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Re-evaluation of Reform Judaism, 1935.

## ISRAEL

Abstract of the Paper read at the annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in Chicago, Illinois on June 27, 1935 on the Declaration of Principles of Reform Judaism which was adopted by the Pittsburgh Rabbinical Conference in 1885.

By

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

Paragraph 5 of the Declaration of Principles of Reform Judaism which was adopted by the Pittsburgh Rabbinical Conference in 1885 reads as follows: "We recognize, in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect, the approaching of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice, and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state."

This declaration is noteworthy in that it was the first of its kind ever made by an assembly of Jewish religious leaders, lay or cleric. No similarly constituted conference anywhere in the whole history of Israel up to that time declared categorically: "We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community."

The early Reform Rabbis of America were certainly more eager to formulate Principles and Declarations than were their confreres in Germany. They did not shrink from dogmatic pronouncements, nor did the old adage of Erasmus - *omnis definitio periculosa est* - discourage them. The fact that they had to reckon with far fewer restraints in the New World, traditional or institutional, and with an inchoate Jewish community and a minimum of local Jewish history, undoubtedly gave wing to their spacious and care-free theologic depositions. What impresses

one, however, is the fact that it was in the United States, of all countries, where such a declaration on the subject of Jewish nationalism as one finds in the Pittsburgh platform was made. One cannot account for it except on the basis of its being an importation, an exotic plant brought to these shores by immigrant Rabbis from Germany and transplanted here without any particular reference to soil or climate. For there was nothing in the American Jewish scene in the Eighties that made such a declaration urgent or significant. There was no political pressure from without, no need to placate organized anti-Semitic forces, no necessity to purchase political equality through any public renunciation of earlier ways of life and thought. Nor was there visible any strong nationalist movements among American Jews of those days.

Anti-nationalist tendencies among German Jews were most marked because German anti-Semitism was far more virulent and uncompromising, and German nationalism, following the War of Liberation, far more intense and jaundiced. The opposition to the political emancipation of the Jews in Germany was bitter and relentless throughout the nineteenth century, continuing into the twentieth and achieving a complete victory under the Nazi regime in our day. Rising like a miasma from the poisoned soil of the Dark Ages, Jew hatred has swept uninterruptedly like a pestilential plague through German life and literature, infesting masses and classes alike, poisoning the hearts and minds of liberals as well as reactionaries, of poets, philosophers, statesmen, historians, musicians and churchmen. The venomous anti-Jewish Nazi propaganda literature of the last fifteen years drew its inspiration program and slogans from the prolific school of Jew-baiting preachers, pundits and pamphleteers of the Bismarckian era, and they, in turn, derived their leading ideas from their precursors in the post-Napoleonic era, whose mentor and model was the liberal, anti-clerical

philosopher Fichte whose attitude is summed up in his statement: "The only way I see by which civil rights can be conceded to them is to cut off all their heads in one night and set new ones on their shoulders, which shall contain not a single Jewish idea. The only means of protecting ourselves against them is to conquer their promised land and send them there." The Nazi cry "Juda Verrecke" is the authentic echo of the "Hep, Hep", cry shouted by frenzied mobs in the streets of Frankfort and Hamburg a century and more ago. There is an unbroken line of ideologically formulated, metaphysically sanctioned and artistically embellished Judeophobia in Germany, centuries old, unmatched anywhere else in the world. It was in such a milieu that the Jews of Germany struggled for their civil and political rights. If, therefore, Jewish lay and religious leaders attempted to throw overboard all the racial and national baggage of Israel in the fond hope of calming this sea of hate, if they believed that they could exorcise anti-Semitism by professions of patriotism, and in an age of "crescendo" nationalism, they could solve the Jewish problem by a corresponding "diminuendo" of Jewish nationalism, one can understand their problem and forgive their blindness.

German Jewry might have been sobered in the Seventies when the great reaction set in and anti-Semitism flared up again. Treitschke, Bernhardt, Stocker, Durer, Marr, Mole, -- all the forerunners of the present-day Nazis -- told them exactly how the German people felt about the Jews and why and what the German people would do to them when the hour of decision arrived. But the German Jews continued in their ineluctable optative mood, confident as was Rabbi Auerbach at the Rabbinical Conference of Frankfort, that: "In our day the ideals of justice and the brotherhood of men have been so strengthened through the laws and institutions of modern states, that they can never again be shattered. We are witnessing an ever nearer approach of the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth through the strivings of mankind



(quoted from Philipson's "The Reform Movement in Judaism," p. 178.) This was uttered in Frankfurt in 1845. Frankfurt of 1935 is, of course, a sad and discouraging refutation of all this apocalyptic romancing in which German Jewry immersed itself in those days. The catastrophe of 1933 broke the back of assimilation in Germany. The whole improvised philosophy of Jewish history which is expressed in the doctrine that we are not a nation but a religious community has proved bankrupt and has been liquidated in the very home of its origin.

It would have been far better for the Jews of Germany if they had kept alive a strong national self-consciousness. They would then have faced the Nazi attack as a clash between national groups within a political state - something quite common in Central and Eastern Europe, and their defeat they would have regarded as a political defeat and not as the loss of their entire patrimony, as a banishment from their one and only cultural and spiritual home.

How confidently Ludwig Geiger of Berlin proclaimed thirty years ago: "Any desire to form together with his coreligionists a people outside of Germany is, not to speak of its impracticability, downright thanklessness toward the nation in whose midst he lives -- a chimera; for the German Jew is a German in his national peculiarities (sic!) and Zion is for him the land only of the past, not of the future." (Quoted in J.E. Vol. XII, p. 673.) Thirty years later, Germans whose "national peculiarities" were all German, were fleeing from Germany and finding refuge by the thousands in the land which was never the land of their past but which very definitely must now become the land of their future. The Munich community which forced the transfer of the first Zionist Congress, scheduled to be held there, to Basel, is now grateful that some of its sons and daughters are finding a haven and a new hope in the land which those "unpatriotic" Zionists had built....

They were all too dogmatic, these Geigers and Maybaums and XXI Vogelsteins! It is well to spin philosophies of Jewish history. It is dangerous to ignore the

realities of Jewish experience. The timeliness and convenience of a given theory of Jewish life are not the only tests of its validity. It must be viewed against the background of the accumulated historical experiences of our people, tested as it were, in the crucible of the ages. Certainly, the hope that such a theory might be approved by our enemies gives it no sanction whatsoever; for our enemies can rationalize their hates quite as readily as we can rationalize our hopes, and they have never been known to relent because of any sweet and appetizing definition of Jewish life which we offered them.

Ever since the first dispersion of our people in the sixth century, before the Common Era, and the subsequent voluntary and involuntary migrations which by the beginning of the Common Era saw the Jewish diaspora extend from the Gates of India to the Pillars of Hercules and from the Caucasus to Ethiopia, and their further diffusion throughout Europe in the twenty centuries which followed, up to the present-day world-wide diaspora, Jews have faced the two-fold task of adjusting themselves to their given political and cultural environments and at the same time of remaining loyal to themselves as Jews. Because of this two-fold responsibility there was always an element of stress, tension, and conflict in Jewish life in the diaspora. There always will be. Human history is replete with the clash and conflict of nations, races, peoples, religions and classes. The Jewish nation had its full quota of these conflicts when it was a political nation in Palestine. It certainly could not escape them as a non-political and scattered nation in the diaspora. Those who could not stand the strain of Jewish existence disappeared. Myriads of such Jews were lost to us. Many others were forcibly assimilated. Those who cannot endure the pressures of Jewish life today, will also disappear -- if they can. The newer racial anti-Semitism of the Nazi type is making such desertion extremely difficult. It is impossible to propound any formula for Jewish survival in the diaspora -- if we really mean survival --

free from a measure of stress and conflict.

In our long history we never had a uniform plan or formula for survival. Such a formula, if it is to be something more than academic, must take into account not only the shifting interests and needs of the Jews themselves but also the varied and changing political and economic milieu in which Jewish groups find themselves. A formula which would be valid for Jewish communities living in an empire like that of ancient Persia, Greece or Rome which embraced numerous nationalities and allowed them full national autonomy short of political independence would not meet the situation of a Jewish community living in a closely-knit, uni-cultural, national state like modern France, Germany, or Italy, and a formula valid for these countries would not be adequate for a multi-national state like Poland, Czechoslovakia, or Russia. A Jewish community living in the midst of a people whose cultural level was far inferior to its own, would face altogether different problems of adjustment than one living in the midst of a superior culture.

But there was always the will to survive! Not in all sections of our people, to be sure, nor at all times, but certainly in sufficiently large sections of our people at all times to have enabled Israel to survive to this day. And at all times, this will to survive, this basic loyalty to their corporate existence and to the substantial elements of their total heritage, projected the necessary strategy, the adequate technique for survival. This strategy was dictated not by any abstract speculation or by apologetics but by the life-hunger of the race, the indefeasible will to live, the compelling sense of destiny. The source of inspiration was always within, rising from the profound hidden depths of the racial, the instinctive, the primordial.

So great was this desire not to die as a people, that when it found its life besieged and threatened, it threw additional bulwarks around its security and raised stronger walls of defense. It did not hesitate to impose upon itself in the centuries following the second Destruction, a code of discipline which was far more rigorous

than any military discipline, and which effectively safeguarded the individuality of the people and secured it against disintegration. The people, as a whole, never relaxed its vigilance. It never whittled down its requirements or its survival program to appease enemies or detractors. It never countenanced a minimal program to satisfy others. It always insisted upon a maximum program to protect its own life.

Some of the great ideals of Jewish life were evolved in response to the nation's vital needs of survival. This is particularly true of the so-called mission idea. There is nothing of the mission idea among the prophets who preached before the Babylonian exile. It is a product of post-exilic times and received its classic formulation at the hands of the anonymous author or authors of Isaiah 40-56 (plus 34-35?) who, living during the Babylonian captivity as some maintain, or in the latter half of the Persian period as Torrey and others maintain, preached to a far-flung diaspora of the new opportunity and challenge which has come to Israel because of its dispersion to convert the whole world to the worship of the One True God, thus making Judaism the first "missionary" religion of mankind.

The pre-exile prophets, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and the prophets of the transition era, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, know nothing of any historic mandate upon Israel to convert the world. The idea of mission did not enter into Jewish religious thought until almost a thousand years after the Jews had settled in Palestine and, in all probability, would never have made its appearance if the people had not been exiled.

The source of the mission idea must be looked for in the fact of the Dispersion and not in any automatic spiritual development of prophetic Judaism. It was evolved, consciously or ~~unconsciously~~ unconsciously, in response to a desperate national emergency, out of the indomitable will to live of the race, as a means of strengthening the morale of the scattered hosts of Israel and of giving meaning and dignity to their exile and their vast tribulations. It was a noble compensatory ideal, ~~xx~~ warranted by the



fact that Israel did possess a religious outlook which far transcended that of the heathen, and a moral code of superior excellence. Israel knew itself to be a great people because of the spiritual heights to which it had attained in its religious and ethical development. This achievement made it contemptuous of the superstitions and idolatries of the world about it. But politically it was a small, scattered and defeated people - a "worm" among the nations, despised and contemned. Wherein shall this proud but defeated people, of which only a miserable remnant now remained in the waste and desolate places of Judea, whilst its hosts were captives and exiles in foreign lands now find that indemnifying conception of destiny which would take the edge of their defeat, sweeten the bitterness of exile, and restore confidence to those utterly cast down? The answer was soon forthcoming - the cup of comfort to the parched lips:

"I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and have taken hold of thy hand, and kept thee and set thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nation; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." (Is. 42.6-7.)

Note that this ideal of the mission is not a denial, ~~xx~~ a revision or a substitution for any other concept heretofore held basic in Jewish thought but only a supplement, an addition, another bulwark for national security. It does not supplant nationalism. It re-enforces it. It does not ~~it~~ look upon the dispersion as a blessing. It confronts it as a tragic fact which, however, must not be permitted to endanger the survival of Israel. It does not assume that the Jew must remain in exile in order that Yahweh may become the God of all the nations. It does not proclaim that Israel is no longer a nation but only a religious community, whose sole raison d'etre is the conversion of the Gentiles. It does not divorce religion from nationalism. The prophecies of Second Isaiah ring with the recurrent refrain of Israel's approaching restoration to Palestine. And when the prophets speak of



Restoration they are not thinking of "the colonization of Palestine as a philanthropic effort deserving of general support" ( a concession made to Palestine even by anti-Zionist Reform Rabbis), but of the rebuilding of the political life and home of the Jewish nation.

Any one, therefore, who attempts to exploit the historic mission idea of Israel as an argument against Jewish nationalism or against the rebuilding of Palestine or in justification of the Galut is guilty of gross distortion of an idea which is very clearly and unambiguously defined in its original sources. The prophets did not believe that the Jews should continue to live in exile, nor that they should welcome the Dispersion as a blessing for the sake of their mission. They did not say that the Jews were exiled in order that they might become God's witnesses to the Gentiles. They exhorted the Jews in exile to find strength in defeat. They sought to sustain them by the thought that though they had been driven into exile their significance in the economy of the world was not at an end. On the contrary, they now had the glorious opportunity, through the example of their steadfastness to Yahweh, and through the moral tone of their lives, to acquaint the whole heathen world with their great spiritual heritage -- the true knowledge of God, and the nobility of His worship.

Nation, race, land, language were always vital and indispensable concepts in Jewish life, indissolubly associated of course with religion. It was never a case of one or the other. They were all one, organically united. There were times when one or the other had to be stressed. Whenever one of these factors of survival was threatened, the strong instinct of the people rallied to its defense. Hence in our history we find eras of accentuation of one or another of these several concepts and eras of attenuation. But never was any one of them abandoned - until the time of the Reform Rabbis of Germany which is, of course, a very recent and seemingly a rapidly vanishing phenomenon.

There is a striking similarity to be seen between the theoretic position

taken by Paul and that taken by the extreme leaders of Reform Judaism; and had these men been as consistent as Paul, and had they translated their loquacity about the mission of Israel into a real missionary propaganda as did Paul and his followers, the logic of events would also have brought about the secession of their group far from Jewish life. For they, too, were denationalized Jews. They, too, conceived of Israel as "a candle which lights others and consumes itself." They, too, tried to erect Jewish life upon the slender, sagging stilts of a few theologic abstractions. They, too, felt the Law to be a burden. They focused their antinomistic edium on the Talmud and the Shulchan Aruch. The Bible they spared, for after all the Bible was sacred also to Christians....But those laws of the Bible, against which Paul inveighed -- circumcision, Sabbath observance and dietary laws -- came under their obloquy also. The use of the Hebrew language in public worship, they maintained, was not only unnecessary from a legal point of view but from any other point of view. (Frankfort Conference) They, too, believed that the world was on the threshold of great new beginnings, bewitched by the hope of "maranatha." To them, too, as to the apocalyptic visionaries of the First Century, the Kingdom of God was just around the corner....listen to the words of Article 5 of the Pittsburgh Declaration which echoed similar sentiments among Reformers everywhere: "We recognize, in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect, the approaching of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of truth, justice, and peace among all men"....They, too, converted the national Messianic hope of Israel into a Pauline apocalypse. A Messianic hope not bound up with the restoration of Israel to Palestine is simply not found in Jewish religious literature anywhere from the time of the Second Isaiah to our own day, except, of course, in the writings of these Reformers and some of the Hellenistic apocalyptic writers who through allegory and other devices attempted to universalize the teachings of Judaism found in the Torah so as to impress the non-Jewish world with the excellency of the Jewish faith, and who converted the Jewish national Messiah into a "incarnation of a divine power who should judge men at the end of days." National

restoration was the very heart of the Messianic ideal from its very inception. To substitute for this national ideal an anti-national, purely transcendental, nebulous "Messianic Age", on the plea of religious evolution, is to be guilty not of revision but of distortion. It is both new and ~~new~~ counterfeit.

Fortunately the view of these men did not prevail. They were quickly challenged. The masses of Jewry recoiled from them. The facts of life soon dissipated the fumes of their universalistic romancing. They have now been completely liquidated in the very land of their nativity. The United States, because of its peculiar political and social configuration, for a time gave scope to these ideas and they were received with considerable favor among certain classes of our people, particularly among our German-Jewish immigrants. But they are being rapidly abandoned.

