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## The Relationship of Orthodox Jews with Believing Jews of Other Religious Ideologies and Non-Believing Jews: The American Situation in Historical Perspective

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A central paradox underlies “the relationship of Orthodox Jewish with believing Jews of other religious ideologies and non-believing Jews in America.”<sup>1</sup> On the one hand, Orthodox Jews, non-Orthodox Jews, and non-Jews periodically trumpet the “unity of Israel”—whether as an

ideal, a presumed reality, or an administrative convenience. On the other hand, they likewise take cognizance of the “disunity of Israel,” which they alternatively cheer, lament, or ignore. Historically, Orthodox Jews in particular have long faced conflicting goals: some have stood first and foremost for cherished religious principles while others have placed primary emphasis on preserving Jewish unity. In the American setting, most often these two goals have proved impossible to reconcile.

In Colonial America, before anyone knew of “Orthodox Jews,” much less of other Jewish religious ideologies, the problem of how to relate to Jews who “daily violate the principles [of] our holy religion, such as Trading on the Sabath, Eating of forbidden Meats & other Heinous Crimes,” arose in New York in 1757. The Parnasim and Elders of the city’s only synagogue, Shearith Israel, basing themselves upon biblical and rabbinic tradition, took a hard line:

Whoever for the future continues to act contrary to our Holy law by breacking any of the principles command [principal commandments?] will not be deem’d a member of our Congregation, have none of the Mitz[v]ote of the Sinagoge Conferred on him & when Dead will not be buried according to the manner of our brethren.<sup>2</sup>

Within six months, following what appears to have been significant pressure, they reconsidered:

Whosoever may thinck that they are quallified but wrongfully debarred being called to Sepher or any other Mitz[v]ote in Sinagoge, they are requested of themselves or their Friends for them to acquaint the Ruling Parnaz of the same, that none who are worthy may be unjustly neglected or deprived Thereof. The Parnasim like fait[h]ful Sheepards call into the fold the wandring sheep, leaving the ways of men to the Righteous God, not doubting but every member of this Community is convinced the Parnasim & Elders had anything else in view in the last Exhortation but the establishing & supporting our holy religion.<sup>3</sup>

Absent state support, synagogues in colonial North America depended on voluntary contributions. Coercive measures aimed at strengthening religious discipline proved unpopular, especially in a colony like New York where many believing Protestants were openly latitudinarian in their faith. As a result, colonial American synagogues learned to patrol the “edges” of irreligious behavior, much as New England congregational parishes of the time did. Torn between irreconcilable goals—the desire to combat sinful behavior and the need to preserve communal consensus—synagogue leaders blazoned the possibility of censure but generally pulled back in the face of dissent.<sup>4</sup>

The American Revolution introduced a new element into the question of how to relate to Jews of other religious ideologies. In addition to overthrowing the British, the Revolution also discredited the Anglican Church, with its hierarchic model of organization. The congregational form of governance characteristic of Protestant dissenters from Anglicanism came to characterize much of American religion, and especially American Judaism. Already in the days of George Washington, congregations proved reluctant to cede authority, even to the prestigious “mother” congregation, Shearith Israel of New York. That unwillingness explains, in part, why Washington received three different letters from American Jews (one from the congregation in Savannah, another from Newport, and a third from congregations in Philadelphia, New York, Charleston, and Richmond), rather than just one letter from a united Jewish community. Each congregation cherished its independence.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, the new world of American religion, which did away with restrictive colonial laws and monopolistic church establishments, came to be characterized by a series of principles that would have far-reaching effects on American Judaism. Four of these are particularly important to our theme: (1) religious freedom, (2) church-state separation, (3) denominationalism (“the religious situation created in a land of many Christian churches and sects when none of them occupies a privileged situation and each has an equal claim to status”), and (4) voluntarism (“the principle that individuals are free to choose their religious beliefs and associations without political, ecclesiastical, or communal coercion”). The fact that America fully legitimated indi-

vidual religious freedom as well as a plethora of religious options, and banned government from favoring any particular religious movement or from prescribing religious “heresy,” dramatically distinguished the post-Revolutionary United States from every other country where Jews then lived.<sup>6</sup>

The decades that followed witnessed a whole series of confrontations that pitted synagogue leaders in America against malcontents, some of whom we might anachronistically characterize as “believing Jews of other religious ideologies.” In 1782, for example, Mikveh Israel congregation in Philadelphia banned Jacob I. Cohen from marrying a widow, Esther Mordecai, who had converted to Judaism years before; the marriage of a *kohen* to a *giyyoret* is, of course, halakhically forbidden. The marriage took place in any case, defiantly witnessed by three distinguished Philadelphia Jewish laymen (including Haym Salomon), who married the couple privately. Having been apprised of Jewish law, they knowingly placed Cohen’s liberty and happiness above its dictates.<sup>7</sup>

Three years later the same congregation complained to Rabbi Saul Halevi Loewenstamm in Amsterdam that a local businessman named Mordecai Mordecai, the son of a rabbi from Telz, took the law into his own hands on two separate occasions. First, in an apparent attempt to reconcile members of his extended family, he performed an unauthorized Jewish marriage ceremony on a previously intermarried couple, his niece, Judith Hart, and her unconverted husband, Lt. James Pettigrew. On another occasion he openly flouted synagogue authority by performing the traditional last rites on Benjamin Clava, an identifying but intermarried Jew whom the synagogue, as a warning to others, had ordered buried “without ritual ablution, without shrouds, and without funeral rites.” On both occasions Mordecai vigorously defended his actions, insisting that he knew Jewish law better than those who judged him. Seeking to enlist Rabbi Loewenstamm on their behalf, the congregation’s leaders explained that “In this country . . . everyone does as he pleases. . . . Yet, the *Kahal* [community] has no authority to restrain or punish anyone, except for the nominal penalty of denying them synagogue honors, or of withholding from them sacred rites. However, these vicious people completely disregard such measures and contin-

ue to attend our synagogue, because under the laws of the country it is impossible to enjoin them from so doing.” In other words, Jews in post-Revolutionary America were making their own rules concerning how to live Jewishly, and there was little that the synagogue could do about it.<sup>8</sup>

