Message from the President and Chair, HUC-JIR Board of Governors

Dear Friends:

Once Honi was walking along the road when he saw a man planting a carob tree.

He asked, "How long before it will bear fruit?"

The man answered, "Seventy years" [Ta'anit 23a].

Honi asked, "And will you be alive in seventy years to eat from its fruit?"

The man answered, "And what if I am not? Just as I found the world full of carob trees planted by my parents and grandparents, so will I plant for my children."

We have recently celebrated Tu B'Shevat, the New Year of the Trees, when we are all reminded of the precious resources that sustain life. All of us are stewards of resources that represent the potentiality of the Jewish future. The replenishment of these resources is our responsibility so that we can leave a legacy of hope and commitment for the generations to come.

Four hundred years ago, the kabbalists in Safed believed that on Tu B'Shevat their seder of wine and fruits could unleash the sparks of holiness hidden since Creation. Over one hundred years ago, the halutzim – European pioneers – came to Eretz-Israel and planted trees to reclaim the deserts and swamps and make them bloom, singing "We have come to the land to build it and be built by it." Mystics and idealists demonstrated that action is required to transform our world.

Your support of Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion is an act of faith in the Jewish future. Your contributions of substance, heart, and spirit ensure the precious resources of Jewish scholarship and professional development that make a difference today, and promise a vital future.

With your generous help, the College-Institute has raised a record $27 million during the 2001-2002 fiscal year – far exceeding the $13 million raised the year before. Your contributions represent the seedlings that nurture our students, enrich our programs, sustain our faculty, and preserve our libraries, archives, and museums. These seedlings are transforming the landscape of Jewish life in North America, Israel, and throughout the world.

In these pages celebrating a milestone in the history of the College-Institute, we rededicate ourselves to our sacred obligation to act today to guarantee the Jewish future. We thank you for your partnership in our mission. Together, let us advance our vision for Jewish continuity and a peaceful future for klal yisrael and all humankind.

With warmest wishes for the blessings of peace, health, fulfillment, and joy,

Rabbi David Ellenson, Ph.D.
President

Burton Lehman
Chair, Board of Governors

The Charge to the New President

Burton Lehman
Chair, Board of Governors
Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion

At this milestone in the history of our beloved Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, we call upon you to lead us – just as Moses called upon Joshua in the passage of the Torah that we have just read, and as generations of our people have called upon successive generations throughout the millennia. For we are a people of calling: called to serve God, and called to serve humanity.

Our founders – Isaac Mayer Wise and Stephen Wise – were surely called as well, as were the generations of teachers, scholars, and lay leaders who supported and advised them. That is why we have come here today: to affirm our call and to call upon you – to service on behalf of our College-Institute, the Reform Movement, and *klal yisrael.*

The future lies ahead of all of us – full of promise and potential. But dreams alone are not enough. As Theodore Herzl taught us, "If you will it, it is not a dream." To realize our dreams, we need a Moses, a Joshua, or a Wise: a visionary leader who will act affirmatively to shape the future.

We take seriously the transforming possibility that we are divinely intended – that we are part of a cosmic plan beyond our ken. God has called upon us to be part of this moment in Jewish history. This moment presents us with great challenges, as well as great hopes.

- At this moment, Jews in Europe and Latin America are facing a resurgence of anti-Semitism that we thought would never recur in our lifetime.
- At this moment, the State of Israel is beleaguered, but has our unflagging support and commitment as it struggles for a future blessed with peace and security.
- And at this moment, here in America, we are still reeling from the impact of September 11th and the threat of renewed terror and a war in Iraq. And yet, at this same moment, we Jews in North America are possessed of unprecedented resources, security, and confidence to realize a golden age of Jewish spiritual and cultural growth.

Someone once said that we are the "nevertheless" people, so I say to you – "nevertheless," we believe that the world is fated for greatness.

Isaac Mayer Wise saw our destiny embedded in our Bible, and borrowed it for our College logo: *"Haboker or"* – "Dawn appeared." For we Jews aspire always for the promise of the dawn, and an end to the night – an end to times of oppression and evil. All of us gathered here today share this dream – to hasten the dawn for which our people's visionaries have always hoped.

In guiding us toward this dream, we look to you and the great gifts that you bring to your Presidency of the College-Institute:

- Your renowned scholarship in Jewish history, ethics, and religious thought
- Your inspiring teaching and mentorship of generations of students
- Your love for the people and land of Israel and your idealism and activism on behalf of the Zionist dream
- Your devotion to pluralism and *klal yisrael*
- Your commitment to the Reform Movement and its unique capacity to guarantee authentic Jewish continuity in a world of increasing regard for individual freedom and personal conscience
- And your warmth, compassion, and integrity, which animate all your endeavors.

We take comfort in knowing that these gifts of knowledge and character will be a source of strength and inspiration to all of us in the years to come.

As the leader of this internationally recognized university and seminary, you will be called upon to sustain its academic excellence, distinguished faculty, accomplished alumni, and gifted students.

As our President, you will be called upon to serve as a leader of world Jewry.

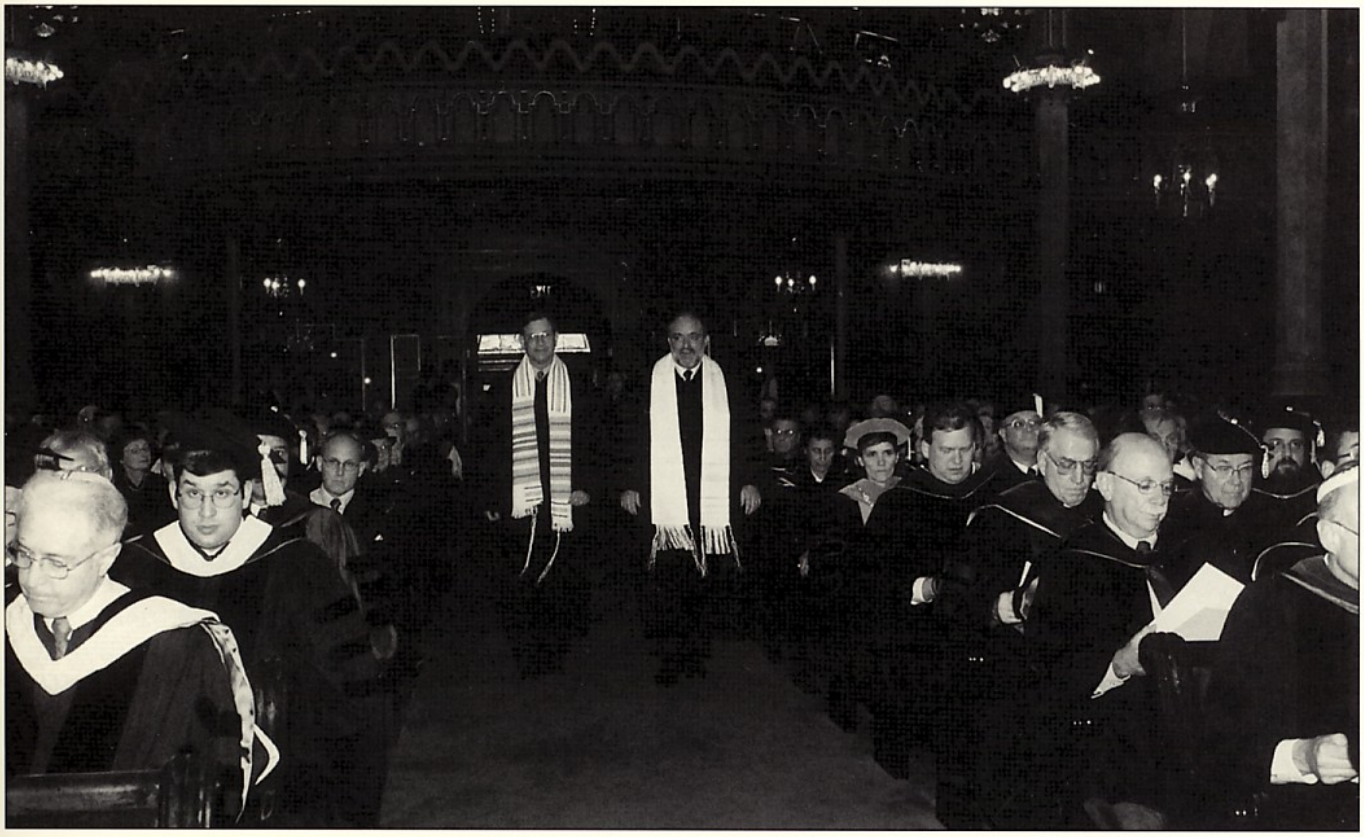
At this moment, as I charge you with the privilege and responsibility of leading our beloved College-Institute, let all who are present here today pledge to be your partners in building our Jewish future. For this inauguration calls upon us, even as we call upon you, to guarantee a bold tomorrow, when dawn will come.

By the authority vested in me as Chair of the Board of Governors, it is my privilege and joy to formally install you as the eighth President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and to publicly charge you on this day of your Inauguration:

- To sustain *shalshelet ha-kabbalah* – the chain of Jewish learning and teaching, from generation to generation;
- To preserve Judaism's sacred texts, values, and history to ensure Jewish survival;
- To promote the living interpretation of Judaism through a dynamic engagement with contemporary life and liberal thought;
- And to inspire us all to build a better world where ignorance and injustice are eradicated, and justice and understanding prevail.

May God bless you and your dear family as you embark on this new chapter in your lives. May God grant you the wisdom and strength to fulfill your aspirations and dreams. And may God bless your leadership of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, so that Jewish learning and leadership, in service to God and to the world, will flourish as a source of light among the nations for the generations to come.

The Inauguration processional at the landmark Plum Street Temple in Cincinnati. The Inauguration Ceremony was composed by Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman, '69, Barbara and Stephen Friedman Professor of Liturgy, Worship and Ritual; with the help of the Inauguration Liturgy Committee comprised of Dr. Rachel Adler, Associate Professor of Jewish Religious Thought and Feminist Studies; Cantor Israel Goldstein, '59, Director, School of Sacred Music; Rabbi Lewis H. Kamrass, '85, Senior Rabbi, Isaac Mayer Wise Temple / K.K. B'nai Yeshurun / Plum Street Temple, Cincinnati; Rabbi Richard S. Sarason, '74, Professor of Rabbinic Literature and Thought; Cantor Benjie Ellen Schiller, '87, Professor of Cantorial Arts; and Composer Bonia Shur, Director of Liturgical Arts Emeritus.



Inaugural Address

Rabbi David Ellenson
President
Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion

In the Talmud, the rabbis command that when one views a large assembly of people, one should praise God, *"ha-yo'dei'a razim* – the One who alone knows the secrets of every human heart." At this moment, I cannot say what animates the souls of each one of you who are gathered today in this assembly. Indeed, it is difficult for me to even speak of all the thoughts and feelings that crowd my own soul at this moment. Yet, I can tell you that my heart overflows, and I hope that I can properly articulate the holiness and promise this moment holds not only for my family and me, but more importantly, for the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, our people, and our religion. My life has been personally intertwined with so many of you who sit here today, and I am touched beyond measure by all the kindnesses so many of you have showered upon my family and me – particularly during this past year. I am grateful to each and every one of you for your friendship, and thank all of you for coming here to share this moment of celebration and revitalization in the life of the College-Institute.

To Burton Lehman and the Board of Governors of the College-Institute, I do express my heartfelt gratitude. It is an honor and inspiration to work together with you on behalf of our people and our God, and I am thankful for the confidence you have placed in me by selecting me to serve as the eighth president of this institution. Let me say to each of you at this moment of awe what my illustrious predecessor Kaufmann Kohler – second president of the Hebrew Union College – said to the Board of Governors over a century ago at the outset of his own Inaugural Address, *"Yishar kokhakem v'helekem* – may your strength and might to accomplish good ever increase."

On this special day, I would like to begin on a personal note. At the outset, I want to say that I miss my parents dearly and I am sad that they did not live to share this moment with me. I am cognizant that if it were not for my mother and father and the passions and commitments that marked them, I could never have been open to all the influences that have brought me to this day. My father, Samuel Ellenson, died twenty-five years ago at the age of

55 after a long bout with ALS, Lou Gehrig's Disease. He was a deeply emotional man who believed in the primacy of scholarship and he held an instinctual love for Judaism and *klal yisrael*. I have inherited much from him. My mother, Rosalind Stern Ellenson, who passed away in 1989, possessed a different persona. She was a calm and measured person in both thought and deed. I not only loved her, as all sons do their mothers, I liked her immensely. Well-educated in Jewish as well as secular topics, she was completely devoted to causes of social justice and Zionism. Her work as Director of the Social Services Department of Hampton, Virginia, and her service in Hadassah as well as the active role she consistently played in the life of the Jewish Federation and the Jewish Community Center in my hometown of Newport News provided me with the highest example of service and commitment to human and Jewish causes. She was kind and thoughtful, and she was in so many ways my best friend and my most trusted confidant. I have missed her terribly since her death, and she continues to represent for me the ideal of how a human life ought to be led. I am grateful to have been raised in the home of my father and mother, and I rejoice that my sister Judy and my brother Jimmy as well as so many other family members are here with me today.

And to Jackie and our children – I cannot imagine what my life would be without you. There is no way to ever fully express love. I can only thank God that I have been blessed with each of you. Jackie, you, above all, have taught me what it means to live in Covenant. You are my best friend and my closest adviser, my most acute critic and my most encouraging supporter. When we were married, we pledged and hoped to build a *bayit ne'e'man b'yisrael*, a Jewish home that would embody and reflect the highest values of our tradition. If we have succeeded in accomplishing this, it is due to you. I remain amazed and grateful that you have chosen me as your husband, and I feel fortunate that we have opened this new chapter in our lives together.

Rabbi Wolli Kaelter, '40 (center), who was rescued from Nazi Europe by HUC-JIR, presenting the College-Institute's Holocaust-era Torah scroll to Rabbi Ellenson, '77, with the assistance of Rabbi Robert N. Levine, '77, Senior Rabbi, Congregation Rodeph Sholom, New York

As I stand before this assembly today, I am keenly aware that two seemingly contradictory poles – each captured by an ancient rabbinic teaching – frame the position of responsibility I now hold as well as the challenge that we confront as a community. The first is expressed in the rabbinic notion of *hitdardarut ha-dorot* – the decline of the generations. It is a concept that leaves each of us acutely aware of our seeming inability to meet the standards and deeds of our ancestors. An emphasis upon our unworthiness, in contrast to the greatness of those who came before us, could not be more pronounced than it is in this teaching. As the Talmud phrases it, "*Im ha-rishonim ha-yu k'malachim, az anu kiv-nei adam* – if our ancestors were akin to angels, then we are akin to human beings."

However, in opposition to this perception of decline, stands an elementary rabbinic dictum known to all who labor in the fields of Jewish law, *hilchata ke-vat'ra'ei* – the law is always decided according to the latest authorities. While our ancestors may loom as giants in our eyes, we nevertheless stand on their shoulders and we are regarded by God as being of infinite worth. Whatever the frailties and shortcomings are that mark those of us who are here today either individually or collectively, we, no less than our ancestors, are created in the divine image. God has placed within each of us a *nitzot kedushah*, a spark of holiness that bestows upon and demands that we affirm the opportunity to sustain and enhance life. Ours is an interpretive tradition that compels Jewish religious leaders and laity alike to recognize that there is a creative impulse that ever-again informs the Jewish people as each generation addresses with its own genius as well as its shortcomings the challenges and claims of its own hour. God empowers each generation of this people Israel and its leaders to answer the demands of the day. As the Talmud phrases it, "*Shmuel b'doro k'yiftah b'doro.*" Jepthah, the least of leaders, is as worthy of the mantel of leadership in his generation, as Samuel, the greatest of leaders, was in his.

It is this dialectical interplay between *hitdardarut ha-dorot* on the one hand and *hilchata ke-vat'ra'ei* on the other that informs and guides my soul at this moment. It is in obeisance to the former pole of this dialectic that I, no less than my predecessors in this position who recounted their own teachers and guides on the day of their own inaugurations as President of HUC-JIR, would turn to thank so many of those on whose shoulders I stand today.

I was fortunate as a boy that Rabbi Nathan Bulman was my teacher. A most Orthodox rabbi, Rabbi Bulman was laid to rest just several months ago in Jerusalem. His fierce attachment to a Judaism of commandments and

texts planted a love of Jewish study and law within me that has accompanied me throughout my life. Professors James Livingston and Edward Crapol of The College of William and Mary in Virginia demonstrated that wisdom had to be sought beyond the bounds of Judaism, and Professor David Little of the University of Virginia opened the portals of the sociology of religion before me. Rabbi Donald Berlin and his wife Norma taught me as a young man that a love for learning and study must always be informed and tempered by compassion for persons, while Rabbi Alan Lettofsky and his wife Jean opened their home and their hearts to me when I was a student at the University of Virginia. Through the example provided by their life, they demonstrated that there could be no higher calling than a life devoted to Judaism and the Jewish people. At Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Rabbi Eugene Borowitz pierced my soul with his teachings on Covenant, and Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman taught me over and over again how exciting it is to learn. He made me realize that the head and the heart must complement one another. Professors Joseph Blau and Gillian Lindt, as well as Jacob Katz and Arthur Hertzberg, did much to shape my own intellectual directions during my student years on Morningside Heights at Columbia. I am grateful to all of these people.

