

The Move Toward Conservatism

World War II had ended. The period of the “leaders” had ended. The men who had held the reins of synagogue leadership for decades were passing to their reward one by one, and there were few to replace them. But a new impasse loomed. The postwar years, 1945 to 1950, were years of drastic change at Beth Israel. The new generation had gradually begun to separate itself from the strict ritualism of the past. Perhaps the most serious problem confronting Beth Israel was to crystallize religious policy with respect to the various ideologies in Jewish thought and practice.

“Shevorim!” . . . Congregation Beth Israel again was called to action by the sound of the Shofar in the fall of 1948. The quick and impatient melody of the Shevorim was heard, and it pierced, like knife thrusts, to the core of the spirit.

The Shevorim, symbolic of the growing-up years, pointed to a period marked by ideological conflicts. There were some in the congregation who favored Orthodoxy, and others who favored moderate Conservatism. Heretofore, the congregation was passive in the extreme. It was prayed at, preached at, sung at, invoked, blessed and dismissed.

The pattern of Jewish living was changing and the native Jewish generation was restive and dissatisfied with the uncompromising Orthodoxy of their parents. This new generation of American born Jews preferred to battle the turbulent currents of religious controversy rather than to drift with the tide of tradition. They felt keenly the desirability of harmonizing Jewish tradition with the demands of modern life. The “old shul” never made any changes down through the years in its activities — certainly not in the religious service. Even the physical structure of the synagogue remained the same except for a few minor alterations.

A native movement among a small group of Beth Israel members advocated adoption of the Conservative platform as early as the 1920s; it soon lost its momentum and was revived only when Myer Segal came upon the scene in 1927. This movement from the outset was, of an external nature. There was no attempt to foist the philosophy of Conservatism upon the existing synagogue. This new religious congregation was named Beth El and elected Myer Segal as its first president. Services were conducted at the old Talmud Torah building on State Street, and in 1935, Rabbi Harry Zwelling, a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York was called to occupy the pulpit.

Services were conducted in Hebrew with English readings. Men and women were permitted to sit together and the services were enhanced by a mixed choir.

This “rebellion” was later to become the focus of attraction to many of our religious minded Jews who could accept neither the rigid Orthodoxy transplanted from Europe, nor the radical theories of American Reform Judaism. Beth El was founded on the conviction that traditional Judaism can function as a vital spiritual force in this country in complete harmony with the best in our American culture. Twenty years would elapse before Beth Israel would institute these innovations and its membership reunited in a common purpose.

The situation reached the boiling point in 1948. Naturally in a congregation consisting of the old and the young, there arose a dissatisfaction with the status quo and a clamor arose for a change in the ritual.

Specifically, should women be permitted to sit with men? Should there be a use of the vernacular in the traditional service? These questions became topics of heated debate. The traditionalists, and there were many of the elders who had strong feelings for the time-honored services, fought against the “reformers.” And the answers that came from the senior members nearly split the congregation into islands of Orthodoxy and Conservatism, and stirred the kind of bitter and passionate espousal of one side or the other that only religious controversy can create. To the modern Jews, the religious philosophy of Judaism was a living vital issue — something that requires vigorous action, not merely nicely turned phrases. This new element was dissatisfied with rigid Orthodoxy, but was unwilling to go as far as Reform. This was the beginning of a bitter feud between the advocates of change and James Gimpel Striar. His father had fought as unrelentlessly 60 years ago. Striar was an exponent of the traditional Orthodox service and warned against the changes which would impair the essence and purity of the Jewish religion. He struck out against these new proposals when he admonished the membership with the charge: “Reformers create schisms and promote division besides impairing the unity of our faith.” He and his family left the congregation and worshipped elsewhere rather than see the shibboleths of their faith changed. They did, however, retain their membership in the congregation. And so the battle raged on

through the months, every move along the road to Conservatism being contested inch by inch.

The Orthodox group hinted at court action in order to obtain redress, but the victory was apparently too complete. The pioneers, so to speak, had become the patriarchs; it was time for the next generation to carry on the work. The synagogue was no longer static but bent to the beauties and requirements of American Jewish life. That we chose in some respects to depart from the strict ritual of our founders does not mean to imply criticism of them. It rather suggests we intend to compliment them by assuming that, even as they adjusted tradition to their day, so we mean, in the same spirit, to adjust to the changed circumstances of our own.



James Gimpel Striar

The Freedman Years

Having known Rabbi Zucker, it was impossible for the congregation to think of a successor who would not be worthy of the scholarly tradition set by the rabbinate of Beth Israel. The rabbi who would fill the pulpit must, furthermore, be steeped in traditionalism and at the same time be a liberal theologian. Early in 1949, the congregation began its search for a successor to Rabbi Zucker. President Harold R. Epstein, Myer Segal, David Rosen, Joseph Emple and Henry H. Segal were designated as a committee to screen candidates who would meet the requirements of the new order. The choice fell upon Rabbi Avraham Freedman and his election was ratified by the congregation. It was arranged that Rabbi Freedman should assume his new duties in September of that year.

The installation of Rabbi Freedman as the religious leader of the congregation in the fall of 1949 was in many respects the mark of the beginning of a new era. Coming to the pulpit of Beth Israel following years of distinguished service as spiritual leader of Durban, South Africa, Rabbi Freedman was symbolic of the postwar age — an age full of promise and achievement.

He was scholarly and gentlemanly, a man whose tolerance and learning well fitted him for the difficult years of transition lying ahead. Born in Russia, Avraham Freedman came to America as a young child and was educated at Yeshiva University. He received

his ordination from three of the most distinguished rabbis in the country — Rabbi M. Soloveichik, RaMaz Margolis, and Dr. Bernard Revel. He occupied the pulpit of the Rideout Street Synagogue in Ottawa, Canada, and later served as the rabbi of the united synagogues in Ottawa. Rabbi Freedman organized the first Vaad Ha-Ir in Canada and was elected rabbi of the entire Jewish community of the city of Ottawa. In 1937, he was called to South Africa where he served the Durban com-



Rabbi Freedman

munity with distinction for 12 years. During World War II, Rabbi Freedman served as chaplain to His Majesty's forces. He also was elected to the South African Board of Deputies.

Rabbi Freedman believed that the synagogue must be restored to its primacy in Jewish life, that it must be the dynamic center of all phases of Jewish communal life. He knew that while he must convince the elders of this necessity, his main work would be with the younger element. To restore our meaningful folkways and give color and drama to our teachings, he inaugurated the Friday Evening Service and the Sunday Morning Minyan Breakfasts, which proved to be a "breakfast institute" of Jewish studies.

The sermons of Rabbi Freedman explored the gamut of intellectualism. Soon he was in demand as a lecturer; he gained renown for his intercultural activities. Through the years he sustained the congregation and helped it regain its perspective toward Judaism, and brought new hope to the spiritually disinherited. It was due to his influence and zeal that the sisterhood and brotherhood were organized. The women's work of the synagogue was originally charitable; it now became apparent that their role would be almost exclusively in the realm of service to the congregation. Rummage sales, fund-raising projects and major renovations to the shul followed over the years.

