

*Priester und Fuersten* (1847–57), he stressed the connection between political and religious history. Herzfeld also published *Ecclesiastes*, with a German translation and commentary (1838); proposals for a reform of Jewish matrimonial law (*Vorschlaege*, 1846); and a Reform prayer book (1874<sup>3</sup>), with some studies on its preparation.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** G. Karpeles, in: L. Herzfeld, *Handelsgeschichte...* (1894<sup>2</sup>), introduction; S.W. Baron, *History and Jewish Historians* (1964), 322ff.; Wilhelm, in: *BLBI*, 12 (1960), 259ff.; M. Eschelbacher, in: *AJR-information* (Feb. 1961), 10.

**HERZL, THEODOR (Binyamin Ze'ev; 1860–1904)**, founder of political Zionism and the World Zionist Organization. Herzl was born in Budapest, Hungary, to an affluent family and educated in the spirit of German-Jewish enlightenment. In 1878 he entered the law faculty of the University of Vienna, where his family had moved. In 1881 he joined a German students association, *Albina*, but, encountering antisemitism, resigned two years later. In 1884 he completed his studies but soon afterwards left the legal profession and dedicated himself to literature. His essays were characterized by his superb style and penetrating observations on human problems in modern times. In addition, he also wrote a number of plays, some of which were staged in Vienna, Prague, Berlin, and New York.

In 1889 Herzl married Julie Naschauer. She failed to appreciate his ideas and aspirations and the relationship was not a happy one. They had three children: Pauline, Hans, and Margarethe.

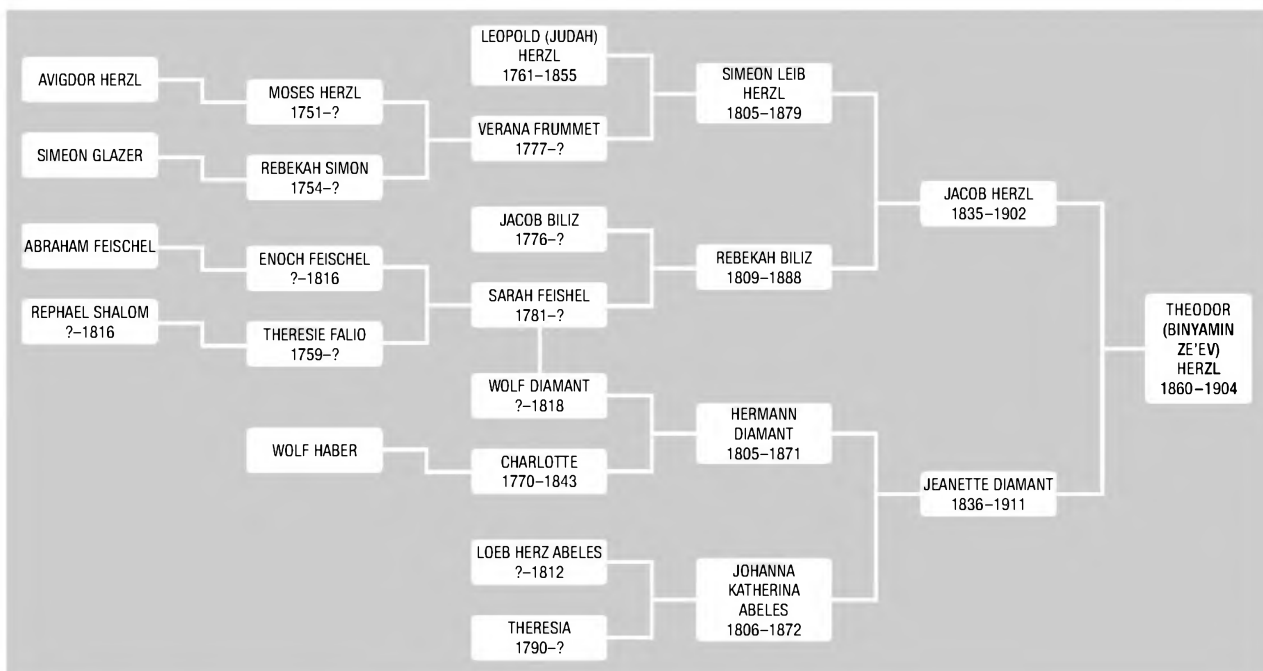
From October 1891 until July 1895 Herzl served as the Paris correspondent of the *Neue Freie Presse*, a liberal-oriented and prestigious Viennese daily. Herzl took particular inter-

est in the social and political problems of France. Excerpts from his articles appeared in a book titled *Das Palais Bourbon* (1895). The resurgence of antisemitism in France awakened his interest in the Jewish problem. His article, entitled "French Antisemites," which appeared in the *Neue Freie Presse* (1892), was followed by his play *Das neue Ghetto* (1895) in which he rejected assimilation, and certainly conversion, as a way to make Jews acceptable to gentile society.

It was, however, the Dreyfus trial (January 1895) that shattered Herzl's illusions. The humiliation of an innocent Jewish captain at the *Ecole Militaire*, and particularly the cries of the mob, "Death to the Jews," convinced him that the only solution to the Jewish problem would be a massive exodus of the Jews from countries afflicted with antisemitism and the concentration of the Jews in a territory of their own, preferably in the Land of their Forefathers.

He tried first to interest Baron Maurice de \*Hirsch, a prominent Jewish philanthropist. The meeting was a failure. Nor was Herzl successful in winning over Dr. Moritz Guedemann, the chief rabbi of Vienna, where Herzl had returned in 1895 to serve as a feuilleton editor of the *Neue Freie Presse*. His attempts to convince a number of other Jewish leaders and intellectuals to support his scheme were also unsuccessful. A notable exception was the celebrated author Max \*Nordau, who lent his brilliant pen and oratorical talents to Herzl's service, as well as to Zionism.

Undeterred by his initial setbacks, Herzl published in 1896 his epoch-making treatise *Der Judenstaat* (*The Jewish State*). Translations into Hebrew, English, French, Russian, and Romanian soon followed. In his book Herzl analyzed the Jewish problem and saw the establishment of a Jewish State as



Ancestry of Theodor Herzl, from P. J. Diamant, *Theodor Herzl's vaeterliche und muetterliche Vorfahren*, Jerusalem, 1934.

the only solution. Responses to his book were mixed. Predictably, the assimilationists in Western Europe rejected his thesis and regarded it as a hindrance to their struggle for emancipation. In contrast, David \*Wolfsohn, Max \*Bodenheimer, and other Zionist-oriented individuals were enchanted and found in Herzl their natural leader. Particularly enthusiastic were Jewish students in Germany and in Austria. The Zionist Movement had come into being. It was, however, the mass of Jews in Eastern Europe that constituted the backbone of the Movement. They regarded Herzl almost as a savior.

Henceforth, Herzl dedicated all his energy and resources to his Zionist cause. His premature death on July 3, 1904, at the age of 44, deprived the movement of a leader of international caliber. He had become a legendary figure in Jewish history, even in his own lifetime.

### Political Activity

It was antisemitism that made Herzl and Max Nordau, his close collaborator, conscious Jews. Both were steeped in European culture, but the resurgence of modern antisemitism wounded their dignity. Herzl was particularly stirred by Eugen Duehring's book *Die Juederfrage als Frage des Rassencharakters und seiner Schädlichkeit fuer Existenz und Kultur des Volkes* ("The Jewish Problem as a Problem of Race and the Harm It Is Causing to the Existence and to the Culture of the People"). As the years went by, the feeling of disenchantment grew stronger, but it was not until the Dreyfus trial in 1894 that Herzl's hopes of emancipation were irreparably shattered. He realized that the civilized nations could not cope with the "Jewish Question," which was a legacy from the Middle Ages. "They have tried it through emancipation, but it came too late." The belief of the doctrinaire libertarians that "men can be made equal by publishing an edict was erroneous." The Jews themselves were not yet accustomed to freedom, and the people around them had "neither magnanimity nor patience." In those places where the Jews had been liberated, the nations saw only their bad characteristics. Lacking historical perspective, they failed to realize that some of the anti-social qualities they attributed to Jews were the product of oppression in earlier times. In vain did Jews endeavor to show their loyalty, sometimes even exaggerated patriotism, toward their countries of domicile. Their sacrifices, their achievements in science, and their contributions to commerce were in vain. In the "fatherlands" in which they had lived for centuries, they were denounced as "strangers."

