The Dream of Zion

THE STORY OF THE FIRST ZIONIST CONGRESS

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This book is dedicated to
SHARON SELIB EPSTEIN
A True Woman of Valor

Acknowledgments

It is humbling to research and write a book about the birth of Zionism as particularly embodied in the story of the First Zionist Congress. As I worked on the book, I thought of Rabbi Tarfon's famous words in the Talmud: "You are not expected to complete the task, but neither are you free to abandon it." Writing about the origins of the Zionist movement involved doing research that was beyond my abilities, for in principle that research should include mastering material that is both staggering in scope and written in the wide variety of foreign languages in which the material resides. On the other hand, I had my enthusiasm and a sense of relief that so much of the material is at least available. Happily, the early Zionists were not shy about dipping their pens in ink and attaching their thoughts to paper. They had much to say to each other and to the world.

I have, given that voluminous amount of material, therefore undertaken this book not with the idea that every last fact about Zionism's origins is in here. Rather, it is my hope that I have told the story of the First Zionist Congress in a clear and coherent way to introduce readers to a vital and significant subject about perhaps the most seminal meeting in modern Jewish life. I only hope I have successfully conveyed the depth of my own fascination with the subject.

To help me, I have relied on people who were always eager to help. I started with the assistance of the staff at the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem. Indeed, without their bibliographical advice, I might not have been able to continue. Benjamin Trowbridge at The National Archives of the United Kingdom answered questions helpfully. I got materials from the Theodor Herzl Collection at the Leo Baeck Institute Archives and the Center for Jewish History. I used many libraries, too many to list, but I do in particular want to thank the Jewish Theological Seminary Library and the Columbia University Library. I want to thank Kevin Proffitt, senior archivist for Research and Collections at the American Jewish Archives, for his repeated extraordinary help over the course of several books.

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I learned an enormous amount about Israel not only from trips there but also by serving as an adviser on Israel for Congressman William Carney and Congressman Michael Forbes. Bill and Mike were extraordinarily generous in providing me with such an opportunity.

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While I have greatly profited from all this help, I bear responsibility for the book's contents. Surely, those who helped me have some interpretations of the material that differ from mine. Their help is not tantamount to their agreement with what I have written. I am the one who assembled the facts and interpretations in the book.

My family is the indispensable part of my life that I most cherish. My brother, Richard, is my first reader. We have conversations virtually daily about Israel and much else. His wife, Perla, along with children Adam and Sondra and their families are always supportive. My cousins Toby Everett and her brother Dr. Sheldon Scheinert have discussed Israel with me for many decades. It is hard to say how very much, from childhood on, their being there has meant. My cousin Dr. Joseph Gastwirth has been so supportive that he has actually shown up for lectures I have given. His brother, my late cousin Don Gastwirth, was a literary adviser to me for many years. I miss his immense wit and knowledge.

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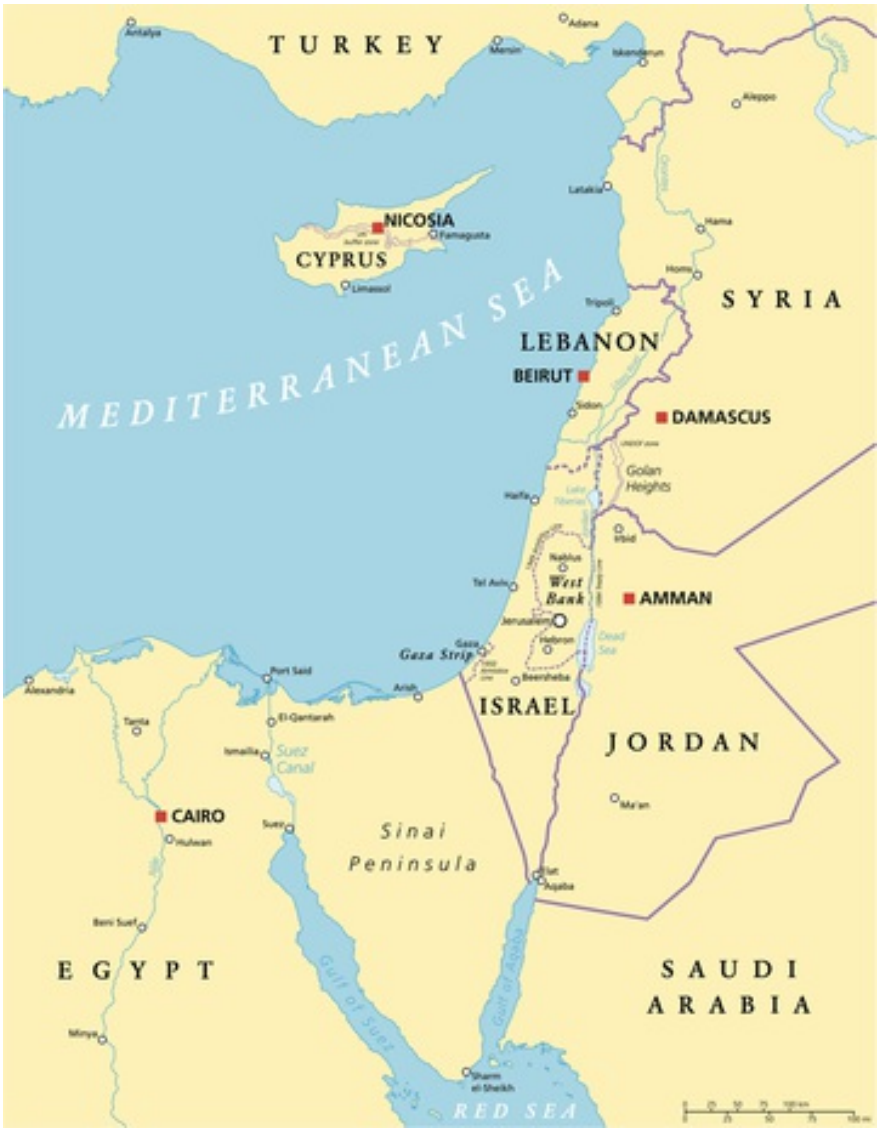
These are the people who have made it possible for me to write this book. I thank them wholeheartedly.

Map of Israel and the Middle East



Introduction

My family and I stood on the leveled, sun-baked mountaintop in the Judean desert. We were there for my daughter Elana's Bat Mitzvah ceremony. This was Masada, the ancient fortress in which 960 rebels committed mass suicide rather than surrender to Roman troops.

Here in Israel, the hills shout and the dead cry out to be remembered.

Later my family went to the Western Wall. As I placed my hands against its stones, I understood why for so many centuries it has been called the Wailing Wall. It had been witness to tender tears and deafening cries of despair at Jewish suffering. We went to the Children's Memorial at Yad Vashem, Israel's memorial to the Holocaust. Here candles are reflected infinitely in a somber space hollowed out from a cavern. Staring at the light, viewers get the sense of being in the presence of millions of shining stars. I was overwhelmed with sadness for the million and a half children murdered by the Nazis.

The rebirth of Israel after nearly two thousand years of an exile marked by survival, the joys of study and family life, and the struggle to live punctuated all too frequently by deprivation, persecution, and death is one of the greatest of human stories. The Jewish return to what so many thought of as their promised land came with the burdens of their tortured history. It was in many ways a noble, exciting, and utterly extraordinary story. After all, they reclaimed a land, they invented new words for an ancient language, and they gathered in exiles from all over the Earth. But it is not a story without war and struggles, without having to confront, morally and in other ways, the Arabs already living in the land.

To understand the miracle of Israel, I wanted to understand its birth. I could have focused on the story of the early return to the land of those Jews who had a specific national goal. Instead, I have aimed the camera of history on the remarkable gathering that created political Zionism, the modern movement that gave birth to Israel.

In doing so, I wanted to provide a summary of the story, not an exhaustive scholarly chronology of the Zionist movement.

The Jewish effort to restore their ancient nation began as a defined political force in Basel, Switzerland, during the final days of August in 1897 at the First Zionist Congress. It was there that Theodor Herzl, the witty Viennese journalist and playwright who had written an electrifying and visionary work calling for a Jewish nation, convened the meeting that founded what became the World Zionist Organization, defined the political goals of the movement, adopted a national anthem, created the legal and financial instruments that would lead to statehood, and ushered the reentry of the Jewish people into political history. It was there in Basel that Herzl became the leader, the man some praised and some mocked as the new Moses.

It was to Basel that idealistic, desperate, and colorful characters journeyed to make history. They included, among many others, the Reverend William Hechler, the man Herzl called "the first Christian Zionist," and as such the prototype of a crucial segment of the Zionist movement; Ahad Ha'am (the pen name of Asher Ginsberg), a writer and political opponent of Herzl who warned Zionists of the need to understand the concerns of the indigenous Arab population in the Land of Israel; Rosa Sonneschein, the founding editor of *The American Jewess*, the first English-language periodical for American Jewish women; and Nachman Syrkin, the

ideological founder and leader of Socialist Zionism, and the originator of the idea that Jewish immigrants form collective communities in their homeland. Those who attended the First Zionist Congress were prophets with a fire in every vein.

There are many excellent histories of Zionism. I wanted to put a spotlight less on the historical forces at work than on the personal stories of those who were at the Congress. This book focuses on a group portrait of these people and what they did at Basel. As they spent three days hammering out the Basel Program, they knew—Herzl predicted it in his diary with uncanny historical precision—that they had given birth to a Jewish nation in the Land of Israel after two thousand years of exile.

Hindsight provides a certain benefit in considering historical events. Looking backward to the First Zionist Congress and considering what has happened since, I knew there were questions I had to try to answer.

The Jews are the people who ask questions as a religious and moral obligation. The Talmud opens with a question. I am a Jew but, stemming from that Jewish identity, I try to be, at least in aspiration, a morally sensitive person. And so, no doubt burdened by my own intellectual assumptions and patterns of thought, I sought to look at morally difficult questions. Indeed, to tell the story of the rebirth of Israel accurately is, by definition, to wrestle with some painful questions.

There is a cluster of questions I considered as I wrote the story of the First Zionist Congress: Did the Jews have a moral right to reestablish a Jewish nation in the Land of Israel? Did the Jews adequately consider the Arabs living there? Did the Jews steal the land or were they legally and morally entitled to it? Whose land was it? Was Zionism a retreat from internationalism and a withdrawal into narrow ethnic nationalism?

These questions, of course, resonate until the current moment in history. Examining the Congress provides a unique prism through which to see all the history that followed. All the intellectual and moral questions of the Arab-Israeli conflict emerge from the debates and decisions made at the First Zionist Congress.

That is, underlying the story of the Congress lies the accompanying and far less triumphant story of the relationship between the Jews and Arabs in the Land of Israel. Along with the Jewish march into history, then, this book tries to consider the unfolding of the Arab-Jewish encounter.

This book is a story and not an argument. I don't know whether I have provided an answer, or even a partial answer, to these complex questions. I do hope, though, that the story helps readers consider the complexity of the issues.

I thought this book would be particularly pertinent now because we are witnessing a vigorous attempt to delegitimize Israel, to isolate it, to question its moral foundations. There has been an urgency for more than one hundred and twenty years to keep Zionism tethered to those moral foundations; questions about it continue since there is an ongoing conflict with the Palestinian Arabs who make a moral claim to the same land.

Efforts at the logical resolution of the conflict by partitioning the land have failed since the British first tried to separate the peoples with the Peel Commission Partition Plan of July 1937, when the Jews agreed to the partition and the Arabs rejected the plan. Failures continued with the United Nations partition plan of 1947 and various Israeli initiatives such as by Prime Ministers Barak and Olmert. As of this writing, no successful partition plan seems imminent.

This is therefore a crucial moment to examine the event that gave political birth to the

Zionist movement. I wanted to see what we can learn by being present at the creation. I wanted to offer a behind-the-scenes look at how the basic decisions were made that ultimately led to the nation of Israel.

In an attempt to understand the First Zionist Congress, I will also cover the Zionist movement before Theodor Herzl, including the forerunners who had similar ideas of national return and a brief discussion of those who offered a practical alternative to Herzl's political ventures by moving to the land; the hatred of the Jews during the era as exemplified by violent pogroms in Russia and the Dreyfus trial; the attractions of Zionism for Christians; world reaction from American Jews, Germany, Turkey—which controlled the Land of Israel—and the Vatican; the disputes at the Congress; and, finally, its effects, which have lasted until the present.

Every conflict has multiple dimensions. There is, for example, a linguistic dimension in discussing the Arab-Israeli struggle. Therefore, let me discuss the terminology I will use in the book. Since the book is specifically about a Jewish enterprise in history, I will use BCE (Before the Common Era) instead of BC and CE (Common Era) instead of AD.

The designation of the land under discussion is a knottier problem. I have decided against calling it the Promised Land. This term obviously carries with it both theological and political freight and is more a political than useful term. Jews did not normally refer to the land as the "Holy Land." It is a misleading term in describing a Jewish effort.

The name "Palestine" is the most contentious contender as a name for the land. Before the Jewish revolt against the Roman Empire led by Bar Kochba (135 CE), the Romans and others used the words "Judea" and "Galilee." The Emperor Hadrian, celebrating the victory over the defeated Jewish people, renamed the land, calling it "Palestine" for the first time. The name "Palestine" was deliberately taken from the Philistines, who had once been the enemies of the Jews. The term later stopped being used until the British applied it again starting in the nineteenth century as an imprecise geographic term. "Palestine" was a useful and neutral term for many years even though it derived from a non-Jewish, or, more accurately, an anti-Jewish source. But it was a widely used and widely understood term. However, currently the term is used in a very explicitly political way by Arabs who live in the territory west of the Jordan River. Ironically the term "Palestinian" for many years referred to the Jews living in the land, so it is more linguistically accurate to differentiate the peoples as "Palestinian Arabs" and "Palestinian Jews." The use of the term "Palestinian" simply to describe the Arab population, however historically misleading, is by now very widespread.

The term "Palestine" is not rooted in the Jewish past and so is not the most precise term to use in a story about the attempt to revive that past Jewish homeland. Jews did use it for many years simply because it was used by others. But internally, the Jewish people knew the country as Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel, and so, for the late-nineteenth-century era in which this story takes place, that is the term I will use most often. When historically appropriate, I will use other names for the land.

But giving the land a name doesn't end the problem. The geographic contours of the Land of Israel are also unclear. Part of the problem is that there was no specific political entity named "Palestine" before or under the Ottoman Empire. Without defined borders, the Zionist aspirations could not be clearly stated. At any rate, they believed at the beginning that the Ottoman Empire would cede some land and that the exact borders of the land would be subject to negotiation. There were much clearer definitions when the British took control of the land after World War I, but that era is outside the focus of the book.

And so, burdened by the insights and drawbacks of ideology, by the promise and limitations of language, by the weight of numerous but conflicting testimonies, I offer what I believe is an accurate portrayal of what happened at the First Zionist Congress.

Chapter 1
The Birth of Zionism

The profound Jewish emotional attachment to and longing for the Land of Israel began with the Jewish dispersal from the land. After the second rebellion against Rome failed in 135 CE, the Jews lost their national independence. Half a million Jews had been killed. Many, but not all, Jews left voluntarily because they didn't want to remain under Roman rule or they sought economic opportunities elsewhere, or they were forced out of the land to scatter throughout Europe and eventually throughout the world.

Despite this widespread dispersal, all through Jewish history the Land of Israel retained its special spiritual attraction. There were, therefore, travelers to the land from the beginning of the exile. Some, especially religious Jews, came to live in the land. Some came there specifically to die. The idea of the Land of Israel was ever present in Jewish history. The Jews prayed for Jerusalem. They fasted on Tisha B'av to remember the tragedies that had occurred on that date, including the destruction of both the First and Second Temples. They ended their Passover sederim with a vow of "Next year in Jerusalem." It was a yearly promise, and, if not always a sincere one, at least it kept the idea of returning to Eretz Yisrael alive through the generations.

But for almost two thousand years, this attachment did not lead to a mass return. Jews remained in the Diaspora undisturbed by practical efforts to restore Zion. They loved Jerusalem, but they did not go there.

The principal identity of Jews prior to the nineteenth century was as a religious group. Identified by their faith by authorities, the surrounding Gentile population, and Jews themselves, Jews regulated their lives according to a Jewish calendar and followed the laws prescribed by their tradition. They lived lives mostly separate from their surrounding neighbors. They sometimes lived in a ghetto. They prayed, they worked, and as far as going to the Land of Israel was concerned, they waited.

They eventually justified their waiting by an ideology that included the belief that one day their Messiah would come, and it would be the Messiah who would lead them back to their sacred land. For all these centuries, the Jewish people saw the world through deeply religious eyes. They didn't think of their return as a political act. They believed that when the Messiah came, the return to the Land of Israel would be part of their long-awaited redemption.

Redemption meant the creation of an ideal world. The Messiah would lead the world to a reconciliation between God and humanity so that God would not be disappointed in the moral behavior of humans but rather relieved that human moral potential had been fulfilled. In this state of redemption, humans would be released from sin and emotional suffering. Jews longed for the Messiah and the wonderful outcome that arrival promised.

But the Messiah tarried. The decades and centuries went by, and the Jews led lives, sometimes interrupted by intense persecutions, that didn't include political, economic, or military power. Their passionate focus on ritual and ethics turned their minds away from the kind of emancipatory action necessary to remove themselves from the Diaspora in large numbers and return to the Land of Israel.

All this changed after the Jewish Enlightenment, the *Haskalah*, in which the traditional religious studies were supplemented or abandoned in favor of European languages and thought as well as Jewish history and the Hebrew language. Just as in European society, there was an

accelerating attachment to the secular life for Jews and a loosening or abandonment of a traditional religious life.

Prompted by the revolutionary calls for equality coming from France starting in 1789, the Jews slowly moved from the edges of European society to its center. The newly liberal societies seemed eager to embrace all people. The Enlightenment came with the promise of ending the darkness of intolerance and hatred.

The political and economic equality promised by the new order was intoxicating to young Jews. Their identity was transformed. They were citizens. Or so they thought.

It turned out that history wasn't really marching toward a utopian future after all.

The new Jewish identity as educated European citizens was not so clear. In fact, the new liberal Enlightenment that was supposed to solve the Jewish problem made it worse in many ways. Jews weren't really accepted as full and equal members of society, a fact most dramatically made evident in France by the Dreyfus affair, which will be discussed below. Nations were created and the Jews were just part of them, still not accepted as genuinely attached to the nations.

Before the Enlightenment there had been an escape hatch, unpleasant and unappealing as it was. The Jews could have embraced Christianity and entered the wider society. But Europe was no longer dividing people along religious lines.

There emerged a new and ominous division: race. And while Jews could, in principle, change their religion, they could not ever change their race. The escape hatch was sealed.

Hatred of the Jews, it turned out, had not died but changed clothes.

On February 5, 1840, a Capuchin friar and his Muslim servant disappeared in Damascus. The Capuchins accused Jews, claiming the men had been murdered to extract their blood for use during Passover. This was a sadly traditional blood libel, a false charge rooted in Jewish history that Jews murdered Christians, and most particularly Christian children, to use the blood for Jewish religious rituals, such as using the blood as an ingredient in baking matzoh for Passover. Sixty-three Jewish children were taken in an attempt to force their mothers to reveal the location of the supposed hidden blood. Eventually a total of thirteen Jews in Damascus were accused of murder. The Jews were put in prison and tortured. Some died. One was forced to convert to Islam. Eventually, through intervention and negotiation, the remaining nine prisoners were released.

The Damascus affair profoundly shocked world Jewry.

In a pattern that would later be repeated during other even sadder moments, the hatred of the Jews prompted many Jews to rethink their ideas and position in the world.

Rabbi Yehudah Alkalai was a Sephardic rabbi in Serbia, in the city of Semlin. Like so many others, the deeply traditional Alkalai was bothered by the Damascus affair. Additionally, he lived in an area in which peoples, such as Serbs and Greeks, developed a national consciousness and later nation-states from the Austrian and Turkish empires.

In 1845, Alkalai wrote his book *Minhat Yehuda* (The Offering of Judah). It is a remarkable book in which Alkalai walked a theological tightrope. As a strictly religious rabbi, he didn't want to question the traditional view of the Messiah leading the Jews back to the Land of Israel.

Alkalai's approach was to assert that there would be necessary preparatory steps before the Messiah led the Jews, because, for example, the land wasn't ready for all the Jews in the world to return there. So, Alkalai suggested, the Jews should take these steps. The Jews should buy land so it is available for the Messiah. He wanted to establish a fund to get that land.

Alkalai had made a major intellectual breakthrough. No longer was Redemption purely divine; there was a role for humans, a role strictly within the tradition.

Similarly, Alkalai suggested, as a practical matter, that all Jews learn to speak Hebrew because their different languages are an obstacle to Redemption. And, amazingly, he wanted to establish an Assembly of the Elders, a representative governing body.

None of Alkalai's ideas were implemented, and while he personally made a journey to the Land of Israel, he and his startling ideas might well have been forgotten. He had almost no followers. He started no obvious national tradition.

History, though, has its own cunning. When Alkalai published another book on the subject in 1857, one of those who attended his synagogue in Semlin became attracted to the ideas of national return and the role of humans in that effort. Alkalai and this man met with each other and discussed ideas about redeeming the land.

This man, this rare example of Alkalai's very few followers, was Simon Loeb Herzl. Simon Herzl's grandson was Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern political Zionism. Simon was alive until after his grandson turned nineteen, and it is now widely assumed by historians that Simon told Theodor if not the details about Alkalai then about the promise of a Jewish presence in the Land of Israel.

History sometimes propels its own future. When people interpret events, these events lead them to new conclusions and new actions. For many Europeans, the revolutions of 1848 that unsuccessfully challenged the political order were a harbinger of upheavals to come. Chaim Lorje saw the events through Jewish eyes and interpreted the revolutionary actions as signs of the Messiah. This understanding prompted him to consider how a Jewish nation might come about.

Lorje ran a boarding house for Jewish children. He was highly educated. His exact thought process is not known, but in 1860, the very year of Theodor Herzl's birth, Lorje announced that he was establishing a Palestine Colonization Society, the first organization devoted to Jewish immigration in the Land of Israel. Lorje then took a highly unusual step. Instead of just declaring the society's existence he began a series of efforts to make his view public. He wrote articles, including in the secular press. He tried to convince others to follow him.

And yet, despite his unique efforts, Lorje did not effect the emigration of anyone to the Land of Israel. No new Jewish villages were established; no community to build on in the future. After four years of trying, Lorje ended his efforts.

