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THE ZIONIST IDEA

A Historical Analysis and Reader

EDITED AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION
AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

by Arthur Hertzberg

FOREWORD BY EMANUEL NEUMANN

HARPER TORCHBOOKS 

The Temple Library

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For Phyllis, Linda, and Susan

THE ZIONIST IDEA

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to me. "National religion"—by all means: Judaism is fundamentally national, and all the efforts of the "Reformers" to separate the Jewish religion from its national element have had no result except to ruin both the nationalism and the religion. Clearly, then, if you want to build and not to destroy, you must teach religion on the basis of nationalism, with which it is inseparably intertwined. But when you talk of propagating "religious nationalism," I do not know what you mean (unless you are simply saying the same thing in other words). Do you really think of excluding from the ranks of the nationalists all those who do not believe in the principles of religion? If that is your intention, I cannot agree. In my view our religion is national—that is to say, it is a product of our national spirit—but the reverse is not true. If it is impossible to be a Jew in the religious sense without acknowledging our nationality, it is possible to be a Jew in the national sense without accepting many things in which religion requires belief. . . .

THE JEWISH STATE AND THE JEWISH PROBLEM (1897)

SOME MONTHS have passed since the Zionist Congress, but its echoes are still reverberating in daily life and in the press. All kinds of gatherings—small and large, local and regional—are taking place. Since the delegates returned home, they have been calling public meetings and repeatedly regaling us with tales of the wonders that were enacted before their very eyes. The wretched, hungry public is listening, becoming ecstatic, and hoping for salvation. It is inconceivable to them that "they"—the Jews of the West—can fail to succeed in what they propose. Heads grow hot and hearts beat fast, and many "leaders" who had for years—until last August—lived only for Palestinian settlement, and for whom a penny donation in aid of Jewish labor in Palestine or the Jaffa School¹³ was worth the world, have now lost their bearings and ask one another: "What's the good of this sort of work? The days of the Messiah are near at hand, and we busy ourselves with trifles! The time has come for great deeds, for great

men, men of the West, have enlisted in the cause and march before us."

There has been a revolution in their world, and, to emphasize it, they have given the cause itself a new name: It is no longer "Love of Zion" (*Hibbat Zion*), but "Zionism" (*Zioniyuth*). Indeed, there are even "precisionists" who, being determined to leave no loophole for error, use only the European form of the name ("Zionismus")—thus announcing to all and sundry that they are not talking about anything so antiquated as *Hibbat Zion*, but about a new, up-to-date movement, which comes, like its name, from the West, where people are innocent of the Hebrew language.

Nordau's address on the general condition of the Jews was a sort of introduction to the business of the Congress. It described in incisive language the sore troubles, whether material or spiritual, which beset the Jews the world over. In eastern countries their trouble is material: they must struggle without letup to satisfy the most elementary physical needs—for the crust of bread and the breath of air which are denied them because they are Jews. In the West, in lands where the Jews are legally emancipated, their material condition is not particularly bad, but their spiritual state is serious: they want to take full advantage of their legal rights, and cannot; they long to be accepted by the gentile majority and to become part of the national society, but they are kept at arm's length; they hope for love and brotherhood, but they encounter looks of hatred and contempt on all sides; they know that they are in no way inferior to their neighbors in ability or virtue, but they have it continually thrown in their faces that they are of an inferior type and that they are unfit to rise to the level of the Aryans. And more to the same effect.

Well—what then?

Nordau himself did not touch on this question, which was outside the scope of his address. But the whole Congress was the answer. Beginning as it did with Nordau's address, the Congress meant this: that in order to escape from all these troubles it is necessary to establish a Jewish State.

There is no doubt that, even when the Jewish State is established, Jewish settlement will be able to advance only by small degrees, as permitted by the resources of the people themselves and by the progress of the economic development of the country. Meanwhile the natural increase of Jewish population both within the Palestinian settlement and in the Diaspora, will continue, with the inevitable result that, on the one hand, Palestine will have less and less room

for the new immigrants, and, on the other hand, despite continual emigration, the number of those remaining outside Palestine will not be appreciably diminished. In his opening speech at the Congress, Dr. Herzl, wishing to demonstrate the superiority of his State idea to the previous form of Palestinian colonization, calculated that by the latter method it would take nine hundred years before all the Jews could be settled in their land. The members of the Congress applauded this as a conclusive argument. But it was a cheap victory. The Jewish State itself, do what it will, will find no way to make a more favorable calculation.