It is idle, of course, to talk of our people as no longer a nation but a religious community, in the face of the fact that millions of Jews are today recognized by the law of nations as national minorities in Poland, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, millions more recognized as a ~~state~~ distinct nationality in Soviet Russia, where an autonomous Jewish region is actually being built and hundreds of thousands in Palestine where a Jewish homeland is being created under the terms of a mandate of the League of Nations which recognizes not only the national existence of the Jewish people but its historic claim to a national home. It is not only idle to repeat the religious community shibboleth of the early Reformers in our day but also quite fantastic and ridiculous.

It should be borne in mind, also, that nationalism is sometimes forced upon the Jew, even when he does not particularly crave it. In the struggle, for example, between the numerous nationalities in Eastern and Central Europe, each clamoring for self-determination, the Jews, living in their midst, have to take sides or declare themselves to be an ~~xx~~ independent nationality. It was a case of accepting the cultures of Rumanians, Croations, Slovaks and of other nationality

groups which were far inferior to their own or of asserting their own. No Jewish group was as completely denationalized as were the Jewish communists of Russia. They were anti-religious, anti-Zionist, anti-Hebraist. Their sole allegiance was to the proletarian class. And yet, with the triumph of Bolshevism, these very Jewish communists have been forced by the logic of events not only to carry on as members of a Jewish nationality in Soviet Russia but to undertake the building of a separate Jewish Republic in Siberia. One cannot, therefore, in the face of these political realities in Jewish life today, maintain the theologic fiction that the Jews are only a religious community.

And what of the myriads of our people who are non-religious or anti-religious, who can accept neither the theology of Judaism nor its code of religious observances, Orthodox or Reform, and who are yet very loyal and active Jews? Is there no room for them in the household of Israel? There would not be, if we regarded Israel as a "religious community" ~~absolutely~~ exclusively. But being a nation, and not a religious community, there is room in Israel for all Jews, except for those who do not wish to be Jews and who declare "We have no portion or inheritance in our fathers' house".... And these are being tragically reminded in some parts of the world that even though they forsake their inheritance in their father's house, they will not find their portion or inheritance anywhere else in the world....

Should we not rather regard it as providential that in these days when formal religion is losing its hold upon great numbers of our people and when this loss threatens to undermine our existence as a people, that the national and racial sentiment has been rekindled among many of our people so that they wish to remain Jews and to link up their destiny with the destiny of Israel in some if not in all of the spheres of its creative life?

The Jewish people produced the Jewish religion, but people and religion are not synonymous terms. The Jewish religion is a ~~mighty~~ colossal and world-revolutionizing



concourse of spiritual ideas unfolding themselves in the life of a people of a particular character and temperament. But the Jewish religion does not exhaust the full content of the Jewish people. In relation to its religion, Israel is both imminent and transcendent as is every great artist in relation to the creation of his genius. Judah Halevi declared: "If there had been no Jews there would have been no Torah, and the Jews did not derive their high estate from Moses, but Moses derived his high estate from the Jews."

The Jewish religion is the noblest creation of our people and our supreme gift to civilization. It possesses such vast reservoirs of spiritual truth that it has been able to sustain and inspire generations upon generations of our people and retain their sacrificial loyalty under all circumstances and upon all levels of culture. It thus became the strongest factor in the survival of our people, the enduring tie. It is doubtful whether the Jewish people can long survive in the diaspora without it -- unless the other survival factors are reinforced to a degree which will compensate such a major loss. Jewish secular cultural autonomy may be possible in countries where the Jewish groups achieve minority rights. In such countries the Jewish group may survive even if divorced from strong religious loyalties. This is possible, though not probable. But in countries where minority rights are not possible, where there exists no active anti-Semitism which forces the Jew back upon himself, the task of Jewish survival will become increasingly difficult as religion loses its influence upon Jews and therewith also its power of national conservation. Those religious leaders, therefore, who are today teaching the religion of Israel to their people, are not only leading them to fountains of living truth which can sweeten and refresh their individual lives, but are also conserving the most potent force which throughout the ages has sheltered and preserved the Jewish people.

But they should not substitute a ~~part~~ part for the whole - even if it is the major part. Havelock Ellis, in his introduction to J. K. Huysman's "A Reboars",



makes the interesting observation that the essential distinction between the classic and the decadent in art and literature is to be found in the fact that in the classic the parts are subordinated to the whole, whereas in the decadent, the whole is subordinated in the parts. "The classic strives after those virtues which the whole may best express; the later manner "the decadent depreciates the importance of the whole for the benefit of its parts, and strives after the virtue of individualism."

Jewish life also possessed in its great epochs this classic balance, and the aim of religious leaders today should be to restore it. Many tributaries flow into the historic channel of Jewish life. In recent years some zealous and mostly uninformed partisans have attempted to reduce Judaism to what is ~~at~~ only a fraction of itself -- to race or nationalism or folkways or theologic abstractions. Quite unconsciously they are falsifying Judaism. It is a mark of decadence in the diaspora that so many of our people have lost the sense of the classic harmony in Jewish life and are ~~trying~~ attempting to substitute a part for the whole.

It is the total program of Jewish life and destiny which the religious leaders of our people should stress today -- the religious and moral values, the universal concepts, the mandate of mission, as well as the Jewish people itself and all its national aspirations. Thus the strength and security of our life will be retrieved, and whether in Palestine or in the diaspora, we shall move forward unafraid upon the road of our destiny.

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I shall devote myself principally to a discussion of paragraph 5 of the Declaration of Principles adopted by the Pittsburgh Rabbinical Conference in 1885 which reads as follows: "We recognize, in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect, the approaching of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice, and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state."

This declaration is noteworthy in that it was the first of its kind ever made by an assembly of Jewish religious leaders, lay or cleric. No similarly constituted conference anywhere in the whole history of Israel up to that time declared categorically: "We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community." Individual Reform Rabbis, did of course, prior to 1885, like Geiger and Holdheim and many others, proclaim this thesis time and again. But it is significant that even the Frankfurt Conference of 1845 which was dominated by the extreme left wing of the German Reform movement contented itself with a resolution that: "The Messianic idea should receive prominent mention in the prayers, but all petitions for our return to the land of our fathers, and for the restoration of a Jewish state should be eliminated from the prayers." Sfp

It is, of course, one thing to say that it is desirable, <sup>for</sup> one reason or another, for the Jewish people to remain where they are and not to strive after national restoration in Palestine. Galut nationalists of the Dubnow School, the proletarian Yiddishists of Soviet Russia and many others besides anti-Zionist Reform Rabbis would subscribe to such a doctrine. It is quite another thing to announce that: "We consider ourselves no longer a nation but a religious community."

Rabbi Wechsler, for example, clearly grasped this difference which seems

to have escaped the notice of so many of his Reform colleagues of that day. He, too, was opposed to the Restoration idea but he nevertheless maintained that we were a people united not merely by religious ties but also by racial and national ties and by historical experiences commonly shared. (See S. Bernfeld cracow, 1900 p. 49, note).

It is quite possible that if a set of principles had been adopted by the Frankfort Conference, or by its predecessor, the Brunswick Conference of 1844, that a declaration similar to the one of the Pittsburgh Conference would have been adopted. But their very reluctance to adopt such a declaration of principles is itself significant.

The Philadelphia Conference of 1869 was the first to formulate a platform of Reform Judaism. This declaration likewise does not contain the creed of national abjuration found in the Pittsburgh platform. The theologic cosmopolitanism of the framers of the Philadelphia constitution of Reform Judaism found sufficient peace of mind in their avowal that: "The Messianic aim of Israel is not the restoration of the old Jewish state under a descendant of David, involving a second separation from the nations of the earth....We look upon the destruction of the second Jewish commonwealth not as a punishment for the sinfulness of Israel, but as a result of the divine purpose revealed to Abraham, which, as has become ever clearer in the course of the world's history, consists in this dispersion of the Jews to all parts of the earth, for the realization of their high priestly mission, to lead the nations to the true knowledge and worship of God."

The early Reform Rabbis of America were certainly <sup>more</sup> eager to formulate Principles and Declarations than were their confreres in Germany. They did not shrink from dogmatic pronouncements, nor did the old ~~xxx~~ adage of Erasmus - omnis definitio periculosa est - discourage them. The fact that they had to

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reckon with far fewer restraints in the New World, traditional or institutional, and with an incipient Jewish community and a minimum of local Jewish history, undoubtedly gave wing to their spacious and care-free theologic depositions. What impresses one, however, is the fact that it was in the United States, of all countries, where such a declaration on the subject of Jewish nationalism as one finds in the Pittsburgh platform was made. One cannot account for it except on the basis of its being an importation, an exotic plant brought to these shores by immigrant Rabbis from Germany and transplanted here without any particular reference to soil or climate. For there was nothing in the American Jewish scene in the Eighties that made such a declaration urgent or significant. There was no political pressure from without, no need to placate or organize anti-Semitic forces, no necessity to purchase political equality through any public renunciation of earlier ways of life and thought. Nor was there visible any strong nationalist movements among the American Jews of those days. (One can readily understand the political motives behind such formal surrender of Jewish nationalism made by some Jews who lived in Germany during the period of struggle for emancipation and equality in the Nineteenth Century, and by some groups of Jews in Russia in the eager, hopeful years of the early reign of Alexander II.

But why in America? Germanization and Russification were conscious expedients, not so much to "modernize" the Jew culturally, as to gain for him full rights of citizenship -- to produce an effect upon the civil authorities. It was assumed albeit erroneously, that Jewish separatism manifested in speech, dress, folkways, rituals and ceremonies and in the Messianic expectation of a return to Palestine were responsible for the non-Jews' suspicion and hostility and for their reluctance to concede to Jews full political equality. The accusations of the cruder and less sophisticated anti-Semites of that day lent credence to that assumption. The



solution, accordingly, lay in a thorough-going eradication of all evidences of separatism. For some Jews this meant total assimilation, apostasy not excluded. For others assimilation stopt short of religious surrender but the religion to ~~xxx~~ all which they adhered had to be purged of/nationalistic elements.

The process began in the Aufklaerung era whose symbol is Moses Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn was of course neither a reformer nor an anti-nationalist. He was a humanist who sought to find a place for the religiously observant Jew in the political and intellectual milieu of Western European civilization. But under the influence of the rationalism and cosmopolitanism of his day and in his eagerness to persuade the German people of the Jew's qualifications for citizenship, he "neutralized" Judaism theologically by denying its unique and challenging character as a system of belief and restricted it to the status of a revealed law or divine legislation which was in no way in conflict with the law of the land. He, furthermore, passed over in silence, though perhaps not intentionally, the "national" character of the Jewish people. Nationalism, be it remembered, was in Mendelssohn's day not as fully developed a concept and the idea of separate nationalities within a state was not quite as repugnant and sinister as they became later. Nevertheless Mendelssohn's thesis that theology is a private matter and that Judaism is nothing more than a revealed code of laws, largely ceremonial, and his reticence touching the "national" destiny of Israel was seized upon by contemporaries as justification for assimilation. It was but one step regardless of its logical non-sequitur, from the position taken by Mendelssohn to that of his friend and admirer, David Friedlander, who in the "Epistle of Several Jewish Fathers to Councillor Teller" offered to accept Christianity if certain doctrines such as the Trinity were eliminated. Dorothea Mendelssohn after her conversion to Christianity, felt justified in saying that her father, if he had been alive, would not have been saddened by her act. This first generation of "enlightened" Berlin, Frankfurt and Viennese Jews were convinced that their political and social salvation lay in



deorientalizing and Germanizing themselves, in making themselves like other people in order to be accepted as equals by other people. Of course they were naive. In the land of the poll-tax where Jew-hatred had always been the most vulgar, violent and sustained in all Europe, they permitted themselves to indulge in wishful thinking. They might have been cautioned by the cool admonitions of some of their Christian contemporaries who advised them, as Teller deftly advised Friedlander, not to confound Jewish efforts at "Religious modernization" with the hope of political equality. Schleiermacher, the non-Jew, grasped the Jewish problem far more realistically and fundamentally than did the German Jews of his day. He warned them that the important difference between them and the non-Jewish world was not religious but national. It took the German Jews a century and a half to reconcile themselves finally to this unyielding fact.

✓ The "national" character of the Jewish problem became evident within a few years after the French Revolution. In the superb exultation of the Revolution the rights of citizenship were granted to the Jews of France. But when the revolutionary fervor had abated, grumbings and mutterings were soon heard against them. An Anti-semitic literature made its appearance. A particularly violent outburst of Jew-hatred made itself manifest in the German-speaking French province of Alsace. The attitude of Napoleon was anything but friendly to the Jews. He was considering the revocation or curtailment of their civil rights. The real motive which prompted the convocation of the Assembly of Jewish notables in Paris in 1806 - the forerunner of the Sanhedrin - was to cross-examine the Jews of France, to discover whether they were one hundred percent patriotic and deserving of the citizenship which the Revolution had bestowed upon them. The questionnaire submitted to the Assembly was to ferret out some possible excuse for the abrogations of their rights. Thus the sixth question read: "Do the Jews who are natives of France and are treated as French citizens

by the law look upon France as their Fatherland?" The fourth question read: "Do the Jews consider the French their brethren or do they look upon them as aliens?"

✓ The Assembly, of course, affirmed that the Jews of France regarded France as their Fatherland, and all Frenchmen as their brothers. They loudly proclaimed their loyalty to France and their readiness to defend her at all costs. They did not feel called upon, however, as did the Rabbis of the Pittsburgh Conference who were neither solicited for an opinion, nor were hard-pressed politically, to declare that the Jews were not a nation, only a religious community. Nor did they deny the hope of national restoration as did the all-too-zealous German reformers a few decades later.

✓ But it was clear from the very fact that such an assembly had been convoked, and such questions asked that nationalism would from then on be the central fact of Jewish experience not only in France, but everywhere as soon as the Jews left their ghettos and reached out for civil and political rights. As in Germany, so also in France, there were Jews who met the increasing nationalist sentiments in their environment with a corresponding modulation of their own, although there did not transpire any such thorough-going religious reform movement among the French as among the German Jews. France was Catholic, religiously orthodox. There was no popular Protestant movement for the Jews of France to model themselves after.

✓ *Begin* ~~Most marked, however, were the~~ <sup>were most marked</sup> ~~Anti-nationalist tendencies among German Jews~~ because German Anti-semitism was far more virulent and uncompromising, and German nationalism, following the War of Liberation, far more intense and jaundiced. The opposition to the political emancipation of the Jews in Germany was bitter and relentless throughout the nineteenth century, continuing into the twentieth and achieving a complete victory under the Nazi regime in our day. Rising like a miasma from the poisoned soil of the Dark Ages, Jew hatred has swept uninterruptedly like a pestilential plague through German life and literature, infesting masses

and classes alike, poisoning the hearts and minds of liberals as well as reactionaries, of poets, philosophers, statesmen, historians, musicians and churchmen. The venomous anti-Jewish Nazi propaganda literature of the last fifteen years drew its inspiration program and slogans from the prolific school of Jew-baiting preachers, pundits and pamphleteers of the Bismarckian era, and they, in turn, derived their leading ideas from their precursors in the post-Napoleonic era, whose mentor and model was the liberal, anti-clerical philosopher Fichte whose attitude is summed up in his statement: "The only way I see by which civil rights can be conceded to them is to cut off all their heads in one night and set new ones on their shoulders, which shall contain not a single Jewish idea. The only means of protecting ourselves against them is to conquer their promised land and send them there." The Nazi cry "Juda Verrecke" is the authentic echo of the "Hep, Hep", cry shouted by frenzied mobs in the street of Frankfort and Hamburg a century and more ago. There is an unbroken line of ideologically formulated, metaphysically sanctioned and artistically embellished Judeophobia in Germany, centuries old, unmatched anywhere else in the world. It was in such a milieu that the Jews of Germany struggled for their civil and political rights. If, therefore, Jewish lay and religious leaders attempted to throw overboard all the racial and national baggage of Israel in the fond hope of calming this sea of hate, if they believed that they could exorcise Anti-Semitism by professions of patriotism, and in an age of "crescendo" nationalism, they could solve the Jewish problem by a corresponding "diminuendo" of Jewish nationalism, one can understand their problem and forgive their blindness.

