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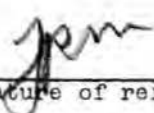
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THE EAST- WEST CONFLICT IN AMERICAN REFORM AS REFLECTED IN
THE ISRAELITE, 1854-1879

by
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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
Master of Hebrew Letters Degree

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INTRODUCTION

To properly understand the nature of the conflict between East and West in American Reform Judaism, it will repay us very well to obtain a bird's eye view of the social, political, and economic conditions in America as well as in Europe, which certainly were important factors in paving the way for the emergence of this conflict. In the 1850's, when thousands of Jewish immigrants were coming into the United States, Europe was seething in revolution. This was the aftermath of an age of reaction and repression dominated by Metternich and his German Confederation. It was the failure of the sundry revolutions throughout Europe in 1848 that accelerated the rate of Jewish immigration to America; these revolutions resulted in economic setbacks and disillusionment with regard to securing bona fide political equality. To America they looked to have their aspirations for freedom fulfilled; in American democracy there was a new hope. But the United States too, at mid century was in the throes of a serious crisis, a struggle to implement the democratic ideas of '76. Born in revolution, America was at the brink of another internal conflict. North-South rivalry was at its height and sectionalism was the determining factor in American politics. Only Henry Clay's Compromise of 1850 saved the day and postponed the conflagration for a decade.

It was in this turbulent period of history that Rabbis I. M. Wise and David Einhorn, the leaders of the two dominant parties in American Reform Judaism in the 19th century, appear on the American scene. Like the thousands of refugees that were pouring into our country from Germany and the other countries of Central Europe at this time, these rabbis came to our shores in search of a measure of freedom. After years of struggle for enlightenment in religion, Wise, and especially Einhorn, found that their efforts were being frustrated not merely by a short-sighted Orthodoxy within the pale of Judaism, but what was even more difficult to cope with, a politically reactionary regime from without. Born in Steingrub, Bohemia in 1819 in a period which marked the crumbling of French liberalism, Wise received the usual Heder education from his father and grandfather. Neither he himself nor any of his biographers record his having received the standard secular education. In the secular field he was a self-educated man. Having never been exposed to what might be termed systematic University training, Wise was not strangled by the Germanizing tendencies which afflicted a leading rabbi such as Einhorn. Thus I. M. Wise plunged into the American scene unhampered by the slavish Germanism of many another rabbi and was able to work towards the goal of the evolvement of an American Judaism. Hence, from the very beginning Wise insists upon the use of English and not German as the vernacular in the Synagogue.

After officiating as a rabbi in Radnitz, Bohemia for two years, Wise came to the United States in 1846, and was soon elected rabbi in Albany, N. Y. Even during his incumbency in Albany, where he served a comparatively Orthodox congregation, Wise gave expression to Reform ideas by preachment and by contributing articles on religion in The Occident. Only two years after his arrival in the United States, in 1848-49, Wise was already trying out his schemes for unity and responsibility in American Jewish life by joining Leiser in calling together a conference of congregations. Though this proved to be a failure it does nevertheless demonstrate the perspective with which Wise fearlessly viewed the future of American Israel. Wise was obliged to leave Albany in 1854 when his reforms met with the opposition of the leaders of the congregation and he was soon elected rabbi of Temple Bene Yeshurun in Cincinnati, where he occupied the pulpit for the rest of his life. He founded the Israelite, an Anglo-Jewish weekly newspaper in 1854, and in 1855 added a weekly German appendage called Die Deborah. Via his multifarious articles on Jewish theology and on political rights for the Jew, Wise attained country-wide renown and became a dominant figure in the American Reform movement. His constant pleas for unity were finally crowned with success in the establishment of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1873 and of the

Hebrew Union College in 1875.¹ Thus did Wise become the anchor of Judaism in the mid-west.

David Einhorn, the great leader of Eastern Reform, differed from Wise in many respects. Born in 1809 in the little Bavarian village of Dispeck, Einhorn from early childhood was known as an Iluy. When only seventeen years of age he was the recipient of the Rabbinical degree at the Yeshivah in Fuerth. Unlike Wise, Einhorn received a systematic university education. Soon after his ordination, Einhorn is found pursuing his secular studies at the Bavarian Universities Erlangen, Wuerzburg, and Munich respectively. Upon his return to Fuerth from the University he was no longer an adherent of Orthodoxy and was regarded as a Poshea Yisroel by his teachers. For this reason he was forced to delay his entry into the active rabbinate for ten years, for already at that time he was known as a Reformer.² His first pulpit in 1842 was in Hoppstaedten and thereafter he held several other positions. In 1847 Einhorn was appointed Chief-rabbi of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, the successor of the famed leader of German reform, Samuel Holdheim. It was upon his appointment to this position that Rabbi Hamburger of Fuerth, who had ordained Einhorn, denounced him as "an insolent and wicked infidel." All during this period Einhorn played an active role in the sundry rabbinic conferences in Germany in the 1840's, where he was a leading spokesman for Reform Judaism. He was an

acknowledged scholar and published articles in the leading journals of the German Liberal movement. In an attempt to escape from reactionary Germany, Einhorn accepted a call to the Reform Temple in Budapest, in 1852. When this news reached the Austrian government, the authorities, fearing Einhorn's liberalism, ordered the closing of the Reform Temple in Budapest. Hence unlike Wise, Einhorn upon his arrival in the United States in 1855 had achieved a reputation as a fighting reformer on the continent and was considered one of the distinguished leaders of the German Reform movement. Immediately upon his arrival in the United States he was appointed rabbi of Har Sinai Congregation in Baltimore, where he soon emerged as the leader of the Eastern or Radical Reformers in opposition to the Moderate Reformers under the leadership of I. M. Wise. His very first sermon was roundly attacked by Wise as "Deistical," and Wise invites Einhorn "to join the Unitarian Church."³ In 1856 Einhorn starts publishing a monthly called Sinai, which preaches a Reform much more radical than that preached by Wise in the columns of the Israelite. In 1858 Einhorn published a new prayer book, Olath Tamid, which according to Kohler formed the basis for the Union Prayer Book in later years. Thus we see the beginnings of what was soon to become the conflict between East and West in American Reform Judaism. We shall see later that

the theological debates between Wise and Einhorn were in large measure responsible for the molding of American Reform Judaism.

It will be the task of this thesis to determine whether there was a real conflict in theological outlook between East and West or whether issues were artificially created because of personality differences between Wise and Einhorn. Were the difficulties primarily personal? Or did each of them have a basically different philosophy of Jewish life? Did Wise and Einhorn, as do all heroes in history, reflect the will and the religious convictions of specific groups of people? Were the differences between East and West, perhaps, geographical? Did Wise and Einhorn articulate a religious philosophy which was motivated by sectional considerations? Or was the conflict a combination of all these factors? With reference to the geographical factor, it should be pointed out that at this juncture in American History sectionalism was a potent force in American politics. For decades now most all legislative matters were being determined by sectional considerations. It may be that this emphasis upon sectional allegiance in the community at large reflected itself in Jewish life. Wise who lived in Cincinnati, on the borderline between the North and the South, was a states' rights man who constantly soft-pedaled the issue of slavery. Just as in the religious arena Wise was essentially a compromiser,

so in the arena of politics Wise played the role of a middle-of-the-road man. At the time of the outbreak of the Civil War Wise fulminates against abolitionism and says: "Radicalism will not do in politics, because there are historical rights.....which will not yield to theories."⁴ Einhorn, on the other hand, was a fiery abolitionist who was forced to flee for his life from Baltimore because of his anti-slavery preachments. This altogether secular issue was certainly a factor in the Wise-Einhorn conflict on the personal level, if not on the theological level.

It should be remembered, too, that in the 1850's Cincinnati, the Queen City of the West, was at the height of an industrial boom and had dreams of challenging the industrial supremacy of the East.⁵ The West was not going to "take orders" from the East. It may well be that this feeling of independence and sectional pride was reflected in Wise's assuming of leadership in American Israel and in his insistence upon Cincinnati as the center of American Judaism. In this connection it would be well for us to note a generalization oftentimes made by historians: "Cincinnati has ever been one of the most conservative municipal bodies in the Union."⁶ It is not unlikely, then, that this was the reason why abolitionist activities as well as Radicalism in religion were frowned upon by Wise.

These, then, constitute some of the central questions

with which this thesis will concern itself. We shall explore the major areas of the East-West conflict and thereby seek to determine whether any of the considerations mentioned above motivated the conflict, or whether underlying the conflict was a combination of historic circumstances pointed up by these questions. In any event it is hoped that the material brought together here will shed light upon a struggle which has been for the most part ignored by American Jewish historians, and which will help us to understand the forces which helped in the development of a healthy American Judaism. The research for this study was confined to the pages of The Israelite, and consequently the material examined hereafter will be that which I. M. Wise saw "fit to print."

CHAPTER I THE THEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

Although there had been from time to time rumblings by I. M. Wise against radical reform, the schism between East and West actually received its impetus with the arrival of David Einhorn in the United States late in 1855. From the very beginning he had been unenthusiastic about Holdheim's radical proposals which were adopted at the various German rabbinic conferences of the 40's. Wise bitterly opposed splintering-off groups and sectarianism in Judaism and envisioned the development of a united American Judaism. Hence as early as 1848 he issued a call to "the Ministers and other Israelites" to form a union. Already early in 1855, only a few months since he first started publishing The Israelite, Wise was highly critical of the reckless sloughing-off methods of the early reformers, when he says:

"I am not one of the so-called Reform Jews for the transposition of the Sabbath to the first day of the week, the setting aside of the Circumcision, the exclusion of the Hebrew from the Divine Service, in short, the entire separation from the historical standard of Judaism, the total negation of the law. All this is such a destruction of the whole spirit of Judaism, such a denial of its greatest Principles, that Reform Jews stand nearer in Name than in spirit to Judaism."

Several months later, smarting under the attacks of Leeser and the Orthodox wing Wise comes to the defense of Reform. He assures them that the American reformers intend to follow the "historical standard of Judaism," retaining all meaning-

ful ceremonies, even to the extent of sustaining the holiness of the Bible. "What the reform party proposes to do is to banish the hideous indifference which has taken hold of a large portion of the Jewish communityto inspire the Jew with a new love for their own Religion."⁸

It was only after Einhorn's arrival in the United States in October 1855 that Wise accelerates his attacks upon Radical Reform. Already in his inaugural sermon Einhorn arouses the ire of Wise in which he is quoted as saying: "Only the Ten Commandments are the testimony of the covenant while all other biblical laws are but the signs of the covenant and may be changed, amended, or abolished." It is here that he advises Einhorn to join the Unitarian Church. At a time when Wise was still preaching that the laws of the Talmud are binding, the views of Einhorn indeed seem to be extreme. Again and again the editorials in The Israelite cry out for legal reform. For Wise every attempt at progress must be based upon Halachah. In a resounding editorial on the sanctity of the Talmud, Wise says:

"There can be no reforms within the pale of Judaism without the Talmud. There is no Reform without the Talmud. That very Talmud which so many of you deride or consider a divine revelation, that very Talmud which many of you worship as the idol of stability, while others renounce it as a collection of follies, that very Talmud embosoms the reforms

and progress of Judaism in the earliest ages. That very Talmud exists because Judaism acknowledges the principles of progress. Knowledge of the Talmud is required to judge which reform is legal, Jewish, and admissable, and which is contrary; therefore, no reform without the Talmud.They cry, no Talmud! No Laws! No restrictions! Down with the frigid forms! What people actually mean to say is Down with the Sabbath! We need no Milah, no shechitah, none of the laws distinguishing and uniting Israel. Yes, they cry, 'No Talmud!' actually means no religious laws ...the Berlin pattern is our proof... it actually means no religion....Our ultra Reformers say the Golden Age is at our door. These are indeed good-natured individuals among us, as David Friedlander in his days, who judge the world by the generous impulse of their own noble hearts. The truth, however, is that mankind stands miserably low in religious conceptions..."¹⁰

This view Wise maintains despite the repeated attacks leveled against him by Einhorn and his Har Sinai Verein on the grounds of the historical development of our religion. The belief that the Jewish religion exists principally in the Ten Commandments is entirely repulsive to Wise. Wise expresses his belief in a developing Halachah in a famous article entitled: "Why I am a Talmudical Jew."

"I am a Talmudical Jew, because I believe that laws must be expounded in order to become practical in new emergencies, and the expounder ~~or~~ expounders must be acknowledged as such by the law. The lawyer in our very days reads of precedents and the decisions of authorized judges and makes them his sole guide. Why should I not be guided in expounding religious laws by the same principle?"¹¹

Here Wise expresses his belief in a developing Halachah. This controversy with regard to legal reform as opposed to radical reform constitutes one of the major theological differences between East and West in the early days of the conflict. Einhorn is oftentimes quoted as regarding the Talmud as an "unfit instrument for reform and it should be abolished." In this connection it should be pointed out that at this time the West through its spokesman, Wise, and Lilienthal were laying great stress upon "following the majority."¹² Here we have something that resembles the modern concept of K'lal Yisroel. While Einhorn is quoted as having said: "I have nothing to do with the large majority.....I am working for the few enlightened who are rallying under my banner." This demonstrates that while Wise's aim was unity in Israel by a reform based on a developing tradition, it was Einhorn's objective to develop a well-disciplined enlightened minority whose function it will be to lead the way. It may be that another factor, (in addition to the personal which will be discussed later), contributed to the extremism in this theological controversy. The fact that Einhorn's area of operations was the East where orthodoxy, dominated by such eminent figures as Leiser and Isaacs, was strongly entrenched, made him a fighting reformer who went the whole gamut to the other extreme. Wise, however, was nearer the frontier in a city where orthodoxy had not attained a strong foothold, and hence the people were amenable

to change. Wise was not challenged by a foe of equal stature, hence his approach was more conciliatory.

Another theological issue which crops up frequently in the early days of American reform is that of viewing changes in ritual and ceremony from an historical perspective. On innumerable occasions do both Wise and Lillienthal - the associate editor of The Israelite at this time - unmercifully attack reckless reform or reform for convenience. Reform must constantly have its own "doing something for the common cause of Judaism and not only for the minority. Reform cannot be disconnected with the historical development of Judaism."¹³ When an Eastern layman in a letter to the editor violently attacks "the bloody act of circumcision" and proposes the transfer of the Sabbath to Sunday, Wise lays the blame at the door of Einhorn. Such reactions on the part of the laity may be traced to "the author of the Baltimore organ of Radicalism who reduced Judaism to the axioms of the mind." While Wise was trying to implement changes in ceremony on the basis of historical development of Jewish tradition, Einhorn is represented as preaching the indiscriminate discarding of laws without regard for Jewish history and tradition. Wise sums up his impressions of an article which appeared in "the Baltimore organ of Radicalism" as follows:

"Only such commandments of the Bible which are axioms of the human mind are obligatory.. doctrines which are no axioms of the mind are no longer according to the teachings of obligatory Judaism." Wise roundly denounces these Einhorn axioms: "Neither the Bible nor any writer on modern Judaism (not even Doctors Holdheim, Hess, or Kreisenbach) uttered such an extravagant irreligious and unphilosophical doctrine." ;...."He says that modern Judaism declares valid only the spiritual essence of the Biblical commands, the particular laws - the embodiment of this essence - are not intended by Scripture itself for perpetual existence. Then the Sabbath, Holy Days, Day of Atonement, and a host of other ceremonies must be discarded." Wise claims that it is Einhorn's objective to separate between ideas and laws, hence the ideas are perpetual but the laws are flexible and may be laid aside. This leads to the abolition of laws so vital for Israel. If the above is Einhorn's view, then asks Wise: "Why must he be a Jewish preacher, why not a functionary among Deists and Unitarians? Why does he call his doctrine Jewish, why not Deistical or unitarian? Why not call things by their right names? The objections we urge are only against throwing this doctrine on the head of modern Judaism; otherwise we would not care."¹⁴

Lilienthal demonstrates how Einhorn has gone even further than the German Rabbis Philipson and Stein, and even Holdheim By "acknowledging the Bible to be obsolete and abolished, Einhorn reduces Judaism to the mere axioms of rationalism....if the Bible has no authority, it is ridiculous to retain Milah, Sabbath, etc."¹⁵ It is interesting to note that while the Western rabbis object vociferously to the "personal abuse" leveled against them by Einhorn, they in turn resort from time to time to the very same techniques. In a sizzling editorial Lilienthal says: "The repeated cry of the radical reformers is humbug, falsehood, lie....scorn them, persecute them...they are

the enemies of Judaism."¹⁶ To the modern person the volume and frequency of personal abuse is startling. But to revert to our theme: Wise continues to plead for "moderate reform which is based upon history and national law" and urges the Jewish people "to look neither to the right nor to the left but onward and forward."¹⁷ In the same issue Wise says: "Be silent ye frivolous nullifiers who worship convenience.... keep the peace ye unsystematical deists, each of whom has other doctrines."

In December, 1856, Wise publishes a series of articles in which he analyzes the reasons for the lack of success of reform in Germany. He comes to the conclusion that they failed to capture the imagination of the masses because reform was "not a scientific question but purely a matter of taste; their sole argument was the spirit of the age against established views." This theme of moderate reform based upon historical Judaism is the very core of Wise's early theology:

"While the radicals float in the air and the orthodox are entangled between established customs, ours is a historical, scientific basis...we stand upon the firm ground of historical Judaism...we are the only organ of a moderate, sound, and scientific reform."¹⁸

Wise continues to demonstrate how the Talmud can function as a basis for reform; that the Talmud contains decisions on biblical laws which have been changed with the needs of the times. It is via a synod that "all desirable reforms

can be obtained in this legal and historical way."

This plea for a synod to pass on reforms repeatedly appears in the columns of The Israelite, and it is evidently to this "hierarchical^{ic} system" that Einhorn strenuously objects. Already in 1855 only a few months after his arrival in this country, Einhorn protested against an "American Sanhedrin."

With regard to a philosophy of Judaism, Wise at this stage differs sharply from Einhorn. The latter maintains that the spirit of the law is divine, and only this spirit may be considered Judaism, while Judaism's laws are the "mutable body." Since the laws are changeable, they lose their obligatory power, and it is this unbinding character of the law which makes for free development in Judaism. In a lengthy editorial Wise shows that this approach of convenience merely confuses the people and leads to chaos. All of Judaism will ultimately wither away if we were to follow the philosophy of the radical reformers. Wise dubs Einhorn "an echo of Holdheim" and says:

"Men of convenience and those yielding to the force of circumstances cannot fairly be reckoned among any particular class of religious people." Why has this ultra reform system been unsuccessful in Europe?..... By what acknowledged standard of Interpretation do we arrive at the exact and unquestionable spirit and essence of the law? None has solved this problem and "hence none can say with any degree of certainty what the spirit and essence of the law is. Therefore none can define Judaism according to system of our radical theorists, satisfactory to any thinking mind.....What religious laws and ceremonies still exercise a salutary influence on the community and what do not. According to their system it

must be admitted that there is no necessity for either the observance of the Biblical Sabbath, Day of Atonement, the Feasts, or to retain the practice of circumcision any longer. Abstract the spirit and essence of all those ceremonies and nothing else is wanted.".....that no religion can exist without its forms, symbols, and ceremonies. If our radical friends maintain that no forms are necessary and that it is the mind which worships God,, then they must abolish synogogue, preachers, prayer books, etc.; if they retain this then they concede the need of ceremonies. This admitted then they come to the point where every synogogue will practice such ceremonies that are convenient to its members.....!let every congregation have its own prayer book, and religious observances then in ten years we will have as many religions as we have synogogues. The great mission of the center at present is union - to be the connecting link in the chain of our American synogogues, so that we break not in sects; now to admonish the vanguard not to advance too fast, and then to encourage the rear to follow. Nor do we intend to say the existence of many views is unfortunate to our cause."¹⁹

Wise shows that the philosophy of Judaism must grow out of "the pale of Judaism" and not be dependent on any secular philosophy. Wise considers the philosophy of Maimonides a bona fide synthesis between reason and religion. He, however, objected to the other philosophers whose work created an antithesis between religion and reason.

"Reform must have limits, for it must move within the sphere of Judaism. Whoever attempts to reform Judaism by the dogmas of Spinoza, Leibnitz, Kant, Hegel, or Feurbach forgets that he deserts the ground of positive Judaism and embraces a particular form of philosophy. For the reformer of philosophy, philosophy is ~~his~~ basis, so Judaism must be the basis for the reformer of Judaism."²⁰

Wise proceeds to investigate the reasons for the ineptness of radical reform and discovers that an additional flaw in its theology is that it is essentially negative. They preach "abolish this, abolish that" and continually scold the moderate reformers for their ceremonialism. Reform must have a positive program and must serve as a handmaid to Judaism for the purpose of elevating religion "and endearing it to its votaries." It is Einhorn's viewing of reform from a negative perspective that irritates Wise when he says:

"Long enough reform has been negative, saying what we do not believe, what should be abolished, changed, improved...The Community is tired of that everlasting spirit of negation. We need now positive teaching, what we do believe, what we do consider essential; such expositions are required now in the pulpit."²¹

In this vein Wise repeatedly points to the fact that Judaism is a system of progress and not of abolition.

