

GAZING TOWARD JERUSALEM

A Critical Analysis of the
Attitudes of the Cincinnati Jewish Community
In Relation to Israel and Zionism
1942-1990

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DIGEST

Two themes emerge time and again in analyzing the history of Zionism in Cincinnati in the period 1942 to 1990. First, the dilemma of the particularism of the Zionists versus the universalism of the assimilationists. Second, the dilemma of whether Judaism is primarily a peoplehood or a religion.

I have conducted my research of this topic through an in depth study of the newspapers Every Friday and The American Israelite. In addition, I interviewed 26 Cincinnati Jewish personages who represent a variety of segments of the community over the 48 year span of the thesis. I also referred to a number of secondary sources for background information.

This thesis draws a picture of Zionist, anti-Zionist, and non-Zionist activity in Cincinnati in the period 1942 to 1990. It focuses on developments at the Hebrew Union College, the congregations, and the general Jewish community.

The first three chapters are organized chronologically. Chapter One sets the stage with background information from the period before 1942. Chapter Two covers the period from 1942 to the end of World War II. This period, prior to the full revelation of the Holocaust, includes the strongest ideological debate between Zionists and anti-Zionists. Chapter Three takes us from 1945 to the establishment of the State of Israel. Anti-Zionists begin to mute their criticism and become non-Zionists as the need for a refuge for Holocaust survivors becomes unarguable.

The last two chapters are arranged thematically. Chapter Four begins in 1948 and ends in 1966. This is a period in which the newly independent State of Israel receives widespread but lukewarm community support. Jews are not entirely secure in their American identity and are concerned with the issue of dual loyalty in this era of McCarthyism. The reality of the State of Israel brings new debates about the future course of Zionism and the desirability of *aliyah*.

Chapter Five covers the period from the 1967 Six-Day War to 1990. This is a period of relative Jewish security in America and pride in identification with Israel. Jews begin having strong reactions to both positive and negative actions of the Israeli government. Support for Israel is manifest through funds raised in the Jewish community and attendance at communal celebrations. There are very few risks associated with Zionism and pro-Israel activities in this most recent period.

CHAPTER ONE

Zionism in Cincinnati Prior to 1942

The Zionist Agenda

In 1897 Theodore Herzl convened the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland. During that assembly a total of 204 representatives from 15 different countries debated the future course of political Zionism.¹ Herzl began his opening address by describing the challenge facing the delegates:

There is much to be accomplished within the space of three days. We want to lay the foundations of the edifice which is one day to house the Jewish people.... We shall hear reports of the Jewish situation in the various countries.... With few exceptions the situation is not cheering. Were it otherwise we should probably not have convened....²

Herzl continued the address by promoting his agenda that Zionists must strive to secure political pledges from the colonial powers:

Zionism cannot gain its ends otherwise than through an unequivocal understanding with the political units involved.... Consequently the only reasonable course of action which our movement can pursue is to work for publicly legalized guarantees [of colonization of Palestine].³

¹Howard M. Sachar, A History Of Israel--From The Rise Of Zionism To Our Time (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), p. 44.

²Arthur Hertzberg (ed.), The Zionist Idea (New York: Atheneum, 1959), p. 226.

³Ibid., p. 228.

He concludes by presenting his description of Zionism as an ethically just and valid homecoming to Zion, not as a religious return to the Holy Land:

Let everyone find out what Zionism really is, Zionism, which was rumored to be a sort of millennial marvel--that it is a moral, lawful, humanitarian movement, directed toward the long-yearned-for goal of our people.⁴

That same year of 1897 saw the founding of the first Zionist organization in Cincinnati.⁵ The Cincinnati Jewish reaction to Zionism over the following 45 years is best assessed by dividing the community into three distinct sections: the Reform Temples, the Hebrew Union College, and the Conservative-Orthodox community.

Zionism In The Traditional Communities

The attitude toward Zionism in the Conservative and Orthodox segments of the Cincinnati Jewish Community is simplest to assess, since within it there was a relative unanimity of opinion. Leading the Conservative community from 1918 to 1949 was Rabbi Louis Feinberg of Adath Israel Synagogue, and leading the Orthodox community from 1931 to 1968 was Rabbi Eliezer Silver. Both men were committed Zionists.

The traditionalists were mostly Jews of East European origin who had recently immigrated to the United States of America. The better educated of these became the

⁴Ibid., p. 230.

⁵Jonathan D. Sarna and Nancy H. Klein, The Jews Of Cincinnati (Cincinnati: Center for the Study of the American Jewish Experience, 1989), p. 111.

early Zionist leaders in Cincinnati. Most of their Zionist efforts were concentrated on raising money to support the Jewish National Fund.⁶

One person who was especially active in Zionist activities was Dr. M.S. Schulzinger. He recalls that in the period before 1947, Zionist activity was centered around the work of the Poale Zion (Labor Zionists), a vibrant organization with fifty or so active young men and women. There was also Mizrahi, the Orthodox religious Zionists, with about a dozen members, and the General Zionists, who had perhaps half of that. Poale Zion was definitely the place to be. It even had a variety of organizations within it, some of which were "very radical in socialism, and some of which were just interested in Zionism. However, [each of these organizations was comprised] entirely of Eastern Europeans, such as Joseph Gootman and Ben Doll."⁷

Sham Eden, a native of Cincinnati, lifelong Zionist activist (along with her husband Nachum), and daughter of Joseph Gootman, remembers how her family and friends were orthodox and were always "lovers of Zion," whose commitment to Zionism went far beyond the realm of talking and fundraising.

The Balfour Declaration [pledging British support for the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine] came out in 1917. In 1920 my grandparents, who were in their fifties, decided they would go live in Eretz Yisrael. In those years people didn't go to Eretz Yisrael to live, they went there to die. But my grandfather said "I'm 50 and I'm strong. I'm a farmer. I am going to work there." The Schulzingers also went, and then my grandfather's sister. So there was a small *aliyah* at that time from Cincinnati.⁸

⁶Sarna and Klein, p. 111.

⁷Interview with Dr. M.S. Schulzinger, December 28, 1992.

⁸Interview with Sham and Nachum Eden, December 21, 1992.

The objectives of the Zionists in the traditional Jewish community were much broader than one might imagine. They did not just seek the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, but they also sought to transform the entire experience of Jewish identity and Jewish education in Cincinnati.

In 1935 the Labor Zionists were active in forming the Hebrew Schools here and in seeing that the children got a Jewish education. That same year Dr. Irv Dunskey became the first parent to send his child to study in Eretz Yisrael because something was lacking here. His child, who was in high school, went to a modern Yeshivah in Jerusalem for four years. He returned speaking fluent Hebrew, which was unusual at that time.⁹

Even in those days, before the advent of Israeli statehood, the community Talmud Torah went so far as to sponsor one scholarship annually for a year of high school study in Palestine. Sham Eden recalls winning this award and studying there from 1939-40, when the Second World War broke out.¹⁰

Another member of the Orthodox community is Phylis Karp. She recalls that when she was growing up all of her friends were Zionists, and that Zionism was a consuming passion in her community even for the young children:

In 1926 I was 8 and founded a group we called the Hadassah Seedlings. Although it did not become national, it was active. It's purpose was to promote the concept of Medinat Yisrael (Israeli statehood), which truthfully in my lifetime I never thought I'd see happen. [The Hadassah Seedlings] would stand on the street corners in the cohesive Jewish community of Avondale and give out Blue Boxes. In 1929, my sisters and I joined the newly formed Cincinnati chapter of the Zionist youth group Young Judea.¹¹

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Interview with Phylis Karp, December 30, 1992.

In the 1930's, one of the key activities with which Orthodox Zionists involved themselves was the effort to stand up to German aggression and anti-Semitism. Ms. Karp recalls:

In 1933 we were already marching in front of Cincinnati stores that sold German products, to [convince shoppers to] boycott Germany. By 1935 we knew of Hitler and were convinced [about what was really going on], but people made fun of us called us communists. In fact, I was investigated at U.C. in 1935 for preaching Zionism.¹²

Ms. Karp observes that although her companions actively supported the boycott of Germany, most Cincinnatians and Reform Jews resisted it.¹³

The Reform Jewish Community

During this period, the Reform Jewish community was split between those who supported Zionism and those who opposed it. The supporters were largely those who identified with Isaac M. Wise Temple, which had been formed in 1931 as a merger of Plum Street (Bene Yeshurun) and Reading Road Temples.¹⁴ The two young rabbis of Wise Temple, Rabbi Heller and Rabbi Wohl, were both staunchly Zionist. Dr. Schulzinger worked with both of these men, and reflects on their positions on Zionism in this early period:

The only rabbi in the [Reform] community who was openly Zionist, more nationally than locally, was Rabbi James Heller at Wise Temple. That was a time when there were few Zionists, and Zionism had to struggle against the accepted philosophy of Americanization. Becoming a Zionist was seen by

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Sarna and Klein, p. 128-29.

many as antiquated and antediluvian since the ideal [of that period] was that immigrants should devote themselves to becoming good Americans.¹⁵

Rabbi Heller, the Senior Rabbi at Wise Temple, was often outspoken on Zionist issues. Rabbi Wohl, the Associate Rabbi, took a somewhat more cautious approach.

Rabbi Wohl was an ardent Zionist, Hebraist, and Labor Zionist. But he did not talk about Zionism to his congregation. I don't know whether he was told not to or simply found it prudent not to. He was not officially Zionist. Only Heller took that public position.¹⁶

Wise Temple was home to the Reform Jews who were supporters of Zionism. At the other end of the spectrum stood Rockdale Temple. Dr. David Philipson was a member of the first ordination class of the Hebrew Union College, and served as rabbi of Rockdale Temple from 1888 to 1938. In those fifty years (plus eleven more years as rabbi-emeritus), Dr. Philipson both shaped and reflected his congregation's attitude toward Zionism which contended that Judaism was a religion and not a nationality.¹⁷

Louise Reichert, widow of Rabbi Victor Reichert (who was initially Dr. Philipson's assistant, then his associate, and ultimately his successor), remembers her early years with the congregation and its steadfastly universalist stance:

Rabbi Philipson was staunchly anti-Zionist, and he would preach against Zionism from the pulpit. The congregants felt we were so deeply ingrained in the United States since our families had all lived here for quite some time.

¹⁵Schulzinger.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Sarna and Klein, p. 116.

This was our home. We didn't want another home. We couldn't imagine two homelands.¹⁸

Sham Eden remembers that Rabbi Philipson had a very strong personality and was zealously anti-Zionist. Her father told her that after the end of the First World War, many prominent Jews were invited to testify before Congress on the issue of Palestine. The Arabs sat on one side of the chamber and the Jews on the other. Ms. Eden rhetorically exclaims, "Can you believe it but Rabbi Philipson sat on the side with all the Arabs!"¹⁹

Ms. Eden remembers that the Reform Jews were the wealthy Jews in Cincinnati. They were the spokespeople for the Jewish community, and as such they set the tone of the debate over Zionism. "When I was in school," Ms. Eden relates, "the Reform Jews looked down on us, and if they heard we were Zionists they didn't want anything to do with us. They thought Zionists were not good Americans, that America was your home, and that religion and nationality was separate."²⁰

On the Reform side of the ledger, Rockdale Temple and Isaac M. Wise Temple represented the two opposite poles in the Reform Jewish dispute over Zionism. In the traditionalist community, there was widespread and unchallenged support for Zionism. But in Cincinnati, there was an unusual third base of power and influence to consider in this discussion: Hebrew Union College, the seminary for Reform rabbis.

¹⁸Interview with Louise Reichert, December 29, 1992.

¹⁹Eden.

²⁰Ibid.

The Hebrew Union College

According to Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus, noted historian and longtime H.U.C. faculty member, in the early part of the twentieth century the Hebrew Union College "under [the leadership of Kaufmann] Kohler was bitterly, strongly anti-Zionist."²¹ The vehemence of this anti-Zionism may partially be due to personalities and internal College politics. It was not simply the resultant outgrowth of universalist ideology. Dr. Marcus recalls that in the early 1900's a small group of rabbis tried to unseat Dr. Kohler. These dissidents were Zionists, but Zionism was only a peripheral issue in the dispute. When Kohler went to the College's Board of Trustees for support, he managed to turn this conflict into a Zionist issue. In part it was a battle over Zionism, but in reality it was a conflict over control. Kohler won, and he gradually pushed these people out.²²

Having emerged victorious from that controversy, Kohler imposed his anti-Zionist ideology on both faculty and students. Dr. Marcus remembers an incident that occurred between a young James Heller, then a rabbinic student, and Dr. Kohler. Heller wanted to preach a Zionist political sermon in the Hebrew Union College chapel, but Kohler wouldn't let him. The conflict escalated and the matter was brought to the board. To diffuse the situation and break the impasse, Rabbi Max Heller of New Orleans, father of James Heller, negotiated a compromise. Kohler

²¹Interview with Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus, January 4, 1993.

²²Ibid.

partially relented and agreed that James could preach on the subject of Zionism as long as it was in the form of an exclusively religious and not a political sermon.²³

Restrictions on Zionist activity at the Hebrew Union College were placed on the faculty as well. In 1911, to escape these constraints, Dr. David Neumark founded a Hebrew language club called the Ivriah.²⁴ It was disbanded during World War I, but Dr. Schulzinger later helped Dr. Neumark to re-found the organization which persists to this day. He recalls that most of the people who were involved in the group were Zionists. It consisted of Hebraists, Hebrew Union College professors, and a few Hebrew Union College students (since not many students knew how to speak Hebrew).²⁵

Dr. Julian Morgenstern began his tenure as president of the Hebrew Union College in 1921. Morgenstern was much more tolerant of dissent than was Kohler. His approach to most issues was to be inclusive of a variety of perspectives. On the question of Zionism, Morgenstern thought of himself as a non-Zionist, which placed him somewhere between the extremes of Zionism and anti-Zionism.²⁶

According to Dr. Helen Glueck, widow of Dr. Nelson Glueck (H.U.C. President from 1947-1971), although Morgenstern disliked political Zionism, he never

²³Ibid.

²⁴Sarna and Klein, p. 112.

²⁵Schulzinger.

²⁶Michael A. Meyer, "A Centennial History," Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion At One Hundred Years, ed. Samuel E. Karff, (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1976), p. 90.

let that get in the way of the love some of his faculty showed for Palestine. Morgenstern "never put any obstacles in Dr. Glueck's way of spending a third of every year in Palestine, [when he went there] every single summer."²⁷

The Newspapers

A key source of information about events in the community is the Jewish newspaper. The Cincinnati newspaper The American Israelite has a long history, billing itself as "The Oldest English-Jewish Weekly in America." According to the paper's current editor Phyllis Singer, the Israelite was founded in 1854 by Isaac M. Wise "as a paper for all of American Jewry."²⁸ When Wise died in 1900, the ownership of the paper transferred to his family. Singer notes that his children had little sympathy for Zionism, and the paper "became rabidly anti-Orthodox."²⁹

In response, a new paper called Every Friday began publication in 1929. The front page of its initial issue carried an article describing the goals of the paper:

This is a new Jewish weekly for Cincinnati.... We are here to be a mirror of Jewish life in Cincinnati. We want to be a full-length mirror, reflecting the whole body of our Jewry.³⁰

Every Friday was founded as a non-Reform alternative Jewish newspaper, and its coverage was clearly pro-Zionist. The Israelite appealed more to the Reform

²⁷Interview with Dr. Helen Glueck, January 5, 1993.

²⁸Interview with Phyllis Singer, December 25, 1992.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Every Friday, September 23, 1929, p. 1.

community, and had a decidedly anti-Zionist bias in its news articles and editorials.

It is through the pages of these two newspapers that the story of Zionism in Cincinnati unfolds.

CHAPTER TWO

The War Years: Zionist and anti-Zionist Forces Collide

A Jewish Army

By 1942 the Second World War was well underway. Revelations about the scope of German persecution of European Jewry were beginning to have a major impact on the attitude of American Jewry toward Zionism. Zionists argued for the right to establish a Jewish Army in Palestine alongside the British to fight against the Germans. Their hope was that this fighting force would prove successful and would provide additional leverage in any postwar settlement of the Palestine issue. The anti-Zionists and non-Zionists opposed the formation of a Jewish army, contending that Judaism is a religion and not a nationality. Only nation-states need armies, and Jews are part of many different nations.

The rabbinic students of the Hebrew Union College had become increasingly Zionist over the preceding decades. This process was speeded along by the passage in 1937 of the "Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism" (the "Columbus Platform") of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (C.C.A.R.). Prior to 1937, the C.C.A.R. (the professional organization of Reform rabbis) had been initially anti-Zionist and then became officially neutral on the issue of Zionism. For the first time, this platform put the organization on record as taking an explicitly pro-Zionist

position. Part of the Columbus Platform, under the heading "Israel," illustrates this shift in attitude:

In the rehabilitation of Palestine, the land hallowed by memories and hopes, we behold the promise of renewed life for many of our brethren. We affirm the obligation of all Jewry to aid in its upbuilding as a Jewish homeland by endeavoring to make it not only a haven of refuge for the oppressed but also a center of Jewish culture and spiritual life.³¹

Rabbi Sidney Akselrad entered the rabbinic program in 1942. He recalls that most of his classmates were pro-Zionist and came from East European Orthodox or Conservative backgrounds. He noted that the Columbus Platform's stance on Zionism had enabled many of them to consider attending H.U.C.³²

One event that reflects the attitude of the H.U.C. students is the response to the disaster of the sinking of the "Struma." The "Struma" was a ship carrying refugees from Romania to Palestine. The British refused it admission to Palestine, then the Turks forced it to leave the Port of Istanbul. Shortly afterward, the ship sank and all aboard were drowned.³³ In response to this tragedy, Every Friday headlined at the top of page one, "H.U.C. Students Adopt Struma Resolution," part of which follows:

WHEREAS, the recent sinking of the S. S. STRUMA has resulted in the unnecessary loss of the lives of 750 men, women and children who were fleeing from Nazi tyranny; and...

³¹Michael A. Meyer, Response To Modernity--A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 389.

³²Interview with Rabbi Sidney Akselrad, December 26, 1991.

³³Every Friday, March 13, 1942, p. 1.

WHEREAS, this [British Colonial Administration] policy has denied to the Jews of Palestine the same right as granted to other anti-fascist nations, namely the right to organize an armed force under their own flag...

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Student Body of the Hebrew Union College...record its protest against the arbitrary and inhuman conduct on the part of the officials of the British Colonial Administration...³⁴

In this resolution, the students show their support for the formation of a Jewish army in Palestine.

In addition to covering local news that championed the cause of a Jewish army, Every Friday ran many national and international wire-service stories advocating that position.³⁵ It also featured prominently both local and national articles describing the support of non-Jews for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.³⁶

The American Israelite took a different approach. It ran an editorial column on the front page of every paper called "Plain Talk," written by Alfred Segal. Segal was an avowed anti-Zionist, and many of his columns were written as criticism of Zionism or defense of anti-Zionism. In one representative column, entitled "One Man's Opinion," Segal explained his basic views on Zionism:

³⁴Every Friday, March 20, 1942, p. 1.

