

Zionist army began to fight for positions in the Galut. The *Helsingfors* program¹⁶ in Russia and the formation of the Jewish National Party¹⁷ in Austria initiated a new trend in Zionist politics. Thus Zionism at last began to resolve the contradictions of its role. Instead of merely dreaming of saving Jewry at one stroke, Zionism began to strengthen Jewish Galut positions.

Zionism became synthesized and integrated. It encompassed every need of Jewry in the Galut and in Palestine: in the present, and in the future. But most Zionists were so psychologically unprepared for these tasks that only lately have they undertaken them in practice. Unfavorable circumstances undoubtedly contributed to this backwardness, particularly in Russia. Besides, the most important communal positions were already in the hands of the enemies of the *real* renaissance of the Jewish people. It was difficult for Zionists (if we exclude the Poale Zion who have long since understood the question and developed their tactics accordingly) to become accustomed to the thought that Zionism is facing a *struggle for power* within Jewish life.

In short, Zionism must take over all that has been usurped by its enemies to the detriment of the people. The positions that the anti-Zionist intelligentsia had held were not taken away from Zionism; they simply never were under Zionist control. It is noteworthy that where Zionism strives to penetrate into Jewish life, it is received warmly by the masses. It was so in the elections to the first and second Duma, and in Galicia a year or two earlier. To date Zionism has failed to utilize the potent sympathies for it that lie dormant in the Jewish masses.

On the threshold of a new era in universal and Jewish history, when the Jewish people faces new dangers and contemplates glorious visions, we pose these questions: How can we overcome the organizational weakness of Zionism? How can we develop the maximum of activity among the masses so sympathetic to the ideal of rebirth in our national home?

The answer is: *A national front against the anti-Zionist front.*

¹⁶ Helsingfors program—the national Galut program adopted by Russian Zionists in Helsingfors, which was then under Russian rule.

¹⁷ Jewish National Party refers to the Zionist elements in Galicia who appeared in the local political elections not as a Zionist, but as a national grouping, with a program of national rights.

NATIONALISM AND THE WORLD WAR¹

I.

IT IS absurd to contend that nationalism alone is responsible for the present World War. It is a grave injustice to burden the national impulse with sole responsibility for this bloodshed, for this holocaust of wild passions and sufferings, for this destruction of cultural treasures. Yet it is equally absurd to ignore the harmfulness of present-day reactionary chauvinism.

Only those whose minds are still dominated by the clichés of the old radical canonical code will seriously believe that it is nationalism that is guilty of bringing on the current catastrophe. It is argued that were there no nations and no nationalism, there would be no quarrels among the peoples and all would live in unity and peace. Therefore it is the sacred task of all radicals to vilify all nationalism and to strive for the abolition of all nations.

We might, if we wished, develop prettier notions. By following this logic of an intoned A. B. C. of Marx, we can reason that inasmuch as the instinct of self-preservation drives human beings to compete with one another, and in this process the weaker are exploited by the stronger, it is the sacred duty of every friend of mankind to fight this instinct of self-preservation.

The same profound scholastics have discovered an additional series of syllogisms against nationalism, syllogisms whose validity is on a par with the one cited above. It is argued that since national sentiments are easily exploited for militaristic purposes, therefore all national sentiments should be rooted out from the human heart. To be consistent, all sentiments of heroism, courage and

¹ Published in the *Yiddisher Kaempfer*, New York, 1916, under the title "Healthy and Diseased Socialism".

ambition—which are frequently exploited for militaristic purposes and may consequently be harmful—should also be done away with. Similarly, since militarism makes use of iron, steel and copper, bread and boots, these too should be branded as reactionary tools.

Some of the more profound philosophers of this type contend that territorial boundaries are responsible for all human conflicts. Nations may continue to exist as long as they do not possess definite, demarcated territories; boundaries should cease marring the face of the earth. When the boundaries of the various fatherlands disappear, there will be no more wars. A nation that possesses boundaries automatically desires to expand its frontiers and does not permit another nation to encroach upon its own. Proletarians have no fatherlands, but if they have one, their attachment to it must be uprooted.

To this day the Jews have been an exceptional case among all the nations of the world. All nations have boundaries, and fight and suffer for their fatherlands; only the Jews, faring better, have no land for which to suffer. The Jewish people can proudly claim, with Sholom Aleichem's *Motel Paisie*, the cantor's son, "How lucky I am to be an orphan". There you have an easy solution to the woes of the world: let all the nations become orphans; let there be indiscriminate assimilation; let all the nations of the world become landless like the Jews instead of letting the Jews become a normal people on its own land.

II.

Such was the philosophy which dominated pre-war Socialist thought, with the force of a holy creed given to Moses direct from Mount Sinai. The World War smashed those ideas, and turned those social cosmopolitans into social patriots.

They leaped from one absurdity to another, substituting one A. B. C. for another. They scrapped the A. B. C. of the class will snatch the heavenly fires for himself and for the Jewish people. patriotism. Karl Marx was replaced by the old Imperial Majesty and the verses of the Communist Manifesto were discarded for the

tune of "How Fine It Is To Be a Soldier".² Instead of "Proletarians of all lands, unite" the new slogan became "Citizens of all lands, to arms against one another!"

