

The end result of fifty years of Zionist politics was embodied in the recent resolution of the largest and most influential section of the World Zionist Organization. American Zionists from left to right adopted unanimously, at their last annual convention held in Atlantic City in October, 1944, the demand for a “free and democratic Jewish commonwealth ... [which] shall embrace the whole of Palestine, undivided and undiminished.” This is a turning-point in Zionist history; for it means that the Revisionist program, so long bitterly repudiated, has proved finally victorious. The Atlantic City Resolution goes even a step further than the Biltmore Program (1942), in which the Jewish minority had granted minority rights to the Arab majority. This time the Arabs were simply not mentioned in the resolution, which obviously leaves them the choice between voluntary emigration or second-class citizenship. It seems to admit that only opportunist reasons had previously prevented the Zionist movement from stating its final aims. These aims now appear to be completely identical with those of the extremists as far as the future political constitution of Palestine is concerned. It is a deadly blow to those Jewish parties in Palestine itself that have tirelessly preached the necessity of an understanding between the Arab and the Jewish peoples. On the other hand, it will considerably strengthen the majority under the leadership of Ben-Gurion, which, through the pressure of many injustices in Palestine and the terrible catastrophes in Europe, have turned more than ever nationalistic.

Why “general” Zionists should still quarrel officially with Revisionists is hard to understand, unless it be that the former do not quite believe in the fulfillment of their demands but think it wise to demand the maximum as a base for future compromises, while the latter are serious, honest and intransigent in their nationalism. The general Zionists, furthermore, have set their hopes on the help of the Big Powers, while the Revisionists seem pretty much decided to take matters into their own hands. Foolish and unrealistic as this may be, it will bring to the Revisionists many new adherents from among the most honest and most idealistic elements of Jewry.

In any case, the significant development lies in the unanimous adherence of all Zionist parties to the ultimate aim, the very discussion of which was still tabooed during the 1930's. By stating it with such bluntness in what seemed to them an appropriate moment, Zionists have forfeited for a long time to come any chance of *pourparlers* with Arabs; for whatever Zionists

may offer, they will not be trusted. This, in turn, leaves the door wide open for an outside power to take over without asking the advice of either of the two parties most concerned. The Zionists have now indeed done their best to create that insoluble “tragic conflict” which can only be ended through cutting the Gordian knot.

It would certainly be very naive to believe that such a cutting would invariably be to the Jewish advantage, nor is there any reason to assume that it would result in a lasting solution. To be more specific, the British Government may tomorrow decide to partition the country and may sincerely believe it has found a working compromise between Jewish and Arab demands. This belief on the British part would be all the more natural since partition might indeed be an acceptable compromise between the pro-Arab anti-Jewish Colonial administration and the rather pro-Jewish English public opinion: thus it would seem to solve an inner British disagreement over the Palestine question. But it is simply preposterous to believe that further partition of so small a territory whose present border lines are already the result of two previous partitions—the first from Syria and the second from Transjordan—could resolve the conflict of two peoples, especially in a period when similar conflicts are not territorially soluble on much larger areas.

Nationalism is bad enough when it trusts in nothing but the rude force of the nation. A nationalism that necessarily and admittedly depends upon the force of a foreign nation is certainly worse. This is the threatened fate of Jewish nationalism and of the proposed Jewish State, surrounded inevitably by Arab states and Arab peoples. Even a Jewish majority in Palestine—nay, even a transfer of all Palestine Arabs, which is openly demanded by Revisionists—would not substantially change a situation in which Jews must either ask protection from an outside power against their neighbors or effect a working agreement with their neighbors.

If such an agreement is not brought about, there is the imminent danger that, through their need and willingness to accept any power in the Mediterranean basin which might assure their existence, Jewish interests will clash with those of all other Mediterranean peoples; so that, instead of one “tragic conflict” we shall face tomorrow as many insoluble conflicts as there are Mediterranean nations. For these nations, bound to demand a *mare nostrum* shared only by those who have settled territories along its shores, must in the long run oppose any outside—that is, interfering—power creating or holding a sphere of interest. These outside powers, however powerful at the moment, certainly cannot afford to antagonize the Arabs, one of the most numerous peoples of the Mediterranean basin. If, in the present situation, the powers should be willing to help the establishment of a Jewish homestead, they could

do so only on the basis of a broad understanding that takes into account the whole region and the needs of all its peoples. On the other hand, the Zionists, if they continue to ignore the Mediterranean peoples and watch out only for the big far-away powers, will appear only as their tools, the agents of foreign and hostile interests. Jews who know their own history should be aware that such a state of affairs will inevitably lead to a new wave of Jew-hatred; the antisemitism of tomorrow will assert that Jews not only profited [sic] from the presence of the foreign big powers in that region but had actually plotted it and hence are guilty of the consequences.

The big nations that can afford to play the game of power politics have found it easy to forsake King Arthur's Round Table for the poker table; but small powerless nations that venture their own stakes in that game, and try to mingle with the big, usually end by being sold down the river. The Jews, trying their hand "realistically" in the horse-trading politics of oil in the Near East, are uncomfortably like people who, with a passion for horse-trading but disposing of neither horse nor money, decide to make up for the lack of both by imitating the magnificent shouting that usually accompanies these gaudy transactions.

II

The Revisionist landslide in the Zionist Organization was brought on by the sharpening of political conflicts during the past ten years. None of these conflicts, however, is new; the new factor is the situation in which Zionism is forced to give an answer to questions which for at least twenty years had been held deliberately in suspense. Under Weizmann's leadership in foreign affairs, and partly because of the great achievements of Palestine Jewry, the Zionist Organization had developed a genius for not answering, or answering ambiguously, all questions of political consequence. Everybody was free to interpret Zionism as he pleased; stress was laid, especially in the European countries, on the purely "ideological" elements.

In the light of present decisions, this ideology must appear to any neutral and not too well-informed spectator like deliberately complicated talk designed to hide political intentions. But such an interpretation would not do justice to the majority of Zionists. The truth of the matter is that the Zionist ideology, in the Herzlian version, had a definite tendency toward what later was known as Revisionist attitudes, and could escape from them only through a wilful blindness to the real political issues that were at stake.

The political issues on which the course of the whole movement depended

were few in number and could be plainly recognized. Foremost among them was the question of which kind of a political body Palestine Jewry was to form. The Revisionist insistence on a National State, refusing to accept a mere "national homeland," has proven victorious. Almost as an afterthought of the first came the next question, namely, what relationship this body should have with the Jews of Diaspora countries.

Here enters the double-loyalty conflict, never clearly answered, which is an unavoidable problem of every national movement of a people living within the boundaries of other States and unwilling to resign their civil and political rights therein. For over twenty years the President of the World Zionist Organization and of the Jewish Agency for Palestine has been a British subject whose British patriotism and loyalty are certainly beyond doubt. The trouble is only that by the very nature of his passport he is forced into a theory of predestined harmony of Jewish and British interests in Palestine. Such harmony may or may not exist; but the situation reminds one very vividly of the similar theories of European assimilationists. Here, too, the Revisionists—at least their extreme wing in America, the "Hebrew Committee for National Liberation"—has given the answer which has great chances of being accepted by Zionism, because it corresponds so well with the ideology of most Zionists and fulfills expertly their present needs.

