

POOR COUSIN
OR
PARENT BODY?

THE WORLD UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM
DURING ITS FIRST 50 YEARS
1926 - 1976

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For
Dorothy

who
with the
faith, courage, and wisdom
which I lacked
said,

"If you think you want to be a rabbi,
then do it now rather than have regrets later."

I did;
I don't;
I am grateful.

DIGEST

The World Union for Progressive Judaism is the international umbrella organization of Judaism's Reform, Liberal, and Progressive movements. Representing more than 1.3 million Jews worldwide, the WUPJ boasts constituents in some twenty countries on six continents. In cooperation with these constituents, the World Union serves a number of needs and performs a variety of tasks. It sends rabbis and educators to communities throughout the world where there is a need for religious leadership; subsidizes rabbinical training and salaries, congregations, publications, and special projects; and provides texts, religious materials, and books to communities where these are unavailable or unobtainable. It thus serves to encourage the development of religious, educational, and cultural programs which preserve Jewish identity and perpetuate the Jewish heritage. The World Union also coordinates and organizes international conferences of Progressive Jews, serves an international advocacy role on behalf of Progressive Judaism, and establishes institutions for the perpetuation and enrichment of Progressive Judaism. It thus acts as the bonding and networking agent for Progressive Judaism among Jewish communities worldwide.

Last year, in 1986, the World Union celebrated its diamond jubilee. In those 60 years the Reform Movement (which at the time of the WUPJ's inception was to be found primarily in Germany, England, and the United States) has,

in part through the efforts of the WUPJ, now spread to Latin America, southern Africa, Australasia, and Israel. The organization's activities in the different countries have varied according to the state of Progressive Judaism in each. That they have met with variable success reflects the differing characters of the member communities themselves, the nature of the World Union, and the roller-coaster of historical circumstance on which the World Union has frequently and with little choice had to ride.

This thesis stands as the first critical history to be written of the World Union. The chapters contained herein are divided according to certain natural breaks or periods in the evolving development of the organization. Chapter One traces the background history of Reform Judaism and the events leading up to the organizing conference of 1926. Succeeding chapters span the two decades from 1926 through the world war; the post-war era through 1959, the year of the decision to move from London to New York; the period when the main office was in New York, 1959-1973; and the years following the 1973 move to Jerusalem culminating in the fiftieth anniversary conference in 1976. Embodied in each chapter are examinations of the WUPJ's biennial international conferences and community development work. In addition, Chapter Two briefly explores the work of the World Union's internal committees while Chapters Three and Four consider some of the WUPJ's special projects and undertakings. Chapter Six devotes space to a review

and evaluation of the first five decades of the WUPJ's existence, their significance and successes, their flaws and failures. Following the final chapter are four appendices which concisely tabulate the World Union's roster of officers, conferences, and constituents.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The last occasion on which protocol demanded that I offer public thanks and acknowledgments was my Bar Mitzvah. The customary form which this assumed went something like, "I want to thank my parents and teachers...." That was some 18 years ago and, to the best of my recollection, the expressions of appreciation became rather maudlin and syrupy. With the completion of this thesis, I am only too happy for the opportunity once again to offer public thanks. This time around, however, it is in the distinct hope that I shall avoid any excessive or embarrassing sentimentality.

Drawing attention to a ceremony almost two decades past is not intended as a cheap or calculated literary device. A Bar Mitzvah is a rite of passage; a bridge between youth and adulthood, occasioning public thanks. This thesis has been a similar rite of passage; a bridge between study and scholarship, imposing a similar obligation. And rightfully so! Rites of passage are seldom made without considerable aid and encouragement. My thesis was, of course, no exception. And though this particular bridge be still a bit shaky, that it was crossed at all is owing to many. Thus, I want to thank my parents and teachers....

In addition to a very necessary, though often under-appreciated, support group of friends and family members (I can only hope that they know who they are) I would like to offer more personal thanks as well: to the staffs of

the Klau Library and the American Jewish Archives, especially Mr. Kevin Proffitt; to the faculty of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, most especially Drs. Sheldon Blank, Alfred Gottschalk, and Jacob J. Petuchowski; and to my colleague, Steven Leder. I would be an ingrate if I did not also give credit to the individuals who occupy a special place within the World Union: Miss Jane Evans, Mr. Gerard Daniel, and particularly Rabbi Clifford Kulwin. Most importantly, however, I would like to thank Professor Michael A. Meyer, my thesis advisor and the person to whom I and this thesis owe the greatest debt. Dr. Meyer is not only a dedicated teacher and a demanding critic; he is a fine and objective historian, a compelling social conscience, and (what is increasingly rare these days) a true gentleman. To him I offer my great gratitude and respect.

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PREFACE

I first became acquainted with the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) when enrolled in the first-year rabbinical program at the Jerusalem campus of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Two of my classmates, Danny Schiff of Melbourne, Australia, and Alex Lillienthal of Montevideo, Uruguay, had become known to me as "World Union students." They had come to the College-Institute in part under World Union sponsorship and with the assistance of funds earmarked for such students by the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (NFTS). In the course of that year-in-Israel I had, moreover, heard something about a World Union in connection with the establishment and growth of the Israel Progressive Movement at a lecture or two by the World Union's current Executive Director Richard Hirsch.

Since that first year I have met or learned about other such students and rabbis trained under auspices similar to those of my two (later three, with the addition of Uri Goren of Chile) classmates; individuals from continents as diverse as South America, Asia, Europe, and Africa; Jews from communities as far-flung as Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Israel, India, Turkey, New Zealand, South Africa, England, France, and Holland. In the course of my own studies at the College-Institute I have worked at World Union congregations in Sydney and Johannesburg and visited a dozen others. This World Union for Progressive Judaism was, I found,

a global network indeed.

I ask myself how a young man of then 25, reasonably knowledgeable about things Jewish and certainly fascinated by things foreign, could have for so long remained completely unaware of the existence of a Reform movement worldwide, to say nothing of this organization calling itself the World Union for Progressive Judaism. Upon reflection, however, I find that a number of factors militated against my awareness of the World Union and its work. To the uninitiated "Reform", "Progressive", and "Liberal" Judaism ---all of which the World Union embraces---would seem to be distinct rather than overlapping or parallel expressions of a single modern movement. Reform Judaism, the label with which I, an American Jew, was most familiar, had always and not without cause been presented to me as a German legacy which had found its ultimate and most hospitable home in North America. Moreover, the visibility of American Reform and its extensive organizational, institutional, and social network; the overshadowing role which that network has generally played in financing and influencing World Union endeavors; both contributed to my somewhat inaccurate and exaggerated impression of Reform Judaism as a well-nigh exclusive American rather than international movement. Add to this certain aspects of the World Union itself---its relative youth, its twice change of headquarters from London to New York to Jerusalem, its low profile and self-confessed difficulties---and one readily

understands my ignorance of the international breadth of Progressive Judaism and its unifying organization.

In the sixty years since its birth, the World Union has succeeded in growing, often haltingly, into a global forum for Liberal Jewish communities worldwide. At the time of the organization's inception, the Liberal Jewish world was essentially bi-polar, with established and flourishing movements in Germany and the United States. One could also find congregations in London and Paris, but Germany and the United States clearly enjoyed sovereignty as the bastions of Reform. Through the efforts of the World Union, nascent or organized communities can now be found as well in Latin America, southern Africa, Australasia, and Israel. WUPJ activities in the different countries have varied according to the state of Progressive Judaism in each. That they have met with variable success reflects the differing characters of the communities themselves, the nature of the WUPJ itself, and the roller-coaster of historical circumstance on which the World Union has frequently and with little choice had to ride. Often because of inadequate funding, but mainly due to the will (and willfulness) of its constituents, the World Union has always suffered rather circumscribed functions. From the beginning, paradox and anomaly were evident in its growth. While assuming for itself originally the task of combatting religious indifference by revitalizing Judaism along progressive

lines, it could neither legislate nor govern, much less command. It could not even direct or guide by assembly vote or plenary resolution. It has survived forces from without: the Great Depression, the disintegration and destruction of the German community resulting from the Holocaust, the Orthodox onslaught empowered by Israel's coalition politics, and the crisis of religious faith which has characterized much of the twentieth century. It has survived forces from within: two relocations of its base of operations, structural weaknesses, and procedural and funding inadequacies, all of which have forced it alternately to contract and expand its program. It has survived, arguably against the odds for it has frequently lacked the organizational structure, dynamic leadership, rabbinical personnel, and material resources to achieve its goals with any kind of measured blueprint or calculated timetable. Nevertheless, it has survived, surmounted obstacles, and even achieved some of its aims in spreading Progressive Judaism and linking Progressive communities. To a large degree, however, it has remained as its president in 1967, Jacob Shankman, described it: a pygmy organization with a giant purpose.

Methodology and Sources

A critical history of the World Union for Progressive Judaism has not, to date, been published. A monograph entitled The First 25 Years was produced in 1951. The World

Union's golden jubilee in 1976 occasioned a similar retrospective entitled The WUPJ: The First 50 Years, by Ira S. Youdovin. Neither was very broad in scope or critical in its evaluation, however; the latter, in fact, having been written more along the lines of an informational/promotional pamphlet. A critical historical survey of the organization has remained lacking. This thesis thus intends to fill a vacuum and serve a certain practical need. The variegated history of the World Union has made the task both interesting and rewarding.

Organizational histories generally lend themselves to a number of different methodologies. If certain distinguished and/or provocative personalities have dominated an institution, each leaving a discernible imprint during his or her tenure, one might organize a critical history accordingly. Similarly, if an institution has had to reckon and wrestle with certain clearly identifiable issues, one might organize a critical history thematically. Yet a third, and very likely the least complicated methodology is one which seeks to identify and evaluate events, ideas, and personalities in sequence.

My initial and subsequent research suggested that this third methodology was the most appropriate for exploring the history of the WUPJ. True, the World Union's roster of presidents has included such stars as Claude Montefiore, Leo Baeck, and Solomon Freehof. Equally true, the World Union has had to grapple continually with certain issues

(in the early years, for example, with the matter of Zionism and the establishment of Progressive Judaism in Palestine). Nonetheless, the history of the organization has primarily consisted of a sequence of projects and undertakings, a series of ideas and directions, and a chain of conditions and responses, causes and effects. These are best comprehended in order and in context.

A wealth of primary sources was available to this end. The American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, Ohio was in possession of the WUPJ Records and Minutes through 1965, in addition to various corollary collections to these records. The records and minutes for the years since 1965 were easily accessible at the World Union's North American office in the UAHC building in New York City. The Klau Library at the Cincinnati campus of the HUC-JIR also possessed similar and supplementary primary materials. At that same campus, as well, could be found documents relating to the ongoing construction of the World Union's world headquarters in Jerusalem. Through the years, the WUPJ had itself produced a variety of publications by way of bulletins, youth information, newsletters and the like. Personal interviews and inquiries of leading personalities involved in the World Union provided additional source material.

This thesis explores the background to a number of issues. Among the questions to which it seeks answers are the following:

(1) What were the principal purposes for which the WUPJ was organized? Was it primarily to serve as a support group and communications network? If so, to what extent did it succeed or fail in these objectives?

(2) In what ways has the WUPJ revised or expanded its original intentions? Has it attempted to become more activist and more dynamic in "revitalizing Judaism along progressive lines in order to save Jews for Judaism"? Has it attempted to become more "missionary" in order to augment the ranks of Reform and so compete with Orthodoxy? Did it play any significant role during the war years?

(3) Did the concerns underlying the creation of the WUPJ include that of preventing Reform Judaism from becoming merely an American sect? One issue debated initially within the CCAR was the common ground (or lack thereof) between the American Reform Movement and Progressive Judaism elsewhere. What have been the implications of the insistence on autonomy with cooperation? Is the WUPJ in fact a union or more simply a loosely linked confederation?

(4) What were the implications and subsequent resolution by the WUPJ of the tensions between Zionists and anti-Zionists? What factors have contributed to the WUPJ's apparent change of emphasis toward Israel and its visibly high priority for establishing Liberal Judaism in Eretz Yisrael?

(5) To what extent have the fortunes (or misfortunes) of the WUPJ been shaped by individual personalities and

institutions? Have its leaders been merely "distinguished" or have visionaries and builders been counted among them? What has been the Union's relationship to the UAHC, HUC-JIR, and CCAR?

(6) What have been the primary material impediments to the growth of the WUPJ?

In order to address these issues and the events and activities which reflect them, to facilitate ease of understanding, and to provide a convenient frame of reference, the chapters of this thesis are divided according to certain natural breaks or periods in the evolving development of the World Union. Chapter One traces the background history of Reform Judaism and the events leading up to the organizing conference of 1926. Succeeding chapters span the two decades from 1926 through the world war; the post-war era through 1959, the time of the decision to move from London to New York; the years in New York, 1959-1973; and the years since the 1973 move to Jerusalem, culminating in the fiftieth anniversary conference in 1976. The final chapter devotes space to a review and evaluation of the first five decades of the World Union's existence. What were their significance and successes? What were their flaws and failures?

It is this author's hope that this work will make some small contribution to the ever-expanding field of research

into the history of one of the principal modern expressions of Judaism, Reform Judaism. Histories, however, mean to do more than simply record and preserve the past. They also seek to point directions for the future through a better understanding of the past. Perhaps this history of the World Union for Progressive Judaism can do something of the same for a Reform movement seeking an international dimension. If so, I shall feel more than amply gratified.

CHAPTER ONE

CONCEPTION AND BIRTH OF A WORLD UNION Prologue and 1926 Organizing Conference

The Historical Milieu

It is not really too audacious to suggest that only an age of liberalization would have necessitated or could have tolerated a liberalized religious expression such as Reform Judaism. The period in European history commonly known as post-Enlightenment was just such an age of cultural and intellectual ferment. Confronting modernity, European society, in somewhat schizophrenic fashion perhaps, began to transform itself as it awakened to a new period of historical self-consciousness.

The western and central European Jewish communities of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in many ways mirrored their surrounding society, albeit with some distinct differences. Cultural and intellectual ferment and an awakening self-consciousness had also begun to permeate newly-emancipated communities. The initially halting, then steady emergence of the Jew from the ghetto, however, created peculiar localized issues which compounded the difficulties of the Jewish confrontation with modernity and distinguished it from its more general European cousin. The move from a well-defined, if isolated and restrictive, place on the periphery into the social mainstream created a disjuncture in, and reappraisal of, Jewish identity. As one historian has noted, "In the considerable isolation of the ghetto, Jewish existence possessed an all-encompassing

and unquestioned character which it lost to a significant extent only after the middle of the eighteenth century. It is with the age of Enlightenment that Jewish identity becomes segmental and hence problematic."¹

Segmental Jewish identity was not, however, as simple or clean as having one foot or neither foot or both feet outside the ghetto; nor was it a uniform condition throughout Europe. The Jewish confrontation with modernity alternately resulted from, responded to, or paralleled European society's own confrontation. Accordingly, its solutions alternately reflected or differed from those of its host nations. More importantly, the need for change within each Jewish community was often intimately linked to conditions in its host country, to considerations of time and place. So, too, the degree, type, and pace of change and of response within each community varied considerably from country to country and even from city to city.

The German states provided the stage on which the opening scenes of this drama would unfold. There, three principal approaches to the Jewish crisis of modernity would collide. They would subsequently come to be known by the convenient if often deceptively simple or misleading labels of Reform Judaism, Orthodox Judaism, and Zionism. It must be understood from the foregoing, of course, that these approaches developed neither simultaneously nor fully independently of one another. Rather, Reform began in somewhat

1. Michael A. Meyer, The Origins of the Modern Jew (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979), p.8.

sporadic fashion in early-nineteenth century Germany, eventually gaining ground and momentum in the West. To the spread of Reform, traditionalists reacted with an entrenchment to which non-halachic Jews now refer as Orthodoxy. Later on towards the end of the nineteenth century, a new ideology, Jewish nationalism, would assert itself. Like Reform, Zionism was also a response to the Jewish crisis of modernity. Unlike Reform, however, it found its greater strength in the East. Though Zionism (like Orthodoxy) certainly played a key role in the course of Reform's later development, both as a competing and as a shaping ideology,² it is the latter with which we are here primarily concerned.

The history and development of Reform Judaism, like the seminal problem of the Jewish confrontation with modernity, quite obviously resists brevity. Nonetheless, a minimal understanding of both is helpful. To comprehend that the Reform, Zionist, and Orthodox camps were almost continually at loggerheads with one another is to comprehend the desirability of a united Reform to combat the assault. To comprehend that the various Reform movements had evolved different styles and developed to different stages subject to considerations of time and place is to comprehend the multifarious challenges to an eventual World Union for Progressive Judaism.

2. See for example David Polish, Renew Our Days (World Zionist Organization, 1976).

Germany, the birthplace of Liberal Judaism, throughout the nineteenth century clearly remained the established hub of (European) Jewish religious reform. In Germany reforms were largely of an evolutionary character, though not without a later radical fringe element (called "Reform"). They had begun as a lay effort concerned with aesthetic reforms which later spread to the entire community. Only much later, through the efforts of rabbis and thinkers leading to the rabbinical conferences of mid-century, did the drive for reforms begin to resemble anything like a denominational movement as it began to confront ideological and theological rather than purely aesthetic issues. Even then, however, several factors continued to inhibit the growth of something more than an amorphous movement. In the first instance, the long-standing and differing traditions of local communities stubbornly resisted uniform reforms at a uniform pace. Secondly, the Gemeinde system and the desire of most Liberal leaders to preserve a certain degree of unity within the community (witness the Geiger-Tiktin affair) discouraged radical independence. Finally, the leading Reformers disagreed among themselves as to the correct means and goals of reform. Zacharias Frankel split with Abraham Geiger over the matter of Hebrew in the service. Geiger differed with Samuel Holdheim as to the evolutionary or revolutionary approach to reform. Nevertheless, by the early twentieth century, Liberal Judaism (in varying degrees) had become the dominant mode of expression for

German Judaism and the German communities had organized both a Union of Liberal Rabbis and a Union for Liberal Judaism.

Reform pursued a markedly different course in America. German reform had begun as a lay movement occupied with aesthetic reforms and gradually enlarged its concerns to include liturgical, doctrinal, and ideological reforms by the informed rabbinate.³ In America the earliest efforts at religious reform also began with the laity and are traceable to the Sephardic community in Charleston, South Carolina in 1824. It was, however, with the mid-nineteenth century wave of German immigrants that German Liberal Judaism found its way to the United States and flourished. But because both the independent nature of the Jewish congregations and the less conservative nature of the larger society differed radically on American shores, the evolution of American Reform differed radically from its German forbear. It did not originate simply as a lay movement (except in Charleston), nor did it concern itself exclusively with aesthetic, but also with substantive reforms. "It was, in most instances, German preachers and thinkers who, in the early days, shaped the course of the American congregations in their adoption of the principles of reform....It was not merely an aesthetic impulse that swayed these men... but [overriding this impulse] there was also a question of

3. See generally Jakob J. Petuchowski, Prayerbook Reform in Europe (New York: WUPJ, Ltd., 1968) and W. Gunther Plaut, The Rise of Reform Judaism (New York: WUPJ, Ltd., 1963).

principle."⁴ As in Germany, there existed varieties of Reform and competing advocates and leaders. Unlike Germany, America was a far more hospitable environment to the radical Reform interpretation of Samuel Holdheim which found its principal exponent in David Einhorn. Vying for American leadership was the less radical Isaac M. Wise who envisioned the growth of a single mode of Jewish religious expression in America. To this end he helped establish the three institutional pillars of the American Reform Movement: the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) in 1873, the Hebrew Union College in 1875, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) in 1889. Suffice it to say that, because a far more amenable American milieu put up fewer obstacles and challenges than that of Europe, the Reform Movement was well established in America by the 1880's. Evidenced by the famous Pittsburgh Platform enunciated in 1885, American Reform was better organized, more secure, and certainly bolder and far more liberal than its German counterpart.

In England, circumstances differed considerably from those which prevailed in either Germany or America. In 1840 the first self-proclaimed Reform congregation, the West London Synagogue, was established. The implemented reforms were, however, of minimal scale and ideological import. In truth, social and class distinctions more than any reformist tendencies gave rise to the West London Synagogue. Until

4. David Philipson, The Reform Movement in Judaism, 2nd ed. (New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1930), pp.329, 331.

the late-nineteenth century, little by way of a "modernized" Judaism developed in England beyond this one comparatively conservative (some have said 'karaitic') congregation.⁵ By the twentieth century, however, England possessed two modern movements: Reform, which resembled German "Liberal" and American "Conservative"; and Liberal, which resembled German and American "Reform". In 1899, moved by a perceived lack of religiosity among her co-religionists and similarly perceived deterioration within the Jewish community, Lily Montagu put into motion the wheels of what would later become the Jewish Religious Union (JRU). With the expressed hope of revitalizing the Anglo-Jewish community, representatives both Liberal and Orthodox resolved to establish religious services, public lectures, and publications supplementary to those provided by the existing synagogues. This association lasted until late 1902-early 1903 when it came under increasing pressure to find hospitality within the confines of one of the existing synagogues. To do so, however, would have meant a compromise of independence and of the liberal direction in which the group was moving. Thus was born the Jewish Religious Union for the Advancement of Liberal Judaism (JRU) and England's Liberal Jewish Movement with Claude G. Montefiore as its president and, after 1912, American-born and HUC-ordained Israel Mattuck as its

5. See Ellen Umansky, Lily Montagu and the Advancement of Liberal Judaism: From Vision to Vocation (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1983), pp.48-53, wherein the author enumerates the various theories postulated as to the motives behind the establishment of the West London Synagogue: religious, political, geographic, and social.

rabbi.⁶ Compared to the German and American movements, the British movement was a mere fledgling.

France, the European nation first to emancipate its Jews, had also been forced to come to grips with maintaining Judaism in an open, modern society. It, too, had witnessed some reformist tendencies. Because of voting policies within the French consistoire system⁷ as well as a desire to prevent a breach in the community, however, the French rabbinate in 1856 made concessions to "Catholicizing" the synagogue services.⁸

The different elements in French Jewry continued on good terms since the doctrinal independence of the local rabbi remained intact. Subsequently more ambitious attempts at reform were cut short by the Franco-Prussian war....The French defeat cast an odium, a priori, on anything that smacked of German importation. As a result, French Jewry found itself in a state of ar-

6. For a fuller discussion, see Lily H. Montagu, "The Jewish Religious Union and its Beginnings," Papers for Jewish People, no.27 (London: Jewish Religious Union, 1927).

7. Encyclopedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing Co., 1972), vol.7, p.27 explains, "A meeting of grand rabbins was held in Paris from May 13-21, 1856, to establish a common policy with which to confront the growing trend away from Judaism. The camps were clearly divided well before the meeting: the Alsatian communities, which were the most numerous, opposed the introduction of substantive reforms, for which they felt no necessity. However, since each consistory was represented by only one delegate, the majority of the representatives tended to opt for modifications. To prevent a breach, it was resolved that decisions would be taken according to a simple majority, but that the question of their application would be held in abeyance."

8. Ibid., pp.27-28. "The assembly decided to limit the number of piyyutim, to organize synagogue services for the blessing of newborn infants, to conduct the funeral with more ceremonial, and to instruct rabbis and officiating ministers to wear a garb resembling that worn by the Catholic clergy. It was also resolved to make greater use of the sermon in synagogue, to reduce the length of services which were to be conducted in a more dignified manner, and to introduce the ceremony of religious initiation, particularly for girls....[I]t was decided that [the organ's] use on Sabbath and festivals was lawful provided that it was played by a non-Jew."

rested reform. Although moving away from Orthodoxy, it remained firmly attached to the idea of an integrated community.[9]

So it was that throughout the nineteenth century France never spawned a dissident Reform movement as had Germany, America, and England. In the twentieth century, however, the Union Libérale Israélite (ULI) in Paris was more identifiably Progressive than any other. Its rabbi, Louis-Germain Levy had in fact apparently advised Lily Montagu in the creation of the JRU.¹⁰ Nevertheless, France could scarcely be said to have possessed a Reform movement.

Such was the state of non-halachic Judaism in the second decade of the twentieth century: two principal foci, one in Germany and one in America. The former was known as Liberal Judaism and was both older and a good deal more conservative than its American counterpart, known as Reform. To its admirers the American movement was regarded as a beacon of progress and creativity; to its detractors, a dilution or bastardization of Judaism. Both the German and American movements were well-entrenched in their respective countries. In England there were two modern movements, Reform and Liberal, both embattled minorities. In France there existed the tiniest of dissident movements (the ULI), though there stood on several pulpits rabbis with Progressive leanings. Addressing the CCAR in 1910, Claude Montefiore, leading English Liberal, assessed the situation this way:

9. Ibid.

10. American Jewish Archives (hereafter AJA), Manuscript Collection 16 (hereafter WUPJ), Box 8, File 13, letter dated Mar. 31, 1926.

The new birth, the new outlook, came to you from the Old World, from Germany. But Germany for a time fell back, though Germany is rapidly again coming to the fore. You remained true to the new light, the new hopes, the new beliefs: you sought to apply them in practice, to make a correspondence between faith and life. You adopted and adapted; you developed and went forward. And now the ferment has begun again in the old countries: the tide of Liberalism has flowed back eastwards, and the Liberal movement, to which you have remained true and staunch, and which you have cherished and held high, has become again alive, and is again making progress, in Germany, its original home, in England and in France.[11]

Characters and Events Behind the 1926 Conference

Montefiore was essentially correct in his analysis. For liberally-minded Jews in particular, the decade prior to the first world war had witnessed a surge of heady optimism in the approaching "universal brotherhood of man." So it was that the four communities which boasted established Liberal Jewish movements continued to grow in adherents (as well as adversaries) and came to share certain attitudes and aspirations. At the same CCAR Conference, Montefiore described a grateful and supportive kinship between English Liberals and American Reformers and went on to enumerate five bonds between the two communities. These included a shared belief in the modified authority of Bible and Talmud, a common attitude toward critical scholarship and science, a determined desire to harmonize Jewish belief and practice, and a mutual goal of universalizing Judaism.¹²

Montefiore went on to become a co-founder of the World

11. CCAR Yearbook (Cincinnati: CCAR, 1910), vol.20, pp.178-79.

12. Ibid., pp.180-84.

Union and, as its first president, a principal shaper of attitudes during its formative years. As such, it is useful to note that he and America's "Classical Reformers" were kindred spirits indeed. A great-nephew of Sir Moses Montefiore and a grandson of Isaac Goldsmith, two of England's wealthiest Jewish families, he became something of a gentleman scholar and religious philosopher after studying both at Oxford and the Berlin Hochschule and under the private tutelage of Solomon Schechter. The founder of American-style radical Reform (called "Liberal") in England, he determinedly opposed Zionism and, as president of the Anglo-Jewish Association, tried to prevent England's signature of the Balfour Declaration. Suspicious of Jewish nationalism because of its "narrowness" and betrayal of Jewish universalism, he has been described as "so much at home in England that his affinities were much closer to his native land than to the community of Israel throughout the world."¹³ A leading exponent of the doctrine of progressive revelation¹⁴ and a spokesman for certain positive goods to be found in limited assimilation,¹⁵ Montefiore in fact expressed beliefs bordering on the Unitarian. He saw a kinship between the Jewish and Christian conceptions of God's relationship to man and

13. Encyclopedia Judaica, vol.12, p.269. See also C.G. Montefiore, "Liberal Judaism and Jewish Nationalism," Papers for Jewish People, (hereafter PJP) no.16 (1917) and "The Dangers of Zionism," PJP, no.20, (1918).

14. See C.G. Montefiore, "The Meaning of Progressive Revelation," PJP, no.8 (1914).

15. See C.G. Montefiore, "Assimilation: Good and Bad," PJP, no.9 (1914). Also "The Place of Judaism in the Religions of the World," PJP, no.12 (1916).

religion's relationship to morality¹⁶ and, while not placing the New Testament on a par with Jewish Scriptures, thought Jews should read the New Testament and give it an honored place in Judaism. Thus it has been maintained:

The greatest cause of offense to traditionalists was Montefiore's leaning toward Christianity. He viewed Christianity entirely sympathetically and seemed to look forward to the religion of the future as embracing all that is good in both Judaism and Christianity as well as in other religions.¹⁷

Much as they had for the JRU, Montefiore's ideas and, perhaps more importantly, his checkered reputation (among Reform, Orthodox, Zionist, and non-Jew alike) both determined to some extent the future fortunes of the World Union.

Montefiore, however, was not the sole personality figuring in the birth of the World Union. He was joined by his countryman and protégé, the Hon. Lily H. Montagu. Montagu, born (in 1873) like Montefiore into one of England's wealthiest Jewish families, had played an active role in social service before (and long after) her involvement with the JRU and WUPJ.¹⁸ To judge by what she herself wrote,¹⁹ as well as what has been written about her, Montagu was a devotedly religious woman. A deep religious feeling infused all her work; her faith, the essence of her being, dominated

16. See C.G. Montefiore, "Judaism, Unitarianism, and Theism," PJP, no.4 (1908).

17. Encyclopedia Judaica, vol.12, p.270.

18. See Umansky, p.97, where the author argues that the discrepancy between the comfort in which Montagu was brought up and the social misery at large inclined her toward social service.

19. See generally AJA, Manuscript Collection 282 (Lily H. Montagu Papers--- Sermons & Addresses).

her life.²⁰ A woman assimilated to the Victorian age and "excluded" from Judaism by the limited Jewish education and circumscribed role which Orthodoxy had assigned her, she was more steeped in the works of Carlyle, Eliot, Browning, Tennyson, and Matthew Arnold than in the literature of the Talmud and the Rabbis. With her religious perspective thus shaped more by England than Israel, she quite naturally gravitated to the ethical Judaism preached by Montefiore and the "inner religious experience" taught by Montefiore's collaborator, Israel Abrahams.²¹ She became, moreover, not only a receptive student of their brand of personal religion, but also a gifted transmitter of such faith. A letter written to her by a UAHC stenographer who heard her on a 1938 radio broadcast typifies the impression she had on people:

...I could not refrain one moment longer from writing you and extending my sincere thanks for the beautiful message which was transmitted to us from across the waters....With the conclusion of your talk, I felt that I had truly partaken of something lovely and genuine. In your voice and in your words was that deep rooted sincerity that is so lacking in our materialistic minded speakers of today....I felt that it was a true spiritual gift that I was receiving from you....If only all the women could have within their souls that spirit of unselfishness and sincerity that is...within you, then the fire of Judaism would burn brighter and unity be stronger.[22]

Although the mystique of Claude Montefiore seems at times to have overshadowed the work of Montagu in connection with the JRU and the WUPJ, Montagu enjoyed near-universal recog-

20. The WUPJ American Manual (1954), p.6.

21. See Umansky, Chaps. 3-4.

22. AJA, WUPJ, Box 1, File 7, letter dated Oct. 2, 1925.

niton and acclaim as the singular driving force during the World Union's infancy and childhood. Through her initiative and organizing work the WUPJ was established in 1926 and it was "she who, far beyond any other, was the moving spirit, the angel, of this organization...." ²³ It becomes essential, therefore, to recognize the religious component of Lily Montagu's personality, inasmuch as her sense of faith and religious mission determined much of the initial direction and all that she strove to accomplish on behalf of the World Union. It was her desire to bring others to a similar awareness of the Divine eternal presence that propelled her into a role of leadership, not just within Anglo-Jewry, but outside of England as well. ²⁴

Montefiore, Montagu, and American-born and educated Rabbi Israel Mattuck constituted the principal leadership of England's Liberal movement. As the embodiment of American Reform's ideals, it is not too surprising that the English Liberals perceived a close kinship between themselves and the American Reformers such as that which Montefiore described to the 1910 CCAR Conference. The American and German communities, if on the one hand not quite the same kindred spirits, did, nevertheless, enjoy a similarly cordial relationship. Many of the leading American Reformers and the professors at the Hebrew Union College hailed from Germany (or still had close attachments there) and it was

23. The WUPJ: The First Twenty-Five Years (1951), p.7.

24. See Umansky, p.98.

not entirely uncommon for graduates of the College to study for a few years in a German university. Ties were strong between the HUC and the Berlin Hochschule.²⁵ As noted by one historian:

In terms of Jewish culture and scholarship, Jews in America up to the last decades of the [19th] century appreciatively accepted the hegemony of German Jewry. What was true for the realm of culture was true almost to the same degree in the area of religion.[26]

By the twentieth century, it should be duly noted, American Reform Jews had more than adequately severed the German umbilical cord. More Americanized in their orientation by then, and more developed in their institutions and scholarship, they had emancipated themselves from their European roots. Nevertheless, while American Reformers may have felt that their brand of liberalism had evolved to a higher plane than its German forebear (and would henceforth point the way), they still maintained more than just a veneer of polite veneration and filial respect for the land which was the cradle of Reform Judaism. As the German component of their Jewish identity remained strong (at least on the surface) in the face of an influx of East European Jews, so too did their connection to Germany.

In view of the close and cordial relationships between the American, English and German Liberal Jewish communities, it does not come altogether as a surprise that a proposal

25. See generally Michael A. Meyer, "A Centennial History," HUC-JIR at One Hundred Years (USA: HUC Press, 1976).

26. Michael A. Meyer, "German-Jewish Identity in Nineteenth-Century America," in The American Jewish Experience, Jonathan D. Sarna, ed. (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1986), pp.50-51.

to establish an international organization which would further strengthen these ties had been forthcoming at a time in fact very close to that of Montefiore's appearance before the CCAR. First formulated in Germany in 1913 and scheduled to eventuate in the autumn of 1914 in Elberfeld,²⁷ such plans had to be abandoned with the outbreak of the first world war. In 1925, largely through the efforts of the Jewish Religious Union's "three M's"---the triumvirate of Mattuck, Montefiore, and Montagu---similar plans jelled once again. Though the war had cooled some of the verve and optimism which had characterized the pre-war years, it had not weakened the felt needs and shared perspectives of the German, English, and American communities. The need for common bonds may, in fact, have been reinforced by Germany's (and, hence, German Jewry's) post-war economic difficulties²⁸ as well as by the English Liberals' continuing sense of being a besieged minority. Certainly the latter, in conjunction with the religious despair which overtook Europe after World War One, would help to explain why England, the JRU, and Montagu figured so prominently in the calling of an International Conference of Liberal Jews.

Indeed it would appear that, just as the religious de-

27. "Liberal Jews in Conference," Jewish Guardian, July 9, 1926, No.354, p.13, quoting Hermann Vogelstein. Also AJA, WUPJ correspondence file, letter dated June, 1914, from Seligmann to Mattuck, inviting the latter to a conference Oct. 31-Nov. 2, 1914.

28. A letter of May 28, 1937, from Ismar Elbogen to UAHC Secretary George Zepin indicates that in 1923 the German Union for Liberal Judaism was in dire financial straits and sought aid from the UAHC. The situation would repeat itself in 1937 as the noose tightened on German Jewry.

terioration of English Jewry had been Lily Montagu's overriding concern in her organizing the JRU, religious conditions worldwide were the chief agent motivating her suggestion of a World Union of Progressive Jews. On the World Union's silver anniversary she would later write:

We felt strongly that we must make better use of the spiritual inheritance which our ancestors received about 3000 years ago. Through this birthright, we Jews believed that we had the power to spiritualise the world. There was still too much materialism and religious apathy about. We had deplored this condition of the world for so long, but it had remained impervious to our appeals. Through the World Union we might be instrumental in initiating some important movement towards God Himself.

A young woman friend of mine, an active worker in a German peace organisation, had pointed out to me how isolated each nation was on the religious plane. Modern Judaism seemed to be losing the sense of its high calling. The nations were heedless; the hope of close co-operation seemed absurd. Individuals were being pushed into negation by the weight of their own apathy and indifference....Vaguely it was felt that it would be helpful if the various interpreters came together and through exchange of thought strengthened their sense of religious purpose and decided how it could be formulated and developed.[29]

So it was that on October 1, 1925, England's Jewish Religious Union for the Advancement of Liberal Judaism approved Montagu's proposal to invite representatives to form an international union of Liberal Jewish organizations. Montagu initiated correspondence the following day with Leo Baeck, Germany's leading Liberal rabbi, expressing the desire to form an alliance with other Liberal communities "to increase the strength and further the interest of Progressive Judaism."³⁰ Responding positively, Baeck's chief

29. First 25 Years, p.7.

30. AJA, WUPJ, Box 1, File 7, letter dated Oct. 2, 1925.

concern lay in Montefiore's attitude, the latter's opinion being significant in Germany. With the assurance that Montefiore offered the fullest sympathy and encouragement for the conference, Germany's Vereinigung für das liberale Judentum (Union for Liberal Judaism) endorsed the proposal enthusiastically. Thus were the wheels set in motion for giving an international basis to an increasingly formidable Reform network.

The 1926 Conference

On Saturday morning, July 10, 1926, as crowds gathered at the Lords' famous cricket grounds for one of the season's most fashionable matches,³¹ another illustrious crowd gathered across the street at London's Liberal Jewish Synagogue. Although his physician had prevented Baeck's attendance and a labor strike had nearly waylaid some of the Americans, some 139 delegates---representatives of various liberally-denominated organization and constituencies from the United States, Germany, France, England (the Liberals, though not yet the Reform), India, Sweden, Czechoslovakia and Romania³²

31. Herald Tribune, July 10, 1926, writing in part, "Across the street from the temple, where these serious-minded Jews were assembling to-day, there gathered a throng of London society men and women at the Lords' famous cricket grounds, where...Eton and Harrow were playing the most fashionable match of the season. Paying no attention to the loud cheering, the noise of which penetrated even to the quietness of the synagogue, the Liberal Jews listened to the opening address of Rabbi Israel I. Mattuck...."

32. CCAR Yearbook, 37, p.19. The Amended List of Delegates from the official record of the International Conference of Liberal Jews, 1926, p.137ff., in fact records 138 delegates, 147 expected with 9 prevented from coming. Of the 147 invited delegates, approximately 64 were from the USA, 40 from England, 34 from Germany, 5 from Canada, 2 from France, and 1 each from Sweden and India.

---came together for lectures and meetings which would culminate in the formation of the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

Heralded at the time by some as one of the most significant events in the history of Reform Judaism, the Conference had been looked to with both anticipation and trepidation. Among German leaders, Baeck saw it as a means to widening the horizon of Liberal Judaism, bringing into the foreground the meaning of Liberal Judaism, and expressing gratitude and veneration for Claude Montefiore.³³ Ismar Elbogen, leading historian and head of the Berlin Hochschule, hoped that a World Union would put at the side of the Agudah and the Zionists, the expression of Liberal religious Jewry.³⁴ Joseph Lehmann, of the Berlin Reform Gemeinde, felt that the Conference had arrived late, but not too late; that Liberal Jewry, which had held the leadership all during the nineteenth century, had hesitated too long in regard to its organization in relation to the world's then present conditions. He went on to say that he envisaged the possibility of creating a central organization combining the three religious Jewish federations---a confederation for the purpose of counteracting the political, national, and particularistic movement in Jewry.³⁵ The Conference's chief organizer, Montagu, hoped less for political gains than for guidance in

33. "Liberal Jews in Conference," Jewish Guardian, July 9, 1926, No.354, p.13, quoting from an issue of the Jüdische Liberale Zeitung.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

religious thought, a fresh stimulus to an understanding of Judaism, and a worldwide cooperation in the furthering of those aims.³⁶ In Orthodox quarters (and subsequently Zionist as well), however, the prospective Conference was reportedly stirring some controversy and was "[t]he beginning of what may well prove to be a crisis in the Jewish community in this country..."³⁷

Who actually conceived the idea of such a conference may be a matter of some debate. In his address of welcome, Montefiore observed that some Liberal Jewish leaders in Germany had thought of the Conference in 1913. He went on to add, however,

it is not I who revived the plan and brought it to fruition. It is the achievement of a remarkable woman...the work of Miss Lily Montagu, the foundress of the Jewish Religious Union....[38]

Others have given Montagu similar credit.³⁹ Still others

36. "International Conference of Liberal Jews to Organize in London in July," The American Hebrew, June 25, 1926, Vol.119, No.7, pp.199ff. The periodical devoted approximately an entire page to an advance story on the Conference. Montagu went on to describe the state of Liberal Judaism in various countries and also to say, "We cannot doubt that religious revelation will be given to our people in progressive measure, so long as they are receptive to its influence. But we see around us so much deadening indifference, that we fear that the number of our witnesses, the direct descendants of the ancient kingdom of priests, may dwindle unless a great and united effort is made to resist atrophy and revitalize the faith."

