

## Daniel Jeremy Silver Collection Digitization Project

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Series III: The Temple Tifereth-Israel, 1946-1993, undated. Sub-series A: Events and Activities, 1946-1993, undated.

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Men's Club, Lecture Series 1978, speech "The Middle East-Can There Be Peace?", 1978.

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The Middle East: Can There Be Peace?

The first Zionists in modern times were Christian. They were mostly Englishmen like the Earl of Shaftesbury and Lawrence Oliphant, devour believers in Biblical prophecy, who felt that the resettlement of the Jews in the Holy Land was essentially preliminary to the second coming of Christ.

The last 200 years have seen the publication of several hundred such tracts by such believers and though their attitudes were not of great political moment they remind us that the Holy Land is significant both in Christian and Jewish thought and that Jews and Christians have looked upon Israel and Zionism from distinct theological perceptions which have inevitably colored their view and shaped their thinking. Obviously, not all Christians are Zionists. Many Christians reject any literal interpretation of Biblical prophecy. Many are disciples of a traditional view which sees the New Testament as a universalistic spiritual dispensation whose traditions transcend the assumed particularism and worldliness of the whole. It is assumed that the Old Testament is narrowly bound up to a set of parochial concerns about a single people or that Christianity above willy universites is Expensive, indifferent, to nationalism, and interested only in the saving of manking as well as the human soul. From Constantine to Gregory the Great to Calvin and Luther one could make a long list of Christians who believed that theocracy, political power, were legitimate interests of the church. I confess that I am sometimes nonplussed by some of these anti-nationalist Christians who condemn equally American imperialism and Zionism but find it in their hearts to applaud almost any form of third world chauvinism and nationalism.

I do not want to begin this series in a preachy way, but I am tired to death of competitive religion, of all those assumptions which argue that my covenant with God is nobler, more sensitive, more loving, more genuine than yours.

Because we come from different backgrounds it is inevitable that the concept of Zionism should resonate with different overtones for us. Because of this difficulty Christians have for the most part accepted the importance of Israel as a place of refuge - Which is Less Thory ZIDNIA for survivors of the Holocaust. Israel has seemed to be an acceptable solution to another refugee problem and many in the Christian community have been quite supportive of the drama of human rehabilitation which has been involved in Israel In our search for understanding I would like to take us beyond and behind this idea of Israel as a haven of refuge and to pick up the term which is redolent of theology and of a particular Jewish attitude, Zionism. It is a term that many have trouble with. I would like to try and expose what this term means within the context of our tradition. You may remember that two years ago a coalition of Communist states, some Third World states and Arab states condemned Zionism "as a form of racism and racial discrimination." This vote was another evidence of that automatic majority which operates in the U.N. to satisfy the passions and the ideologies of many of the nations of our world. This action was generally denounced as outrageous in the west and it was seen as part of a conspiracy to delegita-The Jews were encouraged by the matize Israel. understanding of our neighbors and by their ability to recognize the big lie and the patent cynicism of this diplomatic manéuver.

I was encouraged by the understanding of our neighbors and by their ability to recognize the big lie and the patent cynicism of this diplomatic maneuver; but if the many knew that the vote was wrong, few could explain why. There is much confusion as to the meaning of Zionism. There is a need for understanding which takes us beyond the currently popular definition: "Zionsim is a program for the national liberation of the Jewish people."

Let me suggest a definition of Zionism based upon four themes: that Zionism

is the natural outgrowth of Biblical thought, particularly of Biblical messian; that Zionism differs from Biblical thought in one major respect, it is activist; that Zionism is a program for an unredeemed world and finally, that Zionism is a program designed to rehabilitate the individual Jew, the Jewish people and Judaism.

God's initial summons to a Jew, to Abraham, required him to leave Ur of the Chaldees for a new land, Abraham was told simply; "Go to the land that I will show you, and be a blessing." Once Abraham had settled in that land God made a covenant with him. In return for his pledge of obedience God promised Abraham that this land "will be yours, and your seed forever."

