

SOME POST ELECTION THOUGHTS

The Rabbi would have written this article irrespective of the trend of events in the Temple elections. He feels that what he has to say bears on the manner of conducting the election, and not on its results. He is concerned not with the victory or defeat of certain individuals but with the repercussions of the election upon the congregation as a whole.

The congregation gained one major victory from the election turmoil. Once and for all the threat of a "Conservative Bloc" was laid to rest. This ghost was buried by both slates with representatives of both contending groups acting as pall-bearers and grave-diggers. The leaders of all forces contending in the election agreed in the presence of the Rabbi that this congregation 1) Would forever remain within the Union of American Hebrew Congregations; 2) Would obtain its rabbis only from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion; 3) Would use its present Prayer-book; 4) Was committed to the active reconstruction of Jewish life in an atmosphere of free choice.

There were other significant points which everyone agreed to, but these are sufficient to indicate that the area of disagreement between the contending forces was small indeed. The Rabbi regards this agreement as a cornerstone in the building of a Liberal program in Elmont. Its importance should not be overlooked by those who were overcome by the smoke screen laid down during the election battle.

A Second Victory

As far as the Rabbi is concerned, there was a second major victory in the campaign. Supporters of both slates affirmed the right of the Rabbi to supremacy in matters religious. To the Rabbi, this can mean only one thing, that the ultimate solution of all problems involving religious questions lies with him. This implies that he alone in the final analysis, is to determine what is the proper definition of Liberal Judaism and what its rituals may or may not be.

Those who affirmed the right of the Rabbi to form religious policy (both slates) have by implication agreed to two things: 1) All religious problems are to be solved by working through the Rabbi and not through the membership (which cannot be fully informed on all issues and which can be aroused on an emotional basis); and 2) The Rabbi alone is to determine the limits and content of Liberal Judaism (instead of giving each member a vote on the question).

The Rabbi feels that his procedure of

including representatives of all points of view on the committee to discuss a particular religious matter has been extremely successful in the past. A small, well-informed, representative committee can achieve not only democratic results but results of high content because it works in an atmosphere of calm. After all Liberal Judaism is not a mere matter of majority vote. It is a matter of viewpoint and teaching procedure. If we were to permit the congregation at large to determine every issue, it would be possible to vote out Liberal Judaism while holding up the banner of Liberal Judaism. Liberal Judaism is not another name for anarchy, nor is it another name for majority rule.

Liberal Judaism has a positive program which most people are not yet educated to interpret properly. It is unfortunate that the high degree of democracy we have developed here has left some people with the impression that a Liberal ritual is anything the membership can be organized to vote for. Nothing is farther from the truth. The Rabbi has proposed rituals which were not originally to the liking of the majority of the members, and he will oppose the introduction of rituals which the majority may wish, if he believes them to be inconsistent with the spirit of Liberal Judaism.

The best way to sane, reasoned planning is a top committee headed by the Rabbi which is to be in complete charge of matters religious. This committee should be advisory to the Rabbi and should not be governed by majority vote. This has been our past procedure, and if it is recognized by all as the only workable procedure, we can save ourselves much heartache.

Election Losses

The congregation lost one major battle in the strife of the past few weeks. The bitterness engendered during the campaign concerning kashruth and the election negated the higher causes we serve. There can be no victory if this bitterness endures. The question of who fired the first shot is of no consequence at this advanced stage. Few people acted during the campaign with complete prudence. There were ill-advised actions typical of people new to the political arena, which did the congregation little good. As the campaign drew towards its close, the Rabbi could hardly distinguish between the victims and the oppressors.

Most distressing was the claim of some that they were the "good Jews" while others were the "goyim". On a par with this was the claim of others that they

were the emancipated Jews while the others were still ghetto-ized. No doubt you heard the phrases "Assimilationists," "Orthodox," "True Liberals" and "Liberal, Liberal-Liberals." Meanwhile, even as the battle of pride and words raged, the few souls who came to Sabbath morning Services fought valiantly to amass a Minyan.

The Congregation Victimized

From the dozens of phone calls he received during the campaign, the Rabbi can state that most of the membership is in utter confusion about the issues. The phone calls would indicate that the campaign suffered from the disease of all political campaigns. In the enthusiasm for one's candidates partial information, half-truths, and extreme statements were uttered. Much of this was to the detriment of the Temple as a continuing organization. No doubt we shall have many more campaigns in the future and contesting slates can be of vital importance to a democratic organization. Nonetheless, we must remember that synagogue politics must be conducted on a level above reproach.

