

World Council of Synagogues



Proceedings of Ninth International Convention

JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

November 20-23, 1972

14-17 Kislev, 5733

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These pages contain a summary, in qualified chronological order, of the proceedings and excerpts from addresses delivered in Jerusalem, Israel, November 20-23, 1972, 14-17 Kislev, 5733.

Convention Program

Monday

Nov. 20,

VISIT TO AIR FORCE BASE

Address by the Base Commander
Visit to aircraft and arms exhibit
Observation of take-offs and landings of military aircraft
Delegates' luncheon at air force base

Presentation:

RABBI IRWIN GRONER, Congregation Shaarey Zedek, Southfield,
Michigan

OPENING CEREMONY at Western Wall, Jerusalem

Welcome

RABBI PINCHAS PELI

Moment of Silence

Communion with our people, our land and our history

Sounding of the Shofar

Yizkor

CANTOR EMANUEL BARKAN

For martyrs of the Holocaust and for those who fell in the defense of
the State of Israel

Musical selections

CANTOR N. LIFSHITZ AND ENSEMBLE

PLENARY SESSION

Welcome to Delegates

GERRARD BERMAN, Convention Chairman

Greetings

DR. CHAIM RISKIN, President, United Synagogue of Israel

RABBI JUDAH NADICH, President, Rabbinical Assembly

MRS. HENRY N. RAPAPORT, President, National Women's League of
the United Synagogue of America

RAFAEL ZUCHOWICKI, Vice-President, Seminario Rabinico
Latinoamericano

Memorial Tribute to Charles Rosengarten

RABBI BERNARD SEGAL, Executive Vice-President, United Syna-
gogue of America

Presidential Address

MORRIS SPEIZMAN, President, World Council of Synagogues

Address

SHIMON PERES, Minister of Transportation and Communications,
State of Israel

Musical Selections

ZAMIR CHORALE GROUP

Tuesday

Nov. 21,

SHAHARIT SERVICE (at the King David Hotel and the Diplomat Hotel)

D'var Torah

RABBI CHARLES SIEGEL, Congregation Moriah, Haifa

RABBI M. DAVID WEISS, Kehillat Sinai, Tel Aviv

MORNING SESSION

Chairman

RABBI PINCHAS SPECTRE, Netzach Israel, Ashkelon.

The Role of Halakhah in our Time

RABBI BENT MELCHIOR, Chief Rabbi of Denmark

Respondents

PROF. ERNST SIMON, Jerusalem

DR. PINCHAS PELI, Jerusalem

Discussion from floor

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Resolutions

JUDAH GRIBETZ, Chairman

MARTIN L. KAMEROW, Co-Chairman

MORRIS LAUB, Consultant

Nominations

GEORGE MAISLEN, Chairman

HENRY N. RAPAPORT, Co-Chairman

RABBI BERNARD SEGAL, Consultant

AFTERNOON SESSION

Chairman

HENRY N. RAPAPORT, Honorary President, United Synagogue of America

International Reports

RABBI MORTON H. NARROWE, Stockholm, Sweden

SOLOMON J. ASHTAMKAR, United Synagogue of India

GEORGES LEVITTE, Cultural Consultant, European Council of Jewish Community Services

RABBI MARSHALL T. MEYER, Rector, Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano, Buenos Aires, Argentina

PROF. GIANFRANCO TEDESCHI, M.D., Rome, Italy

RABBI FRITZ PINKUSS, Sao Paulo, Brazil

Discussion from the floor

RECEPTION AT THE ISRAEL MUSEUM,

tendered by the Municipality of Jerusalem

Greetings

RABBI SHAAR-YASHUV COHEN, Vice-Mayor of Jerusalem

Response

MORRIS SPEIZMAN, President, World Council of Synagogues

Wednesday SHAHARIT SERVICE

Nov. 22,

D'var Torah

RABBI MICHAEL GRAETZ, Congregation Bet Yisrael, Netanya

RABBI JOEL KAMSLER, Congregation Adat Shalom, Rehovot

MORNING SESSION

Report

RABBI DAVID SHOFET, Teheran, Iran

Symposium on the Quality of Jewish Life in Israel

Moderator

DR. SIMON GREENBERG, Vice-Chancellor, The Jewish Theological Seminary of America

Panelists

RABBI MENACHEM HACOHEN, Tel Aviv
TZVI TZAMERET, Jerusalem

Group discussions, led by

DAVID FREEMAN, Haifa
RABBI JOEL KAMSLER (Consultant)

HARRY DOBKIN, Netanya
RABBI M. DAVID WEISS (Consultant)

MRS. CHANA ABELLS, Tel Aviv
RABBI CHARLES SIEGEL (Consultant)

ARYEH GOEL, Rehovot
RABBI MICHAEL GRAETZ (Consultant)

DEDICATION OF CENTER OF CONSERVATIVE
JUDAISM IN JERUSALEM

Chairman

SAMUEL ROTHSTEIN, Past President, United Synagogue of America

Affixing of Mezuzah

HAROLD ROSEN, Past President, Connecticut Valley Region, United
Synagogue of America

Presentations

MRS. HENRY N. RAPAPORT, President, National Women's League
HAROLD BERNSTEIN, Temple Israel, Great Neck, New York

Remarks

JACK STEIN, President, United Synagogue of America

Greetings

RABBI GERSON D. COHEN, Chancellor, The Jewish Theological
Seminary of America

Dedication Psalm 30

CANTOR MORTON KULA

Dedication Address

RABBI SIMON GREENBERG, Vice-Chancellor, The Jewish Theological
Seminary of America

CELEBRATION IN HONOR OF ISRAEL'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Chairman

DAVID ZUCKER, Treasurer, World Council of Synagogues

Presentation to David Ben-Gurion

MORRIS SPEIZMAN, President, World Council of Synagogues

Presentation to Moshe Kol

PHILIP GREENE, Honorary Vice-President, World Council of Syna-
gogues

Evening of Israeli Entertainment

Thursday

Nov. 23,

SHAHARIT SERVICES

D'var Torah

RABBI PINCHAS SPECTRE, Ashkelon
RABBI MORTON LEIFMAN, Jerusalem

MORNING SESSION

Chairman

ARTHUR J. LEVINE, Vice-President, United Synagogue of America

Symposium on Soviet Jewry

PROF. SHNEIOR LIFSON, Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot

DR. A. AHIROM, Consultant to the Minister, Ministry of Absorption

ROMAN ROTMAN, newly arrived from Moscow

MRS. SIMA KAMINSKAYA, whose husband is presently imprisoned in
Russia

AFTERNOON SESSION

Chairman

JERRY WAGNER, Vice-President, United Synagogue of America

Greetings

ALAIN DE ROTHSCHILD, Paris (read by Georges Levitte)

JACOB STEIN, President, United Synagogue of America

Report of Nominations Committee

HENRY N. RAPAPORT, Co-Chairman

Report of Resolutions Committee

JUDAH GRIBETZ, Chairman

Farewell Remarks

MORRIS SPEIZMAN, Outgoing President, World Council of Synagogues

Installation of Officers

RABBI DAVID GOLDSTEIN, Chairman, Program of Activities for
Jerusalem Building, World Council of Synagogues

Acceptance Speech

SAMUEL ROTHSTEIN, Newly-elected President, World Council of
Synagogues

Address

LOUIS PINCUS, Chairman, Jewish Agency Executive

Closing Remarks

MORRIS LAUB, Director, World Council of Synagogues

GALA BANQUET AT THE KNESSET

Cocktail Party

Dinner

Chairman

GERRARD BERMAN, Convention Chairman

Award to Moshe Dayan

SAMUEL ROTHSTEIN, President, World Council of Synagogues

Discussion with MOSHE DAYAN, Minister of Defense

GREETINGS

Prime Minister Golda Meir

(The following is a translation of a cabled Hebrew message.)

I am delighted to send greetings and best wishes to the participants of the convention of the World Council of Synagogues. It is fitting that this important gathering is convened in the eternal home of Israel, the spiritual center of the entire Jewish people. I know that your deliberations are aimed at strengthening bonds among fellow Jews and at perpetuating the Jewish heritage among your communities throughout the world.

May peace and brotherhood be the destiny of our land and of our holy city. May we be privileged to witness the realization of the prayer that was formulated in this very city: May He who creates harmony in the universe also bestow peace upon us and upon the house of Israel. Amen.

Dr. Chaim Riskin

It is my pleasure and privilege to welcome you in the name of the United Synagogue of Israel. You have come here at a most exciting and meaningful time in the history of our people, and in the history of our movement in Israel. Twenty-five years in the history of the world is like the blinking of an eye. But during these past twenty-five years, Jews the world over have stood shoulder to shoulder with Israelis to build a dynamic modern home for all of us, in which the visions of our prophets are being brought closer to realization; a state in which our people can seek its self-fulfillment with dignity and honor. We pray that soon it will be granted to all Jews, wherever they are, to live as free men.

We are not gathered in Jerusalem only for the sake of brotherhood, or to express our loyalty to the state of Israel, lofty as these ideals may be. We have come together to advance the cause of Judaism here and throughout the world, both in free countries, and in countries where our brothers are still denied their basic right to determine their way of worshipping God and to be united with their people in their homeland.

Here in Israel, our movement is growing in numbers; Israelis are turning to us more and more, for assistance in establishing indigenous congregations. But, as you know, we are faced with many problems.

My friends, a people without differences is inconceivable; but a people without common purposes cannot endure. Thus, we deem it the duty of the World Council of Synagogues and of world Jewry to issue a call for unity among the Jews of Israel. We call not for unity of form, nor for empty conformity mistaken for unity, but for that unity of common inspiration and mutual respect which mirrors a vision of the future when Jews can serve their God and fellow men in peace and harmony.

May our meeting together be in the spirit of our Sages, who emphasized that study must precede deed, and that no man is free to avoid the challenges of his time. And may our meeting here in Jerusalem move you to join us personally in the continued building of Israel, to come on *aliyah*, facilitate *aliyah* for your children, so that in our lifetime and theirs, we may witness a secure Israel, dedicated to strengthening our tradition—for ourselves and for the generations to come.

Rabbi Judah Nadich

It is a great privilege for me to represent over 1050 of my colleagues in the Rabbinical Assembly, and to bring their warm greetings to this convention. Like your own organization, the Rabbinical Assembly is not limited to the United States, but has members in Canada and Mexico, South America and Europe, Japan and Thailand and Israel. The Israel region of the Rabbinical Assembly numbers some sixty men serving in education, congregations, and other areas of endeavor.

The Conservative movement is not a recent convert to Zionism. From its beginnings it had a strong and unremitting relationship with the land of Israel and the people of Israel. It is the only one of the three branches of Jewish religious life in America that has been completely and consistently pro-Zionist, since the days of Solomon Schechter.

It is the only movement to include pro-Israel prayers in the *matbe'a shel tefilah*, in the traditional text of the prayer book. For example, on Israel's Independence Day, we recite in our synagogues the *al hanisim* prayer, expressing our gratitude to God for the miracle in our day of the rebirth of the Jewish State. Prayers for Israel and Jerusalem have been included in the High Holiday *mahzor* published this year by the Rabbinical Assembly.

Similarly, the creation of Israel and the reunification of Jerusalem have found their reflection in the *halakhah*, in Jewish law as interpreted by the Rabbinical Assembly Committee on Jewish Law and Standards.

Thus, our rabbis, educators and congregations are in Israel not on sufferance; we and our movement are here by right. We are convinced that our movement has something to offer to our brothers and sisters in Israel, to the enrichment of their spiritual lives, to the strengthening of the ties between the youth of Israel, including those of the kibbutzim, and the Jewish tradition. For we have a unique approach to *halakhah*, blending tradition with change, keeping its free-flowing stream open to work its way on contemporary problems. And we too shall learn from Israel, from our relationships with our people in this land; their experiences will benefit us in the *golah*.

We ask that we be not hindered in our work in this land, that our congregations in Israel be encouraged, and that our Conservative rabbis in Israel be officially recognized and enabled to officiate at marriages and conversions in accordance with the *halakhah* so that they may carry out the functions of their rabbinical office, *lehagdil torah ulehadrah*, for the strengthening of the Torah and its glorification.

As President of the Rabbinical Assembly, I congratulate Chief Rabbi Goren for his courageous decision in the case of the Langer brother and sister announced in today's press. Such a decision, recognizing life's realities, interpreting the *halakhah* in a compassionate manner, in the spirit of Hillel, seeking the solution of contemporary problems, cannot help but strengthen Jewish law and enhance the attitude towards it on the part of all Jews.

The Rabbinical Assembly welcomes the creation of the new center of Conservative Judaism in Jerusalem, to be dedicated on Wednesday. We hope it will be integrated into a dynamic program that will prove its usefulness for the Conservative movement in Israel and abroad.

Finally, we Jews of the United States must continue to be on the alert regarding the future relationship between our own government and the State of Israel. We rejoice in the good relations existing presently, but should the future months show evidence of renewed American pressure upon Israel to negotiate with its neighbors under conditions disadvantageous to Israel, we must be prepared to demonstrate to our own government that the search for permanent peace in the Middle East is not only to Israel's advantage, but to the advantage of America and the freedom-loving world.

May our convention be blessed out of Zion, and may we speedily see the peace of Jerusalem.

Mrs. Henry N. Rapaport

This is a very exciting time for me to be reporting to you, for National Women's League has just completed a stimulating five-day convention. More than 1500 women assembled for serious Torah study under the leadership of Dr. Gerson Cohen, the newly elected Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Despite schedules of meetings which continued late into the night, it was standing room only at the daily *shaharit* services, some of which were traditional and some experimental.

The delegates celebrated Israel's 25th anniversary; we remembered the Jews of the Soviet Union in a special program; and we dealt with many social and educational issues of broad scope.

It was especially exciting to have in attendance, in addition to a record number of Americans and Canadians, three representatives of our new Jerusalem affiliate. We are aware that there is a strong resurgent religious spirit among Jews here and throughout the world. We hope that we can help nurture it, through sharing our programs and publications, human relations group dynamics techniques, and the many other projects on which we work.

We are aware that each society has its own approaches, and not all methods are transferable. That is why we are so delighted to be working so closely with our Israeli members in planning joint events, in organizing a Conservative women's group here in Israel. Indeed, our leadership conference tour will be held here this spring. We anticipate that before long, we will be developing equivalent ties with the women of the Conservative movement in other parts of the world.

It is through such exchanges that we will strengthen one another and continue to evolve answers needed for a vital Judaism in this turbulent era. Women play a distinctive role in Jewish life by accepting the responsibility of passing basic Jewish values on to the next generation. Whether a woman is a homemaker or a career woman, the needs of the family have a high priority for her. Without the support provided by women, Judaism is weakened.

A historic decision was taken at our convention, when the delegates voted to change the name we have carried for five decades. Reflecting the international nature of our constituency, and the autonomy of our agency, our new name will be the Women's League for Conservative Judaism. Our relationship of friendship with the United Synagogue and our mutual goals remain unchanged. Our loyalty to and support for The Jewish Theological Seminary of America will continue as always. Our volunteers will continue to help our synagogues and our communities. We look forward to continuing partnership with the World Council in fulfilling this great responsibility.

Rafael Zuchowicki

I feel a very heavy responsibility as I bring you the greetings and good wishes of approximately 5,000 Jews in Argentina who have seen their lives changed through the intensive living of a new Judaism. I personally feel indebted to those individuals who, a few years ago, had the vision, the spiritual force and above all the courage to create in Argentina a Rabbinical Seminary. I doubt that many of you here can realize the many dimensions of this project. I beg you to understand and appreciate that to attempt to change the spiritual destiny of thousands of Jews on a continent is not simply a task, but history. My friends, you have had a great deal to do with this history.

Eleven years ago, who would have believed in the creation of a new synagogue, where each *Shabbat* six hundred people pray together with genuine fervor and sincere friendship. It is the deep desire of this congregation to share this religious inspiration with you, our brother Jews in the Conservative movement in Israel. I doubt that you could possibly face stronger attacks than those to which we have been subject; I doubt that

you could possibly encounter more foreboding obstacles. But if you have the courage, you will surely create a significant and dynamic Judaism here in Israel.

The value of our Seminario is understood and appreciated not only by Comunidad Bet-El in Buenos Aires and the other communities that are affiliated or about to affiliate with our movement in Argentina, but by Jews in Uruguay, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Peru and Colombia. They have responded to our work in the Seminario, but unfortunately they are relatively few. You have cooperated with us too, to make the Seminario a reality. But above all, there are two couples who have transformed this dream into a reality: Rabbi and Mrs. Marshall Meyer, and Rabbi and Mrs. Mordejai Edery. We owe them a debt of gratitude for life.

The task we have all undertaken has been enormous. But we have succeeded on many fronts. We have 3,000 people present for *ne'ilah* on Yom Kippur. We are about to initiate the fourteenth season of Camp Ramah, and have already educated some 3,500 young people in this camp. We have prepared five young Latin Americans for the Rabbinate. And we have published some fifty volumes on Jewish subjects in the past eight years. Last but not least, we have begun the construction of our new synagogue building and of a primary and secondary day school.

But how much easier would our task have been if we had been permitted to grow and create without having such enormous blocks placed in our path; blocks that make the stones of the *kotel* look like grains of sand. For all of our projects antagonized the Argentine Jewish establishment which had been unable to create a dynamic Judaism, or maintain an effective Zionist movement free of cheap politics.

We, however, are not involved with any particular party; we have not utilized the services of *shlichim*, yet many of our young people, and entire families have come on *aliyah*. This bothers many people. But how can one instill Zionism without first teaching Judaism? Our object is to help the individual live his Judaism; only then can he understand what *aliyah* is all about.

Thus, the central organs of Argentine Jewry are not too happy with us. How could they be when, without any vast subsidies, we continue to grow, while they continue to beg from the United States, and above all, from the State of Israel?

Friends, I should like to terminate my remarks by inviting you to hold the next convention of the World Council of Synagogues in Buenos Aires, Argentina. We need your presence and your support.

Alain de Rothschild

(The following message was read by Mr. Georges Levitte.)

Our times are characterized by a situation without precedent in the history of the Jewish people. Twenty-five years of existence of the State of Israel, the reunification of Jerusalem, the return to Judaism of thousands and thousands of our brethren in the Soviet Union, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, the challenge of the society that the Jewish religious communities have to face in the countries of the Diaspora.

All this creates problems for which our generation has to provide the proper answers, so that we may preserve the specific values emanating from our Torah. That is why all efforts undertaken for maintaining and reinforcing Jewishness in our communities lead toward a goal which, in the final analysis, is common to all of us.

In the name of the Consistoire Central des Israelites de France and in my own name, I wish your convention the great success which is due to you. I am convinced that all of us, each one in his own way, work for the renewed vitality of Judaism, traditional and ever-relevant.

Memorial Tribute to Charles Rosengarten

Rabbi Bernard Segal

As we open our international convention this evening, it is altogether fitting that we should pause to pay affectionate tribute to the memory of Charles Rosengarten, founder and first president of our organization, who departed this life since we last met in convention.

We also want to avail ourselves of this opportunity to convey our affectionate greetings to Florence, Charlie's life partner, who wanted so much to be with us at this gathering, but due to illness was, unfortunately, prevented from undertaking the trip.

Charles Rosengarten came from Waterbury, Connecticut, a comparatively small town in the United States, and emerged to a position of preeminence as a leader of the wider American Jewish community. Step by step, he went from the presidency of his own congregation in Waterbury to the presidency of the Connecticut Valley Region of the United Synagogue of America, and then to the presidency of the United Synagogue and, finally, to the presidency of the World Council of Synagogues.

During his incumbency as president of the World Council, Charles gave himself wholeheartedly and sacrificially towards establishing a firm and broad foundation for our organization. Among his many achievements was the founding of our Latin American Section and, shortly thereafter, the establishment of the World Council's Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano. Charles was able to accomplish both of these achievements by a series of extended visits which he personally made to more than a dozen countries in South America where he mobilized Jewish communities to the urgent task of vitalizing Jewish life, or as he himself liked to describe his mission—"to Judaize Jews."

Parallel with his rise in the leadership of the Conservative movement, Charles also grew in the ranks of the Zionist movement in the United States, and at the time of his passing, he was head of the American Zionist Fund.

Charles was also a generous supporter of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and played a major role in the construction of the Seminary's student center in Jerusalem.

Charles also headed many civic and philanthropic organizations in his community and his state, including the local Chamber of Commerce and the local hospital, in all of which he was highly respected and admired.

Charles Rosengarten was truly a rare human being, and in everything that he said or did he always reflected the essence of nobility and integrity, and brought great luster to all who had the privilege of being associated with him.

By profession, Charles was an insurance and real-estate broker, and it was widely known that because of his impeccable character, the State of Connecticut never engaged in any real-estate transaction without seeking the opinion of Charles Rosengarten.

One of the blessings which Moses conferred upon our ancestors when they were about to enter the Promised Land was: "Blessed may you be in your coming and blessed may you be in your going." In commenting on this blessing, the rabbis in the Talmud saw it as a design for living which Moses laid down before the children of Israel. According to the rabbis, what Moses really said was: "Just as every human being arrives in this world without sin, so should it also be the life goal of every human being to leave this world without sin."

As we recall the life of Charles Rosengarten, we recognize that this precious blessing of Moses truly characterized Charlie's life. It was a blessing which guided his every thought and deed, and endowed his life with a rare quality of innocence and purity. It was a life of selflessness and sinlessness, a life of complete devotion to the Jewish people, to Torah, to the synagogue and to the State of Israel.

"The law of truth was in his mouth, and unrighteousness was not found on his lips;

He walked with God in peace and uprightness, and he turned many away from iniquity;

For he was a messenger of the Lord of Hosts."

Presidential Report

Morris Speizman

The Book of Nehemiah contains some striking analogies for our times, and our presence here tonight. Many of us are gathered here from the far corners of the *galut*; some of us are in Israel for the very first time in our lives. Like Ezra and Nehemiah, who came to Jerusalem from ancient Babylon, we have arrived on the scene some years after the gates were once again opened and Jews were free to return to Jerusalem, rebuild its walls and rededicate the Temple. In those ancient days, however, the high excitement of adventurous return was followed by a period of lethargy. This is in sharp contrast to the wonderful accomplishments of our fellow-Jews in the past quarter-century.

Nevertheless, there are still some breaches in the walls, even though these are breaches of a spiritual and religious nature, rather than breaks in concrete, stone, wood or bricks.

We of the Conservative movement in Judaism have been working for almost a century now, to repair the breaches in the walls of our tradition, and to strengthen our defenses against the encroachment of incompatible influences upon the life of Jews throughout the world.

The World Council of Synagogues can point with pride to the progress we have made in Latin America. Since the establishment of the Seminario in Buenos Aires, Argentina, under the inspired leadership of Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer, we have touched the lives of practically every Jewish community on the continent. Our prayer book translations into Spanish, our youth programs, our Camps Ramah, our dedicated staff of underpaid and overworked religious leaders, all have contributed to a vast renaissance of Jewish values throughout South America.

Rabbi Meyer is with us in Jerusalem. He will give us a more detailed and graphic account of our South American progress and accomplishments in his inimitable and eloquent style during the sessions tomorrow. We are also fortunate in having with us one of the great rabbis in Latin America, the senior rabbi of Congregacao Israelita Paulista, Rabbi Pinkuss. Many of our young rabbis from The Jewish Theological Seminary of America have served under him and he has been a tower of strength, not only to them but to the entire community of Brazil. It will be our pleasure to hear from him tomorrow.

Our efforts to encourage a meaningful atmosphere of Jewish living extend to every corner of the world, from Sweden to Australia and from India to Canada. While we can point with pride to the progress of our movement throughout the world, we cannot help but be saddened and troubled by the situation of our fellow Jews who languish in the Soviet Union. Their plight is a matter of heartfelt concern for all Jews, everywhere. Our tradition of ransoming the captives, which we considered only as a figure of speech, has emerged as a horrible anachronism in our own day. We pray that it will prove a passing aberration, and not an ongoing evidence of man's inhumanity to man.

Mr. Jacob Stein, in addition to being President of the United Synagogue of America, also serves as Chairman of the Presidents' Conference. He and his distinguished associates have been untiring in their efforts to ameliorate the conditions of our Soviet Jewish brothers and sisters. We of the World Council are striving to do what we can to help alleviate their suffering. Through the efforts of your President, in contact with our Senators and Congressmen in the U.S.A., and in conjunction with the other members of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jewry, it is our hope that we will help in the months ahead to lower the barriers so that our people can indeed go free.

In addition to this phase of our contacts with Soviet Jews, there have been many contacts and discussions with fellow Jews in Eastern Europe during the past two years, within the framework of visits by our youth groups, and by adults representing the Conservative movement. It is well to note that many of the delegates here will be travelling on to Rumania, and other areas of Eastern and Central Europe, to further encourage the feeling of kinship which we share with our fellow Jews in that part of the world.

Turning from travail and tragedy, to achievement and positive progress, we can point

with a pardonable measure of pride, to the accomplishments of our movement in the past two years.

Judaism has always been concerned with the *quality* of human existence rather than the mere *quantity* of man's time on earth. In the same vein, we Conservative Jews must concern ourselves with the *quality* of Jewish life, not only in Israel, but in all countries of the world. This concern is one of the several areas to be discussed and explored during the next few days.

The quality of Jewish living is intimately connected with the role of *halakhah* in our time. We are honored by the presence of Rabbi Bent Melchior, Chief Rabbi of Denmark, who will expound upon this vital subject tomorrow. We Conservative Jews feel that we are the Pharisees of our own day, Jews who are not content to follow blindly in ritualistically motivated channels, down the tired road of uninspired existence.

Rather, we feel that our watchwords should be "Tradition and Change." We uphold those traditions that are truly representative of the highest ideals of Judaism, of the unique way of life which distinguishes the sons of Abraham from all others. We should, in truth, consider ourselves *mamlekheth kohanim*, a nation of priests, as we have been commanded to do in our holy writings. But a nation of priests is concerned not only with prayer and study of the word of God, but also with acts and deeds which reflect the highest ideals of those teachings.

It is in this latter respect that I can report to you some of the more mundane yet inspirational progress of our movement since we last met here, in Jerusalem, two years ago. We have grown from four to ten congregations, an expansion made possible not only by the efforts of our dedicated leaders in America, but even more by those wonderful men and women who have assumed leadership roles in the development of the United Synagogue of Israel.

I would like to call upon them by name, so that they may receive the recognition that they deserve:

Chaim Chiell, first president and dedicated guiding light of the United Synagogue of Israel, and a vice-president of the World Council of Synagogues.

David Freeman, president of Moriah Congregation in Haifa, and a pioneer in our work.

Prof. Ernst Simon, a former vice-president of the World Council of Synagogues, and a member of its Board of Directors.

Rabbi Moshe Cohen, director of the United Synagogue of Israel.

I would be remiss if I did not also pay due credit to the tremendous efforts of the staff of the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Rabbinical Assembly, and the United Synagogue of America, who have helped further the wonderful progress of Israel's Conservative community.

Above and beyond the call of duty, has been the splendid help and counsel given us by the Women's League of the United Synagogue. The presence of several of their leaders on the executive board of the World Council of Synagogues, is a small measure of our recognition of their leadership and interest.

Rabbi David Goldstein has been a tower of strength in recent months. His unflagging energy in securing support for our new center in Jerusalem will be long remembered and appreciated.

Last, but by far not the least, our own World Council of Synagogues staff, headed by our Executive Director, Morris Laub, and the Convention Director, Jack Mittleman, deserve much more than this spoken acknowledgment of thanks for their herculean efforts. They were guided by the capable and genial Executive Vice-President of the United Synagogue, Rabbi Bernard Segal.

Since we last gathered in Convention, we have witnessed the retirement of the man who, more than anyone else, has typified the stature, the dignity, the wisdom, and the deep religious commitment of the Conservative movement. To Rabbi Louis Finkelstein we owe a debt of gratitude that can never be measured by words, but only by the deeds of those who follow in his footsteps. In this respect, we are indeed fortunate to have as the new Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, a man whose learning and whose

character and executive ability, bode well for the future of our great academy of Jewish learning.

And now, let me return to the theme of Nehemiah, and our presence here today. In the Book of Nehemiah, we read an account of how each of the Jews who returned from the exile in Babylon, took upon himself to repair a specific breach in the walls. In a similar vein, those of us who have gathered here today will give honor to the many men and women who, by their acts of selfless devotion, have made it possible for us to establish here in Jerusalem, a center for Conservative Judaism, a focal point for the United Synagogue of America, for the United Synagogue of Israel and, above all, for the activities of the World Council of Synagogues.