³⁵There are many examples of this type of article. For an illustration, see an item from the Jewish Telegraphic Association (J.T.A.) with a New York byline entitled "American Zionist Leaders Appeal to Churchill For Immediate Arming of All Palestine Jews." Every Friday, July 10, 1942, p. 1.

³⁶For examples, see "Post-War Palestine Seen By Non-Jews," and "Christian Leaders Demand Establishment Of Jewish Commonwealth In Holy Land," Every Friday, (respectively) July 17, 1942, p. 1; and December 25, 1942, p. 1.

...In a world in which the majority of mankind has been marching together in a hopeful unity, [the Zionists] have been loudly proclaiming their special cause.

I cannot accept them as voices that speak for me or for the majority of American Jews. It seems to me they are not serving Jewish life well when, by reason of their protestations of a separate Jewish nationhood, they put me and other Jews in the embarrassing position of having to argue that we are really Americans...

Palestine is a shrine of my religion not of my politics. I do consider it a conflict of loyalties to be an American citizen and at the same time to play the politics of another nation.³⁷

The American Israelite did carry many articles about Zionist activities and developments in Palestine. However, its editorial policy was clearly anti-Zionist, and the newspaper proudly featured any articles which cast aspersions on the Zionist cause or pointed to dissention in Zionist ranks.³⁸

The C.C.A.R. Convention

The fifty-third convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis was held in Cincinnati from February 24 to March 1, 1942. This meeting proved to be a crucial event in the history of Zionist activity in Cincinnati. By 1942 the majority of members of the C.C.A.R. were Zionists.³⁹ They had exercised their strength back

³⁷The American Israelite, February 12, 1942, p. 1.

³⁸For example, see "Zionist Group Led by Stephen Wise Rejects 'Committee for A Jewish Army' As 'A Self-Constituted Body,'" The American Israelite, March 12, 1942, p. 1

³⁹Interview with Dr. Ezra Spicehandler, December 23, 1992.

in 1937 when they managed to include a Zionist plank in the Columbus Platform.

Now, five years later, they were ready to take full control.

The C.C.A.R. reaffirmed its overall Zionist orientation by re-electing Rabbi James Heller of Wise Temple to a second one-year term as president. According to Dr. Marcus, the Zionists controlled the convention, and by that point "the conference had become an agency of the Zionists. This very much annoyed a heavy percentage of the rabbis who looked upon the Central Conference as a purely religious organization, not a nationalist association." The Zionists were no longer willing to sit back and arrange compromises, and at the convention it seemed as if they went out of their way intentionally to goad the anti-Zionists!⁴⁰

The leadership pushed for passage of a very controversial resolution of support for a Jewish army in Palestine. Dr. Morgenstern, president of H.U.C., joined the opposition which argued that the C.C.A.R. had previously agreed to stay neutral on this issue. Rabbi Heller conceded this point, but contended that the news from Europe had altered the context of the debate.⁴¹

On February 27, 1942, the C.C.A.R. passed a resolution entitled "On Jews In Palestine." In part, this declaration reads:

...Whereas, ...the Government of Great Britain has still failed to avail itself of the offer of the Jewish Agency for Palestine to establish a military unit based on Palestine, composed of Palestinian and stateless European Jews.

⁴⁰Marcus.

⁴¹Spicehandler.

Be it resolved that the Central Conference of American Rabbis adds its voice to the demand that the Jewish population of Palestine be given the privilege of establishing a military force which will fight under its own banner on the side of the democracies...to defend its own land and the near East...⁴²

As a result of this resolution, the C.C.A.R. became embroiled in a major dispute that was felt deeply by the Jews of Cincinnati.

Repercussions of the C.C.A.R. Resolution

Later that March, 72 members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis signed a statement opposing the concept of a Jewish army based in Palestine. They stated that:

...With regard to the creation of a Jewish Army in Palestine...American-Jewish opinion is sharply divided on this issue.

We believe that the creation of a Jewish Army to fight under its own banner would lead to further friction in Palestine, cause misunderstanding of the Jews the world over and thus add to the unhappy plight of our stricken people....

...The solution of the group problems of Jews, wherever they live, should be sought in the spirit of the prophetic teaching of Isaiah, that "the work of righteousness shall be peace..."⁴³

The American Israelite covered the story by placing an article about this anti-C.C.A.R. statement side-by-side with an article describing the pro-Zionist response of Rabbi Heller and two other rabbis. This was part of a trend in the Israelite on issues of Zionism. While the editorials of this period remained strongly anti-Zionist and the

⁴²The American Israelite, March 5, 1942, p. 1.

⁴³The American Israelite, March 26, 1942, p. 1.

paper continued publishing anti-Zionist information, the news coverage began presenting articles about events supporting both sides in the conflict.

On March 28, 1942, the discord over the C.C.A.R. resolution was brought to the attention of the Cincinnati public once again when Rabbi Victor Reichert of Rockdale Temple delivered the Founder's Day address at the Hebrew Union College. The topic of Reichert's speech was "The Spiritual Focus of the Founder," and in it Reichert confronted the issue of a Jewish army. He declared:

...If Wise could speak to us now, who can doubt but that he would set his face like flint against those who have turned in their despair to the dark distrust of Calvin, with his dogma of man's total depravity...

...As Jewish citizens of America, we ought to spurn the strutting group delusion of grandeur that now clamors to fight under a Jewish flag.

This is spiritual isolation in its most fatuous and pretentious form.⁴⁴

When Louise Reichert was asked to describe the attitude toward Zionism of Rabbi Reichert and his associates, she proclaimed:

We never had any feeling about being Zionist at all; we were American Jews! We were Americans first, and Judaism was our religion. Dr. Philipson was very anti-Zionist. [He and] my husband did not feel the need for Zionism.⁴⁵

⁴⁴The American Israelite, April 2, 1942, p. 1.

⁴⁵Reichert.

The Atlantic City Conference

Nationally, many rabbis were indignant that the C.C.A.R. would take such a pro-Zionist position. The headline of a front page article in the Israelite declared, "Anti-Zionist Reform Rabbis to Meet June 1-2." The article described how Rabbi Louis Wolsey of Philadelphia was organizing a "national conference of rabbis dissenting from the recent majority decision of the Central Conference of American Rabbis on the subject of a Jewish Army in Palestine."⁴⁶ Rabbi Wolsey and 22 other rabbis issued this statement as an appeal for other rabbis to join them at this meeting in Atlantic City.

Part of the message expressing their ideology reads as follows:

Approximately 50 years after the first Reform rabbis of America met in Pittsburgh to adopt a program rejecting Palestine as a future homeland for Jews, Jewish ministers are summoned to take action on the contention [that]:

"...Tendencies in the interpretation of American Judaism are opposed to the fundamental [intent] of Reform.... We are convinced that the growing emphasis upon the racial and nationalistic aspect of Jewish thought is bound to have an adverse effect upon Jews, politically, socially and spiritually, no matter where they live."⁴⁷

Throughout the period of this controversy, there was still strong pro-Zionist activity happening in Cincinnati. Turning the pages of the same Israelite that trumpeted the call for the Atlantic City conference, we find a headline deep inside the paper which announces, "Palestine Labor Conference To Be Held in Cincinnati

⁴⁶The American Israelite, April 30, 1942, p. 1.

⁴⁷Ibid.

Soon." This two day long gathering was to be chaired by Rabbi Wohl and held at Wise Center.⁴⁸

Rabbi Heller made the front page of the Israelite two weeks later with his denunciation of the proposed Atlantic City anti-Zionist conference. Heller contended that there was "ample room within the [C.C.A.R.] for advocates of every point of view to express themselves."⁴⁹ He did not want these rabbis to break away from the C.C.A.R., hurting both the Central Conference and the cause of Zionism. Heller argued that:

Even when the Conference was avowedly anti-Zionist it never took the view that those of its members who were Zionists could not with propriety be members, and continue to express their point of view and labor for its dissemination and adoption within the Conference.⁵⁰

The Atlantic City conference did take place as planned, with 60 Reform rabbis in attendance. The American Israelite trumpeted on its front page, "Anti-Zionist Reform Rabbis Meet in East." Cincinnati Dr. David Philipson, rabbi emeritus of Rockdale Temple, gave the keynote address. He asserted that, "Judaism's mission is religious and not political. Accordingly the American Jew is a Jew in his religion and an American in his nationality." Before printing excerpts from his speech, the Israelite noted that Dr. Philipson was at that time the "only surviving founder of the

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 10.

⁴⁹The American Israelite, May 14, 1942, p. 1.

⁵⁰Ibid.

C.C.A.R.⁵¹ This description was probably added to bolster his credibility as the person who uniquely understood the original intent of American Reform Judaism.

The 60 rabbis who met in Atlantic City agreed on four principles: first, Jews are a religious group; second, there should be no Jewish army; third, the physical rehabilitation of Palestine is desirable; and fourth, there should be no Jewish state.⁵² Ninety Reform rabbis, about one-fifth of the C.C.A.R., eventually signed a revised form of this plan.⁵³

At the Hebrew Union College, Dr. Marcus recalls Dr. Morgenstern asking members of the faculty to sign the Atlantic City statement. Marcus refused to join with this group, noting that although he "never joined the Zionist party," he was not anti-Zionist.⁵⁴ Only two of seven faculty members signed on to this platform, indicating just how much the faculty had changed in attitude since the era of Kaufmann Kohler.⁵⁵

Throughout the rest of 1942, The American Israelite published many articles in defense of the Atlantic City group and its goals.⁵⁶ It also wrote extensively on

⁵¹The American Israelite, June 4, 1942, p. 1.

⁵²The American Israelite, June 11, 1942, p. 1.

⁵³Meyer, p. 332.

⁵⁴Marcus.

⁵⁵Meyer, note #107, p. 465.

⁵⁶For examples, see "Non-Zionists Ask More Religion, Less Nationalism," and "Not Against Palestine," The American Israelite, (respectively) August 20, 1942, p. 1 and p. 6.

Zionist activity, especially as this related to Rabbi Heller's national role in Zionism. For example, one piece headlined "World Lethargic To Jews' Plight, Says Dr. Heller," and described a speech by Heller at the annual convention of the Zionist Organization of America (Z.O.A.). The article described how "Dr. Heller warned the Zionists that a mighty effort would yet be necessary to awaken the world to the desperate status of the Jew and the need for a statesmanlike approach to the solution of the problem."⁵⁷

Pro-Zionist Activity

Meanwhile, Every Friday continued with a heavy emphasis on Zionist items; it virtually ignored the issues raised by the anti-Zionist rabbis. The Zionist portion of the Cincinnati community continued to have great success during this period. Dr. Spicehandler, who was then an H.U.C. student, especially recalls the vitality of the youth groups and of Hadassah (the women's branch of the Zionist Organization of America):

There was a strong Zionist youth movement with close to 1000 children. Wise Temple's youth group began by being affiliated with [Zionist] Young Judea. Young Judea had a council of 40 leaders which was run by H.U.C. students. Ha'Bonim, the Labor Zionist movement, was second to Young Judea. However, they saw themselves as rivals in the same cause.

Hadassah was also strong. Even non-Zionists were members. They were concerned with medical activities and youth *aliyah*. Hadassah ran several hospitals in Palestine. Ben Gurion spoke when Hadassah had its

⁵⁷The American Israelite, October 22, 1942, p. 1.

national convention in Cincinnati. The women thought he was crazy, but he won them over.⁵⁸

The American Council For Judaism

At the end of 1942, the rabbis who had earlier met in Atlantic City founded an organization committed to fighting Zionism and strengthening Judaism in America.

The American Israelite announced that:

The intra-Jewish cleavage around Zionism has received impetus in the formation of the American Council for Judaism to oppose the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.... The council plans to issue tracts, publish a magazine and conduct a lecture bureau.⁵⁹

Both Rabbis Philipson and Reichert of Rockdale Temple were supporters of this new association. According to Millard Mack, publisher of the Israelite and longtime member of Rockdale Temple, their congregation became a "bastion of [the ideology of the] American Council for Judaism.... [The congregants] were people who were acculturated and thought there were other answers than a formal state."⁶⁰

The American Israelite supported the Council by publishing articles that were favorable to the anti-Zionist cause. One front page article entitled "Political Zionism Criticized by Rabbi Lazon" reported on the 119th annual Rockdale Temple

⁵⁸Spicehandler.

⁵⁹The American Israelite, December 24, 1942, p. 4.

⁶⁰Interview with Millard Mack, December 17, 1992.

congregational dinner. The paper described Rabbi Lazaron of Baltimore as "a leader in the new American Council for Judaism. In his address, Lazaron declared:

I object to political Zionism--a demand for a commonwealth in Palestine--because that philosophy is the philosophy of despair,... it is a rejection of democracy. I object to political Zionism because it goes beyond the Balfour Declaration in demanding (a) a Jewish army; [and] (b) unlimited Jewish immigration into Palestine.⁶¹

The Israelite went on to list at least a dozen objections Rabbi Lazaron had to Zionism, filling a column the entire length of the front page of the newspaper and continuing on the inside!⁶²

Throughout this period, The American Israelite published anti-Zionist editorials.⁶³ The editor of the Israelite seemed pleased whenever Zionists failed to succeed. For example, when the Executive Board of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (the national organization of Reform congregations) chose to delay taking a stand on the call for a Jewish state in Palestine, an editorial entitled "Let the People Decide" stated:

...It is not only impossible for an Executive Board but it is also impossible for the Union convention delegates themselves to know just what is in the minds of all of America's Reform Jews on the vital issue of a Palestinian Jewish state....

We strongly recommend that every member of every Reform congregation in the Union be polled...so that the decision may be made by those who should

⁶¹The American Israelite, January 28, 1943, p. 1.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³For example, see "Letter to the Editor" by Alfred Segal, columnist, The American Israelite, February 11, 1943, p. 4.

make it--the members themselves--and so that all of us may know where the mass of Reform Jewry stands on the question.⁶⁴

This decision went against the trend in which mainstream Jewish organizations were routinely rejecting anti-Zionism. Apparently, the Israelite felt there was less sympathy for Zionism among the Reform laity than among the Reform leadership, or at least hoped that a delay might help the anti-Zionist cause.

Some Zionist articles did make their way into The American Israelite. When an article describing pro-Zionist activity appeared it was often because it had something to do with Rabbi Heller, who would then become the focus of the story.⁶⁵ Otherwise, pro-Zionist news was typically run alongside anti-Zionist propaganda designed to act as a counterpoint.⁶⁶

At the other extreme, Every Friday carried a great deal of news related to Zionist activity, particularly on the national and international levels.⁶⁷ Every Friday

⁶⁴The American Israelite, October 7, 1943, p. 4.

⁶⁵For example, see "Dr. Heller Urges Care in Electing AJC Delegates," The American Israelite, June 7, 1943, p. 4.

⁶⁶For example, see "Jewish State in Palestine Demanded by AJC: A Jewish State in Palestine: The Case For--By the American Jewish Conference (news article--text of resolution of September 1); The Case Against--By the American Council for Judaism (press release of standard principles of A.C.F.J.)," The American Israelite, September 9, 1943, p. 1.

⁶⁷For examples, see "Labor Zionist Convention Opens Tonight [in New York]," and "UAHC Calls For Heroic Measures to Avert Complete Extinction of European Jewry--Urges Palestine Be Opened To All Jews Wishing to Settle There," Every Friday, (respectively) March 26, 1943, p. 1; and April 9, 1943, p. 1.

also carried a weekly column entitled "Inside Palestine," which kept readers apprised of events in Palestine by stringing together various wire service reports.⁶⁸

Dr. Morgenstern's Address

President Julian Morgenstern delivered the main address at the 1943 opening exercises of the Hebrew Union College. His message that day sent shock waves throughout the community, and succeeded in escalating the already bitter war of words between the Zionists and the anti-Zionists. In a five column headline across its front page, The American Israelite proclaimed, "HUC President Says--History Proves Jewish Contribution Is Not As Nation But As Religion--Assails Political Zionism." In this speech, Dr. Morgenstern contended that Israel had something special to offer the world as a religion, but not as a nation. He asserted:

In the past, Israel [as a nation] was not one whit different from numerous other little and equally insignificant nations. And nothing whatever suggests that today, restored to national existence, Israel would be aught different from the many little insignificant racial states which struggle desperately to maintain and to justify their national existence.

On the other hand, that Israel is a people and Judaism a religion, and that these two principles are eternally and inseparably linked, and that in this indissoluble fusion they make Israel a unique people among the nations of the world...is beyond all question.⁶⁹

⁶⁸For example, see "Inside Palestine," Every Friday, September 24, 1943.

⁶⁹The American Israelite, October 21, 1943, p. 1.

Dr. Morgenstern went on to attack the "bombastic peroration of the so-called Palestine resolution of the American Jewish Conference," a national representative Jewish group that had come out in support of Zionism the previous month.⁷⁰

The response of the Zionists was swift and irate. On the front page of its next edition, the Israelite reported that Rabbi Louis Feinberg (Conservative) had already delivered a sermon in which he quoted directly from Morgenstern's speech and then repudiated it.⁷¹ Two weeks later, the Israelite carried two more anti-Morgenstern articles on the front page, this time from Reform rabbis.⁷² Every Friday chimed in with an even more vehement denunciation entitled, "Ignorance at the Hebrew Union College; Dr. Morgenstern's Misleading Message." The editorial begins as follows:

Dr. Julian Morgenstern is no Kaufmann Kohler, whom he succeeded in the presidency of the Hebrew Union College. Even so, he should have enough sagacity, if not scholarship, not to make such statements about the history of the Jewish people as would enable any undergraduate, taking History A or Sociology B, to trip him up and put him to shame.⁷³

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹"Rabbi Feinberg Issues Reply To Dr. Morgenstern," The American Israelite, October 28, 1943, p. 1.

⁷²"Rabbi Wohl Replies to Dr. Morgenstern," and "45 Alumni Disagree With HUC President," The American Israelite, November 11, 1943, p. 1.

⁷³Every Friday, November 19, 1943, p. 1.

Local Zionist Activity

Zionism was on the ascent. Zionists representing a variety of constituencies felt emboldened enough to challenge the anti-Zionists with strong actions and words. Cincinnati's own Rabbi Heller was elected to become National Chairman of American Jewry's main fund-raising organization for the rebuilding of the Jewish homeland, the United Palestine Appeal.⁷⁴

Every Friday made a point of listing and reporting on the variety of Zionist activities that were occurring. These included meetings of Masada (the young people's association affiliated with the Zionist Organization of America), Hadassah, Poale Zion, and even the "Cincinnati Emergency Committee for the Abrogation of the Palestine White Paper and Implementation of the Balfour Declaration!"⁷⁵

The Council Comes to Cincinnati

The anti-Zionists needed to do something to stem the Zionist tide. On May 18, 1944, the leaders of the American Council for Judaism, Lessing Rosenwald and Rabbi Louis Wolsey, arrived in Cincinnati and spoke at a dinner of "several hundred Cincinnatians."⁷⁶ For six weeks prior to this dinner, every issue of The American Israelite contained a prominent article touting the virtues of this organization to its

⁷⁴Every Friday, February 4, 1944, p. 1.

