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Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Merger plan.
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First draft

FUTURE GOALS OF THE REFORM MOVEMENT

Paper to be given at CCAR 23 June 1953

Reform Judaism can have but one goal for the future, which is being determined for it by the championing voice of history. We are being swept into the position, not against our will, but almost without our initiative, of inheriting the future through the conduct of the Jewish body politic in America. In the short course of our existence we have made such an indelible impress upon the total community of this land, that noblesse oblige must now enter our calculations as we attempt to understand and evaluate our future.

We can no longer think about our problems, our desires, our plans, but must reorient our concepts to include entire American Jewry whose Jewish fate and future will lie with us because the people have willed it so. I say this in no commercial sense or jubilation over having "cornered the market", nor in any empire-building sense of pride over recent growth and expansion, but in the humblest sense of acknowledging what appears to be a fact - namely, that the Reform or Liberal approach to Judaism has captured the hearts and minds of the overwhelming number of Jews in America. This is true, I think, regardless of what the statistics might show regarding congregational affiliation. For Reform methodology and ideology have infiltrated Conservative and Orthodox ranks more widely than we sometimes realize.

Rabbi Freehof expressed this enormously important judgment a few months ago at the 30th anniversary celebration of the Commission

ET - CCAR 23 June 1953
✓ *not*

on Jewish Education at the Union Biennial in New York. He said "Reform is not a sect, it is a branch of a living tree. We must judge it by what growth it has added to the total organism. The Reform Movement has brought new vitality to Jewish religious life, a spirit of creativity which has reflected itself in all branches of American Jewry. Many of our methods, above all are a spirit of hopeful experimentation, will, for a long time, bless all of American Jewry."

AMERICAN JEWISH

Rabbi Joshua Trachtenberg projected the same thought to us at the CCAR meeting in Bretton Woods in 1949. He said then: "Reform has conquered American Jewry. Conservative Jews, so called, and for the most part, so-called Orthodox Jews too, have become in fact adherents of the basic position of Reform. The developmental nature of Judaism, the idea of change, adjustment, evolution, is today largely accepted in theory and practice by American Jews we have reached an important historic point in the development of a distinctive "American Judaism" cast in the mold of Reform, (by whatever other name it may be called)".

Insert first page

If this is true, you are aware of the implications which flow immediately. To be the inheritor of the future, the guardian into whose hands the treasure is delivered, the trustee of a tri-millennial tradition, will demand of us far greater exertions than we have ever contemplated. If Jews will continue to elect the liberal approach, to think along the lines we will outline, to practice along the lines we will inspire, then it becomes incumbent upon us to provide them with a maximum stimulation.

We could settle for a lowest-common denominator brand of Jewish conviction and practice. But that would be ignoble and unworthy of us. We have no right to permit an escape into the Reform fold as a means of defaulting on Jewish responsibilities.

Population shifts within our large urban centers, reduction of immigration from abroad, elevation on the social and economic scale, are bringing large masses of hitherto Conservative and Orthodox Jews into our ranks. If they are coming to us in order to find a way of minimizing the demands of Judaism upon them, we should quickly disillusion them.

Ours would be the greatest treason to Jewish past - its martyrdom, struggle and aspirations - if we were to allow the Jewish future to become no more than a diluted shadowy image of its true potential. ^{It is true that} We will not require this Jew who comes to us today or in the next decade to observe the Taryag Mitzvos. But neither, on the other hand, can we permit him to feel that he discharges his obligation to Judaism ^{simply} merely by observing ~~some of~~ the Ten Commandments.

of The wave of the future is ours, ~~What we do not insist upon as pre-requisite for the devoted Jew, and therefore preserve as the normative pattern of American Jewish life, will be lost in another two generations.~~ ^{Then whatever we do not}

^{The goals of our movement therefore,}
~~What is it, then, which must constitute the irreducible and therefore imperishable core of Jewishness for the unborn generations whose outline we now seek to delineate? Imposing this question, in this context, we really are struggling to establish the goals of our movement. In no indispensable order of priority, but simply as they occur to me, let me indicate what I think are the broad lines of~~

approach.

Firstly, we must protect fiercely that which has been our noblest contribution to modern Jewish thought - the social idealism which we have called Prophetic Judaism. Under this excellent banner we tried to cut through the obscurantism of Talmudic legalism to discover afresh the living waters of Prophetic Liberalism. We have ^{preferred to teach} ~~taught~~ our children the burning sentence of Micah, which appears in this week's Haftorah, instead of the ~~wearisome~~ paragraphs of Mishnah. ^{we have preferred} Micah instead of Mishnah; Amos instead of Avodah Zarah; Hosea instead of Halacha. ~~perhaps we have certainly found much in the idea of the Talmud which is applicable to modern Jewish life.~~

But if this was the theme we selected to orchestrate out of the great symphony of Judaism, then, by all that is holy, let us underscore the theme, repeat it, play it in all its variations, so that the soul is thrilled and the heart leaps when it is sounded. These are times which call for a social liberalism of the highest quality. McCarthy's hand is heavy in the land. Social reaction may yet ^{doom} ~~plague~~ us before this century is much older. Let the pure passion of the prophet be heard again through us, so that fear may be cast off. Courage, instead of timidity, is the order of the day. Our collective voice, swelling out of the past, reinterpreted for the present, will be a great gift to the future. One goal of Reform, therefore, must always be to provide militant ~~social~~ inspiration for those who would fight darkness and reaction and fear.