The Need for Humility

As we have stated previously, the campaign has its good features. Many people have become interested in the congregation for the first time. If we can take advantage of this interest, the campaign will have performed an important service. On the other hand, those who had a part in developing the bitterness which arose (and there are no clean hands) have the responsibility to dissipate it. From the point of view of the congregation as a living organism, there is no division into victims and oppressors, there are only oppressors. It was the congregation which suffered most from the negative aspects of the campaign. The congregation needs friends. It is hoped that the individuals involved in the more personal aspects of the campaign (which we deplore) will rise above their emotional involvement to heal the wounds inflicted upon the congregation.

Let's forget about the "Good Jews" and the "Orthodox." These phrases have no real status where the factual issues are concerned. Most of us share common ground and common hopes, if we would care (or dare) to admit it. Yet this admission is what is most badly needed at present. The Rabbi was struck by the absence of real humility on the part of most people during the campaign. He is happy to see some of this creeping through now. The admission of errors brings with it healing repentance.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The Congregation wishes to welcome into its family the new members listed below. It is hoped that each of them will be as anxious to get to know us as we are to know them.

Annette & Sol Agatstein
 Herman Adlowitz
 Beatrice & Azrael Alpern
 Sylvia & Nat Altman
 Mildred & Sidney Auerbach
 Ida & Philip Auster
 Helen & Harry Ayre
 Doris & Irving Barkan
 Sylvia & Sam Bassis
 Marcia & David Bauman
 Sylvia & Bernard Berkell
 Jeanette & Sam Berliner
 Evelyn & Bernard Berman
 Bernice & Lester Bernberg
 Sally & George Berne
 Sylvia & Sol Bernstein
 Sylvia & Louis Bell
 Ida & Jerome Blakeman
 Marilynn & Herbert Bloom
 Clara & Paul Blumenthal
 Kate & David Boritz
 Renee & Robert Breslof
 Frances & Morris Carpman
 Sophie & Ben Canin
 Lillian & Albert Center
 Betty & Morton Chait
 Bessie & Joseph Cohen
 Fannie & Phil Cohen
 Florence & Gershon Cooper
 Phyllis & Zelag Cooper
 Anna & Irving Crown
 Sylvia & Irving Dressler
 Ida & Joseph Drucker
 Lillian & Nat Drucker
 Florence & Herman Dworkin
 Elaine & Melvin Dykes
 Gladys & Samuel Eisenberg
 Shirley & Arthur Epand
 Ida & Abraham Ettenson
 Evelyn & Morton Exter
 Frieda & George Farbstein
 Mildred & Leo Feingold
 Tesis & Sam Ferber
 Gladys & Leon Fernbach
 Anna & Max Feueseisen
 Edythe & Harold Feuerstein
 Ester & Harry Fingerhut
 Charles & Saul Fischler
 Gertrude & Irving Fleishman
 Sylvia & Ben Foss
 Sylvia & Meyer Frachtman
 Esther & Meyer Freedman
 Sara & Jack Freeman
 Ethel & George Freems
 Rita & Irving Friedman
 Eva & Jesse Frieaman
 Rosalind &
 F. Edmund Gallard
 Shirley & Jack Garfinkle
 Selman & Murray Geffner
 Sylvia & Max Gerstein
 Mildred & Joseph Glusky
 Rose & Abraham Gold
 Hilda & Milton Gold
 Marjorie & Morton Golden
 Rose & Carl Goldman
 Anne & Frank Goodman
 Bernice & Meyer Gottesman
 Florence & Sheldon Gould

