

THE ADATH ISRAEL CONGREGATION STORY

BY Samuel R. Lavine

The first Orthodox Jews of Trenton came in small groups. They came to America to get away from the tyrannies, persecution and pogroms of Eastern Europe--mostly from Poland and Russia. Almost eleven million people poured into these shores of Liberty and Equality from approximately 1855 to 1888, among whom were a good percentage of Jews. The greater number of these Jews settled in the Atlantic Seaboard States and brought with them little but their hopes and aspirations. They were not disillusioned nor did hardship discourage them. They invariably turned to selling of small wares on foot--peddling. These peddlers covered the whole countryside with packs on their backs and baskets on their arms containing, in most cases, notions, small dry-goods items, and even tinware. When their economic conditions improved, which was very slowly, they branched out into other vending fields. The horse and wagon came later as an aid in the junk business, long before any Jew was the proud possessor of a little store. The pushcart was seldom used for peddling in small communities.

These pioneer Orthodox Jews were a hardy race. They had to struggle for a livelihood. They came to stay and reared large families in the tradition of the "old country". Seldom were there less than a half-dozen children in any family, and fifteen or sixteen was not an unusual thing. But these early

Jewish settlers were determined men and women, determined to become part and parcel of the land.

In 1857, Har Sinai was originally a Jewish cemetery association, and was broadened into the Har Sinai Temple in 1860. It began to function as an Orthodox House of Worship, mostly of German lineage. It changed to a Reform Temple in the late nineties. Har Sinai was already well established when small numbers of Polish and Russian ^{JEW} arrived in Trenton in the early eighties. The Brothers of Israel Synagogue in South Trenton was for years the only Orthodox House of Worship in Trenton after Har Sinai Temple changed to Reform Judaism. A movement which began in the liberal atmosphere of Boston by German Jews who fled Germany for political reasons.

The Brothers of Israel Synagogue was rebuilt in 1900 into a modern edifice. After approximately a quarter of a century discord and dissatisfaction set in at the Brothers of Israel Synagogue, setting a precedent for other synagogues of the same ilk to be established; and there followed The People of Truth, Ahavath Israel, and Workers of Truth.

The original Talmud Torah was established about 70 years ago, directly across the street from the synagogue on Union Street, and it was organized and controlled by the Brothers of Israel Congregation. There were, however, several "rebis" who taught Hebrew in private homes or in "chedorim", a kind of classroom conducted by private individuals. The separately organized Talmud Torah came much later.

Against a background of improved circumstances, the

exodus of Trenton Jews took place; at first gradually and later en masse to the western residential section of the city. The education of the children began to sprout in all directions of higher learning. The better the circumstances of the newcomer, the higher the goal for education; but college had not yet come into the picture for the progeny of the early Trenton Jews. Once the old surroundings were left, generally speaking, new ideas and new ideals overtook them. However, from the old and the new locations the children of Orthodox Jewish homes were entering and graduating from High School. There were few entrees for college education in the early nineties, but the equal opportunity offered the Jewish people developed leaders who were looked-up to. Although the early Jews were an humble lot, they were intent on experiencing every avenue of American life. In 1920, there was considerable talk of establishing a House of Worship, a synagogue, closer to the new Jewish population in the western section of the city. Since economic conditions had improved greatly for the Jew, a more liberal view of life and religion, in general, had come into existence. The spiritual requirements of these Jews in the western section of the city were the same, but in the transition leaders had been developed who had great vision of religious life to come. The influence of the Torah and its precepts had a strong hold on the Jewish community. Crime and delinquency were unheard of among Jewish people in those early years, but it was feared that in the freer atmosphere Jews would turn away from Orthodox Judaism. Rationalism seemed to be spreading to such an extent

that Jewish leaders sensed a danger to Judaism. In the larger cities another force came into being--Conservative Judaism--and it caught on here in Trenton. It fitted into the pattern of American life more suitably, and it would help to conserve Judaism whereas strict orthodoxy was beginning to lose ground. The soil of strong desire was first seeded with Conservatism so as not to lose the strength and beauty of Judaism for the coming generations in America. This movement for a more liberal religion, not so extreme as Reform, gave birth to concrete action by which a mere handful of Jewish leaders led the Jews of Trenton to the "Promised Land".

The first organizational meeting of the Adath Israel Congregation was held in November, 1920, at the Y. M. H. A., on South Stockton Street, where it still is today, by a few prominent Trenton Jews, to discuss the necessity of the Conservative movement and the need of a synagogue closer to the Jewish homes in the western section of the city. There are no records of the interim years of 1920 to 1923, but there is a record of a public meeting that was called for on November 15, 1920, according to the Trenton Times Sunday Advertiser of November 14, 1920. The records show that this meeting was presided over by Joseph Lavine. Counsellor Sol Phillips Perlman was named secretary; Louis Kaplan, treasurer; and the committee in charge of arrangements was made up of N. H. Aroniss, Bernard Cohen, Harris Fiestal, Isaac Fineberg, Phillip Forman, Michael Gilinsky, Israel Kohn, Samuel Levin, Harris Levin, I. Herbert Levy, I. C. Rednor, Samuel Shankman, Sol Urken, Phillip S. Vine and Israel Vine.

price of \$45,000.00 exclusive of heat, electric wiring and fixtures. There are records to show that Samuel Levin was a prime mover of this public meeting and that the Adath Israel Congregation started had been raised from members and by September 30, 1925, the officers had to borrow \$20,000.00. The president, Solomon Urken, Club on West State Street, at the Ahavath Israel Synagogue on Center Street and in other different places.

