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CHANGING ATTITUDES OF AMERICAN REFORM JUDAISM
WITH RESPECT TO THE ZIONIST IDEA

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THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
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REFEREE, PROF. ELLIS RIVKIN

To my beloved grandmother

Edythe H. Bloomberg 7"1

DIGEST

This thesis is a study of the attitudes and reactions of Reform Judaism with regard to the Zionist idea as documented in the CCAR Yearbook. By carefully examining this material with respect to historical setting, this thesis illustrates how Reform Judaism arrived at its present pro-Zionist posture.

The Prologue sets the stage by briefly reviewing some of the German thinking which inspired American Reform Judaism and the writing of the Pittsburgh Platform. The first chapter recounts the most blatantly anti-Zionist period in the history of Reform Judaism. It opens with I. M. Wise's 1897 address to the Conference (in which he lashed out against Zionism and its modern promulgator, Theodor Herzl) and proceeds to the year 1917.

The second chapter discusses the shift in Reform Jewish attitudes from monolithic anti-Zionism to what has been termed non-Zionism. The "Balfour Declaration" (1917) ushered in this mood of moderation and paved the way for the softening of Reform Judaism's original stand on Zionism over a twenty year period. The third chapter continues with the adoption of the Columbus Platform (1937) which officially proclaimed Reform Judaism's neutral stance regarding Zionism. However, the Holocaust, the creation of the American Council for Judaism (1943) and the establishment of the State of Israel forced Reform Judaism in effect to abandon its neutral position and to solidify its commitment to Israel.

The fourth chapter depicts an interim period which lasted until the Six Day War (1967). It is one in which Reform Judaism displayed relentless support for Israel and sought to strengthen its ties with the newly-established Jewish state. Nevertheless, there was really no change in attitude

concerning the acceptance of a Zionist ideology.

Reform Judaism indeed became pro-Zionist during its most recent era which is described in the fifth chapter. In the past decade, the Reform movement joined the World Zionist Organization and also founded its own Zionist arm, ARZA.

Finally, by way of conclusion, the Epilogue comments on the Zionist issue in light of the fact that Reform Judaism is a developmental religion. Furthermore, some observations are made as to how Reform Judaism might proceed in order to fashion a Reform Zionist identity.

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PROLOGUE:

INTRODUCTION - EARLY ANTECEDENTS
OF THE ANTI-ZIONIST FEELING
IN AMERICAN REFORM JUDAISM

Anyone who is aware of American Jewish history and Reform Jewish thought knows that Reform Judaism vehemently opposed Zionism during the early years of both movements. Reform Judaism emerged out of the emancipation of Western Europe -- particularly Germany. Zionism, on the other hand, arose out of the repressive conditions which existed in Eastern Europe. Consequently, each movement appealed to a different segment of the Jewish community.

Indeed, both Reform Judaism and Zionism evolved as a response to history -- specifically in reaction to the Emancipation. Both sought to redefine the Jew and both propounded normalization of the Jewish experience. Classical Reform redefined the Jew in terms of faith -- as a religion; whereas early Zionism redefined the Jew as a people like other ethnic peoples.

Zionism, in essence, reasserted and posited Jewish nationalism, a concept which Reform Judaism had rejected. Zionism raised questions about the status of Diaspora Jewry which Reform claimed were improper and should not have been voiced. One can well understand how a movement which made repeated references to America as "our Zion" would not support or view favorably a group working toward the establishment of a homeland in Palestine.

Long before the founding of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1889, American Reform Judaism had stood firm in its opposition to all forms of political Zionism. It adhered to the universal mission of the Jew in a religious sense only. These ideas, embraced wholeheartedly by Reform in America, originated with the Reform Rabbis in Germany. Abraham Geiger and Samuel Holdheim, the two outstanding German Jewish Reform lead-

ers, were overwhelming anti-Zionist. Their views are reflected in the various conferences of the Rabbis in Germany which were held in the nineteenth century: Brunswick, June, 1844; Frankfort, July, 1845; and two synods, Leipzig, 1869; and Augsburg, 1871.

Holdheim asserted that just as a Christian state could not possibly exist, so too a Jewish state could not possibly exist. In other words, Holdheim strictly separated religious and political affairs. This view later became a key concept for those Reform Jews who argued the incompatibility of Reform with political Zionism.

Geiger, reflecting the era in which he lived, looked forward to the coming of an age of science, reason, and enlightenment. He was quite explicit regarding Jewish nationalism, stating that "the national side of Israel must be pushed into the background." He also added: "the hope that all Israelites be gathered from every corner of the globe and returned to the promised land has vanished entirely from our consciousness."¹

American Reform Rabbis formally expressed anti-nationalist sentiments as they met for the first time in Philadelphia in November, 1869. The document produced by this conference, an enumeration of principles, included the following statement:

Article 1. The Messianic goal of Israel is not the restoration of the old Jewish state under a son of David, nor the continued separation from other nations, but the union of all men as the children of God acknowledging His unity, and the oneness of all rational beings and their call to moral satisfaction.

Article 2. We do not consider the fall of the second Jewish commonwealth as a punishment for the sinfulness of Israel, but as a sequence of divine intent first revealed in a promise to Abraham . . . so that they [Jews] may fulfill their high priestly task to lead the nations in the true knowledge and worship of God.²

In 1885, fifteen Reform Rabbis gathered in Pittsburgh for a meeting. Their deliberations produced the Pittsburgh Platform which became the foundation for early American Reform Jewish beliefs. Reform's limited interpretation of Judaism as only a religion is embodied in the fifth paragraph:

Fifth - We recognize in the universal era of modern culture of heart and intellect the approach of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the administration of the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any laws concerning the Jewish state.³

This statement remained the official Reform position influencing attitudes for over fifty years. Moreover, in 1890, during the first CCAR conference, the presiding body declared:

. . . the proceedings of all modern Rabbinical conferences . . . shall be taken as the basis of the work of this Conference in an endeavor to maintain in unbroken historic succession the formulated expression of Jewish thought and life in each era.⁴

With this simple affirmation, all previous German and American Reform Jewish thought was taken into consideration and accorded official status in the formation of Reform philosophy and theology.

That same conference of 1890 confirmed its anti-Zionist posture by issuing the following resolution:

Although it has been stated time and again that the Jews are no longer a nation, and they form a religious community only, yet has this thought not been thoroughly appreciated by the community at large: we still hear of the Jewish nation and the Hebrew people, and therefore this Conference feels itself called upon to declare

once more that there is no Jewish nation now, only a Jewish religious body, and in accordance with this fact, neither the name Hebrew nor Israelite, but the universal appellation Jew is applicable to the adherents of Judaism today.⁵

Reform Rabbis during the decade of the 1890's fervently and loudly defended their anti-Zionist position, even though they were already a minority within the American Jewish community.

During this decade, Zionist leaders were far from silent. They campaigned rigorously to win over American Jewry to support their cause. The Zionist movement, as an outgrowth of the traditional Jewish longing to return to Zion (Palestine), even attracted some religious Jews. However, since early Zionists emphasized the national character of Judaism over the religious, and allowed for the secularization of many traditional elements of Judaism, many Orthodox and Conservative Jews, who based their return to Zion on religious principles, were to some extent alienated somewhat, by the existing Zionist groups at this time.

Reform, as pointed out above, completely rejected the whole idea of a return to Zion. The methods employed by Zionist leaders to achieve this goal were of no consequence to the Reform movement. Reform Judaism and Zionism were at the turn of the century proceeding on divergent paths.

The outlook of American Reform Judaism at this time is succinctly summarized by Howard Robert Greenstein in his Ph.D. thesis:

For the founders of American Reform Judaism especially, the question of "homelessness" was preposterous. They were convinced the Jews were more at home here in the young, vibrant, promising and prosperous Democracy of America than they could have possibly been anywhere else in the world, including Western Europe. Jews were not primarily a nation. They were a religious community. Their major task was not the restoration of a sovereign, secular state, but the dissemination of pro-

phetic ideals of justice, truth, love, brotherhood and peace. The leaders of American Reform Judaism considered themselves the spokesmen and the fore-runners of a new age of universal understanding and good will, a world devoid of all the old hatreds and prejudices.⁶

CHAPTER 1:

THE DOMINATION OF
ANTI-ZIONIST VIEWS
(1897-1917)

In order to understand fully the prevailing views of American Reform Judaism at the time of the Balfour Declaration (which was to be the starting-point for this thesis), it is necessary by way of introduction to backtrack to the year 1897, when the first Zionist Congress was held in Basel, and to examine the intervening years, for this period witnessed the most intense anti-Zionism of the Reform movement. David Polish (Renew Our Days) suggests that this anti-Zionist attitude actually became "creed" for Reform during these particular years.⁷

Although reactions to the first Zionist Congress by Jews throughout the world were varied, American Reform Judaism reacted in a very predictable manner.

At the Montreal conference of the CCAR in July, 1897, one month before the first Zionist Congress, Isaac Mayer Wise, Reform's foremost leader, lashed out against Zionism, made derogatory remarks about Theodor Herzl, and criticized the upcoming Zionist Congress:

I consider it my duty also, Reverend Colleagues, to call your attention to the political projects engaging now a considerable portion of our co-religionists in Europe and also in our country, especially in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and other large cities. I refer, of course, to the so-called "Friends of Zion", Chovaveh Zion, who revive among certain classes of people the political national sentiment of olden times, and turn the mission of Israel from the province of religion and humanity to the narrow political and national field, where Judaism loses its universal and sanctified ground, and its historical significance. The persecution of Jews in Russia and Roumania and the anti-Semitic hatred against the Jewish race and religion, as it still exists in Germany, Austria, and partly in France, roused among the persecuted and outraged persons the hapless feeling of being hated strangers among hostile Gentiles. It was quite natural that this humiliating experience roused in their memory the glory of the past, when Israel was the great nation, the chosen people, and in-

spired in them the consolation, "we are the great nation yet." . . . This experience roused in those outraged men and women the old hope of restoration, the reconstruction of the Hebrew nationality as in days of yore. The first step in this direction was the colonization of Palestine with Jewish agriculturalists. This, of course, found support among all good people, not indeed for the sake of Zion, but for the redemption of the persecuted Idealist and religious phantasts took hold upon this situation, and made of it a general restoration of the Jews, and their returning to the holy land, although the greatest number of Jewish citizens in the countries where they enjoy all civil and political rights, loudly disavowed any such beliefs, hopes, or wishes; yet the persecuted and expatriated from Russia and such other countries preached their new doctrine loudly and emphatically At last politicians seized the situation, and one of them called Dr. Herzl, proposed to establish and constitute at once the Jewish state in Palestine That now Messianic movement over the ocean does not concern us at all. But the same expatriated, persecuted and outrageously wronged people came in large numbers also to us, and they being still imbued with their home ideas, ideals, and beliefs, voiced these projects among themselves and their friends so loudly and so vehemently, that the subject was discussed rather passionately in public meetings, and some petty politicians of that class are appointed as delegates, we learn to the Basle Congress, and in each of those meetings, as reported by the press, so and so many rabbis advocated those political themes, and compromised in the eyes of the public the whole of American Judaism, as the phantastic dupes of a thoughtless Utopia which is to us a fata morgana, a monetary inebriation of morbid minds, and a prostitution of Israel's holy cause to a madman's dance of unsound politicians The honor and position of the American Israel demand imperatively that this conference, which does represent the sentiment of American Judaism minus the idiosyncrasies of those late immigrants, do declare officially the American standpoint in this unpleasant episode of our history.⁸

Wise's articulate statement cogently characterizes the concerns of early American Reform Judaism. Massive Eastern European immigration to America with its Jewish nationalism threatened both the security and ideology of Reform Judaism in its newly-found haven, America. Expressing full agreement with Wise's expressed opinion, the Committee on

the President's Message issued a resolution which was overwhelmingly approved by the Conference:

Resolved, That we totally disapprove of any attempt for the establishment of a Jewish state. Such attempts show a misunderstanding of Israel's mission, which from the narrow political and rational field has been expanded to the promotion among the whole human race of the broad and universalistic religion first proclaimed by the Jewish prophets. Such attempts do not benefit, but indefinitely harm our Jewish brethren where they are still persecuted, by confirming the assertion of their enemies that the Jews are foreigners in the countries in which they are at home, and of which they are everywhere the most loyal and patriotic citizens.

We affirm that the object of Judaism is not political or national, but spiritual, and addresses itself to the continuous growth of peace, justice and love in the human race, to a messianic time when all men will recognize that they form "one great brotherhood" for the establishment of God's kingdom on earth.⁹

These pronouncements of the 1897 CCAR conference, coupled with the Pittsburgh Platform, became the primary rationale for Reform's anti-Zionist stand.

The year 1899 produced more anti-Zionist proclamations by the Reform rabbinate. At the CCAR conference, Rabbi Henry Berkowitz presented an address entitled "Why I am not a Zionist." He quoted and rejected Professor Richard Gottheil's (President of the newly-formed Federation of American Zionists) formulation of the basic principles of Zionism:

"We believe that the Jews are something more than a purely religious body; that they are not only a race, but a nation, though a nation without, as yet, two important requisites -- a common home and a common language.

We believe that if an end is to be made to Jewish misery and to the exceptional position of the Jews a new home must be supplied. We believe that such a regeneration would be the fulfillment of the Jews' greatest hope.

We believe that the home of their fathers, Palestine is the only place for such a home, and that a guarantee of such a

return must be given by the great powers of the world. We further hold that this does not mean that all Jews shall return to Palestine."

Against each one of the doctrines of this creed I [Berkowitz] respectfully enter my protest and demurrer. In my judgment there is not a sound plank in the platform, and the whole platform rests upon unreliable supports.¹⁰

Berkowitz believed in the ultimate victory of justice and thus predicated a positive future for Jews in European countries. Moreover, he claimed that the ultimate aim of Jewish history is "the maintenance of Judaism, not the maintenance of Jews."¹¹ Religion is ultimate and essential for the Jews, not nationality and race, as Zionism posits. Berkowitz elaborated on the reasons why he was not a Zionist:

First. Because I do not believe that the misery of my people is hopeless. I have not lost faith in the triumph of justice in the world.

Second. Because I believe that the methods of our modern organizations and the efforts made through them for colonization, education and the working out of the great economic problems of the day are practical, feasible and sensible, while Zionism is sentimental and in my judgment chimerical. What is needed in all our people is the awakening of a deeper Jewish consciousness to arouse their slumbering consciences and unite them in heroic moral action.

Third. Because Zionism makes race and nationality, rather than religion ultimate and essential for the Jews. Jews have no lasting claims for a separate existence excepting their religious mission. To be faithful to this they must wilfully assume the martyrdom and the struggle and not weakly evade it.¹²

At this same conference, Rabbi Samuel Sale presented a paper "Address on Zionism". Sale rejected Zionism on the same grounds as Berkowitz. For Sale, the nationalism explicit in Zionism was a complete denial of the universalism which Reform Judaism propounded. Sale held that Zionism was a dead issue, a "repugnant question".¹³ He claimed that Zi-

onists were prophets of evil.

The chairman of the conference then asked for a volunteer to speak on behalf of Zionism. Rabbi Casper Levias, the only Zionist present at these proceedings, declined the opportunity because he had not been given sufficient notice to prepare his arguments adequately. However, Levias did write a paper, "The Justification of Zionism", which was included in the CCAR Yearbook of 1899. It explained the grounding of the anti-Zionist position and presented logical arguments to refute this position:

The first move of the anti-Zionists in discussing Zionism is to drag into the arena the mission of Israel. The Zionists cannot help admitting that Israel has a mission; but they differ as to the mode of carrying on that mission; or, if you wish, as to the base of operations. The Zionists claim that we could carry out that mission only after we ourselves shall have realized the prophetic ideal; and this can be consummated only in a home of our own . . .

The next point advanced by one of the speakers against Zionism was that the establishment of a petty Jewish state does not comport with the glorious future predicted for us by the prophetic dreamers. The dream of the prophet that nature shall be transformed, that the lion shall lie down with the lamb, and a small boy shall lead them, is a beautiful dream, an inspiring dream, but an unrealizable dream after all. The Jew that takes this dream into consideration in affairs of practical life is no less a visionary than his Christian neighbor who attempts to realize in human society the New Testament dream of non-resistance to evil.

But, again for argument's sake, I will grant the literal interpretation of messianic prophecy. Even the antis cannot deny that the realization of the messianic ideal lies still in the far distant future. By what logic do they bring themselves to the belief that, in expectation of that distant contingency, it is preferable to allow ourselves to be kicked by the Cossack and abused by the Junker, rather than live in the enjoyment of peace and human rights in Palestine? Would the existence of a human state hinder the realization of a common humanity?¹⁴

Levias continues with a discussion of nationalism in which he illustrates how this is not an evil, negative ideal:

Nationalism was brought up by one of the speakers as another bugaboo

Nationalism is one of those big words which speakers and writers bandy about nowadays, frequently without having a clear idea of their meaning Nationalism is but a synonym of what I should call collective individualism

Nationalism, that is, collective individualism, involves as little hatred towards other nationalities as single individualism does toward another individual. Nor does nationalism imply a shutting oneself up and isolating oneself from the influences of other nations; this just as little as single individualism means isolation from the influence of other individuals. Nationalism is merely the logical development and necessary outcome of individualism; it is only a higher stage of the latter.¹⁵

Levias also addresses himself to concerns of the anti-Zionists, such as reactions of the goyim and the "practicability" of Zionism:

One of the speakers finished his address with the declaration: "America is our Palestine and Washington is our Zion." As stated in the introductory remark, the discussion of such declarations lies without the scope of this paper. But we may examine into the cause of these patriotic hysterics. It is the fear that our Christian fellow citizens might deny out patriotism, or impune [sic] our loyalty Our [American] population consists of various elements. Nobody has ever thought of impuning [sic] the patriotism of our Irishmen, or denying the loyalty of our German citizens, merely because their kinfolk and co-religionists have a home of their own across the Atlantic. Why should our loyalty be impuned [sic]? The best proof that Zionism does not impair our loyalty and patriotism was furnished by the present war [Spanish-American]. The greatest number of volunteers that have offered their services to the country of their adoption were Russian, Roumanian, and Galician immigrants, avowedly all Zionists

Finally, I must say a word about the practicability of Zionism. I humbly confess that I have no opinion on this subject; but I claim with good right that others do not know a whit more about it. The Zionists have repeatedly declared that their aim is not to be achieved in a year or two; it might take two or more generations The immediate aims of the Zionists are the preparing of the way and the fitting of the people for the future.¹⁶

Although Dr. Levias's paper was an eloquent response in support of Zionism, Dr. Levias remained alone in his views. He failed to persuade any significant numbers among members of the CCAR to change their stand.

There were, in these early years, some utterances on behalf of financial support for Palestine -- to help build settlements and to develop culture there. Rabbi Joseph Silverman, in his presidential address to the CCAR in 1901, reminded his colleagues of the Conference position on Zionism, but suggested that the Conference back Herzl's fund-raising effort to collect ten million dollars for the colonization of Palestine:

. . . I am not unmindful of the fact that this Conference has set itself on record as being opposed to political Zionism -- that is, to the founding of a Jewish State, but I also do not ignore the fact, that we, at the same time, favored the colonization of Jews It seems to me that ten millions is a modest sum to ask the Jews of the whole world to contribute towards any plan of colonization or settlement that will permanently relieve the overcrowded Jewish districts of at least Russia and Roumania. Whatever may be the outcome of political Zionism, whatever may be the attitude of Jews, in general, towards the idea of a Jewish State, upon this, at least, all are agreed, that any experiment that will relieve our brethren in the Orient and make them self-supporting and independent, that will remove them from the Jewish Pale and decrease the causes that give rise to anti-Semitism, is worth trying, whether it will cost ten or a hundred millions of dollars.¹⁷

The Committee on the Presidents' Message, chaired by Rabbi Sale, tabled this suggestion on the grounds that it was inadvisable to consider this question at this time.

As a matter of information, it should be pointed out that Isaac Mayer Wise and his successor as president of the Hebrew Union College, Kaufmann Kohler, both vociferous anti-Zionists, had each supported earlier efforts to colonize Palestine during the nineteenth century. In 1860, Wise urged the purchase of land in Palestine as a place to resettle Moroccan (Jewish)

exiles. Again, in 1871, he even suggested political action comparing the two-hundred year claim of Germany to Alsace and Lorraine to the two thousand year claim of the Jew to Palestine.¹⁸ Kaufmann Kohler, in 1891, signed a petition which was presented to President Benjamin Harrison which requested that he negotiate with the European powers in order to procure Palestine for the Jews.¹⁹

Again, in 1902, Silverman, still president of the CCAR, commented on the uselessness of Zionism in the resolution of the Jewish question. He remarked, "Zionism has continued its agitation, yet has evinced no real progress; we do not believe that it contains that constituency or those elements of principle that are necessary for the solution of the Jewish question."²⁰

During the following years, Reform rabbis would uphold an almost inapproachable negative attitude with regard to political Zionism, but one can see a softening of the negative attitude regarding the support of colonization of Palestine. This was due primarily to three factors: 1) the plight of European and Russian Jews; 2) gaining popularity of the Zionist movement within the total American Jewish population; and 3) near-inevitable reaction to such doctrinaire opinions. In 1906, a resolution was submitted to the Committee on Resolutions that the Conference send a message of greetings to the convention of the American Federation of Zionists. Needless to say, although this minority resolution is recorded in the 1906 CCAR Yearbook, along with many other minority resolutions, it was not submitted to the presiding body in the report of the Committee on Resolutions.

The following year (1907), Rabbi Marcus Salzman delivered the Shabbat sermon to the Conference. He carefully couched praise of the Zionist movement within his anti-Zionist remarks. He applauded the good that the Zi-

onist movement had achieved and the devotion of Herzl and his followers to the solution of the Jewish question, but also charged that Zionism is full of propaganda. A vast gap existed, in Salzman's opinion, between intention and accomplishment. Zionism, for Salzman, represented Judaism in retreat.²¹

Voicing this subtle change in attitude with regard to Zionism, two committed Reform pro-Zionists within the CCAR, Rabbis Max Heller and Bernard Felsenthal set forth a resolution concerning the relationship between Reform Judaism and Zionism. Heller introduced the resolution; Felsenthal was its author:

Be it resolved, To declare that in our opinion the antithesis implied in the term "Reform vs. Zionism" is not warranted by the facts in the case. For everyone, who with open eyes observes the actual state of affairs, knows that there are thousands of Jews who are real and honest reformers and at the same time real and honest Zionists. The alleged incompatibility of Reform and Zionism is, moreover, artificial, illogical and lacking substantial basis. In the assertion, that Reform and Zionism are mutually exclusive, is just as much sense, or rather just as little sense, as in someone's saying that Homeopathy and High Tariff Policy are incompatible and mutually exclusive. A true antithesis, justified by hard facts, would rather be "Progress and Free Development" on one side vs. "Ossified or Petrified Reform" on the other side.²²

Felsenthal does not mix words! Nevertheless, the impact of this resolution was minimal. It was submitted to the Committee on Resolutions where it was tabled indefinitely.

Rabbi Max Heller became president of the CCAR in 1909. What a marked contrast to Isaac Mayer Wise, the Conference's first president who was so adamantly anti-Zionist! Heller, in fact, became honorary Vice President of the Zionist Organization of America from 1911 through 1929. In 1909, the Conference's Committee on Contemporaneous History assessed the situa-

tion in Palestine (now with a population of eighty thousand Jews), and called on the CCAR to create a board of inquiry to investigate the organizations in Palestine to determine where charity might be directed. The Committee on Resolutions endorsed this request and recommended that the Executive Board direct the attention of this matter to other organizations such as the Conference of Jewish Charities and B'nai Brith. The manner in which this matter was handled is clearly a case of "passing the buck." A year later, after no visible results, the Committee of Contemporaneous History again reiterated its request and made a plea for action.

Aside from attempts for practical action within committees, Heller sought to show that Jews were both a religion and a people. One could not be separated from the other. The difference between Zionists and anti-Zionists, in Heller's view, was not the issue. Rather, the two differed in their outlook as to where Judaism could achieve its religious mission -- in a national homeland or scattered throughout the world:

In addressing a rabbinical convention it would almost seem presumption to labor the patent truth that religious teaching and religious example are both the outstanding achievement of our past and the sole justification of our survival, the cement of every loyalty that holds us together. Yet, as an ardent Zionist, who has always avowed his convictions as such without hesitation or reserve, I owe it to you and myself to forestal some of the misunderstandings that haunt the popular mind in this connection. In my view and to my feeling the religious life must be the crown and summit of any full-blown culture; the real point of divergence between Zionism and anti-Zionism cannot be the question, as it is sometimes crudely put, whether we are a religion or a race, but whether we shall achieve our religious mission as a people scattered to the four corners of the globe, or as a nation upbuilding a typical culture upon its ancient soil. Upon the fact of the religious nature of our mission, there can be no difference save between extremists, either of nationalism at the one end, or of assimilationism at the other.

With this fundamental fact in view it must be matter for regret and condemnation that, as we organize slowly toward co-operation on behalf of Jewish causes, we should so often lose sight of our ultimate aims and aspirations in the single effort towards practical ends . . .²³

During the decade prior to World War I, the number of Reform rabbis increased appreciably. Herbert Parzen (A Short History of Zionism) comments that regarding the Zionist movement, this was "a period of consolation and growth, despite the struggle for power and the competition of ideologies."²⁴ One is not surprised to note, then, that although anti-Zionist sentiments felt by Reform rabbis did not diminish, their remarks became more defensive as the years passed.

The Committee on Contemporaneous History of the CCAR urged a resolution supporting the use of Hebrew in Palestine where it is needed in educational institutions and should be given priority over all other languages. Although the resolution does not insist on Hebrew as a national language per se in Palestine, it represents a positive attitude toward the revival of Hebrew and support of cultural Zionism.

In 1916, Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, who became one of the twentieth century's Zionist giants, participated in a symposium on "Religion and the Jewish Child" at the CCAR conference. Eloquently, he supported Zionism along with those causes which might strengthen Jewish communal life:

It is at this age [adolescence] in the life of the Jewish child that the Jewish community must step in. If the Jewish community possesses certain social traditions which are uniquely its own and, it is agreed, that it does possess them, this is the time when they must be transmitted to the rising generation. This is the time when loyalty to the Jewish community -- and group loyalty, be it remembered, is a pre-requisite of religion -- when devotion to its ideals and love for its traditions

can be inculcated; for the instincts of loyalty, devotion and love are already in the child, and require but proper direction In a word, this is the time when the religious Jews can be realized.

