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MEMORANDUM

August 17, 1989
16 Av 5749

Date _____

CLAL
From Rabbi Paul J. Menitoff

To Rabbi Alexander Schindler

Copy for information of _____

Subject _____

*Paul will
tell me /
and discuss it in
person*

Dear Alex:

I received the copy of Louis Diamond's letter to Rabbi Greenberg regarding CLAL's attitude about Reform Judaism. The Synagogue Council of Massachusetts (the Northeast Council is a sponsor) has developed a relationship with CLAL. If CLAL is in fact bias against Reform Judaism, the UAHC (including the Synagogue Council) should not involve CLAL in its programs. I am not sure that Louis Diamond is correct, but it should be checked out.

From its inception, I have had some reservations about CLAL. In its effort to break down denominational barriers, it seems to minimize differences. In fact, we are not the same. Differences should be acknowledged, respected and accepted. Finally, CLAL should not be the instrument to bring the movements closer. The denominations should be working on this directly together. That would strengthen each of the movements. I think CLAL tends to detract from our strength.

After you take a closer look at the CLAL, I will appreciate receiving some guidance from you.

As ever,



Rabbi Paul J. Menitoff

PJM:mc

UAHC Northeast Council
1330 Beacon Street, Suite 355
Brookline, MA 02146
617-277-1655

Rabbi Paul J. Menitoff
Regional Director
Irving Belansky
Regional President

August 8, 1989
7 Av 5749

Mr. Louis H. Diamond
6239 S. Hudon
Tulsa, OK 74136

Dear Mr. Diamond:

Dan Syme was kind enough to share with me your letter to Rabbi Greebberg of CLAL. It was good of you to write as you did. I much appreciate your having taken the time to express your concerns to Rabbi Steven Greenberg.

I will be very interested in learning of his response to you and hope that you will be willing to share with me any response you receive.

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Rabbi Daniel B. Syme

LHD Ltr
cc. Reg. Dir
aag
mm
278/10/89

From the desk of:



RABBI DANIEL B. SYME

I thought the attached
might be of interest to you.

①
Thank him
for this letter
ask that he
share his Tz's
answers with
me.

cc: of Simon letter
to ABC, MM, & Reg Director

Louis H. Diamond
6239 S. Hudson
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74136

August 1, 1989

Rabbi Steven Greenberg
CLAL
421 Seventh St.
New York, N.Y. 10001

Dear Rabbi Greenberg:

Recently my wife and I completed a CLAL Learning Leadership Program in Tulsa, Oklahoma presented under the auspices of the Jewish Federation of Tulsa. At the conclusion of the Program I expressed to Rabbi David Nelson my belief that the Program materials presented an anti-Reform bias and that if Reform Jews are to participate in the Program they should be aware of this bias or that the materials be revised to present a more objective viewpoint of Reform Judaism.

What I found to be the most objectionable were the numerous references to the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885.(1,2,3). Nowhere is any reference made to the major changes as promulgated in the Columbus Platform of 1937 or the Centenary Perspective of 1976. While the Pittsburgh Platform is of historical significance, little of its contents is applicable to current Reform Judaism. I feel it is a deliberate attempt to ridicule Reform Judaism by reference to the more excessive statements made over one hundred years ago in the Pittsburgh Platform, particularly when such statements have long ago been repudiated by Reform Jews. If anywhere in the CLAL materials is a positive reference to Reform Judaism's contribution to K'lal Yisrael, I failed to find it. Surely, within the past two centuries there should be some contribution of Reform philosophers, scholars, rabbis, and, yes, even Reform Zionists that would be worthy of mention in the CLAL Program.

The reference material presented in the section "Who Is A Jew" is a distortion of Reform's position. The arcane language in the 1961 Rabbis' Manual section on Admission of Proselytes was significantly revised and updated in the 1988 Rabbis' Manual section on Giyur. Certainly a copy of the proposed revision was available to you prior to your 1988 revision of the Learning Leadership Program. In addition, your materials would indicate that the 1983 CCAR resolution on patrilineal descent was an earth-shaking change in Reform practice and that this subject was a major controversy within Reform circles. Patrilineal descent has been recognized in Reform practice long before 1983 and if there were any controversy it was on why the resolution was even needed. Even the question you ask of the CLAL Program participants reflect a condescending attitude toward Reform. As a Reform Jew I find the following question insulting:

" How does the Reform movements preception of what Judaism is affect its view of how one becomes a Jew ? "

Would you dare ask the same question of Orthodox or Conservative Jews?

Hue-
sir
grad.

In the furor that arose in late 1988 when it appeared that the Knesset would amend the Law of Return the vast majority of American Jews were united in opposition to any change in the Law. Obviously, in this practical instance Reform's position was not that of an isolated minority, but rather, was in the mainstream of American Jewry.

Rabbi Irving Greenberg calls the public statements made by Rabbi Schindler and the CCAR in reference to Israel's policy in handling the intifada—excessive. Rabbi Greenberg paraphrases the Reform statements to conform to his beliefs. His statement that the Reform view is "heavily weighted toward a liberal and idealist position in foreign policy—" is debateable at best and biased at worst. Obviously, Rabbi Greenberg has the right to state his opinions, but he has no monopoly on what constitutes an ethical position on Jewish power.

I hope that my comments will at least be considered in any future revisions of the CLAL Program.

Very truly yours,

Louis H. Diamond

Louis H. Diamond

cc: Rabbi Daniel B. Syme UAHC New York

References:

1. CLAL Learning Leadership Program, Jews and Gentiles, p.21.
2. Ibid. The Zionist Vision, p.17.
3. Perspectives, The Third Great Cycle of Jewish History, p.8.

CLAL

November 17, 1986
15 Heshvan 5747

The Honorable Shimon Peres, M.K.
The Knesset
Jerusalem, Israel

Dear Shimon:

If you have the time and the patience, you might want to read the enclosed since it is germane to the subject which you raised at our recent meeting.

It is always good to see you. Warm regards.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.

CLAL

CHA

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

April 5, 1988

no further

Solomon Kimerling
Critical Issues Chairman
CLAL
421 Seventh Avenue
New York City, New York 10001

Re: Critical Issues Conference

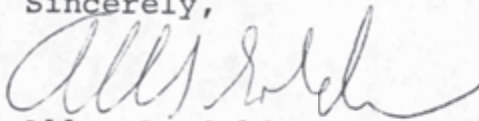
Dear Mr. Kimerling:

Confirming our previous telephone conversation, I am delighted to inform you that Mrs. Norma U. Levitt, a distinguished Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, can participate as a panelist in your "Costs of Disunity" session on Sunday, May 8, 1988 at 8:30 P.M. For your information I am enclosing a copy of a recent Resume of Mrs. Levitt's organizational positions, writings, and honors (with her address and phone number). You should know that she has worked with Blu Greenberg for many years and has deep admiration for the courage and authenticity of the Greenbergs.

I have promised Mrs. Levitt that some days prior to the session you will send her a paragraph about what each speaker plans to say, so that she may ascertain the focus of the program and direct her response accordingly.

Finally, Mrs. Levitt would be most appreciative if you could put her in contact with someone driving from Manhattan or its environs to Teaneck and back that evening, since she needs a ride!

Sincerely,



Allan B. Goldman

ABG:beb

cc: Mrs. Norma Levitt
✓ Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler



CLAL

August 18, 1988
5 Elul 5748

Rabbi Irving Greenberg
President
The National Jewish Center for Learning
and Leadership
421 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10001

Dear Yitz:

Regretfully, I cannot accept the invitation contained in your letter of August 8th. I have commitments for that weekend made many, many months ago.

Three months less time simply is not sufficient for me. Believe it or not, I am turning down dates for 1991 and even one date for 1992. Weekends are especially horrible from that perspective.

I regret this all the more because, (a) I want to support your work in every possible way, and (b) because the topic is one which is of special interest to me.

I hope you understand and in understanding forgive. If I don't see you, I wish you all the best for a sweet year.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



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And Leadership

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August 8, 1988
25 Av, 5748

Rabbi Alexander Schindler
President
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10021

*regrets -
important
made annual
plan*

Dear Alex:

I hope that you are enjoying the summer and have had the opportunity to take some time off to relax. Blu and I are in Gloucester and are using the month of August to try to catch up on the many things that were not completed during the regular year.

I would like to invite you to join me in discussing some very important issues at our annual leadership Shabbaton scheduled for December 9th-11th at the Tarrytown Executive Conference Center in Tarrytown, New York.

This is an annual Shabbaton which attracts 75-100 of our key leaders during which we normally discuss major issues and install our new officers. Marty Stein (who has just completed two years as National Chairman of the UJA) will be our incoming Chairman, and we will be honoring our outgoing Chairman, Robert Loup.

The theme of the Shabbaton will be to discuss the changing relationships between America and Israel and the American Jewish Community and Israel, especially after both elections. It is a topic that I believe you and I have some major thoughts on and can provide to this leadership some very interesting perspectives. Attached is a draft copy of the schedule which will give you a full picture of how we schedule our Shabbatonim.

We ask that a draft of your presentation be available two weeks ahead of time so that we can share it with the lay panel which will respond to our remarks Saturday after Shabbat.

I hope that you and Rhea will be able to join us as our guests that weekend, and I know that your participation will add much to the discussion. I will have Paul Jeser call to follow this letter up.

Regards.

Sincerely,

Uitz
Irving Greenberg

This is an important group and we plan to publish the projects! responses if all possible. we would be grateful and honored if you would participate - you have been an important model of independence & support for Israel!



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8/5/88

DRAFT

ANNUAL LEADERSHIP SHABBATON

1-3 TEVET 5749

DECEMBER 9-11 1988

AMERICA AND ISRAEL
AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY AND ISRAEL
THE CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS

FRIDAY

12:00-3:30 p.m. Annual Board Meeting (Lunch)

3:30 Board Reception

4:00 Pre-Shabbat Program - Candle Lighting
(Shabbat begins at 4:11 p.m.) (Irwin Kula)

5:00 Kabbalat Shabbat Services (David Elcott)

6:00 Session I
Keynote: Rabbi Irving Greenberg

7:30 Dinner (D'var Torah - Ralph Stern)

10:00 Oneg Shabbat

SATURDAY

7:30 a.m. Breakfast

8:00 Traditional Shacharit/Torah Reading
(Steven Greenberg)

Liberal Shacharit/Torah Reading
(David Nelson)

9:30 Torah Study (Reuven Kimelman)
Haftorah (Paul Jeser)
Musaf (Eric Levine)
Installation (Herschel Blumberg)

11:30 Kiddush

11:45 Session II
Keynote: Rabbi Alexander Schindler (invited)

1:15 p.m. Lunch (D'var Torah - Roz Hollander)

2:30 Shabbat M'nucha (Leisure Time)

4:00 Mincha

5:00 Maariv/Havdalah

5:30 Session III
Lay Panel Responses to Keynote Address
Invited: Shoshanna Cardin
Irving Schneider
Stuart Eizenstat

7:00 Dinner (D'var Torah - Aaron Ziegelman)

9:00 Session IV
The American and Israeli Elections:
A Response
Senator Robert Packwood
Mortimer Zuckerman

10:30 M'lava Malka

SUNDAY

8:00 a.m. Breakfast

9:00-11:00 Session V
Study Session (David Elcott)

CLAL

May 8, 1986
29 Nisan 5746

Mr. Henry Taub
Automatic Data Processing
#1 A.D.P. Boulevard
Roseland, N.J. 07068

Dear Henry:

Someone - I forget just who - told me that you have some reservations about the stances I have taken within Reform recently, especially those affecting our relationship to the Orthodox community.

I send you a copy of the lecture on the subject which I recently gave and which explains my motivations for some of these changes as well as my reaction to the so-called schism within Judaism. Maybe after you have had a chance to read it we can get together and discuss it. As a matter of fact, why not get together anyway? I will have my wife call your wife and perhaps we can plan on at least dinner and an evening together in New York.

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.

April 15, 1986
6 Nisan 5746

Dr. Leonard Fein
MOMENT
462 Boylstone Street
#301
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Lenny:

Your message was received and I am sorry that my CLAL address will not appear in MOMENT. Of course, I can appreciate your position but I want you to know that I didn't release the paper, Yitz Greenberg's office must have. I have sent copies to a few friends, on request, but not to any press people.

At any rate, I wanted you to know how I felt.

Warm regards and best wishes for a sweet and happy Pesach.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

ChH

March 27, 1986
16 Adar II 5746

Rabbi Ira Eisenstein
17 De Lisio Lane
Woodstock, NY 12498

Dear Rabbi Eisenstein:

Believe it or not, my omission of the Reconstructionist Movement was not at all "purposive," as you put it. My omission was bishgaga and I apologize once again as I did to one person at the Conference who mentioned it to me.

Habits are hard to break. In any event, you ought to know that my focus was not on the relationships between each of the branches ~~but~~ American Judaism but rather between the non-Orthodox and Orthodox groupings.

Again, I certainly did not mean to offend anyone and your letter will serve as a reminder to me for the future.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

IRA EISENSTEIN
17 DE LISIO LANE
WOODSTOCK, NEW YORK 12498

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

Several friends have reported to me about the recent conference on Jewish unity in which you participated. I am writing to you now to express my dismay at what I was told was your failure to acknowledge the existence, much less the importance of the Reconstructionist movement. You referred, I am told, several times to the traditional triad of Reform, Conservative and Orthodox, but not to Reconstructionism. This could only have been purposive for I cannot imagine that you are unacquainted with the realities of the current Jewish scene or of the

IRA EISENSTEIN
17 DE LISIO LANE
WOODSTOCK, NEW YORK 12498

literature on contemporary Judaism.
Surely the presence of Ira Silverman
at the symposium must have conveyed
the message.

I am therefore troubled as well
puzzled by your publicly ignoring
our movement, especially since you
are such a vigorous proponent of
pluralism. A word of explanation
would be appreciated.

Very sincerely yours,



*Please forgive
my poor typing.*

March 25, 1986
14 Adar II 5746

Leonard Fein, Editor
Moment Magazine
462 Boylston Street - Suite 301
Boston, 02116

Dear Label:

I understand that you will be reprinting my recent CLAL speech. I am delighted by this development.

Enclosed herewith is a copy which has a few minor corrections made after I gave the speech. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

Fond regards.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

March 25, 1986
14 Adar II 5746

Mr. Paul Jesser
c/o CLAL
421 Seventh Avenue, 4th Fl.
New York, NY 10001

Dear Paul:

Here is a corrected copy of my speech at the CLAL Conference. As you know, I have made a few corrections in the text. I have also forwarded a corrected copy to Leonard Fein for reproduction in Moment.

With every good wish, I am,

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



CLAL

The National Jewish
Center for Learning
And Leadership

March 21, 1986
10 Adar II 5746

Me Frankel

Rabbi Alexander Schindler
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

On behalf of CLAL - The National Jewish Center for Learning And Leadership, we wish to express to you our sincerest appreciation for your participation in, and presentation to our recent Critical Issues Conference.

No matter how much time one puts into the planning of a conference, the success or failure of the conference is dependent upon the participants and the presentations. The participants in our conference were from every aspect of Jewish communal leadership. The presentations to the conference help set the stage so that those participants could continue building the necessary bridges for a strong and stable Jewish community. Your efforts on behalf of the conference, your presentation, and your participation, were one of the highlights.

We have participated in many national Jewish conferences throughout the years. We feel that this Critical Issues Conference will become one of the most important -- much of that due to your thoughts.

Again, please accept our appreciation for your efforts on our behalf, and we look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Herschel

Herschel Blumberg
Chairman, CLAL

Sol

Solomon Kimerling
CIC Chairman

Yitz

Irving Greenberg
President

*Thank you for giving doors -
we will try to get
people to go through them*

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CLAL

The National Jewish
Center for Learning
And Leadership

March 20, 1986

no further

Rabbi Alexander Schindler
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Dear Alex,

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I continue to mull over in my mind your moving and powerful presentation at the Critical Issues Conference. Whatever the difficulties that preceded the Conference, I am deeply grateful to you for your total participation and for the power and significance of your statement. Aside from publicizing it and spreading it around, we will make it available and use it with our rabbinic groups and Chevra as well as in countless lay dialogues.