In this task of repairing the breach, one name stands out above all others. I take this opportunity of honoring the man who more than any one individual is responsible for the giant leap forward that our presence in Jerusalem represents. It was his inspiration and dogged determination that enabled us to join our efforts with his, in acquiring the building which will be dedicated during the next few days. I refer to Mr. David Zucker, a man who is close to our hearts, a dedicated Jew, and a leader among men.

I could list many other men and women who have served our movement with dignity and dedication, but for fear of overlooking a single one whose efforts might have gone unnoticed, I shall forego the recital of these names. Suffice it to say that, together, they have succeeded in healing many breaches in the spiritual wall of our movement, to the end that Zion may truly represent the ideal of our Sabbath morning prayers: For out of Zion shall come forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. We look forward to the time when the word of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem in ever increasing measure and with ever increasing clarity of purpose and thought.

Allow me to quote from the writings of our revered rabbi, Abraham Joshua Heschel: "To regard all that happens as workings of Providence, is to deny human responsibility. The world is more frequently subject to the power of man than to the love of God. Our task is to act, not only to enjoy; to change, not only to accept; to augment, not only to discover, the glory of God."

I know of no greater objective, nor any finer means of attaining that objective, than the work in which we of the World Council of Synagogues are engaged. It is my earnest hope and prayer that our dedicated efforts will be rewarded by the approbation of our fellow Jews, and the blessings of the Almighty.

Insight Into Aliyah

Shimon Peres

In the eyes of an Israeli, the World Council of Synagogues convention in Jerusalem is a greatly moving and meaningful experience. First of all, because it is a spiritual movement in Jewish life, concerned with questions of tradition, of concepts and values, as applied to modern life. Secondly, because you are a source of Jewish strength, a stream which guards the tradition and maintains the flow of modern life. And thirdly, because you are a world-embracing organization very much like Jewish life itself. It is good to see delegates from Argentina, from Iran, from India, from Europe, and from the United States.

I think your real welcome was expressed this morning by the decision of Rabbi Goren which, I believe, is very much in line with your own philosophy. It is a courageous, responsible decision consonant with the real spirit of *halakhah* which is, in my judgment, *ahavat yisrael*, love of all Jews.

I know I am not revealing any great secret when I say that we have some internal problems between observant and non-observant Israelis. We try to solve these problems in two ways: on the governmental level by forming a coalition; otherwise, by seeking solutions. By coalition, I meant that we agree that in the government we will maintain the *status quo* between religious and non-religious practices. Sometimes the results are bizarre, such as when we have transportation on *Shabbat* in some cities, and not in others. As

Minister of Transportation I have come to the conclusion that it is a pity that the Jewish people has only one *Shabbat*. Had it been dependent upon me, I would have another two or three days of rest, so that our drivers would not drive on the roads in such haste on their one day of *Shabbat*.

At least in one domain we have neither a compromise nor a coalition regarding religion. That area is the army of Israel. It is a Jewish army. It keeps kosher; it keeps *Shabbat*; it has rabbis and synagogues; and it is trying to solve, in accordance with tradition, the real needs of the people, the serious and important problems of daily life that involve Jewish values.

I believe it is very much because Rabbi Goren had experience in the army, where he was Chief Rabbi, that he brings to the religious life of Israel an experience of faith which is both historically positive, and positive for the future development of our people. What you and Rabbi Solomon Schechter call the succession of changes which makes for Jewish history, was emphasized by Harav Kook, the first and great Chief Rabbi of Israel, who said: "*Hakadosh yit'hadesh, vehahadash yithadesh*—the holy will become new, and the new will become holy." The wisdom and tradition in this approach is very close to your own thinking.

Your convention in Jerusalem is taking place on the eve of the 25th anniversary of the State of Israel. Since Exodus, 3200 years ago, we have passed through 128 quarter-centuries in the life of the Jewish people. In comparing the most recent quarter-century with the other 127, I may say that, by and large, we did not do too badly!

It has been a quarter-century of great achievement in Jewish life. We have our own state, our own army. We are experiencing a renaissance in the Jewish spiritual approach to life, and we are enjoying a sense of solidarity that the Jewish people has rarely experienced during its history. We are approaching our anniversary while the guns are silent, with our hopes high.

I would like to read to you a description of a country—not Israel—written by two famous historians:

It was a lusty republic that was now ready to begin its career. A census taken the year of the inauguration showed that it had merely four million people [exactly the number in Israel now] of whom about 3,500,000 were whites, and only five cities worthy of their name existed at the time.

The great mass of population lived in small villages. Communications were poor and slow, for the roads were wretched. And the impression which this country made upon the European traveller was one of rudeness, discomfort, rough manners, and a meager culture, along with independence and boundless self-confidence.

Do you know which country is being described? The United States of America, as it was just after George Washington became President in 1789. I don't suggest that you draw too many conclusions from this comparison. . . . But judging by the interest Israel has created in the last quarter-century, I must say that we are almost as good as the United States in its first quarter-century!

Statistics of the United Nations indicate that Israel is third on the list in providing the world with news. (The first two are the United States and Russia.) One of the reasons why Israel creates such great interest is that it is experiencing four different movements which are unparalleled in any other country in the 20th century.

The first movement is certainly the migration of the Jewish people to Israel, a migration which, since the Six-Day War, has reached the impressive number of 200,000 immigrants, half of them from Europe, and a bit over a quarter from Soviet Russia. Twenty-five percent are academicians. They are arriving and changing the life of this country because they bring with them not only Jewish experience, but also the taste and outlook of the greatest countries of ideology of our time: the United States and the Soviet Union.

I am sure that for each of you, as for each of us, the return of Russian Jewry to Israel is by far the greatest and most moving experience we have had in the last few years. I must admit that many of us were worried about the fate of Soviet Jewry. In 1959, according to official statistics, there were in Soviet Russia 2,268,000 Jews. From 1959 to 1970, the Russian population grew by 35 percent, but the Jewish population declined by 5.2

percent, to 2,151,000. What happened to the Jewish people? How did they disappear? Was it intermarriage, assimilation, running away from Jewish life, giving up Jewish hope? It is very hard to answer, but I remember two statements which were made in two different places almost at the same time.

One statement, by Ilya Ehrenberg, was that "as long as there will be a single anti-Semite in Soviet Russia, I shall remain Jewish." The other one, made during the same period by Norman Podhoretz, the editor of *Commentary*, was that "unfortunately, as long as there will remain a single Jew, anti-Semitism will prevail." I am afraid both statements are right, and not merely as far as Soviet Jewry is concerned.

Right now we are in the midst of a great argument in Israel regarding the future demography of the state. Some people say: today there are 2.7 million Jews and 1.4 million Arabs. What will happen in the future? The Arabs are increasing rapidly; the birthrate of the Jewish people is lower. Once we lose the Jewish majority, what will happen to the Jewish character of Israel? However, on this 25th anniversary of Israel, I must ask myself what was the demographic basis, the statistical justification for the Zionist dream eighty or ninety years ago.

In 1882, there were altogether 7.7 million Jews throughout the world. Do you know how many of them were in Palestine? Only 22,000—0.3 percent of the Jewish people. Twenty years later, in 1900, there were 10.7 million Jews in the world, with 50,000 of them in Palestine—0.5 percent of the Jewish people.

In 1925, when the British took over, figures were also gathered about the Arab residents of Palestine. The picture was 14.8 million Jews in the world, out of which 120,000 were in Palestine, representing 0.8 percent of the Jewish people; against 661,000 Arabs in Palestine—five times their number.

In 1940, before the Holocaust, there were 16.7 million Jews in the world, of which 467,000 were in Palestine—2.8 percent of the Jewish people; against 1,068,000 Arabs.

Today, we have 14 million Jews in the world; 2.7 million—over 20 percent—are in Israel. Two-thirds of Israel is Jewish; one-third is Arab. Do we have any reason today to be skeptical, or to slow our drive to bring Jewish people back home, and make this country a real stronghold, a guarantor for Jewish existence and growth?

I believe that one hundred years from now we can be a nation of 80 or 100 million people—if we won't again be massacred or assimilated, lose our faith and hope. For what is Israel, but a decision of the Jewish people to take our fate in our own hands, ensure our future, and continue to live a normal life from a physical point of view, and a rich life from a spiritual point of view?

The second movement of great importance involves those Jews who migrated to Israel fifteen or twenty years ago, from North Africa, Yemen and other Asian and African countries. When they arrived, they brought many problems with them. Ten percent of the families of Israel (who are now parents of forty percent of our children) came here after having been cut off from Jewish life for a period of about 2,000 years. They had no leadership when they arrived, for the richer, the more educated among them had gone elsewhere. Those who came to Israel were poor, unequipped with skills, lacking work habits, inexperienced in modern society.

Now, twenty years later, I believe this is the greatest miracle that has happened to the State of Israel. These people became the creators of new towns, new villages. Today they are entering the hierarchies of the state, both intellectually and politically, making a place and a name for themselves. I believe this is probably one of the greatest stories that Israel can tell.

The third movement, which is the newest and one of the most important, is the movement of the Arab community of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It is moving from one age to another, from the age of feudalism to modern society. In a state of war, in a climate of hatred, in an atmosphere of prejudice, unprepared for the meeting, both Jews and Arabs are finding themselves, without anyone planning it, under the very same roof, cultivating the very same land, dwelling in the very same city, as in the city of Jerusalem.

I agree with Professor Abraham J. Heschel who said that ethics must come before policies, that mores must precede political decisions. I believe that this is one of the

greatest moral problems the State of Israel ever faced: Can we or can't we live together, Jews and Arabs, honorably, meaningfully, honestly, side by side, as neighbors?

The fact is that 1.4 million Arabs are enjoying a new period of economic prosperity, of social progress, of peaceful co-existence—while technically in a state of war. The Arab press in Israel is the freest among the Arab-speaking peoples. There are open bridges across the Jordan River, free movement within Israel, and a nucleus of Arab self-administration. Out of 8,500 officials on the West Bank, only 196 are Israeli. The rest are Arabs from the West Bank. Out of 4,100 officials in the Gaza Strip, only 108 are Jews. Out of 7,500 educators for Arab children, only 16 are Israelis.

Probably one of the most important things that has happened is the quiet, gradual, human approach to the refugees which we find on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip: over 300,000 Arab refugees—one-third on the West Bank, in 18 camps; two-thirds in the Gaza Strip in 8 camps. We haven't said much publicly on this subject, but I believe that the Arab refugees on the West Bank live a completely normal life today. I believe the problem of Arab refugees on the West Bank is practically solved, and we are on our way to solving that problem in the Gaza Strip.

The fourth movement, which I shall mention very briefly, is the forward surge of the Israeli economy, in spite of war and immigration and the administration of the new territories. In a matter of ten years we have increased our GNP four times. We are 16th on the world list of countries who own ships; 13th on the list in terms of aviation; 11th as far as communications are concerned.

We are becoming somewhat more independent in our defense production. In 1966, we produced arms at a value of IL370 million. This year we produced arms worth IL1.8 billion, four times as much. In the five years between 1962 and 1967, we produced sophisticated electronic equipment for our army valued at IL250 million. Between 1967 and 1972, we produced IL1,200 million of electronic equipment.

Our goal is economic, industrial and military self-reliance. This was recently recognized by the Strategic Studies Group of London, which published a report claiming that in the Middle East, Israel has the most powerful air force in the Western camp. It gave the following figures: Turkey, 360 military aircraft; Italy, 300; Greece, 215; the American Sixth Fleet, 200; Israel, 374.

But we still have plenty of problems ahead. Again and again, the most pressing and the most important one, which will decide the destiny of the Jewish people more than any other single factor, is the continuance of immigration to this country, and our ability to absorb immigrants as quickly and as meaningfully as we can.

Our second major problem is reaching peace with the Arab countries. For this, one must be realistic in tactics and decisive in strategy. What do I mean by this? To say simply that Israel must have a peace treaty with the Arabs, that it must trade territories for peace, as is suggested from time to time, is an oversimplification of the situation in the Middle East. We are now in Jerusalem. Before the Six-Day War, Jerusalem was within pistol range of the Jordanian Army; today the relations between Jordan and Israel are the best we have ever had. We are farther from war with Jordan than we have ever been. As a matter of fact, King Hussein is a very popular figure in the eyes of many Israelis—especially the Jewish ones! The king is not interested in war; neither are we. He would not like to see the Fatah come back to Jordan; neither would we. He would not like to be swallowed up by the Syrians; we would not like to see that either. He would not like to see the Russians come in and replace American influence in Jordan; neither would we. He and we want to see easy contact and open bridges between Jordan and the West Bank.

But strangely enough, if we will ask King Hussein to enter into open negotiations leading to a peace treaty between Jordan and Israel, we will endanger the peaceful situation which exists today—because the king will come to the bargaining table and say: "I want to have part of Jerusalem back." He will say it; he *must* say it. Our answer will be a flat "No." So instead of a pragmatic, peaceful situation, we will have an open and official argument which will endanger practical achievements.

I am sure that all Israelis and Jews throughout the world sincerely hope for peace with the Arabs. But we must recognize that peace can only be achieved step by step. The first step is the new relationship between Israel and the West Bank Arabs, a relationship which

may serve as a model for the rest of the Arab world. Then we must try and reach a pragmatic understanding, partial and gradual, with the President of Egypt. Then we may come again to Jordan. It will take time and trouble and ingenuity. And all the while Israel must remain strong and decisive, a judge of its own needs.

This morning I met with Senator Ribicoff of the United States, who is visiting the country. He asked me, "Aren't you worried that once Israel has peace it will become a boring country?" Ladies and gentleman, it is that boredom that we are looking for! But I am not worried. I believe that Jewish life carries within it the greatest drama for the foreseeable future, because of the ingathering of exiles, because of Jews from Russia, from North America, and South America coming here, comparing notes, trying to create a new society.

We will continue to need the support of the Jews throughout the free world, for without you we are alone in the world, alone because of our tradition and faith, our historic commitment. We are a community of the Jewish people, a Hebrew-speaking nation, the only Jewish state in the world.

There are many variations within Judaism, but we all share a sense of togetherness, an acceptance of responsibility to our forefathers and to the efforts made by so many past generations of Jews. There is great hope in our hearts that we can again become a contributing people, a people of spiritual endeavor, of great beliefs and goals, a people which finds its esthetics in the moral realm. But this will be possible only if we remain strong spiritually, politically, economically and militarily. These are tremendous goals toward which we must all work as hard as we can—you, and we, together.

The Role of Halakhah in Our Time

Rabbi Bent Melchior

Our chairman this morning related the problem of Jewish law to the need to understand the *halakhah*. I think he is right, and to some extent this has been one of the underlying principles of the public discussions in which I have been involved during the last few years. In these discussions I have received encouragement and warm support from the honorary officers of the World Council of Synagogues. For this I owe them gratitude beyond what my words can express. It has meant a great deal to me personally, as well as to the cause for which I have been the spokesman.

Looking around the world of today, being aware of such vital problems as the security of the state of Israel, the spiritual danger of Jews in the Western world, and the physical danger of our brothers in Eastern Europe, the problem that we are going to discuss this morning might seem to be minor. It is, however, with good reason placed on our agenda for serious deliberation, for it is perhaps as vital for the survival of Judaism in the long run as any of the other questions we will discuss during our convention. It is our duty to investigate and try to find answers to all the questions facing us, to ensure that not only the Jews but also Judaism will exist in generations to come.

To my way of thinking, *halakhah* provides us with the means of finding a common way-of-life that puts its clear, distinguishing mark upon every Jew. In some respects, however, it also has the effect of making one Jew a stranger to another. The *halakhah* that unifies those who have drifted apart, also divides those who have been reunited.

During the ghetto period, a comparatively unified understanding of the *halakhah* developed. We, however, live in an age of emancipation, and at a time when the general society is more inclined toward permissiveness than toward acceptance of a set of rules characterized by numerous thou-shalts and thou-shalt-nots. Although Christianity in principle refused to accept the Jewish code of law, in practice it enforced a very distinctive mode of behavior on the people among whom we lived. Only in our century has the

division between state and religion been carried out in practice, and the basic idea of freedom been expressed as a liberal and progressive ideal.

I think, therefore, that it is necessary to stress how much freedom is dependent on law. A society that provides freedom for all people can only exist with law; it cannot exist without law. Coming from Denmark, I want to quote Soren Kierkegaard who said, "Only he is free that is bound." One may ask why many people in our age have another impression. And I believe that at least part of the reason is to be found in the fact that the concept of freedom has been misunderstood. One can be free *from* something, but one can certainly also be free *toward* something. Once freedom has been established, it is necessary to administer it with a sense of responsibility. Judaism clearly incorporates the idea of free choice—to do right and to do wrong. But these choices have consequences, and *halakhah* comes to help us make the right choice.

The abstract idea of freedom does not mean very much if this idea is not applied. If you are free to vote for any political party you want and you then stay at home on election day, there is not much content in that freedom. Applied freedom means that a man and a woman who are free to marry any unmarried person of the other sex, bind themselves and limit their freedom when they exercise their free option to marry. It means that the person who has many offers for a position must make a decision and thereby tie himself down. Once this decision has been reached, he might feel much more at ease than he did while he still had the freedom of choice!

So it is with the person who follows the law of free choice. To our Sages it has always been important that *halakhah* should have the acceptance of the people. Not only was it forbidden to issue a new law if the majority of the people were not reasonably likely to obey it, but in the view of our Sages, the law that was given to our people as a revelation at Mount Sinai also *developed* throughout the generations.

The changing circumstances of life imply that it must be possible to change our understanding of a law that had been given a particular interpretation under particular circumstances. We can easily quote many examples. The re-establishment of the Jewish state, for example, involves a move from a society that made use of a *shabbes goy*; it involves a change to a work-week of six days from a week in which a day other than *Shabbat* was available to do many things forbidden on the Sabbath. "Hapoel" of Copenhagen has a right to demand that all its football matches against teams of the Danish Football Association should take place on days that are not *Shabbat* or any Jewish holiday. A similar possibility today is not available to "Hapoel" of Jerusalem. We have also witnessed tremendous mobility in our age, and in many places we see people moving far away from the Jewish centers, so that they cannot participate in services on *Shabbat* without using some form of transportation.

Many of my friends here might expect me, coming from Copenhagen, Denmark, to say something about the problems facing a Jew in a society that seems to be permissive with respect to certain sexual practices. Well, I can tell you that the reality is not as bad as the rumor. My personal opinion is that sexual morals are as good (or bad) in Denmark as in most other countries I know of.

But it is true that the general approach to a number of problems has changed. Let us look at the area of *taharat hamishpahah*, the relationships between husband and wife, as defined within the halakhic framework. These laws have been and, to my mind, still are of great importance to the ethics and health of our people. But these laws can be expressed in our days in a different manner, without violating anything of the actual *halakhah*. We must recognize that our world is different from the world of our grandparents; and it does not take much imagination to realize that our grandchildren will live in yet another world. If we cannot reinterpret the *halakhah* in the light of new situations, we may find that the entire body of law, inclusive of that part which goes back to the Torah itself, will be discarded by the great majority of our people.

Two thousand years of Jewish life have been built on *halakhah*, and it has been adapted to changes throughout the generations, thanks to great thinkers who have lived during those periods of change. The greatness of *halakhah* is reflected in the fact that it has been meaningful to all these generations. Our classical ideas do not change, and they prove

their worth through their still having a message to give each new generation. There is no reason to believe that all of a sudden, in our generation, the validity of *halakhah* should be abandoned.

It is true that social change has accelerated rapidly in our age. But this is a difference in degree, not in kind. And it only places a higher degree of responsibility upon our learned rabbis, to interpret the law in the light of the current situation.

It is also true, however, that it is the nature of law to be conservative. The law-maker normally does not predict the future. He is more inclined to wait and see whether a development is permanent, or only temporary. And then, after some time, he adjusts the law to the permanent development. This is especially true where we speak of law in a modern context. That makes the man-in-the-street very impatient with the law-maker; for changes accelerate, and the law-maker or interpreter is hesitant and slow. I believe that is what we experience in our time.

That is why the greatest social system of all time, the Jewish legal tradition, sometimes gives the appearance of being anti-social. I must admit that I have no answer to this problem; there is no easy answer. But I believe that the problem of *Shabbat*, and other problems within the socio-religious framework of Israel, are of greater concern to our generation than certain cases of individuals that are given extensive press coverage.

Let us, for a moment, look into the question of conversion. Our Sages have provided us with rules and regulations to be followed for conversion. I have therefore allowed myself to criticize a resolution that was issued by the World Council of Synagogues earlier this year on the question of conversion. To my mind it is necessary to give words a certain meaning. If a couple comes to me to get married, I have to follow a certain set of rules. Whether you regard me as being representative of the secular state, or of Judaism, the validity of the act of marriage depends on my following the regulations, and not on whether the two love each other. No system of law can do without forms and without formulas in the area of personal status.

It is, therefore, certainly not in keeping with the established stand of the World Council of Synagogues on *halakhah* that, on the question of conversion, we join forces with the Reform movement which does not accept the *halakhah* on this point.

I am aware that there are rabbis who will not recognize our conversions even where the *halakhah* has been followed in every respect. It is, however, dangerous to put the blame for that on the *halakhah*. It is a serious mistake on the part of those rabbis who do refuse to accept such conversions, and I want to stress that it does not apply to all rabbis of the Orthodox camp.

If, one day, I will publish my experiences in this connection, you will find it difficult to believe what immoral actions have been taken by some leaders of our people who should act as an example to all of us. However, let us not blame *halakhah* for this either. Rather, let us put the blame on those persons who were mistaken in their actions.

Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai said that the Temple was destroyed because that generation concentrated too much on the letter of the law and thereby forgot the spirit of the law. I am afraid that in some sense this can also be said about our generation. It bothers me particularly when we speak about the relationship between man and man, Jew and Gentile alike. Some of the *halakhot* taught in our yeshivot have their roots in ages filled with religious hatred. They are clearly against all that the eternal Torah and our own prophets have taught us about relationships with our fellow-man: that we should love our neighbor as ourselves. I come from a country where an open relationship exists between Jew and Gentile, where the Jewish community owes its physical survival to the non-Jewish population. (I should add that the non-Jewish population does not want to be reminded of the actions of the past; it is typical that for them this was a question of a person saving his neighbor.) Under these circumstances we can no longer teach a series of laws that tell us that Jews are supermen. We can teach the idea of the Chosen People; that is a fact of history. But this does not mean that the Jews of our time are in any way better or worse than anyone else. The sensitive, open relationship between man and man must be fundamental to the approach of all *halakhot*.

I do not think that the lack of respect for one's neighbor is more dominant in religious than in non-religious circles. The so-called liberal mind is as narrow and as intolerant as

that of any orthodox believer. The liberal becomes as upset when he meets opposition as does the traditionalist, but somehow the liberal demonstrates his lack of tolerance in a different way. Part of his philosophy reflects the idea that it does not matter what you do. Therefore the liberal seems to be easier-going, whereas the religious person with his active principles is a difficult customer.

I am proud to say that in my country a certain amount of respect has developed for the Jew who follows *halakhah*. No Jewish organization will lend its name to activities that violate Jewish law and custom. Gentile organizations will take any steps necessary to see that Jewish guests can observe Jewish law. I have often found myself in the embarrassing position where, at official state dinners, I and a few others were served kosher food, whereas the official guests from Israel ate everything. On occasion, programs have been designed for a touring sports group or cultural delegation from Israel so that *Shabbat* and *kashrut* could be observed. But the visitors have protested and insisted on violating the law of our people.

We find in Israel a form of Jewish life that I regard as most dangerous to the future of our people. You are either "in," or you are "out." You wear a *kipa*, and you are in; you don't wear a *kipa*, and you are out. We are, with some justification, worried about the possibility of a sharp division between Jews inside and outside Israel. We should be as worried about the division between the religious and what I would call the less-religious Jews right here in Israel.

In talmudic times, our Rabbis operated with a *hezkat kashrut* that applied to human relationships; that is, if you met someone, you regarded him as all right until the opposite was proved. Nowadays the stranger has a *hezkat tarfut*; he no longer has the benefit of the doubt, but is regarded as a sinner until the opposite is proved. And who can prove that he is not a sinner?

In this world, only certain outward signs seem to count—the *kipa*, *shtreimel*, various movements during prayers, and signatures on resolutions. The spirit of the law does not count.

If *halakhah* is to preserve its central place in our generation and the generation of our children, we must in practice restore the understanding that it is a wonderful code of behavior with strong social and moral implications, that speaks as much to the world of today and tomorrow as it spoke to the world of yesterday.

Professor Ernst Simon

Let us begin with a definition of *halakhah*. To my mind, *halakhah* is a method by which to arrive at and sustain a religiously based, socially effective, and personally acceptable, traditional Jewish way of life. The main characteristics of this way of life are:

1) No sphere of life is excluded, as, for instance, sex is in the total asceticism of monks and nuns.

2) No sphere of life is accepted completely as given, as, for instance, total hedonism which is governed by the principle of lust alone. But all spheres of life are shaped by the religious-ethical principle of deliberate choice between permitted and forbidden ways, to the satisfaction of man's natural drives.

3) This system of partial asceticism is total, comprising the satisfaction of hunger and thirst and of the sexual drive, recognizing the necessity of economic acquisition, of political competition, and even of military struggle. It is a total system but not a totalitarian one, because there is no unassailable arbiter at its head. Nor should there be an ecclesiastic or political body which tries to enforce it—not even the State of Israel.

There are several main instruments to maintain this way of life and to keep it effective within an ever-changing society, as well as bearable for the individual. The first instrument is an ongoing discussion of topical interpretations of an unchangeable basis, that is, the application of the Torah to ever-changing environments. Every Jew with a necessary minimum of knowledge of the Hebrew sources of *halakhah* is welcome to join this discussion, whether he be an ordained rabbi or an educated layman.

The second instrument to keep *halakhah* effective is a decision-making process comprised of three main forces: one, a competent body voting by majority; and two, a codex composed by an outstanding scholar (as, for instance, Maimonides, Rabbi Josef Caro, etc.). The third main force is the right of a qualified court to make new *takanot*, i.e. special or general provisions, the first of which are to be found as early as in the Mishna. The vast body of *she'elot* and *t'shuvot* (queries and answers), now for the first time systematically collected and studied in a special research institute at the Hebrew University, under the direction of Prof. M. Elon, yields important new material for the revitalization of *halakhah*—understood as a continuous law-giving process, rather than as a petrified and unchangeable situation.

The character of halakhic decisions is such that they are never final, even if the people who make them deem them to be so. There is no final station to the ways of Jewish law and life. All of them are merely milestones on our endless path. Both the halakhically acknowledged procedure of reopening a seemingly closed question, and the established fact that the greatest codes of Jewish laws have yielded the most voluminous and most important commentaries, bear sufficient testimony to the relatively transitory character of halakhic decisions.

Let us examine three of Rabbi Melchior's illustrations in the light of *halakhah* and in the shadow of our present religious situation. Our speaker talked, *inter alia*, of *mamzerim*, of proselytes, and of some prevailing attitudes toward the commandment to love our neighbor, either Jew or Gentile.

Rabbi Melchior thinks that the problem of the Sabbath is more essential today than certain individual cases of *mamzerut*. I am not so sure, because *Shabbat* is, in practice, voluntarily observed. But the laws of *mamzerut* exclude innocent people from the Jewish fold by the force of *halakhah*, because of something done by one of their parents. There is a *midrash* regarding *mamzerim* that relates that these unhappy people cry out to God: "My father may have sinned, but what did I do?" And the *midrash* continues that because God cannot help them in this world, He answers, "I will help them in the world-to-come."¹ I beg to differ from this last conclusion. We have to help them in this world, as Rabbi Goren has begun to do.

I once had a discussion with Rabbi Unterman, who invited to his home a group of so-called religious people and a group of so-called less religious people. (I belong to the latter group.) I raised the question of *mamzerut*, and said, "Rabbi, you have one clear choice. You can be in favor of *aliyah* from Soviet Russia, as all of us are; or you can judge harshly in the question of *mamzerim*, as you do." (I put this alternative because the halakhic status of some Russian Jews may be open to question.) There is great difficulty in finding an in-between position, although perhaps Rabbi Goren will succeed in doing so.

In any event, *mamzerut* is a question of no less public Jewish interest today than is the Sabbath, which is very dear to my heart. This question should not be viewed as affecting only a few, or just one individual, *nefesh ahat*. *Nefesh ahat*, according to a famous *mishna* in Sanhedrin (IV:5), is as important "as an entire world."

The second point concerns proselytes. I agree with Rabbi Melchior's position that we need a set of rules governing conversion. But there is one rule with which I have to disagree.

Today, a proselyte seeking conversion is asked whether he or she will keep the whole *halakhah* after becoming a Jew. Orthodox rabbis insist that he must give his answer affirmatively; he has no choice, he cannot say, "I shall try."