✓ The Russian Jewish intelligentsia of the Sixties and Seventies resorted to the self-same unavailing tactics in a land in which there was far less literary Anti-semitism than in Germany, and in which the educated classes of Russian society was definitely pro-Jewish. The anti-national incantation which Hoidheim chanted

in Germany to appease the intolerant spirits of German nationalism, Pinsker, for example, chanted in Russia for many years before tragic disillusioning events felled him upon the long hard road which leads from assimilation to auto-emancipation. Many others among the best minds of Russian Jewry believed that in thorough Russification and assimilation lay the hope of ultimate salvation. They advocated the use of the Russian language and the abandonment both of Yiddish and Hebrew. At most they conceded a minimal religious distinctiveness. The idea of a Jewish national renaissance, or the reconstruction of a Jewish homeland in Palestine was to them both fantastic and unwelcome. It was too reactionary an idea to entertain in an age of enlightenment when a favoring breeze filled their sails and they felt themselves being carried on to the delectable harbor of liberty and equality. It was too reactionary an idea and too illogical. But history has a logic of her own. A sharp reaction set in under the same Liberator Czar Alexander II, and in 1871, the Jews of Russia sampled the gall and bitterness of a pogrom. The pogrom of 1871 and the more extensive and brutal pogroms of 1881 broke the back of assimilation in Russia. The solution clearly did not lie in the formula "Russians of the Mosaic Persuasion." In 1882 the Cheverel Zion appear on the scene. In the same year the converted Pinsker publishes his "auto-Emancipation." Russian Jewry sets about solving its problems through self-help, through mass emigration to other lands, through the upbuilding of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, through national concentration and cultural revival, and through revolutionary economic-political agitation and action in an effort to break the power of the hostile reactionary regime.

✓ German Jewry might have <sup>been sobered</sup> ~~learned the same lesson~~ in the Seventies when the great reaction set in and Anti-semitism flared up again. Treitschke, Bernhardt, Stocker, Darr, Marr, Mole, -- all the forerunners of the present-day Nazis - told them exactly how the German people felt about the Jews and why and what the



German people would do to them when the hour of decision arrived. But the German Jews continued in their ineluctable optative mood, confident as was Rabbi Auerbach at the Rabbinical Conference of Frankfort, that: "In our day the ideals of justice and the brotherhood of men have been so strengthened through the laws and institutions of modern states, that they can never again be shattered. We are witnessing an ever nearer approach of the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth through the strivings of mankind (quoted from Philipson's "The Reform Movement in Judaism," p. 178.) This was uttered in Frankfort in 1845. Frankfort of 1935 is of course a sad and discouraging refutation of all this apocalyptic romancing in which German Jewry immersed itself in those days. The catastrophe of 1933 broke the back of assimilation in Germany. The whole improvised philosophy of Jewish history which is expressed in the doctrine that we are not a nation but a religious community has proved bankrupt and has been liquidated in the very home of its origin.

✓ While the leaders of German Jewry, with the exception of course of the small but distinguished group of nationally-minded thinkers of the type of Moses Hess, Bodenheimer, Franz Oppenheimer, Wolffsohn, Ruppin, Hantke, Otto Warburg and Martin Buber, talked to unheeding Gentile ears about the unoffending status of the Jews as only another religious sect and in all other regards "Echt-und-un-Deutschen", the Germans were reading and absorbing the nationalistic theses and the Aryan race-mythologies of Chamberlain, Friedrich, Delitsch, Gunther and Rosenberg and the relentless processes of history, made "race" and "nation" the order of the day in Germany. In their name and at their behest the Jews of Germany have been disfranchised, stripped of all their hard-won gains of a century and a half, and degraded as few Jewish communities have ever been degraded in the last two thousand years. And now the Jews of Germany, except those of the small and pathologically chauvinistic Haumannite group are meeting the crisis of their inner and outer life in the same way as their Russian brethren a half century



a half century before - a strong national revival, the rediscovery of the cultural heritage of their own people, Palestine, emigration and presumably also, such underground political action as their stoutest spirits dare to resort to.

✓ It would have been far better for the Jews of Germany if they had kept alive a strong national self-consciousness. They would then have faced the Nazi attack as a clash between national groups within a political state - something quite common in Central and Eastern Europe, and their defeat they would have regarded as a political defeat and not as the loss of their entire patrimony, as a banishment from their one and only cultural and spiritual home.

*Ref* How confidently Ludwig Geiger of Berlin proclaimed thirty years ago: "Any desire to form together with his coreligionists a people outside of Germany is, not to speak of its impracticability, downright thanklessness toward the nation in whose midst he lives - achizera; for the German Jew is a German in his national peculiarities (sic!) and Zion is for him the land only of the past, not of the future. (Quoted in J.E. Vol. XII, p. 673). Thirty years later, Germans whose "national peculiarities" were all German, (in the eyes of Jews but not of Germans,) were fleeing from Germany and finding refuge by the thousands in the land which was never the land of their past but which very definitely must now become the land of their future. The Munich community which forced the transfer of the first Zionist Congress, scheduled to be held there, to Basel, is now grateful that some of its sons and daughters are finding a haven and a new hope in the land which those "unpatriotic" Zionists had built...

✓ They were all too dogmatic, these Geigers, and Maybaums, and Vogelsteins! It is well to spin philosophies of Jewish history. It is dangerous to ignore the realities of Jewish experience. The timeliness and convenience of a given theory of Jewish life are not the only tests of its validity. It must be viewed against the background of the accumulated historical experiences of our people, tested as it were, in the crucible of the ages. Certainly, the hope that such a theory might

be approved by our enemies gives it no sanction whatsoever; for our enemies can rationalize their hates quite as readily as we can rationalize our hopes, and they have never been known to relent because of any sweet and appetizing definition of Jewish life which we offered them.

✓ Ever since the first dispersion of our people in the sixth century, before the Common Era, and the subsequent voluntary and involuntary migrations which by the beginning of the Common Era saw the Jewish diaspora extend from the Gates of India to the Pillars of Hercules and from the Caucasus to Ethiopia, and their further diffusion throughout Europe in the twenty centuries which followed, up to the present-day world-wide diaspora, Jews have faced the two-fold task of adjusting themselves to their given political and cultural environments and at the same time of remaining loyal to themselves as Jews. Because of this two-fold responsibility there was always an element of stress, tension, and conflict in Jewish life in the diaspora. There always will be. Human history is replete with the clash and conflict of nations, races, peoples, religions and classes. The Jewish nation had its full quota of these conflicts when it was a political nation in Palestine. It certainly could not escape them as a non-political and scattered nation in the diaspora. Those who could not stand the strain of Jewish existence disappeared. Myriads of such Jews were lost to us. Many others were forcibly assimilated. Those who cannot endure the pressures of Jewish life today, ~~their number~~ <sup>20</sup> will also disappear -- if they can. The newer racial anti-Semitism of the Nazi type is making such desertion extremely difficult. It is impossible to propound any formula for Jewish survival in the diaspora -- if we really mean survival -- free from a measure of stress and conflict.

✓ In our long history we never had a uniform plan or formula for survival. Such a formula, if it is to be something more than academic, must take into account not only the shifting interests and needs of the Jews themselves but also the varied and changing political and economic milieu in which Jewish groups find

themselves. A formula which would be valid for Jewish communities living in an empire like that of ancient Persia, Greece or Rome which embraced numerous nationalities and allowed them full national autonomy short of political independence would not meet the situation of a Jewish community living in a closely-knit, uni-cultural national state like modern France, Germany, or Italy, and a formula valid for these countries would not be adequate for a multi-national state like Poland, Czechoslovakia, or Russia. A Jewish community living in the midst of a people whose cultural niveau was far inferior to its own, would face altogether different problems of adjustment than one living in the midst of a superior culture.

But there was always the will to survive! Not in all sections of our people, to be sure, nor at all times, but certainly in sufficiently large sections of our people at all times to have enabled Israel to survive to this day. And at all times, this will to survive, this basic loyalty to their corporate existence and to the substantial elements of their total heritage, projected the necessary strategy, the adequate technique for survival. This strategy was dictated not by any abstract speculation or by apologetics but by the life-hunger of the race, the indefeasible will to live, the compelling sense of destiny. The source of inspiration was always within, rising from the profound hidden depths of the racial, the instinctive, the primordial.

✓ So great was this desire not to die as a people, that when it found its life besieged and threatened, it threw additional bulwarks around its security and raised stronger walls of defense. It did not hesitate to impose upon itself in the centuries following the second Destruction, a code of discipline, a regime of \_\_\_\_\_ which was far more rigorous than any military discipline, and which effectively safeguarded the individuality of the people and secured it against disintegration. The people, as a whole, never relaxed its vigilance. It never whittled down its requirements or its survival program to appease enemies or detractors. It never countenanced a

minimal program to satisfy others. It always insisted upon a maximum program to protect its own life.

When the first great crisis developed in Jewish life following the national catastrophe in 586, the great leaders of the people immediately rushed to the defense of Israel threatened with extinction. The prophets, who had heretofore castigated their people for their idolatry and their moral waywardness and called down upon them doom and destruction, now abruptly change their invective style and in words of comfort, encouragement and hope seek to heal the wounds and revive the broken spirits. The stern, unyielding Jeremiah, who before the national calamity wrote "with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond" and whose mouth was a sharp sword, now speaks like a compassionate father to his bruised and suffering children lovingly, tenderly. "The people that are left of the sword have found grace in the wilderness, even Israel, when I go to cause him to rest... Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with affection have I drawn thee. Again will I build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel. Again shalt thou be adorned with thy tabrets, and shall go forth in the dances of them that make merry....And they shall come and sing in the height of Zion and shall flow unto the goodness of the Lord....and their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not pine any more at all."

Ezekiel, who in the tense, tragic interlude between 597 and 586, between the first and the second deportations, still called down imprecations upon the sinful in Zion and uttered terrible and frantic denunciations against them in the desperate hope of averting the calamity which he saw approaching, now, that the blow had fallen and the people lay crushed, dazed and hope-bereft, finds a new voice and a new message. For now one must "breathe upon the slain that they might live." The people must not die! "Behold I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, O My people."....Faith and confidence must be



rekindled. "Behold here am I, and I will search for my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are separated so will I seek out of all places whether they have been scattered in the day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the habitable places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be;....I will seek that which was lost, and will bring back that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick"....

Powerful and exhilarating new motifs ring through the post-exilic prophecies of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Obadiah, Joel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and of course, Deutero-Isaiah. There is the reverberating motif: - Fear not!

"Fear thou not, O Jacob, My servant, saith the Lord, neither be dismayed, O Israel; For I will save thee from afar and thy seed from the land of their captivity."

(Jer.30.10). There is the motif: "I will restore!" "And I will turn your captivity, and gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord, and I will bring you back into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive." (Jer. 29.14). There is the motif of

"A new covenant!" The old covenant was broken and had to be atoned for in blood and tears. A new covenant will now be made, a covenant of everlasting love and peace. (Ezek. 37.26, Jer. 31.31). There is the startling new motif: "Every man shall die for his own iniquity!" There is

no inherited guilt. The exiles should throw off the oppressive sense of guilt and the fear of retribution because of the sins of their fathers. (Jer. 31.28-9; Ezek. 18.4; 33.10). The guilt has been paid off. (Is. 40.2) There is the motif

of "The testing in the furnace of affliction." Exile and suffering were intended not to crush Israel, but to cleanse, purify and strengthen him. There is the motif of "The Eternity of Israel!" "Thus saith the Lord, who giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, who stirreth up the sea, that the waves thereof roar....If these ordinances depart from Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever." (Jer. 31.35-6). And there appears the magnificently new motif of: "A light unto the nations!" The mission idea! <sup>Babylonian</sup> There is nothing of the mission idea among the prophets who preached before the ~~exile~~. It is a product of post-exilic times and received its classic formulation at the hands of the anonymous author or authors of Isaiah 40-66 (plus 34-35) who, living during the Babylonian captivity as some maintain or in the latter half of the Persian period as Torrey and others maintain, preached ~~from~~ to a far-flung diaspora of the new opportunity and challenge which has come to Israel because of its dispersion to convert the whole world to the worship of the One, True God, thus making Judaism the first "missionary" religion of mankind.

The pre-exile prophets, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and the prophets of the transition era, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, know nothing of any historic mandate upon Israel to convert the world. The idea of mission did not enter into Jewish religious thought until almost a thousand years after the Jews had settled in Palestine and, in all probability, would never have made its appearance if the people had not been exiled. That Israel was a people chosen by God, "Yahweh's "special possession", was a commonly accepted doctrine among the pre-exilic prophets. The sense of an inviolable covenant - Yahweh's covenant with Israel made at the time of the Exodus from Egypt - was dominant in their thought at all times. That this unique and covenanted relationship entered into between Israel and Yahweh, the God of Holiness, made Israel as long as it observed this covenant of Israel a holy people

in the midst of the surrounding idolatrous peoples, was also strongly felt by them. But that these convictions also carried with them the implication that Israel must be Yahweh's messenger to convert the heathen world was not entertained by them. The phrase in Ex. 19.6

"And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" -- even if we assume that it is pre-exilic -- says nothing about any mission to the Gentiles. Only very deft and spacious homiletics can read such a meaning into it. The majestic apocalyptic vision of found in Is. 2.2-4 and Micah 4.1-4 -- the vision of Zion as the spiritual center of the world, and of all nations flowing to the house of God of Jacob in order to learn of His ways of justice and peace is concededly of post-exilic origin. So are all the references scattered through the writings of the prophets which tell of the future conversion of all the peoples of the earth, of their pilgrimages to Zion and of Israel as the servant of God who will bring this conversion about.

The source of the Mission Idea must therefore be looked for in the fact of the Dispersion and not in any automatic spiritual development of prophetic Judaism. It was evolved, consciously or unconsciously, in response to a desperate national emergency, out of the indomitable will to live of the race, as a means of strengthening the morale of the scattered hosts of Israel and of giving meaning and dignity to their exile and their vast tribulations. It was a noble compensatory ideal, warranted by the fact that Israel did possess a religious outlook which far transcended that of the heathen, and a moral code of superior excellence. Israel knew itself to be <sup>a</sup> great people because of the spiritual heights to which it had attained in its religious and ethical development. This achievement made it contemptuous of the superstitions and idolatries of the world about it. But politically it was a small, scattered and defeated people - a "Gom" among the nations, despised and cotemned. Wherein shall

this proud but defeated people, of which only a miserable remnant now remained in the waste and desolate places of Judea, whilst its hosts were captives and exiles in foreign lands now find that indemnifying conception of destiny which would ~~take~~ take the edge of their defeat, sweeten the bitterness of exile, and restore confidence to those utterly cast down? The answer was soon forthcoming - the cup of comfort to the parched lips:

"Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, His Holy One, to him who is despised of men, to him who is abhorred of nations, to a servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise, princes, and they shall prostrate themselves...I will preserve thee and give thee for a covenant of the people...(Is.49.1)...I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and have taken hold of thy hand, and kept thee and set thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nation; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." (Is. 42.6-7). Light and salvation will come to the whole world through Israel, who is God's servant, suffering in the present but destined to ultimate triumph and vindication. <sup>is</sup> This/the - the wonderfully new gospel which the Second Isaiah now proclaims. This is the new vision and hope which the spiritual guides of Israel projected for their people in order to save them from death in defeat and exile.

Note that this ideal of the mission is not a denial, a revision or a substitution for any other concept heretofore held basic in Jewish thought but only a supplement, an addition, another bulwark for national security. It does not supplant nationalism. It re-enforces it. It does not <sup>look upon the dispersion as a blessing.</sup> It confronts it as a tragic fact which, however, must not be permitted to endanger the survival of Israel. It does not assume that the Jew must remain in exile in order that Yahweh may become the God of all the nations. It does not proclaim that Israel is no longer a nation but only a religious community, whose sole raison d'être is the conversion



of the Gentiles. It does not divorce religion from nationalism. The prophecies of Second Isaiah ring with the recurrent refrain of Israel's approaching restoration to Palestine. "Fear not, for I am with thee; I will bring thy seed from the east and will gather thee from the west. I will say to the north: 'Give up', and to the south: 'Keep not back'; bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the end of the earth." (Is. 43-5-6). And when the prophets speak of Restoration they are not thinking of "the colonization of Palestine as a philanthropic effort deserving of general support" (a concession made to Palestine even by anti-Zionist Reform Rabbis), but of the rebuilding of the political life and home of the Jewish nation.