The answer is that in Palestine we have a Hebrew nation, in the Diaspora a Jewish people. This chimes in with the old theory that only the remnant will return, the remnant being the élite of the Jewish people upon whom Jewish survival exclusively depends. This furthermore has the tremendous advantage of fitting in beautifully with the need for a reformulation of Zionism for America. Here not even the pretense of a willingness to move to Palestine is upheld; so here the movement has lost its initial character as that of changing the life of Jews in the Diaspora. The differentiation between the "Jewish people" in America and the "Hebrew nation" in Palestine and Europe could indeed solve, in theory at least, the double-loyalty conflict of American Jews.

Of equal importance has been the question, always open, as to what Jews should do against antisemitism: what kind of fight or explanation the new national movement, which had after all been occasioned by the anti-Jewish agitation of the end of the century, could and would offer. The answer to this, since Herzl's time, has been an utter resignation, an open acceptance of antisemitism as a "fact," and therefore a "realistic" willingness not only to do business with the foes of the Jewish people but also to take propaganda advantage of anti-Jewish hostility. Here, too, the difference between Revisionists and general Zionists has been hard to detect. The while Revisionists

were violently criticized by other Zionists for entering into negotiations with the Polish antisemitic prewar Government for the evacuation of a million Polish Jews, in order to win Polish support for extreme Zionist demands before the League of Nations and thus exercise pressure on the British Government, the general Zionists themselves were in constant contact with the Hitler-Government in Germany about the transfer business.

The last, and at the moment certainly most important, issue is the Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine. The intransigent attitude of the Revisionists is well known. Always claiming the whole of Palestine and Transjordan, they were the first to advocate the transfer of Palestine Arabs to Iraq—a proposition which a few years ago was earnestly discussed in general Zionist circles as well. Since the latest resolution of the American Zionist Organization, from which neither the Jewish Agency nor the Palestine Vaad Leumi differs in principle, leaves practically no choice for the Arabs but minority status in Palestine or voluntary emigration, it is obvious that in this question, too, the Revisionist principle, if not yet the Revisionist methods, has won a decisive victory.

The only distinct difference between the Revisionists and the general Zionists today lies in their attitude towards England, and this is not a fundamental political issue. The Revisionists, decidedly anti-British, share this position, at least on sentimental grounds, with a great many Palestine Jews who have the experience of British Colonial administration. Moreover, they enjoy in this respect the support of many American Zionists who are either influenced by the American distrust of British imperialism or hope that America and not Great Britain will be the future great power in the Near East. The last obstacle between them and victory in this field is Weizmann, who is backed by the English Zionist Organization and a small minority in Palestine.

III

In a rather summary way it may be asserted that the Zionist movement was fathered by two typical nineteenth-century European political ideologies—socialism and nationalism. The amalgam of these two seemingly contradictory doctrines was generally effected long before Zionism came into being: it was effected in all those national-revolutionary movements of small European peoples whose situation was equally one of social as of national oppression. But within the Zionist movement such an amalgam has never been realized. Instead, the movement was split from the beginning between the social-revolutionary forces which had sprung from the east European

masses and the aspiration for national emancipation as formulated by Herzl and his followers in the central European countries. The paradox of this split was that, whereas the former was actually a people's movement, caused by national oppression, the latter, created by social discrimination, became the political creed of intellectuals.

For a long time the eastern movement had so strong an affinity with socialism in the Tolstoyan form that its followers almost adopted it as their exclusive ideology. The Marxists among them believed Palestine to be the ideal place to “normalize” the social aspects of Jewish life, by establishing there appropriate conditions for Jewish participation in the all-important class struggle from which the ghetto existence had excluded the Jewish masses: this was to give them a “strategical base” for future participation in the world revolution and the coming classless and nation-less society (Borochov). Those who adopted the more eastern variation of the Messianic dream went to Palestine for a kind of personal salvation through work within a collective (A.D. Gordon). Spared the ignominies of capitalist exploitation, they could realize at once and by themselves the ideals they preached, and build up the new social order that was only a far-off dream in the social-revolutionary teachings of the West.

The national aim of the socialist Zionists was attained when they settled in Palestine. Beyond that they had no national aspirations. Absurd as it may sound today, they had not the slightest suspicion of any national conflict with the present inhabitants of the promised land; they did not even stop to think of the very existence of Arabs. Nothing could better prove the entirely unpolitical character of the new movement than this innocent obliviousness. True, those Jews were rebels; but they rebelled not so much against the oppressions of their people as against the crippling, stifling atmosphere of Jewish ghetto-life, on the one hand, and the injustices of social life in general, on the other. From both they hoped to have escaped when once established in Palestine, whose very name was still holy as well as familiar to them, emancipated though they were from Jewish orthodoxy. They escaped to Palestine as one might wish to escape to the moon, to a region beyond the wickedness of the world. True to their ideals, they established themselves on the moon; and with the extraordinary strength of their faith they were able to create small islands of perfection.

Out of these social ideals grew the *chalutz* and *kibbutz* movement. Its members, a small minority in their native lands, are a hardly larger minority in Palestine Jewry today. But they did succeed in creating a new type of Jew, even a new kind of aristocracy with their newly established values: their genuine contempt for material wealth, exploitation, and bourgeois life; their

unique combination of culture and labor; their rigorous realization of social justice within their small circle; and their loving pride in the fertile soil, the work of their hands, together with an utter and surprising lack of any wish for personal possession.

Great as these achievements are, they have remained without any appreciable political influence. The pioneers were completely content within the small circle where they could realize their ideals for themselves; they were little interested in Jewish or Palestine politics, were in fact frequently wearied by it, unaware of the general destiny of their people. Like all true sectarians, they tried hard to convince people of their way of life, to win over to their convictions as many adherents as possible, even to educate the Jewish youth of the Diaspora to follow in their footsteps. But once in Palestine, and even before within the safe shelter of the various youth movements, these idealists became self-contented, concerned only with the personal realization of lofty ideals, as indifferent as their teachers had been to the world at large which had not accepted the salutary way of living in an agricultural collective. In a sense, indeed, they were too decent for politics, the best among them somehow afraid of soiling their hands with it; but they were also completely disinterested in any event in Jewish life outside Palestine which did not land thousands of Jews as new immigrants; and they were bored by any Jew who was not himself a prospective immigrant. Politics, therefore, they gladly left to the politicians—on condition they were helped with money, left alone with their own social organization, and guaranteed a certain influence upon education of the youth.

Not even the events of 1933 roused their political interest; they were naive enough to see in them, above all, a God-sent opportunity for an undreamt-of wave of immigration to Palestine. When the Zionist Organization, against the natural impulses of the whole Jewish people, decided to do business with Hitler, to trade German goods against the wealth of German Jewry, to flood the Palestine market with German products and thus make a mockery of the boycott against German-made articles, they found little opposition in the Jewish National Homeland, and least of all among its aristocracy, the so-called *kibbutzniks*. When accused of dealing with the enemy of Jewry and of Labor, these Palestinians used to argue that the Soviet Union too had extended its trade agreements with Germany. Thereby once more these Palestinians underlined the fact that they were interested only in the existing and prospective *Yishuv*, the Jewish settlement, and were quite unwilling to become the protagonists of a world-wide national movement.