⁷⁵For examples, see "Masada," and "Cincinnati Emergency Committee Active On Palestine Resolution," Every Friday, (respectively) February 11, 1944, p. 6; and February 18, 1944, p. 1.

⁷⁶The American Israelite, May 25, 1944, p. 1.

readers.⁷⁷ The dinner meeting marked the founding of the Cincinnati Chapter of the American Council for Judaism,

In his speech that evening, Dr Wolsey referred to an 1876 Israelite editorial written by Isaac Mayer Wise that strongly opposed political Zionism. Additionally, Wolsey linked Cincinnati to the formation of the Council because "it was born as the result of and as a protest against a resolution passed here by the Central Conference of American Rabbis [in 1942] in favor of a Jewish army based on Palestine."⁷⁸

Another development that was encouraging to the anti-Zionists occurred just one month after this dinner, when the Reform rabbis again held their annual convention in Cincinnati. Dr. Solomon B. Freehof had taken over as president from the fiery Zionist James Heller, which resulted in the conference taking on a more moderate tone. In contrast to its 1942 declaration in support of a Jewish army, the C.C.A.R. passed a resolution asserting its neutrality on the question of Zionism. It emphasized that all members were free to hold any position "in accordance with their individual convictions."⁷⁹

The American Israelite showered a tremendous amount of attention upon the American Council for Judaism through 1944 and the early part of 1945. The case of Senator Alfred M. Cohen illustrates this. When the senator decided to support the

⁷⁷For examples, see "Council for Judaism Selects May 18th for Cincinnati Meeting," "American Council Hostesses Named," and "Lessing Rosenwald, Louis Wolsey To Talk at Alms May 18 Before Council for American Judaism [sic]," The American Israelite, (respectively) April 20, May 4, and May 11, 1944, p. 1 (all).

⁷⁸The American Israelite, May 25, 1944, p. 1.

⁷⁹The American Israelite, June 29, 1944, p. 1.

Council in 1945, the Israelite printed the full text of his letter (which was clearly an opinion piece) as the lead news story on the paper's front page. The introduction to this "news article" was even written by the local leaders of the American Council for Judaism!⁸⁰ The opening of the local Council headquarters and reports of Council meetings also merited front page coverage.⁸¹

But shortly, all this would begin to change. On May 8, 1945, Nazi Germany surrendered to the allies. Revelations of the enormity of the Holocaust would soon turn the tide of Jewish opinion permanently against the anti-Zionists.

⁸⁰The American Israelite, April 19, 1945, p. 1.

⁸¹"American Council for Judaism Invites Cincinnatians To Join; Local Headquarters Are Opened," and "Choice For Or Against Political Zionism Urged by Sidney Wallach; Sets Forth American Council Cause," The American Israelite, (respectively) April 26, 1945, p. 1; and May 10, 1945, p. 1.

CHAPTER THREE

Cincinnati Jewry Recognizes The Need For A Refuge

The Aftermath of the Holocaust

Philip Cohen, who later became president of the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati, has vivid memories of the German surrender at the end of the war and what it meant to the Jews. Cohen had grown up at Rockdale Temple, and all his friends and family had been anti-Zionist. He recounts:

I was in the armed forces in Europe. Then in 1945, after the end of the war, I was in the occupation army. We went through Dachau, and when I walked through the gas chamber it was the first realization I had of what had taken place. I knew Jews had been persecuted but I didn't have a complete understanding until then.⁸²

Cohen was not the only person to begin seeing things in a new light. One month after the end of the war, Alfred Segal wrote a stunning column in The American Israelite. The heretofore anti-Zionist Segal announced that he was leaving the American Council for Judaism. The following week, Every Friday's columnist Reb Sh'muel commended Segal on his action, writing:

Finally, in his column last week, Al Segal comes to the conviction that spending \$2 on cocktails is better than wasting \$2 dues for the American Council of Judaism [sic], and concludes; ... "I shall withhold my \$2 dues until this organization against political Zionism takes up to do something positive in behalf of Jewish religion.... I don't feel like wasting \$2 on negatives...."

⁸²Interview with Philip Cohen, December 15, 1992.

I [Reb Sh'muel] heartily applaud this new approach of Segal. I think that Jews could improve their lot if they would stir up more enthusiasm to fight FOR THINGS rather than AGAINST THINGS.⁸³

Sham and Nachum Eden also remember a dramatic shift in attitude taking place among most of the Reform anti-Zionists. They believe the turning point may have come in 1945, when Dr. Zalman Greenberg came to Cincinnati and addressed the upper class German Jews of the city.

This was a meeting of the Reform leadership. People were dressed formally in evening gowns and such. Dr. Greenberg got up and spoke, and painted a picture of what happened in the Holocaust that was absolutely horrendous. We felt doubly horrible because here we were dressed up in all this finery in a beautiful hotel in a very elegant setting when this news came to us.

He said "if you cannot convince yourself that you have to help with the establishment of a state, please do not disturb it, do not stand in our way. This is our only salvation."

This meeting was a watershed.⁸⁴

Rabbis Silver and Heller seized this opportunity to push for their dream of a Jewish state in Palestine. Rabbi Silver was recalled to the leadership of the Zionist Emergency Council of America.⁸⁵ Rabbi Heller, chairman of the United Palestine Appeal, embarked on a three month trip to Palestine to "help initiate a large-scale settlement program in behalf of Jewish survivors of war and Nazi aggression in

⁸³Every Friday, June 15, 1945, p. 1.

⁸⁴Eden.

⁸⁵Every Friday, July 20, 1945, p. 1.

Europe."⁸⁶ Every Friday recounts that shortly after his arrival in Palestine, Heller sent a cable from Jerusalem to Cincinnati. He reported that:

"A miracle has been achieved" in the rebuilding of the Jewish homeland in Palestine and that "the land offers possibilities for much greater development and for the absorption of large numbers of Jews who have survived Nazi persecution in Europe."⁸⁷

Upon his return to Cincinnati, Rabbi Heller "declared that the only real solution for the survival of the mass of Jews in Europe is through the settlement in Palestine."⁸⁸

Even the strongest anti-nationalist "religionists" recognized the need for a sanctuary to absorb and protect the remnant of European Jewry that had survived the Holocaust. At H.U.C., Dr. Morgenstern began to change his tune. Only two years earlier, Morgenstern had delivered his controversial anti-Zionist opening day speech. However in 1945 his conciliatory opening address was entitled "Unity in American Judaism--How and When?" It was a soothing oration full of hope for a future in which all Jews will gradually unite.⁸⁹

Broader based action on Zionism began to take place within the Cincinnati Jewish community. A number of mass meetings were held at Wise Center, and Rabbi Heller was nearly always one of the featured speakers.⁹⁰ According to The

⁸⁶The American Israelite, May 24, 1945, p. 1.

⁸⁷Every Friday, July 6, 1945, p. 1.

⁸⁸Every Friday, August 31, 1945, p. 1.

⁸⁹The American Israelite, September 27, 1945, p. 1.

⁹⁰"Lausche and Heller To Address Meeting," Every Friday, November 16, 1945, p. 1.

American Israelite, the community was so enthusiastic about this subject that these meetings attracted capacity crowds.⁹¹

On November 23, 1945, Every Friday displayed a banner headline that read, "Poll Discloses That Only 10.5 % of U.S. Jews Oppose Jewish State." Below it, another headline announced, "Cincinnati To Protest Palestine Closed Doors." The community was responding to President Truman's "concurrence with Great Britain's plan for a joint British-American Commission to study the Palestine problem." The meeting was sponsored by the Zionist Emergency Council and the American Palestine Christian Committee, who were furious that President Truman was supporting a temporary suspension of Jewish immigration to Palestine.⁹² In this and other cases, Every Friday featured articles and columns which were strongly anti-British in tone.⁹³

Non-Zionism Replaces Anti-Zionism

Opposition to Zionism was starting to wither. Anti-Zionism was no longer so acceptable in the shadow of the Holocaust. However, not all anti-Zionists were immediately convinced of the necessity of fighting for a Jewish state. Many of the old anti-Zionists began considering themselves non-Zionists. They would not actively

⁹¹"Jews in Palestine Ready To Fight, Rabbi Heller Tells Cincinnatians," The American Israelite, October 18, 1945, p. 1.

⁹²Every Friday, November 23, 1945, p. 1.

⁹³For example, see "For The Shame Of Great Britain!" Every Friday, December 7, 1945, p. 1.

oppose those who wanted to create a Jewish state, but neither would they encourage the use of the Jewish community's name or resources to further that goal.

The tension between Cincinnati's German Jewish elite and the newly ascendant East European Jewry is illustrated by one report pertaining to the struggle for power in the Jewish Community Council. This confederation was formed in 1929, and consisted of representatives from all Jewish organizations in the city. A glimpse into the conflict is found in an Israelite article entitled, "Crisis Arises in Cincinnati Jewish Community Council; Political Zionism's Friends, Foes Debate Amendments."⁹⁴

The Executive Committee of the Council proposed a constitutional amendment intended to keep control in the hands of the old leadership. They wanted to limit the rising power of the Zionist East European majority by ruling that:

In matters involving a fundamental principle [as defined by the Executive Committee], where there is a minority vote [which represents any dissent],... the vote taken shall not be the action of the Jewish Community Council but only an expression of opinion of the majority of those present.⁹⁵

The non-Zionists wanted to prevent the Council from taking any future pro-Zionist position, instead limiting it to making less authoritative "statements of opinion." This article continues by assessing the perceived importance of the controversy in the Cincinnati Jewish Community Council:

Observers and participants realize that the outcome of the controversy will have national effect. The Cincinnati chapter is but part of the contemporary Jewish book that is being written, figuratively speaking, on the decisive struggle.

⁹⁴The American Israelite, October 25, 1945, p. 1.

⁹⁵Ibid.

The differences are ideological [sic]. They arise from the same differences that are at the bottom of Jewry's chief divisiveness elsewhere--namely, that of political Zionism on the one hand and that of anti-Zionism and non-Zionism on the other.⁹⁶

In March of 1946, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations held its biennial convention in Cincinnati. The non-Zionists achieved a victory when the conference voted unanimously that the Union would be officially neutral on the question of political Zionism. The same vote recognized that each individual has the right to determine his or her own attitude on this controversial question.⁹⁷ The following week, an editorial in the *Israelite* applauded the action taken at the convention promoting religion over politics:

The neutrality pledge, if observed in letter and in spirit, may go far toward sealing the breach that had been widening perceptibly in the days preceding the March 3rd-6th UAHC convention....

In a day when Jews are all too willing to enter the lists in ideological [sic] combat with one another, it is indeed refreshing to find one organization with the intelligence and courage to decide:

"There are plenty of organizations in which the question of Zionism can be debated. Let us make our group [(the U.A.H.C.)] religious in fact as well as in name."⁹⁸

When reporting this story, the *Israelite* focused on the neutrality pledge. That same week, *Every Friday* gave the story a pro-Zionist tilt by concentrating on the other major resolution which had been passed. Their headline read, "Motion Of Anti-

⁹⁶*Ibid.*

⁹⁷"'Neutrality' Resolution of Political Zionism Ratified Unanimously by UAHC Convention," *The American Israelite*, March 7, 1946, p. 1.

⁹⁸*The American Israelite*, March 14, 1946, p. 4.

Zionists To Withdraw From American Jewish Conference, Overwhelmingly Defeated By The Delegates To The 39th Council Of The Union Of American Congregations. By A Vote Of Six To One."⁹⁹ While the U.A.H.C. professed neutrality it also chose to remain a part of the American Jewish Conference, the national Jewish organization which earlier had ratified a strongly Zionist position.

Zionists Take To The Streets

As the Zionist cause became more widely accepted, Zionist leaders were able to mobilize Cincinnati Jewry in public demonstrations. One particularly large and controversial event took place on July 31, 1946, as a protest against British policy in Palestine. This meeting was held at the Hotel Gibson, and had the support of both the Jewish Community Council and its Executive Committee. Participants signed a petition urging President Truman to use his influence to prod the British to open Palestine to Jewish immigration. Rabbi James Heller spoke.¹⁰⁰

The controversy arose when a dozen Jewish activists picketed the British consulate. The protesters held their demonstration on both the day before and the day of the community meeting. Their signs contained a variety of messages, including:

Open Palestine to 100,000 homeless Jews.

We are picketing the British consulate in the building to demand justice in Palestine.

⁹⁹Every Friday, March 8, 1946, p. 1.

¹⁰⁰The American Israelite, August 1, 1946, p. 1.

America asks that Britain keep its pledges in Palestine.¹⁰¹

Despite the rather innocuous nature of these messages, a portion of the old leadership of the community was irate. While the Cincinnati Jewish Community Council approved both the meeting and the picketing, its Executive Committee explicitly withheld approval of the picketing.¹⁰² The American Israelite ran a press release from the Cincinnati Committee of the American Council for Judaism as a news item alongside the report of the meeting and picketing. The American Council for Judaism contended that:

...the picketing very definitely lacks the approval of and in fact is heartily opposed by many persons in Cincinnati.... There are many Jewish citizens of Cincinnati who are not connected with the Community Council and who are outspoken in their condemnation of the picketing of the consulate.¹⁰³

There was clearly a vocal and influential minority in the community that did not want the Zionists to draw undue attention to the Jews, and they would continue to fight to keep the community name separate from the cause of Zionism.

Shortly after the British consulate controversy, the Zionists got an unexpected boost. Dr. Morgenstern, president of the Hebrew Union College, announced that he would step down as of the end of the next academic year. In a letter dated September 13, 1946, Dr. Morgenstern gave some of his reasons for retirement at this time. He wrote:

¹⁰¹Every Friday, August 2, 1946, p. 3.

¹⁰²The American Israelite, August 1, 1946, p. 1.

¹⁰³Ibid.

...Our College stands now upon the threshold of a new era. The Jewish scene, both within our beloved nation and throughout the world, has changed so rapidly and so radically within the last few years that new and grave responsibilities have been thrust upon our College, and new services, many and varied, of both national and international character, are demanded of it.¹⁰⁴

Dr. Morgenstern understood that it was time for someone with a fresh vision to take over from him. Dr. Ezra Spicehandler was a rabbinic student until 1946, and recalls that the students saw Dr. Morgenstern as "an ideological fossil." Morgenstern's world view had been shaped in an earlier period which was markedly different than the post-Holocaust Jewish reality.

During his final year as president, Dr. Morgenstern described his evolving understanding of the Jewish situation. In a speech before the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Morgenstern asserted:

...The vast majority of the Jewish people throughout the world today are Zionist in thought, belief and program....

[Since the Holocaust, we are] all Zionists of a kind and to a degree, though we may differ in convictions as to the nature and magnitude of the political organization [to be set up in Palestine].

[Political Zionism is] a natural reaction of the soul of the Jewish people, [and] nationhood of some type is absolutely essential [in Palestine].¹⁰⁵

The same H.U.C. president who in 1943 assailed Zionism now to a certain degree embraced it. However, there was a limit to Morgenstern's "conversion" to Zionism. He continued:

¹⁰⁴The American Israelite, September 26, 1946, p. 1.

¹⁰⁵The American Israelite, July 3, 1947, p. 1.

Jewish nationalism will be, and should be, only for that segment of the Jewish people living in Palestine.

Here in America, Judaism has found the most congenial and favorable home it has ever known.¹⁰⁶

The Rush To Statehood

As the situation for the Jews in Palestine became critical, the various factions of Cincinnati Jewry increasingly put aside their differences to work together on issues of communal importance. In an editorial entitled "Exemplary Leadership," The American Israelite applauded cooperation in the realm of Jewish fund raising, noting that:

The recent and inspiring example of team-play between and among Zionist, non-Zionist and anti-Zionist organizations and individuals in behalf of the Cincinnati Jewish Welfare Fund campaign is [commendable, and]...the remarkable financial response is unmistakable evidence that the Jews can forget their ideological differences and can find large areas of agreement when the cause to be served is meritorious.¹⁰⁷

With success seemingly within reach, the Zionist organizations stepped up their major public activities. One such event in November of 1947 was "Histadrut Night." This "evening of great spiritual elevation" included a speech by Hayim Greenberg, a member of the World Zionist Actions Committee and the Jewish Agency Executive, and a musical performance by a singer performing in both Hebrew

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷The American Israelite, September 4, 1947, p. 4.

and Yiddish.¹⁰⁸ In the same month, Masada held its national convention in Cincinnati at the Hotel Gibson.¹⁰⁹

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly voted to partition Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab. The Cincinnati Jewish community celebrated by packing into the Avondale Synagogue to hear its leadership sound off about this remarkable turn of events. Rabbi James Heller declared:

These days are the culmination of thousands of years of Jewish prayer....

Shiploads after shiploads of Jewish survivors [of the Holocaust] will leave in a brief time the ports of Southern France and Italy, and they will no more be rammed by British destroyers. These Jewish survivors who waited weeks, months and years for this moment, will be received with that tenderness which is such a remarkable part of the spirit of the Yishuv [the Jewish settlement in Palestine].¹¹⁰

An editorial in the Israelite reflects the hope that the decision of the United Nations might put an end to intra-Jewish discord. It reads:

...Today, in a very real sense, the question of whether or not there should be a Jewish state becomes academic. Those who favor and those who oppose such a state may continue their debates, but, in the words of the late Grover Cleveland on another occasion, "we are facing a condition, not a theory."

...The debate on political Zionism has seen the manners of our people descend to a sorry level indeed....

¹⁰⁸"This Sunday Attend The Histadrut Night," Every Friday, November 7, 1947, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹Every Friday, November 21, 1947, p. 1.

¹¹⁰Every Friday, December 12, 1947, p. 5.

Not least among the gains that will follow in the wake of the UN Assembly decision, we hope, will be a decline of tension and an era of reasonableness among those who call themselves co-religionists.¹¹¹

Despite this hope, the hard core anti-Zionists persisted at the American Council for Judaism. Israelite columnist Alfred Segal complained that the Council is making "a nuisance of itself." Segal said that the Council is more concerned with what the gentiles in America might think than in what is happening to Jewish Holocaust refugees in Palestine.¹¹² However, despite this attack, the American Council for Judaism continued to defend its actions and promote its activities¹¹³.

Rabbi Reichert of Rockdale Temple was still an active member, and was a featured speaker at Council meetings.¹¹⁴ The anti-Zionism of Rockdale Temple and its rabbi is attested to by the reflections of Edith Carter. Ms. Carter arrived in Cincinnati on April 1, 1948, as a Holocaust survivor from Czechoslovakia. Her background was quite assimilated, but she cared deeply for Zionism. She tells the story of her early exposure to Rabbi Reichert:

When I came here my husband immediately wanted to take out a membership in a synagogue that I would feel comfortable in, so he went to Rockdale [because of its Reform practice].