Jewish community life must, for that reason, be preserved and energized We must realize that there are certain cultural movements among our people which, while they touch, like a tangent, the circumference of the synagog at some one point, do nevertheless possess a vision and an extension of their own. Blind, indeed, is he who in a spirit of theologic intolerance would suppress these evidences of the inner strivings and agitations of the soul of our people. It is not the logical soundness of these new tendencies and movements which should recommend them. Rather it is their functional value as spiritual and emotional dynamics that render them of value to us. These movements, be they Nationalism, Political or Cultural Zionism, the renaissance of Hebrew or Yiddish literature, the aesthetic revival which is seeking expression in a new Jewish art, these movements and others, I say, are valuable in so far as they intensify Jewish communal life, charge it with new energy, and thrill it with new purposes. They should be welcomed as so many more dikes against the onrushing tides of assimilation. All these movements and tendencies, all these loyalties and aspirations can remain discordant notes in our life or they can with sympathy and tolerance be welded into a great spiritual symphony.²⁵

Dr. Martin A. Meyer, an American Reform rabbi, wrote an article for The Maccabaean magazine (January, 1917), "Zionism and Reform Judaism," in which he attempts to show how Zionism is indeed compatible with Reform Judaism from a Zionist perspective. Zionism embraces every manifestation of Jewish life and would certainly accept the mission of the Jew (of Israel). It sympathizes with Reform's efforts to adjust Jewish life to modern standards, but disagrees with Reform's rejection of the national hope and its correlaries. Meyer explains: "This contention of the Zionist that Jewish life is more than a religion, does not eliminate or neglect the Jewish religion but rather coordinates it with all other expressions of Jewish life."²⁶

While Reform concentrates on the individual, Zionism concentrates

on social aspects -- relationships and welfare of the whole Jewish people:

Nationalized Jewry will not be less spiritual, but more helpfully spiritual. It will save Jewish idealism; it will vitalize Jewish lives; it will encourage the further development of the old-time values. It will start a new development of the Jewish spirit which, in the light of modern thought, we hope to see equal, if not excel, the best in our past.²⁷

Finally, Meyer concludes with a statement about the compatibility between the two movements:

Those who are Zionists and members of Reform Jewish Synagogues do not feel any inconsistency in their position. To the contrary, their zeal for Reform in Judaism is deepened and purified and directed aright by their interest in and loyalty to the Zionist ideal The Reform Jewish Zionist looks forward to a Day of God, to use the old prophetic term, in which the wish of the Great Lawgiver will be realized, that "all the people be prophets," a people dedicated one and all to the fulfillment of the Jewish hope, that "out of Zion will go forth the Law and the word of our God from Jerusalem."²⁸

During the summer of that same year, 1917, the CCAR met in Buffalo many months before the issuing of the Balfour Declaration. The Committee on Contemporaneous History addressed itself to the stepped-up activity of settlement in Palestine. It predicted that a complete change would occur in the condition of Palestine due to World War I. The Committee proposed that the CCAR:

. . . express its sympathy with all cultural movements affecting Palestine, without committing itself to the political and national aspects of the question, and that the Committee on Jews of Other Lands be directed to consider this question as soon as normal conditions shall render it possible to propose tangible action.²⁹

One senses the dissolution of the hard-line Reform doctrinaire approach

towards Palestine and Zionism. In fact, this proposal is somewhat sympathetic in tone to the situation in Palestine.

It is difficult to believe that Rabbi William Rosenau, in his Presidential report to the Conference, reiterated those anti-Zionist views characteristic of Classical Reform Judaism. He emphasized the opposition between nationalism and religion. Reform rabbis cannot be part of the Zionist movement because its mission is not religious. Rosenau urged the Conference to issue a stand of disfavor against this nationalistic movement.³⁰

The majority report on the President's Message did what Rosenau had requested. Jewish loyalty was to be based on loyalty to "Israel's God and Israel's religious mission,"³¹ not political Jewish nationalism. However, two very important minority reports were submitted to the Conference. The first, presented by Rabbi Max Heller, again expressed what Rabbi Felsenthal had stated ten years earlier, that the notion of the incompatibility of Reform and Zionism is fallacious:

Inasmuch as reform Judaism does not dogmatize on the geographical habitat or political status of the Jew;

Inasmuch as reform Judaism does not insist on the dispersion of the Jews as an indispensable condition for the welfare and progress of Judaism;

Be it Resolved, that there is nothing in the effort to secure a publicly and legally safe-guarded home for Jews in Palestine which is not in accord with the principles and aims of reform Judaism.³²

The second minority report, presented by Rabbi Louis J. Kopald, claimed that Zionists had the best interests at heart. Kopald backed the right of the minority to speak its views. He also asserted that each individual member of the CCAR must have the right of judgment regarding the mission of Israel. This was one way of blocking a direct resolution regard-

ing Zionism. Although he was not a Zionist himself, Kopald sought to protect the doctrines of Jewish liberalism.³³

Rabbi Joseph Stoltz then submitted a compromise resolution which was passed by an overwhelming majority (68-20) and preserved the unity of the CCAR. It granted legitimacy to individuals who differed in opinion over matters of exceptional import. Rather than attacking Zionism, the resolution opposed all non-religious interpretations of Judaism. In essence, although the anti-Zionist position of the Conference remained, it was made less doctrinaire, and the presence of Zionist Reform rabbis was established as legitimate within the CCAR. The actual text reads:

In view of the present conditions in American Israel, the President has deemed it of urgent importance that the Conference at this time puts itself on record in regard to the nationalistic movement among Jews. Your committee recognizes that a difference of conviction regarding this question exists among our own members, as well as among Jews of America in general, even as differences of opinion regarding most important questions have always existed in Israel.

Your committee, therefore, recommends that the Conference reaffirm its traditional position that the essence of Israel as a priest-people consists in its religious consciousness and in the sense of consecration to God and his service to the world. And that, therefore, we must and do look with disfavor upon any and every un-religious or anti-religious interpretation of Judaism and of Israel's mission in the world.

It further recommends that at a time of universal conflict and suffering, such as the present, it is of prime importance that the Conference emphasize not the differences that divide us, but those sacred principles which all Jews hold in common, and those great Tasks which it is our paramount duty at the present moment to promote and perform together for the alleviation of human suffering and the healing of the Jewish people.³⁴

This whole period (1897-1917) in American Reform Jewish history is marked by Reform's most outright anti-Zionist attitude. As Palestine became a real alternative for Jews suffering in Europe, especially after

the outbreak of World War I, which forced the Reform rabbinate to recognize the plight of the Jews throughout the world, the Conference therefore began to support cultural development and colonization of Palestine, while totally rejecting political Zionism. It is questionable as to whether the two (political and cultural Zionism) can actually be separated. There are, however, several considerations which influenced the decisions and views of the CCAR during this particular era. Although most have been mentioned in passing, I will cite them again briefly in order to clarify some of the motivations of the early Reform Jewish leaders.

During this time, there was a real sense of insecurity among Reform Jews. Although they wanted to maintain a liberal-oriented religious Judaism, Reform Jews also wanted to integrate into the American society. They wanted to become Americanized:

It must be remembered that the end of the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century witnessed the strength of the extremist program of Americanization, which was an attempt to divest the immigrant of his former cultural habits and customs and make him adhere solely to the American way of life as set by the Anglo-Saxon stock. This ideal, which emphasized complete political, economic, and cultural affiliation with America was held also by many Jewish leaders.³⁵

Reform Jews were also concerned about reactions from the non-Jewish community regarding their theology and philosophy as expressed in the various pronouncements by the CCAR. "Ma yomru ha-goyim" was of great importance to the young Reform movement which was trying to plant strong roots in its newly-found paradise, America. In addition, it is curious that a group so adamantly nationalistic towards America, especially by the latter half of the second decade of the twentieth century, would be so negative regarding Jewish nationalism.

Furthermore, the Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe and Russia began to come to America in greater numbers especially because of pogroms, World War I and the Russian Revolution. These Jews posed a threat to Reform Jews who were mainly of German descent at that time. These new immigrants practiced more traditional forms of Judaism and had been inspired with the Zionist idea. David Polish also suggests that the same feelings of "massive suspicion and contempt" held by Christians against Christian immigrants could be paralleled within Reform Judaism. There was, at first, "a social and cultural rejection of them."³⁶

Attempts to maintain unity, however, within the Reform movement on the issue of Zionism vs. Anti-Zionism became evident as Zionism gained a foothold in America and the minority within the CCAR gathered strength and became more verbal. Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld points out ("The Jew in the Modern World"):

Conditioning the pull of both poles was an overarching fear of schism. Again and again, in one form or another, the Conference echoed the determination first voiced by Moses Gries in 1901: "The Conference must not split on the rock of Zionism."³⁷

Rabbi Gries and others had been worried about sustaining unity within the CCAR at the turn of the century. Rabbi Stoltz, as was pointed out, formally called for unity in 1917 among American Reform rabbis. By this time, he and his colleagues espoused individual freedom regarding one's approach and view towards issues within Judaism. One had the right to disagree with majority opinions. This had to be the foundation of a "liberal" Judaism.

So just months before the announcement of the Balfour Declaration, the American Reform movement had reached a subtle change in attitude to-

ward Zionism. Its hardcore anti-Zionist position, which stringently upheld Zionism and Reform Judaism as a dichotomy which could never be synthesized, would wane on in principle to be excitedly proclaimed by individuals here and there, and slowly disappear altogether. This, then, is the period when Balfour released to the world, his Declaration, which set the wheels in motion for the eventual establishment of the State of Israel in Palestine.

CHAPTER 2:
THE SHIFT FROM
ANTI-ZIONISM
TO NON-ZIONISM
(1917-1936)

The conclusion of World War I with the Allied victory over the Turks, coupled with the issuing of the Balfour Declaration by the British government and the San Remo decision to place Palestine under a British mandate -- all symbolized strides forward for the Zionist movement. As a consequence, Reform Judaism, during this period, was in serious danger of splitting over the pro-/negative Zionist issue. And indeed many heated debates ensued. On all levels of American Reform Jewish life -- among rabbis, rabbinical students, and lay-people, Reform Jews began questioning and re-evaluating their views with regard to Jewish nationalism. The Zionist minority within the CCAR gained in numbers and became more verbal. Reform opinion shifted from anti-Zionism to non-Zionism. However, many years were to pass following the announcement of the Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917, before this change in attitude was reflected in Conference resolutions.

The Balfour Declaration stirred a hornet's nest in the Jewish world. It forced open debate between Zionists and anti-Zionists. This issue was now shoved into the limelight for public debate and evaluation. Jewish reactions to the Balfour Declaration were bound to be noted carefully by the Gentile world. Here is the actual letter:

Foreign Office
November 2, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.

"His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing may be done which shall prejudice the civil and religious rights

of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours sincerely,

James Arthur Balfour³⁸

Within a month of the Declaration, two well-known Reform Rabbis, Stephen S. Wise and Max Heller, both devoted Zionists, contributed articles to the December, 1917 issue of the Macabaeon (published by the Federation of American Zionists). Each of these two men urged anti-Zionists to change their opinions in light of the Balfour Declaration. Wise stated:

. . . Zion was. Zion is about to be The British government, true to a policy of 200 years of sympathy with and friendship for the Jew, leads the way in indicating to its allies and to the world that the day has come for the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and that it will use its best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object

It is to be taken for granted that opposition to Zionism is ended. Whatever some Jews may heretofore have thought and said about the Zionist hope, they face a fact which cannot be controverted or annulled

. . . The doors of the Zionist organization have never been shut even to those who kept themselves outside of the Zionist organization. If anything, the doors are to be wider open than before. It is our business to forget who was or was not a Zionist or an anti-Zionist before this time. The time has come to put away the memory of indifference and division in the past, and to welcome the service and helpfulness of every Jew who recognizes that this is the hour of Jewish destiny.³⁹

Heller, former President of the CCAR during the years 1909-1911, likewise declared:

. . . They [they nations of the world] will see in the resurrection of the Jewish Nation the righting of the most ancient of the wrongs of despotism. The world has been tending all these years towards such a consummation. The last to be con-

vinced will be the snobs and autocrats in our ranks, but they are also bound to fall in line.⁴⁰

During the convention of the CCAR in 1918, reactions to the Balfour Declaration were formally expressed. The President's Message issued a very cool, blasé reaction to the Balfour Declaration which, while expressing gratitude, attempted to minimize its implications. These comments by Rabbi Louis Grossman, then President of the Conference, according to David Polish, "represent a departure from militant [anti-] Zionism and now contained a mixture of skepticism and political realism. His position had shifted to non-Zionism."⁴¹ Grossman, himself, proclaimed:

The British Declaration is a document of great importance. No argument for our approval of it can enhance its significance and there is no need to urge our belief in its sincerity. The British Government has earned the confidence of the Jews of England and of the United States, and, I may add, of the Jews of the world, not merely by its avowal of good intentions, but also by its prolonged equities of treatment

But there may be hesitation of quite another kind to herald it, as some enthusiasts do, as the Magna Charta of the Jewish People. For these enthusiasts forget a simple truth, that a Magna Charta is usually not a grant or concession, but an act of autonomous assertion. No people has become genuinely free through somebody else. And the Jews, if they are to achieve their independence as nationalists, should not have to wait upon the British Government nor any government, for a concession. The Nationalists contradict their allegations

So that while we may unequivocally express our admiration to the British Government for its farsightedness, for its appreciation of the splendid share the Jew has in civilization, and for its confidence that Jewish genius has much to contribute to civilization in a restored world, we must not run off the tangent with the impulsive illusion that it has solved the Jewish problem. That problem will vex the world and will embarrass us until the world-morale will have swept it away.⁴²

Grossman then continues by citing two accomplishments of the Balfour Declaration. The first has already been noted above; namely that the De-

claration had made the Jewish Question international. The second was that it unified Jews throughout the world. With these considerations in mind, Grossman calls on the Conference to re-establish the Committee on Jews in Foreign Lands:

The British Declaration has reopened the Jewish Question and has made it international. Up to its promulgation, the Jewish Question was local or national, and was tinkered with by legislatures and parliaments in fragmentary and desultory ways

And the British Declaration has done something else. It has brought the Jews of the various countries nearer to one another. The thrill that the conscience of Europe has awakened to do justice to the Jew is felt everywhere. This constitutes a psychological moment of first importance. Now is the time for a united Israel I suggest that that committee [Committee on Jews in Foreign Lands] be restored and entrusted with the duty to establish correspondence and co-operation with acknowledged Jewish organizations abroad, such as are now accessible, and such as will become accessible after the restoration of peace.⁴³

A minority resolution, which was positive in tone, was introduced to the body and referred to the Committee on the President's Message. It expressed the profound appreciation of the CCAR for the Balfour Declaration. The Committee on the President's Message included appreciation of the Balfour Declaration in its report, but emphasized that Palestine should not be considered the homeland of the Jews. It claimed that Jews in America are part of the American nation. The maintenance of Judaism (its survival) rests on the historic-religious role of its people, not on the establishment of a Jewish state:

The Central Conference of American Rabbis notes with grateful appreciation the declaration of the British Government by Mr. Balfour as an evidence of good-will toward the Jews. We naturally favor the facilitation of immigration to Palestine of Jews who, either because of economic necessity or political or religious persecution desire to settle there. We hold that Jews

in Palestine as well as anywhere else in the world are entitled to equality in political, civil, and religious rights but we do not subscribe to the phrase in the declaration which says, "Palestine is to be a national home-land for the Jewish people." This statement assumes that the Jews although identified with the life of many nations for centuries are in fact a people without a country. We hold that Jewish people are and of right ought to be at home in all lands. Israel, like every other religious communion, has the right to live and assert its message in any part of the world. We are opposed to the idea that Palestine should be considered the home-land of the Jews. Jews in America are part of the American nation. The ideal of a Jew is not the establishment of a Jewish state -- not the re-assertion of Jewish nationality which has long been outgrown. We believe that our survival as a people is dependent upon the assertion and the maintenance of our historic religious role and not upon the acceptance of Palestine as a home-land of the Jewish people. The mission of the Jew is to witness to God all over the world.⁴⁴

It is evident from this statement that Reform Judaism was not yet ready to allow historical events to dictate their philosophy and thinking. An argument over this statement ensued on the floor as to whether to keep or delete the latter portion dealing with the anti-homeland sentiments regarding Palestine. After a heated debate, the original report was adopted in full.

The Committee on Contemporaneous History for its part again made a plea for the Conference to participate in the cultural building of Palestine to promote education, economic progress, and archeological studies. The time was right, claimed the Committee, because the British army occupied much of Palestine.

Particularly interesting is a letter submitted by a layman, Mr. Isaac W. Bernheim, to the Conference. It essentially hailed America as the home of American Jews. Bernheim pointed out that Jews have no special ties with Palestine. He stressed that they are Americans first.⁴⁵ Not only was his letter read to the whole body, but it was printed in the CCAR

Yearbook. One must assume, then, that members of the Conference held that this letter expressed the views of laymen with regard to Jewish nationalism since they attributed to it so much importance.

Nevertheless, moderation of the anti-Zionist stand within the Central Conference of Reform Rabbis was evident. Even Kaufman Kohler in an address ("The Mission of Israel and its Application to Modern Times") to the Conference in 1919 abandoned his resolute anti-Zionist views and spoke of Palestine in terms of one means of furthering Israel's mission. This was quite a change in attitude for Kohler (the second President of the Hebrew Union College) who had helped to fashion the Pittsburgh Platform:

. . . A new heaven and a new earth are the prophetic promises of our statesmen and seers. Who can be in closer sympathy with the stupendous plan of a world peace built on justice and liberty in which the leaders of the nations are engaged in these days, than is the descendant of the prophets and psalmists, the Jew whose scriptural truths built up the American Republic, and whose prophetic dreams and visions of yore are made the sponsors of a new humanity today? Decades, nay, centuries may pass before the lofty ideals will have become a reality; but we have learned to wait. Not for a Zion which is within easy reach, which is purchased and made a matter of diplomatic bargaining. Zion has for us a spiritual meaning. It is the symbol of a united humanity, of the realization of mankind's highest ideal at the end of time.

Let Palestine, our ancient home, under the protection of the great nations, or under the specific British suzerainty, again become a center of Jewish culture and a safe refuge to the homeless. We shall all welcome it and aid in the promotion of the work. Let the million or more of Jewish citizens dwelling there amidst the large Christian and Mohammedan population attached to their own sacred spots, be empowered and encouraged to build up a commonwealth broad and liberal in spirit to serve as a school for international and interdenominational humanity. We shall all hail the undertaking and pray for its prosperity. The historic task of the Jew is not to be, and cannot be, accomplished therewith. This would never be the solution of the great enigma of Jewish history, nor a sa-

tisfactory end to the awful tragedy. Call Israel, as did Judah ha Levi, the great lover of Zion, the heart of mankind whose life sap was to flow through the arteries of the nations, or compare it, as was repeatedly done, to the Gulf Stream, whose warm currents run through the ocean to calm its wild waves, the Jew will ever remain an international force influencing the world, as it has been influenced by it on its course through the lands and the ages. His place is not among the League of Nations, but among the League of Religions, as already indicated by the last of the prophets when he says: "From the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, My name is great among the nations . . . saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal.1,11).⁴⁶

Although the confrontation between Zionists and anti-Zionist elements continued within the Conference and the anti-Zionists did not desist from offering their resolutions, the Zionists succeeded in voicing their viewpoints within Reform Judaism. This is not to suggest that there was a reconciliation between the two groups. As David Polish points out: "Instead, Zionist rabbis defended themselves in growing numbers and with greater vigor, while the anti-Zionist and the non-Zionist position accorded the Zionist presence a large measure of de facto recognition."⁴⁷ Polish cogently cites Julian Morgenstern, who became President of the Hebrew Union College in 1921, as exemplifying de facto recognition of Zionists. For Morgenstern, the Jewish homeland in Palestine was reality. There could be no reason to argue over this fact. Two issues, however, connected with Zionist endeavors were of concern to him. Would Zionism require that American Jewry be spiritually and culturally subordinated? And did the majority of American Zionists still have faith that America would in the future remain their homeland? Morgenstern expresses his position in an address to the Conference in 1919, entitled "Were Isaac M. Wise Alive Today":

There is no need to discuss here the merits or demerits of Zionism. There has been altogether too much of that, and it has led only to recrimination and dissension. But Zionism must be treated objectively as a historical fact and Zionists as a distinct group in American Jewry today.

There is actually for us only one question fundamentally at issue between Zionism and anti-Zionism. It is not the question of the establishment of a specifically Jewish culture, and the influence of such a Jewish state and culture upon the fortunes of Jews and Judaism in other lands. But, except for the fact that it is the bone of contention between Zionists and anti-Zionists, and has contributed greatly to the division of American Israel into two camps, it has little direct bearing upon our main problem.

For us the vital question in the Zionist controversy is whether Judaism in America possesses the power of self-invigoration and self-perpetuation, or must eventually die unless it be given a prompt and oft-repeated hypodermic injection of national Palestinian Jewish culture and devotion. Many Zionists affirm that Judaism in America can not live, is doomed, without the constant stimulus of a Jewish state and a Jewish culture in Palestine; and even then its existence must be precarious and altogether dependent. This is certainly a logical deduction from the basic premises of Zionism.

One other conclusion also follows necessarily from these premises and this argument. If Judaism in America, just to continue to exist, requires the stimulus of a Jewish state in Palestine and a Jewish national culture, then we Jews in America, if we wish to remain Jews at all, must hold ourselves aloof and distinct, not only religiously, but also nationally and culturally, from the American nation and people. Contrary to what we have been taught to believe is the fundamental principle of Americanism, viz., American national unity and solidarity, we Jews in America must uphold the eastern European principle of national group organization and national group rights and cultures, and must refuse to incorporate ourselves completely with the American nation and to assume out responsibility and contribute our share to the evolution of American national culture.

If this be what is meant by assimilation, then we are assimilationists, and we accept the term as a title of honor and American loyalty. For we subscribe unconditionally to the principle of Americanism, which, while it guarantees full freedom of religious belief

and worship, none the less demands that all American citizens, regardless of racial and national origin and previous culture, integrate themselves completely into the American nation and culture, and that even religion contribute of its spiritual treasures to the rich content of this American culture. In this respect we believe that Zionism is altogether foreign to and incompatible with Americanism and American Judaism.

But more than this, we believe with perfect faith that Judaism can live and perpetuate itself and expand here in America, entirely without the need of foreign stimuli, whether from Palestine or elsewhere. True, Russian Orthodox Judaism can not live here; and equally true, an unmodified German Reform Judaism can not live here. But neither of these is American Judaism. And in American Judaism and its power of life and growth in America we have complete faith.

And this question of faith or lack of faith in American Judaism is the real, vital issue between American Zionism and anti-Zionism. It matters little if one labors for a Jewish home land in Palestine, even as an independent Jewish state, so long as it does not affect his personal attitude toward Americanism, and his perfect faith in the future of America as a unified nation, and in American Judaism as a living religion in America. Provided he have this faith and labor for its consummation regardless of Palestinian interests and activities, he is an American and an American Jew in heart and soul.

And we believe that most American Zionists, so-called, are just this kind of Zionist, that their Americanism is in every respect unqualified and beyond question, and that their advocacy of a Jewish state or commonwealth in Palestine is entirely altruistic. What though there be a certain lack of consistency and logic in their combination of Americanism with Zionism. Very few men and women are perfectly consistent and logical in all their beliefs and works. Just this inconsistency and illogicality, we imagine, distinguish the American Zionist from the European Zionist. The former is primarily an American nationalist, a citizen of America; the latter is primarily a Zionist nationalist, a citizen of a Jewish state still to be formed.

But since the American Zionist is primarily an American, and only secondarily and altruistically a Zionist, he must have faith, not only in America and Americanism, but also in Judaism in America, in its power and in its historical compulsion to live and grow as American Judaism. As a Jew whose life in every way centers in America, he must integrate himself completely, as

he does, with the spirit and works of Americanism.

If a Jewish state be ever established in Palestine, and a Jewish culture evolve there, and they be able to contribute anything, much or little, to the up-building and enrichment of American Judaism, as Zionists claim, surely we will not object. Undoubtedly American Judaism will receive certain stimuli from the Judaisms of other lands, with which, needless to say, it is, and will ever remain united by the strong bonds of history and religion. It will likewise undoubtedly contribute equally of its own knowledge and strength to those foreign Judaisms, even the Judaism of Palestine.

But upon all American Jews, Zionists and non-Zionists alike, whose home and whose faith are here in America, there rests the sacred obligation to compose all differences in the face of their common duty and their common goal, and to labor together to bring about union in American Israel, and to consciously, wisely, systematically build up a living, virile American Judaism, which shall root itself deep in American soil, shall grow and thrive in American atmosphere, and shall offer that spiritual pabulum which alone can satisfy the religious hunger of American Jewry.

The period of foreign groups and elements in American Jewry is passing. We have almost ceased to be Portuguese and German and Polish and Russian and Roumanian Jews. Those differences exist today only as rapidly disappearing survivals of an outgrown life. Tomorrow they will be gone entirely, and we will have become completely in fact, what we are already in spirit, one, united American Israel. Likewise the period of dominant foreign ideas and principles in the Judaism of America is passing. German Reform Judaism, Russian Orthodox Judaism, European Zionism, the day of all these in America is almost done. The new day of one, united, common American Judaism is dawning for us and our children.

What will this American Judaism be? We can only determine the tendencies of today, and from this attempt to forecast the future. The general principle is assured; American Judaism will be both Jewish and American, a positive fusion of the principles of Judaism and Americanism applied to the daily existence of the Jews of America. . . .48

The overwhelming drive toward Americanism and the vigilance with which Morgenstern and others attempted to prevent any cause for an outbreak of anti-Semitism in America was well-founded. Post World War I

America was plagued with raids against the "Reds" (Communists) launched by Secretary of State A. Mitchell Palmer -- the "Big Red Scare". President Wilson allowed the Postmaster General to retain war-time controls over mail and press. "Un-American" elements were sought out and suppressed. The War and the Russian Revolution influenced citizens in America to define more precisely their Americanism. Moreover, Henry Ford directly attacked Jews and unleashed the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion".⁴⁹ Indeed, this was a period of anxiety for all Americans over their status and security.

It comes as no surprise therefore that Rabbi Leo Franklin devoted the opening section of his Presidential Message to the CCAR meeting, in 1920, to a repudiation of these charges.⁵⁰ This meeting also included another great debate over Zionism; for during that year (1920), the San Remo Conference (League of Nations) granted Great Britain a Mandate over Palestine. Zionists and Jews in Palestine alike were elated over this announcement. The Zionist Organization of America organized an historic meeting in New York (on May 9-10, 1920) to celebrate the San Remo decision. The Conference had been invited to send a delegation, but Franklin turned down the invitation claiming that CCAR presence at that gathering would violate its expressed position on the Zionist question. Franklin's letter to the Secretary of the Z.O.A. was cited, in its entirety, within his Presidential Message:

May 3, 1920.

Mr. Louis Lipsky, Secy.,
Zionist Organization of America,
55 5th Ave., New York City.

My Dear Mr. Lipsky:

I beg to acknowledge with appreciation your letter of April 30, inviting the Central Conference of American Rabbis to elect a delegation of three to participate in the Extraordinary Convention of delegates

representing the membership of the Zionist Organization of America to be held in the City of New York on May 9th and 10th to celebrate the issuance by the San Remo Conference of a mandate to Great Britain over Palestine.

