

## WHAT IS A JEW?

The word "Jew" means many things to many people. Some think a Jew is a member of a "Jewish" race; others think in terms of a "Jewish" nationality. Some think all Jews are Zionists; others believe they are "different" in some way other than these or the way they choose to worship God.

Even Jews themselves are not in complete agreement on these matters. There simply is no such thing as "Jewish unity" on all matters. Why should there be? Jews, as do their neighbors of other faiths, think, vote, worship and live as individuals, and there are differences of opinions among Jews just as there are among all people. These differences, and the freedom to express them, differentiate our American democracy from the dictatorships.

Unfortunately, however, some differences among Jews have been complicated and emphasized by the establishment of the State of Israel. Americans, Jews and non-Jews alike, are understandably confused as to the relationship of Jews to this foreign nation.

Another mistaken notion is that Jews are members of a race. This may have stemmed from the fact that Biblical Hebrews were called Semites. But this is no racial grouping by any modern definition. The term "Semites" probably describes a language group which does or did include Syrians, Persians, Egyptians, Ethiopians, and many others. Since few still speak Hebrew (a Semitic language), it is doubtful if Jews should be called Semites at all any more.

A Jew is a believer in the religion of Judaism. He is not a Jew by race. There is no Jewish race -- and never was except in the twisted minds of fanatics like Hitler -- a fact verified by competent modern anthropologists. Generally speaking, there are only three races of mankind: the white; the yellow; and the black, or brown. Jews are found among all of them. White men, yellow men and black men have all, in larger or smaller numbers, elected to worship God through Judaism.

Actually, there is no Jewish nationality, any more than there is a Catholic or Protestant nationality. Jews live, as citizens, in many nations. In one country -- Israel -- a majority of the population is Jewish, but that doesn't make Israel a "Jewish" state, any more than France is a "Catholic" state or Switzerland a "Protestant" state. Christians and Moslems also live in Israel and, as their Jewish neighbors, are Israeli by nationality. Jews in the United States, as their non-Jewish neighbors, are American by nationality. To Americans, no matter what their religious beliefs, Israel, France and Switzerland are all foreign nations.

Thus American Jews really have nothing more in common with Israel than the religion of a majority of its citizens. Unfortunately, however, many Israelis, and some American sympathizers, have tried to create a stronger bond. We of The Council, however, say that the nationalism of Israel must be confined to the boundaries of that state; that Israel's national life or culture is no part of our American Judaism.