Herman Stein, Harry Urken, Frank Kohn, Abraham Bellin, Harry Levy, David Gross, Samuel Koppelman, John L. Zimmerman, Harry Bernstein, Sol Phillips Perlman, Samuel Leventhal, to order by Samuel Levin. The first Board of Trustees consisted of Solomon Urken, Harry Bernstein, Alexander Budson, Harry J. Gross, Henry Millner, Samuel Shankman, Samuel Lavinthal, Joseph Lavine, I. C. Rednor, Israel Vine, Samuel Levin, Michael Gilinsky, edifice was put at \$98,236.70. Louis S. Kaplan's blueprints for Israel Kohn, Harry Siegel and Isaac Goldberg. The Certificate of a synagogue in the western section of the city became a reality. Incorporation of the Adath Israel Congregation of Trenton, New Jersey, was signed by the above men of the Board of Trustees on the above date--October 15, 1923.

the Adath Israel Congregation building is a monument.

On October 28, 1923, Solomon Urken was elected first president of the Adath Israel Congregation; Samuel Levin, vice-president; and Henry Millner, financial secretary. At this meeting Samuel Levin reported that he had obtained an option on a strip of land on the southerly side of Bellevue Avenue at the corner of Hermitage. The lot consisted of 270 feet frontage and ran back to the land adjoining the canal. The option price was \$17,000.00. The site and the price were approved by the Board of Trustees immediately, and the future home of the Adath Israel Congregation was assured.

the Conservative manner.

On May 14, 1925, a committee was authorized to execute a contract with Day & Sons for the erection of a synagogue at the Israel Congregation; Samuel Levin, vice-president; Harry Siegel,

price of \$45,000.00 exclusive of heat, electric wiring and fixtures, and stained-glass windows. Up to this time only \$8,000.00 had been raised from members and by September 30, 1925, the officers had to borrow \$20,000.00. The president, Solomon Urken, designated the following to act as a committee of finance: Herman Stein, Harry Urken, Frank Kohn, Abraham Bellin, Harry Levy, David Gross, Samuel Koppelman, John L. Zimmerman, Harry Bernstein, Sol Phillips Perlman, Samuel Leventhal, ... Raphael and William Spiezle. Two years after the Adath Israel Congregation was incorporated, the cornerstone was laid and cornerstone-laying exercises took place, in 1925. The complete cost of the edifice was put at \$98,236.70. Louis S. Kaplan's blueprints for a synagogue in the western section of the city became a reality. The leaders of the Conservative movement in Trenton had the necessary vision and confidence in the future of Judaism to which the Adath Israel Congregation building is a monument. The first Sabbath service was held in the new building on Friday, July 23, 1926, and Rabbi Samuel Rosenblatt, son of the famous cantor, Josef Rosenblatt, officiated and served the Adath Israel Congregation for one year. Cantor Josef Rosenblatt sang and conducted a concert at Adath Israel Synagogue during the tenure of his son, Cantor Samuel Rosenblatt, as rabbi of the congregation. Rabbi Samuel Rosenblatt, however, resigned from the congregation to accept the synagogue post in Baltimore because he did not approve of men and women sitting together in the Conservative manner. In 1926, Solomon Urken continued as president of Adath Israel Congregation; Samuel Levin, vice-president; Harry Siegel,

treasurer; and Alexander Budson, recording secretary. (Alex Budson continued in the office of recording secretary until 1926.) On May 5, 1926, at a Special Meeting, Samuel Levin was authorized to negotiate with the Greenwood Cemetery for a burial ground for members and families of the Adath Israel Congregation. A segregated plot of burial grounds, in a beautifully kept area, was arranged by Samuel Levin without any actual expense to the congregation. Har Sinai Temple had a plot of ground at Greenwood Cemetery for a number of years, since 1900.

There were a few resignations of several of the older generation tendered the synagogue in the western section of the city, the Adath Israel Congregation, during the early years, owing to the establishment of Conservative customs. To the majority of Adath Israel members, Conservative Judaism was an advancement for the cause, and not too far removed from orthodoxy. The liberal interpretation of the "law" and of the ancient customs and traditions, was accepted wholeheartedly. It was a unique religious movement, not to destroy Judaism, but to rekindle loyalty to the ancient love of the Torah, "the Law". It had long been foreseen that changes had to be made in order to meet the challenge confronting Jews in America. Even though Sargent had painted the synagogue in desolation, nevertheless, the Renaissance of Jewish life had begun in Trenton. In America Conservative Judaism had caught on like wildfire in those years. In short, he was loved by the congregation and, in return, Rabbi Leon J. Liebreich arrived at the Adath Israel Congregation in 1927, from Stamford, Connecticut. A graduate of

the College of the City of New York in 1921, he received his Master of Arts degree at Columbia University in 1924. He was ordained rabbi in Israel by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 1925. Rabbi Liebreich occupied the pulpit at Temple Beth El at Stamford, Connecticut, and for two years taught Jewish History and Biblical Literature at the Friedlander Classes of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

Much of the history of Conservative Judaism in Trenton is entwined with Rabbi Liebreich's record in Trenton. He carried on prolific work at the synagogue, with the pulpit and the children in the Sunday School and the Hebrew School. It was for the respect and admiration of Rabbi Liebreich, and the love of the Torah and their children, who were members of Adath Israel Congregation, that Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Layvine, non-members, presented a Torah to the Adath Israel Congregation on Sunday, July 25, 1926. The Torah was accepted by Rabbi Liebreich and the Board of Trustees in a joyous celebration.

