

cute us so freely without being called to account. The uniqueness of the Jewish tragedy resides in the fact that Jews have no land of their own. For that reason Jewish interests and needs do not evoke respect.

Consider a tiny country like Montenegro which has a quarter of a million poor, semi-barbarian inhabitants without any influence whatsoever on world civilization. Then consider the Jewish nation, a cultured people of over thirteen million, with a thousand-year-old culture, a people of great capitalists and great revolutionists, of Rothschilds, Poznanskys, and Schiffs, and of Marxes, Lassalles, and Gershonys; a nation which has everywhere statesmen, journalists, artists, poets, teachers, and social leaders; a people of great capabilities, exerting a powerful influence on human civilization.

Whose interests will be taken into greater account—that of the thirteen million highly cultured Jews, or that of the quarter million Montenegrins? Whose voice will ring clearer in the international chorus of the movements for freedom? The answer is plain. The Montenegrins are in a better position to struggle for freedom than are the Jews. The interests of the Montenegrins will be taken into greater account for they do not depend upon assimilation and human progress, but on their own small forces and planned connections with the great powers of the world. This must also be the national political slogan of the Jewish worker: *organized national self-help. We must unite ourselves in the struggle for our own future.*

FACING REALITY<sup>1</sup>

ZIONISM IS facing reality, while the enemies of Zion are turning their backs on it.

What we predicted about fifteen years ago, and again at the beginning of the World War, has now become a fact. The question of a Jewish national autonomous homeland has been placed on the agenda of world politics. For the present, this is all—no more, but also no less.

This is unquestionably a victory for all Zionists. Were it not for the twenty years of intense Zionist propaganda, and were it not for the ten years of practical revolutionary work in Palestine, this question would never have been seriously considered and world diplomacy would never have been seriously interested in it. Only people with a naive conception of politics could imagine that this question would have been given any consideration if there were no great Zionist movement. As a matter of fact, the Zionist movement has played second fiddle to none in bringing about this result—not even to the British march on Palestine. It will be well for our friends to remember this and surely it will not be harmful for others to take note of it.

No question of rights is ever raised until those directly interested demand them. History proves that the Jews secured their rights only after they demanded them and only in that measure in which they fought for them. The English and Dutch Revolutions of the seventeenth century did not bring equal rights to Jews because the Jews did not ask for them. The first French Revolution did not bring full equality because the Jews made their demands too late. Before the Revolution of 1848, the

<sup>1</sup> Originally published in the American Poale Zion weekly, *Der Yiddisher Kaempfer*, May 4, 1917.

Jewish emancipation movement<sup>2</sup> was very weak; and, therefore, that revolution brought them but little relief.

For fifty years Jewish emancipation movements were active in Russia. Hence, the Russian Revolution immediately broke the chains of the Jewish people. The Russian Jews, however, were almost as instrumental in bringing about their freedom as was the Revolution. If our hearts are filled with gratitude to the Russian nation and the Russian working class for our emancipation, we must also give the same wholehearted thanks and recognition to the Jewish *Maskilim*<sup>3</sup> of the 60's and 70's, to the Jewish Socialist *Bund*, and to the Socialist-Zionists, through whose struggles the result was made possible.

I go further. Outside agents often have less influence in bringing about the emancipation of an oppressed people than does the conscious effort of the people itself. Emancipation is after all the concern of the enslaved, of the working class, and of all oppressed peoples. Civil rights for the Jews of Central Europe in 1867-1870 were not effected by a revolution, but came as the result of an active struggle for these rights and as a result of the strengthening of constitutional principles in Austria, Hungary, and Germany.

The factors responsible for the recognition of our civil rights, will also bring about the recognition of our national-political rights in Palestine and our autonomous national rights<sup>4</sup> in the Galut. To be sure, external political situations must be favorable;

<sup>2</sup> The movement in Jewish life which sought to obtain equal civil and political rights for Jews.

<sup>3</sup> The bearers of the *Haskala* movement. *Haskala*—literally enlightenment; in Jewish history, *Haskala* refers to the movement aiming at the breakdown of the Jewish Ghetto through the introduction of secular studies (Europeanization).

