

# THE SYNAGOGUE IN GREATER PHILADELPHIA: RECENT PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

RABBI AARON LANDES

*Rabbi Emeritus, Beth Sholom Congregation, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania  
and Rear Admiral (Ret.), U.S. Navy*

*This article examines contemporary Jewish religious life and its future in the context of Greater Philadelphia's Jewry's long history. It concentrates on the last three decades and analyzes trends that may hint at the future. Distinguished rabbinic leaders from each of the four major movements describe, in historical order, their movements from within. My observations with regard to the recent past, the present, and the future of synagogue life in Greater Philadelphia follow their contributions.*



## ORTHODOX JEWISH PHILADELPHIA— AN OVERVIEW OF PAST AND PRESENT

RABBI DOV AARON BRISMAN

*Orthodox Beth Din of Philadelphia*

Although I do not specialize in historical evaluations, as an "insider" I hope to present an accurate perspective on the Orthodox Jewish community of Greater Philadelphia. Its development follows a general pattern that reflects almost all major American Jewish communities.

### CHIEF RABBINATE

Philadelphia's earliest congregations were of course Orthodox and during the mid-nineteenth century, Isaac Leeser led Mikveh Israel and staunchly defended traditional Judaism (Sussman, 1995). Nevertheless, the rise of a chief rabbinate in Philadelphia awaited the massive immigration of east European Jews to the United States after 1881. The first Chief Rabbi of Philadelphia was Rabbi Eliezer Kleinberg. Prior to his arrival in Philadelphia, Rabbi Kleinberg served as *dayan* (rabbinical adjudicator) in Wilnius (Vilna), Lithuania. He was appointed to the Philadelphia position shortly after his colleague, Rabbi Jacob Joseph (also a former *dayan* in Wilnius), had been appointed Chief Rabbi in New York. The duty of the Chief Rabbi in

both communities included presiding over kashrut, rabbinic litigation, marriage and divorce, and other halakhic matters. Initially this title only represented several out of many synagogues in both communities. Rabbi Kleinberg passed away in 1891.

Subsequent to Rabbi Kleinberg's passing, the four synagogues that he had served hired (and imported) his son-in-law, Rabbi Dov Aryeh (Benard Louis) Levinthal (1865–1952), as his successor (Temkin, 1998). Rabbi Levinthal served in this position for nearly sixty years until his passing. During his tenure as Chief Rabbi of Philadelphia, Rabbi Levinthal enjoyed an international reputation for his leadership. The role that he played in the promulgation of Orthodox Judaism both nationally and internationally is beyond the scope of this article. He also played a very significant role in the growth and development of the Philadelphia Jewish community.

Although Rabbi Levinthal was initially hired as Chief Rabbi by only four synagogues, he eventually united all of the Orthodox synagogues and their rabbis into one

unified council, the Vaad Hoeir. A united Kashrut Council (Vaad Hakashrut) was established, which supervised ritual slaughter (*shechita*) and kosher butchers. The Chief Rabbi also served as the head of a viable Beth Din.

The integrity of these organizations stemmed from the fact that they included all the Orthodox synagogues and their rabbis. It seems that Rabbi Levinthal learned from the fiasco of Rabbi Jacob Joseph's appointment as Chief Rabbi of New York that a title that does not represent the entire community is not effective (Karp, 1955). Although Rabbi Jacob Joseph was a foremost rabbinical authority, his appointment was endorsed only by some New York synagogues. Other prominent rabbis were also declared to be Chief Rabbis by their adherents. Although Rabbi Levinthal did not permit such history to repeat itself in his community, unfortunately, this arrangement did not continue beyond Rabbi Levinthal's career.

Another important aspect of Rabbi Levinthal's communal work was his willing participation in any Jewish organization, even those of an irreligious and secular nature. This commitment transcended the boundaries of the position of Chief Rabbi and clearly reflected his multifaceted personality.

Rabbi Ephraim E. Yolles (1897–1989) succeeded Rabbi Levinthal as Chief Rabbi of the Orthodox Rabbinate of Philadelphia; Rabbi Yolles was internationally renowned as a halakhic authority and was noted for his encyclopedic erudition. A small sampling of his halachic studies was published in a book (Yolles, 1982).

Rabbi Baruch Halevi Leizerowski (1910–2000) followed Rabbi Yolles. Rabbi Leizerowski, a Holocaust survivor, was installed as Chief Rabbi of Munich after World War II. A well-known orator, Rabbi Leizerowski was recognized for his great scholarship and wise counsel. A small sampling of his halachic work was published (Leizerowski, 1978).

## THE PHILADELPHIA BETH DIN (RABBINICAL COURT)

The primary function of the Beth Din of Greater Philadelphia, which was established in the late 1880s, is to arrange *gittin* (Jewish divorces) and *dinei Torah* (court actions to adjudicate monetary disputes). Its members are in constant contact with colleagues and counterparts throughout the world, maintaining ties with rabbinical courts in Israel, Europe, and the United States. Its procedures have been efficient and expedient.

A Beth Din comprises three rabbis who are also qualified rabbinic adjudicators (*dayyanim*). In order to be qualified to serve as a dayan on a Beth Din, a special rabbinic certification is required. Dayanut (judicial ruling) is a specialty, and not every rabbi is automatically qualified to serve as a dayan.

## KASHRUT

Kashrut is one major area vital to the existence of any Jewish community, but one that has undergone great changes. In the Philadelphia community until some twenty years ago, rabbinic supervision of kashrut was almost entirely restricted to ritual slaughtering (*shechitah*), local butchers, and meat purveyors (such as sausage manufacturing). Old age homes and caterers were also supervised.

About twenty years ago the last "shechita plant" closed its doors. Because there is no local ritual slaughter in Philadelphia, kosher and glatt kosher meats must be imported from central sources. As a result, only a few independent kosher butchers are still open in Greater Philadelphia, and they must compete with the supermarket, where many kosher items including meat and poultry have been available for many years. The future ramifications of this shift from small shops to supermarkets have yet to be evaluated.

The demands of supervising kashrut have greatly expanded over the past two decades. Supervising rabbis and agencies now certify bakeries, restaurants, pizza shops, and facto-

ries.<sup>1</sup> Supermarkets also vie for the business of the kosher consumer and have large Kosher sections. Several such markets have also developed special glatt kosher delis under accepted national rabbinic supervision.