The truth is bitter, but with all its bitterness it is better than illusion. We must admit to ourselves that the "ingathering of the exiles" is unattainable by natural means. We may, by natural means, someday establish a Jewish State; it is possible that the Jews may increase and multiply within it until the "land is filled with them"—but even then the greater part of our people will remain scattered on foreign soils. "To gather our scattered ones from the four corners of the earth" (in the words of the Prayer Book) is impossible. Only a religion, with its belief in a miraculous redemption, can promise such a consummation.

But if this is so, if the Jewish State, too, means not an "ingathering of the exiles" but the settlement of a small part of our people in Palestine, then how will this solve the material problem of the Jewish masses in the lands of the Diaspora?

The material problem will not be ended by the establishment of a Jewish State, and it is, indeed, beyond our power to solve it once and for all. (Even now there are various means at our disposal to alleviate this problem to a greater or lesser degree, e.g., by increasing the proportion of farmers and artisans among our people *in all lands*, etc.) Whether or not we create a Jewish State, the material situation of the Jews will always basically depend on the economic condition and the cultural level of the various nations among which we are dispersed.

Thus we are driven to the conclusion that the real and only basis of Zionism is to be found in another problem, the spiritual one.

But the spiritual problem appears in two differing forms, one in the West and one in the East, which explains the fundamental difference between western "Zionism" and eastern "Hibbat Zion." Nordau dealt only with the western form of the problem, apparently knowing nothing about the eastern; and the Congress as a whole concentrated on the first, and paid little attention to the second.

The western Jew, having left the ghetto and having sought accep-

ance by the gentile majority, is unhappy because his hope of an open-armed welcome has been disappointed. Perforce he returns to his own people and tries to find within the Jewish community that life for which he yearns—but in vain. The life and horizon of the Jewish community no longer satisfy him. He has already grown accustomed to a broader social and political life, and on the intellectual side the work to be done for our Jewish national culture does not attract him, because that culture has played no part in his earliest education and is a closed book to him. In this dilemma he therefore turns to the land of his ancestors and imagines how good it would be if a Jewish State were re-established there—a State and society organized exactly after the pattern of other States. Then he could live a full, complete life within his own people, and he could find at home all that he now sees outside, dangled before his eyes but out of reach. Of course, not all the Jews will be able to take wing and go to their State; but the very existence of the Jewish State will also raise the prestige of those who remain in exile, and their fellow citizens will no longer despise them and keep them at arm's length, as though they were base slaves, dependent entirely on the hospitality of others. As he further contemplates this fascinating vision, it suddenly dawns on his inner consciousness that even now, before the Jewish State is established, the mere idea of it gives him almost complete relief. It provides an opportunity for communal work and political excitement; his emotions find an outlet in a field of activity which is not subservient to non-Jews; and he feels that, thanks to this ideal, he stands once more spiritually erect and has regained his personal dignity, without overmuch trouble and purely by his own efforts. So he devotes himself to the ideal with all the ardor of which he is capable; he gives rein to his fancy and lets it soar as it will, beyond reality and the limitations of human power. For it is not the attainment of the ideal that he needs; its pursuit alone is sufficient to cure him of his spiritual disease, which is that of an inferiority complex, and the loftier and more distant the ideal, the greater its power to exalt.

This is the basis of western Zionism and the secret of its attraction. But eastern Hibbat Zion originated and developed in a different setting. It, too, began as a political movement; but, being a result of material evils, it could not be content with an "activity" consisting only of outbursts of feeling and fine phrases, which may satisfy the heart but not the stomach. Hibbat Zion began at once to express itself in concrete activities—in the establishment of colonies in Palestine. This practical work soon clipped the wings of fancy and demonstrated

conclusively that Hibbat Zion could not lessen the material woe of the Jews by one iota. One might, therefore, have thought that, when this fact became patent, the Hovevei Zion¹⁴ would give up their effort and cease wasting time and energy on work which brought them no nearer their goal. But, no: they remained true to their flag and went on working with the old enthusiasm, though most of them did not understand, even in their own minds, why they did so. They felt instinctively that they must go on; but, as they did not clearly appreciate the nature of this feeling, the things that they did were not always effectively directed toward the true goal, to which they were unconsciously dedicated.

