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# **INTERNATIONALISM**

## **AND**

# **ZIONISM**

by

**S. A. MILLER, B.A., B.Sc.**

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## Internationalism and Zionism

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In many quarters it is now asserted, often by official Zionist spokesmen, that there is no longer any need to disseminate the Zionist ideal, that general Zionist propaganda (apart from fund-raising and organisation of forces) and the development on logical lines of the case for Zionism, is now a waste of time. On the one hand, it is said, Adolph Hitler has rendered unnecessary all the argument that the Jews are a national entity living under unnatural national conditions, for he has proved once and for all that the Gentile world will neither consider the Jews as part and parcel of themselves, nor take us in amity unto their bosom. And on the other hand the day-to-day growth of Palestine and the palpable fact that it is the only refuge for the persecuted of Naziism and the unfortunates in Poland and elsewhere, are there for all to see, the best disproof of the doubts, current till very recently, of the practicability of Zionist schemes, and the best proof of the fact that Zionism is the only hope for Jewry to-day.

But these facts only prove the overriding importance of Zionism, that it is the burning question of our day and will be the burning question for some generations to come. Zionism is not an indignity inflicted on us by the anti-semites, nor is it merely a philanthropic scheme to succour the down-trodden—it is the re-building and re-modelling of the Jewish nation. True it is that anti-semitism brings Zionism to the fore, that Hitler gave



an enormous impetus to Zionist work, that it was the Dreyfus affair that made Herzl reconsider his position on the Jewish question and so create the Zionist Organisation, that Pinsker's "Auto-Emancipation," the founding of *Chibat Zion* as a movement and the first pioneers to go to Palestine (the *Bilu*), all followed very closely on the Russian pogroms of 1881 and the anti-semitic May Laws of 1882. But the springs of Zionism do not find their source in the gentile, his opinions about and treatment of the Jew; they rise from the deepest part of the Jewish soul, and have flooded the whole of our history. It is essential, therefore, that we avoid letting anti-semitism argue our Zionism for us, and that we be prepared at all times to meet objections to Zionism, theoretical or practical, by understanding the ideals of Zionism from its own sources, leaving out of account for this purpose any recourse to the argument of anti-semitism. As for the fact that Zionism is becoming a reality, that the dreams characterised by "knowing" people, even up to two or three years ago, as "impossible," are fast becoming achievements, we must remember that we are still only in the very early stages of the realisation of our ideals, and that in spite of that we are already allowing ourselves to forget them. In these early stages every step delineates the future of the movement, and it is doubly essential to state and restate the ideals in view, so that a proper control can be kept of the situation, lest in the bustle of practical developments the ideals be set aside, a fear that is amply justified by many of the things happening in Palestine to-day.

### THE ANTI-NATIONALISTS' OBJECTION

We must be ready at all times to meet criticism and opposition, especially such as strikes at the very roots of things. There are still a great many Jews who stand out against Zionism for what seems to them to be a very good reason. It is interesting to understand their point of view. They say: "We desire universal brother-

hood. We want to do away with all nations, and with all that nationalism stands for, the hard and fast walls of differing language, customs and ideals, imperialist aims, and policies aiming at economic self-sufficiency, all the things that make for international hate and war. Why then try to establish yet another nation?"

But must one do away with nations in order to have peace? Is the best way of curing an illness to kill the patient? The relationships between individuals were once as chaotic as the present day relationships between states. The man who conquered his neighbour enslaved him, and took for himself all that his slave had possessed; in all disputes the stronger had his way, each man doing the right in his own eyes. Human nature has not changed since those days, the instinct to attain power over others has not vanished from the human soul. But society has largely eliminated violence from human life, and made it possible for everyone to live without fear of his neighbour, even if incapable of a personal defence against attack. Very few citizens find it necessary to keep, say, a machine gun handy, in case of violent attack on his home; there is no analogy to-day in our personal lives to the armaments in national life, yet it is not so many centuries since no man dare leave his home unarmed. This pacification has been brought about by the establishment of law and order, and of authorities such as parliament, police, magistrates and prisons, responsible for the creation and maintenance of this law and order.