Rome was not built in a day, and surely one conference will not change everything. Still, I believe this could well be an important point of turning from separatism toward bridge-building.

I hope to work alongside you, to strengthen the best values which you represent. Perhaps CLAL could be of help, not only in adding to the forces that work for unity but toward the enrichment of lay people and of Reform leadership which I know you so earnestly desire. That has been our specialty and our strength and we would welcome the opportunity to advance your own plans.

In the interim, please accept my gratitude, personal as well as organizational.

Sincerely yours,

Yis

Irving Greenberg

IG:vjo



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CRITICAL ISSUES CONFERENCE

"WILL THERE BE ONE JEWISH PEOPLE BY THE YEAR 2000?"

Scanticon Conference Center, Princeton, N.J.

March 16-17, 1986

SUNDAY

12:30-1:30	Registration	
1:30-1:45	Opening Remarks	Herschel Blumberg, Chairman-CLAL
1:45-2:45	Keynote address	Elie Wiesel
<p><u>PRESENTATIONS</u></p> <p><u>"AN AGENDA FOR CLAL YISRAEL"</u></p>		
3:00-4:00	Rabbi Gerson Cohen	
4:00-4:10	Message from Hon. Chaim Herzog, President of Israel	
4:15-5:15	Ira Silverman	
5:15-5:45	Break	
6:00-7:30	Dinner	
7:30-8:30	Rabbi Alexander Schindler	
8:30-8:40	Message from Hon. Shimon Peres, Prime Minister of Israel	
8:45-9:45	Rabbi Norman Lamm	
9:45-10:45	Reception--hosted by United Federation of MetroWest (New Jersey)	

MONDAY

7:00-8:00	Shacharit (four parallel services)	
8:00-9:00	Breakfast	
9:00- 9:15	Introduction to Workshop I	Klara Silverstein Conference Co-Chair

9:15-11:15	Workshop #1 - Stereotypes, Reality and Visions	
11:30-12:30	Lunch	
12:30- 1:30	Assessment	
	"The Community--How Does It Shape Up?"	
	"The Issues--How Do We Respond?"	
		Charles Silberman, Author CIC Scholar-in-Residence
1:30-3:30	Workshop #2 - Proposals, Policies, Process	
3:45-4:45	Summary	Rabbi Irving Greenberg
	"What Unites Us-- What Divides Us"	President - CLAL
4:45-5:00	Adjournment	Sol Kimerling Chairman, CIC





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CLAL

NEWS AND PERSPECTIVES

JANUARY 1986

SHEVAT 5746

VOLUME I

ISSUE 4

Religious Leaders to Address CLAL Critical Issues Conference

Four major Jewish religious leaders will address CLAL's Critical Issues Conference this March on the topic "Will There Be One Jewish People by the Year 2000?"

In a series of four independent presentations, Rabbi Gerson D. Cohen, Rabbi Norman Lamm, Rabbi Alexander Schindler and Mr. Ira Silverman, will address the question of what to do (or avoid doing) to prevent a fundamental split in the Jewish community, and to strengthen Jewish unity.



Rabbi Gerson D. Cohen



Rabbi Norman Lamm

In addition to these four prominent speakers, conferees will hear a message from Israel's President, the Honorable Chaim Herzog; noted author and lecturer, Elie Wiesel, will deliver the keynote speech; and author and social commentator, Charles Silberman, will serve as the conference's Scholar-in-Residence.

The top lay, rabbinic and professional leadership throughout North America are being invited to attend. A special feature of the conference will be five hours of

workshops which will enable the participants to explore both the communal problems and the possible processes whereby unifying solutions can be developed.



Rabbi Alexander Schindler



Mr. Ira Silverman

The theme of CLAL's first Critical Issues Conference reflects the growing recognition of the threat to Jewish unity which affects the theological, political, communal, social and demographic dimensions of all modern Jewry. The conference will provide the occasion to develop agendas for action and models of process which can reverse the polarization of recent years.

Presenters

Dr. Cohen is Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (commonly designated the fountainhead of the Conservative movement), a position he has held for the past thirteen years. In addition to expanding the Seminary's role as a center of Judaic scholarship, Dr. Cohen guided JTS

(continued on p. 2, col. 1)

CLAL East European Study Mission Set

CLAL will sponsor a twelve-day study mission to Czechoslovakia, Poland and Denmark this summer, July 13 to 24.

Through extensive immersion in the East European environment the mission will provide participants with a rare opportunity to examine the Jewish concept of Covenant as it unfolded in the communities of Europe over the past 1500 years. This "college on wheels" will be led by CLAL President, Rabbi Irving "Yitz" Greenberg, with the support of the CLAL faculty, and will focus on the transformation of the Jewish community as it responds to the challenges of the third era of Jewish history.

Participants in the mission will be equipped with study guides, readings and an introductory lecture prior to leaving from New York to better prepare them for the mission. Daily lectures by CLAL scholars and local experts, as well as guided tours will contribute to the examination of the historical progression of the concept of Covenant from the medieval times to modernity.

The committee organizing this East European Study Mission is composed of Don Landis, Adrian Mnuchin, Radine Abramson Spier and Marjorie Ziegelman.

The mission is open to all CLAL supporters. Contact the CLAL office for more information.



PERSPECTIVES

VOLUME I

JANUARY 1986

SHEVAT 5746

ISSUE 4

ETHIOPIAN JEWRY: URGENT UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Irving Greenberg

Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it." Before our unseeing eyes Santayana's warning is being fulfilled again. The case is that of Ethiopian Jewry—both those in Israel and those left behind—and the situation is a moral scandal.

There are still 8,000 Jews left in Ethiopia. Since many of the Beta Israel who trekked to the Sudan were younger and stronger people, the remaining group is older, sicker, more vulnerable. Ethiopia is still threatened by famine. The government is turning to the international community for massive food lifts and help. Instead of exhausting all efforts to employ every possible form of rescue, the Jewish organizations have fallen to quarreling about the historical record and to showing up each other.

Excerpts from the recent book by Tudor Parfitt, *Operation Moses: The Untold Story of the Secret Exodus of the Falasha Jews from Ethiopia*, have been widely reported and commented on. Parfitt seems to have excellent access to the Mossad and to Jewish Agency circles and he lambastes the American Association for Ethiopian Jewry up and down. The AAEJ has won the undying anger of those groups for its role as gadfly and critic of inaction on Ethiopian Jewish rescue. Through this book and other revelations, rescue routes once usable are being revealed and thereby closed off for future escape.

As it is, Operation Moses was cut off due to premature disclosures. In a stunning display of competitiveness with the AAEJ, the rescue was publicly leaked by Agency officials. In response to the publicity, the governments involved closed down the Operation. The change of government in the Sudan was a major setback to rescue efforts. To allow this issue to drop off the priority agenda and to spend energies to settle scores is nothing less than a disgrace.

I recently attended a dinner tendered by the AAEJ honoring Graenum Berger for his devoted work for the rescue of Ethiopian Jewry. Here was an opportunity for

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THE LIMITS OF MONARCHY AND GOVERNMENT

I. Responses to Kingship

Reuven Kimelman

This is the third in a series of articles designed for home study entitled, "The Ethics of National Power: Government and War in the Jewish Tradition." With this segment we introduce teaching questions designed to highlight several key positions in the article as well as to bring into relief possible ramifications of those positions. As you read through "Responses to Kingship," keep the following questions in mind:

1. How does Samuel characterize the monarchy?
2. What are the limitations and responsibilities that are placed upon the King in Deuteronomy 17?
3. Maimonides and Abravanel differ in their views of the monarchy. According to each, what is the role of a good government?
4. How can the concept of monarchy (human sovereignty) be used to either mediate or interfere with Divine sovereignty?
5. The kings of Israel were held responsible for carrying out God's will and for living according to God's precepts. Is this concept pertinent to us today? What should motivate and guide the actions of governmental leaders today?

Jewish political theory which bases itself on the Bible seeks a system of government which is both politically workable and morally acceptable. Much of the content for this theory evolves out of the interplay between two blocks of material. The first, which serves to undergird a real-politik perspective, is the selection in the Book of Samuel on the power of kings. Apparently, Samuel held that divine sovereignty excludes human sovereignty. Therefore, when the people began to clamor for a temporal king, Samuel tried to dissuade them by delineating common royal prerogatives and their abuses with the following:

This will be the practice of the king who will rule over you: He will take your sons and appoint them as his charioteers and horsemen, and they will serve as outrunners for his chariots. He will appoint them as his chief of thousands and of

(continued on page 5)



Ethiopian Jewry

(continued from page 3)

the 'establishment' to reach out to the AAEJ and to create a new tone for the future. Even those who totally deny the value of the AAEJ's work now admit that the Israeli government badly neglected the issue until Menachem Begin came to power in 1977. Here was a belated chance at last to admit publicly that Graenum Berger had played a pioneering role in placing the issue on the agenda of world Jewry. There is an afterglow of good will and joy which world Jewry feels after Operation Moses' relative success. Here was a chance to begin to close ranks behind the task of saving the remnant and, equally important, the exquisitely difficult challenge of successfully integrating the Beta Israel into Israeli society. With but one or two exceptions, establishment leaders were not present at the dinner. Apparently, on this issue, there is neither forgiveness nor forgetfulness. Rather, the long knives of hatred and rivalry are out in full force, trying to carve up blame and responsibility.

AAEJ itself is struggling to define its appropriate role in working for successful incorporation of the Beta Israel into Israeli society. An important policy initiative intended to enable AAEJ to play a greater role in integration has backfired and resulted in a split both in the Board and between its Israeli volunteer committee and the organization. This setback comes when the Israeli government is freezing or cutting budgets in all areas of social welfare due to the economic crisis.

The problems of integration are enormous. In coming to Israel, the Beta Israel are jumping centuries of culture and technology. In all immigrant groups, the change of language and culture means that families forfeit social standing. Parents are less able to cope and they lose authority in the eyes of their children. There is a real threat of loss of roots, compounded here by the wider cultural gaps which the Ethiopian Jewish youth experiences. Religion has been the major anchor of Beta Israel culture and is a main source of values and stability. But the Beta Israel religious practices are somewhat different from the rabbinic religious tradition. Ethiopian Jewish religion suffers from double jeopardy. It is identified with the immigrant status rather than the Western "modern" host culture; and it is even treated as an outsider by the traditional community which upholds religion. The gap is increased by the Chief Rabbinate's disputed ruling that the Ethiopian Jews must undergo immersion. And the most traditional elements in Israel, which reached out to Sephardim and, later, to Russian immigrants, have pretty much unanimously treated the Beta Israel as non-Jewish, for all practical purposes. Thus, Lubavitch has excluded them from its schools in Israel.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the majority secularist Yishuv treated the Sephardic olim heavily-handedly, undercutting or removing parental authority and breaking religious values to "liberate" the youth for modernization. The resultant heavy deracination, loss of religion and values, and weakening of family—helped create Israel's Sephardi-Ashkenazi gap. Poverty, social resentment and some pathological phenomena such as discrimination, crime, delinquency, and broken families followed. All those problems—raised to a higher power—are likely outcomes of Ethiopian Jewry's situation.

The situation cries out for high-level coordination of welfare care, job training, counseling, linked to religious education. A highly imaginative proposal to create a village for Ethiopian Jews in the South to serve as their national center and as a place to preserve their culture was put forth. However, the plan is struggling to stay alive in the face of the austerity budget. American and Israeli "progressive" Zionist Orthodox institutions have proposed to operate special programs for Ethiopian Jews but they have been turned down on budgetary grounds.

Israel is making real efforts. The costs of the special help now needed are enormous. However, the level of sophistication and coordination in the present situation is not up to the job. One revealing personal incident: I spent one night at the Kfar Saba absorption center for Ethiopian Jews. The *olim* (immigrants) looked wonderful; their physical health and care is manifestly an enormous improvement over conditions in Africa. The Israeli staff made a fine impression on me. However, the evening program was a textbook example of cultural memory loss in the making. The children performed a medley of Hebrew songs—mostly taken from the old Western Zionist secular youth movements' repertoire, songs long since dropped by Israeli youth as antiquated and irrelevant. During dinner, while everyone ate and talked, an old man played melodies from the old country, e.g., the Beta Israel tradition, on an African instrument. In the din, the assembled group totally ignored him.

Business-as-usual is the enemy in this matter. The sense of destiny and history moved American Jews to a high-powered response to Operation Moses; pledge levels and the speed of cash payments were outstanding. Let integration of the Ethiopian Jews get the same priority attention as their rescue; let a total plan be formulated—and world Jewry will respond. The alternative could well be an immigration failure, deculturation, and social pathology. I fear the creation of an underclass in Israel with different skin pigmentation that will besmirch the miracle of redemption of the Beta Israel. ●

Limits of Monarchy and Government

(continued from page 3)

fifties; or they will have to plow his fields, reap his harvest, and make his weapons and the equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters as perfumers, cooks and bakers. He will seize your choice fields, vineyards, and olive groves, and give them to his courtiers. He will take a tenth part of your male and female slaves, your choice young men and your asses, and put them to work for him. He will take a tenth part of your flocks, and you shall become his slaves. (I Samuel 8:11-17)

The second block which serves to empower and delimit royal authority, is the setting forth of the laws of kingship in the book of Deuteronomy. The first part mentions the request for a king along with the conditions, qualifications, and restrictions on an Israelite monarch:

If, when you have entered the land that the Lord your God has given you, and have occupied it and have settled in it, you decide, "I will set a king over me, as do all the nations about me," you shall be free to set a king over yourself, one chosen by the Lord your God. Be sure to set as king over yourself one of your own people; you must not set a foreigner over you, one who is not your kinsman. Moreover, he shall not keep many horses, or send people back to Egypt to add to his horses, since the Lord has warned you, "You must not go back that way again." And he shall not have many wives, lest his heart go astray; nor shall he amass silver and gold to excess (Deuteronomy 17:14-17).

The second part stipulates the conditions for dynastic perpetuation.

When he is seated on his royal throne, he shall have a copy of this Torah written for him by the levitical priests. Let it remain with him and let him read from it all his life, so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God, to observe faithfully every word of this Torah as well as these laws. Thus he will not act haughtily toward his fellows or deviate from the Mitzvah to the right or to the left, to the end that he and his descendants may reign long in the midst of Israel (17: 18-20).

The classical discussion of kingship, based on these passages, seeks to resolve whether the establishment of an Israelite monarchy is a commandment or a concession.¹ A gallant defense of monarchy as biblically mandated is presented by the renowned twelfth century legal philosopher, Maimonides. His treatment of government appears in the fourteenth book of his *Mishneh Torah*, entitled "Judges."

Although not denying that Samuel intended to deter the people from requesting a king, Maimonides saw in Samuel's delineation of royal powers an accurate account. Maimonides holds that for the proper discharge of royal responsibilities, the law accedes to the king significant latitude in the exercise of his office.²

Maimonides' position is in contrast to those of the Franco-German school who claim that Samuel's statement on kingship was not intended to spell out the norms of government, but rather to deter the people.³ As such, the statement does not sanction these as appropriate governmental norms.

Be that as it may, both of the above schools looked positively upon the establishment of the monarchy and considered it a biblical commandment.

The third position in the Talmud, however, brooks no compromise about the desirability of a king. Rabbi Nehorai argues that the provision for appointing a king is in no way mandatory; on the contrary, it is no more than an accommodation to the anticipated insistence of the people for a king. According to Rabbi Nehorai, Deuteronomy 17:14 does not command the appointment of a king, but rather allows for its possibility. Should the Israelites be unable to resist the political models of the Gentile nations surrounding them, the Torah demands that they at least adhere to the following directives lest the emulation of Gentile political institutions lead to the emulation of their religious structures.

