

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Jewish Life in Cleveland in the 1920s and 1930s by Leon Wiesenfeld

This book, published in 1965, is best understood by its subtitle: **"Memoirs of a Jewish Journalist"**. It is not a history, but rather Leon Wiesenfeld's accounts of some events, written from his perspective, which appeared in his *Jewish Voice Pictorial*.

Wiesenfeld was more than a journalist. He championed the Jewish people and fought their enemies. He worked for an inclusive Jewish community, with cooperation between the "assimilated Jews" and the Yiddish-speaking Jews he wrote for who in the 1930s were the majority of Cleveland's Jews. He was a passionate Zionist and a supporter of Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver.

Wiesenfeld (Feb. 2, 1885 – March 1, 1971) was born in Rzeszow, Poland and worked for Polish and German publications before coming to America. He worked briefly in New York for Abraham Cahan's *Jewish Daily Forward* before coming to Cleveland in 1924. For 10 years he was the associate editor of the *Yiddishe Velt* (Jewish World), Cleveland's principal Yiddish-language newspaper, before becoming its editor in 1934. In 1938 he left to establish an English-Yiddish weekly *Die Yiddishe Stimme* (Jewish Voice) which failed after about a year. He then started an English language annual, *Jewish Voice Pictorial*, which endured into the 1950s. (From the entry in the Encyclopedia of Cleveland History.)

The book's introduction was written by Moses Zvi Frank, a long-time Jewish journalist. Frank's review of the book in the *Indiana Jewish Post* of May 7, 1965 notes that he translated it from chapters Wiesenfeld had written in Yiddish.

The digital publication of this hard-to-find book will give some glimpses into Cleveland's Jewish history not available elsewhere.

Thanks to Arnold Berger, the ClevelandJewishHistory.net website editor, for his assistance.

Jeffrey Morris
Beachwood, Ohio
December 26, 2016

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

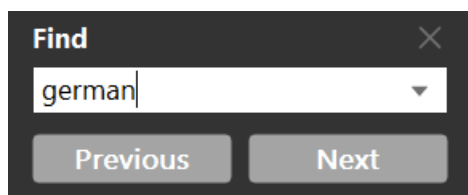
This book is published complete in what has become the standard Portable Document Format (.pdf) created years ago by Adobe. Thus the customary **PageDown** (next page), **Ctrl+End** (go to last page) and **Ctrl+Home** (go to first page) will work.

It has been created with two additional features that will help you find specific pages.

Searching

The document is searchable. Use the Search feature in the program you use to read .pdf documents: Adobe Reader, Nuance PDF, and many others. A fast way to display a Search pop-up window is to press the **Control** and **F** keys at the same time.

An example: To search for "Germany" press **Ctrl+F** then enter **Germany** or **germany**. You could also enter **German** or **german** which will find German, Germany and Germanic.



Bookmarks

There are bookmarks that go directly to the start of each chapter. There may also be bookmarks for topics within a chapter.

Click on Bookmarks in the menu of the program you use to read .pdf documents. An index will display at the side of the document. Click on the page or chapter you want to read. If your program doesn't use bookmarks, consider using a newer program such as the free Adobe Acrobat Reader DC.

Leon Wiesenfeld

JEWISH LIFE
IN
CLEVELAND
IN THE 1920s
AND
1930s

*The best way of looking ahead
is by looking back.*

*Jewish Life In Cleveland
In The 1920s And 1930s*

The Memoirs of a Jewish Journalist

By

LEON WIESENFELD

Published by

The Jewish Voice Pictorial

2821 Mayfield Road

Cleveland, Ohio 44118

To my dear

ESTHER

*wife, friend, companion
who for 55 years stood with me
through thick and thin to share
in my often troubled life.*

CONTENTS

The Aim and Purpose of This Book	VII
The Man and His Town (Introduction)	X
The Incessant Silver-Goldman- Brickner-Zionist Struggle	1
The Intense Struggle Against Nazism in Cleveland in the 1930's	13
12,000 Fill Public Auditorium to Protest Persecutions of Jews	18
Reaction of Our Christian Friends to Our Anti-Nazi Struggle	27
Mayor Burton First High Official to Grant Recognition to Nazis	32
The Depression and the Conduct of Our Charitable Institutions	48
The Founding of the Jewish Welfare Fund	60
The Rabbis Goldman - Benjamin Fight Over The Jewish Center	67

CONTENTS

Rabbi Goldman Leaves Cleveland for Pulpit in Chicago	76
The New Federation of Jewish Organizations and Synagogues	86
Perpetual Meat Scandals Are Brought to Court	101
Orthodox Orphan Asylum Decides to Close It's Doors	105
Mayor of University Heights Not in Favor of Bellefair Orphan Home	113
The Founding of the Jewish Convalescent Hospital	117
Other Organizations I Helped to Organize	121
My Extremely Hard Life in The Jewish World	124
What We Accomplished by Our Magazine	142

THE AIM AND PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

THE present book consists of a series of articles written by me over a period of three years and published in *The Jewish Voice Pictorial*. In these articles I endeavored to present, as honestly as I could, life and movements in the 1920's and 1930's among the Jews of Cleveland and in particular among the Cleveland Jews of the East Side. Those years may not have been the most glorious ones in the life of the community, but they were years of development and, certainly, the most exciting and, perhaps, in a certain sense, even the most productive ones. I therefore thought that an account of those years might provide interesting and possibly illuminating material for the readers.

As to that, I have not been mistaken.

Beginning with the first article, which was written on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Cleveland Zionist Society, to the very last one, the articles made an impression and aroused interest in Jewish circles and among Jewish and non-Jewish readers of the magazine.

Despite that moral success, it would ordinarily not have occurred to me to incorporate the series of articles into a book. What induced me to undertake this step was the resolution adopted by the Jewish Welfare Community to produce a history of Cleveland Jewry, which was long in planning. As first conceived, the project called for covering the whole history of the Jewish community in Cleveland from 1837, when the German Jewish immigrant Simon Thormann first

settled in the city, to our own time. Unfortunately, the Federation later changed its plans and decided to publish only a half-history, that is until 1913, before World War I.

The modification of the original resolution, resulting from pressure brought about from certain influential individuals, convinced me that we still do not have a united Jewish community in Cleveland, despite all Protestations. It was pretty clear to me that the decision to limit the history to the pre-World War I was motivated by prejudice and by the tendency to ignore, as far as possible, the East European element, which not so long ago constituted the majority of the community, and which, in its own way, made a great contribution to the cities Jewish life.

History, as we know, is not written every day, especially the history of an individual locality or community. There was the likelihood that very many years would pass before another project would be undertaken to write the history of Cleveland Jewry and that by that time the life and endeavors of the Jewish masses on the East Side would be entirely forgotten. No record would then remain for the future historian.

In order to help prevent such a travesty I have decided to reproduce my articles in the form of a book. The articles do not in any way embrace the full era of Jewish life on the East Side. But they do reflect one of its important and liveliest periods.

That which is reflected on the pages of this book contains interesting material, to be sure, but more importantly, it constitutes the authentic brief history of Cleveland Jewry. Such books are not unusual in historic literature. They have been written in various periods in other cities in America and many other countries, and not only in dealing with Jews. The small histories have ever been and still are of great importance as contributions to larger histories. There is no doubt in my mind that this book will make such a contribution. At the same time it may influence the men and women of the Jewish Welfare Community to reconsider their decision in favor of

their original plan to prepare a full history rather than stop in the middle of the way. There is still time since the history has as yet not been produced. But it will eventually be at some later time.

The importance of books of this sort in general and for the Jews in America in particular was recently, indirectly, confirmed by such an authority as is Dr. Salo Baron, for thirty years professor of Jewish history at Columbia University and the foremost Jewish historian of our day. In an address before the 35th conference of Jewish clubs in the United States and Canada, Dr. Baron complained that because of the absence of authentic sources, much of Jewish history is incomplete and much of Jewish communal planning is based on conjecture and surmise rather than on known facts. The result is a lot of mere noise without solid achievements. Dr. Baron concluded his address with a call to the leaders of American and Canadian Jewry to combine their efforts for the sake of securing the necessary documents on the basis of which an intelligent evaluation could be made of the reality of Jewish life in America without exception.

I do not know if such thorough study as the esteemed historian suggests will ever be undertaken in our community. But I know that if it is undertaken, the present book will serve as a guide which is based on authentic information and which certainly has its rightful place in the history of Cleveland Jewry. Even more valuable will this book prove to be for the independent, responsible historian who will soon or later undertake to write a full history of Cleveland Jewry.

This book is not published for profit and I do not expect it to be a best seller.

Having been an eye-witness of the life and inspirations of the Jews of Cleveland in the 1920's and 1930's, in which I played a not inconsiderable part, I deemed it my duty to keep those years from oblivion.

Such is the purpose of this volume.

LEON WIESENFELD

THE MAN AND HIS TOWN

(Introduction)

by M. Z. Frank

The subject of the present volume is Cleveland Jewry. The author is a man who lived it — he did not merely live in Cleveland, but lived the life of Cleveland Jewry. The period is between the later 1920's and the present. There are some references to the history of the Cleveland Jewish community before Mr. Wiesenfeld settled in the city. Mr. Wiesenfeld gives us a vivid picture and treats the events and people with rare objectivity. This is not propaganda or apologia, but a factual story told by a man who was in the thick of it and yet was in a position to view it in a detached manner.

Any Jewish community of medium size — say, between 30,000 and 100,000 Jews — is an excellent topic for a novelist or a chronicler. New York is so large as to be unwieldy. The same may be true of Chicago and Los Angeles. But Jewish communities like Montreal and Toronto in Canada, in which I lived, or Cleveland, of which I know more than about any other community of like size, have all the ingredients of a collective personality, worthy of the pen of a writer. Unfortunately, the current literary fashion excludes the type of novel which would do justice to Jewish communities like Montreal, Toronto, Cleveland or St. Louis. Our growing Anglo-Jewish literature in America deals mostly with individuals becoming frustrated or just going meshuga against a usually distorted Jewish background. The fascinating story of the growth of a community is, for the present, anyway, left to the chroniclers. Of these there are very few. I don't know anybody as good as Mr. Wiesenfeld.

I have mentioned Montreal and Toronto, where I lived, Cleveland, about which I know a little, St. Louis, about which I merely heard. Each of these communities is different from the others. The difference is determined by such factors as the general environment and the history of its Jewish immigration. Montreal has a large concentration of Rumanian Jews; Toronto of Polish Jews; Cleveland has more Czech and Hungarian Jews than any other city of like size; St. Louis is the bastion of the old German-Jewish immigration. What all these communities have in common are first of all, their size; second, their not being New York. New York is a world by itself.

Each of the four mentioned communities once had a Yiddish daily paper. Montreal and Toronto were the last to lose them. The editor of the local Yiddish daily played a tremendous part in shaping the life of the community. His personality is of great importance. Mr. Leon Wiesenfeld was such an editor, while the Yiddish daily lasted. Unlike most Yiddish editors, he adapted himself to the inevitable change and became an editor of an Anglo-Jewish periodical. The story of the demise of a provincial Yiddish daily can either be told in one sentence or in terms of a personal drama. All personal dramas are interesting. The reader will find a glimpse of it in the present volume.

Cleveland Jewry has produced or attracted more than its quota of outstanding personalities. To mention only those who are no longer among the living: Abba Hillel Silver, Solomon Goldman, Barnett Brickner, and H. A. Friedland.

All these men were national leaders. Silver, for a time, was a world leader. Solomon Goldman was, in his day, the most articulate and most militant champion of Conservative Judaism. He died in Chicago, from which he was called to New York and Washington to lead the Zionist movement of America, but it was in Cleveland, before Chicago, that he made history. Brickner probably made more history in Toronto, where he established the most prominent Jewish pulpit in Canada, but, throughout most of his life as a national

Jewish leader he was the famous rabbi of Cleveland. H. A. Friedland was the leading intellectual leader of the Hebraic trend in American Jewish education. His main theatre of operation was Cleveland, where he died — the first of the four prominent Cleveland Jews mentioned to depart this world. Silver was the last. Mr. Wiesenfeld's sketches on Silver in this book were first published in magazine form while Silver was still alive. After he died, when I was asked by the editor of the Hebrew weekly *Hadoar* to write an obituary editorial, I drew upon Mr. Wiesenfeld's accounts to describe Silver's background in Cleveland before he became the great leader of American Zionism. I still don't know of a better source. If anyone should wish to write a biography of Silver, he will have to go for his material to the present volume.

Each of the four men rates a biography. Silver is the only one who is likely to get it. But I doubt it will be objective. Like all famous leaders, he became a myth — a saint to some, a demon to others. In Mr. Wiesenfeld's volume we see Silver, Goldman and Brickner — not much of Friedland — as natural human beings, with human frailties, human passions, hates and likes and prejudices and all those attributes which sometimes make a great man appear very small when he is enclosed in a small circle or when seen at close range. Nonetheless, the abilities of these men stand out in the book. I don't know of any other work in which the historic struggle about the Jewish Center in Cleveland, which became a battlefield between Orthodoxy and Conservatism, is so vividly portrayed as by Mr. Wiesenfeld. And yet, the whole story is told in a factual dispassionate tone, without melodramatic effects, told by a shrewd observer, who is capable of being indulgent towards his friends but not blind to their weaknesses.

Across the pages of this little book pass many other figures, some living, others dead, some well-known beyond the confines of Cleveland, others obscure or forgotten even in their own city. Rabbis and lawyers and politicians, common people, bureaucrats, friendly Gentiles and anti-Semites, including Nazis — a rich gallery of men

and women. The author is present all the time. He talks to us in the first person and tells us of his public career in Cleveland. He does not hide his personal opinions or sentiments. But in the final analysis, it is not so much the story of Leon Wiesefeld as the story of the growth and evolution of the Jewish community of Cleveland. We see Wiesefeld's reactions to events and people in Cleveland Jewry, but we don't see much of Leon Wiesefeld. He manages to keep in the shadows — while using the first person. Many a well-known writer would like to give his right arm to be able to accomplish such a feat.

I said "growth and evolution" of the Cleveland Jewish community. The emphasis is on evolution. The growth is implicit, the evolution is spelled out. The pattern is the same in its general outlines in all Jewish communities in America: first come the German or Central European philanthropists and their hired bureaucrats who look down on the East European "rabble" as fit objects of charity but unfit to be subjects of dignified self-assertion. The motto is "hush" — the Gentile world must not be antagonized by raucousness, even when overt anti-Semitic discrimination is involved. Next comes the coming-of-age of the East Europeans and their gradual capture of communal leadership. The German-speaking patricians and their children are forced to make room for the Yiddish-speaking plebeians and their children. Later comes the Americanizing process which all but eliminates Yiddish as a communal force, but does not wipe out the heritage of Eastern Europe.

All this takes place under the shadow of momentous events: two great wars, economic changes in American Jewry, the Great Depression, the Great Holocaust in Europe, the struggle for Palestine, the rise of Israel, the attendant rise of Zionism from a small force of a few — and, as Mr. Wiesefeld so aptly depicts them, not overly conversant with the nature of the movement they propound — to the dominant power in American Jewry.

The pattern, as I said, is the same for all such communities. But there is variation in the details. The variations make up the indi-

viduality of the community — as they do in single individuals. Every Jewish community had its Zionist group and every Zionist group had its internal politics. But only Cleveland had Silver and his Zionist Society — and Leon Wiesenfeld to organize it and champion it. Every Jewish community had its ugly wars over kosher meat. But it was never quite the same in Montreal as in Toronto or in either as in Cleveland. Queen Marie of Rumania traveled through all of the United States and Canada, but only in Cleveland was she so snubbed that she refused to leave the train at the railway station. Personal jealousy between prominent rabbis is a time-honored ingredient of our communal life — even of our cultural history. Fights and jealousy between prominent Reform and Conservative rabbis are only as recent as their respective movements are. But only in Cleveland did such struggles assume such gigantic proportions — because the contestants involved were giants.

And it took Leon Wiesenfeld to tell the story, as no one else has told it so far.

THE INCESSANT SILVER-GOLDMAN- BRICKNER-ZIONIST STRUGGLES

THE Cleveland Zionist Society, led from its inception by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, recently reached its quarter century milestone. The present writer, who was one of the main founders of this body, which is still the largest Zionist group in the United States, unfortunately has not been in a position until now to offer his comments and observations on this important event. However, the fascinating story of this organization deserves to be told, even if somewhat belated.

The Cleveland Zionist Society was not established out of necessity. A Zionist district had already been in existence and struggled to keep alive. Zionism in those days was not very popular among American Jews and only a limited number of dedicated individuals who clung to the ideal joined the local Zionist District which existed for almost fifty years. Their influence in the community, as a body, was even smaller than their numbers. Such was the situation in 1935, when the Cleveland Zionist Society was launched into life, surely without any popular clamor for its birth.

The trouble with the Zionists in Cleveland in those years was that even within the small circle of the old District there was no harmony. Squabbles over trivial matters, such as honor, power, recognition, contending personal ambitions and jealousies took up most of the time of the so-called leadership. Gossip, recriminations and back-biting hindered the growth of the organization and its prestige.

There were times when the District was actually out of existence and had to be repeatedly reorganized.

When I arrived in Cleveland, in January, 1925, to become the associate editor of the Yiddish daily *The Jewish World*, of which I was in time to become editor-in-chief, the President of the District was a man by the name of Danis Gadar, whose understanding of the Zionist movement was of the crudest nature. He was a good-natured ignorant Jew. About two or three weeks after I entered my new office, he came to "convert" me to the cause. Being a native of Hungary and seemingly believing that I, too, immigrated from his country, he used the argument that, after all our own "countrymen" Herzl, Nordau and now Wise, great men that they were, were Zionist, so why shouldn't we join, too?

Having thus been "converted," I came, several days later, to attend my first District meeting. My journalist's sense of smell told me that there was something wrong as soon as I entered the meeting-room. About twenty-five members were present, and at least ten of them delivered what each one thought was an "address." Most of the "addresses" were directed against the person of Rabbi Silver, for whom there was evidently no great love. The spirit of disunity could be palpably sensed.

At the Zionist District the subject of the alleged wrongs and rights of Rabbi Silver overshadowed all other topics until I was thoroughly sick of it. For a long time I refrained from taking part in the discussions. When I did ask for the floor, I suggested that no matter how grave the leaders thought the sins of Rabbi Silver might be, we would do much better to forget them and to try instead to win new members, and in general do something to promote constructive work and raise the prestige of the District. I later published several articles in the *Jewish World* along the same line.

But the situation, far from improving, deteriorated even further. Presidents came and Presidents went, but the quarrels with Silver went on forever. I often met the rabbi at meetings, and though at first I had no interest in him, I gradually gained the impression that

he was not as bad as he is made out to be and that he was not always wrong. Willy-Nilly I became his advocate and used my prestige as editor to try and bring peace. Sometimes I succeeded, but never for long. Sooner or later the old squabbles came back to life. This went on until the summer of 1929.

THE NATIONAL ZIONIST CONVENTION IN CLEVELAND IN 1929

AT that time the leaders of the Zionist Organization of America decided to hold the annual national convention in Cleveland. American Zionism was then split into two hostile camps: the followers of Louis Brandeis and Julian Mack, on the one hand and those of Weitzmann and Lipsky on the other. The Cleveland District selected its delegates to that convention, but Silver's name was not among those elected. This was the way the leaders avenged on Silver's alleged sins: I thought the District had made itself ridiculous and said so in my paper.

Rabbi Silver felt humiliated and was greatly exercised. He hoped, however, that in spite of the rebuff administered him locally, he would be invited to address the opening session. But he was mistaken. The honor went instead to the late Rabbi Barnet R. Brickner.

Rabbi Brickner, who had his own grudges against Rabbi Silver, opened the Convention by delivering some scathing remarks about his rival. He did not mention Silver's name, but there was no mistaking the butt of his shafts, which came flying as from a bow. The speech did not evoke much enthusiasm, but it pleased Silver's enemies in Cleveland and those from New York.

Rabbi Silver, who soon learned of Brickner's attacks upon him, felt despondent. When, at his invitation, I came to see him at his Temple, he had tears in his eyes. He kept on repeating: "I am only 36 years old and they want to destroy me." I then decided to help him out. I went to the Convention Hall and sought out Louis Lipsky, the President of the ZOA. I asked him if he would invite Rabbi Silver to address the Convention. Lipsky, who was always friendly

towards me, turned to me angrily and replied: "Not on his life!" and turned away. But I was determined not to give up.

The real masters of the ZOA at that time were two of my fellow-Galicians, now both deceased—Sigmund Thau and Philip Wattenberg. Both were well-to-do men, who supported the Zionist organization with their money, while the organization was on the verge of bankruptcy. Both, Mr. Thau and Wattenberg, were old friends of mine. I asked them to dinner at my home and invited also my very dear friend Dr. Samuel Margoshes, then editor-in-chief of the New York Yiddish daily *The Day*, and the late Samuel Rosenfeld, a distinguished journalist and a very influential Zionist. The conclave at the dinner table resolved to see to it that Rabbi Silver be invited to address the Convention.

The next day Lipsky had to yield and the rabbi was invited to address the Convention before closing to make the appeal for funds of which the ZOA was badly in need. This was not the kind of an address Silver really desired to deliver. But he did accept the invitation and did very well. His appeal brought in about \$60,000 and he was then elected to the national Executive Board. For a while everything seemed to be good and well.

RABBI BRICKNER AND THE PALESTINE PAGEANT

BUT the controversy, the intrigues and the petty squabbles did not cease after the Cleveland Convention, both locally and on the national scale. Silver, who has a tendency to be vindictive, naturally did not keep quiet. He soon paid back Brickner for his speech with a vengeance.

Rabbi Brickner in those days used to deliver addresses on Judaism over the radio, which were broadcast nationally. Once he used a sermon by Rabbi Emil Hirsch of forty years earlier, giving it as his own speech and without mentioning the source. This played into Silver's hands and he took his revenge. A new crisis in Zionist and even non-Zionist circles resulted, with more and greater hostility towards Rabbi Silver.

Not long afterwards Meyer Weisgal, former editor of the New Palestine and former Secretary of the Zionist Organization, came to Cleveland with a Palestine pageant, after a fairly good result in New York and other cities. Weisgal and my good friend Ezra Shapiro came to me asking that I intercede with Silver to enlist his cooperation in ensuring the success of the spectacle. I knew that it was a waste of time and effort to try to influence Silver, because I was aware that he hated Weisgal more than any one else, but I tried and, of course, I failed.

The pageant in Cleveland was, as I expected, a dismal failure and Silver was blamed for it. At a farewell luncheon arranged by the Zionist district for Weisgal and presided by Rabbi Brickner, Silver was bitterly attacked by every speaker. Weisgal said that Silver was a scourge, a festering sore, in the Zionist body. He demanded that the rabbi be thrown out of the Zionist Organization. I protested sharply against such a language, but Weisgal shouted back that some day I too, would learn more about Silver. I left the hall disgustingly and the next day I attacked Weisgal and the leaders of the District in a very sharply written article in my paper.

But Weisgal attacked Silver again and again in New York and other cities throughout the country and thus again a scandal was created locally and nationally.

The main climax, however, came towards the end of 1934 when the national Zionist leadership convened a special Conference in Washington. Silver was invited to address it. The leaders of the Cleveland District raised a shrill protest and induced Lipsky to revoke his invitation. Silver did not go to Washington but now awaited his opportunity to strike back at his enemies.

Let me digress here for a short space about Silver's personality.

In 1925, when I first arrived in Cleveland, Silver had a good many opponents in town. The strictly orthodox Jews accused him of taking their children out of the Jewish fold by his Reform Judaism. The less orthodox masses strongly resented his aloofness from

them. They felt no warmth for him. During the years of my friendship with Silver I used to try to induce him to become more accessible, more friendly to ordinary people, more interested in them and in their activities. I got him to accept invitations to address the organizations I was interested in and later he was invited without my mediation and accepted the invitations. He then drew closer to the people and made a lot of really admiring and devoted friends.

On the evening when the National Conference was to open in Washington, Rabbi Silver addressed a similar gathering in the Kinsman Road section of Cleveland.

There he availed himself of the opportunity to square his accounts with the District leadership and termed them as "racketeers." This brought forth an uncontrollable storm in all Cleveland circles and in almost the whole country and the atmosphere was poisoned.

THE FOUNDING OF THE CLEVELAND ZIONIST SOCIETY

AT that time I was approached by two young men, one of them a lawyer and very energetic and devoted Zionist, Samuel D. Katz, and the other a certain "doctor" Fred Folkman. They suggested to me that we organize a second Zionist district under the leadership of Rabbi Silver. They also told me they had come with the idea to Silver himself, but he refused to talk to them and nearly threw them out of his study. He disliked both of them.

I liked the idea and promised to speak to Rabbi Silver about it. At first he would not hear of it. He is not going to leave the Cleveland District in the unchallenged control of his enemies, he said. Besides, he did not believe there were enough Zionists in Cleveland for a second district. If we fail in that venture, he argued, he would have to leave Cleveland. He also added that the members of his Temple were opposed to his constant feuds with his Zionist enemies.

But I did not give up. I told him that Zionists are made and not born. Besides, I said, it was high time for him to sever his connections with the old District, where he was always the stormy

petrel and the center of unlovely controversies. Furthermore, I added, we would develop the new organization into a platform for him, which he would be able to use unchallenged. I also advised him to permit himself to be elected President of the new organization. After long discussions my words finally had the desired effect. Silver agreed to the establishment of the new district, but on condition that it would not be proclaimed until the first fifty members had been assured.

That same evening, when Mr. Katz and "doctor" Folkman came to see me, I gave them the "go-ahead" signal. In the course of the next two weeks I personally enlisted about fifty members, and Katz and Folkman had many more. Thus was born the second Zionist District in Cleveland.

BUT the aftermath was not so smooth. The Cleveland Zionists raised a new storm. They sent a delegation to the national headquarters in New York, which addressed vigorous protests to our group. There were stories in the Cleveland press and another large-scale scandal rocked the Cleveland community, with echoes throughout the country. Without consulting Rabbi Silver I took a trip to New York in the hope of effecting some peaceable solution. I had some very close friends in the National Administration and counted on them to help me influence Lipsky and other leaders to come to some understanding. But I soon found out that the money I spent for the trip, the work and the energy I put in, had been wasted. Silver did not have a single friend in the administration. The only thing I accomplished was to have put a stop to the extremely malicious publicity in the New York Yiddish press against Silver.

On my return to Cleveland I met with new difficulties. The publishers of the *Jewish World*, never having been in harmony with my championing Silver, demanded that I adopt a policy of neutrality in the paper. Henry A. Rocker and his father, the late Samuel Rocker, my superior, were both members of the District. The late H. A. Friedland, then president of the District, was a close friend of both Rockers. Moreover, Friedland, as head of the Talmud Torah,

was, indirectly, a substantial advertiser in the *Jewish World*. The Rockers, though personally far from any animosity towards Silver, could not believe that he was always right. Neither did they believe that another Zionist organization was justified. I resisted their demands and was ready to resign my position rather than let Silver down. It was this threat of resignation that made it possible for me to continue to support the rabbi and the Cleveland Zionist Society to the end.

In the meantime the scandals grew and would probably kept on growing if not for the timely intercession of the Cleveland Jewish Federation. Headed by the late, very energetic Edward D. Baker, the Federation managed to quieten things. Rabbi Silver yielded to some extent to publicly apologizing for calling the leaders of the Zionist District "racketeers" and agreed, also, that the new Zionist organization should be named Cleveland Zionist Society, instead of another Zionist District.

The scandal was quelled, at least temporarily, but the mutual hatred continued. Embers were still glowing.

