THE ZIONIST IDEA

A Historical Analysis and Reader

EDITED AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

AN AFTERWORD AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

by Arthur Hertzberg

The Jewish Publication Society
Philadelphia
THEODOR HERZL 1860-1904

THEODOR HERZL was born on May 2, 1860 in Budapest, Hungary, as the only son of a rich merchant. His mother, who adored him and remained, until his death, the dominant influence on his personal life, raised him to dream of himself as meant for great things. In the milieu of his birth such ambitions implied a career devoted neither to Jewish nor even to Hungarian interests. German was the dominant culture of the Austro-Hungarian empire and of central Europe as a whole, and the young Herzl, a voracious reader and adolescent poet, was soon hoping for a literary career in that language.

Herzl received his preliminary education in a technical school and high school in Budapest. When he was eighteen the family moved to Vienna, after his sister had died of typhoid, and he enrolled in the law faculty of the university. After gaining his doctorate in 1884, Herzl practiced for a year as a minor civil servant but soon gave up the law for good to devote himself entirely to writing. With relative ease he won regard as a feuilletonist (i.e., as familiar essayist, the favorite form of central European journalism) and as a writer of light, fashionable plays. In 1892 he was appointed to the staff of the Neue Freie Presse, the most important Viennese newspaper, and later that year Herzl was sent to Paris as its resident correspondent.

Herzl’s pre-Zionist writings were marked by a tone of brittle irony, even by cynicism. The productions of these early years contained scarcely a dozen lines of passing references to Jews. On the surface of his consciousness Herzl held the conventional view of the westernized Jewish intellectual in the late nineteenth century, that progress was on the march for all mankind and that complete assimilation was both desirable and inevitable. Nonetheless the emotional explosion that was soon to take place in his life and result in his Zionism had its roots in his earlier life and experience. His early Jewish education had indeed been skimpy, but his grandfather, Simon Loeb, a friend and congregant of Alkalai, had lived on to come to Budapest for his bar-mitzvah.
While still at the university he had encountered anti-Semitism in its new theoretical forms as racism in the writings of Eugen Dühring; more personally, he had withdrawn from his fraternity because it had taken part in a Wagner memorial meeting which had been transformed into an anti-Semitic demonstration. When he arrived in Paris anti-Semitism confronted him again, as a rising phenomenon of French life. Edouard Drumont, the author of La France Juive, the most notorious and successful of French anti-Jewish "classics," had just founded a newspaper and was attracting a noisy, though not yet influential, circle of supporters. Herzl wrote a long account for his paper and suggested in his analytic comments that hatred of the Jew was being used universally as a lightning rod to draw the revolutionary ire of the masses away from the real woes of society.

The Jewish problem was now in the forefront of his attention. The result of two years of pondering and intellectual and emotional zigzagging was a play, The New Ghetto. Its hero, Dr. Jacob Samuel, is Herzl himself. Samuel dies in a duel, crying out that he wants to get out, "out of the ghetto," but in the course of the play Herzl had made the point unmistakably that even the most assimilated of Jews are in an invisible ghetto in a gentile world. He still believed in the possibility of better understanding in the future between Jews and Christians, but these hopes were ended for him by the Dreyfus affair.

In 1894 Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish captain on duty with the French General Staff, was accused of spying for Germany. It was Herzl's duty as correspondent to provide his paper in Vienna with an account of the trial of Dreyfus and its effect on the public life of France. He was present at the École Militaire at the famous dramatic scene when Dreyfus was stripped of his epaulets and drummed out the gate in disgrace. For Herzl this moment was a hammer blow, and the howling of the mob outside the gates of the parade ground, shouting "à bas les Juifs," transformed him into the Zionist that he was to be.

In the early days of May 1895 Herzl requested an interview with Baron Maurice de Hirsch, the founder of Jewish colonization in Argentina, to interest him in his ideas of a Jewish national state. He followed up that interview by sending de Hirsch a long letter on June 3, 1895, which is the first written statement of his views. Baron de Hirsch was not receptive and Herzl was soon hoping that perhaps the Rothschilds would listen to him. In five days of feverish writing he poured into his diary a sixty-five-page pamphlet—in effect an outline of his Jewish State—which he entitled Address to the Rothschilds. There he wrote: "I have the solution to the Jewish question. I know it sounds mad; and at the beginning I shall be called mad more than once—until the truth of what I am saying is recognized in all its shattering force." Finally, after much reworking and some difficulty in finding a publisher, his Jewish State appeared in February 1896.

The last eight years of Herzl's life, even though he had to continue to work as literary editor of the Neue Freie Presse in order to support his family, were spent in feverish, superhuman Zionist activity. He founded Die Welt, a weekly organ for the Zionist movement, even before the first Zionist Congress convened in the summer of 1897, and called it proudly a Judenblatt, a Jew's sheet, the very term of derision that was being used by anti-Semites against a number of liberal European newspapers that were owned by Jews (be it added, by highly assimilated Jews, most of whom would mention Herzl in their papers only to call him a madman and an adventurer). In August 1897 more than two hundred delegates from all over the Jewish world answered his call to come to Basel, Switzerland, to found the World Zionist Organization. Here its purpose was proclaimed: "Zionism seeks to secure for the Jewish people a publicly recognized, legally secured, home in Palestine." At succeeding Congresses, of which there were six in Herzl's lifetime, all of the essential institutions and organizational forms of the movement, as they exist to this day, were fashioned.

For Herzl, the most important aspect of his work was in diplomacy—among others he negotiated with the Sultan of Turkey, Kaiser Wilhelm, the King of Italy and Pope Pius X—but, ironically, his one great success in the international arena almost wrecked the Zionist movement. In 1903 the British government offered him a large tract of land in Uganda, East Africa, for a Jewish self-governing settlement. Herzl proposed to the Congress of that year, the last one that he was to attend, that the offer be accepted, not as a substitute for Zion, but as a "temporary haven" (which seemed all the more urgently needed at the moment because this was also the year of a brutal pogrom in Kishinev, Russia). His authority won a bare victory for a vote to investigate Uganda, but the Zionists of Russia, led by the young Chaim Weizmann, among others, lined up against him. There were no practical results from this offer because it was withdrawn in a year or so by the British Government. The scenes of high drama which attended the discussion are, however, of crucial importance in the history of Zionism, for the seal was unalterably set on its devotion to a territorial state in Zion, and only in Zion.
Worn out by his exertions Herzl died not far from Vienna on July 3, 1904. Forty-five years later, on August 17, 1949, an airplane flying the blue-white flag of the new state of Israel brought his remains to the country of which he was the principal architect.

FIRST ENTRY IN HIS DIARY (1895)

Shavuot, 1895

I have been occupied for some time past with a work which is of immeasurable greatness. I cannot tell today whether I shall bring it to a close. It has the appearance of a gigantic dream. But for days and weeks it has filled me, saturated even my subconsciousness; it accompanies me wherever I go, broods above my ordinary daily converse, looks over my shoulder and at my petty, comical journalistic work, disturbs me, and intoxicates me.

What it will lead to it is impossible to surmise as yet. But my experience tells me that it is something marvelous, even as a dream, and that I should write it down—if not as a memorial for mankind, then for my own delight or meditation in later years. And perhaps for something between both these possibilities: for the enrichment of literature. If the romance does not become a fact, at least the fact can become a romance. Title: The Promised Land!

THE JEWISH STATE (1896)

Preface

The idea which I have developed in this pamphlet is an ancient one: It is the restoration of the Jewish State.

The world resounds with clamor against the Jews, and this has revived the dormant idea.

I claim no new discoveries; let this be noted at once and throughout my discussion. I have discovered neither the Jewish situation as it has crystallized in history, nor the means to remedy it. The materials for the structure I here sketch exist in reality, they are quite tangible; this anyone can establish to his own satisfaction. Hence, if this attempt to resolve the Jewish question is to be described by a single word, let it be labeled not a “fantasy,” but at most a “construction.”

I must first of all defend my sketch from being treated as “Utopian.” To do this is simply to protect superficial critics from committing a foolish error. Though, indeed, it would be no disgrace to have written an idealist Utopia. And very likely I could also assure myself easier literary success while avoiding all responsibility, if I were to offer this plan in the form of romantic fiction to a public that seeks to be entertained. But this is no amiable Utopia such as have been projected in abundance before and since Sir Thomas More. And it seems to me that the situation of the Jews in various lands is grave enough to make quite superfluous any attention-getting tricks.

An interesting book, Freiland, by Dr. Theodor Herzka, which appeared a few years ago, may serve to illustrate the distinction I draw between my construction and a Utopia. His is the ingenious invention of a modern mind thoroughly schooled in the principles of political economy; it is as remote from actuality as the equatorial mountain on which his dream state lies. “Freiland” is a complicated mechanism with numerous cogs and wheels that even seem to mesh well; but I have no reason whatever to believe that they can be set in motion. Even if I were to see “Freiland societies” come into being, I should regard the whole thing as a joke.

The present scheme, on the other hand, involves the use of a motive force which exists in reality. In view of my own limitations, I shall do no more than suggest what cogs and wheels constitute the machinery I propose, trusting that better mechanics than myself will be found to carry the work out.

The decisive factor is our propelling force. And what is that force? The plight of the Jews.