Secondly, we must retain the high drama of ceremonialism which has so vitally warmed the bones of those who ^{complained that our} ~~loved us with~~ temples were cold. There was intellect in our ^{they said} ~~precepts~~ but ~~their intellect but were chilled at our coldness.~~ ^{that} Rabbi Berman's no fire on our altars. The people wanted to be surrounded by the

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ceremonial ~~for~~ practice which would give real form to the content of Judaism. They wanted right and sound and personal involvement rather than cold rationalism.

Reb. Mordecai
Berman's

survey in 1950 and the Brotherhood survey in 1953 have too amply demonstrated the validity of this statement for us to emphasize it further. We are convinced, I think, that the addition of ^{color} magic and poetry and fine excitement of ritual practice, within the framework of our avowedly liberal freedom to pick and choose unbound by law, has greatly enriched the lives of our people. We shall not, it seems to me, retreat again to that kind of ceremonial austerity which marked an earlier period in the history of our movement. Our goal must be to continue our experimentation, our search for that pattern of ritual observance which will eventually become a rich norm, accepted and practiced by the Jew of the future.

Thirdly, we must reaffirm the great secret that Brandeis learned so late in life - the secret that the Jews are a people - one, as God is one, indivisible, irrefragably bound in a physical and metaphysical union which is greater than the sum of all its parts. We must put it for the young modern Jew as Brandeis put it for himself: "Throughout long years which represent my life, I have been to a great extent separated from Jews. I am very ignorant of things Jewish. But recent experiences have made me feel that the Jewish people have something which should be saved for the world; that the Jewish people should be preserved; and that it is our duty to save and preserve."

There are some in our midst who cavil at the word "people", who seek to dissolve the gigantic strength of peoplehood by dark mutterings of double loyalty. No one is fooled. These are the petrified fossils who have died and whose footprints we merely see

~~as the echo they left on the imperishable rock.~~

The people of Israel is one of our trinity, with God and Torah, and we of the Reform Group no longer stand on its periphery as some queer and slightly neurotic sect. We shall assert by word and attest by deed that we are indivisibly tied to that people in all its scattered multitudes. Stephen Wise's ringing cry Klal Yisroel was the battle-slogan under which Reform elevated itself from a mere sect to a great movement. For, by linking itself with all Jews everywhere, Reform left its isolationist camp and rejoined the common destiny. One of the most important goals of Reform must be never again to fall prey to parochialism, but always to embrace the totality of world Jewish experience.

Fourth, we must continue to refine and improve what has come to be called the American way. This is a symbolic shorthand expression of those ideals of democracy and freedom and brotherhood, with which Judaism is so compatible and so organically related. The law came forth from Jerusalem to New England and may yet go forth from both places to the world.

The twentieth century is the American Period of world history, just as the nineteenth was British. If the American Period is to serve as an exemplar and stimulant to world progress and decency, the bright light of Jewish idealism is bound to show through, directly or filtered. There is no one who can better be the bearer of this synthesis between Americanism and Judaism than we in the Reform Movement who have so assiduously cultivated the union. All the Jews of America know and recognize this. But when we wrap our

Americanism around us to the extent that our Judaism is muffled - then we are suspect and no one believes us. It shall be the task and challenge of Liberal Judaism to blend successfully and without loss to either, these two motifs for the generations to come.

Fifty, scholarship *write insert*
There are many other goals concerning which we could speak. There is the urgent need of propounding a theology for modern man, which would not fall into the pattern of present day Protestant neo-orthodoxy that speaks of world evil as the result of sin. There is the great need of helping people to develop a more quickened sense of personal piety. There is the crying need of struggling toward an improvement in personal and public morals. There are many problems in this cosmic area of God and prayer and ethics which must and shall occupy our attention. There is not time for all things. I have spoken only of ^{these} ^{goals} ~~these four items~~ which I consider such powerful factors in the future course of our movement - a prophetic social zeal; a rich ceremonial pattern; an identification with world Israel; and a constant sharpening of the American dream into focus with Jewish ideals.

~~Let me now touch on another point.~~ Goals cannot be achieved without instruments to attain them. There are three instruments of our Reform Movement. This Conference of Rabbis has enjoyed over the years a deepening and a broadening of its strength and capacity. While still far distant from the ultimate influence it shall someday wield, it continues to develop its potential in the direction of shaping trends and executing them on the American scene. Our second instrument, the Union, has flourished mightily in the past decade; has sprouted in its new abode; and will continue to exercise

skill and ingenuity in enlarging the impact of the Reform Movement on American and world Jewry.