As confrontations multiplied, a new generation of American Jews, born after the American Revolution, successfully challenged the model of American Judaism that had existed to that time. In the 1820s, Jews in the two largest American Jewish communities, New York and Charleston, seceded from the “established synagogues” of their communities and formed new ones: in New York the Ashkenazic synagogue, B’nai Jeshurun, and in Charleston, The Reformed Society of Israelites for Promoting True Principles of Judaism According to Its Purity and Spirit. The hallowed “synagogue–community” model of American Judaism, which assumed that each community would be organized around a single synagogue that unified Jews and governed all aspects of their religious lives, as a result gave way to a more free-wheeling marketplace model of American Judaism: the “community of competing synagogues.”<sup>9</sup>

Two decades later the population of the American Jewish community had significantly grown—reaching perhaps 15,000 Jews, mostly from Central Europe—and synagogues opposed to demands for “Reform” began for the first time to label themselves “Orthodox.”<sup>10</sup> With multiple congregations competing against one another in major communities, religious conflicts no longer just pit synagogue leaders against dissenting members, as had been the case in the immediate post-Revolutionary decades. Instead, conflicts now pitted synagogue leaders against one another, some promoting religious change, others standing firm for tradition. Both groups generally trumpeted the importance of unity, just as Protestants at that time did, but as a rule communal unity proved impossible to reconcile with cherished religious principles.

The issue came to a head, for the first time, at a national conference of Jewish clergy and lay leaders held in Cleveland in 1855. The meeting, called by Isaac Mayer Wise, brought together the two giants of American Judaism—Isaac Leeser, editor of the *Occident* and leader

of the moderate “Orthodox” camp, and Wise, editor of the *Israelite* and leader of the moderate “Reform” camp—in a bid to promote what was called *Shalom Al Yisrael*. Wise and Leeser spoke of fashioning an overarching ecclesiastical assembly (“synod”) for American Jews, a common liturgy, and a plan for promoting Jewish education.<sup>11</sup>

What makes the conference significant in terms of our topic is the reluctance of many Orthodox rabbis, especially those religiously to the right of Leeser, to attend the gathering. Abraham Rice, Morris Raphall, Henry A. Henry, and Abraham Joseph Ash all refused to participate, fearing that the conference would be manipulated by Wise and his allies and would legitimate Reform in the eyes of the public. Rice, the first formally ordained rabbi to immigrate to America, complained that many of those coming to the conference lacked religious standing; they “assumed in this country the title of Rabbins... [they] have put on their own heads the rabbinical cap.”<sup>12</sup> In the end, the conference, which began on a conciliatory note, endorsed a series of Reform proposals that were introduced and passed only after Leeser had returned to Philadelphia. In response, Bernard Illowy, who had initially agreed to join Leeser in Cleveland but then changed his mind, called on his erstwhile friend to own up to the fact that attending the joint rabbinical conference in the first place had been a mistake:

I know your good heart and that you have acted with a pure heart, without deceit. But I advise you to make yourself clear before all. Therefore, chastise those people in public. Tell them that their actions belie their words, and that their spirits are not faithful to Judaism. Let them change their ways and say, “We have sinned.” Then everyone will believe that you and the men with you are true followers of the God of Israel.<sup>13</sup>

The Cleveland Conference, designed to unite America’s Jews, in the end underscored their deepening ideological divisions. These divisions were confirmed by the next effort to unite American Jewry, the Board of Delegates of American Israelites, established in 1859. The Board had no religious aims; its goals were to “keep a watchful eye on all occurrences at home and abroad” and to collect statistics. It mod-

eled itself after London Jewry's influential Board of Deputies and was stimulated, in part, by the worldwide Jewish campaign to free Edgardo Mortara from the House of the Catechumens in Rome. Nevertheless, only about a fifth of America's synagogues participated in the Board's work. Even though moderate Orthodox leaders such as Samuel M. Isaacs and Leeser dominated the Board, the two largest Sephardic synagogues stayed away, fearing that their freedom and independence might be challenged. Most Reformers stayed away as well, charging that the board intended to "interfere with the internal affairs of the congregations."<sup>14</sup>

On the eve of the American Civil War, then, leading American Jews were divided: some advocated compromise for the sake of Jewish unity while others urged steadfastness in defense of cherished religious principles. The debate was not unique to Jews. Protestants conducted parallel debates, and in many ways the Civil War too pitted "unity" against "principle." The dispute among Orthodox Jews concerning how to relate "with believing Jews of other religious ideologies and non-believing Jews" echoed key aspects of this debate. The issue would be taken up again and again over the next 150 years but would never conclusively be resolved.

The coming of over two million East European Jews to America (1881-1924) reignited the debate over the appropriate relationship of Orthodox to non-Orthodox Jews. Whereas some in the 1870s had believed that "the meager residues of Orthodoxy which one still finds in this land are insignificant," and that Reform Judaism would shortly become "Minhag America,"<sup>15</sup> mass immigration turned the tide. Soon Reform Jews found themselves in the minority.

Outsiders knew little of this issue and viewed Jews as a single community. They considered the ethnic and religious differences among Jews to be far less significant than the "blood" (or "race") ties marking all Jews alike as different from Christians. Inevitably, this "ascribed" identity affected Jewish self-identity. Based on longstanding Jewish values, moreover, native-born Central European Jews and immigrant East European Jews also began to interact more with one another, particularly in philanthropic and communal settings. Sharing as they did

a common fate, the two worlds of American Jewry slowly but inexorably began to bond.

The Protestant ecumenical movement further spurred such interreligious ties among Jews. At a time when the Protestant majority in America joined together in support of the “social gospel,” overseas missions, and the Federal Council of Churches (established in 1908), similar cooperation among Jews seemed only appropriate.

