

American Jewish Life as Reflected in the Anglo-Jewish
Press of Baltimore, Cincinnati, New York,
Philadelphia and San Francisco
from 1905-1910

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DIGEST

This thesis is a study of American Jewish life as reflected in the Anglo-Jewish press from 1905-1910. The newspapers used reflect the life style of the upper and middle class American Jewish community. These Jews were for the most part from Germany and either first or second generation Americans. They were predominantly Reform Jews, and the newspapers used tended to reflect this point of view. 1905-1910 were key years in the development of the American Jewish community. They witnessed the rise of a Jewish consciousness for Jews living under persecution in Russia, and the formation of organizations to aid these Jews. The American Jewish Committee was formed in 1906, in part, due to the Russian pogroms of 1905-1906 and the immediate response of the complete American Jewish community to aid their coreligionists in Russia. Because of the growth of the Jewish community in New York City, due to the rise in Russian immigration, a move was initiated in 1908-1909, to form a "Jewish Community." This became the New York Kehillah, an organization founded to coordinate the numerous Jewish organizations in the city.

These years were years of prosperity and growth for American Jews. In 1905, the Jewish community celebrated two hundred and fifty years of Jewish life in the United States.

This prosperity lent an air of security to the Jewish community, and when their rights were attacked or anti-Semitic charges were made against them, the community rallied to defend itself. In this period of prosperity and integration into American society, the community was faced with several problems. Intermarriage became a major issue during these years, as Jews in the freedom of America, intermarried with Gentiles. It was also a period of the "good life," when Jews, because of their position and know-how, were able to take advantage of the better life that was offered in the United States. It was during these years that one could understand why several leaders of the Reform movement considered the United States the "promised land." These years saw the beginnings of the great Jewish community that was to emerge in the United States in the twentieth century.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
PART ONE--YEARS OF ORGANIZATION	
Chapter One Russian Pogroms and National Relief . .	11
Chapter Two The International Jewish League	21
Chapter Three The American Jewish Committee	25
Chapter Four The Jewish Territorial Organization and The Galveston Plan.	37
Chapter Five The New York Kehillah	46
PART TWO--AMERICAN LIFE	
Chapter One Cause for Celebration	60
Chapter Two Social Discrimination	66
Chapter Three The Theodore Bingham Affair	76
Chapter Four Inter-marriage	88
Chapter Five The "Good Life"	102
Summary--American Jewish Life 1905-1910.	111
Bibliography	116

INTRODUCTION

This study of American Jewish life from 1905 to 1910 is based on the articles and editorials of five Anglo-Jewish newspapers of the period. The subjects covered in this paper are the ones which occupied the minds of the editors of the various newspapers and were considered to be of importance to their readers. All five weeklies addressed an audience of educated American Jews who had become a part of the mainstream of American life. They were no longer immigrants, but Americans. Their opinions and life style reflected a secure way of life that few Jewish communities had known. The American Hebrew, New York City's most prominent Anglo-Jewish weekly, and one of the newspapers used, was called in 1908 "the organ of the Jewish four-hundred."¹ Indeed, all five of the newspapers reflected the views of the growing Jewish middle and upper classes, and were directed towards a Reform-German Jewish community.

The newspapers used are: The American Hebrew and Jewish Messenger of New York City; The American Israelite of Cincinnati, Ohio; The Emanu-El of San Francisco, California; The

1. Arthur A. Goren, New York Jews and the Quest for Community (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 129.

Jewish Comment, of Baltimore, Maryland; and The Jewish Exponent published in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Baltimore.

The American Hebrew was founded in New York City in November, 1879. It was founded chiefly through the efforts of Frederick de Sola Mendes, then rabbi of Shaaray Tefillah congregation in New York City and a leader in the New York Jewish community, and Philip Cowen, a Jewish publisher and communal worker. Cowen was publisher of The American Hebrew during 1905-1910. The policy of the paper was declared as follows: "It is not controlled by one person, nor is it inspired by one. Its editorial staff comprises men of diverse shades of opinion on ritualistic matters in Judaism, but men who are determined to combine their energies for the common cause of Judaism."² The newspaper was conducted by a board of editors, whose names were never published in the paper, "to insure absolute impersonality in all matters pertaining to the paper."³ Since its founding, The American Hebrew has absorbed several Jewish periodicals, among which have been The Jewish Chronicle of Baltimore in 1880; Jewish Tidings of Rochester, New York in 1895; The Jewish Reformer, a weekly journal published for a time by Kaufman Kohler, I. S. Moses, and Emil G. Hirsch, in 1886.⁴ On December 19, 1902, The

2. Frank H. Vizetelly, "The American Hebrew," The Jewish Encyclopedia (1916), I: 518.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

Jewish Messenger, another Anglo-Jewish weekly published in New York City was sold to The Jewish Gazette, and subsequently to The American Hebrew on January 1, 1903.⁵ It then became The American Hebrew and Jewish Messenger, a weekly journal for the Jewish home.⁶

The American Hebrew was always active in matters of public interest, and published columns, articles, and poems by several of the most prominent members of the Jewish community. Emma Lazarus was introduced to a wide range of American Jewish readers through the publication of her works in The American Hebrew.⁷ Editorially, The American Hebrew stood for conservatism in Judaism. However, the columns of the newspaper were always open to discussions of views which it did not endorse, but which may have been of interest to its readers. In 1905, Cyrus L. Sulzberger, prominent New York merchant and civic leader and the president of the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society, was president of The American Hebrew Publishing Company; Isaac N. Seligman, president of J. & W. Seligman & Co. banking house, was treasurer; and Jules Weil, secretary.⁸ Joseph Jacobs, a leader in the founding of the American Jewish Committee, was

5. Albert M. Friedenberg, "The Jewish Messenger," The Jewish Encyclopedia (1916), VII: 182.

6. The American Hebrew (New York), January 27, 1905, p. 311.

7. Vizetelly, op. cit.

8. The American Hebrew, op. cit.

the editor. These men, all prominent in New York Jewish circles, reflected the outlook of The American Hebrew in 1905--prosperous, German and Reform.

The American Israelite was established in Cincinnati, Ohio in July, 1854, by Isaac Mayer Wise, the founder of American Reform Judaism. It was originally called The Israelite, but Wise changed the name to The American Israelite in 1874, as being more in line with the ideas the newspaper represented. Wise had two aims for the newspaper: (1) to propagate the principles of Reform Judaism; and (2) to keep the Israelites that lived, often singly or in communities of two or three families in the numerous small towns of the United States, in touch with Jewish affairs, thus contributing to save them for Judaism. The American Israelite has always advocated progressive, Reform Judaism and Americanism. The paper maintained that American Jews are differentiated from American Christians in religion only, not in nationality, and that there is no such thing as a Jewish nation.⁹

When Isaac Mayer Wise died in 1900, the ownership of the newspaper was inherited by his eldest son Leo. Prior to his death, Isaac M. Wise had written most of the editorials of the paper. Following his death, his son was assisted in the editorial department by Rabbi David Philipson, of Congregation Bene Israel of Cincinnati, and Rabbi Louis Grossman,

9. Leo Wise, "The American Israelite," The Jewish Encyclopedia (1916), I: 518-519.

who had succeeded Wise as rabbi of Congregation B'nai Yeshurun, and by Dr. Julius Wise of Chicago. Leo Wise was also the founder and publisher of The Chicago Israelite. He founded that newspaper in January, 1885.¹⁰

The American Israelite always had a wide circulation in the Middle West and the South. Maximilian Heller, rabbi of Temple Sinai in New Orleans, and a leader in American Reform Judaism, was a frequent contributor to the newspaper. The American Israelite always carried detailed reports concerning the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Hebrew Union College, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, since Isaac M. Wise was one of the founders of these organizations.

The Emanu-El of San Francisco, California, was founded in May, 1895, by Jacob Voorsanger, rabbi of Temple Emanu-El, the leading congregation on the Pacific coast.¹¹ He served as the editor of the newspaper until his death in 1908. It was published by A. W. Voorsanger. Following Jacob Voorsanger's death, the editorial material was written by Bernard M. Kaplan, rabbi of Beth Israel congregation, and a few items by Jacob Nieto, rabbi of Sherith Israel congregation, both Reform. Voorsanger came to San Francisco in 1886 from Houston,

10. Frank H. Vizetelly, "The Chicago Israelite," The Jewish Encyclopedia (1916), IV: 27.

11. Albert M. Friedenberg, "Emanu-El," The Jewish Encyclopedia (1916), V: 146.

Texas. He was in Houston for eight years and edited The Jewish South. The Emanu-El was devoted especially to the interests of Jews and Judaism on the Pacific coast. Its editorial viewpoint was Reform and American, and although Voorsanger had visited Palestine in 1907, the newspaper was anti-Zionist. The newspaper reflected the views of the large German-Jewish community in San Francisco.

The Jewish Comment of Baltimore, Maryland, was first published on May 25, 1895. Its first editor was Max Myers, and he was succeeded by Louis Levin, who was editor during the 1905-1910 period.¹² Levin was an attorney-at-law, lecturer at Baltimore University, and a frequent contributor to The Jewish Exponent, The American Hebrew, and Menorah.¹³ The Jewish Comment was the only Jewish weekly published in the state. Its theological position was Conservative, but it welcomed a free interchange of opinions between Radical and Orthodox. One of its major features was regular correspondence from New York City, England, France, Germany, Italy, Australia, Austria, Russia, and India. It carried feature articles and news clippings of the Jewish communities of these areas. It also printed numerous Jewish plays, literature, and scholarly

12. Albert M. Friedenberg, "Jewish Comment," The Jewish Encyclopedia (1916), VII: 181.

13. "Biographical Sketches of Jews Prominent in the Professions, etc., in the United States," The American Jewish Yearbook (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1904), VI: 137.

articles. The newspaper was not anti-Zionist and favored a middle-of-the-road to friendly position towards Zionism.

The Jewish Exponent was first published in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in April, 1887. It was also published in Baltimore. The newspaper was founded by the Jewish Exponent Publishing Company. It calls itself "a weekly journal dedicated to the interests of the Jewish people."¹⁴ The editor was Charles Hoffman, one of the founders of the newspaper. Hoffman was educated at the University of Pennsylvania and at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He was president of the International Order of B'nai B'rith, District No. 3.¹⁵ The newspaper represents American Judaism in its broadest sense. It also served as the organ of the Jewish Chautauqua Society of America, whose founder and president, Henry Berkowitz, was rabbi of the prominent Rodeph Shalom congregation of Philadelphia.¹⁶ Berkowitz was a member of the first graduating class of the Hebrew Union College in 1883. He founded the Jewish Chautauqua Society in 1893 for "the dissemination of knowledge of the Jewish religion."¹⁷

14. The Jewish Exponent (Philadelphia), January 6, 1905, p. 1.

15. I. George Dobsevage, "Charles Isaiah Hoffman," The Jewish Encyclopedia (1916), VI: 435.

16. Albert M. Friedenberg, "The Jewish Exponent," The Jewish Encyclopedia (1916), VII: 181.

17. Rufus Lears, The Jews in America: A History (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1972), p. 204.

community was a unique Jewish community, just beginning to awaken to the hope and promise that they saw in America for themselves and for the rest of humanity. They had gained power, wealth, and esteem in American society, and during these early years of the twentieth century began to use that power for the benefit of themselves and their coreligionists.

PART ONE
YEARS OF ORGANIZATION

CHAPTER ONE
RUSSIAN POGROMS AND NATIONAL RELIEF

1905 dawned as a year of promise for American Jews. Plans were announced in New York City for a national celebration commemorating two hundred and fifty years of Jewish settlement in America.¹ The plans for celebrations to take place throughout the United States during the Thanksgiving week began in April. However, a gloom was cast over the preparation for the celebration, and the celebration itself, when reports of renewed pogroms against the Jews in Russia reached the United States. The pogroms during the early months of 1905 were only the rehearsals for the many anti-Jewish riots that were to develop in Russia in late 1905 and throughout 1906. American Jews had hoped that the outrages perpetrated on the Russian Jewish communities by the Czarist government in 1903 would not be repeated because of the public outcry against the atrocities raised in Western Europe and the United States. However, this was not to be the case. From Kishineff in April, 1903, to Bialystok in June, 1906, 638 Jewish communities were attacked by Russian soldiers and citizens, with and without the consent of the government:

1. The American Hebrew (New York), May 5, 1905, p. 725.

37,075 families suffered, 937 Jews killed, 1190 wounded, 351 women made widows, and countless thousands left homeless.²

In Odessa alone, over 370 people were killed, thousands maimed and scores of thousands left destitute and homeless in October, 1905.³

When news first began to reach America in the early months of 1905, no one believed that the situation would grow into mass pogroms. Scattered reports of Jewish life in Russia, and the "disturbances" in Jewish communities, had already begun to reach the United States.⁴ The reports began to grow in intensity following several pogroms which occurred during and after Easter, 1905. The American Israelite reported:

Easter massacres of Jews in Russia have been much more numerous, bloody, and widespread than the civilized world has been permitted to learn. The mobs were openly incited by the "Greek Catholic Church" to wreak vengeance upon the Jews. It is very probably that the horrors of Kishineff have once more been perpetrated and Holy Russia has added one more to her list of crimes against humanity.⁵

The question of how to react to the "slaughters" that were taking place in Russia became the single topic of concern for American Jews:

2. Ibid., November 9, 1906, p. 5.

3. Ibid.

4. The Emanu-El (San Francisco), April 14, 1905, p. 13.

5. The American Israelite (Cincinnati), June 1, 1905,

It is impossible for those living in this country, who are not in a position to follow these occurrences in the European press, to realize the dire plight of our brethren. So long as this terrible state of affairs continues, the Russian Jewish question must be of primary importance to all faithful Jews, for this intolerable condition cannot be permitted to continue.⁶

Organizations began to form, especially in New York City, in the summer of 1905 to aid the victims of the Russian pogroms. In New York City, the "Central Committee for the Relief of the Needy in Russia" was established to extend financial aid to such communities as Zhitomir, Melitopol, and Troyanov. The committee was similar to the relief committee that was established after the 1903 pogrom in Kishineff.⁷

On August 14, 1905, a Jewish delegation consisting of Oscar Straus, Jacob H. Schiff, Isaac N. Seligman, and Adolph Lewisohn, all prominent Jewish leaders from New York City, and Adolph Kraus of Chicago, President of the Executive Committee of B'nai B'rith, met with Count Sergius Witte, to discuss the Russian situation. Count Witte was the ranking Russian envoy at the signing of the Russo-Japanese peace treaty in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The delegation met with Count Witte in Portsmouth. The men had approached Count Witte on their own, as an ad hoc action, to bargain for the rights of their Russian coreligionists. Although nothing tangible came out

6. The Jewish Exponent (Philadelphia), June 16, 1905, p. 4.

7. The Jewish Comment (Baltimore), June 2, 1905, p. 16.

of the meeting, Oscar Straus believed that some future benefit could be derived from it. He noted:

Mr. Witte explained with much frankness the condition of the Jewish population of Russia, while the American gentlemen endeavored to explain to the Russian gentlemen the state of public opinion in the United States, and to impress them with the impatience on the part of the American people with the restrictive and suppressive laws exercised by the Russian government against its Jewish subjects.

While the discussion, in its nature, could not lead to immediate reforms, we believe that in course of time and indirectly the frank exchange of opinions and views which has been had cannot but bear beneficial consequences.⁸

Not all agreed with the actions of the ad hoc committee in approaching Count Witte, but there was little time to debate the issue. The pogroms continued to increase in number and public indignation continued to grow in the United States. Public protest meetings were held in cities throughout the country--from San Francisco to New York.⁹ The American Jewish community was uniting as one force to help the victims of the pogroms.