But the third instrument is the most important, for in our seminary or seminaries we shall have that fountain of knowledge and spirit, mind and heart, which will activate the other two, through the ultimate determinant of moulding the individual Reform rabbi. Our school, the strongest link in the movement, is now going through a painful period of growth and readjustment. And because the question of the type and style of school is so inextricably bound up with the goals of our movement, I consider it ^{essential} legitimate to discuss ^{both together} ~~a few~~ guiding principles to which the administrators of the school might want to pay heed.

If we are to prepare well for what we undoubtedly will become, the vehicle of Judaism for most if not all American Jews, then we must orient our school in that direction. The saintly Leo Baeck, with prescience and foresight, pointed the way in his Founder's Day address at HUC in March, 1953 by saying:

"This is Founders' Day, the day of self-criticism. Our college is a precious heritage bestowed by the founders upon following generations. Each generation must acquire it anew. Each generation is a section of history, the one only a paragraph, the other a chapter. History makes clear what today is to be acquired. Today our college must surely be a college for the sake of America, but at the same time it is to be a college for the sake of the whole of the Jewish people, the whole of Judaism, the college of 'Amzu' - of 'this people'."

Begin Declaration

If we are to have a "college for the sake of the whole of the Jewish people, the whole of Judaism", then one of the things we must insure is that such a college be strong and secure in that place where half the Jews of the land dwell and from which pulsates so much of organized Jewish vitality. I do not plead this point as special sentimentalist or stubborn devotee to an Alma Mater. This should be clear to all who know that my only passion is for the kind of Reform Judaism I have outlined, as part of a healthy Israel. I have no overweening loyalty to the JIR which would blind me to larger considerations. If I honestly thought we could serve Klal Yisroel as I want to serve it from a spiritual fountainhead in ~~Cincinnati~~ ^{Cincinnati} ~~Southwestern Ohio~~, I would immediately agree to the complete liquidation of the New York school. I would not want an attenuated appendage left over as an encumbrance.

That is simply not the case. New York cannot be ignored. Our school there should be a magnificent institution, surcharged with strength, crackling with an enthusiasm which would enoble and inspire. The greatest voices of the international Jewish world should speak from our forum in the metropolis. The seminars and lectures and symposia which any renowned university offers should be a constant fare with which we first stimulate and then satisfy the Jewish appetite. Our graduates should go forth in full ^{strength} ~~panoply~~ from New York to attest to the virility of our beliefs. All this will in time demonstrate our position to those myriads with whom we now stand in ambivalence of half-acceptance, half-rejection.

Our school must preach and practice Klal Yisroel, else we

are lost. In order to teach it, we must understand it. In order to understand it, we must rub shoulders physically with ^{spiritually} ~~a~~ heterogeneous mass that makes up the New York Jewish population. And rub shoulders with it not in some genteel and detached fashion, but with all the vigor of ^{a living organism} ~~the subway crowd~~. Sura and Pundedita were surrounded, enmeshed, submerged in the jostling crowds of Babylonia for more than half a thousand years. Klal Yisroel is in New York in macrocosm, ~~and in every Cincinnati and Milwaukee only in microcosm.~~ We shall be buffeted, swung, disturbed by this crowd, but it is the stuff of our people. If we would love it, we must live it.

~~Good last paragraph~~
Above all other things, our school must ring true to authentic Jewish aspirations - historically and ideologically. When it is clear and obvious that the men we are graduating go forth into the cities and villages attuned to the yearnings of ^{all} ~~native born~~ American Jews, then we shall have succeeded in playing our destined role to the hilt. The people want us liberal, fresh, flexible - but they want us Jewish to the core.

I was taught Atoh Bochartonu by Slonimsky. I believe it. It is like breathing fire - and my people have caught flashes of it from time to time. It has colored the entire practice of my ministry. It is the single strongest strand in my Jewishness.

I want our Reform Judaism to be of this fire and spirit. Only then will straight young men salute it, young brides embrace it into their homes, young children respond to it. Our goals in the future must yield fruits for all of these. Our school must help attain the goals.

get declaration

second draft
PAPER TO BE GIVEN AT CCAR 23 JUNE 1953

FUTURE GOALS OF THE REFORM MOVEMENT

I've had the feeling for some time that there are two discernible trends within the Reform Movement in America. For the sake of short-hand definition, we have come to call these patterns by the names of classical Reform and Liberal Reform. Each of us knows broadly what these terms mean. Oft times a man or an institution will know quite clearly to which camp sympathy inclines - oft times there is an ambivalence of feeling which does not permit clear-cut labeling.

As the basic premise of this paper, I had intended to submit the thesis that the future goals of our Movement would have to be oriented along the lines of broad, Liberal Reform, if we were to emerge as the powerful factor in American Jewish life to which destiny seems to be summoning us. The classical pattern, valid as it may have been at a certain time in our evolutionary development, would simply fail to nourish our future. Classical Reform, had we continued to follow it, would have found us someday as a bleak and sterile relic on the forgotten shore together with other curiosities in Jewish history.