Deeply appreciative as the Conference must be of this very courteous invitation, I regret that it will be impossible for us officially to participate in the convention, if for no other reason than that the Conference is not a member of the Zionist Organization whose delegates, according to your letter, are to compose the meeting.

Moreover, as you will no doubt recall, the Central Conference of American Rabbis at its 1918 meeting, held in the City of Chicago, set itself on record as follows:

"The Central Conference of American Rabbis notes with grateful appreciation the declaration of the British Government by Mr. Balfour as an evidence of good-will toward the Jews. We naturally favor the facilitation of immigration to Palestine of Jews who either because of economic necessity or political or religious persecution desire to settle there. We hold that Jews in Palestine as well as anywhere else in the world are entitled to equality in political, civil and religious rights, but we do not subscribe to the phrase in the declaration which says, 'Palestine is to be a national home-land for the Jewish people.' This statement assumes that the Jews, although identified with the life of many nations for centuries, are in fact a people without a country. We hold that Jewish people are, and of right ought to be, at home in all lands. Israel, like every other religious communion, has the right to live and assert its message in any part of the world. We are opposed to the idea that Palestine should be considered the home-land of the Jews. Jews in America are part of the American nation. The ideal of the Jew is not the establishment of a Jewish state - - not the re-assertion of Jewish nationality which has long been outgrown. We believe that our survival as a people is dependent upon the assertion and the maintenance of our historic religious role and not upon the acceptance of Palestine as a home-land of the Jewish people. The mission of the Jew is to witness to God all over the world."

You will readily see, I am sure, that in the light of the above resolution expressive of the sentiment of the Conference toward the Palestinian question, we could not consistently participate in a meeting whose purpose is to stress the establishment in Palestine of the Jewish national home.

None the less, I am entirely sure that I voice the sentiment of every member of the Central Conference of American Rabbis when I say that we greatly rejoice in the prospect that a considerable number of our brethren in faith who are now the victims of physical suffering and spiritual repression may be able to find in Palestine the opportunity to live full, free, and happy lives.

In any movement looking to make Palestine a land not merely of refuge for the down-trodden Jew, but as well a place where a fuller expression may be given to the spiritual genius of the Jew, you may be assured of the full and whole-hearted co-operation of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

In the hope that the decision of the San Remo Conference may point to a new and better day for world Israel, and that the last chapter in the story of Israel's martyrdom having been written, what follows shall be a tale of Israel's spiritual mastery, I beg to remain,

Very sincerely yours,

Leo M. Franklin, President.⁵¹

Franklin, in his speech, stated that he did not want to reopen the Palestinian question within the CCAR, but he emphasized that all Jews must be in agreement on one point: "that we stand ready to aid with all our powers in the physical reconstruction of the land [Palestine]"⁵² This is indeed a well-tempered proclamation for a man who had always been an anti-Zionist.

Before the Committee on the President's Message presented its formal report, the following resolution was submitted to it for consideration:

Together with world-Jewry, the Central Conference of American Rabbis rejoices in the decision of the San Remo Conference of the Allied Powers to grant Great Britain a mandate over Palestine in conformity with the Balfour Declaration. We are deeply conscious of the historic moment of this generous and constructive step.

For the first time since the second Destruction of the Temple the Jew will be given the chance of securing not merely a refuge for his harassed brethren of

of the lands of darkness, but the growth of an indigenous Jewish life and culture, the intensification and vivication of his historic faith under the impulse of its own creativity.

We deem it the privilege and the duty of the Jews of this country to respond to the fullest extent to the call that has come to us from San Remo, to aid unstintedly in this work of the redemption, of the restoration of our land and people.

We desire, therefore, to offer our support to the agencies of the Zionist Organization of America, whose task it will be to collect and direct the necessary forces, spiritual and material. The time has come for united action, and we offer ourselves for the good of the people and faith to which we have consecrated our lives.⁵³

Nevertheless, the Committee on the President's Message, chaired by Rabbi Samuel Schulman (another anti-Zionist), essentially echoed Franklin's stand. It hailed the British Mandate, but reiterated the position adopted in reaction to the Balfour Declaration:

We endorse the action of the President in declining the invitation of the Zionist Organization of America to appoint a delegation to participate in the Extraordinary Convention of delegates representing the membership of the Zionist Organization held in the city of New York, May 9 and 10, to celebrate the issuance by the San Remo Conference of a Mandate over Palestine to Great Britain.

We rejoice, indeed, at the present decision of the San Remo Conference to give to Great Britain a mandate over Palestine in line with the Balfour Declaration. But, we hold today what the Conference declared anent the Balfour Declaration two years ago. We do not subscribe to the phrase in the declaration which says "Palestine is to be a national home land for the Jewish People." We believe that Israel, the Jewish People, like every other religious communion, has the right to live, to be at home, and to assert its message in every part of the world.

With confidence in the free institutions of Great Britain, we rejoice in and recognize the historic significance of such a British Mandate for Palestine, in that it will offer the opportunity to some Jews who may desire to settle there to go there, and to live full, free and happy lives. And if facilities

are offered for an appreciable number to go there from lands in which they suffer from religious, political or economic persecution they may be enabled so to shape their communal life that, inspired by the hallowed associations of the land in which Israel's Prophets announced world-redeeming ideas, they may become a great spiritual influence.

While we thus rejoice, we do not, however, admit that this historic event is what has been called, the Geulah or the Redemption of Israel. Convinced that the mission of the Jew is to witness to God all over the world, emphasizing the religious function of Israel, and rejecting any assertion of Jewish nationality, which it has long ago outgrown, we hold that Israel's Redemption will only be realized when the Jew will have the right to live in any part of the world, and, all racial and religious prejudice and persecution ended, Israel will be free as a religious power and integral part of all nations to give world service.

Recognizing the opportunity which Palestine under the Mandate of the British empire will offer some Jews, the Conference reiterates now what it has said many times, that it is the duty of all Jews to contribute to the reconstruction of Palestine, in so far as Jews may place themselves there and make it a good place for them to live in. But the cooperation of Jews who reject Jewish Nationalism is made difficult, nay, impossible, as long as the Zionist Organization is committed to such Nationalism. For such cooperation would mean the tacit acceptance of the program and ideals of Zionism. We, therefore, hold that it is the duty of all Jews to make clear the character of the practical work now demanded for Palestine, leaving to the Jews there, and not to any partisan organization, to determine their own destiny. We hope that for the sake of unity in Israel, and above all, for the sake of the practical help to Palestinian Jews, some plan for the Union of Jewish forces may be devised. In the present circumstances we believe that while nothing Jewish is alien to our Jewish hearts, and that while we are ready to help in the work of rebuilding Palestine for some Jews, we reemphasize the view of Jewish life for which our Conference stands -- that Israel is not a nation, but a religious community; that Palestine is the the homeland for the Jewish People, but that the whole world ought to be its home.

In conclusion, we congratulate the President once more and hope that the fine service which his last year's administration gave to American Judaism will stimulate us all to earnest endeavor for the blessing of Israel and our fellowmen and for the glory of God.⁵⁴

A minority report was immediately submitted to counteract the underlying negative tone of the Committee's report. This statement made a plea for a call to action among all Jews:

The treaty of San Remo, following the lead of the Balfour Declaration, has stamped the sanction of the civilized world upon the program of political Zionism, which had confined itself to the demand for a "publicly secured, legally safe-guarded home for the Jewish people in Palestine". Before the treaty has been signed, Great Britain has begun its task as mandatory for a Jewish national homeland by appointing Mr. Herbert Samuel as High Commissioner.

The Jewish Communities in every corner of the globe have greeted this epochal consummation with an outpouring of joy, which, through contrast, was deepened by the tragic plight of our Eastern brothers and by the recrudescence of anti-Semitism in the Western world. Wherever Jewish hearts beat in loyalty for our people and our mission it is recognized that a priceless opportunity and a grave responsibility have come to our generation which call for united effort and generous self-sacrifice.

This Central Conference of American Rabbis must perceive that conditions annihilate theories. Truth and justice have not changed; but solemn duties are arising out of inexorable circumstances.

Now that Palestine is to be, by world consent, a national homeland for our people, our duty is, first of all, to lift our hearts in fervent gratitude to the mysterious Providence which is guiding the Jewish people out of its wildernesses into the Promised Land; then to convey the expression of our own warm appreciation to those human agencies; the Zionist Organization, the British Government, the Entente Powers and President Wilson, who have been instrumental in bringing about this consummation; to honor the memories of those no longer with us who have fought and suffered for the realization of our longings of almost two score centuries; lastly, to call, as earnestly as we can, upon our people that they shall take up, in a spirit of fervid loyalty and steadfast hope, the delicate and difficult tasks which now await us.⁵⁵

These reports triggered a discussion on the floor which might have lasted indefinitely, had time not been called. When brought to a vote, the minority report was defeated, but the Zionist minority gained one

major concession. The CCAR agreed to publish all reports and resolutions received, whether adopted, amended or rejected.⁵⁶

Throughout the 1920's sharp debates over its Zionist stand continued within the Central Conference of American Rabbis. In addition the Conference, from time to time, voiced and pledged its support of work which was done to develop Palestine. Many of these sentiments were verbalized by the Committee on Contemporaneous History and then enacted through resolutions.

The Committee on Contemporaneous History, in its report of 1921, recognized the division on the Zionist principle within the Conference, but maintained that a Jewish state in Palestine was already a fact. Therefore, it proposed a unifying action -- that American (Reform) Jews establish economic and spiritual representation in the life of Jews in Palestine by sponsoring courses in English in schools of higher learning there or by endowing a chair for English at the university proposed for Jerusalem. It also suggested awarding prizes for works published by a Jewish academy and "preferably for an edition of works of rabbinical literature which have been neglected for centuries."⁵⁷

At this same convention, a resolution was proposed which propounded that the CCAR should "endeavor to arrive at some practical and expedient method of co-operation with the Zionist organization towards the rebuilding of Palestine."⁵⁸ Although the resolution carried, an amendment to endorse the principle of the resolution lost. Again, a discussion of the Zionist issue was touched off within the Conference.

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, during the following year, 1922, suggested in a letter to the Executive Board that the CCAR express its willingness to work with the Palestine Development Council. As the result of his ef-

forts, the Conference passed a resolution (with only one dissenting vote) containing the proviso that Zionists and non-Zionists have equal representation on the Council's Board:

WHEREAS, the Palestine Development Council has been established for the sole purpose of stimulating the social and economic reconstruction of Palestine in co-operation with the mandatory power; and

WHEREAS, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, in the course of its statement made at Rochester, 1920, said that it was the duty of all Jews to contribute to the reconstruction of Palestine, insofar as Jews may be enabled to place themselves there.

THEREFORE, the Palestine Development Council and the Central Conference of American Rabbis hereby agree, by their joint efforts, to associate themselves in the economic rehabilitation of Palestine and the promotion of the settlement in that country of such Jews as wish to go there.

FURTHER, the Palestine Development Council and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, in adopting a policy of joint active participation in the work of developing Palestine, hereby agree that such joint effort is predicated upon the understanding that neither party, as an organization, is committed to any political-nationalist program.

IT IS FURTHER AGREED that the Central Conference of American Rabbis shall call upon its members actively to support, in accordance with this agreement, the economic enterprises of the Council; provided, however, that the Central Conference of American Rabbis or the Palestine Development Council shall have the right to terminate this agreement at its annual convention.

FURTHER, that upon the acceptance of these resolutions by the Palestine Development Council and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, at their respective conventions, they be given the widest publicity and be published in the program describing the aims and the objects of the Central Committee of the Palestine Development League.

IT IS FURTHER AGREED, that the Conference shall have a representation of six in the Palestine Development Council, to belong to the group in the Council that are known as members at large. And furthermore, the Conference shall appoint six men to serve on the Central Committee of the Palestine Development League.⁵⁹

Moreover, Silver and Isaac Landman submitted a resolution which urged in

light of the above agreement, that the CCAR and the Palestine Development Council jointly invite other Jewish organizations on a national scale to help create one organization of united Jewry to promote the development of Palestine in cooperation with Palestine. The Resolutions Committee, however, blocked this resolution claiming that it surpassed the boundaries of the CCAR as a religious body.⁶⁰

Another important event occurred in 1922 which reflected Reform attitudes towards Jewish nationalism. Representative Hamilton Fish introduced the following resolution before the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives in the United States Congress:

Whereas the Jewish people for many centuries have believed in and yearned for the rebuilding of their ancient homeland; and

Whereas owing to the outcome of the World War and their part therein the Jewish people, under definite and adequate international guarantees are to be enabled, with due regard to the rights of all elements of the population of Palestine and to the sanctity of its holy places, to re-create and reorganize a national home in the land of their fathers: Therefore be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), that the Congress of the United States hereby express its profound satisfaction in that outcome of the victorious war which promises the building up of a new and beneficent life in Palestine, rejoices in this act of historic justice about to be consummated, and on behalf of the American people commends an undertaking which will do honor to Christendom and give to the House of Israel its long-denied opportunity to reestablish a fruitful Jewish life and culture in the ancient Jewish land.⁶¹

During hearings concerning this bill, two Reform rabbis, David Philipson and Isaac Landman testified. Basically, they espoused between them all of the anti-Zionist sentiments which characterized mainstream Reform thought of the first two decades of the twentieth century. In ad-

dition, Philipson commented that:

. . . he was opposed to the bill because the United States government had no authority to interfere in the internal matters of a religious group, because America should not become entangled in European politics, and because the bill seemed to appeal to the "Jewish vote."⁶²

Landman, however, admitted that no Jew would be opposed to the rebuilding of Palestine, but the majority objects to a political Jewish nation.

The attitude of non-Zionism gradually adopted by the CCAR during the period (1917-1936) was eloquently expressed by Rabbi Abram Simon in his Presidential address to the CCAR in 1924. While still maintaining its repudiation of political Zionism, Simon urged the Conference to work toward the creation of a Jewish Agency to carry out the expectations of the Balfour Declaration. This Jewish Agency should be composed of equal numbers of Zionists and non-Zionists. (Here, as in the agreement between the CCAR and the Palestine Development Council (1922), the term "non-Zionist" represents a fundamental change in Reform thought.) The salient sections of Simon's message follow:

. . . The official statement of our Conference, adopted in connection with the Report of the Committee on President's Message (Yearbook XXVII, page 133), remains as its repudiation of Nationalistic Zionism. Nothing has transpired to suggest any change in that well-worded document. The march of events, however, often leaves finely woven theories behind. Life breaks through the meshes of logic. Whatever we may say to the contrary, Palestinism is a more impressive responsibility, and calls to us as insistently as the condemnation of political Zionism. We are not viewing the segment of Palestine as equal in size or responsibility to the circumference of Israel's world hope. The rehabilitation of the Holy Land has our profound sympathy; yet we have only expressed it in a willing co-operation with the Palestine Development Council. The reclamation of Palestine cannot succeed on resolutions. Burning zeal, practical co-operation and financial support of a united Israel can alone make this hope come true. Accepting

our Conference Resolution in its fullest import, the conclusion is inevitable that we must assist in the rehabilitation of the Holy Land either as individuals or as an organization. Individual labors are costly, dissipate energy, and put to naught the best of plans. Group activities by the Zionist organization did not win our support. Group activities by the Palestine Development Council did win our support. The merger of the Palestine Development Council with the newly created Investment Company is of probable consummation. If such a merger comes to pass, our relation to the Palestine Development Council automatically ceases. Until it does, our moral obligations to it must be held sacred. How to co-operate with any other responsible organization doing a similar kind of work and flying the same non-committal banner, brings us to ask if a modus operandi with the Zionist organization is now feasible, advisable and imperative.

The use of the words Zionist and non-Zionist is necessary, so long as important distinctions are comprehended by them. That these distinctions lie imbedded in historical and philosophical interpretations is obvious. That they cannot be legislated out of the minds of sincere advocates by mere protests is equally obvious. What is the common sense point of view? What should we do to make good our determination to facilitate immigration and to help in the reconstruction of Palestine?

A basis upon which non-Zionists may labor is furnished in the authoritative declaration of the recent Carlsbad Conference that a Jewish Agency be created of equal Zionist and non-Zionist representation to carry into effect the expectation of the Balfour Declaration. The non-Partisan Group is the first and only body which has thus far made any serious effort to formulate a workable program. Its tentative outlines may be delineated as follows:

- (a) The Council or Jewish Agency shall be composed of one hundred and fifty members, to be equally divided between Zionists and non-Zionists. Forty per cent of the non-Zionist members are to be chosen from the United States.
- (b) An Executive Board of eighteen is to be created of equal representation.
- (c) A Body of Experts is to be selected by the Executive Committee to function in Palestine.
- (d) With the acceptance of the Jewish agency in all lands, the Zionist Organization will discontinue as The Jewish Agency.

. . . More and more tightly will the lines be drawn around immigration into our country. If race shall be added to nation, and then religion added to both as bases of restriction, the coming of Jews to our land in a few years will be impossible. In other words, the Jewish population in our land must grow from within. The outlook in European lands for Jewish settlements is not promising. Palestine, at least, holds out a beacon of hope for those of our brethren who wish to live there. To make it possible for them to come within the limits of reasonable and assimilable numbers implies an adequate preparation of the country, and this in lines of irrigation, colonization, hygiene, education and industrial development calls for a huge sum of money. Our interest in this great adventure is sincere enough to override our fears that some with whom we are to co-operate still find comfort in the illusive dream of a Jewish State. What form of political unity may be necessary five decades hence cannot be raised as an impassable obstacle against our desire for the creation of a Jewish Agency. It is our fond hope that the above mentioned formula for a Jewish Agency may be presented to a conference of Jewish representatives of our land for adoption. Without awaiting such an assembly, our Conference is now in the Valley of Decision.

Can we Jewish leaders not accept this formula or so modify it by safeguarding reservations as to express the willing attitude of non-Zionists? There are three courses: Organize a new non-Zionist group or continue our present irreconcilability, or co-operate with a non-Partisan Conference. I recommend the acceptance by our Conference of the basis recommended by the non-Partisan Group, and the appointment of a Committee to co-operate with the same or a more inclusive body in the further development of this program.⁶³

Just as Abram Simon, a non-Zionist, whole-heartedly called for full cooperation in efforts to develop Palestine, the Committee on the President's Message likewise voiced this view in its report which was approved unanimously. It stressed "cooperation in the social economic rehabilitation of Palestine"⁶⁴ and urged the Conference to accept the tentative outline for the Jewish Agency as suggested by the non-partisan group.

The resolution to join the Jewish Agency was ignored until the 1930 convention. Perhaps due in part to the 1929 riots in Palestine, especially

Arab attacks on Jewish settlers in Hebron, the CCAR finally joined the Jewish Agency.

Meanwhile several noteworthy events occurred during the interim period. A clash in opinions erupted in 1925 within the CCAR in reaction to a proposal to join relief for Jews in Europe with funds for resettling Jews in Palestine. Louis Newman asserted that the two could not be separated and set forth a motion that the Conference back efforts by the Jewish Agency with regard to relief (for) and resettlement of Jews. The motion lost by two votes. In 1926, the Committee on the President's Message directed the Executive Board to make a study of the religious needs of the Jewish population in Palestine and to investigate where there would be possibilities for Reform Judaism to make inroads. By 1927, 10% of the Conference membership had become political Zionists. David Polish assesses the situation as follows:

Two realities emerge. First, the anti-Zionist position seems to have spent itself. Anti-Zionism would linger, but second, the voices of Zionist rabbis would increasingly be heard with authority and growing acceptance within the deliberations of the Conference.⁶⁵

Consequently, in 1928, the CCAR easily passed a resolution supporting relief and rehabilitation in Palestine. It pointed out that the Conference "views with satisfaction the productive labors of the Jewish Agency Commissioners" and Conference members should give sympathetic cooperation "to realize the aims which this program encompasses."⁶⁶

The mood and proceedings of the Central Conference of American Rabbis during the early 1930's substantiates the assertion that its previous vehement anti-Zionistic stand had dissipated to that of non-Zionism. The Presidents' Messages make a plea for help from American Jewry to provide

the needs of Palestinian Jewry and the Jewish Agency. There was an acute awareness within the Reform Rabbinate of the deteriorating situation of Jews in Europe. Palestine was a real refuge for those Jews.

One striking example of the new non-Zionist attitude effecting decisions occurred at the 1930 convention of the Conference where a disagreement evolved over the inclusion of the Zionist hymn "Hatikvah" in the new Union Hymnal. After a very moderate discussion the members moved to have it included in the hymnal. What might have been a fiery, drawn-out debate only a few years earlier, was now low-keyed. Rabbi Louis Wolsey argued that the hymnal was to be limited to devotional music. Rabbi Stephen S. Wise responded by questioning the inclusion of "The Star Spangled Banner". That marked the end of the discussion.

By 1933, Hitler had come to power in Germany and the Nazis had taken over control of that country. As Nazi persecution of Jews began, the CCAR stepped up its support of immigration to Palestine. That very year, the President, Morris Newfield, expressed his shock and sadness over the position of German Jews and their plight. He also noted that with a hopeless future in Germany, the Jews there had, with the exception of Palestine, very few countries to which they could turn. Consequently, he recommended:

. . . that the Central Conference of American Rabbis heartily endorse the appeal of the Jewish Agency for adequate means to promote the settlement of large numbers in Palestine, and that we urge the members of the Conference to support this endeavor in their respective communities.⁶⁷

Newfield also endorsed efforts by the Joint Distribution Committee to gather funds on behalf of German Jews and the B'nai Brith plan to unify all American Jews under one representative body. He called for the CCAR to

organize a national conference, should the B'nai Brith fail.

Newfield's recommendation concerning immigration was realized during the next convention of the CCAR in 1934. Although Samuel H. Goldenson, the new President of the Conference, was not pro-Zionist, he shared the genuine concern over the plight of German Jewry which permeated the Conference, and he therefore urged support for Palestine or any country which would provide a haven for the Jews.⁶⁸ In response, the Committee on Resolutions accepted a resolution which was submitted to them and which stated:

The Central Conference of American Rabbis expresses its profound joy and satisfaction at the economic, cultural, and spiritual progress of the new Palestine. We rejoice to note that Palestine has proved to be a haven for many Jews, and we urge the mandatory power in these days of stress and crisis for Israel to facilitate in every possible way the settlement of an increasing number of Jews in Palestine in accordance with the program of the Jewish Agency.⁶⁹

Contemporaneously, during the early 1930's, attempts were already being made to reconcile Reform Judaism and Zionism -- to show that indeed the two movements were not incompatible and that the two (their ideologies) could and should be synthesized. Rabbi Barnett R. Brickner clearly made this point in his address "The Reform of Reform Judaism", delivered at the 1932 CCAR convention:

. . . I believe that the synthesis between Reform Judaism and Jewish nationalism is both a logical and an emotional necessity. The two must not, yea, cannot be kept apart any longer. Jewish nationalism needs the dynamic of religion for its motivation and power; and Reform needs the whole Household of Israel for its congregation.⁷⁰

Rabbi Abraham Feldman, in his sermon to the CCAR in 1934, called for a

partial revision of the Pittsburgh Platform. His outlook concurred with that of Barnett Brickner. Feldman understood that Zionism encompassed both political and spiritual elements. Feldman, also, sought to synthesize Reform Jewish thought and Zionist ideology:

First -- We should revise the fifth paragraph of the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885. That paragraph, in one part of it, defines the people of Israel to be a "religious community" exclusively, and renounces any future hope for the rebuilding of Palestine. I feel that we should now revise that paragraph and make it more consonant with our modern needs and convictions. In 1885, Palestine did not occupy the place in Jewish life which it occupies today. It was more than a decade before Theodor Herzl and Ahad Ha-am. Nearly half a century has elapsed since the "Pittsburgh Platform" was adopted. Much has happened, much has transpired and changed in Jewish life and thought, as indeed in world thought, in these forty-nine years. A new statement, a new declaration of principles is imperative, a declaration that will recognize and reassert the spiritual and ethnic Gemeinschaft of Israel and take sympathetic cognizance of the Palestine that is being rebuilt, of the spiritual and cultural values inherent in that phenomenal development. Such a declaration, I urge, should be made forthwith.

The 1935 convention of the CCAR officially dropped the anti-Zionist attitude and adopted one of neutrality. A minority resolution was submitted to the Committee on Resolutions:

In the past, despite the fact that for many years members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis have believed that there is no inherent incompatibility between Reform Judaism and Zionism, this Conference has repeatedly adopted resolutions expressing its deep dissent from the principles and policies of the latter. We believe that the time has come for a change in the attitude these former actions implied.

When there is an honest difference of opinion in respect to the nature of Reform Judaism, anti-Zionists should not force their views down the throats

of Zionists, nor in turn should Zionists now demand that the Conference, at least in the present status of the problem, commit itself to the Zionist philosophy and program. A policy of neutrality and of mutual respect and tolerance should be fostered.

We cannot blot out the record of the past. But we can determine our present stand. Be it, therefore, resolved that the Central Conference of American Rabbis as a body harbors at present no opposition to Zionism and will permit to every constituent member the right to determine his own spiritual convictions and his own practical stand upon this important problem.⁷²

However, the Committee offered a substitute resolution which passed by an overwhelming majority:

Whereas, At certain foregoing conventions of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, resolutions have been adopted in opposition to Zionism, and

Whereas, We believe that such an attitude no longer reflects the sentiment of a very substantial section of the Conference membership, and

Whereas, We are persuaded that acceptance or rejection of the Zionist program should be left to the determination of the individual members of the Conference themselves, therefore

Be It Resolved, That the Central Conference of American Rabbis takes no official stand on the subject of Zionism; and be it further

Resolved, That in keeping with its oft-announced intentions, the Central Conference of American Rabbis will continue to co-operate in the upbuilding of Palestine, and in the economic, cultural and particularly spiritual tasks confronting the growing and evolving Jewish community there.

The substitute resolution was adopted after the second paragraph had been deleted.⁷³

With the passage of this resolution, the Conference began a thorough examination and debate over its commitment to Jewish nationalism.

At this same convention (1935), two Reform giants, Rabbi Abba Hillel

Silver, the Zionist, and Rabbi Samuel Schulman, an anti-Zionist, once again debated the Zionist issue. The result proved that there was growing Zionist sentiments among the Reform rabbis. Silver traced the history of and reason for Reform anti-Zionist feeling. He showed how Zionism, a return to Zion, is actually an integral part of Reform as witnessed by some of those later philosophers who were held in high esteem by liberal Jews. Silver proclaimed that Zionism is the wave of the future within Judaism and that the majority of American Jews are pro-Zionist.⁷⁴

Schulman, on the other hand, attempted to defend Classical Reform's anti-nationalist position through apologetics. He propounded the familiar claims that Judaism is neither a race or a nation, but strictly a religion whose messianism is universalism. Whereas Silver eloquently built a case for the role of nationalism in Judaism, Schulman asserted that Zionism signaled a break in Jewish history in which Israel was placed over God. In spite of his anti-Zionist position, Schulman maintained that aside from helping to build up Palestine, Reform should send men to Palestine to begin building Liberal Judaism there.⁷⁵ This was an insightful proposal.

