

Cincinnati  
March 21, 1961

INSTRUCTIONS TO LIBRARY

Statement  
by Referee

The Senior Thesis of Lawrence Martin Siegel

Entitled: "The Neo-Reform Growth of American Reform Judaism  
as Reflected in the Central Conference of American  
Rabbis Yearbook 1942-1959"

- 1) May (with revisions) be considered for publication ( ) (✓)  
yes no
- 2) May be circulated ( ) ( ) ( ) (✓)  
to faculty to students to alumni no restriction
- 3) May be consulted in Library only ( ) ( )  
by faculty by students

( ) (✓)  
by alumni no restriction

            
(date)

Jacob R. Marcus  
(signature of referee)

Statement  
by Author

I hereby give permission to the Library to circulate my thesis

( ) (X)  
yes no

The Library may sell positive microfilm copies of my thesis

(X) ( )  
yes no

March 1 1961  
(date)

Lawrence Martin Siegel  
(signature of author)

Library  
Record

The above-named thesis was microfilmed on             
(date)

For the Library             
(signature of staff member)

Report on Rabbinical Thesis of Lawrence M. Siegel  
Entitled

"The Neo-Reform Growth of American Reform Judaism  
as Reflected in the Central Conference of American  
Rabbis Yearbook 1942-1959"

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree and Ordination, Lawrence M. Siegel has submitted a thesis entitled "The Neo-Reform Growth of American Reform Judaism as Reflected in the Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook 1942-1959."

This is a very good work. Mr. Siegel has shown a fine critical instinct and has made a serious effort to examine the sources thoroughly, to judge them objectively, and to present his views intelligently and impartially.

The period under discussion is very important because it marks the transition from Classical Reform to what may be termed Neo-Reform. It is imperative that this cultural and religious transformation be thoroughly understood, and Mr. Siegel has shed a great deal of light on the subject.

It is with pleasure that your referee recommends the acceptance of this thesis.

Jacob R. Marcus  
Referee

THESIS DIGEST

THE NEO-REFORM GROWTH OF AMERICAN  
REFORM JUDAISM AS REFLECTED IN THE  
CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN  
RABBIS YEARBOOK 1942-1959

by

LAWRENCE MARTIN SIEGEL

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Master  
of Arts Degree and Ordination

Hebrew Union College-  
Jewish Institute of Religion  
Cincinnati, Ohio

Referee:  
Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus

Co-Referee:  
Dr. Ellis Rivkin

This thesis is an account of the activities of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and its relationship to Zionism and ritual-ceremonialism during the years 1942-1959. These years were a crucial period for world Jewry. The years were wrought with cataclysmic occurrences and no Jew or Jewish organization could escape from the psychodynamic effects of these historic forces unleashed during this period of time.

With the gradual destruction of European Jewry, in 1942, the Reform American Rabbinate commenced to build American Reform Judaism into a major religious organization which would be able to speak for a much larger segment of American Israel than it previously represented. This could only be done if Reform attracted to its ranks some of the millions of unaffiliated American Jews who were of Eastern-European backgrounds.

This desire to expand necessitated certain changes in the Conference's political position vis-a-vis Palestine and Zionism as well as making a bridge by using ritual and ceremony so that the gap between Reform Temple and Shul might be bridged.

The war and the desire for augmenting the ranks of Reform Judaism had turned the Conference from a neutral Zionist position to a dynamically positive one. This affiliation

Digest - Page 2

with the Zionist cause brought in its wake an emphasis on ethnocentrism and Jewish particularism as substitute ideologies in place of the broad universal messianic outlook of so-called classical Reform Judaism.

Policy changes in organizations create difficulties not originally contemplated when new directions are set upon. The Conference was directly responsible in 1942 for the creation of the anti-Zionist organization the "American Council for Judaism" when it broke its neutrality agreement on Zionism by endorsing a Jewish army for Palestine.

The absorption of Eastern-Europeans into the movement brought about diverse ceremonies and practices into the Reform Temple, which led many to feel that the movement had become chaotic without any authoritative practices or guides of religious behavior. Hence the growing movement to establish codes of practice for this heterogeneous movement was felt to be necessary by a large segment of the members of the Conference.

Living in an age of post-war reaction and increased centralization of business and government the Conference too reflected the spirit of the times by wanting a curtailment of the freedom and authority of each Rabbi and congregation in respect to its own religious experimentation. These types of restrictions are proposals which are contrary to the

Digest - Page 3

spirit of Reform. For the freedom of religious expression is the essence of Reform Judaism.

During these years the Conference paid scant attention to the question of theology, though for some Zionism and new rituals answered their existential needs. For others this was not the answer and for them the Conference had failed to develop a meaningful theological position.

Zionism had obtained its major purpose and strong forces are presently at work seeking an end to the Zionist Organization of America. Perhaps the Conference will in future turn from its preoccupation with the Jewish State and devote its attention to developing a meaningful Jewish theology for Reform Judaism.

NAOMI

Israel's Religion is the Religion of History. Far from being either a creed imposed on its adherents by an ecclesiastic authority as the condition of the soul's salvation, or a mere tribal religion, Judaism is an historical religion, pointing back to the very beginning of man, one which has been growing and developing, expanding and deepening under the influence of the various forces of History.

Kaufmann Kohler



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Analysis of the Central Conference of American Rabbis Neo-Reform Growth 1942-1959 .....	1
Footnotes .....	74
Bibliography .....	105
Appendix .....	107

The fifty-third annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis was convened at Cincinnati, Ohio, February 24th, 1942. Since its organization in 1889, the Central Conference of American Rabbis was never involved with the problems of World Jewry to the degree it found itself to be in 1942. The major Jewish settlements of Eastern and Central Europe had succumbed to the German onslaught. Western Europe had also fallen to the Nazis, and the Middle East was in a precarious position with its hundreds of thousands of oriental Jews. The fear of the destruction of those Jewish colonies in Palestine, together with some three million additional Jews living in the Soviet Union, seemed to be a reality.<sup>1</sup>

The United States of America was in a state of war with Germany and Japan. The world was in a life and death struggle upon which the future course of Western Civilization depended. For the first time in the history of American Israel the great responsibility for leadership and care of World Jewry fell on American Jews. The great centers of European Jewry were emasculated, English Jewry was incapacitated by the strenuous demands of the war. In this chaotic atmosphere American Jewry was the "voice crying in the wilderness, what do you do unto my people!"

The report of the Conference's Committee on Contemporaneous History in the year 1942 outlines the program which the Conference would be strenuously trying to achieve in the immediate future.

1. "The only chance for a Jewish Army in Palestine is the grim logic of a threatened German attack, or the possible intervention of American leaders backed by a strong American public opinion."<sup>2</sup>
2. "We Jews in this land are faced with a double problem. Our first and most important problem is to do everything that lies in our power to help win this war; the second is to help our fellow Jews abroad, who are the outstanding victims of Nazi cruelty."<sup>3</sup>
3. "American Jewry must set to work immediately to formulate the proposals that will be presented to the eventual peace conference, proposals that will attempt to assure decent and honorable treatment for Jews..."<sup>4</sup>

Faced with the possible destruction of European Jewry, the authors of this program set their minds toward the preservation of those Jews still able to defend themselves against the Nazi terror, and the rehabilitation of those

victims of the World War who well might survive until the day of the victory of the allied powers.

This program aroused once again the divergent beliefs and emotions of the Conference concerning the question of Jewish Nationalism, i.e., Zionism. One might think that the effects of the catastrophic world conflict would have convinced the members of the Conference that the founding ideals of Reform Messianism and Universalism were not adequate to meet the Jewish world condition in 1942, and the new demands of the times.<sup>5</sup>

In 1937, when the guiding principles of Reform Judaism were restated, in the so-called Columbus Platform, the question of Zionism which previously had so embittered the discussion of the Conference, was neutralized by revising the Pittsburgh Platform's stand on the question. The new platform affirmed the "obligation of all Jewry to aid in its (Palestine's) upbuilding as a Jewish homeland by endeavoring to make it not only a haven of refuge for the oppressed but also a center of Jewish culture and spiritual life."<sup>6</sup> The Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 had not sought a return of Jews to Palestine.

With the rise of German National Socialism in 1933 and the implementation of its program of anti-semitism by November, 1938, some 100,000 Jews had emigrated from their

homeland to other countries, among which was Palestine.<sup>7</sup>

With limited immigration quotas for Jews in Western lands the Zionist members of the Conference banded ever more tightly together, and by 1937 had succeeded in getting the Conference to reverse its former stand and look to Palestine as a haven for these unfortunates who were soon to become a symbol of the twentieth-century "refugees."

This Columbus Platform's affirmation of the "Up-building of Palestine" was a victory of sorts for the Jewish Nationalists of the Conference. But that was in 1937. Hitler had not yet marched against the world, and those forces within the Conference persistently opposed to Zionism were constantly diminishing either through death or conviction as the Nazi menace ever increased.

Five years after the Columbus Platform, the situation of World Jewry was such that no prophet could have predicted its dire circumstances. In Europe the Jewish people were systematically and methodically being murdered, and in America Jews were disorganized and splintered.

Dr. James G. Heller's presidential message to the Conference in 1942 made recommendations which the leadership of Reform Judaism began to follow in earnest. Heller's contention was that Reform Judaism must evaluate itself, "Not because Reform Judaism is to be discarded! Far from that! Not because its pristine impulse, -- to purify the religion,

to draw distinctions between central and peripheral, to emphasize the prophetic rather than the legal aspect of Judaism, -- is less germane to, less needed by our generation. On the contrary, it is more so! Because we have failed to win over the masses of Jews in America."<sup>8</sup> In a moment of truth the Reform movement is here confronted with the fact that the dream of I. M. Wise (that in a short time all Jews in these United States would become adherents of what he called "American Judaism") was not a reality.

The effect upon the Conference of the destruction of the great storehouse of Jewish learning and centers of Jewish life in Europe was that the Reform Rabbinate began to realize that it was one of the major depositories of Judaism left intact in the world, and in order to preserve what was left of Judaism it would have to capture and hold the mass of unaffiliated American Jews.

The explanation of why Reform had failed to win over the mass of American Jews to its cause is stated with candor: "...when the blame is to be assigned, [it] should be placed on these factors: the condign exclusiveness of our temples; their tendency to identify themselves with an economic class; the excessive rationalism of their liturgy; their growing prejudice against the use of Hebrew; their antipathy toward Zionism growing out of the specific situation in which the

German Jews had found themselves in the early years of the nineteenth century; and, finally, the lethargy and quietism that soon settled upon them so that they made no serious effort to win over the new masses, so that their own faith soon became for them a mere matter of routine."<sup>9</sup>

The Reform movement saw its situation quite correctly. It was a minority religious organization whose membership was composed of a certain select representation of American Jewry. If it was to be an effective organization not only for the preservation of the so-called Jewish heritage, but also concerning the war time objectives it wished to see accomplished, it had to enlist the support and loyalty of the mass of American Jewry. Thus Reform Judaism turned its back on its past with an earnest desire to become a mass movement. Who was this mass that Reform Judaism wished to appeal to, and with what did it appeal.

During the period 1820-1870 the Jewish emigration to the United States was primarily from Western Europe dominated by a Germanic influence. This emigration accounted for about 300,000 Jews.<sup>10</sup> In the years 1870-1914 more than two million Jews entered the United States; for 80 per cent of them, their land of origin was Eastern Europe.<sup>11</sup> The mass of American Jews in the United States by 1942 was of Eastern-European descent; they held strong Jewish nationalistic views,

and their religious emotions were tied together with the cords of traditional ceremonies and observances.<sup>12</sup> If Reform Judaism was to add this mass to its ranks, it had to change its reputation from being a movement which was self-contained among the Germanic Jewish element who represented the socio-economic upper class of Jewish society with its anti-Jewish nationalistic views. This change would bring in its wake a new interpretation of Reform Judaism which would be a natural consequence of such an expansion.

The combined effects of the Second World War with its annihilation of European Jewry, and the mass indifference of American Jews toward any form of synagogal affiliation spurred the C.C.A.R. to a re-evaluation of Reform Judaism which set it in a new direction.

Of major consideration for the Conference was the Zionist question, for the majority of Jews, though they did not affiliate themselves with religious bodies, were pro-Zionist and would not give heed to a Jewish organization which was noted for its lukewarm or anti-Nationalistic views.

The early history of Reform or Liberal Judaism which originated in Germany stated in no unequivocal terms its position towards Zionism. A Rabbinical Conference was held in Brunswick, on June 12, 1844, and chief among the early reformers, Samuel Holdheim, declared: "We do not grant that

there is such a thing as a 'Christian State,' and certainly we should not speak of a 'Jewish State,' or of the overlapping of the religious and the political in Judaism... Let the Jewish clergyman concern himself with religious instruction; that is plain!"<sup>13</sup>

The C.C.A.R., considering the Nationalistic sympathies of American Jews and its own aspirations to enlarge its rolls, passed the so-called "Jewish Army Resolution" at its convention in 1942. "Be it resolved, that the Central Conference of American Rabbis adds its voice to the demand that the Jewish population of Palestine be given the privilege of establishing a military force which will fight under its own banner on the side of the democracies, under the allied command, to defend its own land and the near East to the end that the victory of democracy may be hastened everywhere."<sup>14</sup>

This resolution was adopted by a vote of 64 to 38.<sup>15</sup> This vote does not represent anywhere near a majority of the members of the C.C.A.R. or of the 236 members who registered for the convention.<sup>16</sup> One wonders why a resolution of such major importance was voted upon by such a minority of the Conference, particularly in view of the fact that since the Conference's inception the nationalist question had been a burning and passionate issue.

In 1935, prior to the Pittsburgh Platform, a resolution was passed in the C.C.A.R. which attempted to unite

the Conference on the Nationalist question. The "Zionist program should be left to the determination of the individual members of the Conference themselves, therefore Be It Resolved that the C.C.A.R. takes no official stand on the subject of Zionism... The C.C.A.R. will continue to cooperate in the upbuilding of Palestine in the economic, cultural, and particularly spiritual tasks confronting the growing and evolving Jewish community there."<sup>17</sup> This resolution was a compromise with an original resolution that stated that a substantial segment of the Conference was no longer in opposition to Zionism.<sup>18</sup>

When this resolution was passed, James G. Heller, an ardent Zionist, expressed the opinion that the resolution was too weak and that he wished to see the time when there "would no longer be any incompatibility between Zionism and Reform Judaism."<sup>19</sup> Slowly the complexion of the Reform Rabbinate and laity was changing, for in 1935 a majority of the students in attendance at the Hebrew Union College was East-European in background, and approximately 50 per cent of the laity affiliated with Reform congregations was non-Germanic.<sup>20</sup> Yet the anti-Nationalistic forces within the Conference were able to prevent the inclusion of the statement that a substantial number of men of the C.C.A.R. were no longer opposed to Zionism. The leadership of the Nationalists within the

Conference was biding its time. The cycle of history was unfolding in its favor, and it was unwilling to take a stand in 1935 which might result in a Conference divided over the Zionist question which might force men to withdraw from the ranks of the C.C.A.R.