Zion rebuilt and Israel ingathered are the passionate themes of the prophets following the exile, and they did not regard them as being in any way irreconcilable with the hope of converting the whole world to Yahweh. The nations will come to Zion. Zion will become the religious center of mankind. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great fury!... I shall return to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem....Behold, I will save My people from the east country and from the west country and I will bring them and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem...(Zech.8.2).

Centuries later, Judah Halevi, reinterprets this Mission Idea for the Jews of his age and here again it is inseparably intertwined with the national aspirations, with people, land and language. Halevi takes up afresh the theme of Deutero-Isaiah. Israel among the nations is like the heart among the organs of the body, the most sensitive and the most important. Israel suffers for the sins of mankind and through Israel's peculiar racial genius or aptness for religion (or prophecy as Halevi prefers it) the nations of the earth will be exalted. But Israel must live if its unique gifts are to continue to bless mankind, and it must be restored to its own land, where alone prophecy can find its congenial soil, and it must revive the Hebrew language which alone can be the perfect medium for such prophecy. The

"Guzari", you will recall, closes on the note of the return to Palestine of the Rabbi who converted the King of the Chazars. Halevi may seem extreme in his views, but there can be no doubt that as far as essentials are concerned, he was in direct line of authentic Jewish tradition. He voiced the major convictions of Israel.

Any one, therefore, who attempts to exploit the historic Mission Idea of Israel as an argument against Jewish nationalism or against the rebuilding of Palestine or in justification of the Galut is guilty of gross distortion of an idea which is very clearly and unambiguously defined in its original sources. The prophets did not believe that the Jews should continue to live in exile, nor that they should welcome the Dispersion as a blessing for the sake of their mission. They did not say that the Jews were exiled in order that they might become God's witnesses to the Gentiles. They exhorted the Jews in exile to find strength in defeat. They sought to sustain them by the thought that though they had been driven into exile their significance in the economy of the world was not at an end. On the contrary, they now had the glorious opportunity, through the example of their steadfastness to Yahweh, and through the moral tone of their lives, to acquaint the whole heathen world with their great spiritual heritage -- the true knowledge of God, and the nobility of His worship.

The Jews, during the chaotic centuries which followed the Destruction, employed every means to preserve their national life. We have seen how the prophets sought to restore the morale of the people by giving those living inside and outside

of Palestine an inspiring and sustaining sense of destiny. The people, themselves, in exile, once the first shock of terror and dismay was over, recovered their ancient faith and loyalties. By the rivers of Babylon they vowed eternal loyalty to Zion, their national home: "If I forget thee, O, Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her cunning!" The priests elaborated a code of ritual and ceremony and a religious discipline which in a practical way was intended to shelter the life of Israel from the - "the uncleanness of the Gentiles", and to keep it a separate and distinct people. In Judea the returned exiles under Ezra instituted a most drastic process of national purgation and reconstruction in order to save the life of the community. In his zeal for the preservation of the faith and the purity of the racial stock, Ezra ordains that the foreign women whom the Jews had married should be put away, as well as the children born of them, and that they should "separate themselves from the peoples of the land." Ezra draws no distinction between those belonging to the peoples of Ammon and Moab, against whom there existed of old a law of perpetual exclusion from the "congregation of Yahweh" (D. 23-4) and other peoples like Edom, Egypt, against whom no such law existed. Ezra did not even tolerate proselytism, for he does not suggest the conversion of these foreign wives as an alternative to their divorce. This attitude was shared neither by the prophets who preceded Ezra nor by the Rabbis of later times. The Halacha recognized proselytism and accorded full status to the proselyte, incorporating him unreservedly into the life of the nation.

. Only an acute crisis, the fear of extinction, ever present in the tenuous life of this small harassed community which had been delivered over "to the sword, to captivity, to spoiling and to confusion of face" could have called forth such harsh and extreme acts. The nation withdrew as it were, to its last citadel, for a final stand against the forces which threatened to overwhelm it. Ezra and Nehemiah did not "nationalize" the God-concept of Israel

in the sense of localizing it. They did not turn back the hands of the clock in the religious evolution of Israel - as ~~xx~~ some Biblical critics imagine. Yahweh is still the One and Universal Lord: "Thou art the Lord, even Thou alone. Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that <sup>are</sup> thereon (Neh. 9.6)...But the hour now demands another emphasis: The immediate task for the Judean community is not saving the world but saving itself. Hence the unusually strong emphasis upon race, nation and language. The Samaritans are rejected because though they professed the same faith they were nevertheless not of the same race as Israel. Nehemiah rises to the defense of the language of Israel - for the abandonment of the Hebrew speech was rightly interpreted by him as a sign to assimilation: "In those days also saw I the Jews that had married women of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab and their children spoke half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And I quarreled with them, and cursed them and wrote certain of them"....

Begin  
Nation, race, land, language were always vital and indispensable concepts in Jewish life, indissolubly associated of course with religion. It was never a case of one or the other. They were all one, organically united. There were times when one or the other had to be stressed. Whenever one of these factors of survival was threatened, the strong instinct of the people rallied to its defense. Hence in our history we find eras of accentuation of one or another of these several concepts and eras of attenuation. But never was any one of them abandoned - until the time of the Reform Rabbis of Germany which is, of course, a very recent and seemingly a rapidly vanishing phenomenon. p. 26

The sound, practical sense of Israel and its experience through many centuries of partial or total dispersion over the earth, saved it from being dogmatic or fanatic concerning any of these concepts except, of course, in the



case of the monotheistic article of faith. Jewish life would never stomach the type of doctrinaire, arrogant and militant racialism and nationalism which is devastating the life of the Western World today. Israel reconciled in life and practice ideas theoretically irreconcilable. Thus it spoke of a Universal God,

but at the same time it also spoke of

the God of the people of Israel. It extolled the race as but admitted members of other races into the racial family through proselytism. It recognized no biologically superior and inferior races. It always longed for national restoration to Zion but, from the days of Jeremiah on, it admonished its children, dwelling in foreign lands, to live as good citizens, "to seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it, for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace." It prescribed a complete code of Jewish law for its members living in and out of Palestine covering every phase of life, but it also lay down the qualifying precept - in all matters of law, involving no basic tenets of faith, the law of the land is binding. It exalted the Hebrew language. It was the . It made the teaching of it obligatory.

Yet it permitted, though it did not counsel, prayer in all languages

and translations of the Bible were made and, by and large, welcomed as early as the third century B.C.

Doctrinaires of the white-black, either-or variety, who like to have life and history simplified to fit in neatly in the theoretic frame-work which they arbitrarily construct to serve their tastes or their times, are impatient with these seeming incongruities and contradictions in Jewish life. They lightly reject whatever they find in practically or ideologically inconvenient. They are unaware of, or they consciously ignore the strong life-sense, the survival wisdom,

the adjustment-genius

of the people which produced them. A religious creed, once you grant its premises, may well be logically consistent and undeviating. But a people is not a creed and a people's life and culture are determined by historic forces which are not logical. Israel confronted through most of its history with ever changing and threatening environment and wishing to survive, had to take into account all the economic, political, sociologic and psychologic facts in its environment and make proper adjustments to them.

But it never sacrificed essential values for temporary expediency. It was a cause of . There were many movements and sects within Israel during its long history — Sadduceism, Pharisaism, Essenism, Christianity, Hellenism, Karaism, Kabbalism, Chassidism, Haskalah, Reform, Zionism. They all in their day quite naturally led to bitter conflict and partisanship. That is true of such movements among all peoples. But the Jewish people as such found room for all of them within its fold except for Christianity. Even Karaism which created such turmoil and dissention in Jewish life was never outlawed by our people. Thus, for example, Maimonides, in the very midst of a bitter feud between the ~~Sadducees~~ and the Karaites, a feud centuries old in Maimonides' day, nevertheless urges a policy of brotherly toleration towards the Karaites, to treat them as Jews, circumcise their children, bury their dead, comfort their mourners, and treat their wine as ritually fit. For, after all the Karaites were loyal Jews, regardless of their opposition to the tradition and authority of the Rabbis. They were devoted not only to the God of Israel and the Torah but to the Karaites, forsaking home and friends, migrated to Palestine and established communities known as the "the for Zion." Their zeal for Palestine excluded that of the . They loved the Hebrew language, and the birth of the science of Hebrew grammar and philology in the Middle Ages owes everything to them.

In the case of Christianity, it was the Pauline insistence upon a religious creed

entirely divorced from nation, race, land or language and from the disciplines of Jewish law, that finally placed the movement outside the sphere of Jewish life.

As a messianic movement, inspired by the millennial expectations of that age, preaching the advent of the Kingdom of God, and calling men to repentance and moral purification in order to escape the \_\_\_\_\_ and be worthy of admission into the Kingdom, the Messianism of Jesus might well have found a place, as for a time it actually did find a place, among sections of Jewry who detected neither heresy nor apostasy in it. The early Judaeo-Christians in Palestine were Jews in all regards. But Paul, a product of the culturally diluted Hellenistic diaspora, entertained views which centuries later Reform Rabbis in Germany and in America came to entertain. The sense of belonging to a Jewish nation and the desire to preserve that nation and to re-establish the Kingdom of Israel was hardly present with him. Race had no significance. "All the nations of the earth are made of one blood." (Acts 17.26). Race is in Pauline theology metamorphosed into a universal society of believers... "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel, neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children.... They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. (Rom. 9.6). Unlike Matthew, Paul is not interested in establishing the Davidic genealogic descent of Jesus. (I Tim. 1.4). Jesus' Jewish origin is of no particular moment to him. While Jesus directed his message - a thorough-going Jewish messianic message - specifically to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" - and was not particularly interested in proselytism, Paul called himself the "apostle to the Gentiles," and his chief concern was to carry the gospel of salvation to the non-Jews. Peter, he declared, was intrusted with the good news for the Jews, he for the heathen. (Gal. 2.7). The mastering idea of Paul was that, in as much as the millenium was fast approaching when the purging and winnowing of mankind

would take place, the whole human race should be rapidly converted to the one, true faith. This one true faith consisted in the abjuration of polytheism and idolatry and in leading a pure life -- in other words -- ethical monotheism. Such a faith has been in the keeping of Israel since the ~~happy~~ days of Abraham. But because of the Law of Moses - the ceremonial and ritual law, e.g., circumcision, the observance of Sabbaths and Holy Days and the





dietary laws, this pure faith has been obscured, veiled even to Israel (II Cor. 3.15) and made difficult of acceptance by non-Jews. The coming of the Messiah in the person of Jesus put an end to the reign of this Law. Now conversion to the true faith is accessible to every man merely through faith - faith in the One, Universal Lord and in the atoning power of the death of Jesus. This latter idea is essential to the doctrine of Paul. The sin of Adam brought death as its punishment upon all the generations of men (cf. D.R. 9.4 ).

This sin had to be atoned for by a sacrificial death - for only such a sacrifice could be proper atonement for such a sin - before men could obtain the hope of eternal life. The crucifixion of Jesus was that sacrifice. All men would have had to die at the approach of the End of Day, because all men are sinners. But Jesus saved them from death by means of his own death. In his death all who believe in him die "figuratively" to their old selves and are reborn into the new life. They come redeemed to the threshold of the Kingdom. Henceforth, every one, regardless of race or nation, who eschewed idolatry and accepted the sacrifice of Jesus, dying for all men, will "walk in the newness of life" and will inherit eternal life. It is not the observance of the laws of the Torah which bestows life eternal, i.e., admission into the Kingdom of God which is fast approaching. Immortal life comes through accepting the ~~his~~ blood sacrifice of Jesus. In Messianic times the Law is not needed. (cf. ).

But what was the purpose of giving the Law by God to Israel, and what is the significance of the election of Israel - a doctrine which Paul accepts (Rom. 11.29). In Paul's reply one finds the clue to the reason why the Jewish people had finally to reject him and his religious teachings. The giving of the Laws of the Torah to the Jews carried with it the possibility and the opportunity of transgressing them. It is the Law that gives sin its power. I Cor. 15.56). Where there is no law there is no sin against the law. "Sin is not imputed where there is no law." (Rom. 5.13)

Thus the Laws of the Torah were ordained that offenses against them by the Jews might multiply, so that there would be greater need for the grace of God which came through the atonement sacrifice of Jesus. The disobedience of the Jews was therefore the Gentiles' opportunity to gain salvation. As far as the Paul's new message of glad tidings is concerned, the Jews are treated as enemies of God. (Rom. 11.28) But because they had been chosen by God and are beloved by Him for their fathers' sakes, they, too, will be saved from sin through the grace of God ultimately, after all the heathen have been redeemed. Thus Israel, in the hands of this fervid, mystical theologian, is no longer a nation but a theologic pawn. The national character of the Jewish Messianic ideal is ignored, as it was ignored centuries later by Reform Rabbis. It is dissolved in a universal salvationism, quite like the denationalized "Messianic Age" of the Reform Rabbis. There is, however, one exception: With Paul all nations vanish into the spiritual anonymity of Kingdom Come. With the Reform Rabbis, only the Jewish nation. Their theology took zealous toll of Jewish nationalism but stopped short at German, Austrian, French or American nationalism. With Paul the age-old hope of the ingathering of the dispersion and the deliverance of Israel from the yoke of Rome gives way to an apocalyptic conversionism in which Israel is only incidentally significant because in olden days God had announced in advance the good news to Abraham in the words: "All the heathens will be blessed through you" and through the Jews this blessing reached the heathen. (Gal. 3.8 ff). This is the sole role ascribed by Paul to Israel in the economy of world-salvation. With the nationalism prophets of Israel a reborn and politically rehabilitated people ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ strong and secure in its own land was also to become a light Zion unto the world. The nations of the earth would flow unto/redeemed "for out of Zion would go forth the Torah." With Paul, Torah was a form of slavery, and Zion had no significance as the capital of a nation but only as the locale of a Temple of whose ritual he ~~xxx~~ scarcely approved. No wonder that this new program of proselytism

which demanded the sacrifice of some of the essential survival-values of Israel, met with stubborn resistance not alone from Jews who had not accepted Jesus as the Messiah but even from the early Judaeo-Christians. In classic Judaism there were always two elements, one universal, i.e., pure religion intended for all men, the other local, i.e., the laws of the Hebrew polity, intended for Jews only. Paul, the Roman citizen and the product of the Mediterranean cultural melting-pot, accepted the first. The second he regarded principally as a stumbling block in the way of the first. Therefore, nothing but the faith mattered. The Jewish nation, land, language and law were of small consequence, particularly in view of the approaching millennial denouement. But not all the early followers of Jesus felt as he did. A bitter struggle raged within the early church against these teachings of Paul. The Palestinian Judaeo-Christians were neither anti-nomists nor anti-nationalists. They were glad to welcome converts to their Messianic Judaism but only as proselytes who were willing to accept not only the principle of the Unity of God and the

but also the entire discipline of the Law

inclusive of the Abrahamitic rites, Sabbath and Holy Day observance and the dietary laws.

Paul's views prevailed in the new sect. As a result the sect steadily receded from Jewish life and became at first non-Jewish and then anti-Jewish. In the national uprisings against Rome in 70 and 135 the Judaeo-Christians refused to participate. Their loyalty was now to an idea, not to a people.

There is a striking similarity to be seen between the theoretic position taken by Paul and that taken by the extreme leaders of Reform Judaism; and had these men been as consistent as Paul, and had they translated their loquacity about the mission of Israel into a real missionary propaganda as did Paul and his followers, the logic of events would also have brought about the secession of their group from Jewish life. For they, too, were denationalized Jews. They, too, conceived

of Israel as "a candle which lights others and consumes itself." They, too, tried to erect Jewish life upon the slender, sagging stilts of a few theologic abstractions. They, too, felt the Law to be a burden. They focused their anti-nomist odium on the Talmud and the Shulchan Aruch. The Bible they spared, for after all the Bible was sacred also to Christians...But those laws of the Bible, against which Paul inveighed -- circumcision, Sabbath observance and dietary laws -- came under their obloquy also. The use of the Hebrew language in public worship they maintained was not only unnecessary from a legal point of view but from any other point of view. (Frankfort Conference) And while Jewish Rabbis were thus practically consigning the Hebrew language to oblivion, Dohn of Breslaw, a Christian, rose to its defense, urged its retention by Jews as the language of the prayers and as a bond of unity, and reminded them that if many Jews no longer understand the language, the solution lies, not in abandoning the language but rather in teaching it more energetically than before. They, too, believed that the world was on the threshold of great, new beginnings, bewitched by the hope of "maranatha." To them, too, as to the apocalyptic visionaries of the First Century, the Kingdom of God was just around the corner...Listen to the words of Article 5 of the Pittsburgh Declaration which echoed similar sentiments among Reformers everywhere: "We recognize, in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect, the approaching of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of truth, justice, and peace among all men".... They, too, converted the national Messianic hope of Israel into <sup>a</sup> Pauline apocalypse. A Messianic hope not bound up with the restoration of Israel to Palestine is simply not found in Jewish religious literature anywhere from the time of the Second Isaiah to our own day, except, of course, in the writings of these Reformers and some of the Hellenistic apocalyptic writers, who through allegory and other devices attempted to universalize the teachings of Judaism found in the Torah, so as to



impress the non-Jewish world with the excellency of the Jewish faith, and who converted the Jewish national Messiah into an "incarnation of a divine power who should judge men at the end of days." National restoration was the very heart of the Messianic ideal from its very inception. To substitute for this national ideal an anti-national, purely transcendental, nebulous "Messianic Age", on the plea of religious evolution, is to be guilty not of revision but of distortion. It is both new and counterfeit.

