve Israel) moved that a loan association was expedient(thus by-passing the plan for consolidation). A committee of five was appointed to work out rules for a loan association and to report to a meeting on November 16th. This meeting, too, was poorly attended, since interest in the movement had dropped, and the entire matter -- consolidation and loan fund -- was forgotton.[77]

The proponents of unification were not to be daunted in their efforts, and taking advantage of a large attendence the following year, at a meeting on the Swiss treaty, raised the question of the charities, after the resolutions on the treaty had been disposed of. A resolution was adopted calling for a meeting of the 6 congregations on November 22. At this gathering, well attended and representing all the congregations, the original plan for consolidation was adopted with one reservation. The "General Relief Association"was to go out of existence after Passover. It was to be only a temporary expedient. The plan worked well. The committee engaged grocers, butchers, bakers, druggists, and even physicians. Receipts exceeded $2,500 for the winter.[78] When the venture was over, the final report, dated April 18, 1858, included a resolution to make the

organization a permanent one. This report was adopted by a large meeting and a committee was appointed to draw up articles for a permanent organization.[79]

Cincinnati took its lead from Philadelphia's unsuccessful venture in 1856. Referring to the plan drawn up for the July 6th meeting, Lilienthal urged that each large city should establish a union of charities to systematize the work.[80] Lilienthal presented this idea to a private meeting of some 80 Cincinnati Jews. They subscribed $3,200 to a fund, and agreed to call a general meeting for Sunday October 5th, at which a constitution was drawn up and a board elected, including 40 directors and 25 lady directors. The latter were to receive applications for relief and act as a visiting committee for the proposed organization. On October 19th, the constitution was formally adopted, with membership dues at a $5.00 minimum, and a week later officers were elected and the city divided into districts. There were to be 4 districts with 6 directors in charge of each. Notices were to be posted in each synagogue, giving the name and address of the director to whom one was to apply for relief. Dr. Lilienthal was appointed to a committee which was to negotiate with other benevolent societies to invite their cooperation. As a result, three ladies' groups agreed to donate $100 each and elected directors to the board. Three physicians volunteered their services to the new organization.[81] Actually Cincinnati did not follow Philadelphia's plan or principle at all. It did not really consolidate the charities, but organized a new and more efficient society, which it was hoped would absorb the other groups.

Chicago must have organized its United Hebrew Relief Association in 1859. The fourth annual report(1863) refers to its work as"the first practical effort to combine the charitable institutions in the work of distributing the benefits to the needy." The U.H.R.A. included delagates of 9 charitable organizations.[82] Its annual report for 1866-67 showed that 108 delagates representing 14 different congregations and societies, including 2 B'nai Brith lodges, attended the meeting. During the year $6,300 was disbursed and the hospital building fund reached the total of $17,635. Wise rated the U.H.R.A. of Chicage as one of the wealthiest philanthropies in the country.[83]

The raising of funds for the Jews of Palestine was still one other area of cooperation between the several congregations and communities. As early as 1832, the problem of how to transmit them to Palestine without the waste of supporting messengers, was taken up in New York. On November 11, 1832 a meeting of the three congregations then existing, was called at the Mill Street synagogue to organize a branch of the Terumat Hakodesh(Society for the Offerings of the Sanctuary). The main purpose was raise funds for Palestine without messengers from the holy land. The funds were to be derived from the annual shekel collection in each synagogue, from the receipts of the Palestine boxes in the synagogue vestibules, from collections at funerals, and any special collection which might be necessary. In 1848 the society proposed that the synagogues of New York and the rest of the country should subscribe a definite sum to Palestinian relief, to be paid in 5 instalments yearly, thus main-

taining a steady flow of funds from America to the holy land. In 1850 the distribution of funds was agreed upon by the synagogues represented in New York City[84] as follows: the Sephardim of Palestine were to receive 38%, the Polish and Russians 48%, and the German and Dutch 14%. Whether this decision was one made by the Hebrah Terumat Hakodesh is not clear, but after this there is nothing further to indicate any activity by this organization, and it seems to have gone out of existence in the early '50s.[85]

The question of dealing with messengers from the holy land was not clearly dealt with or settled by the formation of the Hebrah Terumat Hakodesh. When in 1847, I.B.Kursheedt, its president, asked the OCCIDENT to insert an appeal for funds, emphasizing that money should be sent directly to agents in Europe and not paid to messengers, Lesser inserted the appeal, but as a personal note, called attention to the critical condition of the Hebron Jews, and urged support of their agent here in the United States! Leeser was torn between principles and practical considerations.[86]

In 1849 Rabbis Joseph Schwartz and Zadok Levy arrived from Palestine, and the problem again came up as to what to do about funds and messengers. This time Shearith Israel took decisive action, adopting a resolution appropriating $25.00 a year for the "support of all poor Jews in Palestine, and by this mode hereafter prevent the recognition of any messenger." The Board sent copies of the resolution to all other congregations with

the suggestion that they take the same action. Leeser in the OCCIDENT supported the paln and urged that a large fund be raised by having each congregation of the more than 40 then organized raise at least $10, and if possible $25. Schwartz and Levy seem to have agreed to the plan and issued an appeal to all American congregations to establish a permanent relief fund, the contributions to be sent directly to Palestine, and they undertook to guarantee that the congregations in Palestine would not send out messengers to America if such a plan were established.[87]

A terrible famine in Palestineiin 1853-54 occasioned an appeal from Dr.Adler and Montefiore in London to send money to the starving Jews of Palestine. S.M.Isaacs took the lead in New York, and other ministers followed with their own support. According to a report in the ASMONEAN the German Jews held back for a while, but when the fact that the Portugese, English and Polish Jews were contributing was established, the German responded to an appeal by Lilienthal and made their donations. Isaacs was the general treasurer of the campaign, which Grinstein calls the "first national campaign for an overseas Jewish cause."[88] Over $5000 was collected.

According to the reports in the OCCIDENT these collections were transmitted through a newly created organization -- the North American Relief Society. The N.A.R.S. was chartered February 14,1853 "for the sole purpose and motive of affording permanent aid to poor Israelites

dwelling in Jerusalem or its environs...."and that they be supported by remitting now, and at stated periods, all amounts you and your congregation can spare for so necessary and sacred a cause....." It was in a sense a successor to the Hebrah Terumat Ha kodesh and also tried to obviate the need for messengers coming to America.[89] The officers who organized the N.A.R.S. were Samson Simson President, Dr.S.Abrahams Vice-President, Rev.S.M. Isaacs Treasurer, and L.Levy, L.Myers, S.Cohen, P.Levi Trustees.[90] In 1854 the Trustees announced that within one year they would have an income from a legacy of Judah Touro which would be nearly sufficient to meet the demands for Palestinian relief. In the meantime they were in great need of funds(because of the famine). The response to this appeal, described above, reached $5,446, and over 20 cities responded with contributions.[91]

In an editorial comment on the appeal issued by the N.A.R.S. Leeser deplored the system of charity under which the Jews of Palestine were never enabled to support themselves. He pointed out that the lack of general and trade schools, of hospitals and dispensaries was indicative of the shortsightedness of the present system. While urging full support for the philanthropic efforts, he suggested the need for a different system, by which agriculture and trades could be stimulated, so that Jews could live independently of the gifts from the outside world.[92] Concrete suggestions in this direction came, though several years later, when a Jewish Colonization Society was proposed by S.Berman of Richmond, Virginia,

though it is not entirely clear whether his project was intended for Palestine, America, or both. Leeser supported the idea editorially as a means of preventing pauperization among the Jews, and presented a plan with a financial estimate of the needs of such a project.[93] A little later, Wise, in the ISRAELITE, endorsed a plan specifically for Palestinian colonization, proposed by Dr.Lurje of Frankfort-on-the-Oder. This plan included the diversion of most of the funds for colonization purposes and no collections for messengers. Lurje's plan suggested that in every congregation a Colonization Society be established whose officers or committee were to receive all contributions for the project.[94]

Just as Philadelphia had had greater success than New York City in consolidating the charities, so too they went further in effecting a measure of unity among the congregations for other purposes.In the fall of 1861, the OCCIDENT reports, the ministers of the United Congregations of Philadelphia met and acted on the question of Jewish chaplains in the Union army.[95] In a subsequent report, Leeser stated that the ministers of the 5 congregations met weekly to discuss religious questions and actions to be undertaken in concert to prevent any conflict or cross-purposes. He suggested local boards of ministers wherever more than one Jewish congregation existed in a city. From such local boards, there might develop a national council of religious leaders.(We shall see that Leeser never lost an opportunity to work for a unified

religious authority.)

On August 19, 1862, the Board of Jewish ministers of Philadelphia resolved to request the President to appoint a Jewish Chaplain to the Army hospitals near Philadelphia. In response to the President's subsequent request for a recommendation, Rev.Jacob Frankel of Rodeph Sholom was nominated and later commissioned by the President.[96] The Ministerial Board seemed to continue to function as late as 1866, when the OCCIDENT reported that the Rev.Dr.Jastrow was asked on his arrival, to assume the presidency, he being the first minister to join the board who had rabbinical ordination.[97]

New York's attempts in the direction of congregational union were many and varied, though without real success. The first movement toward this goal was the union of the three German congregations who jointly elected Lilienthal as their Rabbi and maintained a union school under his supervision. Beginning in December, 1845, the boards of the three congregations - Anshe Chesed, Rodeph Sholom, and Shaaray Hashomayim - met jointly, though the congregations continued to exist as separate entities. There was a plan to unite all four German congregations, but a resolution passed by the joint boards provided that Bene Jeshurun was not to be invited to join the union. After two years of this venture, in which Lilienthal's activities were closely regulated by the by-laws, a trifling matter induced one of the congregations to declare that its pulpit was vacant, thus releasing Lilien-

thal. He resigned from the other two congregations and the union did not survive his withdrawal. Emanuel, which had apparently lost ground during this period, due to Lilienthal's prestige and oratorical powers, tried to organize an amalgamation of all the German congregations into one large group, which would undertake a building campaign of huge proportions. But suspicions as to reform tendencies on the part of the Emanuel leaders, prevented the success of the project.[98]

(Somewhat similar to the union plan in New York, was the program for a Union School of the 3 congregations in Albany, described in a letter to the ASMONEAN in 1852.[99])

One persistent problem which forced a measure of unity on the New York Congregationswas the problem of changing cemetery laws, closely related to the question of burying poor unaffiliated Jews. In 1841, Shaaray Ha-Shomayim proposed that all the synagogues of New York unite in the purchase of a common "potters' field" for the Jewish poor. Nothing seems to have been done about this suggestion, but in 1848, the three German orthodox congregations, together with Emanuel, agreed on a joint plan to bury poor German Jews. They were to share expenses and take turns at interring the bodies in their respective cemeteries. In 1854, when some new German congregations had been organized, Shaaray Hashomayim again suggested that all should join in this arrangement. The new congregations, however, did not respond. This led to another call for a meeting of the New York congregations on the problem. One of the four cooperating congregations had

declared through its board that "unless the other congregations should shortly join the association, ...they will be compelled to withdraw.....the want of union of all the congregations for such charitable purposes is strongly felt." When we consider that the number of congregations had doubled between 1845 and 1855, and that the Jewish population had approximately trippled, we can readily see that the number of pauper dead must have sharply increased, constituting a severe burden on the four congregations. On July 22, 1855, ten congregations agreed to join in the movement,[100] and undertook to rotate the burials in their respective cemeteries, thereby sharing the burden equally.By 1857, however, the Jews' Hospital took over the problem, to a great extent, since they provided for the burial of those who died under their care, and this tended to include the majority of the poor unaffiliated Jews.[101]

The change in the cemetery laws constituted a serious problem for the Jews , since they steadfastly refused to abandon their dead, but persisted, often at great hardship to re-inter them whenever it became necessary. In 1850 the ASMONEAN called attention to the fact that the law would shortly prohibit interment below 40th Street and there would be need for a Jewish cemetery outside the limits of zoning imposed by the law. A union of congregations would have simplified the problem and lessened the cost.[102] The following year Lyon re-iterated the need for a large cemetery and suggested concrete steps to be taken.[103] No response followed these suggestions, though Lyon appealed

specifically to Shearith Israel to take the lead in this matter.[104] Finally in May of 1851, the Asmonean was able to report one tiny step forward when the members of two congregations agreed to joint purchase of a plot of ground in Long Island.[105]

New York did make some attempts at a religious union to regulate city-wide problems and avoid unauthorized persons from acting in an official religious capacity, as well as to prevent departures from the orthodox practises. Though not a religious leader, it was to a large extent the editor of the ASMONEAN who took the lead in urging action. He called for a Beth Din, and expressed the belief that "the movement would be hailed with joy and rapidly extend its powers, fusing the present incongruous masses into a compact whole, and rendering the American Israelites a body of great influence."[106] It is amusing how each leader tended to see his own particular goals achieved through whatever project was being considered at the time. The regulation of religious affairs had, after all, little to do with "great influence" but Lyon could not help associating with any type of unity, his own notions of power and influence to be achieved by welding the Jewish community into a strong active union. If the editor seriously believed the problem so simple and soluble, the letters that came in the following week must have disillusioned him. Both the reform and the orthodox groups opposed his suggestions. Lyon, in commenting on the objections to, and fear of, union, referred to Leeser's earlier attempt and similar experience with union plans. The reaction shwoed "how little prepared the community was for any com-

bined or serious action."[107] Yet, the ASMONEAN pointed out, both reform and orthodox leaders take exception to unauthorized persons acting improperly in matters of Jewish ritual![108]

Subsequently attempts were made to draw the several congregations together. The OCCIDENT refers to efforts in 1862 to form a congregational union and establish a religious authority.[109] The following year on April 12th, there was a meeting of the representatives of 14 congregations for the purpose of regulating shechitah. The plan to license and regulate the shochetim was adopted and referred to the congregations for their ratification.[110] Apparently the plan was not acceptable to the congregations for in December of 1868, the editor of the MESSENGER included the control of shechitah as one of the purposes of the central committee of the N.Y. congregations which he was advocating. He suggested that the congregations unite in forming a committee or board, similar to the Board of Delegates, to concern itself with local affairs, including marriage, divorce, shechitah, and philanthropy.[111]

Although these local attepts, and in a few cases, successes, might be regarded as a prelude to efforts for unity on a national scale, we see that actually they did not precede the various national attempts at religious and secular union. The tow efforts, along local and along national lines, went forward simultaneously, as we shall see better when we examine the various attempts at synods, congregational unions, and the national committees and

conventions called to protest civil and political matters. The local efforts have been considered first, because they seem somewhat less significant to this writer, and were the"proving grounds" for efforts on a wider scale. Actually the first attempt at national union which was at all successful, the Board of Delagates, did come into being rather late, when many of the efforts described in this chapter were already well on their way to either success or failure. The chief importance of the projects described in this chapter, is that they brought to the attention of the congregations and the general Jewish public, in a practical way, what was being written and urged by the periodicals. The experience of New York and Philadelphia, Chicago and Cincinnati, and probably there were other cities whose records we have not been able to examine, proved that there were certain important problems which could not be dealt with on a purely congregational basis. The need for unity was being recognized not only through the voice of the periodicals, but more specifically, through a series of concrete experiences at unity, though on a limited scale.

CHAPTER III

TOWARD A RELIGIOUS UNION

The first attempts to unite the congregations of America into a permanent religious union took place in 1841. On June 27th, Rev. Louis Solamon and Rev. Isaac Leeser proposed to a meeting of the Beth Israel Synagogue, Philadelphia that a plan be worked out to unite the congregations of the country into one religious organization. After committee meetings, such a plan was adopted for presentation to the other American congregations. The preamble of the plan stated the purpose of a union would be threefold: to establish an ecclesiastical authority, to promote education, and to effect unity of action and arbitration of differences among the American Jewish congregations.[112] The plan in full was presented in Volume III No.5 of the OCCIDENT a few years later. The main points of this plan were the following:

Article I Sect.1 An ecclesiastical board of 3 to be elected as the Central Religious Council, whose function would be to give decisions and correct interpretations on religious matters, by a majority vote. Sect. 9 These decisions were to be only advisory, and the Central Religious Council was not to exercise the power of excommunication for refusal to accept its views. Sect.11 Examination of Shochetim and Sect.15 Supervision of schools by the Central Religious Council.

Article II Schools were to be set up and maintained by the union, with teachers paid out of a common fund, and not by parents. The curriculum was to include:

a. "Hebrew.....catechism, Biblical commentaries.... introduction to Jewish oral law, if possible... elementary knowledge of Talmud.

b. "English grammar, composition, elocution, arithmetic, writing, singing, geography, universal history, history of the Jews, history of England, history of the United States.

c. "For higher classes, in addition to the above, Hebrew composition, Talmud, general Jewish literature, Latin, Greek, French, German, Spanish, Mathematics, natural history, natural philosophy, moral philosophy, political economy, and chemistry.

d. "any other useful matters to be added as the occasion may require."

Sect.5 A central high school was to be set up to teach the subjects in "c." above, and also to train Chazzanim and teachers, lecturers and female instructors. Article III The union. Delegates of regularly organized congregations were to meet November 7, 1841 in Philadelphia. Representation was to be proportionate to the number of seatholders in each congregation. The union was to meet bi-ennially. It was to elect a Board of Control, with 5 officers and 4 councillors, which was to act for the union between its sessions. The Central Board(probably the Board of Control) was to sit in Philadelphia, but the union was to meet alternately in Philadelphia New York and Baltimore. The union was not to interfere directly or indirectly in the internal affairs of a congregation, except to offer advice, and to judge between

contending parties(presumably between congregations).

The plan was certainly a comprehensive and ambitious one. Its educational program, especially, seems to embrace a curriculum, which even today would not be attempted without very careful consideration and planning.The union idea, no matter how carefully it was circumscribed and defined, was considered a danger to the infant reform movement in this country. And there can be no question that it was intended to strengthen orthodoxy, which for Leeser and others was synonymous with Judaism. When the plan promised to leave "internal affairs" of a congregation out of its sphere of activities for a union, Leeser probably had in mind such matters as internal discipline, finances, elections, etc., but it is inconceivable tha t he would have regarded reforms of the liturgy or the introduction of the family pew as a purely internal matter.

The reform opposition to the 1841 union plan was clearly stated at the time by the Beth Elohim congregation of Charleston, S.C. In a letter to the ASMONEAN, commenting on the Cleveland Conference of 1855, Mayer states that the attitude of his congregation to this latter conference was anticipated in its reaction to the Union Plan of 1841. This meeting in Philadelphia, called to plan a "religious union among the Israelites of America" was in reality an attempt to devise means and measures wherewith Reform.....could best be suffocated at its very birth."

The ecclesiastical authority was to be vested with such great power "that it could easily exercise the most des-

potic hierarchical sway, and soon not only prevent the spread of reform, but even order the abolition of whatever has already been achieved." The one reform minister then in America, Rev.G.Poznanski(then at Charleston), even if elected to the Central Religious Council, or to the Board of Control, would have been outvoted by the orthodox, so that the Council "might have resolved upon anything injurious to reform, or attempted to curtail, by their decision and orders, the freedom of conscience and belief of their co-religionists." Mayer admits that they did not have the power of excommunication, but they were to be vested with power "to designate the offences which of right deprive any offender from the usual Jewish rights and privileges(see OCCIDENT Vol.III pp.167, 175,222)". Mayer said that he felt the congregation was entirely right to oppose this union, and to see the real danger involved.

This opposition was staed in the following resolution, proposed by Abraham Moise, and adopted by the congregation ata general meeting on August 10, 1841:

"Resolved that the Congregation Beth Elohim cannot with propriety agree to bind themselves to the observance of a plan and regulations for the government of the several congregations in America, when it is plain that said plan and regulations have been adopted without their consent or concurrence, and by a small portion only of the aggregate number of Israelites in the United States.

"Resolved that all conventions, founded or created for the establishment of any ecclesiastical authority whatever, except such as may actually be necessary for the immediate local government of each congregation and within its own jurisdiction, are alien to the spirit and genius of the age in which we live, and wholly inconsistent with the spirit of American liberty.

"Resolved that even if it were practical to unite the various views of the several congregations throughout the United States of North America, so as to establish for their government any union of action or plan of regulation, it would nevertheless be unwise and inexpedient to aid in the building up of a system that cannot be lasting and which from its very nature must be hostile to the march of improvement, or the progress of enlightened and rational reform."

That the main purpose of the 1841 union plan was to devise "means and measures" to stifle the reform movement, as Mayer asserted, is not actually true. There can be doubt that Leeser had other objectives in mind. He was an ardent proponent of unity on all matters, as can be seen from the role he took in the Philadelphia charities, and on the Board of Delegates. Reform at that time was not so much of a menace or threat to orthodoxy, as it was by 1855. It would hardly be fair to conclude that the whole idea was to throttle reform. But that is not to say that there was no implied danger to reform at all. Poznanski and his congregation would certainly have been outvoted on all issues of reform and their moral position would have been weakened, even though no ban could have been formally pronounced on their movement.

