

ILF #2 Northwestern Hillel- what is Zionism?

5:30-5:35 - Last week, we began to explore our own Israel stories — what we bring with us into this group from our own questions and life experiences. We talked about what Israel may evoke for us emotionally, including—at times—pride, shame, confusion, or hope.

Has anything come up for any of us after last week's discussion that you'd like to share with us? An insight you came up with? A big question to revisit?

Give students a chance to weigh in briefly, then transition.

Today we're going to explore the question, "What is Zionism?"

For 2,000 years Jews understood their politics in religious terms. That is, if you wanted to make a change in history or in political life, you did so through religion. **Zionism—the move to build a Jewish nation—is ultimately a rejection of that premise. So, what do you get when you do that? Is Zionism a fulfillment or a rejection of a religious dream?**

5:35- 5:45: - Round of names: name, where did you come from just now?

5:45 - 5:50: Hevruta Question:

One of the goals of this fellowship is to create a community around learning and build friendships with a variety of peers. Dinner is a great time to do that. Find someone with whom you have not yet had a meaningful conversation. They will be your dinner chevruta. Grab food and find a place to sit with your partner, and then answer the following:

Dinner Chevruta Question:

What does the term zionism means to you? What does it make you think of?

5:50 - 6:15: Step in Step Out questions: one leg is in the middle

in= yes, out= no one leg= not so relevant for me.

Take few breaths look around - share.

- I'm a first year student
 - I'm a second year student
 - I'm a third year student
 - I'm a fourth year student
 - Does your family identify as Ashkenazy
 - " Sefardi - Mizrahi
- I grew up in a religious Jewish home
- I didn't go to a Jewish day school
- I went to a Sunday school
- Growing up, I was taught that Israel was perfect.
- Israel was very present in my education system growing up
- I have family in Israel
- I have never been to Israel
- Israel is not part of my Jewish identity
- My relationship with Israel "is complicated"
- There are spaces where I prefer not to say what I think about Israel
- My views on Israel are different than my parents' views
- The time I spent in Israel made me feel connected to my Jewish identity
- I'm not sure I want to go on birthright
- Sometimes people expect me to explain what's going on in Israel
- I feel a gap between what I learned about Israel at school/camp/Jewish spaces to what I learn in university.
- My opinion on Israel does not align with some of my liberal friends' views
- I wish I knew more about the history of the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict
- I feel like Israel is a safe haven for me as a Jewish person
- Sometimes I feel unsafe being connected to Israel as a Jewish person

6:15- 6:30 - Transition to the texts about Zionism

One thing to keep in mind: In the last two centuries, with the advent of modernity and nation-building movements in the 19th century, Jews began to actively reject this worldview of religion as political power (no more waiting for god) and take political action. That movement in the broadest terms is called Zionism.

Zionism is not a single thing. The word Zionism really describes many different cultural movements that seek to politically empower Jews who, before Zionism, believed that politics (whether or not you are free, self-governing, or have a homeland) were linked up with “good religious behavior” or piety.

Thus some Zionisms focused on building a new modern language (Hebrew), others on new Jewish culture, still others on settling the land of Israel agriculturally. The common link in all these strains, however, is—**at its a core—a radical idea (for that time), that Jews can control their own destiny regardless of their religious behavior.**

Second thing to keep in mind: Zionists had a very complicated relationship with Judaism as a religion and with anti-Semitism, on the one hand, they agreed with anti-Semitism there was something wrong with the Jews.

The European anti-Semitism that it's a genetic problem - Zionists think that it's an environmental problem.

Zionists were influenced by modernity and secular ideas.

Shpinuza: the halacha makes human obedient. The Zionists were dreaming of a new Jew free and

Bialik:

5:20-5:45 - “the founding fathers”: Herzl, Jabotinsky, Ahad Ha'am and Harav Kook

Split into groups of 4

Questions:

1. How would you define Zionism by this Zionist thinker?
2. What do you find challenging?
3. How is it different from the previous text?
4. After reading the 3 texts - which one speaks to you the most?