A series of challenges promoted intracommunal cooperation. The 1903 Kishinev pogrom that saw 47 Jews killed and 424 wounded, as well as 700 houses burned and 600 looted, outraged American Jews and united them in protest. At a mass meeting in Atlantic City, Simon Wolf, a proud German Reform Jew and a leader of B’nai B’rith, delivered a masterful address in English, followed by the well-known Orthodox Zionist preacher Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, who spoke no less masterfully in Yiddish. In Philadelphia the Socialist leader Abraham Cahan announced that at times of calamity “there should be no distinction made between socialist, orthodox, or radical.” He practiced what he preached, observing that “he, the leader of the socialists, known as the infidel, the heretic, stands now in an orthodox synagogue and preaches from the same pulpit with Rev. Masliansky and Rabbi [Bernard] Levinthal.” With Jewish lives at stake in Russia, Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews, believers and non-believers alike, as well as notable non-Jews, all stood shoulder to shoulder. Their shared goal was *pikuah nefesh*.<sup>16</sup>

The prolonged campaign to abrogate America’s 1832 treaty of commerce with Russia, where Jewish tourists and even visiting American Jewish dignitaries faced discrimination on religious grounds, promoted some of these same cooperative efforts. So did the long political battle to keep America’s doors open to immigrants. In both cases, Central and East European Jews, Orthodox, Reform, and secular Jews, all had the satisfaction of knowing that they had worked hand in hand in support of a common aim. Religious differences had not prevented them from speaking with one voice on issues of shared communal concern.<sup>17</sup>

In New York at the same time, domestic challenges brought Jews together in an unprecedented way. On February 27, 1909, in response

to New York City police commissioner Theodore A. Bingham's charge (quickly disproved and retracted) that the "Hebrew race" produced "perhaps half" of the city's criminals, and in an effort to combat a wide range of social and religious ills within the city's Jewish community, 300 delegates representing every element within Jewish life met to form what became known, employing a word of great historical resonance, as the Kehillah—the organized Jewish community of New York. The new organization combined elements of traditional European-Jewish communal structures with American-style Progressive-era democracy. The Kehillah's sponsors, its historian explains, "envisioned a democratically governed polity which would unite the city's multifarious Jewish population, harness the group's intellectual and material resources, and build a model ethnic community"—based, of course, on the principle of voluntarism and without any formal ties to the state.<sup>18</sup> Disagreements between Orthodox Jews, Reform Jews, and anti-religious socialists nearly wrecked the Kehillah before it began, but thanks to the able leadership and chameleon-like qualities of Judah Magnes—who was, at one and the same time, trained as a Classical Reform rabbi, enchanted by Orthodoxy, related to New York's best Jewish families, and sympathetic to Socialism—an uneasy harmony prevailed. The elected 25-member Kehillah executive, although dominated by Central European patricians, represented a surprisingly wide range of community figures, among them the Orthodox lay leaders Harry Fischel and Sender Jarmulowsky. Together, they struggled mightily to contend with a wide range of daunting communal problems, including the supervision of kosher food and the chaotic condition of Jewish education. By promising to restore "to the Rabbis their authority in matters affecting Judaism as a religion," the Kehillah succeeded in winning cooperation even from some distinguished members of the Agudath ha-Rabbanim, notably Rabbi Moses Z. Margolies (*Ramaz*).<sup>19</sup> As one Jewish leader noted, admiringly, "the conventions of the Kehillah bring together the most varied assemblage of Jews that can be imagined. Side by side with the extreme orthodox are members of the most reformed temples. Rich men and men practically penniless, extreme socialists and extreme conservatives, gather together and under parliamentary methods, discuss the subjects they have in com-

mon. Two do not always agree but they have learned to disagree with no more disturbance than is often witnessed in foreign parliaments and, sometimes, in our own Congress.”<sup>20</sup>

The Kehillah’s reach quickly exceeded its grasp. Tensions between the Orthodox and other segments of the Jewish community flared up regularly, and the Kehillah also suffered from financial, organizational, and political problems. It barely survived World War I and by 1922 it was dead. But the dream of intra-Jewish communal cooperation did not die with it. If anything, the challenges of World War I made that goal seem more urgent than ever.

Over 1.5 million Jews numbered among the sufferers of World War I, including relatives, friends, and former neighbors of Jews who now lived in the United States. In the face of this tragedy, three different American Jewish relief organizations competed for funds, each representing a different segment of the American Jewish community and committed to a different ideology and worldview. The Central Committee for the Relief of Jews Suffering Through the War, organized by the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, represented religious Jews, most of them East European in origin. The American Jewish Relief Committee, organized by the American Jewish Committee and chaired by its president, Louis Marshall, represented the community elite, most of them American born, of Central European descent and affiliated with Reform Judaism. The Jewish People’s Relief Committee of America, organized by trade union leaders and East European-born Jewish socialists, represented “persons who can afford to give only very small amounts,” the immigrant Jewish masses. All three of these organizations, for all of their social, economic, political, and religious differences, shared the same overriding goal: “to join hands in the work of immediate help and relief of the sufferers.” To this end, and drawing upon their experience cooperating in the New York Kehillah, they agreed to collect contributions from their respective constituencies, to pool the funds, and collectively to dispense them through the organization that became the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, established to apportion and send abroad money and supplies for Jewish war relief. Orthodox and Reform rabbis, capitalists and

socialists, Jews of widely different backgrounds and persuasions, including three women, all sat together at the Joint's meetings, reaching most decisions by consensus and some by majority vote. The thorniest problem involved distributing funds for Jewish education abroad, but after much debate a formula was devised: 55 percent to Orthodox institutions, 17.5 percent to Yiddish schools, and 27.5 percent to Zionist schools. The non-Orthodox complained about "so much money spent on people who did nothing but sit and read books," but the compromise held. This collaboration established a pattern of intracommunal cooperation that included Orthodox participation.<sup>21</sup>

The Jewish Board for Welfare Work in the U.S. Army and Navy (later the National Jewish Welfare Board [JWB]) extended this pattern. Established within days of America's entry into the war, it responded to a demand from the United States military for a Jewish organization, akin to the Protestant Young Men's Christian Association and the Catholic Knights of Columbus, to meet the spiritual and welfare needs of Jewish soldiers. The military refused to deal with multiple Jewish groups; they assumed that if Protestants could unite around a single military service organization, then Jews could too. So it was that representatives of the Agudath ha-Rabbanim, the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, the United Synagogue of America, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis all sat down together (along with representatives of the Young Men's Hebrew Association and the Jewish Publication Society) to establish the JWB. The goal was to find some way to jointly provide Jewish chaplains, religious literature, and other religious services for the 200,000-250,000 soldiers and sailors being mustered into the American armed forces.<sup>22</sup>

The relationship between the Orthodox rabbinical body and the Reform rabbinical body was never easy (the 104-member Alumni Association of the Jewish Theological Seminary, the antecedent of the Conservative Movement's Rabbinical Assembly, was apparently not yet significant enough to be invited to sit at the JWB's table). The Agudath ha-Rabbanim, whose members considered themselves America's only true rabbis, sought "to act as the sole authority on all questions

concerning religion,” and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, whose members considered the Orthodox rabbis out-of-touch immigrants, assumed that it would exert final authority in all matters of religion. Since neither could compromise, lay leaders themselves promptly assumed control of the JWB, and they relegated the rabbis to a “Rabbinic Advisory Committee,” without final authority in any area.<sup>23</sup>