The change from the oligarchy which had directed the congregation during the earlier years led to a more general participation by the members in synagogue affairs. Keeping the rest of the congregation intact and pacifying both the traditionalists and innovators required a great deal of tact and ministerial engineering. While traditional as his predecessors in fundamentals, Rabbi Freedman believed that the new policy adopted



Attending a dinner in honor of Beth Israel President Harry Epstein in December 1956 are (front, left to right) Hannah and Rabbi Avraham Freedman, Moses Byer, Harry and Ruth Epstein, Eleanor Epstein, Gail Epstein, (back, left

to right) Dr. Howard and Mildred Kominsky, Herbert and Miriam Freedman, Myer and Bess Minsky, and Bertha Robinson. More than 250 people attended the event at the Jewish Community Center. (Bangor Daily News Photo)

before his arrival would tend to enhance the service and have further meaning for modern Jews. The foundation was laid for the establishment of a congregation along Conservative lines with a minimum of innovations, aiming to attract the young American Jews to the synagogue in order to guide them by precept and example toward the Jewish way of life. Religion at Beth Israel, if it were to mean anything, had to be the expression of a free and educated people. Yet it had, like all Judaism, to be characterized by the love of basic ethical traditions.

Rabbi Freedman's pastorate marked a turning point for the congregation. Beth Israel embarked upon a reappraisal of values. Progress and tradition moved side by side in the synagogue's calendar. Rabbi Freedman was close to the emotional and religious needs of his congregation. The rabbi's leadership in the support of Israel and suppressed Jews the world over symbolized the deep sense of urgency — the need to re-educate for Judaism. His activity in the communal Hebrew School reflects credit upon himself and his congregation. He played the role of shadchan between school and home, enlightening each as to the responsibilities of the other.

Nor was the temporal part of the congregation neglected. The original constitution and bylaws were replaced by new ones in 1954. The legality of these new measures as presented by Henry H. Segal were scruti-

nized by Shirley Berger and Abraham Stern and finally enacted at the general meeting.

Growth Of Beth Israel

“Teruah” . . . a call to battle, and to build!

During the incumbency of Rabbi Freedman, who holds the record of longest service to the congregation, the modernization of the synagogue building was started. The interior of the building was completely overhauled, the vestry floor was tiled and an attractive and utilitarian kitchen was installed. The main sanctuary was tastefully redecorated. New electric light fixtures were installed, and installation of an air refreshing unit completed the work on the balcony.

The remarkable expansion of Beth Israel under Rabbi Freedman's leadership encompassed a broad range of interests and sentiments and a diversity of traditions. With the coming of Rabbi Freedman men and women were attracted to the synagogue in growing numbers. They, along with the workings of time, were to modify its features.

Growth always has been one of the basic impulses of the Jewish spirit, and it was not long before the congregation felt the pinch of limitation. Passing years and the rise in religious interest made Beth Israel's facilities inadequate. When the present building was erected, the congregation was convinced that it had been built for the future. During the 1950s it became

apparent that the synagogue facilities were insufficient to cope with the increasing needs of the members. More useful space was vital for synagogue activities. The office of the rabbi had to be surrendered for other uses because of the space shortage. There were inadequate facilities for recreational and social activities. In 1960 the first changes were brought about by remodeling the downstairs vestry. A specially designed movable wall made the vestry available for secular functions, which were compatible with the aims and purposes of the synagogue. The vestry could now accommodate 160 comfortably. A modern heating system was installed and the walls covered with a rich mahogany paneling. This welcome change added a touch of warmth to the heretofore bleak atmosphere. In 1961 the main sanctuary was carpeted and paneling was put on the walls.

Subsequently, the Ark area was enlarged and the Ark itself refinished in deep tones and adorned with pillars of golden glint. The bimah was removed from the center of the sanctuary and additional benches installed to meet the problem of increased membership as well as allowing greater visibility of the rabbi's podium and the Ark. The completely new lighting effect along with the colorful stained glass windows lent both an inner comfort and a deep sense of awe.

The Diamond Jubilee

The year 1963 was meaningful for Congregation Beth Israel, for it marked not only the 75th anniversary of its founding, but also the Golden Jubilee of the present synagogue. To prepare for this occasion, the board of directors met in October 1962 and appointed a committee to plan for this milestone. Rabbi Freedman was appointed general chairman of the Anniversary Committee and Harold R. Epstein was appointed honorary chairman. The board also named Henry H. Segal editor and historian of the jubilee publication, and Albert and Sidney Schiro as co-chairmen of the Fund-Raising Committee. A large and active committee was later named to assist Rabbi Freedman in planning for the celebration.

One of the goals of the Anniversary Committee was to free the congregation of all indebtedness incurred in the renovation of the synagogue. More than \$20,000 in gifts were contributed toward the Jubilee Fund. President Epstein was able to announce that all indebtedness had been lifted from the congregation through the use of part of the gifts.

To show its appreciation of Rabbi Freedman, the board of directors on July 18, 1963, voted him a life tenure.

After a year of planning, Congregation Beth Israel celebrated its Diamond Jubilee at 7:30 p.m. Sunday

Oct. 20, 1963. The program included talks by Rep. Clifford G. McIntire; Dr. Lloyd H. Elliott, president of the University of Maine; Dr. Andrew Banning, president of the Bangor-Brewer Council of Churches; the Right Rev. Msgr. Edward F. Ward, P.R., of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Bangor; and the Rev. John D. Protapas of St. George's Greek Orthodox Church in Bangor. The keynote speaker was Rabbi Theodore "Teddy" Adams, a Bangor native prominent in rabbinical circles throughout the United States.



Rabbi "Teddy" Adams

Rabbi Freedman said, "The founders brought to the life of this congregation something that was worth a great deal more than money and membership. They brought to their task a vast measure of devotion and vision to a high and noble cause. We shall never be able to adequately discharge our debt of gratitude to these pioneering men and women. It is from the well they dug that we draw today our waters of salvation."

The Friday evening service on Oct. 18 also saluted the 75th anniversary with a special choir program.

After the celebration Beth Israel continued to thrive under the leadership of Presidents Epstein and Joseph G. Ornstein. The congregation enjoyed the prominent position Rabbi Freedman held within the synagogue and throughout the community.

Freedman Decides To Leave

However the tranquil atmosphere suddenly changed in 1969 when Rabbi Freedman announced that he would be leaving the synagogue for Israel in the summer. It was described as a shock by many congregants. Some believed, or perhaps had hoped, that Freedman would stay on as rabbi and retire in Bangor. Members always praised Freedman for his sermons, discussions and diplomatic manner. He was remembered as a warm and kind man who knew how to handle people and shul politics.

A. David Rapaport, paying tribute to Freedman in *The Community News*, said that under Freedman's leadership the congregation had grown to nearly 300 families and that Beth Israel had been revitalized as a holy place and a core of Jewish life. The tribute



Rabbi and Mrs. Avraham H. Freedman were honored at a testimonial dinner June 17, 1969, at Beth Israel Synagogue for their 20 years of service to the Bangor shul. Among those paying tribute to the Freedmans were Rabbi Bernard

continued: "He was our teacher and delivered over 500 informal lectures at Sunday morning breakfasts. He was the principal of our Hebrew School for many years. His interfaith activities brought pride to the Jewish community and enlightenment to all. He has been not only the spiritual leader of the congregation, but one of the outstanding personalities of the civil life of Bangor and of the Maine Jewish community."