5:45-6:05 - Group sharing their answers to these questions

Common threads: they all wanted to solve the “Jewish problem”

Jabotinsky wanted to hurry up and get to the point and have a Jewish state before anything else is accomplished.

Herzl wanted to make sure the world leaders will support this idea of a Jewish secular state.

Ahad Ha'am - opposed to the idea of forming a state first, wanted to focus on Jewish culture, and have the state only as a spiritual-cultural center, focus on Hebrew, and not having everyone move to Israel. The Jewish religion is the problem, we need to develop Jewish culture.

6:05-6:20 - in hevruta:

1. Natan Sharansky (identity and belonging) - how does it feel to be accepted?
2. Stav Shaffir (social) - What is true Zionism? Can 2 people define in different ways?
3. **Yair Lapid - I am a Zionist** (each one reads a part)

Questions: - How would you say each of them define Zionism?

- How is it different from the "founding fathers" vision?

Contemporary Zionism- for people who already live or were born in Israel, Zionism can mean many times is part of Israelis' identity. personally, I grew up seeing Zionists as Israelis who contribute to society and wish to make Israel a good and equal place to live.

My grandparents from my mom's side were waiting in a displaced camp in Germany to go to Israel because they had no other home to go to. People from my parents'/ my generation are coming from a different starting point.

Zionism means different things to different Israelis - Next session we will talk about the different parties in Israel and we can see how the different Zionist ideologies evolve in to modern Israel today.

<https://unpacked.education/video/herzl-the-zionist-dream-of-a-jewish-state/>

THEODOR HERZL

(1860 – 1904)

Who was he?

Theodor Herzl was born in 1860 to a liberal Jewish family in Budapest. He studied law at Vienna University and became a journalist. It was whilst working as a correspondent in France and covering the Dreyfus Trial [1894] (see earlier) that he became aware of what he saw as the 'Jewish Problem' and he devoted the rest of his life to organizing the Zionist movement and to placing the Zionist goal on the world agenda. He published his initial ideas in a booklet called 'Judenstaat' in which he set out the importance of a Jewish State. He started the Zionist newspaper (Die Welt), established the first Zionist Congress in Basle in 1897 and became the first President of the World Zionist Organisation. He continued to work to advance the idea and ideals of Zionism until his death in 1904.

Type of Zionism – Political Zionism

Herzl believed that a homeland could only be realized through political activity. He saw a homeland and the concept of Jewish nationalism as the solution to the 'Jewish Problem'

(anti-Semitism). In order to fulfill the necessity for Jewish self-determination there was a need for a political framework. In his own words at the first Zionist Congress “Zionism seeks to secure for the Jewish People a publicly recognized, legally secured, home in Palestine”.

Herzl’s rationale for Zionism stemmed from a profound need to save Jews. He would take religious concepts such as redemption and translate them into a nationalistic framework - showing a need for ‘saving’. In one of his books (Alt Neuland) he almost prophesied the Holocaust – an event that proved to the world the need for a Jewish homeland.

For Herzl, the country was about the Jewish people having a refuge and a national identity and he believed that once created, the state would be a democratic, secular state.

Theodor Herzl: On the Jewish State, 1896

“We have honestly endeavored everywhere to merge ourselves in the social life of surrounding communities and to preserve the faith of our fathers. We are not permitted to do so. In vain are we loyal patriots, our loyalty in some places running to extremes; in vain do we make the same sacrifices of life and property as our fellow citizens; in vain do we strive to increase the fame of our native land in science and art or her wealth by trade and commerce. In countries where we have lived for centuries we are still cried down as strangers, and often by those whose ancestors were not yet domiciled in the land where Jews had already had the experience of suffering. The majority may decide which are the strangers; for this, as indeed every point which arises in the relations between nations, is a question of might. I do not here surrender any portion of our prescriptive right, when I make this statement merely in my own name as an individual. In the world as it now is and for an indefinite period will probably remain, might precede right. It is useless, therefore, for us to be loyal patriots, as were the Huguenots who were forced to emigrate. If we could only be left in peace...”

