

The Work of a Jewish Political Party, From an Underground Publication, 1940*

...There have often been discussions among the members concerning our working methods. At one discussion the question under review was: what are our aims at this time? What should our task be in this war? Two answers were given.

There were members who were of the opinion that at the present time we should occupy ourselves only with economic problems, helping the large numbers of members who are in difficulties, looking for means to help them, and very often to see to it that there should be a piece of bread and a bowl of soup for those in need. [In their view] all our efforts should be aimed in this direction and we should not occupy ourselves with any other activities.

Another group of members considered that it was by no means the purpose of our movement to turn itself into a charitable organization and to provide aid for individuals. According to them, such tasks were never our responsibility nor that of movements similar to ours, and we should not occupy ourselves with them, even though conditions have changed. We should turn to cultural activities, build up organizational cells, hold frequent discussions among the members to broaden our educational activities and to make use of this time for deeper thought.

And if this debate was in place a few months ago, then today, owing to the realities of the situation and the experience of more than a year, it is no longer the time for it now. All the members were right, those who said one thing and those who said the other: we are working in both directions at once, and the two views have merged into one....

Yad Vashem Archives, JM/219/3.

*From the underground newspaper of the Po'alei Zion ZS in Warsaw, *Befrayung* ("Liberation"), December 1940.

Source: *Documents on the Holocaust, Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland, and the Soviet Union*, Y. Arad, Y. Gutman, A. Margalio (editors), Yad Vashem, 1981, p. 208.