Who would dare to deny that this exists? We shall discuss it fully in the chapter on the causes of anti-Semitism.

Now everyone knows how steam is generated by boiling water in a kettle, but such steam only rattles the lid. The current Zionist projects and other associations to check anti-Semitism are teakettle phenomena of this kind. But I say that this force, if properly harnessed,
is powerful enough to propel a large engine and to move passengers and goods, let the engine have whatever form it may.

I am profoundly convinced that I am right, though I doubt whether I shall live to see myself proved so. Those who today inaugurate this movement are unlikely to live to see its glorious culmination. But the very inauguration is enough to inspire in them a high pride and the joy of an inner liberation of their existence.

To avoid all suspicion of Utopianism, I shall also be very sparing of picturesque details in my exposition. I expect, in any case, that unthinking scoffers will caricature my sketch in an attempt to vitiate the whole idea. A Jew, of excellent judgment in other respects, to whom I explained my plan, remarked that “It is the hallmark of Utopia to present facts of the future as facts in present reality.” This is a mistake. Every finance minister bases his budget estimates on future figures, and not only on projections of the actual average returns of previous years, or on previous revenues in other states, but sometimes on figures for which there is no precedent whatever; as, for example, in instituting a new tax. Anyone who has examined a budget knows that this is so. But is such a financial draft considered Utopian, even when we know that the estimates will never be rigidly adhered to?

But I expect far more of my readers. I ask the cultivated men whom I address to set aside many preconceptions. I shall even go so far as to ask those Jews who have most earnestly tried to solve the Jewish question to look upon their previous attempts as mistaken and impracticable.

There is one danger I must guard against in the presentation of my idea. If I am restrained in describing all these things that lie in the future, I may appear to be doubting the possibility of their ever being realized. If, on the other hand, I speak of them quite unreservedly as realized, I may appear to be building castles in the air.

I therefore state, clearly and emphatically, that I believe in the achievement of the idea, though I do not profess to have discovered the shape it may ultimately take. The world needs the Jewish State; therefore it will arise.

The plan would seem mad enough if a single individual were to undertake it; but if many Jews simultaneously agree on it, it is entirely reasonable, and its achievement presents no difficulties worth mentioning. The idea depends only on the number of its adherents. Perhaps our ambitious young men, to whom every road of advancement is now closed, and for whom the Jewish State throws open a bright prospect of freedom, happiness, and honor—perhaps they will see to it that this idea is spread.

I feel that with the publication of this pamphlet my own task is done. I shall not again take up my pen unless the attacks of serious opponents force me to do so, or it becomes necessary to meet objections and errors not already dealt with.

Is what I am saying not yet true? Am I ahead of time? Are the sufferings of the Jews not yet acute enough? We shall see.

It depends on the Jews themselves whether this political document remains for the present a political romance. If this generation is too dull to understand it rightly, a future, finer, more advanced generation will arise to comprehend it. The Jews who will try it shall achieve their State; and they will deserve it.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

THE UNDERSTANDING of economics among men actively engaged in business is often astonishingly slight. This seems to be the only explanation for the fact that even Jews faithfully parrot the catchword of the anti-Semites: “We live off ‘Host-nations’; and if we had no ‘Host-nation’ to sustain us we should starve to death.” This is one case in point of the undermining of our self-respect through unjust accusations. But how does this theory of “Host-nations” stand up in the light of reality? Where it does not rest on narrow physiocratic views, it reflects the childish error which assumes that there is a fixed quantity of values in continuous circulation. But it is not necessary to be Rip van Winkle, and wake from long slumber, in order to realize that the world is considerably altered by the continuous production of new values. The technical progress achieved in our own wonderful era enables even the dullest of minds with the dimmest of vision to note the appearance of new commodities all around him. The spirit of enterprise has created them.

Without enterprise, labor remains static, unaltering; typical of it is the labor of the farmer, who stands now precisely where his forebears stood a thousand years ago. All our material welfare has been brought about by men of enterprise. I feel almost ashamed of writing down so slight a remark. Even if we were a nation of entrepreneurs—such as absurdly exaggerated accounts make us out to be—we would require no “Host-nation.” We are not dependent upon the circulation of old values; we produce new ones.
persists wherever Jews live in appreciable numbers. Wherever it does not exist, it is brought in together with Jewish immigrants. We are naturally drawn into those places where we are not persecuted, and our appearance there gives rise to persecution. This is the case, and will inevitably be so, everywhere, even in highly civilized countries—see, for instance, France—so long as the Jewish question is not solved on the political level. The unfortunate Jews are now carrying the seeds of anti-Semitism into England; they have already introduced it into America.

Anti-Semitism is a highly complex movement, which I think I understand. I approach this movement as a Jew, yet without fear or hatred. I believe that I can see in it the elements of cruel sport, of common commercial rivalry, of inherited prejudice, of religious intolerance—but also of a supposed need for self-defense. I consider the Jewish question neither a social nor a religious one, even though it sometimes takes these and other forms. It is a national question, and to solve it we must first of all establish it as an international political problem to be discussed and settled by the civilized nations of the world in council.

We are a people—one people.

We have sincerely tried everywhere to merge with the national communities in which we live, seeking only to preserve the faith of our fathers. It is not permitted us. In vain are we loyal patriots, sometimes superlative; in vain do we make the same sacrifices of life and property as our fellow citizens; in vain do we strive to enhance the fame of our native lands in the arts and sciences, or our wealth by trade and commerce. In our native lands where we have lived for centuries we are still decried as aliens, often by men whose ancestors had not yet come at a time when Jewish rights had long been heard in the country. The majority decide who the “alien” is; this, and all else in the relations between peoples, is a matter of power. I do not surrender any part of our prescriptive right when I make this statement merely in my own name, as an individual. In the world as it now is and will probably remain, for an indefinite period, might takes precedence over right. It is without avail, therefore, for us to be loyal patriots, as were the Huguenots, who were forced to emigrate. If we were left in peace . . .

But I think we shall not be left in peace.

Oppression and persecution cannot exterminate us. No nation on earth has endured such struggles and sufferings as we have. Jew-baiting has merely winnowed out our weaklings; the strong among us defiantly return to their own whenever persecution breaks out. This was most
this step would mean the subjection of the majority to a recently despised minority, which, however, would possess neither military nor administrative authority of its own. I, therefore, hold the absorption of Jews by means of their prosperity to be unlikely. In countries which now are anti-Semitic my view will be seconded. In others, where Jews are for the moment secure, it will probably be passionately challenged by my coreligionists. They will not believe me until they are again visited by Jew-baiting; and the longer anti-Semitism lies dormant, the more violently it will erupt. The infiltration of immigrating Jews attracted to a land by apparent security, and the rising class status of native Jews, combine powerfully to bring about a revolution. Nothing could be plainer than this rational conclusion.

Yet, because I have drawn this conclusion with complete indifference to everything but the truth, I shall probably be opposed and rejected by Jews who are in comfortable circumstances. Insofar as private interests alone are held by their anxious or timid possessors to be threatened, they may safely be ignored, for the concerns of the poor and oppressed are of greater importance than theirs. But I wish from the very beginning to deal with any mistaken ideas that might arise: in this case, the fear that if the present plan is realized, it could in any way damage property and interests now held by Jews. I will, therefore, thoroughly explain everything connected with property rights. If, on the other hand, my plan never becomes anything more than literature, things will merely remain as they are.

A more serious objection would be that I am giving aid and comfort to the anti-Semites when I say we are a people—one people. Or that I am hindering the assimilation of Jews where there are hopes of achieving it, and endangering it where it is already an accomplished fact, insofar as it is possible for a solitary writer to hinder or endanger anything.

This objection will be brought forward especially in France. It will probably also be made in other countries, but I shall first answer only the French Jews, who afford the most striking example of my point.

However much I may esteem personality—powerful individual personality in statesmen, inventors, artists, philosophers, or leaders, as well as the collective personality of a historic group of human beings, which we designate “nation”—however much I may esteem personality, I do not mourn its decline. Whoever can, will, and must perish, let him perish. But the distinctive nationality of the Jews neither can, will, nor must perish. It cannot, because external enemies consolidate it. It does not wish to; this it has proved through two millennia of appall-
ing suffering. It need not; that, as a descendant of countless Jews who refused to despair, I am trying once more to prove in this pamphlet. Whole branches of Jewry may wither and fall away. The tree lives on.

Hence, if any or all of French Jewry protest against this scheme, because they are already “assimilated,” my answer is simple: The whole thing does not concern them at all. They are Iberian Frenchmen! This is a private affair for Jews alone.

However, the movement for the creation of the State which I here propose would harm Iberian Frenchmen no more than it would harm those who have “assimilated” in other countries. It would, rather, be distinctly to their advantage. For they would no longer be disturbed in their “chromatic function,” as Darwin puts it, but would be able to assimilate in peace, because present-day anti-Semitism would have been stopped for all time. For it would certainly be believed that they are assimilated to the very depths of their being if they remained in their old homes, even after the new Jewish State, with its superior institutions, had become a reality.

