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STUDIES OF THREE AMERICAN REFORM TEMPLES BETWEEN TWO WORLD WARS

by

MILTON RICHMAN

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE HEBREW UNION COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION.

February 1952

A STUDY OF THREE AMERICAN REFORM TEMPLES BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

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There are many Reform Temples in America which have been active for several generations, some for over a hundred years, in the American milieu with its problems, its issues, it phases; of this American milieu, the period between the two World Wars is viewed both by those who lived through it, and by those who study it as two distinct social and economic periods: the prosperity of the Twenties, and the depression of the Thirties. In undertaking this study of Reform Temples in America we set out to describe and to interpret the impact of the American milieu -- that of the Twenties, and that of the Thirties -- on the Reform Temple.

We sought to describe these two phases of the impact in terms of the effects on the organziation and relationships inside the temples, and in terms of the reactions of the leadership, and active members of the Temple.

To accomplish this task, we surveyed all the material available in the files of the Hebrew Union College Library, and those of the American Jewish Archives. We selected three Temples as the case studies for our investigation: 1) as an example of a large congregation -- Congregation Tifereth Israel, "The Temple," Cleveland, Ohio, ministered to by Rabbi A.H. Silver; 2) as an example of a medium congregation -- Congregation Beth Israel, Hartford, Connecticut, ministered to by Rabbi. A.J. Feldman; 3) as an example of a small congregation -- Mt. Sinai Congregation, El Paso, Texas, ministered to by Rabbi M. Zielonka. For each of these congregations, we studied their congregational minute books, Board minute books, Temple bulletins, Temple annuals, writings about the community, writings and sermons of the rabbis, and other miscellaneous publications by and about the respective congregations.

The analysis of each temple separately led to the development of several methodological hypothesis: 1) what the leaders and members think of their institution, we called the "institutional self-image; this made it possible to present a historical profile of each institution. 2)By making a distinction between the internal and the external phases of each institution we were enabled to describe separately the impact of the period on 1) the internal institutional structure of organziation, and of relationships

(i.e. rabbi and members, rabbi and board, temple and community), and 2) the external life of the institution (how the members, and particularly the rabbi, viewed the external world, and how these reacted to it).

As a result of this study we have the following: 1) that congregations differ according to size, much more than according to geographical location, or even leadership. 2) We are convinced that the institutional self-images, by which the membership reflect their relationship to the institution is itself a normative datum for the congregation. 3.) That the self-images vary with the size of the congregation: large temple is seen in terms of its institutional features; medium in terms of personal relatedness; 4) in terms of children and activity. 5) That these three temples used their funds during prosperity to build structures; and that in prosperity their sub-groups (men, women) devoted themselves to cultural luxuries (drama, music). 6.) That in depression, the cultural luxuries were replaced by social issues, but that the main reaction -- differing though it did according to the rabbi -- came only from the rabbi; that the rabbis were forced by circumstances in the Thirties to preach sermons of direct, personal, consolatory content. 7.) That these three rabbis -- in prosperity and in depression -- could not save the Sabbath for services on Saturday morning - no matter the technique, the appeal, and even the times.

Other implications are implicit in the study and its treatment; but these require further inquiry. It is safe to conclude from these case studies, that the impact of American affairs -- particularly economic, were of decisive impact on both the internal and external phases of American Reform Temples; that this impact was -- and is -- unquestionably greater than the effect of the institutions on American conditions.

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Preface

When the history of Jewish life in America shall be written, it may be expected that the institutional aspects of that life will be part of the fabric of that history. Of the movements and personalities and institutions which such a history will need to include, a significant thread in the pattern will no doubt be the Reform movement, its leaders and rabbis, and the institutions in which and through which it operated.

The paper that follows is an attempt to analyse three Reform temples, and their leaders.

It should also be said that the history of Jewish life in America will of necessity be greatly concerned with what occurred in this country between the two World Wars: between 1917-1918 and 1939-1945. The Twenties and the early Thirties had features the impact of which was decisive on both religious institutions and on its leadership. Whatever the temples in America are at present, or will be, may be said to be the cumulative effect of the impacts of the Twenties and Thirties. And among Reform institutions, this impact has been perhaps even stronger in shaping the institution than the traditional, historic patterns of the temples and synagogues with which Jews came to this land.

This paper is concerned with the forces and factors of the Twenties and Thirties, their impact on the Reform institutions, and their effect on those institutions.

This paper then is a set of studies of three Reform temples and their leadership in the significant Twenties and Thirties in American life.

It is not, however a complete history of any one of those institutions, nor of Americal life in this period. It is rather a selective, analytical case study of three different sizes of religious institutions during some special periods in American life. It is perhaps best to be characterized as an institutional study in the sociology of religious life.

For the interest in this field of the sociology of religion, I am continuously indebted to the many teachers at various schools who shared their wisdom with me, especially Dr. Carl Mayer of the New School For Social Research, Dr. Samuel C. Kincheloe of the University of Chicago Divinity School.

I am also grateful to Rabbi Jacob D. Schwarz, Director of Synagogue Activities, U.A.H.C,, for his friendship, and his inspiration in the field of synagogue study.

For the wisdom and guidance in the field of American Jewish life and religious institutions, I am deeply grateful to Dr. Jacob R. Marcus of the Hebrew Union College under whose sponsorship this paper was done.

Introduction

We set out to study some examples of the American Reform temple. This raised first the problem of the selection of our institutions to be studied. We surveyed the facilities of the Hebrew Union College Library where we found files of temple bulletins for over 47 different temples, in addition to collections of sermons, institutional histories, and other peripheral material. We surveyed the facilities of the Hebrew Union College's American Jewish Archives Library where we found the official records, in photostat, of over 57 different congregations; this included minutes of Board meetings, of congregational meetings, correspondence files, budget and financial statements, etc.

We collated the two files, and found that there were ten congregations about whom we had available both bulletins and official records of the Twenties and of the Thirties.

It was our original intention to select from these, temples in different regions of the country. Early in the study however it became apparent that regional differences were relatively unimportant. What did seem to matter was the size of the congregation.

At this point we decided to select three institutions which varied in size. The underlying assumption was that the institutional differences between such three congregations would somehow sum up the general characteristics of all American Reform temples. Thus we selected as an example of a large temple, Congregation Tifereth Israel, "The Temple," Cleveland, Ohio, whose membership through the Twenties and Thirties was always over a thousand families; as an example of a medium congregation, we selected Congregation Beth Israel, Hartford, Connecticut, whose membership in the Twenties was about 300 families; and as an example of a small temple, we selected Congregation Mt. Sinai, El Paso, Texas, whose membership was always below 100 families.

Once having selected the three somewhat representative institutions, the question of gathering data presented itself. We were interested most especially in the temples during the Twenties and Thirties. Each of these had been formed before the beginning of the twentieth century, and this meant that they had long histories before the Twenties and Thirties with which we were concerned. This meant that the whole history of each congregation had to be examined, so as to catch the special features and principles of its life and growth. Having done this, it was then possible to pin-point the special features in the temple of the period of our study. It was necessary for this to peruse every document, publication available

either at the Library or the Archives.

After this general over-view, we went back to the periods of the Twenties and Thirties for an intensive examination of the temple life, and of the actions and views of the rabbis. In this step of our research we made certain methodological assumptions, which will bear discussion at this point.

1. We believe that an over-view, or a full picture of the institution is reflected in what the constituents of the institution think of the institution. This we have characterized as "self-images." Thus, to define what the members refer to when reference is made to the institution as a whole is to define the total configuration of the institution. What the persons thought their institution to be was for us a definition and description of reality insofar as the institution and its members were concerned. If the people of "The Temple" viewed their temple as the largest, the pioneer, the originator, then for our study we considered these images as data in understanding the temple as it developed, and operated. For these reasons, we use these self-images to fathom the institutional history and development of the congregation as the background in which to discuss the reaction to the Twenties and Thirties.

2. A second major assumption in our study was made in positing a distinction between the internal and the external aspects of the institution. By internal we mean

those phases of institutional organization, activities, and problems which have no effect outside the institution, even though they made be prompted by external forces. For example, the prosperous conditions of the Twenties may be called external, but insofar as its effects were internalized -- in terms of new activities, or increased membership, we regard this feature of the institution as the internal pattern.

By external we mean those features of the institution which somehow reach out to affect the external world, either in acting upon it or in understanding and interpreting it. Thus, while almost everything in and of the temple comes from external sources, some of the responses are kept within the institutional framework, and some of the responses reach out onto the external sources, and outside of the institution. An example of the external is the rabbi's view of the depression: the depression constitutes an outside force operating on the institution; what the temple does in the face of it to the temple is the internal effect; what the temple and the rabbi do about the depression in general is the external feature of the temple.

In making these distinctions, we must acknowledge that there certainly are other factors in the institution, notably the age development of the persons in the institutions. We have designated this factor as the "chronologicum." By this we mean that certain developments in the congregation

will be prompted by the fact of the growing up of the members and their children. Obviously, a Sunday School adds club activities when its students grow up to the age in which club activities become important; or the Men's Club becomes part of the Congregational Board when it grows in years and in life-space (wealth, position, etc.).

3. In addition to the technique of self-images, and the distinction between internal and external features of the institution, we have adopted a third methodological assumption: We have assumed that topics and themes of lectures, of sermons have a specific connotative value. Through them we may get to know the views and stands of the speaker, and in addition of the listeners. In the first place, a topic is almost always worded in a positive way. Thus, when the rabbi speaks on "A New Deal In Religion," it is safe to assume that the New Deal, at that time at least, has a positive valence of value, and that he probably favored the New Deal and would make some application of it to religion. Usually negative statements are described very specifically: for example, the rabbi may announce his sermon "The New Deal -- Success or Failure." The latter we may assume will contain both positive and negative valences, and in so doing, we may realize not only the meaning of the sermon, but also the movement from the first all-positive to the second mixed-valence sermon. We hold that the intentions of the speaker are revealed in the way the

subject or issue is titled, and framed.

In addition to being an indicator, the title and theme is also assumed to have real significance for the listener. Here we assume that the world-views of the listeners follow that of the speaker, and the rabbi. Many factors make for this phenomehom: 1) the complex external world requires the interpretation of the expert, and the speaker, or the rabbi are experts in the most favorable institutional atmosphere, namely, the religious institution where only truth is expected. 2) the very fact that the rabbi is part of the same social and religious atmosphere means that both have common referents and common symbols of thought; indeed, if this were not so, there would be indifference to the programs, and even open hostility between rabbi and listeners. Therefore, the rabbi who is adored is, in our view agreed with, precisely because his views coincide with those of his listeners. We hold therefore that the intentions of the speaker, or the rabbi, is communicated, and accepted, and internalized by the listeners.

In view of this last assumption, we have taken the various lecture themes and sermon topics of the Twenties and Thirties as indicators of both the internal and external aspects of the temple. It should also be pointed out that wherever available the full sermons of the rabbis were carefully read and analyzed.

The three studies which follow are presented in the same methodological framework. In the first section of each study, we are interested in presenting an analytical

over-view of the whole institution, both in terms of historical time and of operational space. To do this at the point most significant for our study, we used the self-images of the group, and of the rabbi about their institution.

Having set this framework, through the use of the technique of analysing the self-images, we then proceed to a discussion of the temple in the Twenties, in the period of prosperity. In this section, we distinguish between internal aspects of the temple for the same period.

The same dichotomy is utilized in discussing the temple during the Thirties and the depression days.

Following a separate analysis of each of the three temples, we attempt in our concluding section, a summary and some comparative conclusions.

What some American Reform temples have been and are like during the "Roaring Twenties," "The Plastic Age," and during the "Great Depression," "The Gloomy Thirties," "The Aspirin Age," we hope to indicate in the pages that follow. We start first with the large temple; then the medium; then the small.

PART ONE

CONGREGATION TIFERETH ISRAEL, "THE TEMPLE", CLEVELAND, OHIO

1. A Profile of the Institution
   a. Self-Images in terms of Institutional Features
   b. Self-Images in terms of the Rabbi
2. The Temple in The Twenties and Prosperity
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PART ONE

CONGREGATION TIFERETH ISRAEL, "THE TEMPLE," CLEVELAND, OHIO.

1. A Profile of the Institution

A. Self-Images in terms of Institutional Features

Congregation Tifereth Israel called itself "The Temple" ever since the ministrations of Rabbi Moses J. Gries (1892-1917). This name has come to be the more or less accepted designation of the institution both in its city as throughout the country. The origin of this label and its implications lie in the fact that early in the history of the Jewish community of Cleveland, this institution, by virtue of its size and its special activities in the community, assumed a unique self-image. Such was the hold of the label, and the meaning of the self-image, that even when the special functions changed, another reason for asserting its uniqueness was found: the personality and activities of its rabbi, Rabbi Abba H. Silver (1918 to the present).

In this label are reflected two sets of images which the members held of their institution: images about the temple in terms of its institutional features, and images in terms of Rabbi Silver. Both of these sets of images are at the heart of the whole atmosphere and development and function of the temple as it operated through the Twenties and the Thirties.

In the 90's of the last century, the temple was proud of its large numbers and never failed to proclaim

this fact. Attached to its very elaborate records of its annual meetings, were detailed statistical lists covering all phases of its institutional life, especially the numbers attending and the numbers registered in the Sunday School, the numbers attending the Sunday morning, and the Saturday morning religious services, and the numbers attending its "Popular Evenings" (i.e. Forums), and the number of books and magazines in its large Library.[1] This was more than a report to the congregation at the annual meeting; it was rather an institutional self-image stressing the unique size of the temple, both to compare it with other institutions of the land, and to publicize the continuous growth of the institution. In every report during these early days, these statistical reports were alluded to with great congregational pride.

In 1901, Rabbi Gries declared[2]

> "...more men and women and children use The Temple than pass through the portals of any other Temple anywhere."

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(1) Souvenir Program, 50th Anniversary, The Temple, Cleveland; 1850-1900, pages 20 ff.
(2) The Temple Yearbook, 1901, p. 56.