A letter addressed to the "Jews of America" was sent out on November 8, 1905, by Adolph Kraus; Samuel Woolner, President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations; Mrs. Henry Solomon, President of the Council of Jewish Women; Dr. H. Pereira Mendes, President of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations in the United States and Canada;

8. Ibid., August 25, 1905, p. 8.

9. The American Hebrew, November 10, 1905, p. 667; The American Israelite, November 16, 1905, p. 1; The Jewish Comment, November 10, 1905, p. 1; The Jewish Exponent, November 17, 1905, p. 7.

Dr. Joseph Stolz, President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis; Dr. Harry Friedenwald, President of the Federation of American Zionists; Max Stern, Grand Master, Independent Order of B'rith Abraham; Samuel Dorf, Grand Master, Order of B'rith Abraham; and Isaac Anderson Loeb, Grand Master, District No. 2, Independent Order Free Sons of Israel, requesting each Jewish community "to organize at once and without further notice for the purpose of raising funds to aid these destitute living victims" of the riots and massacres in Russia.¹⁰

The National Committee for the Relief of Sufferers by Russian Massacres took shape in New York City within a week of the publication of the letter. Oscar Straus served as president, and Jacob Schiff as treasurer. All funds collected by the various committees in the country were to be sent to Schiff. The initial meeting for forming the committee took place in New York City's Temple Emanuel. All sections of the Jewish community were represented. People from the East Side, socialists and zionists, and leaders from every facet of Jewish religious life attended the meeting. Following the motions of organization, Jacob Schiff was asked to telegraph President Theodore Roosevelt for support, which he did. He, in turn, received from Roosevelt his support and that of the United States government in combating the

10. The American Hebrew, November 10, 1905, p. 671.

atrocities in Russia. Schiff also telegraphed Witte in Russia, and received an ambiguous reply stating that "all I can do to stop the disorders is done but as long as the country is in such an excited state, the local authorities are often powerless."¹¹ Offers for aid came from the Christian community of New York and a mass protest meeting was held in the Baptist Church of the Epiphany in New York City.¹² Andrew Carnegie contributed \$10,000 for the relief of the Russian Jews.¹³

Meetings and appeals were conducted everywhere. In Philadelphia, thousands of dollars was collected. Roman Catholic Archbishop Ryan contributed \$500 "for the Jewish victims of Russian cruelty."¹⁴ It was considered a "graceful and generous expression . . . by one of the most eminent leaders of the Catholic Church."¹⁵ The meeting in Cincinnati was held in Plum Street Temple. It was reported that the audience was "the most representative that has ever been brought together in this city, every shade of Jewish opinion being represented."¹⁶ The American Israelite went on to say

11. Ibid., p. 667.

12. Ibid., p. 707.

13. The Jewish Exponent, November 17, 1905, p. 8.

14. Ibid., December 1, 1905, p. 4.

15. Ibid.

16. The American Israelite, November 16, 1905, p. 1.

that for the Jews of the United States "a good has come out of the Russian horrors because it is the first time that the representative Jewish organizations have forgotten their rivalry and taken a united action." They continued, "the issuance by them of an appeal for aid for the survivors of the Russian massacres establishes a precedent whose importance it is impossible to overrate."¹⁷ Funds were collected throughout the nation and within a month over one million dollars had been sent to Schiff.

On December 4, 1905, Rabbi Judah Magnes led over 150,000 Jews from the East Side of New York City up Fifth Avenue to protest the Russian pogroms.¹⁸ The march brought traffic to a standstill, and the demonstration lasted six hours. It was the first of many causes that Judah Magnes, a young rabbi in Brooklyn, and soon to be rabbi of the prestigious Temple Emanuel, would be involved in during the early years of the twentieth century. Other notables from the Jewish community also took part in the march. As the Jews paraded up Fifth Avenue, the bells of Christian churches tolled as they passed.

Magnes had organized in November The Jewish Self-Defense Association for the purpose of collecting funds to be used by the Jews of Russia in defending themselves during

17. Ibid.

18. The American Hebrew, December 8, 1905, pp. 62, 73.

anti-Jewish disturbances. They raised \$30,000.¹⁹ The association did not meet with the approval of the "uptown" Jewish leaders who were taking a leading role in the formation of the National Committee for the Relief of Sufferers by the Russian Massacres, which was along a less radical line than Magnes' organization.

The pogroms continued throughout 1906, and began to subside in 1907, leaving a destitute Russian Jewish community. On April 11, 1906, the Honorable Allan L. McDermott, of New Jersey, delivered an address in the United States House of Representatives, arraigning Russia and other Christian nations for their treatment of Jews.²⁰ On June 14, 1906, a pogrom occurred in Bialystok, lead by the police and the army garrison in the city. It was labeled "an outrage to Jews everywhere and will rank with Kishineff as a place of infamous memory."²¹ The slaughter of over 200 Jews at Bialystok brought about a storm of protest from every civilized country. In the United States, President Roosevelt and the Congress passed the following resolution which had been introduced by Senator Anselm McLaurin of Mississippi:

That the people of the United States are horrified by the reports of the massacre of Hebrews in Russia, on account

19. The American Jewish Yearbook (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1906), VIII: 117.

20. The American Hebrew, April 20, 1906, p. 666.

21. The Emanu-El, June 22, 1906, p. 2.

of their race and religion, and that those bereaved thereby have the hearty sympathy of the people of this country.²²

Coinciding with the passage of the resolution, the Honorable John Gill, Jr., of Maryland, introduced a resolution calling upon the President to transmit to the House of Representatives all official information that he can secure concerning the massacre at Bialystok. Reports of pogroms continued into 1907, with brutality reported again in Kishineff on the second day of Rosh Hashanah,²³ and again in December in various small towns.²⁴

Although the pogroms began to subside, life in Russia for the Jew was detestable and thousands continued to immigrate to the United States, as they had been doing since the turn of the century. The American Jewish community was faced with several problems in terms of how to handle the immigrants, and how to react to the growing need for a national Jewish defense organization which would present a united action against the persecution of Jews. The need for a national organization became apparent when the Jewish community saw how quickly they could organize to help their coreligionists who had suffered in Russia. If such an organization had already existed, organization of communities could have been

22. The Jewish Comment, June 29, 1906, p. 14.

23. The Emanu-El, October 11, 1907, p. 3.

24. Ibid., December 6, 1907, p. 1.

accomplished sooner. The stage had been set for the formation of a national organization to represent the Jewish community when it felt threatened in periods of crisis and external persecution.

CHAPTER TWO
THE INTERNATIONAL JEWISH LEAGUE

The cries for a national Jewish defense organization were first answered in San Francisco. Jacob Voorsanger, the editor of The Emanu El and rabbi of Temple Emanuel of that city, organized the International Jewish League in January, 1906.¹ Voorsanger wrote that "the aims and objects of the league consist generally in aiding Jewish communities in the attainment of civil and religious liberty by such means as may be determined upon by the governing agencies of the league."² The league was to be based in San Francisco, and Voorsanger was to be president. All the officers, and the council of directors were members of the San Francisco Jewish community. Membership in the league was extended to any individual, male or female, above the age of eighteen. Two things were required of every member: (1) signing a declaration of sympathy with the aims and objects of the league, and (2) payment of one dollar membership fee.³ Besides Jews,

1. The Emanu-El (San Francisco), January 19, 1906, p. 5.

2. Ibid., January 26, 1906, p. 5.

3. Ibid., February 9, 1906, p. 5.

Christians applied for league membership.⁴ The league's motto was "Le' Heruth Israel!"--"to Israel's Freedom."⁵

Voorsanger began the league with the disclaimer that he had been waiting for an organization of this type to appear in New York City, the center of American Jewish life. Since this had not been done, he had taken the initiative to start such an organization based in San Francisco.⁶ When such a time comes, he wrote, for the formation of an organization in New York City, he "hopes that New York will prove equal to the opportunity."⁷ Voorsanger also stated that when such an organization appears in the East, his league "would be content to be a branch of such a society."⁸ The International Jewish League hoped to establish branches in every city in the United States and Europe.⁹

National response to Voorsanger's "league" was mixed. While most people endorsed the formation of such an organization, they believed that San Francisco was the wrong place to form it.¹⁰ In forming his league, Voorsanger had disregarded

4. Ibid., February 16, 1906, p. 5.

5. Ibid., January 26, 1906, p. 5.

6. Ibid., January 19, 1906, p. 5.

7. Ibid., February 23, 1906, p. 9.

8. Ibid., February 16, 1906, p. 5.

9. The American Israelite (Cincinnati), February 15, 1906, p. 1.

10. The Jewish Comment (Baltimore), February 2, 1906, p. 7.

a notion of unity with the rest of the country in order to form his own group. Voorsanger was compared to William Jennings Bryant, who when he first ran for President of the United States, was in favor of the free coinage of silver "without waiting for the invitation or consent of any other country."¹¹ The people of San Francisco were willing to begin their international organization without waiting for the consent or cooperation of any other international Jewish community, or any other part of the United States. It was not considered the best way to initiate an international movement.

Other complaints arose because in the East, a meeting had been called in New York City to discuss the formation of a national Jewish organization, with similar aims as Voorsanger's league. Voorsanger had been issued an invitation to this meeting. Many people believed that this new organization complicated the work beginning in New York, and created one more organization that had to be absorbed or gotten out of the way.

The life span of the league was short. Voorsanger became one of the founding organizers and members of the American Jewish Committee.¹² He traveled to New York City in November, 1906, to help found the Committee and formulate

11. Ibid., p. 7.

12. Ibid., June 29, 1906, p. 14.

its charter.¹³ With the establishment of the American Jewish Committee in New York City and the listing of goals similar to the International Jewish League, the league's purpose ceased, as did the league. In his own way, Jacob Voorsanger had called attention to the growing Jewish community on the Pacific coast, and added his voice to the many that were calling for a national Jewish defense organization.¹⁴

13. The Emanu-El, November 16, 1906, p. 3.

14. The Jewish Comment, February 23, 1906, p. 7.

CHAPTER THREE

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Once the leaders of the American Jewish community saw how quickly the community had been able to organize in the face of a crisis, it became evident that the time was ready for the formation of a permanent national Jewish organization. Rabbi Jacob Voorsanger, as mentioned earlier, had initiated a movement in San Francisco with the establishment of the International Jewish League. The time may have been right, but the location was wrong. The initial call for organizing such an organization had to come from New York City, the seat of Jewish power in the United States.

In December, 1905, the Wanderers, a group of prominent New York Jews who met monthly for social and discussion purposes, considered the subject of a permanent Jewish committee. Louis Marshall, prominent lawyer and civic leader, reported that "although we all felt the dangers of such a movement," the consensus was that someone would doubtless form an organization and that "in order to avoid mischief it was desirable that we should take the initiative."¹ The men

1. Naomi W. Cohen, Not Free to Desist (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), p. 8.

interpreted "mischief" as the beginnings of the International Jewish League, and the Jewish Self-Defense Association that Rabbi Judah Magnes had formed.² It is also possible that the reference to "mischievous organization" was to the conference held in Brussels, Belgium, on January 29, 1906.³ The conference was called by the central Zionist organization to discuss the recent pogroms in Russia, and the eventual emigration of Jews from Russia. Delegates representing the major European Jewish organizations were present, but no American delegates attended. The initial aim of the meeting was to try and establish an International Committee of Jews to effectively deal with the Jewish question.⁴ The conference had a pro-Zionist flavor, although representatives of anti-Zionist organizations were present.⁵ The men who were considering forming a permanent Jewish committee in the United States would not be ready to deal with a world Jewish committee that was sponsored by the Zionist movement. The group appointed a committee consisting of Marshall; Cyrus L. Sulzberger; Samuel Greenbaum, a Justice of the New York State Supreme Court; Nathan Bijur, prominent lawyer and community leader; and Joseph Jacobs, editor of The American Hebrew, to form a plan for an American organization.

2. Ibid.

3. The American Hebrew (New York), February 2, 1906, p. 355.

4. Ibid., February 16, 1906, pp. 399, 401.

5. Ibid.

In order to present the idea of such an organization to the public, Cyrus Adler, a member of the Wanderers and civic leader, broached the idea publicly in a letter to The American Hebrew in January, 1906. Adler's letter was written to present his views on the establishment of a National Jewish Organization in the United States. He was also writing to oppose the plans for a national Jewish "congress" that would represent the Jews of America. The concept of a national Jewish congress, or American Jewish Congress, had been a topic of discussion since the American Jewish community was in the state of mind for forming some type of national organization. Adler stated that a congress was neither "possible nor desirable."⁶ He wrote:

No single individual or group of individuals, or no single organization or group of organizations however good their intentions or however great their wisdom can indefinitely act as the representatives of the large body of Jews in America.⁷

He suggested that instead of a congress, a committee composed of at least one representative from each state in the Union, and additional representatives in proportion to Jewish population, be set up. He suggested one additional representative for every 50,000 Jews. This committee would be convoked only in case of emergency. Ordinarily an executive subcommittee of nine would transact the necessary business. He added that

6. Ibid., January 5, 1906, p. 233.

7. Ibid.

the existing American organizations were unrepresentative of all American Jews.⁸

Three days after the letter appeared, a letter signed by Louis Marshall's committee was sent to fifty-nine leading American Jews, inviting them to a February meeting in New York City to discuss forming a national organization. The committee especially invited Magnes, Voorsanger, and H. Pereira Mendes, a prominent Orthodox rabbi in New York City, to the meeting. Mendes had proposed the establishment of an American Jewish organization similar to the "congress" idea. The letter cited the need for continuing aid to oppressed Jewries but also cautioned that if "such a Committee be organized, it shall be on such lines as shall not only meet with the approval of the general public, but shall be free from all objectionable tendencies."⁹

The "congress" and "committee" plans were both met with mixed reaction. The distinction between the "committee" of Adler and the "congress" which was discussed in New York City, was not very great. Certain individuals favored one idea or the other, as did Adler, but all favored an organization. As proposed by Adler, his committee would make a fair size congress and if the promoters of the congress decided to be moderate in the formation of such a congress, they would establish a congress no larger than Adler's committee.

8. Ibid., pp. 233, 234.

9. Cohen, op. cit., p. 9.

There was one point in which both the promoters of the congress and the committee agreed, and that was, "that only one voice should speak in behalf of the Jews in America on matters of national and international importance, and that voice should be the product of the combined wisdom of all the Jews in America."¹⁰

A meeting was held on Saturday evening, February 3, and on Sunday, February 4, at the Hebrew Charities Building in New York City, to discuss the idea of forming a general Jewish committee in the United States.¹¹ Of the fifty-nine invited men, thirty-four attended. Since delegates came from San Francisco, Milwaukee, New Orleans, Chicago, and Cincinnati, the showing was impressive. The delegates constituted a young group: over half were under fifty. They were predominantly lawyers, rabbis, and businessmen, all active in Jewish circles.¹² One-third of the delegates were

10. The American Hebrew, January 5, 1906, p. 234; The Jewish Comment (Baltimore), January 19, 1906, p. 4.

11. The Jewish Comment, February 9, 1906, p. 13.

12. The list of the thirty-four men who attended the February, 1906, meeting to discuss the formation of a general Jewish Committee in the United States, is as follows: Baltimore-Dr. Harry Friedenwald; Boston-L. Pickert; Chicago-Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, Adolf Kraus, Hon. Julian W. Mack, Dr. J. Stolz; Cincinnati-Dr. D. Philipson; Louisville-Dr. H. G. Enelow; Milwaukee-A. W. Rich; Newark-Mr. Felix Fuld; New Orleans-Dr. M. Heller, Dr. Isaac Leucht; New York-N. Aleinikoff, Nathan Bijur, Hon. S. Greenbaum, Joseph Jacobs, Dr. Kaplan, E. W. Lewin-Epstein, Morris Loeb, Dr. J. L. Magnes, Louis Marshall, Dr. H. P. Mendes, J. Saphirstein, Jacob H. Schiff, Abraham S. Schomer, Oscar Straus, Cyrus L. Sulzberger; Providence-Harry Cutler; Philadelphia-Mayer Sulzberger;

American born and most had been educated in the United States. They were men representing all shades of opinion. Nicholas Aleinikoff, active in Yiddish intellectual and socialist circles; Jacob Saphirstein, publisher of the Yiddish language Jewish Morning Journal; and Abraham Schomer, son of a Yiddish playwright, represented the new Eastern European Jews. The rest of the delegates were from the older, German-Jewish community. Reform rabbis Emil G. Hirsch, David Philipson, Judah Magnes, H. G. Enelow, Max Heller, I. J. Leucht, and others, represented the western and Reform traditions. Zionism was represented by Magnes and Heller; and Nathan Bijur, the anti-Zionist approach.¹³

The meeting was called to order by Marshall, and immediately Mayer Sulzberger of Philadelphia was elected chairman, and Joseph Jacobs, secretary. For two days the delegates discussed all facets of such an organization. Several opposed any form of organization; others said that some form of united action was desirable; and a large number were insistent that all organization be along religious lines. After all the discussions, the conference unanimously passed the following resolutions: (1) Resolved, That it is the sense of this conference that it is desirable and feasible to establish a

San Francisco-O. J. Wise; Washington-Cyrus Adler, Simon Wolf; Richmond-Dr. E. N. Calish. The list is taken from The Jewish Comment, February 9, 1906, p. 13.