The departure of the dedicated Jews would be even more to the advantage of the “assimilated” than of the Christian citizens; for they would be freed of the disquieting, unpredictable, and inescapable competition of a Jewish proletariat driven by poverty and political pressure from place to place, from land to land. This drifting proletariat would become stabilized. Certain Christians today—whom we can call anti-Semites—feel free to offer determined resistance to the immigration of foreign Jews. Christian citizens cannot do this, although it affects them far more severely; for it is they who first feel the competition of individuals who engage in similar fields of enterprise, and who besides give rise to anti-Semitism where it does not exist, and intensify it where it does. This is a secret grievance of the “assimilated” which finds expression in their “philanthropic” undertakings. They organize emigration societies for incoming Jews. The ambiguous character of this project would be comical if it did not involve human suffering. Some of these charity institutions are created not for but against the persecuted Jews: Remove the paupers as quickly and as far away as possible. And thus, many an apparent friend of the Jews turns out, on closer examination, to be no more than an anti-Semite of Jewish origin in philanthropist’s clothing.

But the attempts at colonization made even by truly well-meaning men, interesting attempts though they were, have so far been unsuccessful. I do not think that one or another person took up the matter merely as an amusement, that they sent Jews off on their journeys in the same spirit as one races horses. The matter was too grave and too painful for that. These attempts were interesting, to the extent that they may serve on a small scale as an experiment fore-shadowing the Jewish State idea. They were even useful, for out of their mistakes we may learn how to proceed in a large-scale project. They have, of course, also done harm. The transplantation of anti-Semitism to new areas, which is the inevitable consequence of such artificial infiltration, seems to me the least of these aftereffects. Far worse is the fact that the unsatisfactory results inspire doubt among the Jews themselves as to the capacity of Jewish manpower. But the following simple argument will suffice to dispel this doubt for any intelligent person: What is impractical or impossible on a small scale need not be so on a larger one. A small enterprise may result in loss under the same conditions that would make a large one pay. A rivulet is not navigable even by boats; the river into which it flows carries stately iron vessels.

No human being is wealthy or powerful enough to transplant a people from one place of residence to another. Only an idea can achieve that. The State idea surely has that power. The Jews have dreamed this princely dream throughout the long night of their history. “Next year in Jerusalem” is our age-old motto. It is now a matter of showing that the vague dream can be transformed into a clear and glowing idea.

For this, our minds must first be thoroughly cleansed of many old, outworn, muddled, and shortsighted notions. The unthinking might, for example, imagine that this exodus would have to take its way from civilization into the desert. That is not so! It will be carried out entirely in the framework of civilization. We shall not revert to a lower stage; we shall rise to a higher one. We shall not dwell in mud huts; we shall build new, more beautiful, and more modern houses, and possess them in safety. We shall not lose our acquired possessions; we shall realize them. We shall surrender our well-earned rights for better ones. We shall relinquish none of our cherished customs; we shall find them again. We shall not leave our old home until the new one is available. Those only will depart who are sure thereby to improve their lot; those who are now desperate will go first, after them the poor, next the well to do, and last of all the wealthy. Those who go first will raise themselves to a higher grade, on a level with that whose representatives will shortly follow. The exodus will thus at the same time be an ascent in class.

The departure of the Jews will leave no wake of economic dis-
is to be created first, the Company last; but in this exposition the reverse order is preferable, because it is the financial soundness of the enterprise which will chiefly be called into question, and doubts on this score must be removed first.

In the conclusion, I shall try to meet every further objection that could possibly be made. My Jewish readers will, I hope, follow me patiently to the end. Some will make their objections in another order than that chosen for their refutation. But whoever finds his reservations rationally overcome, let him offer himself to the cause.

Although I speak here in terms of reason, I am well aware that reason alone will not suffice. Long-term prisoners do not willingly quit their cells. We shall see whether the youth, whom we must have, is ripe; the youth—which irresistibly draws along the aged, bears them up on powerful arms, and transforms rationality into enthusiasm.

CHAPTER 2. THE JEWISH QUESTION

NO ONE CAN DENY the gravity of the Jewish situation. Wherever they live in appreciable number, Jews are persecuted in greater or lesser measure. Their equality before the law, granted by statute, has become practically a dead letter. They are debarred from filling even moderately high offices in the army, or in any public or private institutions. And attempts are being made to thrust them out of business also: “Don’t buy from Jews!”

Attacks in parliaments, in assemblies, in the press, in the pulpit, in the street, on journeys—for example, their exclusion from certain hotels—even in places of recreation are increasing from day to day. The forms of persecutions vary according to country and social circle. In Russia, special taxes are levied on Jewish villages; in Romania, only a few persons are put to death; in Germany, they get a good beating occasionally; in Austria, anti-Semites exercise their terrorism over all public life; in Algeria, there are traveling agitators; in Paris, the Jews are shut out of the so-called best social circles and excluded from clubs. The varieties of anti-Jewish expression are innumerable. But this is not the occasion to attempt the sorry catalogue of Jewish hardships. We shall not dwell on particular cases, however painful.

I do not aim to arouse sympathy on our behalf. All that is nonsense, as futile as it is dishonorable. I shall content myself with putting the following questions to the Jews: Is it not true that, in countries where we live in appreciable numbers, the position of Jewish lawyers, doctors,
technicians, teachers, and employees of every description becomes daily more intolerable? Is it not true that the Jewish middle classes are seriously threatened? Is it not true that the passions of the mob are incited against our wealthy? Is it not true that our poor endure greater suffering than any other proletariat? I think that this pressure is everywhere present. In our upper economic classes it causes discomfort, in our middle classes utter despair.

The fact of the matter is, everything tends to one and the same conclusion, which is expressed in the classic Berlin cry: “Juden raus!” (“Out with the Jews!”).

I shall now put the question in the briefest possible form: Shouldn’t we “get out” at once, and if so, whither? Or, may we remain, and if so, how long?

Let us first settle the point of remaining. Can we hope for better days, can we possess our souls in patience, can we wait in pious resignation till the princes and peoples of this earth are more mercifully disposed toward us? I say that we cannot hope for the current to shift. And why not? Even if we were as near to the hearts of princes as are their other subjects, they could not protect us. They would only incur popular hatred by showing us too much favor. And this “too much” implies less than is claimed as a right by any ordinary citizen or ethnic group. The nations in whose midst Jews live are all covertly or openly anti-Semitic.

The common people have not, and indeed cannot have, any comprehension of history. They do not know that the sins of the Middle Ages are now being visited on the nations of Europe. We are what the ghetto made us. We have without a doubt attained pre-eminence in finance because medieval conditions drove us to it. The same process in now being repeated. We are again being forced into money-lending—now named stock exchange—by being kept out of other occupations. But once on the stock exchange, we are again objects of contempt. At the same time we continue to produce an abundance of mediocre intellectuals who find no outlet, and this endangers our social position as much as does our increasing wealth. Educated Jews without means are now rapidly becoming socialists. Hence we are certain to suffer acutely in the struggle between the classes, because we stand in the most exposed position in both the capitalist and the socialist camps.

Previous Attempts at a Solution

The artificial methods heretofore employed to remedy the plight of Jews have been either too petty, such as attempts at colonization, or falsely conceived, such as attempts to convert the Jews into peasants in their present homes.

What is achieved by transporting a few thousand Jews to another country? Either they come to grief at once, or, if they prosper, their prosperity gives rise to anti-Semitism. We have already discussed these attempts to channel poor Jews to new regions. This diversion is clearly inadequate and useless, if not actually harmful, for it merely postpones and drags out if not actually hinders the solution.

But those who would attempt to convert Jews into peasants are committing a truly astonishing error. For the peasant is a creature of the past, as seen by his style of dress, which in most countries is centuries old, and by his tools, which are identical with those used by his earliest forebears. His plow is unchanged; he sows his seed from the apron, mows with the time-honored scythe, and threshes with the flail. But we know that all this can now be done by machinery. The agrarian question is only a question of machinery. America must conquer Europe, in the same way as large landed possessions absorb small ones. The peasant is, consequently, a type which is on the way to extinction. Wherever he is preserved by special measures, there are involved political interests who hope to gain his support. To create new peasants on the old pattern is an absurd and impossible undertaking. No one is wealthy or powerful enough to make civilization take a single step backward. The mere preservation of obsolete institutions is a task vast enough to strain the capacities of even an autocratic state.

Will anyone, then, suggest to Jews, who know what they are about, that they become peasants of the old cast? That would be like saying to the Jew: “Here is a crossbow; now go to war!” What? With a crossbow, while others have small arms and Krupp cannon? Under these circumstances the Jews would be perfectly right in remaining unmoved when people try to place them on the farm. The crossbow is a pretty piece of armament, which inspires a lyrical mood in me whenever I can spare the time. But its proper place is the museum.

Now, there certainly are regions where desperate Jews go out, or at any rate are willing to go out, and till the soil. And a little observation shows that these areas, such as the enclave of Hesse in Germany and
some provinces in Russia—these areas are the very hotbeds of anti-Semitism.

For the do-gooders of the world who send the Jews to the plow forget a very important person, who has a great deal to say in the matter. That person is the peasant. And the peasant is absolutely in the right. For the tax on the land, the risks attached to crops, the pressure of large proprietors who produce at cheaper rates, not to mention American competition, all combine to make life difficult enough for him. Besides, the duties on corn cannot go on increasing indefinitely. For the factory worker cannot be allowed to starve, either; his political influence is, in fact, in the ascendant, and he must therefore be treated with ever-increasing respect.