So it would appear that the way to end lawlessness and violence among states is not to do away with the very existence of nations altogether, but to establish law and order in their relationships, and authorities powerful enough to maintain them, and to prevent all kinds of international strife, whether economic struggles, imperialist exploitation or open warfare.



## WHAT DOES NOT CAUSE WAR

It is never differences in language, customs or ideals that drive states to war or to set up economic barriers against each other's trade; language, art, ideals and customs are the spiritual and cultural content of nationalism, the elements without which nations would cease to exist. Factors that poison international relations are greed, oppression, lust for power, industrial and economic rivalries, and policies of national economies, all things without which nations could still exist, and indeed exist far more freely; in such factors lie the root causes of war. If a people is oppressed it may fight for its language and its laws, but that is because it is oppressed, not just because it is different from its oppressors. Where there is no oppression, then differences in language and tradition do not precipitate any sort of strife whatsoever. The relations between the French, German and Italian cantons in Switzerland are harmonious, in spite of differing language. In parts of Wales, English is practically never spoken, yet these parts of the country have no quarrel with the rest of the British Isles. But in Ireland the situation is different; centuries ago Anglo-Irish relations were poisoned, not by differing language, but by oppression and exploitation, and poisoned they remain to this day. In America the hatred between black and white is not due to differences in colour, but is a legacy of slavery. The oppressed hates the oppressor, and even more does the oppressor hate the oppressed, even long after the period of oppression is nominally over. Take the case of the Jews. We have been oppressed and did not succumb, and we are hated still.

Just as mere national differences do not cause wars, so national identity does not prevent them. Even apart from the innumerable revolutions and civil wars in history, international wars often found fragments of the same nation in opposing camps. The Poles' national existence was compulsorily stopped for over a century, yet this did not save them from the Great War; Poles fought for Austria and Germany and Poles fought for Russia.

Jews laid down their lives in all armies. Nor do nations line up according to similarity of stock or language; were not the two Teutonic races, English and German, at each other's throats, while England allied itself with Japan, and Germany with Turkey? If national differences were the cause of war, then nations who oppose one another in one war, would be unable to fight side by side in the next. Yet England and France, continually at war with each other in the eighteenth century, have since always fought side by side, yet their languages and traditions are no more alike now than they were then. It is the STATE that wages war, not the NATION; nation and state are not synonymous terms. State interests, the bones of contention in international strife, are not the national interests, but the material interests of the class or section of the nation that holds the ruling power.

Internationalism means a harmonious code of relationship between nations. Harmony is the well-balanced relation of differing parts, not the identity of all parts. By making all nations identical, by "doing away" with nations (if such a process were even theoretically possible), only monotony would result, not harmony. Is the continuous repetition of the same musical note, harmony of sound? Is a surface uniformly painted with the same colour, a harmonious picture? The desire to have mankind functioning harmoniously as just one complete unit is the basis of internationalism, but that does not involve the destruction of national entities. A unit is not necessarily internally homogeneous, especially so an organic unit. The various portions of the human body differ entirely among themselves, yet the body is one unit, and if any organ or member does not function properly, the whole body is diseased as the consequence. Just because humanity is in effect just one unit, nationalism will never be safe until we get true internationalism. Only under conditions of liberty, peace and goodwill between all mankind, can the creative qualities of nationalism develop wholesomely, and art, language, literature, music, science, etc., flourish properly.



## IMPERIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

Why then has nationalism acquired such an evil reputation in progressive circles? Because we call something nationalism which is not nationalism, but just its worst disease. That is imperialism. The fact that one nation should rob another of its land, its people, its self-government, its resources, and impose upon it by force of arms, an alien administration, alien settlers, an alien language, an alien mode of life, is still regarded as a natural outcome of national aspirations. It is only after innumerable such wars, from the earliest history down to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, that public opinion has decided that this sort of action is ethically wrong, and some attempt been made to stop Italy conquering Ethiopia—but even then no Power has denied Italy's "right to expansion". . . .