ZE'EV VLADIMIR JABOTINSKY

(1880 – 1940)

Who was he?

Vladimir Jabotinsky was born in Odessa, Russia, in 1880. He wasn't brought up in a Jewish environment and after a secular education in Russia; he went on to study law in Rome and Berne. In 1903 he helped start a Jewish self-defense group and due to the impending pogroms, he immersed himself in Zionist activities, coming as a delegate to the 6th Zionist congress. He continued to work towards the fulfillment of what he saw as the Zionist goals and established programs in Russia advocating both *Alya* to Eretz Yisrael alongside educational and political activities in the Diaspora. It was his idea to set up a Jewish legion to support the allies in liberating Israel during WWI and reached the rank of Lieutenant, receiving a decoration for leading the first company to cross the Jordan. When the British Government took over the running of Israel after the war, **Jabotinsky became a strict opponent to their rule.** This put him in opposition to the main Zionist agenda, and in 1923 he resigned from the executive of the Zionist organization. Instead, he set up the World Union of Zionist Revisionists and served as its President. In 1930 the British refused him entry to Palestine and he, therefore, lived in Paris until his death in 1940.

Revisionist Zionism

Jabotinsky remains one of the most controversial figures in Zionism – constantly evoking heated debate and creating his own directions.

He was a believer in the need for a Jewish State in which the Jewish People were a majority. He believed that many of the problems arose in Diaspora because the Jews were always a minority. He believed that **all 'People' had the right to their own state** and to fulfill his vision he **pushed for rapid mass migration (Aliyah)**. He wanted the **Jews to be able to defend themselves and initiated Jewish military and police units**. When the British limited the number of people allowed entering Israel, Jabotinsky initiated illegal immigration. He wanted the Jews to build a self-image of pride, which could only be accomplished, by physically **building a nation with a Jewish majority**.

His concern was not for the culture of the state, rather he saw this as a luxury that should wait until the creation of the state. He focused on getting Jews to come to Palestine and settle there – moving towards the Jewish majority he believed essential.

The Fundamentals of the Betarian World Outlook (1934)

The Jewish state: The basis of the Betarian [Jewish movement] viewpoint consists of one idea: the Jewish state. In this simple idea however, lies a deep meaning indeed. What do the nations of the world symbolize? They symbolize that every nation must contribute its own share to the common culture of humanity, a share which is distinguished by its own specific spirit... For this purpose, every nation must possess its own "laboratory," a country wherein the nation alone is master and can freely suit the common life in accordance with its own conception of good and evil.

Many of the adherents of the present national revival maintain that they are secularists. If a Jewish secular nationalism really were imaginable, then we would, indeed, be in danger of falling so low as to be beyond redemption. But Jewish secular nationalism is a form of self-delusion: the spirit of Israel is so closely linked to the spirit of God that a Jewish nationalist, no matter how secularist his intention may be, must, despite himself, affirm the divine. An individual can sever the tie that binds him to life eternal, but the House of Israel cannot. All of its most cherished national possessions - its land, language, history, and customs - are vessels of the spirit of the Lord.

AHAD HA'AM

(1856 – 1927)

Who was he?

Born Asher Zvi Ginsberg in Sikoira, Russia, he grew up in an aristocratic family within the Jewish ghetto. He was close to the local Hassidic Rabbi and had a religious upbringing. His formal education was so pious that he was not even taught the Russian alphabet at school!! It was when he published his first article in 1889 that he began to use the name Ahad Ha'am (meaning 'one of the people'). In 1921 he settled in Palestine where he remained until his death.