Among all these teachers, Professor Fritz Bamberger holds a central role of prominence. Possessed of an encyclopedic knowledge of Jewish intellectual history as well as general philosophy, this German-Jewish refugee always taught and spoke with care and deliberation. He was the embodiment of German *Bildung*, and his measured and proper being in the world stood at such odds with my own loquacious and less formal style. However, I always felt his gentleness, and I knew his appreciation and love for me at every moment. I have attempted to model my own being on his in so many ways, and I am eternally grateful to God that I was privileged to be his *talmid*. On this day especially, I miss him as I do my parents.

I also stand today upon the shoulders of so many others. For my entire adult life, I have devoted myself to a study of the modern Jewish experience. I have attempted to understand and analyze the diverse ways in which so many different Jewish leaders have turned at the crossroads of modern Jewish life. I have sought to understand how all of them have responded to the challenge of allowing Judaism to speak in relevant cadences in the current era. I have cradled the legal writings of Esriel Hildesheimer and Zacharias Frankel, and I have poured over the prayer books of Abraham Geiger and Isaac Mayer Wise. I have been fascinated by the passion and boldness displayed by Samuel Holdheim and David Einhorn, and I have been moved and genuinely awed by the knowledge and insights Solomon Schechter and Kaufmann Kohler offered in their many researches and speeches. Irving Greenberg has expressed a love for *klal yisrael* and David Hartman has articulated a meaningful philosophy of religious Zionism that have touched my very soul, and the theology and liturgical poetry of Rachel Adler and Marcia Falk have left me inspired by their creativity and humanity. I am indebted to all of these people. I have studied and admired them all because each one is a person of passion and wisdom who has applied their talents and their concerns to the cause of Judaism in the modern setting. They are my conversation partners in the ongoing dialogues that form modern Judaism, and what I say and do is a distillation in many ways both subtle and overt of what they all have said and done.

I STAND AS WELL upon the shoulders of my predecessors who have served in this office. Isaac Mayer Wise held a simple belief. He reechoed the prophetic assertion that "without vision the people would perish," and he was convinced that Judaism in America would flourish only if informed and inspiring leadership could be educated. He created the Hebrew Union College so that such leadership would be produced, and his vision remains an enduring one that guides the task of our school today. It constitutes the rock upon which the College-Institute stands. Kaufmann Kohler demonstrated that a man of great learning and religious conviction could direct the actual course of our school and our Movement, and Julian Morgenstern forged one of the greatest chapters in the history of the Hebrew Union College when he literally rescued scholars and students from the hell of Hitler's furnaces.

No president of this institution ranks as a greater man than Stephen Samuel Wise. Founder of the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York in 1922, Rabbi Wise passionately believed in "the unity of Jewish spiritual fate" and was intolerant only of "Jewish indifference." His love for Zion and the totality of the Jewish people, as well as his zeal in working for social justice for all persons, mark him as the greatest of persons and my own passions and convictions are completely at one with his. I only pray that I prove worthy of the legacy he has established.

At his own inauguration on March 15, 1948, a scant two months before the State of Israel was born, Nelson Glueck recognized that the about to be born Jewish State was "literally under fire." However, he went on to state that "to abandon" an embryonic Israel would grant "license to terror." And this Dr. Glueck refused to do. It was

The Koch-Ellenson family

under his leadership that our Jerusalem campus was born, and his vision was reaffirmed and expanded by his successor, Alfred Gottschalk, who ordained the first woman as rabbi among the Jewish people. For twenty-five years, Dr. Gottschalk gave direction to our school and granted inspiration to our people in his capacity as President.

During the past six years, the Administration of President Sheldon Zimmerman and Provost Norman Cohen breathed renewed life into the College-Institute. Under their stewardship, new institutes were created and a host of new faculty members were appointed on all our campuses. Our Los Angeles campus was granted the privilege of ordaining rabbis among the people Israel, and Jerusalem began to realize more fully the promise of its beginnings. Finally, a new curriculum was envisioned, one that would facilitate our students' self-conscious integration of the academic, professional, and spiritual components of their education. For all these accomplishments and more, I thank all those who came in the generations before me, and I pray that the College-Institute today proves capable of building upon the foundations our ancestors have established. You indeed stand as angels in our sight, and I stand in respect and wonder as I survey the heritage you have bequeathed us. I am conscious upon whose shoulders I today stand.

WHILE MY CONTEMPORARIES and I may stand in relationship to our predecessors as Jepthah stood in relationship to Samuel, the task of leadership is no less pressing for us than it was for Jepthah and others in the past. After all, *hilchata ke-vat'ra'ei* – the law is decided according to the later authorities – and just as my predecessors were required to do in generations past, I am called upon today to articulate an ongoing vision for the College-Institute as we confront the present and move towards the future. The other side of the dialectic that I outlined at the beginning of my speech must now receive its voice.

After 127 years of existence, the College-Institute and the North American Jewish community find ourselves at a much different historical juncture than our community did when Isaac Mayer Wise ordained the first class of rabbis in this institution in 1883. His was an age shaped and informed by an unfettered confidence in Enlightenment. He had not heard of Freud, and he could speak of civilization without recognizing the discontents that stand at its base. Isaac Mayer Wise and his colleagues could confidently proclaim that the day would come when reason alone would guarantee that "superstition would no longer enslave the mind, nor idolatry blind the eyes." Unaware that a Holocaust was looming, where monsters of intellect

would divorce learning from virtue, Isaac Mayer Wise and his peers as well as his immediate successors would soon forge a Judaism that would allow a predominantly immigrant Jewish community to adapt successfully to the demands of an American setting. His immediate successor, Kaufmann Kohler, proved able to forge a denominationally distinct Reform Judaism that was universalistic in its outlook. This vision of Reform flourished in a setting where Jewish integration into the cultural, social, economic, and political realms of American life remained limited, and at a time when the State of Israel did not exist.

How much has changed since that time. The rivalry and jealously that formerly divided a German-Jewish American community from its Eastern European sisters and brothers are at best an historical memory, and the promise of redemption offered by the existence of a Jewish State now constitutes a central element in Jewish life. The ethnic homogeneity that previously marked the North American Jewish community is a relic of the past. Today we witness an era where the rate of Jewish exogamy stands at an all-time high, and the limitations and constraints imposed by a previous age upon complete Jewish integration into all sectors of the American nation have given way to an epoch where Jews take part as complete equals in every walk of American life. At the same time, the twentieth century has borne witness to the previously unimaginable evil of the Shoah, as well as the genocides of other peoples, and we today cannot share the total certainty our ancestors did in the power of reason to achieve the good. Ours is an age of ambiguity and nuance – one in which we stand at the crossroads of global capitalism and global terror.

Yet, we must not allow the uncertainty of our own age to paralyze us. Our contemporary efforts at the College-Institute must be no less than those of our predecessors. We must recognize our own power, and we must employ our passion and our imagination as well as our knowledge to chart the course and direction of Jewish spiritual and communal life for our own time as well as for future generations. Our ancient rabbis understood this well, for they understood that the realm of the human being was distinct from the realm of nature. The latter was governed by a mechanistic determinism, the former by the freedom to act. As the Gemara phrases it, "Suppose a man steals a measure of wheat and sows it in his own field, *din hu she'lo titzmah* – it would be right that the wheat not grow." After all, it is stolen seed. Yet, "*olam ke'minhago noheg* – nature pursues its own course." The world of nature is not one of volition. Our human world is one that we have the ability to create. Our visions and our deeds

Inauguration Honorary Chair Richard J. Scheuer; Rabbi Lewis H. Kamrass, '85, Isaac Mayer Wise Temple/K.K. B'nai Yeshurun/Plum Street Temple, Cincinnati; and Rabbi Ilana G. Baden, '99, Isaac Mayer Wise Temple/K.K. B'nai Yeshurun/Plum Street Temple, Cincinnati, reading Torah

must reflect our recognition that we are capable of shaping the world, and our religion teaches us that God calls us to this task. We are neither the first nor the last generations of Jews, and our responsibility extends no less to our descendants than it does to our ancestors. We must recognize our own power, and we must employ our passion and our imagination as well as our knowledge to chart the course of Jewish spiritual and communal life for our own time as well as for the future.

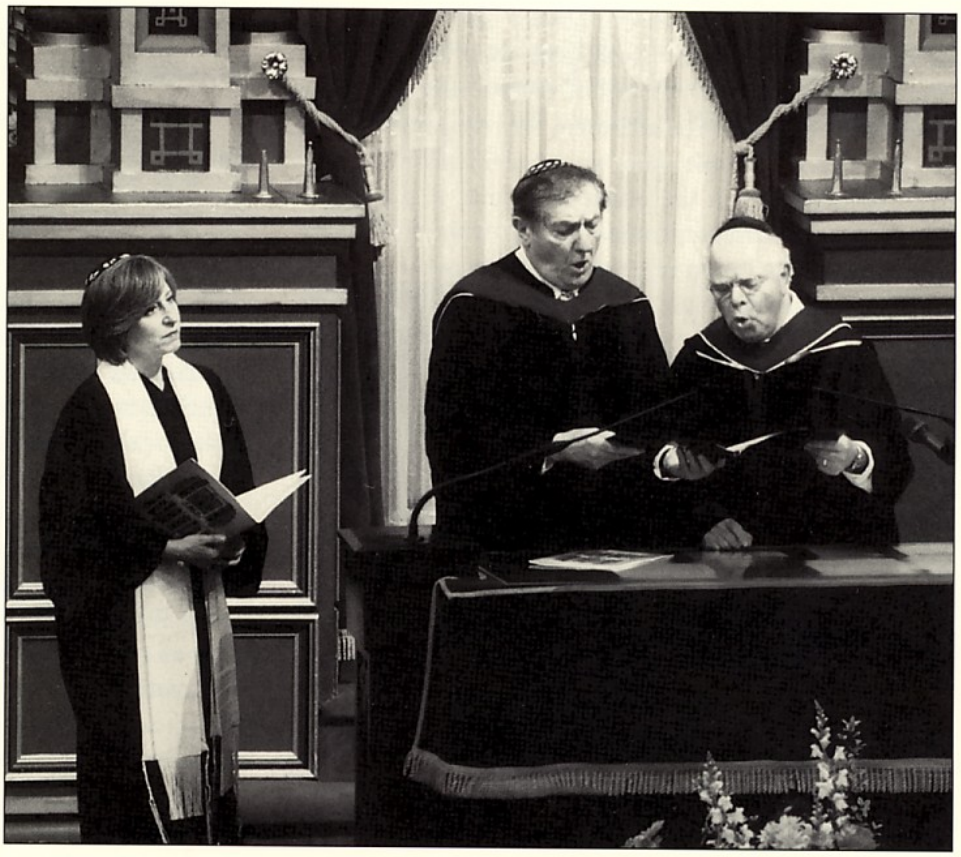
FOREMOST among the commitments that we must now honor is our obligation to our brothers and sisters in Israel. Let me say with pride that my intention is that the destiny of the College-Institute will remain intertwined and interlocked with the fate of our people in the State of Israel, and I intend to do all in my power to enhance the presence and influence of HUC-JIR in Jerusalem by expanding our faculty and increasing our student body in the years ahead so that the promise of our present can reach fruition in the future.

Our students in Cincinnati, Los Angeles, and New York who prepare for careers in the cantorate, communal service, education, and the rabbinate will continue to study in Israel at our Jerusalem campus, and there they will learn the true meaning of *'areivut*, the ideal of mutual responsibility that binds Jews worldwide into one people. Our graduates will know that when Jews are in distress in Argentina and Europe or any place on earth, their responsibility to the people Israel is absolute.

More than thirty Israeli rabbinical students and dozens of Israeli teachers also currently attend our Jerusalem School, and they constitute the most precious resource we could possibly provide for the growth of liberal Judaism on Israeli soil. In a country where an extremist and coercive form of Judaism on the one hand and a strident and unyielding secularism on the other have provided the only two meaningful options between which Israeli Jews can choose, the need for us to educate native Israelis as rabbis and educators who speak the language of liberal Judaism is urgent. Should we fail in this sacred obligation, history will justifiably condemn us.

Our obligations are hardly limited to Israel. We must consider our responsibility to North America as well. Twenty-first-century America represents an extraordinary challenge and opportunity for us. Stasis in our present moment would be dangerous, and a dynamic and open approach to the future is required. We must reaffirm the broad vision that our founder Isaac Mayer Wise held of an

Rabbi Jacqueline Koch Ellenson, '83; Cantor Israel Goldstein, '59, Director, School of Sacred Music, HUC-JIR/NY; and Cantor Eliyahu Schleifer, Associate Professor of Sacred Music, HUC-JIR/Jerusalem



American Judaism in light of our own conditions. Like Rabbi Wise, we must recognize that the foremost concern of the College-Institute is the education and formation of scholars and *k'lei kodesh* who will be imbued with the spirit of Torah.

At the same time, our graduates must be bilingual – they must speak the language of America as well as the language of Judaism. This means that our alumni must be prepared to speak to Jews in the synagogue. No venue can be more meaningful for the future of the Jewish people. However, the spiritual hunger of Jews in this country is acute, and we must not rest content to confine our Jewish passion to the synagogue alone. Nor can we guard our own denominational boundaries too jealously. Our students must be equipped to address Jews across what are already often-outmoded denominational lines. Our graduates must be found wherever the possibilities for Jewish renewal appear – in the settings of Jewish community centers and Jewish organizational life, as well as in the university.

We must also continue to nurture the concern for equality and inclusiveness that has long been the hallmark of Reform Judaism. We proudly salute a full generation of women rabbis who have made remarkable contributions to Jewish life, and we are proud that the number of women on our faculty has increased significantly in recent years – these gains must be cultivated. The open embrace of persons of diverse sexual orientations must continue to be affirmed. We recognize that the voices of those people who were previously prevented from participation in the public discourse of the Jewish people now contribute immeasurably to the fulfillment of the messianic vision of justice that lies at the heart of Jewish religious tradition.

Through the ongoing growth of our institutes, we must expose our students to the initiatives these institutes are taking to enhance Jewish life on this continent. The implementation of the core curriculum project envisioned by our faculty, supported by the holdings of our library, our archives, and our museums, and directed by our Provost, Norman Cohen, must receive our highest priority. This pioneering project seeks to integrate the academic, personal, and professional components of the education HUC-JIR provides its students so that our graduates will be optimally prepared to serve our community in diverse ways and settings. Our students must apply the values and wisdom of our tradition to the different venues where they will be called to serve in this new century. The future and fate of the Jewish people and the Jewish religion are at stake.

Finally, we must be ever mindful of our role in *tikkun olam* – our responsibility for the betterment of the world. During the midst of World War II, as the most cherished values of western civilization were being trampled, Chancellor Louis Finkelstein of the Jewish Theological Seminary understood that the modern Jewish seminary was accountable to the larger human community as well as to the Jewish people. He therefore established an Institute for Religious and Social Studies and a Conference on Science, Religion, and Philosophy under the aegis of JTS. I find his example instructive and inspirational, and I would ask the Jewish world today to follow the model he established. Not to do so would be a betrayal of the task that God has assigned us as persons of faith to apply the teachings of our traditions for the amelioration of humanity.

It is in this spirit that I would ask that the College-Institute as an academic institution recognize the role it is called upon to play in the task of *tikkun olam*, and I would hope that HUC-JIR might take the lead in cooperation with other Jewish institutions so that together we might create an Institute for Advanced Studies modeled after existing institutes at universities such as Princeton and the Hebrew University. Here the College-Institute and other schools devoted to Jewish intellectual and professional development would foster study and intellectual reflection, in an open and liberal Jewish spirit, on the great questions of our time.

During these past few years, the world has borne witness to the terror and destruction that monists and fundamentalists of all types have wreaked upon humanity. Our task is therefore to create a setting where a decisive liberal religious spirit might emerge, an institute where all types of persons – Jews and non-Jews, academics and activists, clergy and laity – of different viewpoints and convictions could come together to consider how the ethical and social obligations contained in Torah might find expression in practical programs and policy initiatives. We would here hopefully foster a new energy between American Judaism and the American and world marketplace of ideas. It would be a place where a Eugene Borowitz and a Robert Bellah, a Rachel Adler and a Stephen Carter, a Lawrence Hoffman and a Ruth Gavison could think about what Judaism as well as other religions might contribute to the public square. Such an institute might potentially become a central actor in the life of the Jewish people, and would hopefully contribute – however modestly – towards a better future for humanity.

As I conclude my remarks today, I would turn for inspiration and guidance to the words of Rabbi Leo Baeck, a man for whom I have always felt a special affinity. Rabbi Baeck was the last duly elected leader of the Jewish people in Germany during the cruel era of Nazi rule. He was the teacher of my teacher Fritz Bamberger, and *mori v'rabi* Jakob Petuchowski, who contributed so much to the College-Institute and the world of scholarship. The direct interventions of Rabbi Baeck saved the lives of countless Jews. One of them was Rabbi Wolli Kaelter, who bestowed his blessing upon me today. Rabbi Kaelter was a young rabbinical student at the Hochschule when Rabbi Baeck directed him to Cincinnati to enroll at the Hebrew Union College in the 1930s. My link to Rabbi Baeck is personal and direct.

Rabbi Baeck was himself accorded countless opportunities to flee Germany during those years of Nazi hatred, but he refused to flee Germany. As a true *ro'eh yisrael*, shepherd among the people Israel, Rabbi Baeck decided that he could not leave his people while they were in distress and he ultimately was imprisoned in Theresienstadt. There, three of his sisters died. However, Rabbi Baeck survived and out of those years there emerged a classic of Jewish religious literature that he authored while he was in the camp. Entitled *This People Israel*, this book constitutes one of the great spiritual treasures of our people and I find myself turning again and again to this work for inspiration and hope. The book is never far from my side.