The first indication that Wise was deviating from his heretofore fairly conservative theology may be detected in the first issue of Volume VII of The Israelite. There is noticeable a constant increase in the use of the term universal religion. "Judaism in its pure light is the universal religion. Reform and progress are the moving and inherent principles of Judaism.....ceremonies live and die, but the spirit and the essence of the law are everlasting." From this emphasis on Universalism Wise arrives at his idea of the Mission of Israel which plays so large a role in his theology in later years. "The mission idea is the everlasting

portion of Jacob whose teachings once must become the law of salvation of all mankind." In this same editorial Wise demonstrates a more tolerant attitude towards radical reform by incorporating some of their ideas into his own thinking:

"Religion is not in a set of observances, nor is it in the kitchen or in the stomach; it is in obedience to the laws of God - the laws which are the essence of those which are transitory. No law of God shall be abolished, but it may change its outward form to meet the demands of the age."²²

It is interesting to note that in a subsequent issue Wise still insists upon the concept of "Torah min Shomayim" when he criticises Leiser for saying that "the Bible is the Testament of the Jewish Church." Wise quotes Maimonides to show that Leiser is an Apikores - "Ho-omayr ayn Torah min Shomayim hu Apikores."²³

However, Wise does continue gradually to modify his former insistence upon the unchangeability of Biblical laws. It would be very difficult for the impartial observer to distinguish between Einhorn's theology and the following:

"To us the Bible as regards the spirit and essence of religion is all important. Only a correct distinction must be made between 'the laws of the Covenant' and transitory laws, and that liberty must be taken with the laws which the Bible teaches, so that they in every age remain subservient to the spirit both of religion and man."²⁴

It may be that here we have the beginnings of a genuine integration of ideas which culminated in later years with

a more or less consistent program of reform Judaism. Too, it surprises us to find that Wise's quarrel with the East was not altogether one of opposition to radical reform. For the Recorder of New York reports that "a number of Western congregations abolished the prayer of Kol Nidri on the Eve of Yom Kippur." The only reply that Wise has for this evidence of radical reform in the West is: "The wonder is how the East gets such vast information on all the minutiae of Western congregations"²⁵ Wise evades the question and evidently is prepared to defend the West at all costs. Had a goodly number of Eastern congregations acted in a similar fashion, he would have vigorously protested. This is another instance of sheer sectionalism.

In view of the humanistic tendencies of some present day reformers with regard to revelation, it would repay us well to hear what Wise has to say on this subject:

"But the first and essential characteristic of religion is revelation. We hold Judaism to be the religion revealed directly by God to Israel and expounded through Moses and the Prophets. Religion is a system of doctrines revealed to man for his elevation and salvation, to regulate our conduct, to lead a religious life."the main source of Judaism is the Decalogue. All the laws expressed or implied in this sacred document are everlastingly obligatory on Israel; the rest are only under certain circumstances. This distinction was not made by modern Reformers, but by Moses and Isaiah (59:21)"²⁶

Here again the later section of this statement is rather revealing, for it demonstrates how close Wise has come to

Einhorn in his theological outlook. From this point on we see Wise plying down the importance of the Talmud as a source for Jewish changes. He considers it to be the chief task of the rabbis to reconcile the two great provinces of thought, religion and science. However the concept of a Sinaitic revelation remains central in the theology of Wise through the years. It is what he calls "Divine Truth."

As was pointed out above the elements of a developing tradition and a constantly progressing Halachah were central to Wise's system of theology. This emphasis continues throughout.

"No true Israelite will believe for a moment that the laws of God, revealed in Sacred Scriptures, can be of another character than those of the same immutable God revealed in nature and history. Therefore progress must be the principal law of the Sacred Scriptures.....So the prophets understood the laws of Moses, so the rabbis of the Mishnah and the Talmud understood the words of Moses and the Prophets; so the Spanish, French, Italian, and German philosophers and theologians in Israel, the greatest expounders of the law, understood the Bible and the tradition; so brethren we understand the spirit of Judaism and not otherwise. Onward, forward with the light of God to become the light of man."²⁷

Wise goes on to illustrate how a developing Halachah is deduced from the classical sources of Judaism; Elijah's sacrifice on Mount Carmel, when the Bible permits sacrifices only in the central place of worship, Hillel's Prozbul, and the references to polygamy and slavery in the Bible show that there were Mosaic laws which were only

provisional.

Although this emphasis upon the historical development of Judaism would appear to place Wise again very much to the right of Einhorn, he, however, does continue to come closer to Einhorn. Wise now finds that the verse "Thou shalt not add thereto and thou shalt not diminish therefrom" - generally regarded as the basis for resistance to reform - only refers to the Decalogue and not to all the laws of the Torah. He even goes farther than merely implementing this interpretation when in an editorial on reason and religion, he says:

"A certain class of people hold religion to be a 'touch me not' subject - a thing which must be believed unconditionally, with all its appendages, dogmas, observancesThe doctrine of God's providence is no more to them than the precept to kindle no fire on the Sabbath day. Not to eat forbidden food is as holy and inviolable a law in their estimation as the divine precept 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.' To pronounce a certain prayer thrice daily, is as much a religious duty in their catechism, as is self inquiry and successive improvement of the mind.....dogmas are human formulas, and observances are human forms, invented to express religious ideas, but formulas and forms are perishable, the ideas, the rays from the sun of the truth are everlasting. The closest reasoning and most rigid criticism can only benefit truth, and salvation is only in truth. Mankind will always have religion; however, formulas and forms changeThe Israelite rejects all doctrines and dogmas based upon incomprehensible mysteriesThe Israelite has nothing to defend which is contrary to reason...The great mystery of the preservation of Judaism finds its solution in the rational character of the system." 28

Does not Wise here approximate the theology of Einhorn?

His emphasis upon 'Love Thy Neighbor' and the ethical precepts of Judaism and his playing down of the tangible laws, the very same laws which only a few years back he regarded as essential to Judaism, clearly demonstrates his close proximity to the Einhorn outlook. He now maintains that aside from the Decalogue, the laws are subject to change. "The only question is by whom? To this the Bible replies by the seventy Elders, the Talmud replies by the Sanhedrin, and we translate it into a synod."²⁹ The stress upon reason occupies a central place in Wise's philosophy of Judaism. He points to the fact that because the Bible is divinely inspired it cannot contradict reason:

"The bible is not and cannot be in conflict with reason; therefore it cannot oppose the facts of science and criticism or the just demands of any age if they are products of reason. This is a principle from which not an iota can be yielded without denying either the divinity of the Bible or the divine origin of reason. By strict adherence to this leading principle we reach the threefold object: 1. The restoration of the purity of Judaism because it is the religion of reason. 2. The union of all American Israelites because Jews can be united on the basis of reason only. 3. The Messianic mission of Israel, which consists exclusively in the promulgation of the universal elements of religion, which is reason absolute and universal."³⁰

Another idea which occupies a prominent place in the theological system of I. M. Wise is that of the Messianic Age. With reference to this concept East and West are in agreement. For Wise the mission of Israel idea is tied in with the Messianic age. He categorically rejects the belief in a personal Messiah as being no longer acceptable

to the modern Jew. As far back as 1857 he regarded Israel as the "Messiah people" whose chief aim it was to promulgate God's praise to the nations, to the end that mankind will be redeemed from the yoke of friction, injustice, and despotism. This Messiah-Mission idea runs a steady streak in all of Wise's writings. He says: "Truth must triumph without the miraculous interference of the Deity. Israel is the Messiah to the nations..... it is the covenant people....the light of the nations.... we need no personal messiah....we need neither miracles nor messiah in our religion."³¹ This is the refrain which one meets again and again in the columns of The Israelite. Wise in fact had visions of converting the world to Judaism. This idea was strong amongst all the early reformers ; to wit the Messianic age is at hand and it is the task of the Jewish people to bring the nations of the world to worship the One God.

"That mankind will be redeemed from the oppressive burden of error and that all nations and tongues will worship the one and true God....It is universal religion and universal salvation for which Israel lived which must be taught first and foremost in this and every other temple in Israel. In the essence of religion and the substance of ethics, there can exist no real difference of opinion among enlightened men, we differ from the rest of mankind only in that which was added to our heritage. The pure elements of Universal religion were preserved by us, this was and is the mission of Israel, the messianic vocation of God's chosen people, the very cause of his preservation and existence....Let all the world be one Jerusalem, one Temple of the Lord, all mankind one band of Levites."³²

These thoughts were expressed at the occasion of the dedication

of the Plum Street Temple in Cincinnati. Wise believed that Christianity would have relapsed into another form of idolatry without the continuous challenge of Judaism.

In the following Wise points to Judaism's twofold mission:

"It must have ceremonies and observances corresponding to the taste and the ability of conception of those very masses. These ceremonies and observances may be dear and elevating to those who find holy reminiscences and stirring suggestions in the symbols, although, to the uninitiated they may appear void of sense or even ridiculously small....Judaism, however, has still another mission, viz: to preserve and promulgate the eternal truths of universal religion. Without Judaism's influence upon the progress of history, heathenism would have reigned supreme in all parts. No Christianity and no Islam could ever have come into existence. ...You cannot break asunder the bonds of observances and ceremonies without breaking down the congregation of Israel, the very vessel, the only vessel, in which these truths have been safely kept up-to-date. You cannot fulfil one mission of Judaism without injuring the other."³³

And ten years later we find Wise still certain that the world will be converted to Judaism.

"....all reformations work one way, viz., to Judaize the world, although it is so, exactly so. There is no way beyond the Living God of Israel; There all reforms stop, and thither they all proceed. There is no way beyond Jewish ethics, built upon the foundation of that ever-living and omnipresent God; thither all incline and there they stop. These two points are beyond the reach of criticism; they are above the philosophy of the philosophers, and beyond the control of human will or intelligence....The world is Judaizing, although too proud, too self-conceited, too much prejudiced to see it. The spirit works out its own way. Progressive liberty, justice, education and enlightenment are its heralds and banner-bearers.....The religious world is ripe to do away with the mistaken ideas of Trinity and its other appendages, and adopt Israel's religion and Israel's Sabbath as a day of rest."³⁴

Inasmuch as this mission-chosen people idea was central to reform Judaism it did not constitute an area of conflict between East and West. These ideas formed the core of the principles accepted by the Philadelphia Conference of Rabbis held during the week of November 12, 1869, a conference called into being by the Eastern Reformers and participated in by Wise. Such famous names in Reform as S. Adler, D. Einhorn, S. Hirsch, and K. Kohler attended the conference. Although Wise was in agreement with the proposals passed by the conference, he nevertheless is highly critical of the negative language these proposals were couched in. We shall let Wise speak for himself:

"It was resolved that the following articles express the principles of Judaism in its present stage of development: 'Article 1. Israel's messianic aim is not the re-establishment of the ancient Jewish state under a son of David, the renewed separation from the nations; it is the unity of all men as children of God in the confession of the One and Sole God, the unity of all intellectual beings and their vocation of moral holiness.' It ought to read 'Israel's messianic aim is the unity of all men,' with the negative to close the paragraph, if necessary. The Conference intended no protest against anybody or party, and doctrines must be positive. We make this remark here once for all, not only against the incorrect style of the articles beginning with a negative, but also against the negative spirit which was unconsciously manifested. Judaism is not mere negative. Its doctrines are positive and must be stated as such.

'Article 2. We do not consider the dissolution of the second Jewish State a punishment for Israel's sinfulness; we understand it to be a consequence of the promise made to Abraham and the Providential intention, manifesting itself more and more in the progression of history, to send forth the members of the Jewish tribe to all parts of the earth, in

order to solve their high and priestly mission, to guide the nations to the true understanding and worship of God.'

The long passage with all its artificial meanders might have been simply worded thus: 'Israel in his dispersion realizes the Providential purpose, manifested in the progression of history, of guiding the nations to the true understanding and worship of God, as He has promised to Abraham and his seed.' This is understood by all and can be defended before all.

'Article 3. The Levitical priesthood and the Mosaic rite of sacrifices were mere preliminaries to the priesthood of the whole congregation, actually beginning with the dispersion of the Jewish tribe; and to the only sacrifice acceptable to the most Holy, cordial devotion and moral sanctification. Those institutions, preliminary to a more sublime piety, with the destruction of the second temple, once and for all, have been handed over to the things past; and only in this sense, in their educational power, they are to be mentioned in our prayers.'

'Article 4. Therefore, every difference between Levitical priests and other Israelites, in regard to religious rites and duties, has become untenable.'

Besides, we would have opposed the words, 'Actually beginning with the dispersion of the Jewish tribe' which Dr. Einhorn intended merely as a defense or sequence of Article 2. Also, the priesthood of Israel actually begins with Moses who sanctified his people in the name of God, 'And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' The people never yielded an iota of its priesthood.

'Article 5. The election of Israel to the people of religion, the bearer of the highest idea of humanity, must be emphasized as heretofore, and, must, therefore, always be connected and equally emphasized with his universal mission and the equal love of God to all his children.'

'Article 6. The belief in the resurrection of the body has no religious foundation, and the doctrine of immortality is to be expressed in reference to the eternity of the spirit only.'

Nevertheless this negative appears to us superfluous and untenable. It is superfluous, because the positive part of the article expresses the whole, doctrine, and the negative cannot be expressed in the prayer book or catechism. It is untenable, because the religious consciousness of those millions in Israel who believed in the resurrection of the body, is also a religious foundation, and it cannot be denied that both doctrines, the resurrection of the body in some form and the eternity of the spirit have coexisted in Israel as far back as history traces this doctrine. The negative portions of all these articles might have been omitted without any disadvantage. The immortality of the soul is enough for us. We need no more, teach no more, and expect no more..... The principles thus expressed are liberal, broad, genuinely Jewish, expressive of the doctrines of our co-religionists, and an honor to the conference that uttered them. The phraseology and the arrangement, however, admit of considerable improvement." 35

Here we must ask ourselves the question: Is this mere quibbling over language because Einhorn and the so-called school of classical reform dominated the Conference? Or do these lengthy comments manifest a genuine attempt by Wise to re-orient the Reform movement to a more positive approach to Judaism? That there is an element of personal jealousy and sectionalism one might deduce from the fact that the subsequent conference, which was scheduled to be held in Cincinnati in 1870, never took place. According to Wise the Cincinnati conference was sabotaged by the Easterners. And secondly, it should be remembered that the Eastern rabbis did not participate again in a country-wide conference until their congregations began to join singly over a period of years the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, long after "The Union" had become a reality in Jewish life. This, then, would tend to demonstrate that a combination of both above-

mentioned factors were responsible for Wise's lengthy discourse. Wise evidently was aware of the plans of the Eastern rabbis, for he held his fire in abeyance for more than six months - the Philadelphia conference was held in November and the above comments were published in April.

Another area of disagreement between Wise and the Eastern reformers was with respect to the use of the term reform. Wise for the first time introduces the term progressive Judaism. However, he does not insist upon the exchange of the term reform for progressive in later years.

"In Judaism, the term reform is a misnomer, as nobody seriously entertains the idea of reestablishing old forms of worship in their original simplicity. There are conservative and progressive Israelites..... the latter confess not to abide at the decisions of the Talmud and the customs of the Ghetto, but to read and expound the law in the light of honest criticism, and to establish a form of worship agreeable to our wants and satisfactory to our taste and desire. We do not reform. We abolish antiquated forms, and supercede them by such new ones as correspond with the demands of our age."

It may be that this reluctance to continue to use the term reform is in direct consequence of the fact that Wise's attempts at Union and Conference had been so recently frustrated by the Eastern carriers of the name reform. Whereas the attitude of Wise towards Einhorn and Co. had approached the friendly stage during the period immediately preceding the Philadelphia Conference of 1869, he has now again reverted to the frontal attacks on Radical Reform which were so common in the early years. Again we hear the cry that "reform must remain within the sphere of God's laws.

Paul deserted it and thousands of modern reformers do precisely the same thing." Wise continues his attack upon "the thirteen gentlemen meeting in a private study in Philadelphia," and says:

"Radicalism among our rabbinical colleagues means, to go back on everybody who says not Amen; to use a rowdy style of language; to be in a perpetual rage and fury; and to be always exclusively right. Whoever wants them shall have them. We don't."³⁷

Now Wise reverts to an insistence on adherence to Torah:

"Therefore it is certainly every Israelite's holy duty to weigh and judge carefully before he declares a law of Moses out of date, and much more so before he gainsays a principle advanced in the Pentateuch. We hear them often say, this or that law of Moses has no meaning for us in this century; but in most instances it is not true.....Men of conscience must be sure, very sure, before they refuse to perform a duty. Without the Law of Moses carefully and conscientiously understood, we cannot preserve Judaism, for without Moses there is none."³⁸

When the East effects a veritable boycott of the new Union of American Congregations, Wise unleashes the fire of his indignation against them and their radical reform. "Abolish this and abolish that is called reform....they will never tell you what they believe because in many instances, they do not know themselves. They will always tell you what they believe not, therefore the congregations believe not."³⁹ However, this vein of assault lets up considerably after the Eastern Congregations start joining the Union.

Although the concept of a personal God is not dealt with frequently by Wise, there are from time to time allusions in his editorials and sermons to the importance of this idea.

To exemplify, Wise quotes with approval Kohler's retort to the Ethical Culture people wherein Kohler defends the personal God concept in Judaism. Kohler says:

"I ever defended and pronounced the belief in a personal, i. e., ever-living and active God as the actual cause and creative ideal of all material and spiritual life, the source of our moral freedom and responsibility, and the foundation of our hope for future life. Hence God to me is not a mere product of the thinker's brain, but the absolute Being, whose image is reflected in the human heart and mind as the ideal of ~~wither~~ moral or mental perfection, so as to render man, with his never-stilled aspirations after the good and true, God-like."⁴⁰

The threat to the preservation of Judaism came not only from within the pale of Judaism from the "Deistical Preachers" as Wise called them, but also from without. The menace was not from the more orthodox Christian sects, though their missionary activities constantly irked Wise, but from the ultra-liberal groups in Christianity. Nineteenth century liberalism was reflected in America by the flowering of Unitarianism, which reached its peak just at the time Reform Judaism was emerging as a potent force in American Judaism. For a time the Unitarian Church functioned as "a catch-all" group, a sort of religious melting pot for all those fleeing for one reason or another from the religion of their childhood. Though not unfriendly to its philosophy of religion, Wise nevertheless was aware of its potential danger to Liberal Judaism. It is for this reason that Wise consistently urged the retention of tangible forms in Jewish life, the individual's

need for a day to day religious experience. Wise's opposition to Radical Reform which sloughed off indiscriminately most all Jewish ceremonies was actuated by the fear that it would lead to Unitarianism, a fear not altogether unjustified when one peruses the preachments of some Eastern rabbis. Wise was motivated by an unquenchable fire for the preservation of Judaism and for the transmission of the faith to the children, a task that can be performed only by tangible religious experiences. It is for this reason that he continually invites the radical reformers to join the Unitarian Church.