Cultural Zionism

Ahad Ha'am himself never began a political movement, though his ideas and writings had a tremendous impact on the leaders of the day. He saw the "Jewish problem", not as a political one, rather a cultural one. He feared that Judaism was under threat of being engulfed by secular society. To rekindle Jewish culture, there was a need to rekindle the Jewish national spirit. To do this it was essential to take Jewish culture from the Diaspora and place it in its native homeland where it can naturally flourish.

He saw Israel as having the potential to be the center of the nation from which the spirit of Judaism will radiate to all communities of the Diaspora. He didn't believe Jews would give up their Western style of life for Israel and believed that the majority of Jews would remain "scattered in foreign soils". As long as there were to be strong links between Diaspora and Israel the cultural revival of Judaism would be fulfilled.

After the first Zionist Congress, in 1897, Ahad Ha'am became a fierce opponent of Herzl and his political outlook. He believed that the main problem of the Jewish people was not the "trouble of the Jews" - the hatred of the Jews and the persecution they suffered, but the "trouble of Judaism", which lost its spiritual property.

The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem (1897), Ahad Ha-Am

It is not only the Jews who have come out of the ghetto; Judaism has come out too. For the Jews, the exodus from the ghettos confined to certain countries and is due to toleration; but Judaism has come out, or is coming out, of its own accord, wherever it has come into contact with modern culture. This contact with modern culture overturns the inner defenses of Judaism, so that it can no longer remain isolated and live apart. The spirit of our people desires further development; it wants to absorb the basic elements of general culture which are reaching it from the outside world, to digest them and to make them a part of itself, as it has done before at various periods of history. But the conditions of its life in exile are not suitable for this task. Judaism is in a quandary: It can no longer tolerate the Galut [diaspora, exile] form which it had to take on, in obedience to its will to live, when it was exiled from its own country; but without that form, its life is in danger. So it seeks to return to its historic center, where it will be able to live a life developing in a natural way, to bring its powers into play in every department of human culture, to broaden and perfect those national possessions which it has acquired up to now, and thus to contribute to the common stock of humanity, in the future as it has in the past, a great national culture, the fruit of the unhampered activity of a people living by the light of its own spirit. For this purpose, Judaism can, for the present, content itself with little. **It does not need a State**, but only the creation in its native land of conditions favorable to its development: a good-sized settlement of Jews working without hindrance in every branch of civilization, from agriculture and handicrafts to science and literature. This Jewish Yishuv (community in Israel), which will be a gradual growth, will become in the course of time, the center of the nation, wherein its spirit will find pure expression and develop in all its aspects to the highest degree of perfection of which it is capable. Then, from this center, the spirit of Judaism will radiate to the great circumference, to all the communities of the Diaspora, to inspire them with new life and to preserve the overall unity of our people. When our national culture in Palestine has attained that level, we may be confident that it will produce people in the Land of Israel itself who will be able, at a favorable moment, to establish a State there, **one which will not merely be a State of the Jews, but a really Jewish State**. A political ideal which is not grounded in our national culture is apt to seduce us from loyalty to our own inner spirit and to beget in us a tendency to find the path of glory in the attainment of material power and political domination, thus breaking the thread that unites us with the past and undermines our historical foundation.

RAV KOOK

(1865 – 1935)

Who was he?

Born in Greiva, Latvia, Rav Abraham Isaac Kook was educated at a traditional Yeshiva. In addition to his study of the Jewish texts, he believed it important to understand the social problems of contemporary society because these problems had a powerful impact on the assimilated majority of Jews. In 1904 he went to live in Israel, serving as the Rabbi of Jaffe. During WWI, having been caught in Europe and not able to return to Israel, he became a rabbi in London. After the war, upon his return to Israel, he was appointed Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, and later the first Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Palestine. As an active leader within Eretz Yisrael he tried to build and strengthen the bridges between the secular Zionist movement and the religious world.