37. "Rabbis to Meet in Conclave," Daily Express, July 8, 1926. The article reports that "Orthodox Jews, headed by Dr. Joseph Hertz, Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, are deeply concerned at the development of Liberal Judaism, which cuts straight at the root of customs and laws more than 2000 years old." It goes on to describe the various Orthodox laws which Liberals disregard and concludes with the assertion that, "Further, they recognise the eminence of Christ as a teacher, though not His divinity, and over this and other points a bitter controversy has been raging." Note the impact of Montefiore's thinking in the latter quote.

38. International Conference Report, 1926, pp.12-13.

39. Umansky, p.98.

dispute this and credit Israel Mattuck, rabbi of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue of London, as the "moving spirit" of the Conference.⁴⁰

Whoever was the actual "brains" behind it and whatever were the personal ambitions for or reservations about it, the Conference must have been motivated and actuated by a sincerely felt need for such an international colloquium, to judge by the list of luminaries who troubled to attend. Among the scheduled speakers were, of course, Mattuck, Montagu, and Montefiore. Joining them were Caesar Seligmann, president of the Union of Liberal Rabbis in Germany, and Heinrich Stern, president of the Vereinigung für das liberale Judentum; CCAR president Louis Wolsey, HUC president Julian Morgenstern, and past CCAR president Abram Simon; also other leading American rabbis such as Samuel Schulman, Maurice Harris, and William Rosenau; and, finally, Leo Baeck who, unable to attend the Conference, nevertheless sent an address with Stern. Also present to give an "unscheduled" address on Zionism was leading American Reform Zionist, Stephen Wise. The roster was, indeed, star-studded; but a show can cast only so many stars. The number of strong personalities at this one, and the wide differences of opinion they engendered, purportedly added considerable tension.⁴¹ In

40. An interview with Sheldon and Amy Blank, June 11, 1986. Mrs. Blank, a close friend of the Mattucks, suggested that Mattuck was the "moving spirit" and Dr. Blank, who attended the Conference, agreed that he was "central." Mrs. Blank went on to say that it was not Montefiore's line to start something like that as he was not an organizer. "Lily Montagu did what she was told," relying on Montefiore, then Mattuck. She was a "very fine person, but not the brains."

41. Ibid.

fact, much credit was awarded to Elbogen who, in his capacity as German-English interpreter, always succeeded in "smoothing the rough places" and taking out some of the sting.⁴²

The program of the Conference was simply structured, with the first two days given over to lectures, sermons, and addresses and the third day to business meetings. Several of the second day's talks were assessments of Liberal Judaism in the various represented countries, which offered historical retrospectives on the tribulations and triumphs of Reform Judaism, evaluated current relations with the Orthodox, and apprised delegates of the conditions of Jews and Judaism generally in their respective lands. Most sounded a very positive note as to the promise and potential of Reform Judaism in the years to come.⁴³

More revealing of the widely disparate concerns, attitudes, and approaches of the various Liberal communities, however, were the lectures and addresses. Mattuck's address, "The Task of Liberal Judaism," strove to make a virtue of the many differences which divide Jews, while describing the task of Liberal Judaism as that of increasing personal piety, communal strength, and the universal emphasis. Echoing

42. Ibid., See also The Reform Advocate, Aug. 28, 1926, Vol.LXXII, No.4, p.77. "...Rabbi Elbogen of Germany, whose delightfully charming personality helped much to bring quietude of spirit to an assembly reft by doubts and disagreements."

43. Julian Morgenstern's speech seems to have been widely printed in the United States. Attention was called especially to his remarks as to the changes wrought, both positive and negative, by the Eastern European immigrants upon Reform Judaism, the increased synagogue membership and diminished attendance and Sabbath observance, the discontent with the liturgy, and the growing promise of "eventual unity in American Israel."

Mattuck's thoughts, Montefiore's "Address of Welcome" also defended the many differences in Liberal expression. Sounding a similar chord, Wolsey's address sang the merits of continued change and progress as preferable to being mired in ritualism. Reading Schulman's speech, "The Synagogue in Modern Life", with all its exhortations about modernity, one can understand why, for all the other talk of Vision and the unique contribution which Judaism can still make, the lasting and somewhat disenchanted impression of one listener was that Liberal Judaism is nothing if not "modern".⁴⁴ Mattuck's second address, "The Use of the Bible in Education and Worship" also established the need for modernism, speaking to the positive aspects of the Bible while also insisting on both the positive value of the Higher Criticism and the need to harmonize Bible and science. In accord with all of what had preceded, Rosenau spoke to the value of traditional ceremonials, though recommending and defending the need for change if they are to continue to have positive meaning for modern Jews. On the final morning of the Conference, Elbogen attempted to summarize his impression into one sentence:

I would say, it was a remarkable enunciation of what Liberal Judaism stands for. There was no binding to definite dogmas and ceremonials, and still full of life, full of vitality, full of desire to make itself understood by our fellow Jews and by the whole world.[45]

44. Reform Advocate, p.77, which somewhat sarcastically described Schulman as a man "imbued with modernism" and whose manners and diction were more reminiscent of a street corner orator than a man of the pulpit."

45. International Conference Report, 1926, p.92.

The final day of the Conference, devoted primarily to a discussion of the papers and to business matters, was perhaps the most telling of the strong personalities attending the Conference and their differing views. Two particularly discordant notes were struck. The first was in regard to the issue of Zionism. Apart from a brief mention by Montefiore, the Conference seems to have deliberately and studiously avoided the issue which was then being so hotly debated in most Liberal/Reform circles. A leading English Zionist, M.L. Perlzweig, in fact raised the issue, though it was Stephen Wise's lengthy "speech" and explosive rhetoric which seem to have made the most lasting impression. It is clear from the responses of other delegates that, having agreed to limit remarks to ten minutes and to avoid the Zionist issue, Wise's violation of both was a source of surprise and no little irritation. Wise's question was, essentially, whether Zionist Liberals were to be welcome partners of the Conference. Montefiore's answer was that the Conference held no official attitude toward Zionism (though individual views were well-known.)⁴⁶ The second issue, reflective of the widely differing views and understandings at the Conference, arose during the afternoon session which had been set aside for creating a World Union and developing the organizational schema (which would mature into a full constitution at the 1928 Berlin Conference.) A protracted discussion ensued as to the

46. Ibid., pp.108-9.

naming of the baby. Was it to be a World Union of Reform, Liberal, Modern, or Progressive Judaism? Each word had different implications to the Americans, Germans, and English. The matter seems to have taken some considerable amount of time to resolve. Resolved it finally was, however, and the International Conference of Liberal Jews became, henceforth, the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

In the final analysis what, if anything, was significant about this conference? Perhaps more noteworthy than anything else was, as mentioned in Montefiore's welcome, the bare fact of the Conference's occurrence. Never before had such an assembly congregated. A potentially historic event was being staged in London and the delegates were themselves aware of it. It is difficult, however, to sort through all the fanfare and bombast of speeches by the insiders, many of whom were noted for flamboyant oratory, to know what the real feelings of the participants were.

Reactions by outsiders, on the other hand, were pronounced in both praise and criticism, often colored by personal or professional bias. One editorial, by a Reform newspaper, described the Conference as "a purely Jewish affair, but...in no way more decisive....Mr. Montefiore's personality was the only unifying influence at the Conference. The rest was all rifts and patches."⁴⁷ Noting the great differences of viewpoint, it observed that "the Germans were struck by the 'advanced' spirit of the service

47. Reform Advocate, p.77.

and the Americans thought they had wandered into an 'orthodox' synagogue,⁴⁸ and further said that the only point of agreement was that Liberal Judaism meant something separating them from "barbarous" Eastern Jews still trapped in the prejudices of the Middle Ages!⁴⁹ Another article observed, however, "The most striking feature of the Conference was the unanimity of opinion on the proposition that the future of Judaism rests in its liberal wing...and that, in Judaism at least, union need not mean conformity." Continuing in a positive vein, the same writer averred, "This much is certain, however: the Conference made evident that liberalism in Judaism is gaining ground the world over, and that this Union will promote its advancement...."⁵⁰ Yet another report describing the historic meeting commented, "There was an undercurrent of dissatisfaction with the progress of Reform Judaism that made itself evident from the very inception of the session."⁵¹ The most vociferous exchange, however, came from the conservative Jewish Chronicle and the liberal Jewish Guardian of England. The former wrote a stinging editorial which castigated the Conference for breaching the Sabbath, attacked Liberal

48. Ibid. See also, AJA MSC 282 (Montagu Papers), Box 6, File 4, "Impressions of the Conference of the WUPJ held in Berlin from Aug. 18th to 21st, 1928" in which Montagu makes a similar observation two years later.

49. Reform Advocate, p.77.

50. "Jewish Liberalism in Many Lands." The American Hebrew, July 30, 1926, Vol. 119, No.12, p.331.

51. "Liberal Judaism in America," The Jewish Times, July 23, 1926, Vol.XIV, No. 21, p.10.

Judaism for inconsistency and chaotic puerility, and repudiated the moral weakness and self-deception on the issue of Zionism.⁵² The latter wrote an equally stirring defense. Responding to remarks by those Zionists who, seizing upon anti-Liberal remarks by Chief Rabbi Hertz, twisted them into an attack on anti-nationalist Liberals, the Guardian went on to say:

To pretend that scholars of the eminence of those who travelled to London for this meeting, and who spent three long summer days in efforts to advance the future of Judaism as a world religion in modern life, are animated by no nobler object than what is called 'disruption,' and constitute a 'grave menace' to the very cause which they serve and love, is a contention which we respect where it is sincere, but to which we cannot subscribe.[53]

Perhaps more significant than either the fact of the

52. The Jewish Chronicle, July 16, 1926, No. 2988, pp.7-8, quoting almost in its entirety: "[The Conference was] remarkable for other reasons besides the fact that it was the first gathering of the sort. It began with a breach of the Traditional Sabbath, a mark of defiance to the sentiments of Jews which, to say the least, is a characteristic of this particular section of Jewry. Another notable achievement of the Conference was the astounding exhibition it made of the chaotic puerility of what goes by the name of 'Liberal Judaism.'...[T]here was little agreement on questions of either principle or practise, methods or object among the delegates comprising the Conference. Under the influence of what is claimed to be the purest and most ethical conception of Judaism, the leading 'Liberal' Jew of America showed his good taste by telling the Conference that what 'Liberal' Judaism wanted was God and not Ghetto. It would be difficult to characterise adequately such an exclamation, and still more difficult to determine what sin, whether against manners or religious respect, or fair treatment of the English language, to ascribe to it....But as we say, the Conference showed that these people, who take upon themselves to subject to the most unfair criticism those at whom they sneer as unprogressive and inferentially as illiberal, were themselves floundering in a very sea of contention and doubt, and difference. The Conference presented a whole gamut of thoughts and ideas utterly inconsistent, and totally incompatible....It is to be hoped, however, for the sake of Judaism at large, that the new International organisation will to some extent remedy this, and that there will emerge a 'Liberal' Judaism at least definite and well determined....But perhaps the most sorry revelation of moral weakness, if not utter self-deception, was the attitude of the Conference towards Zionism...."

53. Jewish Guardian, July 16, 1926, No. 355, p.1. See also "After the Conference," p.8.

Conference or the reactions it stirred was its tangible outcome. A World Union for Progressive Judaism had been organized and convened as a consultative and deliberative body designed to bring together on a regular basis from all parts of the world those Jews whose religious outlook was described as Reform, Modern, Liberal, and Progressive. In an age before telecommunications and jet travel made such things commonplace, delegates had discussed their common problems, described the progress and difficulties of Liberal Judaism---both ideologically and institutionally---in their respective countries, exchanged ideas, and even talked of desired aspirations and hopeful achievements. It remains to subsequent chapters to explore how the various problems and variances in constituents' ideas, attitudes, goals, and perceptions of the World Union's positions and purposes, the seeds of which were sown in London, would later manifest themselves.

CHAPTER TWO

EUPHORIA AND POST-PARTUM DEPRESSION

World Economic Decline and World War
1926 - 1945

In the Wake of the Organizing Conference

In the estimation of those who participated in or contributed in some manner to the 1926 Organizing Conference, the event was to be regarded an overwhelming success. The array of scholars, the scope of the papers and addresses, and the engaging discussion which they provoked contributed to its impressiveness. More than this, however, the Conference delegates left London almost uniformly infused with bright hopes and unremitting enthusiasm for the declared goals and perceived prospects of a world union of Progressive Jews. In her invitations to the Conference delegates (as in so many of her writings before and after the initial London meeting) Lily Montagu had expressed her alarm at the ever-increasing religious indifference of Jews worldwide and at idealism's loss of ground to materialism. Her purpose in organizing the Conference, she said, was to combat such indifference and materialism by revitalizing Judaism along Progressive Jewish lines. So it may have been that the delegates left London with a heightened conviction that Montagu's personal battle had become their own. So, too, it may have been that they left London with a greater zeal for a Progressive Judaism which, to all appearances, had now become an international movement where it had previously been a purely local phenomenon in various countries. More-

over, it may also have seemed to them that Progressive Judaism had drawn battle lines against more than just religious indifference. Certainly some must have felt that they now had Orthodoxy "on the run" as rumors spread in London that, in response to the World Union's formation, some Orthodox leaders were visualizing the establishment of a counter-group (though this never materialized.)¹

Although a World Union for Progressive Judaism was accomplished fact and its first conference a heralded success, these by no means assured its integrity. It was self-evident to all that such a federation would have been meaningless without the participation of the CCAR and UAHC as constituents, the membership of the great American institutions of Reform being considered essential to its success.² Nearly half the delegates at the 1926 Conference were Americans and of the nine positions on the Provisional Governing Body, four had been reserved for Americans.³ Nonetheless, the decision of the CCAR Executive Board had made clear that its delegates to the Conference attended only in their individual capacities and were in no way empowered to bind the CCAR.⁴ Official CCAR and UAHC membership in the WUPJ could only follow formal ratification by those organizations.

1. AJA, WUPJ, Box 13, File 1, letter to A. Leo Weil from Montagu dated Nov. 18, 1926.

2. Ibid.

3. The four appointed were CCAR president Louis Wolsey, HUC president Julian Morgenstern, past CCAR president Abram Simon, and Executive Committee member of the UAHC A. Leo Weil.

4. CCAR Yearbook (Cincinnati: CCAR, 1926), 36, pp.28, 121.

While the not inconsiderable influence of the Americans on the Provisional Governing Body virtually assured the ratification would carry, it is worth noting, too, the very strong personal sympathy and commitment of several Americans to the World Union. So keen was it, in fact, that Leo Weil and Ludwig Vogelstein promised, in the unlikely situation of the UAHC's failure to join, nevertheless to guarantee the \$2500 contribution to which the American constituency had pledged itself.⁵

On January 19, 1927, the UAHC cabled its decision to join the World Union⁶ and later that year the CCAR also voted by overwhelming majority to join, though not without vigorous debate. The principal challenge to membership came from William Rosenau and, to a lesser extent, James Heller.⁷ Rosenau argued that, because the constituents had little in common, the organization would be a union in name only. He feared, moreover, a compromise of CCAR autonomy. Rosenau went on to differentiate between CCAR membership in, for example, ecumenical councils for the sake of cooperation and membership in a Union to assert common principles and goals. Heller, on the other hand, tentatively objected to the aggressive stand which such a Union might have implied vis-a-vis the Orthodox and the importation of

5. AJA, WUPJ, Box 13, File 1, letter to Montagu dated Dec. 2, 1926. Weil was a Pittsburgh attorney and Vogelstein, a wealthy metal industrialist. Both figured prominently in the UAHC and counted among their friends the Rosenwald, Warburg, and Schiff families (see letter dated Mar. 30, 1929).

6. AJA, WUPJ, Box 12, File 5.

7. For a full account of the discussion see CCAR Yearbook, 37, pp.18ff.

Progressive Judaism into non-Progressive communities.

While Rosenau's and Heller's objections were in some sense unfounded, neither were they entirely without merit. In both instances, the proposed constitution offered certain specific guarantees. Article III recognized each constituent's absolute independence and unlimited direction of its own affairs. Article II, sec.3 implied that the World Union would not offer unsolicited assistance in promoting Progressive Judaism or organizing congregations in new countries and certainly would not tread on a World Union constituent's existing domain. The two objections, Rosenau's especially, did however raise some crucial issues. What precisely was to be the nature of this World Union? What would American Reform stand to gain or lose through membership? Was it only a forum for discussion and support? Would it actively or passively crusade to establish congregations in new countries? Was it to be the supreme organ and official mouthpiece of Progressive Judaism? Would it exert any real authority over its constituents?

The activist fervor with which delegates left the 1926 Conference made such questions appear all the more reasonable. The World Union had proclaimed the establishment of Progressive Judaism as a global movement. A movement usually suggests a central organ to serve as policymaker, spokesperson, and arbiter of standards; a union usually suggests a whole which is, not equal to, but rather greater

than its parts.⁸ The preamble to the proposed constitution⁹ further reflected an activist posture, asserting the mission of Israel to spread the knowledge of God and the duty of Israel to work for recognition of Judaism's religious/ethical demands. To achieve these ends the World Union, in its Constitution, declared it would work to further the development of Progressive Judaism, to encourage its growth, in different countries, and to promote cooperation in the various communities. This notion of activism was central to the organization and seems to have guided its most prominent figures during its early years. It remains to the greater part of this chapter, then, to explore its problems and its manifestations---through the World Union's biennial conferences, propaganda/"missionary" efforts, committee work, and refugee work of the late 1930's.

The International Conferences: 1928, 1930, 1934, 1937

To judge by the volume of correspondence which both emanated from and arrived at Lily Montagu's desk, a considerable amount of her time and energies were consumed in the planning and organizing of the international conferences of the World Union. Indeed, no small importance attached to these conferences in that they sought to achieve one of the World Union's primary goals: promoting cooperation

8. The UAHC and CCAR would be paradigms of the former. A federal system such as that of the United States, in which the constituent states enjoy autonomy except in those matters where the federal government is supreme, would be a paradigm of the latter.

9. Authored by A. Leo Weil and approved by the Governing Body on Sept. 7, 1927.

between the various communities and stimulating the study of Judaism and its adaptation to modern life.¹⁰ Article V of the Constitution in fact required that

Sec. 1. The Union shall hold regular bi-annual conferences of the representatives of its constituent members.

Sec. 2. The purpose of these conferences shall be the submission of reports upon the work of the various communities; the discussion of their religious conceptions, points of view and aspirations, and of any or all matters germane to the objects of the Union and its future.

The World Union staged four International Conferences before the deteriorating political situation in pre-war Europe rendered such a task impossible. Each conference followed essentially the same format. Reform scholars and leaders would deliver sermons or addresses pertinent to the chosen theme of the conference. Representatives of the various constituents would deliver papers informing delegates of the state of Progressive Judaism in their respective lands. Montagu and various committee chairpersons would report on the work and progress of the Governing Body, committees, and task forces since the previous conference. The program would be rounded off with worship services, socials, a business meeting, and "round-table discussions" on the sundry papers or addresses. Seen from our vantage point, when international gatherings are routine, these Conferences may seem inconsequential or even trivial. Viewed in their context, however, these Conferences were considered highly noteworthy and highly successful in fostering a sense

10. WUPJ Constitution, Art. II, sec. 1(a).

of fraternity, awareness, and support among the far-flung constituent communities. They also highlighted many differences, setting off, for example, traditionalists from non-traditionalists, Zionists from non- or anti-Zionists. Moreover, while some individuals felt that the Conferences would have benefitted from dispensing with the scholarly papers in favor of more time for talk and discussion,¹¹ the content of these addresses ranked of a high scholastic caliber.

On the surface at least, the Conferences were internally directed, intended to strengthen bonds within the Progressive community and to deal with Progressive Jewish applications and solutions to contemporary problems. One suspects, however, that the conferees also hoped to make ripples beyond the confines of the Progressive community at a time when only the Zionists could boast of Congresses on an international scale. One periodical predicted:

The Conference, that is to be held in Berlin next month in connection with the World Union for Progressive Judaism is likely to be an outstanding event in modern Jewry (emphasis added). [12]

An admittedly liberally-inclined paper went on to say:

There is nothing like it in Orthodox Jewish life, and its proceedings, we should think, will be more harmonious than the political discussions at international Congresses of Zionists....[J]udging by events, the most 'live' movement in Judaism at the present moment is its Progressive Ecclesia: most 'live' because its representatives come together from both sides of the Atlantic in order to exchange views on topics of Jewish religion....[13]

11. AJA, WUPJ, Box 12, File 10, reply by A. Leo Weil to a questionnaire from Ludwig Vogelstein, dated 1928.

12. The Jewish World, July, 1928.

13. The Jewish Guardian, August 3, 1928.

So it was that the World Union reconvened formally on August 18, 1928, in Berlin, for the first official biennial Conference. Setting the date had itself been a matter of some difficulty and illustrative, in a small way, of certain problems within the WUPJ. A date in June would have had to allow for travel time for the American delegates. Thus, August 11 was agreed upon, until it was learned that this was a German national holiday at which time rabbis were expected to preach patriotic sermons in their respective synagogues. Upon moving the date to August 18, the Americans complained they would have insufficient time to return home in preparation for the High Holy Days. The Germans agreed again to August 11, but the Americans who could attend on the 18th had already arranged to do so. Letters moved slowly or crossed in the mail and feathers were ruffled when some leading Americans proved unable to attend.¹⁴ On a mundane level this was testimony to the difficulties of constructing a global network when communications were by no means what they are today; a problem persisting beyond the first decade and leading individuals from CCAR president Hyman Enelow to HUC president Julian Morgenstern to complain of improving the machinery of communications with the constituent organizations.¹⁵ On a more serious level, underscoring the rift

14. For example, CCAR president Felix Levy. AJA, WUPJ, Box 8, File 12, letter dated July, 1928.

15. AJA, WUPJ, Box 5, File 2, letter from Harry Enelow to Montagu dated May 24, 1928. Also AJA, WUPJ, Box 12, File 10, Oct. 4, 1928, regarding the mechanics of communication with American delegates: "I must say that I am by no means satisfied with the manner of organization of the World Union or its Governing Body

over Zionism, the incident provoked an accusation that the late August date was a ploy by German Zionist delegates to keep away enough Americans so as to force through an affirmative vote on the issue.¹⁶

The Conference theme was "The Message of Liberal Judaism for the Jew of Today" and many of the addresses sounded the same chord as in 1926. Tending toward institutionalized rather than politicized religious issues, some were almost apologia justifying the case for Progressive Judaism as, for example, Samuel Goldenson's "Why the Services of the Synagogue Should be Modernized." Others, not unexpectedly those of Montefiore and Baeck, rose to the inspirational. Montefiore, speaking to "The Importance of Liberal Judaism for the Religious Life of the Individual," insisted that the religious life must be the whole of one's existence and not merely a part. Baeck, taking the Conference theme for his title, spoke of religion as the long march of history and of the Jew's task as taking his place in the world without losing his connection with his own history.¹⁷

for the transaction of business. The machine which the Union has perfected is to my mind very inefficient and wastes much time in talking about important matters, but achieves comparatively little in the way of actually carrying out in a businesslike manner important undertakings and projects. I am not at all certain that an organization of American delegates will help matters. In fact, I have a distinct feeling that it will merely make the entire procedure more involved and inefficient."

16. AJA, WUPJ, Box 13, File 1, letter from A. Leo Weil to Montagu dated Mar. 10, 1928. Weil, an anti-Zionist, was convinced that if the World Union ever became committed to Zionism, this would bring about its disintegration and collapse so far as the Americans were concerned. He also seemed to regard Germans such as Baeck and Elbogen as pro-Zionism. See for example Aug. 21, 1928 edition of Daily New Bulletin of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

17. AJA, MSC 282 (Montagu Papers), Box 6, File 4, "Impressions of 1928 Con-

The 1928 Conference was notable on several counts. At the Sunday morning service of the Reform Gemeinde, Lily Montagu preached the sermon, marking the first occasion in which a woman had spoken from a German pulpit.¹⁸ No less positive was the conciliatory tone of the round-table discussions as when Caesar Seligmann, drawing from an article by Ismar Elbogen, spoke to the Reform Gemeinde's Joseph Lehmann of building bridges.¹⁹ Less positively, there remained a continuing division over the WUPJ's official neutrality toward Zionism. Indeed, a minor disruption of the Sunday morning public meeting over the distribution of the Zionists' Jüdische Rundschau moved Chairman Leo Weil to reiterate earlier disavowals:

Certain propaganda has been distributed relating to Zionism, and there will be distributed (so I am informed), at the door when the audience leaves, other propaganda on the same subject. We wish it distinctly understood that the World Union for Progressive Judaism has taken up no attitude whatever on that subject....We are in no way responsible for the distribution of this propaganda and have taken no attitude on this subject.[20]

Paradoxically, the official neutrality which had been intended to prevent disintegration of the World Union over the matter of Zionism had itself become one of the Union's most contentious issues.

ference." Montagu wrote of Baeck, "His personality is that of a prophet...there is an intensity about him which lifts his audience to a high plane."

18. - This required a good deal of coaxing by Dr. Joseph Lehmann, beginning in August, 1927. See AJA, WUPJ, Box 8, File 10, letters dated Aug. 28 and Nov. 12, 1927. Also AJA, MSC 282 (Montagu Papers), Box 6, File 4, "Impressions of 1928 Conference."

19. WUPJ, 1928 Conference Report (hereafter CR), p.146.

20. Ibid., p.59.

Finally there was, less immediately explosive though potentially more threatening over the long term, what would prove to be the recurring problem of finances. The annual budget at this time was £1000 when £3000 was needed "to get well started in our work."²¹ The matter of fund-raising, discussed at length, necessitated a resolution permitting the Governing Body to engage in soliciting private individuals. The principal objection was that monies thus raised might be gleaned and disbursed in such a way as to encroach on a constituent organization's "turf."²² This fear was placated and a resolution approved encouraging and supporting the Governing Body's endeavors at independent fund-raising. One notes again, however, the issue of constituent sovereignty and autonomy (as well as competing interests) rearing its ugly head as feared two years earlier by William Rosenau.

Thus ended the First International Conference in Berlin. Papers and addresses ranging from the didactic to the defensive underscored the differences in Progressive Judaism. Frank and open discussion built bridges between Progressive Jews. Beneath the veneer of international cooperation, however, there lurked dissension over constituent sovereignty, finances, and the avoided issue of Zionism. The delegates left Berlin, nonetheless, apparently with buoyant

21. *Ibid.*, p.100. A goal of an annual income of £3000 or about \$15,000 remained the hope of many and the goal of Leo Weil until his death in 1938. Weil hoped that a few wealthy donors could be induced to establish an endowment fund generating \$15,000 annual income for ten years, by which time the WUPJ would be self-supporting. Regrettably, the Depression and the refugee problem of the 1930's prevented this.

22. *Ibid.*, p.101.

spirits mirroring those of 1926. They also left with an invitation by the Americans to host the 1930 International Conference.

Due to financial considerations which would have rendered the attendance of many European delegates improbable, the World Union changed the proposed venue of the 1930 Conference to London.²³ If the length of the Conference Report is any measure, running as it does to 310 pages, the work of the Union had expanded considerably and caught up with its aspirations in the preceding two years. By 1930 these conferences, indeed the World Union itself, seemed to possess a greater sense of purpose and self-assuredness. As President Montefiore stated in his welcoming address:

These Conferences are...of value in many different ways....[T]hey keep before our minds...the importance of our cause. They stimulate and encourage us. We learn from each other, and we give to each other; ...The Conferences tend to spread abroad a knowledge of, and an interest in, Progressive Judaism and its ideals....Moreover, the value of these Conferences is not exhausted by the papers and discussions that we hear....Friendly conversations between members of different countries may often be as useful as the public meetings. Then, too, our Conferences cause the Jews as a whole to perceive more clearly the importance of Progressive Judaism as a religious factor both within Judaism itself and beyond the pale. Lastly, the Conferences stimulate the permanent work of the Union, namely, to help in diffusing Progressive Judaism among countries where Liberal Jewish organisations would be a blessing for the Jews and for Judaism, but where at present they do not exist.[24]

It was clear that the overarching purpose of these confer-

23. The Conference convened July 19-22, 1930. The first International Conference to be held in North America did not finally occur until April, 1986 in Toronto.

24. WUPJ 1930 CR, p.22.

ences, whatever their interpretation by outsiders, was to offer a forum for the exchange of ideas and ideology. Indeed, it was this very exchange which in some sense made of them Progressive conferences.

The subjects dealt with in the Conference were of great importance and covered a wide range...The total record is somewhat imposing. It shows, at all events, that Progressive Judaism is earnest and alive, that those who range themselves under its banner are anxious to apply themselves with sincerity and open-mindedness to the...special problems which beset and affect Judaism. In the foreward to the Report of the first Conference, Dr. Elbogen finely said that it is not the business or purpose of these Conferences to lay down dogmatic answers to the problems discussed: it is enough that the problems are raised and ventilated, and that the speakers treat of them frankly and fearlessly....The freedom of Progressive Judaism lies...in the readiness to ask and discuss the questions. We move forward to fuller answers in the light of growing knowledge and thought. That our Conferences help this moving forward is one of the chief reasons for holding them.[25]

It was similarly clear at this conference, judging by the addresses and discussions which accrued to the Conference theme of "Progressive Judaism and Some Aspects of Modern Thought," that if Progressive Judaism had been born of Judaism's confrontation with modernity, coming to grips with that confrontation was by no means an accomplished fact. David Koigen of Berlin, for example, spoke of evolving modern conceptions of God; Samuel Schulman, of New York, of the appropriate content of prayer in modern times; Israel Mattuck, of translating religious teaching into the modern life of the individual and the place of Law and ceremony in Progressive Judaism; Felix Levy, of modernity's twin enemies of religion---industrialism and nationalism---and Reform Juda-

25. Ibid., from the Forward by Montefiore.

ism's role in the combat. Indisputably, modernity was foremost in the minds of the conferees. Further evidence of it lay in the three motions passed impinging on the status of women. At the Business Meeting, after a long discussion in German it may be worth noting, the World Union declared (i) the perfect equality of men and women, (ii) that thousands of war widows must be released from their condition as Agunot, and (iii) the non-necessity of Chalitza. However interesting this declaration may have been of itself, it was probably more interesting for the light in which it cast the World Union's role. Inasmuch as the Liberal/Reform rabbinates of America, Germany, and England had long accepted these principles, either by proclamation or practice, the World Union* hardly broke new ground. One may well wonder, in fact, whether the World Union was a clarion call or an echo, leading or being led; whether it would have been as quick to make such a pronouncement had a major constituent already declared to the contrary.

Finally, it is essential to note that the issue of Zionism continued to rouse heated debate within the ranks. At this 1930 Conference a resolution was moved that the official position on Zionism---that it was inappropriate for discussion---should be rescinded as inconsonant with Progressive Judaism's emphasis on free speech. CCAR president Felix Levy had already raised the matter with Montagu months before by insisting that his address ("The Task of Liberal Judaism") must be permitted to touch briefly upon the subject of Zion-

ism in order to be complete. Montagu had urged against it and the matter was left hanging.²⁶ At the Conference, however, the resolutions committee advised against rescission. Following an emotional debate between Rabbis Isserman (favoring rescission) and Schulman (opposed), the committee's recommendation was adopted.²⁷

The World Union did not reconvene again formally for another four years. Prevented from staging a gathering in 1932 by financial disabilities created by the Great Depression, the Governing Body instead held an informal Round-Table Conference in Amsterdam around the theme "How Progressive Judaism Can Combat the Wrong Kind of Assimilation." Subsequently, the World Union agreed to postpone plans for its biennial until 1933, by which time it was hoped that the Jewish community in the city of Hamburg, the "birthplace of Liberal Judaism," would be in a better economic position to host the meetings at the famous Hamburg Temple. Once again, however, history intervened when the changed political fortunes of German Jewry (and the resulting opposition from the CCAR to a conference in Germany) forced another postponement.

The World Union did, finally, convene in its Third International Conference in July, 1934, in London. The mood was a more somber one than previously, but although the

26. AJA, WUPJ, Box 8, File 12, correspondence of May, 1930.

27. WUPJ 1930 CR, pp.188-95.

financial and political considerations which had forced the earlier cancellations still persisited, the sentiment had prevailed that these mounting troubles mandated the renewal and strengthening afforded by the Conference.²⁸ There is precious little to remark upon about this conference, however; perhaps because the size of the Conference was notably smaller than previous ones, both in actual numbers and in stature. Many of the luminaries of the German and American movements had been prevented by circumstances from attending. Moreover, morale and money problems seemed to have dampened things. Mr. E. Turk, WUPJ Treasurer, had predicted that the current deficit of nearly \$900 would grow to nearly \$1900 by 1936 and would very likely worsen after that.²⁹

The Conference theme of "Judaism and Human Destiny" prompted discussions largely dominated by the problem of the relation between the claims of the community and the rights of the individual. Dr. Mattuck's summary of Conference discussions observed that a great deal of emphasis on Community came from the German representatives; further, that an oft-repeated "desire for a discipline, a way of life, imposed by an authority that spoke in the name of the community" came from the young people.³⁰ Interestingly,

28. WUPJ 1934 CR, p.8.

29. *Ibid.*, p.42. The minutes of the Executive Committee, Oct. 26, 1938, indicate a deficit of over £1100 (\$5500) in the Palestine account and more than £600 (\$3000) in the general account!

30. *Ibid.*, p.47-8.

Mattuck rather blithely dismissed this emphasis on the group life of the Jew as "to be expected in view of the prevailing tendencies in the world at present."³¹ Presumably he was speaking to the increasing alienation and isolation which had forced many European Jewish communities to fall back on their own resources and to look for strength and nourishment from within their own people. Mattuck, an anti-Zionist, decried this emphasis on the people Israel at the expense of the religion of Israel, seemingly regarding it as only a temporary aberration.

One particularly noteworthy matter does distinguish the Third Conference; namely, the gradually increasing emphasis on Palestine in the World Union's agenda. In response to "frequent* and urgent requests" that work be initiated in Palestine, the Governing Body had, at their July, 1934 meeting, agreed to appoint a special committee to investigate and, if possible, initiate Progressive work in Palestine.³² At the Business Meeting of the International Conference that same year

the Secretary's reference to the proposal of the Governing Body to form [such] a committee...evoked much sympathetic discussion. Mr. Perlzweig was supported by several other speakers in his view that there was a definite and urgent need for religious work, and if not undertaken under the auspices of the World Union it might waste itself in unauthorised and spasmodic efforts. It was agreed that the need for constructive organisation on religious lines was felt not only by Progressively minded men and women already resident in Palestine for some time, but also by the German refugees who

31. Ibid., p.49.

32. Secretary's report to WUPJ 1934 CR, p.7.

had gone there during the last year.[33]

Whether or not it was contradictory for an ostensibly non-Zionist World Union dominated by anti-Zionists to undertake to bring Progressive Judaism to Palestine remains arguable.³⁴ More certain is that at the 1934 London Conference the World Union for Progressive Judaism, if not exactly discovering Zionism, did discover Zion.

The World Union came together again July 2-6, 1937, in Amsterdam, Holland, in what would prove its last formal Conference until after World War II. The venue had been a very deliberate choice: in part as a matter of convenience to the German delegation; in part as a gesture of support to the still fledgling Dutch Progressive community; in part to sound an upbeat note, the establishment of the Dutch group being one of the World Union's "success stories." As a result of the turmoil wrought by the steadily mounting crisis for the German Jews and the combined financial woes wrought by the still recovering economy and the diversion of funds to the German refugee efforts, however, the mood of the conference was apparently and unsurprisingly downbeat. Clearly, the progress of the Union had been confounded by the circumstances of history. Within the ranks, President Montefiore, then 80 and suffering continuing setbacks to his health, seems to have been only nominally serving as

33. WUPJ 1934 CR, pp.43-4.

34. For a fuller treatment of this subject, see "Liberal Judaism in Palestine," thesis by James Scott Glazier, 1979, HUC-JIR.

president.³⁵ Outside the ranks, moreover, the very organization of the conference seems to have been attended by some controversy when the president of the Board of Deputies of Dutch Jews, a Mr. Asscher, concerned that such a meeting would cause a schism in the Dutch community and possibly prejudice work among German refugees, requested that the Conference not take place in Holland or that meetings at least be kept private. It is hard to know whether the concerns were valid or merely a ploy; in any event, the WUPJ held its ground as well as the Conference.³⁶

The Conference itself was described as "remarkable because of the number of German delegates who had come at considerable personal sacrifice, and because of the interesting youth meetings which were organised by the youth members themselves, and particularly because of the alive character of the business meeting."³⁷ In attendance were 71 delegates (about half that of the 1926 Organizing Conference) including two from Danzig, which had affiliated with the Union earlier that year.³⁸ The Conference theme was "Organised Religion and Modern Life," yet what seems most to have stirred the gathering was a response by Israel Mattuck to remarks delivered by outgoing CCAR president Felix Levy.

35. WUPJ 1937 CR, p.8.

36. AJA, WUPJ, Box 5, File 4, minutes of Executive Committee (hereafter MEC), Apr. 24, 1937.

37. AJA, WUPJ, Box 3, File 4, Conference Report for "Monthly," p.1.

38. AJA, WUPJ, Box 6, File 11, minutes of Governing Body (hereafter MGB), July 6, 1937.

It may be remembered that the pronouncement by Dr. Felix Levy...on the relation between Reform and Traditional Judaism as reported in the papers, had been considered by some of Orthodox critics as an expression of discouragement and even of frustration. From all sides appeals had come in to the Executive of the World Union that an effective reply must be given to our critics.[39]

Mattuck took up the challenge, addressing three points which the Orthodox had taken out of context and rebutting each.⁴⁰ Expressions of appreciation for Dr. Mattuck's remarks were immediately forthcoming from as far away as Australia and South Africa. Though the matter may seem at first blush a small one, it was significant in what it revealed about the evolving nature of the World Union and the interdependency of its constituents. On the one hand, the statements and decisions of one WUPJ constituent, here the CCAR, had come to have serious implications for other constituents in other lands---evidence that others had come to view Progressive Judaism as the WUPJ viewed it, a worldwide movement. On the other hand, smaller, more remote Progressive communities still found themselves isolated and on the defensive, looking toward the World Union for the support and propaganda necessary to secure their positions.