All these difficulties are well known; therefore I refer to them only cursorily. I merely wanted to indicate clearly how futile have been past attempts—most of them well intentioned—to solve the Jewish question. Neither a diversion of the stream nor an artificial depression of the intellectual level of our proletariat will avail. And we have already dealt with the panacea of assimilation.

We cannot overcome anti-Semitism by any of these methods. It cannot be eliminated until its causes are eradicated. But are they eradicable?

**Causes of Anti-Semitism**

We now no longer discuss the irrational causes, prejudice and narrow-mindedness, but the political and economic causes. Modern anti-Semitism is not to be confused with the persecution of the Jews in former times, though it does still have a religious aspect in some countries. The main current of Jew-hatred is today a different one. In the principal centers of anti-Semitism, it is an outgrowth of the emancipation of the Jews. When civilized nations awoke to the inhumanity of discriminatory legislation and enforced us, our enfranchisement came too late. Legislation alone no longer sufficed to emancipate us in our old homes. For in the ghetto we had remarkably developed into a bourgeois people and we emerged from the ghetto a prodigious rival to the middle class. Thus we found ourselves thrust, upon emancipation, into this bourgeois circle, where we have a double pressure to sustain, from within and from without. The Christian bourgeoisie would indeed not be loath to cast us as a peace offering to socialism, little though that would avail them.

At the same time, the equal rights of Jews before the law cannot be rescinded where they have once been granted. Not only because their renunciation would be contrary to the spirit of our age, but also because it would immediately drive all Jews rich and poor alike, into the ranks of the revolutionary parties. No serious harm can really be done us. In olden days our jewels were taken from us. How is our movable property to be seized now? It consists of printed papers which are locked up somewhere or other in the world, perhaps in the strongboxes of Christians. It is, of course, possible to get at railway shares and debentures, banks and industrial undertakings of all descriptions, by taxation; and where the progressive income tax is in force all our movable property can eventually be laid hold of. But all these efforts cannot be directed against Jews alone, and wherever they might nevertheless be made, their upshot would be immediate economic crises, which would by no means be confined to the Jews as the first affected. The very impossibility of getting at the Jews nourishes and deepens hatred of them. Anti-Semitism increases day by day and hour by hour among the nations; indeed, it is bound to increase, because the causes of its growth continue to exist and are ineradicable. Its remote cause is the loss of our assimilability during the Middle Ages; its immediate cause is our excessive production of mediocre intellectuals, who have no outlet downward or upward—rather, no wholesome outlet in either direction. When we sink, we become a revolutionary proletariat, the corporals of every revolutionary party; and when we rise, there rises also our terrifying financial power.

**Effects of Anti-Semitism**

The pressure applied to us does not improve us, for we are no different from ordinary people. It is true enough that we do not love our enemies; but he alone who has quite mastered himself dares throw that up to us. Oppression naturally creates hostility against oppressors, and our hostility in turn increases the pressure. It is impossible to escape this vicious circle.

"No!" some softhearted visionaries will say. "Not! It is possible! Possible by means of the perfectibility of man."

Is it really necessary for me, at this late stage, to show what sentimental drivel this is? He who would peg the improvement of conditions on the goodness of all mankind would indeed be writing a Utopia.

I referred previously to our "assimilation." I do not for a moment wish to imply that I desire such an end. Our national character is too
glorious in history and, in spite of every degradation, too noble to make its annihilation desirable. Though perhaps we could succeed in vanishing without a trace into the surrounding peoples if they would let us be for just two generations. But they will not let us be. After brief periods of toleration, their hostility erupts again and again. When we prosper, it seems to be unbearable irritating, for the world has for many centuries been accustomed to regarding us as the most degraded of the poor. Thus out of ignorance or ill will they have failed to observe that prosperity weakens us as Jews and wipes away our differences. Only pressure drives us back to our own; only hostility stamps us ever again as strangers.

Thus we are now, and shall remain, whether we would or not, a group of unmistakable cohesiveness.

We are one people—our enemies have made us one whether we will or not, as has repeatedly happened in history. Affliction binds us together, and thus united, we suddenly discover our strength. Yes, we are strong enough to form a State, and, indeed, a model State. We possess all the requisite human and material resources.

This would, accordingly, be the appropriate place to give an account of what has been somewhat crudely termed our "human material." But it would not be appreciated till the broad outlines of the plan, on which everything depends, have first been marked out.

The Plan

The whole plan is essentially quite simple, as it must necessarily be if it is to be comprehensible to all.

Let sovereignty be granted us over a portion of the globe adequate to meet our rightful national requirements; we will attend to the rest.

To create a new State is neither ridiculous nor impossible. Havent we witnessed the process in our own day, among nations which were not largely middle class as we are, but poorer, less educated, and consequently weaker than ourselves? The governments of all countries scourged by anti-Semitism will be keenly interested in obtaining sovereignty for us.

The plan, simple in design but complicated in execution, will be executed by two agencies: the Society of Jews and the Jewish Company.

The scientific plan and political policies which the Society of Jews will establish will be carried out by the Jewish Company.

The Jewish Company will be the liquidating agent for the business interests of departing Jews, and will organize trade and commerce in the new country.

We must not visualize the exodus of the Jews as a sudden one. It will be gradual, proceeding over a period of decades. The poorest will go first and cultivate the soil. They will construct roads, bridges, rail- ways, and telegraph installations, regulate rivers, and provide themselves with homesteads, all according to predetermined plans. Their labor will create trade, trade will create markets, and markets will attract new settlers—for every man will go voluntarily, at his own expense and his own risk. The labor invested in the soil will enhance its value. The Jews will soon perceive that a new and permanent frontier has been opened up for that spirit of enterprise which has herefore brought them only hatred and obloquy.

The founding of a State today is not to be accomplished in the manner that a thousand years ago would have been the only possible one. It is silly to revert to older levels of civilization, as many Zionists propose. Supposing, for example, we were obliged to clear a country of wild beasts, we should not set about it in the fashion of the fifth-century Europeans. We should not take spear and lance and go out individually in pursuit of bears; we would organize a grand and glorious hunting party, drive the animals together, and throw a molotn bomb into their midst.

If we planned to erect buildings, we should not drive a few shaky piles in a marsh like the lake dwellers, but should build as men build now. Indeed, we shall build in bolder and more stately style than has ever been done before; for we now possess means which heretofore did not exist.

The emigrants standing lowest in the economic scale will be gradually followed by those of the next grade. Those now in desperate straits will go first. They will be led by the intellectual mediocrities whom we produce so abundantly and who are oppressed everywhere.

Let this pamphlet serve as the beginning of a general discussion on the question of Jewish emigration. That does not mean to suggest, however, that the question should be called to a vote. Such an approach would ruin the cause from the outset. Whoever wishes may stay behind. The opposition of a few individuals is quite immaterial.

Who would go with us, let him fall in behind our banner and fight for the cause with word and pen and deed.

Those Jews who agree with our State idea will rally around the Society. Thereby they will give it the authority in the eyes of governments to confer and treat on behalf of our people. The Society will
be recognized as, to put it in terminology of international law, a State-creating power. And this recognition will, in effect, mean the creation of the State.

Should the powers show themselves willing to grant us sovereignty over a neutral land, then the Society will enter into negotiations for the possession of this land. Here two regions come to mind: Palestine and Argentina. Significant experiments in colonization have been made in both countries, though on the mistaken principle of gradual infiltration of Jews. Infiltration is bound to end badly. For there comes the inevitable moment when the government in question, under pressure of the native populace—which feels itself threatened—puts a stop to further influx of Jews. Immigration, therefore, is futile unless it is based on our guaranteed autonomy.

The Society of Jews will treat with the present authorities in the land, under the sponsorship of the European powers, if they prove friendly to the plan. We could offer the present authorities enormous advantages, assume part of the public debt, build new thoroughfares, which we ourselves would also require, and do many other things. The very creation of the Jewish State would be beneficial to neighboring lands, since the cultivation of a strip of land increases the value of its surrounding districts.

_Palestine or Argentina?_

Is Palestine or Argentina preferable? The Society will take whatever it is given and whatever Jewish public opinion favors. The Society will determine both these points.

Argentina is one of the most fertile countries in the world, extends over a vast area, is sparsely populated, and has a temperate climate. It would be in its own highest interest for the Republic of Argentina to cede us a portion of its territory. The present infiltration of Jews has certainly produced some discontent, and it would be necessary to enlighten the Republic on the intrinsic difference of the new immigration of Jews.

Palestine is our unforgettable historic homeland. The very name would be a marvelously effective rallying cry. If His Majesty the Sultan were to give us Palestine, we could in return undertake the complete management of the finances of Turkey. We should there form a part of a wall of defense for Europe in Asia, an outpost of civilization against barbarism. We should as a neutral state remain in contact with all Europe, which would have to guarantee our existence.

The holy places of Christendom could be placed under some form of international extraterritoriality. We should form a guard of honor about these holy places, answering for the fulfillment of this duty with our existence. The guard of honor would be the great symbol of the solution of the Jewish question after what were for us eighteen centuries of affliction.

**CONCLUSION**

_How much remains_ to be elaborated, how many defects, how many harmful superficialities, and how many useless repetitions in this pamphlet which I have so long considered and so frequently revised!

