IN THE DAYS OF ISAAC MAYER WISE

The world belongs to him who dares—I. M. WISE, *Reminiscences*

IT WAS A SOLEMN, EVEN an historic occasion. Long before the appointed hour, the spacious Bene Yeshurun Temple was crowded with ladies and gentlemen, both Jews and gentiles, drawn from Cincinnati's economic and cultural élite. Precisely at half past seven in the evening a sonorous organ preludium opened the festive program. In dignified procession the participants ascended the platform. An augmented choir, accompanied by a complete orchestra, sang a stirring hymn, electrifying the audience of two thousand. Carried away with admiration, the reporter for the *American Israelite* later wrote: "The grand and palatial building, with its oriental fresco lit by hundreds of gas flames, filled to its utmost capacity by the highest intelligence of the city, now fairly ablaze with that higher inspiration which classical music arouses in appreciative souls, presented a panorama to the quiet observer, which no pen can describe, no artist paint, and no eloquence reproduce." [1]

That evening, Sunday, October 3, 1875, marked the Opening Exercises of the Hebrew Union College, the first permanent modern rabbinical seminary in America and today the oldest and largest

anywhere in the world. Yet the throng gathered for music and formal addresses in the Plum Street Temple a hundred years ago had little reason to hope for so bright and promising a future. For behind the impressive pomp and ceremony lay an institution of only the most modest circumstances and of questionable capacity for endurance.

A more realistic picture of the Hebrew Union College at its inception could be gained only the next day when a total of nine students aged thirteen to seventeen, most of them from poor families, gathered for registration in the basement vestry rooms of Bene Israel's Mound Street Temple. Most of them were not serious about their studies, and even those who were hardly looked like future rabbis. It was a very humble beginning, quite out of proportion with the previous day's celebration. And yet it was also a culmination, the result of historical developments, combined with individual initiative and persistence, which had made even this modest start possible. The history of the Hebrew Union College in its full scope commences neither with the Opening Exercises nor with the first class lesson. The College's beginnings must be traced back to the earliest proposals for a modern rabbinate in Europe and the United States, and even beyond them to the development of a modern Jewish consciousness in the West. Nor can the tale be told without due regard for the earlier career and personality of its founder and first president, Isaac Mayer Wise.

The progressive acculturation and social integration of the Jews, which proceeded with increasing rapidity in Central and Western Europe during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, eroded the authority of the traditional rabbinate. As ever larger numbers of Jews, especially of the upper class, adopted a way of life at variance with the accepted pattern, the established religious leadership, which for the most part remained unchanged in its outlook, came increasingly to appear as an anachronism which had survived irrelevantly from an earlier period of Jewish isolation. In addition, modern states began to regard the legal prerogatives of Jewish communities as incompatible with the tight political structure required for efficient government, reducing or eliminating the wide-ranging autonomy which they enjoyed in the past. For the rabbis this meant a distinct curtailment of

their powers. If the Jews were to live under the civil laws of France or Prussia rather than those of the Bible and the Talmud as interpreted by Jewish tradition, then, it became clear, the rabbinate as an institution would either have to restrict its authority to the highly limited legal sphere still allowed it, or reconstitute itself in terms of the new opportunities which were becoming available even as old prerogatives were melting away.

The type of rabbi called for by the new situation was not the legal scholar and decisor. As Jews in the West came under the influence of Christian society, they refashioned their image of the rabbi according to that of the Christian minister, regarding the latter as exemplary of the proper role for a clergyman in the modern world.[2] The rabbi was to preach, to conduct services, to teach children, to be a pastor to his flock. He was also to be a scholar, but his scholarship was expected to extend to secular learning as well as to Jewish studies.

The process of Jewish acculturation and even of rabbinic role transformation was well advanced before any institution was created to train the kind of rabbi required by the new circumstances of Jewish life. The principal religious leaders of modern Judaism in Germany during the nineteenth century all received their rabbinical training privately or in orthodox yeshivot. From radical to neo-orthodox, from Samuel Holdheim and Abraham Geiger to Zacharias Frankel and Samson Raphael Hirsch, they all combined a wholly traditional Jewish education with advanced secular studies at a university; none of them was the product of a seminary which had itself embodied the intellectual values of modern culture. Until mid-century, no such institution had come into existence.

It is true that as early as 1829 the Italian Instituto Rabbinico Lombardo-Veneto was opened in Padua and that same year the old yeshiva in Metz was transformed into the École Centrale Rabbinique. But these two institutions for the most part simply perpetuated the traditional curriculum both in content and in approach. Moreover, they remained weak and fragile, serving relatively small Jewish communities and exercising only the most limited influence.

In Germany, both Abraham Geiger and Ludwig Philippson urged the creation of a Jewish theological faculty as part of a major uni-

versity as early as the mid-1830s. But their pleas found no response. There was neither a German university willing to lend the dignity of its name to Jewish studies nor funds available within the Jewish community for its support. It was only at mid-century, when a large legacy was specifically designated for a rabbinical and teachers' seminary, that an institution for the training of rabbis could at length be established in Germany. The *Jüdisch-theologisches Seminar,* which opened in Breslau in 1854, was not the Jewish theological faculty of a university, as Geiger, who championed the integration of Jewish with secular learning, had hoped, but a separate institution of distinctly conservative bent. Zacharias Frankel, an advocate of only the most moderate reform in conformity with what he called "positive-historical Judaism," became its president. The tone he set for the institution combined great reverence for tradition with a commitment to scientific investigation of Jewish sources up to, but not including, the Pentateuch.

Geiger, who had hoped to gain the presidency for himself, was forced to wait nearly twenty years longer until it became possible to found the *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin in 1872. Unlike the Breslau Seminary, the *Hochschule* was dedicated to presenting various points of view, from the traditional to the most radical. At this institution Geiger was finally able to play a leading role during the last period of his life. Only a year later, the third modern rabbinical seminary was founded—again in Berlin. This was the *Rabbinerseminar* of German othodoxy. Thus, by the time Isaac Mayer Wise founded the Hebrew Union College in 1875, German Jewry—to which most of the Jews in America traced their origins—had provided for the training of modern rabbis of all shades of opinion.[3] But American Jewry still remained bereft.

As the father of organized Reform Judaism in the United States, Isaac M. Wise has been revered as hero and exemplar. A great deal has been written about him, most of it pietistic and reverential.[4] Yet Wise was both a less saintly and a more interesting figure than the portrait his admirers have usually drawn. Indeed, one may argue that had he not possessed less attractive, aggressive qualities of char-

acter along with indubitable virtues, he would scarcely have been able to succeed where modesty and humility could only have brought hesitation and ultimate failure.

Contemporaries noted that Wise rarely referred to the early years of his life in Europe.[5] He preferred to draw a curtain over them, leaving the motives for his silence a riddle to which one can only guess at the answer. Perhaps it was because of personal pains and disappointments which he had suffered, perhaps because the education he had received, the position he had held, were not what he would later have liked them to have been. Or perhaps he really felt that in coming to America he had taken on a new identity, sloughing off the old one as a worn-out or ill-fitting garment. In any event, we know that he remained ambivalent about all things German: he wrote novels in his mother tongue and confided more intimately in the readers of the German-language *Deborah* than in the larger circle which received his English newspaper, the *American Israelite.*[6] But basically he was an Americanizer who saw it as his task to establish a distinctly American Judaism unrestrained by its roots in Europe.

Wise was born in Steingrub, a small village in Bohemia, on March 20, 1819. The son of a poor Jewish schoolmaster, he received Jewish and secular educations which later proved less than adequate to the tasks he would undertake in America. At the age of twelve he set out for Prague, where he studied in the yeshiva and gained a high school education in secular studies. Later he may have attended classes at the Prague University and possibly at the University of Vienna for a brief time as well; but he seems not to have been a registered student and he received no academic degree. His Jewish studies apparently resulted in the receipt of some manner of diploma from Rabbis Rappaport, Freund, and Teweles in Prague in 1842, but since Wise never displayed the document, the question of the degree of authority it gave him must remain uncertain. In any case, it was sufficient for the young man to gain the position of preacher and schoolmaster in the Bohemian village of Radnitz, where he served for three years from 1843 to 1846 before making the decision to come to America.

Contemporary evidence for Wise's motives in leaving the Habsburg

Empire is lacking. In later years he liked to attribute his emigration with a wife and infant child to the political disabilities Jews suffered there and to his ingrained love of freedom. But it seems probable that there were personal reasons as well: dissatisfaction with what the future held for him in Radnitz and a vision of the unlimited possibilities that beckoned in the United States. That Wise was able to uproot himself from his familiar surroundings and face so uncertain a future bears early testimony to the daring and self-confidence which prompted so many of his actions in later years.[7]

Wise possessed a personality capable of producing enormous gyrations of depression and self-doubt alternating with virtually messianic pretensions and incredible sustained energy. The inner anxiety which must have beset him as he approached the new land resolved itself for him in a most remarkable dream as his ship was nearing the coast of North America. He later recalled the dream often; indeed it became the paradigm and lodestar of his life. Wise dreamed that a storm arose, driving the ship upon the rocks. But at the last moment, with wife and child, he leaped to the shore and with the break of dawn marched forward to ascend the mountain that loomed before them. The dream continues:

> Then as though the measure of woes was not yet full, hollow-eyed, ghostly, grinning dwarfs, lascivious, ragged goblins, and tiny poodles, with large, hollow, puffed-out heads, came towards us on the narrow path, opposed our further progress, and mocked me mercilessly. I brushed them aside; but for every ten that I pushed away a hundred arose from out the bare rock. They came in the shape of night-owls, and deafened me with their cries; they sizzed about me like angry wasps, and stung me; they placed themselves, like stupid blocks, in my path; in short, they did everything to harass me and prevent my further progress. My wife at my side wept bitterly, the child in my arms cried for fright, but my courage, strength, and confidence grew. I begged, implored, avoided, circumvented them, all to no avail. Then I marched straight through the crowd of dwarfs, paid no attention to their ravings, dashed them aside to the right and the left, until finally, weary and perspiring, we reached

> the summit of the mountain. Arriving there, I saw the most beautiful and glorious landscape, the richest, most fertile meadows, but I sank fainting; thereupon I awoke, and found that it was all a dream. . . .[8]

In the years which followed, as Wise became embroiled in one controversy after another, as he struggled to become the leader of a united American Jewry, he was at times stricken by self-doubt, hypochondria, presentiments of death, and even wishes for his own destruction. At one point he seriously considered leaving the rabbinate to take up a career in law. But the source of strength which had prompted the supreme confidence of that well-remembered (and doubtless embellished) dream was in the course of time increasingly to banish all countervailing forces of despair. Wise became convinced that "the world belongs to him who dares," and came to see himself as the humble servant of an optimistic idealism which must always ultimately succeed. He learned never to hesitate once he had embarked upon a course of action: "I rarely asked myself whether I was competent to do this or that after I had determined upon it. I said to myself continually: 'A person can learn whatever he does not know, and whatever he can not accomplish in one year can be achieved in five or ten years. Patience, industry, perseverance, and a little ability will overcome all obstacles.' " Where others were held back by qualms and misgivings, or where their fortitude crumbled in the face of opposition, Wise marched right on, always certain in the depths of his soul that those who stood in his path were only pygmies whom he would sooner or later dash against the rocks to the left and the right. Wise came to see himself as a "child of destiny," an apposite designation in a nation then bent upon achieving its "manifest destiny." His brash audacity, his firm belief that he "had talent for all things," created an aura of strength which enabled him to exercise influence over those who came into contact with him. Combined with a quick mind and an agile pen, it made the ill-trained country preacher into the foremost religious leader of American Jewry in the nineteenth century, and it enabled him to become the prime creator of its first national religious institutions.[9]

Wise's earliest years in the United States were spent as a rabbi in Albany, New York. It was here that he became Americanized, and here he proceeded autodidactically, as best he could, to fill in the gaps in his education. Here, too, he began to propagate religious reform, introducing a mixed choir and confirmation, publicly stating that he believed neither in bodily resurrection nor in a personal messiah. But he also showed that he was not a radical: he insisted his congregants observe the Sabbath by closing their businesses; he advocated only moderate reform of the ritual. When Wise left Albany for Cincinnati in the spring of 1854, it was not so much because of the difficulties which had been put in his way as a reformer (though there had been some problems) as because the landscape of the West seemed to offer—in the imagery of the dream—"the richest, most fertile meadows."