THE ZIONIST CONVENTION IN DETROIT

DURING those years of struggle, at Rabbi Silver's request, I often used to accompany him on his trips to the national Zionist Conventions, where I always had numerous friends. I traveled at my own expense, although the position of my publication was such that I could hardly afford it. The publishers of the *Jewish World* were far behind in their payments of salaries and owed thousands of dollars to their employes, including their editor. Under such conditions it was not easy for me to undertake such trips. But I would go along with Silver because I was anxious to help him out—and I did.

The last Zionist Convention to which I accompanied Rabbi Silver was held in Detroit, in 1938. The leaders in New York, led by the late Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, as the outgoing President, nominated the late Rabbi Solomon Goldman for the new Presidency. Goldman was

always feuding with Silver (and they hated each other) before he left Cleveland, but my own relations with him remained cordial. We were close friends until Goldman's departure for his new pulpit in Chicago.

In any other circumstances I would have favored Goldman for the Presidency. But Silver pressed for Rabbi Israel Goldstein. I felt constrained to support Silver's candidate and worked hard at the convention to round up votes for Goldstein. For this I was bitterly attacked from the platform by Rabbi Brickner shortly before the convention came to a close. In the lobby of the Statler Hotel I was nearly beaten up by Alex Wintner, a Cleveland banker. He attacked me shouting "Goldman is my boy, and if you and your friends work against him, I'll make a cripple out of you." He had the physical strength to do it, but thanks to Henry A. Rocker, who quieted him, I was rescued from his mighty fists.

Goldman won by a small majority. But the Cleveland Zionists, supported by many of other cities, among them quite a few young rabbis, staged a tumultuous and disgusting demonstration against Silver, the like of which has never before been seen at a Zionist gathering. I protested to Rabbi Wise for tolerating such an ugly scene, but my words were drowned out in a sea of catcalls, foot-stamping and shouting.

THIS, in brief, is the history of the birth of the Cleveland Zionist Society and the circumstances that brought it about.

Today Rabbi Silver is the most highly revered Zionist leader not only in American Zionism but in world Zionism and in Jewry generally. His tour of the United States in 1946 and 1947, when he made America "Zionist-conscious," his indefatigable efforts in Washington and later his brilliant address at the United Nations presenting the Jewish case in the Palestine debate, insure for him a place of recognition and honor in Jewish history.

I am sure, however, that it will not be exaggerated to say that Rabbi Silver's present status is, in many respects, the result of the

existence of the Cleveland Zionist Society, to the formation and development of which I devoted my very best efforts. Until the Society came into existence most of the doors were barred to him and his remarkable talents. The Society, by giving him a platform, enabled him to break through and eventually to emerge as the great national leader he was to become during the years of political activity, before the establishment of the state of Israel.

SILVER'S QUARREL WITHIN THE BUREAU OF JEWISH EDUCATION

When I first met Rabbi Silver, a few weeks after my arrival in Cleveland, he did not appear to me to be an affable person. He seemed to me to be stiff-mannered, looking down on people who were not as gifted as he was, and taking no one seriously. In relation to a Yiddish journalist he acted like a snob who has to treat with a "kike." Soon afterwards I was involved with him in an insignificant conflict, which was not of my making. Meaningless, however, as this so-called conflict was, it prompted the rabbi to demand my discharge from the *Jewish World*. As a result I went out of his way and for a time had no interest in him.

But in spite of my personal grievances I soon became more and more attracted to him by the easy stream of his eloquence, his depth of feeling, grace of gesture, the charm he exercised when interpreting matters of concern to Jews, the beauty of his voice and smooth diction—all combined to make him a really great spokesman for his people. I then gradually became one of his most ardent admirers and devoted friend. There were times when I simply idolized him.

During the more than twelve years that I championed Silver's side, there were always omniscient people who "knew" that I was not doing it gratis . . . Now, on the threshold of my 77th year, I want to make this statement as solemnly as I can, that until the time when I was, for economic reasons, forced to leave the *Jewish World*, I never asked Rabbi Silver for the slightest favor. On the contrary, I found his feuds expensive, far beyond my means. I stood with

him through thick and thin, sacrificing even my dearest friends, without bothering about the price I had to pay. I acted as my conscience dictated and not as my interests demanded.

I stood side-by-side with Rabbi Silver in all his quarrels and not only with the Zionists, locally and nationally.

When the late Rabbi Solomon Goldman, then the spiritual leader of the old Jewish Center, accused Silver of having deliberately destroyed his long-time efforts to establish a Hebrew Chair at the Western Reserve University, it was I who helped Silver to quell this scandal. Goldman's charge shocked almost the entire Jewish community and brought forth a lot of hostile resentment against Silver even among people who were ordinarily friendly disposed towards him. Against the advice of my boss, the late Samuel Rucker, I had a lengthy interview with the late Dr. Robert E. Winson, President of the university, and when I found Goldman's assertions to be greatly exaggerated I published the interview in the *Jewish World*, my close friendship with Goldman notwithstanding.

Silver's quarrels with the leaders of the Bureau of Jewish Education were still worse than those of the Zionist District. Many of the struggles in the District were actually originated in the Bureau where the late H. A. Friedland, Aaron Garber, Alfred Sacks, Max Korman, George Klein, Rabbi Brickner and others were always feuding with Silver who was then President of the Bureau. I stood with him also in this quarrel although I was not always convinced that he was right. I supported Silver again in his quarrels with the Jewish Welfare Federation and almost everywhere where he came into conflict. I stood with him even at times when my own personal interests were jeopardized as a result of his actions, turning friends into bitter enemies, right and left. Those enemies avenged on me towards the end of 1938, when I left the *Jewish World* and made an attempt to establish a new Weekly in Cleveland. I then paid a high price, physically, mentally and financially, for supporting Silver. But this is a story by itself, which will be told at a later opportunity.

Today my relations with Rabbi Silver are no longer what they were nearly twenty-five years ago. I am perfectly satisfied, however, that during all those years of my friendship with him I backed the right man. His great contribution to the establishment of the State of Israel dwarfs every personal sacrifice.

The only thing I deeply deplore is the sudden loss of his life at a comparatively early age. It will take many years before another Silver-like leader will be born to American Jewry.

THE INTENSE STRUGGLE AGAINST NAZISM IN CLEVELAND IN THE 1930's

BEGINNING OF THE STRUGGLE

THE day on which Adolf Hitler came to power was Saturday, January 30, 1933. That day the Jews of Berlin and of other large cities in Germany gathered in large numbers in the temples and synagogues to pray to God that He strengthen the determination of the German President von Hindenburg not to call Hitler to office as Chancellor of the Reich. Unfortunately, not only for the Jews but for the whole world, the old general weakened and handed over the reins of office to the half-demented and reckless gangster leader.

Hindenburg, who had little admiration for the Weimar Constitution, insisted nevertheless, that, on taking the oath of office, Hitler swear allegiance to that Constitution. When the Jews in their places of worship heard the oath over the radio, uttered by Hitler word by word, they breathed more freely. They believed that now that Hitler had taken over power and bore the responsibility for the whole nation, he would practice some restraint and treat the Jews as full-fledged German citizens. But Hitler defied the German democratic Constitution from the very moment he became Reichskanzler.

Persecutions of the Jews started on the next day. The whole civilized world was shocked and voiced its protests—especially the Jews of the world. Protests were especially loud in the United States.

The American Jewish Congress immediately convened a large protest meeting in New York, at the Madison Square Garden. On that day over a million Jews marched in protest over the main streets of New York and called upon their government to intercede with the Nazi authorities and demand an end to the persecutions. Protest meetings and demonstrations were also held in Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia and other cities where Jews live in large masses.

In Cleveland the Jewish press demanded similar action. But that was easier said than done. We had in Cleveland at that time a small branch of the American Jewish Congress, which had very little influence on the Jewish public. From time to time that branch did some good work, but it was not equipped for such a large project like calling a large protest meeting. Furthermore, in order to secure the moral success of such an undertaking it was necessary to have a considerable amount of money. Of that the Congress had none. Several meetings and discussions were held, but nothing was done.

Presently the idea was promulgated of counteracting the Nazi persecutions of the Jews by means of an economic boycott against the Third Reich. The American Congress, led by the late Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, was opposed to the plan of a boycott. But the demand that Hitler's boycott against the Jews be countered by a world boycott against Nazi Germany found a ready response among the Jews of America. Strong efforts to put the boycott into practice were made by Dr. S. Margoshes, then Editor-in-Chief of *The Jewish Day*, and his late brilliant fello-journalist, on the staff of the same paper, Dr. A. A. Coralnik. They were soon joined by the late famous lawyer, Samuel Untermeyer and other leading personalities.

I was strongly attracted to the plan for a boycott. Being familiar with the German mentality with regard to money matters, I entertained the hope that German merchants and manufacturers would, as the result of the boycott, seek to influence Hitler to stop his persecutions of the Jews. Many other Jews in Cleveland took the same attitude. Although I was then a member of the National Executive

Board of the American Jewish Congress, I refused to follow its policy of opposition to the boycott. On the contrary, I worked for it.

Opinions were divided in the Cleveland branch of the Congress. Those who favored a uniform Congress policy were opposed to the idea of a boycott. On the other hand, others argued that a mere protest with resolutions against Hitler would have no value, unless concrete steps were taken which would affect the Germans. Unable to unite on an agreed course of action, the Congress in Cleveland did nothing. But someone thought of the idea that a special conference of all Jewish organizations and synagogues be convened to sponsor the protest. The plan was adopted unanimously. Since I wielded influence in most Jewish organizations, I was entrusted with the task of arranging the conference. Within a few days a large number of synagogues and other Jewish organizations joined the project and the conference was called for the first week of April of 1933, to be held in the auditorium of the Jewish Center.

Many people, however, misread the publicity about the proposed conference and believed it was going to be a protest meeting against Nazism. The Center auditorium was, therefore, filled early in the evening and over two thousand people stood jammed an hour before the opening. Thousands of others, unable to enter the hall, filled the streets around the Center.

A young but already prominent lawyer, Edward J. Schweid, was the Chairman of the conference, which had now been converted into a protest meeting. His was a trying job. Rabbi Armand E. Cohen of the Center was the main speaker and I myself spoke more about the boycott than about any other subject. Each time I mentioned the word "boycott," the audience rose to its feet and applauded. This was the best proof that the Jewish masses wanted action, not just speeches in condemnation of the Nazis.

A number of leaders of the organization were named as delegates to our committee. Despite the unexpected difficulties, the conference was a success.

RABBI BRICKNER BECOMES CHAIRMAN

A few days after that conference took place, the dynamic Mrs. Jennie Zwick, chairman of the Cleveland branch of the American Jewish Congress, called a luncheon meeting in one of the downtown restaurants. The delegates elected at the conference were among those invited. But to everyone's surprise, the late Rabbi Barnett R. Brickner, who had never before taken an interest, appeared at that luncheon meeting. He declared his coming had one purpose: to support my demand that the pending protest meeting proclaim an economic boycott against Germany.

I was elated by his sudden declaration and proposed his name as a presiding member of our committee and as Chairman of the large meeting, which was to be held in the auditorium of the Public Hall. Brickner was pleased by my proposal, which the assembled members immediately accepted. At that same meeting we decided to carry our public demonstration on May 14.

The task of securing the necessary funds was entrusted to the late Eugene Wolf and myself. Mr. Wolf was President of Rabbi Silver's Temple, the only one of the large temples to take an active part in our work. The subsequent meetings were held in Rabbi Brickner's Temple. It was there that the young attorney Charles Auerbach, was elected as secretary and was also charged, together with myself, to carry on the work of publicity.

Rabbi Brickner undertook to negotiate with the then City Mayor Ray T. Miller about hiring the Public Auditorium and to use his influence with him to get the regular fee of \$1,000 reduced. Instead of that, Rabbi Brickner, disregarding the unanimous resolution of the committee to hire the Public Auditorium, whose capacity is about 12,000, and hired the Music Hall, which could take in only about 3,000 people. He phoned me to let me know that the Mayor let him have the smaller place at a bargain, for only \$50.00. I was quite upset over it. However, I did not wish to create any bad feelings between the Rabbi and myself or inside the committee and merely

asked him what prompted him to act in contravention to our unanimous decision. His answer was he did not believe we could fill even as much as half of the larger auditorium.

I had a feeling we could, and undertook to convince the Mayor. The Mayor let himself be convinced and let us have the large Auditorium for the same nominal fee of fifty dollars. Subsequent developments proved me to be right.

At the next meeting of our Committee it was decided to invite Rabbi Stephen S. Wise as principal speaker at our protest meeting. It was also decided to propose that the people assembled at the meeting adopt a resolution consisting of two parts: one, voicing our protest, the other proclaiming an economic boycott against Hitler's Germany. The resolution was to be pressed even if Rabbi Wise were to oppose the boycott. Brickner was to read the text of the resolutions following Rabbi Wise's address.

12,000 FILL PUBLIC AUDITORIUM TO PROTEST PERSECUTIONS OF JEWS

FOR the Jews of Cleveland the day of May 14, 1933 was one they would never forget. On that day most Jews of the city, and a good many non-Jews with them, demonstrated their readiness to combat the brutal crimes of the Hitler regime in Germany. The meeting in the Public Auditorium had been announced for two o'clock in the afternoon. But already in the morning masses of Jews traveled downtown to take part in the street march arranged by the Jewish War Veterans under the leadership of A. J. Housman, commandant of Post 14.

Originally the march was to be merely symbolic, but Mr. Housman, an active attorney and communal worker, who had excellent connections with the leaders of the American Legion, asked for their assistance. They brought to the public square three music bands, several military trucks and a number of non-Jewish veterans dressed in military uniform. The Jewish veterans, too, were in uniform.

The three bands, marching and playing, were in front, followed by the marching Legionnaires and Jewish War Veterans. They were joined by other marchers, Jews and non-Jews. The parade turned into a mighty demonstration, never before seen in Cleveland.

I left the marchers to rush to the railway station where I was to meet Rabbi Wise. As soon as he saw me, he began berating me

in his amiable manner for making such a fuss about an economic boycott, which he considered "ridiculous" and "impossible." He said if I persisted in my demand to proclaim a boycott, he would leave the city forthwith. Rabbi Wise and I had been friends for many years and I had a great deal of regard for him, despite our occasional differences of opinion. I told him frankly I was going to insist on the boycott resolution.

After the impressive march downtown, the large crowd flowed toward the Public Auditorium. When I entered the hall at one o'clock in the afternoon, I was highly gratified to see it three quarters full, while more people were still streaming in. By two o'clock the Auditorium was filled almost to its capacity of about 12,000 people. Rabbi Brickner arrived with Rabbi Wise to the Music Hall. When he saw its doors locked, he became enraged and shouted that he would "murder" me. But when he entered the Auditorium with Rabbi Wise, the two of them ran towards me and warmly shook my hand and thanked me.

Rabbi Brickner opened the meeting, delivering a strongly-worded address, after which he presented Mayor Ray T. Miller as the first speaker of the afternoon. The second speaker was the late Archbishop Joseph H. Schrembs. Although a German himself, the esteemed head of the Catholic diocese sharply condemned Nazism and the brutal persecutions of the Jews. Dr. George Crile, head of the famous Cleveland Clinic, spoke about the great contributions to medicine made by German Jewish physicians and voiced his vigorous protest against Hitler and the Nazi philosophy. The last speaker, naturally, was Rabbi Wise, whose fiery speech was interrupted several times by loud applause.

It was now Rabbi Brickner's turn to read the text of the resolutions. He read the first part, but ignored the second part, calling for a boycott. This was the second time Brickner disregarded the unanimous decision of our committee. The adherents of the boycott became incensed, took possession of a small hall nearby, where they held a

meeting to protest against Brickner. I entered the hall and appealed to the several hundred people assembled there to calm down. I assured them the boycott would be proclaimed but that it would be done without undue acrimony. Meantime, I said, we ought to be pleased by the great moral effect of our large meeting. The assembly followed my appeal and dispersed. From that time on Brickner never took any active part in the struggle against the Nazis.

MY DEAL WITH THE GERMAN NEWSPAPER

DURING all that time Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver was in Europe, where he took part in the Zionist Congress in Zurich and later vacationed in Switzerland. He happened to be in Berlin on the day when Hitler rose to power and saw the perils menacing German Jewry. When he returned to Cleveland a few days after the demonstration in Public Hall, I had a long talk with him, in which he told me of his impressions of the Zionist Congress and of his observations in Germany. It was his opinion that German Jewry was doomed.

We touched on the problems of the boycott. I was taken aback by Rabbi Silver's equivocation in this matter. His personal opinion was that the boycott could become a powerful weapon, but in New York, where he spent several days on his way back home, he learned that the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the B'nai B'rith and other Jewish organizations did not favor it. He could not make up his mind to take a stand of which they would not approve. We agreed to postpone the discussion of the question for another two weeks.

In the meantime I was in for another surprise.

A few days after our great demonstration in Public Hall, I was suddenly called on the telephone by Alex Eichinger, manager and member of the editorial staff of the Cleveland German-language paper *Waechter und Anzeiger*, who invited me to be his guest at lunch in a downtown restaurant. Since I knew Eichinger not to be over-

friendly to the Jews, the invitation intrigued me. I promised to meet him the following day in the place he designated. When I came in, I found in the restaurant, besides Eichinger, also Otto Renner, who was editor-in-chief of the newspaper, and two other Germans I met for the first time and who, were introduced to me by Eichinger as important leaders of the German community in Cleveland.

They all complained to me that Jewish employers were dismissing German help only because they were German. That, they claimed, could only lead to unpleasant consequences. The economic depression, they said, was still on, and the resultant unemployment among the Germans would only drive them into the ranks of local Nazis and strengthen their position. They wanted me to publish an article in *The Jewish World*, calling upon Jewish employers to discontinue the practice.

I countered by pointing out the machinations of Hitler's followers in Cleveland and their anti-Jewish propaganda. Finally I agreed to the offer made by Otto Renner, who I knew was an outspoken anti-Nazi, that the Yiddish publication, of which I was editor, and the German paper, of which he was in charge, conclude a pact together to fight the Cleveland Nazis. Renner suggested that I write a special article, to appear in both publications, in order to make it clear that the struggle against Nazism in Germany, forced upon the Jews, was not a struggle against the Germans in Cleveland. I gave my consent.

That same day I wrote the article in Yiddish and in German. I stated that we were engaged in a fight on Hitler and Nazism in Germany but not on our German neighbors in America. At the same time I let it be known that shortly an economic boycott would be proclaimed against Germany, but that had no connection with the Germans in America. I added that German workers must not be dismissed from their jobs unless it was proven that they were Nazis. The article appeared in the Yiddish-language *Jewish World* and in the German-language *Der Waechter und Anzeiger* on May 23, 1933.

The Cleveland Press

GERMANS, JEWS, DECLARE PACT

Groups Here State Principles
of Friendship in
Papers

The Cleveland Jewish Daily World, Yiddish language newspaper, and the Waechter und Anzeiger, German language daily, today began a campaign against Hitlerism in Cleveland on one hand and against anti-Germanism on the other.

An editorial article written by Leon Wiesenfeld, associate editor of the Jewish Daily World, was published simultaneously by both papers, announcing the fight between the Nazis and Jews is not the fight of the Jews and American Germans.

In beginning its campaign the Waechter und Anzeiger writes it is hoped the traditional friendship between American Jews and American Germans will be continued.

Here are parts from the article by Wiesenfeld as published in both papers:

"Our fight against Nazi Germany is not a fight against the German people but solely against the Nazi leadership. In order to fight Hitler on the Jewish question the only method we have left is boycott.

"But we Jews in America should not make the tragic error by having a fight against the German Americans in this country, especially in Cleveland. Our war against the Nazis shall never be a war against the Germans in America or the Germans in any other country."

On the other hand, the Waechter und Anzeiger makes this comment: "We live our own lives in America and are in the first place, Americans. The political maneuver and methods of the old country should have no effect on our feelings toward other races in this country. The Jews in America are our friends and this friendship must be continued regardless of old country conditions."

Eichinger, without asking me, translated some passages of my article into English and sent the release to the daily English press. *The Cleveland Press* printed it that same afternoon. The piece made an impression in some Jewish circles. Rabbi Silver telephoned me immediately and asked me to come to see him to discuss the matter. When I came to his study, I found him greatly exercised. He demanded an explanation why I had not consulted the Jewish leaders

of Cleveland before agreeing to that deal with the German paper. I tried to calm him down by assuring him this was not yet a pact between the Jewish and the German communities of Cleveland, but only between two publications. He would not calm down and kept on reprimanding me.

In time Rabbi Silver became convinced that that agreement with the German editor, which later was extended to include leading figures in the Cleveland German community, was a constructive factor, which helped to combat Hitler's agents in the city, as will be seen in the second article.

I should like to take the liberty to state here that during that time the so-called Jewish "leaders" labored under the illusion that the Jews would be better off if they made no "noise." The outworn notions of the assimilated Jews that the Jews must be inconspicuous, stiller than water and lower than grass, were still prevalent. When the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* suddenly restricted printing reports about Hitler's persecutions of the Jews, I got in touch with the late Mr. Paul Bellamy, the editor-in-chief, and asked him for an explanation. Mr. Bellamy, with whom I was on friendly terms, with his usual candor, told me that the "most prominent leaders of the Cleveland Jews" did not wish to see such reports printed too often. I well knew who those "leaders" were: they were the same ones who had pressured Rabbi Silver into asking me for an explanation about my deal with the German editors. Since most of them are dead, I prefer not to mention their names.

CLEVELAND FIRST CITY TO PROCLAIM BOYCOTT

MEANWHILE I made every effort to popularize the idea of a boycott. I wrote about it in my paper and spoke about it at every meeting I attended. I carried on a vigorous campaign among the Jewish organizations, where I wielded considerable influence.

After I became certain that the vast majority of the Jews in Cleveland were ready to make the boycott a success, I came to see

Rabbi Silver again. I told him I had everything ready for convening a large conference of Jewish organizations and that I would very much like him to come to address it and also to take over the leadership of the boycott movement. But the Rabbi still hesitated. At first I thought he was peeved at me for having made that deal with the German newspaper without preliminary consultation with the "Jewish leadership." But that was not the case.

Rabbi Silver himself favored the boycott. He agreed that that was the only effective weapon at our command. But he feared the opposition to the boycott. That was why he was undecided and showed weakness when I came to see him. Nevertheless he agreed to address the conference if I should convene it.

But he made three rather strange stipulations as conditions for his appearance at the conference:

1. No publicity must be given the conference in the daily English press or in the Anglo-Jewish weekly press;
2. Only accredited delegates were to be admitted into the hall, where the conference was to be held;
3. Special guards were to be posted at the entrance to see to it that no press reporters enter the hall.

Naturally these conditions were not to my liking. I was anxious to give the conference as much publicity as possible. But, having no choice in the matter, I accepted Silver's conditions. However, that very same day I wired my good friend Dr. Margoshes of New York to come to the conference. I did it because I feared that Silver, under pressure from certain elements, might show weakness. Margoshes wired he was coming. That was a load off my mind.

The conference was called for a Sunday early in June—I do not happen to recall the exact date. Dr. Margoshes arrived in the morning, and my wife invited both him and Rabbi Silver for lunch at our house. When Silver heard from Margoshes about the development of the boycott movement throughout the country, his face lit up. He said he would do all in his power to assure the greatest possible success for the boycott.

More than a hundred Jewish organizations in Cleveland sent delegates to the conference. When we entered the auditorium of the Jewish Center at the appointed time of two o'clock, there were already six hundred people in it, and more were coming. I opened the meeting and stated the purpose of the conference. Dr. Margoshes delivered an impressive speech, explaining the great significance and importance of the boycott. The last speaker was Rabbi Silver.

It was a hot day and the auditorium was like an oven. Rabbi Silver discarded his clerical frock and stood on the platform in his shirt-sleeves. His tone was just as informal. It was a great oration, nevertheless, full of feeling and conviction, which transported the audience to another world. It was one of the greatest speeches I had ever heard Rabbi Silver make. The assembly responded to his words with stormy applause, thus expressing its readiness to follow him to the end of the road.

At the end of the meeting I read the text of a resolution calling for a boycott of Germany. The resolution was adopted unanimously and with thunderous applause.

Thus Cleveland became the first city in the United States in which the economic boycott against Hitler's Germany was openly proclaimed.

About a week or two later a similar conference was held in New York under the chairmanship of Louis Untermeyer. The conference resulted in the establishing of a national organization, later to be known as "The League for Human Rights and Against Nazism." Untermeyer was elected as President, Rabbi Silver as First Vice-President. Dr. Margoshes and Dr. Coralnik were also elected as Vice-President. I was elected to the National Executive. Both Silver and I had been invited to attend the conference in New York and took part in it.

On returning from New York, Silver and I immediately established a branch of the new organization in Cleveland, and Rabbi Silver became an arduous and dedicated worker in behalf of assur-

ing the success of the anti-Nazi boycott. Thanks to his devotion, talent and influence, Cleveland became the city where the boycott against Germany was in full swing.

But Rabbi Silver was not content with this. He undertook to travel through the country at his own expense to organize the boycott in every city he visited.

REACTION OF OUR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS TO OUR ANTI-NAZI STRUGGLE

HOW did our non-Jewish fellow-citizens react to the Jewish protests against Hitler's brutal persecutions of the Jews in Germany? What was their attitude on boycotting German goods, which the Jews in the United States organized in response to the anti-Jewish boycott of the Nazi regime of the "Third Reich?"

As editor of a Yiddish Daily newspaper and as one of the leading organizers in our city of the protests and the boycott, I was intensely interested in those questions. I thereupon made it my business to meet with a number of prominent citizens in Cleveland to get their views. I met with a few of the leading clergymen in town, newspaper editors, representatives of the business community, labor leaders and so on.

Most of the people I met with expressed outrightly a great deal of sympathy. Among them were especially noted the spiritual leaders of the Christian community, such as the late former Catholic Auxiliary Bishop John O. McFadden (later Bishop of Youngstown) and the two very popular Protestant clergymen Dr. Arthur J. Culler and Dr. Dillworth Lupton. They condemned Hitler's persecutions of the Jews in Germany and more than justified the protests and the boycott. Others were more or less understanding, though not all so warm in their sympathy. Some were more restrained, a few were "neutral" or non-committal. Still others had no opinion. Some were in sympathy with the protests but not with the boycott.

It was one of America's most respected statesmen in those days who was the most outspoken on this subject, the late Mr. Newton D. Baker, with whom I was privileged to strike up a friendship on the second year of my arrival in Cleveland. In time I became convinced that he was one of the best friends the Jews had in America. There was a time when he evinced a strong interest in the Zionist cause. He was a good friend of Louis Brandeis and Dr. Chaim Weitzmann and even proclaimed himself to be a Zionist. Later he lost much of that interest, but not his warm feelings for the Jews.

I came to see him when he returned from a prolonged tour of the Southern states, where he helped to establish branches of the recently founded National Conference of Christians and Jews. He was one of the founders of this organization. Mr. Baker expressed to me his bitter disappointment as a result of his experiences and observations in the South, where he found very little tolerance and a good deal of anti-Semitism. "The Ku Klux Klan does not function any longer," he said, "but there is still a lot of sympathy for this un-American body." He thought the Jews in America ought to take a good look behind their own backs, or, in their own back yard, as the saying goes. . . . The first duty of American Jewry, he added, is to America and then to themselves. Mr. Baker did not oppose the actions taken by the Jews of the United States in favor of their unfortunate brethren in Germany. But neither did he approve of them.