These were subjected emotions on my part, substantiated by my personal perspective, influenced by the training I received, determined by my hopes of what kind of Judaism would emerge in America. In order to ascertain the validity of this analysis, I sought the opinions of the members of this Conference. The totality of the equally subjective impressions of others would serve to check or rebut my feelings.

The answers I received are impressive. Almost 100 rabbis took the trouble to record their opinions. An absolutely overwhelming attitude crystallized from the pens of these miscellaneous correspondence. It was most startling to see unfolding before the eye such a uniformity of thought among such a highly individualistic group of men.

There emerged a clear, undeniable rejection of the classical pattern and all that it implies. Most men insisted that there were not even ^{any longer} two trends - that my schematization was archaic - that this may once have been the case, but that by now it was manifest and apparent - which direction contained life and vitality and which meant dessication and death. The classical Judaism of the Pittsburgh platform, it

can honestly be said, has no organic meaning for most of our men today.

Further corroboration of this appeared in an analysis of the answers to the question which asked whether the Reform Movement should continue its present trends of increased ceremonialism, intensified education, pro-Israel sentiment, world-Jewish identification. Again, the answers were almost shocking in the unanimity. A vigorous affirmation sounded to all of these test-items.

There were some warnings - mostly along the lines that these present trends should not be exploited opportunistically as a means of weaning the members away from conservative or orthodox ranks, for then Reform might lose its own characteristics and integrity. But after the warnings were taken into account, it was apparent where most of the men stood.

A second fact became obvious. Many of our men poignantly sensed the voice of history making its demands upon us. There was much talk about our version of Judaism representing the healthy and normative pattern which Jews would elect in the future. The bringing back of disenchanted drifters, who had found orthodoxy untenable but had not yet fully discovered Reform; the winning of large masses of completely secularized and never affiliated Jews; a conquest of lost generations of college youth; were all suggested as areas in which Liberal Judaism could and would work more successfully than its sister-philosophies.

If this is true, you are aware of the implications which flow immediately. To be the inheritor of the future, the guardian into whose hands the treasure is delivered, the trustee of a trimillennial tradition, will demand of us far greater exertions than we have ever contemplated. If Jews will continue to elect the liberal approach, to think along the lines we will outline, to practice along the lines we will inspire, then it becomes incumbent upon us to provide them with a maximum stimulation.

We could settle for a lowest-common denominator brand of Jewish conviction and practice. But that would be ignoble and unworthy of us. We have no right to permit an escape into the Reform fold as a means of defaulting on Jewish responsibilities.

Ours would be the greatest treason to Jewish past - its martyrdom, struggle and aspirations - if we were to allow the Jewish future to become no more than a diluted shadowy image of its true potential. It is true that we will not require this Jew who comes to us today or in the next decade to observe the Taryag Mitzvos. But neither, on the other hand, can we permit him to feel that he discharges his obligation to Judaism simply by observing the Ten Commandments. If the wave of the future is ours, then whatever we do not preserve as the normative pattern of American Jewish life, will be lost in another two generations.

The goals of our movement, therefore, must constitute the irreducible and therefore imperishable core of Jewishness for the unborn generations.

Firstly, we must protect fiercely that which has been our noblest contribution to modern Jewish thought - the social idealism which we have called Prophetic Judaism. Under this excellent banner we tried to cut through the obscurantism of Talmudic legalism to discover afresh the living waters of Prophetic Liberalism. We have preferred to teach our children the burning sentence of Micah, which appears in this week's Haftorah, instead of the paragraphs of Mishnah. We have preferred Michal instead of Mishnah; Amos instead of Avodah Zarah; Hosea instead of Halacha.

But if this was the theme we selected to orchestrate out of the great symphony of Judaism, then, by all that is holy, let us underscore the theme, repeat it, play it in all its variations, so that the soul is thrilled and the heart leaps when it is sounded. These are times which call for a social liberalism of the highest quality. McCarthy's hand is heavy in the land. Social reaction may yet doom us before this century is much older. Let the pure passion of the prophet be heard again through us, so that fear may be cast off. Courage, instead of timidity, is the order of the day. Our collective voice, swelling out of the past, reinterpreted for the present, will be a great gift to the future. One goal of Reform

therefore, must always be to provide militant inspiration for those who would fight darkness and reaction and fear.

Secondly, we must retain the high drama of ceremonialism which has so vitally warmed the bones of those who complained that our temples were cold. There was intellect in our pulpits, they said, but no fire on our altars. The people wanted to be surrounded by the ceremonial practices which would give real form to the content of Judaism. They wanted sight and sound and personal involvement rather than cold rationalism. Rabbi Morton Berman's survey in 1950 and the Brotherhood survey in 1953 have too amply demonstrated the validity of this statement for us to emphasize it further. We are convinced, I think, that the addition of color and poetry and fine excitement of ritual practice, within the framework of our avowedly liberal freedom to pick and choose unbound by law, has greatly enriched the lives of our people. We shall not, it seems to me, retreat again to that kind of ceremonial austerity which marked an earlier period in the history of our movement. Our goal must be to continue our experimentation, our search for that pattern of ritual observance which will eventually become a rich norm, accepted and practiced by the Jew of the future.