A prominent and learned communal professional, Cyrus Adler, then President of the Jewish Theological Seminary, undertook to lead the most challenging task: preparing an abridged battlefield prayerbook which the military undertook to provide to all Jewish soldiers. Although Adler had assistance in this task from an Orthodox rabbi, Bernard Drachman, and a Reform rabbi, William Rosenau, and claimed to have consulted with Moses Z. Margolies and Bernard Revel as well, neither the Orthodox nor the Reform expressed satisfaction with the final product. The Orthodox found it inappropriately short, and the Reform complained that it did “not reflect our particular theology.” Nevertheless, Orthodox Jews continued to work with the JWB. Three Orthodox rabbis (Drachman, Margolies, and David de Sola Pool), two Reform rabbis (Rosenau and Louis Grossman), and one Conservative rabbi (Elias Solomon), who represented the United Synagogue, worked under Adler’s chairmanship to select suitable Jewish chaplains for the field. External pressure from the U.S. military, coupled with the need to show patriotism, ensured that all sides displayed an appropriate spirit of wartime cooperation.<sup>24</sup>

The wartime experience in intrareligious cooperation, coupled with the sense that Jews in the anti-Semitic atmosphere of the “tribal twenties” needed to unite and a fear that religion generally was losing its hold on American Jews, stimulated the Reform rabbi of Washington D.C., Abram Simon, to call upon his colleagues in 1924 to “work harmoniously” with the “sons of immigrants and the daughters of orthodox parents. . . in all good causes for their sakes and for the sake of all Israel.”<sup>25</sup> Fully 85 percent of American Jewry was of East European origin or descent at that time while Reform Judaism, by and large, remained the province of a comparatively small number of German Jews

and their descendants. In America's largest Jewish community, New York City, just about 2 percent of the city's synagogues were Reform; the rest were Orthodox in one form or another. So it seemed prudent, both from a Reform Jewish perspective and from a general Jewish perspective, to strengthen ties with other Jews.<sup>26</sup>

Within a year, Simon had formulated a plan, which he presented to his congregation and distributed:

I think the time has come for the leaders of Reform Judaism to meet with the leaders of Conservative and Orthodox Judaism *on the basis of congregational loyalty*. The time has come for representatives of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the United Synagogue, and the Union of Orthodox Congregations to join forces to stem the tide of ignorance and indifference, and to do jointly what cannot be done so well separately. Such a National Committee, born in the heart of the Synagogue and deriving its authority from the Synagogue, will have the right to speak in behalf of Israel and of Judaism in America.<sup>27</sup>

In short order, an invitation went out from the President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to the United Synagogue, the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Rabbinical Assembly, and the Agudath ha-Rabbanim inviting them to attend a meeting at the aptly named Harmonie Club in New York for the purpose of setting up a national body of American synagogues.

The Agudath ha-Rabbanim, true to its principles, did not reply. Notwithstanding a long section in its 1902 constitution devoted to "unity and peace (*ha-shalom ve-ha-ahdut*),<sup>28</sup> cooperation with non-Orthodox Jews was to these immigrant Orthodox rabbis anathema. The twenty-fifth anniversary history of the organization makes no direct mention of the Synagogue Council, but it does record that on 24 Tevet 5685 (January 20, 1925) Reform Jews approached with a request to work together in a bid to win support for the five-day workweek—which, in fact, was one of the Synagogue Council's earliest initiatives.<sup>29</sup>

Some rabbis, according to the account, thought that the urgency of the issue (*et la'asot*)—the fact that the five-day workweek would greatly ease Sabbath observance—permitted cooperation with the Reformers to bring about this key objective; others disagreed. After a “great deal of controversy” (*pulmus harif*), the decision was made to move extremely carefully and without haste: “cooperation with those who hate Judaism (*sone'ey hayahadut*), even for the purposes of a mitzvah,” the Agudath ha-Rabbanim concluded, “could cause great damage to Judaism.”<sup>30</sup>

More modern, English-speaking Orthodox rabbis disagreed. Herbert Goldstein, Leo Jung, and David de Sola Pool, members of the Rabbinical Council of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, expressed interest in the idea. In 1925 Pool joined David Philipson (Reform) and Jacob Kohn (Conservative) in a joint resolution that underscored the importance of Jewish unity and the centrality of the synagogue:

We, the representatives of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the United Synagogs of America, the Rabbinical Assembly, and the Union of Orthodox Congregations, recognizing the fundamental spiritual unity that binds us as Jews, believing that the Synagog is the basic and essential unit in our Jewish life, and believing in the desirability of taking counsel together for the sacred purpose of preserving and fostering Judaism in America, recommend to the organizations represented at this meeting, that a Conference composed of national congregations and rabbinical organizations of America be formed for the purpose of enabling them to speak and act unitedly in furthering such religious interests as all these constituent national organizations share in common, it being clearly provided that such proposed Conference in no way interfere with the religious administrative autonomy of any of the constituent organizations.<sup>31</sup>

Thanks to Herbert Goldstein, the Orthodox Union as a whole agreed in 1926 to participate in the new organization. The key con-

cession (which the Reform leader, Samuel Schulman, opposed) was a commitment to act only upon unanimous consent, meaning that the Orthodox could never be overruled. According to the Synagogue Council's 1926 constitution, "every decision of the Council shall require the unanimous approval of the constituent organizations as expressed through a majority vote of each constituent organization."<sup>32</sup> The Orthodox Union also insisted "that in all matters in which questions of Jewish Law shall be involved, the Orthodox view shall prevail," and that the Synagogue Council "shall in no way interfere with the religious or administrative autonomy of this Union."<sup>33</sup>

The early work of the Synagogue Council proved, for the most part, uncontroversial. It supported strengthening of the Sabbath. It called upon all Jewish organizations "to arrange that their public dinners be prepared in accordance with Jewish dietary laws" (though the Reform were not committed to *kashrut*, they voted for the resolution "as a matter of courtesy" and in order to advance "the spirit of unity" among Jewish movements").<sup>34</sup> It admitted the Rabbinical Council of America as a constituent organization when it was organized. And it helped to coordinate Jewish communal activities during World War II.

