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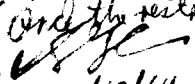
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SOME ASPECTS OF THE LIFE OF STEPHEN S. WISE TO 1925

by Floyd Lehman Herman

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters and
Ordination

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

1964

Referee: Professor Stanley F. Chyet

Thesis Digest

This thesis deals with several aspects of the life of Dr. Stephen S. Wise during the period of his life to 1925.

The main emphasis of the thesis is on Wise's workings within the framework of the institutions of Reform Judaism and the Free Synagogue of New York. Some attempt is made to show how Zionism affected his dealings in all the other areas of his life. The thesis begins with a short biographical sketch.

The major chapter of this thesis deals directly with Wise's relation to the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and the Hebrew Union College. Most of this material is gathered from the records of those institutions and from Wise's correspondence with his colleagues, especially Max Heller. The key to these relationships was a conflict over Zionism. Wise, the dedicated Zionist, could not tolerate the institutions of Reform Judaism. He found them to be anti-liberal and stifling. Much of his anger in this area was directed against the leaders of the Conference and of the College, whom he saw symbolized in the person of Rabbi David Philipson. Wise was vigorous in his attack on the institutions and on Philipson.

In the course of his associations with these institutions Wise took several positions. At one point he tried to gain control of the College by becoming important in the Conference. Failing in this attempt, Wise then made a head-on

attack on the College. This too failed. Finally Wise attempted to attack the College through the Union. Here again, Wise was halted.

Partly as a result of these frustrations in his attempts to gain control of the College, Wise, in 1922, founded the Jewish Institute of Religion. The third chapter of the thesis deals with this phase of his life. The institute was founded over the protests of the Union. Wise had tried to found his school under Union auspices, but unwilling to give up any autonomy, he was forced to work outside this body. Wise succeeded on his own and gathered a faculty from Europe and America in time to open his college in September of 1922.

Whereas the College had been anti-Zionist, the Institute was strongly pro-Zionist. Whereas the College had strongly advocated Reform Judaism, the Institute was more "catholic" in its approach. The main difference, however, was in the attitude towards Zionism.

Wise was also an active pulpit rabbi. He gained national prominence in his battle with Temple Emanu-El over the subject of freedom of the pulpit. This conflict is discussed in the fourth chapter of this thesis. This was the beginning of a very active ministry in New York. Wise was mainly interested in social justice, liberal causes and Zionism. These were the key points in his ministry.

Wise's dedication to Zionism is discussed in the fifth

chapter. An attempt is made to show how much he was devoted to the cause by discussion in some detail an incident in which Wise was a key participant. The incident involved the Joint Distribution Committee appointment of a member to a Red Cross Commission to Palestine. Wise opposed the appointment of Dr. Israel Friedlaender and successfully blocked his inclusion on the Commission. The entire matter was a result of Wise's dedication to Zionism.

A final chapter is devoted to an evaluation of Wise's place in the total structure of his society, with special emphasis on the Jewish society of the early part of the twentieth century. An attempt is made to discover why Wise chose Zionism and the conflicts that this choice provided in his life. While no complete evaluation is possible in this thesis, it seems clear that Stephen S. Wise was an important figure in the American Jewish Community in which he lived.

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Introduction

The title of this work -- "Some Aspects of the Life of Stephen S. Wise to 1925" -- tells much about its scope. This thesis is not intended as a biography of Dr. Wise. While no biography has yet been written of him, we were not able to carry out this work within the limits of this study.

This study intends to examine in some detail some of the aspects of Wise's life. While every attempt has been made to examine all the materials available, we are aware that the study is not exhaustive. We were limited in our research to previously published materials and those published and unpublished materials available to us through the facilities of the American Jewish Archives. While we consider the material examined sufficient for the scope of this paper, we are aware of other areas in which some further research would be valuable. For example, Wise lived most of his life in New York. For this reason there are innumerable references to him in the newspapers of that city. While we did look at the Index to the New York Times, where we discovered that, indeed, Wise's name appeared in that paper frequently, we were prevented by time and other considerations from embarking on a real study of this source. We were also unable to examine closely all of Wise's published writings, such as his weekly column in the magazine Opinion. These and other avenues still remain to be opened by future research.

This paper is divided into six chapters. The first

chapter contains a biographical sketch of Wise. The materials here are not original, and many such sketches have appeared previously. This is not taken exclusively from any one source, but tries to take into account the different biographical sketches of Wise.

The second chapter deals with the aspect of Wise's life in which he had relations with the institutions of Reform Judaism. By that, we mean Wise's contacts with the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and the Hebrew Union College. This is perhaps the most detailed account in the paper for the reason that the sources were more readily available to us.

The third chapter is, in many ways, a continuation of the second. It deals with the founding of the Jewish Institute of Religion. We view this as a culmination of Wise's strained relations with the institutions of Reform Judaism as explained in Chapter II.

The fourth chapter is a survey of some of the areas in which Wise worked as a rabbi and of some of the things for which he stood. A major part of this chapter deals with the founding of the Free Synagogue but other aspects of the rabbinic life are also treated.

No work on the life of Stephen Wise would be complete without at least a passing mention of his attachment to Zionism. This is the attempt of the fifth chapter of this study. Wise's Zionist activities consumed the better part

of his life, although it proved impossible to deal with them in any but the most cursory fashion here. We have made no attempt to describe Wise's role in all the intricate details of Zionist politics nor have we attempted to assess his place in the overall picture of American and world Zionism. While no work of this kind has been attempted, we considered it such a vast subject that we were forced, by the necessities of time and space, to exclude it from this study.

Also excluded from this thesis is a subject which rightfully belongs in this section on Zionism, that of Wise and the American Jewish Congress. While some research was done on the subject, we soon discovered, to our regret, that this is a subject which a work many times this size could not fully exhaust. Rather than attempt a poor summary of Wise's place in the Congress movement, we have chosen to mention it only in passing, and leave the development of this theme to some future study. Recognizing that this is a weakness in this thesis, we were, nevertheless, compelled to accept this limitation.

Our only reason for mentioning Zionism at all in this work is to try to put the other parts of the study, in which Zionism is a factor, into perspective. We have attempted to do this by selecting one small incident in Wise's Zionist activities which we have here discussed in some detail. We have chosen this incident as indicative of Wise's complete devotion to the Zionism in which he believed. While we are

sure that there must be other, even more dramatic, incidents which point to Wise's devotion to the cause, we felt that the incident reported here adequately shows how far Wise was willing to go for the cause of Zion reborn.

This chapter is in no way intended as a discussion of Wise's Zionist activities or his philosophy, except as they relate to the main incident. Fully aware of the weaknesses of this entire chapter and the approach in it, and even more acutely aware of the necessity for a fuller discussion of many of the subjects merely mentioned herein, we look expectantly forward to the day when some future research will fill in the gaps in this account.

The sixth and concluding chapter in this study is an attempt to evaluate Wise within the broader framework of American life, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Some of the ideas in this section are the result of discussions with my teachers and my colleagues; others are based on the evaluations of others. To these sources I am grateful, but the responsibility for any conclusions I accept upon myself. Any successes are due, in large measure, to their assistance. Any shortcomings are my own.

It was impossible to deal even with these limited aspects of Wise's life within this study without limiting our range even more carefully. For this, and other reasons, we set out limit at the year 1925. By that year, Wise had pretty well established himself on the American scene. He

had founded the Jewish Institute of Religion. He had become a Zionist leader. He had attained stature as one of the leading rabbis of this country. Certainly these aspects of his life up to the time he was fifty are worthy of study.

This thesis is intended only as a beginning. We feel that it is somewhat of a shame that no biography of Stephen Wise has been attempted up to now. Whether one agrees with him or not, surely we must all recognize that his mark was left upon American Judaism. We are convinced that Wise had a much larger part in shaping the Reform Judaism of the mid-twentieth century than anyone has yet realized. By 1950 the things for which Wise stood in 1920, and for which he had been so bitterly castigated by most of Reform Judaism's proponents were the accepted norms of American Reform. Zionism, liberalism, social justice, freedom, these are the foundations of the Judaism which we know today, and these were the foundations of Wise's Judaism in 1920.

Too long indeed have we been without a biography of this giant. Perhaps this will be a beginning. If it stirs us or some other writer to dig more deeply into this great life, then perhaps it will have served its purpose well.

If this thesis possesses any merit at all, there are many people who have done more than their share to make it so. To all of them I express my gratitude.

The topic for this study was suggested to me by Dr. Stanley F. Chyet, who consented to become my referee in

the work. His constant interest and assistance during the months of the preparation of this work have been a large factor in whatever successes this study has achieved. It would not have been possible to complete this study without his aid at every step of the way. I can never fully thank him for his guidance.

Most of the materials included in the research of this study were housed in the collections of the American Jewish Archives. Dr. Jacob R. Marcus, Director of the Archives, and his fine staff were ever willing and eager to aid me in whatever way they could in the research areas of this study. Their cooperation saved me many hours of frustrating search, and they pointed the way to many areas which might have otherwise escaped my attention.

To Mrs. Fannie Zelcer, who was more than patient and understanding with me in the preparation of this manuscript, my great thanks and appreciation.

Finally, to my wife, Barbara, who more than anyone else has had to suffer with me through the long months of this work, I dedicate this thesis. Inadequate as it is, may it be a small token of my undying love for her.

CHAPTER I

A Biographical Sketch

Stephen S. Wise was born in Budapest, Hungary, on March 17, 1874, to Rabbi Aaron Weiss (Weisz¹) and Sabine Weiss, nee Fischer de Farkashasy, daughter of the founder of the porcelain industry in Austria-Hungary. A year later, in 1875, the elder Weiss, now Wise, immigrated to New York where he became the rabbi of Temple Rodeph Sholem, a position which he held until his death in 1896. Wise was educated in the public schools of New York City where "from his boyhood he impressed teachers and friends alike with a serious and earnest will to learn and to achieve."² His college education was attained at the College of the City of New York, where he concentrated on classics and languages and "attained distinction as a Latin and Greek scholar,"³ and at Columbia University, from which he was graduated in 1892 with a degree in Semitics and philosophy. More important to him, however, was the study of English. His children report:

But it was the field of English letters that first won and always held Stephen Wise's affection as a student. The very fact that English was not his mother tongue-German being the first language of his home-determined him to master it. He pored over the writings of the British poets and prose stylists. Shakespeare and Milton, Matthew Arnold and Wordsworth were as familiar to him as Isaiah and Amos and Hillel.⁴

Wise had apparently decided upon his career as a rabbi very early in his life. During the period of his study at

CCNY and Columbia he received private rabbinic training under the guidance of his father, and such scholars as Alexander Kohut, Gustave Gottheil, Max L. Margolis, Henry Gersoni, and possibly others. Following his graduation from Columbia he went abroad "first to Vienna, where he was ordained under Chief Rabbi [Adolf] Jellinek, and later, to study and do graduate work at Oxford [under Adolph Neubauer]." ⁵

In 1893, Wise began his rabbinic career as the Assistant to Rabbi Henry S. Jacobs of the B'nai Jeshurun Temple, known as Madison Avenue Synagogue, New York. Dr. Jacobs died the same year whereupon Wise succeeded him as rabbi. During his term of service at B'nai Jeshurun, Wise was instrumental in setting up the congregation's Sisterhood of Personal Service to aid the destitute. This was to become a major theme of his life's work and an important part of his Free Synagogue organization. It is interesting to note that at this point in his life the young Wise was a member of the advisory board of the Jewish Theological Seminary, which his father had helped found in 1884.

There were four events which occurred during his stay at Madison Avenue Synagogue which were to affect profoundly the future course of his life.

The first of these was the death of his father in 1897. "Still in his twenty-third year, Stephen Wise became the economic support and moral stay of his family. His youth was

ended."⁶

The second was the increase of Jewish persecution and distruction in Czarist Russia and the Dreyfus case in France, both of which had a saddening effect on the entire Jewish world. "Stephen Wise came to realize then that the process of Jewish liberation was to be arduous, not automatic, and that its consummation was still far off."⁷

The third was the coming of Theodor Herzl and modern Zionism. This became one of the most important aspects of his entire life. Wise testifies to this in his autobiography:

Among the most fateful occasions in my life, none was more deep and challenging in its effects than my attendance at the Second Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland, in August, 1898, as a delegate of the Federation of American Zionists, which I had helped to found one month earlier. My Zionism I owed chiefly to my father. It may have been in my blood, but it was the tide of his devotion which bore it to the heart of my being. My father, without being strictly Orthodox as was his father, was an ardent Zionist, and his Zionism is one of the earliest and sweetest memories of my life. As very young children in our home, we got our first lesson in saving and giving in connection with the humble ambassadors from the land of Israel, into whose little tin cups we placed our scant savings, that these in turn might be given to satisfy needs in the Holy Land.⁸

The fourth event of those years at B'nai Jeshurun was Wise's meeting Louise Waterman in 1898. She was to become

his wife and life-long companion until her death in 1947. They were married in 1900, the year that Wise accepted the call to become the rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel in Portland, Oregon.

Wise accepted the call to Portland against the advice of his family and friends who felt "that he would be burying himself so far from the center of Jewish life....He felt that he needed to know more of the United States than New York City if he was to serve his country and his people in the fullest sense."⁹

Wise served well in Portland. There he completed his dissertation on the philosophy of Ibn Gabirol and received the Ph.D degree from Columbia University in 1901. Popular legend has it that this dissertation was ghosted by someone else for Wise, but no evidence has been found to support this theory.

Wise entered into the fight for the causes in which he believed in Oregon and these activities became a fore-shadow of battles he would wage later in New York, and for which he received much publicity and fame. Wise found Portland a city of lawlessness and corruption. "It was the union of gambling and liquor interests plus organized prostitution, which, in collusion with city officials and above all with the police department, poisoned and corroded the life of the city. The hold of these forces upon the city's life was fully known to the acquiescent and rather

cynical population, which seemed to take it for granted that organized vice was entitled to no small part in managing the city and its affairs."¹⁰

Wise took an important role in cleansing the city of Portland of its corruption. He became one of the leaders among the ministers in a crusade against the lawlessness of gambling and prostitution. According to Wise, he overheard one day, in a Turkish bath, a threat against his life. He did not wait around to confront his would be assailant and apparently nothing else came of the incident.¹¹

Among Wise's accomplishments in Oregon was the assistance in the passage of a child-labor law which curtailed the exploiting of children by the fish canneries of this area. As a result of his work in this area, Wise was appointed to the State Child Labor Commission in 1903 and served in this capacity until his return to New York in 1906.

During his stay in Oregon, Wise reports that he "mildly --- tempted to seek public office for the first time in the United States Senate when it was felt by some of the Democratic party bosses that the state of Oregon was ready to revolt against the long-time Republican Party dominance, and for the second time when I took a very active part in the civic-reform movement."¹²

Wise's reputation soon spread and in 1905 he was invited to preach a series of trial sermons at Temple Emanuel in New York. Wise went to New York, and his experiences

there became another turning point in his life. Fighting against control of the pulpit by the board of the congregation, Wise rejected any offers to become rabbi of Temple Emanuel and returned to Portland, where he set his affairs in order and the following year returned to New York to found the Free Synagogue.

The Free Synagogue was begun in 1906 and for a time it held Sunday morning services in a local theatre. Later these services were moved to Carnegie Hall where this weekly practice became an institution in New York.

Wise soon became a familiar and active figure in the affairs of New York and of the entire nation. He was one of the leaders in the cause of social justice and equality for all men. In 1908 he attacked the corruption of the political bosses of New York when he characterized a dinner given for Richard Croker, Tammany leader, and attended by twelve justices of the City Supreme Court, as a night of shame. In 1909 he participated in the campaign against race riots and signed the original "Lincoln Birthday Call" which led to the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Before America's entry into World War I, Wise had advocated a position of pacifism and disarmament. He spoke often of the dangers of militarism. From 1917 on, however, he endorsed President Wilson's attitude towards Germany, whose aggression he condemned. After the United States be-

came a participant in the war, he strongly supported the war effort. For a time he worked as a common laborer at a Marine Construction Company's shipyard.

In public speeches, Wise advocated women's suffrage and the rights of labor to organize. He carried on a running battle with the political bosses of Tammany hall. He spoke on such subjects as the minimum wage, capital punishment, and Turkish persecution of the Armenians. Throughout this period he was very active in the affairs of the American and World Zionist organizations.

In 1916 Wise was a supporter of the movement to organize a democratically constituted American Jewish Congress. In an address in Philadelphia at the Preliminary Conference called to organize such a congress, Wise said:

The Jewish people must create
their own organ through which
after earnest deliberation and
discussion to express their
convictions touching the needs
and demands of the Jewish people.¹⁰

Wise was active in behalf of the establishment of a mandate for Palestine. He conferred on many occasions with President Wilson on Zionism and helped to obtain his approval for the Balfour Declaration. As a result of this, he was made a member of the Peace Delegation as a representative of the American Zionists. It was here that he greatly aided the cause of world-wide Zionism.

Wise was instrumental in the founding of the Zionist Organization of America, which replaced the older Federation

of American Zionists. He served as the vice-president of the new organization.

While Wise was in Paris, as a part of the Peace Delegation of the American Jewish Congress, in 1919, he received the decoration of a Cavalier of the Legion of Honor from Baron Edouard de Rothschild. In 1937 he was awarded the decoration of Officer of the Legion of Honor.

Upon his return to America, Wise continued his fights in behalf of the causes in which he believed. His offer of help to the A.F. of L. in their attempts to organize the steel industry, got him into one of his most famous battles, that with Judge Gary and the United States Steel Corporation.

By this time, one can see, Wise's life was developing along certain important lines for which he was fighting. He continued to be active in the Zionist organizations both here and abroad. He actively supported the cause of labor to organize and was instrumental in the settlement of several strikes. He fought hard for the democratic establishment of an American Jewish Congress, which he believed would take the power away from the Wall Street Jews whom he considered to have taken control of the Jews of America through the instrument of the American Jewish Committee. He fought always for equal rights for all men and against anti-Semitism. This led him into conflict with the infamous Ku Klux Klan whom he fought for years.

In 1921, Wise split with the Zionists in America. He

had supported the Brandeis Group and upon the latter's defeat , he left the convention in Cleveland, together with others of this group. He still, however, continued his interests in Palestine as a homeland for the Jews and he served in that same year as honorary vice-president of the Palestine Development Council.

The year 1922 was an important one in the life of Stephen S. Wise. His dream of a rabbinical seminary in New York, under the auspices of the Free Synagogue, had finally become a reality. Another of his dreams had also come into being. After several earlier attempts, the American Jewish Congress was finally reorganized and Wise became one of its vice-presidents.

During the next few years Wise continued his crusade for equality and justice. He vigorously attacked the Johnson Immigration Bill, saying that Jesus and his disciples would have to cast lots if they wanted to enter the United States under the quota law.

Throughout his career, Wise kept close to politics in one way or another. In 1924 he became an active participant in the Democratic presidential campaign serving as a member of the New York delegation to the Democratic National Convention.

At the fourteenth World Zionist Congress in Vienna in 1925, Wise once again did not see eye to eye with the Zionist leadership. He opposed the extension of the Jewish Agency

to include non-Zionists. He further denounced the campaign of the American Joint Distribution Committee to aid the Crimea colonization scheme in Russia as harmful to Zionist aspirations.

In that same year, 1925, Wise became embroiled in a fight over the Jewish attitude toward Jesus. In a sermon to his congregation at Carnegie Hall he advised Jews to regard Jesus as a moral teacher. The speech aroused the anger of orthodox rabbis who demanded his removal from Zionist leadership. He offered to resign as chairman of the United Palestine Appeal, but his resignation was not accepted and Nathan Straus, upholding him, donated \$650,000 for welfare work in Palestine.

Wise continued to be a liberal in his views on labor, social justice, religion, and politics. Politically he became so liberal that in 1929 he supported Norman Thomas, Socialist candidate for Mayor of New York. He always insisted on the right and the obligation of ministers to speak from the pulpit on matters of controversy and even actively to engage in battle against the corruption and evil of government and politics.

In 1930, Wise became the vice-chairman of the City Affairs Committee, and together with John Haynes Holmes, urged the New Yorkers to organize vigilantes in the war against crime. His activities on this committee led in 1932 to the investigation and resignation of Mayor Walker.

During the thirties, Wise turned his attention to an attack of Hitler and Nazism. He led rallies and spoke publicly for a boycott of German goods. He pleaded with the United States government to allow refugees from Germany to enter this country. He made every effort possible to bring the attention of the world to the menace of Nazism and the plight of the Jews in Germany.

It was also during the thirties that Wise launched his attack on the British policy in Palestine. He seemed to feel that the British had not lived up to their obligations to Palestine and Zionism as outlined in the Balfour Declaration. He opposed the partition plan but continued to work actively and vigorously for Zionism.

The third achievement of Wise during the thirties was the establishment of the World Jewish Congress. He defined its task and purposes in the opening address of the Founding Session in Geneva in 1935, declaring the Congress aimed at bringing "Jews together on a new plan...for an exchange of views touching every manner of Jewish problems with a view to their solution."¹⁴

Wise continued to fight for the things in which he believed, freedom, justice, Zion. This was his life and his career. One of his last letters, perhaps his last, was written to his children to be opened upon his death. In it he expressed some of his idealism which never died and his love for his family and his people.

I am not tearful or maudlin as I write this, but I am so wretched that I would be insensitive and stupid not to write as I do. When something happens to me, Ed knows about the things I prefer for the Service. [Edward Klein was then associate, later rabbi, of the Free Synagogue.]

Ed, of course, is to have charge of the Service, whether at the Synagogue House or in Carnegie Hall, where I preached for thirty years and with which I became associated during the stronger years of my life - or, best of all, in the new building. [Wise had laid the cornerstone of a new building for the Free Synagogue in 1948, the year before he died. The building was completed in 1950.]

In view of the large part which the [American Jewish] Congress and Zionism have had in my life, I think that, just as in the case of Mummie, I would like Dave [Petegorsky] to speak the word of farewell if he were equal to it. Dave [executive director of the Congress] has grown very dear to me. He knows what it is that I most deeply care for: the State of Israel and freedom and justice for Jews everywhere. If an address is to be made, it shall be made by Dave. He has become very dear to me and he is a loyal and faithful comrade.

I would like a prayer or the reading of a poem by my beloved friend, Holmes [John Haynes Holmes, minister of the Community Church, New York].

You won't see this while I am alive. When you do see it, I beg you to understand that my release, whenever it come, is a great mercy. I am far from well and comfortable. As you know, I hate to leave you both and Shad [Polier, Wise's son-in-law] and

Helen /Brooks Wise, Wise's daughter-in-law/ and my precious grandchildren, but I feel the time is drawing very near for me to go Home. If God will, it will mean the reunion of my spirit with that of Mummie's /Louise Waterman Wise, his wife, had died in 1947/ and you know that I want my dust to be placed in the niche wherein she lies.

All love forever to you who have taken such wonderful care of me and will do so, I know, to my end, whenever it is to be. You will love and care for each other always.