Two years later, amidst the rising wave of National Socialism and world-wide anti-semitism, the Nationalists in the Conference were successful in having a plank included in the "Columbus Platform" which committed the Conference to the "upbuilding of Palestine," but not as a Jewish National State.<sup>21</sup>

Slowly, with the increasingly dangerous political situation of German Jewry and the expansion of the Nazi state abroad, the leadership of the American Jewish community was turning to Zionist hands. The major American religious and secular leaders were identified with Zionism, among them Rabbis Stephen S. Wise, Abba Hillel Silver and Solomon Goldman, United States Supreme Court Justice, Louis D. Brandeis, Governor Herbert Lehman of New York, and Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau. These men spoke, and millions of American Jews revered their words, regardless of their synagogue affiliation. The Zionists were militant; they had little time and a burning cause in their hearts.

The Zionists were out to capture the whole of Jewish life in America. Dr. Solomon Goldman stated in the Jewish

Exponent, September, 1939, "It is essential that Zionist propaganda enhance the whole of Jewish life...to color and influence it. What is happening in the rest of the Jewish world is completely bound up with the fundamental realization of Zionism."<sup>22</sup>

With the British promulgation of the so-called "White Paper for Palestine" in 1939, a paper limiting to 15,000 souls, the number of Jews that might legally be entitled to enter during the next five years, the claims of the Zionists that the impending disaster facing the Jewish people was more than a theoretical possibility assumed added weight.<sup>23</sup> By March, 1940, the British had further abandoned the Balfour Declaration by restricting the right of Jews to acquire land in Palestine. Thus, the fate of those Jewish refugees wishing to emigrate to Palestine was sealed.

The Conference was then concerned that the future direction of American Jewry would fall into the hands of secular leaders, and if the Conference remained neutral or gave charitable support to the Zionist cause it could never receive the respect and loyalty of the majority of American Israel.

To combat this situation, James G. Heller who was elected President of the Conference in 1941, and who was also Chairman of the National Administrative Council of the Zionist Organization of America, stated in the Jewish Exponent



of Philadelphia on July 4, 1941, "...that Reform was no longer anti-Zionist, and Jews must unite to work for Palestine." Jews must "put the force of the liberal rabbinate behind the beneficent and creative work of Zionism."<sup>24</sup>

The realities of the political situation for the Zionists made it impossible to have the restrictions of the "White Paper" revoked, but a new idea seized them which would have universal appeal, not only to Jews, but to freedom-loving men everywhere. The leadership of the Zionist organization started an intensified campaign demanding that the Jews of Palestine "be allowed to muster a large army, based on Palestine, to fight under the Jewish banner as an integral part of the Forces of the United Nations."<sup>25</sup>

The men in the Conference who wished to see Reform Judaism increase its ranks as well as the Nationalists of the Conference saw in this proposal an opportunity to commit the Conference to a stand which would have great mass appeal to American Jewry and firmly commit the Conference to the Zionist cause.

It is important to consider the manner in which the Jewish Army Proposal was brought to the floor of the Conference for consideration, and the effects of this strategy. There seemed to have been two important considerations in the minds of the backers of the "Jewish Army Resolution."

1. If it failed in getting the resolution approved the

Conference would once again be identified with the forces working against the Zionist cause, and in the public's mind still be considered anti-Zionist. 2. There must have been enough opposition among the registered delegates to defeat or emasculate the proposed resolution, and a manner would have to be worked out assuring that a majority of the members present would vote for the resolution.

Because of the above considerations the following strategy was employed by the backers of the Jewish Army Resolution. The resolution was brought to the floor of the Conference when only 102 of the 236 men who were registered at the convention were present. This was done on a Friday afternoon during the final session of the Convention when many of the men had already departed for their pulpits.<sup>26</sup>

Though the circumstances give evidence of being pre-arranged when put to the vote, the resolution was passed by 64-38 in favor of adoption. The discussion which preceded the passage of the resolution noted that the resolution violated the situations in this Conference so as to divide one group against the other, predicated upon differences in our midst on the Zionist matter."<sup>27</sup>

The anti-Nationalist forces within the Conference were convinced that they had been betrayed for they had planned to introduce a "resolution prepared in opposition to the idea of the creation of the Jewish Army and in the interest

of harmony that resolution was not introduced."<sup>28</sup>

There were some men of the Conference, such as Rabbi Aaron Opher, a member of the Nationalist block, who had advocated a Jewish Army for Palestine outside the confines of the Conference, but favored the withdrawal of this resolution because of "the fact that a resolution committing the C.C.A.R. on this issue would have little effect upon the British Government and would cause a rift in the unity of this body..."<sup>29</sup>

Rabbi Opher's interpretation of the effects of the resolution was correct. The reason for bringing the resolution to the Conference floor was to identify in the American public's mind the endorsement of Zionist aspirations by the C.C.A.R., and this mutual identification was aimed by the members of the Conference far beyond the halls of the convention upon the minds of the mass of unaffiliated Jews of America. Evidently, Rabbi Opher was more concerned with the unity of the Conference as a whole than increasing the membership of the ranks of Reform Judaism.

The strategy used by Heller and the Nationalist block within the Conference was successful in getting the "Jewish Army Resolution" passed, but it also justified the feeling of the anti-Nationalist forces of the Conference that they had been betrayed. These anti-Nationalists grouped themselves together, and under the direction of Dr. Louis Wolsey,

of Congregation Rodeph Shalom, Philadelphia, assembled on June 1, 1942, at Atlantic City, New Jersey, to consider their situation.<sup>30</sup>

Wolsey's original intent was to convene a conference of rabbinical leaders, but on April 29, 1942, Dr. Wolsey solicited the views of Rabbi Elmer Berger, of Flint, Michigan, regarding the formation of such a conference to express the sentiments of the anti-Nationalists of the C.C.A.R. The thought behind Wolsey's action was that Berger had previously organized a lay opposition to Zionism in Flint. Rabbi Berger suggested a program of lay-rabbinic cooperation in fighting Zionism for the Atlantic City meeting. Thus the Atlantic City meeting was a joint rabbinic-lay venture. This established the Conference by its very composition as a non-rabbinical organization, though it was called by Rabbi Wolsey, to give a means of expression to those anti-Nationalist Rabbis of the C.C.A.R. whose views on Zionism differed from the official pronouncements of the C.C.A.R.<sup>31</sup>

During the interval between February, 1942, and June, 1942, a series of letters was exchanged between James G. Heller, Dr. Wolsey and the general membership of the C.C.A.R. Heller was aware, on April 30, 1942, of the proposed conference to be held at Atlantic City, with its implication for the C.C.A.R. and Reform Judaism vis-a-vis the Jewish



masses, wrote to all members of the C.C.A.R. urging them not to heed Dr. Wolsey's invitation, and to bind themselves by the decision of the majority of the C.C.A.R., who formerly were a minority, and prevent a rupture of the Conference.<sup>32</sup>

The hornets' nest had been stirred, and it was not to be put at rest with such ease. The majority of the Conference, though willing to abide with the "Jewish Army Resolution" once it had been passed, did not have an opportunity to vote for its consideration, and the opposition to Heller wrote to him on May 7, 1942, informing him that the "Jewish Army Resolution" had "committed the C.C.A.R. to a Jewish Army stand when only a small percentage of the group was present at the meeting." It was their intention to fight "Nationalistic tendencies in Jewish life"...but to fight them "within the C.C.A.R." They further advised Heller to return to the former agreed-upon neutrality of the C.C.A.R. in its official pronouncements concerning the Zionist question.

Heller, realizing that the future unity of the C.C.A.R. was at stake, after he had usurped it, wrote on May 15, 1942, to Morris Lazaron, of Baltimore, offering to present a resolution to the next C.C.A.R. Conference which would return the Conference to its former neutral position, on the condition that the proposed meeting to be held at Atlantic City be cancelled. Heller further stated that he thought such a resolution would be defeated and as such be a

personal defeat for him. This offer was rejected by the anti-Nationalists.<sup>33</sup>

Heller was known as a passionate Zionist, and it would be difficult for any members of the C.C.A.R. to take his presentation of such a proposal seriously, no matter what reasons he would adduce in calling for its passage. Secondly, he had already indicated that such a resolution would have little chance of passage. One really wonders then why Heller would have made such a proposition to the anti-Nationalists in the first place. Perhaps, he thought that such action on his part would enable the anti-Nationalists to call off their convention and at the same time give him more time to try and mend the fences of the Conference which he had been instrumental in tearing down.

Ninety-six rabbis attended the Atlantic City meeting called by Dr. Wolsey in June, 1942.<sup>34</sup> This conference drafted a resolution which emphasized the universal interpretation of Reform Judaism against the particularistic views expressed by the Nationalist members of the C.C.A.R., restoring the C.C.A.R. position on Zionism to the 1935 declaration.<sup>35</sup>

Rabbinic leadership of the Atlantic City Conference was not long in duration, and on December 7, 1942, Lessing J. Rosenwald was elected president of this group, which was to be known as the American Council for Judaism. The election of a lay president for the American Council for Judaism

and its subsequent lay leadership led to the resignation from its ranks of most of the rabbis who signed its original statement of purpose. By August, 1943, only twenty-six of the original ninety-six rabbis who had been present in June, 1942, were affiliated with the Council.<sup>36</sup>

Heller was aware that something had started that would not easily be contained, for now that the laity were at the helm of leadership there were ample finances available to the organization and there were also many members of the American Jewish community who, for a long time, had had no other avenue in which to give vent to their anti-Zionist views. Thus, Heller feared that the American Council for Judaism would grow into a rival rabbinic-lay organization to the Conference and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Heller again pleaded that the rabbinical membership withdraw and "disband, for its members to continue to agitate for their point of view within the framework of existing organizations, to advance it as strongly as they can in the C.C.A.R. and from their own pulpits; but to cease constituting an organization which, in my opinion, is bound to become an antagonist of the Union and of the Conference."<sup>37</sup>

More than a majority of the original rabbinic membership had resigned from the American Council for Judaism by late 1943; the unity of the C.C.A.R. was once more assured, and the remaining "Classically minded" Reform Rabbis had

been defeated in their attempts to reverse the new trend of the C.C.A.R., but a new force was created from this situation in the American Jewish scene which was to be a thorn in the side of all those who held Zionist sympathies.

In furthering the identification of Reform Judaism and Zionism, a round table discussion was held in executive session at the 1943 Conference entitled "Compatibility of Zionism with Reform Judaism."<sup>38</sup> A committee was appointed "to formulate and to present to the Conference a resolution or resolutions" on Zionism and Reform Judaism growing out of this discussion. The committee formulated two resolutions which it presented to the Conference.<sup>39</sup>

The first of these resolutions denied that there is any "essential incompatibility between Reform Judaism and Zionism."<sup>40</sup> This resolution was signed by such Zionists as Stephen S. Wise and Barnett R. Brickner, as well as men known for their anti-Zionist leanings like Julian Morgenstern and Joseph Rauch.<sup>41</sup>

The second majority resolution that was reported to the Conference called upon "our colleagues of the American Council for Judaism to terminate this organization" because "its continued existence would become a growing threat to our fellowship."<sup>42</sup> This second resolution was not signed by Rabbi Rauch, and a minority resolution was presented by him and Rabbi S. H. Goldenson.<sup>43</sup>

This minority report challenged the authority of the Conference and questioned the wisdom which had led it to state "that there is no fundamental incompatibility between Reform Judaism and Zionism" as well as to urge or "require the Conference members of the American Council for Judaism to disband." The minority resolution condemned the Conference for saying "unity" and meaning "conformity," regarding "their program" as the only one for Reform Judaism.<sup>44</sup>

The minority resolution was defeated by a roll call vote of 137-45. Several members of the Conference asked permission to explain their vote on this report. They expressed the opinion that it was beyond the scope of the authority of the Conference to ask "an organization of not only rabbis but also laymen to disband."<sup>45</sup> Rabbi Isaac E. Marcuson, the Administrative Secretary of the Conference and one of its most esteemed members, said with sagacity, "It is illogical to ask the non-Zionists to disband their organization for the sake of unity unless we likewise ask the Zionists to withdraw from their organization."<sup>46</sup>

Marcuson was quite correct in his opinion, but the Conference was no longer governed by the great liberal traditions of the past, where respect for individual difference on the Zionist question had been the norm. To inject further hostility into the Conference and embitter its members, the anti-Nationalists were accused of "treason" for their stand.

This certainly was a cry smacking of a political convention rather than a rabbinical one.<sup>47</sup>

The Conference was determined to crush the anti-Nationalistic forces within its ranks and silence their voice. The Conference's effort to join forces with the Zionists of America was ever more successful, and during the next years the presidency of the Conference devolved upon such noted Zionists as Abba Hillel Silver (1945-47), Abraham J. Feldman (1947-49), and Philip S. Bernstein (1950-52).<sup>48</sup>

The Nationalist forces were in numerical control of the Conference, and with their allegiance to Zionism and their desire that Reform Judaism become a mass movement, certain changes in the religious orientation of Reform were necessary.

In re-evaluating the Reform movement and its new directions, the political identification of Reform with Zionism might prove successful in removing its anti-Nationalist reputation and winning for itself a favorable position in the thought of American Jewry; but how was this going to attract new members into its ranks? The synagogue is the primary place where formal religious expression takes place in Reform Judaism. If the former criticism of the Reform Movement was true and Reform Synagogues were indeed characterized by "condign exclusiveness," by "excessive rationalism of liturgy," by "prejudice against the use of Hebrew," and "antipathy toward Zionism," this situation would have to be rectified from within if Reform was to attract the Jews of Eastern European heritage.

The report of the Commission on Synagogue Activities for 1942 attempted to offer a suggestion which would move Reform on a new path. In connection with Heller's presidential message of the same year, the Commission on Synagogue Activity had been "emphasizing the new tendencies in the direction of a revitalized and more appealing, not to say, more complacent synagogue; and by stimulating observances of meaningful ceremonies and customs in synagogue and home..."<sup>49</sup>

This program was offered by the committee, and congregations were urged to have "more ceremonials...Friday evening...the wearing of robe and attire by rabbi and cantor ...revival of interest in the teaching of Hebrew as shown by the re-introduction or extension of Hebrew in many Religious Schools and the organization of Hebrew classes for adults; the again changing age of Confirmation."<sup>50</sup>

Thus the Synagogue entered into the campaign to increase its membership. It attempted to do this by introducing rituals and customs formerly absent from the majority of Reform Synagogues. The return to Hebrew, the use of clerical attire, and new home and Temple ceremonies were certainly not principally initiated for old line Reform members, but rather to bridge the gap between temple and schul in order that the mass of unaffiliated Jews with Eastern European backgrounds would feel more of an emotional attachment with the Reform Synagogue than they had formerly experienced, for there was no other way that Reform could become a mass movement.

