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As Rabbi Walter S. Wurzburger listened, left, Rabbi Shlomo Goren, right, new chief rabbi of Israel, spoke with rabbis at the Orthodox convention in the Pine View Hotel in Fallsburg, N.Y.

# Orthodox and Reform Rabbis at Parleys Note Growing Demand for Traditionalism

By **GEORGE VECSEY**  
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FALLSBURG, N.Y., June 23—It takes 15 minutes to drive between here and Liberty, N.Y., where the Orthodox and Reform rabbis held respective conventions this week. Looking at it another way, there is a period of nearly 100 years in between.

The coincidental closeness afforded a look at the workings of both movements, where the new Government of Israel was easily the most frequent topic.

The Orthodox rabbi exuded the feelings of winners, enjoying a personal blessing from Shlomo Goren, the new chief rabbi of Israel, while the Reform rabbi underwent a rather stern lecture from Chaim Herzog, the Israeli representative at the United Nations.

If there was one common thread between the two conventions, it was a sense of increasing traditionalism, particularly among the young, following disillusionment with science and reason.

We're really tired of getting insulted. Why can't a marriage we recognize be recognized in Israel? Why can't a rabbi be recognized as a rabbi?"

Some Reform rabbis were not reassured by Mr. Herzog, who is now in the position of defending a government of a rival political party.

Mr. Herzog spoke to several hundred Reform rabbis and their wives—suntanned men with neat beards or moustaches, some of their wives in tennis garb, on holiday from their own professions.

Mr. Herzog opened his speech by quoting Chaim Weizmann's remark to two young rabbis: "My God, it's a shame that two rabbi's sons should look so much like goyim [non-Jews]."

### Reaction to Begin Is Scored

From there, Mr. Herzog criticized the "vile and uncivilized" reaction to Mr. Begin in America, and he warned the Reform leaders, "Please do not ignore certain facts" that 50 percent of immigrants from America come from the Orthodox movement.

Community of the United States," and many attending it felt even closer ties to the new regime.

### Women Voice Complaints

One note of controversy arose when convention leaders put the subject of the women's role in Orthodoxy in a rare public discussion, setting up a three-scholar panel (all of them men) last night.

Several women here complained that divorces were being held up by recalcitrant husbands who refused to cooperate with the Orthodox divorce ritual. No woman at the Orthodox convention questioned the Halachic rule against women rabbis. (The Reform movement has three woman rabbis to date while the Conservative movement, in the middle of Judaism, recently tabled the issue until next year.)

One of the panelists, Rabbi Shlomo Riskin of New York City, said he had recently permitted women in his congregation in Lincoln Center to fashion their own prayer shawls and hold worship services tailored to their religious needs and professional attainments.

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### External Differences Apparent

The external differences were easy to spot: 500 Reform rabbis—from the Central Conference of American Rabbis, representing 1,300 Reform rabbis—held their convention at Grossinger's, that huge but rather tasteful resort where there are as many main courses on the menu as there are tennis courts—that is to say, dozens.

Over 500 Orthodox rabbis, members of the 1,000-man Rabbinical Council of America, held their convention at the Lebowitz Pine View Hotel, a pleasant 66-year-old family establishment in the woods, where separate swimming times are offered for men and women, to satisfy Orthodox requirements.

Sometimes the two groups traded salvos across the rolling hills of the Catskills. If a Reform leader raised fears of Israel's rejecting Reform and Conservative marriages, the Orthodox group whipped out a statement calling for "standards and guidelines of Jewish behavior that would reflect a pride in our heritage and respect for our tradition."

Late last night, the Reform group also voted to form an organization that would join the World Zionist Organization, reversing the original anti-Zionist thrust of the Reform movement. Several older rabbis protested this reversal.

### Many Issues Considered

The Reform group agonized over many issues—such as questions of Jewish population (they urged larger families) and the popularity of various cults among Jewish youth.

In one obvious change, at least a dozen Reform rabbis wore yarmulkes, which were specifically banned in the early days of the movement.

"This is a sign of identification as Jews," said Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld, the outgoing president of the group, who said there was a demand for traditionalism among young people.

The same response came from Rabbi Walter S. Wurzbarger, leader of the Orthodox group, who said:

"In the postwar period, I used to give sermons that rational thought, more science, would liberate the world. Now there is a wave of disillusionment. There is a search for something else."

### More Orthodox Services Urged

He said young people were demanding more Orthodox services, and noted that Orthodoxy had reached a born-in-America generation.

"I can remember a pillar of the community saying to me when I was young: 'How come you are Orthodox? You seem like a smart fellow.' Today you have scientists, philosophers, teachers, doctors, facing complex questions of bio-ethics. We are not an immigrant culture any more."

One of the few visitors to both camps was Samuel Katz, the special envoy from the new Israeli Prime Minister, Menahem Begin. Mr. Katz has been in America for several weeks lobbying with religious leaders and the American Government. At the Reform meeting, he tried to reassure leaders that Mr. Begin was no bogeyman, and he said he favored religious pluralism in Israel. A few hours later at the Orthodox convention down the road, Mr. Katz did not bring up the subject of religious pluralism.

### 'Tired of Getting Insulted'

Israel is a troubling issue for the Reform Jews, since the religious-oriented Mr. Begin took power this week.

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"We're going to fight this thing," Rabbi Pilchik said later, "by continuing our involvement with Israel, with our visits and with the kibbutz we started last year."

The highlight of the Orthodox convention was a three-hour talk by Dr. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, the 70-year-old spiritual leader ("the Rov"). While hundreds of rabbis and their wives leaned forward, intently holding tape recorders and trying to respond to his questions, Dr. Soloveitchik spoke of the fine points of Orthodox belief.

"If we have faith in man, we are idol worshipers," he said, talking about "punishment" for the worship of man. "Modern man worships man—both Marxism and democracy."

The Orthodox convention theme was "The Impact of Israel on the Religious

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A second panelist, Rabbi Gedalia D. Schwartz of Brooklyn, gave an hour of Halachic explanation on why women could take no further role in worship. He also said he did not think Rabbi Riskin had any right to alter the services.

The third panelist, Rabbi Dr. Reuven P. Bulka of Ottawa, editor of the Journal of Psychology and Judaism, unearthed a Margaret Mead quotation about women being happiest "when they are exalted." Rabbi Bulka also told the rabbi's wives in the audience that they were already superior to men and did not need all the trappings of leadership that chauvinist men had invented for themselves.

Several wives of rabbis said they were insulted by Dr. Bulka, and at least one, a psychiatric social worker, walked out while he was speaking.

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#### 'Tired of Getting Insulted'

Israel is a troubling issue for the Reform Jews, since the religious-oriented Mr. Begin took power this week.

"These are difficult times, very difficult times," said Rabbi Ely E. Pilchik of Short Hills, N.J., the new president of the Reform group, in an interview. "Our love for Israel is unmatched by anybody.

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