

rabbi's sermon, but required that it be delivered at the end of the service (after *Adon Olam*), which gave the men an option to leave. In time the sermons became shorter and more entertaining.

What happened to Wise after the Albany fiasco?

After being fired, Wise and his supporters created a new synagogue in Albany. Anshe Emeth pioneered the Reform practice of men and women sitting together during services. In 1854, the ever energetic Wise accepted the position of rabbi at Cincinnati's Bene Yeshurun congregation. There he also began publishing Jewish journals and worked on establishing the first rabbinical seminary in America. He sought to professionalize the rabbinate by creating modern rabbinical schools which employed contemporary and academic ways of studying Judaism, as opposed to the traditional yeshiva approach in Europe. Twenty years later, the Hebrew Union College opened in the basement of Cincinnati's Mound Street synagogue. That America's first rabbinic school began in a synagogue basement—where most Jewish learning was conducted at the time—testifies to how much progress we have made in upgrading Jewish education since those days. In fact, at the very beginning of the 20th century, there was literally a campaign to “Get Jewish Education Out of the Basement” in North America.

How did Wise recruit his first students?

Wise found it very difficult to attract native-born Jews to the college, as the

rabbinate had not yet been established as a respected profession. He had the most success in recruiting Jewish young men who were living in poverty—a number of them from a Jewish orphanage in Cleveland—with the promise of upward mobility. Indeed, the rabbinate was an educational and professional track out of poverty.

Take the example of Joseph Krauskopf. Born in Ostrowo, Prussia in 1858, he came to America on his own at age 14 in search of opportunity. His older brother, who was living in Trenton, New Jersey, set out to meet him but was murdered en route. Poor and alone, Krauskopf was taken in by a distant cousin in the port town of Falls River, Massachusetts. The intellectually inclined young man spent much of his spare time reading books given to him by Mary Slade, a well-known New England poet and the wife of his high school principal. Slade recognized his potential and agreed with Krauskopf's request that she send Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise an unsolicited letter to recommend him for Wise's program. “He has all the Christian virtues,” Slade wrote, by which she meant that he was moral, read the Bible, and was capable of public speaking—all qualities required for the “ministry.” Krauskopf was accepted, but by the time he reached Cincinnati, he was penniless and practically starving. With Wise's help and his own personal determination, he got through eight years of study and became one of the first four rabbis ordained by the Hebrew Union College. He also earned a Doctor of Divinity degree from HUC; in those days it was very important to be a “Reverend Doc-

tor” to bolster one's position in the Jewish and larger community.

After serving a few smaller pulpits in the Midwest, Rabbi Krauskopf moved on to B'nai Jehudah Congregation in Kansas City, Missouri. There he gave two series of blockbuster sermons—one on the golden age of the Jews of Spain which implied that America could be the location of a new golden age for Jews; and the second on evolution, the hot-button topic of the day, in which he proclaimed the compatibility of Judaism and science (and thereby publicly disagreed with his teacher, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, who was on record as against Darwin's theory of evolution). Krauskopf's sermons, subsequently reprinted in two volumes, were so popular, he became one of America's most recognized Jewish preachers. He was then recruited by Congregation Keneseth Israel in Philadelphia, which he quickly built up to become one of the largest congregations in the United States. Every week his Sunday lectures on religion, ethics, and social science packed the house, and the transcripts were sold on the streets of Philadelphia until his death in 1923.

Joseph Krauskopf epitomized the new American rabbi: celebrity preacher, public intellectual, and congregational leader.

Did all four graduates of HUC's first class share a common Jewish worldview?

In many ways, Joseph Krauskopf, David Philipson (who later served as I.M. Wise's right-hand man in Cincinnati), Henry Berkowitz (who became the rabbi of Rodef Shalom Congregation in Philadelphia), and Israel Aaron (who served Temple Beth Zion in Buffalo) all shared Wise's belief that America was the new Promised Land and that synagogues were the new temples of the Jewish people, so there was no need to pray for the restoration of the Temple and the sacrificial cult in Jerusalem. Moreover, they believed that Judaism was a religion with a universal message. Consequently, there was no need to reestablish a national Jewish homeland. Zionism, they maintained, was an ideological misapplication of Judaism.

The four graduates were also united in rejecting the emerging Ethical Cul-

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3. The CCAR is “partnering with the URJ and HUC-JIR in forging a vision of what our Movement might look like in 20, 30, or even 50 years from now.” What vision do you have for shaping our Movement's future, 20, 30, or 50 years from today?

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