I was terribly disappointed when I heard Rabbi Reichert speak about Chaim Weizmann. The sense of it was that a man like him should not become

¹¹¹The American Israelite, December 4, 1947, p. 4.

¹¹²"Silly Lady in a Fire," The American Israelite, February 12, 1948, p. 1.

¹¹³For a response to Segal's column see "Spokesman for American Council Replies to Columnist's Attack," The American Israelite, February 19, 1948, p. 1.

¹¹⁴"Dr. Irving F. Reichert To Address ACJ Chapter On Tuesday, May 18th," The American Israelite, May 6, 1948, p. 1.

president of Israel because of his Eastern European background. That struck me terribly when Rabbi Reichert spoke. At Rockdale, they were not for the establishment of the state of Israel. I found this terrible, because if you can speak about something positive that came out of these terrible times, it was the creation of the state of Israel. And here you find a leader of the Jewish community to speak against it. I was terribly disappointed.

Because of this I refused to go there anymore, and I joined Wise Temple with Rabbi Heller.¹¹⁵

Rabbi Heller and the other leading Zionists continued their push for funds and for political assistance to aid the cause. Jewish Agency figures such as Goldie Meyerson (later changed to Golda Meir) came to visit Cincinnati.¹¹⁶ When the United States government changed its policy and withdrew support for the partition of Palestine, the Cincinnati Jewish community responded with anger and action. This response included mass meetings, protests, and editorials against this "betrayal."¹¹⁷

Finally, on May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was established. Every Friday describes the scene in Cincinnati two days later:

A parade was held in Reading Road. Between 700 and 800 marchers, men, women, children, participated in the parade. The sun was shining and the faces of the marchers expressed deep satisfaction. Most of the people wore blue and white ribbons, the colors of the new state of Israel.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵Interview with Edith Carter, December 28, 1992.

¹¹⁶Every Friday, February 20, 1948, p. 1.

¹¹⁷For examples, see "Cincinnati Zionist Council Protests," "Justice For Palestine!" and "To The Conscience Of America!" Every Friday, (respectively) March 26, April 2, and April 23, 1948, p. 1 (all).

¹¹⁸Every Friday, May 21, 1948, p. 1.

The American Israelite estimated that 2,000 people attended the celebration at Avondale Synagogue at the end of the parade, which was hosted by the various Zionist organizations of Cincinnati.¹¹⁹

The dream of the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine had become a reality, and an editorial in the Israelite expressed the hope that "as good Americans, all Jews--Zionists, non-Zionists and anti-Zionists--will accept our government's decision [to recognize Israel] and hope that the new state will be a power for peace and understanding throughout the world."¹²⁰

¹¹⁹The American Israelite, May 20, 1948, p. 1.

¹²⁰The American Israelite, May 20, 1948, p. 4.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Jewish State as a Reality: A Calming of Zionist Passions

After the advent of the independent State of Israel, most Jews and Jewish organizations became backers of the Jewish state, although their support was much less energetic than it had been in the contentious period prior to 1948. Israel emerged as an issue that could bind the Cincinnati Jewish community together. This cohesion manifest itself in the area of fund raising and also through communal celebration of Israeli achievements. However, non-Zionists in some parts of the community continued to raise questions about the role Israel should play in American Jewish life.

A Question of Loyalty

Although the news of Israeli independence was enthusiastically applauded by almost all Jews, many were also fearful that gentiles might perceive that Jews owed allegiance to a foreign government. The issue of "dual loyalty" even raised a bit of debate among pro-Zionists at Zionist conferences.¹²¹ In 1949, a controversy was created in Zionist ranks when Dr. Nahum Goldmann, chief of the American section

¹²¹"Zionists Discuss Issue of 'Double Loyalties' And State of Israel," The American Israelite, September 2, 1948, p. 1.

of the Jewish Agency for Palestine¹²², was said to have "urged Jews throughout the country to adopt a 'double nationality,' with ties to the country in which they live and to Israel." He soon came under fire and was forced to clarify that he had meant that every Jew should be politically loyal to the country in which he or she lives, but "at the same time be linked to Israel by moral and spiritual ties." Dr. Goldmann reiterated that he had always been opposed to the idea of "double nationality."¹²³

While the Zionists were discussing the dilemma of dual loyalty, the old non-Zionists were consumed by it. The American Council for Judaism continued to function. The Council asked:

What should be the mutual relationship between the new State of Israel and Jews of the world outside--particularly in the United States?...

To what extent is the separation of the Jews of the world and the State of Israel to be carried out in practice; in community activities; in the religious schools; in fund-raising and "Ys"?

What meaning is there to the continuance of a "Jewish National Fund?" What "nation" is here involved and who are its "nationals"?¹²⁴

The National Community Relations Advisory Council (which was the coordinating body for the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Jewish Labor Committee, Jewish War veterans of the United States, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and

¹²²The Jewish Agency was the quasi-governmental political leadership of the Jewish settlement in Palestine prior to Israeli independence. This pre-1948 Jewish settlement was known as the "Yishuv."

¹²³The American Israelite, September 29, 1949, p. 1.

¹²⁴"American Council Urges Clarification As to Israel-Diaspora Status," The American Israelite, November 4, 1948, p. 1.

twenty-seven local Jewish Federations throughout the country) condemned the American Council for Judaism for its "unfounded charges and innuendoes casting doubts on the loyalty of American Jews."¹²⁵ The statement reads:

The small but highly vocal group of Jewish individuals known as the American Council for Judaism has been responsible for the publication in the nation's press of reiterated statements casting doubts on the loyalty of American Jews who have demonstrated their sympathies with Israel....

In raising the bogey of "dual loyalty", the American Council for Judaism ignores the fact that the American way of life recognizes the right of all citizens to work for such causes.¹²⁶

The Council may have been vocal, but it no longer appealed to large numbers of Jews through its program of opposition to Israel. Not only did it have difficulty attracting new adherents to its cause, but it also had trouble keeping current members interested in the fight against Zionism. For example, in March of 1950 Dr. Leon Saks was elected to his second consecutive term as chairman of the Cincinnati Chapter of the American Council for Judaism.¹²⁷ Only three months later, Dr. Saks resigned from the Council because he felt that "the Council had to have some positive aim and not only the negative purpose of fighting Zionism."¹²⁸

¹²⁵Every Friday, January 20, 1950, p. 1.

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷The American Israelite, March 9, 1950, p. 1.

¹²⁸"Dr. Saks Resigns From Council For Judaism," Every Friday, June 30, 1950, p. 1.

The Course of Zionism

Another challenge confronting Zionists after 1948 was the difficulty of defining the future roll of Zionism in America. Should Zionists work to strengthen Israel from inside by encouraging and fostering *aliyah* (immigration to Israel)? Or should Zionists work to strengthen Israel from outside by raising money and pressing for United States political assistance to Israel?

Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion took the position that Zionists should promote and personally commit themselves to making *aliyah*. In an article entitled, "Ben-Gurion Critical Of Zionist Leaders In United States," the Israelite reported on one of one of his more caustic speeches, in which he stated in 1951:

Zionist leaders in the United States "went bankrupt" after establishment of the State of Israel in 1948....

Some Jewish communities (such as the U.S.) are able but unwilling to migrate to Israel, and some (such as Russian) are willing but unable to migrate to Israel.¹²⁹

Ten years later, in 1961, Ben-Gurion wrote that supporters of Israel in the Diaspora should stop calling themselves "Zionists." He contended that the word "Zionist" had lost its meaning, "since the fulfillment of the Zionist goal--settling in Israel—is not binding." Those "Zionists" who were capable of making *aliyah* but did not do so were "living a lie."¹³⁰

¹²⁹The American Israelite, December 20, 1951, p. 1.

¹³⁰"Ben-Gurion Resumes Attack On World Zionist Movement," Every Friday, May 12, 1961, p. 1.

Some of the Cincinnati Jewish community supported Ben-Gurion's position, including many in the traditional Jewish community. Phyllis Karp was a part of the Orthodox community, and during that period she witnessed a great increase in immigration to Israel. Her sister made *aliyah* in 1952, and her parents did so in 1960. Many other people she was close with made *aliyah* as well during those years.¹³¹

The *aliyah* of community leaders Joseph and Bessie Gootman in 1962 made the front page of The American Israelite.¹³² Even Rabbi Heller, the Reform rabbi of Wise Temple, was an early proponent of *aliyah*. Shortly after the birth of the State of Israel, Heller proclaimed that:

Israel is pleading for Americans anxious to help Israel. [There is a] need for more groups to train young people for Israel.

Many young Americans have gone to Israel, but many thousands more are needed. It is not disloyal, as some foolish Jews believe, to leave America, and live in Israel.¹³³

Many in the Reform Jewish community of Cincinnati took exception to this type of Zionism. The American Council for Judaism articulated these feelings in a paid advertisement in the Every Friday on the occasion of the first anniversary of Israeli independence. The advertisement stated:

¹³¹Karp.

¹³²The American Israelite, August 2, 1962, p. 1.

¹³³"Rabbi Heller Calls For More American Chalutzim," Every Friday, October 22, 1948, p. 1.

...The Council takes its firm stand against the wave of "Jewish Nationalism" now threatening to engulf the Jews of America and their institutions. This "Nationalism" implies that Jews can be secure only temporarily in parts of the world other than Israel,...and that their true homeland is in Israel--even though this attitude is to the detriment not only of integration in America but also to Jewish institutions in America.¹³⁴

Louise Reichert contends that there was very little support for *aliyah* at Rockdale Temple. She states, "I don't think anybody from our temple ever made *aliyah*. We thought that anybody who went there was a martyr or an idealist. We did not feel Israel was the place that Jews SHOULD be going to."¹³⁵

Many mainstream Jewish organizations also argued against Ben-Gurion's definition of Zionism and call for mass *aliyah*. These included the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform), American Jewish Committee, Zionist Organization of America, American Jewish Congress, Union of Orthodox Rabbis, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform).¹³⁶

Rabbi Reichert and Rockdale Temple

After 1948, changes in attitudes toward Israel among key players in the community became apparent. One of these shifts is evidenced in the new perspective of Rabbi Reichert of Rockdale Temple, who previously had been a strong supporter of the American Council for Judaism. A trip to Israel that he and his wife Louise

¹³⁴Every Friday, May 13, 1949, p. 3.

¹³⁵Reichert.

¹³⁶"Ben-Gurion's View On Diaspora Is Assailed in U.S.," The American Israelite, January 5, 1961, p. 1.

took proved to be a turning point. Suddenly, Rabbi Reichert saw things in an entirely new light. Louise recalls:

Victor did not resign from the American Council for Judaism until he went to Israel in 1952, and then he very quietly resigned.

The people who were in charge of the American Council were lovely people. Lessing Rosenwald was one of the great figures. On our trip back from Israel, we saw Lessing Rosenwald in Rome and Victor told him "Lessing, you've got to go to Israel, you've got to see it and get out of the Council." Rosenwald laughed.¹³⁷

Louise remembers that there were some members of Rockdale Temple who were unhappy with her husband's change of position. These people "felt very strongly against Zionism, and there were people who accused him of saying that the Temple should become a Zionist center. They were suspicious of any talk about Zionism."¹³⁸

In his Yom Kippur evening sermon for 1953, Rabbi Reichert spoke out against the Council. In response, one of the diehard anti-Zionists wrote the rabbi a personal letter of complaint. The letter reads in part:

Dear Victor:

...Had you deliberately intended to offend those of your congregation who are members of the American Council for Judaism, you could not have succeeded more admirably than in your Yom Kippur eve sermon. In my opinion there was no reason whatsoever for your having mentioned the Council by name.

Every movement has its lunatic fringe but I am positive that the vast majority of Council members are not "extremists" as you termed them, in their feeling

¹³⁷Reichert.

¹³⁸Ibid.

that Israel is "just another foreign state." The fact that most of them support the United Jewish Appeal is proof enough.

But I am sure they do feel that where the political interest of the U.S.A. is concerned, the problems of the entire Middle East must be considered as a whole, and no one state, even Israel, should be selected for preferential treatment.

I, like all Jews, wish to see the Israel experiment succeed, but I adhere to my opinion that it is not proving to be the ideal democracy that it professed to be, and even if that is a minority opinion among Jews, I insist that it be not only tolerated but respected....¹³⁹

This letter is one example of the lingering non-Zionism which persisted at Rockdale Temple. Although Victor Reichert never became hotly Zionist, he did support the State of Israel. In 1961, he and four other Reform rabbis were even honored by the Cincinnati Committee of the State of Israel Bonds for their advocacy of Israel.¹⁴⁰ Despite his shift in attitude, Louise Reichert observes that "there are even people in our congregation who still belong to the American Council for Judaism today [in 1992]!"¹⁴¹

The School For Judaism

The remaining anti-Zionists were not pleased with any of these developments. Wise Temple had been Zionist for some time, and now Rockdale Temple was moving away from its anti-Zionist roots. In response, a number of families left Rockdale Temple in 1954 to form the School for Judaism. Sponsored by the American Council

¹³⁹Letter from Ralph Bloom to Rabbi Victor Reichert, September 20, 1953.

¹⁴⁰The American Israelite, October 5, 1961, p. 1.

¹⁴¹Reichert.

for Judaism, this religious school met on Sunday mornings. It was the eighth such Council school in the United States, and the founders promised potential students and members that only "classic Reform Judaism as taught by the late Rabbi Isaac M. Wise will be presented."¹⁴²

Charles Tobias, a longtime Federation and community leader, was an early member of the School for Judaism. He recalls the attitude of his circle of family and friends toward Zionism:

My group [of friends] was passive about Israel.... My parents saw Israel as another foreign country, that had a great deal to be sympathetic about because these people had been refugees and they were Jews. But as far as this being our personal responsibility, that emotional involvement was not there. Israel's victory and independence didn't change this much, and this is the case with those who are still around who were my childhood friends. I still don't feel the type of emotional involvement that many others do.¹⁴³

The early members of the Cincinnati School for Judaism had feelings that were similar to these, but it was the Jewish movement to the suburbs that provided the impetus for the creation of this new school. According to Mr. Tobias:

The school attracted people moving to Wyoming who like myself objected to increased traditionalism and chauvinistic attitude toward Israel. The Cincinnati School for Judaism was run in the home of [a parent]. There were a dozen or so families and it was taught by the parents.

The curricula was furnished by the American Council for Judaism. I didn't see anything in it that was objectionable. There was little in it on Israel at all. It had Bible stories and holidays, with little on Jewish history or Israel.

The school formed for a combination of ideological and geographical reasons. But there is no question that there was a dissatisfaction with the existing

¹⁴²The American Israelite, September 16, 1954, p. 1.

¹⁴³Interview with Charles Tobias, December 22, 1992.

temple sunday schools as having too much Hebrew, which was a foreign language.... The other schools were teaching things that were foreign to Americanism, like the language.¹⁴⁴

The school was relatively successful, and in 1959 its membership voted to constitute itself into a congregation "to be known as the Cincinnati School and Congregation for Judaism."¹⁴⁵ This congregation, which later became known as the Valley Temple, first met in rented quarters and had lay led services. Soon after this, student rabbis served the congregation on a weekly basis. Traditionalism in the services and use of Hebrew remained key issues.¹⁴⁶

The Hebrew Union College

In 1947, the presidency of the Hebrew Union College passed from Julian Morgenstern to Nelson Glueck. According to Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, current president of H.U.C. and Dr. Glueck's successor, "Glueck brought a passionate kind of visceral Zionism" to the College.¹⁴⁷ Dr. Glueck's widow Helen reflected on her late husband's attachment to Israel:

Nelson loved the desert, he was just the happiest man there you've ever seen. He loved the country, but he was not originally a political Zionist. His love of Israel originally was because of the Bible and because he was Jewish. He always said he felt much more at home there than in this country. Also, he

¹⁴⁴Ibid.

¹⁴⁵The American Israelite, June 18, 1959, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶Tobias.

¹⁴⁷Interview with Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, December 23, 1992.

was beloved in Israel. He could draw a huge crowd for a lecture and make it come alive for these people [in Israel].¹⁴⁸

Dr. Glueck regularly took trips to Israel and conducted a great deal of his archeological exploration and research within that country.¹⁴⁹ In Cincinnati, Glueck enthusiastically supported the sale of Israel Bonds.¹⁵⁰ Through these and other actions, Dr. Glueck made his attitude about support for Israel known both locally and worldwide. He led by example and did not force others to conform to his view.

Dr. Gottschalk, who was a rabbinic student from 1952 to 1957, remembers that "Glueck used little coercion to get people to toe the mark on ideology. He had grown up under Morgenstern and his tremendous suppression of Zionism in the College, [and Glueck did things differently]." Through Glueck, the students "felt the presence of Israel and archeology. The student association invited prominent Israelis to come. Dr. Glueck invited [Israeli Prime Minister] Moshe Sharett."¹⁵¹

Under Nelson Glueck, the College tried to strike a balance between a devotion to American Judaism and a commitment to the Jewish State of Israel. Dr. Glueck presided over the Hebrew Union College's merger with the Jewish Institute of

¹⁴⁸Glueck.

¹⁴⁹For example, see "Scientific Group Is To Hear Dr. Glueck In Israel Oct. 5," The American Israelite, September 25, 1952, p. 1.

¹⁵⁰For example, see "Dr. Nelson Glueck Cites 3 Reasons Why He Urges Israeli Bond Purchases," The American Israelite, November 18, 1954, p. 5 (The three reasons Dr. Glueck gives to buy bonds are: we must strengthen the only democracy in the Near East; we should be proud of this Jewish "miracle" of Israel; and, we might eventually be able to use some of the funds to build a branch of H.U.C. in Jerusalem).

¹⁵¹Ibid.

Religion (J.I.R.) in New York. The J.I.R. had been a Reform seminary with strongly Zionist tendencies from its inception. Dr. Glueck was the ideal figure to bring the two schools together.¹⁵²

The Hebrew Union College faculty was not as excited about Israel as was Dr. Glueck. Dr. Gottschalk remembers that certain students desired to spend a year of study in Jerusalem, which was not well received. He explains:

There was considerable unease among some faculty about Israel and Zionism and the notion of program of study to take a year off, go to Israel and study Hebrew at Hebrew University. The faculty made this difficult if not impossible to do. [They would not permit credits to transfer, since] there were no comparable courses in Jerusalem to what you would have to take here.¹⁵³

Shortly after taking the helm at the Hebrew Union College, Nelson Glueck began planning to open a branch of the College in Jerusalem. Glueck had lost his access to museums, schools, and archeological institutions on the east side of the city when Jerusalem became a divided city in 1948. Since there was no longer any place that an American Jewish archeologist could work, Glueck needed to establish his own School of Biblical Archeology.¹⁵⁴

As with the H.U.C. campuses in the United States, Dr. Glueck insisted that the Jerusalem campus contain a chapel. This created quite a controversy within the Israeli religious establishment, which was rigidly orthodox and anti-Reform. Glueck and the College responded that:

¹⁵²Michael Meyer in Karff, p. 168.

¹⁵³Gottschalk.