Perhaps, however, of greatest consequence in Amsterdam,

39. AJA, WUPJ, Box 3, File 4, Conference Report for "Monthly," p.3.

40. WUPJ 1937 CR, pp.18-22. Levy had called for changes which the Orthodox took as an admission of Reform's failure. Mattuck explained that change, progress, is the very essence of Progressive Judaism. Levy was further reported to have said the "Reformation days are over." Mattuck cut a distinction between a suggested return to more conservative practices and moderations in reform---not the end of Reform. Finally, Levy reportedly said that Reform Judaism had failed to influence the bulk of Jewry. Mattuck questioned whether Orthodoxy had done any better and went on to claim that where Jewry had had the option of Reform, it had fared well.

though it passed with little fanfare, was the World Union's subtle yet utter aboutface on the issue of Zionism. In one of the supreme ironies, albeit hastened by the approach of one of history's supreme tragedies, Mattuck proposed a resolution effectively nullifying the Union's longstanding policy of silence on Zionism:

While maintaining the official attitude of neutrality towards Zionism which was adopted by our Union when it was founded, so as to allow both Zionists and non-Zionists attached to Progressive Judaism to participate in its work, we recognise with gratitude the present value of the upbuilding work that has been, and is being, done in Palestine, and express the hope that it may afford a home for the largest possible number of those Jews who are forced by oppression or by unbearably adverse economic or political circumstances to leave their present homelands.[41]

While the resolution was a far cry from a plea for a Jewish state, while it was more a plea for a Jewish haven, the grateful acknowledgment of the work of the Zionists did mark a dramatic shift for the World Union. The subject would no longer be taboo. As another writer has written, "German anti-Semitism had made the World Union's policy of shelving Zionism impossible to maintain. The universalism which Progressive Judaism had taken for granted was fading. For the World Union it was indeed time to reconsider."⁴²

The World Union's Efforts to Found New Communities

The periodic convening of the International Conferences constituted some of the most visible efforts of the World

41. Ibid., p.37.

42. Glazier, p.12.

Union for Progressive Judaism. Its attempts to sow Progressive Jewish communities on new soil comprised its most enduring, fruitful, troublesome, and overly-ambitious. Several of these attempts enjoyed notable success. Historical circumstances or finances either crippled or completely aborted others and, just as sadly, demographics or self-delusion turned some into boondoggles.

The World Union Constitution had ascribed two raisons d'etre to the organization. Writing in 1937, eleven years after the WUPJ's founding, Israel Mattuck described this bifurcation thusly:

The World Union was founded eleven years ago this month, at a meeting in London, with two special aims. One was to bring together representatives of Progressive Judaism...for an exchange of views, for a discussion of policies, for considering ways by which Progressive Judaism might increase and strengthen its work in the countries where it existed. The second purpose was to combine all the existing Progressive Jewish organisations for joint work in spreading Progressive Judaism to countries and to places where it did not then exist. The aims of the World Union are (1) joint discussion for the development of Progressive Judaism; and (2) joint work for the spread of Progressive Judaism.[43]

This second purpose, the spread of Progressive Judaism (eventually translated as the formation of new congregations) would over time prove a source of endless frustration even as it would come to assume ever-greater and sometimes overwhelming importance.

Of these two raisons d'etre the first, to further the development of Progressive Judaism and promote cooperation among constituents seemed clear enough in its meaning insofar

as the Constitution went on to describe the exchange of information and ideas and the forging of bonds, principally by means of biennial international conferences. The second, however, to aid in the spread of Progressive Judaism, while easily enough put into words, was far more ambiguous when put into practice. With few guidelines and fewer precedents to guide the task, it might easily have been altogether neglected, but for the tenacity and earnestness of several individuals. By 1931, the Governing Body had evolved the following policy toward communities which possessed no Progressive organization:

It is among the aims of the World Union to present the teachings of Progressive Judaism to those Jews who, because they feel out of harmony with the Orthodox presentation of Judaism, or for any other reason, have drifted, or are in danger of drifting, into a complete religious indifference. In countries where there are Progressive Jewish organisations, that work is being done by them. But countries where there is no organisation presenting the Progressive view of Judaism, present a special problem. The World Union feels that it has the special responsibility or duty to spread the knowledge of Progressive Judaism to such countries.

The World Union, however, cannot and should not undertake this work without the help of some of the people in the country....[T]here must be some evidence of the desire for Progressive Judaism, as well as evidence of the need for it, before the World Union undertakes any responsibility for the work of promoting...in any country. When there is evidence...the World Union may help in one or all of these several ways:

1. By instituting an investigation with reference to the possibility of establishing a Progressive Jewish organisation in such country,
2. by supplying literature,
3. by sending a minister to such country, upon the invitation of a local group, or in answer to a desire expressed by a number of responsible individuals in the country,
4. by giving a local group financial assistance.[44]

Between 1926 and 1945 the World Union engaged in propaganda and "missionary" activities in Australia, South Africa, Latin America, Poland, Central Europe, the Netherlands (and elsewhere in Western Europe), Palestine, and India. Detailed histories of the World Union's role and efforts in each country quite obviously extend beyond the possibilities of this thesis. As it is equally obvious that these can neither be completely ignored, they must at least receive brief treatment. By the same token, these efforts cannot be fairly judged except when measured against the above-mentioned policy established by the World Union. Neither, however, can they be fairly evaluated using only this policy. Thus additional criteria must be introduced. Did the World Union have an overall strategy and was it appropriate? Were the World Union's endeavors overly-ambitious given its resources and youth? Were its methods ingenuous or blind to local and international conditions? What follows is a synopsis and evaluation of the World Union's efforts in each country.

Australia. Not long after the formation of the World Union, correspondence began between its secretary, Lily Montagu, and both Ada Phillips and Ernest Levinson of Melbourne. Phillips had become acquainted with the Jewish Religious Union (and the WUPJ) on a visit to London and thought perhaps that Liberal Judaism might be introduced in Australia. Levinson was particularly pessimistic about Judaism's prospects

"down under":

Nowhere is there clearer evidence of the damage done, perhaps irreperably [sic] by the misinterpretation of the Jewish faith by an unsympathetic and form-ridden Orthodoxy....After another generation Judaism in Australia will be with the Dodo, unless Liberalism comes to invigorate it.[45]

A small organization of Progressive Jews organized and in 1930 conducted its first worship services in Phillips' home. Though the nineteenth century had witnessed "rumblings for reform," small efforts at internal reforms from within Orthodoxy, and even one failed attempt at a German-styled Reform Temple,⁴⁶ Phillips' group would form the seeds of what later grew to become Progressive Judaism in Australia.

At the 1930 London Conference, Montagu reported the Melbourne congregation's request for a rabbi. Upon recommendation by Julian Morgenstern, the World Union responded with Rabbi Jerome Mark as well as a partial guarantee for his transportation and first year's salary. Mark, a radical Reformer from Selma, Alabama (who had originally been intended for a fledgling group in Johannesburg until plans fell through) arrived in time to inaugurate High Holy Day services in 1930.

The World Union remained in constant contact with the Melbourne congregation, offering both moral and, to a lesser extent, monetary support throughout its difficult early years. In early 1931, ~~the~~ congregation began to shoulder

45. AJA, WUPJ, Box 1, File 4, from letters of 1928 and 1929.

46. For a fuller history, see "Dinkum Liberal: A History of Progressive Judaism in Australia," thesis by Eliot Joel Baskin, 1985, HUC-JIR.

its own financial burdens and affiliated formally with the WUPJ later that year. Between 1932 and 1934, however, debts began to mount and the group again looked for help to the World Union. The economic depression, general apathy at some level, and the small size and meager resources of the congregation all contributed to the problem. Problems with rabbinical leadership, however, aggravated it considerably.

As a radical Reformer, Mark's rabbinate had been attended by some controversy. Some was generated by the Melbourne Orthodox community; but more was created from within the ranks of American Reform when Solomon Freehof (who ironically enough would later become a World Union president) caused a fracas by attacking the World Union in the American Israelite on charges of missionizing. Labeling Mark as "Mark the Missionary," the Freehof article not only caused some consternation in Australia and the United States, but also touched off a bitter exchange of articles between the World Union and London's Jewish Chronicle over the WUPJ's methods of establishing new communities.⁴⁷

Whether due to Mark's dissatisfaction with Melbourne (as well as with Freehof) or Melbourne's with Mark, the rabbi resigned in 1933. He was followed in rapid succession by two more Americans, Perry Nussbaum (1933-34) and Martin Perelmutter (1934-36).⁴⁸ The struggle was all uphill, with Nussbaum even recommending that the WUPJ suspend its activ-

47. Jewish Chronicle, from February-October, 1931.

48. There seems to be some discrepancy in names. Baskin indicates a Rabbi Perley rather than Perelmutter.

ities.⁴⁹ The primary obstacle in Melbourne clearly lay in attracting the right leader. After the departure of Perelmutter the congregation expressed to the World Union its dissatisfaction with American applicants who were only job seekers with an eye to advancement in America and its desire for a rabbi, preferably an English-speaking German who would throw in his lot with the Australian community.⁵⁰

The World Union assisted in finding Dr. Hermann Sanger, a German rabbi who arrived in Australia in 1936. He proved to be the right man and was particularly attractive to the growing influx of German-Jewish refugees. Under his leadership the Australian movement grew. Temple Beth Israel began construction on its own building in 1937 and with Sanger's impetus a congregation* formed in Sydney in 1938. Within a few years it, too, had its own building and rabbi and the two congregations federated together as a single constituent of the WUPJ, the Australian Jewish Religious Union.

South Africa. The World Union's role in South Africa mirrored that of its efforts in Australia and makes an informative comparison. A core group organized itself in Johannesburg, the World Union helped locate a rabbi, guaranteed his transportation and underwrote his salary for at least

49. AJA, WUPJ, Box 1, File 5, letter dated Apr. 30, 1934: "I most earnestly recommend to the WUPJ that it recognise the failure of the movement established in 1929 and suspend its activities in Australia until such time when there will be a sufficiently enthusiastic, cohesive, and realistic group who are capable of laying a firm foundation."

50. Ibid., letter dated Apr. 28, 1936.

the first year, and then provided literature and moral support until the congregation was on its feet. If the South African movement seems to have been beset by fewer difficulties, the reason in large measure seems to have lain in having found a suitable leader from the outset who could profitably exploit the generally strong Jewish identity of South African Jewry.

Montagu began corresponding with two Liberal Jews in South Africa as early as 1927. Mr. Dainow and Mr. Idelsohn (whose brother Abraham, an HUC music professor, later visited and lectured in South Africa) were convinced of the need for Progressive Judaism and equally convinced that a dedicated group would rally around if only the World Union would send a leader to do pioneer work. Until 1929 the parties were at something of a standoff: the Union kept insisting (in line with its general policy) first on an organized group to whose call they would then respond; Dainow kept explaining that nobody wanted to assume responsibility for such an invitation, but gave assurances that such a pioneer would get support if he came. A small group finally organized in 1929, the invitation went out to Jerome Mark, the group subsequently disbanded, and Rabbi Mark went instead to Melbourne.

In 1931 a group calling itself the Jewish Religious Union of South Africa formed under the leadership of Idelsohn. With the help of special donations from the Governing Body, the World Union sent a recent graduate, Moses Weiler, to

Johannesburg in 1932. The WUPJ extended its one year guarantee for Weiler through 1934, by which time the congregation was on firmer ground. The growth of the South African movement was little short of spectacular. By 1937 the congregation possessed its own building and 1200 members. By the early 1940's a second congregation was established in Johannesburg as well as one in Cape Town. By 1944 these congregations had federated into one WUPJ constituent, the South African Union for Progressive Judaism.

Though the commitment of the congregants obviously played no small part in the growth of the South African movement, much of its success was attributable to Weiler's leadership. Thus it becomes clear that the most important role which the World Union could play, as was also found out in Melbourne, lay in recruiting the right pioneer for genuinely fertile ground. South Africa was fertile ground. As a non-radical Reformer, Weiler was the right man. The earliest congregants kept insisting on a Zionist such as Perlzweig of England. Had Jerome Mark gone out first, the movement might have failed abysmally. Weiler, however, was a committed Zionist, distasteful as that might have been to someone such as Montagu.⁵¹ Further evidence of the necessity (and difficulty) of finding suitable rabbis shown again in

51. See for example AJA, WUPJ, Box 7, File 6, letter from Montagu to Basil Henriques dated Nov. 10, 1938, prior to his trip to South Africa: "The people in South Africa are, as you know, terribly Zionist. Could you use that objectionable symptom for our purpose, and make them see how wicked it is to believe in a Zion without religion and persuade the religious Zionists to help us in our Palestine work. We need money so desperately...."

the search for an assistant to Weiler. There were a number of frustrations before finding an Austrian Rabbi Rappaport,⁵² in the course of which Julian Morgenstern wrote:

I am increasingly reluctant to recommend American graduates of the Hebrew Union College for positions abroad since after a time they become homesick and wish to return home....Pioneers need to be willing to stay for a time.[53]

In the end Morgenstern suggested that these communities would do best by recruiting individuals for study at HUC, thus breeding their own native leaders. Certainly he was correct to the extent that such is the hallmark and key to the continued strength of a movement.

The Netherlands. Between 1926 and 1928 the World Union implemented preliminary* background investigations in Holland to study the prospects for establishing a Progressive Jewish community in Amsterdam or the Hague. The initial findings were pessimistic. Dutch Jewry was 8-10% Orthodox with a roughly equal number of Zionists. Otherwise, the studies concluded, Dutch Jewry reflected Dutch society-at-large, being mostly irreligious. In early 1930, however, following correspondence with Montagu, a few interested individuals invited both Israel Mattuck and Montagu to speak in the Hague and appointed L. Levisson as their representative to the 1930 International Conference in London.

52. Rappaport, originally trained as an Orthodox rabbi, ultimately deserted to the Orthodox shortly after his arrival in South Africa. As Rappaport was a considerable scholar, it proved a loss to the Movement.

53. AJA, WUPJ, Box 11, File 3, letter dated Apr. 13, 1938.

The two groups which had organized in Amsterdam and the Hague encountered endless difficulties in their early years. An equally endless retinue of rabbis, all subsidized by the World Union, came and went, beginning in 1931 with Max (Meir) Lasker, an American who had attempted some work in Poland on behalf of the WUPJ. After Lasker's departure, Leo Baeck wrote Montagu that the Dutch group was "nervous about having another American rabbi, even though of German origin, without first seeing him."⁵⁴ The Dutch group was sustained by visits from Montefiore and Caesar Seligmann until finally appointing Rabbi Mehler of Berlin in 1934.

The small Dutch group suffered severe financial difficulties throughout the 1930's and even with (or because of) steady growth from German refugees after 1933, was still pleading for continued subsidies after 1935. At that time the World Union was still paying half of Mehler's salary. This matter of subventions evoked continuing discussion within the Governing Body inasmuch as the WUPJ's funds were limited (or, more correctly, nearing exhaustion) and the subsidies seemed to some to go beyond its policies and responsibilities. In 1931 Mattuck favored underwriting the Dutch group's expenses, at least until a permanent rabbi could be appointed.⁵⁵ CCAR secretary Isaac Marcuson, however, opposed giving financial aid to new communities apart from sending an organizer to round off and gather up the liberal

54. AJA, WUPJ, Box 1, File 7, letter dated Apr. 5, 1931.

55. Ibid.

element in a community. Much better, he felt, for a group to begin in a humbler way and build itself up naturally, as Reform did in America, meanwhile being satisfied with lay leaders until it was strong enough to be self-supporting.⁵⁶

The Dutch group might have become a kind of test case for the issue of World Union subsidies. Until history intervened and decimated the community, Holland was an instance of a community, though largely irreligious yet historically and potentially amenable to Liberalism, which with encouragement, money, and leadership might be turned around. At one point, in fact, Mehler proposed consideration of Holland's potential as a new, transplanted center for the great German institutions of religious thought.⁵⁷ To be sure, the factor which most contributed to the community's surge of growth, namely the influx of German ~~refugees~~, also contributed to its exaggerated financial problems. Thus it is impossible to know whether, with the WUPJ's efforts and more normalized circumstances, an indigenous Dutch movement would have grown of its own accord. Nevertheless, the growth of a Dutch community after the war would seem to indicate that its efforts would not have gone unrewarded. Once again, with suitable leadership secured and adequate resources made available, the World Union could indeed help to create a flourishing Progressive community almost ex nihilo.

56. AJA, WUPJ, Box 9, File 4.

57. AJA, WUPJ, Box 5, File 4, MEC, Nov. 22, 1938.

It is temptingly easy to fall victim to judging another's foresight with benefit of hindsight; too easy to say of the World Union's successes "they used good judgment" and of its failures "they used bad judgment." Yet this seems the case with World Union efforts in Central and Eastern Europe. Throughout the 1930's the organization's aspirations and efforts seemed to outpace its resources and any realistic expectations. No overall strategy for "conquest" ever really emerged. Rather than concentrate on a few promising places, an attitude of urgency seemed to prevail: "If there are Jews there, Progressive Judaism should be there, for Jews are slipping away." The closing paragraph of the Secretary's 1928 Report resounded with an almost evangelical zeal:

From the reports we have received during these two years, it has been revealed to us that there is a vast and arid territory waiting to be fertilised by the seeds of a living Judaism. We believe that the communities federated in the Union, who have already done much for Progressive Judaism, knowing its power and blessing, will do much to show that power and bring that blessing to their fellow-Jews who seek for a modern expression of our ancient faith. There is the need and we hope opportunity.[58]

Without doubting the World Union's or Lily Montagu's sincerity, one must question the sophistication of the approach. A philosophy of "when we receive a call for organising work, the reply must not be too long delayed"⁵⁹ shows admirable enthusiasm. Yet, as proved to be the case in Poland, one call does not a summer make.

Thus it happened that the World Union, with correspon-

58. WUPJ 1928 CR, p.96.

59. WUPJ 1930 CR, p.138.

dents across Europe, suffered from perhaps undue optimism about what was achievable. In 1931 Montagu wrote to David Philipson:

Personally, I shall be very disappointed if we do not have the Conference in 1932. I find it so difficult to keep up the interest in our work between the Conferences, but if the Governing Body decides on postponement, I should use a little time next year in going to Hungary and Austria and try to work up interest in spite of general depression. Our German friends do not seem inclined to do very much in this line, and we cannot afford to wait.[60]

Until his death in 1933, Joseph Lehmann was constantly receiving letters (as was Leo Baeck) asking for contacts in Poland, Prague, Vienna, and Budapest. Rabbi Louis-Germain Levy of Paris was asked to enlist Edmond Fleg for propaganda in Belgium. Montagu initiated surveys in Italy and Denmark and, after Hitler, had correspondents in Spain, Portugal, Turkey, and Mexico. These never developed beyond the enquiry stage.

In Central Europe, however, the World Union did expend both money and effort.

We have often been told that a presentment of Progressive Judaism was needed in Vienna, and that some individuals were waiting to be organised into a group of Liberal Jews....We are assured by our friends in Germany that they will go forward with this work, and try to establish a centre in connection with the World Union in Vienna.[61]

Thus convinced that in Vienna, Prague, and Budapest the possibilities were excellent and the time ripe, the Governing Body in late 1933 hired Margarete Goldstein to serve the

60. AJA, WUPJ, Box 10, File 5, letter dated June 22, 1931.

61. WUPJ 1930 CR, p.138.

Union for a year as organizing and field secretary.

...[H]er work has been attended with gratifying success. Between December and April she visited Vienna, Buda Pesth and Prague. In Vienna the two groups of Progressive Jews...were stimulated to hold regular monthly meetings of a religious character under helpful leadership. The attendance and character of these meetings were most encouraging, and when Frau Goldstein returns in the Autumn she may find a considerable development.

In Buda Pesth a fellowship of young people and of adults has also been formed, and much useful activity is recorded. In Prague the religious indifference is extreme....A few individuals promise to attempt some definite work on an educational basis in the Autumn.[62]

Inasmuch as the formation of a new congregation in Budapest would not have been permitted by the regime,⁶³ one wonders whether Montagu was either being misled or deceiving herself. Though history has mooted the question, the World Union's efforts in Poland are illustrative.

Poland. The World Union's efforts in Poland were time and money misspent and, without trying to appear unduly negative, probably doomed to failure from the start. With its dense population of some three million Jews, Poland must have seemed a titillating prospect for bringing, at least to some degree, within the Progressive orbit. Nevertheless, even had the WUPJ found the right leadership, even without knowing the ultimate fate which awaited Polish Jewry, how could it have seriously entertained the possibility of introducing Progressive Judaism on any scale into that region?

62. WUPJ 1934 Conference, Report of work since the 1930 Conference, p.2.

63. AJA, WUPJ, Box 5, File 4, MEC, Oct. 15, 1937. Hungarian law then forbade any form of meeting or gathering of organizations not recognized by the government, thus making the work of Budapest's small Liberal group very difficult.

With its geographic proximity and quasi-cultural ties to Germany, would not Reform have evolved on its own had the soil been so fertile as was hoped?

The earliest investigations of Poland seem to have been initiated by a letter in late 1926 from an Eric Maschler of Breslau to Heinrich Stern, head of the German Union for Liberal Judaism. Maschler had met in Warsaw with a gentleman by the name of Leon Bregman and a group of 15 others interested in Liberalism. Stern responded to Maschler's overture, since the German Liberal community, with encouragement from Leo Baeck, had long nourished the idea of introducing the Jews in the East to Reform.⁶⁴ Until 1928, the World Union confined its efforts in Poland to enquiries and the dissemination of literature and propaganda, largely through the efforts of Maschler and Rabbi Sali Levi of Mainz. The WUPJ was, moreover, encouraged in its efforts by its constituents. In 1927, Louis-Germain Levy of Paris wrote to Montagu:

I think it is very important for active propaganda amongst the Russian Jews and in Palestine....At Paris we have the proof that Polish, Russian, and Palestinian Jews are mostly ready to accept Liberal Judaism. For two years many of them have come to us and are deeply interested.[65]

Equally supportive was another Levy, CCAR president Felix Levy;

...permit me to say that I feel we ought proceed very slowly in the matter of Poland. However, I feel also that as soon as we are certain of our ground we ought to go ahead regardless of the expense, because Eastern

64. AJA, WUPJ, Box 11, File 7, letter to Stern dated Nov. 17, 1926.

65. AJA, WUPJ, Box 8, File 13, letter dated June 12, 1927. One might well ask whether expatriate Polish/Russian/Palestinian Jews living in Paris were representative examples of their countrymen.

Europe is a most fertile field for our movement.[66]

By April, 1928, however, Maschler's and Levi's efforts had largely collapsed. The men cited economic conditions and the deep divisions within Polish Jewry as the cause. Their efforts to publicize in Warsaw and Vilna had unearthed absolutely no conception there of Liberalism.

That same year, though, the secretary to the German Union for Liberal Judaism, G. Goetz, received news of a Polish (or Silesian) Union of Democratic Jews which might wish to federate with the WUPJ. (Goetz explained that the group avoided the use of the term "Liberal" for political reasons.) In August at the World Union's invitation, Leon Bregman addressed the Berlin Conference on the possibilities for Progressive Judaism in Poland and received an enthusiastic response. Despite the pessimism of the investigations of the previous two years and despite questions in the WUPJ's mind as to whether this Democratic Union of Poland was not just intellectually liberal and not more political than religious, a resolution passed promising assistance to a properly formed nucleus of individuals in Warsaw or Vilna.

In late 1928, Ismar Elbogen, discussing with Leo Baeck the proper approach of the World Union to Poland, suggested that forcing propaganda would do more harm than good.

We have to wait till the demand is evolved in the country itself, and before that can be expected, I am so afraid that the thousands of Jews will pass away from religion.[67]

66. AJA, WUPJ, Box 8, File 12, letter dated Aug. 22, 1927.

67. AJA, WUPJ, Box 1, File 7, letter dated Dec. 16, 1928.

The Union's contacts in Poland (Bregman in Warsaw and a Dr. Seifter in Silesia), while concurring in the latter part of Elbogen's assessment, dissented in the former. They wanted the World Union to move in immediately without waiting for Polish Jews to constitute themselves a Liberal body. Bregman felt that Liberal forces would have to penetrate from without as there was insufficient time to await an internal development. The WUPJ should create a mission or secretariat in Poland. For its part, however, the WUPJ was disappointed that Bregman was unable to organize even the smallest group of Progressive Jews as the 1928 resolution required before granting assistance.

Despite these signals, the World Union in September, 1929, recruited Rabbi Max Lasker for six months' further investigation in Poland. In his report, Lasker described conditions in Poland as abysmal. He added that all the previous supposed representatives of Polish Liberal Judaism were merely private individuals. The few scattered liberals to be found in Poland had never met, let alone formed an organization or even the germ of a movement. Lasker, nevertheless optimistic because of what he perceived as the "dire need among the youth," proposed the creation of some kind of Liberal Jewish press and the dissemination of brochures by leading Liberal thinkers in Poland, in order to cross political party lines. A contact of his, a Professor Regensburg, similarly suggested a World Union subsidy for a liberal Jewish daily paper in Yiddish.

Meanwhile, in the town of Lemberg in Silesia, the World Union had evidently received indications from Lasker of the possibility of establishing a Liberal congregation in that culturally German, Polish university town. In July, 1930 the World Union offered a £400 annual subsidy to a young German Rabbi Koretz. Koretz could not make up his mind and kept stalling as the WUPJ kept urging him to go immediately to establish a Liberal Cultural Center. Koretz wanted a personal call from the Polish group though the Union advised him his delays could jeopardize the whole enterprise. Koretz ultimately went to Salonika instead of Silesia, whereupon the World Union made a similar offer to a Dr. Sonnenschein. Sonnenschein was later disqualified as unsuitable for lack of personality and enthusiasm.⁶⁸ There the Polish venture seems to have ended. Although the WUPJ maintained correspondence with Poland as late as 1934 and granted membership to a congregation in Danzig in 1937, the obstacles proved insurmountable and the World Union grew increasingly wary. Eight years of effort had been for nought.

Palestine. It is difficult to disentangle the development in Palestine of Progressive Judaism itself from the role of the organization which sponsored that development, inasmuch as the growth of Progressive Judaism in Palestine largely depended upon the success or failure of the World Union's

68. AJA, WUPJ, Box 11, File 7, letter dated Dec. 9, 1930.

efforts on its behalf. Although the individuals and institutions associated with the development of the movement were free to follow their own course and were not the puppets of World Union directives, they were in some ways so closely identified with the organization that, at some point, a history of those individuals and institutions becomes part and parcel a history of the World Union itself. Nevertheless, as it is the WUPJ and not Progressive Judaism itself which lies within the ambit of this thesis, some limits---however artificial---must be imposed. Thus the early role of the World Union in Palestine may be summarily described as having been that of fundraiser and supporter, promoter as well as propagandist.

The World Union's interest in Palestine was aroused several years prior to any formal activities in that region. In 1928 CCAR president Hyman Enelow suggested work there for the purpose of counteracting the efforts of Christian missionaries.⁶⁹ Throughout the early 1930's reports had often reached its ears decrying the deplorable religious apathy of Palestinian Jews and urging that the WUPJ initiate work among them. Not until 1934, however, did the Governing Body sanction any formal commitment to the development of a Progressive movement in Palestine. In principle, being committed to spreading Progressive Judaism wherever there lived Jews in need of it, the WUPJ might have long supported the idea of pioneer work. That it had not been

69. AJA, WUPJ, Box 5, File 2, letter dated July 19, 1928.

more vocal prior to 1934 surely is attributable to those same factors which had motivated its neutrality on Zionism. Regardless of its non-Zionistic position, however, with the stepped-up flow of Liberal German Jews to Palestine after 1933, the Union's neglect of the region had to change. When it did, the WUPJ was quick to deny any incongruities, making announcements to show that the work proposed by the World Union in Palestine was of a definitely and exclusively religious character.

Two German Liberals, Rabbis Kurt Wilhelm and Max Elk had for some months already been working in Jerusalem and Haifa when the Governing Body met in January, 1934. At that meeting Dr. Elbogen presented a letter from Wilhelm apprising them of his hopes for and interest in implementing there, some much needed Progressive work and putting himself at the Union's disposal for the purpose. The Governing Body suggested that if the two would form a committee of inquiry with Perlzweig, they would likely respond favorably. The committee's suggestions did meet with a sympathetic response at the International Conference in July of that year. The World Union appointed an advisory council of five men,⁷⁰ the Palestine Committee; two Americans on the Governing Body, Samuel Goldenson and Julian Morgenstern, committed themselves to raising upwards of \$500 to establish

70. Drs. Ehrenpreis, Goldenson, Elbogen, Silver, and Rev. Perlzweig. Abba Hillel Silver had reservations about joining the committee until reassured that the group initiating work would come from within Palestine and the World Union's efforts would be limited to helping them obtain funds and finding a suitable rabbi. AJA, WUPJ, Box 11, File 1, letter dated Nov. 6, 1934.

a special Palestine fund. Thus began the World Union's primary role in Palestine during these years, that of fundraiser.

In the coming months the World Union had to decide what tack and leader(s) to employ. It was agreed that the initiative must come from people resided in Palestine and that while they should receive support from the Executive, the whole movement must not be labelled the work of the World Union. Should, however, the initiative come from long-time residents of Palestine or would German immigrants prove acceptable? Who should serve as leader? Dr. Max Dienemann insisted that only a German could be the leader as the primary need for Liberal Judaism sprang from the Germans. Elbogen strongly supported Wilhelm since, among other reasons, he enjoyed the approval and confidence of Chief Rabbi Kook. Conversely, Mattuck and Montagu had reservations about giving Wilhelm free reign.

Until late 1935 the matter seems to have been held in abeyance until groups had formed and appealed to the World Union for support. When Dienemann visited Palestine at the Union's behest in early 1936, he reported back positively on the work in which both Wilhelm in Jerusalem and Elk in Haifa were immersed and on the potential in Tel Aviv. At his urging, the World Union agreed to a one year's subvention of £150 to Elk and £100 to Wilhelm. The work of both, especially Elk's Hillel School (now the Leo Baeck School), burgeoned rapidly as refugees arrived, and in 1937 a third

rabbi, Dr. Manfred (Meir) Rosenberg, working in Tel Aviv, came within the WUPJ's purview.

Here end the salient facts of the World Union's inauguration of work in Palestine. The ensuing years are a history of organizational beggary and friction. Having committed itself to the support of three rabbis and their increasingly expanding programs and needs, the World Union found itself as penurious as the immigrants whom its programs were primarily serving. By mid-1937 its coffers were in the red and growing redder. Subventions to Elk, Wilhelm, and Rosenberg were doled out a few months at a time, as the funds were raised, largely in the United States. Yet funds were slow in coming. In America they were in short supply (and growing shorter as relief efforts grew more urgent.) In 1938 aid was sought unsuccessfully from the Joint Distribution Committee whose policy then was more concerned with immediate rescue needs than with religious needs. By 1940 the WUPJ's finances had reached the crisis stage. The UAHC had been forced to reduce its annual subscription from \$1500 to \$500 due to its own shaky finances.⁷¹ The CCAR, too, was withholding its contribution to the Palestine fund in a dispute as to whether their monies were not in fact supporting non-liberal congregations in Palestine.⁷² The matter had been brewing for some time (even the World Union had required reassurances from Elk and Wilhelm when it first underwrote

71. AJA, WUPJ, Box 12, File 7, letter dated Mar. 4, 1941.

72. CCAR Yearbook, 50, pp.203-4.

them in 1936) and the suspicion seems to have been widespread in the American movement that they were not quite what they purported to be. In 1937, Samuel Finkel, president of the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods wrote Lily Montagu:

In confidence I would tell you that although both Dr. Wilhelm and Dr. Elk have declared their acceptance of the underlying progressive principles of the World Union, and asked to be members, we are not quite satisfied that Dr. Elk is carrying on his teaching on definitely progressive lines....even though the form may be different, the idea of continuous revelation must be accepted.[73]

The WUPJ and CCAR resolved the matter (on the surface at least) and the contribution was restored. In truth, it must be said that it was the funding efforts of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods which helped keep the WUPJ Palestine programs afloat in these latter years. Long a friend of the World Union with its scholarship program for overseas rabbinical students, it raised some \$4200 for the organization between 1940-42.⁷⁴ More than money, however, the Sisterhood's efforts showed what could be accomplished on behalf of the WUPJ if only the public were made more aware of its programs. For years Lily Montagu had been suggesting that the UAHC and CCAR might give the WUPJ more exposure. Until this financial crisis she had gone largely unheeded.

Thus concluded the early years of the World Union's efforts to establish Progressive Judaism in Palestine. With

73. AJA, WUPJ, Box 9, File 12, letter dated Sept. 16, 1937.

74. AJA, WUPJ, Box 9, Files 13 & 14.

active programs in the three major cities, the WUPJ proclaimed it had succeeded in what it had long hoped to achieve. One wonders, however. Had an indigenous Progressive movement taken root in Palestine or had a German Liberal movement merely been transplanted by immigrant refugees?

Committee Work

Although the work of the World Union remained principally twofold, namely conferences and support of new communities, beginning in the 1930's a skeletal network of internal committees began to take shape within the organization. To be sure, the work of these committees never assumed any significant proportions. If anything, the committees seemed to represent the World Union's attempts to find some special niche for itself and to maintain a constructive momentum more than any concerted drive towards expansionism. These committees deserve some brief mention, however, inasmuch as they afford a glimpse of the internal dynamics of the organization.

Sometime prior to 1934 the WUPJ created a Youth Committee which in 1951 would graduate to a semi-independent Youth Section. Initially, there seems to have been some uncertainty as to the goals of the committee, a problem which extended to other WUPJ committees as well. Early on, UAHC secretary George Zepin wrote to Montagu:

The same applies to Youth Work [as to the Committee on Social Betterment.] I have talked to Mr. Marcus Lester Aaron...and he, too, seems to be somewhat in

the dark on the purpose of the youth activities of the World Union and method of cooperation expected of him. If he is merely to await suggestions from the World Union and then to have these passed on to the congregations, that is one method of cooperation; if he is expected to make any special studies...for transmittal to the World Union, that would be another method....At any rate, I rely upon your help to set us straight in this matter.[75]

When the Youth Committee finally got off the ground, it found itself severely hampered by lack of funds. For several years running Israel Mattuck prepared a study group syllabus to be used by the various constituents' youth organizations. Though plans were in the offing for holiday camps and summer schools and youth magazines on Progressive Jewish subjects, these seem never to have materialized. The European and American constituents in fact coordinated little, apart from a World Union Youth^a Day beginning in 1935. Even this, however, was celebrated more in Europe, Australia, and India than in the United States. One may cite a number of reasons: social conditions in the 1930's, failures of communications, lack of clear purpose, unavailability of manpower, and scarcity of funds. The chief reason, however, seems to have been lack of interest, particularly among the Americans who had the least need for internationalizing youth programs.

The problems which afflicted the Youth Committee similarly plagued the other sectional committees. The Liturgy Committee, established in 1935 and chaired by Dr. Elbogen, published comparative studies of Progressive Jewish liturgies and conversion procedures within the various communities.

75. AJA, WUPJ, Box 12, File 6, letter from Zepin dated Oct. 23, 1935.

It also collected specimens of Progressive Jewish prayer-books and replies to a questionnaire concerning Children's Services. The purpose in each instance seems to have been purely informational as any suggestions of compiling and international Progressive liturgy would undoubtedly have met with a great outcry, especially among the Americans.⁷⁶

Such was the case, in fact, with the World Union's other two committees. The Authority Committee, also established in 1935 and chaired by Dr. Max Dienemann (and subsequently renamed the Committee on Present Thought and Practice) had one primary project during its three-year life. In response to a request by the German youth groups for religious direction, the committee sought to formulate a treatise on the principles and practices of Progressive Judaism. Succinctly put, the German and English commissions submitted their statements. The American commission---comprised of Schulman, Morgenstern, and Abba Hillel Silver---resisted or outright refused. Appalled by the rigorous German paper, fearing any kind of Progressive dogma, and deferring to the Columbus Platform, it dismissed the undertaking. Morgenstern explained, "I have little faith in the worthwhileness of the project. I cannot see how it can lead to anything practical whatever."⁷⁷ American-trained Israel Mattuck went so far as to suggest suppressing the German paper as inconducive.

76. AJA, WUPJ, Box 9, Files 1 & 2, contain sample questionnaires and responses, correspondence, and results.

77. AJA, WUPJ, Box 3, File 1, letter dated May 19, 1938. The whereabouts of the German paper is unknown except by reference to it in other correspondence.

to unity, rather than publicize the disparity between American and German Progressive thought.⁷⁸

A similar fate awaited the Committee on Social Betterment which was subsequently renamed the Committee for Problems Concerning Human Relations. Like the Youth Committee, it was unclear as to its task. Like the Liturgy Committee it attempted to publish a survey, this one a report on anti-Semitism with recommendations for educating Christians and improving interfaith relations.⁷⁹ Like the Authority Committee, its work was eventually left in abeyance when the Americans determined that it was impossible to plan any programs of an international scale. Different countries were in different stages of social development, they said, and problems were best handled at the local level.⁸⁰ So it was that the internal committees of the World Union, try as they did to engage in constructive work, tended to fail due to constituent resistance or apathy.

The War Years

As was the case with so many national and international Jewish organizations, the war years forced the World Union to weather, if not a total cessation of its work, then at least a considerable curtailment. Priorities shifted somewhat as the organization found itself increasingly strapped

78. Ibid., letter dated May 16, 1938.

79. See AJA, MSC 31 (Goldman Papers), Box 7, File 10.

80. AJA, MSC 31 (Goldman Papers), Box 7, File 10, letter dated Nov. 22, 1932.

for funds. While its limited resources had often brought the WUPJ near the end of its tether, its budget now shrank to a mere shoestring as constituent members (most importantly the Americans) diverted monies to appeals by the Joint Distribution Committee or the more general war effort. Moreover, the Executive Committee found itself increasingly engaged in its own refugee efforts. Though the World Union had never perceived itself as a political or humanitarian organization, it did see a role for itself in saving the lives of German rabbis and community leaders,⁸¹ both for their own sake and for the sake of saving and enriching the religious life of the refugee communities beyond Europe to which these teachers might be transplanted. Handicapped or sidetracked as it was,* the World Union nevertheless succeeded in maintaining a semblance of its prescribed activities. The Executive Committee and Governing Body continued to meet at regular intervals;⁸² Montagu continued a very healthy correspondence with constituents, answering questions, offering suggestions and encouragement, and trying to sustain morale; and a WUPJ Newsletter/Bulletin continued to be published as part of a commitment both to nurturing and spreading Progressive Jewish thought and to informing

81. It would appear from the scattered material available that the WUPJ in some way aided or facilitated the move of Rabbi Heinrich (Henrique) Lemle to Brazil; Rabbis L.G. Graf, B. Italiener, J.J. Kokotek, G. Salzberger, and C. Seligmann to England; also Heinrich Stern to London.

82. AJA, WUPJ, Box 6, File 12 indicates that the Governing Body managed to meet eight times between 1939-45; the Executive Committee, 21 times. But for occasional refugee Germans, rarely indeed were any non-English members in attendance.

constituents of each other's activities.⁸³ Thus did the leadership keep the World Union linked together, however tenuously, during those very trying years.

83. AJA, WUPJ, Box 2, File 7 indicates eight Bulletins published between 1939-1945 and dated: May, 1939; Nov., 1940; July, 1941; August, 1941; Nov., 1942; early 1943 (missing); Dec., 1943; and March, 1945.

CHAPTER THREE

ADOLESCENCE AND THE SEARCH FOR NEW DIRECTIONS

Religious Reconstruction in Europe
1945 - 1959

In the Wake of the War

The years following the Allied victory until 1959 (the year of the organization's transfer of headquarters from London to New York) marked a period of renewed resolve by the World Union. As it did for most of the world, the conclusion of World War Two ushered in a new era for the World Union for Progressive Judaism. Yet it would be mistaken to think of the post-war years as a new beginning. It would be more accurate to describe them as years of resurrection and repair, reassessment and redirection, reconsolidation and restructuring.* The pre-war problems which had plagued the World Union---financial, ideological, and associational---had hardly disappeared. At best they had only lain dormant; at worst they had been exacerbated.