Into the Hand of God I commend my spirit. May He continue to vouchsafe me His grace and mercy.¹⁵

CHAPTER II

The Institutions of Reform Judaism

Stephen Wise's formal connections with Reform Judaism go back to 1896 when his name first appears in the Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis as a member of that organization.¹⁶ His father, Aaron Wise, had become a member of the C.C.A.R. by 1895¹⁷ but apparently the younger Wise had not yet fully made up his mind to become a Reform rabbi. It is somewhat difficult to determine the extent of the elder Wise's participation in the C.C.A.R. Apparently he never answered a roll call at a meeting of the Conference, but he was eulogized in glowing terms at the meeting of the Conference in July, 1896.¹⁸

Apparently Stephen Wise attended his first meeting of the Conference in Philadelphia, July 26, 1901.¹⁹ At that meeting he was elected to the Executive Committee of the C.C.A.R.,²⁰ a position which he held for one year and to which he did not return until 1932.²¹ Wise seems to have had rather a large part to play in the convention of 1901. He was a member of the temporary committees on the president's message and nomination of officers.²² Wise set the tone for the history of his dealings with the C.C.A.R. at the first convention he attended. A part of the report on the president's message dealt with Zionism.

3. Concerning the suggestion of the President, asking the Conference to co-operate

with the Zionists in the colonization of Palestine, we deem it inadvisable for this body to consider this question at this time.²³

This particular section of the resolution caused quite a bit of discussion. There were those who were opposed to any discussion of Zionism, colonization, or Palestine. Wise entered the discussion in a very mild manner, considering his views on the subject in later years.

...S. S. Wise said that a real vital question was involved in Zionism. The actual condition of Roumanian and Russian Jews called for redress. The aim of Zionism was to make Palestine a homestead for homeless Jews. He thought that a thoughtful study of Zionism should be made by the Conference and that it ought not to be hastily or contemptuously dismissed.²⁴

A compromise was finally reached in the matter when the conference decided to have a paper presented at its next meeting on the subject of Jewish Colonization.²⁵ This, then, was Wise's first encounter with his rabbinic colleagues on the subject of Zionism, but it was far from his last.

By 1909, Wise had established his Free Synagogue. He was back from the West and back into the thick of things. By that year, also, he must have gained some stature, or at least notice among the members of the C.C.A.R. In the fall of that year, he was among a group of rabbis who sought to bypass the regular rotation of officers in favor of electing Emil G. Hirsch to the presidency. These men ex-

plained their position in a circular letter which they distributed before the Conference convened.

At such time as this, it is of the highest importance that the leadership of the Conference be vested in one, who in his personality symbolizes the cause of Jewish Reform. Such a leader is Emil G. Hirsch, Rabbi of Sinai Congregation of Chicago. It is... because for thirty years he has been the courageous, militant, uncompromising leader of progressive Judaism in America, that we are moved to take the unusual step of writing to you in this strain before the session of the Conference.

This proposal is not intended to defeat a custom which has prevailed in the Conference of late years, that of rotation of office. In following this custom to pay a tribute to one of our colleagues, we simply mean to postpone that rotation to such a time as the wisdom of the Conference may determine to resume it.²⁶

It is ironic that the man against whom this campaign was launched later became one of Wise's closest friends in the C.C.A.R., Max Heller, Rabbi of Temple Sinai in New Orleans. Their correspondence throughout the years is extensive and usually quite amiable, but the letters that crossed on this matter were far from friendly. On November 10, 1909, the day after the convention began in New York, Heller wrote to Wise concerning the circular letter.

I am greatly surprised to learn from friends that you have sent to a chosen few a circular proposing, "as a feeler," that I be passed for the presidency in

favor of Dr. Hirsch.

I am neither narrow enough, nor sufficiently blinded with conceit to be unable to see some very good reasons why colleagues should feel that Dr. H. would make a better President than myself. What arouses my indignation, however, and partly robs me of the esteem in which I had held you is the secret and underhanded manner in which your movement is engineered.... Without meaning to boast I can honestly say, that, had I aimed such action against you, I should have done it in the open and you should have received a circular among the first.

I shall not be in New York, owing to the demands of a nearer duty; circumstances seem to favor the success of your enterprise. My defeat will, of course, be a disappointment to me; but almost as bitter will be to me the knowledge that men of your high standing could resort to such measures and succeed with them.

I am, waiting your explanation....²⁷

Never one to shrink in the face of a personal attack, Wise answered Heller in an angry letter which was written during the convention in New York. He resented the tone of Heller's letter to him and insisted that he was not personally responsible for the movement, as Heller had implied. He stated that the reason for electing Hirsch in place of Heller was:

...a number of men, including... myself, have felt that at this time the Presidency of the Conference should not be lodged in a man who has, for what he considers adequate reasons, chosen to place

himself in the forefront of the counter-reformation movement. That movement is fundamentally opposed to the principles of the Jewish reformation. It is a recantation and a repudiation of all that for which the Jewish Reformation has stood....it seemed to a group of us that, however friendly we personally were to you, it would be most unwise to elect to the Presidency a man who is considered one of the leaders in the movement which makes for the undoing of the Jewish Reformation.²⁸

As it turned out, Hirsch had forbidden his name to be put in nomination, and Heller was eventually elected to the presidency of the C.C.A.R. Wise, however, was at this point afraid that Heller would not be elected but rather that the "Cincinnati cabal"²⁹ would elect one friendly to them. This he apparently feared more than the election of Heller.

In the course of this angry letter, Wise took the opportunity to return the personal attack which Heller had made on him with a personal attack, of sorts, of his own. Referring to an old wound, which apparently had not been mentioned, but had not healed, Wise concluded this letter as follows:

I close by saying again that I am not unfriendly to you. I have felt nothing but a friendly feeling for you. As you know, I have never met you face to face, but I have always believed in your honesty of purpose. True enough, it was shocking to find your readiness, some four years ago, to lend assent to the dictum of certain people in New York that the pulpit need not be free. But, I for-

gave you then as I had occasion to forgive many who did not and do not understand even now the-tremendous fight I made for the entire Jewish ministry in America. Nothing could have been more disheartening at that time than your word written in the American Israelite to the effect that a strong man need not stipulate for freedom and that a weak man has no right to expect it--namely, only the strong may be free and the weaker must be satisfied with the chains.³⁰

Wise seems to be complaining against some sort of orthodox tendencies in Heller's attitude towards Judaism. It is difficult to imagine the rabbi of Temple Sinai in New Orleans as an orthodox rabbi, but apparently there was some justification for Wise's assessment of Heller's position. In his weekly column in the American Israelite, Heller refers to his election to the presidency of the C.C.A.R. and discusses the charges leveled against him.

...it will almost be a waste of words to soothe the fears of those whose terrifying bogey bears the brand-new label of "Counter-Reformation." According to these alarmists, some of them pretending, others sincere, the editorial column, which is in charge of this newly elected president, has been persistently arrayed in hostile battle-ender against the cause of Jewish Reform; it has dared to disapprove of the Sunday-Sabbath and to condemn the shifting or occasional abolition of our historical festivals; it has advocated, with a measure of enthusiasm, the preservation of such observances as ought, by their poetic beauty and their symbolic significance, to appeal to the soul of the modern man; it has been so "unprogressive"

as to speak a word, now and then, on behalf of the historical reminders and the flavor of individuality which might be gained from despised "Orientalism"; it has been guilty of the double crime of pessimism and disloyalty in casting doubt on couleur-de-rose estimates and prognostications regarding the flourishing spiritual health of conditions prevailing in American Reform Judaism; lastly, it has committed the high treason of echoing with a lusty "pater peccavi" some of the indictments, not by any means new, which "reasonable orthodoxy" and its leaders have directed against some of the misgrowths in our ranks.....

As against these not unexpected misunderstandings the writer has but one plea to advance: the old rabbinical saw according to which there can be no genuine love which will not or cannot reprove its object. He is not a true friend of Reform or of what is infinitely greater, of Judaism, who can witness without protest the excesses, the compromises with sheer convenience, the sacrifice to the mere size of audiences, the religious unrefinements, the gross inconsistencies of which the extremists in our ranks have been guilty; and a sad day it will be, indeed, for the cause of genuine, lasting Reform when he who pleads for the positive elements of religiousness and reverence, for the symbols that bind us, for the reminders which strengthen our individuality, for the venerations and even the sentimentalities that link us with Jewish past and orthodox brother, when such a one will be denounced by others besides the blind partisan as "reactionary," benighted, unprogressive, etc., and accused of seeking to turn the masses back to medievalism and utter darkness. The great majority of the members of the conference will not permit themselves to be so hoodwinked; that majority, it is safe to assert, is not ready to be led off blindfolded into the Radical camp.....Those radical extremes....

are good enough to afford an - interesting thrill for the Sunday transient, but... can not obtain a sober and deliberate endorsement on the part of an earnest gathering of religious teachers.³¹

It seems highly possible that most of this section of Heller's column was written especially for Wise. Wise had, since returning to New York, conducted his main service on Sunday morning, a practice which he was to continue for many years. At these Sunday services, Wise always drew tremendous crowds. Of course he was not the only rabbi who drew big crowds on Sunday, but certainly Heller must have had Wise in mind when he wrote the above article. It is difficult to determine whether Heller considered Wise to be "pretending" or "sincere". It seems that Wise must have been sincere in his criticism of his old friend. Perhaps those who Heller considered pretenders were really anti-Zionists who were looking for another excuse to by-pass Heller, although it is difficult to see why Heller's Zionism was not excuse enough. In any event, Wise logically should have been all in favor of Heller. Here was the first opportunity to elect a Zionist to the presidency of the C.C.A.R. Why did Wise refuse him support?

We can only guess at Wise's motives. It is possible that Wise was swayed by the council of some of the men who wanted to bypass Heller either because of his Zionism or for some other reason. In any event, Wise was probably convinced that Heller was opposed to the forces of liberalism

and reform in American Judaism. What is interesting is that here Wise is apparently more concerned with liberalism than he is with Zionism. This is indeed strange but unless this assumption is true then it is impossible to explain the motives which would cause Wise to turn against the first Zionist who had a chance to become president of the Conference, Heller, in favor of Hirsch, who was a leader of liberalism, but an avowed foe of Zionism.

At the Conference meeting in 1909, Wise used all the powers at his disposal to attack the address of one of his colleagues. In response to a very long and detailed paper on "The Workingman and the Synagogue" delivered by Rabbi Solomon Foster, of Newark, New Jersey, Wise attacked what he considered to be an unrealistic attitude towards social welfare and the place of the synagogue in it.

Foster had spent page after page on such subjects as the rabbinic attitude towards labor in which he quoted a list of passages in rabbinic sources which deal with the subject of the dignity of labor. At one point he said that the synagogue should not take sides in labor disputes. In general he recommended that the synagogue become an agency to propagandize the working class in order to get them closer to the synagogue. There is no real plan of action outlined in his remarks.³²

Wise took exception to the position of Foster. He began in a very sarcastic and derogatory vein.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Conference:

I have no desire to disturb the pleasure of the Conference in its apparent enjoyment of the symposium of platitudinous pomposity of this morning. I shall speak to you this afternoon from my viewpoint, and not from the pewpoint, which is the viewpoint occupied by so many men. In the first place I want to protest against the very careful irrelevancy of very much adduced in this Conference. I challenge the right of a member of this Conference to allude to the white slave criminal and white slave traffic under the head of the workingman. It is not they who conduct the white slave trade, it is their daughters who are the victims of the slave traffic, because the synagogue is not true to the workingman. We have heard a great deal about the shame of temporary synagogues; I want to say something about the shame of permanent synagogues, insofar as they commit themselves to the program which we heard today.... We have heard that the synagogue does not deal with secondary problems. Oh no; only with those of primary importance! One of the tremendous concerns of the Kehillah has been the question of Kashruth. Is that of primary concern today in New York? Are the reform synagogues any more truly than the orthodox dealing with primary questions?

I pass over to three fundamental principles: the synagogue can not deal with the workingman; the synagogue can not attract the workingman; the synagogue has no word for the workingman...unless these things are true; the synagogue must have an open door and the synagogue must have a free pulpit....

...I said to one of the foremost rabbis of New York, "Why don't you take a stand and come out and take your position against

this tremendous thing?" His answer was, "I would do it if I could, but I don't stand in a free pulpit as you do." My fundamental contention is that after all you can't get the workingman to respect the synagogue, and I don't want the synagogue to be respected unless its pulpit is free.

You may ask me, "What have you done about the synagogue and the workingman?" I will tell you what I did. I was asked last summer to have a part in the bakers' strike in New York. I investigated it. I did not talk about general principles. I went down and found Jewish bakers, treated almost like slaves. I told their Jewish masters that it was an outrage. And that strike was settled by the strikers gaining, as they ought to have gained, every single point for which they had contended. They did not ask enough. They did not ask even human conditions. They asked for the minimum. And it was given to me to present their claim to their employers.

We must be true to Judaism. The synagogue deals with this world. Its characteristic is what has been called the thought and spirit of this-worldliness.... A year ago it was said in one of the Jewish seminaries, "It is all right to speak about great moral principles, but you must not apply them." That is a new idea to me. We are told a rabbi may deal with these things, but not as a representative of the synagogue. Why not? If the synagogue has laid down these principles, why should not we speak out and deal frankly and fairly as men?....³³

It is interesting to note in this statement the direction which Wise's interests were taking. In a statement on the synagogue and the workingman, Wise found the opportunity to assail his colleagues for what he considered their spineless-

ness in the matter of freedom of the pulpit. This was the first conference he attended after the founding of his Free Synagogue and it is obvious that he used the opportunity to contrast his achievements with those of the other rabbis, many of whom opposed his position in this matter. This is perfectly in keeping with his statement to Heller, which was written at the same time, and to which we have referred above.

More to the point of the discussion on the floor of the Conference, were Wise's remarks about what the synagogue can actually do in the area of social justice. He advocated a very strong, activist position in these matters. This was one of Wise's major concerns throughout his ministry and will be discussed in more detail elsewhere in this work.

It is interesting to note that Wise, who had served on the executive committee of the C.C.A.R. in 1901, was, at this period, not even on any of the committees, either permanent or temporary, of the organization.³⁴ This was perhaps as a result of his own choice not to serve. He must have been, at this time, very busy with his newly formed Free Synagogue and other duties in New York and may not have felt that he could give the time to the C.C.A.R. More likely, however, Wise was not asked to serve. Wise had made a big name for himself in the Temple Emanu-El incident, but many of his colleagues considered him to be a sensationalist and in the wrong. His Zionist views were also unpopular

among his colleagues, and the remarks quoted above indicate that his sharp tongue and biting criticism would not have made him the most popular member of the C.C.A.R. And yet the next time he comes into contact with the organization it is in a most curious fashion.

Wise apparently did not attend any more meetings of the Conference until the meeting in Detroit, June 30-July 7, 1914. Just prior to that meeting he wrote to his wife in New York, the following assessment of his position in the C.C.A.R.:

.....The recent graduates [of the Hebrew Union College] made me their guest of honor at the luncheon yesterday..... This is certain - if I will give the time, the Conference will be in my hands with the possibility directly and immediately of affecting the younger men.³⁵

This letter was written from Detroit just three days before that meeting began. At the session of the Conference in 1914, Wise had more to say than he had ever said before at such a meeting. He still, however, had no real power. He was not a member of the executive committee of the Conference, nor did he hold the chairmanship of any of its permanent committees. He was, at that meeting, appointed chairman of a special committee to establish a Conference lectureship at the Hebrew Union College. He was made chairman of this committee, probably because it was he who introduced the original motion.³⁶

This motion and the events which followed present an interesting picture of the motives of Wise toward the C.C.A.R. and more especially towards the Hebrew Union College. The motion made at the Conference reads:

Resolved, That the Central Conference of American Rabbis institute an annual lectureship dealing with some phase of Liberal Judaism before the students of the Hebrew Union College, the expense thereof to be borne by the Conference; and

Be it Further Resolved, That this resolution be referred to a special committee which shall report back to the Conference before the close of the convention.³⁷

The motion was introduced by Wise and Rabbi J. Leonard Levy of Pittsburgh. The plan was supported by Dr. Kaufmann Kohler, President of the College, who stipulated that "the selection of the lecturers must ultimately rest with the Faculty of the Hebrew Union College, naturally in cooperation with the Executive Board of the Conference."³⁸ Thereupon a committee was appointed which consisted of Wise as chairman and Levy, Kohler, David Philipson, and Joseph Stolz as members.³⁹ The resolution was passed by the entire conference unanimously⁴⁰ and Wise set about the task of securing a lecturer for the College.

It is apparent that Wise had been laboring under a misunderstanding as to his role in this affair. In December of 1914, Wise wrote to his now renewed friend, Max Heller concerning the disposition of the matter:

I have just received a letter from Rabbi Kornfeld Corres-ponding Secretary of the C.C.A.R., dated, Dec. 25th... You will notice that the Executive Committee declared that the lectureship to be provided only under the following conditions: First, that a permanent fund be established for that purpose. Second, that the selection of the lecturer and subject be left to the Faculty of the Hebrew Union College.⁴¹

This seems simply to restate the discussion which had transpired at the meeting of the C.C.A.R. when the resolution was first presented. Wise, however, was incensed at the letter from Kornfeld. He had obviously understood that his committee, and especially he as chairman, would have the right to choose the lecturer and the subject. Wise took this opportunity to tell Heller what he really thought of the C.C.A.R., after first expressing his anger at the position of the Executive Committee on this particular matter.

I merely wish you to know that I will not serve either as Chairman or as a member of this Committee, and, what is more, I shall bring up the matter with all the vigor at my command at the next meeting of the Conference at its annual session. I hold that the Executive Committee had no right to lay down the conditions for the provision of such lectureship. Now that the conditions are laid down, it merely gives us the right and authority to secure the funds.... I consider it supremely discourteous and insolent on the part of the Executive Committee to me, as Chairman of the Committee, and to my associates to charge us with a task under conditions which leave us no freedom of

thought or action and accord us
only the right to secure funds.

Perhaps I should not feel as strongly as I do about this thing, if I did not see once again what you perhaps will be loath to acknowledge and even to recognize, - that the Executive Committee of the Conference, as at present constituted, seems determined to make it impossible for me to co-operate with it, and that any offer of service on my part will be met in so ungracious and hostile a spirit as to make that co-operation impossible. But I tell you, my dear Heller, that I am equally determined not to reciprocate in the spirit of ungenerosity and unfairness, but to serve the Conference. I am not a candidate for such honors as the Conference has to bestow. Extraordinary as it may seem to some of your honor-hunting colleagues on the Committee, I am determined not to magnify **myself** but the Conference and through the Conference and its membership to serve the highest interests of American Israel.

I write to you with perfect frankness because I want you to know that I am resolved to go to the Conference and to help my colleagues to judge for themselves the spirit and temper of its leadership.... There was a time, as you know, when I was quick to see that I could not work with the Conference. Now, I am just as determined that I shall work with and for the Conference and equally determined that my own determination to serve the Conference shall not be neutralized by the littleness and the meanesses that for a long time under certain unhappy inspirations have had too large a part in the councils of the Central Conference.⁴²

While it is not explicitly stated, it is quite apparent that Wise's main complaint against the Conference was its attitude towards Zionism. While Zionism had been dis-

cussed at several meetings of the Conference and some resolutions had been passed concerning it, no really negative stand had been taken by the C.C.A.R. on this subject.⁴³ It is well known, however, that many of the leaders of the Conference were also leaders of the anti-Zionist movement in this country. Perhaps most notable of these, at the time, was Rabbi David Philipson of Cincinnati, a perennial member of the Executive Committee of the C.C.A.R. and of the Board of Governors of the Hebrew Union College.

From the nature of the resolution and Wise's reaction to the decision of the Executive Committee, it is quite easy to assume that Wise had something very definite in mind when he proposed a Conference Lectureship at the College. Two ardent anti-Zionists, Philipson and Kohler, controlled the College. Wise felt, however, that many of the students were more favorably inclined toward Zionism. Wise was not so wrong in his assessment of the student body as is demonstrated in an incident which is reported below. In any event, it is entirely possible that the lectureship which Wise attempted to establish at the College was to be for the purpose of bringing Zionist speakers into this stronghold of anti-Zionism.

Wise was unsuccessful in this attempt to establish a Conference Lectureship at the College. Feeling that he had been put in the position of merely being a money-raiser for the Conference, Wise soon resigned the chairmanship and membership on the committee. In his explanation to Heller, Wise

comments that "the conditions imposed by the Executive Committee constitute an intolerable and most impertinent limitation upon our freedom."⁴⁴

Wise did not intend to let the matter drop merely with his resignation from the committee. He also sent a protest to the Executive Committee and planned to bring the matter up at the next meeting of the Conference. Wise did not attend the next meeting of the Conference and apparently received no reply from the Executive Committee.⁴⁵ It seems as if the entire matter was simply dropped.

It is sometimes difficult to understand Wise's great respect and admiration, bordering almost on hero worship, of Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch. Perhaps it was his radical liberalism which attracted Wise. It certainly could not have been his anti-Zionism. In any event, Wise seems always to be championing Hirsch in dealings with the C.C.A.R. The year 1915 was to be the celebration in the C.C.A.R. of the centennial of Samuel Hirsch, Emil G. Hirsch's father. Wise was concerned that the younger Hirsch would not receive the honor of being asked to participate in that session. Hirsch had resigned from the Conference but Wise wrote to Heller urging the Executive Committee to extend a special invitation to Hirsch to attend.⁴⁶

Apparently Heller did not agree with Wise that Emil Hirsch should receive a special invitation to attend the Conference. Wise, however, was not willing to let the matter

drop. His attitude towards Hirsch, and his dislike for the C.C.A.R. are clearly shown in another letter which he addressed to Heller on the subject.

...irrespective of Dr. Hirsch's attitude toward you or me or any or all of the members of the Conference, he is, - and inevitably stands in the public eye as, - the son of his father, apart from the circumstance that he is in himself far and above the most distinguished and gifted teacher in American Israel.

I do not feel that I can in conscience let the matter rest here, because I cannot remain a member of a body which so stultifies itself without at least raising my voice in protest and calling the attention of my colleagues throughout the Conference to the unwisdom and unworthiness of such a procedure. I am not governed by any consideration of friendship for Dr. Hirsch, for I know as well as you do how little he would in turn be governed by any sentiments of this kind toward any one of his colleagues, even toward the few whom he suffers, in the despite of himself, to remain among his friends.... The Central Conference has no right to take into account the personal relationships of its members to Dr. Hirsch and deny him the privilege, even though he will hardly consider it a privilege, of being invited to the meeting in memory of his father.⁴⁷

Apparently nothing more came of Wise's suggestion. Neither Wise nor Hirsch attended the Conference. Wise did send a message, but Hirsch did not have the courtesy to do even that. No record of any invitation to Hirsch is recorded and one may assume that no such invitation was ever extended. Thus the matter apparently ended.

In 1915, Wise continued to fight the elements of anti-Zionism within Reform Judaism. In the spring of that year, he became involved in a bitter struggle with none other than the President of the Hebrew Union College, Kaufmann Kohler, and the Board of Governors of the College. It seems to have begun late in 1914, when an invitation to Horace Kallen, then at the University of Wisconsin, to speak to the students was retracted by order of Kohler. Wise brings this to the attention of his friend Heller in an angry letter.