The early years of Rabbi Leon J. Liebreich's ministry were very interesting ones: Uniting all elements of the congregation, owing to his amiability, his learning, and understanding of the problems confronting him. He witnessed the "labor pains" of the growing congregation, all of the joys and sorrows of the community, suffering many hardships and sacrifices along with the officers, the elders and members of the Adath Israel Congregation. In short, he was loved by the congregation and, in return, he showed his love for his fellow-members and the children. Many of the children whom he confirmed and who were Bar

Mitzvah under his tutelage, he later married.

From the beginning there were financial difficulties in the running of the Adath Israel Congregation, owing to the overwhelming mortgage. The president, Solomon Urken, and the Board of Trustees met the situation with courage, augmented by personal gifts of cash, free signing of notes, and the generous contributions of the Adath Israel Sisterhood. An illustration of the financial condition of the congregation in the early years is on the minutes: Cantor Asher Goldenberg's contract was renewed for one year on June 5, 1928, but on August 22, 1928, a letter was received by the secretary informing the Board of Trustees that Cantor Goldenberg had not received his salary for nearly twelve weeks. Under Cantor Goldenberg's guidance Bar Mitzvah boys received two and a half hours of instruction per week in Hebrew. The Adath Israel Sunday School enrolled 128 pupils in those days, 43 of whom were children of non-members. The Sunday School staff counted seven teachers in 1928.

The Adath Israel Congregation weathered the "stormy" years of the depression--1929, 1930 and 1931--with the aid and patience of the president, Solomon Urken, Zalman B'reb Yeshua Urken, and the Board of Trustees. The Sisterhood was a source of strength in those days to those courageous men, coming forward with financial aid at critical times. The finances during those fateful, history-making years was insufficient to cover the successful operation of the synagogue.

In 1933, Harry Siegel was elected president of the Adath Israel Congregation but immediately resigned and declined the

office. His resignation was accepted with regret and the Board of Trustees re-elected Solomon Urken president. During the years that Solomon Urken served the synagogue, he saw to it that Conservative Jewish traditions of the new generation were adhered to. His viewpoint was such that it left no room for schisms. He leaned toward moderation in religion, where youth found enough interest and attraction to hold them in the synagogue. His idea was to unite the religious with the social and modern--a herculean task in those days. Solomon Urken accepted a Torah from Dr. and Mrs. Barney D. Lavine, in 1935, in honor of their son, Arthur's Bar Mitzvah, at a celebration in the synagogue. Harry Siegel and his wife presented a Torah to Adath Israel Congregation; Mr. and Mrs. Hyman Green, The Brothers of Israel Synagogue; and, recently, Mr. Bernard Casway--all presented Torahs which are still in use at Adath Israel Congregation.

He served his fellow Jews well, this softly-spoken man, Solomon Urken, as president of Adath Israel Congregation from 1926 to 1938, the last two years from a sick bed--1937 and 1938. When he passed away in 1938, the whole Jewish community as well as the Adath Israel Congregation mourned the loss of a leader whom they loved. Adath Israel Congregation was enriched by Mr. Urken's untiring efforts. It was a great joy to him that he saw the Confirmation of a granddaughter and the Bar Mitzvah of a grandson in his "Shull". Through Solomon Urken's efforts Rabbi Leon J. Liebreich, who fitted in with his philosophy, was installed as rabbi of the congregation. He left the Jewish community a priceless possession in the establishing of a Conserva-

tive House of Worship, and a part of himself in his sons, who follow in his footsteps by working hard in the synagogue to have these traditions passed on to the generations that follow. It is important to record that, until the time of his death, Harry Koppleman served as financial secretary under Solomon Urken.

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Rabbi Leon J. Liebreich's service at the Adath Israel Congregation, a special worship at the Adath Israel synagogue was given in which he was honored, and at a reception tendered in their honor, Rabbi and Mollie, at the Stacy-Trent Hotel, on a Sunday in January, 1938, many high and fine tributes were paid the Liebreichs. Professor Louis Finkelstein, president of the Jewish Theological Seminary, was the main speaker.

In February, 1938, at the Board of Trustees meeting, those present stood in silent prayer out of respect to the deceased president, Solomon Urken. A resolution of condolence was forwarded his widow and family. Harry Levy was elevated to the presidency at this meeting; Sol Phillips Perlman, first vice-president; Harry Goodstein, second vice-president; Nathan Levin, treasurer; Hyman Garb, financial secretary; and Jack Bernstein, recording secretary.

Harry Levy was re-elected to the presidency in 1939 and 1940, making it the third consecutive term; Sol Phillips Perlman, first vice-president; Harry Goodstein, second vice-president; Nathan Levin, treasurer; Hyman Garb, financial secretary; and Jack Bernstein, recording secretary. The financial difficulties of a growing congregation were met in the same way as heretofore:

by the signing of notes and donations by the Board of Trustees members. Those elected to the Board of Trustees were Samuel Kopleman, Irving Lewis, Harry Siegel, Samuel Swern, Roy Ambramson, Michael Gilinsky and Harry Gross. An amendment to the By-Laws of the congregation was passed at the Annual Meeting in 1940, increasing the Board of Trustees by six members. At the meeting of the Board of Trustees in April, 1940, Harry Levy, president of the Adath Israel Congregation, gave notice that he wished to retire from the presidency at the end of the year. On January 10, 1941, at the Annual Meeting, the Board of Trustees was increased to 30 members... "one of whom may be a woman member of the congregation". In spite of his desire to retire from the presidency, Harry Levy continued in office. Sol Phillips Perlman became vice-president again; Nathan Levin continued as treasurer; and Jack Bernstein was renamed as recording secretary. Lester Kolman, a newcomer, was elected financial secretary. At the meeting of the Board of Trustees of November 5, 1941, the secretary, Jack Bernstein, read to the Board of Trustees an invitation to the Adath Israel Congregation to attend the 35th anniversary of the ordination of Rabbi Abraham Holzberg, of Temple Har Sinai, as a Reform Rabbi. Rabbi Leon J. Liebreich accepted the invitation to be one of the speakers at this celebration at Har Sinai, and Chaplain Bernard Segal, of Fort Dix, accepted the invitation to occupy the Adath Israel Congregation pulpit during Rabbi Liebreich's absence. The meeting of the Board of Trustees of November 5, 1941, also records a suggestion