This whole debate reveals the new attitude of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. There had occurred a complete reversal of roles between Zionists and anti-Zionists from what they had been at the turn of the century. By the mid-thirties, as noted above, the anti-Zionists were now on the defensive using apologetics to cling to their classical Reform views.

In addition, the year 1935 brought about a call for support by American Jewry for the principles of the Histadruth (Labor Palestine). Both the Conservative and Orthodox rabbinical organizations pledged their support to this cause in a published document: "Rabbis of America to Labor

Palestine". Although the CCAR would not acquiesce to this request, 241 Reform rabbis (more than half of the Conference membership) drafted a statement of support which was included as part of the document of the two other rabbinical organizations.

Rabbi Felix Levy, an outspoken Zionist, became President of the Conference in 1936. In his message, he openly admitted that he was a Zionist and pledged to help Palestinian Jewry. The Committee on President's Message and the membership itself unanimously approved his speech.

Two resolutions that were passed at that meeting must be mentioned. One expressed sympathy to the Jewish Agency for the bereaved families and pride in the calm and restraint employed by the Jewish masses during the crisis (rioting) in Palestine. The second resolution expressed cordial wishes and pledges of support to the United Palestine Appeal. The relations between the United Palestine Appeal and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee had been severely strained. Since the Conference backed both organizations, it felt that this resolution was quite proper.

Clearly this era (1917-1936) depicts a change in the attitude of American Reform rabbis and Reform Judaism with regard to Zionism. Both the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate had forced the Conference to react and comment publicly on the situation in Palestine. The deteriorating relations and riots between Arabs and Jews in Palestine, and then the Nazi take-over in Germany during the 1920's and the 1930's forced the CCAR to espouse a cooperative attitude toward Palestine and tone down its anti-Zionist posture at a time when it still could not embrace a pro-political Zionist position. Hence, it pursued a non-Zionist stand.

Other factors influenced the official stand taken by the CCAR. The members of the Conference were profoundly influenced by American thought.

The United States attempted to remain isolationist. So too, many anti-Semitic elements had surfaced in American society: The Klu Klux Klan, Henry Ford's articles, the Daughters of Zion. Reform Judaism, still feeling some sense of insecurity, but happy and at home in America, did not want to aggravate these anti-Semitic movements.

The United States society also held up the ideals of humanism during this period. Consequently, Reform Judaism could not bury itself within the American soil and ignore its fellow Jews around the world. When the plight of European Jewry became questionable and Palestine became a center of hope and escape, the Conference was compelled to promote and back financially initiatives for immigration to Palestine.

Furthermore, factors within American Judaism and the Reform movement determined the CCAR's change in attitude toward Zionism. The tide of Jewish immigration to America had shifted from Germany to Eastern Europe during the first decade of the twentieth century. These immigrants, being more traditional in their practice of Judaism and being more inclined toward Jewish nationalism, slowly had infiltrated the Reform movement. This not only applied to the Central Conference of American Rabbis, but also to the Hebrew Union College and, a bit later, within the lay organization of Reform Judaism, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations as well. The younger rabbis being trained at H.U.C. thus helped to influence a transition from "the classical humanist approach" to "a more concentrated Hebraic one."⁷⁶ More traditional elements of Judaism were added to Reform ideology. Zionist thought, at least an openness to it, crept into the training of Reform rabbis by the early 1930's. Rabbinical students and rabbis, who had previously been timid with regard to their Zionist sympathies, now became visible, and audibly expressed their convictions.

Due to the situation just described, a temporary "generation gap" evolved within the Reform movement on all levels. It was inevitable that the young would be pinned against the old in many of the debates concerning Zionism or Palestine because of differences in background and ideology.

Howard Greenstein cogently summarizes the impact of this period on the Reform movement in connection with its substantial change in attitude toward Zionism:

Notwithstanding the differences in ideology, the decisive consideration was still the flow of events and not of ideas. The Balfour Declaration was perhaps only the opening volley in the onslaught of circumstances which demolished the ideology of the Pittsburgh Platform, but as the changing composition of the movement increased, as anti-Semitism in America and Nazi terror in Germany blazed across the front pages, as immigration virtually ceased and harbors of refuge sharply dropped, the reassessment of Jewish nationalism gathered momentum. By 1937 it was a major issue for American Reform Judaism but by no means resolved.⁷⁷

CHAPTER 3:

OFFICIAL NEUTRALITY

REGARDING ZIONSIM

(1937-1948)

The CCAR, during the period to be discussed in this chapter (1937-1948), adopted an official position of neutrality regarding Zionism and sympathy regarding Palestine. This was merely the "rubber stamp" of approval to what had become the predominant attitudes of the Conference membership. Although anti-Zionist sentiments still surfaced, especially as expounded by the American Council for Judaism, these proved to be short-lived. The new drive within the mainstream of the Reform rabbinate was to show the compatibility of Reform Judaism and Zionism.

One surely cannot neglect the historical events of this era. The Holocaust and World War II had a profound effect on world Jewry. There was a call for unity among all Jews to take action against the horror, brutality and bloodshed which the maniacal Nazis unleashed upon the world. The British machinations against Palestine (apparent by the late thirties and then rigorously stepped up following World War II) coupled by the Yishuv's role in the world as a haven for homeless Jews and its fight for full independence elicited strong feelings of responsibility among Diaspora Jews. They felt an obligation actively to help the Yishuv realize its goal, a goal which was finally achieved on May 14, 1948, when David Ben Gurion formally declared the independence and the founding of the State of Israel.

The Pittsburgh Platform, technically the "Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism," was replaced by the Columbus Platform, implemented by the CCAR at its 1937 convention. The Rabbis were well aware of the changes which had occurred both worldwide and within Reform Judaism. This is evident from the preamble:

In view of the changes that have taken place in the

modern world and the consequent need of stating anew the teachings of Reform Judaism, the Central Conference of American Rabbis makes the following declaration of principles. It presents them not as a fixed creed but as a guide for the progressive elements of Jewry.⁷⁸

The most significant change introduced by the Columbus Platform was precisely in the section dealing with "Israel". The paragraph referred to here reads:

In all lands where our people live, they assume and seek to share loyally the full duties and responsibilities of citizenship and to create seats of Jewish knowledge and religion. In the rehabilitation of Palestine, the land hallowed by memories and hopes, we behold the promise of renewed life for many of our brethren. We affirm the obligation of all Jewry to aid in its upbuilding as a Jewish homeland by endeavoring to make it not only a haven of refuge for the oppressed but also a center of Jewish culture and spiritual life.⁷⁹

Earlier, Rabbi Felix A. Levy had echoed these very sentiments in his Presidential Address and they were wholeheartedly approved by the Committee on President's Message. Levy made "a plea for a return to Israel in all consciousness of a common history, fate and task." He added that Reform Judaism "had passed beyond the stage of quarreling over the place of Palestine in Jewish life and [we] are deeply interested in its fate."⁸⁰ Helping Jews to return to Zion and escape from Germany, Poland, etc., was a priority. The Conference must also react against British attempts to limit immigration to Palestine.

David Philipson, himself, while participating in the discussion of the Columbus Platform, moved for the adoption of these Guiding Principles. Philipson, still an ardent anti-Zionist and the one individual at the convention who had been present at the Pittsburgh Conference, declared that

although originally he had not supported this new declaration, now, because "the Conference wanted it" and "for the sake of historic continuity" he would move for its adoption.⁸¹

Regarding the issue of open immigration to Palestine, a unified stand was taken within the CCAR. The British had put severe immigration restrictions into effect on April 1, 1938, and had then issued the first of the White Papers in 1939, which limited the immigration of Jews to Palestine to 15,000 a year for a period of five years. The Conference responded by relaying harsh protests to the British authorities.

Although the Columbus Platform represented a milestone decision in Reform Judaism's changing attitude toward Zionism, and a consensus was reached by the CCAR concerning immigration to Palestine, several problems remained to be solved before Reform Judaism could comfortably acquire a pro-Zionist posture. The issues of the compatibility between Reform and Zionism, and related to this, dual loyalty now became the center of attention.

Samuel Goldenson, in 1939, introduced the compatibility issue in a paper "The Democratic Implications of Jewish Moral and Spiritual Thinking"⁸² in which he suggested that Reform Jews play down the particularities of Jewish heritage and emphasize the universal aspects of Jewish teachings. James Heller criticized Goldenson and maintained that differences (i.e. particularities) are an integral part of a democratic system. Moreover Heller made reference to "our forefathers":

. . . They did not concern themselves with the problem that Judaism, which came before the Jew, was in any sense incompatible with emphasis on the Jew as a people. It is rather astonishing that we who believe in an evolutionary concept of Judaism itself should have trouble in believing that there is an integral and organic relationship between the Jew as a people

and the ideas that have been evolved by him.⁸³

He concluded with the following comment:

. . . I believe that at the present juncture in Jewish history, when we are being accused by our detractors of being an exclusive and particularistic group, we ought to be on our guard against repeating the accusation ourselves.⁸⁴

The following year (1940) Julius Gordon presented a paper "Palestine in Jewish Life and Literature" to the CCAR in which he addressed the dilemma of dual loyalty among American Jews. He stressed the importance of all Jews standing united together to expound a new definition of tolerance. Gordon quoted Louis D. Brandeis who held that dual loyalties are only objectionable when they are inconsistent.⁸⁵ Therefore, Gordon urged that Reform Judaism assume an affirmative posture regarding Palestine and Zionism.

I believe the time has come for Reform Judaism to crystallize a positive, affirmative attitude towards Palestine. We have eliminated Zion from our prayer-book, but we have not succeeded in removing Zion from the hearts of our people. And if we are to be at one with our people we must become aware of both the romance and the realism of this movement which embraces the Jewish past as well as the Jewish future

. . . .

I have just said that Palestine needs Israel. May I add that we too need Palestine. We need the vitality of the Zionist movement. We need the idealism of the movement. We need the fervor and enthusiasm of the movement. We need this inspired and inspiring cause especially in this hour of darkness and despair in Jewish life as well as in human life.⁸⁶

By 1942, two new committees had been added to the CCAR: the Committee on Cooperation with National and International Organizations (which would help to coordinate the positions and work of the Reform rabbinate

with American and world Jewry) and the Committee on Palestine. The Committee on Palestine did not commit the Conference to a pro-Zionist stand, but instead carried out resolutions to assist refugees and to promote spiritual and cultural renaissance in Palestine.

Abba Hillel Silver delivered an address to this convention of the CCAR (1942) in which he made an impassioned plea to return to spiritual Judaism by embracing Jewish nationalism. His message reflected the major problems within Reform Judaism at this time and it also called for unity among all Jews:

Spiritual reform and regeneration are known among our people as Tshuvah -- "Return" -- and the way of return is the hard way of soul-searching, contemplation, contrition, and sacrifice. The aim of such a reform is not to adjust a man to a morally imperfect society but to make him morally more demanding of himself and of society. It is not to lift burdens, but to assume new and nobler burdens

For all their loyalty, learning and high-mindedness, many of the leaders of our movement over-estimated the importance of their ritual reforms

It must be clear by now that the omission from the prayer book of the prayer for the restoration of Zion did not appease the gentile opposition, and did not succeed in making more secure the position of the Jew in the German Fatherland. It must also be clear by now that the Jew who spoke a perfect German could be disliked as vehemently as he who spoke a perfect or imperfect Yiddish. Those who were finally driven out of Germany were Jews who had become perfectly adjusted and perfectly modernized. This is not to suggest that many of the reforms were unnecessary. But looking at them from the perspective of history, which reformers frequently sacrifice for an apocalypse, they appear far less consequential than they seemed at first.

Surely in our day the need for this type of reform is over. It was over a long time ago. What is needed today is not the innovation or renovation or reformation or reconstruction of Judaism, but the conversion of the Jew to his faith. Tshuvah - "Return" - that is the note which the world's great Judgment Day and our own vast tribulation is sounding in the camp of Israel.

ושובת עד ה' אלהיך -- בצר לך It is no longer a question of less ritual or of more, of Reform, Conservatism or Orthodoxy, but of Godlessness, secularism, and materialism which have blighted our people, along with all other peoples, but which we, because of our unique position in the world, can least of all afford. It is hopeless to try to reach the heart of our people or to serve them in this their tragic hour by reviving old slogans and battle-cries, or discarded rituals, or by confronting them with the competitive claims of Orthodoxy, Conservatism or Reform. None of these has scored any significant victory in our day, and life is now attacking them all. Organizationally, Reform Judaism has not only failed to make progress in recent years, but it has actually retrogressed in relation to the increased Jewish population in the United States. The ranks of Conservatism and Orthodoxy have been replenished largely through immigration. Nor can Reform Judaism hope to save or vitalize itself by refurbishing up anew its traditional opposition to Jewish nationalism. The bitterest foes of Zionism are laymen who never enter our Temples. Their opposition is motivated not by religion or by any consistent and worthy philosophy of Jewish life and destiny, but by sheer escapism. Nor will Conservative and Orthodox Judaism save or vitalize themselves through the mere championing of Jewish nationalism. Nor is Jewish philanthropy or civic protective activities adequate for the spiritual emergencies of our people. The former is only a phase of our religion, the latter only a phase of the world's irreligion. Our lay-leaders would do well to turn from their all-out absorption in relief and defense and devote more of their thought and energy to the spiritual and educational needs of their people, who, knowing less and less of their people's life, history, and literature, are losing more and more their perspective and their morale

It is the faith of Spiritual Return which we should offer our people, and with it the immemorial task of national restoration, of National Return. These two returns, the one spiritual, the other national, are the two elements of our ancient covenant. . . .⁸⁷

This convention also marked the beginning of the last intense debate within American Reform Judaism between Zionists and anti-Zionists. This debate lasted over a year. Reform Judaism was forced to confront its position on Zionism in the question of urging and backing the formation

of a Jewish military unit in Palestine. World War II, the Holocaust and the desperate situation of the British army in Egypt made the security of Jews in Palestine quite precarious. Their Arab neighbors, throughout the war, had sympathized with the Nazis. Furthermore, by this time, the British White Paper had curtailed Jewish immigration to Palestine.

If the CCAR would have observed its declared position of neutrality regarding Zionism, it would have had to ignore this question. However, thirty-three Conference members together submitted the following resolution in support of an army for Palestine:

Whereas, the free peoples of the world are now engaged in a war for decency, justice and good faith in international relations, and for the defense of their homes and their freedoms against oppression and slavery

And whereas, the Jewish population of Palestine is eager to defend its soil and its home to the last man,

And whereas, despite its formal approval of the plan, the Government of Great Britain has still failed to avail itself of the offer of the Jewish Agency for Palestine to establish a military unit based on Palestine, composed of Palestinian and stateless European Jews,

Be It Resolved, that the Central Conference of American Rabbis adds its voice to the demand that the Jewish population of Palestine be given the privilege of establishing a military force which will fight under its own banner on the side of the democracies, under allied command, to defend its own land and the near East to the end that the victory of democracy may be hastened everywhere.⁸⁸

The Committee on Resolutions suggested a substitute resolution in which the third paragraph of the original was deleted completely and the concluding paragraph was softened in tone:

Whereas, the free peoples of the world are now engaged in a war for decency, justice and good faith in international relations, and for the defense of their homes and their freedoms against oppression and slavery,

And whereas, the Jewish population of Palestine is eager to defend its soil and its home to the last man, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Central Conference of American Rabbis is in complete sympathy with the demand of the Jews of Palestine that they be given the opportunity to fight in defense of their homeland on the side of the democracies under allied command to the end that the victory of democracy may be hastened everywhere.⁸⁹

As one might assume, a drawn-out, emotion-packed bitter discussion ensued over this question.⁹⁰ In a last effort to maintain the Conference position of neutrality concerning Zionism, a motion was made to table this resolution and to strike the resulting discussion from the minutes. This motion did not pass. In fact, a motion to vote on the original form of the resolution (not the committee's substitute) carried and the original (pro-Zionist) resolution was adopted.

The reaction among the non-Zionists in the CCAR to this move was more severe than expected. They were enraged. Although they were clearly a minority (but a significant minority) and did not renounce their membership in the Conference, these rabbis met in Atlantic City after the CCAR convention to form another organization which would carry out anti-Zionist ideology and stress American Jewry. Their creation, the American Council for Judaism, presented a potential threat to the unity of Reform Judaism and the continued existence of the Central Conference of American Rabbis as a viable organization.

The aims of the American Council for Judaism ran counter to the flow of mainstream Judaism even at this time and sought to stifle non-Jewish and American governmental participation in the eventual establishment of an independent Jewish national homeland. Its principles are summarized as follows:

- (a) The nationality of a United States citizen of Jewish faith is exclusively American;
- (b) Judaism is a religion, not a nationality;
- (c) Israel is not "the Jewish State";
- (d) American Jews have no national attachments to Israel through their religion;
- (e) Jews in the United States are not a minority group of a national, political or any other secular character;
- (f) No Jew and no organization of Jews, including our own, can speak for all Americans of Jewish faith.⁹¹

Again, in 1943, the restrictions of Jewish immigration to Palestine because of the British White Paper became a topic of concern. The report of the Committee on Contemporaneous History, which was chaired by Jacob R. Marcus, strongly suggested that the CCAR make a request to the British government to modify its 1939 White Paper in order to make Palestine a haven for European Jewry.⁹² The Committee on President's Message concurred completely with this view in its report: ". . . we request the speedy abrogation of the White Paper. We also respectfully request our own State Department to use its good offices with the British Government . . ." to open the doors of Palestine and ". . . to secure havens of refuge for those Jews in Europe threatened with extinction."⁹³

During World War II, Jews had to stand united to implement a positive program on behalf of the future of the Jewish community in Palestine and those European Jews who might survive the tortures of the Nazis. Theoretical discussions about the relationship between Reform Judaism and Zionism might have seemed ill-timed and somewhat academic had the Council for American Judaism not been so successful in polarizing the Reform rabbinate through its anti-Zionist propaganda. It was proving to be a source of embarrassment to both American Reform Jews and American Zionists alike,

for the organization's campaign was making a significant impact on the total American Jewish community:

Following the creation of the American Council for Judaism, a series of incidents were to occur. These included the issuance of resolutions against and then for a Jewish army in the non-Jewish press; the publication of a platform rejecting political Zionism and secular nationalism and demanding a return to classical Reform; a counter-attack by hundreds of Reform, Conservative and Orthodox rabbis; conflicts for power within local rabbinical bodies, based on the prevailing issue; attacks on the Council in the Yiddish press; suspicion directed against Reform organizations; and the efforts by members of the Council to organize local chapters with ensuing conflicts within congregations.⁹⁴

The division within the Conference had reached "critical proportions."⁹⁵ Consequently, a debate over the compatibility issue was held within the CCAR at this same 1943 convention. The question was asked, "Are Zionism and Reform Judaism Incompatible?" The respondents were Rabbis William H. Fineschriber and Hyman Judah Schachtel (both members of the American Council for Judaism) for the affirmative side and Rabbis Felix A. Levy and David Polish (both committed Zionists) for the negative side.⁹⁶ (Please note that a negative response to this question as posed indicated that indeed Reform Judaism and Zionism are compatible.)

Fineschriber maintained that Zionists and non-Zionists alike have a common objective: preservation of Judaism and the Jewish people. The Zionists proclaim that Palestine is uniquely precious to all Jews. It must be a refuge for dispossessed and displaced European Jews. Moreover, Palestine must be a home for any Jew who wants to settle there. Fineschriber asserted that even non-Zionists agree with these points in principle. However, non-Zionists are opposed to the establishment of Palestine as a national Jewish homeland on practical grounds. The Arab world and

presently the British Foreign Office are both opposed to the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. Zionists are placing great pressure on the United States Government to influence the British Government to modify its White Paper, the effective barrier to the realization of Jewish Statehood in Palestine. Fineschriber proposed that Palestine should be governed by a special commission of the United Nations. Finally, consideration of the Palestine question should be separated from the Jewish question as such.

Schachtel complemented Fineschriber's remarks. He employed a different approach, but one which was familiar within the ranks of Reform Judaism. Schachtel propounded the old-line classical Reform doctrines quoting from early CCAR resolutions and speeches by its members. (Many of these appear in the preceeding chapters of this thesis.) He also pointed out that the CCAR is still bound by its 1935 resolution of neutrality with regard to Zionism.

Levy, however, stressed the two-fold character of Israel as a religion and a nation. Judaism is not merely a theology as non-Zionists propound, but it is a people. A Jew, according to Levy, is the fusion of revelation, mission, election and nationalism as expressed in Isaiah 51:16. Philosophy is not the most important element for the Jew. Maintenance of a Jewish life is ultimately more important:

Jewish life is rhythmic like the heart to which it is so frequently compared. Zionism, nationalism, particularism are the systole; universalism, diaspora, reform Judaism, the diastole of our life pulsation. Both expansion and contraction are needed for a healthy, functioning organ or organism.⁹⁷

Levy emphasized that Jews are a "religious people". Reform Judaism must reconcile nationalism and religion, rather than placing a barrier between

the two.

Polish supported Levy's views. He refuted many of the anti-Zionist arguments from an historical perspective in analyzing Jewish nationalism. He contended that national and religious trends within Judaism were never parallel, but were indeed integral.

Following a discussion of the compatibility question, two resolutions were drafted for the consideration of the Conference membership. These have greater import than the debate itself. The first resolution, where-as it called for continued CCAR neutrality regarding Zionism, it did assert that Reform Judaism and Zionism are indeed compatible:

RESOLUTION I

In 1935 at its Chicago Convention, the Central Conference of American Rabbis declared that it would take no official stand on Zionism. It decided that it was to be the prerogative of individual members to determine for themselves, within the framework of Reform Judaism what their point of view on this subject might be. This was and is a salutary policy and should be continued.

Of late, however, some of our members have renewed the assertion that Zionism is not compatible with Reform Judaism. The attempt has been made to set in irreconcilable opposition "universalism" and "particularism". To the members of the Conference, this appears unreal and misleading. Without impugning the right of members of the Conference to be opposed to Zionism, for whatever reason they may choose, the Conference declares that it discerns no essential incompatibility between Reform Judaism and Zionism, no reason why those of its members who give allegiance to Zionism should not have the right to regard themselves as fully within the spirit and purpose of Reform Judaism.⁹⁸

The second resolution urged the termination of the American Council for Judaism and explained the threat it posed for the CCAR:

RESOLUTION II

While members of the C.C.A.R. are fully within their rights in espousing whatever philosophy of Jewish life they may accept; nevertheless, the American Council for Judaism, because of the special circumstances under which it came into being, has already endangered the unity of the Conference. Its continued existence would become a growing threat to our fellowship.

The American Council for Judaism was founded by members of the C.C.A.R. for the purpose of combatting Zionism. The Zionist Movement and masses of Jews everywhere, shocked by the rise of this organization at a time when Zionists and others are laboring hard to have the gates of Palestine reopened for the harassed Jews of Europe, could not avoid judging this event in the light of past controversies, or seeing in it an example of what they had come to consider the constant opposition of Reform Judaism to Zionist aspirations. This impression does grave injustice to the many devoted Zionists in the C.C.A.R. and to the Conference itself.

Therefore, without impugning the right of Zionists or non-Zionists to express and to disseminate their convictions within and without the Conference, we, in the spirit of amity, urge our colleagues of the American Council for Judaism to terminate this organization.⁹⁹

The first resolution was adopted overwhelmingly. In the case of the second resolution, two members of the drafting committee submitted a minority resolution expressing dismay over the original resolution claiming that the Conference had overstepped its boundaries:

After discussing extensively the American Council for Judaism, its inception organization, the practical consequences that might flow from its persistence, and also the ideological points of view involved, the President concluded by making two recommendations: One, that the Central Conference of American Rabbis "express its belief, not provocatively but with restraint, that it is unwise for its members to organize separately and outside itself for the proclamation or furtherance of special points of view." Second, that the Conference should express the belief "that there is no fundamental incompatibility between Reform Judaism and Zionism."

With regard to the second of these two recommendations,

I merely wish to say in this Statement, that the Conference is fully within its rights to express its belief on that subject, though I personally, and many of my colleagues, may differ with the wisdom and correctness of that judgment.

As to the first proposition, however, I wish to say that if the Conference should take action on this recommendation, namely, to advise or require the Conference members of the American Council for Judaism to disband, such an action would be altogether beyond the scope and the authority of this organization; and by authority I mean not merely legal, but moral as well¹⁰⁰

The minority report was not adopted. The majority report did carry after a roll call vote of 137-45.

The 1943 CCAR convention thus formalized a new outlook toward Zionism within the Reform movement. The Reform rabbinate declared the legitimacy of Zionism within Reform Jewish philosophy. David Polish comments:

. . . Zionism was declared to occupy a legitimate place within Reform. Such a statement was tantamount to the declaration of a new Reform Judaism. While it was not stated, and while the rights of the anti-Zionists within the Conference were not challenged, it was clear that anti-Zionism could no longer be considered "compatible" with the new Reform. While clearly not Zionist *de jure*, the declarations and commitments of the Central Conference were to place it *de facto* into the Zionist orbit.¹⁰¹

The next step for Reform Judaism would be to endorse political Zionism, but this would not occur for several decades.

The American Council for Judaism lost much of its momentum. Although it remained on the scene as a voice of anti-Zionism, its membership dropped off considerably and unity was restored within the CCAR.

The following year, 1944, the "compatibility" resolution was put to a test. Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver had introduced a resolution to the CCAR Executive Board which commended the outcome of sessions of the American

Jewish Congress to which the Conference had sent delegates:

Having received the reports of its delegates who attended the recent sessions of the American Jewish Conference, the Executive Board of the C.C.A.R. expresses its satisfaction with the outcome of this historic Conference and with the contribution which our representatives made towards its deliberations. It ratifies the action of its delegates in supporting all the resolutions which were adopted at the Conference. It expresses the hope that this great and representative body of American Jewry will continue to function and to serve the cause of our people in these critical times.¹⁰²

This resolution was adopted by the Executive Board, but then referred to the Committee on President's Message for consideration. The implied support by the CCAR of the "Resolution on Palestine," adopted by the American Jewish Conference, was for some members a serious violation of CCAR neutrality with regard to Zionism. Therefore, the Committee on President's Message offered a substitute resolution:

With regard to the American Jewish Conference's resolution on Palestine, we beg to state that the Central Conference of American Rabbis' delegates went to the Conference uninstructed and were free to vote in accordance with their individual convictions. They therefore did not commit the Central Conference of American Rabbis to their point of view, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis' position on neutrality adopted in 1935 remains unimpaired. The committee on the President's Message concurs in the action of the Central Conference of American Rabbis' Executive Board in ratifying the other resolutions of the American Jewish Conference for which our delegates voted.¹⁰³

After some debate, the substitute resolution lost and the original one was adopted. Solomon Freehof,¹⁰⁴ then President of the CCAR, had opened the discussion by citing his interpretation of the matter, an interpretation which seemed to correspond with the prevailing view of CCAR members:

. . . The New York resolution stated that any member of the Conference can take any stand he wants on the question of Zionism without affecting his membership in the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Our Conference cannot instruct its delegates to vote for or against Zionist resolutions; our delegates were free. Your delegates never reported how they voted -- there was no record how they voted. It happened that Rabbi Heller and I voted for all the resolutions. Whether the Executive Board would have commended the delegates had they voted against certain resolutions, I cannot say, but they would have had the right to do so.¹⁰⁵

During the years that followed (1944-1947), most efforts concerning Palestine were centered around legal and illegal immigration (dealing with the British) and developing the Jewish community there. The homeless Jewish Holocaust survivors in Europe especially placed pressure on world Jewry (Reform included) to work to open Palestine as a viable refuge for these people.