¹⁵⁴Glueck.

the institution will not be a [religious] congregation. It will be a school for research, for graduate students, and for those College-Institute students who wish to come there to catch the spirit of the prophets of old....

The Institute in Israel will include a chapel.

The College-Institute is co-operating with the World Union for Progressive Judaism and with other Liberal Jewish agencies in the United States toward creation of an indigenous Liberal Jewish movement in Israel. But [this] is an entirely separate endeavor.¹⁵⁵

In 1956, after much political maneuvering, the municipal council of Jerusalem voted by a margin of 10-6 to grant the license necessary to commence construction of the Jerusalem school.¹⁵⁶ The School of Biblical Research and Archaeology, including the chapel, opened in 1961.¹⁵⁷ Two years later, Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion spoke at the dedication of a new building at the Jerusalem campus. Ben-Gurion expressed the hope that the school would serve as a center for many Jews affiliated with H.U.C., and not only for archaeologists of all faiths.¹⁵⁸

Helen Glueck reveals that her husband originally conceived of the Jerusalem branch of H.U.C. as an outlet for his archeological interests. However, she confides that:

I always knew, because he told me, [he said,] "My greatest dream is to have my rabbinical students spend the first year [of their studies] in Israel." This was from the beginning. [Because of this plan,] although the orthodox fought

¹⁵⁵The American Israelite, August 4, 1955, p. 1.

¹⁵⁶The American Israelite, August 16, 1956, p. 1.

¹⁵⁷The American Israelite, March 10, 1960, p. 1.

¹⁵⁸The American Israelite, April 4, 1963, p. 1.

him tooth and nail, he insisted on putting in a chapel just as in the other [H.U.C.] campuses.¹⁵⁹

Dr. Glueck was privileged to witness the first class of H.U.C. rabbinic students that went to Jerusalem in 1970 to participate in the newly instituted first year in Israel program. This dream fulfilled, Nelson Glueck died in 1971.

Fund Raising

Once Israeli statehood had been achieved in 1948 it was no longer essential for Zionists to expend energy on political lobbying of the United Nations and the U.S. government. The new critical need was to secure dollars to support the young and struggling state. To meet this demand, many turned their attention to fund raising.

Longtime Zionist activist Dr. M.S. Schulzinger recalls the way in which the increasing need for funds following Israeli independence affected Cincinnati Zionist leadership:

When the state was founded it attracted new local leadership, and those with money were now attracted more readily. The Poale Zion was not a proper agency to raise millions, because its members were struggling economically to get settled in this country. We had to attract new people. Ben Gurion came and spoke here and failed. He sent Golda Meir, and she overwhelmed them.¹⁶⁰

Golda Meir (later prime minister of Israel) and many other Israeli government officials made frequent trips to Cincinnati to headline Bonds For Israel and Jewish Welfare Fund events. Meir, who was originally from Milwaukee, was a perennial

¹⁵⁹Glueck.

¹⁶⁰Schulzinger.

favorite in midwestern Cincinnati. Dr. Schulzinger notes with some amusement that before there was a State of Israel, Meir was not well received in Cincinnati. He recalls that:

Golda Meir came every year, she would stay at my home and meet people there. But this never attracted people outside of Poale Zion. It's almost unbelievable that before the state was founded and she became a government official she was not accepted by the American Jewish community in Cincinnati and everywhere else.

Similarly, Nachum and Sham Eden remember that:

when Golda Meir came to Cincinnati before 1948, the Hadassah women felt she was too emotional! But after the war [for Israeli Independence] was over, there was a great change. They [the Hadassah women] were the ones who were excited and wanted to hear every word she had to say. How glorious it was that Jews had stood up and fought and won."¹⁶¹

Golda Meir visited Cincinnati in 1951 to promote a \$500,000,000 State of Israel bond issue, and to explain Israeli industrial and agricultural development.¹⁶²

She returned in 1952 to encourage fund raising efforts. On that visit, Every Friday wrote that:

Few women have reached such heights of international fame as Mrs. Myerson [sic]. Farm worker, author, diplomat, executive, government leader, school teacher, mother and crusader for peace and freedom, Golda Myerson [sic] has become one of Israel's most eloquent and forceful spokesmen, and a veritable symbol for Israel's moral stature in the international arena.¹⁶³

She returned year after year, always drawing excellent crowds and raising large sums of money. For example, Meir spoke at an Israel Bond dinner after the Sinai

¹⁶¹Eden.

¹⁶²Every Friday, March 21, 1952, p. 1.

¹⁶³Ibid.

Campaign was over at the end of 1956. More than 1,000 people turned out that evening, and Meir was able to persuade Cincinnatians to purchase almost \$200,000 worth of bonds during the dinner.¹⁶⁴ The high level of giving can be partly attributed to the community's response to crisis, but it is also in part due to Golda Meir's marvelous standing in Cincinnati. The \$200,000 raised in one night was even more remarkable considering that the Cincinnati Israeli Bonds drive for all of 1955 reached only \$411,000.¹⁶⁵ Meir succeeded in raising almost half of the prior year's total at that one dinner.

Another important and frequent visitor to Cincinnati was Abba Eban, Israeli ambassador to the United States.¹⁶⁶ One year after Golda Meir's \$200,000 triumph, Eban was able to raise \$125,000 at a similar dinner.¹⁶⁷ This was quite an achievement since the end of 1957 was a relatively calm period in terms of Israeli security. Raising large amounts of money in times where there was no imminent crisis was a challenge that a speaker like Eban was able to meet. Moshe Sharett was another prominent dignitary who often travelled to Cincinnati, although it does not

¹⁶⁴Every Friday, December 28, 1956, p. 1.

¹⁶⁵Every Friday, January 13, 1956, p. 1.

¹⁶⁶For examples, see Every Friday, May 18, 1951, p. 1, and October 22, 1954, p. 1.

¹⁶⁷Every Friday, December 6, 1957, p. 1.

seem that he was quite as popular or as successful in raising funds as were Meir or Eban.¹⁶⁸

Eleanor Roosevelt, widow of President Roosevelt, also headlined major events and spoke out on behalf of Israel.¹⁶⁹ Every Friday reports that at one dinner in 1957, Mrs. Roosevelt "urged the group to invest heavily in Israel Bonds as a means of strengthening the economy of the Jewish State. This, she felt, would inevitably lead to recognition of Israel by the Arab states."¹⁷⁰

During this period from 1949 to 1966, purchases of Israel Bonds and pledges to the Jewish Welfare Fund briefly surged two times. The first time, as mentioned above, was during and immediately following the 1956 Suez Canal crisis and Sinai Campaign. The second time was from 1959 to 1962, when Adolf Eichmann was captured and put on trial in Israel. Eichmann was the Nazi in charge of the "Final Solution" for European and world Jewry.

Sol Schaengold, the 1961 Cincinnati Jewish Welfare Fund campaign chairman, reported on the effect this trial had on the campaign. He concluded that:

...response to the 1961 Cincinnati Jewish Welfare Fund has swelled to greater heights during the past few weeks because of awesome realities recalled by the Eichmann trial.

We are indeed fortunate to be living during an era, and in a world, where it is Eichmann rather than the Jewish people on trial. However, too often, such a

¹⁶⁸For examples, see "Israel Needs Arms for Defense," The American Israelite, December 1, 1955, p. 1, and "Responsibility for Security Of Israel On Shoulders Of All World's Jews--Sharett," Every Friday, March 28, 1958, p. 1.

¹⁶⁹For example, see Every Friday, August 20, 1954, p. 1.

¹⁷⁰Every Friday, October 11, 1957, p. 1.

desirable period is void of the excitement necessary to produce increased giving for vital yet "undramatic" needs.

Reviewing the horrible fate millions of our brethren suffered at the hands of Eichmann has made Jews of Cincinnati, and all over the world, count their blessings and give more to the JWF out of thankfulness.¹⁷¹

Zionist Activity

Upon the realization of Israeli independence, activism among Cincinnati Zionists began to wane. Zionists no longer needed to rally together to marshal their forces against the anti-Zionists. Nachum Eden describes it as "slowly becoming an inertia kind of thing."¹⁷² Zionists had meetings and occasional rallies, but except for the period of crisis in 1956 the overall mood was that of more passive Zionism.

Prior to 1948, the key Zionist organization in Cincinnati had been Poale Zion. Its ideology of giving power to the laborers who work the land was quite appealing to supporters of President Roosevelt's "New Deal." However in the 1950's a fear of Communism filled the United States. Nachum Eden was in Israel from 1947 to 1952. He describes the new attitudes and concerns he experienced upon his return:

We stayed [in Israel] until 1952. When we returned to Cincinnati there was a great change. It was the period of McCarthyism, and people were conscious of what they were saying. It was so strange to me.

Our organization became known as the Labor Zionist Alliance. You didn't use Hebrew names [like Poale Zion] because people might become suspicious.

¹⁷¹The American Israelite, April 20, 1961, p. 1.

¹⁷²Eden.

Even [the term] Labor became questionable, so you called it Friends of Labor Zionism.¹⁷³

According to Dr. M.S. Schulzinger, the name "Friends of Labor Zionism" was chosen because it did not commit the members to any particular philosophical position. It simply said that they were in favor of Labor Zionism, but not that they were actively committed to enacting its plan.¹⁷⁴

Labor Zionist meetings and events tended to be designed to educate and inform its membership about happenings in Israel. Rabbis Wohl and Heller presided over many of these affairs, and spoke at numerous Labor Zionist meetings.¹⁷⁵ On occasion, the Labor Zionists even sponsored events of a religious nature. At Passover in 1951, they held the "Labor Zionist Third Seder." The evening included an invocation by Rabbi Wohl, a speech by a guest lecturer, and group singing from the Haggadah.¹⁷⁶

The other significant Zionist group in this period was Hadassah. Anita Hyman was an active member of Hadassah both before and after the State of Israel was in existence. She noticed a definite change in the attitude of Cincinnatians toward Zionism in this latter period. Ms. Hyman recalls:

¹⁷³Ibid.

¹⁷⁴Schulzinger.

¹⁷⁵For examples, see "Rabbi Wohl To Preside Over Labor Zionist Dessert Banquet March 27," and "'Zionism Just Beginning' Dr. Heller Tells LZOA," Every Friday, (respectively) March 18, 1949, p. 1; and August 1, 1952, p. 1.

¹⁷⁶"Dr. Sherman To Speak At Labor Zionist Seder," Every Friday, April 13, 1951, p. 1.

After 1948 Hadassah became more acceptable and popular. It was a fact that there was a state. Our President [Truman] had given his stamp of approval and the people were excited. Israel was widely covered in the general press.¹⁷⁷

The women of Hadassah furnished critical support to Israel in its time of crisis in 1956. Hadassah worked to raise money for Israel through encouragement of the sale of Israeli Bonds.¹⁷⁸ Hadassah continued with its primary mission of raising funds to provide for Israeli medical needs. Anita Hyman was privileged to travel to Israel to see part of the Hadassah goal achieved. She reflects on the repercussions of this trip:

In 1960 we went to Israel for the dedication of the Hadassah hospital. [This trip] intensified our interest in Israel. We passed that on to our children, family and friends.

When we came home they all wanted to see our films. Later, in 1962, we took our kids to Israel. When the Israelis we had met visited Cincinnati, they held parlor meetings at our home. A month didn't go by without us having a parlor meeting!¹⁷⁹

Hadassah, the Labor Zionists, and a few other organizations maintained a semblance of Zionist activism in Cincinnati. Aside from those events, there was one Zionist gala annually for the entire community. Each year the Cincinnati community joined together to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. At first this was a major event. In 1949, the Israelite described:

¹⁷⁷Interview with Anita Hyman, December 24, 1992.

¹⁷⁸Ibid.

¹⁷⁹Ibid.

A throng which virtually filled Taft Auditorium celebrated Tuesday Evening, May 17, on the occasion of the State of Israel's first anniversary.

Dr. James G. Heller of Wise Temple was the speaker. Shoshana Damari and Joseph Goland, musical revue stars from Israel, entertained.

Dr. Heller compared Israel's advent to the "turn of the tide, the coming of the rainbow that God has set in the clouds after the flood has subsided from view."¹⁸⁰

The next year the program was held in the Cox Theater, and again Rabbi Heller spoke.¹⁸¹ By the time of Israel's eighth anniversary, the celebration was much smaller. Additionally it was headlined by entertainers, not by Zionist leaders and thinkers. Excerpts from the Every Friday describe this scene in 1956:

Many hundreds of Jewish citizens participated...in the celebration of Israel's Eighth Birthday, sponsored and arranged by the Israel Bonds Organization of Cincinnati.

The first attraction...was a fascinating ISRAELI FASHION SHOW....

The second big attraction was Zero Mostel, Night Club comedy star, star of theatre and screen and painter who delighted the audience with his many witty and spirited stories.¹⁸²

For the tenth anniversary in 1958, the celebration featured an Israeli dancer and was merely the third program in the ongoing "Jewish Culture and Art Series."¹⁸³ Nachum Eden recalls that by this time "Israeli Independence Day had

¹⁸⁰"Israel's First Anniversary Celebrated," The American Israelite, May 26, 1949, p. 1.

¹⁸¹The American Israelite, April 27, 1950, p. 1.

¹⁸²Every Friday, June 5, 1956, p. 1.

¹⁸³Every Friday, April 11, 1958, p. 1.

become a weak kind of thing. Only a handful of people showed up."¹⁸⁴ He believes that one reason for this was that the American Jewish Committee did not want to encourage demonstrative support for Israel out of fear of accusations of dual loyalty.¹⁸⁵

The one time that many Jews did rally and speak out on behalf of Israel was before and during the Suez Canal crisis. Throughout 1955 and 1956, the Soviet Union supplied Egypt and Syria with tremendous amounts of arms. Egypt also blockaded Israel's southern port of Eilat. During this period, Cincinnati Jews held public events in support of Israel. There were mass meetings such as a rally at the Feinberg Synagogue that was "called in the face of Israel's imminent and grave danger from the supplies of arms received by the hostile Near East neighbors of Israel."¹⁸⁶ Every Friday also reported that there was also a public airing of an "International Telephone Conference Call...[between] Senator Herbert Lehman, Ambassador Abba Eban, Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver and Dr. Joseph Schwartz," at which they spoke "about the VERY GRAVE SITUATION WHICH ISRAEL IS NOW FACING."¹⁸⁷

Once the fighting began, however, the attitude of the Cincinnati Jewish community changed perceptibly. Jews were uncomfortable with the fact that Israel

¹⁸⁴Eden.

¹⁸⁵Ibid.

¹⁸⁶"Your Presence At This Meeting Is Most Urgent," Every Friday, November 4, 1955, p. 1.

¹⁸⁷"This Is A Must!" Every Friday, January 20, 1956, p. 1.

had initiated the attack on Egypt, and that President Eisenhower had come out publicly against the Israeli actions. In a front page commentary headlined, "Is Israel The Aggressor?" the Every Friday stated, "We cannot believe that the Israel government has waged a full-fledged 'preventive' war which it has always condemned in the past."¹⁸⁸

Dr. Ezra Spicehandler, who was by that time a faculty member of the Hebrew Union College, remembers the situation in Cincinnati well. He recalls:

In 1956 there was a distancing of support for Israel, because of a Galut [Diaspora] mentality....

Eisenhower gave a speech in which he said that we [Americans] are dear friends of Israel, we love it and support it, but what does a friend do when a friend makes a mistake? Would it be friendship for us to keep quiet? We believe Israel made a terrible mistake.

...After Eisenhower gave his speech [against Israeli actions], Abba Eban spoke to Jewish communities around the country on closed circuit T.V. Prominent members of the Cincinnati community were invited to a meeting to watch this downtown. About a third didn't show up because they were afraid the F.B.I. was taking names down.

There was not much Jewish criticism of the Israeli operation, but I think the American Jews felt if you must choose between loyalty to the United States or to Israel it must be in favor of the U.S.

Eisenhower was shrewd. In private he threatened the United Jewish Appeal with the loss of its tax exempt status. Israel was dependant on that money, and he talked tough with Israel. Ben Gurion knew that he must have the U.S. on his side, so he was willing to back down.

Cincinnati Jews were very pleased afterward when the U.S. government indicated it was no longer angry with Israel.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸Every Friday, November 2, 1956, p. 1.

¹⁸⁹Spicehandler.

Between 1956 and 1966 Zionism became even more mainstream within the Jewish Community of Cincinnati. However, the zeal and enthusiasm it brought to the community declined. On August 13, 1965, Every Friday published its final issue. In his farewell article, the editor wrote about the reasons for the paper's inception in 1927, and also for its demise. He wrote:

...Every Friday was started...as a very sincere endeavor on our part to fill a crying need for the wellbeing of the Jewish community of Cincinnati. The English-Jewish weekly which was being published locally did not even pretend to serve as a local paper. It was looked upon as an official national organ of the Jewish-Reform group in this country....

Serving as editor afforded me the opportunity to make Every Friday a pioneer in aiding the cause of Zionism, at a time when Zionism was not a very popular ISM locally. Today, with Israel contributing so much to the stature of the Jews all over the world, my work of long ago is a source of satisfaction compensating former hardships.¹⁹⁰

Zionism was now accepted as part of mainstream Jewish life. However, it was a passive Zionism that retained little of its vibrant energy and enthusiasm of earlier years. Shortly, the events of 1967 would reinvigorate Zionism and place Israel back at the center of the American Jewish agenda.

¹⁹⁰Every Friday, August 13, 1965, p. 1.

CHAPTER FIVE

Vicarious Victory and Mainstream Zionism

During the years 1967 to 1990, Israel became a primary source of identification for Cincinnati Jews. This connection was affected by Israeli events which were of significance to the Cincinnati Jewish community. These include the Six-Day War, the Yom Kippur War, and a number of other major incidents. The responses of specific institutions illustrate the evolving concerns held by Cincinnati Jewry.

The Six-Day War

On the morning of June 5, 1967, the Israeli Defense Force went to war against the combined armed forces of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, and Syria. In a pre-emptive strike designed to thwart imminent Arab aggression, Israel managed to save itself from much greater loss of life, and possibly even ultimate destruction. By the time a cease-fire agreement ended the war on June 10, 1967, Israel had captured the Sinai, the Gaza district, the Golan Heights, the West Bank, and had succeeded in reunifying Jerusalem.¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹Sachar, p. 658.

Twenty-five years after the war, Cincinnatians remember how the community gathered together to support Israel in its time of need. As Zionist activists, Sham and Nachum Eden spent a great deal of time organizing the Cincinnati response while monitoring events in Israel. They recall the frenzied feel of those days:

We set up an information center at the J.C.C. and collected contributions. It was a citywide response to the crisis through the Federation. It became as close as you ever had to a central organization for the Jewish community, where everybody was represented.

Many [Cincinnati] Jews had already visited Israel and had connected to Israelis in that way. Many wanted to go and help but the U.S. government prohibited them from going.¹⁹²

Countless individuals also engaged in unusual acts of personal sacrifice in order to help. Some of these deeds involved the non-Jewish community as well. Phylis Karp owned an auction house downtown, and describes her own motivations and actions during the war:

My whole family was living there [in Israel] in 1967 during the Six-Day War, [In Cincinnati] we had a very positive community response, including the gentile community.