Perhaps Henry Segal said it best when he wrote in 1969 that "no rabbi in the 80 year history of Beth Israel has so perfectly identified himself with the interests of his congregation and his people at home and abroad."

The congregation not only lost a rabbi, but lost the dedication and hard work of Mrs. Freedman. Hannah played an important role in the shul and community. She served as president of the sisterhood and was a member of the Hebrew Day Academy.

Rabbi Freedman told the Bangor Daily News that

L. Berzon of New York City, who was Beth Israel's rabbi from 1937 to 1939, and shul President Joseph G. Ornstein. More than 125 people attended the farewell dinner. (Bangor Daily News Photo)

he was going to Israel to fulfill a personal wish and the dream of many Jews. "The country is now in a period of crisis," Freedman said in the June 14-15, 1969, article. "I've been wanting to go and see if I can become involved in the life there, if I can be of some service to the people. Israel is crying out for people to serve in the social life. Any aspect of the Israeli community in which I could be of service I will undertake."

Before Rabbi Freedman left Bangor, the congregation honored him at a testimonial dinner at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 17. The guest speaker was Rabbi Bernard L. Berzon of Congregation Ahavath Israel in New York City. Berzon had served as rabbi at Beth Israel from 1937 to 1939. More than 125 people, including many prominent members of the community, attended the dinner at the synagogue.

And so ended Freedman's 20 years of distinguished service to Congregation Beth Israel.

The Transition Period

It had been 20 years since Beth Israel last searched for a rabbi and this time the members had to wait two years before finding a long-term replacement.

By the time Freedman was in Israel aiding his fellow Jews, the congregation had hired Rabbi Goodman from Waterville. However, Goodman was relieved of his duties in just two months after his leadership didn't measure up to what Beth Israel had expected. For the next two years the congregation maintained the religious spirit through the help of its membership.

While the search for a rabbi continued, the congregation lost one of its most influential members. Myer Minsky, 82, a Zionist pioneer in the Bangor area, died April 15, 1971, in Bangor after a period of ill health. Upon Minsky's death, Dr. Eliot Epstein, president of the Jewish Community Center, said he was a rarity and that the Jewish community had suffered a great loss. Minsky was involved with nearly every significant project within the Bangor Jewish community. He organized and was president of Bangor's first Zionist organization in the early 1900s, which later was renamed The Sons and Daughters of Zion. He was president of the Maine State Zionist Organization, vice president of the New England Zionist Organization, vice president of Beth Israel for more than 25 years, gabbai of Beth Israel, president of the Bangor Hebrew School, and a charter member and president of B'nai B'rith. He also was active in the Jewish National Fund and was vice president of the New England Region of the JNF. He was instrumental in forming the Jewish Community Center and founded the Young Judea group in 1912. He also was local and statewide adviser of the youth organization of B'nai B'rith. Myer's two sons, Leonard and Norman, are members of the synagogue. Norman has served as president of the congregation since 1983.

The search for a new rabbi ended later that year when Rabbi Irving A. Margolies of Teaneck, N.J., was hired. Margolies, who had more than 20 years of experience as a rabbi, and his family were welcomed by about 150 people during a reception at 8:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 9, at the synagogue. Mrs. Benjamin L. Shapero, president of the sisterhood, introduced the rabbi and his family to the gathering.

In September 1971, Stanley Israel, chairman of the Board of Education of the Jewish Community Council, announced that Margolies would become principal of the Bangor Hebrew School. Margolies realized the importance of giving young Bangor Jews a solid Jewish education.

The Hebrew School became a growing concern in 1973. Some members of the community, including



Myer Minsky



Louis Shapiro

several from Congregation Beth Israel, were concerned about having teachers from the Hebrew Academy — a school offering secular and religious studies to Jewish students in kindergarten through eighth grade — teach Hebrew School classes. The concerns related to whether the teachers might be too fatigued after a full day of teaching in the day school to provide the necessary instruction to the Hebrew School students during the late afternoon. There also was concern over the curriculum. Boards representing the Jewish Community Council and Congregation Beth Israel discussed the issues and a special committee was appointed. The committee ultimately recommended hiring separate teachers for the Hebrew School. The proposal was accepted by the Religious and Education Committee of Congregation Beth Israel.

While education continued to be a focus in 1973, the death of Louis Shapiro on June 20 forced Beth Israel to turn its attention to hiring a new shamash. Shapiro had faithfully served the congregation for many years and his death certainly left a deep void. Shapiro was a loyal friend and worker, and the synagogue was his life. The board of directors approved Harry Gedal as Shapiro's successor. Gedal, who was a shopkeeper on York Street, is a highly educated layman and a devout Jew. Gedal retired as shamash in 1986, and the synagogue has not been able to find a person to fill his shoes. Not being able to find a replacement for Gedal was a concern as early as 1979. Joseph Ornstein had stated that the shul needed to be concerned with finding a replacement for Gedal when he decided to retire. Ornstein said, "The availability is not great."

Land For Expanding

A month had passed since Shapiro's death when President Seymour Chamoff proposed at the July board meeting that the shul consider purchasing the

Shapiro property on the westerly side of the synagogue. Chamoff pointed out that the shul had taken steps to acquire the Mountaine property on the easterly side. If the purchases were made the synagogue would have control on both sides and provide future generations valuable land for expanding.

Purchasing property was nothing new to Beth Israel. After Rabbi Freedman left, the house in which he lived on Garland Street was sold and within a few years the current house for the synagogue's rabbi was purchased at 122 Maple St.

While various members worked to acquire the properties, Margolies prepared for the High Holy Days. At a special meeting of the board of directors in September, Margolies said he would appeal to the congregation on the second day of Rosh Hashana to pledge attendance throughout the year. He said the board would hand out pledge cards on which members could pledge from one to four days of attendance each month. Margolies' idea paid off and in December he reported at the annual meeting that 160 people pledged to attend services at least once a month and that Sabbath morning services had tripled.

Margolies also cited a number of accomplishments for 1973. Besides the increased attendance, the rabbi said that the adult, couples and sisterhood study groups were well-attended.

Acquiring property again was the main topic of discussion at the Jan. 20, 1974, meeting. It was announced that the shul had bought the Shapiro building at 142 York St. for \$9,000. The board was informed that the Toldoth Yitzchak Synagogue at 37 Essex St. and its cemetery property could be purchased for \$10,000 on condition that Beth Israel send the defunct synagogue's five Sefer Torahs to Israel. In return, Toldoth Yitzchak would donate \$4,000 to Beth Israel's Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund. The board approved the purchase of Toldoth Yitzchak and also voted to purchase the Mountaine property at 21 Adams St. when it was put on the market. Seymour Chamoff, Joe Ornstein and Harold Baron were instructed to negotiate for the Mountaine property.

In May the Mountaine building was purchased for \$20,000 after the first offer of \$17,500 was refused. In September it was decided to rent the property on Adams Street and Harold Baron reported that the Shapiro and Toldoth Yitzchak buildings were demolished at no cost to the synagogue. President Chamoff thanked Baron for his time and efforts in finding people to demolish the buildings and grade the land at no cost. The board then decided to seed the property and ruled out the possibility of using the land as a parking lot.