Lorje's singular practical success was in recruiting Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer to the nascent national movement. Kalischer heard about Lorje's efforts and sent him a copy of the manuscript *Derishot Zion* (Seeking Zion). It was Lorje who arranged to have what would be a highly influential book published in 1862. In his book, Kalischer proposed, like Alkalai, that monies be collected to purchase farmland. Kalischer suggested founding an agricultural school and forming a defense force to make sure the Jews would be safe in their holy land.

Like Alkalai, Kalischer was suggesting that the Jews themselves had to take steps to prepare for the Messiah. Unlike Alkalai, Kalischer had great influence. His book went through various editions. Like Lorje, Kalischer traveled and sought to advance his idea and set up other colonization societies.

Alkalai and Kalischer came to Jewish nationalism from a religious perspective. But for many European Jews, nationalism was a completely secular attraction.

Jewish intellectuals in Europe, though, had a significant competitor for their political

allegiance. Socialism held a promise that was a sort of secular redemption. The socialist vision of social and economic equality provided heady inspiration to the downtrodden Jews, especially in Eastern Europe. Jews were attracted to the universalism inherent in political socialist efforts precisely because it seemed to promise a new identity. Dismissive of Jewish rituals, dress, and social separation, these modernist Jews yearned for education and acceptance. Many saw in the socialist vision the opportunities denied them by religious orthodoxy and the existing social structures.

Moses Hess, a compatriot of Karl Marx, was one of those Jews deeply attached to the socialist vision. Hess, however, was clear-eyed. He saw that the promises offered by the French Revolution and the political emancipation of Jews were not fulfilled. At the end, Hess realized, he was a Jew, not a universal human.

This insight shook him and his sense of his own identity. In 1862 he wrote a book titled *Rome and Jerusalem.* The "Rome" in the title was not an allusion to ancient Rome, but to Italian nationalism. Comparing the Jewish situation to that of Italians, Hess believed that the Jews were a nation. Their problems couldn't be solved by being perpetual minorities even if given rights. They had to seek a national solution to their quest for identity and security. Jews, like other European peoples, had to seek their own nation in their ancient homeland. Hess, still attracted to socialist ideas, believed the Jews should set up a socialist nation, a Jewish commonwealth, in that homeland.

These attempts at intellectual clarification and public promotion of the idea of Jewish nationalism were supplemented by some practical efforts to move to the Land of Israel.

Kalischer's constant and effective efforts to form an agricultural school led the Alliance Israelite Universelle, an organization set up in 1860 to protect Jewish rights around the globe, to establish Mikveh Israel, the first such school in the Land of Israel, in 1870. Mishkenot Sha'ananim, the first Jewish community established outside the protective walls of Jerusalem, had been set up in 1860. The Jews only slowly settled. Some European pioneers, prompted by religious fervor, founded Petah Tikvah in 1878 as the first agricultural settlement established in the nineteenth century.

Meanwhile, hatred against the Jews continued. There had been pogroms against the Jews in Russia before, but the one in Odessa in 1871 forced Jews, for the first time in a serious way, to wonder whether they could ever be fully part of Russian society. It was this concern that led to increased interest in a Jewish nation.

But the Odessa pogrom was only a foretaste of what was to come.

Czar Alexander II of Russia was assassinated on March 13, 1881 (March 1 on the Julian calendar Russia was then using). The anarchists who killed him mined a tunnel under the street on which he rode in a military parade. Four conspirators with bombs lined the parade route. None of these four assassins was Jewish. The actual killer, Ignaty Grinevitsky, was Polish. However, a Jewish woman named Hessia Helfman rented the apartment that the conspirators used as a headquarters.

Her presence in the conspiracy was enough to ignite a wave of pogroms on the Jews of Russia. The first organized one was in Elizavetgrad at the end of April 1881. There were thirty additional attacks over the next three days. By the end of 1881, twenty thousand Jewish homes were destroyed. By 1882, more than two hundred Jewish communities had suffered attacks and the Russian government, through its harsh May Laws, imposed further and more severe restrictions on Jews.

Jews had to make a decision. Two-thirds decided to stay in Eastern Europe. This fateful and terrible decision made many of them and their descendants victims of the Nazi regime or subject to Soviet rule. It should be noted that emigration of Jews was also prompted by dire economic circumstances, and many Jews left simply for the greater opportunities offered in the Golden Land, America. Indeed, in 1882, 15,000 Jews immigrated into the United States. Between 1886 and 1898, 380,278 Jewish immigrants arrived just in New York City.

The United States was, by a very wide margin, the most popular destination for those who left voluntarily or were forced out.

But there was another alternative besides staying put or emigrating to America.

The Jews could go to their ancient homeland in the Land of Israel. In fact, they didn't know much about such an option. There had been travel tales, none of them gushing with reports of milk and honey. In 1857 Herman Melville went to what he thought of as the Holy Land in order to see where Jesus had been born. When he took a look around, he wrote in the margins of his diary that he wished Jesus had been born in Tahiti. The Jews, mostly misinformed, thought the land a vast and empty desert. Some who knew of the Arabs didn't foresee any conflict with them; a very few were worried about potential conflict. Although he didn't invent the phrase, it was Lord Shaftesbury, a British political leader, who wrote to his foreign minister that the land was "a country without a nation" that needed "a nation without a country." This was the vision many Zionists had, or wanted to have.

But by about 1890, there were already large numbers of Arabs living in Eretz Yisrael. The exact numbers aren't known, but one demographic estimate is that there were probably close to 500,000 Muslims and Christians living in the land then, with ten times more Muslims than the 43,000 Jews. It should, though, be noted that the first census in Jerusalem was taken in 1844 and showed that the city then consisted of 7,120 Jews, 5,760 Muslims, and 3,390 Christians.

It is those numbers that seem to present Zionism's founding with a moral problem. If there were so many Arabs, whatever the actual numbers, what moral right did the Jews have to seek this land for their nation, even if they bought the land legally, even if they negotiated a treaty for the land with Turkey?

The eminent author Yossi Klein Halevi puts it well. He sees the origins of the conflict as one between "narrative and presence." The Jews had a compelling narrative. The Arabs had the stronger presence.

The Zionists too often did not see or simply ignored the Arabs. Halevi observes that "the Arab world is built on respect" and the Jews, he notes, had not learned how to show respect to either fellow Jews or Arabs, the other in the sacred land.

Perhaps because of this the Zionists all too often never tried or failed to make their moral case or had listeners unwilling to hear any case. So understandably desperate were the Zionists for a safe haven from persecution in Europe and the threat of assimilation in America that they focused their minds on the extraordinarily daring and seemingly unattainable goal of creating that nation.

In fact, though, they did have a good moral case.

The widespread "racial" hatred and the murder and assaults on Jews was one of the principal moral reasons why a state for the Jews was needed. There was a deadly poisonous hatred charging through history and aiming right at them. The Zionists were frighteningly correct in their assessment of the dangers the Jews faced. Not only was hatred of the Jews

loose in the world, but soon there would be no escape from it. After the 1924 immigration act in the United States, there would be no remaining haven for Jews in trouble. That was less than a decade before the rise of Hitler. Herzl was in a race against Hitler, although neither of them knew it.

And the Zionists were also correct about non-ultra-Orthodox Jewry being lured away from Jewish traditions by the charms of assimilation. The Zionists knew there needed to be a Jewish nation to provide those who weren't ultra-Orthodox Jews with a place to live a completely Jewish modern life. It was this spiritual need as well that provided Zionists with a moral foundation for their difficult and bold enterprise.

This situation of the Jews was uniquely dire. The Arabs did not face any kind of comparable hatred. That is, all else being equal, the moral claim by the Zionists might have been that the more persecuted people, in history and in the current moment, was more in need and so more morally entitled to using the land as a home nation.

However valid this claim, though, it doesn't get at the Arab attachment to the land or their presence.

The fellahin living in the land in 1890, the peasants, the agricultural workers, the farmers, were there before the new Zionist movement. They eventually charged the Zionists with usurping Muslim land, the very land on which the Muslims had lived for a thousand years. The fellahin may not have owned the land, but they worked on it, and they lived there, at the very least temporarily.

Jewish nationalism had several distinct disadvantages in trying to reclaim their homeland. The Jews had been scattered among the nations for nineteen centuries. They did not share a common language. Their cultures were different. They were late in coming to nationalism. European nationalism had its peak between the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and the Congress of Berlin in 1878. Zionism used the logic of European nationalism in forming its own intellectual foundations but failed to note the European model's great failure. That model's intellectuals thought a people sharing a distinct cultural identity were the natural basis of a nation. The Europeans, however, never overlaid the lands apportioned to the nations with the peoples of those distinct cultural identities. The result for Europe was a real problem of minorities, people within a nation who didn't fit with the majority cultural identity. This fact was, of course, most tragic for the Jews. Intellectually, the Zionists failed, as the Europeans did, to understand that minorities disrupted the intellectual logic of nationalism. And so Zionism, too, did not adequately take the Arabs living on the land into account.

Instead, Jewish thinkers, however blinkered, understandably took note of the arc of Jewish history, the emancipation and enlightenment of the Jews, the nationalism going on around them, and the intense hatred toward the Jews and attacks on them, and so, late or not, many Jews believed it was time for a Jewish nationalism. After all, despite the travails of their history, the Jews had remained united as a people, surely seen by most Jews as a miracle of God or history.

Desperate in their travails, the frightened, weak, deprived Jews had the simple human aspiration to be normal. One of the principal goals of Jewish nationalist efforts was to transform their anomalous status in European societies to one of a normal people living safely in their own land. It was a significant, important, and totally appropriate goal. It seemed, at the time, to be a goal that was within reach. It did not, however, turn out to be a successful goal precisely because no partition agreement or modus vivendi with the Palestinian Arabs was ever reached.

It's not that the attempt to be normal was a total failure. The Jews, after all, did get their basic goal, a state in at least part of their ancient homeland. And, almost of equal success, the Jews took an ancient language used for their liturgy and their literature and transformed it into a spoken language of everyday use. Untold numbers of new words had to be invented; a population had to be convinced to give up their spoken Yiddish or Russian or other languages and use it; it had to be taught. Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, who became a Hebrew lexicographer as he created new words, was the most important driving force behind this effort.

Starting in about 1880, various independent groups emerged; sometimes these were simply study circles, sometimes they had a more political aim in such places as Russia, Romania, England, France, and the United States, where the famous poet Emma Lazarus was perhaps the first prominent person to support Jewish nationalism. Together, these groups are known as Hovevei Zion, or the Lovers of Zion. The local leaders of these groups did not believe that they should immediately pick up and move to the land they supported as a Jewish national home. Additionally, very few wealthy Jews were in a hurry to offer money for what many saw as an improbable dream.

But there were developments from this movement. In 1881, the Ottoman government announced its permission for foreign Jews to settle all through the Ottoman Empire—except for Palestine. Leo Pinsker, a physician and Lover of Zion, anonymously published his provocative pamphlet *Auto-Emancipation* on January 1, 1882. As the title of his assertive essay suggests, Pinsker favored the idea that the Jews should emancipate themselves. This, then, was a critique of the standard understanding of Jewish emancipation. One part of his critique was very practical. He pointed to the 1881 attacks as stark and irrefutable evidence that the Jews could not thrive in their attempt to be a free minority group in a country that was not theirs. The promise of European emancipation of the Jews, he thought, turned out to be unworkable. Second, he thought that in the standard model of emancipation, the Jews were simply passive subjects, people to be given rights, people to be treated equally. But, Pinsker asserted, the rest of the world operated on the idea of active emancipation, of peoples establishing their own nations. Therefore, traditional emancipation could not work. Instead, the Jews had to become active and emancipate themselves. There is another dimension to Pinsker's essay, a claim that it was a fear of the Jews that led to a hatred of the Jews. This far less effective part of Pinsker's work had little influence. Additionally, in his pamphlet Pinsker is torn between arguing for the Land of Israel or for America as the appropriate destination for an auto-emancipated people. He would later choose the former along with his colleagues in the Hovevei Zion movement.

Pinsker's pamphlet caused an uproar. It was widely discussed. Jewish nationalism was on the move.

Indeed, on July 31, 1882, Rishon LeZion (First to Zion), the second agricultural settlement after Petah Tikvah, was established. But Rishon LeZion was the first explicitly nationalistic settlement. Ten Hovevei Zion members from the Ukraine founded it.

The Hovevei Zion groups had spontaneously sprung up as did BILU, another significant group of Jewish pioneers.

January 30, 1882, had been set aside as a fast day to commemorate the pogroms' victims. In the Ukrainian city of Kharkov that night, after services at the local synagogue, Israel Belkind, a twenty-one-year-old student, invited other students back to his room. Their purpose was to reorient their lives. Belkind had a plan; they were to go to the Land of Israel. Eventually they called themselves BILU, an acronym from the Hebrew Beit Yakov Lekhu Venelkha (O House of

Jacob, let us go), meaning to make *aliyah*, or move to Israel. The verse was from Isaiah 2:5. In July 1882, the first group of twenty-four Biluim arrived in the Land of Israel. Eventually, about fifty of them arrived. Not all could endure this new life, but some did. Chaim Chissin, one of those pioneers, kept a diary that is revealing about the agonies and efforts of pioneer life, including working with the Arabs.

Curiosity was the initial reaction of the Arabs to these newcomers. The Arabs had seen Jews before, but they had been older, religious, apart. They didn't farm, they dressed in dark clothing, they spoke Yiddish. These new Jews were different. They dressed in a more modern fashion. They spoke Russian, not Yiddish. They carried themselves in a different, more confident manner. The native Arab workers were surprised how hard the Jews worked. The Arabs were used to seeing Jews at prayer, not tilling the soil. The Jews had new farming machinery and that intrigued the Arabs. These new Jewish farmers were also a source of amusement because of their struggles to learn the ways of their new trade. The Jews would coax a camel onto a cart the way they did a horse. The Arabs were deeply amused by such ignorance.

Friction inevitably developed, caused by both sides. The Jews did not know Arabic and were ignorant of local customs. For example, the Arab tradition was of shared pastureland, but the Jewish pioneers, fearful for their first crops, believed the Arab shepherds who came onto their land were trespassers and forcibly removed them. Some Arabs were tempted to steal what the Jews had and were forcibly restrained.

Jews purchased the land legally, but mostly from Arab absentee landlords or Arab moneylenders after the local peasants had defaulted on a loan. The Arabs wanted this land back.

On the other hand, the Jewish communities employed Arabs and paid them more than the Arabs could get elsewhere. The Jews bought produce at Arab markets. And the Arabs eventually saw that the Jews did not intend to leave.

And so, in these agricultural communities, a pattern developed. The Arabs were resentful at first, a resentment that engendered some hostility. But this gave way to acceptance and then reasonably good relations through the end of the century.

But in cities like Jerusalem, Arabs continued to be deeply concerned at Jews entering the land and acquiring property.

Taking note of all this, the Ottoman government reacted. In 1882 it adopted a policy of allowing Jewish pilgrims and businessmen to visit Palestine but not to settle there and informed the Jewish leadership in Constantinople that it viewed the new Zionist communities in Palestine as a political problem.

Meanwhile, the Hovevei Zion continued to organize.

On November 6, 1884, Pinsker organized a conference of thirty-six Hovevei Zion members. This first gathering of Jewish nationalists was at Katowice (also known as Kattowitz), now in southern Poland.

The conference created Agudat Montefiore, an institution with the goal of providing aid to Jewish communities in the Land of Israel and, more generally, supporting the idea of Jews becoming farmers. Ten thousand francs were sent to Petah Tikvah and more money elsewhere.

The conference did not lead to practical results. Hovevei Zion kept progressing. The Russian branch, seeking legal recognition, was forced to register as a charity. In 1890 Russian authorities approved the creation of a society known as the Odessa Committee.

But with all this intellectual and practical effort, with all the mourning after the death and

destruction caused by the pogroms, with the heroic and self-sacrifice of the early pioneers, the advocates for Jewish nationalism remained frustrated.

In 1884, the Ottoman government closed Palestine to foreign Jewish businessmen but not yet to Jewish travelers. In 1887 and 1888, the Ottomans divided the land into the districts (*sanjaks*) of Jerusalem, Nablus, and Acre. Jerusalem was attached directly to Istanbul, while the others went to the wilayet, the administrative district of Beirut. In 1892, the Ottoman government forbade the sale of state land to foreign Jews in Palestine. By 1893, European powers pressured the Ottoman government to permit Jews who were legal residents in Palestine to buy land provided they did not seek to establish any communities on that land.

The Jews remained without a clear plan. They didn't even have a name for their movement.

The word "Zionism" specifically referring to an effort to restore a Jewish nation in the Land of Israel was first used on April 1, 1890. Nathan Birnbaum, then a well-known intellectual who had organized Kadimah, the first Jewish student organization associated with a university, used "Zionism" in an article he wrote for his journal *Selbt-Emancipation!*. Birnbaum used the term in a public address for the first time on January 23, 1892, when he spoke about "the Principles of Zionism."

Zion originally referred to a mountain near Jerusalem. It later became a symbol for Jerusalem itself and then for the Land of Israel. The term had been in use, but Birnbaum's linking the term to a political goal was unique.

Birnbaum gave a name to what was then a very small movement.

That movement now had a name. It had a growing number of adherents.

It didn't have a great leader or an effective organization.

That was about to change.

Chapter 2
The Sad-Eyed Prophet
Theodor Herzl's Mission

In one of his essays, Ralph Waldo Emerson asserted that "there is properly no history, only biography." However hyperbolic that view may be in general, it is likely that Zionism wouldn't have succeeded, or if it did that success would have been severely delayed, if Theodor Herzl had not lived.

Herzl was a deeply unlikely hero of the story of Zionism. He identified with German culture. He loved, for example, going to Wagner's operas. He kept a Christmas tree in his home. His son did not enter the covenant of Abraham through circumcision. He didn't know the Hebrew necessary for religious ceremonies or a lot about Jewish life, traditions, or history. He was, that is, hovering over the precipice of assimilation.

He was born in Pest (later Budapest) in Hungary on Wednesday, May 2, 1860, in a building next to the Dohany Synagogue. He was next to Judaism but not part of it.

Herzl attended a Jewish school at the Dohany Synagogue, but as he wrote in a later autobiographical article, "My earliest memories of this school consist of the punishments meted out to me because I did not know the details of the exodus of the Jews from Egypt." Referring to his later leading the Zionist movement to restore the ancient Jewish homeland, Herzl continued, "At the present time many schoolmasters would like to thrash me because I remember that exodus too well."

When Herzl was ten he went to what he termed a modern high school. He recalled that one of his teachers there tried to explain to the class what the word "heathen" meant and did it like this: "Among the heathens are the idol worshippers, Mohammedans and Jews." That was enough for Herzl, and he left the school.

In February 1878 Herzl's beloved sister Pauline contracted typhoid fever and died a few days later. A week after her death, the grief-stricken family moved to Vienna. Although attracted to playwriting, Herzl became a law student at Vienna University in the fall of that year.

In 1882, Herzl began to encounter stories of hatred of the Jews. The term "anti-Semitism" (sometimes written as "antisemitism") was coined by Wilhelm Marr, a German racist who helped transform hatred of the Jews from having a religious basis to having a so-called race basis, and so in these years and considering the origin of the term anti-Semitism, it makes more sense to talk about hatred of the Jews, which sometimes avoided the directness of the word "hate" by being called the Jewish question.

Herzl also began keeping a reading journal to record his views as he read. In February Herzl read Wilhelm Jensen's *The Jews of Cologne* about Jewish persecution in the fourteenth century. More crucially, that year Herzl also read Eugen Duhring's book *The Jewish Problem as a Problem of Race, Morals and Culture.* No book on a Jewish subject took up more space in his journal. Many writers cite Herzl's encounter with the Dreyfus case as the moment he realized the dangers the Jews faced in Europe and so the moment he began to look for a way out of the situation in which Jews found themselves, a search that eventually led to Zionism. But, as discussed below, the Dreyfus case was not Herzl's turning point. It is far more probable that reading Duhring's book was the crucial turning point in Herzl's thinking.

The book was Herzl's first encounter with modern racist hatred of the Jews. Herzl thought the book especially dangerous because it was so well written. It was, it turned out, not possible to dismiss the haters as uneducated fools. Duhring had been regarded by many simply as a fool. Herzl, however, with a prescience that marks a visionary, understood all too well the power of the nefarious ideas in that book.

Duhring suggested that there was a single Jewish character type that all Jews had. Furthermore, this Jewish character was passed on from one Jewish generation to the next because Jews belonged to the same race. With a character that couldn't in principle be eradicated or altered, the Jews were not capable, in Duhring's view, of being fully assimilated into European nations. By racial definition, they would always be Jewish, always be a race parasitic upon their host nations, and therefore always foreign. Duhring's stunningly horrific conclusion to this analysis was that the Jews could not be absorbed. They therefore had to be annihilated.

Herzl took these words more seriously than other Jewish readers. Intellectuals saw the power of words, but to them words of hate were either dismissed as without influence in polite circles or, if serious, countered by other words. Herzl was a different kind of intellectual. He was deeply attracted to the emotional power of words, but as his interest in the theater and opera showed him, words accompanied by a setting, costumes, and dramatic events taking place in front of him were even more powerful than the words alone.

Somehow, Herzl differed from many other Jewish intellectuals in that he was not satisfied to live in the German world. He had to take the world he created in his head, the world of ideas, and travel with it to the real world. This was the crucial difference in his personality. He had been brought up in a formal home. There was great emphasis on how the family appeared to the public. Herzl's father, Jakob, was a very successful business operator, someone who knew how to deal with the practical world. All of this amalgamated into Herzl's distinctive personality.

Herzl believed in action. He had joined Albia, a dueling fraternity—although he ended up fighting only one duel. On March 3, 1883, one of Albia's members made a nasty speech about Jews at a ceremony in memory of Wagner. Herzl had not been there, but on March 7 he angrily sent off a letter of resignation. We have in all these activities the beginning of Herzl the Jewish leader. He saw dangers when others didn't. He formulated a plan of action and carried it through.

Meanwhile, his future still didn't seem unusual. In May 1884 he graduated as a doctor of law. On July 30 he was admitted to the bar, and on August 4 he began to practice law as an unpaid clerk in another lawyer's practice. Herzl worked in Vienna and Salzburg for the court service.

Even then, however, Herzl was preoccupied by writing, trying his best to write plays. At the time, playwrights were regarded as famous and successful. Herzl's vanity was at work here. He loved writing, but he never had the skills of a playwright. His minor light comedy successes aside, it seems likely that Herzl started to write plays specifically because he sought fame. He thought he was destined for greatness and searched around for the path to that renown. He eventually found it in Zionism.