At mid-century, Cincinnati was truly the Queen City of the West, the largest metropolis west of the Allegheny Mountains and in 1860 the sixth-largest city in the country: a bustling commercial entrepôt on the busy Ohio River. It was also the center of learning for the West. Cincinnati College had been chartered as early as 1819, and since 1831 the city had boasted a public high school as well. Jews had lived in Cincinnati since at least 1817. Attracted by the abundance of business opportunities, their numbers swelled to about ten thousand by the Civil War. Most of them came from the small towns of southern Germany, some from Poland and England. By the time Wise arrived, there were four congregations, two quite large: Bene Israel (founded in 1824) and Bene Yeshurun, the congregation to which Wise was called (founded in 1839). Though well established, the Jewish community was not yet affluent; that would come only after the war. But Cincinnati seemed clearly to be a city with a promising future and its Jewish community appeared certain to increase in size. Here Wise could flourish in an atmosphere still redolent with the pioneering spirit that so well fit his own view of life. Here, where traditional ways of doing things were ever being challenged by new prospects, where a man was more admired for his achievements than for the profundity

of his thought—here Wise could unleash the full energy of his spirit and hope to find a sympathetic, even enthusiastic response.[10]

He lost no time. In speedy succession Wise established himself securely not only as rabbi of his own congregation but for a time of Bene Israel as well. He founded and almost single-handedly edited two weekly newspapers, one in English and one in German, which spread his influence across the country. In October of 1855 he organized a conference of rabbis in Cleveland which adopted a very conservative platform intended to lay the groundwork for further efforts at unity within "American Israel." Two years later he published his prayerbook, *Minhag America.* One marvels at this amazing record of frenetic, productive activity! But despite Wise's best efforts, the first two decades in Cincinnati did not yet bring about the unification under his own aegis that he was seeking so persistently. Nor did they bring to fruition his dream of founding a school for higher Jewish learning in the United States—though he had harbored that desire almost from the moment he first stepped upon these shores.

As early as 1848, Wise had called for a congregational union in the pages of Isaac Leeser's *Occident,* deploring the lack of Jewish education and mentioning specifically the need for "better educated men to fill the pulpit."[11] But in this early period Wise was thinking rather of a general college under Jewish auspices, one which would teach secular as well as Jewish subjects and train young men for a variety of professions rather than for the rabbinate alone. As this was a time when large numbers of such denominational schools were being founded throughout the United States, but especially in the West, it is not surprising that the energetic and ambitious Wise should try his hand at establishing such an institution for the Jews very shortly after his arrival in Cincinnati. Using the day school of Bene Yeshurun as the basis, he hoped to create a "Hebrew College." But when his Zion College, as the school was named, opened in the fall of 1855, it could boast only a handful of students and the most limited financial support. Jewish businessmen were not at all convinced that their children needed a college education to succeed, nor were supporters outside Cincinnati easily persuaded to contribute to Wise's venture, especially as he acted without consulting them. When

a financial panic struck in 1857, the sources of the college's income dried up and the school ceased to exist. Thus Wise's first effort to found an institution of higher learning failed totally. But the venture did teach him a twofold lesson: that a rabbinical seminary was the more necessary and feasible project, and that such a seminary could only be supported by a preexisting union of congregations brought into being specifically for that purpose.[12]

For the next two decades conditions remained unpropitious. In the years immediately before and during the Civil War few new colleges were established anywhere in America, and even in the period directly following that upheaval, circumstances were not yet favorable. Once funds became available in Cincinnati, the building of magnificent synagogues took precedence. These structures seem to have been more important for the Jewish self-image in America than were cultural institutions.

Efforts by others to establish a school of higher Jewish learning during this period all failed. In 1865 the radical reformers in New York City created the Emanu-El Theological Seminary Association, but they were unable to establish an actual seminary. In Philadelphia, Wise's sometime ally sometime opponent, the conservative Isaac Leeser, brought about the creation of Maimonides College in 1867. It admitted eleven students, but only five completed the first year, three went on to the second, and only one—without benefit of diploma —became a practicing rabbi. Leeser's death, shortly after the school opened, dealt it a crippling blow; after six years the seminary ceased to exist.[13]

As these other attempts proved unsuccessful, the initiative passed once again into the hands of Wise. To succeed he needed a respectable number of students willing to study for the rabbinate and he needed a steady source of funds. The former he could recruit through the personal contacts he had established, his own reputation, and the lure to poor, immigrant parents of a respected professional standing for their sons. The funds would be forthcoming through the establishment of a congregational union. In the pages of the *Israelite* he now began to agitate in earnest for such a union and a seminary. Yet it was a quite fortuitous event that provided the final impetus: a donation

in the considerable amount of $10,000, which was given with a very clear stipulation.

Henry Adler of Lawrenceberg, Indiana, was a Jew of substantial means, though not among the truly wealthy. Toward the end of 1870 he proposed for the first time to give $10,000 in trust to Wise's congregation for the establishment and support of a rabbinical college. It was his offer which set the organizational process actively in motion. Although a rabbinical conference which Wise convened in Cincinnati in 1871 expressed approval of a union of congregations, a sense of urgency was not created until Adler spelled out his terms in February of 1873, including the proviso that if the seminary (he preferred to call it "Jewish theological faculty") should not be established within three years, then the gift would revert to the donor. In later years the Adler donation was referred to repeatedly on ceremonial occasions as giving the College its start. But its significance seems to have lain less in the immediate income which it provided—since most of the interest from the $10,000 was paid out to Adler during his lifetime—than in the impetus it gave to act quickly lest this sizable sum be lost.[14]

The first tangible step had already been taken on October 10, 1872, when Moritz Loth, the president of Wise's congregation, recommended in his annual report that Bene Yeshurun assume the initiative in establishing a congregational union. Together with four other Cincinnati synagogues, it then issued a joint call for a general convention to take place in Cincinnati the following summer. Twenty-eight congregations from the Midwest and South sent representatives. A constitution was adopted stating that the Union's "primary object" was to establish a "Hebrew Theological Institute," its operation to be supported by dues of one dollar per member from each of the constituent congregations. A sinking fund, to be obtained from gifts and bequests, would be invested to provide additional income and security. It was decided that the Institute would open only after $60,000 had been collected; a building would be built once assets reached $160,000.[15]

When the first regular council of the newly formed Union of American Hebrew Congregations met the following year in Cleveland,

the amount which had been raised was a pitiful percentage of the goal laid down. The year 1873 had witnessed a financial panic of extraordinary severity and persistence which had affected the business interests of the wealthier Jews. Though fifty-five congregations had now joined the Union, the prospects of gathering sufficient funds to open the College looked bleak indeed. The situation appeared no more promising at the second council, held in Buffalo in 1875. By now there were seventy-two congregations, but the total assets as of June 30, 1875, not including the Adler gift, barely exceeded $5,000. By any strict construction of the constitution, the College should never have been opened that fall as planned. It was decided, however, to proceed nonetheless; the opening of the Preparatory Department was deemed not yet to be the "permanent establishment of the College." [16] Thus the impressive exercises in the Plum Street Temple that fall diverted attention from the shaky financial condition of the incipient institution even while the festive oratory sought to inspire confidence in its success. The effect was apparently as desired, for in the following months generous contributions were made, especially by the Jews of Cincinnati. By December there was already a total accumulation of $64,000, though most of it was in as yet uncollected pledges.[17] Within a few months after it had opened, the school could be considered "permanently established."

Wise had decided to begin the College with a single class, adding another one each successive year. The total program was to consist of eight years. Students were to spend the first four years in a Preparatory Department while taking classes concurrently at one of the public high schools, the second four in the Collegiate Department while studying at the recently municipalized University of Cincinnati. Thus the fall of 1875 found Wise, the unpaid president, along with an assistant, Solomon Eppinger, instructing a small class from four until six on weekday afternoons. Though Wise put the best face he could on the school's circumstances whenever he wrote of the College in the *American Israelite* or reported to the newly constituted Board of Governors,[18] it really amounted to little more than an intensive religious school. Recalling those first days two decades later, the founder

wrote: "There sat the wise men of Israel, namely the good old teacher Solomon Eppinger and fourteen noisy boys, most of whom had come only to kill time and at the command of their parents. Four of them wanted to study; ten wanted to make noise. . . . No one who failed to see the embryonic college can imagine how ridiculous was this little hole-in-the-wall of a school in its not-too-bright cellar, carrying the pompous name of college. Fortunately we did not have to be ashamed in front of visitors, for none came." [19]

But with persistent effort the school slowly grew and, as a result, the need for some permanent quarters became apparent. After two years the classes were moved from the basement of the Mound Street Synagogue to that of the Plum Street Temple, but these quarters, too, were deemed only temporary. When an attractive private mansion at a bargain price became available in 1880, the Union leaders decided to use their limited funds to purchase it for $25,250 and renovate it for instructional purposes. The building was located on West Sixth Street, at that time a most fashionable section of the city and in close proximity to the large Reform temples. Its design served the purposes of the College very well. Three stories in height, with an elegant freestone front, the structure presented an impressive appearance, and once the name of the College was hewn above the entry in large gold letters, it gave the school an identity of its own and an aura of permanence which it had not previously enjoyed. On the first floor there was space for the rapidly expanding library as well as for a richly furnished president's office; on the second floor, bedrooms were turned into an adequate number of classrooms; and on the third floor a large hall was soon converted into a chapel. The building, which was dedicated on April 24, 1881, served HUC for thirty years until at length it was deemed no longer of sufficient size and its location no longer desirable.[20]

The students who entered the College were required to pass an examination in Hebrew reading and conjugation of the regular verb. They had to be able to translate at sight any passage from the Book of Genesis and were to be familiar with the history of Israel from Abraham to Zerubbabel. They also had to possess the qualifications

for admission to a public high school. Considering the students' limited preparation upon entry, the small number of class hours per week available, and the fatigue of the students in the late afternoon after a full schedule at the high school, the curriculum devised for the Preparatory Department was remarkably, even absurdly, ambitious. At the end of four years—and before beginning the Collegiate Department—a student was to have mastered Hebrew and Aramaic grammar, read in the original most of the Bible and large selections from rabbinic literature, including portions from both the Babylonian and the Palestinian Talmuds, and familiarized himself with the entire span of Jewish history.[21]