by Sidney Goldman, chairman of the Public Relations Committee of Trenton, and not a member of Adath Israel Congregation, which was supported by the Chairman, Mr. Levy, that the use of the Adath Israel synagogue was offered to the local Defense Council for whatever purpose they deemed necessary during the war: shelter, feeding place, or Red Cross classes. Mr. Andrew Duch, Trenton Home Defense chairman, accepted the offer. The synagogue was used for several of these purposes, especially Red Cross work, during the war.

The war years of 1941 and 1942 gave the officers and the Board of Trustees extra responsibilities. At the Annual meeting of the Board of Trustees, Harry Levy again was elected to the presidency of the Adath Israel Congregation on January 22, 1943. The other officers elected were Sol Phillips Perlman, 1st vice-president; Harry L. Goodstein, 2nd vice-president; Benjamin Rosenthal, treasurer, for the first time; Benjamin L. Goodstein, assistant treasurer, for the first time; Lester Kolman, financial secretary; and Jack Bernstein, recording secretary. At the Annual Board of Trustees meeting, which was held on February 1, 1943 a drive was conducted to pay off the original mortgage on the Adath Israel edifice. Mr. Louis Shipper was very active in this drive for funds. Dr. Max Artz, of the United Synagogue of America, was the main speaker at a dinner given at the synagogue for the said purpose of raising enough funds to pay off the mortgage. Mr. Samuel Swern was chairman of the drive. At the Board of Trustees Meeting of December 1, 1943, Harry L. Goodstein reported that the mortgage had been reduced by

\$20,000.00, and pledges to the amount of \$25,000 were received to date. On Sunday, January 23, 1944, Burning of the Mortgage Ceremonies took place in the vestry rooms of the synagogue. Sol Phillips Perlman was chairman of the affair and addresses were given by President Harry Levy; Rabbi Leon J. Liebreich; Samuel Swern, chairman of Campaign for Funds to pay off the Mortgage; Mrs. Louis Ruderman, president of Adath Israel Sisterhood. Mrs. Harry Levy of the Sisterhood entertained as chairman of Reception Committee in the Social Hall.

On February 6, 1944, the Adath Israel Congregation signed a resolution addressed to the President of the United States... "with earnest appeal that all appropriate action be taken to insure the withdrawal in its entirety of the Palestine White Paper of May, 1939, and its unjustifiable restrictions on immigration and land settlement..." President Harry Levy's signature adorned the resolution. At this meeting the privilege of erecting an Honor Roll on the Adath grounds at Bellevue and Hermitage Avenues was granted by the Board of Trustees.

At the Annual Board of Trustees meeting, which was held on February 9, 1944, Harry Levy was again elected unanimously president of Adath Israel Congregation; Sol Phillips Perlman, 1st vice-president; Harry L. Goodstein, 2nd vice-president; Benjamin Rosenthal, treasurer; Joseph Klatzkin, financial secretary, new in this office; and Jack Bernstein, recording secretary. Harry Levy, president, reported that he was in correspondence with the Foreign Relations Committee at Washington, D. C., with regard to establishing Palestine as a Jewish Homeland,

and that he had received replies from Honorable Tom Connely and Honorable Arthur Walsh.

The report of the minutes of the Board of Trustees of April 5, 1944, mourned the passing of Israel H. Albert. Services were held in the synagogue, and the arrangements were made by Benjamin Garb and Hyman Garb. Adath Israel Congregation paid tribute to Israel H. Albert, and the synagogue was filled to capacity. Rabbi Leon J. Liebreich was superb in conducting the funeral service, and paid high tribute to his memory. Phillip Albert was appointed to the Board of Trustees to fill the vacancy caused by his father's death. In April, 1944, at a Board of Trustees Meeting, a new committee was formed to establish a bulletin for the synagogue news and other news pertaining to Jewish current events. The Adath Israel News began its publication career at once. As chairman of the monthly sheet Mrs. Morris Nochumson was named, assisted by Sol Phillips Perlman and Samuel R. Lavine.

On January 7, 1945, the same slate, as of 1944, were elected at the Adath Israel Congregation: Harry Levy, president; Sol Phillips Perlman, 1st vice-president; Harry L. Goodstein, 2nd vice-president; Benjamin Rosenthal, treasurer; Joseph Klatzkin, financial secretary; and Jack Bernstein, recording secretary. At the Board of Trustees Meeting of May 2, 1945, it was passed that a \$5.00 assessment would be made on all Adath Israel members in behalf of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. (The Adath Israel Sisterhood of the congregation had established a voluntary contribution of \$6.11 per member for the Seminary.)