Imperialism may appear to be a natural and instinctive result of nationalism. But robbery, murder and violence are apparently natural expressions of self-esteem; yet they have been checked and submerged by the growth of communal civilised life, and where they still crop up are dealt with by the judicial and punitive authorities. Imperialism is the very denial of nationalism; a nation that seeks to "civilise" the nations it conquers is seeking to model the world in its own mould, trying to force its own brand of civilisation on peoples with a different trend of development, different in colour, race, customs, environment, history, mode of life, social structure and many other things, the "civilising" government being unconcerned with the greatest joint welfare, but merely with safeguarding its own interests. One can then expect tyranny and injustice, and finally rebellion. More than that, the conquering nation loses its own national characteristics, a phenomenon often observed in history, for imperialism carries within itself the seeds of its own punishment. To take but one example of this, how much of the spirit of the early patrician Roman republic was left in the later dissolute Empire, a hybrid indeterminate structure of oriental

despotism, Greek culture and the Christian religion that had been adapted from Judaism?

Internationalism, on the other hand, is the sublimation of nationalism. For the idealistic basis for internationalism is easy to find. An authority representative of all nations would run all matters that concern the world as a whole, having as its aim the greatest mutual benefit. Then each nation, large or small, powerful or weak, could manage its own local concerns (so long as they were just local concerns), perfectly free from the interference or dread of interference of its more powerful brothers. Just as every county, city, urban or rural district, has its own local government for local matters. If such a central world authority had to divide the world from scratch into administrative areas, these would follow the lines of national divisions; not necessarily always that of existing state boundaries, certainly not that of "colonial" empire boundaries, but definitively along national lines of some sort. For nations are natural groupings and their lands are natural units.

A belief in the principles of internationalism does not invoke disloyalty to the nation. For the most bigoted national patriot cannot object to people showing interest in the dialect, customs and welfare of their country, town or village, nor desire the country to be uniformly homogenised; local differences are essential features of the country. In the same way the most convinced internationalist has no right to object to the desire to preserve and develop national cultural and social life, demanding only that harmony be maintained with the rest of the world. On the other hand, a vital interest in national concerns does not necessarily involve the repudiation of internationalist ideals, just as a local interest in the affairs of London, of Lancashire or of John o' Groats does not mean treachery to the British Government.

This analogy between local patriotism and nationalism on the one hand, and nationalism and internationalism on the other, is perfectly justified, for it is a truism that the nations to-day are as closely concerned in one



another's welfare, as closely bound up together, as the various parts of one country. Many states are attempting to shut their eyes to this fact, and in so doing are aggravating the situation. Not only are these close ties apparent in the spheres of economic life, but they are equally strong in national cultural life. Each nation has an interest in the freedom of every other. We love the good, the true and the beautiful in all nations. However much we abhor Jew-baiting Germany, and the anti-democratic terroristic methods and crazy ideology of Naziism, we should remember that we have no quarrel with the art and music, the science and philosophy of Germany. Art is not a product confined to any one nation, it is a universal gift. Consider any art you know, the so-called "schools" of painting, music, architecture or literature. They represent some particular period of national life. Artists are, it is true, creative, but they are expressive rather than original. The great man reflects the soul, the will of his people; he is supremely normal, unusual only in his sensitiveness and in his power of expression and portrayal in his particular medium. And what truly expresses the soul of a people will appeal to all peoples. Great art is the bond between all nations; it is national in its expression and universal in its appeal.

### INTERNATIONALISM AND JEWISH IDEALS

These observations on internationalism and true nationalism have very definite connections with Zionism. This outlook on nationalism is the rock on which Zionism is built, and is as old as Judaism itself. Over two thousand years ago our prophets preached the Society of Nations. "In the end of the days," declaimed Isaiah, "He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many peoples, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall learn the art of war any more." Here is no vision of the end of nations, of all nations disappearing into one. "All the

nations shall walk in the way of the Lord," that is, obey international authority and law, just as the Bible describes the peace-loving citizen as "walking in the way of the Lord." "The kid and the tiger shall lie down together," not with the kid inside the tiger, nor yet with the tiger metamorphosed into another kid. Each is to retain its own identity, except that the tiger is to conquer its rapacious appetite. To the prophets of Israel, living in a period when international strife seemed to be the very first essential factor in human life, and was to continue to seem so for thousands of years, universal brotherhood included the brotherhood of nations.