In 1967 I auctioned off my diamond and sapphire ring at my own auction house. I took nothing, but the check [from the purchaser] had to be made out to the Emergency Fund of the Jewish Welfare Fund. Every person that bought anything at that day's auction had to make the check payable to the J.W.F.¹⁹³

Sol Greenberg, rabbi at the Valley Temple since 1968, was the assistant rabbi at Wise Temple at the time of the Six-Day War. He recalls the scene there:

¹⁹²Eden.

¹⁹³Karp.

When the war broke out in 1967 we had meetings at Wise Temple. People from the J.C.R.C. [Jewish Community Relations Committee], Federation, and other rabbis in the community came to Wise Temple.

We had meetings downstairs with an open phone line to New York to find what was happening, and to organize the community for a massive fundraising drive. There was a tremendous community outpouring of money, doctors, nurses, blood--anything people could do to help.¹⁹⁴

The community did raise a tremendous amount of money in very little time.

In the six weeks during and following the war, the Cincinnati Israel Emergency Fund campaign raised \$1,268,000.¹⁹⁵ Over one million dollars of this was raised in the first seven days after fighting had begun.¹⁹⁶ In that same one-week period, over \$730,000 in Israel Bonds were purchased.¹⁹⁷

However, while Cincinnati Jewry did help Israel financially, it was not as demonstratively supportive of Israel in public in the first days and weeks after the war as many remember it to be. Certainly the community activists did play an important roll in the Jewish response to the Six-Day War. But the ordinary Cincinnati Jew was still mired in the unenthusiastic Zionism of the 1950's and early 1960's. One example of this tepid display of public identification with Israel can be found in the community rally at Wise Center on June 11, 1967. This rally for the Israel Emergency Fund campaign featured Dr. Albert Sabin, discoverer of the oral polio

¹⁹⁴Interview with Rabbi Sol Greenberg, January 5, 1993.

¹⁹⁵The American Israelite, August 3, 1967, p. 1.

¹⁹⁶To put this in perspective, the general U.J.A./Jewish Federation campaign for 1967 raised \$1,181,000 for the entire year. Source: Jewish Federation of Cincinnati Archives.

¹⁹⁷The American Israelite, June 15, 1967, p. 1.

vaccine. The event drew only 100 men and women. During his address, Dr. Sabin was forced to ask the audience, "Where are the other 600 who were urged to attend today's meeting?"¹⁹⁸

The mass public involvement came a bit later, after the magnitude of Israel's victory had time to be absorbed. Attitudes quickly changed after hearing details of the incredible success of the Israeli military. Suddenly, everyone wanted to identify with Israel. As historian Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus recalls, Jews proudly strutted around after the Six-Day War believing, "We are heros, we are Maccabeans! Everybody was elated. You can't keep those Jews [Israelis] down, they are wonderful!"¹⁹⁹

About three months after the small July 11th rally, the community held another meeting related to the Six-Day War. Dr. Ezra Spicehandler, who was in Jerusalem during the war, spoke of his experiences in Israel. He called on the Arabs to leave hatred and intransigence behind, to accept the reality of the Jewish state, and to negotiate directly with Israel. This time the meeting drew a capacity crowd of over 600 people.²⁰⁰

The Six-Day War left a lasting impact upon the attitudes of Cincinnati Jews toward Israel. It marked the start of universal acceptance of and identification with Israel by the Cincinnati Jewish community.

¹⁹⁸"Speakers Warn of Threats to Israel: 'Second Munich,' Disaster at Home," The American Israelite, June 15, 1967, p. 1.

¹⁹⁹Marcus.

²⁰⁰The American Israelite, September 21, 1967, p. 1.

The Yom Kippur War

Israel came under full scale attack again on October, 6, 1973. Egypt and Syria caught Israel by surprise by launching their attack in Sinai and the Golan on Yom Kippur. Nachum Eden remembers that war as "a very traumatic kind of experience."²⁰¹ He lived across the street from Adath Israel Synagogue, the largest Conservative congregation in Cincinnati. Eden was in the synagogue for Yom Kippur services when he heard the news. He immediately ran home and flipped on his radio. For the rest of the day, Eden periodically returned to Adath Israel to inform Rabbi Goldfeder of developments. The rabbi gave his blessing to this breach of Yom Kippur, and relayed these updates to the congregation.²⁰²

The public response of Cincinnati Jewry to the Yom Kippur War was markedly different than it had been in 1967. The American Israelite is full of accounts of ways in which the Jewish and gentile community openly identified with Israel. The Cincinnati Board of Rabbis called a public meeting for October 8, two days after the start of the war. That evening "more than 1,500 Cincinnatians overflowed Lerner auditorium of Adath Israel Synagogue...to show their solidarity with the fighting men and women of Israel.... More than \$600,000 in additional gifts to UJA and Bonds for Israel were pledged."²⁰³ Just six days later, on October 14th,

²⁰¹Eden.

²⁰²Ibid.

²⁰³The American Israelite, October 11, 1973, p. 1.

the community held another rally "in behalf of Israel's victory on the battlefield."²⁰⁴

The Israelite describes that, "Hundreds led by Rabbi Donald Splansky carrying the Torah and 20 boys and girls carrying the blue and white flags of Israel, and marched from Section and Reading Roads to the Jewish Center."²⁰⁵ The public nature of the march and the large number of people involved in both of these events indicate a powerful and widespread communal identification with Israel.

The American Israelite of October 25th reports on the wide variety of communal responses to the crisis. It records:

"Eager To Serve Israel's Cause": Thousands of Cincinnatians--including the young, the middle-aged, the elderly; rabbis and lay-persons; business men and women and professionals are giving many of their waking hours these days and nights in behalf of Israel....

The Board of Rabbis sponsored a rally for Israel Monday evening, Oct. 22, at the Jewish Community Center.... A feature of the meeting was the lighting of 656 memorial candles--one for each Israeli soldier reported killed in the early fighting in the Mid-East....

Dr. Warren Bennis, president of UC [University of Cincinnati], spoke at a meeting of the UC Jewish Faculty Council Wednesday night, Oct. 24th.

Fathers of each of three Israeli families living in Cincinnati are known to have been called back to Israel to serve in the armed forces....

Mechanism for a blood donor center is being set up at Jewish Hospital in the event that Israel calls for blood plasma.

"Sunday School Pupils Will Have March, Rally for Israel Sunday": Cincinnati Jewish Sunday School pupils will participate in a march and rally for Israel on Sunday, October 28. The Principals' Council of the Bureau of Jewish Education, which has planned the activity, says the program will give the

²⁰⁴The American Israelite, October 18, 1973, p. 1.

²⁰⁵Ibid.

younger children in the community an opportunity to express their feelings about Israel.

"Council Moves To Aid Israel": [Cincinnati] City Council's unanimous approval of the proposal to purchase \$1 million of Bonds for Israel and Mayor Theodore M. Berry's proclamation have constituted two quite welcome and heartening lifts in behalf of that beleaguered nation.... Council's action is quite comparable to the thrilling response in many cities across the nation.

"Teen-Agers' 'Walk' To Aid Israel's Cause": Teenagers from several of Cincinnati's Jewish youth groups will walk ten miles for Israel on Sunday, Oct. 28.... [They] will hike ten miles in a circle and return to the JCC. Following the walk, the teens will sponsor a benefit dance and supper at the JCC. The proceeds from this event, too, will go to the Israel Emergency Fund.²⁰⁶

Some students at the Hebrew Union College took an especially creative approach in their response to the emergency. Rabbi Abie Ingber, current director of the University of Cincinnati Hillel, was a rabbinic student in 1973. He recalls that the response came from Jew and non-Jew alike:

During the Yom Kippur War [some friends and I] commandeered H.U.C.'s pickup truck. [We called it] the "Israel Actionmobile," and drove with huge Israeli flags saying, "Support Tiny Israel" or "Support Israel during the War."

We drove through the non-Jewish parts of Cincinnati--Western Hills, Price Hill, shopping centers where there were very few Jews that would have been residents in the area--and encouraged people to throw money into the back of the truck that we sent to the Israel Emergency Fund.

The response was unbelievable in these non-Jewish, obviously Christian, primarily Catholic communities in the city. It was a willingness a la Salvation

²⁰⁶The American Israelite, October 25, 1973. See also in same date of this newspaper "Volunteers for Non-Military Work Told Whom To Contact in Cincinnati," and "HUC-JIR Students Serve on Local, National Level in the Emergency."

Army to throw money into the kettle, to throw money into H.U.C.'s pickup truck, to be given to tiny Israel...for the Yom Kippur war.²⁰⁷

Following Israel's victory in the Yom Kippur War, the Israelite saw fit to write an editorial in praise of Cincinnati's favorite Israeli, Prime Minister Golda Meir:

There are heroes innumerable of the battles being fought for Israel.... But there is one individual who is the unsurpassed inspiration for all others.

She is Golda Meir--that doughty warrior in civilian garb. Weary almost beyond endurance, she has not tired of the battle. Heartsick at the loss of the flower of Israel's youth, she looks not for sympathy but goes instead to comfort the wounded--and there is comforted instead by the wounded who urge her to carry on....

We salute this gallant woman.²⁰⁸

The Struggle For Public Opinion

By 1974, Israel had defeated the combined Arab armies in four major wars. As a result of this success, the American media began to portray Israel as a potent regional power. The close military, economic, and political support that the United States gave to Israel contributed to this perception. By the late 1970's, President Sadat of Egypt had even accepted the reality of Israeli political legitimacy. This move resulted in Israel's first peace treaty and diplomatic relationship with a neighboring country, and furthered the Western media image of a secure Israel.

²⁰⁷Interview with Rabbi Abie Ingber, December 16, 1992.

²⁰⁸The American Israelite, November 8, 1973, p. 4.

However, changes in the internal Israeli political situation began to create new obstacles. In the 1977 elections for the Israeli Knesset (Parliament), the left-of-center Labor Party lost control of the government for the first time since the establishment of the state. In its place, the right-of-center Likud Party ascended to power. The hawkish Likud government proceeded to respond aggressively to a number of crisis situations, including the increasing nuclear potential of Iraq, the harassment of northern Israel by Palestinian terrorists in Lebanon, and the ongoing controversy over the disposition of territories gained in the Six-Day War.

In general, the Cincinnati Jewish community was not as comfortable with the new Likud leadership as it had been with Labor. Dr. Michael Rapp, Executive Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Cincinnati, believes this discomfort was connected to the fact that, "The [Cincinnati] laypeople had a certain amount of status with Labor party figures who had known them for many years. They didn't have those connections with Likud figures."²⁰⁹

American Jewry, which identified closely with Israel, understood the precarious nature of the Israeli situation. Therefore, the Cincinnati Jewish community frequently found itself in the uncomfortable position of defending Israeli actions. In 1978, on the occasion of Israel's thirtieth anniversary, The American Israelite published an editorial entitled, "Beyond These 30 Years--The Struggle For Public Opinion," which described the new challenge facing Cincinnati Jewry:

²⁰⁹Interview with Dr. Michael Rapp, December 24, 1992.

Even in the 30th year of establishment, the State of Israel finds herself beset by hostile neighbors....

Israel's insistence upon a certain security is misinterpreted--intentionally or unintentionally--by some segments of the mass media as indefensible intransigence....

We are living in a period of a cold war in which the stake is the winning of public opinion.

Israel's story must be told ceaselessly, factually and convincingly. And it is not for Israel alone that the fight must be waged. It must be waged because Israel constitutes a vital ally of the U.S.; because Israel has earned the friendship and support of all lovers of democracy; and because those who seek Israel's destruction are contributing to a repetition of the Holocaust.²¹⁰

The message was clear: Cincinnati Jews must stand by Israel. The Cincinnati Jewish community's response to the controversial actions of the Likud government was to support Israel by explaining and publicizing the logic behind Israeli actions. An example of this is found in the Israelite editorial which gave a cautious justification for the 1981 Israeli bombing of an Iraqi nuclear reactor. It explained:

Israel's destruction of an atomic reactor near Baghdad, Iraq, Sunday, June 7, has drawn comment from embassies and political and military observers around the world.

Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin announced that the bombing was necessary in order to prevent Iraq from attacking Israeli cities with atomic bombs similar to those dropped on Hiroshima during World War II.

Israel enjoys the reputation of having an intelligence service unsurpassed in the world. We believe she ordered the attack because she was convinced that the atomic reactor constituted a "clear and present danger" to her security.

Israel was not alone in suffering the confrontation by the atomic device in the hands of Iraq.

²¹⁰The American Israelite, May 11, 1978, p. 4.

It [bombing the Iraqi reactor] was not an easy choice but on the basis of information available to date, it seemed the choice she [Israel] had to make for her self preservation.²¹¹

During the 1982 Lebanon War, the Cincinnati Jewish community once again stood by Israel. Efforts were made to educate the rest of Cincinnati about the reasons for Israel's invasion of Lebanon, but there were no parades or other forms of public protest to show support. During the war, Jewish community leaders travelled to Lebanon on Israeli government sponsored missions. They returned from these trips with the information needed to explicate and rationalize Israel's actions. They played down the purported devastation of Lebanon as an exaggeration of the media, contending that the damage is "not nearly what we have been led to believe." They continued that Lebanon had "the appearance of normality."²¹²

The Jews of Cincinnati did what they could to put the best face possible on the war in Lebanon. This became more difficult to do as the war dragged on. Dr.

Michael Rapp recalls:

At first the Lebanon war was easy to explain to the non-Jewish world . [For Israel to invade] 25 to 50 kilometers made sense, but it was more difficult to defend as Beirut was under siege.

[The massacre of Palestinians by Lebanese Christians at] Sabra and Shatilla [refugee camps, which were under Israeli military command] was also difficult. There was a sense of horror in this community. [However,] there were no major community protests. It caused anxiety in the Jewish community [over how Israel's actions reflected on Cincinnati Jewry]. However, the Israeli investigation of this event was helpful because we could

²¹¹The American Israelite, June 11, 1981, p. 4.

²¹²The American Israelite, August 26, 1982, p. 1.

say [to critics], "Where else in the Middle East could this [judicial process and democratic accountability] happen?"²¹³

Eventually, the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati even sent Cincinnati Mayor David Mann, a non-Jew, on a trip to Lebanon. When he returned, Mann addressed an overflow crowd of more than 500 people at the Jewish Community Center. He told the audience that he now recognized how the P.L.O. had destabilized Lebanon, and had also posed a genuine military threat to Israel. By taking this trip, Mann now understood what it was like for Israelis to live under the constant threat of terrorism, expressing his feeling that, "Unless you've been there...seen the conditions...talked to people who have lived with bombings as part of their lives, you can't really appreciate this."²¹⁴

The Jews of Cincinnati stood behind Israel despite the controversy over the 1982 war in Lebanon. However, when the *intifada* (Palestinian uprising against Israel) began five years later, the Jewish response was quite different. Hillel Rabbi Abie Ingber asserts that much had changed over those five years. He contends:

Israel under [Prime Minister] Shamir ceased being an underdog. The same "Israel Actionmobile" [from the Yom Kippur War] would not have had money thrown at it. There were no underdogs, not Palestinians or Israelis.

There was very little Israel activism. That was the mood on [the University of Cincinnati] campus. We'd monitor [Israeli] elections via radio and hold mock elections where the Left would always win, [which was] never characteristic of reality. Even Israeli fairs on campus were more due to a staff need to express themselves than a student need to hear about Israel.²¹⁵

²¹³Rapp.

²¹⁴The American Israelite, September 16, 1982, p. 4.

²¹⁵Ingber.

It was no simple task for Cincinnati Jewry to paint a positive picture of the Israeli reaction to the *intifada*. Ingber describes the Hillel response:

They were difficult days. It was tough to wear your "Zionism Is A Badge Of Honor" button. The staff found the cultural beauty in Israel, and down played the political situation. Externally, we promoted Israel's antiquity, its beauty, and its beaches. Internally, we discussed how to respond to questions [about the uprising].²¹⁶

When the *intifada* began, the broader Cincinnati Jewish community confronted the dilemma of what kind of role it should play in relation to Israel. Aubrey Herman, the Executive Vice President of the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati, recalls that the Federation leadership made a conscious decision to alter the Jewish community's relationship to Israel. Herman explains:

The *intifada* was a key change. It gave the Federation the opportunity to decide whether [our relationship to Israel] was going to be a blind faith, following the party line, or recognize the fact that in spite of our commitment to Israel it is o.k. to disagree and not just accept things lying down. From 1987 on, we were conscious that we were not going to sugar coat [news about Israel], we were not going to lay down [and follow the Israeli line], we were not going to stand up and raise the [Israeli] flag every time there was a problem.

Our job is to give our constituency, which we define as the entire community, the real picture. We would show them Jericho on the one side, go into the territories on the other, and [then] we would show them Tel Aviv. Our missions began to deal with those issues of the *intifada*.

We became serious in our public relations. When we disagreed with Israel we were clear about it.... When our constituency started raising questions we started being very honest.²¹⁷

²¹⁶Ibid.

²¹⁷Interview with Aubrey Herman, January 5, 1993.

One public event that reflected this new relationship was a community forum on the topic, "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Is There a Solution?" It was held less than two months after the start of the *intifada*. The Israeli consul general spoke, responded to a panel of questioners, and took questions from the audience. In its editorial prior to the meeting, the Israelite expressed the new Jewish willingness to voice reservations about Israeli actions. The Israelite urged:

Cincinnati's will have the opportunity to hear a voice from the Israeli government and to express their own opinions at a community forum....

Jews are deeply troubled by the current situation in Israel. It is important that we hear reports first hand, whenever possible, and that we have the opportunity to voice our opinions.

Next Wednesday is such an opportunity. We urge the community to attend.²¹⁸

Recent Changes in Rockdale Temple

From 1942 to 1990, Rockdale Temple experienced a tremendous change in its attitude toward Zionism. Rabbi Reichert was a staunch anti-Zionist who reflected the feelings of most members of his congregation. Although Reichert never considered himself to be a Zionist, eventually he recognized the need for the State of Israel and came to support it. By the middle of the 1970's, when Rabbi Reichert was rabbi

²¹⁸The American Israelite, January 28, 1988, p. 4.

emeritus, the congregation was supportive enough of Israel to host speakers such as Abba Eban and Menachem Begin.²¹⁹

Rabbi Mark Goldman, senior rabbi of Rockdale Temple since 1986, has witnessed a significant shift in attitudes toward Israel over the past six years. He began to recognize the staying power of the "old guard" of Classical Reformers as soon as he began his tenure at Rockdale. He recalls:

At my interview [for the position of senior rabbi],... they asked questions with a hidden agenda like, "What is your view on Israel? What do you feel about Jerusalem? Should a Jew live in Israel? Do we have to travel to Israel? Should we make *aliyah*? What do you think about the Israeli flag on the right side of the Bimah."