When God confronted Moses at the Burning Bush, He placed two obligations upon him; to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt and to lead the tribes to the Promised Land. When the tribes of Israel affirmed God's word at Sinai, they accepted the bonds of a covenant relationship, inextricably bound up with land. God spoke. The people assented. God warned: "If you accept these commands you are duty bound to them; if you obey them it will be well with you, you will live in security on your land; if you are disobedient I will close up the heavens, there will not be rain; I will drive you off the land." Land is an essential category in the covenant's understanding of reward and punishment.

Biblical prophecy is best explained as an interpretation of Jewish history which elaborates a single insight: the fate of Israel and Judah are not determined by ordinary consideration of political power, but by the quality of national obedience to the covenant regulations. 'If ye are willing and obey ye shall be secure in the land; if ye be disobedient and sinful you will be driven off the land.' When Israel and Judah suffered defeat, the prophets interpreted the successive disasters as God's doing, consequent on the nation's sinful living. It was not that the army was weak, but that the nation had been disobedient. Once exiled for their sins, this people, accustomed to covenant thinking, expected to return

if and when they showed themselves worthy. If they were repentant and proved themselves loyal God would forgive them and bring them back home.

The word used in Biblical thought for repentance, teshuvah, comes from a root shuv, which implies both contrition and the physical act of returning to one's place.

Teshuvah suggests etymologically as well as conceptually that repentance is both a mor¢al stance and a posture which will lead to a return to the land. Exile was always galut, a state of alienation from God. To travel to the Holy Land is aliyah a going up; and to leave the land is yeridah a going down. One was closer to God in the land than off the land.

On Passover, our annual celebration of redemption, we end the Seder with the hope: "next year in Jerusalem." Our hope, indeed, all of Jewish messianism, is rooted in the concept of freedom and security on our land. Jews sanctified this connection of land and covenant, not simply out of piety and doggedness, but because it expressed their/our understanding of redemption. Judaism insists that redemption is possible in the here and now as well as in the world-to-come. We do not accept the image of life as an endless trial, a hapless burden, with all blessings reserved to come after life. Because of this considered theological position our promises must necessarily be understood in terms of a particular people in a particular place at a particular time. A well ordered society cannot exist in the abstract. Any redemption this side of the grave must involve a particular place and a particular people. I must add that even those traditions which looked upon this life as a via dolorsa, a way of tears, who believe that there can be no happiness this side of the grave, instinctively apply categories of space to heaven by turning it into a restricted subdivision reserved for like-minded folk.

Zionism grows out of Biblical thought, particularly out of Biblical messianism; but Zionism differs from Biblical thought in that it is activist. Zionism is not satisfied to fold the hands and say a prayer for the coming of the messiah. Zionism is not satisfied

with liturgies of confession and breast-beating designed to convince God of our contrition. During every century after the destruction of the Temple, pious folk went up to Jerusalem to offer their prayers in the holy city for Israel's early return to Zion, for redemption. The Avelei Zion, or Mourners for Zion, believed that by offering devotion at the ruins of the Temple and exposing their misery they would move God to speed the coming of the messiah. Sons of a people inured to political impotence, it did not occur to them that they might buy a farm and cultivate the land and so hasten its redemption. Their faith, Biblical faith, knew that God was in full control of history. The prophets did not organize politically for the economic and social development of Judea; their political program was limited to summoning Jews to repentance and righteousness. If and when Israel lived obediently, God would let Israel live in peace.

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Biblical and medieval thought is pious and submissive. "Not by power nor by might, but by My spirit." Modern thought is activist and eager to be up and doing. In many ways the social gospel of contemporary Christianity is a parallel development to Zionism. In both, man is seen as an active partner with God in the work of creation. Neither is satisfied that the poor will always be among us, that conditions must remain as they are until God intervenes.

During the General Assembly debate an Arab diplomat, Abd-allah al-Sayegh, informed the Assembly that Arabs have no quarrel with Judaism. Arabs, he said, applaud Judaism, but Zionism is not an essential element in the Jewish tradition, indeed, it is a bastardization of that tradition. His proof? The existence of opposition to Zionism within the Jewish camp. Al-Sayegh claimed that the racism resolution simply repeated what "Jewish intellectuals" had often said. Al-Sayegh spoke with a forked tongue, but he was right to this extent: during the nineteenth century significant numbers of Jews were opposed to practical Zionism for reasons of orthodox piety. They were the heirs