After long years of min-

It was also passed, at this meeting, to sell on behalf of the congregation the 1000 shares of Panhandle Railroad stock which was contributed anonymously to the Adath Israel Congregation. It was at this meeting, also of May 2, 1945, that Rabbi Leon Liebreich informed the Board of Trustees that he had accepted a professorship at Gratz College, in Philadelphia, and that he would continue at his post at Adath Israel synagogue until a new rabbi was installed in his place. The Board of Trustees reluctantly accepted the resignation of Rabbi Leon J. Liebreich and wished him every success.

It was in November, 1945, that Bernard Alexander reported for Rabbinical Committee that Rabbi S. Joshua Kohn, who was a chaplain in the U. S. Maritime Service with the rank of Lieutenant Commander, would shortly be released from service and that he would be the guest rabbi at the Friday evening services on November 8, 1945. On November 19, 1945, Rabbi S. Joshua Kohn accepted the pulpit that was offered to him--the Adath Israel Congregation--by the Board of Trustees. On January 4, 1946, Rabbi S. Joshua Kohn was installed at Adath Israel synagogue with all the honors becoming a rabbi in Israel. On January 14, 1946, an amendment to the By-Laws, Article XVI, was proposed, increasing the membership of the Board of Trustees to 36, one of whom shall be a woman member of the congregation. A drive for funds was conducted in November, 1945, for a new building.

So, eighteen years of service for Rabbi Leon J. Liebreich and Mollie, his wife, was drawing to a close. The last years of his rabbinate were trying years for the Liebreichs, since a child of theirs was seriously ill. After long years of min-

istering to the Adath Israel Congregation, Rabbi Liebreich had explained to the Board of Trustees that he decided to change his life's work to teaching and doing research work in Hebrew Letters. Rabbi Liebreich left his mark on the congregation--the sweetness of his chanting daily or holiday services, the establishing Conservative customs that appealed to the congregation, the love the children in all the classes bore him and, in return, his love for them; especially his work with the Confirmation Classes, Bar Mitzvahs, and the Adult Institute of Learning. When the Liebreichs left Trenton, they were honored by young and old alike, and the loss was keenly felt for a long time.

One of the most memorable events in the annals of Adath Israel Congregation's history took place on Wednesday evening, January 23, 1946, in the vestry rooms of the synagogue. A farewell dinner was tendered Rabbi and Mollie Liebreich at which time a token of appreciation in the form of a \$1,000.00 purse from the Adath Israel Congregation treasury and a purse from the congregation was presented the Liebreichs with the best wishes of the congregation. Rabbi Leon J. Liebreich was also presented with a life's Honorary Membership, at the congregation he served so well for 18 years, entitling him to all the privileges of membership.

At the Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees in July, 1946, Harry Levy continued in the presidency; Sol Phillips Perlman, 1st vice-president; Harry L. Goodstein, 2nd vice-president; Benjamin Rosenthal, treasurer; Lester Kolman, financial

secretary; and Jack Bernstein, recording secretary. At this meeting of the Board of Trustees the president, Harry Levy, commented on the excellence of the Adath Israel News. The Board of Trustees passed a motion to select a home for the new rabbi, S. Joshua Kohn, for \$8,000.00. Secretary Jack S. Bernstein notified Cantor Ralph Eckhaus of his appointment by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees had not renewed Cantor Judah L. Wise's contract. Cantor Wise had been at the Adath Israel Congregation since 1936. Cantor Wise taught Hebrew to Bar Mitzvah boys as an aid to Rabbi Leon J. Liebreich and served as cantor up to the end of his term in 1945. Cantor Wise became a Mohel during his career at Adath Israel synagogue and a writer of Jewish music.

The Annual Trustee Meeting of the Adath Israel Congregation was held on Wednesday, January 22, 1947, and again Harry Levy became president; Sol Phillips Perlman, 1st vice-president; Harry L. Goodstein, 2nd vice-president; Benjamin Rosenthal, treasurer; Lester Kolman, financial secretary; and Jack Bernstein, recording secretary--the slate being the same as in 1946. The House-Committee through its chairman, Isaac Levy, suggested changes in the synagogue, as safety measures, at the Board of Trustees Meeting of March 5, 1947. Harry Goodstein reported at this meeting cash on hand of \$49,102.25, and unpaid pledges of \$1,800.00 from the drive for funds for a new building. This report of funds was from the drive of November, 1945.

At the meeting of June 4, 1947, Irving Lewis, chairman of the Membership Committee, reported \$5,600.00 in collections for

the Hebrew and the Sunday School. Cantor Ralph Eckhaus' contract was renewed for the fall term at this meeting. There is a letter in the files of the synagogue from the Jewish Federation of Trenton, dated June 2, 1947, thanking the Adath Israel Congregation for the loan of \$40,000 which went..."to meet the urgent need for cash..." by the United Jewish Appeal. At the Board of Trustees Meeting of December 3, 1947, Irving Lewis reported that a total of 70 new members had been enrolled for the year 1947.

On February 4, 1948, at the Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees, Harry Levy declined the office of president, which he had occupied since 1938. In 1937, Harry Levy became 1st vice-president of the congregation, and then in 1938, became the president. For ten long, trying years he and the Board of Trustees labored to keep the synagogue open and going through years of war and peace, and years of insufficient funds and failing health. This amiable man, Harry Levy, like his predecessor, was the right man for the office he held--gave his all that Adath Israel Congregation and Conservative Judaism might live in the hearts of his own sons as well as his fellow Jews. That he succeeded beyond his hopes and dreams was due to his wisdom, his knowledge of men, and his thorough knowledge of financial matters. Solomon Urken nurtured the life-flame in its early stages, and Harry Levy blew more life into it so that it would grow.