### ORTHODOX JEWISH EDUCATION

Jewish education has changed drastically during the past two generations. Before that time, most Orthodox-affiliated Jewish youth attended public school, and during the afternoon attended classes in the synagogue (the "Talmud Torah") (King, Lakritz, Wachs, 1986). This system offered a very limited education and did not inspire continuity.

Gradually, Jewish day schools emerged. The Philadelphia area hosts five Orthodox day schools from pre-school through high school. Graduates of these institutions often continue their studies in yeshivot and seminaries, both in the United States as well as Israel. Secular education is also offered on a high level. Many graduates attend leading universities (in some cases in addition to the yeshiva studies). The Philadelphia Orthodox community's greatest source of pride has been the success of its educational system.

### ERUVIN

Another strong indication of the progressive growth of the Orthodox Jewish communities of Greater Philadelphia is that virtually every neighborhood with a significant Orthodox presence has a viable *eruv*. The Northeast, Overbrook, Bala Cynwyd, Cherry Hill, and Elkins Park all maintain *eruv*. There are currently efforts underway to construct

*eruv* in Center City and at the University of Pennsylvania campus.

It is forbidden for a Jew to carry in the public domain on Shabbat. An *eruv* is a way to construct "door-ways" or enclosures around a given area and render it a closed domain in which one is permitted to carry items on Shabbat.

Twenty-five years ago, there were very few *eruv*, and Orthodox Jews simply did not carry any items outside of their home or synagogue. Even the *talit* was brought to synagogue before Shabbat or worn to shul on Shabbat; it was never carried. Today's *eruv* allow families with young children to go out for strolls and visits with their infants and strollers. The *eruv* provides a more pleasurable Shabbat for its adherents and has been strongly encouraged where feasible.

### NEIGHBORHOODS

Orthodox Jews first settled in the Center City section of Philadelphia and moved over the past fifty years or so to Northeast Philadelphia and to the suburbs. Elkins Park and various enclaves in Bucks County have an emerging Orthodox presence. The excellent academic standards of University of Pennsylvania have attracted Orthodox students from all parts of the country, many of whom have yeshiva backgrounds. In addition to having their own minyan, this student community also offers many Torah study sessions on various levels.

A major factor in the recent renaissance of Orthodox Judaism is outreach. In addition to the Chabad Chassidim, who are pioneers in reaching out to Jews at all levels and introducing them to Orthodox Judaism, other successful outreach groups have emerged. Most notably the Etz Chaim Center and Aish Hatorah have made a profound impact on the Philadelphia Jewish community. They offer classes on various Torah topics.

In 2000, the Philadelphia community Kollel opened its doors in Bala Cynwyd, a nearby suburb. A Kollel is a group of married Talmudists who pursue their research and study with lay members of the commu-

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<sup>1</sup>In 2002, there were four Orthodox supervisory sources for kashrut in Philadelphia. No unified system of supervision with commonly accepted standards currently exists. In addition and perhaps because of this situation, as noted above, supermarkets have chosen national supervisory agencies to guarantee broad acceptance of their delicatessen products. Finally, Philadelphia is unique in the United States in that it is the only large city where the Conservative rabbinate through the regional branch of the Rabbinical Assembly has a long-established independent supervision of kashrut.

nity. The Kollel has been enthusiastically received by the Orthodox community and has already made significant inroads in outreach work.

Although the Orthodox community de-

clined rapidly throughout the first half of the century, quality Jewish education and outreach are reversing that trend. Hence, the Orthodox community is growing. Being an optimist, I believe that this community will thrive.



## REFORM JUDAISM: CHANGES AND GROWTH

RABBI BERNARD FRANK

*Rabbi Emeritus, Temple Beth Torah, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

Clearly, the Reform movement in America, which was founded in the nineteenth century and organized by Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise with the influence of such leaders as Rabbis David Einhorn and Max Lienthal, has undergone many changes (Meyer, 1995; Temkin, 1998). Three classic statements of principle are normally used to illustrate these changes: (1) the Pittsburgh Platform in 1885, which defined American Reform Judaism for the next fifty years; (2) the Columbus Platform of 1936, which revised the Platform of 1885; and (3) the Centenary Perspective in 1976, which was a new set of guidelines used to formulate the standards and goals of Reform Judaism during the modern religious period.

Just as Philadelphia played a dominant role in the emergence of traditional Judaism under Isaac Leeser, and in the establishment of Conservative Judaism, it also contributed significantly to the early furtherance of Reform Judaism. In 1869 with Rabbi Dr. Samuel Hirsch as host, thirteen rabbis with liberal leanings met in Philadelphia and conducted the first American Reform rabbinical conference in America. The venue was no accident.

Until the 1840s, Philadelphia had two Jewish congregations, the Spanish and Portuguese Mikveh Israel and the Ashkenazic Rodeph Shalom (Stern, 1983). In fact, Philadelphia is the only American community with two Jewish congregations founded in the eighteenth century. Mikveh Israel traced

its founding to the dedication of a Jewish communal cemetery in 1740 while Rodeph Shalom's roots began with a minyan in 1795. Through the middle of the nineteenth century, Rodeph Shalom was considered the immigrants' synagogue, a perception that was reinforced as many of its members affiliated with Mikveh Israel as they ascended the socioeconomic ladder.

Rodeph Shalom also spawned new congregations, beginning in 1840 with Beth Israel, a Polish congregation. In 1846, a group of Bavarian Jews broke away from Rodeph Shalom to form Kenesseth Israel (KI). All these synagogues were Orthodox, but the winds of Reform soon affected most of them. Knesseth Israel became "Reform Congregation Knesseth Israel" in 1851, and by 1861 had recruited Rabbi David Einhorn of Baltimore, the abolitionist and radical Reformer. In 1894, Einhorn's prayerbook, *Oloth Tamid*, was eventually adopted as the *Union Prayer Book*, the official prayer book of the American Reform movement, displacing Isaac Mayer Wise's own more traditional, *Minhag America*.