At the close of the year, Rabbi Margolies issued a

Harry Gedal

While many names come to mind when thinking about people who have made contributions to the shul, one name appears on everybody's list. Harry Gedal, who served as shamash from 1973 to 1986, is recognized by all as a highly educated layman and devout Jew. Gedal's able work and consistent service brought peace of mind to those who prayed at Beth Israel.



Harry Gedal

In the absence of a rabbi, it was Gedal who kept the religious thread from fraying. His service was praised by past presidents and rabbis, as well as many shul members.

In his 1974 year-end report, Rabbi Irving Margolies thanked Gedal for his dedicated service to the synagogue. Past President Harold Baron praised Gedal for his service to the congregation when Rabbi Alan Kalinsky left Bangor.

"I don't know what we would have done without him," Baron said.

Although he retired in 1986, Gedal still finds time to help out when needed. During the Oct. 16 100th anniversary convocation, Gedal could be seen lending a helping hand to ensure the success of the event.

His retirement definitely left a void in the shul. The congregation knew Gedal's shoes would be hard to fill. As early as 1979 Joseph Ornstein was concerned about Gedal's retirement. He said of possible replacements: "The availability is not great."

While there are many ways to contribute to the congregation, Harry Gedal leaves his mark in prayer and dedicated service to all.

positive report about the year's activities. He said that Sabbath services were better attended than when he first arrived to Bangor. "During my first and second year as your rabbi, we barely had a minyan on Shabbos, and hardly any women worshippers," Margolies said. "This year we have seen some 40 to 50 men and women attend regularly on just ordinary Sabbaths.

As a matter of fact, our women may soon outnumber the men at Shabbos morning service." The rabbi said he was pleased by the number of youngsters attending the Sabbath services with their parents. He said the children were called to the pulpit for the concluding part of the service and seemed to enjoy it. "It is my opinion that bringing the children to shul on Shabbos is a far better training ground for future participation than any separate Junior Congregation could possibly offer."

Margolies also mentioned the success of various study groups and thanked Gedal for his dedicated service to the synagogue.

Turning to education, Margolies reported that the Board of Education of the Jewish Community Center decided to hire two teachers for the Hebrew School. This announcement pleased the congregation.

The synagogue's future depends on youth, but age is its foundation. On June 20, 1974, Beth Israel lost one of its cornerstones when Abraham O. Emple, a pillar in Congregation Beth Israel, died after a short illness. Asher Emple had served Beth Israel throughout the years in various capacities including honorary life member of the board of directors, honorary gabbai and baal tefillah. He was also a member of the Jewish Community Council and the Zionist Organization of America. In 1972, the board of directors honored Asher Emple with a citation which hangs in the vestry. In the citation it is recorded that Asher Emple "is truly devoted to the welfare of his congregation, a man who holds sacrosanct the elements of righteousness, a man who is an ardent believing Jew (who) is deeply concerned about the future of Beth Israel." Two of A.O. Emple's sons, Maurice and Irving, currently participate in the daily minyans and Sabbath services.

With the coming of a new year attendance began to wane. The board of directors said there were not enough men coming for daily minyans, a situation that would continue to plague the congregation for many years.

Attendance at services was not the only trouble the synagogue faced. The board of directors was seeking better attendance at its meetings. The board searched through the past minutes and decided to contact those directors that had failed to attend recent meetings. The board proposed in October 1975, that the directors who failed to attend the next board meeting would lose their position on the board, but President Chamoff said he would contact those directors before any action would be taken. Chamoff told the board that he received a letter thanking the congregation for the five Torahs that were sent to Israel in March 1974. The board then agreed to send a letter to Fox and Ginn Movers to thank them for packing

and shipping the Toldoth Yitzchak Torahs at no cost to the synagogue.

The most important item of business during the October meeting was whether to offer Margolies a new contract. After much discussion the board voted 17 to 10 not to offer the rabbi a new contract. The contract issue was brought up at the Nov. 16 annual meeting and the congregation upheld the board's decision 65 to 45.

As 1975 came to a close, a new chapter in the history of Beth Israel was ready to begin. 1975 was an active year for the synagogue. Attendance at Brotherhood Breakfasts and other discussion groups was good. An average of 23 people had attended recent discussions and the topic of Jewish contributions toward the birth of the United States proved to be a popular topic as the U.S. bicentennial approached. Among other special activities, a recent seudah to honor the Chevra Kadisha was a success with about 200 people attending.

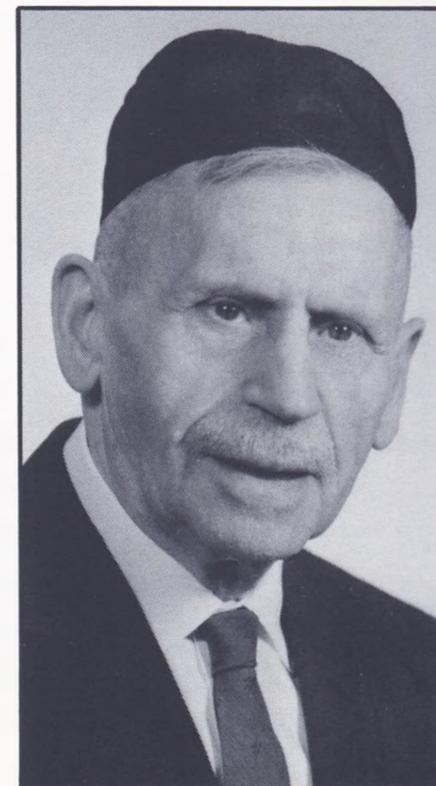
As America began its celebration of 200 years of independence, Beth Israel began the process of finding a new rabbi although Margolies would not be leaving until midsummer.

The board of directors gained more power in 1976 when it voted 18 to 7 to control the hiring and salaries of future rabbis and cantors. It also was mentioned during the meeting that it was getting difficult to maintain a minyan at morning and evening services.

Search For A New Rabbi

Meanwhile, a committee consisting of Harold Baron, Seymour Chamoff, Connie Kelsey, Sam Rolsky, David Leen, Bernard Miller, Leonard Minsky and Herbert Macoby undertook the task of finding a new rabbi. The committee reported in June that the shul had received one resume, but nothing came of it. David Leen was instructed to contact various agencies to locate five or six candidates for interviews. President Chamoff warned that the congregation might be in for a rough time in finding a rabbi soon because there didn't seem to be many available.

Later that month Beth Israel interviewed Rabbi Alan M. Kalinsky of New York. The next evening, Thursday, July 1, Kalinsky delivered a sermon to the congregation during a general meeting and then met



Abraham O. Emple

with members in the vestry. At 9:30 that evening the board of directors met and it was moved by Bernard Miller and seconded by Harry Tabenken to offer Rabbi Kalinsky a two-year contract to assume the pulpit of Beth Israel. A discussion ensued and "after all sides were heard the vote was taken." Kalinsky was approved 16 to 2 and he was invited to accept the pulpit. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Rabbi Margolies gave his farewell sermon Saturday, July 17, and afterward the congregation honored him with a kiddush. Under Rabbi Margolies' leadership, the religious and cultural programs at the shul were broadened, the Bangor Daily News reported. The rabbi's work with various groups also was praised by the local press. Margolies assumed the pulpit of Temple Sinai in Middletown, N.Y., on Aug. 15. The synagogue has 500 family members and has a larger potential for continued growth and spiritual development, Margolies told the press.