To further enhance the synagogue and Reform ritual and ceremony, the C.C.A.R.'s Committee on Ceremonies was responsible in 1942 for having a new Chanuko Lamp for the synagogue designed by Ruben Leaf, formerly a teacher of applied design at the Bezalel Art School in Palestine.<sup>51</sup> They also created a Chanuko service pageant as well as a new

Megillah for Purim in English. The holidays of Chanuko and Purim are both occasions when in former times the Jewish people have been rescued from defeat in the face of overwhelming odds. It seemed fitting, in the face of such another catastrophe which befell the Jewish people in 1942, that these rituals should be re-emphasized, for they embody "the idea of Jewish survival."<sup>52</sup> Thus in the darkest years of World War II, the Reform movement looked to the historic past for strength and encouragement to face the contemporary catastrophe of Jewish experience.

This revival of Chanuko and Purim, which are the most particularistic of the Jewish Holidays, was a far cry from the universal and messianic emphasis given to the Jewish experience by the early reformers, who felt uncomfortable at the phrase in the Haggadah "and thou shalt pour out thy wrath [etc] ..."

The Committee further introduced special Sabbath services: Sabbath S'kolim, which was a revival of the ancient tree will offering; Sabbaths Sholom and Todo; as well as urging the use of rabbinical robe and attire; and the use of the Shofar-with mouth-piece, originated by the Committee.<sup>53</sup>

Along with ceremonial revision and addition, the Liturgical Committee of the Conference had for some time been editing and revising the Union Prayer Book for Reform worship services. The revision of the daily prayer book

appeared in 1940. It contained a greater amount of Hebrew text than the former edition, as well as a service which expressed the Zionist hope in the "hearts of Israel...that Zion might be restored...and that we may share joyously in the work of redemption so that from Zion shall go forth the law and the word of God from Jerusalem"...and "Uphold also the hands of our brother who toil to rebuild Zion."<sup>54</sup>

The inclusion of such a service in the Union Prayer Book was a major departure from the position of the early Reformers, in particular, Isaac M. Wise who "considered it un-Jewish to pray for, or work toward the restoration of a Jewish State."<sup>55</sup>

The second work issuing from the Liturgical Committee was a revision of the Union Prayer Book II for the New Year and the Day of Atonement. The liturgy in this volume again increased the amount of Hebrew text, returned to the "tradition of varying the standard blessings"...the picturesque traditional ceremony...Kol Nidre...reworded." In the former edition of the Union Prayer Book, 1922, the text of Kol Nidre was omitted, and the words Kol Nidre did not appear in the text, for the prayer Venishlah was recited in its place. "Greater use was made of the treasures of Medieval poetry."<sup>56</sup> About a dozen of these Medieval piutim and selichoth, which had been omitted from the former edition, were introduced into the revised High Holiday prayer book.<sup>57</sup>



In his work Jewish Liturgy and its Development, Dr. A. Z. Idelson writes: "In surveying this ritual we see... the tendency toward universalism and rationalism, stripped of all leanings toward nationalism and mysticism, robbed this ritual to a large extent of its Jewish coloring and warmth. The omission of many texts resulted in the omission of many traditional tunes endeared to the Jew of all ages."<sup>58</sup>

The discussion which followed the presentation of the Report of the Liturgical Committee clearly stated the intention of the editors of these new editions and their objectives. "Some believe in drastic revisions; others believe that the liturgy should conform very closely to the traditional pattern. The committee has tried to take a middle course between the extremes and to provide new material and greater variety. Traditional material was introduced wherever possible and you will find that it is a well rounded compromise."<sup>59</sup>

Traditionalism, with its particularistic emphasis, was being openly re-introduced into the Reform Liturgy without much opposition.

Yet there were those who still struggled to maintain the Classical Reform approach to the Liturgy, but their ranks were ever thinning. Dr. David Phillipson, a Classical Reformer, who served as secretary of the original Committee on the Union Prayer Book and as chairman of the first revision

committee, was requested to serve on the committee producing the Newly Revised edition of the prayer book, but refused. Once the prayer book was issued he found "several of the new features in the book...quite objectionable...notably the so-called 'Zionist prayer' in the Sabbath evening service, and the Yiskor service on the seventh day of Passover."<sup>60</sup>

The attractions had been created; the question was now to dangle these new innovations before those for whom they had been created. A "nation-wide Enrollment Campaign" had been endorsed by the Conference in cooperation with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The goal of this initial campaign was set to "mobilize an additional twenty-five thousand members for our Reform Congregations."<sup>61</sup>

The Reform movement, i.e., the Conference and the Union were to embark upon an evangelical campaign which would further increase the number of congregants who would be from an Eastern European heritage and who would be at home only in an environment that reflected the emotional tie they had with traditional Judaism. The leaders of Reform were out to see to it that that emotional identification could be made by its new adherents.

The year 1943 was a turning point in the Second World War, and when the Conference convened that year, the spirits of the Allied powers were greatly enhanced for "slowly...the tide of war changed. The Axis forces have finally been driven out of North Africa; American forces are making slow but steady advances against the Japanese. The Russian advances have gained increased momentum."<sup>62</sup>

The prospect of complete victory over the enemy was seen to be possible in the not too distant future, and the Conference commenced to formulate proposals to be considered by the United Nations at the peace table.

In order to have a more unified American Jewish community, the Conference joined with the American Jewish Committee to unite for defense against anti-semitism. This action brought Reform Judaism into a cooperative relationship with other Jewish and non-religious Jewish bodies working on the American scene. The involvement was heartily approved by the Conference, for a "salutary tendency toward unity has manifested itself in American Jewish life."<sup>63</sup> To identify itself further with the great American Jewish community, the Conference also joined the "American Jewish Conference" which was organized with the intent of speaking out for all American Jewry.<sup>64</sup>

Once again this action opened all wounds in the ranks of the Conference members, for this affiliation of the

Conference with the American Jewish Conference drew it deeper into Zionist affiliation and identification. The anti-Nationalist members of the Conference attempted to restrain the ever increasing total identification of the Conference by means of a resolution which informed the public that the C.C.A.R. delegates to the "American Jewish Conference" were "uninstructed and were free to vote in accordance with their individual convictions...and the C.C.A.R. position on neutrality adopted in 1935 remains unimpaired."<sup>65</sup>

One wonders what effect this resolution had on changing the general impression previously created by the C.C.A.R. delegates to the American Jewish Conference that had voted for the American Jewish Conference resolution regarding Palestine.

The general American Jewish Press in 1944 was pro-Zionist and interested in marshalling all the forces in America to the Zionist cause. The action of the C.C.A.R. delegates would receive much greater notoriety than the latter resolution passed by the C.C.A.R. concerning the "individual convictions" of the delegates.

The disruptive situation which developed after the Jewish Army Resolution was passed by the Conference was not desired again. The Nationalists within the Conference, therefore, gave opportunity to the anti-Nationalists to express their views and keep peace in the halls of the

Conference as long as their actions did not impede the goals of the Zionists, and the Conference could still reap the benefits of being identified with Jewish Nationalism.

The awakened American interest and revival in Judaism and Jewish culture was perhaps caused by the psychological effects of the murder of their brethren in Europe, leading the Jews of America into a sense of insecurity never before felt in this great land.<sup>66</sup> If it had happened in Germany, the most scientifically advanced and cultured nation in Europe, why could it not happen here? Where to turn for stability and purpose of life, was one of the major questions in American Jewish life during the closing years of the War. The former avenues of assimilation did not offer security, for the Jews of Germany had been, for the most part, the most assimilated Jewish community in Europe. The altars of conversion were no more secure and now took on the significance of betrayal of those who had perished in the War. These roads led only to dead ends. The final blow was the disillusionment with the Soviet Union which started with its Nazi defense pact of 1939 and betrayal of its "socialist ideals... which made it increasingly difficult for the unaffiliated to remain aloof, to hope that the problem of their own identification would ultimately be dissolved in some magic disappearance of the Jewish problem."<sup>67</sup>

During these years, a great number of Jews joined the Zionist Organization of America. But what was, later, to be of equally great import for the American Jewish community was an awakened interest in the storehouse of Jewish culture. There came about a new interest in Hebrew, and the C.C.A.R. passed a resolution praising the Hebrew weekly Hadoar, the "Histadruth Ivrit," efforts in the publishing of Hebrew books as well as the periodical Bitzaron. The Conference greeted the advancement "of the Hebrew renaissance and urges its members to use their best efforts to cooperate with Hadoar and the "Histadruth."<sup>68</sup>

These Hebrew publications and societies were not only instrumental in giving voice to Jewish culture, but they were militantly Zionist. In giving its endorsements to their efforts, the Conference once again identified itself with the Nationalist cause. After the establishment of the State of Israel, this previous identification with Zionism was to have beneficial effects for American Jews, as I shall attempt to show later, for the immigration of American Zionists to Israel was almost nil.



The fifty-fifth annual meeting of the C.C.A.R. took place seventeen days after the Allied invasion of France. The Soviet Union was successful in pushing back the Nazi armies on the Eastern front. North Africa had been liberated as well as most of Italy. The Pacific campaign was going well for the Allied forces, and it now appeared that victory for the United States and her Allies was shortly in the making.

The situation of the remaining Jews in Europe was desperate. Those who survived the War were physically and mentally sick, as well as destitute and dislocated from their families, homes and countries. They had been gathered from the face of Europe and interned in concentration camps as well as slave labor factories. The Conference was deeply concerned about their European brethren and the problem of rehabilitating and settling them in the post-war world.

For many of these European Jews, there was no returning to their former country. Whole communities of Jews had been liquidated by the Germans. Towns and cities where Jews had resided were no longer in existence. Vast areas of Eastern Europe were now under the control of the Soviet, and Jews had no desire to return to a situation where religion was discouraged, if not oppressed. Immigration quotas to the United States, though somewhat liberalized after the War to admit refugees, were not sufficient for the majority

of Jewish survivors. Once again the eyes of World Jewry were focused on Palestine as a land of refuge for its people.

The British Government's mandate for Palestine was to expire in 1948, and plans and preparations for its withdrawal and the future status of Palestine were even now being formulated. The "White Paper" which had been issued in 1939 was still the official British policy in 1944, and if it continued, the Jewish population of Palestine would remain a weak minority.

The Conference, prompted by humanitarian considerations as well as seeing the future political handwriting on the wall, recommended that "the White Paper must be repudiated" and that it was the "rightful responsibility of the Allied Nations..." to give "the European Jew...a chance to reclaim the waste lands of Palestine."<sup>69</sup>

Interestingly, the C.C.A.R., without mentioning the words "Jewish State" or any other terms that would imply a Jewish political organization in Palestine, demanded that the Jews of Europe be able to emigrate to Palestine without quota. This recommendation of the Committee of Justice and Peace was adopted without much discussion. Thus the Zionists, avoiding political terms in their resolution, were able to achieve their ends without disrupting the peace and unity of the Conference. For who, among the members of the Conference in 1944, could object to the opening of a haven of refuge for

their downtrodden and oppressed co-religionists who had survived the Nazi onslaught in Europe?

One year later the European War had been drawn to a victorious end for the Allied powers, and the Pacific theater of operations was in its final stages of conflict. Viewing the world scene, "the only large Jewish group left in Europe is Russian Jewry..."<sup>70</sup> With this turn of historic events, almost as a matter of default, for the first time in its history, the United States had become "the focal point of Jewish learning and leadership..." And it was no longer a theoretical discussion that the responsibility of maintaining and supporting Judaism in the world was an American Jewish duty but a stark and frightening reality.<sup>71</sup>

The new United Nations were meeting in San Francisco in 1945 to try and organize the nations of the world into a body that would bring peace and concord to an exhausted and war scarred humanity. The Conference viewed, with disappointment, "the official Jewish advisory groups" who were present at the United Nations. There appeared to be no unification of Jewish organizations in presenting the cause of World Jewry before this body of World Governments.<sup>72</sup>

Dismayed at the disorganization presented before the world by disunited Jewish organizations, the Conference strongly commended the "Vaad Hatzalah" the "Yishub" and the United Palestine Appeal for their efforts in "saving Jews

from the inferno of Hitlerism..." and once again demanded the immediate abrogation of the "White Paper," and for the nations to "facilitate the migration of such Jews to Palestine."<sup>73</sup>

The C.C.A.R. was firmly committed to the restoration of Jews to Palestine. The question of a Jewish political state was again put before the Conference in a disguised form, for if there was unlimited Jewish immigration to Palestine, with the British mandate soon to terminate, little would be left to the imagination as to the new political status of Palestine. Nevertheless, the resettlement of Jews in Palestine was treated as a religious-humanitarian obligation of the World, as a recognition of the atrocities and murders committed against the innocent Jews of Europe. The anti-Nationalists within the Conference, coming from the great liberal humanitarian traditions of the nineteenth century, could hardly offer any opposition to this proposed resettlement, regardless of what the Realpolitik was.

When the Conference convened in 1946 under the leadership of Abba Hillel Silver and Abraham J. Feldman, two renowned and passionate Zionists, the direction of the Conference's Zionist affiliation was sealed, publicly and privately. For in the American Rabbinate, with the exception of Stephen S. Wise, Silver was the national rabbinic spokesman for the Zionist cause in America. Silver's presidential

address to the Conference confirmed the view that was expressed in James G. Heller's term of office, that in order to become a mass religious movement and not a "minority sect in American Jewish life," Reform had to become Zionist-affiliated. In praising the action taken by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in March, 1946, Dr. Silver declared that "American Reform Judaism cleared the way for a notable forward advance during the year by removing the formidable obstacle of a political commitment which was never part of essential doctrine and threatened for a time to disrupt it or isolate it as a minority sect in American Jewish Life." This action of the Union was the confirmation of the 1943 resolution of the Conference which stated that there is "no essential incompatibility between Reform Judaism and Zionism." The laity and the Conference were united in the affirmation of the right of Zionists to consider themselves "within the spirit and purpose of Reform Judaism."<sup>74</sup>

Once again the truth of the past had been sacrificed to the needs of the present.<sup>75</sup> In a discussion on the significance of the day of lamentation which commemorates the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, Dr. David Phillipson writes in his history, The Reform Movement in Judaism, "that the out and out reformers went much further than that; in place of the traditional service of lamentation on this day, they suggested the substitution of a service which,

while it dwelt upon all that was precious and dear in the memory of Palestine and Jerusalem, laid the chief stress on the universalistic prophetic teachings of the faith which stands out all the more clearly since the fortunes of the religion are no longer bound up with the petty politics of a small country. This today is the vital distinction between Reform Judaism, the interpreter of the universalistic outlook of the faith, and political Zionism, the reincarnation of narrow nationalism."<sup>76</sup>

We might once again consider the view of Isaac Mayer Wise and his attitude concerning Zionism and the Jews outside of Palestine, since he was the founder not only of the C.C.A.R., but of the U.A.H.C. "Wise denounced the impending First Zionist Congress and declared that the question of a Jewish state was foreign to the spirit of the American Jew. Wise ridiculed the Congress, but, nevertheless, thought it necessary to warn against the assumption of the existence of a desire for a separate national life among the entire body of Jews. During the remaining years of his life, Wise again attacked Zionism on the grounds that it would make of the Jews aliens in the lands of their birth and residence."<sup>77</sup>

Thus the Reform movement as a whole, excepting the Hebrew Union College, had allied itself with Zionism. Changing historic times and patterns bring new needs to a society, and it is an axiom that many organizations change their

attachments, loyalties, and sympathies during various historic periods; otherwise they fossilize. However, the need to say to the past, "You are what we say you are," does not always describe the true historic condition, regardless of all the official pronouncements of the present.