In response to KI's rabbinic coup, Rodeph Shalom secured the services of the learned Marcus Jastrow in 1866. Jastrow's 1903 compendium of Talmudic and Midrashic usage still remains a classic. KI answered with the hiring of Rabbi Samuel Hirsch in 1866 (after the departure of Rabbi Einhorn to New York), and in 1887, it secured the services of Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf, a graduate of the

first class of Hebrew Union College and vice president (at age 27) of the Reform rabbinic conference that issued the Pittsburgh Platform. These rabbis were national Reform figures who did much to define the Reform movement in America. They were followed in the twentieth century by such intellectual and ideological leaders as Rabbi David Wice of Rodeph Shalom and Rabbis Bertram Korn and Shimon Maslin of KI. These leaders took roles of national leadership and wrote works that were widely read within their movement. They have been succeeded by colleagues in other Philadelphia Reform congregations whose accomplishments follow their influential tradition.

As its name implies, Reform Judaism has always been in constant flux. The only *minhag* (ritual) has been the Reform prayer book. *The Union Prayer Book* remained the standard in the movement until the appearance of *Gates of Prayer* in 1972. Despite the stability of the prayer book, the differences between the two versions are quite dramatic; the ritualistic language of the Einhorn's *Union Prayer Book* has been replaced by the novel-like, gender-sensitive prose of *Gates of Prayer*.

I was born into Reform Judaism. My rabbinate has been shaped by the religious teachings I learned as a child, as well as those that were instilled during my rabbinical studies at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. My rabbinical training was far different from that of today. Since the 1970s, Reform rabbinical students have been required to spend the first year of their studies at the Jerusalem campus of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. This requirement illustrates how important the Land of Israel has become to Reform tradition and its teaching. There continues to be a strong presence of Reform Judaism throughout Israel as represented by an increasing number of Reform synagogues and *kibbutzim*.

During my rabbinate, Reform Jewish practices and rituals have become more traditional, especially during the last decades of

the twentieth century. The Classical Reform that characterized the larger Reform congregations has gradually been replaced by a more traditional, comprehensible service based on liberal Jewish presumptions. What was once a worship service conducted mostly in English has through the years added more and more Hebrew to the liturgy. The liturgical music of a four-part choir that once filled the sanctuary of Reform synagogues has now given way to the cantorial chant. Services and rituals that are conducted today in Reform synagogues were not part of the worship service even twenty-five years ago.

In Dresher, a suburb of Philadelphia, I conducted worship services without a *kip-pah*, wearing a robe and an *atarah*. Today, more and more Reform rabbis wear *kippot* and *taletim*, and many Reform congregations now provide *kippot* and *taletim* for their worshipers. Many now observe Havdalah to mark the end of Shabbat and the second day of Rosh Hashanah. Conversion now includes the mandatory requirement of ritual immersion in a *mikveh*. In fact, a *mikveh* has recently been constructed at Shir Ami, a Reform congregation in Bucks County.

Congregations and memberships have grown substantially as a result of the Reform movement's liberal approach to traditional Jewish practices. Twenty-five years ago, there were less than half of the twenty-one Reform synagogues that exist today in the Greater Philadelphia area. Those located in the neighboring suburbs have shown the most growth, a trend attributable in part to the Baby Boomers. Over the years, Reform Judaism has gradually been adopted by those who felt that the Judaism of their parents was too restrictive and too demanding. As the need for two family incomes increased, parents had less time to devote to their children's extracurricular activities, including their religious education. Therefore, the idea of sending their children to religious schools of Reform congregations that only met two days a week, rather than three days a week, became very attractive. Another explanation

for the growth was a strong desire by those who came from Conservative and Orthodox backgrounds to retain some traditions from their past. They wanted what liberal Judaism could give them while providing a traditional approach for themselves and their children.

Clearly the Reform Judaism of today is not the Reform Judaism of bygone generations. Who would have thought in the days of the great rabbis, such as Stephen S. Wise, Bertram Korn, and Abba Hillel Silver, that by the year 2002 there would be a gender-sensitive prayer book, patrilineal descent, same-sex marriage ceremony, and the ordination of women as rabbis and investiture as cantors? Within the Reform movement there are gay and lesbian congregations, and gay and lesbian rabbis are recognized and sanctioned by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

Not all congregations and certainly not all Reform rabbis agree with or follow all of these changes. There still remains a great

deal of diversity in practice and ritual. Then again, that is why it is called Reform Judaism. I choose to follow the Reform Judaism I love, taught, and have enjoyed throughout my life, albeit with the changes that recent years have brought.

Twenty-three years after the Centenary Perspective was promulgated, the Reform rabbinate adopted a fourth Statement of Principles in 1999. This document reaffirms that Reform Judaism "has remained firmly rooted in Jewish tradition, even as its adherents have learned much from our encounters with other cultures. The great contribution of Reform Judaism is that it has enabled the Jewish people to introduce innovation while preserving tradition, to embrace diversity while asserting commonality, to affirm beliefs without rejecting those who doubt, and to bring faith to sacred text without sacrificing critical scholarship," teaching the central tenets of Judaism, God, Torah, and Israel, even as it acknowledges the diversity of Reform Jewish beliefs and practices.



## THE STRONGHOLD OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

RABBI ROBERT LAYMAN

*Executive Director (Ret.), Mid-Atlantic Region, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism*

Conservative Judaism in North America can trace its roots to Philadelphia with the establishment of the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) of America in 1886. Although the Seminary has been located in New York City from the day of its founding, the impetus and inspiration for its creation originated with a Philadelphian, Sabato Morais, the *Hazzan* (cantor) of the historic Mikveh Israel Congregation from 1851 to 1898 and the successor to Isaac Leeser, the leader of traditional Judaism in America (Wertheimer, 1997).

In 1887 Morais was named the first president of JTS, but despite his devotion and that of other founding supporters, JTS fell on difficult times and was saved through the

largesse of Reform Jews like the financier Jacob Schiff. Solomon Schechter, who became president of the re-organized Seminary in 1902, is generally regarded as the founder of Conservative Judaism in North America. Among his many achievements, he is noted for organizing a group of twenty-two congregations into the United Synagogue of America in 1913, among them two Philadelphia congregations, Adath Jeshurun and Beth Israel. In 1991, this organization was renamed the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ).

Conservative Judaism is popularly perceived as the middle ground between the strict traditionalism of Orthodoxy and the liberalism of Reform. Indeed, its founders

established it in response to what they regarded as the extreme stance of Reform's reappraisal of much of traditional practice and belief. They held that it was both possible and desirable to create in the democratic climate of North America a Judaism that could preserve tradition while adjusting to the modernity of the new. The professional and lay leaders of the Conservative movement have maintained its founders' belief in the centrality of halakhah (Jewish law) in Jewish life.