Kalinsky assumed his new position at Beth Israel in August and was formally installed Sunday, Nov. 7. Rabbi Moshe Neiss of New York City conducted the installation. Kalinsky graduated from Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, an affiliate of Yeshiva University of New York, in 1976.

A week after the installation dinner, the board of directors decided the shul would drop its membership in The United Synagogue of America. The shul had joined the Conservative organization June 9 and decided it had received no benefits as a member. Also at the meeting, Kalinsky reported that some changes could be expected soon to improve the Hebrew School.

At the annual meeting on Nov. 21, 1976, Kalinsky expressed appreciation to the congregation for extending such a warm welcome. He commended the Chevra Kadisha for following the Jewish precepts of burial and said the curriculum at the Hebrew School had been improved and that he had more input into how the school was run.

President Chamoff then thanked the congregation for its support during his four years as president and said the appointment of Kalinsky was the high point of his tenure. He said Kalinsky was very easy and pleasant to work with. Chamoff added that he supported the decision to withdraw from The United Synagogue of America saying the organization was of no help during the recent search for a rabbi. Chamoff received a standing ovation for his service to the congregation. Neil Glazier then became the next president.

Although most of the committees reported that 1976 was a good year, the Finance and Audit Committee viewed the decrease in membership with some alarm.

A declining membership and decrease in service



President Sy Chamoff and Rabbi Margolies hold two of the Toldoth Yitzchak Torahs that are to be sent to Israel. Fox and Ginn Movers shipped the scrolls to Israel in 1974 at no cost to the shul. (Bangor Daily News Photo)

attendance would continue to be a problem throughout Kalinsky's term as rabbi. But Rabbi Kalinsky said in a 1977 interview that empty seats in the synagogue didn't bother him. "Judaism was never intrigued by large numbers — rather quality was what counted," he said in *The Community News*. "On any given Sabbath, no matter what the numbers, one can feel the warmth and friendship generated during our services."

In some cases, that warmth and friendship of Beth Israel's services involved members of Beth Abraham. Occasionally the lack of a minyan at Beth Israel required its members to go across the street to get people from Beth Abraham to establish a minyan. The situation became desperate during the winter months when some congregants left for Florida on vacation.

During 1978 the board of directors began to study the feasibility of moving the Hebrew School to the synagogue. While the meeting minutes do not outline the exact problems that led to the action, past disputes had centered on Beth Israel not having a strong enough say in what their members' children were taught.

The board and the rabbi realized the importance of a solid education for the young Jews. Kalinsky worked well with the youngsters and also with high school and college-age students. Kalinsky held Young Judea meetings at the synagogue and taught at the



Beth Israel members join Rabbi and Mrs. Kalinsky at the sisterhood's Passover Seder in 1978.

Bangor Daily News Photo

Hebrew School. Kalinsky believed it was important to involve the youngsters in religious services.

On April 12, the board of directors voted 11 to 6 against moving the Hebrew School to the synagogue. After that vote, Henry Segal proposed that the president of Beth Israel choose a committee to meet with the directors of the Jewish Community Council and the Board of Hebrew Education to make the rabbi of Beth Israel principal of the Hebrew School under the school's current structure. The motion was seconded by Bess Minsky and unanimously approved by the board. In June it was determined by the Board of Jewish Education that Rabbi Kalinsky would serve as principal of the Hebrew School.

Shul In Need Of Repairs

Meanwhile, the board of directors faced the need to repair the synagogue and the houses on Maple and Adams streets. The synagogue needed extensive roof and exterior wall repairs that would cost more than \$100,000. In August the board named Harold Baron, Irwin Singer, Henry Segal, Harry Epstein and Joseph Ornstein to a reconstruction committee.

While the board was concerning itself with the Hebrew School and building renovations in 1979 it would soon have to deal with the possibility of losing Rabbi Kalinsky. The rabbi told the board on April 19 that he wanted to be closer to his family in New York and that "there was a tremendous void with respect to

participation in shul functions." The board immediately formed a committee to search for a new rabbi.

On July 2, 1979, President Billy Miller called a board meeting to reconsider Kalinsky's resignation. Bernie Kubetz proposed that Rabbi Kalinsky be offered a new contract. Neil Glazier, who earlier that year became a life member of the board of directors, seconded the motion. After a lengthy discussion the motion carried.

Now that Beth Israel and Kalinsky had come to terms, the members continued to take steps to renovate the shul. In September Irwin Singer indicated that the properties on Maple and Adams streets were in good shape. Baron, meanwhile, met with architects to discuss renovation costs. The House Committee was then given authority to repair the shul and received \$75,000 to complete the work. However, before any work could be started, the House Committee had to receive the approval of the board of directors. By October the board had two proposals from the Lewiston firm Aliberti, LaRochelle & Hodson. One proposal was to use Maine stone and the other was to put Cota, a type of stucco, on the building. The board, which would eventually opt for the Maine stone, unanimously approved the use of Cota at an estimated cost of \$78,600. Months before this action was taken the board also had discussed the possibility of using bricks or to construct a new building. The high cost of a new building precluded any further action on that proposal.



Bangor Daily News Photo

Workers continue the restoration of Beth Israel Synagogue on York Street in August 1980.

At the annual meeting it was reported that the costs of the improvements would be closer to \$100,000 and that work would begin in the spring of 1980.

Rabbi Kalinsky told the congregation that new membership was needed. It was also mentioned that there continued to be a problem achieving a minyan. Joseph Ornstein reported that membership was falling. He said, "The figure of 250-300 members is often heard. This is not so. As an estimate we have 140 family members, 75 women members, and 27 men members." He reported a net loss of 10 or more members in 1979. Ornstein also voiced concern about the dwindling Junior Congregation attendance and said something should be done. When the meeting adjourned, Harold Baron was selected to serve as president. Baron would lead the synagogue for three terms and see the shul brought back from its deteriorated condition.

Baron called his first meeting as president on Dec.

2, and shul repairs topped the agenda. The board members discussed the plans from Downeast Associates, the general contractor for the project, and also decided against pursuing the idea of an addition. A motion was made to assess each member \$300 for synagogue repairs, but the motion was tabled and referred to the Fund-Raising Committee.

In May the board was informed that although the synagogue was structurally sound it was more deteriorated than had been originally thought. The contractor told the Building Committee it would be more expensive to apply the Cota system and it should consider using Maine stone at a cost of \$100,000. The contractor said that price would include a new foundation around the synagogue. A motion was made by Billy Miller and seconded by Neil Glazier that the Maine stone be used. The motion passed with only two dissenting votes.

By October the synagogue had paid most of its



Bangor Daily News Photo

Harry Gedal and Rabbi Alan Kalinsky each hold a Torah inside the synagogue in 1980.

debts on the renovations. The treasurer reported at the Oct. 13 meeting that \$104,000 of the \$125,000 final cost had been paid. Eventually, the total debt was removed through fund-raising efforts. A plaque in the shul lists the names of those who donated more than \$1,000 toward the renovation project.

The renovations in 1980 also included the canopy over the side entrance, a new roof, a 550-gallon oil storage tank, Lexan protective covering on the stained-glass windows, insulation, new carpeting on the outside steps, and added storage area at the rear of the shul.