Thirdly, we must reaffirm the great secret that Brandeis learned so late in life - the secret that the Jews are a people - one, as God is one, indivisible, irrefragably bound in a physical and metaphysical union which is greater than the sum of all its parts. We must put it for the young modern Jew as Brandeis put it for himself: "Throughout long years which represent my life, I have been to a great extent separated from Jews. I am very ignorant of things Jewish. But recent experiences have made me feel that the Jewish people have something which should be saved for the world; that the Jewish people should be preserved; and that it is our duty to save and preserve."

The people of Israel is one of our trinity, with God and Torah, and we of the Reform Group no longer stand on its periphery as some queer and slightly neurotic sect. We shall assert by word and attest by deed that we are indivisibly tied to that people in all its scattered multitudes. Stephen Wise's ringing cry Klal

Yisroel was the battle-slogan under which Reform elevated itself from a mere sect to a great movement. For, by linking itself with all Jews everywhere, Reform left its isolationist camp and rejoined the common destiny. One of the most important goals of Reform must be never again to fall prey to parochialism, but always to embrace the totality of world Jewish experience.

Fourth, we must continue to refine and improve what has come to be called the American way. This is a symbolic shorthand expression of those ideals of democracy and freedom and brotherhood, with which Judaism is so compatible and so organically related. The law came forth from Jerusalem to New England and may yet go forth from both places to the world.

The twentieth century is the American Period of world history, just as the nineteenth was British. If the American Period is to serve as an exemplar and stimulant to world progress and decency, the bright light of Jewish idealism is bound to show through, directly or filtered. There is no one who can better be the bearer of this synthesis between Americanism and Judaism than we in the Reform Movement who have so assiduously cultivated the union. All the Jews of America know and recognize this. But when we wrap our Americanism around us to the extent that our Judaism is muffled - then we are suspect and no one believes us. It shall be the task and challenge of Liberal Judaism to blend successfully and without loss to either, these two motifs for the generations to come.

There are many other goals concerning which we could speak. There is the urgent need of propounding a theology for modern man, which would not fall into the pattern of present day Protestant neo-orthodoxy that speaks of world evil as the result of sin. There is the great need of helping people to develop a more quickened sense of personal piety. There is the crying need of struggling toward an improvement in personal and public morals. There are many problems in this cosmic area of God and prayer and ethics which must and shall occupy our attention. There is not time for all things. I have spoken only of these four goals which I

consider such powerful factors in the future course of our movement - a prophetic social zeal; a rich ceremonial pattern; an identification with world Israel; and a constant sharpening of the American dream into focus with Jewish ideals.

Goals cannot be achieved without instruments to attain them. There are three instruments of our Reform Movement. This Conference of Rabbis has enjoyed over the years a deepening and a broadening of its strength and capacity. While still far distant from the ultimate influence it shall someday wield, it continues to develop its potential in the direction of shaping trends and executing them on the American scene. Our second instrument, the Union, has flourished mightily in the past decade; has sprouted in its new abode; and will continue to exercise skill and ingenuity in enlarging the impact of the Reform Movement on American and world Jewry.

But the third instrument is the most important, for in our seminary or seminaries we shall have that fountain of knowledge and spirit, mind and heart, which will activate the other two, through the ultimate determinant of moulding the individual Reform rabbi. Our school the strongest link in the movement, is now going through a painful period of growth and readjustment. And because the question of the type and style of school is so inextricably bound up with the goals of our movement, I consider it essential to discuss both together.

Let me be perfectly frank. There was once an ideological difference between the two existent Liberal seminaries.

Stephen Wise established a second Reform college in 1922 in order to give expression to a certain point of view. He gathered an eclectic faculty and an equally heterogeneous student body. His policy was followed deliberately so that there might be an enrichment of each man's personality, so that cross-fertilization might take place between students of varying backgrounds, so that Zionism might be vigorously taught to Liberal rabbis, so that orthodox, conservative and reform students, respecting each other first in the classroom, would later respect each other as

rabbis in the living communities they would mutually serve.

The JIR thus gave a new look to the Liberal Movement, quite different from the HUC. Many feel that the JIR played the role of leaven in the dough, causing the Reform Movement to bestir itself, change its shape, rise and come to completion. The introduction of JIR thinking, the impact of Stephen Wise's personality, the physical presence of several hundred graduates in the practicing rabbinate all had their effect in helping to reshape the Reform Movement.

In the course of time, the new School merged with the older one, and it was felt that this was a happy circumstance. For unsightly and unseemly competition would be eliminated and all energies would be released for the constructive task of building the new Reform Judaism.