Herzl appreciated that antisemitism was a complex phenomenon. In some countries, it did occasionally reveal a religious bias, but its virulent character was primarily a consequence of emancipation. Contrary to the general belief that hostility to the Jews would disappear, Herzl feared that it would worsen. Hence, he believed that it was futile to combat antisemitism. Assimilation had failed, since in any genuine sense it could be effected only by intermarriage, and the nations would not tolerate members of an unassimilable group becoming their leaders, although, he allowed, perhaps they were "fully within their rights." He predicted that in Russia

and Romania persecution would be inspired officially; in Germany, discrimination would be legalized, and in Austria, people would allow themselves to be intimidated by the mob into initiating a "new St. Bartholomew's Night." Hungary, Herzl's country of birth, would be no exception. The calamity would come in a "most brutal form; the longer it is postponed, the more severe it will be; the more powerful the Jews become the fiercer the retribution. There is no escape from it."

He hoped that, in the long run, antisemitism would not harm the Jews and that educationally it might even prove useful. "It forces us," he declared, "to close ranks, unites us through pressure, and through our unity will make us free." It was this feeling of freedom that made Herzl declare: "We are a people, one people. We recognize ourselves as a nation by our faith." Henceforth, he no longer regarded the "Jewish Question" as a social or religious problem, but as a national one, which should be solved politically by the council of the civilized nations. Sovereignty over a portion of land, "large enough to justify the rightful requirements of a nation," to which the Jewish masses would emigrate, would provide the right solution. Pondering the choice between the Argentine and Palestine, the "ever memorable historic home" seemed preferable. Its very name would attract the people "with a force of marvelous potency."

Herzl wanted to give the Jews "a corner... where they can live in peace, no longer hounded, outcast, and despised... a country that will be their own," to rid them of the faults that centuries of persecution and ostracism had fostered in them and to allow their intellectual and moral gifts free play, so that finally they might no longer be "the dirty Jews, but the people of light." There they would regain self-esteem and dignity, and "the derisive cry 'Jews!' may become an honorable appellation, like 'German,' 'Englishman,' 'Frenchman.'"

The solution to the problem, however, should not be left to Jews alone. "The Jewish State is a world necessity!" Those civilized nations who were trying "to exorcise a ghost out of their past" must also shoulder responsibility. He believed that a potential community of interests did exist between the antisemites and the Zionists. "The antisemites will become our most dependable friends, the antisemitic countries our allies. We want to emigrate as respected people," parting as "friends from our foes... The solution of the Jewish Question must be a mighty final chord of reconciliation." Eventually it would place relationships between Jew and Gentile on a normal footing. If the Powers, with the concurrence of the sultan, would recognize Jewish sovereignty over Palestine, the Jews in return could undertake to regulate Turkish finances; they would form there "a portion of Europe... an outpost of civilization." The Jewish State would become "something remarkable... a model country for social experiments and a treasure house for works of art... a destination for the civilized world."

### Relations with Germany

Herzl was primarily a man of action who wished to translate his ideas into reality. His basic premise, that Zionism consti-

tuted an effective antidote to antisemitism, led him to the conviction that the countries most plagued by this problem were his potential allies. As early as June 9, 1895, he jotted down in his diary, "First I shall negotiate with the Czar regarding permission for the Russian Jews to leave the country ... Then I shall negotiate with the German kaiser, then with Austria, then with France regarding the Algerian Jews, then as need dictates." That Herzl should have expected Germany to support him is not surprising, since it was there that modern antisemitism originated. In an interview with Baron de Hirsch in 1895 he exclaimed, "I shall go to the German kaiser, he will understand me.... I shall say: Let our people go! We are strangers here; we are not permitted to assimilate with the people, nor are we able to do so. Let us go!" He was confident that one day the kaiser would be grateful to him for leading the "unas-similable people out."

In this assumption Herzl was basically correct, but it was rather the philosemites who first gave him support. When a long-awaited reply from ex-Chancellor Bismarck was not forthcoming, and the German press appeared to be critical of his *Judenstaat*, a savior from an unexpected quarter called on him. It was the Reverend William Hechler, chaplain to the British Embassy in Vienna. Hechler impressed Herzl as a likable, sensitive, and enthusiastic man. He believed that in 1897–98, the years of "prophetic crisis," Palestine would be returned to the Jews, a prediction that was backed by abstruse computations. Having read the *Judenstaat*, he no longer doubted that the "foreordained movement" had come into being. In Herzl's quizzical eyes, Hechler appeared "a naive visionary," but it is undeniable that it was he who raised Herzl's cause to the diplomatic plane by introducing him to the Grand Duke of Baden, at whose court Hechler had been a tutor. Hechler also knew the kaiser and thought it possible to arrange an audience for Herzl.

On March 26, 1896, Hechler wrote to the duke about Herzl's project, noting with satisfaction that the antisemitic movement had made the Jews see that they were "Jews first and [only] secondly Germans, Englishmen, etc." It reawakened in them a longing to return "as a nation to the Land of Promise ... Palestine belongs to them by right." Should Germany and England give their support and take the Jewish State, declared neutral, under their protection, the Return of the Jews would be a great blessing and would put an end to antisemitism, which was detrimental to the welfare of European nations. He also suggested that the issue be laid before the kaiser, the duke's nephew.

The duke took the opportunity of the kaiser's visit to Karlsruhe to brief him on the subject. The kaiser was not fully acquainted with the matter and did not take it seriously. Nor, it appears was Grand Duke Frederick truly convinced of Herzl's cause. Herzl did his best to dispel the duke's misgivings. On April 22, 1898, when they first met at Karlsruhe, he explained that the establishment of the Jewish State would be an act of goodwill, not a consequence of persecution, that emigration would be voluntary, and that it concerned chiefly the Jews of

Austria, Russia, and Romania. German Jews would welcome it; it would divert the migration of their East European co-religionists away from Germany. Moreover, it would reduce the number of Jewish proletarians and, by the same token, the number of revolutionaries. Herzl argued that Jewish enterprise would restore to health "the plague-spot of the Orient."

The grand duke was won over and remained Herzl's staunch supporter. Verdy du Vernois, the former Prussian minister of war and an expert on the Orient, was also convinced that the Zionist project would benefit Turkey, while Hechler continued untiringly to win new converts, particularly in British and German clerical circles. Grand Duke Frederick advised Hechler to win over Count Philipp zu Eulenburg, the German ambassador in Vienna, a gifted politician, whose influence on the kaiser was profound. Hechler was instructed to tell the ambassador that, in the duke's opinion, "something was involved that might prove to be important for German policy in the Orient."

Briefed by Hechler, Herzl was now confident that his movement would receive help. He hoped to persuade the grand duke that settlement by a neutral national element along the shortest route to Asia could be of value to Germany. He also prepared a draft letter to the kaiser, explaining that the Jews were the only people who could colonize Palestine; the land was too poor to attract others. For the Jews, it was rich in memories and hopes. Settlement by other European nationals would engender jealousy among the Powers, while settlement by the Jews, as a neutral element, would create fewer complications.

On Hechler's advice, the letters were not dispatched, but they reflect the working of Herzl's mind. He attempted to strike a balance between the principle of neutrality, embodied in the Basle Program, and an endeavor to solicit the support of a European Power – in this case, Germany – for his cause. The two elements were complementary. The Zionists, he hoped, would be regarded as the lesser evil, since no Power would let any other have Palestine.

During the summer and autumn of 1898, everything seemed, at least superficially, to be going well for Herzl. When Hechler failed to meet Count Eulenburg in Vienna, the duke wrote directly to the kaiser. Earlier he had hesitated to introduce Herzl to Wilhelm, but now that the Zionist movement had made substantial progress, it warranted a certain amount of attention, especially on the eve of the imperial visit to Palestine. Jewish colonization had proved successful, and consistent efforts were being made to lay the foundations of a Jewish state.

It took Wilhelm a month to reply to his uncle's letter. The Zionist aspirations appealed to him, and he instructed Eulenburg to examine the material, but he doubted whether the movement was ripe enough to justify official support. He noted also that Zionism was meeting with strong opposition from influential sections of Jewry, but the duke remained optimistic. On September 2, 1898, he received Herzl in Mainau Castle and, as if to demonstrate his confidence, discussed se-

cret political matters with him. Originally, the kaiser's trip was to be strictly religious, but subsequently it was decided to give it a political character. En route to Palestine, the emperor would pay an official visit to the sultan. Through Ambassador Marschall, the German Government had made inquiries in Constantinople and, the duke said, had learned that the sultan viewed the Zionist cause with favor. Since the Cretan affair, the kaiser had been on excellent terms with the sultan, and the duke was confident that the kaiser's word would certainly be heeded by his host. This was important, because legal security was necessary for the foundation of a state; he thought a formula could be found for preserving the Ottoman overlordship on the pattern of the former Danube principalities.