That anti-Semitism was rampant throughout the country and not merely in the South, in those days—in the 1930's—was not news to me. Those were the years' of an economic collapse in the United States with some fifteen million people out of work. All sorts of imported and home-grown nazis and fascists and other demagogues exploited the misery of the people to blame every conceivable ill on the Jews. In speeches, in rallies, in millions of copies of scurrilous pamphlets and publications, men like the notorious Gerald L. K. Smith, William Dudley Pelley, and later Charles E. Coughlin pointed to the Jews as the "villain" who caused the misery of the hungry and unem-

ployed. Fritz Kuhn, Hitler's chief "Gauleiter" (regional leader) in America, published in New York a German-language newspaper "Deutscher Weckruf," which was financed from Berlin, and printed there in hundreds of thousands of copies. It was full of anti-Jewish poison, inciting the Germans living in America against the Jews. The smaller "Gouleiters" threw this paper into the homes of Germans in every city in the country, free of charge.

HITLER'S INITIAL SUCCESSES AND HIS FOLLOWERS IN CLEVELAND

HITLER'S initial successes, though insignificant, had their effect on many Germans in America. Many of them, who until then had been totally free of the Nazi virus, were converted to the old German super-nationalism and patriotism. They suddenly began to see in that half-demented demagogue and former street urchin a second Bismarck, who was to restore Germany to even greater glory than the great Chancellor. As a result many of those Germans embraced the Nazis gradually and helped them to become a power in the American-German community to be reckoned with. Most of the Jews knew little or nothing of those occurrences because they were not reported in the press.

Within time the Jews, too, gradually grew accustomed to the events in Germany. Forgotten were the initial protests against Hitler's persecution of the Jews in Germany and the boycott activity also was far from being as successful as was hoped. There was even a number of Jewish businessmen who carried on indirectly or undercover trade in German goods. Since there was nothing else that could have been done to rescue the Jews in Germany, American Jewry turned to its own affairs. New organizations and Community Councils were established, but those did not deal with anti-Semitism and Nazism. Those problems were left to the League of Human Rights, the Anti-Defamation League and the Jewish press.

Needless to say, that our non-Jewish fellow citizens, who at first sympathized with the brutally persecuted victims of the Hitler barbarians, lost their interest and forgot them altogether. America, like all other countries, accepted the Hitler regime among her friendly neighbors. The State Department on several occasions even voiced its disapproval of the Jewish boycott on German goods. No one concerned himself much longer with the cruel fate of the Jews under the Nazi regime. Still less was anybody concerned with the un-American Nazi activities in the United States.

HERE, in Cleveland, under the leadership of Martin Kessler, an intelligent but extremely fanatical Hitler follower, and a virulent anti-Semite, gained some successes just as did the Nazis in other American cities. The Nazi organization in Cleveland was organized several years before Hitler came to power in Germany. From the start they made a lot of tumult, but were almost entirely ignored by the local German inhabitants. Most of the Germans looked upon them as a bunch of hooligans with whom they would have nothing in common. This situation changed radically, however, in their favor after Hitler succeeded in grabbing the power of Germany. As was well known there was never a deficiency of those Germans who had always had a tendency towards anti-Semitism and Jew-baiting. Many of those people joined the Nazis and together they organized a considerable force in our city.

THE CLIQUE OF GERMAN INTELLECTUALS

Aiding the Nazis, directly and indirectly, was a clique of prominent German intellectuals and professionals who enjoyed great prestige in Cleveland. This clique pretended to be a "cultural" group. In reality, however, they were, if not outright Nazis, at least very friendly towards Hitler's "Third Reich" and the local Nazis. Among them were such well-known names as Dr. Rieger, chief of the old City Hospital; Dr. Otto Glasser of the Cleveland Clinic; Mrs. Henry Gerstenberger and daughter, wife and daughter of one of Cleve-

land's most prominent physicians who had a large Jewish clientele; Johann Foisel, Protestant Minister of the church on Eddy Road; Dr. Carl Hugo Pelt, professor at the Western Reserve University, Hans Brown and many others whose names I cannot recall while writing these lines. After a thorough investigation of this clique I unmasked their hyprocritical activities and charged them of being what they really were.

This charge created immediately a stir among our so-called "better class" Jews in Cleveland, who refused to believe my findings and accused me of being a "trouble maker" and "sensationalist." Also, the editors of the local newspapers, to whom those intellectuals had easy access, were not ready to believe that those highly respected citizens were secret Nazi agents. They later had to change their minds when *The Cleveland Press* on one fine day ran a double-header accusing the "liberal" Pastor John Foisel, a member of the clique, in being a paid agent of that crippled monster Paul Goebel, Hitler's Minister of Propaganda in the Nazi Government. Foisel vanished from Cleveland the next day.

During the years of their activities, however, they won recognition for the Nazis in many German circles and raised their standing not only in the German community but in non-German as well, including political.

MAYOR BURTON FIRST HIGH OFFICIAL T O GRANT RECOGNITION TO NAZIS

THE first elected official to grant recognition to the Nazis in Cleveland as an organization equal to all others, was Mayor Harold H. Burton, who died about a year ago after having served as Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Burton almost unknown politically to the voters of Cleveland, was elected Mayor due to a lucky combination of circumstances. The people were tired of Mayor Harry L. Davis, who was a candidate for re-election. They wanted a new face, one who would better serve their interests. The Republican organization was at that time badly split and the most important and recognized leaders of the organization desired to get rid of Mayor Davis. It was Maurice Maschke and other former leaders who encouraged Burton to "throw his hat into the ring." All three daily newspapers, who hated Davis, strongly indorsed Burton just as soon as he announced his candidacy.

After he was elected Burton was aware of the fact that in spite of his election he is personally almost unknown to the people of his city. He thereupon determined to make himself popular by making the rounds of every kind of group organizations. Here it was where the Mayor came in contact with the Nazis. Cleveland, as is well known, is one of the largest cosmopolitan cities in the United States. In contrast to his predecessors Burton went to all the numerous

group celebrations and even meetings, including those of the Nazis, usually accompanied by his lovely wife, and did, indeed, succeed in gaining popularity.

Burton, probably not realizing the full effect of his conduct, was in all reality exploited by the Nazis for their own gains. Kessler and Dr. Glasser saw to that because the presence of the Mayor at their meetings and celebrations raised their own prestige in the eyes of the still hesitating German population. I tried several times to call his attention to this situation and he always promised to "study" it. In the meantime he was again and again attending Nazi meetings where he was greeted by Hitler's followers in storm trooper uniforms and the bloody "swastikas" on their arms, with the Nazi outcry of "Heil, Heil, our Mayor."

The Mayor was not much of an orator. His brief, inane addresses were monotonously repetitious. He was always "happy to be here"; he was "pleased" about the "fine activities" of the respective organizations, etcetera, etcetera. People were pleased with the Mayor's and Mrs. Burton's presence at their celebrations, but paid little attention to his speeches. To the Nazis, however, his words had great meaning . . . Burton's praise of their "fine activities" raised their standing in the German community. In an editorial in Fritz Kuhn's "Deutscher Weckruf" Burton was cited as an example for those Germans who still refused to fall in line with the Nazis. Here follows an extraction from this editorial, translated from the German original:

"The Mayor of the City of Cleveland recently spoke on the occasion of German Day from a stage richly decorated with several Swastika flags. We see, then, that in Ohio, the head of a government has no objection against the showing of the German flag. We see that he does not hesitate to stand beneath this flag when he speaks to Germans. He understands and appreciates the reasons which are causing our people to let the flag of their Fatherland proudly wave in the wind.

“We would, therefore, like to know by what authority and right many editors of German newspapers and many leaders of German societies believe that showing of our flag does not agree with their obligations as citizens of this country? If the chief executive of one of America’s great cities does not consider the showing of our flag publicly as objectionable, we would like to know by what right some Germans are trying to prohibit the display of the Swastika under the contention that it is un-American? If the highest governmental official of a great city does not think that the display of the Swastika is treachery, why should Germans believe it is?”

WAS Mayor Burton aware of the fact that the Nazis were exploiting his political naivete for their own purpose to further Nazi propaganda? I have no answer to this question. But I do know that Kuhn wrote his editorial a few days after the “German Day” which took place July the 4th, 1936, in Parma Heights. At that gathering which was attended by the Nazi leaders of fourteen Midwestern states, Burton excelled himself with his inordinately long address, in which he expressed—as usual in the name of ALL THE PEOPLE OF CLEVELAND—his admiration for their activities. . . . He assured the Nazis that the people of Cleveland will be glad to hear what they will have to say. He assured the Nazis also, that they were welcome in our city. At the close of his speech he invited the “delegates” from the fourteen states to be his guests at the Industrial Exhibition on the downtown shores of Lake Erie, whose guest a few days earlier had been President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

MY SHARP LETTER OF PROTEST TO MAYOR BURTON; CITY HALL WAS AGOG

I was so enraged by his action, while unable to use my paper, that I wrote a lengthy letter to the Mayor berating him for his behavior. The letter follows:

July 15, 1953

Hon. Harold H. Burton, Mayor

City Hall

Cleveland, Ohio

My dear Mr. Mayor:

A few days ago, I was very much surprised to learn from accounts in our English and German newspapers that on July 4th you took the trouble, notwithstanding the pouring rain, to drive to the German Central Farm in Parma Heights that you might extend greetings of welcome to a so-called "convention" of Hitlerite district leaders who came here from fourteen states in the middle west to work out plans with which to further their subversive fascist un-American activities.

Hard as it was to believe that it was the duty of the Mayor of Cleveland to proceed to Parma to welcome such a gathering, I, nevertheless was under the impression that you were misled by Hitler's agents in this town; that you were misinformed as to its character. I therefore thought this to be an innocent and honest mistake.

However, from what I have had the opportunity to learn later from the most reliable non-Nazi German sources, I now know that you were not misled nor misinformed; it was now obvious that you were quite well acquainted with the character of the German-American League whose leaders assembled in Parma.

But even if one was willing to give you the benefit of the doubt and to assume that you were not sufficiently informed with the exact character of the German-American League (this can naturally be denied at your convenience), may I be permitted to ask you the following question:

Do you really believe that it was becoming for the Mayor of a great American cosmopolitan city to be greeted as he were the mayor of one of the great cities of Hitler's "Third Reich?"

According to my very reliable information you were greeted with the Hitler salute, with outstretched arms and Nazi "Heils." These greetings were extended to you immediately upon your arrival to the German Central Farm and again after Martin Kessler, president of the Nazi organization in Cleveland introduced you as "a very good friend of the German-American League."

True, your speech was partly to the point. But even then you told the overwhelming pro-Hitler audience that you commend the "good work" of the League and that "Cleveland will be glad to listen to what the delegates will have to say." You even went so far as to invite this bunch of gangsters to be your personal guests at the Industrial Exhibition.

What amazed me most was that after you have already extended your greetings and invitation, you still remained for another hour or so at this un-American meeting where the German Farm was flooded with Hitler's Nazi Swastika flags and other Nazi emblems. You listened not only to Nazi music and songs, but also to the very inflammatory speech of George Forboese, the Nazi district leader of Milwaukee, who followed you to the rostrum.

Forboese denounced the Jewish people of the United States as only Nazi demagogues are capable of doing. He told the audience in so many plain words that the German-American League is political; that its ultimate goal is to exterminate the Jews in this country from every influence and public life, as was done in Germany: he cursed the Jews for their economic boycott against Germany and

called upon the Germans and also non-Germans in Cleveland to retaliate through boycotting American Jewish merchants.

Not only have you, as Mayor of Cleveland, attentively and tolerantly listened to such un-American Jew-baiting, but you went further than that. You joined in the thunderous applause with which Forboese's contemptible speech was greeted by Fritz Kuhn, Hitler's American "Gauleiter," and his Nazi com-patriots.

I have not the least desire to stir up the people of our city against you. But I do believe to be within my rights as an American citizen to lodge with you my personal most emphatic protest against this strange, un-American, unjustified and indefensible action on your part.

Your predecessors in City Hall were also frequently invited to all sorts of Nazi celebrations. But they have always ignored them. Mayors and other high Governmental officials of Ohio and in many other states have always refused Nazi invitations whenever they were extended to them. No responsible public official, elected or otherwise, has ever accepted an invitation to attend or to participate in a Nazi gathering of any kind.

You are the first mayor of a great American city in this country who last July the 4th found it necessary to extend official greetings to a Jew-baiting Hitlerite "convention," which was not even held in your own city. By doing so, you certainly created a very unpleasant and distasteful precedent. It is against this that I consider it my solemn duty to protest.

Respectfully yours,

Leon Wiesenfeld.

When Burton received the letter the City Hall was agog. . . . He immediately called his campaign manager, the late former United States District Attorney, A. E. Bernsteen, asking him to come to his office. Bernsteen, though a Jew, knew nothing about Jews and had nothing in common with them. He quickly called together the Jewish employees of the City Hall to consider the situation. One of them suggested that my "boss," Mr. Henry A. Rucker, be called up.

Mr. Rucker, a well-known lawyer, was the nominal publisher of the *Daily Jewish World* of which I was the editor. It was on his account that I was unable to use the columns of the paper to express my views or my sentiments with regard to Mr. Burton.

Henry A. Rucker's late brother, a printer, worked at the Municipal Printing Department. Mr. Rucker's son, also a lawyer, was employed in the City Law Department. Incidentally, I, and not my "boss" was responsible for their jobs. During the years of economic depression I have used my influence in City Hall to obtain employment for a considerable number of Jews, including the two Ruckers. Mr. Rucker was all the more afraid that I might cause his brother and his son to lose their jobs if I pursued my anti-Burton campaign. He, therefore, kept a vigilant eye over me making sure that I could not print even the least criticism on Mr. Burton's behavior.

Mr. Rucker came to the City Hall, read my letter to the Mayor and assured the politicians that they had nothing to worry about. The politicians were reassured. A few days later Mr. Burton wrote me a friendly letter, assuring me that in the future he would consult me before accepting such invitations.

His letter follows:

City of Cleveland

HAROLD H. BURTON
MAYOR

July 30, 1936.

Mr. Leon Wiesenfeld
1289 East Boulevard
Cleveland, Ohio

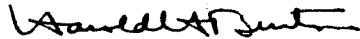
Dear Mr. Wiesenfeld:

This will acknowledge, with thanks, your letter of July 15th, referring to my attendance as the Mayor of Cleveland at the German-American League convention held at the German Central Farm recently. I appreciate your interest in the situation and you may feel perfectly confident that I have no prejudice in this matter and that my attendance was in no way indicative of a prejudice against the Jews. I did not have information as to the character of the German-American League, but understood that it was a German-American organization loyal to the principles of this country as are so many other of the German organizations which meet at the German Central Farm.

At the meeting I was advised that all members of the organization were American citizens and that a part of the occasion was the observance of the American Day of Independence July 4th. Therefore, it seemed to me most appropriate that, as a representative of the City of Cleveland, I accept the invitation extended to be officially present on that occasion.

I will be glad to see you at any time in connection with any matters which you feel are of community interest, and as to which you may feel that I have been in any way misled, or in connection with which I might not adequately represent the interests of all of the people of our great cosmopolitan city.

Yours sincerely,



Mayor

HHB:H

Burton, as seen, did not deny anything that was said in my letter to him. He merely claimed not to have known the character of the gathering in Parma and that he was "misled."

Incredulous as this subterfuge was, I was nevertheless inclined to accept his assurance that he "will be glad to see me at any time" in connection with any matters as to which I may feel that he has been in any way misled. Unfortunately Burton did not live up to this promise. There were many times when he was on the verge of being "misled" again. I then made strong attempts to meet with him on each of such occasions, but somehow he could never find the time to receive me.

Soon afterwards Mr. Burton suppressed a resolution introduced in the City Council expressing opposition to the participation of the American Olympic players in the International Olympic games in Berlin. He continued to attend Nazi gatherings and even private affairs, like the reception of a German fowl dealer who was honored in the home of the Nazi Consul. He permitted the Nazis to parade in their uniforms and to display the Swastika in the downtown section of the city.

CLEVELAND'S EXCHANGE OF STUDENTS WITH NAZI GERMANY

IN the month of May, 1937, I was informed by German sources that the School Managements of Cleveland and Rocky River had made an agreement with Nazi Germany for the exchange of students. I found it incredible and telephoned Dr. Charles Lake, the late Superintendent of Schools, asking for information. Dr. Lake did not answer directly but turned me over to some woman. She was evasive and vague in her answers so that I could not make out anything definite. I reported the news in my paper, hardly believing it myself.

A few days later *The Cleveland Press* came out with a big headline confirming the deal with Hitler's Germany. The paper added

that several suburbs refused to participate and that only Cleveland proper and Rocky River agreed to the student exchange.

Two weeks afterwards, I was again appraised by German sources that the local Nazis hired the Public Auditorium where a gala reception for the students will be arranged. The Mayor, those sources said, and some other local notables would be on hand to welcome them. I promptly alerted the Jewish War Veterans and other organizations, which demanded that the Mayor should cancel the permit to use the Public Auditorium. Meantime the so-called "students," who, in fact, were young Hitlerite propagandists, arrived in New York. There Fritz Kuhn and his Nazis put them on two Swastika decorated busses and sent them off to Cleveland.

No one paid attention to the young Nazis on their way to our city until they came to our own city limits. There a large number of policemen on motorcycles and cars were waiting for them. They were escorted through Euclid Avenue, without stopping for the red lights to the Public Hall, where they were received with great acclaim by a large crowd of Nazis and other Germans. Patriotic German music played as they marched into the Hall. It was soon filled.

Robert A. Good, a lawyer, introduced Mayor Burton, who stubbornly rejected every suggestion not to attend this reception. This time the Mayor delivered a different kind of a speech than at other gatherings. He told the "students" that Cleveland was a city of many ethnic groups in which there was no room for fascism. His speech was clear and to the point. But Burton was followed by Mr. Good who ignored the admonition of the Mayor and advised the "students" to spread their propaganda as they saw fit, saying "If you will have occasion to do or say something which will bring honor and dignity of your fatherland, then say it without hesitation or fear." Then this man read a "poem" written by himself. It was a cheap and outrageous insult to Jews, Catholics and Protestants. Then the "students" sang "Deutschland Ueber Alles" and the bloody "Horst Wesel"

song, while the crowd cheered wildly. The Mayor was present at this reception to the end.

At the next meetings of the Jewish Community Council and the League for Human Rights and against Nazism I demanded that steps be finally taken against Mayor Burton and the School Management. There were enough Republican politicians, however, in both organizations to obstruct speedy action. But later, on my strong insistence, the two bodies united and called a protest meeting in the Music Hall. More than three thousand people filled the hall and enthusiastically applauded Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver and the other speakers who denounced Mayor Burton and the action of the School Management. Another two thousand were turned away for lack of room. It was a very impressive meeting.

I DECIDE TO HELP DEFEAT BURTON IN NEW MAYORALTY ELECTIONS

NEW elections for Mayor were to be held that same year. I decided to start a personal campaign against Burton. Unfortunately the Democratic opposition candidate was very weak and had no chance of winning. Nevertheless I threw my support behind him. As soon as Burton's Jewish politicians learned of my decision they began carrying on a campaign of vilification against me. Petty jobholders went from door to door of Jewish homes telling the people all sorts of lies about me. I then advised Mr. John O. McWilliams, Burton's opponent, to publish a special election paper which was to tell the voters about Burton's relations with the Nazis.

As soon as my "boss," Mr. Henry A. Rucker, heard of this, he demanded that the Community Council take a stand against me. The Council had a standing committee with Rabbi Silver as chairman and the late Edward A. Baker and Nathan Loeser as co-chairmen, to watch that no Jewish issues be dragged into political election campaigns. Mr. Rucker claimed that I was committing an injustice against the Council.

One day I received a "summons" by wire from Mr. Phillip Bernstein, the Secretary of the Jewish Community Council, to appear at Mr. Loeser's office to answer questions about my part in the election campaign. I took along the proof sheets of the projected paper and went to find out what the eminent leaders of the Council—which I helped to organize—had to say.

In Mr. Loeser's office I found Mr. Rucker and Rabbi Armand E. Cohen. Rucker was at that time President of the Conservative Synagogue and the Center, where Rabbi Cohen occupied the pulpit. Saul S. Danaceau, now Judge of the Common Pleas Court, informed me that he had been named as my defendant. Rabbi Silver, being on vacation, the "tribunal" which was to sit in judgment over me, consisted of the late Messrs. Edward M. Baker and Nathan Loeser. Mr. Rucker stated the case for the "prosecution." I was being charged with the "heinous crime" of injecting Jewish issues in the election campaign, contrary to the express prohibition of the Council. I then turned over the proof sheets to Mr. Danaceau and asked him to read them before the "Court." That he did.

When Mr. Baker asked me what I had to say I replied that my answer could be found in the page proofs. I merely added that I considered myself to be a good American citizen and a free man who bears responsibility for his political actions as well as any other action.

Mr. Rucker wasn't satisfied with my "arrogant" reply to Mr. Baker's question.

"You know very well," he shouted, "that the Community Council has taken a stand against dragging Jewish questions into a political campaign. By what right are you defying the Council's decision?"

"This is not a Jewish question," I replied. "It is an American question; it is an issue that concerns every citizen of this community. The Mayor has been advised time and again by influential Jewish and non-Jewish civic leaders to refrain from official conduct that lends encouragement to the Nazi movement in our city. No one

accuses the Mayor of being a Nazi. But he has continued to ignore all signs of caution, continuing to cater to this group that professes un-American doctrines of racial hatred and intolerance.

"When I first objected to the Mayor's participation in the Nazi activities at the Parma convention of Nazi leaders, he tried to explain his conduct as being the result of misunderstanding of the nature and purpose of the gathering. But since that time he has attended many more gatherings of the same kind, proving that he has no intention of mending his way.

"I harbor no personal enmity against the Mayor, neither do I have any ulterior political motives. My fight against Mr. Burton, as you and so many others know, did not originate in the heat of the present political campaign. For fifteen months I have carried on this fight alone. Several weeks ago I asked the Mayor to refrain from further catering to the Nazis and to repudiate their endorsement. This he refused. It was then that I took up my fight against him.

"All I can say to you, Mr. Rucker, is that because of you I deeply deplore that I cannot avail myself in this certainly justified struggle of the paper of which I happen to be the editor. But I want to make it clear not alone to you, but also to Rabbi Cohen and to both of these two distinguished communal leaders, Messrs. Baker and Loeser, that under no conditions will I relinquish from this struggle against the man who is, indirectly, encouraging the worst enemies of our people to carry on their impudent propaganda against all of us. The unfortunate Jews in Hitler's Germany cannot fight back. But we here, in these blessed United States, can and will. As an independent American citizen I will continue to carry on this struggle to the finish. Neither you nor anyone else will stop me."

Messrs. Baker and Loeser then retired to another room. When they emerged from it, Mr. Baker called me over to his desk and, taking my hand in his, said:

"My dear Wiesenfeld. You and I, as is well known, do not always see eye to eye. There were many things in which we differed. But I have always considered you an able journalist and a sincere

and dedicated champion of, and worker for all Jewish interests. In the present political campaign it was not you by any means who created the Jewish issue. That was done by Mr. Burton. The responsibility is his, not yours. Although I am a Republican and a friend of the Mayor, I agree with you fully that Burton must not be the Mayor of Cleveland. Mr. Loeser shares my admiration for your Jewish sense of dignity. Go on with your work and may God help you!"

Mr. Rucker and Rabbi Cohen were stunned by this decision. But after a while they regained their composure and came over to me smiling and shook hands. Two days later Rabbi Silver returned from his vacation. He telephoned me, asking me to come to his home. At that time the election sheet was already printed and ready for distribution. Silver read the paper carefully and then asked me if Mr. McWilliams had any prospect of being elected. When I told him that I did not believe so, he strongly advised me not to distribute the paper.

No man before or since had ever had such strong personal influence over me as Rabbi Silver during that period. I did as he said and the paper was not distributed. A few days later Burton was, as expected, re-elected Mayor of Cleveland by a much smaller majority than he received two years ago. The day after the election the English newspapers reported that Burton lost a lot of votes on account of his fraternizing with Nazis. In three of the four wards in which Jews lived in greater masses, Burton hardly pulled through and in the fourth he lost. That gave me a feeling of satisfaction.

But I was more satisfied to learn later that after his second election Burton finally saw the light and was never again seen or heard at a Nazi rally.

Towards the end of 1941, when Burton was the junior United States Senator from Ohio, I issued a special Goodwill edition of my magazine. I mailed a copy of this issue to him and here is what he had to say about it:

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D. C.

December 30, 1941

Mr. Leon Wiesenfeld, Editor
The Jewish Voice
1289 East Boulevard
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Leon:

This will acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your January, 1942, "Goodwill Edition" of "The Jewish Voice". I congratulate you upon it. You have produced a publication of substantial interest and one which is fully expressive of the point of view so necessary to our national and international unity in the cause of freedom.

Yours sincerely,

HHB:va



IN the same election for Mayor, Cleveland voters also had to elect candidates for the City Council. In the primary election one of the candidates was an elderly physician by the name of Dr. Victor Waltz. Dr. Waltz was formerly a member of the Cleveland City Council for several years. He later dropped out of the Council when he decided to go for a visit to his "Fatherland" in Germany. There he was "privileged" to meet the "Fuehrer" himself. Upon his return to Cleveland he was already a full-fledged Nazi. He was one of Dr. Otto Glasser's collaborators in the clique the former founded.

Following the suggestions of the Nazi leaders he decided to run again in his West Side ward as a candidate for election to the City Council. Dr. Waltz was known during his terms as one of the most

liberal spokesmen in the Council. *The Cleveland Press* warmly supported the old doctor on the basis of his record and experience. He was sure of being elected because he was popular with the people of his ward. If he would have had succeeded in this effort, the City of Cleveland would have achieved the "distinction" of having the first Nazi in the United States as its member of the city government.

Unfortunately for him I managed to convince the editors of *The Cleveland Press* that the old gentleman became a Nazi. Messrs. Louis B. Seltzer and Burch, the editors of *The Press*, could not believe that my contention could be possible. But Martin Kessler was called up by one of the writers and he reluctantly admitted that Dr. Waltz was the treasurer of the "Deutscher Consumer Verein," which carried on the boycott against Jewish merchants in Cleveland. The editors immediately withdrew their support for him and indorsed, instead, his opponent, also a German, but not a Nazi. With Dr. Waltz the "Consumer Verein," too flopped.

Dr. Waltz thereafter threatened to sue me for \$150,000 damages. But he later changed his mind and let me get away with it.

THE DEPRESSION AND THE CONDUCT OF OUR CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS

THE year 1928 found Cleveland as one of the first cities in the United States destined to fall as early victims of the economic catastrophe which struck the country. Less than one year before the great crash on Wall Street, the booming building industry in Cleveland endured an unprecedented calamity. The Jews of Cleveland, as one of the most active groups in the industry, were the first to suffer. Real estate prices fell so rapidly and so low, without regard to the sizes and the ages of the structures, that many engaged in the trade lost their heads. There were men who went to bed as capitalists and woke up as paupers.

Ten months later came the Wall Street crash and the situation in Cleveland became even worse. Some of yesterday's philanthropists became recipients of charity. Banks, including some of the oldest and best-established, closed down and credit became unobtainable. This also affected people outside the building and real estate lines.

The only Jewish institution which, in those dark days, was still in a position to render some limited assistance to the numerous applicants, was the Jewish Social Service Bureau. The men recently made poor and the masses of unemployed workers went to the Bureau with their hearts heavy, asking for help. Their position grew worse from day to day and they were forced to apply for assistance, if not for their own sakes, for their children's.

But the Social Service Bureau had a policy of investigating the applications, which sometimes took a long time. Meantime the poor applicant had to do without necessities. The policy might have been justified in normal times, but not in a catastrophe such as we had in those days. The blow was so sudden that there simply was no time to inquire whether the blow was a blow or not. Men, women and children were literally starving. Others had been put out of their homes and had to sleep on the sidewalks in front of their former homes. This was a situation which required quick action. But the Social Service Bureau kept to its old policy of careful preliminary investigation. On top of that, there was not enough personnel to attend to all the applicants. The needy ones sold their belongings for less than half price to enable them to buy food. But that was enough only for a few days.