One of the most significant developments in Conservative Judaism in the past three decades, exemplifying the adaptability of halakhah, has been the transformation in the role and status of women. With permission granted by the movement's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards in 1973 to include women in a minyan (quorum for congregational worship), the trend toward total egalitarianism grew very rapidly. A decade later, women were admitted to the Rabbinical School of JTS, and the first female rabbi was ordained in 1985. She was Amy Eilberg, a Philadelphian, who now lives in California.

Within a few years following this historic event, women were admitted to the Seminary's Cantors Institute (now the H.L. Miller Cantorial School) and to membership in the Conservative movement's Rabbinical Assembly and Cantors Assembly (see below). Currently, all USCJ-affiliated congregations, except one, in metropolitan Philadelphia are egalitarian. There are two Conservative women rabbis in the community.

The Conservative movement experienced phenomenal growth, particularly in the decades following World War II. Membership in United Synagogue increased from the handful in Solomon Schechter's day to a peak of about 800 synagogues in the United States and Canada by the 1980s. This growth was reflected in the Greater Philadelphia area. The large number of Conservative synagogues and the high percentage of Jews affiliated with them earned Philadelphia the unofficial title of "the Stronghold of Conservative Judaism."

Like other Jewish communities, Philadelphia has experienced significant demographic changes during the last three decades, which inevitably had an impact on the size and viability of Conservative congregations. In 1980, the Delaware Valley Region of United Synagogue (formed from a merger of the Southern New Jersey and Philadelphia Regions in 1976) boasted a total membership of 52 congregations on both sides of the Delaware River and in the State of Delaware. Of these, 35 were located in the Greater Philadelphia area. In 2001, the register of affiliated congregations listed a total of 36 congregations, of which 23 were on the Pennsylvania side of the river. It is interesting to note, also, that in 1980 there were 18 congregations within city limits. By 2002, there were only seven. A significant number of congregations followed their members out of the city and into the suburbs, in each case constructing impressive new buildings. A small enclave of senior citizens remains in South Philadelphia, the original area of Jewish settlement.

Early in 2002, negotiations were completed for the creation of the Mid-Atlantic Region of USCJ, consolidating the Delaware Valley and Eastern Pennsylvania Regions. The latter consisted of a total of twenty congregations in an area extending as far west as Altoona and as far north as Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. Of particular demographic relevance is the inclusion of four congregations in Chester County and two in northern Montgomery County, areas now considered part of metropolitan Philadelphia and experiencing considerable growth. The population survey conducted by the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia in 1997 spells out the significance of this demographic change. This phenomenon has been replicated in other parts of the country. USCJ has consequently experienced a net loss in affiliates, with the total standing at about 730 throughout North America.

In view of the substantial number of Conservative congregations in the Philadelphia area, it is important to take note of the role of

the Rabbinical Assembly, the international organization of Conservative rabbis that has approximately 1,600 members and was established in 1901. About 60 members live in the metropolitan Philadelphia area. The majority of these rabbis are graduates of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Like USCJ, the Rabbinical Assembly (RA) is divided into geographic regions. The RA of Greater Philadelphia (formerly Philadelphia Branch) has long performed a variety of crucial services for the local Conservative congregations and the larger Jewish community, as well as for its own members. Most noteworthy are the following:

- **Kashrut supervision:** Since the late 1950s, the local RA has been involved in certifying adherence to the Jewish dietary laws by catering firms, restaurants, bakeries, and various food manufacturers. While Kashrut supervision is not typically associated with the Conservative rabbinate, the standards of the RA are strict and therefore widely accepted in the community. A Kashrut Committee establishes policy, deals with problems, and appoints the *Rav ha-Makhshir* (certifying rabbi) who, in turn, appoints the *meshgihim*, the individuals who oversee the food purveyors on their premises. Philadelphia is the only RA region in North America involved in Kashrut supervision.
- **Giyyur:** In the 1960s, the late Rabbi Morris Goodblatt (Congregation Beth Am Israel, previously in Southwest Philadelphia, now in Penn Valley), was the administrator and teacher of a program of instruction for prospective converts to Judaism, now popularly referred to as "Jews by choice." Classes were offered in fall and spring semesters, and for many years, summer sessions were conducted. For many years, the average class size was 25 to 30, predominantly women. As alternatives to traditional conversion grew in recent years, class size has diminished to 12–15 and summer sessions were discontinued. Over the years, thousands of men and women of all ages have joined the

Community of Israel through the good offices of the local RA. The formal name of the program is the Rabbi Morris S. Goodblatt Academy of Jewish Studies, in memory of its founder.

- **Gittin:** As traditional Judaism expects Jews to be married *k'dat Moshe v'Yisrael*, "in accordance with the Law of Moses and Israel," so when a marriage is dissolved, the couple is expected to obtain a traditional Jewish divorce document known as a *get* (plural, *gittin*). The Rabbinical Assembly of Greater Philadelphia, for many decades, has provided a dignified procedure for this emotionally difficult occasion. A *Beth Din* (rabbinic court) meets regularly for this purpose. Thousands of *gittin* issued by the RA are on file in the local office of USCJ in Elkins Park.

Among the major activities of the local Conservative movement, its educational program has been in the forefront. For many decades, the Board of Jewish Education (BJE) operated as a semi-autonomous division of United Synagogue. It was founded in 1937, actually predating the establishment of a distinct region of United Synagogue, and functioned for about fifty years, serving schools in local Conservative congregations almost exclusively. This agency set minimum requirements for Bar/Bat Mitzvah; developed salary scales for teachers; published textbooks, teachers' manuals, and curricula; provided in-service programs for teachers and principals; and operated a network of regional Hebrew High Schools.

In 1988, the Jewish Federation created the Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education (ACAJE), the purpose of which was to function as a single service organization for all of the Jewish school systems in metropolitan Philadelphia. ACAJE assumed most of the functions performed by the BJE. In addition, the BJE's high-school system was amalgamated with Gratz College's high-school department to form the Jewish Community High School (JCHS). The Conservative movement is represented on the boards of both agencies. The main current activities



of the BJE, which now functions as an education commission, are consultative services to affiliated schools, the publication of an occasional newsletter, the presentation of the Dr. William Lakritz Award (named for a former director) to an outstanding teacher, and the annual *Zimriyah* (songfest), which brings together choral groups from schools throughout the Region.