For at the very time when the material tragedy in the East was at its height, the heart of the eastern Jews was sensitive to another tragedy as well—a spiritual one; and when the Hovevei Zion began to work for the solution of the material problem, the national instinct of the people felt that in this work it would find the remedy for its spiritual trouble. Hence the people rallied to this effort and did not abandon it even after it had become obvious that it was an ineffective instrument for curing the material trouble of the Jews.

The eastern form of the spiritual problem is absolutely different from the western. In the West it is the problem of the Jews; in the East, the *problem of Judaism*. The first weighs on the individual; the second, on the nation. The one is felt by Jews who have had European education; the other, by Jews whose education has been Jewish. The one is a product of anti-Semitism, and is dependent on anti-Semitism for its existence; the other is a natural product of a real link with a millennial culture, and it will remain unsolved and unaffected even if the troubled of the Jews all over the world attain comfortable economic positions, are on the best possible terms with their neighbors, and are admitted to the fullest social and political equality.

It is not only the Jews who have come out of the ghetto; Judaism has come out, too. For the Jews the exodus from the ghetto is confined to certain countries and is due to toleration; but Judaism has come out (or is coming out) of its own accord, wherever it has come into contact with modern culture. This contact with modern culture overturns the inner defences of Judaism, so that it can no longer remain isolated and live a life apart. The spirit of our people demands further development; it wants to absorb the basic elements of general culture which are reaching it from the outside world, to digest them and to make them a part of itself, as it has done before at various

periods of its history. But the conditions of its life in exile are not suitable for such a task. In our time culture expresses itself everywhere through the form of the national spirit, and the stranger who would become part of culture must sink his individuality and become absorbed in the dominant environment. In exile, Judaism cannot, therefore, develop its individuality in its own way. When it leaves the ghetto walls, it is in danger of losing its essential being or—at very least—its national unity; it is in danger of being split up into as many kinds of Judaism, each with a different character and life, as there are countries of the dispersion.

Judaism is, therefore, in a quandry: It can no longer tolerate the *Galut*¹⁵ form which it had to take on, in obedience to its will-to-live, when it was exiled from its own country; but, without that form, its life is in danger. So it seeks to return to its historic center, where it will be able to live a life developing in a natural way, to bring its powers into play in every department of human culture, to broaden and perfect those national possessions which it has acquired up to now, and thus to contribute to the common stock of humanity, in the future as it has in the past, a great national culture, the fruit of the unhampered activity of a people living by the light of its own spirit. For this purpose Judaism can, for the present, content itself with little. It does not need an independent State, but only the creation in its native land of conditions favorable to its development: a good-sized settlement of Jews working without hindrance in every branch of civilization, from agriculture and handicrafts to science and literature. This Jewish settlement, which will be a gradual growth, will become in course of time the center of the nation, wherein its spirit will find pure expression and develop in all its aspects to the highest degree of perfection of which it is capable. Then, from this center, the spirit of Judaism will radiate to the great circumference, to all the communities of the Diaspora, to inspire them with new life and to preserve the over-all unity of our people. When our national culture in Palestine has attained that level, we may be confident that it will produce men in the Land of Israel itself who will be able, at a favorable moment, to establish a State there—one which will be not merely a State of Jews but a really Jewish State.

This Hibbat Zion, which concerns itself with the preservation of Judaism at a time when Jewry is suffering so much, is something odd and unintelligible to the "political" Zionists of the West, just as the demand of R. Johanan ben Zakkai for "Yavneh" was strange and unintelligible to the comparable party of his time. And so political

Zionism cannot satisfy those Jews who care for Judaism; its growth seems to them to be fraught with danger to the object of their own aspiration.

The secret of our people's persistence is—as I have tried to show elsewhere—that at a very early period the Prophets taught it to respect only the power of the spirit and not to worship material power. Therefore, unlike the other nations of antiquity, the Jewish people never reached the point of losing its self-respect in the face of more powerful enemies. As long as we remain faithful to this principle, our existence has a secure basis, and we shall not lose our self-respect, for we are not spiritually inferior to any nation. But a political ideal which is not grounded in our national culture is apt to seduce us from loyalty to our own inner spirit and to beget in us a tendency to find the path of glory in the attainment of material power and political domination, thus breaking the thread that unites us with the past and undermining our historical foundation. Needless to say, if the political ideal is not attained, it will have disastrous consequences, because we shall have lost the old basis without finding a new one. But even if it is attained under present conditions, when we are a scattered people not only in the physical but also in the spiritual sense—even then, Judaism will be in great danger. Almost all our great men—those, that is, whose education and social position have prepared them to be at the head of a Jewish State—are spiritually far removed from Judaism and have no true conception of its nature and its value. Such men, however loyal to their State and devoted to its interests, will necessarily envisage those interests by the standards of the foreign culture which they themselves have imbibed; and they will endeavor, by moral persuasion or even by force, to implant that culture in the Jewish State, so that in the end the Jewish State will be a State of Germans or Frenchmen of the Jewish race. We have even now a small example of this process in Palestine.