The Social Service Bureau, which at that time had its offices in a building on Prospect Avenue, was besieged from early morning till late in the evening. But only the few "lucky" ones were admitted—those whose cases had been investigated. This led to disorders and riots, and the police had to intervene to disperse the crowds.

HUNDREDS BESIEGE THE JEWISH WORLD

IN their desperation hundreds of men and women crowded around the office of *The Jewish World* every evening after the offices of the Social Service Bureau were closed, and appealed to me for some action in their behalf. My heart bled for those unfortunates and I decided to go and have a talk with Miss Violet Kittner who was in charge. But when I managed to squeeze through the crowd and get into the inner sanctum, I was told that I was not allowed to see Miss Kittner. I then went to the office of the Jewish Welfare Federation wishing to see the omnipotent Executive Secretary, Mr. Samuel Goldhammer.

It was nice and cozy in the office of the Federation. The poor and the destitute were not there to disturb the serene atmosphere in which the officials carried on their daily routine. I gave my name

to one of the girls in the office and told her I wished to see Mr. Goldhammer. It took some time but there was no sign of Mr. Goldhammer. I was beginning to lose patience when Mr. Goldhammer's assistant appeared. It was Dr. John Slawson, who is today Executive Vice-President of the American Jewish Committee in New York. Dr. Slawson's manner was affable. He said Mr. Goldhammer was very busy just now and inquired what had suddenly brought me to the Federation.

No sooner did I begin explaining, when Mr. Goldhammer appeared in the doorway and, after casting his customary unfriendly glance, said sharply: "That is our business, not yours, Good-bye!" He beckoned to Dr. Slawson and both went back into their offices, leaving me standing alone in my humiliation.

Not that I was overly surprised at Goldhammer's conduct. I had known him to be a surly person. But I decided not to give up without a fight. My fight was both with the Social Service Bureau and with the Federation. On coming back into my editorial office, I wrote a sharp article, demanding at least a temporary stoppage to the long drawn-out investigations in order to start giving some small assistance to the needy ones immediately. At least, I wrote, the hungry children ought to be fed without delay. I kept on repeating those demands in my paper from time to time.

In my articles I did not demand the impossible. I knew that our philanthropic organizations, both Jewish and non-Jewish, were not prepared for the emergency. The catastrophe was so great that many millions were required to alleviate the distress. The Social Service Bureau had to operate with very limited means at its disposal. All that I asked for was that the money which was available should be applied immediately without the thorough preliminary investigations, which were proper in normal times but which caused undue hardship at such a time. The Jewish Welfare Federation was a relatively opulent body even then, and I demanded that it come to the assistance of the Social Service Bureau, insofar as that was feasible.

But Mr. Goldhammer and other people in the Federation looked upon my views as "provocations." They had my articles translated into English and, after reading the translations, they literally spewed fire at me. Goldhammer considered the calamity as strictly his private domain and was very intolerant of any criticism of the Federation. He looked upon me as a curse and was full of fire.

Fortunately, there were other people in the Federation and in the institutions affiliated with the Federation, who took a different attitude. One of the less allergic persons was that same Miss Violet Kittner whom I had not at first managed to see. She was in charge of the Social Service Bureau. Miss Kittner was a capable and experienced social worker with a genuine human heart. She felt sympathy for the people who applied for help but was prevented to do more for them than she could, because of insufficient funds.

Unlike Mr. Goldhammer who refused to discuss "his" business with outsiders, Miss Kittner called me up and asked me to meet her for lunch in a downtown restaurant. She told me she had read the translations of my articles and had discussed them with her colleagues and that they had all come to the conclusion that my demands for suspending the lengthy investigations for the time being were justified.

She assured me the changes would be introduced as soon as possible, but she added that her Bureau was short of funds. I was so touched by her words that if I had not been ashamed I would have hugged her and kissed her right there and then. A few days later the policies advocated by my paper were indeed introduced. I showered upon Miss Kittner the highest praise in the columns of *The Jewish World*.

But the officials of the Federation, and particularly Mr. Goldhammer, still looked upon me as a dangerous meddler and troublemaker, even though there were several leaders at the Federation who publicly expressed their approval of the new policy of the Social Service Bureau.

MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL DURING DEPRESSION

THE now famous Mount Sinai Hospital of Cleveland first became known to me soon after I arrived in the city. At that time the Hospital was waging a campaign for funds in order to build a new Nursing Home and the Superintendent, Mr. Frank Chapman used to visit me at my office almost daily to ask for my support in publicizing the campaign. It was not very easy then to get money from people, even for a hospital with a fine reputation like Mount Sinai, and there was need for much effort. The help of the local Yiddish newspaper was of great importance. Mr. Chapman was a Gentile, but he knew how to appeal to Jewish sentiment in order to reach at Jewish pockets.

"Say in your article," he would urge me, "that the Mount Sinai Hospital is a Jewish institution. Tell your readers the Jews of Cleveland have a sacred duty to support it. Hundreds of Jews are given treatment in our hospital every year and are cured, even when they can't pay a cent. The Nursing Home is a necessity for us, if we are to improve our service to the sick, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile. Non-Jews are also contributing to our campaign, but the primary duty devolves on the Jews."

I agreed with Mr. Chapman and devoted whole pages to the campaign. The Nursing Home was put up and I had no further interest in Mount Sinai.

Some time later a non-Jewish taxi-driver came into my office, greatly agitated, and told me the following story:

He was driving an elderly Jew in his cab who had suddenly taken sick to the Mt. Sinai Hospital. A physician examined the man and made arrangements to have him stay there. But he was asked to pay in fifty dollars in advance. The patient did not have the money. The cabbie then took him in his taxi to the Lakeside Hospital, but when he reached it the man was dead.

Mr. Rocker thought it was wisest to ignore such a story and not to stir up a feeling against the Mt. Sinai Hospital. I investi-

gated the story and found out that the deceased had been a collector for an important institution in New York. The Burial Society took care of the funeral and the matter passed unnoticed.

During the years of the Depression I was forced to again become interested in the Mt. Sinai Hospital. Probably as a result of many factors in the Depression, there was more illness in Jewish homes then than in normal times. I had a visit by William Goldberg, Manager of the Jewish Carpenters' Union, who, with tears in his eyes, told me that several unemployed members of his organization were gravely ill and were in need of hospitalization. They insisted on entering a Jewish hospital, but Mount Sinai demanded payment in advance which they could not afford.

Goldberg, who is a kindly person and devoted to the welfare of his members, asked me to plead with the leadership of the Hospital for a change of policy. "You've done it in the Social Service Bureau," he argued, "and, I am sure, with the paper you edit, you'll be able to influence the Hospital too."

I was very anxious to help Goldberg and even more his sick friends. But I knew what to expect if I dared utter one word of criticism against the policies of the Mount Sinai Hospital. I therefore suggested that I first go to the Hospital to have a talk with Mr. Chapman. Goldberg agreed. The next morning I went to the Hospital and asked to see Mr. Chapman.

Mr. Chapman was very affable when he saw me. But when he heard about the purpose of my visit his manner changed.

"It is not good," he said, "when outsiders come to tell us how to run our business. . . . If we permitted that, we'd have real chaos in our Hospital. The decision in such matters lies with our very capable and conscientious Mrs. Malvina Friedmann, who acts according to her instructions. Your visit here cannot alter anything. There is no point in my discussing this matter with you or anybody else."

"Excuse me, Mr. Chapman," I replied. "I am not trying to tell you how to run your business. Not being a director of this institution I have no right to interfere. But since this happens to be a Jewish hospital and since we, Jews, have a four thousand year old tradition of compassion, I am simply appealing for compassion in behalf of a few unfortunate patients.

Mr Chapman was incensed:

"Mount Sinai is not a Jewish hospital!" he exclaimed. "It is no more Jewish than it is Catholic or Protestant. It is a non-sectarian institution!"

"May I remind you, Mr. Chapman," I inquired, "that that was not what you had to say when you came to me to help you build the Nursing Home?"

Mr. Chapman suddenly discovered that he had a meeting with the Board of Directors within a few minutes and that he was therefore pressed for time.

I left his office greatly disappointed. His argument that Mount Sinai was no longer a Jewish hospital hurt me to the quick. What a different tune he sang when he wanted Jewish money for the Nursing Home! But I did not wish to create any commotion in town. A few days later I wrote a mild editorial taking up issue with his preposterous claim that Mount Sinai was not a Jewish institution. Despite the mildness of my tone, the "upper crust" of Cleveland Jewry which centered around the Welfare Federation, was up in arms against me. I ignored the matter and let it sink into oblivion. I merely regretted the fact that I could not help a few poor sick Jews.

MT. SINAI OPPOSED TO JEWISH NURSES

PEOPLE continued coming to see me in my editorial office, to complain against the conduct of the Mt. Sinai Hospital. Much to my regret, all I could offer my visitors was sympathy. I explained to them that, as far as I could see, nothing could be done and it was not a place where one could find compassion.

Nevertheless, somewhat less than one year after my visit to Mr. Chapman, I had to take a hand again in the affairs of the Mt. Sinai Hospital.

One fine day two young girls, neither of them Jewish-looking, came to the offices of *The Jewish World* and asked to see the editor. They were shown into my study and, when I asked them what I could do for them, they told me an incredible story:

They were two Jewish sisters from East Liverpool, Ohio, where they had been practicing their profession as graduate nurses. But, for certain reasons many Jewish girls in small communities are moving to large cities, and that they too decided to come to Cleveland. They applied for positions at the Mount Sinai Hospital. The head nurse who interviewed them, on finding out they were Jewish, told them she was sorry but it was the policy of the hospital not to engage Jewish nurses. Their relatives in Cleveland advised them to go and see the editor of the Yiddish newspaper.

I was dumbfounded. I had already been enlightened by Mr. Chapman about Mount Sinai not being a Jewish hospital, but I knew that non-Jewish hospitals in Cleveland did not discriminate against Jewish nurses. I wondered if the two girls had told me the whole truth. They assured me they had concealed nothing and suggested I call up the head nurse. They gave me her name.

One of the girls in my office called up the head nurse and the latter told her quite unabashedly:

"Jewish girls are not suited for the nursing profession. They are too nervous. I have a Jewish girl working here. She is generally quite efficient, but she is so nervous I wish she found a place in some other hospital."

I decided to have another talk with Mr. Chapman and to ask him if Mount Sinai was so un-Jewish that even Jewish nurses were not allowed to work there. Chapman became even more greatly incensed than during my previous visit.

JEWISH LIFE IN CLEVELAND

"Have you really nothing better to do with your time," he fumed, "than come here to find fault with the way we run our hospital? If the head nurse says Jewish nurses are not suitable, she must know what she says, and I have nothing to add to her words."

"As far as I am concerned," I answered him, "Mount Sinai is still a Jewish hospital, and if it discriminates against Jewish nurses, I have the right to try to ascertain why this is so. Your shouting will only make me come out into the open again, but this time I do not propose to write in as mild a tone as last time."

I saw that I could not get anywhere with Chapman and so I left. On returning to my office, I wrote a sharply-worded article challenging the directors and the leaders of the Mount Sinai Hospital to answer the charges of discrimination against Jewish nurses. This time Mr. Rocker was in agreement with me. He felt that such practices in Jewish institutions could not be tolerated.

But as soon as my article appeared in print, a storm broke out in comparison with which all the previous storms had seemed like child's play. Goldhammer called a special meeting of the Jewish Welfare Federation, where the leading directors of the Mount Sinai Hospital took part. It was decided to take "appropriate measures" against me to render me "harmless."

Mr. Max Simon, a close friend of Mr. Henry A. Rocker, nominal treasurer of *The Jewish World*, was sent by the Federation to talk to Mr. Rocker to see that my "slanders" against Jewish institutions were discontinued. . . .

When I first arrived in Cleveland, Mr. Rocker was hardly interested in Jewish communal affairs and expressed no views about my editorial line, except occasionally to commend me. Our relations were quite friendly. After Rabbi Solomon Goldman left Cleveland in 1929, Mr. Rocker was elected President of the Jewish Center and began taking more interest in the affairs of the Jewish community. His attitude to *The Jewish World* and to my editorials changed. He

often criticized me and even reprimanded me for the position I took on some questions.

After Mr. Simon made representations to Mr. Rucker in behalf of the Jewish Welfare Federation, Mr. Rucker came into the office of *The Jewish World*, greatly agitated, and subjected me to a strict cross-examination. To all his strictures I answered him calmly that I saw it as my duty as editor of a Yiddish daily to point out and to combat every case of discrimination against Jews, especially, as in this case, when such discrimination is practiced by a Jewish institution supported by Jewish funds.

But Mr. Rucker did not agree with me. My argument that a newspaper must serve the interests of its readers was met by another argument:

"This paper was not established for the purpose of serving anybody's interests, but as a source of income to the Rucker family. That was the policy of the paper when I was on its staff and that is what it is going to be now!"

Mr. Rucker went on to reproach me for my "sins" in making him and his family many enemies by my editorials. He claimed I was even hurting his own law practice. All that must stop, he insisted.

"Whether you are right or wrong is not the question!" he shouted. "Even if you are right, nobody is going to be grateful to you for what you are doing anyway. I don't agree with Goldhammer that you are guilty of libel. You may be sincere in your convictions, but *The Jewish World* has not the resources of the daily English-language papers and cannot afford to take an independent stand which antagonizes influential people. We are a poor outfit and we must first of all look after our own interests."

In the midst of our talk, Mr. Samuel Rucker, who was my real master, came in. I told him in brief the contents of my talk with his son and added that if those were also his views I would serve

him four weeks' notice, during which time he could hire and train a new associate editor.

Mr. Rucker, who was a good-natured man, not given to momentary excitement, smilingly sought to quieten both his son and myself, then listened to the arguments of both and finally declared he was in full agreement with my position that discrimination against Jewish nurses in a Jewish hospital could not be tolerated. He said he was going to write an editorial on that subject himself.

Henry was not happy with his father's verdict. But he held his father in great esteem and offered no further objections. He took leave of me in a cordial spirit and left the office.

Soon after this encounter I wrote another article, taking the Mount Sinai Hospital to account and demanding an explanation. The storm in the Federation continued but I paid no attention to it. I was getting ready to write yet another article on the subject, when I was informed by some of my non-Jewish friends that Mr. Chapman was about to take over the supervision of the Lakeside Hospital. I waited for further developments.

A few weeks later, Mr. Chapman did, indeed, become the Superintendent of the Lakeside Hospital, so there was no point in criticizing him now for his policies at the Mount Sinai Hospital. The latter soon engaged as its new Superintendent Dr. Crawford, until then the health commissioner in the City of Cleveland. Dr. Crawford resigned his position at the City Hall to devote all his time to Mt. Sinai Hospital.

Dr. Crawford, who was known in Cleveland as a fine, liberal person, changed the policies of the head nurse and abolished discrimination against Jewish nurses — or, for that matter, discrimination against any group. I found nothing more to criticize and stopped writing about the hospital. The Directors, though, still looked upon me as *persona non-grata*. However, in time the matter was forgotten.

In 1934 I was severely ill and was treated at the Mount Sinai Hospital. There were six Jewish nurses there at the time. They served

me well and were so considerate and attentive in treating me that if they were my own daughters, I could not have expected any more.

On the sixth day after the operation, when I began to improve, those girls surprised me by bringing in a large bouquet of flowers. I had had no want for flowers then. There was not enough place for them in my room and many had to be placed in the corridors. When I asked the girls who sent me such a large bouquet, they gave me the following explanation:

“As you can see, we are all Jewish girls. We are well aware of the fight you carried on for the admission of Jewish nurses to this hospital. This bouquet is a token of our deep appreciation and of our best wishes for your recovery.”

I was so touched that my eyes were filled with tears. I had many visitors at the hospital — perhaps too many. Two of my then best friends, Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver and Rabbi Harry Davidowitch of the Jewish Center, used to come to see me every day. Both rabbis were tremendously impressed when I told them about the flowers.

“And so,” I turned to Rabbi Silver, quoting Galileo, “the earth does go round!”

THE FOUNDING OF THE JEWISH WELFARE FUND

THREE decades ago nobody would have believed it possible that the Jews of Cleveland would be able to raise millions of dollars annually for local, national and international Jewish needs. And yet, what appeared to be at first a madman's dream became a positive fact only a few years later.

Beginning with 1944, when, for the first time in history, over a million dollars were raised in this city for Jewish relief, larger and larger sums have been contributed by Cleveland Jewry, so that in the most recent Welfare Fund Campaign the collections came close to six million dollars.

The Jewish Welfare Fund Appeal in Cleveland was created in 1931, following the lead taken by the old Jewish Welfare Federation. As the editor of the Yiddish daily in Cleveland at the time, I welcomed in my paper the formation of the new Fund and predicted it would turn out to be a blessing for the Jewish community of our city. What I had in mind in writing that editorial was not merely the apparent and immediate financial benefits, but the deeper and long range effect a united campaign would have on bringing together the various elements in Cleveland Jewry and the gradual obliteration of the differences and prejudices, based on wealth, country of origin, forms of worship and ideology.

Cleveland was not the only sizeable Jewish community in the United States where a Jewish Welfare Fund was organized, but it

was one of the first ones. Those were the years of the economic depression, when many Jewish organizations were faced with the prospect of liquidation for lack of funds. Drastic steps were necessary, as well as an imaginative approach.

The institutions established by the East European Jews were naturally hit hardest: both the institutions themselves and the Jews who supported them were younger, less solidly established than the Jews of Central Europe and the welfare organizations they had founded. But the immigrant Jews and their institutions had to do a good deal of negotiating and bargaining with the old-timers before some form of centralization and coordination was agreed upon, by which all would benefit. The first Jewish Welfare Fund Appeal campaign came to life in 1931.

It did not turn out to be the great success the leaders hoped for. Cleveland Jewry was still disunited, and the differences between the German, Bohemian and Hungarian Jews, on the one side, who had migrated in the 1940's, and the Russian, Galician and Roumanian Jews, who had begun to come in larger masses in the 1880's, were still sharp. There was a good deal of mutual distrust and harmony was far away. And yet, the sum of \$142,428 was realized in that first campaign. In view of the very difficult economic situation, it was not entirely a failure. Seasoned leaders could look forward with confidence.

Unfortunately, however, the economic situation went from bad to worse and the hopes for more successful campaigns evaporated. The second annual campaign brought in, with great difficulty, the small sum of \$57,667. The third year was somewhat better: \$91,039. The fourth annual appeal netted only \$72,772. The leaders were disappointed and, as is usual in cases of frustration, blamed one another for the failure. The leaders of the old Federation argued that the fault lay with the "Orthodox" Jews — meaning the East European Jews — who, they claimed, made no contributions or very small ones. On the other hand, the founders of the East-European Jewish

institutions charged that many of the wealthy German and Bohemian Jews refused to contribute even small sums because they did not want to support the Talmud Torahs.

Both sides were exaggerating their claims and accusations. It was true that the bigoted assimilationists regarded the Hebrew schools as a thorn in their eyes, but the number of such extremists was not nearly as large as the "orthodox" spokesmen seemed to believe. The argument was, in a way, an excuse for the helplessness of their institutions, whose position was financially deteriorating rapidly as that some of them were confronted with the danger of being closed down. On the other hand it was also true that well-to-do "Orthodox" Jews, who suffered less from the economic Depression, failed in their duties. They were simply not as yet grown up to their responsibilities toward the community.

The main cause, however, was the Depression. The fact is that the Talmud Torahs, the orthodox orphanage and other institutions depended very largely on the real estate and building trades, which were first to be hit by the economic breakdown. Some erstwhile donors lost all their fortunes and had themselves become recipients of relief. The leaders of the orphanage and others then appealed to the Federation to come to their aid, but the Federation, too, had its hands full.

THE old Jewish Federation, or Federation of Jewish Charities, was formed in 1903 by Jews who came from Central Europe. Until 1913 it carried on annual campaigns for funds mainly to take care of their most important eight organizations and institutions, in which the East European immigrants figured only as recipients of help but not as participants in financial contributions or in management.

In 1913, when the Cleveland Community Chest was established, the Federation of Jewish Charities joined it. The name was then changed into Jewish Welfare Federation and its annual campaigns for funds had to be abandoned in exchange of the annual allotments

from the Chest. But the Federation also had additional sources of income on the side. The Federation was already a wealthy organization at that time, but it refused to come financially to the help of the orthodox institutions. Some of the leaders of the Federation felt—and rightly so—that the well-to-do Orthodox Jews ought to support their own institutions. Still others thought that only the larger institutions were necessary and that the smaller ones were only a burden on the community. The result of all those quarrels was that during the early stages of the existence of the newly-created Welfare Fund Appeal, the mutual bitterness was so acute that there was the danger of a split.

IT was in such an atmosphere that preparations were being made for the fifth annual campaign of the Welfare Fund Appeal in 1935. At that time there was yet another unfavorable state of affairs: the incessant strife of the two Zionist factions in Cleveland. The Cleveland Zionist Society, headed by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, had just come into being. The leaders of the old Zionist District strongly opposed this newly created organization and fought bitterly against it. Among the leaders of the District was the late Rabbi Barnett R. Brickner who had his own grudges against Silver. This acrimonious and dramatic contest so absorbed the attention of the people, including some of the most communally active Jews in Cleveland, that they hardly had any mind left for other matters of interest to Cleveland Jewry.

The leaders of the Welfare Federation, on the other hand, considered their cause more important than the duel among the Zionists and particularly those of the two rabbinical prima donnas which threatened to wreck the campaign. They then made a demand on the two leading rabbis—Silver and Brickner—to effect at least a temporary truce and to personally take charge of the campaign. The late Edward M. Baker and Max Simon, though a member of the Zionist District, succeeded in inducing Silver and Brickner to undertake just that.

Rabbi Silver thereupon called on me to give him all the help possible in my role as the editor of the Yiddish daily. He, too, felt the orthodox Jews, who could afford, were remiss in their duty. Such were the views he expressed in a letter addressed to me dated April 11, 1935. The letter follows:

April 11, 1935

Mr. Leon Wiesenfeld
The Jewish World
10600 Superior Ave.
Cleveland, Ohio

My Dear Leon:

Following up the conversation which we had in your home on the occasion of the delightful party which we had — I think that one or two editorials within the next two weeks on the subject of "Giving" or the "Lack of Giving" on the part of many Jews of Cleveland to the Jewish Welfare Fund would be very timely and helpful.

I believe that special appeal ought to be made to the orthodox Jews, the rank and file Jews and the "stam" Jews to do much better by this Fund than they have in previous years. It should be pointed out that many hundreds of them who should had given, haven't given a penny in the last few years to the German-Jewish relief, to the Talmud Torah and to the twenty other agencies included in the Fund. Many of those who gave, gave pitifully inadequate sums. I believe that a frank discussion of the subject in your own vigorous style would be very helpful. These Jews should be appealed to on the basis of their Jewish responsibilities as well as the prestige of our community which has suffered so greatly because of the successive failures of our campaigns.

I know that you will keep the subject of the coming Welfare Fund "warm" on the columns of the *Jewish World*. With all good wishes, I remain

Very cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

Needless to say, I was only too happy to comply. The *Jewish World* threw its full support behind the campaign. There were still a great deal of mistrust of some organizations and I was asked to participate in the discussions which were still carried on. There I succeeded to straighten out the differences. I wanted this fifth campaign more than anything else to be successful in every respect. Because of this strong desire I was not content with using only the columns of my paper to appeal for funds, but came to meetings of all those organizations where I had any influence to appeal for the support of this, perhaps deciding campaign.

Both Rabbi Silver and Rabbi Brickner worked very hard. Silver even made the rounds of his friends. In spite of all of this the fifth annual campaign was not a great success, but it did better than the three campaigns which preceded it: \$137,829—only a little worse than the first campaign, which brought in \$142,428. But from then on things began to improve. The sums rose, still modestly, from year to year, until 1944, when the first million was reached. From 1945 on, however, contributions were in the millions until it reached the stupendous amount it did recently. It is a great deal for a community which is, after all, not very large.

What is even more heartening than the actual amount of money raised is the realization of our hopes—certainly my own hopes—that common effort would bring together the diverse elements in our Jewish community, eliminating mutual prejudice and distrust. Today there is no longer that difference once felt between a Jew from Galicia or Lithuania and a Jew from Germany or Hungary.

Today, Cleveland Jewry is one united community, actively interested in their local institutions and greatly concerned with the welfare of Jews all over the world who may need help and especially concerned with the development and the future of that great little State of Israel. True, similar successes were achieved also in most of the other greater Jewish communities in the United States. But we are here firstly interested in our own community. Yesterdays sharply divided Cleveland Jewry is united today. Those who knew Cleveland three decades ago will agree with this writer that it is quite an achievement.

I still remember the day when the late S. P. Halle, took me into a sideroom of the Excelsior Club, where the Jewish Welfare Fund Appeal was founded, and very doubtfully asked me: "Do you really believe that we would be able to get along with them?" It is a pity that he is no longer alive.

THE RABBIS GOLDMAN - BENJAMIN FIGHT OVER THE JEWISH CENTER

AS I have already mentioned in several passages in the present series, I came to Cleveland early in January in 1925 in order to start on my duties as co-editor of the Yiddish daily of the time, *The Jewish World*. But I failed to mention that that was my second arrival in Cleveland on similar business. The first one was in February of 1923, when a new daily was to make its appearance under the name of *Der Yiddisher Waechter*. I was engaged as Managing Editor.

The *Waechter* had had a previous existence as a bi-lingual weekly in Yiddish and English. Now its publishers, consisting of Rabbi Samuel Benjamin and two well-to-do orthodox Jews — M. A. Katz and Abraham Sachs — decided to convert it into a daily. The Editor-in-Chief was the well-known writer Dr. Ezekiel Wortsman.

Dr. Wortsman, whom I knew quite well, came to New York to find a suitable staff of writers. When he saw me in Cafe Royal, the meeting place in those days of Jewish writers, he offered me the position of Managing Editor on the new daily. I was at that time the editor of a Yiddish weekly in Brooklyn, *The Brooklyn New Journal*, which was also a bi-lingual. I was quite reluctant to get away from New York.

Wortsman offered me a relatively large salary and told me the publishers had invested 100,000 dollars in the new paper and its existence was completely assured. I accepted the offer.

But on arrival in Cleveland three weeks later I realized I had made a serious blunder. In the first place I found out Cleveland had for years had a daily Yiddish paper, *The Jewish World*, and there was hardly room for another one. In the second place, Wortsman was either misinformed or had misled me, there was no money invested to guarantee the continued existence of the new publication. Besides, I saw that neither Wortsman nor his publishers had the slightest idea of what it took to run a daily paper. Furthermore, the purpose of the new publication was not to serve Cleveland Jewry but to fight Rabbi Solomon Goldman of the Jewish Center and *The Jewish World*.

It became quite clear to me that I was not going to stay in Cleveland very long. But it was too late to pull back immediately. The first issue of *Der Yiddisher Waechter* was published. It was rich in content, well put together and it put *The Jewish World* into the shadow. The only thing I did not like about the first issue was that its editors in Yiddish and in English, Dr. Wortsman and Rabbi Benjamin, had fired most of their shots in it.

Now that the reader has an idea about the new daily, it may be worthwhile to acquaint him with the struggle that went on day by day during the six weeks of the existence of that daily.

The name has been mentioned of Rabbi Samuel Benjamin. Older readers will certainly recall the good name of that rabbi, who was then a young man. The younger readers probably never heard of him. Let me, then, tell the whole story.

Rabbi Samuel Benjamin, a native of Palestine, came to this country at an early age and studied at Brown University and at the N.Y.U. Later he took a full course at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and was ordained as rabbi. He was thus — or was supposed to be — a Conservative rabbi.