The CCAR Commission on Justice and Peace stated (1944):

. . . The first step in the international rehabilitation of the world in the institution of universal justice must be the rehabilitation of the Jew. The White Paper must be repudiated. Jewish immigration in Palestine is not unjust to the Arab. It has helped to raise his standard of living, increased his numbers, and has been the most constructive force in the elimination of his poverty, ignorance and disease. Jewish immigrants have by the sweat of their brows and the idealism of their souls transformed waste lands into granaries that feed the children of men. We plead with the Allied nations to give the European Jew, up-rooted and unwanted, the first victim of Axis tyranny, a chance to reclaim the waste lands of Palestine, as an expression of elemental justice and as the only reward they can give to their heroic ally who has suffered most. If the Allied nations will meet the challenge, humanity may indeed look forward to a just peace.¹⁰⁶

These sentiments were reiterated again in 1945 with an added message to American Jewry to offer "material and moral support" to the Jews of

Europe, so that they may rehabilitate themselves "both economically and spiritually."¹⁰⁷

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, addressing the CCAR as its President in 1946, expressed negative feelings toward the American Council for Judaism which was still functioning and espousing anti-Zionist opinions. Silver urged continued support for the American Jewish Conference. He also directed the Conference to petition the United States President to use his power to achieve the implementation of the Anglo-American Inquiry Commission report which called for unconditional admission of 100,000 Jews to Palestine.¹⁰⁸ The Committee on President's Message responded by unanimously adopting the following resolution:

We express our heartfelt appreciation to the President of the United States for his just and humanitarian demand upon the British government to expedite the immediate immigration of one hundred thousand of our homeless brethren to Palestine -- a demand which he made more than ten months ago and which has the unanimous endorsement of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry for Palestine. In urging the immediate implementation of this demand, we ask that our government take further cognizance of the imperative necessity for open and unrestricted settlement of additional hundreds of thousands of Jews whose right to migrate to Palestine is fully recognized by the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. In endorsing the Committee stand on the need for the admission of the hundred thousand Jews to Palestine, we do not assent to those recommendations in the report which negate the British pledge to the Jewish people in the Balfour Declaration. Nor do we assent to those recommendations in the report which would paralyze Jewish development in Palestine and would do violence to the rights of our people in Europe.

We are further moved to express our deep sense of indignation and hurt at the unprovoked and malicious statement made by Mr. Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, which deliberately impugns the high motives of our government and the American people in relation to the salvation of our broken people in Europe. It is an obvious attempt to confuse the mind of the American people and to prejudice our case before the

world. We trust that President Truman and our government will remain firm in their consistent and oft-repeated demands for justice to the Jewish people.¹⁰⁹

Moreover, after the Conference learned about the arrest by the British of thousands of Jews in Palestine including the Jewish Agency Executive and the acts of violence which the British had launched themselves or instigated there, the Reform rabbinate issued the following statement which was delivered to President Harry Truman personally by Rabbis Felix A. Levy, Maurice N. Eisendrath and David Philipson:

The Central Conference of American Rabbis in convention assembled in Chicago, Ill., has just learned the shocking news of the unconscionable arrest of members of the Executive of the Jewish Agency in Palestine and of thousands of other Jews; and of other acts of violence and terror tantamount to the inauguration of war by the British authorities on the Jews of Palestine. We are outraged even further by the manifestly deliberate desecration of the Jewish Sabbath by this wanton violation of one of the basic elements of religious freedom and which represents a reversion to the barbaric practices of ancient Syria and Rome

In view of the important role in the titanic struggle played by Jews of all lands and of which the Jews of Palestine are a part, we had a right to expect that simple justice would have been meted out to our people everywhere, but, instead of justice, Jewry has had thrust upon it the infamous White Paper, oppressive and tyrannical measures in Palestine, continuous aggressive and provocative acts against Palestinian Jewry; the breaking of sacred promises and now the supreme act of betrayal, the arrest of the Executive of the Jewish Agency and thousands of others.

We, the members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, are resolved to resist this act of flagrant injustice with all the moral power at our command. We hereby petition the President of our country to use his good offices to procure the immediate release of the members of the Executive Agency and of all other victims of this terroristic procedure, and the prompt implementation of that recommendation

of the Anglo-American Inquiry Commission's report which calls for the unconditional admission of one hundred thousand Jews into Palestine.

We are firm in the conviction that the moral conscience of America is in full agreement with our stand; will support our protest and will join us in this appeal in the name of the God of justice.¹¹⁰

The next year, 1947, Rabbi Silver devoted more than a quarter of his Presidential Message to assessing the situation in Palestine.¹¹¹ This convention coincided with the 50th anniversary of the Basel Congress and I. M. Wise's attack on Zionism at the CCAR convention of the same year, 1897. In addition, both CCAR conventions (1897 and 1947) took place in Montreal.

Rabbi Julian Morgenstern, President of Hebrew Union College, delivered the Conference Lecture in which he spoke about Zionism and proclaimed that:

Today the vast majority of the Jewish people throughout the world are Zionistic in thought, belief and program. This is an unchallengable fact. The events of the last fourteen years, and particularly the developments in Central and Eastern Europe during the last two years, which have passed since the end of World War II, as they have affected our Jewish brethren, the seeming hopelessness of their lot and the apparent callousness of the entire world thereto have made of all of us who are worthy of the name, Jew, Zionists in a certain sense, in that since Palestine seems to be the only potential haven of escape and of renewed life and hope for our brethren, we must all desire eagerly and actively to secure Palestine in maximum degree for them and support their migration thither in every proper and practicable way.¹¹²

The most important aspect of that convention was the report and five-point resolution of the Committee on Palestine approved by the body of the Conference. The report made clear the assumption that the problem of

the European Jewish Holocaust survivors and that of Palestine could not be separated. The report relayed the situation as it stood in 1947. The resolution, which concludes the report, is as follows:

1. The Committee of Inquiry on Palestine of U.N. cannot in justice divorce the Palestine problem from the problem of the Jewish displaced persons. It is, therefore, respectfully urged that the Committee visit the European DP camps in the course of its itinerary.
2. The British White Paper of 1939 is in contravention to the Balfour Declaration and the Palestine Mandate and should in the interests of justice and humanity be revoked.
3. Free immigration and colonization in Palestine need not and ought not await final political solution of the Palestine problem. We strongly urge that the recommendations of President Truman and the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry be immediately implemented by the granting of 100,000 immigration certificates to Palestine in 1947.
4. We deplore the use of violence as both immoral and harmful to the Jewish cause, but also vigorously condemn the repressive measures invoked by the British authorities in Palestine which give rise to a violence born of desperation.
5. We heartily commend the efforts of the United Jewish Appeal to bring relief to our brothers abroad and shall endeavor to give to this cause the devotion of our heart and hand.¹¹³

On May 14, 1948, the state of Israel formally declared its independence. The Zionist (and traditional Jewish) dream of a return to Zion became a reality with the creation of the Jewish national homeland. The reaction in the CCAR, as among all of Jewry, was one of elation. Rabbi Abraham J. Feldman devoted a significant portion of his Presidential Message to comment on this event:

Since last we met an event of transcendent importance to all our people occurred. I am referring, of course, to the action of May 14, 1948, when the State of Israel

was proclaimed from Tel Aviv, and a Jewish government was established over part of Eretz Yisroel, for the first time since the year 70. The event itself is one of those which is bound to have far-reaching influence upon the course of subsequent Jewish history, and, come what may, the date will be forever memorable. Jewish history and Jewish life will never be as if this event had never happened.

For most Jews, and for the great majority of the members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, May 14, 1948, was an experience of deep emotional and spiritual moment.¹¹⁴

Feldman called for the CCAR to send warm messages of greetings to Haim Weizmann and David Ben Gurion. Feldman also emphasized that Israel being a fact, indicates that the half century debate on Zionism within Reform Judaism should rightfully come to a close. American Jews must work to strengthen their own community, but also simultaneously reach out to their fellow Jews scattered throughout the world. Feldman issued a plea to dismiss the conflicts within the people Israel.¹¹⁵

The Committee on President's Message agreed completely with the sentiments expressed by Feldman and added some of its own recommendations:

With our President we rejoice in the consummation of the millennial hopes and aspirations of our people, and pray that the courage and tenacity of our brethren in the new republic of Israel may speedily bring them peace and security.

We are deeply moved by the express determination of the Yishuv to welcome their homeless brothers and make a home for them in their midst.

We petition our government to extend full recognition to Israel, to help it defend itself against aggression, and to give it economic support.

We ask the UN to take all possible measures to safeguard the new republic's existence within the boundaries defined in the UN resolution of Nov. 29, 1947.

We take pride in the fact that members of our Conference have played an important role in the creation of the State of Israel.

We endorse the recommendation of the President that we salute the new Republic of Israel and that we send our greetings and best wishes to the President of the Provisional Government, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, and the Prime Minister, David ben Gurion.

We are also in complete accord with our President when he declares that as American Jews we shall continue to build our Jewish life here in America and jointly with our neighbors of every faith, we shall make our contribution as Jews and Americans, to the spiritualization of life in this country, to the preservation of our American democracy, to the establishment of justice, and righteousness, peace and security for us and our children and our children's children, and all the children of men.¹¹⁶

The Committee on Palestine was jubilant in its reaction to the establishment of Israel, the fulfillment of a two thousand year old Jewish dream. Israel would immediately provide a home for Europe's displaced Jews. The committee report then enumerated seven resolutions which were adopted by the CCAR at this convention:

1. We salute the Republic of Israel and offer our Israeli brothers all possible encouragement and assistance in the maintenance of independence and in the achievement of security. We pray that Israel may go from strength to strength and that with God's help, it may soon attain peace and prosperity, that it may carry forward the spiritual revival, the Hebrew cultural contributions and the social and democratic advances already fostered in the Yishuv, for the enrichment of Judaism the world over, and the benefit of all humanity.
2. We commend with pride the heroism of the Haganah in resisting the aggressor, defending the boundaries of Israel, established by the United Nations, and achieving the discipline that constitutes a people's army fighting in defense of the right.
3. We condemn the aggressive warfare waged by the Arab states under the direction of the Arab League, in contravention of the United Nations' decision and moral and ethical principles.
4. We condemn the duplicity of Britain's Palestine policy which gives open assistance to the Arab Legion and support to the Arab League, which en-

courages Arab aggression while it hampers Israeli defense of rights recognized by the Balfour Declaration, the League of Nations and the United Nations. We strongly urge that such financial assistance to England under the United States European Recovery Plan as would support the war against Israel, be withheld.

We appeal to Britain to disavow its policy of encouragement and appeasement of aggression and to recognize and assist the State of Israel, cooperate in the implementation of the United Nations Partition Decision and help achieve in the Near East the democracy that shall be a bulwark of justice in one of the world's most strategic areas.

5. We are proud of, and grateful for American recognition of the Republic of Israel and voice our gratitude to President Truman for his prompt and unequivocal action.

We applaud the stand of the United States Delegation to the United Nations in urging international action to identify and halt Arab aggression as a threat to world peace.

We urge that America implement its recognition of Israel with financial assistance from the world's oldest democracy to its youngest, and the use of its good offices to assure a just settlement of the war on Israel.

6. We pray that the efforts of the United Nations, to negotiate a truce in Palestine during the period of peace, will prove successful.

We urge that such negotiations, and the truce, may not be allowed to handicap Israel and that no decision be reached that shall compromise the independence of Israel or its territorial integrity and the free immigration of Jews into the new State in accordance with its immigration policy. This we urge, not only out of deepest concern for our Israeli brothers and Jews throughout the world, but out of concern for the United Nations itself and the achievement of justice and a lasting peace in international affairs.

7. We are proud of the record of American Jewry in support of the United Jewish Appeal. We urge even greater support for the relief of our brothers in Europe and for the assistance of our embattled brothers in Israel. We urge, in addition, fullest cooperation with Hadassah, the Jewish War Veterans of America and the Red Mogen David, to give aid to our heroic people in its newest struggle for justice and security.¹¹⁷

Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein delivered a paper, "The New Israel and American Jewry"¹¹⁸ in which he attempted to assess the implications of the establishment of Israel for the American Jewish community. Many of his points were quite cogent. American Jews, Bernstein stated, would have to make a choice either to resettle in Israel or remain in America as law-abiding United States citizens politically committed to the United States. He claimed that Diaspora Jewry should be completely disassociated with the political affairs of Israel. Moreover, Bernstein suggested that two changes would occur in the American Jewish community: that synagogues will again assume a primary role in American Jewish life and that the continued strength of the American Jewish community will depend upon unity. He urged the complete elimination of the American Council for Judaism and Galut psychology. Bernstein also touched upon some of the new responsibilities of American Jewry.

Fundamental changes, according to Bernstein, will take place in Zionist organizational life. There will be a refocusing of interest within Zionist parties outside of Israel. Instead of a preoccupation with political endeavors, these Zionist groups will concentrate on cultural, spiritual and philanthropic as well as economic interests.

What will the new state contribute to American Jewry in return? It will produce a totally new culture and cross-fertilization will begin:

A rich culture has flowered in Palestine. The music is fresh and lively. The dances are meaningful and gay. New art forms are emerging. Folk festivals are celebrated with a realism and beauty undreamed of in the Diaspora. The impact of this new culture is already deeply felt in the United States. However, endless opportunities are now before us. In every field of Jewish culture and art our American Jewish teachers and students should have contact with Palestine. There should be an exchange of artists and ideas. We will be immeasurably benefited by what Israel can offer.¹¹⁹

Looking back on this episode in Reform Jewish history, Howard Greenstein¹²⁰ expounds on the many elements which were responsible for Reform Judaism's change in attitude. Historically, times had changed and the grave position of European Jewry forced American Reform Jews to take a stand on Palestine. Arguments such as "democratic principles" among mankind were empty in light of Nazi mass murder. Palestine was needed desperately as a haven for homeless European Jews. Petitioning for more rights in the lands of origin was viewed as ineffective. This was especially understood by the large Eastern European segment of American Reform Jews.

Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut writes:

After Hitler came to power the sentiment of the Reform bodies shifted radically, and in 1937 both the CCAR and the UAHC moved away from their official anti-Zionist position. As the war progressed and the full extent of the European tragedy was understood more clearly, the securing of Palestine as a homeland moved to the center of all Jewish endeavor. Now it became apparent that a "homeland" would have to be more than a land for colonization and culture; it would have to be an independent Jewish commonwealth in which Jews would determine their own future and which would enable Jews as Jews to take their place in the concert of nations.¹²¹

The historical crises which led to this marked change in attitude are explicated here. First, the American Council for Judaism was created in the wake of the Jewish Army controversy within the CCAR. However, the Conference responded by relentlessly attacking the American Council for Judaism and the propaganda it was spreading. Second, the Reform rabbinate united with the total American Jewish community vociferously proclaimed its appeal on behalf of the Holocaust survivors in Europe and the gross injustices of British limitation of immigration to Israel. Third, the crises in Palestine perpetrated by the British, especially the arrest of

Jewish Agency officials on June 29, 1946, elicited cries of protest and condemnation by the membership of the CCAR. It was clear that by this time, the Reform rabbinate was emotionally involved in these events.

In addition, the arguments of the anti-Zionist movement were bankrupt:

No single individual or group of individuals, however, was solely responsible for the Zionist transformation in Reform Judaism. That change was also due in large measure to an increasing bankruptcy of the anti-Zionist position. The ideology of the Pittsburgh Platform had grown stale, and in light of twentieth century realities, inconsistent with world events. In the aftermath of the Holocaust it was no longer so evident that human progress was inevitable, that universal justice and brotherhood was imminent, or even that human nature was essentially pure and good, and that the proper morality would produce a world of order and harmony, as the "mission" concept of earlier Reform Judaism had implied. Human behavior, it was discovered, was simply too complicated and unpredictable for any easy, conventional judgements. Self-interest was still the dominating incentive in human relations, and, hence, in international relations too.¹²²

Finally, the Zionist-anti-Zionist debate became academic. Israel was established in May, 1948. American Reform Judaism would now have to reassess its relationship with the Jewish state and begin the arduous process of establishing direct ties in Israel to lay the groundwork for representation and a Reform Jewish movement within Israeli society.

CHAPTER 4:

AN INTERIM PERIOD

(1949-1966)

The years to be discussed in this chapter, 1949-1966, certainly mark little change in Reform Jewish attitudes toward Zionism. The Central Conference of American Rabbis was still not ready to complete a 180° turn with regard to Jewish nationalism and embrace political Zionism. Instead, the Conference became overtly pro-Israel. It backed Israeli efforts for peace with her Arab neighbors. The Conference also urged the United States along with American Jewry to support Israel as the country struggled to get her foothold in the world. Furthermore, the American Reform movement began to promote further development of a liberal Jewish movement in Israel. This proved to be quite a taxing task as the Israeli Orthodox establishment was (and is today) totally opposed to Jewish religious pluralism in Israel. This period, then, is characterized by the American Reform Jewish attempt to plant seeds in Israel and strengthen its ties there, while also trying to define its relationship, as a representative of Diaspora Jewry, with the new Jewish state.

Three distinct issues connected with Israel were voiced at the 1949 CCAR convention. The President, Abraham J. Feldman, expressed concern over the restrictions imposed upon Liberal congregations in Israel because they are not recognized by the Orthodox Rabbinate. He urged the Conference to take measures to advance Liberal Judaism in Israel.¹²³

Concerning Jerusalem, the Commission on Justice and Peace aired the following comment:

The hearts of Jews have always been linked to the Holy City. We believe that Jerusalem should be incorporated within the boundaries of Israel where it belongs by virtue of history and population. Under an Israeli administration we are confident that the holy places will enjoy peace and security.¹²⁴

The Committee on Resolutions went one step further by drafting a resolution which directed the Executive Board to explore the possibility of holding a future meeting of the CCAR in Jerusalem. It also drafted a resolution declaring Yom Ha-atz-ma-ut as an official holiday to be observed in Reform synagogues:

Resolved that Iyar 5 be officially recognized by the CCAR as the day on which Israel was restored to independence, and that we observe this day in proper manner in our synagogue.¹²⁵

During the 1950 CCAR meeting, three papers on the subject "Israel and the American Jew" were presented respectively by Abraham J. Feldman, Charles E. Shulman and Samuel M. Blumenfield.¹²⁶

Feldman claimed that no organic bond exists between the State of Israel and the American Jew. Although the American Jew and the Jewish Israeli are politically separate and distinct, the American Jew cannot and must not sever himself either in sentiment or emotion from those people who are rebuilding Israel. The American Jew is like a parent or older brother to Israeli Jewry. He must allow Israel to be on its own. However, the American Jew must not turn away from Israel when she is in need of help -- financial, protective, cultural and religious (Feldman's categories).

Shulman talked about the Labor Party, immigration to Israel and the fact that Reform Judaism is not recognized in the Jewish state. He claimed that in order to influence Israel, American Reform Judaism must go beyond de facto recognition of Israel and give the new state de jure recognition. Reform Judaism must drop its neutral stand, guaranteed by the Columbus Platform, and support the philosophy which brought Israel into being. Reform Judaism must pursue missionary work in Israel in order to establish liberal Judaism by creating new congregations, changing laws

and sending rabbis to Israel. Shulman proclaims:

The life and religion of Israel will ultimately be determined by the people who live in Israel and not by the resolutions and demands of Jews in the Diaspora.¹²⁷

Blumenfield expounded on the four resolutions which he claimed were responsible for "the transformation of the cultural physiognomy of the modern Jew: The French revolution, the Russian revolution, the Nazi upheaval and reborn Israel."¹²⁸

Cultural relations between Israel and American Jews, according to Blumenfield, should be conceived of in terms of a "two-way passage."¹²⁹ A "cultural bridge"¹³⁰ between Israel and American Jewry includes give and take, acceptance and rejection, constructive criticism and helpful co-operation. Israel and American Jewries can and must serve as "leaven"¹³¹ to one another.

After a CCAR Summer Institute in Israel in 1951, Joshua Trachtenberg was sent to Israel for five months to study the spiritual life in Israel for the Reform movement. Trachtenberg's findings ¹³² provoked widespread shock and bitter reactions after he presented them to the Conference in 1952. In fact, Jacob Weinstein's response, with his permission, was stricken from all the records because of its violent tone.¹³³ Arthur Lelyveld in his article "The Jew in the Modern World" cogently summarizes Trachtenberg's report:

After paying his respects to the "realization of our ageless dream," he spoke of such unpleasant developments as an "ubiquitous black market" which "has debauched virtually every home," of the deterioration of ideals in the collective settlements, of "protektsia" or the partiality of government to those who can muster influence. He dismissed the so-called progressive congregations, saying, "to clamor for equal rights for a non-existent liberal rabbinate

and community . . . is wildly unrealistic," and concluded that Israel does not need the American brand of Reform Judaism but its own "indigenous, authentic restatement of the eternal truths of our faith . . ." To this end, he called upon the Conference to supply facilities for youth work in the cities, educational and social work in the transit camps and new settlements, a liberal religious branch or zerem in the school system, an aliyah of liberal Jewish young people to be nuclei for liberal settlements, and a "pilot congregation" under "sensitive, perseverent, informed, dedicated American rabbinical guidance."¹³⁴

The CCAR also passed the following resolution on Israel at that 1952 meeting:

The Central Conference of American Rabbis at its 63rd annual Convention in Buffalo, N.Y., hails the State of Israel which has recently celebrated the fourth year of its establishment. The Conference applauds the sacrificial idealism of the young nation in absorbing 700,000 immigrants in this short time, despite its own grave trials and privations -- an achievement of human helpfulness and rescue unprecedented in history, and an example of practical Judaism at its best.

The Conference salutes Israel's mighty achievements in building new settlements in the wilderness areas of the land, in developing new industries in towns and hamlets, in providing modern medical and social services and democratic political freedoms to all the inhabitants of the land, whether Jewish, Arab or Christian.

The Conference extends encouragement and understanding to the harried leaders and people of the new land, in their earnest, searching labors to meet the severe problems before them, problems of austerity and food distribution, of religious freedom, of free public education, of the adjustment of the various elements of the population one to another, and of the functioning of representative government among the peoples with varying political traditions.

The Conference is confident that there are in Israel the resources of mind and will to conquer these difficulties, especially when the pressures of economic insecurity and military danger are relieved.

The Conference is happy to recognize the consistent and ever growing support of Israel by the American Jewish public through its purchase of Israeli bonds and its contributions to the UJA. The Conference commends all who through their contributions of energy and sub-

stance thus affirm their faith in the miracle of restoration of our people to its ancient land. We rejoice in the increase of cultural exchange between Israel and America. We pray that there will be an ever increasing number of Americans who will bring the precious gifts of American experience to Israel and more Israelis who will bring the fervor, the spark and faith of a new pioneer land to America. Thus will the greatest democracy and the newest strengthen each other as token of that greater fulfillment of democratic world brotherhood and peace, for which the God-inspired prophets of Israel have led all mankind to labor and to pray.¹³⁵

Consistent with the sentiments expressed in the resolution above, the President's message to the CCAR convention in 1953 again emphasized closer relations between the people of Israel and the American Jewish community. In addition, a resolution was adopted urging further United States aid to Israel in order that she may become economically solvent and politically secure:

The economic stability, the political vigor, and the physical security of the State of Israel are matters of the greatest concern to us as Jews. As citizens of the world's greatest democracy, we are likewise vitally concerned with peace and justice everywhere We therefore urge a continued program of United States Aid to Israel and the Arab States. We ask the good offices of the Government of the United States in an effort to persuade the Arab nations to lift their boycott and blockades against Israel in and to join with that nation in a concerted effort for the preservation and promotion of democracy.¹³⁶

The next year, 1954, resolutions were passed by the Conference concerning Israel's readiness to make peace with her neighbors, arms sales to hostile Arab countries, and insinuations questioning the genuine sincerity of Jewish aid and sympathy for Israel:

We urge our State Department, in view of Israel's constant readiness to make peace with its Arab neighbors, to insist on Arab participation in negotiations to

achieve permanent peace and stability.

We deplore the sending of arms by our country to countries in the Middle East which have continued to avow their hostile intentions toward Israel.

We condemn recent insinuations by high State Department officials as to the legitimacy of American Jewish sympathy and aid for Israel. We regard such concern as a necessary expression of our spiritual bonds with the land and people of Israel. We urge our colleagues to give unremitting moral and practical support in their respective communities to Israel's cause.¹³⁷

The Committee on Projects in Israel, at this same convention, defined its functions:

This committee is an outgrowth of the Conference sub-Committee on Palestine. The role of the original committee was never clearly defined. Now that six years have passed since the establishment of the State of Israel, our functions stand in clearer perspective:

1. To express the positive attitude of our Conference toward the ideal of Zion and the State of Israel and to assist in effecting the cooperation of the American Reform Rabbinate with causes which strengthen them;
2. To assist specific projects in Israel which show promise of furthering an indigenous liberal religious philosophy and movement there;
3. To utilize all possible means of bringing to Israel a better understanding of liberal Judaism;
4. To assist our own members to keep informed of the complex religious situation in Israel.¹³⁸

Barnett R. Brickner's Presidential message of 1955 to the CCAR urged the United States to establish a strong alliance with Israel, especially in light of Arab hostility toward the Jewish state and U.S. State Department indifference regarding the whole situation. Brickner outlined five specific recommendations:

1. That the CCAR requests the President and the State Department to negotiate a defense agreement between Israel and the United States.