But the reform group were not the only ones who opposed Leeser in his unity efforts. Shearith Israel, still in 1841 the strongest congregation in the country, would not support the plan. In 1859 Leeser revealed that he had learned from the Parnas of Shearith Israel, in a conversation shortly after the plan had been dropped, the reason that they had refused to participate. The ancient congregation feared that the German Jews would

outvote the Sephardim, and thus gain the ascendency in American Jewish life. Leeser was perfectly right in concluding, that the result of this rivalry within the orthodox group had weakened them and resulted in the growth of reform.[115] Shearith Israel enjoyed its position of leadership because of the wealth and distinction of its members and their contacts with the leading men of the day, and had a union been achieved, the rising German Jews would, very shortly, have controlled it. But it was only a matter of years until the German Congregations were able to usurp the position of the Sephardim, and in the interval, with no union to suppress or limit them, the reform group grew in strength. Thus the first attempt at union, though imaginatively conceived, carefully planned, came to naught, chiefly as the result of group rivalries, though in part because of the developing reform-orthodox conflict.

An important, though brief and unsuccessful attempt to achieve religious unity and liturgical uniformity was the Beth Din organized in New York in 1846 or 1847.[116] The Beth Din was organized by Dr.Max Lilienthal, one of the first of the German religious leaders to come to this country with rabbinical ordination. He invited Wise, at that time Rabbi of Albany and Syracuse, Dr.Herman Felsenheld, ateacher at Anshe Chesed and the Union School of the United German Congregations, and Kohlmeyer, a rabbinical student, to join him in the court. Lilienthal was to be Rosh Beth Din. The OCCIDENT carried an announcement of the organization of the court, in which it offered its services to every Jewish congregation in America

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without any dues or fees. The report of the proceedings of the Beth Din in the OCCIDENT, states that it met in New York in April of 1847. Lilienthal, Wise and Felsenheld were present. Lilienthal stated at the outset that the court was proceeding "without hierarchical pretension.....only as an advisory counsel." At this meeting Wise proposed the Minhag America "which treats the Tephilah according to the din, on scientific principles, and according to the demands of the times." The question of its adoption was laid over until the next meeting, to allow time for study. Lilienthal presented his English reader,for medium classes of Hebrew school, on Jewish doctrine. This too was tabled for study. Correspondence from European Rabbis on Chalitzah and the Agunah question, was read, and it was resolved to study the questions and present opinions at the next meeting and to exchange opinions with courts abroad. Questions submitted by American congregations were discussed and answered. Finally it was proposed to study the organization of new congregations in America, and to meet the
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following year in Albany.

In his Reminiscences, Wise states that he favored the idea of a Beth Din, but opposed the name.. He says the work was apportioned as follows:

Lilienthal - a history for Jewish schools

Felsenheld - a catechism

Kohlmeyer - a Hebrew grammar

Wise-a Minhag America

Wise says that the Beth Din,was to reassemble in the spring of 1847(the following year) with all these works completed.

He went to New York, with his manuscript of the Minhag America completed, "but the Beth Din was no more." Kohlmeyer had gone to New Orleans, and the plan had gome to naught. (Wise makes no mention of Lilenthal at this point, but it is likely that Lilienthal, having severed his connection with the United German Congregations, and turned his attention to his own school, had no further interest in a Beth Din.) Wise complained to Merzbacher, Rabbi of Emanuel, who had not been involved in the court at all. Merzbacher had probably been more concerned with Emanuel and the progress of reform within the congregation, than any union schemes. Wise says that he "could not be interested in anything outside his own congregation." It is interesting to note here Wise's early views on liturgical reforms. "It never occured to me to prepare a prayer-book for my own congregation, because I considered such an autocratic proceeding wrong, and I am still of the same opinion. I did not wish to sever the bond of synagogal unity."[119]

The second attempt to unite the Jews of America into a congregational union on a national basis took place in the years 1848-49. Leeser had not given up, even after the failure of 1841, and kept the idea alive in his OCCIDENT. In August of 1848 he discussed the idea of a union with A.A.Lindo of Cincinnati. Their thought was that a "Chamber of Deputies of American Israelites" similar to the British Board of Deputies might be formed. Leeser on his way back to Philadelphia laid the plan before several of the New York congregations, who prom-

ised to consider it.[120] Leeser had already exchanged letters with Wise in the spring of 1848 and they had agreed on the advantages of gathering the representatives of the congregations in order to unify and elevate American Jewry.[121] They had further agreed that Leeser was to advocate the idea in Philadelphia, and in the west and south, while Wise was to work for it in New York and the east. (It is rather curious that at this time it should have seemed advisable to make this division of territory, especially as only a few years later, Wise was the "man of the west" and Leeser continued to draw his following from the east.)

In October, apparently referring to a letter from Wise, Leeser urged that at least a meeting of rabbis and ministers should be called in the spring of 1849.[122] Wise responded to this suggestion with a formal call to ministers and laymen to meet in Philadelphia on the 2nd of Iyar, 5609. He appealed to Lilienthal, Kohlmeyer, Merzbacher, Isaacs and Felsenheld to support this call. In addition to the union idea, a suggestion for a moderate reform, based on modern Jewish principles, was included in the call.

The response to this call was certainly encouraging. Isaacs in New York was favorable to the idea. InCincinnati, where no doubt Lindo was exercising his influence, a meeting was called on December 11, 1848, preliminary to a gathering of the 3 congregations. Elias Mayer, President, and J.K.Gutheim, Secretary, reported on a plan to implement Wise's call for unity. The meeting agreed that any gathering of representatives should be made up of accredited

delegates to act responsibly for their congregations.[123] Rev.J.Rosenfield of Charleston, S.C. suggested in a letter to the OCCIDENT that there was weakness in Wise's call. The ministers who responded would be without authority to act for their congregations and might be involved in difficulties at home, resulting in the loss of their pulpits and possibly their livelihood. He therefore urged that congregations should join in the union movement, and send as their delegates, the ministers who serve them. In this way a union could really be achieved and schism within the congregations be prevented. He urged that a call be addressed to the congregations.[124]

Early in 1849, Wise and Lilienthal issued a circular in which, after setting forth the evils and disadvantages of disunity, they proposed specific measures for the organization of the union. It must include at least 20 congregations, each represented by one voting delegate. The purpose should be to advance the education of youth and instruction of adults, to publish Jewish books, and to discuss such other subjects as might be suggested in petitions from the congregations. Leeser was to be notified by the congregations who wished to participate, and to set the meeting date if 20 congregations responded before May 1, 1849.[125]

For a while all went well. Wise was invited to address a meeting of the Boards of the three German congregations, called for February 2nd by W.K.Franks, President of Shaaray Hashomayim. Lilienthal introduced Wise and he gave the main address. In response to his plea for action, the meeting adopted a resolution favor-

ing the convention of delagates of all congregations to establish a union, and also a Jewish press. The Boards agreed to urge their congregations to elect delagates at the next congregational meetings. Wise was invited to come to New York again, before the convention, for further preliminary discussions.[126] Meanwhile, Leeser had set June 11, 1849 as a tentative date for the convention, although no congregation had yet specifically agreed to be represented.[127]

Gradually notices came in to Leeser's editorial offices from various congregations signifying their intention of sending representatives to the union convention. On February 17, 1849, Albany's Bethel Congregation adopted a resolution to send a delagate, and in the preamble suggested a national periodical advocating "rational reform" be one of the projects of the union.[128] Other congregations which agreed to be represented were Mickve Israel of Philadelphia, B'nai Jeshurun of Cincinnati, The Portugese and German congregations of New Orleans, Shaaray Hashomayim of Mobile, and one of the St.Louis congregations.[129] The reform congregation of Charleston S.C., true to its tradition, declined to join a union.[130]

Meanwhile in New York, some of the radical reformers, inspired by some of Wise's remarks, and for other reasons, had organized a "Society of Friends of Light", a lay group of reformers under the influence of the German Rabbinical Conferences, which proved ultimately most embarrassing to Wise. Emanuel had dissociated itself from the union idea, but some of its members were among those who established the "Society of Friends". This society, combined with

Albany's resolution for a journal advocating "rational reform", was enough to frighten the orthodox congregations into believing that the union plan was a scheme of the reformers to advance their own purposes. In a letter to the OCCIDENT, J.Beckel insisted that both "Israel's Herold" (Edited by Isidore Busch advocating reform) and the "Society of Friends" came into being as aresult of Wise's speaking in New York, the second time, and thus proved the reform tinge of the proposed conference. Leeser tried to counter this fear on the part of the orthodox group, by showing that Shaaray Tefilah, the "ultra-orthodox" group of New York, had elected their minister, S.M.Isaacs as a delegate, even theugh they knew that reform congregations would be represented.Isaacs apparentlt had no fear of the danger from reform and urged that a common ground could be found.[131] But since 20 congregations had not been heard from, Leeser announced that the convention could not meet.[132]

As time went on, although two more congregations, one in Richmond and one in Augusta, Georgia, had agreed to participate, more and more disagreements were raised. Lindo, in a letter to Leeser, had already urged that no congregation "assuming to itself to deviate from the religious institutions, forms and observances received by the whole house of Israel" be admitted to any union and insisted that the union could not carry out or authorize any reforms.[133] Another correspondent, J.M.Falkenau, criticisedthe circular of Wise and Lilienthal for not clearly setting forth that the union was to be founded and based on orthodox grounds. He had also opposed equal represen-

tation for all congregations, and favored that the voting delegates should be proportionate both to the number of seatholders, and the financial support which a congregation was to give to the union. In addition he opposed the idea of an elected ecclesiastical authority. Such authority would be meaningless, since matters of law "are left to the decisions of the wisest individual, most skilled in the law, and never decided by an elected board."[134]

On the other hand, the "Society of Friends", claiming Wise as an honorary member, insisted it was in favor of reform and the union idea, and that its purpose was to dispel ignorance in matters of Jewish history, literature and religion.[135] This could only add to the fears of the orthodox, and Wise himself later wrote that the "Society of Friends" stood in the way of the union idea and had discredited reform as he(Wise) understood and advocated it. The enthusiasm which he had tried to evoke for the union, the society diverted to a radical reform movement, and those who heard reform advocated by this group, could only become more orthodox.[136] All in all, with Merzbacher already committed against the union idea, and with no support from the 3 German congregations, New York was completely opposed to the plan, and as Leeser had written Wise, without New York, there could be no union.[137]

When in 1849 Lyon came out for union in the ASMONEAN, a good deal of correspondence ensued, some of which threw light on the attempts at union in 1848-49. Wise, writing in his formal, somewhat histrionic style, asserted that his cause(union) was misrepresented, and "all the pious

attempts of my orthodox friends proved a total failure." He referred to the suspicions that were voiced that he had in mind to hatch reform plans and thus destroy Judaism. Denying the truth of such rumors and charges, Wise offered to stay out of the struggle for unity, if it was felt this would help matters.[138] Lyon made light of Wise's fear that he was the cause of failure, and urged him to continue with his plans and efforts for unity.[139] Leeser took note of this letter in the OCCIDENT, and expressed surprise at some of the statements Wise had made. He objected to Wise's claim that he(Wise) had called for the union, as if the union idea was original with him. Leeser also questioned the need for such great shame and disappointment on Wise's part over the failure of the plan. Leeser pointed out he had already tried and failed in 1841, and was not the least bit ashamed or surprised that the union plan had not been accepted. The idea was new and would therefore require time. Though he differed with Wise and disagreed with his reform tendencies, he urged him not to retire from the struggle, and certainly not to feel that the cause of failure was his.[140]

Writing in December of 1849, Isaacs summarized the reaction to the union idea as "more opposition than zeal, more fear than enterprise". "Its promoters have been stigmatized as men imbued with the reforming spirit of the age, as persons tinctured with the desire of self-aggrandisment. ...all who have dared to raise a voice or lift a pen in favor of a convention, have had their supposed motives brought to light, in order to make it known...

...that honesty is not found in any of its promoters .....we deem it a duty....to point out the ruin that must inevitably overtake us, if in defiance of all warning, we are determined to stand still, while everything around us is progressing." Isaacs concluded with a plea for a convention to condider the problems of education, religious leadership, and the lack of union. Coming from an orthodox leader, this was a remarkable utterance. There can be no doubt, that had Isaacs' point of view prevailed, and been shared by others, there would have been union and some progress, but of course no reform.

Though both Leeser and Lyon had hastened to relieve Wise of responsibility for the failure of the 1848-49 plan, it is not so easy today, looking back on the whole picture, to come to the same conclusions. For Wise, union and reform went hand in hand, and it was largely because he and his congregation had raised certain mild reform ideas as goals for the union, that the orthodox group for the most part withdrew in fear. Wise felt that almost all Jews could be united around his standard of Reform, and it took the experience of 1855 to disabuse him of this notion. The 1848-49 venture was but a prelude to this first conference of rabbis and ministers in Cleveland, 6 years later.

Although Leeser did not give up the union idea after the second failure, it was Wise who took the lead in calling the next conference for the purpose of union in 1855. By this time Wise was in Cincinnati, had a congregation which gave him complete support, and also, what he had asked for in Albany, a "national periodical advo-

cating rational reform." Through the medium of the ISRAELITE, Wise had been calling for a College and an orphan asylum to serve the American Jewish community. Attempts at a College had been made in Philadelphia and New York, as well as in Cincinnati, and there were societies everywhere to aid widows and orphans, but the problem was "how to unite these efforts in one focus." In addition to these problems, there were those of separate schools (the advisability of parochial education) and the need for good text books for Hebrew schools. Obviously there was need for a large private conference, of an exploratory nature, after which a synod elected by congregations and societies might be organized.[141] Pointing out the pioneer nature of the Jewish community in America, the responsibility resting on the present generation to build for the future, and citing the examples of the conference of Rabbis at Offenbach, Wise argued that only through a similar conference could a union be established and the position of the American Jewish community be consolidated.[142] There had to be a middle road between extreme Rabbinic Judaism which Wise felt was impossible, and the reform which threw off "Cabbalistic and Rabbinic literature", so that there was no guide or basis for development, with the result that each congregation would produce its own law. There was a principle of progress in Mosaic legislation, which Wise promised to show in future articles. He also pledged to demonstrate that a triennial synod, such as he was proposing in order to regulate Jewish life, was authorized by the Talmud itself, to make changes.[143]

Sensing that there would be doubt and suspicion in the minds of the orthodox, Wise promised that the Synod would do nothing contrary to the Bible, the Talmud, the Constitution or the laws of the United States! This he felt should satisfy even the ultra-orthodox.[144]

It should be noted that that what Wise was calling for was a private meeting of Rabbis to thrash out certain problems, to see what basis could be found to unite all groups in a conference and synod. He was more than willing to compromise, but he expected the other party to do as much. He had stated in advance that the Talmud would not be abandoned, and even though this had a special and subtle meaning for him and his school of thought, it might have been acceptable to the orthodox, had they heard it explained and argued it through with such menas Wise and Lilienthal. Instead, all except Leeser stayed away in fear, and thus there was never a real meeting of minds. There was only a veritable barrage of correspondence and charges in the press, cries of trickery, treason and deceit. Wise was an able Talmudist and had a grasp of Jewsih history. Had he and the orthodox met at Cleveland there might have been some unity on the basis of mutual understanding. But it should be remembered that Wise was not calling for the synod or conference itself at this first meeting at Cleveland, but only for a private meeting of an unofficial nature, to lay the groundwork for whatever could be done later.

Letters began coming in to the ISRAELITE indicating that therewwas a sufficient number of men interested in the union idea to justify calling a conference at this

time. Wise urged that congregations make it easier for their ministers to attend such a conference by paying their expenses.[145] Although July 30th had been suggested as a tentative date, Wise agreed, after meeting with Merzbacher, Lilienthal, Rothenheim and Cohn, that more time was needed to prepare for the conference.[146] Another suggestion had been made, that the conference meet October 15th, and finally Wise issued the formal call to ministers and congregations' delegates, to meet October 17, 1855 in Cleveland to deliberate on 5 points:

1. Articles of union
2. Plan for a synod
3. Minhag America
4. Higher and lower education
5. Other business proposed to the conference.

The call was published in the ISRAELITE, the OCCIDENT, and the ASMONEAN.[147] It was signed by the following Rabbis:

Cohn of Albany
Guenzberg of Baltimore
Hochheimer " "
Illowy of St.Louis
Kalish of Cleveland
Lilienthal of Cincinnati
Merzbacher of New York
Rothenheim of Cincinnati
Wise " " signing as the Corresponding Secretary.

Wise states in his Reminiscences that these were all the officiating Rabbis in America at that time.[148] The ASMONEAN

announced that in addition to these signers of the call Leeser, Isaacs, S.Jacobs, and Mayer of Charleston would attend. All were to attend in their private capacities so that it would be up to the congregations to take action on the results of the conference. Lyon also reported that the proposed organiztion of the conference was that Dr. Guenzberg should be chairman, with Wise as German secretary and Leeser as English secretary.[149]

Leeser in Philadelphia had been carefully noting the plans which Wise had been formulating, and began to comment on them from the outset. He too wanted union, but for reasons quite different from those of Wise. He felt it was absolutely necessary for the "friends of religion" to counter-act the work of the reformers. Referring to the four varieties of reform in America, the Charleston, Baltimore, New York and Cincinnati types, he saw in the calling of a synod the attempt to compromise the difference and work out a ritual and practise acceptable to all. Leeser was clearly afraid of the danger to orthodoxy which a consolidated reform group would constitute.[150] A month later, Leeser pointed out that a successful synod, shunned by the orthodox and left to the reformers exclusively, "might give attone to the religious sentiment for centuries, perhaps, in America." Leeser was anything but asleep to the realities of his times! He urged all the orthodox ministers and leaders to join the proposed synod or conference and "restrain them(the reformers) from doing evil, and unite with them if they act righteously and labor jointly for the peace and welfare of Israel".[151]

Again we see, that for different reasons, Leeser and Wise were advocating the same practical action -- that all should attend the conference, regardless of their position on the reform-orthodox conflict. Had the advice been heeded, there is no telling what might not have been accomplished, since there might have been a disposition to "labor jointly for the peace and welfare of Israel" once the opposing groups had met and exchanged ideas, and worked out their difference. Lilienthal and Wise had a unique idea about Talmud as a development or movement, which they were well able to defend. The orthodox might have been influenced by this point of view, had they met face to face, and not tried to battle out their differences afterwards in the columns of the Israelite and the Occident.

Leeser seemed quite pleased to report that he, Isaacs and Jacobs(all orthodox) were going to the conference.[152] Lilienthal in Cincinnati did not seem to be so worried over the reform-orthodox conflict, and urged that all shades of opinion -- all parties be represented at the conference. Only in this way, through an unprejudiced interchange of opinions among a representative group, could a union be established.[153]

Finally after all preliminary matters had been taken care of, delegates elected by congregations, the conference opened at 2 P.M. on October 17, 1855 in Cleveland. It was called to order by Dr.Lilienthal, and Rev.Kalish was appointed Chairman pro-tem, with Lilienthal acting as secretary. The proceedings were conducted in German.

Leeser was surprised at the informality of the proceedings, as no credentials were presented or checked. It was agreed that each congregation be allowed two votes, since some were represented by one and some by two delegates. Those present were:

Ministers: Lilienthal, Rothenheim and Wise of Cincinnati
Adler of Detroit
Gotthelf of Louisville
Fould, Levi, and Kalish of Cleveland
Cohn of Albany and later
Merzbacher of New York
Leeser of Philadelphia(first only as a reporter, later as delegate of the Portugese congregation of Richmond)

Laymen: Miller and Kahn of Cincinnati
Lehman, Cohen and Schwab of Cleveland.

Of the signers of the call, Hochheimer, Guenzberg and Illowy, all orthodox, were absent. Isaacs and Jacobs, who had expected to attend, were also not present. It is interesting to note that had these 5 orthodox leaders been present, they together with Leeser, Fould, Levi, Adler, Cohen, and Lehman would have outnumbered the reform leaders present 11 - 10, and probably have changed the nature of this conference.

As things were, Wise was elected President of the Conference, Cohn Vice-President, and Lilienthal Secretary. After some introductory remarks, Wise presented a paper containing the following principles: that the Bible is the "revealed word of God, given to us by divine inspiration" and that the Talmud "contained the logical, and

and legal development of holy scriptures, and that its decisions must bind us in all matters of practise and duty", that the conference and all future synods would act in accordance with these principles, that the "illiberal assertions of the Talmud are not the kind referred to, and have no binding force on us."