At the conclusion of this book, Rabbi Baeck observed that the appearance of each new life constitutes a question that God has posed about the nature and worth of human life. He further stated that the manner in which that new life is led comprises an answer to the question that God has put forth.

As I am inaugurated as a new President of the College-Institute, I pray that I prove worthy of responding properly to the question that God has now assigned my life. An inheritance cannot be fabricated. It must be assumed with full responsibility, and nurtured with courage and creativity. People are not born into community as if by fate. Rather, God calls us to the task of forging our world. I hope that in the days ahead we will work together so that the College-Institute can play its rightful role in the unfolding narrative of Jewish and human life. In so doing, we will meet our obligations to our own as well as future generations. *V'chen y'hi ratzon, v'no'mar amen* – May this be God's will, and let us say, Amen.

Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, '57, Chancellor Emeritus and President of HUC-JIR from 1971 to 1996, and Rabbi Ellenson

Invocation

Dr. Alfred Gottschalk
Chancellor Emeritus

Blessed are you our God who has kept us alive, sustained us and enabled us to reach this great moment – a moment of both continuation and renewal.

As a community, we gather here with full and grateful hearts as Rabbi David Ellenson is inaugurated as the 8th President of our College-Institute. In his person resides the authority and privilege to lead our school and to continue its great traditions of Torah studies and critical scientific inquiry; of preserving the best that is in our past and enlarging our morasha – our intellectual, spiritual, and religious heritage – for the future.

As Moses ordained Joshua to continue authentic Jewish leadership, so you will enjoy the high privileges of ordaining new generations of rabbis, investing cantors, and sending scholars, educators, and communal professionals into the Jewish world.

Ours are daunting times and we pray for you and your family at this hour of promise and responsibility that in the midst of your great work in leading our school, you will hold steadfast to your vision for it.

May the words of Torah be forever in your mouth, for then you will endure and succeed: "Have I not commanded you – be strong and of good courage. Do not be afraid nor dismayed for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:8-10

Amen.

Words of Congratulation

Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie
President
Union of American Hebrew Congregations

The congregational arm of the Reform Movement greets this momentous occasion with joy, enthusiasm, and thanksgiving. There could be no better choice than Rabbi David Ellenson to lead the College-Institute at this critical moment in our Movement's history.

Because Rabbi Ellenson, first and foremost, is a distinguished Torah scholar and an eminent intellectual and academician.

The Reform Movement, of course, embraces the exuberant spirituality of our day. We know that there is no Judaism without God, and prayer, and the fire of religion. But, alas, spirituality is too often confused with ignorance; people actually write books entitled "Judaism for Dummies," and many Jews actually read them. Passion and the search for authenticity have too often become substitutes for thinking, for learning, for Torah, and for text.

But Rabbi David Ellenson – a great scholar, a profound thinker, a wonderful Torah teacher – knows better than anyone the dangers of soul without mind. Like all Jewish leaders he is a heartfelt believer; but he is also, to the depths of his being, a man of deep learning. And his students will learn at his feet, from the very first day, that yes, the College-Institute is a place of spiritual nourishment, but even more it is a place of great intellectual rigor. They will learn that they are not training to be "professionals" or "functionaries" of the Jewish community; they are learning to be teachers of Torah – teachers who, in addition, should also be healers of the soul and bridges to the mystery of God.

The task of the College-Institute is simply stated: "*le-hagdil Torah u-le-ha-adira*," "to magnify Torah and to exalt it." Rabbi Ellenson will succeed because he is a man of Torah who understands this task.

Rabbi Ellenson is also a man of *menschlichkeit*, humility, and inwardness. And this too: at a time when the Jewish people are splitting apart, when divisions in the Jewish world have multiplied and rancor has replaced civility, he – as much as any person that I know – asserts the totality and interdependence of the Jewish people, and our shared sense of peoplehood and common destiny. He is a proud and assertive champion of Reform who is also committed, in all that he says and does, to *Knesset Yisrael*, the collective community of Israel, and to the reciprocal responsibility of Jew to Jew.

My advice today to Rabbi Ellenson: whenever you do not know what to do about a weighty problem, wait a minute. The phone will always ring with another problem that will take your mind off the first.

I know the bewildering range of challenges that he faces. He is already expected to be teacher, spiritual guide, administrator, and CEO, and, of course, to raise money day and night. And he will inevitably be caught between the conflicting and competing conceptions of what his task should be.

But he will succeed in his work, and succeed brilliantly. Because he has a supportive wife and family, and rock-solid convictions. And because Torah is his burning, incandescent passion, and Torah will sustain him, as it has always sustained us.

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the congregational body of Reform Judaism and the patron of the College-Institute, congratulates Rabbi Ellenson on this day, and pledges its support for the College-Institute and its sacred mission.

Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie, '74, President,
Union of American Hebrew Congregations

Words of Congratulation

Rabbi Martin S. Weiner
President
Central Conference of American Rabbis

My friends, at this very special moment of dedication, as we inaugurate a new *Rosh Yeshivah* for the College-Institute in this historic sanctuary, my mind hearkens back over twenty years to the beautiful wine country of California. Amidst those lovely rolling hills covered with vineyards and Live Oak trees, members of my Sherith Israel congregation came together for a retreat weekend. We welcomed the *Shabbat* with prayers and song and festive meals. On that weekend we were privileged to study with an inspiring young scholar who made Jewish history and theology come alive with new meaning for our lives. This young man was blessed with an incredibly warm and caring spirit and a fine sense of humor that truly enhanced the brilliant insights of his scholarship. That young man was, of course, our beloved rabbi and teacher, David Ellenson. Our experience in the Sonoma wine country that weekend has been echoed hundreds of times in synagogues and college classrooms, in camps and parlor meetings throughout our nation, and in many distant lands. David has inspired countless students to cherish the precious values of Jewish tradition.

Thus, on this day, it is a joy for me to join my colleague, Rabbi Paul Menitoff, the Executive Vice-President of the CCAR, and the more than 1800 rabbis of the Central Conference to extend our heartfelt good wishes to President David Ellenson, his devoted wife, our colleague Rabbi Jacqueline Koch Ellenson, and his entire family. We pray that David's future years of service may be filled with health and blessing. We know that he has the vision, wisdom, and courage to guide our *Yeshivah* through the many challenges confronting us in this new century. We pray that President Ellenson will continue to be inspired by the teaching of the great sage Hillel who called upon us to "be among the disciples of Aaron, loving people and bringing them to the Torah."

Rabbi Martin S. Weiner, '64, President, Central Conference of American Rabbis

FROM RIGHT: *Dr. Jonathan Cohen, Director, HUC-UC Ethics Center; Rabbi Uri Regev, '86, Executive Director, World Union for Progressive Judaism; Rabbi Na'amah Kelman, '92, Director of Educational Initiatives, HUC-JIR/Jerusalem; Rabbi Michael A. Signer, '70, Abrams Professor of Jewish Thought and Culture, University of Notre Dame; and Rabbi Jonathan W. Malino, '79, Professor of Philosophy, Guilford College*

Blessing for the Inauguration of Rabbi David Ellenson

Rabbi Laura J. Geller
Senior Rabbi, Temple Emanuel, Beverly Hills, California

There is a story in the Talmud that makes me think of David. It is about a man who was traveling through the desert, tired and thirsty. All of a sudden he came upon an oasis with a beautiful shade tree laden with fruit, nestled next to a refreshing stream. He rested under the tree, ate the fruit and drank the water. When it was time for him to continue his journey, he turned to the tree: "O tree, how can I bless you? Shall I say: 'May your fruit be sweet?' It is already sweet. Shall I say: 'May your shade be restful?' It already is restful. Shall I say: 'May there be a stream running along your side?' There already is a stream. O tree, how can I bless you? All I can say is: 'May all your saplings be like you.'"

David, how can we bless you? Shall we say: 'May you be a passionate, respected scholar?' You already are. Shall we say: 'May you be the kind of teacher who changes the lives of your students?' You already are – astounding all of us who have ever learned with you, as you lecture without a note, ask questions that make us think, model what it means to be passionate about a text and compassionate about those who have been your teachers. We have learned as much from your tears as you teach about the courage and decency of Leo Baeck as we have learned from the many books we have read with you. When Abraham Joshua Heschel said that what we need are not more textbooks but text persons, he was speaking of teachers like you.

Shall we say: 'May you be a worthy successor to the presidents who have come before you, progressive enlightened visionaries who created and shaped an institution that has trained spiritual leaders and teachers for the challenges of contemporary Jewish life?' You already are. You have the strength to make tough decisions. You have the integrity to stand for the best values of Jewish tradition. You have the courage to keep Zionism at the center of our focus. And you care about Jewish persons as much as you care about the Jewish people. All the alumni of HUC-JIR are proud beyond words to have you as our eighth president.

Shall we say: 'Even though you have this important position, may you never lose your sense of humor?' It isn't likely – after all, with all your serious scholarship, Azriel Hildesheimer is hardly a household name and you still laugh at Michael Marmur's quip that the presidency has gone from Kaufmann Kohler to Diet Cola.

So David, how can we bless you? All we can say is: 'May all your saplings be like you.'

All your saplings – not only Jackie's and your wonderful children, Ruthie and Robert, Micah, Hannah, Nomi and Rafi, but all of us – the generations of students, colleagues, and friends who have been blessed by you. And may the next generation of rabbis, educators, cantors, communal professionals, and scholars be renewed in the shade of your compassion, nourished by the fruit of your leadership, and sustained by the water of your Torah.

Rabbi Laura J. Geller, '76, Senior Rabbi, Temple Emanuel, Beverly Hills, California

The Inauguration of Rabbi David Ellenson

James O. Freedman
President Emeritus, Dartmouth College
Member, Board of Governors
Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion

It is an honor to join you in saluting David Ellenson upon his inauguration as the eighth president of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, the academic center of Reform Judaism.

The late Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun used to say that the speaker on an occasion like this was like the corpse at an old-fashioned Irish wake: his presence was necessary to justify the occasion but no one expected him to say anything.

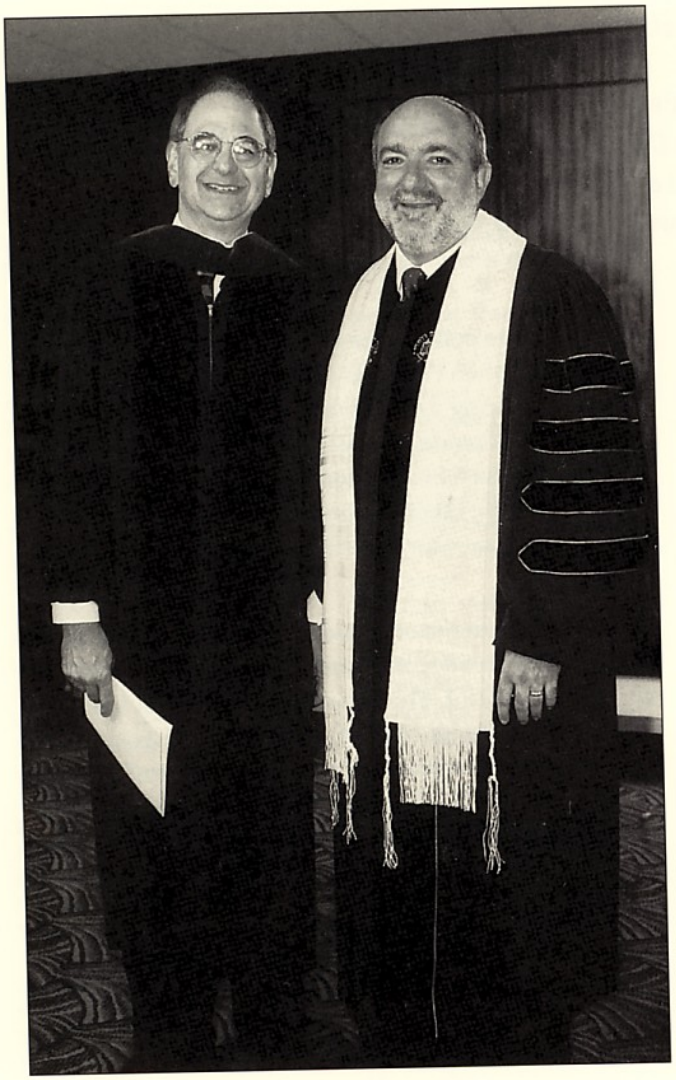
Few professional challenges are as daunting as those that college presidents face. It seems always to have been so. When Daniel Dana resigned as president of Dartmouth College in 1822 after only eleven months in office, he told the board of trustees, "this College, Gentlemen, needs a president not only of powerful talents, but of strong nerves." That prescription for a president is surely as apt today as it was in 1822. And in David Ellenson, we have found such a president.

I feel some confidence that I speak for all of us who know David when I say that describing his strengths is an act akin to gilding a lily. I think of the day in 1877 when Mark Twain introduced his good friend William Dean Howells to an audience in Hartford. Twain said, "He has a reputation in the literary world which I need not say anything about. I am only here to back up his moral character."

The appointment of David Ellenson is an act for which American higher education and the entire Jewish community can be grateful. The moral and intellectual standards to which David holds himself, as anyone who has read his work or heard him speak can attest, are impeccable. David is scholar and a teacher. He is a leader, not merely a manager. He is both educated and cultured. He believes in the life of the mind. His voice is the voice of reason.

He is honorable and dignified, an optimist and a listener. He is quiet but forceful, thoughtful but decisive. He has charm as well as backbone. He can be persuaded, but

Rabbi Na'amah Kelman, '92, Director of Educational Initiatives, HUC-JIR/ Jerusalem; and Rabbi Michael Signer, '70, Abrams Professor of Jewish Thought and Culture, University of Notre Dame



Rabbi Jonathan W. Malino, '79, Professor of Philosophy, Guilford College and Rabbi Ellenson

he cannot be intimidated. He will stimulate the pursuit of excellence in everything that faculty members and students undertake. And he will speak forcefully to the great issues, educational and moral, that face the Jewish community and the world.

We meet at a moment when the Jewish people can take satisfaction from some of its greatest triumphs, not least the creation of the democratic State of Israel and the rebirth of the Hebrew language. Yet Jews remain embattled in Israel and in many parts of the world. The evidence of a rising anti-Semitism is widespread: the suicide bombings of buses, discotheques, and pizzerias, the vandalization of synagogues, the smashing of headstones and desecration of cemeteries, the repetition of blood libels, and the eruptions of malignant hatred of the kind that deformed the United Nations conference at Durban.

Theodore Herzl declared that the goals of Zionism were to allow the Jewish people to "live at least as free men on our own soil, and in our homes peacefully die." The Zionist movement established a democratic state that reflected Judaism's most cherished values. Its efforts were forcefully supported by many prominent American Jews, including Rabbi Stephen S. Wise and Justice Louis D. Brandeis, who famously declared that "to be good Americans, we must be better Jews, and to be better Jews, we must become Zionists."

The so-called Americanization of Zionism has empowered American Jews to be both authentically Jewish and unselfconsciously American. It has also, at a time of intensified Muslim terrorism, wedded the fate of American Jews to the survival of Israel in ways that, one hopes, will insure the endurance and vitality of Jewish values.

The task of preserving these values lies at the heart of Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion's educational mission. From the days of its founding in 1875, the College-Institute has recognized that Jews are a people of the book. It has appreciated that nothing has been more characteristic of Judaism, over the course of more than two millennia, than its tradition of scholarship and learning – a tradition that every generation has sought to extend by following the Talmud's observation, "When you teach your son, you teach the son of your son."

In emphasizing the centrality of scholarship and learning, Judaism has revered the open mind – the enduring tension between authenticity and innovation, responsibility and choice, tradition and change, democracy and authority, the eternal and the ephemeral, the particular and the universal. In exploring these tensions, Judaism has urged upon us a reflectiveness and a tentativeness, a judi-

cious sense of humility, a hospitality to other points of view, a carefulness to be open to correction and new insight.

There are many examples of this openness of mind in both the American and the Jewish traditions. Few are more powerful in the American tradition than that of Abraham Lincoln. In his Second Inaugural Address, Lincoln observes that both parties to the Civil War "read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged. . . . The Almighty has His own purposes."

It is remarkable that Lincoln could speak about the withering war effort with such a profound moral diffidence. Despite his heart-and-soul commitment to the Union's cause, he could not discern, or claim he knew, the Almighty's purposes.

Lincoln's example suggests why the education of rabbis and other Jewish leaders in the twenty-first century must begin, as it has in centuries past, with an emphasis upon maintaining an open mind and observing the simple proposition that one of the most important words in the English language is the adverb "perhaps."

Beyond its cherished commitment to free inquiry and an open mind, Judaism is a religion woven from tradition. The dilemmas of the present are, for Jews, always shaped by the heritage of the past – the Bible, the Talmud, volumes of commentary, the teachings of the great rabbis. Yet the pressures and tempo of contemporary society make it increasingly difficult for Jews, as for others, to retain a connection to their historical past.