He came to Cleveland to occupy the pulpit in the outspokenly Orthodox congregation of *Anshe Emeth Beth Tfilo*, the so-called "Polish" synagogue, where his predecessor had been Rabbi Samuel

Margulies, the son of the well-known Orthodox rabbi in New York. Rabbi Margulies, an extremely able man, who was also a partner in the *Jewish World* publication, was killed in an automobile accident. As he was what is called a "progressive," or "enlightened" rabbi, the representatives of the congregation, which was recognized as the leading Orthodox congregation in the city, sought a successor of the same type. Despite the fact he was a Conservative, Rabbi Benjamin was chosen.

Rabbi Benjamin quickly adapted himself to the new atmosphere, began to feel at home with the members of the congregation and slowly but surely made himself popular in the community. Like his predecessor, Rabbi Margulies, Rabbi Benjamin was an able man and an ambitious man, anxious to make further progress. The synagogue became too small to hold its growing membership and Rabbi Benjamin, together with the leaders of the congregation, began to think of a new large structure. It was then that the plan was born to put up a Jewish Center. The plan met with general approval. The father of the idea was Rabbi Benjamin.

The young rabbi devoted himself heart and soul to the task of building the new Center. He worked out the details of the plan, he raised the funds and did everything else connected with assuring the successful consummation of the project. Finally the edifice was completed — at the cost of a million dollars, which in those days was a tremendous sum of money.

But as soon as the complex of buildings were ready to function, the membership was rocked by a controversy which in time reverberated throughout the whole of American Jewry. The new large and beautiful synagogue was to remain, according to the old constitution, forever and forever strictly Orthodox. But many of the members were by now inclined to a more progressive approach. This was especially the case with those members whose grown up children had been subjected to the influence of Reform Judaism and were not ready to follow exactly the practices of their parents. These

members demanded certain liberal reforms in the synagogue and in the Center. The die-hard Orthodox element refused to compromise and the struggle between the two factions grew more and more acrimonious.

Rabbi Benjamin, though, as already mentioned, himself a Conservative, stood fast by the Orthodox element and refused to bend. At the same time the membership increased steadily and the newcomers were mostly of the more liberal element. Ultimately the latter won out. Rabbi Benjamin was relieved of his position and his place was taken by Rabbi Solomon Goldman, the Conservative rabbi of the *Bnai Jeshurun* Temple of East 55th Street. Rabbi Goldman, though a scion of a long line of pious rabbis and Orthodox *hassidim*, was himself an outspoken Conservative. He encouraged the liberals. Moreover, he undertook to convert the *Anshe Emeth Beth Tfilo* congregation into a Conservative temple.

Rabbi Benjamin, embittered, humiliated and without a pulpit, had a substantial following in the community. The Orthodox members in the Center were with him and were ready to back him in every possible way. He was not a coward, not one who gives up a fight after a reverse. He established the weekly publication, *Der Yiddisher Waechter* and with the help of his Orthodox friends, carried on a vigorous fight against the new leadership of the synagogue and the Center, against Rabbi Goldman and against *The Jewish World*, which supported Goldman.

When the new daily was discontinued, after the "large sum of money" Dr. Wortsman had told me about ran out in six weeks, the embittered Rabbi Benjamin with Wortsman's help, returned to his attacks, now even more virulent, in the old weekly. I naturally left Cleveland as soon as the new daily closed up, but I continued receiving the weekly while in New York and followed the developments. To tell the truth, I had very little interest in the whole business.

One fine day, when I received the paper, I became greatly agitated. I found a report in it that a week earlier, Rabbi Benjamin, on returning from a Friday night service at the synagogue, was ar-

rested in front of his house. Two policemen with a warrant in their hands, seized him and threw him into the police patrol wagon as if he were a common criminal. He was taken to police headquarters downtown and was subjected to a strict investigation. He was soon released and had to walk — because of the Sabbath — all the way from downtown to his home. As he reached it, all tired out and exhausted, he was confronted with something even worse.

Near his house was Philip Rucker, son of Samuel Rucker of *The Jewish World*. He waited for the rabbi and when he saw him he attacked him and beat him up quite severely.

During the six weeks of my stay in Cleveland I had very little to do with Rabbi Benjamin. I had a few discussions with him, mostly about matters relating to the publication, and found him to be a fine, decent, affable person. I took no part in his campaign, although I often thought that if I were in his place I would act just that way. After all, it was he who built up that beautiful Center and enriched Cleveland Jewry with an important communal institution. When I now read how he was rewarded for his troubles. I had a feeling of genuine indignation. I felt strongly enough to want to write an article expressing my sentiments, but just then I noticed a statement by Dr. Wortsman that this was the weekly's last issue.

This man who brought about the arrest of Rabbi Benjamin was one by the name of Herman Stein. He came to the United States from Rumania as a very young boy, working, among other jobs, as a newspaper vendor, distributing *The Jewish World* to subscribers early in the morning and selling it to casual buyers later in the day. In time he rose to become the Advertising Manager of the paper, where a wide field was opened for his genius. He later became the owner of an advertising agency and grew rich.

Since Mr. Stein has now been dead for some years, it is not proper to tell too many unfavorable things about the dead. Let it be said that the Jews of Cleveland had no reason to find pride and joy in his causing the arrest of a spiritual leader or in many of other acts of his.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE CENTER
CONTINUES

TWO years later, when I came to Cleveland again, Rabbi Benjamin and Dr. Wortsman had long been gone from the city. But the struggle against the Center went on with full vigor, perhaps even in a more acrimonious spirit than two years earlier. Most of Rabbi Goldman's opponents had been driven out of the Center and were now carrying on their Holy War from outside. The Orthodox brought in law suits in the court against the Rabbi and the congregation, claiming that they were violating the constitution of the congregation, according to which it was to remain Orthodox in perpetuity.

But that alone was not enough. They carried on a propaganda campaign in the form of handbills and paid advertisements in *The Jewish World*, leveling against Goldman some pretty strong charges. Naturally, Goldman replied. He wrote his own advertising copy, in which he showed even less moderation in tone than his adversaries. When I arrived to take up my duties in *The Jewish World*, the publication had taken no editorial position on the struggle. Mr. Rucker for certain reasons saw no need to be anything but neutral. Mr. Rucker was fond of Goldman and admired him for his great scholarship. Besides, he had no reason to love the Orthodox crowd who had tried to ruin him by founding a rival publication. During its whole career *The Waechter* pictured Mr. Rucker as a monster and besmirched him. Such things are not easily forgotten. Mr. Rucker remembered it.

Mr. Rucker figured in Cleveland as an Orthodox Jew, even as a leader of the Orthodox Jews of the city. His publication, too, was considered to be an Orthodox organ. But he did not think the new reforms in the Center constituted a menace to Orthodox Judaism. His attitude aroused a good deal of antagonism in many Orthodox circles. Still, when Rabbi Goldman first proposed to introduce mixed seating in the synagogue, Mr. Rucker published an editorial oppos-

ing it, which forced the rabbi, for a time, at least, to postpone the innovation. It did not last long, though.

Rabbi Goldman was not a man to be easily frightened and was a much better fighter than his Orthodox opponents. One fine day he carried out his program and converted the synagogue and the Center into a full-fledged Conservative institution. The result was a storm of protest not only in Cleveland but almost in all of the United States and even Canada. But Goldman was little affected by it and went on with his plans. As time went on, more and more reforms were introduced until the institution was as far removed from Orthodoxy as East is from West. His congregation stood by him and backed him in all his undertakings.

There were new lawsuits and new public debates of a stormy nature. They led nowhere. In court, the Orthodox won one suit, lost another. A lower court ruled in their favor, a higher court granted the appeal. Later the lower courts took a different position and the Orthodox kept on losing their case. But they kept on fighting, even though the fight swallowed a lot of money and never gave up.

On their side the Orthodox element had the support of articulate public opinion. The two widely circulated Orthodox Yiddish dailies of New York, *The Morning Journal* and the *Tageblatt*, as well as the Orthodox *Jewish Courier* of Chicago (a Yiddish daily), backed the champions of Cleveland Orthodoxy. Reporters from the Jewish press, including the Jewish news agencies of those days, often visited Cleveland. They collected enough material to file lengthy reports and stories, to which Goldman replied by paid advertisements in *The Jewish World*. The Orthodox counter-advertised and the Jewish community of Cleveland was in a fever. People argued, quarrelled and even fought physically. It was one continuous public scandal.

Rabbi Goldman was a virulent foe of Orthodoxy. I don't know whether his hatred was the result of accumulated resentment because of the fight that was waged on him or he had been carrying it in his heart for a long time. But I know that if he had the power, he would have exiled all Orthodox Jews to Siberia, as long as not to

have them in Cleveland. I tried to convince him that his hatred was unreasonable and that he was going too far, but to no effect. Any such attempt to bring him to reason only kindled his hatred more.

Rabbi Goldman was what is usually known as a "likeable fellow." He was, on the surface anyway, a friendly, pleasant, always smiling man. True, the Orthodox element hated him, but others, even if they did not agree with him respected him and rather liked him. I was one of such people. I first met him the third week I was in Cleveland and we became friendly from the very first meeting. He could be a good friend.

But he could also be an enemy. He bore a deep implacable hatred for the Orthodox leaders. Once he asked me to come to a luncheon at the Hollenden Hotel where he was to lecture on religion. I was not in a good mood that day and felt no desire to go. Fifteen minutes later a taxi stopped at the office of *The Jewish World* and I was practically coerced into going with him downtown to the luncheon. I had no choice.

In his lecture, which was highly interesting and informative at the outset, he poured out venom on Orthodox Judaism, and particularly the Orthodox leaders in Cleveland. Even I, who had no particular interest in the whole controversy, blushed to hear him talk. There was a large crowd, including some non-Jews and a few judges who were to decide on the merits of the lawsuit Rabbi Goldman was engaged in. I was not the only one who felt Goldman had gone too far. Some Reform Jews present felt that way, too. A well-known Christian lawyer in Cleveland told me after the lecture: "The rabbi spoke as if he were an anti-Semite."

As we rode back together in a taxi on the way to my editorial offices I wanted to discuss his lecture with him and point out that he had gone too far. But he refused to discuss the subject. I wondered if he himself realized that a man in his position must not lose control over himself or he simply did not want to talk about the subject.

But time heals all wounds and settles all problems. I am not sure Goldman's wounds were healed, but the excitement slowly died down. The paid advertisements in the paper were discontinued. One of the leaders of the Orthodox opposition, the above-mentioned Mr. Katz, died and the anti-Goldman movement gradually gave up the ghost. Orthodox Jews, including even Orthodox rabbis, drew closer to Goldman and some became his friends, although a lawsuit against him was still pending.

Rabbi Goldman's popularity grew and his adversaries were entirely forgotten. That was the end of the long-drawn-out fight.

RABBI GOLDMAN LEAVES CLEVELAND FOR PULPIT IN CHICAGO

ONE Friday morning, as I sat working in my editorial office, Rabbi Goldman telephoned me and asked me to be his guest for lunch at his home. I asked what the invitation signified and he replied it had no particular significance, he merely felt like having a chat. I knew him well enough by then to take his statements and assurances with a grain of salt, but I accepted the invitation nevertheless.

In his house I found him almost buried under an avalanche of books, among which were some I knew he could not read — Greek and Latin volumes. When I inquired why this book exhibition, he suggested we first eat. After our repast we went into his sizeable library, where he told me the following story:

The University of Chicago, he said, was about to establish a Chair for Hebrew and he was trying to get it. This reminded me of the story of the Hebrew Chair in Cleveland. "Another Chair?" I asked. "Are you looking for new troubles?" Goldman answered that this time it was the real thing and that he needed help, and that I could be of help.

I was amazed. Of what use could I be to him in such matters? I was curious. He told me all the books I saw piled up were there with a purpose. He was collecting material for a new brief history of the Jewish people. I had no doubt Goldman was capable of writing a good history. For one thing, he was a very fine scholar. Still I

asked facetiously what the Greek and Latin books were doing there. He laughed out loud and that was the end of it.

To make a long story short, the rabbi finally let the cat out of the bag and told me he wanted me to write an article about him for the Yiddish daily in Chicago, *The Jewish Courier*. The article was to dwell on his project to write a new Jewish history. I could not understand why that article should be printed in the Chicago paper and not in our own local Cleveland Yiddish daily, in which I worked. His explanation was that the editor of the Chicago paper, the late Dr. S. M. Melamed, one of the foremost scholars of his day, was the intermediary in negotiating the establishment of the Hebrew Chair. Melamed it was, Goldman told me, who suggested that I write the article for him. But why could not Melamed himself write such an article? I inquired. The answer was that Melamed felt it would look better if the article was written by a Cleveland man rather than by one in Chicago. I had my doubts, but, as I have already said, I was fond of Goldman and could not refuse him. The piece was written and appeared in the Chicago *Jewish Courier*.

It did not take me long to discover that my doubts were justified. The whole story about the Hebrew Chair at the University of Chicago was a hoax. True, Melamed acted as Goldman's intermediary, but not about a Chair at the University. He sought to get him appointed to the pulpit of the largest and wealthiest Conservative temple in Chicago. The deal was consummated and Goldman himself announced his resignation from the Center in Cleveland, and he was leaving the city. That was in 1929.

Goldman's resignation evoked a sensation in Cleveland among the Christians as well as among the Jews. His adherents at the Center, who worshipped him, were shocked. They did not wish to lose him and did everything they could to induce him to change his mind. But Goldman was determined.

Goldman's answer to all the entreaties was that he would be happy to remain in Cleveland but that he could not because Rabbi Silver made it impossible for him to remain. Silver, according to

Goldman, kept him down, made his life miserable. I was so close to Silver in those days as I was to Goldman and I knew Goldman was not telling the truth. The two men did not like each other very much, both of them important personalities and great scholars, but I never heard Silver say anything in disparagement of Goldman. Anyway, Goldman's claim that "Silver is driving me from Cleveland," was greatly exaggerated.

The real reason why Goldman left Cleveland for Chicago lay elsewhere: in the first place, a much larger salary and better prospects for additional income; in the second place, the ambition to become, in Chicago, the equivalent of Silver in Cleveland. In fact, in time he admitted as much to me himself. (Goldman's salary in Cleveland before he left was \$11,000 annually and he was offered \$12,000 to remain. His salary in Chicago was \$18,000).

Ten years later, when I left *The Jewish World* and founded the present publication, I did a good deal of traveling in the Middle West to get subscribers for the magazine. Nearly everywhere I heard the same story repeated to me by local rabbis about Silver forcing Goldman out of Cleveland. Nobody knew better than I did how unfounded that story was.

COURT FAVORS THE ORTHODOX AGAIN

IT did not take long for Rabbi Goldman to turn out a great success in Chicago. The Chicago Zionists, who, unlike the Zionists of Cleveland, were united, helped him a great deal. They received him with open arms, pampered him and boosted him. There were in Chicago other rabbis who were known for their scholarship, but no one could match his driving ambition to become, as he told me himself, "the Abba Hillel Silver of Chicago." His popularity grew day by day and he soon attained his set goal. He did become, thanks to his talents, the Silver of Chicago.

Here, in Cleveland, his loss was felt for a time. But days, weeks and months passed and he was well-nigh forgotten. People

remembered him only when a court of non-Cleveland judges passed a verdict on the latest suit of the Orthodox members against the Jewish Center. The three judges ruled in favor of the Orthodox. They strongly rebuked the former rabbi for changing the character of the congregation and demanded the restoration of the Orthodox status.

The verdict evoked joy among the still remaining Orthodox warriors and caused a sensation in Cleveland Jewry. In the Center itself, where Rabbi Harry Dawidowitz officiated, the verdict caused consternation. It was like a thunder out of the blue sky.

Good or bad, justified or not, the sensational verdict could not be ignored by the local newspaper. I naturally gave it proper space. The policy of the publication was still the same as that introduced by Mr. Rucker years earlier: editorial neutrality. The paper could however, not do less than print a full report. But, honest and impartial as the report might have been, there were people in Cleveland, friends of Rabbi Goldman's, who were unhappy. The most dissatisfied person was the late Rabbi Barnett R. Brickner, who did not like the tone of the report.

I was at that time the Cleveland correspondent of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency and the Middle West correspondent of the widely read New York daily *The Jewish Day*. Naturally, I filed my dispatches to them about the verdict. My article to *The Day* was written two days after the event and was rather exhaustive, giving the full story and its background in as abject and impartial a spirit as I was capable of. When the paper arrived in Cleveland, Rabbi Brickner, who had already accumulated a store of grievances against me, sounded an alarm.

Rabbi Brickner objected not so much to the body of my article as to its title. The then Managing Editor of *The Day*, the late Z. H. Rubinstein, who was fond of sensational headlines, printed my article under the headline he made up, saying "Cleveland Court Finds Goldman Insufficiently Pious." Rabbi Brickner, who was not familiar with the techniques of making up a newspaper, blamed me for that "heinous crime."

He wrote a long very angry letter to Dr. S. Margoshes, who was then Editor-in-Chief of *The Day*, expressing his "sharpest protest" against my "irresponsibility."

"Rabbi Goldman," said Brickner in his letter, "is still as greatly beloved by the Jews of Cleveland as he was when serving here as spiritual leader of the Jewish Center. People swear by him and adore him. And now comes one . . . who dares to write about him in this manner."

Dr. Margoshes and Brickner were old friends, but Margoshes was in no hurry to publish the protest. Instead he sent me Brickner's letter, inviting me to write a reply which would be published together with the letter. I wrote a reply, using much more moderate language than Rabbi Brickner, but I did ask him some pertinent questions.

First of all, I wished to know when his friendship for Rabbi Goldman had become so great and sacred that he felt it his duty to take up the cudgels on his behalf and abuse me in that way. I reminded him that in his numerous conversations with me he expressed an altogether different opinion about his "friend." I pointed out that in writing the letter to Dr. Margoshes, protesting against my article which was in no way offensive to Goldman, he was motivated by personal considerations which were not germane to the subject.

In those days friendship between the rabbis — real, genuine friendship — was inconceivable, no matter whether it concerned Orthodox, Conservative or Reform rabbis, rabbis of the same denomination or rabbis of different denominations. Below the surface of amiability the clerics were possessed of such a morbid deep jealousy which actually poisoned the air. This was known not only to most Jews but also to many non-Jews.

I think I knew better than anybody else what went on among the rabbis behind the scenes. Each one of them, in his anxiety to enlist my help in getting his favorable publicity, confided in me.

No sooner did Rabbi X get a play in the paper than Rabbi Y telephoned to complain. The rabbi who was lucky enough to have his name in print that day — or the previous day — was declared to be unworthy of it; the complaining rabbi was the overlooked hero. There were exceptions — rabbis who were not interested in publicity. Those I did not know too well and seldom heard from. Rabbi Brickner was not one of the exceptions.

The friendship between Brickner and Goldman was never as close as Brickner made it out to be in his letter to Dr. Margoshes. Before I go on to explain what made Rabbi Brickner write his letter, let me say a few words about Rabbi Brickner's personality.

WHEN RABBI BRICKNER ARRIVED IN CLEVELAND

RABBI BRICKNER, as is still well known to many people, arrived in Cleveland late in 1925 to take over the pulpit of the Euclid Avenue Temple. He came here from Toronto, Canada, where he had been Rabbi of the *Holy Blossom Congregation* — a Reform Temple. He had made himself popular and well-liked not only in Toronto among Jews and non-Jews but in all of Canada. He was a friendly man, not given to putting on airs, as some other rabbis do, folksy and truly democratic in his dealings with people.

About two weeks before Rabbi Brickner was ready to leave Toronto I received a letter from Dr. Margoshes, who then was Director of the Toronto Zionist Office, and a day or two later another letter from the late Abraham Rhinewine, editor of the *Toronto Hebrew Journal* — a Yiddish daily. Both letters from men who were friends of mine introduced Rabbi Brickner as a man worth cultivating, as one of the finest personalities in American Jewry. Both Margoshes and Rhinewine depicted Brickner in the brightest colors and urged me to accord him a favorable reception, assuring me that he is a real man of the people, a fine Jew, who was sure to enrich the communal life of Cleveland Jewry.

When the rabbi came to Cleveland I was preparing to go to see him and interview him for the paper. But he forestalled me and called on the editorial offices of *The Jewish World* on Woodland Avenue the day after his arrival. He inquired about me and was shown into my office. He came in, smiling amiably, introduced himself and addressed me very warmly, telling me that in a certain sense he was my countryman. His mother, he said, was born in Galicia, where I was born. He spoke a very fine literary Yiddish, unusual among American-born Jews, which evoked my admiration.

He spent two hours in my office, during which time my impression of him passed from favorable to enthusiastic. It was unusual to find among American rabbis such a man. I had not met one until Rabbi Brickner walked into my office. I wrote so in my article about him in *The Jewish World*. A few days later I went to his installation at the Temple. Rabbi Silver, who installed him, spoke about him with great warmth and praised him to the sky. My admiration for the new rabbi increased.

To my amazement, Brickner came to the office again a few days later. He came to thank me for my warm articles and, besides, he wanted to meet Mr. Rucker, whom he had missed on his first visit. He also told me he was anxious to meet Cleveland Jews from all walks of life, rich or poor, educated or simple, workers and employers. I was greatly impressed by this attitude. His predecessor at the Euclid Avenue Temple, the late Rabbi Louis Wolsey, used to keep aloof from the Jews of the East Side for whom he felt a deep contempt. He was a bitter anti-Zionist. Here, on the other hand, was a rabbi who was altogether different. What more could one expect?

During our conversation, Mr. Rucker came in and I introduced the Rabbi to him. Mr. Rucker also became enthusiastic, and as a result wrote a warm editorial, commanding the new Rabbi to Cleveland Jewry. I did everything in my power to make Brickner popular among the Yiddish speaking masses. In time he did win the favor of all classes of Jews, including even the strict Orthodox.

BUT, in the meantime the Cleveland Zionist District became the scene of an ever-growing unlovely strife between its leaders and Rabbi Silver. A similar strife was carried on also in the Jewish Educational Bureau where Silver was president. Brickner, being a member in both, was in quiet sympathy with Silver's opponents though he did not participate directly in the quarrels. Silver, in spite of all the quarrels, was still the most respected Rabbi in Cleveland. His personal popularity far exceeded that of any other rabbi. In time Brickner also fell into the net of rabbinical jealousies. I tried a few times to persuade Brickner from injecting himself into a controversy whose results could only be harmful, but to no avail.

The fight in both, the Zionist District and the Jewish Educational Bureau, grew worse and worse and often reached the stage of an ugly scandal. Silver left the Educational Bureau and Brickner was elected in his place as president. In the District the situation, far from improving, deteriorated even further. Presidents came and Presidents went. Some of them like Max Simon, David Ralph Herz and the late Municipal Judge Louis Drucker, honestly tried to bring about peace in the Zionist District, but the quarrels went on forever. This situation reached its climax when the late Rabbi Goldman and later the late H. A. Friedland assumed the Presidency of the District.

During most of these years I took the side of Rabbi Silver in spite of the many friends I had in the District. This was not to the liking of many of those friends and least of all to the liking of Rabbi Brickner.

Rabbi Brickner was jealous of the publicity I found necessary to give Rabbi Silver in the controversy in the Zionist District and the Bureau of Jewish Education. Our friendship began to cool off. Soon afterwards another incident, which I would not like to recall, reached to the point when I felt forced to break with him altogether. The rabbi then became my enemy as a result.

Now, that Brickner felt I had wronged his friend, Rabbi Goldman, took up the cudgels for him and wrote his very angry letter to Dr. Margoshes. Goldman himself laughed at the whole business.

Soon a Cleveland Court of Appeals annulled the verdict of the three out-of-town Judges. The Orthodox, however, still had a chance to take the cause to the Ohio Supreme Court. But they were already tired of the litigation, of the long and bitter struggle, and did nothing further. This was the final end of the bitter struggle. The Jewish Center remained Conservative and after World War II disappeared from 105th Street altogether. Under the leadership of Henry A. Rucker and Rabbi Armond E. Cohen a new and beautiful conservative Temple was erected at Euclid Heights Boulevard which is now known as the Park Synagogue.

Many years later, when Rabbi Brickner tragically lost his life in Spain, I mourned him from my heart and went to his funeral carrying in my heart the same feeling as all his friends.

CONTROVERSIES IN OTHER CONGREGATIONS

The so-called "war" around the Jewish Center was not the only one of Congregational battles in the history of Cleveland Jewry. There were others which preceded it. Already as early as 1845, when Cleveland was a city of about six thousand people and only a handful of Jews, differences with regard to rituals caused the split of the small Jewish community. Some years later similar splits took place in other Congregations, the last one of which was the split some thirty years ago in the B'nai Jeshurum Congregation, now known as The Temple On The Heights.

This last split was not for the cause of rituals. It was caused as a result of the decision of the Temple's leadership not to renew its contract with its spiritual leader, Rabbi Abraham Novak, after the new Temple was built. The present Rabbi Rudolph Rosenthal was engaged in his place and that was not to the liking of a small group of dissenting and indignant members. They took up a fight against the leadership and for a time it looked that another Goldman-

like struggle was in the making. Fortunately, however, Rabbi Novak was not just another Benjamin and Rabbi Rosenthal another Goldman. The dissenting members left the Temple deciding to form another Temple with Rabbi Novak as its spiritual leader. This was not an easy-going matter. It took quite a long time before the new Temple came into being. After a few years of struggle Rabbi Novak quietly left Cleveland to occupy the pulpit of the conservative synagogue in Rochester.

The splinters, however, did finally succeed to enrich Cleveland Jewry with another conservative synagogue. They purchased a small church on Washington Boulevard which they converted into a Temple. Rabbi Jack Herman was brought from New York and entrusted with the spiritual leadership. Under his capable and very energetic leadership the small Temple was soon greatly expanded and is now the third largest Conservative Temple in Cleveland. It is known as The Community Temple.

There were many splits also among the Orthodox Jews and new synagogues kept on being built until they were out of proportion. But this is a story by itself. Today, however, there are quite a few less Orthodox congregations in Cleveland. Instead of building new homes of worship the Orthodox found a much better way. They joined together and built instead a few large Congregations among which the Taylor Road Synagogue is the largest. Rabbi Louis Engelberg is its spiritual leader. Also the former Tetiever Synagogue was joined with other synagogues and is now one of the largest Orthodox synagogues in the city. It is known as the Warrensville-Center Synagogue with Rabbi Jacob Muskin as spiritual leader. The second largest Orthodox Synagogue is that of the Heights Jewish Center where the eminent Rabbi Israel Porath is its spiritual leader.

THE NEW FEDERATION OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS AND SYNAGOGUES

IN the last several issues of our magazine, we published a few articles in which, to some extent, Jewish life in Cleveland is reflected as it was in the 1920's and in the 1930's. It was to be expected that some of our readers would react to those articles. But to our own surprise, the number of letters was much greater than anticipated. Not only regular readers of our magazine, but casual ones whose attention was drawn to the pieces, wrote to tell us how much they liked them and expressed the desire to see further installments of the story of Cleveland Jewry.

It was not surprising at all, though, that our account of the long and bitter "war" between the regular Zionist of Cleveland and Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, attracted more attention than other material. It may, therefore, be of interest to some of our older readers to be reminded that other conflicts in our community did at least as much as the one connected with Silver to gain for Cleveland Jewry the reputation of one of the most quarrelsome in America. Anyway, there was no lack of issues and personalities to fight about in Cleveland when I first arrived in 1925.