In his reports to the ISRAELITE, Wise took great delight in describing the effect which this statement had on the orthodox group. He had noted their suspicions towards the reformers, who were in the majority. They had kept somewhat apart, Leeser sitting by himself in the rear and up to this point taking no part in the proceedings. The principles which Wise offered as a basis for future synods were like a bombshell in their effect. Leeser and the other orthodox leaders were at first astonished, but then beamed with satisfaction. Leeser came forward and expressed the wish that his orthodox colleagues might have known in advance of this statement, since some had remained away out of fear of reform tendencies. This principle would unquestionably attract them to a future conference. He strongly urged that the conference, after adopting this principle, adjourn to an eastern city at a future date , so that these absent colleagues could be included in the work of the conference. In his enthusiasm at the possibility of union on what seemed to him to be thoroughly orthodox grounds, Leeser said that"the 17th of October now should be a holiday for American Israelites if this platform was adopted by the conference." Wise in his report to the ISRAELITE was equally jubilant. "This was a conclusion

of peace without any skirmishes. There are no longer two parties in the American synagogue."[154]

On motion to reread the statement, and action on it by paragraphs, several differences of opinion were now discovered, but only over the exact words to be used. Wise, Merzbacher, and Leeser finally worked from eleven at night to four in the morning to make the statement acceptable to all present.[155] The statement on the Talmud, which was the crux of the matter, was finally adopted in these words: "The Talmud contains the traditional, logical and legal exposition of the sacred Scriptures." Fully satisfied and expecting that the conference would now adjourn and not undertake any important matters until the orthodox could join with them, Leeser now left Cleveland to return to Philadelphia.

Leeser, however, was to be disappointed. Wise had no intention of adjourning, now that a conference had finally been gathered. After the platform had been adopted, a synod committee was appointed, and the Minhag America was referred to another committee, which was to consider it from the point of view of liturgy, ritual, casuistics and queries(?). The question of separate schools for Jewish children was debated at length and referred to another committee for a report to the next synod. After the matter of schools, including Wise's project, the Zion Collegiate Association, had been disposed of, the organization and constitution of a synod was debated for two days. It was finally agreed that in the proposed synod, every congregation was to have one delegate at least, and those with over 100 members

were to have two delegates. All qualified rabbis and preachers, plus elected delegates, were to constitute the synod -- if 70 men were assembled and 1/3 of their number were qualified rabbis or preachers it was to be a synod. If less than 70 were assembled the gathering would only be a conference.But only the decision of the synod would be binding; conference resolutions would be merely instructive. The synod was to consider all aspects of the Jewish community and its religious problmes, except those which specifically concerned only the individual congregations. It was not to interfere in such internal matters. No decision of the synod could be contrary to the Bible, the Talmud, the Constitution or the laws of the United States. All religious questions were to be referred to an ecclesiastical committee, made up of all the qualified rabbis and preachers, and their report was to be accepted only by a 2/3 vote of the synod. Secular matters were to be referred to committees also, but thier reports could be accepted by a simple majority. Each synod was to be self-governing, and was to set the time and place for the next meeting.[156]

The reaction to the Cleveland Conference was quite different from what Wise, or for that matter, Leeser, had anticipated. Neither the eastern orthodox group, nor the radical reform leaders were at all satisfied. Wise and Leeser were both denounced as traitors -- Wise for supposedly embracing orthodoxy, and Leeser for endorsing, by his participation, reform. The happy compromise, which was achieved through the Talmud resolution, rested on each

side having its own idea of what the Talmud was. To the orthodox it could only be the decisions as codified in the Shulchan Aruch, while for Wise and Lilienthal it was the spirit of progress and growth, the principles by which the Talmud had advanced Judaism beyond the Bible. As soon as the conference had taken cognizance of the Minhag America, it became clear that the two parties were not at all in agreement, and then the charges and counter-charges began to fly thick and fast. The spirit of the controversy grew so bitter that the Editor of the ASMONEAN, while trying to adhere to his policy of allowing all groups to speak through his columns, had to insist that remarks be free from personal references and threatened to censor all articles which were not written on a decent level.[157]

David Einhorn, Rabbi of Har Sinai Congregation in Baltimore, was among the first to attack Wise on the issue of the Talmud. He prevailed upon his congregation to publish a sharp protest, taking exception to the resolution that the Talmud was the legal and obligatory commentary of the Bible. The resolution adopted by the Congregation cited medieval scholars and the German Rabbinical Conferences as authorities who differed with or opposed parts of the Talmud. Typical of what resulted in these discussions, charges and counter-charges, was the counter-protest of Abraham Rice(probably the first ordained Rabbi to come to America in the 19th century) refuting Einhorn's use of quotations from Maimonides, Ibn Ezra, etc. in his attack on the authority of the Talmud.[158] The contestants on each side of the struggle hurled their attacks, often on a very personal level, and then stood on their dignity and refused

to take note of the remarks of their opponents.Thus when Einhorn accused Wise of mutilating his introductory sermon, in the ISRAELITE, Wise answered that he could not take note of such a charge, since it was "written in a style becoming neither the station he(Einhorn) occupies nor the personal character of a scholar."...."As soon as the doctor, in a style becoming the dignity of the subject, will address us his remarks " Wise would undertake to answer them![159] In response to the official protest of the Baltimore group, the standing committee of the Cleveland Conference(Wise, Lilienthal and Miller) gladly acknowledged the difference in platforms between the Cleveland Conference and the Har Sinai Verein and "consider it beneath their dignity to answer to insults."[160] Wise privately expressed doubt as to whether the members were completely or even partially competent to judge, and whether they were all actually present at the adoption of the resolution, and agreed to it.[161]

Leeser partly to defend his own position, and partly out of disappointment and anger, that the conference had gone ahead and not heeded his suggestion to adjourn and meet in the east, turned about and attacked the Conference. The cause of union, he said, was damaged because the reformers had taken control of the project, and especially because they had endeavored to construct a platform "broad enough to afford standing room for all shades of opinion prevailing among us." What had been a great achievement, a milestone in progress, was now the cause of failure! Leeser insisted that no platform was needed, no legislation

on religion was required. The law was given at Sinai, and the only need was for a union to promote education, a uniform system of charity, a publication society, a means of training a Jewish ministry, and to effect harmony in the management of public affairs. Any conference or union must resolve in advance not to"meddle in religion". Thus neither the "stand-still, nor the progressive party" can suffer any damage from a union.[162] Leeser was not asking for much, only that religious education be promoted, religious works published, ministers trained, and harmony in public matters effected, and all this without any understanding on the burning issue of the day -- the reform-orthodox controversy! Leeser was too realistic to think that reform could be stopped now, but he was not realistic enough to see that it had to reckoned with, either through compromise, or by accepting a parting of the ways, a permanant religious division among American Jews. He though it could be overlooked, while union was achieved on"practical matters".

Lilienthal, writing in the ISRAELITE during and after the conference, had a realistic hope, based on his feeling that scientific application of Talmudic principles would justify all the reforms which were necessary for progress. He hoped that on this ground, all but the extreme orthodox leaders would join with them. He pointed out that there was no basis for all the agitation. The conference had not made any decisions, had only laid the foundation for future discussions. It had adopted a platform which he thought both parties could agree on and proceedfrom. Committees had been appointed, but in no case had any religious de-

cisions been made. The procedure of a 2/3 vote on all religious questions was surely sufficient protection against rash actions.

Now that the platform had been adopted as a basis for unity, it remained to investigate the Talmud for its spirit and authority, to separate the traditions, legal regulations, and find out "the ways and means by which its theories, according to its own comments, may be further adapted to the wants and emergencies of our times...." "We declare as senseless and useless any reform not justified by Talmudic principles, or not rooted in the development of Jewish history."

Lilienthal held that the Cleveland Conference went beyond the German Rabbinical Conferences, in that it defined its principles and did not merely set down decisions, without any basis or clear authority. The orthodox Jew could be led to reforms, if such a basis were always maintained. This was the purpose of the committees - to do scientific work to support whatever decisions might be adopted in the future. In dealing with vital and timely questions, the conference would revive an interest in Jewish affairs, stir up settled minds, and revivify Jewish life. The conference, he felt, cemented friendships, allayed suspicions -- everyone present seemed to agree that everyone else was working for the good of Israel.[163] Lilienthal pointed out how bankrupt was the position of the Baltimore group, who by their stand would leave nothing to Judaism but a formal rationalism. They abolished everything but Sabbath and circumcision, and they might as well have dropped these too, and thus

win over the Christian(since no Jews would favor their philosophy). A handful might accept this sort of Judaism, but the vast majority would reject it completely. The basic platform of the conference was the intelligent reading of the Talmud for its principles and guiding thought,as a basis for legal reform and development. A synod could do this work authoritatively and intelligently, and thus unite the broad mass of Jews.

Lilienthal, it must be remembered, was not dreaming when he wrote this. He was present at the conference and active at all its sessions. Apparently, the men gathered there, though from different parties, were able to see a basis for cooperation and work together for unity and progress. It was not those who attended the sessions, even of the orthodox group who attacked the conference. It was those who stayed away. This was the real tragedy of the conference. It is reasonable to assume that had the other orthodox leaders been present, they might have been just as able and willing to compromise and cooperate as their colleagues who were present. From this point of view, Lilienthal was entirely right in believing that union was possible even on the basis of the Talmud. The trouble was that those who stayed away became determined to defeat the conference in every way. They had no use for principles or for the idea of development. For them Talmud was no more a development than Bible was, and they decided that there was no need for change, except in men, who should change by returning to the former ways of blind adherence to all that the codes required. Had these orthodox leaders

looked ahead, and met with the reformers in an unprejudiced spirit, they could easily have prevented any radical reforms, and yet worked out a uniform system of practise, acceptable to all. The question to be asked is whether Wise would have been willing to be bound by such a synod which might have stopped all reform through the 2/3 vote. Wise and Lilienthal were so taken with their own ideas that they embarked on the task of analyzing the Talmud and Reform as abasis of progress.[165]

Wise was bitterly disappointed in the outcome of the Conference. That the orthodox denounced it was not so surprising, although Wise thought he had won over Leeser, and through him the orthodox group. But the attack of the radical reform leaders was a bitter pill, since Wise knew that the reform group had to stand together if they were to hold their own in any conference of all groups. He compared the fate of the conference in Cleveland to that of the German Rabbinical Conferences which were attacked and excommunicated by the orthodox while the extreme reformers stood aloof or slandered it.[166]

Reviewing the whole affair in later years, Wise saw that he had made many mistakes. The greatest hope for success had grown out of the fact that the call had emanated from all the Rabbis in America, the orthodox joining with the reform in this way. Hence there was really prospect for a union. Not one word had been published in opposition to the conference before it met. This too was a reason for high hopes. But by assuming the leading role, Wise had

antagonized certain groups, who were probably more emotionally aroused against reform, which they associated with Wise, than against any specific acts of the conference. Wise admitted that Cohn or Merzbacher should have been elected President of the Conference, Leeser Vice-President, and "a scribe and not an orator(Lilienthal) should have been elected secretary." There was apparently no objection to consistent and legal reformsamong the orthodox leaders who were present at the conference; unity among the delegates had been achieved and all felt that they could work together in unity.

When the conference adjourned, Wise "imagined that the battle had been fought and won. We all knew we could gain the consent of the synod to any reform we wanted....hence we believed to have gained a powerful and lawful organ for progress." Here Wise was probably a little too sure of himself, and this is something which his friends objected to. (See the comments of Mayer below.) That all was not perfect and harmonious soon dawned on Wise. Protests from Charleston and New York, as well as Baltimore were raised. "No one expected them; for they proceeded from the reform camp whose active support we counted on confidently." This was the real blow to Wise's hopes, "for without union among the reformers, who were in the minority(on the national scene) no progressive measures could be hoped for from the synod.. ....all the efforts for union were shattered, for the moment at any rate, by these protests. The best thing..... would have been to go to Charleston, Baltimore and New York in order to effect a recall of the protests, by personal

efforts and explanations. I would have done this, if honor and self-respect had not forbidden it". Insults and vile abuse, however, soon cooled Wise's enthusiams and dampened his optimism. "We were treated like.... a crowd of political bummers and adventurous tramps..... and that too in language, the like of which we had never met before, and disclosed hatred, rage and fanaticism, rather than instruction and argument. The whole purpose of the conference and the proposed synod was passed over in silence, and the Talmud, together with the men who attended the meeting, were made the chief objects of attack. 167

What made the failure of the conference an especially keen disappointment to Wise, was that he had hoped, by his bold stand on the Talmud, to be the instrument toward unity. He was willing to compromise with the moderate orthodox group for the sake of union. Wise might have rallied a larger group to the conference, had he not saved his "bomb-shell for the sessions, and instead, presented it in advance to the orthodox, either personally, or in correspondence. He might also have won over Einhorm and Mayer, had he approached them and explained what he meant by Talmud. That complete and perfect harmony would have prevailed is doubtful, but had these men met face to face, as did the 21 leaders in Cleveland, possibly a greater number might have been drawn together, so that a truly middle-of-the-road movement might have taken root, embracing all but the extreme leaders on both sides. As things turned out, only a small handful of the moderate reform group were at all united by the conference.

To undersatnd a little better why some of the reform group did not participate in the conference, we can turn to the reactions of Mayer of the Beth Elohim congregation in Charleston. Mayer was by no means in the class of Einhorn, for though he disagreed, in principle, with Wise, he defended him personally.

Mayer had opposed Wise's idea that a union should embrace orthodox and reform groups. He felt that the orthodox would never agree to even "legal reforms". "Union is possible only in every party itself -- but not between the several parties." Wise had stated that the matter of an organ in the synagogue could be left to each individual congregation, but Mayer objected that this was completely contradictory to the idea of a synod. If the Minhag America and other liturgical matters are to be left to the decisions of the synod, how can the question of an organ be decided by an individual congregation? Mayer insisted if he joined in a synod, he would feel morally bound to submit in all matters which the synod decided.

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We have already referred to Mayer's letter to the ASMONEAN in connection with the 1841 union plan. The resolution adopted by the congregation then was clearly applicable to the Cleveland Conference, according to his viewpoint. The proposed synod is a "despotic hierarchy" whose decisions are to be "legally valid". It might not be able to compel its decisions, but if a congregation voluntarily joined the union, it would in all honesty be required to submit to the authority which it had helped to create. Drs. Wise,

Cohn, and Merzbacher would be honor bound to accept and follow the resolutions of the synod, even though a 2/3 vote of the orthodox might oppose the use of the organ, for example. And a rabbi, thus bound, might find his congregation opposed to this view, and be forced to resign his pulpit, and make way for a (reform) rabbi who was not bound in his views by the action of the synod.

Mayer declared he favored a union which was practical. In March 1854 he had written to Wise that it was now possible to call a deliberative meeting of reform ministers, since there were enough of them to constitute a working group. Wise had agreed and suggested the names of those who were likely to be receptive to such a program. Apparently Wise had had visions of a grander project, and so the Cleveland Conference had been called on a broad all-inclusive scope. Mayer felt that the Cleveland platform would not make for unity even though representatives of both parties had agreed to it. What most disturbed Mayer, was the inconsistency of Wise's principles and actions. He questioned Wise's right to make reforms before the Conference or synod approved. "Is he so certain that the synod created, as it were, by him and his co-adjutors, would exercise its hierarchical powers only so far as it is in accordance with his views, and give sanction to all he had done beforehand?" Mayer did not question Wise's sincerity, and did not brand him a traitor or a renegade, though he did question his consistency and correctness. He still hoped to meet with him and others in a conference(on a reform basis) but not in a synod, which he considered too

much of a hierarchical institution![169]

Mayer's criticism, given cooly and in a friendly manner, were effective, and Wise came to realize that union could not be based on an alliance with the orthodox group. He had had this bitter experience, had seen his fondest hopes dashed to earth by the personal animosity which made open-mindedness and clear judgement impossible. No one can say whether Wise was personally responsible for the failure of this important attempt at unity. He was too strongly identified with reform to be the bridge between the extremes of either party. But whether another man, Lilienthal for example, could have succeeded, is pure speculation.

This much is certain - from the point of view of unity, broad, all inclusive unity, the religious field was definitely beyond such a program. There were parties - sharply divided groups - and there seemed little prospect that they could ever be drawn together on a religious basis. In fact, so bitterly did Wise regard the eastern leaders, both reform and orthodox, that he found it impossible to work with them for years to come. When the orthodox group worked out the Board of Delegates which had nothing to do with religion, Wise could not help seeing in it an attempt to kill reform. As for the radical reformers, Wise ignored them completely for the present and turned all his attention to the moderate reform group of the middle west.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS - SPURS TO UNITY

To promote Jewish education, especially on a higher level, and to train ministers for the American Jewish community was considered by all parties as a national problem. There were schools attached to congregations, and in some cities, attempts had been made to run a school in connection with several congregations. But, for the most part, such schools were on an elementary level, and did not solve the problem of promoting Jewish scholarship, or of providing trained leaders for the American congregations. Almost every essay on union included the education question as one of the reasons why union was essential. Conversely, the attempts to establish a college, university or seminary led to some measure of unification, as it was too much for a single congregation to undertake such a project.

Early in 1853, while yet in the east, Wise started to agitate for a college. He wondered where teachers and preachers would be procured in 20 years, and urged the I.O.B.B. still in its early stages, to reflect on this problem.[170] In August he presented a plan, the first of many to follow, in which he considered the cost, the curriculum, and the organization of an American Hebrew College, to include Jewish as well as general studies, to prepare ministers and others for a practical vocation. The basis of representation in the government of the college was to be one vote per each $100 share bought by a congregation. Wise said he knew of 83 congregations at this time, each of which could buy at least one share. Eager to organize such a project, Wise offered to travel about to support the idea.[171]

As soon as Wise was settled in Cincinnati, with a cooperative congregation to back him and a newspaper to carry his message abroad, he began to work for the college idea in earnest. His idea was to "establish a College on the plan of the German universities, connected with a theological seminary, and a seminary for teachers, in order to promulgate science and the interests of Judaism among our fellow-citizens." A meeting was called for Sunday, October 8th at which Wise was to be the chief speaker.[172] Probably at this meeting the Zion Collegiate Association was established, and after a series of meetings, a constitution and by-laws were adopted and officers elected. Over 200 Cincinnatians responded to the idea and joined the movement. It was hoped from the outset that similar associations would be formed in other cities and the by-laws stated that each sister society could elect one delegate for 25 members to sit on the board of the proposed college. The only condition was that $50 had to be contributed for each delegate.[173]

Finally on January 1, 1855, a call to the Israelites of America was published by the Cincinnati group. 2000 copies of the call, in English and in German, were sent out.[174] The call listed the officers as Mosely Ezekiel - President, H.Mack - Vice-President, I.M.Wise - Corresponding Secretary, and M.Helman - Secretary of Finance.[175]

The ASMONEAN carried the call, and its editor sagely warned that such a project was far from easy to carry through. "The undertaking thus proposed....will ripen into reality if the Hebrew communities throughout the west can be brought to a just conception of the many benefits deriva-

ble from possessing an educational institution in America, capable of raising a class of students, qualified to take charge of the various ministerial offices.....Experience, however,.....has shown that there are immense difficulties to be cleared away in centralizing Jewish support for any object which does not offer an immediate return, either by supplying a pressing local want, or meeting an emergency, the claim of which is not to be evaded."[176]

Wise's optimism, however, was unbounded, and when an announcement, with an appeal for donations, came to his attention, stating that a"Jewish Theological Seminary and Scientific Institution" had been incorporated, and was trying to establish itself, Wise commented favorably on the project. It should be carried forward "by the united efforts of all" and Wise was certain it could be fitted into the scheme of the Zion Collegiate Association! The humor of this suggestion lies in the fact that the stated purpose of the proposed school was "the perpetuation of the ancient and orthodox Jewish faith, its customs, rites and ceremonies."[177]

Branches of the Z.C.A. were formed in Louisville March 7, in Baltimore May 13, in Philadelphia May 20, in New York City (No.1 at Temple Emanuel and No.2 at Covenant Hall, sponsored by the I.O.B.B.) on May 27, in Albany June 3.[178] This list reads like the engagements of a speaking tour, which in reality was what had happened. Wise spoke in each of the cities, and appealed for support for his plan. The result was the organization of all these branches. In each case, officers were elected, constitutions adopted, and subscriptions pledged. Wise stated that the governmet of the pro-

posed the college would be democratic and representative.[179]

As was almost inevitable, the question of orthodoxy was raised. Jacob Ezekiel of Richmond, while praising the Z.C.A., pointed out that it would be attacked if the reform group made inroads into its management. Wise's interpretation of Jewish history(a reference to his History of the Israelitish Nation etc.published 1854) had raised many doubts as to his orthodoxy, and his leadership might damage the cause. Ezekiel urged Wise to state his position clearly. In reply Wise said that he considered himself an orthodox Jew, but that this did not really matter, since he would be subordinate to the elected delegates who would guide and control the college, and as for himself, he desire no office.[180]

In the summer of 1855, the ISRAELITE carried a plan for a four year preparatory college to be established at once as a forerunner of whatever institution the Z.C.A. might eventually organize. This plan was presumably the work of Wise, and it included all the specifications, curriculum, finances, government, etc.and suggested immediate action. The Cincinnati Z,C.A. board met and referred this plan to a committee on August 6th, at the same time instructing Wise to get facts about the sister organiztions, who were the officers and how large was the membership.[181] On September 5th, at a general meeting, the board's recommendation to act on Wise's plan was adopted, and a few days later a Board of Trustees was elected to manage the new venture - the Zion College. The Cincinnati Z.C.A. undertook to pay all the expenses, but Wise called on the sister societies to elect delegates and send students(as well as funds, presumably) according to plan.[182]

At first the opening date was set for October 25, and it was announced that Lilienthal, Dessar and Wise would be the instructors. Tuition was set at $50 per annum.[183] Before Wise left for Cleveland in the fall of 1855, it was announced that the Cincinnati society had subscribed $900 to the college and elected 9 delegates to the board. Wise had been elected President of the Cincinnati Z.C.A. and expressed the hope that the Cleveland Conference would advocate support of Zion College.[184]

The separate action taken by the Cincinnati Z.C.A. angered the sister societies in the east. An article in the ASMONEAN in October, announcing a meeting of Z.C.A.No.1 at Emanuel on October 7th, indicated that this matter would be brought up at that time. The report, however, only indicared that a constitution and by-laws had been adopted and officers elected, but said nothing about the decision to open Zion College. The other New York society met on October 27th and adopted a strong resolution censoring the action of the Cincinnati group. A committee originally appointed to draft a constitution, reported instead that they had documents to show that the Cincinnati Z.C.A.,by deciding to open the Zion College in their city, had violated the original agreement that a conference of delegates would be called to decide when and where a College would be established. The committee therefore urged that the New York group sever its relations with Cincinnati and re-organize independently as a new organization "for the moral and religious education of youth." This report was accepted unanimously, and a public statement was released on October 30, setting forth the action of the society and its reasons.[185]

Wise answered the charges of breach of covenant, by asserting that the agreement among the several Z.C.A. groups was with regard to a University, whereas the proposed Zion College was to be only a preparatory school. Nevertheless he offered the other groups representation on the board of Zion College, proportionate to whatever contribution they were willing to make.[186] That establishing and supporting Zion College was virtually a guarantee that the university would eventually be set up in Cincinnati, and that this deprived the other Jewish groups of the freedom to bid for the university in their own cities, Wise neatly overlooked. Everything he said was strictly true, but he evaded the heart of the issue, that of equality among the various societies in the planning, as well as the governing, of the proposed institution.