This consenting to the Nazi-Zionist transfer agreement is only one outstanding instance among many of the political failure of the aristocracy of

Palestine Jewry. Much as, despite their small number, they influenced the social values in Palestine, so little did they exercise their force in Zionist politics. Invariably they submitted to the Organization which, none the less, they held in contempt, as they held in contempt all men who were not producing and living from the work of their hands.

So it has come to pass that this new class of Jews, who possess such a rich new experience in social relationships, have not uttered a single fresh word, have not offered a single new slogan, in the wide field of Jewish politics. They took no differing stand on political antisemitism—content merely with repeating the old socialist or the new nationalist banalities, as though the whole affair did not concern them. Without a single fresh approach to the Arab-Jewish conflict (the “bi-national State” of *Hashomer Hazair* is no solution since it could be realized only as a result of a solution), they limited themselves to fighting either for or against the slogan of Jewish Labor. Revolutionary as were their background and their ideology, they failed to level a single criticism at Jewish bourgeoisie outside of Palestine, or to attack the role of Jewish finance in the political structure of Jewish life. They even adapted themselves to the charity methods of fund-raising, which they were taught by the Organization when sent to other countries on special missions. Amid the turmoil of conflicts in Palestine today, most of them have become loyal supporters of Ben-Gurion who indeed, in contrast to Weizmann, comes from their own ranks; though many of them have, in the old tradition, simply refused to vote; and only a few of them have protested that under the leadership of Ben-Gurion, whose Revisionist leanings were still violently denounced by Palestine Labor in 1935, the Zionist Organization has adopted the Revisionist Jewish State program.

Thus the social-revolutionary Jewish national movement, which started half a century ago with ideals so lofty that it overlooked the particular realities of the Near East and the general wickedness of the world, has ended—as do most such movements—with the unequivocal support not only of national but of chauvinist claims—claims not against the foes of the Jewish people but against its possible friends and present neighbors.

IV

This voluntary and, in its consequences, tragic abdication of political leadership by the vanguard of the Jewish people left the course free to the devotees of the movement who may be truly called political Zionists. Their Zionism belongs to those nineteenth-century political movements that carried

ideologies, *Weltanschauungen*, keys to history, in their portmanteaus. Not less than its better known contemporaries, such as socialism or nationalism, Zionism was once fed on the very life-blood of genuine political passions; and it shares with them the sad fate of having outlived their political conditions only to stalk together like living ghosts amid the ruins of our times.

Socialism—which, despite all its materialist superstitions and naive atheistic dogmatism, was once an inspiring source of the revolutionary labor movement—laid the heavy hand of “dialectical necessity” upon the heads and hearts of its adherents until they were willing to fit into almost any inhumane conditions. They were so willing because, on the one hand, their genuine political impulses for justice and freedom had grown fainter and fainter and, on the other hand, their fanatical belief in some superhuman, eternally progressive development had grown stronger and stronger. As for nationalism, it never was more evil or more fiercely defended than since it became apparent that this once great and revolutionary principle of the national organization of peoples could no longer either guarantee true sovereignty of the people within or establish a just relationship among different peoples beyond the national borders.

The pressure of this general European situation made itself felt in Jewish life through a new hostile philosophy, which centered its whole outlook around the role of the Jews in political and social life. In a sense, antisemitism was the father of both Assimilationism and Zionism—to such a degree, indeed, that we can hardly understand a single word of the great war of arguments between them, that was to last for decades, without keeping in mind the standard contentions of antisemitism.

At that time antisemitism was still the expression of a typical conflict such as must inevitably occur within the framework of a national state whose fundamental identity between people and territory and state cannot but be disturbed by the presence of another nationality which, in whatever forms, wants to preserve its identity. Within the framework of a national state there are only two alternatives for the solution of nationality-conflicts: either complete assimilation—that is, actual disappearance—or emigration. If, then, the assimilationists had simply preached national suicide for Jewry and the Zionists had simply challenged this in proposing means of national survival, we would have witnessed two factions of Jewry fighting each other on the ground of genuine and serious differences. Instead, both preferred to dodge the issue and to develop each an “ideology.” Most of the so-called assimilationists never wanted complete assimilation and national suicide: they imagined that by escaping from actual history into an imaginary history of mankind they had found an excellent method of survival. The Zionists

likewise fled the field of actual conflicts into a doctrine of eternal antisemitism governing the relations of Jews and Gentiles everywhere and always, and mainly responsible for the survival of the Jewish people. Thus both sides relieved themselves of the arduous task of fighting antisemitism on its own grounds, which were political, and even of the unpleasant task of analyzing its true causes. The assimilationists began their futile writing of a ponderous library of refutations which nobody ever read—except perhaps the Zionists. For they obviously accepted the validity of the utterly stupid reasoning, since they concluded from that kind of propaganda that all reasoning was entirely futile—a surprising conclusion if one considers the level of the “reasons.”

But now the way was free for talking in general terms and developing the respective *isms*. It was a struggle in which political issues were touched on only when the Zionists charged that the solution of the Jewish problem through assimilation meant suicide. This was true enough; but it was something most of the assimilationists neither wished nor dared to refute. They were frightened by Gentile critics all unaware that they too, the very assimilationists, wanted Jewish survival and were actually engaged in Jewish politics. On the other side, when the assimilationists talked about the danger of double loyalty and the impossibility of being German or French patriots and Zionists at the same time, they rudely raised a problem which for obvious reasons the Zionists did not care to talk of frankly.

V

Sad as it must be for every believer in government of the people, by the people and for the people, the fact is that a political history of Zionism could easily pass over the genuine national revolutionary movement which sprang from the Jewish masses. The political history of Zionism must be concerned mainly with those elements that did not come of the people: it must be concerned with men who believed in government by the people as little as did Theodor Herzl whom they followed—although it is true that they all emphatically wished to do something for the people. They had the advantage of a general European education and outlook, together with some knowledge of how to approach and deal with governments. They called themselves political Zionists, which indicated clearly their special and one-sided interest in foreign politics. They were confronted by the similarly one-sided concern with domestic politics on the part of the east-European adherents of the movement.

It was only after Herzl’s death in 1904, and because of the failure of all of Herzl’s ventures into high diplomacy, that they became converts to

Weizmann's "practical" Zionism, which preached practical achievements in Palestine as the basis for political success. This approach, however, was to meet with as little actual success. In the absence of a political guarantee (Herzl's famous Charter) and in the presence of the hostile Turkish administration, very few Jews could be induced to settle in Palestine prior to the Balfour Declaration in 1917. This Declaration was not issued, nor was it ever pretended to have been issued, because of practical achievements in Palestine. The practical Zionists, therefore, became "General Zionists," this term designating their ideological creed as opposed to the philosophy of assimilation.

For the most part interested in the relationship between the movement and the Great Powers, and in the propaganda results among a few outstanding personalities, the General Zionists were sufficiently unprejudiced, despite their bourgeois origin, to leave to their eastern brethren—those who actually did go to Palestine—a completely free hand with their experiments in social and economic life, insisting only on an equal chance for capitalist enterprise and investment. Both groups could work together rather smoothly just because of their entirely different outlooks. However, the result of this cooperation, in the actual upbuilding of Palestine, was a most paradoxical conglomerate of radical approach and revolutionary social reforms domestically, with outmoded and outright reactionary political lines in the field of foreign politics, that is, the relationship of the Jews to other nations and peoples.