While he especially loved Salzburg and noted that he would have gladly spent all his days there, it was painfully apparent to him that as a Jew he could never become a judge. And so in August 1885 Herzl left the court service to devote himself to writing.

Biographers often gloss over Herzl's legal education and career, seeing it as an ephemeral,

unimportant interlude in his quest for literary fame and a gesture to his beloved parents. But the reason Herzl left the law was more than his desire to write. He didn't hate the law or his work. He simply realized, quite accurately, that politics was closed to him as a Jew. Wanting success, having a flair for and interest in writing, and noting that literature was an open field for Jews, Herzl embraced letters as a career. In a way this interest masked a deeper, seemingly unattainable, goal of being a man inhabiting a political world.

His legal training and inclinations gave Herzl a deep respect for the law and for acting in a legal manner. The moral man, he believed, lived according to laws codified by a society. It is therefore not surprising that Herzl eventually disapproved of the attempts to set up communities in the Land of Israel prior to having legal control of the land through an agreement with Turkey. Herzl preferred the court intrigues and bargains that defined political activity, which he believed could secure the Jewish homeland legally.

In 1888, Herzl found some success as a writer of feuilletons, apolitical bits of culture, gossip, and wit. Herzl, always clever, found an outlet for his biting criticism, especially in the *Neue Freie Presse*, a popular Viennese newspaper.

On July 25, 1889, Herzl married Julie Naschauer, a beautiful, well-off, brooding woman who would be completely unsuitable for Herzl's eventual life work. So manic was she that Sigmund Freud, who lived down the block from the Herzls, might easily have diagnosed Julie Herzl as psychotic. But her behavior was also rooted in rational feelings. She understandably complained of the money her husband spent on Zionism, on his frequent absences, and on other all too typical marital complaints.

In fairness, however, as Ernst Pawel emphasizes in his Herzl biography, *The Labyrinth of Exile*, whatever fits Julie Herzl threw, however unbalanced she may have been, Herzl had his own emotional problems. He lived around the corner from his parents and went home virtually every day to get support from his mother. To finance the Zionist cause, he went through money Julie had gotten from her own family. Once he latched onto the idea of Zionism, whether intentionally or not, Herzl was permanently physically and emotionally distant from his family.

In October 1891, while Herzl was traveling in Spain, editors of the *Neue Freie Presse* sent a telegram to him offering him the post of the Paris correspondent for the paper. He immediately accepted, and because he was so unhappy with his wife he never returned to Vienna before proceeding directly to Paris.

Working out of his room at the Hotel Rastatt, Herzl was exposed to a new world. He covered trials and duels, and especially the workings of the French government. Always a keen observer, Herzl absorbed the etiquette of parliamentary activity.

On November 8, 1894, Herzl completed work on a play, which eventually was titled *The New Ghetto*. It was about Jewish lack of security and the failure of the attempt to live as an emancipated people.

Not long after, Herzl got a horrifying verification for the play's insights. Herzl literally had a front-row seat to one of the most famous events in nineteenth-century history.

In December 1894, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, an artillery officer, was falsely convicted of treason for supposedly passing French military secrets to an official at the German embassy in Paris. On January 6, 1895, Dreyfus faced military degradation. Four soldiers marched with drawn swords onto the parade grounds. Dreyfus was in the middle of them. A sergeant tore off Dreyfus's insignia. His sword was broken in half and thrown at his feet. He was led past soldiers. Then he passed by journalists. He spoke to the journalists, saying, "Tell all of France that I am

innocent."

Theodor Herzl was one of those journalists.

The mob surrounding the grounds cried out, "Death to the Jews."

Dreyfus was led away.

Herzl wrote a story for his paper, but the editors censored the story, changing "Death to the Jews" to "Death to the traitors."

In April, Herzl tried unsuccessfully, as he had before, to sell his play *The New Ghetto*. Had the play sold and been a hit, it is highly probable that Herzl would have devoted his energies solely to writing. But that was not to happen, and so his eye had to turn again to the real-life anti-Semitism of the day.

At one time, it was an accepted view that the Dreyfus affair converted Herzl to Zionism. As it happened, the effect of the play was more subtle. Herzl had never protested the Dreyfus trial. He had thought a lot about hatred of the Jews before Dreyfus, even writing *The New Ghetto* before the trial. That is, the Dreyfus trial added to the evidence he had already gathered, but it wasn't decisive in changing him. The verdict and Dreyfus's sentence to imprisonment on the notorious Devil's Island staggered Western European Jewry, which had already been awakened by the Damascus affair and deeply unsettled by the pogroms in Eastern Europe. But those pogroms had taken place in the unenlightened East, not the morally mature, intellectually alert West of Europe. The Dreyfus affair changed all that.

Herzl, attuned to how the public had reacted to Dreyfus, much later retroactively adopted the affair as the moment of his own awakening. It was a dramatic gesture taken by someone who wished for identification with and approval by the wider Jewish public.

The affair did have a profound influence on Herzl. The pogroms and the Dreyfus affair gave Herzl a large, concerned, and sometimes frantic potential audience. That is, it wasn't the Dreyfus case so much as the Jewish reaction to the Dreyfus case that brought about a change in Herzl. It quickened his search for a solution to the Jewish question, a solution he had already sought.

His first thought about dealing with the hatred of the Jews, conceived in 1893, was to use what European aristocrats had always used to deal with an opponent—the duel. But he could not save European Jewry by killing a single famous hater or becoming a martyr. No one could duel to the death every European who hated Jews.

Herzl's next possible solution, again in 1893, rested on his reasoning that those who hated Jews would not let them assimilate because they remained Jews. Herzl thought if they converted to Christianity they would then be accepted. (He evidently had not absorbed the unforgiving nature of racial hatred.) He envisioned himself, with a few other nonconverting leaders, bringing the Jewish masses before the pope to convert. But his publisher made light of the idea, both for its improbability and the more telling argument that Herzl had no right to set himself up as the end point in Judaism, which had preserved itself through the generations.

The dismembering of the modern concept of a state was another possible solution to anti-Semitism. Perhaps socialism's ideal of doing away with nations was the answer. After all, many Jews saw in human emancipation from capitalism the inevitable emancipation of Jews. Differences of religion, race, and nationality would wither with common ownership.

Herzl saw socialism as at best a solution for the long run, but of no definite help for the Russian Jews who were being killed and attacked at that moment. Moreover, Herzl feared that in doing away with nations the socialists would be doing away with laws. However, there was a

quicker version of socialism: revolution. Some desperate Jews and members of other oppressed groups considered this alternative. For Herzl, however, revolution was even more uninviting than evolutionary socialism for it demanded large numbers of victims and a wholesale rejection of existing laws. Herzl could tolerate neither of those consequences.

Nachman Syrkin was the most interesting socialist contributor to Zionism. He was an early member of Hovevei Zion and developed a synthesis of his two ideological positions. He wanted to have large cooperative settlements of the Jewish working class. This was the seed idea for the later concept of a kibbutz. Syrkin ultimately opposed Herzl for dealing with the reactionary leaders of Europe. Similarly, he did not like the religious supporters of Zionism or the middle-class bourgeois ones.

Herzl rejected all these socialist ideas. For him, the political answer seemed inevitable. If the Jewish problem was not solvable by internal mechanisms (assimilation or conversion) and the available external mechanisms (socialism or revolution) violated his sense of legal order, Herzl had to find another solution. Herzl's sense of legal order overlapped the nineteenth century's notion of legal order as nationhood. Unfortunately for Herzl, Zionism, and the Jews, the European nationalist moment had been replaced by imperialism by nations and antinationalist socialism. However late, Herzl had come to his conclusion that nationalism was the answer for the desperate Jews.

The answer had to be a Jewish nation. The idea developed and then exploded in his mind, refusing to depart for a moment, leaving him haunted by it day and night, seeing all his other work as pitifully meaningless.

Herzl's idea was eventually viewed as utopian and monumentally unrealistic by many who heard it. Herzl's advantage over those who dismissed the idea as a fancy came from the fact that he saw the nation as a writer, an inventor of imaginary worlds, and therefore his mind was used to making leaps of imagination. The story worlds of his plays were "real" to him. Zionism had to begin as just such a story world. Most people were incapable of seeing that world. What made Herzl unique was that, unlike others with equally creative imaginations, he had a legal education, journalistic training, and an enormous amount of intense political experience. His mind, uniquely, could take the language of the imaginary world and travel with it so it became the language of the real, political world.

Herzl had conducted a fervent search for an answer to hatred of the Jews. His nationalist answer can be seen as the conclusion of a morally serious and unfrightened mind in a man who wished to help his people. But there are also other possible motives, ones far more personal.

Herzl was representative of a Jewish spirit, indeed a human spirit, that yearned to escape its condition. The persecuted Jews of Eastern Europe and the Jews of Western Europe who were horrified to learn they couldn't be both Jewish and European felt a deep and sometimes painful need to escape so that they might lead a new life in their ancient homeland. Some may have entertained utopian thoughts, believing that escaping from a place like Russia was tantamount to escaping the travails of the world, the traumas and terrors of physical ailments, even escaping from their own minds with the mind's stifling emotions and pattern of reactions that undermined how the Jews reacted to themselves and others. Some idealized what a journey to the Land of Israel could mean for their very condition as humans. It was precisely because Herzl was subject to such utopianism and that Jews were inheritors of a sometimes dangerous messianism that he was careful in public and in his Zionist writings to sound logical and measured even if that meant framing his ideas in flat prose.

Herzl's emblematic desire to escape turned out to have unexpected limitations. Sometimes when we try to escape, part of what we tried to escape from follows us. If Jews were discontented in Odessa, part of that may have also been present if they made it to the Land of Israel. The rational desire to escape from the painfully real reality of persecution, or in Herzl's world frustration at lack of opportunity, may have covered up the desire to escape from emotional problems from which there was no real escape. Some of these emotional problems, of course, may have come from the accumulated history of persecution itself.

It is also possible that Herzl was desperate for a life role that matched his self-perception that he was a great man, that society had trapped him as a Jew. Indeed, Herzl is often presented as a man who yearned to be a leader, and so, this line of reasoning goes, Herzl eventually found Zionism attractive; he wanted to be a leader, even a messiah and savior. Herzl would have nodded at Emerson's line, for Herzl was convinced that the task of pushing history forward depended on a small group of elite leaders, even one leader, a king of sorts.

But Herzl's view of leadership went beyond this notion of his being some sort of savior. As his legal career illustrated, Herzl knew that secular society would frustrate any desire for leadership he had. The idea of leading a Jewish society must therefore have seemed to him to be enormously appealing, a utopia of sorts where the frustrating psychological environment of Gentile society would be replaced. This escape from the real political world to a safe Jewish environment might have been satisfied by religion if Herzl had been a more pious and less skeptical Jew.

But his very cosmopolitanism made him want a real place in the world. He ultimately thought that being a leader in a Jewish state would end his frustrations and that he would finally find inner peace.

Herzl was mistaken, of course. As the late eminent literary critic Alfred Kazin told the author in a private correspondence, Jewishness can be as mysterious as other secular occupations, and the frustrations of Jewish leadership can be as frighteningly painful as any other kind of leadership. If Herzl had ever lived to see the Holocaust, this would be evident to him as Jewish leaders could only watch helplessly.

It was this false view that "fulfilled" leadership could be found in a Jewish career that convinced Herzl to devote his energies to the Zionist solution, wanting the Jews, once again in their history, to follow a leader to the Promised Land.

A leader must have many qualities. A principal one was that a leader had to look like a leader.

Herzl looked perfectly like a leader. He seemed tall even to the tall people he met. They were prepared to meet a leader and saw one when they met him. His hair was combed back from his forehead and became more closely cut the further down the back of his head it went. The hair was thick except for a tiny spot on the crown of his head seeking attention among all those hairs. His complexion was dark, but not very dark. His eyebrows were pronounced and dark. There were two tiny parallel folds between them. Photographers always retouched the folds, so those who only knew Herzl from his pictures didn't get a realistic look. His baritone voice was even; his adopted German spoken without an accent. He was careful not to raise his voice. He was always in control.

But it was his beard and his eyes that were mesmerizing. The dark beard was thick and full. It was, many thought, the beard of a prophet. Put a hundred men in a room and say to a stranger to pick out a king, and the stranger was likely to go to Herzl. His brown eyes were

round and deeply set in his face. They were ever alert. He had the unusual habit of saying good-bye to a friend as he lowered his head and slightly rolled his eyes. But the harder his toil on behalf of his people, the sadder those eyes seemed to grow.

Armed with wit, charm, and his parents' and his money, Herzl began his intellectual career in the Zionist movement. He had conceived of a Jewish state as being the answer in late April or early May 1895.

In May he planned his first action. It was a letter to Maurice de Hirsch. De Hirsch was a very prominent Jewish philanthropist who had established the Jewish Colonization Association to sponsor the growth of Jewish communities in Argentina. Their meeting did not go well. Herzl had not thought through his ideas intricately enough, though he had twenty-two pages of notes. He dismissed the idea of creating a Jewish haven in Argentina. De Hirsch thought Herzl's ideas impossible to accomplish.

Evidently realizing the historical nature of his thinking, Herzl began a diary in early June. He was overwhelmed by the idea of a Jewish nation. Perhaps, he thought, he should write a novel of the idea.

Undaunted by de Hirsch's rebuff, in June Herzl composed a sixty-five-page "Address to the Rothschilds." He tried in this work to convince the wealthy Jewish family that their fortunes could be preserved only in a Jewish state. Herzl's intentions were clear. He believed that attracting the wealthy to his cause would be the easiest route to success.

Herzl read the address to as many influential people as he could. Herzl was one of those people who were undaunted by failure and disappointment. Indeed, it strengthened his resolve, his sense that he was on a historically decisive mission.

For the last two weeks of November 1895, Herzl traveled to Paris and London, meeting local Jewish leaders and telling them about his plan. Most crucially, on November 19 he met Max Nordau, a well-known writer and social critic, who became Herzl's first important supporter. Nordau was a decade older than Herzl, thickset, shorter than Herzl, and wearing a thick beard. Unlike Herzl, Nordau was a seasoned writer, world famous in the way the Viennese journalist had only wished. Herzl was by comparison a novice in the world of fame. But, beyond the fact that they both had been born in Pest, their outlooks were compatible. Neither liked the cultural world around them. Both were confused by the political and social order they saw. Both were fearful about the future. Both, that is, were temperamentally conservative. Nordau's controversial assaults on art, society, and politics were epitomized by his book *Conventional Lies of Civilization*, which he wrote in 1883. In the book, Nordau focused his acid pen on the nihilism he saw all around him, the egos and the irrational people who were favorites in European intellectual life.

Exactly as it had done to Herzl, it was hatred of the Jews that compelled Nordau to reexamine his life and outlook. By the time he met Herzl, he was ready to listen to the idea of a Jewish state.

Still, even with an emotional compatibility and an emerging sense of Jewish needs, it is remarkable that Nordau listened to Herzl's assertions and immediately found his new intellectual home. Nordau became an invaluable aide to Herzl primarily because he provided the movement with a cover. How, after all, could a movement be called romantic or utopian if Max Nordau embraced it? Nordau had the celebrity and the reputation to allow Herzl to present Zionism as a sober and serious enterprise.

Nordau gave Herzl a letter of introduction to Israel Zangwill, a prominent English writer. It

was through Zangwill that Herzl spoke with other prominent Jews in London.

On November 24, Herzl spoke at the Maccabeans Club. This was the first group to hear Herzl's ideas. On January 7, 1896, the first article about his plans appeared, also in London, in the *Jewish Chronicle*.

Visiting, lecturing, writing articles, writing endless letters: these were Herzl's furious activities once he had been seized by his idea. He realized that the wealthy Jews would not come to join him. He knew he needed to reach the Jewish masses. Even this early in his Zionist career, he thought of having a meeting of Zionists. But Herzl was dissatisfied by what he thought of as a necessity to reach out to ordinary Jews. Herzl saw the Jewish masses as involuntarily deprived of political life for two millennia and so unable to work together for a common cause. Herzl felt trapped. There was no option to go to the wealthy. Therefore he had no choice but to seek the support of the millions of ordinary Jews.

Herzl began rewriting his as yet undelivered "Address to the Rothschilds" into a pamphlet. He later noted that the poet Heinrich Heine said he heard the rustle of eagles' wings as he composed certain verses. Herzl said he heard a similar sound as he wrote his pamphlet. He worked on it every day, pushing himself until he was exhausted. He often wept as he wrote it.

When he finished the manuscript, he showed it to one of his oldest friends, Dr. Emil Schiff, who had been trained to be a physician but now worked as the Paris correspondent for a German news agency. In mid-June 1895, Herzl wrote an urgent letter to Schiff asking him to come for a visit. The letter was mysterious: Herzl indicated that he needed Schiff's advice on a matter of crucial importance. Schiff thought Herzl might be summoning him because of problems in the Herzl marriage. Schiff was shocked. He had seen his friend recently, but now Herzl looked ill, as though he had been suffering for a long time from some disease. Schiff was shocked that his friend had unkempt hair and clothing. Herzl told Schiff of the work. Herzl noted that he had stayed away from people for two weeks, that he had hardly eaten or slept. He had written a book, he said. Herzl said his own fate was inextricably tied to the fate of the book.

Schiff just looked at him, deeply concerned. Herzl asked for a few hours so that he could read the book to Schiff. He asked only that Schiff not interrupt him but at the reading's conclusion to offer all his thoughts.

Herzl's voice was shaky as he read. As Schiff listened he thought to himself that Herzl had gone mad. Schiff began to cry. Herzl interpreted the tears as recognition of the majesty of the idea of Jewish nationalism. Soon, however, Herzl realized the truth. Schiff told Herzl that the would-be leader of a return to the Land of Israel needed to see a doctor. Then Schiff took Herzl's pulse. It was racing.

Herzl had a crisis of confidence, but he eventually continued. He arranged to have his pamphlet published and began telling people about it. At the same time, the end of November 1895, David Wolffsohn, a timber merchant in Cologne and a Jewish nationalist, received an urgent letter from Willi Bambus, a Berlin supporter of Zion who would later cause trouble for Herzl. Bambus wanted to alert Wolffsohn to a new book that would soon be published by Theodor Herzl, the well-known writer for the *Neue Freie Presse.* Bambus stressed how dangerous the book would be to the nationalist cause. Wolffsohn, however, admired anyone who could write so nimbly with such wit. When Wolffsohn discovered the name of the publishers of the book, he contacted them immediately to ask for proof-sheets of the book even before it was bound and published.

When Wolffsohn received the proofs, he stayed up until one in the morning reading them.

After finishing, he felt as though his life had changed. He realized he had to go to Vienna and meet the author.

Eventually they did talk. Wolffsohn wanted to know why Herzl had not mentioned his predecessors, and Herzl, replying honestly, pleaded ignorance. Wolffsohn then told him the success of his pamphlet would depend on the reaction of Russia's Jews. Herzl was doubtful, and it was then that Wolffsohn realized his mission—to teach Herzl about the life of Russian Jewry. Wolffsohn eventually served Herzl in many ways as his assistant, but awakening in him an understanding of the mass of Jews was crucial to his eventual success. They would be the mass audience he needed.

Der Judenstaat was published on February 14, 1896. It is the seminal work of political Zionism. The pamphlet is often translated as *The Jewish State.* This translation carries political implications, as though the state established by Herzl's ideas was intrinsically Jewish, that its essential character was Jewish. In such a state, the national anthem should reflect Jewish thought. The laws of the state should provide special privileges for Jews, such as the right of Jews throughout the world to return to their ancestral home as citizens. The term "Jewish State" is used five times in the Israeli Declaration of Independence.

It is this interpretation that has caused some later readers of the pamphlet, such as the prominent Israeli novelist Amos Oz, to use a different translation, to call Herzl's pamphlet *The State of the Jews.* This translation is meant to convey the notion that no state can be "Jewish" in its nature. A state of the Jews is a state with a Jewish majority but without special privileges for Jews stemming from the nature of the state.

In fact, both of these translations are incorrect. The correct translation is *The Jews' State*. The word "Juden" was frequently used pejoratively by those who hated Jews. What Herzl had in mind was a bold, defiant, assertive title to say to the haters that even the Jews who were hated, the Juden, could form their own nation. Herzl, however, did not intend a specific political dimension in his title. It might be noted that *The Jewish State* does not need to be used with political implications but simply as a more polite way to translate the title than *The Jews' State*.

The pamphlet's intentionally stiff, legalistic prose, written in that way to avoid charges of utopianism or romanticism, lays out Herzl's analysis of why people hate the Jews and what the Jews can do about it, specifically establishing their own nation. Herzl had absorbed a lot of lessons while reporting on French political life. He had learned to think like a politician. For example, at one point in his pamphlet Herzl notes that the exact location of the Jewish nation is not clear. Perhaps, he suggested, it would be in Palestine (then a neutral term used to describe a territory of the Ottoman Empire, not a separate nation). Or, alternately, it could be in Argentina. But as he had told a group of Jewish students a few days before *Der Judenstaat* appeared, Herzl had mentioned Argentina so that the Turks wouldn't think that Jews would only settle for some Turkish territory and therefore would be subject to whatever price the Turks asked.

Herzl's focus on a response to the hatred of the Jews explains his single focus. His own secularism was valuable in propelling his political vision. But that very secularism did not let him see that while a nation is not spiritual, the Land of Israel was uniquely different. France was a nation, but the land on which it stood was not separately sacred. For the Land of Israel, however, the land itself was spiritual. The nation Herzl proposed to put on that sacred land was not spiritual. Herzl failed to grasp this and therefore failed to explore the complicated relationship between land and state.

Herzl addressed many subjects in his pamphlet, but it is telling that there was one subject that was inadequately covered. That, of course, is the fact that there were inhabitants, mostly Arab Muslims, already living in the proposed Jewish nation.

The Ottoman sultan Abd-al Hamid II reacted to Herzl's proposal that Palestine be granted to the Jews by flatly rejecting it. But Herzl's views would soon be supplemented by an organization he created to fulfill his political goals. It was that organization that would eventually succeed, long after the Ottoman Empire itself had fallen.

It is important to consider the content of Herzl's ideas to judge him and the movement he created. In assessing Herzl's thought, and ultimately in assessing Zionism morally, it is crucial to consider what would emerge as his failure and the failure of the movement to convince Arabs living in the land and beyond that it was prudent, practical, and proper to accept the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. It is, of course, easy to argue what Herzl and the others should have seen, that the substantial native Arab population would resist Zionism.