The improvements began to pay dividends almost immediately. The renovations alleviated the constant problem of flooding and reduced energy costs. The shul used 4,136 gallons of oil from 1979 to 1980 and 2,366 from 1981 to 1982.

The sisterhood also contributed during this period of renovation by upgrading the kitchen area. The sisterhood put in new appliances, counters, flooring and cupboards. The sisterhood also painted and wall-papered the kitchen and had new carpet installed in the vestry entryway. By 1986 the sisterhood also renovated

the men's and women's bathrooms downstairs and financed construction of a unisex bathroom on the sanctuary floor.

Special Year In Bangor

The year 1980 was special for Beth Israel. Many necessary tasks were undertaken and completed. But 1980 also was important for Bangor Orthodox and Reform Jews.

On Oct. 19 Congregation Beth Abraham celebrated Rabbi Henry Isaacs' 20th year as spiritual leader of the Orthodox synagogue in Bangor.

Also in 1980, about five Bangor area families with some Reform Judaism background decided that Bangor could support a Reform congregation. The families decided to hold a public meeting in 1981 and formed a Reform movement with about 20 families. Some of the older members of the newly formed congregation decided to name the synagogue Beth El after the Conservative congregation formed in 1927. The 1927 Conservative congregation had been a first of its kind in the Bangor area and so the new Reform congregation thought it would be a suitable name for the first

organized Reform synagogue in the area. Beth El, which meets in the Unitarian Church on Union Street, joined the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1982 and currently has a membership of 55 families.

Meanwhile, the Beth Israel board of directors met May 20, 1981, to take action on whether to offer Rabbi Kalinsky a new contract. After much discussion the board voted 22 to 8 against a new contract and a search committee was formed to find a new rabbi. Norman Minsky was chairman of the Search Committee.

The congregation prepared a farewell breakfast for Rabbi Kalinsky in the vestry of the synagogue on Sunday, June 28. During his five years in Bangor, Rabbi Kalinsky was a member of the Bangor Area Clergy Fellowship, the Chaplain's Advisory Committee at Eastern Maine Medical Center and a chaplain in the U.S. Air Force Reserve. On Nov. 8 he was installed as rabbi at an Orthodox shul in Schenectady, N.Y., named Beth Israel.

Before his installation in 1981 he told a reporter at the Bangor Daily News that serving Bangor was an excellent opportunity. "Bangor was the best opportunity for someone coming right out of school."

On Nov. 22, Minsky reported at the annual meeting that finding a rabbi didn't look promising. He said he was in contact with the Jewish Theological Seminary and was told that the shul probably would be able to hire a rabbi sometime in the spring of 1982.

Also at the meeting, Joseph Ornstein, chairman of the Finance and Audit Committee, complimented President Harold Baron on his fiscal acuity in handling the synagogue funds the past several years. With numerous expenses during the past couple of years it was fortunate that the congregation had Baron's leadership.

Although Beth Israel's financial house was in order, its religious house was without a leader. While the shul searched for a rabbi, Harry Gedal davened on the Sabbath while other congregants assisted in other ways. Joseph Ornstein orchestrated the services and planned the honor parts during the High Holy Days. Rabbi David Lapp of New York, who has been Beth Israel's cantor for many years, led the services during the High Holy Days. The synagogue also used the services of Yeshiva University students.

Conservative Rabbi Hired

On May 18, 1982, the board moved to invite Rabbi Joseph P. Schonberger to Bangor. On June 9, the board held a special meeting and Stanley Israel moved that the board hire Rabbi Schonberger. Arnold Garson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Beth Israel had hired its first Conservative

rabbi and prepared to face the challenges that the 1980s would present.

In November Rabbi Schonberger reported to the congregation that activities were in full swing. He was meeting with Jewish students at the University of Maine, tutoring children in Torah reading and developing Holocaust programs with local members of the clergy.

Programming is an important part of the rabbi's day and through his discretionary fund he was able to sponsor and initiate a

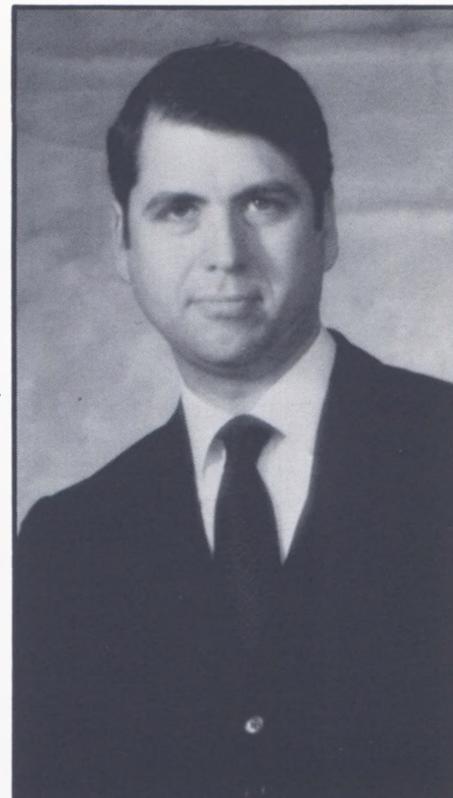
variety of programs. Whenever the rabbi performed a function for a shul member the money would go into the discretionary fund. "In this way, money from one mitzvah can go to other mitzvah," Schonberger said. The money is used for activities that are important for the shul and community and also to assist people in need. The fund has been used in the past to initiate a variety of educational and holiday activities. Once these programs got off the ground, other means of funding were used to continue the programs. The sisterhood, he added, now sponsors many of these activities.

At the annual meeting Baron ended his three terms as president and the next day was elected an honorary member of the board of directors. Marshall Stern became president at the Nov. 21, 1982, meeting.

On Oct. 9, 1983, Beth Abraham Synagogue celebrated its 50th year on York Street. More than 150 people attended the event. Within just a few months, however, celebration turned to tragedy for the Jews in the Greater Bangor area when Beth Abraham was destroyed by fire. Fire was no stranger to Beth Abraham. The Orthodox shul lost its first building at 37 Carr St. on March 30, 1932.

Although the Jan. 25, 1984, fire destroyed the synagogue, the Torahs were saved. A front page story in the Bangor Daily News reported that "Rabbi Henry Isaacs donned a firefighter's coat and hat and rushed into the burning synagogue to rescue the holy scrolls." A silver crown also was salvaged, and according to shul members it was the same crown David Striar had rescued in the 1932 fire.

The Jewish community received another blow when the Bangor Hebrew Academy announced that it would close its doors after the May 29, 1984, grad-



Rabbi Schonberger

uation. The school was established in September 1963 at the Jewish Community Center to provide Jewish children "a complete education," Isaacs told the Bangor Daily News. During the 1970s the school had as many as 67 students and 14 teachers. In its final year the school had only 12 students and three full-time and two part-time teachers. Isaacs served as principal and teacher at the school.

Jews in Bangor finally had a reason to celebrate on Dec. 15, 1985, when Beth Abraham dedicated its new building on York Street at an evening service. Earlier that day there was an open house at which several distinguished guests paid tribute to the new shul. Rabbi Schonberger welcomed Beth Abraham "back to the block." Also offering congratulations were representatives from Beth El, Temple Israel of Old Town, Chaveroth Shalom of Ellsworth, the Jewish Community Center, and the city of Bangor. The event also marked Isaac's 25th year as rabbi of Beth Abraham.