The men who now assumed Zionist leadership were no less the moral aristocracy of western Jewry than were the founders of the *Kibbutz* and *Chalutz* movement of eastern Jewry. They constituted the best part of that new Jewish intelligentsia in central Europe, whose worst representatives were to be found in the offices of Ullstein and Mosse in Berlin or the *Neue Freie Presse* in Vienna. It was not their fault they were not of the people, for in these western and central European countries a "Jewish people" simply did not exist. Nor can they be blamed for not believing in government by the people, since the central European countries of their birth and upbringing had no political traditions of this kind. Those countries had left their Jewries in a social, if not economic, vacuum wherein they knew the Gentiles of their environment as little as they knew their fellow-Jews who lived far away, beyond the borders of their own native lands. It was their moral courage, their feeling for personal honor and cleanliness in life, which more than anything else served to propagate among them the new solution of the Jewish question. With their stressing of personal salvation from a life of hollow pretenses—something more important to them than the upbuilding of Palestine (where, after all, this type of European Jew appeared in numbers only after the catastrophe of 1933)—they resembled more than they could have known their eastern

brethren. Zionism was for the former what socialism had been for the latter; and in both cases Palestine functioned as an ideal place, out of the bleak world, where one might realize one's ideals and find a personal solution for political and social conflicts. It was, indeed, this very factor of personalizing political problems which led western Zionism to an enthusiastic acceptance of the *chaluziuth* ideal of the east. With the difference, however, that this ideal did not actually play any considerable part in the west until the arrival of Hitler. True, it was preached in the Zionist youth movement; but that movement shared with the other German pre-Hitler youth movements the fate that its ideals became only a source of tender recollections in adult life.

Western Zionists, then, were a fraction of those sons of wealthy Jewish bourgeois families who could afford to see their children through the university. Simply by so doing, and without giving the matter much thought, the wealthy Jews, mainly of Germany and Austria-Hungary, created an entirely new class in Jewish life—modern intellectuals given to the liberal professions, to art and science, without either spiritual or ideological link to Judaism. They—"das moderne gebildete, dem Ghetto entwachsene, des Schachers entwoehnte Judentum" (Herzl)—had to find both their daily bread and their self-respect outside of Jewish society—"ihr Brod und ihr bisschen Ehre ausserhalb des juedischen Schachers" (Herzl); and they alone were exposed without shelter and defense to the new Jew-hatred at the turn of the century. If they did not wish to sink to the moral and intellectual level of the Ullstein-Mosse clique, nor to establish themselves as "*freischwebende Intellektuelle*" (Karl Mannheim), they had perforce to go back to Jewish life and find a place for themselves in the midst of their own people.

This, however, quickly proved almost as difficult as complete assimilation with self-respect. For in "the house of their fathers" (Herzl) there was no place for them. The Jewish classes, like Jewish masses, clung together socially, linked by the never-ending chain of family and business connections. Those relationships were further solidified through the charity organization to which every member of the community, though he may never in his life have entered a synagogue, gave his appropriate share. Charity, this leftover of the once autonomous Jewish communities, had proved through two hundred years strong enough to prevent the destruction of the interrelationship of the Jewish people throughout the world. As family and business connections sufficed to keep the Jewry of each country a closely knit social body, Jewish charity had come very near to organize world-Jewry into a curious sort of body politic.

However, the new Jewish intellectuals had not been provided for in this undirected but nevertheless efficiently functioning organization. True, if they

were lawyers and doctors—the heart’s desire of all Jewish parents—they still needed Jewish social connections for their living. But for those who chose the professions of writers and journalists, of artists or scientists, of teachers or state-employees—as happened frequently—there was no need of Jewish social connections, and Jewish life had no need of those intellectuals. Socially, they were outside the pale. But if they did not fit locally into the social body of emancipated Jewry, still less did they fit into the body politic of charitable world-Jewry. For in this great and truly international organization one had to be either on the receiving or on the giving end in order to be accounted for as a Jew. Now, since these intellectuals were too poor to be philanthropists and too rich to become *schmorrers*, charity took as little interest in them as they could take in charity. Thus were the intellectuals excluded from the only practical way in which Western Jewry proved its solidarity with the Jewish people. The intellectuals didn’t belong, either socially or politically; there was no place for them in the house of their fathers. To remain Jews at all they had to build a new house.

Zionism, hence, was destined primarily, in western and central Europe, to offer a solution to these men who were more assimilated than any other class of Jewry and certainly more imbued with European education and cultural values than their opponents. Precisely because they were assimilated enough to understand the structure of the modern national state they realized the political actuality of antisemitism even if they failed to analyze it, and they wanted the same body politic for the Jewish people. The hollow word-struggles between Zionism and assimilationism has completely distorted the simple fact that the Zionists, in a sense, were the only ones who sincerely wanted assimilation, namely, “normalization” of the people (“to be a people like all other peoples”), whereas the assimilationists wanted the Jewish people to retain their unique position.

In sharp contrast to their eastern comrades, these western Zionists were no revolutionaries at all; they neither criticized nor rebelled against the social and political conditions of their time; on the contrary, they wanted only to establish the same set of conditions for their own people. Herzl dreamt of a kind of huge transfer enterprise by which “the people without a country” was to be transported into “the country without a people”; but the people themselves were to him poor, uneducated and irresponsible masses (an “ignorant child,” as Bernard Lazare put it in his critique of Herzl), which had to be led and governed from above. Of a real popular movement Herzl spoke but once—when he wanted to frighten the Rothschilds and other philanthropists into supporting him.

VI

During the decade after Herzl’s death until the outbreak of the First World War, Zionism was without any major political success. In this period Zionism developed more and more into an expression of personal affirmation, so to speak—into a type of almost religious confession which helped a man go straight and keep his head high; Zionism lost more and more of that little political impetus it still had until Herzl’s death. Instead, and mostly by means of an entirely academic and theoretical critique of Jewish opposition within, it unfolded all the “ideological” elements of Herzl’s writings. For the time, during the long stagnation years of the movement, these tenets had but little actual practical significance; anyway they avoided every serious issue. But if ever a fundamentally unpolitical attitude had political consequences, this one had.

First, and for the personal problems of Jewish intellectuals most important of all, was the question of antisemitism. This phenomenon—though extensively described, especially in its rather harmless social aspects—was never analyzed on its political grounds and in context with the general political situation of the time. It was explained as the natural reaction of one people against another, as though they were two natural substances destined by some mysterious natural law to antagonize each other to eternity.

This appraisal of antisemitism—as an eternal phenomenon attending inevitably the course of Jewish history through all the Diaspora countries—sometimes took to more rational forms, as when interpreted with the categories of the national state. Then antisemitism could appear as “a feeling of peripheral tension” comparable to “the tension between nations ... at the national boundaries where the constant human contacts of national elements at variance with each other tend constantly to renew the international conflict” (Kurt Blumenfeld). But even this most advanced interpretation, in which at least one aspect of Jew-hatred is correctly attributed to the national organization of peoples, still presupposes the eternity of antisemitism in an eternal world of nations and, moreover, denies the Jewish part of responsibility for existing conditions. Thereby it not only cuts off Jewish history from European history and even from the rest of mankind; it ignores the role that European Jewry played in the construction and functioning of the national state; and thus it is reduced to the assumption, as arbitrary as it is absurd, that every Gentile living with Jews must become a conscious or subconscious Jew-hater.

