Dr. Neuman Describes Purpose of American Jews: To Transmit the Message of Israel to the World

by Jeffrey I. Steinfeld, '62

A new message for the world will come out of Israel, and the American Jews will be of great importance in transmitting this message, according to Dr. Abraham Neuman, President of Dropsie College. Speaking in Krenge Little Theatre last Sunday night, Dr. Neuman explained in prophetic terms his concept of a new Renaissance of Judaism in America.

Dr. Neuman addressed examples to demonstrate his contention. In the Jews' brief history in America—just 300 years—a high quality of intellectual effort has developed; the Conservative and Reconstructionist modes of worship have arisen; a Hebrew and a Judeo-English literature have taken shape. Other Centers Slow

In comparison, Dr. Neuman noted that the rich and important Jewish community in Babylonia was culturally inactive for eight hundred years. From the Exile in 586 B.C. to the beginning of the Talmudic Period in 200 A.D., nothing was produced. The community in Spain, settled during Roman times, was inactive until the tenth century A.D.; the German community produced nothing between 1509 and 1800.

Dr. Neuman explained this series of inaction and sudden vitality by an "intuitive sense" of rhythm and pattern extending over thousands of years. He noted that the rise of the Gaonic Period in Babylonia in 200 A.D. preceded the destruction of the Gaonate by 180 years. Before the destruction of the community in Spain by the 14th century, the Polish and Lithuanian communities ceased to the fore. The German Jews became important just before the Lithuanian destroyed themselves by assimilation; and the American community took its place just prior to the destruction of the German Jewry by Hitler. Dr. Neuman

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