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Editors Note: *Because of limited space, only photographs of officers and past presidents are presented. We are sorry that not all of the Trustees could be present for the group photograph.*

Retiring President's Message

Jacob Levin

The situation prevailing in the Agudath B'nai Israel Congregation in Lorain in 1952 was not different from that which has existed generally throughout the country in the past 14 years. The interest and efforts of the Jewish people has been largely concentrated upon meeting the conditions created by the advent of Hitler; our efforts and our money have been diverted toward alleviating the condition of the survivors of that holocaust.

So that it was not at all strange that in 1952 our Congregation was at a low ebb; our meetings were being poorly attended; our activities were largely limited to the important religious holidays; our treasury was being steadily depleted.

It was, therefore, felt that a program was required to remedy these conditions. It was determined that first it was necessary to get greater membership interest. Therefore, in the setting up of committees an attempt was made to include as many members as possible so as to arouse interest in Temple work. An Activities Committee was established of which Dr. Sol Alpern is chairman and the banquet, which this booklet commemorates, is the result of that effort.

To stop the drain upon our treasury, there were two logical solutions; (1) Increase dues; (2) Increase membership. We can report that at the close of our two-year stewardship both have been accomplished. Our minimum dues have been raised from \$5 to \$6 with many members voluntarily paying more than the minimum dues; our membership has been increased some 20 per cent. The membership drive has been aggressively headed by Ben Margolis and Isadore Sepsewol; a recent Sunday morning breakfast of the membership committee was attended by 26 persons and resulted in 25 new members.

In the past two years, there has been some change in our ritual. We have introduced at the Reformed Services, which are held in the gymnasium, the Revised Edition of the Union Prayer Book. The Silverman Prayer Book for High Holidays was established as the official prayer book in the Temple Proper and thus for the first time, we used a recognized Conservative prayer book in our High Holiday services. Both received general approbation from the Congregation. We also in the past two years have changed the Friday night prayer book and have engaged a paid choir leader to head the choir.

Also the past two years have witnessed the publication of the first issues of the Lorain Community News, sponsored by the Congregation and edited by Phillip Kaplansky. The Community News has filled a long-felt want and has been favorably received. Its staff deserve an accolade.

In the past several years, there has been a considerable increase in the Jewish population of this community with the resultant increase in the attendance at the Hebrew and Sunday schools. This has presented the major problem with which we have been confronted with in the past two years. A Temple Expansion Committee, headed by Harvey Karas, was appointed to survey the field and make recommendations. After thorough study, a very complete report was filed by that committee wherein it recommended that we accept the very generous offer of the Gary brothers, David, Simon and Frank, to donate to the Congregation of a five acre site on the East Side. A number of open meetings were held, to which the members, their wives and members of the PTO were invited. These meetings were well attended and very lively discussions resulted.

The matter culminated in a general meeting of the Congregation at which 92 members were present, which was the largest number ever to attend an official Congregation meeting; At this meeting, it was voted to accept the Gary brothers' offer. Thereafter, a petition was signed by certain members who were dissatisfied with the result. At the request of the Gary brothers, the matter was reopened. A mail poll was held, which indicated that a majority of the members preferred that we acquire the lot adjacent to the present Temple site. No further official, action was taken with regard to the Gary brothers' offer and no official action was taken with reference to the acquisition of the Reid Avenue site; so that the matter remains unresolved.

The solution to the problem is not an easy one. Whatever solution is offered has its handicaps. The acquisition of the adjacent site will temporarily solve the problem as to classrooms. It cannot solve the problem as to our needs for a larger Temple auditorium. It cannot solve our needs for a Community Center nor the needs of the various other Jewish activities. It cannot solve the parking problem.

The most feasible solution would be the acquisition of a plot of land of sufficient size to take care of our present

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Rabbi's Message



Rabbi
Samuel Meyers

Our sages were wont to speak of two Angels accompanying man on life's journey. The Angel of Memory and the Angel of Hope. Tonight, we indeed feel the presence of these celestial beings. There are the pleasant memories of the past and the beautiful hopes for the future. They tie us to the past and forge the links for the future. They tell us of the problem that faces Israel in every generation—the preservation of our heritage. Judaism is always in danger. Being an Ideal, it must always live precariously. It is tried and tested anew in every generation. It goes on trial with every child that is born. This was true in the days of the Prophets, in the ages of Philo, Maimonides and Mendelssohn. But especially is this true of Judaism in the modern world, when, on the battlefield of ideas, there is a mighty combat; when all manner of spiritual values rival each other for the attention of the mind of modern man.

From the world's battlefields of ideas, Judaism, up to yesterday, emerged the victor. It defeated many cults, philosophies, and fads. In truth, many of these paid it the supreme compliment of imitation.

How was this victory made possible? What kept the torch of Judaism from becoming extinguished?

I venture to say that the greatest institution which made for the deathlessness of Israel's heritage, has been the Synagogue. When our people left Palestine and were scattered to the corners of the world, it was the synagogue that marched with our people through the long, dark centuries of persecution. It witnessed Israel's joys and sorrows. Within its walls the haunted soul of our people found refuge.