This Zionist attitude toward antisemitism—which was held to be sound precisely because it was irrational, and therefore explained something

unexplainable and avoided explaining what could be explained—led to a very dangerous misappraisal of political conditions in each country. Antisemitic parties and movements were taken at their face value, were considered genuinely representative of the whole nation, and hence not worthwhile fighting against. And since the Jewish people, still in the manner of antique nations with their own ancient traditions, divided the whole of mankind between themselves and the foreigners, the Jews and the *Goyim*—as the Greeks divided the world between Greeks and *barbaroi*—they were only too willing to accept an unpolitical and unhistorical explanation of the hostility against them. In their estimate of antisemitism Zionists could simply fall back upon this Jewish tradition; they found little serious opposition whether they expressed themselves in half-mystical or, following the fashions of the time, in half-scientific terms, as long as they appealed to this basic Jewish attitude. They fortified the dangerous, time-honored, deep-seated distrust of Jews for Gentiles.

Not less dangerous and quite in accord with this general trend was the sole new piece of historical philosophy which the Zionists contributed out of their own new experiences; “A nation is a group of people ... held together by a common enemy” (Herzl)—an absurd doctrine containing only this bit of truth: that many Zionists had, indeed, been convinced they were Jews by the enemies of the Jewish people. Thereupon these Zionists concluded that without antisemitism the Jewish people would not have survived in the countries of the Diaspora; and hence they were opposed to any attempt to liquidate antisemitism on a large scale. On the contrary, they declared that our foes, the antisemites, “will be our most reliable friends, the antisemitic countries our allies” (Herzl). The result could only be, of course, an utter confusion in which nobody could distinguish between friend and foe, in which the foe became the friend and the friend the hidden, and therefore all the more dangerous, enemy.

Even before the Zionist Organization descended into the shameful position of joining the part of Jewry that willingly treated with its enemy, this doctrine had several not unimportant consequences.

One immediate consequence was that it made superfluous a political understanding of the part Jewish plutocracy played within the framework of national states, and its effects on the life of the Jewish people. The new Zionist definition of a nation as a group of people held together by a common enemy strengthened the general Jewish feeling that “we are all in the same boat”—which simply did not correspond to the realities. Hence the merely sporadic Zionist attacks on the Jewish powers-that-be remained harmless, confined to a few bitter remarks about charity, which Herzl had called

the “machinery to suppress the outcries.” Even such tame criticisms were silenced after 1929, the year of the formation of the Jewish Agency, when the Zionist Organization traded the hope of a larger income (which was not to be realized) against the independence of the only large Jewish organization that had ever been beyond the control of Jewish plutocracy and had ever dared to criticize the Jewish notables. In that year the true revolutionary possibilities of Zionism for Jewish life were definitely sacrificed.

In the second place, the new doctrine of nationalism influenced very strongly the Zionists’ attitude toward the Soviet attempt to liquidate antisemitism without liquidating the Jews. This, it was asserted, could in the long and even short run lead only to the disappearance of Russian Jewry. It is true that today little is left of their hostility, although it still plays a role, if only a subordinate one, in the minds of that minority who are wholly tied up with Weizmann and, consequently, hostile to any influence in the Near East besides the British. We witness, rather, a new sympathy for Soviet Russia among Zionists throughout the world. So far it has remained mostly sentimental, ready to admire everything Russian; but, out of disillusionment with Great Britain’s promises, there has also arisen a widespread, though politically still inarticulate, hope to see the Soviet Union take an active part in the future of the Near East. The belief in an unalterable friendship of the USSR for the Jews would, of course, be no less naive than the former belief in England. What every political and national movement in our times should give its utmost attention to with respect to Russia—namely, its entirely new and successful approach to nationality conflicts, its new form of organizing different peoples on the basis of national equality—has been neglected by friends and foes alike.

A third political consequence of a fundamentally unpolitical attitude was the place which Palestine itself was assigned in the philosophy of Zionism. Its clearest expression may be found in Weizmann’s dictum during the ‘thirties that “the upbuilding of Palestine is our answer to antisemitism”—the absurdity of which was to be shown only a few years later, when Rommel’s army threatened Palestine Jewry with exactly the same fate as in European countries. Since antisemitism was taken to be a natural corollary of nationalism, it could not be fomented, it was supposed, against that part of world-Jewry established as a nation. In other words, Palestine was conceived as the place, the only place, where Jews could escape from Jew-hatred. There, in Palestine, they would be safe from their enemies: nay, their very enemies would miraculously change into their friends.

At the core of this hope which—were ideologies not stronger for some people than realities—should by now be blown to bits, we find the old

mentality of enslaved peoples, the belief that it does not pay to fight back, that one must dodge and escape in order to survive. How deep-rooted is this conviction could be seen during the first years of the war, when only through the pressure of Jews throughout the world was the Zionist Organization driven to ask for a Jewish Army—which, indeed, was the only important issue in a war against Hitler. Weizmann, however, always refused to make this a major political issue, spoke deprecatingly of a “so-called Jewish Army,” and, after five years of war, accepted the “Jewish Brigade,” which another spokesman of the Jewish Agency hastened to diminish in importance. The whole matter apparently was, for them, a question of prestige for Palestine Jewry. That an early distinct and demonstrable participation of Jews *as Jews* in this war would have been the decisive way to prevent the antisemitic slogan which, even before victory was won, already represented Jews as its parasites, apparently never entered their heads.

Ideologically more important was the fact that, by their interpretation of Palestine in the future life of the Jewish people, the Zionists shut themselves off from the destiny of the Jews all over the world. Their doctrine of the inevitable decline of Jewish life in the *Galuth*, the Diaspora the world over, made it easy for the conscience of the *Yishuv*, the settlement in Palestine, to develop its attitude of aloofness. Palestine Jewry, instead of making itself the political vanguard of the whole Jewish people, developed a spirit of self-centeredness, though its preoccupation with its own affairs was veiled by its readiness to welcome refugees who would help it become a stronger factor in Palestine. While the assimilated Jewries of the Western world had pretended to ignore the strong ties which had always connected Leningrad with Warsaw, and Warsaw with Berlin, and both with Paris and London, and all together with New York, and had presumed unique unrelated conditions for each country, Zionism followed suit by pretending special conditions for Palestine, unrelated to Jewish destinies elsewhere, while at the same time generalizing adverse conditions for Jews everywhere else in the world.

This pessimism for Jewish life in any other political form, and in any other territory of the earth, seems to be unaffected in the Zionist mind by the very size of Palestine, a small country that at best can give homestead to several millions of the Jewish people but never to all the millions of Jews still remaining throughout the world. Hence only two political solutions could be envisioned. Zionists used to argue that “only the remnant will return,” the best, the only ones worth saving; let us establish ourselves as the élite of the Jewish people and we shall be the only surviving Jews in the end; all that matters is our survival; let charity take care of the pressing needs of the masses, we shall not interfere; we are interested in the future of a nation, not in the fate of individuals.

But in the face of the terrible catastrophe in Europe, there are few Zionists left who would stick to their former doctrine of the necessary perishing of *Galuth*-Jewry. Therefore, the alternative solution of the problem, once preached only by Revisionists, has won the day. Now they talk the language of all extreme nationalists. To the puzzling question of how Zionism can serve as an answer to antisemitism for the Jews who remain in the Diaspora they cheerfully assert, “Pan-Semitism is the best answer to anti-Semitism.”

