

of this new development was the Reformation. Contrary to the assurances of our school histories and similar sources of information, the Reformation was least of all a religious movement. In so far as it did not directly aim at economic results, it was essentially a political movement resulting from economic conditions.

On its formal side—that is, in the separation of the “reformed” churches from the Church of Rome and the denial of the supremacy of the Roman Pontiff—the Reformation was merely a solemn registering of the fact that Europe had broken up into separate nations. That each of these nations, having a separate economic life, must also constitute separate political, spiritual and intellectual entities. That henceforth there would be no common church and no common language, as well as no common empire. The Roman Emperor, the Roman Pope, and the Latin Bible had all become anachronisms, survivals of a common nationless Europe, and must all go. Henceforth each Nation was to have its own independent political head, paying no allegiance to any Emperor; its own independent church, paying no tribute and recognizing no sovereign outside of its own national jurisdiction; and its own literature, with the vernacular Bible as a symbol of its freedom from Latin tutelage.

And all of these independencies—*sacred* “national” possessions all—were to do duty in serving as a means of strengthening and fostering the economic organization which gave them birth.

So while the Anglo-Scotch philosopher Adam Smith was teaching his liberal economic principles as the surest means of increasing the wealth of *nations*, the German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte was dreaming of a Prussian bureaucratic closed “national” state—*der geschlossene Handelsstaat*.

But time passes on. What is born is destined to die—and the nation forms no exception. The question only is whether the hour of its passing is at hand. This question resolves itself into two inquiries. First: Has the economic system which gave rise to the nation passed? And, second: Has its passing penetrated into the consciousness of the people, so as to make them ripe for that

revolution of ideas which is necessary in order to establish the international order in the place of the national?

The answer to the first question is comparatively easy: The international character of our modern economic system will hardly be denied by any one at all familiar with the subject. Nations no longer produce for their own consumption, exchanging merely the surplus. Production is now for the world-market, instead of the national market. Our finance-and-credit system, too, is international. That is why the New York Stock Exchange was closed—went on a sympathetic strike, as it were—when the Great War broke out. And the three years of “European” war have shown as how intimately related and minutely interdependent the world’s economic system really is—shown it to us in a way that must have come with the shock of a revelation to most of us. When England and Germany went to war, women’s clothes here in America began to fade, and our local courts became crowded with the suits of furriers against dyers for goods spoiled in the process dyeing.

“National Oekonomie” as a *fact* has indisputably passed out of existence. The only thing that can still be discussed seriously is, whether it has also passed, or is passing away, as a system of thought. And it is in this connection that the expressions of opinion on nationalism and internationalism cited at the beginning of this article are of importance.

Fortunately for the cause of internationalism those views are nothing but the foam upon the sea of contemporaneous thought, raised by the passing breeze: The reflexes of the wisdom of popular journalism that lives upon the interests of the day and the hour. The deeper currents of contemporary thought, the thought that counts, is all the other way.

It is, of course, impossible to give in the space of a brief magazine article a complete survey of contemporary thought on the subject. I shall therefore have to restrict myself to a few examples indicating the drift of thought on the subject, but I have no doubt that the examples will be sufficient to prove by their very existence that the edifice of nationalism is showing signs of readiness to collapse.