This was the year when there were 433 members (families), and 634 childrem in the Sunday School. Years later, the same emphasis on size is apparent (and with it an emphasis on quality): in 1935, when there were 1489 members, the president said (3)

> "(we) are the largest in the country and probably in the world."

When the enrollment of the Religious School had reached 1049 students, a member of the School Committee declared (4)

> "it (The Temple's school) was the largest of its kind in the country and doing some of the best work."

This was the pride of size, and an image of bigness, which has continued from the expansive days of the end of the nineteenth century up to and including the present.

Another image of The Temple was that of "the first." It was the "first Temple," to establish a gymnasium for its members (by petition of 47 youth) in 1901. It was "the first in the country" to organize a Temple Club in 1903 (made up of officers and committee men who met for a monthly luncheon meeting.) When the women's group, the Women's Temple Association, organized in 1891, was made an auxiliary committee of The Temple in 1910, the congregation's president said with obvious delight (5)

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(3) President's Messaage at the 85th Annual Meeting, May 19, 1935. Archives Document #410. See also Temple Bulletins December 9, 1934, and May 12, 1935.
(4) See Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, May 15, 1935.

> "(That The Temple) was the first congregation to give due recognition to women."

As for the Association itself, he added that it was

> "one of the first organizations of Jewish women to be actively connected with and to be officially recognized by any congregation in this country."

Soon after, when the Temple Board permitted six women to sit on and vote on the Temple Board, the president offered this idea to all congregations to emulate.(6)

Later, in 1924, when the Temple Men's Club was organized, stimulated no doubt by the national campaign for Temple Brotherhoods made by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the reporter in the Temple's bulletin crowed about its uniqueness. In 1925, it quoted with great pride the remarks of a visitor to the group who was supposed to have said(7)

> "not only the program but the general idea was new and epoch-making."

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(5) President's Message, Annual Report, April 1909, page 18. And see Annual Report, for 1912-1913, page 43.
(6) See Annual Report, for 1914-1915, page 24.
(7) Temple Bulletin, March 15, 1925.

This emphasis on "the first" is obviously more than a descriptive statement of objective fact. Its weight and value are beyond the truth or correctness of the feeling. It is rather a judgement of value, a self-image of pride in being "the first." For this image carries with it the idea of other congregations copying and emulating the efforts and developments of their institution. This is most clear in the feelings clusted around the members' and leaders' image of the "Open Temple."

First it must be explained that during the ministry of Rabbi Gries, The Temple had developed an institutional synagogue, a synagogue-center; this was known as the "Open Temple". (8) Of this Gries said

> "Historically, it is the first "Open Temple" or institutional church among Jews in the United States, and in the world."

(9) And the president declared, in the same vein, but further,

> "The Open Temple originated in Cleveland. The institutional plan was first introduced by our Congregation nearly twenty years ago. Many who decried and ridiculed it have now become devoted adherents. Other are ready to follow in the endeavor to recreate an interest in the religion of our fathers in harmony with modern thought and applied to modern conditions."

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(8) Moses J. Gries, The Jewish Community of Cleveland. Cleveland 1910, page 5.
(9) Annual report for 1911-1912, page 15.

The most significant features of these views are not the explanations and motivations and rationalizations. What is important is that an institutional feature, arising from a chronologicum of growth, or from an accident of positions, is theorized as an epoch-making event, the first and the one to be emulated.

Years later, when a policy was adoped which literally undid and opposed the "Open Temple" policy, the new policy became the same reason for the self-images of bigness, of firstness, of epoch-making qualities. The reasons changed, but the self-images persisted and thrived.

Said an anonymous writer in the Temple Bulletin (10)

> "In 1929 a new and radical experiment in Temple was inaugurated when the annual meeting adopted the New Temple Policy, aiming at the intensification of the religious and cultural activities of The Temple and the elimination of the purely recreational. Thus Tifereth Israel once again demonstrated its pioneering spirit, being the first congregation in the United States to attempt a definite formulation of the function and place of the synagogue in modern American life." (11)

And the president repeated the same imagery

> "A few years ago our organization was the first to adopt a restricted policy with reference to Temple activities. ....I might say in passing that many other congregations are now pursuing a similar policy."

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(10) Temple Bulletin, May 11, 1930
(11) President 's Message, in Temple Bulletin, June 14, 1931

While these hoped for results might have been authentic, it is simply not true that the underlying motivation was simply to redefine the synagogue, and certainly not for the nation at large. The facts are that activities continued in the same variety as before the New Temple Policy; a more decisive factor was the erection of a new building, without a gym, in 1923-1924; still another factor was the changing social complexion of the members from social homogeneity to social heterogeneity. But the image was important, and its persistence continued whatever the explanation, or the change in policy.

The scope of these images was not limited to broad referants. They included large as well as small ones: the "Open Temple" policy and the "New Temple" policy, and they included the establishment of memorial funds in place of flowers for the deceased,(12) or the introduction of a new, occasional program idea, as the "Evening-With-The Rabbi," arranged in 1936.(13)

"The Temple" was viewed as "the first," "the largest," "the best," "the originator." All of these images are part of the identification which the member takes on in entering within the institution. These images are significant; they are constant; they are repeated in some summarization or in motivation. The images were constantly

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(12) See President's Message in Annual Report for 1913-1914, Page 15.

(13) See Temple Bulletin, January 9, 1938

used by the leaders of the congregation for their motivational powers. This is epitomized in a statement in the bulletin, which was aimed at inducing large numbers of the members to participate in an elaborate 80th Anniversary Celebration:[14]

> "Almost from the beginning of its history The Temple has been in the forefront of American Jewish Congregations. It has been a leader and a pioneer in the development of Jewish religious life in this country."

In writing this, the writer was not only reflecting an institutional self-image, but was also using it to motivate participation.

The self-images we have thus far studied are those utilizing the institutional features of the institution. Those who hold such images use it to define their identification with the institution, and through it with what is "the largest," "the first," "the pioneer." Others use these self-images to motivate activity and participation.

Over-arching the uses of the images, it seems important to point out this: However important these imgges are in terms of what they see and say, it is equally important for what they do not include: no reference to the Reform movement; none to spirituality as such, or to Jewish history in general.

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(14) Temple Bulletin, May 4, 1930

b. Self-Images in Terms of the Rabbi

From the very beginning of the Temple's life as a Reform temple, the rabbi has held a special, central position in the images about the institution. There are many components to this special position, one of which is no doubt derived from the Reform protesting features of the temple as a Reform institution. But outweighing all of these components of the rabbi's centrality, is the special status-symbol he held among the members. To a group many of whom were newcomers into the community, and many of whom were rising to new social positions, the status of the rabbi became the active symbol of their own ascent, and of their own adjustments. Thus when the rabbi was accepted, respected, applauded in the community-at-large they too shared in that special status of acceptance.

This was evident in the activities of Rabbi Gries (1892-1917). His participation in the community -- in sponsoring cultural programs for the community both in and out of the Temple, in organizing community welfare agencies -- were what were most remembered about his ministry, just as it was most emphasized in his time.

With Rabbi Gries, the older symbols of the Rabbi derived from Jewish tradition, and those derived from German-Jewish life, gave way to the new symbols as both the agent and the evidence of acceptance, and adjustment in the new society of Cleveland and America.

With the arrival of Rabbi Silver in the Fall of 1917, a new dimension was added to the symbolic role of the rabbi in The Temple. The community activity for which Rabbi Gries was famous, was continued by Silver with a variety, an intensity, and a scope that can only be explained by the unique power and vitality of the man. The tribute of the Cleveland City Council summed up the scope of his community activity:(15)

> "Whereas, Rabbi Silver has been identified with every civic, patriotic and humanitarian cause in this city over the period of these many years..."

It was however outside the community that he added the new dimensions most dramatically. Almost from the beginning of his ministry at The Temple he widened his pulpit to cities all over the nation, speaking here, lecturing there, dedicating this, celebrating that. He spoke to educators, social workers, to non-Jewish ministerial groups, to college students, to Zionists all over the land. Consequently, a new self-image arose: The Temple became The Rabbi. Silver impressed his varied listeners as an outstanding orator, and profoundly original thinker. The magnificent tributes to Silver became tributes to The Temple itself, not simply that they enabled him to make these tours, but

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(15) Temple Bulletin, April 19, 1937.

precisely because of the successful accolades which he received. Silver gave the institution a voice that reached beyond the community and across the natipn; he gave it new institutional pride in return for the opportunity it afforded him.

In 1924, the bulletin quoted Dr. John H. Holmes who wrote on the Temple's architectural magnificence, (16) and called it

> "a monument to the power of Rabbi Silver's personality."

In 1927, other bulletin quotes called him "one of the outstanding religious leaders in the world." (17) Silver was "the voice of The Temple," (18) and "one of Cleveland's most valuable possessions." (18)

What Dr. Holmes had said, and what the bulletin had quoted for the membership was truer beyond mere hyperbole. Silver's acclaim and success became identified with The Temple building's structural magnificence. The new self-image, added to those expressed in terms of institutional features, saw in The Temple, Silver, and in Silver, The Temple, and their membership as participation in the acclaimed magnificence.

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(16) Temple Bulletin, March 16, 1924
(17) Temple Bulletin, May 29, 1927
(18) Temple Bulletin, May 22, 1927

Thus far, we have the self-image in terms of their concept of the rabbi, Rabbi Silver, in terms of his wide national appeal. But still another dimension has to be added to his status, so as to understand what else this self-image meant for the membership.

Silver's Zionism is historical. His interests in Jewish affairs on the national and international levels are well known.

In the early Twenties he became a delegate to the Zionist Congress in Vienna; in 1926 he opened New York's Palestine Foundation Campaign; in 1927 he was again a delegate to the World Zionist Congress in Basle, and a member of the International Actions Committee; in 1929, he went again to the Congress in Zurich, where he was elected vice-president to the W.Z.O. In 1930, he opened the first Allied Jewish Campaign in the United States. In 1935 he founded the Zionist District of Cleveland. In 1936, he was elected co-chairman of the United Palestine Appeal Campaign; in 1938 he was elected national chairman of the U.P.A.

Just as he was acclaimed for his community work, and for his wide national work, he was honored and acclaimed for his Zionist effort, all of which the bulletins of The Temple echoed and re-echoed. By 1928, he was already recognized as an "ardent Zionist."

When he returned from addressing a National Conference of American Jewry which was held in Washington in the Fall of 1929, the bulletin carried this quotation:(19)

> "...no one we have ever heard has approached the solemnity, the prophetic sincerely, and the almost unbelievable power of Rabbi Silver. ...unsurpassed is the only word we can think of...the modern Isaiah."

What the effect of these accolades, and of their quotation in the bulletin, may be seen in the statement of a laymen at a discussion meeting, which was likewise quoted in the bulletin:(20) the layman spoke of "the role that the Temple is performing in the renascence of Jewish life throughout the world." This we must take to mean that Silver's activity in the Jewish world had become identified with the work of The Temple, in the minds of its members. Otherwise there is no more basis for this statement about The Temple in 1930 as there was in 1936 or at any date. The plain fact is that Silver was The Temple, and the self-image of The Temple was seen in just that which Silver was doing so successfully and dramatically.

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(19) Temple Bulletin, January, 1930.
(20) Temple Bulletin, January 1, 1930.

The president in his annual message at the 86th Annual Meeting said it very specifically:[21]

> "It has often been said and rightly too, that the place in the forefront of American Jewry occupied by The Temple today is due to the matchless spiritual leadership which it receives from its present religious head."

In fact, so strong was this self-image of the institution seen in terms of the rabbi, that membership in The Temple was defined as "that of enabling unified expression through our leaders."[22] Membership in the institution not only enabled the leaders to work, but it gave that membership the success, the popularity, the significance of Rabbi Silver.

Thus we have seen the two sets of self-images with which The Temple was defined: 1) self-images in terms of institutional features ("the largest," "the first," "the pioneer," "the originator"); and 2) self-images with respect to the rabbis (with Gries as community and social status; with Silver as national prominence and as world Jewish leadership).

There does not appear to be any way of measuring the comparative intensities of these self-images. However, we may perhaps give a chronological sequence: The self-images in terms of institution start early and continue

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(21) Minutes of the 86th Annual Meeting, 1936, President's Address. Archive Document 410.
(22) Minutes of the 83rd Annual Meeting, President's Address, 1933, Archive Document 410.

long. In the case of The Temple, the institutional self-images are overshadowed by the self-images in terms of the rabbis, especially that of Rabbi Silver. In a crisis, as we shall later see, when institutional features are of necessity limited, the institutional self-images give way to the images of The Temple as the rabbi.

2. The Temple in The Twenties and Prosperity

In the Twenties, the growth of the city, the growth of the Jewish community, and the growth of the Temple's membership reached their high points.(23)

	General Pop.	Jewish Pop.	Membership
1837	5,080	3	---
1850*	6,071	500	47
1910	-**	50,000	595
1927	984,000	85,000	1510
1937	950,000	90,000	1450
1940-8	878,336	80,000	1500

The increased wealth of the city as a whole, the increased Jewish population by immigration and by natural growth and by commercial attraction, provided the Temple and its various activities with large masses of potential worshippers, participants, and members. Just this numerical expansiveness was a significant aspect of the Twenties and the Temple.

a. Internal Institutional Patterns

In the Twenties every one of the various sub-groups

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* Congregation Tifereth Israel was organized in 1850.
** Figures are not abailable, but by this time, the city had become "the great sixth city of the United States," and a famous Midwest port.
(23) These population figures were taken from the lists of the various American Jewish Yearbooks, and are admittedly only approximations with regard to the Jewish population. The figures for Temple membership come from official Temple documents and may be taken as nearly exact.

and activities of the Temple grew. By the middle of 1929,[24] the Temple had over 1500 members, which meant between 7 and 8,000 persons. The Sunday School in its various departments had 1400 boys and girls. The Temple Woman's Association had 1400 women members. The Temple Men's Club, which was organized in 1924, had 450 members. The Temple Alumni Association, of young people between 18 and 30 years of age, had about 450 members.