All people concerned, the worthy rabbis included, know that they teach the majority of the proselytes to lie at that very moment which should be decisive for them in terms of their link to Judaism. The first thing they are forced to do in order to become Jewish is to give a promise which they know, and the rabbis know, most of them cannot or will not fulfill. But "God's seal is Truth!"² That may, perhaps, serve as an overruling principle of many *halakhot*.

Moreover, I am sorry to say that the majority of Jews today, and the majority of us assembled here, do not observe *halakhah* totally. Most of us—and I include myself—observe the *halakhah* as far as we can, and many far less. How can we ask people who were not born as Jews to do what born-Jews are not willing to do? Is there a double

standard, a difference between a Jew who from birth or before stood at Mount Sinai, and a man who has just come to us? Most proselytes want to join the majority of the Jewish people, which is not Orthodox. Yet they are forced to express themselves as if they wish to join the Orthodox minority. I cannot agree to this set of rules or to this practice. Hopefully, some proselytes will join this minority. Blessed may they be. But they should not be forced to do so.

The third proposition presented by Rabbi Melchior was, in essence, an understanding of the verses of the Bible, "You shall love your neighbors as yourself; I am the Lord."³ Rabbi Melchior complained of the rather negative way in which inter-group relations are taught in many, if not all, yeshivot.

I have studied this point rather carefully, have lectured on it at a gathering of Jewish scholars sponsored by Bar-Ilan University, and a paper of mine on this subject is to appear shortly. I must say that I am afraid that the teachers at the yeshivot really teach according to the *halakhah* in this respect. In reviewing a good many of the *poskim* (authoritative decision-makers), I have still to find even one who said that the critical word in question, *reah*, "neighbor," refers to a non-Jew. From Rambam through S'mag,⁴ and Sefer HaHinukh,⁵ and till the Talmudic Encyclopedia of our own day, *ahavat hare'ah*, love of one's neighbor, is treated as identical with *ahavat yisrael*, love of one's fellow-Jew.

True, there are some halakhists, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, and in Central or Western Europe, like the Malbim, or Yaakov Zvi Meklenburg, or David Hoffmann, who differ—when they are not thinking within a halakhic context, but just as commentators. But within the logic of halakhic context, even these men do not seem to understand the neighbor as referring to a non-Jew too.

This brings me to my last point. I share the opinion of Rabbi Melchior that the *halakhah* is indispensable. But I also share the view of Rabbi Solomon Schechter, of Dr. Abraham J. Heschel, and of my friend Prof. Uri Tal, who argue the necessity of *aggadah*. *Halakhah* is indispensable for every authentic Jew, but it is not identical with the whole of Torah and Judaism. And here I will present the testimony of a prominent Orthodox rabbi, a disciple of Rabbi Soloveitchik, Walter S. Wurzbarger, who, two years ago, published an article about the "covenantal commandments" which derive from the covenant between the people of Israel and God, imperatives which affect Israel and all mankind.

Halakhah is comprised not only of the content of the commandments, but of God's presence which preceded them. We must seek to live in God's presence—that is the underlying meaning of fulfilling the commandments. But beyond them, it is God's living presence that should guide us in questions on which the *halakhah* is silent. Let me give you one or two topical examples of what I mean.

The first involves the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron. For years we have had a working compromise there, with certain hours and areas set aside for the Moslems, and certain hours and areas for us. Some weeks ago, this working compromise was changed in favor of the Jews. I don't know of any religious commandment that we have to pray in a special place, on certain steps leading to the innermost cave of the Tomb of the Patriarchs. But even if there were such a commandment, would there not be a moral need to guide our actions today, not only by *halakhah*, but by the presence of God who, as the Creator of the world, created many non-Jews too—and I don't think that He was absent-minded at that very moment. I just cannot believe in the one God as the Creator of the world, without believing that there must be commandments governing relations between me as a Jew, and non-Jews. That may have been the meaning of Hillel, when he interpreted the positive commandment in a negative way: "Don't do to your neighbor what you do not wish to be done to you."⁶ I think that if our religious or military-political authorities had learned from Hillel, they would not have made this new arrangement.

A second example involves the loyal Christian Arabs of Baram and Ikrit, who have been denied return to their villages in the northern Galilee for more than 24 years. Do we wish to be treated as they are treated? Yes or no? If not, let us treat them according to Hillel's teaching.

In conclusion, may I quote the prayer we recite as we return the Torah scroll to the Ark in the synagogue: "O Lord, turn us back to You, and we shall return; renew our days as of old." May I dare to ask: Really as of old? With a Temple? With sacrifices? In reply, allow

me to attempt a Conservative paraphrase: O Lord, renew our days now; help us to renew them with understanding and sensitivity, as they were renewed in the days of old!

Notes

- (1) Kohelet Rabbah on Eccl. 4:1, and parallels.
- (2) Babli, Sabbath 51a; cf. Jerushalmi, Sanhedrin I,1,18a,b.
- (3) Lev. 19:18.
- (4) *Sefer Mitzvot Gadol* (The Great Book of Commandments), written by R. Moshe ben Yaakov of Coucy, about 1250.
- (5) The Book of Education, considered to have been written by R. Aaron haLevi of Barcelona, about 1300.
- (6) Babli, Sabbath 31a.

Dr. Pinchas Peli

Permit me to start with a *d'var Torah*: The Mishna says that a baby, while an embryo in its mother's womb, is taught the entire Torah. And just when he is ready to come into this world, an angel comes and gives him a "*shnedel*," a "clop" under his nose, that makes him forget all that he learned. And that is why, according to Jewish folklore, we have a fold between our nose and our mouth.

A disciple of Reb Haim of Zanz asked why so much effort was invested in teaching a baby in its mother's womb all the Torah if he then has to forget it upon birth. And Reb Haim of Zanz, the hasidic master, answered that question with a parable:

A king travelled to a forest, and heard from afar beautiful melodies being played by an orchestra. It was so enchanting that he decided to follow the music. He ran after it for a day, a night, and yet another day. But when he travelled to the South, the melody came from the North; and when he turned to the East, it came from the West. He heard it from all sides, but he could not reach it.

Several days later, tired and disappointed, he returned to his palace. But the melody continued to ring in his ears and in his heart. The king summoned to his palace all the great musicians in the country, and made them play every melody in their repertoire. They played the most beautiful melodies, but could not duplicate the melody that the king heard in the forest. He summoned musicians from all over the world, and they played the most exquisite music for him. He listened and enjoyed it, but each time he said, "It is not the same music that I heard in the forest."

Then Reb Haim of Zanz said to his disciple: "We are taught the Torah before we are born for one reason; that for the rest of our lives, whatever we learn, we should always remember that there is a complete Torah to which we aspire, but which we cannot reach."

Every one of us has a certain concept of *halakhah*. It may derive from scholarly study, from a *Zayde* or *Bubbe*, or from parents. We have heard some beautiful and very erudite definitions of the nature of *halakhah* from Professor Simon. He mentioned the tie between *halakhah* and *aggadah*. The Torah does not give us laws alone; it gives us the explanation and background for those laws. Bialik, the great Hebrew poet, wrote a beautiful essay in which he says that the relationship between *halakhah* and *aggadah* is like the relationship between the flower and the fruit on a tree. My teacher, Professor Heschel, said that Torah contains both law and love. Law is what holds the world together, and love is what brings the world together.

Now, in response to Rabbi Melchior's remarks, I would like to discuss the reality of *halakhah* in given situations in Israel. In Israel, and often outside it as well, we have limited the definition of *halakhah*. We see only one side of it, and very often we abuse it. We know that when the legalism of *halakhah* is separated from its spirit, it can be distorted, and lead us to the very opposite of what it seeks to accomplish. Unfortunately, we have witnessed, in recent years in Israel, *halakhah's* loss of touch with life, with pain, with human suffering.

Professor Heschel talks about "pan-halakhism," about idolizing *halakhah*. In Israel,

those who make *halakhah* a password of religion are involved in a certain idolization. One must not forget, as Heschel says, that the law does not exist for its own sake, but for the sake of God. Often, those who represent *halakhah* in this country and in certain circles outside Israel misrepresent it in ways which make one wonder whether we are not sinning against *halakhah* in the name of *halakhah*. For according to all the definitions given, *halakhah* is a dynamic process, a translation into human action of the will of God. It has built within its system all the components of compassion, of love and understanding, that God wants us to have.

There are many halakhic rules, even *lifnim mishurat hadin*, which make halakhic Judaism a living way of life. A rule such as *mifnei darkei shalom* enables us to abrogate *halakhah* at times, in order to bring peace into the world. And as Professor Greenberg has pointed out, *mifnei derakheha darkhei no'am*—the ways of the Torah are ways of sweetness—has become a rule that at times abrogates *halakhah*. Our Rabbis went so far as to say in *Masekhet Berakhot*: "The specter of a human being, the specter of human life, is so great that it even cancels out a commandment which is written clearly in the Torah."

Yesterday my teacher and dear friend, Rabbi Simon Greenberg, and several other speakers, congratulated Rabbi Goren for his courageous decision in solving the problem of *mamzerim*. I am afraid that I cannot share their joy on this occasion. This "Festival of Mamzerim," as it is called today in one of the newspapers, is not a festival in which I participate. If one follows the events leading up to Rabbi Goren's decision, I don't know if, in simple arithmetic, there has been a great gain. What did Rabbi Goren do? He took one Jew and declared him a *goy*, and took two Jews and declared them married. A brother and a sister were able to marry because their mother's first husband was declared to be a non-Jew. This was the basis of which Rabbi Goren solved a problem which caused so much human suffering. I am not sure if we won or lost as a result.

It's not enough to say that we praise Rabbi Goren for his decision within *halakhah*. It is not even enough to say: Let those people who do not want to accept *halakhah* have the right to marry as they wish. We have to present a different picture of what *halakhah* is. In Israel today, with the cooperation of Rabbi Goren, the Chief Rabbinate and the political parties, the ultra-Orthodox, those for whom *halakhah* became petrified at one point, have come to a political agreement with complete secularists, in order to impose a *halakhah* which is strange to the latter. If there is a crucial problem within *halakhah*, it is not that of *mamzerim*, but of presenting a choice to the people. We must say clearly that those who now represent *halakhah* do not really represent it. The choice is not between the secularists and the Orthodox. There is another and, to our mind, true approach to Jewish law: a *halakhah* which is flexible, as scholars can prove in open debate. I want to accept *halakhah* which is livable; I do not want to argue for a way out of it.

The late Professor Boaz Cohen, who taught at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, was a scholar who wrote extensively on *halakhah*. I would like to quote what he said about the extent to which Conservative Judaism is bound to *halakhah*: "As I understand it, Conservative Judaism is dedicated to the proposition that Jewish law, as embodied in the sacred scriptures interpreted in the Talmud and elaborated in the subsequent halakhic writings, is binding upon every Jew."

My friends, *halakhah* is more than the question of *mamzerim*. And if there is a contribution that the Conservative movement can make to *halakhah* in this country, it is not by fighting the cause of the *mamzerim*, but by studying what *halakhah* can offer to Israeli society in such areas as town planning, community responsibility, or pollution—all topics which have been dealt with in the past, within *halakhah*. Do you know that *halakhah* says that if a person separates himself from the community and does not share community responsibility, the laws of mourning do not hold for him? Even his own relatives do not have to sit *shivah* for him.

Corruption, to my deep regret, is a very important problem in Israeli society. But there has been no word heard from the rabbis of Israel about corruption.

Women's liberation, problems of labor and management, old-age, poverty, the sacredness of human life, political problems such as Hebron, and Ikrit and Baram, are all questions on which *halakhah* can be brought to bear. Of course, on each of these problems there is more than one halakhic view. For instance, I personally would claim the same

halakhah to prove the opposite of what Professor Simon argues regarding our presence in the Tombs of the Patriarchs in Hebron. I believe the Torah gives us the right to pray in the Tombs cave where our forefathers are buried according to tradition, after we were deprived for so many years of the right of even stepping into it.

The important thing is to approach such questions from a religious point of view, which is not done in Israel.

What we have now is, on the one hand, people who are over-pious, self-righteous, know exactly what is right, and label every Jew *a priori*, as Rabbi Melchior pointed out, "religious," or "not religious," according to external signs. And on the other hand we find secularists who are still bound to their ideologies, but are ready to give some concessions to the Jewish minority, as represented by Orthodox Jewry. The fact is that in Israel we have a large silent majority of people who would like to live according to *halakhah*, if it were presented to them in its true colors.

We are waiting for an approach to *halakhah* which will include the fifth part of the *shulhan arukh*. You know that the *shulhan arukh* is divided into four parts: *Orah Hayyim*, *Yoreh De'ah*, *Even ha-Ezer* and *Hoshen Mishpat*, each section dealing with another area of Jewish law. The story is told about a young rabbi who came to an old scholar to get *s'mikhhah*. He was tested in each of the four parts of the code of laws, and he passed each test. But then the old scholar refused to give him *s'mikhhah*. The young man asked: "Where did I fail?" And he said: "You failed in the fifth part." "The fifth part?" he asked. "There is no such thing." "Yes," said the old scholar, "the fifth part is the unwritten section which says that you should be a *mensch*."

We lack an approach to the fifth part of Jewish law. We lack the human approach which, I think, would create alternatives and recapture the spirit of *halakhah* to which we in Israel should become more alert. The voice of the World Council of Synagogues should be heard more, but not in terms of standing at the door of the Rabbinate and begging for recognition for our rabbis to perform weddings. We should have a head-on confrontation with those who misrepresent *halakhah*. If we can bring this about, I think we will have accomplished something in Israeli life, and in Jewish life in general.

DISCUSSION

Questions: Why was it not mentioned that the principle of *vehai bahem*, and you shall live by them (the laws), is a good way to justify the new approach to *halakhah*? Why are personal rights, for example in the case of the *mamzerim*, open to review after a period of several thousand years, while property rights, such as the purchase of the Ma'arat Hamachpelah 3,000 years ago, are not subject to halakhic change? Why is it permitted to use Arab workers here in Israel for economic reasons, and not for the purpose of working as a "Shabbes goy"?

Rabbi Melchior; While it is true that many Jewish communities in the Diaspora have made use of the "Shabbes goy," who heated their apartments and lit fires so that the *Shabbat* should be a day of warmth and light, we now find ourselves in a new situation. I think that even in the Diaspora we are embarrassed to ask the Gentile to do some of our work on *Shabbat*. Thank God we have found modern methods enabling us to eliminate the "Shabbes goy."

I think that while *vehai bahem* may not have been quoted here, the principle of *halakhah* being a code to live by has been clearly indicated by all three speakers this morning.

Together with Dr. Peli, I am not at ease with the halakhic decision that was made in the *mamzerut* case, for it does not solve the moral problem involved. That problem, however, is one that we ourselves create to some extent, so that it is not as much a problem of society as are the problems of *Shabbat*.

I should like to discuss further Professor Simon's remarks regarding relations to non-Jews and to converts. The word *re'ah* is used not only in the verse "and you shall love your neighbor (*re'ah*) as yourself," but also in the verses where the Jewish people ask the *re'ah* for their property before they leave Egypt. Here, the reference is clearly to non-Jews. There is also a law which tells us to love the *ger*. Now I know that some halakhic

sources tell us that the *ger* is a convert, but the children of Israel were also called *ger* in the land of Egypt, and we were not converts to the Egyptian religion. Thus we have a halakhic basis to interpret *re'ah* and *ger* as a stranger-to-the-group, whom we should love.

I should also like to comment on the question which is put to the convert regarding observance of *halakhah*. Why is this hard to answer? Of course I am interested in truth, but you can't ask a person if he will obey the law "as far as he has learned it," or "as far as he is capable." You must ask a simple question: will you observe the law? And get a simple answer: yes, or no.

We should realize that a person who asks to join the Jewish people, has no good reason to do so other than to observe Jewish law. If he wants to be only a national Jew, he should go to the nearest Israel Embassy. To become a Jew entails an obligation, and if we take away that obligation, to my mind we make a mockery of the idea of conversion. Thus I feel that I can truthfully ask a convert if he will observe *halakhah*; and I think, from my experience, that they have answered truthfully.

Dr. Peli: Let me merely clarify that I did not discuss the question of property rights to Ma'arat Hamachpelah, but rather the right of Jews to pray there, as they always did until the Arabs stopped them.

Rabbi Greenberg: I should like to expand briefly upon my view that Rabbi Goren's decision has solved the problem of *mamzerut* in Jewish life. I think that his decision is an example of using a halakhic method to introduce an aggadic principle. There will be some who will complain, but now that a halakhic principle has been found for this case, nobody in the future will have any difficulty in finding a halakhic principle to abolish *mamzerut*.

The Jewish Community in Scandinavia

Rabbi Morton H. Narowe

Externally and even internally, developments within our Jewish communities reflect the complex trends guiding the general Scandinavian society. Not unexpectedly, the present negative economic situation in our countries has hurt the various Jewish communities; it even affects the ability of members to pay the dues set by the communities. You may remember that I told this convention several years ago that our dues are established in proportion to one's income. In Stockholm, all members pay 2.4 percent of their annual income before taxes; in Malmo the dues exceed 4 percent. And remember that our direct taxation is likely the highest in the world—even higher than Israel's—not to speak of heavy indirect taxation as well. I should also add that the Swedish government provides the Jewish community with its official records, so that we know everyone's tax income!

During the past few years, as a result of the economic situation, many members have applied for a dues reduction, and we have also lost some members. However, most of these are "fringe" Jews who belong to the community out of what they call "filial piety and loyalty to parental traditions." Thus their departure does not affect the voluntary work which still continues; but the loss of income has curtailed some of the services to the Jewish population, at least in Stockholm. And I believe that the same is true throughout Scandinavia.

Another aspect of our contemporary crisis is that we, like the United States and Western Europe, have an overabundance of academically trained men and women. Many college graduates leave to seek work elsewhere; others have returned to school while waiting for the crisis to pass. But this lack of work has had one indirect positive effect on the Jewish community in Stockholm. Some university graduates are currently considering

careers in Jewish professions, and have turned to the local communities for financial assistance, so that they may study and be trained outside Scandinavia, usually in Israel.

A few years ago I reported to this convention that our professional leadership was aging, and that we had little hope of replacing it with local talent. But now we in Stockholm have selected an outstanding young man to be our new community executive as of next July. In the spring he will be sent to the United States and to Israel, to familiarize himself with techniques employed in various communities and congregations. I will ask him to contact the World Council of Synagogues, and I hope that the ties between us will be strengthened.

Several young men have expressed interest in teaching careers, combining work in our one-day-a-week religious school and in our all-day Hillel School. At present we, like most other small communities, have Jewish Agency-sponsored Israelis teaching in our communities for three or four years. But we look forward to replacing them with Swedish-speaking, Swedish-trained young teachers who know the way of thinking and attitudes of our society.

We even employ a 21-year-old Jewish Community Center worker—something we never dreamed of, for in the past we were compelled to use non-Jews as Center leaders! In addition, Copenhagen has several young people studying in Jerusalem yeshivot; this is a good sign for our future.

The only dark spot on the Jewish community scene is our disappointment with Camp Ramah. Previously we sent three or four youngsters and a leader to the *mador* program in a Ramah camp in the United States. Unfortunately, our candidates were not able to go this year, and our educational camp outside of Stockholm has suffered somewhat.

What I have optimistically described is the situation in Gothenburg, Copenhagen and Stockholm. Unfortunately, the smaller communities in Finland and Norway have no professional leadership at present. And I regret to say that it appears that they are in the slow process of disappearing. In addition, *aliyah* is growing throughout Scandinavia; indeed, it is possible that, percentage-wise, Finland (Helsinki and a small community in Turku) and Stockholm may have the highest *aliyah* rate in the world at this time.

The smaller communities have no possibility of replacing the people who are going on *aliyah*, so that between assimilation and *aliyah*, they have no future. Stockholm and Copenhagen will survive, but we too are losing our best men and women. While both communities have been successful in activating new leadership in their forties and fifties, we will face a crisis in ten years, when we will be without lay leadership in these age categories.

In other words, as I stand here, my heart is torn. I want to encourage *aliyah*, and at the same time I know the effect it will have upon us and upon smaller communities.

I want to conclude this brief report with a general observation which I think will be of interest. The Swedish parliament will shortly vote on the separation of church and state, and on new family laws. At present it is legally unsatisfactory but economically advantageous not to marry. But when the new laws are passed, living together out of wedlock will enjoy exactly the same legal status as marriage. In one way the new legislation is insignificant, since most Jewish couples do find their way to the *huppah* after living together for a year or so. What upsets me is that the law sanctions and supports the hedonism of the present situation.

Never before have we had so many children born to unwed mothers, and among them some are Jewish. Of the total births in Sweden in 1971 (114,484), 22 percent (22,655) were registered out of wedlock, even with abortion a readily available alternative. Today, women's liberation in Sweden insists that women have the right to be mothers; but many of these unwed mothers cannot care for their children, and have no realistic idea of parenthood. It is often too late when girls discover that a baby is much more bother than a dog. . . . And so the children suffer.

For the record, let me add that in 1971, 38,452 marriages took place in Sweden. That's the lowest figure ever recorded, and this at a time when the number of young people in their twenties is very large, because of the postwar baby boom. Divorces numbered 12,807, about one-third of the number of marriages.

Our Jewish community has never discussed the situation, but we have *done* something

which is more important. We have accepted the children of unwed mothers and the children of mixed marriages in our schools. Just as our public schools try to teach tolerance for different religious beliefs and for various patterns of living, we have tried to do the same within the Jewish community. And, like society as a whole, we have had greater success with our younger people than with their parents. Nevertheless, it is emotionally demanding for both unwed and non-Jewish parents to approach a Jewish community and present their children to us for Jewish training.

At present this is a Swedish and Danish problem. I hope that you in other lands will be spared this conflict between two Jewish values—intolerance of sexual immorality, and acceptance of the principle that “a Jew or Jewess who has sinned is still a Jew” and thus remains a member of our family.

Report From India

Solomon Ashtamkar

It is my great privilege to bring to you the greetings of the Jewish community of India, in my capacity as director of the United Synagogue of India, which is the only federation of synagogues active in my country today. Our association with the World Council of Synagogues for the last twelve years has been very fruitful. We were able to organize and consolidate religious life in a number of villages, with the assistance of the World Council and the United Synagogue of America. Several congregations in the United States helped us in our cultural activities by donating a large number of books of Jewish interest.

The United Synagogue of India conducts eleven Hebrew classes, and provides religious education for some 500 poor children in Bombay and in various villages. However, a number of our congregations no longer function, due to the migration of their members to Israel. We have been able to use our good offices with the World Council of Synagogues on behalf of the Bnei Israel congregations settled in Israel.

We will be holding our own convention shortly, and anticipate that several additional synagogues will join our ranks. I am sure that spiritual problems discussed at this convention in Jerusalem will assist the Jewish community of India in dealing with its own problems.

The New Jewish Community in France

Georges Levitte

As I looked through the proceedings of former conventions, I noted that at the last two conventions I spoke about youth. Now I am wondering if that was not an error. Perhaps I devoted too much time to youth, not because youth is not extremely important, but because devoting time to youth as a category is to put youth inside a ghetto. The community is not a place where you have youth on one side, old people on the other; rich people on one side, poor people on the other; Ashkenazim on one side, and North Africans somewhere else. A community is all these together.

Let us go back five years, to the hectic days of May 1967. Our Jews who were on the fringe and often lacking any Jewish feeling, suddenly felt that there was something Jewish in them. Now, five years later, this individual feeling is dwindling. But in some way these Jews are aware that the shock of discovering something Jewish inside themselves was not an individual feeling, but that it was a general awakening shared with all other Jews.

And suddenly the question now arises: What is the meaning of being Jewish in a non-Jewish country, in France, together with other people who are Jewish only by right of birth? What does it really mean to reconstruct, perhaps to re-invent, a community within an open society? Right now we have organizations. Even our synagogues, after all, are organizations. Now an organization is definable: you have to have a good management; you have people who give and people who receive. Some people give money; some people receive money. Some people give knowledge; some people receive knowledge. Some people pray; and some people say Amen.

But a community is more difficult to define. Traditionally, what was a community? It was the place where Jews came together. But first one must find or create Jews, increase Jewish consciousness inside Jewish souls. Then one must create a meaningful community, in which one can sustain inter-personal relations between Jews of all categories—parents with children and children with parents; knowledgeable people with *am-haratzim*; and also, perhaps, religious with less-religious people—all within one community. It is all the more important at this time, when we are under so many pressures, to find a place where we can live a human life; and what is a human life if not a Jewish life? Thus, our first problem is to take our organizations and our “public” and make of them a community.

The second problem to which I think we have to dedicate a lot of research and thinking is how, 28 years from now, we shall enter the 21st century. We Diaspora Jews recognize the tremendous values of Israel, but we feel slightly guilty in not knowing the positive values of the Diaspora. Our communities will not be vital communities if they live only by reference to something else.

In the next few years we shall have to clarify this question for ourselves. Either there are no positive values in a Diaspora community, in which case, let's say it, put all our efforts into *aliyah*, and let our communities in Western Europe die. Or, there are positive values in Diaspora communities—which I believe. In that case, let us try together to find and formulate them. I think that the World Council of Synagogues has a tremendous role to play in this search, even if you have no organizations in our country. You have a tremendous role to play because you have the best Jewish thinkers in the world, who can seek to formulate what a Jewish community in the Diaspora should be, and what its positive values are. In advance, I thank you for all that you will contribute.

That we have the opportunity of dealing with the problem of a French-Jewish community is the result of the relatively recent influx of North African Jewry, which has once again made France the leading center of Jewish life on the continent. For there are now over 500,000 Jews in France, only 25 percent of whom have been in the country since before World War II. (There were 300,000 Jews in France before the war; only 120,000 remained after the Nazi period.)

Some 120,000 Jews arrived from Eastern Europe after the Second World War; and then, from 1954 on, 250,000 North African Jews arrived, 100,000 of them within a very few days in June and July, 1962.

Now French Jewry is half Ashkenazi, and half North African, with a few Sephardim from Eastern Mediterranean countries. When “old” Frenchmen speak about North Africans, we tend to consider them as a homogenous population, but in reality they are quite diverse. Some who are legally Frenchmen, e.g. the Algerians, were educated in French universities; some came from little villages where they lived much as the Arabs did. Tunisians and Moroccans are not French citizens, and therefore they have difficulties in finding work.

When over 100,000 Jews arrived *en masse* just ten years ago, we faced a great crisis. I think this was the first time in Jewish history that such a large migration of Jews took place for reasons that had nothing to do with Jews! These Jews arrived as Frenchmen, among one million non-Jewish Frenchmen, and they were treated as the others; they were dispersed throughout France by the government. But little by little, families came together, and now half of French Jewry lives around Paris, while a large group of North Africans have settled in southern France.

Half of this population was very poor and completely incapable of adapting to modern economic society, having supported themselves by petty commerce. And what was more, they arrived with very large families. But French legislation provides very high social

security and family allocations. With ten children, you receive approximately \$250 to \$300 a month from the government before you even start earning money. And as long as your children go to school there are tax deductions and special allocations for families. Thus, very quickly, the new arrivals understood that it was better for them to keep their children in school; it brought in more money than sending them out into the market in a variety of petty jobs. Schooling, in turn, has led to greater social mobility. While poverty still exists, it is diminishing year by year. But the settlement of the non-French citizens (Tunisians, Moroccans, and some Libyans) still poses great problems for French Jewish organizations.

On the other hand, and this is the most important factor as far as Jewish life in France is concerned, the North Africans have brought into France something that we Ashkenazi Jews had completely lost. Our Jewishness has consisted of huge synagogues with first-rate *hazzanim*—and no congregation. We speak night after night about Zionism and do not go to Israel.

North African Jews, however, *live* Judaism. To them it is not important to speak about Judaism, perhaps not even to keep all the *mitzvot*. But they make Judaism part of their lives, from the moment a child is born, to the foods they eat, to marriage and keeping a Jewish home, to the moment of death and the rituals of mourning. The arrival of North African Jews brought us into contact with a quite different kind of Jewishness; it was a revelation of something that we lacked.

At the same time, the North African Jews have discovered our university courses in Judaica, our sophisticated books and way of thinking. Little by little, a new French Jewry is emerging from the living North African Jewry grafted onto a rather old Ashkenazi tree. I think we may predict that in ten years from now we may even have a *real* French Jewry, where Ashkenazi and North African will not be separated, but will be one community.

The Future of Latin American Jewry

Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer

What the Bard said many centuries ago cannot be gainsaid: "Come what come may, time and the hour runs through the roughest day." Yet, I hasten to add: In that part of the world from which I have come, the days are getting rougher all the time.