Once Maimonides codified the position that kingship is mandatory, subsequent legal opinion followed suit. Nevertheless, Maimonides has been taken to task for deviating from the normal rules of codification which would indicate that the Nehorean position should be the norm.

Other midrashic positions which oppose monarchy pick up on the biblical theme which hears in the request of a human king a rejection of divine sovereignty. One source glosses the verse, "I will set a king over me" by reporting that God responded, "In this world you asked for kings, and kings arose in Israel and caused you to fall by the sword." The midrash goes on to enumerate the national tragedies precipitated by Saul, David, Ahab, and Zedekiah. It concludes with the following denigration of human kingship:

When Israel saw what befell them on account of their kings they all began to cry out: "We do not desire a king, we desire our first king," (as it is said), "For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our law-giver, the Lord is our king; He will save us" (Isaiah 33:22). Whereupon God replied: "By your life, I will do so." How do we know this? For it is said, "And the Lord shall be kind over all the earth, etc." (Zechariah 14:9).⁴

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Limits of Monarchy and Government

(continued from page 5)

This version of the antimonarchial position does not reverberate much in Jewish political theory, for it provides no counsel on how society should structure its power through government. Apparently this position believes that the Torah allows for political sovereignty, but is indifferent to the form it takes as long as it does not interfere with divine sovereignty.

The antimonarchial Nehorean position, however, is picked up by the fifteenth century savant Abravanel and given a specific political dress. Abravanel espoused a fervid republican position. Such a position could easily have been reinforced by his service in the royal courts of fifteenth century Portugal, Castille, and Naples.

In his Commentary to Deuteronomy 17, he expounds the reasons for his antimonarchial position:

Even if we should admit that a king is beneficial and necessary for other peoples for the improvement and maintenance of political order - which actually is contrary to the truth - such reasoning does not make kingship necessary for Israel. The general proposition advances three arguments in favor of kingship:

1. As supreme commander of the armed forces, the king provides the people with help and comfort against the enemy, and he leads them in the fight for their country;
2. As supreme legislative authority, he provides his people with a constitution and laws as the occasion warrants;
3. As supreme judicial tribunal, he sentences and punishes, often without justice, as called for by the circumstances.

Abravanel systematically counters these pro-monarchial arguments. Against the first argument, he maintains that God is Israel's help against their enemies, and that judges like Joshua, Gideon, Samuel and others were sufficiently competent to lead them in battle. As for the second argument, the Torah and not the king is the source of legislation. Regarding the third argument, it is the supreme court of Sanhedrin which is primarily authorized to administer judicial functions.

Abravanel's own position is that authority should be vested in judges, not kings. Even should one accept that necessity of kings for other peoples, he contends, it still would not apply to Israel:

Experience teaches us that we can even more forcefully point to the lesson of the kings of Israel and Judah about whom it is said, "They were rebels against the light" (Job 24:13). They turned Israel's heart backward, as you know of Jereboam, the son of Nebat, as did all the other kings of (the northern kingdom of) Israel, as well as most of the Judean kings, who brought about the Judean exile. Such was not the case with Israel's judges and prophets, who were all competent rulers who feared God, all men of integrity, who hated unjust gain ... All this demonstrates that the leadership of judges is a good thing, whereas the leadership of kings is bad, harmful and extremely dangerous. This accounts for Hosea prophesying in God's name, "I give you kings in my ire, etc." (13:11).

According to Abravanel, it is precisely the political pluses of monarchy which are its moral minuses. The advocates of monarchy praise it for its unified leadership, cross-generational stability, and absolute power. Abravanel, on the other hand, advocates collective leadership, subject to limited terms. A rotational leadership, he argues, allows subsequent administrations to check the probity of their predecessors and hold them accountable for wrongs committed during their rule. The mere awareness of accountability will serve to dampen excesses and to alleviate suspicions of misconduct.

Jewish political theorists, both pro- and anti-monarchialists, had to grapple with the problems resulting from the centralization of authority. By focusing on the uses of power, the issue shifts from kingship itself to that of the appropriate restraints on the exercise of all duly constituted authority.

The next segment will show how both a monarchialist—such as Maimonides—and a republican—such as Abravanel—confronted and resolved this issue which remains central to contemporary political theory.

REFERENCES

1. Moshe of Coucy, Menahem HaMeiri Nissim Gerondi and Joshua Ibn Shu'ib hold, for example, that is mandatory, while Saadia Gaon, Ibn Ezra and Sforno (commenting on Deuteronomy 17:14) maintain that is concessive. *Political Concepts in Maimonidean Halakhah* (in Hebrew) by Gerald J. Blidstein (Bar Ilan University, 1983) p. 21, note 5, discusses the ambiguous positions of Gersonides, Nachmanides and Bachya ben Asher.
2. This position is based on the opinion of the tanna Rabbi Yosi and the amora Mar Samuel as found in Sanhedrin 20b.
3. This position is based on the opinion of the tanna Rabbi Judah and the amora Rav as found in Sanhedrin 20b.
4. Deuteronomy Rabbah 5:8-11



Writers' Group

(continued from page 7)



Blu Greenberg (right) and Rabbi Robert Summers at N.Y. Writers' Group meeting.

speakers are Rabbi Reuven Kimelman, CLAL Chief Program Associate, and guest lecturer Rabbi Joseph Telushkin of Jerusalem. Rabbi Telushkin co-authored the popular book, *Nine Questions People Ask About Judaism*, and has most recently completed a mystery novel entitled, *The Unorthodox Murder of Rabbi Wohl*.

At the opening session, Rabbi Kimelman examined the question, "What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?" while at the second session Rabbi Telushkin will address the issue of "Why the Jews? The Reasons for Anti-Semitism," the topic and title of his recent book.

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Calendar of Events

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Syosset, LI	Jan. 31-Feb. 1	Paul Jeser One Jewish People? Ethics of Jewish Power	Midway Jewish Center Rabbi Ezra Finkelstein (516) 938-8390
Metrowest, N.J.	January 22	Reuven Kimelman European Jewry	Federation Howard Charish (201) 673-6800
San Antonio	January 23-24	Irving Greenberg One Jewish People?	Federation Don Rogers (512) 341-8234
Los Angeles	January 27	David Elcott Judaism in the Moslem World	Federation Ted Kanner (213) 852-1234
New York City	January 28	Reuven Kimelman Jewish Identity	NY-UJA A. Lapin (212) 980-1000
Metrowest, N.J.	February 3	Irving Greenberg Emancipation & Enlightenment	Federation Howard Charish (201) 673-6800
Deal Park, NJ	February 6	Irving Greenberg One Jewish People?	JCC Greater Monmouth Jess Levy (201) 531-9100
Roslyn, LI	February 6	David Elcott Jews, America, and Anti-Semitism	Shelter Rock J.C. Addie Parker 980-1000 x764
Las Vegas	February 9	Reuven Kimelman Will Our Grandchildren be Jewish?	Las Vegas Federation Jerry Countess (702) 732-0556
Highland Park, NJ	February 9	Irving Greenberg/ Egon Mayer Intermarriage	Highland Park Temple Rabbi Yaacov Hilsenrath (201) 545-6482
New York City	February 18	Irving Greenberg One Jewish People?	92nd St. "Y" (212) 831-8603
Bergen County, NJ	February 21	Paul Jeser One Jewish People?	Temple Emanuel Rabbi Andre Unger (201) 391-0801
Washington, D.C.	Feb. 28-Mar. 1	Shabbaton prior to UJA YLC Conference	CLAL Sharon Laufer
Potomac, MD	March 7-9	Reuven Kimelman Weekend	Har Shalom Synagogue Harry Birn Krant (202) 692-7484
Boston	March 9	Reuven Kimelman Leadership Program	The Wexner Foundation Rabbi Herbert Friedman (212) 930-9207
Princeton, NJ	March 16-17	Critical Issues Conf. One Jewish People?	CLAL Sharon Laufer
Los Angeles	March 20-23	Reuven Kimelman The Promethean Element in a Divine Human Relationship with the Bible	Ramah Academy Dr. Alvin Mars (213) 476-9777 x250
Huntington, NY	March 28	Paul Jeser One Jewish People?	Cong. Kehillath Shalom Barry J. Zusman (516) 367-4589
Eastern Europe	July 13-24	Irving Greerberg Scholar-in-Residence	CLAL Sharon Laufer

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January 23, 1986
13 Shevat 5746

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New York, NY 10001

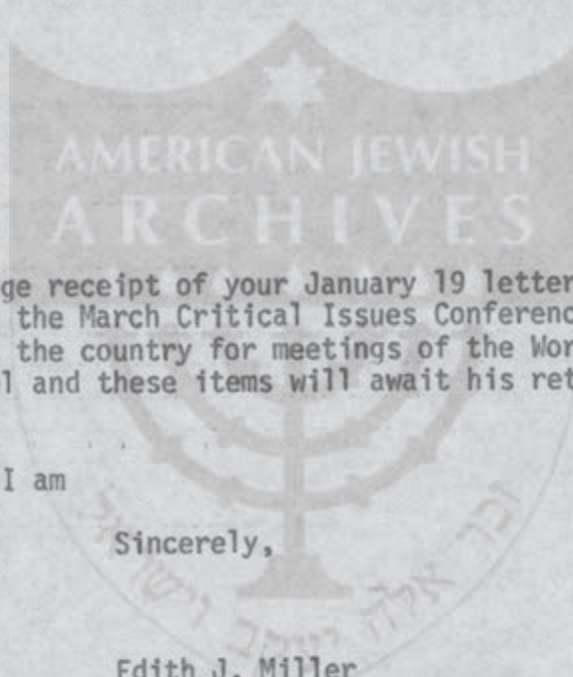
Dear Rabbi Greenberg:

Just a note to acknowledge receipt of your January 19 letter and guidelines regarding the March Critical Issues Conference. Rabbi Schindler has left the country for meetings of the World Jewish Congress in Israel and these items will await his return early in February.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Edith J. Miller
Assistant to the President





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The National Jewish
Center for Learning
And Leadership

Herschel Blumberg
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Rabbi Irving Greenberg
President
Robert Loup
Vice Chairman
William Spier
Treasurer
Harvey Arfa
Secretary
Paul Jeser
Exec. Vice President
Dr. David Elcott
Program Director

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10021

January 19, 1986

Dear Alex,

Now that the arrangements and participation for the Critical Issues Conference has been finally nailed down, I take the liberty of enclosing the following memo. It is an attempt to help focus the presentations along parallel lines. This will enable us to maximize the exchanges and exploration at the workshops, which take up most of Monday. These are only intended as helpful suggestions and not as an attempt to preempt your own direction or thinking. We believe that the Conference will offer an unusual opportunity to educate the public and to get your own positive agenda before leading philanthropists and heads of organizations in the United States. Since the framework is individual presentations and not a panel, these guidelines may help join the issues and the positive possibilities.

Please note one procedural change: The original sequence of presentations was alphabetical. However, Ira Silverman has requested a change of slot because there is a major meeting of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association on Sunday night, March 16th. Since Norman Lamm had a semi-conflict with the afternoon slot, we have arranged for the two to exchange positions on the schedule. The slots' length and the time are unchanged--only the sequence is altered.

We will be in touch with your office to arrange transportation. We are grateful for your cooperation and willingness to participate, and believe that this conference will generate many positive developments that will strengthen the movements and generate more positive momentum for respect and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Irving Greenberg
Irving Greenberg

IG:vjo

*Send ce
to Loung*

*Loung need to
No write what
re write
you have
I just thought
you ought
to have*

*this
OK
2/14*



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Center for Learning
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Herschel Blumberg
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Rabbi Irving Greenberg
President
Robert Loup
Vice Chairman
William Spier
Treasurer
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Program Director

January 19, 1986

TO: GERSON COHEN, NORMAN LAMM, ALEXANDER SCHINDLER, AND IRA SILVERMAN
FROM: IRVING GREENBERG
SUBJECT: CRITICAL ISSUES CONFERENCE, MARCH 16-17, 1986. MEMO #2.

PROPOSED GUIDELINES FOR PRESENTATIONS

I refer you back to my letter of December 24, 1985, for background on the Critical Issues Conference. The general goals are: educating the public to the problem, showing a model of constructive process in dealing with polarization, to engage top leadership of North American Jewry in this process, to begin to suggest practical solutions to specific problems that can be worked on, jointly or as in the individual movements.

We hope that this conference will be the start of a process whereby lay people and community structures and organizations can be enlisted in the effort to strengthen the connections between the groups and to create a climate for greater unity within diversity. This will not be a negotiation or even a conference that is focused on dialogue between the major presenters. Each is presenting individually because our primary goal is to lay out the agendas and the possible parameters of action for the coming decades.

In this spirit, may I suggest the following possible areas of focus, so that the presentations can be parallel to each other, and a fruitful basis for serious conversations and dialogue between the lay people and others who will be taking part in the workshops on Monday.

1. A positive delineation of the role of your own group in a pluralistic environment. What particular strengths, policies, insights your own group will bring to the total American picture. Where you perceive the others can or should bring special strengths or expertise.
2. What the other groups (i.e., not your own) can or should do in language and in policy to strengthen unity and reduce polarization. How the other groups should deal with what elements or policies in your own group that they disagree with.
3. What your own group can or should do to strengthen unity and reduce polarization. You may choose to illustrate areas where your own group policy will go one way if the other groups act more positively, and another way if the other groups act more negatively. What is the bottom line of your own group's needs or expectations, no matter what?

Note: We understand that this is not a formal or official presentation in your roles as spokesmen for your own denomination. Rather, this is an attempt to speak somewhat objectively about parameters and possibilities. It is not assumed that any statement or suggestion made here will be 'binding' on any of the movements. This is an attempt to map out the field and to point out some of the possibilities and some of the conflicts within the groups and their relationships to each other.

4. Specific proposals for unifying or strengthening connections. This might include concrete joint programs, such as outreach or strengthening synagogues, etc. These might even focus in areas where there are no theological differences, or perhaps in areas of common social concern, or other forms of joint programs.

5. What you believe the other--i.e., non-denominational groups--can do to keep unity strong and to strengthen the positive interactions between all the religious groups.

6. What (new) investments you and your group or denomination will make to heal strife and to draw the others closer. You might announce or suggest new initiatives that either your own group can take or that other groups can take as well.

Note: There will be many important philanthropists and philanthropic community organizations present. This could be an ideal opportunity to come out with a 'shopping list' of projects that could strengthen unity that could be funded within your own institution or movement.

Needless to say, none of the above is a dictation or even recommendation, but only an attempt to give some possible focus and parallel lines to the presentations.



December 30, 1985
18 Tevet 5746

Rabbi Jack Stern
Westchester Reform Temple
255 Mamaroneck Road
Acarsdale, New York 10583

Dear Jack:

Gerson Cohen has accepted Yitz Greenberg's invitation after all. This, alas, has left me as the sole refuser. Therefore, I was virtually compelled to accept lest we be seen as stopping co-operation.

I'm no happier than are you but I simply had no other choice. I had to accept.

Warm regards,

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

December 18, 1985

Rabbi Irving Greenberg
The National Jewish Center
for Learning and Leadership
421 Seventh Avenue
New York, New York 10001

Dear Yitz:

I must tell you that I'm getting a little perplexed about that meeting which you project for Princeton University some months hence.

When you invited me to this function, you told me that Gerson Cohen of JTS and Norman Lamm of Yeshiva University would be the other participants in that symposium. I chanced to talk to Gerson and he told me that he was not participating. I then checked with Lamm via Israel Miller, who told me that while Lamm would be part of such a symposium, he would do so only in a kind of "Rhodes style negotiation" (that's my term), that is to say that he would speak at one function, and the non-Orthodox representatives would participate at another function; he is not yet prepared to participate in a symposium which would unite Orthodox, Conservative and Reform on the platform.