Fortunately the views of these men did not prevail. They were quickly challenged. The masses of Jewry recoiled from the. The facts of life soon dissipated the fumes of their universalistic romancing. They have now been completely liquidated in the very land of their nativity. The United States, because of its peculiar political and social configuration, for a time gave scope to these ideas and they were received with considerable favor among certain classes of our people, particularly among our German-Jewish immigrants. But they are being rapidly abandoned. The very men who framed the Pittsburgh Declaration felt the inadequacy of their definition. Twice in the Declaration they speak of the "Jewish people." They do not define the term "people", but the very fact that they resorted to the term indicates that they felt that the term "religious community" somehow failed to cover the full canvass of Jewish realities.

Dr. Kohler, who convoked the Pittsburgh Conference, and helped to ~~xxxx~~ draft its Declaration, found it necessary in ~~in~~ his "Theology" to supplement this definition of Israel as a religious community with the concept of race. "The Jew is born into it (Judaism) and cannot extricate himself from it even by the renunciation of his faith, which would but render him an apostate Jew. This condition ~~xx~~ exists, because the racial community formed, and still forms, the basis of the religious community. It is birth, not confession, that imposes on the Jew the obligation to work and strive for the eternal

verities of Israel, for the preservation and propagation of which he has been chosen by the God of history." (p.6).

But why is the concept of "race" more exalted than "nation"? Why should racial fatalism commit one irrevocably to religious beliefs which are voluntary? If one not of the race can become a Jew by accepting Judaism, why cannot one "extricate" himself from Judaism by rejecting it? Identifying Judaism with race is ~~not~~ no more logical, and in one day, far less delectable than identifying it with "nation."

Dr. Cyrus Adler, another theologian, though not of the conservative wing, is quite as vigorous in denying that the Jews are a race. In his recent address before the Seminary National Council, he declared: "Sometimes people say that they are Jews by race and sometimes that they are Jews by nationality. No people is suffering today more from this race or national theory than the Jewish people, and to the extent that these doctrines have been preached, we have given a weapon into the hands of our enemies....The German State does not close synagogues, it does not forbid religious teachings. The State outlaws the Jew on the race theory....Why then should we fall into this trap? Why should we declare ourselves a race or kultur?....Let us get into our minds definitely once for all that even before the destruction of the Temple, even before the destruction of our nation in Palestine, we became a religious community, and that we are or we are nothing".

Dr. Adler also labors under the fond illusion which we discussed before -- that if our enemies would only realize that we are a religious community and not a race or a nationality, they would automatically cease to hate us. But this highly adjustable diplomatic philosophy of Jewish history deceives no one. Instead of centering the attack upon the whole false race theory of the State which in Germany had its origin in the Hegelian thesis that the State must be a national

unit based on race homogeneity. Dr. Adler counsels the Jews to abandon entirely the very concept of race as a factor in Jewish survival. This is in keeping with those sad and futile tactics of so many Jews in the last one hundred years who tried to whittle down the content of Jewish life in order to meet a temporary political emergency.

It is idle, of course, to talk of our people as no longer a nation but a religious community, in the face of the fact that millions of Jews are today recognized by the law of nations as national minorities in Poland, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, millions more recognized as a distinct nationality in Soviet Russia, where an autonomous Jewish region is actually being built and hundreds of thousands in Palestine where a Jewish homeland is being created under the terms of a mandate of the League of Nations which recognizes not only the national existence of the Jewish people but its historic claim to a national home. It is not only idle to ~~repeat~~ repeat the religious community shipbolet of the early Reformers in our day but also quite fantastic and ridiculous.

It should be borne in mind, also, that nationalism is sometimes forced upon the Jew, even when he does not particularly crave it. In the struggle, for example, between the numerous nationalities in Eastern and Central Europe, each clamoring for self-determination, the Jews, living in their midst, have to take sides or declare themselves to be an independent nationality. It was a case of accepting the cultures of Rutenians, Croats, Slovaks and of other nationality groups which were far inferior to their own or of asserting their own. No Jewish group was as completely denationalized as were the Jewish communists of Russia. They were anti-religious, anti-Zionist, anti-Hebraist. Their sole allegiance was to the proletarian class. And yet, with the triumph of Bolshevism, these very Jewish communists have been forced by the logic of events not only to carry on as ~~members~~ members of a Jewish nationality in Soviet Russia but to undertake the building of a separate Jewish Republic in Siberia. One cannot, therefore, in the face of these political realities in Jewish life, today, maintain

the theologic fiction that the Jews are only a religious community.

✓ And what of the myriads of our people who are non-religious or anti-religious, who can accept neither the theology of Judaism nor its code of religious observances Orthodox or Reform and who are yet very loyal and active Jews? Is there no room for them in the household of Israel? There would not be, if we regarded Israel as <sup>a</sup> "religious community" exclusively. But being a nation, and not a religious community, there is room in Israel for all Jews, except for those who do not wish to be Jews and who declare

"We have no portion or inheritance in our fathers' house.!"... And these are being tragically reminded in some parts of the world that even though they forsake their inheritance in their fathers' house they will not find their portion or inheritance anywhere else in the world....

✓ Should we not rather regard it as providential that in these days when formal religion is losing its hold upon great numbers of our people and when this loss threatens to undermine our existence as a people, that the national and racial sentiment has been rekindled among many of our people so that they wish to remain Jews and to link up their destiny with the destiny of Israel in some if not in all of the spheres of its creative life?

✓ The Jewish people produced the Jewish religion, but people and religion are not synonymous terms. The Jewish religion is a colossal and world-revolutionizing concourse of spiritual ideas unfolding themselves in the life of a people of a particular character and temperament, but the Jewish religion does not exhaust the full content of the Jewish people. In relation to its religion, Israel is both imminent and transcendent as is every great artist in relation to the creation of his genius. declared

Judah Halevi. "If there had been no Jews there would have been no Torah, and the Jews did not derive their high estate from Moses but Moses derived his high estate



from the Jews ( 11.56).

✓ The Jewish religion is the noblest creation of our people and our supreme gift to civilization. It possesses such vast reservoirs of spiritual truth that it has been able to sustain and inspire generations upon generations of our people and retain their sacrificial loyalty under all circumstances and upon all levels of culture. It thus became the strongest factor in the survival of our people, the , the enduring tie. It is doubtful whether the Jewish people can long survive in the diaspora without it - unless the other survival factors are reinforced to a degree which will compensate such a major loss. Jewish secular cultural autonomy may be possible in countries where the Jewish groups achieve minority rights. In such ~~maxims~~ countries the Jewish group may survive even if divorced from strong religious loyalties. This is possible, though not probable. But in countries where minority rights are not possible, where there exists no active Anti-semitism, which forces the Jew back upon himself, the task of Jewish survival will become increasingly difficult as religion loses its influence upon Jews and therewith also its power of national conservation. Those religious leaders, therefore, who are, today, teaching the religion of Israel to their people are not only leading them to fountains of living truth which can sweeten and refresh their individual lives, but are also conserving the most potent force which, throughout the ages, has sheltered and preserved the Jewish people.

✓ But they should not substitute a part for the whole - even if it is the major part. Havelock Ellis, in his introduction to J. K. Haysman's "A Rebours" makes the interesting observation that the essential distinction between the classic and the decadent in art and literature is to be found in the fact that in ~~the~~ the classic the parts ~~are~~ are subordinated to the whole, whereas in

the decadent, the whole is subordinated in the parts. "The classic strives after those virtues which the whole may best express; the later manner (the decadent depreciates the importance of the whole for the benefit of its parts, and strives after the virtue of individualism."

✓ Jewish life also possessed in its great epochs this classic balance, and the aim of religious leaders today should be to restore it. Many tributaries flow into the historic channel of Jewish life. In recent years some zealous and mostly uninformed partisans have attempted to reduce Judaism to what is only a fraction of itself -- to race or ~~xxix~~ nationalism or folkways or theologic abstractions. Quite unconsciously they are falsifying Judaism. It is a mark of decadence in the diaspora that so many of our people have lost the sense of the classic harmony in Jewish life and are attempting to substitute a part for the whole.

✓ It is the total program of Jewish life and destiny which the religious leaders of our people should stress today -- the religious and moral values, the universal concepts, the mandate of mission, as well as the Jewish people itself and all its national aspirations. Thus the strength and security of our life will be retrieved, and whether in Palestine or in the diaspora, we shall move forward unafraid upon the road of our destiny.

# ISRAEL

A Paper on the Declaration of Principles adopted by  
the Pittsburgh Rabbinical Conference in 1885, read  
before the Annual Convention of the Central Conference  
of American Rabbis in Chicago, Ill., on June 27, 1935

BY

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## ISRAEL

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I shall devote myself principally to a discussion of paragraph 5 of the Declaration of Principles adopted by the Pittsburgh Rabbinical Conference in 1885 which reads as follows: "We recognize, in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect, the approaching of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice, and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state."

This declaration is noteworthy in that it was the first of its kind ever made by an assembly of Jewish religious leaders, lay or cleric. No similarly constituted conference anywhere in the whole history of Israel up to that time declared categorically: "We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community." Individual Reform Rabbis, like Geiger and Holdheim and many others, did of course, prior to 1885, proclaim this thesis time and again. But it is significant that even the Frankfort Conference of 1845 which was dominated by the extreme left wing of the German Reform movement contented itself with a resolution that: "The Messianic idea should receive prominent mention in the prayers, but all petitions for our return to the land of our fathers, and for the restoration of a Jewish state should be eliminated from the prayers."

It is, of course, one thing to say that it is desirable, for one reason or another, for the Jewish people to remain where they are and not



to strive after national restoration in Palestine; Galut nationalists of the Dubnow School, the proletarian Yiddishists of Soviet Russia and many others besides anti-Zionist Reform Rabbis would subscribe to such a doctrine. It is quite another thing to announce that: "We consider ourselves no longer a nation but a religious community."

Rabbi Wechsler, for example, clearly grasped this difference which seems to have escaped the notice of so many of his Reform colleagues of that day. He, too, was opposed to the Restoration idea but he nevertheless maintained that we were a people united not merely by religious ties but also by racial and national ties and by historical experiences commonly shared. (See S. Bernfeld, —תולדות הרפורם צ"ן הדתית Cracow, 1900, p. 49, note.)

It is quite possible that if a set of principles had been adopted by the Frankfort Conference, or by its predecessor, the Brunswick Conference of 1844, a declaration similar to the one of the Pittsburgh Conference would have been adopted. But their very reluctance to adopt such a declaration of principles is itself significant.

The Philadelphia Conference of 1869 was the first to formulate a platform of Reform Judaism. This declaration likewise does not contain the creed of national abjuration found in the Pittsburgh platform. The theologic cosmopolitanism of the framers of the Philadelphia constitution of Reform Judaism found sufficient peace of mind in the avowal that: "The Messianic aim of Israel is not the restoration of the old Jewish state under a descendant of David, involving a second separation from the nations of the earth. . . . We look upon the destruction of the second Jewish commonwealth not as a punishment for the sinfulness of Israel, but as a result of the divine purpose revealed to Abraham, which, as has become ever clearer in the course of the world's history, consists in the dispersion of the Jews to all parts of the earth, for the realization of their high priestly mission, to lead the nations to the true knowledge and worship of God."

The early Reform Rabbis of America were certainly more eager to formulate Principles and Declarations than were their confreres in Germany. They did not shrink from dogmatic pronouncements, nor did the old adage of Erasmus—*omnis definitio periculosa est*—discourage them. The fact that they had to reckon with far fewer restraints

in the New World, traditional or institutional, and with an inchoate Jewish community and a minimum of local Jewish history, undoubtedly gave wing to their spacious and care-free theologic depositions. What impresses one, however, is the fact that it was in the United States, of all countries, where such a declaration on the subject of Jewish nationalism as one finds in the Pittsburgh platform was made. One cannot account for it except on the basis of its being an importation, an exotic plant brought to these shores by immigrant rabbis from Germany and transplanted here without any particular reference to soil or climate. For there was nothing in the American Jewish scene in the eighties that made such a declaration urgent or significant. There was no political pressure from without, no need to placate organized anti-Semitic forces, no necessity to purchase political equality through any public renunciation of earlier ways of life and thought. Nor was there visible any strong nationalist movement among the American Jews of those days. One can readily understand the political motives behind such formal surrender of Jewish nationalism made by some Jews who lived in Germany during the period of struggle for emancipation and equality in the nineteenth century, and by some groups of Jews in Russia in the eager, hopeful years of the early reign of Alexander II. But why in America?

The Reform movement in Germany did not originate in any great outpouring of spirit, or in any outburst of religious fervor or revivalism. Hence, while producing a vigorous polemic and *Wissenschaft* literature, it produced no great theologic or mystic literature. It was part of a comprehensive purpose to adjust Jewish life pragmatically to its new environment. It was a conscious expedient, not to reinstate prophetic universalism in Jewish religious thought—that was rationalization—but to gain for the Jew full rights of citizenship by producing the proper effect upon the civil authorities. It was assumed, albeit erroneously, that Jewish separatism, manifested in speech, dress, folkways, rituals and ceremonies and in the Messianic expectation of a return to Palestine, was responsible for the non-Jews' suspicion and hostility and for their reluctance to concede to Jews full political equality. The accusations of the cruder and less sophisticated anti-Semites of that day lent credence to that assumption. The solution, accordingly, lay in a thorough-going eradication

of all evidences of separatism. For some Jews this meant total assimilation, apostasy not excluded. For others assimilation stopped short of religious surrender but religion purged of all nationalistic elements.

The process began in the *Aufklärung* era whose symbol is Moses Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn was, of course, neither a reformer nor an anti-nationalist. He was a humanist who sought to find a place for the religiously observant Jew in the political and intellectual milieu of Western European civilization. But under the influence of the rationalism and cosmopolitanism of his day and in his eagerness to persuade the German people of the Jew's qualifications for citizenship, he "neutralized" Judaism theologically by denying its unique and challenging character as a system of beliefs and restricted it to the status of a revealed law or divine legislation which was in no way in conflict with the law of the land. He, furthermore, passed over in silence, though perhaps not intentionally, the *national* character of the Jewish people. Nationalism, be it remembered, was in Mendelssohn's day not a fully developed concept and the idea of separate nationalities within a state was not quite as repugnant and sinister as it became later. Nevertheless Mendelssohn's thesis that theology is a private matter and that Judaism is nothing more than a revealed code of laws, largely ceremonial, and his reticence touching the *national* destiny of Israel was seized upon by contemporaries as justification for assimilation. It was but one step, regardless of its logical *non-sequitur*, from the position taken by Mendelssohn to that of his friend and admirer, David Friedländer, who in the *Epistle of Several Jewish Fathers to Councilor Teller* offered to accept Christianity if certain doctrines such as the Trinity were eliminated. Dorothea Mendelssohn, after her conversion to Christianity, felt justified in saying that her father, if he had been alive, would not have been saddened by her act. This first generation of *enlightened* Berlin, Frankfurt and Viennese Jews were convinced that their political and social salvation lay in deorientalizing and Germanizing themselves, in making themselves *like* other people in order to be accepted as equals *by* other people. Of course they were naive. In the land of the poll-tax where Jew-hatred had always been the most vulgar, violent, and sustained in all Europe, they permitted them-

selves to indulge in wishful thinking. They might have been cautioned by the cool admonitions of some of their Christian contemporaries who advised them, as Teller deftly advised Friedländer, not to confound Jewish efforts at *religious modernization* with the hope of political equality. Schleiermacher, the non-Jew, grasped the Jewish problem far more realistically and fundamentally than did the German Jews of his day. He warned them that the important difference between them and the non-Jewish world was not religious but national. It took the German Jews a century and a half to reconcile themselves finally to this unyielding fact.