As I sat in my study in Buenos Aires preparing these remarks, I re-read what I had said at past conventions of the World Council of Synagogues in Mexico City, Geneva, London and Jerusalem. In each of my addresses I stressed the growing social, political and economic turmoil in Latin America. Today, as 1972 draws to a close, the storm of social revolution has been thoroughly unleashed. And there are millions who cry out to it, "Blow winds and crack your cheeks! Rage, blow, you cataracts and hurricanes, spout until you have drenched our steeples, drown'd the cocks!" As one reads the Jewish press, time and time again the impression is that the Jews are not safe, that anti-Semitism is innate to and inordinately powerful in the Latin American psychological structure.

Due to this superficial reportage, I hardly ever travel abroad without being asked, "How is the anti-Semitic situation in Argentina?" Let me briefly analyze the problem with you. No one can responsibly deny that there is anti-Semitism in Latin America, any more than one can deny that it exists in just about every country in the world. Bombs are thrown at synagogues in Buenos Aires—just as they are thrown at synagogues in Italy, England and the United States, indeed, wherever synagogues are located. But please bear with me if I state the obvious. Bombs are not thrown only at synagogues in Latin America. Bombs are placed in supermarkets, in American or other foreign business firms, in the private dwellings of politicians and police agents, and in secular and Catholic schools as well. It is true that certain guerrillas have kidnapped a few Jewish businessmen in

Argentina, but many more Christian businessmen have been kidnapped, and even murdered. It is perfectly legitimate for the Jewish press to be concerned with Jewish news, but I suggest that they owe it to the intelligent reader to place this news within the proper context.

Let me state my thesis directly and in no uncertain terms: While it is true that there is anti-Semitism in varying degrees on the Latin American continent, I do not in any way consider this to be the principal danger confronting the Jewish community. I charge that the principal institutions of Argentine Jewry are in spiritual and economic bankruptcy. The frightening and critical situation of Argentine Jewry—or for that matter the majority of Latin America's 800,000 Jews—is reflected in the alarming increase in assimilation and mixed marriages, and in the overwhelming apathy that has seized thousands upon thousands of young Jews.

I was bitterly attacked in the Spanish-Jewish press years ago for a statement that I made at a United Synagogue convention. More than a decade has passed, and I repeat that very same statement—if possible with more emphasis. The Synagogue is in no manner or means the central institution in Latin American Jewish life. Indeed, with but *relatively few exceptions*, the synagogue as a life-creating and spiritual force in the community has been stillborn. Most of the continent's synagogues are empty of youth. A very small percentage of Jewish boys celebrate their *bar mitzvah*. In all of Buenos Aires' fifty synagogues there were fewer than 30,000 Jews during the last High Holy Days, and the city's Jewish population is considered to be approximately 350,000. This means that about eight percent of the Jews attended services on the High Holy Days. May I quickly add that of that number, precious few were young people. Most of the synagogues auction off their *aliyot*; very few services utilize a uniform *máhor*; and a large percentage of the few Jews who do attend have no idea what is going on during the service. With the exception of a very small group of synagogues throughout the continent, no attempt has been made to modernize the service or to introduce liturgical readings in Spanish or Portuguese. More and more Jews elect to go to a resort during the High Holy Days, and a great number continue their regular economic or professional activity during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

But all this is hardly news. It's much more interesting to read of a bomb scare in a synagogue. Who wants to know that whereas there were some 17,000 students last year in Jewish high schools in Buenos Aires, this year the figure has dropped to about 13,000?

It is not particularly heartening to learn that last year the AMIA, the *kehillah* of Buenos Aires *took* one million dollars *from Israel* to help balance its educational budget. Nor is it particularly encouraging to hear that during 1972 and 1973 the Joint Distribution Committee will give it another \$600,000 to maintain the Buenos Aires Jewish schools. I submit that there is something desperately wrong in a community of 350,000 Jews when the central organizations are unable to meet their ordinary educational budget without referring to the overtaxed Israeli government or to the charity of the Joint Distribution Committee whose monies should be destined for less prosperous communities.

It is fairly obvious why the Jewish establishment has not made any in-depth statistical studies of mixed marriages. For the same obvious reasons it is impossible to read about the increased number of Jews being cremated in the Christian cemeteries in Buenos Aires.

What does the ordinary South American Jew feel about the future? The answer to this very delicate and important question depends on the country of his residence as well as on his age. If he is a young university student in Santiago (Chile), associated with Allende's Communist Party, he may well answer that the future depends directly upon the success of Allende's democratically-elected Communist regime. If he is a Jewish youngster in Paraguay, Bolivia or Ecuador, he might well say that he sees absolutely no Jewish future in his country; little or no hope that his community will have the services of a rabbi in the near future. He will speak with a sense of depression that comes with the realistic appraisal of a dying community.

The university student or thriving businessman in Sao Paulo, Brazil, will speak of the present boom in the Brazilian economy, and the active and vibrant synagogue life in the Congresao Israelita Paulista, under the leadership of its two rabbis. The pioneering

spiritual architect of this great synagogue in Sao Paulo is Dr. Fritz Pinkuss, who is with us at this convention.

Let us turn to Montevideo, Uruguay, with its 50,000 Jews. Practically all the Jews there will tell you that Uruguay, with its weak economy, is hopelessly enmeshed in a life-and-death struggle with the extreme Left. And the Argentine Jew? There is no one Argentine Jew; he is a tremendously complicated composite. You will find a young student anxiously waiting for the moment of his *aliyah*; and his colleague, who insists that Israel is a pawn in the hands of United States' fascist imperialism. This young man will probably be active as an urban guerrilla, have no connection whatsoever with the Jewish community, and be completely involved in planning the overthrow of the present Argentine regime.

Argentine Jewry is uncertain of its future—not because of anti-Semitism, but because of the inevitable consequences of future political alignments, whatever they may be, upon the community. Many are thinking of *aliyah*, but many more are planning to wait it out in the confident hope that peace, tranquility and prosperity will once again return to the country.

One must not underestimate the nervousness and anxiety that marks present-day Argentine life. Two years ago, when I spoke at this convention, I needed 350 Argentine pesos to buy one American dollar. Now I need 1,400 pesos to buy the same dollar. This year the rise of the cost-of-living index will exceed 60 percent—a rate of inflation even higher than that of Viet Nam. The list of bankruptcies in the daily newspaper gets longer each day, and insecurity is the paramount note.

It seems to me that there are only three possible avenues of expression. One, to ensure the Jewish future as well as the richness of Jewish creativity, there is not the slightest doubt in my mind that the first choice should be *aliyah*. Would that those individuals concerned with *aliyah* understand more of the problems and be more sensitive to the kaleidoscope of values involved so that they could be more efficacious. Secondly, some Jews will actively seek the road to assimilation, and will be gobbled up by the general population, leaving very little trace in a few generations. Let us hope that this second road will be chosen by few.

Finally, I feel that the greatest number of Jews will not go on *aliyah*, and will not openly choose assimilation, but will gradually be whittled away. I have already stated that my first choice is *aliyah*, and happily over a hundred families previously associated with our work in Buenos Aires have made that choice. The institutions of the World Council of Synagogues in Latin America are working seriously to guide their members toward a well-thought-out decision of *aliyah*. But as long as we remain active in Latin America we must do all in our power to assure the Jewish future on the continent for as long as it is possible.

What have we done up to now, and what do we plan to do? The Latin American office of the World Council of Synagogues opened in Buenos Aires in 1960, a year after my wife and I arrived in Argentina. One of the first projects that came to fruition was the publication of a quarterly journal in the Spanish language. Dedicated to modern Jewish thought, we have called it "Majshavot" (thoughts). "Majshavot" appears regularly and is the only journal of its kind in the Spanish language.

Next month Camp Ramah, Argentina, will open its 14th consecutive season in the province of Cordoba. Over 3,500 children have received a Ramah experience, which has indeed made an indelible imprint on many young minds and souls. These campers have come from Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil. During all this period my wife and I have worked with the most erudite exponent of classical Judaism in Latin America as well as one of the most remarkable human beings we have met, Rabbi Mordejai Edery. Together we have published and distributed thousands upon thousands of copies of the complete Jewish liturgy in bilingual editions, Hebrew and Spanish, with commentary notes and original liturgical readings: the complete *Siddur*, the Ashkenazi *Mahzor* and the Sephardic *Mahzor*. Together with the Editoria Phaidos, the leading publishing house in the Spanish language specializing in psychology and sociology, we have published some fifty titles in a series dedicated to the science and history of religions. One now can read in Spanish Salo Baron, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Jacob Agus,

Yehezkel Kaufmann, Joseph Klausner, Gershon Cohen, Abraham Halkin, Jules Isaac, and many others.

Perhaps the two crowning achievements of our work in Buenos Aires have been the foundation of the only rabbinical seminary on a university level on the entire continent, and the establishment of the youngest and surely one of the most dynamic synagogues in Latin America. Comunidad Bet-El was founded in 1963, and for its 10th anniversary next year we plan to inaugurate our new and first permanent sanctuary. Few newcomers to Bet-El from Argentina, or indeed from South America or other parts of the world, can believe their eyes when they enter the synagogue on any Friday night and find well over 500 people present—spiritually present, and actively participating in what I honestly believe to be a genuine prayer experience. What is most heartening is that at least half of these worshippers are under 25 years of age. Bet El has no professional *hazzan*. Indeed, frequently the rabbis sit with the congregation, while the young people direct the entire service. There are no monologic sermons in Bet El. For the past year and a half, Rabbi Ederly and I have been engaged in dialogues, where we challenge one another's points of view, while teaching the congregation the portion of the week, a page in the Talmud, an interesting *aggadah*, or discussing a topic of Jewish philosophy. Fully ten percent of the 30,000 Jews in Buenos Aires who participated in Yom Kippur services were present in Bet El. For *ne'ilah* there were 3,000 people, half of whom sat on a basketball court adjacent to the synagogue, sheltered by an enormous tent.

Bet El youth movements, pre-Ramah, Ramah and Atid, enroll over 500 youngsters. Bet El is the only Jewish organization in Buenos Aires which is involved in social work in the shanty-towns within the sprawling metropolis of Buenos Aires.

The Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano is now completing its 11th academic year. A few months ago all of us in the Seminario and Bet-El lived an unforgettable experience. Two of our students, after at least eight years of study in Buenos Aires at the Seminario and the University, and after having passed final examinations administered to them by a rabbinic tribunal here in Jerusalem, were awarded the first ordinations granted directly by the Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano. The examiners included Professors Theodore Friedman, Pinchas Peli, Solomon Goldfarb, Chaim Rabinowics, and others.

In spite of the modest successes of the Seminario in the past, in spite of the beautiful but small library of some 11,000 volumes which we now possess, in spite of the 180 students who attend the Seminario classes in its various departments, in spite of the very important ecumenical dialogues in the Seminario's Institute for Higher Religious Studies—in spite of all of this, I dare say that for the 1,200 people present at the ordination ceremony, the Seminario proved its ultimate merit by ordaining these two young men, both of whom were third-generation Argentines whose parents had not been affiliated with a synagogue.

One of those men, Rabbi Angel Kreiman-Brill, is the only rabbi serving Chile's 28,000 Jews. The other graduate, Rabbi Ruben Nisenbom, is now a professor at the Seminario, as well as rabbi of the Leo Baeck Synagogue in Buenos Aires. Please God, we hope to ordain three more men next year. Others of our graduates have received their ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. One is now an instructor in the Hebrew University; another is preparing his doctorate at Columbia University. Still another is to receive his doctorate from the Sorbonne. The most recent graduate, Rabbi Alfredo Winter, is now in Montevideo and may shortly take a pulpit in Brazil. If our plans materialize, within a year we shall have Seminario graduates in Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Chile, Argentina, and Brazil.

It is more than praiseworthy when one thinks of the fact that a very small group of people has been able to support all this activity within a period of some 13 years. These same families are building Bet El, maintain the Seminario, provide their sons for the rabbinate, and manifest their interest in Judaism by studying the books that they manage to have published. It is really an incredible story of courage and faith and love, and I would like to state before this convention that without the dedicated families of Bet El and the Seminario, who are all the same people, I could not have done anything. Of course such a record of production and creativity, which has been accomplished despite the

obstacles placed in our way by the Argentine Jewish establishment has not endeared us to the wheeling-dealing *politicos* of organized Jewish life in Buenos Aires.

At the present time, it is clear that the Conservative movement in Argentina is really spreading throughout the continent. We cannot afford to be fearful. We must be courageous. We cannot tiptoe about, while assimilation and disenchantment with Judaism gallops rampant.

Bet El is about to open a tri-lingual primary and secondary day school. Thus, the entire educational cycle will be covered. Plans are underway for the inauguration of a Bet El and Seminario cemetery. There is an extraordinary amount of work to be done, but thank God we have young and dedicated people who want to do it. Still, we desperately need the help of the Conservative movement, for our entire budget in dollar terms is ridiculously inadequate. We draw very little salary. As a matter of fact, since I've been married I have never earned enough to pay an income tax! We hope our new synagogue will be esthetically pleasing. But the entire building, furnished and complete to the last drape, will cost no more than \$75,000, for 2,000 people. If only every Conservative congregation in the United States and Canada would give us \$50 a year, \$4 a month, \$1 a week, I honestly believe that we could do many times over the work that we have managed to do with our terribly limited financial resources.

What will eventually happen in Latin America? I really don't know. Demographers assure us that within 25 years the area will contain over 500 million human beings. Political analysts assure us that there is no avoiding violence and upheaval. Economists assure us that the currencies will continue to fold, and the economies will continue to limp along. We fervently hope that many Latin American Jews will understand the tremendous advantages and accept the creative challenges of *aliyah*.

I fervently hope that the Jewish establishment will see the folly of its ways and abandon a political structure, inspired by Israeli political parties that has nothing at all to do with the realities of life in Latin America, that only serves to alienate intelligent and sensitive Jews who might otherwise be brought within the pale of more creative and Jewish influences.

I fervently hope that Jews will stop attacking Jews, and that each will respect the sphere and competence of the other's activities.

I fervently hope that God will grant us the discernment necessary to choose our goals wisely, the courage necessary to achieve them, the modesty necessary to accept them, and the gratitude necessary to give thanks.

Jewish Self-Awareness and Anti-Semitism in Italy

Dr. Gianfranco Tedeschi

Among the many problems confronting Jewish communities in the Diaspora, there is one that deeply concerns them all, and that is the problem of Jewish identity. At past conventions I said that there are three ways to fight assimilation and maintain Jewish identity: these strategies are religious, political, and cultural. In the past I spoke about the cultural sphere; but I think that in the last year Jews throughout the world have faced the problem of defending their identity in the political and religious spheres.

The political sphere involves the relationship between the Jew and Israel, his identity as a member of the broad Jewish people. This is not a simple matter, because it involves a very deep modification in the personality structure of the individual Jew. This, in professional language, creates a rupture of the psyche and the acquisition of a new level of awareness which provides unconscious guilt feelings, and consequently the fear of punishment, which in Jewish sociology is the fear of anti-Semitism.

In Italy, fear of anti-Semitism has grown very strong. I believe, however, that it is

exaggerated, that it is just a projection of the guilt feelings of the Jewish community. Moreover, there are some elements, of which I won't speak, that oblige people like me to be careful in their statements. Thus I will say that Italy is not anti-Semitic, neither officially nor in practice, but conditions are such that many, many Jews in Italy are afraid that anti-Semitism could develop in certain situations. Not only the Jews, but many distinguished non-Jewish historians and academicians also think that Italy is ready for anti-Semitism. A convention of distinguished academicians, organized by a Catholic university last year, discussed anti-Semitism and expressed the fear that Italy could become the ground for its emergence.

Let us examine together what is happening in Italy. We cannot deny that there are, fortunately very isolated, elements of anti-Semitism. For instance, some synagogues in the north of Italy have been damaged, some Jewish cemeteries have been desecrated, and at times "Heil Hitler" is written on shops owned by Jews. When the Prime Minister of Italy, who is a very good friend of the Jews and of Israel, asked us who we thought was responsible for these deeds, we were not able to indicate whether it was the inspiration of the extreme Left or the extreme Right.

Anti-Semitism certainly exists in the extreme Right, in what we call the extra-parliamentary Right. The official Fascist party in the parliament is not anti-Semitic. Their line is pro-Jewish and pro-Israel. In any event, the memory of what happened in Italy is still so strong that an official policy of anti-Semitism could provoke counter-action. But there are many pamphlets and books published in Italy which speak against Jews in ways that we recognize, unfortunately, from the period of Fascism or Nazism.

A well-known philosopher in Italy, Evola, who is associated with the philosophy of the extreme Right, will argue that Jews are not equal to others. To this I agree, as a Jew, but not from the negative point of view that Evola takes! He does not speak about biological differences, as the Nazis did, but about a different psychology, too much sensitivity, unperceptiveness, inadaptability. His books are well circulated.

There is also open anti-Semitism of religious origin. Since the Ecumenical Council, the Church is no longer officially anti-Semitic; but we cannot pretend that five years after the Council all the anti-Semitism that was preached for 2,000 years will disappear at once. There are many high-ranking priests, many archbishops and cardinals, who continue to preach in the church or write in pamphlets that the Jews are responsible for the killing of God, and so on.

Anti-Semitism is also tied in with what we may call anti-Zionism, which is rather widespread in Italy. There is the anti-Zionism of the Church, but this is not very developed. And there are two kinds of anti-Zionism of the Left. The Communist Party speaks about anti-Zionism, but not about the destruction of the state of Israel. Reflecting Russia's pro-Arab stand, it speaks against Israel because the latter is a representative of capitalism. But it is not against the Jews.

The anti-Zionism of the extra-parliamentary Left, the Maoists, is more developed. They urge the destruction of the monster that they call Israel, because they are very good friends of the Palestinians whom they consider to be the leaders of the world revolutions. For these reasons, the extra-parliamentary Left is linked with the extra-parliamentary Right. The Nazis and Maoists are partners in the fight against Israel; the extreme Right because it is anti-Semitic, and the extreme Left because it is violently against Israel. These Nazi-Maoists are financed and hand-picked by the Arab Embassies in Italy.

These anti-Zionists are creating a feeling of danger among Italians. For instance, the television very often does not speak of Israeli reaction against terrorists, but about "Jewish" reaction. They don't say Israeli troops; they say "Jewish" troops. This change of words may have a broader meaning and effect than we suspect.

For example: a very important newspaper in Italy praised Germany for freeing the Munich killers. It blamed Israel for its reaction to this matter, and said that Germany had given good reasons proving the wisdom of giving back the terrorists. The newspaper said: "We don't understand why Israel protested."

The newspaper also considered Israeli retaliatory actions too strong. This, in turn, is reflected by the public which is not anti-Semitic, but thinks that Israel is too aggressive. This feeling of anti-Zionism is spreading.

In addition to the Communists, the leftist elements of the Christian Democratic Party, officially the largest party in Italy, are pro-Arab because they are concerned about oil. And the television and radio are controlled by the leftists of the Christian Democratic Party.

The Socialist Party is pro-Israel, but it is also pro-Palestinian. This creates confusion. There are also many Jewish intellectuals who are pro-Palestinian. An El Fatah leader was killed in Rome two months ago, and many intellectuals, artists, and writers, implied that he was murdered by the Israeli intelligence.

Following the development of anti-Zionism the Jews of Italy are afraid that fertile ground exists on which anti-Semitism can flourish. But I tell you again that, actually, we cannot speak of anti-Semitism. These are isolated acts that I am sure exist in every part of the world.

But this is a problem external to the control of the Jewish community. What about our own problem, that of Jewish consciousness? I repeat what I said in Tel Aviv two years ago: the Israelis must help us. First, Israelis must also be aware of their Judaism, their attachment to Jewish values. Many Jews in Italy are disillusioned by the complete lack of interest in religious problems on the part of Israelis.

Secondly, I repeat my conviction that the Jews of the Diaspora must participate with the Israeli government in the big decisions that concern education and other social problems. Today the Israeli government represents only Israel; but in certain areas it should also represent the Jewish people throughout the world. The reality of this generation is that all the Jews in the world are involved, whether we want it or not, in the policies of the government of Israel. For this reason, there must be more participation of Diaspora Jews in those of Israel's decisions that affect them.

I look forward to this kind of relationship.

The Needs of Brazilian Jewry

Rabbi Fritz Pinkuss

As has been pointed out earlier in this convention, each Jewish community has its own problems, and they all share some common opportunities and preoccupations. Let me discuss some of the problems that are special to the communities of Latin America. When Simon Bolivar, the symbol of South American freedom, stood on the heights of the Andean Mountains, he looked out over the vastness of the continent and said, "My God, these territories can hardly be governed." Unfortunately, that seems to be the case. Again and again there is revolutions and turmoil; but this must be understood in terms of the Latin American nations trying to find a way of life of their own. We are in a period of transformation. The monolithic Latin-American civilization based on Catholicism is breaking down, and we do not yet know what will come in its place.

But let us distinguish between Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking Latin America, not because of local patriotism, but because of sociological facts. In Brazil, for example, there is no discrimination. Constitutions may change, but there are unwritten laws; and the unwritten law against discrimination is an old heritage from the Portuguese colonizers. In previous Brazilian governments there have been Jewish ministers; I personally enjoy good relations with the Vatican, through the former Cardinal of Sao Paulo who now occupies a senior position in Rome.

Brazil is making an effort to close the economic gap between the various classes, due to the tremendous boom the country is experiencing. That means that in Brazil we are something like a large family.

In order to understand the Jewish communities in Latin America, it is necessary to review their historical evolution. Early Jewish immigrants to the United States came from central Europe and brought with them the idea of the *kehillah*, the organized Jewish

community. And parallel to the many different congregations of the Christian denominations, the synagogue in the United States assumed a similar place of importance. In Latin America, however, the Jewish immigrants found a monolithic Catholic civilization; and they brought with them, from Eastern Europe, a certain amount of suspicion of the *kehillah* and the domination which it supposedly exercised.

Because of these factors, Jewish communities in Latin America developed basically along secular lines. The Yiddish language prospered until the generation of our fathers. When I came, in 1936, as a young rabbi, and spoke Portuguese while officiating at a Bar Mitzvah, the older members of the congregation protested. One of the leading families told me, "Here you have to speak Yiddish." Now these secularized groups were enthusiastic about Zionism, but they had no real knowledge of Zionist ideology, nor of many other aspects of Jewish life.

Today's Jewish communal structures are antiquated and require reformulation for contemporary Latin American society. There is almost no book of Jewish content that was originally written in Latin America. And though we have schools, our Jewish education in general is not sufficient, for only a small percentage of our children attend classes. This is a hangover from the past, when very few families sent their children to Jewish schools. Thus, the descendants of the old Brazilian families have Jewish names—but they are no longer Jewish; the new generation of children have non-Jewish mothers.

But, as a result of the Holocaust, a new and important era began in Latin American Jewish history. Central European Jews began to arrive. In some communities these immigrants isolated themselves, retained the German language, and set up German-type congregations. Unfortunately, these congregations are disappearing as their members grow older.

I would like to see a different pattern emerge in Latin America. During my rabbinate, I have tried to introduce the idea of the *kehillah* to the Brazilian Jewish community, not in terms of the old European institution, but as a new creation, a Jewish community that will serve as the common denominator for the whole of Jewish life, for the Jewish faith.

The secular groups, whose younger members are mainly in the professions or industry, work for Israel and express their interest in what they term Jewish "culture." They maintain good schools, but their children's schooling stops just at the age when the young people need guidance if they are to live their lives as Jews. About five percent of the youth go on *aliyah*; but perhaps about sixty percent of the Brazilian Jewish community do not know how to live Jewishly. For college-age Jews, we have only one very small Hillel foundation in Sao Paulo. The intellectuals of Jewish parentage have a knowledge of Judaism that is equivalent to that of a child who is entering kindergarten; it is not surprising that they lose contact with Jewish life. Now where there is no Jewish substance, religious heritage is not an impediment to intermarriage. In families where there is no Jewish content, the rate of intermarriage is about one-quarter or more, in my estimation.

In time, however, many young married Jews come back to the fold. When they begin to raise their own family, they cannot deny to their children that they are Jewish, and they seek to give them Jewish content and a "sense of belonging." These young couples see our congregation with its 2,500 families; they see Rabbi Lemle's congregation in Rio. And they bring us their children. In Sao Paulo we have waiting lists of youngsters seeking to enter our youth programs. We anticipate restricting membership in the future, or creating additional congregations—which is the better solution.

What is the secret of our congregation's success? First, there is human warmth. We take care of each and every human being. We are aware that everybody today is in search of something to fill the human void, and we let our members understand that we will look for this content *together* with them.

As a result, on Friday evenings we have between 500 and 1200 people at services. We have about two-thirds of all the Bar Mitzvahs and Bat Mitzvahs of a community of 65,000; we hardly know how to handle them all. And we insist that every boy and girl must learn to go to the *amud* and serve as *hazzan* for a service, on Friday night or Saturday morning; we do not separate youth services from adult services. But it is necessary for the rabbis to be flexible. We must allow the youngsters to speak their own language, to introduce creative services with prayers of their own, and help them to create an intelligent,

balanced amalgamation of the traditional and the new. Among the young people affiliated with our congregation, intermarriage is less than five percent. On a smaller scale, this picture holds true for the Jewish community of Rio.

We have done pioneer work in creating prayer books, together with Rabbi Lemle of Rio, whose congregation was founded with our help. The rabbis have a published material of Jewish content, and the community sponsors a Jewish newspaper. We have a university chair, and have founded a Center of Jewish Studies in which, this year, seven hundred students and fifteen professors participate. An Israeli student received his Ph.D. on the basis of his study of the language of the Dead Sea Scrolls; a priest who graduated from the Gregorian University in Rome wrote a Ph.D. thesis for the University of Sao Paulo on the subject of "Serfdom in the Bible." A woman on the faculty is world-renowned for her studies of the novels of the Marranos; and now my assistant is preparing a survey of the philological root-words of the modern Hebrew language for his Ph.D. There is also a Center of Jewish Education in Rio, under the guidance of Rabbi Lemle.

For the past dozen years we have sponsored a youth program throughout the continent, with its own study camps. These are somewhat different from others, for they are smaller in size, and encourage individual contact between the rabbi and the youngster.

But we in Sao Paulo, and the congregation in Rio de Janeiro, are islands. The great majority of our people throughout Brazil remain with insufficient religious content. The trouble is that we do not have enough professional leadership. There are many communities in Brazil without a rabbi. In various cities it is important to bring together the different small *shuls* and amalgamate them into one large congregation—and then find them professional leadership. This was done in Santiago, Chile, which now has an active young rabbi, a pupil of Rabbi Marshall Meyer. The same pattern was followed in Lima, Peru, which will soon be getting a rabbi. I hope the same will hold true for Curitiba and Porto Alegre, Brazil. Even my own congregation needs additional rabbis! In addition, a minimum of two young men are needed to serve as itinerant rabbis for the huge Brazilian subcontinent. Without professional Jewish leadership in Brazil and in other Latin American countries as well, the very existence of Jewish organizations is threatened.

So I come to you today with an urgent request: Send us young, flexible, dynamic rabbis. We need them for the survival of the 800,000 Jews on the Latin American continent.

The Iranian Jewish Community

Rabbi David Shofet

The Iranian Jewish community is the oldest in the diaspora, and Jewish tradition connects the Jews in Persia with various events in Israel's ancient history. The starting point is regarded as the deportation of the Israelites at the time of Tiglat-pileser, from Samaria to the cities of Medea and Persia. Even before the destruction of the First Temple we succeeded in establishing flourishing commercial communities in some parts of Persia.

After the destruction of the First Temple, and the edict of restoration by King Cyrus, the Jewish community became very influential in the Persian royal court. The exotic story of Esther and Mordechai, which we read on Purim, reflects the political and economic position the Jews enjoyed during that period. The first leaders of the restoration of Zion emerged from this community. Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah were the Zionist thinkers and leaders of their day, who were supported wholeheartedly by their Iranian brothers. Under the Iranian rulers, and in an atmosphere of peace and religious freedom, the Jews were able to produce and edit the most valuable Jewish heritage, namely, the Talmud.

This mutual good relationship between the Persian kings and the Jewish community lasted until the 7th century. The period of peace and tranquility ended with the invasion of the Arabs. From the 7th century until the turn of this century we, as Jews, have been persecuted and spiritually humiliated by the fanatics of various Islamic sects. Many of us were given the choice of conversion to Islam or death.

In 1838 the Jewish community of Meshed, a religious Islamic city in Iran, was forced to convert to Islam. But they became the marranos of the 19th century, for they secretly practiced Judaism and taught their children Torah. Later on, the whole community returned to Judaism openly.