<sup>4</sup> More commonly known as "minority rights"—that is, the rights granted by a government to a minority population (which differs from the majority in race, language, or religion) to regulate its own communal, religious, and educational affairs. In the broadest sense minority rights imply self-government of the minority population, its language being recognized in the government courts and institutions. In the narrower sense, minority rights refer only to the cultural autonomy granted to the minority population. After the World War minority rights were incorporated in the treaties made with most of the East European countries. At present, minority rights remain in force only in Finland and Czechoslovakia. In Palestine the Jewish community enjoys *autonomy* rights. The Jewish Assembly (*Knesset Yisrael*) has the power to tax its constituents and to administrate all internal affairs (religious, educational, health, etc.) of the Jewish community.

but what we need primarily is a strong movement within Jewry to focus world-wide attention upon our interests—a movement which shall make use of every favorable political situation, and, whenever necessary, take advantage of every suitable alignment with other political forces.

From a political point of view, propaganda is less productive than action. *Create facts and more facts—that is the cornerstone of political strategy.* Facts are more convincing than phrases. Accomplishments are of greater influence than proclamations. Sacrifices are better propaganda than resolutions. The *Bund*, for example, played a more important role in the emancipation of Russian Jewry than all the apologetic literature on the question of Jewish rights produced during a period of fifty years. The *Bund* did not content itself with talk, but fought and made sacrifices. It created political facts, small and insignificant in their isolation, but in combination building up one great fact which has now borne fruit. (I refer, of course, only to the former *positive* achievements of the *Bund*.)

The same is true of Zionism. The practical colonization work in Palestine, with its experiences, its sacrifices, its inevitable mistakes, has created those political *facts* which have paved the way for our present status. No matter how small and weak the Jewish colonies might be, no matter how great the shortcomings in their system of colonization—they did more towards enlightening the Jewish nation than a thousand beautifully-worded programs and diplomatic negotiations. A fallen *Shomer*<sup>5</sup> plays a greater role in the realization of Zionism than all declarations.

*The best guarantee of Zionism lies not in a charter but in the Zionist movement.* The guarantee lies in the organization of the Zionists and Socialist Zionists. I said this fifteen years ago, and I will not cease reiterating it even now when the world is so carried away by current political and diplomatic events. I am not fearful about the disillusionment which may follow. The sole

<sup>5</sup> *Hashomer* was the name of a semi-professional organization of armed watchmen in pre-War Palestine which protected the Jewish colonies from thieves, plunderers and attackers. Its members were known as *Shomrim* (the Hebrew for guards; singular—*Shomer*). In modern Palestine the Jewish colonies designate members for guard duty as well. (See *The Terrorist and the Shomer*, p. 120.)

danger lies in confusion. One must not fail to see the trees because of the forest. The beautiful forest of political perspectives for Zionism can exist only because of its trees—the practical accomplishments of the Zionist movement.

Meanwhile, our goal has not been fully achieved. It is still in the process of realization. We must remember that Palestine is not yet ours. We still have no official promise that we are going to get Palestine. It is true, nevertheless, that Zionism has finally become a serious matter in world politics. This great victory for the Zionist movement must ultimately result in substantial dividends—even though we may suffer temporary setbacks. Ostensibly, the first Russian revolution (1905) was a fearful fiasco, but today it has borne fruit with a vengeance. That tragic revolution with its tragic disappointment dealt the true death-blow to Czarism. Likewise, our latest victory has dealt a death-blow to the Galut ideology and to reactionary anti-Zionism.

Anti-Zionism has been mortally wounded. The world may now see that anti-Zionism has no sound psychological or social foundation, that it is thoroughly decadent, that it represents reactionary and obscurantist issues in Jewish life. The enemies of Zion, who brazenly turn their backs on life and freedom, do not realize that life has answered them in kind by turning her back on them.

I repeat, the gain will be permanent even if the existing diplomatic negotiations bring no positive results.

Let us hope that world events will so shape themselves that they will contribute to the highest interests of mankind and the Jewish people. The World War is progressing from its imperialistic phase to its revolutionary phase. Let us hope that it will end with a thorough emancipation of all peoples.

It is almost certain that England will conquer Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Syria. It is almost certain, too, that revolutions will make an end of the Hohenzollerns, the Hapsburgs, and the chauvinism of the Young Turks. If so, a Jewish republic in Palestine is destined to come.

But, who knows? Is it not possible that the wheels of history will take a queer turn and Zionism, like other revolutionary hopes, will be disappointed; that the knights of Jewish assimilation and Galut opportunists, together with other reactionaries, will once again come out the "victors"? Yet, one positive fact will remain. Once placed on the table of world politics, the Palestine question will not be removed from there. The Zionist movement will, through its practical accomplishments, bring the problem to its ultimate solution—an assured and autonomous homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine.

Zionism is the only answer to the economic and historic needs of the Jewish people. It will be realized through the Zionist movement, through the Poale Zion, and through our labors and struggles.