VII

It was during and after the First World War that the Zionist attitude toward the Great Powers took definite shape. There had already been, however, almost since the seizure of political leadership by the western branch in the ‘nineties, significant signs indicating the way the new national movement was to choose for the realization of its aims. It is well known how Herzl himself started negotiations with Governments, appealing invariably to their interest in getting rid of the Jewish question through the emigration of their Jews. It is known, too, how he invariably failed, and for a simple reason: he was the only one who took the anti-Jewish agitation at its face value. Precisely those Governments that indulged most in Jew-baiting were the least prepared to take his proposal seriously; they could scarcely understand a man who insisted on the spontaneity of a movement which they themselves had stirred up.

Even more significant for the future were Herzl’s negotiations with the Turkish Government. The Turkish Empire was one of those nationality-states based on oppression which were already doomed and, indeed, disappeared during the First World War. Yet the Turkish Empire was to be interested in Jewish settlements on this premise: with the Jews a new and completely loyal factor would be introduced into the Near East; and a new loyal element would certainly help to keep down the greatest of the menaces that threatened the Imperial Government from all sides, the menace of an Arab uprising. Therefore when Herzl, during these negotiations, received cables from students of various oppressed nationalities protesting against agreements with a Government which had just slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Armenians, he only observed: “This will be useful for me with the Sultan.”

It was in this same spirit, following what had already become a tradition, that as late as 1913 the Zionist leaders, in their reawakened hope to sway the Sultan to their side, broke off negotiations with the Arabs. Whereupon one of the Arab leaders shrewdly remarked “*Gardez-vous bien, Messieurs les Sionistes, un gouvernement passe, mats un peuple reste.*”

Those who are dismayed at the spectacle of a national movement that, starting out with such an idealistic élan, sold out at the very first moment to the powers-that-be—that felt no solidarity with other oppressed peoples whose cause, though historically otherwise conditioned, was essentially the same—that endeavored even in the morning-dream of freedom and justice to compromise with the most evil forces of our time by taking advantage of imperialistic interests—those who are dismayed should in fairness consider how exceptionally difficult the conditions were for the Jews who, in contrast to other peoples, did not even possess the territory from which to start their fight for freedom. The alternative to the road that Herzl marked out, and Weizmann followed through to the bitter end, would have been to organize the Jewish people in order to negotiate on the basis of a great revolutionary movement. This would have meant an alliance with all progressive forces in Europe; it would certainly have involved great risks. The only man within the Zionist Organization known to have ever considered this way was the great French Zionist Bernard Lazare, the friend of Charles Péguy—and he had to resign from the Organization at the early date of 1899. From then on no responsible Zionist trusted the Jewish people for the necessary political strength of will to achieve freedom instead of being transported to freedom; thus no official Zionist leader dared to side with the revolutionary forces in Europe.

Instead, the Zionists went on seeking the protection of the Great Powers, trying to trade it against possible services. They realized that what they could offer must be in terms of the interests of the Governments. In the consequent subservience to British policy, which is associated with Weizmann's unswerving loyalty to the cause of the British Empire in the Near East, the Zionists were abetted by sheer ignorance of the new imperialist forces at work. Though these forces had been active ever since the 'eighties of the last century, they had begun to show clearly in all their intricacies only at the beginning of the twentieth century. Since theirs was a national movement, the Zionists could think only in national terms, seemingly unaware of the fact that imperialism was a nation-destroying force, and therefore, for a small people, it was near suicide to attempt to become its allies or its agents. Nor have they even yet realized that protection by these interests supports a people as the rope supports for hanging. When challenged by opponents the Zionists would answer that British national interests and Jewish national interests happen to be identical and therefore this is a case not of protection but of alliance. It is rather hard to see what national, and not imperial, interests England could possibly have in the Near East; though it has never been hard to foretell that, till we achieve the bliss of messianic times, an alliance between a lion and a lamb can have disastrous consequences for the lamb.

Opposition from within the ranks of Zionists themselves never gained enough numerical strength to offset the official political line; moreover, any such opposition always showed itself hesitant in action, uneasy and weak in argument as though it were insecure in thought as well as in conscience. Such leftist groups as *Hashomer Hazair*—which have a radical program for world politics, so radical that, at the beginning of this war, they even opposed it on the ground of its being an “imperialist war”—express themselves only by abstention when it comes to vital questions of Palestine foreign policy. In other words, they sometimes, in spite of the undoubted personal integrity of most of their members, give the all too familiar impression of leftist groups of other countries, that hide under official protests their secret relief at having the majority parties do the dirty work for them.

This uneasiness of conscience, widespread among other leftist groups and explainable by the general bankruptcy of socialism, is among Zionists older than the general conditions and points to other and more special reasons. Since the days of Borochof, whose adherents can still be found in the small sectarian group of Poale-Zion, the leftist Zionists never thought of developing any answer of their own to the national question: they simply added official Zionism to their socialism. This addition hasn't made for an amalgam, since it claims socialism for domestic and nationalist Zionism for foreign affairs. The result is the existing situation between Jews and Arabs.

In fact, the uneasiness of conscience dates from the days of the surprising discovery that within the very domestic field, in the upbuilding of Palestine, there were factors present of foreign policy—by the existence of “a foreign people.” Since that time Jewish Labor has fought against Arab Labor under the pretense of class-struggle against the Jewish planters, who certainly did employ Arabs for capitalist reasons. During this fight—which more than anything else, up to 1936, poisoned the Palestine atmosphere—no attention was paid to the economic conditions of the Arabs who, through the introduction of Jewish capital and labor and the industrialization of the country, found themselves changed overnight into potential proletarians, without much chance to find the corresponding work positions. Instead, Zionist Labor repeated the true but wholly inadequate arguments regarding the feudal character of Arab society, the progressive character of capitalism, and the general rise of the Palestine standard of life shared in by the Arabs. How blind people can become if their real or supposed interests are at stake is shown by the preposterous slogan they used: although Jewish Labor fought as much for its economic position as for its national aim, the cry was always for *Avodah Ivrit* (“Jewish Labor”); and one had to peer behind the scenes to detect that their chief menace was not simply Arab labor but, more actually,

avodah zolah (cheap labor), represented, it is true, by the unorganized backward Arab worker.

In the resulting pickets of Jewish workers against Arab workers the leftist groups, most important among them *Hashomer Hazair*, did not directly participate; but they did little else: they remained abstentionists. The consequent local troubles, the latent internal war which has been going on in Palestine since the early 'twenties, interrupted by more and more frequent outbreaks, in turn strengthened the attitude of official Zionism. The less able was Palestine Jewry to find allies among the neighbors, the more the Zionists had to look upon Great Britain as the great protecting power.

Outstanding among the reasons why Labor and left-wing groups consented to this policy is again the general outlook of Zionism they had accepted. With an eye only for "the unique character" of Jewish history, insisting on the unparalleled nature of Jewish political conditions which were held to be unrelated to any other factors in European history and politics, the Zionists had ideologically placed the center of the Jewish people's existence outside the pale of European peoples and outside the destiny of the European continent.