The Jewish God ideal implies democracy and implies internationalism. In ancient times every nation had its own gods, in many places every hill and valley, every tribe and city, had its own divine creator and guardian. The Jewish people were the first to visualise the existence of one God of all nations, one universal judge and ruler. The very Jewish conception of the Divinity implies a brotherhood of nations. This conception saved the Jews from the fate of all the other peoples devoured by the Roman Empire; for the Roman Empire spread the concept of Emperor worship as an essential instrument of government of the peoples it conquered. Emperor worship was but a logical development of Roman Imperialism, and the Jews resisted it at all costs. Hundreds of thousands of Jewish lives paid for this resistance, but the Jewish people remains to this day.

The above philosophy of nationalism, of the possibilities of international authority, of a sort of super-state power that will have jurisdiction and control over the problems of the human race that our present system cannot solve, will not be acceptable to all. Internationalism is not in favour in fascist circles, nor is it really keenly supported even by those who, genuinely and heartily sick of war and all the misery it entails, are unwilling to "sacrifice" anything in the present state of affairs for the abolishment of war as a principle of national policy. To those who for one reason or another, do not hold the principles of internationalism as an ideal,



however doubtful its realisation in the near future may be, to those who do not wish to strive for this end, this essay is not addressed. It is to those who see the only salvation for mankind along these lines that I have endeavoured to point out that there is no essential contradiction between their ideals and Zionism, or any nationalism that is purged from the imperialist disease. Socialist thought involves internationalism; it calls upon the workers of the world to unite. Socialist organisations have existed from the very first as international federations of national units. In a world consisting of socialised nations, imperialism would perish of neglect. But the aim of this essay is not to preach socialism; rather it is to point out that the internationalism that socialist doctrines bring in their train does not preclude Zionism, any more than the generalised internationalist hopes that I have taken throughout the essay preclude the existence of nations, nationhood and nationalism.

### CRITERIA FOR NATIONHOOD

What constitutes a nation? Some say one thing, some another, but many of the criteria suggested do not always apply. A common language is one of the criteria, yet the Swiss nation does not possess one. A common history is another criterion, yet many nations have very little history, such as the Bulgarians, of whose existence as a nation nothing was known till the nineteenth century. Poland before the War had no government, nor had the Lithuanians, Latvians, Esthonians or Finns, yet it was not the mere creation of independent governments that made them into nations. Under Tsarist oppression they were still nations. Nationality is character, a state of mind. All the characteristics that make us distinctly national are mental and spiritual characteristics. What constitutes a nation is that it considers itself a nation. Except in the pathological case of the abnormal appetite caused by imperialism, it makes little difference if the population be large or small, urban or rural, progressive or backward; what counts is solidarity.

The main criteria, apart from this sense of solidarity, of nationhood, are a common language, a common history, a central authority, common customs and traditions, national art and culture, and a certain common orientation of thought processes, that is observable in individuals of the same nation even when they reach diametrically opposite conclusions. One criterion I have not yet dwelt upon: a land.

### A NATIONAL HOME

A land and its people are like a body and a soul. Geography and climate mould and change character, they are the root and branch of national traditions. No amount of good-will nor force could make the Egyptian and the Laplander desire the same poetry or the same clothes. A people dissociated from its land is alien everywhere, a wanderer and eternal fugitive on the face of the earth. It loses that essential criterion of nationhood, solidarity, for it has to serve a score of masters; it finds a foothold in many places, but a permanent shelter in none. A people living on its own land, even if subjected by its enemies, oppressed and terrorised, its national institutions submerged by a bureaucracy set over it by its conqueror, is still a national entity. Many are the cases in history in which such nations have arisen again, after a short or a long period, shaken off the yoke of the imperialist tormentor, and fought for their liberty. Poland is an example of which we are all aware; partitioned between Russia, Prussia and Austria in the eighteenth century, no amount of oppression could destroy the Polish nation, living on its own soil, and now it is once more united and self-governing. Greece, conquered by the Romans, passed over to the domination of the Turks when the Ottoman forces destroyed the Byzantine Empire in the fifteenth century; but the Greek national life could not be broken by the Turks, and freedom was again secured in 1827. Holland came under Spanish domination, but in the seventeenth century regained its freedom. Spain itself at an earlier period was under Moorish conquest.