History teaches us that in the days of the Herodian house Palestine was indeed a Jewish State, but the national culture was despised and persecuted. The ruling house did everything in its power to implant Roman culture in the country and frittered away the resources of the nation in the building of heathen temples, amphitheatres, and so forth. Such a Jewish State would spell death and utter degradation for our people. Such a State would never achieve sufficient political power to deserve respect, while it would be estranged from the living inner spiritual force of Judaism. The puny State, being “tossed about like a ball between its powerful neighbors, and maintaining its existence

only by diplomatic shifts and continual truckling to the favored of fortune,” would not be able to give us a feeling of national glory; the national culture, in which we might have sought and found our glory, would not have been implanted in our State and would not be the principle of its life. So we should really be then—much more than we are now—“a small and insignificant nation,” enslaved in spirit to “the favored of fortune,” turning an envious and covetous eye on the armed force of our “powerful neighbors”; our existence in such terms, as a sovereign State would not add a glorious chapter to our national history.

Would it not be better for “an ancient people which was once a beacon to the world” to disappear than to end by reaching such a goal as this? Mr. Lilienblum¹⁶ reminds me that there exist today small States, like Switzerland, which are safeguarded against interference by the other nations and are not forced to “continual truckling.” But a comparison between Palestine and small countries like Switzerland overlooks the geographical position of Palestine and its religious importance for all the world. These two facts will make it quite impossible for its “powerful neighbors” (by which expression, of course, I did not mean, as Mr. Lilienblum interprets, “the Druses and the Persians”) to leave it alone. Even after it has become a Jewish State, they will all still keep an eye on it, and each power will try to influence its policy in a direction favorable to itself, after the pattern of events in other weak states (like Turkey) in which the great European nations have “interests.”

In sum: Hibbat Zion, no less than “Zionism,” wants a Jewish State and believes in the possibility of the establishment of a Jewish State in the future. But while “Zionism” looks to the Jewish State to furnish a remedy for poverty and to provide complete tranquillity and national glory, Hibbat Zion knows that our State will not give us all these things until “universal Righteousness is enthroned and holds sway over nations and States”—it looks to a Jewish State to provide only a “secure refuge” for Judaism and a cultural bond to unite our nation. “Zionism,” therefore, begins its work with political propaganda; Hibbat Zion begins with national culture, because only *through* the national culture and *for its sake* can a Jewish State be established in such a way as to correspond with the will and the needs of the Jewish people.

THE NEGATION OF THE DIASPORA (1909)

"A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE DIASPORA" is an expression frequently heard in discussions between the Zionists, who look beyond the Diaspora for a solution of our national problem, and the Nationalists, who do not, and the latter have come to take it for granted that the attitude in question is necessarily predicable of anybody who does accept their "autonomist" doctrine. Actually, however, the expression is not so clear as it might be.

An attitude may be either subjectively or objectively negative. If we express disapproval or dislike of something or other, our negative attitude is subjective: it relates not to the thing itself, but only to our own reactions to it. But if we say that something or other cannot possibly exist, our negative attitude is objective: it results from an examination of the objective facts, without any reference to our own predilections.

In the subjective sense all Jews adopt a negative attitude toward the Diaspora. With few exceptions, they all recognize that the position of a lamb among wolves is unsatisfactory, and they would gladly put an end to this state of things if it were possible. Those who profess to regard our dispersion as a heaven-sent blessing are simply weak-kneed optimists; lacking the courage to look the evil thing in the face, they find it necessary to smile on it and call it good so long as they cannot abolish it. But if the Messiah—the true Messiah—were to appear today or tomorrow, to lead us out of our exile, even these optimists would join the throng of his followers without a moment's hesitation.