There were Zionists who even then took note of the Arabs. Ahad Ha'am, a prominent Hebrew essayist, was particularly cautious. Ahad Ha'am's real name was Asher Ginzberg. His pen name meant "one of the people" in Hebrew. His spare, beautifully written Hebrew essays carried with them a rigid sense of ethics and a deep pessimism, especially about the idea of a political nation in the ancient Jewish homeland. He took several trips to the Land of Israel, starting in 1891. He didn't speak with the Arabs but paid close attention to how he thought the Jews treated them. More generally, in what should have been a cautionary note for all Zionists, Ahad Ha'am wrote that "not only isn't Palestine empty . . . but arable land is now at a premium" and "far from being unaware of Jewish plans, local Arabs are shrewd and ready to exploit the settlers." It should be added that Ahad Ha'am didn't romanticize the local Arab population. Indeed, he wrote of their laziness. The seeds of conflict were there for those who had the eyes to see them.

Ahad Ha'am had a different idea. Herzl favored what has come to be known as political Zionism. Those who moved to the Land of Israel and established communities have come to be known as following practical Zionism. Ahad Ha'am followed spiritual Zionism. He wanted to establish in the Land of Israel a spiritual center of Jewish life. He thought Herzl a demagogue for reaching out to the masses and for ignoring Jewish culture. Ahad Ha'am saw in Herzl's political approach a discontinuity with Jewish history and believed Herzl comparable to Jewish history's disastrous flirtations with false messiahs who had promised redemption and brought failure and disappointment.

Ahad Ha'am's vision is complex. Steven J. Zipperstein's extraordinarily insightful book *Elusive Prophet* is the best presentation of that vision. Zipperstein suggests in the book that, like Herzl, Ahad Ha'am wanted a state, a political entity that was coherent. And he wanted a Jewish majority in that state. The two differed radically in the means to get that state. It is also important to note that, as Zipperstein points out, Ahad Ha'am's ideas are sometimes misunderstood now because later cultural Zionists, such as Judah Magnes, who favored a binational state shared by Jews and Arabs, always claimed that he had modeled his views on Ahad Ha'am's. Zipperstein correctly concludes that Magnes's views (shared by, for example, Martin Buber, Henrietta Szold, and others) were in fact a new and separate form of cultural Zionism.

Even with his unique insights, Ahad Ha'am and other cultural Zionists themselves approached the Arabs without adequate knowledge, without enough investigation. Ahad

Ha'am, for example, is often cited as someone with vision about future Arab-Jewish relations. But the great essayist misunderstood the depth of Arab feelings, and his proposed spiritual center of a state would have been as deeply resented and resisted as Herzl's state.

Herzl encountered others who warned him about the need to consider the Arabs. In 1896 Herzl spoke with Abraham Yahuda, a writer who collected rare documents. Yahuda told the Zionist leader that for the movement to succeed, the non-Jews needed to approve of the enterprise.

Ironically at the time, some of the Zionists concerned about the Arabs were worried about Christian Arabs, not Muslim Arabs. These Zionists feared that the Christian Arabs would absorb Jewish hatred from Christian Europe.

Of course, considerations of Arab-Jewish political relations expanded considerably later, after the 1897 setting of this book. Still, as the founder of political Zionism, Herzl bears special scrutiny.

It first must be noted that whatever else he was, Herzl was no racist. Zionism as a theory rested on the intellectual foundation that racial hatred was wrong. Herzl rejected it as an acceptable principle.

Beyond that, Herzl did not consider the Arab population in any way proportional to the importance the question would later have. It is possible to forgive Herzl. It was easier to tell himself that the local Arabs in the Land of Israel were simply part of the landscape. They were there, but he failed to see them as independent actors. More generously, it might be said that Herzl thought that if the Arabs were treated decently and if they participated in the economic revival of the land brought about by technology, they would live peacefully among the Jews. He didn't grasp that they would have nationalistic aspirations of their own, and, in fairness, there was no Palestinian Arab national movement at the time for Herzl to miss. Still, he seems not to have assessed the situation of the Arabs systematically or at length. He can be accused of paternalism, naiveté, and neglect, but not, fairly at least, of feelings of malice or hatred. Herzl, in his race against his health, had to deal with organizing a movement, internal Jewish enemies, and the Turkish Empire and other world powers. His lack of analysis of the Arab question was a political failure but not a moral failure.

Herzl's most provocative comment about the Arabs was confined to a single entry in his diary at the very beginning of his Zionist thinking. On June 12, 1895, Herzl wrote:

"We must expropriate gently the private property on the estates assigned to us.

"We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it employment in our own country.

"The property owners will come over to our side. Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly.

"Let the owners of immovable property believe they are cheating us, selling us things for more than they are worth.

"But we are not going to sell them anything back."

This is the language of transfer or expulsion, and, as such, a basic text of Zionism's opponents. Ironically, there are within the Zionist movement those who favored transfer of the Arabs and they, too, cited this entry.

Had the text been an indicator of Herzl's later thought or the basis of a political proposal he made, it would be much more crucial than in fact it is. Herzl was in some sort of manic state for several weeks before he wrote this entry. Indeed, on the very day he wrote about the

"penniless population" he wrote much else, including his plan to duel an anti-Semite. That is, Herzl was exploring fantasies and letting loose some of his emotions. He wrote of every possible alternative; he was not advocating them at that point. He didn't, for example, go through with the duel.

It is a matter of judgment to decide how significant or not the entry is, but it is hard to make it central in morally evaluating Herzl or Zionism precisely because it appears nowhere else in Herzl's very extensive writing and nowhere in his actual political plans, which were shaped not by fantasies but by the frustrating and complex world of power politics he tried to navigate.

For a more official statement about Herzl's views of the Arabs, it makes more sense to look at his published views. By 1902, for example, he was a recognized world leader of the movement. He knew his statements would be parsed carefully. If he had at that point publicly called for the forced removal of non-Jews from the Land of Israel, that would have been a serious moral failure. But that was not the case, for in that year he published his utopian novel *Altneuland*. (The title, meaning "old-new land" became the inspiration for the founders of Tel Aviv, founded in 1909. In naming the city, the founders turned to Herzl's novel and chose a symbol of the old, a tel, which is a mound made up of accumulated layers of prior civilizations, and of the new, because *aviv* means spring in Hebrew.)

David Littwak, a major character in the novel, is running for president. Littwak not only speaks Arabic but also works with Rashid Bey, an Arab engineer, who is one of the novel's heroes. There is a character, Rabbi Geyer, who wishes to deny voting rights to non-Jews. (Geyer was modeled after Karl Lueger, the leader of the anti-Semites in Vienna.)

Invoking the Bible, the president who is leaving office says, "Let the stranger be at home among us." Littwak's party wins the election and Geyer leaves the country. Clearly, Herzl's vision is one of tolerance. It should be added that in the envisioned Jewish homeland, rights are not only extended to Arabs but also to women. Herzl suggested this at a time when no Western democracy gave women the right to vote.

It needs to be noted however that the toleration and understanding was one with Arabs as a minority group in a Jewish state. Herzl, unlike Ahad Ha'am, did not see the Arabs as ever developing the kind of nationalist consciousness that the Jews had for what was, in Herzl's mind, the ancient Jewish homeland.

Whatever its inadequacies, Herzl's pamphlet was a sensation. In an era without sophisticated knowledge of public relations, it turned out that all of Herzl's correspondence, speeches, and meetings had built an audience.

Sensations, however, cut both ways. On the one hand, there was a lot of enthusiasm and excitement. Members of Hovevei Zion societies and other Zionists were already in place waiting for an organizer and so Herzl had a devoted readership. On the other hand, there were inevitable resentments among the Zionists and fierce opposition by those who were not Zionists.

Nathan Birnbaum, for example, thought he should be the leader since he had invented the term "Zionism." Herzl, after all, had only made it popular. Other Zionists resented Herzl's ignorance of his predecessors. Some had very different visions of a Zionist goal. Some, for example, didn't want a political state but only a Jewish cultural center. Some wanted autonomy, not sovereignty. Herzl himself had to be nebulous about his official end goal out of fear of angering Turkish authorities.

There was a particularly venomous attack on Herzl from Orthodox and Reform rabbis and

leaders, although it should also be added that from the beginning some religious leaders were at Herzl's side and were crucial in Zionism's success. The Orthodox thought it was insolent and blasphemous for a human to usurp the role of the Messiah in leading the Jews back to their homeland. The Reform saw being scattered among the nations crucial for the accomplishment of their mission to be a moral light unto the nations.

Herzl was called all sorts of names, attacked in print, mocked mercilessly. He knew, however, that it was vital to meet this opposition with imperturbable calm.

He also met some unusual characters. On March 10, 1896, the Reverend William Hechler, chaplain in the British Embassy in Vienna, came to see Herzl. Hechler was fifteen years older than Herzl, slender, with enormous energy for a man over fifty. He had a white beard that flowed down to his chest. He always carried around with him a table of biblical dates; he furiously argued that in the years leading up to 1897 the Jewish people would undergo the fulfillment of prophecies for a return to their ancient homeland. Hechler had come upon *Der Judenstaat* by accident by looking over the new books in a book stall.

Hechler had rushed into Herzl's study, announcing "Here I am!" Hechler was no political fool; he immediately announced that he had predicted the coming of a Jewish leader to the Grand Duke of Baden. Herzl, who desperately wanted access to the royal family in Germany, immediately saw how the strange-looking Hechler could be useful. Stymied by Jewish "royalty," the powerful and wealthy Jewish families in Europe, Herzl saw in European royalty an opportunity to provide political legitimacy to his movement.

Herzl also called Hechler "the first Christian Zionist." Although not quite historically accurate because as early as the seventeenth century there had been restorationists who believed in a Jewish return to the Holy Land, Hechler was certainly Herzl's first Christian supporter. And he turned out to be an extraordinarily loyal and passionate defender of Zionism. He spoke to other Christians about the movement and became the symbol of the millions of Christians who eventually embraced Zionism for a variety of reasons.

Herzl was a deep believer in Christian Zionism. As he said in his introductory address to the Second Zionist Congress: "If we desire and bespeak the sympathies of the non-Jewish world for our endeavors, people will find something objectionable in that also. In fact, the same people who reproachfully say to us that Zionism is erecting new barriers between human beings criticize us for not welcoming the friendship of Christian Zionists. But when we grasp the friendly hands that are extended to us, we do not do so out of paltry considerations of expediency. Inherent in Zionism is a power that makes for conciliation. Ideas, free of hate, thrive on its soil. We steadfastly cling to our Judaism and nevertheless win friends of the noblest altruism. Is that bad? We who allegedly create new differences are actually bringing people closer together by a gentle experiment. In doing so, we use no tricks of any kind. We only act as we are; we simply tell the truth."

For his part, Herzl absorbed each new helper. But he pushed no one as hard as he pushed himself. Doing so was not easy. On March 12, 1896, Dr. Bernhard Beck, the Herzl family physician, had warned Herzl about a heart condition. Herzl had ruefully noted in his diary that Beck simply couldn't understand why a man in such a state would want to get involved in the Jewish cause to which he observed that Herzl had devoted his life. Herzl had not been surprised by the diagnosis. In 1879, during Herzl's nineteenth year, army medical boards had detected heart problems.

Herzl was left with an impossible dilemma: he could try to maintain his health by giving up

any excitable activity, activity that obviously included the overwhelming if not impossible task of trying to organize world Jewry to give rebirth to the Jewish nation. Or he could ignore his heart and do all he could with whatever time he had left to work on behalf of his dream.

Herzl was in a race against time. He chose to give up his heart's blood on behalf of his people, to paraphrase what would be the last words of his brief life.

On July 18, 1896, Herzl finally got a chance to deliver his "Address to the Rothschilds."

Edmond de Rothschild was not a significant member of his banking family; he preferred to leave the banking to his various brothers and cousins. He focused on philanthropy, especially his favorite two causes: donating art to the Louvre and supporting Jewish farming communities in Palestine. Rothschild supported about two dozen of those communities with perhaps three thousand Jews living and working in them. Rothschild, very much unlike Herzl, did not see the communities as part of a Jewish national revival. Instead, Rothschild was a typical philanthropist. He wanted to take care of poor Jews. The location happened to be in the ancient Jewish homeland.

It is easy to see Rothschild's objections to Herzl. The Zionist leader opposed any living in the land without a legal agreement to do so. And Rothschild, as perhaps the wealthiest man in France, was deeply worried that Herzl's fanaticism would subject people like Rothschild to charges of treason. Their meeting, after all, was not so long after the Dreyfus affair.

Rothschild agreed to a meeting, but he noted his disdain by meeting not in his home but in his office where all the other supplicants came to beg.

Unsurprisingly, the meeting did not go well. Rothschild immediately made it obvious that he wanted no part of Herzl's work. He asserted that a hundred and fifty thousand beggars would be the first to arrive in the new Jewish nation. He pointedly asked if Herzl was prepared to support them.

Rothschild saw Herzl as drunk with the idea of power. Herzl thought the philanthropist a coward, unable to understand the fate in store for Jews in Europe and without the vision to alter that fate.

It is an amazing irony of history that Rothschild, the anti-Zionist, essentially created and funded the nucleus of the future Jewish state, and it was Herzl who opposed the very communities that would form the beginning of the nation he devoted his life to creating.

Herzl engaged in many political activities, but most of them involved seeking to relieve Turkey of its debt in return for a Jewish state. Such an effort was quixotic, for Turkey had no intention of relying on Herzl.

There was, however, one lasting and real political achievement by Herzl, and that was the founding of the Zionist political movement at the First Zionist Congress.

Herzl's aim was nothing less than to create a Jewish parliament, to make the Zionist movement an international one, and to create representative organizations. It was a bold move that reversed traditional history. Usually a state existed and then a parliament was selected. Herzl called for the parliament itself to shape and organize the existence of the state. He didn't, that is, just want to offer the idea of a Jewish state. He wanted to create the instrumentalities that would create that state and be seen by the world as doing so.

The very idea of beginning with a parliament is revealing. It shows that Zionism was born as a democratic movement. Herzl's vision, borne out at the Congress, was a movement with free elections, free speech, and a free press. Herzl did not envision the rise of Orthodox Jewry (who were, by and large, opponents of Zionism) and so any need for the separation of religion

and state. Nor did he envision Jewish security needs and so didn't foresee problems between the democracy he assumed and assertive minority groups within that democracy. Still, it is remarkable that Zionism's birthright includes a democratic basis.

And so, armed with his vision, in March 1897 Herzl began his characteristically careful planning for the Congress. Herzl correctly assessed that only the re-creation of a Jewish parliament would provide Zionism with the political institution needed to proceed. What he didn't possess was the insight that in creating such a parliament, he would be creating an institution greater than himself. He didn't see that his own political power in the Zionist world would be diminished and restrained by the creation of such a Congress.

For now, though, Herzl proceeded as he always had done. He was not the sort of leader who delegated responsibilities easily. He used his own money, and that of his father. He worked tirelessly, knowing that every heartbeat in service to the movement was dangerous to his health.

And so it was on March 6 and 7 that he held a preparatory conference in Vienna with various Zionists. Herzl formally presented his idea for a Congress.

Even the year 1897 seemed auspicious for the Zionist Congress. William McKinley had been inaugurated as president of the United States. It would be on the last day of the Zionist Congress that Thomas Edison would receive the patents for his kinetoscope, the first movie projector. During the year Americans also had their first comic strip, the "Katzenjammer Kids." They rode in horseless carriages and courted during drives in these surreys. They met friends at soda fountains. During the year H. G. Wells wrote *The Invisible Man*. George Bernard Shaw wrote *Candida*. Everyone was wondering what the new century arriving in a few years would be like. It was to be a new era for the world and the Zionist Congress would make sure it would also be a new era for Jews.

Everyone at Herzl's meeting agreed to the idea of a Congress, although, politics being what it is, there was a reservation entered that the Russian Zionists needed to be consulted and their cooperation obtained. It was agreed that the Congress would take place in August in Munich. Herzl had originally wanted the Congress to be in Zurich, Switzerland. But Zionism was illegal in Russia, and Switzerland contained cells of revolutionaries in exile. The group with Herzl feared Russian Zionists would be worried about coming to Switzerland because doing so would draw the attention of the Russian police. And so, Herzl agreed to move the venue from Vienna to Munich, in Germany. He wanted to lead the Jews to Zion, not Siberia.

Some of those attending, such as Willi Bambus, a German social worker, had long been active in the effort to bring Jews to the Land of Israel, and some of these men resented what they saw as Herzl's usurpation of the leadership. Bambus, for example, didn't want an international organization; he wanted to promote local Zionist clubs and charities to support Jewish communities in the Land of Israel. Herzl was adamantly opposed to this, favoring securing legal control of the land prior to establishing farms and communities there.

It almost wasn't possible, but Herzl now increased the pace of his efforts. His study at No. 6 Berggasse became the effective headquarters of the movement. It overlooked a small garden and was always filled with the assortment of people attracted to history in the making. Herzl wrote to every important Jewish leader and others who were interested in Zionism. He would fall asleep at his desk until awakened by the milkman making his rounds. He neglected, however, Edmond de Rothschild, and those in the Land of Israel who administered the communities de Rothschild funded.

On March 16, Herzl mailed out announcements of the Congress. There was an invitation to register. The agenda for the meeting was deliberately mild: (1) The position of the Jews in all lands, their political, economic, and social conditions; (2) Reports on the Jewish communities in the Land of Israel and future prospects for them; (3) The goals of various Jewish charities in upbuilding the homeland; (4) Emigration to the Land of Israel; and (5) How to proceed politically and how to fund the Zionist project. Three weeks later, this agenda was altered to include an address by Herzl about how Zionism should be discussed at a future meeting of the great world powers.

Unsurprisingly, there were widely divergent reactions to Herzl's calls. Some were overwhelmed that they were living as history was charging forward. Some were shocked by the same movement of history. On behalf of the Rabbinical Council of Germany, five rabbis blasted Herzl, arguing that any effort by humans to establish a Jewish nation in the Land of Israel stood in contradiction to Judaism's messianic promises. To make sure Berlin authorities understood the depth of the opposition, the rabbis noted that Judaism's obligations mandated that Jews "serve the fatherland to which they belong."

Bambus and others in Berlin associated with the Hovevei Zion withdrew. They wanted a meeting called the Congress of Hovevei Zion, not a Zionist Congress. They wanted the agenda limited to helping the Jewish communities in the Land of Israel. The English Hovevei Zion issued a formal resolution refusing to participate. A New York group worried that a Zionist Congress might cast doubt on the "citizenship, patriotism, and loyalty" of Jews wherever they lived. There was opposition even in Herzl's hometown of Vienna. Some were upset that Herzl wasn't an outright proponent of Hebrew as the Jewish state's language. Accusations appeared that Herzl was in principle supporting anti-Semitic assertions that Jews were more than a religious group but also a separate nation apart from the nations in which they lived.

If Herzl's opponents thought this flurry of opposition would discourage him, they didn't understand Herzl or the Zionist movement. Herzl had both wit and pen. About the Berlin rabbis, he wrote: "These are people who sit in a safe boat using their oars to beat the heads of drowning men who try to hang on to the sides." It was a startling image and metaphor for Jewish life. Herzl went on to mock the idea of Jews belonging to a fatherland telling them that when their fatherland turned on them they would be in trouble. It was a surprising insight made about the situation of Jews in Germany.

The opposition continued its efforts. The Jewish religious community of Munich did not want the Zionist Congress to meet in their city. The infuriated Herzl went to Prince von Wrede, a non-Jewish friend of his who told him that the government of Bavaria (of which Munich was a part) would have no objections to holding a Zionist Congress in the city. Armed with this powerful ammunition, the pugnacious Herzl wrote in the *Jewish Chronicle* in London that moving the Congress from Munich would provide a lasting memorial to the Jewish community's protest because the Congress would be an important moment in Jewish history. Attacking the Munich Jewish community in that way was revealing. It showed Herzl's confrontational nature when it came to Zionism. It showed he understood politics and to the limited extent of his power he could use it. (Those limitations would become painfully evident as he eventually tried to negotiate to get the Jewish state.) Additionally, the argument he got into with Munich served a dual Jewish purpose. First, it provided a revealing difference between the Diaspora mentality Herzl was trying to uproot and the Zionist mentality of assertive Jewish power. Also, the dispute provided a tremendous amount of publicity, which Herzl exploited by noting that he had the

political permission to proceed with the Congress in Munich, but that he would not do so, purportedly, to prevent divisions within the Jewish community. Munich provided a small but perfect example of why Theodor Herzl could accomplish what others could not.

Now without a venue for the Congress, Herzl pondered returning to his original idea of holding it in Zurich. He realized, however, that before he could make any announcements, he needed to check with the local Jewish community and municipal authorities. He decided to approach a young lawyer in Zurich named David Farbstein who had recently written an approving article about *Der Judenstaat* for the magazine *Ha-Shiloah.* In writing, Herzl urged speed, but he wanted to know whether holding the Congress in Zurich would meet the agreement of the Swiss government, the municipal leaders, and the Jewish community.

Farbstein wrote back, suggesting Herzl avoid Zurich. Instead, Farbstein suggested that the Congress be held in Basel, which, unlike Zurich, was not a hotbed of Russian revolutionary activities.

Basel, in the northwest part of Switzerland on the Rhine River, lies where the Swiss, French, and German borders meet. Pleased with the idea of holding the Congress there, Herzl had Farbstein investigate Basel as he had intended Zurich to be placed under scrutiny; he didn't want a repeat of what had happened with the Munich Jewish community. Particularly interesting is that Herzl also noted various Christian supporters of Zionism in Basel whom Farbstein should contact, such as Paul Kober-Gobat and his wife, the daughter of the Protestant bishop of Jerusalem. The couple were particularly helpful in organizational details in preparation for the Congress. Herzl had probably heard about these Christian Zionists in Basel from Reverend Hechler. Clearly, Herzl recognized the affinity with Christians who had an obvious place in their hearts for the Holy Land, and he saw in them potential allies in the struggle for a Jewish homeland.

Farbstein contacted Rabbi Arthur Cohn, who was the spiritual head of Basel's Jewish community. Cohn said he had "nothing against" holding the Congress in the Swiss city. In fact, Cohn was more complex than this approval implies. As an Orthodox Jew, he was skeptical and even suspicious of Zionism. But either his curiosity or more likely his tolerant nature offered Herzl and the Zionists a place they could meet without the usual opposition. He provided a possible location for the Congress and, taking note of the kosher needs of participants, mentioned the Braunschweig restaurant as one under rabbinic supervision. Cohen also recommended four appropriate nearby hotels, information that Herzl was able to use. Cohn's emotional generosity, especially from someone who was not a Zionist, was remarkable.