Thus far, the focus has been on congregational schools, popularly called Hebrew schools in bygone years. The last quarter-century has witnessed a tremendous growth in the number of day schools and their enrollments at all levels. Once the almost exclusive domain of Orthodox Jewry, the movement has gained considerable momentum in Conservative Judaism, which operates the Solomon Schechter Day School network under the auspices of USCJ's Department of Education. Currently, there are more than 70 Schechter schools in North America, with one of the largest in metropolitan Philadelphia and boasting an enrollment of almost 700 students. Three branches operate on the elementary level. In September 2001 a middle school was opened in the Gratz College building on the Mandell Education Campus.

The impetus for the establishment of the Solomon Schechter schools in this area came from a small group of committed rabbis and lay leaders who recognized the need for a more intensive and comprehensive Jewish education than that provided by even the most successful congregational schools where classes, as a rule, met for only six hours per week. The first day school opened its doors in 1955. For many years, the branches were housed in temporary quarters in various locations within the city and in the western and northern suburbs, including two Reform temples. The current locations appear to be long-term.

Conservative Judaism has long been a strong advocate of informal education. The most successful ventures in this area are the Ramah Camps and the youth programs: Kadima, United Synagogue Youth (USY),

and KOACH, the college-level program of recent vintage. One of the earliest camps in the Ramah network was established with the aid of prominent Philadelphians in 1950 at a site in Lake Como, PA.

Known as Camp Ramah in the Poconos, it is operated by the Jewish Theological Seminary like its sister camps. Its governance is shared with a local Camp Ramah Commission. Camp Ramah offers an experience of intensive Jewish living for eight weeks in the summer for children in grades seven through eleven. In addition to the usual athletic and recreational activities offered by most summer camps, Ramah provides daily classes for the study of Jewish texts, a full schedule of religious services, and opportunities to perform a variety of ritual and ethical mitzvot. Particularly noteworthy is its Keshet program for hearing-impaired children. In recent years, Camp Ramah in the Poconos has been filled to capacity with about 400 campers. In 1996, the local Ramah Commission established a day camp at Tiferet Bet Israel, a Conservative synagogue in Blue Bell, PA. A permanent home is being sought for this camp, which attracts about 150 children every summer.

The youth programs provide educational, religious, and social activities for teens and pre-teens. Members consist mainly of children whose families are affiliated with Conservative congregations, but a substantial number do come from unaffiliated families. USY, founded in 1951, has maintained a total regional membership of approximately 1,000 in recent years. Kadima, the pre-USY organization is open to children aged 10 to 13. KOACH, an unofficial USY alumni association, was established in the early 1990s. There are KOACH chapters on local college campuses and throughout North America.

As a multifaceted organization, Conservative Judaism comprises several divisions or "arms" in addition to those previously described. Professional groups that have branches in the Philadelphia area and meet regularly are the Cantors Assembly and the Jewish Educators Assembly. Local members

of the North American Association of Synagogue Executives (NAASE), are affiliated with the Delaware Valley Association of Synagogue Administrators, a transdenominational group. Too, JTS has maintained a regional office in the Philadelphia area since the 1940s. Its main functions are fundraising and public relations, and its operations are guided by an executive director and a cabinet of lay leaders.

The lay organizations, aside from USCJ, that are active locally are the Women's League for Conservative Judaism, Philadelphia Branch and the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, Middle Atlantic Region. Both serve the main auxiliary groups that are found in most Conservative synagogues. Women's League was founded in 1918 by Mathilde Schechter, then the widow of Solomon Schechter. There are about 700 Sisterhoods affiliated with Women's League of which 23 are in the Philadelphia Branch. The Branch's main programs include weekly study sessions, an annual Founder's Day lecture and luncheon, and a Spring Conference.

The Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs was organized in 1924 in response to the creation of a parallel organization in the Reform movement in the preceding year. Starting with 50 clubs, it now numbers approximately 350 affiliates in North America. The Middle Atlantic Region has contributed an exceptionally large number of men to the post of International President over the

years. One of the Region's most noteworthy accomplishments during the past two decades has been its annual fundraising concert, which has realized hundreds of thousands of dollars for new buildings and renovations at Camp Ramah in the Poconos.

There are nine divisions or arms of the Conservative movement in metropolitan Philadelphia, each with disparate goals and missions and little opportunity to work in concert. In 1990, the need was recognized to create a unifying force that would strengthen Conservative Judaism, particularly in light of the increasing polarization of the Jewish community and the growing secularization of Jewish life. A Conservative Leadership Council was formed that year on the initiative of the professional and lay leadership of USCJ and the president of the local Rabbinical Assembly. A number of meetings were held at irregular intervals in the ensuing years for the purpose of defining the Council's goals and publicizing the message of Conservative Judaism more effectively. These objectives have yet to be realized, thus emphasizing that while it has been on the American scene for over one hundred years, while it can claim credit for many stellar accomplishments, and while it continues to operate according to its unofficial slogans of "Unity in Diversity" and "Tradition and Change," Conservative Judaism is still a work in progress.



## RECONSTRUCTIONISM: ROOTED IN PHILADELPHIA

RABBI RICHARD HIRSH

*Executive Director, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association and Editor, "The Reconstructionist"*

From 1934, when Mordecai Kaplan's published *Judaism as a Civilization* until the mid-1960s, whether Reconstructionism was a school of thought or a movement remained unclear. Kaplan leaned toward its remaining a school of thought that would influence the other movements, but advocated against adopt-

ing the organizational structure of a movement. With the founding of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC) in 1968, the debate was resolved, and Reconstructionism finally emerged unambiguously as the fourth movement in American Judaism.

Unlike the older and larger denominational

structures of the Reform, Orthodox, and Conservative movements, whose organizations were all based in New York, Reconstructionism chose to make its stand and its home in Philadelphia. Although the Reform and Conservative seminaries did have West Coast branches (and, in the case of HUC-JIR, the original Cincinnati center), New York was the epicenter of American Jewish life.

How did the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, and eventually the other arms of the Reconstructionist movement, come to be based in a city widely identified as a bastion of Conservative Judaism? The answer lies in the unique nature of the original academic program of the RRC and its original dual program of studies with a secular university.