Shortly after, on September 16, Herzl was invited to meet Count Eulenburg in Vienna. The ambassador was not yet fully acquainted with the project and nourished some misgivings: the soil of Palestine was poor and the Turks would view the immigration of "two million people" with disfavor and suspicion; the sultan was obsessed by fear. However, after listening to Herzl, the ambassador grew "perceptibly warmer." The project was new and visibly fascinated him. But the strongest impression made on him was Herzl's statement that, since Zionism existed, one Power or another would sooner or later espouse it. "Originally, I thought that it would be England. It lay in the nature of things" – but now Germany would be even more welcome. The mention of England, as Herzl observed, was conclusive for Eulenburg. He promised Herzl that he would try to persuade the emperor to intercede with the sultan in order to obtain the country for the Zionists on "the basis of autonomy." He also suggested that Herzl should meet the foreign minister, Bernhard von Buelow.

Herzl impressed Eulenburg as "an unusually gifted man" of striking appearance: "a tall gentleman, with a head like that of King David, the type of valiant leading Jews from the time of the Jewish kingdom, without any trace of a *Handelsjude*." This reaction was typical of Eulenburg's romantic nature. His deeper reasons for so fervently supporting Herzl can only be surmised, for there is little documentary evidence. He believed that Herzl could collect "absolutely unlimited sums" to offer the sultan as a quid pro quo for the concession of Palestine. Since Eulenburg was the first German statesman to commit himself, at least by implication, to the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire, it is possible that Herzl's offer to straighten out the sultan's finances made a strong appeal to him.

Buelow had other ideas. He received Herzl with "captivating kindness," impressing him as a gentleman of the *vieux jeu* of diplomacy rather than the iron type of the Bismarck era. He complimented Herzl profusely on his writing, but his conversation was more in the nature of a chat than a serious political discussion. He doubted whether many German Jews would emigrate; in any case, their departure seemed to him undesirable. He was pleased to learn from Herzl that in Vienna the Zionists had won students away from socialism. Herzl's projected state, however, he dismissed as a "*polis* of

Plato." He expected that the main difficulty would be to convince the sultan to enter into negotiations with the Zionists, adding ironically that "it would make a big impression on him should the kaiser give him such advice." Yet Herzl felt intuitively that Buelow was not in favor of the kaiser granting him an audience.

Buelow was a cultured and subtle diplomat and an expert in manipulating people. "He liked to play with ideas and with human beings [but] had no taste for pathos or for lofty trains of thought," but "beneath the charming façade was a narrowness of vision." That the anti-Socialist aspect of Zionism should have attracted his attention is hardly surprising, since "the most important domestic question for him was the fight against the Socialists." His biographer notes that, while recognizing Herzl's great literary talents, he was unable to work up any enthusiasm for his political ideas. Buelow was well aware of the hardships which the Jews in Eastern Europe had to endure but was not convinced that mass emigration to Palestine would improve their lot. He also doubted whether Herzl's project could be applied to German Jews, who were strongly attached to Germany and felt no need "to rush into an undefined venture in Palestine." Zionism, in Buelow's opinion, could at best attract the destitute, not the prosperous and educated among the Jews of Europe; but beggars were not capable of founding a state or even of colonizing it.

Buelow was largely influenced by Professor Ludwig Stein. In a memorandum prepared at Buelow's request, Stein dismissed the Zionist project as "not worthy of consideration," a conclusion he had reached during a fact-finding mission to Palestine in 1895 on behalf of the *Esra Verein*. The *Verein* was investigating the possibilities of Jewish migration from Russia to Palestine, but Stein, though impressed by the existing colonies, discounted them as "mere oases in the desert. The stony soil, the lack of humus, the dearth of fauna, and the scanty flora" were "insurmountable obstacles to any considerable colonization." Moreover, in his opinion, Abdul Hamid's opposition to the settlement of aliens made the *Verein's* project impracticable.

In 1929, Stein admitted that he had been mistaken:

In justice to the memory of Herzl, I must confess that in his visionary ecstasy he foresaw many things which logical rationalism considered Utopian. Herzl and Nordau had prevailed. They brought to life a movement that grew far beyond the limits of my wildest dreams. Had I possessed prophetic vision then my judgment as recorded in my diary [memorandum?] would have been different. But being a philosopher by profession, I could not assume the role of seer.

Buelow, too, in October 1914 (by then no longer a minister) admitted to Bodenheimer that reports from Jewish quarters had misled him into adopting a negative attitude toward Zionism.

Unable to rely on Buelow, Herzl wrote to Eulenburg to request an audience with the emperor before the latter's departure for Constantinople. He made five points:

1. In various countries, Zionism might lessen the danger

of socialism, since it was often dissatisfied Jews who provided the revolutionary parties with leaders and ideas.

2. A reduction in Jewish numbers would weaken anti-semitism.

3. Turkey stood to gain from the influx of an intelligent and energetic element into Palestine. Large sums of money injected into her economy and the increase in trade would improve her finances.

4. The Jews would bring civilization and order back to a neglected corner of the Orient.

5. A railroad from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf was a European necessity. The Jews could and must build this great road of the nations which, if undertaken otherwise, might call forth the most serious rivalries.

This memorandum had a remarkable success. In less than a week, the kaiser, in consultation with Eulenburg, whose counsel he valued, made up his mind to give full support to Herzl's cause. In a letter to his uncle, the grand duke, thanking him for providing the stimulus and guidance in a matter of which hitherto he had had only superficial knowledge, the kaiser wrote:

The fundamental idea of Zionism has always interested me and even aroused my sympathy. I have come to the conclusion that here we have to deal with a question of the most far-reaching importance. Therefore I have requested that cautious contact should be made with the promoters of this idea. I am willing to grant an audience to a Zionist deputation in Jerusalem on the occasion of our presence there. I am convinced that the settlement of the Holy Land by the wealthy and industrious people of Israel [*Volk Israel*] will bring unprecedented prosperity and blessings to the Holy Land, which may do much to revive and develop Asia Minor. Such a settlement would bring millions into the purse of the Turks and so gradually help to save the "Sick Man" from bankruptcy. In this way the disagreeable Eastern question would be imperceptibly separated from the Mediterranean.... The Turk will recover, getting his money without borrowing, and will be able to build his own highways and railways without foreign companies and then it would not be so easy to dismember Turkey.

In addition, the energy and creative powers and abilities of the tribe of Shem would be directed to more dignified purposes than the exploitation of Christians, and many Semites of the Social Democratic Party, who are stirring up opposition, will move eastwards, where more rewarding work will present itself.... I know very well that nine-tenths of all Germans will be deeply shocked when they hear, at a later time, that I sympathize with the Zionists or even that I place them under my protection when they appeal to me.

Moreover, Kaiser Wilhelm added:

From the point of view of secular *Realpolitik*, the question cannot be ignored. In view of the gigantic power (very dangerous in a way) of international Jewish capital, would it not be an immense achievement for Germany if the world of the Hebrews looked to her with gratitude? Everywhere the hydra of the most awful antisemitism raises its terrible and brutal head, and the Jews, full of anxiety, are ready to leave the countries where they are threatened in order to return to the Holy Land and seek protection and security. I shall intercede with the Sultan.

Wilhelm was certainly not free from religious prejudices but here his reaction to antisemitism was unusual. By proposing a constructive solution to the "Jewish Problem," he seemed to stand out from most of his contemporaries, though obviously, without the impact of Herzl's memorandum (re-echoed partly in his letter), it is doubtful whether his conclusions would have been so far-reaching. However, it is evident that it was Eulenburg who had kindled his interest. The count understood the emperor and, in serious matters, knew how to make his counsel effective. "Only by consistently rational and timely advice was it possible to confine the ... temperamentally exuberant Emperor within limits." The kaiser "has to be greatly interested in a matter," Eulenburg told Herzl during his second interview on October 8, "as otherwise he soon loses sight of it. My standing with the Kaiser is such that I am able to speak to him differently from, and more than, many others. Very few people can go as far as I ... I have been able to bring the matter up again and again and I have succeeded."

On September 27, Eulenburg advised Herzl that the kaiser would be pleased to receive a Zionist deputation in Palestine, which would give Herzl an excellent opportunity to present his case. On the next day, September 28, Eulenburg sent Herzl a highly confidential postscript: "His Majesty would discuss the matter with the Sultan in a most emphatic manner and will be pleased to hear more from you in Jerusalem. The Kaiser has already issued orders to the effect that no obstacle is to be placed in the way of the [Zionist] delegation. In conclusion, H.M. wishes to tell you that he is very much *prepared* to undertake the protectorate in question."