When the "illegitimate child" of Unitarianism, the Ethical Culture Movement, is founded by Felix Adler, Wise correctly evaluates the menace to Judaism and embarks upon a frontal attack against both Unitarianism and Ethical Culture. He points out the negative character of both movements and advises those who join these groups to drop the name Jew. "It will be beneficial to Judaism when those who do not wish to be Jews will call themselves by any other nameWe must drop the dead cargo, and the sooner the better."⁴¹ In his sundry attacks upon Ethical Culture he demonstrates that this is the heresy that Radical Reform leads to. He points to the fact that basically there is a self-hating factor in the mental make-up of those who join the forces of Felix Adler. "These gay young persons despise not only everything that is Jewish....they laugh at the piety of their

fathers and mothers....why should the congregation of Israel permit such persons to call themselves Jews, when permitting it brings disgrace upon the name and cause of the Jewish People?"⁴² From a perusal of all of the articles published against Unitarianism and Ethical Culture one is lead to believe that Wise's chief aim was to demonstrate how Radical reform leads to these heresies. Thus he quotes Felix Adler's critique of Reform Judaism at length in which the leader of Ethical Culture shows how close Radical Reform is to Unitarianism and Ethical Culture:

"Many of the festivals and fast days also were struck from the calendar. One of the most distinctive customs of the Jews, the so-called rite of Abraham's Covenant, was boldly attacked, and though the abolition of this ancient custom is still strenuously resisted, there is little doubt that it will ultimately go with the rest. Samuel Holdheim advocated the propriety of inter-marriage between the Jews and Christians."⁴³

It is at this time too that Wise takes up the cudgels in defense of Judaism against the general menace of assimilation. Here he reverts to the Mission of Israel Idea and the task of converting the world to Judaism. It is evidently to prevent further inroads on the part of Felix Adler's group that Wise says:

"And, suppose we close our temples, we surrender our Judaism, we merge into the surrounding majorities, would we, would the human race at large gain anything by it? No, most emphatically, no! We would merely surrender the truth, the only religion, which is compatible with the progress of the human race and is fully in accordance with the principles of humanity, as advocated by the most advanced thinkers of the age.....Will the world gain or lose by our surrendering the doctrines of

our religion and by our joining other creeds?
....The only religion, and I emphasize this assertion, which breathes the true, genuine spirit of this love is the Jewish religion in its modern spirit, in its modern progressive development....When we with justifiable pride and satisfaction read, 'Thou shalt love thy fellow-man like thyself,' we extend the authority of this command to all races, past, present, and future....Consider these facts and you yourselves shall answer: 'Yes, I have no reason to be ashamed of my religion; nay, I am proud of it, and am happy that on this sacred day I renew my allegiance to it and am reconfirmed in it.'⁴⁴

Even such rabbis as Einhorn and Kohler are uncompromising in their opposition to F. Adler and join Wise in his attacks on this transmission belt to Christianity. Kohler kicks up quite a rumpus in Chicago when he bans Adler and his association from meeting at the Sinai Temple:

"Of what benefit to a society of Jewish young people the lecture of a man can be who has deserted the Jewish flag, and openly professes his disbelief in God and immortality, I really fail to see, unless the eradication of the Jewish faith is the object contemplated. But, I suppose, very few of your members, if any, know anything about the young professor, who merely by his fine oratory, combined with great arrogance, created for a while some sensation in New York. At any rate, I shall not allow my temple to be disgraced by a lecture to be delivered within the walls by one who blasphemes God and Judaism." ⁴⁵

Wise acquiesces with Kohler's theological onslaught against Ethical Culture in which Kohler says:

"There is, without reserve, the belief in God and immortality discarded, and, in place of the King of the world, the eagle of liberty (suggesting, no doubt, Professor Felix Adler himself) is proclaimed as the moral governor of human society....My answer simply is: I, with all theistic thinkers of the age, hold the history of human culture and progress in religion, morals, art, and science to be the revelation of the divine in man, above whom,

in sublime heights, God will ever stand as His holy ideal of perfection and source of inspiration and strength. Felix Adler, with all infidels, on the contrary, declare the ideal of perfection and the fountainhead of inspiration to be a mere dream of the dreamers. The sum and acme of moral perfection is utilitarian ethics and socialistic equality, or, as the author of 'Creed and Deed' poorly, defines his new ideal, 'to consist in greater simplicity in manners, great purity in the passions, and greater charity.' This is his summum bonum, or highest goodness. Whether these atheistic doctrines are broader broader, more sound and liberal than mine, I leave to others to decide; that they are anything but beneficial to Jewish or Christian young men, no man of religious principles will deny...."⁴⁶

It is interesting to note that only two weeks after this blast against Ethical Culture, Dr; Einhorn's Congregation Beth-El of New York joined the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.⁴⁷ When danger lurks from without all parties in Judaism start to pull together. Though there remained theological differences between East and West, these differences were soft-pedaled to meet the challenge from without. East and West closed ranks so that Israel's faith might be perpetuated.

From this analysis of the theological differences between East and West, we may conclude that although Wise veered from right to left and then back to the center in his theological outlook, he consistently preached for "reform within the pale of Judaism." Always his measuring rod was "the historical standard of Judaism" and not reform for the sake of convenience.

For the emissary of radical reform, David Einhorn, "only the Ten Commandments" were unchangeable; all else was subject to change if the times warranted it, regardless of traditional Judaism. According to Wise, Einhorn's theology consisted of "abolish this and abolish that," of negative reform, without making provisions for substitute forms. Wise, however, viewed changes as legitimate only when they were based on a developing Halachah. Although at times his philosophy of religion comes close to the "rational axioms" taught by Einhorn, in practice Wise uses the standard of historical Judaism to determine the validity of specific reforms. For Wise progress can be effected not by abolition but by growth. Hence he says: "Do not tell your people what you believe not, but what you do believe." It is this basis technique that Wise has in mind when he continually calls for Union and for the development of an American Judaism. While Einhorn himself conceded that his radical Judaism was not meant for the masses but for the intellectual elite of the Jewish people. Hence for Wise Judaism remains essentially a religious experience, a way of life, whereas for Einhorn Judaism becomes a series of intellectual disciplines which are not dependent upon tangible experiences.

CHAPTER II

THE NEED FOR UNITY IN AMERICAN ISRAEL

Although there had been several abortive attempts to cement some form of unity in American Jewish life before Wise embarked upon the publication of his weekly newspaper, The Israelite, the real impetus for union comes after 1854. The first authentic plan for the union of the congregations was commandeered by Leeser in 1841 in Philadelphia. As was pointed out by Rabbi Mayer in a communication to The Israelite at the time of the Cleveland Conference, the only-then Reform congregation, Beth Elohim of Charleston, S. C., refused to participate in the Philadelphia conference because "this meeting was an attempt to devise means whereforth reform could be suffocated at its very birth."⁴⁸ It is for this reason that Wise found it quite difficult to convince reform rabbis to join his Union schemes. In 1848-49 Wise collaborated with Leeser in another attempt at union which again proved unsuccessful primarily because of the fears of the reform congregations that this was a scheme on the part of the Orthodox party to gain control over religious life in America. Learning from the reasons for his failure in his maiden union venture, Wise, from the time of the first issue of The Israelite, appeals constantly for Union. For Wise union was an acceptable medium whereby reform might be spread throughout the United States. In the columns of The Israelite Wise exhorts American Jewry for such unifying agencies as Synod, Theological College, and Conference. He was disgusted with the chaos

in Jewish life, or as he repeatedly refers to the situation in which "each one does what is right in his own eyes". Wise was going to bring some order in our religious life. To this he dedicates his ministry and his journal.

Wise justifies his plea for a conference of rabbis on the grounds that the American Jewish community is a new community whose people originate in many different climes and cultures. New conditions in free America, he felt, must bring about adjustments in religious practice. These changes can be made only by the convocation of a Synod as provided for by the Talmud. As was pointed out in the last chapter, Wise based his philosophy of moderate reform upon a developing Halachah. In order to allay the fears of Leeser and the Orthodox party, he gave them assurances that the Synod would not introduce any changes which were contrary to the laws of the Bible or even the Talmud. Even before any conference was called Wise placed himself in the position of compromiser between the two extreme groups.⁴⁹

It was in this spirit, in the spirit that the Talmud would serve as an anchor for any changes, that Wise called the Cleveland conference. Here he planned to lay the foundation for a country-wide union of congregations and a recognized synod. This was to be a meeting of rabbis to take stock of the particular problems facing American Jewry

and then take steps to resolve them by means of a Synod. The decisions of the would not be binding on the individual congregations, thus each congregation retains its independence. This autonomy, this non-legislative character of the conference was guaranteed by Wise and repeated through the years whenever a convocation was in the offing. However, in reality as will be seen later, the synod did arrogate unto itself authority in religious matters. Lillienthal, who did much of the editorial writing for The Israelite at this time, was hopeful that through a healthy exchange of views between the Orthodox and reform groups a strong Union might emerge.⁵⁰

The sessions of the conference opened in Cleveland on October 17, 1855, with Lillienthal presiding. Those registering as delegates at the conference were:

"Ministers:	Lillienthal, Rothenheim and Wise of Cincinnati
	Adler of Detroit
	Gotthelf of Louisville
	Fould, Levi, and Kalish of Cleveland
	Cohn of Albany
	Merzbacher of New York
	Leeser of Philadelphia
Laymen:	Miller and Kahn of Cincinnati
	Ehman, Cohen and Schwab of Cleveland

Such famous orthodox rabbis as Isaacs and Jacobs and several other rabbis who had signed the original circular calling for the conference were not present. Wise was soon elected President of the Conference and Lillienthal Secretary. Wise's keynote address was designed to allay the fears particularly of the orthodox group, repeating his oft-mentioned promise that the Talmud would be the legal basis for all changes.

Thus he said: "The Talmud contains the logical and legal expositions of holy scriptures, and its decisions must bind us in all matters of practice and duty, that the Synod would be guided by these principles." But he added that "the illiberal assertions of the Talmud are not the kind referred to, and have no binding force on us."⁵¹ Prolonged debate followed Wise's report, with the exact nature of the authority of the Talmud being the point of contention.⁵² This committee stayed up until four in the morning to produce the following compromise: "The Talmud contains the traditional legal and logical of the biblical laws which must be expounded and practiced according to the comments of the Talmud."⁵³ It was this compromise with regard to the Talmud that aroused the suspicions and subsequently the violent opposition of many reform rabbis. In his eagerness to reach an understanding, Wise phrased the final draft of the Talmud resolution so loosely that it was interpreted by each party as an endorsement of its views. For the Orthodox this meant that no changes would be made which were contrary to the decisions of the rabbis; while for the reform group this meant that the progressive spirit of the Talmud would be continued to abolish meaningless forms and introduce new practices. The Talmud was to be used as an instrument for reform. That Wise had reference to the latter interpretation might be seen from his whole philosophy of Halachah and legal reform as was shown in the

first chapter of this thesis, and from the following additional provision adopted by the Conference: "The resolutions of the Synod, in accordance with the above principles, are legally valid." The purpose of the Synod was to legalize reform and to control reckless reform on the part of individual congregations. The Synod was to be composed of at least one lay delegate from each congregation - those congregations having a membership of more than one hundred members were entitled to two lay delegates - and all the qualified rabbis. The Synod would have no jurisdiction over purely local matters. An ecclesiastical committee, to which all rabbis are appointed, would review all religious matters and then report back to the Synod where a two-thirds vote is necessary for the passage of any measure of a religious nature.⁵⁴

While Wise was under the impression that the reform rabbis would endorse his manipulations to inveigle the Orthodox group, they in turn responded to the Cleveland platform in a violent fashion. It should be remembered that Wise's Talmud compromise was primarily motivated by a desire to do away with chaos and create some sort of unity in American Jewish life. Defending the Cleveland Conference he says:

"Progress and reform will always remain our watchword as long as there is a schism between our life and our religion. But every attempt of progress must be based upon our laws.... We never will give our sanction to illegal reforms. The reforms shall not be sectional for this causes strife. Whatever reforms are required, let them be legal and general or not at all....This can be done by a synod only. If when we lay our reform propositions before the

Synod, and the Synod should decide to the contrary we bow our neck before the highest tribunal, because we want peace and union, and for this we are ready to sacrifice anything, principles excepted."⁵⁵

Einhorn was particularly aggressive in his opposition to Cleveland, calling it the "foul peace of Cleveland, according to which all Israelites must believe in the infallible exegesis of the Talmud."⁵⁶ This, added to personal remarks directed against Wise were contained in a letter to the editor of The Israelite denouncing him for "omitting whole pages in the translation of the sermon;" i. e., Einhorn's inaugural sermon in Baltimore. Wise postponed a reply until Einhorn will write his remarks "in a style becoming the station and personal character of a scholar." One week following Einhorn's blast The Israelite carried a report that the Har Sinai Verein, Einhorn's congregation, published a circular protesting against the articles of the Cleveland Conference; to which Wise and Lilienthal reply:

"....that they consider it far under their dignity to answer to insults. And that they feel sorry in seeing the Har Sinai Verein taking recourse to unjustifiable calumniations."⁵⁷

Thus began the long-drawn out debate which oftentimes descended to the personal level. Of a less violent type was the criticism of Rabbi Mayer of Charleston, S. C. Wise's letter to Mayer in reply to the latter's article in the Asmonean entitled "Wise a Traitor?" in which he considers union between the orthodox and reform groups an impossibility, points out that union must include all

groups. Wise reiterates his formula "there can exist no Judaism based upon the Bible and history without the Talmud."⁵⁸ In line with the long established policy of his congregation, Mayer refused to participate in an all-inclusive conference, for fear that it might impede the progress of reform. Mayer would rather have liked to see conference of reform rabbis only.

"Rabbi Mayer of Charleston takes Wise to task for his Principle of Compromise. 'We reformers in Charleston still think an independent (not neutral) position preferable. Union is possible only in every party itself, but never between the different parties.'⁵⁹

Wise becomes very much discouraged over the failure of the Cleveland Conference. He had thought that his efforts for unity would meet with the enthusiastic approval of the reform group. Instead he became the target of continuous attack and personal abuse coming mostly from the East. It may be that the aftermath of the Cleveland Conference did much to make Wise "anti-East." Wise was smarting under the ferocity of the attack from the East - "they call Wise a traitor, they cry treachery" - when he again defends his compromise of the Talmud question as a basis for unity. When it was pointed out that his position on the Talmud resulted in Laeser's looking upon him as a penitent person, Wise is altogether beside himself. He vows that despite the misrepresentations, he will carry on the struggle for unity in Israel.⁶⁰

Wise does not let up in his campaign for Union and Synod;

on the contrary he intensifies his appeals. They appear with greater frequency in The Israelite and are of a more hard-hitting nature. In an editorial entitled "We and Our Opponents," Wise says: "We advocated a Synod because we are desirous to see Israel united. We want such reforms which are according to the Jewish law and actually wanted by the people and in union with the people. They say now, we want no Judaism and no Jews, no Talmud and no laws, no unions and no fraternity, we want - opposition." Wise practically put Einhorn in Cherem when he says: 'We saw his miserable script condemning the Cleveland Conference in the *Allegemeine Zeitung des Judentums* and did not reply to it, because we knew from which source it originated.'"⁶¹ In his defense of Synod Wise assures the public that he is just as ardent a reformer as he has been heretofore, but changes must grow out of the "pale of the law." "Judaism being of a progressive nature must have synods in order to reconcile at all times the demands of the age with the practices of religion." Wise goes on to demonstrate that the Synod idea goes back to the Bible, going through the stages of the Synod of Elders, Sanhedrin...the reforms of Gerson, the codifiers, and the synods which existed in Poland all the way into the sixteenth century.

"We want reform more so than do all our noisy opponents, but we want reform for the sake of Judaism, a law by which Israel may continue to exist; therefore we must have a Synod. No hefkeyrus, not each congregation, not each individual should be free to practice his own peculiar reforms....Only a Synod can establish

the practices of Judaism in this country.... We must ascertain which reforms are legally Jewish. In order not to foment disunity any changes must be sanctioned by a two-thirds vote of the Synod."⁶²

With respect to the fears of the East that Union and Synod would stifle the progress of reform, Wise reminds them that the situation in America differs radically from the European situation where most all conferences are dominated by the orthodox because of their overwhelming numbers.

"He appeals to the Einhorn party to join the Conference and unite the forces that are now split into fractions, create an authority into which they will put implicit faith, do not exclude the orthodox from your sanctuary with overbearing and despairing haughtiness, and in five years hence you will perceive a general progress that will give you more gratification than the satisfaction with which you are now looking on your isolated temples."⁶²

Wise calls the Synod "the historical Jewish method of perpetual reform in the law of God....all desirable reforms can be obtained in this legal and historical way....Ain L'cho Shofet Eloh sh'b'yomecho."⁶³ Here one year after the unsuccessful conference Wise demonstrates that he has not retreated from his philosophy of a developing Halachah. The constant cry of Wise is that "we want reforms, we want progressive reforms, but we want no illegal reforms." We must have order in Jewish religious life...

"Such reforms can originate only with a Synod in which the congregations are represented. We must have an authority to form a center of union, to produce

and carry out plans for the revival of the Jewish spirit through knowledge, eminent learning, and true piety. This authority is the Synod in every country with its executive committee and the general Synod consisting of members elected by the several synods and its executive committee. Let the individual arrange its own religious affairs as his conscience dictates, but the affairs of Israel's religion must be managed by Israel aggregately."⁶⁴

When the Philadelphia Committee is aroused to action as a result of the "Mortara Affair" and issues a plea for unity in American Jewry, Wise enthusiastically endorses the plea with "we are ready to cooperate in every union scheme."⁶⁵ This and other statements of a similar vein would seem to indicate that Wise was not only eager for union when he himself initiated the plan, but was ever ready to actively cooperate with others who had similar ideas. These pleas for union during the "Mortara Affair"-emergency culminated in the forming of the Board of Delegates in 1859. However, no sooner was The Board of Delegates organized than Wise editorially asks his readers not to cooperate with it "because it is the tool of men who are enemies of reform....opponents of progressive Judaism." He proceeds to show that "The Board" is dominated by orthodox extremists.⁶⁶ This, of course, does not constitute an area of conflict between East and Western reform Judaism, for in this connection Wise was supported by Einhorn. Here for the first time we are confronted with a situation where despite their many differences Einhorn and Wise are forced to cooperate with each other. In a

letter to The Israelite Temple Emanuel of New York enthusiastically supports Wise's position to "stay aloof" of the Board of Delegates.

During the **first** two years of the Civil War Wise makes little mention of his schemes for Union. It is in 1863 that we hear Wise's voice roar out again against reckless reform and make a plea for Union. Here for the first time he makes reference to a "Union of American Hebrew Congregations:"

"We reform singlehandedly. Every congregation has a leader who reforms as he thinks proper. We do not struggle to maintain Judaism, we work to maintain a congregation, each by himself. Every congregation behaves like a distinct sect. They call it free development of the religious idea; we call it anarchy. Is it possible for us to lay aside part of our egotism and cement a union of the American congregations in order to reconcile Judaism with the demands of the age? Could we not ignore personalities and personal whims and think of the future of Israel and the sacred truth we possess?"⁶⁷

But after several additional pleas for a conference, Wise despairs of a Union with the Eastern congregations. He therefore proposes a "union of the congregations of the Mississippi Valley, in order to do the work here if we can not do it all over the country,"⁶⁸ a union of West and South. He then repeats his formula of Union, Synod, College which were central to his early appeals. The plan is to go ahead with the Union scheme without the Eastern congregations. Not merely union between the various congregations, but unity within the Jewish community to the

end that "instead of having a Polish Congregation extra at every place, let us make every legitimate attempt to consolidate the various congregations....our strength lies in union and progress." Here Wise demonstrates his lack of prejudice against Polish Jews, a prejudice that manifested itself in many reform temples at this time, by appealing to the temples to integrate these non-German elements of the population into the community house of worship. Wise believed in the development of American congregations which were not hyphenated, which owed no allegiance to any European culture.

Wise considers the suggestions of several of his reform contemporaries to organize a conference of reform temples only, and he comes to the conclusion that there are hazards in such an organization. He was ever ready to form a union of all american congregations. Hence he was always reluctant to support such reforms which would tend to alienate the more conservative wing of Judaism. His writings are interspersed periodically with the following theme: "The progressive reforms of one body in Israel must never go so far as to separate the same from the Congregation of Israel."⁶⁹ This reminds one of the present day vogue amongst liberal rabbis to steer clear of sectarianism by giving public utterance to their adherence to K'lal Yisroel. In reality this concept of the oneness of the main body of Israel in America goes back to the early days of

I. M. Wise. Wise carried this idea as far as we have carried it to date, by advocating the founding of a secular Jewish University:

"Wise proposes that in addition to a seminary we Jews should have a university of our own. 'We must have a college, not merely to prepare young men for the theological seminary - we must have a college to educate our sons that we may get educated lawyers, doctors, statesmen, or any vocation they choose to follow.'"70

In our own day this dream of Wise for a secular Jewish university has been realized recently in the establishment of Brandeis University.

At the time when talk of another conference was in the air, this time at the instigation of the East, Wise takes advantage of the exceptionally high morale in Jewish life to drive home the Union idea.

"The future of Judaism in America is not secured unless the union of the congregations be cemented and perpetuated by annual conferences; unless we have a theological seminary and a united synagogue....as long as 'everybody builds an altar for himself,' there is something left to be done, something worthy to be done. We cannot lay down our pen. This is the conclusion as which we finally arrived. Let it be understood, unless it pleases the Almighty to call us from our post, we will stand and work, until the union and unison of the American Israel are secured by a regular conference or synod; until a theological seminary shall insure the dignity of the pulpit, with the autonomy of the congregations and the rabbis shall have assumed a truly Jewish and republican form; until we shall be organized and represented among the religious bodies of this country."71

This period was especially ripe for a conference in that the antagonism between Wise and Einhorn has been subdued considerably. But the ever-recurring theme of a Union

of all American Hebrew Congregations appears again in The Israelite to the resentment of the East. Wise saw the Union as a transmission belt for the Orthodox groups to integrate themselves into the liberal movement.