We were so isolated that even the story of our faith never reached world Jewry directly. It was discovered by Christian missionaries who were trying to buy souls among unfortunate Jews. Living in narrow, dusty streets of ghettos, the deprivation of social, cultural and economic freedom was so complete that our physical and spiritual well-being was on the brink of disaster. During those long and dark years of suffering, only Judaism and our sacred heritage gave us refuge and shelter. Even under those spiritual handicaps we produced a very special body of work, which is known as Judeo-Persian literature. For instance, the translation of the Bible into poetry, by Shaheen, a famous rabbi and poet of the 14th century, is a monumental masterpiece of literary work. The works of other Jewish scholars like Babae Lotf in the field of Jewish historiography are unique examples of their kind.

Fortunately, the revolution of 1905 and the formation of a new dynasty in Iran began to bring us social equality and religious freedom. Gradually, the walls of the ghettos came down, and Jews were allowed to seek employment even outside of the ghetto areas. This was the beginning of the Persian Jewish emancipation, although at the time it only affected a very small group.

Another significant event which changed the fate of many Iranian Jews was the establishment of Israel. For more than 60,000 Jews, the real emancipation started in 1948, when Iranian Jews emigrated to Israel in order to build it and to be built by it.

In Iran itself, during the past 40 years, the internal migration from the villages and small towns to urban areas has changed the lives of the remaining 70,000 Jews. They are now a very energetic and active urban community. Our financial situation has improved immensely. Our peddlers and small businessmen have become importers-exporters, landlords, contractors and industrialists. We introduced new systems of marketing and other technical innovations into the country.

Our secular institutions, various women's organizations and Jewish hospitals have been functioning very effectively. Many charitable foundations and some educational institutions are run by our women. Although we have made this progress, we still find some of our brothers remaining in ghettos. This is partly due to their own choice, and partly to lack of financial ability.

As one who has a very special concern for the Jewish religion, it is unfortunate that I cannot give you a similar positive report about our religious institutions. The out-dated framework of our religious organization did not permit progress at the same rate as the secular changes which occurred quickly in our community. Lack of educational facilities has left our community with too few learned rabbis, and those we have are mostly busy with functional aspects of the rabbinate, as opposed to Jewish education. However, we have been able to develop Jewish education through the Alliance Israélite Universale which, in 1944, was joined by the Otzar Ha Tora network and other independent community schools. In 1950, a network of ORT institutions began to function in Iran. The role which American Jewry has played in financing these institutions is enormous. We are always thankful for their generosity and direction.

In spite of reasonable achievements in the field of Jewish education, we are confronted with many problems. Lack of experienced teachers with proper training is our biggest problem. To overcome this, many seminars and special courses in Judaica have recently been set up for teachers. Some teachers have been sent to Israel to study. Many Israeli *shlichim* have come to us and have brought us *torat erez Yisrael*.

Politically, we obtained equal rights under the constitution of 1906. Jews have the right, collectively, to elect one delegate to the Iranian House of Representatives. But few Jews

enter public service or work in banks, and few are employed in high offices, because of unofficial discrimination. Few of us are interested in studying law because a Muslim, or even a Jew, needing the services of a lawyer would prefer a Muslim attorney.

In Iran we have full freedom to practice our religion. We have autonomous religious courts for matrimonial and inheritance laws. Our religious life is not organized around community centers. Our synagogues in Iran serve the Jewish community only as houses of prayer. In most of them one can find a daily *minyan*. But these synagogues are not able to satisfy the spiritual needs and expectations of our younger generation. As a result, our students and young intellectuals, under the influence of Western culture and its value system, have become more and more alienated from our sacred heritage. Our future as a coherent community will be affected by what happens in Israel; we look towards Israel as our sole refuge, not only spiritually, but also physically. Many among us think seriously about our *aliyah*, to Israel, and some of us make *aliyah*.

Dear American brothers and sisters; Your achievements in the field of Jewish organization and Jewish education can also be a source of inspiration and example to us. Many of your young men and women participate in the Peace Corps around the world in order to help various nations in many fields of activity. May I suggest that young American Jewish teachers and educators be encouraged to come to the East, to their needy brothers. They can be of tremendous help to us.

DISCUSSION ON WORLD JEWISH COMMUNITIES

Question: What can we do on the congregational level to bring youth groups from one country in contact with youth groups in another—perhaps through pen-pals, or a youth-exchange program?

Rabbi Narowe: I regret having to say what I am about to say. When I first came to Sweden, I believed that we could bring people from the States to our communities, let them work within our communities, and somehow restructure certain aspects of our Jewish communal life in the light of the American experience. Looking back, however, I feel that every attempt that we have made has been a failure. We must, rather, send people from our communities, who speak our language and are familiar with our way of thinking (and there are differences), to the States, to observe and learn—and then return to our congregations. For example, when our youngsters went to Camp Ramah in the United States and returned to Sweden, they were extremely useful to us. But when we took Ramah experts from America and brought them to our summer camp, it just didn't work.

If we can send young people to be trained in the Seminary, and have them come back to Sweden, that would be very effective. But it takes several years before a rabbi from America can begin to function intelligently in a foreign country—and I say this from my own experience. It's an amazing phenomenon; when people come to a new country they have all the answers; and then, in the course of time, they learn how much they don't know. It takes several years until this process has been completed, and one understands how much humility one needs.

What can congregations do? Maybe you can set up scholarships at various institutions—at Ramah, the Seminary, the Cantor's Institute—so that we can send our people to the States for training. Then, when they return to our communities, they can make worthwhile contributions.

Rabbi Melchior: We are considering the possibility of inviting about ten young people from another community which has a strong Jewish identity, to come, live together in our town, study at the local university and get their university credits in their home country. At the same time they would inter-relate with our local community. When they return home, they would bring back with them insights into the Jewish life of the community they have visited; and while with us they would infuse us, hopefully, with some of the Jewish spirit of their own background.

The Quality of Jewish Life in Israel

Rabbi Menachem Hacohen

In attempting to define the essence of Jewish life in Israel, it is my duty to state from the beginning that I intend to devote my address to those matters which concern the Jewish people, not as a people with a government, a land, an army, a language, but rather those problems which concern the Jewish people as Jews.

It is true that serving in the Israeli army, for example, is certainly part of Jewish life in this country. But there is nothing especially Jewish about it. As a matter of fact, I am sorry to say that features of life that are typically Jewish do not play a very great role in the lives of most Israelis. Thus, at the beginning of our discussion, I would like to raise certain questions, questions whose very voicing is a Jewish duty of the first magnitude.

The first question concerns the nation. Will the people growing up today in Israel have those characteristics that have been traditionally associated with the Jewish people? Will they constitute a link in the chain of Jewish history? Or are we raising a generation which has nothing in common with previous generations of Jews, whose mode of thinking, and world of values have nothing Jewish about them, a generation of Jews for whom the Jewish historic tradition is nothing more than a museum piece?

The second question: Will the coming generation feel any kinship with the Jews who live outside of Israel, and vice versa?

My third question: Can the Jewish communities outside of Israel continue to exist for any long period of time without the influence exerted by Israel's existence?

Fourth question: Do the religious institutions of the Jews in the Diaspora, especially in America, have any meaning for the average Israeli? Can the image of the rabbi as a spiritual leader, which has been created by Diaspora Jewry in America and in Western Europe, serve as an example for Israeli society?

The last question: Is there any religious revival in Israel, and if so, what brought it about?

These are the questions to which we must address ourselves seriously at this convention. In order that I may be able to express myself freely, I beg your indulgence and ask you to allow me to continue in Hebrew.

(The following is a translation of Rabbi Hacohen's remarks.)

With reference to the first question, the Jewish characteristics of the next generation in Israel, I must point out that our young people are growing up not knowing what a synagogue is. They don't even go to synagogue once a year. We do see full synagogues on the High Holidays, but when we analyze the congregation we see that those present were brought up in the Diaspora or, in unusual cases, are first-generation Israelis, the children of *olim*. The great majority of Israeli youth know nothing about Jewish life. Other than those who attend religious schools, they are growing up without any ties to historic Judaism.

This leads to the second question. As long as Jewish identity is rooted in Jews who know both Jewish life and the inspiration deriving from the still recent establishment of the Jewish State, one may assume that a relationship will exist between Jews in the Diaspora and in Israel. But in coming generations, when Israel will no longer be a novelty, and Diaspora Jews will look upon the Jewish State as a given fact, they will not experience the same emotional ties with it. And then we will have, on one side, a Jewish people whose Judaism is expressed through synagogues and religious life, and on the other side, Jews whose Judaism is expressed through love for their homeland, through pride in their military strength. And then too, since we may project that the young Diaspora Jews in generations to come will have a liberal world outlook, and since we may also project that Israel's political situation will not change to the extent of our turning our swords into plowshares, the Jews of the Diaspora and of Israel will find themselves at odds with one another. The contradiction between them will stem from an estrangement and alienation

from historic Judaism, and from the vast difference in the values cherished by each group.

The answer to the question of whether Diaspora Jewry can long exist without drawing inspiration from Israel would, theoretically be a positive one. After all, Diaspora Jewry existed for thousands of years before there was a Jewish State. But then Jewish life centered about a core of religious practices. In today's free world, where Jews enjoy equal rights in all areas of life, unless there is a Jewish State to formulate Jewish challenges, Jewish missions, I am afraid that in future generations there will be no young Jews in the Diaspora. The State of Israel has an obligation to serve as a national challenge for Diaspora Jewry. When we are blessed with peace, and the security needs will no longer exist, the Jewish State will have to undertake to revive the spiritual element among all mankind. That will be the task of Israel, and of Jews throughout the world. The Jewish State will have to represent the world of the spirit and of morality, as against the world of materialism. Unfortunately, we cannot assume this role now, because of the security situation.

I must give a twofold answer to the question regarding the viability of Diaspora Jewish forms in Israel. One must distinguish between Israelis for whom Diaspora history is a living reality, and those for whom it is a chapter in a textbook. For the former group, who derive from Eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia, and constitute the majority of Israel, the ritual forms that exist in Israel are sufficient. They are not accustomed to Western religious forms. But our younger generation, particularly those who have visited abroad, are greatly impressed by Jewish life in the Western world. What young Israelis need is a synagogue in which they can pray with understanding, in which they can find a spiritual atmosphere to supplement the rest of their daily existence. This is what the Jews of the Diaspora can teach our younger generation.

Let me give you an example drawn from my own experience. Three years ago a group of young settlers in the Aravah asked me to arrange a Yom Kippur service for them. I sent down an attractive young man with a lovely voice, to lead them in prayers. Their reaction was not positive and, upon consideration, I understood why. The Yom Kippur melodies he had chanted so movingly meant nothing to those young people. They had never heard them before.

Last year I sent two young American students (I couldn't find Israelis willing to do this) to the same settlement. I suggested that they pray privately in their rooms and, during Yom Kippur, meet several times with the settlers to read, analyze, and discuss some of the key prayers in the *Mahzor*. This experiment was successful beyond my expectations, and the settlement now has an ongoing study group on Jewish topics. My point is that the young generation of Israelis does not react to current religious forms as practiced either here or in the Diaspora. They need—and perhaps the coming generation of Jews in the Diaspora will also need—different forms of ritual, that need not impinge on the halakhic character of synagogue observance.

My answer regarding the image of the rabbi as a spiritual leader is also twofold. Clearly, today's image of the rabbi in Israel cannot serve as a model for the young generation. The rabbi in the Diaspora can provide a partial answer to the problem of spiritual leadership in Israel in the next generation. But a rabbi in Israel must grow from Israeli soil, not be a Diaspora transplant. He must be, first and foremost, an Israeli—and at the same time an example for other Israelis. A rabbi in Israel must be a member of the Israel Defense Forces and be called to reserve duty like every other citizen. A rabbi in Israel may work full-time at being a rabbi, and draw full-time salary; or he may earn his livelihood from some other work and still be a rabbi.

Finally, it is difficult to say whether a spiritual revival exists among the broad public in Israel. I don't agree with those who say it does. The truth is that some young intellectuals are in the midst of a spiritual crisis which leads them to seek a return to Judaism. This phenomenon exists in Israeli society in general, and in the kibbutz-moshav sector in particular. But a revolutionary spiritual revival does not exist. What does exist among young Israelis, as among young people throughout the world, is a search for content, for an expression of values relevant to their world—which is not the world of their parents.

We face the great task of turning this search into a spiritual revolution in Israel and

among Diaspora Jewry, by freeing our Jewish life from the narrow world of ritualism and problems of personal status, and displaying Judaism in all its riches and breadth, by applying its generations-old values toward the solution of many of modern man's problems.

I will close with a brief reference to the *mamzerut* issue which has been in the headlines during the past few days. This is more than a landmark decision involving a particular case and solving one difficult problem of personal status. It marks the beginning of a new era in the Israeli rabbinate, an era in which, hopefully, the rigidity of a frozen *halakhah* will begin to gain flexibility. A great scholar in Israel has sought to bring Jewish law into the modern world. I hope that this will not be an isolated instance in the broad sphere of our spiritual life.

The Quality of Spiritual Life in Israel

Tzvi Tzameret

Ladies and gentlemen, Zionism is facing one of the most difficult ideological periods it has passed through during the last century. We are living in a vacuum; we are experiencing a spiritual emptiness that this country has not known for many decades. This generation lacks spiritual leadership; it lacks defined goals and is concerned mainly with chasing luxuries. The crisis was inevitable; in a sense it was long overdue. Its origins lie in the period before the Six-Day War, when cynicism, lack of a sense of purpose, was rampant. It was a period of many emigrants from Israel. Typical of our black humor during those days was the question, "Will the last person leaving please turn off the lights at Lydda Airport?" Perhaps the Six-Day War broke out because of this crisis; our neighbors hoped to take advantage of it and thus destroy us. After the war, the crisis was postponed—until now, when the echoes of the war have faded. Now cynicism is again a rising tide; bitterness is rampant; alienation is on the rise. The builders of the State never imagined that this would happen, that the best, the finest of her sons would feel estranged within her borders.

The Zionist movement built the framework of the State, but left us without its content, without its discipline. Our parents were busy creating a haven of refuge for Jews, and barely had time to ask themselves what kind of a home was being created, what its character would be. Under the pressure of historic events, they hurried to create a state in which there would be a Jewish majority, which would give shelter to every Jew who sought it. They had no time to define its image. They built a state for Jews, but they didn't build a Jewish State. They dug up Jewish roots and created a new sapling which lacks true roots.

Estrangement and alienation are the offspring of lack of defined goals, of lack of a Jewish consciousness, of the severing of Jewish roots. The phraseology of the fathers of Zionism does not stand up to the pressures of our day, and certainly cannot provide guidelines for the future. The current ideological crisis is the fruit of a frightening paucity of thought, of the neglect of values during the last decades. Our pragmatic, materialistic way of life, our utter ignorance of things Jewish, have led to this crisis. Unlike other nations, the State of Israel cannot be only a frame, walls without a roof. If we are to be only another Mediterranean country, we will collapse.

The crisis of values is visible everywhere. We are like an old lead pipe which each time springs a leak from another spot. Patching each small leak will no longer suffice, for the leaks are growing in number, and the waters are becoming a flood.

How is this crisis expressed? In immigration and absorption: We have ceased absorbing. The Law of Return, which lies at the very foundation of the State, is put into effect by bureaucrats. Even Russian Jews, whose personal and collective courage will forever stand as one of the outstanding episodes in Jewish history, are pushed aside by us. This is even more true of immigrants and students from the United States and other

countries. The average citizen sees the immigrant as a weed that is encroaching upon his garden of pleasures. He eyes the benefits which the immigrants enjoy, and his attitude turns into acute jealousy.

A second crisis area is our relationship with the Arabs. We have not defined any clear political line. We have not carved out a distinct program for peace. Insufficient care is given the Arab refugees. Last week's incident of settling Jews on the lands of Akraha, perhaps, the best proof that we have no unified policy toward the Arabs.

A third crisis area is the economic sphere. Strikes proliferate. Each sector tries to grab a bigger piece of the economic pie. The work ethic has deteriorated. It is "stylish" to evade paying taxes. The newspapers are filled with exposés of public corruption, and our leaders, including our religious leaders, do not even disassociate themselves from those who are guilty.

Education is another area of crisis. The least talented of our citizens become teachers. The various teachers' unions are mainly concerned with practical matters. The conversation among teachers revolves about money. Education is no longer a goal; the educational system is busy feeding children information. Politics is mixed up in education. The split between the national and the national-religious networks of schools divides the nation.

My last example concerns religion. The religious leadership is mainly political. It is outstanding in its lack of quality; it is out of touch with large segments of the nation. A sizable element what synagogue of The latter mark To commentary, Sephardi Gerson Bet El Bet El portion Bet El establishment, gallop parties, acquisition State revolution. The revolution Israelites, and we have HaTora Eretz Yisrael. prayer, where minyan, not as community centers. aliyah congregations,

theoretically, practiced kibbutz-moshav by pressure State springs ceased State, is one of guilty. Israel sees the man of religion in stereotyped negative terms which are worse than those used by many non-Jews.

I think that we have never before experienced such a yawning gulf between our material and our spiritual achievements. There is no leadership which has a conscience, which can set up goals, which can point to flaws and uproot them from our midst. The desire to be "normal" is turning us into a nation like all others, torn into splinter groups that are foreign and antagonistic to one another. Growing elements of the Left and the Right are challenging our Zionist goals, our Jewish goals.

I have hesitated to bare my pain to you, but I have done so because I feel that your true place is also in Eretz Yisrael. As R. Nahman of Bratslav said, "My place is in Eretz Yisrael. I may travel here and there, but even though I still see only Bratslav, it is to Eretz Yisrael that I travel." Though you are still in various countries in the Diaspora, the spiritual crisis of Israel is a crisis in your home, an illness in your very roots. The problems of Jewish life in Israel are your problems. And we can emerge from this crisis only with your participation and help.

Let me say, first, that I am more optimistic about the future than my gloomy description may indicate. You may know the story concerning three views of a glass of wine. The pessimist sees it half-empty; the optimist sees it half-full; and the very optimistic person sees only that there is room to add more wine! In this sense, I am very optimistic. I do not doubt that the void I have described will be filled. The shelter we have built here will become a Jewish home; a roof will be added to the framework that our parents built, and it will be filled with Jewish content.

The ability to overcome the crisis is to be found within us. Awareness of the crisis is the first step toward that end. But the next step must be to tackle its root causes. We must come up with a new formulation of our goals, a redefinition of the content of Jewish life, a reexamination of our education, a basic change in our political life, new spiritual leadership. The first steps must come from Israel and its citizens, but your participation is also essential. We need people who will be active in immigrant absorption, who will help close the social and economic gaps in our society, who will help work toward peace with the Arabs, who will be active in various areas of religious life. We need educators who will bridge the divisiveness in our educational system and perhaps establish schools that will

teach Jewish values. We need modern young teachers who wear *kipot*, to serve as example to our youth that wearing a *kipah* does not necessarily put you on the other side of the barricades, to teach that the treasures of Judaism are very real.

We need activists who will join the various political parties and spur them to renewed vitality. We lack people to fight for pure democracy, for equality, for Jewish values. There is room for molders of public opinion, for philosophers, writers, journalists, who will redefine old slogans, merge old and new ideals, create a Jewish culture.

There is room in Israel for the Conservative movement, but not exactly as it exists in the Diaspora. You cannot bring Conservative Judaism here like a plant in a pot. We need plants that will grow in our soil, put forth roots in our landscape, adapt themselves to our climate. The Conservative movement must carefully study the conditions of Israeli society before it brings its forms here. But I am convinced that it can find a place in Israel and help change the existing narrow definition of religion as ritual only, as a profession, or as a political pressure group. It can awaken awareness of Judaism as a complete way of life—educational, moral and social. The Conservative movement can change synagogues from empty shells serving as houses of prayer for individuals, to lively centers filled with Jewish content and Jewish studies.

The Conservative movement should engage in a program of publications in Hebrew, seek various ways to reach the public, initiate dialogues between local and Diaspora youth and students, form study groups to deal with problems of our social and national roots. It is important for you to continue to send groups of young people to Israel, and it is important that Israeli youth visit Jewish communities abroad, and thus strengthen the reality of the unity of the Jewish people.

We live in a period when the walls our parents built can become a home. It is a difficult, complicated period; we need new leadership to undertake this work, and a broad public to support that leadership. You hold the answer to the question of the extent to which the Conservative movement will influence this new home that is being built. A large group of young Israelis who would like to see changes in our society is waiting for you to join our ranks and help us reach this goal.

Panel Recommendations on The Quality of Life in Israel

The convention delegates participated in panel discussions based on the presentations made by Rabbi Menachem Hacohen and Tzvi Tzameret. The following recommendations emerged from the discussions:

1. It is necessary to develop a Conservative ideology in Israel, and to propagate it as forcefully as possible. In this task, the aid of the spiritual leaders of the Conservative movement in the United States is absolutely essential. Special effort should be made to appeal to the experience, concerns and life-style of the youth—from high school age through young adulthood.

2. The establishment of Conservative (religious) elementary and high schools in Israel should be part of the movement's program. Parallel with this development, efforts should be made to have Judaism and Jewish religious values emphasized in the Bible lessons given in the secular schools. In addition, more opportunities should be made available to provide secular youth with an understanding of the attitudes and concerns of the religious youth in Israel, in order to bridge the social separation of the children who study in the two different school systems.

3. Now that there are ten Conservative congregations in Israel, a strenuous effort must be made to obtain full religious recognition of Conservative rabbis serving Israeli congregations.

4. Promising Israeli students should be chosen for training at the Jewish Theological

Seminary in New York, until the day comes—may it soon be realized—that a branch of the Seminary is opened in Israel. Upon completion of their studies, these young rabbis would serve Conservative congregations in Israel.

5. In order to assist in the integration of families from Western countries, many additional Conservative congregations should be founded in Israel. Pending that development, when members of a Conservative synagogue migrate to Israel, their synagogue should send details about the family to the United Synagogue of Israel, so that the local congregation nearest to their place of settlement can welcome the family.

Dedication of the Center of Conservative Judaism in Israel

Samuel Rothstein

This is a historic occasion for Judaism.

We have gathered to dedicate these buildings in which we are assembled, as the Center of Conservative Judaism in Israel. It is fitting and proper that this event should take place during the celebration of the 25th year of the founding of *Medinat Yisrael*. I have been informed that this is the first time in the history of the sacred city of Jerusalem that a building that was owned and used for religious purposes by another faith, has been purchased and converted for use as a synagogue.

It should be noted that this is not the first time the Conservative movement has struck roots in Jerusalem. The United Synagogue of America built the Yeshurun Synagogue in Jerusalem in the 1920s. In 1946, in what were then very dark days for the Jews of Palestine, when people questioned whether a Jewish State would ever be established, the Conservative movement had faith in the restoration of Israel, and to show its faith the United Synagogue of America deeded the Yeshurun Synagogue to the Jewish National Fund so that it could be a synagogue-center for the Jews in Eretz Yisrael and belong to the Jewish people throughout the world.

The purchase of the present buildings was made possible for the Conservative movement through the vision, the wisdom and devotion of our Treasurer, David Zucker. Like our forefather Jacob, David Zucker had a dream, to establish a sanctuary to God. Not only did he have such a dream, but he made it a reality by virtue of his own generosity and that of his son Jacob, and of Morris Speizman.

These buildings will be a sanctuary and the home and center of the Conservative movement. They will serve as a bridge between the Jews in Israel and Conservative Jewry the world over; as a guide for Jewish youth in their quest for a meaningful identity, for a deeper understanding of the Jewish heritage of old, and for an appreciation of the living drama of modern Israel. It is our hope that this Center will provide religious inspiration for Israelis, new *olim* and visitors, that it will be a meeting place for “newcomer” and “old timer,” for “*dati*” and “*lo dati*,” for young and old, and that it will contribute towards a better appreciation of the values of Judaism.

The Center will maintain a modern synagogue which will reflect the loftiest teachings and values of Judaism. It will house a library of books and periodicals in Hebrew, in English, and in other languages, with special emphasis on publications of the Conservative movement. It will maintain ongoing exhibits illustrative of Jewish life around the world, and focusing on the activities of the Conservative movement. Study groups and public lectures for the entire community will be sponsored, and seminars for the youth of the *kibbutzim* will be conducted under the auspices of the ATID and USY organizations of the Conservative movement. The Center will conduct classes for adults and young people, sponsor Oneg Shabbat programs aimed especially at tourists, offer a forum for expression of different Jewish points of view, including the Orthodox and

Reform, and encourage interfaith understanding by extending the platform from time to time to scholarly and responsible Christian and Moslem lecturers.

May I conclude with a prayer that God grant long life and good health to our benefactors, David and Jacob Zucker, and Morris Speizman, and to all of us assembled here today, so that we may be able to continue our labors in His vineyards for the worthy cause and noble work in which we are engaged.

May the pleasantness of the Lord be upon us, and may He establish for us the work of our hands. May He indeed, help us to fulfill our sacred task.

Dedication Greetings

Rabbi Gerson D. Cohen

(In the unavoidable absence of Dr. Cohen, his greetings were read by Mr. Samuel Rothstein.)

I deeply regret that it is impossible for me to join you at this convention which, in the time-honored role of the Conservative movement, brings together Jews of many countries and many shades of opinion, all of us part of what Solomon Schechter, our revered leader, liked to call "Catholic Israel." As Jews, we are a people sharing a religious heritage which affirms the legitimacy of the continuing nation of the Jewish people, both here in Israel and throughout the world. We in the Conservative movement in America have come to characterize this heritage as Conservative Judaism. Our Conservative movement is at once committed to religious authenticity and to critical scholarship, thus making possible the expression and viability of classical Judaism within the contemporary world. As Conservative Jews, we recognize that religious affiliation must be a voluntary fact. Only a voluntary re-affirmation of the mandate of Sinai will make it possible for Jews to live both in modern society and within the context of Jewish tradition. These characteristics of Conservative Judaism appear to us to be as valid in Israel as in the other countries here represented.

The historic land of Israel has always held a central position in the value system of Diaspora Judaism and especially Conservative Jewry. At this time Diaspora Jewry and Judaism must occupy an increasingly important place in the values of Israel. Together we must engage in the the eternal task of strengthening our common roots, of building a Judaism relevant to the 20th century Jew, whether he lives in Israel, in one of the new and restructured Jewish communities of the West, or in one of the struggling communities that remain as symbols of cataclysmic events in recent world history.

This convocation represents an important step in uniting for that common task, by working together and engaging in meaningful dialogue with each other. Each national Jewish community will discover its own distinctive dialect of the tradition and will make a singular contribution to the necessary balance between tradition and renewal. With a stress upon scholarship and upon the quest for authentic religious roots, Conservative Judaism can serve as the bridge which we have not yet fully built, to link us to one another and to our historic heritage in a kinship that cuts across space and time.

This year we mark the 70th anniversary of Solomon Schechter's arrival in America. There can be no doubt that this great visionary who, in the early part of our century, affirmed the indispensability of renewal of the Land of Israel, would have particular joy and pride in this assembly, which in so many ways testifies to the profundity of his understanding, his planning, and his building. As Schechter often reminded us, there is no other Jewish religion but that taught by the Torah and confirmed by history and tradition.

We are engaged today—each of us—in the search for a new meaning of that religion,

based on contemporary experience. That quest, it seems to me, is as central in Israel as it is in the Diaspora. May the spirit of God and His blessings forever radiate in the building you dedicate today to the people in the Land of Israel and to our brethren wherever they may be.

Jacob Stein

I have the great pleasure to bring to this convention the greetings and good wishes of the 836 congregations which make up the family of the United Synagogue of America, of the million-and-a-quarter members of congregations reaching across Canada, the United States and Mexico. In doing so, I extend good wishes and congratulations to your president and his fellow officers on their achievements during the past two years, and, anticipating tomorrow's events, congratulations and hearty good wishes to the incoming president and officers.

This meeting of the convention is marked by a sense of *ruah*, of spirit which communicates itself to everyone. It binds us into one community, within the central core of Judaism, no matter from what distant corner of the globe we may have come.

The United Synagogue, at its convention a little over a year ago, shared with its members a dream, a dream that we would in the near future be able to bring to Israel some of the benefits of the historic experiences and of the religious insights which we have developed. The Torah portion we read last *Shabbat* also dealt with a dream, a dream that Jacob had. The Bible tells us that after his dream, Jacob, who was a man of action, began to transform his dream into reality. He took the stone upon which his head had rested as he slept, and made it into an altar. And recognizing that the character of his spiritual experience indicated a quality of holiness in the place, he changed the name of an ordinary little settlement from Luz to Beth-El, for his dream told him that this was the gateway to the House of the Lord.