Religious Zionism

Rav Kook believed that the state should be established and conducted in accordance with the principles of the Torah. He saw the return to Israel as the first step in saving Judaism and the Jews. The Jew in Diaspora had no real foundation in his eyes and would not be able to 'fight' the impulse to assimilate into secular culture. The land of Israel itself was holy and this would help the Jewish religion thrive. He disagreed with the concept of secular Zionism and was concerned about how others tried to split the national element from the religious element within Judaism. The Jewish spirit was one whole and should not be split in two.

For Rav Kook, Zionism was 100% about religion and the return to Israel was the beginning of the redemption.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865– 1935), "The Lights of Rebirth," translated in Arthur Hertzberg, The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader (1997)

There is an eternal covenant which assures the whole House of Israel that it will not ever become completely unclean. Yes, it may be partially corroded, but it can never be totally cut off from the source of divine life. Many of the adherents of the present national revival maintain that they are secularists. If a Jewish secular nationalism were really imaginable, then we would, indeed, be in danger of falling so low as to be beyond redemption. But Jewish secular nationalism is a form of self-delusion: the spirit of Israel is so closely linked to the spirit of God that a Jewish nationalist, no matter how secularist his intention may be, must, despite himself, affirm the divine. An individual can sever the tie that binds him to life eternal, but the House of Israel as a whole cannot. All of its most cherished national possessions—its land, language, history, and customs—are vessels of the spirit of the Lord. How should men of faith respond to an age of ideological ferment which affirms all of these values in the name of nationalism and denies their source, the rootedness of the national spirit, in God? To oppose Jewish nationalism, even in speech, and to denigrate its values is not permissible, for the spirit of God and the spirit of Israel are identical. What they must do is to work all the harder at the task of uncovering the light and holiness implicit in our national spirit, the divine element which is its core. The secularists will thus be constrained to realize that they are immersed and rooted in the life of God and bathed in the radiant sanctity that comes from above.

Yair Lapid

I am a Zionist (2009)

I am a Zionist. I believe that the Jewish people established itself in the Land of Israel, albeit somewhat late. Had it listened to the alarm clock, there would have been no Holocaust, and my dead grandfather



– the one I was named after – would have been able to dance a last waltz with grandma on the shores of the Yarkon River.

I am a Zionist. Hebrew is the language I use to thank the Creator, and also to swear on the road. The Bible does not only contain my history, but also my geography. King Saul went to look for mules on what is today Highway 443, Jonah the Prophet boarded his ship not too far from what is today a Jaffa restaurant, and the balcony where David peeped on Bathsheba must have been bought by some oligarch by now.

I am a Zionist. The first time I saw my son wearing an IDF uniform I burst into tears, I haven't missed the Independence Day torch-lighting ceremony for 20 years now, and my television was made in Korea, but I taught it to cheer for our national soccer team.

I am a Zionist. I believe in our right for this land. The people who were persecuted for no reason throughout history have a right to a state of their own plus a free F-16 from the manufacturer. Every display of anti-Semitism from London to Mumbai hurts me, yet deep inside I'm thinking that Jews who choose to live abroad fail to understand something very basic about this world. The State of Israel was not established so that the anti-Semites will disappear, but rather, so we can tell them to get lost.

I am a Zionist. I was fired at in Lebanon, a Katyusha rockets missed me by a few feet in Kiryat Shmona, missiles landed near my home during the first Gulf War, I was in Sderot when the Color Red anti-rocket alert system was activated, terrorists blew themselves up not too far from my parents' house, and my children stayed in a bomb shelter before they even knew how to pronounce their own name, clinging to a grandmother who arrived here from Poland to escape death. Yet nonetheless, I always felt fortunate to be living here, and I don't really feel good anywhere else.

I am a Zionist. I think that anyone who lives here should serve in the army, pay taxes, vote in the elections, and be familiar with the lyrics of at least one Shalom Hanoch song. I think that the State of Israel is not only a place, it is also an idea, and I wholeheartedly believe in the three extra commandments engraved on the wall of the Holocaust museum in Washington: "Thou shalt not be a victim, thou shalt not be a perpetrator, but above all, thou shalt not be a bystander."