The American Council for Judaism had suffered severe defeats by 1946. The endorsement by the Conference as well as the Union of the Zionist cause had isolated it from the main contingency of Reform Judaism in the United States. The plight of the homeless survivors of Nazism, combined with the American government's endorsement of immigration to Palestine of these "unfortunate men, women and children... with utmost dispatch..."<sup>78</sup> stilled the anti-Nationalist voices in the Conference.

The growth of Nationalism in the Conference and Union was not held back by the American Council for Judaism, and Silver called for the remaining Rabbis who were members of this organization to "dissociate themselves from this organization"; it was no longer in their power to "terminate" the organization as had previously been asked of them by the Conference, for such powers were no longer in rabbinic hands as the organization was now controlled by the laity.<sup>79</sup>

Time and the historic continuity of events do not wait for men to sanction them. The British Mandate for

Palestine was swiftly drawing to a conclusion with ever more restrictions on the Jewish population who resided under its jurisdiction in Palestine. During the final session of the Conference on June 29, 1946, reports filtered in to the Conference hall that "Sabbath morning searches suddenly were made of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem, Mr. Shertok and Rabbi Fishman, the World President of Mizrachi, one of the leading Orthodox Rabbonim, and other members of the Agency."<sup>80</sup>

Perhaps this action of the British authorities would not have made a grievous impression in the Conference, considering the anti-British and illegal activities the Agency was engaged in. However, this raid was carried out on a Saturday morning, and "Rabbi Fishman refused to enter a vehicle for transportation to police headquarters and the police bodily threw him into the vehicle and took him to headquarters."<sup>81</sup>

Dr. Weizman was held incommunicado during this time,<sup>82</sup> and serious squirmishes broke out between British troops and the Jews of Palestine. The land was put under martial law.<sup>83</sup>

This action of the Mandate authorities struck members of the Conference in different areas of emotional commitment. For the Zionists it was a severe blow against their Nationalistic hopes. To those of the Conference who regarded England as the great preserver of liberal traditions

and enlightenment, they appeared no better than the enemy so recently defeated in the World War. Dr. David Phillipson, anti-Nationalist all his life and at this late date the Dean of the Conference, spoke with strong emotion and conviction in support of a resolution condemning this "horror" and "these unprecedented unjust Gestapo acts." "I personally have during all my life been a great admirer of Great Britain, but in this act of hers today, if proven true, she has forfeited all the respect and the love which I and many others have had for Great Britain..."<sup>84</sup>

When the resolution of condemnation was brought to the Conference hall, Dr. Phillipson stated: "I have differed on many points with many men in the Conference, as you know, but here I am in heartiest accord with what the Committee has brought in; I think it is worthy and admirable and I should like to know whether it will be possible that I could be of the Committee that shall present this resolution to the President of the United States." "Whereupon the Convention arose and applauded."<sup>85</sup>

Thereupon the resolution was unanimously adopted amidst applause.<sup>86</sup> A committee was appointed to deliver to the President of the United States the resolution which called upon him to "procure the immediate release of the members of the Executive Agency and all other victims of this terroristic procedure, and the prompt implementation of that

recommendation of the Anglo-American Inquiry Commission's report which calls for the unconditional admission of one hundred thousand Jews into Palestine."<sup>87</sup>

One is amazed at the political naivete of the Conference. One wonders just what the British should have done to the members of a Jewish Agency which, from its point of view, was taking the morally correct action, actually was a hostile army encamped within the British front. The indignation expressed by the Conference would have been comical if the Palestinian situation had not been so tragic.

The Conference had now become a militant supporting organization working for the establishment of the New Jewish Commonwealth, though as late as 1946 it was still unable to urge action in favor of a Jewish State.<sup>88</sup> The emotional connotation of the words Jewish State still were too electrically charged, and apparently would still have brought out into the open emotional arguments and outmoded political views of the older generation, who were now willing to support the cause of Zionism by self-deceptive acts, linking themselves with humanitarian or social justice traditions of Judaism, rather than its political tradition.

Nevertheless, the die had been cast, and there was no turning back. The future of American Judaism, and one might add World Judaism, was to be deeply affected by that small land area in the Middle East. The circle of Reform



Judaism had made a full swing, from the early bitter stands against any nationalistic aspirations of Jews, through the so-called charitable nationalism of the 1920-1930 period, to militant support of the goals of Nationalism by 1946.<sup>89</sup>

In conjunction with the Conference's ever increasing support of Zionist activities during the 1940's, another feature of its return to a more traditional position was the increased amount of ceremonial and ritual materials created by the Committee on Ceremonies.

By 1945 the new Megillah ritual introduced in 1939 had sold 30,720 copies, and was in use in 184 congregations.<sup>90</sup> The storo for rabbinical robes was adopted by ninety-nine congregations.<sup>91</sup> The Chanuko service pageant was used by sixty-one congregations,<sup>92</sup> and the Sabbath Sh'kolim liturgy had sold 2,261 copies and was used by twenty congregations.<sup>93</sup>

Encouraged by its initial success in introducing these new religious activities, the Committee on Ceremonies prepared, in 1945, a ritual to be used at a family Yahrzeit kindling and urged that Kiddush be celebrated at the Friday evening service in the Synagogue with accompanying music.<sup>94</sup>

The revised Union Prayer Book of 1924 had omitted the traditional Kiddush text from the regular Friday evening service, and placed it only in a translated version in the section entitled "Service in the Home."<sup>95</sup> In the "Newly Revised" edition of the Union Prayer Book, Vol. I, the text of the traditional Kiddush now appears, with the exclusion of the phrase mi-kol ha-amim.<sup>96</sup>

The enrichment of the ritual for the synagogue was attempted to give it some of the overtones of traditional Judaism. The effort to do so met with a measure of success and encouraged the Committee to continue to introduce new practices into the Reform Temple in later years, as we will have occasion to see.

The years immediately following the conclusion of hostilities in Europe and Asia were a period of religious transformation in the United States. Church and synagogue attendance were on the upsurge, but at the same time the war seemed to have caused a spiritual vacuum in the United States. The recent destruction of millions of innocents as well as the physical ruins in which a great section of the globe found itself seemed to undermine the moral and religious authority on which people had come to rely. The once United Allies were beginning to separate, and the people of Western Europe as well as the United States, having hoped for a just and lasting peace, were beginning to experience the first cracks in the war time alliance between the Western Powers and Soviet Russia.<sup>97</sup> Thus their faith in the unity of purpose for which the great war had been fought was undergoing attacks of doubt and skepticism.

The old faith of Reform Judaism and its justification of the ultimate triumph of the "Messianic Prophecy" was

now to come under severe attack from many quarters of American life. Nationalism, particularism and anti-universalistic ideologies were to reassert themselves in the United States.

The former period of American liberalism was ever slowly evolving into an age of political conservatism, if not reaction. The government of the United States introduced loyalty oaths; the Congress further restricted immigration and expanded its un-American activities investigations; legislation unfavorable to union labor organizations was passed, and permanent peace time military conscription was made the law of the land for the first time in the nation's history.

In 1946 the Central Conference of American Rabbis had two addresses presented to them which were significantly indicative of the secular atmosphere of the time: "Guiding Principles in a Defeatist World," written by Rabbi Morton M. Berman, and "Reform Judaism and the Halacha," delivered by Solomon B. Freehof.

Rabbi Berman was a chaplain recently home from the war, and he quite candidly stated his analysis of American life as he found it upon his discharge and return home.

Distance had lent enchantment, I had visualized the community back home more inwardly sure of itself, stronger in its faith in Jewish values, and more hopeful of a better future for itself and the world. I have returned to find that it had only been a dream, for I discovered that Jewry is filled with a mood of

defeat rather than of victory. It is not a mood peculiar to Jews alone, for it is shared by many non-Jews.<sup>98</sup>

This temper of the post-war years was disenchantment with the condition of the world and also of religion which had it seemed, failed in saving mankind from its destructive impulses, and yet man did not know "any other shrine at which to worship."<sup>99</sup> The immediate problem confronting the American rabbinate as well as its Christian counterpart was how to regain the faith of its people in the value of religion.

The answer of Rabbi Berman was that the Jew of the past believed that "God, Torah and Israel were one..." "While the Jew believed in the God of Israel, he could not doubt the ultimate triumph of Justice. While he studied his Torah and practiced its mitzwoths his faith in God and himself were daily renewed."<sup>100</sup> Berman saw the cause of this religious dilemma of the Jew as his inability to accept the traditional theology of Judaism. Unfortunately, Berman did not ask why this theology was no longer satisfying for the Jew, but plead that we "turn our people from the relative norms of our times to the absolute standards drawn from the pattern of God's own conduct."<sup>101</sup>

Berman's recommendation to capture the people of Israel once again for the Synagogue was the "formulation of a code and the authorization of its use by this body."<sup>102</sup>

This was truly a suggestion of reaction often rejected by the Conference in the past as alien to the Spirit of Reform Judaism, but this was a different age and time and a code of behavior was demanded by some "for the rebuilding of their morale and their will to live as Jews."<sup>103</sup>

Appealing to a code of religious practice and behavior for American Jews hardly seems a likely means for recapturing the faith of men in an age of transition from war to peace. It seems rather an attempt on the part of some to secure their individuality by the curious method of giving up that precious individuality -- and thereby, in fact, destroying their own creative spirit and authority as rabbis by surrendering their authority to a collective body which would decide just what their religious spirits shall do and shall not do.

The address of Dr. Solomon B. Freehof at the 1946 Conference concerned itself with "Reform Judaism and the Halacha." Dr. Freehof stressed the point that "certain matters can't be adjusted by law..."<sup>104</sup> and plead for an internal organic growth [which] would at present lack a spiritual foundation and would actually hamper us in our creative process."<sup>105</sup>

This desire for a code of religious practice was not a new question to the Conference. Calls for synods and codes of authorized Jewish theology could be traced to the



founder of the C.C.A.R., Isaac M. Wise,<sup>106</sup> who had himself experienced defeat and a negative response to his suggestions that the Conference approve an authorized theology for Reform Jews.<sup>107</sup>

That these two different approaches to the development of Reform Judaism have always been present in the Conference is evidenced by Wise's early experience as well as the differently oriented appeals of Rabbis Berman and Freshof in our own generation. The discussion which followed the presentation of these papers clearly indicated the divergence of opinion in the Conference concerning the question of whether or not Reform Judaism should have an authoritative code of practice.

Dr. Samuel S. Cohon, Professor of Theology at the Hebrew Union College and a long time member of the Conference, reflected the conservative view that "we need a small Hayye Adam if not a Shulchan Aruch, written for the average man and woman..."<sup>108</sup>

Rabbi Frederick A. Doppelt sympathized with Cohon's view: "...we in Reform Judaism have not yet been able to revive authority -- the right to demand our people to abide by certain practices. I believe that such authority can be had if we have but a definite code."<sup>109</sup>

Representing the other side of the question were such arguments as those of Rabbi Julius Gordon: "We cannot

go back to a codified, ritualistic Shulchan Aruch -- and no one of us wants a 'printed pope' -- what about a Guide to the Preplexed that will deal with the ethical, moral and educational phases of our entire life? We are perplexed. Why not give us a guide."<sup>110</sup>

This request for a guide is a type of compromise between the extreme positions of authoritative codes and no codes at all. Nevertheless, it is indicative of the spiritual and moral dilemma men of the Conference were experiencing. Those who did not wish to give up their individual authority as rabbis were aware that the movement as a whole needed some sort of code which would render it a more unified religious body, yet were wary and fearful of any type of sanctioned codes of religious behavior and practice.

In his summation to the Conference, Dr. Freshof emphasized to his colleagues, "The essence of my paper is not that we do not need a code, or will not need a code, but that we need a great deal of careful and creative study for some time to come."<sup>111</sup>

The demand of many of the men of the Conference concerning the desirability of a code of religious practices and behavior for the Reform Jew which would give the rabbi an official sanction for his pronouncements larger than his own authority is an attempt to gain loyalty from the rabbi's congregants and bind their differences into some sort of

homogeneity. One wonders if this proposed method was very different from the developing ideology, in secular governmental affairs, of requiring those whom the Government is to employ to sign so-called loyalty oaths. The movement of oath signing was just gaining momentum in 1946, and by 1948 the Executive Branch of the Government of the United States issued an order making the signing of a loyalty oath a condition of employment. The attempts made in the Conference to formulate a code were not so unique, for increased attempts at centralization of authority and control over the beliefs of individuals were also reflected in secular American life.

In opposition to the growing climate of reaction and the attempts of leaders to place demands of conformity on the citizenry of this land, Abba Hillel Silver denounced the executive order of President Harry S. Truman which was apparently formulated in order that "Communists and Communist sympathizers should be screened out of their jobs..." Silver, standing in the tradition nineteenth-century liberalism where the freedom of thought was a primary consideration, rightly observed: "When a country gets launched on an anti-Communist campaign it quickly passes over to an anti-liberal and anti-democratic campaign..."<sup>112</sup> The correctness of Silver's assumption was borne out in the subsequent developments of American political life when the smear technique and guilt by association became the common vehicle of public defaming of innocents.

The age of reaction began to grip the American political scene, and the Conference's concern with ways to gain authority over the beliefs and practices of its members' congregants was no less than a reflection of the secular atmosphere of reaction and fear produced by the free thought of individuals in a period of transition.

The attempt to curb the individual authority of rabbis was continued at the next session of the Conference, although no official code or practice of behavior had been authorized by 1947. In a discussion following the report of the Conference entitled "Mixed Marriage and Intermarriage,"<sup>113</sup> once again the question of the curbing of the rabbi's individual authority was at stake. The discussion hinged around the 1909 resolution of the Conference which stated mixed marriage is "discouraged," but the adherents for centralization wished to return to the Orthodox position and to reword this 1909 resolution by substituting the word "forbid" for "discourage."<sup>114</sup>

In the arguments presented at the Conference, the statement of Rabbi William F. Rosenblum gave evidence of the new air which had permeated the thinking of a large number of its members: "I probably do not represent what seems to be the popular point of view. We should not legislate in the spirit of reaction that is showing itself in many quarters. ...nothing is as sublime as is the love of a man for a woman

and no legislation and no resolution that you will pass here is going to stop it... To use the word 'forbid,' or... 'sanction' is a step backward."<sup>115</sup>

The plea of Rabbi Ephraim Frisch was candid concerning the issue at stake in these attempts to restrict individual authority. "I was opposed to the mild resolution in 1909. Leave us our freedom..."<sup>116</sup>

The proponents of this word change were also apologists for Judaism and brought evidence from the world of sociology to support their position to forbid mixed marriages. Rabbi Samuel S. Mayerberg: "This Conference should go on record against mixed marriages...on good sociological basis... We have a right to suggest that a marriage between people when there is a fundamental difference in the ways of life, cannot result in a happy, harmonious home."<sup>117</sup> One might note that the Conference had already suggested this in 1909, and since that time no statistics had been presented to the Conference investigating the amount of happiness generated either by mixed marriages or marriages between Jews.