Herzl now had his location, but he was still concerned about Russian Jews. But Herzl's politics was always unsentimentally hard-headed. The Russian Jews could provide people but not the kind of respectability to merit international news coverage and publicity.

Herzl saw much of the opposition as free and effective publicity. Jews who had never heard of Zionism suddenly learned about it. Indeed, sensing the need for information and publicity, Herzl decided on May 12 that the movement needed its own newspaper. Of course, he would have to pay for it.

As he had with the title of *Der Judenstaat*, Herzl decided to fling anti-Semitic mockeries back in the face of those who offered them. Herzl would, he decided, make the cover of *Die Welt* (The World) a bright yellow because the Jews had been forced to wear a yellow badge in medieval times; he declared that the color of past shame would be the color of future glory. Herzl planned to put a Jewish star, the Star of David, between the two words of the title. Inside

the star, Herzl would put a globe with the Land of Israel as a central point.

And so on June 6 the first issue of *Die Welt* appeared. Herzl wrote almost all the articles. He approached advertisers. He did the proofreading. There was no task he refused to undertake.

Herzl's editorial appeared on the front page:

"Our weekly is a *Judenblatt* [A Jew rag].

"We accept this word, meant as an insult, and will turn it into a mark of honor.

"*Die Welt* is a paper of the Jews. Which Jews? Not the strong ones, who are being helped anyway. They don't need our support.

"*Die Welt* is the paper of the poor, the weak, the young, and of those as well who, while not themselves oppressed, have nonetheless found their way back to their tribe.

"What we want—to use the words already familiar to our friends—is to create a homeland secured by international law for those Jews unable or unwilling to assimilate in their current host countries. *Die Welt* will be the organ of those men who want to lead Jewry out of these times into a better future."

Herzl's editors at the *Neue Freie Presse* were horrified. One of the editors told Herzl bluntly that *Die Welt* had to cease publication. Herzl refused and expected to lose his job. The incident led to another fight with his wife. The poor woman had married a successful journalist and ended up with an obsessed would-be leader with a clearly fantastic and unattainable dream of a Jewish nation. Julie Herzl, never fully emotionally stable, fell apart even more. The fragile relationship became a battleground.

Herzl's palpitating heart, aggravated by Zionist organizational difficulties, arguments at work, and a nearly broken marriage, kept pounding. Herzl recognized it, but thought his will could overcome a bodily muscle. Herzl, after all, was as influenced as other German intellectuals by the work of Schopenhauer, who in his major work saw the will, especially of the dissatisfied, as the major driving force in the world.

Herzl had a reconciliation of sorts with his employer and went on a vacation with his family. But an obsessed person can never truly vacate the obsession. Herzl began to survey his supporters to come up with a national anthem. Even away from Vienna, Herzl continued writing his letters, continued organizing, and continued fighting with Julie, who adamantly refused to accompany her husband to the Congress.

Some of his opponents relented a bit. Russian delegates decided they would create a united faction at the Congress. They wished to make sure no words would be used in Basel to offend the philanthropic Rothschilds, or the Turks, or the czar and his government.

And finally, on August 23, Theodor Herzl was on the train to Basel. He was accompanied by Isidor Schalit, a medical student and a member of *Die Welt*'s editorial staff, and Saul Raphael Landau, *Die Welt*'s executive editor.

Even on his way to a staggering success, in private Herzl remained agitated and realistic. He wrote in his diary: "The fact—and one I keep from everybody—is that I have an army of shnorrers [beggars]. I am the leader of a bunch of boys, beggars, and shmucks. Some exploit me. Others are already envious or disloyal. Still others defect as soon as they sniff a chance for some minor career. The unselfish enthusiasts among them are few in number."

It is revealing that Herzl could stare so unblinkingly at the reality he faced and yet remain so steadfast in his determination to change the course of Jewish history. Perhaps Herzl thought of Nietzsche's idea of a superman developed in the philosophical novel *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

Perhaps he recalled that Moses of the Bible had died before entering the Promised Land. Surely he contemplated his role as a leader who had a prophetic vision unavailable to others. Maybe he recalled the line from Proverbs 29:18: “Where there is no vision, the people perish.”

He must have felt intense loneliness as he contemplated the tasks he would face at the First Zionist Congress, the pain of his failed marriage, the constant struggles with his employers, and the brutal palpitations of a heart that had betrayed him.

Herzl knew the different interests he had to balance, the delicacy he needed to balance the varying and often contradictory interests, and the array of power armed against him.

He was, truly, a sad-eyed prophet on an almost unimaginably difficult mission. And he resolved that after this Congress either the great nations of the world would take Zionism seriously or Herzl would retire from his efforts.

The train pulled into Basel.

Chapter 3
With Eyes toward Zion
The Many Routes to Basel

Theodor Herzl arrived in Basel on Wednesday, August 25, 1897. The summer sun and the accumulated soot overwhelmed him as he stepped off the coal-fueled train. It was four days before the Congress would begin, and Herzl knew he had a lot of work to do. He would allow no doubts to build a home in his mind.

David Wolffsohn met Herzl and his traveling companions at the station in Basel. Wolffsohn knew what his role would be over the next several days. He had prepared what he could for Herzl. Wolffsohn tried to anticipate any needs Herzl might have. Wolffsohn was the one who would clear a path when Herzl was besieged by well-wishers, opponents, beggars, or those seeking a role in Herzl's efforts. If Herzl asked for anyone to be brought to him, it was Wolffsohn who would find the people and bring them to Herzl.

Herzl trudged through the heat still wearing a stiff white collar that buttoned separately onto his shirt, a collar he wore everywhere. He would not take it off now. He struggled to breathe. He felt the palpitations, the infuriatingly draining fatigue. He knew it was his heart betraying him again. He wondered if the beating time bomb would let him survive long enough to fulfill the mission he knew he was born to complete.

Herzl first headed to the Freie Strasse to find the office that the city had provided for him. When he got there he had his first shock. The place had been a tailor shop, one just vacated. Herzl could hear the jokes about Jewish tailors trying to create a nation. He demanded that a cloth be found to cover the shop's sign.

Once that was done and the office examined, he then went off to the Burgvogtei where the Congress was about to take place. But when he arrived, he was again upset. Did no one understand? This was the national assembly of the Jewish people, an assembly planning nothing less than the return of a dispossessed and tormented people to their ancient homeland, not some musical production punctuated by rounds of beer drinking. Herzl immediately canceled the lease David Farbstein had signed and sought another option.

Herzl went looking for a new site, one more fitting for the inclusion in Jewish history, and found the Basel Municipal Casino. Pleased by its appearance, Herzl rented the Musiksaal, the concert hall in the building. He must have wondered why he was in the blazing heat having to correct others' mistakes when he could be back in Vienna listening to his beloved Wagner or reading or writing another comedic and slightly risqué play. Wherever he went, he found confirmation that only he had the vision and sense to do what needed to be done correctly. There was no turning back, no more reliance on others than necessary.

When the renting of the Musiksaal was finished, Herzl eventually made his way to his hotel, the Trois Rois (Three Kings), at Blumerain 8, right on the bank of the Rhine. Napoleon had stayed in the original building of the hotel in 1797. The hotel was named after Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar, the Three Kings who came bearing gifts for the infant Jesus. Surely, Herzl must have laughed ruefully at the thought that as someone often called a messiah, he would be staying at that hotel.

Room 117 was plain. It was about 236 square feet and led to a balcony that overlooked the

Rhine River. There was a wooden bridge off to the right. In a few years it would be replaced by a stone structure. The Rhine must have offered Herzl some moments of peace and contemplation, although perhaps the mist that rose from the river reminded him of the confusion that lay ahead. The hotel was right on the river, and from the amount of time Herzl spent on the balcony simply looking over the river or talking to others there, it seems clear that the river became some sort of symbol for him—perhaps a symbol of quiet rest and calm, some escape from the turmoil all around him, or alternately its never-ending movement might have struck Herzl as the perfect metaphor for the flow of history he so dramatically wished to disrupt.

Basel itself turned out to be an extraordinarily hospitable location for the Congress. It was large, with a welcoming Jewish community and a curious Gentile one. It was modern; the first streetcars in Basel had begun service in 1895. The city had long served as a center for peace negotiations as well as international meetings. That fact gave the Zionist Congress some claim to be of worldwide importance. There are, though, mixed reports about the hospitality of Basel's Jewish community leaders. According to the author Pierre Heumann in his book *Israel entstand in Basel*, Herzl wished to raise funds in Basel's synagogues, but the Jewish leaders there were worried that local Jewish institutions would suffer financially if the money were used for Zionist purposes.

But the fact that the Zionist movement chose to have many succeeding Congresses in Basel illustrates the general congeniality of the location.

As has been noted, all the world eagerly awaited the birth of a new century in a few years. In an important way, though, the First Zionist Congress was the opposite of the widespread fin de siècle attitudes in Europe.

The era was symbolic for Zionism in part because it represented the end of one century and the beginning of a new era. That message was at the heart of Zionism for it sought to represent itself as the end of Jewish dispersion and removal from the main events of political history. Zionism was to mark the end of one era and the beginning of another, one in which Jews found protection, in which they were free from the whims of tyrants and those in their lands who hated them. If the old era was one of degeneration, the new one coinciding with the arrival of a new century was the resurgence of hope, the profound expectation that the calendar's turn marked a new beginning.

The principal intellectual strains of fin de siècle Europe were those of pessimism. The major thinkers were pessimistic about the future, sure that the society around them was decaying. Max Nordau was part of this intellectual movement. Therefore his turn to Zionism can, for him, also be seen as a personal act of redemption, a turning away from a psychological stance of boredom. His intellectual colleagues revolted against the rational. They sought refuge from materialism. They mocked the comforts of bourgeois society and the smug pieties of liberal democrats. Instead, they more characteristically turned to a trust of emotions more than thinking, of subjective experience as a clearer guide to life than what was presented as objective reality. They became symbolists and modernists.

Zionism, especially as espoused by Herzl, rejected this attitude. The world according to Herzl was rational. He was optimistic about scientific progress if not about European attitudes toward Jews.

The very arc of progress he had witnessed had convinced him of his own correctness. He surely thought Basel corroborated all he believed.

When back at the casino, surveying what needed to be done, Herzl began to give orders. He used a friendly, gentle voice but the tone made it a voice no one dared contradict or disobey. Over the portals of the casino he had a large white signboard placed. The sign read Zionisten-Kongress. Above it, Herzl decided, a Star of David would hang. He had known even before his arrival that he would not be satisfied because what he had were signals of a Jewish meeting, not a Jewish nation.

He knew he would need a flag. But there wasn't any flag he knew of for a Jewish nation. Herzl had his own idea for the flag's design. He wanted seven gold stars to represent the seven-hour workday he envisioned in the Jewish state. But that hadn't proved popular (nor would it eventually at the Congress itself), so prior to the Congress he gave the problem to the shy and loyal David Wolffsohn. The timber merchant arrived early in Basel and contemplated the problem. He finally had an idea. The Jews already had a flag of sorts; they wrapped it around themselves when they prayed. So, envisioning the flag as a tallit (prayer shawl) unfurled, Wolffsohn had one made.

The flag had a white field with two blue stripes and a Star of David. Herzl was extremely pleased and proudly ordered the flag to be hung at the same level as the Jewish star and, as people faced the entrance, on the far right-hand corner of the sign announcing the Congress. It turned out that many delegates assumed it was the national flag, flying proudly after all these years.

The delegates began arriving. There were 204, including 14 women, although the official stenographic report of the Congress only lists 196, including 3 guests. There was no doubt that more delegates were there who did not want their picture taken or their name recorded for fear of repercussions from the Russian authorities, including arrest when they returned home. Indeed, 5 of the 204 asked to have their names removed at the end of the Congress. However many actually showed up, only 69 represented what could legitimately be called a Zionist organization. The others were people Herzl had invited personally, those who just came on their own, and local people drawn in by the excitement. One estimate put the number of guests in the gallery at more than 1,000. These people represented no one but themselves. In this sense, Herzl was trying to perform a bit of a magic trick to make the Jews and the world outside believe what was happening in Basel was in fact a Jewish parliament when in reality the Zionist movement itself was extraordinarily small and even that movement was divided about Herzl and the Congress and was not fully represented there.

Herzl was making a more subtle point, however, than even a more representative group would have illustrated. Herzl wanted to create a physical Jewish state in a physical place. But to do that, he realized, he had to find a place for the Jews in the public political space. Jews and the world had to believe there was a Jewish political reality. Herzl was creating it with the actual Congress even though in fact there was no true political reality and even though the Congress represented a tiny percentage of Jews. Herzl's great accomplishment was to use his political genius to create that political space, to have it accepted, and to use it to launch a political movement that eventually succeeded in what seemed like an impossible goal when it began.

Herzl's political goal was so focused on the Jewish career in political history that he did not fully grasp the political career of the actual land on which he wished to house the Jewish state. That is why his mind pushed out what he incorrectly thought of as distracting and extraneous matters such as Rothschild's communities in the Land of Israel or the Arab peasants living in the land.

If the Arab community had developed a political force comparable to Zionism, Herzl would have been forced to think more about the status of the Arabs. The fact that their political consciousness came only later turned out to be crucial to the history of the disputed land.

In Basel, the delegates who arrived to create the Jewish political force were strangers to each other at first, but they realized they did in fact know each other. They were part of the same Zionist family. They embraced and kissed and then told each other their names. Then, after hearing the names, they embraced again because the names were familiar. They had read about each other, in some cases had corresponded with each other. They formed an immediate community. The Babel of languages didn't matter. Strange words became emotionally familiar ones. For a few days, as one delegate later recalled, they felt as though they were in their own world, and the world outside had effectively ceased to exist. Most of the delegates had read Herzl or read about him or corresponded with him. Many, however, had never met Herzl, and they were excited to do so. They crowded him wherever they went, no doubt deeply impressed by his appearance and bearing.

Who were these delegates, beyond Herzl and his circle?

They included Abraham Salz, the second vice president of the Presidium of the First Zionist Congress (Herzl was the president and Nordau the first vice president). Salz was a Zionist leader from Galicia. He had joined Kadimah, the Zionist student society, in his hometown of Tarnow. Salz was especially effective in dealing with non-Zionist Jews. So, for example, the Hasidic rabbi of Czortkow supported Jewish nationalism because of Salz. As the chair of the Executive Committee of the Jewish National Party in Galicia, he worked with Nathan Birnbaum to issue invitations to a conference held in Cracow on November 1, 1893. The conference's purpose was to establish an Austrian Jewish organization. Given Salz's interest and ability in political activity it is no surprise that he joined with Herzl almost immediately and effectively helped to bring about the First Zionist Congress.

Samuel Pineles was the third vice president. Pineles had long been active in the Hovevei Zion movement, serving as chair of a conference of Romanian societies active in Jewish nationalism. He wrote Herzl immediately after Herzl's efforts became public. Herzl put Pineles in charge of organizing the Romanian Zionists for the Congress.

Rosa Sonneschein was the founding editor of *The American Jewess,* the first English-language magazine for Jewish women. She had been a prominent member of the St. Louis Jewish community where her husband was a rabbi. Very unusually, the two had divorced, and, in 1895, Sonneschein began publishing her magazine. She had read about Herzl, and, extraordinarily moved by what he had accomplished, she wrote to him in the summer of 1897. Herzl, eager for American support, wrote back inviting her to attend the Congress. Eventually, his first words to the American community were published in *The American Jewess.*

Sonneschein was one of the relatively few women who attended the Congress. However, it was decided early on that though women could attend they would not have a vote. Sonneschein was deeply disappointed by this and protested the lack of women's votes. After the Congress, she wrote about the lack of voting rights. Twelve women who attended the First Zionist Congress issued a proclamation that women should have a role in the Zionist movement, at least as educators. The women vowed that they would create "Zionist women's associations wherever there were Jewish communities."

Herzl and the other Zionist leaders came to realize the significance of Jewish women, an observation obviously borne out by ensuing history, and so women got the vote for the Second

Zionist Congress in 1898 and all future Zionist Congresses, even at the time when most Western countries continued to refuse suffrage to women.

Sonneschein was one of five people from the United States who attended the Congress. The others included Adam Rosenberg, a lawyer from New York; Sabbatai Sheftl Schaffer, a rabbi from Baltimore; Cyrus Leopold Sulzberger (the father of Arthur Hays Sulzberger, who became, through his marriage to Iphigene Ochs, publisher of the *New York Times*); and Davis Trietsch, a businessman from New York.

Dr. David Alkalai and his sister Rachel Alkalai of Belgrade—the grandchildren of the precursor of Zionism, Yehuda Alkalai—represented the arc of the movement's history.

Herman Schapira was born in Lithuania and trained to be a rabbi. He entered the rabbinate but left to study a variety of secular subjects, especially mathematics and physics. He became a prominent professor of mathematics. He was also prominent in efforts to restore a Jewish home in the Land of Israel. In 1884, he developed the idea of founding what was called the Jewish National Fund. The idea of the fund was to buy land that would then belong to all the Jewish people. Schapira brought this idea to the First Zionist Congress.

Nahum Sokolow was a prominent writer. There were twenty other writers at the Congress, such as the ever suspicious Asher Ginzberg (Ahad Ha'am), who had come to observe but not to participate.

There were thirty-eight students, one sculptor (Friedrich Beer), a single printer, a single farmer, and a single cantor. Eleven rabbis attended, as did two dentists and, perhaps surprisingly, fifty-three businessmen, but only three professors.

And, it needs to be repeated, this group was not made up exclusively of those who admired Herzl without reservations. Menachem Ussishkin, for example, was another Jewish nationalist who had joined the movement before Herzl. An engineer, Ussishkin had been among those who had founded BILU. He was also a member of both Hovevei Zion in Moscow and Ahad Ha'am's Bnei Moshe society. Ussishkin differed from both Herzl and Ahad Ha'am. Herzl, of course, wanted to focus exclusively on political activities and have no Jewish communities in the Land of Israel until land was legally secured for a Jewish homeland. Ussishkin strongly disagreed with this, favoring sending Jews to the land independent of their legal status. But Ussishkin, while appreciating Ahad Ha'am's simply cultural goals, wanted to supplement them with very explicit nationalistic goals. Ussishkin went to the Land of Israel in 1891 and wrote of his journey in an influential pamphlet, published first in Russian and then translated into Hebrew.

There were also a variety of guests invited to the Congress. There were three official guests: Reverend William Hechler, Lieutenant-Colonel C. Bentinck of London, and Baron Maxim Manteuffel of St. Michele. These men were Christian Zionists. Hechler's enormous contributions must have convinced Herzl that there were Christians who were serious about their Zionist support. That is, Christian Zionists were present even before the Zionist movement began and were attached to it from its very beginnings. Indeed, other Christian Zionists at the Basel Congress included the Reverend John Mitchell and Maria Kober-Gobart, perhaps connected to Zionism by her father's role in Jerusalem. She told Marcus Cohn, the son of Basel's rabbi, that in Herzl she saw the Messiah. She contributed the gavel that would be used to open the Congress.

There was one Christian who is listed in many sources as having attended the Congress. However, Henri Dunant, the founder of the Red Cross, was not in attendance.

The benefits of welcoming Christian support were clear. They had their own contacts. They

could speak directly to people Herzl couldn't. That is, they added to the political power that Zionism was able to muster. But, whether he considered it or not, there were also dangers to accepting Christian Zionist support. Other Jews, already deeply hostile to or suspicious of Zionism, might use that support to claim Zionism was abandoning Judaism. Or that the Christian Zionists had ulterior motives—most especially offering their support simply because they believed doing so would hasten the return of Jesus and therefore the ultimate dissolution of the Jewish people. These debates continued over the course of Zionism's history. At the First Zionist Congress, at least, the Christian Zionists were warmly welcomed by the Zionist leadership.

But most of the attention focused on the Jews who arrived to go to the Congress. Wandering eventually over to Herzl's office, all those who attended officially went to collect their azure-colored seven-cornered shields that had twelve stars in gold and red and bore the legend, in German, "The only solution to the Jewish Question is the establishment of a Jewish State." They got their official badge, a blue and white rosette with a six-pointed star. They got their delegate cards that showed a farmer sowing long furrows in a field that led to what was then called the Wailing Wall. Herzl wanted to dazzle them with symbols, and he did. There was a bureau of people set up to meet the delegates so that questions asked in any language could be answered. There was an agenda printed and available. There were postcards for people who wished to send them; Herzl, realizing the ridiculousness of sending the postcards himself, sent them anyway to his wife and children. People from *Die Welt* were there to greet and guide members of the press. Copies of the publication itself, printed in a much larger quantity than usual, were available.

They were an argumentative group of delegates, drunk with hope and fervor, eager to use their nimble minds and quick tongues at least for their own people. One delegate walked up to Herzl and said to the Viennese master of wit, "Basel Tov," a pun on the Jewish expression for "good luck" or "congratulations," Mazel Tov.

Herzl characteristically had rules for his delegates. They had to be at least twenty-one. This was strictly enforced. Mones Kimche, for example, had been elected to be one of the Swiss delegates, but the Credentials Committee would not accept him because he was only twenty. Additionally, Herzl demanded that all the delegates wear the traditional European formal evening attire, black jackets and pants with a white necktie. The rule was printed on their card. No one was happier with this dictum than the Basel rental shops that saw a run on their stock.

Not everyone was pleased by this rule. Nordau showed up in more ordinary clothes, but Herzl begged him to change. The older author, who had made his reputation mocking convention, went back and returned in his evening finery. The grateful Herzl was overwhelmed and embraced his fellow Zionist. The socialists and communists among the delegates didn't believe in formal dress; they were there to discuss serious matters. Nevertheless, virtually everyone went along.

Herzl, ever theatrical, was brilliant in this regard. There were many journalists attending the event. Seeing several hundred Jewish representatives in formal dress would be a startling sight. But Herzl's insight was deeper than seeking to impress the world. He wanted the Jewish delegates to the Congress to see themselves and the other delegates. He wanted these Jews to believe in their own dignity, in their own importance, in their own role. He wanted to transform them and through them all the Jewish people, from having a Diaspora mentality to believing they were as good as any European nation, to believe once again that Jews had a rightful place

among the nations.

Herzl had to keep everyone pleased. He went to visit Swiss federal officials and then officials of Basel. He was careful to dress formally. It was all part of the act. This was to be a meeting of the Jewish parliament and Herzl had assigned himself the role of head of state. He wanted to convey that to everyone.

Herzl even held a press conference. There he laid out his vision as a simple exchange. The Jews would pay off the Turkish debt, and the Turks would give some land in Palestine for a Jewish state. Herzl made it all seem so reasonable. He knew he would be reaching large numbers of readers.