The duke also assured Herzl of the emperor's "warm and lively interest"; he would suggest his protection of the Zionist project when he met the sultan; thereafter he would receive a Zionist deputation in Jerusalem in order to demonstrate his sympathy.

The meeting with Eulenburg on October 8 was even more encouraging and made Herzl confident that Germany's intervention and protection were a foregone conclusion.

A subsequent conversation with the grand duke in Potsdam on October 9 fortified Herzl's conviction. "The Kaiser has been thoroughly informed ... and is full of enthusiasm. That word is not too strong. He has taken to your idea quite warmly. He speaks of it in the liveliest terms. He would also have received you by now, for he has confidence in you; but it is now deemed better to receive you at Constantinople and Jerusalem." He added that a good report had come from Marschall and that the kaiser believed that the sultan would consider his advice favorably.

Ambassador Marschall had made his name as a diplomat by initiating the era of German-Turkish friendship, which became one of the chief *leitmotifs* of Germany's foreign policy. There is hardly any evidence about his attitude toward Zionism; the "favorable report" to which both Eulenburg and the grand duke of Baden referred has not so far come to light. It is not among the documents of the German Foreign Ministry, nor can it be traced in the *Nachlass Eulenburg*, or

among the emperor's papers. We can only surmise why it was too risky for him to support such a venture.

His first objective was to cement relations with Turkey; the second, to facilitate Germany's peaceful penetration of the Ottoman Empire without arousing suspicion. This was not an easy task, since the Russian press was giving much prominence to the alleged German plans to colonize Asia Minor, and even Petersburg made known its displeasure with Berlin's *Drang nach Osten*. It was the French who were responsible for feeding the Russians with this kind of information, which Marschall dismissed as "terrible nonsense, such as only Frenchmen, when speaking about Germans, are able to produce." But German protection of Jewish colonization would have substantiated the Russian and French allegations and, in the given circumstances, caution was imperative.

Moreover, Marschall was aware that the sultan's objection to foreign colonization was based on religious grounds and that the Muslim clergy were particularly sensitive on this issue. In 1905, Marschall asked a representative of the *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden* to advise the Zionists to moderate their political aspirations. Yet the question still arises: why, if Marschall was aware of the pitfalls entailed in support of Zionism, did he not warn the emperor in the autumn of 1898?

Soon after the Zionist delegation arrived in Constantinople, it experienced a bitter foretaste of its future disappointments. Marschall declined to grant Herzl an audience on the pretext that he did not know him. Max Bodenheimer's explanation that Dr. Herzl was the Zionist leader who had been in touch with Count Eulenburg and that the matter concerned the reception of a deputation by His Majesty the Kaiser had no effect. To the Zionists' regret, Eulenburg did not join the Near Eastern tour. Buelow was unreliable and Marschall enigmatic. To bring matters to a head, Herzl wrote to Wilhelm requesting a confidential audience. He assured the kaiser that France, weakened internally, would not be able to make a move, that "to Russia, the Zionist solution of the Jewish question meant enormous relief," and that no effective objection was to be feared from England, since the English Church was known to favor the Zionist cause. "Everything depends on the form of the *fait accompli*." As for the sultan, even if he did not immediately realize what aid the Zionists would bring to his impoverished state, it was unlikely that he would decline to accept the kaiser's advice. Once personal contact between the two sovereigns was established, they could ignore the intrigues of the other Powers. Herzl's request boiled down to a concession for a "Jewish Land Company for Syria and Palestine" under German protection.

The long-awaited audience with the emperor took place on October 18 in Buelow's presence. The kaiser listened attentively to Herzl's exposition and expressed confidence that the Zionists, with the financial and human resources at their disposal, would be successful in their venture. That the word "Zionism" was used by the German emperor as an accepted term was a source of pride to Herzl, but other utterances were less pleasant. "There are elements among your people whom it

would be a good thing to settle in Palestine," the kaiser stated. "I am thinking of Hesse, for example, where there are usurers at work among the rural population. If these people took their possessions and went to settle in the colonies, they could be more useful." Herzl was taken by surprise, because earlier he had been assured by both Eulenburg and Buelow that Wilhelm II was by no means antisemitic. Herzl soon regained his confidence and launched an attack on antisemitism, only to be parried by Buelow, who commented that the Jews, by flocking to the opposition and even to the anti-monarchical parties, showed their ingratitude to the House of Hohenzollern. Herzl replied that Zionism would take the Jews away from the revolutionary parties. Buelow stuck to his guns and, when Wilhelm expressed confidence that the Jews would support the colonization of Palestine once they knew it was under his protection, the foreign minister interjected that the rich Jews were not in favor of it, nor were the big newspapers. At every opportunity, he contradicted the emperor, only stopping short of using "the little word No ... since the *voluntas regis* [royal will] is Yes." On one occasion, the kaiser had laid it down that "*suprema lex regis voluntas est*."

However, the emperor, who often allowed himself to be guided by his minister, in this case supported Herzl and agreed that Zionism was a "completely natural" solution. Buelow again raised a doubt as to the attitude of the Porte, although individual Turkish ministers might prove more amenable if offered sufficient bribes. But the kaiser brushed aside Buelow's misgivings, confident that it would make an impression if he showed interest. "After all, I am the only one who still sticks by the Sultan." Throughout the conversation, the kaiser looked at Herzl directly. Only when the latter spoke of the new overland route to Asia and the Persian Gulf did he stare into space, and his thoughtful expression revealed that Herzl's words had made an impact. The interview was concluded by the kaiser's undertaking to ask the sultan for a "chartered company under German protection." He shook Herzl's hand vigorously, promising to work the details out with Buelow. Events showed that he gravely misjudged the attitude of the Porte and his own minister.

Though flattering his sovereign as "a monarch of genius!" Buelow remained unconvinced. He told Herzl (after the kaiser had left) that in his opinion the Turks were unfavorably disposed and advised him to see Marschall, who possessed "exact information." Soon after, Herzl drove to the German Embassy, only to find that Marschall had left to attend the dinner in the kaiser's honor. It was there that the emperor made his diplomatic overture to the sultan and failed.

Wilhelm's account of his encounter with Abdul Hamid, quoted already, is too sketchy to enlighten us. In 1902, the Grand Duke of Baden told Dr. Bodenheimer that at the dinner the kaiser twice attempted to discuss the matter of Palestine with the sultan, but the latter displayed a "complete and ostentatious lack of understanding." Earlier, in 1901, Herzl was told by Count Eulenburg that he had been unable to discover what the difficulty had been. The sultan rejected the kaiser's sugges-

tion so brusquely that it was not possible to pursue it further; “we are anxious to remain on good terms with him. As a guest, the Kaiser could not, of course, press the subject.”

If the circumstantial evidence adduced above is correct, the kaiser’s diplomatic venture was clumsy. Wilhelm II has been described as quick, versatile, and responsive to ideas, but also as a man without depth; impulsive by nature, he scarcely penetrated the problems that he studied. In personal relations, he was benevolent and amiable; yet, on some occasions, he was inclined to act in a most erratic and tactless manner. Despite his intellectual gifts, there was much of the irresponsible dilettante in him. He undoubtedly had an instinct for politics, but he was no master of diplomacy. “What he needed most – and never had – was someone in authority over him.” It was unfortunate that Eulenburg was not present, because Buelow’s reliability was still to be tested.

Unaware of the emperor’s failure, Herzl drafted the official address he was to deliver in Jerusalem:

We are bound to this sacred soil through no valid title of ownership. Many generations have come and gone since this earth was Jewish. If we talk about it, it is only about a dream of very ancient days. But the dream is still alive, lives in many hundreds of thousands of hearts; it was and is a wonderful comfort in many an hour of pain for our poor people. Whenever foes oppressed us with accusations and persecutions, whenever we were begrudged that little bit of right to live, whenever we were excluded from the society of our fellow citizens – whose destinies we have been ready to share loyally – the thought of Zion arose in our oppressed hearts.

There is something eternal about that thought, whose form, to be sure, has undergone multifarious changes with people, institutions, and times.

Herzl stressed that Zionism was a political expression of an old idea. It aimed at solving the “Jewish Question” by modern means, but its essence was to realize the centuries-old dream of returning to Zion. “This is the land of our fathers, a land suitable for colonization and cultivation,” he said, “It cries out for the people to work. And we have among our brethren a frightful [*sic*] proletariat. These people cry out for a land to cultivate.” He argued that Zionism was a cause so worthy of sympathy that it would fully justify the emperor’s protection. The sultan, too, should be persuaded of the usefulness of the Jewish Land Company.