The latter saddens me, of course, even as Gerson's non-participation perplexes me in the light of your indicating to me that the two of them would indeed be my counterparts.

Under the circumstances, you will understand that I have to reevaluate my own participation in that particular symposium.

I do regret this very, very much but - put yourself in my shoes - I really have no other choice.

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

bcc: Albert Vorspan
Richard Cohen



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Exec. Vice President
Dr. David Elcott
Program Director

November 19, 1985
6 Kislev 5746

Rabbi Alexander Schindler
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Dear Alex,

On behalf of CLAL, I want to confirm our invitation to you to participate in our Critical Issues Conference to be held at Scanticon Conference Center, Princeton, N.J. on March 16 - 17, 1986. The conference will deal with the growing problem of religious polarization. We are grateful for your acceptance of this invitation and look forward to your participation. *oc*

The Critical Issues Conference will start at 1 P.M. on Sunday, March 16th. Monday, March 17th will be devoted to workshops involving lay, professional and rabbinic leaders of American Jewry. We understand that your schedule will probably not permit your being present on Monday.

We have invited the leading figure in each denomination with you as the leading Reform figure - to reflect (with an audience drawn from the totality of the community leadership) on the problem of polarization in the community. Specifically we ask that you focus on two elements. What do you believe that the other groups must do or can do differently that can help prevent a split in the Jewish people. Secondly, what do you believe that your own group must do or can do in a new way to prevent such a split? We would welcome specific policy suggestions as well as general theoretical guidelines. You should assume that this is the beginning of a process in which major figures from each of the denominations as well as a broad range of communal and philanthropic leaders will be motivated to participate in a process of dialogue and overcoming communal divisiveness. Since a number of the attendees will be significant philanthropists in their own right, you should feel free to make specific suggestions that may involve funding or new programs that could make a contribution to overcoming divisiveness.

We propose to set aside one hour for each of the presentations. You can divide that time as you see fit but we suggest that you allow some time for questions and answers.

*Put in
agenda for
Give it to me
about one week
in advance*

There will be presentations both Sunday afternoon and evening. We will be in touch with your office to establish which hour would be most convenient for you in the context of the overall program. Mr. Paul Jeser, Executive Vice President of CLAL, will contact your office to confirm the final arrangements, including directions and travel arrangements and to answer any questions that you might have.

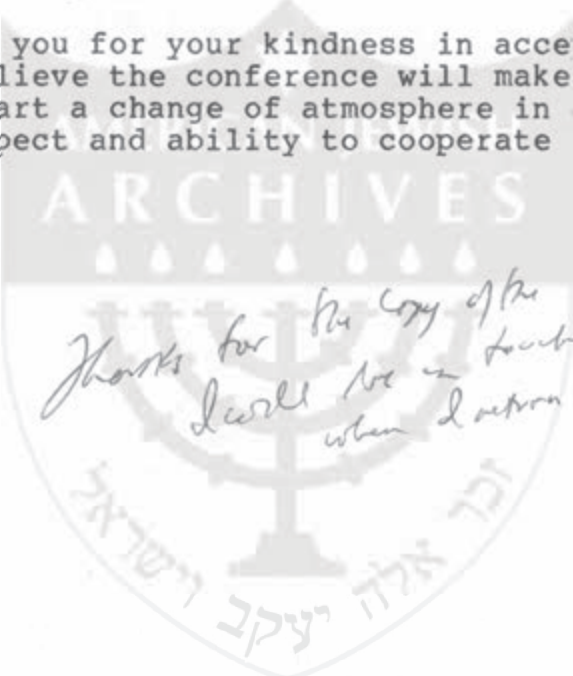
In addition to your own participation, we would welcome your bringing a major assistant or figure in the Reform movement who could spend the entire two days with the group. We also respectfully request that you give us a list of ten top professionals and ten top lay leaders of the movement who you feel would be receptive to participating in the dialogue and the workshops that follow. People who you feel could be important figures within the movement to carry on the work of seeking communal peace and cooperation.

Again let me thank you for your kindness in accepting this invitation. We believe the conference will make a significant contribution to start a change of atmosphere in Jewish life toward greater mutual respect and ability to cooperate for constructive purposes.

Sincerely yours,


Irving Greenberg

IG/rl


*Thanks for the copy of the ^{book}
I will be in touch further
when I return from Israel.*



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The National Jewish
Center for Learning
And Leadership

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Rabbi Irving Greenberg
Elie Wiesel
Rabbi Steven Shaw

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: PAUL JESER
(212) 714-9500

JEWISH LEADERS GATHER TO PROBE POLARIZATION
AT TWO-DAY CRITICAL ISSUES CONFERENCE

PRINCETON, NJ...More than 250 of North American Jewry's most prominent lay, rabbinic, and professional leaders gathered at the Scanticon Conference Center here for two days (March 16 and 17) to deal with the problems that Jews of different denominations have with one another and to begin developing practical solutions to the widening gulf between them.

"Will There Be One Jewish People by the Year 2000?" was the theme of the first annual Critical Issues Conference, sponsored by CLAL (The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership), an organization involved in Jewish leadership education in the spirit of Clal Yisrael.

Those making presentations at this Critical Issues Conference included: Elie Wiesel, Rabbi Gerson Cohen, Mr. Ira Silverman, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, Rabbi Norman Lamm, Mr. Charles Silberman, and Rabbi Irving Greenberg.

Elie Wiesel, the noted author and Holocaust historian, gave the keynote address. It was a plea for understanding and tolerance. He voiced his concern for growing religious divisiveness and fanaticism, and expressed his fear that the Jewish people were "entering an era of gratuitous hatred."

"We live in a violent, abnormal time," he said. "Never has the planet been so united in its fear. Ideological inflexibility is not appropriated by one segment alone and must be fought from within." Wiesel called for bringing together Jews of all denominations to create an atmosphere of fervor around Jewish education. "Whatever his or her affiliation, let the Jew know the beauty of ancient texts, the humanity of their laws, the depth of their tales."

Through joint scholarship and learning, said Wiesel, "all branches can come together and discuss the urgent issues of our times."

-- Rabbi Gerson D. Cohen, chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and a leader of the Conservative movement, argued that the Jewish people has achieved unprecedented unity in this century. He said that the current crisis of family identity and Jewish status has come to a head now because of the growing power of the Orthodox in Israel and in the U.S. He faulted lay leaders who secretly feel that the Orthodox are "more authentic" and therefore lavish support on them. "The present alarm over personal status," he said, "is a byproduct of Reform assertiveness and the decision of the Orthodox to confront them."

Cohen called for collecting an extensive data base to establish the facts on the Jewish condition and on the true numbers of Jews of contested status. He suggested the creation of a joint commission made up of representatives of all branches of Judaism, including the secular, to explore the new facts of Jewish life and tradition. "To insure Jewish survival beyond the year 2000," Dr. Cohen said, "there must be a renewal of commitment to Jewish values, not just to the Jewish people."

-- Rabbi Norman Lamm, president of Yeshiva University, who spoke from his Orthodox perspective. "We must try our best within the limits of our integrity to search for Jewish unity," he said. "No amount of goodwill posturing will resolve the problems facing Jews today. Although there can be more than one response within Jewish law, a pluralism which accepts everything as legitimate can lead to spiritual nihilism, said Lamm. If everything is kosher, then nothing is kosher."

"Orthodoxy," he continued, "is by its very nature tied to a transcendent view of a Being who is beyond us. That vision includes the revelation of Torah and halacha (Jewish law) as a way of life. It therefore obligates us, and we are not authorized to dispose of it according to personal taste or whim."

He called for a renewed spirit of tolerance among all denominations, saying that the issues of conversion and Jewish divorce, especially the latter, pose a grave threat to Jewish unity. "If Orthodox and Conservative Jews cannot recognize a non-halachic conversion by a Reform rabbi," he said, "at least the person involved can later undergo a conversion according to Orthodox Jewish law. But the lack of Jewish divorce (get) would label a subsequent Jewish remarriage adultery, and children of that union mamzerim (bastards) who are forbidden to marry other Jews for generations.

He called for reviving the National Bet Din (religious court) first discussed in the 1950s to deal with these issues of personal status. Judges would be elected only on the basis of scholarship and personal observance of Jewish law. Thus, at least a partial solution of the problem would be achieved.

-- Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the synagogue organization of Reform Judaism, said, "our disagreements have not truly inflamed the passions of our people.

"The greatest danger arising from our wranglings," said Schindler, "is not that the Orthodox refuse to recognize Reform conversions, but rather that the great mass of unaffiliated Jews will be so put off by what they see that they will say 'a plague on all your houses.'"

He said that the issue of patrilineal descent (adopted by Reform groups) was not really a new concept, and that biblical lineage was male-oriented. "We have always invoked the 'God of our Fathers,' not of our mothers," said Schindler. Schindler stressed Reform's view that "All changes [in Jewish practice] must be born of necessity and conviction." The patrilineal decision was a principled assertion of the equality of men and women and a response to the anguish of the children who considered themselves Jewish but were pushed into a no-man's land between Jews and Christians.

Schindler issued a plea for mutual tolerance in recognition of the fact that many differences between Orthodox and liberal Jews are unlikely to be resolved. In what participants described as one of the most moving moments of the conference, Rabbi Schindler expressed his regret at some of the polemical language which he and others had used. But he communicated the pain of being the object of denial and the concern at delegitimation out of which Reform Jews spoke.

Rabbi Schindler called for concrete steps to improve relations between the groups, including exchange of ideas and pulpits, joint studies, and a regular nonbinding religious forum where policies and possible mutual

CRITICAL ISSUES CONFERENCE - 6

compromises could be explored. Schindler concluded with a reminder that "Words like Orthodox, Reform, secular...are adjectives...the noun is Jew." He reminded the audience that the Shoah constitutes "a lasting, impelling mandate for unity...Even as we were brothers and sisters in death, so must we ever remain brothers and sisters in life."

-- Ira Silverman, president of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, said that "the barriers of ethnicity and geography must be transcended." He said that Jews who call themselves "just Jews" and not members of specific denominations should be applauded, and that no one group has a "monopoly on the truth."

Silverman called for continuing pluralism in bridging the gap between tradition and modernity. For the sake of community, he and other Reconstructionists are prepared to make certain compromises to enable traditionalists to live with the situation, but such compromises must be a two-way street.

Silverman said that "Jews today should not adhere to the rulings of a rabbinical elite, but should judge themselves and reconstruct their Judaism for themselves."

-more-

Israel's President Chaim Herzog and Prime Minister Shimon Peres sent messages to the conferees, stressing the importance of the occasion and giving their support to the historic meeting. "It is hard to believe that today's warring groups among us seem to have forgotten how only a generation ago the Jews of Europe were murdered without distinction as to theological commitment -- simply as Jews," said President Herzog.

In summing up the two days of conference, speeches and workshops, Rabbi Irving (Yitz) Greenberg, president of CLAL, charged that the present state of intra-Jewish dialogue is less developed than the Jewish-Christian dialogue of 50 years ago. He noted that the Jewish community now spends \$10 million a year on Jewish-Christian dialogue, but not a significant fraction of that amount on dialogue among themselves. "This shows an unhealthy lack of self-respect for Jewish priorities," he said.

Greenberg urged that every Jew develop a "dual loyalty" --both to his or her own denomination and to the idea of clal Yisrael. "The dues we pay for such dual loyalty is a willingness to confront one's own group for the sake of the greater Jewish community, and to find unifying rather than separatist solutions."

"Each denomination can be strengthened by the other," Greenberg said. "The non-Orthodox can learn discipline and observance from the Orthodox, while the Orthodox can learn from the openness and commitment of the liberal groups, thus making each group more competent to deal with the vast majority of unaffiliated American Jews. By ignoring and sniping at each other, no group grows."

Greenberg called for major expansion of intra-Jewish dialogue at the advanced scholarly level, at the rabbinic and at the lay level. "Almost all of the outstanding divisive issues could be solved or at least reduced by policies and halachic approaches already in existence, he said. "But first the commitment to each other must be strengthened enough to carry the burden of such an effort to a successful conclusion."

Prior to five hours of workshops, the noted author Charles Silberman, the conference scholar-in-residence, and Klara Silverstein, conference co-chairman, directed the participants not to use the pluralism and polarization issues for their own ends, but as a means to benefit all Jews. The workshops were an opportunity for participants to air their views in an open and unbiased forum.

-more-

CRITICAL ISSUES CONFERENCE - 9

Conferees came from 93 communities in 21 states and Canada, and included 50 rabbis. Conference leadership included: Solomon Kimerling, chairman, of Birmingham, Alabama; and co-chairmen James Fingerioth and Stephen Wald of New York; Dr. Saul Singer, of Hollywood, Florida; Leon Weiner, of Houston, Texas; and Ronald Wornick, of San Francisco, California.

The Critical Issues Conference was sponsored by CLAL, with cooperation from the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York and the United Jewish Federation of MetroWest (New Jersey).

CLAL educates Jewish leaders, teaching them the lessons of leadership through the treasures of Jewish history and text. CLAL provides its learning experiences to Jewish leaders through classes, dialogues, study groups, conferences, publications and retreats. Its programs are offered to Jewish groups and their communities throughout North America.

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friction*

PLEASE JOIN US FOR . . .

A CRITICAL ISSUES CONFERENCE

"WILL THERE BE ONE JEWISH PEOPLE BY THE YEAR 2000?"

SUNDAY-MONDAY, MARCH 16-17, 1986

SCANTICON CONFERENCE CENTER, PRINCETON, NJ



CLAL

THE NATIONAL JEWISH CENTER FOR LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP

IN COOPERATION WITH

THE FEDERATION OF JEWISH PHILANTHROPIES OF NEW YORK

AND

THE UNITED JEWISH FEDERATION OF METROWEST (NEW JERSEY)

**THIS IMPORTANT CONFERENCE WILL DISCUSS
WHAT UNITES US — WHAT DIVIDES US
THE STRENGTH OF UNITY WITHIN DIVERSITY**

PRESENTATIONS BY

**RABBI GERSON COHEN
RABBI NORMAN LAMM
RABBI ALEXANDER SCHINDLER
IRA SILVERMAN
ELIE WIESEL
CHARLES SILBERMAN
RABBI IRVING GREENBERG**

with a special message from
THE HONORABLE CHAIM HERZOG

PARTICIPANTS

YOU

AND OTHER LEADERS OF NORTH AMERICAN JEWRY



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Center for Learning
And Leadership

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Vice Chairman
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Dr. David Elcott
Program Director

CONFERENCE
LEADERSHIP

Chairman
Solomon Kimerling
Birmingham, AL
Co-Chairmen
James Fingeroth
New York, NY
Klara Silverstein
New York, NY
Dr. Saul Singer
Hollywood, FL
Stephen Wald
New York, NY
Leon Weiner
Houston, TX
Ronald Wornick
San Francisco, CA

Dear Colleague:

With every passing week, evidences of religious polarization grow. We see in our midst the delegitimization of fellow Jews; growing anger, stereotyping, and hostility; the threat of non-support for Israel; and the building and maintenance of duplicate mikvehs and the proliferation of day schools. **We believe that the ultimate danger is a fundamental split into two people or two religions.**

This "Critical Issues Conference" will focus on this important challenge. Our goals are:

- a) To place the problem higher on the agenda of North American Jewry.
- b) To stimulate the will to come closer to each other and to stiffen the resistance to policies that separate us.
- c) To offer a model of constructive process.
- d) To engage the top leadership of North American Jewry in this process.
- e) To begin to develop practical solutions that will strengthen unity within diversity.

We urge you, as a leader of the North American Jewish Community, to participate in this conference.

In addition to the presentations by those listed in this invitation, there will be substantial time for workshops. Participants will discuss the images, stereotypes, and language that cause polarization, and will explore programs, policies, and processes that will develop cooperation.