Meanwhile, Beth Israel was making historic moves. Billy Miller, at the June 10, 1985, board meeting, made a motion that would allow women to take part in the opening of the Ark beginning with the 1985 High Holy Days. The motion carried with only four dissenting votes.

A Change In Education

In August the board started taking steps that would revolutionize the way Bangor's Jewish youth would receive their Jewish education. Beginning in September the Hebrew School system was reorganized to correct the problems that threatened the community school. The school was divided into two sections. One section, which maintained the community school method, dealt with language and post-biblical Jewish history. The second section centered on religious education and was taught by the various synagogues. Under this new system the community structure was preserved while the congregational differences were maintained.

During the language and Jewish history phase of the school, Susan Schonberger and Paula Saffer teach modern Hebrew language. Inez Rudman teaches Jewish history and Susan and Rabbi Schonberger teach the religious classes. Scott Rapaport and Amy Glazier assist in teaching the Beth Israel students.

In its first year there were 43 students attending the Hebrew School, 28 of those students were from Beth Israel. During the 1987-88 school year there were 47 students enrolled, 38 representing Beth Israel.

Educating the youth is an important goal of Rabbi and Mrs. Schonberger. The Schonbergers are active organizing programs for preschoolers, teen-agers, and college students. Their aim is to increase youngsters'



Susan Schonberger prepares children for the High Holy Days during a Harold Levy Preschool Workshop in 1984. Upon his death, Harold Levy left a sizable amount of money to Beth Israel which became an endowment for preschool activities. (Bangor Daily News Photo)

involvement in all levels of synagogue and community Jewish life. Some of the events they are involved in are the United Synagogue Youth program, Friday evening family services led by the youngsters, and Junior Congregation, which meets the first Saturday of each month.

There also have been numerous memorial funds established to further the education of Beth Israel's young Jews. Perhaps the most well-known fund is the Harold Levy Youth Fund, which was created to help provide activities for preschoolers.

The importance of educating the children of Beth Israel is obvious. The hard work of past generations must be carried on by the younger generations. Although the membership has declined from its levels in the 1960s, the 1980s have shown significant growth, according to Rabbi Schonberger. The membership as a whole is much younger and this is a good sign. According to 1988 figures, there are 111 family members, 68 single women members and 22 single men members.

While today's youth must build for the future, they must look back to learn from the examples of the past. There have been many hard workers in the history of Beth Israel and on Nov. 18, 1985, one of them died leaving a space not easily filled by one man.

Dr. Joseph G. Ornstein died in Miami at the age of 71. He was described as a diligent worker by former President Harold Baron and received similar praise from other members. Rabbi Kalinsky, in a 1977 letter to Dr. Ornstein, said, "I wish to express to you on behalf of the congregation and myself our most sincere gratitude to you for being so dedicated to the synagogue for so many years. I am convinced that you top the list of those who have served (the synagogue) both faithfully and devotedly. I appreciate your assistance as Gabbai Rishon, especially your Torah and Haftorah insights during my absences."



Joseph Ornstein

Ornstein was a member of numerous professional, civic and religious organizations. According to his obituary he was a member of B'nai B'rith and the Zionist Organization of America. He became a member of the Bangor Jewish Council board of directors in 1948, serving as secretary, treasurer, editor and president, and was elected an honorary life member of the board in 1962. He was a trustee of the endowment fund of the council for 10 years. Outside Bangor, he was on the executive committee of the New England section of the Jewish Welfare Board for six years and was vice president for one year. He also served on the board of directors of the Jewish Community Center Camps for 12 years.

From 1948 to 1968 he was on the Beth Israel Synagogue board of directors serving on various committees and in numerous positions. He served as secretary and treasurer under President Epstein and as president from 1965 to 1969. He also established and ran the trust funds beginning in 1960 and was elected a life member of the board in 1968. He was a member of the Chevra Kadisha for many years and was elected first gabbai in 1970 and served in that capacity until his retirement.

Shul Activities Increase

In 1986 Rabbi Schonberger received a new three-year contract. For Schonberger things were coming together at Beth Israel. Not only had the Hebrew School attendance increased, but the number of weddings, bar and bas mitzvahs and conversions had been promising.

Celia Segal

One person who plays an important role in Beth Israel is not even a member of the shul.

Celia Segal, who has cooked for many events for the congregation for nearly 25 years, is a member of our neighbor synagogue, Beth Abraham.

Celia cooks a variety of foods and treats for Kiddushes. Her pastries, fish and puddings are all among the many treats that members of the synagogue have enjoyed over the years.

People also look forward to her tasty treats at bar mitzvahs, bat mitzvahs and other synagogue events.

Celia's personality adds to the atmosphere of shul events, and her friendship and many contributions continue to enrich the many facets of synagogue life. Celia is a pleasure to work with and her hard work is appreciated by all.



Celia Segal

In June the rabbi reported that there was a growing religious spirit. Attendance at Saturday morning services during the month improved. He also mentioned that the Beth Israel Havurah was very active and said that the shul should be proud of the Harold Levy Preschool Workshops for youngsters.

According to the board minutes parking became a concern for a few members of Beth Israel. Many congregants were upset that some members parked too close to the shul on the Sabbath. Schonberger, however, believed the parking problem was minor and said the board should be more concerned with attendance. He told the board to be more concerned with maintaining the proper decorum during services and in being more open in welcoming new members.

By this time Schonberger was actively involved with the community. He was a member of the Chaplain's Advisory Committee at Eastern Maine Medical Center, the Ethical Review Board at St. Joseph Hospital, and the Bangor Area Clergy Fellowship. He was sought for speaking engagements in the Greater Bangor area and was active helping Beth Israel congregants.

Harry Epstein Honored

On Sept. 28, 1986, the sisterhood sponsored a dinner to honor Harry Epstein whose constant participation and leadership in community and Beth Israel affairs was appreciated by all.

At the May 18, 1987, board meeting another milestone in the advancement of women within the synagogue structure began to take shape. The issue of women's aliyahs was hotly debated. Billy Miller said the practice disturbed various members and shouldn't be done. Miller made a motion that would not allow women to receive aliyahs. The motion was seconded by Irving Emple and was defeated, leaving the issue unresolved. Stan Israel then made a motion that would allow women to go up to the bimah in the company of a man, but not as an aliyah. Fran D'Errico seconded the motion and it was withdrawn. Much discussion followed, but no decisions regarding the issue were made at the May meeting.

Also at the May meeting, the House Committee reported that the Adams Street property was in poor condition and should either be renovated or torn down. The board decided to clear the lot on which the house stands. The options were to demolish the building or have somebody move the house from the property.

The next board meeting in June again focused on the issue of women's aliyahs. A motion was made to allow women to accompany their husbands when called for an aliyah during a bar or bas mitzvah. The motion carried, and the religious role of women became more visible. Later it was decided to expand that decision to cover the High Holy Days.