But a fair-minded reader, who has sufficient understanding to grasp the spirit of my words, will not be repelled by these defects. He will rather be roused thereby to enlist his intelligence and energy in a project which is not one man’s alone and improve it.

Have I not explained obvious things and overlooked important objections?

I have tried to meet some objections; but I know that there are many more, high-minded and base.

It is one of the high-minded objections that the Jews are not the only people in the world who are in a state of distress. But I should think that we might well begin by removing a little of this misery, be it only our own for the time being.

It might further be said that we ought not to create new distinctions between people; we ought not to raise fresh barriers, we should rather make the old disappear. I say that those who think in this way are amiable visionaries; and the Homeland idea will go on flourishing long after the dust of their bones will have been scattered without trace by the winds. Universal brotherhood is not even a beautiful dream. Conflict is essential to man’s highest efforts.

Well, then? The Jews, in their own State, will likely have no more enemies, and in their prosperity they will decline and dwindle, so that the Jewish people will soon disappear altogether? I imagine that the Jews will always have sufficient enemies, just as every other nation. But once settled in their own land, they can never again be scattered all over the world. The Diaspora cannot be revived, unless all of civilization collapses. Only a simpleton could fear this. The civilized world of today has sufficient power to defend itself.
The base objections are innumerable, just as there are indeed more base men than noble in this world. I have tried to refute some of the narrow-minded notions. Whoever would rally behind the white flag with the seven stars must assist in this campaign of enlightenment. It may be that it is against many a malicious, narrow-minded, shortsighted Jew that the battle will first have to be joined.

Will it not be said that I am providing weapons for the anti-Semites? How so? Because I admit the truth? Because I do not maintain that there are none but excellent men among us?

Will it not be said that I am suggesting a way in which we can be injured? This I categorically deny. My proposal can be carried out only with the free consent of a majority of Jews. Action may be taken against individuals, even against groups of the most powerful Jews, but never and by no means by governments against all Jews. The equal rights of the Jew before the law once granted cannot be rescinded, for the first attempt would immediately drive all Jews, rich and poor alike, into the ranks of revolutionary parties. The very beginning of official discrimination against the Jews has invariably brought about economic crises. Very little, therefore, can effectively be done against us that will not redound to the detriment of the perpetrator. Meantime hatred grows apace. The rich do not feel it much. But our poor! Let us ask our poor, who have been more severely proletarized since the last resurgence of anti-Semitism than ever before.

Will some of our well to do say that the pressure is not yet severe enough to justify emigration, and that even the forcible expulsions that have occurred show how unwilling our people are to depart? True, because they do not know whither! Because they only pass from one trouble on to the next. But we are showing them the way to the Promised Land. And the splendid force of enthusiasm must fight against the terrible force of habit.

Persecutions are no longer as vicious as they were in the Middle Ages? True, but our sensitivity has increased, so that we feel no diminution in our suffering. Prolonged persecution has strained our nerves.

Will people say, again, that the venture is hopeless, because even if we obtain the land with sovereignty over it, the poor only will go along? It is precisely they whom we need at first! Only desperate men make good conquerors.

Will some one say: If it were feasible it would have been done long ago?

It has never yet been possible. Now it is possible. A hundred, even fifty, years ago it would have been sheer fantasy. Today it is reality. The rich, who enjoy a comprehensive acquaintance with all technical advances, know full well how much can be done for money. And this is how it will go: precisely the poor and simple, who have no idea what power man already exercises over the forces of Nature, will have the staunchest faith in the new message. For these have never lost their hope of the Promised Land.

Here you have it, Jews! Not fiction, nor yet fraud! Every man may convince himself of it, for every man will carry over with him a portion of the Promised Land—one in his head, another in his arms, another in his acquired possessions.

Now, all this may appear to be a drawn-out affair. Even in the most favorable circumstances, many years might elapse before the founding of the State is under way. In the meantime, Jews in a thousand different places will suffer insult, mortification, abuse, drubbings, deportation, and death. But no; once we begin to execute the plan, anti-Semitism will cease at once and everywhere. For it is the conclusion of peace. When the Jewish Company has been formed, the news will be carried in a single day to the utmost ends of the globe by the lightning speed of our telegraph wires.

And immediate relief will ensue. The intellectuals whom we produce so superabundantly in our middle classes will find an immediate outlet in our organizations, as our first technicians, officers, professors, officials, lawyers, physicians. And so it will continue, swiftly but smoothly.

Prayers will be offered up in the temples for the success of the project. And in the churches as well! It is the relief from the old burden, under which all have suffered.

But first the minds must be enlightened. The idea must make its way into the uttermost miserable holes where our people dwell. They will awaken from barren brooding. For into all our lives will come a new meaning. Every man need think only of himself, and the movement will become an overwhelming one.

And what glory awaits the selfless fighters for the cause!

Therefore I believe that a wondrous breed of Jews will spring up from the earth, The Maccabees will rise again.

Let me repeat once more my opening words: The Jews who will it shall achieve their State.

We shall live at last as free men on our own soil, and in our own homes peacefully die.
The world will be liberated by our freedom, enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness.

And whatever we attempt there for our own benefit will redound mightily and beneficially to the good of all mankind.

FIRST CONGRESS ADDRESS (1897)

Delivered at Basel, August 29, 1897

FELLOW DELEGATES: As one of those who called this Congress into being I have been granted the privilege of welcoming you. This I shall do briefly, for if we wish to serve the cause we should economize the valuable moments of the Congress. There is much to be accomplished within the space of three days. We want to lay the foundations of the edifice which is one day to house the Jewish people. The task is so great that we may treat of it in none but the simplest terms. So far as we can now foresee, a summary of the present status of the Jewish question will be submitted within the coming three days. The tremendous bulk of material on hand is being classified by the chairman of our committees.

We shall hear reports of the Jewish situation in the various countries. You all know, even if only in a vague way, that with few exceptions the situation is not cheering. Were it otherwise we should probably not have convened. The unity of our destiny has suffered a long interruption, although the scattered fragments of the Jewish people have everywhere endured similar vicissitudes. It is only in our days that the marvels of communication have brought about mutual understanding and union between isolated groups. And in these times, so progressive in most respects, we know ourselves to be surrounded by the old, old hatred. Anti-Semitism—you know it, alas, too well!—is the up-to-date designation of the movement. The first impression which it made upon the Jews of today was one of astonishment, which gave way to pain and resentment. Perhaps our enemies are quite unaware how deeply they wounded the sensibilities of just those of us who were possibly not the primary objects of their attack. That very part of Jewry which is modern and cultured, which has outgrown the ghetto...
a jot of the culture we have acquired. On the contrary, we are aiming toward a broader culture, such as an increase of knowledge brings with it. As a matter of fact, the Jews have always been more active mentally than physically.

It was because the practical forerunners of Zionism realized this that they inaugurated agricultural work for the Jews. We shall never be able, nor shall we desire, to speak of these attempts at colonization in Palestine and in Argentina otherwise than with genuine gratitude. But they spoke the first, not the last word of the Zionist movement. For the Zionist movement must be greater in scope if it is to be at all. A people can be helped only by its own efforts, and if it cannot help itself it is beyond succor. But we Zionists want to rouse the people to self-help. No premature, unwholesome hopes should be awakened in this direction. This is another reason why public procedure, as it is planned by our Congress, is so essential.

Those who give the matter careful consideration must surely admit that Zionism cannot gain its ends otherwise than through an unequivocal understanding with the political units involved. It is generally known that the difficulties of obtaining colonization rights were not created by Zionism in its present form. One wonders what motives actuate the narrators of these fables. The confidence of the government with which we want to negotiate regarding the settlement of Jewish masses on a large scale can be gained by plain language and upright dealing. The advantages which an entire people is able to offer in return for benefits received are so considerable that the negotiations are vested with sufficient importance a priori. It would be an idle beginning to engage in lengthy discussions today regarding the legal form which the agreement will finally assume. But one thing is to be adhered to inviolably: The agreement must be based on rights, and not on toleration. Indeed we have had enough experience of toleration and of “protection” which could be withdrawn at any time.

Consequently the only reasonable course of action which our movement can pursue is to work for publicly legalized guarantees. The results of colonization as it has been carried on hitherto were quite satisfactory within its limitations. It confirmed the much disputed fitness of the Jews for agricultural work. It established this proof for all time, as the legal phrase has it. But colonization in its present form is not, and cannot be, the solution of the Jewish question. And we must admit unreservedly that it has failed to evoke much sympathy. Why? Because the Jews know how to calculate; in fact, it has been asserted that they calculate too well. Thus, if we assume that there are nine million Jews in the world, and that it would be possible to colonize ten thousand Jews in Palestine every year, the Jewish question would require nine hundred years for its solution. This would seem impracticable.

On the other hand, you know that to count on ten thousand settlers a year under existing circumstances is nothing short of fantastic. The Turkish government would doubtless unearth the old immigration restrictions immediately, and to that we would have little objection. For if anyone thinks that the Jews can steal into the land of their fathers, he is deceiving either himself or others. Nowhere is the coming of Jews so promptly noted as in the historic home of the race, for the very reason that it is the historic home. And it would by no means be to our interest to go there prematurely. The immigration of Jews signifies an unhoped-for accession of strength for the land which is now so poor; in fact, for the whole Ottoman Empire. Besides, His Majesty the Sultan has had excellent experiences with his Jewish subjects, and he has been an indulgent monarch to them in turn. Thus, existing conditions point to a successful outcome, provided the whole matter is intelligently and felicitously treated. The financial help which the Jews can give to Turkey is by no means inconsiderable and would serve to obviate many an internal ill from which the country is now suffering. If the Near East question is partially solved together with the Jewish question, it will surely be of advantage to all civilized peoples. The advent of Jews would bring about an improvement in the situation of the Christians in the Orient.