Pearl & David Greenberg
 Rose Marie & Louis Gross
 Barbara & Gerald Grossman
 Marth & Julius Gutheim
 Ruth & Sheldon Haimouit
 Pauline & Joe Hazan
 Ruth & Irving Hecht
 Doris & Samuel Hellman
 Molly & Philip Hirsch
 Anita & Sam Hochhauser
 Harriet & Herbert Horowitz
 Esther & Sidney Hutt
 Mildred & Louis Hyman
 Betty & Merill Jacobs
 Blanche & Samuel Jerebker
 Esther & Samuel Joselow
 Ethel & Leo Kadet
 Sadye & Elias Kagan
 Pearl & Harris Kahn
 Doris & Joseph Kalish
 Sylvia & Moe Kanner
 Irene & Nathan Kanter
 Anne & Saul Kaplowitz
 Edythe & Seymour Katz
 Hilda & Sam Kaufman
 Shirley & Archie Kimmel
 Mildred &
 Emanuel Kirmayer
 Sara & Andrew Klein
 Mrs. Frieda Klingbeil
 Rose & Abraham Koppelman
 Shirley & Philip Kornblum
 Edith & Saul Krantz
 Dora & Harry Krisloff
 Natalie & Julius Krumholz
 Edith & Samuel Krupnick
 Rhoda & Dr. Edwin Kushner
 Edith & Milton Kuttner
 Charlotte & Milton Landau
 Herta & Leo Lehrer
 Leah & Edward Lerner
 Blanche & Sidney Levens
 Beatrice & Walter Levin
 Gloria & David Lewis
 Joan & Victor Lewis
 Ronnie & Natan Lieberman
 Lauretta & Murray Lippset
 Beatrice & Sidney Lowenberg
 Bernice & Robert Luft
 Lorraine & Joseph Mandel
 Ruth & Monroe Margoshes
 Hannah Martin
 Julia & Louis Matza
 Sarah & Sam Menkes
 Shirley & Gabriel Miller
 Judith & Herbert Miller
 Hilda & Marty Miller
 Stecia & David Millman
 Pauline & Isadore Mintz
 Shirley & Leo Monther
 Rose & Jacob Narasin
 Edythe & William Nehlsen
 Jeanetts & Daniel Newnan
 Beatrice & Julius Oster
 Ida & Jack Ostrin
 Theresa & Rubin Oster
 Ruth & Abraham Ostrowsky
 Bella & Oscar Perez
 Gertrude & Harold Perlick

Mildred & Harry Piek
 Kathryn & Albert Popkin
 Irene & Maxwell Powell
 Eleanor & Morris Press
 Harriet & Marvin Rann
 Blanche & Irwin Rick
 Ann & Edward Ross
 Estelle & Robert Robinson
 Estelle & Abraham Rothkopf
 Frances &
 Bertram Rothschild
 Ruth & Samuel Rothstein
 Ruth & Irving Rutstein
 Silvia & Isadore Sacher
 Mildred & Milton Saltzman
 Melba & Jack Savate
 Elayne & Adrien Schaffer
 Dorothy & Van Scharlin
 Rita & Morton Schlesinger
 Muriel & Jerome Schneider
 Julia & Jerome Schneider
 Rosalie &
 Nathan Schoenbaum
 Rose & Harry Schoener
 Florence & Alvin Schwartz
 Fritzie & Martin Schwartz
 Dorothy & Martin Schwartz
 Bella & Milton Schwartz
 Eleanor & Maurice Schwarz
 Mollie & Jack Schweitzer
 Sylvia & Philip Seidman
 Emma & Morris Shapiro
 Selma & Morris Sharf
 Rose & Harry Shluker
 Helene & Joseph Siegel
 Audrey & George Silverman
 Ruth & Irving Silverstein
 Ethel & Harold Sklar
 Betty & Seymour Smoke
 Frieda & Abraham Solomon
 Helen & George Solomon
 Susan & Harry Solomon
 Sophie & Arthur Spiegel
 Bertha Spiegel
 Ruth & Murray Stechel
 Ruth & Bernard Stein
 Dora & Samuel Stein
 Ethel & Norman Stein
 Belle & Willard Steinberg
 Helen & Herman Steinman
 Harriet & Benjamin Torgoff
 Gabrielle & Erwin Vogel
 Blanche & Sam Wainer
 Selma & Edward Waldman
 Gussie & Max Walker
 Shirry & Sidney Weinberg
 Phyllis & Benjamin Weiner
 Ruth & David Weiner
 Anne Marie & Irving Weiss
 Nancy & Fred Weiss
 Rita & Samuel Weissman
 Ann & Joseph Weitzman
 Sarah & Leonard Yager
 Ann & Joseph Yesselman
 Sylvia & Sidney Zahn
 Harriet & Seymour Zaldin
 Germaine & Abe Zebrak
 Jean & Jack Zeldin
 Rita & Murray Zelin