The lead editorial of *The Reconstructionist* magazine of February 9, 1968 was entitled "Announcing A New Type of School for Rabbis." In that editorial was the following announcement:

The Board of Directors of the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation has announced plans for the establishment of a training school for rabbis. The proposal represents a radical departure from the established methods of preparing men (sic) for the ministry. Instead of creating a new seminary, the foundation will connect the rabbinical training course with a Doctor of Philosophy program at Temple University's Department of Religion...students will receive specialized courses in preparation for their rabbinical vocation.

Despite the wide-ranging influence of Mordecai Kaplan's ideas, in 1968 the Reconstructionist movement was quite small. The number of congregations that identified as Reconstructionist barely comprised a minyan. The number of laypeople to whom the movement could turn for financial support was minuscule. And many "Kaplanians" who supported Reconstructionism as a school of thought were unwilling to (re)align politically or professionally with a movement. How would a dedicated but underfunded group of leaders create a seminary out of such meager resources?

The vision of the RRC that Ira Eisenstein, the founding President, shaped was one based on a conflation of principle and pragmatism. In principle, Eisenstein argued, a new type of rabbinic training was necessary. Rabbis needed to be intellectually and academically equipped with graduate-level (Ph.D.) accomplishments in comparative religion, social science, and other related disciplines. Eisenstein firmly believed that a Reconstructionist rabbi needed not only to be conversant with the intellectual and textual traditions of Judaism but also with Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism, as well as with the psychology and sociology of religion; how else could a contemporary rabbi understand the place of religion in general and Judaism in particular in the modern world?

Thus, Eisenstein was determined to establish the RRC adjacent to a major university with a deep and broad department of religion. RRC students would simultaneously pursue a five-year course of Judaic/rabbinic studies at RRC and a Ph.D. in religion at the university. The founders of RRC also understood the pragmatic value of using a major university faculty to help educate rabbinic students. Nascent RRC students would take a significant part of their graduate courses in Jewish studies through the university.

With this design in hand, Eisenstein and Arthur Gilbert, who was then on the staff of the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, went in search of a university that might be receptive to this daring new design for rabbinic education. New York was ruled out in principle: the Jewish community was overwhelmingly large and the established institutions overpoweringly established. Staking out a spot there would be too difficult.

The initial approach was thus made at a spot further north: Brandeis University. Brandeis in some ways was a natural choice. In addition to it being "the Jewish university" it had a large and distinguished Jewish studies faculty and was situated near a major Jewish center that could provide practical opportunities for students to have internships

and employment. Despite Brandeis' initial interest in and receptivity to the idea of establishing a Reconstructionist seminary adjacent to the university, the price tag (reportedly one million dollars) placed on this proposed *shidduch* was beyond the reach of the Reconstructionist leaders.

It was Gilbert, a native of Philadelphia, who alerted Eisenstein to the possibility of approaching Temple University and its rapidly expanding Religion Department with the same proposal. Temple's Department of Religion had recently embarked on an aggressive program of bringing a wide variety of scholars from world religions to Philadelphia, and the department was quickly gaining a national reputation as a leader in inter-faith dialogue. In addition, the Religion Department in 1968 boasted such notable Jewish scholars as Robert Gordis (Bible), Maurice Friedman (Jewish Thought), and Jacob Agus (Jewish Philosophy). If RRC students could cover many of their core courses with such a faculty, the academic and financial demands on the new college could be managed more easily.

Fortunately, Temple's administration and the religion department in particular were enthusiastic and encouraging. The decision was made to open what was to become the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in October 1968 in a pair of converted brownstone homes three blocks above the Temple campus. From that time forward, the home of the Reconstructionist movement would be Philadelphia.

In 1982, with a rapidly expanding student body and faculty and with an ever-increasing course load of studies, the college relocated to suburban Wyncote. Shortly thereafter, the academic program of dual studies yielded to the concerns of workload and geography, it being no longer possible to walk between Temple and RRC to carry a dual course load. Academic options still exist, however, and RRC invests cantors prepared through a cooperative program through which they receive a rigorous Master of Arts in Jewish Music as matriculated students at Gratz College.

Although the congregational arm of the

movement (the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation) remained in New York for several more years, in 1987 it too relocated its operation to Philadelphia, first to RRC and then in 1998 to an expanded suite of offices in suburban Elkins Park. The now over 100 Reconstructionist congregations and *havurot* throughout North America are served from that office by a large staff of congregational, educational, and programmatic personnel. The first graduates of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College established the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association (RRA) in 1974, and the office, serving over 225 Reconstructionist rabbis, is now based at RRC.

In the over 30 years that the RRC, and later the JRF, and RRA, have been part of the Jewish community of Philadelphia, the impact of Reconstructionism on that community has been significant. As of 2001, the RRC had graduated 228 rabbis, each of whom spent an average of five years in Philadelphia. As students, they staffed area synagogue schools and campus Hillel; served as staff to the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia and its network of Jewish agencies; served as student rabbis to Reform, Conservative, and unaffiliated congregations; staffed JCCs; and became chaplains in hospitals, nursing homes, and prisons. Upon graduation, many Reconstructionist rabbis chose to make Philadelphia their home, contributing again to the strength and vitality of the Jewish community.

Relationships between the Reconstructionist movement organizations in general (the College in particular) and the organized Jewish community of Philadelphia have grown increasingly strong, particularly in the past decade under the leadership of David Teutsch as President of RRC. While the Philadelphia Jewish community has not been a primary source of financial support for the Reconstructionist movement, such support has grown over the years. Additionally, many key Jewish community lay and professional leaders have served on the College Board and have been members of area Reconstructionist congregations.

Curiously, despite the presence of RRC,

the growth of Reconstructionist congregations in the Philadelphia area was slow. For many years, a small congregation in suburban Media was the sole affiliate. Over the past two decades, more congregations have formed, with there now being a total of nine in the immediate Philadelphia area and nearby suburbs. Two congregations in Philadelphia in particular have been actively involved with the Reconstructionist movement, although they were not affiliated with the JRF. Society Hill Synagogue (SHS), an eclectic urban congregation in Center City, was reinvigorated and reconstituted in 1968, the same year that RRC opened. Rabbi Ivan Caine of SHS was also the first faculty member of RRC, where he directed the Biblical Civilization program until 1987.