As early as 1941, no doubt still anticipating an early armistice, leading figures had begun considering the World Union's agenda after the war's end. To be sure, the discussion then focused less on the Union's internal problems than on its representation at the expected Peace Conference and its role in the religious reconstruction of Europe.¹ Yet the discussion is significant in its adumbration of certain internal issues with which the World Union would have to grapple in the two decades following the war. First,

1. AJA, WUPJ, Box 6, File 12, MGB, Nov. 13, 1941.

the assumption that it would enjoy representation at the Peace Conference virtually presaged the 1950's battle for representation at the Reparations and War Claims Conference. (The outcome of the latter would seriously determine the World Union's success in establishing a Progressive seminary in Paris---a kind of successor to the defunct Berlin Hochschule.) The 1950's battle would in its turn reflect a larger question: as the only international Jewish religious organization to serve as a delegate to UNESCO, was the World Union in fact the international face and voice of Progressive Judaism such as would entitle it to a seat at the Claims Conference? Second, Ismar Elbogen's prescient observation in 1941 that

after the war, Europe will be so terribly impoverished that American Jews will be the only ones to rely on for material help, and it is necessary to awaken the sense of responsibility of the leading men right now,[2]

accurately predicted, if not the constitutional and leadership crises involving the Americans in the mid-1950's, then both the need for greater American awareness of and involvement with the World Union as well as the pivotal role American Reform Jewry would come to play as the focus shifted away from Europe.

In 1941 the leadership could hardly have been expected to know the degree of change which the war would effect. By 1945, however, it began to consider in earnest the internal difficulties besetting the WUPJ. Julian Morgenstern

2. Ibid., agenda, p.23.

described the present conditions as ones of great urgency, noting that the various suggestions which had been made to date were only stop-gap measures. The major weakness, he continued, was that the war had allowed no active participation by American delegates for seven years. Those who had formerly been closely identified with the World Union were unaware of its activities or had no feeling of responsibility; those recently enlisted had never attended any World Union meetings and had no personal knowledge of it. Morgenstern further added that it was essential that newly-elected UAHC executive Maurice Eisendrath become personally identified with the World Union.³ Rev. Leslie Edgar of London's Liberal Jewish Synagogue also recommended that delegates of the Governing Body visit those Progressive communities which had made such great strides during the war: South Africa, South America, and Australia.⁴ Included among the internal needs which the Governing Body cited⁵ were those of (a) revival and rehabilitation of World Union constituents in the liberated countries before proceeding to new development work, (b) constitutional emendation, (c) establishment, in countries with multiple constituents, of national boards, (d) improvement of publicity, publications, and finances through international committees, and (e) appointment of an international emissary or travelling

3. AJA, WUPJ, Box 5, File 4, MEC, May 29, 1945.

4. Ibid.

5. AJA, WUPJ, Box 6, File 12, MGB, June 17, 1945.

secretary to visit the constituents, thus strengthening contact and cooperation which the war had weakened.⁶ It was in order to address those needs and initiate the necessary changes that Julian Morgenstern and Maurice Eisendrath cogently advocated the holding of an international conference as soon as possible after the war, perhaps in the summer of 1946.

The Conferences: 1946, 1949, 1951, 1953, 1955, 1957, 1959

The Governing Body concurred with Morgenstern and Eisendrath and the World Union convened once again as an international body in London, the last week of July, 1946. Nine years had elapsed since the Fourth International Conference and, if one may venture the metaphor, the existential soul-searching of late adolescence had replaced the ebullience of youth. In the shadow of the Holocaust the deliberations seem to have been marked by sadness as much as joy, by sighs as much as by stoic resolve. Under the theme of "The Task of Progressive Judaism in the post-War World," almost ninety officers and delegates gathered publicly as representatives of an organization to consider the same kinds of questions which individuals privately ask themselves on the road to adulthood: what is our purpose; what are our strengths and limitations; how best to achieve the former, given the latter?

The Conference was undoubtedly of inestimable value in

6. AJA, WUPJ, Box 1, File 8. Leo Baeck was thought to be the best and likeliest candidate.

terms of "getting the ball rolling again" and insofar as the sharing of ideas re-established old links and renewed cooperation. In terms of the intellectual caliber of the programs, however, it paled next to earlier conferences, and it was left to Leo Baeck to provide the most penetrating insights to the spreading of Progressive Judaism. Summarizing Israel Mattuck's concluding remarks at the colloquium's end, the Conference report records:

Our President had given us a grand vision, and we had gone down into the little Judaism of which he warned us. We had got to regard the problem in a big way; if we looked at it in a little way, we were guilty. Speaker after speaker had spoken in the little way. He himself was not interested in preserving Progressive Judaism for its own sake, but only if it were of value in the world.["]

Of far greater interest were the Secretary's and Treasurer's reports and the candid discussion which followed. In the year since the end of the war, the World Union had taken the first hesitant steps toward rehabilitating the Progressive communities on the Continent. Largely through Montagu's endeavors it had successfully solicited grants from the Central British Fund for the Paris and Amsterdam synagogues; it had arranged, after many difficulties, for a Rabbi R.R. Geis to come from Palestine to do social and religious work for the Frankfurt and neighboring communities; and it had received reports from Mrs. Lionel de Rothschild as to conditions in France, Belgium, and Germany.

The Treasurer's report merits special interest, not only

because it shows an account £1600 in the black, but because it discloses a much-changed World Union relationship with Palestine. Between the years 1937-1946 almost forty per cent of WUPJ income derived from sources earmarked specifically for work in Palestine and more than sixty per cent of its income had actually been expended on such work.⁸ Perhaps it was that changing relationship which seemed to permit or legitimate the emphatic condemnation of Jewish terrorism in Palestine with which Mattuck prefaced the business meeting:

All Jews condemn emphatically the terrorism perpetrated in Palestine by a small band of Jews. It shocks and grieves us deeply that any Jews, however provoked, could be guilty of such brutal and destructive acts in a land which is holy to Jews and in the city which is its most holy centre....The critical situation in Palestine raises political issues which fall outside the scope of this Conference which is devoted to religious subjects....But besides the issues about which there is disagreement, there is agreement on two points. We agree and recognise the need to find homes for the homeless Jews. We agree in condemning the terrorism in Palestine.[9]

That changing relationship was likewise reflected in the discussion initiated by the new American Field Secretary David Wice concerning the marriage problem (and the rights of Progressive rabbis) in Palestine. Beyond a resolution by the Palestine committee, appointing a sub-committee to study the matter,¹⁰ nothing concrete was formulated at the 1946 Conference though that problem would continue to agitate

8. Ibid., pp.24-25. Of a total nine-year income of \$10,664, \$4228 had been collected for Palestine and \$6590 actually spent.

9. Ibid., p.13.

10. Ibid., p.89.

the World Union for years to come.

As the 1946 Conference served more to raise questions about Palestine than to resolve them, so too with other issues which would highlight the years ahead. Proposed changes to the constitution were referred back to the Governing Body until the next conference. The need was raised for more funding with which to publish an adequate newspaper and establish a seminary. A sub-committee was appointed to study the matter. A suggestion was made by Rabbi W. van der Zyl that the center of the World Union be moved to America, only to be later withdrawn.¹¹ Most telling, however, were the questions of organization posed by Jane Evans of the NFTS and Van der Zyl.¹² Was the World Union to be an originator and creator of literature and of all the other necessary arms of activity through which Progressive Judaism could be carried to the four corners of the earth, or a clearing body through which it might assign tasks for the benefit of the World Union as a whole to those National Unions in the various countries which were best equipped to perform them? What was to be the function and relation of the World Union in relation to Progressive Jewish organizations in the various countries given the principle of autonomy guaranteed to them by the constitution? What could and should be the dynamic power of the Executive? The questions had been raised before and were further evidenced

11. Ibid., p.29.

12. Ibid., pp.31-32.

by Moses Weiler's and the South African movement's continuing agitation for a World Union Central Authority on Progressive Thought and Practice.¹³ Only time, it seems, would provide the answers.

One may best describe the years between the 1946 Conference and the Sixth International Conference---held also in London, July 14-19, 1949---as years of preparatory work. Though Montagu and her American counterpart David Wice had invested no small amount of time, effort, and paperwork in tackling some of the problems which the 1946 Conference had brought to the fore, they could boast of few tangible and no immediate results. Rehabilitation work in Europe, especially in Germany, progressed slowly and new developmental work lay temporarily in abeyance. Attempts at acquiring greater international stature for the World Union by obtaining consultative status with UNESCO had initially failed¹⁴ and renewed efforts by Jane Evans and Rabbi D.J. Seligson would yield nothing before July, 1949. It has

13. See AJA, WUPJ, Box 5, File 4, MEC, May 29, 1945. Weiler, it seems, was under continual assault from the Orthodox rabbinate in his community. He desired a Central Authority composed of rabbis and laymen who would issue a Guide of Practice and a Uniform Rabbi's Manual and Prayerbook for the Movement worldwide such as the South African Reform Movement itself had.

14. AJA, WUPJ, Box 6, File 12, MGB, Feb. 16 and July 6, 1947. Evidently the World Union made application to the UN independently in 1946. The UN suggested their chances would be much improved by withdrawing their application and making joint application with the American Jewish Committee, the Anglo-Jewish Association, the Alliance Israelite Universelle, and the World Agudah (strange bedfellows, indeed!) Mattuck and Morgenstern favored joint application with the first three. Eisendrath and Heinrich Stern opposed on grounds that it could weaken the WUPJ's political neutrality. Before the matter could be finally decided, the UN had in Feb., 1947, rejected the World Union's independent application.

already been noted how seriously the war had undermined American involvement with the World Union and how keen was the leadership's desire to repair the damage. In 1947 Wice wrote to Montagu:

I regret to report that cooperation from my colleagues in the World Union work here and the constituents is not altogether what I should like it to be, and I continue to work against great odds. Many letters go long unanswered and yet I pledge you persistence on my part and continual cooperation until we should have received a better organization here.[15]

In 1948 the first tentative steps were taken to improve the situation with trips to America by Baeck and Montagu. Baeck visited HUC-JIR in Cincinnati and the NPTS hosted Montagu at the UAHC biennial in Boston, both personalities succeeding in gaining increased exposure and financial backing for the World Union. *

And finally, by 1949 the World Union's ideological position (or perhaps more accurately, its refusal to voice an ideological position) began to crystallize once and for all. In the one instance, the Constitution Committee had firmly rejected a Dutch constituent's proposal to amend the Preamble to read:

It is the duty of each generation of Jews to base their life on the religious and ethical teachings of their fathers, bearing in mind the developments in thought, advances in knowledge, and changes in circumstances which affect the life of the whole of mankind. It is also their duty to keep the traditional practices of their fathers in so far as these practices and traditions still have an actual sense for the present day and are in harmony with contemporary life.[16]

15. AJA, WUPJ, Box 13, File 4, letter dated Feb. 4, 1947.

16. AJA, WUPJ, Box 4, File 8. Part II of the original Preamble reads: "The

It may simply have been, that the Constitution Committee saw no need for altering that portion of the Preamble or that it felt, generally speaking, that changes in the status quo tended to create more problems than they solved. More likely, however, the proposed revision, reflecting as it did a more conservative line, would have demoted the doctrine of progressive revelation from the honored place it occupied in the Preamble. It would have given modern innovation a parity with, rather than priority over, traditional ritual observance, and this the English Liberals and American Reformers would have been disinclined to do.

If the Constitution Committee's rejection of the proposed revision to the Preamble represented a more crystallized commitment to the more liberal wing of Progressive Judaism, so too the Governing Body's resolution of a second proposal which had come out of the 1946 Conference. The South African delegation had caused something of a brouhaha by their continued agitation for a World Union Central Authority on Progressive Thought and Practice for establishing uniform rules, ritual, and prayerbooks. After considering the opinions of leading Reform rabbis and because also fearing a potential Shulhan Aruch, the Governing Body finally agreed to the setting up of an Advisory Committee on Present Thought and Practice in Judaism, the circumscribed function of which

World Union, convinced of the capacity for development inherent in the Jewish religion, declares that it is the duty of each generation of Jews to bring the religious teachings and practices of their fathers into harmony with developments in thought, advances in knowledge, and changes in the circumstances of life."

would be only

- (a) To answer questions from individuals or organisations about the Thought and Practice of Judaism, but not to formulate a statement of principles and practices, it being understood that it shall not be incumbent on a Congregation applying for the Committee's advice to follow it.
- (b) To advise the Publications Committee with regard to issuing books and pamphlets on Progressive Judaism by outstanding Progressive Jews.[17]

This question of authority was hardly new, either to Reform Judaism or to the World Union. (Witness the drive by the pre-war German constituents for a similar Authority Committee.) Nevertheless, it obviously continued to generate lively debate among WUPJ constituents and each time the battle lines were the same. The more traditional communities took the hard line. The Americans and the English Liberals (led, not coincidentally, by American Israel Mattuck) opposed them.

Because the World Union had more than once sung the virtues of "progress" and "freedom" and "changing with modernity" and more than once denounced the horrors of "authority", the issues raised by the Dutch and the South Africans (and concurred in by the Australians, South Americans, and later the English Reformers) were for the immediate present a tempest in a teapot. Those same issues did, however, send some very important signals to the World Union. They hinted at a growing gulf between the liberal and conservative elements comprising the organization. They also indicated both a wish by some individuals to give the World Union

a certain unity of action, and a latent desire by the smaller constituents to regard the World Union (rather than America) as the supreme voice and standard bearer of Reform Judaism. American and British influence presented a great obstacle to such an orientation, however. The World Union's ideology, to the extent that it possessed an ideology, would echo the liberalism of its dominant constituents. This required that the World Union confirm that the doctrinal autonomy of each constituent was terra sancta. The World Union would serve only as a conduit or clearinghouse. Like the CCAR or UAHC, the WUPJ would offer direction, but not directives.

Much as the three years preceding the Sixth International Conference had been something less than startling, so too the Conference itself. Exploring the theme "The Mission of Judaism---Its Present Day Application," the scholarly bent of its presentations bore greater resemblance to that of the pre-war conferences than that of its 1946 predecessor. Clearly, in terms of its conferences at least, the World Union was getting back on its feet. Montagu subsequently distinguished the Conference for its "warm fellowship," which is also to say that very little of note occurred. Two issues, however, deserve mention. The first concerned the relocation of the World Union headquarters. Van der Zyl had raised the issue in 1946. Baeck had written of it again in 1948, enunciating concern that such a move would make the

World Union's influence in Europe negligible.¹⁸ Once more, at the 1949 Conference, the issue was raised only to be referred to the Governing Body.¹⁹ The second issue concerned proposed changes to the Constitution and its Preamble which the constituents would yet have to ratify. Felix Levy, expressing dissatisfaction with the Preamble by the UAHC and CCAR, hoped that it might be rewritten and based more upon the attitude and statements of the Columbus Platform of 1937. Moreover, Levy voiced objections by the UAHC and CCAR to Article VI which allowed no country to have more than one-third the total number of representatives to conferences. Having the preponderant number of congregations, they felt that if they could not have proportional representation they would at least like a larger proportion than the Constitution allowed.²⁰ Levy further objected to clauses requiring that the Executive Committee meet, and the General Office of the World Union be, in London and inquired as well if there were a possibility of changing the name of the WUPJ since no one in the United States liked the term "Progressive".²¹ If the caliber of the biennial conferences were to be taken as clear indication that the World Union was getting back on its feet, it was equally

18. AJA, WUPJ, Box 1, File 8, letter dated Feb. 24, 1948.

19. CCAR Yearbook, 59, p.41.

20. WUPJ 1949 CR, p. 46. Mattyck pointed out that the original framer, American Leo Weil, had suggested the limitation to prevent any one country from having a majority.

21. Ibid., p.49.

clear from the tenor of the 1949 Conference dialogue that the WUPJ was walking in a westerly direction toward America.

With its venue again in London, July 12-18, 1951, the World Union's Seventh International Conference marked the organization's twenty-fifth anniversary. The Conference was thus attended by a certain amount of fanfare although the past two years had been singularly uneventful. Correcting a slight of two years earlier, an error in protocol which had invited accusations that English Liberals were wont to segregate themselves from the community, the World Union made certain the head of Britain's Jewish Board of Deputies, Dr. Redcliffe Salaman, was in attendance to welcome the conferees and the Conference's pre-eminent speakers, Leo Baeck and Martin Buber, on behalf of Anglo-Jewry.²² If the accusations were paradoxical inasmuch as the Orthodox had never gone out of their way to make the Liberals feel welcomed in the community, the matter probably says more about the esteem in which Baeck and Buber were held than about any possible rapprochement within Anglo-Jewry.

Addressing themselves to the Conference theme, "The Present Contribution of Judaism to Civilization," Baeck and Buber unquestionably lent the conference stature. Indeed, from the inception of the World Union in 1926 (in whose birth he figured prominently) until his death in 1956, Leo

22. See Jewish Chronicle, July 6, 1951, which criticized the WUPJ for the aloofness of its local organizers to any members of the Anglo-Jewish community outside its own sect. If true, then such snobbery or alienation might explain why much of the drive for an international union of Liberal Jews came from the English.

Baeck had always given the World Union eminence through his scholarship, integrity, and personal courage. The leading rabbi of twentieth century German Jewry, Baeck had succeeded Montefiore as WUPJ president in 1938. He had lived out the war years in Theresienstadt, but resumed office in 1945. Living in England after the war, he was in a good position to guide the World Union until his resignation in 1953; he continued in his role as elder statesman until his death three years later. At the 1951 Conference Baeck spoke to the necessity of unity and union in "K'lal Yisrael" and of the large spheres and wide aims with which "the Jewish possibility" and "the Jewish destiny" are intertwined. He asserted that width of Jewish general outlook depends on a specific comprehension of the ideal and the fact of "K'lal Yisrael," of the wholeness of Jewish life and task. Outlook and comprehension influence and determine each other: the weaker the one, the more feeble will grow the other, and strengthening the one will corroborate the other.²³ Buber, in a more theoretical vein, described great civilizations as those possessed of a life-system built up around a supreme principle pervading the entire existence of the group. Ancient Israel was such a civilization, in which the action of the religious and normative principle manifested itself with peculiar, unique pregnancy. Israel's religious-normative principle manifested itself as an essentially historic one, at once realistic and Messianic. Buber averred, however,

23. WUPJ 1951 CR, pp.61-69.

that in modernity, in our exit from the ghetto, the unique unity of people and religion had developed a deep rift. It was the task of the Jewish community to strive to heal the rift and once more to hallow communal life.²⁴

The mood of the Conference was frequently less forward looking than its theme might suggest, lapsing often into a retrospective of and tribute to the World Union's first 25 years. That first quarter-century had in many ways been less than kind, leading one observer to note a certain amount of dissatisfaction and disillusionment with 25 years' labor while going on to add:

Indeed, much time seems to have been devoted to the discussion of vague generalizations and to abstract metaphysical and philosophical disquisitions which tend to weaken allegiance to the robust practical endeavours of the traditional Jewish life.[25]

Elsewhere it was suggested that while there was nothing wrong in the Conference theme, something a bit more practical and concerned with securing a better lodgment for Judaism among Jews might have received consideration:

An apparent aloofness from practical problems has robbed the World Union of the possibility of exercising any considerable influence in the Jewish world. Its second 25 years ought to witness considerable changes in outlook. New leaders will take office, and even a change of headquarters---to the United States---cannot be ruled out. It is not too certain that Liberal Jews here...would take kindly to such a development.[26]

Inasmuch as the World Union had always intended its international conferences to foster Progressive Jewish thought of

24. Ibid., pp. 70-78.

25. Jewish Chronicle, July 27, 1951, p.12.

26. Ibid., July 6, 1951.

a serious and scholarly nature at least as much as it had intended them to deal with practical matters, the criticism rings a bit harsh. Its forecast for the future would in time, however, ring true.

One should record several important developments at the Conference. Leo Baeck reluctantly agreed to another term as President, largely through the pleas of Montagu,²⁷ thus postponing for a few years a serious leadership vacuum. More significantly, perhaps, the Conference created a potentially valuable and useful appendage to the World Union. The World Union Youth Section (WUPJYS) included among its stated objectives a youth magazine, leadership camps, holiday exchange schemes, hospitality programs for foreign Jewish students, and the encouragement and grooming of young people for the rabbinate.²⁸ Most significantly, however, the Conference framed within its constitution the WUPJ's official attitude toward the State of Israel. Henceforth the Preamble would contain a third statement:

The World Union is deeply conscious of the great religious tasks, opportunities and challenges that the State of

27. AJA, WUPJ, Box 1, File 8, letter dated Oct. 30, 1950, asking that Baeck reconsider his resignation: "You have through your scholarship and personality, the power to help in keeping our Union together...in order that the work undertaken by our beloved friend Claude Montefiore should continue...."

28. WUPJ 1951 CR, p.95. The WUPJ had several "adjunct" committees. Some were short-term, such as the Constitution Committee, and formed for a specific and limited purpose. Others, such as Publicity and Publications, Social Action, and the Youth Section, were meant to do more creative work of unlimited duration. Only the Youth Section succeeded in doing anything of real consequence and even this committee was limited in developing its potential. Among its accomplishments were leadership camps, recruitment of several rabbinical students for HUC-JIR and Leo Baeck College, and publication of a handbook, The Jewish Youth Group, by John Rayner and Henry Skirball.

Israel presents before World Jewry, and feels a deep sense of responsibility to do all within its power to aid in helping to realise there, as in all lands where Jewish people live, the best and highest ideals of our faith.[29]

Though the wording of the addition engendered some discussion, its basic thrust did not. Alongside statements of the World Union's belief in prophetic Judaism and continuing revelation would now stand some form of commitment to the Zionist idea. What had years earlier been de facto had now become de jure policy.

From the early 1950's onward the activities and ambitions of the World Union continued to expand though at times one would have been hard pressed to discern any kind of grand plan or general direction which gave order to the grand vision and general aspirations. Subsequent portions of this chapter will provide illustrations but, simply put, if there were some need which the World Union felt it should or could fill, it moved to do so; however limited its means, however rudimentary its method, or however duplicative its effort of that of the existing American machine. Thus while the mainstay of the World Union's work remained (a) the strengthening of links between constituents, principally

29. WUPJ Constitution, Preamble, Art. III. The new paragraph, as originally proposed, read: "The World Union recognizes the outstanding significance for the Jewish people of the religious developments in the State of Israel and, at the same time, emphasises the obligation of Jews in all lands to make their contribution to the religious life of the Jewish people by cultivating Jewish learning and following loyally the Jewish way of life." AJA, WUPJ, Box 6, File 13, MGB, July 12, 1951. The Jewish Chronicle attributed the change to the large American delegation and the presence of Israeli representatives such as Martin Buber.

through international conferences and (b) its developmental work in new communities (most importantly Israel, with the establishment by the American Board in 1952 of an Israel Committee for Liberal Judaism), the World Union's efforts also began to spread into other areas. Resolutions at the 1951 Conference had ripened into a World Union Youth Section and a Commission on Social Action and International Relations even as the WUPJ had begun to venture into the areas of education and human rights in its consultative capacity with UNESCO.

With the broadened sense of purpose which such growth suggested, the WUPJ convened its Eighth International Conference in London, July 2-9, 1953. While the attendance of Mordecai Kaplan would later lead to speculation on the possibility of the Reconstructionist Movement's joining the WUPJ, as on previous occasions it was "the towering personality of Leo Baeck [which] dominated the Conference."³⁰ Indeed, some of the most moving moments occurred during the eightieth-birthday tributes to Baeck when Montagu announced the as yet incomplete preparation of a Festschrift in his honor.³¹ The Conference theme, "Our Religious Approach to World Problems," suggested a social action orientation and certainly conferees devoted far more time to discussion of the Commission on Social Action and to the Work of the

30. CCAR Journal, Oct. 1953, p.41.

31. Entitled Aspects of Progressive Jewish Thought (1954), its list of contributors reads like a who's who of Reform: Morgenstern, Bettan, Blank, Freehof, Mattuck, Cohon, Eisendrath, Cronbach, and Glueck, to name a few.

World Union in Connection with the United Nations, than to the usual scholarly addresses. They gave a similarly good deal of time as well to ancillary matters---the business sessions, the youth session, and the women's meeting---than in former times, perhaps suggesting a shift of priorities to the practical side and thus vindicating the Jewish Chronicle's critic of two years earlier.

Both the Social Action Commission and the United Nations work require extended discussion. The former was largely the initiative of Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman, a prominent American Reform social activist. In some sense it was only natural that the World Union should eventually create such a commission given its constitutional Preamble's positive view of prophetic Judaism. Moreover, American Reformers had long before come to translate the prophetic ideal into long-standing programs of social action. If "as Maine goes, so goes the nation," so it was, often enough, that "as America goes, so goes the World Union." At the conference Isserman explained that, there being no unanimity among the Commission's members as to its work, he had deemed it necessary to draw up a charter for approval by the Conference. The Charter gave primacy to the concept of prophetic revelation to the irritation of Moses Weiler (who wanted more references from the rabbinic literature) and CCAR president Joseph Rauch (who wanted more mention of the demands of personal faith.) The Charter also proclaimed a commitment to studying various plans for disarmament, building goodwill among the

nations, and ending wars and to recommending and supporting such measures as secured the peace of all. These it would disseminate to constituent bodies and then to the whole world. The Charter then went on to state positions on international government, the rights of man, racial discrimination, distribution of wealth and immigration barriers, colonialism as the enemy of democracy, interfaith cooperation and universalism.³² The Charter made some daring assertions and, although the constituents were generally supportive in sentiment, some British and South African conferees immediately raised their brows as to the implications of references to colonialism and racism. WUPJ Secretary-Treasurer Bruno Woyda suggested that passages on immigration, colonialism, and the subordination of national sovereignty to international law should be worded in a way which combined Jewish religious principles with a realistic approach to practical situations. Speaking to the Charter's passages on racism, Moses Weiler explained that South African Jewry was in a difficult position and was seeking a modus vivendi in the matter; moreover, that the Jews as a community had decided to take no stand on the native question because they were involved with the problem of assisting Jewry in other lands and could not ask the government's permission to export funds and goods and simultaneously object to the government.³³ The matter ended with the World Union's ap-

32. WUPJ 1953 CR, pp.30-35.

33. Ibid., pp.36-37.

proval in principle of a Charter on Social Justice and International Relations, with the proviso that Isserman's draft be submitted to the constituents and the Governing Body for further study and discussion. Thus the future development of the World Union's Social Action Commission was by no means clear. Would it ever be in a position to apply concretely its principles or ever likely do more than issue statements and proclamations? Even if only the latter, would consideration of the constituents' respective national ties so circumscribe any such statements as to prevent any but the safest or most general? As it turned out, this was precisely the case until the 1959-1960 move to America (and even after.)

The World Union's work in connection with the United Nations as a non-governmental consultant to UNESCO was a similar outgrowth of the WUPJ's religious and world views. The work did not actually involve the World Union so much as it did its representative who, as liason, would communicate the World Union's views on such issues as genocide, human rights, and disarmament. In turn the representative would try to muster support by the constituents for such United Nations efforts as the Genocide Convention,³⁴ the Human Rights Convention (to which the United States government was for various reasons opposed), and programs to combat illiteracy and hunger. As Bruno Woyda explained:

34. The United States government failed to ratify the Genocide Convention until late 1985-early 1986.

To have consultative status implies that we try to interest the general public in the work of the United Nations; it implies on the other hand that we make by written or oral statements and by the participation in the exchange of views our contribution to the work which is or should be done by the United Nations. Too often religious leaders in our days are satisfied with generalities. Words for instance such as "justice" or "righteousness" do not help us at all if we do not say what they mean when applied to special situations.[35]

The World Union was inordinately proud of its work with the United Nations. The connection no doubt³⁵ conferred a certain prestige upon the WUPJ³⁶ and many of those involved in the World Union undoubtedly sympathized warmly with the aspirations of the UN and reposed great hopes in its future. One wonders, however, if something deeper was not involved. In its own religious domain the World Union shared with the UN many of the same goals and surely must have felt that it confronted many of the same obstacles. Moreover, the World Union, as a confederation of loosely linked national movements in which one of those movements occupied a dominant position, must have identified with the United Nations and seen in it something of its own situation. Indeed, it was David Wice who offered the following analogy:

The State of Pennsylvania, said Dr. Wice, had more natural resources, a larger annual budget and a larger population than thirty nations in the United Nations

35. WUPJ 1953 CR, p.90.

36. At any rate it perceived a certain amount of status in the appointment. Thus it was that at a 1953 conference in Zurich to which the Jewish Agency had invited Europe's Jewish organizations, the WUPJ was hugely offended at not receiving an invitation. It was also, in part, its UN status on which the WUPJ based its demand for inclusion in the Jewish Claims Conference. It should be pointed out in both instances, however, that even without UN consultative status, the WUPJ had legitimate reasons for being included.

combined, yet the United States saw fit to support in great measure and to work through the United Nations in the world picture, because the United States was a country, whereas the United Nations was the instrument created for common action. He believed that that was the way they in America must look at the World Union; they must see the whole Liberal movement as a world interpretation of Judaism. Only as they had an organization outside the United States, as they had the United Nations, could they work together towards a world movement.[37]

Several other matters of long-term import discussed at the 1953 Conference, involving both finances and leadership, also deserve mention. Beginning in late 1951, following announcements by the German government and Chancellor Adenauer of plans to make war reparations, the World Union became embroiled in a struggle to obtain representation at the Jewish Claims Conferences held in New York and later in Paris. Within the ranks of the World Union opinion was divided as to the correctness of the organization's involvement. Moreover, it was uncertain if reparations would be made for the cultural-educational endeavors for which the WUPJ requested funds, complicating the matter still further. Baeck opposed any involvement with the Conference, fearful that the World Union would have to become immersed in political issues which were beyond its purview as a strictly religious organization. Many constituents, however, especially those on the Continent which had suffered the ravages of war or those elsewhere with large refugee congregations, favored it. The 1953 Conference resolved the cleavage, urging those involved to press their claims individually

(with World Union backing) until such time as the World Union might obtain full representation. The battle involved not only large sums of money, but also a certain crucial recognition of World Union legitimacy generally and as one of the heirs of Liberal German Jewry. It would drag on until 1957 when, through pressure from such individuals as Glueck, Wice, Evans, and Eisendrath, the World Union finally obtained the representation it sought.

The 1953 Conference further marked the genesis of a serious drive to put the World Union on a solid economic base. For more than 25 years the organization had been subsisting on a pauper's budget. In 1951 it had determined that an annual budget of \$10,000 would provide the minimum means to achieving its ends and by 1953 had nearly met that goal. At the 1953 Conference, J.C. Ackerman of Chicago and Louis Friedman of Pittsburgh announced plans to achieve a \$100,000 annual budget by the end of the decade.

On the question of how to raise the \$100,000, Mr. Ackerman said that it was his conviction that our inability to raise money had not been due to lack of financial capacity in our movement, but rather to a lack of enthusiasm and zeal and inadequate organisational facilities. He felt that much larger sums could be raised for our cause in America if the purpose of the World Union were properly "sold" to our constituents. It had become a world habit to look to the USA for funds whatever the cause....Experience had shown that if there was a broad basis of consultation with leaders of the Liberal Jewish community then it was possible to raise substantial sums. The speaker asked the Conference to realise the difficulties in America where the communities were not internationally minded. (emphasis added) and where they were already overburdened with the need for obtaining funds for home projects. They needed time for education and opportunities for propaganda.[38]

As envisioned, 75 per cent of the proposed budget would come from America.³⁹ More interesting, for the priorities it reveals, was the proposed breakdown of the budget. Israel projects would receive 25 per cent; grants and subventions for small and new communities would receive 20 per cent; travel for maintaining contact with the constituents, office expenses, and the Youth Section would each receive 15 per cent; and rabbinical scholarships would receive ten per cent.

As the World Union had begun to look ahead in terms of finances and priorities, so too it began to confront the long-term problems of leadership, both globally and within its own infrastructure. The leadership had long felt the need to make provisions for the ever-critical problem of rabbinical leadership in its far-flung communities and Julian Morgenstern, trying to be cooperative, had several years earlier enunciated an HUC-JIR policy of free admission to qualified overseas students. Finally, with the destruction of the German seminaries and the growing realization that American rabbis could not fill the empty pulpits abroad (whether because of insufficient interest and numbers or because of the CCAR's and UAHC's own competing interests), the World Union recognized that communities would have to raise up their own disciples if they were ever to stand on their own. The 1953 Conference initiated the first steps to correct the chronic imbalance with the announcement of

39. *Ibid.*, p.151. The remainder would be apportioned thusly: Great Britain-12%, South Africa-10%, other parts of the world-2%.

a foreign recruitment program by HUC-JIR and the establishment by the NFTS of a \$5000 fund for foreign rabbinical scholarships.⁴⁰

But even as the World Union was addressing the shortage of rabbinical leadership internationally, the 1953 Conference was witnessing a leadership crisis within its own backyard. Some months prior to the Conference, Leo Baeck had informed the Executive Committee of his intention to step down from the presidency. The time had come to give way to a younger man, preferably an American, as America was one of the great centers of Jewish life. What subsequently transpired is somewhat unclear. According to the minutes, the Executive Committee, following customary procedure, nominated Nelson Glueck, then HUC-JIR president and internationally renowned archaeologist. Glueck accepted the nomination. Minutes were distributed to the Executive Committee and no objections registered. The Governing Body was polled, the 18 who voted agreeing unanimously to recommend Glueck to the 1953 Conference. Prior to the Conference, however, UAHC president Maurice Eisendrath protested and was supported by Jane Evans. (Eisendrath was a member of both the Executive Committee and the Governing Body and so should have known of Glueck's nomination well before.) Eisendrath maintained that his opposition was in no way directed personally toward Glueck. Rather, he felt that (a) Glueck's duties as College president

40. CCAR Yearbook, 62, p.224. Also AJA, WUPJ, Box 5, File 6, MEC, Nov. 20, 1951. Montagu and Mrs. J. Walter Freiberg had in fact discussed the idea as early as 1928. See AJA, WUPJ, Box 6, File 4, letter dated Jan., 1928.

would not permit him adequately to fulfill his responsibilities as WUPJ president and (b) though there was no constitutional precedent in the Executive Committee's consulting a WUPJ constituent body, it should have been just an ordinary procedure to have informed the heads of the American constituents of the Committee's intended nomination.⁴¹ According, however, to correspondence and Eisendrath's close associate, the NFTS' Jane Evans, it would seem that several things had occurred. Baeck had tried to discuss the matter with Eisendrath though Eisendrath insisted that he had been led to believe his attendance at the 1953 Conference was "imperative" precisely because nothing would transpire before then. Eisendrath seemed to feel that much had gone on behind his back, though Baeck disavowed any knowledge of such goings-on⁴² and Glueck apparently never actively sought the job but only wanted to please Baeck.⁴³ On the other hand, Evans has stated that the formidable rivalry and love-hate relationship between Glueck and Eisendrath was well known

41. AJA, WUPJ, Box 6, File 14, MGB, July 2, 1953.

42. AJA, WUPJ, Box 12, File 8, letters dated Apr. 8 and Apr. 16, 1953.

43. AJA, MSC 5 (HUC-JIR), Box 27, File 2, letter from Glueck to Montagu dated March 2, 1953, in part reading "...you say that you have heard from Dr. Baeck ...that I am 'interested' in becoming President of the World Union. I assure you that I have no desire to assume any more offices or duties than I presently have, which actually I find most overwhelming. I have, however, weighed the urgent request...and I note what you say with regard to the eagerness of the Officers...to have my help in this connection....I am prepared to stand for election....I should be happy to withdraw my name should others be interested...I do not wish to enter any competition for the office. It is, frankly, with considerable reluctance that I am letting my name be put up at all. I do so because I do not like to say 'no' to Dr. Baeck and because I do not want to give the impression that I am not interested in the WUPJ. I am exceedingly interested and eager to help...."

in their inner circle. Well known, too, was that Lily Montagu had become accustomed to functioning in a solo capacity. Consequently Montagu had simply single-handedly (and certainly without any malice toward Eisendrath) invited Glueck to assume the WUPJ presidency.⁴⁴ Evidently, the resulting explosion nearly devastated Montagu.⁴⁵ Eisendrath very nearly refused to attend the Conference and, according to Evans, threatened to take the UAHC out of the World Union.⁴⁶ Julian Morgenstern and David Wice managed to smoothe Eisendrath's ruffled feathers and Eisendrath was finally placated by Glueck's acquiescence⁴⁷ and, again according to Evans, by an agreement that neither he nor Glueck would become president of the organization.⁴⁸ Thus did the 1953 Confer-

44. Interview with Jane Evans, Adg. 12, 1986.

45. Ibid. Also AJA, MSC 30 (Morgenstern), Box 13, File 8, letter from Montagu dated June 6, 1953. "By refusing to rescind the Governing Body's resolution and sticking to Dr. Glueck who has been so kind and generous in all this, apparently we caused great annoyance to Miss E and Dr. E. We wrote to Dr. Glueck that we had no desire to have any other President although he reiterated his offer to withdraw. Dr. Eisendrath wrote an angry letter on our decision and said we were alienating the Union and the Sisterhoods---that it was no personal matter....Well now this morning to my very great regret and sorrow Dr. Glueck has cabled that he thinks it would be better to choose another President....I have cabled begging him to wait....But now I feel that my beloved W.U. is in mortal danger. It exists to further religious purposes and I never thought any other element could affect its safety and consecrated purpose." So distressed was Montagu that she even offered to move the headquarters to the U.S. if Wice and Morgenstern thought it would help.

46. Ibid. Also Evans interview.

47. AJA, MSC 5, Box 27, File 2, letter from Glueck to Montagu dated June 1, 1953, offering to step down rather than hurt the prospects of the WUPJ. Also Box 5, File 1, telegram to Eisendrath urging him to come to the London Conference: "Together we can work this out." Also AJA, MSC 30 (Morgenstern), Box 13, File 8, letter from Wice to Morgenstern, dated June 11, 1953: "...you may have heard that if anything, Dr. Eisendrath's anger has spent open itself, and the most recent action was a telephone conversation between Dr. Glueck and Eisendrath in Tel Aviv, in which Dr. Glueck agreed to withdraw his candidacy."

48. Evans interview. Eisendrath in fact served as president from 1972-1973.

ence conclude with a nomination of Leo Baeck to an honorary life presidency, a presidency pro tempore (held by Lily Montagu until her formal election in 1955), and a hard lesson in the potential hazards of an organization's domination by a single constituent.

The World Union's progress, in the years following the 1953 Conference through to the end of the decade, resists easy definition. One may perhaps liken it to a treadmill situated on a geological fault. While there was the appearance of movement, in many ways the WUPJ was going no place. Beneath the surface, however, major shifts and significant changes had begun. Consequently, one would do well to examine these six years as a single unit.

On the surface of things the work of the World Union seemed to proceed apace. The organization staged three more biennials: the Ninth International Conference in Paris, June 30 & July 6, 1955, with its theme "Progressive Judaism: Its Teachings and Immediate Tasks"; the Tenth International Conference in Amsterdam, July 4-10, 1957, with its theme "Religious Experience in Judaism"; and the Eleventh International Conference in London, July 9-15, 1959, with its theme "Religious Authority in Progressive Judaism". Holding the Conferences in such venues as Paris and Amsterdam would suggest that the Progressive communities of those cities had at last begun to be rehabilitated and desired the "boost" and recognition which an international conference could

provide. It would perhaps suggest, as well, an attempt to restore a certain internationalism to a World Union which had grown perilously close to looking like an English organization funded by American dollars. About the themes of the Conferences one can generalize little. In fact, one discerns almost no pattern to the themes of the World Union's first eleven conferences. One senses only, and even then very tentatively, a move away from the purely theoretical and philosophical to the tangible and practical. The themes of the 1955 and 1959 Conferences seemed to reflect a long-overdue response to pleas from many of the smaller and more formative communities to "tell us what Progressive Jews are meant to believe and do." Paralleling the move from the theoretical to the tangible, it would appear also that Progressive Jewish thought was taking a backseat to Progressive Jewish action. Theory had occupied a prominent place in the conferences of earlier times. To be sure, even the latter conferences could boast of lectures and addresses by the likes of Professor Samuel Cohon, Edmond Fleg, and Eugene Mihaly;⁴⁹ to be sure, one of the purposes in seeking Nelson Glueck and later Solomon Freehof for the presidential post lay in their suitable combination of dynamism and scholarly renown. Nevertheless, the emphasis was shifting from pedagogy to "projects". More and more, a preponderance of conference discussion was consumed by the business of the World Union, especially Israel.