This being so, the "negative attitude toward the Diaspora" which has become a debating counter must be negative in the objective sense. To adopt a negative attitude toward the Diaspora means, for our present purpose, to believe that the Jews cannot survive as a scattered people now that our spiritual isolation is ended, because we have no longer any defence against the ocean of foreign culture, which threatens to obliterate our national characteristics and traditions, and thus gradually to put an end to our existence as a people.

There are, it is true, some Jews who are of that opinion; but they are not all of one way of thinking. They belong in fact to two different

parties, which draw diametrically opposite conclusions from their common assumption. The one party argues that, as we are doomed to extinction, it is better to hasten the end by our action than to sit and wait for it to come of its own accord after a long and painful death agony. If a Jew can get rid of his Judaism here and now by assimilation, good luck to him; if he cannot, let him try to make it possible for his children. But the other party argues that, since we are threatened with extinction, we ought to put an end to our dispersion before it puts an end to us. We must secure our future by gathering the scattered members of our race together in our historical land (or, some would add, in some other country of their own), where alone we shall be able to continue to live as a people. Any Jew who is both able and willing to get rid of his Judaism by assimilation may remain where he is; those who are unable or unwilling to assimilate will betake themselves to the Jewish State.

But so far both these parties remain merely parties, and neither has succeeded in persuading the Jewish people as a whole to accept the fundamental postulate with either of its consequential policies. Both alike have come into conflict with something very deep-rooted and stubborn—the instinctive and unconquerable desire of the Jewish people to survive. This desire for survival, or will to live, obviously makes it impossible for the Jewish people as a whole to contemplate the disappearance of the Diaspora if that involves its own disappearance; but the case is no better if the argument is that the Diaspora must disappear in order that the people may survive. Survival cannot be made dependent on any condition, because the condition might not be fulfilled. The Jews as a people feel that they have the will and the strength to survive whatever may happen, without any ifs or ands. They cannot accept a theory which makes their survival conditional on their ceasing to be dispersed, because that theory implies that failure to end the dispersion would mean extinction, and extinction is an alternative that cannot be contemplated in any circumstances whatever.

Except, then, for these two extreme parties, the Jews remain true to their ancient belief: their attitude toward the Diaspora is subjectively negative, but objectively positive. Dispersion is a thoroughly evil and unpleasant thing, but we can and must live in dispersion, for all its evils and all its unpleasantness. Exodus from the dispersion will always be, as it always has been, an inspiring hope for the distant future; but the date of that consummation is the secret of a higher power, and our survival as a people is not dependent upon it.

This, however, does not settle the question of our survival in dispersion. On the contrary, it is precisely this positive attitude toward the Diaspora that gives the question its urgency. A man at death's door does not worry much about his affairs during his last days on earth; a man on the point of going abroad is not particular about the tidiness of the lodging he occupies just before his departure. But if the Jews believe that they can and must continue to live in dispersion, the question at once arises—how is it to be done? It is neither necessary nor possible for them to go on living all the time in exactly the same old way. The will to live not only persuades them to believe that it is possible to survive in dispersion; it also impels them, in the changing circumstances of successive epochs, to find always the most appropriate means of preserving and developing their national identity. Moreover, this watchful instinct is always anticipating events, always providing in advance against the future. When Titus besieged Jerusalem, we are told, the defenders always had a new rampart ready in the rear before the one in front of it was overthrown. So it is with our national survival. And now that all but the wilfully blind can see the old rampart tottering to its fall, we are bound to ask ourselves: Where is the new rampart that is to secure our existence as a people in dispersion?

The Nationalists answer: national autonomy. What they mean by this has been made reasonably clear in the literature on the subject, and there is no need to go into detail here. But it seems to me that one fundamental point has been left obscure, and that some confusion of thought has in consequence arisen.

If we are to decide how far autonomy is a satisfactory answer to our problem, we must first of all define the scope of the problem itself. To judge from the current controversy on this matter, there appear in fact to be two different schools of thought. It is common ground among the Nationalists that we must find some new means of maintaining our distinctive national life in the Diaspora; but, on close examination, we find that while some of them are looking for a pattern of national life that will be as complete and self-contained as the ghetto life of our forefathers, others are convinced, in their heart of hearts, that that is an impossible ideal. These latter ask for nothing more than the possibility of developing our national life up to the limit of what is in practice attainable, and with no more than the unavoidable minimum of truncation and circumscription. When we are told, then, that autonomy is the solution, we must ask the further question: To what extent is it a solution? Is national autonomy put forward as a final answer to our problem, holding out a promise of

full and complete national life in the Diaspora? Or is it offered merely as the best that can be had in the circumstances, it being recognized that a complete national life in the Diaspora is impossible except in the ghetto which we have left forever?