Have you noted that Dr. Kallen of Madison, Wisconsin, whom you probably know, was asked by the Hebrew Union College Literary Society to address it in conjunction with the intercollegiate Menorah meeting. He accepted and named his subject, - "The Meaning of Hebraism," whereupon he subsequently received a telegram from the President of the Society, stating: "The authorities of the Hebrew Union College resent Literary Society's invitation to you for December 22nd and have commanded me to cancel said invitation because of your views, which they oppose." Is nothing to be said or done about this? Are you satisfied with that spirit at the college and are you going to sit silent under it? I ask you not only as a graduate of the College and as my fellow-Zionist, but as the father of a College student. Is there nothing to be done to end once and for all that bigotted attitude which stifles every expression of opinion that differs from the gentlemen of the College who are still living in 1840, including Kohler & Phillipson?⁴⁸

Wise reached the conclusion, probably correctly, that the Kallen invitation had been cancelled because Kallen was a Zionist. It was, however, also a matter of what Wise con-

sidered to be the illiberal attitude at the College. As a result of the Kallen incident, Wise and Heller asked for a special meeting with the Board of Governors of the College. This request was granted and the meeting was set for February 15, 1915.⁴⁹

In a letter to Heller just prior to their meeting with the H.U.C. Board, Wise tells Heller of the demands he intends to make in their forthcoming meeting.

I beg to send you a copy of a letter which I have just written to the Secretary of the Board of Governors of the College....

* * * * *

There are two things we ought to urge; - in the first place, that this one meeting....will not suffice to clear up the difficulties. I want to urge...that a Commission be appointed consisting of some members of the Board of Governors and some non-members, who together would spend the next six months or a year in making a careful study of the College situation for ultimate report thru the Board of Governors to the Union.

The next thing I mean to urge is the anomaly of the present situation...namely, that the Board of Governors is absolutely independent of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. It is a situation which I cannot understand. The Union supplies the funds and then the Board of Governors erect themselves into an independent institution. It is beyond my understanding....

Another question upon which we ought to submit our own thought is the whole problem of academic freedom, bearing in mind the statement of Dr. Kohler as made to us...

"I do not believe in *Lehrfreiheit* at the Seminary." That matter must be fought out and through....⁵⁰

Wise made several interesting points in the letter to Heller. Apparently he was quite concerned over the fact that the College, for all intents and purposes, was controlled by a few men in Cincinnati, namely Philipson and Kohler, and that these men were unsympathetic to Wise's own goals for Reform Judaism, especially with regard to Zionism. Wise, it seems, had made an attempt, or was in the process of making an attempt, to gain control of the C.C.A.R. and in this way to get at the source of the American rabbinate, H.U.C. That his ambitions in the C.C.A.R. were somewhat bogged down, is evidenced from his defeat and resignation from the committee on Conference Lectureships. Apparently here he is taking a different tack.

First of all, if any Commission is appointed, Wise can surely figure that he will be a member. He was, at the time, a rather prominent New York rabbi. His voice was beginning to be heard. He had also been one of the ones who had instituted the complaints against the Board. The combination of these two factors almost assured him of a place on the Commission and a voice in the policies of the College.

The second method by which Wise may have hoped to gain some say in the College was through his understood suggestion that the Union have more power on the Board of the College. Wise's Free Synagogue had just become a member of the Union

early in 1915⁵¹ and while the control of the Union was still centered in Cincinnati, a growing power was developing in New York. If not directly, at least through some of the influential members of his congregation, Wise may have hoped to gain some control of the College through a stronger participation of the Union in its affairs. It is interesting that Wise was faced with somewhat the same situation a few years later in relation to the establishment of the Jewish Institute of Religion, but there he stood on the opposite side of the fence.⁵²

The problem of '*Lehrfreiheit*' which Wise raises is a problem which has plagued academic institutions for all time, and especially seminaries. It is a real problem in every respect but it probably came to Wise's attention mainly because of Kohler's attitude towards Zionism. There is little question but that Wise really stood for complete academic freedom, but there can also be little doubt that the Kallen incident probably precipitated this entire discussion and especially that aspect of it which deals with academic freedom.

The meeting of the Board of Governors to which Wise and Heller were invited took place on February 15, 1915. At that meeting some degree of harmony was reached with the passage of the following three resolutions:

- (1) The rule long since adopted that the President of the College shall alone prescribe who may speak in the Chapel

is adhered to.

- (2) Dr. Kohler agreed that he had no objection to addresses on Zionism being delivered in the College building outside of the Chapel, and
- (3) Dr. Kohler further agreed that students may preach on Zionism or may refer to the subject in their Chapel sermons provided the sermons are religious in tone and otherwise unobjectionable to him.⁵³

Wise and Heller apparently came away from the meeting with some feeling of making some inroads into the strong anti-Zionist bias at the College. It was a compromise to be sure, but at least Zionism could get some hearing now. The matter had not ended, however. On March 17, 1915, Wise wrote to Heller as follows:

...just a word at this time to let you know that Louis Grossman writes as follows: "Dr. Kohler rejected the first frankly offered student's sermon on Zionism without even reading it and upon merely hearing the student's frank statement that the sermon was on Zionism." The thing is interesting after the meeting and its 'concordat.'

What shall we do about this? Are you going to let that state of affairs go unchallenged?... Is it not enough to have these promises made to our ears and broken to our hope.⁵⁴

The student to which this letter referred was, as Wise found out latter, Heller's own son, James. As the entire situation is revealed in the minutes, it turned out that there had been a major misunderstanding. Somehow the entire

incident had been blown up all out of proportion. No sermon had been rejected and the matter was finally smoothed over.⁵⁵ Wise, however, was still not satisfied. Before this incident had been fully explained Wise wrote to Heller of his proposed trip to Cincinnati to preach for Louis Grossman at the Plum Street Temple.

...I am greatly disturbed about the whole thing, but I count it fortunate that I am going to Cincinnati in the morning and am to spend the whole of the day there.... I mean to go to the service of the College in the afternoon, though Kohler has not taken any notice of my coming up to this time, and in all likelihood will probably not even ask me to speak. This matter is very grave. It is such a flagrant breach of faith....The whole system must be changed. We must, my dear Heller, next make the fight at the summer session of the Central Conference. That will be one way and one opportunity of appealing to the men.⁵⁶

At this point, Wise still had hopes of working through the C.C.A.R. to bring about changes in the College. Just how he hoped to affect these changes he does not spell out but it is apparent that he does not completely despair of the Conference.

Perhaps this is what Wise refers to in another somewhat vague letter which he wrote to Heller after his return from Cincinnati. In that letter he tells Heller:

...I...feel that it would be unwise on our part to continue to fight along the present lines. In a battle like our own, it is the part of wisdom to choose the battleground. Nothing we could do

would be more helpful to the Philipson side of things than to wage our whole fight for freedom and dignity and worth-whileness at the College along the lines of Zionism....No, we must choose our own battleground and not have it forced upon us.⁵⁷

It is possible that Wise wanted this battleground to be the Conference. Here it is apparent that Wise still sees himself as able to achieve some degree of control over the C.C.A.R. He is, perhaps, still under the impression that "the Conference will be in my hands..."⁵⁸

Less than six months later Wise had completely changed his opinion. Whereas in March he had been very optimistic about his chances to control the College through the C.C.A.R., in August he seemed to be seriously contemplating resigning his membership in the organization. He had not attended the session of the Conference in the summer of 1915 and perhaps he felt somewhat guilty that he was not there to support Heller. Apparently Wise had intended to attend the Conference, but illness in his family had prevented this.⁵⁹ Heller was left to defend Zionism by himself. While there was no formal discussion either on the question of the College or Zionism, Heller did get an opportunity to defend the Zionist position.⁶⁰ Later in the summer Wise expressed his sorrow that he had not been at the Conference in Charlevoix to support Heller.

...Several of the men have written to me to the effect that you stood like a rock against all the pettiness and meanness which, alas, too often characterized the spirit,

such as it is, of the Conference. One of the younger men wrote to me that you were superb when almost singlehanded you fought against the powers of darkness and sought to wrest from them their unhappy control alike of the Conference and the College. I wish I might have been at Charlevoix for many reasons. I wanted to take up the matter of the discourtesy with which we of the Conference Lectureship Committee of the College were treated, and I wanted to make a fight for Zionism...⁶¹

In response to a letter from Heller (which was not available to me) in which Heller must have described what happened at the Conference, Wise wrote to him again, later in August, but this time in a much more pessimistic and discouraged vein.

...I shall never cease to regret that I could not have stood by your side and perhaps in some measure have held up your hands in the valiant fight that you made. I wonder whether you will not come to feel, as I am again coming to feel, that the fight within the Conference is not worth while. It is good to know that Louis Grossman, whom the Conference so long mistreated, is in time to become the President. But I rather think that, even if he become the President, he will be bound hand and foot by the Phil(ipson)istines.⁶²

Here Wise reaches almost the low-point of his feelings against the C.C.A.R. He is here on the verge of throwing in the towel and giving up the battle. It is apparent here that his main dislike is directed towards Philipson. He seemed to feel that Philipson stood for everything which he opposed in the Conference and that Philipson was the real

leader of the group. This is borne out in a letter written to Heller in November of that year in which Wise goes into detail about the C.C.A.R. and his resentment of it. This letter is so significant as an expression of Wise's feeling of utter frustration and dislike that most of it will be quoted here.

...I have tried harder than you can possibly understand to see that it is my duty not merely to remain nominally within the Conference but to work on its behalf as long as it is possible for me to do so, but again and again I have felt deeply and sorely tried. It is not that I resent the personal treatment or ill-treatment which has been meted out to me. One grows accustomed to such things as one grows older, in fact grows indifferent to them. I determined long ago that the Conference should never bestow any honors upon me. Upon that I am solemnly resolved, nor does it lie within the power of any member of the Conference to do me injury. What I am deeply and increasingly disturbed about is the feeling that the fight is not only futile but, worst of all, hardly worth while. I have watched the thing carefully for years and I have come to feel that a group of men small in vision and mean in motive have come to dominate the Conference, men who apparently have no conception of the nobleness of our calling, on the one hand, nor any understanding of the meaning of the service which at our highest it lies within our power to render. The management of the Conference has become not unlike that of a political machine with all that is implied in the way of chicanery and self-seeking and sordidness. Evidently you do not know me well enough or you would not assume that it is possible for me to compromise on anything fundamental with the men who dominate the Conference. I am never a middle-of-the-road man. Therein lies at one and the same time my

my weakness and my strength....We are coming nearer and nearer to a life and death battle over fundamentals. I can see more clearly that the fight of tomorrow will not be over orthodoxy and reform but over a real and fundamental Jewishness expressed racially or, if you please, nationally, and with mild-and-water emasculate Judaism which is the sad survival of the German-Jewish Reformation. I feel as you do much nearer to our orthodox brothers who are Jews than to our reform colleagues many of whom have fundamentally ceased to be Jews, who prate about the religion of the Jew when religion is the furthest from their own souls. Their religion consists of nothing more than a denial of the validity and integrity of our racialism.

There is another and final reason that has made me doubtful as to the wisdom of continuing to work in and with the Conference. I do not like to speak of it for it will seem immodest on my part, but I am perhaps differently circumstanced from any other man in the Conference. Through no merit of my own, but chiefly because of physical strength and perhaps resolute will, it is given to me to reach annually a very large number of Jewish communities throughout the country. Most men who are in the Conference can reach American Jewry only through the Conference.....I have been looking over my calendar for the current year and find that I shall be speaking to the Jewish communities of from fifty to seventy-five of the largest cities of the country from New York to San Francisco and from Milwaukee to New Orleans. In other words, seeing that many of the rabbis in the country under the unhappy and much worse than unhappy leadership of Philipson will not share my own vision of the service of the Rabbinate, it lies within my power to go to their communities in city after city and speak over their heads to their congregations and make myself felt in a perhaps not wholly insignifi-

cant way in a very large number of communities from one end of the land to the other. Is it then worth my while to make the same painful, toilsome, heart-breaking effort year after year in the attempt to redeem the Conference from itself which chooses to remain unredeemed? If the men want to accept Philipson as their leader and their exemplar, so be it. I have no desire in the world to fight him. I am indifferent to him and Schulman and all their comrades, but I abhor and loath the things for which they stand.

* * * * *

I wish when you come to New York or when I come to New Orleans you and I may together think through the problem whether the permeation of individual communities is not far more desirable and feasible than the policy of capturing the Conference which I cannot help feeling is lamentably committed to the Philipsonian attitudes and conceptions.⁶³

A closer analysis of this letter reveals much about Wise and his relation to the C.C.A.R. Wise insists that he is above the petty hurts inflicted upon him by the members of the Conference. He insists that he wants no honor from them nor has he any desire to achieve such. This is interesting in the light of his statement eighteen months earlier that he expected to have the Conference in his hand if he so willed. It seems as if Wise protests too much. It is apparent that Wise really did expect to control the Conference. In November, 1915, however, he realized that this was impossible. As much as he insists that he did not resent the treatment afforded him by the members of the Conference,

Wise must have been deeply hurt by his failure to have his way. It was very unusual for Wise to be so rebuffed in his efforts but apparently he realized that he could get nowhere through the C.C.A.R. This must have been a blow to his ego, thus the hurt which is implicitly expressed in this letter.

It is difficult to determine just exactly what Wise means when he talks about "the nobleness of our calling" or "the service which at our highest it lies within our power to render." Perhaps the references here are to social justice. The Conference, up to this time, had failed to take a strong positive stand on any social justice resolution. The only resolutions which had passed dealt with the subject in vague generalities and platitudinous sentiments. This was one area of disagreement which Heller had voiced at the meeting of the Conference in 1915.⁶⁴ Wise, always a leader in areas of social reform, perhaps felt that the Conference had failed its responsibility in this area.

Wise's criticism of the Conference as a "political machine" was probably quite valid. It appears that a few men controlled the system of nominations and elections within the C.C.A.R. in order to hold the control within their hands. Had Wise been a part of this group, it is possible that he would not have complained so bitterly of its existence. Wise was not important in the power structure of the Conference. He held no office in it nor was he a member of the Executive Committee. There can be

little doubt that at one time Wise held political ambitions in the Conference. The frustration of these hopes may have produced this attitude and this attack on the politics of the C.C.A.R.

The primary complaint by Wise against the C.C.A.R. was against its attitude on Zionism. While the Conference had passed no resolutions either favoring or opposing Zionism, it is well known that many of the most influential members of the Conference were ardent anti-Zionists. Wise expresses his disagreement with the "mild-and-water emascuate Judaism" which he feels the anti-Zionists represent. This is surely also one of the bases of his attack on Philipson, a leader of the anti-Zionist forces.

While Wise is no longer sure of himself working within the instrumentalities of the Conference, he seems quite certain that he can take his case to the congregations of America. Just what he hoped to tell them he does not spell out. One can only assume however, that first on the list would be the spreading of the ideals of Zionism. Secondly, Wise probably would speak on the problems of the social and industrial revolution in America. The fact is that Wise did make many speaking tours speaking on such subjects as pacifism, woman suffrage, child labor, and always on Zionism.

Wise, then, late in 1915, was ready to give up the C.C.A.R. entirely. He had failed in any attempt he might have made to wrest the power of the Conference from the hands

of the anti-Zionist Philipsonians. The Conference and the College lay beyond his immediate grasp. But Wise was not through yet. He had big plans to take his battle to the people and in that way to gain control. The curious thing, however, is that Wise did not resign from the Conference; in fact he accepted the chairmanship of a committee. In that very same letter of defeat and despair Wise wrote:

And yet, having said all this,
I mean to be patient. Moved
in part by your word, I have
yielded to the mandate of
President Rosenau who had bade
me accept the Chairmanship of
the special Commission of Social
Justice, the Commission which
includes you as a member. I
shall give a great deal of time
throughout the rest of the year
to that problem and I hope with
the aid of my associates to
produce something that will
commit us definitely to a position
on the great social-industrial
problems of our time and of all
times.⁶⁵

From the sound of the rest of the letter, only something as vital to Wise as social justice could keep him in the C.C.A.R. He must have undergone a great struggle within himself in order to overlook the other complaints he had against the Conference for the time being and to accept the responsibility of this challenging assignment on social justice. Certainly his concern with this issue and his dismay at the fact that the C.C.A.R. had taken no stand on it kept him, for a time, within the organization of the C.C.A.R.

Wise was becoming increasingly concerned over the attitude toward Zionism at the College and in the Reform movement in general. He was, however, more concerned with the College in view of the meeting in which he had participated early in 1915. In the spring of 1916, Wise was once again apprised of a situation at the College which he reported to Heller.

I had a letter from one of the students at the H.U.C. lately in which he writes: "Dr. Kohler recently rejected a sermon of mine because it was too Zionistic and too much in favor of the Jewish Congress idea." This shows, though perhaps you do not need to be shown, how little can be done in behalf of the liberation of teachers and students at the College as long as Kohler remains in power. It is a hard and perhaps a cruel thing to fight an old man like Kohler, but I sometimes think it is a crueller thing to suffer his evil influence to go unchecked, more especially seeing that that influence is fortified by Philipson. It is a very serious question and I wonder whether we will not have to make a fight, stiff, and unequivocal, at the next meeting of the Union and rip open the thing as wide as it can be ripped. Of course they would hide themselves behind their plea of two years ago that the affairs of the College do not properly come under the Reviewing Board of the Union.⁶⁶

It is impossible to say just how much of the student's statement was quoted from Kohler and how much the student read into Kohler's remarks to him. In any event, Wise was

more inclined to accept the student's statement as fact than he would have been to accept a rebuttal by Kohler. This was but one more incident in Wise's feud with H.U.C.

Once again Wise attacks his arch enemies Kohler and Philipson, but this time he intends to use the facilities of the Union in order to air his grievances. He apparently had failed through the Conference and so he now will try to turn to the larger Union of American Hebrew Congregations for his goals.

The problem of the Jewish Congress had become a real one in American Israel by the time of the annual meeting of the C.C.A.R. in Wildwood, New Jersey, in June, 1916. The C.C.A.R. had been invited by the American Jewish Committee to participate in the preliminary meetings on a Congress. In 1915, they had decided to send delegates. In 1916, however, a split had occurred between the Committee and those who wanted a Congress. The problem for the C.C.A.R. was which group to support. Since they had already been in touch with the AJCommittee, many of the men wanted to continue to cooperate with them. There were, however, in the C.C.A.R. men who were committed to the Congress movement. Not the least among these were Stephen Wise and Max Heller. They insisted that the C.C.A.R. not limit itself only to the workings of the AJCommittee but also be in a position to negotiate with the Congress Organization.⁶⁷

The resolution of the Committee on Cooperation with

National Organizations, called for continued cooperation mainly through the instrumentalities of the American Jewish Committee. This resolution was passed after some debate on the issue.⁶⁸ Wise, however, was not satisfied and as a result he introduced the following resolution which was adopted:

Resolved, That the Central Conference of American Rabbis designate a committee of seven...for purpose of conference with the American Jewish Committee or the organization to be effected by it and for purpose of conference with the Executive Committee of the Congress Organization, such Committee to report to the Executive Board of the Central Conference of American Rabbis for action.⁶⁹

This was perhaps Wise's first victory in the C.C.A.R. and a small victory it was indeed. The Conference was still committed to work with the American Jewish Committee but was also now able to talk to the Congress Organization. This was a small gain but it did leave the door open for C.C.A.R. participation in the Congress. One year later, in a stormy session in Buffalo, the door was finally closed.

Wise felt not only that the C.C.A.R. and the Hebrew Union College should be less outspoken in their anti-Zionism, but also that the Union of American Hebrew Congregations should make every effort to keep this subject out of its deliberations. In a letter to Heller a week before the convening of the twenty-fifth council of the U.A.H.C. in

Baltimore, Wise complained about the selection of David Philipson as keynote speaker.

...I had half decided not to go to Baltimore, but perhaps I ought to go after all. /He did attend./ I have just written to Louis Grossman and I feel that the time has come for us to stand on our hind legs. There is no reason why Philipson should have been selected to give the keynote address. If he pronounce a violent diatribe against Zionism, I shall insist upon my congregation withdrawing from the Union. I do not see why my congregation should build up the Union in order to strengthen the position of the enemy...⁷⁰

As it turned out, Philipson did speak against Zionism. He traced the development of the concept of Judaism as an international religion. He spoke out against the Jewish nationalists but never used the term Zionism or Zionists.⁷¹ Perhaps Wise did not consider this a "violent diatribe" because he did not withdraw his congregation from the Union and in fact he was present in person at the twenty-sixth council of the U.A.H.C. in Boston in 1919.⁷²

The Central Conference of American Rabbis met in Buffalo, New York in June, 1917. For the first time in many years a resolution was introduced on Zionism. Almost every president of the Conference in his message had attacked Zionism but in 1917 the Committee on the President's message presented a resolution on the subject. The Majority Report on this section of the message was an out and out attack on Zionism.

It affirmed the concept of Judaism as a priest-people and looked "with disfavor upon the new doctrine of political Jewish nationalism...."73

Two Minority Reports were submitted on this resolution. One, offered by Max Heller, held "that there is nothing in the effort to secure a...home for Jews in Palestine which is not in accord with the principles and aims of reform Judaism."74 The other minority report, submitted by a non-Zionist, Louis Kopald, urged that no action be taken but that in the spirit of liberalism the question of Zionism be left up to the individual.75

One of the most violent battles ever held on the floor of the Conference ensued on this matter. The debate lasted all afternoon and became embroiled in a matter of parliamentary moves and countermoves to block any action at all. During the course of the debate Wise made a brilliant plea on behalf of the Zionist members of the C.C.A.R.

In the twenty years' history of the Conference there has never been an attempt made to compel any one to accept Zionism as the lawful and permissible interpretation of liberal or reform Judaism. But year after year we have heard Zionism attacked. You are making reform Judaism proscriptive of us who are Zionists. Perhaps you feel you have the right, perhaps you feel Zionists are a menace to liberalism and Judaism, but I warn you to be mindful of the Conference. If you pass this resolution, no matter how you water it or mitigate it, the moment you say that we who are Zionists are

anti-religionists, that we are enemies of religious Judaism, that moment we must regretfully yet with absolute conviction say, "We can stay no longer within the Conference." I stand here today not as a Zionist, but as a reform rabbi. I would not have you say that a reform teacher or rabbi has forfeited the right to be a teacher of reform Judaism because he has subscribed to the Zionist platform. I appeal not for Zionism, but for the inclusiveness and comprehensiveness of liberal Judaism.

Will liberal Judaism, after a century of distinguished and outstanding history, make the monumental blunder of saying to men who love and serve it, "We bid you go forth?" I ask this not for the sake of Zionism, but that the honor and dignity and noble history of reform Judaism shall not be marred and undone now.⁷⁶

The result of the debate was the passage of a resolution in which neither side really won a clear-cut victory. A substitute resolution was introduced and finally adopted which reaffirmed the concept of Judaism as a priest-people and looked "with disfavor upon any and every un-religious or anti-religious interpretation of Judaism and of Israel's mission in the world."⁷⁷ The resolution further called upon all Jews to work together in a spirit of harmony and concord and called upon them to emphasize their common features rather than their differences.⁷⁸ Clearly no one was satisfied, least of all the Zionist. The resolution, while not explicit, is a fairly clearly implied rejection of the Zionist philosophy. And yet, Wise still did not leave

the Conference.