Apparently Wise was aware in later years that it had been improper for Cincinnati to proceed,as it had,on a unilateral basis. He said it had been the Cincinnati membership of the Z.C.A. who had pushed the opening of the College, and he had opposed this, "for nothing had been as yet accomplished outside this city to assure the permanence of such an institution." He had been outvoted, he said, and allowed himself to be carried along by the popular enthusiasm which had induced the Cincinnati people to agree to maintain Zion College "even if the societies outside Cincinnati contributed nothing." He was merely the agent of this group, he said, "It would have been foolish and unjust of me to oppose this enthusiasm any longer." Just how great the enthusiasm was is not easy to determine, as Wise himself wrote. "There

was no enthusiasm among the people at large, but on the other hand, the few who were deeply interested in eduacation and culture.....were all the more active."[187]

At any rate, Zion College was proudly opened in the fall of 1855. 12 Jewish and 2 Christian students were enrolled. The instructors were Cohen, Jankerman, Lilienthal, Rothenheim, Thompson and Wise.[188] Its existence was cut short, however, because of financial difficulties. Although Wise spoke in terms of raising $100,000 for a sinking fund, and worked out a plan for financing the College through a joint stock company, it was apparently impossible to raise even enough money to pay the very limited expenses of the College. After less than two years of actual operation, the College was officially declared out of existence, the Cicinnati Z.C.A. was dissolved, and all its assets and resources were turned over to the newly organized high school department of the Talmud Yelodim Institute(now 9 years old). Thus ended Wise's first attempt to establish a college.[189]

In later years Wise admitted that the whole undertaking was not managed well and that he had misjudged the situation. "If AmericanJewry had been ripe for such an undertaking at that time.....what could not such a school as the college have accomplished within the space of 20 years!"[190] Wise never admitted the most important truth, namely that the real failure was in forgetting to abide by the principle of unity, which he himself so firmly advocated. He knew that a College was more than any one community could undertake, he had travelled far and wide, spoken and preached the necessity of national action for a college, and then had allowed local enthusiasm to carry him away. This was not

only a blow to the Zion College project, but a setback to the whole unity movement, in that Wise was earning for himself the reputation that he was only interested in building up institutions where he could predominate. This was as much the reason why later projects were suspected and failed as anything else.

One failure, however, could not stop Wise, and in 1858 and again in 1861 he published editorials calling for a college, and ventured to submit a plan to the public.[191] In 1866 Wise published a letter from Abraham Cohn of Chicago which stated a detailed plan for raising $500,000 in five years as a permanent fund, by assessing or taxing each Jew in the country $1 each year at the high holidays. This sum invested in government bonds would yield from $30,000 to $40,000 a year, enough to guarantee the maintainance of a College. In five years the trustees of the fund were to call a national convention of congregational delegates to organize the College, and as more funds were invested, higher branches of learning were to be included to expand the College into a national Jewish university.[192] The plan received some support, both from individuals and congregations. In St.Louis, Buffalo, Indianapolis, New Brunswick and Cincinnati, congregations took action to implement the plan,[193] but nothing seems to have come of it.

Wise insisted in later years that Philadelphia began to show interest in education on a higher level, only after he had spoken there in behalf of the Z.C.A. He maintained that Leeser's "leading thought was to have the institution controlled by the orthodox party," and so he diverted the interest which Wise had aroused to strictly local efforts

which later gave rise to the Maimonides College.[194] Whether or not this is true is hard to say. Leeser had been interested in the problem of education at least from the day he began publishing his OCCIDENT. Even before that in 1841, he had urged the establishment of a Central High School to train Chazzanim, lecturers and teachers for congregational needs of the American Jewish community. Whether Wise's personality and oratorical ability served to heighten interest in the problem in Philadelphia, and thus had concrete effects is impossible to tell. Nothing happened in Philadelphia immediately after 1855 to prove that Wise had moved mountains or struck oil! Maimonides College did not come into being until 1867, and then only after great effort by Leeser and the Board of Delegates. The Hebrew Education Society had been in existence since 1848 and its school operating since 1851. If anything, Wise did his best to laugh the Maimonides College out of existence before it was in operation.

The school of the Hebrew Education Society of Philadelphia was a local venture, and not until 1860, when the Board of Delegates was in existence was there any prospect of a College along national lines in Philadelphia. In August of that year, Isaacs included in his proposed agenda for the Board of Delegates, the establishment of a theological seminary and an American Jewish College.[195] When the board did meet, on August 13th, it adopted the establishment of a college as one of its future objectives, but declared that it was impossible to carry through at present for financial reasons.[196] Leeser pressed the idea again in

March of 1861, but progress was impossible as the result of the civil war.[197] After the war, in 1866, he renewed the question and expressed the hope to see his "darling project realized" - a Jewish theological high school to train rabbis and promote the knowledge of Judaism.[198] This time he was not to be disappointed. In its 7th Annual Report, the Executive Committee of the Board of Delegates, included a plan for a rabbinical seminary.[199] On August 1, 1866 the Board issued a circular, requesting aid and support from the congregations and other organizations for the establishment of preparatory high schools and a seminary for training rabbis. It published the resolution adopted by the Board, May 28, 1866, which requested that the delegates use their best efforts on behalf of Hebrew education, and especially to raise funds for a college in Philadelphia. The plan was to "engraft" preparatory schools on existing Hebrew schools throughout the country, and their graduates would be eligible to enter the proposed college in Philadelphia. Such preparatory schools could be established in cities like New York and Philadelphia, and the courses were to be uniform, preparing men simultaneously, in different parts of the country for work at the college. The college itself was to be establishedunder a charter already granted to the Hebrew Education Society of Philadelphia by the legislature. The college was to be governed by the Board of Delegates, the Hebrew Education Society, and other supporting organizations. Fees were to be moderate, and scholarships available to those who needed them. At least $50,000 had to be pledged before the project actually was undertaken. The delegates to the Board were appointed a Collection Com-

mittee to raise the necessary funds.[200]

When the Board of Delegates met again in May,1867, it resolved to open the College that fall.[201] Apparently funds were available, and concrete steps could be taken. In June the Board's Executive Committee met in New York and elected as trustees for the College A.Hart, M.A.Dropsie, I.Binswanger, M.Sulzberger, A.S.Saroni, H.Josephi, and M.S.Isaacs.[202] On June 25th, these trustees elected the following ministers as professors of the College:

Rev.Dr.Jastrow - Talmudic literature and Jewish history
" " Bettelheim - Mishnah and Book of Decisions
" " Morais - Biblical literature and commentaries
" " Leeser - Belles Lettres, Homiletics and Comparitive Theology.
" " Buttenwieser - Talmudic literature

In addition, the trustees electes A.Hart President and M.Sulzberger Secretary of the College, and decided to open it on the 4th Monday in October.[203] On July 1, another circular was released, announcing the faculty, and outlining a five year collegiate course leading to the usual degrees, and also for candidates for the ministry, to the B.D. and D.D. degrees. The course included ancient languages - Greek, Latin, Hebrew and Chaldaic; Modern languages - Frenchand German; the literature of each of these languages, natural science, history, mathematics, astronomy, moral and intellectual philosophy, Constitutional history and laws of the United States, Belles Letters, Homiletics, Comparitive Theology, Bible, Mishnah, Commentaries, Shulchan Aruch, Yad Hachazakah, Jewish history, Literature, Hebrew philosophy, Talmud with commentaries. Also Chazanuth, and Shechitah. The requirements for admission

to this institution of such great learning, were merely to be able to translate the historical portions of the Bible, but those not able to meet this requirement, could enter the preparatory school of the Hebew Education Society. The tuition fee was to be $100, and board and lodging could be had for $200 per year. Scholarships of $100 and $300 would be made available to students and congregations were invited to set up scholarships and nominate qualified students.[204] This circular carried as the name of the new institution, Maimonides College.

With the arrival of a student from Bubuque, Iowa, and three Philadelphia boys ready for entrance, the trustees summoned the professors and asked them to prepare a curriculum for the first year. Leeser was elected by the faculty as President pro-tem. On Monday, November 4, after a week's delay, the first classes were held.[205] They continued regularly through the year, and on Wednesday, May 13, 1868 there was a public examination of the five students in Bible, philosophy, Talmud, history, Greek and German. By this time the professors were three in number and there was one instructor. The three professors, ministers in the community, taught gratuitously, and only the instructor was paid a salary for his services. Thus the school was able to continue through a general financial crisis, without having to close its doors.[206] To help the College, the Board of Delegates, at its annual meeting in 1868, appointed a special committee to raise scholarships among the New York congregations.[207]

On the whole there was little objection to the college. Shortly before the college had opened, the "Leader" of

New York, criticised the program which had been sent out, saying that"there was no proposition in it to procure good teachers for our youth." Leeser was not sure whether to take this as a judgement on the faculty, or a criticism that there were no education courses in the curriculum. The same article raised the question of reform vs. orthodoxy at the college, to which Leeser replied that the college was not to be partisan on the question, and should not be criticised until it was functioning.[208]

Wise in the ISRAELITE wrote a satirical and biting criticism of the whole project, based on the circular published by the Board of Delegates. In principle, he said, he was not opposed to the idea of an orthodox college, but Maimonides College was not a college at all, but a rabbinical seminary. He questioned the titles of the members of the faculty(the "Rev.Dr." before each name) and also the titles of the subjects in the curriculum. In this he displayed a keen sense of humor and a sharp satirical style. Who were the men on the faculty and how could the College undertake such a huge program? His whole attitude was to ridicule the college out of existence.[209]

Leeser's response to Wise's attack was interesting in many ways. The aged leader seemed personally hurt at the unkind remarks which Wise had made, and imputed his opposition to the fear that a generation of trained leaders would be raised who would eventually expose the imposters in the ranks of reform. He urged the "genuine reformers" to establish their own college, and would wish them success. To illustrate, by contrast, the generous attitude of a

sincere Reform Jew toward the college, he acknowledge a gift of books made to the library of the college by this individual.[210]

Actually Leeser was dressing up Wise's remarks with motives higher than those which had influenced him to attack Maimonides College. It is doubtful that Wise feared to be "exposed", or that he was afraid of young graduxtates of an American seminary. There was probably very little more to his satire and ridicule than the desire to belittle the very thing which he had tried, unsuccessfully, to accomplish and which his old rival might now carry through with a degree of success.We shall see that this was exactly his attitude toward the Board of Delegates. His reasons for opposition were irrelevant and based on false assumptions, and arguing against him was pointless. He was opposed to both the Board and the College, beaause they were organized in the east and not in the west, because their leadership was orthodox and not reform, and mainly, because someone else, and not he, was the chief agent in the organization. Wise was "getting even" for his own failure at the Cleveland Conference.

There were other less successful attempts to organize a college on a national basis. One of these proceeded from the literary societies which were then largely in vogue. On January 18, 1864, the Jewish Literary Societies of Baltimore met in committee and resolved to attempt to unite all such literary societies in the country to sponser and found a Hebrew National College. They raised over $2000 toward their goal, received some response, but found that the number of such societies was not large enough to accom-

plish this purpose.[211]

In New York the Emanuel congregation decided on November 3, 1865, to establish a theological seminary. They organized an association for the purpose, with dues at $10 per year or $100 for life. Wise gave them advice as to costs in the ISRAELITE and wished them luck. The Emanuel project was the first to be undertaken by a single congregation, and on a clearly stated partisan basis. Its purpose was "the education of Jewish youths for the Jewish ministry on the basis of reform." The by-laws provided that the majority of the board must at all times be members of the Emanuel Congregation of New York.[212]

By the early part of 1867 the Society had a capital of $6000 and 133 members. Its income from dues and interest was $1750 a year. It was supporting two students at Columbia who were receiving a Jewish education privately. The society seems to have broadened its view by this time, as the by-laws were amended to allow members of other congregations to sit on the board freely, provided that their congregations had expunged from the liturgy of their services all nationalistic references. The name of the proposed school was accordingly changed to the "American Hebrew College of the City of New York."[213]

Similar projects were undertaken elsewhere. In New Orleans, in St.Louis, and in Savannah, there were attempts at higher Jewish learning and instruction, but none of the projects seemed to succeed, at least not within our period.[214] The I.O.B.B. had a plan for an American Jewish University as early as 1866. By this time the members of the order numbered 7000 in 78 lodges. Its plans were to have each member

contribute $10 a year to an education fund, and to have each lodge contribute $500 a year for the support of 5 students from their city. The site of the university was to be determined by a convention as soon as the funds were available. Perhaps because there was a possibility that the University might be established in Cincinnati, Wise gave this plan full editorial support. Wise was a great admirer of the Order and perhaps this too had something to do with his favorable attitude.[215]

The need for higher education was still not felt strongly enough to unite the various groups which were becoming more and more self-conscious along meaningful lines. The old national antagonisms, inherited from Europe, were, in part, giving way, and the opposition to the immigrant was looming less as a problem, for the time being. But the controversy over the growing reform group and the opposition of the larger and still much stronger orthodox group was becoming far more serious. Along somewhat the same lines, an east-west rivalry was assuming important proportions, and these antagonisms were standing in the way of the slowly emerging need for trained leadership, for the integration of efforts -- for unity.

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST REAL NEED - JEWISH DEFENCE

If religious issues seemed to divide Jews and split them into parties, secular matters, particularly questions of civil rights at home and defence of co-religionists abroad, tended to draw them together. They were made to realize that there was at least one thing which confronted all Jews alike and that was the danger of an anti-Jewish outburst. By the middle of the 19th century, Jews of the western world had come to believe that the old wives' tales about ritual murder were a thing of the past, never again to be raised. They thought that the power of the medieval church, though not destroyed, could never be exercised again as tyrannically as it had been before. They felt that while there were still vestiges of legal discrimination left, these would gradually disappear, and certainly never receive sanction or approval from one of the world's great democratic powers. The Damascus Affair in 1840, the Mortara Affair in 1858, and the question of the Swiss treaty, lasting from 1851 to 1874, were factors in awakening the Jew to the realization that "things were not what they seemed."

These three manifestations of the vitality and strength of anti-Jewish feeling did much to force upon the Jews of America a certain measure of unity. One could disregard the waste of efforts and money in the duplication of benevolences, one could remain oblivious to the needs of higher education, one could refuse to yield sovereignty for the sake of religious uniformity. But to evade the dangers represented in the three issues mentioned above was impossible, and if unity of action was the only way to safeguard one's posi-

tion and defend one's brethren overseas, then unity had to be worked out in spite of whatever obstacles made it difficult. While personality clashes and sectional differences and even religious prevented the achievement of perfect harmony, it is nevertheless true, that on these immediate issues the American Jewish community was most successful in unifying its many constituent parts.

The first time that the Jews of America joined with their European brethren on an international question was in 1840, when the Jews of Damascus were charged with the ritual murder of a Capuchin monk. Father Tomaso and his attendent had disappeared mysteriously, and as a result, 13 Jews, among them the most prominent members of the community were seized and examined under torture. The sole basis for any charge against them was the confession, under torture, of a Jewish barber, who implicated the others. Although the majority of the Jews withstood every attempt to wring a confession from them, the Moslem governor of Damascus recommended capital punishment for all of them. We need not go into the political background of the Damascus Affair, which is extremely complicated by the conflicting interests of Britain and France, and other European powers. When the news became known generally, it shocked and excited people all over the world. After three months of futile attempts to get the consular agents of the European governments to intervene, a meeting was held at London, on June 15th, called by the Board of Deputies of British Jews, which was attended by Cremieux, as well as the leaders of the Anglo-Jewish community. It was decided to send Montefiore and Cremieux to intervene directly with the Pasha and on July 21,

they left for Egypt to demand the release of the Jews who had survived the torture and were still alive. The journey and the negotiations took another month, and finally on August 28, Mehemet Ali issued an order to release the accused prisoners, which was carried out on September 6th.

The action taken in America actually had no effect in the release of the unfortunate victims, since, the protest meetings were all held in the latter part of August and early September, and any action by the govenment resulting therefrom would have taken place after the release was already effected. Nevertheless, since this was the first attempt on the part of the Jews of America to unite in expressing their protest and requesting their government to intervene in behalf of fellow-Jews abroad, it is important to take note of these events.

In New York, S.I.Joseph organized a committee for the purpose of calling a meeting to secure the intervention of the goverment. Being a member of Shearith Israel, he tried to secure the use of the congregation's building, but the trustees voted 4 to 1 against allowing the meeting to take place in the synagogue, stating that the board members "believed with the majority of the electors of this congregation that no benefit can arise from such a course." The committee then asked and obtained the use of Bénai Jeshurun's building. Although Shearith Israel refused to participate in the action officially, its members as individuals were active in the meeting. I.B.Kursheedt was chairman of the meeting, and Major Noah and Jonathan Nathan delivered the main addresses. A panel of 13 Vice-Presidents, including representatives of all the synagogues and of the important societies

was named. As a result of the meeting, a letter was sent to President van Buren which included the resolution adopted at the meeting. This resolution, dated August 19,1840, stated that the meeting was for the"purpose of uniting in an expression of sympathy for their brethren in Damascus, and of taking such steps as may be necessary to procure for them impartial justice..." It requested that the American consul in the domains of the Pasha of Egypt cooperate with all other consular agents to obtain a fair trial for the Jews involved. The committee felt that they expressed the "unanimous opinion of the Israelites throughout the union."

The answer to this letter camefrom Secretary of State John Forsyth, and indicated that the matter had already come to the attention of the President through the U.S.Consul at Alexandria, and that action had already been taken along the lines suggested by the letter. The New York committee sent copies of its correspondence with the State Department to all the congregations in the city, but Shearith Israel refused to accept them officially. At the same time resolutions had arrived from a meeting of Israelites in Richmond, Virginia, and Benjamin Nathan, who had been urging united action, offered a resolution to accept the two sets of documents and also place the congregation on record as participating in the sentiments expressed in both. While the trustees received the resolutions and correspondence, they persisted in their refusal to be involved in the general movement of protest.