Thus, the struggle in the Jewish Centre and the affiliated luxurious Anshe Emeth Beth Tefillah Synagogue, was incomparably more sensational than the one between Silver and the other Zionists. The late Rabbi Solomon Goldman, the spiritual leader of the Centre and the Synagogue, was carrying on an acrimonious feud against

the orthodox members of that great religious institution. The battle was closely followed by and exercised many thousands of Jews throughout the United States and Canada, let alone the Jews of Cleveland. The battle was joined when Rabbi Goldman set out to convert this old orthodox congregation—the largest in Cleveland—into a citadel of Conservative Judaism. The battle raged with unusual ferocity until the day when Rabbi Goldman, in 1929, left Cleveland for Chicago to occupy the pulpit of the largest and wealthiest Conservative temple in that city.

Much less pretty was the kosher-meat war which raged at the same time in Cleveland. There were fist-fights, bombs, police arrests. Butchers and their employees were often dragged into the police on charges leveled against them by their opponents. Rabbis and ritual slaughters were arraigned at court. One fantastic development followed another. The scandals disgraced the community.

There was also plenty of fireworks in the field of Jewish education. The late H. A. Friedland, who died of cancer at a comparatively young age, was one of the ablest, most scholarly, and most devoted Hebrew educationists in America. But, as the Head of the Cleveland Talmud Torah system, he was the constant butt of attack by the orthodox rabbis in town, headed by the late Dr. Philip Rosenberg. The Keneseth Israel Synagogue, of which Rabbi Rosenberg was the spiritual leader, was the scene of many protest meetings against Friedland and his system, at which exaggerated and non-existent misdeeds were charged. Dr. Rosenberg was aided in his crusade by the leaders of the Adath Bnai Israel Yeshivah and the war went on and on.

THE FIGHT AGAINST THE SCHOOL BOARD

LITTLE by little I became accustomed to life in Cleveland and often wrote about different futile quarrels in the community. Several times I intervened between contending parties and sometimes even succeeded in establishing peace, at least, for a while. But not in the Jewish Centre, where even a temporary truce was out of the

question. My personal popularity grew, so that in time I might have become a more effective peace-maker. But suddenly I myself became a champion of a feud.

This happened when the Cleveland School Board, out of the clear blue sky, distributed questionnaires among the Jewish and the Negro pupils, the contents of which was an insult to both races. Jewish and Negro children were asked to answer questions about life in their homes which had no connection with the work of the School Board. Christian children, who were not Negro, did not receive such questionnaires.

As the editor of the Jewish newspaper, I wanted to find out what purpose the questionnaire was supposed to serve and what the School Board expected to learn from it. At the suggestion of my publisher, the late Mr. Samuel Rucker, I got in touch with the Jewish member of the Board, Mr. Alfred Benesh and asked for an explanation. Mr. Benesh was at that time an active leader in the Jewish community and Mr. Rucker was sure he would be the first to protest against this insulting questionnaire.

Mr. Rucker was mistaken. Mr. Benesh received me very coldly and, after listening to my case, answered angrily: "Yes, I know your boss and I also know his son, Henry, the lawyer. They are afraid people will find out the paper hasn't much of a circulation, so they're raising a fuss about the questionnaire." He told me he was too busy to discuss the matter with me any further, then opened the door of his office and just said, "Good-bye."

Bitterly disappointed by the attitude of this "Jewish leader," I decided it would be better to speak to the non-Jewish Superintendent of the Schools to hear what he had to say. I went straight from Benesh's office to the building of the School Board. There I was received by the Superintendent, Mr. Robinson J. Jones. He listened to me very courteously and told me he was not responsible for the questionnaire and that he had been opposed to it. It was his assistant, Dr. Charles Lake, who was responsible for the questionnaire and Mr. Jones suggested that I speak to him.

When I entered Lake's office, which was next door to Mr. Jones, he told me Mr. Benesh had telephoned him about me and that he had nothing to discuss with me, he was too busy. To all my questions he did not reply with a single word. Thus I was disappointed for the second time.

On returning to the office of the paper, I wrote a sharp editorial, urging the parents of the children at school not to fill in the answers to the disgraceful questionnaire, which were an insult to the Jews. Naturally I did not spare Mr. Benesh. The editorial made a strong impression on many of the parents.

But I did not rely on that alone. For several days I went from one Jewish meeting to another—of orthodox synagogues, Labor unions and of other Jewish organizations—and addressed them, urging the parents not to permit their children to answer the questionnaires no matter what the pressure from the teachers. My mission was a success. For the first time since my coming to Cleveland, I saw unity in Jewish ranks. Rabbi Goldman, Rabbi Abraham Novak of the Bnai Jeshurun Congregation and all orthodox rabbis unaniously endorsed my fight against the School Board.

When the children refused to fill in the questionnaire, the case found its way into the English press. The result was an uproar in the School Board. The struggle lasted for several weeks. At first *The Plain Dealer*, later the *Cleveland Press*, came out with strongly worded editorials condemning the questionnaire. Several members of the School Board asked Dr. Lake some very uncomfortable questions. Mr. Benesh protected him. The struggle went on.

A second editorial in *The Plain Dealer* led to a vote in the School Board, where, with five members against Mr. Benesh, decided to withdraw the questionnaire. This was the end of the offensive step. It was also a triumph for *The Jewish World*, which, under my editorship, began to acquire more readers than it had ever had in the past. It was also a triumph for those Jews who believed that a struggle must be undertaken whenever it is called for.

A FEDERATION OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

DURING that period, the Ku-Klux-Klan was very strong in the whole State of Ohio, naturally including Cleveland. The Klan carried on a campaign against the Jews, the Catholics and the Negroes. The Jews of Cleveland, always ready to war on one another, had no organizational instrument for repelling the attacks of the Klan. The only well-organized Jewish body which was to be found in the city then was the Jewish Welfare Federation. It had good leadership. Although primarily concerned with providing funds for its affiliated organizations, the Jewish Welfare Federation also enjoyed the prestige of the leading Jewish organizations in Cleveland. The non-Jews looked upon the Federation as the body representing the Jewish community.

The leaders of the Federation and their associates in the affiliated organizations looked upon themselves as the elite of Cleveland Jewry. Those were mostly second-generation German, Bohemian, Moravian and Hungarian Jews who had no dealings with the East European immigrants of the East Side. The first Jew of East European origin who was admitted to the charmed circle—and that, after long years of struggle—was Max Simon, a Zionist leader in Cleveland whose parents came from Lithuania. He soon turned out to be one of the ablest leaders of the Federation.

The Federation refrained from injecting itself into the squabbles of the East Side Jewish groups. Neither did it show much concern over anti-Semitic activities of the Klan. The latter, they felt, ought to be combatted by the Catholics and by other liberal-minded Christians. The leaders of the Federation were fine, decent, honest human beings. But they saw no necessity to carry on any other Jewish activity besides philanthropy and believed in the principle of keeping stiller than water and lower than grass. My own views were totally different.

My experience during the struggle with the School Board led me to the conclusion that besides all the good, bad and indifferent or-

ganizations the Jews had in Cleveland, they needed one large body to take care of the general interests of the community. I believed that the Jews of Cleveland, and especially, the Jews of the East Side, should form an organization to concern itself with precisely those matters with which the Federation did not concern itself. I finally conceived of a plan for a Federation of Jewish People's Organizations, orthodox synagogue, labor unions and others.

As soon as the plan matured in my mind, I went to work on it. First I published a series of articles on the subject in *The Jewish World*, next I convened a special conference on a Sunday afternoon in the hall of the 55th Street Talmud Torah, near Woodland Avenue. The meeting had a large attendance of representatives of many Jewish organizations. When they heard my plan, they agreed to begin working on it almost unanimously.

My dream came true. A new Jewish Federation with the sacred task of serving Cleveland Jewry, was born. A. J. Housman, a young lawyer, well-known as an active communal leader, was elected President. Other offices were also filled by men of ability. A large Executive was elected and a handsome sum of money was raised on the spot to enable the Federation to begin functioning. I did not wish to accept any office, but was elected, against my will, as Honorary President.

The new Federation's first achievement of importance was in the struggle against a civic reception to Queen Marie of Rumania.

THE QUEEN OF RUMANIA COMES TO CLEVELAND

QUEEN MARIE, who at one time enjoyed a reputation for liberalism, and who was a well-known writer, undertook a tour of the United States. Invited by her countrymen in Cleveland to visit the city, she graciously consented. The Rumanians in Cleveland were ready to accord their Queen a royal welcome and the Municipal Government agreed to take part.

But a few days before the Queen was to arrive in Cleveland, the New York press—Jewish and non-Jewish—reported from Bucharest that the Rumanian Government was renewing its persecution of the Jews. There were even reports of pogroms in several provincial towns. Naturally, American Jewry stormed with protests against the Rumanian Government, and the general press was critical. It was even mentioned in the *New York Times* that the Rumanian Government ought to have known better than to stage pogroms just when their queen was on a visit to the United States.

At my request, the new Federation of Jewish Organizations, held a special meeting, where it was decided to make representations to the City Government against the proposed civic reception for the Queen. Three men were elected as a committee to go to the City Hall and discuss the matter with William R. Hopkins, who was City Manager (the office of Mayor had then been abolished). I headed the Committee. I had already known Mr. Hopkins well and found no difficulty in making our point of view clear to him.

Mr. Hopkins immediately, in our presence, issued an order to take down the large Rumanian flag which had been waving over the City Hall for a few days. He also telephoned the newspapers to let them know that in view of the renewed persecutions of the Jews in Rumania, the City Government would not participate in the reception for the Queen. The Rumanians in Cleveland were angry, but nothing could be done about the City Manager's order.

When the Queen arrived in Cleveland, her countrymen gave her a rousing ovation on the platform of the railway station where her train stopped. But their representatives immediately conveyed to her the decision of the City Government to ignore her presence. The Queen could not accept this humiliation and went back into her wagon to proceed to another city. Nothing could induce her to enter the City of Cleveland.

This was the result of the first activities of the Federation of Jewish Organizations in Cleveland. To be sure, there was no una-

nimity in the views about our action. The leaders of the Jewish Welfare Federation and especially its Executive Director, Mr. Samuel Goldhamer, were opposed to our activity. On the other hand, we gained prestige not only in Cleveland but throughout the United States and Canada.

THE FEDERATION HELPS INTRODUCE ORDER IN JEWISH RANKS

THE new Federation was the first and only Jewish organization which managed to bring—temporarily at least—order out of chaos in the kosher-meat situation and brought together the two contending factions. It was also the first one to intervene in a threatened strike of the Jewish bakery workers. Also, other, smaller conflicts were resolved by the intervention of the Federation.

As the activities of the Federation developed, it gained more and more prestige. Other Jewish communities, such as Akron and Cincinnati in Ohio, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Detroit, Michigan, sent delegates to Cleveland to learn our methods and our ways of organization in order to establish similar Federations.

But "Man proposes and God disposes." I took sick with a fever which kept me in bed for more than a month, and, when I rose from my sick-bed, I was too busy catching up on my work on the paper to give much time to the Federation. Meantime, the Federation became infested with delegates from all sorts of organizations who pursued their petty personal ambitions, usually of a political nature. Shyster lawyers who joined several organizations simultaneously, partly in order to acquire a clientele, partly in order to further their political ambitions, became delegates and, in time, converted the Federation into a club of politicians. The Federation lost its prestige. The situation became unbearable. I proposed a temporary suspension of its activities. Serious-minded Jews who did not happen to have children or relatives who hoped to use the Federation for their own political advancement, saw my point and supported me.

That was the end of the Federation where I wasted so much effort to bring it into life.

THE HUNGARIAN DELEGATION IN CLEVELAND

I DO not recall precisely the year, but I believe it was in 1928 or 1929, when a large parliamentary delegation came to America on a goodwill tour. The delegation was headed by Baron Perenie and consisted of the leaders of all political parties in Hungary and included two Jews, one a Socialist, Dr. Fabian, the other a member of the Liberal Party. The majority of the delegates were of the ruling party, then led by Admiral Horthy.

At that time anti-Semitic terror ran rampant in Hungary. The "Awakening Magyars" who were the Hungarian prototypes of Hitler's goons in Germany, were left unmolested by Horthy's government.

When the delegation arrived in New York, leaders of the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee and other organizations, especially those of Hungarian Jews in America, sought a meeting with the visiting parliamentarians, but in vain.

Cleveland, as is well known, has a large colony of Hungarians, which, in the 1920's, amounted to over eighty thousand. At their invitation, the delegation from Hungary visited our city. Despite the large number of Hungarian Jews in Cleveland, unlike New York, no delegation of Hungarian Jews sought to meet with the delegation. As editor of the local Yiddish daily, I could not miss the opportunity at least to make an attempt.

I asked my friend Nathan Schoenfeld, who occasionally wrote for my paper and who spoke Hungarian well, to accompany me. He readily agreed.

We came to the ninth floor of the hotel where the delegation was staying. It was almost entirely occupied by the delegates, who were walking around the lobbies. Some of them stopped us to ask what we wanted.

I spoke in German and Schoenfeld in Magyar. We explained that we wished to interview Baron Perenie. Soon the two Jewish members of the delegation—whose Jewish origin was clearly marked on their faces—came over. Dr. Fabian—who incidentally now lives in New York—spoke to us. He was very stern. The other Jew, whose name I cannot now recall, was rather mild. He smiled affably and tried to find out what we wished to discuss with the Baron who, he maintained, was very busy and could only see people on extremely urgent business.

Schoenfeld and I replied that our business was very urgent. Fabian was indignant and addressed us in an offensive tone, trying to make us understand the Baron would not receive us.

Presently the Baron, attracted by the commotion, emerged from his room and approached us. We were pleasantly surprised to find in him an amiable person. He asked us to sit down with him on a nearby couch and asked us questions—instead of waiting for us to do the asking.

Schoenfeld and I did manage to put to him the questions we had prepared about the position of the Jews in Hungary. The Baron replied to all questions in a very friendly manner. I pointed out that Hungary was harming her own reputation not only among American Jews but among all Americans by her toleration of the treatment of the Jewish minority by the "Awakening Magyars."

The interview lasted for over an hour. In the end Baron Perenie gave us his word that he would present our case to Admiral Horthy and explain to him our position. He added that he personally would see to it that the matter be raised in the Hungarian Parliament. That was the close of the interview.

Neither Schoenfeld nor myself is trying to take credit for what developed subsequently. But the fact is that soon afterwards the Jewish position in Hungary under Admiral Horthy improved considerably. It was only after Hitler's armies marched into Hungary that it became bad again. Baron Perenie kept his word to us: On

his return to Hungary he condemned in Parliament the excesses of the "Awakening Magyars," said they gave Hungary a black eye in America and demanded that the perpetrators of the excesses be punished and that the "Awakening Magyars" be dissolved.

As already indicated, they only came to life again when Hitler marched in.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

AS soon as the Federation went out of business, the old war was resumed about kosher meat, in an even uglier and more disgraceful form than before. Again the police had to take a hand and arrests were made daily. One of those arrested was the late Rabbi Heschel Levenberg, formerly rabbi in New Haven, Conn., where he had his own small yeshivah. From New Haven he came to the Hibath Jerusalem synagogue as its rabbi and brought his yeshivah with him.

I had a warm feeling for that rabbi and helped him to establish himself in Cleveland. When the kosher-meat struggle got into full swing, I was suddenly awakened at 4 a.m. by a group of students from Rabbi Levenberg's yeshivah who told me their rabbi had been arrested on the charge that he was responsible for the bomb thrown at a Jewish poultry market. With tears in their eyes, the yeshiva students pleaded with me to go save their master.

As I entered the police headquarters, I found the rabbi in the large "Third Degree" Chamber. He was seated in a high chair over which was suspended a large lamp, with strong light burning into his eyes. Three detectives were pelting him with questions, while he, the rabbi, holding a Hebrew volume in his hand, was endeavoring to explain certain passages. I voiced my protest against this treatment, and since, one of the detectives knew me well the inquisition was stopped. I took the rabbi by the hand and led him out of the room. In the corridor my detective acquaintance told me the rabbi was still under arrest. But a higher police officer entrusted the rabbi to my care on my promise to bring him back as their prisoner when the time came for him to appear in the Municipal Court.

I am not even sure today whether the Federation, if it existed, could have stopped the kosher-meat war. But it certainly would have prevented such disgraceful treatment of a rabbi. I then decided to try to bring the Federation back to life. I evolved a plan of action and invited, through *The Jewish World*, the Jewish organizations in the city to send representatives to a conference on Sunday afternoon in the hall of the Orthodox Orphanage. A large crowd came and the success of the enterprise was assured.

Presently the then spiritual leader of the Jewish Centre, Rabbi Harry Davidowich made his appearance at the conference and offered an alternate plan: to form in Cleveland a Jewish Community Council. This was a new idea in American Jewry, with which I was familiar but with which the ordinary layman in Cleveland was not. I liked the idea because it offered the possibility of bringing together the various elements in the Jewish community and make them in time work harmoniously for the good of all.

One thing worried me, however:

The Jewish Welfare Federation with the energetic leadership of Max Simon, whole-heartedly plunged into the work of promoting a Jewish Community Council in Cleveland and promised to finance it. I sincerely feared that the Federation people, that is, the Central European Jews, would dominate it and allow no voice to the East European Jews. I proposed to the conference however, to postpone the consideration of the renewal of the Federation in order to study the situation further. We were, in the meantime, to examine the merits of the proposed Community Council.

Both Rabbi Davidowich and Max Simon gave me firm assurances that the Council, when set up, would be an independent body, free from domination by any group or individual. The Federation, Mr. Simon assured me, would be merely one of the constituent organizations with no special privileges. I had full confidence in Mr. Simon and accepted his assurances. For my part, I threw in my support behind the proposed Council.

I placed *The Jewish World* at the service of the project and devoted several articles to the exposition of the plan for a Jewish Community Council, which would enable Cleveland Jewry to appear as a united body and speak in one voice. Besides that, I went along with Rabbi Davidowich and Max Simon, from one Jewish meeting to another, to make propaganda for the forming of the Jewish Community Council in Cleveland, and to urge each organization to join it.

That my endeavors to assist the rabbi and Mr. Simon in the establishment of the Jewish Community Council were considered important was expressed to me in the following letter by Mr. Simon:

MAX SIMON
1303 WEST SIXTH STREET
CLEVELAND, OHIO

Mr Leon Wiesenfeld, Editor
Jewish Daily World
10600 Superior Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio

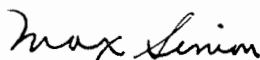
My dear Mr Wiesenfeld:

I have just read your excellent article on the proposed Community Council, in the Jewish World of January 18th. May I assure you our Committee and I personally appreciate greatly the splendid support you are giving this effort to bring greater unity into our Jewish Community.

This is an undertaking which concerns all Jews alike. We are in perfect agreement, therefore, that the Council should be a body "of and for all Jews".

Thanking you again, I am

Sincerely yours,



Max Simon,
Chairman.

January 31, 1935.

In later years I did not always see eye to eye with the Jewish Community Council in Cleveland. But I always felt that its formation and its continued existence was a blessing. If Cleveland today has a united Jewish community, it is thanks to the existence of the Jewish Community Council and, in the first place, to Rabbi Davidovich and Mr. Simon, who worked to educate Cleveland Jewry to the

maturity of being able to appreciate the significance and moral value of such a comprehensive Jewish body.

The Jewish Community Council no longer exists today as separate body. Some years ago it was merged with the Jewish Welfare Federation, which is known today as the Jewish Community Federation, which embraces practically the whole Jewish population of Cleveland.

PERPETUAL KOSHER MEAT SCANDALS ARE BROUGHT TO COURT

IN the so-called "struggle for kashruth in the Jewish communities in the United States and Canada, there was no lack of scandals. It seems to me, the most sensational one fell to the part of Cleveland in the 1930's. It was a fight, which reached the courts and aroused the Jewish communities of the whole North American continent.

The large meat packing firm of Swift and Company in Chicago brought in a suit in court against the Cleveland Board of Kashruth and the orthodox rabbis associated with the Board. The "crimes" charged against the plaintiffs were those of boycotting the firm's products. The Swift Company demanded an injunction against the boycott and damages for financial losses.

The late Mr. Benjamin Cohen, who operated several kosher butcher shops in town, was the Cleveland representative of the firm for the kosher trade. Actually, he was more than that. He was, in fact, the wholesaler for the Chicago firm in Cleveland. Mr. Cohen was a stubborn, self-opinionated man, who was sure that the meat slaughtered by the Swift Company under his supervision was absolutely kosher. He refused to co-operate with the Kashruth Board of Cleveland, the local rabbinate or any other responsible body in town. He acted on his own responsibility and did what he pleased. He had one or two orthodox rabbis in his pay. They did his bidding.

The leaders of the Kashruth Board insisted, however, that Cohen must co-operate with them and must accept the supervision of the local rabbis they appoint over the meat of the Swift Company. Mr. Cohen and his staff of rabbis and shohetim (ritual slaughterers) undertook a bitter struggle against the Kashruth Board, which responded by appealing to the observant Jews of Cleveland not to buy Cohen's kosher meat. Then the Swift Company took its case to court.

The trial at the Court of Common Pleas lasted for three weeks and was marked by some disgraceful scenes. One shohet, who considered himself to be an outstanding scholar, interpreted the law as he saw it for the benefit of the judge and spoke with marked disdain of the local rabbis, designating them as boors, ignoramuses and fakers. The rabbis, in reply, returned in coin. One, Rabbi Philip Rosenberg, a hot-tempered individual, was sharp in his repudiation of the shohet's arguments. The shohet took the stand again and designated the rabbis and the leaders of the Kashruth Board as "plain racketeers."

The local press reported the developments and every Jew's face was red from shame. In the restaurants and lunch rooms one often overheard non-Jews discussing the kosher meat trial. It added little to the good name of the Jewish community in the eyes of the general public.

Besides serving as Associate Editor of the local Yiddish daily, I was, at that time, also the Mid-western correspondent of the large New York Yiddish daily "*The Day*" and of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. I was well acquainted with the facts of the controversy and took the side of the Kashruth Board. My dispatches were written in that spirit. They did not favor the side of the Swift Company. When the scenes in the court became scandalous, my dispatches and my articles in *The Day* became sharp. I demanded that the Swift Company discontinue the court proceedings. My words had their effect.

Orthodox Jews throughout the United States were aroused to such an extent that the Swift Company became alarmed.

The Company sent to Cleveland two well-known Jewish leaders from Chicago: the late Rabbi Ezriel Epstein, one of the outstanding leaders of Orthodox Jewry in America in his day, and another such leader, a layman, Solomon Levy, the owner of the Sinai Sausage Company. Immediately on their arrival in town, the two emissaries opened conversations with the Cleveland Board of Kashruth, in which I was asked to take part. But three days of negotiations brought no results.

On the fourth day, as I sat in the restaurant at lunch, the Presiding Judge walked in. He had been sent to Cleveland from another place in the State of Ohio, after every local judge refused to preside over the kosher meat trial. I had made the visiting judge's acquaintance the day he first arrived and gained the impression he was an affable man. He sat at my table in the restaurant and we got into a conversation about the trial.

The judge, who was an elderly man, told me quite frankly that in his opinion neither side had conducted itself properly in court. He thought both parties overstated their cases, but he added that so far the Swift Company failed to justify its argument.

"In that case," I remarked, "why don't you throw the case out of court?"

The judge merely laughed in reply.

But at the afternoon session the judge delivered a lengthy address, explaining his position and rebuking the lawyers who failed to build up a strong enough case for the Swift Company. He declared the trial closed and threw the case out of court. The Swift Company lost. That was the end of the scandal in court.

That same day the mediators and the local rabbis and the leaders of the Kashruth Board succeeded in arriving at a settlement. For a time—not too long, though,—there was quiet on the Kashrut front.

Both the men from Chicago and the local leaders and rabbis admitted that my articles had their effect and expressed their thanks to me for bringing about this truce. I gained the impression that now harmony will prevail and that the Kashrut quarrels will finally be brought to an end. But I was mistaken.

Less than three months later the rabbis decided that the Kashrut Board is no longer needed and a new scandal was created. The rabbis, most of them now employed as supervisors at the Swift Company and other companies, claimed that the Kashrut Board is intervening in their affairs and should therefore be dissolved. A new war came to life which brought no honor to the Jews of the East Side. This war lasted for many months and made the leaders of the Kashrut Board so wearisome that they finally capitulated and the Board went out of business. Other quarrels were, however, created again and again.

It was only later, when the Jewish Community Council was founded, that a more permanent peace was effected and quiet prevailed in the matter of Kashrut meat.

ORTHODOX ORPHAN ASYLUM DECIDES TO CLOSE ITS DOORS

WHEN I first arrived in Cleveland, the local Jewish community could boast of five worth-while institutions: the large, rich Montefiore Old Folks' Home; the Orthodox Home for the Aged; the large B'nai B'rith Orphans' Home on Woodland Avenue, and the Orthodox Orphans' Asylum on Parkwood Drive. There was, besides, the Jewish Day Nursery which was supported by the Jews of the East Side. It was a very important institution. The first three institutions mentioned were financially sound, but the two latter — the Orthodox Orphans' Asylum and the Day Nursery — were struggling. This was especially the case with the Orphans' Asylum.

The Asylum maintained about forty children, boys and girls, who were given a fine upbringing and a good traditional Jewish education. They felt as if they lived in their own homes. But the Jewish community rendered the institution too little help and the leaders were always worrying about money matters.

Soon after my arrival in Cleveland the Orphans' Asylum suffered a severe blow. One of its leaders, a well-known figure on the East Side, had been the Treasurer of the Asylum and had also served as President or Treasurer of a small bank, suddenly absconded with a considerable sum of money from the bank, including the whole deposit of the Asylum. This event precipitated such a crisis in the fortunes of the institution that its continued existence hung in the

balance. Nevertheless, the fine people who were responsible for its existence managed to get it out of danger and put it on its feet. The Asylum still struggled, though, but managed to keep its head above water until the year of 1928, when the crash came in the building industry.

The late Joseph Neshkin, President of the Asylum, was a builder by profession. A few of the more important men on the Board of the Asylum were Mr. Neshkin's business associates — builders like himself, or real estate operators. Thus, the major part of the income of the Asylum depended on the building industry and related trades. But the crash in the building industry in 1928 ruined the very people who supported the Asylum and made its further existence seemingly impossible.

The leaders were despondent. They turned for advice to Mr. Samuel Rucker. Mr. Rucker, after examining the situation, came to the conclusion that, under existing circumstances, the only way out would be for the Orthodox Orphans' Asylum to merge with the large B'nai B'rith Orphans' Home — if the directors of the latter were willing. The B'nai B'rith institution was situated across the street from our publication. "Just walk across the street," Mr. Rucker said, "and have a talk with them."

I did not approve of this idea of Mr Rucker's. The B'nai B'rith Orphans' Home was a Reform institution and I did not think it was right for an Orthodox institution to be swallowed up by it.

"Have you a better idea?" Mr. Rucker asked, "let's hear it."

I then proposed to let the matter rest for a while and for the present appeal to the Jewish population of Cleveland to come to the rescue of the Asylum. Everyone agreed to my plan. The next day there appeared in *The Jewish World*, under a large headline, a strong appeal to the Jews of Cleveland and surrounding small communities to come to the help of this worthy institution, to save it from closing its doors. I suggested a mass-meeting for the coming Sunday afternoon.

I repeated the appeal in the paper several times and soon reached the conclusion that it had evoked a favorable reaction in the public.

On the following Sunday afternoon so many people came to the meeting that there was not enough room to place them all in the regular meeting-hall and the meeting had to be held in the garden of the Asylum in the open air. But the leaders were still too disheartened to believe it was possible to save the Orphans' Asylum. "I suppose a few dollars will come in from this meeting, but what about the future?" said Neshkin. All my efforts to give him courage were of no avail.

Neshkin opened the meeting and spoke more about the prospects of closing the institution than about the hopes for its continuance. All other leading directors spoke in the same vein. They pointed to the impossible financial conditions of the Asylum, especially now when the building industry had collapsed. It will not be possible to go on, was their refrain. Others introduced a personal note by stating they were tired and could no longer carry the burden.