"There is now a better feeling among our orthodox brethren toward legitimate reforms and moderate reformers than ever before, and we hope for the best results of union and progress from that very feeling. All we need to do just now to cement a lasting union of the American Hebrew congregations, is to meet in conference and discuss the points on which ~~we~~ agree. Therefore, again we call on all friends of the cause, not to miss this opportune time, and bring the conference question up at the next congregational meeting during these autumnal holidays. Let us give the matter a fair and full trial."⁷²

A conference of rabbis was finally called by Doctors S. Adler and D. Einhorn to meet in Philadelphia on November 3rd. "Besides a revision of marriage and divorce laws, no subjects are proposed as yet."⁷³ This would show, then, that at the outset the East had no intention to implement Wise's program and create a genuine Union. When the conference was called to order at the home of Dr. S. Hirsch in Philadelphia on November 3, 1869, the following rabbis were present: Rev. Doctors Adler of New York, Chronik of Chicago; Deutsch of Baltimore; Einhorn of New York; Felsenthal of Chicago; Gutheim of New York; Hirsch of Philadelphia; Kohler of Detroit; Milziner of New York; Mayer of New York;

Schlesinger of Albany; Sonnenschein of St. Louis; and Wise of Cincinnati.

The conference was organized by the election of Hirsch as President, Adler as Vice-President and Feinsenthal and Milziner as secretaries. 74 Although there were many areas of disagreement at this conference between Wise and the Eastern block, the East actually controlled the conference as might be seen by a perusal of the names. As was shown in the first chapter, Wise was overjoyed that "...the conference had done one great thing, it had established a conference." Wise saw the conference as an agent for compromising the differences between the sundry groups. Thus, he comments very significantly:

'The conference has established a conference, and will establish it next year in Cincinnati as a permanent American institution. That is sufficient. Hereafter individual opinion will not be the substitute of law; the conference will examine into it, discuss it, and the resolves of the majority will replace it. Whether the conference shall be radical, moderate or conservative, it must debate, give reasons for its declarations; and those reasons are fresh nutriment to the mind. The conference has opened a new era to American Judaism and will year after year, rouse its energies, develop its capacities, and call its abilities into action. This leads to truth in the name of God. We do not mean to say, that we shout Amen to every thing the conference has done or will do hereafter. To us all parties in Israel appear necessary. The camp must have a vanguard, and these are our radicals who constantly point forward and march forward. It must have its center, and these are the liberal masses of our people who prevent the rear and van from falling apart into sects or hostile factions. Without the radicals we stagnate; without the conservatives we outshoot the target; and without the liberal masses, the strong center, we could not maintain ourselves in this chaos of opinions. We will not shout Amen to the resolves of the one or the other side. But we will hear all of them, work

with each as far as we can go without the sacrifice of principle, and remain among the mighty columns of the center. All of them are our brethren, all Israelites, all defenders of Israel's cause. They must not necessarily agree with us in every particular, to enlist our sympathies." 75

Wise's great hope was that the conference would become an annual affair in Jewish life. The fact that the next conference was scheduled to meet in Cincinnati was even more encouraging for Wise. He thought that this would give him an opportunity to organize his camp more adequately and thereby push through his program for Union. When the proposition to convene in Cincinnati in 1870 was passed unanimously, Wise was overjoyed. Little did he know that the Einhorn people were aware of his plans and that they were already at that time laying plans to sabotage the Cincinnati conference. In a later editorial Wise senses the strategy of the "unholy alliance" of the East and states categorically that Union includes all groups. He objects to reform for the sake of reform.

"We desire our friends once more to understand that there are no sects and no factions in the American Israel, none at least in our estimation. Judaism acknowledges none. To us, we must repeat, all shades of opinion appear justifiable and necessary for a healthy development and sound progress....

There is no use in throwing suspicion on the men who met in Philadelphia or to initiate any disrupting movement, right after a step towards union has been taken. Nevertheless we are fully aware of the responsibility resting on our shoulders, by having the question of a congregational conference and having been supported by twenty highly respectable congregations.

In conclusion we have to say one more word. It is not our business to abolish Judaism; it is our duty to preserve, elevate and endear it to the community. All reforms or enterprises with the tendency merely to abolish, to ape the style or fashion, or to innovate

for innovation's sake, have met and shall always meet with our honest and efficient opposition...." 76

Wise asks very pointedly "...what would have become of American Judaism, had we adopted deformation in place of reformation... What would have become of American Judaism, had we like Acher abrogated the whole law, and thrown ourselves headlong into the embrace of the supposed spirit of our age and country, in imitation of German or American Puritanism, German or American mysticism, allegorism and dogmatism? The Jewish spirit in the body of the modern Gentile forms is as farcical a deformation as it was eighteen centuries ago, and looks as foreign, outlandish and ludicrous as it did then to the honest, contemplative mind." 77 Wise is very disillusioned by virtue of the fact that the Easterners fail to call the scheduled conference in Cincinnati in 1870 as was ordered by the Philadelphia Conference. He informs them that he intends to use his own methods in making an annual conference a reality.

"The refusal to convoke a congregational conference, and the reasons to support the refusal, appeared to us not only a proof of the unpractical turn of mind of the majority, but also an entire misunderstanding of the spirit living in the majority of the American congregations. The conference ignored the fact that the majority of our congregations are in favor of progress, although they are opposed to radicalism. Why not consult the opinions of the representatives? Why not solve practical questions which the congregations must do? The conference wishes to remain a purely deliberative body of professional men. This is its final resolution in the matter, and we could not change it.

Therefore, for all practical purposes, we must open other avenues, if we desire to do something tangible....Personal feelings must submit to the great cause of union and united progress. United we are a power, divided we are individuals. United, progress, and reform are legitimate; in disunion they bring anarchy. Therefore we do stand up for the annual conference, whatever blunders it may make."⁷⁸

Wise tries a last minute move to bring the Eastern rabbis to the 1870 conference by scheduling its sessions in neutral territory, but leading rabbis such as Adler, Einhorn, and Hirsch are absent. To allay the fears of those in the reform camp, who had suspected that this would be an all-comprehensive Union conference, Wise placed the revision of the prayer book as the chief item on the agenda.

After his failure to convince the East of calling a general conference for the purpose of Union, Wise embarks on his own to educate the public. This was the beginning of intensive campaigning that culminated in the founding of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1873. He really "puts on the heat" when he fulminates editorially:

"The congregations ought not to tolerate a minister who is either incompetent for his office or who excludes himself from the union of Israel. The one who excludes himself from the community according to ancient conceptions of Israel, excommunicates himself and stands outside of the Hebrew congregation."⁷⁹

The net result of this campaign was the Conference of Rabbis

held in Cincinnati in June 1871. Though the East was absent, Wise thought that the conference was a success. "It settled the question of uniformity in the American synagogue by revising and compiling the prayer book.... there exists no reason any longer for quibbling over prayer books....the conference was a brilliant success." Wise's wrath reaches the boiling point when perusing the Eastern press he finds that the Conference was being attacked constantly - before it met, while it deliberated, and after it adjourned. Their language was "worthy of the lowest and most reckless ward and cross-road politicians excited over some election. They spoke of twenty-seven teachers in Israel as hardly any sporting paper in this country would speak of the same number of gamblers, ruffians, or counterfeiters meeting to decide their bets."⁸¹ Realizing that the time has come to "call a spade a spade" and to stop appeasing Einhorn, Wise unleashes a barrage against him whom he considers responsible for all the anti-conference propaganda in the East:

"Who brought that language of hell to our shores?....After the Cleveland Conference in 1855, the same party issued a protest against that conference in the same style and spirit....After the Cincinnati Conference of 1871, the same party issues a protest in the same style and spirit....After the public service on Sunday, the public eating of pork to the bread and butter, and public smoking of cigars on Sabbath day had been zealously advanced as the outward standard of the true reformer and the banishment of the Hebrew from the synagogal worship as the inward standard....They see fit, in 1871,

to throw off the false face of sham liberalism and assume the surplice of holy inquisitors, to wrap themselves in the long gown of unholy hypocrisy."82

The campaign for Union is now going forward full blast and Wise constantly urges influential laymen to "move your congregation to join the 'Union of the Israelite Congregations of America', and let us have at once the Synod, the seminary, the other necessary institutions, one great brotherhood all over this great country."83 However, these appeals do not make any dent in the hard shell of the East. After being stymied continually by the East in the project for a conference and a seminary, M. Loth, President of Wise's temple, suggests that a meeting of all reform congregations in the West and South be called for that purpose - excluding the people from the East who refuse to cooperate.84 Wise decides to resort to sectionalism only as a temporary means to "break the ice", with a long range view toward bringing all the congregations into the Union. After several months of continuous propaganda the five Cincinnati congregations, including those of Orthodox persuasion, issued a call on March 30, 1873, for a conference of the West, North, and South-West congregations to be held in Cincinnati. Lipman Levy, Secretary of the Conference Committee, in reply to many inquiries regarding the nature of the conference, says that all congregations are invited to send their delegates:

"This call emanates from all the regularly incorporated congregations of Cincinnati

two of which are strictly 'orthodox' in their form of divine service, which you will perceive at once divests the whole preliminary movement of anything like either a reform or orthodox tendency. It is intended to form a union of all congregations, and as it is understood here without interfering with the internal government of any congregation."⁸⁵

The delegates from thirty-four congregations met in Cincinnati on July 8, 1873, and the "Union of American Hebrew Congregations" was officially formed. The purposes of The Union were set forth as the following:

"A - To establish and maintain institutions for instruction in the higher branches of Hebrew literature and Jewish theology, with the necessary preparatory schools in such cities of those States as may hereafter be designated.

B - To provide means for the relief of Jews from political oppressions and unjust discrimination, and for rendering them aid for their intellectual elevation.

C - To promote religious instruction and encourage the study of the Scriptures and of the tenets and history of Judaism.

All this, however, without interfering in any manner whatsoever with the worship, the schools, or any other of the congregational institutions."⁸⁶

Immediately following the conference Wise declares that next year at Cleveland he expects delegates from the "majority of states to be represented at the conferencethis is not a Union of congregations of West and South only, it is a Union for all....inviting all and excluding none."⁸⁷ Here we see Wise bending every effort to reach his goal of a Union of all congregations

by extending an invitation to all. It is interesting to note that at this time when Wise is flushed with victory, he no longer advises the congregations to "stay aloof" from the Board of Delegates, but on the contrary now says: "This institution commends itself to the warmest sympathies of American Israelites."⁸⁸ This, as we shall see later, was done for a purpose. It was through the active support of the Board of Delegates that Wise finally succeeds in having the Eastern congregations affiliate themselves with the Union. All through the year 1873-4 The Israelite continually quotes the excerpt from the Union constitution: "Any Hebrew congregation of the United States, lawfully organized, may become a member of 'The Union of American Hebrew Congregations'"

In the heat of the struggle to convince the East to join the Union, Wise uses some very strong language against his opponents. He accuses those rabbis who oppose the Union of "annihilating Judaism:" "Those rabbis are hypocrites; they sail under false colors and are ready to surrender the 'noble ship of State;' commence first by changing Sabbath to Sunday; then gradually abolish the observances of our annual holidays; abolish circumcision; give free consent to the intermarriage between Israelites and Christians, and their doom is sealed; the Israelites will cease to exist. The Israelites have not been conquered, crushed, and stamped out of existence by their opponents, but they

have been annihilated through the treachery of their rabbis, who have so industriously undone the sacred laws which made of the Israelites a distinct people and through intermarriage with others besides their own, they have melted away, disappeared, ceased to exist."⁸⁹ Wise receives an encouraging letter from Rabbi Wechsler of New Haven, Connecticut, in which he volunteers his service to the cause of Union. He denounces the artificial lines of geography which have stymied a country-wide Union but says: "The East, however, will not for a long time remain unrepresented, and I see already the time approaching when the East and the West, the South and the North will firmly support the American Union. I am convinced myself that my congregation - Mishken Israel - will be represented at your next meeting."⁹⁰ In reply to the Eastern allegation that the Union is a "Western affair," Wise fulminates "it is the artificial gas made by demagogues." You must not try to offer any geographical excuse for your resistance to Union....it is rank rebellion against the House of Israel." In continuing this appraisal of the Union council meeting held in Cleveland, Wise for the first time mentions his theological seminary by its present name and regards the maintenance of The Hebrew Union College to be the central task of the Union:

"The main question of the Union, viz, the College, this council has solved finally. There will be in Cincinnati 'The Hebrew Union College,' under the control of the Union. It will be a complete college for

all, and upon the height of the spirit of our age and our country. There will be only one such college in the United States, because there exists not the slightest necessity for two, and one will cost of money."⁹¹

Wise even resorts to his familiar cry of the olden days, the cry against negative reformers, to discredit his opponents. Those who feel convinced that Judaism must be preserved can no longer be satisfied with "perpetual negatives and negations;" they will rally behind the Union. This, and other frequent editorials in a similar vein, must be Wise's reaction against the abuse heaped upon him personally by Einhorn and his followers. Evidently the East has been conducting an all-out campaign to squelch the Union. Otherwise, The Israelite would not constantly use such terms as "scamp," "hypocrite," "infernal falsehood," etc.

2 Sensing the danger from the West, the East organized a counter-congregational conference in June, 1876. Among the congregations which met in the Y. M. H. A rooms in New York, were such well known reform temples as B'nai Jeshurun, Emanuel, and Beth-El of New York and Sinai of Chicago. Wise's New York correspondent reports that Einhorn is the main force behind this new movement. This conference also organized a "Union" and a "Hebrew Theological Seminary." Wise sees in this conference a victory for his own kind of American Judaism and is sport enough to wish "the generous enterprise the best of success."

"Our opponents, like our friends, have at last been forced to admit that American rabbis could, should, and must be educated in America, which is in itself a triumph of the cause and a victory achieved over the Polish-Germanic factions, who stand with one leg somewhere in Europe and with the other in dreamland. They were at last obliged to pronounce publicly that something in this direction must be done, and we are glad they did."⁹²

In the meantime the famous Washington "shtadlan" of American Jewry, Simon Wolf, pushed through a resolution at the meeting of the Board of Delegates providing for a committee to confer with similar committees of both the Cincinnati and New York "Unions" for the purpose of establishing "a complete Union of all Hebrew congregations in the United States."⁹³ No doubt that this action was taken at the behest of Wise who had been pleading for such a meeting for a long time. Such a meeting actually took place in June 1877 between the committees of the Board of Delegates and of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. This conference failed according to Wise because "after the meeting the Eastern Committee wanted two Executive Boards, one for the East and one for the West, to which the Union Committee would not agree simply because they could not make two unions."⁹⁴ When he is attacked by the Jewish Record and other Eastern journals as the one who upset the Union plan, Wise bitterly replies that these are "infamous falsehoods." "The Union needs no disorganizers under the artificial guise of peace."

However, Wise promises to continue working with the Board of Delegates for Union. At the next annual meeting of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations held in

Philadelphia on July 10, 1877, the representatives of the Board of Delegates pledged themselves to bring into the Union a number of congregations from the Eastern states representing at least two thousand contributing members. This will be achieved upon the condition that the Executive Board of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations "would consist of thirty members, fifteen to be resident in the Western and Southern states and fifteen in the East."⁹⁵ This was agreed to by the Union with the stipulation that "The Hebrew Union College, the seal and funds of the Union remain perpetually in the city of Cincinnati." This proposition was heartily accepted by the Board of Delegates. In line with this promise the Board of Delegates met in New York on October 3, 1877, a meeting in which representatives of the most prominent New York City congregations participated. These congregational delegates pledged their congregations to join the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. In the meantime all during the winter of 1877-78 Wise kept up a steady stream of editorials for Union. In April 1878 Wise proudly reported that there were over one hundred congregations affiliated with the Union. The final breakdown in Eastern resistance to Union comes when Einhorn's Beth-El Congregation joins the Union of American Hebrew Congregations on April 26, 1878.⁹⁶ This move by Einhorn is responsible for the veritable

rush on the part of the Eastern congregations to join the Union. (Wise is overjoyed when he reads the first pro-Union editorial in Einhorn's Jewish Messenger.) In quick order the outstanding Eastern temples join the Union; Temple Emanuel passes a resolution in which it pledges itself to send delegates to the next Union convention to be held in Milwaukee in July, 1878.⁹⁷ The highpoint of this new spirit for Union was reached at the Milwaukee convention which proclaimed:

"It is the primary object of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to establish a Hebrew Theological Institute to preserve Judaism intact....without, however, interfering in any manner whatsoever with the affairs and management of any congregations...The Hebrew Theological Institute, provided for in Article II, Section 1 of this Constitution, shall be styled "The Hebrew Union College," which shall remain permanently located in the city of Cincinnati, Ohio."⁹⁸

The fact that The Hebrew Union College was to be permanently situated in Cincinnati was a major victory for Wise. Wise speaks of the achievements of this convention in lofty terms and vows to "bury the hatchet forever:"

"The results accomplished in Milwaukee are manifold and important. In the first place there is now but one representative body among the American Israelites, and that is the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The Board of Delegates has been merged in the Union...The principal opposition to the Union is no more, its forces have surrendered, the campaign has ended in an alliance, as is often the case among rational combatants.;...We have done one another a good deal of mischief and might now make up for it by doing a deal of good by friendly relations. On the part of the Eastern rabbis Dr. Gottheil of the New York Emanuel Temple, was in the Council and

did quite an amount of earnest work. He influenced and was influenced for good, and we believed to be entitled to the supposition that the rabbinical opposition to the Union ended in an alliance with it....We have come back from Milwaukee with the cheerful impression that a great and good work has been accomplished for Israel; that the Union and the College have triumphed over all obstacles and are now secured beyond any peradventure."⁹⁹

Thus in 1878, just one year before the death of the fighting radical reformer, David Einhorn, did Wise see a dream come true. The struggle for domination in Jewish life between East and West was over, at least in so far as competing organizations are concerned. Now the East-West conflict was to continue within the confines of the Union. This basic unity amongst the congregations had far reaching effects upon the pattern of community organizations in Jewish life which were to emerge in the future. It is this pattern of Unity which is, perhaps, Wise's chief contribution to American Jewish life. To this day this is the pattern which marks most all areas of Jewish community life.

CHAPTER III AMERICAN JUDAISM VIA AMERICAN TRAINED RABBIS

One of the themes which constantly recurs in the writings of I. M. Wise is that of the need for an American Theological Seminary. In almost all of his editorials the subject of a rabbinical seminary appears as the forging link between the pleas for a positive theology and a union for Israel. Moreover, even in the practical field this project is awarded an equal rank along with the other members of the triumvirate "Union, Synod, Seminary." Whenever the opportunity presents itself, Wise integrates an appeal for Seminary in his lengthy theological debates with the East. In the American-trained rabbi he saw not merely an agent for the transmission of our faith to the next generation but, what is even more significant, a potent force in the creation of an American Judaism. The product of the American cultural pattern, he thought, would stimulate our people to respond more enthusiastically to the verities of the Jewish faith. Always pointing to the language limitations as the chief reason for the failure of the German rabbis to reach American youth, Wise was convinced that the English speaking rabbi would be much more successful in conveying the Jewish religion to the American masses. He was possessed of a keen psychological insight and saw how the proper rapport between clergyman and parishioner played a major role in determining the acceptance of his message. These, then, were some of the considerations

which motivated Wise's emphasis upon a theological seminary.