But it did not become a powerful or influential organization. As a result, the National Jewish Welfare Board—particularly its Committee on Army and Navy Religious Activities (CANRA)—played the key role in bringing the different Jewish movements together under a single umbrella during World War II. As before, the military would deal with only one Jewish organization during wartime, and in the interests of meeting the needs of service personnel, key rabbis from every movement cooperated.<sup>35</sup> CANRA even established a unique three-man responsa committee, chaired by Solomon B. Freehof (Reform) along with Leo Jung (Orthodox) and Milton Steinberg (Conservative), to deal with wartime problems—everything from when to hold Kabbalat Shabbat services in the northern latitudes, to whether services may be held in a chapel containing a Christmas tree, to questions concerning marriage, divorce, conversion, and burial. Responsa were jointly issued, and in an astonishing number of cases, unanimity was achieved—otherwise no responsum was issued. But the committee was careful to delimit its functions. It issued no rulings that affected civilians, and it

insisted that its work respond to the “abnormalities of war” and should “not in any way be used to influence civilian religious life in peace.”<sup>36</sup>

Jewish leaders who celebrated Jewish unity, like their Christian counterparts who celebrated ecumenism, hoped nevertheless that in-trareligious cooperation in wartime *would* carry over into peacetime. They sought to strengthen the role of religion in the battle against secularism, and they imagined that the Synagogue Council might in time serve as a counterpart to the National Council of Churches. In 1954, Theodore Adams, president of the Rabbinical Council of America, was as hopeful on this score as his Reform and Conservative counterparts. “I believe,” he told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, that “with the maturing of the three branches of Jewry, the competitiveness and mistrust which in the past grew out of an insecurity and a striving for a place in the sun, now is giving way to a healthy cooperation. I foresee a period when religious leadership will in fact give way to religious statesmanship, with the Synagogue Council of America becoming the widely recognized forum for the negotiation of religious ‘diplomatic’ problems vis-à-vis the American community.”<sup>37</sup>

Nothing of the sort happened. Instead, Orthodox leaders faced growing pressure to limit the role of the Synagogue Council or to withdraw from the organization altogether. Orthodox rabbis born and trained in Europe who immigrated to the United States in the 1930s and 1940s—men like Moshe Feinstein, Ahron Kotler, and the Lubavitcher Rebbe—were often appalled by the relationship of Orthodox Jews with leaders of other movements in Judaism. In Eastern Europe, they recalled, Orthodox rabbis never sat down as equals with the non-Orthodox nor did they legitimate them the way their American counterparts did. Rather than compromising for the sake of Jewish unity, they advocated standing firm for Orthodox Jewish principles.

Rabbi Soloveitchik, serving as *posek* for the Rabbinical Council of America, steered a characteristically middle course. In 1953, just months before Adams set forth his optimistic vision of what the Synagogue Council might be, the Rav, in a private letter to Adams, set forth his own views:

I noticed in your letter that you are a bit disturbed about the probability of being left out. Let me tell you that this attitude

of fear is responsible for many commissions and omissions, compromises and fallacies on our part which have contributed greatly to the prevailing confusion within the Jewish community and to the loss of our self-esteem, our experience of ourselves as independent entities committed to a unique philosophy and way of life. Of course, sociability is a basic virtue and we all hate loneliness and dread the experience of being left alone. Yet at times there is no alternative and we must courageously face the test.<sup>38</sup>

Specifically, with respect to the 1954 Tercentenary of the American Jewish community, the Rav, in a subsequent letter, lambasted a proposed Synagogue Council sponsored liturgy for commemoration of the American Jewish tercentenary:

The whole service concocted by some rabbi of the Synagogue Council should not and cannot be accepted by the RCA. The service suggests to me both religious infantilism and Christian-Methodist sentimentalism which exhausts itself in hymn singing and responsive reading. As a matter of fact, an order of service by the Methodist church is far superior to the approach employed by the Synagogue Council. I am not as much disturbed by the problem you raised as by the whole character and structure of the service, which contains very few Jewish themes and a lot of high school commencement nonsense.<sup>39</sup>

Moreover, he carefully distinguished the “politico-social aspects and the religious moments of the suggested plan.” His ruling was unequivocal: “We are ready to cooperate with the [Tercentenary] committee on a secular social level. However, we cannot commit ourselves to any plans worked out by the committee which entail a religious moment.”<sup>40</sup> The Tercentenary Committee was not identical to the Synagogue Council, but the theory underlying the Rav’s ruling applied to both alike. He permitted secular and social relations with believing Jews of other religious ideologies and non-believing Jews; he forbade shared “religious moments.” This stance, of course, posed a significant challenge to an organization like the Synagogue Council that viewed

itself as a religious counterpart to the National Council of Churches, a counterweight to the highly secular federations, community centers, and defense organizations that claimed to represent the American Jewish community. If the Synagogue Council were truly forced to confine itself to “secular social issues,” it would surely not be able to become “the widely recognized forum for the negotiation of religious ‘diplomatic’ problems vis-à-vis the American community” that Adams foresaw.

Fortunately for Adams, Rabbi Soloveitchik proved open to persuasion. For the Rav, religious truth and sincere faith emerged “out of the straits of inner oppositions and incongruities, spiritual doubts and uncertainties, out of the depths of a psyche rent with antinomies and contradictions, out of the bottomless pit of a soul that struggles with its own torments.”<sup>41</sup> So although in his 1953 letter he vigorously insisted that “we as a rabbinate should never sign a joint proclamation with other national rabbinic bodies, particularly if it should manifest a religious character,”<sup>42</sup> the signature of both the Rabbinical Council of America and the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America (but not the Agudath ha-Rabbanim) did prominently appear in a handsomely printed joint statement “To Our Jewish Brethren in the United States” alongside the signatures of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Rabbinical Assembly of America, and the United Synagogue of America. The statement was published in Hebrew and Yiddish as well as in English, and all three versions of the statement included religious sentiments, the Hebrew text most of all. Doubtless with Rabbi Soloveitchik’s assent, each version was separately and personally signed by Adams in the name of the Rabbinical Council of America.<sup>43</sup>

David Hollander, who succeeded Adams as RCA president, was horrified by these kinds of cooperative projects with Conservative and Reform leaders, men he charged with “flaunting their violation of Jewish law and claiming that this was ‘Twentieth Century Judaism.’” Nor could he make peace with the fact that a “great Godol Hador”—presumably Rabbi Soloveitchik—displayed “inability or unwillingness to take a clear stand publicly one way or the other.” Bolstered by the

Lubavitcher Rebbe, who told him “with increasing strength, never to relent on this issue,” Hollander crusaded against Orthodox involvement with organizations such as the Synagogue Council and the New York Board of Rabbis.<sup>44</sup> Partly at his instigation, a group of eleven fervently Orthodox rabbis, led by Ahron Kotler and Moshe Feinstein, issued on February 1, 1956, their famous ban on contacts between Orthodox rabbis and their Reform and Conservative counterparts.