49. WUPJ 1955 CR, pp.54, 121. Also WUPJ CR, p.84.

And on the surface of things, the work of the World Union seemed to proceed apace, though it becomes often difficult to differentiate one Conference Report from another. Each business report of "Work Since the Last Conference" echoes the last in terms of hopes and prospects for new communities. Each conference brought with it a new update on the World Union's work with the United Nations⁵⁰ and a new report of some small progress within the Youth Section. Until 1957, the World Union continued its battle for representation at the Jewish Claims Conference, passing a strongly worded resolution at the Paris Conference rebuking the Claims Conference for refusing to recognize the WUPJ's right to participate both as the spokesman of Progressive Jewish refugee communities and as the executor of Germany's Liberal Jewish legacy.⁵¹ The drive to increase American consciousness of the World Union also accelerated with the annual publication by the American Board of its American Manual. (A glossy "newsletter" of WUPJ activities, personalities, and communities, the American Manual apparently saw only two editions, in 1954 and 1955.) Similarly, the drive begun in 1953 to place the WUPJ on a firm economic base continued to make some small headway, though, in 1958 Jacob Shankman (replacing Wice's successor, Ferdinand Isserman, as American Director) could still report to the CCAR:

50. WUPJ 1955 CR, p.107. When the World Union's first representative to the UN, Ronald Ronalds, died in a motor accident in 1954, he was succeeded by Mrs. Victor Polstein.

51. Ibid. p.48.

For decades now, this work has been a humble petitioner at your doors; its requests have been ignored and disregarded; its needs have been overlooked. When they have been met, the response has often been paltry and niggardly. The great challenge faces you to further our liberal Reform program throughout the world.[52]

The World Union made progress. But the old problems of money and manpower, of planning and publicity, of communication and commitment still persisted. Moreover, new problems and new versions of old problems (as will be discussed subsequently) brewed just beneath the surface. Thus, when all is said and done the organization was on a treadmill, moving in its routine way but with no real direction and only a modicum of success. As Montagu herself wrote:

Our achievements are, of course, small, but man advances slowly when regarded individually; still more, when considered as a member of a national group; most slowly of all, when results are estimated on an international basis. A religious movement lives through eternity. Two years out of the first thirty-three of its existence can offer an infinitesimal, though certainly not insignificant, contribution to...its progress.[53]

All of this is not to say, of course, that the work of these years enjoyed no new additions or occasioned no new controversies.* The World Union held its 1955 Conference in Paris in large part to herald the birth of the Institute

52. CCAR Yearbook, 68, p.138. For a fuller understanding of the financial difficulties note Shankman's remarks, WUPJ 1959 CR, pp.46-47: "...for the years 1958 and 1959, the World Union adopted a budget which called for an income of approximately \$60,000....In the schedule of assessments about \$50,000 or five-sixths of the total was assigned to the American Board....[T]he assessment was made... without creating any kind of machinery for the American Board to raise the money. The American Board, as constituted, had no authority to tax its constituents or in turn to parcel out the assessments. It has been an almost incredible situation, and it made the position of the American Director almost untenable....Mind you, the assessment had been only \$10,000 for 1957, but for 1958 it had been increased about 500% and no scheme had ever been devised to realize it."

53. WUPJ 1959 CR, p.14.

for Jewish Studies. Founded under the auspices of the World Union,⁵⁴ the institution was intended to replace to some extent the German rabbinical seminaries and to train Liberal Jewish rabbis, teachers, and scholars. The idea of such a seminary demonstrated both broad ambition and commendable vision by those parties involved and, had it ultimately succeeded, would have stood as one of the World Union's crowning achievements. Nevertheless, one puzzles over the timing and location. At a time when the World Union was still striving to establish a dependable financial base and committing itself to an expanding Israel program, was the undertaking more foolishly impracticable than visionary? Was it an idea born of the drive and force of a single personality, namely Paris' Rabbi Andre Zaoui; or did it enjoy the broad consensus and commitment of the entire WUPJ leadership? Moreover, while the Institute may have hoped to attract students from among both the native French Jews and the francophonic Jews of North Africa (altogether some 1.3 million Jews⁵⁵), was Paris the wisest choice? Modern France, after all, had only one small Progressive synagogue and rabbi affiliated to the WUPJ and a tradition richer in assimilation than in Jewish scholarship and identification. Wise or foolish, the undertaking would consume a good deal of

54. The Institute was to be principally funded by American sources and Baroness Lucie de Gunzberg. The WUPJ also looked to the JDC and the Jewish Claims Conference to supply about 10% of the budget, thus explaining the relentless determination to gain representation at the Claims Conference.

55. WUPJ 1955 CR, p.5.

the World Union's energy and resources⁵⁶ and engender a considerable amount of discussion for several years. The WUPJ was ill-equipped to exercise much control over the Institute, especially after the move to New York. Although it raised many questions of policy and WUPJ rabbis often served as examiners, nevertheless the World Union played more the role of patron and advisor than that of supervisor (much as it had for many years done in Palestine/Israel.) The Institute ordained its first rabbi in 1960, with Rabbi Freehof present as one of the rabbis conferring smicha. Over the next decade it graduated some 16 or so additional rabbis and several more educators before finally deleting its rabbinical program in the early 1970's.⁵⁷ Zaoui made aliya in 1969.

As the 1955 Conference witnessed new undertakings it also witnessed a new constitutional controversy within the American ranks. It seems the Constitution Committee, which in response to changing conditions had been preparing amendments to the Constitution since 1946, presented a host of new recommendations for the vote of the Governing Body. Among them, Art. VII, Sec. 2, essentially required that each country's representation on the Governing Body be numerically apportioned relative to the whole (each country receiving a minimum of one seat and a maximum of one-third the total number of seats). Art. VII, Sec. 3, then went

56. AJA, WUPJ, Box 6, File 14, MGB, July 4, 1957. The proposed budget indicates £10,000 (of a total income of £21,000) was earmarked for the seminary.

57. Cf. Chap. 4, n.41 & 42.

on to say that where a country was represented by several constituents (e.g. the CCAR, UAHC, NFTS, and NFTB), the country's constituents would determine among themselves how best to apportion the number of Governing Body seats which the WUPJ had allocated to that country. UAHC president Eisendrath moved to amend Sec. 3 such that the World Union would not only proportionally allocate seats to each country as described in Sec. 2; the World Union would also proportionally distribute those seats among a country's constituents by the same method. Thus each of America's constituents would receive a minimum of one seat and a maximum of one-third of America's total seats on the Governing Body. The effect, of course, would be to award a greater number of America's seats to the UAHC than to the much smaller CCAR. Because the UAHC and CCAR had previously enjoyed equal representation, CCAR president Barnett Brickner strenuously but unsuccessfully opposed the maneuver on grounds that the WUPJ was not simply a lay organization. Rather it represented a movement of Progressive Jews, lay and rabbinic alike. To this end Brickner wished to maintain the status quo of equal CCAR/UAHC representation. In the end, however, the World Union's constituents approved the amendment months later (perhaps not fully realizing the potential implications) and Eisendrath once again proved himself the better muscle flexer.

Needless to say, all of the foregoing matters were in some degree peripheral. Beneath the surface, the World

Union was undergoing far more serious challenges or upheavals. In 1953, following the Glueck-Eisendrath collision, Lily Montagu had filled in as acting president (being formally elected in 1955.) She accepted the nomination reluctantly, however, and only until someone better equipped for the task could be found. So it was that a self-described "stop-gap" president served as World Union leader for some six critical years. Montagu was nearly 80 when she took office and, though a woman of considerable attainments, was never comfortable in her executive capacity. Her age, in fact, was representative of a larger problem facing the World Union. Throughout the late 1940's and 1950's, the old guard leadership of the first generation was passing on and not many equally committed leaders were forthcoming to replace them. At the 1959 Conference Montagu asked the conferees to pay silent memorial tribute to the likes of Claude Montefiore, Israel Mattuck, Israel Abrahams, Leo Baeck, Ismar Elbogen, Stephen Wise, Herman Vogelstein, Ludwig Vogelstein, Caesar Seligmann, Louis-Germain Levy, Max Diene-mann, and Heinrich Stern.

Challenges came from without as well, most notably from the Conservative Movement. In 1957 the Conservatives moved to organize their own international counterpart to the WUPJ, a union called the World Council of Synagogues (WCS). With objectives mirroring those of the WUPJ, the World Council hoped to unite, in a single international body with a single liturgical and educational standard, all congregations with

a point-of-view similar to that propounded by the Conservative Movement. It would appear that the WUPJ feared, not unreasonably, that the WCS might begin to make inroads on the World Union's own efforts.⁵⁸ As has been noted earlier, the World Union included a strongly traditionalist wing among its (especially non-American) constituents and the World Council might have proven more compatible with that wing's ideology. Indeed, though the 17th Annual Conference of the RSGB in 1958 voted 36-26 against splitting from the Liberals, withdrawing from the World Union, and aligning with the WCS, the outcome of the vote was reversed in 1960. The RSGB withdrew from the WUPJ (but did not affiliate with the WCS) only to rejoin again later.⁵⁹ For a few brief moments the World Union seems to have feared that the Southern African Union and certain WUPJ-connected congregations in South America might also link up with the World Council. In fact, Montagu's close friend, Rabbi Henrique Lemle of Rio de Janeiro's then unaffiliated (but WUPJ-connected) Liberal congregation did just that in 1960.⁶⁰ The same fear of "desertion" was also voiced in regard to continental European congregations during the roughly contemporaneous

58. World Union North American Board Records - New York Office (hereafter NYO), Minutes of North American Board (hereafter MNAB), May 28, 1959.

59. NYO. According to the MNAB, Jan. 22, 1959, there were three issues causing the cleavage between the Reform and Liberal movements in England: the composition of the WUPJ committee to approach the World Council of Synagogues regarding a merger; the question of joint or separate rabbinical seminaries in England; and the "temporary" nature of the RSGB's affiliation with the WUPJ.

60. AJA, WUPJ, Box 1, File 2, MEC, June 13, 1960, Box 5, File 8, MEC, Feb. 2, 1960.

discussions on moving the WUPJ to New York. Thus, at the urging of some constituents, the World Union engaged the World Council in discussions in hopes of establishing some common ground, if not a merger.⁶¹ These proved fruitless, however (nominally due to philosophical differences). The World Council either saw no common ground or had hopes of luring certain WUPJ congregations into its fold. More likely, perhaps, the World Council may have even then felt that its chances of obtaining recognition in Israel for its rabbis would be enhanced by disassociating from, rather than joining with, the Reform Movement.

The major policy decision facing the World Union during the second half of the 1950's was, not surprisingly, whether to transfer the World Union headquarters to America. Van der Zyl had first raised the question in 1946, but not until 1956 did anyone move seriously to address the matter. In a letter dated March 6, Montagu wrote the American Director:

I want to ask you to bring before your Board in the strictest confidence and as soon as possible, an idea which I have been entertaining subconsciously for a considerable time. You will realise how deeply I have at heart the future of our World Union and I hope and pray that it will always move nearer and nearer to the ideal which my co-founders and I, myself, originally conceived. I, therefore, ask your Board through you, whether they do not think that the time has come when we should move our centre to the USA. Although our co-operation is very close, it is now, and for the immediate future difficult to obtain the right balance, unless the centre is in the most powerful Constituent, regarded from the financial and numerical angle, and I think all our Constituents would concur in this view.^[62]

61. AJA, WUPJ, Box 6, File 14, MGB, July 4, 1957. Box 7, File 1, MGB, Jan. 12, 1958, Jan. 11, 1959, July 9, 1959.

62. AJA, WUPJ, Box 6, File 14, MGB, July 8, 1956.

The response of the American Board was

that the American Board does not seek the relocation of the Headquarters of the World Union from London to the United States, but in the event the Governing Body of the World Union for Progressive Judaism should so decide, it will do everything in its power to co-operate.[63]

Because of the American Board's lukewarm response, the World Union Executive decided to postpone recommending any resolutions at the time of the 1957 Amsterdam Conference. Yet the possibility indeed the inevitability of an eventual transfer remained very much in the foreground of the Executive Committee's thoughts. Most regarded the move as a necessity, in order that the center of responsibility and center of power might finally unite, but several opposed any transfer. Echoing Leo Baeck's concerns years earlier, Julian Morgenstern expressed "uncompromising opposition to the suggestion that the Headquarters of the World Union be transferred to the USA," fearing that such a move might well make the World Union "more or less a subsidiary to the UAHC."⁶⁴

Others joined with Morgenstern in expressing reservations about the move. On the American side of the Atlantic, Maurice Eisendrath understood the logic of the move, but did not feel America was prepared for the World Union financially, emotionally, or psychologically. American Jewry, he said, did not have enough faith in the UAHC that it would be sufficiently understanding to protect the integrity and autonomy

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

of the World Union.⁶⁵ And while there was the hope that from North America the WUPJ could more easily build up something in South America, there was also a concern that, since the American Board had been unable to meet its \$50,000 annual assessment by the World Union, it would certainly be unable to raise the \$100,000 needed to establish the headquarters in New York. On the European side of the Atlantic as well, there were shared fears about the move. There, however, the concern focused more on the debilitating effect the move would have on European Progressive Judaism than on the welfare of the UAHC.

Nevertheless, for the majority the question was less "whether" than "when and how." Suggestions of partial transfers were rejected. Provisions to safeguard the integrity of the European community with a strong European Board were discussed. Ideally, to effect a smooth transfer, the Executive felt an American should come to London for two years to familiarize himself with the Union's work, after which time the headquarters would move. Though this never eventuated (Hugo Gryn worked only a few months in London before moving to New York as the new Executive Director), in 1958 the Governing Body determined finally to place a resolution on the agenda of the upcoming London Conference, working in the interim to obtain a consensus among the constituents. On July 13, 1959 the World Union passed a resolution reading in part:

65. NYO, MNAB, Jan. 22, 1959.

...the World Union for Progressive Judaism notes with approval the...recommendation...that the Headquarters of the World Union be transferred, as early as is convenient, to the United States. The Conference emphasises that, in order to preserve the international character of the World Union, biennial conferences should, as a general rule, continue to be held outside the United States and normally in Europe; and, further, that at least one Governing Body Meeting shall be held each year in Europe.

The Conference desires to record its deep appreciation of the most generous action of the UAHF in agreeing, at the suggestion of Dr. Eisendrath, to give the new World Union Headquarter rent free accommodation in its House of Living Judaism for some years and important auxilliary services without charge.[66]

Several days earlier a London Jewish newspaper editorial had wryly commented, "Now the World Union intends to remove to New York, and no doubt it will boom louder as Export Division of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations than it did as Colonial Office of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue."⁶⁷ Clearly the World Union had crossed the Rubicon and time alone could prove whether the arrant cynics or the cautious optimists be right.

The World Union's Developmental Work

As we have already seen in the previous chapter, two principal components comprised the work of the World Union. Endeavoring to spread and nurture the growth of Progressive Judaism internationally, it sought at the one level to foster Progressive thought and to forge links between constituents through correspondence and international conferences. At another level, however, it strove toward the enabling and enhancement of new Progressive communities by providing

66. WUPJ 1959 CR, p.132.

67. Jewish Chronicle, July 10, 1959.

leadership, funding and materials, and encouragement. As we earlier established, in the case studies of Australia and South Africa, three factors usually determined the success of WUPJ efforts at this second level: timing, availability of appropriate rabbinical leadership and adequate funds, and the existence of a committed cadre of interested individuals in the infant community. If the war years played havoc with the one component, weakening links and rendering international conferences impossible, they inflicted even greater damage on the second component. Political instability and a shortage of both manpower and money scarcely allowed for the development and growth of anything more than a few struggling refugee congregations. So, too, as rehabilitation more than progress characterized the first component during the post-war years, the World Union could do little to advance the development of new Progressive communities during this period. This is not to say, however, that it did not earnestly try; nor is it to suggest that it registered no gains.

Australia and South Africa. In the southern hemisphere the movement continued to sustain growth in Australia and South Africa. These two great enterprises, more or less successfully launched before the war, grew and developed their own resources, depending to an ever-diminishing degree upon the World Union's benefaction. Greatly sheltered from the ravages of war and benefitting from an influx of refu-

gees⁶⁸ these communities continued to look to the World Union in locating rabbis. The World Union was, however, unable to give them very much assistance in the matter of rabbinical recruitment due to a scarcity of interested or suitable applicants. Until these communities were in a position to nurture and send their own native-born candidates to the Reform seminaries abroad (with the aid of World Union NFTS scholarships), the WUPJ's contribution to these regions was in fact largely limited to moral support. Otherwise they had become self-supporting and, in large measure, self-generating as they looked to their own resources, spawned new congregations and organized themselves into regional unions.

In Australia, the congregations in Melbourne and Sydney grew and expanded into a larger suburban network. In Melbourne, a branch congregation opened in the Eastern suburbs in 1950 and with a loan from the mother congregation purchased its own building a year later. By 1955 the new group had grown to 250 families. A branch congregation formed in the Southern suburbs in 1952 and followed a similar pattern of growth. Attracting members by their religious schools

68. For example two thousand German refugees were hastily sent from England to Australia aboard the S.S. Dunera in the early years of WWII. They joined many thousands more who had already emigrated during the 1930's and were themselves followed by some 25,000 more after the war. Among the Dunera refugees were Joseph Ansbacher (Asher) and George Ruben. Asher began as minister in Hobart, Tasmania. Sanger hired him as his assistant in 1944. Following the war he returned to London to complete his rabbinical studies and after a private ordination returned to serve as Sanger's associate until 1948. Ruben began as religious school teacher in Melbourne, served as Sanger's assistant, left to serve as minister in Hobart in 1949, and several years later became the first rabbi of the young Reform congregation in Perth. See Baskin thesis, pp.70-71, 89.

which were in areas largely ignored by the Orthodox, the two suburban branches depended completely on the original congregation for everything from rabbinical services to financial subsidies, becoming independent with time and growth.⁶⁹ The growth of Progressive Judaism in Sydney replicated that of Melbourne. Upon the retirement in 1949 of Max Schenk, the Sydney congregation's founding rabbi, Rudolph Brasch (who had previously served WUPJ congregations in England, Ireland, and South Africa) assumed the pulpit of Temple Emanuel. Critics have given Brasch mixed reviews, in contrast to Sanger in Melbourne, but during his tenure the Sydney congregation expanded to include two suburban branches in 1956. Though one ultimately failed, the other, on Sydney's North Shore, became independent in 1959 and continued to expand rapidly.⁷⁰ By 1961 the Melbourne congregation could report a membership of nearly 2000 families and the Sydney congregation, 900 families.⁷¹ In 1952, primarily due to Orthodox recalcitrance in the matter of accepting proselytes, a Progressive congregation organized in Perth.⁷² By 1961 it claimed a membership of 360, more than ten percent of Western Australia's Jewish population.⁷³

69. Baskin thesis, pp.72-74.

70. Ibid., pp.74-78.

71. WUPJ 1961 CR, pp.109, 111.

72. WUPJ 1953 CR, p.11. Also AJA, WUPJ, Box 1, File 6. The congregation was formed by a Col. Boaz. George Ruben (supra, n.67) became rabbi in 1956.

73. WUPJ 1961 CR, p.112.

At the 1955 Paris Conference Montagu mentioned in her report that "we desire to initiate some work in New Zealand." At the World Union's behest, North American Director Ferdinand Isserman visited Auckland while on a world cruise in 1956. Following a meeting and lecture he helped to form the Temple Shalom Liberal Congregation and promised, if asked, to send a minister from the U.S. to conduct High Holyday services at the WUPJ's expense.⁷⁴ The World Union made good Isserman's promise and arranged for Rabbi Bernard Heller to lead services that year.⁷⁵ For several years the Auckland congregation managed with assistance from both the Melbourne and Sydney congregations as well as the material and rabbinical assistance provided by the Americans and the World Union. In 1959, with material help from the WUPJ and the NFTS, a rabbinical student at HUC-JIR, Melbournian John Levi, visited Auckland on a summer internship.⁷⁶ While in New Zealand he assisted in organizing a sister congregation in Wellington. With 40 members at its formation, it had more than doubled to 90 members by 1961.⁷⁷ In 1961 the Australian and New Zealand congregations would form a regional union, the Australia and New Zealand Union for Progressive

74. Baskin thesis, p.90.

75. WUPJ 1957 CR, p.31.

76. NYO, MNAB, Jan. 22, 1959.

77. WUPJ 1961 CR, p.114. Unlike the Perth and Auckland congregations, where Orthodox intransigence in the acceptance of proselytes served as the primary impetus in their formation, the founding members of the Wellington congregation were all Jewish. This may account for its fewer problems and, hence, greater initial growth. See Baskin thesis, p.91.

Judaism. They would subsequently be joined by new congregations in Adelaide (1963), Brisbane (1972), and the Gold Coast (1976).

Meanwhile, the South African movement continued to sustain its phenomenal growth, at least until the departure of Moses Cyrus Weiler for settlement in Israel in 1958. At the time of Weiler's aliyah, the South African movement was approaching its silver anniversary. A small core of Reformers had grown to approximately ten thousand members nationwide. The original congregation in Johannesburg, Temple Israel (1933), had grown to four: Temples Shalom (1945), Emanuel (1953), and Beth Am, all conjoined in the United Progressive Jewish Congregation of Johannesburg. In 1942 the movement had founded its own youth camp, the Alan Isaacs Camp. In 1944 the movement had spread beyond the city of Johannesburg with the founding of a congregation in Cape Town. As the movement flourished, congregations had formed in Springs (1945), Durban (1948), Port Elizabeth (1949), Pretoria (1950), Germiston (1952), and East London (1956), with groups in Bloemfontein and Klerksdorp.⁷⁸ These constituted themselves in a South African Union for Progressive Judaism (SAUPJ) which, with the formation of a congregation in 1956 in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia in 1957 became the Southern African Union. In 1959 a suburban branch of the Cape Town congregation became fully independent. Despite its remarkable growth, however, the South African movement

78. South African Jewry, ed. Leon Feldberg (Johannesburg: Alex White & Co. (Pty) Ltd., 1977), pp.102, 106, 107, 108, 112.

was not without its share of difficulties. From the outset it had continually excited Orthodox opposition, for the usual repertoire of reasons and much to the aggravation of Weiler. As evidence that the movement stood for something, and in order to maintain uniform standards, the movement had developed its own guide to ritual practice, an idea which Weiler not only wanted the World Union to adopt in principle, but also strove to impose on all other rabbis in the movement. When Rabbi David Sherman arrived from America in 1946 to assume the pulpit in Cape Town which he would occupy for more than forty years, Weiler asked that, in conformity with policy, Sherman refrain from doing any conversions for five years. Because the Orthodox were reluctant to accept proselytes, Weiler was afraid that if the barriers came down the Reform Movement would be swamped with a flood of converts and become known as a congregation of converts.⁷⁹ Apparently not only the policy, but also Weiler's imposition of authority created internal dissension within the movement. When the SAUPJ attempted in 1951 to appoint a Chief Rabbi of the Union, Cape Town withdrew, not to rejoin until 1958.⁸⁰ Another problem which constantly beset the South African movement and arguably limited its growth was the incessant shortage of trained rabbinical leadership. Not until the ordination of Walter Blumenthal at HUC-JIR in 1957 did South African Reform produce a native-

⁷⁹. David Sherman, Pioneering for Reform Judaism in South Africa: A Personal Memoir, 1983, p.40.

⁸⁰. Ibid., p.41.

born leader. The congregations in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, and Bulawayo managed to obtain rabbis (those already mentioned as well as Meyer Miller, Isaac Richards, C.E. Cassell, Richard Lampert, Michael Elton, J. Weinberber, and R.L. Zimmerman.)⁸¹ The rest had to depend on an assortment of trained lay leaders, reverends, and visiting rabbis. The problem would continue unabated throughout the 1960's. Though the community would produce several more rabbinical students,⁸² it would be forced to an increasingly greater degree to rely on its own resources and the visits of luminaries from abroad as a long retinue of native and imported rabbis came and went.

Thus was the progress of the Australian and South African Progressive Movements. One must emphasize, however, that while the World Union took pride in having helped initiate their beginnings, their growth through the 1950's (with the exception of New Zealand) owed little to the World Union itself.

India. The Jewish Religious Union of Bombay had been a faithful if somewhat indigent constituent of the World Union almost from the outset. Montagu had regularly corresponded with its principal leader, Leah Jhirad, offering suggestions and encouragement and arranging for literature about Progress-

81. The Progressive Observer, various issues 1955-1960.

82. Among them Anthony Holz, HUC '70; Alec Friedman, LBC '71; Charles Wallach, LBC; Sonny Benjamin, LBC; and Mordecai Miller, HUC '74, son of Meyer Miller. Miller never returned to South Africa.

sive Judaism. Not until the 1950's, though, did the Indian group begin to enjoy a higher priority in the World Union's developmental work. Indeed, one might fairly say that whatever growth the small group sustained it owed to the endeavors of Montagu and her successful efforts to co-opt the American constituents. Besides helping to locate a Torah scroll for the group and facilitating a \$10,000 interest-free building loan by the UAHC,⁸³ the World Union sought to recruit and subsidize a rabbi as early as 1945.⁸⁴ In 1952, under World Union auspices, Bernard Heller visited the congregation for several months. In 1955 the organization paid for the summer student-internship of Richard Israel who was returning from Israel to HUC-JIR. For two years (1957-58) Hugo Gryn, recently ordained at HUC-JIR (and subsequently WUPJ Executive Director from 1960-1962), served the congregation at the World Union's expense. In 1959-60 the WUPJ made a similar arrangement with Elisha Nattive, an Israeli. It is to some extent difficult to fathom the reasons behind the World Union's interest in and indulgence of the Indian community. Even admitting that hindsight is always better than foresight and that the WUPJ expended comparatively little money,⁸⁵ the group seemed to offer few prospects for long-term growth. Perhaps something exotic in the idea of an Indian group appealed to the leadership.

83. WUPJ 1959 CR, p.23.

84. AJA, WUPJ, Box 6, File 12, MGB, Dec. 17, 1945.

85. Approximately \$5000 for each of two years out of an annual budget of well over ten times that figure.

More likely, however, their neediness and the personal affection and respect between Montagu and Jhirad must have somehow touched both the World Union's heart and its sense of religious mission. That sense for the philanthropic often exceeded any sense for the practical.

Latin America. If a sense of religious mission and a zeal for "saving Jews for Judaism" (more than any kind of master plan) had often provided the driving force behind the World Union's infiltration into new communities, it remains something of a mystery that until the 1960's South America did not figure more centrally on the WUPJ's developmental agenda. A very large number of (largely unobservant and unaffiliated) Jews had made South America their home and a sizable percentage were of Central European extraction. The conditions should have seemed ripe enough.

Nevertheless, the region received only minimal attention from the World Union throughout the 1950's.⁸⁶ Montagu maintained regular contact with Heinrich Lemle, a refugee rabbi for whom the WUPJ had arranged to go to Rio de Janeiro, and more sporadic contacts with German Liberal rabbis Fritz Pinkuss of São Paulo and Fritz Steinthal in Buenos Aires. During the early 1950's she corresponded regularly with a congregation in Montevideo which was ostensibly in search of a Liberal rabbi. Though the World Union was prepared to guarantee passage and a first year's salary and even

86. For a more detailed examination of the subject, see "Progressive Judaism in South America," thesis by Clifford Marion Kulwin, 1983, HUC-JIR.

had a serious offer from German-born Rabbi Joseph Asher, then working in Australia, nothing seems to have come of the matter.⁸⁷ In 1952 the Governing Body made brief mention of an expanded policy in South America though it never seems to have formulated anything more than the suggestion.⁸⁸ In 1955 the World Union authorized a Chicago rabbi, Hermann Schaalman, to represent it on an upcoming personal trip to Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina and to pursue investigations, make contacts, and explore any possibilities in Peru and Chile. Beyond all of the foregoing, however, the World Union achieved little in South America before the 1960's.

Clearly, then, the World Union was cognizant of the fertile potential of South America and had some ambitions for the region. One may only postulate reasons for its neglect. Many of them, naturally, center on geographical, political, and social considerations of the countries and communities in South America itself. Others lie within the World Union itself. One may count as principal among them: the distance between Europe and South America (though Australia and South Africa were equally remote); the priority assigned to Europe and Israel; the commensurate lack of available funds and manpower; and the lack of interest and commitment evinced by the communities themselves. Not until after the transfer of headquarters to New York would the World Union translate any of its ambitions into something more concrete.

87. The reasons were due more to problems within the Montivideo congregation than to any omissions by the World Union.

88. AJA, WUPJ, Box 6, File 13, MGB, Jan. 31, 1952.

Europe. The World Union concentrated a great deal of its efforts in Europe during the immediate post-war era, with only middling success. It did acquire two new constituents: in 1951 several small groups of mostly intellectuals in various cities of Italy joined together and affiliated with the World Union under the leadership of an eminent psychologist, Dr. Assagioli; in 1957 a Swiss constituent joined the Amsterdam Conference. In the latter instance, the Swiss group seems to have developed of its own accord and with little input or assistance from the World Union. In the case of the former, the Italian Union never seems to have grown into very much, though the World Union offered what assistance it could with translating literature into Italian and with arranging lecture tours by the French constituent's Rabbi Zaoui.

Montagu continued her active correspondence, exploring new avenues for development in Belgium, North Africa (at Zaoui's prodding), and even Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Romania as late as 1957. It was in reconstructive work in France, Holland, and Germany, however, that the World Union contributed its greater energies. In all three it secured monies for synagogue rebuilding from the Central British Fund and the Joint Distribution Committee and supported claims filed with the Claims Conference. The rabbis who had served the Dutch community prior to the war, Andorn and Mehler, had perished in the camps. The World Union helped to rebuild the community from the ground up, offering

grants to erect a new synagogue and subsidies for a rabbi and cantor, much as it had done prior to the war. World Union efforts on behalf of the remnant of German Jews, however, were most consuming. The WUPJ tried to negotiate grants, solicited investigatory reports, and secured prayer-books. Most importantly it located and salaried two rabbis to serve the Berlin community, Steven Schwarzschild (1948-50) and N.P. Levinson (1950-52). Although by 1953 the Berlin community was in a better position to look after its own needs, it remained semi-dependent on the World Union for several years thereafter.

Palestine/Israel. As pointed out earlier, the establishment of a Progressive movement in Palestine increasingly pre-occupied and consumed the resources of the World Union. Of the monies expended on development in new communities, the lion's share went to Israel in the form of grants and subventions. In truth, the Israel Progressive Movement throughout the 1950's remained so utterly dependent for support on the World Union, or on monies channelled through the World Union by its American constituents, that the two (the WUPJ and the Israel movement) become virtually indistinguishable.

In fact, to describe the state of Progressive Judaism in Palestine (before 1958) as a "movement" in any meaningful sense would be a misnomer. As before the war, the WUPJ's modus operandi in Israel consisted in the main of supporting

certain rabbis and institutions: Max (Meir) Elk and Elk's Leo Baeck School (formerly the Hillel School); Paul Lazarus, a German Liberal emigré assisting Elk at Haifa's Beth Israel Congregation; Manfred (Meir) Rosenberg in Tel Aviv; Kurt Wilhelm and, after his departure to become Chief Rabbi of Sweden, Wilhelm's successor in Jerusalem, Alfred Philipp. Beyond this, however, the organization did precious little more than endlessly "discuss" and "investigate" how best to implement the movement there and desultorily attempt to resolve politically the aforementioned problems regarding the status of Progressive rabbis. Many recommendations were made. Weiler suggested in 1946 the appointment of an American field worker to go to Palestine. In 1950 he further urged the expansion of more Leo Baeck School type activities and increased social work to develop the Progressives' influence in the community. Resolutions to establish a central office of Progressive Judaism in Jerusalem, to endorse a policy of one-year sabbaticals for rabbis to work in Israel, and to draft a program for influencing government circles in Israel were all postponed.⁸⁹ A proposal to establish literacy centers and to subsidize a journal were left in abeyance.⁹⁰

In 1950 the World Union began urging the rabbis and congregations in Israel to organize themselves into a union and formally affiliate themselves with the WUPJ. The Execu-

89. AJA, WUPJ, Box 6; File 13, MGB, Feb. 26, 1950.

90. Ibid., MGB, June 3, 1952.

tive Committee had suggested this before, but encountered resistance from Wilhelm. Again in 1950, Philipp similarly opposed such an open identification with the WUPJ and Rosenberg joined him, explaining that local conditions and the anti-Zionist reputation of certain World Union leaders recommended against such an affiliation. Though the Governing Body unanimously believed in such a union, it defeated a motion to condition grants and subventions on its formation. In the end, Elk and Rosenberg affiliated separately while Philipp remained adamant and subsequently deserted to the Conservatives.⁹¹

If the Israel rabbis had been uncooperative about affiliating with the World Union, they were only slightly less so as the World Union became involved in certain political matters. At the time of statehood, the newly revived Palestine Committee submitted to the appropriate parties recommendations with regard to the drafting of Israel's new constitution that would have ensured the rights of Progressive rabbis.⁹² Quite obviously these were ignored though at the time the issue did not overly concern Wilhelm (who had come to an understanding with the Chief Rabbinate and whom the Chief Rabbi had individually licensed as a marriage officiant) or Elk (whose rabbinical responsibilities revolved more around his school than around a pulpit). In 1952-1953, the World Union again took up the fight, prompted

91. Ibid., MGB, Feb. 26, 1950 and Jan. 18, 1951.

92. AJA, WUPJ, Box 5, File 5, MEC, June 19, 1948.

by the Wittenberg case in which the Chief Rabbinate had refused to recognize, without the stamp of the London Beth Din, a couple's marriage in England by a Liberal rabbi. The Executive Committee submitted to the Knesset a resolution advocating separate channels for religious and civil marriages. This would have obtained marriage rights for Progressive rabbis, but Rabbi Rosenberg refused to give it his support. Along with others, he not only opposed separation of state and religion in a Jewish state, but also objected that the impression was that the Progressives were aiding the cause of the atheists and was determined that Progressive Judaism be recognized as no less a religion than Orthodoxy.⁹³

German Liberal rabbis had helped organize refugee congregations and the WUPJ simply gave financial support, more or less without questions. When it began to make demands, the rabbis balked and eventually the congregations died. Not until 1955 did the World Union begin finally to assume a more definite position. At the Paris Conference it announced that the Committee on Liberal Judaism in Israel, comprised of the UAHC, CCAR, HUC-JIR, and WUPJ, was prepared to guarantee almost \$60,000 to cover three years' salary and expenses for an American rabbi to serve as a field worker in Israel for the Progressive movement. The World Union further resolved to end automatic material grants to the Israel movement, to continue regular subventions, to focus

93. AJA, WUPJ, Box 9, File 5.

more on specific projects, and to continue appropriations for the Leo Baeck School.⁹⁴

The World Union's commitment to the establishment of Progressive Judaism in Israel had begun to congeal. Yet, certain questions remained unanswered. In nearly 20 years, the congregations had not really grown. Their combined membership, mostly elderly, stood at only about 400. Although Tel Aviv's now included some eastern Jews, and Jerusalem's a more cosmopolitan mix, they remained mostly German. They still adhered to a largely German Orthodox ritual despite warnings that, to succeed as an Israeli movement they would have to be homegrown and develop their own style. Their financial situation was equally disturbing, with members paying only £1-2 annually. Had the World Union actually encouraged the growth of a distinctively Israeli movement or merely tolerated an import? Had the World Union violated its fundamental tenet of encouraging Progressive Judaism only where a committed cadre of individuals voiced an interest and a desire? Had the World Union been overly anxious to conceal or compensate for an anti-Zionist (in the public's mind at least) past? Or had it simply been caught up in a kind of missionary zeal to bring religion to a heathen (in the Reformers' minds at least) land? The pitiful statistics suggested that this might indeed be the case because by the mid-1950's the Leo Baeck School was the WUPJ's one remaining connection in Israel.

94. AJA, WUPJ, Box 6, File 14, MGB, Dec. 15, 1956.

Such then was the work of the World Union from the war's end until the 1959 move to New York. Largely a period of reconstruction, the WUPJ attempted during this time to rebuild its communications and support network through regular biennial international conferences. In its developmental work it did its best to resuscitate the Dutch community, to give attention to a neglected Indian community, and to invigorate the French community with a new rabbinical seminary. More importantly, in terms of the implications for the decades which lay ahead, the World Union began to look increasingly toward the New World; to North America for greater participation and new leadership; to South America for new prospects for the movement's growth. And looking westward, it simultaneously looked eastward. As Israel would come to play an ever-larger role in the life of world Jewry, it would also come to play an ever-larger role in the life of the World Union.

CHAPTER FOUR

MARRIAGE OF THE CENTERS OF POWER AND RESPONSIBILITY

The Years in New York
1960 - 1973

Introduction

In March/April of 1960, the transplanted World Union for Progressive Judaism took up its new lodgings in the UAHC's House of Living Judaism in New York City. The Executive Committee moved quickly to make the transition as smooth as possible, almost immediately appointing an Evaluation Sub-committee the task of which would be to assess the present state of the organization and apprise the leadership of its recommendations. On October 31 of that year, returning to address the Executive as to the "state of the Union," sub-committee chairman David Wice urged the adoption of a table of priorities for immediate projects of the World Union. Wice's three principal recommendations included among others: (a) better coordination of rabbinical training and a careful review of the Paris Institute with an eye towards gradually weaning it from World Union funding, thus relieving the WUPJ of a heavy financial burden and thus encouraging the Institute to increase its own responsibilities; (b) more immediate attention to South America, including the appointment of a full-time representative whose duty would be to spend some time in the big population centers, thus furthering the cause of Progressive Judaism (monies to come from the decreased expenditures on the Institute); and (c) clarification of the relationship between

the Leo Baeck School in Haifa and the World Union, with an eye towards establishing an official and not merely tacit connection between the school and the WUPJ.¹

While Wice's recommendations did, in fact, become a large part of the World Union's prospectus during the New York years and beyond, the report of the Evaluation Sub-committee reflects something more significant than policy alone. Indeed, if anything can be said to characterize the period in which the WUPJ headquartered in the United States, it is that the era was marked by a greatly increased professionalization. Whether the World Union owed this transformation to the influence of the American environment or to that of the UAHC and its leadership, both of which were themselves products of that environment, would probably be a matter of some debate. More important than the reasons, however, were the forms which this professionalization assumed; for even as the organization was incorporating under the laws of New York State, it was becoming more corporate in its style.

So long as it headquartered in England, the World Union had always retained something of its original flavor as a special project, albeit hardly a trivial one, of Lily Montagu. With the move to the United States, leadership---in more corporate fashion---became somewhat more diffuse. Although unquestionably dominated by the Americans, the work of the WUPJ was now administered by both a European Board

1. AJA, WUPJ, Box 5, File 8, MEC, Oct. 31, 1960.

and a (North) American Board. For almost 35 years, Montagu had virtually single-handedly managed the organization's day to day affairs. Following the move, these came under the aegis of a salaried executive director; first Hugo Gryn (later to become the senior rabbi of the West London Synagogue), then Rabbis William Rosenthal and Richard Hirsch. In its first three decades the World Union had elected only three presidents, all Europeans. Between 1959 and 1980 the office would be filled by a relatively quick succession of five Americans: Rabbis Solomon Freehof (1959-64), Jacob K. Shankman (1964-70), Bernard J. Bamberger (1970-72), Maurice Eisendrath (1972-73), and David Wice (1973-80). Clearly each individual would leave his mark on the organization; but it was the common denominator of Americanism, with the exception of Gryn, which would more thoroughly leave its imprint.