We are pleased that the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York and the United Jewish Federation of MetroWest (N.J.) are cooperating with us in hosting this conference.

It will take years of intense high-level communication and policy responses to reverse the powerful momentum to separation. Journeys of a thousand miles begin with single steps. **This conference will be a historic step**—together with others being taken to rally the forces of American Jewry—**if you are there.**

You will find a registration form on the back of this letter. We urge you not to miss this important meeting.

Sincerely yours,

HERSCHEL BLUMBERG,
Chairman

IRVING GREENBERG,
President

SOLOMON KIMERLING,
Conference Chairman

REGISTRATION FORM

"A CRITICAL ISSUES CONFERENCE"

SCANTICON CONFERENCE CENTER, PRINCETON, NJ

Beginning: Sunday, March 16, 1986, 1:00 P.M.

Concluding: Monday, March 17, 1986, 5:30 P.M.

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

Last Name _____

First Name _____ Spouse (if attending) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phones: Home _____ Office _____

Religious Affiliation (please check one — to be used for Workshop Assignments)

☐ Conservative

☐ Reconstructionist

☐ Orthodox

☐ Reform

REGISTRATION IS LIMITED, MUST BE RECEIVED BY FEBRUARY 15, 1986, and should include conference and hotel fee of \$300 (single) or \$500 (double).

Check should be made payable to CLAL, and with the registration form, mailed to CLAL-CIC, 421 Seventh Avenue, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10001.

Transportation information from area airports will be mailed to you upon receipt of registration form.

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE CRITICAL ISSUES CONFERENCE

"WILL THERE BE ONE JEWISH PEOPLE BY THE YEAR 2000?"

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

SUNDAY-MONDAY, MARCH 16-17, 1986

SCANTICON CONFERENCE CENTER, PRINCETON, NJ



CLAL

THE NATIONAL JEWISH CENTER FOR LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP

IN COOPERATION WITH

THE FEDERATION OF JEWISH PHILANTHROPIES OF NEW YORK

AND

THE UNITED JEWISH FEDERATION OF METROWEST (NEW JERSEY)

POLICY SUGGESTIONS OFFERED BY LEADERS OF THE FOUR MOVEMENTS

RABBI GERSON COHEN

Joint and longstanding committee to study problems, data, possibilities of amelioration, and to set goals. Joint, permanent commission to collect data on the actual Jewish condition, study relationships and family law, and explore possibilities of resolving problems.

IRA SILVERMAN

Establish joint committee for standards of marriage and divorce.

RABBI ALEXANDER SCHINDLER

Establish an informal forum to explore issues and air differences before they reach "flash point"; joint study by seminary faculties; assessment of textbooks to ensure that presentations of other movements are not stereotypical or prejudicial; exchange of pulpits; dialogue among lay leadership and especially youth.

RABBI NORMAN LAMM

Establish a national Bet Din to deal with Jewish divorce issues. Religious leaders ought to consult together behind closed doors.

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS OFFERED BY CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

1. Private meeting among leadership--behind closed doors, allowing for candid expression of views.
2. Strengthen moderate groups within each movement that seek to work cooperatively and connect them to each other.
3. Work on settling problems locally on basis of existing relationships of mutual trust and cooperation.
4. Specific national task forces to explore resolution of conflict issues, involving scholars from all the movements, seeking ad hoc, limited solutions, not permanent global one.
5. Establish local chapters of CHEVRA (CLAL's dialogue-study groups between the rabbis of the denominations).
6. Arrange meetings between Men's Clubs or Sisterhoods of synagogues of different denominations.
7. Joint weekend retreats between synagogues of various denominations with local rabbis as scholar resources.
8. Arrange a meeting of synagogue boards of the community on issues of shared non-controversial interest.
9. Arrange combined youth programs of various synagogues and movements--locally and nationally.
10. Arrange a youth choir made up of the children of various Hebrew and Day schools to perform together.
11. Sponsor public symposia between panels of local or national rabbis to dramatize the will to unity and dialogue.
12. Develop a team of facilitators to meet both sides of any denominational dispute to foster open and respectful listening and responding.
13. Develop a training program for community leaders, both lay and professional, dealing with issues of polarization and clal Yisrael.
14. Federations should review allocations and encourage all recipients of community funds to promote clal Yisrael, and to refrain from any public attacks.
15. Form a "Community Lay Board for Jewish Unity" to monitor public attacks by community rabbis or lay leaders on other movements or their representatives, and to respond publicly to the invective between movements, supporting dialogue, rapprochement and respectful disagreement.
16. Receive pledges that major leaders and community rabbis will never use the press (Jewish or otherwise) or other public forums for attack.



CLAL

SUGGESTED PRINCIPLES OF DIALOGUE

IRVING GREENBERG

1. Jews must work at dialogue with fellow Jews at least as seriously as the dialogue between Jews and Christians.
2. Make a conscious effort to establish friendships, relationships, and alliances, across all lines.
3. One should criticize one's own group, not the other. Let members of each group criticize their own. Such criticism will have much more impact and lead to improvements.
4. One should justify and try to learn from the other, rather than focus on what is wrong or ridiculous.
5. Learn to discern the various positions and differences within each group. Avoid generalizing stereotypes of the other.
6. The test of a true clal Yisrael orientation is a willingness to pay a price for the position; calling on the other to make all the changes or sacrifices for the sake of unity is a misuse of the principle.
7. Philanthropists should review their giving, and emphasize to recipients their concern that they respect clal Yisrael and do not attack or delegitimize others.

IF YOU ARE PREPARED TO START DIALOGUE OR OTHER PROCESS IN YOUR COMMUNITY, CLAL STANDS READY TO WORK WITH YOU AND TO GUIDE YOU.

CLAL — The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership

March, 1986

421 Seventh Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10001

(212) 714-9500

PLACE
STAMP
HERE



CLAL



The National Jewish
Center for
Learning And Leadership

(Formerly NJRC)

421 Seventh Avenue
New York, New York 10001

CIC

"WILL THERE BE ONE JEWISH PEOPLE BY THE YEAR 2000?"

SUNDAY, MARCH 16

12:30 - 1:30 REGISTRATION
Lobby

1:30 - 1:45 OPENING REMARKS
Auditorium A

Herschel Blumberg, Chairman, CLAL

1:45 - 2:45 KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY ELIE WIESEL
Auditorium A

Introduction by Dan Shapiro
President, Federation of
Jewish Philanthropies of New York

PRESENTATIONS

"AN AGENDA FOR CLAL YISRAEL"

3:00 - 4:00 RABBI GERSON D. COHEN
Auditorium A

Introduction by Stephen Peck,
Chairman, Executive Committee, JTS

4:00 - 4:10 MESSAGE FROM THE HONORABLE CHAIM HERZOG
PRESIDENT OF ISRAEL

Delivered by Sanford Solender
Executive Consultant, N.Y. UJA/Federation
Member, CLAL Board of Directors

4:15 - 5:15 MR. IRA SILVERMAN
Auditorium A

Introduction by Aaron Ziegelman,
Vice Chairman, RRC Board of Governors
Vice Chairman, CLAL

5:15 - 5:45 BREAK — MINCHA AND MAARIV

Traditional (Auditorium B)
Egalitarian (Auditorium A)

6:00 - 7:30 DINNER
Banquet Rooms

7:30 - 8:30 RABBI ALEXANDER SCHINDLER
Auditorium A

Introduction by Melvin Merians,
Vice Chairman, Board of Trustees, UAHC

8:30 - 8:40 MESSAGE FROM THE HONORABLE SHIMON PERES,
PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL

Delivered by Lester Pollack
Chair, JWB Jewish Education/JCC Committee
Member, CLAL Executive Committee

8:45 - 9:45 RABBI NORMAN LAMM
Auditorium A

Introduction by Herbert Tenzer,
Chairman, Board of Trustees, Y.U.

9:45 - 10:45 RECEPTION HOSTED BY THE UNITED FEDERATION OF
METROWEST, (NEW JERSEY)
Banquet Rooms

MONDAY, MARCH 17

7:00 - 8:00 SHACHARIT SERVICES
Conservative (Auditorium A)
Orthodox (Auditorium B)

Reconstructionist (H-5)
Reform (Black Swan)

8:00 - 9:10 BREAKFAST AND INTRODUCTION TO WORKSHOP I
Banquet Rooms

Klara Silverstein, Conference Co-Chair

9:15 - 11:15 WORKSHOP I — STEREOTYPES, REALITY AND VISIONS
By Assignment

11:30 - 1:30 LUNCH AND ADDRESS BY CHARLES SILBERMAN
Banquet Rooms
"THE COMMUNITY — HOW DOES IT SHAPE UP?"
"THE ISSUES — HOW DO WE RESPOND?"

Introduction by Frank Kreutzer, President, USA

1:30 - 3:30 WORKSHOP II — PROPOSALS, POLICIES AND PROCESS
By Assignment

3:45 - 4:45 RABBI IRVING GREENBERG
Auditorium A
"WHAT UNITES US — WHAT DIVIDES US"

Introduction by Robert Loup,
Chairman, Board of Trustees, UJA
Vice Chairman, CLAL

4:45 - 5:00 CLOSING REMARKS
Auditorium A

Sol Kimerling, Chairman
Critical Issues Conference

CRITICAL ISSUES CONFERENCE

OPENING REMARKS

HERSCHEL BLUMBERG, CHAIRMAN

CLAL - THE NATIONAL JEWISH CENTER FOR LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP

GOOD AFTERNOON: RABBIS, HONORED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

ON BEHALF OF CLAL AND OUR CO-HOSTS, THE FEDERATION OF JEWISH PHILANTHROPIES OF NEW YORK AND THE UNITED JEWISH FEDERATION OF METRO-WEST (N.J.), IT IS MY DISTINCT PLEASURE TO WELCOME YOU TO THIS CONFERENCE.

WE ARE NOT ONLY PLEASED YOU HAVE JOINED US, BUT WE ARE MOST SINCERELY DEEPLY HONORED.

YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS CONFERENCE ADDS IMMEASURABLE STRENGTH TO OUR CONVICTION THAT THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR US TO COME TOGETHER.

OBVIOUSLY, YOU HAVE TRAVELLED TO THIS SITE BECAUSE OF THE CRITICAL ISSUE WHICH IS BEFORE US, AND BECAUSE OF YOUR DESIRE TO HEAR THE DISTINGUISHED RABBIS AND SCHOLARS WHO HAVE GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTED OUR INVITATION TO SPEAK TO US.

WE EAGERLY ANTICIPATE HEARING THEM AND SPENDING TODAY AND TOMORROW WITH YOU.

ALL OF YOU, AS LEADERS OF ORGANIZATIONS, HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH OTHER CONFERENCE PREPARATIONS AND CONSEQUENTLY WILL APPRECIATE MY EXPRESSION OF SINCERE THANKS TO SOL KIMERLING AND HIS COMMITTEE AND THE VERY CAPABLE STAFF OF CLAL FOR THEIR METICULOUS PLANNING. MOST ESPECIALLY, SOL HAS BEEN CONCERNED THAT ALL VIEWPOINTS BE HEARD AND THAT EVERYONE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE.

THIS WILL HELP EXPLAIN THE AGENDA AND SCHEDULE OF EVENTS.
SOL'S VISION HELPED CREATE THIS CONFERENCE. HE AND HIS
CO-CHAIRS DESERVE TO BE RECOGNIZED.

WILL YOU PLEASE STAND, SOL.

JIM FINGEROTH
KLARA SILVERSTEIN
DR. SAUL SINGER

STEPHEN WALD
LEON WEINER
RONALD WORNICK

THE COMMITTEE HAS BEEN EXTREMELY CONSCIENTIOUS IN MAKING
EVERY EFFORT TO SATISFY WHAT WE KNOW ARE YOUR HIGH STANDARDS OF
PROGRAMMING, SCHEDULING AND ACCOMMODATIONS.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO METRO-WEST FOR PROVIDING THE VOLUNTEERS,
WHO HAVE ALREADY BEEN SO HELPFUL, AND FOR SPONSORING TONIGHT'S RECEPTION.

CLAL IS PROUD TO BE CO-HOST WITH NEW YORK FEDERATION AND THE
METRO-WEST FEDERATION AND WE ARE ESPECIALLY GRATEFUL TO THEIR
PRESIDENTS AND TOP PROFESSIONALS, DAN SHAPIRO AND WILLIAM KAHN OF
NEW YORK, AND JIMMY SCHWARZ AND HAROLD CHARISH OF METRO-WEST.

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR READY AGREEMENT TO JOIN WITH US AND
WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRESENCE AND HOSPITALITY.

IF ONE IS KNOWN BY THE COMPANY ONE KEEPS, CLAL'S REPUTATION
IS GREATLY ENHANCED BY THIS FELICITIOUS ASSOCIATION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

AS YOU SEE FROM THE AGENDA IN YOUR KITS, THIS AFTERNOON AND
THIS EVENING WE SHALL BE PRIVILEGED TO HEAR FROM FIVE OF JUDAISM'S
MOST DISTINGUISHED LEADERS AND SPOKESMEN.

AS TEACHERS, SCHOLARS, RABBIS, ADMINISTRATORS, THEY HAVE
MADE OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO JUDAISM, TO THEIR RESPECTIVE
ORGANIZATIONS, AND TO THEIR FIELDS OF SCHOLARSHIP.

TOMORROW, AT MORNING AND AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS, WE SHALL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS OUR VIEWS OF THE ISSUES WHICH BRING US HERE AND DISCUSS THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PRESENTATIONS MADE TODAY.

AT LUNCH TOMORROW, OUR SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE - WELL KNOWN SCHOLAR AND AUTHOR, CHARLES SILVERMAN, WILL PRESENT HIS ANALYSIS OF STATE OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY AND WHAT THIS IMPLIES ON THE QUESTIONS BEFORE US, AND YITZ GREENBERG WILL CONCLUDE THE DAY WITH A CHARGE CONTAINING SUGGESTIONS FOR BEHAVIOR AND GUIDELINES FOR POLICIES.

FOLLOWING THE PRESENTATION OF EACH SPEAKER, IF TIME PERMITS, THERE WILL BE A QUESTION PERIOD.

PLEASE, WRITE YOUR QUESTIONS ON THE PAPER PROVIDED AND PASS THEM TO AN USHER AS EACH SPEAKER FINISHES.

YOU WILL UNDERSTAND, I'M SURE, IF WE INSIST UPON ABIDING BY THE TIME SCHEDULE.

WE WANT TO GIVE EACH PRESENTER AN EQUAL AMOUNT OF TIME.

IN THE INTEREST OF TIME, WHICH MEANS WE WANT MORE TIME FOR TACHLIS, WE SHALL NOT MAKE THE USUAL INTRODUCTIONS OF THE DISTINGUISHED INTRODUCERS. THEY UNDERSTAND; WE HOPE YOU DO, TOO.

IN YOUR KITS YOU WILL FIND BACKGROUND PAPERS WHICH WE HOPE YOU WILL FIND USEFUL AND I BELIEVE YOU WILL FIND CHALLENGING.

WE SHALL BE DISCUSSING COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT ISSUES FOR WHICH WE DARE EVENTUALLY TO SEEK SOLUTIONS.

OUR CREATIVITY, PATIENCE AND PERSISTENCE WILL SURELY
BE TESTED.

OUR COMING HERE IS AN ACT OF FIDELITY TO OUR GOD, OUR PEOPLE
AND OUR CHOSEN DESTINY.

WE SHALL LEAVE HERE MONDAY HOPEFULLY WITH A FULLER UNDERSTANDING
OF EACH OTHER'S POSITIONS, OF THE DEPTH OF OUR CONCERNS, AND OF THE
NEED TO FIND MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTIONS.

THIS CONFERENCE IS BOTH A CULMINATION AND A BEGINNING.