The autonomists do not answer this question. Mr. Dubnov¹⁷ himself appears sometimes to think that autonomy would be a complete solution, providing a full synthesis of the "human" and the "national" elements in our corporate life; at other times he uses qualifying phrases like "within the bounds of possibility" or "as far as possible." But it seems to me that our doubts will disappear if we remember what is really meant by "a complete national life."

A complete national life involves two things: first, full play for the creative faculties of the nation in a specific national culture of its own, and, second, a system of education whereby the individual members of the nation will be thoroughly imbued with that culture, and so molded by it that its imprint will be recognizable in all their way of life and thought, individual and social. These two aspects of a national life may not always be realized in the same degree, but broadly speaking they are interdependent. If the individuals are not imbued with the national culture, the development of the nation will be arrested, and its creative faculties will suffer atrophy or dissipation. On the other hand, if those faculties are not sufficiently employed in the service of the development of the national culture, the education of children and adults alike will become narrow, its influence will progressively decline, and many individuals will turn elsewhere for the satisfaction of their cultural needs, with the result that gradually their minds and characters will cease to bear the nation's imprint.

Moreover, if a nation is to live a complete national life, it must have both the opportunity and the will to do so. It is the environment—the complex of political, economic, social, and moral factors—that creates both the opportunity and the psychological attitude from which springs the will to take advantage of the opportunity. This psychological attitude is of the utmost importance. When Mr. Dubnov says that autonomy will solve our problem only if we have the strength of will to make proper use of our rights, I take him to mean not that it will be entirely for us to decide, as free beings in the metaphysical sense, whether to use our rights or not, but that the external and internal conditions will be such that in our case, as in that of other national groups, the will to use our opportunities will automatically develop.

To sum up, then: If national autonomy in the Diaspora is put

forward as a completely satisfactory solution of our problem, it has to promise to normalize the life of the scattered and atomized Jewish people. It has to undertake to provide the Jewish people with both the opportunity and the necessary strength of will to deploy its creative faculties to the maximum extent in the development of its specific national culture. Nor is that all. It has to guarantee the possibility of educating all the individual members of the people, in every rank of society, on the lines of the national culture, so as to ensure that when they reach maturity they will find within the circle of the national life so wide a range of intellectual interests, and such ample scope for practical activity, that they will feel neither the need nor the desire to desert that sphere for another.

Now it may be that autonomists of the Yiddishist school believe that national autonomy can satisfy these requirements. For them our national culture means Yiddish literature, national education means speaking Yiddish, and the national ideal is to reach the level of nations like the Letts or the Slovaks, which have not as yet made any contribution whatever to the general stock of human culture. If "Nationalists" of this type regard autonomy in the Diaspora as the perfect solution of our problem, we can more or less understand their point of view. But it is otherwise with Nationalists who have a historical perspective—who demand that the future of our nation shall be a continuation of its past, and date the beginning of our national history from the Exodus from Egypt, not from the birth of the Yiddish novel and drama. Such Nationalists cannot be satisfied with a future that would put the greatness of our past to shame, and consequently they must see that the sort of exiguous living-space that might perhaps suffice for the infant toddlings of a nation of yesterday cannot provide elbow-room for the cultural life of the "eternal people," which has an ancient heritage of spiritual values and a fund of creative energy too large to be pent up within its own narrow confines. It is with Nationalists of this kind alone that I am here concerned, and they, I feel sure, would not subscribe to the obviously untenable view that autonomy can perform all these miracles. At any rate, pending an explicit statement on their part that they do subscribe to that view, I feel that to develop the arguments against it would be pushing an open door.

It may, then, be taken as practically certain that the autonomists admit that national autonomy in the Diaspora cannot give us the possibility of a full and complete national life; their contention is that nonetheless, if we wish to survive, we must struggle for national rights

in the Diaspora, so as to broaden the basis of our national life to the greatest possible extent. It is, however, common ground that at best we cannot get all we really need, and that our national culture and education must remain fragmentary and distorted, for lack of sufficient elbow-room within the framework of the alien culture which hems us in on every side.