Wise, who for several years had been toying with the idea of resigning from the C.C.A.R., now seemed to have changed his mind. Perhaps it was a result of the influence of Heller who never seemed to want to get out. While Wise seemed to be content to remain in the Conference, he was not ready to give up the fight. Late in the summer of 1917, after the resolution on "Zionism" was passed, Wise wrote to Heller of his decision to remain in the C.C.A.R.

...I begin to feel as you do that little will be gained by our exit, unless that it were worth while, conducted with dignity, and that there were enough of us to make a really serious impression upon the Conference....I have little respect and an abundance of contempt for the Central Conference; at the same time, perhaps our fight must be made within it. The trouble about our fights is that they are haphazard and there is no coordinated plan. We have no statesmanship to match the political finesse of the other fellows. Hereafter we must go to the meetings of the Conference with a concerted, organized plan and fight for big causes in a big way....79

Apparently at this time there simply were not sufficient men in the Conference who were committed to the Zionist ideal enough to walk out. Wise, however, was now more hopeful. Whereas he had been completely discouraged and ready to quit the Conference only two years before, now he was convinced

that a fight could be made within the C.C.A.R. This is perhaps as a result of an increased number of men who were becoming sympathetic with Zionism. At this point, however, there certainly were not enough even effectively to block the moves of the anti-Zionists, much less to gain control of the Conference. This situation was to change in years to come.

Wise's interest and activities within the C.C.A.R. during the next few years became increasingly less. Perhaps he realized that the time was not yet ripe to stage a full scale war on the leadership of the Conference. From 1917 to 1930 Wise attended only one session of the Conference and that was in 1923 to ask for funds for the support of the rabbinical seminaries in Europe.⁸⁰

While Wise was not actively engaged in work within the Conference, he still remained interested in what happened within the organizations of Reform Judaism. In 1919, Wise feared that the Union would pass an anti-Zionist resolution. He wrote to Heller in that year that if the Union did so, he would fight it of course, but if the resolution which he feared passed he would be forced to withdraw, along with his congregation, from membership in the U.A.H.C.

A resolution was adopted at the twenty-sixth council of the U.A.H.C., at which Wise was present, which was rather strong in its condemnation of Zionism. The resolution, in part, read:

In accordance with the spirit of our whole history we declare that it is imperative for the welfare of Jews everywhere...that Israel dedicate itself not to any aspiration for the revival of a Jewish nationality or the foundation of a Jewish state, but to the faithful and consistent fulfillment of its religious mission in the world. We, therefore, do not seek for Israel any national homeland... Nor do we approve of the demand for specifically Jewish national rights in any land....⁸¹

This resolution is certainly a strong attack on Zionism. It also seems to attack some of the principles of those who were still seeking to establish a Congress Organization, of which Wise was an active and important member. It is difficult to determine just why this resolution did not cause Wise to resign from the Union but apparently it did not, for he attended the next council of the Union in 1921 as a delegate from the Free Synagogue.⁸² Perhaps his resignation was forestalled by his plans to establish a seminary in New York and his desire to enlist the support of the Union.

In 1921, Kaufmann Kohler resigned as president of the Hebrew Union College. While Stephen Wise had no official part in the choosing of a successor, he did express an opinion on the subject to Max Heller. Wise, at the time, was well into the plans for the establishment of a seminary in New York. It is interesting to note what he wrote to Heller with regard to this project.

...I agree with you that the man in the country is Martin Meyer...

I feel he is perhaps the one man that could save the institution, although even he could not save it,--unless it can be thoroughly purged. Even a Meyer in Cincinnati would be unavailing if the Philipson influence were permitted to be as dominant in the future as it has been in the past. Any man taking that place would have to insist upon utmost freedom. I have put it crassly, but I have meant it,--that the only things to be changed at the College are the Faculty, the Board of Governors, the students and the course of studies,--to say nothing of the spirit of the place.

* * * * *

...In view of my own plans with regard to the founding of a Institute for the training of men for the Liberal Ministry, I do not believe I am free to act, although I may say to you that the one thing that might deter me,--I say might, not will,--from founding this Institute would be the assumption of the leadership at Cincinnati by Meyer.⁸³

As always, Wise attacks his arch enemy Philipson. It seems as if Wise blames him for most of what is wrong with the College, which is, according to Wise, everything. Meyer, of course, was not elected to the presidency of the College. Even if he had been, however, it is extremely doubtful that Wise would have abandoned his plans for the Institute. Not only was he too far along to give up at this point, but he still remained strongly opposed to everything the College represented to him. He seemed to see the College merely as an extension of David Philipson, whom Wise could never tolerate

in even the smallest respect. It is interesting, however, to see that Wise was still concerned with H.U.C. even in the midst of forming an institution of his own.

One interesting little note on Wise's attitude towards some of the things the Conference was doing is found in a letter to Heller in 1922. At the annual meeting of the C.C.A.R. in June, 1922, a resolution was passed which put the C.C.A.R. on record as favoring the ordination of women.⁸⁴ In response to this, Wise wrote:

I was greatly interested in the action of the Conference in reference to the ordination of women. I do not see how we can take the position that women are not to be permitted to serve in the Jewish ministry. We shall not have them as students immediately, but we shall make provision for them as early as possible, that is to say, just as soon as we can have a house for them in residence.⁸⁵

Wise is of course, here referring to plans to accept women into the Jewish Institute of Religion. While he may have wanted to ordain women rabbis, he was apparently unsuccessful, as were the authorities of the Hebrew Union College. Today, there are no women rabbis in the United States.

More interesting than this comment, is Wise's complete silence on the attitude of the C.C.A.R. towards Zionism. While no pro-Zionist resolutions had been passed, there was an increasing amount of pressure on the part of Zionists to get a resolution through the Conference. In 1921 and again

in 1922, pro-Zionist resolutions had been introduced on the floor of the Conference.⁸⁶ None had been adopted, but the mere introduction of a pro-Zionist resolution was indeed a victory. Conspicuous by his absence at these sessions was perhaps the leading Zionist rabbi in the country, Stephen Wise. Why he did not attend is difficult to know. Perhaps he once again felt that it would do no good. It is possible that he was just too busy with other duties to come to the Conference. Maybe he felt his presence would do the Zionist cause more harm than good at the C.C.A.R. Surely he was as much resented by his anti-Zionist colleagues as he resented them. In any event, Wise was not present, nor did he seem to care. This attitude is somewhat puzzling and rather difficult to explain.

In 1923, Wise once again showed his contempt for the Conference. He had introduced a plan to aid the struggling seminaries of Europe, which had been in great financial need since the war. This plan was presented to the Conference in June of 1923 and was adopted by them.⁸⁷ While Wise had presented the plan to the Conference and had come to the meeting for the first time in over five years expressly for that purpose, he apparently had little faith in the abilities of the C.C.A.R. to carry the plan out. In a letter to Dr. Ismar Elbogen in the fall of 1923, Wise expressed his misgivings about the success of the plan through the C.C.A.R. He suggested the alternative of appealing directly to the laity

for support.

Please understand that I am not sure this is the best way, but I ask you not to shut out of your mind the possibility of dealing with the problem in this way if the Central Conference fails as practically everything fails that it touches unless it be for the glory of the Conference or the immediate benefit of its members.⁸⁸

This letter expresses the tremendous bitterness and resentment and the utter contempt that Wise always had for his colleagues in the Conference. He looked upon them as a group of egocentric, selfish, mean, petty people who did not see in the rabbinate the high calling which he saw there.

Undoubtedly Wise was not a popular man in the C.C.A.R. He was also undoubtedly aware of this. In fact in a letter to Elbogen on the same subject, Wise explains his reason for not accepting the chairmanship of the committee to raise funds as being because "he does not feel certain that he will command such good will and cooperation on the part of his colleagues as may make possible the maximum results."⁸⁹ In this respect Wise was a realist. He knew that he had antagonized the members of the Conference and he knew that he had practically no direct power in it.

It is interesting to trace the relationship of Wise to the institutions of Reform Judaism from the end of the nineteenth century through the first quarter of the twentieth century. Wise joined the Reform camp as a bright and promising

young rabbi. He quickly achieved some degree of status by becoming a member of the Executive Committee of the Conference. Soon, however, Wise's views on a number of issues, mainly Zionism, cast him in the role of enemy of the Conference and especially of the Hebrew Union College. From the time he returned to New York until the end of the period under consideration, he was almost at constant odds with the powers of the Reform Movement. He fought what was apparently a losing battle, but what eventually turned out to be a great victory.

The watchword of Wise's fight with the institutions of Reform Judaism was "Zionism over all." Frustrating indeed were his battles through the first quarter of this century. Defeated at almost every turn, Wise finally simply lost interest in the official movement. This is evidenced in the fact that he stopped attending the meetings of the C.C.A.R.; he formed his own seminary in competition with the Hebrew Union College; he got into a very large struggle with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations over the establishment of J.I.R. He turned his main interests from the institutions of reform to other areas of concern.

Apparently Wise, at one point had visions of becoming the leader of the Conference and through it the College. These visions were quickly extinguished in the cold light of reality. Wise never had the possibility of becoming the top man in Reform Judaism, mainly because of his Zionism.

After his defeat in the Conference, Wise turned to the Union for his source of power. Here the data is not as complete, but it is obvious that he failed here also, again because of his Zionism. Thwarted at every turn, but still loyal to Zionism, Wise finally went outside the configuration of official Reform and began to duplicate its institutions. He formed his own inter-congregational organization which rallied around his seminary, the Jewish Institute of Religion. The formation of that school and its early years are the subject of the next chapter in this thesis. Here Wise, while officially still in the fold of Reform, became a pioneer and a rebel against the very movement in which he had been defeated for so many years.

CHAPTER III

The Jewish Institute of Religion

A lovely young boy came to me yesterday from Cincinnati, - he is so unhappy at the college. The boy is dejected and almost sullen. Now, Madam, please hold your breath while I tell you something. Why shouldn't I have a school for the training of Jewish ministers?...I will do that-I am resolved. It will be a part of the F.S. /Free Synagogue/ equipment. A log with Mark Hopkins at one end and a boy at the other would make a University, -it was said; I shall do it. Boys could go to Columbia. I could arrange for their instruction. One of the good men like Ehrlich /Arnold Bogumil Ehrlich, 1848-1919, Biblical scholar and lexicographer/ could do that. The practical experience, training and discipline, they could get under me! I am just aflame with the idea, and I will do it, and you'll help me and it will be blessed of God.⁹⁰

This letter was written in 1909. Thirteen years later, in 1922, the Jewish Institute of Religion opened its doors in New York City. The seed which was planted here was to grow and develop until Wise found it impossible to continue without a school of his own. While the dream expressed in this letter had to wait for its fulfillment, it never died. Dr. Abraham Cronbach, who worked with Wise from December, 1915, to October, 1917, reported that during this period Wise frequently mentioned his desire to create a school for the training of rabbis.⁹¹ Apparently this idea was always in Wise's mind.

It is not difficult to see why Wise wanted to form the Jewish Institute of Religion. He had little use for the Hebrew Union College. He considered it to represent the opinions of a small dictatorial group within American Jewish life. He could never acquiesce to its attitudes towards Zionism. His attempts at gaining some measure of control of the College had been all but completely destroyed by 1915 and there is little doubt that he was determined by that time to start a school of his own.⁹²

By the summer of 1920, Wise was fairly certain that he would have his college. Mordecai Kaplan, who was on the staff of the Jewish Theological Seminary, recorded a conversation with Wise on this matter in his diary, under the date of July 27, 1920.

...I went to see Wise and after a few interviews with him we seemed to feel that ultimately he might get the funds for a Rabbinical Training School of which I would be given charge...⁹³

While "ultimately" is a rather indefinite statement, Wise apparently was closer to that time than Kaplan realized. At a meeting at the Free Synagogue House on November 2, 1920, the following discussion took place:

It was generally conceded that the Hebrew Union College had outgrown whatever usefulness it may have originally had, - that it no longer attracted to it the finest of our American youth and those that it did attract, were but poorly trained to fill the pulpits of forward-

looking, progressive American
Congregations.

It seemed to those present that the time had come, - if the Free Synagogue ideal of a vital Jewish faith in America was to be realized, that a new group of men with a different type of training must be developed, - that these men must be college graduates or the equivalent of college graduates before they should be admitted into the professional school; - in other words, to properly train Rabbis, the Rabbinate as a profession must be placed upon the same plain as any other profession such as Medicine or Law. In connection with this, it was suggested and strongly urged, that the old practice of granting subsidies as a bait to prospective Rabbis must be discontinued and that any school for the education of Rabbis which might be organized by the Free Synagogue, no subsidies were to be allowed and a fee should be charged.....It was the consensus of opinion that such a new plan would measurably raise the choice of the Rabbinate as a profession to a new level.

1. To sum up, it was the consensus of opinion of those present that not only was there a need for such Institute as was under consideration, but that there was an urgent and insistent demand for it.
- 2nd; - that there was no organization or group of men prepared or qualified to create such an institution as the Free Synagogue, in view of its past achievements and its ideals for the future.
- 3rd;- that such a school should be organized to be opened in September, 1922, providing a budget of \$30,000 a year for from three to five years is assured,

to which the Synagogue itself would be able to contribute \$10,000.

4th; - that within the next few months an effort would be made to procure pledges from friends of the Free Synagogue and of Dr. Wise as a leader throughout the country, and that if and after the budget of \$30,000 (which should be publicly stated as \$50,000) was assured, then plans for the opening of the school should be made.⁹⁴

The minutes of this meeting point to the real reason Wise decided to establish his own seminary. The opening paragraph spells out fully Wise's opinion of the Hebrew Union College. Exactly what is meant by the statement that the College had "outgrown whatever usefulness it may have originally had," is not clear. Perhaps Wise considered the course of study at the College to be old-fashioned. More likely, Wise was concerned that the men at the College were not instilled with a passion for social justice and even more with a love for Zion. These two key interests of his were apparently lacking at the College. For this reason he saw it as outmoded.

Many of the other statements in this document are aimed either directly or indirectly at the College. The recommendation that only university graduates be admitted to the new school was a direct contradiction of the practice at H.U.C. In Cincinnati men were accepted as soon as they had completed high school and in some cases even before. They received an education at the University of Cincinnati at the same time

as they were being trained at H.U.C. Wise did not approve of this system.

The granting of subsidies might also refer to the Hebrew Union College. It is difficult to determine the fine distinction between subsidies, which this committee opposed, and scholarships, of which the committee approved. Scholarships were offered at H.U.C. and perhaps even subsidies, whatever that might have meant.

Most striking in this document is the concept of the Rabbinate as a profession, on the same level as the professions of Medicine and Law. It was usual at this time to refer to the Rabbinate as a "calling," not as a profession. Perhaps this terminology is not altogether unique in this document, but one gets the impression that it is a somewhat new concept for the time.

The committee was not ignorant as to the facts of raising money. It is interesting in this respect to note that they needed only \$30,000 but that they would ask for \$50,000. There must have been business men on the committee and no evidence is presented as to whose idea this was, but surely Wise, himself, was no amateur when it came to raising funds.

In general the new seminary was to be built upon the personality and popularity of Wise and the Free Synagogue. The funds to support it were to be raised by the person of Wise through his friends "throughout the country." It was

to be a refined, dignified institution which would attract "the finest of our American Jewish youth." With these high hopes the Jewish Institute of Religion was launched.

By the spring of 1921, plans were much farther along for the opening of the new school. In May of that year a communication was presented to the Board of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations from Abram I. Elkus, President of the Free Synagogue, which told the Union of the plans of the Free Synagogue to establish the Institute and which asked for "the approval and cooperation of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations."⁹⁵ The letter was referred to a special committee for action.

Later in that month, Kaplan recorded in his diary another conversation he had with Wise about the Institute. Once again Wise invited Kaplan to become a member of the faculty "in the rabbinical school which he is on the point of establishing."⁹⁶ This indicates that Wise was completely determined in his efforts and that his plans had progressed to the point at which he was beginning to engage men for the faculty.

During the winter of 1921 and the spring of 1922, Wise and his committee from the Free Synagogue entered into negotiations with a committee of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The report of this committee to the Board of the Union is extensive and deals in detail with the negotiations. The first meeting of the two groups was held on

December 21, 1921. At that time the committee of the Union tried to dissuade Wise from his venture. The committee understood its role to be that of dissuader as it reported to the Board.

The purpose of the Committee, as we understood it from what took place at the meeting at which it was appointed, was to endeavor to dissuade Dr. Wise and his committee from carrying out their program, for the reason that the Hebrew Union College is adequately equipped to train all Jewish young men for the ministry...and because a division in the ranks of progressive Jews on this subject would not be furthering the interests of American Judaism....⁸⁷

It is apparent from this, the opening paragraph of the Committee report, that the Union never really intended to cooperate with Wise in the matter of the Institute. The primary purpose of the Committee was to stop Wise in his efforts in this area. This was not possible.

After it became apparent to the Committee that Wise was determined to go ahead with his plans, the negotiations turned to the subject of cooperation between the Union and the Institute. Wise submitted a plan to the Union and insisted that he get an answer from them by April 15, 1922, at which time he planned to "make a tour of the country for the purpose of raising funds...."⁹⁸

The proposal contained six points as follows:

1. The Jewish Institute of Religion...

is to become an activity of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations coordinate with the Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati.

2. The Jewish Institute of Religion shall be an independent and autonomous institution and no arrangement or agreement of any kind shall qualify its independence or limit its autonomy.
3. The Board of Trustees...of the Jewish Institute of Religion... shall...remain a self-perpetuating body; shall include representation of not more than 20% of its number to be appointed or elected by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.
4. There shall be such interchange of Professors, Students and arrangements of student credits as may be deemed desirable by the governing bodies of the Jewish Institute of Religion and the Hebrew Union College, or the faculties thereof if so empowered.
5. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations shall make necessary budgetary provision for the Jewish Institute of Religion for the first three years of this agreement, the budget shall be the minimum sum of \$45,000.00 per annum....
6. The officers of the Institute, including its President, Dr. Wise, shall, upon acceptance of the plan herein proposed, place themselves at the disposal of the officers of the Union for the purpose of securing funds for the maintenance of the Hebrew Union College and the Jewish Institute of Religion, all funds by them secured to be credited to a joint College and Institute fund.⁹⁹

This is, indeed, a remarkable plan. In the first section, the Institute is to become a part of the Union. In the second,

however, it is to maintain its own autonomy. The Union is to supply the funds in return for Wise's services as a money-raiser. It seems as if Wise wants to eat his cake and have it too. He simply wants the funds of the Union without giving up any of the control to the financier. This is extremely interesting in light of his criticism of the College and its relationship to the Union in 1915.¹⁰⁰

Naturally the Union could not accept the proposals of Wise and his committee. The following resolution was adopted which closed the door on any further negotiations and pushed the Institute outside the Union entirely:

The best interest of American Judaism will be conserved not by founding a new institution, but by strengthening the present support of the Hebrew Union College.

Should it become necessary at any time in the future to establish another institution for the training of Rabbis such institution in order to become 'an activity of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, coordinate with the Hebrew Union College' (these are the words of the proposal of the Free Synagogue Committee), could under no circumstances be under the self-perpetuating control of a single congregation, but, as is the Hebrew Union College, would necessarily be controlled by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, composed of more than two hundred congregations representing and speaking for Liberal Judaism in America.¹⁰¹

Wise would have disagreed that the Union was "speaking for Liberal Judaism in America," but he had no choice under

the terms of this resolution but either to abandon his plans or to proceed without the Union. He chose, of course, the latter course of action. By the time of this resolution, April 6, 1922, plans were already too far along to be abandoned, even if Wise had been so inclined, which he definitely was not.

Wise made his trip throughout the country in the spring of 1922. Apparently it was successful, for the Institute opened its doors in September of that year. There were no records available for this thesis on the amount of money raised by Wise on this trip nor on the budget for the first years of operation of the Institute. Apparently, however, Wise received a good deal of support.

Strangely silent on this whole matter was the Board of Governors and administration of the Hebrew Union College. There is little or no mention of the J.I.R. in the minutes of the Board from this period. While there was silence from these quarters, Charles Shohl, President of the Union, was not quite so unconcerned. Soon after the rejection of the proposal for cooperation, Shohl wrote to Rabbi Louis Wolsey, who was a member of the Board of Governors of the College, as follows:

As far as we can see the College is fully able to supply all the rabbis needed for the Reform Ministry. We have about eighty students now and have accommodations for two hundred. We are just on the point of building a dormitory to accommodate one

hundred and twenty-five students.
I am of the opinion that Dr. Wise's
trip through the West, if successful,
is apt to be fraught with danger
for our own institution.¹⁰²

Just what that danger would be, Shohl did not spell out. It is reasonable to assume, however, that the primary danger to the College would be a financial danger. The College, at that time, was not in the best of conditions financially and the men in control of it would obviously look upon the success of Wise's venture as a possible drain on the contributors to the College. It must be emphasized, however, that the sentiment expressed in this letter is not the predominant public sentiment of the men who controlled the College. In general, they either said nothing at all about J.I.R. or else they were quite sure that the new school in New York would not affect them appreciably one way or the other.¹⁰³

Feelings between Wise and his committee from the Free Synagogue, and Charles Shohl, President of the Union, were quite inflamed over this matter. In an article in The Jewish Tribune of April 28, 1922, the split between the Free Synagogue and the Union is reported.

FIGHT OVER DR. WISE'S INSTITUTE
Free Synagogue Committee Assails
Charles Shohl and Demands Re-
traction from Union President

An open break has resulted between the Free Synagogue and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations over the proposed Institute of Religion which Dr. Stephen S. Wise

is organizing and which is scheduled to open next fall under the honorary presidency of Dr. Emil G. Hirsch of Chicago.

The latest step in the split is a lengthy letter addressed to Charles Shohl of Cincinnati, President of the Union, signed by a committee of the Free Synagogue, demanding that Mr. Shohl either "publicly retract the calumnious and false inuendoes in your public statement of April 11 and recite the facts as you have not therein stated them, or that the Free Synagogue be given the opportunity promptly to present the entire matter to the Executive Board of the Union.".....

The report of the Committee of the Union, headed by Daniel D. Hays of New York appointed to confer with the Free Synagogue Committee over the proposed Seminary, was made public before it had been presented to the Executive Board of the Union.... it is this letter of April 11 which the Free Synagogue Committee assails and not the conclusion reached by the Committee not to cooperate with Dr. Wise in his Institute.

Mr. Shohl bitterly attacks Dr. Wise in his covering letter of April 11, declaring that he has frequently found fault with the Hebrew Union College and the Union and that he has criticized the Union because of the address made at its convention last year by Mr. Bernheim. He declared that Dr. Wise insisted upon an answer in 15 days to his proposal for co-operation with the Union or that he would immediately start out upon a tour of the West to raise money for his Seminary in New York.