We have been asked by a number of rabbis in the country and by alumni and *musmochim* [*ordinees*] of yeshivos if it is permissible to participate with and be a member of the New York Board of Rabbis and similar groups in other communities, which are composed of Reform and Conservative “rabbis.”

Having gathered together to clarify this matter, it has been ruled by the undersigned that it is forbidden by the law of our sacred Torah to be a member of and to participate in such an organization.

We have also been asked if it is permissible to participate with and to be a member of the Synagogue Council of America, which is also composed of Reform and Conservative organizations.

We have ruled that it is forbidden by the law of our sacred Torah to participate with them either as an individual or as an organized communal body.

May Hashem Yisborach have mercy on His people, and seal the breaches [in Torah life] and may we be worthy of the elevation of the glory of our sacred Torah and our people Israel.

Signed this fifth day, the week of Parshas Ki Seesoh, the Eighteenth day of Adar, 5716, in the City of New York.<sup>45</sup>

The ban set off a frenzy of activities that have been documented elsewhere. A minority, led by David Hollander, believed that Orthodox bodies should honor the ban and withdraw from the Synagogue Council since it gave status and legitimacy to non-Orthodox bodies. The

majority insisted that cooperation with the non-Orthodox promoted Jewish communal unity and ultimately benefited Orthodoxy, leading to advances in areas such as *kashrut*.<sup>46</sup> The RCA Halachic Commission refused to issue an opinion on the question, citing, among other things, “an atmosphere charged with partisanship and emotion.”<sup>47</sup> Privately, Rabbi Soloveitchik confessed that “I strongly disapprove of the method and the manner in which the whole problem has been handled, of the personal and political overtones, of the hysterical climate which has been created and of the unfairness displayed by certain individuals and groups.”<sup>48</sup>

The Rabbinical Council of America and the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations did not withdraw from the Synagogue Council, nor did its rabbis sever their relationships with organizations such as the New York Board of Rabbis. When the Agudath ha-Rabbanim issued a resolution in 1960 demanding compliance with its ban and threatening to oust from membership any rabbi “unless he resigns from the forbidden organization within thirty days,” RCA members for the most part took no notice. Indeed, Joseph Soloveitchik continued the delicate assignment he took on for the Synagogue Council two years earlier, dealing with humane methods of handling meats for slaughter, and Samuel Belkin, President of Yeshiva University, accepted an award from the Synagogue Council at a dinner in 1961. (Orthodox protestors, critical of Belkin’s appearance, threw eggs onto the ball-room floor.<sup>49</sup>)

Over time, though, the Synagogue Council weakened. A whole host of issues—the Israeli debate over who is a Jew, state funding of parochial schools, divorce and *mamzerut*,<sup>50</sup> women rabbis, patrilineal descent, admission of the Reconstructionist movement, and others—spotlighted differences between Orthodox Jews and believing Jews of other religious ideologies. Lack of consensus paralyzed the organization and lack of funds made it more and more difficult for it to operate. Meanwhile, rabbis on all sides stood firm for cherished principles, making compromise for the sake of unity impossible. As a result, in 1994 the Synagogue Council closed its doors.<sup>51</sup>

But the relationship of Orthodox Jews with believing Jews of other religious ideologies and non-believing Jews by no means ended there.

Indeed, in 2005 historian Jack Wertheimer reported that, contrary to widespread predictions, “overt religious conflicts have either eased or have been pushed into the background.” He found that “a goodly amount of transdenominational cooperation occurs every day and that American Jews, like many of their liberal non-Jewish neighbors, are dealing with ideological divisions in a pragmatic fashion, seeking common ground rather than confrontation.” The “continuity agenda,” a strategy of “unity in the face of adversity” in response to anti-Semitic and anti-Israel attacks; trends in the larger community, where intrareligious tensions likewise declined; and threats by prominent funders to “cut off” those who “speak irresponsibly about other members and groups in the Jewish community,” all help to explain these developments. Specifically in the case of Orthodoxy, Wertheimer found that new efforts at “outreach,” such as Chabad *shluhim* and community *kollelim*, had muted attacks on non-Orthodox Jews. Outreach, he concluded, “is lowering social and ideological barriers and is modifying the historical tendency of Orthodox leaders to castigate their opponents as “deviationists” and to trumpet their own way as “Torah-true.”<sup>52</sup>

The turn away from “Jew vs. Jew,” welcome as it may be to proponents of Jewish unity and *klal yisrael*, is unlikely to mark the final chapter in the long saga of the “relationship of Orthodox Jews with believing Jews of other religious ideologies and unbelieving Jews in America.” Since the colonial era, we have seen, tensions have divided those who seek compromise for the sake of Jewish unity from those who demand firmness to uphold sacred Jewish principles. Looking back, we can see that this tension has proved beneficial in many ways. The compromisers and the uncompromising have, over time, checked each other’s excesses. Irreconcilable as the two may appear, they have accomplished together what neither might have accomplished separately: preserving the delicate balance between Orthodox distinctiveness and the unity of the Jewish people.