Already in the fall of 1854 we find Wise laying plans for the establishment of a seminary, when he organizes the Zion Collegiate Association. This group was formed for the purpose of collecting adequate funds for the opening of Zion College. The educational objectives of Zion College were twofold: to provide secular training for American Jewish youth, and to give such training in advanced Jewish subjects to qualified students as would lead them to receive the rabbinical degree.¹⁰⁰

Wise followed through by circularizing an appeal for financial support in behalf of Zion College.¹⁰¹ In this campaign for a college he had the support of B'nai B'rith lodges scattered over the country, and with the help of B'nai B'rith, local branches of the Zion Collegiate Association were formed in Louisville, Baltimore, New York City, and other cities.¹⁰² It was the chief function of these groups to raise funds to help maintain the College. Wise then published a plan for the establishment of a preparatory department to Zion College which provided for curriculum and administration.¹⁰³ This plan was approved at a general meeting of the Zion Collegiate Association of Cincinnati, and it was decided to open the new institution on October 25, 1855 with Lilienthal, Wise, and Dessar as teachers.¹⁰⁴ This action on the part of the Cincinnati group aroused the jealousy and anger of the other branches throughout the country, and the subsequent issues of The Israelite carry lengthy ex-

planations by Wise in which he tries to assuage their wrath. However, Zion College was soon opened with Lilienthal, Wise, Cohen, Jankerman, Rothenheim, and Thompson as instructors. On opening day twelve Jewish students and two Christian students made up the roster.¹⁰⁵ Due to financial difficulties Zion College remained open only two years, after which time the Zion Collegiate Association was dissolved.¹⁰⁶

It may well be that Wise's failure in his first attempt to establish a college was due to sabotage from the East. As (the) was the case in his other projects, Wise met with violent opposition from the East. Ever ready to retaliate, Wise unburdens himself of some bitter feelings when he says:

"Notwithstanding the mad dog cries of infidelity and notwithstanding the unprincipled noise of the radical reformers, I am obliged to believe that the vast majority of American Jews approve fully the course which I pursue!...The response to the Zion College project was very generous. Reform Union and Education is the slogan. He calls upon his followers to 'look neither to the right nor to the left, but onward and forward.'" ¹⁰⁷

Evidently Einhorn and his party must have been rather obnoxious in their utterances to elicit such wrath. This emanating from the same Einhorn, who only a short while ago was sending letters of felicitations to Zion College banquets, was rather disturbing. Notwithstanding the antagonism from the East, Wise assures his readers that "our objective is a theological seminary to produce here in the United States American rabbis."

However it should be remembered that Wise's educational schemes were far more extensive than the founding of a school for rabbis. The contemporary idea for a Jewish university, such as the recently established Brandeis University, was envisioned by Wise already in 1857.

"We were carried upon the wings of two great and excellent thoughts, the Synod and the University, the union progress and elevation of Israel, two thoughts which monopolized our whole soul. The university we thought would be the stronghold of Israel's future from whence literature and science would triumphantly return into the house of Israel."¹⁰⁸

From this point on Wise repeatedly associates the university idea with his plea for a seminary. In this connection mention must be made of Wise's plans to found a "female academy," thus implementing his impassioned appeals for the equality of women. From time to time this neglected area of education evoked his interest and he included the female academy in his appeals for "College." It may be that this interest in female education was a reflection of the growing activities at this time on the part of the Suffragists in the American community at large. Wise continues his campaign for a university in the face of mounting opposition from the East. He challenges the opponents to the Jewish University to present their objections before the general public.¹⁰⁹ This editorial continues:

"We must have a college not merely to prepare young men for the theological or the teacher's seminary - this is but one object of a college; we must have a seat of learning in order to have it, to be justified before God and man; we must have a college to educate our sons, that we may get educated lawyers, physicians, statesmen,

artists, artizans, merchants, bankers, mechanics, agriculturists, or any other profession or vocation they may choose to follow. Let them be educated men - this is the main point....Fearlessly we challenge every opponent to come forward and tell us why we should not have a college of our own, supported exclusively by us."

However, Wise's pet project was the rabbinical seminary. To this he devoted most of his time and energy. When a Mr. Tuska, a native American, is obliged to go to Breslau to study for ^{The} his rabbinate, Wise again reminds his readers of the urgent need for a rabbinical seminary.¹¹⁰ He is overjoyed when Temple Emanuel of New York makes public a resolution which it had adopted providing "for annual stipends to American Hebrew students of theology." Wise congratulates Emanuel for the foresight that prompted this grant and urges other congregations to follow this fine example.¹¹¹ On November 2, 1860 he announces his intention of opening "The Hebrew College." He adds:

"We want neither money nor plans - the college is finished - all we want and need can be reduced to one word - students, scholars. Give us students and we will give you a complete college."

In his eagerness to open the College Wise appeals to the parents to induce their children to study for the rabbinate. He scathingly denounces the rank materialism of American parents, who when considering a profession for their children, reject the rabbinate on the grounds that the remuneration is inadequate. He finds in this lack of enthusiasm for Torah the very core of disunion in America.¹¹²

But these plans for the opening of The Hebrew Union College must have been frustrated by the East. As Wise

remarks some years later, when he review the situation:

"We wanted a college.... there came insult and sickening opposition from the eastern cities because the college was to be in the west....our efforts resulted in personal tirades against the editor of this journal."¹¹³ It may be that the general confusion that prevailed in America during the Civil War was an additional cause for the postponement of the opening of The Hebrew College. Of particular interest to us is Wise's reaction to the founding of colleges in other sections of the country. His was not the bitter type of competition. When, for instance, The Hebrew National College is established in Baltimore, Wise hails the news with unsurpassed enthusiasm.¹¹⁴ He appeals to other communities throughout the country to follow suit.

In the year 1865 there develops an upsurge of interest in a Jewish Theological College. As was mentioned above this was a period in which Wise was mending his fences for a final try at Union. East-West antagonism had reached a new low. All was peaceful. In this setting Rabbi Adler makes public a letter in which he supports Wise's seminary scheme: "We need theological orators who can preach in the English tongue, who can be heard and understood by the rising generation. We must create an institution for the education of Jewish theologians."¹¹⁵ In a genuine spirit of sportsmanship Wise editorially urges Rabbi Adler, Mielziner, Heubscher, and Einhorn to "start a Rabbinical Seminary in New York."¹¹⁶ The

Emanuel Theological Seminary of New York reached the stage of drawing up a set of by-laws which contained the following aim: "The object shall be the education of Jewish youths for the Jewish ministry on the basis of reform."¹¹⁷ Wise demonstrated his friendliness to the New York seminary by giving it wide publicity and by publishing a transcript of its by-laws. In a subsequent editorial Wise professes himself "to be a member of the Emanuel Theological Seminary" and urges all Jews to support "this noble project for the education of Jewish ministers and teachers."¹¹⁸ This willingness to lend support to an institution backed by Einhorn and the East shows that Wise is above what is today called "agency-mindedness." Too, it proves beyond doubt that Wise is willing to "let bygones be bygones" and clear the path for cooperation between East and West in the future.

One of the more successful ventures in the college field was the Maimonides College which was founded in the fall of 1867. This institution was sponsored by the Board of Delegates and was under the supervision of Leeser. From a perusal of the list of sponsors of Maimonides College which appeared from time to time in The Israelite, one may deduce that the Eastern reformers were opposed to it on the grounds that it was orthodox. However, inasmuch as the East was a stronghold of orthodoxy, such distinguished laymen as Sulzberger and Dropsie of Philadelphia are listed as trustees. Like his reform colleagues in the East, Wise does not support

Maimonides College "on the grounds that it is not a college but a theological seminary.....men who know nothing about seminary must not write about its curriculum.....Schuster bleib bei deinen Leisten....the program for a course in Hazanuth may be made by Hazanim."¹¹⁹ This was Wise's reaction to the published curriculum, with its staff of "Reverend Doctors" of the Maimonides College. The Savannah Hebrew Collegiate Institute and a similar college in New Orleans were sponsored during this "college conscious" period by the literary societies of their respective communities.¹²⁰ Although these attempts proved to be abortive and unsuccessful, each project disappearing after a few years, they do demonstrate a groping with forces which were to determine the progress of American Judaism. These communities felt that a creative American Judaism could only be molded by American-trained rabbis and laymen.

Learning from the mistakes of all the local college associations, Wise now set for his objective a theological seminary sponsored by the Conference of Congregations:

"We must have a theological seminary for the education of rabbis, preachers, and teachers for the American Israel....We will have one, as soon (and no sooner) as the conference shall have devised the plan of raising the means. We do not mean to make opposition to the college association of New York, of which we are a member, nor to the Maimonides College of Philadelphia, neither of which is a theological seminary in contemplation or in reality."¹²⁰

This was the seminary theme repeated over and over again in the columns of The Israelite during the period immediately

preceding the Philadelphia Conference of November, 1869. When this conference which was controlled by the East refuses to act on his seminary scheme, Wise swallows his pride and tirelessly keeps up a steady barrage for Seminary so as to prepare the public in this regard for the next conference. All during the year preceding the conference which was scheduled to be held in Cincinnati in July, 1870, the following theme is often repeated: "We must have a Seminary....we must have English preachers who know and understand the wants and desires of this country, who can honorably represent and defend us in this community, teach our young ones in their own language, and place us in consonance with the intelligence and the free spirit of this age and this country...."¹²²

When the Cincinnati conference does not take place because of sabotage from the East, Wise goes to the "grass roots" to make the seminary a reality. Resolutions by congregations in behalf of a "Jewish Theological Institute" become more prominent. Wise's own congregation repeatedly publishes resolutions urging action on the famous triumvirate, "Union-Synod-Seminary."¹²³ It may be that the East felt that a conference sponsored seminary in Cincinnati would impede the progress of Maimonides College and the Emanuel Theological School. It is only after he decides to ignore the East and form a South-West Union that Wise can perceive his seminary project finally taking shape. Wise is overjoyed by the turn of events and says: "It is coming after all,

viz., the college, seminary, theological faculty, or whatever it will be named."¹²⁴ It is significant to note that in the call to the congregations for the first conference of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the seminary project occupies the central position on the agenda:

"I. That all the congregations of the West and South shall be represented by delegates to the General Conference as provided in the said call.

"II. That the congregations thus represented shall form themselves into a 'Union,' under the auspice of which the contemplated 'Jewish Theological Institute' shall be created and maintained."¹²⁵

He keeps up a steady flow of propaganda for his pet project and for the first time uses the term "Hebrew College" on September 5, 1873. The name "Hebrew Union College" is mentioned for the first time in an optimistic editorial on July 31, 1874:

"The main question of the Union, viz., the College, this Council has solved finally. There will be in Cincinnati 'The Hebrew Union College' under the control of the Union. It will be a complete college for all, and upon the height of the spirit of our age and our country. There will be only one such college in the United States, because there exists not the slightest necessity for two, and one will cost plenty of money."¹²⁶

The Union convention was so successful and the seminary project so impressive that an Eastern rabbi, Rev. J. Wechsler of Mishken Israel of New Haven, Connecticut, says in a communication: "The East, however, will not for a long time remain unrepresented, and I see already the time approaching when the East and the West, the South and

the North will firmly support the American Union. I am convinced myself that my congregation - Mishken Israel - will be represented at your next meeting."¹²⁷ In the fall of 1875 just prior to its opening, I. M. Wise was elected president of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Wise anticipates trouble as a result of his election and advises his opponents that in utilizing the democratic method they could unseat him:

"Wise's opponents who are also opponents of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, will, of course, denounce his election..... Send your delegates to the next Council to take place in July next in Washington, and instruct them to vote against Isaac M. Wise as President of the Hebrew Union College; have a better candidate to propose, and get for him the majority of the votes in that Council, and the matter is settled."¹²⁸

The Hebrew Union College opened its doors on October 3, 1875, under the auspices of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The opening exercises took place in B'nai Jeshurun Temple amidst such inspiring music and prayer "so that two thousand intelligent countenances radiated a luster, which is probably the most beautiful on earth."¹²⁹ Class D of the Preparatory Department of the Hebrew Union College was organized the following Monday with a faculty consisting of two instructors, I. M. Wise and S. Eppinger. The following students registered their names for the first session:

"Israel Aaron, Lancaster, Pa.
Nathan Cohn, Nashville, Tenn.
David Eichberg, Cincinnati, Ohio
Edward Heinsheimer, Cincinnati, Ohio
L. D. Marks, Cincinnati, Ohio
F. Strasburg, Cincinnati, Ohio
Joseph Krauskopf, Fall River, Mass.
D. Philipson, Columbus, Ohio

A. Ullman, St. Louis, Mo.
Levy Rosenbush, Greenville, Ohio."

This number was soon augmented to thirteen. The student body soon adopted the name "A'B'I' Association" which is an abbreviation of the name "Atzilay B'nai Yisroel."¹³⁰

The course of study for this first class included the following: "reading and translation of selected portions of the Five Books of Moses, Psalms, Hebrew Grammar, Pirke Aboth, all taught by Mr. Eppinger. Mishnah - selections from Sanhedrin and Sotah - was taught by Dr. Wise."¹³¹

During the next seven years a new class was added each year until there was a preparatory department of four grades and a collegiate department with four grades. This same class and department pattern remained at The Hebrew Union College until 1946.

In the meantime opposition was mounting to Wise's presidency of the college. Issue after issue of The Israelite contains editorials replying to these attacks. The chief source of this antagonism is evidently focused in New York, for Wise says:

"New York is no place for the education of rabbis; no large commercial city is, because there are too much corruption, dissention, extravagance, and hypocrisy in large commercial centers where young students are exactly in the worst place they could possibly be located, so that intelligent parents send their children out of the commercial cities for the purpose of education. New York is too expensive for students. New York cannot afford to make opposition to the whole country."¹³²

Hard feelings reached such heights that an "opposition College" convention was held in New York.¹³³ Here the

radical reformer Einhorn harmonized with the delegate from Shearith Israel (hide-bound orthodoxy). Diversified elements in Jewish life, whose only area of agreement was opposition to Wise, agreed at this conference to organize a "Hebrew Theological Seminary Association." In the very forming of this association Wise perceives victory for himself in that "they have been forced to admit that American rabbis must be educated in America."¹³⁴ Wise sees the figure of Einhorn lurking behind "the disunion college."

That Wise was not section-minded when a bona fide college for advanced Jewish studies was organized might be seen in his enthusiastic support of the Emanuel College: "The Emanuel Temple congregation opened a preparatory Hebrew college class with eighteen students.....*Better two than one.' There is no opposition in matters of charity, benevolence, and education. The more workers the more work done, the better for the cause in which they are engaged."¹³⁵ He looked upon this school as a preparatory department for HUC. However, he regarded The HUC in Cincinnati as not merely a preparatory school, but as an institution where students might take courses leading to ordination. HUC was the "home base" for the other schools scattered over the country. It will always remain in Cincinnati.

"In September, 1879, the collegiate class will be opened with graduates of the Preparatory Department....This comprises again a course of four years, after the completion of which the rabbinical course is to be opened with graduates of the collegiate grade and the University....The college is permanently located in Cincinnati. Preparatory departments may be located elsewhere, conducted on the same curriculum as in Cincinnati."¹³⁶

This constant vying for position between East and West was brought to a halt when in 1878 David Einhorn was appointed to the commission on curriculum revision for The HUC. He served on this commission along with such notable scholars as G. Gottheil, M. Jastrow, M. Sulzberger, I. M. Wise, D. Lilienthal, E. G. Hirsch, L. Dembitz, and A. Moses. Triumph follows triumph in rapid succession and Einhorn and several other Eastern rabbis and laymen are elected to the Board of Governors of The HUC.¹³⁷ Thus Einhorn and the Eastern party finally accept The HUC in Cincinnati as a reality and are satisfied to look upon the Emanuel School in New York as a preparatory school, it being clear, however, that both institutions are under the auspices of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Board of Governors remaining in control. The Board of Governors promises:

"That a branch of the Cincinnati College be opened in New York....the course of study being the same.....That a Superintendent be appointed for this branch of the Cincinnati College, to be assisted in the administration of this branch by four members of the Board of Governors."¹³⁸

Upon the recommendation of Einhorn, M. Mielziner, later to become President of The HUC, was appointed professor of Talmud at the college.

As 1879 draws to a close we find Wise giving this prognosis for American Judaism:

"The Collegiate Class of 1879 will give to the country the first American rabbis, and then some will graduate every year, please God. In ten or fifteen years, hence, the American Synagogue will

have American rabbis at the side of those eminent and learned men who have transplanted Hebrew lore and rabbinical learning from Europe to America; who have built up the American synagogue in its present status. This fact secures a promising future to Judaism in America.....When Americans will preach Judaism to Americans, the difference will soon be perceptible."¹³⁹

Thus ended the saga, seminary in the East-West conflict.

In this area of the conflict we are on sure grounds if we say that the personal element loomed large in the considerations of both Wise and Einhorn. The scion of Cincinnati demonstrated by virtue of his victory that he was possessed of the greater measure of tenacity and fortitude than his counterpart in the East. But who knows whether this insistence on Cincinnati did not provide the conservative movement with a bridgehead in New York, from which strategic position it was able to spread its influence all along the Atlantic seaboard? The very fact the The Jewish Theological Seminary was founded only a short while after the East-West conflict subsided, and the fact that beginning with Jacob Schiff many reform Jews were to be found sitting on the Board of The Jewish Theological Seminary, would tend to demonstrate that not always is it true that "to the victor belong the spoils."

CHAPTER IV THE ROLE OF CEREMONIAL OBSERVANCE IN EAST-WEST CONFLICT

As one thumbs through the chapter on theology above, one might readily deduce where the two factions stand with regard to observance. A radical theology must of its very nature lead to the sloughing off of those forms and rituals for which no rational justification can be found. More than being an area of experience, religion gradually becomes a situation of believing; it becomes more a matter of an intellectual discipline, an ethical persuasion, than a day to day pattern chock-full of Mitzvot and tangible observances. Both the East and the West were convinced that the emergence of a healthy and ever-developing Judaism in a free democratic America called for a cutting away of the superstitious forms that had attached themselves to the body of our faith. The difference lies in the extent to which and the method in which this operation was performed. Whereas Wise believed that religious experience is "like an ante-chamber" to a genuine faith and that therefore forms might be changed but not abolished, Einhorn and his party soft-pedaled the importance of religious practice. This is the conclusion one draws from the continuous attacks upon radical reform in the pages of The Israelite.

In reply to the charge by Einhorn that Wise had betrayed reform at the Cleveland Conference of 1855, Wise thunders forth with:

"They cry, no Talmud! No Laws! No restrictions!
Down with the frigid forms! What people actually
mean to say is Down with the Sabbath! We need no

Milah, no shechitah, none of the laws distinguishing and uniting Israel. Yes, they cry, 'No Talmud!' actually means no religious laws. The Berlin pattern is our proof, it actually means no religion.Judaism lives in the hearts of Israel's innumerable millions, it reveals itself in thousands of flourishing institutions devoted to its service. Judaism is a living active power."¹⁴⁰

In this article he even goes as far as to say "History furnishes no evidence entitling us to say that the new forms would be better than the old." This, of course, is sheer orthodoxy, a view which was considerably altered as time went by. Wise shows that the Einhorn position means "the abolition of Sabbath, Milah, Yom Kippur, Niddah, Shechitah." We see that at this juncture Wise still adhered to the practice of properly slaughtering the animal, i. e., Shechitah. He believed that forms grow out of a developing Jewish tradition: "Without the tradition of Israel which are in the Talmud and the Massorah, no Judaism is possible." All desirable reforms must be obtained in the legal, historical way, via a Synod.¹⁴¹ Reckless reform leads to anarchy.

Notwithstanding all his early emphasis upon authority in Jewish life, Wise, nevertheless, soon welcomes the changes instituted by Temple Emanuel of New York with regard to funeral and mourning. Wise remarks that "Emanuel continues to be in a healthy condition" with regard to progressive reforms when it abolishes K'riah and changes Shivah into three days. Wise gives us a good insight as to what he considers reckless reform when he describes Einhorn's congregation as a place:

"where the rabbi and principal members eat Trefoth and Cahmez on Passover, smoke cigars and write on Sabbath.....Holdheim's system

being taught from the pulpit, the impartial observer cannot comprehend why this congregation should have sabbath just the seventh day of the week, why the day of Atonement should be observed or children should be circumcised, as these are entirely contrary to the system preached by Einhorn."¹⁴³

This somewhat pedantic adherence to traditional forms is soon modified considerably. In 1864 the fact that ^{Congregation} Temple Emanuel resolved "to sit in Temple during Divine Service without a hat" does not disturb him.

However, we soon perceive that over the years there develops a gradual change in his views on ceremonial observances which is finally articulated in the following:

"Judaism has no established and irrevocable form. The argument of Chukas Hagoyim is perfectly absurd....After the French Revolution with the increasing intercourse of Jews and Gentiles, the forms were entirely revolutionizedReform means to advocate the essence of Judaism, to liberate the Hebrew mind of the chains of dead forms, to unlock the wonderful paradise of truth to the inquiring soul....It must not dissolve the bonds of union in Israel, on the contrary it must unite us in the spirit of truth. This is reform within the pale of Judaism."¹⁴⁴

This philosophy of reform is preached only to the extent that the progressive reforms of one section of Israel will not go so far as to separate it from the main body of Israel. We find again that Wise is moving closer to the Einhorn view when he says:

"In vain the so-called orthodox cling to this or that rabbinical law or dogma, superannuated long ago by the progress of science; Israelism only - the plain, simple, and natural doctrines of the Bible, the liberal, broad, and humane principles of the divine laws - has a future; The rest will go and it goes fast."¹⁴⁵

This liberal attitude in theory does not as yet manifest itself in practice, not at least so far as criticism of Einhorn is concerned. In ridiculing Einhorn's position he says "nobody believes that one must smoke cigars on Sabbath or eat pork in vindication of principle....reform for the sake of reform finds no favor with our people." ¹⁴⁶

In his appraisal of the proposals adopted at the Philadelphia Conference of 1869, Wise demonstrates a constructive type of liberalism. He concurs with the conference view that a religious divorce is superfluous in our day and that the civil decree is sufficient:

"The ritualistic divorce, Guet, never was considered a religious act and never had a religious character.....Bills of divorce must come from the lawful courts of the land, and all other bills of divorce are null and void." ¹⁴⁷

In several subsequent editorials Wise reiterates his stand that he considers "the ritual Guet" abolished but at the same time adds that the rabbi, before performing a second marriage, should make certain that a civil divorce had been obtained by the divorced person.