The Sunday morning services,[25] which featured the lectures of Rabbi Silver, a professional choir, and frequently guest instrumental and vocal soloists, attracted over 1500 persons in 1926, and as many as 1800 in 1928. On some special occasions, as many as 2200 are reported in 1927. In this regard it is interesting to report the conclusions of a census made of worshippers in 1926: it was found that 70% of the worshippers were members or in the family of members of the Temple, and 30% were visitors and out-of-town guests.[26]

It was certainly correct to say later with the president[27]

> "The problem of attendance has never been a serious one in the past fourteen years."

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(24) See Minutes of the 79th Annual Meeting, 1929, the President's Address. Archive Documents 410/102-106.
(25) See Temple Bulletin for May-June, 1926, and for February 12, 1928, and for January 2, 1927.
(26) Tempel Bulletin, May-June, 1926.
(27) Temple Bulletin, June 4, 1931.

The president's remarks are correct only in so far as the Sunday services were concerned. The brief Vesper Service on Friday eve was not well attended and required constant appeals.(28) The Saturday morning services was organized as a convenience for the crowded class room facilities, and remained a Sunday School religious assembly.(29)

It should also be pointed out that prior to Silver's coming to the Temple, even the Sunday Services were not well attended; the appeals for attendance were constant: the membership was told(30)

> "(they would be) repaid, for they would bring strength and power and influence to the Temple, and inspiration to the Rabbi."

There was no doubt that in the Twenties huge throngs came to the Sunday services, but Saturday and Friday services were almost neglibly attended. In fact so great was the Sunday morning attendance that the largest problem of the Twenties with regard to Services was the problem of seating, of holding reserved seats, and of seating non-seatholders.(31)

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(28) See Temple Bulletins for November 9, 1924, January 16, 1926, February 19, 1928.
(29) Minutes of the Board Meetings of October and November, 1927. Archive Documents 410-385, and 390.
(30) See Annual Report of the Public Worship Committee in the Annual for 1911-1912, page 37.
(31) See Minutes of the Board Meetings for September 9, 1924, and for January 15, 1929.

In addition to the huge numbers in the Twenties, and the pattern of worship attendance and worship problems of that period, one other aspect of its institutional development should be discussed. This concerns the erection of its great building. The cost of this undertaking had very profound effects on the institutional structure of the organization throughout the Twenties and even beyond.

In 1855, after five years in reated halls, the congregation dedicated its first building. In 1892, compelled by an increase in numbers, and made possible by an increase in wealth, the congregation erected its second quarters. By 1910, continued increase, and the fact that the population had become scattered led to plans for a new structure. In 1924 the structure was finally completed and dedicated. The new structure proveded a seating capacity of 1197; it cost over a million and a quarter dollars; it was built with a mortgage of $400,000 taken out in 1922, reduced to $125,000 in 1928, payment stopped in 1931, reduced in 1936 to $152,000, and completely paid ---twenty-two years later -- in 1944.

Throughout the Twenties, the Temple had an obligation of from $4000,000 to $125,000. As a result membership in the Temple came to be defined in terms of seat-owners, or seat-renters, or non-seat members. (32)

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(32) See Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting, July 1924, the Finance Committee Plan. Archive Document 410/200,201.

The Finance Committee through the Executive Board ruled the Temple. In 1926 it limited the membership in the Temple to 1500.(33) In 1927 it made any new membership conditioned by either the purchase of a seat, or a donation to the amortization fund.(34) In 1928 it ordered a campaign for 200 new members so as solve the mortgage problem.(35) It ruled that no burial space would be sold to anyone who at the time of death was not a member fully paid up in all his temple debts.(36) It set as rules for the Sunday School that children of parents delinquent in their dues would not be registered.(37) It defined the organization, the budget, and the prices of the Temple's Forums.(38)

The mortgage problem meant that the Finance Committee held the rains of the Temple's institutional structure. This is did in the prosperity of the Twenties, and continued in the depression of the Thirties: earlier for the mortgage, later for the sake of enforced economies of budget.

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(33) Minutes of Board Meeting, October 1926, Doc. 410/312.
(34) Minutes of Board Meeting, August 1927, Doc. 410/373.
(35) Letter Finance Committee to Board, June 1928. Doc.410-2
(36) Minutes of Board Meeting, October 1928. Doc. 410/41.
(37) Minutes of Board Meeting, November 1927. Doc. 410/390. See also Special Board Meeting, August 27, 1928. Doc. 410/26; Board Meeting Sept. 9, 1930. Doc. 410/251.
(38) Minutes of Board Meeting, August 14, 1928. Doc. 410/24.

While the Board and its Finance Committee were most concerned with finances, and members, and seating problems at the Sunday services, there were several other activities, especially of the Women's group which may be likewise be taken as characteristic of the Twenties in the Temple.

The calendar of the Temple Women's Association devoted a large share of its activity calendar, with its luncheons and meetings, to musical programs and especially to dramatics -- of play readings, of discussions of plays, of play performances.

The frequency and the popularity of these dramatic programs during the Twenties would indicate some relationship between such programs and the general prosperity of the Twenties. This becomes especially evident when it is later seen that in the Thirties and the depression days, just these programs of dramatices cease. And when the depression seems alleviated somewhat, by about 1935, musicales and dramatic programs reappear in the calendar of the women's group.(39) It would indicate that there is some relationship between economic prosperity and the cultivation of the arts.

This interest in dramatics was easily the popular area of interest for youth groups, Sunday School groups, too.

(39) Compare the Temple Women's Association programs announced in the following Temple Bulletins: March 21, 1926, May 3, 1931, March 17, 1935.

In 1924 there were at least six different dramatic groups in the Temple: a Temple Theater Guild on Saturday eve, a Dramatic Study Group on Monday afternoon, an Alumni Dramatic Group, the Women's Association who produced skits and plays on their own, the Religious School with two dramatic groups, and a dramatic group which joined with the Euclid Avenue Reform Temple (Anshe Chesed) and with the Jewish Center to produce a joint effort.

By 1935, all of these groups and activities in the arts, had simply faded away. Only the school groups remained, and continued to produce their festival pageants and presentations.

The Twenties were the period of the fine arts in the activity programs of the Temple.

This period, as we have seen, was one of great expansion in numbers of members, and in numbers of worshippers (for Sunday services). We have also seen that the Temple built an expensive building for over a million and a half dollars; one of the results of this tremendous undertaking was that the Finance Committee assumed wide powers in running the institution.

b. External Forces and Their Resultants

The world of the Twenties was a post-was world in which the bitterness of the war was combined with the flush of victory. It was also a world of bigness, of newness, of change. The world of the Jew was similarly composed of this bitterness -- in the violent nationalisms unleashed in Europe, and of the flush of victory -- in the Balfour Declaration, and the new developments in Zionism. For Jews as individuals the world was likewise composed of bigness, of newness, of change. B ut what the Jew as individual experienced in the "Golden Twenties," was constantly being challenged by what was being experienced by the Jew as part of one group the world-over, especially when such experiences found their American counterparts.

The external world made itself felt and heard to the thinking, acting Jew in the Temple. In response the Temple member would answer appeals for contributions to funds and charities everywhere. But more often the events would require interpretation; therefore the great need and reliance on the lecturer, and guest speaker, from whom information, clarification, and even resolution were expected. Of these lecturers, the most important one in facing the external world was the rabbi and his Sunday morning lectures.

The Sunday service to which over 1800 persons came each Sunday, and the lecture which was the important feature of the service, and the successful image of the

rabbi served as a bridge between the changing, complicated external world and the internal, individualized world of the member-listener. The lecture and the sermon, and the rabbi were more than a bridge; they were, in fact, the glass through which he saw the world.

Earlier, at the turn of the centnry, the external world did not present such complexities to the members. The men and women were occupied with their lives and living in a growing, bustling community, in an America of high idealism, and of certain progress. The officials of the congregation talked of "the true religion," by which they refered to their high ethical, universal ideals of morality, of brotherhood, of peace. It was the cause of Judaism "to unite for the betterment of human life and for the good of Israel."(40) The mission of this Judaism was "to make bad men good, and good men better." This was the view of Judaism which they wanted to hear in their sermons, and this was the view of Judaism they wished to inculcate in the Sunday School.(41)

The sermons were looked to for just this view of the external world: what it needed was more morality. Said the chairman of the Public Worship Committee, in 1906:(42)

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(40) President's Address in the Annual for 1912-1913, page 19. See also Annual for 1914-1915, page 27.
(41) Report of the Chairman of the Sunday School, in Annual for 1915-1916, page 33.
(42) Annual for 1905,1906, page 37.

> "...The themes discussed from our pulpit do not concern themselves with creed, intellectual scholarship or theological mysteries. The sermons to which we listen draw their inspiration from Jewish morality, and make their appeal to living men in relation to living problems."

The post-war world of the Twenties was different in this regard. There were problems in the Twenties, and these problems -- whether of the Jewish world, or of American society had to be somehow handled. Yet, prosperity blunted the edges of these problems. In 1919, Rabbi Silver in a sermon titled "Blazing A Trail In Life" said:

> "We are indeed living in a wonderful age....Our civilization, our culture, literature and institutions are experiencing the pulsating throb of passionate youthful ideals."

The high idealism of the early part of the Twentieth Century gave way to an exuberance in the Twenties. Jewish problems as such do not seem to have been concern of members in the former period, and not in the latter period. In the Twenties, under the leadership of Silver, a whole new set of problems of American life were brought to the attention of the member-listeners. These were problems of war and disarmament, problems of prosperity and wealth, problems of society, problems of religion in general.

Silver denounced war with all the force of his rhetoric, and with all his weight as a public figure. He fought it in the pulpit and in national activities. He hated it because he had seen it in the Summer of 1918 when he had gone to Europe. He hated it because he saw in it

the work of economic imperialists "whose activities always fostered wars."(43) In the middle Twenties he opposed military training in the schools, and was a member of the Board of the National Committee Opposed to Military Training, and petitioned for the abolition of military training in the schools. In an Armistice Address in 1929 he had this to say:(44)

> "...the causes of war are in almost every instance not high ideals but damnably selfish greed;...the nature of war is not glamorous but unspeakably mean and beastly...the consequences of war are not victory but defeat, economic and moral for all concerned..."

As for the church (which he distinguished from religion, as personnel are distinguished from ideals), Silver was bitter:(45)

> "We ministers, rabbis and priests were stampeded into the World War in the thought of saving civilization from some monstrous foe. We know better now. We know now that it was not our business to cast the mantle of sanctity over that miserable, bloody international fracas. Let us not again be so beguiled."

Throughout the Twenties, and even the Thirties, Silver was consistent in hating the first World War, in regarding war as monstrous, in denouncing the church for getting

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(43) Temple Bulletin, April 6, 1930.
(44) Temple Bulletin, November 17, 1929.
(45) "Should Church and Synagogue Fight Communism," excerpted in the Temple Bulletin, November 22, 1936.

involved in it in 1914, in educating people to hate war. For Silver, it was religion's true function to create a temperament for peace, and to focus men's attention on the machinery for peace. A large number of his sermons and lectures in the Twenties were on just these themes: in 1922, "The Ghost at the Conference Table - Why the Washington Conference Failed." In 1925, he addressed the National Federation of Religious Liberals on the theme "Organized Religion and World Peace." In 1928, he delivered a radio address on "The Church and World Peace," which was in turn widely distributed. In 1930, he spoke on "why The London Naval Conference Failed." Even in the Thirties, he spoke against war, as in his sermon "Who Wants War - Can The Next War Be Stopped?" in 1934.

For Silver, "Peace (and war) was the most perplexing and pressing problem of the day."(46) And like him, the Temple women's group and the Temple men' club devoted a large share of their programming to the issues of peace. It must however, be pointed out that these groups unlike the rabbi were not so much concerned with war, with understanding it and avoiding it, as they were with peace.

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(46) A.N. Silver, "The Church and World Peace," in RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD, 1930, page 85.

And a further distinction needs to be made between the activities of the women and those of the men in their treatment and interest in peace. The women participated in national and internation groups devoted to peace: they sent delegates, they heard reports, they signed petitions, they presented peace pageants, and heard speakers. The men on the other hand were far less active, confining themselves to an occasional lecture on the subject, and more often to some peripheral treatment of the subject, as for example, a travelog on a foreign nation and its affairs.

Whether the women's group agreed with the interpretation of the causes of war or not one cannot fathom; of this one can be sure, there was an active, serious wish for peace. The fact is, however, the rabbi did present these views in the pulpit and in the bulletin, and one may expect that they were aware of the issues. Similarly, though to a lesser extent, the men's group heard the many points of view from the variety of speakers who addressed them and especially those who addressed the Public Forums. In these Forums, prominent speakers were presented: Norman Thomas, Sidney Hook, Senator LaFollete, Senator Wagner, Professor Morris Cohen, Abraham Sachar, Oscar Janowsky. Issues were no doubt presented to the men as to women. However, only the women seemed activley engaged in the problem, even if only in terms of a wish for peace. As to their general familiarity

with the subject, only the rabbi's words and views can have influenced them, if at all.

In addition to the question of war and peace, Rabbi Silver took on another issue of the Twenties. In the midst of prosperity, Silver viewed the wealth of America as a serious problem. In this Silver was certainly not reflecting the times in which he lived, nor the social milieu of the Temple; only his own understanding, nurtured on Jewish tradition and prophetic idealism could possibly explain this area of his interest.

To Silver, the greatest threat to American, and to religion in America, was the wealth of America. In 1926, he asked in a sermon, "Will Prosperity Destroy the Nation?" In 1928 he asked "What Will America Do With Her Wealth - Will wealth undermine our nation?" It was America's prosperity which was undermining the American home: (47)

> "...increasing wealth of our people is perhaps the greatest menace of the integrity of the American home... wealth, that destructive force comes with continued prosperity." (48)

America's wealth was a handicap rather than a blessing:

> "Some nations have had to surmount the handicap of poverty. We shall have to surmount the handicap of wealth."

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(47) "What Is Happening To the American Home", in Temple Bulletin, December 25, 1927. See also RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD, 1930

(48) Ibid. page 155.