13. The Jewish Comment, February 9, 1906, p. 13.

general Jewish Committee in the United States; and (2) That the chairman appoint a committee of seven, who should consider the various suggestions laid before the meeting and report at a reconvened meeting of the conference, which should include all of the fifty-nine gentlemen originally invited.¹⁴ The meeting was adjourned after arranging to meet again in May.

The selected committee met during the months between February and May and drew up a report to be submitted to the reconvened full committee in May. Its report called for an organization "whose purpose shall be to promote the cause of Judaism and to aid in securing the civil and religious rights of the Jews in all countries where such rights are denied or endangered."¹⁵ It proposed that every five years all incorporated congregations which paid a small fee would elect a convention of 150 delegates. Ballots would be distributed in proportion to their membership; unaffiliated Jews could participate by submitting independent ballots. The convention would in turn elect an executive committee of twenty-three. The United States would be divided into nine districts, each district having a population of at least 10,000 Jews. The major problem with the plan was that it revolved around congregational affiliation.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., May 11, 1906, p. 4.

As planned, the original delegates reconvened in New York City on May 19, to discuss the report. Only twenty-two showed up. Two principal issues nearly wrecked the Committee before it could get off the ground. The first, which disturbed the leaders of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the B'nai B'rith, was that the new body would repeat the work they were already doing in the area of Jewish rights. The second issue revolved around the selected committee's report. It had been authored by Louis Marshall, and it was not acceptable to the majority of the delegates. It was feared that a democratically elected organization, as proposed, would be quickly taken over by the growing number of Eastern European Jews immigrating into the United States. Several men, led by Oscar Straus and Adolf Kraus, insisted that the Committee should be self-appointed and self-perpetuating.¹⁶

Marshall's plan was not adopted. Instead, a Committee of Fifteen was named and authorized to choose thirty-five additional members. The fears of the B'nai B'rith and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations were allayed: it was voted that the new Committee was "to cooperate with the different national bodies in the country."¹⁷ During the summer months, the Committee of Fifteen met and corresponded with one another concerning the make-up of the Committee.

16. Ibid., June 29, 1906, p. 14.

17. The Emanu-El (San Francisco), June 8, 1906, p. 6.

On November 11, 1906, the American Jewish Committee held its first meeting in New York's Hotel Savoy. Increasing its number to sixty, the Committee agreed to a constitution providing for five-year terms for members to be elected by district advisory councils, with one-fifth of the members to leave office each year. The districts would be divided according to population. The general committee was to meet annually and elect an executive committee of thirteen. Five members of the executive committee would constitute a quorum. Mayer Sulzberger was chosen president, Julian Mack, a Chicago jurist and civic leader, and Isidor Newman, a New Orleans merchant and banker, vice presidents.¹⁸ The Committee defined its goals in the charter which it registered with the New York Legislature when it was incorporated:

The objects of this corporation shall be, to prevent the infraction of the civil and religious rights of the Jews, in any part of the world; to render all lawful assistance and to take appropriate remedial action in the event of threatened or actual invasion or restriction of such rights, or of unfavorable discrimination with respect thereto; to secure for Jews equality of economic, social and educational opportunity; alleviate the consequence of persecution, and to afford relief from calamities affecting Jews, wherever they may occur.¹⁹

One of the first acts of the American Jewish Committee was to vote to raise \$100,000 to rebuild synagogues and Jewish educational buildings destroyed in the San Francisco earthquake

18. Ibid., November 23, 1906, p. 9.

19. The American Hebrew, November 30, 1906, p. 85.

and fire in April, 1906.²⁰ In San Francisco, the action was hailed as a worthy beginning for the Committee.²¹ It was also criticized for this move because many believed that the Committee acted in haste, with a notion of trying to do something quickly, to establish themselves in the Jewish community.²²

Even though the formation of the Committee was greeted with moderate enthusiasm, most people hoped it would succeed. The American Israelite noted that "the American Jewish Committee has a good start at least, because of the men that have been chosen for it. The body of men are fully equal in intelligence, ability and character of any like number that could have been selected from among the entire eighty-five millions of our fellow-citizens."²³ An article from the Yiddish press noted that "the less that will be expected from the Committee, the more it will be able to accomplish. Provided too much is not expected, the committee may become a power that will open in time new possibilities that at present we cannot even conceive of."²⁴ The American Hebrew was the only early real friend of the Committee. The fact that the editor of the newspaper, Joseph Jacobs, was an early member of the Committee must have played a role in the paper's stand.

20. The Emanu-El, November 16, 1906, p. 3.

21. Ibid., January 8, 1907, p. 3.

22. The American Israelite (Cincinnati), November 22, 1906, p. 4.

23. Ibid., November 1, 1906, p. 4.

24. The Jewish Comment, November 23, 1906, p. 132.

Some of the division over the formation of the Committee came about because of regional differences. The American Jewish Committee was essentially an Eastern product, with Eastern men as the moving spirits and its destiny rested in their hands. As one commentator wrote:

The West has been used to look upon the East as reactionary in religion; the East upon the West as superficial and radical . . . the West feels that the East ought to remain in the East, and that it would be a dangerous thing to have a powerful national organization that will feed at the breasts of New York and Philadelphia. So Pittsburg registers its objection; Cincinnati is not convinced, but is willing to bide its time; St. Louis makes a wry face; Denver is all excitement and opposition; Chicago is superlatively skeptical and contemptuous. They all say that their principal objection is to the method by which the committee was gotten together. The inalienable right of every American to vote on every thing has been ignored. But I have my doubts as to the entire validity of this objection. I see in it the old division between the two sections of the countries. Dr. Wise did not go to Cincinnati just at a venture.²⁵

In the first years of the Committee, they took over the editorship of The American Jewish Yearbook from the Jewish Publication Society of America. Following the request for aid to the victims of the San Francisco earthquake, they rallied to help the victims of a pogrom in Morocco in September, 1907.²⁶ They also became involved in the Theodore Bingham affair in New York City, the formation of the Kehillah in New York City, and fought against the growing moves in the United States Congress to limit immigration to the United States from Eastern

25. Ibid., December 7, 1906, p. 167.

26. The Emanu-El, September 27, 1907, p. 6.

Europe. Their first years set the precedent for the work they would do for the next seventy years.

The Committee was born in a decade characterized by optimism and a basic belief in the rationality of man. The Committee could predicate its activities on the conviction that the universal recognition of human rights was an attainable goal. Jews had found security in the United States, security sufficient to overcome doubts about being alien Jews. They did not face a national tradition of anti-Semitism as existed in European countries: America was a new land.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE JEWISH TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION AND
THE GALVESTON PLAN

Zionism, the Jewish national movement, began to play an important role in the world Jewish community in the early years of the twentieth century. The Zionist organization was officially organized in Basel, Switzerland, in July and August, 1897. Over two hundred delegates attended the First Zionist Congress, at which Theodore Herzl was elected president. Herzl, an Austrian journalist, had been the prime initiator of the Congress, and is considered the father of modern Zionism. The aim of Zionism was to establish a national Jewish homeland in Palestine, the historic home of the Jewish people. The movement rapidly gained support in Europe. In the United States, the American Federation of Zionists was established soon after the First Zionist Congress, and became affiliated with the international Zionist movement.¹

At first, the Zionist organization encouraged the colonization of Palestine by Jewish colonists. As early as the 1880's, Jews from Russia and other areas of Eastern Europe had established settlements in Palestine. The financial

1. Richard Gottheil, "Zionism," The Jewish Encyclopedia (1916), XII: 670-675.

support for these ventures in Palestine came in part from wealthy European Jews such as the Rothschilds. The early colonists did have problems, especially with the Ottoman Turks, who ruled Palestine at this time. The Turks were not happy with the amount of Jewish immigration into Palestine as the persecutions in Russia continued, and the Jews fled. The Turks began to create problems for the new immigrants in Palestine. The increase in pogroms in Russia also increased the amount of Jewish immigration into the United States. The Zionist movement needed Palestine as a place for Jews to colonize who wanted to establish a Jewish national homeland, rather than seeking a home in another non-Jewish country.

Zionism had gained a large following in England among non-Jews, as well as Jews. In 1903, the British Government offered 6,000 square miles in British East Africa for the settlement of an autonomous Jewish state. The territory was the Guas Ngishu Plateau in present day Kenya. The offer became known as the Uganda Plan. A commission was selected by the Zionists to visit the area and submit a report to the next Zionist Congress. Before the report could be submitted, Theodore Herzl died.

On July 27, 1905, a year following the funeral of Herzl, the Seventh Zionist Congress was convened in Basel. Max Nordau was elected president to succeed Theodore Herzl. The Congress, after reading the report submitted by the commission, rejected the offer of the British for the land in

East Africa. The Congress reiterated the statement made at the First Zionist Congress that it supports "the establishment of a legally secured, publicly recognized home for the Jewish people in Palestine,"² and rejects, either as an end or as a means of colonizing, "activity outside Palestine and its adjacent lands."³

Not all the delegates agreed with the stand of the Congress, and twenty-eight of them withdrew from the Congress. They were led by Israel Zangwill, British author, lecturer, and Zionist. Zangwill became a leader in a new movement known as "Territorialism." The movement's objective was to establish an autonomous Jewish state in which the predominant majority of the population would be Jewish. In contrast to Zionism, Territorialism regarded Palestine as one of these areas, but not the only one. It was in essence "Zionism minus Zion."⁴

Zangwill established in August, 1905, following his break with the Zionist Congress, the Jewish Territorial Organization, abbreviated I.T.O. He became its president and remained in that capacity until the dissolution of the I.T.O. in 1925. The first conference held in Basel defined the objects of the I.T.O. as follows:

2. Ibid., pp. 680-681.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 685.

(1) To procure a territory upon an autonomous basis for those Jews who cannot, or will not, remain in the lands in which they at present live. (2) To achieve this end the Organization proposes (a) to unite all Jews who are in agreement with this object; (b) to enter into relations with Governments and public and private institutions; (c) to create financial institutions, labor-bureaus, and other instruments that may be found necessary.⁵

The I.T.O. gained the support of several Americans: Cyrus Sulzberger, Oscar Straus, and Jacob Schiff, among them. An American Federation of the Jewish Territorial Organization was established in New York City in April, 1906. Cyrus Sulzberger, who initiated the movement for an American branch, became chairman. The need to establish an American branch of the I.T.O. was looked upon by Sulzberger and others as a possible solution to a growing problem in the United States. There was a growing movement in the United States Jewish community to limit the immigration of Jews to the East coast. Jewish leaders had been trying to gain United States Government financial support to erect immigration stations on the Gulf coast, in their search for havens for persecuted Russian Jews, but could not get it.⁶

New York City had become a Jewish ghetto. From June, 1905, to June, 1906, 150,846 Jews immigrated to America, and 133,764 landed in New York City, and stayed.⁷ The city had

5. Ibid.

6. Naomi W. Cohen, Not Free to Desist (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of American, 1972), p. 48.

7. The Jewish Comment (Baltimore), January 18, 1907, p. 297.

a Jewish population of close to one million people. The calls for distributing the immigrants to other cities had begun all over the country. Many people believed that too many people were "ghettoized" in the large Eastern cities and the new immigrants had to be distributed to other areas of the country.⁸ The area that seemed most open to potential immigration from Europe was the Southern and Western states. It was the same area that the American founders of the I.T.O. had looked upon as a new home in America for Russian immigrants.

The American Federation of the Jewish Territorial Organization began to work very closely with the Industrial Removal Office in this project. The Industrial Removal Office had been established to move Jews out of the large Eastern cities and relocate them in more sparsely populated areas of the United States. Since 1900, the Industrial Removal Office had succeeded in removing 33,000 Jews from New York City, and resettled them in the interior of the United States. It was no coincidence that Cyrus Sulzberger, the chairman of the American branch of the I.T.O. was also the chairman of the Industrial Removal Office.⁹

Beginning in January, 1907, plans were formulated through the offices of the I.T.O. in London and other European cities, and the American branch, to promote the

8. The Emanu-El (San Francisco), January 20, 1905, p. 6.

9. The American Hebrew (New York), September 27, 1907, p. 510.

idea of bringing Russian Jewish immigrants to the United States through the port of Galveston, Texas.¹⁰ The movement to bring Jews to Galveston was backed by Jacob Schiff. He offered to finance the project with \$100,000. Funds were also offered by Leopold de Rothschild of London, and Barons James and Edmond de Rothschild of Paris.¹¹

Initially, the project for diverting Jewish immigration away from New York City, had begun before the I.T.O. endorsed it. However once the plan was started, the I.T.O. put it into effect. Although the Galveston project was not in line with the goals of the I.T.O., Zangwill believed it was a necessary endeavor. Jews were rapidly fleeing Russia, and "invading" New York City and the East coast. Zangwill believed that Galveston provided an ideal location for distributing Jews throughout the South and West. He noted in an article addressed to the American Jewish community that "from Galveston alone, six railway lines run to all areas of the South and the Southwest. Distribution would not be difficult."¹² The plans were to divert 10,000 immigrants, embarking from Bremen, Germany, to Galveston over the next year. This number would increase as settlement continued and the immigrants established communities.¹³

10. The Jewish Comment, January 4, 1907, p. 266.

11. The American Hebrew, January 4, 1907, p. 218.

12. The Jewish Comment, January 18, 1907, p. 297.

13. Ibid.

The initial response to the plan was a favorable one. Criticism to the plan came from Rabbi H. Pereira Mendes, President of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of the United States and Canada. He wrote:

I understand that it is expected and even announced that the Jews arriving in South and scattered thence to the West will be unable to observe Sabbath and the Jewish religion for which their fathers lived and died. . . . The Jewish Territorial Organization is a magnificent work, if it is Jewish. It is magnificent if it aims to provide homes and peace for those who to-day "sit in darkness and the shadow of death." But it is infernal treachery if it means taking these wretched Jews to where they must surrender their Sabbath and their religion.¹⁴

His argument was countered by the statement that "all Jews embarking from Germany for Galveston had been told that Sabbath observance in the West is difficult, if not impossible. All who are going to Galveston, are going of their own free will. . . . The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of the United States and Canada, instead of making captious criticism, might be engaged in the useful work of aiding in the distribution of immigrants to such places where Sabbath observance is more easily possible. The constituency of this Union is composed for the most part of Russian immigrants, and they should extend a helping hand to their newly arriving fellows."¹⁵ There was also a fear that when the immigrants docked in Galveston, they would

14. The American Hebrew, June 14, 1907, p. 143.

15. Ibid.

immediately board a train for New York City.¹⁶ Everyone acknowledged that the plan had to be handled with care, that the immigrants did not become a burden to the established communities, and that they would be quickly processed through Galveston and sent on their way.¹⁷ Also, there arose an objection among the Jews already in the South and West that these "new Jews" might create distinct colonies of Russian Jews, and not become Americanized.¹⁸

A Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau, directed by Morris D. Waldman, was established in 1907, in Galveston, to settle and sustain the immigrants who would soon be arriving.¹⁹ Rabbi Henry Cohen of Galveston was a guiding force during the entire effort. On June 7, 1907, the North German Lloyd steamer Cassel left Bremen for Galveston with the first detachment of Russian Jews.²⁰ This first group of immigrants arrived at Galveston on July 1. The group included sixty-six men, sixteen women, and fifteen children, and the plans called for them to be "dispersed to Missouri, Kansas and the South, as soon as they had been processed in Galveston."²¹ They were

16. The Jewish Comment, June 21, 1907, p. 165.

17. Ibid., p. 170.

18. The Emanu-El, July 12, 1907, p. 1.

19. The American Hebrew, September 27, 1907, pp. 507,
510.

20. Ibid., June 14, 1907, p. 148.

21. The Emanu-El, July 19, 1907, p. 5.

met by a delegation from the Jewish and general community. Mayor Landes of Galveston welcomed the group, and one of the new immigrants responded:

We have been accustomed to receive only harsh words and kicks from city rulers; and to have the ruler of your city welcome us in a kindly manner and then shake hands with us goes straight to our hearts, and we already love America.²²

The Galveston Plan was a short lived one. During the first year, only 900 immigrants entered the United States through the Texas port.²³ Although the plan had its merits, it did not receive the full support of the American Jewish community. Several major Jewish immigration agencies refused to assist the organizers of the movement in placing the immigrants in the South and West. Problems also arose with the United States Department of Commerce and Labor, and in 1910, a large number of immigrants were deported.²⁴ Nevertheless, the Galveston plan managed to settle 10,000 immigrants in the South and West before it ceased operations at the outbreak of World War I.