It so happened that on that day my good friend Dr. Samuel Margoshes, Editor of the New York "Day," was in Cleveland and I asked him to come with me to the meeting, in order to put in a few words of encouragement to the leaders of the Orphans' Asylum. Margoshes came, but, on hearing the speeches by the leaders, he decided there was no hope. He went through the motions of saying a few encouraging words, urging the Jews of Cleveland to make every effort to carry on the institution, but, of course, his words hardly had any effect.

Finally I took the floor myself. Not only did I make a strong appeal for funds, but I went so far as to administer a severe public rebuke to the pessimistic speakers who preceded me. "Tired men should not be leaders!" I said. "The Orphans' Asylum is too important an institution to be entrusted to the needs of tired leaders. If you are tired, take a vacation, have a rest, and, meantime, hand

over the institution into the hands of men who will have faith and energy to carry on!"

Nearly eight thousand dollars came in that afternoon in cash, checks and pledges. The Orthodox Orphans' Asylum was saved. Dr. Margoshes was amazed. "In New York," he remarked, "no Jewish writer would have dared speak that way." But, he added, the main thing was that I succeeded.

From then on I took it upon myself to assist the Asylum whenever it needed my help. I boosted it at every opportunity and helped to make it one of the most popular institutions in Cleveland Jewry.

SUPERINTENDENT CAUSES SCANDALS

FOLLOWING that meeting which saved the Orthodox Orphans' Asylum from closing its doors, more money came in than even before the Depression. To be sure, the old "tired" leaders did not take a vacation but remained in the leadership and carried on. On the whole, things went on better than anybody expected.

Unfortunately, the President, Mr. Neshkin died soon after and the leadership became weakened. The newly-elected President, Mr. Aaron Permuth, and his close collaborators decided that the Superintendent of the Asylum was not good enough and let him go. They sent a delegation to New York to find a new Superintendent. They wanted a scholar and a capable executive, one fit to run the Asylum.

The delegation spent a few days in New York, interviewing prospective candidates, who had applied in response to advertisements in the Jewish and the general press. Every applicant seemed worthy of the job. But there was, in particular a man with a Ph.D. title, who produced the best impression and he was engaged. His name was Adolph Dickman.

When Dr. Dickman arrived in Cleveland with his wife a few days later, the President Mr. Permuth brought him into my office. The new man somehow made me feel uncomfortable. He was a

highly educated person, no doubt, but there was something about him I could not define, which made me feel there was something lacking in his personality.

It did not take long for my intuition to be verified. Dr. Dickman, it turned out, was a very wily person. In New York he had assured the members of the delegation from Cleveland that he was a strictly Orthodox Jew. But the first few weeks of their presence at the Orphans' Asylum showed that both the doctor and his wife were far removed from traditional Judaism. They were, in fact, outspoken freethinkers. Nevertheless, Mrs. Dickman, who was the "mother" of the Asylum, carried on her work very competently. But Dr. Dickman took a cynical attitude from the very beginning.

One of his duties at the Asylum was to teach the children traditional Jewish subjects, such as the Bible and the Prayer Book and to familiarize them with the Yiddish language.

But Dr. Dickman, on the contrary, began to implant in the hearts and minds of his wards a feeling of hatred towards these subjects. He felt a deep disdain towards the Yiddish language and gradually managed to infect the children with the same attitude. The children ceased studying not only Yiddish but also traditional subjects and some of them even spat at visiting Directors who addressed them in Yiddish.

Most of the directors, who numbered more than forty, developed a strong antagonism towards Dr. Dickman and his policies. But Dr. Dickman, despite the feeling against him, felt pretty strong in his position. The reason for it was that he had loaned considerable sums of money to the four leading directors of the institution, including the President. All four of them were in the building trade and were using the loans they received from Dr. Dickman to try and rehabilitate their businesses. Dr. Dickman felt sure enough of himself to become increasingly arrogant in his manner with the majority of the directors who were opposed to him.

As I was Honorary Director of the Asylum, both sides came to me with their arguments and asked me to establish some sort of order in the organization. I invited to my home Dr. and Mrs. Dickman, the President, Mr. Permuth and three of Dickman's opponents on the Board of Directors. But all my persuasive efforts were in vain. Dickman's attitude made any settlement impossible. He wanted nothing less than the dismissal of all his opponents from the Board of Directors. My mediation proved fruitless.

A few days later all but seven of the Directors voted to dismiss Dr. Dickman from his position. I made another attempt to patch up things, but failed again.

I naturally reported the matter in full in my paper and added my own comment that the action of the Directors was as it should have been. That was all I needed. Dickman ran for help to Goldhammer of the Federation, with whom he had made friends. Knowing how Goldhammer hated me, Dickman berated me to him, looking for assistance. Neither Dickman nor Goldhammer seemed to worry over the fact that the Federation had not given a cent to help the Asylum.

Goldhammer called up the State Welfare Department in Columbus, demanding the annulment of the charter for the Asylum. He also demanded that, as "an unsuitable person," I should be debarred from serving on the Board of Directors.

The woman in charge of the State Welfare Department, who was an ignorant politician and had no idea about the whole business, immediately annulled the charter and wrote me a strict letter, forbidding me to serve as director.

Dickman and Goldhammer were rubbing their hands with glee, believing they had finally liquidated me as a public figure.

Among my closest friends at the time were the present Appeal Court Judge Joseph H. Silbert, who, incidentally, is today President of the Orphans' Home, and the late Joseph M. Ackerman, who was later to become Municipal Judge. Silbert was a member of the

State Legislature and Ackerman of the State Senate, where he also served on the Committee on Welfare.

Ackerman immediately left for Columbus, where he told the full story of the developments in the institution. The lady Director of the State Welfare Department apologized and admitted she had been misled. She immediately restored the charter and wrote me a letter of apology. Thus both Dickman and Goldhammer suffered an ignominious defeat. Dickman soon left Cleveland and returned to New York. There he lost his life in a car accident.

A new delegation then left for New York and brought back a new Superintendent, a Mr. Leon Belkin and his wife, both of whom were Orthodox Jews. They soon introduced order into the prevailing chaos and the children came under strict control.

Progress at the Orphans' Asylum was now satisfactory. Soon elections were held for a President and a new Board of Directors. A large number of people came to take part. The late Samuel Zimet, one of the finest Jews in Cleveland, was elected President.

But before very long new squabbles broke out between the outgoing and the incoming Directors. Meantime, Mr. Zimet took very ill and was unable to come to the meetings. He telephoned me from his sick-bed, asking me to come to one of the meetings and see if peace could be restored. I did go and did manage to reconcile the two factions. From then on there has been comparative harmony.

The Board of Directors, at a subsequent meeting, decided to express their gratitude to me, in the above letter from the sick President Samuel Zimet:

S. ZIMET, President
I. FINESILVER, Vice President
P. HIMMEL, Vice President

LEON ELKIND, Superintendent

F. HOFFMAN, Vice President
M. TEPLITZ, Treasurer
M. H. GOLDSTEIN, Secretary

ORTHODOX JEWISH ORPHAN HOME

GLENVILLE 5090

879 PARKWOOD DRIVE



CLEVELAND, OHIO

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

A. Permut, Chairman
 Mrs. Rose Levin
 E. Forzman
 Joseph H. Silbert
 D. Sperber
 S. Zimet

November 2, 1934

HEALTH STAFF

S. R. Permut, M. D.
 E. S. Caplin, D. D. S.
 L. L. Cooperman, D. D. S.
 S. M. Robbins, D. D. S.

Mr. Leon Weisenfeld
 c/o The Jewish World
 10600 Superior Ave.
 Cleveland, Ohio

HONORARY DIRECTORS

Rabbi J. H. Levenberg
 Rabbi J. Forath
 Rabbi S. Sachs
 Rabbi E. Eckstein
 Rabbi J. Krielow
 Rabbi S. Fine
 Rabbi J. I. Berger
 Rev. A. Kantor
 Judge Lewis Drucker
 Judge S. M. Silbert
 Judge A. E. Steuer
 Judge Joe. N. Ackerman
 Judge J. Stacej
 M. Rothman
 S. Rucker
 L. Weisenfeld
 L. Weidenhai

Dear Mr. Weisenfeld:

At the yesterday evening's meeting, which, as was reported to me, was one of peace, decorum and brotherhood, a vote of thanks and appreciation was tendered to you for your untiring efforts in preventing the continuation of an unbridled conflict in the Home. This disagreement threatened to approach a condition of personal enmity between various members of the Board and by your kind mediation a crisis was averted.

DIRECTORS

A. L. Adelman
 J. Adelman
 H. Altshuld
 B. Atkin
 M. Atkin
 J. Davis
 J. Dolin
 Mrs. A. Estrin
 J. Fargus
 I. Feigenbaum
 S. Fenster
 Ch. Goldman
 A. J. Goldstein
 Mrs. M. Gordetaky
 S. Hershman
 A. I. Hausman
 Ph. Jacobson
 S. Kosoff
 S. Kramer
 Mrs. Fanny Levine
 I. E. Levin
 J. Milkove
 A. Neuhkin
 Mrs. D. Neumaor
 E. Neubaum
 Mrs. A. Permut
 A. E. Pevsky
 Mrs. M. Roth
 J. Schneider
 Mrs. M. Shmon
 M. Sobel

In the course of the meeting rousing voices of acclamation made themselves heard at the mention of your worthy name. The contrast between this meeting and the few preceding ones is testimony enough to the effect that your tireless energy has had upon the atmosphere that for so long was strained.

Be assured, therefore, of the esteem in which we all hold you and, with best wishes for your complete recovery and your continued efforts for the weal of the community and the Home which is so near and dear to all of us, I am,

Very cordially yours,

ORTHODOX JEWISH ORPHAN HOME

S. Zimet
 President

SZ:KB

MAYOR OF UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS NOT IN FAVOR OF BELLEFAIR ORPHAN HOME

THE large Jewish Orphans' Home, which for a long time was situated on Woodland Avenue, was founded in 1868 by the then District 2 of B'nai B'rith, which encompassed four Mid-western states. This was one of the best appointed Jewish children's home in the United States. In the late 1920's the organization purchased a fine spacious lot in University Heights, at Fairmount and Belvoir Boulevards, with the aim of building there a new luxurious home for the large number of children in its care.

When the then Mayor of University Heights learned the purpose of the planned buildings, he raised a hue and cry. He said he would under no circumstances permit the most attractive-looking spot in the Heights to be used for a Jewish children's home. He gave no reasons for his objections. Mr. Alfred Benesch, who was at that time one of the main leaders of the B'nai B'rith in Cleveland, and other prominent personalities in the community endeavored to reason with the Mayor, pleading with him to withdraw his opposition. But the Mayor stuck to his taboo and would not yield.

But the Mayor of University Heights realized he had a hard nut to crack and appealed for assistance to other mayors in the suburbs of Cleveland and to the then nominal Mayor of Cleveland proper, Mr. John D. Marshall. All this was not known to the Jews of Cleveland, since the B'nai B'rith at that time was pursuing the

same hush-hush policies as the Welfare Federation and would not take the public into its confidence. All matters in which Jews were involved with non-Jews were to be treated by secret diplomacy.

However, I learned of the whole business when Mr. Marshall called me up on the telephone and asked me to come to see him at his law office in the Williamson Building. He told me the whole story and showed me the letter he had received from the Mayor of University Heights. A perusal of the letter left no doubt in my mind that the Mayor of University Heights was a member of the Ku Klux Klan, which was then raging in and around Cleveland.

The Mayor of University Heights was afraid that the Jewish children might demoralize the Christian children they came in contact with in school and might even contaminate them with lice. Let the Jews stay on Woodland Avenue he demanded.

I took the letter with me to show to Mr. Benesch. I was naive enough to think he had not been familiar with its spirit or its contents. Mr. Benesch read the letter and, without as much as throwing me a glance, said: "That's all, thank you!" This astounded me. "Have you nothing more to say to me?" I asked. This time he looked at me straight and repeated: "That's all, thank you." He put the letter in his side pocket. I asked him to return it to me, but he refused.

"You wouldn't wish me to take it from you by force, would you?" I said menacingly as I moved up closer to him. When he realized I was serious, he handed me the letter. But he warned me not to publish it and not to create any sensations. "This is a matter for the B'nai B'rith," he explained, "and not for you. You better let us handle it in our own way." Then he added a warning: "If you should make a fuss about it in your paper, you will have cause to regret it, because . . ." He did not complete the sentence.

Naturally, I was not frightened by Mr. Benesch's warning and published the whole story in *The Jewish World*. I followed up the report by a sharp attack on the anti-Semitic Mayor of University

Heights who, as Mr. Marshall had informed me, was entertaining ambitions for higher elective offices in the State of Ohio.

Mr. Benesch and some of my other "friends" kept up a steady barrage of abuse against me. This went on for a long time.

I replied to the attacks and again exposed the Mayor of University Heights. When this was brought to his attention, he wrote a letter to Mr. Samuel Rucker to justify his position. He disclaimed ever having been an anti-Semite.

Not long after that the question of the Children's Home was settled in a friendly spirit and on terms favorable to it. Mr. Benesch was in a triumphant mood and claimed the whole credit.

BUILDER REFUSES TO EMPLOY JEWISH WORKERS

SOON after the Mayor of University Heights withdrew his objections to the Children's Home, the leaders of the institution started to make arrangements to put it up as soon as possible. A large building contractor in Chicago was engaged to erect the buildings according to a previously worked out plan.

Why a firm from Chicago had to be engaged when there were so many good firms in Cleveland hungry for business after the crash, I cannot figure out to this day. There were in Cleveland then, as there are today, many contractors, Jewish and non-Jewish, just as capable of carrying out a building project as any in Chicago. But the B'nai B'rith leadership insisted on entrusting the job to a Chicago firm.

The firm sent its men down to Cleveland and the work began. The Cleveland trade unions supplied the labor and everything proceeded on schedule. But there was one hitch: among the workers the Cleveland Bricklayers' Union sent up there were a few Jews whom the manager of the Chicago building firm rejected. Every other worker sent up by the union was taken on. The only exception was made in the case of the Jewish bricklayers. No reasons were given.

The Jewish bricklayers, led by a man by the name of Shkolnik, came to me. I knew Shkolnik as a very fine fellow who was President of one of the largest Jewish organizations in town.

I got in touch with the manager on the telephone. He hemmed and he hawed and claimed they were only engaging the best workmen. I asked him if he had tried out the Jewish applicants before he judged them not to be among the best. He did not answer that question, but hung up without saying good-bye.

Perhaps there are Jewish newspapermen who would not be excited over such conduct by a contractor for a Jewish institution. But I am not constituted that way. I was outraged. I knew I was court-ing trouble, but I published a report in my paper about the refusal to employ needy Jewish workers and demanded of the Cleveland B'nai B'rith to take appropriate steps.

Mr. Benesch and his cohorts at the Welfare Federation were also indignant. But their indignation was not directed at the Chicago contractor or its manager. It was directed at the terrible Leon Wiesenfeld, the scandal-monger, the liar, the sensationalist, the disturber of the peace, etc., etc. Nevertheless, they quietly went to Chicago, where, with customary assimilationist fawning, they managed to wheedle out from the contractor a readiness to engage a very limited number of Jewish workers. They were very proud of their achievement, while continuing to brand me a trouble-maker, a liar and a libeller.

Mr. Benesch became my bitter personal enemy and has remained so to this day, although I am no longer active in the communal affairs of Cleveland Jewry. I am leaving the leadership to Mr. Benesch and his ilk.

THE FOUNDING OF THE JEWISH CONVALESCENT HOSPITAL

WHENEVER I think of our now excellent Jewish Convalescent Hospital, I cannot help recalling the former President of a certain Jewish organization in Cleveland. It was an organization which played an important part in the life of the East European Jews in our city, and I knew its leaders quite well. When that organization celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, I published a short article, praising its founder and long-time President.

After the publication of that article, the new President came to see me and expressed his displeasure why I had lauded his predecessor and ignored him entirely. After all, he was President now. I tried to explain to my visitor that what prompted me to write my article was my intimate knowledge of the great efforts made by the original founder to establish the institution and to place it on a sound foundation. The current incumbent of the honors was not satisfied:

"That's all bunk!" he shouted. "The world does not ask who built the house, but wants to know who lives in it. I am now the President and am entitled to all the honors and all the credit."

The new leaders of the Jewish Convalescent Hospital share the views of that one time President. They claim all the credit. The name of the real founder is never mentioned. I therefore consider it my duty to spell out the name of that person without whom that

important institution would perhaps never have come into being. The name is that of Sophie Krangel, who devoted her best energies to the creation of the Jewish Convalescent Hospital in Cleveland.

That was in the days when tuberculosis raged among the Jews of the East Side, causing misery and death. Mrs. Krangel was the President of a fine Jewish women's organization—the Jewish Consumptive Aid Society—which helped out the unfortunate victims of the dreaded disease. It was, while active as President of the Jewish Consumptive Aid Society that Mrs. Krangel conceived the plan to establish a hospital to take care of the patients who needed care after being discharged from the regular hospitals.

With the help of the very fine women who worked with her, Mrs. Krangel made the necessary efforts to carry out her plan as soon as feasible. She came to me, asking for moral support from the paper, which I naturally was willing to give. She also went to the Jewish Welfare Federation, asking for financial assistance. But Mr. Goldhammer, who was in control there, did not think the Jews of Cleveland needed such an institution. If the time should ever come when an institution like that would have to be founded, Mr. Goldhammer felt, more responsible people than a few East-European immigrants would have to take charge. Mr. Goldhammer did not hold a high opinion of East European Jews.

But Mrs. Krangel went on with her work. She invited a number of well-known figures in the community to attend the meetings of the Society and to become acquainted with her plans, and, naturally, to try and win their moral and financial support. At one of these meetings, when I was invited to address the Society, I ran into Mr. Goldhammer. Mrs. Krangel introduced him to the meeting and asked him to say a few words. Goldhammer, as usual, spoke against the founding of the institution.

I followed him to the podium and spoke in the very opposite vein. I said the proposed institution was a necessity and ought to be established, whether Mr. Goldhammer liked it or not.

Mrs. Krangel and her associates started a campaign for funds. I helped them out a great deal. Although the economic depression was still in full force and it was hard to get money, yet the noble women made enough money to buy a large plot of land on Harvard Avenue, where eventually the Jewish Convalescent Hospital arose. That was all due, in the first place, to Mrs. Krangel and her prematurely deceased husband, Mr. Bernard Krangel. Their daughter Florence, now well-known as Mrs. Sanford Arshom, who was then still a young girl, helped a great deal in the fund-raising. That is how the Jewish Convalescent Hospital was built, of which the present Federation is so proud.

One wonders if the name of the Krangels is ever mentioned in that connection.

COLLAPSE OF THE JEWISH SHELTER HOME

AMONG the Jewish institutions on the East Side the Jewish Shelter Home did not play much of a role, although it was, in fact, of considerable importance. Some Jews supported it financially because it took in Jewish transients who stopped over in our city. Those transients were people in search of work, or poor emissaries sent by various institutions, or simply men who roamed without a definite goal. They did not have enough money to pay for a room even in the cheapest hotels and so they came to the Shelter, where they were given a warm bed and a good kosher meal free of charge.

For a long time the late Ben Arshom, aided by a few other Jews, who took pity on the transients, carried on the activities of the Shelter. During the years of the Depression and unemployment, many Jewish workers went through the country, hoping to land some employment far from home. The small Cleveland "Shelter" was very busy then. People came every evening to find a place to sleep and a decent meal. But the overflow of the newcomers taxed the modest capacities of the institution. There was not enough money, and with-

out money the poor wanderers could not be helped. The Shelter Home had to discontinue its activities.

Mr. Arshom, a very fine person, was disheartened. In his despair he appealed to the Federation and asked it to give him financial assistance for his institution. But the ears at the Federation were deaf. He then came to *The Jewish World* and asked me to help him. I readily complied, but my appeals in the paper did not help much. Only a handful of readers responded with very small contributions. I then advised Mr. Arshom to approach personally those of the well-to-do Jews in our city who had not been affected by the Depression and ask for contributions. At first I took him to my late friend and fellow-immigrant from Galicia, Mr. John Anisfeld who, after hearing our story, gave us a check for a thousand dollars. Mr. Arshom was so overcome that he burst out crying. Later I went along with him to a few other people. Together with the money that had been sent in to the paper, we had about four thousand dollars. The Shelter Home was re-opened. It is still operating and is affiliated with the Federation.

OTHER ORGANIZATNONS WHICH I HELPED TO FOUND

DURING the years of my activities in the Jewish life of Cleveland I not only helped to rescue existing organizations from liquidation but also was instrumental in the new ones. The first of these was the Geverkshaften Campaign, known today as the Israel Histadruth Campaign. That is how I first met the man who is today President of Israel, Mr. Zalman Shazar. His name then was Zalman Rubashow. He was still a young man, known as a scholar and as a poet and, especially as an eloquent speaker. He is still one of the most famous Jewish orators in the world. Mr. Rubashow—or Shazar—was sent from Tel-Aviv to America to help launch the Campaign and when he came to Cleveland, he was taken to my office by the local leaders of the Labor Zionist movement: the late Dr. Milkoff and the still active Mr. Louis Skolnick, a well-known architect in our town. The delegation which came to me was particularly interested in winning the goodwill of the local leading rabbis — Abba Hillel Silver, Solomon Goldman and Barnett R. Brickner.

I felt that the importance of the cause for Palestine Jewry warranted my inviting those three rabbis and a few other prominent personalities to lunch. We met in a Jewish restaurant on Euclid Avenue at 37th Street. They all came and that lunch meeting was the start of the Histadruth Campaign in Cleveland, or, as it was first

called the Geverkshaffen Campaign. I helped it with publicity in my paper and succeeded in popularizing it among the Jewish organizations and the Yiddish-speaking masses in Cleveland, who gave the Campaign their generous support.

Not long after that I had a visit from Meyer Katz and a few other Jews in Cleveland who asked for my assistance in their effort to establish the now well-known Kiever Hebrew Aid Society. After learning about the nature of the proposed organization, I decided to throw my full support behind it both through my paper and in other ways. From its very inception, the Kiever Society did—and still does important communal work in Cleveland and is appreciated by the local Jews. It is now headed by Mr. Ben H. Richman.

SOME TIME LATER a man came to see me by the name of Dan Weiss, whom I had never met before. He told me that he, together with a few other Jews in the Mount Pleasant neighborhood had undertaken to build a new Jewish Center and Synagogue on Kinsman Road. The Mount Pleasant district was then inhabited by about twenty thousand Jews, of which some three quarters were plain workingmen, who were hard hit by the Depression. More than half of them were compelled to live on relief.

Many of them, and, still more of their children, were in those dark days easy prey to the propaganda of the Communist demagogues. I thought that a Jewish Center would render good service to the Jews in the neighborhood and would be an effective antidote to the Communist poison. I therefore determined to give Weiss and his associates all the help I could.

These people had no money and were in need of more than just moral support. I advised them to convoke a meeting in the Carpenters' Hall, the use of which I obtained for them free of charge, owing to the help of my friend William Goldberg, the Business Manager of the Jewish Carpenters' Union. I got Rabbi Silver and the late Cleveland City Manager Mr. Hopkins to address the meeting. More meetings were called to which I got Ezra Shapiro and the late H. A.

Frieland as speakers. They all appealed for help to the proposed Center.

After three years of hard work the Center was finally built. But it soon became clear that neither Mr. Weiss nor his associates, nor the rabbi they had engaged were mature enough to carry on its activities.

Several years later, the Center, under the far superior leadership of Ben H. Richman and the new youthful rabbi Jacob Muskin, combined with the Tetiver Synagogue and is now known as the Warrensville Center Synagogue.

THE UNITED GALICIAN JEWS OF CLEVELAND is entirely my creation. The aim of this organization was to render assistance to young Jews in Galicia who were studying in trade schools there. Before the Second World War we managed to raise large sums of money which we sent over to Galicia. After the War we did a great deal to rescue a considerable number of Jewish orphans and transport them to Palestine and Israel. Today with a greatly reduced membership, Mr. Morris Arberman is the leader of the organization. The well known philanthropic couple, Mr. and Mrs. Elias Mantel both work hard to raise the necessary funds. The magnificent new hospital which Hadassah recently put up in Jerusalem receives substantial help from the Galician Jews. Also the Jewish National Fund receives a substantial sum of money each year from that organization. It contributed about six thousand dollars for the construction of a Jewish Carpenters' School in Tel-Aviv and a still larger sum for a new settlement near Jerusalem I have every reason to feel proud of this small dedicated group.

MY EXTREMELY HARD LIFE IN THE JEWISH WORLD

This article brings to a close the series I began writing three years ago, in which I sought to reflect the life and aspirations of Cleveland Jewry in the 1920's and 1930's. The conclusion of the series does not mean there is nothing more to tell. Far from it! There could certainly be enough additional material to report on and probably of an interesting nature.

Thus, there is a great deal to tell about the ludicrous attempt made by several Orthodox rabbis to elect in Cleveland a Chief Rabbi. The attempt ended in a fiasco and a scandal. Also, there is much to be told about the number of Jewish landowners who had to make alterations in their houses during the Depression years but refused to use the services of skilled unemployed Jews in the trade. No less might be told about the three year strike of the Jewish bakery workers.

But, like everything else, history has its limitations. Some things can be told, others had better be ignored. In the series of articles just published I concealed nothing, denied nothing and exaggerated nothing. I told the good as well as the bad. I tried to give an objective account of Jewish life during that period, including the positive and the negative sides of the picture. I did not gloss over the experiences of those years which had unsavory aftermaths. But the three events mentioned above were 99% scandal, with practically no redeeming features, so I chose to omit them. Instead I would prefer

at the close to look back on my own place in the general hurly-burly of Jewish life in Cleveland in those by now nearly forgotten years. I have also dwelt on *The Jewish World*, the Yiddish daily to which I devoted the best fourteen years of my life and more than that I related how I, then still a stranger in the city, threw myself into communal activities and thereby made a substantial contribution to the raising of the Jewish community to a higher standard than I had found it.

But first a few words about *The Jewish World*.

WHAT KIND OF A PAPER WAS THE JEWISH WORLD?

THIS is not a question that can be answered easily. I ought to begin by explaining that what I found on my arrival in Cleveland was not a newspaper in the usual sense: it had no reading public to speak of. In this respect it was like one of the many German newspapers before the Hitler period which used to be published, as the saying went "to the exclusion of the public." The few people who did look at *The Jewish World* were some orthodox Jews who were personal followers of Mr. Samuel Rucker, the publisher and editor-in-chief of the paper.

Mr. Rucker was a Jewish scholar in the fullest sense of the word. He was also an extremely affable and clever person, respected even by those of Cleveland Jews who never looked at his publication. He had done a great deal for the community outside his editorial offices. He was the recognized leader of the Orthodox group in town. Although not a particularly gifted journalist, he was a fine editorial writer.

The only asset the newspaper had when I first entered its service was in Mr. Rucker's editorials. It had practically nothing else. It had no news service. It hardly covered local events. Its make-up was amateurish in the extreme. I had never before come across such a poor specimen of a newspaper.

When, early in 1925, I started working for *The Jewish World*, it had a staff of one-and-a-half doing editorial work. One was a

"Managing Editor," who did not know how to put a paper together or how to write a piece of news. The other, the foreman of the printing shop was a sort of ex-officio make-up editor as well. The volunteer contributors were told by him how and what to write and the paper was thrown together by him as the spirit moved him. The result of it was a weird concoction which was far from anything that could attract the readers. I still shudder when I think of that foreman who was the sort of a character one could hardly find anywhere to match with him.

No wonder *The Jewish World* had no readers.