This questioning of America's wealth was directed at understanding the changing mores, and relationships which were obvious to him in the home, the community, the nation. He offered no proposals except some cautions for the home, and in morality.

He was much more specific on the effects of wealth on the church. Here he voiced a caution, and a challenge. He asked:(49)

> "Can the church survive prosperity? It is not so difficult after all to be a voice crying in the wilderness. It is far more difficult to be a voice -- clear and courageous -- crying for justice amid the pomp and splendor and costliness of a Temple or a Cathedral, which is built and supported by those who must often become the very target of the voice's invective."

Silver urged "the church to protect itself against institutionalism... over-organization and prosperity."(50)

What Silver was saying about prosperity and the home was probably felt by his member-listeners, to whom this proveded an explanation of the changing times, and the problems of rearing their children. However, what Silver explained and cautioned about the church and prosperity could hardly be understood in terms of the Temple itself.

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(49) A.H. Silver, "The Church and Social Justice," in RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD, 1930, page 67.
(50) Ibid. page 66.

These ideas had national significance; they had little significance for the Temple itself. The fact is the Temple had in this very period become institutionalized, over-organized; prosperity had given the impetus to the new structure in 1924, and the mortgage led the Finance Committee to hold the reins of the institution, as we have indicated above. The contribution that Silver probably did make in this whole issue of wealth and the church was in his distinction between the church as institution, and religion as ideals: wealth, he hoped, would not endanger ideals, though it might the institution. It does not appear to have been correct about the members of the Temple -- not about the Finance Committee, nor as reflected in the activities of the various sub-groups of the Temple.

This high idealism with which he viewed American society, led Silver to consider the broad problems of religion and social justive in American society. Silver had an image of the ideal society: derived in large part from his studies in Jewish tradition and Jewish Messianism about which he wrote in 1925.(51) In addition, he was an active student of contemporary issues and affairs.

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(51) A.H. Silver, A History of Messianic Speculation In Israel, 1927. (This was his doctoral dissertation in 1925.)

His images of the better society, it would seem then, were influenced by a native analytical acumen, by a social sensitivity, by his Jewish nurture, and by his studies of prophetism and messianism.

He called for (52)

> "A condition of society in which rewards will be commensurate with service, and in which none shall partake of social goods who does not contribute to the social weal."

He had a vision, and he defined it in socio-economic terms. Yet, he urged religion, most strenuously, to avoid politics, or any committment to one or another economic system; (53)

> "The Church must rise above the pregalent economic system. It must not attempt in doctrinaire fashion to substitute another system for it."

This was a double-edged sword: on the one hand, he urged protest and dissatisfaction with the present system -- to cry for righteousness as the prophets did; on the other hand, he would not commit the church to any system at all. Religion had to stick to principles and have nothing to do with systems except to oppose them in the name of social justice.

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(52) "The Church and Social Justice," in RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD, 1930, page 63.

He feared any other course for religion, not because it did not know what was good, but only because he feared the compromises, and political entanglements it would cost. Where there were no moral issues involved he urged the church to stay out of a struggle: thus he avoided the labor issues of the late Twenties because he felt that there"were no clear cut moral issues" involved.(53)

These issues which Silver raised in the pulpit, in his addresses, in his writings -- issues of war and peace, of wealth and society and religion -- were by no means the only themes of the Twenties for him. As a matter of fact many more sermons were preached on culture in general, on Jewish ideals and ideals. It was to these that his member-listeners reacted most.

In 1919, he gave a series on "Some Problems of Human Life -- Propounded in the Bible". In 1923, a series on "Definitions of Moral Values," and a series on "Why I Believe What I Believe." In 1924, a series titled "The Soul of Man -- In Song, In Poetry," and a series on "Social Forces in America Today - Theater, Industry, School," and a series on "Certain Experiences of Our Common Life -- Time, Fear, Friendship, Culture."

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(53) Ibid. page 61.

In 1925 a series on "Founders of the Great Religions of the World," and a series on "Our Life's Great Callings -- the business man, the working man, the professional man." in 1926, "Great Spiritual Tendencies in Jewish Life," and "What Is Judaism." In 1927, a series on "An Outline of Jewish History," and a series on "Great Moments in Jewish Life." In 1927, "The Basic Values of the Spiritual Life of Man -- Morality, Religion, Citizenship," and a series on "Israel's Role In History." In 1928, there were two special lectures on "What Is Religion," and "What Is The Soul."

Of these last two, an anonymous writer in the bulletin expressed what may be taken as the real interests of the congregation, when he said: (54)

> "That purely theologic subjects have not lost their interest for men and women is provided by the unusually large congregation which attended (over 1800 persons)."

In 1906, the laymen favored talks on "living problems," and not "Theologic mysteries." (55) In the Twenties, in 1928 the laymen favored "purely theologic subjects." In the Twenties spiritual and religious and cultural subjects were significant to the laymen, much more than the political

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(54) Temple Bulletin, March 4, 1928.
(55) See Footnote (42).

and practical issues: the external world-views of the rabbi were the glass through which the world outside was viewed; they were not the bridge which led to action.

And yet, the interests of 1906 and those of 1928 were more similar than different. Both viewed all of Jewish life as a continuous story of progress and idealism: the past, present and future were all blended into one. (For this reason, perhaps, the festivals were not discussed in terms of issues, or in terms of past problems; they were motivated by present, social pleasures.) Thus both attitudes toward the real world were interested in morality, and universal categories of thought. Silver was reflecting the times and his temple, when he said: (56)

> "A church is not a sanitarium, It is a place of ethical guidance and inspiration."

But when the "Gloomy Thirties," came -- when wealth disappeared, and when the Jewish present presented new, threatening problems -- the spiritual and theologic sermons became profoundly personal -- more than ever before.

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(56) Temple Bulletin, January 26, 1930.

3. The Temple in The Thirties and Depression

The crash of October 1929, and the chain of events that it marks off, had deep effects on both the internal institutional life and the external life of the congregation. The 1930-1931 season was hit hard. And the bank holiday of 1933 was another economic jolt to many of the members, and to the institution itself.

a. Internal Institutional Patterns

The Finance Committee had been ruling the organization in the Twenties. But in the Thirties it took over many new domains. In the Twenties, it was a question of staying within the budget, and to pay off the mortgage debts. In the Thirties it was a question of cutting the budget to the bone. The high-point in the budget of the institution was reached in 1927-1928 when the budget was $106,500. For the 1930-1931 season it was lowered to $98,000, and was continuously lowered, until 1933-1934, when it was set at its lowest, at $64,714. (The following season it started up again.)

In May 1931, the Finance Committee submitted a list of emergency measures, all of which were adopted:(57) All expenses were to be watched carefully by the Finance Committee and the President. All salaries were to be cut by 10%. All departments of the Sunday School were to be curtailed. The various departments were to close from 2 to 6 weeks earlier for the sake of economy. A campaign for new members was to be opened, with the former requirements that new members had to buy seats or contribute to the building fund

now suspened.[58] (Of course this meant that the member in addition to his $50 fee, would still have to rent a seat, or seats, for the Holy Days.)

In 1933, the Finance Committee was even more insistent in its recommendations:[59] 1) "it was absolutely necessary that activities be curtailed in the present crisis." 2) The religious school staff was asked to function without salary. 3) Guest-speakers for the pulpit were cancelled. 4) Dues were reduced by 20%, temporarily.

In addition to these economies and curtailments, the most interesting feature of the Finance Committee's activity concerned the new problems of membership. The Finance Committee not only defined who and how one could become a member, as during the Twenties, but now it defined how and who could resign, and how and who could reduce their dues and assessments.

In 1932 there were numerous requests for dues reductions, and letters of resignation. Whereas in 1931 there were at least 47 applications for membership, in 1932 there were none. (Actually memberships had started to fall in 1930, but when the requirements were eased, and only a $50 fee was insisted on, there were 47 new applicants in 1931. However by 1932, even this was no longer an attraction.)

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(57) Minutes of the Board Meeting, May 12, 1931. Archive Doc. 410/297.
(58) Minutes of the Board Meeting, September 13, 1932, Archive Doc. 410/409; cf. Temple Bulletin, September 6, 1932. Also Report of Temple Finance Committee.
(59) Report of the Temple Finance Committee, for February 4, 1933, in Minutes of Board Meetings. Archive Doc. 410/448. See also Temple Bulletin, March 26, 1933.

Thus in 1932, the Finance Committee handled all such reductions and resignations through personal interviews and investigations. Resignations were accepted readily; reductions were investigated, and often refused.(60)

Several resignations were submitted with the request that the child of children be permitted to continue in the Religious School by virtue of a relation who had retained his membership. Such requests were investigated, and decided in terms of the financial condition of either the resigning parent, or the belonging relative.(61)

Members delinquent in their dues were listed and supended: in 1934, 146, and in 1936, 103. The Finance Committee gained these powers in the Twenties, widened then in the Thirties.

But the internal picture of the Temple was not confined to the problems and recommendations of the Finance Committee, however important these were, especially for the Religious School, and for the membership -- new and old.

Two other features of the internal picture will now be discussed: 1) the effect on the activity programs, and 2) the new meanings of the religious festival celebrations.

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(60) Minutes of the Organization Meeting, June 2, 1932
Archive Doc. 410/394-7
(61) Minutes of Board Meeting, September 19, 1930.
Doc. 410/251.

The activity programs of the Temple were no longer able to show profit, nor was profit any longer anticipated. What was even more significant is the new development by which the activity no longer depended on outside talent, most of which was bought, but on local, native talent.

The Monday Evening Forums, of which the Temple had been especially proud for its scope, its longevity, its popularity, was until 1928-1929 season a financial, as well as cultural, success. By the 1931-1932 season the Forum series showed financial losses. To avert this, the 1933 series were to be made free to paid-up members, with a minimal charge to non-members, and the speaker costs were to be cut down. This forced the programmers to lower prices of admission, to economize on the speaker costs, and to advertise as it in 1934 "such a magnificent list of speakers at such a reasonable price."(62)

These lessons of prices went further: the Temple Men's Club was forced to reduce its dues; the Temple Women's Association was forced to cease any charges to its members for any and all programs it sponsored.(63).

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(62) Temple Bulletin, October 28, 1934.
(63) Temple Bulletin, October 11, 1933.

But there was another lesson learned: the use of local talent. In 1931, the Men's Club announced[64]

> "a new type of program: instead of outside talent for its meetings, now it would use members of the club exclusively."

This meant debates among the members, talents of the members were now exploited, and the rabbis of the Temple called on for special features. Similarly the Women's Association gave up its musical and dramatic program -- which we have seen was so important during the Twenties, and instead featured Current Events groups with the rabbis, while its reduced musicals to a minimum, and of course making it free of any charge to its members.

These were only expediencies of the moment, for when the sharp edges of the Depression had been worn off, these groups went right back to the patterns and programs of the Twenties.[65]

Money and crisis had another interesting effect on the inside of the Temple: in terms of the methods and motivations for celebrating the Jewish festivals.

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(64) Temple Bulletin, March 22, 1931.
(65) Compare the Women's Association programs of Temple Bulletin, March 26, 1933 with that of March 17, 1935.

In the Twenties the holidays were celebrated almost exclusively in the Temple, and the celebrations accentuated the social or cultural aspects of the holiday rather than the religious and historical.

Succos was celebrated as a Harvest Festival almost identical with Thanksgiving Day. Chanukah meant gifts and entertainments. (It is true that the children received special Menorahs and candles for their home celebrations, but the publicity and emphasis was on the Temple's giving these objects, and much, much less on their home use.) Purim was a minor festival in the Twenties, and its celebration limited to what was mentioned at the Sunday service. Passover was traditionally celebrated by a congregational seder. Although this was publicized as a seder only for those who did not hold home seders, it drew more attention than an occasional plea for home observance.(66) Shavous had been completely ignored until the coming of Rabbi Silver who made it the occasion for Confirmation.(67)

The largest measure of celebration of any of these

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(66) See Temple Bulletin April 26, 1925, or any bulletin of the Twenties around Passover time.
(67) See the Annual for 1917-1918.

festivals in the Twenties was through the sermon and the Sunday service: the service before the festival was the celebration, and the sermon was the rite. In the same way of chronological convenience, the women celebrated Purim in their association: they had planned a musicale for the month, and since Purim fell in the month, it became a "Purim Musicale."

The whole pattern may perhaps be seem in Silver's words about Purim: during the Twenties he devoted his Purim message to the "Christian friends of Israel." (68) He said

> "Purim quite naturally brings to mind Haman and Anti-Semitism -- a much belabored theme. It is desirable to get, from time to time, the other side of the picture."

So it was with all the festivals. Life was good. Historical travail was a thing of the past. The Temple took care of all the observances, and home observances, in the Twenties, might have disappeared entirely if things had continued in the Thirties as it had in the Twenties. Silver had told them, what they knew all along:

> "Religion, if it means anything means the supreme joy and happiness of life....Religion fills our soul with a most exquisite happiness." (69)

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(68) Temple Bulletin, March 4, 1928.
(69) Sermon, "Some Problems of Human Life," 1919, page 30.

For Silver, there was wider base to his meaning of religion; it included the language, and the history, and the ideals of the Hebrews; his was a growing mind, so that "the equisite happiness" of religion could give way to "the voice crying in the wilderness."

In the Thirties the congregation learned new meanings about the festivals. It required the constant efforts of Rabbi Silver, and his assistant, Rabbi Leon Feuer (1927-1934) to do this. But even more important, it required the force of the times: of financial crisis which removed some of the "exquisite happiness," and which forced them back to Jewish history whence to derive some measure of optimism; it took dollar shortages to force them to feature their own talents, and their festivals in their activity programs; and above all, it took the unique, overwhelming tragedies under the Nazis, to lead them to see the historical, spiritual messages in the festivals and their observances.

By 1930, there were full column features on the festivals, especially on their home observance, in the Temple Bulletins. Parents of Sunday School children were lectured to and demonstrated on the home observance of the festivals. By 1933, on Chanukah, parents were appealed to, to "put lights in the home." Chanukah was not simply an "eight day season of joy and thanksgiving," as in 1927, it became the "story of Jewish valor."(70)

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(70) Compare Bulletins for December 18, 1927, with that for November 28, 1937.