I am a Zionist. I already laid down on my back to admire the Sistine Chapel, I bought a postcard at the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, and I was deeply impressed by the emerald Buddha at the king's palace in Bangkok. Yet I still believe that Tel Aviv is more entertaining, the Red Sea is greener, and the Western Wall Tunnels provide for a much more powerful spiritual experience. It is true that I'm not objective, but I'm also not objective in respect to my wife and children.

I am a Zionist. I am a man of tomorrow but I also live my past. My dynasty includes Moses, Jesus, Maimonides, Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, Albert Einstein, Woody Allen, Bobby Fischer, Bob Dylan, Franz Kafka, Herzl, and Ben-Gurion. I am part of a tiny persecuted minority that influenced the world more than any other nation. While others invested their energies in war, we had the sense to invest in our minds.

I am a Zionist. I sometimes look around me and become filled with pride, because I live better than a billion Indians, 1.3 billion Chinese, the entire African continent, more than 250 million Indonesians, and also better than the Thais, the Filipinos, the Russians, the Ukrainians, and the entire Muslim world, with the exception of the Sultan of Brunei. I live in a country under siege that has no natural resources, yet nonetheless the traffic lights always work and we have high-speed connection to the Internet.

I am a Zionist. My Zionism is natural, just like it is natural for me to be a father, a husband, and a son. People who claim that they, and only they, represent the "real Zionism" are ridiculous in my view. My Zionism is not measured by the size of my kippa, by the neighborhood where I live, or by the party I will be voting for. It was born a long time before me, on a snowy street in the ghetto in Budapest where my father stood and attempted, in vain, to understand why the entire world is trying to kill him.

I am a Zionist. Every time an innocent victim dies, I bow my head because once upon a time I was an innocent victim. I have no desire or intention to adopt the moral standards of my enemies. I do not want to be like them. I do not live on my sword; I merely keep it under my pillow.

I am a Zionist. I do not only hold on to the rights of our forefathers, but also to the duty of the sons. The people who established this state lived and worked under much worse conditions than I have to face, yet nonetheless they did not make do with mere survival. They also attempted to establish a better, wiser, more humane, and more moral state here. They were willing to die for this cause, and I try to live for its sake.

Stav Shaffir

Speech to the Knesset (2015)

Don't preach to us about Zionism, because real Zionism means dividing the budget equally among all the citizens. Real Zionism is taking care of the weak. Real Zionism is solidarity, not only in battle but in everyday life, day to day, to watch out for each other. That is Israeliness. That is Zionism.

To be concerned about the future of the citizens of Israel. In the hospitals, in the schools, on the roads, on welfare. That is Zionism...

Friends, when we sing "Hatikva" [the national anthem], we sing it in the fullest sense of the word, "Hope": a politics of hope, a politics that has a future, a politics that is forward-looking, that wants to make life here better, more secure, that wants to make peace, that wants to improve relations between the different sectors within Israeli society, that believes in equal rights, in budgetary equity, that thinks that every single Israel citizen deserves an equal portion, and deserves to live a truly good life here. That is the true Zionism. That's Hatikva.



Natan Sharansky

Jewish Agency, born in 1948

Chairman of the

Was a refusenik in the Soviet Union during the 1970s and 1980s, and spent nine years in Soviet prisons. [Refusenik = Soviet Jew who were denied permission to emigrate by the authorities of the former Soviet Union]

The Zionist idea gave me—and millions of others—a meaningful identity. In June 1967, when I was nineteen, the call from Jerusalem—“The Temple Mount Is in Our Hands”—penetrated the Iron Curtain. Democratic Israel’s surprising victory in the Six Day War, defeating Arab dictatorships threatening to destroy it, inspired many of us all over the world to become active participants in Jewish history. This notion that the Jews are a people with collective rights to establish a Jewish state in our ancient homeland, the Land of Israel, connected us to something more important than simple physical survival. Forging a mystical link with our people, we discovered identity, or as we call it, “peoplehood.” Suddenly we Soviet Jews, Jews of silence, robbed of our heritage by the Soviet regime, realized there is a country that called us its children.... The rediscovery of my identity, my community, my people, gave me the strength to fight for my rights, for the rights of other Jews, and for the rights of others, allying me with dissidents fighting communist tyranny. I discovered that this synthesis of the universal, the democratic, with the particularist, the nationalist, is central to the Zionist idea.