Among all the misconceptions harbored by the Zionist movement because it had been influenced so strongly by antisemitism, this false notion of the non-European character of the Jews has had probably the most far-reaching and the worst consequences. Not only did the Zionists break the necessary solidarity of European peoples—necessary not only for the weak but for the strong as well; incredibly, they would even deprive the Jews of the only historical and cultural homestead they possibly can have; for Palestine together with the whole Mediterranean basin has always belonged to the European continent, geographically, historically, culturally, if not at all times politically. Thus the Zionists would deprive the Jewish people of its just share in the roots and development of what we generally call Western culture. Indeed, the attempts were numerous to interpret Jewish history as the history of an Asiatic people that had been driven by misfortune into a foreign comity of nations and culture wherein, regarded as an eternal stranger, it could never feel at home. (The absurdity of this kind of argumentation could be proved by citing the example of the Hungarian people alone: the Hungarians were of Asiatic origin, but had always been accepted as members of the European family since they were christianized.) Yet no serious attempt was ever made to integrate the Jewish people into the pattern of Asiatic politics, for that could only mean an alliance with the national-revolutionary peoples of Asia and participation in their struggle against imperialism. In the official Zionist conception, it seems, the Jewish people is uprooted from its European back-

ground and left somehow in the air, while Palestine is a place in the moon where such footless aloofness may be realized.

Only in its Zionist variant has such a crazy isolationism gone to the extreme of escape from Europe altogether. But its underlying national philosophy is far more general; indeed, it has been the ideology of most central European national movements. It is nothing else than the uncritical acceptance of German-inspired nationalism. This holds a nation to be an eternal organic body, the product of inevitable natural growth of inherent qualities; and it explains peoples, not in terms of political organizations, but in terms of biological superhuman personalities. In this conception European history is split up into the stories of unrelated organic bodies, and the grand French idea of the sovereignty of the people is perverted into the nationalist claims to autarchical existence. Zionism, closely tied up with that tradition of nationalist thinking, never bothered much about sovereignty of the people, which is the prerequisite for the formation of a nation, but wanted from the beginning that utopian nationalist independence.

To such an independence, it was believed, the Jewish nation could arrive under the protecting wings of any great power strong enough to shelter its growth. Paradoxical as it may sound, it was precisely because of this nationalist misconception of the inherent independence of a nation that the Zionists ended by making the Jewish national emancipation entirely dependent upon the material interests of another nation.

The actual result was a return of the new movement to the traditional methods of *shtadlonus*, which the Zionists once had so bitterly despised and violently denounced. Now Zionists too knew no better place politically than the lobbies of the powerful, and no sounder basis for agreements than their good services as agents of foreign interests. It was in the interest of foreign powers that the so-called Weizmann-Feisal agreement was "allowed to pass into oblivion until 1936. It also stands to reason that British apprehension and compromise was behind the tacit abandonment." When in 1922 new Arab-Jewish negotiations took place, the British Ambassador in Rome was kept fully informed, with the result that the British asked a postponement until "the Mandate has been conferred"; the Jewish representative, Asher Saphir, held "little doubt that members of a certain political school took the view that it was not in the interest of the peaceful administration of Near and Middle Eastern territories that the two Semitic races ... should cooperate again on the platform of the recognition of Jewish rights in Palestine." From then onward Arab hostility has grown year by year; and Jewish dependence on British protection has become so desperate a need that one may well call it a curious case of voluntary unconditional surrender.

This, then, is the tradition to fall back upon in times of crisis and emergency like ours—these the political weapons with which to handle the new political situation of tomorrow—these the “ideological categories” to utilize the new experiences of the Jewish people. Up to now no new approaches, no new insights, no reformulation of Zionism or the demands of the Jewish people have been visible. And it is therefore only in the light of this past, with consideration of this present, that we can gauge the chances of the future.

One new factor, however, should be noted, although so far it has not brought about anything like a fundamental change. It is the tremendously increased importance of American Jewry and American Zionism within the World Zionist Organization. Never before has any Jewry of any country produced such a large number of members of the Zionist Organization, together with an even larger number of sympathizers. Indeed, the election planks of both the Democratic and Republican parties last year, the declarations of both President Roosevelt and Governor Dewey at election time, would seem to prove that the great majority of voting Jews in America are regarded as pro-Palestinians and that, so far as there is “a Jewish vote,” it is influenced by the program for Palestine to the same degree as the Polish vote is influenced by American foreign policy toward Poland and the Italian vote by events in Italy.

The Zionism of the American Jewish masses, however, differs remarkably from Zionism in the countries of the old continent. The men and women who are members of the Zionist Organization here would have been found in Europe in the so-called Pro-Palestine Committees. In those Committees were organized the people who held Palestine to be a good solution for oppressed and poor Jews, the best of all philanthropic enterprises, but who never considered Palestine to be a solution for their own problems, the very existence of which they were rather inclined to deny. At the same time, most of those who here in America call themselves non-Zionists also have a pronounced tendency towards this pro-Palestine view; at any rate, they take a much more positive and constructive attitude towards the Palestine enterprise, and for the rights of the Jewish people as a people, than did the “assimilants” in Europe.

The reason is to be found in the political structure of the United States, which is not a national state in the European sense of the word. A vital interest in Palestine as the homeland of the Jewish people is only natural, needs no excuses, in a country where so many national splinter groups show loyalty to their mother-countries. Indeed, a Jewish mother-country might thus rather

tend to “normalize” the situation of the Jews in America and be a good argument against political antisemitism.

However, this “normalization,” inherent in pro-Palestinism, would instantly be thrown into reverse if Zionism in the official sense of the term were to get hold of American Jews. Then they would have to start a really national movement, at least preach if not actually practice *chaluziuth* (pioneering and self-realization); they would have to insist in principle on *aliyah* (immigration to Zion) for every Zionist. In fact, Weizmann has recently called on American Jews to come and settle in Palestine. The old question of double loyalty would emerge again, in a more violent form than in any other country, because of the multi-national structure of the United States. Just because the American body politic can afford a far greater tolerance for community life of the numerous nationalities which all together form and determine the life of the American nation, this country could never permit one of these “splinter groups” to start a movement to take them away from the American continent. The argument once heard in European Zionist discussions that, after all, the European countries could get along very well without their Jews, whereas the Jewish people needs to reclaim its best sons, can never be valid here. On the contrary, it would set a dangerous precedent; it could easily serve to upset the balance of a community of peoples who need to get along with each other within the limits of the American constitution and on the territory of the American continent. It is for this reason—because of the acute menace of any outright national movement for the constitution of a nationality-state—that the Zionist movement has been so bitterly opposed in Soviet Russia.

Probably on account of this unique position of theirs in the World Zionist Organization, their vague if not explicit consciousness of it, American Zionists have not attempted to change the general ideological outlook. That is held to be good enough for European Jews who, after all, are the principal ones concerned. Instead, American Zionists have simply taken the pragmatic stand of the Palestine maximalists, and hope—together with them, though for more complex reasons—that American interest and power will at least equal the English influence in the Near East. This would, of course, be the best way to solve all their problems. If Palestine Jewry could be charged with a share in the care-taking of American interests in that part of the world, the famous dictum of Justice Brandeis would indeed come true: you would have to be a Zionist in order to be a perfect American patriot. And why should this good fortune not come to pass? Has it not been for more than twenty-five years the foundation of British Zionism that one had to be a good Zionist to be a good British patriot—that by supporting the Balfour Declaration one

supported the very Government whose loyal subject one was? We should be prepared to see a similar, though government-inspired, “Zionism” among Russian Jewry, if and when Soviet Russia takes up her old claims to Near Eastern politics. Should this happen, it will quickly enough become clear to what an extent Zionism has inherited the burden of assimilationist politics.