Wise made every effort to fulfill the prescriptions of the curriculum. It was of great importance for the future of the school that scoffers, who had argued the impossibility of teaching classical Jewish texts to American youngsters, be proven wrong, and that traditionally inclined opponents find that the College's students were learning what had always been required of a rabbi. Thus in his regular reports to the Board of Governors, later printed in the *American Israelite,* Wise was ever at pains to indicate precisely how many chapters of Psalms had been covered in the preceding month, how many pages of *Mekhilta,* and the like. In order that the achievements of the College's instruction be presented to the Jewish world at large, it was decided to employ a then common practice in American education: the public examination conducted by outside examiners. From 1877 until 1889 (when the task was given to the president and faculty), groups of three examiners were regularly appointed by the Union at its councils. These panels, which included rabbis and laymen of varying points of view, repeatedly expressed appreciation of the school's accomplishments. Their only evident criticism was directed at Wise's over-ambition, which allowed students to begin study of talmudic writings when they had as yet insufficiently mastered the Pentateuch.[22]

The nature of the curriculum for the Collegiate Department remained undetermined until a commission of nine was selected to formulate a complete plan of studies at the Union council in 1878. Composed of both rabbis and educated laymen, reformers and con-

servatives, it of course counted Isaac Mayer Wise among its members. Yet before the commission could meet, Wise decided to formulate his own program and to submit it to the other members in advance of their deliberations. His hope was that they would either allow it to stand intact or make only minor alterations. But to his dismay, the commission refused to accept Wise's proposal and insisted on formulating its own, which was adopted by the Union the following summer. As a result, Wise was constrained to write a dissent, though he did not present it officially. The differences between Wise's two documents and the official commission report shed some interesting light on the president's priorities for the curriculum.[23] Unlike his colleagues, he was certain of the necessity for each rabbinical student to be familiar with a number of Semitic languages. However, he was less convinced than they of the importance of stressing the German language in the HUC curriculum, since Wise was not committed to its preservation as the language of the sermon and prayerbook in America.[24] He further criticized the majority for failing to note the necessity of determining a new method for the study of *halakha* based on the comprehension of its guiding principles. Finally, he questioned their desire to institute an additional ninth year of exclusive study at the College after the student's completion of his university program;[25] Wise was not in favor of protracting rabbinic studies and apparently wanted to produce the first graduates as quickly as possible. Considering the president's character, it is not surprising that, although the majority report was adopted by the Union and even signed by Wise himself, the actual curriculum instituted was in every respect in line with Wise's personal opinions.

The curriculum as it finally evolved in practice consisted basically of four subjects: biblical exegesis utilizing both traditional and modern commentaries, Talmud (including Codes), philosophy of Judaism (restricted to medieval texts), and history of Judaism. In addition, there were language courses in Syriac, Arabic, and "Assyrian" (Hebrew and Aramaic having been mastered in the Preparatory Department). There was also some "New Hebrew" (medieval) poetry, theology (taught by Wise), and in the senior year two hours of homiletics. About two-thirds of a student's time in the Collegiate De-

partment, and an even larger percentage in the Preparatory Department, was taken up with translating texts and learning grammar.[26] No alternatives were available at any level.

In accordance with then current American educational practice, little time was apportioned for modern writings, for lecture, or for discussion. Wise explained this emphasis pedagogically: Bible and Talmud had to be mastered first before recent synthetic works would be of any value; Jewish theology could not be fruitfully studied until the texts upon which it rested were well known. "It is illegitimate," he wrote in one of his reports, "to speculate and theorize without the proper basis. Hence, the inevitable conclusion that those only who have a respectable knowledge of Jewish literature must be admitted to the study of Jewish theology, in order not to educate sophists." [27] Only upon reaching their junior and senior years in the Collegiate Department did students orally present and then debate papers on theological subjects. But pedagogic considerations were not the only ones which played a role in the emphasis given to sources in this curriculum. Concentration upon the texts enabled Wise to elude the often posed question whether the Hebrew Union College was orthodox or reformist in approach by replying simply that there was little in the curriculum to make it the one or the other: the classical sources of Judaism were the common possession of all Jews.

Though it is not possible to measure the quality of the students' learning in those early days, the quantity of material which in some fashion at least they managed to absorb is astounding when one considers the concurrent obligations (including classical and modern languages) at the high school and university. During the year 1883–84, for example, the senior class actually read forty-nine full folio pages of Talmud, forty chapters of Codes, and twenty chapters of Midrash Rabba; they also heard lectures on talmudic literature, methodology, and terminology. In Bible they read forty chapters of Ezekiel plus Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and a number of Minor Prophets; and in philosophy they studied Joseph Albo's *Sefer ha-Ikarim* and Saadia's *Emunot ve-Deot*. In addition, they wrote Hebrew compositions and heard regular lectures on Jewish history and theology.[28] Finally, the

senior year was also the time when students were required to write a rabbinical thesis and (though this requirement was eventually dropped) "stand final examination in all subjects of the collegiate course, read *prima vista* (or after a short preparation) any part of the Hebrew Bible, the ancient Targumim and commentaries, Talmud, Midrash, Code, the philosophical and poetical literatures of the Hebrews. . . ." [29] The quantitative achievements of the lower classes (at least on paper) were hardly less remarkable.

The faculty which taught according to this curriculum grew slowly as year after year was added on to the school and as funds became available. At the very beginning there was only Wise himself along with Solomon Eppinger, an elderly teacher in Wise's religious school who was the only one to receive a regular salary. Max Lilienthal, the rabbi of Bene Israel, who joined the staff the second year to teach history, like Wise taught without compensation. During the initial period there was no figure of scholarly stature who was a regular member of the faculty; indeed none such was required to teach basic texts to the high school students who at first made up the entire student body. But with the opening of the Collegiate Department in 1879, the need for a full-time teacher of recognized credentials became imperative. Fortunately, Wise was able that year to persuade the capable Moses Mielziner to join the faculty as professor of Talmud. Mielziner, who would teach at the Hebrew Union College for more than two decades, had studied in Germany with the radical reformer Samuel Holdheim and received his rabbinical diploma from the Hungarian rabbi Leopold Loew; he also possessed a Ph.D. from the University of Giessen. Before coming to Cincinnati, he had been a rabbi and teacher in New York City. When he moved to Hebrew Union College, he was undoubtedly the ablest modern talmudic scholar in the United States. Of even greater immediate significance, he possessed the ability to teach rabbinic sources in a fashion which made them meaningful to his students. Expounding the Talmud in English from the original Hebrew and Aramaic text, as was done at the College, was a pioneering task which required the development of a hitherto nonexistent technical terminology. In this effort he was eminently

successful. Mielziner also created a "scientific" method of presenting the Talmud which the examiners in 1884 praised for enabling students to read and explain some of the most difficult passages after an hour's preparation. In his teaching he would also draw comparisons with Roman and modern law and would concentrate on subjects, such as the marital laws, which seemed to be of particular contemporary relevance.[30]

Until the 1890s, the other regular members of the faculty were of distinctly lesser stature. They consisted of whomever Wise could persuade to accept a teaching position at the meager salary offered by the Board of Governors.[31] Some gained the respect of their students, others did not; one, Heinrich Zirndorf, who was the first regular professor of Jewish history, failed so egregiously in his teaching that students openly reviled him, and the board, after much acrimony, was eventually forced to dismiss him.[32] Those faculty members who came toward the end of Wise's presidency—Gotthard Deutsch in history, Max Margolis in Hebrew, Moses Buttenwieser in Bible—elevated the level of the College considerably, but Mielziner remained the senior scholar and the most important of the regular teachers during Wise's presidency.

The faculty member's lot in the early days of the College was not an enviable one. Compensated at from about half to only slightly more than the salaries earned by the first graduates,[33] he was forced to accept other employment—preaching, editing, teaching religious school—in addition to the thirteen to sixteen hours per week spent in his classroom at the College. He possessed no tenure; each faculty member stood for yearly reelection by the Board of Governors. He enjoyed no pension or security other than what he could set aside on his own. Monthly, he was required to submit to the president a report on the material covered in his classes. By explicit ruling of the Board of Governors he was prohibited from spending any portion of class time on "matters foreign to the instruction set for the respective hour" or to dismiss his classes before the bell.[34] Lack of funds during the early years meant that the faculty was usually understaffed. Classes were combined and advanced students were employed to do some of the more elementary teaching. In 1882–83, when the final eighth

year of the school was added, the total faculty—diminished by a number of deaths—consisted of Mielziner, Eppinger, and Wise. In 1887, when the size of the student body for the first time demanded eight separately taught classes, there were still only five faculty members to teach them. In later years, one professor served as the "ordinarius" for each class, individual faculty members thus bearing responsibility for the welfare of a particular segment of the student body.

No less meager than the faculty were the size and quality of the Hebrew Union College library in the first years. Nearly all of the early books were gifts donated by friends around the country. Aside from an abundance of worn-out prayerbooks, these contributions consisted mostly of Bibles, Mishnas, Hebrew grammars, and dictionaries. By the end of the first year there was a total of 103 usable volumes, all dutifully enumerated by Wise in his report to the Board of Governors.[35] In the beginning, the books received little care. When the first catalogue was undertaken in 1878,[36] it was discovered that seventy-two volumes had been lost or destroyed, constituting at that time a considerable portion of the library's total holdings. Each student, we learn from a report, considered himself the librarian.[37] At length, a faculty member was persuaded to take on the additional duties of supervising the library—for which he was paid the munificent salary of $50 per year. Not until 1878 did the council of the Union authorize an appropriation specifically for the purchase of books. These funds, plus an increasing number of donations, thereupon enabled the library to grow very rapidly so that by 1881 it possessed 7,800 volumes, making it the largest Jewish library in the country. Its preeminence was permanently assured when Rabbi Samuel Adler, upon his death in 1891, willed his private collection to the College. His rich assemblage of some 1,600 bound volumes and 300 pamphlets of Hebraica and Judaica was the first major acquisition to come into the College's possession, though smaller collections of some importance had been received earlier. By the end of the century, the Hebrew Union College library possessed more than 14,000 volumes, including a number of rare and precious works.[38]

Of the students who attended Hebrew Union College during its

first quarter century, the majority by far were born in the United States. They came from poor families of German origin in the Midwest and South or were the wards of Jewish orphanages. Well-to-do Jewish parents would not hear of their sons entering a profession which was for the most part poorly paid and lacking in prestige. Becoming a rabbi was widely considered the last resort for a young man, appropriate only for someone who, as an Alabama congregation candidly wrote to the Board of Governors, "is not fit for anything else." Two of the Union's leaders in Cincinnati did in fact send their sons to the Preparatory Department for a time, but their intent seems to have been nothing more than to supply their progeny with a somewhat more intensive Jewish education and to bolster the number of pupils. For serious students Wise was forced to turn to those families for whom the tuition-free education offered by the Hebrew Union College in conjunction with high school and university studies provided an opportunity they could not otherwise afford. In some cases Wise himself knew the parents from his wide-ranging and frequent trips to preach and to dedicate synagogues in the small towns of the Midwest; in other instances word of the new school had come through his two newspapers. Contact was also maintained with the Jewish orphan asylums and a scholarship was offered to one student from each of them. As Wise's colleague, Max Lilienthal, had noted at the Opening Exercises, the composition of the student body was really quite in keeping with traditional precedent: "Our old rabbis have already said, thousands of years ago, 'Take care of the poor, they will be your scholars and your teachers.' "[39]