In regard to proselytism and circumcision, too, Wise rejects those elements of tradition which tend to base membership in the Jewish faith upon racialism. He says: "Abrahamitic circumcision is no necessary condition of entering Judaism and the omission of circumcision neither excludes an Israelite from the community of Israel, nor absolves him

of his duties."¹⁴⁸ He continues:

"Nobody has the shadow of a right to declare illegitimate the children of legally married parents, because either of them is a Gentile. If the marriage is sanctioned by the laws of the state, the offspring are legitimate. The child of a Jewish mother and a Gentile father and Gentile mother is Jewish."

Such were the views promulgated by Wise for the purpose of making practical adjustments to a free America. In this spirit he expressed his revulsion to the rite of Halitzah, and regarded the law which provides for a man's marrying his brother's childless widow as "inhuman."

Wise continues to deviate from his early position of insistence on ceremony and he quotes the rabbis to justify his stand: "Charity and deeds of mercy outbalance all the commandments of the Law." "Not that which goes into the mouth but that which comes out" determines the good Jew. These statements are directed against his orthodox contemporaries, but when he turns to his radical colleagues Wise still maintains that religious practice is central to the Jewish faith:

"It is true beyond doubt that man cannot do without forms, even if all of them were philosophers. There must be certain forms to direct our attention inwardly and outwardly, to satisfy and please the yearning soul, to fraternize multitudes, and to lead all on the path of righteousness. These forms must be adequate, in the purpose, sensible, pleasing, and in strict accordance with the laws of God."¹⁴⁹

In view of this statement, it is amazing to find Wise saying: "Let us look upon Pesach as represented in the rays of reasonThe Chad Gadyo, the moror, the Koss shell Eliyahuy, etc. are a burlesque upon the spirit of freedom....."

However, in the midst of the many types of innovations which were being promulgated all over the country, precisely at this time, Wise was urging the retention of such institutions as a daily Minyan, weddings in the temple, Bar Mitzvah in addition to Confirmation, etc.:

"We want twice every day Minyan in the temple for mourners, Jahrzeit and such other people who want to go there; we want the daily Minyan, even if some of the Minyan men must be salaried. We want every wedding in the temple and go outside under protest only; religious solemnities must take place in the house of public worship. We want every boy to say the benediction over the Torah on the Sabbath of his Bar Mitzvah, even if he has been confirmed already..."¹⁵¹

Wise sums up his objections to radical reform and its irresponsible sloughing off of ceremonies with:

"Abolish this and abolish that is called reform; Judaism is also called reform; hence to abolish this and that is Judaism, and then comes degeneration. They will never tell you what they believe, because in many instances, they do not know themselves. They will always tell what they believe not; their religion is negative."¹⁵²

Let us now trace the pattern of Wise's development over a period of years and see to what extent his orientation with respect to ceremonial observance had undergone any change. For this purpose an institution of major significance to Judaism - The Sabbath - has been selected. From the outset Wise confronts his readers with the ultimatum that no compromise can be made with regard to Shabbos. He carries on an intensive campaign to convince "his flock" to close their places of business on the Sabbath. Wise pours hail and brimstone

upon the heads of Holdheim and Einhorn "who work to abolish the Sabbath and give us the Sunday as a day of rest."¹⁵³

Wise would disqualify him who violates the Sabbath from holding office on the temple board.

"We consider it a disgrace for congregations to have officers who violate the Sabbath and are Jews when their convenience only would allow it. Therefore none in our congregation can hold an office who observes not the Sabbath and is not present in the synagogue whenever it is opened." ¹⁵⁴

As a result of this all-out effort for Sabbath observance Wise is happy to report some time later:

"There is scarcely any wholesale market on Sabbath, and one of the principal causes thereof is that a large number of Jewish houses transact no business on the Sabbath.' He urges congregations to call meetings for the purpose of observing the Sabbath; 'You are bodies constituted for the avowed purpose to maintain Judaism; the Sabbath is the corner stone of practical Judaism.'" ¹⁵⁵

The pace of his success is accelerated so that nearly a decade later Wise can report with justifiable pride: "Two-thirds of all Hebrew merchants of Cincinnati and four-fifths of all the members of the temple do no business on the Sabbath, so that Saturday is actually no business day for Cincinnati merchants."¹⁵⁶ Along with this plea for abstinence from work on the Sabbath is combined the theme of attending Sabbath Services with one's entire family. To this end Wise inaugurates the late Friday Evening Service on October 19, 1866. Through the years the constant cry of Wise, with respect to the transfer of the service to Sunday in Eastern temples is:

"Who gave those gentlemen the right to abolish the Sabbath?" Plum Street Temple upon the recommendation of its distinguished president, M. Loth, who later became the president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, repeatedly passes resolutions urging Sabbath observance.

When Kaufman Kohler, then rabbi of Sinai Congregation, introduced regular Sunday services in Chicago, a bitter debate commences in the columns of The Israelite. Wise quotes the reaction of a Chicago newspaper to Kohler's action as follows: "The Jews of this country are coming near a junction with the Christian faith."¹⁵⁴ Kohler abandoned the Sabbath on the grounds of "accommodation in religion." Wise opposes the principle of convenience as a determining factor in religious practice. More than objecting to the desecration of the Sabbath, Wise declares himself to be much more opposed "to the adoption of the Christian Sunday" in place of the Jewish Sabbath. "The day of Jesus' supposed resurrection can never become the Jew's Sabbath." Reacting vigorously to Wise's broadside, Kohler says that he regards the Sunday service to be "a kind of Shabbos Shayni" and continues:

"This privilege of holding an additional service on Sunday, I defended two years ago already, when, siding with Dr. Hirsch in Philadelphia against Wise, I referred to the custom of reading the Law on Monday and Thursday, introduced by the men of the Great Synagogue, for the benefit of those coming to the city on those days from country places where they could not hear the lesson of the week on Sabbath!"¹⁵⁸

In this Kohler received the unqualified support of Einhorn.

On the other hand, Wise met this challenge to the Sabbath forcefully. With unsurpassed vigor he lashes out against the radical reformers with the charge of willful destruction of the faith:

"We are possibly called upon to behold a contest, strange and inexplicable as it seems, waged by Jews against Jews in defense of the very life and soul of Judaism. The proposition is already mooted and somewhat actively canvassed, to change from the Jewish to the Christian day of worship; in other words, to abolish Saturday as Sabbath and adopt Sunday for this purpose. There is surely every reason for crying "Halt!" at this stage of the proceedings. The whole structure is endangered. We must pause in our mad career or be prepared for the consequences. We must desist from the ruthless work, or expect to look upon the spectacle of 'Israel destroyed.'"159

Editorials on Sabbath observance and resolutions by congregations on this subject now appear more frequently than heretofore. A variety of techniques are utilized by Wise to motivate Sabbath observance and to discredit the "Sunday service of the negative reformers" - such as the following appeal to the materialist:

"Had Mendel, the father of Moses Mendelsohn, and Amsel Rothschild not observed the Sabbath as God commanded, they never would have had the honor, the one to be the father of one of Israel's greatest men of modern times, and the other the founder of one of the greatest financial houses of the world which is a glory to their names and an honor to all Israel. May this sketch serve to induce thousands of Israelites to keep henceforth the Sabbath."160

Conscientiously pursuing his ideal, Wise proposed the following resolution at a Union convention:

"Resolved, that this council appoint a committee whose duty it shall be to draw up, circulate, obtain signatures to and have presented in proper form to the Congress of the United States and the legislatures of the various states a petition asking the enactment of laws, where such do not exist, enabling the Israelite to keep and observe the Sabbath according to the dictates of his conscience, and exempting him who so keeps the Sabbath from such Sunday laws and regulations which may interfere with his legitimate business."161

Thus through the years, Wise adheres to the proposition that the sanctity of the Sabbath is "one of the foundation stones" of our faith. In 1879, even after the breach between East and West had been healed, after Wise and Einhorn had "buried the hatchet," Wise continues his struggle against the Sunday service:

"No Jewish congregation will succeed in permanently establishing a Sunday service.....Nobody can serve two masters, and the Jews will not replace the Sabbath of the Decalogue by the Pope's Sunday. We cannot reproduce the thunders and lightening of Sinai; we cannot undo the Decalogue; and if we could, we would not dare to do it, because it would shake the very foundations of civilized society and cut Judaism loose from its basis. All the good that could be attained by a Sunday service can be fully reached by a Friday evening service, strictly within the pale of Judaism and to the satisfaction of all parties. Make proper arrangements everywhere for the Friday evening service and lecture, if you want to do something good."162

This demonstrates that, so far as Wise was concerned, the question of Sabbath observance went far beyond the realm of personal antagonism.

Another wedge between East and West, at least so far as the spokesmen of the two camps are concerned, was the observance of the dietary laws. Whenever Wise lapsed into a

personal attack on Einhorn or any member of his party, he generally made reference to his failure to desist from "eating pork, etc." As was pointed out above, Wise at first even insisted upon the proper ritual slaughtering of clean animals.¹⁶³ Again and again, he fulminates against the eating of "T'reyfoth." In an editorial on December 23, 1859, he especially stresses the prohibition against N'vaylo or forbidden beasts and fowls. It is not long before Wise qualifies his stringent stand on Kashruth, when he proclaims: "Religion.....is not in the kitchen or in the stomach."¹⁶⁴ Wise does continue to consider the eating of pig meat in violation of Jewish law.

With regard to the mixing of meat and milk Wise soon becomes more liberal. He permits the eating of meat with milk on the grounds that no rational reader "of the verse 'thou shalt not seethe the kit in the milk of its mother,' can discover in this verse anything beyond the prohibition to seethe a kit in the milk of its mother. Therefore we are forced to the admission that the Bible ordains not all those laws of the kitchen which we were taught."¹⁶⁵ However Wise does not deviate from his former position that ritually slaughtered meat is preferable especially at times and in places where cattle disease is prevalent:

"No cattle must be pronounced Kosher unless the Shochet has examined carefully the spleen and the kidneys. Every change in those members, either in color or texture, is and must be,

under the prevailing circumstances, considered as a sufficient cause of pronouncing the beef Trephah....No Shochet in Cincinnati will examine the lung of a beef before he has carefully examined the spleen and kidneys, and found them fully sound. Every change in these members makes the beef Trephah."166

On scientific grounds, too, he proceeds to expose the laxity of the radical reformers with respect to the eating of pig:

"When several years ago, some of our radicals forced upon the community the supposition that the dietary laws of Moses were based partly upon Egyptian superstitions and partly upon the generalization of Levitical laws among the Pharisees, we protested against the unwarranted assumptions, and maintained that none of those laws had been scientifically investigated to justify any attack on them, even if we admit that rabbinical laws of this category have not been made on scientific principles....The microscope has revealed the trichina, and the physicians have discovered the trichinosis, the disease or rather diseases, produced in the human body by eating pork or the flesh of other animals affected with this parasite."167

In 1877 we still find Wise defending Shechitah as a sound health measure in preventing disease:

"Some of those extraordinary humanitarians in Europe had hit upon the idea that the Jewish mode of slaughtering animals for food was cruel, until some of the most prominent professors of somatology convinced those animalitarians of their mistake, and so they have given up their opposition to a practice thousands of years oldOfficer Bachman will find no rotten meat shops among the Jews, and the Jewish butchers cannot well - not without risking their business - sell any but the meat of thoroughly sound cattle. That institution must be kept up among Jews until the Gentiles have learned and introduced it as the general practice."168

We see, then, that in addition to utilizing the question of adherence to the dietary laws as ammunition in his personal squabbles with members of the radical party, Wise remained a firm believer in the essential correctness of these laws.

Especially persistent was he in his campaign against pig meat. From the tenor of his attacks, there is no doubt that were Wise alive today, he would align himself with those forces with the reform movement in which abstention from pig meat is preached.

Thus in this chapter we have examined some of the differences between East and West in the matter of ceremonial observance. The usual reforms, like worship with uncovered head, organ in the synagogue, etc., appear not to have been a source of contention between the two parties. Only some practices which were universally accepted by the masses emerged as areas of disagreement. This should not surprise us if we remember that the radical reformers were bent upon molding a Judaism which would be acceptable to the intellectually advanced people in the community. They were frank to admit that their program was designed to serve a particular segment of the Jewish people; hence forms were considered extraneous.

CHAPTER V

TOWARD AN AMERICAN WORSHIP SERVICE

As soon as Wise entered the American ministry as rabbi of the Albany congregation, he saw the need for an American version of the prayer book. He felt that just as there had been a "Minhag Poland," etc., there is destined to emerge a Minhag America. Already at that time, after he had been in this country for only a few months, he assigned unto himself the task of editing this Minhag America. Wise soon was elected to the Beth Din in New York - in the autumn of 1846 - and was immediately empowered to work on a revision of the prayer book. When he arrived in New York with the Minhag America manuscript in the spring of 1847, he found that the Beth Din "was no more," and he returned to Albany feeling despondent. Wise was not one of those innovators who believed in editing a separate prayer book for his own congregation. He says: "Such proceeding is autocratic; I did not wish to sever the bond of synagogal unity." He decided to hold it in abeyance until a conference of rabbis would endorse it.¹⁶⁹ It was not until the Cleveland conference in 1855 that the opportunity presented itself for the implementation of the Minhag America project. For the purpose of liturgy revision a committee of four was appointed consisting of Wise, Rothenheim, Merzbacher, and Kalish. From this point on Wise published many editorials to prepare the public for the new prayer book. Even before Minhag America was off the press it was already attacked by Wise's opponents. Fearing that Minhag America

would replace the German prayer book, Rabbi Stein, a leading reformer in Germany, advised against this venture "because American congregations are not as far advanced as those in Germany."¹⁷⁰ Wise condemns this attitude as "sophistry, arrogance, and passion" and points out that the Minhag America project was undertaken for the purpose "of producing a union of synagogal forms of worship in America."

Wise then goes on to explain the theoretical basis for the prayer book. The primary objective was to trim down the service. To accomplish this Wise recommends "the removal of all kabalistic piyutim, the prayers for the restoration of the sacrificial cult, prayers founded on rabbinical fables, etc."¹⁷¹ In the same article he proposes to alter the pattern of the service by having the rabbi read a translation of the biblical portion and by curtailing Chazanuth in the religious service. "The principal reform needed is that there must be an expounder of the law in every Synagogue." Here we see Wise providing the preacher-rabbi with central position in the Synagogue. From this point on the preacher-rabbi emerges as the professional functionary of the synagogue. "Too much singing, chanting, and praying will wear out almost anybody." The sermon must become the pivotal point of the Jewish worship service. However, "the weekly sermon must remain Jewish in spirit,

dogma, and ethics." The weekly sermon is imperative in the reorganization of the American synagogue. The emphasis on Jewishness with regard to the sermon is directed against the radical rabbis whom Wise had been criticising for secularizing the pulpit.

In the next article on the synagogue, Wise suggests further revisions: "The prayers for the restoration of sacrifices, personal Messiah, and the restoration of the Davidic dynasty may be omitted."¹⁷² In the process of streamlining the service, Wise includes the following: "The service should conclude with a hymn, a prayer for the country, and a parting blessing." A plethora of editorials, both in analysis of changes and in rebuttal to the orthodox and ultra-reform parties of the East, are in evidence in The Israelite during this period. Minhag America finally appears in the summer of 1857, and the criticism from all parts of the country mounts, criticism which not infrequently descends to the level of personal insult. Such must have been the tone of Leeser's remarks, for in responding to him, Wise uses the theme "Leeser is sometimes completely deranged in his mind."¹⁷³ The publication of Minhag America was the only tangible achievement of the Cleveland conference. The use of Minhag America soon spread to all sections of the country, even to such conservative congregations as Rabbi Szold's Oheb Sholom in Baltimore. The radical reformers in the East, however, boycotted it.

Another innovation introduced by Wise in September, 1860, was the triennial cycle for reading of the Torah on Sabbath. This had a twofold purpose - to shorten the service and to curtail the noise during K'rias Ha-Torah. In this campaign for more decorum in the Synagogue, Wise recommends the development of an American synagogue by banishing such hyphenated synagogues as German, Polish, Portuguese American from the community:

"....not that they pray in either of these languages, no they talk and whisper in these tongues after and between the prayers."¹⁷⁴

After struggling with the triennial system for a decade, Wise conceded the impracticability of this system and returned to reading portions from the weekly Sidrah.

The prayer book issue evidently developed into a major dispute between East and West. Most all of the reform congregations in the East refused to adopt Minhag America on the grounds which did not amount to much more than personal jealousy. They looked upon Minhag America as Wise's prayer book. Moreover, had they been even willing to concede that it was the authorized version of the Cleveland conference, the fact that they violently opposed "the foul peace at Cleveland" would make the prayer book unpalatable to them. When Einhorn is appointed rabbi of Adath Jeshurun in New York, he accepted the call upon the condition "that mein Gebetbuch would be adopted in place of Minhag America."¹⁷⁵

When the orthodox group objects to Minhag America on the grounds that it is opposed to any alterations in the Siddur, Wise replies: "We have the same right to make Minhag America as our ancestors had to make a Minhag Poland and a Minhag Germany."¹⁷⁶ In reply to the orthodox Wise writes at length in defense of prayer book revision. The following approximates the theme of these polemics:

"All prayers for the restoration of a kingdom are plain falsehoods in the mouths of republican citizens. All prayers for the restoration of bloody sacrifices are immoral because the conscience of man of the nineteenth century shrinks at the idea of worshipping God by bloodshed. Divine worship must correspond entirely with the religious wants of every age. It must not be repugnant to taste doctrine or reason. It must edify and ennoble."¹⁷⁷

In this connection it should be noted that the Minhag America was a potent factor in bringing southern congregations around to reform. In reply to a complaint that Judaism is not flourishing in the South:

"One of the main reasons of the lethargy in the South regarding Judaism is because our brethren cling to a form of orthodoxy which they have outgrown long ago....Let the Southern congregations begin with introducing the Minhag America and they will see in a short while a magic change."¹⁷⁸

As a result of this appeal, letters to The Israelite indicate that many Southern congregations actually introduced the new prayer book.

All through the years Wise had been campaigning for a standardized prayer book. He was critical of the "hefkayroos"

in the Jewish worship service. Multifarious prayer books were in use. Each rabbi did "that which found favor in his eyes." The showdown came at the Philadelphia conference where Wise sought endorsement for Minhag America. He wished for this prayer book, or a revised version of it, to become the authorized prayer book of the conference. Through the machinations of the East Wise's proposal was buried in committee. In a sermon denouncing this action as another symbol of "deformation in place of reformation" Wise cries out with indignation:

"They understood readily the principle involved in the words Minhag America, reformation to suit the taste and the spirit of the age, without running into deformation, without breaking asunder the holy bonds which unite the people of Israel to one fraternity from Abraham to this day, and from pole to pole. There stand those glorious Minhag America temples, the harp of Judah resounds in them with holy glee and seraphic fire..... flashes of light in them proclaim powerfully, forms change, principles not." 179

In the summer of the same year when Wise called a conference of rabbis in Cleveland for the purpose of revising Minhag America, Einhorn and the East were absent. So eager was Wise for a uniform liturgy that he called another meeting several months later; this time in Einhorn's own bailiwick--New York. All this conciliation failed to move the East, and this conference, too, was boycotted by the leading Eastern rabbis:

"Rev. Dr. Mayer, on behalf of the invitation committee, reported that they called on Rev. Dr. Einhorn who could not be found at home. Rev. Dr. Gutheim was in favor of the union and would reflect on the subject. Rev. Dr. Adler was in favor of union, but wished that

all rabbis and representatives of congregations be convoked to the purpose. Rev. Dr. Mielziner was not found at home. A letter of the chairman to Rev. Dr. Einhorn had not been answered."180

Wise's time honored formula "that no man has a right to impose his own form of worship upon the congregation" was endorsed by the New York conference. Wise reports that Minhag America will be the basis of the conference prayer book and hopes that this will do away with the anarchy in the American synagogue:

"It is the first book of this kind coming before the congregations with the recommendation of a conference, composed of acknowledged scholars, able critics, and earnest men. This will set a stop to all the reform noise by unripe individuals who cover their deficiencies in scholarship and talent by unprincipled declamations on reform and prayer-book making. The congregations will henceforth, in matters of divine worship, be able to point to enactments of a liberal and enlightened conference of able and acknowledged teachers in Israel."181

However, Wise's correspondent in New York reported that while it is true that Minhag America was introduced into the Beth Israel Temple of Hartford, Connecticut, the other reform congregations in the East continue to refuse to use Wise's prayer book.