We are honestly convinced that the implementation of the Zionist plan must mean welfare for Turkey ... Energies and material resources will be brought to the country; a magnificent fructification of desolate areas may easily be foreseen; and from all this there will arise more happiness and more culture for many human beings. Our idea offends no-one’s rights or religious feelings; it breathes long-desired reconciliation. We understand and respect the devotion of all faiths to the soil on which, after all, the faith of our fathers, too, arose.

Moreover, Herzl added that Jewish aspirations transcended their purely national context. They were part of the human endeavor.

This is the fatherland of ideas which do not belong to one people or to one creed alone. The farther men advance in their morality, the more clearly do they recognize the common elements in these ideas. And thus the actual city of Jerusalem, with its fateful walls, has long since become a symbolic city sacred to all civilized men.

The exalted note echoed the messianic hope of the Hebrew prophets, who believed that the redemption of the Jewish people would coincide with the redemption of mankind. Lofty as its content was, it brought no definite result. Circumstances were against Herzl; it does not require much imagination to realize why “German protection of a Jewish chartered company” could not commend itself to the sultan. For years, Turkey had been struggling against the system of \*Capitulations, which provided the European Powers with an instrument for meddling in her internal affairs. “The spectre of a second Franco-Lebanon [in the form of a Judeo-]German Palestine” was alarming. Ahmed Tewfik, the Turkish foreign minister, who accompanied the kaiser on his tour of Palestine, made it clear that “the Sultan would have nothing to do with Zionism and an independent Jewish kingdom.” As a result, Wilhelm lost his enthusiasm for Zionism.

Herzl may have been flattered when the kaiser stopped for a while and chatted with him at the gates of Mikveh Israel, to the astonishment of the spectators watching the imperial procession on its way to Jerusalem. “Water is what it needs, a lot of water ... It is a land of the future,” the kaiser told Herzl, but the interview that Herzl had with the Legation counselor Klehmet, whom Buelow had brought with him from Berlin as his secretary, was discouraging. He objected to a number of passages in Herzl’s draft address and insisted on the deletion of the passages requesting the emperor to take the Land Company under his protection. It was noticeable, Bodenheimer observed, that the Foreign Ministry took great care to ensure that the kaiser would not, in a moment of enthusiasm, announce his protection of Zionist colonization.

The official audience with the emperor took place on November 2, 1898, in Jerusalem, again in Buelow’s presence. The emperor welcomed Herzl affably and displayed interest in his address, but then stated that the matter required “thorough study and further discussion.” The German and Jewish colonies had impressed him and served as an indication of “what could be done. The country has room for everyone”; the work of the Jewish colonists “will also serve as a stimulating example to the native population. Your movement, with which I am thoroughly acquainted, contains a sound idea.” He assured the deputation of his continued interest, but the conclusive statement that Herzl was so eagerly awaiting was not forthcoming, and the political aspect of the scheme was passed over. The kaiser said “neither yes nor no,” and Herzl inferred that his stock had depreciated. On the day itself, he still clung to the belief that the reception might have some “historic consequences,” but disillusion was soon to follow. The colorless official communiqué issued by the German news agency (of which Herzl learned on his return journey) dispelled earlier hopes. It read:



Kaiser Wilhelm has received a Jewish deputation... Replying to an address by its leader, Kaiser Wilhelm said that all those efforts which aimed at the improvement of agriculture in Palestine, and which furthered the welfare of the Ottoman Empire, commanded his benevolent interest, with due respect for the sovereignty of the Sultan.

The substitution of "Jewish" for "Zionist" was significant. Moreover, the emphasis on respect for Ottoman sovereignty also reflected the caution employed by German officials, but such an emasculated formula was hardly what Herzl expected. A month earlier he had asked Eulenburg whether it would not be wiser for the kaiser to receive the Zionist deputation privately. Unaware of the fiasco in Constantinople, he felt he had been misled. However, unlike his colleagues, he remained undaunted; the protectorate was not an end in itself, but only a means to achieve his objective. Herzl returned to Berlin empty-handed.

The ever sympathetic Grand Duke of Baden was willing to help and Count Eulenburg invited Herzl to meet him, but the attitude in Berlin remained negative. The duke admired Herzl's perseverance and suggested that, since Germany was in no position to recommend the Zionists in Constantinople, Austria might well be able to do so. Eulenburg also explained why it was impossible for Germany to sponsor Herzl's cause, but encouraged him and thought that the support of the British Parliament, where Herzl had managed to enlist 40 sympathizers, was "very important."

#### Relations with Turkey

Turkey was Herzl's main stumbling-block; to win her over was one of his main objectives. As early as 1895 (the year of his Zionist awakening), when the Eastern question had gained renewed prominence in diplomatic circles, he hoped that a favorable opportunity might arise for the Jews to claim Palestine as a "neutral land." But when prospects of Turkey's dismemberment faded, he veered in the opposite direction: "We shall bestow enormous benefits upon Turkey." If Palestine were ceded as "an independent country," the Jews would undertake to straighten out Turkish finances. If Jewish capital could be raised for the most exotic undertakings, would none be found for "the most immediate, the direst need of the Jews themselves?" he wrote to Baron Hirsch in 1895.

Briefed by Moritz Reichenfeld, director of the Union Bank of Vienna, he calculated that a sum of 18 million Turkish pounds would suffice to relieve the Porte of foreign debt; this he hoped to supplement with an additional 2 million. These calculations were, however, based on a misconception. The Turks were disinclined to grant even minor concessions, while the rich Jews were in no mood to raise the money. Dionys Rosenfeld, editor of the *Osmanische Post* in Constantinople, told Herzl on May 3, 1896 that, despite her financial straits and diplomatic weakness, Turkey would not relinquish sovereignty over any of her provinces, an opinion that Philip de Newlinski, a Polish agent, confirmed: the sultan would never part with Jerusalem.

To Newlinski's astonishment, Herzl did not betray any sign of despair. His instinct told him that not every statement should be taken at face value. Herzl's sympathetic presentation of Turkey's problems in the formerly hostile *Neue Freie Press* earned him the sultan's goodwill. Although Palestine remained out of the question, Herzl inferred from Newlinski that the Ottoman sovereign might accept some kind of arrangement. The only opponent was the grand vizier. He received Herzl in his capacity as a journalist and discussed current affairs, but Palestine was not mentioned. Herzl still hoped that once the benefits became more tangible opposition at the Yildiz Kiosk would melt away. Moreover, to dispel any lingering suspicions he modified his terminology. "Independent Jewish State" and "republic" were replaced by "autonomous vassal state ... under the suzerainty of the Sultan"; Jewish immigrants were to embrace Ottoman nationality and settle in Palestine at the express invitation of the sultan; they were to pay a tribute of 100,000 pounds, a sum which would rise to 1 million annually, *pari passu* with the increase in immigration. In return they would be granted autonomy and be allowed to maintain an army.

On his return from Constantinople (July 1896) Herzl's first priority was to raise the necessary funds. In London the idea of a Jewish state had an electrifying effect on the poor Jews of the East End, but the rich Jews remained aloof. A notable exception was Sir Samuel \*Montagu, MP (later the first Lord Swaythling), a prominent banker and a *Hovevei Zion* leader. Even so Montagu made his support conditional on that of Baron de Hirsch and Baron Edmond de \*Rothschild of Paris, but, as neither was moved by Herzl's appeal, Sir Samuel's sympathy had little practical value. Rothschild had no faith in Turkish promises and doubted the feasibility of the project. Warm as his patronage of the Jewish colonies in Palestine was, he was not prepared to accept the risk of having to maintain hundreds of thousands of immigrants. Moreover, his experience convinced him that a politically motivated project would not be favored in Constantinople. Rothschild's rejection was a bitter blow to Herzl, but despair was a luxury he could not afford. A year earlier he had written to Zadoc Khan, the chief rabbi in France, "I believe that we are at a great turning point of our history." If the big capitalists refused, perhaps the little Jews would band together and raise the money. A national movement had to be shouldered by the people themselves, not by single individuals. It was this reasoning, among other things, that prompted him to convene a World Zionist Congress.