If World Union leadership and administration became more corporate and professionalized during these years, so too did financing. Few would question the supremacy of the American machine in matters of Jewish fundraising and the WUPJ surely benefitted from such expertise. On the one hand, of course, the various cogs of the American Reform movement already had prior claim to the most generous sources of donations, thus denying the World Union any hope of greatly fattening its purse. On the other hand, however, being situated in America afforded the WUPJ greater visibility among its wealthiest constituents, insured it would not

go entirely begging, and enabled it to merge interests with the UAHC (particularly on its Israel projects). Though still largely dependent on the largesse of certain individuals and, quite properly, the dues assessed to its various constituents (most notably American in both instances), the World Union also began to initiate more refined, innovative, corporate methods of securing funds. These included Solomon Freehof's "Friends of the World Union" campaign which sought to attract 1000 "friends" who would annually contribute \$100 to the organization; a "Dollar Campaign" in which UAHC rabbis would appeal to all congregants to mail-in a dollar contribution to the WUPJ; and an "Adoption Scheme" whereby various UAHC regions (or individual congregations) would adopt and help support a World Union congregation. In the latter case Israeli congregations almost alone were adopted, though congregations in Buenos Aires and Bombay also benefitted. The "Friends" and "Dollar" campaigns were, however, only marginally successful² suggesting that even a more professionalized approach could not combat all the many obstacles to fundraising such as: failure of the WUPJ to capture the imagination, lack of rabbinical support at the local level, Diaspora Jewry's preoccupation with Israel, and the onerous pyramidal demands made by a multitude of Jewish causes from the local to the national level.³

2. NYO, MGB, July 4, 1965. After nearly five years the program had attracted only 150 "Friends", all but three American.

3. Jane Evans interview, in which Miss Evans explained that so many fundraising claims are made on American Jews, beginning at the local level, that the

More than style of administration and fundraising, it was the general orientation of the World Union which reflected its more professionalized approach. In 1960 American Board member Mrs. Barnett Brickner observed that the WUPJ lacked a "project" in Israel, asserting that with a specific project the organization would have no problem in raising \$100,000.⁴ Brickner's recommended tactic for Israel ultimately came to typify the next decade's overall strategy. Whereas the European-based World Union of earlier times had never developed real priorities or a master plan, the American-based World Union became increasingly projects-oriented. In so doing, both the international conferences for the "exchange of ideas" and the rather more nebulous goal of "spreading Progressive Judaism"---long the cornerstones of WUPJ activities---came to be subsumed by a more focused approach of specific priorities and objectives. Still limited by money and manpower, the World Union was in no way able to develop a reliable "timetable" or succeed to a high degree in its newly-delineated ambitions. Nevertheless, it did begin to concentrate and channel its ambitions in a somewhat more coherent fashion. Staging conferences, sponsoring publications, training rabbis for other than North American pulpits, and developing programs for South America and Israel---these were the World Union's

WUPJ suffers as a result. A suggestion has also been made that there is often confusion between WUPJ and UAHC projects, especially those in Israel, and that the average giver thinks that in giving to one he has given to the other.

4. AJA., WUPJ, Box 1, File 2, MNAB, June 13, 1960.

primary fields of interest during the years it headquartered in New York. Thus this chapter shall depart somewhat from the format of the preceding two chapters and explore the years 1960-1973 on a project-by-project basis.

The International Conferences

The World Union organized six international conferences during these years: the Twelfth, in London (July 6-11, 1961); the Thirteenth, in Paris (July 8-14, 1964); the Fourteenth, again in London (July 4-11, 1966); the Fifteenth, in Jerusalem (July 3-6, 1968); the Sixteenth, in Amsterdam (July 1-6, 1970); and the Seventeenth, in Geneva (June 28-July 2, 1972). As in the past, each bore a theme which, taken collectively, create something of a tableau of the evolving concerns of Progressive Judaism. In respective order they included: "Aspects of Progressive Judaism and Human Responsibility," "Bridges" (between the generations, between Israel and Diaspora, between religions), "Retrospect and Prospect," "Israel, the Diaspora, and Progressive Judaism," "Crisis in Belief," and "Beyond Survival---Hope."

The nature of the World Union had begun to change, however, and with those changes the biennial conferences seem to have lost some of their former luster. The WUPJ biennials had hitherto featured prominently in the World Union's program, their convening being one of the principal purposes for the organization's founding. They had served a significant need in bringing together Progressive Jews from far-

flung and isolated communities for both communion and communication, sharing and soul-baring, edification and inspiration. While those needs remained, perhaps they had become less pronounced. Advancements in global transport and communication, visits to some of the more isolated communities by leading World Union figures,⁵ and broader distribution of printed materials enabled WUPJ constituents to stay in closer contact. A prolonged period of relative world stability made international conventions both less onerous and less remarkable. Internally, a shift of World Union emphases and an expansion of its other projects would have also given the biennials the relative appearance of occupying a subordinate role in the scheme of things. And, perhaps, with the World Union's money, manpower, and administration all concentrated in and dominated by America, international conferences might have come to seem (to Americans at least) less urgently serious affairs.⁶

Although only the 1966 and 1968 Conferences merit any lengthy discussion, a few passing observations should be made of the others. The 1961 Conference, held in London largely out of consideration for an elderly and infirm Lily Montagu,⁷ was distinguished by Solomon Freehof's compelling

5. Among them were Freehof, Eisendrath, Rosenthal, Shankman, and W. Gunther Plaut.

6. It is worth noting that after the 1961 Conference, the WUPJ ceased publishing printed volumes of the recorded proceedings of each biennial. Montagu had always attached great importance to these volumes, devoting considerable time and energy to gathering Conference addresses, discussions, and translations presumably for purposes of distribution and education as well as posterity.

7. Montagu passed away in 1963 at the age of 90. In one of her last letters

if somewhat defensive presidential address which even still at this late date sought to explain and justify Progressive Judaism to an audience already avowedly Progressive. The Conference was also distinguished by its plethora of resolutions (a) reaffirming the unity of Israel and the non-separatist intent of Reform, (b) challenging the Israeli Chief Rabbinate for its refusal to recognize India's Bene Israel community (who largely comprised the WUPJ's Bombay congregation) as bona fide Jews,⁸ (c) condemning all forms of racial discrimination,⁹ (d) voicing concern for Soviet Jewry, (e) recommending an early conference in Israel, and (f) supporting the work of a United Nations which had of late come under attack from various quarters.¹⁰ The 1972 Conference, held in Geneva as a means of giving support to the young congregation there, was distinguished both by its celebration of the pending move of WUPJ headquarters to Jerusalem (with all the attendant blarney and rhetoric) and by another

to David Wice she wrote, "Of course I love the World Union as much as ever, and am happy in working very hard in its administration, but I am becoming rather a poor thing. My memory is very bad and my legs wobbly, and I do at last know what it is to be very tired indeed. I hate to confess this but it is true. I comfort myself for the pain on leaving my high office---and it is acute, by feeling that it will be better for the World Union that I do this before my friends suffer through my weakness. I can always pray for our Union and I believe God will let me go on doing this when I go out of human sight." See NYO, Wice's Presidential Address to the 1976 International Conference.

8. At the 1968 Jerusalem Conference, reference would be made to this resolution by Progressive Jews who saw a parallel between their own plight in Israel and that of the Bene Israel.

9. The resolution was moved by Bernard Bamberger and seconded by Rabbi Meyer Miller of South Africa. South Africa's recent Sharpeville race riots may have had something to do with the resolution though there is no evidence to support this.

10. WUPJ 1961 CR, pp.47-50.

outpouring of resolutions. These included: (a) a significant statement of theses on mixed marriages by the Israeli Progressive Rabbinate,¹¹ (b) affirmations of the unique role of Israel and the continuing significance of the Diaspora, (c) a prayer for the social advancement of all peoples within Israel, (d) statements of solidarity with the Progressive Movement in Israel, Soviet Jewry, and Syrian Jewry, (e) a reaffirmation of devotion to inter-religious relations, and (f) another recommendation of continued support for the work of the United Nations. It would appear, however, that the early-1960's were the high water mark of World Union involvement with the UN. At the 1970 Conference, Jacob Shankman would inform the Governing Body:

The influence of Russia reaches far beyond its borders, far beyond the military equipment and training personnel which it provides for the enemies of the State of Israel. In the not so tranquil halls of the United Nations it also seeks to silence the voice and message of Judaism. It is my unhappy duty to report to you that our World Union has been dropped from its category #2 status of ECOSOC in the UN. While we have been put on the roster for UNESCO and UNICEF, we must now ask permission (instead of having the right) to participate in any discussion that is legitimately our concern.... [We] must humbly petition, with the recurrent possibility that it may not be granted, for the humiliating by-your-leave request to express its point of view. We are exerting every effort and exploring every avenue to have our full NGO status restored to us at the United Nations---that the voice and ideals of Judaism continue

11. Entitled The Rabbi and Mixed Marriages, NYO, it was published jointly by signatories from the CCAR and the RA. While acknowledging the right of all human beings (and therefore Jews) to intermarry and defending their right still to be loved by the Jewish community, it reserved the right to determine the standards by which the marriages of Jews should be contracted. It argued that intermarriage constitutes a threat to Jewish existence. It espoused a set of guidelines demonstrably Conservative in character: Rabbis should not officiate at mixed marriages and should follow the necessary procedures for converting non-Jewish spouses or children of mixed marriages, where appropriate.

to be heard, through us, in the council of nations....[12]

If Shankman's remarks smacked of not a little rhetoric, as his passionate addresses to or on behalf of the World Union so often did, perhaps they did not seem so conspicuous in context. Increasingly, a great deal of bluster and rhetoric was coming to characterize the conferences.

The decade's two most significant World Union biennials were certainly no exception. The Fourteenth International Conference, celebrating the WUPJ's forty-year jubilee, veritably brimmed with an unbridled optimism reminiscent of an earlier era. Excerpts from Shankman's 1966 presidential address strike a tone remarkably similar to that which once characterized Lily Montagu's "Reports":

In Europe, our indefatigable and idealistic Director, Rabbi Lionel Blue, was successful in launching a Liberal Congregation in Brussels...and another is being nurtured in Geneva...Meanwhile, energetic and unflagging efforts are being made to revitalize European Jewish youth, even in Germany...In France, the valiant Union Libérale Israelite carries on....Our work in Israel continues apace. The World Union is the sole support of our four dedicated and pioneering Rabbis...Our efforts in Latin America continue on a small but promising scale....[13]

Because Shankman regarded the World Union as an essentially

12. NYO, 1970 International Conference, Presidential Address, p.8. Though Shankman seemed to attribute the downgraded status to Soviet influence at the UN, the July 1, 1970 MGB attribute it to the WUPJ's indifference which allowed it to happen. Mrs. Norma Levitt, WUPJ liason to the UN since 1975 explains that the downgrade to "roster" status was the result of the WU's own administrative oversight in renewing the proper forms. It could be corrected within 3 years, but would be difficult for a Jewish organization given the present alliances within the UN; moreover, the WUPJ would gain little as the differences between "roster" and #2 NGO status are, for World Union purposes, insignificant.

13. NYO, 1966 International Conference, Presidential Address, p.3. Shankman's praise of Lionel Blue was no mere rhetoric. The European section had been seriously weakened by the move to New York. Under Blue's leadership considerable advances were made both in the development of new continental communities and in WUPJYS

deliberative body, he further called upon Progressive Jewry to formulate a new religious manifesto which would distill the essence of Judaism, proclaim its devotion to peace and hatred of racism, support the cause of population control, and reaffirm the rights of Soviet Jews and the unity of Israel. The two other major addresses of the Conference. Eisendrath's "These Forty Years---Retrospect and Prospect" and Glueck's "Prospects for Reform in Israel" struck similarly optimistic notes. Eisendrath, focusing more on the history of Reform Judaism itself than on that of the WUPJ as an organization, echoed Shankman's sentiments in asserting Reform's moral mission. He also emphasized the role of Israel and the need for a Reform interpretation of Zionism. Glueck spoke of the challenge of establishing Reform in Israel, of the need to continue forging ahead unswervingly in the World Union's program there, and of Reform's destiny and eventual triumph. One reads the speeches of Shankman, Eisendrath, and Glueck and thinks "them thar's fightin' words." And it was so, as would become evident two years later. One wonders, however, whether the World Union was in a position to wage more than a war of words. After 40 years of life, the sobering realities described below by Executive Director William Rosenthal still afflicted the organization, dampening its enthusiasm and tempering its rhetoric:

We are not yet the international people or movement we want to be. Even though we are felicitously bound together, still are we separate in many of our ways and

(which, though increasing its activities, was still more European than international.)

manners....[I]t cannot be denied that national interests, regional jealousies and even personal rivalries mar our complexion. The great problem is not these ineluctable qualities, but rather the absence on the part of many of our members of a sympathetic understanding of each other's problems....There may be on occasion provincialism in our approach, too much avoidance of the essentials....All too often we have been late or missed the boat....In 1926 the founders of our union were convinced that the future Jewry would be Progressive. Do we still so believe? That erstwhile... catch-phrase of which Miss Montagu was so fond, and which we appear to be somewhat apologetic about, "Save Jews for Judaism" needs dusting off.[14]

The Twelfth International Conference had recommended an "early conference in Israel;" the Thirteenth International Conference had seen Andre Zaoui recommend that Reform liturgy and theology bring out of retirement both the Hebrew language and the traditional doctrine of "return to Zion;" the Fourteenth International Conference had been heavily Israel-oriented. With the euphoria following the Six-Day War and the gathering momentum of the World Union's Israel program, it was virtually inevitable that the Fifteenth International Conference play itself out in Jerusalem. The conference would prove to be one of the most significant and occasion the most publicity since the organizing conference of 1926.

Quite apart from providing a forum for the customary business and interaction associated with the biennials, the 1968 Conference stands out as the Progressive Movement's grandstand statement of its solidarity with Israel and its readiness to do battle with the forces within the State

14. Ibid., report of the Executive Director, pp.2-3.

which would deny Reform Judaism its legitimate rights. The war which was to be waged would remain, for some time to come, largely a war of words. Nonetheless, the words which were exchanged in Jerusalem were strong indeed.

A number of statements, addresses, and resolutions distinguished the conference. Both Prime Minister Levi Eshkol and Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek were in attendance at the opening session as Jacob Shankman exclaimed, "We are in the presence of history." Repeating elements of Eisendrath's 1966 London speech, Shankman attempted to minimize the anti-Zionist past of an earlier generation of Reformers in light of a now differently motivated weltanschauung. He recommended that this World Union conference accept for itself the pledge of unbroken and ever-continuing kinship with the people of Israel, of a similar support for the UJA, and of grave concern for the sovereignty and security of the State of Israel. Even more powerful, however, was Rabbi David Polish's address "All Israel's Search for Identity." In a penetrating analysis, Polish asked the question:

What is our true problem? Is it the relationship of Diaspora to Israel? I think not. The question of relationship is dependent upon a deeper and even more troublesome burden, the identity of the Jew, both in Israel and in the Diaspora. Before there can be relationship, identity must be established. Before there can be I-Thou, there must be I. For the Diaspora Jew, the crisis came with the power of a black revelation during May and June, 1967. He was no longer the easy dweller in the dual Zion of Diaspora and the vicarious homeland in Israel. Suddenly he found himself confronted with a challenge that he had never envisioned, to be passionately fearful for Israel in places where his generation-old roots suddenly seemed to shrivel.[15]

15. NYO, David Polish, "All Israel's Search for Identity," p.1.

Examining the schizoid state of Diaspora Jewry, he explained that as reality had changed Jewry's attitude toward history, Zionism had changed its theology from one of waiting for God to one of acting for God. Along with other conclusions he drew, among them that not only the Diaspora but also Israel suffers an identity crisis, he maintained that

the Galut Jew can rediscover identity not by swinging erratically from loyalty to loyalty, from Israel to the social crisis and back, but by integrating them both into his being and making them an organic aspect of his Jewish existence. Even here, however, there is a scale of priorities....Only when Galut becomes more than an historical accident or a deliberate choice for the entrenchment of success and power, only when it becomes a value, however painful and deceptive, a value by which the Jewish ethic can be released into the world, can we justify Jewish existence outside of Israel.[16]

If many of the words exchanged at the conference were intended for Progressive Jews, at least as many were intended for Israel itself. "A Statement to the Prime Minister," a condensation of a large and thoroughly documented work dealing with the historical background and the present status of the Jewish religion in the Jewish State, was delivered to Levi Eshkol.¹⁷ It concluded with demands that:

1. Progressive Rabbis in Israel shall be allowed to marry those Jews who are registered in the Rabbinate as eligible for marriage.
2. All persons who have been converted to Judaism by Reform or Liberal rabbis throughout the world shall be recognized by the State of Israel as Jews and admitted to Israel as Jews and granted citizenship as Jews, under the Law of Return.

16. Ibid., p.7.

17. NYO; the "Statement," running to 12 pages, was based upon a book in part commissioned by the WUPJ entitled Perpetual Dilemma: Jewish Religion in the Jewish State, by S. Zalman Abramov.

3. The Progressive congregations of Israel shall receive full support and aid from the Ministry for Religious Affairs and the local Religious Councils, in full equality with Orthodox congregations.[18]

These demands, the crux of the Progressive Movement's campaign in Israel, were but part of a comprehensive package of resolutions passed at the 1968 Conference. Among the others were commitments (a) to intensify the participation of Progressive Jews in the upbuilding of Zion and in aliyah though the rights of Progressive Jews were a matter of equity and not of numbers, (b) to heal the generation gap through Jewish teachings, (c) to publish in Israel a series of tracts accurately describing the role of Progressive Jews in the history of Zionism, and (d) to bring pressure to bear for full rights in Israel.

It was not any of the foregoing, however, which called attention to the Fifteenth Conference and generated so much controversy at the time. In fact, a confrontation with the Orthodox over a planned mixed-sex prayer service at the Kotel seems to have been what put the biennial into the headlines. Apparently Israel's Minister of Religious Affairs refused to grant the WUPJ permission to conduct the service. Israeli rabbi Moshe Zager (Zemer) appealed to the Prime Minister, arousing a great deal of Knesset debate and public controversy.¹⁹ Kollek promised police

18. Ibid.

19. General Moshe Dayan was even summoned from his desk in the Ministry of Defense to join a high-level government commission hurriedly convened to deal with the matter, according to Dimensions in Judaism, Fall, 1968, vol.3, p.2.

protection if the large-scale disruption threatened by the Mizrachi and Bnei Akiva took place.²⁰ Although a subsequent opinion poll disclosed that 41 per cent of Israelis favored allowing the service,²¹ and the government generally agreed, the government was also gravely concerned that any confrontation at the Wall would damage Israel's world reputation as custodian of religious shrines. A great deal of discussion ensued within the World Union and opinions were deeply divided: some favoring a go-ahead, others a change of venue, the majority a complete cancellation.²² The matter ended with a formal statement by the World Union that

...because irresponsible elements have threatened to disrupt and bodily prevent the scheduled service, thus creating a potential danger to the peace of Jerusalem which we cherish dearly and do not wish to see jeopardized, we have chosen to refrain for the present from holding this service until there can be undisturbed exercise of Israel's declared principle of freedom of religion and conscience.[23]

Reactions to the Conference generally, and the "prayer affair" specifically, were mixed. One supportive editorial enquired:

Should one laugh or cry when some hundreds of Jews from abroad, filled with an all-embracing goodwill for the Jewish people, for Israel, and even for the Orthodox, must yield to the PM's entreaties to abandon their planned prayer ceremony at the Western Wall, to preserve this most venerated site from certain bloodshed? The WUPJ is entitled to protest that this was

20. The Detroit Jewish News, July 5, 1968, p.38.

21. Ibid. Of the remainder, 26 per cent agreed with the Orthodox and 33 per cent had no opinion.

22. NYO, MGB, July 3, 1968.

23. NYO, Resolution adopted at the Fifteenth International Conference of the WUPJ.

no less than spiritual blackmail....
The Reform group, by definition liberal and tolerant, found itself at a hopeless disadvantage in this struggle... against a section of the community that glories in its illiberalism, intolerance, and fanaticism....But still we have reason to be grateful for their good sense in withdrawing in time from a painful conflict, and saving Jerusalem from the likelihood of shame and disgrace. They showed more respect and regard for the Wall than many others have done.[24]

Reform journals were naturally positive. UAHC president Alexander Schindler wrote:

We were persuaded by government leaders that pictures of violence, flashed 'round the world, would give strong argument to Israel's enemies;...A concern not for OUR peace but for the peace of Jerusalem united impelled us to suspend the scheduled devotions. Government circles applauded the decision, as did the...public....[25]

Prime Minister Eshkol averred that "the very act of holding this conference in our holy and united Capital...spells our [the Zionists'] triumph for the Jewish National Trend in your movement."²⁶ Some critics, however, both WUPJ outsiders and insiders, responded less glowingly to the Conference. Schindler noted that

the strongest discordant note in response to the convention was sounded not by a citizen of Israel but by a visiting Toronto [Conservative] rabbi who published a lengthy J'accuse excoriating Reform leaders for "persistently fighting the wrong battles"---as if this battle of the Wall had been chosen by us, rather than for us---and denouncing them [Reform leaders] for their failure to cooperate with the Conservative movement "to establish one programme for Israel." His argument would have come with better grace and greater force had not Reform Jewry's offer to cooperate with all non-Orthodox groups in Israel been rejected, ab initio, by the very movement for which Rabbi Stuart Rosenberg

24. The Jerusalem Post, July 7, 1968.

25. Dimensions in Judaism, Fall, 1968, vol.3, p.2.

26. The Israel Digest, Sept. 9, 1968, vol. XI., no.14, p.2.

is spokesman.[27]

Discordant notes were not forthcoming from outside the WUPJ alone, however. Rabbi Dow Marmur of the RSGB wrote in a subsequent report of the conference:

The...Conference...was one of those events that disappoint all concerned: the Israelis for whom it was intended; the Americans who dominated it; the Europeans whom it frustrated;...there was so little to inspire the visitors with confidence and hope, it is doubtful whether they will be moved to greater efforts in the future.

Nor did the Conference make much impact. It had plenty of publicity---but the wrong kind. Most of it was about the trivial question of whether men and women could stand together...at the Western Wall.... Because of the general inertia which developed among the delegates, as a kind of reaction to the Executive's rather quixotic excitement over the Wall, the only theological paper of the Conference, read by Rabbi David Polish...received relatively little attention despite its vision, clarity, and brilliance....

Much of that inertia was evident in the large but non-attending American delegation. It was obvious that many of them had come for a holiday and not to a Conference....But we [the European delegates] were not allowed an impact. Although the two most important resolutions were proposed by the European Board...they received relatively little attention.[28]

Such a turncoat response and an airing of dirty laundry from "within the ranks" raised the ire of many on the Executive Committee and evoked a stinging rejoinder from Freehof:

So I do not mind his deprecation of the effectiveness of the Convention. What I do mind and dislike very much is the bitterness revealed in his statement that the World Union is now only an appanage of the American Reform movement. I generally have an affection for the English...but I find this type of concealed envy one of their most unadmirable characteristics. They accept every possible American help, and expect us in return to yield them world dominance. Whitehall still believes that the White House should be gentlemanly enough to allow Britannica [sic] to "rule the waves" even

27. Dimensions, p.2.

28. Living Judaism, Winter, 1969, vol.3, no.1, pp.29-30.

though the White House pays for everything....Will the English tax their congregants for a portion of the dues for support of the World Union? How many well-to-do English Reform Jews give a personal contribution to the World Union? Which English congregations have substantially adopted one of our "mission" congregations? We are doing everything for the World Union and yet they resent our influence in it.[29]

More than what the exchange says about the 1968 Conference is what it reveals about the internal relationships and rivalries within the World Union itself. If the remarks are representative of more widespread sentiments, then it would appear that there was more than a kernel of truth in William Rosenthal's assertions at the 1966 Conference. Perhaps it could not be denied that national interests, regional jealousies, and even personal rivalries marred the World Union's complexion.

Publishing and Publications

In the early 1960's the World Union began to enlarge the scope of its activities with an entrance into the publishing field. In addition to broadening its list of periodic publications, heretofore limited to rather unsophisticated newsletters or information sheets, the WUPJ sponsored several books of a scholarly or liturgical bent. Whether these forays into the world of linotype were the result of a deliberated policy or programming decision or merely the product of chance and circumstance is difficult to determine. The sources mention no "mastermind" and reveal

29. Jacob K. Shankman Records (hereafter JSR), letter from Freehof to William Rosenthal, dated April 1, 1969.

little more than the bare fact of various publications and certain concomitant complications.

One can at best conjecture or speculate as to the whys and wherefores behind these projects. Some of them, for example new Hebrew and Spanish liturgies, were clearly a response to certain needs within the expanding Israeli and South American Progressive movements. Others, such as various periodicals, were clearly motivated by a desire to give greater exposure to and foster the spread of the Movement and its doctrines. The books, however, are more problematic. Focusing largely on historical aspects of Progressive Judaism, they may simply have reflected a natural desire to document and propagandize the Movement. As the World Union had also a longstanding constitutional commitment to developing and spreading Progressive thought, they may have represented a natural outgrowth of that commitment and a more general commitment to Jewish scholarship. Alternatively, these attempts at publishing may have been part of a rivalrous effort to compete with the UAHC or, more innocently, a useful way for the WUPJ to avail itself of monies from the Claims Conference.

Whatever the reasons, all, some, or none of the above, the organization generated a long list of publications during these years. Included among the magazines and periodicals spawned were two in Israel, Prozdor and Shalhavet. Both were intellectual journals of Progressive religious thought, the former published on a bi-monthly basis from 1962-1967;

the latter also published on a bi-monthly basis beginning in 1969. Argentina saw the production of Teshuvá, a short-lived (1969-70) "house organ" of the South American movement edited in Buenos Aires by then WUPJ representative Leon Klenicki. In 1965 the European Board began publishing European Judaism, an intelligent, high-quality magazine published semi-annually and covering a wide range of Jewish concerns though with an emphasis on the European scene and written from a Progressive Jewish point-of-view. In 1975 the new Jerusalem-based World Union began producing Amni, a similar effort with an emphasis on the Israeli scene. Throughout the New York years an in-house newsletter, News and Views, appeared regularly. Finally, a youth magazine published by WUPJYS and entitled Shalom (or Shalom Dialog) underwent several births/rebirths. First appearing in 1964, it was resurrected in 1969 as a bilingual effort published jointly with the Jüdische Gemeinde zu Berlin and aimed at the small, scattered communities throughout Europe.³⁰

The World Union also had some share in the production of several new liturgies and guides to religious practice. In 1965 WUPJ president Jacob Shankman announced to the CCAR the compilation of a new Israeli Siddur (1962) and Mahzor (fall, 1964).³¹ In 1964 HUC graduate Meir Ydit produced

30. The magazine was not without controversy. A poem in the first edition (Feb., 1969) entitled "Höre, Israel" (Listen, Israel) began "Als wir verfolgt wurden, war ich einer von euch / Wie kann ich das bleiben / wenn ihr Verfolger werdet?" (When we were persecuted I was one of you. How can I remain so when you become persecutors?) Provocatively critical of Israeli treatment of Arabs, several among the WUPJ executive took umbrage at the poem.

31. CCAR Yearbook, 75, p.111. This author has been unable to locate copies of either.

Moreh Derech li N'vuchei haDat, a guide to problems of Jewish religious practice with a consideration of halachic issues. In 1965 Ydit also composed for the Israel movement a new, sixty page Haggaddah. In Argentina the World Union published Rabbi Rifat Sonsino's guide, Introducción al Judaismo Reformista (1968) and Ruth de Hecht's children's guide to the "Fasts and Feasts," De Fiesta en Fiesta (1969). The organization also aided or supported the production of new or revised Progressive liturgies written or translated into Spanish. In the summer of 1963, Rabbi Haim Asa began to assemble a Majzor for use in High Holy Day youth services. In the mid- to late-1960's the WUPJ's Buenos Aires constituent Congregación Emanu-El issued a new mahzor, Libro de Plegarias para las Altas Fiestas. Rabbi Leon Klenicki also produced a new Shabbat liturgy in Hebrew and Spanish, Servicio del Viernes a la Noche (1968-69). In 1970, Klenicki and HUC-JIR rabbinical student Roberto Graetz produced two mahzorim, one for each of the High Holy Days. Entitled Rosh Hashana and Servicio de Iom Kippur, these were accompanied in 1973 by a prayerbook for weekday, Sabbath, and festival services Libro de Oraciones. These last three were all published under the auspices of the World Union.³²

The World Union also commissioned or in some way sponsored several tomes tracing the historical development of Progressive Judaism: Gunther Plaut's The Rise of Reform Judaism (1963) and The Growth of Reform Judaism (1965).

32. Kulwin thesis, pp.80-82.

sourcebooks for the history of the Reform movement; Jakob J. Petuchowski's Prayerbook Reform in Europe (1968), a comprehensive study of the evolution of European Reform liturgies; S. Zalman Abramov's Perpetual Dilemma---Jewish Religion in the Jewish State (1976), a study of the politics of religion in Israel (in the production of which leading figures associated with the WUPJ assisted though the WUPJ did not actually publish the book); and Alexander Guttman's The Struggle over Reform in Rabbinic Literature During the Last Century and a Half (1977), a study of the various legal issues with which Reform grappled and on which it parted ways with the Orthodox. An English translation of Max Wiener's classic Jüdische Religion im Zeitalter der Emanzipation (1964) by the author's son was dropped after the quality of the translation proved poor. It would appear, however, that this impressive list was not without its share of controversies. Though the details are somewhat murky, the World Union was apparently inexperienced in the complexities of publishing and a number of disputes subsequently arose with several authors as to royalties and distribution and property rights.³³ After numerous complications and with the approaching end of the Claims Conference, the World Union elected in 1965 to terminate its publications program³⁴ though it seems to have subsequently rethought its position

33. Disagreements seem to have arisen in at least two cases. Abramov's book occasioned some discussion and Petuchowski's book in particular was the source of considerable acrimony.

34. NYO, MEC, Feb. 24, 1965.

as evidenced by Guttman's book (published after a brief reactivation of the Claims Conference in 1974).

Rabbinical Training

Providing World Union congregations with rabbinical leadership had been a chief concern of the organization almost from its inception. In the 1950's, with the establishment of the NFTS overseas fellowships and the formation of the International Institute for Hebrew Studies (introduced briefly in the previous chapter), the WUPJ began to play a more active role in this area and throughout the 1960's continued to expand this sphere of interest. Both the fellowship program and the Institute continued to recruit and train individuals for other than the North American rabbinate. Even as these two mechanisms enjoyed a certain marked success, however, they were also marred by problems.

The Paris Institute. The World Union had heartily endorsed the idea of a European seminary at the time of the Institute's birth and actively striven to requisition funds for it from the Claims Conference. Nevertheless, it would appear in retrospect that the WUPJ had not intended a permanent commitment but rather had only intended to provide seed money until such time as the Institute could achieve some measure of independence. By the early 1960's, however, the Institute had become an albatross for the World Union and the WUPJ came to realize either that from the outset

it had bitten off more than it could chew or that the child had no intention of leaving home before the age of 21. Thus it was that the World Union sought some way either of gracefully extricating itself from its original commitment or of firmly pushing the fledgling from the nest in order to force it to stand on its own.

As already noted earlier in this chapter, following the move to New York, the Executive Committee directed one of its earliest policy decisions at the Paris Institute. The funds which the World Union had annually contributed to the support of the Institute since its establishment had consumed a sizable percentage of the WUPJ's own annual budget and the burden showed no signs of abatement. Thus it was that the Executive determined to reduce its contribution by one-fourth over each of the next four years (1960-64). With the Claims Conference also winding down, the Institute would consequently be forced to sink or swim. Though the World Union attempted to follow through on its decision, it did not entirely succeed for some several years.

Reluctant to see a seminary closed, the WUPJ continued to relent, even as the Institute continued a hand-to-mouth existence. Spending more than \$14,000 on the Institute in 1961, the WUPJ complained that it could not maintain the school and that a true French Reform movement must be established in which French Jews would themselves respond.³⁵ The WUPJ, fearing the Institute would suffer, further com-

35. AJA, WUPJ, Box 5, File 8, MEC, Dec. 7, 1961 and Feb. 12, 1962.

plained when its rosh, Andre Zaoui, determined in 1962 to take sabbatical leave in Israel for two years.³⁶ The grievances were legitimate inasmuch as the World Union's share of the Institute's \$48,000 budget had increased by \$4000 at a time when the school was barely breaking even.³⁷ The situation continued to worsen and upon returning from Israel in 1964 Zaoui proposed a possible move of the Institute to Israel.³⁸ Freehof thought the suggestion premature. If anything, the World Union thought a merger of some sort with the Leo Baeck College in London would be more in order. The original impetus behind the Institute had been, after all, to have a Progressive seminary in Europe--not in Israel.

One must be permitted a brief digression at this point. Apart from its financial woes, the Institute had for some time been the object of other criticisms as well. Founded to help establish a Reform movement in France, the seminary more than once sent its graduates outside France, to pulpits in South Africa and Australia. It was unable to assure its students of placement and resisted coordinating its program with that of the Leo Baeck College.³⁹ With the Institute successfully training quality rabbis but failing to spread them (and thence Progressive Judaism) throughout France or to establish a broad base of support even in Paris.

36. AJA, WUPJ, Box 5, File 8 MEC, May 11, 1962.

37. Ibid.

38. NYO, MEC, Feb. 25, 1964.

39. AJA, WUPJ, Box 7, File 2, MGB, July 12, 1961. Also NYO, MGB, July 5, 1966.

critics questioned outlays of World Union money or even the point of a continental seminary. The Leo Baeck College (never a WUPJ project though it liked to claim some ownership in the London seminary) by comparison had become a notable success. Founded within a year of the Institute's founding, LBC eventually became a joint project of the English Liberal and Reform movements. Its graduates greatly enlarged the English movements, thus enlarging its own base of support.

The Institute's condition reached a crisis point in 1964-1965, surviving it primarily because the WUPJ bailed it out after an impassioned plea by Zaoui at the 1964 Paris Conference. In early 1965, with only \$15,000 coming in from the French community, the Institute needed another \$20,000 to stay open. Moreover, with but two permanent faculty members, the school's backbone---Zaoui---was still talking of aliyah.⁴⁰ The seminary stayed solvent through September, 1965, by which time the WUPJ had reduced its annual subvention to \$8000. In 1966, after a lengthy debate, the World Union voted to make a final grant of \$4000 in 1967 after which time it would sever its connection with the Institute. The seminary managed somehow to struggle on until the early 1970's after having ordained some seventeen rabbis⁴¹ after which time it narrowed its program to

40. NYO, MCB, Jan. 7, 1965.

41. NYO, MCB, July 3, 1969 report 14 rabbis ordained to date. NYO, MCB, July 1, 1970 report that three more rabbis were to be ordained soon.

adult education and the training of Jewish teachers.⁴²

NFTS Fellowships. A combination of funds provided by the NFTS and a \$50,000 donation from the Merrill Trust⁴³ had been enabling overseas rabbinical students to attend HUC and LBC free of charge since the mid-1950's. According to the terms of these grants, students would receive both a tuition-free education and a modest stipend at either of the colleges in exchange for a three-year commitment to serve a WUPJ congregation in their home countries (or elsewhere by special arrangement.) By most standards the program was to be judged an overwhelming success, at least in terms of educating for the rabbinate students from Europe, Israel, India, Turkey, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, South America, and even Japan.⁴⁴

The program was not without problems, however, and in 1964 the World Union began to question its implementation and even its value. Most of the scholarship recipients were honoring their commitments and returning to do overseas work on a long-term basis. The WUPJ, however, wondered

42. Jane Ehrlich and Ina Rae Levy, NFTS and the World Union for Progressive Judaism (New York: NFTS, 1985) pp.4-1, 4-2.

43. AJA, WUPJ, Box 5, File 8, MEC, Feb. 2, 1960.

44. American Judaism, Fall, 1966, vol. XVI, no.1, pp.51-53, lists the names of scholarship recipients Michael Goulston (England), Arthur Herman and Avraham Soetendorp (Holland), Hugo Gryn (Czechoslovakia), Isaac Neuman (Poland), Mordecai Schreiber (Uruguay), Haim Asa (Bulgaria), John Levi (Australia), Brian Fox (New Zealand), Isaac Jerusalem and Rifat Sonsino (Turkey), Walter Blumenthal (South Africa), Sion David (India), and Elisha Nattiv and Samuel Kehati (Israel). Others not mentioned in the article included Leon Klenicki and Roberto Graetz (Argentina), Meir Ydit (Israel), and Hiroshi Okamoto (Japan).

about the good faith and dedication of others who would honor their minimum three-year obligation and promptly return to America either for graduate work or for a pulpit. Anticipating a quick return, some students had even applied for or received U.S. citizenship during their period of study at HUC-JIR.⁴⁵

The program consequently came up for review, both at the Paris Conference and on later occasions. In most instances the problem was one of "how do ya keep 'em down on the farm once they've seen the city?"⁴⁶ HUC's Samuel Sandmel suggested making greater use of LBC in London, especially since the expense (and risks) of training were greater in the United States. Sandmel further ventured to query whether young, newly-ordained rabbis were in any event best suited for pioneer work in new communities. NFTS' Jane Evans advocated some form of grant repayment in the event of a scholarship recipient's failure to serve beyond the minimum three years.⁴⁷ England's John Rayner several years later suggested that the WUPJ reduce its overseas commitments and consolidate congregations.⁴⁸ Presumably Rayner felt that either solution, by reducing the number

45. NYO, MEC, Feb. 24, 1965.

46. The most interesting (or notorious) case was that of Sion David, brought to HUC from India. The WUPJ had long hoped to train a rabbi for its Bombay congregation. Upon ordination David returned to Bombay with his American wife. He returned to New York less than a month later!

47. NYO, MGB, July 14, 1964.

48. NYO, MEC, Oct. 28, 1966.

of vacant pulpits, would reduce the World Union's burden of finding or training rabbis. The South African movement, trying to avert the hardship of overseas study to begin with, even attempted to develop an accredited home-study program which would reduce attendance at HUC or LBC to one or two years.⁴⁹

Apparently, though, there was another side to the story. As one embittered student described it in a rather heated exchange of articles and letters in the CCAR Journal, the problem with the program lay not in the three-year overseas commitment. The problem was one of mismatching students with congregations and of failures in communication and support from the WUPJ.

I would often wonder what the World Union was all about, as at no time would any signs of life emanate from that office. I had many questions about my future work overseas, yet there was never anyone on hand to answer them....

Yet within a few short years, as more and more of us were being ordained and sent to those far-flung posts, some serious cracks began to show up in the gay façade of optimism. One newly ordained rabbi after another failed to adjust to his new pulpit.... What had gone wrong? Did the fault lie with the World Union? Was the congregation abroad to be blamed? Or was it the rabbi himself who had failed? Much has been said for all three possibilities....The World Union would send an HUC-JIR graduate to Latin America... and once he got there he would be virtually on his own. He would receive hardly any communications, no materials, no funds, no guidance, and would have to stay put wherever he happened to be sent, regardless of whether or not he was making headway. He had no choice but to resign himself to his fate until he could pack up and leave for good....The World Union simply wanted me to stay put in Guatemala, so it could

49. JSR. Correspondence between Rabbis Jacob Shankman and David Sherman of Cape Town, June-August, 1966.

keep another pin in its world map.[50]

In a well-worded response, William Rosenthal challenged the overall accuracy of the author's facts, recollections, and criticisms while acknowledging the value of some of his suggestions. True or not, the articles pointed up some of the dissatisfactions on both sides with the rabbinical training program. For the most part, however, the NFTS fellowships had born fruit.