At the time I arrived in Cleveland, there were three sections in the city which were inhabited by large numbers of Jews: the most populous one was the Glenville section around East 105th Street, the other in the Mt. Pleasant neighborhood near Kinsman Road and the third around Woodland, Central and Cedar Avenues, which once constituted the largest Jewish section. The newstands around the Glenville and the section around Woodland Avenue used to sell Yiddish papers from New York and other centers. But only a few copies of the *Jewish World* were sold there. On the other hand, it could not be found at all in the Mt. Pleasant area, where there was a Jewish population of some 20,000, most of whom were in the habit of reading the out-of-town Yiddish press. To my inquiry I was given the explanation that the Jews of that neighborhood were mostly workers and radicals who did not read the Orthodox press. That was not the real reason.

SITUATION OF THE JEWISH WORLD CHANGES

After I familiarized myself sufficiently with *The Jewish World*, I took complete charge of it, which was not an easy matter. The "Managing Editor" refused to step down from his throne and the make-up man would not let me have any say in the making of the newspaper. Their argument ran that the paper was all right as it was and that it did not need to increase its circulation. In time, however,

I managed to win over Mr. Rucker to my views and was enabled to turn the publication into something entirely new.

Mr. Rucker was familiar with my record. He knew I had twenty years' experience before I came to work for him, that at the age of nineteen I had already worked on Yiddish, Polish and German newspapers in Galicia, Prague and Germany, and that I had been publishing papers of my own. When I arrived in New York in 1920 my name was well known in the New York Jewish press. The way was then opened to me to work on *The Jewish Daily Forward* in New York. But since the *Forward* at that time was outspokenly Socialist and anti-Zionist, I, being a Zionist, and not being a Socialist, did not find the paper congenial to myself and left it after a few months. Soon afterwards I worked on *The Jewish World* in Philadelphia and was for a time the editor of a Jewish weekly in Brooklyn which was published in Yiddish and in English.

With the help of Mr. Rucker I managed to place the paper in the service of the Cleveland Jewish masses. At the same time I threw myself into the activities of the local Jewish community. I became a fighter and a mediator. I took up the struggle where I thought it was necessary and offered my services to mediate between quarreling factions where I felt that unity and harmony were needed. My activities made me a familiar figure in the community and my popularity grew rapidly. Along with that grew the circulation of the newspaper I edited. It was then read not only by very many more people in the Glenville and Woodland districts but in the Mt. Pleasant district as well.

I worked from 12 to 15 hours daily on the paper, trying to maintain it on a high level and was, besides, active in communal affairs. Five years passed thus — not necessarily the five happiest years of my life, but years I was proud of. I was proud of the achievements of my paper and of the large following I had gained among the Jewish masses of Cleveland, of the many friends I made. If I derived any joy from it all, it was greatly marred by the intrigues of the printing foreman and some members of the Rucker household who

were infected with a growing feeling of jealousy and ill-will towards me. They combined with the printing foreman to poison my working hours and even influenced the girls in the administration office to sabotage me. They still maintained that there was no need for a large circulation, that money was not to be made from circulation and accused me of putting the Rockers in the shadow and "seizing all control."

But the Jewish masses of all shades appreciated my contributions and were my friends.

FETED BY JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

TOWARDS the close of the 1930's my journalistic career reached its twenty-five year mark. Pre-occupied as I was with the publication and with communal affairs, the date went unnoticed by me. But my late friend, Z. H. Rubinstein, who was then City Editor of *The Jewish Day* of New York, read about it in a newspaper published in Lemberg, Poland, and inserted an item in *The Day*.

Since *The Day* of New York enjoyed a circulation in Cleveland, my friends in the city read it, took note of it, and soon decided to celebrate the occasion. A committee was formed consisting of representatives of various trade unions and other organizations, twenty in all, and a banquet was set for February 7, 1931. It was a fine affair. Five hundred men and women, including prominent leaders of the community, came to the banquet. The late H. A. Friedland, famous educator and writer, was toastmaster. Among the speakers were the late Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, City Manager William R. Hopkins, Rabbi Henry Davidowitz, Rabbi Israel Porath and other rabbis. There were also, among the speakers, representatives of trade unions, the Culture Society and others who lauded my contribution.

My wife and I were showered with gifts by our friends, who spent hundreds of dollars on them. That was the finest day in our married life.

Unfortunately our joy did not last. 1931 was a bitter year in the life of the American people. All newspapers, large and small, were

affected by the Depression. They lost much advertising and were brought to a very critical state of affairs. The foreign-language press was hit especially hard. There were quite a few of them in Cleveland at the time, and they were all facing bankruptcy. *The Jewish World* was affected most adversely. The reasons were as follows:

All the other foreign-language newspapers in Cleveland employed editorial staffs — which *The Jewish World* did not quite have — as well as business administration and advertising staffs, whose function was to look after the continued existence and progress of the publication. But *The Jewish World* was a family affair, in which all the business was concentrated in the hands of Mr. Rocker and his family. Occasionally advertising solicitors were employed, but they were not trained to go out for business, and could handle only the type of advertising which comes in practically by itself. Such amateurs were not equipped to face up to the emergency.

The Jewish World stopped paying salaries. This was a severe blow to my wife and myself. Despite the long hours I had put in my work at the paper, my salary was too low to enable me to save up enough for a rainy day. However, we managed to keep going under hardship for about eighteen months getting more and more deeply into debt. Finally we decided to leave Cleveland.

Just then something happened to make us reconsider our decision. We were destined to remain in Cleveland.

EZRA SHAPIRO TURNS ME INTO A POLITICIAN

IN the Summer of 1933 elections were due in Cleveland for the office of Mayor and for the City Council. The Mayor at the time was Ray T. Miller, who was running for a second term. Running against him were two candidates — the late Congressman Martin L. Sweeny and the late Harry L. Davis, who had previously served three terms as Mayor and one term as Governor of Ohio. Miller and Sweeny were Democrats. Davis was a Republican.

Shapiro was Davis's closest associate and managed his campaign. He came to me and asked me to help his candidate to be elected. Ezra and I were good friends and I would not have turned him down if not for the fact that we were practically ready to leave Cleveland. When Ezra learned of my situation, he advised me not to be too hasty about my resolve to leave and in the meantime to devote myself to the campaign. "If Davis wins," Ezra argued, "he will do something for you and you will not have to leave." A few days later he introduced me to Davis who made me the same promise.

Not having anything to lose, we decided to remain in Cleveland for the time being. I threw myself into the Davis campaign, although I was not a Republican. I did help him a great deal and he won all the Jewish districts in the primaries and four weeks later defeated Miller and was re-elected Mayor.

Following his election, Davis appointed Ezra to the second highest position in the city administration, entrusting him with the direction of the Law Department. In Cleveland this is the equivalent of Vice-Mayor. This appointment aroused a great deal of envy and resentment. To begin with, this was the first time a Jew was elevated to such a high post in the city administration. Besides, Ezra was at that time a very young lawyer. His enemies who begrudged him his success maintained that he lacked the required qualifications for the job. However, Davis as well as Ezra Shapiro took little notice of the talk and Ezra soon was able to show that he could handle his job pretty well. His prestige grew overnight.

I was given a newly created position in the City Hall which did not interfere with my conduct of the paper *The Jewish World*. The Mayor appointed me Publicity Manager of the Public Hall and Stadium. The pay was moderate, but it was enough to make me stay in Cleveland. This meant a great deal to us and we are very grateful to Ezra to this day.

As soon as the general press reported my appointment, I was besieged by numberless applicants for favors: those were victims of the Depression who sought some employment at the City Hall. I

knew some of the people and felt great sympathy for them. But I had no experience in creating political jobs. I knew Ezra had a long list of names of Jews whom he wished to reward for their help in the campaign for Davis. Nevertheless I spoke to him about a few other people. He told me not to be silly: the Mayor had to hand out jobs to people to whom he was politically indebted.

But the Jews kept on coming to me, tearing my heart out with their tales of woe and their pleas for help. I decided to make a try and see whether anything could be done for them. The corridors of the City Hall which led to the door of the Mayor's office were daily besieged with people who were waiting for jobs. It was virtually out of the question to get to his door. But as soon as it turned out to be physically possible, I made my way to his office and presented him with a list of people who had suffered most in the Depression and asked that they be given jobs. The Mayor was very friendly and asked me to come back in three days. When I called on him three days later, to my great joy, he had work assigned for every man on my list.

But that only made my position more difficult. More people, some of them pretty close to me, came with the same requests. I came to Mayor Davis again and got jobs again. This went on for a long time. Together with those for whom Ezra Shapiro obtained jobs, the number of Jews employed at the City Hall now became the largest in the history of Cleveland. The resentment of the older politicians was aroused, who reproached me with converting the City Hall into a Jewish institution. This did not bother me much. I went on obtaining work for applicants whenever I could manage. Many victims of the Depression were thus given a chance for a livelihood.

Unfortunately the Davis administration was not successful. He committed grave errors and caused a split in his own Republican party. The press attacked him unmercifully. By the time his first year in office was over, it was clear that his popularity had waned and that he was not going to be re-elected for another term. In 1935 his own fellow-Republicans whom he had alienated put up a candi-

date against him in the person of Harold H. Burton, a former Law Director. Burton beat Davis at the primaries and was eventually elected as Mayor of Cleveland.

I was the first to resign my job, having had enough of politics and political intrigues. That was the end of my political career. I retained enough influence, however, to try and make sure that those who had obtained jobs through me should not be laid off. I did not succeed in all cases, but more than half of my proteges remained at the City Hall.

SILVER WEDDING BUT . . .

ANOTHER year went by. The general economic situation in the country slowly began to improve. The number of business failures diminished and business improved considerably. But the situation in *The Jewish World* remained the same. During the two years I held my position at the City Hall my wife managed to save up some money but the savings gradually gave out. The paper used to pay me one, at most two, weekly checks per month and that only, thanks to the increased circulation for which I was responsible. In other foreign-language newspapers business gradually improved, but not in *The Jewish World*.

Late in 1936 we began thinking of schemes to improve our situation. But life has its demands, good or bad. It was precisely during that period that our first important anniversary occurred: we had completed 25 years of a happy married life. In spite of all my difficulties I wished to celebrate the occasion, so as to give my wife some little pleasure after all the trouble she had had sharing my life.

I had intentions of inviting a few of our more intimate friends to a supper in a restaurant where we could together celebrate our silver anniversary. But my friends with whom I discussed the matter had other ideas. They decided, instead, on a public celebration. Within a few days they obtained the ready co-operation of 56 Jewish organizations in Cleveland and together they arranged for a banquet to be held on January 10, 1937 at the Jewish Center Auditorium. It

was one of the most impressive public events in the history of Cleveland Jewry. Eight hundred people filled the Auditorium and several hundred were turned back for lack of room.

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, who was Honorary Chairman of the Committee, was the main speaker. Greetings by wire were received from New York from leading Jewish figures, such as Dr. Stephen S. Wise, Louis Lipsky, Morris Rotherberg, Jacob Fishman (Editor of *The Jewish Morning Journal*), Dr. Samuel Margoshes (Editor of *The Day*), Adolph Held (President of *The Jewish Daily Forward*)—besides many editors and writers of provincial Jewish publications throughout the United States and Canada. There were so many messages from Jews and non-Jews in Cleveland that the toastmaster, our good friend Common Pleas Judge Samuel H. Silbert did not manage to read them all out.

Cleveland's morning paper, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, gave a full report of the celebration, with my wife's picture and mine and quoted at length from the many addresses. Let me reprint two of them:

600 HEAR TRIBUTE TO JEWISH EDITOR

(Note: This is wrong. Actually there were 815)

Fifteen speeches of mingled affection, fun and sober tribute were made about Leon Wiesenfeld, crusading editor of *The Jewish World*, and Mrs. Wiesenfeld at their 25th wedding anniversary and his 50th birthday, celebrated by more than 600 at the Jewish Center last night. The speakers represented 56 organizations. Here is what some of the speakers said:

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver—"We first pay tribute to Mrs. Wiesenfeld. It is an achievement to have put up with this temperamental Galician for 25 years. 'Her price is above rubics', as was said in the Proverbs. You say Leon is 50.

Judging by the way he scraps, I should have thought he was younger. He has the vigor and intellectual attack of a man in the 30's. But he scraps for things worth while.

"I have never known him to take a position wrongly as an error of heart. While he and I have differed occasionally, sometimes more or less violently, I have never questioned his sincerity and earnestness, as he has not questioned mine.

"He is a writer of ability, courage. He has used his pen in many languages to advance the cause of justice and humanity. He has been a proud Jew, not wearing sensitiveness on his sleeve, nor being provoked by trivial incidents, but by major issues. He has been most helpful in the Zionist movement—in fact, in every worthy movement to further Jewish renaissance.

"No wonder Leon is liked by so many people. He has dedicated his heart and soul to the service of our community and to all our people. There is no one who can match his many accomplishments since he came to Cleveland. May his path be a little less strewn with difficulties and with more roses and placidity and happiness. May God bless you both!"

Mayor Harold M. Burton—"There is such a big crowd here. I speak for those here and for those many I saw outside and couldn't get in, and congratulate the man and his wife who have made such a fine record in Cleveland. Cleveland is proud to welcome so distinguished a member of the press as Leon Wiesenfeld. Cleveland is glad to have a free press and for citizens to speak their minds and thank him for advocating freedom of speech so that we may have tolerance and understanding and learn to be friends."

A day earlier, on Saturday the 9th of January, the *Cleveland Press*, the largest newspaper in Ohio, devoted a short but very warm editorial to me, which I am reproducing here:

TRIBUTE TO AN EDITOR

"Along with many others in the community we would like to extend our congratulations to Leon Wiesenfeld on his 50th birthday. A formal celebration in Mr. Wiesenfeld's honor is to be held at the Jewish Center tomorrow night with more than 700 participating.

"Mr. Wiesenfeld came to Cleveland in 1925 to assume the position of associate editor of *The Jewish World*, where he is now Editor-in-Chief. The publication has long been known for its services to the community and its editor is equally known for his numerous activities outside of his editorial duties. May the celebration be a pleasant tribute for Mr. Wiesenfeld's services since he came to Cleveland."

As far as I knew at the time, with the only exception of Abraham Cahan, no Jewish journalist had been so honored in America, as my wife and I were in Cleveland. We certainly had every reason to be happy. Unfortunately such was not the case. Fate decreed otherwise. The reason was that, in fact, we really had no future before us. The outpouring of feeling for us at the splendid celebration merely intensified the resentment and the envy of the Rucker family and, together with the printing foreman, they made my life miserable. Those people disgusted me so that I could not think of anything else but how to get rid of them.

The Jewish World sank deeper and deeper into debt. The publishers owed their employees thousands of dollars and there was no sign of improvement in sight. I was compelled to search for new devices to improve our situation. Some of my close friends who were familiar with the position of the paper suggested to me that I leave *The Jewish World* and establish a new publication, a weekly, which

would enable me to carry on my communal activities in Cleveland Jewry.

I gave the idea a good deal of thought and finally agreed with my friends, that it might be the only way out of my predicament. Most of those I spoke to made solemn promises of assistance and support.

A short time afterward those friends and a few others held a meeting at the home of our dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Krangel. There it was resolved to form a corporation in which all those present would buy enough stock to ensure the existence of the new publication until its future was consolidated. The late Ben Arshom was elected President of the corporation and my very dear friend Elias Mantel as Treasurer. I myself was not present at that meeting, but was elected Secretary in absentia.

When I was informed of the news I felt new life welling up in me. I need not explain that both my wife and myself were genuinely happy and were cordially grateful to all our friends. We had the feeling that now a new world was opening for us. There was no doubt in our minds about the earnestness of our friends. I therefore informed the publishers of *The Jewish World* that I was resigning my position and four weeks later left the paper which had become part of my life.

I AM OFFERED CITY EDITORSHIP IN CHICAGO PAPER

ON the same day that I left *The Jewish World* I received a telegram from Chicago which came like a bolt from the blue. It was from the publishers of *The Jewish Courier*, the second oldest Yiddish daily in America, offering me the position of City Editor. They asked me to come to Chicago at their expense to negotiate the offer. Rabbi Silver, who had undertaken to raise at least \$3500 among his friends, urged me to go to Chicago. I listened to him and arrived in Chicago two days later.

There I was met at the Lasalle station by the publishers, who took me to a restaurant to discuss the proposition. They urged me to take on the position and offered me a salary more than one and a half time the pay I used to get at *The Jewish World* in the best days. The Editor-in-Chief, the late Dr. Mordecai Katz, a brilliant writer and a famous scholar, also urged me to come to work on the *Courier*. I accepted the offer and promised to come to Chicago in two weeks time.

On returning to Cleveland I ran into strong opposition. First, it was my wife. "No," she declared firmly, "we are staying here and you are not going anywhere!" During the twenty-four hours I was away in Chicago, my wife appraised our friends of the offer by the publishers in Chicago. The friends immediately held a meeting at which it was decided to keep me from leaving Cleveland. Subsequently, when my wife and I came into Clark's restaurant on Superior avenue and East 105th street, where we often met our friends, the restaurant was filled with nearly all of them. They voiced their vigorous objections to my behavior in taking the trip to Chicago without first consulting them. They undertook to raise enough money to assure the publication of the new weekly and my future. The result was I wired to Chicago that I was remaining in Cleveland.

Soon afterwards I rented suitable quarters on the East 105th street and began to install all the necessary equipment. Some of the friends who had made commitments to support my publication carried out their promises. Rabbi Silver kept his word and gave me the first \$2000, which I used to make the initial payment on the printing machinery I bought. I then went to New York where I secured the services of a good typesetter and a good writer in Yiddish and in English. Three weeks later the first issue of the new weekly appeared, which I named *Di Yiddishe Shtime*—The Jewish Voice.

The first issue, which was excellently gotten up, was soon bought up and none was left on the newsstands. Everything seemed to be fine and dandy. At the same time, however, the Rockers and their employees carried on a vicious campaign against me. They combined

with my adversaries of the Zionist District, which could never forgive me my collaboration with Silver in the creation of the Cleveland Zionist Society. They were joined by others of my opponents who were dissatisfied with certain of my communal activities and all together exerted a strong pressure on my friends, even to the point of making threats. They spread calumnies against me which went beyond all limits. *The Jewish World*, they argued, served the totality of Jewish interests and now I sought to ruin it. They forgot to mention that *The Jewish World* was already past being ruined by anybody, because it was already ruined and that service to the interests of the Jewish public had begun in earnest only when I became editor.

Wherever they could find someone who had any grudge against me, they harnessed him to their calumious wagon. I was aware of everything that was going on. But my wife and I had so much faith in our friends that we had no doubt we could count on their support despite all slanderous campaigns against us.

But—and I say it now with deep pain—we were mistaken. Most of our “friends” who for years had clung to us like bees to honey and whom I had raised from nothing to the role of “somebodies” in the community, allowed themselves to be won over to the other side and shamefully abandoned us with a light heart. None of them showed his face as if they had suddenly disappeared. The result was that I hardly had the sixth issue out when I was forced to close down. The old German maxim that when one is in need all one’s friends are dead was confirmed.

A CHRISTIAN FRIEND HELPS ME IN MY NEED

THIS treachery on the part of men for whom I had done so much and who had made me believe in their sincerity drove me to a mood of dejection which kept up a long time. I shut myself up in a room in my house and did not see anybody. A vast number of people came to see me, perhaps wanting to help me, but I refused to receive them. The only person who could talk to me was my wife.

My wife, who is generally a very amiable and affable person, continually pampered me as if I were the first born of a happy mother. She watched over me day and night to see that I should not do any harm to myself. She was ever the faithful and self-sacrificing wife, but nothing even in her can compare to the loyalty and complete devotion she showed me during the days of my despondency. If I am still alive and can tell it all, it is not because of the physicians—who, incidentally, refused to be paid for their many services—but because of my loving faithful wife. It is to her I owe my gradual recuperation and the return of my capacity to look on the world and on man with different eyes.

Weeks passed and my condition steadily improved. I then began thinking again of our future, but this was hardly of help to me in my state of health. Little by little I began to feel stronger, though I still did not leave the house. At that time new types of magazines, made their appearance, with illustrations, like *Life* and others of the same kind, many of which are no longer in existence.

I was very much interested in those magazines, which my wife used to buy for me and I studied them most attentively. Being a life-long dreamer, I began to dream of publishing a magazine of that sort for Jews. But there is a great distance between fancy and performance. I had no money, not even a printing plant, which had been taken away from me by the creditors. How could it be done? Just then Providence intervened.

One fine day, as I sat on the porch sunning myself, an old friend approached our home, a non-Jew, who was then and still is one of the well-known lawyers in Cleveland. Having been told about my situation, he came to pay me a visit. I already felt much better then, so I was very glad to see him.

In our conversation he kept on inquiring about my plans for the future after I had completely recovered. This brought on the topic of my dream to publish an illustrated magazine for Jews. But I added that I did not have the slightest hope of being able to carry

out such a plan. He asked me how much money I thought such a magazine would require. I had no clear answer myself, but merely to mention some sum, I named \$3,000. My friend smiled and turned the conversation to other topics. Presently he bade my wife and me a friendly good-bye and left.

To our great amazement he returned on the next day. Before I had a chance to ask what brought him to us, he said:

"I came to lend you the three thousand dollars which you need to found your planned magazine." He handed me a check for that sum. My wife and I remained seated as if dumbfounded. For some minutes we could not find words. We had never even dreamed of anything like that. My friend did not speak either, but merely looked at me amiably and smiled. When I finally came to myself I asked him why he did that and what would happen if I failed again and would be unable to repay him the 3000 dollars?

"I hope you won't fail," was that fine man's reply, "But if you do, God forbid it, the world does not stand or fall with the three thousand dollars."

He soon left and for a long time my wife and I could not come to regain our composure. But I determined to carry out my pet scheme as soon as it became feasible. During the following days, though I had not yet recovered completely, I began working on the details of the plan to start an illustrated Jewish magazine. I invited a printer who had the facilities for putting out such a magazine and we worked on it together. I was quite happy.

To make a long story short again: in five weeks the first issue was out of *The Jewish Voice Pictorial*. It was a beautiful issue which surpassed by far the non-Jewish magazines. I decided to publish it as a quarterly and announced it as such. The magazine was distributed on the newsstands, in drugstores and bookstores all over the city, in the Jewish and non-Jewish sections. To our deep satisfaction, the magazine sold very well, in the non-Jewish as well as — perhaps even more than — the Jewish sections.

Following the appearance of that first issue my wife and I went out to get subscribers in the city as well as outside of Cleveland. We covered Ohio, Western Pennsylvania, Western New York, Michigan and Indiana. We worked hard and obtained subscriptions to the magazine wherever we went. I soon forgot my grievances and placed our magazine in the service of our people, as had always been my wont since the start of my journalistic career. May I be permitted here to tell the story?

WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED BY OUR MAGAZINE

MANY things have happened in our country and in the world since we started this magazine. Let us refresh our memory:

It was a time of doubt and confusion, when we began—doubt in the efficacy and even in the basic values of the moral principles on which America was founded, confusion and insecurity with regard to the position of American Jewry.

Hitler was riding the “wave of the future.” He had in this country many admirers and stooges, many well-paid agents, many would-be imitators. Father Coughlin, Gerald L. K. Smith, William Dudley Pelly and many other demagogues in the United States, now long forgotten, preached hatred for the Jews and blamed them for all real and imaginary ills.

The catastrophic economic crisis and the success Hitler was scoring in Europe favored the dissemination of malicious propaganda and of the undermining of faith in American democracy.

THE JEWISH VOICE PICTORIAL made its appearance a few years after the founding of The National Conference of Christians and Jews, with the express purpose of supporting its aims and ideals. We undertook to pursue to the best of our ability **THE FURTHERING OF BETTER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND JEWS.**

Rather than to engage in polemics with our slanderers, we sought to refute their unfounded and insane accusations by disseminating true information. In article after article we told of the great contributions made by American Jews to the country's progress from the very beginnings of this great Republic.

We made every effort to introduce our Pictorial not only into Jewish homes but also into those of our non-Jewish neighbors. Many of our friends thought we were chasing a pipe-dream: they could not imagine that non-Jews would be interested in a purely Jewish publication. But very soon the dream turned out to be a constructive and heart-warming reality. Within a matter of months we managed to acquire a substantial reading public among non-Jews in key positions: leaders in religious, educational, business, labor, professional and journalistic fields, and ordinary people who did business with Jews or had Jewish neighbors, friends or acquaintances and had an open enough mind to learn something about Jews. The attractive illustrations contributed to the interest of the readers—and to their information.

Our informative articles contained a wealth of information, based on authentic facts, relating to the immense contribution Jews made to the development of the United States in every field. Our non-Jewish readers, and many of our Jewish readers as well, learned for the first time about the important part played by the early Jewish immigrants in the development of America's foreign and domestic trade; in the building of the large American merchant marine, in the growth of the country's banking system and, in particular, in the Revolutionary War, in which the participation of the Jews was considerable in relation to their small numbers at the time. Subsequent articles told of the patriotism of the Jewish citizens of the United States in the Civil War and in other wars and of the great sacrifices in life and limb made by American Jews. Those were indisputable facts.

In some of these illuminating stories we told of the part played by Jewish engineers and architects in building America's largest

bridges, waterways and canals, including the Panama Canal and of the country's great cities. We told our readers about Jewish contributions to American science, arts and literature, the theatre, the opera, the movie industry, and many other industries in which millions of people are now employed.

THE KEEN INTEREST shown by our non-Jewish readers in the authentic and enlightened information we supplied was evidenced by the avalanche of letters we received from time to time. Also, on several occasions Christian clergymen quoted the Pictorial in their churches and commented on it favorably.

Since 1948 many of our non-Jewish readers have been highly interested in what we could tell them about that "great little country" the Jews have been building on the Eastern Mediterranean—Israel.

MY SIXTY YEARS OF JOURNALISTIC ACTIVITY

FRIEND and foe who read my accounts so far, in which I spoke of my experiences since coming to Cleveland, will have to admit that I never missed an opportunity to serve the best interests of the Jewish people when such an opportunity presented itself. As I have already mentioned, I began my career as a writer in my 19th year. That was in my native Galicia, for 150 years a province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and now a part of Poland. At that time anti-Semitism raged in Galicia and its Jews suffered greatly. I then founded a publication in my home town to carry on the fight against the enemies of the Jews.

Wherever life took me later—in Vienna, Bohemia or Germany—I never failed in assuming that task again which I had first assumed in my youth. But more than anywhere else I carried on that work in Cleveland. Notwithstanding the fact that my life in that city was harder than anywhere else I had lived before, I was ever on guard when the situation demanded it. Whether it was an unwarranted act on the part of the city administration, or an individual teacher with anti-Jewish bias, or a Mayor in a suburb of Cleveland,

I always took up the struggle. My incomparable fight against Hitler's lackeys in Cleveland in the 1930's has not been forgotten by Jews and non-Jews alike. I was then the only Jewish newspaperman whom Fritz Kuhn attacked in his paper *Der Deutsche Weckruf*. The same was done by Charles Coughlin's men in their widely circulated *Social Justice*.

I took on such tasks because such tasks ought to be assumed by Jewish journalists. I continued carrying them out in my magazine *The Jewish Voice Pictorial* as long as that was necessary. I should be ready to do it again today, if the need arose, despite my advanced age, which is already eighty. For sixty long years I was in the service of the Jewish people, serving well or poorly. It never bothered me whether my multifarious Jewish activities were or were not adequately recognized.

I did what I consider my duty and of that I can rightly say I am proud!

**To our very dear friends
Mr. and Mrs. Elias Mantel**

On this occasion we take pleasure to express to you our deep-felt gratitude for your years of friendship towards us. There are very few of our people in Cleveland, that we owe any gratitude. But we do owe it to you, especially for your uninterrupted support to our magazine. This book is therefore dedicated also to you.

The Wiesenfelds

E N D