During Harry Levy's presidency, there was the joy for him and his wife, Rita, that all three of his sons were Bar Mitzvah at Adath Israel synagogue and two of his boys were married by Adath Israel's rabbi, and one at the synagogue. Even after re-

tiring from the heavier responsibilities of the presidency, Harry Rabinowitz was engaged for the high job. For the Levy has aided in some of the most important work of a changing Board of Trustees the last few years were years of planning and era.

The nomination of the next president took place at the Synagogue's 21st Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees on February 4, 1948. The nomination for president of Adath Israel Congregation by Sol Phillips Perlman was declined. The slate that was elected consisted of Bernard Alexander, president; Hyman Garb, 1st vice-president; Hyman Urken, 2nd vice-president; Isador Miller, treasurer, new in office; Hyman Siegel, assistant treasurer; Lester Kolman, financial secretary; and Bernard Green, also holding of-

At the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of November 3, 1947, it was reported that 21 members and volunteers had to relinquish his post as recording secretary, which he held since 1935, because of serious illness. Jack Bernstein's record as recording secretary stands out as a service rendered with unlimited measure alongside of the many whose names will be enshrined in the glory of Adath Israel's history for all more Conservative services combined, at the passing of some times.

For a number of years the Board of Trustees had been planning to build an addition to the synagogue of the Adath Israel Congregation with modern classrooms, kitchen and a large auditorium. Although there had been a drive for funds in 1945, and nearly \$80,000 had been raised for this purpose, nothing had as yet materialized. At the meeting of the Board of Trustees of

April 7, 1948, Louis S. Kaplan, prominent Trenton architect, exhibited his newest plan for an addition to the synagogue, and he commented in detail on the plans. On September 1, 1948, Cantor Joseph, in Philadelphia, at the Portuguese Synagogue. The re-

Ralph Eckhaus was re-engaged for the High-Holy Days. For the Board of Trustees the last few years were years of planning and viewing other synagogues--what a new wing to the Adath Israel Synagogue ought to look like. Rabbi S. Joshua Kohn continually kept urging the Board of Trustees to take positive action. The collection of pledges and the disagreements, the many problems to overcome, were finally overcome by a unity that emerged--a dream becoming a reality. Slowly but surely the dream synchronized in general agreement by the gentle handling of the question by the president, Bernard Alexander.

At the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of November 5, 1949, it was reported that 91 members had voluntarily increased their dues, which totaled \$5,000.00. The hand of the ex-president, Harry Levy, who was chairman of the finance committee, was in evidence. At this meeting there was talk of reviving the Men's Club, revitalizing it. Hyman Urken, a constant urger for more Conservative services complained, at this meeting of November 5, 1949, of the services being too long. Harry Levy reported to the Board of Trustees, on December 15, 1949, that \$6,600.00 dues would be received from 140 of its members, and that possibly \$7,500.00 might be in the "offing". Emanuel Kaplan was elected president of the Men's Club, and Harry Levy was elected Honorary president of the Adath Israel Congregation.

An invitation was read from Dr. and Mrs. Leon J. Liebreich at the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of January 1, 1950, inviting the congregation to the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Joseph, in Philadelphia, at the Portuguese Synagogue. The re-

minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting of March 1, 1950, show that Max Mosovich and Albert Shapiro were elected to the

Board of Trustees and the following officers were elected:

Bernard Alexander, president; Hyman Garb, 1st vice-president;

Hyman Urken, 2nd vice-president; Isador Miller, treasurer; Hyman

Siegel, assistant treasurer; Lester Kolman, financial secretary;

and Bernard Green, recording secretary. It was reported at this

meeting that the new building would cost approximately \$270,324.00.

Mrs. Benjamin Pincus, president of the Sisterhood of the Adath Israel Congregation, advised the Board of Trustees at the Board of Trustees Meeting of April 5, 1950, that the 25th wedding anniversary of Rabbi and Priva Kohn would take place in June, and that at the same time it would mark the 5th anniversary of the Kohns' association and leadership with the Adath Israel Congregation. Accordingly in June a celebration was held on the anniversary of the Kohns' wedding and the 5th anniversary of their being at Adath Israel, in which a purse was presented and a reception tendered to Rabbi S. Joshua Kohn and Priva, his wife. At this meeting of April 5, 1950, Rabbi Kohn spoke of the additional "load" that the congregation was carrying in all phases of synagogue activity and of the necessity of more personnel.

Ben Garb reported the resignation of Mrs. Albert Shapiro, better known as Mollie Shapiro, as Sunday School principal, who had accomplished "superhuman" things with her position.

Some very important events took place at the meeting of the Board of Trustees on May 3, 1950. The committee of the Hebrew and the Sunday School Committee reported that some

changes were necessary in the Hebrew and Sunday School program, and wished to submit it to the Board of Trustees for consideration: brought many improvements and necessary changes to a rapidly

(1) That an educational director be engaged to supervise the synagogue's youth educational activities. Joseph Kohn

(2) That the Adath Israel Congregation schools be limited to children of members only and that children of non-members be allowed to complete their courses. choir, and

(3) That an additional fee of \$10.00 be added to the Bar Mitzvah and Confirmation enrollees. Congregational work.

The first two items met with the approval of the Board of Trustees and were passed. The meeting of May 3, 1950 was im-

portant also for the reason that the general dues were increased to \$75.00 per year. Many who could afford it were paying an in-

crease in dues voluntarily. The Building Committee reported that the inscription over the entrance to the new building would

be: "The Future of a People Lies in the Education of its Youth."