Purim was even earlier to be revived. By 1932, Haman and Anti-Semitism were no longer "a much belabored theme," as in 1928, but Haman was Hitler, and the sermon on Sunday was no longer on "the other side," but "Hitler-Haman, Purim-Spiel of 1932."(71)

By 1934, Succos had been revived, and even extended to the home:(72)

> "To reintroduce among our people the lovely custom of erecting Sukkoth, a contest -- among Religious School students for the most attractive Sukkath (sic) erected at home."

Thus while the festivals did not become new things - neither in meanings nor in forms of observance - their meanings were revived, and the forms revitalized under the new conditions of the Thirties.

So under the influence of the Thirties -- of crisis in money, of crisis in Jewish affairs (which we will discuss later) -- the inside, the internal institutional aspects of the Temple changed, and were certainly effected.

What were the extensions of the Temple, how it, as a whole, acted in response to the external world, we now take up.

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(71) Compare Temple Bulletins for March 4, 1928, with that of May 20, 1932.
(72) Temple Bulletin, October 14, 1934.

b. External Forces and Their Resultants

In the Thirties, the Jews as individuals faced the problem of economic crisis, and we have seen what this did to the institutional patterns. But in the Thirties, the Jews as a group faced German anti-semitism abroad, its threats at home. As a result of this, there was in the institution a new emphasis on religious festivals and Jewish history.

Yet, for both crises, the Temple as whole did something: mainly through the understanding and action of the rabbi, but also, to a much lesser extent, on its own.

We propose to discuss these two crises separately though of course they were interrelated in many ways.

Soon after the stock-market crash, Silver in November 1929, preached on "The National Get-Rich-Quick Debacle -- Earning a Living vs. Gambling on the Stock Exchange." The crash, in his view, was a direct consequence of gambling, and stock-market gambling was more criminal than all. In an address on crime, in February 1930, Silver called Americans "the speediest law-makers," and "the speediest law-breakers." Economic imperialiests had gotten America into the World War, and now the stock gamblers had gotten us into a terrible crisis. In a letter he wrote while on his sabbatical tour in Europe in 1933, and which was printed in the bulletin he spoke of "the sinister domination of

Wall Street," and he said:(73)

> "unscrupulous speculation and gross abuse of credit by bankers and speculators wrecked the economic life of America."

The crisis was the work of Wall Street. At other times he blamed it on our materialism; later he viewed it as a problem of technological unemployment.

Thus, even though he had seen the problems present in the American society of the Twenties, he was in no way prepared with a program for the Thirties. Perhaps this is to be attributed to the fact that he was critical of wealth not because it might lead, as it did, to economic unbalance, but because it would lead to indolence and obfuscation.

This understanding of the depression on the part of Silver was one aspect. However, he undertook to offer consolation and spirituality in his sermons, unlike anything previously. Thus while he was continuously seeking for new ways to explain the crisis, he was at the same time, and with even more devotion, offering his people comforting and adjustive sermons.

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(73) Silver's letter dated March 23, 1933, in Temple Bulletin, April 2, 1933.

In 1930, he spoke on "A Man's Real Assets." In 1931 he gave a series on "Men Who Serve -- the doctor, the lawyer, social worker, working man (the unemployed), teacher." He spoke on "The Quest and Conquest of Happiness," and "How Shall We Measure Life?" In March of 1931, he spoke on "When Men Lose Their Money." In 1932, he gave series on "Basic Realities of Life -- Fear, Suffering, Death, Love, Hope and Ambition." In 1934, he preached on "Where Do Our Moral Ideas Come From?" In 1935, on "Ourselves When Old - How can we prepare ourselves for a dignified and resourceful old age?" In 1936, it was "Little Man, How Big You Are -- A sermon on the uncommonness of common folks." There was a series on "Overcoming Life's Handicaps," and a series on "The Seven Pillars of Home." In 1937, he gave a series on "Things Permanent," and a series on "Problems of Human Life Reflected in the Bible -- Suffering, death, wealth, war, happiness, love, God."

The new emphasis in the sermons on the personal, and the intimate problems of everyday life were most appealing the listener-members. His series on "Things Permanent" brought these remarks: (74)

> "It is proving to be Rabbi Silver's most successful series in many years and the attendance at them has been among the largest.

> "The response of the congregation and the community to this series of religious discourses and the sustained interest manifested throughout has been a most illuminating commentary on what the laymen really wants from the synagogue and the pulpit."

The Temple was becoming what Silver once declared it was not: a sanitorium. The external world of economic crisis was reacted to by what one might call a "listening it away," by over-reaching it, by substituting spirit for matter, feelings for possessions, by personal moods for social currents. There can be no doubt that this was a necessary function for the pulpit; the question which remains is only - what of the other things?

In addition to his attempts at understanding and explaining the crisis, and his efforts for consoling his listeners, another dimension to Silver's projects, particularly on the problem of unemployment. At first he seemed most concerned with the question of unemployment insurance; in 1931-1932 he featured in his bulletins statements by industrial leaders on how they themselves had solved that problem in their plants. In 1932 hw was appointed by Governor White of Ohio as chairman

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(74) Temple Bulletins for March 14, 1937, and for April 11, 1937.

of a Commission to Study Unemployment Insurance, and later, the same year, he was appointed to President Hoover's Committee on Unemployment Relief. The plan which the Ohio Committee proposed, and in which Silver had a large share, was a palliative measure at best.(75) It set up maximum benefits of $15. a week, it set limits of qualification, it set waiting periods so as to discourage "the attempt to live entirely off the compensation." It was also intended that that whole insurance plan would be turned over to private industry to administer eventually.

In this plan Silver revealed aspects of his reaction to the crisis of the early Thirties. In the first place, he was all along concerned with giving help. In 1928, he appealed for help for unemployed Clevelanders.(76) In 1930 he appealed for the workers unemployed in the textile strike in Marion, North Carolina.(77) In 1932 he came to the defense of relief families in Cleveland, who, he charged were not getting sufficient relief: "One dollar per person per week is not relief. It is starvation."(78)

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(75) See Temple Bulletin, December 18, 1932 where the main points of the plan are quoted.
(76) Temple Bulletin, January 1, 1928.
(77) Temple Bulletin, January 19, 1930.
(78) Quote from Cleveland Press, in Temple Bulletin, February 28, 1932.

So, too, in the unemployment plan, he sought a remedy for the hunger and privation.

But the plan also revealed his general distrust of government sponsored measures, therefore the hope for the eventual administration by private industry. Silver was suspicious of state control; he said it with regard to the church, and he said it with regard to Jewish experience. Already in 1930, he had stated his position:[79]

> "...altogether there is too marked a tendency in our life to obtain social salvation through legislation. We are forcing the state to become more and more paternalistic and bureaucratic and we shall rue the day."

Thus while he participated in an unemployment commission he sought to avoid state control of the plan. Yet, he supported the social platforms of the CCAR of 1931 and 1932 which called for all kinds of governmental decisions. And in a sermon titled "If I Were A Dictator," he left no doubt that he would have the government make such decisions and take some of the actions suggested by the CCAR.[80]

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(79) Temple Bulletin, February 2, 1930.
(80) Temple Bulletin, May 8, 1932.

The pattern which the rabbi set in understanding the depression, in acting to alleviate some of it was reflected by the two major groups in the Temple: the Men's Club tried up to a point to understand it, and the Women's Association acted up to a point to alleviate it. Neither undertook the tasks, nor did any one of the two groups, follow up in any one task beyond surface considerations.

The Temple Women's Association set up an Unemployment Relief project from 1931 to the middle of 1933, when the project was taken over by the Federal Civil Works Administration. Of this project the Association president said the following: (81)

> "Until the first of the year, it (the Temple Women's Association) employed 30 women, 3 days each week in the production of garments for the Jewish Social Service Bureau and the Associated Charities. In addition to furnishing them a livelihood, these women were taught a trade, thereby discharging to an extent our responsibilities in the fields of philanthropy and civics. Letters received from the Jewish Social Service Bureau and the Associated Charities evidenced their appreciation of our efforts during the two and half years we operated. This work was discontinued only because it was undertaken by governmental agencies. The alphabetical set-up of the New Deal was not violated by this arrangement, for these women merely passed from the TWA to the CWA. Of the $2000 expended in this service, $1200 was budgeted by the Association, and $800 was contributed to the Association by individuals."

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(81) Report of the President of the Association to the 84th Annual Meeting, 1934. pages 1,2.

And while the women were busy with their project, or collecting funds for charity appeals, they held no discussions on unemployment, or economic, or social issues as such. On the other hand, the Men's Club made no appeals, and no collections, and undertook no projects as a group. Instead, they held debates, as one in 1931 on unemployment insurance (82)

> "whether palliative or solution ... the cyclical periods of economic depression and unemployment."

They held a symposium on the theme "Insuring Prosperity," in 1930, in which they presented a banker, an industrial leader, and a labor leader. In another symposium, they heard speakers on the "Romance of Industry," in which they heard speakers on chemistry, steel, electricity, and transportation.

For the Men's Club, the Thirties brought changes in the program. In the Twenties they were not sure of their purposes, and their programs ranged from entertainments to lectures on crime, or on great adventure. In the Thirties, the speeches were earnest. But beyond these surface aspects they did not go.

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(82) Temple Bulletin, April 5, 1931.

The crisis which came to the Jews of Germany were felt in innumerable ways by the individuals of the congregation. However, there were less manifestations of it insofar as they belonged to the institution than with regard to the reactions to the economic crisis. The whole reaction to the experience seems localised in Rabbi Silver, who became a leader in organizing a national and international boycott against the Germans, and then a world figure in organizing for Zionism and Palestine.(83) No doubt the imagery regarding the rabbi was enhanced by his activities, but beyond this we can not see that the German tragedy had any effects on the institution which were other than those occasioned by the economic crisis.

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(83) A very revealing chapter on Silver in the Thirties - his attitudes towards Nazism, and his plans for Zionism is available from the writer. However, it was deemed desirable to leave this out in this paper, for the sake of keeping the focus on the institution more sharp.

PART TWO

CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT.

1. A Profile of the Institution
   a. Self-Images of the Institution
2. The Temple in the Twenties and Prosperity
   a. Internal Issues: Service Attendance
   b. External Issues: Society and Religion
3. The Temple in The Thirties and Depression
   A. Issues and Views

PART TWO

CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT.

1. A Profile of the Institution

a. Self-Images of the Institution

Congregation Beth Israel prided itself on its longevity as an institution in New England, and on its loyalty to the Reform movement. Both of these self-images have considerable basis in fact.

The congregation was organized in 1843, nineteen years before the second congregation was formed in the city of Hartford. Its building erected in 1876 was in fact the first synagogue building in New England which was built as a synagogue.

As a Reform institution, it can point to the fact that thirteen years after its organization, in 1856 it began a series of Reforms from which it did not equivocate up to the present. Its Reform rabbis from 1847 to 1911 were staunch propagandists for Reform; and the American trained rabbis from then on, up to and including Rabbi Abraham J. Feldman (1925 - to date) were active in the movement in their temple, their community, and the nation. The officers of the congregation could point with pride, as he did, and say:(1)

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(1) President's Message in Annual Report for 1946, page 1

> "...as a congregation we do not seek national prominence, although few Reform Congregations of our size have larger representation on the principle executive boards and boards of national organizations of Reform Judaism."

The president was here refering to Rabbi Feldman who at that time was president of the CCAR, and to the temple's secretary who had been appointed a life member of the Executive Board of the National Association of Temple Secretaries. That same year, 1946, the rabbi himself pointed with pride to the fact that the congregation was in second place among all the congregations of the land, in per capita support to the Union, exceeded only by Temple Emanuel in New York.

This loyalty to the movement may be further seen in the remarks of the president who after participation in the 1946 meeting of the Union said:(2)

> "The meetings were thrilling and most inspiring, and we who were present are convinced that Reform Judaism in America is becoming more firmly entrenched as time goes on."

Both of these images of longevity, and of loyalty have a function beyond that of stating some historical facts. They are used in the organization and activities of the institution. Such references as to "the old guard of the Temple," and "The aristocracy of donors," and the very specific attention and honor given these old families are the real meaning of these self-images.

When the appeal is made for attendance at services it is in terms of this old, institutional loyalty that the appeal is made.[3] When the appeal is made for funds for the building, or for support of the Reform Union, it is in terms of this loyal, institutional image that the appeals are made.[4] It is through these two, related self-images that the cooperation and participation of the contemporaries are sought.

In addition to these images of longevity and of loyalty, a third image is apparent which has some of the qualities of the two, and yet extends its meaning to become a new form: this is the image of the institution as part of the person. Here the person who has lived his or her life in the community, and had been confirmed, married, active, etc., in the institution connects her religious personality with the institution. This is vividly portrayed in a speech by the president of the Sisterhood:[5]

> "...I recall so well the anxious thoughts before my confirmation, the pledges made in this very room before my God. I recall, too, the presence of many dear ones no longer in our midst whose blessed memory is ever with us. My suppliant prayer as I became a bride. My prayers

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(3) Weekly Bulletin, January 16, 1930.
(4) Annual Report, 108th annual, President's Address, and Rabbi's Address.
(5) Weekly Bulletin(then called The Temple Bulletin) June,35.

> of gratitude after the birth of my
> little ones. The petitions for
> strength and courage to face the
> daily task - to do my part acceptably.."

In this personal account is revealed the full dimension of the image of the institution as one's personal religious life. In this image is the temple's strength.

Thus the picture of the temple has these three self-images: longevity in New England, seniority and loyalty in Reform, and personal religion.

2. The Temple in The Twenties and Prosperity

a. Internal Issues

The first building of the congregation was a transformed church building, which in 1856 with the aid of a bequest from the estate of Judah Touro was converted to use as a synagogue. In 1876, the group constructed its own building with 741 seats. This building was in use until 1935, though there were plans to replace it through the twenties.

In 1876 there were 79 members; by 1912 there were 165; and by 1925, over 200.