2. That our Government continue economic and technical assistance to both Israel and the Arab States, exclusive of military equipment.
3. That our Government do all in its power to persuade the Arab States to meet with Israel with a view of converting the troublesome armistice into a viable and lasting peace.
4. That our Government desist from sending arms to any and all of the Arab States until they have come to a final peace with one another.
5. That we commend our Government for furthering the Johnston Irrigation Plans and that we urge both Israel and the Arabs to adopt them, with the necessary modifications.¹³⁹

Consistent with this view, the Commission on Justice and Peace offered a resolution which was approved by the Conference:

We hail the Republic of Israel in this, its eighth heroic year. The United States has been a great and good friend of Israel; through its efforts in the councils of the United Nations, our country helped to bring the State of Israel into being. It is with deep regret that we note, therefore, the seeming indifference of our State Department to the present critical situation in Israel, engendered by Arab intransigence. During the past year, the Arab neighbors of Israel have intensified their deliberate attempts to negate the United Nations policy toward Israel. They refuse to discuss peace. They refuse to restrain marauders. They refuse to halt their inflammatory pronouncements. They state openly their territorial designs on Israel. In this situation recent State Department policy can only tend to embolden and encourage the Arab nations in their avowed determination to destroy the State of Israel. We believe a revision of this policy is called for. We look to the President and to the Secretary of State to vitalize the traditional American policy of friendship for Israel and to employ their good offices within the United Nations to bring about effective international influence toward establishing an atmosphere of peace in the Near East.¹⁴⁰

One other transaction merits mention. This was the year (1955) that Nelson Glueck, President of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion secured a parcel of land in Jerusalem which was to become the future site of an Israeli branch of the school.¹⁴¹

The subsequent four years mainly represent an extension of the same type of thinking and concerns thus far depicted. Many papers¹⁴² on Israel and Zionism were also delivered to the Conference meetings during this period.

A resolution passed at the 1958 convention is noteworthy. It called for discussions with the Conservative movement in order to develop jointly progressive Judaism in Israel:

The Central Conference of American Rabbis believes that an urgent need exists in the State of Israel for the development of progressive forms of Judaism. We recognize that such forms will be responsive to the needs and desires of the people of Israel. We urge the initiation of discussions between appropriate representatives of Reform and Conservative Judaism for the purpose of stimulating and encouraging the development of progressive Judaism in Israel. We commend this undertaking to the CCAR representatives on the board of the American section of the World Union for Progressive Judaism.¹⁴³

By 1960, there was a move to re-evaluate and again state the relation of Reform Judaism to Zionism and to the Jewish state. Bernard J. Bamberger made a recommendation in his Presidential address to the CCAR for:

. . . the creation of a special committee to draft for submission to the Conference a declaration of principles on the relation of Reform Judaism to Jewish Nationalism and the relation of American Jewry to the State of Israel.¹⁴⁴

The Committee on President's Message endorsed this recommendation and a committee was appointed. This Committee on the Relation of Reform Judaism to the State of Israel presented a draft of the "principles" requested to the 1961 convention:

I. We affirm our faith in the One living God of justice and love, the Creator and Governor of the Uni-

verse. Our fathers pledged eternal loyalty to the Universal God and He, we believe, accepted them as a people consecrated to His service. It is this bond that gives historic Jewish existence its distinctive character.

II. Changes of time, place, and circumstance have brought about divergent views among Jews as to the nature of the covenant with God and its implications for our time. Some place primary emphasis on identification with Jewish peoplehood and nationhood, others find fuller meaning in our Jewish faith; yet we are one Jewish community the world over. The familiar classifications of race, nationality, and church do not adequately describe this community. We believe it is a unique historical entity.

III. Judaism and Jewish historical experience demand of us constant concern with all that Jews do and all that happens to them, wherever they live. We apply the ancient Jewish norm: "All Jews are responsible for one another," in the sense that any help other Jews require and we can give -- material assistance, defense against oppression, education or spiritual guidance -- we are obligated to provide. However, it is not necessary for us to uphold the opinions of other Jews nor to approve and defend all their actions.

IV. We share the joy, gratitude, and pride felt by Jews everywhere over the establishment of the State of Israel. We hail the heroism and sacrifice of its builders, and of all who are struggling to maintain its security and to advance its development. We see in the State of Israel not only a refuge for the oppressed, but a community striving to translate the prophetic ideals of Judaism into living forms and institutions. As we acknowledge our responsibilities toward all Jews everywhere, we affirm our special obligation to provide the fullest measure of brotherly support and assistance -- material and moral -- for the people of the State of Israel.

V. We pledge ourselves to continued effort toward fuller understanding between the Jews who live in the Land of Israel and those who live elsewhere. We have no right to speak for each other; but we have a duty to speak to each other in mutual concern and genuine love. Our lives as Jews in America will be enriched by the creative development of Jewish culture in the State of Israel. The lives of our brothers in the State of Israel will, in turn, be enriched by the distinctive and creative Jewish experience in America. Jewish creativity knows no geographical boundaries.

The bridge of communication and of help to be built on solid foundations of knowledge, integrity, and affection

will not be shaken by disagreement or even by criticism.

VI. There is no necessary contradiction between Jewish nationalism and the universal principles of the Jewish faith, between the existence of the State of Israel and the world-wide mission of Judaism. The noblest teachers of Judaism have always insisted that the Jewish people should be the vehicle for the transmission of universal ideals as reflected in our historic experiences.

The aim of our Jewish communal life in America and of their Jewish national life in the State of Israel is . the implementation of the Jewish prophetic vision.¹⁴⁵

This draft evoked extensive discussion and divergent viewpoints. The salient comments are summarized here:

David Polish: It adds nothing to previous resolutions.

James G. Heller: It is negative in (character) approach, wording, and the spirit that animates it.

Jakob J. Petuchowski: It leaves out the point as to whether Israel (for Reform Jews) is considered the fulfillment of Messianic dreams (גאולה) or just the beginning.

Shai Shacknai: The statement does not point out the place of Hebrew as a living language and bond (link) among all Jews.

Max Kaufman: The report does not recognize the historical realities and impact of the creation of Israel upon the present generation.

Albert G. Minda: The report lacks any political obligation on the part of the American Jew with regard to Israel.

Charles E. Shulman: The report does not take into account a certain aspect of permanence to Reform Jewry and the people of the United States. It must make a clear statement regarding Jewish culture, Judaism, etc., vis-a-vis Israel, i.e., emphasizing Diaspora Jewry's relationship with Israel.

W. Gunther Plaut: There should be two parts to the statement -- (1) The relation of Diaspora Jewry to Judaism and Jewish people in light of the existence of Israel, and (2), An appendix: Special problems in light of Reform Jewry and the United States.

Joseph Buchler: Diaspora Jewry has a right to speak

and teach in terms of being Jewish to Israel and Israel must realize the needs of Jews in the Diaspora. If Israel is to be a Jewish State, it must be Jewish. (This second point should be spelled out in the report.)

Abraham I. Jacobson: The report should comment on the attitude of Israel in her responsibilities toward the Diaspora.

Max Nussbaum: This ought to be an entirely new platform, but it still represents a compromise between Zionists and anti-Zionists. It lacks philosophical principles. The Conference should discuss it, adopt it in principle, and then revise the text for the next convention.

Ely E. Pilchik: This statement is just a beginning. (Pilchik thus defends it.)

Solomon Foster: Everything has been universalized. (Foster cannot endorse certain elements of the report.)

Julian Morgenstern: Although Morgenstern agrees with the report, all views should be heard and considered in the final draft.

Joseph I. Weiss: This statement contains generalities which do not deal with the subject. Positive attitudes regarding the American Reform Jewish community and its future must also be stated. The role of Reform Judaism and freedom of Jewish expression in Israel (Liberal Judaism) must be noted.

Herschel Levine: The report cannot answer the charges of Ben Gurion. It represents many shades of opinion and will never reflect unity.¹⁴⁶

The draft of principles was referred back to the Committee for revision. A final draft was submitted to the 1962 CCAR meeting and this set of principles was finally adopted. Many changes both overt (in wording) and subtle (ideology) appear in this version of the 1961 document:

This last quarter of a century has brought upon us overwhelming changes. A third of our people has been martyred. The prophetic dream of the ancient homeland re-established and flourishing has been realized. As the State of Israel begins its fifteenth year, the Central Conference of American Rabbis issues this new statement:

I. We affirm our faith in the One Living God, Creator and Governor of the Universe. Our fathers pledged eternal loyalty to Him and He, we believe, accepted them as a people consecrated to His service. It is this Covenant between God and Israel that gives historic Jewish existence its distinctive character.

II. Changes of time, place, and circumstances have evoked divergent views among Jews as to the nature of Israel's Covenant with God and its implications for our time. Some give primary emphasis to Jewish nationhood. Some limit their interest to the maintenance of ethnic and cultural continuity. For us, Jewish religious faith is indispensable to the Jewish way of life. Yet we Jews are one people the world over, with a common historic background and a distinct consciousness of Jewish brotherhood. The familiar classifications of race, nationality, and church do not properly describe us. We are a unique community.

III. Jewish religious duty and Jewish historical experience both demand of us constant concern with all that Jews do and all that happens to them wherever they may live. "All Jews are responsible for one another" does not mean for us that we must approve and defend the words and actions of all Jews. It means that we are obligated to provide help -- material and spiritual -- that other Jews may need and to draw from other Jewish communities benefits they may confer upon us.

IV. We share the joy, gratitude, and pride felt by Jews everywhere over the growth and progress of the State of Israel. We hail the heroism and sacrifice of its builders and of all who are struggling to maintain its security and to further its development. The State of Israel has been the great refuge for our oppressed. It has established a center for a dynamic Hebrew culture. It has translated some of the prophetic ideals of Judaism into living forms and institutions. It has been a source of living inspiration to all our people. It offers great promise in the future.

As we acknowledge our responsibilities toward all Jews everywhere, we affirm our special obligation to provide the fullest measure of brotherly support and assistance -- material and moral -- for the people of the State of Israel.

We note with deep gratification the establishment of Liberal Jewish congregations in the land of Israel. This new religious movement requires our wholehearted encouragement and support.

V. We pledge ourselves to continued effort toward fuller understanding between the Jews who live in the land of Israel and those who live elsewhere. We have no right to speak for each other; but it is our duty to

speak to each other continually in mutual concern and genuine love. Our lives as Jews in America are enriched by the creative development of Jewish life in the State of Israel. The lives of our brothers in the State of Israel are, in turn, enriched by the distinctive and creative Jewish experience in America. Jewish creativity knows no geographical boundaries.

There will be disagreements between us, and even criticisms of each other. American Jews should not give the impression that they are trying to direct the affairs of the State of Israel and the leaders of the State of Israel should avoid giving the impression that they speak for American Jewry. Yet the bridge of communication and help, built with knowledge and love, must stand firm and unshaken.

VI. The distinctive character of historic Jewish existence rooted in our Covenant with the One Living God, affirmed in each generation and in every place and circumstance by the noblest teachers of Judaism, imposes upon us all the unceasing striving for the implementation of the Jewish prophetic vision.

This divine mission again unites and challenges our brothers in the State of Israel, in America, and everywhere on earth.¹⁴⁷

During the remaining years (1963-1966) under discussion in this chapter, the CCAR became preoccupied with the development of progressive Judaism in Israel and the implementation of Reform programs there. In 1963, the Conference spoke out for the rights of non-Orthodox Jews in Israel by passing the following resolution:

We express our chagrin and grievances in the matter of the attitude in the State of Israel to Reform Judaism.¹⁴⁸

These sentiments are expressed more adamantly in a 1964 statement adopted by the CCAR:

The Central Conference of American Rabbis, which has participated in the development of the Hebrew Union College Biblical and Archaeological School in Jerusalem, expresses its deep sense of satisfaction with the completion and dedication of the School. We are also gratified that, through the co-operation of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, several Chugim have now been

established in Israel; that plans are in progress for the development of the Leo Baeck School in Haifa, and that alumni of our Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion are engaged in religious and educational work in Israel. We applaud the support given by the officials of the State of Israel.

Together with many Israelis, we recognize the urgent need for the spirit and content of a liberal Judaism in Israel. Encouraged and supported by us, such a movement must be helped to grow and flourish out of the soil of the homeland and in response to the religious needs of the people. It is our desire and determination that the College and the religious fellowships, which we hope will multiply in number, shall be aided to function freely and effectively.

We deplore the fact that non-Orthodox religious leaders are denied legal status which would permit them to officiate at such religious rites as marriage. We also deplore the harassment by official representatives of Orthodox Judaism of those wishing to worship in other than Orthodox forms. This infringement on religious liberty is contrary to the true nature of historic Judaism.

While we do not presume to suggest the direction along which the future relationship between the State of Israel and Judaism will evolve, our own background of American experience convinces us that church and state are both freer, and in the long run, healthier without the direct impingement of the power of the one upon the other. Separation does not seem to lessen but rather to increase the real influence of religion upon human affairs.

We hope that the citizens of Israel will come to the conclusion that the principle of separation is the best way, and we are resolved to use our own influence toward the further development of religious liberalism in the life of the country.¹⁴⁹

Two more resolutions concerning Israel were adopted by the Conference this same year. One urged support for the Leo Baeck School in Haifa and the other endorsed the proposed "First Year in Israel Program" for rabbinic students at Hebrew Union College.

This period (1949-1966), then, marked the solidification of Reform Judaism's commitment toward Israel. The CCAR outwardly attempted to influence the American government to form strong ties with Israel and aid

her developing economy. The Conference addressed the problem of establishing peace in the Middle East. More important, the American Reform movement began establishing a liberal Jewish movement in Israel in its fight for acceptance by the Israelis of non-Orthodox Jewish ideas. Although there was no move on the part of the Reform rabbinate to affiliate with a Zionist group such as the World Zionist Organization, a development which did occur (see Chapter 5), American Reform Judaism certainly proved by its pronouncements and actions that it was a true "friend of Israel." Arthur Lelyveld captured the prevailing spirit of the Conference during this juncture in history by bringing together two relevant quotations:

The papers and discussions of the 'fifties and 'sixties expressed the changed temper of the Conference. "The anti-Zionist philosophy has been rendered obsolete by history," said Bernard Bamberger. ". . . Sympathetic non-Zionism has become the dominant attitude among American Jews . . . but the mood and content . . . changed. Instead of calling it non-Zionist we may now title it simply 'pro-Israel'." The change of mood was symbolized by the Executive Board's approval of a memorial resolution on the 50th anniversary of the death of Theodore Herzl -- a far cry from Isaac Mayer Wise's disparaging reference to Herzl in 1897.¹⁵⁰

The Six Day War between Israel and her neighbors was to usher in a new era in Jewish history, characterized as it was by a heightened sense of Jewish identity. The American Reform rabbinate was dramatically affected by this new awareness among Jews. As a result, the Reform movement became pro-Zionist. These developments are the subject for the final chapter of this study.

CHAPTER 5:

REFORM JUDAISM EMBRACES ZIONISM

(1967-1978)

The most contemporary era in Jewish history marks the completion of Reform Judaism's swing toward a total commitment to Jewish nationalism. This swing was definitively marked by the CCAR's decision to embrace Zionism. A contagious wave of heightened Jewish identity coupled with a new consciousness of the role of Israel in the life of every Jew, which the Six Day War produced and the Yom Kippur War reinforced, had made such a profound impact on the Reform rabbinate that they finally spilled over the brink into Zionism.

Dr. Michael Langer, a member of Kibbutz Geshet Haziv and past shaliach to the Reform movement in the United States, pointed out:

It was in the period between the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War that the Reform Movement began to seriously think in terms of its impact on the Jewish State. In order to confront the political and religious reality it was clear that a Progressive Jewish presence would have to be established. The World Union for Progressive Judaism moved its headquarters to Jerusalem. The Hebrew Union College established a campus in Jerusalem and made a year of study there mandatory for ordination in the Reform rabbinate. A group of rabbis from the Central Conference of American Rabbis initiated a series of dialogues with leaders of the kibbutz movement and the idea of a Reform kibbutz was born. The idea, however, had to await realization until the youth groups of the tiny Israeli Reform Movement matured sufficiently to attempt to realize it. A real Reform kibbutz movement also depends on the evolution of a pioneering Reform youth movement in North America.¹⁵¹

The kibbutz to which Langer alluded, Yahel, was dedicated in November, 1976, during the Fiftieth Anniversary Conference of the World Union for Progressive Judaism in Israel. (A second Reform kibbutz is presently being formed at the time of the writing of this thesis.)

The establishment of ARZA (Association of Reform Zionists of America)

as an arm of the UAHC has officially linked American Reform Jewry with the World Zionist Organization. ARZA, for the first time ever, sent an American Reform Jewish delegation to the World Zionist Congress in Jerusalem in February, 1978.

The above capitulation of some of the salient events revolving around Reform Judaism's marriage to Zionism gives a sketchy overview of the past twelve years. However, a closer examination of the deliberations of the CCAR which led to these events will certainly clarify Reform Judaism's new posture with regard to Zionism.

Rabbi Jacob J. Weinstein, President of the Conference in 1967, devoted much of his address to the Six Day War in the Middle East and assessed it in light of the Vietnam War.¹⁵² The following selection from Weinstein's speech is expressive of the reactions characteristic of the Reform rabbi-nate:

As to Israel and the Arabs, we recognize a different situation altogether. We have watched the noose being drawn around the collective neck of the people of Israel. They have lived under the murky half-way conditions of a tenuous truce, violated by countless acts of violence initiated by Egyptians, Syrians or Jordanians. We have watched the patience of the people of Israel grow thin and at times evaporate under acts of sabotage and murder. Unhappily, the truce-keeping agency and the United Nations representatives have all too often witnessed the reaction and ignored the provocation, the reflex action of the leg but not the thump of the hammer on the knee. Israeli leadership would have been criminally negligent if it had permitted the massing of the Arab forces, the unification of military leadership between the UAR and Syria and Jordan, the continuous repetition of Nasser's threat to have a final reckoning, to have gone by as mere exercises in Oriental verbal flamboyance.

We rejoice in the modern-day repetition of the victory over Goliath of today's David, who rained his smooth pebbles from slingshots in the sky. We recognize the justice of Israel's declaration that she will never again be the scapegoat of an act of appeasement,

that she will insist on the kind of peace that will guarantee her borders, give access to her ports, and enable her to live peacefully as a good neighbor in the little land which a repentant world finally and grudgingly vouchsafed to her. And we must be strong as lions, swift as eagles, cunning as serpents not to permit that which Israel has gained by so much precious blood and sweat to be nibbled away through the devious diplomacy of big-power plays.

It is hardly necessary to point out the differences between the Mid-East situation and Vietnam: the fact that Israel came into being by the act of a majority of the membership of the United Nations, that it has had the support of every President from Wilson to Johnson, that Congressional acts in every administration have confirmed America's pledge to the continuity and welfare of Israel. I say it is not necessary to recount these and many other factors that differentiate America's commitment to Israel from our commitment to Vietnam. Perhaps we can symbolize the difference dramatically by asking whether General Nguen Cao Ky or Levi Eshkol can be better entrusted with the encouragement of the democratic process in their respective spheres of influence! The American public recognizes the difference. The numbers of young men, many non-Jewish, who volunteered for service in the Israeli army -- many of them cool or opposed to the Vietnam war -- speaks more than volumes. The perceptive cartoonist Bill Mauldin ended his first dispatch from Israel with the terse comment: "Here was a war whose motives were clear and simple. No one needs to ask what he is fighting for."¹⁵³

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver submitted a "Statement on Israel"¹⁵⁴ to be adopted as a resolution during the Conference session on Israel. While putting the whole Middle East crisis into perspective, Rabbi Silver expressed many of the feelings and thoughts of his colleagues:

We utter a heartfelt prayer of thanks that God granted deliverance to Israel in her hour of danger

The Conference rejoices in the re-unification of Jerusalem as a fulfillment of divine promise. We applaud the Government of Israel for its solemn pledge to safeguard the Holy Places of Jerusalem, which are sacred to all faiths, and to guarantee access to them

Israel faced military attack alone. Israel now faces a critical political and economic attack and the challenge

of effecting a meaningful settlement with no certain ally save one -- the Jewish people. As proud rabbis of this people, individually and as a Conference we pledge ourselves to encourage communal discipline in this hour of crises. Individually and in our congregations we pledge sacrificial support of the Israel Emergency Fund and to the purchase of Israel bonds. Individually and as a Conference we will use our pulpits and our platforms to clarify the fundamental issues, the facts and the equities.

Israel faces many dangers. The economy needs to be reconstructed. The truth needs to be spoken. Decency needs to be mobilized. The world needs to understand that Israel cannot properly be asked to sacrifice any present advantage unless and until all issues are placed on the conference table and the Arab world is prepared in its turn to make appropriate adjustments.

As rabbis, we have fought many battles for many causes with men of good will. We call upon them now to recognize the perversion of genocide, the sin of obdurate hate, and the imperative of a lasting peace. We ask their understanding of the rightness of Israel's survival even as they have asked our understanding of their proper causes and human interests.

We declare our solidarity with the State and the people of Israel. Their triumphs are our triumphs. Their ordeal is our ordeal. Their fate is our fate.¹⁵⁵

In addition, the following resolution was added to the first:

As a tangible statement of this Conference's concern, we ask this assembly to mandate the Executive Board to make a substantial investment out of our assets in Israel Bonds. These monies will help to rebuild the land. They will testify to our faith that this people Israel lives and will live.¹⁵⁶

Both resolutions were passed by standing acclaim.

The paragraph cited above concerning the reunification of Jerusalem was adopted by the Executive Board of the CCAR during the year between the 1967 and 1968 conventions. A new Committee on Israel was also appointed. During the 1968 meeting of the Conference, Dr. Ezra Spicehandler delivered a paper "What Can We Say to Israel" in which he explained how Reform Ju-

daism and Zionism indeed go hand-in-hand together. Yitzchak Rabin responded by expounding the Israeli viewpoint in a paper "What Can Israel Say to Us." A discussion took place after these talks were delivered.¹⁵⁷

Rabbi Levi A. Olan, in his 1969 President's Message, urged the CCAR to call an American Jewish Conference to devise programs of large scale support of money and spirit to the State of Israel. According to Olan, "every man, woman and child" must be dedicated "to support Israel's will to live."¹⁵⁸

The Committee on the President's Message shared Olan's concerns regarding the existence of Israel. It endorsed Israel's (on the State's 21st Anniversary) continuing quest for genuine peace as expressed by Golda Meir.¹⁵⁹ The committee then added:

We renew our Conference commitment to the United Jewish Appeal, the Israel Emergency Fund and Israel Bonds as vital sources of assistance during this very difficult time, when the resources of the people and the government of Israel are being taxed to the limit.

We call upon the American government to provide Israel with all the necessary military equipment essential for her legitimate defense against genocide and aggression. We urge our government to adhere to its policy of advocating a negotiated peace among the parties directly involved until a permanent peace is established through signed peace treaties between Israel and each of the neighboring states.

We endorse Israel's insistence that

(a) external powers cannot impose a political settlement on the Mid-East;

(b) there can be no withdrawals from the present ceasefire lines until there are direct negotiations leading to signed peace treaties between Israel and each of her Arab neighbors.¹⁶⁰

The CCAR also took another important step with regard to the solidarity of Diaspora Jewry with Jews in Israel by declaring that Israel Independence Day would henceforth become a holiday to be observed by Reform Jewry:

I. WHEREAS, The CCAR would wish to further the desire of Jews everywhere to give public expression to their identification and unity with the accomplishments and aspirations of our people in Israel,

Be it therefore resolved, That the CCAR, assembled in Houston, Texas at its Eightieth Anniversary Convention, institute Israel Independence Day as a permanent festival to be observed annually on the fifth day of Iyar as part of our spiritual history and religious life.

Be it further resolved, That the CCAR direct its Committee on Liturgy jointly with the Committee on Israel to prepare an order of service and cultural program for the appropriate and meaningful observance of Israel Independence Day in our homes and congregations.

We call on all other rabbinic bodies to join us in this observance.¹⁶¹

In 1970, several significant events took place within Reform Judaism in connection with Israel. The First Year Program in Jerusalem for rabbinic students was initiated by the Hebrew Union College. The College thus became the first Diaspora rabbinic seminary to require that its students spend at least one year in Israel. Furthermore, the CCAR held its 1970 convention in Israel, also a first for a Diaspora rabbinic association. The Conference membership decided that at least once every seven years it would hold its annual convention in Israel.

During the year preceeding this convention in Israel, the CCAR Executive Board made many important decisions regarding Reform Judaism and Israel. These are enumerated in the Report of Recording Secretary:

. . . The following recommendations were moved and passed:

That we call upon HUC-JIR, UAHC, WUPJ and CCAR to merge their separate committees into a Joint Commission on Israel.

That we recommend the employment of a director for the Progressive movement in Israel.

That the UAHC Israel Committee be requested to find a better way to raise larger sums of money for Israel, the dollar-a-year program not being adequate.

That representatives of the Progressive movement be ap-

pointed to the Israel Commission.

That a representative of MARAM be invited to attend meetings of the CCAR Executive Board on the same basis as regional presidents at no expense to the Conference and that an annual report to the CCAR Executive Board be given by MARAM.

That the CCAR convention be held in Israel at least once every seven years.

That the proposed conversation between representatives of the Kibbutz and delegates of the CCAR here and in Israel be endorsed.

That we encourage our colleagues to intensify recruitment for the Leo Baeck School and all schools in the E.I.E. program.

The Board expressed its gratitude to our colleagues Roland B. Gittelsohn, Joseph B. Glaser, Richard G. Hirsch, David Polish, and Ezra Spicehandler for their significant roles in the magnificent Jerusalem conference.¹⁶²

Gathered at Mt. Scopus for the opening of the Conference convention, Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn, in his Presidential Message, concentrated on the relationship between American Reform Judaism and Israel. He proclaimed:

. . . We shall use our influence, wherever and whenever we can, to persuade the world that its own survival and integrity are irrevocably linked with those of Israel. We shall do all this not as a gesture of philanthropy, but because we know how imperative the survival of Israel is for the enhancement and vitality of our own Judaism.¹⁶³

This theme was reiterated in the various papers delivered to this gathering both by Conference members and a vast array of distinguished Israeli guest speakers.¹⁶⁴

The CCAR also issued a Statement on Jerusalem which was adopted unanimously by a rising vote at this historic meeting in Israel:

Gathered at its national convention in Jerusalem, the Central Conference of American Rabbis affirms its commitment to the preservation of the unity of this city, heartland of Jewish existence from ages past until this

day. We stand with the State of Israel in opposing any efforts to restore Jerusalem to its prior severed condition where Jewish sacred places were violated, the Hebrew University and the Hadassah hospital shut down, and the Jewish inhabitants placed in jeopardy. The State of Israel will continue to safeguard the holy places of Christendom and Islam, but it must not be expected to relinquish its right to sovereignty over the city which in its totality is sacred to the Jewish people. For the sake of Zion we shall not be silent.¹⁶⁵

The CCAR, at its next convention in 1971, passed two resolutions with respect to Israel. One pledged support for the Israel Bond Campaign and the other pinpointed the responsibility of the American Jewish Community to guarantee that Israel lives.¹⁶⁶ The Executive Board adopted a resolution "On Israel"¹⁶⁷ in which it commended Nixon and his government for extending friendship and understanding to Israeli leaders during their recent trip to the United States. This resolution issued a warning that only through negotiations (from strength) could a peace settlement evolve. Weakening Israel's negotiating position would only increase the possibility for another war.