22. Ibid., August 9, 1907, p. 6.

23. The American Hebrew, February 19, 1909, p. 417.

24. Cohen, op. cit., pp. 45-47.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE NEW YORK KEHILLAH

By 1907, the Jewish population of New York City was rapidly growing into the largest Jewish community in the world. Since the 1880's, thousands of Eastern European Jews had flocked to the shores of the United States escaping the persecutions of the Russian pogroms. The majority of them landed in New York City and stayed there. Hundreds of organizations served their needs. There were religious, educational, and philanthropic agencies that served all the possible needs of the growing community. Yet the city lacked one organization which might have been regarded as representative of the whole community. Attempts had been made to coordinate several of the organizations into a federation, and some had succeeded, but no general organization had been established.

The Russian massacres of 1905-06 found no organization ready to meet the problem created, and the formation of a temporary organization was necessary. The formation of this temporary organization led eventually to the organization of the American Jewish Committee in November, 1906. The American Jewish Committee became the spokesman for many American Jews on national and international problems. However

no collective organization existed for the New York Jewish community. The American Hebrew, in October, 1907, broached the idea of a "Community" in New York City. The paper noted:

Signs are fast accumulating that the Jews of New York will before long begin to act as one community. For this purpose it will have some sort of organization which should represent it in all its phases. Preliminary efforts towards this unification are to be seen in the Federation of Contributors, which will surely one day grow into a federation of charities . . . New York is almost the only Jewish community of the world that has not some sort of organization binding its members together. It is especially American to have large bodies represented by delegates or nominees and the assumption that the present invertebrate condition of the Jewish community is specifically Jewish or American is in both cases unjustified. All great Jewish communities have hitherto had their organization and all great bodies of Americans having a common object have invariably had their representative assembly. Why should the New York Jewish community be without either?¹

The editorial also stated that any organization which is established should be based upon the existing synagogues and congregations. However, the delegates should be the laymen of these congregations, and not the rabbis.²

Although the editorial expressed a popular view towards community organization, no action was taken to form such an organization for almost a year. It took the slanderous charges of New York's Police Commissioner Theodore Bingham, in September, 1908** that the Jews of New York City were responsible for

**The Theodore Bingham affair will be dealt with in greater detail in Part II of this paper.

1. The American Hebrew (New York), October 11, 1907, p. 560.

2. Ibid.

fifty percent of the city's crime, for the general community to act.³ The charge infuriated the Jewish community and the Jewish Lower East Side erupted in anger. The American Hebrew, in its initial reaction, castigated Bingham for infecting "venom and prejudice" into his discussion when speaking of Jews.⁴ Two and a half weeks after Bingham had made the accusation, he issued a retraction.⁵ At that point, most members of the Jewish community wished "to allow the incident between Commissioner Bingham and the Jews of New York to be regarded as closed."⁶

The incident began a battle between the Anglo-Jewish press, the press of the German Jews, and the Yiddish press, the spokesman for the immigrant. Both sides berated one another for the stand each was taking. After the initial editorial in The American Hebrew, it printed a second one a week later on "Jewish Sensitiveness," that the East Side was reacting with undue emotion towards the statement. It wrote that the "whole incident illustrates the excessive sensitiveness of Jews with regard to any statements derogatory to their highest claim. So many of them have passed their lives under

3. Ibid., September 4, 1908, p. 419.

4. Ibid.

5. The Jewish Comment (Baltimore), September 25, 1908, p. 362.

6. Arthur A. Goren, New York Jews and the Quest for Community (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 35.

the withering fact of repression, that in this land of liberty they tend to go to the other extreme and insist upon the right of freedom with undue emphasis."⁷

The Yiddish press, led by the Tageblatt, immediately responded that The American Hebrew was "soft pedaling Bingham," and did not understand the feelings of protest sweeping the East Side.⁸ They wrote, "they were more unhappy about our agitation against Bingham than over the insult Bingham so crudely flung at the Jews."⁹ The Yiddish press was also berating the American Jewish Committee, which took little action in the affair, although Louis Marshall and Jacob Schiff were key figures in compelling the apology from Bingham.¹⁰ What was truly lacking throughout the two and a half week episode was a bona fide spokesman for the immigrant Jews. The "uptown" German Jews and the "downtown" Russian Jews, were both at odds as to how to react to the statement. The uptown leaders took Bingham's statement, although exaggerated, as a confirmation of their long-standing criticism of the East Side: delinquency was rising, a grim indication of the presence of moral dissolution. Sensitive downtown Jewry read the statement as blatant anti-Semitism. The incident produced a debate between uptown

7. The American Hebrew, September 11, 1908, p. 444.

8. Goren, op. cit., p. 29.

9. Ibid.

10. Naomi W. Cohen, Not Free to Desist (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), p. 23.

and downtown Jews over the course of Jewish communal life in New York City, and "out of the Bingham affair came a movement to organize the Jews of New York into a real community."¹¹

The leadership for such an organization fell on the shoulders of Judah Magnes, the associate rabbi of Temple Emanuel. Magnes, born in San Francisco, was educated at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. He ministered at the leading Reform congregation in New York City; numbering the Schiffs, Warburgs, Guggenheims, and Lewisohns as his congregants. In the fall of 1908, he married a sister of Louis Marshall's wife, and this marriage reinforced his connection with the Jewish elite. But he also was at home on the East Side. Professors Solomon Schechter and Israel Friedlaender, of the Conservative Jewish Theological Seminary of America, were his friends. He often attended Orthodox services in tenement-house basements. Magnes was a leading American Zionist; and, he headed a fund to aid clandestine Jewish self-defense units in Russia. He participated in the establishment of the patrician American Jewish Committee. In December, 1905, it was Magnes who lead 150,000 Jews up Fifth Avenue to protest the Russian pogroms. His "downtown" following was an asset to the "uptown" community; just as his "uptown" connections provided invaluable financial aid to the "downtown" community in forming the new community organization.¹²

11. The Jewish Comment, October 9, 1908, p. 6.

12. Goren, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

The initial meeting for the organization of the New York Jewish community took place on October 11 and 12, 1908, in Clinton Hall, New York City. Two hundred and fifty representatives of the East Side gathered for the convention. The sessions were "turbulent, eloquent, bitter, sentimental, and quite often practical."¹³ A steering committee, after long deliberation, offered two propositions to the conference:

(1) the purpose of this organization shall be the formation of a representative community, or kehillah,** of Jews of New York City; (2) it shall have represented within it the Jews of New York City, and shall act for them as necessity requires; and it may promote and foster such organizations, institutions, etc., as will fulfill its purposes.¹⁴

The innocuous formulation was deliberate, so as not to make a commitment to any persuasion.

But there was no way to avoid controversy at the conference. Bernard Drachman, an Orthodox rabbi in the city, declared that the statement should affirm the interests of the Jewish faith. This was counteracted by Henry Moskowitz, leader of the Ethical Culture Society's Madison House settlement, and Nachman Syrkin, a socialist Zionist, who proposed an amendment excluding all political and religious issues. They wanted the Kehillah to devote itself to those interests

**Kehillah is the Hebrew term for community. It was used by the New York Jewish community to refer to the self-contained communal establishments of European Jewry, especially in Eastern Europe. The organized New York Jewish community took the name New York Kehillah.

13. The American Hebrew, October 16, 1908, p. 583.

14. Ibid., p. 584.

of the Jewish people that are national, cultural, social and economic.¹⁵

Magnes, who chaired the sessions, held the meetings together. He argued that the meeting was only a planning session and a unity among the groups attending had to be established before any dissension. The important question was "what would the Kehillah do once organized."¹⁶ To be successful, the Jewish community had to be tolerant enough to embrace all who would join. The Committee of Twenty-five was appointed as an interim executive committee, to meet with Jewish organizations in the city to discuss the formal formation of a Kehillah. Magnes appointed the members of the committee. It was made up of men representing the wide range of opinions presented at the sessions. The conference was adjourned and work towards formal organization had begun.¹⁷

Two obstacles stood in the way of the formation of the Kehillah. The first was the position of the American Jewish Committee towards it, and the second was the response of the Reform Jewish community. Magnes, at least, had a foothold in both. Rabbi Samuel Schulman, of the Reform Temple Beth-El, favored the establishment of the Kehillah because "danger existed in prolonging any longer than absolutely

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. The American Hebrew, October 23, 1908, p. 615.

necessary the features of a foreign colony in the midst of American life." Unification of Russian Jews with German Reform elements would encourage this process. But he stressed the wording "cause of Judaism" as part of the Kehillah's charter. The movement cannot surrender to the secularists. The task of the Kehillah, in his words, was:

there is only one basis of unity and representation and that is the synagogue. Both from the point of view of inner development and outward safety and welfare we cannot organize New York Jewry on the basis of race and nationality. We exist in the non-Jewish world only as a "Keneseth Yisrael," a congregation of Israel.¹⁸

From Cincinnati, the bastion of American Reform Judaism, Rabbi David Philipson wrote:

If the purpose be to have a central representative body to supervise the religious, philanthropic and educational life of Jewry--then there is not one but wishes the organization Godspeed. However there must be care in the formation of the New York community that it is not neo-nationalism in disguise, Zionism in another form . . . We don't need self-defense leagues; America, thank God, is not Russia. If the purpose be to have an organization of Jews as a distinct element of the population, or in other words, as a distinct race or nationality, then it cannot be too vigorously opposed.¹⁹

Other cities registered the view of wait and see. The purpose, in principle, was a good one, but the organizing process had to be watched closely to see if the divergent types represented in New York could come together.²⁰

18. Ibid., October 9, 1908, p. 560.

19. The American Israelite (Cincinnati), November 26, 1908, p. 4.

20. The Jewish Comment, October 23, 1908, p. 38.

Magnes, along with Louis Marshall and Jacob Schiff, led the fight for the American Jewish Committee's approval of the Kehillah at the annual meeting of the Committee in November, 1908. As mentioned earlier, the East Side needed the financial backing of the German Jews for the formation of the Kehillah; and the Committee could not remain aloof from the new Kehillah. The planners of the Kehillah met with New York members of the Committee and arrived at an agreement. The Kehillah would deal solely with local matters and leave all national and international issues to the jurisdiction of the Committee; the twenty-five members of the Kehillah's executive board, would be the representatives of the Committee's New York District. The Committee made the stipulation that American citizenship was mandatory for members of the executive committee.²¹

The founding convention for the Jewish Community of New York City was held on Saturday evening, February 27, 1909, at the United Hebrew Charities Building. Three hundred delegates representing 222 organizations attended.²² Magnes explained the arrangement which had been made with the American Jewish Committee to the delegates. There was some opposition from the Orthodox community that the Reform rabbis and "assimilationist" German Jews might use the new body to undermine the

21. The American Hebrew, January 29, 1909, p. 337.

22. Ibid., March 5, 1909, p. 467.

Orthodox insitutions of the Jewish East Side.²³ But Louis Marshall stood up and told the delegates that the American Jewish Committee is not here to capture the Kehillah. Indeed, he went on to say, "on the contrary, the members of the Committee have tendered their resignation to this convention, and are asking you to elect the men to fill their places."²⁴

After several hours of debate, Magnes called for a vote on Marshall's proposition that "it is the sense of this gathering that a Jewish Community of New York City be formed." The motion was carried and then Jacob Schiff took the floor. The American Hebrew reported that "it was a unique event in Jewish communal affairs for a man to receive such an outburst of spontaneous, sincere, and enthusiastic applause, which had all the characteristics of a demonstration at a political meeting in the height of a campaign."²⁵ Schiff, the most influential leader in the Jewish community, praised the convention. He then moved the acceptance of the first two articles of the proposed constitution: that "the purpose of the Jewish Community of New York City shall be to further the cause of Judaism . . . and to represent the Jews of this city;" and that "the organization shall not engage" in political activity

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., p. 469.

25. Ibid., p. 468.

"or interfere with the autonomy of a constituent organization." The resolution was carried unanimously.²⁶

Two more meetings were held, on March 6 and March 27, to elect the executive committee of the Kehillah. Ten members of the American Jewish Committee, led by Schiff, were elected to the executive committee, and retained a dominant voice in the Kehillah movement. Louis Marshall, Judah Magnes, and Cyrus Sulzberger were among those elected. A representative group from the East Side was also elected. Magnes was elected chairman of the Kehillah.²⁷

The American Israelite described the Kehillah, after its organization, as advancing "that crazy nationalism which is the latest form of Jewish hysteria." The Kehillah's leaders were "unsafe men of narrow, distorted views . . . without understanding of the proper relation of a religious community to the American nation."²⁸ It went on to say that "not all New York Jews favor the 'Kehillah.' Of the up-town Jews, ninety-nine percent do not care three straws about the matter, being absolutely indifferent. . . . The plain truth of the matter is that the 'New York Jewish Community' is planned to be a tail to the Zionist kite. The movement is fraught with danger to the good name of Jewish Americans and it is a pity that the

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid., April 2, 1909, p. 569.

28. The American Israelite, March 11, 1909, p. 4.

prominent Jews of New York, who are opposed to it--and they form a large majority--allow themselves to be intimidated by the clamor of noisy demagogues, and are afraid to speak out. New York Jewry needs a few more Samuel Greenbaums and Marcus Marks."29 Judge Samuel Greenbaum, president of the Educational Alliance of New York City, called the Kehillah "a dangerous act of self-segregation, uncalled for, and un-American."30 Marcus Marks, president of the National Association of Clothiers, also called the Kehillah "un-American."31

The New York Kehillah embarked on a program with the New York Board of Rabbis to regulate the religious aspect of marriage and divorce and the sale of Kosher food; set up a Court of Arbitration, a "Bet Din," to decide religious disputes; a Bureau of Industry to settle labor disputes between Jewish employers and employees; a Welfare Committee to cooperate with the authorities in matters involving Jews that required police action; an Employment Bureau for the Handicapped; and a Bureau of Jewish Education for the city.32 One of its early endeavors was to provide "provisional synagogues" for unaffiliated Jews during the High Holy Days.33 The Kehillah

29. Ibid., April 1, 1909, p. 4.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Rufus Lears, The Jews in America: A History (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1972), p. 216.