The opinion of Rabbi Gunther Plaut, speaking in favor of the proposed change, is of interest for it gives his interpretation of liberalism, which he attempted to defend while advocating a reactionary point of view: "We are taking a step forward when we as Reform rabbis declare that

we have certain standards and that liberalism is not identical with lawlessness and that Reform is not identical with expedience."<sup>118</sup> Plaut confessed that he was one who used to "make exceptions," but upon returning from the war had changed his beliefs concerning this matter.<sup>119</sup> The feeling was that the tightening of the bonds which bound congregants to Judaism seemed to be a result of the great numerical loss the Jewish people had suffered in Europe as well as the general climate of reaction on the American scene, both a result of the recent war.

A unique interpretation of why the 1909 resolution should be amended was given by Rabbi Bernard Heller, "We ought to say in order to maintain the philosophy of progressive Judaism that we feel the traditional attitude to have relevance today."<sup>120</sup> It is extremely difficult for this writer to see or feel that the theological views of Ezra and Nehemiah or other representatives of Jewish tradition concerning mixed marriage can be equated, let alone reconciled, with the universalism and humanitarian view of man as understood by the Reform movement until the reaction of the late 1940's.

In order to bring harmony into the discussion of this question, Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman proposed a substitute resolution "that members of this Conference officiate only at such mixed marriages where both partners give their

oath that the children born of their union will be reared in accordance with the traditions and teachings of Judaism..." This substitute motion was lost, and by the narrow majority of two votes the Conference turned down the proposed motion that mixed marriages should not be sanctioned.<sup>121</sup>

The Conference then proceeded to endorse the 1909<sup>122</sup> resolution that mixed marriages should be "discouraged."

Though the attempted passage of this restrictive motion was defeated, it was indicative of the resurgence of particularism which smacked of orthodoxy and its authoritarian nature; it also reflected the desire of a number of men in the Conference for authority and authorization independent of the strength they were able to exert in their local communities. Finally, it constituted an attempt to preserve the racial integrity of those persons professing to be Jews. However, didn't the proponents of this restrictive measure understand that it would frequently place them in the invidious position of endorsing marriages between agnostic Jews, while restricting marriage between an agnostic Jew and an agnostic Christian.

If qualifications are to be established before a rabbi performs a religious marriage ceremony, perhaps it would be necessary to request information from the Jewish participants if they are "true believers" and members of the faith in "good standing." It appears that such an inquisition

would be contrary to the spirit of any liberal religion which endorsed the equality and brotherhood of man before his creator.

Perhaps this tendency within the Conference can also be traced to the secular scene where the State also was seeking to preserve itself by inhibiting and restricting the political freedom of its citizens by intimidation and public investigation of one's political opinions. I believe that a correlation could be established between religious liberalism and reaction, and Governmental or secular behavior towards the freedom of its citizens.

We have seen, in the intervening years between 1942-1947, Reform Judaism slowly changing in character. It has become less universal in its orientation and more ethnocentric and particularistic. It has also abandoned the anti-Nationalistic policies which were formulated at the genesis of its German and American inception.

The 1948 session of the Conference was convened in an atmosphere unique in its history. Since Titus destroyed the city of Jerusalem there had not existed an independent state governed and populated by Jews. This new Jewish state in Palestine was to change the perspective of world Jewry and no less the members of the Conference. In the words of the late Dr. Stephen S. Wise, "D.P.' will no longer mean 'Displaced Person' but those 'Destined for Palestine.'"<sup>123</sup>

In 1980, the founder of the Conference had declared: "The idea of the Jews returning to Palestine is no part of our creed. We rather believe it is God's will that the habitable world become one holy land and the human family one chosen people."<sup>124</sup> We might contrast this view with the report of the Committee of Contemporaneous History to the 1948 Conference. "Your committee suggests that the Conference go on record as directing its prayers and efforts in the aid of fellow Jews who are gallant fighters in the new State of Israel...We are inspired by the rebirth of Jewish nationhood. The dauntless valor, courage and dedication of our brethren in 'Israel' are a source of great hope and light to us."<sup>125</sup>

The question of the Jewish national state could no longer be an academic one. It was a political reality, and the Government of Israel was recognized by the major and most of the minor powers of the United Nations where it was admitted as a member state.

We turn our attention now to an investigation of the effect that this new Jewish body had on the actions of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

In 1946 the Conference authorized the formation of a standing Committee to inform it of developments in Palestine. In this Committee's report of 1948 there is evidence that leads to the conclusion that the Conference had become an arm of religious endorsement for the activities of the new State of Israel. The Conference was now firmly committed to do all in its power to support the new State and marshal all Jews to aid it in every way possible. This support was not limited to financial assistance, but involved approving and condemning the foreign policy of various governments as well as urging that, in any future peace negotiations which might take place, no nation should be "allowed to handicap Israel and that no decision be reached that shall compromise the independence of Israel or its territorial integrity and the free immigration of Jews into the new State in accordance with its immigration policy."<sup>126</sup>

The emotional relationship to a political ideal is significantly altered when the ideal becomes a reality. In the first relationship, the ideal is to be sought, and in the seeking, the ideal does not necessarily affect the seeker by its existence. Once the political ideal is realized,



however, it can exert influences on the seeker which he never contemplated when anticipating the establishment of his political ideal.

This was the situation that arose with the new Jewish State. A paper was presented to the Conference in 1948 by Rabbi Philip Bernstein entitled "The New Israel and American Jewry,"<sup>127</sup> the paper attempted to give an analysis of the present relations between the Jews of the diaspora and the State of Israel, as well as offering recommendations for the future direction of this relationship.

Rabbi Bernstein was concerned about the question of dual loyalty between Jews who lived in the nations of the world and those in the State of Israel, a charge which had been leveled by anti-Nationalists as well as anti-Semites against the Zionist cause. Bernstein's claim was that Jews had always fought other Jews who belonged to a different national body politic and that this state "will give American Jews who desire to settle in Israel as citizens the opportunity to do so. On the other hand, it will clearly free Jews from involvement in divided political loyalties."<sup>128</sup>

This, however, seems a rather naive analysis and suggestion concerning the loyalty of American Jews and their emotional relationship to Israel. No matter how strongly they felt about Israel, most American Jews, due to economic conditions or family relationships, were not going to move

there in mass. It is quite true that Jews have fought Jews who were nationals of another State, and in the ancient past Jews outside of Palestine have fought against Jews who lived in Palestine, but after the massacres of World War II and the destruction of millions of Jews, there is every reason to believe that the Jews of the United States viewed the creation of the new state as a symbol of resurrection for World Jewry, and one wonders how many of them would have actually borne arms against it, regardless of the political oratory.

Bernstein was of the opinion that the Zionist organization of America would, of necessity, undergo changes that would make of it a "largely cultural, spiritual, philanthropic organization as well as economic primarily in the fields of loans and investments."<sup>129</sup> This abandonment of the political activities of the Zionist Organization was seen in the light of national experience of the German American Bund and the Communist Party of the United States. What a strange comparison. Both of these organizations were parties whose primary function was to deliver the government of the United States into the hands of foreign states. The objectives of the Zionist Organization was always to obtain support from the government to further the idea of a Jewish national state, which in no way would interfere with the sovereign state whose aid was requested, but the fear of some

Jews that they would be open to dual loyalty attacks appeared to be real, and the naive attempts to change the activities of the Zionist Organization were a complete misunderstanding of the causes of anti-semitism, which have nothing to do with the fact of Jews engaging in political activity.

Rabbi Bernatein's paper was answered rightly by a member of the Conference from the floor who declared: "I, for one, cannot conceive...of the Jews of America being uninterested in the security of that State, or in its political soundness; being only interested in cultural and philanthropic relationship to it...will we not continue to be vitally interested in seeing to it that this country helps in international relationships, in securing the stability of Palestine ..."<sup>130</sup>

Time has proven thus far that Rabbi Bernstein's assumptions were in error. The Jews of America have not been accused of dual loyalty, and the political activities of the Zionist organizations of the United States as well as the Central Conference of American Rabbis on behalf of the State of Israel have not abated during the intervening years. Whether or not in a time of economic breakdown this same amicable relationship between Jews and their neighbors will remain stable still remains to be seen.

It was astute observation on Rabbi Bernstein's part that the new State was going to have a strong cultural impact

upon American Jews, and the "revived Hebrew Culture of Palestine has been wafted like a fresh breeze across the sea."<sup>131</sup> American Jews did become keenly interested in Hebrew-Israeli songs and folk dances, as well as attuning their ears to the Israeli pronunciation of Hebrew. Bernstein envisaged this new American interest in Hebraism as a "return...toward tradition..." with American Jewry demanding more Jewish education and the development of a parochial school system.<sup>132</sup>

If Rabbi Bernstein's account of the demands of the Jewish community was valid, then American Jewry, and this of course includes Reform Jewry, was becoming more ethnic-centered, losing its universal outlook, and concentrating on the up-building of a religious body which is particularistically centered and intent on self-preservation in the immediate post-war era.

The hopes of Reform Jewry, disavowing its own claims to the spiritual leadership of American Jewry, were startlingly put forth by Rabbi Hillel Silver: "I am thinking of Jerusalem as a sort of spiritual and cultural center of World Jewry, and the beginnings are there...that Jerusalem will become for World Jewry, in generations to come, a real powerhouse, a real dynamo of spiritual and cultural influence...to make Jerusalem the *נֶפֶשׁ הַיָּד* in Jewish life and Jewish thought."<sup>133</sup>

If Rabbi Silver's opinion was common to many members of the Conference, Reform had done a complete about face, and

a total immersion with the secularists of Zionism had taken place. The early Reformers saw the United States of America as the new spiritual birthplace of Judaism; consider, for instance, the lyrics of Professor Moritz Lazarus:

We have no fear for the future...The new interpretation that Judaism has received among us in this land has clothed the eternal basic principles in garments fashioned according to the demands of this later time...Judaism in America, free, noble aspiring! ...Judaism in this land has, in the beautiful words of our American poetess, Emma Lazarus, "burst her cobwebbed sheath and flown forth attired in the winged beauty of immortality." Here indeed the Jew has once again arisen to the height of man; here Israel has come to a new Sinai, where God has revealed Himself anew...From the Hills of Palestine the prophet's voice floats down the vestibule of time, enjoying the soulful command, "Hear, O Israel, the Eternal is our God"; from the broad plains of the United States the answer is sent back, "God is one."<sup>134</sup>

How is one to reconcile these totally different understandings of the spiritual rejuvenation of Jewry? Did the decades between Lazarus and Silver so change the Jewish psyche in America that the only hope for the creative Jewish spirit lay in the resurrection of the ancient home land? Did the philosophers of Reform Judaism find that the politics of the middle twentieth century undermined their commitment to the universal concepts of love, consideration, and faith in one's fellow man? Was Judaism to revert back to a tribal situation where concern for members of the family was paramount, taking precedence over universal considerations?

It appeared that Reform Judaism had failed to capture

the American Jewish community, either spiritually or politically, and that it had not realized its utopian goals. Some looked to Palestine for spiritual rejuvenation, but others, realizing that spiritual strength had to be a native product, looked within themselves; the latter, looking at the American Jewish scene, were cognizant that a great deal of thought and work would be necessary to establish Reform Judaism in America as a vigorous, dynamic religious body.

Some sixty years after the Central Conference of American Rabbis was organized, it still had not realized the goals of its founders to become the majority Jewish religious group in America. We have cited reasons for this failure, and though the increased amount of tradition and gravitation to the support of Zionism gave a broader base for the attraction of non-affiliated Jews, Reform still seemed to be without "appeal to the laboring Jew..."<sup>135</sup>

Constituting a majority of the Jewish laboring class in the United States were those Jews "who yearned for the type of ritualism they knew when they were children in an orthodox environment."<sup>136</sup> This emotional tie to ritual was taken into account by the Conference and the Union, and the increase in the ceremonials of Reform Judaism can be accounted for by the report of the Joint Committee on Ceremonies of the Conference and the Union for 1949. During the years 1945-1949 the Committee issued "four new experimental publi-



cations...ceremonial for lighting of festival candles...No provision was made in the Union Prayerbook for the candle lighting ceremony on the festivals...Installation of congregational officers and trustees, revised...New edition of Megillah ritual...Supplement to the Haggadah."<sup>137</sup>

The Joint Committee had to its "credit nineteen experimental ceremonies and related materials and six ceremonial objects."<sup>138</sup> The Joint Committee planned in the future to publish "seven certificates for important occasions in Jewish life...Jewish book plates, birthday cards, get well cards...music for Kiddush...ceremonial art objects...ceremony in connection with naming of a child...Shoshanas Yaakov..." and a host of other ceremonies and Jewish objects of art."<sup>139</sup>

The report of this Joint Committee concluded as follows: "The time and the means are short, but the work is great and the demands of our sacred cause, as well as the gratifying response that we have received from all over the country urges us on."<sup>140</sup>

In the field of Jewish Education, Dr. Abraham Franzblau carried out an intensive research project "in an effort to re-evaluate the methods and the techniques of teaching Hebrew in the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform school."<sup>141</sup>

Dr. Franzblau arrived at the following conclusions: the recent World War and the establishment of the new Jewish commonwealth "have certainly helped to emphasize the importance

of Hebrew." The effect of these developments on educators was that they were "pushing harder and harder for the subject of Hebrew in our religious schools today." The net effect of this had resulted in more schools teaching Hebrew, extending the amount of time devoted to its teaching and in the revival of publishing Hebrew texts."<sup>142</sup>

In turning his attention to Reform Religious schools, Dr. Franzblau found that the students were being taught to say grace before meals in Hebrew and that they were saying it with ever increasing frequency. He found that Reform had a "Seder and calls it a Seder, and that we say Gut Shabbos at the end of our services...the benediction for Chanukah is said...more than we did twenty-five and fifty years ago."<sup>143</sup>

The sixty years which had gone before had seen little activity in Reform Judaism with respect to the field of ceremonial creativity or Hebrew education in the religious school. The "Circumcision of the Heart" had been held more important than the waving of the lulav, and prayer in the vernacular had been considered just as efficacious as the Hebrew tongue.