FOR MORE THAN 13 YEARS, PRINCIPALLY THROUGH THE DYNAMIC
PERSONALITY OF RABBI IRVING GREENBERG - YITZ, TO MOST OF US, CLAL'S
PRIMARY WORK HAS BEEN TO PRESENT JEWISH LEARNING, BOTH CLASSICAL AND
MODERN, IN ORDER TO ENRICH THE PERSONAL LIVES OF COMMUNAL LEADERSHIP,
TO BUILD UNITY AND TO GUIDE POLICY.

CLAL AND ITS FACULTY HAVE PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN DIRECTING
FEDERATIONS AND NATIONAL JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS TOWARDS BECOMING
VEHICLES OF JEWISH LEARNING.

THE TREASURES OF JEWISH HISTORY AND TEXT HAVE BECOME BETTER
KNOWN TO A LARGE NUMBER OF OUR PRESENT AND FUTURE LEADERS THROUGH
CLASSES, SHABBATON, LECTURES AND RETREATS.

WHILE THERE ARE OVER 600 LAY LEADERS PARTICIPATING IN CLAL'S
CLASSES IN SIX OF OUR MAJOR CITIES, WE ALSO HAVE ON-GOING LEARNING
PROGRAMS IN OVER 40 CITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

THE LESSONS OF THE HOLOCAUST, THE POTENTIAL GENERATED BY THE
REBIRTH OF ISRAEL, THE NEED FOR POLITICAL ACTION FOR ISRAEL, AND THE
ETHICS OF JEWISH POWER HAVE BEEN PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS OF CLAL'S
CURRICULA.

ADDITIONALLY, FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS YITZ GREENBERG AND CLAL HAVE BEEN LAYING THE GROUNDWORK IN PREPARATION FOR THIS MEETING.

FOR EXAMPLE:

CHEVRA, GROUPS OF RABBIS FROM ALL DENOMINATIONS, BEGAN MEETING AND STUDYING TOGETHER IN OUR LARGEST CITIES 5 YEARS AGO.

TODAY THEY MEET IN NEW YORK, LOS ANGELES, CHICAGO, PHILADELPHIA, D.C., BOSTON, SAN FRANCISCO AND DALLAS.

THIS YEAR WE WILL HOLD OUR FOURTH ANNUAL NATIONAL CHEVRA CONFERENCE, AT WHICH WE EXPECT AN ATTENDANCE OF 150 RABBIS.

FOUR INTERNS, ONE FROM EACH OF THE SEMINARIES, HAVE BEEN STUDYING AND WORKING WITH OUR STAFF AND PARTICIPATING IN OUR TEACHING PROGRAMS.

STUDENTS OF THE SEMINARIES MEET SEVERAL TIMES EACH YEAR WITH YITZ AND STAFF.

AND IN JANUARY CLAL'S FIRST SYMPOSIUM FOR UNITY WAS HELD IN WASHINGTON, D.C., AT AN ORTHODOX SYNAGOGUE AT WHICH MAJOR RABBINICAL LEADERS OF THE FOUR DENOMINATIONS SPOKE.

ALL OF THIS HAS BEEN IN PREPARATION FOR CONFRONTING THE GROWING RELIGIOUS POLARIZATION WHICH IS VIEWED AS A THREAT CAPABLE OF CREATING A FUNDAMENTAL SCHISM IN THE AMERICAN/JEWISH COMMUNITY.

THE DIALOGUE WHICH HAS TAKEN PLACE IN CLAL'S PROGRAMS HAS CONVINCED US THAT THE TIME HAS COME FOR LAY AND RABBINICAL LEADERS TO MEET TOGETHER.

THUS, THIS CONFERENCE.

THE ISSUE BEFORE THIS CONFERENCE IS:

CAN WE, IN OUR PERSONAL AND DENOMINATIONAL DUAL QUEST FOR UNDERSTANDING THE FULLNESS OF GOD AND FOR SERVING THE LORD IN TRUTH, DO SO IN HARMONY WITH EACH OTHER?

THE PURPOSE OF THIS CONFERENCE IS TO INFORM IMPORTANT LEADERSHIP THROUGH TODAY'S LEARNED SPEAKERS, AS WELL AS THROUGH THE PAPERS PRESENTED, OF THE INTRICACIES AND COMPLEXITIES OF THE ISSUES CREATED BY THE DIFFERENCES AMONG US AND TO GIVE EACH OF US AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE DIFFERING VIEWPOINTS AND UNDERSTANDINGS, IN THE HOPE THAT (1) THOSE DIFFERENCES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO CREATE FURTHER RELIGIOUS POLARIZATION, AND (2) THE UNDERSTANDING RESULTING WILL BE A CATALYST FOR UNITY.

SIMPLY STATED, WE HOPE TO STIMULATE THE WILL TO COME CLOSER TOGETHER, TO STIFFEN RESISTANCE TO NEW POLICIES AND PRACTICES THAT TEND TO SEPARATE US, AND TO DEMONSTRATE THE WORKING OF A MODEL FOR FUTURE DIALOGUES.

IF OUR PRAYERS WILL BE ANSWERED, WHEN WE LEAVE HERE WE WILL UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER BETTER, AND THEREBY PERHAPS REMOVE SOME OF THE TENSIONS EXISTING AMONG US.

IT IS ESSENTIAL WE SEEK COMMON GROUND AND LEARN TO COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER AT ALL LEVELS AND ACROSS ALL LINES.

TO SOME EXTENT WE ALREADY SHARE COMMON GROUND, FOR OUR BACK- GROUND ARE PROBABLY SIMILAR IN SEVERAL RESPECTS.

I'M A GRANDSON OF IMMIGRANTS WHO ARRIVED ON TWO SEPARATE WAVES OF IMMIGRATION FROM POLAND AND RUSSIA AROUND 1900.

ONE TRADED VILLAGE LIFE FOR EAST BALTIMORE; THE OTHER WARSAW FOR HAVRE DE GRACE, MARYLAND.

THEIR RELIGIOUS LIVES CHANGED DRAMATICALLY, BUT THEY WERE ORTHODOX, THEY KEPT KOSHER - EVEN IN HAVRE DE GRACE, AND ALL 14 CHILDREN MARRIED JEWS.

WHEN WE MOVED TO WASHINGTON, D. C., WE SOUGHT A SHUL CLOSE TO HOME AND CLOSE TO THE ONE WE KNEW IN BALTIMORE.

THERE WAS VERY LITTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TRADITIONAL CONSERVATIVE SYNAGOGUE WE JOINED AND THE ONE WE LEFT.

AND, AGAIN, MOST OF OUR FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES BELONGED TO OUR SHUL.

MY ZAIDAS AND BUBAHS WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD THAT I BECAME PRESIDENT AND SPENT ALMOST AS MUCH TIME IN SHUL AS THEY USED TO EVERY DAY.

THEN I BECAME PART OF UJA, AN ACTION TAKEN IN PART BECAUSE OF THE LESSONS I LEARNED FROM MY RABBIS AND TEACHERS.

AT UJA I FOUND A WORLD MUCH DIFFERENT FROM SHUL LIFE.

UJA'S LEADERSHIP CONSISTS OF MEN AND WOMEN FROM ALL ORDERS OF JEWISH LIFE AND FROM ALL DENOMINATIONS AND SORTS OF RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS. THEIR DEDICATION TO ISRAEL AND TO JEWS EVERYWHERE IS WELL KNOWN AND THEIR MOTIVATIONS ARE AS PURE AND UNSELFISH AS ANY I'VE SEEN.

DRIVEN BY LOVE, PRIDE AND COMPASSION, THEY COURAGEOUSLY SACRIFICE THEIR TIME, ENERGY AND WEALTH TO HELP ASSURE THE SURVIVAL OF OUR PEOPLE AND THE FLOURISHING OF ISRAEL.

WHAT IS STRIKING TO ME IS THAT ALTHOUGH THEY COME FROM ALL DENOMINATIONS, THERE IS UNDERSTANDING AND UNQUESTIONED ACCEPTANCE OF EACH OTHER.

THAT DOES NOT MEAN WE AGREE ON ALL RELIGIOUS ISSUES OR PRACTICES; WE DO NOT.

BUT WE RESPECT EACH OTHER.

INDEED, THERE IS LOVE GIVEN AND LOVE RETURNED.

I TRULY FEEL THAT AT UJA I EXPERIENCE THE MEANING OF CLAL YISRAEL.

IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT AN IDENTICAL FEELING IS FOUND ON
CLAL'S BOARD.

CLAL IS DOING IN RELIGIOUS AREAS WHAT UJA HAS DONE IN
FUND RAISING.

THAT'S WHY - IN PART - IM ACTIVE IN CLAL AND AM EXHILIRATED BY
THIS CONFERENCE.

THE PRECEDING GENERATION COULD NOT HAVE MET AT THIS CONFERENCE;
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN TOO SOON.

IF TRENDS CONTINUE AND UNHAPPY PROJECTIONS MATERIALIZE, IT WILL
BE TOO LATE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION.

MY FRIENDS, AT THIS CRITICAL ISSUES CONFERENCE WE ARE AT THE
BEGINNING OF POSSIBILITIES.

WHILE BEGINNINGS ARE DIFFICULT AND ARE THE GREATEST TEST
OF LEADERSHIP, IT IS REASSURING TO REALIZE THAT POSSIBILITIES HAVE
MORE POSITIVE CONNOTATIONS THAN NEGATIVE ONES.

THUS, THE ODDS ARE WITH US, ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE.

WITH YOUR ENCOURAGEMENT, SUPPORT, PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP
AT THIS CONFERENCE AND AFTERWARD, THE POSSIBLE CAN BE ACHIEVED.



HERSCHEL BLUMBERG



CLAL

The National Jewish
Center for Learning
And Leadership

Herschel Blumberg
Chairman
Rabbi Irving Greenberg
President
Robert Loup
Vice Chairman
Martin Stein
Vice Chairman
Aaron Ziegelman
Vice Chairman
William Spier
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Program Director

CONFERENCE
LEADERSHIP
Chairman
Solomon Kimerling
Birmingham, AL
Co-Chairmen
James Fingerhuth
New York, NY
Klara Silverstein
New York, NY
Dr. Saul Singer
Hollywood, FL
Stephen Wald
New York, NY
Leon Weiner
Houston, TX
Ronald Wornick
San Francisco, CA

TO THE CRITICAL ISSUES CONFERENCE
FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

It is with no small measure of identification that I send you greetings and best wishes from Jerusalem. The central issues with which you are to deal are of basic importance to the future of the Jewish people everywhere. Mutatis mutandis Israel, too, is affected by the divisions, indeed the polarization, you all too rightly see as threatening to split the Jewish community.

It is hard to believe that today's warring groups among us seem to have forgotten how only a generation ago the Jews of Europe were murdered without distinction as to theological commitment -- simply as Jews. Nor was our people's center in Israel established exclusively by Orthodox or Socialist or Conservative or Reform or Hebraist or Yiddishist or otherwise labeled Jews. It is simplistic to stress the varying origins, ideas and creeds which jointly underlay the daring and inspired national endeavor that built a viable State, rescued many hundreds of thousands of Jews, revived our people's language, gave its culture new impetus, naturalness and depth.

CLAL's educational work has, I understand, consistently stressed the overriding significance of those two key points in modern Jewish history -- the Holocaust and the rise of Israel. Certainly those two poles -- the negative and the positive -- should dwarf the differences of emphasis among us and teach us mutual understanding.

For the sake of American Jewry and of Israel itself, I trust your joint deliberations will lead you on the road to tolerance and cooperation.

That is a road we must learn to follow in Israel. Never in the century of modern Jewish resettlement of the Land has there been such perilous polarization between rigid orthodox and the more liberal observant and secular sectors of the community. Rigidity tends to bring with it a chauvinist intolerance of the stranger, totally at odds with Jewish tradition. We find it difficult to accept the import of fanaticism from American Jewry and the support it continues to receive from circles in the United States.

"Will There Be One Jewish People By The Year 2000?" is the frightening question posed to you. But what you think, say and do together may provide a partial answer, an initial answer, towards assurance of unity and Jewish strength.

CHAIM HERZOG

421 Seventh Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10001 (212) 714-9500



CLAL

The National Jewish
Center for Learning
And Leadership

MESSAGE TO CRITICAL ISSUES CONFERENCE
FROM PRIME MINISTER PERES

Herschel Blumberg
Chairman
Rabbi Irving Greenberg
President
Robert Loup
Vice Chairman
Martin Stein
Vice Chairman
Aaron Ziegelman
Vice Chairman
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New York, NY
Dr. Saul Singer
Hollywood, FL
Stephen Wald
New York, NY
Leon Weiner
Houston, TX
Ronald Wornick
San Francisco, CA

Dear Herschel Blumberg,
Solomon Kimerling,
and Rabbi Irving Greenberg,

The Prime Minister has asked me to convey his warmest wishes and greetings to all those attending the Critical Issues Conference.

You have taken upon yourselves an important and vital task to arouse the Jewish world to the dangers of polarization and divisiveness.

Today, more than ever, we require a new approach to dialogue which will place the ideals of "clal Yisrael" at the center of the Jewish agenda, out of a sense of responsibility and commitment to the integrity of the Jewish people wherever they may be.

The Prime Minister is confident that you will succeed in finding new approaches to bridge the gap, setting an example for us here and for those of you who remain in the Diaspora.

Y'shar Koach

Avrum Burg
Advisor to the Prime Minister for Diaspora Affairs.



CLAL

ORIENTATION AND BRIEFING PRIOR TO WORKSHOPS

Klara Silverstein
CIC Co-Chairman

The National Jewish
Center for Learning
And Leadership

Herschel Blumberg
Chairman
Rabbi Irving Greenberg
President
Robert Loup
Vice Chairman
Martin Stein
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Stephen Wald
New York, NY
Leon Weiner
Houston, TX
Ronald Wornick
San Francisco, CA

This Critical Issues Conference is not meant to be a panacea solving all problems of inter-denominational conflict. We recognize that diversity has and will remain a part of Jewish life. We also know that, to remain one people, we must nurture passionate advocates for unity. The goals of this conference are to mobilize Jewish leaders to take a stand against polarization; to open up dialogue between all groups of Jewish leaders; and to locate and develop techniques which will help us heal the hemorrhaging which threatens our community.

Dialogue is not negotiation. It is not compromise nor is it the give-and-take one expects from labor arbitration. No one advocating dialogue can demand swapping patrilineal descent for accepting Reform conversions, or women rabbis for a community Beit Din, rabbinical court. That does not mean that such goals are impossible, only that dialogue need not lead to any particular solution.

Today, although many claim that they are pluralists, there are few movement advocates focused on dialogue. Patrilineal descent, conversion without circumcision and ritual immersion, forbidding observant Jews to enter a Reform or Conservative synagogue, public attacks by leaders of one of the movements against leaders of another movement, are reflective of our contemporary reality. In fact, much more money is spent on Christian-Jewish dialogue, in which conversion is certainly no one's goal, than on Jewish inter-denominational dialogue.

That, more than any other piece of evidence, gives us a sense of the place of Clal Yisrael on our collective list of priorities. Our goal here is to move pluralism and polarization away from benefiting any one movement so that Clal Yisrael can benefit.

We have heard the words and the visions of leaders of the four denominations. We have shared the messages of President Herzog, Prime Minister Peres, and Elie Wiesel.

Your participation is the logical next step and an opportunity for you to share your own thoughts, concerns, and love of Clal Yisrael, and be enriched by those of your colleagues. Now, it is your turn.

1. The "era of gratuitous hatred" among Judaism's denominations is caused by the:

- ☐ A. Reform
- ☐ B. Conservative
- ☐ C. Orthodox
- ☒ D. All of the above

*Jewish leaders hold a
and offer specific
bridging the*

*summit meeting
suggestions for
widening gulf. (Page 6)*

Reform, Conservative and Orthodox: Are They One?