In meeting the responsibility of rabbinic education, the College-Institute must preserve the chain of learning that connects us to the heritage of generations past, lest we lose its lessons by indifference. What would be the consequence of losing this heritage? It would be an indifference to learning and to the life that has gone before, a loss of the values that once informed how we viewed ourselves, as well as our place in the vast sweep of human history. By succumbing to a world in which the past has less and less relevance, we would form Societies, as T.S. Eliot warned in his 1944 essay "What Is a Classic?," that foster a kind of global provincialism:

> In our age, when men seem more than ever prone to confuse wisdom with knowledge, and knowledge with information, and to try and solve problems of life in terms of engineering, there is coming into existence a new kind of provincialism.
>
> It is a provincialism, not of space, but of time; one for which history is merely the chronicle of human devices which have served their turn and been scrapped, one for which the world is the property solely of the living, a property in which the dead hold no shares.

The task of preserving the past is an essential burden for every generation of Jews. As Abraham Joshua Heschel

School of Sacred Music students at rehearsal on the eve of the Inauguration

Donald and Barbara Werner with the Ellensons at one of the festive dinners on campus

has written, "We are either the last Jews or those who will hand over the entire past to generations to come. We will either forfeit or enrich the legacy of ages."

Finally, Judaism is deeply concerned with the meaning of life and the spiritual condition of the soul. The College-Institute strives to respond to this age-old concern by educating its students – the next generation – to deal with those moments of existential weariness that test our moral foundations, those moments, as F. Scott Fitzgerald described them in *Tender is the Night* (1934), when "in a real dark night of the soul it is always three o'clock in the morning."

Because we are human, profound perplexities haunt our souls. What is the meaning of life? Why does God permit the innocent to suffer? Why are we such mysteries to ourselves and each other? Why is the self we present to the world sometimes so different from the self we know in our private hearts? Why, as Oscar Wilde once asked, do we kill the things we love?

The continual search for the meaning of life is at the heart of Judaism's spiritual teachings. "The conviction that life has a purpose is rooted in every fibre of man," as Primo Levi has written, "it is a property of the human substance." For this reason, finding religious purpose in everyday life, discovering spiritual meaning in the mundane, has ever been one of the great themes of Jewish education and pastoral practice.

Yet few efforts are more treacherous than seeking to

Rabbinical student Stephen Stein, '03, reading Torah at services held during the Board of Governors meeting the day after the Inauguration; (from left) Rabbi Ruth Alpers, '94, Jay Stein Director of Human Relations and Pastoral Counseling; Stanley P. Gold; Richard J. Scheuer; Mona Kerstine, Overseer and Chair of Local Arrangements for the Inauguration; and Ilene Gold; (seated in the background) rabbinical student John Linder, '03, and Rabbi Ellenson

Rabbi Norman J. Cohen, '71, Provost

understand ourselves and others. Too often we congratulate ourselves on how well we understand, yet we are regularly disquieted by the puzzling pathology of human personality. When Nathan Zuckerman, the narrator of Philip Roth's novel *The Human Stain* (2000), ponders the assertion that "everyone knows" the truth about another character's behavior, he explodes in anger:

> Because we don't know, do we? *Everyone knows* . . . How what happens the way it does? What underlies the anarchy of the train of events, the uncertainties, the mishaps, the disunity, the shocking irregularities that define human affairs?

Nobody knows . . . . "Everyone knows" is the invocation of the cliché and the beginning of the banalization of experience, and it's the solemnity and the sense of authority that people have in voicing the cliché that's so insufferable. What we know is that, in an unclichéd way, nobody knows anything. You *can't* know anything. The things you *know* you don't know. Intention? Motive? Consequence? Meaning? All that we don't know is astonishing. Even more astonishing is what passes for knowing.

When the ground seems to shake and shift beneath us, when life seems to be poignantly painful and perversely unfair, Judaism provides perspective and solace, courage and inner strength. It joins with prayer in nourishing the soul and helping in that most desperate of desires – the yearning to make sense out of the painful perplexities and confusing ironies of human experience.

And so, this is an apt occasion to celebrate the educational mission of Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion and to renew our commitment as Jews to the historic traditions of maintaining an open mind, preserving tradition, and the meaning of life.

In doing so, we can do no better than to reflect upon some words of David Ellenson: "The task of the Jew, of every human being, is to take those sparks of holiness that are innate in all people and touch and transform them so that these sparks become manifest in the world." May this ennobling thought mark every feature of David Ellenson's leadership.

Benediction

Rabbi Norman J. Cohen
Provost

God of Ages Past; Our God:

We ask that You bestow your blessings upon David Ellenson and his family. Like our forebearer Abraham, in this week's parashah, he has been called to embark on a journey of leadership.

It is not easy to leave that place of our youth, the place of comfort, Haran, where our family grew and we planted deep roots. It is not easy to set out on an unmarked path, without the certainty of knowing what the future will hold, what obstacles lie ahead. And even with the promise of personal renown and greatness, it is not easy to ask one's family to come along, those who have not heard the call directly. And it is not easy to clearly see the destination, to know when in fact we have arrived at God's place, when we are doing God's work.

But it is all about vision – about seeing, about knowing – that however difficult the journey, the place to which we have committed ourselves is kadosh, holy.

As was said to Abraham, therefore, David Ellenson, we say to you: he'yaiy berachah – May you be a blessing! May you bring blessing to yourself, your family, the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, to the whole House of Israel, as you help us shape a seminary that will ensure the continuity of our people and be a legacy for future generations.

World Jewry: Retrospective and Prospective

Academic Symposium in Celebration of the Inauguration of Rabbi David Ellenson, Ph.D.

PAULA HYMAN
Lucy Moses Professor of Modern Jewish History, Yale University
Academic Symposium Moderator

WELCOME TO "World Jewry: Retrospective and Prospective," the academic symposium launching a day of celebration in honor of the Inauguration of Rabbi David Ellenson, the new President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

It is extremely appropriate to have this kind of symposium today – to have both an opportunity and an obligation to reflect today on the state of world Jewry. The opportunity is provided by the inauguration of David Ellenson as the eight President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

The College-Institute has a long history of scholar leaders and David Ellenson simply adds luster to that history. As a scholar as well as a rabbi, as a sensitive interpreter of Jewish thought and experience, David Ellenson brings intellectual concerns and talents to his role as a Jewish leader. His inauguration would be incomplete without his scholarly reflection on the meaning of our journey as a people in the modern world and that, with all modesty, is what we are attempting to provide this morning. Moreover, Rabbi Ellenson himself gives expression to the transnational nature of contemporary Jewish life.

He has written and taught on European, American, and Israeli Jewish history. He takes seriously the fact that Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion has four campuses and an international student body. He is especially committed to the importance of Israel in the educational experience of students at HUC-JIR. Moreover, he has a vision of the strengthening of Jewish life internationally in the 21st century. So we certainly have an opportunity this morning to reflect on world Jewry.

We also have an obligation to reflect on the state of world Jewry because of where we find ourselves in 2002. Fifty years ago, after the tumultuous events of mid-century – after the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel, we might have expected, as we projected into the future into our own time, a number of accomplishments in the 21st century. First, we might have expected the acceptance of the State of Israel within the community of nations. We might have expected a growing closeness between Diaspora and Israeli Jews and an accommodation of Israel with its neighbors.

Second, we might have projected the flourishing of American Jewry in terms of prosperity and integration, both of which we have seen. We also might have thought, or at least hoped for, the assurance of the transmission of Jewish culture in America and also even for Jewish creativity in America. And finally we might have envisioned the end of anti-Semitism in the modern world because of the horrific consequences of the Holocaust. Anti-Semitism, so it seemed in 1950 or 1952, had been completely delegitimized and it appeared that the trajectory would be for its complete disappearance. That vision of the present has not been fully achieved. I've presented a somewhat sobering view of 2002.

To be fair, we have seen some positive changes that we could not have foretold fifty years ago. Most importantly is the end of Communism and the possibility for Jews living in the former Soviet Union and other former Communist states to live as Jews, to build their institutions in their countries, or to emigrate elsewhere. Our goals today are to explore the issues of the paradoxes of contemporary Jewish life as they play themselves out in Europe, in Israel, and in the United States with an eye to the past and also to the future.

As a people of diverse cultures, classes, and societal contexts, we have confronted the challenges of modernity for more than two centuries and in very different forms. What we have learned from the past and what is new in our own time is the subject of this symposium, with presentations by three distinguished speakers from different parts of the world: David Myers of the United States, Beate Klarsfeld of Europe, and Ruth Gavison of Israel, as well as the remarks of Arthur Hertzberg, a distinguished historian and public intellectual, who was unable to attend the symposium for health reasons but whose remarks are published as part of proceedings of the Inauguration day.

ARTHUR HERTZBERG
Visiting Bronfman Professor of the Humanities,
New York University

NEEDLESS TO SAY, I am deeply saddened not to be at this session in person. I grieve not for my state of health, which precludes travel at this moment, and not even for the remarks that I will not be privileged to make in the discussion after the symposiasts have concluded their prepared remarks. I agreed to come because David Ellenson is being installed as president of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. I take great pride in him. He is a former student of mine at Columbia who has shown in his own person and in his own career that it is possible to be a Jewish activist, a great teacher, a creative scholar, and a role model as *mensch* and rabbi. He is a blessing to the generation which he will help lead towards knowledge of Torah and faith in God.

In Rabbi Ellenson's honor, those who are taking part in this morning's program have been asked to reflect on both the past and the future of world Jewry. This is almost as tall an order as a question that was once posed in an examination in a history course at Johns Hopkins University when I was an undergraduate: "Discuss the rise and fall of man from Adam to Adolph Hitler." Obviously, I cannot deal today with the whole sweep of Jewish history and so I must limit myself to a few remarks about the time of transition from the premodern apartness in which Jews lived and the last two centuries or so in which Jews have been trying to find and define a place for themselves in the open society. I can only offer you a few clues as to what has been happening.

I shall be challenging, qualifying, and even denying some of the accepted assessments of this history. It has been said over and over again that Jewish modernity is the result of the attempts by Jewish thinkers and leaders to redefine Jews and Judaism in Western terms. Early Reform Judaism presented Jewish religion as parallel both in dogma and in practice to enlightened Protestantism, or even as a Jewish version of Unitarianism. In the middle years of the nineteenth century, Nachman Krochmal in Galicia and Heinrich Graetz and Moses Hesse in Germany defined the Jewish community in terms that were borrowed from the nationalisms which then dominated Europe. By the end of the century, some Jews were trying to be "just like everybody else" by fashioning the Jewish Socialist Bund, a revolutionary's workers party which somehow found reason to cling to the Yiddish language. Others chose to become nationals of a "normal" political state which Herzl envisioned in his call to action to create the Jewish state. But Herzl, at least in the beginning, before the Eastern Europeans got hold of him, was indifferent to claims of Jewish religion and culture. He would just as soon as solve the "Jewish problem," which he defined as the persistence of anti-Semitism, by taking the Jews to the supposedly friendly pampas of Argentina.

So, the thesis still comes trippingly to the tongue and to the pen of Jewish historians that the modern Jewish experience was created from the outside by forces which originated in the larger society. Jews were simply busy trying to work their way into the new spaces that seemingly had been defined for them by the revolutions and wars, and the changing ideologies, of the modern era. I have myself contributed to this myth in my very first work, the introductory essay to *The Zionist Idea*, in which, writing in the 1950's, I defined Zionism as a modern secular movement with its deepest roots in modernity as a whole.

But the Talmud tells us that there is a vast difference between those who study texts, any serious text, only a hundred times and those who study them one hundred and one times. After my hundred and first rereading of the high points of Zionist literature, I have come to the new conclusion that Jewish modernity is largely a creation of the Jews themselves. To be sure, they used an enormous amount of material which was lying around in the general society but the question remains: why did most Jews

Dr. Paula Hyman and HUC-JIR Governor Barbara Friedman

refuse to stay voluntarily within their own culture and tradition?

The explanations that are usually given are unsatisfactory. It is simply not true that most Jews were persuaded early on that the majority culture was superior to their own. On the contrary, the founders of "the scientific study of Judaism" in the early years of the nineteenth century insisted with substantial passion and great erudition that the learning of the Jews was an essential foundation of Western culture and that the Jewish spirit through the ages had not been culturally inferior. So many of the Jews who left Judaism in the modern age, such as Heinrich Heine and Karl Marx's father, Heinrich, or Moses Mendelssohn's son, Abraham, avowed that they were not leaving Judaism because it was culturally or morally inferior; they simply wanted to open the door for themselves to the opportunities of the larger society.

It is also not true that adherence to the inherited forms and faith of Judaism was a barrier to economic advancement and success. The basic fortune of the Rothschilds was acquired by the founder of the clan late in the eighteenth century: he was an Orthodox Jew of the old school living in the ghetto of Frankfurt. His sons and some of his grandsons remained within the inherited Jewish life. Many made the contrary choice to abandon the inherited traditions but their decision was not forced by economic necessity. The underlying reason was a choice that had been centuries in the making in the very Jewish community and within the very Jewish life which was supposed to be preserving the past unchanged.

By the sixteenth century many Jews had become visibly tired of being passive, of surviving to wait for the Messiah. Yehudah ibn Verga wrote the first reflections on the great disaster that happened to the Jews of the Iberian Peninsula in the last years of the fifteenth century. He identified the sin for which Jews were being punished as their having become too comfortable in the world of the Gentiles. They had lost the sense of their urgent need to be redeemed and returned to their own land. The line from ibn Verga to the new Kabbalah of Isaac Luria, a half century later, is indirect but clear. Luria took the Kabbalah away from its long preoccupation with finding the way of man's ascending to God towards the need to make a road for man to redeem the world and, as part of that redemption, to redeem the Jews. A century later the most successful of all the false messiahs in the history of the Jews during the exile, Shabtai Zvi, rallied the majority of the Jews of the world around his promise that he would return the Jews to their land and effect their redemption. The sober businessmen in towns like Hamburg who sold their property in anticipation of the messianic event were impatient for the glories of the return to Zion and for a life that would no longer be hindered by their unique and negative status as Jews.

I could go on alluding to Jewish attitudes during the three centuries from 1500 to 1800 in which, in various forms, impatience with the exile was expressed evermore forcefully. Indeed, I am these days encouraging the brightest of my graduate students to write her dissertation on this very theme. Her work, if she undertakes it, will support Gershom Scholem's assertion that the modern Jewish movements, including even those like early Reform Judaism which seemed to be entirely "Western" in origin, were really based on the tiredness of the Jews with their waiting for God to redeem them and their eagerness to rise beyond the vexations and indignities of the exile.

I more than suspect that a serious study of the subject of distemper among Jews of passively waiting for God to intervene and change their destiny has a deep history leading back as far as the first exile, after the Temple had been destroyed by the Babylonians. The prophet Ezekiel may have counseled the exiles to make as good a life as they could in the foreign lands and wait for God to redeem them, but his contemporary, the prophet Jeremiah, wrote the Book of Lamentations out of his profound anger that God could have allowed this destruction of the Jewish people to happen and his demand that the redemption come soon. Perhaps the place to end this set of allusions of Jewish distemper with their passivity in the exile is to evoke the image of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, as prisoner of the Assyrians. Late in the nineteenth century Yehudah Leib Gordon, the leading poet in modern Hebrew of that day, wrote a daring poem in which the blinded Zedekiah speaks as he walks in stocks in a mill to thresh wheat. Zedekiah has been made into a working animal but he keeps thinking about the war that he lost. He curses the prophet Jeremiah for having weakened the will to resist of the people of Judah and was thus one of the fathers of their disastrous defeat. The poet Gordon's Zedekiah is not passively accepting the judgments of God and waiting for His favor to shine upon him. He is brimming with resentment at his defeat, as he drags himself around in the millstone as a blinded animal. His ideal is that the Jews will one day rise again and actively make their own destiny.

I TURN NOW to the present and future. In all its many varieties, Jewish thought and Jewish action have been devoted to replacing passivity with action. It is of course true that the greatest disaster in our history, the Holocaust,

Deanie and Jay Stein, benefactors of the Stein Human Relations and Pastoral Counseling Directorship, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati, with the Ellensons

took place in the middle of the twentieth century and that the Jewish people could do very little to fight back. We were the captives of the horrible will of others and we did not even have large assent among Jews to accept the horrors as a martyrdom enjoined by the unknowable will of God. But the Holocaust has not been the preamble to the rebirth of Jewish passivity. The messianic turmoil that exists nowadays in some circles is not the old messianism of waiting for God to redeem us. On the contrary, its stigmata are those of armed prophets who insist that we must actively build "the undivided land of Israel."

The truest guideposts to the meaning of Jewish modernity are the extraordinary creativity of the last two generations, and, be it admitted, the quest for influence and power. The energies which went into the creation of Israel were fueled not, as our enemies say these days, by any passion to be the colonial masters of the Palestinian Arabs. On the contrary, the state was built to transform our people from victims into victors. Its central assertion was and remains the "law of return" which guarantees that any Jew has the inalienable right to claim his place in the Jewish state. This is recompense for the many centuries in which potentates, large and small, refused to allow Jews in their domains. There is no way of understanding the passion of Jews for their success in the United States without taking account of the persecutions which they were escaping when they chose, or were forced, to emigrate from various parts of Europe.

Some thirty or forty years ago, it was still essentially forbidden for anyone of any authority among American Jews to say anything other than that Jews are politically just like everybody else: they are many individuals who act by their own wishes in a free society. American Jews today do not blanch when they are told that they are the only white group of "haves" which has consistently voted by a margin of at least two to one for candidates of the Democratic Party. We remain partisans of the welfare state. The one issue on which Jews are in overwhelming agreement is to continue to push in American politics for support of Israel. Jews do not now fear the accusation of undue influence among the leadership elites of American life as a whole. On the contrary, we now take substantial and unadorned delight in this present reality.