The case of Gustave Herve is a typical illustration of this change. He who had always been on the extreme opposition at all the congresses of the Socialist International, he who continually demanded that energetic steps be taken against militarism, that the general strike be used against war, that war declaration be met with barricades on the streets—he was the one to change the name of his militant organ *The Social War* to that of *The Victory*. At these International Socialist congresses, little heed was paid to him; his fiery speeches were received with condescending smiles. He was too logical and too consistently unilinear. But, theoretically it was impossible to dissent openly from his views. No one dared and no one could, for Herve was simply pushing the Socialists' absurdities to their logical conclusion.

Unlike his comrades Herve had the courage to be absurd. He maintained that "the proletarians have no fatherland"; for it is not our fatherland, but that of the rich and mighty, that of the capitalists. This was Herve's dictum, one befitting a courageous man who speaks out honestly. It was the Socialists who said, "True, we have no fatherland, yet we must defend the fatherland" who were illogical.

² Borochoff opposed America's entry to the World War. Of those Socialists who preached "the call to arms" in the name of "historic necessity", Borochoff wrote:

We know that when Marx said that Socialism will come with mathematical certainty and because of the "historic necessity", it was only a great wish of a great spirit; and his pupils who studied and popularized his wish were simply hypnotized by Marx's superb dialectics. . . . But since we have no historic or supernatural guarantees that "historic necessity" must come, it pains us all the more to see how the official priests and custodians of these ideals endeavor to belittle their own teachings. No matter what syllogisms we shall make use of, Socialism and militarism do not go hand and hand; for militarism is the opposite of Socialism. Militarism aims at letting loose man's instincts and enslaving humanity; Socialism aims at creating a humanity which will control its instincts. Militarism aims to convert nations into armies, men into soldiers; Socialism aims to free men and nations.

"Historic necessity" is but a wish. Socialism is abused when it is coupled with the spirit of war.

We must guard ourselves lest Socialism meet a similar fate as Christianity. Christianity, too, believed in the historical, supernatural guarantees and has patiently awaited the coming of the savior. In the meantime, Christianity gradually compromised until little remained of all of its precepts and ideals. We must beware lest Socialism become a new labor edition of Capitalism. (From the article, "New Socialism and Old Christianity", *Die Wahrheit*, Dec. 24, 1915.)

Herve lambasted this inconsistency, mocked this line of thought, and spent his days in jail for his anti-war propaganda, in a French jail on which was inscribed "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."

Today Herve is still the same open, brave, and courageous fighter. He does not conduct diplomatic negotiations with his own conscience. What his comrades murmur he promptly proclaims to the world.

On changing the name of his organ, he announced, "I can no more call my organ *The Social War*. For sixteen months this organ has openly and consistently advocated the sacredness of national unity, and is determined to continue this policy even after the war.

"I find it necessary to proclaim that we feel ourselves bound more closely to the clerical and reactionary French patriot who is willing to continue the war until Prussian militarism is destroyed, than to the so-called Socialists of Zimmerwald who are too willing to accept a 'German Peace'.

"We want no more social war, no more civil war. Today it is just war; tomorrow it must be unity among the French, so that justice and brotherhood may prevail at home and abroad."

Thus wrote Herve because he wished to be consistent, because his conduct was motivated by principles of sobriety, clarity, and intellectual honesty.

It was the same in Germany. If Socialists may become loyal to the Kaiser, His Majesty can also become a Marxist! We actually heard how "Comrade" Wilhelm II declared himself in love with Socialism . . .

III.

We have described the two maladies and have observed the symptoms. We have noted the heat generated by the chauvinists and the chauvinistic reaction among Socialists, which resulted from their earlier over-simplified anti-nationalist stand. One who today demands that all national boundaries be abolished, may tomorrow

shout hurrah to the Kaiser and find joy in the Imperial cannons. Such men cannot adhere to a healthy Socialism.

Marx was quite correct in saying that proletarians have no fatherland. In his day (70 years ago), healthy, progressive nationalism had hardly yet pecked its way out from its bourgeois liberal shell. But since then, progressive nationalism has become a unique historical phenomenon. Nationalism is not the reactionary product manufactured by petty bourgeois agitators; it is the instinct of self-preservation in nations, their healthy urge for self-determination.

It is thus understood by international Socialism. Mankind is divided into nations and classes. Nations existed before they were split into classes. Nations remain, while classes change. In the middle ages classes were different from what they are today. Then, the division was feudal—burghers and serfs; today the division is capitalist and proletarian. The nations underwent cultural modifications, but in essence they remained the same, like water changing into ice or steam, though retaining the same chemical elements.

This instinct of self-preservation in nations cannot be destroyed. It is rank diletantism and sheer nonsense to demand that nations lose their identity and shake off their loyalty to themselves.

The national instinct of self-preservation latent in the Socialist working class is a healthy nationalism. Only international Socialism based upon a realistic approach to nationalism can liberate sick humanity in this capitalistic era, and cure this society of the social and national conflicts.