One of the most prominent members of Beth Israel Synagogue passed away Aug. 18, 1987, in Bangor after a long illness. Harold R. Epstein, 82, was president of Beth Israel from 1941 to 1947 and from 1948 to 1965. Besides serving as president, Epstein headed the Chevra Kadisha for more than 50 years and was a member of B'nai B'rith, the Jewish Community Center, the Zionist Organization of America, Beth Abraham Synagogue, and the United Jewish Chapel. Epstein owned the chain of Epstein's Department Stores, which began in 1910 when his father, Max,



Harry Epstein

opened a small business in Brewer. Epstein was known for his generosity and good will toward his fellow man.

At the Aug. 24 meeting, President Norman Minsky requested a minute of silence to pay tribute to Harry Epstein.

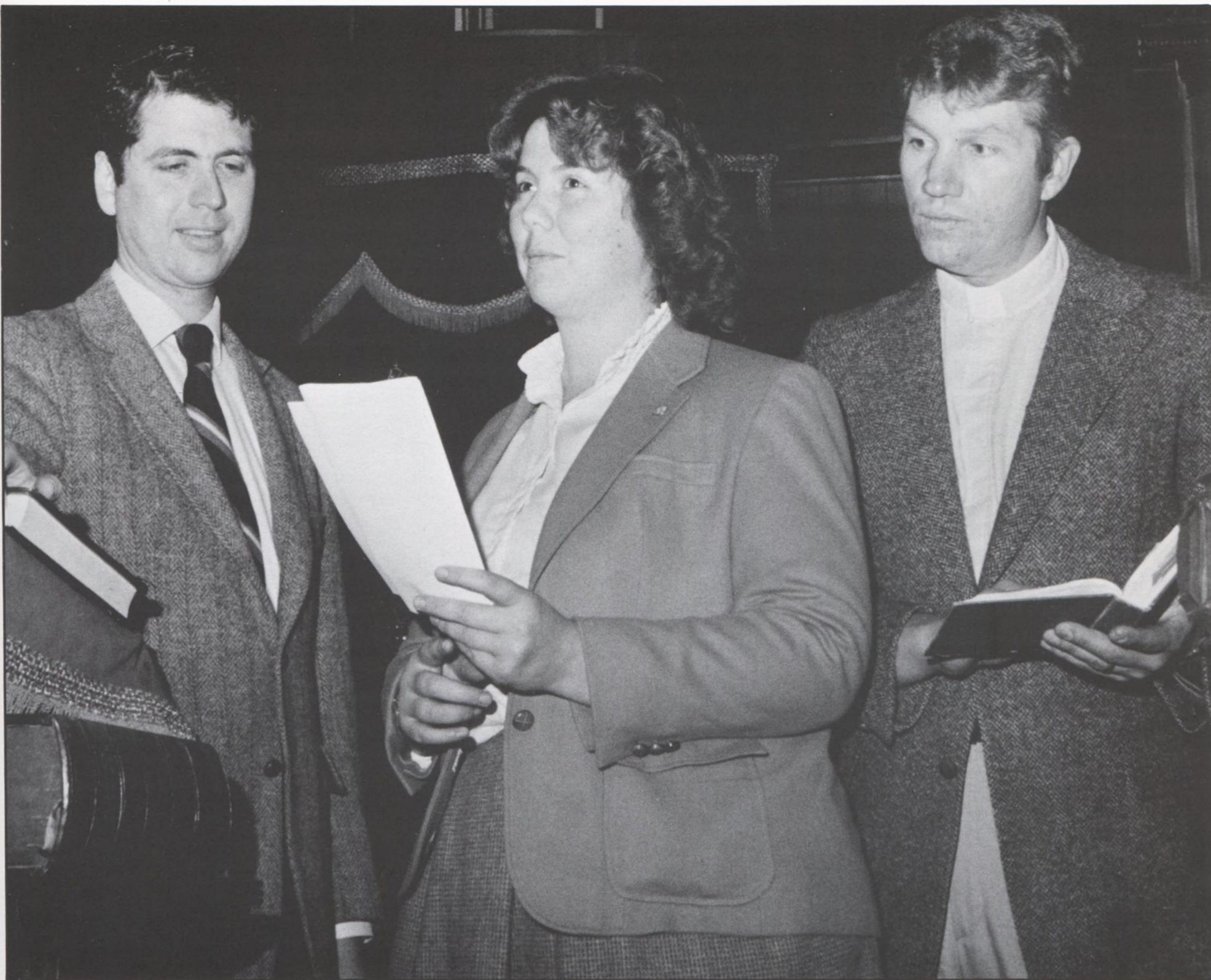
The Jewish community was dealt another loss in 1987, when Temple Israel in Old Town did not have enough people to observe the High Holy Days. The Old Town shul was forced to close and was placed on the market in 1988. The few remaining members of Temple Israel either celebrated the holidays in Bangor or left town to observe the holidays with their families. The Old Town synagogue placed its memorial plaques in Beth Israel's care and also presented the Bangor shul with its two Torahs.

With one year to go before Beth Israel would celebrate its 100th anniversary, Rabbi Schonberger wasn't waiting around for a reason to celebrate. Schonberger, whose activities and special services to educate people of all faiths about the Holocaust are well-known throughout the community, was planning a Thanksgiving interfaith service for Sunday, Nov. 22, at Beth Israel. The rabbi believes that it's important for people to understand other people's religions. With a better understanding of different religious perspectives, everybody can work together within the community. "If we have positive contacts with the community, then it's easier to deal with situations that might arise in the future," the rabbi said.

The Rev. Paul Anderson of the Redeemer Lutheran Church, the Rev. Patricia Carol of the Universalist Church and Rabbi Schonberger planned an event that would not be forgotten by those in attendance. Dr. Malcolm Warford, president of the Bangor Theological Seminary, delivered the Thanksgiving address. Among the clergy to participate were the Rev. Robert Beaumont, First Baptist Church; the Rev. Maurice Lebel, SJ, St. John's Catholic Church; the Rev. John Hoelter, chaplain, Eastern Maine Medical Center; the Rev. Thomas Heath, St. George Greek Orthodox Church; the Rev. Donald Harpster, All Souls Congregational Church; and the Rev. Sidney E. Buzzell, Grace Methodist Church.

The program featured readings from the Bible and excerpts from the Bill of Rights and the U.S. Constitution, as well as quotes from famous American political figures. More than 225 people donned yarmulkes at the interfaith service.

President Minsky praised Schonberger for his organizational efforts which enabled the event to be a success. Schonberger said another interfaith service would be scheduled at the shul April 14, 1988, to observe Holocaust Remembrance Day.



Bangor Daily News Photo

Rabbi Joseph Schonberger, the Rev. Pat Carol, and the Rev. Paul Anderson prepare for the Thanksgiving interfaith service scheduled Nov. 22, 1987, at Beth Israel.



Members of the Beth Israel Religious School learn about Hanukkah during a December 1986 class. Watching the candles in the menorah burn are (front, left to right) Joshua Bruno, Rose Whelan, Emily

Kagan Peters, Rachael Weinstein, Rachel Rubin, (back, left to right) Meredith Theeman, Daniel Pincus, Ian Cohen, Joshua Rubin, Halie Cohen, and Amanda Blank. (The Register Photo)



Rabbi Joseph Schonberger helps children build a sukkah at his Maple Street home in October 1987. The children look forward each year to building the sukkah. (Bangor Daily News Photo)