The Richmond meeting had taken place on September 4th, with A.H.Cohen presiding and Jacob Ezekiel as Secretary. Since by this time, the President had already taken action, the resolutions adopted expressed thanks for his prompt and

humanitarian action.[217] The Jews of Philadelphia organized a large protest meeting at the Mickve Israel vestry on August 27th. The meeting called by Hyman Graetz was attended by the leaders of the Jewish community and by Christian clergy. Leeser gave the main address of the evening. The resolution adopted was similar to that framed in New York, and at the meeting, reference was made to the action taken at New York, and to the existence of an Executive and Corresponding Committee of the Israelites of Virginia.[218]

Although as has been said, the action in America was not significant in aiding the victims of the Damascus Affair, it did have great effect on the subsequent attitude of the Jews toward the question of seeking governmental assistance for Jews involvedin persecutions abroad. The prompt and voluntary action taken by the government was cited again and again as a precedent, and the techniques of mass protests, petitions and even joint action were pioneered on this occasion. It has been suggested that the original impetus for a union of congregations came from this experience, that Leeser's 1841 plan and his determination to initiate the OCCIDENT as a means of drawing together the scattered Jewish communities of America, followed from the Damascus Affair.[219] It may well be so, but Leeser's objections to a union which would discuss non-religious or "political" questions throw some doubt on this contention. Leeser's stated reasons for the 1841 union plan, were religious union, education and arbitration of congregational differences.

In November of 1850, Mr.A,Dudley Mann, American representative in Basle, negotiated a treaty with the

Swiss Confederation, which President Fillmore transmitted to the Senate in February of 1851 with specific objections to part of the first article of the treaty. This clause in the first article provided that Christians alone were to be entitled to the privileges guaranteed by the Swiss Confederation in the treaty. As soon as the objectionable nature of the treaty was made known, individual Jews who had some contact with officials in the government, registered protests against it. In New York, Robert Lyon clearly stated the objections to the treaty, and urged strong opposition to its ratification. "The course open to Israelites is clear and defined - they ought to show their sense of the wrong inflicted on them by instructing their Senators of their respective states of the opinion they entertain of the diplomatic labors of the special agent to the Swiss confederation. Who will take the lead in this laudable movement."[220] At the same time, a Dr.S.W.(probably Dr.Waterman, then prominent in Jewish affairs in New York) urged that"an address signed by every Jew in this land should be drawn up and sent to the President of the Republic...."to state the objection to and resentment at the treaty.[221] Writing in the Asmonean on May 28, 1852, Wise suggested that delegates be appointed by all the American congregations to meet in New York City, "to frame and adopt resolutions to Congress, requesting our government to protest against the illegal, inhuman and degrading laws which have been forced upon our brethren by the Pope in Rome and by the government of Switzerland." Wise wanted a mass movement, with petitions from all congregations, with non-Jews approached for signatures to the petition, and plenty of notices in the press, so as to arouse the entire

country to the issues involved.[222]

Although Wise was not attacking the treaty directly, he was exposing the conditions in Switzerland which the treaty sanctioned. So far as we know, only two congregations acted on Wise's suggestion. Shaaray Hashomayim in New York and Anshe Emeth of Albany adopted appropriate resolutions and elected delegates for a general meeting.[223] It is worth while noting what Lyon had to say about Wise's plan. He opposed it, saying that the method would not be effective, and that the cry of intervention would be raised, thus killing the whole matter. Instead, he urged that societies be formed to promote emigration and settle the immigrants in the interior of the country. This would do far more good than all the protests in the world.[224]

In spite of the attitude of Lyon, the main effort of the Jews was to oppose the treaty, and to get the government to assure equal rights for all American citizens abroad regardless of their religion. Leeser corresponded with Lewis Cass, Senator from Michigan, who was active in the defence of the rights of Jews, and assured Leeser that the "invidious distinctions contained in the treaty" would never be sanctioned by the Senate.[225] In New York, Alexander Kursheedt headed a committee which circulated a petition from the Jews of the United States to the Senate, requesting that reciprocal religious privileges be assured all nationals abroad, regardless of which religion they professed. Capt. Jonas Levy, who was a member of the committee, received Cass's assurance as to the propriety of such a petition, and on April 19th, 1854, Cass presented it in the Senate.[226]

As a result of this opposition, in which David Einhorn

and J.M.Cardoza, of Charleston also took an active part, the Senate declined to ratify the treaty as it stood, and amended it, removing certain objectionable clauses. In this amended form, however, the treaty still did not prevent Swiss cantons from discriminating against American Jews. Despite this the treaty was ratified and proclaimed at the end of 1855, though it seems that only a year and a half later was it made the serious concern of the American Jewish community.[227]

When it became known that one A.H.Goetman, an American Jew had been expelled from one of the Swiss cantons, a storm of protest swept over the country. The Jews became concerned once again with the matter, and wondered how it was possible that this could have happened. Leeser seemed to have thought that the treaty might have been blocked in the Senate if the Kursheedt petition had received wider support. But the trouble was not that the petition had been ignored; actually the Senate had in response to it and other protests amended the treaty. The real difficulty lay in the structure of the Swiss Confederation. The Federal Council could not interfere with the laws of the individual cantons, and could not by treaty, force religious equality upon them. At any rate, Leeser feared that protest was now belated and futile, but he declared that if anything was to be done at all, Jews "ought to get up, all over the country, memorials addressed to the Senate and the President, asking them to abrogate the treaty in question, unless the restrictive clause be stricken out."[228]

On July 31st, Wise presented a detailed analysis of the Swiss treaty in the ISRAELITE, showing it to be unconstitutional, a complete violation of the preamble to the consti-

tution.[229] The following week, the ISRAELITE appeared with these headlines:

AGITATE!

CALL MEETINGS!!

ENGAGE THE PRESS IN YOUR FAVOR!!!

Wise called for public meetings and urged that all resolutions adopted be published in the local press. He also asked that a copy be sent to the ISRAELITE "that a concert of action be assured".[230] Just how this was to follow, whether Wise had any further plans is not clear. But results did follow on both Wise's and Leeser's pleas. In the next few weeks editorials appeared in papers all over the country, opppos-ing the Swiss treaty. Wise quoted 4 out of 60 which came to his attention, unanimously condemning the treaty as unconstitutional.[231] Again it is not clear to what extent these papers were led to take a stand through the influence of Jewish protests.

Leeser was not in favor of large noisy protest meetings. Instead he suggested that a committee of representatives of various congregations should form a deputation to wait on the President and present a memorial protest. These representatives should be prominent Jews of New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Charleston, Savannah, New Orleans, Washington and Cincinnati, and should meet in Washington in December to draw up a memorial and present it to the President.[232] Lyon also had objections to Wise's call for agitation and meetings. He felt that "instead of a remonstrance from the Israelites of the Union, a State, or even a city...arresting public attention by its weight and influence" the result would be "the correspondence of a variety of individuals,

all ending in smoke." Lyon took the occasion to review his own efforts for unity for just such an occasion as this. "At that period(January - March 1851) we advocatedthe necessity of an union among the Israelites to prevent all such infractions of their rights in the fubure....The want of unity of action among our people led them to disregard the teaching(of the danger of the Swiss treaty) and hence, after a silence of four years, in the fall of 1855, the treaty with Switzerland was ratified....Had there been an organization representing the communities and producing concerted action before, there would be nothing to complain of now. If the spirit of egoism which rules our people can be stilled, the cliques and coteries into which they are everywhere divided be broken down, and the Hebrews of New York and other large cities will unite in each locale, there is a hope that their combined numbers, wealth, and commercial importance will induce the abrogation of the treaty that now disgraces the archives of the Federal government.[233]

If there was any possibility that the spirit of egoism might be stilled, and the cliques and coteries broken dowm, it was in the situation which clearly challenged the American Jewish community in the summer of 1857. Here was the test of whether or not they could forget their differences and work together, for the sake of their common interests. In response to the appeals of Wise and Leeser, protest meetings were held in all the large cities. In the next few numbers of the ISRAELITE Wise reported mass meetings in Pittsburgh, Indianapolis, Baltimore, Easton, Cincinnati, Rock Island, and Washington, D.C.[234] In Baltimore the committee which called the meetingand drew up the resolutions, suggested that dele-

gates from all the cities convene in Baltimore and proceed from there to Washington to present their resolutions and protests in a body. The date set for the meeting of delegates was October 26.[235] The Washington meeting after adopting resolutions, had appointed a committee to wait on the President and present their memorial, together with any other groups from other cities.[236] At least the different communities were taking cognizance of each other, and beginning to think in terms of more than just one congregation and one city. Wise liked the Baltimore idea very much, and urged all communities to elect delegates and send them to Baltimore for a united protest to the government.[237] Cincinnati responded promptly to the idea and elected Wise and A.Louis as its delegates.[238] Shortly thereafter New York City, Cleveland, Chicago, St.Louis held mass meetings of protest and also elected delegates to the Baltimore convention.[239] Nashville and Charleston held meetings, adopted resolutions, but did not agree to present them through the Baltimore convention.[240] Rochester, though it did not elect a delegate, supported the convention idea and offered to pay a share of the expenses of the delegates.[241] In the meantime, in New York City, the I.O.B.B. voted $150 toward the expenses of "appropriately taking up the question of the constitutionality of the Swiss treaty". The New York meeting which took place at the Maimonides Library on September 12, appointed committees to get specific information from Switzerland on all the restrictive laws which the treaty upheld.[242]

The Baltimore Committee in setting October 26th as the convention date had allowed only a month for the information to reach communities in various parts of the country, and

for meetings to be called, delegates elected, and for them to travel to Baltimore, this was not a great deal of time. Leeser very correctly pointed out that the needless haste of the Baltimore committee would preclude the widest possible participation in the convention.[243] That this was the only reason that so few cities were represented at Baltimore is unlikely, probably some of the old antagonisms and cleavages played their role in keeping delegates away from the convention. Of the 16 cities which took action on the Swiss treaty,[244] only 5 were represented at Baltimore on October 29th. (The petitions of Charleston and Washington were presented separately from the rest on October 31st by Capt.Jonas Levy, and that of Philadelphia by Leeser and Jones around the 9th of December.[245]) The New York delegates never appeared in Baltimore and neither did Leeser, who had been elected by the St.Louis meeting to represent them.

When Wise and the other out-of-town delegates arrived in Baltimore, they found that no arrangements had been made for the convention, that the Baltimore group had not even elected their own delegates. For what seemed to be personal reasons, which at the time Wise could not understand, there was considerable disagreement among the members of the local committee. After Wise had addressed a gathering on some religious theme(not a meeting, but a scheduled lecture), the audience constituted themselves a meeting and elected three delegates, with some controversy over the authority of the group to take this action.At any rate,the delegates of all the cities met the following afternoon and elected Wise their chairman and Herzberg of Baltimore as secretary. A formal resolution was drawn up for presentation and signed as

follows:

M.I.Cohen, Maryland

H.Hochheimer "

Ph.Herzberg "

I.M.Wise, Ohio

Martin Bijur,Kentucky

M.M.Gerstley, Illinois

L.F.Leopold, Ohio

The delegates proceeded to Washington the same evening, October 26th, and met with the President the following morning. They were presented by a member of Congress from Alabama and transmitted their protest to Buchanan, who responded very directly to their statements. He said that the treaty as they construed it, was certainly unconstitutional, but he doubted that this was in the mind of the members of the previous administration, when they negotiated and considered the treaty.Instructions had already been sent to the American representative at Berne to effect a modification of the treaty to meet this objection. Both the President and the Secretary of State promised to use their good offices to secure the wishes of the delegates. Officially reporting for the delegates, Wise stated that they were entirely satisfied with the assurances they had received in Washington, and requested the Jewish communities to abstain from further agitation on the subject.[245]

Leeser in Philadelphia objected to Wise's suggestion that further agitation was now out of order. (Such was the result of personal rivalry and antagonism. Originally, when Wise had called for agitation and mass meetings, Leeser opposed "noisy demonstrations and indignation meetings", now when

Wise asked that they not be held, Lesser insisted that communities not yet on record ought to take action.) Consequently on November 15 and 22, and on December 8, four of the five Philadelphia congregations met and acted to express their protest to the treaty.[246]

Although the Baltimore convention was officially over and for the time being, the matter of the Swiss traety disposed of, there were repercussions which were echoed through the periodicals for months. Dr. A.B.Arnold, who had been chairman of the Baltimore committee which called the convention, wrote to the ASMONEAN that the project was a complete failure, inasmuch as the delegates who gathered in Baltimore represented only a few communities. There had been a sharp difference among the members of the Baltimore committee, and Arnold had taken the view that since only a handful of men had arrived, there was no justification for calling it a national convention, or acting as the representatives of American Jewry. Consequently he had not called a meeting to elect Baltimore delegates. The gathering which had met and elected the delegates, he said, was improper and not legally called, and when asked to serve as one of the three delegates, Arnold had refused. Moreover, Arnold accused Wise on capitalizing on the whole situation for his own glory.[247]

Telling the other side of the story, Herzberg, who had finally called the meeting which elected the Baltimore delegates, explained that he had asked Arnold to call a meeting as soon as he had read in the ISRAELITE that Cincinnati had acted on their committee's suggestions.Arnold had refused. Herzberg, thereupon, took the initiative and called a meeting which was well attended, and except for Arnold and his few

followers, was quite harmonious. Herzberg asked, in his letter to the ASMONEAN, why New York, after electing delegates, did not cooperate with the Baltimore group.[248]

One of the New York "Executive Committee" answered Herzberg and stated the following objections to the actions of the Baltimore committee:

1. The specific designation of a place(Baltimore) for the convention.
2. The calling of a convention without knowing whether the various communities wanted one.
3. the manner in which the convention claimed to act for U.S.Jewry when so few communities were represented.
4. The gaining of specific information about disabilities under the treaty was what the President had asked for, and this was what the New York committee was doing.
5. The request that all agitation should now cease was totally unjustified.

While these objections may have been valid ones, they had nothing to do with Herzberg's question. They did not explain why New York, after electing delegates, did not send them to Baltimore. Most of the objections referred to what happened at or after the convention met, and could not have influenced the New York delegates to stay away. As for the first statement, the New York group knew that Baltimore had been designated when they agreed to participate. The whole thing illustrates how prejudices and rivalries, and not intelligent reasons motivated the actions of the various groups. It is possible that some of the New York antagonism to the con-

vention was engendered when it became known thatWise was going to take part, but it is unlikely that there was so much prejudice against him, or that the New York group actually anticipated that he would assume the leading role in the convention. There may have been something of the reform-orthodox cleavage here, but Arnold, who opposed the convention in Baltimore, was not anti-Wiseor anti-reform, as far as the evidence shows. Arnold had defended Wise's History of the Israelitish Nation" against the orthodox critics of the work, which would seem to indicate that he was not at all idealogically opposed to Wise.[249]

That there was something of a clash of personalities between the two men, however, seems likely. Martin Bijur, delegate from Louisville, said that Arnold attacked Wise because he was the successful rival candidate for leadership in the convention, and that Arnold had been made to look ridiculous when he had declined to be a delegate for Baltimore, and a substitute was immediately elected unanimously. "Is it necessary", Bijur asked, "to destroy the moral effect which the demonstration had exercised on the nation and on the executive department, in order to heal the wounded ambition of Dr. Arnold?"[250] That question might have been asked of Wise in the years that followed, when he opposed the action of the Board of Delegates on numerous cases, and when they were in exactly the same position as he was in the case of the Swiss treaty and the Baltimore convention. And it may be asked even today, when personal rivalries are allowed so often to destroy the effect of a united protest against some violation of Jewish rights or privileges.

Arnold took exception to this explanation of his motives, and argued that his sole reason for opposing the convention was that only four communities had responded, and even they had not notified the Baltimore committee of their intention to send delegates. For this readon alone, he had made no arrangements for a convention. As to his opposition to Wise, Arnold stated that his entire action in calling a meeting of Baltimore Jews, and in proposing a convention, had been in response to Wise's call in the Israelite! Hence it was entirely untrue that his opposition to Wise had led him to oppose what had been done.[251] If this is true, and there seems to be no reason to dispute Arnold's last statement, it is evident that Wise had lost a real follower in Arnold, by the action he had followed in Baltimore. Here was a man who read his paper(the ISRAELITE) acted on Wise's ideas, and was probably sincere in his efforts. But due to haste, misunderstandings, lack of mutual respect for integrity, and patience, two men who might have worked together, became enemies and wasted their efforts in attacking each other.

A Louisville business man summed up the whole situation in the following way. While upholding the position of the delegates at Baltimore, he pointed out how tragic it was that important matters had degenerated to personal rivalries. "It is a shame that every public demonstration, every action undertaken for the welfare of our nation, turns outto be a personal affair..... Such man as Dr.Arnold and Dr.Wise would be an honor to Judaism, if their abilities would not be used to lower one another in the estimation of the Jewish nation." Gerstle's remarks about the Baltimore convention

and its leadership, can be applied to any number of similar situations in American Jewish life, and indicate one of the most serious of the obstacles which have stood in the way of unity.

The Swiss treaty issue was not really settled until 1874, and then not by the abrogation of the treaty, but by changes in the Swiss Constitution, so that the treaty no longer sanctioned or upheld discrimination. In the intervening years there was correspondence between various Jewish leaders and the State Department, but no united action. Meanwhile, however, another and far more serious incident occurred which did much to advance the cause of unity. In 1858, towardthe end of the year, news came from Europe that a Jewish child had been converted secretly by his Catholic nurse, and forcibly taken from his parents by the agents of the Church. The incident took place in Bologna in the Papal States. The child, Edgar Mortara was variously described as being from 6 to 11 years old. The details of the affair were spread out in the Jewish and general press, and there was great excitement and commotion. Ultimately it became a Protestant-Catholic issue, and even had political implications. But for the Jews it wasfurther proof that they had no agency prepared to rally them for effective joint action in such a case.

The news of the Mortara Affair came via newspapres from abroad, and through letters and appeals from Montefiore and the British Board of Deputies. Eighteen communities, embracing about 60 congregations, took action at the time, and of these half had been apprised of the events and took action as a result of a letter from Montefiore.

Subsequently the American Jewish periodicals carried the appeals from abroad, articles and calls for action which brought the matter to the attention of the rest of the communities and congregations.

The ISRAELITE was aware of the Mortara incident in August of 1858, more than two months before it became an important issue for American Jews. While Wise, who was then travelling across the country, was in Baltimore, a letter came to the editorial offices of the paper in Cincinnati, from a Dr.Mensor of Chicago, who had read of the abduction of the child in an English paper. He suggested that the Israelites of America"take the matter in hand, obtain the interference of the government. England, France, Holland would speedily follow -- and the struggle for liberty will achieve a triumph in Rome."[255] In subsequent issues of the paper, Lilienthal, who was editing it in Wise's absence, quoted from articles in the Archives Israelites, and Jeschurun, giving further details of the abduction. In October, he reported that the Jewish communities in the larger cities of Europe were organizing a strong protest, that the Central Consistory of France, the British Board of Deputies, the Consistory of Sardinia, and also the German Jews, were addressing petitions to their respective governments to intervene on behalf of the distressed parents. Lilienthal urged that the American Congregations follow their example. "Call meetings in your congregations! Address remonstrances and petitions to our government in Washington, that the President and his Secretaries may throw their influence too intthe scale of this important case."[256] This call on October 22, was the first for American action, and it came two full months after

the first news of the case reached America. One reason why more attention was not focused on the Mortara Affair during these months, was that the question of admission of Jews to Parliament was at that time the big issue in every Jewish periodical. The foreign columns of the Anglo-Jewish press were carrying stories of the great victory of British Jewry and its celebration of the occasion by meetings in London and other large English cities. This news seems to have crowded out the Mortara Affair until November.

On October 30th, a meeting of committees representing all the Jewish congregations of Cincinnati was called with Lilienthal presiding. Representing "5000 United States citizens", the meeting adopted a petition addressed to the Pope, to be forwarded through the U.S.State Department. Although Lilienthal suggested that other congregations follow the example of Cincinnati, he said nothing about joint action or a meeting of delegates.[257] Possibly, had Wise been in the city, he might have led a movement for unified action, and done so much sooner. In that case America might have led the rest of the Jewish communities in taking action on this matter. As it was, Cincinnati took action only very shortly before other congregations and communities whose information came from Montefiore and the Board of Deputies.