Emanuel Kaplan announced that the ground-breaking ceremonies would take place on Sunday morning, May 7, 1950, and that the

Men's Club would present orchids to the ladies attending the Special Mothers Day service at Adath Israel synagogue. grace the

At the meeting of the Board of Trustees it was announced that Rabbi S. Joshua Kohn was leaving for a visit to Israel and

that a Bon Voyage Service and Oneg Shabat would be held at the synagogue on the last Friday evening of June. An appropriate

purse of appreciation was presented the rabbi as a token of good wishes of the congregation. Rabbi Kohn was very much deserving

of a rest. He had been working ardently since 1946, since his installation at Adath Israel Congregation. Rabbi S. Joshua Kohn had brought many improvements and necessary changes to a rapidly expanding congregation. The synagogue grew up spontaneously with the Kohns--Rabbi S. Joshua Kohn, Priva Kohn and Joseph Kohn. Priva gave her all in successfully aiding all social functions coming under the synagogue's jurisdiction, by teaching leadership courses and Hebrew classes, leading the all-girl choir, and advising and managing wedding ceremonies. Joseph Kohn, their son, also played an important part in the Junior Congregational work, where he was a director.

Rabbi Kohn gained his doctorate degree while being the teacher and spiritual guide of his congregation--the Adath Israel Synagogue. From a membership of 180 at Adath Israel Congregation in 1946, to 650 in 1954, is a record for any organization, especially a synagogue. It was through Rabbi Kohn's continuous urging that the change in membership and the new building came about. His vision supported by the president, Bernard Alexander, and the Board of Trustees brought a dream into being a reality: The magnificent additions to the synagogue with all modern facilities--classrooms, auditorium, banquet room and chapel--grace the Adath Israel Congregation: from one room downstairs, a vestry room in the synagogue, to many well-lit, cheerful and spacious rooms in the new wing.

Under Rabbi Kohn's guidance the Hebrew School which had 47 children in 1946 now has 210, a credit to the fine educational progress. Moreover, the Sunday School classes have risen from a

small crowded group to more than 200. The Hebrew High School was instituted in 1946, as a three-year extension course, now is combined with the Leaders Training Fellowship, which boys are former Bar Mitzvah graduates. In 1946, the Hebrew School had only two sessions per week, one hour each session; now it has four sessions per week--one hour per session as heretofore. On Sunday there is a two-hour session, making a total of six hours per week. Rabbi Kohn established a Youth Congregation, a Junior Congregation which flourished and the attendance is at least 50 at each service: This means that at least 100 young people attend some service at the synagogue. There are four teachers directed by the Educational Director, Mordecai Levow, who received his B.A. at Brooklyn College and has attended the Teachers Institute of the Yeshiva. At present the Educational Director is attending classes at the Graduate School of Education of the Dropsie College. At the Greenwood Cemetery, the cemetery president negotiated

Rabbi Kohn has instituted an Adult Jewish Institute for six consecutive Tuesday evenings. In addition to the evening classes there are morning classes: discussion groups of the Sisterhood and Daughterhood; the subjects--Conservatism Judaism, Jewish History, Beginners and Intermediate Hebrew, and Jewish music which includes synagogue music. Cantor Irving S. Feller's experience in Cantillation, chanting of the Haftora--recognition of the symbols and their usage in chanting and singing the ancient melodies, makes his classes one of the most essential in the synagogue.

Adath Israel protects its rabbi with a pension and a re-

retirement plan issued by the Joint Retirement Board. Adath Israel has established a Rabbi's Fund to which members contribute and the rabbi dispenses at his discretion without publicity to the giver or taker. Rabbi Kohn has greatly increased the attendance of the Friday night services, which was always a spot that needed improvement. Rabbi S. Joshua Kohn's sermons are modern interpretations of the scriptures interspersed with the wisdom of the sages. His simple methods and pleasing personality have endeared him to the congregation. Being an ardent Zionist, a former president of the Zionist Organization of Trenton, he centers his whole life around Zionism, Judaism and the Adath Israel Congregation.

The question of additional space in the Greenwood Cemetery came up at the Board of Trustees Meeting of April 2, 1952. Honorary president, Harry Levy, reported that additional space could be had for \$140,000.00. However, instead of additional space at the Greenwood Cemetery, the Honorary president negotiated successfully with the Fountain Lawn Park, at Eggerts Crossing Road, the cost being put at \$40.00 per grave. The park, containing approximately 1750 graves, beautifully landscaped, was consecrated as another Adath Israel Congregation Cemetery on October 4, 1953. On the 15th day of Shevat, 7th day of February, 1953, Harry L. Goodstein passed away, leaving an enviable record in the synagogue as a vice-president and as chairman of the different Building Drives.

At the meeting of the Board of Trustees of May 7, 1952, Mordecai Levow was selected as the Educational Director of the Adath Israel Congregation. Under Mordecai Levow's directorship

the religious schools have grown considerably. The Hebrew School attendance in 1952-53 was 117 pupils, in 1953-54 it was 245 pupils, and in 1954-55, 188 pupils. The Hebrew curriculum is based on a 5-year study period, and toward this end the Adath Israel Congregation Board of Education has increased the requirements for Bar Mitzvah and Confirmation to a minimum of four years. The following are the activities of the religious schools: Adath Alumnae Confirmation Group, Junior Congregation, Youth Congregation, Special Assembly Programs, The Hazzonim Club, Keren Ami Project, Sadye Lewis Essay Contest, Parent-Teacher Meetings, United Synagogue Youth, the Tallis and Tephilin Club and the Scouts. After a year of exhaustive study and planning, with the concurrence of the Board of Trustees, the Board of Education launched its nursery school project, on September 15, 1954.