of those who had believed with every fiber of their being that God would bring the messiah and create the Jewish State on His own, in His time. Conditioned to impotence and to the concept of a supernatural redemption such pious folk looked on practical programs of renewal as either blasphemous or pointless. It was as if Israel no longer trusted God. Further, many had known at first hand the devastating consequence of earlier "Zionist" activities; more than once a charismatic had proclaimed himself to be the messiah and had raised people's hopes only to dash them when his apostasy proved false. But we must be clear on this. These pious folk were no less Zionist for all their fears of practical programs. They prayed every day for their return to Zion, and as the possibility of establishing a national home by political means emerged as a realistic possibility, the vast majority of these traditionalists fell behind it. It should be added that the first practical Zionists of the nineteenth century were orthodox rabbis from Eastern Europe, men like Yehudah Alkalai and Zvi Hirsch Kaischer, who argued that it was an act of strict piety to begin the reclamation of the Holy Land. They argued from the nature of teshuvah, repentance. We do not expect God to forgive us without evidence of a change of heart on our parts. Repentance must precede forgiveness. The initiative must be ours. we not show some initiative if we expect national forgiveness? Let our people go to the Holy Land. Let them establish farms and found cities and build schools. God will see that we are eager to please Him and He may turn towards us and complete our beginning.

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Zionism is a natural outgrowth of Biblical thought; Zionism diverges from Biblical thought in that it is activist; and Zionism is a program for action within the context of an unredeemed world.

Until the second World War two political analyses were current among Jews.

The Jews of the West, particularly those of France, England and the United States found themselves in a world which by contrast to the past seemed a paradise. The once excluded were now citizens. Instead of being locked into a ghetto they were free to move

If you read the so-called theological writings of the newly enfranchised bourgeoise Jews of the West, you will find many who believed that the messianic times were at hand. "In the 19th century civilization began," Isaac Mayer Wise. "In a matter of a few years universal peace will reign, "Isaac Mayer Wise. "The old barriers between people are coming down, "Isaac Mayer Wise. I do not pick out Isaac Mayer Wise to pillory him or to parody him. He is simply typical of tens of hundreds of bourgeois Jews who had escaped from oppression and who now found themselves in a dazzling world full of freedoms and possibilities. Such liberated Jews, with their growing bank accounts and enlarged sense of belonging, could not believe that their brave new world required Jews to give much thought to their Jewishness, much less to the creation of a Jewish National Home. This was a time for men of progressive attitudes to cooperate, not separate. They could not imagine Jews leaving the golden streets of New York or Cleveland for the barren wastes of a backwater province of the Turkish empire. They believed in the melting pot. Why erect fences? They believed in a universal brotherhood of men of good will. Why take Jews out of that community? They had just escaped from a state of their own, the ghetto, Why create a new Jewish State?

Yes, there was opposition within the Jewish community to Zionism. The bourgeois Jew of the West read his history as a drama of progress, beginning with the French Revolution, with liberty, equality and fraternity, and developing into the promise of America. The Zionist read the nineteenth century as a time of promises made and promises broken. The principalities of Germany which had emancipated the Jew under Napoleonic pressure locked them up again after the Congress of Vienna. Yes, the universities taught new ideas, but these included new theories of anti-semitism based upon pseudo-scientific theories of race. Far from receding, anti-semitism had grown over

the years into a powerful political force. In Vienna, perhaps the most cultured city of the age, an anti-semitic party, so-labeled, which had only one plank in its platform, "to deprive the Jews of control of Vienna," won the mayor's seat and a majority of the city council. Nationalist parties throughout Europe began to popularize the theme that Jewish attitudes were subversive to the fundamental values of the nation. It was claimed that Jewish writers and artists introduced insidious ideas which subverted the purity and idealism of Germany or Austria or Poland or France. There was not less hate but more. The position of the Jew was not only insecure but hapless. If the Jew advanced politically and socially, he incited envy and the envious used anti-semitism to eliminate competition. If the Jew failed to Westernize and remained an outcast he was pilloried as a lien, a fossil, an anachronism.