It was in deference to Turkish susceptibilities that references to the idea of Jewish statehood were dropped. In the June 1897 issue of *Die Welt*, the Zionist organ, Herzl introduced for the first time the term *Heimstaette*, which means homestead, and prevailed upon the First Zionist Congress to incorporate it in its official program: "Der Zionismus erstrebt fuer das juedische Volk die Schaffung einer oeffentlich-rechtlich gesicherten Heimstaette in Palestina." He insisted on the wording "oeffentlich-rechtlich" (under public law) as against one of the alternative suggestions "voelker-rechtlich" (under



international law) which implied intervention by the foreign Powers in the internal affairs of a sovereign state. He dismissed the term “rechtlich” (under private law) since in the given context it was too weak. By contrast, “oeffentlich-rechtlich gesicherte Heimstaette” (secured by public law) was flexible enough to be interpreted in Constantinople as meaning by public Ottoman law, whereas, in London, Paris, and Berlin it could be read as international law, enabling the European Powers to guarantee the Jewish home. Like the Delphic utterances, it could be interpreted either way, but to Herzl it could have had only one meaning:

At Basel I founded the Jewish State. If I said this out loud today, I would be answered by universal laughter. Perhaps in five years, and certainly in fifty, everyone will know it. The foundation of a State lies in the will of the people. . . . Territory is only the material basis; the State, even when it possesses territory, is always something abstract . . . At Basel I created this abstraction . . . I gradually worked the people into the mood for a State and made them feel that they were its National Assembly.

The Turks, however, were not deceived, and on February 4, 1898, Tewfik Pasha told Herzl that he welcomed Jewish immigrants to Turkey but would not grant them any specific territory or autonomy. To Herzl such a solution, tantamount to a “settlement of new Armenians in Turkey,” was totally unacceptable. Nor did Wilhelm II prove to be Herzl’s savior; as it turned out, the kaiser’s *démarche* with Abdul Hamid did more harm than good. Strangely, it never occurred to Herzl that the intervention of a foreign Power would prejudice his case with the Ottoman ruler. Newlinski’s sudden death was an additional misfortune. Rejected by the German government and aware of the poor state of Zionist finances, Herzl almost reached breaking point. The big question mark inserted on April 17, 1899, in his diary reflected his state of mind.

However, it was Arminius Vámbéry, a Hungarian-Jewish Orientalist and traveler, who procured an audience with the sultan for Herzl. Vámbéry was fluent in 12 languages and changed his religion as lightly as his coat. As a young man in Constantinople he had embraced Islam and later, when appointed professor of Oriental languages at the University of Budapest, had adopted Protestantism. A personal friend of Abdul Hamid II and of King Edward VII, and an authority on Central Asia, he had carried out several diplomatic missions for both the British and Turkish governments. When Herzl met him on June 16, 1900, he was 70 years old, not clear about his own identity, whether he was a Turk or an Englishman, but his study of religions had made him an atheist. Herzl’s personality attracted him strongly, and, as events showed, his help to the Zionists was genuine. Beneath his cosmopolitan veneer lurked Jewish sentiments, and Herzl played on them well. “You and I belong to a race who can do everything but fail,” and on December 23, 1900 Herzl urged him on: “Your true mission is to help your people.”

Vámbéry kept his word. On May 8, 1901, on his return from Constantinople, he brought good news: the sultan would receive Herzl as a Jewish leader and an influential journal-

ist, though not as a Zionist. “You must not talk to him about Zionism. That is a phantasmagoria. Jerusalem is as holy to these people as Mecca is.”

However weighty the religious motives, what made the Turks so obdurate was the fear of intervention by the Powers. Should the Jews be allowed to immigrate freely, the Powers would seize an early excuse to occupy Palestine by military force. Ahmed Tewfik made little effort to conceal from David Wolffsohn how annoyed his government was with Herzl’s *The Jewish State* and reiterated the standard Turkish position.

That the sultan nonetheless did receive Herzl warmly is not surprising since with Zionism deliberately excluded there was nothing to sour the occasion. The meeting took place on May 17, 1901. Before the audience Herzl was presented with the Grand Cordon of the Order of Mejdidiye, the highest Turkish decoration, and, after they had met, the sultan gave him a diamond tie pin as a token of personal friendship. For Herzl the gifts had only a symbolic value. His impression of Abdul Hamid was of “a weak, cowardly, but thoroughly good-natured, man,” neither crafty nor cruel, but “a profoundly unhappy prisoner in whose name a rapacious, infamous, seedy camarilla perpetuates the vilest abominations.” In contrast, Herzl impressed his host as “a leader” and “a prophet.” The audience lasted for two hours. Herzl thanked Abdul Hamid for his benevolence toward the Jews, which the latter accepted as confirmation of an established fact: his Empire was wide open to Jewish refugees and, among the non-Muslims, they were the most reliable subjects. This gave Herzl an opening to proffer certain services, quoting the story of Androcles and the lion. “His Majesty is the lion, perhaps I am Androcles, and maybe there is a thorn that has to be pulled out.” The thorn, Herzl disclosed, was the public debt; if eliminated, Turkey would be given a new lease on life. Herzl put his finger on the sore spot of Turkey’s body politic and, noting how amused his host was by the parable, asked for permission to make the sultan’s pro-Jewish sentiments public from whatever platform and on whatever occasion he deemed fit. Abdul Hamid, unaware that Herzl had in mind the Zionist Congress, agreed and said that what Turkey needed most was the industrial skill of the Jewish people. He asked Herzl to recommend a financial adviser and promised “permanent protection” to those Jews who sought refuge in his lands.

Vámbéry, whom Herzl met on his return journey, thought that his achievement in Constantinople was “tremendous” and hoped that the concession for the charter company would be granted within a year. The press, too, presented the audience in rosy colors. Elated, Herzl hoped to be more successful with Jewish financiers, but was again disappointed. The Rothschilds remained unconvinced. Herzl complained to a friend that had it not been for this “miserable money” he would have been “almost through with the Sultan.”

In mid-July 1902, Herzl called at the Yildiz Kiosk for the fifth and last time. Believing the moment propitious, he asked that the Porte should reject French financial assistance and grant a concession for the Jewish colonization of

Mesopotamia and Haifa and its environs. Mesopotamia was merely camouflage for his real ambitions, and Haifa was only a stepping stone. He was careful not to disclose the identity of his “friends” in the world of high finance, and warned that the consolidation of the Ottoman public debt would be a “slow and complicated” process. The fees paid by the Company would be proportionate to the number of immigrants allowed to enter the regions concerned. Should the sultan make a special declaration, a favorable response throughout the world would follow. It would attract Jewish intelligence, capital, and enterprise, from which the Ottoman Empire as a whole would benefit.

Mehmed Said Pasha, the grand vizier, complimenting Herzl on his “humanitarian and commendable” aspirations, assured him that, in principle, the sultan was prepared to negotiate. But when the actual situation was considered, Said was decidedly negative: Turkey feared complications with the Great Powers, and even Haifa could not be conceded, since it was strategically important. Before leaving, Herzl obtained a warm letter from Abdul Hamid (“*Le Sionisme est très noble*”), but on matters of substance, the deadlock remained unresolved.

Turkey was Herzl’s main stumbling block. His policy toward it was based on give and take, but this principle proved unworkable, since the funds with which he hoped to restore Turkish solvency were denied him, and the sultan refused to issue a declaration that could have stirred the Jewish masses and warmed the hearts of Jewish financiers. Nor was it likely that Herzl would have been more successful had the necessary resources been placed at his disposal. The sultan was not in the habit of selling his land and limiting his sovereignty voluntarily. Fear of political complications, real and imaginary, should the Jews be allowed to establish themselves in Palestine, weighed far more heavily with the Turks than financial benefits, however alluring. In the circumstances, it was only the combined pressure of the Powers that could have forced Turkey to make certain concessions. It was therefore an illusion to expect that friendly advice by the kaiser to the sultan would be sufficient to put Herzl’s charter company into operation.

### **In Search of International Support – The Uganda Controversy**

Herzl did not lose hope. Some day, when the Turks were in dire need, they would become more amenable. In the meantime, he shifted his efforts to Britain in the expectation that it would allow him to establish a Jewish colony under its protection somewhere in the neighborhood of Palestine. His eyes had been turned to England since 1895. Initial reactions to his ideas reinforced his belief that London should be one of his main bases. Gladstone, the former prime minister, liked Herzl’s *The Jewish State*, while Bishop Wilkinson thought that Zionism was a practical proposition. Also the press reported sympathetically on the First Zionist Congress; the Conservative *Pall Mall Gazette* and the radical *Daily Chronicle* advocated a European conference for the settlement of the “Jewish

Question.” The Fourth Zionist Congress, which met in London (August 13–16, 1900), also attracted favorable comment, and friendly sentiments were expressed at Westminster and elsewhere. Yet, for all the sympathy that Herzl gained, no practical results ensued.