The Free Synagogue Committee challenges the authority of Mr. Shohl in publishing the report of his committee and supplementing it with a report of his own and adds that "you had no right in common decency to publish the views of

your colleagues and yourself in a form which makes them appear as an official decision of the Union...."104

We have been unsuccessful in our attempts to locate the letter which Shohl wrote on this matter. It is obvious, however, that he was angered by Wise's proposal. The two charges against Wise mentioned in the above article are absolutely true. Wise had been very critical of the Hebrew Union College. Time and again he had attacked the administration and the faculty.¹⁰⁵ Wise's complaint against the Union in the Bernheim matter was not so unusual.

At the meeting of the Twenty-seventh Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, at which Wise was present, in Buffalo in May, 1921, Mr. Isaac W. Bernheim, of Louisville, Ky., delivered an address in which he advocated abolition of the terms 'Jew' and 'Judaism' and substitution of the word 'Israelite.' In addition, he advocated the changing of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday.¹⁰⁶

Apparently many, many people within and without Reform Judaism attacked Bernheim viciously for his address. Wise was among the most vigorous in his protest. He resented the fact that Bernheim had even been allowed to speak and he intimated that the only reason he had been given the floor was because he had donated a sizeable sum of money to the Hebrew Union College for the building of a library.¹⁰⁷

In both cases, what Shohl had said about Wise was true according to the facts. The manner of presentation must have

been what angered Wise and his followers. It is apparent, however, that by this time the breach between Wise and the Union on the matter of a new Seminary had already been opened. For all intents and purposes, the rejection of Wise's proposal for cooperation by the committee of the Union was the end of the dialogue. Wise had made up his mind that Union or no Union he would have his college in the manner in which he wanted it. Under these circumstances there could never have been any agreement between the leaders of J.I.R. and the leaders of the U.A.H.C.

After the breakdown of relations and negotiations between Wise and the Union, Wise explained the situation to Heller. He had written to Heller on the same day that he had presented his plan to the Union and he had outlined the plan to Heller.¹⁰⁸ Apparently Heller did not approve of Wise's plan any more than the Executive Board of the Union did. In answer to an unfound letter of Heller's, Wise wrote to explain his position.

....I am not surprised that you should take the position that you do with respect to the Union and its negotiations with the J.I.R. You speak of your surprise at the J.I.R. placing before the Union a plan which called for so large an appropriation and promised in return so small a measure of control. As for the large appropriation, nothing more was asked than for a term of three years. All had to be asked for that was needed, because the adoption of the plan would not have left me free to ask for a penny out-

side of the appropriation. Moreover, evidently you do not quite understand that had the Union made the appropriation and had the rabbis of America co-operated with us in the right spirit, I could have gotten for the Union toward the support of the College and the Institute two or three times as much as would have been appropriated by the Union for the Institute.

As for the "small measure of control" you must remember, dear Heller, and I speak with utmost frankness, that the one thing we could never permit would be such an infringement of the freedom of the Faculty and the student body alike as you have known to obtain for a number of years at Cincinnati. The Trustees of the Institute must be and will be free, the Faculty must and will be free, and the student body likewise. I do not believe that has been true, nor do you believe that has always been true, with respect to the Faculty and student body of the College.

The big and generous and catholic thing would have been for the Union to have supported two widely different institutions, each of them doing its work as best it could.

But I do not desire to enter into any further arguments respecting the Union and the Institute. We have presented our case and we refuse to enter into further discussion any more than we desire to have any quarrel. We propose to remain friends and to support alike the Union and the College. We shall not compete with the College nor try to rival it. Our work is to be our own under the auspices that will in time make it enormously significant to the well-being of American Israel.

Within the last few days, we have re-

ceived thirty thousand dollars as a beginning for an Endowment Fund for the Institute, and the Synagogue at its Executive meeting the other night voted fifty thousand dollars for three years as its contribution toward the support. How does that compare with what has been done in the past by the rich Temples in Cincinnati and elsewhere on behalf of the College?¹⁰⁹

It is interesting here how Wise turns his answer back to one of his favorite targets of attack, the Hebrew Union College. He was absolutely adamant in his insistence upon complete freedom at his Institute. This freedom he saw in contradistinction to the situation at the Hebrew Union College, which he considered to be a bastion of illiberalism and a stronghold of anti-freedom.

Wise's estimation of his own powers of money-raising are also quite interesting. He claims that he could raise two or three times as much as the Union would give to the Institute. That means that he conceives of himself as capable of raising \$90,000 to \$135,000 for the joint funds of College, Union, and Institute. If this be the case, then one wonders why he wanted to cooperate at all with the Union. From the plan he presented to the Union, it is apparent that all he wants from the Union is money without giving up anything in return. But, if Wise were such a great money-raiser on his own, why bother to ask for funds from the Union? There is no answer to this question. Undoubtedly Wise was a great money-raiser. Whether he could have raised the amount of

money he claimed he could is a matter which the events never allowed to be resolved.

Apparently from this letter, Wise is ready to call a truce to the hostilities which had transpired between him and the Union. He says that he wants "to remain friends and to support alike the Union and the College." His congregation did remain within the Union, and Wise himself never left the C.C.A.R. Just how much support went to the Union and the College is a matter upon which there is no evidence. It seems ridiculous to assume, however, that more support would have gone to the Union and the College than went to the Institute. In any event, Wise seems tired of the warfare.

The statement in this letter that the Institute does not intend to become a rival of the College is somewhat difficult to explain. Perhaps Wise did not consider the Institute to rival the College because of the difference in emphases of the institutions. Whereas the College was anti-Zionist, the Institute would be pro-Zionist. The College was dedicated to the 'Classical' Reform position; the Institute was developed more along the lines of a concept of 'Catholic' Israel. Doubtlessly the Institute was also designed to draw more boys from the New York area, which was somewhat outside the scope of the College. In any event, rivalry did develop, which is only natural when the end product of the two schools is the same, a rabbi..

The last paragraph of this letter is the only clue as

to the financial aspects of the founding of the Institute. According to Wise he was assured of ninety thousand dollars already for the first three years. According to the original plans for the school, the budget would be thirty thousand dollars a year for the first three years.¹¹⁰ If these two facts are correct, then the Institute seemed to be on a pretty sound financial footing. The problem, of course, is to determine how much money he actually had and how much in sure and even unsure pledged. There is, of course, no way of knowing. We may assume, however, that Wise did not actually have the money in hand. It is entirely reasonable to assume that Wise may have been boasting just a little to Heller and that he really did not have all the money he needed. In any event, Wise had enough to open his doors in September of 1922.

While Wise may have had enough money to open his school in September of 1922, it takes more than money to run a rabbinical seminary. In the summer of 1922, Wise attempted to obtain the other important part of a school, a faculty. In the spring of 1922, Wise had made an effort to get Mordecai M. Kaplan to join the faculty.¹¹¹ Wise even offered him the presidency of the institution, but to no avail.¹¹² Kaplan never joined the faculty of J.I.R.

In the summer of 1922, Wise travelled to Europe to try to find men there who would either become permanent members of his faculty, or at least come to lecture at the

Institute for a period of time. His first stop was England where Wise contacted, among others, Israel Abrahams.

Abrahams was at first very reluctant to commit himself to teach at the Institute. He seemed to have been somewhat afraid of what the reaction would be at the College. Wise reported this initial conversation with Abrahams in a memorandum written on his trip.

SSW got in touch with IA immediately after arriving having lunch with him on Tuesday the 20th [June, 1922]. Abrahams seemed almost hostile to the idea of coming to teach in America and answered SSW's jocular remarks as to the time and place of his lectures before the J.I.R. in a most discouraging manner. Later in serious mood he raised objections to his coming, which were based chiefly on the lack of unity and friendly relations between the JIR and HUC, his point being that as he had very good friends in both places and as the HUC had given him an honorary degree he felt that he ought not as he put it, "take sides" in the quarrel. SSW showed IA that coming to teach, a purely academic matter did not imply any decision as to the judicial merits of the case, and stated his belief that before IA came to America there would be established relations of friendliness between the two colleges.

SSW went over very briefly the history of the negotiations between JIR and HUC committee, and IA seemed to see afterwards that he had had no fair presentation of the facts before. He stated that much would depend on the judgement of CGM [Claude G. Montefiore] as to what he should do. But his attitude was distinctly more friendly than it has been at the outset.¹¹³

After some amount of persuasion, Abrahams agreed to come

to the Institute as a visiting lecturer. He also helped Wise choose some other European scholars to contact on the Continent. Wise wrote to his assistant, Sidney Goldstein, of the talks with Abrahams. Among the names mentioned were those of Ismar Elbogen, Professor of History and Biblical Exegesis at the Hochschule fur die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin; Viktor Aptowitzer, rabbinics, and Samuel Krauss, Bible exegesis and Aramaic, both at the Jüdisch-Theologische Lehranstalt in Vienna; Michael Guttman, Professor of Talmud and Halachah at the Jüdisch-Theologisches Seminar in Breslau; Adolf Buchler, Principal of Jews' College in London; and Chaim Tchernowitz, who became a member of the faculty of J.I.R. in 1923.¹¹⁴ Each one of these men was a noted scholar in his field. Wise hoped to draw upon the learning of the European seminaries to educate men for the rabbinate in America.

Wise had a plan to sort of exchange professorships with the four seminaries in Europe. He hoped to get the best men from these schools as visiting lecturers rather than on a permanent basis. Undoubtedly, however, he hoped that once the men came to America he could persuade them to stay. In describing his experiences to someone Wise wrote:

....Of one thing I am persuaded, though I have made no definite commitments..that my coming to Europe ought to be richly productive of good to the J.I.R. for years to come. I am enabled to make my program clear, *Lehrfreiheit*, as the atmosphere

of Jewish study and Jewish loyalty. I have the feeling that before another week I shall have most of the great scholars of the four seminaries enrolled as members of the visiting staff and perhaps some of the best of them as our permanent teachers; they seem to like the plan of trial visits.¹¹⁵

Wise, here as in other places, was overly optimistic about the scholars coming to New York. Abrahams and Elbogen did come as visiting lecturers for a period of less than a year. Tchernowitz became a permanent member of the faculty, but otherwise none of the men came to J.I.R. There were, however, others.

At home Wise was able to attract permanently Dr. Henry Slonimsky, who was an instructor at the Hebrew Union College. He was one of the first permanent members of the J.I.R. faculty and soon became the dean of the Institute.¹¹⁶ Of those who were on the faculty either as visiting lecturers or for short periods of time, most notable were George Foote Moore, Harry A. Wolfson, Charles Albright, Charles Torrey, and others.¹¹⁷

One of the problems which had to be solved early in the history of J.I.R. was exactly what kind of institution it would become. With the wealth of visiting scholars in those early days but the scarcity of any permanent staff, the image of the school had to be worked out. Wise thought that the emphasis should be placed upon teaching rather than research. In a memorandum from him in the summer of 1923, he

explained his position:

Would it not be well to consider at an early meeting the degree to which the J.I.R. is to become a research institution? This is a question of policy and will govern the selection of men for the Faculty as well as a number of other decisions. I have come to believe that we should not stress the research too greatly but that we should do our utmost to build up a strong teaching institution. Dropsy College is a research institution and it looks as though the Jewish Theological Seminary is becoming more and more so. What is needed now in the East is a teaching institution in which men can be trained not primarily for research but for the Jewish ministry and religious education and community service....118

Wise's primary goal was the establishment of a training school for rabbis in New York which would be sympathetic to Zionism and non-dogmatic as far as the organized branches of Judaism in America were concerned. He was forced to go to Europe to seek the staff for that seminary. After he split with the Union, Wise's school became a rival to the Hebrew Union College, but it survived its first rocky years to grow and prosper under Wise's leadership.

In an article in The Reform Advocate, some ten years after the founding of J.I.R. Rabbi Tobias Schanfarber, Rabbi Emeritus of K.A.M. in Chicago, analyzed, in retrospect, one of the factors which he felt led to the establishment of the Institute.

It seems to me that the Jewish Institute of Religion should never have been called into life. It was next to a crime to have done so. If Dr. Stephen S. Wise had been given a place on the Board of Governors of the Hebrew Union College, I doubt very much whether there ever would have been a Jewish Institute of Religion. The men who were responsible for refusing him such recognition are in the ultimate analysis to be charged up with creation of this second institution to train re--form rabbis. Of course no man has the right to dictate to any organization whether he should or should not be placed on the governing board of that organization. Nor should any man out of mere pique go to work and set up a rival institution simply because he was denied the possibility of sitting on the board of trustees of an organization. But the authorities of the Hebrew Union College should have recognized the great ability of Dr. Wise in many ways - his organizing ability, his tremendous influence on the Jewry of America, his capability in the matter of gathering monies - and should have placed him upon the Governing Board of the college.

The fear was entertained that if he were made a member of the Board of Governors of the Hebrew Union College he would be a disturbing element. What of it? Perhaps the Board of Governors needed just such a disturbing force to arouse it to its full duty and to start it out on new lines of creative activity...ll9

This very interesting article, which is presented in a most factual style, states very clearly that Wise wanted to be put on the Board of Governors of the College and that he

actually started the Institute because he was not considered for that group. This is the only statement we have found which makes any reference at all to a situation of this kind.

There is little doubt that Wise wanted to make some changes in the structure and the philosophy of the Hebrew Union College. He argued constantly with the Board and the Administration of H.U.C.¹²⁰ Had he been offered a position on the Board of the College, he almost certainly would have accepted it. To say, however, that he started the J.I.R. only because he could not get on the Board of the College, seems to be some what oversimplifying the case. Certainly this was a factor, but there were other considerations involved.

In his autobiography, Wise discusses in some detail his motives in the founding of J.I.R. Admittedly this section of the book was written many years later and it may contain some elements which were not in Wise's thinking in the early 1920's when J.I.R. was founded. Bearing all these factors in mind, however, this is still a useful source for some of his motives.

It is true that many of the reasons for founding J.I.R. were based on dissatisfaction with the existing institutions, both the Hebrew Union College and the Jewish Theological Seminary. Wise thought that both of them were guilty of "shackling of the minds to Orthodox or Reform dogmas."¹²¹ This he did not want. In light of this he based his institution on his concept of catholic Israel. In explaining this position Wise declared:

....American Jewry had by 1920, when first we dreamed our dream, become by half a century more tolerant and understand and catholic than it had been in the seventies and eighties; Reform Judaism had ceased to be horror to its enemies and fetish to its followers. Orthodoxy and Conservatism had become less intolerant and less sure of their uniquely redemptive power. It had come to be recognized - in any event by us, the founders of the Jewish Institute of Religion - that the old differences and quarrels and even battles over creed were of little moment by the side of the consciousness of the deepening need of Jewishness. For us, Jewishness meant....a sense of oneness with our Jewish brothers in all lands and times, whatever their circumstances, their so-called faith or unfaith....¹²²

In this statement Wise spelled out, at least to his own satisfaction what had happened in Judaism and the reasons for considering J.I.R. to be, as he saw it, non-sectarian, in the sense of owing no formal allegiance to any of the three branches of Judaism. This is strange in the light of Wise's attempt to join forces with the Union. Perhaps he came to this concept only after he found this alliance impossible.

Another factor which Wise points to as important in the founding of J.I.R. was the fact that Hebrew Union College was in Cincinnati and that there was no Reform seminary in New York. While there was nothing wrong with having a college in Cincinnati, Wise believed that it was only a shadow of its former glory as a center of Judaism.

....Cincinnati, site of the oldest of the American Jewish seminaries,

had somehow ceased to be the large and vital Jewish center it had been in the earliest days of its great founder, Isaac M. Wise. With a Jewish population then...of fewer than twenty thousand, it offered its students an inadequate experimental station. New York had uniquely become such a station, with its great Jewish population, made up of representatives of virtually every Jewish community on earth.¹²³

Wise was not the only New Yorker who felt this way about Cincinnati and the location of the Hebrew Union College. Even Isaac M. Wise had never really succeeded in capturing the Jews of the East. The supporters of the College and even of the Union were largely located in the Midwest and the South. Wise's idea to form a college in New York would have met with approval among many of the Jews of that city. Wise was aware of this and he counted upon their support in the negotiations with the Union.¹²⁴ That support apparently never quite materialized.

The most basic reason for the founding of the Jewish Institute of Religion was the basic drive in Wise's life, Zionism. Neither the Hebrew Union College nor the Jewish Theological Seminary were Zionistically oriented. In fact, both of them were more anti-Zionist than pro. Wise discussed this fact in his autobiography.

I knew the Cincinnati Seminary well enough to understand that under its first two presidents, Wise and Kohler, it had shown

a deep-seated intolerance of Zionist advocacy; especially to Kohler, Zionism seemed an intolerable refutation of Reform Judaism. But it never seemed to suggest itself to him that anti-Zionism was a still graver refutation of the fundamental of Judaism. This intolerance came to a head in the early years of the century when Professor Max L. Margolis, my one time teacher at Columbia, and other distinguished scholars, including Judah Leon Magnes, later of Hebrew University fame, found it impossible to remain at Cincinnati.

The attitude of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York was likewise not wholly unimpeachable. President Schechter was not quite an anti-Zionist, but his intimate association with Louis Marshall moved Schechter not so much to intolerance of Zionism as to intolerance of Zionists....125

This seems to be the main point upon which Wise decided to found the Institute. The College was expressly anti-Zionist. The Seminary, while sympathetic to some of the Zionist causes, and while harboring Zionists on its faculty, was not strong enough committed to the idea of political Zionism to suit Wise. There had to be a place for real, strong, political Zionists. The Jewish Institute of Religion was that place.

Wise's concept of catholic Israel, if read very carefully, is really a Zionist point of view. All Israel are brothers, not religiously, not culturally, but politically in that they all need the protection of the homeland in

Palestine. This concept, which becomes important in the publicity of the Institute, is but Zionism in another language, pointing again to this basic bias on Wise's part.

And so the Jewish Institute of Religion was born. Wise was its founder, its Acting President, its most renowned teacher, its primary money-raiser, and its leader. For the first few years at least, Wise was, for all practical purposes, the Jewish Institute of Religion. He had surrounded himself with some fine scholars from Europe, but his permanent staff was, for the most part, a group of young, not too well-known, scholars, led by Wise, who never pretended to be a scholar, and who, in fact, was an expert in the practical rabbinate but rather weak in Jewish sources. According to one of his friends, "His education did not include more than a contact of courtesy with Hebraic or Talmudic tradition."¹²⁶ In any event, the Institute survived, although the situation, financially, was rather serious more than once.¹²⁷ It was completely dominated by Wise¹²⁸ until, realizing, that his days were numbered, the Jewish Institute of Religion merged with the Hebrew Union College in 1947 to become one school under the leadership of Dr. Nelson Glueck.

CHAPTER IV

Stephen S. Wise - Rabbi

There are so many facets to the life of Stephen S. Wise, Rabbi, that one can only begin to look very hastily at some of the things in which he was engaged primarily as the minister of a congregation. This chapter will deal with many topics: politics, social justice, preaching, theology, and not the least of all, the founding of the Free Synagogue. Perhaps the Free Synagogue is the place to begin since it conveyed Wise's underlying philosophy of the Jewish ministry.

In 1900 Wise gave up the Conservative pulpit at the Madison Avenue Synagogue in New York to take the Reform pulpit of Temple Beth Israel in Portland, Oregon. All the sources on this subject indicate that Wise went West by his own free choice and even against the council of family and friends.¹²⁹ One of his friends indicated, years later, that Wise had taken the pulpit in Oregon in order to become known as a Reform rabbi and thus to be in line for the pulpit at Temple Emanu-El in New York.¹³⁰ Whether this be true or not, Wise did win great renown in Portland. As one writer stated it:

From there [Portland] spread the report of a rabbi patterned after the ancient prophets of Israel. Wise became known, not only in Portland, but throughout the country, as an eloquent preacher who used the talents with which he was richly endowed for the

"benefit of his fellow men."¹³¹

This nationwide fame set the stage for one of the most dramatic and one of the most important encounters in Wise's life, and indeed in the history of the American Reform rabbinate.

In 1905, Wise was invited to preach a series of sermons at the Cathedral Synagogue, Temple Emanu-El of New York. The pulpit there was vacant and the Board of Trustees was looking for a successor. Wise comments in his autobiography that the invitation came "out of a clear sky."¹³² Even so Wise felt that he would be called to the pulpit of Temple Emanu-El. Before leaving Oregon, Wise told some of his close friends, "I am going to New York to preach some trial sermons at the Cathedral Synagogue. They will call me to be their rabbi. I somehow feel that I will have to decline their call. If I decline it, as I believe I shall have to do, I will go back to New York from Oregon to found a Free Synagogue."¹³³ Wise reported these events some forty years later in his autobiography. Now in the light of these two statements one can only conclude that either Wise was reading a great deal into what had happened then, or that he must have been a prophet. He could not have known what would happen in New York unless he had some knowledge of the position, in which case the invitation "out of the blue" is hardly fitting. Perhaps Lipsky was right when he commented that Wise went to Oregon to get to Temple Emanu-El.

In any event, Wise returned to New York late in 1905 to preach his sermons at Temple Emanu-El. It is moot whether Wise was ever officially offered the position at Emanu-El or not. Wise said he was; Marshall said he was not. What probably actually happened was that Wise was never officially offered the position because he soon told the Board that he could not consider accepting under the terms by which the position was offered. These terms were fully spelled out in a letter to Wise from Louis Marshall, President of Temple Emanu-El. Marshall, the lawyer, very carefully worded the letter so that no call was ever offered, but the main section of the letter deals with the control of the pulpit by the Congregation. The letter is quite long and has been reprinted in various places but the key phrases follow:

In making this inquiry it was stated to you by the Committee that in view of the traditions of the Congregation, and out of considerations of the church policy which had always prevailed therein, it was considered as a necessary condition, applicable to any incumbent of the office of rabbi in the Congregation, that the pulpit should always be subject to and under the control of the Board of Trustees....

It is fair to say, that this announcement of our congregational law, is not a mere figure of speech, or an empty formula, although in the past it has never led to any friction between our rabbis and our Board of Trustees. It does not mean, that the Board of Trustees will call upon

any incumbent of our pulpit,
to sacrifice or surrender his
principles or convictions.

The converse of the proposition
is equally important - that the
Board of Trustees shall not, and
will not, sacrifice or surrender
the principles or the convictions
which it officially represents.
the logical consequence of a con-
flict of irreconcilable views
between the rabbi and the Board
of Trustees is, that one or the
other must give way. Naturally,
it must be the rabbi. It goes
without saying, therefore, that
at such a juncture, he should
have the privilege of resigning.
His failure to exercise that
option, necessarily implies an
acquiescence by him in the views
of the Board of Trustees.¹³⁴

The letter spelled out quite clearly and in unequivocal
terms just what the relationship of the rabbi was to be to
the Board of Trustees. This relationship Wise could not
accept. According to his account of the incident, he told
the Board at the meeting when this was brought up that "if
that be true, gentlemen, there is nothing more to say."¹³⁵
Wise considered that to be the end of the matter.

For most men the matter would have ended there. For
Wise, however, it had just begun. In some way, which is not
too clear, Wise felt that his "veracity and integrity
[had been] questioned."¹³⁶ Just how, one is not quite sure,
but in any event, the results of the Emanu-El meeting and
the encounter with Marshall produced one of the most important
documents in the life of Wise and perhaps in the history of

American Judaism. The epistle which Wise composed and which he called simply "An Open Letter," is much too long to quote here in its entirety. Parts of it, however, are important for an understanding of how Wise viewed the situation and what he wanted in the free pulpit which he eventually founded in New York.