On Friday, he held a preparatory meeting so that all concerns about how the Congress would proceed could be settled. Herzl noted in his diary that Nordau was ill-humored at the meeting because he was not made the president. Herzl had to take time to calm Zionism's only famous international supporter. There were plenty of Herzl's enemies arriving in Basel, but even his friends were not easy. A seven-man committee headed by Nordau was appointed to draft the official program of the Zionist movement.

Meanwhile a Russian delegation met. Some of them were plotting ways to get more of their own program as part of the movement's efforts. They were afraid that in some heady moment, utterances at the Congress would be made that the Russian government would consider some sort of revolutionary threat, and that there the Jewish population would be endangered. Additionally, there was a concern that Herzl's political Zionism would anger Baron Rothschild, and so his continuing support of the Jewish communities in the Land of Israel would be threatened.

Even knowing this, Herzl nevertheless met with them in a room of the office set aside for the Congress. The room was hot and smoky. Herzl listened carefully and then called on his helper Jacob de Haas to speak. De Haas emphasized that their purpose was to plan. Herzl repeated this idea. As the meeting broke up, Herzl kept de Haas behind and said to him, "Understand? This should be a conference of generals; that was a meeting of an academic debating society." Herzl realized that the intellectual fervor so part of Jewish life was not what he needed to engage in the painful politics of nation building.

The delegates first got together in a festive gathering. Herzl and Nordau entered. The crowd, listening to a Russian Zionist named Temkin speak, grew excited. Nordau, a master orator, then made an emotional address. He started by saying he couldn't understand by his ear what the Russian speaker had been saying when he and Herzl had entered. But, Nordau emphasized, he had understood the words in his heart. He then quoted from the book of Jeremiah in Hebrew. The passage was about the matriarch Rachel getting a promise from God that one day her children would return to Zion. Nordau, using the ancient sacred language of his people, had captured the emotions of those delegates and tied the feeling to the Bible. Those who attended gasped, so overwhelmed were they.

Herzl worried about those who wanted to lead the movement astray. He was constantly busy meeting the Jews who had come to Basel. He spent afternoons meeting various delegations. At one point seven rabbis came to see him at the Three Kings. They wanted to know if Herzl planned to keep the Sabbath holy and eat only kosher foods. An instinctively honorable man, Herzl could not lie and so told the rabbis that he would not be faithful to these basic traditional laws. The rabbis left. Someone noted that they were smiling and was even more confused when they told him of Herzl's refusal. The rabbis explained. If Herzl had

announced his intention to keep the Jewish laws, the rabbis explained that they could not then have joined the Zionist movement but would have instead had to acknowledge Herzl as the Messiah.

Herzl put up with such people because he knew he needed the religious Jews. He couldn't afford to make Zionism just a secular movement. People like Wolffsohn had made him realize that the bulk of those who would come to the Land of Israel would come from the Russian Jews who at least had been raised Orthodox. It was because he tried to maintain ties with the Orthodox that Herzl agreed to go to Sabbath services on Saturday. He took Nordau with him and went to the synagogue. Neither of them had been inside a synagogue for many years.

Herzl spoke to a Mr. Markus of Meran, a brother-in-law of Samuel Friedrich Beer, the Jewish sculptor Herzl was friends with in Paris who had done a bust of Herzl in 1894 and who would design a commemorative medal for the First Zionist Congress. Having some panic, Herzl had Markus teach him the prayers necessary for before and after the reading from the Torah. When he was finally called to recite the brief blessings, Herzl felt more nervous than he was about the entire Congress or the speech he would give at the Congress. Herzl, though, was a master at preparation. He spoke without a mistake. Nordau, however, was overwhelmed. When he was called to give the blessings, he refused to do so. Instead, he fled from the synagogue.

Finally, as Sunday morning approached, all was ready.

The Congress was about to begin.

Chapter 4
The Three Days of the Congress

Trembling before History

The narrow oblong-shaped gray-walled Musiksaal in the Basel Municipal Casino was 36 meters long, 21 meters wide, and 15 meters high. It was filled that morning with the idealistic, the dedicated, and the curious.

Herzl had underestimated the curiosity in Zionism. The Musiksaal was amazingly not big enough to accommodate everyone who wished to be there. Those crowded closely together inside were suffocating in the unforgiving August heat. There was a narrow gallery on one side. There were chairs and tables for the delegates, with a similar setup in the shape of an *L* for the various journalists. Herzl was not going to miss out on an opportunity for maximum publicity. There was a steep platform. It was covered in a green coarse woolen material. In the rear there was a long, narrow room. It was from there that Herzl and the other officers could enter. The chandeliers had gas lamps and were lit manually by workers who climbed large ladders whenever the delegates needed light.

The black frock coats and white ties were having their effect, even in the early morning of Sunday, August 29, 1897. Everyone was seated long before the program was set to begin. People chattered, exchanged gossip, spoke of great plans. Mostly they waited with impatience.

The delegates, though, may not have fully grasped Herzl's genius. Yes, he had developed a spectacle. Yes, the Congress itself, the evening wear, the journalists, the pure theatricality of the event all were impressive. But what the delegates most likely missed was that Herzl had made them not the audience alone but simultaneously the cast of the drama. By participating in the Zionist drama themselves, they were transforming the fantastic dream of a Jewish state into the institution of power that would bring it about. Herzl, through the Zionist Congress, was turning the delegates from ordinary Jews into the vanguard of history. He was making them a political force, not just intellectual dreamers. And their dress was having a psychological effect. He noted this in his diary, though written on the train back from Basel. The formality of their attire made them solemn. There was none of the frivolity that might have accompanied more appropriate summer wear.

Finally, as the anxious delegates waited, Herzl and a few others came out of the room. As Herzl wrote in his diary, although he himself had designed how the room was arranged, he was still overwhelmed when he walked into the hall, "I quickly walked out again so as not to lose my composure." Eventually he returned and went to the platform. People in the audience went wild, all their anticipation exploding at once. They leaped to their feet. They cheered wildly.

At 9:30 a.m. Isidor Schalit, the member of *Die Welt*'s editorial staff and a member of the Congress's organizational bureau, tapped the gavel three times.

The Zionist Congress had begun.

(Note: German was the official language of the Congress. There were secretaries for Hebrew, Russian, and English besides German. Jacob de Haas was the English language secretary. The translations used in this section are taken from the official ones of the Zionist Organization. They were included, with many other matters, in the book *The Jubilee of the First Zionist Congress 1897–1947* published in Jerusalem by the Executive of the Zionist Organization.

Those translators are N. Strauss for Herzl's address, B. Netanyahu (Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's father) for Nordau's address, and H. Orgel for the proceedings. The author, also using de Haas's and other notes about the Congress, has sometimes modified these translations for clarity.)

Dr. Karpel Lippe of Jassy, at sixty-seven the oldest person among the Zionists and the Congress's temporary chair, began to speak. Ironically, Lippe was not in favor of an independent Jewish nation but wanted a Jewish autonomous region in the Turkish Empire. Selecting him to open the Congress must have seemed to Herzl to be a good idea. As any good political leader would, Herzl wanted to unite all the various Zionist factions behind him. Lippe had initially trained as a rabbi before turning to medicine, and that fact might have been put to use by having Lippe deliver an opening prayer. He would, at the end of his speech, include a brief one, but it is telling that there was no rabbi to offer an opening benediction. Perhaps Herzl wanted to emphasize the difference between the Congress and a religious service. People were there to set up the mechanisms of a nation, not engage in prayer. Still, just as a political gesture, it might have been useful to have a rabbinical blessing at the Congress's opening.

Lippe did begin by reciting the Shehecheyanu, the universally known brief prayer of thanksgiving. He recited, "Baruch atah Adonai, Elohaynu Melech ha'olom, shehecheyanu veqiyemanu, vehigi'anu lazman hazeh" (Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment).

He then, however unintentionally, provided a cogent example of one explanation for the lack of a solely religious speech. Herzl wanted very brief speeches. Time was exceptionally precious. Much needed to be done. Lippe was allotted ten minutes in which to speak. He ended up speaking for thirty minutes. He went on so much that Herzl pleaded with him four times to shorten his speech and then, desperate, threatened to cut his speech.

Lippe's speech began, whether intentionally is not clear, by upbraiding Herzl, who had ignored those who came before him. Lippe, in contrast, praised all those who had worked on behalf of the Jewish nationalist idea. He specifically mentioned the Katowice Conference of Hovevei Zion. Only then acknowledging Herzl's contribution, Lippe noted that the Congress in Basel represented tremendous progress on behalf of the movement. He noted that the aim of the Congress was "to awaken that national consciousness which, during the long years of this exile . . . has lain wrapped up in the womb of Judaism." This was a crucial point that Herzl had also recognized. Zionism wasn't just a bold political act to save the Jews. It provided rather a direct connection to the central ideas of Judaism itself. Zionism was a secular movement but one completely harmonious with Jewish historical longing and religious consciousness.

Using another religious connection, Lippe continued by saying, "What we are considering today is nothing less than the return of the Jews to the land of their ancestors, to the Holy Land which our God, the One and Only, promised to our ancestor Abraham as an inheritance." Most of the delegates were living in an era in which it was a nearly universally accepted axiom that God had promised the Land of Israel to the Jews. Such a view did not animate Herzl, who focused exclusively, at least at first, on the burdens that history had placed on the Jewish people in the form of anti-Semitism. But once again the connection of Zionism to Godly wishes was important to reach the religious among the delegates and even the irreligious whose own parents had accepted traditional Judaism and who in many cases had themselves been brought up as adherents of traditional beliefs.

Lippe went on to describe how Jews had returned to the Land of Israel throughout the

ages, mostly for religious reasons. He offered a dire warning to the Orthodox and the assimilationists that they both needed Zionism.

He concluded his speech by saying that the Congress was a protest "against an 1,800-year-old persecution, oppression, and violation. . . . For from Zion alone goes forth the Law, and the word of God from Jerusalem."

After his speech, Lippe made a motion to send a message expressing the delegates' devotion and thanks to the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Without debate, the motion was passed by acclamation.

It was then Lippe's duty to introduce Theodor Herzl.

Herzl was greeted with what he termed in his diary as "storms of applause." Even Lippe's extended speech had not diminished the pent-up emotions, the raw excitement of those in the room. History was palpable. For his part, Herzl remained as calm as he could. He knew he needed to establish a sober mood, that self-congratulation could come later, after the work was done. He deliberately refrained from bowing. He did not want to transform his speech into a cheap theatrical performance. This was the Zionist Congress, not some show.

And then Mordechai Rabinovich, an author and religious Zionist from Odessa who wrote under the pseudonym Ben Ami, cried out, in Hebrew, "Yeh-Khee Ha-Melech" (Long live the King), a clear messianic reference. Others in the hall picked up the cry and it echoed throughout.

Herzl made a subtle movement with his hand to quiet the crowd. Onlookers thought his face looked especially pale and his features odd, as though his face was made of wax. They did not, of course, know that what he was doing dangerously undermined his health. He threw back his head and appeared to begin to speak. But the crowd would not quiet down. So he folded his arms across his chest, the actor waiting for his adoring audience to let him begin.

Finally, after fifteen minutes of wild cheering, the crowd quieted down, their emotions spent for the moment. Now it was time to hear from the leader. Herzl, a quick-witted, very bright man who could always speak extemporaneously, instead read his speech from a paper. He wasn't there to arouse emotions. Once again, as in the meeting itself, as in his requirements for appropriate attire, Herzl wanted to stress the seriousness of the moment. There were to be no bon mots in this address, no stirring calls to the audience's emotions.

"Fellow Delegates," he began, "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."

Even before he really began, Herzl was warning all those present not to celebrate before the task was done. He, no doubt intentionally, was excoriating Lippe for talking for too long. Herzl was modest, calling himself only one who called the Congress rather than the truth, that without him there would be no Congress, that he spent the money and put in untold hours of precious time to organize it, and defining his task as welcoming the delegates rather than running the entire movement. Here he was speaking to many in the audience, especially Nordau, about the need to submerge individual selves for the sake of a group effort.

It was time to declare his intentions openly. "We want to lay the cornerstone of the edifice which is one day to house the Jewish nation. 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 chairmen of our committees."

Herzl chose an interesting tactic. He expended only a single sentence to announce the goal of a Jewish nation. One of his great accomplishments was to state that goal in a simple, direct way that everyone listening in the hall and around the world could understand. Again, Herzl exhibited signs of political genius. There was no long, confusing excursion into abstract thought. Herzl was a reporter, or what in more modern terms might be termed an advertiser or a publicity agent, not an intellectual. Others may have been more intelligent, have more knowledge, think more deeply, but Herzl could sum up the idea of his movement quickly. Having offered his idea in a single sentence, he then provides a plan to explain the Jewish nation's need, namely, the status of the Jewish people in the various countries. Again, this was a clever move. He wanted the delegates to be able to go home and tell all those who inquired about the Congress the single key goal of the movement. But, beyond being simple, clear, and direct, he was undertaking the Herculean task of taking the intellectual traditions of Judaism and transforming them by turning arguments, ideologies, and justifications—the foundational acts of Jewish intellectuals—into action steps. He wanted to force those in attendance not to be satisfied with having the right idea. He wanted them to take concrete actions to bring those ideas to life.

"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."

Herzl was not there for religious reasons, or cultural reasons. He was there because of anti-Semitism and he wanted to convince the delegates of his logic. If anti-Semitism is the fuel of his plan, he also wanted to convey, quickly, the ancestral connection of Zionism and the modern reason why the task could be undertaken then.

"The homogeneity of our destiny has suffered a long interruption, although the scattered fragments of the Jewish people have everywhere undergone similar ills. It is only in our days that the marvels of communication have served to bring about mutual understanding and union between isolated groups."

But if these times were so modern, Herzl had to account for the continuing anti-Semitism. "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 and lost the habit of petty trading, was pierced to the heart. We can assert it calmly, without laying ourselves open to the suspicion of wanting to appeal to the sentimental pity of our opponents. We have faced the situation squarely."

Herzl's plan in his speech was to balance the memory of a past filled with glory which could serve as the historical balance of a future filled with similar glory. Then anti-Semitism became a practical problem. How, that is, could the Jews move from their current situation to refashion themselves in a way that showed they were the descendants of Abraham and Sarah, King David and King Solomon, Deborah, and all the rest of the greats of the ancient Israelites?

"From times immemorial the world has been misinformed about us. The sentiment of solidarity with which we have been reproached so frequently and so acrimoniously was in

process of disintegration at the period when we were attacked by anti-Semitism. And anti-Semitism served to strengthen it anew."

Here was the oddest part of Herzl's argument: that anti-Semitism had the ironic effect of making the Jews stronger. On the one hand, it's clear from his own intellectual trajectory that it was anti-Semitism that led to his call for a Jewish state. On the other, it seems odd to give anti-Semitism power over Jewish thought and action. Here the failures of Herzl's vision are clear. Zionism's strength, the rallying of the Jews, comes as he himself notes, from the Jewish past and, as he has not yet acknowledged, from Jewish religious fervor. Herzl and the other Zionist secularists simply missed the danger of giving so much power to hatred.

In fact, Herzl was quick to switch ideas in his speech. He followed his comments about anti-Semitism with: "We returned home, as it were. For Zionism is a homecoming to the Jewish fold even before it becomes a homecoming to the Jewish land. We, the children who have returned, find much redress under the ancestral roof, for some of our brothers have sunk deep into misery. We are made welcome in the ancient house, for it is universally known that we are not actuated by an arrogant desire to undermine that which should be revered. This will be clearly demonstrated by the Zionist platform."

Other than the simple declaration of national intention, the idea of Zionism as coming home to Judaism before coming home to the land is the most important and most neglected part of Herzl's outlook. This neglect comes in part because of Herzl. He was so focused on the political that he forgot that he should constantly tie his political efforts with spiritual ones. Had Herzl explored this idea, he might have had an easier time with the Reform and Orthodox segments of Jewry and brought secularists a deeper meaning to their nationalist efforts. He could also, as someone who was not Orthodox, have more forcefully and completely explored what it even meant to come home to the Jewish people. A comparably simple definition of a goal, akin to the one of building a Jewish home, might have had profound effects. But Herzl did not explore that sufficiently.

Still, he did note Zionism's ability to be a unifying force for the Jewish people.

"Zionism has already brought about something remarkable, heretofore regarded as impossible: a close union between the ultra-modern and the ultra-conservative elements of Jewry. The fact that this has come to pass without undignified concessions on the part of either side, without intellectual sacrifices, is further proof, if such proof be necessary, of the national entity of the Jews. A union of this kind is possible only on a national basis."

It is interesting that so quickly after the publication of *Der Judenstaat*, Herzl neglected even to mention his influential pamphlet, the publication that did more than anything else to bring the delegates to Basel. Indeed, the ideas in this speech aren't as boldly stated as Herzl dared to do in his pamphlet. The realities of political life have begun to provide strictures. He was no longer free to express any opinion at any time. Every word, he realized, would be evaluated in Turkey, Russia, France, Germany, and elsewhere. He therefore backed off direct discussions of the Jewish state and was much more abstract.

Then he turned to the needs of the Congress itself in creating an organization that would work for a Jewish state. "Doubtless there will be discussions on the subject of an organization the need for which is recognized by all. Organization is an evidence of the reasonableness of a movement. But there is one point which should be clearly and energetically emphasized in order to further the solution of the Jewish question. We Zionists desire not an international league but international discussion. Needless to say this distinction is of the first importance in

our eyes. It is this distinction which justifies the convening of our Congress."

Again, Herzl was doing his best to avoid provocation. He asserted the need for talk. There was to be no "league" that might foment revolutionary fervor. Zionism was a movement of calm and deliberate talkers. Further seeking to calm the police and governments in Europe, Herzl continued: "There will be no question of intrigues, secret interventions, and devious methods in our ranks, but only of unhampered utterances under the constant and complete supervision of public opinion."

In a crucial way, this caution was understandable and difficult to argue with. But in retrospect, European Jewry's fate was far more fragile than even the pessimistic Herzl thought. Zionism needed to amputate caution. It needed to be dramatic in its efforts. Zionism eventually succeeded, but the very notion of success is undermined by the fact that a Jewish state was established only after six million European Jews had been killed.

Herzl, though, was convinced that a slow and steady approach would not trouble Europe's rulers. His speech continued in this way: "One of the first results of our movement, even now to be perceived in its larger outlines, will be the transformation of the Jewish question into a question of Zion." He wanted to convince people, when instead he needed simply to act. The practical Zionists building in the Land of Israel, including the non-Zionist Rothschild, were a crucial part of Zionism that Herzl dismissed. He needed action on every front, but his legal training and his political vision held him back.

Herzl was clearly anxious about the external reaction to Zionism: "A popular movement of such vast dimensions will necessarily be attacked from many sides. Therefore the Congress will concern itself with the spiritual means to be employed for reviving and fostering the national consciousness of the Jews. Here, too, we must struggle against misconceptions. We have not the least intention of yielding 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."

In retrospect, Herzl delivered exactly the wrong message. What was needed was a balance of the mental and the physical. Some Zionists, starting with Nordau and later in Zionist history including Vladimir Jabotinsky and the Revisionists, emphasized the physical. Some, including Ahad Ha'am and later others such as Martin Buber, favored the mental. But it was a center that was needed. Herzl couldn't quite see that and that failure retarded the growth of Zionism. To be fair to him, however, it is unlikely that the Ottoman Empire would have found any Jewish negotiator congenial. But if, working with the empire and with Rothschild, Herzl had been able to see that fostering Jewish immigration to the land would have provided a practical basis to the Zionist movement, there might have been a very different outcome once Britain took control of the land after World War I.

It is not the case that Herzl didn't recognize either those who came before him or those who had moved to the Land of Israel. As he said in his speech, "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 of establishing communities in Palestine and in Argentina otherwise than with genuine gratitude."

Herzl was right at the edge of recognizing the appropriate direction, and then he reversed his direction: "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." That is, he was arguing, let us secure the land legally and only then move there.

"This is another reason why publicity of procedure, as it is planned by our Congress, is so valuable. Those who give the matter careful consideration must surely admit that Zionism cannot gain its ends otherwise than through an unreserved understanding with the political units involved. It is generally known that the difficulties of obtaining 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 frank language and upright dealing."

Herzl's overconfidence in negotiating is odd unless he was just saying this for public consumption. But, in fact, he spent the rest of his Zionist career in political intrigue. He had his own argument for doing so. "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. Truly we have had enough experience of toleration and of 'protection' which could be revoked at any time."

After discussing how Jews really were fit for agricultural work, Herzl argued that Jews forming agricultural communities "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 send ten thousand Jews to Palestine every year, the Jewish question would require nine hundred years for its solution. This would seem to be impracticable."

This was an interesting point. Herzl, though, ignores the same mathematics should the land have been legally secured. How could the Zionists have convinced Jews to come to such an arid land instead of the Golden Land of America? It is difficult to imagine that even with an open door to the Land of Israel that there would have been massive immigration barring, as there eventually and unfortunately were, horrific acts against the Jews. That is, Herzl was able to ignore the realities of Jews in the Diaspora in exactly the same way that he ignored the Arabs already living in the Land of Israel. He had a clear vision and a clear plan and didn't see that other actors had their own agency, that they would act according to their own desires, not his.

Pressing his argument about sending immigrants to the land, he continued, "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 the Jews so promptly noted as in the historic home of the race, for the very reason that it is the historic home."

The idea of communities used here is sometimes translated as "colonies" and Zionists engaging in colonization. Indeed there was an organization founded on September 11, 1891, by Maurice de Hirsch that was most often translated as the Jewish Colonization Association, or JCA. JCA's goal was to help Russian and Eastern European Jewish emigrants move to agricultural sites, particularly in Argentina and Brazil. Often, however, the term "colony" carries with it

political implications that the Jews neither overtly nor covertly intended to imply. The political definition of a colony is a territory under a nation's political control rather than being part of the nation's homeland. Colonialism therefore refers to that nation's acquiring or establishing and then maintaining a territory apart from its own homeland. There is often an implication of exploitation in the relationship between the nation and its colonies.

Using this standard definition, the communities established in the Land of Israel were not colonies; nor was the Zionist movement engaging in colonialism. There was no nation that wanted a territory apart from itself. Rather, Zionists had no territory at all and wished to establish a nation on land that was not itself a nation but was then controlled by the Ottoman Empire. To avoid confusion, this book refers to what the early Zionists established as communities, a term without any loaded content, rather than using a misleading and deliberately contentious term such as colonies.