But it is not solely from this aspect that Zionism may count upon the sympathy of the nations. You know that in some lands the Jewish problem has come to mean calamity for the government. If it sides with the Jews, it is confronted by the ire of the masses; if it sides against the Jews, it may call considerable economic consequences down upon its head because of the peculiar influence of the Jews upon the business affairs of the world. Examples of the latter may be found in Russia. But if the government maintains a neutral attitude, the Jews find themselves unprotected by the established regime and rush into the arms of the revolutionaries. Zionism, or self-help for the Jews, points to a way out of these numerous and extraordinary difficulties. Zionism is simply a peacemaker. And it suffers the usual fate of peacemakers, in being forced to fight more than anyone else. But should the accusation that we are not patriotic figure among the more or less sincere arguments directed against our movement, this equivo-
cal objection carries its own refutation with it. Nowhere can there be a question of an exodus of all the Jews. Those who are able or who wish to be assimilated will remain behind and be absorbed. When once a satisfactory agreement is concluded with the various political units involved and a systematic Jewish migration begins, it will last only so long in each country as that country desires to be rid of its Jews. How will the current be stopped? Simply by the gradual decrease and the final cessation of anti-Semitism. Thus it is that we understand and anticipate the solution of the Jewish problem.

All this has been said time and again by my friends and by myself. We shall spare no pains to repeat it again and again until we are understood. On this solemn occasion, when Jews have come together from so many lands at the age-old summons of nationality, let our profession of faith be solemnly repeated. Should we not be stirred by a premonition of great events when we remember that at this moment the hopes of thousands upon thousands of our people depend upon our assemblage? In the coming hour the news of our deliberations and decisions will fly to distant lands, over the seven seas. Therefore enlightenment and comfort should go forth from this Congress. Let everyone find out what Zionism really is, Zionism, which was rumored to be a sort of millennial marvel—that it is a moral, lawful, humanitarian movement, directed toward the long yearned-for goal of our people. It was possible and permissible to ignore the spoken or written utterances of individuals within our ranks. Not so with the actions of the Congress. Thus the Congress, which is henceforth to be ruler of its discussions, must govern as a wise ruler.

Finally, the Congress will provide for its own continuance, so that we do not disperse once more ineffectual and ephemeral. Through this Congress we are creating an agency for the Jewish people such as it has not possessed heretofore, an agency of which it has stood in urgent need. Our cause is too great to be left to the ambition or the whim of individuals. It must be elevated to the realm of the impersonal if it is to succeed. And our Congress shall live forever, not only until the redemption from age-long suffering is effected, but afterward as well. Today we are here in the hospitable limits of this free city—where shall we be next year?

But wherever we shall be, and however distant the accomplishment of our task, let our Congress be earnest and high-minded, a source of welfare to the unhappy, of defiance to none, of honor to all Jewry. Let it be worthy of our past, the renown of which, though remote, is eternal!

AFTER A MASS MEETING IN THE EAST END (1896)

London, July 15, 1896

ON SUNDAY, while I sat on the platform I was in a curious mood. I saw and heard the rising of my legend. The people are sentimental; the masses do not see clearly. I believe that even now they no longer have a clear idea of me. A light mist has begun to beat about me, which will perhaps deepen into a cloud in the midst of which I shall walk. But even now if they no longer see my outline clearly, at least they understand that I mean well by them, I am the man of the poor.
Nordau was Herzl's most important colleague and disciple; indeed in 1896 when he accepted Herzl's Zionist faith, Nordau was much the more famous of the two, for he already possessed a European-wide reputation as an avant-garde writer and critic of society.

Like Herzl, he was born in Budapest and received a comparable education under German cultural influence. Nordau began to write in his adolescence, and by 1873 his literary gifts were sufficiently well regarded to earn him the post of Viennese correspondent of the important German language newspaper of Budapest, the Pester Lloyd. After two years of travel, which gave him the material for his first book, From the Kremlin to the Alhambra, Nordau returned to Budapest in 1875 to complete his studies for a medical degree. By 1880 he was permanently domiciled in Paris, practicing as a doctor, writing for a number of newspapers in the German language, especially for the Vossische Zeitung of Berlin, and publishing a succession of books.

His great literary succès de scandale occurred in 1883, when his Conventional Lies of Civilization appeared. In the name of science and positivist philosophy, which were then the dominant advanced thought of Europe, he wrote an uncompromising analysis of the cultural scene and a particularly violent attack upon religion. The Catholic Church placed the book on the Index; it was banned in Austria, Russia, and England; and the ensuing publicity resulted in seventy-three editions in a variety of languages. In two later volumes, Paradoxes and Degeneration, he widened his attacks to blast such great names in literature as Ibsen and Maeterlinck. Abnormal psychology was being created as a modern discipline in the 1880's and the Italian investigator Cesare Lombroso had called attention to the intimate relationship that he saw between genius and madness. Nordau took up the argument to assail all the writers he disliked as hypocrites, neurotics, and degenerates. In a sense he was a Freudian kind of critic of literature a generation before this genre appeared.
At the zenith of his career Nordau regarded himself as a European, personally not involved in any national allegiance, who was equally concerned for the downtrodden of all nations and religions. As an old friend, he was one of the first to whom Theodor Herzl came to expound his Zionist ideas. There is even a perhaps apocryphal story that Herzl came to Nordau not only as friend but also to consult him as psychiatrist, in the fear that he was out of his mind. After several days of conversation Nordau supposedly stretched out his hand to Herzl to say: “If you are crazy, so am I.” Nordau, at any rate, had also been present at the degradation of Dreyfus on the parade ground of the Ecole Militaire and had also been deeply affected emotionally by the anti-Semitic outrages which attended that scene. Nordau had even deeper roots than Herzl in the Jewish tradition, even though he had been alienated from Jewish concerns for all his adult life, because his father, who was a teacher of Hebrew by profession, had provided him with a good early education in the sacred tongue.

Nordau’s adherence to Zionism gave it the stamp of approval as “advanced” thought and helped attract younger Jewish intellectuals, like Bernard Lazare and Israel Zangwill, to the new cause. A master of rhetoric, he gave an opening address on the state of Jewry at the First Zionist Congress and repeated this performance at every one until the tenth. However, within a few years after the death of Herzl, Nordau found himself estranged from the new leadership of the Zionist movement. He remained an uncompromising “messianist,” contemptuous both of philanthropic and cultural Zionism. The organization was now in the hands of the “practical” Zionists, who believed that the ultimate political aim of the movement should be subordinated to the immediate work of building up the Jewish settlement in Palestine.

When World War I broke out he announced his pacifism but nonetheless, as an Austrian subject, he had to leave France for Madrid, where he spent the war years writing. Nordau returned to the Zionist scene in 1919. He was quite impatient with the careful phraseology of the Balfour Declaration, which had been issued in 1917 while he was in Madrid, for he kept demanding not merely “a Jewish National Home in Palestine” but the immediate establishment of a Jewish state. The border war among the Poles, Ukrainians, and Russians was then raging and it was attended by the murder of tens of thousands of Jews. Though Nordau knew that conditions in Palestine were not ripe to receive the immediate immigration of large numbers, he demanded that such be done, even if many would suffer and many more would be unable to remain in the land. Evacuation was better than death, and

the immediate creation of a Jewish majority in Palestine which would result was more important than careful colonization. In these views he approached the position of the young Vladimir Jabotinsky, whom we shall meet later in this volume, the most uncompromising integral nationalist of the next generation of Zionist leaders.

In 1920 Nordau was permitted to return to Paris, where he died on January 23, 1923. Three years later his remains were transferred to Tel Aviv.

SPEECH TO THE FIRST ZIONIST CONGRESS (1897)

The Western Jew has bread, but man does not live by bread alone. The life of the western Jew is no longer endangered by the enmity of the mob, but bodily wounds are not the only ones that cause pain, and from which one may bleed to death. The western Jew regarded emancipation as real liberation, and hastened to draw final conclusions from it. But the nations of the world made him realize that he erred in being so thoughtlessly logical. The law magnanimously lays down the theory of equality of rights. But governments and society practice equality in a manner which makes it as much a mockery as the appointment of Sancho Panza to the splendid position of Viceroy of the Island of Barataria. The Jew says naively: “I am a human being and I regard nothing human as alien.” The answer he meets is: “Softly, your rights as a man must be enjoyed cautiously; you lack true honor, a sense of duty, morality, patriotism, idealism. We must, therefore, keep you from all vocations which require these qualities.”

No one has ever tried to justify these terrible accusations by facts. At most, now and then, an individual Jew, the scum of his race and of mankind, is triumphantly cited as an example, and, contrary to all laws of logic, bold generalizations are constructed on the basis of such an example. Psychologically this is not surprising. The human mind is accustomed to inventing seemingly reasonable causes for the prejudices which are aroused by emotion. Folk wisdom has long been intuitively acquainted with this psychological law and has expressed it in a striking way: “If you have to drown a dog,” says the proverb, “you
must first declare him to be mad." All kinds of vices are falsely attributed to the Jews, because people want to prove to themselves that they have a right to detest them. But the primary sentiment is the detestation of the Jews.