עוד מידע על זבוטינסקי בשביל המנחה:

זאב ז'בוטינסקי מוצא בחוקי המקרא בסיס רעיוני, אידאולוגי, למדיניות הרווחה המודרנית. לשיטתו, יש קשר בין חוקי המקרא העסוקים במענקים מן היבול לעניים ולנזקקים – כמו לקט (1) ופאה (2) – ובין רעיונות חברתיים מודרניים של מדינת רווחה. לפי פרשנותו של ז'בוטינסקי, החוק המקראי הקשור לפאה הוא הבסיס לחקיקה הסוציאלית המודרנית – "ממס הכנסה ומס הירושה ועד הסיוע למחוסרי עבודה".

"התנ"ך כולל לא רק את העיקרון של מחאה על העוול הסוציאלי, אלא גם שיטה... לבנייה חברתית מחדש. (3) כמובן, אין הדברים מוצעים שם (=בתנ"ך) באורח שיטתי, אינם ערוכים יחד כתכנית אחת שיש בה סעיף א וסעיף ב; ה'סעיפים' פזורים בין הטקסטים השונים; אך אם נאסוף אותם יחד, נקבל תכנית ממש... שלושה סעיפים בה (=בתכנית): העיקרון של שבת, העיקרון של פאה ורעיון היוֹבֵל.

הנה קטע מתוך כתבי זאב ז'בוטינסקי, העוסק בעיקרון השבת ובקשר שבין עיקרון מקראי זה - ובין הרווחה הסוציאלית בימינו. ז'בוטינסקי מוצא בעיקרון השבת, כפי הוא מנוסח במקרא, בסיס לחקיקה סוציאלית, שמטרתה להגן על זכותו של כל פועל שכיר ליום מנוחה אחד בשבוע:

"העיקרון של "שבת" הוא אותו שורש אשר מתוך שלוש אותיותיו צמח מלוא היקפה של התחיקה הסוציאלית בימינו, המגינה על זכויותיו ועל מצבו של הפועל השכיר. מלבד מנוחת השבת, מצויים בתנ"ך עוד כמה וכמה חוקי מגן לזכויותיו של עובד שכיר, אפילו ביחס למועד המסוים אשר בעל הבית חייב לשלם בו את השכר (כל ערב); אך את כל הפרטים הללו אפשר לכלול באורח סמלי במושג "שבת". תמצית המושג היא בכך, שהחברה אסור לה לעזוב את הפועל השכיר לחסדו של נותן העבודה... התנ"ך אינו מכיר ב"חוק הברזל" המפורסם של הכלכלנים מן המאה ה-19, חוק הקובע שהסייג היחידי לתנאי העבודה הפרולטרית, הרי זו מידת היגיעה ומידת הרעב שהפועל יוכל לסבול בלי "להיעלם", כלומר למות. במובנה הצר, ה"שבת" הריהי סייג מבחינה אחת בלבד - ביחס לזמן העבודה; אך במובנה הרחב, כאמור, ה"שבת" היא הראשית והמקור לכל אותן הרפורמות אשר מאת (=100) שנים של לוחמים סוציאליים ידעה להשיג בתחומים לאין ספור של ההגנה על הפועל. עיקרון זה של השבת הופיע לראשונה בתנ"ך, לא רק כאחת מתרי"ג המצוות, אלא כאחד מעשרת הדברים (=הדיברות), כאחת מהנחות היסוד רמות החשיבות ביותר לחיי שיתוף בקרב בני האדם...".*