This ability to transform dreams into reality is the mark of every great man—of Jacob, of Moses, of Ezra; in modern times, of Herzl, of Solomon Schechter, of Weizmann, and of Ben-Gurion. Many of us believe in certain ideas and ideals—but we do nothing about them. Because of our inaction, nothing happens. We just continue dreaming, while wonderful opportunities pass irretrievably by. But we launched a dream at the convention in November, 1971. And among those who shared the dream were two distinguished leaders of the United Synagogue, Mr. Morris Speizman, and Mr. David Zucker. They, like Jacob and other men of action before them, transformed the dream into the reality in which you are sitting today. We are all extremely grateful and proud that they are a part of our family.

The fabric of our dream just begins with a building. It is what we put into it that will bring the dream to fruition and permit it to have its maximum impact on people. A program was sketched out for you by Dr. Greenberg, a program that we wholeheartedly endorse, and in which the United Synagogue will play no small part, particularly through our young people's programs, the programs of the thousand or so youngsters who will visit here on summer pilgrimages, and the hundreds of our young people who are attending the universities here.

One of the new dreams that we have is to disseminate the message that we have brought to Jerusalem across Israel, by bringing a bookmobile to the kibbutzim, from the far north to the far south in Israel. Ours cannot be an isolated parochial dream locked into the walls of this building, but must spread across the land. We must put our dream on wheels, so that during the course of the year we can contact and interest many people in what we have to offer.

I join with you in recognition of and tribute to two men who made the beginning of this dream possible. You have expressed your appreciation to them, made it manifest by your applause and your comments to them. May I add, in the words of Rabbi Hanina in *Pirke Avot*; "He in whom his fellow man takes delight, in him the Lord takes delight."

Dedication to Creative Struggle

Rabbi Simon Greenberg

I join all of you in a sense of keen disappointment that a situation completely beyond his control has prevented Professor Gerson Cohen, the Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, from being with us on this memorable occasion. I know how happily he was looking forward to it, and how much his presence would have added to the significance of this hour. But, hopefully, there will be many more great moments to mark in the future course of our activities in Israel which he will grace by his presence and illuminate by his eloquence.

Our meeting today has a twofold purpose. First, we want to express publicly our profound gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. David Zucker and to Mr. and Mrs. Morris Speizman. It was their vision, their faith, and their generosity which made these exercises possible. It was David Zucker who first recognized the possibilities for good which inhered in the opportunity to acquire these buildings and put them at the service of the Conservative movement, through the World Council of Synagogues and the United Synagogue of America. Mr. Morris Speizman readily shared his vision. Together they acted in accordance with the rabbinic dictum, "If the opportunity to perform a *mitzvah* comes your way, do not delay it." Do not allow it to turn sour. Perform it at once and you will enjoy the full sweetness of its flavor. We pray that the Zuckers and the Speizmans, who are savoring the full sweetness of this moment, may be privileged to rejoice for many years in the beneficent influences that will emanate from these buildings to all corners of this land and to communities far beyond its border.

Secondly, we are gathered here to dedicate ourselves and these buildings to the purposes which they are intended to serve. We want these buildings, first and foremost, to help us integrate in our own lives, no matter where we may reside, the sacred memories of the past, the monumental achievements of the present, and the high hopes for the future that are forever inextricably inter-related with the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem.

We want our lives to be enriched and molded by what has been and will be achieved here in the realms of faith and hope in God, in the realms of literature and art, in the realms of human freedom, equality and brotherhood as embodied in the social structure of the *kibbutzim*. We want to participate in the soul-searching struggle of the members of the religious settlements who are determined to adjust the *halakhah* to the exigencies of a self-sufficient Jewish community in the 20th century.

Spiritual and intellectual identification with these and other aspects of Jewish life in Israel is as indispensable to our own spiritual and intellectual life as the air we breathe is to our physical existence. Through the activities sponsored here, these buildings should serve as transmission stations to the Diaspora of the best that is in Israel. They should be our spiritual and social home when we come to visit or, hopefully, to reside in Israel.

But we aspire to be more than merely grateful recipients. We want to be creative participants in building in Israel a society which will embody the prophetic visions of a time when every man will sit under his vine and under his fig-tree, with none to make him afraid; when the earth will be as full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

These buildings are obviously not envisioned as the center through which we will help provide our Israeli brethren with the modern equivalents of vines and fig-trees. This is a concern of other agencies. These buildings will undoubtedly encourage us to think more seriously of becoming permanent residents of Israel, and to do our utmost on behalf of the United Jewish Appeal, Israel Bonds, and other public and private enterprises devoted to strengthening the economic and physical security of Israel. But the primary task to which these buildings will be dedicated is that of helping to satisfy the hunger which is not for bread and the thirst which is not for water, but rather for hearing the word of the Lord. That hunger and thirst is presently being experienced with increasing intensity in Jewish communities everywhere and, for various reasons, especially in this land.

I shall not attempt to indicate how we intend to satisfy that hunger. Nor shall I present a thumbnail sketch of my conception of a Conservative approach to Judaism. That would result only in a garbled view of what to me is a grand and majestic vista. Our activities in the past and during the years ahead will, hopefully, speak persuasively for themselves.

I do not wish to imply that we shall be alone in our preoccupation with the spiritual needs of the community. There are, thank God, other groups equally aware of those needs and striving to meet them. Nor do I wish to imply that all other groups have utterly failed and that we have some magic formula for satisfying the spiritual needs of the Jewish people. I wish merely to recall that our tradition tells us that the word of the Lord has many guises. At Sinai, the Divine Revelation was transmitted simultaneously in the 70 languages of the world, and every man, woman and child standing at the foot of Sinai heard God's voice in accordance with his or her own power to hear and understand.

Thus, while there is but one Torah, there is an infinite number of variations in our comprehension of it. What is of surpassing importance is not that each one should have exactly the same understanding of the Divine teaching, but that each one should be exposed to it, should at least hear it, and experience it in accordance with his own ability and preparedness to hear and to experience.

It is unhappily a fact that in Israel as well as throughout the Diaspora there are many Jews, young and old, who have never been exposed to our religious-spiritual heritage; who have neither privately nor publicly experienced traditional Jewish prayer, nor the Sabbath, nor Rosh Hashana, nor Yom Kippur. There are many here as well as in the Diaspora who live in communities where there are no synagogues. It is a fact that a substantial number of Jews from the United States and other countries who have come to take up residence in Israel out of a profound longing and hope that here they and their children may hear the Word of God more persuasively and experience it more movingly, have not found the fellowship through which they might fulfill that longing and that hope.

On the other hand, there are hundreds of thousands of men and women in our ranks throughout the world, who have found within the Conservative approach to Judaism a spring of living waters whereby they could in some measure satisfy their spiritual thirst and hunger. Through the activities which will be conducted in these buildings as well as in the other centers of our movement in Israel, such as our Student Center in Neve Schechter and the Shoken Institute, we hope to be helpful to the increasing number of individuals from our ranks who are determined to make Israel their home, to find here spiritual resources at least equal to what they had in their countries of origin. It is but natural that they should want to organize themselves here for these purposes. They have the right to look to us for help both on the material and spiritual level, and we have a sacred task to exert every effort to extend that help.

But that is not all. It is incumbent upon us to have the minimum measure of self-confidence in our own judgement, without which a dignified self-respect is not possible. We must have confidence that we are normal human beings of at least average intelligence; that what helps us meet our spiritual needs may be of help to other intelligent human beings in search of spiritual content in their lives. We owe it to them and to ourselves to create and utilize opportunities to enter into intimate, extended, open-hearted, and open-minded dialogue with them; to share with them our insights, our experiences, and organizational skills; to put literature at their disposal that might help them not to become duplicates of us, but to think through their problems in their own way.

We hear frequent admonitions against seeking to export our American spiritual product to Israel. We are told that conditions in the two countries are so radically different that what can flourish in America will almost of necessity wither and die in Israel. If that is true, it is a truth that is a double-edged sword. It cuts both ways. If anything that has taken root in the Diaspora cannot *ipso facto* grow at all in Israel because Israel is so different, then it must follow that anything which has taken root in Israel cannot flourish in the Diaspora because the conditions there are so different. If that is so, then all of our talk about building spiritual and cultural bridges between Israel and the Diaspora is so much empty wind.

I do not believe that everything that flourishes in one country can flourish in the other. But that which is intellectually sound and spiritually satisfying to many, normal, human beings in one country cannot but prove equally sound and spiritually satisfying to some few, or many, normal human beings in the other. It is our duty to search out and serve those few or many.

There are also those who fear that if we meet with any success we shall be a divisive force within Israel. The argument seems to be that if no religious alternatives are available, everyone will be compelled to join the one available group. That is not true even in matters physical, let alone in matters spiritual. True enough, if there is only one road by which to travel to Sinai, then all who wish to travel there will presumably have to use that one road. But the fact that a road exists does not necessarily mean that people will use it. They may not want to go to Sinai at all. And even if they do, they may find the road so unattractive, so difficult to traverse, that the desire to go—no matter how strong it may have been initially—is suppressed.

Our duty is to stimulate people to want to go to Sinai, and then to build as many attractive roads as possible to get them there. If all are travelling toward the same goal, the more attractive paths available the better. Our problem today is that too few want to go at all, and that there are too few roads leading to the foot of Sinai.

This week's portion of the Torah, *Vayishlah*, tells the story of Father Jacob's night-long wrestling with some superhuman assailant. During the centuries this story has become an inexhaustibly rich source for countless homilies. I shall use my preacher's license to add another to that number. We are told that on that occasion Jacob's name was changed from Yaacov to Yisrael, because "thou hast striven with God and man and hast prevailed."

Now we know what it means to prevail against another human being. It means to overcome him in combat. But what can prevailing against God, or overcoming God in combat, possibly mean? There is a well-known story about a Spanish Jew who, in 1492, left Spain on a boat captained by a pirate. After stripping the Jew of his belongings and separating him from his family, the pirate left him on an abandoned island. Whereupon the Jew, looking toward heaven, said, "O Lord, You have done everything You could to cause me to lose faith in You. But I tell You now again, You will not succeed." That Jew strove with God and prevailed.

We are constantly striving with God. Our faith in Him and in the great ideals He set before us, the ideals of holiness in our personal lives, of universal peace and justice, of a free, secure, prosperous and just Israel, is constantly challenged. For 2000 years of exile God has, so to speak, done everything He could to make us lose faith in Him and in His teachings. The Psalmist said it thousands of years ago: "Thou hast driven us like sheep to be eaten. Thou hast made us a taunt to our neighbors, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us. Yet we have not forgotten Thee, neither have we been false to Thy covenant." We have, as it were, refused to grant God victory.

And now with the establishment of the State of Israel and with the approaching completion of 25 years of achievement bordering on the miraculous, with the dawn of this new day after the millennial-long dark night, there are those who would give up the battle and dismiss the God with whom we have so gloriously wrestled all of this time, without even asking, as Jacob did, that He grant us a blessing before we permit Him to depart.

These buildings are dedicated to our continuing our long striving with God. The very essence of our life as individuals and as a people consists in this struggle to hold on to God. He, so to speak, has failed to break our hold on Him during the long bleak night. We shall not give up our hold on Him at this time when a new and brighter day is dawning. Like Jacob, we want to prevail in our striving with God. With God's help we shall prove worthy of the name *Yisrael*. We too shall prevail.

In Honor of Israel's 25th Anniversary

David Zucker

This is a joyous evening for all of us assembled at this historic convention, and also for the entire constituency of the Conservative movement throughout the world.

This is our ninth international convention, and of the nine this is the third that we are holding in Israel.

Our first gathering in Yerushalayim was in 1952. It was also the first convention of any synagogue body to take place in Eretz Yisrael.

Our second gathering in Israel took place only two years ago, and today we are happy to be back here again.

The love of the Conservative movement for the State of Israel did not begin with the establishment of the State. Ours is an abiding love which was woven into the very fabric of our movement. From the day that Solomon Schechter, of blessed memory, founded the Conservative movement, love of Zion never for one moment ceased to be an inseparable part of our lives.

When I pass by the "Wall," thousands of years of Jewish history flash before my eyes. And I say to myself, with pride and joy, "What a great time for a Jew to be alive!"

There is a State of Israel—now a quarter of a century old—which shines forth with strength and vitality.

There is a State of Israel which speaks up whenever Jewish rights are threatened.

There is a State of Israel which has transformed a desert into cultivated fields and which has ingathered millions of exiles.

There is a State of Israel which is capable of scientific research as well as study.

And there is a State of Israel which can defend itself.

What a great time for a Jew to be alive, and to know that his generation was instrumental in bringing about a Jewish State.

In the last 25 years, we stood by Israel in the days of the tent camps—in the days of rationing and austerity—in the days of the Fedayeen—in the days of the Six-Day War—and yes,—right now, in the days of Munich and letter-bombs.

We are justly proud of a strong Israel which we helped build.

We did this because we are recipients of a Jewish education which says *Am Yisrael chai*, which teaches us that we are a people who have given to the world a sense of values and social justice.

Let us clearly acknowledge that the very fact of Israel has straightened the spine and swelled the heart of every Jew.

Our new Center in Jerusalem, with the help of God, will bring to the people of Israel our Conservative approach to Judaism, with the hope that out of it will emerge a new and reinvigorated concept of Judaism.

We in the Conservative Movement are fully conscious of the fact that we are the only branch of Judaism which has never harbored anti-Zionists in its ranks. By the very definition of Conservative Judaism, one cannot be at the same time a Conservative Jew and an anti-Zionist. It is, therefore, altogether appropriate, that in the year in which Israel celebrates its 25th anniversary, the World Council should once again assemble on this hallowed soil and announce to the world that it is establishing its global headquarters in this holy city.

Encounter With Soviet Jewry

Professor Shneior Lifson

In August of this year I spent eight days in Moscow, where I participated in an international scientific congress on bio-physics. But my whole scientific visit was marked by my encounter with Jews, mainly with Jewish scientists in Moscow; it was a traumatic experience for me. I think this experience carries a message, and that is why I am willing to talk anywhere and everywhere about it. I do not think that this is solely a personal experience, but also a national, Jewish experience.

I shall begin in a rather personal way to tell you that for many years I believed—erroneously, as you will realize—that the Jews in Russia were lost to the Jewish people. I thought that under the Russian regime it would take another decade, another few decades, and they would disappear from our scene.

My first doubts, in fact my first mental shock, occurred about ten years ago, after listening to Avraham Shlonsky, one of the greatest, if not the greatest, living poet in Israel. Of Russian origin, Shlonsky translated much of the best poetry of Russia into Hebrew. A well-known figure, he visited Russia as a guest of the Academy of the Union of Poets and Writers. In a closed meeting of friends, he later related his experiences.

Shlonsky has relatives in the Soviet Union, whom he tried to contact. But all his efforts were in vain. Whenever he called them, nobody was at home, or they were busy. They could not meet him, they would not meet him; they were desperately afraid. Then, one day, he met a young man seventeen years old in the elevator of his hotel. In a frightened voice the young man said, "Shlonsky, I must talk to you. I am your nephew, and I want to get to Israel. I must get out." While riding up and down in the elevator late at night, he related his personal tragedy. This young man was an outstanding violinist who has won national prizes. However, he decided to stop playing, because he felt that if he would become famous, the Soviet authorities would never let him leave. He stopped going to the Comsomol, to any social gathering, because he was afraid that if he would fall in love with a girl he would change his mind about leaving.

This young man told Shlonsky that he was not religious; he did not believe in a Jewish God or any other God. His urge to associate himself with Jews, with Jewish life, was something mystical, something which he could not explain to himself, yet it was sufficiently strong to make him go to these extremes.

When I heard this story, I realized even in the early '60s that something under the surface and of colossal power was happening to the Jews in Russia.

I had previously visited Russia in 1968. I spent a few hours in Moscow and then proceeded to a scientific conference held in Sochi, a small resort on the Black Sea. There I tried to contact a Jewish physician who worked in the local hospital and who had been in contact with relatives in the West to whom he had indicated that he wished to go to Israel. It took me three days and a "scandal" to get him on the telephone, but I finally reached him late one evening. The only language we had in common was—Hebrew.

He came to my hotel, a frightened Jew, looking around him all the time, not knowing whether he was doing the right thing by talking to me. We did not know where to talk, for I was afraid my room was bugged. So I sat with him in the lounge and spoke for 15—20 minutes. He spoke Hebrew fairly well, but his vocabulary was very limited. He apologized, "I learned Hebrew underground, in hiding; and I don't know very much." Yet it was very good Hebrew!

I brought him a box of Elite chocolates. That had been my excuse to see him, and I had said to the conference organizers, "I have a box of chocolates for Dr. X from relatives." (And when I couldn't reach this Jew, I threatened the chief interpreter that I would put the box of chocolates in his suitcase and tell the whole world that in Russia you can't even give a box of chocolates to a person when you come to see him. The interpreter arranged for my telephone call!)

But the physician said, "I don't need your chocolates. Did you bring me books?" I had

brought a few Hebrew newspapers and a week-end magazine with me. I gave him the magazine. He folded it once or twice and tried to see where he could hide it. Finally he put it inside the box of chocolates. We went out and said goodbye in the dark.

This memory of a haunted Jew, afraid to talk, but taking the risk, had been part of me ever since. In fact, that was the reason why I wanted to go the conference in Moscow. I went there hoping to see a few Jews. And truly, the first thing that happened when I sat in the first session of one of the symposia—and it was a huge conference with 5,000 participants—was that an old man sat near me and, when nobody noticed, whispered to me, “I must talk to you in the intermission.” Half an hour later another seat near me became empty, and another person came, “I must talk to you in the intermission.”

I talked to many Jews and I want to tell you some of my experiences. I shall start with a famous scientist who was the chairman of a session where I gave a paper. He invited me for dinner one evening—and we spent the evening talking. He is a famous scientist, a member of the Academy. He does not even think of trying to get out of Russia. He’s too old for that, he says. And his children are assimilating. However, the Six-Day War had shocked and shaken him to such an extent that he had to speak to an Israeli. He told me, from his point of view, about the tragedy of Russian Jewry.

He said, “You see, the Jews could have assimilated; they would like to assimilate. It’s not so bad in Russia. True, we have lots of difficulties; we are not a free people. But if you learn how to live with the regime, there are many things that can bring happiness to life. Look at me. I have a successful career. I have even succeeded in getting permission to go abroad to a conference in the beginning of 1973.” (And he had received this permission without having to become an informant to the KGB—which is an exceptional achievement.)

Then he continued, “But you see, there is anti-Semitism in Russia. The Six-Day War in particular shook the entire Russian society. Everybody realized that the Jews—all the Jews, I among them—had their hearts in Israel at that time, and that we were not faithful citizens. The result is obvious. We are not trusted. And while I, as an old man, do not care, the young Jewish scientists have no future. They will only get inferior jobs, nothing of importance, nothing which has any bearing on state secrets or state interests, either military or economic or anything else.

“Since they are not trusted, and since anti-Semitism prevails everywhere, even those young men who wish to assimilate realize that they don’t have a chance. So many of them compromise, and some of them fight. This is a tragedy, for those who fight deny any hope for those who try to compromise to get anywhere. If only the fighting Jews would stop fighting, there would be some hope for others to assimilate, to accommodate, to make something out of their careers.”

My Russian-Jewish colleague did not like the fighting Jewish “extremists.” He felt that they did more harm than good. They, in fact, force all Jews to share the same fate, whether they like it or not. . . .

I met other Jews in Moscow, with different opinions and feelings. I remember one who said that nothing would make him happier than to get out of his Hell and go to Israel. But, he said, “I’m a coward. I don’t dare to get into a fight with the establishment, because they’ll crush me, they’ll crush my family.” He admired those who fought, and realized that some of them would win. But many would lose, would be sent to Siberia, would ruin their careers. And he said, “I’m a coward.”

Well, he was a coward, but he was a heroic coward. Because although he was fearful of being caught speaking to an Israeli, he could not resist inviting me to his home, although we didn’t take the bus. We walked for a long distance, talking all the time, to reach his home.

This scientist lives a good life in Russia—but he is not free. He has a very large, almost complete, collection of Israeli stamps, which he hides. He has Israeli records. You see, he is a heroic coward. He tries to have it both ways. He cannot disentangle himself from Jewishness and Israel, and he tries to live in peace with the establishment. Despite the fact that he too was trying to get permission to attend a conference abroad, he spoke to an Israeli, and has Israeli records and books.

There are hundreds of thousands of such heroic cowards among the Jews of Russia.

They are the majority of the Jews. They don't dare, but still they wait for the moment when they can come into the open.

Another such "coward" saw me in a cafeteria in the university, sitting with another scientist from the United States. He saw my name on my badge and said to me in Hebrew, "Do you speak Hebrew?" I said, "Yes." He said, "You know, I am trying to learn Hebrew (and he spoke a very poor Hebrew indeed), but I don't know how. I don't have books; I don't have a dictionary." So I said, "Do you need a dictionary? I'll give you one." I took out of my briefcase a Russian-Hebrew, Hebrew-Russian dictionary and gave it to him. He almost fainted. His face turned pale and he didn't know how to thank me. He took the dictionary and literally ran away. He is a coward too, you know.

Now I come to the third category of Russian Jews—the fighters. These are the people who cross the Rubicon, who decide that they cannot stand it any more. They decide to risk everything and apply for permission to leave Russia. I saw many of them. Let me tell you about one. He applied for permission to emigrate, and was fired from his job. He then began to teach Hebrew to make a living—and teaching Hebrew is illegal. When I met him he had been out of work for two months, and he told me that after four months he would legally become a parasite because he had no job. And then he would be subject to persecution, to prosecution, to be forced to work, or. . . . You see, one must work in a socialist society. There are no jobless people. And if you are thrown out of a job, you are a criminal, and after four months you are either sent to a remedial camp (which is a substitute for prison) or are forced to take a job, God knows where, in Siberia perhaps.

This Jew gave me a message to spread wherever I go. He said, "We don't need Hebrew texts for children. What we need are scientific books in all fields, in Hebrew. We'll use them as textbooks for learning and teaching Hebrew. At the same time we'll gain some familiarity with science as it is practiced in Israel."

This, then, is my message to you: Buy Hebrew books in the sciences, in the humanities, written on an academic level, and send them to Russia, to Jews who want to keep in touch with Israel through the Hebrew language.

Finally, I want to tell you about my most exciting experience. This was my meeting with the family of Professor Benjamin Levitch. I met him when he submitted a memorandum to the President of the Scientific Congress, protesting the fact that his work which he had submitted to the Congress, was plagiarized through the KGB. The Secret Police took the work, and ordered one of his subordinates to deliver the paper under his own name, erasing reference to Levitch's previous work.

Levitch told me how he had entered into the fight for freedom. It had started with his younger son, a physicist, who (like Shlonsky's nephew) felt a tremendous urge to get out of this Hell and go to what was paradise for him, to Israel. He, being young, courageous and extremely intelligent—a great scientist at the beginning of his career—and with the consent of his young wife, decided to apply for permission to emigrate. When he did so, not only was he thrown out of his job, but his father was demoted and ostracized by all his colleagues. He became a non-person. Levitch was also thrown out of his second position as professor at the University of Moscow. And he is one of the greatest scientists in his field, electro-chemistry, and author of many books translated into English. When Levitch saw what was happening to him, he also applied for emigration. So the whole family now waits for permission to leave.

Levitch and his son are among the scientists who are not even given the option of paying the education levy and leaving. Actually that levy is only a way to make the world believe that the Soviet anti-Jewish policy is merely a matter of money. The tragedy of the Jews—both those who fight, and those who wait clandestinely for the day when they will be able to go to Israel—is far, far beyond the tragedy of having to find the money to pay. I advise all of you to remember, and to remember every day, that the tragedy of the Jews in Russia involves the most far-reaching, courageous and fateful decision—to apply for emigration to Israel at tremendous personal risk, or to live in eternal frustration.

The Absorption of Soviet Jews in Israel

Dr. A. Ahrom

There are two aspects to the problem of absorption of Soviet Jews in Israel. One involves their integration and employment. The second is their psychological adjustment. I'll begin with the second aspect because it ties in neatly with the fascinating talk you just heard from Professor Lipson.

As you heard, Russian Jews are fighting, some of them for many years, some for shorter periods. Some have made larger sacrifices; some smaller ones. But most of them did sacrifice quite a lot. More than that, the pull toward Israel was really the center of their lives for a long time. It was the one problem which occupied their minds and souls, every day.

Now, when they come to Israel, they face a problem which, I think, is similar to the problem the "freedom fighters" had after World War II: they have to adjust to a dull, normal life. Russian *olim* in Israel face officials who aren't nice to them, who might be rude; when they challenge them, however, they are not being heroic, as they were in Russia. They are merely facing the ordinary difficulties which every other immigrant faces, and they have to adjust to this normal everyday life. This is the first problem, and it takes quite some time for most immigrants from the Soviet Union to overcome this psychological shock.

The more tangible problem is that of integrating into a job. In spite of all the difficulties and problems which I will mention shortly, studies conducted by the Ministry of Absorption on all immigrants, including those from the Soviet Union, indicate that after one year about 90–92 percent of all Russian immigrants who seek work are gainfully employed. That means that about 8–10 percent are still unemployed, which one should compare with an unemployment rate of 3 percent in Israel and, I believe, 5 or 6 percent in the United States.

I think this is an outstanding achievement for them and for us—especially if you take into consideration that, among the Soviet Jews, there is a very much higher percentage of people who want to work and who are working, than is the case among the population of other immigrants or among the general population of Israel. For example, of those who are above the age of 18 among the Israeli population and other immigrants, about 55 percent seek work. Among Soviet Jews the percentage is 68. In summary, two-thirds of them seek work, and 90–92 percent of that group are employed after one year.

What are the reasons for the higher employment rate among the Russian *olim*? And here we come to part of the problematics of their absorption. One of the most important reasons is that many more women have been accustomed to work in Russia than is the practice in Israel. They were engaged in many occupations, such as various kinds of engineering, which do not generally employ women in Israel or in other Western countries. The intensive use of female labor in Soviet Russia is made possible there because there are extensive facilities for child care, which enable women to go to work. These facilities do not exist here, and this is one of the reasons why fewer women are working in Israel. When women from Russia want to work in Israel, they face this problem which is new to them.

In general, the problems of employment which Soviet Jews face in Israel, on top of those problems which every immigrant faces, like not knowing the language, not knowing people in their profession, not knowing what is going on in their profession, etc., to a large extent stem from differences between the economy of Soviet Russia and of Israel.

First of all, Soviet Russia, being a huge country, can afford a very detailed division of labor. And therefore, their professional education is very much narrower and more specialized than is the case in Israel. Russian *olim* have to broaden their professional education and training if they want to fit into the Israeli economy.

The second problem which stems from the differences between the two countries is that

in some fields Soviet Russia is still technologically backward in comparison to Israel and other Western countries. For example, electronic engineering in Israel is almost completely transistorized; this is not the case in Russia. Fully qualified dentists from Russia also have difficulties when they begin to work here, because they are used to working with techniques and materials which have not been used in the Western world since the thirties and forties.

The Ministries of Immigrant Absorption and of Labor, and other agencies, try to overcome these problems mainly by providing facilities for additional training in the occupations in which immigrants have been employed abroad. We have provided such training programs for many years but we are now extending these programs to occupations of a much higher professional level, with the cooperation of various institutes of higher education. We are also trying to provide on-the-job training, and therefore we find it necessary to cover at least part of the immigrant's salary for the first few months, because some employers are reluctant to face the problems of retraining immigrants, and do not take the longer view that these people will eventually become very productive and good workers. Indeed, I think that from many points of view they have a much better discipline of work than Israeli workers.

Thus far, a very high percentage of Russian immigrants with academic occupations and professions find work in the same or related professions after one year. We are trying to develop industries which, in the future, will be able to absorb more of the highly professional manpower which is coming from Soviet Russia.

One of the most important elements in solving the employment problem of Russian—indeed, all—immigrants, is the ability to take the longer view, to keep one's perspective, to have patience. Let me give you an example. At the beginning of the 1960s a group of physicians arrived from Rumania. They had to start to work in clinics or in hospitals, whereas in Rumania many of them had been heads of departments. But heads of departments are limited in number in Israel, and it was difficult for them to move directly into these jobs. Today, however, you will find these physicians as heads of departments in hospitals throughout the country. But this took time; it was not immediate.

A few words about one group of Soviet immigrants about whom little has been known until recently—the Jews from Georgia. Although they number only some 60,000, they have been able to preserve their traditions for hundreds and hundreds of years. And they have succeeded in doing so much more than most other Jews in Soviet Russia, even under the fifty years of the Communist regime. They retained their synagogues and their *mikvehs*; they know how to pray. They possess more of the outer symbols of Judaism than most other Jews in Soviet Russia.