During those twenty years, the educational program of Society Hill Synagogue was influenced heavily by RRC students, and the liturgical and governance format of the congregation under Caine's direction reflected the intellectual, participatory, and innovative style associated with Reconstructionism. While the congregation remained unaffiliated, during the two decades from 1968–1987 it was often assumed by many to be a Reconstructionist congregation. In 2001, on Caine's retirement, a graduate of RRC, Avi Winokur, became rabbi of SHS.

The second congregation that enjoyed an active interchange with and influence by Reconstructionism was the Germantown Jewish Centre in Northwest Mt. Airy. Especially in the years since RRC moved to Wyncote (about 10 minutes from Mt. Airy), the majority of students and many of the faculty and

staff have lived in that multicultural and integrated neighborhood. They have belonged to and been active in the Germantown Jewish Centre, playing roles in the educational, preschool, and davenning communities of the congregation. *Minyan Dorshei Derekh*, a Reconstructionist affiliate, is part of the Centre, which retains its Conservative affiliation.

In retrospect, the principled and pragmatic decision of 1968 to bring the new Reconstructionist Rabbinical College to Philadelphia proved to be almost (Kaplan would deny it) "providential." Philadelphia in general, and the Philadelphia Jewish community in particular, has a style and a rhythm that is well suited to the more informal and smaller scale of RRC. Applicants choosing today between RRC and HUC-JIR, or JTS are not only choosing an ideology and an approach; they are choosing a style, a setting, a pace of living. While access to the vibrant resources of New York Jewish life is less immediate for RRC students, being out of the orbit of New York has helped make Reconstructionism more visible.

With the national organizations of Reconstructionism and in particular the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College based in Philadelphia, the local Jewish community continues to be a beneficiary of the creative and committed Jews who make it their home for five (or more) years as they study at RRC. In return, the resources, congregations, agencies, and other Jewish institutions of Philadelphia help shape and serve those students as they move toward becoming rabbis. This mutually fruitful relationship continues to be a sustaining part of the legacy of Reconstructionism in this vibrant center of American Jewish life.



## CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

RABBI AARON LANDES

In many demographic studies, synagogue membership is considered a tangible measure of religious participation. In the mid-1980s synagogue affiliation in Washington,

DC, Philadelphia, New York City, Denver, and Boston was about 40 percent. Sixty percent were not affiliated with synagogues (Warner, 1994). In the 1997 Jewish popula-

tion study of Greater Philadelphia, the percentage of Jews affiliated with synagogues dropped to 37 percent. Over the past decade, the drop in synagogue affiliation indicates a further weakening of Jewish identity and the consequent diminishing participation of Jews in Jewish philanthropic and educational endeavors.

Sociologist Paul Ritterband (1989), in writing about the Jewish population of New York City, was really describing what is true for the entire American Jewish population:

The Orthodox report the most pro-Jewish behavior followed by the Conservative, followed by the Reform. The indicators include the proportion of friends who are Jews, intermarriage, conversion where there is intermarriage, living in a Jewish neighborhood, giving more to Jewish than to non-Jewish charities, and number of visits to Israel. Orthodox Jews expend more of their temporal and material resources in living their lives as Jews than do Conservative Jews who in turn outstrip Reform Jews.

As might be expected, the participation of Jews who reject any denominational label in Jewish life is far less. "Rejection of a denominational label by 23 percent of New York Jews, 28 percent of Los Angeles Jews, 30 percent of Miami Jews, and 22 percent of Philadelphia Jews is noteworthy, given that these are the five largest Jewish communities in the U.S. and encompass close to 60 percent of the national Jewish population" (Wertheimer, 1993). It is of interest that synagogue membership is claimed by 73 percent of Jews who identify themselves as Orthodox, 53 percent who identify themselves as Conservative and 37 percent who identify themselves as Reform.

The impact of intermarriage, defined as a Jewish partner with a non-Jewish partner who does not convert to Judaism, has shown a marked increase so that in the younger cohort, more than 50 percent of all marriages are intermarriages. "Despite a range of outreach efforts and willingness of some Reform and Reconstructionist Rabbis who officiate at mixed marriages in hopes that their

participation will bring the couple closer to the Jewish community, converts to Judaism constitute a declining proportion of the mixed couples, decreasing from 28 percent in 1970 to 13 percent in the 1980s. Thus intermarriage rates among younger Jews are accelerating while conversions to Judaism are declining" (Mayer, 1989).

The impact of intermarriage on Jewish identity is reflected in the following study.

In households where children under eighteen live with one parent who is Jewish and one parent who is not Jewish, only 25 percent were being raised as Jews, 30 percent were being raised with no religion and 45 percent were being raised in another religion. By contrast, virtually all the children in homes where the gentile-born spouse converted to Judaism were being raised as Jews. The rates of intermarriage also conform to the denominational spectrum. In a sample of 10 Jewish communities surveyed in the 1980s, fewer than 1 percent Orthodox Jews claim to be in mixed marriages compared with 2.4 percent of Conservative and Reconstructionists Jews, 9.4 percent Reform Jews and 17.8 percent of secular Jews (Goldstein, 1992). The rates of intermarriage have continued to escalate since that study was conducted.

The drift toward non-affiliation and secularism on the part of growing numbers of Jews is the greatest challenge that the synagogue and the Jewish community face. The highest rates of intermarriage occur among unaffiliated and secular Jews, and the least support for the Jewish causes comes from these groups as well.

The synagogue community has not done all that it should do to stem the tide of assimilation and the distancing of Jews from the synagogue and the Jewish community. Part of the problem is the low level of support within many synagogues and many Jewish communities for the Jewish educational program, both supplementary and day school.

Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, has

called for a new nationwide "Jewish Marshall Plan" to rescue failing afternoon Hebrew education programs. Rabbi Yoffie, in a Shabbat sermon delivered at the movement's largest ever biennial convention, sharply rebuked his own movement, Jewish philanthropists, and the Jewish federation system for failing to help provide an adequate Jewish education for tens of thousands of the movement's children while high levels of assimilation continued to plague the Jewish community. "Let's admit it: many of our parents look upon religious school as a punishment for being young," he said. "Too often in their eyes, it is the castor oil of Jewish life, a burden passed from parent to child with the following admonition: I hated it, you'll hate it, and after your Bar Mitzvah, you can quit." He cited as "real problems" limited instruction time, a shortage of teachers, and sporadic attendance (*New York Jewish Week*, 2001). What Rabbi Yoffie said about Reform Jewish education would apply across the board to Conservative, Orthodox, and Reconstructionist supplementary schools with few exceptions.