Since the students were without means, they were supported financially by the Board of Governors, which provided them with all necessities from books to clothing, food, and lodging. In fact, for the first four years of the College's existence the majority of its total budget was expended to care for these "indigent students," as they were called. In the course of their stay at the College, some of them tried to outgrow or forget their humble origins. A few anglicized their names; one amused a professor when in his presence he tried to prevent his father from gesticulating with his hands.[40]

The age range of the students was such as to place the immature

teenager at the same class table with the more grown-up, but Jewishly ignorant, older pupil. In the year 1876–77, the lowest grade had nine students ranging in age from thirteen to twenty-eight. Although in 1888 the Board of Governors passed a resolution to make fifteen the minimum age of admission, it was not consistently observed and an age range from fourteen to twenty in a single grade still obtained as late as 1896. Finally, in 1898, the age for admission was raised to sixteen years.[41]

Most of the students were quartered in a boarding house or else lived with Cincinnati families whose children they sometimes tutored; their lodgings were closely supervised by a committee of the Board of Governors. Life in such a boarding house, as one occupant later recalled it, was hardly luxurious. Students lived four in a room on the third floor, slept together in trundle beds, and sometimes had to study in overcoats for want of proper heating. Aside from the beds, their furniture consisted of four kitchen chairs, one table, and a single study lamp. In the morning the students were roused by a bell and assembled downstairs while one of their number rushed through the Hebrew prayers as speedily as possible. The food was cheap and poorly cooked, so that whatever spending money students had went for eating in restaurants. When one of them needed clothing, he went to a particular member of the Board of Governors who owned a wholesale clothing business. Upon seeing a student with such a request, the clothier would bluster loudly: "What, again?" [42]

Explicit rules and regulations closely governed the life of the student in his boarding house. He was required to rise daily at 6:15 during the winter months and at 5:45 during the summer (though he might rise as early as four if he desired to study). Ten o'clock was mandatory bedtime for those in the Preparatory Department, eleven for those in the College. Students were cautioned against boisterous talking and laughing at meals and to avoid physical quarrels. The superintendent of the house reported monthly to the Board of Governors on the deportment of the young men under his charge. The College building, too, had its rules: students were allowed to enter only by the side entrance; they were cautioned not to deface the property, open mail addressed to the College, or visit the president's room in

his absence. Only one book at a time might be taken out of the library except by permission of the president of the Board of Governors. Teachers in all classes reported regularly not only on student progress but also on attendance and behavior in the classroom.[43]

Such rules, however, were often broken. This was an age in which the authorities of every school tried to exercise strict control over their charges and in which students frequently engaged in rebellion, malicious pranks, and even violence against instructors and college presidents.[44] Hebrew Union College students were no different from their compeers in other institutions. Wise and Mielziner seem to have suffered little from their diabolical imaginations but others were not so fortunate, especially those whose fiery tempers presented a particular challenge to student incitement or whose accents called forth a talented mimicry.[45]

In those days the Hebrew Union College was a family in a very real sense, not merely in the metaphoric one in which the term was often later used. Each student from outside the city had one member of the board who was declared his legal guardian during his stay at the College.[46] The faculty, the president, and to the largest extent the board exercised a parental role toward the students, and they, in turn, replied with all the ambivalances of love and rebellion that characterize such a relationship. Wise, as a rule, was gentle and understanding in his treatment of students, thus earning their love and respect. But his posture was possible only because the Board of Governors chose to exercise discipline directly. Students delinquent in their studies or guilty of misconduct were frequently summoned before the board and given a reprimand by its president or occasionally even expelled. In 1892 a particularly severe breach of discipline produced a memorable scene. Saturday afternoon, April 9th, all the local members of the Board of Governors, faculty (except for Wise), and student body gathered in the College chapel after the service to hear the president of the board solemnly exhort the students to perform the duties expected of them in the College vis-à-vis their teachers and the Board of Governors, all of whom were ever ready to aid them. He then publicly reprimanded two students for being involved in a brawl and reduced one of them to a lower grade for a year as punishment.

Another student, he announced, had failed to pass his examinations satisfactorily and consequently had been stricken from the roll.[47]

The pressure under which students labored, and their sometimes difficult personal adjustments to the life of the College, produced one notable tragedy in those early years. A deeply disturbed student, who had left the school in 1889 after apparent misconduct, was allowed to reenter a year later. He and a younger pupil who came under his influence entered into a suicide pact and together one day each of them shot himself. Although a note signed by both students explained that they had been treated kindly by everyone at the College and did not hold the institution responsible for their act, hostile Jewish newspapers chose to blame the College. At a funeral service held in the HUC library, the president of the Board of Governors eulogized them moralistically, saying "they were wrong, . . . these poor, misguided friends." [48]

Yet if life at the College had its rigors and even its tragedies, if the students were often more children than prospective religious leaders, the Board of Governors more stern disciplinarians than enlightened educators, there was much that characterized the College in those days which inspires admiration. Academically, every effort was made to maintain a demanding curriculum. Socially, a spirit of close unity prevailed, perhaps especially because the school was a pioneering venture whose value outsiders so often called into question. The students took pride in the accomplishments of their alumni and a deep feeling of fellowship existed among them; there were "close companionships and devoted friendships." [49]

At the very beginning, Wise created a literary society for the students which he called *Atzile Bene Yisrael* ("Noble Sons of Israel") and which was later divided into two sections for students of the Preparatory and Collegiate Departments. These societies met weekly for debates, declamations, music, and drama. Though the students seem to have enjoyed this activity, participation in the societies was mandatory, and their secretaries were even required to hand in monthly reports to the secretary of the faculty.[50] Not until the last decade of Wise's presidency did students become more independent and desirous of taking their own initiatives. In 1896—on their own

responsibility and without financial assistance from the Board of Governors—they founded the first College periodical: the *HUC Journal,* published monthly during the school year until 1903. Students, faculty, alumni, and friends of the College contributed to this new venture. In a most lively fashion its pages reflected the major issues of the day. The Dreyfus case, Zionism, and Sunday Sabbath observance were discussed there along with American phenomena bearing on Judaism, such as the number of Jews attracted to the appearances of the agnostic orator Robert Ingersoll or the controversy over the teaching of Bible in the public schools. There were also précis of sermons given in chapel, book reviews, and scholarly papers. The students' level of thought and expression, as evidenced by the *Journal,* was remarkably high; their tone was serious and thoughtful, neither flippant nor sophomoric.[51]

In those same years the students were also exposed to occasional lectures delivered by prominent Jews not associated with the Reform movement: the novelist Israel Zangwill suggested to them that on account of its poetic beauty the ancient liturgy should remain unchanged, and Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, the famous Jewish nationalist preacher, on two occasions addressed the students in Hebrew. In this period, too, we find the first evidence of student social concern when one student urged his fellows to form a "College Settlement" on the model of the one run by the University of Cincinnati and to spend their spare time leading societies, clubs, and classes among the Jewish poor of the city.[52]

Religious services took a large share of the time that students had left over from their studies—and of course attendance was required. It was assumed that a prospective rabbi would want to devote himself regularly to prayer. Moreover, once he reached the Collegiate Department, a student would officiate at High Holy Day services in a small congregation, and it was important that the young College not be embarrassed. Aside from the daily services held in the boarding house, the student was expected to participate in worship each Saturday morning at one of the local synagogues. At the College an attempt was made to perpetuate the traditional Jewish association of study

with prayer by the regulation that every class be opened and closed with the *birkhot ha-tora* or an extempore prayer by one of the students.[53]

The regular weekly Hebrew Union College service took place on Saturday afternoons following an hour of classes. It was held in the chapel on the third floor and attended by all students and faculty; often, as well, by members of the Board of Governors. Students of the junior year conducted the service while seniors gave the sermon. The speakers were required to submit their speeches in advance to the professor of homiletics for corrections, while readers had to hold a rehearsal before the professor of liturgy on the preceding day. During the services *kaddish* was read at the *yahrzeit* of College benefactors, some of whom had made the reading a stipulation in presenting their gifts.[54]

The student sermon and reading were frankly regarded by Wise as "examinations in homilectics," [55] and as such they served a valuable pedagogic function for the preacher and the reader. But it is interesting to note that the the question of the role of the chapel service in the life of the College—so much agitated in later years—had become an issue in some minds even before the turn of the century. In April 1899, Wise's assistant at Bene Yeshurun, Louis Grossmann, a graduate of the College and later its professor of ethics, suggested in the *HUC Journal* that it was "not quite congruous with a high sense of religiousness to turn worship into an academic exercise" and he expressed doubt as to whether the weekly services "contribute much toward the development and intensification of the Jewish spirit in the students. . . ." The student service, he added, should be "a religious experience that goes deep down into the heart of each one of those who attend it, as much as of those who officiate in it." If there was a desire for religious ecstasy and spiritual strengthening, he concluded, then the service would have to be a "communion" shared in by all, professors as well as students.[56]

During the early period of its history, the College, which had been created by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, remained under the close supervision of its parent organization; it was not even

incorporated as a separate institution. For its part, the UAHC, though increasingly devoting itself to other enterprises, as late as 1900 still appropriated nearly all of its budget directly or indirectly for the support of the College. The councils of the Union elected the entire Board of Governors, which was obliged to present reports and proposed budgets to the Union for approval. Fund-raising and the investment of assets were entirely the function of the Union, which was also the owner of the College property.

In raising funds the Union relied on a number of sources: congregational dues, fixed yearly contributions, and one-time donations and bequests. A special fund was also created for indigent students (later called "stipendiary fund"), which received contributions largely from ladies' auxiliaries organized for this purpose in various communities. The amount realized yearly in congregational dues depended, of course, upon the size of the Union, which, for economic and ideological reasons, did not grow steadily during this quarter century. The number of congregations increased from fifty-five in 1874 to a high of 104 in 1879, remained at about that level for a short time, then fell off, rising again to stand at ninety-nine in 1900. Total individual membership described a somewhat more steady upward curve as member congregations increased in size and larger ones joined the fold. Beginning with 1,966 dues-paying members in 1874, it reached 9,845 in 1900.