## NOTES

1. I focus here largely on relationships in the public arena. Private relationships between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews require a separate treatment. In the nineteenth century Henry Illoway, the son of the Orthodox Rabbi Bernard Illoway, proudly reported that his father, notwithstanding his many forceful battles against Reform, was “on intimate terms” with Isaac Mayer Wise, “and later on, when we resided in Cincinnati, they met frequently in the friendliest intercourse” [see Henry Illoway, *Sefer Milhamot Elohim: Being the Controversial Letters and the Casuistic Decisions of the late Rabbi Bernard Illoway, With a Short History of His Life and Activities* (Berlin: 1914), 28-29, online at <http://www.jewish-history.com/Illoway/biography.html> (accessed 2-12-09)] and (paginated) at <http://hebrewbooks.org/7201> (accessed 6-22-09). In the twentieth century, Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik described Rabbi Joseph Shubow, the rabbi of Temple B’nai Moshe, a Conservative synagogue in Brighton, as a “dear and distinguished friend whom I hold in great esteem” [Joseph Soloveitchik to Philip Fleischer (May 5, 1954) in Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Community, Covenant and Commitment: Selected Letters and Communications*, ed. Nathaniel Helfgot (New York: Ktav, 2005), 125-127.]
2. *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 21 (1913), 74. The edict was promulgated on the eve of Rosh Hashanah 5518 [September 14, 1757].
3. *Ibid.*, 76, 3 Veadar 5518 [March 22, 1758].
4. Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004), 17; Richard W. Pointer, *Protestant Pluralism and the New York Experience* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), esp. 46-52.
5. *Ibid.*, 39; Morris U. Schappes, *A Documentary History of the Jews of the United States, 1654-1875* (New York: Schocken, 1971), 77-84; Joseph L. Blau and Salo W. Baron, eds., *The Jews of the United States: A Documentary History 1790-1840* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 8-11; for a different interpretation, see J. J. Goldberg, *Jewish Power: Inside the American Jewish Establishment* (Reading, Penn.: Addison-Wesley, 1996), 83-85.
6. Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale, 1972), 379-384; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 41.
7. Jonathan D. Sarna, “Jacob I. Cohen,” *Dictionary of Virginia Biography* 3 (Richmond: Library of Virginia, 2006), 345-347; and idem, “The Democratization of American Judaism,” *New Essays in American Jewish History to Commemorate the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Founding of the American Jewish Archives*, eds. Pamesla S. Nadell, Jonathan D. Sarna and Lance J. Sussman (Cincinnati, OH: American Jewish Archives, 2010).
8. Sidney M. Fish, “The Problem of Inter-marriage in Early America,” *Gratz College Annual of Jewish Studies* 4 (1975), 85-95, reproduces the original text of this document and provides an English translation. An abbreviated translation along with other valuable material may be found in Malcolm H. Stern, “Two Jewish Functionaries in Colonial Pennsylvania,” *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 57

- (September 1967), 41-46; see also Sarna, "Democratization of American Judaism," for context and full annotation.
9. Sarna, *American Judaism*, 52-61, sets forth the "synagogue community" to "community of synagogues" model. For a critique, see Holly Snyder, "Rethinking the Definition of 'Community' for a Migratory Age 1654-1830," *Imagining the American Jewish Community*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (Watham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2007), 3-27.
  10. Sarna, *American Judaism* 87 traces the term to the controversy over the installation of an organ at Charleston's Beth Elohim synagogue in the 1840s.
  11. For full accounts of the conference, see esp. Moshe Sherman, *Bernard Illowy and Nineteenth Century American Orthodoxy* (Ph.D., Yeshiva University, 1991), 151-165; Lance J. Sussman, *Isaac Leeser and the Making of American Jewry* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), 196-200; and Sarna, *American Judaism*, 108-110.
  12. *Occident* 13 (December 1855), 451; cf. I. Harold Sharfman, *The First Rabbi* (Malibu, Calif.: Joseph Simon/Pangloss Press, 1988), 312-328.
  13. *Ibid.* 14 (April 1856), 38-39. Illowy wrote in Hebrew. I follow the translation in Moshe Davis, *The Emergence of Conservative Judaism* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1963), 424 n.39. Significantly, Radical Reform rabbis, notably David Einhorn, likewise boycotted the meeting and criticized its results. See Sarna, *American Judaism*, 110.
  14. Allan Tarshish, "The Board of Delegates of American Israelites (1859-1878)," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 49 (1959), 16-32; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 110-111.
  15. *Israelitische Wochenschrift* as quoted in Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 252; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 124-129.
  16. Cyrus Adler, *The Voice of America on Kishineff* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1904), esp. 14, 152-53; cf. Philip E. Schoenberg, "The American Reaction to the Kishinev Pogrom of 1903," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 63 (March 1974), 262-283, and Stefani Hoffman and Ezra Mendelsohn, eds., *The Revolution of 1905 and Russia's Jews* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).
  17. Sarna, *American Judaism*, 199-200; Naomi W. Cohen, "The Abrogation of the Russo-American Treaty of 1832," *Jewish Social Studies* 25 (1963), 3-41; Esther Pannitz "In Defense of the Jewish Immigrant," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 55 (September 1965), 57-97.
  18. Arthur A. Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community: The Kehillah Experiment, 1908-1922* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), esp. 3, 251.
  19. Sarna, *American Judaism*, 200-201.
  20. Cyrus Sulzberger, November 2, 1916, as quoted in Jonathan J. Golden, *From Cooperation to Confrontation: The Rise and Fall of the Synagogue Council of America* (Ph.D., Brandeis University, 2008), 23.

21. Yehuda Bauer, *My Brother's Keeper: A History of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1929-1939* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1974), 3-18; Herbert Agar, *The Saving Remnant—An Account of Jewish Survival* (New York: Viking Press, 1960), 69-71; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 210-211.
22. Charles J. Teller, "The Jewish Welfare Board," *American Jewish Year Book* 20 (1918-19), 98-102; Oscar I. Janowsky, *The JWB Survey* (New York: Dial Press, 1948), 45-61; Golden, *From Cooperation to Confrontation*, 25-34; Albert I. Slomovitz, *The Fighting Rabbis: Jewish Military Chaplains and American History* (New York: NYU Press, 1999), 43-62; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 212-213.
23. Janowsky, *JWB Survey*, 52.
24. Golden, *From Cooperation to Confrontation*, 30-32; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 213.
25. *Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook* 34 (1924), 128; see, on the origins of the Synagogue Council, Golden, *From Cooperation to Confrontation*, 35-63, upon which I draw heavily.
26. Sarna, *American Judaism*, 144-151, 193-197, 206-207, 249.
27. Abram Simon, "The Religion of a Businessman," January 19, 1925, as quoted in Golden, *From Cooperation to Confrontation*, 45.
28. *Constitution of the United Orthodox Rabbis of America* (New York: 5662 [1902]), 16-18.
29. Golden, *From Cooperation to Confrontation*, 53.
30. *Sefer Ha-Yovel Shel Agudat Ha-Rabbanim Ha-Ortodoksim De-Artsot Ha-Berit Ve-Kanada* (New York: 1928), 105. Saul Bernstein quotes Benjamin Koenigsberg as reporting that the Agudath Ha-Rabbanim was prepared to join the Synagogue Council "subject to the stipulation that the proceeding would be in Yiddish. The stipulation was not accepted" (Saul Bernstein, *The Orthodox Union Story: A Centenary Portrayal* [Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1997], 98).
31. *Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook* 35 (1925), 226; Golden, *From Cooperation to Confrontation*, 47.
32. "The Present Constitution of the Synagogue Council of America, as Adopted on November 9, 1926," as quoted in Golden, *From Cooperation to Confrontation*, 51.
33. Golden, *From Cooperation to Confrontation*, 48-50. Golden relies on documents he found in the papers of Samuel Schulman at the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati. Saul Bernstein, *The Orthodox Union Story*, claims that "Diligent search has failed to disclose any record of presentation to any convention, meeting or other organ of the UOJCA of any proposal to join the Synagogue Council of America. Nor is there to be found any record of any discussion or action taken by any organ of the Orthodox Union on the matter, at the time of, or following, the establishment of the mixed council, nor yet of any consideration of the projected formation of that agency. It can be surmised that the connection was made by Rabbi Goldstein's personal presidential decision. . . . Rabbi Goldstein's high distinction as a foremost protagonist of Jewish Orthodoxy, prominently identified with both the Orthodox Union and the Agudath Israel movement of Inde-