More than 250 of North American Jewry's most prominent lay, rabbinic and professional leaders met in Princeton, N. J., recently to iron out the problems among Jews of different denominations. The unusual meeting and frank pronouncements that follow represent an effort to develop practical solutions to narrow the widening gulf among Jews. Elie Wiesel delivered the keynote address at the two-day conference, which was sponsored by CLAL (The National Center for Learning and Leadership), and said that the Jewish people were "entering an era of gratuitous hatred." Wiesel made a plea for understanding and tolerance. The remarks of other important Jewish leaders follow.



Rabbi Norman Lamm

"If everything is kosher, then nothing is kosher."

Rabbi Norman Lamm

The President of Yeshiva University, who spoke from his Orthodox perspective, said, "We must try our best within the limits of our integrity to search for Jewish unity," he said. "No amount of goodwill posturing will resolve the problems facing Jews today. Although there can be more than one response within Jewish law, a pluralism which accepts everything as legitimate can lead to spiritual nihilism, said Lamm. If everything is kosher, then nothing is kosher."

"Orthodoxy," he continued, "is by its very nature tied to a transcendent view of a Being who is beyond us. That vision includes the revelation of Torah and halacha (Jewish law) as a way of life. It therefore obligates us, and we are not authorized to dispose of it according to personal taste or whim."

He called for a renewed spirit of tolerance among all denominations, saying that the issues of conversion and Jewish divorce, especially the latter, pose a grave threat to Jewish unity. "If Orthodox and Conservative Jews cannot recognize a non-halachic conversion by a Reform rabbi," he said, "at least the person involved can later undergo a conversion according to Orthodox Jewish law. But the lack of Jewish divorce (get) would label a subsequent Jewish remarriage adultery, and children of that union mamzerim (bastards) who are forbidden to marry other Jews for generations."

He called for reviving the National Bet Din (religious court) first discussed in the 1950s to deal with these issues of personal status. Judges would be elected only on the basis of scholarship and personal observance of Jewish law. Thus, at least a partial solution of the problem would be achieved.

Rabbi Alexander Schindler

The president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the synagogue organization of Reform Judaism, said, "our disagreements have not truly inflamed the passions of our people."

"The greatest danger arising from our wranglings," said Schindler, "is not that the Orthodox refuse to recognize Reform conversions, but rather that the great mass of unaffiliated Jews will be so put off by what they see that they will say 'a plague on all your houses.'"

He said that the issue of patrilineal descent (adopted by Reform groups) was not really a new concept, and that biblical lineage was male-oriented. "We have always invoked the 'God of our Fathers,' not of our mothers," said Schindler. Schindler stressed Reform's view that "All changes [in Jewish practice] must be born of necessity and conviction." The patrilineal decision was a principled assertion of the equality of men and women and a response to the anguish of the children who considered themselves Jewish but were pushed into a no-man's land between Jews and Christians.

Schindler issued a plea for mutual tolerance in recognition of the fact that many differences between Orthodox and liberal Jews are unlikely to be resolved. In what participants described as one of the most moving moments of the conference, Rabbi Schindler expressed his regret at some of the polemical language which he and others had used. But he communicated the pain of being the object of denial and the concern at delegitimation out of which Reform Jews spoke.

Rabbi Schindler called for concrete steps to improve relations between the groups, including exchange of ideas and pulpits, joint studies and a regular nonbinding religious forum where policies and possible mutual compromises could be explored. Schindler concluded with a reminder that "Words like Orthodox, Reform, secular...are adjectives...the noun is Jew." He reminded the audience that the Shoah constitutes "a lasting, impelling mandate for unity...Even as we were brothers and sisters in death, so must we ever remain brothers and sisters in life."



Rabbi Alexander Schindler

"The greatest danger arising from our wranglings... (is) that the great mass of unaffiliated Jews will be so put off by what they see that they will say 'a plague on all your houses'."

Rabbi Irving Greenberg

In summing up the two days of conference, speeches and workshops, Rabbi Irving (Yitz) Greenberg, president of CLAL, charged that the present state of intra-Jewish dialogue is less developed than the Jewish-Christian dialogue of 50 years ago. He noted that the Jewish community now spends \$10 million a year on Jewish-Christian dialogue, but not a significant fraction of that amount on dialogue among themselves. "This shows an unhealthy lack of self-respect for Jewish priorities," he said.

Greenberg urged that every Jew develop a "dual loyalty" — both to his or her own denomination and to the idea of clal Yisrael. "The dues we pay for such dual loyalty is a willingness to confront one's own group for the sake of the greater Jewish community, and to find unifying rather than separatist solutions."

"Each denomination can be strengthened by the other," Greenberg said. "The non-Orthodox can learn discipline and observance from the Orthodox, while the Orthodox can learn from the openness and commitment of the liberal groups, thus making each group more competent to deal with the vast majority of unaffiliated American Jews. By ignoring and sniping at each other, no group grows."

Greenberg called for major expansion of intra-Jewish dialogue at the advanced scholarly level, at the rabbinic and at the lay level. "Almost all of the outstanding divisive issues could be solved or at least reduced by policies and halachic approaches already in existence, he said. "But first the commitment to each other must be strengthened enough to carry the burden of such an effort to a successful conclusion."

Rabbi Gerson D. Cohen

The former chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and a leader of the Conservative movement, argued that the Jewish people has achieved unprecedented unity in this century. He said that the current crisis of family identity and Jewish status has come to a head now because of the growing power of the Orthodox in Israel and in the U.S. He faulted lay leaders who secretly feel that the Orthodox are "more authentic" and therefore lavish support on them. "The present alarm over personal status," he said, "is a byproduct of Reform assertiveness and the decision of the Orthodox to confront them."

Cohen called for collecting an extensive data base to establish the facts of the Jewish condition and on the true numbers of Jews of contested status. He suggested the creation of a joint commission made up of representatives of all branches of Judaism, including the secular, to explore the new facts of Jewish life and their implications for the tradition. "To insure Jewish survival beyond the year 2000," Dr. Cohen said, "there must be a renewal of commitment to Jewish values, not just to the Jewish people."



Rabbi Gerson D. Cohen

"To ensure Jewish survival beyond the year 2000, there must be a renewal of commitment to Jewish values, not just to the Jewish people."



Rabbi Yitz Greenberg

"By ignoring and sniping each other, no group grows."

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Calling For A Truce In The War Of Incivility

The leaders of the major denominations addressed a two-day conference on the growing schism within Judaism. And though they didn't engage in dialogue, it was a start.

STAFF REPORT
Special To The BALTIMORE JEWISH TIMES



RABBI YITZ GREENBERG: Called for a major expansion of intra-Jewish dialogue and more tolerance and respect.

IRA SILVERMAN: No one group has "a monopoly on truth."

RABBI ALEXANDER SCHINDLER: Defended patrilineal descent but apologized for the tone of some statements about the Orthodox.

DR. GERSON COHEN: Disagreed with the premise of the conference, asserting that "there has never been as much Jewish unity" as now.

RABBI NORMAN LAMM: Called for the creation of a National Bet Din.

Princeton, N.J. — They came together to speak, the leaders of the Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist movements and the president of Yeshiva University, and though it was less than a dialogue — they gave prepared talks and never appeared on the dais at the same time — it was still a major advancement in the cause of Jewish unity.

There were harsh words and there were words of conciliation and in the end, several proposals emerged that will now be studied carefully, ranging from an Orthodox leader's call for a national religious court to a Reform leader's suggestion that the rabbis of each branch exchange pulpits.

The occasion was the first annual critical issues conference sponsored by CLAL (the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership), an organization headed by Rabbi Yitz Greenberg and dedicated to Jewish unity and leadership education.

More than 250 of North American Jewry's most prominent lay, rabbinic and professional leaders were on hand for the two-day session in an effort to develop practical solutions to the widening gulf separating the different denominations within Judaism.

Participants were told at the outset that the goal was not to come up with a panacea but to "nurture passionate advocates for unity" and to take a stand against polarization.

Among the proposals was Rabbi Norman Lamm's call for the creation of a National Bet Din, comprised of three judges "chosen on the basis of scholarship and personal halachic observance, not institutional affiliation."

Dr. Lamm, an Orthodox leader and president of Yeshiva University, was aware of the implications of his proposal. "Many of my Orthodox colleagues will not go along because of the implied 'recognition' of non-

Orthodox rabbis," he said. "But they have to acknowledge the need to alleviate untold personal suffering by accepting purely halachic stands and not being distracted by organizational / denominational considerations."

In his presentation, Lamm sought to walk a delicate balance between the right wing Orthodox who would be critical of any conciliatory moves towards the other branches, and the left wing and centrist Orthodox who would favor dialogue with fellow Jews. Said Lamm: "We must try our best within the limits of our integrity to search for Jewish unity. No amount of good-will posturing will resolve the problems facing Jews today. Although there can be more than one response within Jewish law, a pluralism which accepts everything as legitimate can lead to spiritual nihilism. If everything is kosher, then nothing is kosher.

"Orthodoxy," he contin-

ued, "is by its very nature tied to a transcendent view of a Being who is beyond us. That vision includes the revelation of Torah and halacha as a way of life. It therefore obligates us, and we are not authorized to dispose of it according to personal taste or whim."

He called for a renewed spirit of tolerance among all denominations, saying that the issues of conversion and especially Jewish divorce pose a grave threat to Jewish unity. "If Orthodox and Conservative Jews cannot recognize a non-halachic conversion by a Reform rabbi," he said, "at least the person involved can later undergo a conversion according to Orthodox Jewish law. But the lack of a Jewish divorce (get) would label a subsequent Jewish remarriage adultery, and children of that union mamzerim (bastards) who are forbidden to marry other Jews for generations."

Lamm suggested reviving the concept of a National Bet

Din, first discussed in the 1950s to deal with these issues of personal status.

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, the outspoken president of the Reform movement, apologized for the tone of some of his harsh statements in the past about Orthodoxy while maintaining the positions he advocated. "I have in the heat of response to what I saw as an attack more than once indulged in the anger of the outcast, using words and invoking images and bitter analogies, which I now regret. I have responded in kind to the zeal of Orthodoxy's most extreme spokespersons, using their scorn as an excuse for not truly striving to lessen the pain of others."

According to Schindler, the greatest danger arising from "our wranglings" is not that "the Orthodox refuse to recognize Reform conversions, but rather that the great mass of unaffiliated Jews will be so put off by what they see that they will say 'a plague on all your houses.'"

He defended his movement's recognition of patrilineal descent (adopted by Reform groups), noting that it was not really a new concept, and that biblical lineage was male-oriented. "We have always invoked the 'God our Fathers,' not of our mothers," said Schindler, who stressed Reform's view that "all changes (in Jewish practice) must be born of necessity and conviction." He said the patrilineal decision was a principled assertion of the equality of men and women, and a response to the anguish of the children who considered themselves Jewish but were pushed into a no-man's land between Jews and Christians.

Schindler issued a plea for mutual tolerance and called for concrete steps to improve relations between the groups, including exchange of ideas and pulpits, joint studies, and a regular nonbinding religious forum where policies and possible mutual compromises could be explored. He concluded with a reminder that "words like Orthodox, Reform, secular ... are adjectives ... the noun is Jew."

Ira Silverman, the president of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, criticized Rabbi Lamm for not appearing on the same platform with him. "I am troubled that we have to speak in a series, never appearing together," he said. "Am I not Jewish? Am I *traife*? That's the way it feels."

Asserting that no one group has a "monopoly on the truth," he called for continuing pluralism in bridging the gap between tradition and modernity. For the sake of community, he said that he and other Reconstructionists are prepared to make compromises to enable traditionalists to live with the situation, but said that such compromises must be a two-way street.

He said that Reconstructionism's fundamental devotion to equality requires a commitment to patrilineal descent and he called upon the Orthodox and Conservative movements to consider change. Criticizing the inequality of traditional Jewish divorce, he said that efforts must be made "to make Jewish divorce a more attractive and meaningful option."

Silverman said that "Jews today should not adhere to the rulings of a rabbinical elite, but should judge themselves and reconstruct their Judaism for themselves."

Dr. Gerson Cohen, who will retire this summer as chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Conservative institution, took exception with the underlying premise of the conference that Jews today were increasingly divided. He said that "there has never been as much unity in Jewish history" as now, primarily because of the state of Israel which "has done more to unify Jews than any single phenomenon."

"The present alarm," according to Cohen, "grows out of the increasing assertiveness of Reform Judaism and the decision of Orthodoxy to confront them head on." He said that the current crisis of family identity and Jewish status has come to a head now because of the growing power of the Orthodox in Israel and the U.S. He faulted lay leaders who secretly feel that the Orthodox are "more authentic" and therefore lavish support on them.

Cohen called for collecting an extensive data base to establish the facts of the Jewish condition and on the true numbers of Jews of contested status. He suggested the creation of a joint commission made up of representatives of all branches of

Judaism, including the secular, to explore the new facts of Jewish life and their implications for the tradition. "To insure Jewish survival beyond the year 2000," he said, "there must be a renewal of commitment to Jewish values, not just to the Jewish people."

Elie Wiesel, the noted author and Holocaust historian, made his keynote address a plea for understanding and tolerance, urging each movement to be critical of itself and compassionate toward the others. He voiced his concern for growing religious divisiveness and fanaticism, and expressed his fear that the Jewish people were "entering an era of gratuitous hatred."

Through joint scholarship and learning, he said, "all branches can come together and discuss the urgent issues of our times."

The last word in the two-day conference went to Rabbi Yitz Greenberg, who organized it and whose articles and speeches on the current schism were the motivating force behind it. Greenberg went beyond the denominational leaders, calling on the Orthodox to be open to religious pluralism and accepting of the legitimacy of the other branches. He charged that the present state of intra-Jewish dialogue is less developed than the Jewish-Christian dialogue of 50 years ago, noting that the Jewish community now spends \$10 million a year on Jewish-Christian dialogue, but precious little on dialogue between Jews. "This shows an unhealthy lack of self-respect for Jewish priorities," he said in calling for major expansion of intra-Jewish dialogue at the scholarly, rabbinic and lay levels.

Greenberg called on all Jews to develop a "dual loyalty" — both to his or her own denomination and to the idea of Clal Yisrael, the Jewish People. "Each denomination can be strengthened by the other," he said. "The non-Orthodox can learn discipline

and observance from the Orthodox, while the Orthodox can learn from the openness and commitment of the liberal groups, thus making each group more competent to deal with the vast majority of unaffiliated American Jews. By ignoring and sniping at each other, no group grows."

Rabbi Joel Zaiman of Chizuk Amuno Congregation was the only Baltimore rabbi at the conference and told the BALTIMORE JEW TIMES that he found it an important attempt to deal with a very serious problem. But in noting that the vast majority of the participants were communal rather than religious leaders, he said that "we're dealing with two different groups here — the rabbis and religious leaders, and the leaders of the American Jewish community whose power base is UJA and Federation and who are not known for their involvement with theological issues. And I don't know how one group can have an effect on the other."

There were others, too, who were skeptical about the practical results of such a major undertaking, but Yitz Greenberg says he was pleased with the results to date. He said that some of the key suggestions and proposals will be studied closely, including the concept of a National Bet Din and the call for informal forums among leaders of the different denominations. He believes that the modern or centrist Orthodox movement is a key bridge in this effort and he feels there have been "significant reverberations" within that community of a positive nature.

Greenberg said that his organization is committed to continuing its efforts to achieve unity within Jewish life, but he would welcome the involvement of other Jewish organizations as well in the dialogue.

Dialogue, he noted, is not negotiation. It is not seeking to swap patrilineal descent for accepting Reform conversions, or women rabbis for a community Bet Din. It is rather, the concept of Jews of different beliefs listening to one another and developing techniques to help heal the sickness that is threatening the Jewish community.

Baltimore

JEWISH TIMES

Candle Lighting. April 18. 6:29 p.m.