Compared with dues, the amounts raised from donations gyrated far more wildly, depending apparently on the degree of effort put into fund-raising in any particular year. Not infrequently, the amount collected one year would be halved the next and then rise again to the original height or higher the third year. Nearly half of the total donations usually came from Cincinnati. Throughout the entire period there were extraordinarily large contributions only in the year 1894, when two estates, one in Cincinnati and one in Pittsburgh, brought in a total of approximately $25,000, constituting about half of the total receipts for that year.[57]

The financial situation of the Union was throughout this period a precarious one. Beginning its existence during the drawn-out financial crisis of 1873, the Union suffered again during the panic of 1893–97.[58]

At various times it was beset by ideological opponents from the left and from the right. Yet even in more prosperous and less troubled periods, there seem never to have been sufficient funds to finance its program properly. In 1883 an attempt was made to call upon B'nai B'rith and other lodges to support the indigent students' fund but, though some individual lodges did respond, it met strong opposition on the part of B'nai B'rith's Executive Committee, which regarded all specifically religious institutions as beyond its proper sphere of activity.[59]

Union assets were divided between a general fund, used for operational expenses, and a sinking fund (later called "Endowment Fund") from which only the interest could be used. Congregational dues went into the general fund; all other donations accrued to the sinking fund.[60] Originally, the latter was invested exclusively in United States government bonds; only in 1884 was authorization given to invest it in first mortgages, which at 6 percent yielded twice the income of the bonds.[61]

Until the purchase of the College building in 1881, the income of the Union consistently exceeded its expenditures. But once the structure was opened, fund-raising enthusiasm waned and subscriptions to the sinking fund remained unpaid even as ongoing expenditures increased.[62] The result was a continuous borrowing from the sinking fund for the operational fund (begun with the purchase of the building)[63] and the reduction of liquid assets from over $50,000 in 1880 to a level of from about $20,000 to $28,500 until the fortuitous bequests of 1894 again brought assets up to the point they had reached fourteen years earlier.

For the Hebrew Union College, the financial situation of the Union meant persistent pressure to cut corners: to make do with senior students as teachers since new regular faculty could not be appointed, to turn down students who would otherwise have been admitted to the school because no stipendiary aid was available. During the first decade, as the school grew from a single class to a full eight-year institution, the College's budget increased rapidly. Beginning with an allocation of about $3,000 in 1875–76, it advanced to about $16,000 in 1885–86. But from there it proceeded to fluctuate

according to the funds the Union could provide at any particular time. A sizable portion, an average of about $5,000 per annum, was always devoted to student support.[64] In Wise's final year, 1899–1900, the budget stood at $22,000.

Immediate control over the affairs of the College rested in the hands of the Board of Governors chosen by the Union. It was this body which elected Wise and was further charged with yearly reelecting or dismissing him, along with the rest of the faculty. Through its committees and as a whole it admitted (and at times examined) entering students, provided for their material needs, disciplined them, and if necessary suspended or dismissed them. Although the board was to be broadly representative, at the beginning eight of its twelve members were from Cincinnati, and even after the total membership was raised to twenty-four in 1878, at first nine, and later twelve, members continued to be from the home city. Moreover, it was the Cincinnati members of the board, meeting monthly throughout the year, who made all the significant decisions for the school. Members from other cities were rarely present at the sessions; all committee chairmen were from Cincinnati as, of course, were the officers. The men who ran the College—and the Union—were the same men who played leading roles in congregations Bene Yeshurun and Bene Israel. As one of the first students recalled, in those years "the H.U.C. was to all intents and purposes the ward of the two large Cincinnati Reform Congregations. . . ." [65]

A word must be said here on what the College meant to these immensely dedicated Cincinnati Jewish businessmen who so directly ran the institution. Like Wise, they were of course concerned with providing a native American Jewish religious leadership. But to their minds, they were doing more than that: they were also taking underprivileged boys and providing them with a secure future to which they could not otherwise aspire. In 1881, the president of the Board of Governors described the indigent students' fund as "that grand charity . . . , which in the past years has enabled us to take from the orphan asylums some of their brightest inmates and give them and other deserving young men of our faith, that great boon—a first-class

religious and secular education."[66] Because they devoted both their time and substance to the cause, they thought it only proper that they should receive a measure of gratitude and deference on the part of the students. If students did not respond in the proper spirit, as sometimes happened, they were considered unworthy of receiving the institution's benefits.[67] When on one occasion a young man dared in chapel to interpret the text *he-ashir lo yarbe* ("The rich shall not give more": Exod. 30:15) to mean that the rich were too exclusively favored with prerogatives, the vice-president of the board, who was present, took offense and created such a stir that an article on the altercation—apparently supplied by a student informant—appeared in a Cincinnati newspaper two days later.[68]

Until Wise's death and for a decade thereafter, the president of the Board of Governors was Bernhard Bettmann, a prominent Cincinnati clothier. Born in a small town in Bavaria, he settled in Cincinnati in 1850, joined Congregation Bene Yeshurun, and had already played an active role in Wise's Zion College of 1855. A lifelong Republican, he was active in both local and national politics and served for a time on the Cincinnati School Board and as collector of Internal Revenue for the First District of Ohio. He was also the first president of the United Jewish Charities of Cincinnati, a pioneer of such organizations in the United States. To his work for the College Bettmann brought vigor, executive ability, a modicum of Jewish knowledge, and some literary talent.[69] Serving for thirty-five years in his position, it is understandable that, once accustomed to a particular manner of doing things, he was resistant to the introduction of changes and may have resented any challenges to his authority.[70] But he was very much devoted to Wise and liked to think of himself simply as "the Hur who upholds the hands of Moses."

The vice-president of the Board of Governors from 1875 until his death in 1905 was Julius Freiberg, an immigrant from the Rhineland who arrived in Cincinnati in 1847. His flourishing distilling business soon made him one of the wealthiest Jews in the city. Unlike Bettmann, he was a member of the Bene Israel congregation, which he served as president at various times. He, too, was active in a variety of other Jewish and nonsectarian causes.[71] Freiberg took his religion quite ser-

iously, so much so that even skeptics were convinced of his earnestness.[72] In his later years he seems to have attended the HUC chapel with great regularity. A religious conservative, he resisted liturgical changes, especially any reduction in the amount of Hebrew used in the worship service.[73]

Wise's position vis-à-vis the Board of Governors was considerably weaker than that of some of his successors. Though corresponding to the fashion of the day, the formula Wise used in signing his reports—"your most obedient servant"—was not entirely meaningless. Officially, Wise was merely president of the faculty, and as such he was directly responsible in all matters to the Board of Governors and to its president. As he was not paid for his duties (although the Union bought him a house in honor of his seventieth birthday), he could feel less beholden to the board than would otherwise have been the case. But when it came to disagreements, it was Wise who was forced to back down (or at least to beat a strategic retreat).

The differences of opinion which arose from time to time almost always had to do with finances. Wise wanted to build the school as rapidly as possible. He was eager to hire faculty and sarcastically reproached the board when it was unable to provide the funds. Desirous of building as large a student body as possible, he was both far more ready than the Board of Governors to admit questionable students and far more reluctant to expel academic and disciplinary offenders. When insufficient funds were available for all the indigent students who wanted to enter, Wise would sometimes support them himself out of his $50-per-month presidential allowance. But ultimately the board insisted upon its right to accept or reject indigent students according to its own judgment, and Wise had no choice but to submit.[74]

The general picture one derives with regard to the administration of the College in its first quarter century is that of a small group of Cincinnati laymen running its affairs in all matters except those specifically academic, and of a College president, himself a teacher, carrying on the day-to-day functions and presiding over the faculty. Of subordinate administrators or even regular secretarial assistance there is no evidence. Wise handled the College correspondence alone. Only later was he assisted by two other members of the faculty who,

in addition to their regular duties, served as secretary and registrar respectively.

In view of the rigors of the curriculum, it is not surprising that a great many of the early students did not complete the course of studies. Some were eliminated when they failed to pass their examinations in the high school or university, others were dismissed for academic weakness at the College or for breach of College discipline. Still others left of their own free will to seek careers in more lucrative occupations; according to Julius Freiberg's pun, they preferred "the study of *Mono Revokhim* (a share of profits) to *More Nevokhim* [sic] (of Maimonides)."[75] Of the dozen or so regular students in the first class of the school, seven made it to graduation from the Preparatory Department, celebrated for the first time in 1879. They received the degree of Bachelor of Hebrew Literature (later: Letters) with the Hebrew title: *ḥaver le-atzile bene yisrael.*[76]

Fewer students persevered all the way to ordination. Of the original class, only four were ordained at the first such exercises, held on July 11, 1883. Yet though the number of graduates was small, their ordination—far more than the opening ceremonies eight years earlier—was an occasion for genuine rejoicing. It was the first time in the history of American Jewry that such an event had taken place. Once again the Plum Street Temple was filled to capacity and ablaze with lights; once again there was resounding music and festive oratory. Among the guests gathered within the richly ornamented shrine were representatives from seventy-six congregations, concurrently celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Union. Wise, who had taught the graduates personally for eight years and knew each of them intimately, pressed the "kiss of ordination" upon every forehead, gave each one his blessing, and proclaimed: "In the name of God and by the authority of the Governors and of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and in the name of all good men, I declare you to be rabbis of the Jewish faith, that you may preach the Word of God to the people, that you may be patriots in America and standard-bearers of the people." Each graduate received a *semikhat hora'a* in Hebrew and English bestowing upon him the privileges of rabbi and teacher. Ac-

cording to one observer, many were the tears of joy that were shed and more than one of the rabbis present was heard to exclaim: *ashre ayin ra'ata kol ele*—"Happy the eye that saw all these things!" [77]

Yet this splendid occasion, like the earlier Opening Exercises, screened a problematic situation which could not long remain unnoticed. In 1875 the festive exercises of inauguration had veiled the humble circumstances—so clearly apparent the next day—under which the school began; in 1883 the even more joyous and solemn ceremony of the first ordination—in which the conservative Rabbi Benjamin Szold of Baltimore gave the opening address and in which the New York Reform rabbis Gustav Gottheil and Kaufmann Kohler both gave speeches—concealed the opposition to the College which had manifested itself not long before and which was about to emerge decisively once again. If the counterpart to the Opening Exercises was the next day's scene in the basement of the Mound Street Temple, the complement to the first ordination was the spectacle that met the eye within three hours after the final benediction— at a grand dinner to celebrate the occasion, the so-called Trefa Banquet.

Wise had tried to make his school a rabbinical seminary for all of American Jewry. The achievement of this goal required that he win over to the Union and College both the conservative and the radical religious leadership despite the profound differences which separated them. Although the unity displayed by the program of that first ordination ceremony must have made it seem to him that he had attained his aim, the process had been a difficult one and the success proved only momentary.

From the time that Wise came to America, he had cultivated relations with Isaac Leeser, the Philadelphia Jewish leader of conservative bent in whose *Occident* he had published most of his first essays. Leeser participated in the Cleveland Conference which Wise called in 1855 and was impressed by Wise's willingness to uphold the authority of the Rabbinic tradition. Though in his prayerbook, *Minhag America,* Wise displayed his opposition to the traditional hopes for rebuilding the Temple, reinstituting the animal sacrifices, and restoring the Davidic dynasty, his relations with the moderate elements

in the conservative "Historical School" remained sufficiently cordial for him to enlist their support for the Union and the College. Thus Rabbis Sabato Morais of Philadelphia, Frederick de Sola Mendes of New York, and Benjamin Szold of Baltimore participated in Union councils and served as examiners for the College, as did the conservative layman Lewis Dembitz of Louisville, Kentucky, who was also a member of the Union's Executive Board. Mendes for a time even served on the College's Board of Governors.[78] By the year of the first ordination, the UAHC had on its rolls a number of major congregations which were quite traditional in character, including those led by Szold in Baltimore, Marcus Jastrow in Philadelphia, and by Mendes and Aaron Wise in New York. Morais' congregation in Philadelphia had not joined on constitutional grounds, but it was in sympathy with the Union's objectives.