Such examples could be multiplied indefinitely. It is perfectly true that even when left on its own soil a nation does not always succeed in recovering its freedom after the lapse of time. But rooted in its soil it has a far greater chance of doing so, than in those cases where defeat was followed by dispersion, or conquest followed by "colonisation," or the inter-marriage between victor and vanquished. Only one case can history present of a nation conquered and dispersed, driven from its own land and yet still extant, extant in every part of the world, and that is the Jewish nation.

For close on two thousand years we Jews have withstood this landless and homeless condition, but we have suffered for it, materially, physically, spiritually. To-day we suffer because of our homelessness more than we have ever done since the darkest period of the Middle Ages. We are a nation, not only by religion, but also by nature and history, and nations must obey their instinct of self-preservation, just as much as the individual. A nation we are still and a nation we will remain, but a most abnormal one. An abnormal person is always a sufferer, whether his abnormality be genius or madness, for the world cannot tolerate him. So it is also with the abnormal nation. Especially does the abnormal person suffer if he is compelled to have daily contact with his fellows; and the abnormal nation, the Jewish people, has to live in close contact with other nations, in their very midst, and suffers all the more as a consequence.

We have no national centre, and the absence of a centre stultifies the whole of our national life. Our artists are not Jewish artists, our musicians not Jewish musicians, our scientists not Jewish scientists, our authors not Jewish authors, our statesmen not Jewish statesmen; all our great men, all our productive forces are not Jewish. Not only do they belong to other national cultures, but they take their inspiration, far more often than not, from non-Jewish milieux. Only in the field of Talmudics and Rabbinics have we created from our own sources since the dispersion; and even then the

creation is but the development of commentary and super-commentary on the Talmud, which is but the expression of the lore and traditions of our national life in Palestine, and the semi-national life in Babylon in the centuries immediately following the destruction of the Temple. So that even in the field of religion and scholasticism, we have but developed in fifteen centuries from a source created during a period of normal national existence. In all other fields the Jewish artist and scientist was compelled to go outside Jewish sources for his inspiration. And yet a Jew who seeks his inspiration from other sources, English, French, Russian, German or what you will, cannot but colour his productions with the effects of his Jewish antecedents, assimilate however hard he try. His productions will still be "art," they may still be masterly and great, but they are hybrid, abnormal, indicative of himself, a confused and conflicted soul, a fish out of water. He represents something of which he is undeniably part, and yet equally undeniably not a part; a permanent paradox.

## HERZL AND ACHAD HA'AM

To normalise the Jewish people, then, is the aim and object of Zionism. Let it not be thought that on this matter there was any conflict between the schools of Herzl and Achad Ha'am. Herzl created political Zionism, the struggle for the establishment of a national centre for Jewish life, a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, publicly secured and recognised by the world. But Herzl knew that in order to create this, his fellow-Jews who, just as he himself, had drifted away from Jewry and sought inspiration anywhere but from their own people, had to return to the fold. His dictum that "the return to Zion must be preceded by a return to the Jewish fold" is oft-quoted. Achad Ha'am emphasised the necessity for the re-awakening of the Jewish national spirit and for the free expression of Jewish national characteristics and the development of the Jewish soul



from its own sources. But for this he knew that a return to Palestine and the building of a national centre there, was a primary essential, and his interest in the practical colonisation of Palestine lasted to the day of his death—which was in Palestine. A landless nation, a nation owing allegiance to a score or more of conflicting authorities, such a nation is not in a position to create anything. Let me take but a small example. Palestine Jewry is the only people to-day creating a folk-song, a folk-song throughly expressive of the yearnings of our people, the beginning of their realisation, and the struggles and difficulties therein involved, and the determination to succeed in spite of all. These songs have poured over from Palestine during the past two decades in a never-ceasing stream. On the other hand, Anglo-Jewry and American Jewry have existed as communities for nearly three centuries; there is nevertheless not a single Jewish song in English expressive of Anglo-Jewish or American Jewish life.