Principal Areas of Community Development

Throughout its years in New York, the WUPJ continued its efforts to assist its overseas communities. It strove unsuccessfully for several years to find a rabbi for India after the departure of Elisha Nattiv in 1962.⁵¹ It similarly sought to place rabbis in South Africa, persuading Ahron Opher to assume the senior Johannesburg position in 1963.⁵² In 1965, plans were gotten underway to bring together in a Caribbean Conference of Liberal Congregations small communities in Curacao, Jamaica, Panama, Guatemala, Mexico City, Caracas and Bogotá.⁵³ In Europe, a weak European Board struggled to make inroads. It attempted through WUPJYS

50. Mordecai Schreiber, "Rabbi in Guatemala," CCAR Journal, Oct. 1968, vol.15, pp.80-89. See also April 1969, vol.16, pp.85-89.

51. In 1972 the NFTS sent HUC-JIR student Stephen Mallinger to Bombay as a summer intern and in 1976 Rabbi Lewis Bogage of Philadelphia to serve the congregation during the High Holy Days.

52. CCAR Yearbook, 73, p.98. Opher was persuaded largely through Solomon Freehof's influence. The Paris Institute also sent a graduate, Arthur Super, to Johannesburg in the mid-1960's.

53. CCAR Yearbook, 75, pp.110-13. Also 76, p.90.

to strengthen the German (youth) community with leadership camps and interfaith weeks. It facilitated the further expansion of the Dutch community from two to four congregations. It maintained contact with the Italian group and in the early 1960's even nurtured hopes of placing with them an American rabbi, Jack Bemporad, who was then working in Rome on a Fulbright scholarship. After that fell through, the Italian constituent never progressed beyond the tiny coterie of intellectuals it had always been. As North African refugees flooded into France in 1962, the WUPJ appealed for help for the French community. Though it nourished hopes of enlarging the Progressive community in France by attracting some of these refugees, scarcity of funds forced it to decline a proposal to establish a congregation in Marseilles. It declined a similar opportunity to underwrite a new congregation in Geneva, though European Director Lionel Blue eventually succeeded in establishing congregations in both that city and Brussels sometime after 1965.⁵⁴

In truth, many of these efforts suffered. This was partly due to problems peculiar to the particular regions or to lack of resources by the WUPJ. On the other hand, this was partly due to their place on the list of priorities. Increasingly, the World Union's projects in South America and Israel had become the keystone of its overarching program during the New York years.

⁵⁴. Ibid. Also MNAB, April 18, 1966. The Geneva congregation asked for an annual subsidy of \$4000. What Brussels and Geneva had in common, of course, were large international (i.e. English-speaking) communities by virtue of their UN and NATO ties.

South America. If South America had throughout the 1950's been ignored owing to a lack of firm and formal commitment by the communities there and to a benign neglect by the WUPJ in London, this would change dramatically in the 1960's. As has been noted and thoroughly treated elsewhere:

The late 1950's and early 1960's marked a turning point in the WUPJ's attitude toward South America in that it finally gave its work there much greater importance in both word and deed. Whereas earlier the South American affiliates' link to the world body had existed almost wholly through correspondence, concrete actions now became the core of the relationship. WUPJ representatives visited South America frequently to assess the movement's status and gather information to determine policy. One "Reform" congregation was founded (Congregación Emanu-El) and another brought into the WUPJ fold and greatly bolstered (Congregação Shalom). Further, with South American students at the HUC-JIR, movement spiritual leaders from South America first mixed on a regular basis with their counterparts from elsewhere.[55]

Though the South American milieu would prove resistant to any massive installation of a Reform movement, the World Union nevertheless persisted in its evolving program for the region. A number of reasons have been cited for the WUPJ's aboutface in priorities, among them: South America's closer proximity to the new WUPJ headquarters in New York; the appointment of Spanish-speaking Executive Director William Rosenthal in 1962; the interest of WUPJ trustees Jacob Shankman and David Wice and subsequent appointment of a Latin America Committee; and the fact-finding missions and recruiting trips of Rabbi Isaac Neuman of Panama in 1959, Dr. Ezra Spicehandler of HUC-JIR in 1960, and Rosenthal

55. Kulwin thesis, pp.96-97.

himself in 1962.⁵⁶ While all of these no doubt contributed to the turnaround, the bottom line was that the WUPJ could not consider itself an authentic global union and continue to ignore the vast, untapped Jewish populations to the south.

In 1960, the chairman of the newly-elected Committee for Work in South America, David Wice, announced to the American Board:

It is...hoped to learn from our mistakes in Israel over the past twelve years, where there have been visits and missions, official and unofficial spokesmen, and chaos.[57]

With that declaration of intent the World Union launched, or perhaps more accurately lurched, into its Latin American program.

The WUPJ had been exchanging communications in 1960-1961 with its correspondents Fritz Pinkuss of São Paulo and Fritz Steinthal of Buenos Aires concerning the spread of the Conservative Movement in Brazil⁵⁸ and rabbinical leadership problems in Argentina.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, its first orchestrated attempts to chart a course in the hitherto uncharted territory of South America only began with the fact-finding cum recruitment tour of Ezra Spicehandler in late 1960. Following his detailed and encouraging 1961 report to the Governing Body depicting South America's great

56. Ibid. pp.97-101.

57. AJA, WUPJ, Box 1, File 2, MNAB, June 13, 1960.

58. AJA, WUPJ, Box 2, File 5. In a letter dated Nov. 17, 1961 Pinkuss wrote "The Conservatives are already ahead of us."

59. AJA, WUPJ, Box 7, File 2, MGB, July 12, 1960. Steinthal expressed regret that he had received no help from the WUPJ.

promise,⁶⁰ and a contemporaneous decision by the South American Committee to have no more casual tourists represent the WUPJ in the region, a resolution passed calling for the appointment of a full-time representative in South America and appropriating \$5000 for that purpose. The Executive Committee had actually proposed a similar idea a year earlier. Then estimating a cost of \$15,000, however, it had been forced to abandon the idea when the funds which were expected to be freed up from the subvention to the Paris Institute failed to materialize.

Close on the heels of Spicehandler and equally close on the heels of his own recent appointment as WUPJ Executive Director, William Rosenthal toured South America for two months in 1962 on an investigative trip similar to Spicehandler's. Drawing many of the same conclusions, Rosenthal described the continent as unlimited in potential, if only the WUPJ could furnish funds, rabbis, and youth leaders.⁶¹ Though money was a major impediment, he was determined that somewhere in the region there be a full-time World Union

60. See Kulwin thesis, p.100, wherein he states of Spicehandler, "He made a number of specific suggestions upon his return, notably that the movement continue to search for prospective HUC-JIR students, that it publicize itself via lecturers sent to tour the continent, and that it establish in Buenos Aires a WUPJ office, directed by an HUC-JIR ordinee who would form a Reform congregation and aid other synagogues in youth work and educational programs. Spicehandler also agreed ...that there were many possibilities for the employment of Progressive rabbis throughout South America." Spicehandler, moreover, pointed out that as the Conservatives had already proposed to establish a pre-rabbinic school in Buenos Aires, it might be desirable if this were done under joint auspices with the Reform Movement. See NYO, MGB, Feb. 8, 1961. Elsewhere there is a suggestion that although Marshall Meyer, a JTS graduate working in Argentina, had led Pinkuss to believe there would be such a joint effort, the World Union was later "frozen out." See NYO, MNAB, Jan. 31, 1962.

61. NYO, MEC, Dec. 27, 1962.

office and representative.⁶² Boasting more than half the Jewish population on the continent, Buenos Aires seemed the obvious choice.

With no more groundwork than this, and departing from the formula on which it had insisted in Australia and South Africa decades earlier (i.e. a core of committed individuals would first have to organize itself and then solicit the WUPJ for a suitable leader), the World Union began to initiate actively and tangibly its South America program. A World Union representative to South America was located with the ordination at HUC-JIR in 1963 of Haim Asa. Bulgarian-born Asa, an NFTS scholar with both Spanish language capabilities and a three-year obligation to the WUPJ, moved to Buenos Aires later that year. There he would initially divide his time as World Union emissary and as assistant (youth) rabbi to Rabbi-emeritus Fritz Steinthal's successor, Nathan Blum.

Why the World Union chose to deviate from the above-mentioned formula it had successfully employed in Melbourne and Johannesburg is a matter for speculation. Maybe that formula had simply never been considered as Holy Writ or had merely been forgotten. Perhaps, too, the organization was simply eager and over-anxious to get something underway. Then again, South America may have seemed such utterly virgin soil that to find any individuals who would seek out Progressive Judaism of their own volition would have meant a very

62. AJA, WUPJ, Box 7, File 2, MGB, Apr. 24, 1963.

long wait. The mostly assimilated or Zionist Argentine Jews, after all, were also largely ignorant or suspicious of "Reform" Judaism. If, on the other hand, the World Union felt that it was well within its defined parameters in sending Asa to Steinthal's already established Liberal congregation, then the WUPJ should hardly have considered its new program as "introducing" South Americans to Reform Judaism. It was merely formalizing its own presence there with an accredited representative of its own choosing.

In any event, Asa left Steinthal's congregation in 1964, after only one year, due to what has been described as a personality clash with his senior rabbi Blum.⁶³ Asa made an unauthorized return to New York where the World Union invited him to attend a hastily convened special executive meeting on Latin America to discuss the matter. Asa addressed the meeting with a long litany of complaints about the WUPJ's performance during his year in Argentina. Among his grievances were a lack of communications about and backing for translations and publicity, an information bureau, and an expansion of the Eisendrath International Exchange youth program. Asa further complained of the WUPJ's internal mechanism and alleged that his commission in South America had never been budgeted for in the first place. For its part, the World Union acknowledged that some of the criticisms concerning World Union support had justification and required immediate attention, but also lamented the manner

63. Kulwin thesis, pp.29, 40.

in which they had been aired. Rosenthal recalled the history of Asa's being sent to Argentina, which he termed occasionally unpleasant, and said further that the Executive had made a number of concessions and changes to meet his requests. Headquarters had tried to be cooperative in as many areas as possible. Wice stated that in actuality not much material had been given to Asa for his work, and Rosenthal agreed that more practical aid, especially literature, should have been supplied by the home office. It was agreed that although not enough foresight had been used by the WUPJ in planning the Latin American operation, Asa had to understand that his activities would have to be limited and he would have to be patient for the time being.⁶⁴

The most important outcome of the meeting, however, was a greater clarification than at any other time of the World Union's expectations of Asa and the South American venture. Before leaving for New York, Asa had organized a break-away congregation called Emanuel de Buenos Aires. Opinion within the Executive was divided over how to proceed. Asa wished to return to the U.S. permanently, but some of the Executive voiced concern about the precedent this would set for other NFTS scholarship recipients. Two trustees, Earl Morse and Charles Raizen, gave the idea some support. They argued, respectively, that as Asa was not the right man for the job the WUPJ would have to give the South American question further consideration and start over again,

64. NYO, Minutes of Special Executive Meeting on Latin America, Apr. 28, 1964. Note the parallels between Asa's grievances and Schreiber's, pp.167-68, infra.

and that as Asa's salary could be put to better use elsewhere the entire South American venture should fold indefinitely.⁶⁵ The majority, however, disagreed. Shankman regarded the South American operation as imperative and Rosenthal asserted that new congregational enterprises such as Emanu-El were precisely what the World Union wanted. Asa must go back to Buenos Aires and proceed to nurture the fledgling Emanu-El group. Though Asa wanted to concentrate on building an informational center, he was told that congregations are formed by rabbis working among people and not by handing out pamphlets. Asa should go to the people's homes to talk and hold Sabbath services in their residences. If money were scarce, he would just have to make do as WUPJ rabbis elsewhere* had struggled to make do with what was available. The World Union could only do what it could afford. Though Asa stated that the Reform Movement could not afford patience while the Conservative Movement continued to grow rapidly in Latin America, Raizen informed him that he was asking too much and that it was not good business. Moreover, said Shankman, the WUPJ was not trying to match the expenditures of the World Council (of Synagogues). If Asa were successful congregationally, more funds would be forthcoming, but until then additional financial requests would be denied. He would be expected to return to Buenos Aires and plant a seed for Reform Judaism in South America.⁶⁶ Having thus clarified its goals and

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

expectations, the World Union stood firm and Asa returned to Buenos Aires.

The remainder of the story of the World Union's South American program until the early 1970's can be told concisely. Asa served the World Union two more years, returning stateside in 1966, promptly after fulfilling his minimum three-year obligation. Under his leadership and with considerable moral and financial support from the World Union, Congregación Emanu-El continued to grow. In 1966 the WUPJ assigned Ladino-speaking Rifat Sonsino to replace Asa. Sonsino was a newly-ordained HUC alumnus and another NFTS scholar with a three-year obligation of service to fulfill. He, too, promptly returned to the U.S. (to pursue graduate study) at the expiration of his term of service. At the time of his departure in 1969, Emanu-El had grown to 110 families. In 1967, as David Wice was proclaiming that the time had come for an imaginative, large-scale program in South America,⁶⁷ another NFTS scholar from HUC-JIR, Argentine-born Leon Klenicki, finished his rabbinical studies and returned to Buenos Aires to find no pulpit available to him. For two years the WUPJ employed Klenicki as its only Latin American official whose job was to serve as a full-time World Union representative. Teaching, writing, translating, editing and otherwise publicizing and fostering the growth of Reform Judaism in Latin America for two years.⁶⁸ Klenicki replaced

67. NYO, MGB, Jan. 5, 1967. Wice announced that a private source in Buenos Aires was prepared to make a large donation predicated on an increased WUPJ budget for South America.

68. Kulwin thesis, pp.102-3.

Sonsino upon the latter's departure from the pulpit of Emanu-El. Klenicki left Emanu-El in 1973 whereupon another HUC-JIR graduate, Argentine-born Roberto Graetz replaced him. When Graetz accepted a congregation in Rio de Janeiro in 1979, a graduate of the Conservative Movement's Seminario Rabinico in Buenos Aires assumed the pulpit of Emanu-El. However, it remained affiliated with the World Union.

Although in 1968 the World Union was spending approximately \$20,000 on its South American program, principally to pay the salaries and expenses of Sonsino and Klenicki,⁶⁹ it was not limiting its activities either to financial outlays or to Argentina alone. In Guatemala, during 1964-65, it assigned NFTS scholar Rabbi Leo Abrami to the young Congregación Bet El. Upon Abrami's departure, another WUPJ-assigned NFTS scholar, Mordecai Schreiber, succeeded him for three years (1965-68). For a variety of reasons the undertaking proved a debacle. Schreiber was young and his future intentions were the subject of misunderstandings with the World Union. The World Union, for its part, was accused of failure to provide sufficient back-up support. Moreover, both the country and the small, shrinking Jewish community were wracked with political problems. Beyond Guatemala, the World Union also directed its attention to Brazil. In São Paulo between 1962-70 it helped facilitate the incorporation of a small, amorphous Congregação Shalom into the greater WUPJ network. It also arranged for another

69. NYO, MEC, Jan. 25, 1968 and Nov. 18, 1968.

newly-ordained HUC-JIR rabbi to come to São Paulo as heir apparent to Fritz Pinkuss.⁷⁰

This, then, was the sum total of the World Union's efforts in South America during the New York years: sizable amounts of seed money, extended efforts to provide rabbinical personnel, and a surfeit of moral support and publicity. Yet all that these efforts had to show were an increased awareness of Progressive Judaism on the continent, a small congregation in Buenos Aires, and one smaller still in São Paulo. As between the Reform and Conservative Movements, the latter had clearly taken the lead. They had infused the region with more money, had been more aggressive, and had managed to establish a rabbinical seminary while refusing the WUPJ's offer of cooperation in the project. As between the World Union's recent undertakings in South America and its earlier endeavors elsewhere, clearly the Australian and South African Unions made the more impressive success story. Somehow in those regions the World Union had found the right men at the right time for the right place. South America was an unquestionably different environment with its own distinct problems. And the young men whom the World Union had available to send there were clearly a different breed. Perhaps the World Union bears some responsibility as well. Before embarking on its program it had failed to comprehend thoroughly the territory in which it was to operate: its political problems and instability, its regional

70. Kulwin thesis, pp.103-5.

rivalries, its loyalty to leaders rather than institutions. Moreover, the World Union had, of necessity perhaps, assigned its South American project second priority, behind that of Israel.

Israel. With the establishment of the Israel Committee in the 1950's, the securing of Progressive Judaism in the modern state---by common consent and with a minimum of discussion---came to enjoy top priority in the World Union. If the World Union's Israel program between 1934-1955 had consisted primarily of regular and unquestioning doles to three or four German refugee rabbis and congregations in Jerusalem, Haifa, and Tel Aviv, then a marked change characterized the program of the sixties and seventies. That change entailed a new emphasis on two objectives: the building of thoroughly Progressive institutions and an assault on political obstacles within Israel. The former consisted of the assumption of full responsibility for Elk's Leo Baeck School in Haifa and the gradual establishment throughout the Land of chugim and congregations led by a variety of Israeli and American personnel. The latter resulted in mostly futile and always frustrating confrontations with Israel's political system.

Two phenomena circumscribe the historian's task when detailing the evolution of the World Union's program in Israel. First, with sponsorship of the Leo Baeck School and formation of American-led/American-funded congregations

comprising the lion's share of the Israel program, the many hours of discussion spent on the subject concentrate on legal and fundraising details which often come more within the purview of the lawyer or accountant than that of the historian. Paradoxical it may then be---yet true it is---that the single element of the World Union's agenda which during the New York years consumed the greatest percentage of time, energy, and resources, also becomes the single component requiring the least amount of elaboration. Second, it is no easy thing to delineate that portion of the Israel program for which the WUPJ can claim responsibility (thus bringing it within the scope of this thesis.) In an earlier period the history of Progressive Judaism in Palestine and the history of the World Union in Palestine had been one and the same. With the birth of the Israel Committee, equally embraced as it was by the CCAR, UAHC, HUC-JIR, and WUPJ, the distinctions between specifically World Union projects, those of its American constituents, and the unprodded natural growth of an indigenous Progressive Judaism break down and blur even further. Two examples will illustrate the difficulty. (1) In 1971 the salary of Richard Hirsch, chairman of the Israel Committee but soon to become WUPJ executive director on the eve of the move to Israel, was being (and would continue to be) paid out of the UAHC budget.⁷¹ Does Hirsch then belong to a history of the WUPJ or a history of the UAHC? (2) It would appear that in the earliest stages

71. NYO, MEC, Sept. 9, 1971.

of the plans massively to expand the HUC-JIR Jerusalem campus into a world headquarters for Progressive Judaism, the World Union was excluded from the Jerusalem Building Committee.⁷² Since the WUPJ had not assumed any capital responsibilities for the project and would only have status as a tenant of the completed facilities, the project was considered a joint venture of the UAHC and HUC-JIR alone. Did the WUPJ think it could be an equal partner without sharing an equal responsibility? Had the WUPJ itself simply begun to think of itself as an arm of the UAHC? Or was it simply that so many World Union leaders also wore hats in the UAHC that a blurring of distinctions had become inevitable? All that is certain is that if charges were rife that the WUPJ had become an appanage of the UAHC, then the confusion was certainly understandable. Bearing in mind all of the foregoing, what follows is a concise history of the World Union's Israel program to 1973.

The anchor of the Israel program was, and to some extent remains, the Leo Baeck School in Haifa. The World Union had enjoyed an extended relationship with the institution since its beginnings as the Hillel School in the 1930's under the leadership of Meir (Max) Elk. The WUPJ's relationship entered its second phase in 1959 when the world body began providing the first in an annual series of one hundred scholarships to local students wishing to attend LBS.⁷³ In

72. NYO, MGB, Feb. 1, 1972.

73. NYO, MNAB, May 26, 1959.

that same year the WUPJ assumed a share of the responsibility for a \$75,000 building program which would continue to expand throughout the next decade.⁷⁴ Between 1950-61, with Elk looking toward retirement and seeking to persuade the WUPJ to take the charter for the school, the World Union executive initiated serious discussions on how best to support LBS and how best to obtain the necessary monies.⁷⁵ At Elk's prodding, it began inquiring in earnest about the purchase of founder shares which would officialize the World Union's status at LBS and give it responsibility and authority for running the school.⁷⁶ Also with Elk's encouragement, the WUPJ began searching for a rabbi to serve as his heir-apparent: a man with a dynamic personality, pedagogic talent, and the necessary knowledge of Hebrew and Tanach. Recently ordained at HUC-JIR, Rabbi Robert Samuels had been recommended to them.⁷⁷

The remainder of the story of the Leo Baeck School is one of expanding involvement with and support by the World Union. In 1961, as the WUPJ was still trying to raise a balance of \$55,000 for LBS, Samuels made aliyah and joined both the faculty of LBS and the payroll of the WUPJ.⁷⁸ At the end of 1962, with the assumption of greater responsibil-

74. Ibid.

75. AJA, WUPJ, Box 7, File 2, MGB, July 12, 1960.

76. AJA, WUPJ, Box 8, File 1. See 1960 correspondence between Elk and Hugo Gryn. Also Box 5, File 8, MEC, Oct. 31, 1960.

77. AJA, WUPJ, Box 8, File 1, letter from Elk to Gryn dated Nov. 6, 1961.

78. AJA, WUPJ, Box 5, File 8, MEC, Oct. 25, 1961 and Dec. 7, 1961.

ity for LBS; the World Union found itself trying to raise \$300,000 for further expansion. Fundraising and legalities would continue to burden the WUPJ through 1964 and beyond, as plans were laid to acquire for LBS two junior high schools (one Sephardic, one Ashkenazic) which would feed into a single integrated high school.⁷⁹ Leo Baeck School continued to expand and the Israel Committee continued to raise monies to support its growth. In 1971 the WUPJ Governing Body ratified a decision by the Executive Committee to take title to the LBS and exercise full control of its program and finances.⁸⁰ By way of a housewarming gift, the WUPJ found LBS in a grave financial crisis in mid-1972 and found itself trying once again to raise funds to cover a \$50,000 deficit.⁸¹ Samuels became headmaster upon Elk's retirement in 1974.

While there was some division as to what the Reform Movement needed more in order to establish successfully a permanent and an Israeli presence in Israel---a school to educate a generation of Progressive Jews or stately synagogues--the World Union seems to have decided both were equally necessary. Thus it provided something for everyone. Toward this end the Israel Committee in the late 1950's began to search for an American rabbi who would move to Israel for several years to serve as a WUPJ representative. In the summer of 1960 American-born Rabbi Jerome Unger moved to

79. NYO, MNAB, May 27, 1964.

80. NYO, MGB, July 11, 1971.

81. NYO, MEC, Apr. 25, 1972.

Israel with his Sabra wife to assume the post. He joined an existing Israeli ally of the Progressives, Shalom ben Chorin, who with his son Tovia (later to be ordained in 1964 at HUC-JIR in Cincinnati) was running a Reform Chug in Jerusalem. These two were joined in 1961 by Andre Zaoui (on sabbatical leave from Paris) and Bob Samuels. By 1962 the World Union had three Progressive rabbis in Israel, all of whom were on the WUPJ payroll, and was spending more than \$21,000 per annum (excluding subsidies from the Scheuer Foundation) to maintain this portion of its Israel program.⁸²

The movement continued to expand. In 1962 the Jerusalem Chug acquired a building for its own Har El synagogue through the benefaction of an American donor, Robert Wishnick.⁸³ In 1963 American oleh Rabbi Melvin Zager (Moshe Zemer) replaced Unger in Jerusalem and in 1964 formed a second chug in K'far Shmaryahu near Herzliya.⁸⁴ That same year the WUPJ made a loan to a small group formed in Ramat Gan and also succeeded in raising \$100,000 for its Jerusalem program and synagogue facilities.⁸⁵ Upon returning from Israel, Zaoui averred that Jerusalem could support five additional synagogues and, moreover, that synagogues and a youth movement should have priority over schools.⁸⁶ And, indeed,

82. AJA, WUPJ, Box 5, File 8, MEC, Dec. 7, 1961.

83. CCAR Yearbook, 72, p.135.

84. CCAR Yearbook, 73, p.98.

85. CCAR Yearbook, 74, p.114.

86. NYO, MGB, Jan. 8, 1964.

with World Union backing the synagogue movement flourished. Groups formed in Nazareth and Nahariya in 1965.⁸⁷ Four years later Israel could boast seven Progressive congregations supported by the WUPJ and five full-time rabbis on the payroll.⁸⁸ American money had built the "binyan." Only time would tell whether it would contain the inyan and the minyan. More importantly for many, only time would tell whether the fact of many programmatic structures could serve as persuasive artillery in the political battle which the Progressive Movement would initiate at the historic 1968 International Conference in Jerusalem. In his last year as WUPJ president, Jacob Shankman could only remark, with a certain despair at the existing status quo in Israel, "Our progress continues to be unspectacular but steady."⁸⁹

In 1971 the World Union Governing Body approved a resolution proposing the ultimate transfer of World Union headquarters to Israel.⁹⁰ Bernard Bamberger, then WUPJ president, recalled that the decision had been made because of the availability of land in Jerusalem and the anticipated aliyah of Richard Hirsch.⁹¹ The Executive enunciated other reasons as well. Interestingly, all were pragmatic rather

87. CCAR Yearbook, 75, pp.110-13.

88. Dimensions in Judaism, Fall, 1969, vol.4, p.5.

89. CCAR Yearbook, 80, p.62.

90. NYO, MGB, July 11, 1971.

91. NYO, MEC, Sept. 9, 1971.

than ideological:

- 1) Of the seven rabbis serving the WUPJ outside the U.S., six are located in Israel. Headquarters in Israel would allow for more efficient administration, better financial control, and more effective supervision of staff and program.
- 2) New direction, support, and status would be given to the Progressive Movement in Israel, where the largest number of potential new adherents is to be found.
- 3) Proximity to the non-American constituencies would facilitate better coordination and programming.[92]

Underlying the decision, however, was in fact a certain ideological motive. Bamberger added later that the move also reflected the conviction that an international body should have its center in the place that for all Jews symbolizes the unity and the spiritual striving of the Jewish people.⁹³ If the Geneva biennial in 1972 evidenced a certain joy with the formal announcement of the expected move, then other quarters also heralded the transfer with similar accolades and optimism. Commented one observer:

Now that Reform has taken the giant step, what can Jewry look forward to? Will the Israeli Reform congregations take the lead in pressing for the adoption of civil marriage in Israel? Recently, a bill was introduced in the Knesset calling for civil marriage; it was voted down by all but three members. Obviously, this is not the moment to rock the boat. But the boat is going to have to be rocked sooner or later; will Reform show the way? Will Reform press for official recognition of non-Orthodox forms of Judaism, and non-Orthodox rabbis? We are confident that Reform will assume the initiative on both fronts.[94]

If "mid-life" often embodies a coming to grips with realities, a search for renewed purpose, and an acceptance of

92. NYO, WUPJ Memorandum, June 1, 1971.

93. The Reconstructionist, Mar. 17, 1972, vol.38, pp.4-5.

94. Ibid.

one's proper place in the scheme of things, then the World Union had scaled the last rampart with its move to Jerusalem. With the organization's golden jubilee just around the corner, its new home at the spiritual center of the Jewish people represented an auspicious new stage in its history.

CHAPTER FIVE

OVER THE THRESHOLD OF A NEW HOME

The First Years in Jerusalem
1973 - 1976

With the World Union's move to Jerusalem, the organization entered a new era in its growth. Most of that growth, of course, extends well beyond the scope of this thesis. Yet even after a few short years in its new headquarters a few trends had already become evident. The WUPJ would continue trying to forge a movement in South America. It would give continued attention to work in Brazil and Argentina and even entertain a proposal from Chile's Sephardic rabbi Mauricio Pitchon to affiliate his community with the WUPJ.¹ A similar proposal, from a Dr. Nehoray in Teheran to develop a Progressive movement in Iran, would also be forthcoming though it would end in a similar deferral.² In Europe, the WUPJ's European Board would embark in the summer of 1974 on a three-year development program involving the appointment of a development officer on a part-time basis. Nevertheless, the European community would continue to suffer from internal weakness and neglect by the World Union. Britain would show the only substantial growth while a certain amount of friction, uncooperativeness, and poor communication between Paris and the WUPJ would characterize the Movement in France. As the European Board described its situation in 1974:

1. NYO, MEC, Sept. 11, 1973.

2. Ibid.

It [the European Board] is less homogenous than other Regional Organisations; e.g., its constituents speak half a dozen different languages. It is unevenly divided between relatively large communities in Britain and relatively small ones on the Continent. And it has not been treated by the World Union as a top-priority development area, like Israel and Latin America, so that it has had to rely entirely on its own resources.

In Britain Progressive Judaism is relatively strong....The Leo Baeck College must be regarded as Progressive Judaism's greatest achievement in post-war Europe....On the Continent the situation remains generally bleak, largely because its decimated communities still suffer from the aftermath of the Holocaust....

What of the future? Urgent as it is, the task of spreading Progressive Judaism in Europe is fraught with immense difficulties....It is therefore an illusion to expect any spectacular progress without the kind of expenditure of funds and leadership-manpower which the World Union has invested in Israel and Latin America....[3]

At the 1974 International Conference, the World Union would express a desire to give more attention to Europe and to have a Progressive shaliach for the region.⁴ President David Wice, whose longstanding involvement with and dedication to the World Union has been described as a yeoman's task,⁵ would acknowledge that after 50 years "much work remains in Europe and South America."⁶ In truth, however, this was not where the WUPJ's first priority lay. Its primary emphasis lay in its Israel program and its efforts there would only accelerate with the move to Jerusalem.

The World Union staged two more international conferences during this period: the Eighteenth in London (July 3-8,

3. NYO, Report of the European Board to the 18th International Conference.

4. CCAR Yearbook, 85, p.95.

5. Jane Evans interview.

6. NYO, MGB, July 10, 1975.

1974) and the Nineteenth in Jerusalem (Nov. 16-21, 1976). In its own way, each was landmark and each further evidenced the intention to move ahead full speed in the Israel program.

The 1974 Conference, with a theme apropos of the recent move, "Israel: Land, People, Faith", was clearly the more significant of the two. Certainly it elicited the greater public response with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency's announcement that

the Governing Body of the World Union for Progressive Judaism has unanimously approved the proposal to affiliate with the World Zionist Organisation, and has authorised this Executive to start negotiations to this effect.

A spokesman for the WUPJ's Governing Body...said the decision was the result of years of deliberations.... Leon Dulzin's speech Sunday evening helped to bring about the final decision. "This will give the WUPJ a chance to fight from within on the 'Who is a Jew' issue, as well as for equal treatment for Progressive Judaism," the spokesman told the JTA.[7]

In that speech Dulzin, treasurer of the WZO and the Jewish Agency, had described the excitement and challenge of the growth of the State of Israel, of her exposure to critical examination, and of the importance for Jewish life in Israel of a revival of the spiritual and cultural inspiration inherent in Judaism. He went on to say, inter alia, that

it is scarcely necessary to emphasize that both in the Diaspora and in Israel, Jews of all religious complexions have made their contribution to the Zionist cause and to Israel: Orthodox, Reform, Conservative and secular....

To stress the centrality of Israel in Jewish life today is not, of course, to deny the vitality or importance of other Jewish communities. Every single Jewish community, including Israel, is part of the overriding whole ---the Jewish People....

7. Jewish Telegraphic Agency, July 9, 1974.

What we worry about is the question: What kind of society are we evolving in Israel? What is the quality of life in Israel? How do we generate the force in Israel, and how do we tap it, to maintain Jewish unity and creativity throughout the world? We are now coming back to Herzl's famous admonition, that the return to the homeland must be preceded by our return to Judaism....These are indeed Messianic times....The Land and the People have now miraculously been reunited.[8]

Indeed, the Conference's decision to affiliate with both the WZO and the World Jewish Congress (WJC) had been pending for several years. Originally proposed by Rabbi Arthur Super of Johannesburg and mooted at the 1972 Geneva Conference, the World Union's subsequent decision had been the result of a series of serious discussions initiated in March, 1973. These had, in turn, followed close on the heels of a recommendation by the Israeli Progressive Rabbinate (MARAM) not to petition the Israeli Supreme Court in a test case for permission for Moshe Zemer to perform marriages in Israel.⁹ The following year Super would write to Dick Hirsch:

8. NYO, Norma Levitt, "Highlights" of the 18th International Conference. The quote to which Dulzin probably was referring was from Herzl's address to the First Zionist Congress: "Zionism is a return to the Jewish fold even before it becomes a return to the Jewish land."

9. Letter from Zemer to Hirsch dated Feb. 22, 1973 with attached "Conclusions and Recommendations on the Legal Opinion of Attorney Arie Merinsky." Merinsky's report said, in part, "The prospects of success in the High Court of Justice depend in no small measure on the composition of the Court. At the same time, the Supreme Court decisions in latter years indicate a clear trend to prevent, as far as possible, anomalous cases in the area of marriage and divorce and a striving towards the maximum degree of uniformity. The cumulative effect of the case law and of the above trend represents a hurdle to Rabbi Zemer....As already mentioned, one cannot, having regard to the existing case law, unequivocally state the path which the Court will choose to follow in the Petition of Rabbi Zemer. We incline to the view that it will be dismissed. Yet there certainly is room for making the approach to the registering authority as directed by the Assistant to the Minister of Religious Affairs---even if only to obtain a detailed statement of the reasons for any refusal that may be given. It is our humble opinion that a final appraisal of the prospects of succeeding in a Petition to the High Court of Justice can be made only after receipt and study of such detailed and reasoned

We are starting late, but we must begin now to build positions within the WZO and the Jewish Agency in order to have a solid footing from which we can go on. It may be that the time may come when we may have to seek political muscle inside Israel's internal political structure [in order to build a pluralistic rather than monolithically Orthodox Judaism in Israel]...By affiliating we can demonstrate the Diaspora has a strong and decisive segment, Progressive Jewry, which must be reckoned with.[10]

It would in fact seem that if MARAM's recommendation had provided a catalyst to early discussions and Dulzin's speech had insured the necessary votes for the Governing Body's ratification, then the World Union's recognition that political clout was the best way to combat the political realities which opposed the WUPJ's ambitions in Israel had been the decisive factor in the drive to affiliate with the WZO.

The discussions which preceded the WUPJ's decision to affiliate with the WZO substantiate this view. To judge by the transcript of a late 1972 meeting, the two organizations had a reciprocal interest in each other. WZO and Jewish Agency Chairman Louis Pincus (whose death would later cause some delays in the WUPJ's affiliation¹¹) explained that, for its part, the WZO had a philosophy of trying to

reply." Based on Merinsky's opinion, MARAM voted 5-4 not to submit an Appeal to the High Court of Justice at that time. Zemer's letter explained that "the majority favored that there would be cancelling legislation of the kind which resulted in the Amendment of the Law of Return after the decision in the Shalit case.... furthermore...that the situation would be aggravated in having a negative decision against us, whereas of the present nothing is stated about the rights of Progressive Rabbis in the law books....Furthermore...that more time should be spent in building the Movement rather than in waging a battle for rights." There was also general feeling that the Conservative Movement could not be relied upon to cooperate.

10. NYO, letter from Super to Hirsch dated June 13, 1974.

11. NYO, MGB, Nov. 14, 1973.

to weld Jews together. To that end the WZO had recently undergone a restructuring to establish a basis for including communal leaders as well as political (Zionist) leaders in its ranks. As a result, such non-political organizations as WIZO, Maccabee, and the World Federation of Sephardic Jews had now found a place within the WZO. Pincus went on to say that with the Reform Movement's reputation for sensitivity to social problems, the WUPJ would be a most welcome addition to the WZO; that he felt that in joining forces the two organizations could do so many things faster, to the enormous benefit of the Jewish people as a whole.¹²

For its part, the WUPJ seems to have been more overtly political in its motivations. Alexander Schindler elaborated that World Union affiliation was not necessary to proving Reform's devotion to the principle of Jewish unity; it was, however, to securing a more equitable distribution of the resources at the command of the World Zionist Federation.¹³ Trustees Earl Morris and Jacob Shankman questioned whether affiliation would help or hurt the militant political stand which Reform was being forced to take to achieve equal rights in Israel.¹⁴

The next year or so saw a number of discussions and a great deal of correspondence as to the pro's and con's of WUPJ affiliation. Matters of representation and degree of

12. NYO, Transcript of meeting of WUPJ Executive Committee with Louis Pincus, Oct. 24, 1972, pp.2-5.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

participation in the WZO had to be ironed out. An issue of major concern to the WUPJ was, however, ideological. Problematic clauses in the WZO's platform, the "Jerusalem Program", asserted the centrality of Israel and stated that one of the aims of Zionism is "the ingathering of the Jewish People in its historic homeland...through Aliya and from all countries." What kind of commitments did the latter impose on the Reform Movement? What implications did the former have on the doctrine of chiyuv hagola? After clarification from Dulzin that

the Zionist Movement sees as one of its primary objectives the strengthening of Jewish communities wherever they exist and the intensification of the partnership between the Diaspora and Israel, in assuring Jewish continuity and survival, and in strengthening the Jewish State [15]

and somewhat more evasively that

of course there are some important elements in the Zionist Movement who view Aliyah as obligatory. But the Jerusalem Program restricts itself to underlining the importance of Aliyah from all countries and had traditionally looked upon its encouragement as of the highest priority in our work [16]

the Governing Body approved in principle on July 8, 1974 the WUPJ's affiliation with the WZO. It also approved in principle, though with considerably less discussion, affiliation with the WJC. In February, 1975, World Union representatives Avram Soetendorp of the Netherlands and President David Wice participated in their first Plenary Assembly

15. NYO, letter from Dulzin to Hirsch dated April 23, 1974.

16. Ibid.

of the WZO.¹⁷ Subsequently, as a result of the WUPJ's decision, the Conservative Movement also decided to affiliate.¹⁸

The public response to the World Union's decision was overwhelmingly positive. Never a great friend of the WUPJ or of Progressive Judaism, even London's Jewish Chronicle reported:

The World Union...is a force to be reckoned with in Jewish life....[which] has for years been a sleeping giant on the Jewish international scene. Its comparative isolation was in part due to the aversion of classical Reform to the idea of Jewish nationhood and partly because of the efforts of Orthodoxy to exclude the movement from normative Judaism....

A Jew of a generation ago might have said that these steps were almost harbingers of the Messianic era!^[19]

The following week it went on to add:

Only the most unregenerate fundamentalist will resent this [the affiliation]. As far as I'm concerned, if 1½ million Jews worldwide want to be involved in Jewish life to this extent, the outlook for Jewish continuity is rather less bleak than the mourners would have us believe....

[However] they could make a big mistake if they now increase their militancy in seeking official recognition in Israel. Patently it is unfair if their rabbis are not recognised by the State....