I must express the painful thought: The nations which emancipated the Jews have deluded themselves as to their own feelings. In order to produce its full effect, emancipation should first have been realized in sentiment before it was proclaimed by law. But this was not the case. The history of Jewish emancipation is one of the most remarkable pages in the history of European thought. The emancipation of the Jews was not the result of a conviction that grave injury had been done to a people, that it had been shockingly treated, and that it was time to atone for the injustice of a thousand years; it was solely the result of the geometrical mode of thought of French rationalism of the eighteenth century. Without reference to sentiment and emotion, this rationalism, operating with logic alone, laid down principles as axiomatic as those of mathematics; it insisted upon trying to introduce these creations of pure intellect into the world of reality. The emancipation of the Jews was an example of the automatic application of the rationalistic method. The philosophy of Rousseau and the Encyclopedists has led up to the declaration of human rights. The strict logic of the men of the Great Revolution deduced Jewish emancipation from this declaration. They formulated a logically correct syllogism: Every man is born with certain rights; the Jews are human beings, consequently the Jews by nature possess the rights of man. In this manner, the emancipation of the Jews was proclaimed in France, not out of fraternal feeling for the Jews but because logic demanded it. Popular sentiment indeed rebelled, but the philosophy of the Revolution decreed that principles must be placed above sentiment. May I be permitted to say something which implies no ingratitude: The men of 1792 emancipated us only for the sake of logic.

In the same way that the French Revolution gave to the world the metric and the decimal systems, it also created a kind of normal spiritual scale which other countries, either willingly or unwillingly, accepted as the normal measure of their cultural level. A country which laid claim to cultural attainment had to possess several institutions created or developed by the Great Revolution, as, for instance, representative government, freedom of the press, trial by jury, division of powers, etc. Jewish emancipation was also one of these indispensable furnishings of a highly cultured state, like a piano which is a required article of furniture in a drawing room, even if not a single member of the family can play it. In this manner Jews were emancipated in western Europe not from an inner necessity, but in imitation of a political fashion, not because the nations had decided in their hearts to stretch out the hand of fraternity to the Jews, but because their intellectual leaders had accepted a certain standard, one of whose requirements was that the emancipation of the Jews should figure in the statute book.

There is only one country, England, which is an exception to what I have said above. The English people do not allow its progress to be forced upon it from without; it develops it from its inner self. In England emancipation is a reality. It is not merely on the books; it is lived. It had already long been realized in sentiment before legislation expressly confirmed it. Out of respect for tradition, there was hesitation about formally abolishing the legal restrictions on Non-Conformists in England at a time when the English had for more than a generation no longer been making any social distinction between Christians and Jews. Naturally, a great nation, with a most intense spiritual life, must be somewhat affected by every spiritual current, or even blunder, of the age, and so England, too, has its few instances of anti-Semitism, but these are important only as imitations of Continental fashion.

Emancipation has totally changed the nature of the Jew, and made him into another being. The ghetto Jew bereft of rights did not love the prescribed yellow badge on his coat, because it was an official invitation to the mob to commit brutalities which it justified in advance. But he voluntarily emphasized it much more than the yellow badge could ever do. Wherever the authorities did not shut him up in a ghetto, he built one for himself. He would dwell with his own and would have no other relations but those of business with Christians. The word "ghetto" is today associated with feelings of shame and humiliation. But students of national psychology and history know that the ghetto, whatever may have been the intentions of the peoples who created it, was for the Jew of the past not a prison, but a refuge.

It is plain historical truth to state that only the ghetto gave Jews the possibility of surviving the terrible persecutions of the Middle Ages. In the ghetto, the Jew had his own world; it was his sure refuge and it provided the spiritual and moral equivalent of a motherland. His fellow inhabitants of the ghetto were the people whose respect he both wanted and could attain. His goal and ambition was to gain its good opinion and its criticism or ill will was the punishment that he feared. In the ghetto all specifically Jewish qualities were esteemed, and by their special development one could obtain that admiration which is
the greatest spur to the human spirit. What did it matter that those
values which were prized within the ghetto were despised outside it?
The opinion of the outside world did not matter, because it was the
opinion of ignorant enemies. One tried to please one’s brothers, and
their respect gave honorable meaning to one’s life. In the moral sense,
therefore, the Jews of the ghetto lived a full life. Their external situa-
tion was insecure, often seriously endangered, but internally they
achieved a complete development of their unique qualities and were
not fragmented individuals. They were fully developed human be-
ings, who lacked none of the elements of normal social life. They also
sensed instinctively the total importance of the ghetto to their inner
life and, therefore, they had but one care: to make its existence secure
through invisible walls which were much thicker and higher than the
stone walls that surrounded it physically. All Jewish customs and prac-
tices unconsciously pursued one sole purpose, to preserve Judaism by
separation from the gentiles, to maintain the Jewish community, and
to keep reminding the individual Jew that he would be lost and would
perish if he gave up his unique character. This impulse toward separ-
ateness was the source of most of the ritual laws, which for the average
Jew were identical with his very faith. Religious sanction was also
given to purely external, and often accidental, differences in attire and
custom, as soon as they became acceptable Jewish practice, in order to
maintain them more securely.

Such was the psychology of the ghetto Jew. Then came the Emancipation. The law assured the Jews that they were citizens of their coun-
try in every respect. In the honeymoon period of the Emancipation,
under the influence of the new legal equality, Christian feel-
ings were evoked which were warm and accepting of the new status of
the Jew. Well nigh intoxicated, the Jews rushed to burn all their
bridges immediately. They now had another home, so they no longer
needed a ghetto; they now had other connections and were no longer
forced to live only among their coreligionists. Their instinct of self-
preservation adapted itself immediately and completely to the new
circumstances. This instinct had formerly been directed toward main-
taining the most clear-cut apartness; now it sought the closest associa-
tion with and imitation of the gentiles. In place of being different,
which had been the Jew’s salvation, the new policy was thoroughgoing
mimicry. For one or two generations the Jew was allowed to believe
that he was merely a German, Frenchman, Italian, and so forth, like
all the rest of his countrymen, and that his creativity as an individual

was nourished by the same folk-tradition that sustained the whole of
the nation within which he had become a citizen.

All at once, twenty years ago, after a slumber of thirty to sixty years,
anti-Semitism once more sprang out of the innermost depths of the
nations of western Europe. It revealed to a mortified Jew, who thought
anti-Semitism was gone forever, the true picture of his situation. He
was still allowed to vote for members of Parliament, but he saw himself
excluded, with varying degrees of politeness, from the clubs and
gatherings of his Christian fellow countrymen. He was allowed to go
wherever he pleased, but everywhere he encountered the sign: “No
Jews admitted.” He still had the right of discharging all the duties of a
citizen, but the nobler rights which are granted to talent and energy
were absolutely denied him.

Such is the contemporary situation of the emancipated Jew in west-
ern Europe. He has abandoned his specifically Jewish character, yet
the nations do not accept him as part of their national communities.
He flees from his Jewish fellow, because anti-Semitism has taught him,
too, to be contemptuous of them, but his gentle compatriots repulse
him as he attempts to associate with them. He has lost his home in the
ghetto yet the land of his birth is denied to him as his home. He has no
ground under his feet and he has no community to which he belongs
as a welcome and fully accepted member. He cannot count on justice
from his Christian countrymen as a reward for either his character or
his achievements, and still less on the basis of any existing good feeling;
he has lost his connection with other Jews. Inevitably he feels that the
world hates him and he sees no place where he can find the warmth
for which he longs and seeks.

This is the Jewish spiritual misery, which is more painful than the
physical because it affects men of higher station, who are prouder
and more sensitive. The emancipated Jew is insecure in his relations with
his fellow man, timid with strangers, and suspicious even of the secret
feelings of his friends. His best powers are dissipated in suppressing
and destroying, or at least in the difficult task of concealing his true
character. He fears that this character might be recognized as Jewish,
and he never has the satisfaction of revealing himself as he is in his
real identity, in every thought and sentiment, in every physical gesture.
He has become a cripple within, and a counterfeit person without, so
that like everything unreal, he is ridiculous and hateful to all men of
high standards.

All the better Jews of western Europe groan under this misery and
seek for salvation and alleviation. They no longer possess the faith
which might sustain them in bearing every suffering, as the will of a punishing but nonetheless loving God. They no longer hope for the advent of the Messiah, who will raise them to Glory on some miraculous day. Some try to save themselves by flight from Judaism, but racial anti-Semitism, which denies that baptism can change anything, leaves little prospect for this mode of salvation. It is of little advantage to the Jews of western Europe, who are mostly without belief (I am of course, not referring to the minority of true believers) to enter the Christian community by means of a blasphemous lie. At very best a new Marrano, who is much worse than the old, comes into being in this way. The Marranos of old had an idealistic element in their make-up—a secret longing for the truth, a heartbreaking regret and distress of conscience, and they often sought pardon and purification for themselves through martyrdom. The new Marranos leave Judaism in rage and bitterness, but in their innermost heart, even if they themselves do not acknowledge it, they carry with them into Christianity their personal humiliation, their dishonesty, and their hatred for whatever has compelled them to live a lie.