The future of the synagogue and of the Jewish community is dependent on the success and effectiveness of Jewish schools. Through the school we reach the family and educate parents who do not know how to be Jewish in religious observance at home.

Thirty-five years ago, I consulted with Rabbi David Goldstein, of blessed memory, of Har Zion Congregation before establishing the Forman Hebrew Day School, now the Forman Branch of the Perelman Jewish Day School. He commented that our Conservative and Orthodox supplementary schools were poor and were educating children who as adults would go to the Reform movement. The Reform supplementary schools were poor and were preparing children who as adults would become secular Jews.

My father, Rabbi Henry Landes, of blessed memory, a distinguished Orthodox rabbi, told me forty-five years ago that the human mind abhors a spiritual vacuum. If it is not filled with Torah and Judaism, it will

be receptive to cults and other religions. The high percentage of Jews who intermarry and whose children are raised in another religion confirms his insight.

Yet, I remain a sober optimist with regard to our ability to reverse national trends in Jewish education and, through that, to reverse the trends toward assimilation. My experience will help clarify where I stand. As of this writing, I have served as a rabbi for forty-seven years: two years in the U.S. Navy as the Jewish District Chaplain in Norfolk, VA; seven years with Congregation Brith Shalom in Erie, PA; and thirty-six years as the senior rabbi of Beth Shalom Congregation in Elkins Park, PA.

During these years two rabbinic texts quoted in the traditional Siddur always influenced me. The first reads, "These are the commandments from which there is no prescribed measure: leaving crops at the corner of the field for the poor, offering fresh fruit as a gift to the Temple, bringing special offerings to the Temple on the three festivals, doing deeds of lovingkindness, and studying Torah" (*Mishnah Peah* 1:1). The second citation reads, "These are the commandments which yield immediate fruit and continue to yield fruit in time to come: honoring parents, doing deeds of lovingkindness, tending the house of study punctually, morning and evening, providing hospitality, visiting the sick, helping the needy bride, attending the dead, devotion in prayer, and making peace between people. The study of Torah is basic to them all" (*Shabbat* 127a).

These texts are the paradigm of what any Jewish community must do to strengthen all aspects of Jewish life. "The study of Torah is basic to them all" continues to be true. Daniel J. Elazar and Rela Mintz Geffen (2000), distinguished Jewish sociologists, made the same point: "Build schools and one builds a community from which everything else flows. Without schools there is no community and nothing flows."

I am hopeful about changes in the educational standards of Jewish life because of changes in attitudes that have occurred over

the years, among federations, Jewish seminaries, and the growing number of Jewish philanthropists committed to strengthen Jewish life through Jewish education.

My father-in-law, Dr. Azriel Eisenberg, of blessed memory, educational director of the Bureau of Jewish Education in New York (now the Board of Jewish Education), was invited to give some lectures on Jewish education to the seniors of the rabbinical school of JTS during my senior year in 1954/1955. At that time, there was no full-time faculty person at the Seminary specializing in Jewish education. Today, the Seminary houses the Davidson Graduate School for Jewish Education and full-time tenured professors of Jewish education with the consequent emphasis on the role of the rabbi as educator. The transformation of the seminary is reflective of the transformation of the American Jewish community in its realization of the importance of Jewish education for Jewish continuity.

When I came to Beth Sholom in 1964, the Federation of Jewish Agencies supported Gratz College, the Division of Community Services, and the Board of Jewish Education, predecessor of the Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education. Day schools such as Solomon Schechter had a significant struggle to win federation's support. When the Forman Jewish Day School was established 30 years ago, it received no federation support.

Today, the picture is different. Federation not only supports Gratz College and the Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education, it supports all of the day schools in Greater Philadelphia: Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform. It even helped establish a Reform day school. The essential role of Jewish education is also recognized by major Jewish philanthropists.

Based upon almost five decades of experience as a congregational rabbi, I am convinced that a good religious school from preschool through high school, supplemented by day schools, Jewish summer camps, and active Jewish youth activities, is the key to the strength of the synagogue and

the vehicle for Jewish continuity. The child becomes the vehicle for reaching the family and opens up the possibility of increasing the family's Jewish observance and strengthening its Jewish identity. Organized pilgrimages to Israel with synagogues, youth groups, federation missions and birthright further help strengthen Jewish commitment.

There are many in our community who have given up on the transformative role of supplementary Jewish education. My experience testifies that this need not be the case.

I saw how Jewish education transformed the synagogue and enhanced its status in a small congregation in Erie, with 300 families and a large congregation in Elkins Park, with 1300 families. Each congregation was able to strengthen its supplementary elementary school so that it came to be regarded as a serious institution of learning by its members and became the basis for continuing Jewish education beyond Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The national percentage of students who continue their Jewish education after Bar/Bat Mitzvah is 15 percent. In both Erie and Elkins Park we reversed the trends. In Erie, we retained 95 percent of our Bar/Bat Mitzvahs in a 6-hour per week, three-year Hebrew high school program that was recognized by the Department of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the teaching of Modern Hebrew. At Beth Sholom in Elkins Park, our retention is over 80 percent of all Bar/Bat Mitzvahs. At the time of my retirement as senior rabbi of the congregation in the year 2000, our synagogue's Hebrew high school met six hours a week with almost 200 students. In addition, 45 students were attending Akiba Hebrew Academy and 70 were post-confirmation students at Gratz College. For informal education, we had one of the largest USY chapters in the city and seventy campers and staff members at Camp Ramah every summer. We sent dozens of students to Israel each summer and others on U.S.Y. on Wheels. We achieved all of these standards in our supplementary education, both formal and informal, while at the same time successfully



encouraging day school education. More than one hundred students from our congregation attend the Perelman Jewish Day School and Akiba.

As we move forward into the 21st century, the Philadelphia Jewish community is in a strong position to strengthen synagogue supplementary schools and day schools. Gratz College and the Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education, supported by federation and the philanthropic community, are strong allies for synagogue supplementary schools and day schools. The challenge and opportunity are before us. With the Almighty's guidance and inspiration, we will succeed.

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