Similarly, the Zionists were frequently termed settlers. But "settlers" also carried political freight that was misleading. As with colonialism, settler colonials were sent by an existing nation. The Zionists were not sent by their home nation because they had no home nation.

Therefore, while "colony," "colonial," or "settlers" may be part of the speech of the day by Zionist thinkers, current writers have to be much more politically precise.

Herzl, however, brilliant writer that he was, wasn't thinking of language that would be employed against Zionism in the future. He instead simply continued with his speech. He repeated his plan for success, the straightforward equation of Jewish financial help plus Turkish need equaling a deal. "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."

Herzl, for all his political acumen, miscalculated Turkish intentions. They used Herzl as leverage to get loans from established nations. They never had an intention to surrender their land for Jews to enter. Herzl simply overlooked the obvious fact that Turkey had its own needs that didn't coincide with his.

Herzl spoke at some length about the Jewish relationship with nations and then made an important observation. "Nowhere can there be a question of 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."

Herzl acknowledged that there were Jews who wished to be assimilated. He did not, however, envision the Jews who wished to remain Jews, who did not wish to assimilate but wished to remain in their home countries rather than immigrate to a Jewish nation. Herzl's bifurcated thinking did not allow for such people, and Zionism remained unsure about how to deal with them intellectually, just as they sometimes remained uncertain about their exact relationship to a Jewish state.

As Herzl neared the end of his speech, he turned to how the world would perceive Zionism after the Congress: "Let everyone find out what Zionism really is, Zionism, which was rumored to be a sort of thousand years' wonder, 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 may 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 to the discretion 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 afterwards 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!"

Those in the hall who were expecting a prophet instead got a statesman. They reacted at first with a hush, but then exploded again in wild adulation. Herzl noted that people climbed over each other to congratulate him. Chairs and tables were overturned in the excitement. A woman in the gallery fainted. Many in the audience waved their handkerchiefs and screamed "Heddad," the Hebrew word for "Hurrah."

When all the applause ended, Samuel Pineles proposed the listing of officers that had been developed at the preparatory conference with Herzl as president. The proposal was accepted unanimously. Even that vote by acclamation didn't please everyone. Some who had not been appointed were displeased. One delegate named Steiner had to be mollified by making him chair of the reception committee and head of the organization committee. Steiner took the new role seriously; he sat on the speaker's platform and in his role kept speakers from going up on the platform. They had to speak from the floor while Steiner stayed on the platform. And Herzl also offended Dr. Alexander Mintz, who was seated at the presidential table but who, in Herzl's opinion, sat around motionless and daydreaming instead of taking minutes and assisting Herzl.

Herzl came back to speak and said that the Congress had received so many messages from all over the world, that they hadn't yet been put in any order. Herzl asked that the reading of the messages therefore be delayed. This was agreed upon. Herzl didn't say that the first letter was from his son Hans, and this fact moved Herzl deeply.

Herzl then called on Max Nordau to speak.

By most accounts, Nordau gave the best speech at the Congress, with the very emotional appeals the audience wanted that Herzl had deliberately refrained from offering.

Nordau got the same kind of welcoming Herzl did. There was wild applause. Hats and handkerchiefs were waved. Nordau was a crowd-pleaser and a great speaker, and his talk was interrupted at key moments for applause.

He began with a description of what the speakers would now do. "The special reporters for individual countries will depict for you the condition of their brethren in the different states. Some of their reports have been submitted to me; others not. But even of the countries about which I learnt nothing from my collaborators, I have, partly from personal observation, partly from other sources, obtained some knowledge, so that I may, without presumption, undertake

the task of reporting on the general situation of the Jews at the end of the nineteenth century."

Nordau was, like Herzl, a thinker guided by the realities of life, not the pleasures of a better reality of the religious imagination. He set himself a difficult task, therefore. He had to summarize what everyone else would make specific.

"This picture can, on the whole, be painted only in one color. Everywhere, where the Jews have settled in comparatively large numbers among the nations, Jewish misery prevails. It is not the ordinary misery which is probably the unalterable fate of mankind. It is a peculiar misery, which the Jews do not suffer as human beings, but as Jews, and from which they would be free, were they not Jews."

Nordau presented an odd argument here. As a confirmed pessimist, influenced by Schopenhauer who had also influenced Nietzsche and Wagner, Nordau didn't see Jewish suffering in and of itself as particularly unusual; misery is part of the human condition. To satisfy both his Zionism and his general philosophy, however, Nordau had to differentiate between the two so that Jewish misery could not be dismissed as simply a variant of the same misery experienced by all humans.

"Jewish misery has two forms, the material and the moral. In Eastern Europe, North Africa, and Western Asia—those regions which shelter the vast majority, probably nine-tenths of our race—the misery of the Jews is understood literally. It is the daily distress of the body, anxiety for every following day, the painful fight for the maintenance of a bare existence. In Western Europe, the struggle for existence has been made somewhat lighter for the Jews, although of late the tendency has become visible even there to render it difficult for them again. The question of food and shelter, the question of the security of life, tortures them less; there the misery is moral."

Nordau moved from the philosophical to the actual conditions of the Jews. He was able to articulate the pent-up feelings of those in attendance at the Congress. He understood their suffering and in defining it emotionally but clearly he would be able to gain both sympathy and support for a way out of the Jewish dilemma. Nordau was particularly concerned, as was Herzl, by the failure of assimilation.

"The Western Jew has bread, but man does not live on bread alone. The life of the Western Jew is no longer endangered through the enmity of the mob; but bodily wounds are not the only wounds that cause pain, and from which one may bleed to death. The Western Jew meant emancipation to be real liberation, and hastened to draw the final conclusions from it. . . . The magnanimous laws magnanimously lay down the theory of equality of rights."

Nordau was an insightful psychologist. Here, he was exploring how the promise of emancipation lured the Jews, made them think liberation was at hand, that their long, dark history was over.

"The Jew says naively: 'I am a human being, and I regard nothing human as alien.'" That is, Nordau claimed, the Jews' mistake was to believe the words, but the peoples in modern nations didn't think of the Jews as honorable and so were judged incapable of truly taking part in the society. "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, the example is made general. This tendency is psychologically correct. It is the practice of human intellect to invent for the prejudices, which sentiment has called forth, a cause seemingly reasonable."

Like Herzl, Nordau tried to turn anti-Semitism into a hatred that, however repulsive or

even deadly, could be rationally understood. “Probably wisdom has long been acquainted with this psychological law, and puts it in fairly expressive words: ‘f 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 one wishes to convince himself that he has a right to detest them. But the preexisting sentiment is the detestation of the Jews.”

In many ways, Nordau provided an insight into what eventually became the Nazi ideology. A removal of the Jew from humanity preceded the killing of the Jews because they were detestable. Nordau, that is, had deeper insights than Herzl and other Zionist leaders.

But if Nordau was right, he had to explain why emancipation itself took place. “The emancipation of the Jews was not the consequence of the conviction that grave injury had been done to a race, that it had been treated most terribly, 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. This rationalism was constructed by the aid of pure logic, without taking into account living sentiments and the principles of the certainty of mathematical action; and it insisted upon trying to introduce these creations of pure intellect into the world of reality. The emancipation of the Jews was an automatic application of the rationalistic method. The philosophy of Rousseau and the encyclopedists had led to the declaration of human rights. Out of this declaration, the strict logic of the men of the Great Revolution deduced Jewish emancipation. They formulated a regular equation: Every man is born with certain rights; the Jews are human beings, consequently the Jews are born to own the rights of man. In this manner, the emancipation of the Jews was pronounced, not through a fraternal feeling for the Jews, but because logic demanded it. Popular sentiment rebelled, but the philosophy of the Revolution decreed that principles must be placed higher than sentiment. Allow me then an expression which implies no ingratitude. The men of 1792 emancipated us only for the sake of principle.”

This was a startling analysis, even accusation. Emancipation for the Jews, Nordau thought, was only an intellectual exercise. The Jews as people were not considered by the intellectuals in love with an idea. According to this logic, because the Jews were embodiments of an idea they were not, in real life, ever accorded the respect embedded in that idea. In a crucial way, Nordau is attacking intellectualism itself, arguing that abstract principles at least in this case could not cohere with reality and therefore proved to be deadly dangerous.

“In this manner Jews were emancipated in Europe not from an inner necessity, but in imitation of a political fashion; not because the people had decided from their hearts to stretch out a brotherly hand to the Jews, but because leading spirits had accepted a certain cultured idea which required that Jewish emancipation should figure also in the Statute book.”

After discussing how England was different from France, Nordau returned to emancipation’s effect on the Jewish people. “Emancipation has totally changed the nature of the Jew, and made him another being. The Jew without any rights did not love the prescribed yellow Jewish badge on his coat, because it was an official invitation to the mob to commit brutalities. . . . But voluntarily he did much more to make his separate nature more distinct even than the yellow badge could do. 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.”

Again, Nordau stood apart from other thinkers in his boldness and originality. What he was after here was a subtle argument. Zionism, after all, was going in its intentions to ingather the

Jews who were scattered among the nations. Critics of Zionism could therefore claim that Herzl and Nordau wanted Jews to voluntarily enter a giant ghetto, to separate themselves off from the rest of the world. Nordau turned this argument on its head, for he took the idea of a ghetto and turned it into an idea that nurtured Jewish survival. "The word 'Ghetto' is today associated with feelings of shame and humiliation. But the Ghetto, whatever may have been the intentions of the people who have created it, was for the Jew of the past not only a prison, but ironically also a sort of refuge. [The Ghetto walls kept the Jews in, but they also kept the hostile haters of the Jews out. The Ghetto in fact] gave Jews the possibility to survive the terrible persecutions of the Middle Ages. In the Ghetto, the Jew had his own world; it was to him the sure refuge which had for him the spiritual and moral value of a parental home. Here were associates by whom one wished to be valued, and also could be valued; here was the public opinion to be acknowledged by which was the aim of the Jew's ambition."

But Nordau pressed on about the ghetto's supposedly beneficiary effects. He overplayed his hand because everyone in the Congress hall understood perfectly well that the Jews had in medieval times been forcibly placed in the ghetto and had led incredibly deprived lives there. But these modern Jews with their memories of the ghetto also came from Paris and Vienna, where they led open lives. It was those cosmopolitan Jews to whom Nordau was speaking, calling on their dark memories of ghetto life and accusing them of voluntarily living in one but missing the benefits of ghetto thinking without any ghetto walls.

So Nordau pressed about what others might think. "The opinion of the outside world had no influence, because it was the opinion of ignorant enemies. One tried to please one's co-religionists, and their applause was the worthy contentment of his life. So did the Ghetto Jews live, in a moral respect, a real, full life. Their external situation was insecure, often seriously endangered. But internally they achieved a complete development of their specific qualities. They were human beings in harmony, who were not in want of the elements of normal social life."

The reason Nordau succeeded emotionally with such an argument was that he was transforming Jewish weakness into Jewish power. He was invoking Jewish demons, the folk memory of intense persecution, and arguing that Jews turned it into an internal power. Nordau perceived that a psychological power was needed to transform people into active Zionists who would take that internal power and let it serve as an engine for political power. Many of those who were listening to Nordau already believed this, but Nordau confirmed their beliefs, stirred their excitement, and gave them ammunition with which to convince others what they already believed. In this sense, Nordau's speech was even at this stage far more important than Herzl's. Herzl wanted to employ logic. Nordau employed a principal symbol of Jewish persecution and turned it into a stirring declaration of Jewish freedom.

Nordau continued talking about what Jews did with their inner lives in the ghetto. "They also felt instinctively the whole importance of the Ghetto for their inner life, and therefore, they had the one sole care: to make its existence secure through invisible walls which were much thicker and higher than the stone walls that visibly shut them in. All Jewish buildings and habits unconsciously pursued only one purpose: to keep up Judaism by separation from the other people and to make the individual Jew constantly aware of the fact that he was lost and would perish if he gave up his specific character. This impulse for separation gave him also most of the ritual laws, which for the everyday Jew is identical with his faith itself; and also other purely external, often accidental, marks of difference in attire and habits received a religious

sanction only in order that they might be maintained the more surely. Kaftan, Peoth, Fur Cap, and Jargon have apparently nothing to do with religion. But they feel that these ties alone offer them connection with the community without which an individual, morally, intellectually, and at last physically, cannot exist for any length of time."

Nordau then turned to the age of emancipation to see how modern Jews dealt with it. First he reminded them of what turned out to be the false promise of emancipation.

"That was the psychology of the Ghetto Jew. Now came Emancipation. The law assured the Jews that they were full citizens of their country. In its honeymoon it evoked also from Christians feelings which warmed and purified the heart. The Jews hastened in a form of intoxication, as it were, to burn their bridges. They had now another home; they no longer needed a Ghetto; they had now other connections and were no longer forced to exist only with their co-religionists. Their instinct of self-preservation fitted itself immediately and completely to the new conditions of existence. Formerly this instinct was only directed toward a sharp separation. Now they sought after the closest association and assimilation in place of the distinction, which was their salvation. There followed a true mimicry, and for one or two ages the Jew was allowed to believe that he was only German, French, Italian, and so forth."

But, Nordau then argued, this promise disappeared. In its place, the old hatred of the Jews returned. Ironically, it was Nordau, not the playwright Herzl, who structured his speech like a drama, with a plot and plenty of villains. In his desire to be serious and have his movement not be taken as frivolous, Herzl had almost squandered an opportunity to transform his audience into proselytizers for Zionism. Luckily for him and the movement, Nordau amply filled that role.

"All at once, twenty years ago, after a slumber of thirty to sixty years, anti-Semitism once more broke out from the innermost depths of the nations, and revealed to the highest of the mortified Jews his real situation, which he had no longer seen. He was still allowed to vote for members of parliament, but he was himself excluded from the clubs and the meetings of his Christian fellow-countrymen. He was allowed to go wherever he pleased, but everywhere he met with the inscription: 'No Jews admitted.' He had still the right of discharging all the duties of a citizen, but the nobler rights which are granted to talent and for achievements in those rights were absolutely denied to him."

Nordau was then able to locate this Jewish situation with acute psychological precision. The Jews had abandoned their Jewishness for a false promise. They had wandered from their home with the promise of a better one, but that promise was one that Europe did not keep.

"Such is the existing liberation of the emancipated Jew in Western Europe. He has given up his specifically Jewish character; but the peoples let him feel that he has not acquired their special characteristics. He has lost the home of the Ghetto; but the land of his birth is denied to him as his home. His countrymen repel him when he wishes to associate with them. He has no ground under his feet and he has no community to which he belongs as a full member. With his Christian countrymen neither his character nor his intentions can reckon on justice, still less on kindly feeling. With his Jewish countrymen he has lost touch: necessarily he feels that the world hates him and he sees no place where he can find warmth when he seeks for it. This is the moral Jewish misery which is more bitter than the physical, because it befalls men who are differently situated, prouder and possess the finer feelings."

Nordau then spoke about how Jews reacted to their situation. "Before the emancipation the Jew was a stranger among the peoples, but he did not for a moment think of making a stand against his fate. He felt himself as belonging to a race of his own, which had nothing in

common with the other people of the country." And then Nordau turned to the reactions by Jews who had been emancipated. "The emancipated Jew is insecure in his relations with his fellow-beings, timid with strangers, suspicious even toward the secret feeling of his friends. His best powers are exhausted in the suppression, or at least in the difficult concealment of his own real character. For he fears that this character might be recognized as Jewish, and he has never the satisfaction of showing himself as he is in all his thoughts and sentiments. He becomes an inner cripple, and externally unreal, and thereby always ridiculous and hateful to all higher feeling men, as is everything that is unreal. All the better Jews in Western Europe groan under this, or seek for alleviation. They no longer possess the belief which gives the patience necessary to bear sufferings, because it sees in them the will of a punishing but not loving God."

Nordau was ready to paint a picture of Jews in despair. "They no longer hope in the advent of the Messiah, who will one day raise them to Glory. Many try to save themselves by flight from Judaism. But racial anti-Semitism denies the power of change by baptism, and this mode of salvation does not seem to have much prospect. It is but a slight recommendation for those concerned, who are mostly without belief (I am not speaking naturally of the minority of true believers) that they enter with a blasphemous lie into the Christian community. In this way there arises a new Marrano, who is worse than the old. The latter had an idealistic direction—a secret desire for truth or a heartbreaking distress of conscience, and they often sought for pardon and purification through Martyrdom.

"The new Marranos leave Judaism with rage and bitterness, but in their innermost heart, although not acknowledged by themselves, they carry with them their own humiliation, their own dishonesty, and hatred also toward Christianity which has forced them to lie."

The Jewish self-hatred, the deeply absorbed mentality of the Diaspora, the lure of freedom cruelly dashed by the old hatred all added up to a people in despair. Nordau cited the array of reactions, coming to Zionism and those who feel too deep an attachment to their homeland to consider the Zionist alternative.

"Others hope for the 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 finds at last the simplest but most elementary conditions of life, that are a matter of course for every Jew of both hemispheres: viz, an assured social existence in a well meaning community, the possibility of employing all his powers for the developments of his real being instead of abusing them for the suppression and falsification of self. Yet others, who rebel against the lie of the Marranos, and who feel themselves too intimately connected with the land of their birth not to feel what Zionism means, throw themselves into the arms of the wildest revolution, with an indefinite *arrière pensée* that with the destruction of everything in existence and the construction of a new world Jew-hatred may not be one of the precious articles transferred from the debris of the old conditions into the new."

Nordau, with what no doubt was profound horror and sorrow, summed up the position of the Jews. "This is the history of Israel at the end of the 19th century. To sum it up in a word: The majority of the Jews are a race of accursed beggars. More industrious and more able than the average European, not to speak at all of the inert Asiatic and African, the Jew is condemned to the most extreme pauperism, because he is not allowed to use his powers freely. This poverty grinds down his character, and destroys his body. Fevered by the thirst for higher education, he sees himself repelled from the places where knowledge is attainable—a real intellectual tantalus of our nonmythical times. He dashes his head against the thick ice crusts of hatred and

contempt which are formed over his head. Like scarcely any other social being—whom even his belief teaches that it is a meritorious and God-pleasing action for three to take meals together and for ten to pray together—he is excluded from the society of his countrymen and is condemned to a tragic isolation. One complains of Jews intruding everywhere, but they only strive after superiority, because they are denied equality. They are accused of a feeling of solidarity with the Jews of the whole world; whereas, on the contrary, it is their misfortune that as soon as the first loving word of emancipation had been uttered, they tried to pluck from their hearts all Jewish solidarity up to the last trace. Stunned by the hailstorm of anti-Semitic accusations, they forget who they are and often imagine themselves in reality the bodily and spiritual miscreants whom their deadly enemies represent them to be. Not rarely the Jew is heard to murmur that he must learn from the enemy and try to remedy his feelings. He forgets, however, that the anti-Semitic accusations are valueless, because they are not based on criticism of real facts, but the effects of psychological law according to which children, wild men, and malevolent fools make persons and things against which they have an aversion responsible for their sufferings."

Nordau had aroused the crowd. They were sad. They were angry. He had set them up for his finish.

"To Jewish distress no one can remain indifferent, neither Christian nor Jew. It is a great sin to let a race to whom even their worst enemies do not deny ability, degenerate in intellectual and physical distress. It is a sin against them and against the work of civilization, in the interest of which Jews have not been useless co-workers.

"That Jewish distress cries for help. To find that help will be the great work of this Congress."

Nordau returned to the presidential table and there Herzl stepped forward and said to him, "Monumentum aere perennium" (A monument more enduring than bronze).

And there it was. Nordau had done his work. Everyone in the hall was ready to do whatever was necessary.

Herzl called on Oscar Marmorek, a loyal Herzl supporter, who lavishly praised the speeches by Herzl and Nordau. Then he said, "I believe I speak for all here when I propose that the two speeches . . . be specially published."

Herzl returned to speak and said, "It has been decided to publish the complete stenographic minutes. I regard any special publication of the two speeches to be completely unnecessary. We should thereby neglect the other speakers whose reports we have not heard. But I shall put Marmorek's proposal to the vote. I do not think any further discussion should be allowed on this point. Those gentlemen who are in favor of the special publication of the two speeches please raise their hands."

There was unanimous agreement that the two speeches be published.

There was a brief break and Herzl then asked that any delegate who wished to submit a proposal to do so in writing through him or someone else at the presidential table.

Herzl then called upon speakers to make reports about Jewish conditions in various countries. Dr. Abraham Salz talked about Jews in Galicia. Jacob de Haas talked of Jewish conditions in Great Britain. Jacques Bahar spoke about Algiers, and Samuel Pineles about Romania.

The reports were sufficiently long that a Mr. Rubinstein suggested that all reports should be more abbreviated.

Lunchtime was approaching, and so Herzl concluded by saying that following Rubinstein's suggestion the Congress "would restrict other speakers. . . . We can find a solution by asking them to speak as briefly as possible on the most important points. . . . The proceedings are adjourned until three o'clock."

The lunch break was a crucial time for Herzl to salve wounded egos, suppress mini-rebellions, seek reactions to the historic morning session, and simply gather further support. Delegates engaged in heated discussions with new friends; they were forging connections that would be crucial for a cohesive organization.

Herzl went to the Braunschweig restaurant because it was kosher. Unfortunately for him, Herzl found the food quite bad.

After the lunch break concluded, there were reports about the Jews in Austria, Bukovina, Germany, Bulgaria, Hungary, and the United States. Adam Rosenberg delivered the reports on the United States, not then considered a major Jewish center perhaps because it only had about a million Jews and no Jewish power since the Jewish population in large part consisted of weak and impoverished immigrants. Rosenberg, though, did impress the crowd with his final words: "May the next Congress take place in Jerusalem."

Nordau then made a motion that a committee be set up to compile Jewish occupational statistics, but the motion was defeated because it was an organizational problem better suited to be discussed at a later stage of the proceeding. Nordau's failure to convince other delegates is a pertinent example of his strengths and failures. He was a rousing speaker, important because of his fame, and unique in his psychological acuity. However, he failed to have a political sense to match his other strengths. Herzl, in contrast, had the political strength, the most important of any of the skills needed to forge an international movement.

Nathan Birnbaum then got up and made a long speech about the importance of Jewish national life. The speech was meant to provide support for Birnbaum's claim that he was the true Zionist leader, even though by the time of the Congress he had evolved into a socialist (he would change yet again later in his life). Although Herzl didn't know it then, Birnbaum was surreptitiously gathering supporters for an insurrection he would later lead at the Congress with a proposal. For now, though, Birnbaum spoke generally only about the Jewish condition.