Leeser was much more emphatic in bringing the Mortara Affarir to the attention of his readers. In the November, 1858 issue of the OCCIDENT he recalled having read fragmentary accounts of the case, but only with his receipt of the JESCHURUN, was he able to present a clear picture of what had happened. The incident in Bologna was no isolated affair,

Leeser pointed out, since a similar case had taken place in Verona, in Austrian Italy, which he had reported in the OCCIDENT two years before. In fact the whole question of the condition of the Jews in Russia, Austria and the Papal States deserved considerable attention. Not only was their need for closer contact with the Jews of Europe on these matters, but Leeser felt that some sort of a world organization was necessary to watch over Jewish affairs in all parts of the world.[258]

By this time the British Board of Deputies had taken up the Mortara Affair and sent letters and documents to several American congregations, among them some in Philadelphia. On November 18th(which happened to be Thanksgiving Day) a meeting, called by the officers of 5 of the 6 Philadelphia congregations,was held, in which Christians as well as Jews took part in the proceedings. Leeser offered a resolution that Philadelphia unite with Jews in America and Europe to take action in this affair, and unite with American congregations in laying a memorial before the President. A committee of 12 was appointed to carry out the resolutions.[259] The committee appointed three delegates, including Leeser, to represent Philadelphia in presenting the memorial in Washington. They addressed a circular letter to all American congregations, inviting their cooperation. In Philadelphia the committee circulated a petition for signatures of Jews and Christians. Leeser reported that 5 of the 6 Philadelphia congregations were acting in perfect harmony, but that the old Portugese congregation, Mickve Israel, had taken separate action "thus forestalling(united)action, not only for Philadelphia, but for the whole union besides." He hoped that other

cities would unite with the delegates from Philadelphia to wait on the President with their petitions.[260]

It should be noted that Philadelphia neither set a date for a meeting, nor specified a city where delegates should gather. There could be no charge of local chauvinism, or haste, and when on January 9th, the Philadelphia delegation arrived in Washington, more than a month had elapsed so that congregations might easily have joined with them in joint action.

Although New York did not respond to Philadelphia's overtures for united action, the congregations did join together and worked out a plan for city-wide unity at least. On November 18th, delegates from 12 congregations met in the home of Dr.Raphall(where all New York unity plans seem to have been worked out) and agreed to set up a permanant board to handle such problems as the Mortara Affair. Dr.Raphall was appointed chairman, and B.W.Hart Secretary. A public meeting was called for December 4th at Mozart Hall, and about 2000 people were present. Jonas P.Philips presided, and in addition to representatives of all the important New York congregations, and Protestant leaders, a delegate from Montreal, Mr.Alexander Levy, was present. The resolutions adopted empowered "The Board of Representatives of the United Comgregations of Israelites of the City of New York" to take action.[261]

In November, December and January there were meetings in 18 cities, some in response to Montefiore's letter and others at the prompting of either Lilienthal, Leeser, or the New York committee. In several cities the meetings did not resolve on joint actionwith other Jewish communities, but

rather attempted to make the issue a public one, of equal concern to Protestants and Jews. Thus in Albany, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco and St.Louis, the Christian community was invited to attemd the protest meetings and sign the petitions.[262] On the other hand, in addition to New York and Philadelphia, there were other communities that favored joint action. Mobile and New Orleans suggested a convention of delegates from all congregations.[263] Richmond and Syracuse signified their willingness to cooperate with the Philadelphia committee, while Rochester and Memphis agreed to work with the New York Committee, and voted at their request to authorize G.Kursheedt to act as their delegate abroad, together with other Jewish delegates, in whatever seemed proper.[264] In most of the communities action was taken by all or almost all of the congregations together. Altbgether 18 cities held public meetings. In Washington the only action taken was that of Jonas P.Levy who sent a letter to Secretary of State Cass;[265] Louisville took no formal action at all, except to use influence to get the public press to take a liberal stand on the question.[266]

Why there was no real unified action on the Mortara Affair is not clear. By January 9th, when the Philadelphia delegates went to Washington, there had been fourteen public meetings, representing at least 45 congregations. Of these, at least 26 congregations were on record as favoring cooperation either with New York, Philadelphia or both. Just why even these groups did not adopt a joint declaration and send a combined delegation to Washington is a complete mystery. The New York and the Philadelphia groups were aware of each other's activities. There was no sectional or idealogical

conflict between them. They simply did not approach each other directly to work out some joint plan, and so the only real basis for unity in this case was lost. Any other grouping without these two "major powers" in American Jewish life would have been quite without significance.

When on January 9th, Leeser and his committee presented their memorial to the President, he had already sent an answer to the petition from New York, setting forth his final view on the matter -- he would not interfere in the affairs of another state. This firm policy of non-intervention had been adopted by the President with the advice of the cabinet and although the delegates cited the Damascus Affair as a precedent for a different attitude, the President would not change his position. Leeser and his colleagues were, of course, deeply disappointed, and felt sure that, had they been first to approach the President, they could have presented a far better case, and very possibly have won his support for their policies.[267]

Wise was very bitter in reporting the answer of the President to the Philadelphia delegation. He characterized the United States as a "mercantile monster firm" only interested in protecting trade and property and no longer concerned with human values and ideals. The slavery issue was no moral question at all, said Wise, but merely a matter of whether northern or southern land speculators should make the most profits.[268] The Jews were particularly disappointed that Buchanan took the non-interventionist stand. They could not understand why in 1840 a President could anticipate their desires and use his influence in Turkey and Egypt and Syria, but in 1859 another President should

insist that his government could not interfere in the affairs of the Papal States. A Methodist paper in New York gave what was probably the most correct explanation. The real reason for Buchanan's refusal to interfere in the Mortara Affair was not the "settled policy of the governmeent", but rather that the Catholics carried more political influence than did the Jews. In the Damascus Affair, the Moslems who were involved were not represented in this country by a large voting population, and thus the government could support the Jewish cause without losing political strength. This was not the case in 1859.[269]

The Philadelphia delegated, after seeing the President and the Secretary of State, adopted a resolution in which they stated that, had the Philadelphia plan been adopted and joint action undertaken by all the congregations and communities, a far different result might have been achieved. The delegates therefore recommended that"the different congregations throughout the union take into consideration the propriety of electing delegates to represent them in the future, so as to form a body similar to the Board of Deputies of British Jews in London."[270] Although Wise had taken no action at all on the Mortara Affair, in response to the recommendation of the Philadelphia Committee, he definitely endorsed the idea of a union. Reviewing the history of the struggle for unity, he commented on various efforts which had been made. He regarded the "Bene Berith" as an organ for unity, but while its benevolent work was great, its secret nature, its minority position, its ties to New York, and its control by those who "never evince any particular interest in Judaism" precluded its being a real force for

unity. The 1848 plan for union had been wrecked in New York by the three German congregationswho had refused to elect delegatesdout of a fear of reform. Actually Wise was trying to build up a case against the East, and New York in particular. He overlooked the fact that Shaaray Tefilah had elected Isaacs as delegate in 1848-49 to a union convention, and that it was as much a lack of response from the country as a whole as anything else, that had killed previous attempts at union. After reviewing his own role in the Cleveland Conference, and his work in behalf of the synod idea, Wise stated that he was "ready to cooperate in every union scheme."[271]

Actually by drawing an analogy between these attempts at religious union, i.e. the 1840, 1848-49 plans, and the Cleveland Conference,on the one hand, and the suggestions made by the Philadelphia committee for a Board of Deputies, on the other hand, Wise was confusing the issue. What was needed to meet situations like the Mortara Affair, the Swiss treaty, and the Damascus Affair, was not a religious union, but a sort of national Jewish Council, or as Leeser put it, an American counter-part to the British Board of Deputies. Even this was not a perfect example, since the Board of Deputies concerned itself with religious affairs which pretained to the individual congregation. What was needed in America was a board or federation which could unite all Jewish membership organizations whether of a congregational, philanthropic, mutual benefit, or fraternal type into a body which could deal with common problems, especially matters of civil and religious rights, both at home and abroad, whenever the occasion required it.

It was to fulfill this role that the board of delegates was conceived and organized, and when Leeser tried to engraft upon it the idea of a religious authority, he was making the same confused and confusing mistake that Wise had made. A non-religious union could possibly unite all groupsto meet any problems which the Jewish community as a whole had to face. But as soon as a religious issue was introduced, such as the reform-orthodox controversy, union could, at best, embrace only those who held a set of principles in common. It was only natural, therefore, that the non-religious issues like the Damascus Affair, the Swiss treaty, and the Mortara Affair, should have paved the way for the first really successful attempt at union.

CHAPTER VI

THE BOARD OF DELEGATES - THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL UNION PLAN

The Mortara Affair schocked Jews the world over. It made them wonder just how secure they were in the middle of the enlightened 19th century. In Europe it gave rise to the organization of the Alliance Israelite Universelle; in America it made possible the first union on a national scale. While Wise and the German reformers felt the immanence of a Messianic era, and could not put up with the "melancholy idea of galuth",[272] with its implications of insecurity for the Jew, Leeser and others were not so ready to take for granted that all was well for Israel, even here in the United States..When Leeser first wrote about the Mortara Affair in November of 1858, he pointed to it as but one proof that the reform group were too optimistic about the present.[273] He offered a similar case of forced conversion in St.Louis as an example of what the Catholic Church would do if they were not restrained by the vigilance of the Jews and other liberal American citizens.[274]

It was in this spirit that the Board of Delegates was conceived.The "Board of Representatives" organized by the New York Congregations seemed a good nucleus for a union, and Isaacs urged that every other city should establish a similar local board. These local units could then elect delegates to national organization which could watch over the general welfare of the American Israelites, as well as cooperate with similar European bodies in matters of world-wide importance for the Jews. The Mortara Affair had demonstrated that spontaneous action on the part of individual congregations and communities,was ineffective and took too long to

be organized. "As a matter of course, different proceedings were adopted by the various bodies, and very little, comparatively speaking, has been done." Isaacs saw at once that union along religious lines could not be achieved, and he emphasized that this national organization was not to have a sacred character, but on the contrary, was to keep aloof from the synagogue. It was to be democratic and representative and both support and representation were to be proportionate to the size and strenght of each congregation.[275]

Although Isaacs had hoped that the Board of Representatives of the New York Congregations would continue to function and take the initiative in convoking a national conference or convention, it was necessary to start at the bottom, and first organize the New York community. There had been rumors that Shearith Israel, Bene Jeshurun and Shaaray Tefilah were taking action to call together the New York congregations for the purpose of setting up machinery to organize a Board of Representatives, but nothing came of these rumors. Finally on March 13th, Isaacs congregation, Shaaray Tefilah, resolved to appoint a committee to confer with the officers of the other New York congregations to form a Board. The committee consisted of George Godfrey, Maurice Werner, Louis Levy, the President, and S.M.Isaacs.[276] During April the committee communicated with the other "kihillahs" of the city, and by May 27th, 9 or 10 congregations expressed their willingness to cooperate with the trustees of Shaaray Tefilah.[277] On June 16th a meeting of the delegates of 9 congregations took place at Mozart Hall.[278] Asher Kursheedt of Shearith Israel presided and George Godfrey was secretary. A committee was appointed to work out a plan for

union, which would be acceptable to all the congregations in the country.[279]

Response to the union idea came from both friends and opponents, as well as from observers abroad. Leeser saw the need and supported the idea, but he argued that the proposed Board of Representatives should supervise religious affairs and establish an ecclesiastical authority, and that by no means should reform rabbis be allowed to vote on religious questions.[280] Isaacs quoted an endorsement of the plan for union in the London Jewish Chronicle. The Chronicle pointed out that the greater distances in the United States, and the fact that the Jews were more scattered, would make it more difficult to establish a union in America than in England. The small Anglo-Jewish community had much more influence on the British government that the much larger community of American Jews exerted in Washington. The difference was that the British Jews were organized, while the American Jews were completely disunited.[281]

Opposition came chiefly from the reform group. Mayer followed in the tradition of his congregation and opposed any union idea which might throttle reform. He referred to the British Board of Deputies, the avowed pattern for the proposed American Board, which though only a civil board, took steps to exclude reform synagogues from the Jewish community of England.[282] Wise published articles in the ISRAELITE which ridiculed the idea of a Board, and said it could have no program at all if it remained aloof from the religious question, while if it did involve itself in religious issues it could only oppose reform. Letters written over various assumed names took up the method of ridicule,

and one "Zophnath Phaneach" wrote that the Board would only "ratify treaties between butchers and consumers of meat, ...superintend bakeries," for it had nothing else to do. There was no need for political activities, since politically Jews were Americans. The real purpose of the Board must be to crush reform, and this was the only possible explanation for Shearith Israel's interest in it, since up to this point, the old congregation had remained aloof from every attempt at unity.[283]

Despite opposition, the New York group went ahead. The committee worked on a plan during the summer of 1859, and presented its report to a meeting of delegates at Mozart Hall on October 9th. Although only 7 congregations were represented, the report was adopted. It included an address to be sent to every congregation in the United States, inviting their participation in the establishment of a Board of Representatives. The committee of delegates then adjourned sine die, leaving the circulation of the address and all other matters to a committee of three -- Kursheedt, Godfrey, and Isaacs.[284]

The address sent out to the congregations pointed out that with a Jewish population of over 200,000 there were over 170 synagogues, besides hospitals, foster-homes, literary and benevolent societies, yet absolutely no unity among these organizations. Although attempts had been made in the past, there had been no success, but the need had only increased with the years. The plan proposed by the New York group was as follows:

1. Two delegates from each congregation to serve for one and two years respectively.
2. The Board to organize itself and select its name,etc.
3. Expenses to be paid by the congregations represented in such proportion as the Board shall decide.
4. The Board to deal only with temporal affairs.
5. The delegates to meet at Cooper Institute, New York City on November 27th, 1859.
6. The Executive Committee to be notified by each congregation when representatives were elected.[285]

Leeser, in publishing the plan, suggested that the time allowed for discussion and elections might prove too short, in which case delays or adjournments might be necessary to insure national scopefor the proposed Board. He was particularly concerned lest the Board pretend to speak for the American Israelites without actually being representative. He also questioned whether the statistics were not greatly exaggerated.[286]

Congregations shortly began electing delegates in response to the address. On October 16th, B'nai Israel(New York) took action, on November 4th, Shaaray Tefilah(New York), by November 13th, Beth Israel-Bickur Cholim(New York), Mishkan Israel(New Haven), Wilkesbarre(Penna.), Beth Shalom(Richmond), Shearith Israel(Charleston, S.C.), Keneses Israel(Richmond), BethEl Emeth(Philadelphia), B'nai Israel(Providence), Anshe Chesed(New York), Rodeph Sholom(New York), and BethEl (New York) had elected delegates.[287] Although Shearith Israel had cooperated in the preliminary meetings, its electors voted 23 - 5 that it was "inexpedient" to take part in the Board of Representatives, and its two temporary delegates, Asher Kursheedt and S.I.Joseph therefore resigned from the

preliminary organization.[288]

In the meantime, Wise in Cincinnati had been leading the reform opposition to the Board. Commenting on the address adopted October 9th, he pointed out that only 7 of the 20 New York Congregations had issued the circular. As usual, Wise attacked the project more on details, than on real issues. The circular did not state any real "cause" for a proposed board; the signers of the call were not well known --- he looked in vain for such names as Adler, Bondy, Isaacs, Fishel and Raphall. Wise could see no need for a Board for political reasons. "This is a still born child. Nor do we need or want a political organization, and this it is intended to be....Unless weighty reasons are adduced to such an organization, we cannot recommend it, nor write long windy articles on the subject. The columns of the Israelite are for something better."[289] As a matter of fact the congregations of Bondy, Isaacs and Fishel were signatories, through their delegates, to the call for a Board, and Wise must have known this, even if his readers did not. Furthermore, Wise had, in response to the resolution of the Philadelphia committee on the Mortara Affair, stated his agreement with their sentiments and pledged himself"ready to cooperate in every union scheme". Wise also knew perfectly well what was the "cause" which the proposed union was to champion. His opposition can be explained only on two grounds. One, which he later kept emphasizing, was the alleged menace to reform; the other was that the Board was an eastern organization and not of his own creation. As to the first objection, the circular had already declared against "interference in religious matters". Even the orthodox leaders were opposed to having religious matters come

before the Board, and only Leeser was in favor of this. Though Leeser was repeatedly outvoted on the question of religious authority vested in the board, Wise kept insisting that this was only a temporary action, and that as soon as the Board had strength, it would attack reform.[290] There can be little doubt that the main reason for Wise's opposition was that he was not the author of this plan, and therefore the Borad would not serve his purposes which were to build up reform. Otherwise one cannot understand the many weak arguments which he used against it, almost any objection he could raise, no matter how unjustified or even false. Wise went as far as appealing to the"German Jews" to oppose the Portugese, English and Polish Jews. To pry the German congregations away from the Board, Wise distorted the history of his own attempts at union in the past. He tried to blame the other groups for wrecking his plans,[291] when for example, in 1848, it was the three Geramn congregations of New York that he himself held responsible for his failure. The Portugede, English and Polish Jews, wrote Wise, "do not want the GermanJews in their meetings, and the latter reciprocate the sentiments. "We cannot agree(with them) unless we submit, and that is something which German Jewswill never do."[292] This from the great champion of Americanization, the enemy of all the old loyalties to Europe!

On November 27th, 46 delegates, representing 25 congregations in 13 different cities met at Cooper Institute. (About a dozen more congregations had signified their intention to cooperate with the Board in the future, but they were not represented at this meeting.) Asher Kursheedt called the meeting to order, but retired from the chair

after stating that he could no longer participate as a delegate for Shearith Israel. A slate of temporary officers was elected: Henry I.Hart President, Isaac Leeser and John Marks Vice-Presidents, H.C.Jacobs and S.N.Herrman Secretaries. A committee on credentials was appointed, and while they met, Leeser spoke urging that a Business Committee be appointed to prepare an agenda for the meeting. Leeser said he considered the plan outlined in the circular defective in that it envisaged a political and not a religious body. The motion for a Business Committee was seconded, but Isaacs moved that the plan as circulated be adopted. To compromise the differences between Leeser's and Isaacs' views, an amendment was adopted referring the circular plan to a committee for action. This committee consisted of Leeser of Philadelphia, Jacobs of Charleston, Hart of New York, Schriver of Richmond, and Saroni of Boston.

The committee reported to the delegates with a preamble and several articles for adoption. The first article provided for the name of the organization - "The Board of Delegates of American Israelites" - and stated that the Board was to have permanent succession. This was unanimously adopted. Article II, Section 1 provided for two delegates from each member congregation, and this too was passed unanimously. Section 2 of Article II, which contained Leeser's plan for a religious authority was, on motion, tabled till the next meeting of the Board. After the report of the Committee on Business had been acted on, it was moved that a committee be empowered to draft a constitution and by-laws. Up to this point, the Committee on Business had 5 members from 5 different cities. It was now voted to add the chairman and

3 additional delegates to the committee, and instruct them to prepare the constitution and by-laws. In addition to Hart, 3 New Yorkers were added to the Committee, so that it now had 5 New Yorkers and 4 members from 4 other cities. Obviously there was a clear purpose of keeping the organization under the control of the New York group. However, as shall be pointed out below, there was no opposition to speak of, to this tendency to give New York the dominant position in the new organization. The members from out-of-town could have voted down the move to enlarge the committee and thus place the New York group in control. There is no record of their trying to do this.

The following evening 16 congregations were represented when the Business Committee presented its report. It was read section by section and provided for congregational representation by 2 delegates each, that the Board meet in New York unless it determine otherwise, that the Executive Committee meet in New York unless by a 3/5 vote the delegates determine otherwise. This much of the report was adopted unanimously, but on the last section, setting forth the purposes of the Board, there was both a majority and a minority report. The minority report, presented by Leeser, advocated as one of the purposes of the Board the setting up of an Ecclesiastical Authority. This was tabled, and the majority report was adopted stating the following as the objectives of the Board:

1. to gather statistical information
2. to promote Jewish education and literature
3. to promote charity
4. to watch over occurences at home and abroad relating to Israelites

5. to establish a court of arbitration to settle disputes between congregations without resort to litigation.