Soon after the arrival of Rabbi Feldman in 1925, the campaign for a new structure was pushed to the utmost. In leading this campaign, the emphasis was entirely in terms of activity-space, not worship-space. While worship-space was hardly a problem, except perhaps for the High Holy Days, the activities and groups of the temple had grown considerably. In 1905, the women's auxiliary had been organized, but later in the Twenties occupied more space with its new entertainment and festival functions. The Men's Club was organized in 1924. With the coming of Feldman in 1925, the Religious School expanded with the introduction of a kindergarten for the younger, and with a high school department for the older children. The need for this activity-space was apparent to all. The rabbi gave it an application even wider than what was apparent to the groups: at a discussion of the problem of morality and

youth, he pointed to the needs for a new building "in a neighborhood more accesible and an environment more inviting," as the road towards solving that problem.(6)

The campaign opened in December 1925, and in one evening's meeting, $250,000 was raised, to the obvious delight of all concerned. In 1927 the plans were drawn up, and the new building was heralded by rabbi and laymen alike, as "the finest, synagogal structure east of Cleveland," and "among the four or five Finest Synagogue Buildings in the Country,"(7) and the plans published on the bulletin masthead.

But the depression tabled these plans until the High Holy Days of 1935, at which time the plans were realized.

While the officers of the congregation were most concerned with the finances and the plans for the new building, the rabbi was most concerned with the question of synagogue service attendance.

The problem of getting the men to attend the Saturday morning services was given up from the start.

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(6) Weekly Bulletin, November 12, 1925.
(7) Weekly Bulletin, January 20, 1927.

Instead the aim was at the women, and it was hoped to make "Every Sabbath is a Sisterhood Sabbath."(8) Loyalty to the Sisterhood was defined as loyalty to the temple; and loyalty to both was expected to mean attending the Saturday morning services. This was a campain that ran constantly for the old building, as for the new, in good times as in bad times.

Said the president in his report in 1946:(9)

> "Our Sabbath Evening Services have been well attended. I do, however, wish that we could have a better attendance on Sabbath morning."

But even though the rabbi had been forced to give up in his efforts to get the men to attend Saturday morning, even the Friday evening service required appeal, advertising, and slogans.

He urged them to "Make Friday Eve Brotherhood Night." He appealed in terms of the images of the temple -- of longevity, of loyalty to Reform, of personal religious life. He even talked of the benefit of worship which would give them spiritual strength; the appeal was even made in terms of "the grim reaper."(10)

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(8) Weekly Bulletin, October 15, 1925.
Weekly Bulletin, February 21, 1929.
Weekly Bulletin, October 16, 1930.
(9) Annual Report, 1946.
(10) Weekly Bulletin, November 19, 1925.

The services on Friday evening were adjusted by way of attracting attendants: they were timed to one hour exactly; special programs were instituted - Good-Will Sabbath, Brotherhood Sabbath, B'Nai Brith Sabbath, Youth Sabbath. Where the Friday service preceded a festival, there was no added attendance, but in fact these too required special programs.

The force of the problem is perhaps indicated in a report of a Men's Club meeting in 1927 where the rabbi spoke on loyalty to the synagogue. In the discussion that followed, he was asked by one of the members "Why go to synagogue?" The rabbi in reporting this experience saw fit to comment that "the question was sincerely and reverently put."(11)

The prosperity of the Twenties, and the leisure it brought presented almost insurmountable problems of synagogue attendance, for Friday as for Saturday. Yet, it must also be pointed out that the same energies and appeals were required during the Thirties, in spite of the fact that the numbers of members appears to have continuously increased.

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(11) Weekly Bulletin, April 7, 1927.

b. External Issues: Society and Religion

The rabbi viewed modern society as an external threat -- to religion, to service attendance, to institutional affiliation. He attacked modern society -- its machine-made prosperity, its scientific materialism, its securlarism,

He called attention to the slavery which was involved in the machine-made prosperity. Prosperity he said was not coterminous with righteousness, in fact, a great deal of business was as low as legal criminality; he denounced the "modern Ahab's and Jezebel's."(12)

He lashed out at the critics of religion. He insisted that Judaism and its social messege held more truth, and more promise than the new sciences, and the new liberalisms, and the new modernists; these he call "ignorant, pretentious, smart alecks," and challenged them to join a liberal synagogue. He insisted that the rise of Reform was itself proof that religion was not as static as these claimed.(13)

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(12) A.J. Feldman, WEJEWS, 1927, pages 36, 85; LIGHTS AND SHADOWS, 1928, pages 76, 79, 90; KIDDUSH HASHEM, 1929, pp. 5,6,10 ff.

(13) A.J. Feldman, WHAT IS FAITH, 1930, page 31; WE JEWS, 1927, page 64.

He also turned on the people in the synagogue, denouncing their hollowness, and their unpredictability which thwarted him in his preaching efforts: if he preached a tectual sermon, he was criticized for being unrealistic; if he preached on a social theme, then he was not spiritual enough.(14)

The external world forced its issues on Feldman whether in terms of participation at services, or as members, or as critics outside the institutions. He took up the challenge, and even though he could not convince the critics, he was forced to state the problems, and to find the solution in his own thinking. To do this he found it necessary to make of incompleteness a virtue, and to define religion as a "consciousness of the imperfect." The "unrealized dreams" and the "unsurpassed visions" were the contributions of religion to modern man.

> "We know that the world is far from perfect, and we hope to make the world better by setting before man the unsurpassed visions and the unrealized dreams, for man to fulfill them." (15)

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(14) A.J. Feldman, WE JEWS, page 52; KIDDUSH HASHEM, pages 59, 62. See also Weekly Bulletin, September 28, 1928.

(15) A.J. Feldman, WHAT IS FAITH, 1930, pp. 9,10,30.

While the rabbi grappled with these problems in the pulpit, in his publications, in his address, there would seem to be no transfer, no relationship to what the Sisterhood, or the Men's Club was doing during the Twenties. The Sisterhood was concerned with youth, with the problems of the growing child, and with the current problems of peace - of disarmament, of America's participation in the World Court.(16) The Men's Club were perfectly silent on the rabbi's question, and even on the question of youth, or of peace; they had their smokers, entertainments, and occasional lectures by a professional of one kind or another.

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(16) Weekly Bulletins, November 12, 1925, April 15, 1926. Weekly Bulletins, December 17, 1925, February 1930, And November 29, 1928.

3. The Temple in The Thirties and Depression

a. Issues and Visions

The economic depression which came in the Fall of 1929 brought a variety of reactions in various aspects of the Temple.

In this period, the external and the internal were congealed. In the prosperity period, the internal aspect of the Temple was concerned with fund-raising for the new structure, and with service attendance; while the external aspects of the Temple were concerned with the problems of modernism and religion. In the depression, the general despair was the overwhelming issue both internally and externally.

The reaction to the depression took several forms. The rabbi's salary was voluntarily cut, to be readjusted late in the 40's. There was a general retrenchment in the expenses of the Temple: the temple bulletin was dropped and then reduced to an announcement card; the Religious School budget was cut.

In the depression, the Men's Club took on a tone and a program that was entirely new. For the first time it took up issues; an economist spoke to them in December 1930 on "The Era of 1931 and What It Has In Store For Us." Another speaker took up the whole industrial order in a speech titled "Our Industrial and Economic Status."

On the other hand, the Sisterhood continued as before in its active, serious quest for peace, and for participation in peace organizations: "The United States and World Peace," and "the Women's Olympic for Peace," "The World Disarmament," were frequent themes in the Thirties just as they had been in the Twenties. Whatever other issues were brought before the group depended on the chance interest of the speaker. Thus when Rabbi Louis Newman addressed the group, he spoke on Hitler's anti-semitism.(17) This was neither anticipated, nor continued by the group; they had been primarily interested in having a distinguished rabbi address them.

A fuller gauge of reaction to the depression is manifested by the rabbi.

In the first place, the sermons assumed a new measure of importance after 1930; the sermons were listed boldly in the bulletins of 1931, where formerly they were less conspicuously announced.

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(17) Weekly Bulletin, December 11, 1930.

Even more significantly, the contents of the sermons changed markedly. The argumentative, social themes were replaced with themes about faith, hope, God, consolation. He was no longer troubled by the inconsistencies of his congregation; he realized that now some wanted therapy, some wanted guidance, some wanted prophetic idealism -- and he tried to fill all these requirements.(18)

He offered his congregants his own personal faith. He spoke in 1931 on the question "Does My Faith Meet Men's Needs?" In his 1931 collection of sermons, "The Faith of a Liberal Jew," he described the times as the "Yomim Noraim," "the awesome days," and offered his listeners and his readers his own understanding and his own conviction. With stirring emotion, and deep piety, the rabbi revealed himself to his congregants, and offered them his own faith as the model by which to live.

In his 1933 collection of sermons, under the title "Sources of Inspiration," he discussed the prayer-book, the Bible, the Talmud, and expounded their

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(18) A.J. Feldman, THE FAITH OF A LIBERAL JEW, 1931, pp. 34, 35.

emotional, consoling, optimistic efforts, rather than their historic, or legalistic aspects. The prayer-book offered consolation for the depressing times; the Bible visions of happier times; the Talmud offered practical wisdom of pious rabbis.

The texts of the Sabbath morning services took on other forms. In the Twenties, the rabbi presented to his Saturday congregation series on Jewish wisdom, on Jewish literature: 34 sermons on the Psalms in 1926, the Proverbs in 1927; 31 sermons on the book of Judges in 1929. In the Thirties his selections were taken from books which presented problems more than wise sayings, or literary forms: in 1930-31 sermons on Job; in 1932 a series on Samuel, and on the Ethics of the Fathers; in 1933 a series on Daniel.

In his treatment of these latter books, he took up the larger social issues. In Daniel, he saw texts for social issues, consolatory themes: "Is Idealism A Curse," "God In History," "Averting Social Misfortune," "Man Become Beast," "Perplexity," "The Supremacy of the Spiritual." The rabbi changed from preaching about Jewishness to social ideals in Judaism; he changed from preaching about the contributions of Jewish thought to the world to the contributions of Jewish thought to the person in despair.

Still, even in the Thirties he had to attract his worshippers. This led him to present a whole array of

general subjects on Friday evening: of current drama, on literature, on Jewish festivals, and Jewish life. Under the impact of Nazism and of Hitler, there were various discussions of anti-semitism, of Nazism, of Fascism; these issues began to appear in '33, and '34.

Underlying the rabbi's reaction to the depression, and his reliance on his personal faith to help people, was the rabbi's view of the depression as such.

In his view the fundamental cause of the depression was in the fact that people did not take heed of the wernings that religion had all along been making: that God is being left out, that people are putting their whole faith into things. He could then say "I told you so." But then he would add that things did not mean anything anyway, so that consolation was easy.(19)

His wiew is epitomized in the centennial volume, titled "Remember The Days," which in 1933 was put into the cornerstone of the new temple structure, for future posterity.(20) There he said

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(19) THE FAITH OF A LIBERAL JEW, pp. 16, 17.
(20) "Remember The Days of Old," An Outline History of the Congregation Beth Israel, 1843-1943. Hartford, 1943, pp. 3, 62.

> "Although the years since 1929 have been years of material depression and anxiety, when great suffering and want were bearing heavily upon many in our midst and throughout the land, as well as over the world, we retain our hope and confidence in the faith that when men shall have turned from the evil of their ways, and justice and mercy and peace are established in the world, security and prosperity will return."

The extent of the depression is there. Its understanding is in terms of individual evil. The faith which it reflects is a faith in ultimate righteousness which will lead to security and prosperity. It is perhaps striking to see that neither God's Will, nor His Intervention is alluded to.

This then was Congregation Beth Israel: images of longevity, of loyalty to Reform, of personal religion in the institution. In prosperity, the rabbi grappled with the problems of modernism and religion, while the women worked for peace, ahd the men raised the funds or just enjoyed their evenings togehher. In the depression, the rabbi offered consolation, without any profound delving into the causes of the depression. The women still talked of peace, and the men began to be interested in issues. In prosperity and in depression, attendance at services was a serious problem, and occupied the rabbi in all his thoughts.

PART THREE

CONGREGATION MT. SINAI, EL PASO, TEXAS.

1. A Profile of the Institution
   a. Self-Image in the Temple
   b. Self-Images of the Rabbi
2. The Temple in The Twenties
   a. Internal Patterns
   b. External Issues and the Rabbi
3. The Temple in The Thirties and Depression
   a. The Temple and the Depression
   b. The Rabbi and the Depression

PART THREE

CONGREGATION MT. SINAI, EL PASO, TEXAS.

1. A Profile of the Institution

The "Pioneer Jewish Congregation of the Southwest" began immediately before and soon after the city of El Paso became a terminal railroad point between the west, the north, and Mexico. The early Jewish pioneers were tradesmen, and soon after their settling there, brought family and friends to join them. One of the "Pioneers" was said to have brought more then 30 families to the city.(1)

By 1887 there were at least 32 Jewish families present; by 1897 there were more than 53. When the congregation was chartered, as the Mt. Sinai Association, in 1898, it defined its purposes as follows:(2)

> "The association is formed for the purpose of supporting Public Worship, and the support of Benevolent and Charitable Institutions, and Undertakings, and the maintenance of a Cemetery in connection therewith."

This three-fold purpose continued as its modus vivendi throughout its history, even though changes in the forms of these functions did occur. Each one of the three

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(1) Temple Tidings, May 1930.
(2) Yearbook, Temple Mt. Sinai, 1898-1928, edited by Rabbi Martin Zielonka, page 3.

functions had special, autonomous demands aside from the other two.

There was no image of a temple by which these three functions were formulated; instead they developed according to the demands of the community. Thus when a Jew died in the community, a cemetery association was formed (sometime before 1887); when some person (or persons) appealed for help, a Benevolent Society was formed (1887); when the children grew to school age, a Sunday School was organized (1890); and when a rabbi happened to be available in the community, a formal synagogue organization with regular services was formed (1898).

In addition to these factors of internal development, three external factors served to shape and cement the community and its congregation.