33. The American Hebrew, July 22, 1909, p. 297.

was an experiment that only lasted about a decade. It rapidly began to decline after 1917. However, the original concept of the organization was in line with the general mood of cooperation that existed among Jews in the United States during the early years of the twentieth century.

PART TWO
AMERICAN LIFE

CHAPTER ONE
CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION

In November, 1905, the American Jewish community celebrated a unique event. In cities throughout the country, the two-hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Jewish settlement in the United States was observed. Celebrations were held in all sections of the country. The major observance took place in Carnegie Hall in New York City on November 30.¹ Jacob Schiff served as the chairman for the nation-wide celebration. At the Carnegie Hall celebration, ex-President Grover Cleveland was the featured speaker. The governor of New York state, and the mayor of New York City also attended. A notable feature of the celebration was the reading of a letter from President Theodore Roosevelt, in which he noted that though it was his rule not to write letters on the occasion of any celebration, he was sending one in this case:

because the lamentable and terrible suffering to which so many of the Jewish people in other lands have been subjected, makes me feel it my duty, as the head of the American people, not only to express my deep sympathy for them, as I now do, but at the same time to point out what fine qualities of citizenship have been displayed by the men of Jewish faith and race, who, having come to this country, enjoy the benefit of free

1. The American Hebrew (New York), December 1, 1905, p. 17.

institutions and equal treatment before the law. I feel very strongly that if any people are oppressed anywhere, the wrong inevitably reacts in the end on those who oppress them; for it is an immutable law in the spiritual world that no one can wrong others, and yet in the end himself escape unhurt.²

Roosevelt's reference to the recent pogroms in Russia was applauded by the audience.

The Anglo-Jewish press also took note of the national celebrations with feature articles on the advancement of Jewish life in the United States.³ The Emanu-El published a special seventy-five page souvenir edition in September, 1905, with articles by Rabbi Emil Hirsch of Chicago and Rabbi David Philipson of Cincinnati, among others, commemorating the event.⁴ They paid special attention to the Jewish community on the Pacific coast, with feature articles written by Rabbi Jacob Voorsanger of San Francisco, and Rabbi Sigmund Hecht, of the Reform Congregation B'nai B'rith of Los Angeles. The American Hebrew published a commemorative volume of over two hundred pages. The editors praised Jewish life in America writing that, "we can reach no higher zenith."⁵ The edition was complete with pictures, articles, and stories about every aspect of American Jewish life. An editorial from the New York

2. Ibid.

3. The American Hebrew, November 24, 1905; The Emanu-El (San Francisco), September 29, 1905; and The Jewish Comment (Baltimore), December 1, 1905.

4. The Emanu-El, September 29, 1905, p. 1.

5. The American Hebrew, November 24, 1905, p. 722.

Daily News expressed the mood, not only of the Anglo press, but also the Anglo-Jewish press:

That the Hebrews have gained a high position during the past two hundred and fifty years cannot be gainsaid. That they are the leaders today in every branch of the mercantile and financial world is undisputed. The largest stores, theatres, banks, as well as the professions, are controlled by them, and their charity is lavish to all who need it. Their institutions, although supported by Jews alone, make no distinction of the creed when distributing charity or relieving the sick, and set an example of liberality highly commendable.⁶

The community did have cause for celebration. Although the festivities were dampened by the upsurge of anti-Jewish demonstrations and pogroms in Russia, the American Jewish community was secure. The five years from 1905 to 1910 would be a period of growth and expansion for American Jewry. The setbacks that the community experienced on the national scene would be small when compared to the power and influence the community possessed in proportion to its size among the American people. The experiences of their coreligionists in other lands, although sad and distasteful, only helped to reinforce their security in the United States. Although Jews held local, state, and national offices in the United States, these honors were overshadowed in October, 1906, by the appointment of Oscar Solomon Straus, by President Roosevelt, to be Secretary of Commerce and Labor.⁷ It was the first time that a Jew had

6. Ibid.

7. The American Hebrew, October 26, 1906, p. 502.

been appointed to a President's Cabinet, and was hailed "as a great occasion for Jews in the United States."⁸

Oscar Straus' appointment was especially noteworthy because he was a man active in the Jewish community, a "Jew who identifies himself as a Jew."⁹ His brothers, Isidore and Nathan, were the owners of R. H. Macy & Company, and extremely prominent in Jewish and non-Jewish philanthropic circles. He was a lawyer, and had long been active in Jewish organizations. This was not his first appointment to national service, having served as Minister to Turkey in 1887, 1890, and 1897. In 1902, he was appointed to the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague. President Roosevelt, in appointing Straus, commented: "I want to show Russia and some other countries what we think of the Jews in this country."¹⁰

The reaction to the appointment was very favorable.

The American Hebrew wrote:

And the Jews of the United States are no less to be congratulated on the distinction thus conferred upon one of the representative figures in their midst. It gives official stamp to the position they have attained in the national ranks. They can be proud of Mr. Straus' new honors both as Americans and Jews. They can rejoice at the practical example thus given that difference of creed has absolutely no debarring influence in the career of an American, and they can be equally proud that one of their number has proved himself worthy of one of the

8. The American Hebrew, October 26, 1906; The American Israelite (Cincinnati), November 1, 1906; and The Jewish Comment, October 26, 1906.

9. The Jewish Comment, October 26, 1906, p. 41.

10. The American Hebrew, October 26, 1906, p. 503.

highest honors an American can attain. Whether so intended or not, President Roosevelt's action will be regarded by the diplomatic world as a well-deserved rebuke to those autocracies of Europe where a Jew's creed bars him from public office. . . . The Jews of the United States will feel especially complimented that the choice of the President has fallen upon one of their number, not, of course, because he is a Jew, but simply because he is eminently fitted by experience and training for the position he is now called upon to occupy.¹¹

In Baltimore, The Jewish Comment added, "his country is our country, his faith our faith, his honor our honor."¹² The American Israelite, reflecting the viewpoint of its editor, took a different stand in praising the appointment:

It is characteristic of the American press that in discussing the new appointment to the President's Cabinet, the fact that Mr. Straus is a Jew is given the barest mention. It is treated as a matter of little importance, and one that does not call for discussion. Which is precisely what it should be.¹³

Straus' appointment was symbolic of the period. Although there were instances of social discrimination towards Jews; the anti-Semitic statement of New York Police Commissioner Theodore Bingham; and the continued problems of passports of American Jews being accepted in Russia, life was good for the middle and upper class Jew. There was a rise in intermarriage in the community, which caused great discussion within the Anglo-Jewish press, culminating in a great debate at the Central Conference of American Rabbis' (Reform) annual

11. Ibid., p. 502.

12. The Jewish Comment, October 26, 1906, p. 46.

13. The American Israelite, October 25, 1906, p. 4.

convention in 1909.¹⁴ American Jews, during these years, were celebrating the "good life" that they had found in America.

14. The Jewish Comment, November 19, 1909, p. 102.

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION

As Jews began to acquire wealth and social standing in American society, a new form of anti-Semitism began to appear: social discrimination. Ostracism of Jews by fashionable resorts, clubs and college fraternities was an ordinary occurrence. Although the majority of the Jews in America, the new Eastern European immigrants, were not interested in fashionable resorts or clubs, the exclusion of Jews was a bitter reminder to the upper class assimilated Jew that he had not quite made it in America. The first prominent incident of this kind occurred in June, 1877. Joseph Seligman, one of the most prominent Jewish bankers in the United States, and a friend of President Ulysses S. Grant, was refused admission to the Grand Union Hotel in Saratoga, New York, on racial grounds. When Seligman and his family arrived at the Grand Union Hotel, the manager of the hotel informed Seligman that "no Israelite shall be permitted in the future to stop in the hotel."¹ The incident was publicized in all the New York metropolitan newspapers, and echoed across the country. It

1. Rufus Lears, The Jews in America: A History (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1972), p. 172.

brought forth statements of reproach and disapproval by representatives of various races and religion, and evoked a "long eulogy on the Hebrew race" by Henry Ward Beecher.² Many believe that the incident provoked a good deal of latent anti-Semitism in the nation and brought it into the open. Some believe that the incident caused the ruin of A. T. Stewart & Company of New York, managed by Judge Hilton, also the manager of the Grand Union Hotel, and the eventual absorption of its retail business by John Wanamaker of Philadelphia.³

The practice of hotel exclusion continued into the twentieth century with a number of prominent examples. In December, 1904, prominent members of the Jewish community of New York, asked for the removal, by the Regents of the State of New York, of Melvil Dewey, State Librarian of New York, from his office. The petition was signed by Louis Marshall, Jacob Schiff, Isidore Straus, Adolph Ochs, Cyrus Sulzberger, and others.⁴ The men asked for Dewey's removal because he served as president of the Lake Placid Company which had a policy of excluding Jews. The company owned a hotel and pleasure resort in the Adirondack Mountains in northeast New York state. Dewey was considered the "leading and guiding

2. Joseph Jacobs, "Joseph Seligman," The Jewish Encyclopedia (1916), XI: 169.

3. Lears, op. cit., p. 173; Jacobs, op. cit., p. 169.

4. The American Israelite (Cincinnati), February 2, 1905, p. 5.

spirit" of the corporation.⁵ The letter stated that circulars and other printed matter had been scattered across the country which mentioned that at the resort:

no one will be received, against whom there is physical, moral, social, or race objections, or who would be unwelcome to even a small minority. This excludes absolutely all consumptives, or rather invalids, whose presence might injure health or modify others' freedom or enjoyment. This invariable rule is rigidly enforced. It is found impracticable to make exceptions to Hebrews or others excluded, even when of unusual personal qualifications.⁶

According to the petition, these remarks were most likely authored by Dewey, and that they are cause for his removal.⁷

The Regents of the State of New York censured Dewey, and Dewey resigned from the corporation. The incident also led to Dewey's eventual resignation from his position as State Librarian. Jewish public opinion was unanimous in praise of the action taken by the men in New York in demanding Dewey's removal.⁸

Besides New York, there were instances of hotel exclusion on the Pacific coast. The Emanu-El notes two examples that were brought to the public attention through the newspaper. The first instance involved an inn in Sonoma County,

5. Ibid.

6. The American Jewish Yearbook (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1905), VII: 261.

7. The Jewish Exponent (Philadelphia), February 3, 1905, p. 2.

8. The American Israelite, February 2, 1905, p. 5; The Emanu-El (San Francisco), February 17, 1905, p. 5; The Jewish Exponent, February 3, 1950, p. 2.

California. It was noted that "the stupid innkeeper prints on his circular the legend 'Hebrew trade not solicited;' thus far it does not appear that the Hebrew trade has solicited the innkeeper."⁹ And the second involved a Mr. H. W. Haines, proprietor of a hotel in Glenwood, California. Haines' hotel did not "cater to Hebrews."¹⁰ The Emanu-El noted that "such action was uncalled for in 1905. Mr. Haines has the right to reject serving anyone, as it constitutionally states in the Bill of Rights; but that same document also allows an American citizen to make an ass of himself, or if he desires to become distinguished for extraordinary stupidity or bigotry, no one is going to stop him."¹¹

As the summer months approached, the subject of hotel restrictions was an annual editorial topic in the Jewish press. In 1906, Leo Wise, the editor of The American Israelite, delivered the following advice:

The Israelite advice to its readers is to keep cool when one of these offensive notices is obtruded upon their notice. Use only the hotels where you are sure of welcome, and among these the best are always to be found, as the unscrupulous landlord who runs the "exclusive" house always tries to make up for loss of profit through diminished patronage by furnishing inferior food and poorer service.¹²

9. The Emanu-El, June 16, 1905, p. 5.

10. Ibid., June 23, 1905, p. 5.

11. Ibid.

12. The American Israelite, July 7, 1906, p. 4.

The most publicized incident of the period involving hotel exclusion occurred in May, 1907. Mrs. Samuel L. Frank, the sister of Isidor Rayner, the United States Senator from Maryland, left the Marlborough-Blenheim Hotel in Atlantic City, New Jersey, after finding out that the hotel "does not entertain Hebrews."¹³ Mrs. Frank had taken rooms at the hotel and then applied for accommodations for two nieces who were coming to visit her. It was then that the hotel clerk informed her that the "policy of the house is opposed to Hebrews."¹⁴ She immediately packed her bags and left the hotel. Mrs. Frank said that "as a most ardent Jewess I resent this insult to the many estimable people of the Jewish faith, who are affronted by the stand taken by the proprietors of a number of the principal hotels at this resort."¹⁵

Immediately, the Jewish and non-Jewish press reacted to the incident. Mrs. Frank, besides being the sister of a United States Senator, had been prominent for years in Baltimore social circles, and was a member of many non-sectarian charities. The New York Journal wrote:

Mrs. Bertha Rayner Frank . . . was compelled to leave a hotel in Atlantic City under circumstances disgraceful, shameful and offensive to every American with any sense of manliness or fairness. The time has gone by in the United States for shameful nonsense of this kind. Every American with a sense of fair play will denounce a

13. The Jewish Exponent, May 24, 1907, p. 11.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

cowardly, shameful, disgraceful, un-American and unmanly form of blackguardism that attacks, simultaneously, woman, religion, charity, decency, and fair play.¹⁶

The Jewish Exponent added:

It is indeed a pity that law-breakers of this particular description flourish in a great and enlightened country at this late day in the world's history. But the people who have suffered a martyrdom of centuries can afford to treat the actions of these puny inquisitions with unreserved contempt.¹⁷

The American Hebrew said that the incident was an insult to all American Jews. The actions of certain summer resorts has helped to earn "an unfortunate reputation for America" throughout the world.¹⁸ The attitude of The American Israelite was simply that Jews should go to hotels that serve everyone, and "not bother with the detestable ones."¹⁹

An apology addressed to Mrs. Frank was sent by Josiah White & Sons, the owners of the Marlborough-Blenheim. It stated, in part, that "we regret exceedingly that you should have been given the impression that either you were not welcome, or that your friends were not wanted."²⁰ They added that her publicized interviews concerning the episode, showed that "an affront to the whole Jewish people, which no one

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., p. 4.

18. The American Hebrew, May 24, 1907, p. 73.

19. The American Israelite, May 30, 1907, p. 5.

20. The Jewish Exponent, May 24, 1907, p. 10.

knowing us personally would believe us capable of intending or countenancing, has occurred."²¹ Reaction to the apology came from Simon Wolf, chairman of the Board of Directors on Civil Rights of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, who said that it was ridiculous for the hotel to say that they do not discriminate against Jews, since the year before a friend of his "who is a Catholic, but whose name sounds Jewish, applied for a room there, and was refused."²²

Following the incident and the apology, a bill was introduced in the New York State Legislature by Senator Martin Saxe, seeking more stringent prohibitions against discrimination. Senator Saxe's measure was in the form of an amendment to the current civil rights laws which prohibited discrimination in public places, and was designed to make more stringent the legal prohibitions already existing against discrimination on the part of hotels on account of faith, creed, race or color.²³ The bill would also outlaw advertisements to the effect that any creed or color is not desired at the hotel. The bill was not specifically in reference to Jews, but to all races and creeds. It was highly praised by the Anglo-Jewish press.²⁴ The interesting point about the

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. The American Hebrew, May 31, 1907, p. 100.