"You wish to know," cries the poet Bialik, "you wish to know whence your brothers drew that strength to combat the armed phalanxes of their enemies? You wish to know whence they drew that courage? 'El Beth Hamidrash Sur.' go to a little synagogue in some forsaken village and there at dawn or in the twilight of the vanishing day you will find men chanting over an ancient tome, chanting their old, old talmudic chant from the sacred law. There you will stand before the miracle of my people's eternal life, and you will see the glory of an undying race!"

Today, no less than yesterday, the conscious and thinking Jew loves his synagogue. Today he is even more convinced that nothing can take the place of G-d's house in man's pilgrimage upon earth. For, despite all the material progress of the last decade, despite the stupendous and remarkable achievements of science, the inner life of man is mute. Civilization has not risen to higher moral levels. Man has not found peace and contentment. Man is disturbed, restless and distressed. He is lonely. His soul is hungry, empty and vacuous. The achievements of the brain do not satisfy its quest. This is the very reason why men and women are seeking today, as they never have before, the solution to the mystery of life. Deceived and disappointed by the vague promises of science, men are turning with pathetic longing to the source from which all life flows--G-d--the spiritual values of life, Israel's heritage. Man is discovering at last that religion alone can give him an at-homeness in this vast struggling striving universe. Upon this ideal which we teach, hinges the salvation of humanity. It is an ideal which teaches "Bonim Atem Li" children are

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Past Presidents Message Continued

and future needs. To build merely for the present would be shortsighted. We must build not merely for the present but for the future also. We ought to acquire a plot of land of at least five to ten acres located within the city limits, if possible. We should employ an architect to lay out a plant to be built in stages. We should plan as the first unit a school building to cost not more than \$100,000. This building should be so built that it could be expanded in the future. It should be planned with the idea of it being a unit of a Jewish Community Center with additional buildings, such as an auditorium, a meeting hall, a recreational building and a new Temple; to be built unit by unit as our finances permit.

The present building ought not to be disposed of at this time and possibly never. Our present building should be maintained so long as there are members of the congregation whose needs it will fulfill. But the retention of the present building does not mean that we should not go forward with the acquisition of a site for future expansion, nor does it mean that we should not build the first unit of our new plant, a school building, and build it promptly.

Rabbi's Message Continued

ye, every man, regardless of race, creed, color and nation, children are ye, of the Lord your G-d. It is an ideal which demands, "Zedek Zedek, Tirdoff"-- The establishment of Justice and righteousness in this world. It is an ideal which speaks of peace and love, of faith and hope. It is an ideal which inspires man ever to labor for the blessed time when the "world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d"

This Temple's goal is nothing more than the traditional purpose of the Synagogue of old. Tephillah, Midrash, Knesseth (prayer, study, community meeting place.)

Prayer is fundamental to religion. It is as old as life itself. In this Temple, we must come to pray, and, through this communion with G-d, find a mood of uplift and inspiration for tomorrow. We cannot minimize ceremony and ritual; they are the garments with which the Jew clothed his Ideals, that he might bring them close to his heart.

This Temple must stimulate Jewish thought and learning. It must keep burning the lamps of Jewish knowledge; not only for our children, but for the adults as well. We must expand our physical facilities and our trained staff to accomplish this goal.

The solution suggested may not be the best solution but whatever the answer is, action should be taken promptly. The physical facilities which we now have do not meet requirements of our community. The classrooms are overcrowded; They are inadequate. We have a responsibility to the Jewish children of this community to provide them with adequate schoolrooms so that they may be properly educated. We have a duty to provide them with proper recreational facilities. We have a duty toward the younger members of our community, and also to the older, to provide an adequate community center, a place where we can get together and meet socially, as well as religiously. It is a problem, it is a difficult problem; but it is a problem which we can meet and it is a problem which the Jewish Community of Lorain will meet.

Twenty five years ago with a membership of some sixty persons we built this beautiful edifice. Today, with a membership of more than four times that number we can surely meet our present challenge.

We have gone far in the past twenty five years. May we progress even farther and better in the years ahead.

For, if Judaism is to remain a cultural force, we must have an educated laity.

Through our Temple we must preserve our unity, the solidarity of Israel. We may differ with our Brethren as to the interpretation of certain aspects of Jewish life, but the eternal varieties of Judaism, we all hold dear. We have always had parties in Israel. Our Beth Shammai and Beth Hillel; our Kabbalists and Rationalists; our Chassidim and Misnagdim; our Liberals and Conservatives. We have never had uniformity of thought. However, the guiding principle of our faith has been our unity of spirit. The Shma Yisroel, our common history and tradition, our sacred literature, our undying hopes for a better humanity, bind us all. Israel constitutes one brotherhood-symbolized by our Temple.

I can offer no new program for this Temple other than that we move forward-- in our tradition. The same tradition as the one that inspired the previous generations of Lorain Jews to build this Temple now outgrown physically. This is G-d's work. May His light shine upon us and guide us in our fellowship, that we may labor successfully in His service! Amen.