The *national* character of the Jewish problem became evident within a few years after the French Revolution. In the superb exultation of the Revolution the rights of citizenship were granted to the Jews of France. But when the revolutionary ardor had abated, grumblings and mutterings were soon heard against them. An anti-Semitic literature made its appearance. A particularly violent outburst of Jew-hatred made itself manifest in the German-speaking French province of Alsace. The attitude of Napoleon was anything but friendly to the Jews. He was considering the revocation or curtailment of their civil rights. The real motive which prompted the convocation of the Assembly of Jewish notables in Paris in 1806—the forerunner of the Sanhedrin—was to cross-examine the Jews of France, to discover whether they were one hundred percent patriotic and deserving of the citizenship which the Revolution had bestowed upon them. The questionnaire submitted to the Assembly was to ferret out some possible excuse for the arrogation of their rights. Thus the sixth question read: "Do the Jews who are natives of France and are treated as French citizens by the law look upon France as their Fatherland?" The fourth question read: "Do the Jews consider the French their brethren or do they look upon them as aliens?"

The Assembly, of course, affirmed that the Jews of France regarded France as their Fatherland, and all Frenchmen as their brothers. They loudly proclaimed their loyalty to France and their readiness to defend her at all costs. They did not feel called upon, however, as did the Raobis of the Pittsburgh Conference who were neither solicited for an opinion, nor were hard-pressed politically, to



declare that the Jews were not a nation, only a religious community. Nor did they deny the hope of national restoration as did the all-too-zealous German reformers a few decades later.

But it was clear from the very fact that such an assembly had been convoked, and such questions asked that *nationalism* would from then on be the central fact of Jewish experience not only in France, but everywhere as soon as the Jews left their ghettos and reached out for civil and political rights. As in Germany, so also in France, there were Jews who met the increasing nationalist sentiments in their environment with a corresponding modulation of their own, although there did not transpire any such thorough-going religious reform movement among the French as among the German Jews. France was Catholic, religiously orthodox. There was no popular Protestant movement for the Jews of France to model themselves after.

Most marked, however, were the anti-nationalist tendencies among German Jews because German anti-Semitism was far more virulent and uncompromising, and German nationalism, following the War of Liberation, far more intense and jaundiced. The opposition to the political emancipation of the Jews in Germany was bitter and relentless throughout the nineteenth century, continuing into the twentieth and achieving a complete victory under the Nazi regime in our day. Rising like a miasma from the poisoned soil of the Dark Ages, Jew-hatred has swept uninterruptedly like a pestilential plague through German life and literature, infesting masses and classes alike, poisoning the hearts and minds of liberals as well as reactionaries, of poets, philosophers, statesmen, historians, musicians and churchmen. The venomous anti-Jewish Nazi propaganda literature of the last fifteen years drew its inspiration, program and slogans from the prolific school of Jew-baiting preachers, pundits and pamphleteers of the Bismarckian era, and they, in turn, derived their leading ideas from their precursors in the post-Napoleonic era, whose mentor and model was the liberal, anti-clerical philosopher Fichte whose attitude is summed up in his statement: "The only way I see by which civil rights can be conceded to them (Jews) is to cut off all their heads in one night and set new ones on their shoulders, which shall contain not a single Jewish idea. The only means of protecting

ourselves against them is to conquer their promised land and send them there." The Nazi cry, *Juda Verrecke*, is the authentic echo of the *Hep, Hep*, cry shouted by frenzied mobs in the streets of Frankfort and Hamburg a century and more before. There is an unbroken line of ideologically formulated, metaphysically sanctioned and artistically embellished Judeophobia in Germany, centuries old, unmatched anywhere else in the world. It was in such a milieu that the Jews of Germany lived and struggled for their civil and political rights. If, therefore, Jewish lay and religious leaders of the reform group, and also of some of the Germanized orthodox and conservative groups attempted to throw overboard all the racial and national baggage of Israel in the fond hope of calming this sea of hate, if they believed that they could exorcise anti-Semitism by professions of patriotism, and in an age of *crescendo* nationalism, could solve the Jewish problem by a corresponding *diminuendo* in Jewish nationalism, one can understand their plight and forgive their blindness, whereas one finds it difficult to account for the action of American reformers except on the grounds suggested above.

The Russian Jewish intelligentsia of the sixties and seventies resorted to the self-same unavailing tactics in a land in which there was far less literary anti-Semitism than in Germany, and in which the educated classes of society were definitely pro-Jewish. The anti-national incantation which Holdheim chanted in Germany to appease the intolerant spirits of German nationalism, Pinsker, for example, chanted in Russia for many years before tragic, disillusioning events forced him upon the long hard road which leads from assimilation to auto-emancipation. Many others among the best minds of Russian Jewry believed that in thorough Russification and assimilation lay the hope of ultimate salvation. They advocated the use of the Russian language and the abandonment both of Yiddish and Hebrew. At most they conceded a minimal religious distinctiveness. The idea of a Jewish national renaissance, or the reconstruction of a Jewish homeland in Palestine was to them both fantastic and unwelcome. It was too reactionary an idea to entertain in an age of enlightenment when a favoring breeze filled their sails and they felt themselves carried along to the delectable harbor of liberty and equality. It was too reactionary an idea and too illogical. But

history has a logic of her own. A sharp reaction set in under the same Liberator Czar Alexander II, and in 1871, the Jews of Russia sampled the gall and bitterness of a pogrom. The pogrom of 1871 and the more extensive and brutal pogroms of 1881 broke the back of assimilation in Russia. The solution clearly did not lie in the formula, "Russians of the Mosaic Persuasion." In 1882 the *Chovevei Zion* appear on the scene. In the same year the converted Pinsker publishes his *Auto-Emancipation*. Russian Jewry sets about solving its problems through self-help, through mass emigration to other lands, through the upbuilding of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, through national concentration and cultural revival, and through revolutionary economico-political agitation and action in an effort to break the power of the hostile reactionary regime.

German Jewry might have learned the same lesson in the seventies when the great reaction set in and anti-Semitism flared up again. Treitschke, Bernhardi, Stöcker, Dürer, Marr, Mole,—all the forerunners of the present-day Nazis—told them exactly how the German people felt about the Jews and why and what the German people would do to them when the hour of decision arrived. But the German Jews continued in their ineluctable optative mood, confident as was Rabbi Auerbach at the Rabbinical Conference of Frankfort, that: "In our day the ideals of justice and the brotherhood of men have been so strengthened through the laws and institutions of modern states, that they can never again be shattered. We are witnessing an ever nearer approach of the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth through the strivings of mankind (quoted from Philipson's *The Reform Movement in Judaism*, p. 178). This was uttered in Frankfort in 1845. Frankfort of 1935 is of course a sad and discouraging refutation of all this apocalyptic romancing in which German Jewry immersed itself in those days. The catastrophe of 1933 broke the back of assimilation in Germany. The whole improvised philosophy of Jewish history which is expressed in the doctrine that we are not a nation but a religious community has proved bankrupt and has been liquidated in the very home of its origin.

While the leaders of German Jewry, with the exception of course of the small but distinguished group of nationally-minded thinkers

of the type of Moses Hess, Bodenheimer, Franz Oppenheimer, Volffsohn, Ruppin, Hantke, Otto Warburg and Martin Buber, talked to unheeding Gentile ears about the unoffending status of the Jews as only another religious sect who in all other regards were *Eck-und-Nur-Deutschen*, the Germans were reading and absorbing the nationalistic theses and the Aryan race mythologies of Chamberlain, Friedrich Delitzsch, Glüther and Rosenberg and the relentless processes of history, made *race* and *nation* the order of the day in Germany. In their name and at their behest the Jews of Germany have been disfranchised, stripped of all their hard-won gains of a century and a half, and degraded as few Jewish communities have ever been degraded in the last two thousand years. And now the Jews of Germany, except those of the small and pathologically chauvinistic Naumannian group, are meeting the crisis of their inner and outer lives in the same way as their Russian brethren a few centuries before—a strong national revival, the rediscovery of the cultural heritage of their own people, Palestine, emigration and presumably also, such underground political action as their stoutest spirits dare to resort to.

It would have been far better for the Jews of Germany if they had kept alive a strong national self-consciousness. They would then have faced the Nazi attack as a clash between national groups within a political state—something quite common in Central and Eastern Europe, and their defeat would have been regarded by them as a political defeat and not as the loss of their entire patrimony, as banishment from their one and only cultural and spiritual home,  
 בלו מעל שלחן אביהם

How confidently Ludwig Geiger of Berlin proclaimed thirty years ago: "Any desire to form, together with his co-religionists, a people outside of Germany is, not to speak of its impracticability, downright thanklessness toward the nation in whose midst he lives—a *chimera*; for the German Jew is a German in his *national peculiarities* (*sic!*) and Zion is for him the land only of the past, *not of the future*. (Quoted in *J.E.* Vol. XII, p. 673.) Thirty years later, Germans whose *national peculiarities* were all German (in the eyes of Jews, of course, but not of Germans) were fleeing from Germany and finding refuge by the thousands in the land which was never really the



land of their past but which must very definitely now become the land of their future. The Munich community which forced the transfer of the first Zionist Congress, scheduled to be held there, to Basel, is now grateful that some of its sons and daughters are finding a haven and a new hope in the land which those ungrateful and *unpatriotic* Zionists had built.

They were all too dogmatic, these Geigers, and Maybaums, and Vogelsteins! It is well to spin philosophies of Jewish history. It is dangerous to ignore the realities of Jewish experience. The timeliness and convenience of a given theory of Jewish life are not the only tests of its validity. Such a theory must be viewed against the background of the accumulated historical experiences of our people, tested as it were, in the crucible of the ages. Certainly, the hope that such a theory might be approved by our enemies gives it no sanction whatsoever; for our enemies can rationalize their hates quite as readily as we can rationalize our hopes, and they have never been known to relent because of any sweet and appetizing definition of Jewish life which we offered them.

Ever since the first dispersions of our people in the sixth century before the Common Era, and the subsequent voluntary and involuntary migrations which by the beginning of the Common Era saw the Jewish diaspora extend from the Gates of India to the Pillars of Hercules and from the Caucasus to Ethiopia, and their further diffusion throughout Europe in the twenty centuries which followed, up to the present world-wide diaspora, Jews have faced the two-fold task of adjusting themselves to their given political and cultural environments and at the same time of remaining loyal to themselves as Jews. Because of this two-fold responsibility there was always an element of stress, tension, and conflict in Jewish life in the diaspora. There always will be. Human history is replete with the clash and conflict of nations, races, peoples, religions and classes. The Jewish nation had its full quota of these conflicts when it was a political nation in Palestine. It certainly could not escape them as a non-political and scattered nation in the diaspora. Those who could not stand the strain of Jewish existence disappeared. Myriads of such Jews were lost to us. Many others were forcibly assimilated. Those who cannot endure the pressures

of Jewish life today, their סבל הירושה will also disappear—if they can. The newer racial anti-Semitism of the Nazi type is making such desertion extremely difficult. It is impossible to propound any formula for Jewish survival in the diaspora—if we really mean *survival*—free from a measure of stress and conflict.

In our long history we never had a uniform plan or formula for survival. Such a formula, if it is to be something more than academic, must take into account not only the shifting interests and needs of the Jews themselves but also the varied and changing political and economic milieu in which Jewish groups find themselves. A formula which would be valid for Jewish communities living in an empire like that of ancient Persia, Greece or Rome which embraced numerous nationalities and allowed them full national autonomy short of political independence, would not meet the situation of a Jewish community living in a closely-knit, uni-cultural national state like modern France, Germany, or Italy; and a formula valid for these countries would not be adequate for a multi-national state like Poland, Czechoslovakia, or Russia. A Jewish community living in the midst of a people whose cultural niveau was far inferior to its own, would face altogether different problems of adjustment than one living in the midst of a superior culture.

But there was always the will to survive! Not in all sections of our people, to be sure, nor at all times, but certainly in sufficiently large sections of our people at all times to have enabled Israel to survive to this day. And at all times, the amazing will to survive of this tough and hardy people whom the Rabbis designated עוֹמֵי שְׂבָאוֹת, this *obstinatio Judaeorum*, this basic loyalty to their corporate existence and to the substantial elements of their total heritage, projected the necessary strategy, the adequate technique for survival. This strategy was dictated not by any abstract speculation or by apologetics but by the life-hunger of the race, the indefeasible will to live, the compelling sense of destiny. The source of inspiration was always within, rising from the profound hidden depths of the racial, the instinctive, the primordial.

So great was this desire not to die as a people, that when it found its life besieged and threatened, it threw additional bulwarks around its security and raised stronger walls of defense. It did not hesitate

to impose upon itself in the centuries following the second Destruction, a code of discipline, a regimen of מצוות מעשיות which was far more rigorous than any military discipline, and which effectively safeguarded the individuality of the people and secured it against disintegration. The people, as a whole, never relaxed its vigilance. It never whittled down its requirements or its survival program to appease enemies or detractors. It never countenanced a minimal program to satisfy others. It always insisted upon a maximum program to protect its own life.

When the first great crisis developed in Jewish life following the national catastrophe in 586, the great leaders of the people immediately rushed to the defense of Israel, threatened with extinction. The prophets, who had heretofore castigated their peoples for their idolatry and their moral waywardness and called down upon them doom and destruction, now abruptly change their invective style and in words of comfort, encouragement and hope seek to heal their wounds and revive the broken spirits. The stern, unyielding Jeremiah, who before the national calamity wrote "with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond" and whose mouth was a sharp sword, now speaks like a compassionate father to his bruised and suffering children lovingly, tenderly. "The people that are left of the sword have found grace in the wilderness, even Israel, when I go to cause him to rest. . . . Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with affection have I drawn thee. Again will I build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel. Again shalt thou be adorned with thy tabrets, and shall go forth in the dances of them that make merry. . . . And they shall come and sing in the height of Zion and shall flow unto the goodness of the Lord . . . and their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not pine any more at all."

Ezekiel, who in the tense, tragic interlude between 597 and 586, between the first and the second deportations, still called down imprecations upon the sinful in Zion and uttered terrible and frantic denunciations against them in the desperate hope of averting the calamity which he saw approaching, now, that the blow had fallen and the people lay crushed, dazed and hope-bereft, finds a new voice and a new message. For now one must "breathe upon the slain that

they might live." The people must not die! "Behold I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, O My people." . . . Faith and confidence must be rekindled. "Behold here am I, and I will search for My sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are separated so will I seek out of all places whither they have been scattered in the day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the habitable places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be; . . . I will seek that which was lost, and will bring back that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick."

Powerful and exhilarating new motifs ring through the post-exilic prophecies of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Obadiah, Joel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and of course, Deutero-Isaiah. There is the reverberating motif: **אל תיראו**—"Fear not!" "Fear thou not, O Jacob, My servant, saith the Lord, neither be dismayed, O Israel; For I will save thee from afar and thy seed from the land of their captivity." (Jer. 30.10.) There is the motif: **ושבת** "I will restore!" "And I will turn your captivity, and gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord, and I will bring you back into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive." (Jer. 29.14.) There is the motif of **ברית חדשה** "A new covenant!" The old covenant was broken and had to be atoned for in blood and tears. A new covenant will now be made, a covenant of everlasting love and peace. (Ezek. 37.26, Jer. 31.31.) There is the startling new motif: **איש בעונו ימות** "Every man shall die for *his own* iniquity!" There is no inherited guilt. The exiles should throw off the oppressive sense of guilt and the fear of retribution because of the sins of their fathers. (Jer. 31.28-9; Ezek. 18.4; 33.10.) The guilt has been paid off. (Is. 40.2.) There is the motif of **בחרתיך בכור עני** "The testing in the furnace of affliction." Exile and suffering were intended not to crush Israel, but to cleanse, purify and strengthen him. There is the motif of



נצח ישראל "The Eternity of Israel!" "Thus saith the Lord who giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, who stirreth up the sea, that the waves thereof roar. . . . If these ordinances depart from Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever." (Jer. 31.35-6.) And there appears the new, imperial and magnificent motif of: אור לַגּוֹיִם "A light unto the nations!" The mission idea! There is nothing of the mission idea among the prophets who preached before the exile. It is a product of post-exilic times and received its classic formulation at the hands of the anonymous author or authors of Isaiah 40-66 (plus 34-35?) who, living during the Babylonian captivity, as some maintain or in the latter half of the Persian period as Torrey and others maintain, preached to a far-flung diaspora of the new opportunity and challenge which has come to Israel, because of its dispersion, to convert the whole world to the worship of the One, true God,—thus making Judaism the first missionary religion of mankind.

