Israel's Lessons For Us

By Whitney M. Young, Jr.

The people of Israel come from nations of every corner of the globe, and a short walk in the streets of Tel Aviv brings the visitor into contact with people of all colors. Blue-eyed blondes and dark-skinned people mix freely without the hysterical color-consciousness we find among too many Americans.

Their common bond is, of course, that they are all Jews. But we are all Americans, and we would do well to emulate the Israelis in removing color as a barrier among people.

Tolerance toward Arabs also surprised me. One would think that a nation surrounded by hostile Arab states whose guerillas inflict daily casualties on troops and civilians would develop deep hared for the enemy.

But it is not so, generally. A tol Army general explained it to me. "I don't want my children to hate," he said. "If you teach a child to hate Arags, you are teaching him to fear them, for the two are linked, and I don't want my children to learn fear." Think of the energies and lives that are wasted on such fear and hatred here in America!

The subject came up again when I met Israel's brilliant and charming Prime Minister, Mrs. Golda Meir. An American suggested to her that Arabs were lazy and incapable of learning modern techniques -- the same lies that many people assert about Negroes.

Mrs. Meir was visibly annoyed, but she answered in a very ladylike way that no, you can't say a people are lazy. It's a matter of opportunity and education, se said, and she told of the efforts Israel is making to motivate its Arab population and open new opportunities for them. In her own quiet way, she exploded the myths and generalizations that are part and parcel of racist thought.

Israel also has some concrete lessons for us. Its agricultural cooperatives might be used as example for solving the problems of the rural South.

I visited a moyshev, a cooperative agricultural community. The government gave each member a house and farmland. The cooperative buys equipment for use by the private farmers and markets their goods. All have an equal voice in the government of the community.

As mechanization makes more and more farm laborers jobless in our rural areas, it might make sense to consider a similar development here. Federal land grants, coupled with cooperative organization, could keep people out of big city slums, leading productive lives on their own land.

Israel is also dotted with new cities. Planners carefully arranged for the settlement of new immigrants in new towns. I visited one, Kyriat Gat, on the edge of the Negev. It's a bustling community, specially designed to integrate newcomers into Israeli life.

If a small country can do this, why can't we, with out vast open spaces, plan for new towns to absorb our growing population? We have more money, more planners, more industry than Israel has. But they are experimenting, while we are stuck in a rut. Why?

Perhaps the answer lies in the pioneering spirit, the nation-building spirit of adventure that was once so strong in America, but now seems smothered by affluence and social disinterest. If Israel has anything to teach us, it ma be that this spirit must be recaptured, and that our resources must be used to develop our own human potentials to create an equal society.

BONN (WNS) -- Adolf von Thadden, head of the neo-Nazi National Democractic Party, has denied that he planned t resign as a result of the party's failure to gain representation in the West German Bundestag (Parliament). Mr. von Thadden, who had said many times he would quit if the party lost in the national elections, said that an NPD congress would be held in five weeks and its chairman would be decided then.

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- A Hadassah-sponsored school of occupational therapy to train therapists to work with paraplegics and victims of other disabling illnesses has opened on Mount Scopus.

NEW YORK (WNS) -- Eight new ORT vocational and technical high schools were opened in Israel last month when the new school year began.

CLEVELAND (WNS) -- The Cleveland Jewish Vocational Service and the Cleveland Chapter of the American Jewish Committee are administering a $60,000 three-year program underwritten by the Cleveland Jewish Community Federation and the Cleveland Foundation to help major industrial concerns in the Cleveland area recruit and promote qualified Jews in managerial positions.

NEW YORK -- An enthusiastic welcome was accorded to the Israel Prime Minister Golda Meir by more than 4,000 American Jewish youth at New York's Madison Square Garden Felt Forum. The rally was sponsored by the American Zionist Youth Foundation, the North American jewish Youth Council, and the American Zionist Youth Council. It was the first time that a visiting Israeli Prime Minister addressed a mass meeting of American Jewish youth groups.

NEW YORK -- The fifty-fifth annual meeting of the Joint Distribution Committee, major American agency aiding needy Jews overseas, will be hald December 10, 1969, at the New York Hilton Hotel, New York City, it was announced by Louis Broido, JDC Chairman.

LOS ANGELES The Western Regional Advisory Board of the American Jewish Committee will meet in Los Angeles on October 14th at the International Hotel, it was announced today by Dr. Max W. Bay, Chairman.

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