After that first interview, Randy Trager, a very gruff, outspoken, highly successful entrepreneur who was in his seventies took me aside. With evident affection and acceptance he told me that he detested the Israeli flag on the Bimah. "We are Americans first, our religion is Judaism like some Americans are Methodist." That was my first clue.²²⁰

Upon being selected as rabbi, one of the first programs Rabbi Goldman initiated was a campaign to promote and increase membership among congregants in A.R.Z.A. (Association of Reform Zionists in America). Soon after he started this drive, he received a telephone call from Louise and Victor Reichert. Louise spoke, and she said, "I'm calling for Victor and me, and we don't want your feelings to be hurt, but we really can't join A.R.Z.A. because it is against our philosophy." Goldman relates the rest of the exchange:

²¹⁹"Eban Lauds U.S. Friendship for State of Israel," and "Menachem Begin to speak April 9th," The American Israelite, (respectively) September 3, 1974, p. 1; and April 3, 1975, p. 2.

²²⁰Interview with Rabbi Mark Goldman, January 6, 1993.

In my eager idealism and naivete, I tried to explain to them about A.R.Z.A., and that "it didn't mean that she or her grandchildren had to move to Tel Aviv. That couldn't be heard because of the "Z [for Zionist]." She kept talking on the telephone about the "Z" in A.R.Z.A. This was the first time I was confronted by the Reichert clan, with the rude awakening that anything that smacked of a "Z" was terribly uncomfortable for them.²²¹

Rabbi Goldman instituted a number of changes in his first year at Rockdale, and those who came from a non-Zionist perspective were not afraid to make known their sentiments. Rabbi Goldman illustrates this with a story of a confrontation he had in 1987 with the aforementioned Randy Trager's brother-in-law:

He came to me after one year with a list on a yellow legal pad of everything I had done wrong through Yom Kippur. Things like [displaying] the Israeli flag, too much Hebrew, and carrying the Torah into the congregation on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. [He and his associates] were highly regarded [people]. They are representative of a devotion to...an assimilationist, acculturationist kind of American Reform Jewish response.²²²

Over the past few years the congregation has changed. The old anti-Zionists are now in their seventies and eighties. Goldman notices that the children of these German families who are over fifty years old have a similar ideology of American Judaism. However, those now in their thirties and forties are reversing the trend and are much more solidly pro-Israel.²²³

Rabbi Goldman beams when describing how far Rockdale Temple has come in his short time with the congregation. He remarks:

Now it is Minhag Hamakom [our custom] to have the Israeli flag on the Bimah. Recently we sponsored a lecture by Thomas Friedman, author of

²²¹Ibid.

²²²Ibid.

²²³Ibid.

From Beirut to Jerusalem, and had a sellout crowd. I saw many old-timers here, so I think there has been a change.

Now I am trying to get a congregational trip to Israel together and there is no resistance. They saw the Six-Day War and things began to change. We now send many children to Israel, and this touches many generations of families. The prevalence of Israel in the press has also been a consciousness raiser.²²⁴

Valley Temple

The Cincinnati School for Judaism began in 1954 after a number of families left Rockdale Temple because of Rabbi Reichert's acceptance of the State of Israel. These founders wanted to provide their children with an American Jewish education that had nothing to do with Israel. In 1959, the school expanded into a congregation which came to be known as Valley Temple.

In 1968, Rabbi Sol Greenberg became rabbi at Valley Temple, moving from his previous position across town as assistant rabbi at Wise Temple. He remembers the background that formed the attitudes of the membership of Valley Temple, and the shock that he felt upon meeting them in 1968. He describes the conditions:

The members lived in Wyoming, which was a community where there were not many Jews. The Jews who lived here were not open about the fact that they were Jewish. Many streets in Wyoming were restricted and Jews and Blacks were not allowed to buy homes, [because] it was in the covenants and the deeds of the homes that they were not allowed to live here. The position of the Jew in this community was very precarious. As good citizens of Wyoming they kept their Judaism kind of hidden,

They started a religious school so they wouldn't have to travel out of Wyoming and make what was then a long trip to North Avondale. Out of the original 13 families, five were members of the American Council for Judaism.

²²⁴Ibid.

When the school became a congregation because they desired occasional services and High Holy Day services, no Hebrew was used at all. That was a reflection of the fact that they did not want to show any relationship to Israel.²²⁵

When Rabbi Greenberg was approached to come to Valley Temple he had many reservations. He had heard this was predominantly a group of anti-Semitic Jews who denied their Judaism. He knew they were anti-Israel, and that they did not want Bar or Bat Mitzvah or any Hebrew in their religious services. He shared all these concerns with them, thinking he had nothing to lose since he was not really interested in the job in the first place. Greenberg gave them an ultimatum of five demands that would have to be satisfied if he were to become their rabbi. He recalls:

I told them I would become their rabbi under the following conditions: they must get a permanent facility, instead of meeting at private homes, the J.C.C., and H.U.C.; they had to know I was a Zionist, an avid supporter of the State of Israel and I would continue to support the flourishing of Israel and would promote that end by speaking about and raising funds for Israel; we would achieve this in part by teaching Hebrew in the religious school; I would teach Hebrew and use it in our service as I saw fit, but I would translate any Hebrew in the service into English; and Bar and Bat Mitzvah which had never taken place would now be an option to all children and would be encouraged by me.²²⁶

Greenberg assumed they would reject this, but the 37 families agreed to his conditions. Of the five American Council for Judaism families, four stayed and remained active. One resigned over the issue of Israel and Hebrew. Later, Rabbi Greenberg was asked by another member why the congregation needed to announce in the Israelite that there would be an "Oneg Shabbat" following services. Why not use

²²⁵Greenberg.

²²⁶Ibid.

plain English and call it a "reception?" Greenberg responded that it would be acceptable to him to list the word "Reception" in brackets following "Oneg Shabbat," in order to help people understand its meaning. However, Greenberg held that there was "nothing wrong with using Hebrew terms, especially in a Jewish newspaper!" Greenberg feels that this family "definitely equated the use of Hebrew with support for the State of Israel, which to them meant you were not a good American."²²⁷

Rabbi Greenberg set certain goals regarding use of Hebrew and support for Israel, but he did not try to achieve them all in the first year. He notes:

[Rushing my plan through] wouldn't be fair to them. Part of this was educational, and in their mind Hebrew meant Israel. There was more resistance among older members. Gradually the congregation came around.

Now Temple Sholom is probably the most traditional of the four Reform Temples, but we are probably the second most. In terms of Hebrew and ritual we are much more traditional than either Rockdale or Wise.

We just came back from a congregational trip to Israel. That couldn't have happened in 1970.... The sisterhood now wants to plan one every other year!²²⁸

H.U.C. Cincinnati In The 1970's and 1980's

The Hebrew Union College stood apart from the general Cincinnati community as an elite place of Jewish learning. As such, the intelligentsia there struggled with issues that were not of primary concern to the wider Jewish community. For

²²⁷Ibid.

²²⁸Ibid.

example, the issue of whether or not rabbinic students should spend a year in Israel was hotly debated in the College community.

In 1971, Alfred Gottschalk, dean of H.U.C. in Los Angeles, succeeded Nelson Glueck as president of the Hebrew Union College. Gottschalk recalls that when he arrived at the Cincinnati campus he discovered there was tremendous concern about the recently inaugurated Year-In-Israel program. Certain members of the faculty and of the Board of Governors asked him, "Do we need this? Is its purpose the 'Zionization' of the college?"²²⁹

Dr. Gottschalk found that even after most of the Jewish world had embraced Israel following the Six-Day War, a part of the Cincinnati crowd remained distrustful of anything remotely Zionist. Gottschalk thinks that since he was involved in the Zionist Organization of America he was "suspect... an East European bringing these ideas here into the bastion of classical Reform." He was never able to fully connect with the old Cincinnati leadership, who gave him very little money to support the expansion of the Jerusalem campus. Charles Tobias, a member of Valley Temple and an honorary chairman of the H.U.C. Cincinnati Board of Overseers in 1990, declares that he "was never in favor of H.U.C. spending the money that it has spent on the Jerusalem campus."²³⁰

Alfred Gottschalk recalls an event that illustrates the considerable distance that existed between him and the old leadership:

²²⁹Gottschalk.

²³⁰Tobias.

Fred Lazarus Jr., who is now deceased, once controlled this town with an iron fist. He promised Nelson Glueck a million dollars, and his son Ralph made the same promise to me later if I would stop the Year-In-Israel program.

[To them, this Israel program] was destroying the pure American Reform Jewish approach [which had] the virtue of...assimilation and not uniqueness. That [offer] shook me, and he meant it! A real million dollars, at a time when a million dollars was still a million dollars!

So I thought about it for about three seconds, and got up and left. We remained on friendly terms, but he couldn't understand why both of us [Gottschalk and Glueck] were so stubborn. When he died, he left much money to the University of Cincinnati, but not a penny to H.U.C. They were not going to make major contributions to the college because they were heart and mind assimilationist.²³¹

There was some faculty resistance to the Year-In-Israel program from "a hub of neo-classical Reform oriented faculty members."²³² However, most of the faculty was enthusiastic about the policy of sending all rabbinic students to Jerusalem to live for one year.

Dr. Gottschalk has found that over time, H.U.C. in Cincinnati had become much more comfortable with the notion of Zionism. He believes that through the 1970's and 1980's:

The College became congenial to pro-Israel Zionist thought.... The Jerusalem campus helped to change attitudes here of students, faculty and board members. If we had to move only out of Cincinnati, it would have been very difficult. But the fact is that the College had three American centers, each with its strengths. Zionism was not the strength of the Cincinnati campus, but [it was in] New York and L.A.²³³

²³¹Gottschalk.

²³²Ibid.

²³³Ibid.

It is worth noting that the response of H.U.C. to the 1982 war in Lebanon was somewhat different than that of the broader Cincinnati Jewish community. While much of Cincinnati Jewry was defending Israel, many at H.U.C. were publicly raising questions about Israeli actions. Professor Ezra Spicehandler contends that the right-wing Likud party controlling the Israeli government did not fit the general liberalism of the rabbinic students, and that therefore the students did not support the war. He now finds that "the vast majority of students are doves."²³⁴

Dr. Gottschalk recalls that among the members of the faculty there were only one or two "Likudniks," strong supporters of the Likud party. Many on the faculty were "centrists," who were torn about how to respond. There was also a vocal contingent of professors who were part of Peace Now, a left-wing Israeli group that actively opposed the war in Lebanon. He recalls that during the war, "there was vigorous debate within the college as to what Israel should or should not be doing."²³⁵

²³⁴Spicehandler.

²³⁵Gottschalk.

Zionist Organizations

The Six-Day War pushed Israel into the forefront of Jewish identity for most Cincinnati Jews. Despite this reality, Zionist organizations in Cincinnati did not thrive in the period following 1967. Nachum and Sham Eden describe the condition of Cincinnati Jewry and Zionist activist groups in the 1970's and 1980's:

Our Jewish community is diverse.... It is in its connection to Israel [that it can even be considered a] community.

[Even though this connection to Israel is central,] there are not many new people involved in Cincinnati Zionist organizations. The big change is that there really are no youth movements now. The Labor Zionist Alliance is just a cultural group.

Hadassah does get [some] younger members, but it doesn't have the numbers or the kind of leadership it once had.²³⁶

Dr. Ezra Spicehandler concurs with this assessment of Zionist organizations.

He relates:

I am an active member of the local Labor Zionist chapter, which suffers the fate of most of the Zionist organizations. I joined it [when I was] in my forties, which was [then the] average age of members, and now [in 1992] the average age is past seventy.

It is a kind of intellectual organization and forum, a study group. It meets once a month, and uses the faculty from H.U.C. skillfully. It no longer has the vitality of the older days, but is more like a fraternity where you meet old friends.²³⁷

²³⁶Eden.

²³⁷Spicehandler. For examples of typical L.Z.A. meetings in this period, see "Labor Zionists Have Luncheon Program," and "Eden To Address Zionist Meeting," The American Israelite, (respectively) April 2, 1981, p. 5; and May 8, 1986, p. 1.

The cause of the decline of activist Zionist organizations is largely based on the fact that Jewish identification with Israel had become a mainstream phenomenon. Accordingly, mainstream Jewish organizations assumed the task of organizing Israel-related activities. The Edens note that in this period the Jewish Federation has taken over responsibility for sponsorship and promotion of Israel programs.²³⁸

While the Cincinnati Jewish community's need for Zionist organizations was declining, one new and important grassroots organization was created in the 1970's Yachdav, the Cincinnati chapter of the Association of Parents of American Israelis (A.P.A.I.)²³⁹, was founded in 1975 as a support group for parents of children who had made *aliyah*.²⁴⁰

Yachdav, which means "togetherness," is a non-political organization. It meets monthly, and serves as a support group for the parents. By the end of the 1980's it had a membership of approximately 30 families, some of which had more than one child living in Israel. Cincinnati David Keen was elected the group's first president in June of 1975, and has been re-elected every year since.²⁴¹

During its first decade of existence, Yachdav was involved in promoting the sale of Israeli products in order to help the Israeli economy. Its members sold passover products from Israel, such as candy and soups. All proceeds were used to

²³⁸Eden.

²³⁹The "Association of Parents of American Israelis" (A.P.A.I.) later changed its name to the broader "Parents of North American Israelis" (P.N.A.I.).

²⁴⁰The American Israelite, May 27, 1982, p. 3.

²⁴¹Interview with David Keen, December 22, 1992.

provide scholarships for young men and women from Cincinnati to study in Israel.²⁴²

Yachdav also sponsored a weekly radio program called "The Jewish-Israeli Hour," which was first broadcast on Sunday, March 26, 1978. David Keen was executive producer of the show, which was a mixture Israeli and Yiddish music, as well as news from the Israeli Broadcasting Authority. Keen remembers the weekly struggle and satisfaction of putting the show on the air. He recalls:

We got sponsors and bought our own radio time. We were always short on funds. I remember that once a kid sent in two dollars, and said "I got this from my bank and I want you to have this."

[The program] not only enlightened our Jewish community with news about Israel, but our Christian neighbors [were enlightened] too, since we were [broadcasting] on a Christian station!²⁴³

By the middle of the 1980's, Yachdav had to end both the "Jewish Israeli Hour" and the food sales.²⁴⁴ Ironically, as members of Yachdav themselves made *aliyah*, it became more difficult for the group to sponsor such ambitious projects. Keen notes that Yachdav is no longer a growing organization, since the number of Cincinnati Jews making *aliyah* is down. He found that most *aliyah* took place in the 1970's, and many of those emigrating were people who had been involved in Zionist youth organizations.²⁴⁵

²⁴²The American Israelite, May 27, 1982, p. 3.

²⁴³Keen.

²⁴⁴The last broadcast of "The Jewish-Israeli Hour" was on June 5, 1983, over five years after it had begun. The American Israelite, August 11, 1983, p. 1.

²⁴⁵Keen.

Despite the slowdown in Cincinnati *aliyah*, articles about *aliyah* appeared relatively frequently in The American Israelite throughout the 1970's and 1980's.²⁴⁶ Not all Cincinnatians were supportive of the concept of *aliyah*. David Keen remarks that, "Some people don't join our organization because they are not happy that their kids are living there."²⁴⁷

As a founding member of the Valley Temple, Charles Tobias feels that *aliyah* is antithetical to American Judaism. He states:

I would be very opposed to any significant *aliyah* of American Jews. I don't mind if this or that person goes over to live in Israel because he has relatives there. But I am pleased that it has not been a significant practice.

I don't regard Israel as the center of the Jewish universe, although you can't ignore the fact that so many Jews live there. Being a citizen of the Jewish community is different than being an Israeli.²⁴⁸

Aubrey Herman, Executive Vice President of the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati, predicts that there will not be a significant *aliyah* from Cincinnati over the next 20 years because of the track record of the last 20 years. Herman thinks Americans view Israel as "a refuge for people in need who have no other choices. It is very hard to take an American kid who grew up with all the material wealth that

²⁴⁶For examples of individuals making *aliyah*, see "Steve To Make His Home in Israel," "Aliyah," "Off To Israel," and "Singer makes *aliyah* to Israel," The American Israelite, (respectively) May 26, 1977; November 3, 1977; March 16, 1978; and November 10, 1988. For retrospective appraisals of *aliyah* from Cincinnati, see "Cincinnatians find happiness spending their lives in Israel," and "Rosens glad they made *aliyah*," The American Israelite, April 21, 1988, p. B-8.

²⁴⁷Keen.

²⁴⁸Tobias.

they have today and expect them to throw that away and exchange it for another society. A few do, but I don't see a lot of it." The Jewish Federation now promotes youth missions to Israel "for the purposes of Jewish continuity and identity," not to encourage *aliyah*.²⁴⁹

Israel Programming in Cincinnati

The Israeli victory in the Six-Day War resulted in a renewed interest in and awareness of Israeli culture among Cincinnatians. Almost all Israel-related programming in Cincinnati from 1967 to the early 1980's focused on enthusiastically embracing Israeli culture. Israel was presented as an advanced and highly cultured society.

The Cincinnati Chapter of the America-Israel Cultural Foundation sponsored many of these events. It regularly hosted concerts by Israeli singers and musicians.²⁵⁰ The Cultural Foundation also brought in Israelis to speak about Israeli flora and fauna, and its relationship to the Bible.²⁵¹ In 1974, the Israel

²⁴⁹Herman.

²⁵⁰"America-Israel Cultural Foundation To Present Israeli Pianist on Jan. 8th," and "'Here Is Israel' To Play at Adath Israel," The American Israelite, (respectively) December 25, 1969, p. 1; and May 5, 1977.

²⁵¹"America-Israel Cultural To Hear Chief of Israel's Ancient Cultural Park," The American Israelite, May 29, 1969, p. 1.

Philharmonic even played in Cincinnati under the joint sponsorship of the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati and the Cincinnati Symphony.²⁵²

Beginning in 1969, the American Zionist Youth Federation and the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati co-sponsored an Israeli "Shaliach" (emissary) for Cincinnati.²⁵³ The Shaliach was responsible for organizing, promoting, and implementing Israel information and programming. The Shaliach worked out of the Jewish Community Center and remained in Cincinnati for a period of two or three years. At the conclusion of the assignment, a new Shaliach was sent from Israel. At times there were even two Shlichim at once.

Through the 1970's and early 1980's, the Shlichim devoted their efforts to increasing and improving youth programming and cultural activities.²⁵⁴ David Keen worked closely with the Shaliach in the middle of the 1970's. He remembers that the Shaliach was always accessible to and active in the community. Keen recalls:

The Shaliach had many youth programs to get kids involved. These were mainly to promote knowledge of Israel for Jews and non-Jews.

He brought in Israeli artists, promoted [a touring Israeli] soccer [team from] Ramat Aviv and basketball games from visiting Israeli teams. [This was done]

²⁵²"Symphony, Federation Will Present Israel Philharmonic At Music Hall on Oct. 16th," The American Israelite, August 29, 1974, p. 1.