Though not consistent in the matter, Wise had on occasion tried to avoid the label "reform," once preferring to call himself "a historical Jew" and another time assuring a questioner that he considered himself orthodox.[79] He was certain at first that he needed the support of the moderates in order for the Union and College to succeed, and he acted accordingly. But he was convinced as well of the importance of enlisting the active cooperation of those who stood to his left on the religious spectrum—the radical reformers of the East.

Wise's dispute with Rabbis David Einhorn, Samuel Hirsch, Samuel Adler, and the others who shared their inclination to uncompromising religious change and adaptation was of long standing by the time the College was opened. His feud with Einhorn went back to the Cleveland Conference of 1855, which this staunch radical had mercilessly attacked for its failure to abrogate the authority of the Talmud. To give form to their own conception of Judaism, Einhorn and Adler called a rabbinical conference to Philadelphia in 1869, where a set of principles was adopted declaring the universal mission of Judaism and rejecting what were regarded as archaic or needlessly particularistic elements. Though Wise, who was also present, expressed agreement with the spirit of the declaration, it was basically Einhorn's creation and Wise afterwards began to take issue with some of the formulations in his newspaper. The Philadelphia

Conference did not offer a milieu in which Wise could easily assert himself. The eastern reformers possessed the formal training in classics and European philosophy which Wise lacked; they also shared a devotion to German culture which made them question Wise's program of rapid and complete Americanization of Jewish religious life. Wise, in turn, claimed that they remained foreigners to the American scene and hence could not serve as leaders for American Jewry—certainly not for the next generation. "These gentlemen," he wrote of them, are "unfit for the American pulpit." [80]

If one also considers the sectional rivalry that had emerged between East and West, apparently among laity no less than among rabbis, it is easy to understand why the original call to form the UAHC did not go out to congregations in the East. Initially it was thought that a college in Cincinnati, presided over by Wise, could attract support only from the surrounding region. But once the Union was established, the desire arose to stretch its influence as far as the Atlantic, and overtures were made to congregations east of the Alleghenies. The Western leaders even expressed their willingness to make certain concessions in the constitutional structure of the Union in order to give the Eastern congregations a share in making decisions. The ingathering of the Easterners occurred in 1878 at the Fifth Union Council, held in Milwaukee, and in the period immediately thereafter. Nineteen representatives from Temple Emanu-El of New York were present on that occasion along with their rabbi, Gustav Gottheil; Einhorn's congregation, Beth El of New York, was also represented.

Little more than a year earlier, in February 1877, the Eastern reformers had begun their own rabbinical school in New York City with some thirty pupils at various levels. Gustav Gottheil was its superintendent; the expenses were paid by the already existing Emanu-El Theological Association and by Temple Emanu-El itself. The Union leadership initially looked askance at this rival school and refused even to wish it well.[81] But the sentiment in favor of unity emerging on both sides during the following months led to a decision at the Milwaukee Conference to adopt the New York institution as a preparatory school for the HUC. The Union paid about half of its

budget. It existed for a number of years until a decrease in the size of the student body and lack of local support led to the school's termination in 1885. Only a handful of its very few graduates went on to the College in Cincinnati.

Thus by 1883 the major radical reform congregations had joined the Union and the drive for a separate rabbinical institution in the East had been successfully neutralized. Moreover, the presence of the radicals had not yet driven out conservative congregations which were already members of the Union or deterred new ones from joining thereafter. With the exception of the rigidly orthodox, all major Jewish congregations stood in support of the College at the time of its first ordination.

At half past seven in the evening of that same day of ordination, some two hundred of the distinguished guests gathered in Cincinnati's famed Highland House for a lavish banquet to celebrate the occasion. But no sooner had the invocation been spoken and the waiters begun to serve the food, when a commotion stirred the banquet hall. Two rabbis arose from their seats and left the room; three other guests indignantly refused to partake in the meal. Littleneck clams on the half shell had been placed before them as the first course of the elaborate menu; crabs, shrimp, and frogs were to follow. The arrangements had been handled by a committee of Cincinnati laymen who hired a caterer and also paid the entire cost of the dinner. Wise himself had not been party to this breach of *kashrut*. Indeed, it was politically so preposterous a faux pas that he would never have allowed it to happen. But that it could have occurred at all simply brought into focus what the afternoon's ceremonies had so deftly obscured: the supporters of the College represented such a wide spectrum of attitudes to Jewish tradition that the alliance forged over the previous few years was unlikely to remain long intact.

The influence of the Trefa Banquet upon the events which followed must not be exaggerated.[82] Had the food served that evening been in strict accordance with Jewish dietary regulations, the forces already at work to bring about a split would not have been halted in their course. The Russian pogroms of 1881 had unleashed a flood of

Jewish immigration to the United States from Eastern Europe. These newcomers, whose numbers were to swell vastly in succeeding decades, did not share in the heritage of German Reform nor did they define Judaism in universalistic religious terms. The conservatives thus found themselves with a new constituency which, except for its politically radical elements, espoused a more traditional Judaism than that of most of the Union's congregations. At the same time, the presence of the immigrants drove the reformers to define their own position even more sharply.[83] In 1885 Kaufmann Kohler of New York convened a rabbinical conference at Pittsburgh which adopted a truly radical platform: a "declaration of independence" from traditional concepts and practices. Wise was put into a position where he had to cast his lot either with the reformers or with the conservatives. By participating in the Pittsburgh Conference, presiding over its deliberations, and enthusiastically approving its platform he signaled clearly that he had chosen sides.

Even before the Pittsburgh Conference, Wise's direction had become apparent. In the wake of the Trefa Banquet he had allowed himself to be drawn into a discussion of *kashrut* wherein he abused those who disagreed with him and left no doubt that he regarded the dietary laws as of little spiritual significance. Personally, he refrained from pork, apparently on sanitary grounds, and in his home he excluded all seafood except oysters—which he thought Moses had not prohibited. But as the dietary regulations were not part of the Law of the Covenant he did not consider them obligatory; they were only "purely national laws for Israel, local and temporary. . . ." Moreover, adherence to them in the present often produced a fanaticism which he regarded as destructive of genuine religion.[84]

As it thus became apparent following the first ordination that both in practice and in theology Wise had cast his lot with the reformers, the conservative elements in the Union began to withdraw their support. One after another the more traditional congregations left the UAHC and their leaders turned their efforts to the establishment of a new seminary, more in line with their own interpretation of Judaism. In 1887, some of the same men who had been active in support of the Hebrew Union College were among the founders

of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. They now argued that the College could not expect conservative Jewish congregations to support an institution headed by a man who had shown himself to be a radical. They would scarcely any longer accept the response that the president and faculty taught only from the sources and expounded only the views of the ancient rabbis, "reserving their own opinions and keeping the minds of the students free from bias and untrammeled from the various dogmas now extant."[85] Wise had shown his colors; there could be no turning back the course of events which followed. The College, originally intended as a seminary for the entire American rabbinate, became an institution for the Reform movement alone.

The departure of the conservatives did not, however, prevent the progress and development of the College. In the late eighties and in the nineties the faculty was expanded and improved, enrollment grew, and increasingly graduates of the College came to occupy important pulpits around the land. By 1889, Wise and his disciples were able to organize the College alumni, along with similarly minded colleagues, into the Central Conference of American Rabbis, thus completing the triad of organizations Wise had called into being.

Some of the graduates, who continued with their studies while in the field, earned Doctor of Divinity degrees from the College.[86] Their achievement entitled them to a listing in the catalogue as corresponding members of the faculty. The same degree was also bestowed *honoris causa* on leading Jewish scholars in Europe, such as Moritz Lazarus, David Woolf Marks, and Moritz Steinschneider, as well as on a few American Jewish leaders, including Benjamin Szold.[87]

It was during these latter years of the College's first quarter century that two issues came to the fore which split president, faculty, and student body. The first was theological, the second a question of the Jewish people.

Though in some respects Wise was a theological radical, in others he was adamantly conservative. He was a thoroughgoing rationalist and universalist in religion who rejected whatever elements of "tribal religion" he found in Judaism; he disbelieved in such doctrines as the

resurrection of the body, and in his theological writings even cast doubt on whether God could properly be called personal.[88] But he possessed an unshakable faith in biblical revelation as the message of God by the hand of Moses. "Judaism is inviolable as a revelation," he wrote; "it is Mosaic and Sinaitic, or it is nothing."[89] Therefore Wise rejected the Higher Criticism of the Bible, which sought to show that the Pentateuch was made up of various independent sources and was not the work of Moses. When the curriculum for the Collegiate Department was first formulated in 1878, Wise had opposed the wish of other commission members to include critical study of the biblical text as one of the subjects to be taught, and as a later report of outside examiners shows, Wise got his way.[90] No textual emendations of the Torah were permitted at the College during his lifetime. When, on one occasion, he visited a classroom where the professor was expounding Wellhausenian biblical criticism, he was so overcome with anger that he pounded the table with his fist and exclaimed: "I will not have this taught in this college. Moses was the author of the Torah. That is one of the fundamentals on which we build."[91] For Wise all of Judaism depended on the authenticity of the Torah. If the Pentateuch were a late creation, "a patchwork stitched together by deceitful priests," then, in Wise's view, there would be no basis to believe in a God who was merciful, just, loving, and true.[92] In 1891, he published his *Pronaos to Holy Writ* in order to establish the authenticity of the Pentateuch, and he thereafter used it as a textbook in one of his courses. But though Wise tried to exclude from the halls of HUC what he regarded as the "excrescences of the age," increasing numbers of both faculty and students found themselves unable to share his view.[93] The resulting conflict was the cause of much bitterness during Wise's last years.[94]

The second major issue to occupy the College community toward the end of Wise's administration was the question of Zionism. The First Zionist Congress, held in Basle in 1897, had forced the American Reform movement to take a stand on Jewish nationalism without delay. At the CCAR meeting that same summer, the assembled rabbis unanimously declared that the establishment of a Jewish state represented a misunderstanding of Israel's mission; a year later the UAHC

added its voice by announcing that "America is our Zion." [95] For a time it was Wise's own opinion that the Holy Land could perhaps play a significant role as a refuge for the persecuted Jews of Eastern Europe. But he argued as well that no one could believe Jews would leave "the great nations of culture, power and abundant prosperity . . . to form a ridiculous miniature state in dried up Palestine." [96] It was impossible for him to declare that America was Exile and thus he could never be a Political Zionist. He even made some effort to exclude Zionism from the College: shortly before his death he refused use of the chapel to an outside speaker who desired to discourse on the subject, an action readily concurred in by the Board of Governors.[97]

Unlike biblical criticism, Zionism was an issue on which most faculty and students agreed with Wise. Only one member of the teaching staff, Caspar Levias, publicly defended it, and his essay was more a refutation of anti-Zionism than a fervent advocacy.[98] Gotthard Deutsch (history), Louis Grossmann (ethics), and David Philipson (homiletics) actively gave vent to their opposition. As the students themselves admitted: "The entire trend of our work at College is such as to lead us away from [Zionism]." [99]

Nevertheless, there was a considerable minority among the students who were actively pro-Zionist, and in the last two years of the century some of their number gained sufficient influence on the editorial board of the *HUC Journal* to express their point of view forcefully in the magazine's pages. The first such statement came from the pen of a man who was later to be known as one of the severest critics of Political Zionism: William H. Fineshriber. In the December 1898 issue he wrote: "We do not regard Washington with the same emotions with which we think of Jerusalem; the historical associations are lacking; the much-despised but necessary poetry is not there." After commenting on the prevalence of racial antisemitism in the United States, he concluded: "Germany is for and of the Germans; France is for and of the French; why not a Judea for and of the Jews?" [100] The following year the *Journal* published synopses of articles by the Zionist leaders Max Nordau and Israel Zangwill; it devoted an entire issue to a symposium on Zionism, including contributions from both sides, but featuring a student editorial distinctly favorable to the

movement. At Wise's death, Zionism was assuredly not the philosophy of the College, but it had won over a portion of the student body which—at least in the pages of its *Journal*—was freely advocating the Zionist cause.