Not all Jews were limited by their particular experience. A liberated Jew, the son of a privileged Austrian Jew, Theodore Herzl, clearly understood the bleak future for the Jew in Europe. Herzl was sent to Paris by his newspaper. There, at the cradle of liberty, he had his moment of truth. The headlines dealt with the Dreyfus Trial. The Jew Dreyfus, an army captain, had been convicted of treason on trumped-up charges manufactured by the high military eager to find a scapegoat for their own incompetence. Herzl was moved by this patent miscarriage of justice and transformed by the sight of tens of thousands of Frenchmen wearing black arm bands, marching down the Champs Elysees shouting "a bas les Juifs," down with the Jews; cursing the Jews as the arch enemy and anti-Christ. Then and there Herzl realized that anti-semitism was not simply a long-lived poison whose venom was losing its sting, but a virulent and active disease for which there was no known remedy. Jews had to have a home of their own because Europe could never be a secure home. Jewish life would be crippled as long as it depended on Europe's diseased political environment. It was a time for action.

"A people can be helped only by its own efforts, and if it cannot help itself it is beyond succor." It was a time to build a state. Herzl did not foresee Mein Kampf or Dachau or genocide; but he and his fellow Zionists attacked the naivete of the bourgeois Jews who believed that the dark days were over. These were not messianic times. Jewish life had to be strengthened in Israel and out. "Zionism is a return to the Jewish fold even before it becomes a return to the Jewish land." Until the Jew had a place he could call his own, a national home where he would always be welcome, where his spirit could unfold naturally, his spirit would remain constrained and his political situation precarious.

The final element in Zionism is its program for the rehabilitation of the individual Jew, the Jewish people and of Judaism. When the bourgeois Jew of western Europe and the United States looked about, he was satisfied. He had had a certain success. He had made it. The bourgeois Jew lacked a keen semse of K'lal Yisrael, of the unity of the Jewish people. He preferred not to look at the poor Jews of eastern Europe, who, unfortunately, had not had his advantages. They were a strange people. They spoke a jargon called Yiddish. He might send them charity, but he certainly did not want them as neighbors. They were not his kind.

When the Zionists looked at the Jews of the ghettos and of eastern Europe they, too, did not like what they saw, but they refused to put these Jews out of mind. Zionism expresses fraternity and mutual responsibility. The Zionists saw in the pale of settlement what Robert Coles and others have taught us to see in the ghettos of our western cities - men and women brutalized by a cruel and impoverished environment and by experiences which have rendered them incapable of fulfilling their potential as human beings. The Zionists did not try to hide the unfortunate characteristics of the huddled masses. Yes, many of them were far too shrewd; yes, many of them were idle, never having been able to earn a living; yes, many of them cringed when a muzik walked by; and yes, there was much in their home life which was not pretty. The Zionists

saw the Jew as he was and the Jew as he might be. Zionism was proposed as a movement for the rehabilitation and spiritual renewal for the Jew. Hebrew instead of Yiddish.

Schools on farms instead of the medieval heder. New role models, the Maccabees and the Biblical Judges to complement that of a scholar bent over his books. Until the second World War, most of the money raised by the Zionist movement was spent in Europe, not in Palestine. It was spent to purchase farms where young Jews could go and learn agriculture, to establish vocational schools where young Jews could learn the skills of a modern society, to establish community centers where young Jews could express the Jewish spirit in a modern context. Zionism saw the potential of the Jew to be a human being and was convinced that as a human being the Jew would not only be happier but be a better citizen of the world. Zionism was a program for Jewish renewal, but that hardly makes it racist.

Every program espoused by men of sensitivity for the renewal of their particular nation was espoused by one or another Zionist for the renewal of the Jewish people. Tolstoy told his fellow Russians to go back to the land and sweat the corruption of the city out of their souls with honest labor. Zionists like A. D. Gordon said to the Jew: "Labor is our cure. Centuries ago you were driven off the land. Life in the crowded cities has corrupted the Jewish soul. Let us go back to the land. Work with our hands. The poisons of the ghetto will be sweated out of our bodies by our daily labors under the sun. You will find your back straightening, your mind clearing."

The Jewish communities of Europe had known all the usual divisions between rich and poor; and all the usual abuses. Community was imposed from above rather than by democratic means. Zionism suggested programs to end all class divisions. Ben Zvi, Borochov and others wrote of true community, of an end to privilege, of socialism, of the kibbutz, of sharing labor and benefits.