²⁵³The American Israelite, May 13, 1971, p. 1.

²⁵⁴For examples, see "Liaison Director For Israel and Youth Is Here," "Israeli Journalist Is Cincinnati's New Shaliach," and "Michael Ganor Is New Shaliach," The American Israelite, (respectively) September 2, 1971, p. 1; August 26, 1976, p. 1; and August 20, 1981, p. 1.

to get kids interested in trips to Israel. We even washed cars to assist kids in going to Israel in 1973-74.²⁵⁵

The Shaliach was always involved in the annual community celebration of Israeli independence. This event had fallen on difficult times through the 1950's and early 1960's, as interest in it waned over the years since 1948. However, the Israeli victory in 1967 rekindled the desire of Cincinnati Jewry to rally publicly for Israel. Articles from the Israelite indicate that this celebration has been flourishing ever since.

In 1968, more than 800 people turned out to celebrate Israel's 20th anniversary.²⁵⁶ By 1973 the event had grown tremendously. An estimated 1,500 people marched in a parade to mark Israel's 25th anniversary. A total of 4,000 people participated in the parade and cultural fair that followed.²⁵⁷ David Keen still marvels at the scope of that celebration. He reflects:

I think it's still the most outstanding spectacle that ever occurred in Cincinnati for the promotion of Israel. There were about five bands in the parade. There were high schools, Shrine Units, floats. They all marched to the J.C.C. for an exposition of Israeli products.²⁵⁸

Another parade was held the following year in 1974, this time attracting 2,000 marchers.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁵Keen.

²⁵⁶The American Israelite, May 9, 1968, p. 1.

²⁵⁷The American Israelite, May 17, 1973, p. 1.

²⁵⁸Keen.

²⁵⁹The American Israelite, May 16, 1974, p. 1.

Over 2,500 Cincinnatians participated in the 1978 celebration at downtown's Fountain Square for Israel's 30th birthday. This event included Israeli Folk Dancing, a speech by Cincinnati Mayor Jerry Springer, and the distribution of birthday cake and pens with the inscription, "Israel Celebrates 30 Years--May 1978."²⁶⁰ That same week, an incredible 10,000 people took part in the Israel Celebration at the J.C.C.²⁶¹ The momentum continued when more than 5,000 people participated in Israel independence events in 1983 and in 1989.²⁶²

The role of the Shaliach was abruptly altered in the middle of the 1980's, when the Shaliach's office was moved from the J.C.C. to the Jewish Federation. Aubrey Herman explains the rationale behind this move:

The strategy of moving the Shaliach from the J.C.C. to the Federation is to give Israel programs more emphasis, more power, more visibility, more impact in the community.... Moving the Shaliach to a Federation setting frees him or her up to put energy where it belongs. He can have ongoing relationships with all the different groups [in the community, not just with the J.C.C.].²⁶³

Barbara H. Rabkin, a Zionist and an active leader in the Jewish Federation, was put in charge of reshaping the entire Israel programs section of the Federation, including the role of the Shaliach. She was not pleased with the situation at the office of the Shaliach through the early 1980's. She remarks that:

²⁶⁰The American Israelite, May 18, 1978.

²⁶¹Ibid.

²⁶²"Community Celebrates Israel Independence," and "Thousands enjoy Folk Festival," The American Israelite, (respectively) April 21, 1983, p. 1; and May 25, 1989, p. 1.

²⁶³Herman.

Israel programming was so low key that I, a staunch Zionist, hardly knew anything about what they were doing.

There was an Israel programs committee with a Shaliach at the J.C.C., and a Shaliach hired by the Federation who was also at the J.C.C. Both of them did Israel programming, for example: folk dancing; a parade for Yom Ha'atzma'ut; Hebrew classes. It certainly wasn't a powerful or prestigious group by any means. It was a group of people who liked things Israeli.

They were not the leaders of the community. They were mainly cultural, hard core Zionists. If events were given, the community leaders would not show up.... The Shlichim hid out at the Jewish Center. They had their population to work with, and they didn't have a budget that would allow them to do anything.²⁶⁴

Efforts were made to reorient the Israel programs to reach a different segment of the community. Rabkin continues with her description of this change:

I helped reorganize the Israel programs committee to be a Cabinet [within the Federation] and include leaders in the community.... The Shaliach was moved from the J.C.C., where nobody knew about him, to the place of power in this community, which is the Federation, and given a decent budget. It has been very effective.

...Michael Ganor was the Shaliach then [1981-84] and was located at the J.C.C. He was a darling, energetic guy, but nobody knew him except for the people who liked to go folk-dancing.

We found people to be on the Cabinet who would have some clout in the community. We also found a nice house for the Shaliach, who had always had a dumpy little apartment, usually by the J.C.C. He could never comfortably invite people to his home and entertain. There was no power or prestige, and I wanted to change all that. This should be important, because he is like our ambassador from Israel!²⁶⁵

The leadership of the Jewish Federation has been pleased with the results of these changes. Barbara Rabkin gives a positive assessment of these results:

²⁶⁴Interview with Barbara H. Rabkin, Dec. 24, 1992.

²⁶⁵Ibid.

[Because of this new leadership,] the Federation Endowment Committee [provided money] so that every Jewish child could have an educational Israel experience. Now every child gets \$1,000 for Israel trips. Cincinnati is now the model for the nation on these kinds of programs, which we now take for granted.

...[The Shaliach is no longer bound to the J.C.C., and has] developed a network into the general community. The Shaliach is here not as an employee but as a consultant.... Now he is invited to major programs. We have made tremendous advances in the proper utilization of this wonderful resource.²⁶⁶

Although those at the Jewish Federation are pleased with the results, many community activists who were interviewed feel that something has been sacrificed by moving the Shaliach from the J.C.C. to the Jewish Federation offices. Rabbi Abie Ingber voices their concerns:

There used to be two Shlichim in the J.C.C. There was a Judaic programming Shaliach and an Israel programs Shaliach. One did events like Tu B'shevat [New Year of the Trees] as something religious in Israel, another did Yom Ha'atzma'ut [Israeli Independence Day]. [It was] double the pleasure, double the fun.

Then the Federation pulls his office into the Federation building, and takes the Shaliach out of Amcha [the ordinary people] in the most prominent of locations. Now he is tucked into an administrative office. Today there is a greater expenditure on Israel programs, but less public awareness.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁶Ibid.

²⁶⁷Ingber.

Fund Raising and Israel Missions

Israel has been crucial in the Jewish Federation's efforts to raise funds in the period 1967 to 1990. The Federation sees a link between local needs and needs abroad. The success or failure of Jewish Federation campaigns has been closely tied to the attitudes of the Jews of Cincinnati toward Israel and the Israeli government. Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus believes that "Israel is the American Jew in projection."²⁶⁸ Therefore, the Jewish Federation uses Israel as the centerpiece of its campaign. He continues:

Everybody is pro-Israel, so much so that the apparatus of the Federation to raise money works on a crisis basis. "Israel is in trouble, Israel needs money." So we must raise millions, and Federation takes its fifty percent off the top [for local programs].

We raise this money for Israel to keep our institutions running. Without Israel, nobody would support the Federation. Israel keeps the Federation, which is the dominant institution in America, alive.²⁶⁹

The Jewish Federation of Cincinnati was especially successful at raising money during the Israeli crisis periods of 1967 and 1973. The 1967 chairman of the Federation's Major Gifts Division, Phil Cohen, recalls that during the special campaign for the Six-Day War, "even those who didn't normally give to the regular campaign came through. Every time the chips were down and Israel was in peril we really did get support from almost the entire community."²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸Marcus.

²⁶⁹Ibid.

²⁷⁰Cohen.

At other times, Israeli actions had a negative effect on the Jewish Federation campaign. Phil Cohen remembers that some used the 1982 Lebanon war "as an excuse for not giving, or [later did not give] because they didn't like [Prime Minister] Shamir."²⁷¹ However, since the 1982 sales of Israel Bonds set a record for dollars of bonds sold, the negative effect of the Lebanon war was probably minor.²⁷²

The Jewish Federation campaign was also mildly damaged by the fallout from the "Who Is A Jew?" issue of 1988. The Cincinnati Jewish community balked when Yitzchak Shamir attempted to form a new governing coalition with the provision that the "Law of Return," which grants automatic Israeli citizenship to all Jews, be changed to exclude those who were converted to Judaism by non-Orthodox rabbis. Rabbi Sol Greenberg remembers that he and his congregants were violently opposed to Shamir's position. He recalls:

I even gave a sermon on the High Holy Days blasting the government. I felt we had to stand up as Reform and Conservative Jews and let the government know we would not continue to tolerate this.²⁷³

Events in Israel can have a positive effect on the campaign. Aubrey Herman has found that the Russian immigration to Israel of the past few years greatly aided the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati campaign. He contends that:

Russian resettlement has helped because it gave Israel the centerpiece that it hadn't had since 1950. It said that "Hey, Israel is the place for Jews to go."

²⁷¹Ibid.

²⁷²The American Israelite, February 17, 1983, p. 1.

²⁷³Greenberg.

The more the U.S. government put restrictions on how many Russian Jews could come to the U.S., the more Israel became a critical part of the whole thing....

The general campaign has jumped the past three years, and I can think of no other reason than Operation Exodus. It generated excitement in the general campaign. The key issue is that Israel is clearly the place to be.²⁷⁴

Israeli dignitaries help the success of the campaign as well. Leading Israeli politicians and personalities continued to visit Cincinnati frequently to support the fund raising of the Jewish Federation, Israel Bonds, H.U.C., and other causes and institutions. Some guests during this period have included Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek, Binyamin Netanyahu (who later became Israeli U.N. Ambassador), and Abba Eban.²⁷⁵

Missions to Israel have been an important part of fund raising and community building in Cincinnati. The vibrant period from 1967 through the 1970's saw a tremendous surge in missions to Israel. There were many different types of missions. Some of these were designed specifically for the community leadership,²⁷⁶ while others were designated as "Study Missions."²⁷⁷ There were broad community

²⁷⁴Herman.

²⁷⁵"JWF Leading Gifts Aides Hear Plea for UJA by Mayor Teddy Kollek," "Brother of Entebbe Hero Speaks To Welfare Fund Leaders," and "Eban will speak at Bonds dinner," The American Israelite, (respectively) January 26, 1967; December 23, 1976; and October 27, 1988, p. 1 (all).

²⁷⁶For example, see "Cincinnati in 'Operation Israel,'" The American Israelite, January 22, 1970, p. 1.

²⁷⁷For example, see "Cincinnati in First Group Study Mission to Israel," The American Israelite, November 12, 1970, p. 1.

missions, one of which drew 90 Cincinnatians in 1974,²⁷⁸ and there were "Couples Missions."²⁷⁹ The first Cincinnati youth summer tour of Israel to be self-contained (with only Cincinnatians on board) occurred in 1977.²⁸⁰

By the early to middle 1980's, Cincinnati missions were reaching fewer people. Most of the missions in the early 1980's were targeted at the Jewish Federation leadership, and not at the broader community. Aubrey Herman immediately set out to revamp Israel missions when he arrived in 1985 as Jewish Federation of Cincinnati executive vice president,

Herman believes that the community was ripe for another surge in missions. He contends that "in the early and mid-seventies, around the Yom Kippur War, there was a tremendous excitement, a rebirth around Israel." The 15 year gap that had passed since then was perfect to bring in a new generation of top leaders who were now in their late fifties to early sixties. These were people who were touched by Israeli events when they were in their forties, but were unable to act on their feelings because of their family and business commitments. By the late 1980's, this generation was prepared to take over.²⁸¹

²⁷⁸"90 Cincinnatians Set Record For Solidarity Mission to Israel," The American Israelite, May 2, 1974, p. 1.

²⁷⁹For example, see "On 'Couples Mission' to Israel," The American Israelite, November 18, 1971, p. 1.

²⁸⁰"Ready For Take-Off--And Six-Week Tour of Israel," The American Israelite, July 14, 1977, p. 3.

²⁸¹Herman.

A second factor contributing to this surge in missions is that the focus on Russian and Ethiopian resettlement in Israel has helped turn Cincinnati Jewry's attention toward Israel. Finally, the decision by the Jewish Federation to provide funding for all youth to travel to Israel has resulted in many more families having had an initial contact with Israel.

The success of Israel missions has been astounding. Aubrey Herman notes that "Israel missions was an absolute zero when I arrived.... [But now, in 1992] we have sent over 450 people to Israel."²⁸² Herman marvels over the expansion of the Israel Programs budget, which reflects the success of Israel missions:

There is no longer resistance to spending money on Israel programs, but when I first came here I remember how scared everybody was. We had been spending almost nothing on missions. We went to the Endowment Committee to ask for \$30,000 a year for three years to send high school and college kids to Israel. The anxiety was incredible. The lay leadership came to that Board scared to death, but the Board had the foresight to go for it.

...[In 1992] we just approved \$50,000 a year for the same purpose, and that was gung-ho, no problem. This year we will ask for \$450,000 on top of that for missions, which is an incredible investment from a community that couldn't get people to go to Israel seven years ago.

When people go to Israel they tell ten of their friends about it. If you take 200 people, you have just educated 2000 more people.²⁸³

The money that the Jewish Federation is now willing to spend on Israel missions reveals much about the positive attitude Cincinnati Jews hold toward Israel, and the key role Israel plays in the Jewish identity of the Cincinnati community.

²⁸²Ibid.

²⁸³Ibid.

CONCLUSION

Two overarching themes stand out in assessing the legacy of Zionism in Cincinnati over the past 50 years. These two motifs have been the subject of debate about crucial issues of American Jewish identity during this period.

The first theme is the dilemma of particularism versus universalism. Zionists assume the role of particularists in their desire to stand apart from the non-Jewish majority of Americans. Assimilationists strive for the ideal of universalism, choosing to adhere to the standards of public religion set by the rest of the American society.

The second major dilemma is whether Judaism is a peoplehood or a religion. To Zionists, the Jewish people constitutes one nation. A key Zionist goal is to work for the reunification of that dispersed nation. Those who argue that Judaism is a religion contend that Jews in the modern world should be citizens of the nation in which they reside but should follow Jewish practice in their public display of faith.

From the vantage point of 1992, there is relatively little conflict between being a Zionist and being a "good American." One can be a universalist in the United States while voicing support for a far-away Jewish nation which is a strong ally of America. However, the situation was entirely different in earlier years when Jewish status in America was less secure.

Through the first half of the twentieth century, Jews in America struggled for acceptance. Jews were routinely excluded from certain neighborhoods and country

clubs. Universities and professions set quotas designed to limit the number of Jews in their associations.

Jewish status in the United States remained a primary issue in the period prior to Israeli statehood. Many were concerned that creation of a Jewish state would cast aspersions on the true allegiances of American Jewry. Anti-Zionists were afraid that the 1942 C.C.A.R. resolution (passed in Cincinnati) in support of a Jewish army would make American Jews appear dangerous and militant. The Zionists in this period were either more secure in their American status or were convinced of the practical necessity of the creation of a Jewish state as a refuge for persecuted Jews, regardless of the cost to American Jews.

While anti-Zionism faded with the realization of Israeli independence, Jews did not immediately begin actively embracing Zionism. For Americans, the 1950's was the time of McCarthyism. A tremendous fear of Communism swept the nation, and questions of allegiance and loyalty became of paramount importance. Jews may have been thrilled to see the emergence of the infant Jewish state, but many remained fearful of the potential for personal loss in the event that Americans would begin to see Israel as anything other than an ally.

This concern was made explicit in the uneasy reaction of Cincinnati Jews to the Suez Canal Crisis. The Jewish community was fearful of seeming "un-American" when Eisenhower came out against Israeli actions. It was only after Israel backed down and the U.S. was no longer at odds with Israel that American Jews could feel secure once again in their status as Americans.

In the 1960's, the civil rights movement enabled Jews to feel pride in a distinctive Jewish heritage. In a show of tolerance for religious minorities, John F. Kennedy became the first Catholic to be elected president of the United States. The free speech movement empowered Jews who had been silent under the specter of McCarthyism to speak out on issues of Jewish importance.

These changes in American culture during that turbulent decade set the stage for the Jewish response to the 1967 Six-Day War. Had this war occurred ten years earlier, Jews might not have had the ability to embrace the victory of a foreign nation fully. However, by the end of the 1960's, Jews were comfortable in publicly linking and identifying themselves with the State of Israel.

The second crucial dilemma is whether Judaism is a nation or a religion. Many Jews believe that the two are not mutually exclusive, and that Judaism is both a nation and a religion. However, many Jews believe that Judaism is primarily a religion, and that it is only a nation in the sense that Jews hold a special concern for Jewish co-religionists worldwide. In interviews, some respondents note that Judaism should be viewed along the same lines as the Christianity of their neighbors and be considered exclusively a religion.

The Reform Jews of Cincinnati see themselves as sitting in the "cradle of American Reform Judaism." As such, many in this community cling tenaciously to elements of the "classical" Reform period of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 stated unequivocally that the Jews are "no

longer a nation, but a religious community." Many of the leading Reform Jews of Cincinnati retain this perspective to this day.

The debate over Zionism versus assimilation is rooted in a Jewish concern for how Jews are perceived by non-Jews in America. In 1990, the question has been largely rendered moot. The meaning of the term "Zionist" has evolved. Before the existence of the State of Israel, a Zionist was someone who actively advocated the creation of such a state along with an ingathering of Jewish exiles. Once the State of Israel became a reality and later achieved a measure of security and legitimacy, a Zionist became someone who "supported" the Jewish state. This support can mean anything from making *aliyah* to buying a tree in Israel. The low level of commitment necessary to be considered a Zionist in 1990 has rendered the term almost meaningless. Being pro-Israel is common among both Jews and non-Jews in America. Therefore, being Zionist in 1990 is unlikely to cause Jews to stand out from other Americans.

The debate over whether Judaism is a religion or a nation is rooted in a Jewish concern for how Jews perceive themselves. Are American Jews individual adherents to a system of religious beliefs, truths, and actions? Or are American Jews part of something that links Jews of all nationalities together? This dilemma remains unresolved.

In 1990, the way in which Jews relate to Israel defines their Jewish identity. Jews see Israel as a projection of their public persona. Jews are happy when Israel presents the world with a positive Jewish image of heroism such as was seen during

the Six-Day War, the hostage rescue at Entebbe, and the Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty. The American Jewish self-image is weakened when Israel is cast in a negative light such was the case during the Lebanon War, the Pollard affair (when Israel spied on American intelligence information about Arab countries), and the *intifada*. The 1988 "Who Is A Jew" controversy was significant to Cincinnati Jews because it called into question their validity as Jews and the legitimacy of their leadership as well.

Israel has become the yardstick by which American Jews measure their existence. Israel is a key factor in American Jewish identity. It remains the single most important draw in Jewish fund raising. The debate is no longer about whether or not there should be an Israel but about how Israel informs the "Jewishness" of the American Jew. As Jews continue in their struggle for self-definition, Israel should persist as a vital component of the American Jewish identity.

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