24. Ibid., June 7, 1907, p. 111.

measure is that it was for New York, and the Frank incident had occurred in New Jersey, where no real action was taken.

A different point of view concerning the whole incident was expressed by Rabbi Bernard Drachman, of the Orthodox Congregation Zichron Ephraim, of New York City. He blamed the incident on the religious laxity of Reform Judaism. The Reform theory, he wrote, "that assimilation and free comingling with the Gentile world would solve the Jewish Question made these indignities possible."²⁵ He believed that the Reform non-observance of the dietary laws encourages Jews to mingle with Gentiles and "they end up where they are not wanted."²⁶ He deplored and condemned the action of Senator Saxe, who, he said, "would seek shelter in law for that from which dignity alone should protect."²⁷ He did commend that part of the measure which aimed at suppressing public announcement by hotels of the exclusion of Jewish patronage. He concluded by saying that all Jews should "guard their dignity and self-respect against such occurrences by scrupulously avoiding all circles in which they were not sure of a sincere and cordial welcome."²⁸

25. Ibid., June 14, 1907, p. 157.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

One interesting incident concerning the hotel issue had a strange set of circumstances. In November, 1907, a decision was handed down in New York by Justice Wauhope Lynn in the case of Watson against Abbott. An interesting feature of the case, which ultimately involved Jews, was that none of the persons directly involved were Jews. The facts were as follows: George A. Abbott, a lawyer, had rented rooms at the Hotel Renaissance. He then decided that he did not want the rooms and sought a release from the landlord. The landlord said that he would release Abbott if Abbott would find an acceptable tenant to take over the lease. Abbott found Walter J. Solomon, a real estate operator, willing to take the rooms, but the owner refused to let Solomon have the rooms because he was a Jew, and the hotel does not take Jews. Abbott was unable to get another tenant and refused to pay rent. He was sued by the hotel for non-payment of rent.²⁹

During the trial, the plaintiff's lawyers took the position that Jews were an undesirable class of tenants. They stated:

The court will take judicial notice of the fact that among the Christian element in the community there is a prejudice against living in community with Hebrews, and that in recognition of this prejudice owners of hotels and apartment-houses throughout the country in many instances decline to extend their accommodations to persons of this race.³⁰

29. The Jewish Comment (Baltimore), November 29, 1907, pp. 118, 124.

30. Ibid., p. 118.

The judge responded that the Jews were as "acceptable as any people" in the hotel.³¹ He found in favor of the defendant, but before announcing his verdict he delivered a long discourse on the merits of the Jews in the United States. He referred to the role that Jews played in the Revolutionary War, quoting from George Washington's letter to the Jewish congregation in Newport, Rhode Island; and to their role in the Civil War. In his summation, he said that no court in any "civilized" country would deem Solomon as an unacceptable tenant because of his creed.³² The hotel received nothing from the lawsuit except the adverse publicity from the trial, and the public rebuke of Judge Lynn.³³ The principle of hotel exclusion, to anyone, also suffered a major defeat.

31. Ibid., p. 124.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., p. 118.

CHAPTER THREE
THE THEODORE BINGHAM AFFAIR

Social discrimination was directed basically against the German Jew, who had assimilated into American life. It was a subtle form of anti-Semitism that, for the moment, affected only a small percentage of the Jewish population. The majority of Jews were still of Eastern European immigrant background and concerned with other matters. However, this did not prevent them from being the targets of bigotry and written and verbal attack. On September 1, 1908, an article appeared in The North American Review, authored by New York City's Police Commissioner Theodore Bingham, stating that 50 percent of the criminal classes in New York City were Jews.¹ In the article, entitled "Foreign Criminals in New York," the commissioner wrote:

It is not astonishing that with a million Hebrews, mostly Russian, in the city (one quarter of the population) perhaps half of the criminals should be of that race when we consider that ignorance of the language, more particularly among men not physically fit for hard labor, is conducive to crime. . . . They are burglars, firebugs, pickpockets and highway robbers--when they have the courage; but though all crime is their province, pocket-picking is the one to which they take most naturally. . . . Among the most expert of all the street thieves are

1. The American Hebrew (New York), September 4, 1908, p. 419.

Hebrew boys under sixteen who are brought up to lives of crime. . . . The juvenile Hebrew emulates the adult in the matter of crime percentage.²

The Jewish community was outraged by the statement.³ The high office the author held, the reputability of the publication, and the statistical data invested the article with an aura of objectivity and authority. The secular and Jewish press gave prominent coverage to the statement. Bingham was attacked by the Anglo-Jewish press, and the Yiddish press. It was from the accused, the outraged immigrant Jews of the East Side whose self-image as a law-abiding element in the city had been impugned, that the most tumultuous response came.⁴ The Yiddish press appealed for the aid of the "men of influence" in the community, Louis Marshall and Jacob Schiff, for help in the matter. Schiff, although "shocked and astonished at Bingham's charge,"⁵ remained silent during the episode. They also appealed to the newly formed American Jewish Committee, which also remained somewhat silent during the episode, for aid. The Tageblatt, the Orthodox and Zionist Yiddish newspaper, wrote:

2. The Jewish Comment (Baltimore), September 11, 1908, pp. 338-339.

3. The American Hebrew, September 4, 1908, p. 419; The American Israelite (Cincinnati), September 17, 1908, p. 4; The Emanu-El (San Francisco), September 18, 1908, p. 6; The Jewish Comment, September 4, 1908, p. 318; The Jewish Exponent (Philadelphia), September 18, 1908, p. 5.

4. Arthur A. Goren, New York Jews and the Quest for Community (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 26.

5. The American Hebrew, September 11, 1908, p. 449.

When someone refused to allow a Jewish aristocrat into a Gentile Hotel, the Jewish four hundred did not rest until the guilty party had been dismissed; and now--they are quiet! Is it because the ones insulted are Russian Jews?⁶

The American Jewish Committee was rebuked by The Maccabean, journal of the Federation of American Zionists, for not considering the matter of Bingham's charge.⁷ However, the Anglo-Jewish press did respond to the incident, condemning Bingham for his charges.

Bingham's charge against the Jews of New York City was not his first run-in with the Jewish community. In July, 1907, he charged that the recent immigrants to New York City "were responsible for most of the recent dastardly outrages committed in New York."⁸ The American Hebrew wrote that Bingham "must have been under the influence of the summer heat to make such a statement."⁹ Since Bingham was considered to be an expert "student of criminology," the statement was taken seriously by a large portion of the population. Although he did not mention Jews in this statement, it was most likely inferred since a large percentage of immigrants were Eastern European Jews.

The second encounter occurred in September, 1907. Bingham refused to allow Jewish policemen to have the day

6. Goren, op. cit., p. 28.

7. Ibid.

8. The American Hebrew, July 26, 1907, p. 283.

9. Ibid.

off for Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.¹⁰ He said that if the Jews cannot attend to their ordinary work on such a day, they need not enter the police force. Approximately two hundred Jews served on the police force. Bingham was attacked for denying the Jewish policemen the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the United States Constitution. A representative of the Jewish community met with Bingham and a compromise was worked out. Although Bingham would not give a leave of absence to Jewish members of the force, he assigned them to synagogues, "where they could practically serve and pray at the same time."¹¹ The compromise allowed the Jewish policemen to worship on Yom Kippur, but it also denied them their right to take the day off as a religious holy day. Bingham had denied them the leave of absence for the day, even though the policemen were willing to lose a day's pay.¹²

However, Bingham's charges that were published in The North American Review, received the most attention and publicity because of the anti-Semitic overtones they contained. Bingham was charged "with prejudice rather than experience" in the views he expressed in the article.¹³ No one denied the existence of Jewish criminals, but not in the excess

10. Ibid., September 27, 1907, p. 508.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., September 4, 1908, p. 419.

numbers that Bingham had asserted.¹⁴ The damage had been done to the Jewish community, and the correct facts had to be published to "vindicate" the Jewish name. Some asked for the immediate removal of Bingham from office:

It seems to the Israelite that under the circumstances the proper way to proceed would be to prefer charges against the Commissioner asking for his removal. . . . It is a great pity that we have not laws in our country to protect the good name of classes and communities as well as individuals. As it is, any class or religious sect is at the mercy of every slanderer that chooses to malign it, and there is no direct course for redress.¹⁵

In Philadelphia, The Jewish Exponent took a different view of the matter, blaming not only Bingham, but the magazine which published the article:

The Jewish community of New York and of other cities have been entirely too lenient in their dealings with daily, weekly, and monthly publications that have lent their columns to reckless attempts to stir up prejudice and ill-will. . . . Some blame for the Bingham statement belongs to The North American Review, which printed it.¹⁶

One of the problems in the Jewish community, which the charge uncovered, was that there was no central Jewish organization in the city to react for the community. Different groups met on the East Side and issued their own charges against Bingham. On September 3, two days after Bingham's charges appeared, the Jewish League, a group of young professionals affiliated with the Federation of American Zionists,

14. The Emanu-El, September 25, 1908, p. 3.

15. The American Israelite, September 17, 1908, p. 4.

16. The Jewish Exponent, September 25, 1908, p. 10.

met to discuss Bingham's allegations. The League appointed a committee to press Bingham for a public retraction, and decided to issue a call for a public protest meeting. However, the following day, Joseph Barondess, a popular figure in East Side communal affairs, persuaded the League to reverse its position. He suggested the establishment of a non-partisan preliminary committee which would convene a "conference to consist, as far as possible, of gentlemen representing different shades of opinion of the Jews of Greater New York."¹⁷ Barondess wanted to coordinate all the organizations on the East Side, and also attract representation from the uptown American Jewish Committee.

At the first meeting, held on September 5, leaders of most East Side organizations attended, however not one of the invited uptown "notables," all American Jewish Committee members came. Barondess was still hopeful for a united action, and proposed to those attending a way to involve the American Jewish Committee in their negotiations with Bingham. He knew that any action would need the prestige of a Marshall and Schiff, as well as their aid, if it was to be successful. On September 6, it was announced that two committees had been appointed, one to collect statistical data on Jewish criminality, and the second to select a large committee to represent New York's Jews in this particular situation.¹⁸ The second

17. Goren, op. cit., p. 30.

18. Ibid., p. 33.

committee eventually helped to begin the meetings for the formation of the New York Kehillah.

Uptown, a dialogue began in the Anglo-Jewish press expressing the community's dissatisfaction with the protest activity on the East Side, and the inflammatory role of the Yiddish press. The American Hebrew, after first castigating Bingham, printed a second editorial a week later on "Jewish Sensitiveness;" that the East Side had reacted too quickly and without thinking, in asking for Bingham's removal.¹⁹ The Yiddish press reacted by stating that if the Jews should win the struggle with Bingham, the credit would not be due to the Jewish "magnates," but to the feeling of protest on the East Side:

Our magnates were cold to the entire question. They were more unhappy about our agitation against Bingham than over the insult Bingham so crudely flung at the Jews. . . . The purpose of this editorial is . . . to arouse the great Jewish public. . . . We cannot be dependent on our grand moguls.²⁰

During the first week, Adolph Radin, Jewish chaplain of the penal and correctional institutions of New York City, had issued a report disproving Bingham's charges. Through facts and figures he showed Bingham to be incorrect. He concluded his report by stating:

How Police Commissioner Bingham counted among the New York criminals over 50 per cent Jews I cannot possibly understand, and I think he does not understand, either.

19. The American Hebrew, September 11, 1908, p. 444.

20. Goren, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

It will be falsely applied forbearance on the part of the Jewish community if we should not call him to account for the malicious libel he intentionally or foolishly hurled upon the honor of the Jewish nation.²¹

At first Marshall was not going to intervene, but as the incident began to grow worse, he had to. He began confidential negotiations with Depute Police Commissioner Arthur Woods over the matter. The peace terms that were formulated called for a public retraction by Bingham of his charges, and an explanation of how he came upon the facts that he quoted in his article. Upon the publication of the retraction, a committee from the East Side would make a statement to the effect that they accept the explanation and they regard the incident as closed. Finally, Marshall and Schiff would issue similar statements. The price for Bingham's retraction was to be the cessation of the East Side's anti-Bingham campaign, which was now demanding Bingham's resignation.²²

On September 16, Bingham retracted his charges, with an apology to the Jewish community and the excuse that he had been given the incorrect facts. The American Hebrew reported that:

Commissioner Bingham has acted with frankness and promptness in withdrawing fully and without reservation his published statement regarding Jewish criminality. We trust that the lesson of the episode may not be lost, and that public officials may be more circumspect in their statements.²³

21. The Jewish Comment, September 18, 1908, p. 361.

22. Goren, op. cit., p. 34.

23. The American Hebrew, September 18, 1908, p. 467.

The representatives of the East Side announced their willingness "to allow the incident between Commissioner Bingham and the Jews of New York to be regarded as closed."²⁴ Louis Marshall expressed his approval of "the manly and courageous manner in which Bingham . . . acknowledged his error. . . . His frank recognition that he unwittingly wronged the Jewish people will be accepted by them in the same frank and manly spirit."²⁵ The incident was closed--as far as the Jewish community's response to Bingham was concerned--"there is nothing more to be said, the incident seems now to be about closed."²⁶ The November, 1908, issue of The North American Review printed Bingham's retraction.²⁷

The incident may have been closed outside the Jewish community; however within the community a struggle between the uptown and downtown factions continued. Marshall condemned the East Side for their poor handling of the situation, and also for "not keeping their house in order," a reference to the crime in the district.²⁸ He said that the publication of Bingham's retraction, through his efforts and those of the saner elements of the East Side, produced better results than

24. Goren, op. cit., p. 35.

25. Ibid.

26. The American Israelite, September 24, 1908, p. 4.

27. Rufus Lears, The Jews in America: A History (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1972), p. 173.

28. The American Hebrew, September 25, 1908, p. 502.

"a thousand mass meetings."²⁹ He accused the East Side of not "curing existing evils which would eradicate the causes which led to juvenile delinquency."³⁰ The East Side reacted to Marshall's statement through an editorial in the Tageblatt:

Had we on the East Side remained silent and awaited salvation from on high, Bingham would not have taken his words back. If our prominent Jews from the upper circles used their influence, it was due to the storm we raised on the East Side.³¹

The storm eventually settled down and the two areas of town solved their differences. What both sides realized from the incident was that there was no central organization to represent the Jews of New York when instances such as the Bingham accusation occurred. One of the positive elements in the Bingham affair was the eventual formation of the New York Kehillah.³²

The Jewish community of New York had one other official run-in with Commissioner Bingham. In January, 1909 Marshall, Schiff, Cyrus Sulzberger, and Judah Magnes, representing the newly organized New York Kehillah, met with Bingham over the problem of police molesting those Jews, who observing the Sabbath, open their businesses on Sunday.³³

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Goren, op. cit., p. 36.

32. The Jewish Comment, October 9, 1908, p. 6.

33. Ibid., January 15, 1909, p. 246.

Bingham told the men that any harassment that had been occurring would be discontinued. Bingham added that Sunday was a legal holiday in the United States, being a Christian country. The men informed Bingham that they knew this, however New York City, with one person in four being a Jew, was not an average American city, and not a fair comparison to the rest of the nation.³⁴

Theodore Bingham was dismissed from the New York Police Department in July, 1909. His dismissal was over a minor matter, concerning the complaint of an individual that he was being "unduly oppressed" by the police force. When Bingham was directed by the Mayor of New York City to remove the policeman involved (Bingham's secretary), Bingham refused, and was immediately dismissed from his post. His removal from office received only a passing mention in the Jewish press. Most Jews still recalled the "criminality" issue and were not sorry to see him leave office.³⁶

In retrospect, the Bingham affair provided a service to the New York Jewish community. Because of the episode, the community began to work towards the formation of a city wide communal organization to deal with the problems of the immigrant East Side. It also brought about a dialogue between

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid., July 9, 1909, p. 209.