After the constitution and by-laws were adopted a permanent set of officers was elected as follows:

President	Henry J.Hart	New York
Vice Presidents	Isaac Leeser	Philadelphia
	John Marks	New Orleans
Treasurer	G.N.Herrman	New York
Trustees	John Marks	
	G.N.Herrman	
	Bennet King	New York

An Executive Committee of 15 was elected of which 9 were from New York and one each from Charleston, Boston, Hartford, Philadelphia, and 2 from Richmond. The Executive Committee subsequently elected Myer S.Isaacs as its secretary until the next session.[293]

It should be noted that New York was clearly recognized by the assembled delegates as the center of Jewish affairs in America. Not only were the Board and its Executive Committee to meet in New York, but 3 of its 5 officers, and 9 of its 15 members of the Executive Committee wereNew Yorkers. The New York congregations had sent 22 of the 46 delegates to the organizational meeting of the Board, and this was only slightly higher a ratio than that of the population. New York at that time must have had between 40,000 and 45,000 Jews, while in the United States there were probably a little over 100,000. New York thus had 48% of the delegates to the Board and 45% of the Jewish population in the United States. The importance of these figures is that the charge was laid against the Board that it was an attempt on the part of New York Jews to control

the rest of American Jewry. Aside from the fact that those who made this charge were the ones who refused to join the Board, it was not even entirely true at the outset. The delegates from outside New York could have outvoted the New York representatives, and prevented their majority on the Executive Committee, and refused to provide for future meetings in New York. But apparantly this type of cleavage never entered into the minds of those who sat down together at Cooper Institute. New York contained the great bulk of the Jewish population, it was most highly organized, it was the heart of the nation as a whole, and it must have seemed quite logical that New York would have the largest influence on the Board of Delegates. That the New Yorkers forced their control on the rest of the delegates, or wanted to force it on the nation as a whole, could only be believed by those, who like Wise, were already unalterably opposed to the Board and were looking for possible objections to its existence and functioning. There was a great deal of general agreement on issues which came before this first meeting of the Board of Delegates, except on the question of religion, and here it was not a reform-orthodox conflict at all. Two delegates took the lead in opposing Leeser on the idea of an ecclesiatical authority to be set up by the board, and both of these represented ortho-dox congregations.(One, however, was an avowed follower of the reform movement as an individual.) One cannot conclude from the reports of the proceedings, either, that there was any thought of delaying the decision on this question of the board's taking up religious matters. The decision to table Leeser's report was a polite but firm way of disposing of it, and the subsequent history of the board only proved

this. A few of the delegates may have favored Leeser's point of view, but the large majority were definitely and finally opposed to it.[294]

The Board of Delegates was now ready for action, and its first business was to raise funds for refugees from Morocco who had taken refuge in Gibraltar during the war between Spain and Morocco. The Board sent an appeal to all American congregations for funds and in six months collected almost $7000.[295] Even on this issue, which could hardly be regarded as controversial, there was sharp opposition to the Board. In Cincinnati Wise refused to allow funds to be sent to the Board for transmission to the Moroccan refugees. When it was suggested that the funds be sent instead to Henry I.Hart(President of the Board of Delegates) Wise refused to act as Secretary of the Joint Committee of the 4 congregations which had been set up. In this case, however, he could not have his way, and a J.Abraham was elected in his place, and Wise's own congregation appointed a new delegate to replace him on the joint committee. The funds were sent to Hart![296] In Baltimore David Einhorn raised the same objections as Wise and called a protest meeting of the Har Sinai Association. The group adopted a strong stand against the Board of Delegates and issued a broadside in English and in German for distribution.[297]

Wise's opposition grew only sharper after the Board was organized, for his prediction about the "still-born child" was not borne out. He wrote that the "office of representing American Israelites in any public affair has been delegated to no individual and no body of men." Neither charities, nor literary endeavors, nor congregations need this organization."Our congregations live in peace and harmony and need

no board of arbitrators."[298] The Israelite carried a report of the November 27th meeting, which gave all its attention to Leeser's minority report. This report wasof course never adopted, but its eight sections, proposing an ecclesiastical authority, control of religious education, promotion of Jewish publications, a theological seminary, an annual conference of ministers, uniform prayer books, circuit rabbis, and a pledge by each of the delegates to support the religious objects of the board, gave Wise the "proof" he needed to show that the Board of Delegates was a real menace to reform.[299] Incidentally, the minority report shows that Leeser was really serious about bolstering up orthodoxy.

Among the protests against the Board of Delegates, was that of the Emanuel Congregation of New York. It is especially interesting, because its point of view, while probably novel at the time, has since become very popular among certain groups in America. The Emanuel group objected to the "defence" idea behind the organization of the board. Jews should not organize as Jews to defend their civil, religious, and political rights but act only as Americans. They should certainly not take steps in anticipation of trouble, said the Emanuel protest. "It is time that we practically dispense with the melancholy idea of galuth....Jews in Europe suffered long enough under the charge that they knew not how to assimilate themselves with the nations among whom they lived.....But it behooves us in the United States to take care that no false step of ours should give rise to similar charges against the American Jews."[299a]

In spite of all this opposition, the Board grew in strength, so that within four months of its being organized, the number of congregations represented grew to 30.[300]

still it was constantly necessary to answer to charges of "politics" and "hierarchy" and "anti-reform". Both Isaacs and Leeser devoted many columns and editorials to this, trying to show that the real program of the Board was not what its opponents were trying to make it out to be. Leeser, in particular was very loyal, even though his religious program was not adopted. In answer to charges in the New York "HERALD", Leeser wrote that the chief interest of the Board was to keep a watchful eye on affairs affecting Israelites at home and abroad.[301]

The first annual report of the Board of Delegates, dated June 22, 1860, summarized the first half year's activities. The Board exchanged greetings with and forwarded information to the central Jewish organizations of England and France. It had collected and transmitted to the Board of Deputies in London over $20,000 for relief of Moroccan refugees, almost half of all the funds raised for this purpose all over the world. The Board had received an appeal from Johas P.Levy of Washington, asking that all the member congregations assist the Washington congregation in engaging a Chazzan and Hebrew teacher, who could at the same time offer prayer as Chaplain in the House of Representatives, thus serving as representative of the entire American Jewish community. The annual report recommended immediate action on a memorial to the legislature of North Carolina urging abrogation of all religious requirements in the state constitution.[302]

In August of 1860, the Board had its first annual meeting at Cooper Institute, New York. Only 7 cities were represented by congregational delegates: New York, Richmond, Philadelphia, Boston, Charleston, New Orleans, Mobile.[303] The main point in the President's report was the restatement of the objectives

of the Board, probably in answer to charges and attacks on the organization. The Board accepted, without discussion, the collection of statistics, arbitration, protection of Jewish rights at home and abroad, and cooperation with similar bodies abroad, as its purposes. After debate, the promotion of education, and establishment of a high school to train teachers and ministers, was adopted as a future objective, presently impossible for financial reasons. The question of placing public (Jewish) charities on an equitable and permanent basis was tabled. The five objectives agreed on were adopted as Article IV of the constitution.

The Constitution was next considered and a lengthy discussion on representation ensued. Some delegates favored congregational representation in proportion to the membership of each congregation. It was agreed, however, to retain the system of equal representation, allowing 2 delegates to each congregation regardless of size.[304] There was apparantly some disagreement at this meeting over the religious issue. Leeser claimed that members of the Executive Committee were trying to undermine the Board by inducing their congregations to withdraw. Actually Anshe Chesed of New York did withdraw, and its delegate, L. Lewengood, explained in a letter to the ISRAELITE that the reason was the Board's trying to establish a "hierarchy". No doubt Lewengood was referring to attempts madein New York and Philadelphia for local religious unions of which the Executive Committee had taken note in its Report.[305]

The Board was still somewhat divided on the religious question. Leeser differed sharply with those who wanted the Board to concern itself only with the civil and religious rights of Jews, and not deal with the burning issue of

reform vs.orthodoxy. He was all for excluding reform congregations from the Board, for fighting them by ignoring them in all union attempts. 3066 But his views, though not without some support, were opposed by a good majority of the delegates. The Board was forthright enough on all questions which concerned the rights and privileges of Jews, but on internal Jewish problems it was cautious and moderate. Its leaders still hoped for a broad unity on grounds of common interest and concern.

The Board of Delegates thus maintained itself despite external opposition and internal cleavages. The Civil War, however, prevented the Board from meeting for the next five years. That it survived this difficulty was due only to the energy and interest of its founders and leaders. During those five years the Executive Committee carried on the activities of the Board, depending for authority on their election at the first annual meeting. They dealt with diplomatic problems like the Swiss and Chinese treaties, relief for Jews in Palestine, and for victims of Moroccan persecution. The Executive Board raised funds, sent memorials and protests to Washington, and spoke out strongly whenever Jewish rights were in danger. On the Chaplaincy issue, Grant's order, and the proposed amendment to the constitution of the United States, establishing Christianity as the recognized religion, they took direct and constructive action. On matters relating to Jewish affairs at home, they issued a circular appeal for statistics to 160 congregations, and took note of progress toward union among the congregations in New York and Philadelphia. Thus they kept the organization alive until it could once again resume normal activities when all member congregations were able to

send delegates to a Board meeting.[307]

It was to be expected of course, that there would be protests to every action undertaken by the Board. The ISRAELITE in particular, attacked the Board every time it spoke for the Israelites of America. When the Board took action on the Chaplaincy question, which resulted in the amending of the law and the commissioning of a Jewish chaplain by Lincoln, six rabbis, Lilienthal, Wise, Adler, Hochheimer, Felsenthal and Einhorn, published a strong protest.[308] Charging that the Board represented less Jews than there were in Cincinnati or Baltimore, Wise called onaall persons to sign and circulate petitions on the Chaplaincy law, and not rely on the"Board of Guardians" to protect them.[309] In response to his appeal, and in opposition to the Board, petitions were circulated in Cincinnati, Columbus(Indiana), Franklin(Indiana) and Johnson Co.(Indiana), and in Iowa City, Baltimore and Louisville.[310] The Board's action on Grant's order(No.11) angered Wise no less. This time he took action himself and, with a Louisville delegation, proceeded to Washington, where the order had already been reversed by the time he arrived.[311]

When the full Board of Delegates met again after the war on June 11, 1865, 42 congregations were on the membership role.Of these, 16 were represented, and at later sessions delegates from 3 other congregations were present. The Board was slowly growing, but the old religious question was not yet outgrown. Leeser as the senior vice-President, presided at this meeting, and took occasion to press for his old ideal -- the central religious authority which he felt that America must have to preserve orthodox Judaism. Though some congregations were kept from joining the Board from fear

that it might suppress reform, Leeser said he would not be willing to pledge to avoid religious issues to gain their support. But once again his plea for an authority was voted down by the Board. Leeser argued very cogently that avoiding the religious issue had not won over a single reform congregation thus far, and he objected in principle to the idea of guiding the activities of the Board to please prospective membercongregations, who never join the Board anyway![312] The Board nevertheless adhered to its policy of avoiding any partisan stand on the religious question.

The Board's position seemed to be justified, for gradually it gained in strength. In May 1866, at the annual meeting 22 congregations of the 47 belonging to the Board were represented. Of these 22, 13 were New York and 9 were out-of-town congregations.[313] By May of 1868, which ends the period covered by this study, 54 of the 180 odd congregations in the United States belonged to the Board. 23 were represented at the annual meeting, with half coming from New York. Again at this meeting, the Board re-iterated that it could not legislate on ecclesiastical matters (because of the lack of organization among American Israelites.) The program and activities of the Board continued to include matters of civil and religious rights, relief for Jews abroad in distress for whatever reasons, the gathering of statistics, and as has been noted above, the establishment of a school for higher Jewish education. The matter of arbitration between congregations had by this time been dropped.[314]

It might be noted that the reform question was brought forward once again, when Emanuel published its plans for a theological seminary. The provision to exclude the orthodox

from its board so angered Isaacs, that he urged the Board of Delegates to abandon its position of neutrality and take a clear stand on the religious question, even if some of the member congregations refused to accept this position. But when the Board met in May, it did not act on Isaacs suggestion but remained neutral on religious questions.[315]

The Board was thus the first success in the long movement toward unity among American Israelites. By the end of the decade, which is beyond the range of this study, the reform congregations began to join, and until the organization of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, it was the only organization of its kind in America. It was not entirely successful in representing the idea of union, even to its own adherents. There was still a strong tendency for the individual minister or editor to lead a protest movement on a question of discrimination or civil rights, instead of allowing the Board to take action. Thus in 1867, when some insurance companies issued secret instructions to their agents which slandered Jewish business men and charged that they were bad risks, there were protest meetings called in New York and Philadelphia, and the matter was not even referred by Leeser to the Board of Delegates for action. The Executive Committee dod not bother with the matter at all, since it had been handled by groups in various large cities.[316] The union idea had by no means taken complete hold yet, and the old tendencies to attack problems on an individual, or a congregational, or at best, on a city-wide basis, were still strong.

CONCLUSION

By the year 1868, American Jewish life was beginning to show some signs of order and cooperation. After more than 200 years, the Jews of America were beginning to work out some integration of their institutional life. There was still no religious union, no central authority or board of control, no representative council or conference whose power was recognized to the extent that it could speak with authority for the mass of Jews in the country. There was only a small beginning in the Board of Delegates, and for the rest, Jewish life was still in a chaotic and rampantly anarchic state.

With several leaders clearly aware of the need for unity, and committed to the task of forging a bond of cooperation among the various groups, it must seem strange indeed, that there was so little progress toward the goal for which they all were striving. Leeser, Wise, Lyon and Isaacs were well qualified for their avowed tasks; they had the energy and the imagination, the will and the ability to lead the way to union. The trouble was that they differed, more or less, from each other in aims and ideals, and this gave rise to confusion and misunderstanding. Some wanted a religious union, with some degree of hierachical power, while others wanted only a secular body for cooperation along non-religious lines. To be orthodox, and yet insist that union was possible with reform groups, or vice versa, was not easy. Wise, Leeser, and Isaacs were all at different times attacked as traitors and renegades, for trying to maintain this position. All three had a genuine desire to see a broad union of all American Jews, but each wanted it organized along his own lines of belief and practise. From the point of view of leadership, however, even though personal

rivalries played their role in keeping the men apart, and thus militating against union, it was by no means the failure of the leaders which was responsible for the lack of more unity in American Israel.

The real reason for failure in the unity movement was in the very nature of the situation in American Jewish life. Had circumstances been different, had there been a real and pressing need for union, leaders would have responded to that need. American Israel during the time of this study, had not yet arrived at the stage where union was either possible or imperative. As Lyon put it in one of his most significant editorials, there would be immense difficulties in the way of any union project which did not answer an immediate and recognized need, and only when there was some matter so pressing, that it could not be ignored, would Jews rally together in its support.* That is why the various attempts to unite the congregations andthe ministers ended without success. There was no recognition of the necessity of such a union. A handful of men may have seen the effect which anarchy was having on Jewish life and religion, but to the majority it was of no consequence. To the leaders of the various groups, it was far more important to maintain the sovereignty of thier particular group, than to take active steps to preserve Judaism, or solve Jewish problems. The same could be said with respect to the various efforts for a college or a seminary. Beyond the initial excitement and enthusiasm which Wise was able to generate by his own personal appeal, there was no feeling that a college was needed. When the Board of Delegates had its temporary success with Maimonides College, it was probably the very real threat of the growing reform movement, which crystallized sup-

* see page 94

port for the project.

American Jews were not ready to lend themselves to union ideas. They were torn apart in so many different directions that they found it difficult, even within the factions, to agree on the disagreements. At first there were the national differences, which were expressed in the establishment of so many different synagogues and fraternal and mutual-benefit organizations. The splintering up of the Jewish community along these lines of loyalties to old ties, was further complicated by the fact that newcomers arrived continually. They renewed the old problems of language, economic adjustment, and integration into the American scene. Such a process, extending over decades, was bound to delay the stabilization of Jewish life, and the emergence of a homogeneous Jewish population. Wise displayed keen judgement, when he pointed out the importance of understanding the transitional nature of this period, and the effects this had on the efforts for unity.* Jews coming to America were emerging from a ghetto-like existence into an environment of such great social and religious freedom, that there were bound to be all shades of belief and practise from one extreme to the other. In such an era, it could not be a simple matter to unite people on issues that seemed of little importance compared with the problems of earning a living, raising one's living standards, or rising in the social scale of a vast and open country. There were too many opportunities to be grasped, for men to take time out to worry through the problems of religious decline or chaotic philanthropy, or any of the other questions which vexed the leaders of American Jewry at this time.

* see page 32.

In discussing the factors which militated against union, one cannot overlook the reform-orthodox conflict which became so bitter in the '50s and '60s of the last century. The antagonism was so sharp that those who saw eye to eye on all other matters, could not, as a result of this disagreement, work together in any sort of harmony. It is perfectly clear that on religious problems, the problem over reform could only be an impassible barrier to cooperation. Thus, in trying to work out a system of religious training for the young, or of promoting the publication of Jewish works, or in raising funds for a seminary, the issue of reform was an inevitable stumbling block. How could two groups agree on these matters which had to involve some sort of an agreement or decision on reform, either a recognition of it, or the surrender of their point of view by the reform leaders?

What is not so apparant, however, is that even on non-religious matters, where this conflict between reform and orthodoxy was of no significance, there was a carry-over of feelings which was just as much a hindrance, as if it had real relevance. This is most clearly seen in the disputes over the Board of Delegates, which was bitterly attacked by the reform group in every stage of its organization, and during the entire period of its existence, within the limits of this study. There was no real difference of opinion on principle in all this opposition. The charge of attempts to suppress reform was more imagined than real. At the same time that Wise opposed the Board of Delegates, he supported the Alliance Israelite Universelle, which was organized for the same purpose as the Board, but on an international scale. Obviously the opposition to the Board in New York, was based on personal feelings.

Union was achieved in some measure, however, where it was needed to such a degree that even the average Jew could recognize the necessity. Thus in local charitable efforts, during some of the years of severe depression, the number of Jewish poor was so great, that the different congregations and societies were convinced that they could not meet the situation alone. Then they agreed to work together. Similarly the matter of burying the pauper dead enforced a measure of cooperation on even the most ruggedly individualistic organizations. But these were only small scale attempts at union. On a national scale, it took the world shaking event in Damascus and in the Papal States, to compel the Jewish communities to think of working together. In these situations which seemed a direct threat to the Jews of the United States, it was possible to suppress the strong isolationist tendencies of the several communities. Out of this sort of a challenge, the Board of Delegates was born.

What was the prospect for union in 1868? It is hard to answer this without relying on our knowledge of the subsequent trend of events. But it seems reasonable to say, on the basis of what had happened up to this point in America, that there was some ground for expecting a gradual strengthening of the Board of Delegates. The Board had grown each year, and it seemed likely that it would continue to grow. It was entirely possible too, after the death of Leeser, that the suspicion as to its anti-reform tendencies would be allayed, and that reform congregations would join its ranks. On the question of a religious union, however, there was an entirely different situation. If there was to be any union, it could only be along the lines of reform or orthodoxy, but not embracing

both groups.

The Cleveland Conference had been the last opportunity for any broad, comprehensive unity, and it had failed completely. Whether this had been inevitable, or was the result of poor planning and leadership. is not easy to say. It seems that there might have been a union of all but the rigidly orthodox, and the extreme, radical reformerd. Had Wise and Lilienthal explainedtheir stand in advance to the moderate orthodox leaders, men like Isaacs and Raphall, there might have been an understanding of minds, and some constructive unity. Whether reform would have emerged as "reform", or whether this conference would have given rise to an American Judaism without any particular label, is not too important. It might certainly have united all but the extreme groups, and these might have died out for lack of strength. As things turned out, there was no such unity, and Wise had to look within the ranks of reform for union, even if this meant accepting a type of Judaism which he had condemned as barren and without roots. From the point of view of the struggle for unity, this was a defeat, since without a union along religious lines, Jews/could be at this time only loosely united.

In 1868, then, there was the prospect of an eventual stabilization of Jewish life in America, the unification of charities, at least along local lines, the growth of the Board of Delegates, and its recognition, at least in emergencies, and the organization of religious unions along party lines. This much could be expected, if one could also expect that Jewish life would remain unchanged, or pregress only in straight lines. But while one could not very well have anticipated the events of the 1880s, with their far-reaching effects

on American Israel, one would have been very short-sighted indeed, to expect that Jewish life would develop statically without sharp changes, involving new problems. But by 1868, Jewish life had already begun to show a certain resourcefulness, some ability to meet situations of challenge. And if, in one's imagination, there was some suspicion of what was yet in store for American Israel, what serious and weighty problems were yet to be solved, there was also reason to be hopeful and confident, that whatever they were, the American Jewish community would find within itself reserves of strength and courage to meet them.

APPENDIX

INDEPENDENT ORDER OF THE B'NAI B'RITH

The Independent Order of the B'nai B'rith was unquestionably a strong force for unity during the period of this study. It is not easy to say whether it was really a conscious effort on the part of the order to foster unity, or whether it was merely in the nature of the organization to exert such an influence on the Jewish community as a whole. The preamble to the constitution of the order said that the B'nai B'rith "has taken upon itself the mission of uniting Israelites in the work of promoting their highest interests and those of humanity..." More to the point was the decision at the very beginning of the order's history that no doctrinal religious matters could be brought up at meetings of the order. Because it could not be involved in religious controversies, and at the same time opposed the growing secularization of Jewish life, the B'nai B'rith was supported by the leaders of both the reform and orthodox Jewish groups. Wise, Leeser, Lilienthal, Raphall, Merzbacher and Einhorn all joined its ranks and saw in the movement a strong support of Judaism.[317]

Organized in 1843, the order fulfilled a real need -- it helped the German Jew adjust to the American scene. It provided social intercourse, a degree of security through its mutual benefit program, and through its secret ritual, just enough emotional uplift to attract the average individual. For several years its proceedings were conducted entirely in German, and the first English speaking lodge was organized in Cincinnati in 1850.[318] The order grew rapidly. By 1850 it had 700 members in New York, Cincinnati, Baltimore and Philadelphia.[319] In 1856, there were over 2200 members in 28 lodges.