What has happened in the last half century, both in Israel and in the United States, represents a profound transformation of the self-image of the Jews and of the perception of Jews by others. We are no longer victims on the fringes of human history, we are actors who play roles of significance, far beyond our numbers. The reappearance of overt anti-Semitism in circles in which we never expected it to appear, such as the attacks on Israel and Zionism

among the left wing intelligentsia, is best explained by this historic change. The Western intelligentsia, both religious and secular, has long been accustomed to being begged for compassion for Jews as victims, but how does one relate to the Jewishness of Ariel Sharon, or, for that matter, of Henry Kissinger? Much more fundamental is the question of how the Jews themselves are to deal with the exercise of their unprecedented power. What are the guidelines and what are the constraints? How secure is the possession of power in any amount, in a world in which the superpowers of yesterday are ever less powerful and depend more and more on the good will of the remaining superpower, the United States of America, which is itself increasingly terrorized, by largely invisible enemies? Have the Jews arrived among the wielders of power late in the historic day when power is no guarantee of long term security and well-being?

To ask these questions is almost equivalent to answering them. The future of the Jewish people worldwide requires an age in which decent laws govern the affairs of humanity. Many, many centuries ago the Talmud ruled that the lives of Jews were not safe among people who denied and disregarded universal moral norms. A Jew was forbidden to go out into the desert in a caravan unless he was sure that the others in that company believed in a God that would punish them if they murdered someone for their advantage, to steal his money and his goods. It goes without saying that the Jew himself is prohibited from using his power to push out of his realm those whom he finds inconvenient to his purposes. Where there is no law, and the only principle that prevails is let the strong do whatever they want, we Jews very soon are, or will be made into, the enemy who can be victimized.

In one of the most serious conversations that I had with my father about Zionism, and its assertion of Jewish power, he said to me: "The essence of Jewish statesmanship is to remember how to count. We must always remember that there are many more of them (Arabs or Western Gentiles) than there are of us." He added, "the glory of our recent military victories in the Middle East should not so intoxicate us that we would forget this basic proposition: there are more of them than there are of us." This Hasidic *Rav* and *rebbe,* my father, surprised me even more by adding a quotation from Friedrich Nietzsche: "The Bible is a book of morality invented by the weak to hobble and contain the strong." Nietzsche made this observation to call for a revolt against the Bible: my father evoked this thought to emphasize that Jews are safe only when power is restrained, everyone's power, by morality.

May I conclude these reflections on our Jewish situation, past and present, with one more thought. We have somehow or other survived many centuries of powerlessness by increasingly longing for the possession of power in our own hands. We are now celebrating our having about as much power as a small people could wield. We must now move towards a new age in which we will belong neither among the victims nor among the powerful. We are inevitably moving towards a new age of interdependence. We must help fashion a future in which the many traditions and peoples of this world exist not to do battle with each other but to cooperate. If it is to survive, the world must become a place not of victimhood or power but of interdependence. If we are to survive in the complicated and dangerous century to come, we must help all of mankind reach the promised land of laying down their weapons and helping each other to live.

Because my earliest training was in the Talmud, and I am even now preparing myself in these late days of my career to write a book on how to read the Talmud without the blinkers of fundamentalism, permit me to end with a Talmudic text. The rabbis of old added together the number of sacrifices that were especially offered on the altar in Jerusalem during the holiday of Sukkoth and they discovered that the number was seventy. In the rhetoric of the Talmud, all the nations of the world were seventy, so the rabbis concluded that these sacrifices were enjoined in the Temple itself on behalf of all the nations. Jews could not be secure and live happy lives unless the rest of the world had risen beyond its wars and hungers. To this train of thought the rabbis added that every woe that affects only the Jews is not really a problem; the true woes of the world are those which affect everyone.

I pray that the teaching of this great bastion of Judaism will, under Rabbi Ellenson's leadership, be ever clearer in its message. Judaism is a tradition of piety and learning; not, God forbid, of ethnic fierceness. Our tradition commands us to live at peace with all of mankind and to help all the seventy nations of the world to live in peace with each other.

David N. Myers
Professor of Jewish History;
Vice Chair, History Department;
University of California, Los Angeles

It is an honor to be here with you today to join in the celebration of our dear friend and close colleague David Ellenson, whose combination of intellect, scholarly excellence, warmth, compassion, and *menschlichkeit*, is known to us all and portends a very bright future for this institution. And, indeed, this rare combination situates David Ellenson in a position of prominence on the stage of American and world Jewish leadership.

It is also a great honor and privilege to share this stage with such distinguished colleagues and friends, people whom I've admired from near and far for a long time. We regret the absence of Arthur Hertzberg, who is a towering figure in American Jewish culture and scholarship. I myself wanted to hear Professor Hertzberg's remarks, and I feel humbled to stand in his stead today.

But I suspect that our perspectives on the current predicament of world, and particularly American Jewry, would be somewhat different. In recent years, Professor Hertzberg has written about American Jewry, pointing out that despite all of its material attainments, it is in a state of decline—certainly from the heady days of rich Jewish knowledge, communal unity and ritual observance that marked pre-modern Jewish life. My perspective is a bit different. In looking out upon the vista of American Jewry, I see much more of mixed bag.

The glass is both half full and half empty – as reflected in two very interesting countervailing trends. The first of them emerges against the backdrop of the sense of fragility and volatility in which we find ourselves today, a fragility certainly exacerbated by September 11th. What I'm referring to is the drift and alienation that we notice amongst American Jews from a position of coherence and connection to the American-Jewish communal body. We see drift and alienation that really mark the culmination of centuries or, at least, decades of integration, assimilation, and intermarriage. This pattern of drift and alienation has been born out recently in the latest National Jewish Population Survey, which depicts American Jewry as aging and declining. Indeed, this survey describes a drop in population from 5.5 million Jews to 5.2 million Jews over the past decade or so. This is an unsettling trend to be sure, and one that raises concerns that perhaps we may be the last or amongst the last generations of Jews around.

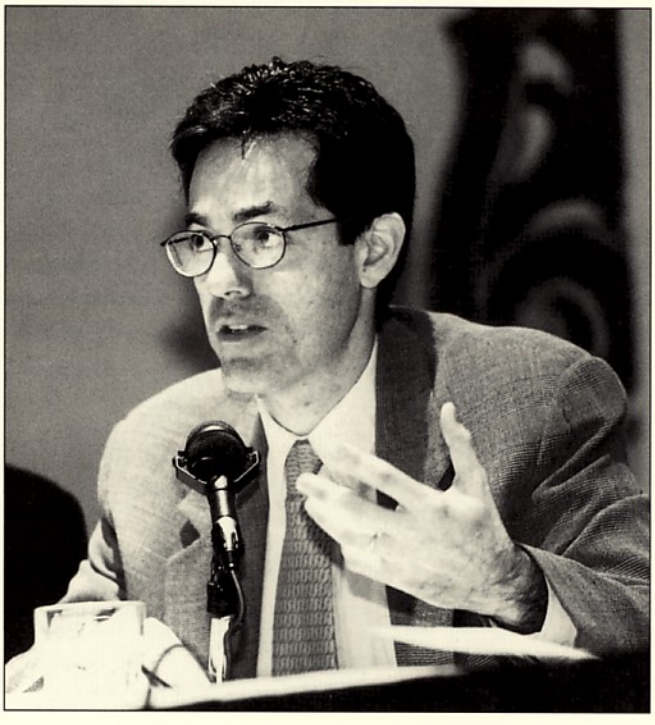
But as the great 20th century Jewish thinker Shimon Rawidowicz once observed, it is a feature of the Jewish frame of mind that every generation believes itself to be the last. Generation after generation. Nonetheless, legitimate fears abound about demographic decline. But I think we would be remiss if we didn't notice another very interesting and important countervailing trend, one which is manifested here today and in this institution. That is to say, there are many signs of cultural rejuvenation, regeneration, even as some have called it, renaissance in American Jewish life.

Among the features or symptoms of this trend is, first, an intensification of spiritual seeking of all sorts. This assumes many different forms, from New Age spirituality, to Zen Buddhism, to a return to more traditional forms of Jewish expression, to a combination of all of them. So this, I think, is one of the signs of vitality.

Second, we must also take notice of the significant broadening of the parameters of Jewish education. There has been a very significant proliferation of Jewish day schools and Jewish day school students that reflects this new energy.

Third, there is a veritable explosion of Jewish studies, programs, centers, and chairs on American college and university campuses. And fourth, there's been a significant

Dr. David N. Myers



expansion of adult learning opportunities with the Wexner program as a model, but replicated in a number of different localities throughout this country. So how do we interpret these countervailing currents?

The common sociological wisdom is to talk of an eroding periphery of American Jewry and a solid and narrowing core. I think this model has a number of virtues, but it also fails to note the dynamic relationship between the two currents. The modern Jewish historical experience demonstrates that fear or anxiety over attrition has ironically served as a stimulus, prompting the creation of new forms of Jewish collective identity and organizations. This is a mechanism shaped by centuries of responding to crisis or tragedy, though it receives new impetus at the dawn of the modern period in the 18th century.

Professor Hertzberg has shed much light on this period in his book *The French Enlightenment and the Jews.* There he discusses the collapse of the walls of the insular Jewish community, the medieval *kehilah*. The walls come down, the doors to European society, to an enlightened European society, open up, and the Jews begin to make their way through.

In fact, as Professor Hertzberg observed, at times Jews don't walk through these doors; they run, desperate to escape the insular and confined world of old. But in order to get into this new, enlightened European society, Jews have to leave behind a substantial portion of their collective or communal identity. And this bespeaks a bargain they have to strike that is memorialized in one of the most fitting and telling epitaphs for the modern Jewish experience.

It's a line uttered by a delegate to the French National Assembly in the midst of the debate over whether the Jews of France could and should be emancipated. The delegate was one Count Clermont-Tonnerre, and he said, "Everything should be granted to the Jews as individuals, nothing to the Jews as a nation or group." Herein lies the challenge of the modern liberal ideal for the Jews. Liberalism values the individual and universal much more than the collective or the particular.

So how do Jews, as it were, square the circle? How do they balance their desire to preserve a strong measure of group identity with their desire to integrate into a new, enlightened society? For some, this predicament yielded no solution other than conversion; here one thinks of the famous line of the German Jewish poet, Heinrich Heine, who said that for him conversion was the ticket of admission to European society. For a much larger number of Jews, contending with this tension did not entail abandonment of Jewish communal affiliations. On the contrary, it led to new forms of Jewish self-expression. And here we can think of the rise in the 19th century of denominational movements, including the Reform Movement, as measures to enfranchise Jews who otherwise might be lost to Jewish religious culture.

I think more particularly of Isaac Mayer Wise, the founding president of this institution, who, in his inaugural address 127 years ago, spoke both of the need for enriching Jewish knowledge and engaging fully with the broader cultural universe. Like the other denominations, the Reform Movement was and is a path toward deepening Jewish commitment while living within a broader cultural world. Striking the balance requires a constant recalibration, veering between the poles of tradition and innovation. In this regard, stasis, remaining static, is the death knell of modern Judaism. This constant recalibration is necessary because liberalism, particularly for the modern Jew of the West, has been a relentless force – persistent in its quest for the individual soul, persistent in its erasure of the boundaries of group particularity.

The constant recalibration between tradition and innovation is also necessary because anti-Semitism has been a recurrent force in modern Jewish life, especially in Europe. Our colleague, Beate Klarsfeld, will address this in her remarks. But suffice it to say that anti-Semitism triggers a set of creative responses similar to those that attrition has over the past two centuries or so.

Here one thinks of a figure like Theodore Herzl, that assimilated Austrian Jewish journalist who, while observing the unfolding of the Dreyfus Affair in France in the 1890s, realized that the path of emancipation and enlightenment was perhaps a bit more illusory and elusive than Jews had thought 100 years before. And so Herzl sat down in the midst of this unfolding affair and drafted a proposal to create a Jewish state – a state that he imagined would take rise in some 50 years (a prediction that reveals a good deal of clairvoyance). One thinks here too of the remarkable personal, communal, and institutional resilience shown by Jews in the wake of the Shoah, the most devastating tragedy to befall the Jewish people.

To summarize up to this point: when faced with the often interrelated threats of assimilation and anti-Semitism, Jews in the modern age have been quite inventive in reviving and recrafting their collective sense of self. Modern Jewish history has posed many challenges to Jews. Today we face new challenges. They may be familiar to us. They may bear a resemblance to old ones, but they have new contours in our age of globalization.

As we move towards the creation of a single, global market, and as we move towards the creation of a single cyber culture, we must worry about the leveling of the norms and habits of particular groups. *The New York Times* columnist Tom Friedman, who was honored by this institution earlier this year, put it succinctly in the title of one of his books, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. Friedman referred to the almost universal appetite for material objects like a Lexus on one hand, and the danger that global market forces pose to the olive tree rooted in its native soil.

Like the initial challenge of enlightenment, like the challenge posed by Clermont-Tonnerre's statement about granting the Jews everything as individuals, globalization carries with it its own risks. They include the dissolution of discrete cultural markers that can then trigger a counter-reaction in the form of fundamentalism. At the same time, there are new opportunities as well that we find in the era of globalization, particularly for our Jewish community.

In an age of instantaneous communication there is the possibility of finding a more global Jewish idiom—the idiom of what I might call a Jewish cultural nation that traverses geographic borders. How do we find our way to this idiom? A few brief suggestions to conclude.

❧ First, although it is somewhat sacrilege here to utter these words, we may need to think of Jewish religious culture beyond denominational boundaries. For these boundaries sometimes segregate and distance, especially those who feel alienated, as much as they reach out and unify.

❧ Second, we should attempt to push towards more mutuality in our relationship between Israel and North American Jewry. I have in mind a mutuality born not of crisis and not of a desire to instrumentalize or exploit the other, but a mutuality of respect. In many ways, the negotiation between the particular and the universal that has been so characteristic of the modern western experience for Jews is shared by our Israeli cousins. I'm reminded of this when I recall the latest book of the Israeli historian and journalist, Tom Segev, translated in English as *Elvis in Jerusalem*. Segev discusses the powerful forces of Americanization that are sweeping over Israeli culture, while also noting a kind of counter-reaction to Americanization in the form of a rejudaization of Israeli culture. Here too, the forces of particularism and universalism are very much present, as is the tension between them, in Israeli society.

❧ Third, we must do more to integrate the newly resurgent European Jewish communities, those communities of the former Soviet Union, those communities of Western and Central Europe, into an expanded Jewish cultural nation. We simply can't afford to leave anyone out. And it may well be that European Jewry in some way can serve as a productive mediating agent between the two large demographic blocks of Jews in the world: North America and Israeli Jewry.

❧ Fourth, we must remember that assimilation, while presented here as something of a social evil, is also an inevitable and sometimes vitalizing feature of modern Jewish life. Indeed, throughout history, Jews have invariably assimilated into a wide array of cultures, and done so quite productively, whether we think back to ancient Babylon or Hellenistic Alexandria or medieval Cordoba, Renaissance Italy or 19th century German Jewry. There is a benign side to assimilation that vitalizes and enriches.

At the end of the day, the pattern of creative response to challenge and crisis is, alas, no guarantee of future vibrancy. But it might temper our own concern that we will be the last generation of Jews in the world. Historical experience provides some grounds for optimism. It suggests that Jews are less a dying people than, as Shimon Rawidowicz put it, an ever dying people, constantly predicting their own demise as a way of assuring their own future.

Beate Klarsfeld
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Has France become an anti-Semitic country? We have in our minds the images of the synagogues destroyed, rabbis beaten up by young Muslims, schools burned down, students attacked and molested. This explosion started in September 2000 after the second *intifada* against Israel. The first attacks saw the burning of synagogues in Paris and suburbs – Villepintes, Creil, Trappes, and other Jewish institutions throughout France. Cemeteries were profaned. Jewish worshipers were molested, stoned; death threats appeared, bomb alerts; Nazi inscriptions: "death to the Jews," "In Paris, like in Gaza – *Intifada*." Such slogans are now shouted in pro-Palestinians demonstrations in Paris and elsewhere.

After Israel decided to attack the terrorists in Jenin who were sending suicide bombers into Israel, violence against Jews increased again. That same week three synagogues were burnt down.

The attacks against the Jews are due, in small part, to the Muslim community in France. France has the largest Muslim community in Europe and also the largest Jewish community, but Jews are only 600,000 and the Muslims ten times more.

A part of the Muslim community attacks the Jewish community, which has been the victim of the most horrible massacre that history has ever known. The fact that such attacks take place on French soil where the highest elites of the country have knowingly contributed to this massacre must not only be condemned but also immediately stopped.

Since de-colonization, France has decided to have a pro-Arab policy. That pro-Arab policy of the executive, the government, and the French diplomacy is not the result of anti-Semitism but the result of a policy choice due to political and economic interests.

France says: "We are attached to the existence of the State of Israel" and at the same time declares "Israel should not defend itself. Pull out from the West Bank and everything will be all right."

Israelis are commonly perceived as willful and cruel occupiers, like an immense Goliath before a little David. But we all know that the conflict is not only between the Israelis and the Palestinians, but between the Arab states (the real Goliath) and the Israelis (the true David), because the Arab states – their leaders, preachers, professors, intellectuals – refuse the existence of a Jewish state in the Middle East.