It was not until 1902 that negotiations with the British government began in earnest. With Palestine barred, Herzl hoped to acquire at least a staging post in its neighborhood; a foothold in Cyprus, in the Sinai Peninsula, or in the El-Arish area. Joseph Chamberlain, the colonial secretary, who met him on October 22 and again on October 23, 1902, thought Cyprus impracticable, but agreed that in the El-Arish area, or in Sinai, which was uninhabited, a self-governing Jewish colony could be founded, provided Lord Cromer, the British agent in Cairo, approved. To Herzl this was no mean achievement, and two days later he told Lord Rothschild enthusiastically that, should the plan materialize, “a refuge” and “a home for the hard-pressed Jews” would be created, while England would increase her influence in the southeastern corner of the Mediterranean and rally “ten million” friends to her side.

The plan did not materialize. The sultan, who exercised at least nominal sovereignty over Sinai, objected; so did the Egyptian government. The difficulty of providing irrigation was another factor weighing heavily against the plan in official calculations, and Cromer, by no means personally hostile, gave it the *coup de grâce*. In the spring of 1903, Chamberlain offered instead the Guas Ngishu plateau near Nairobi in East Africa – not “Uganda,” as Chamberlain and others later inaccurately called it – for a Jewish settlement under the British flag. Herzl thought it politically imprudent to reject it, since the very fact that a Great Power was negotiating with him amounted to a *de facto* recognition of his movement. He considered the offer primarily in *political* terms. Rather than impede, it might bring the realization of his ultimate goal nearer. For him it was merely a ploy to obtain British recognition of the Zionist movement and recognition of the Jews as a people, and to bring Britain gradually to the conclusion that only in Palestine would the “Jewish Problem” be solved.

This strategy is evident from the correspondence between Herzl and Leopold Greenberg, the editor of the *Jewish World* and the *Jewish Chronicle*, his representative *vis-à-vis* the Foreign Office. In a letter dated June 7, 1903, Greenberg wrote:

It seems to me intrinsically there is no great value in East Africa. It will not form a great attraction to our people for it has no moral or historical claim. But the value of the proposal of Chamberlain is politically immense: *if we use it to its full*. An essential of this is, I submit, that the Agreement that we get from the British government should be as well a definite declaration of its desire to assist our people. . . . That will be of infinite value to you both within our Movement and outside. It matters not if East Africa is afterwards refused by us – we shall have obtained from the British government a recognition that it cannot go back on and which no other British government will ever be able to upset. Everything after that will have to start from that point – the point of recognition of us as a Nation. It also follows

naturally that if it is found that East Africa is not good, they will have to make a further suggestion and this will ... gradually and surely lead us to Palestine.

Responding, Herzl insisted: "We must obtain from the British government recognition of us as a nation [*eine nationale Anerkennung*], and the Charter should include the following phrase: 'Bildung einer Colonialgesellschaft fuer die juedische Nation' [creation of a Colonization Company of the Jewish People]."

Greenberg was sorry to hear that the East Africa plan provoked some opposition. He ascribed it to misunderstanding. "Had it really been an alternative plan to Palestine, I would have opposed it myself most vehemently. At the moment, the most pressing problem is recognition of Jews as a people by one of the Great Powers... This should be achieved before our march toward Eretz Israel. We shall thereafter be able to rally our people and unite them under your banner."

The opposition to whom Greenberg referred included Max Nordau, Herzl's close friend and collaborator. Nordau had claimed that the area in East Africa was unsuitable for colonization and Jewish refugees would prefer to migrate to America or Europe instead. The Zionist Movement would lose its *raison d'être* and die a natural death.

Herzl had no difficulty in convincing Nordau. "This British East African beginning," he wrote to Nordau, "is politically a *Rishon le-Zion*." If the Zionists gratefully acknowledged Chamberlain's offer, it would enhance his sympathy and commit him to do something for them, should a Zionist fact-finding mission disqualify East Africa as a suitable place for settlement. Negotiations with the British government, Herzl elucidated, were tactical; they would bring the realization of Zionism sooner than all Baron Edmond de Rothschild's colonies. Moses also reached the Land of Canaan in a roundabout way. Nordau was converted and henceforth supported Herzl wholeheartedly.

It was at that time that Herzl received a letter from Vyachelslav Plehve, the Russian minister of the interior, with whom he had been negotiating. The letter is dated August 12, 1903 and is of outstanding importance. Plehve promised, on behalf of the czarist government, that Russia would intervene with the sultan in favor of the Zionists and would assist them in the organization of massive Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine with the ultimate objective of creating there a Jewish state.

Both in its phrasing and in its implications, Plehve's letter was of far greater moment than the British one. Sir Clement Hill of the Foreign Office referred to "the establishment of a Jewish colony" in East Africa, which would enable the settlers to observe "their National customs." Plehve favored the creation of "an independent state in Palestine," a term that Herzl himself was reluctant to use. The British document is tentative and guarded in its language, while the Russian one refers clearly to "moral and material support" on practical issues. The motives are also different. That of the British government was primarily humanitarian, while that of the Russian government

was shaped by domestic considerations. It reflected also the general line of Russian foreign policy aimed at the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. By fostering the separatist aspirations of the non-Turkish nationalities, Russia hoped not only to weaken Turkey from within, but also to emerge as the champion of those struggling for liberation.

Plehve's letter served as the cornerstone of Herzl's diplomacy. With such a diplomatic breakthrough, was there any point in continuing negotiations about East Africa? Considering Herzl's political *Weltanschauung*, it should not be too difficult to answer the question. The reason was that the British letter contained the key phrase that was missing from the Russian one; i.e., recognition of the Jews as a nation. This was important not only as a matter of principle, but also out of regard for practical politics. Herzl realized, long before the principle of self-determination became standard currency in international relations, that only nations were entitled to claim a territory. Moreover, support by only one Power was insufficient; only pressure by a Concert of Powers would have the desired effect on Turkey. Such a combination did in fact emerge during the conferences in London in 1912-13 following the Balkan Wars. However, by then Herzl was no longer alive. Moreover, Herzl's basic concept was that the "Jewish Problem" was an international problem which should be solved internationally, not by one single Power. Hence, the importance of bringing England into the picture.

The storm that erupted during the Sixth Zionist Congress was unforeseen. The response of the Zionist Executive, to whom Herzl brought Sir Clement Hill's letter of August 14, 1903, for approval, was positive, even enthusiastic. Jehiel "Tschlenow, the Russian Zionist leader, gave it his unqualified blessing, remarking that a Great Power had recognized the Jews as a nation and acknowledged their creative talents. When one of the few skeptics pointed out that Palestine had not been mentioned in the British letter, Herzl replied that it was written in "invisible ink," which, within several months, would become readable.

In his opening address to the Congress on August 23, 1903, Herzl assured the delegates that he had no other objective in mind than Palestine. "There is no change and there will be no change in our attitude toward the Land of our Forefathers," he declared. The speech was greeted with great enthusiasm. Years later, Weizmann acknowledged in his *Trial and Error* that the British letter had reestablished the national and juridical identity of the Jewish people.

The acrimonious controversy that ensued was largely due to a misunderstanding. Partly it was Nordau's fault for coining, in his otherwise brilliant speech, the term *ein Nachtsyl* (a night shelter). This made some of the delegates, like Shmarya \*Levin, initially a fervent supporter, suspect that the *Nachtsyl* was merely the thin end of a permanent shelter to the detriment of the idea of a return to Zion. The atmosphere became explosive, laden with emotion. The exchange turned into a debate among the deaf. Diplomatically discreet, Herzl was wary of revealing his true motives. There was also another

reason for his reticence. Suffering from a serious heart condition, he was unable to take an active part in the discussions. The Congress thus resembled a boat rocked in high seas deprived of its navigator.

The opponents, the *Neinsagers* (Nay sayers), were under a misapprehension. It was not the choice between "Zion or Uganda" that had been put on the agenda. What had been proposed was the dispatch of a Commission of Inquiry to East Africa. The Commission was to report back to the Congress, the Organization's sovereign body, for further reflection. Herzl anticipated that the report would be negative, as it was crystal clear to him that the Jews would not go to Africa in any case. The purpose of the exercise was to elicit from the British government yet another area of settlement and bring it gradually to the conclusion that there was no alternative to Palestine.

In retrospect, all the controversy was irrelevant, because the subject matter became unreal. After Chamberlain's resignation as colonial secretary in mid-September 1903, there was an appreciable diminution in interest in the Uganda project. Alfred Lyttleton, his successor, showed no enthusiasm for it, while the Foreign Office, largely on account of strong objections raised by the British governor in Kenya, became decidedly reserved. As soon as rumors spread of a possible influx of Jews, the white settlers in Kenya protested against the very idea of Jewish settlement. Embarrassed, the Foreign Office offered Leopold Greenberg another territory for settlement in Somali or in Tanaland, which, on all counts, was unsuitable for Europeans.

