

to counteract the disastrous effects produced by the religious confusion which was widespread and which threatened to strike at the very basis of traditional Jewry. Men who denied their Jewish background, scoffed at the Torah and its mitzvahs, and sought to destroy all that was precious and that had been preserved at terrible costs for so many generations - these were the leaders of the people. They spoke for Jewry and represented it before the government. They prevented the Gedolei Torah from having any influence over the Klall life of the people. Jewish schools were established which turned their backs on the Torah and the fear of G-d. Newspapers were founded and innumerable organizations were created whose ideals were solidly opposed to Yiddishkeit.

Before this irreligious onslaught, G-d fearing Jews, who were loyal to the Torah were swept aside. There was little they could do. A few however, resolutely attempted to carry the banner of the Torah in the face of insuperable odds. They turned to Rav Chaim Ozer for the help which he alone could give. The 'Elbonah shel Torah' organization formed in 1909 and was devoted to the care of the secular education which had been introduced into the Jewish community. The support of the Rabbonim of many communities was requested and received in this work, but it was just a feeble straw which the cold wind of 'modernism' brushed aside. Rav Chaim Ozer carefully assessed the situation and contemplated a union of all loyal Torah Jews in whatever land, whose combined strength would restore the Torah to its former glory.

The first congress, called for the purpose of unifying Orthodox Jewry of Czarist Russia, was convened in 1909. Permission had first to be obtained from the government to conduct such a gathering. Rav Chaim Ozer led the group which approached the government. All the greatest Torah