If the autonomist doctrine is put in this more modest form, I doubt whether any true Jew will be opposed to it, in the sense of not regarding the extension of our national rights in the Diaspora as something to be desired and to be worked for whenever possible. Any opposition to it must be based on the view that it is objectively impossible; that our position among the nations is unique, and that the rest of the world will never be induced to admit that we have national rights in the territories that belong to other nations. True, the autonomists are fond of comparing our position with that of other small nations in Russia, Austria, and elsewhere, of which some have achieved autonomy and others hope to acquire it some day. But what is the use of our forgetting the difference between ourselves and the other small nations if those with whom the decision rests will not forget it? Each of the other small nations in question has lived in its national territory for generations and was once independent. The independence has gone, but even the new overlords cannot deny the historic right of the indigenous people, or regard its nationality as a foreign growth on the very soil on which it first came to birth. And if in the course of time some branches of the national tree have spread into the neighboring fields, without losing their connection with the parent stem, that is a perfectly natural and normal historic process. But we Jews entered every one of the lands of our dispersion as a foreign people, with a national culture which had been born and developed elsewhere. Wandering beggars from a distant clime, we have been compassionately granted asylum by the nations of the earth; but there never was, and is not now, any nexus between the life into which we have been admitted and the Jewish type of life which we brought with us, already fully developed, on our arrival. For this reason it is not likely that the world will recognize "the historic right of an alien people to live a national life of its own in a country of which from the very first it has never thought (and still less has anybody else ever thought) as belonging to itself. Ownership is after all a matter of convention; so long as individual ownership is recognized, national ownership cannot be condemned."

This, however, is by the way. My object was not to argue against the

autonomist doctrine, but to explain what it leaves obscure and to carry it to its logical conclusion. Hence I leave the question of practicability on one side. The point I really wish to make is this: If the autonomists agree that autonomy in the Diaspora is not a complete solution, and that we have to struggle for it merely on the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread, then they must also agree that we have to look for other and more radical ways of strengthening and enlarging our national life, on the principle that a whole loaf is better than half a loaf. The will to live, it must be remembered, will not be satisfied with the half loaf; it will give us no rest until we throw all our latent strength into the task of achieving its demands in full. But if this is so, the autonomists, like the rest of us, have still to face the question with which we started: Where is the new rampart that is to secure our existence as a people in dispersion in place of the old rampart, which is tottering before our eyes?

The autonomists know that for twenty years one Zionist school of thought has answered this question by saying that the new rampart must be built outside the Diaspora, in our historic land. This school of thought differs from those who claim to be the "real" Zionists in refusing to believe in the possibility of transferring all the Jews in the world to Palestine, and consequently in refusing to accept the proposition that we cannot survive in the Diaspora. On the contrary, it holds that dispersion must remain a permanent feature of our life which it is beyond our power to eliminate, and therefore it insists that our national life in the Diaspora must be strengthened. But that object, it holds, can be attained only by the creation of a fixed center for our national life in the land of its birth. Isolated groups of Jews wandering about the world here, there, and everywhere can be nothing more than a sort of formless raw material until they are provided with a single permanent center, which can exert a "pull" on all of them and so transform the scattered atoms into a single entity with a definite and self-subsistent character of its own. This answer, as I have said, has been given again and again during the last twenty years and the arguments for and against it have been so thoroughly canvassed that there is no need to embark on a long explanation of it here. But when our autonomists argue with Zionists, they seem to recognize only one kind of Zionism—the kind that pins its faith on the transfer of all the Jews to Palestine and is therefore open to the charge that it adopts the dangerous doctrine of the impossibility of Jewish life in the Diaspora. They completely ignore the other kind of Zionism, which is not open to that criticism, and in doing so they

more or less admit, as it seems to me, to a feeling at the back of their minds that their own doctrine leads them straight into the arms of this version of Zionism. For otherwise they are on the horns of a dilemma. They must either promise that Diaspora autonomy will completely solve our problem or deny that any complete solution is possible. But the first alternative is not open to them, because they do not believe in miracles, and the second is equally impossible, because it is too pessimistic—it means that our unhappy people has to look forward to an endless sick-bed existence with no hope of recovery. So in the end the autonomists, too, will be driven to look eastward and to recast their program so as to include, along with the maximum possible improvement and expansion of our national life in the Diaspora, the search for a complete solution outside the Diaspora.