Another area of conflict between East and West that grew out of synagogue ritual was the extent to which the Hebrew language was to be used in the worship service. How much Hebrew if any was to be included in the modern prayer book? Should Hebrew be taught in reform religious

schools? These sound like contemporary problems confronting most all rabbis in 1949. But already in Wise's time the precise role of Hebrew was confusing to the modernist. After visiting some of the cities in 1857, Wise returns shocked at the illiteracy of the pupils. He ascribes this ignorance to "this new-fangled Christian system" in our religious schools where Hebrew is purged from the curriculum:

"Loudly and vehemently we protest against the unpardonable negligence of Hebrew instruction and the forgetfulness of our national literature. We protest against this new-fangled Christian system because it is pregnant with the ruin of Judaism."¹⁸³

When Wise visits Har Sinai in Baltimore in 1860, he rebukes Einhorn for neglecting the Hebrew language in his school and for restricting "religious instruction to three hours weekly."¹⁸⁴ Again and again does Wise emphasize the need for a more adequate Jewish education whose core is the Hebrew language. Inasmuch as his whole approach to Jewish life in America was motivated by the principle of unity, it is not surprising to find Wise laying so much stress on Hebrew. Wise looked upon Hebrew as a unifying force in his long range plans for a united American Jewry and for the ultimate emergence of an American Judaism. In criticizing the elimination of Hebrew from the worship service of some Eastern reform temples, Wise says:

"The individual must pray in the language he knows best but these services must be conducted in Hebrew not merely to maintain the union of Israel in the synagogue but to maintain the

language of the bible in the mouth of Israel. Hymns, prayers, sermon in English but the main portion of the divine service must remain in Hebrew k'day sheloh tishtakach Torah miYisroel."¹⁸⁵

Notice how prophetic Wise was in this respect; he saw clearly the correlation between illiteracy and irreligion.

Every time some misguided reformer proudly reports to Wise, via the letters to the editor section, that his congregation is "really reformed" because Hebrew has been completely eliminated from the worship service, Wise replies, rejecting this pattern of reform: "Take away the Hebrew from the synagogue and school and you take the liberty of conscience from the Israelite....this is not the object of reform - not on ignorance, on knowledge the hope of your cause is based."¹⁸⁶ As time goes by Wise sees the shadow of ignorance lurking in the congregational religious school and attributes this situation to the lack of emphasis on and even the complete elimination of the Hebrew language in the curriculum:

"All Hebrew schools in which the pupils are not taught to read and understand the Hebrew Bible are perfectly useless, and we do solemnly protest against their existence. They deceive parents and children alike...they rob Israel of the rising generation and Judaism of its sons and daughters. Catechisms are an assistance to the Bible study or they are nothing. Hebrew schools for religious instructions must enable the pupils to read the Hebrew Bible, or else they are worse than useless."¹⁸⁷

In a subsequent editorial he reiterated the same sentiments: "We prefer the entire abolition of the catechism, except

to the confirmation class, to the abolition of Hebrew. Our Bible is Hebrew; our children must be able to read it. Give up the Hebrew and the next generation is the slave of the rabbi, as the dominant sectarians are the tools of their priests."¹⁸⁸

It was Wise who at every conference pushed through resolutions memorializing the congregations to lay greater emphasis upon the Hebrew language both in the worship service and in the religious school. A perusal of the minutes of these conferences would verify this. Even the Philadelphia conference, which was dominated by Einhorn, was obliged to pass a resolution on the importance of Hebrew. In criticizing the mildness of this statement, Wise in a later editorial "gives a plug" to Minhag America and says:

"The object then must be to find the proportion acceptable to each congregation. Therefore we must have a Hebrew prayer book and another in the vernacular, and leave it to the choice of each congregation, how much of each is to be chosen. So we do in the Minhag America. To prescribe for all congregations, this and so much must be read in this or that worship, is folly and petty despotism. Give them the proper material, and let each congregation choose to suit himself."¹⁸⁹

In another broadside at the detractors of the holy tongue at Philadelphia, Wise writes:

"Do away with the Hebrew, adopt translations of the Bible, and in one century interpreters will have disfigured its contents to the very brink of destruction, as those have done who finally were obliged to prohibit the reading of the Bible altogether, or those who read out of it the conflicting opinions of several hundred sects. The rabbis understood this point well, and said the Hebrew must be preserved."¹⁹⁰

As late as 1875 we still find Wise taking time out from the sundry activities that were burdening him at that time to write pro-Hebrew editorials. In reply to his correspondent "Maftir" who evidently felt that it was in vogue to characterize Hebrew as "the dead Hebrew which neither attracts nor enlivens." Wise says:

"The way he characterizes this tongue is very unbecoming of a writer who seems to have the cause of Judaism at the very heart....The Hebrew language is the palladium of our existence as a religious people. And an institution which offers so much life and vigor to Judaism cannot be termed 'the dead Hebrew,' and we do not alone 'still think that this tongue leads to godliness,' but we are, by means of good experience, fully convinced that the knowledge of the Hebrew language is the only 'fire and burglar-proof safe' of our holiest and choicest spiritual treasures. Judaism cannot and will not die as long as the knowledge of the Hebrew language lives."191

Hence we may conclude that Wise was first and foremost a tenacious fighter for the unity of Israel. Inasmuch as this unity was a prerequisite for the development of an American Judaism, he made this goal the chief motivation of his written and spoken word. In so far as the Hebrew language served this end he promoted its retention. One might even go a step further and say that Wise was a staunch friend of the Hebrew language because he was convinced of its preserving qualities.

Perhaps one of the major sources of antagonism in the debate on proper changes in the worship service was the use of the German language in American synagogues. As was pointed out in the introduction Wise, in contradistinction to Einhorn, never received a systematic

university education. Hence his allegiance to German was decidedly at a minimum. While Einhorn made a fetish out of the German language, consistently refusing to preach in English, Wise threw German overboard and in its place made English the vernacular of the temple. Einhorn's attitude might be compared to that of the orthodox rabbi who refused to preach in any language but Yiddish. Einhorn's attachment to German is similar to the orthodox rabbi's attachment to Yiddish.

In 1858 Einhorn was still offering prayers in German on behalf of his "Vaterland," and Wise was reminding him that his is an American synogogue and that "no other land except this and its institutions should be embraced in our prayers."¹⁹² In these early years when Wise is constantly trying to convince the Jewish public of the need for English preaching and English prayers so that an American Judaism might evelve, he meets with opposition from the East. Inasmuch as most of his reading and listening audiences were first generation Germans, he certainly had a difficult obstacle to overcome. Rarely does he miss an opportunity to hold forth against the attempt "to Germanize the American synagogue:"

"The Hebrew text will make a deeper impression on the soul of the Israelite than the German will make. Let us have our Torah and Psalms always in the original Hebrew and some prayers in the vernacular of the country, but let the synagogue be a Hebrew and not a German institution. Let us also have the sermons in English."¹⁹³

Wise becomes more specific and starts to campaign for an English sermon in every synagogue. He says in part: "To germanize American Judaism....they call that reform, we call it retrogression. The American synagogue should either retain Hebrew...or introduce English as the new vernacular. To be understood by the people, at least part of the divine service and the sermon must be in the English language." Wise demonstrates that all synagogue reforms are worthless if the synagogue does not become americanized; it must become American in form and spirit. We need rabbis who can and will preach in English and thereby be understood by the rising generation. This theme runs a steady streak in the early writings of Wise. He wishes for the liturgy to be thoroughly modernized and Americanized.

After his failure to achieve his ends at the Philadelphia conference in 1869, Wise embarks on an even more intensive campaign to discredit the German preachers. No doubt the German element had attacked him on the personal level. His aim is to banish German completely from the synagogue.

"The great majority of our people and all our children are completely Americanized in language, habits, views, principles, and prejudices. We can not be germanized. Therefore all our German preachers and writers might have worked ever so successfully, they could not have reached the masses....All your German prayers, prayer books, sermons, and publications are local, and exercise no influence whatever outside of your circles....If you wish to maintain and advance your position, you must cling to the vernacular of your circles." 194

He points out that those who preach in German are the very ones who by their negative preachments convey a skeptical attitude to the parishioner.

"They forget that they are no longer in the skeptical Germany of twenty-five years ago, that this present generation and this country expect positive religion, positively spoken, and tangibly illustrated...Our children listen to the German lessons on religion as long as they must, without affection and without devotion, without the proper understanding...leap as fast and far from it as they possibly can. The young people do not care to be German scholars in order to be Jews and so in fact they are neither." 195

Wise shows that a Union of American congregations in spirit as well as in deed is almost impossible with German prayers and hymns. He makes a special point of showing how the second generation feels strange in the German synagogue.

"We want you, however, at the same time, to confess that all your German prayer books, sermons, and periodicals fail to impress favorably and lastingly your own offspring, to win them or anybody else for your cause. You must naturalize and incorporate Judaism in this country, if you intend to see it respected and loved by your children. You must throw open your doors of the temple to your neighbors, by English prayers, hymns, sermons, and publications if you want them to appreciate your pretensions. ...Do it in the language understood by all - that is the reformer's business in the American temple." 196

Thus Wise carried on a struggle against German in order to break down one of the chief obstacles to Jewish unity. To achieve a uniform liturgy and to produce text books which would convey the teachings of Judaism to the younger

generation necessitated this fight against the worshippers of German. It is needless to point out that in the end Wise emerged triumphant. The English language soon replaced the German in most German temples. With regard to Wise's insistence upon Hebrew, one may conclude, looking at the reform synagogue from a modern perspective, that Hebrew has shown an amazing capacity for constant rejuvenation in face of the many onslaughts directed against it. Today Hebrew still retains its place in the reform service. The Minhag America played an important role in the successful campaign that finally brought American Jewry around to the point of integrating the English language into the worship service. It also functioned as a force for unity in the early American Jewish community. From amidst this struggle and strife did finally emerge the American worship service which is today in use in the reform synagogue of America.

CHAPTER VI EAST-WEST CONFLICT AS REFLECTED IN AMERICAN POLITICS

In regard to the propriety of a clergyman to dabble in politics, Wise had mixed feelings. On the one hand he writes frequently against politics in the pulpit, the minister of religion should "preach the Word of God for that is his vocation;" while on the other hand, we find Wise seriously considering accepting the Democratic Party's nomination as their candidate for State Senator in 1863.¹⁹⁷ In the latter case he considers "the service I might render to my country not altogether unessential." However, it must be stated in Wise's defense that so far as political action is concerned he hewed to the line of "no politics for the professional religionist." That this policy was adhered to might be deduced from the fact that in The Israelite one finds the bare minimum of editorials on political subjects. Only when the Jew is maligned by age-old falsehoods does Wise rise up in defense of his people. Thus when Wise becomes aware of the fact that a stipulation in the American-Swiss treaty might be used to discriminate against American Jewish merchants, he roars like a lion in defiance. From a perusal of the communications published in The Israelite in the weeks following Wise's editorial on September 13, 1857, it becomes readily apparent that Wise had succeeded in mobilizing the Jewish community to fight for the removal of the restrictive clause.

Aside from an occasional hymn of praise to American democracy, Wise does not become again politically conscious

until the Civil War period. The news of Lincoln's election had been received in the South with alarm; the secession of several Southern states was imminent. It was in this crisis situation that Wise embarked upon a campaign to save the Union. In an editorial at the height of these secessionist activities, Wise makes a strong plea for Union:

"We know that every seceded state weakens this land...Destroy not this temple of freedom. This great and blessed land was not reserved for schismatics and separatists; it is for God and freedom which to protest we must have the power of union. The union must be maintained."198

When South Carolina seceded from the Union, Wise says "The beginning of the end has come....the fanatics in both sections of the country succeeded in destroying the most admirable fabric of government." Particularly harsh is his criticism of the Abolitionists whom he calls "red republicans and habitual revolutionaries." In the same editorial Wise becomes very despondent over the Republican victory and says: "We maintain that the Republican party must be killed off forever by constitutional guarantees to the South...or the Union must be dissolved." So indignant was he that he was ready to curb democratic rights and outlaw a bona fide political party.

On the other hand, Einhorn was a fiery abolitionist who, soon after the outbreak of hostilities, was driven out of Baltimore. Not only was Einhorn a revolutionary

in religion, but consistent with prevailing German anti-slavery opinion in America, he was a radical in politics too. In an article evidently aimed at Einhorn, Wise lumps together radicalism in religion and radicalism in politics and says: "Radicalism will not do in any province of human activity....radicalism will not do in politics because there are historical rights...thousands of interests connected with the existing state of affairs which will not yield to theories....Seward and Hale will either be beaten by compromise or succeed in dissolving the Union.... this same radicalism deprives a man of religion." Thus Wise takes a middle-of-the-road position in order to preserve the Union. Before the first real battle at Bull Run in the summer of 1861, Wise repeatedly calls for compromise. However, the fact that he consistently prints sermons and letters-to-the-editor that are anti-North, seems to convey the impression that he is decidedly more anti-abolitionist than anti-secessionist. In this connection the fact that Wise had always been a "States' rights" man and the fact that Cincinnati was in close proximity to the South should be borne in mind. For instance, the sermon of the pro-Southern Rabbi Hochheimer of Baltimore, whose general theme was "from the north the evil shall fall upon the inhabitants of the land" (Jer. 1.13), was printed in full. Pro-North articles, on the other hand, appear at very infrequent intervals.

Concerning the issue of slavery one could see from the

outset that Wise had no sympathy for this inhuman institution. In criticizing Rabbi Raphall who had defended slavery on religious grounds, Wise says: "Rabbi Raphall's idea that the Negroes are descendents of Ham is without any foundation either biblical or scientific...that among all the nonsense imposed upon the Bible, the greatest is to suppose that the Negroes are the descendents of Ham, and the curse of Noah is applicable to them...we cannot see how the curse of Noah could take effect on unborn generations."²⁰¹ Though he was bitterly anti-abolitionist Wise never became a pro-slavery person. The Halachic articles on the general subject of "Polygamy and Slavery," which appeared in The Israelite in November, 1864, demonstrate that Wise considered the provisions for slavery in the Bible as a humanizing influence upon the primitive oriental institution of slavery. Never does one find Wise preach for the perpetuation of slavery in the United States. His failure to take a strong stand against slavery may be explained by the fact that he refused to make this an issue for fear that the Union might remain permanently disrupted. For Wise the abolition of slavery was a moral question and since the North was not morally superior to the South why make an issue of slavery?

"Slavery, there was slavery in some parts of this country ever since it had a political existence; still from 1776 until 1861 we enjoyed the blessings of liberty in profound peace among ourselves, the enmity and violent

opposition of north and south are but a few years old, and it cannot be denied that twenty years ago public morals were much better both north and south than just now. Therefore we do not suppose slavery to be the cause of the moral degeneration. It may be the cause of this war, of the political rupture; still we cannot see its influences on the morals of Cincinnati, New York, and Boston or any other state or town without slavery."²⁰⁵

However, with regard to the other political issues in the struggle, Wise soon clamped down a self-imposed censorship. He denounced preaching politics from the pulpit as well as general political activity on the part of clerics. Evidently this was directed against the East where both rabbis and ministers were constantly preaching on political subjects. He was particularly critical of the abolitionist activities of the "Protestant Priests." Wise must also have had in mind the abolitionist work of Einhorn. Because of the excitement that prevails on both sides, Wise writes an editorial "Silence Our Policy," in which he expresses the wish to remain neutral in the conflict:

"We cannot choose sides in this conflict, not only because we abhor the idea of war, but also we have dear friends and near relations, beloved brethren and kinsmen in either section of the country, that our heart bleeds in thinking of their distress, of the misery that might befall them. Therefore silence must be our policy, silence on all questions of the day, until a spirit of conciliation shall move the hearts of the millions to a better understanding of the blessings of peace, freedom, and union...we shall be obliged to abstain entirely from all and every commentary on the odd occurrences of the day."²⁰²

Wise was widely denounced both by Jews and non-Jews for his silence at a time when his country was in a crisis and when his leadership was so sorely needed. When a Rev. Conway attacks him for remaining silent, he replies:

"Permit me to say I never preach on politics, my congregation appointed me to bring them that consolation and instruction that religion offers. I consider The Israelite the same medium between the public and my humble self as the pulpit is between my congregation and their preacher...therefore I write no politics in The Israelite."203

Inasmuch as this policy of silence is carried out to the extreme, we rarely get reports on the military and political developments of the War. It goes without saying that abolitionist sermons never as much as received mention in The Israelite, let alone the report of its contents. This explains why from the pages of The Israelite we learn very little of the activities of Einhorn and the Eastern rabbis. Even when he brings together a list of religious leaders who are active abolitionists for the purpose of ridicule, he somehow seems to ignore Einhorn. Wise writes at length on "the wrong influence of the church" and condemns "abolition priesthood" for comparing themselves to the Hebrew Prophets.

"Protestant Priests who inflamed the passions of the multitude are responsible....for the rebellion. Let the priests attend to their business and meddle not in politics....these priests...the Parkers, the Beechers, the Browns, had forgotten their vocation and harped abolitionism. This bloody drama... is due...in good measure to the unhappy

interference of the Priests both Protestant and Catholic in political matters....Had the American Priests occupied themselves less with abolitionism and attended more to their duties, the morals of the community would be much better than they are at present."²⁰⁴

On the other hand, one rarely finds any criticism directed against the Confederacy. The fact that he does not print northern material may be counterposed with the not infrequent printing of prayers for the victory of the Confederate forces.²⁰⁶ This orientation to the war got Wise into trouble with many prominent persons in American intellectual circles. From time to time Wise publishes one of these complaining letters and then editorially tries to defend himself..The editor of Harper's Weekly, for instance, attacks Wise for being "a secessionist, a copperhead, and a rebel," but then continues the article in an anti-semitic vein. Could it be that Wise's writings stimulated this anti-semitism?

That anti-semitism was a factor in the attacks against anti-northern Jews, no one familiar with the facts will deny. The question that suggested itself to the writer of these lines after a survey of the "Anti-semitica" accumulated from the pages of The Israelite was: Was not anti-semitism prevalent in the South, too, during the Civil War period? Then why does not Wise report these repulsive instances, too? Why does Wise continually harp on the anti-semitism

of the Abolitionists? To answer this question we must first determine whether Wise was giving the news items of The Israelite an anti-Northern slant for political considerations.

Wise denounces Senator Wilson of Massachusetts for using the Jewishness of Judah Benjamin, a Jew who held several Cabinet posts in the Confederacy, to deride the South: "Wilson condescended to vulgar prejudices in order to satisfy the roused passions of the North."²⁰⁷ Wise proceeds to condemn the Congressional law which restricts a chaplaincy in the Army "to one of the Christian denominations." In a subsequent editorial he contrasts the qualifications of rabbis with those of "Protestant Priests" and says:

"The Hebrew preachers are no politicians, while the Christian clergy openly and violently preached from the pulpit for the Republican ticket and helped to elect the present authors of these generous laws. The Hebrew rabbis proved to be conservative in politics while Christian clergymen are the most violent abolitionists. In 1865 it shall be our care to dethrone the Dynasty."²⁰⁸

Here, of course, Wise completely overlooks the activities of Einhorn. Frequently he uses the argument that the "abolitionist scamps" are really insincere; for while struggling for the emancipation of the Negro do they not at the same time besmirch the Jewish people. With regard to the Chaplain Law, Wise reports a protest meeting which was held in Baltimore for the purpose of removing the

anti-Jewish provision. Rabbis Szold and Hochheimer are reported to have addressed that meeting while Einhorn did not participate in any fashion.²⁰⁹ What makes the reader highly suspicious of Wise's motives is the fact that the question of Jewish Chaplaincies is never raised against the South. So far as is known the South never officially appointed a Jewish Chaplain, while the North was at least amenable to pressure. On many occasions Wise writes articles against the Chaplaincy Law, which in the end bear fruit. For as a result of this barrage of propaganda several Jewish Chaplains are known to have served with the Union forces.