As the College completed the first quarter century of its existence, its financial condition was not yet secure. In the last years of Wise's administration, a persistent demand by the University of Cincinnati that HUC students pay tuition precipitated a protracted, acrimonious dispute and threatened to ruin the College.[101] The UAHC, which had scarcely grown in total individual membership over the last few years, still had fewer congregations than in 1879, and the College budget had to be kept at the lowest possible level. Wise could not be replaced even had he desired it, as there were no funds to engage a salaried president.

Still, there was also a mood of deep satisfaction pervading the College, a result of the genuine accomplishments of twenty-five years. Altogether nearly half a million dollars had been raised by the Union, seventy-five rabbis had been ordained, and two young women had received Bachelor of Hebrew Letters degrees. A much larger number of students had received some amount of Jewish education at the school, and the student body had reached the respectable size of seventy-three. The faculty of ten and the rich library were second to none; the alumni of the College had easily been placed in congregations, and a number of them had attained prominent positions.

In great measure this success had been due to the amazing persistence, dogged determination, and self-assured vision of Isaac Mayer Wise. In the years that he served as president, his character had not changed. There was definitely an unpleasant side to his personality, which even his disciple and admirer David Philipson privately called "envious and jealous," adding: "He can not endure that any one shall stand near him; independent in thought and action, he must rule. . . ."[102] In his old age Wise was still pushing aside those who stood in his way, the dwarfs of the shipboard dream. But he was also approaching the "beautiful and glorious landscape"—which, had he been a different kind of man, might never have come into view.

Certainly his dedication to the vision and to its realization was almost inhumanly total.[103] Moreover, to those who shared his opinions, to his disciples who had graduated from the College and to those still within it, Wise was beloved as their teacher and guide.[104] They owed him very much.

On Saturday, March 24, 1900, Wise was lecturing as usual to his afternoon class at the College; even at the age of eighty, he had not relinquished his duties. At the end of the hour the aged leader collapsed from a severe stroke and died two days later. His death, coming, as Wise had hoped, while "in harness," threw the College into a situation of vacillation and decline from which it did not speedily recover.

Notes

Preface

1. S. Mannheimer, "History of the Hebrew Union College," *The Menorah,* April–Oct., 1892; David Philipson, "The History of the Hebrew Union College," *Hebrew Union College Jubilee Volume* (Cincinnati, 1925), pp. 1–70; Samuel S. Cohon, "The History of the Hebrew Union College," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society,* XL (1950–51), 17–55. A collection of documents was published in *AJA,* Nov. 1974. A brief history of the JIR, by I. Edward Kiev and John J. Tepfer, appeared in the *American Jewish Year Book,* 1947–48, pp. 91–100.
2. I have also used recorded interviews conducted by Daniel Syme with Helen Glueck and Maurice Eisendrath; and by Stanley Chyet (joined by students) with Dora Aaronsohn, Maxwell Lyons, and Jacob R. Marcus.

In the Days of Isaac Mayer Wise

1. *AI,* Oct. 8, 1875. (It is of course possible that the reporter was I. M. Wise himself.)
2. For a detailed treatment, see my "Christian Influence on Early German Reform Judaism," *I. Edward Kiev Festschrift,* ed. Charles Berlin (New York, 1971), pp. 289–303.
3. Jacob Mann, "Modern Rabbinical Seminaries and Other Institutions of Jewish Learning," *CCARY,* XXXV (1925), 295–310.

4. Book-length treatments include: Max B. May, *Isaac Mayer Wise, the Founder of American Judaism* (New York, 1916); Israel Knox, *Rabbi in America* (Boston, 1957); and James G. Heller, *Isaac M. Wise: His Life, Work and Thought* (New York, 1965). A striking exception to the rule is the critical treatment by Sefton David Temkin, "Isaac Mayer Wise, 1819-1875" (doctoral diss., HUC-JIR, 1963).
5. May, p. 22.
6. Joseph Gutmann, "Watchman on an American Rhine," *AJA*, X (1958), 135–44.
7. For Wise's years in Europe, see especially Temkin, pp. 1–87.
8. Isaac M. Wise, *Reminiscences,* trans. and ed. David Philipson (Cincinnati, 1901), pp. 14–16. (These recollections first appeared in the *Deborah* in 1874–75.) It is of course possible that Wise composed the dream later as a literary device. But even if that be the case, it would simply indicate that Wise was conscious of the pattern of his life and sought in this manner to dramatize it.
9. See *Reminiscences,* pp. 92, 97–98, 126–27, 141–42, 144, 204–5, 208, 257, 265.
10. Barnett R. Brickner, "The Jewish Community of Cincinnati, Historical and Descriptive, 1817–1933" (doctoral diss., University of Cincinnati, 1933); Temkin, pp. 315, 402–3.
11. *Occident,* VI (1848), 433.
12. Leon A. Jick, "The Efforts of Isaac Mayer Wise to Establish a Jewish College in the United States" (unpublished paper, n.d.), AJA Box 1278.
13. Bertram Wallace Korn, "The First American Jewish Theological Seminary," in his *Eventful Years and Experiences* (Cincinnati, 1954), pp. 151–213.
14. Adler's letter of Feb. 13, 1873 to the president and Board of Trustees of Congregation Bene Yeshurun was followed by a formal contract signed on May 15th of the same year. Both are contained in the American Jewish Archives. The letter was later printed in *UAHCP,* I (1873–79), v–vi. Adler's gift was first announced in *AI,* Dec. 9, 1870. At the dedication of the College building in 1881, Moritz Loth, the president of the Union's Executive Board, said that it was this gift which "gave an impetus of holding a convention of congregations in July 1873" (*AI,* April 29, 1881). It is also possible that Wise's threat to leave Cincinnati and accept an offer he had received from Congregation Anshe Chesed of New York in 1873 may have had the effect not only of increasing his salary but also of spurring the lay leadership to proceed rapidly in establishing the College. On this point see Dena Wilansky, *Sinai to Cincinnati* (New York, 1937), pp. 284–88.

15. *UAHCP,* I, i–xiii, 3–26.
16. Ibid., 37, 82, 97, 118–20, 140, 145.
17. Ibid., 202.
18. In the *AI* for Oct. 22, 1875, he wrote: "No college of this kind has ever opened with a larger class or with better talent. We feel perfectly satisfied with the start, which appears very promising to us, as regards both number and talent, and when among the class feel as happy as a king."
19. Isaac Mayer Wise, "The World of My Books," trans. Albert H. Friedlander, *AJA,* VI (1954), 141. These autobiographical fragments appeared in the *Deborah* in 1896–97.
20. *UAHCP,* II (1879–85), 928, 933–38; David Philipson, *My Life as an American Jew* (Cincinnati, 1941), p. 12. In 1878, the school adopted a seal, proposed by Wise, with two mottos: *ḥatom tora belimudai* ("Seal the instruction among My disciples": Isa. 8:16) and *ha-boker or* ("The morning's light": Gen. 44:3). The stationery was inscribed with *shalom rav le-ohave toratekha* ("Great peace have they that love Thy law": Ps. 119:165).
21. *UAHCP,* I, 148–49. A later, somewhat more modest curriculum is to be found in *Programme of the Hebrew Union College, 1894–1895,* pp. 15–16. This is the first regular catalogue that was issued.
22. Philipson, *My Life,* pp. 10–11; *UAHCP,* I, 369–73.
23. I. M. Wise, *Propositions Respectfully Submitted to the Gentlemen of the Commission Appointed by the Council of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations* (Cincinnati, 1878); "Dissenting Report of Isaac M. Wise to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations," n.d., AJA Documents Files. The Commission report is in *UAHCP,* I, 700–708.
24. In 1876 Wise had been requested by the Board of Governors to submit a plan for the study of German. When it was found that no adequate textbook was available in English for the study of Jewish history, he decided to use a German text by S. Baeck and thus to fulfill the wish of the board. Wise claimed that all of the first group of graduates were able to preach in German. See *UAHCP,* I, 248, 317, 639; II, 1386.
25. Ultimately Wise himself became convinced of the necessity of an additional year and recommended it to the Board of Governors in 1896 (*UAHCP,* IV [1891–97], 3614), but it was not instituted until the administration of Kaufmann Kohler.
26. *Programme,* pp. 17–19.
27. *UAHCP,* I, 342.
28. Ibid., II, 1535–36.
29. *Programme,* p. 20.
30. Ella Mielziner, *Moses Mielziner* (New York, 1931); *UAHCP,* I, 658–59; II, 1558–59. According to Kaufmann Kohler, Mielziner came to Cin-

cinnati at the urging of David Einhorn. This was after the enmity between the two men had somewhat abated (*CCARY,* XXIX [1919], 222).

31. *UAHCP,* I, 640–41.
32. Clifton Harby Levy, "How Well I Remember," *Liberal Judaism,* June 1950, p. 33; Gotthard Deutsch Diary [in German], Dec. 19, 1893, AJA; BGM (preserved in the safe of the HUC-JIR, Cincinnati), July 2, 1889, Sept. 9, 1890 (these minutes are cited only for items not included in *UAHCP*); Zirndorf Papers, AJA Box 2288.
33. During 1882–83, Mielziner, the highest paid member of the faculty, received $2,400 per year; Solomon Eppinger earned only $1,200. The first ordinees each received $2,000 (Maximilian Heller to his parents, Nov. 25, 1883, Heller Papers, AJA).
34. *UAHCP,* II, 993; III (1886–91), 1901; BGM, April 1, 1890.
35. *UAHCP,* I, 231–34.
36. The original copy is in the AJA. It appeared in print in 1879.
37. BGM, Sept. 2, 1878.
38. *UAHCP,* II, 1047; V (1898–1903), 3966; Adolph S. Oko, *A History of the Hebrew Union College Library and Museum* (Cincinnati, 1944), pp. 1–2.
39. *UAHCP,* I, 467–69; II, 1526; III, 2561; IV, 2903–4; *AI,* Oct. 8, 1875; June 24, 1881; Joseph L. Fink, "Israel Aaron—the First Graduate of the H.U.C.," *CCARJ,* Oct. 1960, pp. 34–35; David Philipson, "Personal Contacts with the Founder of the Hebrew Union College," *HUCA,* XI (1936), 1–4.
40. Deutsch Diary, June 19, 1897.
41. *UAHCP,* I, 339; III, 2208; V, 3900; Reports to the Board of Governors of the College by Isaac M. Wise, May 4, 1896–Jan. 30, 1900, AJA Documents Files.
42. Levy, March 1951, pp. 14–17.
43. BGM, Nov. 4, 1878; *UAHCP,* III, 2360–62.
44. Richard Hofstadter and C. DeWitt Hardy, *The Development and Scope of Higher Education in the United States* (New York, 1952), p. 17.
45. *Telling Tales Out of School, ed. Stanley R. Brav (Cincinnati,* 1965), pp. 5–6, 61, 63.
46. *UAHCP,* II, 1006–7. The reason for this action, however, was to gain resident status and hence free tuition at the high school and university (ibid., V, 3967).
47. Ibid., III, 2933. Deutsch noted in his diary for April 9, 1892: "Das Ganze macht einen sehr peinl.[ichen] Eindruck, bes.[onders] das schulbubenmässige Behandeln der Jungen." For the experience of the *Hochschule*

für die Wissenschaft des Judentums, see its *Festschrift zur Einweihung des eigenen Heims* (Berlin, 1907), pp. 53–55.