1. As a result of the influx of East-European Jews in the first decade of the twentieth century, a plan was formulated by national Jewish leaders, to route some of the new immigrants westward. This was the "Galveston Movement." Through it some families were added to the Jewish community. And with the newcomers, there came projects for their "Americanization," and their "adjustment."(3)

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(3) Yearbook, page 25.

2. El Paso was situated near an army post, Fort Bliss. In 1910, because of a Mexican Civil War across the border, and again in 1916, as precautions against border infiltrations, over 59,000 army troops were stationed at the post; of these at least 1,000 were Jewish soldiers. In the first place this meant a measure of increased trade to the tradespeople, among whom were most of the Jewish family heads. In the second place the need for welcoming and serving the Jewish soldiers, especially for the Holy Days, and for the Seders on Passover, added a strong motivation for concerted group activity. Canteens for servicemen were set up in town, and in the synagogue special services were held on Sundays.(4)

3. When Jewish immigration to the United States was closed by quotas in the Twenties, some Jewish families, despairing of the closed doors, disembarked in Mexico, and crossed the border into El Paso and the United States. Among several effects on the rabbi

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(4) Yearbook, page 26. See also Minutes of Board Meeting, September 13, 1918. Archive Document 34.

and the community, who were unhappy with these proceedings, it meant that charity provisions had to be made for the newcomers. It was also arranged to provide for the immigrants on the Mexican side, at Juarez, so that they might settle there instead.(5)

Thus in the rugged area of the Southwest, Jewish tradesmen settled. They built a synagogue as it was required. They were influenced by the Galveston movement, by the army post at Fort Bliss, by the immigration across the Mexican border. Above all they were effected by the commercial conditions of the area.

a. Self-Image of the Temple

In the writings of the rabbi, in his very detailed and pointed, and personal remarks, we may see reflected a very specific image on the part of the members regarding their institution.

The institution was seen in terms of the children. It was for the children that the Sunday School was organized; it was for the Sunday School that the first synagogue building was erected. It was for the young people that the second building was erected and equipped

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(5) Temple Tidings, May 1925. Rabbi Zielonka of Mt. Sinai raised $20,000 through the B'nai Brith Grand Lodge for these purposes. He became a life-long student and supporter of Jewish life in Mexico. See his "The Jew in Mexico," in CCAR, Yearbook, 1923.

as an "institutional synagogue and community center," in 1916. While it was certainly true that the 300 seats of the first building, and the 750 seats in the second building reflected a growing population of members and congregants, and that the presence of the Jewish soldiers at Fort Bliss hastened the completion of the 1916 structure, it does seem correct to say that the larger motivation for these efforts were the children of the member families.

All of the religious festivals, with the exception of the High Holy Days, were motivated in terms of the children. Sukkos was hopelessly lost but for the fact that the Sisterhood enterhained the children on that day.(6) Chanukah was simply a home lighting festival for the inspiration of the children.(7) Purim was the children's party time.(8) The Passover Seder was urged for the sake of the children.(9) Shavous was saved altogether only by making it the occasion for the rite of Confirmation.(10)

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(6) Temple Tidings, November 1930.
(7) Temple Tidings, December 1924.
(8) Temple Tidings, April 1921.
(9) Temple Tidings, April 1928.
(10) Temple Tidings, May 1929.

The most successful and the most repeated affairs were those in which the children were involved. This was especially true of the annual Father and Son Dinners, and the Mother and Daugther Dinners.(11) The intimacy of parents and children, more than any other feature of the program, meaaured the success of the affairs.(12) On the other hand, affairs sponsored by and for the Brotherhood or the Sisterhood alone accasioned much less enthusiasm and interest.

The quality of this image is difficult to fathom. It has such features as familial pride, and some measure of loyalty to Jewish heritage. But one gets the impression that behind it all were two other community factors: 1) the precaution against intermarriage, and the effort to have the children "marry one's own kind." and 2), the problem of social distance, of keeping their children from mixing with less than middle class families, with influences not desirable.(13)

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(11) Temple Tidings, February 1922, February 1924, and see especially March, 1927.
(12) Temple Tidings, April 1921. Compare this with Temple Tidings, December 1925, or October 1929.
(13) Temple Tidings, November 1919, February 1929.

The image of the institution for the gongregation was almost entirely in terms of the children -- the young people, in general, and their own children in particular.

b. Self-Images of the Rabbi

While it is true that the rabbi, Rabbi Martin Zielonka 1900-1937, held the same image of the institution, he certainly held it at a broader, deeper, more significant level. And even so, this did not exhaust his image of the institution.

He too viewed the synagogue, especially the institutional synagogue which he helped build, as the center in which the children could find their social, religious and communal values. He was just as aware of the problem of intermarriage and of social distance; he wrote on the subject pointedly, calling it "Our Problem."(14) But he wanted more: he wanted the children to study the Bible at the center, and Jewish history, and the Hebrew language. He wanted them to be specifically devoted to religion and worship; the center was meant to be the adjunct pointing to the temple:(15)

"Youth must play but in playing
it must learn to worship."

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(14) Temple Tidings, November 1919.
(15) Temple Tidings, September 1926.

In addition to the image of himself as a teacher, and the institution as the means for that teaching of the children, the rabbi had another image of the temple. The institution was the place for putting "religion into action," for living "the social function of religion." He defined social in the simple, associative sense, and "the social function of religion," identification by participation, in all phases of the temple life:[16]

> "...religion is a social force and entering into this play of social forces is just as essential as paying larger or smaller dues. Man is by instinct the only social being, yet there are many who seek to stifle this social instinct. Religion is the oldest social force, and yet they seek to make it only a form of divine worship. They will not attend any function outside of the religious function; they will not support any effort except the religious effort; they resolve themselves into cliques that refuse to mingle with other groups and thus create barriers that are both superficial and useless...

The rabbi here reflected the whole range of social problems presented in a small, intimate community, such as was the case in El Paso. Through the temple, he was not only seeking to teach and to serve the faith, but also to help create a social fellowship.[17] He wrote:

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(16) From sermon "Walking Together," in Yearbook, 1928, pages 92-93. See also Temple Tidings, October 1919, April 1923, January 1924, January 1925, October 1927, November 1929.

(17) Temple Tidings, December 1922.

> "The temple should be a leader in creating a real fellowship based upon our faith and also our service to that faith."

Still another self-image of the institution on the part of the rabbi was his view of it as a link through the U.A.H.C. and the C.C.A.R. with all the rest of Jewry. He went to all possible meetings, and urged his members to participate as well; he reported enthusiastically every session; he took up the themes of these meetings in the pulpit and in the lecture room.(18) Perhaps this was a result of the fact that El Paso was "300 miles away from the next city" and "600 miles away from a large Jewish center."(19) Yet, one feels that beyond the fact of the distance, he desired the participation of his temple, and of himself, in the larger picture of American Israel, and the Reform movement. The support of the Union which his congregants gave was entirely due to his spirit and efforts, rather than any particular knowledge or interest in Reform as such.

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(18) Temple Tidings, February 1923, February 1925, February 1927, February 1931.

(19) April 1929.

2. The Temple in The Twenties

The Jewish community of El Paso grew as did the city itself.

	general population	Jewish population
1917	39,379	1800
1927	107,200	2400
1937	96,000	2000

The financial involvements of the congregation paralleled the general pattern of the population, in spite of "slow years" in 1921, and 1923-24. The first structure erected by the group in 1899 cost $5800, of which $1760 was raised from among the members, and $1590 from non-Jewish contributors; this led to an indebtedness of $2000,(20) The second structure erected in 1916 cost $50,000, and led to an indebtedness of $23,000,(21) which in 1926 "was wiped out by subscriptions."

a. Internal Patterns

The 1899 structure provided a worship hall and classrooms. The 1916 structure contained these, and was also fully equipped as a community center, with stage, gym, game rooms, and game equipment. In the

(20) Yearbook, 1928, page 18.
(21) Yearbook, 1928, page 34.

words of the rabbi proud of his efforts:[22]

> "...the first Institutional Synagogue west of the Mississippi, one of the first fully equipped buildings in the United States."

With regard to worship space, the 1899 structure provided 300 seats, while the 1916 structure offered 750 seats. By 1921 "everyone believed that we should have built larger."[23] This of course, referred only to the High Holy Day crowds, for actually throughout the Twenties, the highest attendance at the temple for worship was about 267 in November 1921, and this was a special Friday evening in honor of Armistice and World Prayer For Peace Day.[24]

Actually, attendance at Friday evening services, through the Twenties, the Thirties, required all the appeals, the reprimands, the publicity, the techniques which the rabbi could provide.[25]

The Saturday morning services had an even smaller measure of success. Time and again we read that the rabbi saw fit to remind his congregation that there was such a service every Saturday morning.[26] It took all kinds

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(22) Yearbook, 1928, page 29.
(23) Temple Tidings, November 1921.
(24) Temple Tidings, December 1921.
(25) Temple Tidings, November 1919, January 1921, January 1923, April 1933, October 1934.
(26) Temple Tidings, November 1919, September 1921, January 1924, December 1929, September 1930, April 1933, October 1934.

of persuasions to get even some women and children to attend.

The Sunday School, which as we have seen was a major motivation in the whole organization, grew from 32 children in 1899, to 124 in 1918, to 170 in 1922, and in 1930 to 130.

Through the efforts of the rabbi, in line with his social definition of religion, he broadened the base of activities and interests in the School for the young people: he introduced clubs, and classes and special activities.

He seemed most concerned however with the question of Hebrew instruction, and argued continuously for it:(27)

> "Your rabbi would urge every child to study Hebrew for its cultural and religious value. If we had the means, I would urge a daily Hebrew School with a specially trained teacher in charge of this work."

He did establish beginners and advanced classes, some of which met Sunday morning before the regular sessions, and the others which met two afternoons a week, for about a half-hour session. Yet, his campaign for the study went on, in the face of many obstacles that were perhaps

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(27) Temple Tidings, December 1924.

typical of the Twenties: the dancing and music lessons.[28]

> "We want the parents to decide if it is more important for their children to get some information about the language in which the Bible is written and in which their fathers prayed and which we still use in our service or whether dancing and music lessons are to crowd the afternoons."

This problem was never quite solved, even though the temple through its center offered the young people inducements of a purley recreational and social nature, and even though the Sunday School itself included "special art classes" of elocution and dramatics, of dancing, and of violin.[29]

Thus it would seem that though the image of the institution was seen in terms of the children, the meaning which they hoped to impart was the social one, and the function they hoped to receive from the children was the familial pleasure. With the rabbi however, this meant Hebrew, and Jewish culture, and worship, whatever else it might mean.

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(28) Temple Tidings, Octover 1928.
(29) Temple Tidings, October 1924.

b. External Issues and the Rabbi

Reacting to the World War, the rabbi felt that the post-war world had critical problems facing it, that radical adjustments were coming, and that people were searching for spirituality.(30) In view of these ideas, he inaugurated a series of book-sermons on Friday evenings in which issues of life and current problems were discussed, The series was titled "The Search Spiritual."

In 1919, this involved books on society, and on war, on history. In 1923 Lewisohn's "Upstream" was treated in a discussion on "Who Is A Jew," and S. Lewis' "Babbitt" was treated under the subject "The Average Citizen," and Galsworthy's "Loyalties," under the theme "Loyalties or Prejudices." In 1929 these "special lectures" were organized around clusters rather than individual books, and all under the theme "Old Truths in New Books." Three different novels on Moses (by Fleg, Untermeyer, and Laugner) were discussed in one sermon lecture.

This series reflected the awarness of the rabbi to a part of the external world, and through the series he hoped to bring that part of the external

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(30) Temple Tidings, September 1919, September 1920.

world to his congregants. He said of this as follows:(31)

> "We believe that it is the duty of the pulpit to strengthen the religious feeling of the people by ethical and moral themes with special reference to our present day living conditions, but we also feel that the popular readings of the people deserve consideration and the relation of this reading to the great fundamentals of life ought to be pointed out."

Now it is obvious that these books were not "the popular reading of the people." On the other hand books as such were popular symbols with the people. What was most significant we the fact that the rabbi chose themes from the "present day living conditions" of his group -- as he viewed them, and found a book to use as a text.

It is also revealing from the titles of the books discussed through the years of this series that problems of anti-semitism, religion, social issues, political issues were rarely discussed. It was the whole feelings of the Jew, his ethical and cultural awareness that he seemed to be most interested in bringing up where Jewish books were concerned; it was the average citizen, and society in general -- the average and the general, with which he was most interested in his non-Jewish books.

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(31) Temple Tidings, February 1925.

One other major educational activity was undertaken by the rabbi during the Twenties, and in which we may be able to see what was thought of and how they reacted to the external world around them.

In November 1929, after some half-successes with an adult Bible class, and an adult Hebrew class, the rabbi organized a study group which met bi-monthy, in the evening, and which he called the "School For Jewish Studies."

At first a specific pattern of organization was laid out: at each session, a lay person would first present a digest of current events; this would be followed by a book review presented by another lay person, and then this in turn would be followed by a paper on a theme for discussion by either the rabbi or some laymen.(32) After the first year, a change was announced:(33)

> "the character of the program was changed: that papers by volunteers only...don't stay away because afraid. Rabbi Zielonka will present the principal paper at each meeting."

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(32) Temple Tidings, November 1929.
(33) Temple Tidings, January 1930.

By 1933, the book review and current events presentation were replaced by a discussion entirely.(34)

We now turn to a consideration of the subjects discussed in these sessions whether by the rabbi or laymen so as to indicate what themes of the external world seemed to warrant their concern.

In 1929 the rabbi talked about the Jewish Agency; this was followed by a debate among the laymen on "Have Jews any rights in Palestine?" On another night, the rabbi presented a paper on "The History of Zionism." This was followed by a discussion on "dual loyalties." (It is important to note that these discussions were not planned in advance; the reaction of the laymen may therefore be taken as indicators of their views of this phase of the external world.)

In 1930 there was a debate on the theme "Resolved that Colonization in Palestine is to be preferred to Colonization of Jews in Russia." On that evening, the rabbi contributed his paper on "Latest developments in Palestine."