The pre-exile prophets, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and the prophets of the transition era, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, know nothing of any historic mandate upon Israel to convert the world. The idea of mission did not enter into Jewish religious thought until almost a thousand years after the Jews had settled in Palestine and, in all probability, would never have made its appearance if the people had not been exiled. That Israel was a people chosen by God, Yahweh's *special possession*, was a commonly accepted doctrine among the pre-exilic prophets. The sense of an inviolable covenant—Yahweh's covenant with Israel made at the time of the Exodus from Egypt—was dominant in their thought at all times. That this unique and covenanted relationship entered into between Israel and Yahweh, the God of Holiness, made Israel, as long as it observed this covenant, a holy people in the midst of the surrounding idolatrous peoples, was also strongly felt by them. But that these convictions also carried with them the implication that Israel must be Yahweh's messenger to convert the heathen world was not entertained by them. The phrase in Ex. 19.6 ואתם קדוש תהיו לי סמלכת בהנים וטי קדוש "And ye shall be unto Me

a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"—even if we assume that it is pre-exilic—says nothing about any mission to the Gentiles. Only very deft and generous homiletics can read such a meaning into it. The majestic apocalyptic vision of **אַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים** found in Is. 2.2-4 and Micah 4.1-4—the vision of Zion as the spiritual center of the world, and of all nations flowing to the house of the God of Jacob in order to learn of His ways of justice and peace is concededly of post-exilic origin. So are all the references scattered through the writings of the prophets which tell of the future conversion of all the peoples of the earth, of their pilgrimage to Zion and of Israel as the servant of God who will bring this conversion about.

The source of the Mission Idea must therefore be looked for in the fact of the Dispersion and not in any automatic spiritual development of prophetic Judaism. It was evolved, consciously or unconsciously, in response to a desperate national emergency, out of the indomitable *will to live* of the race, as a means of strengthening the morale of the scattered hosts of Israel and of giving meaning and dignity to their exile and their vast tribulations. It was a noble compensatory ideal, warranted by the fact that Israel *did* possess a religious outlook which far transcended that of the heathen and a moral code of superior excellence. Israel knew itself to be a great people because of the spiritual heights to which it had attained in its religious and ethical development. This achievement made it contemptuous of the superstitions and idolatries of the world about it. But politically it was a small, scattered and defeated people—a *worm* among the nations, despised and contemned. Wherein shall this proud but defeated people, of which only a miserable remnant now remained in the waste and desolate places of Judea, whilst its hosts were captives and exiles in foreign lands, now find that indemnifying conception of destiny which would take the edge off their defeat, sweeten the bitterness of exile, and restore confidence to those utterly cast down? The answer was soon forthcoming—the cup of comfort to the parched lips:

"Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, to him who is despised of men, to him who is abhorred of nations, to a servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise, princes, and they shall prostrate themselves . . . I will preserve thee and give thee for

a covenant of the people." (Is. 49.7.) "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and have taken hold of thy hand, and kept thee and set thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nation; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." (Is. 42.6-7.) Light and salvation will come to the whole world through Israel, who is God's servant, suffering in the present but destined to ultimate triumph and vindication. This is the **חדשות מניד**—the wonderfully new gospel which the Second Isaiah now proclaims. This is the new vision and hope which the spiritual guides of Israel projected for their people in order to save them from death in defeat and exile.

Note that this ideal of mission is not a denial, a revision or a substitution for any other concept heretofore held basic in Jewish thought but only a supplement, an addition, another bulwark for national security. It does not supplant nationalism. It re-enforces it. It does not look upon the dispersion as a blessing. It confronts it as a tragic fact which, however, must not be permitted to endanger the survival of Israel. It does not assume that the Jew must remain in exile in order that Yahweh may become the God of all the nations. It does not proclaim that Israel is no longer a nation but only a religious community, whose *sole raison d'être* is the conversion of the Gentiles. It does not divorce religion from nationalism. The prophecies of Second Isaiah ring with the recurrent refrain of Israel's approaching restoration to Palestine. "Fear not, for I am with thee; I will bring thy seed from the east and will gather thee from the west. I will say to the north: 'Give up,' and to the south: 'Keep not back'; bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the end of the earth." (Is. 43.5-6.) And when the prophets speak of Restoration they are not thinking of "the colonization of Palestine as a philanthropic effort deserving of general support" (a concession made to Palestine even by anti-Zionist Reform Rabbis), but of the rebuilding of the political life and home of the Jewish nation.

Zion rebuilt and Israel ingathered are the passionate themes of the prophets following the exile, and they did not regard them as

being in any way irreconcilable with the hope of converting the whole world to Yahweh. The nations will come to *Zion*. *Zion* will become the religious center of mankind. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts: I am *jealous* for *Zion* with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great fury! . . . I shall return to *Zion*, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. . . . Behold, I will save My people from the east country and from the west country and I will bring them and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem." (Zech. 8.2.)

Centuries later, Judah Halevi, reinterprets this Mission Idea for the Jews of *his* age and here again it is inseparably intertwined with the national aspirations, with people, land and language. Halevi takes up afresh the theme of Deutero-Isaiah. Israel among the nations is like the heart among the organs of the body, the most sensitive and the most important. Israel suffers for the sins of mankind, and through Israel's peculiar racial genius or aptness for religion (or prophecy as Halevi prefers it) the nations of the earth will be exalted. But Israel must live, if its unique gifts are to continue to bless mankind, and it must be restored to its own land, where alone prophecy can find its congenial soil, and it must revive the Hebrew language which alone can be the perfect medium for such prophecy. The *Cuzari*, you will recall, closes on the note of the return to Palestine of the Rabbi who converted the king of the Chazars. Halevi may seem extreme in his views, but there can be no doubt that as far as essentials are concerned, he was in direct line of authentic Jewish tradition. He voiced the major convictions of Israel.

Any one, therefore, who attempts to exploit the historic Mission Idea of Israel as an argument against Jewish nationalism or against the rebuilding of Palestine or in justification of the *Galut* is guilty of gross distortion of an idea which is very clearly and unambiguously defined in its original sources. The prophets did not believe that the Jews should continue to live in exile, nor that they should welcome the Dispersion as a blessing for the sake of their mission. They did not say that the Jews were exiled *in order* that they might become God's witnesses to the Gentiles. They exhorted the Jews in exile to find strength in defeat. They sought to sustain them by the thought that though they had been driven into exile their sig-



nificance in the economy of the world was not at an end. On the contrary, they now had the opportunity, through the example of their steadfastness to Yahweh, and through the moral tone of their lives, to acquaint the whole heathen world with their great spiritual heritage—the true knowledge of God, and the nobility of His worship.

The Jews, during the chaotic centuries which followed the Destruction, employed every means to preserve their national life. We have seen how the prophets sought to restore the morale of the people by giving those living inside and outside of Palestine an inspiring and sustaining sense of destiny. The people, themselves, in exile, once the first shock of terror and dismay was over, recovered their ancient faith and loyalties. By the rivers of Babylon they vowed eternal loyalty to Zion, their national home: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her cunning!" The priests elaborated a code of ritual and ceremony and a religious discipline which in a practical way was intended to shelter the life of Israel from the טומאת הגוים—"the uncleanness of the Gentiles," and to keep it a separate and distinct people. In Judea the returned exiles under Ezra, facing a new crisis instituted a most drastic process of national purgation and reconstruction in order to save the life of the community. In his zeal for the preservation of the faith and the purity of the racial stock, Ezra ordains that the foreign women whom the Jews had married should be put away, as well as the children born of them, and that they should "separate themselves from the peoples of the land." Ezra draws no distinction between those belonging to the peoples of Ammon and Moab, against whom there existed of old a law of perpetual exclusion from the "congregation of Yahweh" (Deut. 23-4) and other peoples like Edom, Egypt, against whom no such law existed. Ezra did not even tolerate proselytism, for he does not suggest the conversion of these foreign wives as an alternative to their divorce. This attitude was shared neither by the prophets who preceded Ezra nor by the Rabbis of later times. The Halacha recognized proselytism and accorded full status to the proselyte, incorporating him unreservedly into the life of the nation. **נר שנתמיד** כקטן שגולד. Only an acute crisis, the fear of extinction, ever

present in the life of this small, harassed community which had been delivered over "to the sword, to captivity, to spoiling and to confusion of face" could have called forth such harsh and extreme acts. The nation withdrew as it were, to its last citadel, for a final stand against the forces which threatened to overwhelm it. Ezra and Nehemiah did not *nationalize* the God-concept of Israel in the sense of localizing it. They did not turn back the hands of the clock in the religious evolution of Israel—as some biblical critics imagine. Yahweh is still the One and Universal Lord: "Thou art the Lord, even Thou alone. Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are thereon (Neh. 9.6) . . . But the hour now demanded another emphasis; the immediate task for the Judean community was not to save the world but to save itself. Hence the unusually strong emphasis upon race, nation and language. The Samaritans are rejected because, though they professed the same faith, they were nevertheless not of the same race as Israel. Nehemiah rises to the defense of the *language* of Israel—for national revival always goes hand in hand with language revival and the abandonment of the Hebrew speech was rightly interpreted by Nehemiah as evidence of assimilation: "In those days also saw I the Jews that had married women of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab and their children spoke half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And I quarreled with them, and cursed them and smote certain of them. . . ."

Nation, race, land, language were always vital and indispensable concepts in Jewish life, indissolubly associated of course with religion. It was never a case of one or the other. They were all one, organically united. There were times when one or the other had to be stressed. Wherever one of these factors of survival was threatened, the strong instinct of the people rallied to its defense. Hence in our history we find eras of accentuation of one or another of these several concepts and eras of attenuation. But never was any one of them abandoned—until the time of the Reform Rabbis of Germany which is, of course, a very recent and seemingly a rapidly vanishing phenomenon.

The sound, practical sense of Israel and its experience through many centuries of partial or total dispersion over the earth, saved it from being dogmatic or fanatic concerning any of these concepts. On one subject only was Israel fanatically dogmatic—the monotheistic article of its faith. Jewish life could never stomach the type of doctrinaire, arrogant and militant racialism and nationalism which is devastating the life of the Western World today. Israel reconciled in life and practice ideas theoretically irreconcilable. It was a case of **מיכאל סולו עלג ונבריאל כולו אש ועוסדין זה אצל זה ואינם מוסיקין זה את זה**. Thus it spoke of a Universal God, **אל אלהי הרחות לכל בשר** but at the same time it also spoke of **ה' אלהי ישראל** the God of the people of Israel. It extolled the race as **זרע קדש** but admitted members of other races into the racial family through proselytism and it recognized no biologically superior and inferior races. It always longed for national restoration to Zion, but, from the days of Jeremiah on, it admonished its children, dwelling in foreign lands, to live as good citizens, "to seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it, for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace." It prescribed a complete code of Jewish law for its members living in and out of Palestine covering every phase of life, but it also lay down the qualifying precept **דינא דמלכותא דינא**—in all matters of law, involving no basic tenets of faith, the law of the land is binding. It exalted the Hebrew language. It was the **לשון הקדש**. It made the teaching of it obligatory. **כשהתינוק מתחיל לדבר**. **אביו מדבר עמו לשון הקדש ומלמדו תורה**. **ואם אין מדבר עמו לשון הקדש ומלמדו תורה ראוי לו כאלו קוברו**. Yet it permitted, though it did not counsel, prayer in all languages **חפלה** and translations of the Bible were made and, by and large, welcomed as early as the third century B.C. The Jews welcomed Greek culture—**הכמה יוניית** until it showed itself a peril to Jewish culture, when they violently rejected many phases of it.

Doctrinaires of the white-black, either-or variety, who like to have life and history simplified to fit in neatly in some theoretic framework which they arbitrarily construct to serve their tastes or their times, are impatient with these seeming incongruities and contradic-

tions in Jewish life. They lightly reject whatever they find, practically or ideologically, inconvenient. They are unaware of, or they consciously ignore the strong life-sense, the survival-wisdom, the adjustment-genius of the people which produced them. A religious creed, once you grant its premises, may well be logically consistent and undeviating. But a people is not a creed and a people's life and culture are determined by historic forces which are not logical. Israel, confronted through most of its history with an ever changing and threatening environment, and wishing to survive, had to take into account all the economic, political, sociologic and psychologic facts in its environment and make proper adjustments to them.

But it never sacrificed essential values for temporary expediency. It was a case of **אֶהָח בִּזְמַן זֶה אֵל תַּחַח דִּיךְ**. There were many movements and sects within Israel during its long history—Sadduceism, Pharisaism, Essenism, Christianity, Hellenism, Karaism, Kabbalism, Chassidism, Haskalah, Reform, Zionism. They all in their day, quite naturally, led to bitter conflict and partisanship. That is true of such movements among all peoples. But the Jewish people, as such, found room for all of them within its fold, except for Christianity. Even the Karaites who created such turmoil and dissention in Jewish life were never outlawed by our people. Thus, for example, Maimonides, in the very midst of a bitter feud between the Rabbinites and the Karaites, a feud already centuries old in Maimonides' day, nevertheless urges a policy of brotherly toleration towards the Karaites, to treat them as Jews, circumcise their children, bury their dead, comfort their mourners, and treat their wine as ritually fit. For, after all, the Karaites were loyal Jews, regardless of their opposition to the tradition and authority of the Rabbis. They were devoted not only to the God of Israel and the Torah but to the land of Israel. Soon after the rise of Karaism, groups of Karaites, forsaking home and friends, migrated to Palestine and established communities known as the **אַנְלִי צִיּוֹן** "the Mourners for Zion." Their zeal for Palestine exceeded that of the Rabbinites. They loved the Hebrew language, and the birth of the science of Hebrew grammar and philology in the Middle Ages is to be credited to them.

But in the case of Christianity, it was the Pauline insistence upon



a religious creed entirely divorced from nation, race, land or language and from the disciplines of Jewish law, that finally placed the movement outside the sphere of Jewish life.

As a messianic movement, inspired by the millennial expectations of that age, preaching the advent of the Kingdom of God, and calling men to repentance and moral purification in order to escape the *חבלי משיח* and be worthy of admission into the Kingdom, the Messianism of Jesus might well have found a place, as for a time it actually did find a place, among sections of Jewry who detected neither heresy nor apostasy in it. The early Judaeo-Christians in Palestine were Jews in all regards. But Paul, a product of the culturally diluted Hellenistic diaspora, entertained views which centuries later Reform Rabbis in Germany and in America came to entertain. The sense of belonging to a Jewish nation and the desire to preserve that nation and to re-establish the Kingdom of Israel were hardly present with him. Race had no significance. "All the nations of the earth are made of one blood." (Acts 17.26.) Race is in Pauline theology metamorphosed into a universal society of believers. . . . "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel, neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children. . . . They which are the children of the flesh, these are *not* the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. (Rom. 9.6.) Unlike Matthew, Paul is not interested in establishing the Davidic descent of Jesus. (I Tim. 1.4.) Jesus' Jewish origin is of no particular moment to him. While Jesus directed his message—a thorough-going Jewish messianic message—specifically to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel"—and was not particularly interested in proselytism, Paul called himself the "apostle to the Gentiles," and his chief concern was to carry the gospel of salvation to the non-Jews. Peter, he declared, was intrusted with the good news for the Jews, he for the heathen. (Gal. 2.7.) The mastering idea of Paul was that, in as much as the millennium was fast approaching when the purging and winnowing of mankind would take place, the whole human race should be rapidly converted to the one true faith. This one true faith consisted in the abjuration of polytheism and idolatry and in leading a pure life—in other words—ethical monotheism. Such a faith has been in the keeping of

Israel since the days of Abraham. But because of the Law of Moses—the ceremonial and ritual law, e.g., circumcision, the observance of Sabbaths and Holy Days and the dietary laws,—this pure faith has been obscured, veiled even to Israel (II Cor. 3.15) and made difficult of acceptance by non-Jews. The coming of the Messiah in the person of Jesus put an end to the reign of this Law. Now conversion to the true faith is accessible to every man merely through faith—faith in the One, Universal Lord and in the atoning power of the death of Jesus. This latter idea is essential to the doctrine of Paul. The sin of Adam brought death as its punishment upon all the generations of men:

(Cf. D.R. 9.4: **בַּחַטִּיּה שֶׁל אָדָמָה אַתָּה מֵת שֶׁהָבִיא מִיתָא לְעוֹלָם**  
 Per contra cf. Sab. 146a: **יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁעָסְדוּ עַל הָרָסִי פִסְקָה וְהִסְתַּחֵם**)  
 This sin had to be atoned for by a sacrificial death—for only such a sacrifice could be proper atonement for such a sin—before men could obtain the hope of eternal life. The crucifixion of Jesus was that sacrifice. All men would have had to die at the approach of the End of Days, because all men are sinners. But Jesus saved them from death by means of his own death. In his death all who believe in him die “figuratively” to their old selves and are reborn into the new life. They thus come redeemed to the threshold of the Kingdom. Henceforth, every one, regardless of race, or nation, who eschewed idolatry and accepted the sacrifice of Jesus, who died for all men, will “walk in the newness of life” and will inherit eternal life. It is not the observance of the laws of the Torah which bestows life eternal, i.e., admission into the Kingdom of God which is fast approaching. Immortal life comes through accepting the blood sacrifice of Jesus. In Messianic times the Law is not needed. (cf. **יְמוֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ שֶׁאֵין בָּהֶם לֹא זְכוּת וְלֹא חֻבָּה**).