Wise's attitude towards the Negro was not an altogether healthy one. While denouncing the Abolitionists for their anti-Jewishness, he accuses them of the fact "that they worship his black majesty, 'King Negro.'"²¹⁰ This and other anti-Negro remarks show that Wise was not unsympathetic to the Southern attitude towards the Negro. This does not mean to say that Wise condoned Slavery; as was shown above, he did not.

Wise continues to attack the Northern preachers who constantly invoke the phrase, "the Jew Benjamin," as the person responsible for the sundry sins of the South:

"Shame on the nineteenth century if a parson dare abuse in a church the very people that gave him religion. Why does the parson always pick up the Jew Benjamin - why not the Catholic Slidell, the Protestant Mason?" 211

By far the most outrageous incident of anti-semitism was the infamous Grant Affair. In the late months of 1862 General Grant issued an order barring Jews from Kentucky and two neighboring states. This was the famous Order Number 11. Protest meetings were held in Louisville, Cincinnati, and several other cities. In Cincinnati Wise and Lillienthal and several prominent Christians were appointed to a committee to go to Washington and see the President. When Wise and his party had arrived in Washington, they found that the decree had been nullified already by Lincoln through the efforts of a Mr. Kaskell from Paducah. In any event they were received by Lincoln who made a profound impression upon Wise and his party:

"Having expressed our thanks for the promptness and dispatch in revoking General Grant's order, the President gave utterance to his surprise that General Grant should have issued so ridiculous an order, and added - 'to condemn a class is, to say the least, to wrong the good with the bad. I do not like to hear a class or nationality condemned on account of a few sinners.' The President, we must confess, fully illustrated to us and convinced us that he knows of no distinction between Jew and Gentile, that he feels no prejudice against any nationality, and that he by no means will allow that a citizen in any wise be wronged on account of his place of birth or religious confession." 212

However, Jewish leaders kept up a constant clamor for a denunciatory resolution on the part of Congress against Grant. The same issue of The Israelite reports that Senator Powell of Kentucky and Congressman Pendleton actually presented resolutions to this end in both

Houses of Congress. In later years when Grant was being considered for the Presidential nomination, it was Wise who organized a country-wide campaign against the Union General.

"The Israelite has no intention of meddling with politics except when men like Grant, Butler, etc., and others of this kind ~~was~~ abused and outraged the Jew.....Therefore we hope and expect that the entire Jewish press will come out against the movement to nominate General Grant as president of the United States."²¹³

An interesting sidelight, which in effect is an outgrowth of his political orientation during the Civil War period, was Wise's reaction to Lincoln. When Lincoln visited Cincinnati after he had been elected President, Wise refused to participate in a banquet given in the new president's honor. Wise saw in him the symbol of Republican Abolitionism against which he fought so bitterly during recent months.

"The Philistines from all corners of the land congregate around their Dagon and worship him...wait till he has done something, then give him the honor...he looks like the country squire for the first time in the city...he will look queer²¹⁴

in the White House with his primitive manner!" Wise even goes as far as to criticize Lincoln's ability in using the English language properly. When Lincoln uses the term

Christianity loosely, Wise says: "In Springfield Religion is called Christianity...Lincoln's style of writing is so careless and without any successful attempt at either correctness or elegance that he must not be criticized in using this or that word in expressing an idea."²¹⁵ During the period that followed the Grant affair Wise becomes convinced of the

essential decency of Lincoln, and writes several complimentary items regarding his personality. On August 19, 1864 Wise reverts to his harshness as of yore when he refers to Lincoln as "one with a thousand and one characteristics of imbecility." After Lincoln is assassinated Wise delivers a sermon which is remarkable for its high praises for the man whom he had ridiculed through the years: "This Abraham Lincoln who endeared himself to so many millions of hearts...whom myriads of freed men consider their savior...his triumphs and mortifications, his hopes and fears were for the people."²¹⁶

Thus we see that all during the Civil War period Wise was in large measure friendly towards the South, though he was not pro-slavery. His was a passion for Union above all else, and he was willing to compromise the basic issues in the conflict between the States. In analyzing Wise's pro-Southern attitude two considerations, which in all likelihood swayed him, emerge: the fact that Cincinnati was so close to the Mason-Dixon line; and from a perspective of the East-West conflict in Jewish life, the fact that the congregations that were influenced by Wise were mostly located in the South and in the Mid-West. More than half of the subscriptions to The Israelite came from Southern communities. It is for this reason that the first successful attempt to unify Jewish life in America takes place only after the East had been discounted by Wise and a Union of West-South congregations is cemented. No doubt that Wise's anti-North editorials did much to further alienate the strongly pro-Union party of Einhorn when it came to cooperation in Jewish life.

CHAPTER VII

THE PERSONAL FEUD BETWEEN WISE AND EINHORN

In the growth and development of any great movement in History the element of personality plays a major role. The heroes of History lead multitudes of men and provide initiative in moulding the ideas which make for change. Men of great stature have^{so} left their imprint upon their times that entire ages have been designated by their names. The Age of Caesar, The Age of Metternich, The Age of Jackson, etc., serve to demonstrate the point. In Jewish History too, this principle may be found operative. If one were to designate a personality for the latter part of the nineteenth century in American Jewish life, he would find that the choice is limited to two rabbis, Einhorn and Wise. Because they were pioneers in the matter of religious reform in America, each left his impress upon a developing American Judaism. The vast range of ideas upon which they disagreed naturally lead to personal antagonism. It is this antagonism which underlies the specific areas of disagreement that will here be discussed. However, it is not presumptive to conclude that even Einhorn's partisans would agree that this was the Age of Wise.

Before Einhorn came to America, Wise wrote an editorial in which he agreed with Rabbi L. Stern's remarks concerning the qualifications of David Einhorn who had just been elected Rabbi in Philadelphia: "Dr. Einhorn is a man of philosophical mind and vast learning, and will cause a new era to begin in Philadelphia.....if the Philadelphia congregation falls not

into radical reforms, which we hope they will not, they will be in a short time the largest congregation in Philadelphia." ²¹⁷

But after Einhorn's inaugural sermon the fireworks began.

Einhorn bitterly resented Wise's omission of several important parts of his sermon and questions his motive:

"It is true that the omitted passages stand little in harmony with the foul peace of Cleveland, according to which all Israelites must believe in the infallible exegese of the Talmud. Whether this grants the right to mutilate the property of another man, respectively excommunicated, whether the heads of the holy league dare avail themselves of such means in the accomplishment of their purposes, in their repenting zeal, we leave to the decision of the public." ²¹⁸

Then commences a whole series of articles by Einhorn and Wise interspersed with personal allusions. Einhorn calls Wise a "traitor" for accepting the Cleveland conference compromise which stipulates that the Talmud is binding, and Wise calls Einhorn "a Deist and a Unitarian and a Seducee" who is eager to take over Jewish leadership in America. Evidently Einhorn's attacks against Wise and against the Talmud had reached major proportions, when Wise in a leading editorial really berates "the Feurbach of Baltimore" and says:

"By this attitude towards the Talmud Wise declares that Einhorn has publicly declared his secession from the religion of his fathers and has herolded himself as the apostle of deistical rationalism... 'He is a self-deluded and over-ambitious man seeing all things in a wrong position... But as he in his blind zeal dips his pen in the warm-hearted blood of our people and writes disgrace and cummy upon the bones of our ancestors... I conceive it my duty to ask him to reclaim his statement... Einhorn's statement reads: 'The Talmud's morals are

narrow-minded. The sublime, world-embracing spirit of the Bible is foreign to it.' 219

"Wise heatedly exclaims: 'I declare that there is not one true word in the above passage. It is either malicious and slanderous calumny, or it is the product of deranged brains.' Wise proceeds to quote eight authoritative Christian and Jewish works with regard to the high moral standards contained in the Talmud: 'I must protest, for according to Dr. Einhorn not only all our ancestors were narrow-minded and immoral men and Eisen-Meeger, Robert Ingilis and McCaul and the other persecutors of the Jews were right, but with "narrow morals, narrow conceptions," they must be and have been for centuries past, stupid rascals.' Einhorn, you should not have thrown this lie in our face! No, you should not have given the sword of lies into the hands of our opponents. You should not so far have forgotten that your father was a Jew, and you heap disgrace upon his decayed bones.' He then calls upon Einhorn to 'reclaim publicly your slanderous and false representations of the Jew and Judaism.' As long as you remain an enemy of Jews and Judaism I am your opponent, but shall not enter into public controversey with you."

Writing in this vein, calling Einhorn an enemy of Judaism and inviting him to become a Unitarian, continues for several years. There must have been attacks of an extreme personal nature in Einhorn's newspaper to have brought forth such an outpouring of wrath on the part of Wise. For Wise continually complains of the "ungentlemanly and unbecoming language in the Sinai." The issues around which these personal assaults were verbalized stemmed from the major theme Radical Reform versus Moderate Reform. Instead of answering Einhorn's arguments against the Talmud directly, Wise accuses him of plagiarism by saying: "his ideas are a second edition of Holdheim's works."

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After harping for a while on Einhorn's statement that Religion consists of "axioms of the human mind", Wise decides

to boycott Einhorn. Except for an occasional broadside against Einhorn, Wise ignores Har Sinai and not a word is said regarding the progress of that congregation. Detailed news of the achievements of the other Baltimore congregations appears frequently in the columns of The Israelite. Might this be an instance of Wise's applying to Einhorn the well-known newspaper technique called "the silent treatment"? This was from September 1856 to the end of 1857. When Wise was tendered a banquet by the Baltimore community for his participation in the Committee to protest the restrictive clauses of the American-Swiss treaty, Einhorn was reported not to have been present. Subsequently Einhorn's congregation formed its own committee and independently protested to Washington. The following serves to sum up Wise's feelings towards Einhorn after months of silence; "the pseudo-Messiah Sabbattai Zevi declared himself first as the redeemer of Israel in the year 1636; in America his office was usurped by the Radical party in 1858." 221

Wise carries the fight into Einhorn's own city by again going to Baltimore for another banquet tendered in his honor at which occasion he says in criticism of the Einhorn group:

"...it means to throw off everything that characterizes Judaism in its practical appearance....are you not convinced by the enthusiastic demonstration for me that the majority of Baltimore Jews 'where they had the whole field for themselves' are not in favor of either form of ultra-Judaism. Must they finally not be convinced that the days of ultraism are numbered?" 222

That Wise was not personally involved with all the other

eastern Reformers is shown by his defense of Rabbi Adler of Temple Emanuel. Wise calls Adler an "excellent spirit" when the latter is attacked for delivering secular sermons.

In the Einhorn-Szold controversey, Wise supported the conservative Rabbi Szold in the columns of The Israelite. He calls the language of the leader of "radical salvation", "the phraseology of scandalism and the malice of shipwrecked individuals." When a reader complains against the abusive language used against Einhorn in The Israelite, Wise replies:

"...the style of which the gentlemen complain justly was introduced in our American Literature by Dr. Einhorn.... before he came to this country that sort of 'brilliant writing' was the phraseology of village lawyers and stump speakers. In theological controversey we did not make use of gross personalities. The style you condemn is Dr. Einhorn's, his is the honor of ingenious invention. Why did the New York gentlemen not censure the sin of so improper an attack upon a stranger---Rabbi Szold? Einhorn's reply to Szold is full with personal abuses and invectives of the grossest kind. Szold replied in the Einhornian style. Stop the contemptible phraseology on all sides." 223

All through the Einhorn-Szold affair Wise consistently supports Szold. However, all during the Divil War period, after the star of Einhorn had fallen by virtue of his expulsion from Baltimore, Wise refrains from attacking him personally. Several years later, a rapprochement seems to have taken place between the two leaders of Reform, for Wise reports in glowing terms his visit with Einhorn:

"I paid a visit to the Rev. Dr. Einhorn who was kind enough to show me the Temple...a magnificent monument of Jewish piety. The enterprise and energy of this congregation, its profound peace and harmony, coupled with the brilliant talent and enthusiastic zeal of the Rev. Dr. Einhorn secures their progress, and the only fault in that new Temple is in its being too small." 224

Wise appears to be paving the way for a resumption of his

campaign for Union and Seminary. Wise even refers to Einhorn's sermon on slavery as "a fine piece of pulpit eloquence worthy of the genius of the author".

This calling a halt to personal warfare lasted till the period after the Philadelphia Conference of 1869. Due to the personal fights engendered by the conference, Wise discloses the dubious methods employed by Einhorn to have Wise discharged from his Cincinnati pulpit:

"Last year a whole phalanx of rabbis and their adjutants published a protest, with the special intention to write Mayer and Wise out of the pale of Judaism. Dr. Einhorn on that occasion was so very charitable and humble, as to go and see the president of our congregation, and in a very touching manner gave him to understand, how welcome it would be to the Almighty's special policemen if that Wise could be got out of the way, in a nice, lawful and decent manner, of course. We were quite surprised to learn that Dr. Einhorn took such a deep interest in our welfare; so were some other people. But what good has it done? Mayer and Wise are now as firmly seated in the affections of their respective flocks as ministers ever were." 225

In the meantime Einhorn was using the Jewish Times, edited in New York by a Mr. Ellinger, to discredit Wise. Wise retaliates in kind by declaring "it will be a blessing to New York Israelites and their religion, when that spirit of malice will be hushed forever." Wise is so infuriated with Einhorn that he is ready to take the fight directly to the East, by resigning his Cincinnati pulpit and accepting a call to Anshe Chesed Congregation of New York. As a matter of fact, he actually
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did submit his resignation, but after a series of meetings with the officers of the Plum Street Temple, Wise decided to remain in Cincinnati.

Kaufman Kohler joins his father-in-law in an all out attack upon Wise when his schemes for Union and Seminary become a reality. Kohler is the western representative of the Radical Reform movement, preaching the anti-Wise philosophy from the pulpit of Har Sinai Temple in Chicago. After trying to pacify Kohler for years, Wise writes:

"For without the least provocation on our part, the reverend gentleman in Chicago sounds again the war cry in the pulpit and the local press, attacks violently the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Hebrew Union College, simply and expressively because Isaac M. Wise fervently advocates both. Had that gentleman argued against those institutions exclusively, his arguments might have carried some weight with intelligent men, as doctors will differ, and both sides of an argument must be taken into fair consideration to arrive at sound conclusions. But the reverend gentleman overturns his own argument by the folly of making a personal and unprovoked attack upon the man; Isaac M. Wise, who is neither the said Union nor the said College. Every impartial reader sees at once that the argument is not directed against those institutions, but against that person; hence, the argument is worthless in the eyes of sober thinkers." 227

The UAHC and the HUC are such huge successes that the personal attacks against Wise gradually subside. By 1877 there develops a feeling of mutualism between the East and the West so that Wise finds it feasible to endorse the efforts of Emanuel College of New York. He praises the teachers of the school and remarks "better two than one...there is no competition in matters of education." 228 The Wise-Einhorn breach is gradually healed and Einhorn soon accepts an appointment to the Board of Governors of The Hebrew Union College. Einhorn's Beth-El Congregation affiliates itself with the Union in April 1878. 229

Thus the curtain is drawn on the personal struggle be-

tween Wise and Einhorn. Einhorn, now a tired and ailing old man, decided to concede defeat before the overwhelming forces of the Union and the College. But Wise's victory was achieved not without major concessions to the Easterners. The recognition of Emanuel College as a sister institution to The Hebrew Union College and the granting to the Eastern bloc equal representation on the Board of the Union are among the significant concessions agreed to by the West. When David Einhorn died in 1879, Wise wrote the following rather friendly eulogy:

"Dr. Einhorn distinguished himself in the German rabbinical conferences where he sided with Geiger, Holdheim, and the other progressive rabbis, and advocated the cause he had espoused with decided ability and vehemence. In our country he adhered to the reform cause with the same decision and firmness of character. As a teacher in Israel, he was a mighty man, highly respected for his eloquence and sagacity. As a writer he left behind a prayer-book, a catechism, the first volume of a book on Judaism, and four volumes of the Sinai Journal (all in German), in which many of his sermons and literary productions were published. There are several of his epistles, reviews, decisions, and sermons in various journals and collections, which have never been compiled. His biography ought to be written by one of his sons-in-law, who has access to outlines of a man's biography, who will occupy a prominent page in Jewish history, and whose memory is sacred to every honest man in Israel. We feel incompetent to do him justice. We can sympathize with the family of the deceased and with the many more who have known him and deeply feel the loss of a great teacher in Israel." 230

CONCLUSION

The death of Einhorn brought to a close an era of almost continuous warfare between East and West. In reviewing the personal antagonism between Wise and Einhorn we sought to demonstrate the degree to which the element of personality enters into the moulding of new movements in history. Beyond the personal level, which of course, was a major factor in the conflict, there were real issues which divided American Reform Judaism into two camps. There was genuine disagreement in the basic approach to Jewish life; whereas Wise believed that all changes in form must be determined by their effects upon the unity of Israel, Einhorn was not unwilling to proceed in a manner which would result in the establishment of a new sect within the pale of Judaism. Wise was motivated by Union in all areas of Jewish life, by the development of a religious philosophy of life for an over-all American Judaism; Einhorn seemed to be primarily interested in the development of a religious philosophy of life for the intellectuals, for the enlightened elite. Wise veered away from sectarianism while Einhorn said openly that he was uninterested in the effect his reforms might have on the main body of Israel. Einhorn is quoted as repeatedly using the theme: "I am working for the few enlightened." Whether Einhorn's personal dislike for Wise drove him into a position from which it was diffi-

cult to retreat is open to question. The facts seem to point to the conclusions that Einhorn was a radical in religion already in Europe, and that upon his arrival in America he merely accelerated the pace of his radicalism. In any event the struggle between East and West was certainly made up of a combination of factors: the personal, historic forces from without, and the political and social changes within the pale of Judaism.

It is not unlikely that Wise, in his insistence upon Cincinnati as the center of American Judaism, was reflecting the sectionalism of the community at large. American History demonstrates that sectional allegiances were particularly strong at this time. No doubt Wise's religious and political outlook was influenced by the fact that his "area of operations" was in close proximity to the frontier. Here in pioneer country it would be strange if the pendulum would swing to either extreme. Hence, Jewish leadership in the Mid-West during the Civil War remains more or less neutral; while the East becomes predominantly Abolitionist. This factor of sectionalism is also discernable in the religious differences between East and West. Einhorn's radicalism was inevitable in the East because it was "set in its ways". Orthodoxy was strongly entrenched in the East and the reformers had to really fight if they were going to make any progress. In the virgin country of the Mid²West, where the Orthodox had not

obtained a strong foothold, Wise had a freer hand in molding a more conservative philosophy of Jewish life. Hence, Einhorn is satisfied to work with a section of the Jewish people, while Wise is bent on creating innovations which are acceptable to all the people.

What Wise feared most was the possibility that Reform might become another "Protestant" sect in American religious life. Therefore he consistently calls for unity in Jewish life. Unity becomes the prerequisite for the development of an American Judaism. One might see this principle of unity underlying all of the areas of conflict between East and West, all the way from his insistence upon moderate reform based upon a developing Halachah to Wise's uncompromising struggle against the Germanization of the American Synagogue. It is for this reason that Wise fights against reckless and negative reforms by individual congregations and rabbis, and calls for authorized and legal reforms.

With the organization of the Union and the founding of the Hebrew Union College, Wise's long struggle for Unity becomes a reality. By 1879 the Einhorn-led opposition had spent its force and had become associated with the various agencies for unity organized by Wise. Now at least there was some semblance of unity, some semblance of responsibility in Jewish life. By 1879 the American Jewish Community had reached the level of maturity to

realize that genuine differences may be resolved within the group. They realized that a degree of discipline was necessary if a healthy American Judaism was to emerge. Now the ideological struggle between East and West was to be continued within the framework of the Union. On many occasions subsequent to 1879, Wise is known to have compromised some of his earlier ideas with a view towards cementing an even greater unity. However, with its rising influence the East was soon to wrest control of the Union and the College from the West, from the hands of the more moderate reformers. When Wise died in 1900 the East was so strongly entrenched in the higher councils of Reform that it was able to select its own man as Wise's successor. Under the leadership of Kaufman Kohler and Julian Morgenstern, the Hebrew Union College reflects the "Eastern" philosophy of Jewish life. Wise's principle of unity is transferred to New York where large mass-organizations for all Jewry are formed. Stephen Wise and his Jewish Institute of Religion to a degree reflect the Isaac M. Wise philosophy of unity in American Jewish life. Thus the ideological struggle continued down to our own day. Now that the Jewish Institute of Religion has been merged with the Hebrew Union College, and with the election of Nelson Glueck as president of the combined seminaries, a new era in American Jewish life is about to emerge. It is hoped that the pattern for unity envisioned by Isaac M. Wise will now be implemented and the Reform Movement will be in the vanguard

of those forces which seek to establish an American
Judaism.

FOOTNOTES

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