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(34) Temple Tidings, February 1933.

There were many other themes discussed: Jews in Texas, Jew in America; anti-semitism; Russia and religion; religion in the schools. Of all these, the evening on anti-semitism, when a debate was held on "Resolved that the conduct of the Jew and not his religion is the cause of anti-semitism," and the evening on the Jew in America drew the largest audience, with as many as 80 persons in attendance. Otherwise the attendance ranged from 20 to 40.(35)

In 1933, one evening was declared as "German Night." A laymen presented a digest of conditions in Germany based on recent news dispatches, a book review was given by another layman of a biography of Walter Rathenau, and the rabbi spoke on "The Jews In Germany - A sketch of early Jewish settlers in Germany."(36) Only once more was German Jewry the subject of a session throughout the early and middle Thirties: In March, 1933, the book reviewed was "The Beloved Rabbi," the rabbi's speech was on "The Rabbi and the Congregation," and the latter also presented a report on present day conditions in Germany.

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(35) Temple Tidings, December 1930.
(36) Temple Tidings, March 1933.

About the depression, only once does there appear to have been even a plan for a discussion on a theme related most directly to it. In the bulletin of February 1933, an anouncement is made of a discussion to be held in March on a theme "of present-day value":[37]

> "We hear of Technocracy, Socialism, Communism, Bolshevism..The Fundamental problem of 'property.' What has the Bible to say about it? Has it an answer for our problem? If so, is it possible?

There is some doubt whether this program was ever presented, but even so, it does reflect an awareness of some phases of the external world of movements and crises -- even though, this is a unique and singular awareness.

Thus the Twenties was internally occupied with its indebtedness, with its center program, with Hebrew instruction, with service attendance. Its external world, carried almost entirely by the rabbi had some phases of the depression, of anti-semitism, Israel, and of Germany in its consideration, though without any apparent frequency, depth, follow-up.

But while the understanding and discussion levels were obviously negligible, the charity and the giving to various local, national, and world appeals continued throughout:[38] Palestine, Europe, the Union, A.D.L. and others.

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(37) Temple Tidings, February 1933.
(38) Temple Tidings, May 1921, May 1924.

3. The Temple in The Thirties and Depression

The years 1923 to 1925 seemed to present some financial difficulties to some of the members of the congregation. There was a retrenchment in both the charities given to the various funds collected by the temple, and in the temple dues itself.(39) These curtailments and retrenchments were of only limited scope and touched only a few areas of the institution and its world. The depression of 1930 was however, literally shattering, and reached through the whole fabric of the institution, effecting the relations of the rabbi and his board, and effecting the whole program as well.

a. The Temple and The Depression

The budget of the temple for the year ending March 1930 was listed as $25,329.50, and showed a deficit of $264.44.(40) Evidently this did not produce any abnormal concern, perhaps because the group had experienced swings of the financial pendulum before, as in the early Twenties. That year, 1930, there were even 18 new members to the congregation.

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(39) Temple Tidings November 1923, December 1924, January 1925. See also Minutes of Board Meeting, December 7, 1924, Archive Doc. 90, and Letter from the rabbi to the congregation, in Minutes of the Board Meetings, September 15, 1924, Archive Doc. 92b.

(40) Financial Statement, March 1, 1930 in Minutes of Board Meetings, Archive Doc. 108a.

By September 1931, the financial condition was viewed as desperate: there was no cash on hand; no cash in the bank; there were obligations of over $3900.[41] In October, the Board ordered a 20% salary cut. The rabbi had volutarily returned $60 of his $600 monthy check. The full-time secretary (since 1918) was discharged for the sake of economy. Still the Board seems to have felt that the crisis, and therefore these precautions, was temporary. It It expressed itself as reluctant to cut the rabbi's salary, on the assumption that conditions would soon improve. By April 1932, the budget had been cut down to $14,681.48 (from $25,329.50 in 1930); still there was a deficit of over $1000.[42]

In 1932 requests for dues reductions began to appear: in March there were 13 requests for dues reductions, and 14 letters of resignation. The Board refused all the requests for reductions with an accompanying letter to some of the writers considered well-to-do that they must bear the expenses of the temple. The resignations were likewise refused and the members who had so written were told that their membership was

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(41) Minutes of the Board Meeting, September 1931, Archive Document 140D, See also documents 140a, 141a, 142b.

(42) Minutes of the Congregational Meeting, April 10, 1932, Archive Doc. 111a.

continued as "non-paying members until their financial conditions improved." No one was denied membership; no one was permitted to resign for financial reasons at that time.(43)

The intimacy and social relationships of this small community were such that these special categories were not entirely easy to retain. Thus the rabbi felt compelled to write as follows in his Tidings:(44)

> "A Question?? Is it true that some people stay away from the services because they are ashamed to come since they are in arrears in their dues? We wonder! Rather show your interest and your intention to meet your pledged obligations as soon as you can by attending the services. It is in this way that we can judge your real interest and not by staying away. Won't you?"

On the one hand the Board cut expenses; on the other hand it argued and urged its members not to cut their dues and contributions. With these who were delinquent, it was insistent. To handle these problems the Board appointed a three-man "Delinquency Committee," who were easily the busiest, and perhaps the most important, committee of the temple during the depression.

In all this the Board and the Committee were

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(43) Minutes of Board Meetings, March 18, 1932, Archive Doc. 145. See also Board Meeting Minutes for March 31, 1931, Archive Doc. 136.
(44) Temple Tidings, November 1931.

enthusiastically assisted by the rabbi. He wrote pleading with the congregants to give of their surplus, not simply their income; to increase, and not decrease their givings; to sacrfice their personal standards, not their community standards. He wrote of confidence and of hope, and insisted that the job could be done.(45) Said he in an article titled "The Task" in the Tidings of March 1932:

> "It has taken centuries to build up institutions and create laws for mutual contract and protection. No crisis ought to be permitted to break these down or to cripple them."

He was even stronger in his remarks. He called the contributions "debts of honor." To cut religious, charitable, social clubs and institutions (the three symbols of the temple) would lead to "communal suicide," and this would be "refined selfishness."(46)

By the middle of 1932, conditions were in fact getting worse, and in anticipation of a larger deficit for 1932-1933, the Board decided on further economies. Here they turned on the rabbi, and cut his salary

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(45) Temple Tidings, February 1932, March 1932, September 1932. See also November 1931.
(46) Temple Tidings, February 1931.

from $600 a month $500. This touched off a struggle that raged through 1932 and 1933 between Board and rabbi.[47] The rabbi's position was that he wished to give the $100 voluntarily, that his salary be kept at $600, which he had been getting since 1920, and which he expected to continue especially after being elected for life in 1927. The Board, anxious for the economy, and also for a test of organizational authority insisted that no legal arrangments had ever been made for his salary, that it felt it could not guarantee that salary now or in the future. The Board won the struggle: his salary was by 1933 cut to $400. a month. For the rabbi this was a shattering experience. His words were:[48]

> "(The struggle) is shattering all that had been built up with such strenuous efforts during the past 32 years."

It was probably out of this deep, personal knowledge that he wrote his article in the Tidings of March 1933, pleading the cause of the minister, titled "What Price Depression."

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(47) See Minutes of Board Meetings, Archive Doc. 147, 148, 149, 151, 153D, 153E,F, 152, 155.

(48) Letter from Rabbi Zielonka to Dr. Cohen, Doc. 153D. In this letter Dr. Cohen gave the right to Zielonka, but urged him to settle it immicably.

b. The Rabbi and the Depression

The range of the rabbi seems to have been limited to the problems of his temple, the problems of his community. Beyond that he does not seem to have expressed himself.

He admitted to the Board that he (49)

> "had no definite suggestion to make being the spiritual leader of the congregation and not sufficiently well versed in business management to offer solutions to the present fundamental problems."

While this was said with reference to the temple as such, it was just as characteristic of his views of the depression. He possessed one quality, and this served him and his people well: he had great feeling for the people involved in the depression, and even though he could offer no cures, no adequate analyses, he did offer genuine, stirring sympathy.

The first effect of the depression was complete confusion. In his first editorial in the Tidings on the subject, he asked whether "we were gaining

(49) Minutes of Board Meetings, October 9, 1931, Archive Doc. 141.

spirituality from the crisis." But he also admitted his own confusion:[50]

> "And yet, I must be honest in saying
> I can see no spiritual compensations."

He called for hope, for spiritual power, for confidence, for determination.[51] He tried to point to the lessons which might be learned from the crisis: "that 'man does not live by bread alone'"; "that happiness cannot be purchased, it must be attained"; that we will be led to respond more regularly to the appeal of religion.[52]

He knew what was going on and described the situation with considerable feeling:[53]

> "In the future when we speak of the year 1931 it will be with sorrow and sadness. We will recall the collapse that came from nowhere; surpluses in food, manufactured articles, and natural resources and yet unemployment, depression, and want. We will recall soup-kitchens, and temporary relief measures for the least fortunate, and readjustment in mode of living and expenditures on our own part... It has been difficult for some; and it has been harder for others. Men and women anxious to work, yet unable to find employment. Through no fault of theirs; they were simply dumbfounded by conditions."

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(50) Temple Tidings, January 1931.
(51) Temple Tidings, September 1931, October 1931. January 1932, March 1932, February, 1933.
(52) Temple Tidings, September 1931.
(53) Temple Tidings, January 1932.

There was no attempt made to analyse the situation, and to offer an explanation; the fact was the rabbi was one of these "simply dumbfounded by conditions." He offered sympathy, and understanding of some of the plight of the unemployed; he understood something of the fears of the people, particularly the employers. He called for confidence on the part of both, and adjustments on everyone's part.

> "...world is topsy-turvey..worker's morale is gone..men of means are retracting their funds..self-preservation becomes the first rule of nature...
>
> "We need emphasize the value of "morale" to those who give employment. They have reserves, or some of them have, and in an emergency we must be ready to draw on reserves. They must realize that their success depends on the confidence, courage and fidelity of those who depend on the weekly pay envelope they receive and treat then accordingly...
>
> "Those who are less fortunate and depend on their job for daily sustenance must realize that honest effort is being put forth to adjust everything to present day conditions, and that, while some actions may seem harsh and may be the result of a fear complex that they placed in a like position probably would have acted in the same way." (54)

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(54) Temple Tidings, February 1933.

In this remarkable piece, he asked employers to regain their confidence and invest their reserves; he asked the workers to have patience. Of the government's role, there is nary a word; of the implications of the depression for the future, neither here nor anywhere else is there a word. Of the causes for the terrible times, he has only this hyperbolic, single remark:(56)

> "Life has been easy, too easy for our own good. While Europe was suffering we were prosperous..."

The rabbi's answer was a personal, religious answer, an institutional answer. There is no way of measuring the effect of his message, and yet one must feel that he probably helped add some confidence, some hope, some sympathy, however little else by way of explanation, or of program he gave.

Besides the messages of the rabbi, activities continued in their same patterns during the depression: the world was distant; one gave charity to Jewish causes; one heard news reports at study sessions; one heard an occasional speaker tell about the external world.

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(55) Temple Tidings, September 1931.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

The Reform Temples in America between the two world wars, during the Twenties and its prosperity and during the Thirties and its Depression, represent no homogenous patterns, neither in terms of their internal institutional features, nor in terms of their external aspects. Factors of size and the personality and equipment of their rabbis are decisive factors.

The large temple presents its members with the concrete symbols of its institutional dimensions; thus the members of the large temple come to think of their temple in terms of these institutional accidents as the basis of the institution, and of their own identification as heightened by these features. When a crisis occurs, and the institutional features must of necessity contract, the imagery is filled with the position of the rabbi, especially if he is a successful, popular personality. In neither case is their any connection of the member with God, Judaism, or the Reform movement through his identification with the large institution. On the other hand, by virtue of its size, the stresses and strains of depression are less compelling; and by virtue of its size, the range of possibilities for activities is much less limited

than smaller institutions.

The medium temple is fortunate in its size and therefore in its imagery. It can retain loyalty to the movement, and it can call forth familial and personal relationship and memories. Hugeness does not distract it from these possibilities as to program and activities is limited; there is more of a homogenous group in the institution, and therefore limits to their interests. Thus if the general atmosphere is indifferent to regular service attendance, the empty pews will be very obvious.

What the small temple does not have in bigness, in personal memories, it has in an intensity of sociality. Whether this is an asset or a liability depends completely on the leadership of the group. Whatever is felt in the temple of this size, is felt intensively, personally and often permanently. Thus if a crisis comes and payments are delinquent, members will be ashamed, and perhaps stay away from the services. On the other hand, at affairs, there is a greater intimacy among and within families.

Our studies elaborate what is held as common sense: that there are different kinds of rabbis. And yet, insofar as the conditions which the rabbis have had to face have been the same in all three cases...the economic crisis, and certainly the Jewish crisis, it is nonetheless amazing to see the different reactions.

One must also ask, whether, in view of the fact that the congregations as aggregates of individuals were not really different, than who did the most good for the individuals?

We have seen that one rabbi explained the depression as the work of Wall Street, another as the evil in men's behavior, and the third had no explanation at all. Perhaps this would indicate that insofar as explaining the depression, some of our congregations were not led to any profound explanation of this tremendous event in their lives, and in the history of Americo. The same variety of reactions is true about the Jewish tragedies in Europe: one blamed it on a power-mad party; another on a demented person, and the third had no opinion.

Thus while it is true that the internal structures of the three synagogues, under even three different leaders were generally the same: Saturday and Friday services were problems in prosperity and in depression; Jewish culture had to be poured in from the outside--yet the way in which each of the congregations reacted to the outside world was also the same: charity, lectures, Only the rabbis took up issues and stated their position.

In summary then: the size of a temple will influence the members views of the temple. In depression as in

prosperity all of the temples, no matter the size, and no matter the rabbi, follows the same pattern, and has the same problems, and the same detached relationship to the external world. The rabbis differ in their reactions to the world around them; but even so do not enter into the issues, except for remedial or inspirational purposes.

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