But what then was the purpose of giving the Law by God to Israel, and what is the significance of the election of Israel—a doctrine which Paul accepts (Rom. 11.29). In Paul's reply one finds the clue to the reason why the Jewish people had finally to reject him and his religious teachings. The giving of the Laws of the Torah to the Jews carried with it the possibility and the opportunity of transgressing them. It is the Law that gives sin its power. (I Cor. 15.56.) “Sin is not imputed where there is no law.” (Rom.

5.13.) Thus the Laws of the Torah were ordained that offenses against them by the Jews might multiply, so that there would be greater need for the grace of God which came through the atonement sacrifice of Jesus. The disobedience of the Jews was therefore the Gentiles' opportunity to gain salvation. As far as Paul's new message of glad tidings is concerned, the Jews are treated as enemies of God. (Rom. 11.28.) But because they had been chosen by God and are beloved by Him for their fathers' sakes, they, too, will be saved from sin through the grace of God ultimately, after all the heathen have been redeemed. Thus Israel, in the hands of this fervid, mystical theologian, is no longer a nation but a theologic pawn. The national character of the Jewish Messianic ideal is ignored, as it was ignored centuries later by Reform Rabbis. It is dissolved in a universal salvationism, quite like the denationalized "Messianic Age" of the Reform Rabbis. There is, however, one exception: With Paul *all* nations vanish into the spiritual anonymity of Kingdom Come. With the Reform Rabbis, *only* the Jewish nation. *Their* theology took zealous toll of *Jewish* nationalism but stopped short at German, Austrian, French or American nationalism. . . . With Paul the age-old hope of the ingathering of the dispersion and the deliverance of Israel from the yoke of Rome gives way to an apocalyptic conversionism in which Israel is only incidentally significant because in olden days God had announced in advance the good news to Abraham in the words: "All the heathens will be blessed through you" and through the Jews this blessing reached the heathen. (Gal. 3.8ff.) This is the sole rôle ascribed by Paul to Israel in the economy of world-salvation. With the nationalist prophets of Israel, a reborn and politically rehabilitated people, strong and secure in its own land, was to become a light unto the world. The nations of the earth would flow unto Zion redeemed, "for out of Zion would go forth the Torah." With Paul, Torah was a form of slavery and Zion had no significance as the capital of a nation but only as the locale of a Temple of whose ritual he scarcely approved. No wonder that this new program of proselytism which demanded the sacrifice of so many of the essential survival-values of Israel, met with stubborn resistance not alone from Jews who had

not accepted Jesus as the Messiah but even from the early Judaeo-Christians.

In classic Judaism there were always two elements, one universal, i.e., pure religion intended for all men, the other local, i.e., the laws of the Hebrew polity, intended for Jews only. Paul, the Roman citizen and the product of the Mediterranean cultural melting-pot, accepted the first. The second he regarded principally as a stumbling block in the way of the first. Therefore, nothing but faith mattered. The Jewish nation, land, language and law were of small consequence, particularly in view of the approaching millennial denouement. But not all the early followers of Jesus felt as he did. A bitter struggle raged within the early church against these teachings of Paul. The Palestinian Judaeo-Christians were neither anti-nomists nor anti-nationalists. They were glad to welcome converts to their Messianic Judaism but only as **נְרִי צִדִּיק** proselytes who were willing to accept not only the principle of the Unity of God and the **שְׁבַע מִצְוֹת בְּנֵי נֹחַ** that is as **נְרִי חֹשֵׁב** but also the entire discipline of the Law inclusive of the Abrahamic rite, Sabbath and Holy Day observance and the dietary laws.

Paul's views prevailed in the new sect. As a result the sect steadily receded from Jewish life and became at first non-Jewish and then anti-Jewish. In the national uprisings against Rome in 70 and 135 the Judaeo-Christians refused to participate. Their loyalty was now to an idea, not to a people.

There is a striking similarity to be seen between the theoretic position taken by Paul and that taken by the extreme leaders of Reform Judaism; and had these men been as consistent as Paul, and had they translated their loquacity about the mission of Israel into a real missionary propaganda as did Paul and his followers, the logic of events would have brought about the secession of their group also from Jewish life. But with Paul, the mission was a race to save the world. With the Reform Rabbis it was a rocking-horse race. These reformist Rabbis, too, were denationalized Jews. They, too, conceived of Israel as "a candle which lights others and consumes itself." They, too, tried to erect Jewish life upon the slender, sagging stilts of a few theologic abstractions. They, too, felt the



Law to be a burden. They focused *their* anti-nomist odium on the Talmud and the Shulchan Aruch. The Bible they spared, for after all the Bible was sacred also to Christians. . . . But those laws of the Bible, against which Paul inveighed—circumcision, Sabbath observance and dietary laws—came under their obloquy also. The use of the Hebrew language in public worship, they maintained, was not only unnecessary from a legal point of view but from any other point of view (Frankfort Conference). And while Jewish Rabbis were thus practically consigning the Hebrew language to oblivion, Dohm of Breslau, a Christian, rose to its defense, urged its retention by Jews as the language of the prayers and as a bond of unity, and reminded them that if many Jews no longer understand the language, the solution lies, not in abandoning the language but rather in teaching it more energetically than before. They, too, believed that the world was on the threshold of great, new beginnings. They, too, were bewitched by the hope of *Maranatha*. To them, too, as to the apocalyptic visionaries of the first century, the Kingdom of God was just around the corner. . . . Listen to the words of Article 5 of the Pittsburgh Declaration which echoed similar sentiments among Reformers everywhere: "We recognize, in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect, *the approaching of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of truth, justice, and peace among all men.* . . ." They, too, converted the national Messianic hope of Israel into something like a Pauline apocalypse.

A Messianic hope not bound up with the restoration of Israel to Palestine is simply not found in Jewish religious literature anywhere from the time of the Second Isaiah to our own day, except, of course, in the writings of these Reformers and some of the Hellenistic apocalyptic writers, who through allegory and other devices attempted to universalize the teachings of the Torah, so as to impress the non-Jewish world with the excellency of the Jewish faith, and who converted the Jewish national Messiah into an "incarnation of a divine power who should judge men at the end of days." National restoration was the very heart of the Messianic ideal from its very inception. To substitute for this national ideal an anti-national, purely transcendental, nebulous *Messianic Age*, on the plea of re-

ligious evolution, is to be guilty not of revision but of distortion. It is both new and counterfeit.

Fortunately the views of these men did not prevail. They were quickly challenged. The masses of Jewry recoiled from them. The facts of life soon dissipated the fumes of their universalistic romancing. They have now been discredited in the very land of their nativity. The United States, because of its peculiar political and social configuration, for a time gave scope to these ideas and they were received with considerable favor among certain classes of our people, particularly among our German-Jewish immigrants. But they are being rapidly abandoned. The very men who framed the Pittsburgh Declaration felt the inadequacy of their definition. Twice in the Declaration they speak of the "Jewish people." They do not define the term "people," but the very fact that they resorted to the term indicates that they felt that the term "religious community" somehow failed to cover the full canvass of Jewish realities.

Dr. Kohler, who convoked the Pittsburgh Conference, and helped to draft its Declaration, found it necessary in his *Theology* to supplement this definition of Israel as a religious community, with the concept of race. "The Jew is born into it (Judaism) and cannot extricate himself from it even by the renunciation of his faith, which would but render him an apostate Jew. This condition exists, because the racial community formed, and still forms, the basis of the religious community. It is birth, not confession, that imposes on the Jew the obligation to work and strive for the eternal verities of Israel, for the preservation and propagation of which he has been chosen by the God of history." (p. 6.)

But why is the concept of "race" any more exalted than "nation"? Why should racial fatalism commit one irrevocably to religious beliefs which should be voluntary? If one, not of the race, can become a Jew by accepting Judaism, why cannot one "extricate" himself from Judaism by rejecting it? Identifying Judaism with race is no more logical, and in our day, far more provocative than identifying it with "nation."

Dr. Cyrus Adler, though belonging to the conservative wing, also believes that the Jews are only a religious community, but he is quite as vigorous in denying that the Jews are a race. In his recent

address before the Seminary National Council, he declared: "Sometimes people say that they are Jews by race and sometimes that they are Jews by nationality. No people is suffering today more from this race or national theory than the Jewish people, and to the extent that these doctrines have been preached, we have given a weapon into the hands of our enemies. . . . The German State does not close synagogues, it does not forbid religious teachings. The State outlaws the Jew on the race theory. . . . Why then should we fall into this trap? Why should we declare ourselves a race or *kultur*? . . . Let us get into our minds definitely once for all that even before the destruction of the Temple, even before the destruction of our nation in Palestine, we became a religious community, and *that* we are or we are nothing."

Dr. Adler labors under that fond illusion which we discussed above—that if our enemies would only realize that we are a religious community and not a race or a nationality, they would automatically cease to hate us. But this highly adjustable *diplomatic* philosophy of Jewish history deceives no one. Instead of centering his attack upon the whole false race-theory of the State which, in Germany, had its origin in the Hegelian thesis that the State must be a national unit based on race homogeneity, Dr. Adler counsels the Jews to abandon entirely the very concept of race as a factor in Jewish survival. This is in keeping with those sad and futile tactics of so many Jews in the last one hundred years who tried to whittle down the content of Jewish life in order to meet a temporary political emergency.

It is idle, of course, to talk of our people as no longer a nation but a religious community, in the face of the fact that millions of Jews are today recognized by the law of nations as national minorities in Poland, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, millions more as a distinct nationality in Soviet Russia, where an autonomous Jewish region is actually being built, and hundreds of thousands in Palestine where a Jewish homeland is being created under the terms of a mandate of the League of Nations which recognizes not only the national existence of the Jewish people but its historic claim to a national home. It is not only idle to-day to repeat the "religious-community" shibboleth of the early Reformers but also quite fantastic.

It should be borne in mind, also, that nationalism is sometimes forced upon the Jew, even when he does not particularly crave it. In the struggle, for example, between the numerous nationalities in Eastern and Central Europe, each clamoring for self-determination, the Jews, living in their midst, have had to take sides or to declare themselves to be an independent nationality. It was a case of accepting the cultures of Ruthenians, Croatians, Slovaks and of other nationality groups which were far inferior to their own or of asserting their own. No Jewish group was as completely denationalized as were the Jewish communists of Russia. They were anti-religious, anti-Zionist, anti-Hebraist. They were Internationalists. Their sole allegiance was to the proletarian class. And yet, with the triumph of communism, these very Jewish communists have been forced by the logic of events not only to carry on as members of a distinct Jewish nationality in Soviet Russia but to undertake the building of a separate Jewish Republic in Siberia. One cannot, therefore, in the face of these political realities in Jewish life, maintain the theologic fiction that the Jews are only a religious community.

And what of the myriads of our people who are non-religious or anti-religious, who can accept neither the theology of Judaism nor its code of religious observances, Orthodox or Reform, and who are yet very loyal and active Jews? Is there no room for them in the household of Israel? There would not be, if we regarded Israel as a "religious community" exclusively. But being a nation, and not a religious community, there is room in Israel for *all* Jews, except for those who do not wish to be Jews and who declare: **אין לט חלק וחלה בבית אבינו** "We have no portion or inheritance in our father's house. . . ." And these are being tragically reminded in some parts of the world today that even though they forsake their inheritance in their father's house they will not find their portion or inheritance anywhere else in the world. . . .

Should we not rather regard it as providential that in these days when formal religion is losing its hold upon great numbers of our people and when this loss threatens to undermine our existence as a people, that the national and racial sentiment has been rekindled among many of them so that they wish to remain Jews and to link



up their destiny with the destiny of Israel in some if not in all of the spheres of its creative life?

The Jewish people produced the Jewish religion, but people and religion are not synonymous terms. The Jewish religion—and I use the term in its customary sense, for I do not believe that a clever neology—the use of a word in a new and unsanctioned sense—is equivalent to a new theology—is a colossal and world-revolutionizing concourse of spiritual ideas unfolding itself in the life of a people of a particular character and temperament, but the Jewish religion does not exhaust the full content of the Jewish people. In relation to its religion, Israel is both immanent and transcendent as is every great artist in relation to the creation of his genius. לולא לא היה התורה declared Judah Halevi. "If there had been no Jews there would have been no Torah, and the Jews did not derive their high estate from Moses but Moses derived his high estate from the Jews." (Cuzari 11.56.)

The Jewish religion is the crowning achievement of our people and our supreme gift to civilization. It possessed such vast reservoirs of spiritual truth that it has been able to sustain and inspire generations upon generations of our people and to retain their sacrificial loyalty under all circumstances and upon all levels of culture. It thus became the strongest factor in the survival of our people, the קשר של קיימא, the enduring tie. It is doubtful whether the Jewish people can long survive in the diaspora without it—unless the other survival factors are reinforced to a degree which will compensate such a major loss. Jewish secular cultural autonomy may be possible in countries where the Jewish groups achieve minority rights. In such countries the Jewish group may survive even if divorced from religious loyalties. This is possible, though not probable. But in countries where minority rights are not possible, where there exists no active anti-Semitism which forces the Jew back upon himself, the task of Jewish survival will become increasingly difficult as religion loses its influence upon Jews and therewith also its power of national conservation. Those religious leaders, therefore, who are, today, teaching the religion of Israel to their people are not only leading them to fountains of living truth which can sweeten and refresh their individual lives, but are also conserving

the most potent force which, throughout the ages, has sheltered and preserved the Jewish people.

But such religious leaders should not attempt to substitute a part for the whole—even if it is the major part. Havelock Ellis, in his introduction to J. K. Huysman's *A Rebours* makes the interesting observation that the essential distinction between the classic and the decadent in art and literature is to be found in the fact that in the classic the parts are subordinated to the whole, whereas in the decadent, the whole is subordinated in the parts. "The classic strives after those virtues which the whole may best express; the later manner (the decadent) depreciates the importance of the whole for the benefit of its parts, and strives after the virtue of individualism."

Jewish life also possessed in its great epochs this classic balance, and the aim of religious leaders today should be to restore it. Many tributaries flow into the historic channel of Jewish life. In recent years some zealous and mostly uninformed partisans have attempted to reduce Jewish life to what is only a fraction of itself—to race or nationalism or folkways or theologic abstractions. Quite unconsciously they are all falsifying Jewish life. It is a mark of decadence in the diaspora that so many of our people have lost the sense of the classic harmony in Jewish life and are attempting to substitute a part for the whole.

It is the *total* program of Jewish life and destiny which the religious leaders of our people should stress today—the religious and moral values, the universal concepts, the mandate of mission, as well as the *Jewish people itself*, and all its national aspirations. Thus the strength and security of our life will be retrieved, and, whether in Palestine or in the diaspora, we shall move forward unafraid upon the road of our destiny.