The leadership of the Conference in the forties tried to tie Reform Judaism to the Orthodoxy of the past ceremonially while doing nothing about Reform theology. Consequently, Reform theology remained one of universalism while its rituals and ceremonies, particularistic in character, continued to grow in order that Reform might appeal to those who found that

"the old Judaism of ceremonialism that meant so much to their parents and grandparents...[was] missing from our Reform Synagogues."<sup>144</sup>

This manufacturing of ceremonies and incorporating ancient rites into the Reform temple did not pass without notice from those members of the Conference who feared the new direction upon which the movement was embarking. One wonders at the reason for such suddenness on the part of the Reform leadership. For the first time one could feel that Reform was being pressured into this activity by a power that had formerly not been there, a threatening power that was going to snare unaffiliated Jews into its own ranks.

Rabbi Karl Rosenthal's views on the circumstances surrounding the ceremonial creativity of the Conference were:

Now, I quite agree that we need ceremonies, but it seems to me there is a certain trend in our Reform movement today to overemphasize the value of ceremonials...I'm afraid that there is a certain fear among some of us that we are losing the race with the Conservative movement.<sup>145</sup>

One might conjecture that what the Joint Committee called a "gratifying response" to the new ceremonies sprang in part from the fear that the Conservative Jewish Religious movement would capture the major portion of American Jews who had religious backgrounds only one generation removed from East European Orthodoxy.

The increasing amount of ceremony and ritual intro-

duced into Reform, together with Reform's alignment with the Zionist cause, brought a measure of success to those in the Reform Movement who wished to augment Reform ranks. The 1949 report of the Committee on Contemporaneous History stated: "The increase in the number of synagogues and members in our movement is a source of satisfaction and indicates the vast field which is still to be explored."<sup>146</sup>

With the increased number of congregations in the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the question of organizing an equitable system of pulpit placement for rabbis and congregations was presented by the Central Conference. This was the third time in the history of the Conference that a "serious attempt [had been made] by the C.C.A.R. to organize a system of rabbinical placement..." It was felt by some members of the Conference that the entire system of placement was in a state of "chaos and anarchy" and that a system of placement was necessary which would bring order to the abuses and freedom of individual prerogative in seeking pulpit assignments.<sup>147</sup>

The growth of congregations brought with it the need for greater order and for a more systematic and efficient method of rabbinical placement. Of particular interest to us in this connection is Section Five of the proposed rules for rabbinical placement. This section demanded sanctions against members of the C.C.A.R. and congregations of the Union who disregarded the proposed rules of placement approved by the Conference.<sup>148</sup>

The two sanctions which illustrate the new structure of the Conference are best stated in Sections Three and Seven of the Report of the Joint Placement Commission of the Union and the Conference. Section Three called for removal of an offending rabbi from all committees or commissions of

the C.C.A.R. and/or the U.A.H.C.; it urged similar removal of all representatives of an offending congregation from all commissions of the U.A.H.C. Section Seven prescribed, as a final and extreme penalty to be invoked reluctantly, when all else had failed, expulsion of the rabbi from the C.C.A.R., or of the congregation from the U.A.H.C.<sup>149</sup>

The proposal of a plan of this nature that would carry with it these drastic sanctions seems out of character with the past of a Conference which claims to be a voluntary association of men of good will bound together for common purposes. Nevertheless, as has been lucidly stated by Dr. Ellis Rivkin,

Every structural complex involves human beings interrelated with each other in the specific way demanded by the prevailing economic, social, and political system ... and as such must cope with the feelings, strivings and aspirations of men... Each system of social organization attempts to preserve itself against the upsurge of recalcitrant particulars... This persistent failure to bring all particulars into line has guaranteed development and novelty -- to say, nothing of pain, anguish and conflict.<sup>150</sup>

The former demand by a substantial number of men in the Conference for codes and guides for religious behavior, for Conference rabbinical decision rather than individual rulings, indicates the new structural composure of the C.C.A.R. Not only was the demand made that congregants give up their religious freedom to determine their own

practices, but in addition the rabbis themselves were asked to relinquish the privilege of free pulpit negotiations, a privilege which had hitherto been unattended by sanctions. The growing number of pulpits thus created a new structural situation, and this new situation organized the "feelings and strivings" of the men of the Conference into demanding the curtailment of recalcitrant members who would seek freely to compete with other members for pulpits without recourse to an official placement body. The new faith in authoritative codes as security against deviant congregational behavior is reflected in the proposal to establish an authority equipped with sanctions protecting men from other rabbis who might freely attempt to fulfill their own desires for more advantageous pulpits without consulting the wishes of their colleagues.

This new direction towards sanctions was best stated by Rabbi Allan Tarshish:

The compulsive features of that plan are very repugnant to me. One of the reasons why I have been attracted to the liberal rabbinate has been its moral authority. I do not believe that the C.C.A.R. has ever before ordered its members in this compulsive fashion on any of the great principles for which we stand.... This is a dangerous and alien tendency in our movement.<sup>151</sup>

Rabbi Tarshish's opinion was no longer the voice of the majority of the Conference. It is this writer's opinion that the Conference was reflecting the general

political climate of the United States, which was moving towards a society structured by strong authoritarian controls against individual freedom and against independence of political opinion and action. Just as the American Liberal tradition was being slowly undermined in the secular realm, so within the confines of the Conference, too, there was a decided change in emphases from left to right.

Rabbi Harry Essrig presented a paper before the Conference entitled "Jewish Religious Liberalism in the World of Tomorrow." In it he categorically stated that the spiritual dilemma of the American Jew would not be solved by the "growing nostalgic tendency" toward the "fetish of ceremonialism," nor by the attempts to establish a "minimum code of behavior."<sup>152</sup>

Rabbi Essrig pleaded that Reform Judaism see its "drive for expansion in proper perspective and avoid falling into the pitfalls of rivalry and competition with other segments of Jewry."<sup>153</sup> The case of what had been happening to the Reform Movement since the early 1940's had been clearly described.

In further eliciting the ills of Reform, Essrig stated that the cause of Reform's failure to attract the American Jewish community in mass was that the movement had become "spiritually unproductive."<sup>154</sup> The attack on the Reform spiritual dilemma was again made by Essrig in his

decrying the fact that Reform was "still too much tradition-bound....we must always cite chapter and verse for every step we take towards the amelioration of human suffering and for every attempt to see the phenomena of life in new, striking relationships."<sup>155</sup>

He urged that Reform try to direct its creative powers in order to change the temple into a

new type of religious institution...which would be people-centered and not pulpit centered, whose primary function it will be to help the members analyze their experiences, re-evaluate the changing values of everyday happenings and weave together a<sup>156</sup> pattern of life that will be meaningful.

The following year Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus was president of the Conference. Cognizant of the positions which were held by those who wished a re-evaluation of Jewish theology and Reform goals, and those who desired a more traditional orientation of Reform with an establishment of codes of practice, he proposed two resolutions to the Conference; these he hoped might guide the Conference along a path which would take and combine the best from the two divergent tendencies present in the C.C.A.R. for the healthy growth of Reform.<sup>157</sup>

The first recommendation of Dr. Marcus called for a re-examination of the goals and theology of the synagogue. The second recommendation proposed consideration of the men of the Conference who were concerned with arriving at a code of practice for Reform Judaism.<sup>158</sup>

These two problems were now formally to be considered by the Conference, as well as the formulation of a Committee to "study every aspect of a code of practice, including its feasibility at this time..."<sup>159</sup>

In mid-century, Reform Judaism was concerned with its ontological status, and it saw itself as having "moved toward ritual and ceremony...the Zionist movement, [with a] new interest in Chassidism..."<sup>160</sup> Solomon B. Freehof succinctly stated the mood of the C.C.A.R.: "We began to be interested not, as hitherto, only in Judaism; but also in Jewishness." Dr. Freehof's explanation of this new interest of Reform Judaism was that the tragedies of the Jewish world had brought all Jews closer together and, in particular, had called attention to the folk movements of Judaism and re-established in Reform Jews a romantic love of the ritual and the drama of their faith.<sup>161</sup>

After a decade of planned membership growth designed to obtain adherents to Reform Judaism, the members of the Conference were experiencing deep concern over their apparent inadequacy in not having formulated a clear ideological or theological program and conveying it to their adherents in lucid, cogent language.

President Marcus' suggestion of holding a conference on Jewish theology similar in nature to one held the previous March, 1950, at the Hebrew Union College, was referred to the executive board of the C.C.A.R., where it languished.<sup>162</sup>



The Conference was not ready at this time to thrash out the question of Reform Jewish theology or practice. Perhaps the pace of the average rabbi involved in his daily routine was such as to cause him to ignore the apparent weakness of Reform Judaism and to be content as long as the rolls of his temple kept increasing.

In 1950 the State of Israel was two years old, and the C.C.A.R. ratified a decision to establish a summer institute in the Holy Land. The institute was designed "to help erect a two-way cultural bridge between the United States and Israel."<sup>163</sup> The cultural bond between the new state and the Conference was fully realized by the Conference. The political effects of Israel also had its ramifications in the membership. The Conference adopted resolutions requesting the American Government to use its "good offices to support vigorously" the payment of reparations to Israel by West Germany,<sup>164</sup> as well as the "immediate implementation of the Huleh reclamation project,"<sup>165</sup> and the granting "of 150 million dollars in 1951 to assist the people and government of Israel."<sup>166</sup>

The climate within the Conference was one where criticism could not rise and expect any degree of success concerning the C.C.A.R.'s involvement with the domestic affairs of the State of Israel. For, in the words of the then president of the Conference, Philip S. Bernstein, "obviously

it is our desire and determination to do nothing which may hurt the State of Israel. We will not permit the creation of a dichotomy between the Israelis and ourselves."<sup>167</sup>

In support of its president, and to emphasize its faith in the durability of the new state, the executive board of the Conference invested five thousand dollars of its "limited funds" in Israeli Government Bonds.<sup>168</sup>

The one area of contention between the Conference and the State of Israel was with the "status of Reform and Conservative Judaism in Israel..."<sup>169</sup> The Conference passed a resolution which expressed its "desire for equal rights for all religious groups in Israel."<sup>170</sup> This resolution was presented to Judah Maimon, who was then the Minister of Religion for the State of Israel.<sup>171</sup>

Anyone who inadvertently wandered into the halls of a session of the Conference might well have thought that he was attending a convention of the Zionist Organization of America rather than one comprised of Jewish clergymen.

The pressures of the American scene and the necessary conditions which presented themselves before American Jewry worked to bring about closer cooperation between the Household of Israel in America. In addition, the need to unite American Israel in support of their war-scarred brethren abroad and the necessity of raising money for the New State of Israel led to a meeting in June, 1951, between the



Rabbinical Assembly of America and the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Confronted with the brunt of supporting World Jewry, Conservative rabbinate and the Reform rabbinate temporarily swept aside the theological differences which divided them and faced the need for co-ordinate action.<sup>172</sup>

The Conference, reflecting the atmosphere of cooperation in so-called Jewish defense activities and the sympathy within its ranks to the idea of Jewish Peoplehood, devoted its 1951 lecture series to "Reform and Conservative Judaism." The following topics were reported upon: "Reform and Conservative Judaism -- Their Mutual Relationship" and "Conservative and Reform, Shall They Merge?"<sup>173</sup>

There apparently was a need to restate those principles of Reform Judaism which differentiated it from its sister movement, Conservative Judaism. In delineating Reform Judaism, Dr. Robert Gordis stated that Reform now embraced the concept of the "world-wide peoplehood of Israel" and had reconciled itself with Zionism; both, of course, had been "basic postulates of Conservative Judaism."<sup>174</sup> But the basic difference between the two movements yet remained, and that was the "status of the concept of authority,"<sup>175</sup> for Reform "will continue to stress the roll of free experimentation in religion without the limitations imposed by Jewish tradition... [Conservative Judaism] will emphasize the discipline of Law...and [its] inherent capacity for growth..."<sup>176</sup>

Thus, "first and foremost the whole basis of authority in Rabbinic Judaism is and has not been acceptable to us."<sup>177</sup> Gordis summed up his argument with deep conviction; Reform, he said, recognizes the place of authority within its ranks, but "it is not an authority wielded by an ecclesiastic power that coerces, excommunicates and imposes sanctions upon recalcitrants, but authority of the spirit, an inner discipline that derives from living faith and conviction..."<sup>178</sup>

One wonders, in the light of the ever increasing demands for authoritative codes and guides to correct Reform Jewish practices, how one would go about reconciling the eloquent summation of Dr. Gordis that Reform Judaism is governed by the "authority of the spirit." Perhaps there is no reconciliation between these two wings of the Conference. One either believes in the freedom of the individual conscience or one demands the necessity of codes of authority through the traditional halacha.

Though the external trappings of Reform and Conservatism seem to have blended, the convictions of the spirit are split by a deep chasm which forces each party to go its separate way in seeking religious fulfillment.

Once again we turn our attention to the State of Israel. In June, 1951, an institute was held in the Republic of Israel by the C.C.A.R. This institute was attended by nineteen members of the Conference.<sup>179</sup> The dream of the founding of an independent Jewish state was now a reality. Still, for the men of the C.C.A.R. who attended this Conference the reality was distressing, for they found Israel a land where a majority of Jews were unaffiliated with formal religion. The Reform rabbis in attendance at the institute rationalized Israeli secularism by attributing it to the legal situation of the State which officially recognized revelatory Judaism<sup>180</sup> so that "no new form has been devised to house the free spirit, to attract the lonely searcher, to welcome the rejector of the inflexible."<sup>180</sup>

The visiting rabbis were also disappointed by the chauvinistic nationalism which seemed to have replaced the "sense of destiny and universal purpose"<sup>181</sup> which they had thought inherent within Judaism. The hope was expressed that Israel, in time, would "indigenously create a free synagogue."<sup>182</sup>

Their experience of finding only one form of Judaism recognized in the new State of Israel tempered the desire of the men to hold an additional institute there.<sup>183</sup> Nevertheless, though not enough interest could be generated for

\* Revelatory Judaism: That form of Judaism which recognizes the revelatory character of the Hebrew Bible, and Talmud, and maintain that its teachings are dependent on the Revelation at Sinai for authority.

another rabbinical institute in Israel, the Conference itself was still keenly interested in Israel, and in 1952 several papers were given at the Conference pertaining to the Israeli question.<sup>184</sup> Among the papers presented was Joshua Trachtenberg's "Report From Israel." Dr. Trachtenberg, a Labor Zionist,<sup>185</sup> was invited by the "C.C.A.R., the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and the Alumni Association of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion to make a survey of the religious situation and of the possibilities of developing liberal Judaism" in Israel.<sup>186</sup> In his account of his trip to Israel, Trachtenberg called attention to the evils which had befallen the idealistic visionary state of Zion. These included the growth of a "ubiquitous black market, currency speculation,"<sup>187</sup> the decline of the halutz ideals and the kibbutz movement,<sup>188</sup> and the growth of a bureaucracy with its graft and protektzia.<sup>189</sup> Concerning the religious issues in Israel, Trachtenberg reported that

the official religious leadership appears to be oblivious to the manifest moral and spiritual needs of the people; it is dedicated to the preservation of a formal Orthodoxy and to its imposition upon an unwilling community by force majeure....<sup>190</sup>

The alienation of Orthodoxy from the actual social situation has fostered the impression that religion has nothing to do with us, to say about the conditions of life.<sup>191</sup>

In evaluating the possibility of exporting Reform

Judaism to Israel, Dr. Trachtenberg stated that what

Israel needs [is] not Reform Judaism as we know it here, but its own indigenous, authentic re-statement of the eternal truths of our faith, in a vocabulary which can reach the hearts of the people, and in institutions of its own devising which can revolutionize its spiritual life.<sup>192</sup>

The plea for recognition of the Liberal rabbinate of America was rejected by the Orthodox rabbinate of Israel in toto. This led to the formation of an American Committee for Liberal Judaism in Israel, which was called together under the auspices of the president of the Conference, the president of the College-Institute, the president of the Union,<sup>193</sup> and the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

The Reform rabbinate was confronted with a rejection of its authority, and it could not passively accept this rebuff for "either Liberal Judaism will be accepted in Israel and everywhere in the world, or we will degenerate into an American sect."<sup>194</sup> The question was now not whether or not Liberal Judaism would speak for the majority of American Jews, but would it, in the future, speak for the majority of World Jewry, regardless of their distinctive nationalities.