Now a dark fear has entered the picture. There is a very real concern that the School in New York, specifically designed to add certain ingredients to the Reform outlook, will become reduced to an ineffectual tool, under the provisions of the recently announced unification plan. Should that tend to occur, the only loser in the long run will be the whole of American Jewry.

The saintly Leo Baeck, with prescience and foresight, said in his Founder's Day address at HUC in March 1953: "Today our College must surely be a college for the sake of America, but at the same time it is to be a college for the sake of the whole of the Jewish people, the whole of Judaism, the college of 'Am Zu' - of 'this people'."

If we are to have a "college for the sake of the whole of the Jewish people, the whole of Judaism", then one of the things we must insure is that such a college be strong and secure in that place where half the Jews of the land dwell and from which pulsates so much of organized Jewish vitality. I do not plead this point as special sentimentalist or stubborn devotee to an Alma Mater. This should be clear to all who know that my only passion is for the kind of Reform Judaism I have outlined, as part of a healthy Israel. I have no overweening loyalty to the JIR which would blind me to larger considerations. If I honestly thought we could serve Klal Yisroel as I want

to serve it, from a spiritual fountainhead in Cincinnati, I would immediately agree to the complete liquidation of the New York school. I would not want an attenuated appendage left over as an encumbrance.

That is simply not the case. New York cannot be ignored. Our school there should be a magnificent institution, surcharged with strength, crackling with an enthusiasm which would enoble and inspire. The greatest voices of the international Jewish world should speak from our forum in the metropolis. The seminars and lectures and symposia which any renowned university offers should be a constant fare with which we first stimulate and then satisfy the Jewish appetite. Our graduates should go forth in full strength from New York to attest to the virility of our beliefs. All this will in time demonstrate our position to those myriads with whom we now stand in ambivalence of half-acceptance, half-rejection.

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young men salute it, young brides embrace it into their homes, young children respond to it. Our goals in the future must yield^{fruits}/for all of these. Our school must help attain the goals.

I would therefore suggest that we seriously reevaluate the unification plan ~~as~~ adopted by the Board of Governors; that we think of the future of our school in terms of the future goals of our Movement; that we create a vehicle which can earnestly serve the best purposes of Liberal Judaism.

To that end, I offer the following resolution to this Conference:

I. In relation to the unification plan for the HUC-JIR adopted by the Board of Governors on 26 March 1953, the CCAR recognizes that the Board of Governors is the body charged with the responsibility of administering the College-Institute, but earnestly feels that the decision arrived at is of such consequence to the future of the Reform Movement that the CCAR should be able to concur.

This it cannot conscientiously do, because no opportunity had been presented before the promulgation to study the plan and its possible effects on American Liberal Judaism by this Conference.

II. The CCAR further takes note of the fact that three large regional groupings of its members, in New England, New York and Chicago, plus many individual rabbis throughout the land, have indicated their unwillingness to accept the plan without study.

III. Therefore, the CCAR resolves:

1. That implementation of the present plan be deferred pending further study.
2. That a Committee of this Conference be appointed by the President to analyze the implications of the plan; to confer with the Board of Governors; to report back to the Executive Board of the CCAR with recommendations.
3. That the UAHC, as the third partner in our Reform Movement, be urged to appoint a similar Committee to study the plan and confer with the Board of Governors, either conjointly with our Committee, or separately if the UAHC prefers.

IV. It is the feeling of the CCAR that these steps will ensure a process whereby we will arrive at a plan that shall best meet the needs and interests of our Liberal Movement.



Brandeis on People & People-hood

"Throughout long years which represent my own life, I have been to a great extent separated from Jews. I am very ignorant in things Jewish. But recent experiences, public & professional, have taught me this: I find Jews possessed of those very qualities which we of the 20th century seek to develop in our struggle for justice & democracy; a deep moral feeling which makes them capable of noble acts; a deep sense of the brotherhood of man; and a high intelligence, the fruit of 3000 years of civilization.

These experiences have made me feel that the Jewish people have something which should be saved for the world; that the Jewish people should be preserved; and that it is our duty to pursue that method of saving which most promises success.

Freedom or Klal Yisroel

"Our predecessors insisted that the essence of Judaism was Judaism. We say the same thing. They understood well that Judaism was a religion carried by the Jewish people. This is the historic fact and the constant emphasis of Scripture. There would have been no Judaism in the world unless there were a specific human group which had the courage to be different from its environment.... We and our predecessors acknowledge the basic doctrine in Judaism, Mosaic, Prophetic, Talmudic and modern, that Jews all over the world belong to a human unity whose God-given duty it is to be the world-carriers of Judaism.... There can be no Judaism without a world Jewry.... This is what we mean by the phrase "The Jewish people."

Final draft

GOALS OF THE REFORM MOVEMENT

CCAR, 24 June 53

I have had the feeling for some time that there are two discernible trends within the Reform Movement in America. As the basic premise of this paper, I had intended to submit the thesis that the future goals of our Movement would have to be oriented along the lines of broad, liberal Reform, if we were to emerge as the powerful factor in American Jewish life to which destiny seems to be summoning us. The classical pattern, valid as it may have been at a certain time in our evolutionary development, would simply fail to nourish our future.