It must be admitted, however, that while the questions of present and future power politics in the Near East are very much in the foreground today, the political realities and experiences of the Jewish people are very much in the background, and they have only too little connection with the main movements in the world. But the new experiences of Jewry are as numerous as the fundamental changes in the world are tremendous; and the chief question to be addressed to Zionism is how well it is prepared to take both into consideration and act accordingly.

IX

The most important new experience of the Jewish people is again concerned with antisemitism. It is a matter of record that the Zionist outlook for the future of emancipated Jewry has always been dark, and Zionists occasionally boast of their foresight. Compared with the earthquake that has shaken the world in our time, those predictions read like prophecies of a storm in a teacup. The fierce outburst of popular hatred which Zionism predicted, and which fitted well with its general distrust of the peoples and overconfidence in Governments, did not take place. Rather, in a number of countries it was replaced by concerted Government action, which proved infinitely more detrimental than any popular outburst of Jew-hatred had ever been.

The point is that antisemitism, in Europe at least, has been discovered as the best political, and not merely demagogic, weapon of imperialism. Wherever politics are centered around the race-concept, the Jews will be in the center of hostility. It would lead us too far here to ask the reasons for this entirely new state of affairs. But one thing is certain. Inasmuch as imperialism—in sharp contrast to nationalism—does not think in terms of limited territories but, as the saying goes, “in continents,” Jews will be secure from this new type of antisemitism nowhere in the world, and certainly not in Palestine, one of the center-spots of imperialist interests. The question to be asked of Zionists today would therefore be what political stand they propose to take in view of a hostility that is far less concerned with dispersed Jewish individuals than with the people as a whole, no matter where it happens to live.

Another question to be asked of Zionists concerns national organization.

We have been seeing the catastrophic decline of the national-state system in our time. The new feeling, that has grown among European peoples since the first war, is that the national state is neither capable of protecting the existence of the nation nor able to guarantee the sovereignty of the people. The national border lines, once the very symbol of security against invasion as well as against an unwelcome overflow of foreigners, have proved to be no longer of any real avail. And while the old western nations were threatened either by lack of manpower and the resulting lag in industrialization, or by an influx of foreigners they could not assimilate, the eastern countries gave the best possible examples that the national state cannot exist with a mixed population.

For Jews, however, there is only too little reason for rejoicing in the decline of the national state and of nationalism. We cannot foretell the next steps of human history, but the alternatives seem to be clear. The resurgent problem of how to organize politically will be solved by adopting either the form of empires or the form of federations. The latter would give the Jewish people, together with other small peoples, a reasonably fair chance for survival. The former may not be possible without arousing imperialist passions as a substitute for outdated nationalism, once the motor to set men into action. Heaven help us if that comes to pass.

X

It is within this general framework of realities and possibilities that the Zionists propose to solve the Jewish question by means of a national state. Yet the essential characteristic of a national state, sovereignty, is not even hoped for. Suppose the Zionists had succeeded twenty-five years ago in securing Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth: what would have happened? We should have seen the Arabs turn against the Jews as the Slovaks turned against the Czechs in Czechoslovakia, and the Croats against the Serbs in Yugoslavia. And though not a single Arab were left in Palestine, the lack of real sovereignty amid Arab States, or peoples hostile to the Jewish State, would have had exactly the same result.

In other words, the slogan of a Jewish Commonwealth or a Jewish State actually means that Jews propose to establish themselves from the very beginning as a “sphere of interest” under the delusion of nationhood. Either a bi-national Palestine State or a Jewish Commonwealth might conceivably have been the outcome of a working agreement with Arabs and other Mediterranean peoples. But to think that by putting the cart before the horse one

can solve genuine conflicts between peoples is a fantastic assumption. The erection of a Jewish State within an imperial sphere of interest may look like a very nice solution to some Zionists, though to others as something desperate but unavoidable. In the long run, there is hardly any course imaginable that would be more dangerous, more in the style of an adventure. It is, indeed, very bad luck for a small people to be placed without any fault of its own in the territory of a “sphere of interest,” though one can hardly see where else it could be placed in the economically and politically shrunken world of today. But only folly could dictate a policy which trusts a distant imperial power for protection, while alienating the goodwill of neighbors. What then, one is prompted to ask, will be the future policy of Zionism with respect to big Powers, and what program have Zionists to offer for a solution of the Arab-Jewish conflict?

In this connection there is a further question. The most optimistic estimates hope for annual postwar emigration from Europe to Palestine of about 100,000 Jews, during at least ten years. Assuming this can be brought about, what is to happen to those who are not in the first groups of immigrants? What status are they to have in Europe? What kind of social, economic, political life will they lead? Zionists apparently hope for restoration of the *status quo ante*. In that case, will the restored Jews be willing to go to Palestine after, say, a period of five years which, even under the darkest circumstances, would mean a period of normalization? For if European Jews are not at once claimed as the prospective citizens of the new Jewish Commonwealth (to say nothing of the question of their admission), there will be the additional trouble of claiming majority rights in a country where Jews are very clearly a minority. Such a claim, on the other hand, if granted, would of course exclude a restoration of the *status quo* in Europe, and thus possibly create a not entirely harmless precedent. Even the most superficial restoration of the *status quo* in Europe would still make it well-nigh impossible to cloud the double-loyalty issue with the same meaningless generalities as in the good old days of the past.

The last question, then, which Zionism has so far succeeded in not answering, solemnly protesting that an answer would be “beneath its dignity,” is this old problem of the relationship between the proposed new State and the Diaspora. And this problem is by no means restricted to European Jewries.

It is a matter of record, ideologies notwithstanding, that up to now the *Yishuv* has been not only an asylum for persecuted Jews from some Diaspora countries. It is also a community which has had to be supported by other Diaspora Jewries. Without the power and resources of American Jewry, above all, the catastrophe in Europe would have been a deadly blow to Pales-

tine Jewry, politically as well as economically. If a Jewish Commonwealth will be obtained in the near future—with or without partition—it will be due to the political influence of American Jews. This would not need to affect their status of American citizenship if their “home land,” or “mother country,” were a politically autonomous entity in a normal sense, or if their help were likely to be only temporary. But if the Jewish Commonwealth is proclaimed against the will of the Arabs and without the support of the Mediterranean peoples, not only financial help but political support will be necessary for a long time to come. And that may turn out to be very troublesome indeed for Jews in this country, who after all have no power to direct the political destinies of the Near East. It may eventually be far more of a responsibility than today they imagine or tomorrow can make good.

These are some of the questions Zionism will face in the near, the very near future. To answer them sincerely, with political sense and responsibility, Zionism will have to reconsider its whole obsolete set of doctrines. It will not be easy either to save the Jews or to save Palestine in the twentieth century; that it can be done with categories and methods of the nineteenth century seems at the very most highly improbable. If Zionists persevere in retaining their sectarian ideology and continue with their short-sighted “realism,” they will have forfeited even the small chances that small peoples still have in this none too beautiful world of ours.

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