Herzl did not shed any tears, but greeted the news with undisguised satisfaction. In a circular letter to the members of the Zionist Executive, he declared that the East Africa project was dead. Simultaneously, he advised Greenberg to continue his pourparler with the Foreign Office. This Greenberg did with consummate skill. The results were spectacular.

On December 14, 1903, Greenberg met Lord Percy, the newly appointed under-secretary of state. Percy was a humanist and a philosemite. Sensing that settlement in Africa would not attract Jews, he asked Greenberg pointedly: "Was there any serious attempt to acquire Palestine? On the basis of what you told me, it ought to be the most desirable goal." He added that he wished to meet Herzl.

In spite of ill health, Herzl continued his diplomatic *tour de force*. On September 5, 1903, briefing Plehve on the proceedings of the Congress, he reiterated his argument that a massive and continuous emigration of Jews from Russia – "an emigration without the right of return" – would be possible only in the direction of Palestine. East Africa would attract only a few thousand proletarians. Hence, it lay in Russia's interest to support Zionist aspirations. And to Count zu Eulenburg, the German ambassador in Vienna and the kaiser's confidant, he confessed, "I will gladly let Wilhelm II have the glory of placing himself at the head" of the Concert of Powers on the Zionist question. Although Sir Clement Hill's letter was as generous as it [was] wise we stubborn Jews are more attached to the sand and chalk of Palestine" than to East Africa.

This line of reasoning dispels any lingering suspicion that Herzl had abandoned Palestine in favor of East Africa, for it appears that his main purpose was not necessarily to obtain the East Africa concession, but to ease Germany's (or any other Power's) task in gaining Palestine for the Zionists. East Africa was only the diplomatic stepping stone to the main goal. That there was no substitute for Palestine is also clear from Herzl's letter to Izzet Bey, which was his last contact with the Sublime Porte:

A territory we can find elsewhere. We have found it. You have undoubtedly read in the papers that the English government has offered me a territory of 60,000–90,000 square leagues in Africa, a rich, fertile country, excellent for our colonization. But nevertheless, I come back once more to my plan for finding the salvation of the Jewish people among the brothers of our race and our coreligionists who live under the scepter of the Caliph, bringing to them what we have ... the spirit of enterprise, industry, economic progress.

With no satisfactory response from Constantinople forthcoming, Herzl continued to consolidate his position among the Powers in the hope that they would exert concerted pressure on Turkey. His achievements in the Italian and Austrian capitals were noteworthy.

Victor Emmanuel III of Italy received Herzl graciously on January 23, 1904. Italy had no "Jewish Problem," but Zionism had its positive attractions. Palestine "will and must get into your hands," the king told Herzl. "It is only a question of time. Wait until you have half a million Jews there!" He thought that the partition of Turkey was inevitable, but that the Zionists in the meantime should refrain from using the term "autonomy"; the sultan disliked this word. Plehve's letter, in the king's opinion, represented "a great success." Herzl was able to witness the effect of the royal goodwill when he met Tommaso Tittoni, the foreign minister. The conversation was short but productive. The minister promised Herzl that he would write to the Italian ambassador at Constantinople and ask him to proceed jointly with the Russians.

Herzl was an Austro-Hungarian citizen and also enjoyed the confidence of successive prime ministers, Count Kazimierz Badeni (1895–97) and Ernst von Koerber (1900–4), but it was not before the autumn of 1903 that he could rely on his own government's support. Koerber was impressed by Herzl's achievements in Russia and assured him of his interest. On April 30, 1904, Herzl met Count Agenor von Goluchowski, the foreign minister. Initially, the latter was skeptical, but Plehve's letter made all the difference. Since Russia was in favor, he too could reach agreement with Herzl. Though strongly critical of antisemitism, he thought Herzl's project so praiseworthy that every government should support it financially. When the question was discussed on an international plane, "there must be no petty or half-way measures. If it were a question of only one or two hundred thousand Jews, the Great Powers could not be stirred into action. But they could if [they] asked Turkey for land and legal rights for 5–6 million Jews."

This was more than Herzl had dared to hope. However, Goluchowski declined Herzl's suggestion to take the lead in the matter; the moment was inopportune. It would be better if England took the initiative.

The foreign minister's reluctance to take the initiative arose from the need to keep in step with Russia. Since 1897, the two countries had had a secret agreement under which they undertook to maintain the *status quo* in the Balkans. This was qualified by Article 111, which specified that, should circumstances change, the contracting parties would act together. The Turkish provinces in Asia were not mentioned in the text, but it could be assumed that the principle in Article 111 applied there as well. This explains the change in Austria's attitude toward Herzl following the revelation of Plehve's letter.

But, in spite of the professed status quo principle, the long-term policy of the two Powers was aimed at the gradual dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. A Jewish Palestine, with a Jewish population of five to six million, could have fit well within this pattern. The sultan's suzerainty over Palestine (a formula advanced by Herzl) did not matter, since it was meant to be only nominal. Moreover, Goluchowski hoped that, if London committed itself to the Zionist cause (as the Italians had already done), this might revive the 1887 tripartite Mediterranean Agreement.

It would be safe to say that had Herzl remained alive, he would have traveled to London, not in connection with the East Africa project but to disclose to Lord Percy the Goluchowski proposal for creating a Concert of Powers in support of the Zionist aspiration.

Criticism, nonetheless, did not abate. It was not until mid-April 1904 (two and a half months before Herzl's death) that the leading opponents, the *Neinsagers*, admitted during the meeting of the Executive that they were mistaken and expressed their unswerving confidence in Herzl.

### An Assessment

The shifts of emphasis in Herzl's diplomatic activity from one capital to another gave the impression at the time that his policy was inconsistent, if not contradictory; but this was not so. His strategy was multilateral, though evolving in response to opportunities rather than by design. His basic principle was that the "Jewish Question" was an international one and should therefore be tackled within the framework of international law. He strove to gain recognition and support from all the Powers concerned; which one was to take the lead was of secondary importance. As Israel Zangwill stated, Herzl was not German, English, or Turkish, but the "first Jewish statesman since the destruction of Jerusalem."

Herzl died on July 3, 1904, at the age of 44. His premature death robbed the Zionist movement of a leader of international caliber. He had become a legendary figure in Jewish history, even in his own lifetime; what he accomplished did not make Zionism poorer, but rather made Jewry richer.

Herzl was a statesman without a state, a leader without a people to support him. If he impressed monarchs, minis-

ters, and intellectuals, it was thanks to his own qualities. He aroused both admiration and opposition, but nobody could ignore the magnetism of his personality, his intelligence, his sincerity, and his idealism. A visionary who sometimes naively believed that because an idea was good and just it must necessarily prevail, he was also a shrewd and down-to-earth politician with no illusions about human nature. A liberal and a great European, he became the foremost exponent of Jewish nationalism, which was neither chauvinist nor escapist, but an endeavor to restore Jewish honor within a normal national environment. "We shall enter the Promised Land ... under the banner of labor.... We must be a people of inventors, warriors, artists, scholars, honest merchants ... workmen." Though the *Judemot* was the primordial force which fired Herzl, he never lost sight of the universal aspect of the Jewish renaissance.

Herzl was the founder of political Zionism. He turned a mystique, a dream, into a political factor. The movement that he brought into being became the most dynamic force in modern Jewish history. He founded its organ, *Die Welt*, its financial arm, the Jewish Colonial Trust, and the Zionist Congress, which became the embodiment of Zionist parliamentarianism. Like any great man of history, he foresaw what was going to happen. His prediction of a Jewish catastrophe was fulfilled, tragically, during the Nazi Holocaust and, exactly 50 years and 8 months after he had recorded its creation in his diary, the State of Israel was proclaimed.

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[Isaiah Friedman (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)]

**HERZLIAH HEBREW TEACHERS' INSTITUTE.** Hebrew educational institution in the U.S. founded in New York in 1921 by Moses \*Feinstein as an afternoon high school. It was expanded into a teachers' seminary in 1923 and the high school was discontinued in 1966. Its aims were "the training of teachers in the ... Hebrew Language, Bible, Religion, Art, Drama, History, Tradition and general culture." In 1967 it merged with the Jewish Teachers' Seminary and People's University.

Prior to the establishment of the State of Israel, Herzliah was the chief instrument for Hebraism and Zionism in American Jewish education, with hundreds of alumni serving Jewish communities throughout North America. Its educational philosophy was based on the cultivation of Hebrew as a living language and a medium for cultural creativity and it was dedicated to national revival and the rebuilding of Israel, and a communal (non-denominational) approach to Jewish education and maximalist requirements in Hebrew schools. For a number of years Herzliah sponsored a young people's Hebrew theater (Habima Haktana). Leading exponents of Hebraism in