AN OPEN LETTER

Portland, Oregon
January 5, 1906

To the President and Members of Temple
Emanu-El,
New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

On the first of December, I received a communication from Mr. Louis Marshall, chairman of a committee of the board of trustees of Temple Emanu-El, a copy of which I append.

On December third I addressed to him the following reply:

Mr. Louis Marshall,
Chairman of Committee of Board
of Trustees, Temple Emanu-El

Dear Sir:

If your letter of December first be expressive of the thought of the board of trustees of Temple Emanu-El, I beg to say that no self-respecting minister of religion, in my opinion, could consider a call to a pulpit which, in the language of your communication, shall always be subject to, and under the control of, the board of trustees. I am,

Yours very truly,

Stephen S. Wise

While my position in the matter under question is thus explained in unmistakable terms, I feel that it is become my duty to address this open letter to you on the question of the freedom of the Jewish pulpit.

I write to you because I believe that a question of super-eminent importance has been raised, the question whether the pulpit shall be free or whether the pulpit shall not be free, and, by reason of its loss of freedom, reft of its power for good....The question... "Shall the pulpit be free or shall it not be free?" is of infinitely greater moment than the question of the occupancy of your pulpit by any man whosoever, and it is the deep conviction that this is so that has impelled me, now that any thought of a direct relation between us is definitely set aside, to address you in earnest language as men equally concerned with myself in the well-being and increasing power of our beloved religion...

The Board of Trustees...assert for themselves in the last analysis the custodianship of the spiritual conviction of the congregation. When I asked the members of the committee to define the terms, "subject to, and under the control of, the board of trustees," the same thought was expressed by them in saying that, if some members of the congregation should differ from my views as expressed in the pulpit, and should make representation to that effect to the board of trustees, the latter would expect me either to alter, or to be silent touching, the views to which objection had been raised. Stated more simply, the rabbi, whose whole life is given to the study of and preoccupation with religion and morals, must always hold his view subject to revision or ratification at the hands of the board of trustees, or of any number, howsoever small, of the members of the congregation having sufficiently formidable influence with the board of trustees. In other words, the mere fact

that a certain number, not necessarily a majority, of the members of the congregation or certain members of the board of trustees, might object to his views is to compel retraction, silence or resignation, without the slightest guarantee that reason and right are on the side of the objectors. The mere statement of the case is its own severest condemnation.....

The chief office of the minister, I take it, is not to represent the views of the congregation, but to proclaim the truth as he sees it. How can he serve a congregation as a teacher save as he quickens the minds of his hearers by the vitality and independence of his utterances? But how can a man be vital and independent and helpful, if he be tethered and muzzled? A free pulpit, worthily filled, must command respect and influence; a pulpit that is not free, howsoever filled, is sure to be without potency and honor. A free pulpit will sometimes stumble into error; a pulpit that is not free can never powerfully plead for truth and righteousness. In the pursuit of the duties of his office, the minister may from time to time be under the necessity of giving expression to views at variance with the views of some, or even many, members of the congregation. Far from such difference proving the pulpit to be in the wrong, it may be, and oftentimes is, found to signify that the pulpit has done its duty in calling evil evil and good good, in abhorring the moral wrong of putting light for darkness and darkness for light, and in scorning to limit itself to the utterance of what the prophet has styled "smooth things," lest variance of views arise. Too great a dread there may be of secession on the part of some members of a congregation, for, after all, difference and disquiet, even schism at the worst, are not so much to be feared as

that attitude of the pulpit which never provokes dissent because it is cautious rather than courageous, peace-loving rather than prophetic, time-serving rather than right-serving. The minister is not to be the spokesman of the congregation, not the message-bearer of the congregation, but the bearer of a message to the congregation. What the contents of that message shall be, must be left to the conscience and understanding and loyalty of him in whom a congregation places sufficient confidence to elect him to minister to it....

The minister in Israel does not regard his utterances as infallible. No minister will refuse to correct an opinion - though he will take the utmost pains to achieve correctness in substance and form before speaking - when reasons are advanced to convince him of his error. Nor will he fail to welcome criticism and invite difference of opinion to the end that truth may be subserved.... To declare that in the event of a conflict of irreconcilable views between the minister and the board of trustees, it is the minister who must yield and not the board, is to assert the right not to criticise the pulpit, but to silence its occupant, and, above all, to imply that the board of trustees are always sure to be in the right, or else that the convictions of the board of trustees shall stand, whether right or wrong, and that the minister must acquiesce in these convictions, right or wrong, or else exercise the "option" and "privilege" of resigning.

The Jewish minister, I repeat, does not speak ex cathedra, and his views are not supposed to have a binding force upon the congregation to which he ministers. He is to express his convictions on any subject that comes within the purview of religion and ethics, but

these convictions do not purport to constitute a creed of dogma to which a congregation must in whole or in part subscribe. But the board of trustees asserts the right to define and formulate the views in which the rabbi must acquiesce, or, failing to acquiesce therein, resign.... Not only is the rabbi expected to sign away his present independence, but to mortgage his intellectual and moral liberty for the future.... This is indeed to attempt to rob the pulpit of every vestige of freedom and independence. I am asked to point the way, and my hands are tied; I am asked to go before and my feet are fettered....

If I could bring myself to accept a call to the pulpit of Emanu-El upon such terms, and this is unthinkable, the board of trustees would never find it necessary to call upon me to surrender my convictions, for assent on my part to the stipulation, "the pulpit shall always be subject to, and under the control of, the board of trustees," would involve such a sacrifice of principles as would leave me no convictions worthy of the name to surrender at any subsequent behest of the board of trustees. It is equally meaningless to declare that "in the past this has never led to any friction between our rabbis and our board of trustees." Where a rabbi is reduced to the choice of acquiescence in views, right or wrong, because held by the board of trustees, or of silence, friction is impossible! The absence of friction in the past between the rabbis and the board of trustees of Temple Emanu-El proves that either the pulpit has been circumspect or that it has been so effectually muzzled that even protest was impossible on the part of an occupant who had subscribed to such conditions. A third possibility obtains - that the board of trustees has had the forbearance of the angels with the

occupants of the pulpit insofar as they have not abused the power which they claim as their own. As for the forbearance of angels, which has possibly been theirs, I wish to make it clear that I would not deliver my conscience into the keeping of the angels. My conscience is my own.

Finally, to hold that the subjection of the pulpit to, and its control by, the board of trustees is a written or unwritten law of the congregation is to maintain that the pulpit of Emanu-El never has been free.....

I have sought to do you the justice of helping you to realize the seriousness of the situation which you face. This situation, I believe, you have not planned; into it you have, however, permitted yourselves to drift. That this appeal to the spirit of my people at its highest shall not have been made in vain is my hope, for the sake of your religion, which a free pulpit alone can truly serve.

I am,

Faithfully yours,

Stephen S. Wise¹³⁷

This statement of religious freedom and liberalism, explains itself better than anyone can explain it. Its serious tone, excellent style, and unfailing logic make it almost unanswerable. It stands as a monument in the career of Wise and perhaps in the history of American liberty and freedom of speech.

While Wise claims that the letter was never answered because it is unanswerable, ¹³⁸ a biographer of Marshall,

the center of the controversy in New York, looked upon Marshall's refusal to answer in a different light.

...A vacancy in the Temple's Emanu-El's pulpit had drawn the attention of the trustees to Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, then serving in Portland, Oregon. Young, well-educated, a brilliant speaker and a forceful writer, Wise was convinced of his own prophetic role. But the negotiations broke down over a fundamental disagreement as to the function of the rabbi. Marshall and the trustees insisted that the Temple was the congregation and should in the last instance be controlled by its members. Wise saw himself as a teacher and leader guiding a flock, not being guided by it. Bitterly disappointed by his rejection, Wise brought the controversy into the open by statements for the press, and went on to form his own Free Synagogue.

The incident left its mark upon Marshall. It made him suspicious of rabbinic pretensions to authority; often thereafter he would complain that the clergy were not adequately attentive to spiritual matters and were excessively meddlesome in affairs that did not concern them. The incident also reinforced his instinctive resentment of those who rushed into public proclamations in preference to the quiet, amicable, private adjustment of differences....139

In this rare statement from Marshall's viewpoint one can see some of the reasoning behind his position. He considered the rabbi to be a functionary of the congregation and therefore subject to the control of the congregation. This was a

basic difference in philosophy from that of Wise.

The interesting thing here is that Handlin, without citing evidence, attributes Wise's "Open Letter" to his bitter disappointment at not getting the position. Wise of course, would never admit this, and there is little evidence to support it factually. It is reasonable to assume, however, that Wise was disappointed and perhaps even angry at his rejection in this matter. One still must assume, however, that Wise was aware of the situation before he ever went to New York and that perhaps it was he who raised the issue.

In any event, the issue was raised, and Wise used it to his own great advantage. After his "Open Letter" was made public, this controversy became the center of a discussion in the press. The letter itself was carried, in part, in the New York Times.¹⁴⁰ The next day the account of an interview with Marshall was carried in the same paper. In that interview, Marshall indicated that the reason that Wise had not been called to Emanu-El was that he had indicated an "inclination to discuss politics in the pulpit."¹⁴¹ According to Marshall's statement, Wise himself had brought up the matter for discussion, and the Board had then stated its rules.¹⁴²

On January 11, 1906, a part of the editorial page of the Times was devoted to a discussion of the controversy. This editorial, while not vehement in its position, takes the

side of the Trustees of Emanu-El. It does not think that a clergyman has the right to say what he pleases and points out that he is being sustained in the pulpit by the members of the congregation.¹⁴³ This is but one example of the controversy in the secular press of the time. Few Jewish newspapers failed to comment on the case. A sampling of the Jewish press of the period indicated that the editors were divided on the subject but favored Wise's position in some degree by about two to one.¹⁴⁴

Had Wise returned to Portland and remained in seclusion the rest of his life, his name would doubtlessly still be remembered for this controversy over freedom of the pulpit. Such was not the case, however. Wise finished out the terms of his contract in Portland and late in 1906, he returned to New York to found his Free Synagogue.

Wise, in his autobiography, described some of the difficulties which he encountered in the founding of the Synagogue.

...I had half resolved to found a Free Synagogue even before my series of "trial sermons" before the Temple Emanu-El. The task proved more difficult than I had forseen. I soon found myself facing a rather wide, if not deep-seated, hostility on the part of temple and synagogue groups within the community. The hostility sometimes verged upon the vulgarity of abuse, as in the case of one of the so-called leading rabbis of New York, who described the Free Synagogue in its earliest days as "a hall, with an orator, an audience, and a pitcher of ice water." Orator was meant to be a

contemptuous substitute for preacher. Hall it really was, first in fact the Hudson Theatre by the kindness of its owner, Henry B. Harris, and after that the Universalist Church of our Father on West 81st Street for two years. Thereafter we entered into and for thirty years, 1910-1940, occupied Carnegie Hall....¹⁴⁵

Wise had indeed embarked upon a new kind of adventure. Never before had anyone attempted to establish the kind of institution which he envisioned. It is interesting, once again, that Wise commented that he had "half resolved to found a Free Synagogue even before" he went to New York. Again, he must have had some knowledge of what was to happen there.

In his first sermon, or address, delivered in New York in January of 1907, Wise discussed "What is a Free Synagogue?" In answer to that question Wise said:

What is a Free Synagogue? I answer, A Synagogue! A synagogue - a Jewish society, for I am a Jew, a Jewish teacher. The Free Synagogue is not to be an indirect or circuitous avenue of approach to Unitarianism; it is not to be a society for the gradual conversion of Jewish men or women to any form of Christianity. We mean to be vitally, intensely, unequivocally Jewish. Jews who would not be Jews, will find no place in the Free Synagogue, for we, its founders, wish to be not less Jewish in the highest and noblest sense of the term.¹⁴⁶

Free Synagogue meant, to Wise, not only a free pulpit, but also free insofar as seating was concerned. No pews were to be sold in his synagogue and no one would be turned away

because of inability to pay.¹⁴⁷ This concept, which is rather common today, was a new one for the time of the founding of the Free Synagogue.

It is interesting to note that Wise insisted that the members of his Free Synagogue would remain loyal Jews. Despite this, a few months after its founding, the Free Synagogue instituted the practice of holding its main service on Sunday. Not only this, but the Torah Scroll came to play a minor, or to be more exact, no part in the service of the Free Synagogue. Years later, Wise, regretted this decision but the facts remain that this was the situation.¹⁴⁸ Perhaps one should ask the question, "What did Wise mean by Jewish?" The question will go unanswered for now.

And so the Free Synagogue was established. It spread the fame of Wise far and wide. It became a platform for liberalism and the causes of social justice. It championed the cause of Jewish civil rights all over the world. From its pulpit, Wise thundered forth against the forces of evil and hate and oppression.

It is interesting that Wise considered himself to be a preacher, not an orator. This is apparent from his statement about what the New York rabbi had said about the Free Synagogue.¹⁴⁹ Even later, when Wise had become a well-known and important rabbi he disliked the term orator. Dr. Abraham Cronbach testified to his dislike of that term. Before Cronbach met Wise for the first time, Mrs. Wise cautioned

him that whatever he did, he should not refer to Wise as an orator.¹⁵⁰ And yet, as much as Wise may have disliked the term, he was an orator, and not only an orator, but an orator of the first magnitude.

Perhaps the best description of Wise as a public speaker was written by his long time friend and associate, John Haynes Holmes. In his autobiography, Holmes chose Wise as one of his three favorite orators. Of Wise he said:

...He had a power and sweep of utterance which were unique. His voice was the most remarkable instrument of the kind I ever heard, except only Bryan's. He never trained this voice - his utterance was as natural and spontaneous as the shout of a boy upon the street. It was supported, of course, by a physical equipment which, as in the case of Bryan, gave his voice extraordinary power. How many times I have sat upon a platform watching the pillars of Wise's throat mount and swell into the huge muscles which sustained his speech. Wise stood one test of oratory which proved his greatness. I refer to the fact that he was at his best in the precise measure of his audience. Thus, in addressing a small group of fifty or a hundred people, he was seldom at ease. He had a keen sense of humor, a contagious gayety of spirit, great charm of personality, but a certain unfitness in a room many sizes too small for him. But let the gathering leap to a thousand people, and the speaker catches fire. Five thousand people, and the orator is in his element. Ten thousand people, and the element in question is suddenly consumed in the mounting flame of eloquence. Twenty thousand, and the

speaker has found himself. He moves now with ease, and immeasurable passion. He soars into the vast empyrean, on the beating wings of the spirit. The larger the audience, the more wonderful the range and effectiveness of the speaker's utterance. This was Wise's unique distinction. I know of no other orator who ever met this test, and with such notes of triumph.¹⁵¹

There are many such descriptions of Wise, the powerful, mighty, thundering orator. This quality made him one of the most sought after orators of his day, and some have reported that he was even more popular among Christians than among Jews.¹⁵² Surely his great oratory had no equal among his colleagues.

But Wise was also a man of great compassion and understanding, and this quality was present in his speaking too. Rabbi Hyman J. Schachtel, in a lecture at the Hebrew Union College recently, spoke of this quality in Wise.

...in the crown of his magnificent preachment and his marvelous addresses, which I heard frequently, I value as the most beautiful diadem a funeral message he delivered one day after the death of a mother in childbirth. Now the thundering voice was tender and gentle. Now the crusader for righteousness was the loving friend and the messenger of compassion. I still see him turning to the grief stricken husband saying, "Do you think that you are alone in your grief? Do you believe that your sorrow is only your burden? Oh my dear young friend, all of us are smitten, all of us weep with you, all of us share in your enormous grief." Suddenly, the mourning husband and family discovered the kinship of sorrow,

the community of suffering. They were no longer isolates in a dark world of death, rather they were brothers and sisters in a family of sympathy and devotion, in a world shining with the light of loving kindness and everlasting life....153

Wise, the great speaker, the thundering orator, could be gentle and kind when the time demanded it. He was a man who used the great natural talents of a fine voice to the utmost of his abilities. Much of his fame was built upon his reputation as a speaker.

Even the greatest speaker will ultimately fail, however, unless he has something to say. Surely much of Wise's power was not in the manner he spoke but in what he spoke of. Wise was the great champion of liberalism and social justice. He used his great powers of speech in the cause of right and justice. His encounter with the Board of Temple Emanu-El was but one example of his passion and his obsession to speak for the right. Marshall had accused Wise of indicating that he intended to speak on politics from the pulpit of Emanu-El. Wise denied this charge but he admitted that he did plan to speak on matters of public interest. Commenting on the charge of politics from the pulpit, Wise wrote to his colleague, Max Raisin as follows:

I need not tell you that it is not true that I threatened to preach politics, for I never have preached politics on any pulpit which I have occupied, unless to speak out on civic shame and corruption be to preach politics.154

As Wise says, if to speak out on political corruption and social justice be to preach politics, then surely he was one of the most "political" of all men. There is almost no time in his long career when he was not engaged in some kind of fight for what he considered to be the just and right thing to do.

In Portland Wise got his first taste of civic corruption and how to combat it. Gambling and prostitution were apparently accepted businesses in Portland, even though both were illegal. The business men thought that if these illegal ventures were closed up, it would be bad for the legitimate businesses in the area. Thus they were not only tolerated but actually protected. Wise, along with other clergymen in the area, was instrumental in closing down all these establishments.¹⁵⁵ This was Wise's first venture into civic reform, but far from his last.

Soon after Wise returned to New York, Tammany Hall announced that a dinner was to be held honoring returning exile boss, "King Richard" Croker. The dinner was held and was attended by several New York Supreme Court judges and other public figures of the area. The following night, Wise was the main speaker at a dinner of the Ethical Social League. In the course of his remarks, Wise spoke against the dinner of the previous night and referred to it as "New York's night of shame." This phrase was picked up by the newspapers and played a large part in keeping Croker out of politics in the

city.¹⁵⁶

Wise continued to fight political bossism in New York and elsewhere. His activities in this area were crowned with his efforts in the 1930's which finally culminated in the resignation of Mayor James Walker.¹⁵⁷

Wise's attitude toward government was based upon a strict concept of democracy and fair play. He insisted that government was the right and the business of everybody. He expressed this theme in 1913, in an address delivered on the subject of "Civic Religion." In that address he said:

.....Let us not make a scapegoat of some single political force or organization and thus try to explain away civic inefficiency and civic unrighteousness. Such an organization as Tammany Hall is supported not only by the active suffrage at all times of a very large minority of New York's citizenship, but above all, is made possible by the indifference and lethargy of the multitude who do not care, and, moreover, by the inefficiency and incompetency of many of those who set forth to lead the forces of reform.¹⁵⁸

For Wise, politics was everybody's business.

Just as politics should concern everybody, Wise taught that so should social progress. Wise was in the vanguard of those men who fought for social equality and freedom for the working man. He was always moved by the plight of the worker. In 1915, while on a trip through the coal country of Pennsylvania, Wise described what he saw and how he felt in a letter

to his wife.

...I have seen a coal mine producing about 600,000 tons yearly, the best coal that is. I got a souvenir of the mine which the children will enjoy. But what a sight - the dear little breaker-boys, supposed to be 14 or over who stand and separate the coal from the slate, from seven in the morning until 4:30 in the afternoon. Formerly they began at work at eight and nine years. Instead of making machinery to "pick" or "separate" coal, in order that it be not broken up, they use boys. As I shall say hereafter, they'd rather "break" the boys than the coal.

I am glad to have seen it all, the dirt and the grime, and hardship, for it all moves me to see more clearly that if this be God's world - and it is - our first business is more justly to distribute the burdens of his children and to apportion their reward.¹⁵⁹

Wise was always involved in efforts of labor to organize and in the efforts of laborers to get a decent wage. There are many examples of his work on the side of labor. In 1912 he was called in for the first time as mediator in a textile dispute in Pennsylvania. During that investigation Wise was outraged to learn that young girls were working in the mills for an average wage of two to three dollars - per week.¹⁶⁰ He was also instrumental in persuading President Taft to appoint a committee on industrial relations. The committee was appointed, but it was rather weak and Wise was not at all satisfied.¹⁶¹

In 1916, Wise identified himself with the striking street-car employees of New York. The men struck for higher wages and Wise was sympathetic to their cause. At the beginning of the strike, Wise wrote to his wife as follows:

Between going to bed and rising
the strike has come. I hope the
men may win but fear violence.
I am peculiarly situated - for
I will not use the "L" or subway
during the strike. Am I not right?
I will not be served by strike
breakers.162

Wise's most famous and most difficult battle in behalf of organized labor came in 1919, when employees of the United States Steel Corporation went on strike to win the right to organize. More than half of these employees were still working twelve hours a day. The employers had used the black list and the labor spy to forstall union activities. In view of the conditions, and in view of the methods used by the steel company to preserve the status quo, Wise felt compelled to speak. He saw the battle as a clear ethical decision between the forces of big business, represented by Judge Elbert H. Gary, and labor, represented by Samuel Gompers. During the summer of 1919, Wise definitely identified himself with the side of labor in the dispute. He wrote to Gompers in June and offered his help in support of the American Federation of Labor which was attempting to organize the steel workers.163

On Sunday morning, October 5, 1919, the walls of Carnegie Hall resounded with a stinging attack on Judge Gary

and the leaders of the United States Steel Corporation. In one of Wise's most famous addresses entitled "Who are the Bolshevists at Home and Abroad?" Wise lamented the fact that the steel workers were being denied the opportunity to organize. Wise charged the United States Steel Corporation "with resorting to every manner of coercion and even violence."¹⁶⁴ He insisted upon the right of the workers to organize and he struck hard at Gary and the company.¹⁶⁵

The sermon received much notoriety in the press. Several of Wise's most influential members resigned. A storm of protest broke over his head. Never one to run from a battle, Wise continued his attack on the steel industry in his sermon from the same pulpit the following week. In that address - entitled "How Ought the Pulpit Deal with the Industrial Situation?" -- Wise actually put his contract on the line. Some say that he actually took the contract from his pocket and laid it on the pulpit.¹⁶⁶ This is probably apocryphal but Wise did offer to resign from the pulpit if his members were so inclined.¹⁶⁷ Wise went on to reaffirm his basic principle of freedom of the pulpit, which he had enunciated when he founded the Free Synagogue. He insisted that the "rabbi speaks to his congregation but for himself."¹⁶⁸ For the first time his concept of a free pulpit was being put to the test.

Many of Wise's own members and many of his rabbinic colleagues cried out that Wise was merely a sensationalist. Many of his members resigned. But Wise stood firm and weather-

ed the test. In the end, Wise did submit his resignation which was promptly rejected by his Board. Thus the principle of a free pulpit was reaffirmed and Wise had won another battle in the never ending struggle for social justice.¹⁶⁹

Wise felt keenly the need to advance the cause of woman suffrage. Through the early part of this century he made many trips throughout the country in behalf of this cause. This was connected with his entire outlook on social progress and reform. In a letter to his wife in 1915, he summed up his feelings on social progress.