Though secular learning had replaced medieval scholasticism and superstition in much of Europe, Judaism was still deeply enmeshed in kaballah and the superstitious overlay of medieval life. The Ahad Ha-Am's of Zionism looked upon the rebuilding of the national home as an opportunity to create modern cultural and academic institutions which would reshape and unlock the spiritual energies of an historically creative people. Theirs was the Zionism of "a great cultural institution in Palestine, attracting to itself a large number of gifted Jewish scholars working in a Jewish atmosphere, free from repression and not unduly subject to extraneous influences, becoming a source of new inspiration to the Jewish people as a whole and bringing about a true revival of Judaism and Jewish culture" - a Hebrew University.

Zionism was not created to solve a refugee problem. The need came later.

Zionism was a reform of all of the institutions of a people determined to remain a people because ours is not yet a utopian age. Zionism was created to renew the Jewish people and to enlarge the possibilities of the Jewish spirit.

## ZIONISM

A Response to the United Nations



Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
Chairman
Israel Information and
Education Committee
Jewish Community Federation
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There were 72 yes votes, 35 no votes and 32 abstentions. The 72 year represented the Communist world, the Arab world, and a significant number of states from the so-called Third World. The 35 no's were cast by the states of Western Europe, some of the countries of Latin America, the British Commonwealth and the United States. Abstentions came from the non-Communist countries of Southeast Asia, a majority of the countries in South America, and a few of the newly independent sub-Sahara nations of Africa. The November 10 vote by the General Assembly of the United Nations, of course, had to do with the definition of Zionism "as a form of racism and of racial discrimination."

This decision was denounced as "outrageous" by our ambassador to the United Nations. Secretary of State Kissinger declared that the United States would act as if the vote had not been cast. If the near unanimity of editorial comment condemning this decision accurately mirrors the reaction of the American people, then we must say that our neighbors recognized the big lie for what it is and reacted intelligently to a crude and cruel display of power.

Veteran observers of the United Nations explained the vote as due to Arab initiative combined with Communist ideology; to votes bought by oil and promises of oil; to old-fashioned anti-semitism; to knee-jerking anti-Americanism and to ignorance. Zionism has become one of a number of shibboleths loose in our world — colonialism, imperialism, zionism — which are part of a mindless litany chanted by angry folk to damn anything and everything they hate. Whatever the ugly reasons, the

vote was cast and this action has further weakened support of the United Nations in the West; not only because of its patent injustice, but because it commits the General Assembly to anti-Israel activity during a previously proclaimed "Decade Against Racism."

I was encouraged by the understanding of our neighbors and by their ability to recognize the big lie and the patent cynicism of this diplomatic maneuver; but if the many knew that the vote was wrong, few could explain why. There is much confusion as to the meaning of Zionism. There is a need for understanding which takes us beyond the currently popular definition: "Zionism is a program for the national liberation of the Jewish people."

Let me suggest a definition of Zionism based upon four themes: that Zionism is the natural outgrowth of Biblical thought, particularly of Biblical messianism; that Zionism differs from Biblical thought in one major respect, it is activist; that Zionism is a program for an unredeemed world; and, finally, that Zionism is a program designed to rehabilitate the individual Jew, the Jewish people and Judaism.

God's initial summons to a Jew, to Abraham, required him to leave Ur of the Chaldees for a new land, Abraham was told simply; "Go to the land that I will show you, and be a blessing." Once Abraham had settled in that land God made a covenant with him. In return for his pledge of obedience God promised Abraham that this land "will be yours, and your seed forever."

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Biblical prophecy is best explained as an interpretation of Jewish history which elaborates a single insight: the fate of Israel and Judah are not determined by ordinary consideration of political power, but by the quality of national obedience to the covenant regulations. 'If ye are willing and obey ye shall be secure in the land; if ye be disobedient and sinful you will be driven off the land.' When Israel and Judah suffered defeat, the prophets interpreted the successive disasters as God's doing, consequent on the nation's sinful living. It was not that the army was weak, but that the nation had been disobedient. Once exiled for their sins, this people, accustomed to covenant thinking, expected to return if and when they showed themselves worthy. If they were repentant and proved themselves loyal God would forgive them and bring them back home.