## ZIONISM AND THE DIASPORA

But in spite of the fact that the current rate of immigration into Palestine is more than a thousand a week, we must admit openly that for a long time to come, certainly throughout our own lifetimes, the great majority of the Jewish people will continue to live in the Diaspora. And therefore work for Palestine is not enough. We must use the new vitality which the developments in Palestine can supply for the regeneration of Jewish life throughout the world. Looked at from this point of view, the point of view which Achad Ha'am expressed over a generation ago, Palestine takes on a new significance. The life in Tel-Aviv, the social system which is being built up by the Chalutzim, the entire achievements of the Yishuv, are saving as yet only a small (though increasing) fraction of our people from the material trials they are suffering, but they have brought a new sense of national pride and dignity to Jews all over the world. They have shown, not only

to the world outside, but what is more important still, they have shown to ourselves, that we are not merely a nation of middlemen, that we can build a new independent life by our own exertions, that we can still add to the great cultural debt the world owes us. They have provided a home where everything characteristic of the Jew can freely exist and freely develop. They have united us in support of a common cause as we have not been united for centuries. They have re-established the sense of continuity in Jewish national history, bridging the gap between ourselves and Biblical history. They have established a rallying point and centre of inspiration for all the forces that make for national regeneration.

But all this is not enough. Our national life cannot be normalised until we have created our national centre, but we cannot afford to write off the Diaspora entirely. The mere creation of the national centre will undoubtedly influence the Diaspora, but we must actively stimulate this influence. We must put an end to the mistaken view that we have nothing to build but a Home, and remember that the Home is only a part, a great part, but nevertheless not the whole, of our task. Our task is to rebuild the Nation. Zionism must apply itself to the task of providing a Jewish national education for our youth, instead of allowing the national education of the children to remain a mere by-product of an inefficient system of religious instruction, and neglecting the adolescents altogether. It must apply itself to the creation of forms of organisation of communal life in all centres that will reflect a new spirit of national unity, in place of the chaos in communal administration apparent at the present day. It should concern itself with giving Diaspora communities the same width and scope in employment of all sorts as is the feature of Palestine Jewry, in place of the present virtual confinement to a few professions and a few artisan occupations. No political or economic Jewish problem, and no practical solutions to such problems, should be considered as outside the scope of Zionism. The Zionism of the future must become exactly co-extensive with the whole field of Jewish life.



## CONCLUSION

Palestine may never be entirely Jewish, for the Arabs are there. The antagonism of the Arab to the Jew is not due to national differences. It is, rather, political in character, being fomented by the Arab leaders. It is the expression of the fear of the feudalistic Arab landlord of losing his economic hold over the *fellaheen*, the age-old struggle of the "vested interest" against any form of change. But while whether Palestine is to be as Jewish as England is English is perhaps an important problem in the ideology of Zionism, it is not the main essential of Zionism. Zionism is a call to the rationalisation of the Jewish position, to our return to a normal nationhood. It is the task laid by history on twentieth century Jewry, and has been well and truly begun. Let not the fears of aggravated nationalism, the fears of those of us who see in war the greatest danger to our hard-won social progress, the fears of those, whether socialist or not, who see in nationalism the greatest factor of reaction and cause of wanton destruction of human life and endeavour, let not these fears turn them against Zionism. Zionism is the only constructive movement in Jewry to-day. But for its inspiration, its hope and promise for the future, Jewry, so largely alienated from its religion, (which is the chief factor that has kept it alive up to the present day), would in these troublous and terrible post-war days, have been very largely destroyed by our enemies and our friends; starved and persecuted by our enemies and assimilated (for a time) by our friends. Had not Zionism appeared, little would have remained of Jewry by the twenty-first century, and we would have felt ourselves as living on the last page of Jewish history.