A number of important points regarding Israel (Zionism) were articulated in a joint message of the President, Roland B. Gittelsohn, and the Vice President, David Polish, and later endorsed by the President's Message Committee Recommendations. First, the two men recommended that the Central Conference of American Rabbis join the World Jewish Congress. Second, they devoted a section of their speech to Israel and emphasized both dialogue and strengthening the bonds between American Jewry and Israel. Gittelsohn and Polish made seven specific suggestions in this area:

1. At our Jerusalem convention, we were invited by leaders of the Kibbutz Movement to join with them in an exploration of what we share in common and what we can together undertake. We responded by holding a preliminary conversation in April, 1970, which led to

the planning of a three-day meeting to be held in Haifa early next month. If some of our common ethical objectives and our common openness to innovation and creativity can lead to a continuous dialogue with Kibbutz life, all of us will be enriched, and a significant contribution to a true bond between Israel and the העולם will be achieved.

2. The distressing moral issues confronting Israel should not be forfeited as weapons to Israel's enemies in the West. They should be honestly discussed and not evaded by Israel's friends, in an atmosphere of critical concern. To this end, we propose that this Conference invite Israelis, both in and outside the political establishment, to meet with us, perhaps in regional gatherings, to face up to the issues with the same candor with which Israelis face them.

3. We urge that this Conference, which dramatically established its presence in Israel in 1970 and will do so again at our conversation with the Kibbutzim in 1971, plan on an annual official presence by means of some program, however modest, in Israel. All of these should be climaxed, as already established by our Executive Board, by a convention in Israel at least once every seven years.

4. We invite our Israeli colleagues in Maram (מזרח המזרח המזרח) to be represented on our Executive Board and to report to our annual conventions.

5. We have asked the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to unite our respective Committees on Israel into a joint Commission. Thought should be given to expanding it further to include the World Union for Progressive Judaism. Such a Commission would greatly intensify the scope of our Israel-oriented work and would synchronize our presently fragmented programs. Without relinquishing our determination to achieve religious freedom in Israel, we do not have to wait for it in order to develop a non-Orthodox program to which the majority of Israelis, as attested in a recent poll, would be receptive. At the same time we should work closely with our College-Institute on programs where, in conjunction with the Hebrew University and similar institutions, we can aid our colleagues in deriving the fullest benefit from their visits, Sabbaticals, and תלמידים to Israel.

6. The American Campus has become a major staging area for anti-Israel attacks by the Radical Left and by the Arab World. Except for the growing and magnificent response by small numbers of Jewish students whose ingenuity compensates for their limited resources, we are in sad disarray. Because of necessary preoccupation with security, the political struggle, and finances,

inadequate attention has been given to the Campus where the ideological battle for Israel could be lost in another generation. We urge that a conference (in which we would share) be called to marshal the intellectual and moral resources of American Jewish youth, and, together with their representatives, to develop a program adequate to the challenge confronting our youth

While adhering to our hard-won positions on race and peace, we urge this Conference to reject the flagrantly hostile policies of those movements on the Left or Right, in the White community or the Black, in Jewish and non-Jewish life, which make common cause with Israel's enemies and the enemies of the Jewish people.¹⁶⁸

Between 1972-1974, the CCAR did actually join the World Jewish Congress. The UAHC also followed suit. The World Union for Progressive Judaism moved its international headquarters from London and New York to Jerusalem in 1974. A year later, it joined the World Zionist Organization.

The year 1973 marked Israel's twenty-fifth anniversary. In the spirit of this celebration, the CCAR adopted the following resolution:

This year Israel has celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the state. In all the ages of our history, and in all the lands of our dispersion, we have remembered it with love and longing, saying with Psalmists: "If I forget Thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember Thee, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy. . . ."

The CCAR reaffirms its spiritual and cultural commitment to Eretz Israel -- the land of our Prophets and Sages. We recall with pride the role of many of the leaders of Reform Judaism in the rebuilding of our ancient Homeland: Stephen Wise, Abba Hillel Silver, Judah Leon Magnes, Barnett Brickner, James Heller, Nelson Glueck and many others. Together with all Israel we pray that Zion may become a light for all nations, as a land in which the vision of Justice and mercy shall be fulfilled, for the good of all mankind. So that "Out of Zion shall go forth Torah, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."¹⁶⁹

Again, Reform Judaism's ties with Israel were emphasized at the Conference convention. Among the many papers delivered, Rabbi Richard G. Hirsch's

address "Symbol of Hope"¹⁷⁰ is noteworthy. He subtly called for a universal commitment to Israel (and Zionism) by the Reform Jewish movement, rather than commitments by individual rabbis or leaders.

During autumn, 1973, the Yom Kippur War broke out in the Middle East. The CCAR, in a move to show openly its firm solidarity with Israel, rescheduled its 1974 convention in Jerusalem. Again, the Conference expressed its conviction that Jerusalem must remain united:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that this convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, meeting in Jerusalem, commits itself to the principle of the unity of Jerusalem, and we call upon our membership to petition their own governments to take stands in the council of nations to advance the cause of the "unity of Jerusalem." Our tradition expresses the mandate that "we pray for the peace of Jerusalem." We pledge to accompany our prayers with concrete acts of petition and to share in being the builders of Jerusalem for today.¹⁷¹

Like its previous 1970 convention in Israel, this CCAR convention was also addressed by an impressive spectrum of Israeli leaders and Conference members. Two of the speeches, that of Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, President of HUC-JIR, and Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, President of the UAHC, merit some examination.

Dr. Gottschalk (in his paper "Israel and the Diaspora -- A New Look"¹⁷²) assessed the situation in Israel after the Yom Kippur War and the relation between Israel and Diaspora Jewry. He emphasized that whereas Diaspora Jewry needs fuller cultural, social and religious participation in the life of Israel, it must also provide Aliyah. There must be a full partnership between Israel and the Diaspora. Moreover, claimed Gottschalk, Israel must have Progressive Judaism. He concluded:

Le-sakem, as the Israelis say -- if I may sum up: We

Jews, whether we are Israelis or Diaspora Jews, have much in common, both in the past and in the future. We are an uprooted people, and so, wherever we find ourselves today, even here in our historic homeland, we are anxious and insecure and even (and quite justifiably) paranoid. We suffer from faulty educations and don't know who we are, or where we're bound for, or what priorities to shape for ourselves (See Rosenblum, Na Le-Hakhlit, Ha-Aretz, March 1, 1974, p. 13). We do, however -- most of us at any rate -- care about one another and about our welfare as a people.

You can call it atavism if you will, but our guts tell us to care, to look to one another for support and comfort -- but we all begin to understand now that Eretz Yisrael or the Medinat Yisrael can represent no Geulah in themselves. Only in partnership with world Jewry is Geulah thinkable. Eretz Yisrael represents possibility, challenge, a unifying focus -- but if there is to be anything we would care to call Geulah, it must take global shape; it must involve and include and operate among Jews everywhere, not only those who live in Israel.

What Israel offers is the possibility of Hebraization, and that is something of immense importance, even something indispensable in the way it can help us strengthen our sense of a historic identity -- but the problem of Judaization is no more easily solved in Israel than in the Diaspora. If it is to be solved at all, it must be solved through some sort of common effort in both. If we can begin this effort, maybe in time to come it will be said with accuracy -- if not historical recapitulation -- that "all Israel prays toward one place."¹⁷³

Rabbi Schindler (in his paper "Israel and the Diaspora -- Our Responsibilities"¹⁷⁴) articulated four basic responsibilities of Diaspora Jewry with regard to Israel. First, Diaspora Jewry must use its perspective of distance to counteract extreme changes in feelings toward Israel -- swinging "from hope to despair, from complacency to paranoia."¹⁷⁵ Second, both Israel and the Diaspora must speak the truth to each other as each sees it. Both sides must be frank and straightforward. Third, Jews must build strong Jewish communities no matter where they live. Finally, Diaspora Jewry must come to Israel at least to visit and hopefully many will chose to live there.

In 1975, Dr. Michael Langer delivered a brief talk "A Zionist Orientation for Reform Judaism"¹⁷⁶ to the CCAR convention in which he tried to illuminate precisely the type of relationship which must exist between Reform Judaism and Zionism. Langer summarized his view in his concluding paragraph:

It will be of importance and significance to Israel and Israeli society if American Jewish Youth experience Israel as a norm in their Jewish education. In the opinion of more Israelis than you think it would be most desirable if a more significant Progressive Jewish presence were established in Israel through a consciously Reform Zionist Aliya. But the decisive importance of these phenomena will be in the vitalizing feed-back to American Liberal Judaism itself, and in ensuring its capability of responding to the challenge of our times with a viable Judaism. This is the nature of the complementary relationship between Zionism and Reform Judaism as I see it today.¹⁷⁷

Two resolutions of considerable importance were adopted by the Conference at this meeting. The first, pledged continued participation in the work of the World Jewish Congress and the World Zionist Organization:

WHEREAS the age old dictum of Kol Yisrael arayvim ze baze -- "All Israelites are responsible one for the other" has been translated into reality in many ways by our rabbinic conference, and

WHEREAS we sense deeply the ties that bind us to Jews throughout the world, and

WHEREAS the pain that comes to our people in lands of oppression causes us pain, and

WHEREAS once again as we meet we relish our own freedom to assemble but note that such freedom does not come to our people in other countries,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that we continue to be full participants in the work of the World Jewish Congress and the World Zionist Organization which strengthen bonds of unity among Jews throughout the world.¹⁷⁸

The second resolution on Israel, which was quite lengthy, dealt with those areas of vital concern to the Reform rabbinate and demonstrated Reform's

"new" commitment to Jewish nationalism.¹⁷⁹

The year 1975 also marked the hundredth anniversary of Reform Judaism in America. Rabbi Robert I. Kahn, then President of the CCAR, pointed out the need to rethink and redefine the principles of Reform Judaism. In his presidential report, Kahn suggested a skeletal frame of principles for consideration by his colleagues. The finished product, "Reform Judaism: A Centenary Perspective,"¹⁸⁰ was adopted by the Conference the following year (1976). Section V "Our Obligations: the State of Israel and the Diaspora" capsulated the contemporary Reform Jewish view regarding Zionism:

We are privileged to live in an extraordinary time, one in which a third Jewish commonwealth has been established in our people's ancient homeland. We are bound to that land and to the newly reborn State of Israel by innumerable religious and ethnic ties. We have been enriched by its culture and ennobled by its indomitable spirit. We see it providing unique opportunities for Jewish self-expression. We have both a stake and a responsibility in building the State of Israel, assuring its security and defining its Jewish character. We encourage aliyah for those who wish to find maximum personal fulfillment in the cause of Zion. We demand that Reform Judaism be unconditionally legitimized in the State of Israel.

At the same time that we consider the State of Israel vital to the welfare of Judaism everywhere, we reaffirm the mandate of our tradition to create strong Jewish communities wherever we live. A genuine Jewish life is possible in any land, each community developing its own particular character and determining its Jewish responsibilities. The foundation of Jewish community life is the synagogue. It leads us beyond itself to cooperate with other Jews, to share their concerns, and to assume leadership in communal affairs. We are therefore committed to the full democratization of the Jewish community and to its hallowing in terms of Jewish values.

The State of Israel and the diaspora, in fruitful dialogue, can show how a people transcends nationalism even as it affirms it, thereby setting an example for humanity which remains largely concerned with dangerously parochial goals.¹⁸¹

During November, 1975, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution which equated Zionism with racism. The Arab world had stepped up its anti-Zionist/anti-Israel propaganda campaign and had successfully manipulated the United Nations into a position where it echoed the Arab propaganda. This situation generated vociferous protests condemning the United Nations. Responding to this volatile chain of events, the CCAR (at the 1976 convention) issued another resolution on Israel:.

WHEREAS the State of Israel is in a desperate struggle for survival; Zionism and the Jewish People are under attack by a malicious Arab propaganda campaign; the United Nations General Assembly and its various commissions continue to be manipulated to discredit Israel, Zionism and the Jewish People; Arab boycotts of Israel and Jews continue; Israel is forced to maintain its defense posture at a level which continues to disrupt its economy and thwart its efforts to render the essential human services to its people; and

WHEREAS we have concern for the future actions of our own United States government, the Israeli government, the leadership of Arab states and groups; and

WHEREAS we feel an obligation to respond properly, responsibly and forthrightly as a conference of rabbis who have a long record of love and loyalty for the State of Israel combined with a fervent dedication to peace,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that we call on the government of the United States to continue its opposition to the calumnies against Zionism and the Jewish People in the United Nations and to approach with the greatest caution proposals for the creation of a Palestinian state or for the disruption of a currently unified Jerusalem, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call on the government of the State of Israel to continue to seek out avenues of peace, to denounce efforts of such groups as Gush Emunim which can only further exacerbate existing tensions and drive Arabs and Jews further apart at a time when the cause of peace requires a narrowing of the gap between them and we commend the government of Israel for its efforts to restrain the illegal activities of Gush Emunim, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call on the leaders of Arab nations and groups within the Arab world to recog-

nize the right of the State of Israel to exist and commit themselves to joining with Israel in a search for a lasting peace in the Middle East.¹⁸²

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, November, 1976, marked the official dedication of Kibbutz Yahel, during the Fiftieth Anniversary Conference of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. The CCAR openly voiced its support and elation over this historic event in a resolution adopted at the 1977 convention:

The Reform movement in Judaism has long supported the upbuilding of the land of Israel. The recent establishment of Kibbutz Yahel exemplifies our commitment to the upbuilding of the land and to building our movement in the land. Our movement's pioneer settlers, living in a hostile terrain and an uncomfortable climate, need certain amenities to make life tolerable.

The Central Conference of American Rabbis and its members are determined by collective and individual effort to ensure the continued creative survival of progressive Judaism in Israel, and of Kibbutz Yahel in particular. We recognize our obligation as rabbis personally to stand in the forefront of this historic effort.

The Central Conference of American Rabbis commends the youthful pioneers of our movement who by their very lives affirm the vitality of liberal Judaism and our unwavering commitment to the land of Israel. We pledge our support of fund-raising efforts in support of Kibbutz Yahel and urge financial support by our membership.¹⁸³

Other resolutions regarding Israel were also adopted. They included the areas of continued United States economic aid to Israel (for both military and non-military needs), security in Israel, the changing government (to the Likud administration under Begin) in Israel, continuing dialogue on Israel within the American Jewish community and finally calling for religious pluralism in Israel in order to preserve Klal Yisrael.¹⁸⁴

The creation of ARZA (Association of Reform Zionists of America) during the summer of 1977 was, without doubt, the most decisive step in

the completion of a marriage between Reform Judaism and Zionism. During June, 1977, the Ad Hoc Committee on Zionist Affiliation, chaired by Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn, submitted a report to the Board of the UAHC. The flow of events which led up to the appointment of this committee are explained in the "Foreword" to this report:

In 1898, a year after Theodor Herzl convened the First Zionist Congress, the CCAR unanimously adopted a resolution expressing its "total disapproval of any attempt for the establishment of a Jewish state". Seventy-five years later, in his presidential sermon to the UAHC Biennial Assembly gathered in Dallas, Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler described the remarkable change that had taken place in the character of our movement: "Whether we spell it with a big 'Z' or a small 'z', we are all of us Zionists."

As Reform Jews, we base our Zionist commitment on a constellation of ideals and values unique to a Liberal religious tradition. Thus, our many Israel-based and Israel-oriented programs, through which we endeavor to implement these values, constitute a positive, indeed, an essential contribution to Judaism, Zionism and Israel.

In recent years, the leadership of the UAHC has received a number of requests from among the ranks of American Reform Jewry to formalize our institutional ties with Zionism, thus giving full voice to our concerns within the councils of the Zionist movement, and providing a vehicle for Reform Jews who wish to participate as Reform Jews in the Zionist process. On February 28, 1977, the UAHC Executive Committee, following extensive discussion, unanimously adopted the following resolution:

Whereas there have been grass root requests from members and groups of members of various Reform congregations to participate as Reform Jews as part of the World Zionist Organization, under the aegis of the UAHC, and/or otherwise more fully implement their commitment to Israel,

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that:

The Executive Committee looks with favor upon the idea of providing a structure under the aegis of the UAHC by which Reform Jews who are so minded may achieve this purpose.

The resolution mandated the Chairman of the Board to appoint a committee to study the means by which this

this purpose may be implemented, and to circulate its report to the UAHC Board at least fifteen days prior to the June, 1977 meeting. Implicit in this mandate was the understanding that the committee could report negatively, should it be unable to develop a feasible means of implementation.¹⁸⁵

The main tenets of the Ad Hoc Committee's findings were summarized at the beginning of its report. They included five conclusions concerning:

- (1) Reform Judaism and Zion; (2) The Zionist Process; (3) Diversity;
- (4) Mechanism (creation of ARZA); and (5) Benefits.¹⁸⁶

The CCAR (at its convention that same month) heard a report delivered by Rabbi David Polish representing the Ad Hoc Steering Committee for the Association of Reform Zionists of America.¹⁸⁷ Polish concluded his report by moving that the Conference endorse ARZA with official CCAR representation. This motion was adopted by the Conference.

During Autumn of 1977, a massive membership drive was undertaken on behalf of ARZA. By February, 1978, ARZA sent a delegation to the World Zionist Organization. On the weekend of September 15-17, 1978, the First National Assembly of ARZA was held in Washington D.C. The ARZA Platform, drafted by a committee under the chairmanship of Rabbi David Polish, was unanimously adopted by the delegates to the National Assembly.¹⁸⁸ This document officially verbalized Reform Judaism's total commitment to Israel and the principles for which Israel stands by embracing Zionist ideology and incorporating this ideology into Reform Jewish thought. Therefore, the synthesis between these two Jewish movements, Reform Judaism and Zionism, finally was accomplished through ARZA.

The past decade of Reform Jewish history and thought unquestionably has been one of the most exciting and decisive periods regarding the changing Reform attitudes toward Jewish nationalism. Reform Judaism in

its entirety -- every facet -- has been affected by the movement's new outlook. Rabbi David Polish cogently put this whole matter into perspective:

The turn toward Jewish nationalism has affected all aspects of life within the Reform community. As was anticipated by its earliest protagonists, Reform has not only entered into Klal Yisrael -- the totality of the Jewish people -- but has increasingly assumed a role of growing influence, both through its leaders and through its Israel-oriented program.

In addition, the Jewish and religious life of Reform Jewry has been transformed. As had been perceived from the beginning, Jewish practice is closely identified with the people's national aspirations. When the latter are attenuated, so is the former. The Reform community has experienced an explosion of Israel-related observance. Much of the music on Shabbat, the festivals and the Yamim Noraim is Israeli. Some Congregations observe the second day of Rosh Hashanah out of spiritual identification with Israel. Israeli art and artifacts are found within many synagogues. The new Haggadah contains the prayer, "Next year in Jerusalem." The new prayer book, "Gates of Prayer" includes special services commemorating the Holocaust and observing Israel Independence Day. It also contains frequent prayers for Israel in the regular liturgy. Thus, a reformulation of one of the Amidah prayers reads: "Turn in compassion to Jerusalem, your city. Let there be peace in her gates, quietness in the hearts of her inhabitants. Let your Torah go forth from Zion and your word from Jerusalem. Blessed is the Lord who gives peace to Jerusalem."

. . . The restoration of traditional practices in the home and in the synagogue reflects the influence not only of the Holocaust but of the State which brought consolation and renewed purpose to the Jewish people. The proliferation of the study of Hebrew as a living language is a reality in the Reform community. Congregations send hundreds of students annually for summers, for semesters, and for year-long study and work sojourns in Israel.¹⁸⁹

This chapter, then, completes the 180° swing by Reform Judaism in which it has totally embraced Zionism. The impact of this process, as explicated above, has been tremendous. Reform Judaism has truly entered a new age. It has acquired a Zionist orientation.

EPILOGUE:

WHERE DOES REFORM JUDAISM GO FROM HERE:

SOME OBSERVATIONS

This thesis has traced the dynamics through which Reform Judaism has dealt with one principle, namely, the Zionist idea (and the reality of the State of Israel). Zionism, understood by the early Reformers as an ephemeral notion, has now been elevated to the status of an eternal element within Reform Jewish thought. This transition required both the historical environment in which American Reform Judaism was immersed and the ideological wrestling which occurred within the movement throughout the years to be favorable. Bridging the past with the present while also considering the future has been an awesome task.

Therefore, the Reform movement currently finds itself at a new beginning. Having arrived at this juncture in its development, Reform Judaism must address the query of how and where to proceed. One priority should be an all-out attempt to inculcate a Reform Zionist identity into Reform Jewry. This will be done through education both in the home and in the synagogue. Reform textbooks must be rewritten to include the Zionist aspect of Reform thinking. New programs and curricula must be developed which convey this new attitude. Opportunities for first-hand experiences in Israel must be increased and encouraged. Zionist affiliation and commitment must be stressed among Reform Jews. ARZA, developed to its utmost capacity, could facilitate much of the impetus behind this drive for a new identity.

Many Reform leaders would agree that this new Reform Zionist identity will not depend solely on the attitudes of Diaspora Jewry and on its educational process, but to a large extent will depend upon Israel. It is imperative that Reform Judaism fashion a strong Liberal or Progressive Jewish movement in Israel with which Diaspora Jewry can identify. This means conscientiously continuing the battle for religious pluralism in

Israel, i.e. by gaining rights for Progressive Jews (and non-Orthodox rabbis) there and by protecting their integrity as Jews.

Progressive (Reform) Judaism in Israel has had a slow start, but has laid a solid foundation and has made some inroads. Established Progressive congregations, however, must be fortified and new congregations must be founded. The range of programs offered by institutions such as the Hebrew Union College and the Leo Baeck School in Israel need to be expanded. More connections and exchanges between Progressive Judaism and already-existing Israeli institutions and organizations such as those with Ben Shemen Youth Village should be initiated.

Moreover, Reform aliyah to Israel is also vital for the full integration of the Zionist philosophy into the hearts and minds of the Reform constituency in America. Presently, a second Progressive (Reform) kibbutz is being developed. A new garin (Netzer) of Young American Reform Jews who intend to make aliyah to a development town, Sderot, has been established and is seeking members. More programs of this nature are a necessity in order to build up the Progressive Jewish community in Israel.

One may ask, why place such an emphasis on Israel? Israel may in fact become the future testing-ground for the durability and quality of Reform Judaism. Rabbi Richard G. Hirsch cogently observed:

Israel offers a real test of our authenticity. For in Israel, there is no societal pressure or inner compulsion to join a synagogue in order to identify as a Jew. No Israeli Jew is subconsciously moved by the question, "What will the gentiles say?"; and since when are Jews moved by "What will the Jews say?" For Israelis, the question is not "with which synagogue shall we affiliate?" but "why do we even need a synagogue at all?" The question is not "how shall we change the prayer which petitions for the restoration of the sacrifices?" but "why should we have prayer at all?"¹⁹⁰

Thus Israel presents the ultimate challenge for the feasibility of a Progressive or Reform Jewish way of life.

Implicit in a Reform Zionist identity is also the acknowledgement of the value of Klal Yisrael. Here, then, lies the very core of this discussion; for the ultimate goal of Reform Judaism is in fact the preservation of Judaism. Whether a Jew lives in Israel or in the Diaspora, Reform Judaism has finally come to realize the significance of this ideal, the unity of Jewish peoplehood, for the future survival of Judaism.

Reform Judaism, as depicted in this thesis, is unquestionably a developmental religious system which attempts within a Jewish framework to keep abreast with the world around it by fulfilling the spiritual needs of its members in light of contemporary experiences. Rabbi Hirsch (in the Forward to David Polish's book Renew Our Days) has expressed the view that

The capacity of a movement for change and growth is dependent on its capacity for critical self-judgment. No movement has been more critical of itself than has Reform Judaism.¹⁹¹

Indeed the evolutionary character and viability of Reform Judaism as a developmental religion has been intensified through its grappling with the Zionist idea and its recent integration of a Zionist philosophy into Reform ideology.

NOTES

1. Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook (CCARY), Vol. I, 1890, pp. 109-110.
2. Gunther W. Plaut, The Growth of Reform Judaism: American and European Sources until 1948 (New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, LTD., 1965), p. 30.
3. Ibid., p. 34.
4. CCARY, Vol. I, 1890, p. 23.
5. Ibid., pp. 25-26.
6. Howard R. Greenstein, "The Changing Attitudes Toward Zionism in Reform Judaism 1937-1948" (Unpublished PhD Thesis for Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 1973), p. 5.
7. David Polish, Renew Our Days: The Zionist Issue in Reform Judaism (Jerusalem: World Zionist Organization, 1976), pp. 48-49.
8. CCARY, Vol. VII, 1897, pp. x-xii.
9. Ibid., p. xli.
10. CCARY, Vol. IX, 1899, p. 167.
11. Ibid., p. 171.
12. Ibid., p. 173.
13. Ibid., p. 174.
14. Ibid., pp. 180-181.
15. Ibid., pp. 182-183.
16. Ibid., p. 190.
17. CCARY, Vol XI, 1901, pp. 30-31.
18. Arthur J. Lelyveld, "The Conference View of the Position of the Jew in the Modern World," in Retrospect and Prospect -- Essays in Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Founding of The Central Conference of American Rabbis 1889-1964, ed. by Bertram Wallace Korn (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1965), p. 134.
19. Naomi Wiener Cohen, "The Reaction of Reform Judaism in America to Political Zionism (1897-1922)," in Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society (Philadelphia: No. XL, Part 4, June, 1951), pp. 363-364.

20. CCARY, Vol. XII, 1902, p. 27.
21. CCARY, Vol. XVII, 1907, p. 235.
22. Ibid., p. 31.
23. CCARY, Vol. XXI, 1911, pp. 133-134.
24. Herbert Parzen, A Short History of Zionism (New York: Herzl Press, 1962), p. 38.
25. CCARY, Vol. XXVI, 1916, pp. 234-235.
26. Martin A. Meyer, Zionism and Reform Judaism (New York: Federation of American Zionists, 1917), p. 6.
27. Ibid., p. 10.
28. Ibid., p. 12.
29. CCARY, Vol. XXVII, 1917, p. 109 (parag. VIII).
30. Ibid., pp. 201-202 (parag. X).
31. Ibid., p. 132.
32. Ibid., p. 132.
33. Ibid., p. 133.
34. Ibid., p. 140.
35. Naomi Cohen, op. cit., p. 367.
36. Polish, op. cit., pp. 74-75.
37. Lelyveld, op. cit., p. 130.
38. League of Nations, "Mandate for Palestine Together With Balfour Declaration and King George's Message to the People of Palestine" (Jerusalem: Central Press, 1936) p. 1.
39. The Maccabaeon (New York: Federation of American Zionists, Vol. XXX, December, 1917), p. 421.
40. Ibid., p. 425.
41. Polish, op. cit., p. 133.
42. CCARY, Vol. XXVIII, 1918, pp. 174-175.
43. Ibid., p. 176.
44. Ibid., pp. 133-134.