48. *UAHCP,* III, 2746–48; *AI,* March 12, 1891.
49. Levy, March 1951, p. 17; *Tales,* p. 7; Heller to his parents, June 19, 1882, Nov. 25, 1883, Heller Papers.
50. *UAHCP,* I, 229; II, 1490. In the nineties both sections of the *Atzile Bene Yisrael* ceased to exist. They were replaced by a variety of other student societies.
51. A hectograph version of the *HUC Journal,* on a much lower level, appeared for three issues from January through March 1896. The printed magazine began to appear in October of the same year. When requested to endorse the journal to the public, the Board of Governors refused to do so and indicated that it "did not wish to be understood as being in any degree responsible, financially or otherwise, for the publication. . . ." (BGM, Executive Session, April 6, 1897).
52. *HUC Journal,* III (1898–99), 36, 72, 208.
53. *UAHCP,* II, 1214, 1490; III, 2548.
54. Ibid., I, 317; III, 2362.
55. Ibid., IV, 3788.
56. *HUC Journal,* III, 185–87.
57. All information on income and allocations is contained in the various volumes of *UAHCP.*
58. *UAHCP,* I, 37, 118; IV, 3664.
59. Ibid., II, 1443. A scrapbook of clippings devoted to this subject is in AJA Box X-2.
60. In 1883 this provision was changed through a constitutional amendment providing that all donations and bequests not otherwise specified would go to the general fund (*UAHCP,* II, 1416).
61. Ibid., 1457, 1567, 1592.
62. In a crossed-out section of the original draft of his report to the Board of Governors for 1897, Wise wrote: "No efforts have been made for the last fifteen years to better the financial status of this institute. We have been placed before the public and before our own employees as seekers of charity" (Reports to the Board of Governors of the College, AJA Documents Files).
63. Some elements in the Union regarded the purchase of the building as a "stretch of authority" (*UAHCP,* II, 1105). No amount even close to the originally stipulated $160,000 had been raised.
64. A table of expenditures for the College for the years 1875 to 1896 is given in ibid., IV, 3563.
65. Philipson, *My Life,* p. 12.
66. *UAHCP,* II, 1066.

67. Ibid., 1229.
68. Deutsch Diary, Feb. 25, 1894. According to the vice-president, Julius Freiberg, students were expected to possess tact and consideration for public opinion; they were to "learn Hebrew and behave like gentlemen" (ibid., Sept. 26, 1893, June 18, 1897).
69. *HUCM,* Nov. 1915, pp. 77–83.
70. David Philipson Diary, Sept. 11, 1890, AJA.
71. Brickner, pp. 66, 255–56.
72. Deutsch Diary, May 1, 1893.
73. Philipson Diary, Sept. 11, 1890.
74. *UAHCP,* I, 481–82; II, 1246–47, 1318; III, 2218; BGM, Nov. 6, 1882.
75. *UAHCP,* II, 1280.
76. Ibid., 1041; BGM, June 30, 1879.
77. Philipson, *My Life,* pp. 21–23; Israel Aaron Scrapbook, AJA Box X-83; *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums,* Sept. 11, 1883, p. 607.
78. In 1879 Mendes transmitted a resolution that pupils "who on their enrollment shall express the conscientious desire to study Hebrew with covered heads, in the olden fashion, shall be permitted to do . . . ," but he chose to withdraw the resolution before any action was taken (*UAHCP,* II, 838, 842).
79. Jick, p. 12.
80. *AI,* July 21, 1871. Wise later had the pleasure of having one of his first graduates, David Philipson, take over the pulpit of Einhorn's old congregation, Har Sinai of Baltimore. Noting this irony, one of the HUC students wrote: "So was hätte der sel.[ige] Einhorn wohl nie geträumt, dass ihm so bald nach der ersten Graduation ein Schüler des verpönten Dr. Wise auf seiner Kanzel folgen würde. Der Osten hat sich nunmehr dem Westen unterworfen" (Heller to his parents, Nov. 25, 1883, Heller Papers).
81. *UAHCP,* I, 239–40, 250–51.
82. It is put into perspective by Daniel Jeremy Silver, "The Trefa Banquet Story" (unpublished paper, n.d.), AJA Box 511. See also John J. Appel, "The Trefa Banquet," *Commentary,* Feb. 1966, pp. 75–78. A general treatment of the conflict is provided by Elbert L. Sapinsley, "The Causes of the Split Between the Conservative and Reform Movements in Judaism in the United States" (unpublished paper, 1955), AJA Box 1278.
83. Wise himself, however, later proposed that the College undertake the task of training an Americanized religious leadership for the new immigrants, the very goal which motivated a number of the lay supporters of the Jewish Theological Seminary (*UAHCP,* IV, 2934).
84. *AI,* Aug. 3, 1883, Dec. 28, 1883; May, p. 379.
85. *American Hebrew,* Jan. 8, 1886. (The excerpt is from a letter, signed

"Emeth," written by Jacob Ezekiel, secretary of the HUC Board of Governors.)

86. The degree required a thesis, plus an oral examination on one book of the Bible, one tractate of the Talmud, and one book of Hebraic philosophy or theology.
87. At first Wise was opposed to the granting of honorary degrees (*UAHCP,* II, 1042). Later he relented in order to give an honorary D.D. to Solomon Eppinger on his seventieth birthday in 1883. But the total number of such degrees during Wise's administration was only seven.
88. Andrew F. Key, *The Theology of Isaac Mayer Wise* (Cincinnati, 1962); Lawrence A. Block, "A Significant Controversy in the Life of Isaac M. Wise," *CCARJ,* June 1961, pp. 29–36; Ralph Mecklenburger, "The Theologies of Isaac Mayer Wise and Kaufmann Kohler" (rabbinical diss., HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, 1972).
89. Quoted in Heller, p. 476.
90. "Critical introduction to the history of the text and the old versions of the Bible, with reference to the modern works on textual criticism" appears in the suggested program of the Commission (*UAHCP,* I, 706). It does not appear in Wise's *Propositions.* In 1887 the examiners suggested that students be kept abreast of the latest methods of scientific biblical study (ibid., III, 2118).
91. Philipson, "Personal Contacts," pp. 5–6.
92. Wise, "The World of My Books," p. 37.
93. "Although I can not say that I have entirely succeeded in keeping out of these recitation rooms the latent spirit of agnosticism and materialism in the very atmosphere of the learned and learning world in which we must live and breathe; although furthermore I can not say that the spirit of negation, hypercriticism and habitual repetition of what opponents advance, who have not the duty to educate teachers in Israel and no presumptive critics, is banished entirely from these halls or could be done in the face of the modern literature on the subjects of our studies; yet I must say, I have those excrescences of the age under control, and counteract them to the best of my ability, without forcing the learned and learning into hypocrisy . . . " (Supplement to the Annual Report, 1897–98, Reports to the Board of Governors of the College, AJA Documents Files).
94. For example, when a student submitted as his thesis a critical treatment of "The Attitude of the Prophets to the Cult," Wise at a faculty meeting indicated that he would refuse to sign his diploma. The student, Max Cohen, was, however, ordained (Deutsch Diary, April 4, 1898). An article favorable to biblical criticism was printed in the *HUC Journal,* I (1896–97), 63–66.

95. *CCARY,* VIII (1898), xli; *UAHCP,* V, 4002.
96. *HUC Journal,* IV (1899–1900), 45–47. Cf. Melvin Weinman, "The Attitude of Isaac Mayer Wise toward Zionism and Palestine," *AJA,* III (1951), 3–23.
97. Reports of President I. M. Wise to Board of Governors of HUC, 1899–1900, AJA Documents Files; BGM, Executive Session, Feb. 27, 1900.
98. *CCARY,* IX (1899), 179–91; *HUC Journal,* III, 165–75.
99. Ibid., IV, 114.
100. Ibid., III, 61–62 (reprinted in *CCARJ,* Winter 1974, pp. 17–19).
101. Relations between the University of Cincinnati and the Hebrew Union College had originally been quite close. When a fire damaged the University in 1885, it accepted an offer to conduct classes for a time in the building of the HUC. Max Lilienthal served on the university's Board of Directors until his death in 1882; he was succeeded by Wise, who was a board member until 1898, when he resigned in the midst of the tuition controversy. In part to avoid the demand for payment of university tuition, the College opened a Semitics Department in 1896 with courses offered free of charge to students of the University of Cincinnati. (The department existed mainly in the catalogue and was officially abandoned in 1903.) But a new administration at the University refused to accept the proffered Semitics courses in lieu of tuition, and Wise was finally driven to the point of proposing to the HUC Board that the College undertake its own department of general studies. To Simon Wolf, Wise wrote on November 1, 1898: "We not only have no sinking fund to maintain the institute for two years without income, but stand now as beggars, I am ashamed to say, before the door of the university, which asks about $1200.00 tuition for the year for our non-resident students, and no funds to pay for it. We look like a bankrupt concern" (AJA Box 2333). On the bitter HUC-UC controversy, which resulted in the Board of Governors lending university tuition to HUC students, see various Board of Governors executive sessions beginning Jan. 7, 1896; *UAHCP,* V, 3967, 4000; Correspondence with the University of Cincinnati, AJA Correspondence Files.
102. Philipson Diary, Sept. 11, 1890.
103. The very evening of the day Wise buried his first wife, he met with Lilienthal and S. Wolfenstein to discuss the curriculum for the Preparatory Department of the College. According to Wolfenstein, Wise told his colleagues: "You might be surprised that I am with you after this day of sorrow, busy with our work, but I have disciplined myself during the years of my public activity so as not to permit my personal affairs to interfere with my duties as minister. I have become so objective that, if it could be done, I could take out my heart from its cavity and ana-

lyze its functions" (*Jewish Review and Observer,* Nov. 16, 1915, p. 4). Yet at the same time Wise was a passionate man. He was attached to his farm in the countryside north of Cincinnati, he wrote torrid love letters to Selma Bondi before she became his second wife, and he fathered a total of fourteen children—the last when he was well over sixty years old.

104. See Wise's letters to Rabbi Joseph Stolz in the forthcoming volume of *Michael,* III (Tel-Aviv, 1975).