36. Ibid., pp. 209-210; 214.

the "uptown" and the "downtown" communities, which was needed. The Jewish community in New York City was becoming a powerful force within the city and their power would increase. Attacks upon them, such as those made by Bingham, would not be tolerated.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTERMARRIAGE

In 1909, at their annual convention, the Central Conference of American Rabbis adopted the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Central Conference of American Rabbis, declare that mixed marriages are contrary to the tradition of the Jewish religion and should therefore be discouraged by the American rabbinate.¹

The resolution passed after several hours of bitter debate on the subject of intermarriage and the position of Reform Judaism towards such marriages. The fact that such an issue came to be debated at the annual convention of the Conference, is in itself a statement concerning the life style of Jews in the United States at this time. For several years, marriages between Jews and Gentiles had been on the rise, but no official stand had been taken by the Reform rabbinate. The Orthodox would not even consider discussing the matter. For the Orthodox, "intermarriage is a religious suicide. Rabbis surely cannot debate the permissibility of suicide."² Pressure began to grow within the Reform rabbinate, and among laymen, for a definitive statement from the Central Conference

1. The American Hebrew (New York), November 19, 1909, p. 74.

2. Ibid., December 3, 1909, p. 130.

of American Rabbis on intermarriage. The subject was placed on the agenda of the twentieth annual convention, which was held in New York City in November, 1909.³

Intermarriage was not a new problem for Jews. As Jews attained more rights and better social standing in Western Europe and the United States, a greater number of Jews intermarried with Gentiles. This problem affected all classes of Jews, but occurred more frequently among the wealthy. In Europe, members of the Rothschild family had been intermarrying with Gentiles for years.⁴ In the United States, Rabbi George Zepin, director of circuit preaching for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, said that in the northern sections of the United States, mixed marriages occurred among five percent of the population, and in the southern sections between twenty to fifty percent depending on the area.⁵ In general, mixed marriages were more frequent where Jews and Gentiles were on the same social and political level. Dr. Max Schloessinger, instructor of Bible exegesis at the Hebrew Union College, noted in 1905:

The greater number of intermarriages occur in places that are largest and places that are smallest. Mixed marriages are frequent in large cities because as regards education and the manner of living, and in matters of religious indifference Jews and Gentiles approach very closely; and

3. Ibid., November 19, 1909, p. 74.

4. The Jewish Comment (Baltimore), February 16, 1905, p. 8.

5. Ibid.

also because life in a large city tends to wipe out national and sectarian distinctions; and finally, because in large cities Jewish solidarity is, relatively speaking, weak. In the very smallest towns, on the other hand, mixed marriages are frequent because the number of Jews is too small to stand in the way of a friendly feeling between them and their Gentile neighbors.⁶

He added that the average Reform Jew was as opposed to mixed marriage as any Orthodox Jew, however, from the official statements of Reform Judaism, this objection had little if any basis. According to Schloessinger, the creed of the Reform Jew is no more than a belief in the unity of God, in man's divine image, in the immortality of the soul and in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. As these beliefs were also held by liberal Christians as well, official Reform had no reason for discouraging unions between believing Jews and believing Christians.⁷ He added that from a practical point of view, and as far as actual practice was concerned, Reform Jews were against intermarriage.

As intermarriage became a growing issue, the Anglo-Jewish press began to take stands on the issue. Jacob Voorsanger, writing in The Emanu-El, noted that "we should not worry about intermarriage. The percentage of intermarriage is too small to figure as a problem. Nevertheless the question bears discussion."⁸ He went on to say that he

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. The Emanu-El (San Francisco), May 5, 1905, p. 5.

opposed intermarriage, but that it was an individual question, for the individuals concerned to work out. He noted that "the ages have proved that not even the mixture of blood can destroy Israel."⁹

On the other side of the country, in New York City, the announcement was made of the engagement of "James Phelps Stokes, of the well known Stokes family, and Miss Rose Harriet Pastor, formerly connected with the English page of The Jewish Daily News."¹⁰ Stokes' family was Episcopalian, and one of the "four hundred" in Gentile society. Miss Pastor's parents were Russian immigrant Orthodox Jews living on the East Side. Miss Pastor had worked as a cigar maker in New York City, but had met Stokes while doing social work among the immigrants on the East Side. The couple had announced that following their marriage, they would devote their time to working among the poor on the East Side. They were married by an Episcopalian minister. Not everyone was willing to accept them in the East Side ghetto. One individual wrote and told them "to keep out . . . we don't need any proselytes . . . the East Side has no use for people who sell their principles for a mess of pottage. Norfolk Street is no place for the wife of a millionaire."¹¹

9. Ibid.

10. The American Hebrew, April 7, 1905, p. 620.

11. Ibid., July 28, 1905, p. 235.

The problem continued and in February, 1908, nearly split the congregation of Temple Emanuel in New York City. Miss Irma Stern, the daughter of a wealthy Temple trustee, Louis Stern, married Baron Leo de Graffenfried, a Roman Catholic. The marriage was performed by Monsignor M. J. Lavelle of St. Patrick's Cathedral in November, 1907.¹² Stern had approved his daughter converting and marrying out of the faith. In February, Rabbi Judah Magnes used the pulpit to speak strongly against intermarriage. Stern resigned his position as a trustee of the Temple. The issue caused a struggle within the congregation, but Magnes won and received a vote of confidence from the Temple's board of trustees. The American Hebrew wrote in an editorial on the affair that Stern should also resign his presidency of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum:

His resignation from the Board of Trustees of Temple Emanuel was inevitable under the circumstances . . . Stern has been a valuable worker in the Jewish community in New York, but because of the intermarriage of his daughter according to the tenet's of another faith, he should resign the presidency of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum. There is no alternative.¹³

As the issue continued to grow, a new play by Israel Zangwill called "The Melting Pot," was performed in the United States. The play did not deal with the subject of

12. The American Hebrew, February 7, 1908, p. 351; The Jewish Comment, February 7, 1908, p. 283; The American Israelite (Cincinnati), February 6, 1908, p. 4.

13. The American Hebrew, February 7, 1908, p. 351.

intermarriage, but rather with the persecution of Russian Jews and the Kishineff pogrom. However, the play concludes with the hero, a Russian Jew in America, marrying the daughter of a Russian nobleman, who had led the pogrom in the hero's home town. Although the play made a strong statement against Russian "barbarism," it was the intermarriage within the play which caused a furor in the American Jewish community. Speaking against intermarriage and the play, Rabbi Samuel Schulman of Temple Beth-El in New York City, said that "one does not have to intermarry to become more American. To quote the great rabbi who was the first preacher in this pulpit, Dr. Einhorn: 'to lend a hand to the sanctification of mixed marriage, is according to my firm conviction, to furnish a nail in the coffin of the small Jewish race with its sublime mission.' I am happy to be in full accord with the spirit of this great teacher."¹⁴ He added that Jews have the right to maintain the integrity of their religion without "overt patriotism; our loyalty, our capacity for complete and whole-souled Americanism being questioned, even if the question results from the exigencies of a Jewish mind at war with itself."¹⁵ The American Hebrew wrote that the play was a good one, but was complicated by the problem of intermarriage. "If it had just

14. Ibid., November 20, 1908, pp. 59-61.

15. Ibid.

dealt with the problem of assimilation in America, it would have been enough."¹⁶

Gotthard Deutsch, a professor at Hebrew Union College, objected to the play because it states briefly that "Jews, unless you intermarry with non-Jews, you will always be hated and persecuted, whether in the crude Russian or in the refined American fashion."¹⁷ He argues against Zangwill that Jews do not have to marry "out of the fold" to be accepted in America.¹⁸ Rabbi Leon Harrison, of Temple Israel, St. Louis, Missouri, made a "passionate appeal against intermarriage, noting that it would mean the extinction of the Jewish race and religion."¹⁹ Judah Magnes added that "from the point of view of a Jew interested in the preservation of Judaism, the play is a pernicious one. It is a powerful and artistic indictment of Russia's barbaric treatment of her Jewish subject. . . . However the play does not speak for all American Jews, some are proud of their Jewishness. To be regarded as a man, one need not cease being a Jew. Nay, the more of a Jew he is, the more of a man he is likely to be."²⁰

The issue of intermarriage also brought about editorials noting that Gentiles were as opposed to intermarriage as

16. Ibid., September 10, 1909, p. 476.

17. The American Israelite, March 25, 1909, p. 4.

18. Ibid.

19. The Jewish Exponent (Philadelphia), May 14, 1909, p. 4.

20. The American Hebrew, October 22, 1909, p. 619.

Jews. Both The American Israelite and The American Hebrew expressed the point of view that "with all the objection of Jews to intermarriage with Christians, it seems to be overlooked that there is equally strong prejudice on the part of Christians to having their sons or daughters marry Jews. It is a feeling which exists in all religious sects."²¹ The American Hebrew added that "the religious practice of Gentiles is a strong deterrent to intermarriage between Jews and Gentiles."²²

Speaking against intermarriage, but from a different standpoint, was Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch, of Chicago Sinai Congregation. Hirsch was a leader of radical reform in the social as well as religious sphere. He was an advocate of the observance of Sunday as the Jewish Sabbath and conducted the major service at his congregation on Sunday mornings. Hirsch spoke strongly against marriages "between 'Reformed' and 'Orthodox' Jews, because the latter held beliefs degrading to women."²³ He wrote:

I don't subscribe to the theory that marriage between a Hebrew and a non-Hebrew is necessarily a mesalliance. Thousands and thousands here who are not Jews are in the truest sense coreligionists of ours. . . . Let those Jews who oppose marriages with such be consistent and cease to bewail that we are a class apart socially . . . I am asked why I do not convert the non-Jew before marrying him or her to one of my people. Antenuptial conversions are as distasteful to me as ante mortem conversions. I believe the company is much better in the other place

21. The American Israelite, May 27, 1909, p. 4.

22. The American Hebrew, November 27, 1908, p. 101.

23. The American Israelite, November 26, 1908, p. 4.

than in the abode of those who repent just before being hanged.²⁴

Hirsch's views were not in the majority among the Reform rabbinate.

All the discussions on intermarriage finally led to the placing of the topic of mixed marriage on the agenda of twentieth annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, in November, 1909. Not only were Reform Jews interested in the outcome of the discussions, but also the Orthodox showed a keen interest in the attitude the Reform rabbis would be taking.²⁵ The intermarriage question was approached at the convention first by two papers presented by Rabbi Samuel Schulman, and Rabbi Ephraim Feldman, professor of Talmud at the Hebrew Union College. Feldman's paper, in his absence, was delivered by Rabbi Nathan Krass of Rochester, New York. Feldman approached intermarriage from an historical point of view. He said that among all peoples, intermarriage was objected to. It was not an especially Jewish problem. Historically, he wrote, "the Israelites, an already separated race, intermarried with surrounding tribes. Prior to the formation of a 'religious consciousness' among Jews, they intermarried freely."²⁶ After the return from Babylonian exile, "there was a stringent objection to

24. Ibid.

25. The American Hebrew, November 19, 1909, p. 88.

26. The Jewish Comment, November 19, 1909, p. 104.

marriage with those of a different faith."²⁷ He wrote:

In the past the only motive sufficiently powerful to keep contiguous human groups from intermarriage was a strong sense of religious distinctiveness. Today the attitude depends upon what one cherished as the ideal for the future of Judaism. If that ideal was transcendental, universalistic, one could not oppose intermarriage. If that ideal was different from this, one must deliberately and with set purpose make the ideal of Judaism that of religious distinctiveness and individuality. The ideal of a Jewish individualism or a Jewish mission, honestly, fully and consistently embraced, was alone able to check intermarriage. This is the verdict of history.²⁸

Schulman's talk emphasized the objections to "mixed marriages," which he was careful to distinguish as different in meaning from "intermarriage" and as representing the prohibited marriage of a Jew to a person professing a religion other than Jewish. He was asking the question: "Can the Jewish religion, even as interpreted by Reform Judaism, sanction a mixed marriage when the non-Jewish party remains unconverted to Judaism?"²⁹ He said that rabbis recognize the marriage between Jews and non-Jews as legal in secular courts, but the issue is whether the marriage should be solemnized by a rabbi. Schulman was against a rabbi performing a mixed marriage, and urged that when a Jew and a non-Jew approach a rabbi and ask him to perform their marriage, the rabbi should encourage the non-Jew to convert to Judaism.³⁰

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid., p. 105.

When Schulman concluded, an open discussion began, led by Rabbi Isaac S. Moses, of Ahawath Chesed Synagogue, New York City. Moses' remarks were contrary to Schulman's statements. The session became a debate, with men taking sides on the issue. When the session had concluded, no major decision had been made. Schulman proposed a resolution on intermarriage, which was sent to committee for discussion. The committee reworked the resolution, and on the final day of the convention, four days after Schulman's talk, the substitute resolution was presented to the entire Conference. Schulman's original resolution read:

Resolved, That it is the sense of this Conference that a rabbi ought not to officiate at a marriage between a Jew or Jewess and a person professing a religion other than Judaism, inasmuch as such marriage is prohibited by the Jewish religion, and would tend to disintegrate the religion of Israel.³¹

The substitute resolution which the committee presented to the Conference read:

Resolved, That the Central Conference of American Rabbis, declare that mixed marriages are contrary to the tradition of the Jewish religion and should therefore be discouraged by the American rabbinate.³²

Schulman, although not pleased with the substitute resolution, moved for its adoption. There was a move to cut off discussion on the issue, as had occurred a few days earlier, but this did not happen and everyone was able to speak. Schulman also moved for acceptance of his original resolution.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

The discussion which followed was loud and opinionated. Three minutes were allotted to each speaker, and the long-sought expressions of opinion, "for which one rabbi said he had traveled 3000 miles, began. It was stormy from start to finish, and the President's gavel and voice were taxed throughout."³³ Moses said:

If this resolution is passed, we have come to the beginning of a synod and a spiritual tyranny. Each rabbi should have sufficient experience and knowledge of his religion to know when to allow and when to prohibit such a marriage. I warn you, brethren not to tie your hands. Let no synod ever dictate what must be done under penalty of excommunication or ban.³⁴

This was countered by Rabbi Kaufman Kohler, the honorary president of the Conference:

All Jewish tradition forbids such marriage. I insist that we now recognize that fact and discuss the question. Only a few days ago a very prominent layman of this city declared that this conference would lay itself liable to the charge of gross cowardice unless it took a stand in this matter.³⁵

Other men said that the Conference was "evading" the issue and had to take a stand. Rabbi Marcus Friedlaender, of Oakland, California, declared that:

The Jews of the West had their eyes on what the Conference was going to decide on this question. The laity had been coming to me and some had even considered, because there had been no pronouncement on the matter, that the Conference of Reform Rabbis was not opposed to intermarriage.³⁶

33. The Jewish Exponent, November 19, 1909, p. 9.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. The American Hebrew, November 19, 1909, p. 74.

In the end, Schulman's motion was defeated by a vote of 18 to 28, and the substitute motion carried by 42 to 2.³⁷ After the vote, Kohler closed the convention with a prayer.