By this time the total funds of the order exceeded $55,000 and it had already established a literary society with a library, and Covenant Hall, a sort of community center in New York.[320] In 1859, the B'nai B'rith was already sufficiently important on a national scale that Wise could speak of it as a possible organ for unity.[321] That he saw certain limitations in its framework and membership, is beside the point; it was already a real force in American Jewish life, and Wise later changed his mind and saw in the order great possibilities for unity. By 1863, the strong control of the east over the organization was broken, and more power was given to the lodges and to the Districts. Thus the rock of sectional antagonism was avoided as the order moved along with the stream of progress. There was danger that all unity between the various districts might be lost, but this did not happen. The national convention, composed of delegates of the lodges, remained the supreme authority of the Order.[322]

In 1864 Wise reported on the meeting of the Constitutional Grand Lodge in Philadelphia. By this time there were 5000 members in 54 lodges, representing an increase of 1300 members in one year. The Order was only 20 years old, wrote Wise, "yet it has united 5000 Israelites in this country, hailing from all parts of Europe and America, a work which deserves particular praise."...All attempts to cement a union of American Israelites on the basis of voluntary adherence failed decidedly, the Cleveland Conference, and the N.Y Board of Delegates proved abortive(!); this order has succeeded in uniting 5000 Israelites and it will unite 5000 more in less than 10 years.....If one contemplates the disunion of congregations in one and the same city, he must admit that the Order performs

wonders."[323]

By 1865 the order had grown to over 6000 members and its funds exceeded $250,000. It had undertaken large projects, the hospital in Philadelphia, an orphan asylum in the west, and a year later, the idea of an American Jewish university. Although the latter was voted down in 1868, it was not because of lack of strength. The reports of the 16th annual convention in January, 1868, showed that the Order had over 8000 members and total assets amounting to $350,000.[324] Wise's estimate of 10,000 members by 1873 was not in the least an exageration. The Order was growing by leaps and bounds. How it would use its strength, beyond philanthropic efforts, was still a question. But it clearly had sufficient numerical and financial strength to exercise influence for unity, or for any other goal that it set before itself.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Masserman and Baker, "The Jews Come to America",p.68
2. Freund, Miriam K.,"Jewish Merchants in Colonial America", p.53
3. Ibid.p.46
4. Ibid.p.37-38
5. Ibid.p.47
6. Shearith Israel, New York
   Yeshuat Israel, Newport
   Mickve Israel, Philadelphia
   Beth Elohim, Charleston
   Shaaray Shomayim, Lancaster(discontinued early in 1800s)
   Mickve Israel, Savannah
   Beth Shalom, Richmond
   (Based on Appendix A of "The Rise of American Judaism" unpublished doctoral thesis of Alan Tarshish)
7. Grinstein, Hyman.B.,"The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York", Appendix XIV, p.521-524
8. Ibid.p.409
9. Ibid.p.407, see also Note 24, p.588
10. A.J.H.S. Publications, III, p.88217-218
11. Ibid. XXVII, p.217-218
12. Ibid. XXVII, 218-220
13. Ibid. XII. p.39-61
14. Ibid. XXVII p.220-221
15. Ibid. III, p.90-91
16. Ibid. XI, p.156-157
17. Ibid. III, p.92

18. Ibid. XXVII p. 221-222

19. Appendix B, "The Ride of American Judaism" by Alan Tarshish

20. Appendix A, "The Rise of American Judaism" by Alan Tarshish

21. Grinstein, Hyman B., "The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York", p.394

22. Ibid. p.408

23. Anshe Chesed Trustees Minutes, Oct.16,1838, Nov.4, 1838 Quoted by Grinstein, op.cit.

CHAPTER I

24. Occident, I, p.457ff.

25. Ibid., X, No.5

26. Ibid., XI, No.1

27. Ibid., XIII, p.165-174

28. Asmonean, I, P.1

29. Ibid.I,p.1

The congregations were:
Shearith Israel
Shaaray Tefilah
Shaar Hashomayim
Shaaray Tsedek
B'nai Jeshurun
Anshe Chesed
Rodeph Sholom
Emanuel
B'nai Israel

30. Ibid., I,p.2

31. Ibid,, I, p.21

32. Ibid., I, p.61

33. Ibid., II, p.21

34. Ibid., IV, p.20

35. Ibid., XVII, p.28

36. Israelite, I, p.83, 94

37. Ibid., I, p.220

38. Israelite, III, p.196
39. Ibid., X, p.52
40. Asmonean, VII, p.18
41. Israelite, IX, p.236
42. Ibid., XII, p.116
43. Grinstein, op.cit. p.216
44. Messenger, I, p.20; II, p.12; II, p.84
45. Ibid., IV, p.140 ff.
46. Ibid., V, p.140
47. Occident, II, p.410
48. Asmonean, I, p.172
49. Messenger, V, p.196
50. Israelite, XIII, No.50, p.4
51. Messenger, V, p.180
52. Israelite, X, p.172
53. Ibid., XIII, No.50, p.4
54. Messenger VI, p.20
55. Ibid., V, p.188
56. Occident, II, 591
57. Israelite, III, p.291, 300

CHAPTER II

58. Asmonean, XI, p.156
59. In 1853. In 1855 there were 21. Based on Appendix A of Tarshish, op.cit.
60. Asmonean, XI, p.156
61. Grinstein, op.cit., p. 145-147
62. Asmonean, I, p.2, 29
63. Ibid., I, p.124
64. Occident, XVII, p.14; Messenger, V, p.106

65. Messenger, V, p.114

66. Shearith Israel
B'nai Jeshurun
Shaaray Tefilah
B'nai Israel
Shaaray Tsedek
Bikkur Cholim
Beth Abraham
Shaar Hashomayim
Haavath Chesed(sic.)
Neshibeth Nashim Society(sic.)

67. Asmonean, II, p.180

68. Ibid., XII, p.38

69. Ibid., XVII, p.156; Messenger, III, p.36-37

70. Asmonean, XVII, p.164

71. Messenger III, p.44

72. Asmonean, XVII, p.28

73. Ibid., XVII, p.36

74. Messenger, IV, p.36

75. Ibid., IV, p.108

76. Occident, XIV, p.235ff.

77. Ibid., XIV, p.452

78. Ibid., VX, p.501-502

79. Ibid., XVI, p.113 ff.

80. Israelite, III, p.45

81. Ibid., III, p.94, 102, 126, 140, 157.

82. Occident, XXI, p.465

83. Israelite, XIV, No.22, p.5

84. Synagogues which were represented were:

Shearith Israel
B'nai Jeshurun
Anshe Chesed
Shaaray Tefilah
Shaaray Tsedek
Shaar Hashomayim
Rodeph Shalom

85. Grinstein, op.cit. p.443-444, and Note 7, p.593

86. Occident, IV, p.601-603
87. Ibid., VII, p.330, 345
88. Grinstein, op.cit., p.446-447
89. Asmonean, VIII, p.97-98
90. Occident, XI, p.276 ff.
91. Ibid., XII, p.263
92. Ibid., XII, p.90 ff.
93. Ibid., XVII, p.142, 162, 163, 175-176
94. Israelite, IX, p.324
95. Occident, XIX, p.419
96. Ibid., XX, 325-327
97. Ibid.,XXIV, p.381
98. Grinstein, op.cit., p.395 ff. and Appendix XI, p.535 ff.
99. Asmonean, V, p.219, 229
100. Ibid., XII, p.100-101, 181
101. Grinstein, op.cit., Chap.XV, p.313 andAppendix XII, p.518-519
102. Asmonean, I, p.188
103. Ibid., III, p.124
104. Ibid., IV, p.4
105. Ibid., IV, p.28
106. Ibid., V, p.30
107. Ibid., V, p.42
108. Ibid., VI, p.4
109. Occident, XX, p.564
110. Ibid., XXI, p.92
111. Messenger, VIII, p.188

CHAPTER III

112. Occident, III, p.175

113. Occident, III, p.222-227

114. Asmonean, XIII, p.74-75

115. Occident, XVII, p.70

116. Grinstein, op.cit., p.397, states that it was organized in 1847, and held only one meeting. Wise in his "Reminiscences", p.50-55, states it met in 1846 and was supposed to meet again in the Spring of 1847, but never did. Most likely it was due to a mistake in translating Hebrew dates into English years, which gave rise to Wise's error.

117. Occident, IV, p.554

118. Ibid., V, p.109-111

119. Wise, Isaac Mayer, "Reminiscences", p.50-55

120. Occident, VI, p.308

121. Wise, op.cit., p.84 ff.

122. Occident, VI, p.313-321

123. Ibid., VI, No.10

124. Ibid., VI, p.563

125. Ibid., VI, p.581-583

126. Ibid., VI, p.615

127. Ibid., VII, p.41

128. Ibid., VII, p.41-42

129. Ibid., VII, p.61 ff., 105, 178

Eventually 9 congregations signified their willingness to be represented:

Mickve Israel(Phila.)
Mobile, Alabama
Cincinnati, Ohio
German congregation of New Orleans
Portugese " " "
Albany, New York
Augusta, Georgia
Shaaray Tefilah, New York
Beth Sholom, Richmond.

130. Occident, VII, p.106

131. Occident, VII, p.137-139; VII, p.17-21
132. Ibid., VII, p.146-149
133. Ibid., VI, No.12
134. Ibid., VII, No.5
135. Ibid., VII, p.270 ff.
136. Wise, op.cit. p.90 ff.
137. Wise, op.cit. p.84 ff.
138. Asmonean, I, p.17
139. Ibid., I, p.21
140. Occident, IX, No.2
141. Israelite, I, p.229
142. Ibid., I, p.244
143. Ibid., I, p.268
144. Ibid., I, p.276
145. Ibid., I, p.317 Leitner?
146. Ibid., I, p.390
147. Israelite, II, p.19, 39; Asmonean, XII, p.137
148. Wise, op.cit., p.307 ff.
149. Asmonean, XII, p.137
150. Occident, XIII, p.213-214
151. Ibid., XIII, p.261-263
152. Ibid., XIII, p.263, 370
153. Israelite, II, p.84
154. Ibid., II, p.132
155. Wise, op.cit. p.312-313
156. There was no formal report of the proceedings of the Cleveland Conference, although it was often called for in the discussions that came up subsequently. The best report was given by Leeser in the OCCIDENT, XIII, p.407-414, covering the period while he was present. The rest

can be found in the ISRAELITE, II, p.132 ff,, 140 ff., and from Wise's"Reminiscences" p.307 ff. The ASMONEAN had no report other than what it copied from the OCCIDENT and the ISRAELITE.

157. Asmonean, XIII, p.50

158. Occident, XIII, p.448-453

159. Israelite, II, p.157

160. Ibid., II, p.163

161. Ibid., II, p.173

162. Occident, XIV, p.503-515

163. Israelite, II, p.137

164. Ibid. II, p.244

165. Ibid. II, p.324

166. Ibid. II, p.244

167. Wise, op.cit. p.307 ff.

168. Israelite, II, p.253

169. Asmonean, XIII, p.74-75, 101

CHAPTER IV

170. Asmonean VII, p.173

171. Ibid., VIII, p.144

172. Israelite, I, p.94, 101

173. Ibid., I, p.127, 131, 164

174. Ibid., I, p.212

175. Occident, XII, p.615-616; Asmonean, XI, p.158

176. Asmonean, XI, p.164

177. Israelite, I, p.175

The officers were the following:

President Samson Simson

Vice President John I.Hart

Trustees H.Hendricks, B.Nathan, J.D.Philips, S.M.Isaacs, J.M.Davies, Theo.J. Seixas, I.Philips

178. Israelite, I, p.283, 366, 374, 379, 390,
Occident, XIII, p.195; Asmonean, XII, p.52, 60
A Z.C.A. branch was also established in Cleveland, Oct.18, during the time that Wise was there for the Cleveland Conference. Israelite, II, p.132

179. Israelite I, p.292

180. Ibid. I, p.301

181. Ibid. II, p.37-38

182. Ibid. II, p.62, 75, 77

183. Ibid. II, p.86

184. Ibid. II, p.108

185. Asmonean, XII, p.196, 204, XIII, p.301
Occident, XIII, p.453 ff.; Israelite, II, p.156

186. Israelite, II, p.156

187. Wise, op.cit. p.305 ff.

188. Israelite, II, p.171

189. Ibid. II, p.324, 405, III, p.54, 340

190. Wise, op.cit. p.324 ff.

191. Israelite, V, p.164, VII, p.140, 156

192. Ibid. XII, p.276

193. Ibid. XII, p.300, 309, 341, 365, 373, XIII,No.2, p.5

194. Wise, op.cit. p.289 ff.

195. Messenger, VIII, p.36, 100

196. Occident, XVIII, p.134-135

197. Ibid. XVIII, p.314

198. Ibid. XXIV, p.201 ff.

199. Ibid. XXIV, p. 221 ff.

200. Occident, XXIV, p.283
201. Ibid.XXV, p.150
202. Ibid. XXV, p.213
203. Ibid. XXV, p.215
204. Ibid. XXV, p.228 ff.
205. Ibid. XXV, p.458
206. Ibid. XXVI, p.137
207. Ibid. XXVI, p.139-140
208. Ibid. XXV, p.221 ff.
209. Israelite, XIV,No.7, p.4
210. Occident, XXVI, p.289, ff.
211. Ibid. XXI, p.523
212. Israelite, XII, p.140
213. Ibid. XIII, No.19, p.5
214. Ibid. XIII, No.16, p.5, XIV, No.11, p.4
215. Ibid. XIII, No.17, p.5, No.18, p.4

CHAPTER V

216. A.J.H.S. Publications, VIII, p.141-145
Grinstein, op.cit. p.420-422
217. A.J.H.S. Publications, VIII, p.145
218. Ibid. X, p.119-128
219. Grinstein, op.cit. p.422
220. Asmonean, III, p.108
221. Ibid. III, p.110
222. Ibid. VI, p.44
223. Ibid. VI, p.61, 69
224. Ibid. VI, p.52
225. Occident, XII, p.96-99
226. Ibid. XII, p.99-100
227. Jewish Encyclopaedia p.356-357

228. Occident XV, p.291-296

229. Israelite, IV, p.26

230. Ibid. IV, p.33

231. Ibid. IV, p.52

232. Occident, XV, p.295

233. Asmonean, XVI, p.140

234. Israelite, IV, p.58, 68, 76, 92, 100
Occident, XV, p.295

235. Israelite, IV, p.100; Asmonean, XVI, p.196
Occident, XV, p.423

236. Israelite, IV, p.100; Asmonean, XVI, p.196
Occident, XV, p.423

237. Israelite IV, p.108

238. Ibid. IV, p.118

239. Ibid. IV, p.134; Asmonean XVII, p.20;
Occident XV, p.423 ff.

240. Israelite IV, p.134; Asmonean, XVI, p.148, 188;
Occident, XV, p.423 ff.

241. Israelite IV, p.130

242. Asmonean, XVI, p.172

243. Occident, XV, p.423.ff.

244. The following cities took action on the Swiss treaty:

Pittsburgh	Rochester
Indianapolis	Nashville
*Baltimore	*Cleveland
Easton	*Chicago
*Cincinnati	*Louisville
Rock Island	Philadelphia
New York	
Charleston	* were represented at the
Washington	Baltimore Convention.
St.Louis	

245. Israelite, IV, p.141-145

246. Occident, XV, p.423

247. Asmonean XVII, p.28, 44

248. Ibid. XVII, p.44

249. Ibid. IX, p.118 of Israelite

250. Israelite, IV, p.169

251. Asmonean, XVII, p. 68

252. Ibid. XVII, p.93

253. Occident, XVI, 472, ff.

254. The following cities acted on the Mortara Affair:

*Cincinnati	Chicago
*St.Louis	*New Orleans
*Philadelphia	*Mobile
*Boston	Indianapolis
*Richmond	Albany
Baltimore	*San Francisco
*Charleston	Detroit
New York City	Rochester
Syracuse	Memphis

* learned of the Mortara Affair through letter from Montefiore.

255. Israelite, V, p.60 Aug 1858

256. Ibid. V, p.85, 93, 102, 108, 118, 126

257. Ibid. V, p.143

258. Occident, XVI, p.376

259. Ibid. XVI, p.450; Messenger, IV, p.115

260. Occident, XVI, p.492 ff.

261. Ibid. XVI, p.492 ff.; Messenger, IV, p.116, 129

262. Israelite, V, p.172, 202, 244

Occident, XVI, p.496, 542, 568

Messenger, IV, p.125

263. Israelite, V, p.253; Occident, XVI, p.564, 568

Messenger, IV, p.156, V, p.27

264. Occident, XVI, 496, 499, 561, 564

Messenger, V, p.5, 35

265. Occident, XVI, p.564

266. Israelite, V, p.286

267. Occident, XVI, p.536, 542; Israelite, V, p.234

268. Israelite, V, p.181

269. Ibid. V, p.212

270. Occident, XVI, p.541 ff.; Israelite, V, p.234
Messenger, V, p.27

271. Israelite V, p.244

CHAPTER VI

272. Israelite VI, p.323

273. Occident, XVI, p.376 ff.

274. Ibid. XVI, p.554

275. Messenger, V, p.36, 60

276. Ibid. V, p.75, 82

277. Ibid. V, p.122, 132, 156, VI, p.164

278. The following congregations took part:

Shaaray Tefilah	Shaaray Tsedek
Shearith Israel	B'nai Jeshurun
B'nai Israel	Beth El
Shaaray Berochoh	Shaaray Rachamim
Rodef Shalom	

279. Messenger, V, p.180, 188; Occident, XVII, p.83

280. Occident, XVII, p.86, 115-116

281. Messenger, V, p.124

282. Occident, XVII, p.109 ff.

283. Israelite, V, p.357

284. Messenger, VI, p.60, 116, 164; Occident, XVII, p.180

285. Occident, XVII, p.193-194; Messenger, VI, p.132

286. Occident, XVII, p.193-194
Tarshish(op.cit.Appendix B) estimates the population of the United States in 1858 as 100,000 and counts actual congregations in 1860 at 118.

287. Messenger, VI, p.125, 132, 141, 147, 154

288. Occident, XVII, p.215-216, and Grinstein, op.cit. p.434, and Note 34, p.592

289. Israelite, VI, p.158, 172

290. Ibid. VI, p.236, 268, VII, p.18

291. Ibid. VI, p.236

292. Ibid. VI, p.236

293. Occident, XVII, p.215,-220; Messenger, VI, p.164 ff.

294. Occident, XVII, p.241

295. Messenger, VI, p.178, VII, p.6, 11, 20, 22, 27, 36, 38, 51, 67, 78, 83, 118, 147, 162; Occident, XVII, p.231, 287

296. Messenger, VII, p.29

297. Occident, XVII, p.277, 299; Israelite, VI, p.235

298. Israelite, VI, p.182

299. Ibid. VI, p.190 2.99a

300. Occident, XVII, p.275

301. Ibid. XVII, p.223-224; Messenger, VII, p.44, 68-69

302. Occident, XVII, p.299, XVIII, p.47; Messenger, VII, p.188

303. Among these, however, there were delegates from four new member congregations: Mobile (Orleans
Sephardic Congregation of New
San Francisco
United Hebrew Congregation of St.Louis

304. Occident, XVIII, p.134-135; Israelite, VII, p.68

305. Israelite, VII, p.18; Occident, XIX, p.269, 275

306. Occident, XVIII, p.137

307. Ibid. XIX, p.144, 269-275, 419, 476-480, XX, p.210, 288 XXI, p. 526, XXII, p.45, 536

308. Occident, XIX, p.507-508; Israelite, VIII, p.230

309. Israelite, VIII, p.212

310. Israelite, VIII, p.198, 206, 230

311. Ibid. IX, p.228, 244

312. Ibid. XI, p.420; Occident, XXIII, p.177, 193 ff.

313. Proceedings of the Board of Delegates, May, 1866, quoted by Tarshish, op.cit. p.27

314. Occident. XXIV, p.221, 283, 477, XXV, p.150, 213, 215, 228, 247, XXVI, p.139, 140, 153-154

315. Tarshish, Alan, "The Board of Delegates", unpublished Rabbinical thesis, p.29-30; Messenger, March 1, 1867 quoted in above.

316. Occident, XXV, p.149, 247

317. American Jewish Yearbook, XLV, p.97-116

318. Ibid. XLV, p.97-116

319. Asmonean, III, p.124

320. Israelite, III, p.37

321. Ibid. V, p.244

322. Ibid. X, p.44; Occident, XXVI, p.88

323. Israelite, XI, p.52

324. Ibid. XIV, No.23, p.6