...Women must vote, saloons must
be closed, all men get a living
wage and more, war end...that's
all I want.¹⁷⁰

Wise, in this short statement, revealed the full extent of his liberalism. Most interesting is his anti-liquor attitude. Today this position is not considered very liberal, but in 1915, all the leaders in the areas of social reform were in favor of prohibition. Wise was no different.

The development of Wise's attitude towards war is indeed interesting. As the above statement indicates, in 1915, Wise was a pacifist. In fact, during that year and the next, Wise toured the country speaking against war. The war was raging in Europe, but the United States had not yet entered the conflict. Wise was in favor of efforts towards disarmament. He was not ready to disarm completely in the United States but he felt that "the United States should make

the greatest effort in the direction of disarmament."¹⁷¹

As ardently anti-war as Wise had been prior to 1917, when America entered the war, Wise became one of the most vocal supporters of the war effort. He could not go to war himself, but he felt that he must do everything in his power to help at home. His first sermon after America's entry into the war was from a pulpit draped with an American flag, which, he said, would remain there "until the morning of the dawn of peace for humanity."¹⁷²

In a letter to his wife in 1917, Wise expressed his need to aid in the war effort. He suggested that perhaps he could spend the summer in behalf of the war.

.....I feel, love, that instead of loafing at a camp, I ought to work with my hands this summer. If I could manage it, I would seek out some serviceable, non-remunerative labor for two months and just work. I can't kill, but I can work and ought, and then women and children will be spared. Jim and I ought to do our share. Do you not agree?¹⁷³

Wise and his son, Jim, did get jobs that summer working in a shipyard to help the war effort. One of the most famous pictures of Wise shows him in ordinary workman's clothes loading a wheelbarrow with his son, Jim.¹⁷⁴

Social Justice, then, seems to have been Wise's main interest as a minister. He was always a passionate leader in the cause of social reform. So much in favor of this type of ministry was he that he developed a social department of his Free Synagogue. Discussing this department,

Leonard Mervis presents the following interesting facts:

....In 1913 forty-five percent of the congregation's budget was spent for social service activities. Until 1914 most of this work was in the medical social service field. In the years following, other departments were opened, including industrial welfare, employment, and loan fund.¹⁷⁵

Certainly it is easy to see where the emphasis lay in Wise's rabbinic career.

Wise was never much of a theologian. There are few statements of a theological nature in his writings, and those that are there are interesting for their approach to the subject of God. In a moment of complete self expression, Wise wrote the following experience to his wife in 1916:

....I went to the Quaker meeting house, oldest in America - the Liberal or Hicksite Quakers. Quaintness and simplicity itself, what beams - and the partitions between the men and women....

No reading, no sermon, no services, no singing - the only word spoken being that of an old lady who arose to thank me. The spirit moved me in truth - and I spoke as you, Carissima, would have liked on the eternal simplicities and verities of religion. There is such a thing as inspiration. God gave it to me yesterday for a little while. If but I could bring myself to trust Him and myself a little more.¹⁷⁶

This is indeed a remarkable statement from the man who was the spiritual leader of so many. And yet this seems to be

typical of Wise's attitude towards God.

Dr. Abraham Cronbach reports another encounter with Wise's theology in his autobiography. Here is Cronbach's statement:

A consecration hour was requested by the confirmation class of the Free Synagogue. We held it on a Saturday morning, confirmation coming the next day. A fervently devout spirit prevailed. Unsuspected holiness and beauty were disclosed by those opened hearts. At the height of the impressiveness, Stephen Wise entered the room. He motioned me not to yield to him, but to continue leading. Attentively he listened to the children. Then, as if he were himself one of the children, America's foremost Jew shared with us his thoughts. He spoke simply and briefly. He said that, between God and him, there was a barrier, a thick wall which he was unable to penetrate. Much as he desired it the experience was not his.¹⁷⁷

Again the expression of one who is unable to trust in God. Not that Wise did not believe in God, this he never said, it was just that he could not experience God. And yet, Wise was a deeply 'religious' man. He loved his fellowman, and herein was his religion. He fought for the triumph of right and truth, and herein was his religion. And above all, he fought for the cause of Zion, again, his religion.

Wise, as a rabbi, was a pulpit rabbi. He used the pulpit as few men have ever used the pulpit. From it he spoke in unmistakable language on everything from social issues to a Jewish view of Jesus. His famous sermon on Jesus caused as much controversy as had some of his sermons on

social issues.¹⁷⁸ But Wise seemed to thrive on controversy. His rabbinate was built upon his dynamic pulpit voice and his passion for social justice. He was a prophet with a great voice to move the people to action, sometimes for his causes, sometimes against, but always did he move the multitudes.

CHAPTER V

ZIONISM

Running underneath all the phases of the life of Stephen Wise, like the steady beat of the base drum in a marching band, was that movement which stirred his hopes and quickened his pulse, and to which he devoted so much of his time, Zionism. It was one of the reasons for his difficulties with his colleagues in the C.C.A.R. and the authorities of the U.A.H.C. and the Hebrew Union College.¹⁷⁹ It was a primary motive for his founding of the Jewish Institute of Religion.¹⁸⁰ And it served to sustain him when he felt he could not reach God.¹⁸¹ It was one of the main themes of his entire life.

Wise's official connections with Zionism began in 1898 when he attended the Second Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland, but Wise himself claims that he was almost always a Zionist. He attributes his Zionism to his father who "was an ardent Zionist."¹⁸² Wise recalls saving his money as a child in order to give it to the emissaries from Palestine who came to collect for the needy of the Holy Land.¹⁸³

Wise was greatly moved by Herzl, whom he met at the Zionist Congress in 1898.. His encounter with the founder of Zionism actually changed his life. Never again could Wise even consider being anything but an ardent Zionist. If there were any doubts before, his encounter with Herzl

erased them completely. Wise tells of this transformation in his autobiography, as follows:

I have already referred to the profound impact of the Congress on my life. I journeyed to Basle merely as a delegate to a conference. I returned home a lifetime servant of the cause in the name and for the sake of which the Congress was assembled. I caught the first glimpse of my people as a people, gathered from many lands, one and undivided, not in creed but in their human faith. This faith was that the tragic dispersal of Israel must end, that the miraculous survival of the Jewish people did not forever guarantee survival in an increasingly hostile world, and that the ancient home of Palestine could and must be rebuilt. We were united by the faith that despite partial dispersion in many parts of the world the survival of the Jewish people and the revival of its creative genius could only come to pass in the land of ancient glory, which needed to be awakened from its centuries-old and enfeebling slumber. This newly gained conviction became and remained the lodestar of my life.¹⁸⁴

Here is the whole of Wise's conviction and dedication to the Zionist ideal. It is impossible to consider fully the part it played in his life. As he himself said, it was the "lodestar" which guided and shaped everything else.

Upon his return from the Congress in 1898, Wise went to work immediately for the Zionist cause. Zionism in America in those days was a small movement with almost no Reform Jews in it. But Wise became a constant propagandist

for the movement. In his personal dealings with his friends and colleagues he almost never failed to put in a good word for Zionism. An example of this approach is seen in a letter he wrote to Max Heller in 1899.

Let me thank you at the outset for your kindness in sending me your fine sermon on Zionism. I wish that all our opponents were as reverent and respectful and as earnest as are you....

I wish to Heaven you could be with us in the Zionist movement, as I know you would like to be, and I some how feel that we yet shall have your valued co-operation and support. I think that failure is impossible, but even if failure were certain, and certain failure in a just and glorious cause is better than the passive indifference and the cowardly lethargy of millions of the World's Jewry today.¹⁸⁵

One of the interesting things about this letter is that apparently Heller was not at this time a Zionist. Later he became one of the leading Zionists, especially among the Reform Rabbis of America. From this letter it would appear that Wise had some part in finally 'converting' Heller to Zionism. There were no other documents of this kind found but one can assume that Wise had at least some part in getting Heller finally to join the ranks of the Zionists, which he did soon after the date of the above letter.

Wise was always interested and active in Zionist affairs.

He was one of the founders of the American Zionist organizations. Soon after his 'conversion,' however, Wise moved to Oregon, somewhat outside the mainstream of Jewish life. He continued to work for Zionism, but his years of greatest activity were still ahead.

Wise's primary interest, always was in the rebuilding of Palestine. Placing himself outside many of the petty disagreements which racked the Zionist ranks both here and in Europe, Wise always kept his goal in mind - the rebirth of the Jewish homeland in Palestine. Even in the days before the Balfour Declaration he worked actively to secure aid for the Holy Land. In 1914 he was involved in securing aid from the American navy for the transportation of produce to Palestine.¹⁸⁶ In that same year Wise became involved in a verbal battle with the millionaire philanthropist Jacob H. Schiff, also over matters in Palestine. It seems as if Wise had persuaded Schiff to join, probably only financially, in some plan to send a commission to investigate conditions in Palestine. After some time, Schiff backed out because he felt that "Palestinian Jewry is for the time being largely controlled by Jewish Nationalists...."¹⁸⁷ To Wise this made no difference. In fact it is probable that Schiff considered Wise himself to be a "nationalist" and Wise probably would not have denied it. In any event, after a series of heated correspondence, the cooperation between the two broke down completely and Schiff withdrew from the plan.¹⁸⁸ What is

interesting to note is that in 1914, Wise had absolutely no qualms about going to non-Zionists for support. The Zionists organizations in this country were small and rather poor. Big money had to come from outside. In 1929, however, Wise left the movement for a time because of the expansion of the Jewish Agency to include the non-Zionists.¹⁸⁹ The complaint in the 20's of course, was that non-Zionists were welcome to contribute but should have no say in what happened. Perhaps this is what Wise had in mind in 1914, also, when he tried, unsuccessfully to get money from Schiff. The outbreak of the War ended the plans for the Commission, in any event.¹⁹⁰

In 1912, Louis D. Brandeis identified himself with the Zionist movement. Here was a man with whom Wise could identify. If Wise was guilty of making gods of men, then the two men who made him sin in this way were Theodor Herzl and Louis D. Brandeis. Next to Herzl, Brandeis was for Wise the greatest Jew. He saw Brandeis as the natural successor to Herzl. Brandeis assumed the leadership of the American Zionists in 1914 and Wise was more than willing to follow him.

Wise, during the Brandeis Epoch, was one of the inner circle of Zionism in America. In 1915 he indicated this, unknowingly perhaps, to his wife when he wrote:

I went home and found a
telephone message from
Brandeis, begging me to
come to him at Nathan
Straus's office where he,
Schmarayahu Levin,

Robert Szold, Judah Magnes and Louis Lipsky were discussing Zionist affairs. He telephoned and begged me again to come to him. He is a big high-souled man- the biggest and finest Jew we have got in the land...¹⁹¹

In that room sat almost all the leaders of Zionism in America. And Brandeis himself had asked Wise to come.

It is interesting to note that Wise considered Brandeis to be the "finest Jew we have got in the land." Even years later he wrote of Brandeis that "since the days of Herzl, Brandeis was indisputably and incomparably our greatest Jew."¹⁹² Now Wise knew many, many Jews. He knew rabbis and lay leaders, religionist and secularists, Zionists and non-Zionists. He must have had contacts with almost every important Jew, and many not-so-important Jews of his day. What is significant, however, is that to Wise, Herzl and Brandeis stood out as the greatest Jews, not the greatest Zionists, nor the greatest humanitarians, but the greatest Jews. From this it seems clear that to Wise, Zionism was his religion and he was a good Jew who was a good Zionist. There seems to be no other possible interpretation for this attitude.

Accepting the fact that Wise's religion was Zionism, many of the actions which have been reported in this thesis become clearer. Of course he would oppose the institutions of Reform Judaism; they were anti-Zionist, which meant anti-

religious. This may also be a partial answer to Wise's inability to trust in God. His Zionism replaced theism.

To indicate how far Wise's devotion and almost subjugation to Zionism extended is not difficult. It could be done in a variety of ways, but skipping over many of the details of his Zionist activities, one episode stands out as proof of his complete devotion to Zion.

At the end of World War I, American Zionists and relief agencies wanted to resume their activities in Palestine. This was perfectly satisfactory to the victorious Allied powers but the problem was, who was to service this area. Of course the Zionists wanted to be there first, but the relief organizations also had a stake in Palestine.

On January 4, 1918, the following letter was transmitted from the State Department to the office of the Joint Distribution Committee in Washington:

The Department is informed by the British Government that it is proposed to send Dr. Wise at the head of a small committee to organize relief measures in Palestine, occupied by British forces....¹⁹³

This letter was sent to New York, as a matter of routine, to the head of the Joint Distribution Committee, Felix M. Warburg. Warburg was not sure whether the Wise mentioned was Stephen Wise or not, but he felt that, in any event, the JDC should have a representative on the committee.¹⁹⁴ Without delay, on January 8, 1918, a letter was sent from the JDC

office in New York to the Secretary of State requesting that the JDC have permission to appoint one or more representatives to the proposed committee.¹⁹⁵

By the middle of February the situation had become more involved. It seems that the committee was to be sent to Palestine and Syria under the auspices of the American Red Cross. Apparently this is the same committee referred to in the initial communication from the State Department. Even for a commission of this kind State Department clearance would have been necessary: thus, the entry of the government into the matter.

The only real information that the JDC had was in the form of well founded rumors. In order to clear up the situation further, Louis Marshall wrote to the director of the Red Cross as follows:

Mr. Felix M. Warburg has just informed me that he has heard a rumor to the effect that the American Red Cross is considering the sending of a unit to Palestine and Syria. He does not know whether it is to be a hospital unit or a relief unit or both.

In view of the fact that...the Joint Distribution Committee... has been very active in relief work in Palestine, it has occurred to us that, in the event that the reports that we have heard are authentic, it might be desirable because of our familiarity with conditions in Palestine and the organization that we have there, if some one representing our body

were requested to become a part of the unit in order that effective cooperation may be brought about.¹⁹⁶

From here on the episode gets more and more complicated. Perhaps a brief chronology will serve to clear up some matters.¹⁹⁷ On February 14, 1918, a meeting was held of a sub-committee of the JDC. At that time Wise was called to ask if he had been invited to serve on the commission. Wise affirmed that he had been asked but stated that he thought he would have to decline. Wise did not attend the meeting.

At this point the name of Dr. Israel Friedlaender was brought up as a possible representative of the JDC. Friedlaender, a Polish-born, German-educated Jew, was the professor of Biblical Literature and Exegesis at the Jewish Theological Seminary. He **was** active in the affairs of the community serving on the Boards of Trustees of both the Educational Alliance and the New York Kehillah. He was also a member of the American Jewish Committee and was involved in the dispute between the Committee and the American Jewish Congress. Friedlaender was associated with Zionism in several ways. He was active in the Intercollegiate Zionist Association and had served on the National Executive Committee of the Federation of American Zionists. At this time he was a member of the Provisional Committee for Zionist Affairs of which Wise was the head.¹⁹⁸ Apparently Friedlaender was called on the telephone without delay and asked if he would be able to serve as a member of the proposed Commission. He

was enthusiastic in his willingness to serve.

On February 26th, Friedlaender received a call asking him to come to Washington the following day to meet with Mr. Cornelius N. Bliss, Chairman of the War Council of the Red Cross. The following day, Friedlaender was confirmed as the Jewish representative on the Red Cross Commission to Syria and Palestine.

On March 6, 1918, a report was circulated by a reporter for the New York Sun, that Friedlaender's appointment had created a rift in the Zionist ranks because of his pro-Germanism. The reporter attempted to secure comment on his information from Friedlaender, Wise, Warburg, and Richard Gottheil. Gottheil had issued a statement that intimated that Friedlaender was pro-German. Warburg had denied Gottheil's statement, as had Friedlaender. Wise had made no comment.

On March 7th, Friedlaender was informed, as was Warburg, that his appointment was being held up because of the charge of pro-Germanism. Late that day, Wise broke his silence and released a statement to the press in which he divorced the Provisional Zionist Committee from any support of Friedlaender. This was followed by a similar, but stronger statement by Wise two days later. In the meantime, Louis Marshall, Wise's old enemy, had entered the conflict on the side of Friedlaender.

As a result of all the controversy, Friedlaender was not

appointed to the Commission. Several years later he was murdered by bandits while on a similar mission in the Ukraine.

Perhaps no one will ever know what really happened in this dispute. Wise and Friedlaender both made full statements to the Provisional Zionist Committee in April, 1918, but Warburg, the other principal in the episode, never made a full statement. To begin with, Wise, as head of the Provisional Zionist Committee and as a worker in Armenian Relief, was the first one contacted on the matter. He understood that while it was impossible for him to go himself that he, or his committee, would have the opportunity to choose his replacement.¹⁹⁹

In the meantime, however, the JDC, having heard rumors of this Commission, requested permission to appoint a representative. Apparently this permission was granted the JDC and the February 14th meeting was called for the purpose of making some arrangements. On that date, according to Wise, and all evidence supports his claim, a committee was appointed by the JDC to look into the matter. Apparently, however, on that same day, a member of the committee, perhaps Warburg, led Friedlaender to believe that he had already been appointed.²⁰⁰

On February 25th, the committee met. It consisted of Wise, Warburg, Dr. Lee K. Frankel, and Judge Julian Mack, whom Wise had invited. At that meeting it was decided, according to Wise's account, that Mr. Morris D. Waldman, a

social worker from Boston, would be the first choice of the JDC, and that Dr. Friedlaender was to be his assistant and translator. According to Wise, however, Waldman was always considered to be the first choice.²⁰¹

Wise urged the JDC not to appoint Friedlaender because of his pro-Germanism. He felt that this had been spread abroad and that it was bound to lead to Friedlaender's rejection by the Red Cross. Apparently Warburg was insistent upon Friedlaender but was satisfied to have him second to Waldman. As the meeting adjourned, Frankel was to call Waldman and Warburg was to call Friedlaender, something which he had apparently done some days before.²⁰²

On February 27, Wise learned that Friedlaender had already gone to Washington to be commissioned. Wise was upset, to say the least, and he called Warburg to see what had happened. Warburg said that he had called Waldman but that the latter had replied that he would have to consult Boston first. Wise then reported his impression of this conversation with Warburg.

....The impression made upon me by the telephone message was that there had been a vague, indefinite telephone conversation with Mr. Waldman and that Mr. Warburg had not earnestly, if at all, urged him to accept the post....²⁰³

Undoubtedly Wise thought that Warburg had "pulled a fast one" on him and had not made an effort to carry out the wishes of the committee. In any event, Friedlaender was

appointed and then later rejected as described above.

This episode is extremely complex and difficult to analyze. On the surface it appears to be simply a disagreement on a man's degree of loyalty to his adopted country. Wise considered Friedlaender to be disloyal because of his pro-Germanism before the War, and Warburg did not think this way. This is the surface issue.

What were the real motives will probably never be known. Many, however, have suggested that the reason Wise opposed Friedlaender was because of Zionism. Even during the midst of the struggle, Warburg, Marshall, and Adler looked upon it as the work of the Zionists.²⁰⁴ The difficulty with this suggestion is that Friedlaender, too, was a Zionist.

The problem may be solved by trying to determine where Friedlaender stood in the Zionist picture. Friedlaender was a member of the faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary. This group, along with men like Judah L. Magnes, who opposed Wise on this issue, had removed themselves from the ranks of political Zionism. They had become spiritual Zionists, after the fashion of Ahad Ha-am. This Wise could never accept. Louis Lipsky, in his profile of Wise the Zionist, points out Wise's reaction to this movement.

....He regarded the spiritual Zionism of Ahad Ha-am as a form of opiate for the Jewish masses, which would keep them in the bondage of a culture that never would lead to political rebirth. The fact that members of the

faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary were the new leaders of American Zionism and that Judah L. Magnes was their spokesman did not help to reconcile Wise with what he regarded as new trends in Zionism....²⁰⁶

The period referred to here by Lipsky was just before Brandeis took control of the organization. By 1918, however, the Brandeis-Mack group, of which Wise was a part, had assumed the leadership of American Zionism. Wise was in a position to show the spiritual Zionists what he thought of them. This is just what he did with Friedlaender.

There is little doubt that Wise was one of the key men behind the release of statements about Friedlaender's pro-Germanism. He had brought it up to the JDC, and the Red Cross had gotten it from a "highly-placed source."²⁰⁷ This highly placed source could have been Wise himself, but more likely it was a member of the staff or the executive of the Provisional Zionist Committee, of which Wise was the chairman. In any event, whatever the source was, the campaign against Friedlaender was successful.

This little episode points out how much Wise was dedicated to the ideals of political Zionism. So much was he committed to this course that he would resort, either directly or indirectly to the almost smear tactics of this affair to win his point. The real tragedy was that Friedlaender never went to Palestine, but later in place of this mission, was sent to the Ukraine where he was murdered.

Most writers on the subject, and there are practically none, think that Wise was wrong on this issue.²⁰⁸ Wrong or right, Wise stood up for his principles and stood to preserve his views of Zionism.

Wise had many struggles in support of his political Zionist beliefs. In 1921 he was a member of the Brandeis-Mack group that walked out of the Convention of the Zionist Organization of America over a financial and political matter.²⁰⁹ He fought again with the JDC in 1925 over the Russian Colonization matter.²¹⁰ But through it all, Wise remained an ardent and loyal Zionist.

One of the bitterest struggles and one of the greatest victories came to Wise the Zionist when the American Jewish Congress was finally established in 1918. This organization represented to Wise the victory of democracy and Zionism over the older system of autocracy and anti-Zionism. He devoted much of his energies in his later years to the work of the American and World Jewish Congresses.²¹¹

Louis Lipsky, in his profile of Wise, summed up Wise's dedication to Zionism and his complete infatuation with the cause.

...the central theme of his varied interests, the most sacred of all causes which he served was the Zionist Movement, in which was included not only the ideal of a Jewish State in Palestine but the rebirth of the Jewish nation. In Zionism was included, so far as he was concerned, Jewish rights everywhere, Jewish democracy,

Jewish survival. It was the American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress; it was the structure of the Jewish community it was Jewish education; it was resistance and protest all along the line against Jewish inequality; it was Jewish pride and dignity.²¹²

Surely, Wise was one of the greatest American Zionists.

CHAPTER VI
An Evaluation

It is difficult at best to evaluate the life of an individual within the context of total society. Especially true is this of a man like Stephen Wise, whose seventy-five years spanned one of the most dynamic periods in American history. Not only is this the case with Wise, but also the wide range of his interests makes any attempt at systematic, thorough evaluation extremely difficult.

In an attempt to find a way out of this difficulty, we thought that perhaps we could look at one statement about Wise, analyze it, apply it, and use it as a basis for a more complete evaluation. It is our contention that the "Judaism" of Stephen Wise in 1925, became the "normative" Reform Judaism of the 1950's.

In 1925, American Reform Judaism was still officially operating under the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885. While some changes in emphasis had taken place, most Reformers still held to this statement of principles, dating from the end of the nineteenth century. Two key statements in this platform concerned Palestine and the Jewish people. The platform did not anticipate a return to Palestine, nor did it view Jews as any more than a religious group. These two views alone, would have been enough to anger Wise. But the platform was not strong enough for him in its statement on social justice and spoke only slightly about aspirations for peace.