Now they have been able to do this mainly because they are a stubborn people. And when they come to Israel, nobody should expect them to turn, suddenly, into sheep! What they want is, from their point of view, often very obvious. In Soviet Russia they lived in large family groups—two, three, four generations together. They have very many extended family ties, and many of them speak only Georgian (which is not Russian). So they want to live among themselves, in large groups. We have had difficulties in providing such arrangements, but we are trying to do so, just as we are trying to give them the religious services which they rightly demand.

With the Georgian Jews, as with Russian *olim* in general, let us remember that their stubbornness has kept them alive as Jews. It is because they have been stubborn that we have the opportunity of having them with us!

World Jewry and Russian Jewry

Roman Rotman

Ladies and gentlemen, I have been in Israel for two weeks. I have come from Moscow, and I am glad that I can bring you greetings from the Jews of Russia who are no longer Jews of silence. I don't have to explain to you what we do to fight for our right to emigrate. You know about our petitions, our demonstrations, our hunger strikes. You have heard two speeches explaining the position of Soviet Jewry. I want to emphasize that Professor Lifson's talk was excellent; he painted an accurate picture of the current situation of Jews in Russia.

I am lucky to be here. I am lucky too that, although I am a scientist working in the field of cybernetics, I did not pay the new education levy, a ransom which, in the case of my wife and I, would have amounted to 42,000 rubles, or \$50,000.

But my friends are still in the Soviet Union, and I have a moral duty to explain to you what a desperate effort they are making to remain scientists.

You must understand that many Jews who are scientists have been deprived of their work, prevented from delivering lectures, stripped of their posts in scientific institutions. Still they try to remain scientists; they hold private seminars in their apartments. I myself was a member of one of those seminars.

I represent a group of Jews of Russia who certainly always were aware of themselves as Jews, but who also regarded themselves as part of Russian culture and Russian society. We tried to contribute to the fields of Russian culture and science, and you undoubtedly know how important a role the Jews do play in the cultural and scientific world of the Soviet Union.

And then a miracle occurred. More and more Jews became aware that they were Jews. It was a renaissance of Jewish consciousness. There were different elements entering into this awakening.

First, I want to emphasize the role of the Moscow synagogue. Very few Russian Jews are or were religious. But in the absence of any kind of Jewish activity, in the absence of Jewish national life in the USSR, the Moscow synagogue became a center of Jewish life. We would gather together, at first in front of the synagogue, which was our "club." We never went inside. Then, little by little, we began to enter the synagogue. When I first went there, I felt like a stranger; and then I got used to it and I felt that I was among my people.

The second element in our renaissance is the tremendous awareness of your support. We became conscious that we were part of the whole Jewish people. Everyone can remember the first telephone call we got from abroad. I remember. Everyone can remember the first Jews we met after applying for visas.

And the third element in our renaissance is the victory of Israel in the Six-Day War. Our pride in our State was so great that we became aware that we were Jews.

Those were emotional moments which we cannot forget. Then Jews came from other countries, to explain to us what it is to be Jewish; some came to serve as rabbis, particularly on holidays. You know, the Jewish holidays were important milestones on our way to Jewish consciousness. When you first come to the synagogue, for instance on Simhat Torah, and see only Jews around you, young Jews dancing and singing, you feel a Jew for the first time.

The authorities finally understood the role of those Jewish holidays, and tried to deprive us of the synagogue. They tried it in Kiev where, four weeks in a row, they arrested people in front of the synagogue, only for coming there. And we thought then that we must leave, we must go, because life was impossible, because we had become accustomed to coming to our synagogue for the Jewish holidays in the fall. Last fall, we were not permitted to gather in front of the synagogue in Moscow, but the most important part of the holiday was inside the synagogue, and it was made possible with the help of guests, particularly Rabbi Haskell Lookstein, who had come for that purpose from the United States.

We need your assistance, throughout the world, not only to help us reach the Promised Land, but also to help us achieve the spirit of Zion; and, ironically, in some ways it is easier to achieve it in Russia, than here in Israel. So please send trained people to explain to us in Russia what it means to be a Jew.

I must emphasize that your help is tremendous—not only in material assistance, but in public opinion. It is not only money that can save Jews in the Soviet Union. We need moral support as well. We have certainly received it, and we are greatly appreciative. But I must repeat once more, with urgency, on behalf of my friends who are still in the Soviet Union: Your help is our only hope.

Prisoners of Zion

Mrs. Sima Kaminskaya

(The following is a translation from Russian.)

I am a newcomer, an *olah*, in Israel only one year, and I am frequently asked if it was difficult for me to come to Israel. Yes, it was very difficult. We applied for an exit visa in 1966-67, before the Six-Day War. I was afraid of all the difficulties, and I was also afraid that I would not be able to leave, because at the time we were among a very small group of people who applied for emigration visas.

Now I am here—but my husband, who dreamed of Israel all his life, was arrested on June 15, 1970. Many of his friends were arrested with him; they were guilty only of being eager to come to Israel.

We learned Hebrew in secret *ulpanim*; we wanted to know as much as possible about our country. But what we read in the Soviet newspapers could only lead us astray, for they regarded our nation as a Fascist state. The Arab terrorists who killed children were heroes in those newspapers, and our army, on which the life of our people depended, was an army of aggression.

We wanted to tell Jews in the Soviet Union the truth about our country, and my husband was sentenced to five years of prison for that. Many of his friends were sentenced to even longer terms. Now they live in unbearable conditions in prisons and concentration camps. They are maltreated, not only by the administration, but by anti-Semitic prisoners as well. They are starving. They are working as slave labor.

I am here and I feel very much at home. But my heart is never at peace. I think every day about my husband, about his friends. I also think about those Jews who are still free, but who are in danger of being put in prison. How can we help them?

First of all, we must remember them always. The Soviet government must know that we have not forgotten them. The Soviet Union is now preparing for its 50th anniversary; it wants to show its achievements. But what is the value of those achievements if the government will not release Jews who were guilty only of the desire to be in their land? Altogether, they were sentenced to 150 years of imprisonment, three times as long as the so-called Jubilee.

I call upon you to demand the release of these prisoners from the Soviet government. I turn to you, and to all the organizations in the United States which can help them. We turn to our Jewish brethren; we rely on your help.

Discussion on Russian Jewry

Charles Schif (U.S.A.): How effective and how desirable are boycotts of Russian cultural missions? How effective are letters sent to Russian diplomats? In what other ways can we be effective in helping?

Mr. Rotman: The petitions which are directed to Soviet diplomats, the petitions which are signed by prominent scientists and officials are effective, as are the demonstrations held before Soviet Embassies abroad. For instance, the meeting which was held in New York on April 30th, on National Solidarity Day, was a tremendous meeting.

Question: How did you know about it?

Mr. Rotman: We knew a lot about it by telephone calls. Mail from abroad is practically stopped, but telephone calls from abroad used to reach us before they cut off our telephones. You know that the telephones of Jewish activists in Moscow were cut off before President Nixon's visit. Until then, we learned a great deal about efforts being made by world Jewry through phone calls.

Alan Meyerowitz (U.S.A.): Mr. Rotman, I would like to tell you that it was I who spoke to you by phone from Rochester, New York, on National Solidarity Day!

It is very difficult to make an appeal here after the stories we have just heard, but I have a message to deliver to this convention from my brother, who heads the National Soviet Jewry Committee of the United Synagogue Youth. One of their projects is a national telephone campaign. To date, fifty phone calls have been made to the Soviet Union, twelve of them during the month of October.

The message I have from my brother to all of you assembled at this convention, is to please go back to your congregations and tell your USYers that there is a desperate need to phone many Soviet Jews. These phone calls are coordinated by the USY national headquarters, and by the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, which will supply names and phone numbers of people to call, and provide information pertinent to the situation.

We are also asking you to help finance some of these phone calls, for we are trying to extend this program throughout the United States and make fifty phone calls each month. Thank you in advance for your help.

Arthur Levine: (Chairman): We must recognize with appreciation that the great drive for the Jews of the Soviet Union has been sparked not by the adult Jewish community, but by our young people. This is something that we shall never forget.

Mrs. Rapaport (U.S.A.): National Women's League is cooperating with nine national women's organizations that are holding rallies and conferences on behalf of Soviet Jewry in major cities all over the United States. At that time Jewish and Gentile leaders will meet, as they did last year.

Louis Willer (U.S.A.): What efforts are being made to direct the attention of the Christian community to the problems of Soviet Jewry, and to secure their participation in a very direct manner?

Mr. Levine: The Christian community, by and large, is actively engaged in helping us in our struggle—as, for example, the Catholic Bishops' Conference, and the National Council of Churches. In addition, the Communist Parties of various countries—Italy, France, etc.—are enlisted in this project. It is a Jewish struggle to the extent that Jews are involved; it is, however, a world concern, because these are not only Jews, but people of the world. We are grateful that the world has joined us in our campaign on their behalf.

Professor Tedeschi (Italy): In Italy we have created an inter-religious board, officially recognized by the government, to work on behalf of the Jews of Russia. Our results, I am afraid, are mixed. But you must remember that the most active role belongs to the Jews of America, because at this moment the American government is one of the most powerful in the world, the only one which can do something in its contacts with the Soviet Union on behalf of our brothers there.

Question: I am disturbed to read about people who are returning to Russia. How significant are the numbers of Soviet Jews who return to the Soviet Union after coming on *aliyah*?

Mr. Ahirom: Of all the groups of immigrants, the Jews from Soviet Russia have the smallest rate of leaving the country. At most, the returnees number well under one hundred.

Seymour Katz (U.S.A.): I'd like to bring to the attention of the delegates a program which was organized in Queens, New York, and could be copied throughout the United States. Our program is called the "telegram bank." We solicit people to give us permission to send a maximum of three "public service telegrams" to Washington throughout the year. These telegrams are minimal in cost, and the charge is added to the individual's phone bill. When a matter of urgency arises, rather than trying to get a few people to send telegrams, we have this bank at our disposal, and can send thousands and thousands of telegrams which are charged to those who have previously given us permission to do so. This provides a very effective network for letting the legislators in Washington know how we feel about various issues concerning Soviet Jewry.

Saul Perry (U.S.A.): We have been reading in the American press that Russian immigrants in Israel are given special consideration or privileges with respect to housing, resulting in resentment on the part of Israelis. How serious is that problem?

Dr. Ahirom: Immigrants from Russia receive the same treatment as all other *olim*. The problem of which you speak concerns all immigrants in Israel. There has been resentment on the part of old-time Israelis about not receiving the same treatment as the immigrants, whether in terms of lower-cost mortgages, or subsidized rent. However, much has been done by the government to provide more housing for the veteran Israelis. Already, the terms on which young couples, or people who live in difficult housing conditions, can obtain housing have been made comparable to those which the immigrants receive.

Meir Cohen (Israel and U.S.A.): Does Israel attempt to put individual Israelis in contact with Russian immigrants, to help their absorption? How can Israel absorb all the immigrants who will be coming?

Mr. Ahirom: We are trying to enlist the voluntary organizations, especially the women's groups, in an effort to provide individual treatment for the immigrants. I don't think we have done enough in this respect, but it is not easy for government officials to organize social life.

As to the second question, I am not worried about it. We now number about three million Jews, and we are not yet as crowded as many other countries. In this new world of developing technology, I would not start to worry until we reach six million, which is still far away. The most important thing is that when we receive the immigrants—and we hope that 150,000 immigrants a year will come from Soviet Russia—we must have the capital which, together with human resources, is needed in order to develop our nation. This aid we are receiving from world Jewry, and this you know much better than I do.

Blueprint for the Future

Jacob Stein

As president of the United Synagogue of America, and as a member of the Board of Directors of the World Council of Synagogues, I would like to share some thoughts with you concerning several matters that I think will face Jewry in the coming years, and the role that the World Council of Synagogues might play therein.

In his book *Jews, God and History*, Max Dimont wrote that the first 2,000 years of their history were years of thesis for the Jewish people, the second 2,000 years were years of antithesis for the Jewish people; and the 2,000 years which we are now ushering in are the years of synthesis. I think the function of the World Council might be to recognize this synthesis which is taking place, to recognize it particularly in terms of its religious expression.

If one examines Judaism throughout the free world, one finds a very strange situation. With very few exceptions, the religious community, such as it is, is made up of people whose natural bent would fall into the categories we call Conservative or Reform, and yet whose rabbis are Orthodox. More important, these are Orthodox rabbis who impose their disciplines upon the relatively few of their number who would dare to innovate, who would try to make any change. One of the important functions of the World Council of Synagogues can be to give support and encouragement, and a sense of global authenticity, to those rabbis who do introduce the winds of change into their communities. We must recognize, after all, that if there is a constancy in anything, it is the constancy of change. That is the hallmark of the times in which we live. The World Council of Synagogues can provide support for such change by recognizing the diversity of the Jewish communities in each of the countries of the free world.

I don't regard it as the function of the World Council of Synagogues to initiate religious practices or to create, in effect, a new movement. In Israel the authentic body reflecting our movement is the United Synagogue of Israel, and all member bodies of the World Council of Synagogues must work to help that group reach its full growth. I think the nature of change was recognized even here in Israel when Rabbi Goren, in his recent ruling on *mamzerim*, accepted the statement of the late Rabbi Solomon Schechter, who said, "Be neither as rigid as the cedar nor as pliant as the reed." It was somewhere in this middle zone that Rabbi Goren found it fit to move, and I think he merits our applause and support for his action.

The most important element in the World Council of Synagogues is the United Synagogue of America. The United Synagogue lends its support to the full flowering and development of new congregations of our movement in Israel. The United Synagogue was instrumental in securing certain building permits for the congregations in Haifa and in Ashkelon. We are delighted to have had the possibility of participating in these momentous undertakings.

Here in Jerusalem, in our new building, we hope to carry on summer programs for our thousand youngsters. We have installed, as director of the building, Mr. Pesach Schindler. We have asked the Director of Activities of the United Synagogue of Israel, Rabbi Moshe Cohen, to be fully cooperative. We are going to expand our college-age facilities and the Atid program. We hope to have a book-mobile travelling to the far reaches of Israel, bringing collections of Judaica, film strips, an indication of available religious alternatives, to those in Israel who are seeking a viable modification of the present Orthodox community.

As I see it, it is not the function of the United Synagogue or of the World Council to create a "Hechal Shlomo" in the building on Agron Street. But the building will house a synagogue where all of our people will be welcome. Again, we are not trying to create a synagogue which is a compromise, or an amalgam, or a tasteless pudding which seeks to satisfy all of the diverse elements in Judaism. We recognize that there are many groups in Judaism, each of which should have its own synagogue to encourage the strengthening of its particular cultural program.

It is extremely important that the work of the World Council of Synagogues be relevant to the times and tides that we are experiencing. A few days ago, I stepped on three scales. One of them indicated that I weighed 27 pounds. I got off that scale and moved to another; it said I weighed 3700 pounds. Finally, I stepped on a third scale which said I weighed 180 pounds. These three scales were in the Hayden Planetarium in New York City. One scale was labeled "Jupiter," where I weighed 3700 pounds. The other was labeled "the Moon," where I weighed 27 pounds. And the third was labeled "the Earth." I think that numbers, terms, ideas, and concepts are only relevant if they are related to the environment in which they exist. Let us remember, whenever we think that something is right in the United States, or Israel, or Denmark, that it is not necessarily right or relevant in France or Latin America.

It is, however, important for every Jewish community, irrespective of differences, to undertake a very special relationship to Israel. At the present time, a fine, harmonious relationship exists between Israel and the Jewish communities of the world. This is so for two reasons. One is that in the last twenty-five years we have witnessed the Holocaust, the extermination of one-third of our people. This has produced a unique amalgam of emotions that move us to a position of largely unquestioning harmony with Israel. The second reason is the Six-Day War, when our guilt syndrome was replaced by a powerful surge of pride and the desire to identify more closely with the source of this pride, Israel.

However, while the Israel-Diaspora situation is fine at present, we are told that within the near future, throughout the world, 50 percent of the population of the countries in which we live is going to be under the age of 25. These will be young people who did not live through the events of Auschwitz. It is logical to project that they will not have the same emotional linkage with Judaism, with all that it implies, nor express this attachment in terms of financial, moral and political support for Israel. Nor will they be inclined to the degree of self-discipline we accept, consciously or otherwise, in matters relating to Israel. One of the functions of the United Synagogue, the World Council, each constituent member of the World council, is to bring a relevant message to our people, to strengthen and encourage this special relationship which exists between Israel and the Jewish communities of the Diaspora.

Finally, I recognize that when we, at this convention, pass resolutions which are binding on all, of necessity they must be of a non-controversial nature. But behind the general resolutions we are all charged with maintaining our own awareness of what is relevant to us. The Bible describes how the Jews assembled when they traveled through the wilderness on the way to the Promised Land. In the center of the multitude was the Ark, and around it, each in its own place, were the twelve tribes of Israel: "Each man in his place but by his own banner." The center, the core, was the Ark, the Torah, the commitment. But each tribe carried its own banner. And it was in this way, each man by his banner, that all of us were able to move forward and achieve the progress that we attained.

That, I think, might well be the over-all goal of the World Council of Synagogues.

Farewell Remarks

Morris Speizman

I should like to extend sincere thanks and appreciation on behalf of us all, to the keystone of our convention, our genial chairman, Mr. Gerrard Berman.

I should also like to thank personally the United Synagogue of Israel, whose president, Dr. Chaim Riskin, and his associates who have also labored mightily to make our convention a success. You may not have realized—as I did not—that our dedication ceremony yesterday was graced by the presence of many, many men and women who left their jobs, their homes and their offices to be with us on that historic occasion. Those present included not only mature men and women but also a number of young soldiers who used some of their precious leave to be with us.

For all of this we are grateful, and we will count on the continued counsel and leadership of the United Synagogue of Israel in the work ahead.

Reinhold Niebuhr has said that man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary. In a similar vein we Jews of the Conservative movement feel that the adverse actions of other ritualistically motivated fellow Jews of the Orthodox persuasion make our presence and growth in Israel and elsewhere a vital necessity. That is why—amongst many other positive reasons—we must continue to work for our goals and ideals.

Installation Address

Rabbi David Goldstein

It is fitting that the installation of officers is being held today, for as our hard-working Convention Chairman, Gerrard Berman, has reminded us, today is Thanksgiving Day. The sense of gratitude is one of the most important aspects of Jewish religious life. I think you know that every Jew is asked to make one hundred *berakhot* a day. We have at least one hundred opportunities to express our thanksgiving daily. And certainly, biblically and historically, Thanksgiving Day owes much to the description of Sukkot in the Bible.

When you consider the meaning of thanksgiving, of giving thanks, you find in the dictionary that "think" is related to "thank." And, by coincidence, in Hebrew the word *modeh* means to thank, and also to acknowledge and be aware of. Thus we learn that only the thoughtful person can be the thankful person. Similarly, "thanks" and "giving" are related. Only one who knows how to give may also know how to receive. And the one who gives thanks also gives generously of his substance.

Today we think of and we thank, first of all, Morris Speizman and the members of his administration for their superb achievements, and for their devotion. The fact is that the acquisition of the Center for Conservative Judaism in Jerusalem is not an achievement of our movement. It was made possible by two individuals, by David Zucker and Morris Speizman. They stepped forth when no one else was ready to do what was so imperative. To Morris Speizman and David Zucker we express our thanksgiving and our appreciation.

As far as the new officers are concerned, you are aware of their records. Our new president, Sam Rothstein, was the president of the United Synagogue for ten years. To you and to your new administration I say, in the words Solomon Schechter quoted from our Sages when he addressed newly ordained rabbis at the Seminary: "I give you not *rabbanut*—I give you not mastery; but I give you *avdut*—I give you service." Your term of office is a period of time in which to dedicate yourselves to necessary tasks, here in Jerusalem, and throughout the Jewish world.

May I emphasize what needs to be done here in Jerusalem: the establishment of a complete, religious, educational, social and cultural center. You may have noted that I like to use a dictionary at a time like this. I looked up the word "install," just as I looked up the words "think" and "thank." To install means to put in place for use and service. You are going to be used. You are going to serve. Let me remind you that insofar as an appliance is concerned, unless it is connected with a source of power, it does not work; it provides no service if it is detached. You too have a source of power to which to relate, and that is—God, Torah and Israel. As long as you are connected, related to the source of our power, there is every reason for your successful achievement of all that we hope for and all that we have visualized.

With these words in mind, we once again express our gratitude to Morris Speizman and the entire administration which now leaves office. And may I now declare installed for use and service, and plugged into the source of our power, the newly elected officers of the World Council of Synagogues, and the newly elected members of its Board of Directors.

Acceptance Speech

Samuel Rothstein

On behalf of my fellow officers and the newly-elected directors, I want to thank you and express to all of you our deep appreciation and gratitude for giving us the opportunity to serve the Conservative movement through the World Council of Synagogues.

We pledge our wholehearted and dedicated service to the World Council. We hope that we shall merit the great trust you have placed in us by electing us as your officers and directors.

I shall be pleased to receive your suggestions regarding the direction our efforts shall take during the coming years. But I do wish to share with you my belief that although we are mindful of the tasks that confront us throughout the world, and we shall not overlook them—especially the requests that were made by delegates from various countries—our primary tasks in the next two years should be in Israel. I think that you will agree in that assumption.

Under the splendid leadership of our Honorary President, Morris Speizman, we have made considerable progress in Israel since our last convention. I am confident that the new Center for Conservative Judaism in Israel, which we dedicated yesterday, will prove to be the catalyst that we need to carry through our many projects. With your help and the help of all the members of our movement, we should be able to implement a more meaningful and effective program. We shall continue to seek and always welcome your interest and cooperation.

The Conservative Movement and the World Zionist Organization

Louis Pincus

I wish to congratulate your organization on the dedication of its building yesterday. It is certainly a very happy augury, and is symbolic of your ties to Israel and to the World Zionist Organization. I think there is much that you can give us, and I think there is much that you can derive from being associated with our organization.

Fortunately, in this group I don't think we have to discuss differences in ideology to any large extent. I don't think that the Zionist philosophy is strange to the Conservative movement. But it seems to me that, as a world movement, the time has come for you to take stock of whether you are only a religious organization, or whether you are also making a contribution to the unity and survival of the Jewish people.

It is that question that we Zionists, in and out of the Zionist Organization, have been debating: Are we proceeding correctly? Are we broadening our base? Are we creating an instrument that can provide vigor and pragmatism to the concept of Jewish peoplehood? I think that after 25 years of Israel's existence, the time has come for us as a Zionist movement and for you as a world organization to consider seriously whether our relationship can be closer. I will try to make clear to you how we have developed, and how, in my opinion, it is possible for a relationship to exist between us.

The Zionist movement always assumed that the State was not an end in itself. We assumed that it would be a means to an end, that it would be the decisive force in ensuring the survival of the Jewish people wherever it may exist. Since the pre-Israel days, and certainly since the State came into being, there has been a debate between Ben-Gurion and the Zionist Organization, as to whether there was a justification for the continuation of that movement once the State had been established. We never accepted the proposition that the Zionist Organization should disappear once Israel was born; nor did Israel accept it. As if the State was an end in itself, and that there was no more Zionist work to be done! I can only add in brackets, "The Zionist movement is necessary to ensure that the State of Israel will remain a Zionist state." This is quite aside from our work in the Diaspora.

There is a very curious law in Israel called "The Law of Status." It accords a special position to the World Zionist Organization "and/or the Jewish Agency." I will refer to this reconstruction a little later. This law recognizes that the World Zionist Organization is responsible in the fields of absorption, immigration and colonization. It also says, in paragraph 5, "And the government and the people of Israel expect the World Zionist Organization to broaden its base so that it may achieve the maximum unity of the Jewish people in the Diaspora." I imagine that there is no such parallel in any law in any country.

The Zionist movement has tried in various ways, not very successfully, to broaden its base. We created Associate Memberships that would include Boards of Deputies and other organizations which were not *per se* Zionist organizations. Some joined, but the idea withered. It is but a relic today.

Then we took an administrative step. We co-opted to our Executive—without calling them representatives of the main religious trends—individuals who could express at our meetings the outlook of the religious movements from which they came. But this move did not achieve what needed to be achieved.

Finally we took what I believe to be a very far-reaching step. We brought into being the "reconstituted Jewish Agency." We said that whereas the Jewish Agency was the practical arm of the Zionist Organization, wholly controlled by the Zionist movement, it nonetheless received its funds from all kinds of people. Indeed, recently, and in the United States in particular (though not in most other countries), most Jewish Agency money has come from what I would call "non-card-carrying Zionists." We felt that the time had come to change the situation, and that we had to bring the people in the Diaspora who were busy helping Israel, into the decision-making process at the ground level. We had to bring them closer to our problems, and give them a say as to what kind of

Israel we Jews as a totality want. It is not right to say to Israel: we'll give you money; build the Israel you want. Diaspora Jewish communities should no. Direct Israel how it should ensure its security and survival, but it should have a say in how it solves its social problems, in whether it will be a state based on social equality and justice.

I must tell you that by bringing Diaspora Jews closer, we also make them more active; we make them more involved. After two years of this reconstituted Jewish Agency, the positive results have exceeded our anticipation. And the imponderables are far more important than the actual aims with which we challenged ourselves and the Diaspora. We have constructed an instrument that inevitably will be dealing with the totality of Jewish life, because the representatives who come from overseas are also communal leaders who are directing the fate and future of practically every reasonably-sized Jewish community in the world. In taking this step the Zionist movement has not only broadened its base, but has brought the Jewish people closer to the problems of Israel.

You come to a Jewish Agency Assembly, and the debate is on the Panthers, on whether we are doing the right thing in regard to absorption, whether we are really creating one people in Israel. And instead of saying to the Diaspora, "You want to do it? Come here and settle. Otherwise you have nothing to say," we say that every Jew who identifies himself with the broad philosophy of the centrality of Israel is entitled to have his voice heard in our discussions.

The Jewish Agency as reconstituted is a very, very powerful instrument in Jewish life. In the corridors of the Jewish Agency, in the meetings of our Assembly and our Board of Governors, you will find us talking about the totality of Jewish life. When we start talking about *aliyah*, we talk about Russia, Rumania and Morocco, and within minutes we are also talking about *aliyah* from South America, from the United States and from England. When we talk about problems of education in Israel, we are immediately told, "We've got a similar problem in our country. If you can do such-and-such here, why can't you help us there?"

As a Zionist movement we are concerned with Jewish survival everywhere. I don't have to describe to you the degree of erosion in Jewish life. I know that the synagogues are making giant strides and that they are the center of Jewish life. I know that the young leadership in the UJA is progressing. It's all true. But I'll tell you something else that is true. The vast majority of the 400,000—500,000 Jewish students in the United States are alienated from Jewish life. Despite all that is being spent on Jewish education, the problem of the survival of Jewish life in the Diaspora is frightening. And we—the Zionist movement and the Jews of Israel—have as much right to tell you what we think on that subject, as I believe you have the right to tell us—whether in the reconstituted Jewish Agency or elsewhere—what you think about how we should be running our affairs in this country.

A few months ago, when the crisis of "who is a Jew?" and conversions reached a peak here, I was inundated by the Orthodox who threatened that if we did not change the law to make conversion obligatory according to the *halakhah*, we would have the entire Orthodox world against us. In a much lower key, I received letters and petitions from the Conservative and Reform movement saying, "Remember, if you are going to compel a halakhic conversion, you are going to alienate other groups of Jews." Let us not talk now about a solution to the problem. I merely want to point out two things. 1) Both sides were entitled to express their views on this matter, and nobody can tell any group, "Don't interfere in our business." 2) When Israel makes a decision on the issue, it must understand that, if it believes in the centrality of Israel, it is legislating *de facto* if not *de jure* not only for itself, but for the Diaspora as a whole. That imposes enormous responsibilities. And the bridge in regard to those responsibilities has become, more than ever, because of the broadening of our base, the World Zionist movement.

Therefore, if you hold your ideals seriously, I believe that you have to find your way into those forums where the action is. The Zionist movement is 50 percent of the Jewish Agency as reconstituted, and the Jewish Agency embodies in a very real sense the vital bridge between all the Jewish communities of the world. If you are not participating in it, your voice is so much weaker in determining ultimates in Jewish survival.