45. Ibid., pp. 141-144.
46. CCARY, Vol. XXIX, 1919, pp. 286-287.
47. Polish, op. cit., pp. 143-144.
48. CCARY, op. cit., pp. 236-239.
49. Polish, op. cit., pp. 138-139.
50. CCARY, Vol. XXX, 1920, pp. 162-164.
51. Ibid., pp. 183-184.
52. Ibid., p. 185.
53. Ibid., p. 107.
54. Ibid., pp. 140-142.
55. Ibid., pp. 142-143.
56. Ibid., p. 155.
57. CCARY, Vol. XXXI, 1921, pp. 79-80.
58. Ibid., p. 85.
59. CCARY, Vol. XXXII, 1922, p. 70.
60. Ibid., p. 81.
61. Naomi Cohen, op. cit., p. 389.
62. Ibid., p. 390.
63. CCARY, Vol. XXXIV, 1924, pp. 136-139.
64. Ibid., pp. 105-106.
65. Polish, op. cit., pp. 161-162.
66. CCARY, Vol. XXXVIII, 1928, p. 140 (XIII).
67. CCARY, Vol. XLIII, 1933, p. 132.
68. CCARY, Vol. XLIV, 1934, pp. 154-155.
69. Ibid., p. 131.
70. CCARY, Vol. XLII, 1932, pp. 179-180.
71. CCARY, Vol. XLIV, 1934, pp. 187-188.

72. CCARY, Vol. XLV, 1935, pp. 102-103.
73. Ibid., p. 103.
74. Ibid., pp. 312-354.
75. Ibid., pp. 260-311.
76. Greenstein, op. cit., pp. 25-26.
77. Ibid., p. 56.
78. CCARY, Vol. XLVII, 1937, p. 97.
79. Ibid., p. 98.
80. Ibid., p. 188.
81. Ibid., pp. 112-113.
82. CCARY, Vol. XLIX, 1939, pp. 331-351.
83. Ibid., p. 357.
84. Ibid., pp. 357-358.
85. CCARY, Vol. L, 1940, pp. 273-274.
86. Ibid., p. 275.
87. CCARY, Vol. LII, 1942, pp. 239-253.
88. Ibid., pp. 169-170.
89. Ibid., p. 170.
90. Highlights of the actual discussion are found in the CCARY, Vol. LII, 1942, pp. 171-182.
91. American Council for Judaism, "Memorandum Outlining the Principles for the American Council for Judaism and Several Problems Created by Confusion of Judaism with the Nationalization of a Foreign State" (New York: 1953), p. 2.
92. CCARY, Vol. LII, 1943, pp. 54-55.
93. Ibid., pp. 54-55.
94. Polish, op. cit., p. 212.
95. Ibid., p. 212.
96. The entire texts of all four speeches may be found in a CCAR publication:

"Are Zionism and Reform Judaism Incompatible," (CCAR, 1943).

97. Ibid., p. 31.
98. CCARY, Vol. LIII, 1943, pp. 92-93.
99. Ibid., pp. 93-94.
100. Ibid., pp. 94-95 (the total report may be found on pp. 94-98).
101. Polish, op. cit., p. 232.
102. CCARY, Vol. LIV, 1944, p. 145.
103. Ibid., pp. 33-34.
104. Freehof sheds light on new Reform perspectives on Zionism and the history of the issue in an article "Reform Judaism and Zionism: A Clarification" in The Menorah Journal (New York: The Menorah Association, Inc., Vol. 32, 1944), pp. 26-41.
105. CCARY, Vol. LIV, 1944, p. 33.
106. Ibid., p. 92.
107. CCARY, Vol. LV, 1945, p. 119.
108. CCARY, Vol. LVI, 1946, pp. 225-228 (III-IV).
109. Ibid., pp. 196-197.
110. Ibid., pp. 212-213.
111. That speech may be found in the CCARY, Vol. LVII, 1947, pp. 237-256.
112. CCARY, Vol. LVII, 1947, p. 283.
113. Ibid., p. 146.
114. CCARY, Vol. LVIII, 1948, p. 196.
115. Look at the section "The State of Israel" from the President's Message in the CCARY, Vol. LVIII, 1948, pp. 196-200.
116. CCARY, Vol. LVIII, 1948, pp. 168-169.
117. Ibid., pp. 93-95.
118. The complete text of Bernstein's speech may be found in the CCARY, Vol. LVIII, 1948, pp. 285-296.
119. CCARY, Vol. LVIII, 1948, p. 290.
120. Greenstein, op. cit., pp. 205-218.

121. Plaut, op. cit., p. 155.
122. Greenstein, op. cit., p. 205.
123. CCARY, Vol. LIX, 1949, pp. 204-209.
124. Ibid., p. 131.
125. Ibid., p. 181.
126. The full texts of these papers may be found in the CCARY, Vol. LX, 1950, (Feldman) pp. 281-284, (Shulman) pp. 285-296, (Blumenfield) pp. 297-309.
127. CCARY, Vol. LX, 1950, p. 294.
128. Ibid., p. 297.
129. Ibid., p. 303.
130. Ibid., p. 304.
131. Ibid., p. 309.
132. The text of his report may be found in the CCARY, Vol. LXII, 1952, pp. 464-480. Trachtenberg's report was one of three papers ("American Jewish Thinking and the State of Israel," by Ely E. Pilchik, pp. 481-488, and "Eretz Yisrael, Galut and Chutz La-aretz in their Historical Settings," by Max Nussbaum, pp. 489-509) in another symposium on "Israel and the American Jew."
133. See footnote in the CCARY, Vol. LXII, 1952, p. 300.
134. Lelyveld, op. cit., p. 169.
135. CCARY, Vol. LXII, 1952, p. 276.
136. CCARY, Vol. LXIII, 1953, p. 123.
137. CCARY, Vol. LXIV, 1954, p. 108.
138. Ibid., p. 62.
139. CCARY, Vol. LXV, 1955, p. 7.
140. Ibid., p. 65.
141. See "Reform Movement and Israel" in the CCARY, Vol. LXV, 1955, pp. 16-17.
142. Three papers of note: "Beyond Zionism" by Leon I. Feuer (Conference Lecture) in the CCARY, Vol. LXVII, 1957, pp. 129-138; "The Idea of Israel" by Theodore N. Lewis in the CCARY, Vol. LXVII, 1957, pp. 187-200; and "Israel Amongst the Nations" by Abba Eban in the CCARY, Vol.

- LXVIII, 1958, pp. 306-322.
143. CCARY, Vol. LXVIII, 1958, p. 142.
144. CCARY, Vol. LXX, 1960, pp. 5-6.
145. CCARY, Vol. LXXI, 1961, pp. 113-114.
146. This summary was made from the full text which may be found in the CCARY, Vol. LXXI, 1961, pp. 114-123.
147. CCARY, Vol. LXXII, 1962, pp. 113-115.
148. CCARY, Vol. LXXIII, 1963, p. 106.
149. CCARY, Vol. LXXIV, 1964, p. 21.
150. Lelyveld, op. cit., p. 170.
151. Michael M. Langer, "Perspectives for an Action Program: Zionism and Reform Judaism as Responses to the Modern Age" (New York: UAHC reprint, 1976), p. 10.
152. CCARY, Vol. LXXVII, 1967, pp. 8-14.
153. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
154. The entire text may be found in the CCARY, Vol. LXXVII, 1967, pp. 106-107.
155. CCARY, Vol. LXXVII, 1967, pp. 107-109.
156. Ibid., p. 109.
157. Spicehandler's address, Rabin's address, and the discussion may be found in the CCARY, Vol. LXXVIII, 1968, pp. 227-236, 237-241, and 241-247 respectively.
158. CCARY, Vol. LXXIX, 1969, p. 15.
159. Golda Meir's statement may be found in the CCARY, Vol. LXXIX, 1969, p. 142.
160. CCARY, Vol. LXXIX, 1969, p. 142.
161. Ibid., p. 143.
162. CCARY, Vol. LXXX, 1970, pp. 16-17.
163. Ibid., p. 11.
164. The texts and topics of these addresses may be found in the CCARY, Vol. LXXX, 1970.

165. CCARY, Vol. LXXX, 1970, p. 67.
166. CCARY, Vol. LXXXI, 1971, pp. 39-40.
167. Ibid., pp. 24-25.
168. Ibid., pp. 9-10.
169. CCARY, Vol. LXXXIII, 1973, p. 110.
170. Hirsch's entire address may be found in the CCARY, Vol. LXXXIII, 1973, pp. 187-189.
171. CCARY, Vol. LXXXIV, 1974, p. 46.
172. Gottschalk's entire address may be found in the CCARY, Vol. LXXXIV, 1974, pp. 128-136.
173. CCARY, Vol. LXXXIV, 1974, pp. 135-136.
174. Schindler's entire address may be found in the CCARY, Vol. LXXXIV, 1974, pp. 137-140.
175. CCARY, Vol. LXXXIV, 1974, p. 137.
176. Langer's entire address may be found in the CCARY, Vol. LXXXV, 1975, pp. 127-130.
177. CCARY, Vol. LXXXV, 1975, pp. 129-130.
178. Ibid., p. 65.
179. Please turn to Appendix A for the text of the 1975 CCAR Resolution on Israel.
180. CCARY, Vol. LXXXVI, 1976, pp. 174-178.
181. Ibid., p. 177.
182. Ibid., pp. 68-69.
183. CCARY, Vol. LXXXVII, 1977, p. 88.
184. These resolutions concerning Israel may be found in the CCARY, Vol. LXXXVII, 1977, pp. 88-89, 90, 94-95.
185. "Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Zionist Affiliation" (New York: UAHC reprint, 1977), p. 1.
186. See Appendix B for the "Summary" of the "Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Zionist Affiliation."
187. See Appendix C for full report.

188. Since the ARZA Platform is accessible, I have only quoted some excerpts which appeared in a recent issue of the ARZA Newsletter. See Appendix D.
189. Polish, op. cit. pp. 236-237.
190. Richard G. Hirsch, "Reform Judaism and Israel" (an address), (New York: Commission on Israel, 1972), p. 16.
191. Polish, op. cit., p. 9.

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APPENDIX A

The 1975 CCAR Resolution on Israel

WHEREAS we sense that special bond that ties us to our people in the State of Israel and fills us with concern for the security of Israel and the achievement of peace in the Middle East, and

WHEREAS that bond finds its first expression in the texts we have studied and which we are called on to interpret in our teaching, and

WHEREAS that bond has been reaffirmed time after time by the leadership that members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis have given to the rebuilding of Israel,

1. BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that we call on the congregations and communities we lead to deepen their spiritual and material concern for Israel. We especially express our wholehearted support for the United Jewish Appeal and State of Israel Bonds. We call on our congregations and communities to increase their support of these two important projects that have done so much to strengthen Israel during the first twenty-seven years of its existence.

2. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we communicate to the congregations and communities we serve the need for increased tourism to Israel. We encourage our congregants and community members to visit Israel for the purpose of increasing their own Jewish knowledge and deepening their own sense of Jewish attachment and also to serve as a demonstration to the people of Israel and to the world of our solidarity with our people in Israel. We encourage tourists and tour groups to be in contact with the liberal Jewish institutions in Israel in order to effect a closer relationship with them.

3. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we commend our colleagues who have chosen to take up residence in Israel and who are today leading synagogues there. Through their presence in Israel they are dramatically enhancing the spiritual life of the State of Israel and contributing to the strengthening of Judaism in the land of its birth just as they are adding strength to Judaism throughout the world. To the liberal congregations in Israel we communicate our support and, with them, we look forward to the day when our colleagues will enjoy full and equal opportunities to serve our people in Eretz Yisrael in all rabbinic functions. We call upon the government of Israel to grant full religious freedom to all branches of Judaism and to resist any attempts to change the Law of Return.

4. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we condemn the acts of terrorism which continue to pose such awesome threats to our people in Israel. Wanting to build a country in peace and to

live in harmony with their neighbors, Israelis stand in fear of their physical and emotional well-being because of terrorist activities which persist. We call on all governments of good will to denounce openly any and all acts of terrorism and to enact such legislation as will grant no asylum to terrorists.

5. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we note with interest and favor the ongoing debate within Israel on various alternatives to bring about peace. Since the security and well-being of Israel remains our abiding commitment, we believe that such security is enhanced by free and open exploration of options for solving the multitude of problems Israel now faces. In this light we applaud the openness that is present in Israel and call upon the North American Jewish community to recognize that diversity. Thus, we encourage a full discussion in the North American Jewish community of all alternatives and call upon our movement to sponsor forums for open discussion of all divergent points of view. No subjects, including options for the solution of the Palestinian problem, should be ignored.

6. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we express dismay at the actions of UNESCO in condemning Israel for its archeological excavations and investigations. Such condemnation and subsequent expulsion of Israel from UNESCO was without basis. We applaud the archeologists of Israel for their continuing work in uncovering the past and doing so with scientific skill, reverence for sacred sites and for their total willingness to share the fruits of their labors with the world-wide academic and religious communities.

7. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we express our anger at instances of prohibiting Israel's participation in world scholarly circles and sports competition. The concerted effort by the Arab nations to deny Israel the rights accorded other countries is deplorable. We call on nations of good will to counteract such activities with their own refusal to participate in any events or programs which deny Israel the right to participate.

8. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we condemn the boycott by the Arab nations of firms and individuals who support Israel. We call on governments, industries and organizations to express their disapproval of such boycotts to the governments and companies involved.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we condemn the actions of the multi-national American corporations such as Gulf Oil and Northrop Aircraft for illegally using corporate funds to bribe public officials and subvert the democratic process. While some of the funds have been used to enrich private individuals, a substantial portion has been diverted by Arab propagandists for anti-Israel purposes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge the passage of new

legislation to combat the Arab boycott as well as carrying out of present legislation which would combat the boycott. All foreign investments in the United States should be monitored and reported. Controlling interests in strategic industries, resources or news media should be banned. Foreign assistance and military sales to any nation guilty of discriminatory business practice should be prohibited. No American governmental agency should acquiesce to discriminatory criteria of any Arab nation.

9. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call the attention of the people of Israel to the fact that in Reform congregations throughout the United States and Canada the observance of Yom Ha-atzmaut has become widespread and we note further that such observances are marked by the introduction of creative liturgies that express in stirring ways the bond between us and Israel. Through our annual observances of Yom Ha-atzmaut we give strength to Israel. We call on the media in Israel to give greater coverage to such observances that take place in our synagogues and we call on every congregation served by a member of the Central Conference of American Rabbis to incorporate the observance of Yom Ha-atzmaut into their annual calendar of religious observances.

10. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we express appreciation to the President and Congress for furnishing grants and credits to Israel during fiscal year 1975. We urge a Middle East policy based on traditional American principles of disdain for totalitarianism and support of countries which pursue freedom and insure human rights. The level of support for Israel must, therefore, be maintained. We applaud the statement of seventy-six members of the United States Senate recognizing the importance of American support for Israel. They have declared what we have always believed -- that Israel is an ally of the United States and should be declared as such in forceful terms by our government and should be supported in order to effectively deter Arab aggression.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call on the government of the United States to:

1. Reaffirm support of UN Resolution 242 which calls for "secure and recognized borders."
2. Reaffirm Security Council Resolution 338 calling for borders to be negotiated by the governments directly involved.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we seek:

1. An end to the state of war.
2. An end to Arab economic warfare against Israel.
3. An end to the diplomatic ostracism of Israel at the United Nations.

4. Free passage of Israeli shipping through the Suez Canal.
5. Beginning of normal relations such as communication, tourism and trade between Israel and the Arab states.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we recognize the complexity of the "Palestine problem." We support the view that ultimately the nature of the Palestinian entity must be determined by the Palestinians themselves and urge, therefore, the use of full democratic means in that process of determination. If the creation of a Palestinian state is democratically deemed to be the desire of the Palestinians then it must be so constituted as to pose no threat to the security and territorial integrity of Israel. The prospect of an armed state sitting on Israel's pre-1967 borders is unacceptable.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call for the consideration in all solutions of the reality of the exchange of Jewish and Arab refugees which followed the 1948 war, a war launched by the Arab states following Israel's establishment on legitimate and legal foundations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge the termination of American support of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) insofar as its funds are administered to a significant degree by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and allocated to Arab refugees. We feel that a total reassessment of United States funding of UNRWA is mandatory and ask the United States government to seek more acceptable instruments to meet the legitimate humanitarian needs of the world's refugees.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we unite in seeking peace in the Middle East, peace based on the principles of mutual trust, compassion and justice -- a peace that is long overdue.

11. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we consider the singular admission of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) to the status of observers in the United Nations a travesty on the principles of the United Nations. We vigorously object to their inclusion in the forthcoming convention on crime being held in Toronto. We urge the government of Canada which lists the PLO as a prohibited organization to stand by this principle and refuse to admit the representatives of the PLO to the UN conferences in Toronto and Vancouver.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we express this concern to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau immediately.

[CCARY, Vol. 85, 1975, pp. 61-64]

APPENDIX B

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Zionist Affiliation

SUMMARY

The Committee reached five main conclusions.

1. Reform Judaism and Zion. Reform Judaism today is imbued with a deep love for Zion. Ideologically and programmatically, we Reform Jews -- as individuals, congregations, and as a movement -- have manifested our commitment to the Covenant which binds the Jewish People to God, through devotion to Israel's Torah and Land.
2. The Zionist Process. Despite this ideological commitment, in the past Reform Judaism has remained outside the organizational framework of Zionism. This posture, which was determined by a specific historical context, now warrants reevaluation. The World Zionist Organization is today the one forum in which broad segments of Israeli and Diaspora Jewry seek constructive dialogue. In the committee's view, the time has come for American Reform Judaism to join in this dialogue, sharing our vision of Jewish life.
3. Diversity. Diversity is an essential strength of Reform Judaism. We affirm that Reform Judaism is and must remain the spiritual home of those for whom Zionist affiliation is an integral part of their commitment, and of those for whom it is not.
4. Mechanism. In order to strengthen Reform Judaism's ties to Zionism, while fully respecting the essential freedom of the individual, we propose the creation of an affiliate, under the aegis of the UAHC, through which Reform Jews could identify as Zionists. Membership in the new affiliate, which we propose naming ARZA -- The Association of Reform Zionists of America -- would be voluntary. As one of its first tasks, ARZA would endeavor to formulate an ideological expression of Reform Zionism.
5. Benefits. By giving Reform Judaism a full voice in the councils of the WZO, the new affiliate would enable us to communicate more effectively our concerns regarding Israel and the Jewish future, such as the status of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, and to demand a more equitable distribution of funds allocated in Israel and throughout the world for educational and cultural projects. Within our own ranks, ARZA would provide a long-awaited vehicle for those who have been frustrated in seeking a channel for their Zionist commitment.

[From UAHC Offprint of Ad Hoc
Committee Report, p. 3]

APPENDIX C

REPORT OF THE AD HOC STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE ASSOCIATION OF REFORM ZIONISTS OF AMERICA

At the initiative of Alex Schindler, the Executive Committee of the UAHC in March approved an inquiry into the feasibility of the Union creating a Reform Zionist Body. This body, through individual membership, would be able to join the World Zionist Organization and the American Zionist Federation as a constituent organization. It would be understood that the Union per se would neither join nor commit those of its members who would prefer not to join. The proposed body would have the status of an affiliate of the Union, structurally and constitutionally similar to the other UAHC affiliates. A committee under the chairmanship of Roland Gittlesohn, and including representatives of the Union and members of the CCAR has already met on this issue and has reported to the June meeting of the UAHC Board. On June 11, the Board unanimously approved the recommendations of the Committee subject to ratification by the Biennial.

Concurrently, the CCAR Executive Board had before it a proposal to join the American Zionist Federation as an affiliate as distinguished from a constituent member, with less than full membership status. At its April Board meeting, the Executive Board voted not to apply under such conditions but instead unanimously approved a resolution calling for participation and cooperation by the CCAR in the undertaking by the Union. I appear before you in that context.

The World Zionist Organization consists of all Zionist groups across the ideological spectrum and it will be holding its Quadrennial Congress in Jerusalem in February 1978. In 1971 it called into being territorial umbrella Zionist Federations of which the AZF is one, containing the full range of national Zionist bodies.

Before addressing myself to the issue, I want to stress again that it is not proposed that we or the Union join the WZO or the AZF, despite the fact that through the World Union for Progressive Judaism with which we are affiliated, we already are identified with the WZO. What is proposed is that we endorse the principal of a Reform Zionist entity in the United States and Canada whose individual members would come from our Movement, and that we give our support to the creation of such a body.

I wish to offer the following arguments for this proposal.

First, together with the UAHC, the Conference has played a significant role in moving Reform Judaism into a leading and influential position within Klal Yisroel. We are part of the World Jewish Congress. As indicated, we are part of the World Zionist Organization. A generation ago, our Abba Hillel

Silvers and Stephen S. Wises were followed by American and World Jewry despite their Reform identification. Today, Alex Schindler and Richard Hirsch play critical roles in the counsels of World Jewry as accredited and avowed spokesmen of Reform Judaism. There is no doubt that our active presence within the structures of World Jewry enhances our own moral strength and our leadership. Most of all, it brings us directly into the midst of the issues and struggles of Jewish Life. We need World Jewry.

Second, there is a critical need to replenish the strength and the human resources of World Jewry and the Zionist Movement which continue to suffer from the disastrous after-effects of the Shoah. Some of the centers of Jewish vitality are gone, and are no longer fountain heads of Jewish leadership. Through many of our own individuals, serving in various private capacities, we have shown our ability to enter the gaping void, and we are now called upon to do so on an extensive scale and in an organized fashion. We are called upon to do this because World Jewry and the Zionist Movement need us.

Third, committed as we have been to Zionist principles for a generation, ideology without institutional implementation, especially at a time when Israel and the Jewish People face massive difficulties, is not enough. The issues of Jewish as well as human existence are being fought out on organizational and political fronts in which ideology plays a vital role, of course, but which ideology alone cannot confront. It could be argued that our active involvement in World and American Zionism could make Reform Jews instruments of Zionist policy with which we may at time differ. It should be pointed out that nothing in the Zionist Movement precludes any constituent group, however small, from taking independent positions, as in fact they have done and continue to do, within the counsels of the Zionist Organization. It is not a monolith. Its problem is not excessive discipline but unrestricted freedom. For us, especially, it would be more effective to carry on our efforts in behalf of Jewish pluralism within the Zionist Movement than outside it. Working within organized Jewish life entails certain responsibilities, and acting outside organized Jewish life offers certain freedoms, but given the democratic structure of the WZP [WZO] and the AZF as well as their demonstrated receptivity to new leadership, the challenges of our collective existence today require going the former route. At the same time, both the CCAR and the UAHC could retain their capacity for independent judgment and expression outside the structure of the Zionist Movement, and this could serve as an important potential corrective and a deterrent to positions which we might oppose.

Fourth, while large members of our People have played important roles as Reform Jews in the fund-raising arms of Israel-oriented life, we have not paid enough attention as

organized Reform Jews to the political aspects of Israel-oriented life, and have thereby contributed in this area to abdication by American Jewry. The issues of Israel-American Jewish relations must be our collective concern, and they should be expressed within an appropriate political forum. These issues within Israel about which we should have a legitimate voice must be our concern, and they should be expressed within an appropriate political forum. In the times ahead, we will be required to respond vigorously to the critical challenges confronting Israel and American Jewry.

Fifth, membership in the WZO would help us in expanding our programs for *schlichim*, youth activities and other purposes in the context of our efforts in behalf of Israel.

Sixth, as a Reform Zionist body in America, we would be able to give expression to a religious, a Reform perception of Zionism which is largely missing from Zionist counsels. In this context, a Reform Zionist body would stand ready to present its interpretation of the Jerusalem Platform in a way which would invite Zionism to examine some of the religious implications of Jewish nationalism. This would greatly strengthen the position of Progressive Judaism in Israel.

We call upon the Conference to respond favorably at this time because of the approaching World Zionist Congress, to be held in February. For us to participate in the Congress which will gather at a critical hour in our current history and will deal with issues affecting the State of Israel and the Jewish People, we have the opportunity now to play a significant role, an opportunity which otherwise would not recur for at least four years.

I move that the CCAR accept the invitation of the Steering Committee of ARZA to become a partner, with official representation for the CCAR, and further that we cooperate with the Union in inviting individual Rabbis and laymen in our Movement to join ARZA.

David Polish

[CCARY, Vol. 87, 1977, pp.20-22]

APPENDIX D

The ARZA Platform

The ARZA Platform is based on the Jerusalem Platform, adopted by the World Zionist Congress in 1968 as the single ideological statement uniting all Zionists. The ARZA Platform was drafted by a committee chaired by Rabbi David Polish, and unanimously adopted by delegates to the National Assembly. Some excerpts:

CENTRALITY

The State of Israel is the Jewish people's supreme creation in this age. At the same time, it has come into being not as an end in itself, but as the instrument for the creative survival of the Jewish people and of Judaism.

In Judaism, no single component, isolated from other major components, is exclusively central. The central element in Jewish life has been the union of God, Torah, and the People Israel. The concept, Israel, has encompassed the people, the land, and national sovereignty. The Land of Israel, as the historic center of the Jewish people, was traditionally perceived as the place where Israel's Covenant with God could most fully be realized through the inspiration of the Torah.

In that context, the State does occupy a special central place in Jewish life. The land of Israel is and always was a necessary condition for the realization of the people's physical and spiritual redemption. In that context, the State of Israel has stirred the hopes, the devotion and the covenantal sense of Jews everywhere as a critical saving factor in contemporary Jewish life.

"INGATHERING OF THE PEOPLE"

Aliyah is necessary for North American Jewry, and should be encouraged. In order to retain strong bonds of kinship between both great communities, numbers of American olim, exercising freedom of choice, are required. Without such a continuing physical link, the ties between both communities could be weakened and the danger of separation and alienation could set in.

At the same time, the continuation of a viable American Jewry is consistent with the principle of aliyah. Israel and American Jewry are indispensable for one another's existence.

THE NATURE OF THE JEWISH STATE

We do not envision a Jewish nation like other nations. We hope it will continue to be nourished by the moral, social, and spiritual teachings of our tradition, reaching back to Sinai, to our biblical and rabbinic sources, to our Diaspora

experience, to Israel's own social achievements.

In the spirit of ahavat Yisrael (love of our fellow Jews), we claim the responsibility to pursue in an appropriate medium those issues which affect the social order in Israel and, as a result, in American Jewry as well. The Diaspora stands with Israel in a special collaborative relationship which requires consultation in all areas of common concern.

PLURALISM AND RELIGIOUS RIGHTS

We call upon the World Zionist Organization and the State of Israel to implement the following pronouncements by the 29th Zionist Congress which were adopted through the initiative of ARZA and its leaders:

"This 29th Congress affirms that all World Zionist Organization departments, instrumentalities and programs shall be administered in accord with the principle of equal standing and equal treatment for every religious movement within its ranks.

"This Congress calls on the State of Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people to implement fully the principle of guaranteed religious rights for all its citizens, including equality of opportunity, equality of recognition, and equality of governmental aid to all religious movements within Judaism."

[ARZA Newsletter, Vol. II,
Nov., 1978, p. 3]