pendent Orthodoxy, was apparently enough to obviate any possibilities of doubt as to the propriety of the step taken (p. 99).”

34. Golden, *From Cooperation to Confrontation*, 61.
35. The Rabbinical Council of America, Hebrew Theological College, Israel Elchanan Theological Seminary, and the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations all signed on to a joint “Call to Jewish Congregations and Rabbis of the United States,” along with Reform and Conservative Jewish leaders, soon after Pearl Harbor. The Agudath Ha-Rabbanim did not sign the statement, which is reprinted in Philip Bernstein, *Rabbis at War: The CANRA Story* (Waltham, Mass.: American Jewish Historical Society, 1971), 55-56.
36. Bernstein, *Rabbis at War*, 5; see pp. 60-95 for the responsa. The best account of the committee, which discloses issues on which the three failed to agree, may be found in Joan S. Freedman, *Solomon S. Freehof, the “Reform Responsa,” and the Shaping of American Reform Judaism* (Ph.D., Columbia University, 2003), 215-250; see also Chaniel Nahari, “Development of Halakhic Literature for Soldiers from 1880-1975” (MA thesis, Bar-Ilan University, 2003; Hebrew), 32-43 (thanks to Menachem Butler for this last reference).
37. JTA, June 27, 1954, as quoted in Golden, *From Cooperation to Confrontation*, 84.
38. Joseph Soloveitchik to Theodore Adams (August 11, 1953), reprinted in Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Community, Covenant and Commitment: Selected Letters and Communications*, ed. Nathaniel Helfgot. (New York: Ktav, 2005), 111. The Rav clearly anticipated here his larger discussion in “The Lonely Man of Faith,” *Tradition* 7 (Summer 1965), 5-67.
39. Joseph Soloveitchik to Emanuel Rackman (August 1, 1954), in Soloveitchik, *Community, Covenant, and Commitment*, 115-116. The “some rabbi” was probably Abraham Feldman, a Reform rabbi of Orthodox background from West Hartford; see Golden, *From Cooperation to Confrontation*, 94-98.
40. Soloveitchik, *Community, Covenant, and Commitment*, 112; see Golden, *From Cooperation to Confrontation*, 108.
41. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Halakhic Man*, trans. Lawrence Kaplan (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1983), 142.
42. Soloveitchik, *Community, Covenant, and Commitment*, 113.
43. Photocopies in the author’s possession.
44. Hollander recounts all of this in Chaim Dalfin, *Conversations with the Rebbe* (Los Angeles: JEC Publishing Company, 1996), 71-77; see also Golden, *From Cooperation to Confrontation*, 100-101.
45. The ban is reproduced in Louis Bernstein, *The Emergence of the English Speaking Orthodox Rabbinate* (Ph.D., Yeshiva University, 1977), 556. A slightly different text appears in Aaron Rakeffet-Rothkoff, *The Silver Era* (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 291-292). Note that Eliezer Silver, like Joseph Soloveitchik, refused to sign this ban.
46. Louis Bernstein, *Challenge and Mission: The Emergence of the English-Speaking Orthodox Rabbinate* (New York: Shengold, 1982), 141-156; Golden, *From Coop-*

- eration to *Confrontation*, 98-113. We also now know that secret negotiations were taking place at that time between Orthodox and Conservative leaders around a plan to set up “a national *beit din* recognized by both groups as having exclusive authority in matters of Jewish family law”; see Marc B. Shapiro, *Saul Lieberman and the Orthodox* (Scranton, Penn.: University of Scranton Press, 2006), 44-46.
47. Joseph Soloveitchik to Solomon Sharfman (June 11, 1957) in Soloveitchik, *Community, Covenant, and Commitment*, 153.
  48. Joseph Soloveitchik to Jacob Radin (n.d.) in *ibid.*, 155. Thirteen years later, speaking at the RCA Annual Convention in 1970, the Rav obliquely alluded to the Synagogue Council issue and spelled out his views more fully: “We are engaged in a mortal struggle with the dissident community. You can call them Reformers or Conservatives. I do not care about the name. We are even contending with secularists. . . .We will not win the battle or lose the battle by excommunications, prohibitions, fist fights, or throwing stones. . . .We will only win if we understand two concepts. First, we must be capable of interpreting Judaism profoundly. . . . However we must also understand the second principle. We will only emerge victorious if the people feel that the Orthodox Jew is morally superior.” [Aaron Rakeffet-Rothkoff, *The Rav: The World of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik* (New York: Ktav, 1999), 53].
  49. Golden, *Cooperation to Confrontation*, 111-114; Soloveitchik, *Community, Covenant, and Commitment*, 61-74.
  50. Norman E. Frimer and Dov I. Frimer, “Reform Marriages in Contemporary Halakhic Responsa,” *Tradition* 21 (Fall 1984), 7-39.
  51. Golden, *Cooperation to Confrontation*, 114-137.
  52. Jack Wertheimer, *All Quiet on the Religious Front? Jewish Unity, Denominationalism, and Postdenominationalism in the United States* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2005), esp. 8-9, 28.