Therefore, by giving biased information on the conflict, French elites from the political world and the intelligentsia create an active anti-Semitism on the part of an excited and violent minority of the Muslim community. They feel carried away, transcended by their adhesion to a cause which they hear about all the time on TV, radio, newspapers – that it is a just cause.

But any sane mind knows that Israel cannot go further than the propositions made by Barak at Camp David and Taba:

- More or less one hundred percent of the West Bank
- Creation of a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem and the sharing of the Old City.

But Arafat rejected those offers of peace, sending his own people and the Israeli people into a terrible bloodshed.

It is not fair that in France, neither in the media nor in the political world are the true questions raised. It is abnormal that it is not said clearly: here is what was offered by the Israelis, here is what was demanded by the Palestinians.

The Palestinians wanted the return of the refugees and their descendants – 4 million people within the State of Israel. Thus there would have been three countries with a majority Palestinian population: Jordan: 70%, The Palestinian State: 100%, and Israel with more than 50%. Is that an offer of peace? No, that clearly means: "We do not want you in the region as a Jewish country."

It is abnormal that in France it is never remembered that until 1967 Jordan, which controlled the West Bank, never proposed even a simple autonomy to the Palestinians. They were Jordanian citizens – that is all. No right to speak, no right to claim, no university.... They were only allowed to hate Israel.

It is abnormal that the fact that Arafat and his negotiators are denying the existence of a Jewish Temple in Jerusalem does not raise an eyebrow in the French intelligentsia.

It is abnormal that France and Europe don't want to understand how hard it is for a democracy to have to negotiate with dictators who do not wish the good and the

Beate Klarsfeld

happiness of their people but are looking to further their own power. And such power can only be maintained by the hate of Israel.

It is abnormal to hear in France the word apartheid applied to Israel, when 20% of the Knesset is composed of Arab Israelis, while in France there is not even one French person of Arab origin in Parliament.

It is abnormal that France and Europe do not condemn clearly and vigorously the campaign of hate against the Jewish people present everywhere in the Arab states. This is an anti-Semitism of the Middle Ages: "the Jews drink the blood of Arab babies"; an antisemitism of the 1930s: "The Jews control the world"; and a neo-Nazi antisemitism: "The Shoah is an invention of the Jewish people"; not taking into account rumors presented as facts: "The Jews destroyed the Twin Towers."

It is abnormal that this learning of hate, present also in Palestinian school books, is financed by the European Union.

It is not normal that France chooses not to realize that countries like Iraq or Iran want the destruction of Israel – not cowardly little countries, but countries who did not hesitate to launch a war where millions died. Iran, who was sending teenagers onto Iraqi mines. Iraq, which razed its own population, launched scuds against Israel, and, if it would have the nuclear bomb, would not hesitate to throw it on Tel Aviv.

For centuries Jews were persecuted in France and in Europe because of their religion. It led to ghettos, expulsions, pogroms. Then, in the nineteenth century, race took over. It led to the Shoah and the destruction of two thirds of the Jews in Europe. Today, anti-Semitism finds its roots in the existence of a State of Israel and the attachment of the Jews of the Diaspora to that state.

The French Revolution freed the Jews but, in the collective subconscious of Europe, the Jewish people have not yet gained the right to be considered an equal to other people. The Jews: yes. Israel: no. It is paradoxical for nations to grant the right for the Jews to reconstitute their state and deny that state the right to defend itself.

This right to self-defense was already refused in 1967. De Gaulle said, "You only have the right to defend once attacked." And when Israeli victory came, de Gaulle said, "The Jewish people are an arrogant and dominating people."

In 1973, attacked by surprise in the south by Egypt, in the east by Jordan and Iraq, and in the north by Syria, Israel did not find any sympathy in France. France even refused to allow the American planes carrying urgently needed weapons to Israel to land on its territories or bases. The French foreign minister said: "I do not see anything astonishing for Arab countries to want to come home."

FRENCH POLICY has not changed today. Human bombs are considered a consequence of the occupation, forgetting that those who commit those crimes against humanity do not want a Jewish state in the first place.

France behaves as if the threats against Israel were insignificant — threats of biological warfare and nuclear weapons, threats in newspapers, speeches, sermons. "It is the duty of each Arab to kill a Jew" is the motto of the Syrian Minister of Defense.

"Do not take those threats seriously," answer the French diplomats. How can we not take them seriously when they are followed by acts of terror? Israel has the duty to defend itself.

Israel also remembers the speeches of the leaders of the Arab states who declared in 1948, just before the war of independence and three years after the Shoah: "We shall exterminate the Jews in such a manner that the massacres done by the Mongols or the Turks will appear pale."

French foreign policy is unjust and dangerous –

unjust to Jews in France, and dangerous because democracies should unite to weaken dictatorships. History has taught us that if you weaken before dictatorships you invite them to enter into war, because hate, and not the pursuit of happiness, is the cement of their power.

But sometimes, when I watch CNN describing France as the most anti-Semitic country of Europe, I feel offended as a French citizen.

France is one of the rare democracies which had the courage to come to grips with its past and to understand what led it to accomplish that which Jacques Chirac, president of the French Republic, defined as "irreparable": the complicity of the French state, of "France," in cooperating with the police to arrest the Jews of France and deliver them to their Nazi butchers.

France is the country which had the courage to put to trial Maurice Papon — responsible for the deportation of 1600 Jews from the region of Bordeaux, among them more than 200 children. Maurice Papon, a man who had been de Gaulle's Prefect of Police for nine years and then Minister of the French Republic. The fact that a man as powerful and influential could have been put to trial and condemned shows that an overwhelming part of the French opinion condemns what was considered as normal at the end of the war.

Papon had only followed the orders of his government acting on German demands. Papon was not alone. All the prefects of Vichy acted like him. Jurors could have considered that if everyone in his field of work had acted like him, he should not be held responsible and therefore acquitted. But the jurors, representing the French people, condemned him to ten years in jail.

It is true that today he is free, but he has been freed by members of his own cast and not by the French people.

Yes, I am also proud to be a French citizen when I remember the words of the speech of Jacques Chirac at the Vel d'Hiv:

> There are moments in the life of a nation which offend the memory and the idea one has of one's country. Yes, the criminal folly of the Germans was helped by French men, was helped by the French state. France, the homeland of Enlightenment and human rights, land of asylum, France on that day was accomplishing the irreparable.

It is true that this speech was also due to more than 15 years of campaigns by my husband, Serge Klarsfeld, and the Association of the Sons and Daughters of the Jews Deported from France.

This was the work of militants protesting actively against the impunity of those who had been accomplices in the deportation of one-fourth of the Jews of France. It was the work of historians giving another reading to this tragic page of history, opening new archives which until then had been closed, and demonstrating at the same time that the reaction of French opinion was the decisive factor in the survival of the three-fourths remaining.

This was the work of memorialization, giving to each victim of the Shoah in France his or her identity and personal itinerary, and taking them out from the obscurity where the feeling of irresponsibility of those who had contributed to their doom had confined them. It was the work of lawyers, by starting the Barbie, Brunner, Leguay, Bousquet, Touvier, and Papon cases and creating in France the judicial notion of crimes against humanity. It was the work of propagandists (in the good sense of the term) by sending to the media the necessary elements in order to change the collective conscience of the French society.

It is true that we were always the initiators, but in order to succeed we had to come into favorable spirits.

I am proud also that as a result of our demands the French government, more than 60 years after the events, decided to bestow a life pension to all Jewish orphans who had lost a mother, a father, or both, and for the many, now that older age had come, were living under an unjust financial situation.

I FEEL PROUD to be a French citizen when I remember the results of the presidential elections of May [2002] where 82% of the French people voted against Le Pen, who personifies racism, anti-Semitism, and intolerance — and when one knows that Le Pen carries arguments which have the black magic of demagogy.

I must admit that it is difficult to answer my introductory question in a clear manner. France is no more anti-Semitic by prejudice of race or religion than other countries. However, the fact that an important part of the French intelligentsia considers the Jews who side with Israel and its policy of self-defense almost as siding with Nazis is dangerous for the Jewish community in France.

History is writing itself today. No one knows what history will bring, because history is the result of the will of individuals. What I do know is that if such dictators as Saddam are not neutralized, there will never be a peace in the Middle East and the fate of the Jews in the European communities will grow darker.

Ruth Gavison
Haim H. Cohn Professor of Human Rights,
Hebrew University

Dr. Ruth Gavison

I am very pleased to be here today as the Israeli, because it's conceivable that you could have this symposium without a person coming all the way from Israel. After all, it's quite a distance. And I'm very glad that you chose to have an Israeli on board because clearly the Jewish community in Israel is a very important Jewish community.

It's the second largest, or maybe even under some counts, the largest Jewish community in the world. It's an experiment that sought to revolutionize Jewish existence in the world, because Israel is the only place in the world in which Jews are a majority. Jews have a state that is seen by most of them and by most of others as, in some important senses, a Jewish state.

It was described as such in the United Nation Resolution deciding to found the state or to allow it to start to exist. Israel, in many ways, is a state in which Jews experience problems and opportunities that they do not experience anywhere in the world. They have the power to defend themselves, the power to control immigration, the control over the public culture of Israel. Unlike in different communities or neighborhoods, the public culture in Israel as a whole is Hebrew and Jewish. All these are things that are very easy for Israelis to take for granted. But Jews who live under different circumstances can appreciate the magnitude of the change, and the uniqueness of the kind of Jewish existence that Israel presents.

Israel today, in the last couple of years, is raising even more difficult questions to the prospects of world Jewry than it had done in the past. We used to think of Israel mainly as a safe haven for persecuted Jews. The principle of Return provided that all Jews could go to Israel and become its citizens. This is still the case today, but a new question has emerged: Is Israel a haven for Jews in the world? Or is Israel, because of its policies and the controversy that the policies raises, a factor that is endangering Jews in Israel, as well as creating additional dangers for Jews in the world?

This is an important turning point in the life of a distinguished institution, which is now acquiring new leadership. This is a moment in which it is very important for us to think very clearly about the relationships between the Jewish communities of the world, and about the future of these Jewish communities suggested by these relationships between them as well as by their relations with the rest of the world. I will try to make a contribution towards such thinking today.

Israel as a state, as I said, has unique features. One of the questions I want to raise is how these unique features relate to the hopes that Israel triggered and inspired. We should remember that there were two different distinct but related hopes.

One is security for Jews. Herzl saw the Jewish State as the one place in which Jews as a majority would not be persecuted or even killed by others simply because they were a vulnerable, helpless minority. This, he thought, would change the situation of Jews as well as Jews themselves. Jews having their own power to defend themselves, Jews having the responsibility for their own security, would not be the kind of Jews who have to negotiate constantly just to survive and to be tolerated.

The other vision of a Jewish state (or a Jewish center in Eretz Yisrael), usually connected with Ahad-Ha-am, did not concentrate on the future or the fate of Jews as individuals, seeking to guarantee their physical security. It thought more about the relationship between the life of Jews and Judaism as a national and a cultural tradition. The danger here was not persecution or even genocide, but the growing risks of assimilation and loss of distinct identity. As we have heard here – these risks grew in mod-

ern times because of the waves of emancipation and secularization that were going over Europe, and creating new opportunities for Jews combined with new threats to their identity as Jews. Emancipation for Jews was a complex and mixed blessing. On the one hand it opened for them avenues that were closed before. But at the same time it revealed to them that their segregation, in part self-imposed and in part imposed by others, had its constructive functions. The necessity to live within Jewish communities that are primarily religious, Orthodox communities, reinforced one's Jewish identity. Once the necessity weakened – one's Jewish identity came under serious threats.

Israel was supposed to be a solution to the combination of these two problems by a) providing a place where Jews have the power to defend themselves; and b) by creating the only state in the world in which Jews form a majority and are independent. Having a state means that in Israel Jews have the power and the responsibility that come with a state and they have the tools to create a Jewish-Hebrew public culture for the first time since the Jewish states of the first and second temple.

This is a good time to look at the record of Israel in trying to achieve these two goals. On the first question – that of achieving physical security for Jews – I think the picture is interesting and mixed. On the one hand, Israel is very strong and it does effectively protect Jews in Israel. On the other hand, it seems that in recent times, the most dangerous place for Jews is Israel. What that means in terms of the success of Israel to provide security to Jews is extremely interesting. Clearly, there is now a security threat to Jews in Israel. Some want to conclude that Israel has failed in its first mission. I think it is important to see that this does not follow. Yes, the struggle for a Jewish State is not over, and it will involve, at least for some years to come, Israel's ability to defend itself and deter its enemies. So long as this challenge persists, Jewish life may be at risk in Israel. But in Israel Jews die to defend a form of Jewish life that is unique. And while some die in the streets and not on the battlefield – Jews do maintain their collective life, and we have succeeded in enlisting our strength countering the attacks against us. We are not giving up, and we have the ability and the resources to do so. This is an ability that Jews in other parts of the world do not have. So I think the picture on that one is mixed.

But I want to concentrate mainly on the other aspect of Israel – its contribution to the development of modern Jewish identities and to the prospects of Jewish culture in modern times. Due to Israel's unique features, it's the only community in the world in which the question, "Who is a Jew?" is not a communal, voluntary, privatized question. This fact presents unique possibilities – and unique difficulties, which highlight important aspects and dimensions of contemporary Jewish life. In this community that hosts us today, as well in the reform community the world over, and in other Jewish communities outside of Israel, it is the relevant Jewish community which decides who is a member of the community. Jewish communities in certain places may decide, as they do for instance in this country, to have plural answers to the question, "Who is a Jew?" Consequently, the borderlines of different communities within the inclusive Jewish community, will be determined by their different answers to the question, "Who is a Jew?"

There is something of this in Israel as well. Israel does have different religious communities, who define themselves along different principles and establishments. In this sense, Israel has some religious pluralism for Jews. Some people are seen as Jews by some of these communities, and as non-Jews by others. However, in Israel you cannot completely privatize all these questions, as you do in this country. Part of the Jewishness of Israel means that it is not completely neutral to the Jewish identity of the majority of its citizens. Consequently, it is impossible, or at least it's extremely difficult, for it to separate completely between the philosophical, theological, communal answers to the question, "Who is a Jew?" and the state's legal answer to the same question. In all Jewish communities around the world, theologians, religious leaders, sociologists and historians ask "Who is a Jew?" In all such communities, individuals ask themselves whether, and in what sense, they are Jewish. But only in Israel are these questions that need to be addressed, debated, and even resolved by the state, the laws, politicians and lawyers. In addition, the question "Who is a Jew?" is raised in Israel's legal system in different contexts. One is marriage and divorce; the other is registration; the third and probably the most important is return.

This plurality of contexts is of immense importance, because it requires that the state of Israel recognizes different answers to the question of Jewish membership. The Orthodox always hoped to avoid this conclusion by suggesting that 'Jew' should be defined in all contexts according to Jewish law in its Orthodox interpretation. This would be totally unacceptable to anyone committed to religious freedom. On the other hand, many non-Orthodox sug-

Academic Symposium panelists

gested the difficulty could be solved by recognizing under law the Jewish identity of all those who claim such identity under some acceptable system of Jewish membership. But this simple solution might force the Orthodox to create their own pedigree books, so they can avoid intermarriage with those who claim to be Jewish, are recognized as such by the state, but are not seen as Jews by their own, Orthodox, interpretation of the law! The wish to avoid this result stems not only from respect to the Orthodox tradition and the right of its members to freedom of religion – but also from the necessity of finding a shared political system which is both inclusive and non-coercive to all Jewish streams and persuasions.

This is the case because freedom of religion includes the freedom of the Orthodox to decide that they don't want to intermarry with people who consider themselves Jewish, but are not considered Jewish by them. But on the other hand freedom of religion must defend the right of people who consider themselves Jewish to marry each other, and to go through life's passages and rites in a Jewish way.

What follows from this analysis is very different from the present status quo in Israel – an Orthodox monopoly over most of these issues. I do propose and hope that Israel will indeed change this status quo. But it also shows why the easy way out of a total separation between state and *religion* will not do in Israel.

It's even clearer that Israel cannot separate state and *Jewish national identity* on the issue of return. One of the major reasons for Israel to exist as a Jewish State is enabling Jews who would like to live in the only place in the world which is Jewish should be allowed to do that. Maybe the acquisition of Israeli citizenship by *olim* should not be immediate. Maybe it should not be automatic. But the principle that the Jewish state is always open to Jews is critical, is central. And it's central in the self-definition and in the perception of Israel by Jews out of Israel as well as by its own citizens.

So the question, "Who is a Jew?" is a question that the State of Israel must answer at least in the form of, "Who is going to be eligible to this right to join the Jewish collective in Israel?" It is important to stress that the answer given to this question by the state should not necessarily aspire to be an essentialist answer to the question, "Who is a Jew?" and by contradiction, "Who is not a Jew?" But it will have to be an official, authoritative answer to the question, "Who is legally entitled to become a member of the Jewish collective in Israel?" And I think this is one of the greatest challenges of Israel and one of the important areas of contention – between Israel and Jewish communities abroad. So this is one issue in which Israel is distinct, and cannot adopt the liberal solution of separation. We do want Israel to continue to say that individuals who are members of the collective are entitled to special rights of immigration and we do have to define who these members are.

(I should emphasize that Israel is not the only nation-state which gives members of the national collective privileges of repatriation).