The commotion caused by the intermarriage issue did not end because the Conference had voted a resolution. The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations in the United States and Canada, condemned the Conference for their stand on intermarriage. In a statement issued by the organization, they said:

We regret that the vote of the recent "Conference" of American Reform Rabbis against intermarriage was so feeble that it may be misinterpreted and that the resolution as adopted, was so inadequately worded as to be almost equivocal. . . . Marriage with persons of other faiths is prohibited to the believing Hebrew by the Bible and religious codes. The motive is the simple one of protecting the religious and spiritual integrity of our people, which must inevitably be destroyed by intermarriage with those of alien faith.³⁸

Judah Magnes, speaking from his pulpit at Temple Emanuel, said that "no one really knows whether the Conference is for or against mixed marriages."³⁹ He said that the Conference had shown "no positive principles" in any of their decisions.⁴⁰

Defense for the stand taken by the Conference, came from Rabbi David Philipson, the president of the Conference. Philipson wrote:

37. The Jewish Comment, November 19, 1909, p. 105.

38. The American Hebrew, December 3, 1909, p. 130.

39. The Jewish Comment, November 26, 1909, p. 124.

40. Ibid.

What does this resolution mean? In the first place, the Conference places itself squarely on record as being in accord with the Jewish tradition against mixed marriages between Jews and non-Jews. There is no equivocation or evasion here. In the second place it declares that such marriages should be discouraged by the American rabbinate. As a conference of liberal Judaism it could no further go. It could not adopt a resolution reading out of the faith the individual rabbi who officiates at such marriages, but it stamps his action with its disapproval. Neither, as a conference of liberal Judaism, could it declare such marriages illegal which would be the logical inference had a more drastic resolution been adopted.⁴¹

Intermarriage had become a part of American Jewish life. The Central Conference of American Rabbis, in coming out with a statement against intermarriage, recognized that it was an issue in American Jewish society that had to be considered and debated. The compromise resolution pointed out the diverse opinion represented within the Conference, and the diversity of the American Jewish community which these men represented. The issue of intermarriage was not settled in 1909, nor has it been settled since. It is still a major issue of deep concern in the American Jewish community.

41. The American Hebrew, December 17, 1909, p. 175.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE "GOOD LIFE"

Life was good in the United States for the middle and upper class Jew during the years 1905 to 1910. The Jewish community was prosperous and growing. Jews had become prominent members of American society. As noted earlier, Oscar Straus had been appointed to the Cabinet of the President of the United States, and two Jews, Isidor Rayner, of Maryland, and Simon Guggenheim, of Colorado, served in the United States Senate.¹ Several Jews served in the House of Representatives during this period, and numerous state and local offices were also held by Jews. During this five year period, 241 synagogues were dedicated in the United States.² Many of the buildings dedicated were large and beautiful symbols of the good life that Jews had found in the United States. The Jewish community took a leading role in the establishment of charitable organizations, not only Jewish ones "to care for their own," but non-sectarian charities, to benefit all

1. The Jewish Comment (Baltimore), January 11, 1907, p. 286.

2. The American Jewish Yearbook (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1905-1910). VII: 213-214; VIII: 221-222; IX: 501-502; X: 124-126; XI: 234-236; XII: 336-337.

Americans.³ Jews were interested in theatre, the latest automobile, and the current European and American fashions. Life for this section of the Jewish community probably could not get any better.

As a model, and as "the Jewish First Family," American Jews looked to Europe and the Rothschilds.⁴ Although there were prominent Jewish families in the United States, none held the mystique that the Rothschilds had. They were Jewish nobility, who dined with kings and queens; a poor family that had become one of the wealthiest and most powerful in Europe. They were Jews who walked freely in a European society that was usually closed to Jews. Every aspect of Rothschild life was keenly watched in the United States. When a Rothschild married, it was reported, and when a Rothschild died, it was noted.⁵ Articles appeared in the Anglo-Jewish press such as "Picturesque Story of Paris Rothschilds,"⁶ and "Rothschild Family and Judaism."⁷ For the Jewish community, the Rothschilds were a symbol of honor and pride. They were observant Jews, and extremely active in Jewish affairs. One Rothschild

3. The Jewish Comment, March 9, 1906, p. 1.

4. Ibid., November 23, 1906, p. 126.

5. The American Israelite (Cincinnati), April 6, 1905, p. 8; The Emanu-El (San Francisco), January 6, 1903, p. 5, June 2, 1905, p. 6; The Jewish Comment, March 10, 1905, p. 9, March 22, 1907, p. 451.

6. The American Israelite, August 17, 1905, p. 1.

7. The Jewish Exponent (Philadelphia), April 14, 1905, p. 6.

served as the lay-head of the English Jewish community, while a French Rothschild helped to finance the early settlements in Palestine. Another Rothschild served as a commissioner of the Jewish Territorial Organization, and still another fought for the rights of Jews to serve in the British Parliament. Their complete life style was one to which Jews could point to with pride and call them "their first family."⁸

The wealth and prestige that the American Jewish community had attained was demonstrated physically through the construction of numerous synagogues during this period. From San Francisco to New York, new congregations were established, and older ones moved into bigger and more elaborate facilities. In San Francisco, Reform Congregation Sherith Israel dedicated a new synagogue which was labeled "the handsomest Temple in the West."⁹ Sherith Israel was not the only congregation in San Francisco that was building. All the congregations in the city had plans to construct "handsome new facilities, which demonstrated the growth and prosperity of San Francisco Jewry."¹⁰

In the Middle West, two congregations dedicated "magnificent" structures in 1906. The first was Adath Israel in Louisville, Kentucky, and the second was Congregation Bene

8. The Jewish Comment, November 23, 1906, p. 126.

9. The Emanu-El, September 8, 1905, p. 8.

10. Ibid., October 6, 1905, p. 12.

Israel in Cincinnati, Ohio. Both congregations were Reform and dedicated within one week of each other.¹¹ The "new Cincinnati temple" was described as a "temple which would grace the city of Athens itself."¹² The new temple, along with Adath Israel, was among the first to introduce Greek architecture to synagogue buildings. It was called the most beautiful temple in the United States. The temple was built at the corner of Rockdale and Harvey avenues, in the new and prosperous suburb of Avondale. The new location for the congregation demonstrated the movement of large numbers of Jews from the downtown area of Cincinnati to the suburbs. In an article describing the dedication of the new temple, it was noted that "this magnificent temple will stand for centuries as a monument to the munificence of our Jewish citizens, and could the restorer of the ancient Hebrew Temple, King Josiah, be present at the dedication, he would rejoice that his example of lavishing care upon the sacred dwelling has been followed by his people in ages after him."¹³ Jacob Voorsanger, on a visit to Cincinnati soon after the dedication, called the new temple "the best there is in Reformed Judaism."¹⁴ Congregation Shearith Israel Ahavath Achim, which became known as Reading

11. The American Israelite, September 6, 1906, p. 1, September 13, 1906, p. 1.

12. The Jewish Comment, September 7, 1906, p. 11.

13. Ibid., p. 12.

14. The Emanu-El, November 16, 1906, p. 2.

Road Temple, also dedicated a beautiful new structure in 1908 in Cincinnati.¹⁵

In New Orleans, Louisiana, Touro Synagogue, the oldest of the three Reform congregations in the city, dedicated a new building in January, 1909. The American Israelite took special note of the dedication of this new building as a milestone in the development of Judaism in the United States:

The dedication of the new Touro Synagogue in New Orleans emphasizes the marvelous development of Judaism in the United States during the nineteenth century, and also the efficiency of the Reform movement. We have seen the Reform congregations grow and have seen and are continually seeing Orthodox congregations eventually pass into the Reform field, but we have never learned of a single case to the contrary. A handful of Jews formed the first congregation in the southern seaport eighty years ago; now they have three Reform congregations and quite a number of Orthodox synagogues, the latter almost entirely made up of recent immigrants. The Americanized and American element will always be found in the Reform congregation, and no amount of morbid sentimentality will alter this condition.¹⁶

Touro Synagogue was originally founded as Congregation Shaaray Chased, an Orthodox congregation.

The Reformers were not the only Jewish groups dedicating new buildings. In Houston, Texas, Adath Yeshurun Synagogue, an Orthodox congregation erected an "imposing and impressive structure of Byzantine architecture. Both Reformed and Orthodox rabbis participated in the ceremony of dedication. Next month Beth Israel Congregation (Reform) will dedicate

15. The American Israelite, September 24, 1908, p. 6.

16. Ibid., January 21, 1909, p. 4.

its new home, and the people of Adath Yeshurun will unite with them in celebration."¹⁷ In Philadelphia, B'nai Reuben Synagogue was dedicated in the downtown area of the city and The Jewish Exponent noted that it was "the first new synagogue in the area that was built entirely as a synagogue and not a remodeled old church."¹⁸ These synagogues represent only a few of the hundreds that were dedicated in the small towns, such as Sioux City, Iowa, and Columbus, Mississippi, to the large cities like New York, Boston and Philadelphia, during this period of prosperity and growth among the Jews in the United States.

The community also began to take stands on issues which affected them as citizens. The automobile was rapidly becoming a part of American life, and Jews were becoming owners of the new invention. Advertisements for all makes of automobiles appeared in all five newspapers used for this paper. The Emanu-El annually carried a supplement in the spring on the "Automobile Show" held in San Francisco. As the paper put it, "the automobile is part and parcel of American life."¹⁹ In another editorial, the editor wrote that "the tyranny of the automobile" cannot be tolerated any longer. Laws and ordinances must be passed to control the automobile's

17. The Jewish Comment, October 9, 1908, p. 44.

18. The Jewish Exponent, January 13, 1905, p. 2.

19. The Emanu-El, February 15, 1907, p. 9.

speed. "An appeal must be made to the mayor to do something to keep the streets safe."²⁰ The Jewish Comment noted that "automobiles are no longer considered the millionaire's luxury. In the past few years they have been so improved and the cost of production so greatly reduced that the moderately wealthy can afford to own them."²¹

On a more serious subject, the community did take a strong stand: the Christmas celebrations in the public schools. During the Christmas season, the Jewish press usually launched a campaign to do away with the religious celebrations in the public schools. In San Francisco, an editorial each year appeared objecting to the Christmas celebrations in the schools. One year, they wrote that the "Christmas exercises in the predominantly Christian schools are just as objectionable, as would be a seder at Passover in a public school on New York's East Side. This all belongs in the church and the home."²² Protests concerning the problem in New York were common.²³ From the pulpit and in the press came statements to keep Christmas out of the public schools. Yearly, the Board of Education of New York City discussed the issue.²⁴

20. Ibid., November 11, 1907, p. 2.

21. The Jewish Comment, April 7, 1905, p. 5.

22. The Emanu-El, December 25, 1908, p. 3.

23. The American Hebrew (New York), January 4, 1907, p. 218, September 6, 1907, p. 425; The American Israelite, January 3, 1907, p. 4.

24. The American Hebrew, September 6, 1907, p. 425.

The American Israelite took the position that the Jewish community was paying too much attention to the matter. The proper protest would be "a dignified silence over the whole issue. The discussions are fruitless . . . because the average Jew has not the courage to withstand the desire for being and living as his neighbor."²⁵ The paper took the position that Christmas was slowly creeping into the Jewish home, not because of the public schools, but because of the Jews themselves. The practice of Christmas should not so much be removed from the public school as from the Jewish home; "the Christmas tree and the Christmas present and the Christmas dinner ought to be an abomination to every truly Jewish home--but truly Jewish homes are on the wane."²⁶

The American Israelite, in its own way, was echoing the same words that were being uttered from pulpits from San Francisco to New York. The paper had written a description of the American Jewish community as it had evolved. It was a community that was very much a part of America and if it had taken on some of the "Christian" elements of American life, it had done so knowingly. The community was prosperous and secure. Even the attitude against the Christmas exercises demonstrated that the community was secure in its position to attack a part of American life that they believed to be a

25. The American Israelite, January 3, 1907, p. 4.

26. Ibid.

prejudice against them. Their security, however, was not altered by the yearly episodes over Christmas programs. For many, they had indeed found the "good life" in the United States.

SUMMARY--AMERICAN JEWISH LIFE

1905-1910

In this study of American Jewish life from 1905 to 1910, I have endeavored to show the Jewish community as it appeared in the Anglo-Jewish press. Newspapers portray community life in a unique way. Although they try to be objective, they can never truly attain that goal. Newspapers are the servants of their publishers and editors, and the audience they serve. As noted in the introduction to this paper, the newspapers used from the Anglo-Jewish press reflected a distinct life style. They were aimed at the middle and upper class Jew, the majority of whom had come from Germany, and who had become part of the mainstream of American life. They had "made it" in the United States. The articles which the editors chose to print reflected the attitudes and interests of these people. Stories about the Jewish community that did not pertain to this segment of the Jewish community were not printed. The advertising and the story topics were all geared to these people. The newspapers, in their sophistication, reflected the people that they served.

The topics which have been discussed were found to be the dominant stories of interest in all five newspapers during

these years. The coverage and editorial opinions expressed on the subjects reflected the individual views of the editors of the newspapers. Several topics, such as the American passport question in Russia, were issues that began in the nineteenth century and were not settled until after this period.¹ The passport question was also a subject which affected a very small number of American Jews, and the major work done in solving the problem was handled by a handful of men in the American Jewish Committee.² Articles which appeared concerning new immigrants and their adjustment to American life were also few. It was not a topic of major interest to the Jews who had already established themselves as part of America.

1. In 1905, Gotthard Deutsch was granted a visa by the Russian Government to visit Russia. The visa was issued because of pressure applied in Washington, D.C., by a few members of the United States Congress. Deutsch's case was unique, and following this instance, no major breakthrough in Russia's policy occurred towards a private American citizen. In 1909, President William H. Taft was urged to enter into negotiations to secure a treaty with Russia to cease this prejudicial treatment of American Jews. The issue was settled in December, 1911, when the United States informed Russia that they had abrogated the Russo-American Treaty of 1832, because the Russian Government would not grant visas to American Jews. The abrogation of the treaty would take place on January 1, 1913.

The American Hebrew (New York), March 10, 1905, p. 494, March 12, 1909, p. 495; The Emanu-El (San Francisco), March 17, 1905, p. 4; The Jewish Comment (Baltimore), March 3, 1905, p. 9; Cohen, Naomi, Not Free to Desist (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), pp. 77-78.

2. Lears, Rufus, The Jews in America: A History (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1972), pp. 226-228.

The only stories which were covered concerning the immigrant were those which affected all American Jews.

American Jewry during these five years were essentially interested in maintaining the rights and privileges they had attained in the United States. They were living a prosperous and free existence in America. They acted as "big brother" to the persecuted Jews in the world, and they did what they could to protest the persecutions of their coreligionists in Eastern Europe during this period. Although a small minority in the United States, their power was far greater than their numbers would signify. The positions that Jews held in business and finance helped to give them this power in American society. Needs arose on the American scene to which the community had to respond. When United States Jewry was threatened and attacked by anti-Semites, they reacted. They formed organizations to deal with these problems and to settle them. Communities organized, as demonstrated by the New York Kehillah, to serve the growing numbers of Jews in the large cities. Although from different social classes and national backgrounds, Jews did organize into mass groups when they all considered themselves threatened.

There was a continual repetition of names in this paper of the men active in the community. It is important to note that these men were the lay-leaders of the American Jewish community for more years than this paper covers. Louis Marshall,

Jacob Schiff, Cyrus Adler, Cyrus Sulzberger, Oscar Straus, and others were continually in the forefront of American Jewish life. Their names were known to all American Jews. They were all men who had become part of American life and could have forgotten about their Jewish heritage and brethren, yet they did not, and they devoted their time and energy to Jewish causes. A major rabbinic figure during this period was Judah Magnes. These years were only the beginning of a long and distinguished career. The energy and interest that Magnes showed in all he did was a foreshadowing of what he was to accomplish later. The accomplishments of all these men speak for themselves.

What we have found through this study is an American Jewish community that was strong, prosperous and secure. It was living through a relatively peaceful era and was able to take advantage of that peace in its own dealings. These five years witnessed the development of a Jewish community that was able to work together when the time was needed, and organize to help all elements, rich and poor, native born and immigrant, in that community. When the United States was founded, it was considered a "noble experiment" in world history. The Jewish community of the United States has shared in this experiment and benefited from it. It was on the verge of becoming the greatest Jewish community in modern history. The years between 1905 and 1910 had a major influence on the

development of the Jewish community that was to follow. These people laid the groundwork that successive generations would use to build the American Jewish community of today.

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