To facilitate the introduction of liberal Judaism into Israel, the 1952 president's message recommended "that this Conference do all in its power to assist one of its members to go to Israel to aid in the development of a liberal religious movement in that country."<sup>195</sup>

The following year the president of the Conference recommended that "there be promoted the exchange of students and of teachers between Israel and the American Liberal Jewish community."<sup>196</sup> To implement this program, the Conference set aside \$500 for support of the Leo Baeck School in Haifa, translated "What is Reform Judaism" into Hebrew along with the "Columbus Platform," and joined hands with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the World Union for Progressive Judaism, and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in a pilot project that would send a Reform Rabbi to Israel for a three-year period. This program involved the substantial sum of \$60,000.<sup>197</sup>

Through support of the Leo Baeck School, the Liberal rabbinate of America hoped to make ideological inroads into the religious thought of Israelis. This initial attempt of waging an aggressive campaign against the established religion of the State of Israel was enthusiastically received by the Conference, but "the help expected from the liberal Jews of America did not materialize."<sup>198</sup> Nevertheless, the Conference continued to urge that relevant information concerning Reform Judaism be made available in modern Hebrew, and also that books of importance in English concerning Reform Judaism be sent to libraries in Israel.<sup>199</sup>

This situation of being unable to gain ecclesiastical endorsement from the new Jewish state did not dissuade

the C.C.A.R. from vigorously supporting the "Bonds for Israel" drive in the United States and the United Jewish Appeal, as well as continuing to urge its members to assist the Histadruth Ivrit.<sup>200</sup>

By 1955 a change of attitude had manifested itself in the ranks of the Government of Israel, and it appeared to recognize the validity of entertaining a liberal Judaism in Israel. Though this in no way represented a change of sentiment on the part of the Orthodox rabbinate of Israel, the Government granted the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion a choice parcel of land, overlooking the Old City of Jerusalem, for the establishment of a school of archeology. The proposed school was to include "among other facilities, a chapel for liberal congregational services."<sup>201</sup>

To help the new school of archeology become a reality, the Conference urged that its members give it their wholehearted financial endorsement, particularly by having interested people in their own congregations and communities contribute Israeli bonds. The Government of Israel would then redeem the bonds from the Hebrew Union College in place of cash for the purpose of paying the costs of constructing this new school.<sup>202</sup>

Inroads by Reform Judaism was seriously being attempted on all fronts. The National Federation of Temple Youth, an organization sponsored by the Union of American

Hebrew Congregations, contributed \$5,000 for the purpose of building a chapel at the Leo Baeck School in Haifa. The chapel was to be named in honor of Dr. Abraham Cronbach. The Conference donated an additional \$800 for the continued operation of the school.<sup>203</sup>

In the area of non-religious concerns, the Conference attempted to support the State of Israel in whatever way it could, either by encouraging the purchase of bonds or by attempting to influence the American State Department to "negotiate a defense agreement between Israel and the United States."<sup>204</sup>

Not only did the Conference see fit to involve itself in the foreign affairs of Israel, but it also requested the United States Government to support the "Johnston Irrigation Plan,"<sup>205</sup> which was an internal as well as external affair of state.

To strengthen further the emotional bond between Reform Jews and the Jewish state, the Conference encouraged Reform congregations to buy from Israel "building materials as plywood or marble"<sup>206</sup> as well as ritual objects, sacramental wine, and other objects that could be used in temples.<sup>207</sup>

One is reminded of the traditional Jewish custom of placing a bit of soil from Palestine in the casket with a person who has died outside the Holy Land in order to ease his way to the Holy Land in his next life. One wonders, too,

what religious significance building materials from Palestine would have for a rational religionist of the mid-twentieth century. It might suggest that the men of the Reform movement in 1955 were either more mystically inclined than the preceding generation of Reformers who felt that material objects from one part of the earth were as spiritually endowed as those from any other section of the planet, or else that they were hard headed business men concerned with Israel's balance of foreign exchange.

A decade after the conclusion of the Second World War, religious affiliation had become de rigueur in America, and America's churches as well as her synagogues had experienced an enormous growth. Both American Judaism and American Christianity were "going through one of the greatest periods of expansion in Congregational history."<sup>208</sup> By 1956 the Union claimed a membership of 530 temples and the loyalty of 2 million congregants. This represented a "tripling" of their forces in ten years.<sup>209</sup>

During these years since the Conference had become a backer of a Jewish national state, the American Council for Judaism continued to oppose any efforts to identify American Jews with any political area other than that of the United States. How successful the Council was in its activities is a moot subject; nevertheless, it continued to be a matter of concern for the Conference, since the Conference felt that the Council had

been engaged in malicious propaganda... for they had illogically charged those of us who are concerned with Israel as being faithless to America. They have carried their postulation so far as to go to top Government authorities, warning them that we fail America when we support Israel -- shades of what was done by the opponents of Reform in Breslau and Berlin in the 1840's and 1850's.<sup>210</sup>

Such charges made by the American Council for Judaism against the Conference were not only a threat to the free exercise of a Jew's political liberty, but also were directed



at stopping one of the principle sources of economic aid to the Jewish state, without which it is questionable if it could have survived and continued to accept Jewish immigrants. It was not only a question of Jews being unpatriotic Americans which was raised by the Council, but the question of whether or not almost 2,000,000 Jews would continue to exist in Palestine.

In the face of increasing agitation on the part of the American Council for Judaism, the Conference passed a resolution which declared that the Council did not "represent liberal Reform Judaism or any other valid interpretation of Judaism."<sup>211</sup> This action on the part of the Conference was, in effect, a type of liberal excommunication of those individuals who belonged to the American Council for Judaism. By what authority could a movement founded on revolutionary and radical principles claim that another radical movement was not just as legitimate an interpretation of Judaism as its own interpretation?

The Conference was, however, in no mood for rational arguments at that date, for it feared that the foreign policy of the United States was "becoming increasingly neutralistic in its approach to the problems of the Middle East."<sup>212</sup> The action taken by the Conference against the Council can be seen as an effort to force that group outside the Jewish community and to cast doubt and suspicion on its activities.

by declaring that it lacked "any...valid interpretation of Judaism."

The Conference encouraged the Government of the United States to insure the safety of Israel and to retreat from its apparent stand of Middle Eastern neutralism concerning the Arab-Israel conflict. The Conference called for protection of Israel by the United States and also recommended that the Government of the United States sell arms to Israel so that she could defend herself against the hostile Arab nations, some of which were receiving arms and military supplies from the Soviet Union.<sup>213</sup>

In addition, the Conference also called for the "reaffirmation of the Tri-parti Declaration of 1950...[which promised] to maintain present frontiers between Israel and the Arab States" to be guaranteed by Britain, France, and the United States.<sup>214</sup> They also hoped that it would be possible for the United States to have a separate "security pact with Israel."<sup>215</sup>

Commencing in 1955, a new turn of events took place in the foreign relations of Israel and her immediate Arab neighbor, Egypt. The political conditions which decided this new turn of events are beyond the scope of this paper. Due, however, to the foreign policy of the United States and Egypt, the Soviet Union entered quite dramatically as a major factor in Middle Eastern affairs, offering arms and financial



assistance to Egypt.<sup>216</sup> This action of the Soviet Union was carried out in defiance of the Tri-partite Agreement of 1950. The Soviet support of Egypt was accompanied with a "corresponding attack on Israel....in the Soviet press and radio."<sup>217</sup>

Egypt's ensuing nationalization of the Suez Canal and continued relationship with the Soviet Union began to have its effect not only on Israel but on the Western Democracies as well.<sup>218</sup> Egypt still refused passage to Israeli ships through the Suez Canal, although Article 1 of the Suez Canal Convention stated that the Canal should be an international waterway to ships of all nations, regardless of nationality and the state of the foreign relations of the respective ship owners.<sup>219</sup>

In October, 1956, the situation contributed to a localized war in the Middle East, with an apparent coalition between France and Great Britain invading Egypt as partners, and Israel acting unilaterally and occupying the Sinai peninsula, which was also Egyptian territory.

For the first time since its creation, the State of Israel was in apparent major disagreement with the aims of American foreign policy, for America was committed to the Tri-partite Declaration of 1950, as well as to the so-called Eisenhower Doctrine announced to the American people on October 31, 1956, and requesting that "the forces of Israel return to their own line and that hostilities in the

area [i.e., in Egypt and Sinai] be brought to a close."<sup>220</sup> This announcement occurred two days after Israel had invaded the Sinai area of Egypt by dropping air-borne troops in the vicinity of Mitla, close to the Suez Canal.<sup>221</sup>

The Conference had met during the summer months preceding the outbreak of the hostilities in the Egyptian area, and by March 4, 1957, Israel had withdrawn from all the territory she had taken from Egypt, by finally giving up administration of the Gaza Strip under the threat of world sanctions.<sup>222</sup>

This timetable relieved the Conference of the need for taking an official stand during these trying days for the American Jewish community. Fortunately for all concerned, the shortness of the hostilities did not develop political difficulties for American Jews. America neither imposed economic sanctions against Israel, nor branded her an aggressor nation in the United Nations, but attempted to be a friend to all the nations of this troubled area.<sup>223</sup>

Thus the swiftness of the resolution of hostilities and the attitude of the United States Government towards the belligerents afforded little opportunity to advance the often put forth thesis that American Jewish Zionists had a dual political allegiance.

When the Conference convened in June, 1957, a peace of sorts had settled over the Middle East, and the threat of

continued hostilities had abated for the immediate present between Israel and her Arab neighbors. The Conference felt that the Middle East was the "most potentially dangerous area in the world," and it urged that

the influence of our country should be continuously exerted toward arranging a fair and permanent peace settlement between Israel and the Arab States, which would guarantee the integrity of the present territory of Israel and access for her shipping through the Suez Canal and Gulf of Aqaba.<sup>224</sup>

The Conference continued to explore ways to tie American Jews to Israel both spiritually and monetarily. Programs were suggested to the Conference -- such as the "Adopt a Settlement Plan," sponsored by the Jewish Agency, and a campaign to stimulate collections in Temple Sunday Schools for the "Central Conference of American Rabbis Projects for Israel."<sup>225</sup> In addition, they continued to raise funds for the Leo Baeck School in Haifa.

In 1958, the Conference again took under advisement the "consideration...of a formal presentation of the question of a Code of Practice or Ritual Guide for Reform Judaism at a C.C.A.R. convention in the near future."<sup>226</sup>

The following year the whole question of a guide for Reform Judaism was taken up by the Conference and the often repeated argument was advanced that a guide for Reform Judaism was needed because of

chaos caused in the ranks of Reform Judaism by the tremendous influx of Jews coming from the Orthodox and Conservative Congregations in the new suburban congregations... are they to be allowed to give direction to Reform Judaism, or are we going to give that direction by means of a guide...<sup>227</sup>

The pendulum had completed its swing, and the seeds of expansion had come home as full grown fruits to be tasted. The seeds sown in the 1940's had born a rich harvest. The Reform movement had grown greatly by incorporating into its ranks congregants from traditional backgrounds who were seeking to take over and direct the customs and ceremonies of Reform Judaism. The theology of these new Reform Jews might have changed, but their love of the ceremonies and practices of a more traditional Judaism had not been satisfied by a change of theology. The early experiences and emotional attachments of childhood are not easily given up, nor modified.

The logical argument was then advanced by Rabbi Selwyn D. Ruslander that the C.C.A.R. had no authority to write such a code of practice for all Reform Jewry, and that there was "no normative philosophical and theological climate in the present Reform movement...for membership is composed of Reconstructionists, Zionists, non-Zionists and anti-Zionists."<sup>228</sup>

Rabbi Ruslander's assertion was indeed true. Reform Judaism, in rejecting the binding authority of the

Hebrew Bible and the continuation of this authority in the Talmud, had itself no authority to write a code of practices which would be binding on all Jews. In the same manner that Martin Luther had questioned the authority of the Holy Roman Catholic Church to be the ultimate interpreter of what Scripture meant, and had thus opened the door for every man to be his own pope, so did Reform Judaism give authority to every Jew to interpret Scripture and observe whatever interests he found to be meaningful.

But also as with Luther, once Reform Judaism had enunciated this principle of individual authority, it wanted to compromise the principle by formulating its own binding ecclesiastical codes.

We are living today in an age far different in orientation from the age that faced the early men of the C.C.A.R. or the age of liberalism which pervaded the 1930's. In the past twenty years catastrophic events have befallen the household of Israel, as well as the rest of mankind. Because of these world historic conditions, the climate of the C.C.A.R. changed from one of liberalism to one where no differences of opinion concerning the interpretation of Reform were easily tolerated. But the old spirit of individual authority for the rabbi and all that it implies in the human personality structure are far from gone within the ranks of the Conference. This spirit may at times appear

to have abated, but the heart of Reform Judaism is freedom of thought and practice. Though it be in the face of ever increasing attacks which seek to put that freedom to an end, Reform tenaciously clings to its heritage of liberty.