At the Annual Board of Trustees Meeting on Sunday evening, January 16, 1955, several new officers were elected: Hyman Garb was elected president; Hyman Urken, 1st vice-president; Alfred Shapiro, treasurer; Jack Rudnick, assistant treasurer; and Bernard Green, recording secretary, as heretofore. At this meeting Irving Lewis received the "Man of the Year" award of the Adath Israel Congregation, a custom established a number of years ago by President Bernard Alexander. Jack S. Bernstein was the first to receive this honor in 1948; Harry Siegel in 1949; Hyman B. Garb in 1950; Samuel Robbins in 1951; Isador Miller in 1952; and Alfred Shapiro in 1953.

The Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees brought to a close the successful reign of Bernard Alexander as president.

Adath Israel Congregation had the right men when it needed them. Bernard Alexander's reign--seven years--were not easy years. The need of controlling an organization pushing in all directions was an immense job--the president's job. Coming to Adath Israel Congregation experienced in the way of leading and organizing campaigns for funds, Bernard Alexander immediately set himself to improve all branches of the Adath Israel Congregation, and found this work cut out for him. At all times in command of the situation with the Board of Trustees, he knew where he was going and what he wanted to accomplish. It has been said that a great many leaders fail in their efforts because of trying to please everybody. President Bernard Alexander always led, led with positive thinking. A man of great wit and charm, not without artifice--but what leader was not a "politician" of rank? Bernard Alexander, president, never relaxed his vigilance--a vigilance of fair play for those who were employed at Adath Israel Congregation, waxing mildly sarcastic when necessary, coming to the point quickly. The Board of Trustees had respect for his broad knowledge of religious and civic affairs, and were moved many times into quick action by his plea. His record as president will be long remembered for its accomplishments. Coming from the presidency of the Jewish Federation of Trenton, he was familiar with all phases of Jewish life. Not only is Bernard Alexander prominent in Jewish leadership locally and nationally, but he holds many offices of great communal and civic origin--a man of prolific energy. His most recent appointment to the Board of Managers of the State Board of Child Welfare is no little honor to himself and his

family--Jessica, Naomi, Dan and Ruth, all prominent in their own right as leaders in their fields, women's and youth's world--and to the congregation which he headed for seven long years.

Bernard Alexander, in short, is a sincere, charitable person, who has headed the Middle Atlantic Region of the Joint Distribution Committee and the United Jewish Appeal. An indefatigable worker, he served with tact and natural ability the Adath Israel Congregation. To Bernard Alexander goes the credit for inspiring the Board of Trustees to act fearlessly in assuming the responsibility and contracting for a new building which costs well over \$200,000.00. Moreover, to Bernard Alexander goes the credit of seeing to it that the mortgage on the Adath Israel Congregation Buildings was reduced to less than one-third of the original amount. To Barney, as he is known to his friends, goes the splendid record of contributing great strides to the cause of Judaism and Americanism at the Adath Israel Congregation.

To the women of Adath Israel Congregation belongs a great deal of the credit showered on the numerous men--an immeasurable credit. Its members also have their names engraved, for all time, in golden letters in the annals of the Adath Israel History. The funds they raised and contributed to the synagogue is only a minor detail of their service to the Adath Israel Congregation. Since the beginning the Sisterhood has contributed thousands of dollars to the different funds of the synagogue. The last contribution was \$4,000.00 for the reduction of the mortgage. The women of the Sisterhood of the Adath Israel Congregation have taken an

equal responsibility with the men and have also given of their intuition, knowledge, experience and talents so that the Adath Israel Congregation might prove a lasting influence for good to the children's children of the founders. The list of presidents are in sequential order: Mrs. Frank Cohen, Mrs. S. Phillips Perlman, Mrs. Charles Gilinsky, Mrs. Frank Millner, Mrs. Ernest Glickman, Mrs. David Gross, Mrs. Irving Lewis, Mrs. Fred Fox, Mrs. Sidney Rosen, Mrs. Samuel Eisenstat, Mrs. Roy Abramson, Mrs. Louis Altman, Mrs. Louis Ruderman, Mrs. Samuel Swern, Mrs. Morris Nochumson, Mrs. Alfred Bernstein, Mrs. Benjamin Pincus, Mrs. Charles Popkin, and Mrs. Louis Lehman. In 1953, Sisterhood membership to the Board of Trustees was increased to three of the Adath Israel Congregation.

To the Men's Club goes the credit of developing men who are willing to devote their time assisting to build a great institution. Not as old in years as the other branch of the congregation, the Sisterhood, nevertheless it has been important in the aiding of social, religious, and financial departments of the modern synagogue. The first president was Bernard Green, and the second was Albert Shapiro. To Emanuel Kaplan, president of the revitalized Men's Club, goes the credit of putting new life into the organization, in 1950. To Irving Schwartzman falls the responsibility of carrying on a work well established, a pattern to be followed, and new heights to be reached. As a tribute to Emanuel Kaplan, and what he accomplished, a testimonial dinner was tendered him on December 7, 1953.

Adath Israel stands as a monument of the Jewish Rennais-

sance in America. It stands as a source of strength in the realization that Conservative Judaism is a potent force that will preserve the spiritual values of the Jewish people; that the historic role of the Jew and his mission to the world will become a living influence to himself and to his neighbors; that Judaism has again become an adventure in good living--a way of life; that the younger generations will discover the spiritual as well as the educational values of its precepts. The larger and the smaller memorials also stand as a monument; included in all the above are the memorials dedicated for all time to the memory of men and women whose names will share in the revitalization of Judaism through Conservatism.