In order to check the validity of this analysis, I sought the opinions of the members of this Conference. Almost 100 rabbis took the trouble to record their opinions. There emerged a clear undeniable rejection of the classical pattern and all that it implies. Most men insisted that there were not any longer two trends - that my schematization was archaic - that this may once have been the case, but that by now it was manifest and apparent which direction contained life and vitality and which meant dessication and death. The Pittsburgh Platform, it can honestly be said, has no organic meaning for most of our men today.

Further corroboration of this appeared in an analysis of the answers to the questions which asked whether the Reform Movement should continue its present trends of increased ceremonialism, intensified education, pro-Israel sentiment, world-Jewish identification. Again, the answers were startling in their unanimity. A vigorous affirmation was sounded to all these test-items.

A second fact became obvious. Many of our men poignantly sensed the voice of history making its demands upon us. There was much talk about our version of Judaism representing the healthy and normative pattern which Jews would elect in the future. The bringing back of disenchanted drifters, who had found orthodoxy untenable but had not yet fully discovered Reform; the

winning of large masses of secularized unaffiliated Jews; the conquest of lost generations of college youth; were all suggested as areas in which Liberal Judaism could and would work more successfully than its sister-philosophies.

If this is true, we must be aware of the implications which flow immediately. To be the inheritor of the future, the guardian into whose hands the treasure will be delivered, will demand of us far greater exertions than we have ever contemplated. If Jews will continue to elect the liberal approach, to think along the lines we will outline, to practice along the lines we will inspire, then it becomes incumbent upon us to provide them with a maximum stimulation. We could settle for a lowest-common denominator brand of Jewish conviction and practice. But that would be ignoble and unworthy of us. We have no right to permit an escape into the Reform fold to be a means of defaulting on Jewish responsibilities. Ours would be the greatest treason to the Jewish past - its martyrdom, struggle and aspirations - if we were to allow the Jewish future to become no more than a diluted shadowy image of its true potential.

The goals of our movement, therefore, must constitute the irreducible and imperishable core of Judaism for the unborn generations of American Jews.

First - we must protect fiercely that which has been our noblest contribution to modern Jewish thought - the social idealism which is called Prophetic Judaism. We have preferred to teach our children the burning sentence of Micah, which appears in this week's Haftorah, instead of the paragraphs of Mishna. We have preferred Micah instead of Mishnah; Amos instead of Avodah Zarah; Hosea instead of Halacha.

But if this was the theme we selected to orchestrate out of the great symphony of Judaism, then, by all that is holy, let us underscore the theme, repeat it, play it in all its variations, so that the soul is thrilled and the heart leaps when it is sounded. These are times which call for a social liberalism of the highest quality. McCarthy's hand is heavy in the land.

Social reaction may yet doom us before this century is much older. Let the pure passion of the prophet be heard again through us, so that fear may be cast off. Courage, instead of timidity is the order of the day. One goal of reform, therefore, must always be to provide militant inspiration for those who would fight darkness and reaction and fear.

Second - we must retain the high drama of ceremonialism which has so vitally warmed the bones of those who complained that our temples were cold. There was intellect in our pulpits, they said, but no fire on our altars. The people wanted to be surrounded by the ceremonial practices which would give real form to the content of Judaism. They wanted sight and sound and personal involvement rather than cold rationalism. We are convinced, I think, that the addition of color and poetry and fine excitement of ritual practice has greatly enriched the lives of our people. We shall not, it seems to me, retreat again to that kind of ceremonial austerity which marked an earlier period in the history of our movement. Our goal must be to continue our experimentation, our search for that ~~app~~ pattern of ritual observance which will eventually become a rich norm, accepted and practiced by the Jew of the future.

Third - we must reaffirm that great secret that Brandeis learned so late in his life - the secret that the Jews are a people - one, as God is one, indivisible, irrefragably bound in a physical and metaphysical union which is greater than the sum of all its parts. We must put it for the young modern Jew as Brandeis put it for himself:

"Throughout long years which represent my life, I have been to a great extent separated from Jews. I am very ignorant of things Jewish. But recent experiences have made me feel that the Jewish people have something which should be saved for the world; that the Jewish people should be preserved; and that it is our duty to save and preserve."

The people of Israel is one with God and Torah. The Reform movement shall assert by word and attest by deed that it is indivisibly tied to that people in all its scattered multitudes. ~~Stephen Wise's ringing cry of~~
~~Klal Yisroel was the battle-slogan under which Reform elevated itself from~~
~~a mere sect to a great movement. For, by linking itself with all Jews~~
everywhere, Reform left its isolationist camp and rejoined the common destiny. One of the most important goals of reform must be never again to fall prey to parochialism, but always to embrace the totality of world Jewish experience.