We are concerned with Jewish education. Jewish education for what? What is the

content that we should strive for? Let me quote from what I said to the World Zionist Congress on this issue: "The content of Jewish education must give the emancipated Jew a feeling of certainty that he belongs to a group of his choice, whose uniqueness has a value for him, and through which he can make his contribution. The teaching of Jewish history and the Hebrew language, therefore, are not merely techniques for accumulating knowledge, but vehicles for transmitting the Jewish heritage in tangible form. In this setting, Israel, its pioneering and social forms, will play a central role. I have no doubt that in America, in which the black movement has legitimized the concept of building a radical movement around ethnic identity, this kind of Jewish education could give the young radical Jew an opportunity to express his radicalism through Jewish commitment."

But the Diaspora cannot do this alone. And Israel cannot do this alone. Together we stand a chance, but there is no certainty. We face a terrible struggle when we seek to inject Jewish values into a free and open society, with its powerful culture pulling at the individual Jew. We face a very difficult fight when we try to attract masses of young people, give them a sense of pride in their past and an acceptance of their common destiny with the rest of the Jewish people. Israel's Ministry of Education, our universities, our leading thinkers, accept the thesis that it is our obligation to help the Departments of Education in the World Zionist Organization. Training centers for teachers for the Diaspora are being set up. This is the kind of activity that I am asking your movement to join.

On the expanded Jewish Agency we sit together with the Joint Distribution Committee, with ORT, with the Alliance Israelite Universale. Jews in South America, South Africa, Australia, are all saying, "This is what we have been waiting for." Perhaps, today, the United States may have to contribute more than it receives in our meetings; but in the long run it will also receive from this association.

That is the function of American Jewish life. If there is any real value beyond numbers in the American Jewish community, it is that it should contribute to the well-being of the total Jewish people. I know that the American Jewish community has a great deal to contribute—and in this respect I am not paying the Conservative movement compliments, just because I am speaking at this convention.

Today, the decisive issue in the relationship between Israel and the Diaspora, practically, politically, economically, socially, psychologically, will be determined by the issue of *aliyah*. If we can't encourage a steady stream (I'm not talking about size) of young people willing to come because of the pull of Israel, to build the kind of Jewish State that we all dream about—then all our future relationships will be warped.

I must tell you that I've been on the Agency Executive for over twelve years, and I don't remember a period in which the free Jewish world has been so willing to listen to the question of *aliyah* in respect to itself. Today I made a presentation on *aliyah* to the President's Conference, a group that is not committed, as the Conservative movement is committed. I spoke about *aliyah* from three areas, of which one was the United States. But nine-tenths of the discussion and debate took place concerning the United States. There were all kinds of offers, of joint action and assistance.

Aliyah is vital for us and our future, for the Jewish State, which is your future too. My conviction is that your Jewish life will be strengthened to the same degree that *aliyah* will develop from your country. I've seen it with regard to South Africa, with regard to towns in the United States. How you do it is a very different question. What you say, how you talk to a multifaceted Jewish community—we can't tell you. But we need day-to-day understanding and cooperation, the acceptance of *aliyah* as a basis of your movement, as it is a basis of ours.

I think this has special relevance to you in particular. And therefore we in the Zionist movement, and this is the organizational relevance of everything that I have said, have decided that there is no need to join us through the "party" gate. The political parties exist and will always exercise great influence. But no individual and no world organization need have a party label in order to join the World Zionist movement. Three world groups have already joined us: WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organization), the World Sephardi Federation, and the Maccabi World Movement. We can work together because, fundamentally, we have one common belief: one people and one

destiny; Jewish education and *aliyah* as moral obligations; the struggle for Jewish rights wherever they are imperilled; Jewish survival based upon the centrality of Israel.

Israel's centrality is not a matter of controversy any more. Israel is far from having achieved its aims, but it can become the major instrument in the survival of the Jewish people. If, on that basis, we talk about the relationship between the Diaspora and Israel, then the right to speak frankly one to the other is clear. We can criticize you—and I've tried. I've tried to admit that we are very vulnerable ourselves in certain areas. But if we talk to each other and recognize our interdependence, we can fashion and maintain one people.

I would ask you, friends, to think this thing through, because we are living in a decade which may represent one of our last opportunities for maximizing what Israel can do for the Diaspora and for uniting the Diaspora with Israel into one people. This decade could be decisive, and time is of the essence. There are enormous dangers within Israel and outside it. The dangers in the free world are no less threatening to Jewish survival just because they do not involve physical threat. If we can find the way to bridge the gap between us, I think that we can pass from what could be the gloomy twilight of our present struggle for survival into a very bright morning, in which the Jewish people as a whole can continue to add another chapter in the forward march of humanity.

David Zucker: I would like to record the important role that Mr. Pincus, as head of the Jewish Agency, played in our acquisition of the Center for Conservative Judaism here in Jerusalem. When I had an opportunity to negotiate for the building, I needed an immediate commitment for \$100,000. Mr. Pincus graciously made it possible for us to obtain the sum for the short time that it was needed. We wish to thank Mr. Pincus publicly for the part he played in our acquiring the Center that we dedicated yesterday.

Discussion With General Moshe Dayan

Presentation by Mr. Samuel Rothstein

It is a great pleasure to present Gen. Dayan with a scroll which is inscribed as follows:

O God, bless his strength and accept the work of his hands.
Smite the loins of his enemies that they may not rise again.

The Conservative movement is proud to acclaim Moshe Dayan an illustrious Jew, valiant soldier, brilliant leader of men, and master defender of the borders of Israel. We rejoice in conferring upon him the Solomon Schechter Award.

Veteran of the Haganah and the War of Independence, co-founder of Palmach, wounded in action, member of Israel's Armistice Delegation at Rhodes, Chief of the General Staff of Israel's Defense Forces during the Sinai Campaign, architect of strategy of the Six-Day War—your phenomenal achievements have captured the imagination of the entire world. You have become a symbol of our people's struggle for survival and its determination to surmount the dangers still confronting it. The Jews of our generation, and all who will come after us until the end of time, will be everlastingly in your debt.

May the promise of the prophet be fulfilled for you: "And I shall behold Jerusalem as a peaceful habitation, a tent that shall not be removed, the stakes whereof shall never be plucked up. Neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken."

Question: How much of the Sinai and the other captured territories can Israel give up without endangering its security?

Gen. Dayan: I don't think that we should draw specific lines now, but I do think that I can give you a general idea about what we think the security boundaries of the country should be.

In the north, we think that we should keep the Golan Heights. On the east, we think that our soldiers should stay on the Jordan River and that no other forces should be allowed to cross the Jordan into the Western Bank of what we call *Eretz Yisrael*.

And then we think that we should not again leave the stretch of land between Eilat and Sharm el Sheikh to anybody else, as we did once before with disastrous results. We must remain in control of the navigation to Israel's southern port of Eilat. Nor do we think that we should go back to the old border line with Egypt. Not only should the Gaza Strip stay within our country, but we should not go back to the old international line in the south.

Finally, we get to the Mediterranean. Now where the exact line will be between Sharm el Sheikh and the sea, is a matter for negotiation. It has not been decided, but the Government does not think that the present cease-fire line, the Suez Canal, must be the final line. On the other hand, we don't think that we have to go back all the way to the old international line. So somewhere in between, when we negotiate, we hope that a new boundary line will be drawn.

To sum it up: it would be the Golan Heights, the Jordan River, Sharm el Sheikh, and a line in the Sinai Desert connecting Sharm el Sheikh and the Mediterranean.

Question: We know you were in Washington recently, and we know that the American elections are over. Have you sensed renewed pressure on you by the American Administration since the elections?

Gen. Dayan: No, there was no pressure during my recent talks in Washington. What I did in Washington was to exchange views with everybody that I met—with Professor Kissinger, with the State Department, with the Pentagon. We compared thoughts: how we see relationships with the Arabs, with Russia, with other relevant elements, and how they see the situation in Washington. But we did not discuss anything that could have been connected with pressure.

Question: General, I take it from what you said in connection with the nature of the Suez boundary, that Israel is prepared to consider, as part of the settlement, the abandonment of the Bar Lev Line. Is that so?

Gen. Dayan: The Bar Lev Line is a military line, and as long as the war continues, I don't think that we should leave it or the Suez Canal. (Once the Canal was a good waterway; now it is a good military defense line.) But when—and if—we get peace and we negotiate, I don't think that this necessarily will be the final boundary between Israel and Egypt. If we do have peace, the major consideration will not be what a good military line is, but what a good, lasting, peaceful boundary should be; and I don't think that the Suez Canal is the best line for a permanent boundary between Israel and Egypt.

Question: Why does a military authority grant permission for the establishment of an exclusive place of Jewish worship within an area previously reserved for Moslem worship only? In accordance with what I have read in the newspapers, the group that is now settled in Kiryat Arba near Hebron has asked for a synagogue area to be established in the area of the mosque located in Ma'arat Hamachpelah. The newspapers report that the military authority is supposed to have given permission for the synagogue, and "Ha'aretz" this morning carries a rather long article about the dangers that are involved in awakening understandable religious fanaticism on the part of the Arabs.

Gen. Dayan: Ma'arat Hamachpelah is more than a mosque. It was the tomb of the Patriarchs, and then it was a Herodian building, and then it was conquered by the Arabs in the seventh century and turned into a mosque. But the tombs of the Patriarchs have been recognized by everyone as being located there.

I will not go into all the history, but Jews have prayed there all through the centuries, until the Muslims denied them that right. During the last few hundred years, Jews were not even allowed to enter Ma'arat Hamachpelah, but only to climb up to the seventh step outside the building. But this was not the history of the place during the entire Muslim regime; now and again there were more liberal Muslim leaders. Lately they have been less liberal. Now, when we came back to Hebron and to Ma'arat Hamachpelah, we changed the regulations and allowed Jews to enter the building. And when they visited the tombs

they prayed; indeed, some of them came especially to pray there. So we set aside one corner where they might pray, not among the Muslims, but not far from the tombs, for we felt that we should not deny Jews the right to pray there.

I don't think we do much harm to Muslims if Jews are allowed to pray. They are not allowed, for instance, to bring in wine, because that offends the Muslims. But on the other hand, we asked the Muslims not to hold funerals and have their dead in the building while Jews are praying there. They can hold their funerals earlier or later. Thus the time is divided, though we have not touched the praying hours of the Muslims. Jews are allowed to come in and pray only when the Muslims are not praying. It is my honest view that this arrangement can continue. We would not have done it in any mosque; but there is only one Ma'arat Hamachpelah, where the Patriarchs are worshipped by both Muslims and Jews, with both groups believing that they are buried there. There is only one place like that in the entire world, and this one place actually represents the family relationship between us and the Arabs, for these are tombs of the common fathers of the Muslims and the Jews.

Question: Are we to understand that nothing has happened in Hebron within the last few months which is different from what has been the case previously?

Gen. Dayan: No, there have been changes. The first change that I referred to occurred after the Six-Day War. Then, a few months later, the number of people coming to pray began to increase, because a Jewish colony, Kiryat Arba, was established in Hebron, and during the holidays several hundred Jews came to Ma'arat Hamachpela to pray. The changes that we introduced are only three: The first one was to provide more room because more people came. We made more room not in the area in which the Muslims pray, but in the other direction. Secondly, we brought in chairs and benches. If people are praying for long periods, especially on Yom Kippur, why should they have to stand? I don't think this causes great harm to the Muslims. And the third is that on Friday afternoon, between 3:30-4:30 P.M., before the Muslim prayer time comes (they start their prayers about five o'clock), people who live in Hebron and want to have *Kabbalat Shabbat* at the tombs, can come for an hour and pray there.

Question: General Dayan, what is Israel's policy regarding the integration of the administered areas with Israel—economically, politically and socially?

Gen. Dayan: I don't think that our policy is aimed at integration. The situation requires some government to be there—either the Jordanians' or our own. People seek work, so we have to decide whether to let them come to Israel and work—especially the refugees from the Gaza Strip—or to remain unemployed. Then, they need electricity, water, irrigation, transportation, telephones. So the administered areas have been tied in with Israeli services. People travel back and forth to work; they earn Israeli money. In order to do something with the money, they have to buy products. Either they produce their vegetables themselves, or we sell them our produce.

In summation, we really do not aim at the integration of the area, but we cannot have an independent state of Gaza, or an independent state of the West Bank. In practical matters there is considerable involvement between Israel and the administered areas, and I think this is for the best. Had we maintained only a military regime there, and not permitted the inhabitants to work, to cross into Israel; had we not developed the area, our relationship would have been much worse.

I am very proud that in the administered areas we have been more than a military regime; we have been a developing and progressive government. Let me put it like this: I think that the Ministry of Agriculture which introduced new brands of wheat, taught methods of fertilization, improved the crops, and raised the income there, contributed much more than the military command.

Question: What do you feel regarding the lack of recognition of Conservative rabbis in Israel?

Gen. Dayan: I don't know much about the specific situation, but I am all for every group of Jews who want to be here and practice their brand of religion, or be non-religious.

They should all be allowed to follow their own practices. I can't see why I, who am not religious at all, is welcome in the country, while you, being religious in a different way, are not. By all means—welcome!

Question: Will Rabbi Goren's action have an impact on other problems related to personal status?

Gen. Dayan: I don't know what Rabbi Goren is going to do in the future, but I am very happy and grateful to him about what he has already done. And if he comes across other problems and manages to settle them, I think it will show first-class leadership. That is what we expect the Chief Rabbi to do—solve problems, not create them.

Question: Do you still think, as you once stated, that Israel should not organize terrorist groups?

Gen. Dayan: I will not go into the technical or political question of how we should fight the terrorists, but I will say that anything done in this field should be authorized by the Government. I don't think that anybody should take the law of this country into his own hands. Whatever we do, and how we do it, here and abroad, should be authorized and organized by the Government.

Question: General Dayan, why are there such heated debates among the Israeli leadership concerning the disposition of the occupied territories, when the Arab countries are unwilling to talk to Israel under any circumstances?

Gen. Dayan: I understand that you take it that we should not discuss this publicly among ourselves. Well, you must realize that we are a democratic country, and we have different parties and views. I believe that every responsible leader who speaks out on that subject takes into consideration that whatever he says will be published. Still, I would not stop such discussions, provided they are carried out within the right framework.

Question: Do you favor civil marriage in Israel?

Gen. Dayan: If there will not be any other alternative, I will favor it. If we cannot allow everybody in this country to marry within religious law, then I think we should allow civil marriage too.

Question: In my country, Italy, the feeling prevails in certain government circles that once there is a framework of peace, there is no need to have secure boundary lines. They say, therefore, that if Israel would renounce its line of security, peace could be achieved more quickly. Do you think this is a wise point of view?

Gen. Dayan: Our immediate, to say nothing about our long-range, history does not prove the wisdom of that argument. We had borders which were very poor military lines in 1948, but we accepted them. We said, let's have peace along whatever lines the Arabs agree upon. But the Arabs didn't want to make peace with us, and they said it would be just an Armistice Agreement. Some of our people said, all right, eventually the Armistice Agreement will turn into a permanent peace. But these were very poor boundary lines, and the Arab terrorists were able to open fire and cross the lines.

The minute that we signed the Armistice Agreement, though it was promised that we would have free admittance to Mount Scopus, to the Mount of Olives, and to the Western Wall, Jews could not go there. Yet we accepted this, did nothing about it, and were even ready to sign peace agreements along these lines. But King Hussein couldn't stand those lines, and crossed them.

We were in Sharm el Sheikh too, before it was blocked between 1951-56, when we took it and opened a waterway for our ships which transport most of our essential oil to the port of Eilat. Still, after we beat the Egyptians in 1953 and took Sharm el Sheikh, we agreed that United Nations observers should be stationed there, and we withdrew our troops back to Israel. We said exactly what you said just now: it is better to have peace without military positions; peace will be more valuable than having soldiers there. But it didn't take ten years until Nasser thought that he could succeed in changing the situation, and sent home all the United Nations observers. None of the Big Powers was ready to

intervene in any way, and we felt that we had to reopen the waterway and resecure our shipping. Now, should we do that again, and say that peace on whatever lines the Arabs agree is safer and better than a military line? I, for one, would not advocate it.

Question: Do Israeli raids into Arab territory really help deter terrorism? Or do they actually aggravate the tension between Arab countries and Israel, creating a situation similar to that which led to the Sinai Campaign in 1956?

Gen. Dayan: I don't think that observing the cease-fire lines stops terrorism. Though we managed to overcome terrorism within the administered areas, and very few terrorists cross from Egypt, and recently none from Jordan, terrorism does exist. Remember that we are still at war. Even when we had Armistice Agreements, they did not prevent the Arab countries from allowing terrorists to cross the lines into Israel. I would say that as long as hostility exists between us and the Arabs, terrorism will continue. I must add that this time, when we make a peace agreement, we will have to insist that the Arab countries undertake that no terrorists from their countries will cross into Israel.

Farewell and Lehitraot

Morris Laub

I wish to express congratulations to my colleagues and members of the staff—to Jack Mittleman, to Ms. Estelle Jaffa, to Rabbi Moshe Cohen, to Pesach Schindler, to my colleague Rabbi Bernard Segal, for the wonderful work which they have done to make this convention possible.

The past four days have been packed so tightly that they seemed more like four weeks to me. We heard reports from eleven different countries and four continents. We heard of the dangers of anti-Semitism, even though we were told that in some countries the press reports are highly exaggerated in this regard. But what the press does not report is the very current and even greater danger, namely, the danger of assimilation and apathy.

We have also heard of achievements—in Latin America, in the United Synagogue of India which has moved almost *en masse* to Israel, of the situation in France, now the largest Jewish community on the continent, and of the Jewish situation in Scandinavia. This morning we heard about Russian Jewry, a story of courage paralleled in our time, I think, only by the bravery of the Israelis.

We had a very fruitful and interesting, somewhat less pragmatic, session on the crisis in traditional Judaism. We called it "the role of *halakhah* in our time." The very eloquent and brilliant speakers from Israel and the Diaspora indicated that if Judaism is to remain rooted in the hearts of our people, the *halakhah* must be examined in traditional terms, yet with the absolute necessity of making it vital and meaningful as a way of life for our people.

We were witness yesterday to the dedication of our Center, the first small step toward the fulfillment of a dream. I want to tell you that I had to keep the news reporters and our public relations department from using what they thought was the great theme of that Center, namely that what was formerly a house of worship of another faith had now become a Jewish center of worship. That may make a good headline, but I don't think that it is as important as the fact that at last, here in Jerusalem *birat hanetsakh*, the eternal capital, we are established in a building which can serve us, serve Israelis, serve visitors, serve Jews from all over the world.

We have heard of our work in Israel, and I must say I come away with a sense of uplift and astonishment at what has happened in two-and-a-half years. We were in Tel Aviv in June 1970; we are here in November 1972. We had three congregations then; we now have ten, and the spirit in the land is such that I prophesy that within ten years we will have at least fifty congregations in this country affiliated to the United Synagogue of

Israel. This will happen because there is a probing and a searching in Israel, a questioning of valid and viable Jewish values. We have something to offer. We must be bold, but not pushy. We must be firm, but not rigid. We must all be cognizant that we are a *klal yisrael* organization, and we must be aware of the need to allow our movement here in Israel to grow indigenously. We cannot graft our forms onto the root stock of Israel. The forms must be rooted in Israeli soil and grow in the glorious sunlight, in the heartening rains of this country.

And now, with your permission, I will close in Hebrew.

(The following is a translation of Mr. Laub's remarks.)

The Lord has granted me a double privilege. First, that of closing this convention in the language of our people, a task I fulfill for the third time. Secondly, that I have been granted the privilege of visiting Eretz Yisrael for the 18th—*chai*—time. I hope to meet with you in our Land on many future occasions.

On behalf of all those present, may I express our deep appreciation to our dear hosts, the United Synagogue of Israel. Without your presence and gracious help and hospitality, we could not have experienced such a successful convention.

The burgeoning of our movement in Israel, the growth of the United Synagogue of Israel, the dedication of the Center for Conservative Judaism, the search on the part of *olim* and *sabras* for spiritual guidelines that our philosophy can provide, all encourage us to continue in our work.

We have come from the four corners of the earth; we have spent time together and exchanged views as brothers. I hope we have learned from one another. We have had the great privilege of being in Israel at the beginning of its 25th anniversary year, and it is difficult to express our feelings. Now we are about to go our separate ways. May we all be privileged to meet again, in a time of peace for Israel and the world, in a period of blessings and well-being for each of us and for our movement.

Shalom, lehitraot!

Resolutions

Resolution on Israel and World Jewry

The World Council of Synagogues greets the State of Israel with joy and pride on the occasion of its 25th anniversary.

Israel's successful struggle for survival since the miracle of its establishment, and its amazing development in the last quarter of a century, have inspired Jews all over the world with a greater sense of solidarity with its purposes and achievements. We now understand more profoundly what Israel means to Jews throughout the world. We are deeply aware, as well, of the serious problems facing it.

We recognize that in order to ensure Israel's survival, those of us living in other lands have a special responsibility to foster a climate of deeper understanding, awareness and commitment within our communities.

We will intensify our efforts to encourage *aliyah* and to bring larger numbers of students and potential immigrants on pilgrimages to Israel. We will encourage our non-Jewish neighbors to visit Israel so that they may directly experience its vibrant and democratic spirit. We will support all those activities which will maintain the strong bonds between Israel and world Jewry, recognizing that the existence of a strong and creative Israel is indispensable to the meaningful survival and growth of Jewish communities everywhere.

Resolution on Peace in the Middle East

We wish to express our satisfaction that a cease fire inaugurated on August 7, 1970 between Egypt and Israel has been kept until today. This cease fire is a heartening sign of the general lessening of international tensions in the Middle East.

We hope that the arms balance between Israel and the Arab countries will be maintained, because such a balance is conducive to peace.

We support Israel in its insistence on direct negotiations for peace, a peace which she and her neighbors desperately need.

We express our fervent hope that active steps towards an eventual full settlement of all problems between Israel and her Arab neighbors can be effected.

Resolution on The United Synagogue of Israel

The World Council of Synagogues takes particular pride in noting the rapid strides of progress of the United Synagogue of Israel, which now numbers ten congregations. Its activities in youth work and adult education are especially noteworthy. The United Synagogue of Israel, the newest group in our movement, is an outstanding example of viable, meaningful and relevant religious expression, rooted in our historic traditions. We commend the United Synagogue of Israel, and pledge our continued full support.

Resolution on the Recognition of Conservative Rabbis in Israel

We urge that our efforts be increased to achieve recognition of the authority of Conservative rabbis in Israel to officiate fully at all religious functions.

Resolution on the United Synagogue Buildings in Jerusalem

The World Council of Synagogues expresses its profound admiration to its distinguished leaders Morris Speizman and David Zucker for their vision, wisdom and generosity in arranging for the gift to the United Synagogue of America of the buildings on the corner of Agron and Keren Hayesod Streets in this Holy City.

We also express our gratitude to the United Synagogue of America for its generosity to the World Council of Synagogues in making its newly acquired buildings available to the World Council of Synagogues for the development of a program of religious and educational activities for the Conservative Movement.

Resolution on the Jerusalem Headquarters of The World Council of Synagogues

In light of the establishment of a World Center of Conservative Judaism in Jerusalem, we ask the Board of Directors of the World Council of Synagogues to give consideration to recommending the move of its headquarters from the United States to Jerusalem.

Resolution on Jewish Minorities in Arab Countries

Cruel harassment and persecution continue to be the fate of the remaining Jews in some Arab countries. In greatest peril are the 4,000 Jews who remain in Syria, less than a third of the pre-1948 Jewish population. The restriction on travel outside the country is virtually absolute, and extends even to those in desperate need of medical treatment. Financial restrictions on the Jewish community continue; Jews cannot work in public companies or banks and cannot conduct any import or export business. Government and army personnel have been ordered not to buy in Jewish-owned stores. Jews cannot sell their houses or real estate. When a Jew dies, the government seizes his property.

In addition to these restrictions, Jews are constantly subjected to harassment at the hands of secret police who maintain headquarters in the Jewish sections of Damascus, Aleppo and Quamish. Recently, eight Jews were jailed, among them four girls in their teens.

News reports coming out of Beirut speak of a kidnapping of a prominent Jew very recently, besides Albert Elia who was abducted several years ago and has not been heard from since.

In Baghdad, eight Jews were jailed recently. This is particularly shocking because it is an unexpected deterioration after a period of relative calm in the lives of Baghdad Jewry.

In accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we urge all fair-minded governments and international agencies to join us in demanding that these Arab governments halt the persecution of their Jewish minorities and permit them to leave for countries of their choice.

Resolution on International Acts of Terror

The period between our last convention and our present one has witnessed a drastic rise in political acts of terror. Thus far, in 1972 alone, 140 passengers and crew members have been killed and 99 persons wounded, in acts of violence perpetrated against 30 aircraft in 14 countries. The massacres at Lod and at the Olympic Village in Munich have been followed by the mailing of hundreds of letter bombs throughout the world to Jews and non-Jews alike.

In international forums, such as the UN, Arab nations have been trying to link the question to the rights of Palestinians. The question of these rights has nothing to do with terror, and arguments about them are used as an escape valve in order to prevent international condemnation and struggle against terror.

Though Israel in particular is subjected to organized terrorism, acts of terror are not the problem of one nation, but of all nations. If terrorism is to be eliminated from the international scene, it must be combatted internationally.

Resolution on Jews in the Soviet Union

The ninth international convention of the World Council of Synagogues notes with satisfaction that despite governmental obstacles strewn in the path of Russian Jews who wish to emigrate to Israel, the number doing so has been rising steadily.

The convention protests vehemently against the singular difficulties experienced by would-be Russian emigrants, foremost among them the unconscionable emigration tax demanded of persons with higher education. The tax—a ransom in effect—is designed to intimidate them and prevent them from *aliyah*.

The convention condemns the stream of anti-Semitic publications flowing from the Soviet Union and disseminated both in Russia itself and outside the country. Since 1970, over thirty books and pamphlets have appeared, presumably anti-religious and anti-Zionist, but actually anti-Semitic in nature. Anti-Semitic articles in the Soviet press are growing in number, again under the guise of anti-Zionism.

The convention solemnly affirms its solidarity with our Soviet Jewish brothers held in confinement or languishing in jail solely because they wish to emigrate to Israel. We ask the Soviet Union to release them immediately and permit them to leave.

The convention asks that the Soviet Union allow Jews within its borders to live as Jews, both religiously and culturally, and afford them all the opportunities guaranteed them by the Soviet constitution.

The convention recommends to its affiliated bodies that they bring the plight of Soviet Jewry to the attention of their governments, especially the fact that the Soviet Union is contradicting the UN Declaration of Human Rights by denying Jews the freedom to emigrate.

Resolution on Anti-Semitic Activities in Italy

The World Council of Synagogues expresses concern over the signs of a rise in anti-Semitic activity appearing in Italy under different forms. We express our solidarity with the Jewish community in Italy in combating this phenomenon, and urge our affiliates to alert the appropriate governmental and international agencies to take the necessary steps to curb such a development.

Resolution on the Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano

The ninth international convention of the World Council of Synagogues greets the Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano on the occasion of its first ordinations. The vision of the founders of the Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano has borne fruit with the assumption of rabbinic duty by two young native-born Latin American men.

We take pride in and gratefully acknowledge the outstanding contributions to Conservative Judaism of the lay leadership of the Seminario and the splendid leadership of Rabbi Marshall Meyer, rector, and Rabbi Mordejai Edery vice-rector. They have earned our renewed pledge of all possible support.

Resolution on Past Actions of the Board

The World Council of Synagogues expresses its heartfelt thanks to the outgoing officers and members of the Board of Directors for a difficult task performed well and with devotion. We fully approve and ratify their actions, one and all, between June 1970 and November 1972, in furthering the work of our organization, and hereby go on record that the cause of Judaism has been served by them faithfully and with distinction.

Resolution of Thanks to Israel Hosts

The World Council of Synagogues expresses its heartfelt thanks to the government of Israel and the people of Israel; and to the United Synagogue of Israel, the World Council of Synagogues' affiliate in Israel; for their generous hospitality and fraternal cooperation given warm-heartedly and in full measure.

The spirit of our Israeli hosts exemplifies once again the tradition of *hachmasat orchim* established by our Father Abraham.

Resolution of Thanks to Mr. Gerrard Berman

The World Council of Synagogues, in convention assembled, expresses its gratitude to Mr. Gerrard Berman, the convention chairman, whose selfless and untiring efforts have ensured the success of this ninth international convention.

Resolution of Thanks to Convention Organizers

The World Council of Synagogues, in convention assembled, expresses its thanks to its director, Mr. Morris Laub, its convention director, Mr. Jack Mittleman, their associates Rabbi Moshe Cohen, the director of the United Synagogue of Israel and Ms. Estelle Jaffa, and staff, for their unceasing and untiring efforts in preparation for and implementation of the detailed arrangements of this convention.