Better by far that they make their presence felt by establishing schools and settlements, encouraging immigration and exerting their pressures discreetly in political circles. Respect will earn its own recognition.^[20]

The two years which passed before the next biennial only serve to reinforce what has already been asserted; namely, that the World Union's move to Jerusalem marks a relentless

17. NYO, MGB, July 10, 1975.

18. NYO, MGB, Nov. 16, 1976.

19. The Jewish Chronicle, July 12, 1974, no. 5490, p.20.

20. Ibid., July 19, 1974, no. 5491, p.22.

acceleration in its Israel program. As the worsening political situation in Argentina---with its omnipresent violence and threats of total chaos---temporarily impeded any new developments in the South American program, the worsening political situation for Progressive Judaism in Israel seemed to require that the Reform Movement throw itself headlong into its undertakings there. Thus it was that the WUPJ began to immerse itself in such matters as the acquisition of political rights in Israel, the establishment of guidelines for personnel practices (especially for rabbis in the World Union's employ in Israel), the formation of new congregations in Israel, and fundraising for the Leo Baeck School and for the proposed expansion/erection of a World Education Center for Progressive Judaism in Jerusalem.²¹

21. Discussion of the proposed World Education Center first appears in the WUPJ's records in November, 1973. HUC-JIR president Alfred Gottschalk verifies that the plans first took shape in 1971. At that time the land adjacent to the present King David Street site of the HUC-JIR Jerusalem Campus became available. Upon learning that the property was to be developed for commercial purposes, Gottschalk approached the late Golda Meir, then Prime Minister, with a proposal to lease the land to HUC-JIR to develop for educational purposes. Thus were the plans hatched for a joint project of the HUC-JIR, UAHC, and WUPJ. Designed by the Israeli architect Moshe Safdie, the grandiose complex of buildings, when complete, will cost more than \$27 million. As originally conceived, the complex would be comprised of three components: (1) a synagogue; (2) an expanded HUC-JIR campus (to include the archaeology school, dormitories, archives, library, offices, and classrooms); and (3) the international headquarters of the WUPJ and the Israel headquarters of the UAHC and CCAR (to include an auditorium, museum, conference-seminar rooms, and offices). According to Israeli statute, the plans would have to be realized in some degree within eight years. The World Education Center has been plagued with problems, mostly fundraising, almost from its inception. In the minutes of the WUPJ Governing Body, Nov. 3, 1975, Richard Hirsch reported that fundraising efforts were not meeting expectations. In February, 1981, UAHC president Alexander Schindler announced his organization's intention to pull out of the project. This has left HUC-JIR with primary responsibility for its campus expansions. An impecunious WUPJ now carries the primary responsibility for the dormitory. The week of Nov. 3-10, 1986, marked the formal opening ceremonies and dedications of the Skirball Center for Biblical and Archaeological Research, the Skirball Museum, the Mildred and Bennett Trupin Family Torah Center, and the Beit Shmuel Youth Center.

If further evidence were needed of the WUPJ's priorities, its financial statement told all. In 1974 the World Union's budget approximated \$175,000 of which \$140,000 derived from American sources. That same year the WUPJ was spending just over \$130,000 on its Israel projects.²²

It thus comes as no great surprise that the Nineteenth International Conference, with its theme of "The World in which the World Union Lives," was Israel-oriented. What does come as something of a surprise was the forward-looking tone of the conference. The Nineteenth Conference marked the fiftieth birthday of the World Union. Golden anniversaries generally have a propensity for looking back and celebrating. Previous jubilee conferences of the WUPJ certainly had been no exception to this rule. Nevertheless, if the fortieth anniversary conference of 1966 had been entitled "Retrospect and Prospect", the 1976 Conference might simply have been called "Prospect". Rather than dwelling on the events of the World Union's first half-century, the organization seemed inclined to consider the half-century yet to come.

The 1976 Conference in fact seems to have been rather low-keyed. An alleged halachic ruling by Sephardi Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef forbidding a Jerusalem printer from print-

Hostel. Construction continues on the S. Zalman and Ayala Abramov Library. Ground has not yet been broken for the synagogue. Gottschalk has described the project as a "cliffhanger" in which the ending is not known from year to year. The project has proven to be a real bane for the World Union. Beset with financial problems in funding its Israel program (its rabbis being woefully underpaid), the World Education Center has only added to its financial worries.

22. NYO, MGB, July 10, 1975.

ing the new Reform Mahzor sparked a minor controversy. CCAR vice-president Joe Glaser denounced the Chief Rabbinate as "oppressive and totalitarian" and said that "this archaic vestige of the Ottoman Empire and the British Mandate" must be abolished.²³ Suppressing a proposed resolution by Glaser calling for abolition of the Chief Rabbinate, the Governing Body instead passed a resolution of vigorous protest. The conference was also distinguished by Washington D.C. rabbi Joshua Haberman's address, "Aliyah: Role of the Diaspora". Beginning with the observation that

this is, I believe, the first time that the World Union, or any national body of Progressive Judaism...has set aside a regular part of its convention program for a discussion of Aliyah, based on the positive premise that Aliyah is in some way a diaspora responsibility[24]

Haberman went on to conclude that

the time has come for diaspora Jewry to take full control of Aliya within each country---to organize it and run it and finance it....In other words, let Aliya be the full responsibility of the diaspora---and absorption the full responsibility of Israel, a division of labor between full and equal partners.[25]

It would appear that the greater emphasis at the Conference was placed on the current and planned projects of the World Union's Israel program. In a relatively few short years the WUPJ had aided in the building up of ten congregations throughout the country.²⁶ Jointly with the HUC-JIR,

23. Jerusalem Post, Nov. 22, 1976, vol.XLVI, p.2. Also MGB, Nov. 21, 1976.

24. NYO, Joshua O. Haberman, "Aliyah: Role of the Diaspora," p.1.

25. Ibid.

26. CCAR Yearbook, 86, p.103. However, the New York Post, Dec. 8, 1976, p.16 reports 13 congregations, perhaps including HUC-Jerusalem, LBS-Haifa, and Yahel.

it had begun to train native Israeli rabbis. Plans and fundraising for a World Education Center were well underway. Some have reported that, indeed, the warmest moments of the 1976 Conference attended the dedication of Israel's first Reform kibbutz, Yahel. Situated in the Arava, it would be joined in 1983 by a sister settlement, Kibbutz Lotan. And perhaps it was only right that the kibbutzim should have been founded in the desert. Quite apart from their greater conspicuousness there (and, hence, greater publicity value), was it not, after all, the Negev in which David ben Gurion had seen Israel's future? And was it not in Israel that the World Union saw a significant share of Progressive Judaism's future? With its eyes and interest focused on the World Education Center in Jerusalem, Kibbutz Yahel in the South, and the Leo Baeck School in the North, the World Union's golden anniversary conference had indeed set its sights on the fifty years which lay ahead.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

On a Golden Anniversary
1926 - 1976

On the eve of its sixth decade, the World Union for Progressive Judaism could not only boast a constituency of some 1½ million Jews in some twenty countries on six continents, but could also lay claim to a half-century of work in furthering the interests of that constituency. And who dared say, but that perhaps another half-century of challenges lay ahead. Indeed, what can one say, what can one conclude, about an organization the work of which is by no means yet concluded? Perhaps all that one may venture to suggest with any measure of certainty is that an equitable and fair evaluation of the World Union's past resists categorical description. One looks back over the organization's first fifty years and gropes for the right word or phrase. "Illustrious"? Although kind, it also tends toward overstatement. "A failure"? This would be not only disparaging, but a patent falsehood as well, in view of the realities.

What, then, are the realities? Has the World Union for Progressive Judaism in truth been the parent body of an international religious movement? Or has it been simply, but nonetheless sadly, a poor cousin to its wealthy American constituents? If we can for a moment imagine that the two represent the extreme ends of a continuum, then it seems to me that the WUPJ falls far closer to the latter than

to the former. This is neither to say, of course, that there is anything ignominious in occupying such a position (for, as we shall see, it may have been ultimately inevitable), nor to suggest that the WUPJ ever really occupied a place very close to the opposite end of the continuum (though it does seem to have once lain rather closer than it now does). The assertion that the World Union possesses something less than the status of a parent body is in no way intended as a criticism of its work or a negation of its worth; demonstrably, but for the WUPJ the international Reform Movement would be far poorer today. Rather, it is only to raise the question of why this should be so. What circumstances have militated against its evolving into something more and how have these shaped its outlook, limited its endeavors, and affected its performance?

As noted in Chapter One of this thesis, Lily Montagu once remarked that the World Union was organized in the spirit of adventure. With only a vague idea of what it should or could become, and only an intuition that something must be done to stem the tide of spiritual impoverishment gradually overtaking the Jewish world, the World Union's founders hoped that their organization might in some way encourage and support the spread of Progressive Judaism. At the heart of their sentiments lay the fundamental conviction that Reform Judaism represented both the religion of the future and the potential panacea to the spiritual

ills besetting the Jewish world.

If Montagu's assessment of the original conception underlying the World Union seems to us charmingly naïve, that probably reflects more of Montagu's thinking than it does that of the many and varied personalities who attended that first international conference in London in 1926. Without question, Montagu represented some of the highest, noblest, and most sublime aspirations of the WUPJ. Her pet phrase, "saving Jews for Judaism," her sermons, and her correspondence all evidence a dedication to both Jewish spiritual salvation and to Liberal Judaism as the best means to achieving that end. Equally without question, other World Union leaders---from Montefiore, Baeck, and Morgenstern to the leaders of a later period---shared her commitment and her vision for the World Union. How else explain the longstanding and not infrequently burdensome involvement with the WUPJ of many of Reform Judaism's twentieth-century luminaries? It is, after all, the convictions born of the spirit which exercise the strongest hold on people, though in asserting as much I admit to imputing my own value system to an "objective" historical judgment.

Surely, though, other agendas also impelled the founding and enhanced the durability of the World Union besides the vision of a World Union as a purely spiritual beacon to the world. Whether at that first international conference or evolving gradually over a period of years, additional expectations attached to the World Union; expectations in-

fluenced more by personal, political, practical, or parochial considerations than by the sublime. Earlier chapters have pointed out instances in which rabbis serving World Union pulpits were accused of doing so as a means of personal advancement (as in the early years of the Australian movement) or as a vehicle for eventual residence in North America (as in the case of certain NFTS scholarship recipients). Similarly, certain wily individuals, however dedicated, seem to have found in the World Union a source of power brokerage and professional aggrandizement. It also appears that the World Union became a politically convenient and appropriate, perhaps even necessary, means of competing on an international level with Orthodox, Conservative, and (in earlier times) Zionist forces such as the Agudat Yisrael, World Council of Synagogues, and Mizrachi. Still others may have viewed an international organization such as the WUPJ as a practical means of pooling forces and resources in an economically efficient and expeditious way, such as would strengthen and spread Reform Judaism worldwide. Such a vision of the WUPJ as a mechanism for creating an economy of scale within the Reform Jewish world, if it ever existed at all, was never in actuality realized. The fact that, for most of its life, the World Union depended on its American constituents for, on the average and by conservative estimate, some seventy-five per cent of its support, mooted any such motive early on. Smaller communities stood to gain considerably from such a "pooling," but the

American movement stood to gain little (though the practical benefits of increased American prestige and influence are not to be gainsaid). The World Union's dependency on and domination by the American community (which we shall also return to later) does, however, raise the specter of a more parochial purpose underpinning the World Union. An international organization of Progressive Jews could provide the means for challenging any popular notions of Reform Judaism as a purely American phenomenon. Though I cannot find more than circumstantial evidence to support this view, it must be considered a distinct probability. Particularly after the demise of the German community, the need to give Reform Judaism a more cosmopolitan dimension became all the more pressing. If Liberalism^{*} were to be regarded both as a force to be reckoned with and as something more than an American sect or, even worse, an aberration within normative Judaism, a World Union for Progressive Judaism was essential.

For the greater part of its history, the World Union has remained essentially true to the seminal idealism and convictions enunciated by Montagu which spawned the organization's birth. Or perhaps one should rather say that it has remained true to them as they were translated into the WUPJ's constitutional preamble. Various chapters have striven to point out that the World Union saw for itself primarily a twofold purpose. It desired to encourage both (a) the development and (b) the spread of Progressive Judaism

and Progressive Jewish thought. A fundamental belief by the leadership has always remained at the heart of these two goals: a belief that Progressive Judaism, if not exactly the religion of the future as was once thought, does have a future; and a further belief that Progressive Judaism (here using the term generically to denote the entire range of modern, non-Orthodox expressions) has a need to fill and a role to play in enriching the Jewish spirit, especially in those places where secularism or Orthodoxy represent the only alternatives.

Toward the goal of encouraging the development of Progressive Judaism, the WUPJ has organized international conferences on a regular basis, every two or three years, except when world political instability has rendered such colloquia impossible. Those conferences have consistently provided a forum for writers, thinkers, and policymakers of international repute within the Jewish (and even non-Jewish) world. Those same conferences have also consistently encouraged resolutions by which Progressive Jews have taken stands on a range of social and political issues. Even as the biennials have promoted from the dais the development of Progressive Jewish thought, they have also stimulated on the floor thought and discussion among conferees and simultaneously garnered moral support for the various smaller communities. And it seems to me that one should neither dismiss, discount, nor underestimate the importance of either of these---discussion or moral support---particularly as

they impinge on the smaller and more isolated communities which comprise the World Union. In the periods between its international conferences, moreover, the WUPJ has further contributed to the development and understanding of Progressive Judaism. Both in its capacity as a non-governmental representative to various United Nations agencies and in its broad program of subsidizing publications and providing texts, religious materials, and books to communities where these are unavailable or unobtainable, its contribution has been inestimable.

Toward the goal of encouraging the spread of Progressive Judaism, the World Union has served an equally invaluable purpose. With assurance it might be said that, but for the World Union, there would have been no Progressive movements in Holland, Australasia, or southern Africa. Though the Liberal presence and presentment in South America is small and not so well networked as might be desired; though the Conservative Movement may have more successfully and aggressively filled the void there; nevertheless, the WUPJ has made some significant contributions on that continent as well. Likewise, the Progressive Movement's progress in Israel has been slow and difficult; it has been spotty in most parts of post-war Europe. Still, it is doubtful whether Progressive Judaism would have reached any of these many and far-flung communities at all had it been left to "grow up like Topsy." In the course of its first fifty years, the World Union has also struggled to provide rab-

binical leadership to its non-American congregations; first, through special arrangements with the Hebrew Union College's Julian Morgenstern prior to World War II; later, with the founding of Paris' International Institute for Jewish Studies and the establishment of NFTS scholarships to HUC-JIR and Leo Baeck College. The WUPJ's efforts to locate, place, or train rabbis, as well as its assistance to both prospective rabbis and young, struggling congregations have been fraught with difficulties to be sure. At various times in its past, some among the World Union executive have questioned whether the return has justified the investment. Whether history shares that calculated view would, of course, depend on the historian; this writer feels it has. A religious organization may wish to conduct its affairs in as businesslike a manner as possible, certainly. Yet it seems to me inconsistent with the nature of such organizations to judge their growth and advance as would an accountant. Religious progress resists a table of debits and credits, investments and returns. That Reform Judaism has, over the decades, become internationalized at all is in large measure owing to the achievements of the World Union.

All things considered, the World Union has, over a relatively short span of years, travelled a remarkable distance toward fulfilling its original twofold purpose of aiding in the development and spread of Progressive Judaism. That it has not always fared so well as one would have hoped seems clear enough. The reasons for this are, however,

not all so evident. Many World Union leaders, most notably Jacob Shankman in the 1960's, have often decried the material impediments to more visible and more permanent success. Lack of money and manpower have usually been the two foremost reasons ascribed to the organization's problems. No doubt this is true. For the first 35 years of its life the WUPJ lived on a pauper's budget. Even after the move to New York, it still lived very close to the subsistence level at times and was occasionally reduced to beggary before it could obtain what funds it needed. Even then it usually depended on the American constituency, especially the largesse of the UAHC and NFTS, for its revenues. Chapters 3 and 4 have already posited reasons for the WUPJ's continual role as mendicant; among them, the WUPJ's low priority and profile among donors, its lack of grassroots support, and its failure to capture the imagination. It should also be recognized, however, that if the American Jewish community (upon which the WUPJ largely depended), was not very internationally-minded, then the World Union's non-American constituents were themselves neither very generous nor very hesitant about letting America carry most of the burden. The move away from Europe seems to have only exacerbated the problem as the WUPJ came increasingly to appear as a division of the UAHC.

Along with the lack of money, the circumstances of history and the lack of manpower have shared center stage as a source of consternation and organizational weakness. The

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WUPJ's formative years were turbulent ones in human history. The Great Depression and the political situation in Europe during the 1930's eclipsed much of the World Union's initial enthusiasm and momentum. The Second World War wreaked havoc and the Holocaust has forever changed the face of world Jewry. Precious time had to be devoted to reconstruction and repair in the 1950's. From a strictly organizational viewpoint (that is, considerations of both money and manpower), the State of Israel has often stood as a worthy competing interest. A paucity of rabbis and, more importantly, of dedicated pioneering rabbis, has more than occasionally hampered the growth of the overseas movement. Even when such rabbis could be found, the political instability of South America generally, and Argentina particularly, often muted the chances for growth. And even when such potentially fertile ground as Argentina or France was stable, the World Union has frequently confronted a mentality of indifference or uncooperativeness which stubbornly resisted any inroads which Progressive Judaism could have hoped to make.

Many of these difficulties have lain beyond the World Union's control. But to paint the organization only as a victim of external forces is to ignore and deflect attention from the internal problems which have often afflicted the World Union. In its early years, the WUPJ often suffered from misunderstandings and failures of communication ranging from the mundane (such as lost or crossed letters) to the

more serious (such as the Glueck-Eisendrath affair of the 1950's). Throughout its life it has often suffered from inexperience (as with some of its publications program) and a failure to give sufficient back-up support (an allegation frequently heard from its overseas rabbis, especially those who served in South America). From the outset it also suffered structural limitations which have circumscribed its function. As earlier stated in the Preface, from the beginning paradox and anomaly were evident in its growth. While assuming for itself originally the task of combatting religious indifference by revitalizing Judaism along progressive lines, it could neither legislate nor govern, much less command. It could not even direct or guide by assembly vote or plenary resolution. Rather, constituent autonomy has always been considered axiomatic. Thus, what at first blush might pass for amateurishness or failure of nerve, should in fact be construed as inherent structural problems.

If a small budget has limited the organization's success, then the WUPJ has also been a prisoner of its own ambitions, guilty of poor management and overextension. The Paris Institute in the 1950's and the ever-expanding Israel Program are two prime examples of biting off more than it could safely chew. If manpower has been a persistent problem in filling overseas pulpits, then problems of leadership within the World Union have posed no less a problem. While most of those involved in the World Union have unquestionably been dedicated and committed Jews, not all have been the

most capable administrators or astute policymakers. Leo Baeck, for all the intellectual stature he may have imparted to the WUPJ, was besieged with problems in Germany for his first two years of office, interred in Theresienstadt for one-third of his term, and too old during his last years to be as effectual as one might have wished. Lily Montagu, for all her kind-heartedness and depth of spirit, was self-admittedly not an executive. Moreover, with the World Union for many years her own pet project, this Victorian matron may have been too caught up personally to make the wisest or most detached decisions on its behalf. Anxious to save Jews for Judaism, in her well-meaning missionary fervor she may have involved the World Union in too many projects too soon. Eisendrath, though president for only a year, was for many years before that an active leader in the WUPJ and a shrewd powerbroker in his own right. A visionary and a builder, he was probably also guilty (whether intentionally or unintentionally I would not presume to say) of making the organization too much an arm of the American movement. Eisendrath does not stand alone in this, however; a host of other American leaders also share a responsibility for not doing more to insist upon and preserve the independent integrity of the organization following the change of headquarters from London to New York.

In all fairness, however, one must hasten to add what has already been hinted at previously. The blurring of distinctions between the World Union and the institutions

of America's Reform Movement was in all likelihood ultimately inevitable. As early as the 1926 Conference, Montagu, Montefiore, and Mattuck recognized the pivotal role of the American constituency if the WUPJ were to succeed. Prior to the war, three major Liberal communities stood as the pillars of the World Union. In influence, if not in numbers, the German and English communities together slightly more than counterbalanced the American. With the destruction of German (Liberal) Jewry, the American community rose from dominance to uncontested leadership within the Reform Jewish world; likewise within the WUPJ. America occupied a central position and England ran a distant second. Even before the war Americans had shown themselves unswervingly opposed to any compromises with or encroachments upon their autonomy. After the war, as Chapter 3 has pointed out, the Americans continued to resist any concessions of authority and on several occasions sought to exercise their muscle. Undeniably, America has been a close, generous, and beneficent friend to the World Union. Many rabbis serving in World Union pulpits have been members of the CCAR. The UAHC and NFTS have been major contributors, along with many private individuals. The UAHC sought to include the WUPJ in its Israel Committee, the progenitor of the World Union's own subsequent Israel program. For many years, until the establishment of the Leo Baeck College, HUC-JIR was the principal institution for educating the leading World Union rabbis. The World Union and the Americans had long cooperated in a

kind of genial partnership of equals. Yet the former was almost utterly dependent on the largesse of the latter. On another level, then, one at times senses that the Americans' attitude was to regard the WUPJ and its support as an unavoidable duty, a kind of organizational equivalent of "the white man's burden." So long as the headquarters, and a fair share of the leadership positions remained in England, the WUPJ could enjoy at least a respectable veneer of independence. With the move to New York, however, the center of power and center of responsibility merged and became concentrated in American hands, with predictable consequences. Hopes for a strong European Board which would prevent the umbrella organization from being swallowed up by its single largest constituent have proven vain. Perhaps the move to Jerusalem will prove something of an antidote and once again return a certain measure of separation between the whole and its parts. In the final analysis, however, one suspects that pursestrings more than geographical independence will prove the determinant factor.

That the complexion of the World Union should have changed over fifty years is to be expected. A normal pattern of growth would engender it. The problems cited in the foregoing pages have insured it. Beginning as a small coterie of leading figures in the Reform community, the organization has emerged as a sizable body which purports to represent an international constituency of 1.3 million Jews. For many years a somewhat unsophisticated operation possessed

of a sense of spiritual mission: the organization has continued, more than just nominally, to retain that sense of mission while becoming far more professionalized in its appearance and corporate in its mechanics. Initially an organization of comparatively limited and unfocused purpose, the WUPJ has gradually and consistently expanded its program to play a more activist, if not always successful, role in Jewish affairs. Once an organization of not inconsiderable intellectual repute, the WUPJ has gradually de-emphasized the academic as it has concentrated on more practical, if not always practicable, attainments. Originally conceived as a partnership of equals, it has inevitably come to be dominated by its American constituents. None of these changes, however, are particularly remarkable. But for the last two, perhaps, they represent the usual attributes of advancement and maturity.

Indeed, the World Union's most radically stunning transformation has been from that of an avowedly apolitical, non-Zionist organization committed to the principle of chiyuv hagola into a member organization of the WZO and WJC, single-mindedly pursuing a religious and political goal of constructing from ground level a Progressive movement in the State of Israel. Much of that transformation has been an uncalculated response to the cataclysmic events of modern Jewish history: an echo of the metamorphosis within Reform Jewry itself. Nevertheless, at least some large part of it has been a deliberate and determined policy reflecting

the priorities and concerns of the World Union's leadership. Beginning in the 1930's as a purely religious endeavor to subsidize congregations for European refugees, the WUPJ's agenda moved in the 1950's to establish its own ostensibly indigenous network of Progressive institutions. From the late 1960's onward, the program has found itself increasingly and irrevocably embroiled in a political struggle for religious pluralism and rabbis' rights. It has also come more perilously close to bankruptcy than ever before and, in moments of despair, one sometimes wonders if good money is not being thrown after bad. The concerns motivating the program seem to be of two sorts. On the one hand there is a religious concern for both (a) the spiritual health of a largely secular Israeli public and (b) the worrisomely disintegrating mutual identification of Israelis and Diaspora Jewry as the religious bond grows increasingly tenuous. On the other hand, there is a purely political concern for the threatened or, more accurately, non-existent principle of religious pluralism and tolerance in Jewish Israel; also an unspoken quest to vindicate and legitimate Progressive Judaism in the Diaspora by establishing a base and a basis for it in what is popularly perceived as world Jewry's spiritual center. These would seem to be the concerns which impel the WUPJ's Israel program. The cost has been staggering, both in terms of resources and in terms of sacrificing the once international scope of the World Union's concerns for an almost exclusively Israel-oriented agenda.

This, then, is the World Union's first fifty years. Is the organization, after all is said and done, merely a poor cousin to the American movement? After some considerable reflection, I would answer a qualified 'yes'; qualified, because this does not mean that it does not also function to some extent, albeit with limitations, as a parent body for the international Reform Movement. But then 'parent body' may be a somewhat misleading term inasmuch as the World Union has never pretended to be either the father or the mother of the Reform Movement. Perhaps 'umbrella' or 'roof' organization is the more accurate term. And if the World Union has never fully succeeded in displacing its American constituent as the central organ, principal mouthpiece, and Chief Executive and Arbiter of Reform Judaism, possibly that was never its goal. Quite possibly it never intended to be more than a fraternity of communities bound together by certain mutual aims and a common need to share: a "United Nations" of geographically and ideologically discrete and independent units. It was former president David Wice, whom we have already quoted in an earlier chapter, who first offered the analogy in 1953:

The State of Pennsylvania...has more natural resources, a larger annual budget and a larger population than thirty nations in the United Nations combined, yet the United States saw fit to support in great measure and to work through the United Nations in the world picture, because the United States was a country, whereas the United Nations was the instrument created for common action...[T]hat was the way they in America must look at the World Union; they must see the whole Liberal movement as a world interpretation of Judaism. Only as they had an organisation outside the United States, as they had the United Nations, could they

work together towards a world movement.[1]

One hopes that the World Union for Progressive Judaism will continue in its efforts to bind together the world's Reform Jewish communities into a bona fide world movement. To do so, however, the WUPJ will have to work towards three goals. It will have to achieve some measure of financial security and fiscal responsibility if it is to avert future disaster and enjoy an independence commensurate with its geographical autonomy. Further, it will have to strive once again to internationalize its agenda if it is ever to recapture the character which once distinguished it from a host of other Jewish organizations and provided its raison d'etre. Finally, it will have to continue to remain true to the idealism of its youth even as it reaps the benefits of a more professionalized middle-age. Historians are neither oracles nor soothsayers. Thus it would be both foolhardy to attempt a prediction of the years ahead and all the more unfair to do so from the vantage point of sixty years rather than the fifty catalogued in this thesis. Vainly one would have to clutch about for an appropriate term to characterize the World Union's future. "Promising" would seem a trifle optimistic in view of past vicissitudes; "ambitious", while accurate, only describes the World Union's dreams. Still, it has been said that dreams are an index to a person's (and perhaps even an organization's) greatness. And, as the poet Heine once remarked, "Sir, do not mock our dreams."

1. WUPJ 1953 CR, pp.26-27.

APPENDIX A

Presidents and Executive Directors of the World Union

PRESIDENTS

1926-1938	Dr. Claude G. Montefiore
1938-1953	Rabbi Dr. Leo Baeck
1954-1959	The Hon. Lily H. Montagu
1959-1964	Rabbi Dr. Solomon B. Freehof
1964-1970	Rabbi Dr. Jacob K. Shankman
1970-1972	Rabbi Dr. Bernard J. Bamberger
1972-1973	Rabbi Dr. Maurice N. Eisendrath
1973-1980	Rabbi Dr. David H. Wice
1980-	Mr. Gerard Daniel

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

1960-1962	Rabbi Hugo Gryn
1962-1972	Rabbi William A. Rosenthal
1972-	Rabbi Dr. Richard G. Hirsch

APPENDIX B

Vice-Presidents of the World Union

1930-1949	Mrs. J. Walter Freiberg (USA)
1930-1934	Rabbi David Lefkowitz (USA)
1930-1937	Mr. Ludwig Vogelstein (USA)
1930-1949	Rabbi Caesar Seligman (Germany)
1930-1951	Mr. Heinrich Stern (Germany)
1930-1934	Rabbi Israel Mattuck (England)
1934-1937	Rabbi S.H. Goldenson (USA)
1937-1939	Rabbi Max Currick (USA)
1937-1938	Mr. A. Leo Weil (USA)
1937-1961	Mr. B.L.Q. Henriques (England)
1946-1955	Rabbi Julian Morgenstern (USA)
1946-1949	Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver (USA)
1949-1973	Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath (USA)
1949-1951	Rabbi A.J. Marcus (USA)
1951-1953	Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein (USA)
1951-1959	Rabbi M.C. Weiler (South Africa)
1951-1953	Mr. David Spink (Australia)
1953-1955	Rabbi Joseph Fink (USA)
1953-1955	Mr. J.E. Nathan (USA)
1955-1957	Rabbi Barnett Brickner (USA)
1955-1957	Mr. J. Taft (Australia)
1957-1957	Rabbi Israel Bettan (USA)
1957-1959	Rabbi Nelson Glueck (USA)
1957-1968	Mr. Cecil A. Luber (Australia)
1957-1961	Rabbi Bernard Bamberger (USA)
1959-1964	Mr. J. Heilbron (South Africa)
1959-1972	Rabbi W. Van der Zyl (England)
1961-1964	Rabbi Albert Minda (USA)
1961-1972	Rabbi Leslie I. Edgar (England)
1964-1968	Mr. Isadore Greenberg (South Africa)

1964-1966 Rabbi Leon I. Feuer (USA)
1966-1968 Rabbi Jacob J. Weinstein (USA)
1968-1976 Rabbi Hermann Sanger (Australia)
1968-1969 Rabbi Levi A. Olan (USA)
1968-1972 Rabbi Meir Elk (Israel)
1968-1976 Mr. Victor Brasch (South Africa)
1969-1972 Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn (USA)
1972- Rabbi Alfred Gottschalk (USA)
1972-1974 Rabbi David Polish (USA)
1973-1974 Judge Emil N. Baar (USA)
1972- Rabbi Albert H. Friedlander (England)
1972- Dr. Maurits Coudeket (Netherlands)
1972-1980 Rabbi Ezra Spicehandler (Israel)
1974-1976 Rabbi Robert I. Kahn (USA)
1974- Rabbi Alexander Schindler (USA)
1976- Rabbi John Levi (Australia)
1976- Mr. Jack Silverman (South Africa)
1980- Mr. David Riegler (Israel)
1983-1986 Rabbi Gunther Plaut (Canada)
1986- Rabbi Jack Stern (USA)
1986- Mrs. Ruth Daniel (USA)
1986- Mr. Ricardo Barbouth (Argentina)

Honorary Life Vice-Presidents

Judge Emil N. Baar (USA)
Rabbi Leslie I. Edgar (England)
M. Marcel Greilshammer (France)
Rabbi Werner Van der Zyl (Majorca)
Rabbi Moses Cyrus Weiler (Israel)
Mrs. Norma U. Levitt (USA)
Rabbi David H. Wice (USA)

APPENDIX C

World Union International Conferences

NO.	YEAR	PLACE	THEME
	July 10-12, 1926	London	Organizing Conference
1	Aug. 18-20, 1928	Berlin	The Message of Liberal Judaism
2	July 19-22, 1930	London	Progressive Judaism and Some Aspects of Modern Thought
3	July 6-10, 1934	London	Judaism and Human Destiny
4	July 2-6, 1937	Amsterdam	Organised Religion and Modern Life
5	July 25-30, 1946	London	The Task of Progressive Judaism in the Post-War World
6	July 14-19, 1949	London	The Mission of Judaism--- Its Present Day Application
7	July 12-18, 1951	London	The Present Contribution of Judaism to Civilization
8	July 2-9, 1953	London	Our Religious Approach to World Problems
9	June 30-July 6, 1955	Paris	Progressive Judaism: Its Teachings and Immediate Tasks
10	July 4-10, 1957	Amsterdam	Religious Experience in Judaism
11	July 9-15, 1959	London	Religious Authority in Progressive Judaism
12	July 6-13, 1961	London	Aspects of Progressive Judaism and Human Responsibility
13	July 8-14, 1964	Paris	Bridges
14	July 4-11, 1966	London	Retrospect and Prospect
15	July 3-6, 1968	Jerusalem	Israel, the Diaspora, and Progressive Judaism
16	July 1-6, 1970	Amsterdam	Crisis in Belief

17	June 28-July 6, 1972	Geneva	Beyond Survival---Hope
18	July 3-8, 1974	London	Israel: Land, People, Faith
19	November 16-21, 1976	Jerusalem	The World in which the World Union Lives
20	July 6-10, 1978	Amsterdam	"I Still Believe"--- The Mission of Progressive Judaism in a post-Holocaust Age
21	February 21-26, 1980	Jerusalem	"The Summit"
22	June 27-July 6, 1983	Jerusalem	Diversity Within Unity: World Progressive Judaism
23	April 8-13, 1986	Toronto	Reform Judaism and Established Orthodoxy: The Realities and Challenges of Coexistence

APPENDIX D

Comparative Tables of WUPJ Affiliates

TABLE 1: 1966

(From 1966 WUPJ Directory of Progressive Jewish Congregations)

Argentina

Congregación Emanu-El (Buenos Aires)

*Asociación Religiosa y Cultural Israelita Lamroth Hakol (Florida)

Australia

Australia and New Zealand Union for Progressive Judaism

South Australian Liberal Congregation (Adelaide)

Temple Beth Israel (Melbourne)

Temple Beth Israel (Melbourne, Eastern Suburbs Congregation)

Temple Beth Israel (Melbourne, Southern Liberal Congregation)

*Beumaris & District Temple Group (Melbourne)

Temple Emanuel (Sydney)

North Shore Temple Emanuel (Sydney)

Temple David (Perth)

Belgium

Union Israélite Libérale de Belgique (Brussels)

Brazil

Congregação Israelita Paulista (São Paulo)

Canada

Canadian Council of the UAHC

Cuba

*Temple Beth Israel (Havana, inactive)

Curacao

United Netherlands Portuguese Congregation (Willemstad)

France

Union Libérale Israélite (Montgeront-Paris)

*Institut Internationale d'Etudes Hébraïques (Paris)

Union Libérale Israélite (Rue Copernic-Paris)

*DROPPED SOMETIME BETWEEN 1966-1986

Germany

Jüdische Gemeinde zu Berlin (Berlin)

Great Britain

European Board of the WUPJ

World Union Youth Section (WUPJYS)

Conference of Progressive Rabbis & Ministers in Europe

Reform Synagogues of Great Britain (RSGB) 24 congregations

Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues (ULPS) 20 congregations

Leo Baeck College

Guatemala

*Congregación Bet El (Guatemala City)

India

*Jewish Religious Union (Bombay)

Ireland

Dublin Progressive Synagogue (ULPS)

Israel

Leo Baeck Secondary School (Haifa)

Haifa Progressive Congregation (Haifa)

Synagogue Har-El (Jerusalem)

Hebrew Union College (Jerusalem)

*Kehilat Hasharon (Kfar Shmaryahu)

Circle for Progressive Judaism (Nahariya)

Herzl Synagogue (Nazareth)

Kehilat Emet v'Anava (Ramat Gan)

Tel Aviv Progressive Congregation (Tel Aviv)

Italy

*Unione Italian per l'Ebraismo Progressivo (Florence)

Japan

*Rabbi Hiroshi Okamoto (Tokyo)

Mexico

*Reform Rabbi Allen Secher (Mexico City)

Netherlands

Verbond van Liberaal-Religieuze Joden in Nederland
Liberaal Joodse Gemeente (Amsterdam)

Netherlands (cont'd.)

Liberaal Joodse Gemeente (Arnhem)
Liberaal Joodse Gemeente (The Hague)

New Zealand

Temple Shalom (Auckland)
Temple Sinai (Wellington)

Panama

*Kol Shearith Israel (Panama City)

Rhodesia

*Bulawayo Progressive Jewish Congregation (Bulawayo)
Salisbury Progressive Jewish Congregation (Salisbury)

South Africa

Southern African Union for Progressive Judaism
Temple Shalom (Bloemfontein)
Temple Israel (Cape Town)
Temple Israel (Cape Town, Wyneberg congregation)
Temple David (Durban)
Temple Hillel (East London)
*Temple Sinai (Germiston)
Temple Israel (Port Elizabeth)
Temple Menorah (Pretoria)
Temple Emeth (Springs)
*Temple Bet El (Johannesburg)
Temple Emanuel (Johannesburg)
Temple Israel (Johannesburg)
Temple Shalom (Johannesburg)

Sweden

Liberal Section, Mosaiska Forsamlingen

Switzerland

English Speaking Community---High Holy Days only (Geneva)
*Rabbi Dr. Lothar Rothschild (St. Gallen)

United States

American Board of the WUPJ
Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR)
Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC)
National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (NFTS)
National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods (NFTB)
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR)

TABLE 2: 1986

(From 1985/86 WUPJ Directories of Progressive Jewish Congregations)

Argentina

Congregación Emanu-El (Buenos Aires)

Australia

Australia and New Zealand Union for Progressive Judaism

Temple Shalom (Adelaide)

*Australian Capital Territory Jewish Community (Canberra)

Temple Beth Israel (Melbourne)

Leo Baeck Centre (Melbourne, formerly Eastern Suburbs Congregation)

Bentleigh Progressive Synagogue (Melbourne, formerly Southern Liberal Congregation)

Temple Emanuel (Sydney)

North Shore Temple Emanuel (Sydney)

*Temple Shalom (Brisbane)

*Temple Shalom (Gold Coast)

Belgium

Communaute Israélite Libérale de Belgique (Brussels)

*Progressief Joodse Gemeenschap (Antwerp)

Brazil

*De Associação Religiosa Israelita (Rio de Janeiro)

Congregação Israelita Paulista (São Paulo)

*Congregação Shalom (São Paulo)

*Sociedade Israelita Brasileira de Cultura e Beneficência (Porto Alegre)

Canada

Canadian Council of the UAHC

Chile

*Circulo Israelita (Santiago)

Curacao

United Congregation Mikve Israel-Emanuel (Willemstad)

France

*Communaute Libérale à Lyon (Lyon)

*Union Libérale Israélite de France (Nice)

*Mouvement Juif Libérale de France (Paris)

Union Libérale Israélite de France (Rue Copernic-Paris)

Union Libérale Israélite de France (Vigneaux)

*ADDED SINCE 1966

Germany

- *Oberrat der Israeliten Badens West Germany (Karlsruhe)
- Jüdische Gemeinde Berlin (Berlin)

Great Britain

European Board of the WUPJ
World Union Youth Section (WUPJYS)
Conference of Progressive Rabbis & Ministers in Europe
Reform Synagogues of Great Britain (RSGB) 37 congregations
Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues (ULPS) 28 congregations
Leo Baeck College

Ireland

Dublin Progressive Synagogue (ULPS)

Israel

- *Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism
- *Beersheva Congregation (Beersheva)
Congregation Or Chadash (Haifa)
Har-El Synagogue (Jerusalem)
Hebrew Union College (Jerusalem)
- *Kiryat Ono Congregation (Kiryat Ono)
Emet v'Shalom (Nahariya)
Herzl Congregation (Nazareth)
- *Netanya Congregation (Netanya)
- *Ramat Aviv Congregation (Ramat Aviv)
Emet v'Anava (Ramat Gan)
Kedem Synagogue (Tel Aviv)
- *Yachad Congregation (Holon)
Ohel Avraham Synagogue (Leo Baeck Centre, Haifa)
- *Kiryat Tivon (Haifa)
- *Ahavat Yisrael Congregation (Rishon le Zion)
- *Emet v'Anana Congregation (Ramat Gan)
- *Ramat Hasharon Congregation (Ramat Hasharon)
- *Kol Haneshama Congregation (Jerusalem)

- *Mitzpe Har Halutz (Upper Galilee)
- *Kibbutz Yahel
- *Kibbutz Lotan

Netherlands

Verbond van Liberaal-Religieuze Joden in Nederland
Liberaal Joodse Gemeente (Amsterdam)
Liberaal Joodse Gemeente (Arnhem)
Liberaal Joodse Gemeente (The Hague)
*Liberaal Joodse Gemeente (Rotterdam)

New Zealand

Temple Shalom (Auckland)

Temple Sinai (Wellington)

Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia)

Salisbury Progressive Jewish Congregation (Harare)

South Africa

Southern African Union for Progressive Judaism

Temple Shalom (Bloemfontein)

Temple Israel (Cape Town)

Temple Israel (Cape Town, Wynberg congregation)

Temple David (Durban)

Temple Hillel (East London)

*Temple David (Klerksdorp)

Temple Israel (Port Elizabeth)

Temple Menorah (Pretoria)

Temple Emeth (Springs)

*Temple David (Johannesburg)

Temple Emanuel (Johannesburg)

Temple Israel (Johannesburg)

Temple Shalom (Johannesburg)

Sweden

Liberal Section, Judiska Forsamlingen

Switzerland

*Israelitische Gemeinde Bern (Bern)

Groupe Israélite Liberal-Geneva (Geneva)

*Jüdische Liberale Gemeinde Or Chadash (Zurich)

United States

North American Board of the WUPJ

Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR)

Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC)

National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (NFTS)

National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods (NFTB)

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR)

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