EDITORIAL

Daring To Talk

One of the more important issues of the day in the American Jewish community is the widening schism among the various branches of Judaism. We have given the ongoing story a good bit of coverage, beginning last July with a cover story by Rabbi Yitz Greenberg on whether or not there will be one Jewish people in the year 2000.

This week we call our readers' attention to a story (see page 40) on a recent conference sponsored by CLAL (the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership), an organization headed by Rabbi Greenberg, which brought together some

of the key leaders of the Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist movements in this country in an effort to have them engage in dialogue and address thorny theological questions that, if left unanswered, could result in the irreparable split of the Jewish people.

The format of the conference had the leaders of each movement deliver a prepared speech, but they never appeared on the dais at the same time and there was no dialogue. Still, given the climate of alienation, it was an accomplishment just to have them present and offering their suggestions to promote a renewed sense of Jewish unity.

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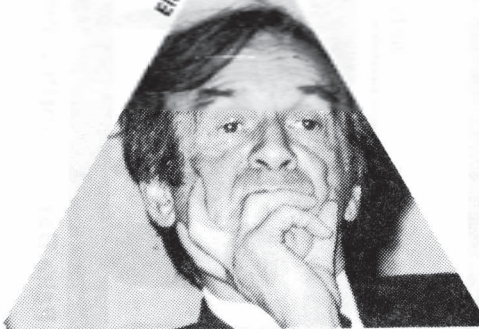
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Mar. 28-Apr. 3, 1986/17 Adar II 5746

FIFTY CENTS

Jewish religious leaders address threat of schism

Elie Wiesel



Alexander Schindler



Charles Silberman



Ira Silverman



Norman Lamm



Gerson Cohen



Will There Be One Jewish People By the Year 2000?

LEADERS PUT
FORTH BOLD
PROPOSALS FOR
JUDAISM'S FUTURE

BY MICHAEL BERENBAUM

PRINCETON, N.J.—In single order file, if not together in dialogue, leaders of American Judaism's four denominations gathered here March 16-17 to probe the question, "Will There Be One Jewish People by the Year 2000?"

Convened by Clal, the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership, the conference was the brainchild of center president Rabbi Irving Greenberg.

An Orthodox rabbi often critical of his movement, Greenberg first sounded the alarm of a potential schism in world Jewry in an influential and widely circulated paper. He has since pressed on, advocating the urgent need for intra-religious dialogue between Jewish denominations—a call that has historically met with little success, or even interest on the part of many.

The Princeton conference represented a small milestone in Greenberg's campaign. Assembled was a cross section of communal leadership from Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist and secular backgrounds. Among them were former United Jewish Appeal chairmen and Federation officers, rabbis, scholars, teachers, philanthropists, communal professionals and laypersons.

Leading Lights of Judaism

They came to hear some of the leading lights of American Judaism. Three were presidents of their movement's seminaries: Orthodox Rabbi Norman Lamm of Yeshiva University, Rabbi Gerson Cohen, retiring chancellor of the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary, and Ira Silverman, who is completing a five-year term as president of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. The fourth was Rabbi Alexander Schindler, the fiery leader of Reform Jewry's Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

They were joined by writer Elie Wiesel, who speaks in the name of an experience that made no distinctions among Jews, and Charles Silberman, whose widely acclaimed work, *A Certain People*, has established him as a distinguished interpreter of American Jewry.

But it was not a dialogue.

The speakers appeared sequentially, never to occupy the same platform or dais. Was it a concession to extremists or a measure designed to insure civility?

The event was closed to the press—at least until after the four institutional leaders—Lamm, Cohen, Schindler and Silverman—had finished speaking. But by noon Monday, March 17, when Silberman rose to comment on what had happened, the conference was opened—

and within minutes everything that had taken place behind close doors was revealed.

Divisive Issues Clear

The issues threatening Jewish unity were clear to all: There is a growing polarization within American Jewry between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews caused in part by significant demographic changes and bold initiatives by liberal Judaism.

Before long, many fear, committed Jews from different denominations will not be able to marry one another or even be recognized as Jews by many other Jews. Worse yet, there is a growing thunder of extremist rhetoric which makes dialogue—let alone compromise—difficult.

Three problems of personal status are central to the debate: divorce, conversion, and patrilineal descent.

Orthodox and Conservative Judaism require that a religious divorce document known as a *get* be issued along with a civil divorce before a party is free to remarry. The *get* may only be initiated by the husband. If a woman remarries after a civil divorce, but without a *get*, the children born of such a union are considered *mamzerim*—illegitimate. Under traditional Jewish law, or halacha, they may marry only other *mamzerim*, with the same applying to their descendants.

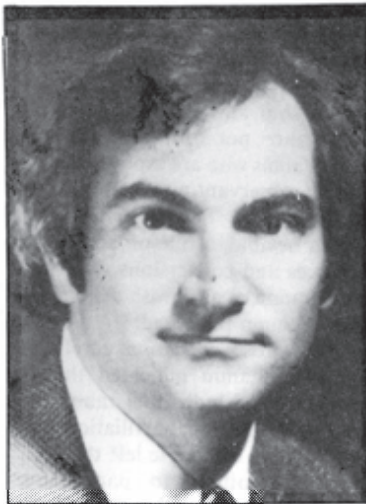
In contrast, Reform Judaism does not require a religious divorce and Reconstructionists do not follow the traditional formula for a *get*. Even some religious divorces written by Conservative rabbis are not recognized by segments of the Orthodox rabbinate.

Divorce rates are rising—and Jews have the highest rate of second marriage of any ethnic group—so the problem of *mamzerut* is growing geometrically as many non-traditional Jews produce children in their second marriages that traditionally observant Jews will not consider for marriage. Eventually, some fear, Orthodox Jews will consider all non-Orthodox Jews suspect as marriage partners, unless they can show a family history untinged by *mamzerut*.

Conversion Dispute

Disputes surrounding conversion are equally divisive. Orthodox rabbis in the United States and the state-sponsored rabbinate in Israel do not recognize non-Orthodox conversion, even where the halachic requirements of circumcision and *mikvah*, or ritual bath, have been followed. Even some Conservative rabbis do not accept the validity of those Reform conversions that do not follow traditional practice.

Compounding this problem, in 1983 the Reform movement voted to



Rabbi Ira Silverman, president of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, criticized Orthodox Rabbi Norman Lamm for not appearing with him on the same platform: "Am I not Jewish? Am I *traife*? That's the way it feels."

accept as Jews children of marriages in which the father alone is Jewish, if the child is brought up as a Jew and identifies with the community in concrete ways, such as becoming bar mitzvah. This stand, known as patrilineal descent, is an anathema to Conservative and Orthodox Judaism, which hew to the traditional criterion conferring Jewishness only upon those born of a Jewish mother. Others must convert, according to traditional practice. These more traditional denominations reject the Jewishness of a whole new class of people being welcomed as Jews by the Reform.

The rate of conversions and mixed marriages is skyrocketing. Cautious estimates indicate that more than 10,000 people a year become Jews by choice—mostly in Conservative and Reform ceremonies unrecognized by Orthodox—and the intermarriage rate is at least one in three. With Jewish men intermarrying twice as often as Jewish women, the problem will only intensify.

There was a feeling of discomfort among the four denominational presidents. Until the last moment, the attendance of these four at one conference on Jewish unity was uncertain. Lamm arrived late and was not present for Schindler's speech. He apologized, saying he had gotten lost. Others regarded his absence as "diplomatic."

Although each represented a movement and often spoke as though in the name of the denomination they represented, each leader was careful to indicate that he spoke for himself alone.

The statements they made were not without risk.

There were harsh words. Silver-



Schism? What schism? asked Conservative Rabbi Gerson Cohen, chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary: "There has never been as much unity in Jewish history...It is centered around the fact of the State of Israel."

man criticized Lamm for not appearing on the same platform. "I am troubled that we have to speak in a series, never appearing together. Am I not Jewish?" Silverman asked. "Am I *traife*? That's the way it feels."

He was adamant in his critique of Orthodoxy's sexism. "Reconstructionism comes to positions not because of salability but on principle. Our fundamental devotion to equality requires a commitment to patrilineal descent." Silverman called upon Orthodox and Conservative Judaism to consider change.

Schindler Apologizes

Words of consolation and the hand of friendship were extended from the extremes. Schindler was self-critical. "In my volleys with Orthodoxy," he said, "I have, in the heat of response to what I saw as an attack, more than once indulged in the anger of the outcast, using words and invoking images and bitter analogies which I now regret."

Some months ago, Schindler accused Orthodox leaders of practicing "*selectzia*," the word used by the Nazis for the selection process of who was to live and who was to die at the concentration camps. But unlike the Orthodox, Schindler said, the Nazis never distinguished Jew from Jew.

Without retreating from the positions he advocated, Schindler apologized for the tone of some of his statements. "I have responded in kind to the zeal of Orthodoxy's most extreme spokespersons, using their scorn as an excuse for not truly striving to lessen the pain of others," he said.

Lamm was equally candid and critical of his movement. "Orthodox Jews have not always been as forth-

coming as one might have hoped," he said. "We have not always been models of pluralism and tolerance. Orthodox Jews will have to learn to be more civil in their rhetoric, more respectful in their approach, more conscious of their responsibility to 'love thy neighbor as thyself.'"

But beyond the extended hands of friendship and the dramatic shift in tone, Schindler and Lamm came to identical conclusions:

The problems that American Jewry faces are serious but not unprecedented, they both said. Differences in religious understanding cannot be bridged, so Jews will have to learn to live together despite their differences, they agreed. Both urged an end to rhetorical harshness and an effort to solve those problems which could be resolved. Each was unusual forthcoming.

Lamm walked an ideological tightrope with remarkable grace. He is subject to attack from his own right wing for being too conciliatory toward movements it regards as heretical. On the left, he is expected to reach out and embrace his fellow Jews. Lamm's problem is both theological and pragmatic. Pragmatically, he knows that he must work with non-Orthodox Jews and their rabbis. Yet theologically, how does one work with these Jews without abandoning the tenets of Orthodoxy that deny the validity of deviant forms of Judaism?

It is an egregious error, Lamm argued, to deny the functional validity of Reform, Reconstructionist and Conservative Judaism. "Facts cannot be wished away...and the facts are that the Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist communities are not only more numerous...but they are vital, powerful, and dynamic; they are committed to Jewish survival," Lamm said. Furthermore, "from a functional point of view, non-Orthodox rabbis are valid leaders of Jewish religious communities."

If non-Orthodox Jews "are sincere, if they believe in God, if they endeavor to carry out the consequences of their faith in a consistent manner—then they are religious people," said Lamm.

Such leaders have spiritual dignity, he acknowledged, but he would not concede their legitimacy. "The criteria of such legitimacy is the halachah, the fundamental acceptance of the Torah's divine origin," Lamm said.

Had his speech ended there, one Conservative rabbi said, "it would have been a letdown. He went as far as he could to reach out to other Jews—yet it was not far enough."

Bold Proposal

But Lamm introduced a bold pro-

posal for a national *beth din*, or religious court, comprised of three judges "chosen on the basis of scholarship and personal halachic observance, not institutional affiliation. Rabbis who are expert and personally observant may be authorized to serve." This rabbinic body would be able to rule on all Jewish divorces and conversions, with the cooperation of all Jewish denominations, Lamm proposed.

The words were chosen carefully.

Twice, Lamm indicated that it would be the individual rabbi and not the institutional affiliation that would be at stake. He left the door open for others to participate, specifically recalling that the authority of the late Rabbi Boaz Cohen of the Jewish Theological Seminary was recognized. His *gittin* were accepted by the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America and its leader, Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik.

Lamm clearly understood the implications of his proposal. "Many of my Orthodox colleagues will not go along because of the implied 'recognition' of non-Orthodox rabbis," he said. "But they have to acknowledge the need to alleviate untold personal suffering by accepting purely halachic stands and not being distracted by organizational/denominational considerations."

The response to Lamm's proposal was positive. "It's a good start, and I hope he doesn't back away from it when he faces the *Roshei Yeshiva*," said one Orthodox participant, referring to the often right-wing yeshiva heads.

Proposal on Divorce

Somewhat elliptically, Lamm also proposed a halachic solution to the problem of *mamzerut*. Deliberately omitting Conservative rabbis, he asked Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis to "explain explicitly to the people they are marrying that they do so according to their understanding of marriage law...and not in accordance with Orthodox law." He also pleaded that these liberal rabbis insist on a *get* before officiating at the remarriage of someone first married in an Orthodox ceremony.

He thus alluded to the view put forth by Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, the revered Orthodox halachic authority who died the same week, that Reform marriages are not marriages by Orthodox standards; thus even without a religious divorce after the breakup of a first marriage, there need be no fear of *mamzerut* from a second marriage since no first marriage, as understood by the Orthodox, took place to begin with.

In a sense, each participant played the role assigned to him. Elie Wiesel was poetic and pleading. He reviewed the tradition of *clal Yisrael*,



Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Reform movement's Union of American Hebrew Congregations: "I have more than once indulged in the anger of the outcast, using words and invoking images and bitter analogies which I now regret."

the unity of the people of Israel, and *ahavat Yisrael*, the love for fellow Jews each Jew is commanded to nurture.

"The enemy always knew who was a Jew," he said. "Our generation is privileged to define for itself what we are." Wiesel urged each movement to be critical of itself and compassionate toward the others. And he recounted his experiences of Jewish unity, in "the kingdom of night," where all Jews were one as concentration camp inmates, in Moscow where Jews reached out for each other and for the past of Israel, and in liberated Jerusalem, where generals and rabbis celebrated the reunification of an ancient people with the eternal city.

Speaking as a Reconstructionist, author Silberman reviewed what was right and wrong with each of the movements. He suggested that Orthodox triumphalism was premature. Orthodoxy is now holding its own, Silberman said. "But it is too early to tell if it can expand its base. And American Orthodoxy cannot remain unchanged. It is impossible to predict what impact the women's movement will have," he said with a smile. American hedonism and emphasis on self-fulfillment will also have its impact, he warned.

Cohen dissented from the working hypothesis of the conference that Jews were divided. "There has never been as much unity in Jewish history. We have never been a unified people," Cohen told his audience. "We have achieved a unity which is unprecedented. It is centered around the fact of the State of Israel, which has done more to unify Jews than any single phenomenon."

Why then the fear of disunity? Cohen asked. "The Orthodox are raising the issue because of their increased power in the State of Israel...and because American Jewish laity have accorded them



Orthodox Rabbi Norman Lamm, president of Yeshiva University: "Orthodox Jews have not always been as forthcoming as one might have hoped. We have not always been models of pluralism and tolerance."

power in the community, by regarding them as the 'authentic Jews,'" Cohen said. "The present alarm grows out of the increasing assertiveness of Reform Judaism and the decision of Orthodoxy to confront them head on."

One rabbi, alarmed at the growing signs of polarization and disunity, said: "It's ironic that the one thing each of the denominational leaders could agree upon was that the threat of disunity was not as bad as we thought. Are they trying to shirk responsibility for a situation they helped create?" he asked.

The final word went to the man who initiated the conference and who first rang the alarm of a schism. Yitz Greenberg demonstrated that his thinking had moved far beyond the denominational leaders. Like Norman Lamm, Greenberg was both theological and pragmatic. He suggested nothing less than an Orthodox theology that is open to religious pluralism, that accepts the legitimacy of the other denominations with love and respect and takes seriously the issues of modernity, authority, autonomy, personal integrity and equality that non-Orthodox Jews raise.

Greenberg proposed a practical program of intra-religious dialogue. "The American Jewish community spends more than \$10 million a year on inter-religious dialogue and less than 1 percent of that sum on intra-religious dialogue," he exclaimed.

A communal professional at the conference, who attends Jewish meetings regularly, summed up the conference best. "All the tough issues were aired, but we knew what they were. The fact that the four talked to each other is a hopeful sign. Calling a truce in the war of incivility and introducing a tone of respect is a true measure of progress."