This platform still represented the thinking of the leaders of American Reform Judaism in 1925. Strongly influenced by the German reformers, who had played a large part in the drafting of this document, the general tone of American reform was anti-Zionist, assimilationist, and politically somewhat conservative. Control of the Jewish community lay in the hands of the "patrician" leaders like Jacob Schiff, Felix Warburg, and Louis Marshall.

A change was taking place in the American Jewish community, however. Beginning with the last few years of the nineteenth century, and reaching a climax in the first twenty years of this century, a new wave of immigration was flooding these shores. The East European Jew, with his more oriental customs, his orthodox religion, and his love for Zion, was rapidly filling up the slums of New York. The older German Jewish community was challenged to cope with the problems of its less fortunate brothers.

For the most part the established community attempted to help the new immigrants fit into the pattern the German Jews had already established in America. By far the greatest attempt on the part of the German Jews was to assimilate the Eastern European Jew quickly into the fibre of American life. One of the primary means was education. Such organizations as the Educational Alliance were established with the goal of Americanizing the new immigrants.

The important thing, however, is that the two communities

remained separate. There were few attempts by the Germans actually to enter into the community life of the Eastern Europeans, nor did they attempt to incorporate the leaders of the new groups into their society. The older Americans were willing to set up organizations and to lend financial support, but here the interaction all but stopped.

Nowhere was this more true than in the area of Zionism. It is untrue to say that all German Jews were anti-Zionists. Men like Schiff and Marshall donated large sums to the settlements in Palestine. For the most part, however, they did not choose to become active members of the Zionist organizations. There were, however, a few notable exceptions. Among these exceptions were Richard Gottheil, Judah L. Magnes, later Julian Mack and Louis D. Brandeis, and, of course, Stephen S. Wise.

It is difficult to determine just why Wise came to Zionism. He was a member of that class of "German" Jews who were generally opposed to the movement. For all practical purposes he was a 'native' American, having been brought to New York before his second birthday. Early in his life, however, Wise became associated with that small group of American Jews, who, contrary to the pressures of their society, identified themselves with Zionism.

There is no question of Wise's absolute dedication to the Zionist cause. But it is highly probable that he came to this dedication because he needed a cause through which

to express himself. At the turn of the century, Zionism in America was in desperate need of a militant spokesman. The young, dynamic, energetic Wise became that spokesman.

Wise's belief in the Zionist ideal brought him into direct conflict with many of the people among whom he would normally be expected to work. While there was in Zionism a nucleus of German leaders, with whom Wise associated, it soon became apparent that if Zionism was to succeed in America, it would have to rely upon the Eastern European Jews for the bulk of its support. This factor, perhaps more than any other, accounts for Wise's rejection by the older Jews of the American Jewish Committee group, who were primarily German in origin, and for his overwhelming acceptance by the new masses of Eastern European Jews who were gaining in stature and importance.

Another important factor in Wise's life was his passion for social justice and liberal causes. This was the side of his life which was most apparent to the general American public. Again it is difficult to analyze the reasons for Wise's espousal of liberalism. There was, at the beginning of the twentieth century, a large segment of the educated population who came to see liberalism as the answer to the problems of the day. Wise was no doubt influenced by these people. Also a factor in this posture was Wise's familiarity with the theology of the German Reformers. He studied for a time in Germany where he must have developed some of his

liberal attitudes. In this country, men like Emil G. Hirsch had a great influence upon him. It is impossible, also, to overlook the liberalism of many of his Zionist colleagues. Many of them had been influenced by the socialism of Eastern Europe, and this liberal attitude must have had an effect on Wise.

Wise learned well from his liberal masters, from whatever quarter they may have come. He became a leader in the battles for social justice and equality and fought to the end of his life for dignity for all men.

In comparing Wise to the standard Reform Judaism of 1925 we can see just how much at odds he was with the movement of which he was a part. The crucial battles almost always took place over the issue of Zionism and the peoplehood of the Jews. But Wise was also impatient with the lukewarm approach of most American Jews to the great social issues of the day, and especially with their silence on the issues of world peace. While he did not remain a pacifist, he did feel strongly the cruelty and injustice of war.

But the Judaism of 1925 was not the Judaism of 1950. In 1937 a new platform was adopted by Reform Judaism. Its most significant departures from the older document were in exactly the areas of Wise's disagreement. While Zionism was not officially promoted, the Columbus Platform of 1937 does urge Reform Jews to aid in the rebuilding of Palestine. While a strong nationalism is not advocated, there is an attempt

to see Judaism as more than a religion. Social Justice, as well as a concern for world peace, becomes one of the main points of the Columbus principles.

The things which Wise advocated in 1925, and for which he was made somewhat of an outcast in the ranks of Reform, had begun, by 1937, to become a part of normative Reform Judaism. Zionism was no longer the great threat to Judaism. Social justice became the consuming passion of a large part of the movement. The final bit of icing on the cake came in the late forties when Dr. Nelson Glueck became president of the Hebrew Union College and the Jewish Institute of Religion. For the first time a professing, active Zionist of East European ancestry had assumed the presidency of the Reform seminaries in America. Near the end of his life Wise finally saw most of the things he had so long advocated come to pass.

It is impossible at this time, to discuss accurately the part that Wise played in this change. Did Wise have a major role in the shaping of today's Judaism, or would it have happened anyway? Was Wise a man of great vision and foresight who was a little ahead of his time, or was he the practical politician who used his influence and power to achieve his own goals? The probable answer is a combination of both extremes. Certainly Wise was important in the development of American Judaism. But there were many other factors which might have finally achieved the same results.

Undoubtedly Wise was a man with a keen insight into the directions his society was taking, but he had the mind of a politician as well.

Certainly Stephen S. Wise is assured of a place in the history of American Judaism. He was a leader of his people; a spokesman for right. He was a brave defender of the weak and a champion of the cause of justice. But how large or how small a place he deserves one cannot tell. Perhaps he will emerge as one of the most important men ever to come upon the Jewish scene, or perhaps he will be remembered only as the rabbi with a booming voice. That decision we must leave to the ages.

Footnotes

- ¹Stephen S. Wise, The Challenging Years, p. xi.
- ²Ibid., p. xii.
- ³Ibid.
- ⁴Ibid.
- ⁵Ibid., p. xiii.
- ⁶Ibid.
- ⁷Ibid.
- ⁸Ibid., p. 23.
- ⁹Ibid., p. xiv.
- ¹⁰Ibid., pp. 7-8.
- ¹¹Ibid., p. 9.
- ¹²Ibid., p. 8.
- ¹³Quoted by Alfred Werner, "The Career of Dr. Stephen S. Wise, A Chronology of Significant Events and Activities," Congress Weekly, May 30, 1949, p. 2.
- ¹⁴Ibid.
- ¹⁵Justine Wise Polier and James Waterman Wise, eds., The Personal Letters of Stephen Wise, pp. 277-78.
- ¹⁶Central Conference of American Rabbis, Yearbook, VII, 177.
- ¹⁷Ibid., IV, 150.
- ¹⁸Ibid., VI, 56.
- ¹⁹Ibid., XI, 43.

- ²⁰Ibid., XI, 95-96.
- ²¹Ibid., XLII, 9.
- ²²Ibid., XI, 7.
- ²³Ibid., p. 76.
- ²⁴Ibid., p. 81.
- ²⁵Ibid., p. 82.
- ²⁶Circular letter from Maurice H. Harris, Charles Fleischer, and Stephen S. Wise to the members of the C.C.A.R., n.d. (1909?), Max Heller Collection, American Jewish Archives. (MHC-AJA).
- ²⁷M. Heller, New Orleans, La. (N.O., La.) to S.S. Wise, New York, New York (N.Y., N. Y.), Nov. 10, 1909, MHC-AJA.
- ²⁸S.S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La., Nov. 13, 1909, MHC-AJA.
- ²⁹Ibid.
- ³⁰Ibid.
- ³¹Max Heller in American Israelite, LVI, 22, Nov. 25, 1909.
- ³²Solomon Foster, "The Workingman and the Synagogue," CCAR, op. cit., XIX, 432-94.
- ³³CCAR, op. cit., XIX, 165-66..
- ³⁴Ibid., unnumbered pages in front of volume.
- ³⁵Polier and Wise, op. cit., pp. 140-41.
- ³⁶CCAR, op. cit., XXIV, 83.
- ³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., p. 84.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 161.

⁴¹S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La., Dec. 25, 1914, MHC-AJA.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³See C.C.A.R. Yearbook, Index to Volumes I-XL, p. 81. For resolutions of Zionism see p. 95 and pp. 96-175 for texts of all CCAR resolutions.

⁴⁴S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La., Jan. 15, 1915, MHC-AJA.

⁴⁵S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La., Feb. 3, 1915, MHC-AJA.

⁴⁶S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La., Dec. 1, 1914, MHC-AJA.

⁴⁷S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La., Dec. 25, 1914, MHC-AJA.

⁴⁸S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La., Dec. 28, 1914, MHC-AJA.

⁴⁹Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Minutes of the Board of Governors, 1875-1955, Jan. 26, 1915, Microfilm, AJA.

⁵⁰S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La., Feb. 3, 1915, MHC-AJA.

⁵¹Compare "Abstracts of the Annual Reports from Congregations" for 1914 with same for 1915 in Proceedings of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, vol. VIII, pages unnumbered.

⁵²See below, Chapter III.

⁵³H.U.C.-J.I.R., op. cit., Feb. 23, 1915.

- ⁵⁴S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La.,
Mar. 17, 1915, MHC-AJA.
- ⁵⁵H.U.C.-J.I.R., op. cit., March 23, 1915.
- ⁵⁶S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La.,
Mar. 18, 1915, MHC-AJA.
- ⁵⁷S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La.,
Apr. 7, 1915, MHC-AJA.
- ⁵⁸Polier and Wise, op. cit., pp. 140-41.
- ⁵⁹CCAR, op. cit., XXV, 21, 75.
- ⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 287, 427.
- ⁶¹S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La.,
Aug. 3, 1915, MHC-AJA.
- ⁶²S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La.,
Aug. 29, 1915, MHC-AJA.
- ⁶³S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La.,
Nov. 15, 1915, MHC-AJA.
- ⁶⁴CCAR, op. cit., XXV, 96-103.
- ⁶⁵S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La.,
Nov. 15, 1915, MHC-AJA.
- ⁶⁶S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La.,
Apr. 3, 1916, MHC-AJA.
- ⁶⁷CCAR, op. cit., XXVI, 86-95, 96-97.
- ⁶⁸Ibid.
- ⁶⁹Ibid.
- ⁷⁰S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La.,
Jan. 8, 1917, MHC-AJA.
- ⁷¹Proceedings of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations
(UAHC), IX, 8092-101.

⁷²Ibid., p. 8485.

⁷³CCAR, op. cit., XXVII, 132.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 133.

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 139-40. (For the full text of this debate as well as the text of the rest of the Conference and the text of all Conferences from 1915-1939, see Central Conference of American Rabbis, Minutes, AJA.)

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 141.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La.,
Aug. 23, 1917, MHC-AJA.

⁸⁰CCAR, op. cit., XXXIII, 80, 85.

⁸¹UAHC, op. cit., IX, 8520.

⁸²Ibid., X, 8847.

⁸³S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La.,
Apr. 3, 1921, MHC-AJA.

⁸⁴CCAR, op. cit., XXXII, 51.

⁸⁵S. Wise, Vienna, Austria, to M. Heller, Edgewater, N.J.,
Aug. 8, 1922, MHC-AJA.

⁸⁶CCAR, op. cit., Index to Volumes I-XL, pp. 136-37, 139.

⁸⁷CCAR, op. cit., XXXIII, 80-85.

⁸⁸S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to Ismar Elbogen, Berlin, Germany,
Sept. 6, 1923, Stephen Wise Collection, AJA (SWC-AJA).

⁸⁹S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to I. Elbogen, Berlin, Germany,
Mar. 27, 1924, SWC-AJA.

⁹⁰Polier and Wise, op. cit., p. 131.

- ⁹¹From an interview with Dr. Abraham Cronbach, Aug. 19, 1963.
- ⁹²For a detailed account of Wise and the Hebrew Union College, see above, Chapter II.
- ⁹³Mordecai M. Kaplan Diaries, II, 21-22, July 27, 1920, Microfilm, AJA, Restricted.
- ⁹⁴"Minutes of the Special Committee appointed to consider forming of new rabbinic institute." Free Synagogue House, New York, N. Y., Nov. 2, 1920, SWC-AJA.
- ⁹⁵UAHC, op. cit., X, 8712.
- ⁹⁶Kaplan, op. cit., II, 50-51, May 27, 1921.
- ⁹⁷UAHC, op. cit., X, 9117.
- ⁹⁸Ibid.
- ⁹⁹Ibid., p. 9119.
- ¹⁰⁰See above, Chapter II.
- ¹⁰¹UAHC, op. cit., X, 9120.
- ¹⁰²Charles Shohl, President of the UAHC, Cincinnati, Ohio, to Louis Wolsey, Member of the Board of Governors of HUC, Cleveland, Ohio, Apr. 14, 1922, SWC-AJA.
- ¹⁰³H.U.C.-J.I.R., op. cit., Oct. 31, 1922.
- ¹⁰⁴The Jewish Tribune, Apr. 28, 1922, p. 14.
- ¹⁰⁵See above, Chapter II.
- ¹⁰⁶UAHC, op. cit., X, 8895, The address was omitted from the published proceedings at the author's request but the main points are made in Isaac W. Bernheim, An Open Letter to Rabbi Stephen S. Wise. See also CCAR, Yearbook, XXVIII, 141-44.
- ¹⁰⁷S. Wise, "Shall We Be Jews - Or Members of the Reform Church of American Israelites?", Free Synagogue Pulpit, VI, 165-84.

- 108S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La.,
Mar. 20, 1922, MHC-AJA.
- 109S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La.,
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- 110See above, .
- 111Kaplan, op. cit., II, 71-72, 73, 75, 78, 80-81-82,
Apr. 27-May 29, 1922.
- 112S. Wise, Challenging Years, p. 136.
- 113"Memorandum of Meeting of SSW with Israel Abrahams,
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- 114S. Wise, London, England, to Sidney E. Goldstein,
N.Y., N.Y., June 22, 1922, SWC-AJA.
- 115S. Wise, Berlin, Germany, to unidentified person,
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- 116Wise, Challenging Years, p. 137.
- 117Ibid.
- 118"Memorandum SSW," Aug. 10, 1923, SWC-AJA.
- 119Tobias Schanfarber, "Men, Thoughts, and Things,"
The Reform Advocate, Chicago, Ill., LXIV, Aug. 20, 1932.
- 120See above, Chapter II.
- 121Wise, Challenging Years, p. 131.
- 122Ibid., p. 132.
- 123Ibid., p. 130.
- 124S. Wise., N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La.,
Mar. 20, 1922, MHC-AJA.
- 125Wise, Challenging Years, pp. 131-32.

- 126 Louis Lipsky, A Gallery of Zionist Profiles, p. 146.
- 127 See S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to Phillip Bernstein, Rochester, N.Y., May 29, 1934, P. Bernstein Collection, AJA; also, Joseph Hagedorn, Philadelphia, Pa., to Dr. Herbert M. Kaufman, N.Y., N.Y., Apr. 24, 1935, SWC-AJA. These are but two examples of many letters most of which ask for money and which may be found scattered throughout the SWC-AJA.
- 128 Kaplan, op. cit., II, 225, Dec. 4, 1924.
- 129 Wise, Challenging Years, p. xiv; Lipsky, Zionist Profiles, p. 147.
- 130 Lipsky, loc. cit.
- 131 Leonard J. Mervis, "The Social Justice Movement and the American Reform Rabbi," American Jewish Archives, VII, (No. 2, June 1955), 203.
- 132 Wise, Challenging Years, p. 82.
- 133 Ibid.
- 134 Charles Reznikoff, ed., Louis Marshall, Champion of Liberty, Selected Papers and Addresses, pp. 831-32.
- 135 Wise, Challenging Years, p. 84.
- 136 Ibid., p. 85.
- 137 Wise, An Open Letter to the Members of Temple Emanu-El of New York on the Freedom of the Jewish Pulpit.
- 138 Wise, Challenging Years, p. 87.
- 139 Oscar Handlin, "Introduction," in Reznikoff, op. cit., p. xix.
- 140 New York Times, Jan. 7, 1906, p. 5.
- 141 Ibid., Jan. 8, 1906, p. 5.
- 142 Ibid.

143 Ibid., Jan. 11, 1906, p. 8.

144 A survey of some of the Jewish newspapers of the period shows the following to have favored Wise in their editorial pages: The Jewish Criterion (Pittsburgh, Pa.) XXII, (No. 7, Jan. 23, 1906), 8; The Jewish American (Detroit, Mich.), XI (No. 14, Jan. 19, 1906), in favor of Wise's position but against his methods; The Reform Advocate (Chicago, Ill.), "Supplement," XXX (No. 12, Jan. 20, 1906), 672-73; Jewish Comment (Baltimore, Md.), XXII (No. 14, Jan. 12, 1906), 6. The following two papers were opposed to Wise's position and favored Temple Emanu-El: American Hebrew (New York) LXXVII (No. 7, Jan. 12, 1906), 257-58; The American Israelite (Cincinnati, O.), LII (No. 29, Jan. 18, 1906), 4.

145 Wise, Challenging Years, p. 95.

146 Wise, "What is a Free Synagogue?" in Free Synagogue Pulpit, I, 2.

147 Ibid., p. 10.

148 Wise, Challenging Years, p. 97.

149 See above, .

150 Interview with A. Cronbach, Aug. 19, 1963.

151 John Haynes Holmes, I Speak For Myself, pp. 94-95.

152 Max Raisin, "Stephen Samuel Wise," Great Jews I have Known, pp. 225-26.

153 Hyman J. Schachtel, "Some Preachers I have Known," Unpublished Homiletics Lecture at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, O., Jan. 20, 1964.

154 S. Wise, Portland, Ore., to Max Raisin, Meridian, Miss., Jan. 27, 1906, SWC-AJA.

155 Wise, Challenging Years, pp. 7-10.

156 Ibid., pp. 10-11.

- 157 Ibid., pp. 15-20; Holmes, op. cit., pp. 215-19.
- 158 New York Times, Jan. 16, 1913, p. 7.
- 159 Polier and Wise, op. cit., pp. 147-48.
- 160 Wise, Challenging Years, pp. 64-65.
- 161 Ibid., pp. 59-60.
- 162 Polier and Wise, op. cit., p. 157.
- 163 Wise, Challenging Years, pp. 66-67.
- 164 Ibid., p. 69.
- 165 Ibid. See also, "Who are the Bolsheviks at Home and Abroad?" in Free Synagogue Pulpit, V, 97-103.
- 166 Interview with A. Cronbach, Aug. 19, 1963.
- 167 Wise, "How Ought the Pulpit Deal with the Industrial Situation?" in Free Synagogue Pulpit, V, 118.
- 168 Ibid.
- 169 Wise, Challenging Years, pp. 69-71. See also, The American Hebrew, Oct. 31, 1919.
- 170 Polier and Wise, op. cit., p. 151.
- 171 Wise, "Is War Cureless?" , Address at Ford Hall, Boston, reprinted in Ford Hall Folks, Oct. 31, 1915. SWC-AJA.
- 172 Wise, "The World War for Humanity," in Free Synagogue Pulpit, IV, 101-20.
- 173 Polier and wise, op. cit., p. 164.
- 174 See, Challenging Years, facing p. 72.
- 175 Mervis, op. cit., p. 205. See also, Sidney E. Goldstein, The Synagogue and Social Welfare. This is a full discussion of the Free Synagogue social service department by its late director.

- 176 Polier and Wise, op. cit., p. 158.
- 177 Abraham Cronbach, "Autobiography," American Jewish Archives, XI (No. 1, April 1959), 49.
- 178 See Sanford Seltzer, "Reactions to Jesus in the Reform Rabbinate," unpublished rabbinic thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, O., 1959.
- 179 See above, Chapter II.
- 180 See above, Chapter III.
- 181 See above, Chapter IV.
- 182 Wise, Challenging Years, p. 23.
- 183 Ibid.
- 184 Ibid., pp. 31-32.
- 185 S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., to M. Heller, N.O., La., Dec. 14, 1899, MHC-AJA.
- 186 Polier and Wise, op. cit., p. 148.
- 187 J. H. Schiff, N.Y., N.Y., to S. Wise, N.Y., N.Y., May 1, 1914, Jacob H. Schiff Papers, AJA.
- 188 See correspondence between J. H. Schiff and S. Wise, Jacob H. Schiff Papers, AJA.
- 189 Samuel Halperin, The Political World of American Zionism, pp. 192-93.
- 190 Wise, Challenging Years, p. 183.
- 191 Polier and Wise, op. cit., p. 151.
- 192 Wise, Challenging Years, p. 201.
- 193 William Phillips, Assistant Secretary of State, Washington, D.C., to Fulton Brylawski, Joint Distribution Committee, Washington, D.C., Jan. 4, 1918, Felix M. Warburg Papers, AJA.

- 194 Felix M. Warburg, N.Y., N.Y., to Louis Marshall, N.Y., N.Y., Jan. 8, 1918, Felix M. Warburg Papers, AJA.
- 195 Albert Lucas, JDC, N.Y., N.Y., to Secretary of State, Washington, D.C., Jan. 8, 1918, Felix M. Warburg Papers, AJA.
- 196 Louis Marshall, N.Y., N.Y., to Cornelius Bliss, Jr. Esq., N.Y., N.Y., Feb. 13, 1918, Louis Marshall Papers, AJA.
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- 199 Wise, "Statement by Dr. Stephen S. Wise Chairman of the Provisional Zionist Committee at the Meeting of the Committee April 21, 1918," unpublished, AJA.
- 200 Israel Friedlaender, "Statement Submitted to Meeting of the Provisional Zionist Committee," Apr. 21, 1918, unpublished, AJA.
- 201 Wise, "Statement to Provisional Zionist Committee, etc." AJA.
- 202 Ibid.
- 203 Ibid.
- 204 F.M. Warburg, N.Y., N.Y., to L. Marshall, N.Y., N.Y., Mar. 8, 1918, F.M. Warburg Papers, AJA: L. Marshall, N.Y., N.Y., to F. M. Warburg, N.Y., N.Y., Mar. 9, 1918, L. Marshall Papers, AJA: F.M. Warburg, N.Y., N.Y., to Cyrus Adler, Philadelphia, Pa., Mar. 14, 1918, F.M. Warburg Papers, AJA.
- 205 For a discussion of Magnes' place in American Zionism see Lipsky, op. cit., pp. 175-83.
- 206 Lipsky, op. cit., pp. 149.

207Friedlaender, op. cit., p. 5.

208Raisin, op. cit., p. 225.

209For more information on this split in Zionism see Irwin Oder, "American Zionism and the Congressional Resolution of 1922 on Palestine," Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society, XLV, 37n.; also New Palestine, (No. 23, June 17, 1923).

210See Robert P. Frazin, "The Public Life of Julius Rosenwald," unpublished rabbinic thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, O., 1964.

211See Alvin Roth, "Backgrounds and Origins of the American Jewish Congress," unpublished rabbinic thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, O., 1953. This deals with the attempt at formation of a Congress in 1915-16.

212Lipsky, op. cit., pp. 148-49.

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