The word used in Biblical thought for repentance, teshuvah, comes from a root shuv, which implies both contrition and the physical act of returning to one's place. Teshuvah suggests etymologically as well as conceptually that repentance is both a moral stance and a posture which will lead to a return to the land. Exile was always galut, a state of alienation from God. To travel to the Holy Land is aliyah a going up; and to leave the land is yeridah a going down. One was closer to God in the land than off the land.

On Passover, our annual celebration of redemption, we end the Seder with the hope: "next year in Jerusalum." Our hope, indeed, all of Jewish messianism, is rooted in the concept of freedom and security on our land. Jews sanctified this connection of land and covenant, not simply out of piety and doggedness, but because it expressed their/our understanding of redemption. Judaism insists that redemption is possible in the here and now as well as in the world-to-come. We do not accept the image of life as an endless trial, a hapless burden, with all blessings reserved to come after life. Because of this considered theological position our promises must necessarily be understood in terms of a particular people in a particular place at a particular time. A well ordered society cannot exist in the abstract. Any redemption this side of the grave must involve a particular place and a particular people. I must add that even those traditions which looked upon this life as a via dolorosa, a way of tears, who believe that there can be no happiness this side of the grave, instinctively apply categories of space to heaven by turning it into a restricted subdivision reserved for like-minded folk.

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Not all Jews were limited by their particular experience. A liberated Jew, the son of a privileged Austrian Jew, Theodore Herzl, clearly understood the bleak future for the Jew in Europe. Herzl was sent to Paris by his newspaper. There, at the cradle of liberty, he had his moment of truth. The headlines dealt with the Dreyfus Trial. The Jew Dreyfus, an army captain, had been convicted of treason on trumped-up charges manufactured by the high military eager to find a scapegoat for their own incompetence. Herzl was moved by this patent miscarriage of justice and transformed by the sight of tens of thousands of Frenchmen wearing black arm bands, marching down the Champs Elysees shouting "a bas les Juifs," down with the Jews; cursing the Jews as the arch enemy and anti-Christ. Then and there Herzl realized that anti-semitism was not simply a long-lived poison whose venom was

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## ZIONISM (continued)

losing its sting, but a virulent and active disease for which there was no known remedy. Jews had to have a home of their own because Europe could never be a secure home. Jewish life would be crippled as long as it depended on Europe's diseased political environment. It was a time for action. "A people can be helped only by its own efforts, and if it cannot help itself it is beyond succor." It was a time to build a state. Herzl did not foresee Mein Kampf or Dachau or genocide; but he and his fellow Zionists attacked the naiveté of the bourgeois Jews who believed that the dark days were over. These were not messianic times. Jewish life had to be strengthened in Israel and out. "Zionism is a return to the Jewish fold even before it becomes a return to the Jewish land." Until the Jew had a place he could call his own, a national home where he would always be welcome, where his spirit could unfold naturally, his spirit would remain constrained and his political situation precarious.

The final element in Zionism is its program for the rehabilitation of the individual Jew, the Jewish people and of Judaism. When the bourgeois Jew of western Europe and the United States looked about, he was satisfied. He had had a certain success. He had made it. The bourgeois Jew lacked a keen sense of K'lal Yisrael, of the unity of the Jewish people. He preferred not to look at the poor Jews of eastern Europe, who, unfortunately, had not had his advantages. They were a strange people. They spoke a jargon called Yiddish. He might send them charity, but he certainly did not want them as neighbors. They were not his kind.

When the Zionists looked at the Jews of the ghettos and of eastern Europe they, too, did not like what they saw, but they refused to put these Jews out of mind. Zionism expresses fraternity and mutual responsibility. The Zionists saw in the pale of settlement what Robert Coles and others have taught us to see in the ghettos of our western cities - men and women brutalized by a cruel and impoverished environment and by experiences which have rendered them incapable of fulfilling their potential as human beings. The Zionists did not try to hide the unfortunate characteristics of the huddled masses. Yes, many of them were far too shrewd; yes, many of them were idle, never having been able to earn a living; yes, many of them cringed when a muzik walked by; and yes, there was much in their home life which was not pretty. The Zionists saw the Jew as he was and the Jew as he might be. Zionism was proposed as a movement for the rehabilitation and spiritual renewal for the Jew. Hebrew instead of Yiddish. Schools on farms instead of the medieval heder. New role models, the Maccabees and the Biblical Judges to complement that of a scholar bent over his books. Until the second World War, most of the money raised by the Zionist movement was spent in Europe, not in Palestine. It was spent to purchase farms where young Jews could go and learn agriculture, to establish vocational schools where young Jews could learn the skills of a modern society, to establish community centers where young Jews could express the Jewish spirit in a modern context. Zionism saw the potential of the Jew to be a human being and was convinced that as a human being the Jew would not only be happier but be a better citizen of the world. Zionism was a program for Jewish renewal, but that hardly makes it racist.