THERE IS ANOTHER UNIQUE ASPECT of Israel in modern Jewish life. Since Israel is now a state, whose citizens and residents include not only those who see themselves as Jews, the Jewish State, as such, must take responsibility for the rights and the welfare of those non-Jews who live under its jurisdiction. In other words, Israel is the only place where a Jewish organization has official responsibility for non-Jews, since the organization is not wholly voluntary. And the question is, How do we deal with this responsibility towards non-Jews? And this is a Jewish question, and it's a political question, and it's a crucial question.

Israel has made a clear commitment to the rights and welfare of all its residents from the very first Declaration of its foundation. In part it made it because of demands of the United Nations and of the international community. But in part it made the commitment because of the wish of the Jewish founding fathers who built Israel. It made the commitment that Israel would be a democracy and that Israel would treat all its residents and all its citizens equally, and with equal dignity. This is seen as both a Jewish command and as a political command. It's a measure of morality, both Jewish and universal, and of political prudence. And it's a central component of the stability and the viability and the possibility to justify the State of Israel to those living in it and to those living outside it.

Hopes and commitments are not enough. One of the main challenges of Israel is whether in fact the Jewish State is compatible with equal citizenship to all, especially non-Jews, and many enemies of Israel suggest that it is not. I think we should take this challenge seriously and stop dismissing it out of hand. I cannot develop the argument here, but I would want to argue that Israel as a Jewish State can and should give equal rights to all its citizens. Israel can and should find the way to strike a balance that will be an acceptable answer to the permanent and eternal question of universalism versus particularism in Jewish life and tradition. Part of that balance is that Israel must and it can give equal dignity to all its residents and all its citizens, Jews and non-Jews alike.

A THIRD PROBLEM that exists for Israel and doesn't exist for Jewish groups elsewhere, is the question of the use of force. Jews have been very important members of many, many communities around the world and they are important participants in decision-making in their countries. This country now is thinking about the possibility of using its force against Iraq, and Jews participate in the debate of "Should America use its force in this or that way?" In Israel it's different because in Israel it's not merely Jews participating in decisions to use the force of their country. It's the decision to use Jewish force to protect the Jewish State. And the challenge against which the use of force is contemplated is made by forces some of which say explicitly that their goal is not to have a Jewish state in the Middle East. The question of using force for Israel raises two different and contradictory threats. And the two threats both involve the fear of double standards.

The first fear is that we justify for ourselves uses of force that we would not justify if used by others under similar circumstances. The basis of this fear is the fact that that some of us, some of the time, still see ourselves primarily as victims struggling to survive. The fact that we think of ourselves as victims is not surprising. It was not too long ago when Jews in Europe were persecuted and murdered just because they were Jews. And we did not get too much help from others. So we had mainly ourselves to count on. And then we did not have a state and an army, and millions of helpless innocent Jews died. We are still under the impression of that trauma. We see many challenges as existential ones. We do not want to concede again that we did not see the signs on the wall. So we tend to see most situations as presenting a choice of either us or them – and we want to fight so that it will be us this time. We do not want to be just and careful and dead. We prefer to err on the side of using too much force – and to survive. And we think that the fact that the international community or other people tell us that we shouldn't use our force in this or that way is not their even-handed judgment of the merits of the case, that we might not see because we are involved. We feel that this is just a remnant of anti-Semitism. That this is again the world being against us.

So there is this one danger and I think it's important to see it as a danger and to remember that we shouldn't justify for ourselves what we wouldn't justify under similar circumstances to others. This is not a principle invented by our enemies to weaken us and lull us. It is in fact a Jewish principle – it was Hillel who said that we should not do to others what we do not want done to us – and a universal, Kantian principle: "You should act by the principle that you're willing to make a general law." Some of those who criticize us may indeed be driven by interests and anti-Semitism. But many are our true and real friends, who want to remind us of the danger of not applying our own principles.

HUC-JIR Governor Nicki Tanner and Overseer David Rousso with Rabbi Ellenson at the Academic Symposium at the S.H. and Helen R. Scheuer Chapel

But there is also another danger and this is the opposite double standard – some of us believe, expect, and demand, that we should not use force in circumstances where it is quite clear that the use of force is justified and called for. This threat may be as dangerous as the first one because it may lead us to hesitate, and to be afraid of using the force that we now have even when we must. This tendency may result from our long time recognition, as a minority, that our specific mode of survival is trying to do without force, of trying to find ways of accommodating, of compromising, of maybe reducing friction. This habit may result in a tendency not to allow ourselves to do what any other group would do and would be entitled to do under similar circumstances. And this is also a very powerful danger – and it is materialized in parts of the voices that we hear from Jews both within Israel and outside Israel, as well as from non-Jews who are expressing these sentiments. Unfortunately, at present, Israel as a Jewish State cannot exist in the Middle East unless it can deter by force those who want to get it out of there. The decision to stay rather than to pack and leave means that Israel must have a credible ability to use its force. It should be very careful not to use more force than necessary. Innocent civilians should not be intentionally harmed. But when civilians within Israel are attacked indiscriminately – Israel does have the right to pursue those responsible for such acts. Exercising this right with wisdom and sensitivity is required by its responsibility towards its Jewish citizens and their right to life, security, and self-determination. I think the need to deal with both these dangers of double standards is crucial and critical.

THE LAST POINT that I want to raise has to do with Jewish identities. Israel's record on this point is extremely interesting, powerful and thought-provoking. First, Israel has been surprisingly good to its religious Jews. Despite the fact that religious Jews are less vulnerable to the dangers of assimilation, living within a Jewish-Hebrew environment has been a haven for religious Jewish culture. The revival of creativity, of writing, that has been developed in Israel among religious Jews of various persuasions and the energy that exists within the Orthodox and non-Orthodox religious communities of Israel are truly amazing. They are one of the major achievements of Israel.

For secular Jews, Israel is more mixed. One of the major achievements of Zionism (it's not only Israel because it started before Israel, but Israel helped a lot), is the amazing revival of Hebrew. Hebrew was only a sacred language and became a living language. And Hebrew is to Jews and to non-Jews in Israel the most important and potent assimilating factor that Israel has succeeded in producing. Together with the Jewish public culture, Israel is the one place in the world where being Jewish is the default option, so to speak. So for secular Jews in Israel, Israel provides a very safe and convenient place for being Jewish without being observant in any way. You can be

Jewish because Jewishness is what is there in the public. You don't have to make an intense and deliberate and constant effort to send the children to a Jewish school to maintain rituals, to maintain certain ceremonies, because it's there in the air. In any place but Israel, remaining Jewish requires effort and taking special steps to avoid assimilation and loss of Jewish identity. In Israel, non-Jews who do not make an effort will be 'assimilated' into the Jewish-Hebrew culture. So this makes Israel a very interesting place for the development of a secular Jewish identity, because it allows people to be naturally, effortlessly Jewish in a way that is more secure and more immediate than in any other place. In Israel you can be at home with both Jewishness and secularity in a more secure and matter-of-fact way than you can be anywhere else in the world. And it is not only one's cultural identity. The fact that in Israel there is a large Jewish majority, and that the native Arab minority is a separated, non-assimilating group, means that most of a Jew's social life is conducted with other Jews. This of course affects the likelihood of intermarriage. In Israel the chances are that you go through your regular life, including school, university, military service, and social life, and the people you meet, you fall in love with, and you have a family with are Jewish. Not a trivial thing as I'm sure you all – can see. So in all these very importance senses, Israel has made a unique contribution to the robustness and naturalness of a secular Jewish identity.

It is very important to see that there is a down side as well. In Israel, precisely because of the ease and naturalness of maintaining one's Jewish identity, secular Jewish identity is more vulnerable than it is almost anywhere else. Israel permits secular Jews to be secure of their Jewishness without an effort, but that means that they are not very clear about what makes them Jewish, and what their Jewishness means to them. Many of them discover that when they leave the supportive Israeli environment they are in trouble. All of a sudden, you don't have what Jews all these years have worked so hard to create for themselves, the naturalness of knowing their identity and why they value it. So this is something that is both a strength and a vulnerability and I think it's very important.

So these are central illustrations of the unique possibilities and difficulties that the Jewish State at present opens up for modern Jewish existence. Where should we go from here? There are many things one can say, but I want to mention only two.

First is the great importance of strengthening Jewish solidarity both within Israel and among Jews in Israel and in the world. It is very good that Israelis and Jews living outside of Israel have intense feelings about Israel. It is important that they realize and feel that Israel still is an important project of the Jewish people, and that Israel has a continuing role in modern Jewish existence. I have already mentioned that to do this we must adopt an inclusive characterization of membership in the Jewish people. We must not lose people who feel Jewish, who want to be Jewish, just because one group thinks they're not Jewish. As I said, we must also protect the right of those Jews who don't think that other people who feel Jewish are indeed Jewish to live their way. We shouldn't (and we cannot) impose on them a more inclusive definition. But we as the Jewish State, we as leaders of both Orthodox and non-Orthodox religious communities, we as secular Jews, we should be for inclusiveness. Israel and the Diaspora should really work hard on their relationships, because the unity of Jewish fate cannot be taken for granted any longer.

This is reflected, among other things, in one of the moves Arabs have been making when they are in a more conceding mood: They then accept that a collective entitled to self-determination has indeed been created in Israel. But for them, this collective is 'Israelis', not 'Jews'. Yes, they go on, historically Israelis are Jews who came to Israel. But the legitimacy of your claim now stems from the fact you actually live in the land. All connection with 'Jews' should be terminated. Israel should be the home of all its present citizens. The principle of Jewish Return should be abolished. There is a small minority of Jews in Israel who endorses this argument. I expect that a majority of Jews in Israel and many Jews outside Israel do not. We must therefore be willing and able to respond to this Arab challenge. And in order to effectively respond to this challenge we need to give a meaning to our shared Jewishness. And this meaning, as I said, must be inclusive. Because it is inclusive, the challenge of giving it a shared meaning is both more urgent and more difficult.

The second concerns the way Jews within Israel and outside Israel should deal with what they see as problems in the way Israel acts and expresses its goals and aspirations. No country is perfect. No country fulfills its own moral commitments. It is a Jewish trait to demand that our country comes closer to its ideals. We shouldn't avoid the fact that there are many problems within Israel and many problems in the relationships between Jews in Israel and Jews in the Diaspora and between different groups of Jews in Israel, and between Jews and Arabs in Israel. Avoiding the problems by denying them is not going to lead us anywhere. When we are facing the problems, thinking about them and discussing them, we should be aware of

the crucial difference between criticism and de-legitimation. We should give plenty of room for criticism, responding to it, and learning from it rather then silencing it. But we should be equally vigilant in exposing and condemning the frequent cases of vicious and unjustified anti-Semitism and demonization of Israel.

It is both stupid and immoral to silence those who voice criticism of Israel, its policies, or its government. If Israel does it within itself it will stop being a democracy. If it seeks to do it out of Israel, it will be seen as unable to respond to the criticism on its merits. There must be a space within which one can accept Israel's right to exist and to defend itself, and express reservations and disagreement with the ways Israel goes about achieving these goals. Criticism of Israel as a whole, and of policies adopted by Israel both within the Jewish divide, and concerning the Jewish-Arab divide, is critical, necessary, and a guarantee to our not losing our moral sensitivity. It's very, very important. It's indispensable. People should be free to voice their criticism without being labeled criminals, traitors or anti-Semites.

On the other hand, what has been going on is not a debating society. There are enemies of Israel out there who are not seeking to redress wrongs but to de-legitimate Israel and erode its international support. Those who care about Israel should do two things. First, they should be very careful to speak in a way that criticizes but does not de-legitimate; that clearly expresses concerns and reservations, but does not condemn. After all, even countries who err and make mistakes do not lose their right to exist! Secondly, they should also take great care not to legitimate, under the disguise of freedom of expression, the kinds of incitement and sweeping condemnation of Israel and Jews that has been heard from some circles.

There is an additional point here, which relates to the fact that both Israel and this country are democracies. In a democracy, I may speak my mind. But if the democratically elected government of the country proposes policies, which I reject – I seek to change the government, and I accept that my struggle against the policies must obey some general constraints. Democracy means that I can try to persuade my fellow-citizens of my views, not that I can force them, in the name of democracy, to accept them. I may resist what my country's doing but the fact that my country's making mistakes and that a particular government is not the one I voted for doesn't mean that my country loses its right to exist, or to defend itself as it sees fit, or to continue to struggle to find its way in resolving the many problems that faces it. So I think that what we should do is we should talk frankly and candidly to each other. We should express our disappointments and our pleasures and pride. We should each respect the democratic nature of the other country. And we should always remember that, after all, we do have a shared interest in the future of the Jewish people and of its one and only State.

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I WANT TO THANK all of our speakers for their inspiring presentations and for the way in which they have opened up a number of very important issues. I found in all of them a consideration of the individual and the collective, an exploration of contemporary angst around the world, and a posing of the question of Jewish collective identity. What is interesting is to combine the papers and to realize that the antipathy toward the collective identity of Jews that David Myers pointed out stemmed from the struggle for emancipation.

By the way, during the French Revolution, Clermont-Tonnere's first lines –"To the Jews as individuals everything. To the Jews as a people nothing"– are often quoted. He went on to say that if Jews are unwilling to accept that bargain, they can leave. That bargain was very much a piece of emancipation. In a sense, the contemporary delegitimation of Israel is a transference of the concern with Jewish collectivity from the emancipationist model to the nationalist model. Israel has become the collectivity of Jews in the world and it is the only national collectivity that many people object to, as Beate Klarsfeld pointed out.

The anti-Semitism which delegitimizes Israel is, in fact, a continuation of a very old question; What role can Jews have in the world? Can Jews ever be a majority? Zionism argued yes, stating that this was the only way that Jews could ever maintain their collective culture. But we have found that the attempt of Jews to express themselves as a collectivity even within the community of nations has stimulated a great deal of antipathy. I remember some twenty years ago being at a feminist meeting, a meeting of the National Women's Studies Association. We Jewish feminists had organized a session at that meeting because anti-Semitism seemed to be growing stronger and stronger in the feminist movement.

And what we Jewish feminists argued was that if you are opposed to all nation states, then we can discuss the issue. But if you are opposed to only one nation state and that's the State of Israel, then you are in fact engaging, perhaps not self-consciously, in anti-Semitism.

— Paula Hyman

Questions from the Audience

How do we teach children the importance of communal identity in an American society that emphasizes individual rights? And I think that would be true of Europe as well.

Myers: This I think is the great challenge – and it relates to the differences in the two major communities of Jews in the world, Israel and America. The American Jewish community is based upon a voluntaristic model of affiliation. This means that one can choose to affiliate and connect oneself to the community, and one can make the choice not to. If one makes the choice to affiliate, then the work of preserving a measure of communal identity is obviously facilitated.

However, the pull of American society is so powerful that the work of connecting to the community is a difficult one. I think what we need to do in all of our collective endeavors is to forge a stronger form of community. We need to think of communal institutions that cut across ideological denominational boundaries. We need to think of creating a more universal idiom that embraces Jews in this country and around the world.

Helene Hahn Waranch, HUC-JIR Governor and President, Women of Reform Judaism; Connie Kreshtool and Betty Golomb, Past Presidents of WRJ

On one hand, we can take pride in the high level of organizational activity among American Jews. Indeed, no Jewish community in history has developed such a robust set of organizational institutions. On the other hand, we might well learn from the earlier European experience in which there was a single communal umbrella, the *Gemeinde*. Federations attempt to play that role, but their work is sometimes mitigated by the existence of any number of other Jewish organizations that exist within or beyond the Federation framework.

My own inclination is to suggest that we move toward ever stronger forms of centralized community leadership and that this be inculcated into the educational process. There are many new opportunities to impart the virtues of a strong Jewish communal identity in our day schools and religious schools. I think we need to think of ways in which we can centralize our labors, organizationally and institutionally, to create that stronger form of community without surrendering the benefits of the modern liberal order.

How are we Reform Jews to strengthen our ties with Israel and the Progressive Movement in view of the current world vogue – a worldwide wave of anti-Semitism and the threat of Palestinian terrorism in Israel?

Gavison: Although the question is about the relations with Israel, the question is clearly about what American Jews should do about Israel. I have many requests from American Jews, but it is you who should make your own decisions about what you think you should do. This is an important aspect of the relationship between the Jewish communities in Israel and the Diaspora. There is a common fate and many things that we do in Israel affect what happens here and many things that you do or do not do affect what happens in Israel. And in this sense we're in the same boat and this imposes a responsibility on us to take the interests of the other community into our deliberations. On the other hand, we're different communities. It's very important to draw the right balance between the autonomy of the different communities and the responsibilities of the different communities to each other, and the understanding of the different ways in which they contribute to the shared fate and shared enterprise. I am very eager to hear what leaders of the Reform community say to that question.

Myers: I'm not a leader of the Reform community but I will attempt to offer a few observations. The Reform Movement has come a very long way since the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885, in which it was declared that Judaism was a religious community but not a nation. We saw movement away from that definition of Judaism some fifty years later in the Columbus Platform (1937), in which Jews were now called upon to assist the building of the Jewish homeland.

What is noticeable today is that the leadership of the Reform Movement is amongst the most Zionist and pro-Israel of any denomination in American Jewry. Our esteemed President, David Ellenson, takes pride in the fact that an overwhelming majority of this year's entering class of rabbinical students went to Israel in the midst of great tension. This suggests, somewhat counter-intuitively, that the Reform Movement is among the most committed – and the most willing to extend itself and its institutional power – in establishing a base in Israel. Having said that, there are very serious challenges that lie ahead for the Reform movement in Israel, and there are a good number of Reform leaders here who know this far better than I do.