Fourth - we must continue to refine and improve what has come to be called the American Way. This is a symbolic shorthand expression for those ideals of democracy and freedom and brotherhood, with which Judaism is so compatible and so organically related. The law came forth from Jerusalem to New England, and may yet go forth from both places to the entire world. The bright light of Jewish idealism is bound to show through this American Period of world history. It shall be the task and challenge of Liberal Judaism to blend successfully and without loss to either, these twin-motifs of Americanism and Judaism for the generations to come.

There are many other goals concerning which we could speak. There is the urgent need of propounding a theology for modern man; of helping people develop a more quickened sense of personal piety; of struggling toward an improvement in personal and public morals. There are many problems in this cosmic area of God and prayer and ethics which must and shall occupy our attention. But there is not time for all things. I have spoken only of these four goals which are so vital to the future course of our movement - a prophetic social zeal; a rich ceremonial pattern; an identification with world Israel; and a constant sharpening of the American dream into focus with Jewish ideals.

Goals cannot be achieved without instruments to attain them. There are three instruments of our Reform movement. This Conference of Rabbis

has enjoyed over the years a deepening and broadening of its strength and capacity. While still distant from the ultimate influence it shall someday wield, it continues to develop its potential in the direction of shaping trends and executing them on the American scene. Our second instrument, the Union, has flourished mightily in the past decade; has sprouted lustily in its new abode; and will continue to perform the crucial role of enlarging the impact of the reform movement on American and world Jewry.



The third instrument is the HUC-JIR. Our seminary is the fountain of knowledge and spirit which ultimately determines the future by molding the individual rabbi. In this sense, the school is perhaps the most important of the three. Because the question of the type and style of school is so inextricably bound up with the goals of our movement, I consider it essential to discuss both together.

The JIR came into existence in 1922 to meet an emerging need in American Jewish life. There were large numbers of Jews, rooted in tradition, but yearning for a more progressive expression of their faith. They were searching for a warm blend of the ancient and the modern which would free them from the hand of Talmudic legalism, but at the same time would give them the feeling of remaining within the framework of authentic Jewish aspirations. They wanted something liberal, fresh, flexible - but they wanted it Jewish to the core.

Under the inspiring figure of Stephen Wise a school was built to express this excellent combination. That school made its contribution all over the land as well as in the heart of the greatest accumulated mass of Jews ever to exist in one city at one time.

It is vastly important to realize that the same or even intensified needs exist today as in 1922. In the same environment, containing half the Jews of America, another generation has grown, this time American-born. Scores of thousands are groping their way from a discarded orthodoxy to a broad liberalism. This is an evolutionary process, vastly quickened - and yet it is even more than evolution - it is almost explosion.

We are dealing, it seems to me, with a ^Aal Y'chomer. If there was a need for a liberal school in New York in the 1920's, how much more so is that true today, when our movement in its present trends is receiving such wide and increasing appreciation.

New York simply cannot be ignored. Our school there should be a magnificent institution, surcharged with strength, crackling with an enthusiasm which would ennoble and inspire. The greatest voices of the international Jewish world should speak from our forum in the metropolis. The seminars and lectures and symposia which any renowned university offers, should be a constant fare with which we first stimulate and then satisfy the Jewish appetite. Our graduates should go forth in full strength from our school in New York to attest to the virility of our beliefs. All this will in time demonstrate our position to those myriads with whom we now stand in ambivalence of half-acceptance, half-rejection.

Wisdom dictates the reasons why the strongest possible school in New York is indispensable to our needs and plans.

1. The growth of congregations in the east betokens the period of expansionism into which we are now entering. Our movement, because of its present trends, is really reaching out to the hearts of the multitudes. It would be folly not to have a deep well of Judaism, represented by a rabbinical college, nourishing with its presence these new and tender trees being planted so lovingly.

2. The full maturation of our movement requires that our rabbis be exposed to this burgeoning expansion. Men can go forth to every corner of America better equipped to serve, and men can come from every corner of America, to taste and feel and sense the vitality of the center of much of organized Jewish life. It is an error to think that New York is the whole of America - but to be untouched by it in some measure is an equivalent error.

3. Increasing the opportunities for scholarship instead of decreasing them must be the pattern for our merged school. We should be adding courses, expanding curriculum. As a result of the Hitlerian decade, the legacy of learning has been transferred from the old world to the new. More houses

of learning, not fewer, become a categorical imperative for American Jewry. For the sake of our new congregations, for the sake of a more universal rabbinate, for the sake of increasing scholarship, our College-Institute should be strengthening its New York branch with all speed and ingenuity. This is a combined school of which I speak. Its two present arms, and God willing, a third someday, elsewhere in America, all spring from the same trunk. The whole is as strong as all its parts. This is no question of primacy, of stubborn loyalty to any one Alma Mater, of sentimental nostalgia for a memory. I am not speaking for or about the JIR. I am pleading for one part of our one united seminary, which I do not want to see whittled down, because I think the whole will thereby suffer.

The strongest possible school, in all its branches, to serve the broadest possible goals of Progressive Judaism - this is a statesmenlike approach to the Liberal Jewish future in America.

*Failure of name
Treat*