Every program espoused by men of sensitivity for the renewal of their particular nation was espoused by one or another Zionist for the renewal of the Jewish people. Tolstoy told his fellow Russians to go back to the land and sweat the corruption of the city out of their souls with honest labor. Zionists like A. D. Gordon said to the Jew: "Labor is our cure. Centuries ago you were driven off the land. Life in the crowded cities has corrupted the Jewish soul. Let us go back to the land. Work with our hands. The poisons of the ghetto will be sweated out of our bodies by our daily labors under the sun. You will find your back straightening, your mind clearing."

The Jewish communities of Europe had known all the usual divisions between rich and poor; and all the usual abuses. Community was imposed from above rather than by democratic means. Zionism suggested programs to end all class divisions. Ben Zvi, Borochov and others wrote of true community, of an end to privilege, of socialism, of the kibbutz, of sharing labor and benefits.

Though secular learning had replaced medieval scholasticism and superstition in much of Europe, Judaism was still deeply enmeshed in kaballah and the superstitious overlay of medieval life. The Ahad Ha-Am's of Zionism looked upon the rebuilding of the national home as an opportunity to create modern cultural and academic institutions which would reshape and unlock the spiritual energies of an historically creative people. Theirs was the Zionism of "a great cultural institution in Palestine, attracting to itself a large number of gifted Jewish scholars working in a Jewish atmosphere, free from repression and not unduly subject to extraneous influences, becoming a source of new inspiration to the Jewish people as a whole and bringing about a true revival of Judaism and Jewish culture" — a Hebrew University.

Zionism was not created to solve a refugee problem. That need came later. Zionism was a reform of all of the institutions of a people determined to remain a people because ours is not yet a utopian age. Zionism was created to renew the Jewish people and to enlarge the possibilities of the Jewish spirit.

Al-Sayegh was right to this extent; in the West, particularly among those who? had bettered themselves economically, Zionism was mistrusted and misunderstood. He was wrong when he implied that there is today any major division of mind among Jews about Zionism. Beginning when Great Britain closed the doors to Palestine in the 1930's and ending when the allied armies opened the gates of the death camps, a series of incredibly bitter lessons transformed all Jews into Zionists. Herzl's analysis made in the nineteenth century proved out in the twentieth. Jews emerged from World War II having learned two lessons: First, that we could not trust the good will of the West. Great Britain had closed the doors to Palestine precisely at the moment when Jews most desperately needed to come. The United States had kept its doors shut tight precisely during the decade when Hitler's refugees needed a place of refuge. Second, that anti-semitism had the power to turn people into efficient butchers of Jews. We cannot put out of mind Hannah Arendt's phrase describing the activity of Eichmann, "the banality of evil." These two lessons, hard-learned by many Jews, turned all who cared about Judaism into Zionists, committed to the renewal of the Jewish creative spirit, to the intensification of Jewish life, to Jewish learning and programs of identity, to the survival of Jewish people.

Today there is a fifth element in Zionism and it is this — pride of accomplishment. Jewish pioneers turned a parched, blighted land into a fertile place. Jewish vision erected in an empty medieval land remarkable institutions of culture and true community. What we saw in the Jewish national home was significant to us, not simply because of national pride, but spiritually, as a symbol of what is possible in our world. Israel was the microcosm. If our people, the castouts of Europe, could take an unwanted piece of the earth and turn it green and build on it a graceful civilization, then what was not possible for mankind given will and determination? In some mysterious way our commitment to Israel is a commitment through Israel to the possibilities of human life. Zionism is a statement of hope in mankind's future.