The remarks of Rabbi Joseph R. Narot against the formulation of codes of practice gives hope and encouragement for the future of American Judaism:

I would like to suggest that the real problem is not in our laity, but in us, the Reform Rabbinate. We are losing the courage to explore, to experiment, to pioneer, and to engender enthusiasm for these things. It has been said that laymen come to us for an interpretation of problems, of course, they do. They should...For this we were ordained. We are supposed to be teachers in Reform Judaism. If we will do as our forebears did so well, there will be no chagg. We shall only enhance the brightness.<sup>228</sup>

With such champions of religious freedom fighting for the precious right of individual religious commitment, Reform Judaism can be certain, though the path will not be straight, of a future of creativity based on respect for individual difference and commitment. Only out of forces free to combat with one another will new and novel religious developments be created in the ranks of American Reform Judaism.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Churchill, Winston, Their Finest Hour (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1949), p. 173.
2. "Report of Committee on Contemporaneous History," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, LII (1942), 61.
3. Ibid., p. 62.
4. Ibid.,
5. Ryback, Martin, "The East - West Conflict in American Reform Judaism," American Jewish Archives, IV (No. 1), 22.
6. "Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, XLVII (1937), 98.
7. Arendt, Hannah, The Origins of Totalitarianism (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1951), p. 268.
8. Heller, James G., "President's Message," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, LII (1942), 218.
9. Ibid., p. 219.
10. Handlin, Oscar, Adventure in Freedom (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1954), p. 49.
11. Ibid., p. 84.
12. Weinman, Melvin, "The Attitude of Isaac Mayer Wise toward Zionism and Palestine," American Jewish Archives, III (No. 1), 14.
13. Philipson, David, The Reform Movement in Judaism (new and revised; New York: Macmillan Co., 1931), p. 151.
14. "Report of Committee on Resolutions," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, LII (1942), 170.
15. Ibid., p. 171.
16. Ibid., p. 20.
17. "Report of Committee on Resolutions," Ibid., XLV (1935), 103.
18. Ibid.

19. Sundheim, Frank, "The Beginnings and Early History of the American Council for Judaism" (Term Paper for American Jewish History, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio, deposited in American Jewish Archives, 1957), p.3.
20. Hoffman, Sydney Lewis, "An Historical Analysis of Some Changing Concepts in the Reform Rabbinate Between the Two World Wars on the Basis of the Central Conference of American Rabbis Year Book 1918-1942" (Thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1956), p. 108.
21. "Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, XLVII (1937), 98.
22. Sundheim, p. 4.
23. Lenczowski, George, The Middle East in World Affairs (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1952), pp. 270ff.
24. Sundheim, p. 7.
25. See note 15 above; see also Weizmann, Chaim, Trial and Error (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), p. 425.
26. Sundheim, p. 9.
27. "Report of Committee on Resolutions," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, LII (1942), 172.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., p. 176.
30. Sundheim, p. 12.
31. Ibid., p. 13.
32. Ibid., pp. 14ff.
33. Ibid., p. 17.
34. Ibid., p. 33.
35. Ibid., p. 26.
36. Ibid., p. 33.
37. Heller, James G., "President's Message," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, LIII (1943), 189.

38. "Compatibility of Zionism with Reform Judaism," ibid., pp. 91ff.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid., p. 93.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., p. 94.
43. Ibid., p. 98.
44. Ibid., p. 97.
45. Ibid., p. 98.
46. Ibid., p. 99.
47. Ibid., p. 97.
48. "Past Presidents," ibid., LXLIII (1953), 553.
49. "Report of Commission on Synagog Activities," ibid., LII (1942), 64.
50. Ibid.
51. "Report of Committee on Ceremonies," ibid., p. 78.
52. Ibid., p. 79.
53. Ibid.
54. Union Prayerbook for Jewish Worship (Newly revised: Cincinnati, 1940), I, 69.
55. Weinman, p. 21.
56. "Report of Liturgical Committee," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, LIII (1943), 57.
57. Union Prayer Book for Jewish Worship (revised: Cincinnati, 1922), II, 97.
58. Idelsohn, A.Z., Jewish Liturgy and its Development (New York: Henry Holt, Inc., 1932), p. 294.
59. "Report of Liturgical Committee," ibid., p. 59.

60. Philipson, David, My Life As An American Jew (Cincinnati: John G. Kidd and Son, Inc., 1941), p. 264.
61. "Report of Committee on Resolutions," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, LII (1942), 165.
62. "Report of the Committee on Contemporaneous History," ibid., LIII (1943), 82.
63. "Report of Committee on Resolutions," ibid., LII (1942), 166.
64. Freshhof, Solomon, "President's Message," ibid., LIV (1944), 70.
65. "Report of Administrative Secretary," ibid., LIV (1944), 34.
66. Packard, Vance, The Status Seekers (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1959), p. 273.
67. Handlin, p. 247.
68. "Report of Committee on Resolutions," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, LIII (1943), 154.
69. "Report of Commission on Justice and Peace," ibid., LIV (1944), 92.
70. "Report of Committee on Contemporaneous History," ibid., LV (1945), 59.
71. Ibid., p. 60.
72. Ibid., p. 61.
73. "Report of Commission on Justice and Peace," ibid., p. 119.
74. Silver, Abba Hillel, "President's Message," ibid., LVI (1946), 225.
75. Hoffman, p. 89.
76. Philipson, David, The Reform Movement in Judaism, p. 313.
77. Weinman, p. 8.
78. Silver, Abba Hillel, ibid., p. 226.
79. Ibid., p. 227.
80. "C.C.A.R. Stenographic Report, 1946" (Deposited in The American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio), p. 388.

81. Ibid., p. 388.
82. Ibid., p. 380.
83. Ibid., p. 389.
84. Ibid., p. 213.
85. Ibid., p. 403.
86. Ibid., p. 408.
87. Ibid., p. 213.
88. "Report of Administrative Secretary," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, LVL (1946), 27.
89. Hoffman, p. 90.
90. "Report of Joint Committee on Ceremonies," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, LV (1945), 144.
91. "Report of Committee on Synagog Activities," ibid., 146.
92. Ibid., p. 144.
93. Ibid., p. 145.
94. Ibid.
95. Union Prayer Book for Jewish Worship (Cincinnati, I, 345).
96. Ibid., (Newly Revised: Cincinnati, 1940), II, 93.
97. Churchill, Winston, Triumph and Tragedy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1953, Ch. X).
98. Berman, Morton M., "The Guiding Principles in a Defeatist World," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, LVI (1946), 231.
99. Ibid., p. 231.
100. Ibid., p. 234.
101. Ibid., p. 241.
102. Ibid., p. 244.
103. Ibid., p. 245.

104. Freehof, Solomon B., "Reform Judaism and the Halacha," ibid., p. 282.
105. Ibid., p. 291.
106. Ibid., III (1893), 27-29.
107. Ibid., VII (1896), 18; See also Podet, Mordecai, "The Impact of Historical Forces on the Intellectual Outlook of the C.C.A.R. from 1889 to 1910" (Unpublished M.H.L. Thesis, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1951), pp. 52-65.
108. Freehof, op. cit., p. 304.
109. Ibid., p. 308.
110. Ibid., p. 310.
111. Ibid., p. 317.
112. Silver, Abba Hillel, "President's Message," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, LVII (1947), 254.
113. "Report on Mixed Marriage and Inter-marriage," ibid., p. 158.
114. Ibid., p. 174.
115. Ibid., p. 176.
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid., p. 181.
118. Ibid.
119. Ibid., p. 180.
120. Ibid., p. 181.
121. Ibid., p. 183.
122. Ibid., p. 184.
123. "Report of Committee on Contemporaneous History," ibid., LVIII (1948), 63.
124. Weinman, ibid., p. 5



125. "Report of Committee on Contemporaneous History," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, LVIII (1948), 63ff.
126. Feldman, Abraham J., "President's Message," ibid., p. 195.
127. Bernstein, Philip S., "The New Israel and American Jewry," ibid., p. 285.
128. Ibid., p. 286.
129. Ibid., p. 287.
130. "C.C.A.R. Stenographic Report, 1948," ibid., p. 67.
131. Bernstein, ibid., p. 289.
132. Ibid., p. 295.
133. "C.C.A.R. Stenographic Report, 1948," ibid., p. 185.
134. Philipson, David, My Life As An American Jew, p. 233.
135. Schwartzman, Sylvan D., "The Union and the Future Pattern of Liberal American Judaism," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, LVIII (1948), 299.
136. Feuer, Leon I., "The Union-An Evaluation and a Hope," ibid., p. 331.
137. "Report of Joint Committee on Ceremonies," ibid., LIX (1949), 112.
138. Ibid.
139. Ibid., p. 139.
140. Ibid., p. 114.
141. "C.C.A.R. Stenographic Report, 1948," LVIII, p. 325.
142. Ibid., p. 327.
143. Ibid., p. 330.
144. Ibid., p. 331.
145. Ibid., p. 335.
146. "Report of Committee on Contemporaneous History," ibid., LIX (1949), 71.

147. "Report of Joint Placement Commission," ibid., LIX (1949), 140.
148. Ibid., p. 146.
149. Ibid.
150. Rivkin, Ellis, "Modern Trends in Judaism," Modern Trends in World Religions (LaSalle, Ill.: The Open Door Publishing Co., 1959), p. 65.
151. "Report of Joint Placement Commission," op. cit., LIX (1949), 158.
152. Essrig, Harry, "Jewish Religious Liberalism in the World of Tomorrow," ibid., 259.
153. Ibid., p. 260.
154. Ibid.
155. Ibid., p. 265.
156. Ibid., p. 266.
157. Marcus, Jacob R., "President's Message," ibid., LX (1950), 238-39.
158. Ibid.
159. "Report of Committee on President's Message," ibid., p. 219.
160. Freehof, Solomon B., "Each Generation and its Truth," ibid., p. 264.
161. Ibid., p. 266.
162. "Report of Committee on President's Message," ibid., p. 217.
163. "Report of Placement Committee," ibid., p. 95.
164. "Report of Committee on Resolutions," ibid., LXI (1951), 202.
165. Ibid., p. 203.
166. Ibid.
167. Bernstein, Philip S., "President's Message," ibid., p. 218.
168. "Report of the Investment Committee," ibid., p. 61.

169. Bernstein, ibid., p. 218.
170. "Report of Committee on President's Message," ibid., p. 207.
171. Ibid.
172. "Report of Committee on Resolutions," ibid., p. 199.
173. Gordis, Robert, "Reform and Conservative Judaism - Their Mutual Relationship," ibid., pp. 259-302.
174. Ibid., p. 272.
175. Ibid., p. 275.
176. Ibid., p. 277.
177. Ibid., p. 286.
178. Rivkin, Ellis, "Some Historical Aspects of Authority in Judaism," ibid., p. 383.
179. "Report of Institute Held in Israel in 1951," ibid., LXII (1952), p. 218.
180. Ibid., p. 220.
181. Ibid.
182. Ibid.
183. Ibid., p. 222.
184. Trachtenberg, Joshua, "Report from Israel," Ibid., pp. 464-89.
185. Ibid., p. 467.
186. Ibid., p. 464.
187. Ibid., p. 467.
188. Ibid., p. 468.
189. Ibid., p. 470.
190. Ibid., p. 473.
191. Ibid., p. 474.

192. Ibid., p. 477.
193. "Report on World Union," ibid., p. 226.
194. Ibid., p. 227.
195. "Report of Committee on President's Message," ibid., p. 270.
196. Fink, Joseph L., "President's Message," ibid., LXIII (1953), 13.
197. "Report of the Recording Secretary," ibid., p. 31.
198. "Report of Committee on Projects in Israel," ibid., p. 137.
199. Ibid.
200. "Report of the Committee on Resolutions," ibid., p. 194.
201. Brickner, Barnett R., "President's Message," ibid., LXV (1955), 16.
202. Ibid.
203. "Report of the Committee on Projects for Israel," ibid., p. 74.
204. Brickner, ibid., p. 7.
205. Ibid.
206. "Report of the Committee on Projects for Israel," ibid., p. 73.
207. Ibid., p. 74.
208. Brickner, ibid., LXVI (1956), 4.
209. Ibid.
210. Ibid., p. 6.
211. "Report of Committee on President's Message," ibid., p. 133.
212. Brickner, ibid., LXVI (1956), 7.
213. Ibid., p. 8.

214. "Resolution of the Executive Board," *ibid.*, LXVI (1956) 23. See also J.C. Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, A Documentary Record: 1914-1956 (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1956), II, 308.
215. *Ibid.*
216. Fisher and Krinsky, Middle East in Crisis (Syracuse University Press, 1959), p. 36.
217. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
218. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
219. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
220. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
221. Robert Henriques, 100 Hours to Suez (New York: Viking Press, 1957), p. 21.
222. Fisher, p. 60.
223. *Ibid.*, p. 174.
224. "Report of Commission on Justice and Peace," C.C.A.R. Yearbook, LXVII (1957), 65.
225. "Central Conference of American Rabbis Projects for Israel," *ibid.*, p. 71.
226. Philip R. Rudin, "President's Message," *ibid.*, LXVIII (1958), 13.
227. "A Guide for Reform Judaism," *ibid.*, LXIV (1959), 263.
228. *Ibid.*, p. 266.
229. *Ibid.*, p. 278.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arendt Hannah. Origins of Totalitarianism. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1951.
- Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook, Vols. III (1883), VII (1896), XLV (1935), XLVII (1937), LVII-LXIV (1942-1959).
- "Central Conference of American Rabbis Stenographic Report of the Annual Conference." Deposited in The American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1946, 1948.
- Church, Winston. Their Finest Hour. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1949.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Triumph and Tragedy. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1953.
- Fisher and Krinsky. Middle East in Crisis. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1959.
- Harlin, Oscar. Adventure in Freedom. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1954.
- Henriques, Robert. 100 Hours to Suez. New York: Viking Press, 1957.
- Hoffman, Sydney Lewis. "An Historical Analysis of Some Changing Concepts in the Reform Rabbinate Between the Two World Wars on the Basis of the Central Conference of American Rabbis Year Book 1918-1942." Unpublished Rabbinic Thesis, Hebrew Union College Library, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1956.
- Hurewitz, J.C. Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, Vol. II. Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1956.
- Idelsohn, A.Z. Jewish Liturgy and its Development. New York: Henry Holt Inc., 1932.
- Lenzowski, George. The Middle East in World Affairs. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1952.
- Packard, Vance. The Status Seekers. New York: David Mackay Co., 1959.
- Philipsen, David. My Life as an American Jew. Cincinnati: John G. Kidd and Son, Inc., 1941.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Reform Movement in Judaism. New York: Macmillan Co., New and Revised, 1931.

Podet, Mordecai. "The Impact of Historical Forces on the Intellectual Outlook of the C.C.A.R. from 1889 to 1910." Unpublished Rabbinic Thesis, Hebrew Union College Library, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1951.

Rivkin, Ellis. "Modern Trends in Judaism," Modern Trends in World Religions. LaSalle, Illinois: The Open Door Publishing Co., 1959.

Ryback, Martin B. "The East-West Conflict in American Reform Judaism," American Jewish Archives (Cincinnati), IV (January, 1952).

Sundheim, Frank. "The Beginnings and Early History of the American Council for Judaism." Unpublished Term Paper for American Jewish History, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1957.

Union Prayer Book for Jewish Worship. Cincinnati: revised, Vol. I, 1924.

\_\_\_\_\_ . Cincinnati: Newly revised,  
Vol. I, 1940.

\_\_\_\_\_ . Cincinnati: revised, Vol. II,  
1922.

Weinman, Melvin. "The Attitude of Isaac Mayer Wise Toward Zionism and Palestine," American Jewish Archives (Cincinnati), III (January 1952).

Weismann, Chaim, Trial and Error. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949.

# APPENDIX

NOTE: All underlined (italicized) words used in this thesis are by the author's hand.