Still, I think the challenge is related to some of Ruth Gavison's comments earlier. As I read the Israeli map, there is no real conceptual vocabulary to describe a position between *dati* and *hiloni*, between religious and secular. Religious meaning Orthodox, of various stripes, but nonetheless, orthodox – a function of the state sponsored definition of what traditional Jewish religious culture is.

The challenge is to create a conceptual vocabulary that allows for a non-orthodox religious culture. And I think the results so far, while the efforts may be heroic, are mixed. It's going to take an ongoing effort by committed Reform Jewish leaders. I think there are reasons for optimism. But I think there are also caution signs that have to be noticed.

Two questions: Please comment on the reasons why, after 50 years of nationhood, Israel has still failed to adopt a constitution and especially the equivalent of a bill of rights akin to the United States. Should the right of return be terminated and if yes, or no, why?

Gavison: From the very beginning I felt that this very important discussion is bound to be very frustrating because the issues are so big and deep and extensive and interrelated. And the hope that we can say something meaningful about these issues in such a frame of time is really very, very, very ambitious. And now the two questions come and illustrate very dramatically the almost impossibility of the mission.

I ask the person who is interested in the issue of a constitution for Israel to come and talk to me after the session. The answer should be a full-length lecture. In a nutshell I can say that I don't think that if Israel had a constitution, that in itself would have solved any of its serious problems. I know this may sound surprising to you Americans, who are so used to the centrality of the constitution in your life. I do not think a constitution or even a Bill of Rights would have changed the internal debate within Israel on the basic issues. The short answer to why we do not have one is simple – too many people and parties believe that they are better off with the present situation, and would not want to cooperate with entrenching a political arrangement that will institutionalize compromises which they are reluctant to make.

The right of Jews to Return is a much trickier subject and I do not think the answer is derived from universal norms or from human rights talk. It's primarily ideological. Many people think that it's time for Israel to give up the principle of return. This is one of the most central questions to Israel's self-conception. The abolition of the principle of Jewish return would be supported by Arabs, and by those who want Israel to move in the direction of a neutral civic state; it will be supported by those who say that the nation created in Israel is that of Israelis, not of Jews. I should not be counted among these. I believe in the right of Jews to political self-determination. I believe Israel is the only state where Jews exercise this right. I think that it's good that there is one place in the world in which Jews exercise the combination of independence and responsibility to others, which Jews in Israel seek to implement. I therefore think that the *principle* of return – the idea that Jews are entitled to come to Israel and live there – should remain. The need of this principle is one of the important lessons of the 20th century. I believe the principle is legitimate, that it can be justified, that it should be justified.

I would, however, change the details of the present arrangement. I would both broaden and narrow down those eligible for return. Today, only those born to a Jewish mother or who were converted are eligible, but they can confer a right on all their family members to three generations, even if these members of family are practicing another religion and have no connection to Judaism or the Jewish people. I would make eligible all those, and only those, who feel Jewish or want to join the Jewish collective sincerely, even if they are not 'Jewish' according to the orthodox interpretation of Jewish law. So I would definitely look at the details. I would take Israeli citizenship much more seriously. I wouldn't give *olim* Israeli citizen-

FROM LEFT:

Richard and Allen Berkman, Frances Hess, Sue and Jim Klau, and Dennis Gilbert were among the Governors, Overseers, faculty, students, and friends who attended the Academic Symposium launching the Inauguration celebration

ship upon their arrival. I would let them learn the country, learn the language, learn its culture, learn the kind of democratic institutions that it has, the different communities that live in it, the internal tensions. After they learn all of this, they can truly and meaningfully exercise their political right to citizenship. But basically I do support the continuation of the principle of return and see it as a central element in the idea of the Jewish State.

Is it possible that the trend towards spirituality is a sign of deterioration rather than regeneration in American Jewish life?

Myers: I think we can say that the quest for spirituality is a sign of a distancing from established communal and denominational bodies. And I think it's part of a much larger American phenomenon. That is to say, the Jewish quest for spirituality takes part in a much larger American quest for spirituality, which often times leads away from organized religious affiliation.

The Jewish variation of this phenomenon has been documented in the recent work of Steve Cohen and Arnold Eisen, a sociologist and a scholar of Jewish thought combining qualitative and quantitative methods, who've described the way in which the American Jew is increasingly disconnected from community. This Jew is embarked upon a spiritual search and intrigued by a notion of religion and God that is, in a sense, more American than Jewish. Thus, there's a kind of American template for thinking about God. Is this a sign of degeneration rather than regeneration? Well, I think it's a wakeup call for Jewish denominations. I think it's a challenge. And there are two ways to think of that group that is clearly adrift from established denominational bodies.

One can think that they're simply heading in a direction that doesn't allow us to reclaim them. And this is consistent with the view of some in the Jewish community who believe that our endeavors should be devoted to inreach rather than outreach. That is, we should devote ourselves to solidifying the core, to nurturing the self-selecting affiliated. And in a sense, leave behind those who have already begun to drift.

I think we can't afford to focus our efforts only on inreach. We must make a play for the large body of unaffiliated Jews out there. Especially at this point in time when we still have substantial resources, and it's still possible to forge new ways of thinking about religious culture and identity. American Jewish organizations, especially denominations, must become sufficiently malleable to reach out to people who have healthy and unfilled spiritual appetites. I think we have the resources and I think we have the creativity. I think we also have the adaptability, and therefore our focus should remain on outreach rather than exclusive inreach.

Gavison: I would like to address the question because I agree that it's a very interesting question and I think it's a question of universal validity and not so particular to the American community. And in Israel you might say that we're so busy with security and economics and all the real aspects of life that we can afford, maybe even that we must, let go of the more spiritual or cultural concerns. This is a

FROM RIGHT:

Dr. Paul M. Steinberg, Vice President for Communal Development, and Trudy Steinberg; Sam Perelson, Chair, New York Board of Overseers; Hilda and Rudolph Forchheimer, HUC-JIR/NY Overseer

very serious mistake. It is not only morally wrong to neglect the cultural and spiritual aspects of life. It is also psychologically dangerous, because those who seek spirituality are people looking for an adequate emotional, real material response to their needs as whole human beings.

In fact, one of the interesting aspects of Jewish revival, in general, and Jewish revival in Israel, in particular, is the fact that many people have found that working towards strengthening aspects of their Jewish identity, both spiritual and material, is just what they have been looking for. It is important that we remember that many people, especially after they meet their more pressing needs of physical and material security, feel an acute and troubling emptiness and meaninglessness. And the challenge of a spiritual community, or a religious community, or a communal community, or a cultural community is precisely to find a way of filling in this emptiness in a way that will help people give their life a meaning that transcends their daily pursuits. I think this is an achievement of Israel.

One of the nice things about Israel is that there is something extremely exciting and stimulating about Israeli existence. I believe this excitement and intensity are generated, in part, by the feeling that you have integrated there a way of being Jewish that is whole in an important way: It is no longer the case of being a Jew in one's home and a Frenchman or a German outside. There is a cultural integration of all aspects of life – you take care of your practical needs, of your material needs, of the responsibility to defend yourself but also of the spiritual religious aspect. And this hope of holistic integration is what makes Israel a unique and complete Jewish experience. So in this sense I think Judaism does have the resources to provide those who seek spirituality an adequate response. Judaism, like all great traditions and civilizations, has it within it to deal with all human needs. We just need to adapt the resources to the needs at hand.

Accepting the suggestion of Professor Myers to integrate the resurgent communities in Europe and Professor Gavison's noting of the need to renegotiate the relationship between many world Jewish communities, will the panelists please speak to the place of Jewish academics to educate lay Jews to both the Jewish past and the developing Jewish present. In other words, what role can, ought, Jewish institutions and intellectuals play to help birth an emerging world Jewish culture?

Myers: Let me begin by saying that it's my sense that in addition to synagogues, which are an obvious home of Jewish culture in this country and around the world, institutions of higher learning, both seminaries and secular academies, are an important venue in which to gain access to Jewish culture. Of course that has nothing to do with the fact that I teach at a large university. Seriously, I do believe that the growth of Jewish studies programs on college campuses is a very significant development in the history of the transmission of Jewish knowledge, one which says a lot about the status of the Jewish community in this country.

Indeed, we can often figure out how Jews are doing in a particular society by looking at where they're learning their texts. In that regard, I think we have cause for opti-

FROM LEFT:

Jay Geller, and Amy and Robert Heller were among the Governors, Overseers, faculty, students and friends who attended the Academic Symposium launching the Inauguration celebration

mism that Jewish studies has been integrated so fully and so widely into the American university system. This is cause for optimism both because we are continuing the chain of transmission of Jewish knowledge, and because we are assuring that Jewish civilization be at the center of contemporary university study, and by extension, of contemporary civilization.

What I see in my own experience is that courses in Jewish studies often represent the last possible horizon for Jewish students who have had limited access to Jewish sources. But for many of them, the encounter in the university offers the possibility of deep immersion into their history before they disappear into the large sea of American culture. Meanwhile, for the non-Jewish student, taking a Jewish studies class has the effect of inculcating values of tolerance and diversity. But the question really related to the former group of students, Jewish students and the Jewish community more broadly.

One of the curious and really winning phenomena that we see in Jewish studies today is the very considerable expansion beyond this country. In Europe we see Jewish studies chairs and programs being established across the continent. And this has led to the creation of very strong bonds of communication and exchange with colleagues in Europe. The reasons have a lot to do with the history of the Jewish people over the last 50 years in Europe, as European nations attempt to reinsert Jews back into the soil of their countries through historical study.

This is an extremely important and salutary development. In my own scholarly existence, I have extensive contacts with European scholars. We have exchange programs. We attend conferences with one another. We share a common intellectual language. And I think there is a potential to build an international community of Jewish studies scholars, one of whose main goals will be to educate toward an emerging world Jewish culture as I suggested earlier. But another mission will be to assure that Judaism and Jewish culture remain central to the self-understanding of those societies in which Jews historically have been found – some of which contain Jews today and some of which, tragically, do not.

Gavison: Being an academic, I share David's bias and I would like, therefore, to talk more about its limitations than about its contributions and virtues. Clearly, there has been much scholarship going on concerning various aspects of Jewish life in many creative ways. Important work has been done looking at the history of communities, of norms, of ways of struggling, trying to have conceptual new ways of looking at processes; trying to give Jewish interpretations to major moral, historical, and cultural events and processes. All of this has been extremely important. Now people who are interested in these aspects of Jewish life can find this scholarship and learn it and use it. We have grown so used to this that we forget that there was time when this kind of literature and this kind of knowledge was not available. We forget that there was a time when people who were looking for that kind of

knowledge to satisfy their needs and curiosity could not have found it. And this is a great achievement of Jewish academics and intellectuals.

But I think we have been talking here more about Jewish identity and Jewish affiliation, less about knowledge. These are things that are more affective and emotional and less intellectual and academic. Academics have an important role in providing knowledge and in making the commitment to look into these questions rather than into other very interesting possible questions that people can look at. But when we think about the more general question of Jewish prospects, we must not think only about the intellectual parts but also about the emotional and the affective parts.

I want to develop a point that was made here before and is connected to the fact that until now we didn't really talk much about synagogues. One of the problems for Jewish identity in modern times (and it's particularly true for secular Jews in Israel) is the fact that people don't have the kind of life structures that initiate a person naturally into a community and a tradition. This life structure is something that people who grow up Orthodox, or even people who grow up in non-Orthodox, active religious communities have. A part of their life is going through certain rites, like prayers, and holidays, and Sabbath, that make their Jewish life meaningful. These rites give structure and meaning to the major passages of their life. And they give them a sense of a community. Some people find these comforting. Others find them constraining. Yet others rebel against them. But basically all know how to answer the question, "In what way am I Jewish?"

I'm concerned with the many people in this country, and the growing number of people who are second and third generation secular Jews in Israel, who don't have a good answer to this question. Sometimes they don't even ask the question. But when they do ask the question, they don't have a good answer to it and the failure comes from the fact, not that there is not scholarship available to tell them about Jews, but that they don't feel the place of the Jewish element in their daily life. I believe this is a major concern. More major than the need to see to it that relevant scholarship and analysis of things Jewish are available.

So I think academics are actually in a predicament here. When you take academics seriously, you're committed to truth, to science, to detachment. What you do for your students may be extremely exciting. You may be opening things up to them and for them. For those students who get their excitement and fulfillment through the head, this may be an eye-opener. But we also need to think of the many who are not intellectuals. Most people, even in the people of the book, are not intellectuals. And we need to give them effective and affective answers to a number of questions: a) Am I a Jew? b) Why am I a Jew? And c) What do I do in order to remain Jewish, if this is important for me?

The seriousness of this concern came home to me in the extremely moving and powerful statement by Jean Amery. He knew he was Jewish because he was persecuted and sent to a concentration camp as a Jew, but felt that he didn't know how to access his Jewishness because there was nothing in his daily life that made him feel he was Jewish. So he was talking about the necessity of being Jewish, the inevitability of being Jewish, and the impossibility of being Jewish.

What Amery did not have was not scholarship about Jews and Jewish history or matters. What he missed was a way of making his Jewishness not just a fate imposed by others – but an internal meaningful reality. This is a great challenge for anyone concerned with the future of Jewish life in modern times. There are many Jews out there who do not even know how to ask the questions. What they need is help in understanding that these aspects of their identity are important for them, and the tools to deepen them and access them and make them a part of their life. If we academics want to help in that, we need to act not only as academics, but also as social leaders, community leaders, religious leaders. And to combine our scholarly work with a real commitment to a way of life which transcends scholarship but gives it meaning.

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THOSE WERE WONDERFUL and fitting concluding words for this symposium. I am sure that the issues that were raised by this event will continue to provoke and stimulate conversation and discussion and debate.

I think that the last question that we had was most significant because this is, after all, an educational institution that trains the very people that Ruth Gavison was talking about: the people who can and do reach out to *amcha*, to raise questions of the meaning and significance of Jewishness, and to find ways in which people can become more and more involved in mining the experiences of Jewishness that are available to them.

— *Paula Hyman*

Gus Waterman Herrman Presidential Chair Inaugurated

The Gus Waterman Herrman Presidential Chair has been established by the largest bequest in the history of the College-Institute. Rabbi David Ellenson is the first HUC-JIR President to hold the newly established chair, which was introduced as part of the Presidential Inauguration celebration.

Gus Waterman Herrman was born in 1920 to Morris and Jessie Waterman Herrman. Gus and his brother Cecil grew up in Lexington, Mississippi, a town of 2,500 people with only 50-60 Jews. Their congregation could not afford a rabbi and depended on HUC-JIR to send student rabbis to serve as the community's spiritual leaders. One such student, Rabbi James Wax, became the Herrman brothers' good friend. Rabbi Wax's impact on their lives as Reform Jews led the brothers to ultimately bequeath their worldly resources to the College-Institute.

Today, classes and religious services take place in the Cecil Herrman Learning Center on the Cincinnati campus. And now, Gus Herrman is memorialized through the Gus Waterman Herrman Presidential Chair.

Gus Waterman Herrman was a member of Congregation Beth Israel, Houston, Texas and Temple Sinai, New Orleans, Louisiana. He was a philanthropist and a decorated World War II veteran. He served as a tank commander in the United States Army under General George Patton, was in the Normandy invasion, and received both the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star medals of honor. He died on December 13, 2001 in Houston, Texas. Gus Waterman Herrman's memory and legacy of Jewish commitment will be perpetuated through this historic gift to the College-Institute.

Jessie Waterman Herrman and her sons, Gus and Cecil
INSET: *Robert and Sondy Berman celebrating the announcement of the Gus Waterman Herrman Presidential Chair with Rabbi Ellenson*

Summary Financial Figures

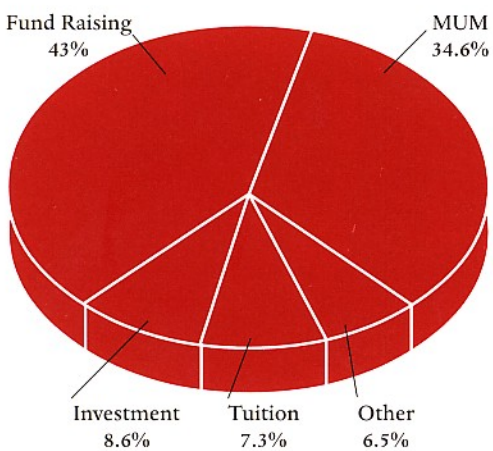
CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

June 30	2002	2001	2000
Total Assets	$192,989,152	$190,374,688	$192,059,199
Total Liabilities	$9,706,138	$7,450,279	$6,877,978
Total Net Assets	$183,229,014	$182,924,409	$185,181,221
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	$192,989,152	$190,374,688	$192,059,199

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Year Ended June 30, 2002	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
Total Operating Revenue, Gains and Other Support	$32,918,521	$8,468,872	$4,221,576	$45,608,969
Total Operating (Expenses)	($35,867,542)			($35,867,542)
Nonoperating Revenue (Expense)	($3,038,607)	($4,680,261)	($1,717,954)	($9,436,822)
Change in Net Assets	($5,987,628)	$3,788,611	$2,503,622	$304,605
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	$94,448,308	$24,717,260	$63,758,841	$182,924,409
Net Assets, End of Year	$88,460,680	$28,505,871	$66,262,463	$183,229,014

HUC-JIR REVENUE 2001-2002



HUC-JIR EXPENSES 2001-2002