I contemplate with horror the future development of this race of new Marranos, which is sustained morally by no tradition, whose soul is poisoned by hostility to both its own and to strange blood, and whose self-respect is destroyed through the ever-present consciousness of a fundamental lie. Some Jews hope for salvation from Zionism, which is for them not the fulfillment of a mystic promise of the Scripture but the way to an existence wherein the Jew will at last find the simplest and most elementary conditions of life, which are a matter of course for every non-Jew of both hemispheres: i.e., an assured place in society, a community which accepts him, the possibility of employing all his powers for the development of his real self instead of abusing them for the suppression and falsification of his personality. There are others who are also rebelling against the lie of being Marranos, but these feel themselves so intimately connected with the land of their birth that this act of renunciation that Zionism ultimately requires is too harsh and bitter for their emotions. This group has been throwing itself into the arms of the wildest revolution, with the vague afterthought that, with the destruction of everything that exists and the erection of a new world, Jew-hatred might perhaps not be one of the precious articles transferred from the debris of the old relationships into the new.

This is the picture of the Jewish people at the end of the nineteenth century. To sum up: The majority of the Jews are a race of accused beggars. More industrious and abler than the average European, not to mention the moribund Asiatic and African, the Jew is condemned to the most extreme pauperism because he is not permitted to use his powers freely. This poverty grinds down his character and destroys his body. Feverishly thirsty for higher education, he sees himself repulsed from the places where knowledge is attainable—a real intellectual Tantalus of our nonmythical times. He dashes his head against the thick walls of hatred and contempt which have formed over his head. Being more minded toward society than perhaps any other people—even his religion teaches that it is a meritorious and God-pleasing action for meals to be taken together in groups of three and for prayer to be held in the company of ten—he is nonetheless excluded from the society of his countrymen and is condemned to tragic isolation. One complains of Jews pushing everywhere, but they strive after superiority only because they are denied equality. They are accused of a feeling of solidarity with the Jews of the whole world; quite to the contrary, it is their misfortune that, as soon as the first word of emancipation was uttered, they tried to make room for national patriotism as their exclusive loyalty by tearing out of their hearts any trace of Jewish solidarity. Stunned by the hailstorm of anti-Semitic accusations, the Jews forget who they are and often imagine that they are really the physical and spiritual horrors which their deadly enemies represent them to be. The Jew is often heard to murmur that he must learn from the enemy and try to remedy the faults ascribed to him. He forgets, however, that the anti-Semitic accusations are meaningless, because they are not a criticism of facts which exist, but are the effects of a psychological law according to which children, wild men, and malevolent fools make the persons and things they hate responsible for their sufferings.

To Jewish distress no one can remain indifferent—neither Christian nor Jew. It is a great sin to let a race, whose ability even its worst enemies do not deny, degenerate in intellectual and physical misery. It is a sin against them and it is a sin against the course of civilization, to whose progress Jews have made, and will yet make, significant contributions.

The misery of the Jew cries out for help. The finding of that help will be the great task of this Congress.
ZIONISM (1902)

The New Zionism, which has been called political, differs from the old, religious, messianic variety in that it disavows all mysticism, no longer identifies itself with messianism, and does not expect the return to Palestine to be brought about by a miracle, but desires to prepare the way by its own efforts.

The new Zionism has grown only in part out of the inner impulses of Judaism itself, out of the enthusiasm of modern educated Jews for their history and martyrology, out of an awakened pride in their racial qualities, out of ambition to save the ancient people for a long, long future and to add new great deeds of posterity to those of their ancestors.

For the rest, Zionism is the result of two impulses which came from without: first, the principle of nationality, which dominated thought and sentiment in Europe for half a century and determined the politics of the world; second, anti-Semitism, from which the Jews of all countries suffer to some degree.

The principle of nationality has awakened a sense of their own identity in all the peoples; it has taught them to regard their unique qualities as values and has given them a passionate desire for independence. It could not, therefore, pass by the educated Jews without leaving some trace. It induced them to remember who and what they are, to feel themselves a people once again, and to demand a normal national destiny for themselves. The principle of nationality has, in its exaggerations, led to excesses. It has ered into chauvinism, stooped to idiotic hatred of the foreigner, and sunk to grotesque self-worship. Jewish nationalism is safe from the caricature of itself. The Jewish nationalist does not suffer from egotism; he feels, on the contrary, that he must make tireless efforts to render the name Jew a title of honor. He modestly recognizes the good qualities of other nations and diligently seeks to make them his own, in so far as they can be blended in with his natural capacities. He knows what terrible harm centuries of slavery or disability have done to his originally proud and upright character and he seeks to cure himself by means of intense self-discipline.

Anti-Semitism has also taught many educated Jews the way back to their people. It has had the effect of a sharp trial which the weak cannot stand, but from which the strong emerge stronger and more confident in themselves. It is incorrect to say that Zionism is but a gesture of truculence or an act of desperation against anti-Semitism. It is true that anti-Semitism alone has moved some educated Jews to throw in their lot with Jewry once again, and that they would again fall away if their Christian fellow countrymen would but receive them in a friendly way. But, in the case of most Zionists, the effect of anti-Semitism was only to force them to reflect upon their relationship to the nations of the world, and their reflection has led them to conclusions which would endure in their minds and hearts if anti-Semitism were to disappear completely.

The one point which excludes, probably forever, the possibility of understanding between Zionist and non-Zionist Jews is the question of Jewish nationality. Whoever maintains and believes that the Jews are not a nation can indeed not be a Zionist; he cannot join a movement which has as its sole purpose the desire to normalize a people which is living and suffering under abnormal conditions. He who is convinced to the contrary that the Jews are a people must necessarily become Zionist, as only the return to their own country can save the Jewish nation which is everywhere hated, persecuted, and oppressed, from physical and intellectual destruction.

Many Jews, especially in the West, have completely broken with Judaism in their heart of hearts, and they will probably soon do so openly; if they do not break away, their children or grandchildren will. These people desire to be completely assimilated among their Christian fellow countrymen. They deeply resent it when other Jews proclaim that we are a people apart and desire to bring about an unequivocal separation between us and the other nations. Their great and constant fear is that in the land of their birth, where they are free citizens, they may be called strangers. They fear that this is all the more likely to happen if a large section of the Jewish people openly claims rights as an independent nation, and, still worse, if anywhere in the world a political and intellectual center of Jewry should really be created, in which millions of Jews would be united as a nation.

All these feelings on the part of assimilationist Jews are understandable. From their standpoint they are justified. The Jews, however, have no right to expect that Zionism should commit suicide for their sake. The Jews who are happy and contented in the lands of their birth, and who indignantly reject the suggestion of abandoning them, are
about one-sixth of the Jewish people, say two million out of twelve. The other five-sixths, or ten million, have every reason for being profoundly unhappy in the countries where they live. These ten million cannot be called upon to submit forever, and without resistance, to their slavery, and to renounce every effort for redemption from their misery, merely in order not to disturb the comfort of two million happy and contented Jews.

The Zionists are, moreover, firmly convinced that the misgivings of the assimilationist Jews are unfounded. The reassembling of the Jewish people in Palestine will not have the consequences which they fear. When there is a Jewish country the Jews will have the choice of emigrating there, or of remaining in their present homes. Many will doubtless remain—they will prove by their choice that they prefer the land of their birth to their kin and their national soil. It is possible that the anti-Semites will still throw the scomful and pernicious cry "Stranger!" in their faces. But the real Christians among their fellow countrymen, those whose thoughts and emotions are guided by the teaching and examples of the Gospel, will be convinced that the Jews who remain do not regard themselves as strangers in the land of their birth. The real Christians will understand the true significance of their voluntary renunciation of a return to a land of the Jews, and of the attachment to their homes and to their Christian neighbors.

The Zionists know that they have undertaken a work of unparalleled difficulty. Never before has the effort been made to transplant several million people peacefully and in a short space of time, from various countries; never has the attempt been made to transform millions of physically degenerate proletarians, without trade or profession, into farmers and herdsmen; to bring town-born hucksters and tradesmen, clerks and men of sedentary occupation, into contact again with the plough and with mother earth. It will be necessary to get Jews of different origins to adjust to one another, to train them practically for national unity, and at the same time to overcome the superhuman obstacles of differences of language, cultural level, ways of thought, and varying prejudices of people who will come to Palestine from all the countries of the world.

What gives Zionists the courage to begin this labor of Hercules is the conviction that they are performing a necessary and useful task, a work of love and civilization, a work of justice and wisdom. They wish to save eight to ten million of their kin from intolerable suffering. They desire to relieve the nations among whom they now vegetate of a presence which is considered disagreeable. They wish to deprive anti-

Semitism, which lowers the morals of the community everywhere and develops the very worst instincts, of its victim. They wish to make the Jews, who are nowadays reproached with being parasites, into an undeniably productive people. They desire to irrigate with their sweat and to till with their hands a country that is today a desert, until it again becomes the blooming garden it once was. Zionism will thus equally serve the unhappy Jews and the Christian peoples, civilization and the economy of the world. The services which it can render and wishes to render are great enough to justify its hope that the Christian world, too, will appreciate them and support the movement with its active sympathy.