After Birnbaum finished, David Farbstein spoke about the economic conditions of the Jews. In structuring the Congress in this way, Herzl meant to lay out a clear logical argument, based on the deteriorating and dangerous Jewish status in much of the world. It may be that he also thought it would be politically useful to have delegates hear from their countries, to feel they were truly participating in the Congress and not just there to follow Herzl's orders. He wanted Zionism, after all, to be an international movement, to have Jews from all over the globe move to the Land of Israel. But just as he had with the evening wear and the location, Herzl's key psychological mission was for the delegates to be participants and not just observers. He wanted them to give speeches and to hear about their home countries. The delegates in turn accepted the agenda whether or not they understood Herzl's logic in constructing its order or his psychological insights in having them participate in the way that they did.

When Farbstein completed his report, Herzl spoke again about the messages received. "We have received so many that it is impossible to quote them all. More than 550 telegrams, greetings, proposals and so on have arrived. The petitions we have received together bear more than 50,000 signatures."

And with that, the Congress's first day was completed.

The second day began with Herzl reading a petition by Galician Jews in support of Jewish communities in the Land of Israel. This was followed by Herzl asking Rabbi Aharon Armand Kaminka of Esseg, Herzl's single Orthodox supporter (who would eventually turn away from Herzl), to read a letter from Rabbi Samuel Z. Mohilewer, a leader of Hovevei Zion. In the letter, Mohilewer opened with his support for open diplomacy and taking the special political circumstances of Russian Zionists into account. Following that, he added an idea similar to that of the Galician Jews' petition. "I hope . . . that the main efforts of the Congress will be devoted to an attempt to obtain from the Turkish leaders the permission to carry out the building of communities. We must strive for that with all our might, for on it depends the whole of our upbuilding work." Mohilewer finished his letter with an extended religious section.

It was agreed that letters of thanks would be sent. Solomon Mandelkern, a writer from Leipzig, in keeping with the theme established by what had already been read that morning, proposed an expression of thanks for the work of Baron Edmond de Rothschild. Herzl, ever the opponent of alternatives to his political Zionism, rejected the proposal because he thought the Congress had no right to vote on Jews immigrating to the land. As Herzl wrote in his diary, "I pulverized Mandelkern by saying that he was placing the Congress in the embarrassing position of having to choose between ingratitude toward a charitable enterprise and the abandonment of principles." (Herzl, ever the wit, was having some fun. A "Mandelkern" was an almond in German, and so Herzl doubled the pleasure of his own retort by saying that an enemy named Mandelkern had been "pulverized.") Herzl noted that the crowd cheered him.

Herzl then read a message from Zadok Kahn, the chief rabbi of France. Herzl had read the manuscript of *Der Judenstaat* to Kahn, who expressed some approval, but Kahn, who supported the Jewish communities in the Land of Israel, was opposed to Jewish nationhood; he thought French Jews owed their national loyalties exclusively to France.

In a way, all these greetings might be seen as organizational housekeeping, a litany of congratulations to start the day off with expressions of approval. In fact, though, starting off with expressions of support from Herzl's political enemies (both the practical Zionists who supported going to the land, not just engaging in political work on its behalf, and those supportive of those who lived in the Land of Israel but opposed to Jewish sovereignty there) was a shrewd political move. Herzl showed a public tolerance for his opponents and provided what seemed to be a universal approval for the Congress itself. Had Herzl ignored those who disagreed with him, the Congress would not have been able to claim to speak for all interested in any way in Zionist work, however that work was defined.

Once this introductory work was completed, Herzl turned to a matter that would by definition be contentious.

Herzl was once again displaying his subtle intelligence. The crowd had heard the despairing stories of Jews under attack and duress. They would now turn to a plan for dealing with the Jewish condition. In using such a narrative arc, Herzl was using, whether or not the crowd recognized it, a powerful motif in Jewish life: the journey from tragedy to triumph. This journey could, for example, be powerfully seen in the Passover story that begins with the Jews enslaved in Egypt, continues with their escape under the leadership of Moses and the reception of the Torah at Mount Sinai, and concludes with their entering their promised land. Such an arc of history seemed to resonate through Jewish history, providing a kind of rhythm to the seemingly high highs and low lows of Jewish life. Of course, the greatest modern example was not known to those at the Congress: the Holocaust tragedy followed by the reemergence of a Jewish

nation in the Land of Israel after almost two thousand years of exile. Herzl the dramatist provided an example of this journey within the very agenda of the Congress.

As the meeting continued, Nordau said, “Gentlemen. At the session on Sunday, you appointed a five-man Committee which was to prepare a draft Zionist program and present it to the Congress.” Nordau then noted that Professor Schapira and Dr. Bodenheier were authors of previous draft programs, so they were added to the committee. Dr. Hermann Schapira, a mathematics professor from Heidelberg, had brought six of his students with him to Basel. While at the Congress, Schapira made various suggestions. He proposed the creation of the Jewish National Fund to purchase land. While the proposal didn’t come to fruition at the Congress, it was soon adopted. The JNF became a very significant organization in Zion’s development. Schapira also suggested founding a Jewish university in Jerusalem.

The committee that included Schapira, Nordau reported, had three very long meetings. Nordau pointed out the brevity of the result did not hint at the amount of work involved, since every word was subject to analysis and criticism. Nordau specifically pointed out that the finished program received unanimous approval. Nordau added: “Anyone who knows the thought processes of lawyers will truly evaluate this amazing fact, bordering on the miraculous, of unanimity.” Nordau added a few more thoughts and then read the draft program:

“Zionism seeks to establish for the Jewish people a legally secured homeland in Palestine.”

It is easy to see from this seemingly simple assertion how treacherous the landscape Nordau was trying to cross. The phrase “legally secured homeland,” for example, does not include the idea of nationhood. “Legally secured” could have been taken as a slap at all those who had sent the morning’s messages about establishing a Jewish presence in the land even without any legally secured agreement.

Nordau continued: “To achieve this goal, the Congress envisages the following methods:

“(1) By fostering the settlement of Palestine with farmers, laborers, and artisans.”

This first method is important because, in placing it at the beginning, Herzl’s supporters set the stage for the eventual unity of political and practical Zionism (what came to be known as Synthetic Zionism). Herzl, whatever his opposition to people moving to the Land of Israel before a political agreement, with the inclusion of this method first, recognized the political reality of immigration.

“(2) By organizing the whole of Jewry in suitable local and general bodies, in accordance with the laws of their respective countries.

“(3) By strengthening the national Jewish feeling and national consciousness.

“(4) By taking prepatory steps to attain any Governmental consent which may be necessary to reach the aim of Zionism.”

There followed, to put it mildly, a spirited debate.

Some of Herzl’s loyal supporters sought immediate approval. Pineles, for example, said he was “in favor of the draft being accepted by acclamation.”

That, however, was not very likely with this crowd.

Fabius Schach, a journalist from Cologne, spoke for many in the crowd: “It is . . . essential that in the program we say quite plainly for what we are striving. A National Jewish Home—that is the object of our desires, not a charitable refuge. We want to make the land of our forefathers into the land of our future. It is self-evident that we do not want to conquer it with the sword, but by friendly negotiations with the Sultan, through the mediation of European powers. But without guarantees based on international law our National Home can never attain

security. . . . The words which are missing in the program are the pillar of Zionism." Schach concluded by confessing he was being impetuous and not timid.

Schach, in essence, was completely agreeing with Herzl's ideology. But politics and ideology often are at loggerheads. Ideological consistency may end up being politically naive and therefore counterproductive. Herzl himself was about to offer this lesson to Schach.

Herzl said, "I think that Mr. Schach has fallen into a certain error. For this draft, the most conciliatory form which is sufficiently clear had been sought." Herzl was arguing that a direct assertion of national aspirations might be emotionally satisfying and even honest, but offering such an assertion could have an effect that was opposite of its intentions. Herzl was rightfully afraid of scaring Turkey with an immediate call for a nation. Rather, he sought a phrase that Turkey could accept but that still in its essence carried within it the promise of eventual statehood. It was a delicate balance, one that the politically sophisticated Herzl saw but that so many ardent Zionists failed to grasp. It might be added, however, that Herzl's assessment of Turkey turned out to be itself naive.

There was then a very brief adjournment to allow people for or against the proposal to appoint spokesmen for their views.

When this break was completed, Leo Motzkin, a leader of the Russian Zionists, delivered a speech and in it he said, "We represent the view that the words 'legally secured' must stand in the program, and indeed just in the sense used by Dr. Herzl in his book."

In opposition to this view, Alexander Mintz, an Austrian lawyer, spoke in favor of the submitted program.

Nordau, trying to save the draft he thought politically necessary, said, "We want to stress everything which unites us and to put into the background whatever separates us. We shall not lack political parties later on. . . . Let us, at the outset of our movement at least, show an example of most impressive unity by the unanimous acceptance of the program, by acclamation."

Emil Blumenfeld, a lawyer from Jaroslav, then asked for a vote about whether the delegates wanted "secured by international law" or "legally secured."

Herzl, seeking to take charge, then noted that "there are actually three propositions: that of the Commission, then that of Mr. Motzkin, and thirdly the proposition of 'publicly recognized.' Many present here today are perhaps under a misapprehension. The members of the Commission, actuated by the desire of formulating something which can demonstrate the unanimity of the First Congress have united in the widest logical sense which includes the smallest circles. They have thereby not given any indication of their own position . . . if I can so define it, of the idea of 'secured by international law' . . . I believe that he who acts brings about a quicker solution. . . . We would still all wish that the proposal regarding our program should be accepted unanimously, and in this connection I would point out that perhaps the choice of the words 'publicly recognized' will be agreed to by the lawyers. I take the liberty of suggesting to the Commission this addition which does not misrepresent our program. If they are in agreement, I shall put it to the vote."

Not everyone was happy with this. Fabius Schach called out, "Gentlemen! I have an urgent request. We are talking here not merely in this hall, but in public, before the world. Every word has a public import. What will the world say when later on it is learned that such a proposal was closed to discussion? On a point of order I propose that the debate be reopened."

There was a general uproar from the crowd at this, and, seeing what the result of any vote

would be, Schach simply left the hall.

When the crowd quieted, Herzl said, “The debate has been closed by the appointment of spokesmen. I have proposed that the Commission should retire to undertake a revision of the draft and present it to the Congress.”

Herzl’s importance was never clearer. He had his way.

Nordau read the finished product. The first paragraph now read: “Zionism seeks to secure for the Jewish people a publicly recognized, legally secured homeland in Palestine.” Before reading this change, Nordau had correctly noted that “the addition of ‘publicly’ to ‘legally’ does not express anything which was not already to be found in the original text.” The crowd didn’t care. There was thunderous applause and unanimous agreement. In a magnanimous move, Leo Motzkin then said, “The delegates who demanded the words ‘internationally recognized’ now state that they are satisfied with the alteration . . . and make known that their convictions and beliefs are thereby expressed openly and honorably before the entire world.”

The whole discussion was a major triumph for Herzl’s leadership. He hadn’t scared off the Turks (or Russians or Germans, for that matter) and had satisfied the more nationalistic among the Zionists. The program was one more example of why Zionism as a movement most probably could not have been successfully born without Herzl.

The vote on the Zionist program was delicate, but it was theoretical. The delegates were simply battling over words. This was familiar territory for all of them.

But Herzl, having established the need for Zionism and the Congress, having defined the Congress’s unanimously agreed upon program, now had to take the crucial step. He had to set up the organizational structure to carry on the movement’s progress. Herzl was no doubt acutely aware of his own mortality, and so he knew more than most the need to have that organization for when he would no longer be around to guide the movement.

Max Bodenheimer was given the crucial task of speaking about the proposed Zionist Organization. He concluded with: “At the present time the Jewish people is a body the organs of which are asleep and paralyzed as a result of their inactivity for hundreds of years.

“It is our task to revive those organs again, to infuse fresh inspiration and confidence into the body of the people. . . .

“That we bleed from a thousand wounds there is no need of proof. . . .

“The ship of the Jewish people drifts aimlessly on the troubled seas. There is no captain or helmsman to bring it into a safe port. Give the people its leader and the well-captained ship will soon . . . reach the verdant shore of that land which promises us the palm of peace and the sun of freedom.”

There was a lunch break, and then the afternoon session began, devoted to a debate on the Zionist Organization.

A decision was made to appoint a committee on organization in which all countries or groups could be represented. The committee was made up of Birnbaum, Bodenheimer, Salz, Steiner, Mandelstamm, Bernstein-Cohan, Pineles, Belkowsky from Bulgaria, Rosenberg from the United States, and de Haas.

There were some additional reports to complete the afternoon session.

As the meeting was nearing an end, David Wolffsohn read a list of all the delegates attending the First Zionist Congress.

The second day ended, but the Organization Committee had a tremendous amount of difficult work to do.

The third day began with the proposals made by the Organization Committee. The proposals began with: "(1) The chief organ of the Zionist movement is the Congress." In case anyone in the crowd missed it, Herzl was dismissing competitors like Birnbaum or those who wanted Hovevei Zion chapters to lead the movement. This was a crucial leadership assertion, for Herzl in having such a proposal was uniting all the factions, all the disparate separate groups. Herzl was, indeed, the king.

"(2) Every Zionist who wishes to participate in the election of delegates to the Congress is to pay voluntarily each year, for the purposes of the Zionist movement, at least one shekel valued at 1 franc—2 shillings—1/2 dollar—1/2 gulden—40 kopeks—1 mark. This amount has been fixed only for the very poorest of our brothers, and every Zionist is obliged to pay as much as his circumstances allow." Again, Herzl, through his committee, has been very circumspect. The money is called "voluntary" but only those who pay can help elect delegates to the Congress. Herzl showed restraint here; the Zionist movement was in desperate need of money. He had bluffed the Turks, trying to convince them that the wealthy Jews would pay their debts in return for a Jewish nation in some of the land they controlled. Herzl had very little money; he hoped that if the Turks agreed, wealthy Jews would join his effort. There was an additional clause (2a) that expanded on the financial aspects. The crucial point was that every one hundred contributors elected one delegate. That wasn't a bad definition of representative democracy.

"(3) Congress, by a show of voting tickets, elects an Actions Committee to carry out its resolutions, to manage its business and to determine the place of the next Congress."

The report went on to state that the Actions Committee would have its seat in Vienna (of course, this was Herzl's hometown). After further explanation of the role and makeup of the Action Committee, there was a debate that lasted for the entirety of the morning session. Finally it was decided that a General Council of twenty-three members be appointed. The fight was over power. Each location wanted more delegates. Democratic representation turned out not to be so easy.

After a brief introduction by Herzl, Steiner listed the five members of the Actions Committee who had to be residents of Vienna and needed to be elected by the Congress. Applause greeted the reading out of each individual name. All were unanimously elected, but Nathan Birnbaum said he could not accept the Congress's appointment. Alexander Mintz was elected to replace Birnbaum.

Beyond his anger at not being recognized as the movement's true leader, Birnbaum was angry about not having a proposal he wanted passed. The proposal, what Herzl in his diary called "the Birnbaum scandal," came when Birnbaum arranged for a few of his supporters led by Schalit (who was a deep disappointment to Herzl because the Zionist leader believed he had showed Schalit much kindness) to propose that the secretary-general of the Actions Committee be elected directly and paid by the Congress. That is, as Herzl noted, "The secretary-general, as trusted representative of the Congress, is supposed to counterbalance the other twenty-two members of the Actions Committee!" Herzl controlled the movement through the force of his ideas and personality. He believed Birnbaum was trying to stage a coup. Herzl said in response to the proposal that if it passed he couldn't imagine that anyone would accept a seat on the committee because they would in essence have no say in the committee's decisions.

As Herzl noted in his diary, during the debate Rosa Sonneschein said to Herzl, "They shall crucify you yet—and I will be your Magdalene." Herzl didn't record his reaction. He was Moses,

he was the Jewish Messiah, and now he was Jesus.

It was not easy to maintain his calm amid all the scheming going on around him. Herzl had few chances to escape this intense pressure. His fondest memory of the days of the Congress turned out to be his few fifteen-minute chats with an old banker, Gustav G. Cohen, which were held on the balcony of the Hotel Trois Rois. Herzl had nicknamed Cohen "Beaujolais fleuri" after the French wine Cohen drank at meals.

Finally, the vote came on Birnbaum's plan; the proposal was roundly defeated.

The members of the General Council were then elected.

The discussion turned to the communities established in the Land of Israel.

M. T. Schnirer, one of Herzl's associates, gave a report on those communities. In keeping with Herzl's ideology, Schnirer concluded his report with these words: "(1) Further immigration into Palestine should not be undertaken before the status of 'legal security and public recognition' has been accorded."

Aharon Armand Kaminka then spoke about the *yishuv* (a term referring to the Jewish residents in the Land of Israel prior to the establishment of a nation), providing a list of Jewish communities and their populations. Rishon le Zion, for example, had 400 residents, Petach Tikvah, 670. There were in total 3,887 members of these communities in 1897. It is dramatic to compare these numbers with the Jewish immigrants, say, to the United States. Clearly, Zionists who physically moved to the land were genuinely bold pioneers who ignored the general flow of Jewish history and the difficult challenges of the Land of Israel itself.

Kaminka continued that "complaints have been leveled that in the larger and better organized communities there is too much . . . inclination toward luxury" (which Kaminka suggested came from an attempt to imitate the French). From the advantage of time, it is startling to imagine any observer arguing that the Jews in any of these communities suffered from the sin of luxury. Adding to his report, with considerable predictive interest, Kaminkin said, "The young people speak Hebrew; they feel themselves real children of the country and work with industry and sacrifice."

The discussion then turned to Hebrew language and literature. Marcus Ehrenpreis reported on the status of Hebrew. He concluded: (1) Congress should set up a general Hebrew school system to establish free lessons in Hebrew; (2) Congress should elect a Hebrew Literature Commission . . . to found and maintain Hebrew periodicals and to subsidize Hebrew works; to assist young Hebrew authors . . . above all to foster by all suitable means the Hebrew language and literature."

The report is interesting because it illustrates the power of the very idea of Hebrew. Herzl, after all, thought of his Jewish state as one in which the residents spoke German and other "civilized" European languages. The nation would be a stew of different languages. That so many at the Congress saw Hebrew as attached so intimately to the nationalist enterprise helps explain its eventual triumph.

A Literature Commission was set up. Interestingly, Ahad Ha'am, who had remained aloof from the entire Congress because, at least in part, of his fierce differences with Herzl, agreed to be part of this commission.

Herzl had sent Ahad Ha'am a special invitation at the author's home in Odessa, hoping to win such an articulate opponent over to political Zionism. The two ended up having two conversations in Basel, one before the Congress began and one after it ended. At the first meeting, Ahad Ha'am asked Herzl about a national fund proposed to be set up in order to buy

property in the Land of Israel on behalf of all the Jewish people. At the second meeting, Ahad Ha'am probed Herzl's reasoning about why he would be able to win concessions from Turkey. Ahad Ha'am was unmoved by the answers. His view was that "Israel will not be redeemed by diplomats but by prophets." In denigrating Herzl in such an unflattering comparison to himself, Ha'am created a permanent rupture between the two men.

A commission to examine the Jewish communities in the Land of Israel was also set up. Perhaps Herzl believed he needed to make this political gesture because the communities had such support or perhaps he thought he would eventually be able to maintain political control over the Congress's policies toward those communities.

The session closed at 7:30 p.m., but the Congress's work wasn't done. A final session was held that evening.

Before the session began, Rabbi Cohn of the host city of Basel got up. Cohn had not been a Zionist; from his synagogue pulpit, Cohn had challenged Herzl's views. But his presence at the Congress transformed him into one. Indeed, he said, "The speech of Dr. Nordau could be signed by any Orthodox Jew, word for word, sentence for sentence." But in his speech Cohn pleaded with the Zionists to safeguard religion. Cohn's expression of support was an enormous emotional boost to the movement because any ideological movement loves to tell conversion stories, tales of how someone had come to see the error of his ideological ways and had embraced the approved view.

Herzl followed the rabbi: "First of all I must thank the Reverend Dr. Cohn for his loyal appearance as our former opponent and for the frankness of his enquiry. . . . I can assure you that Zionism envisages nothing which might wound the religious susceptibilities of any group in Jewry." Herzl's point was clear. He appreciated Cohn's support, but there were non-Orthodox groups, even religious groups, within Zionism, and Herzl did not want his movement's religious dimension to be identified only with Cohn's brand of Orthodoxy.

There was sustained wild applause at this comment.

Herzl continued, "To supplement one point on the agenda, I must make a short remark. During the past year many complaints have come to me [from the communities in the Land of Israel]. I believe I am in accord with the feeling of the majority of Congress if I do not enter more closely into these complaints, but leave them to the Commission."

Having clearly maintained full control, Herzl proceeded, "We have now reached the end of our present task." He thanked Basel and then he offered an interesting note of appreciation. "We must, moreover, thank the Christian Zionists." He then named some, including some like Henri Dunant who were not in attendance. Indeed, it was Herzl's inaccurate thanks that led to the misunderstanding that Dunant in fact had been in attendance. But in his thanking these non-Jewish Zionists, Herzl accorded great meaning to the support of the Christian community. He nurtured it. He praised it. As it turned out, the appreciation he offered for Christian support provides one more cogent example not only of Herzl's incredibly acute political mind but also of his reading of history. Christian support for the Land of Israel and later the nation Israel has turned out to be of vital importance. That such a fact was recognized by Herzl is remarkable.

Herzl then turned to his concluding words. "In many quarters, I believe, people have waited with malicious joy for much foolishness and fanatical enthusiasm to be expressed here. I think that Zionism need not be ashamed of its First Congress. It has been moderate, but nevertheless decisive. How the future will shape cannot be said today. . . . On the day the plough is once again held in the now-strong hand of the Jewish farmer, then the Jewish

question will have been solved."

Several minutes of applause followed.

Professor Max Mandelstamm, an elderly (elderly for the Congress, that is; he was fifty-nine at the time) Russian physician, asked for the floor and spoke emotionally. He concluded with: "I plead with our honored president not to be discouraged by the hard work which he has performed and which still lies before him and by the discomforts which he has met and which are still to be met. May he bring to a successful conclusion the difficult work he has done, with the same spirit and the same self-sacrifice. Long live the president of the First Zionist Congress, Dr. Theodor Herzl."

There were thunderclaps of wild applause.

Finally, Herzl spoke: "The First Zionist Congress is now closed."

There was, if possible, even louder applause. People in the hall stamped their feet. People waved their handkerchiefs. Israel Zangwill stood on his chair and waved his red bandanna. A group of people broke into a rendition of "Hatikvah." The song had been adopted by the Hovevei Zion societies and by the Congress as an official anthem of the movement. It later became Israel's national anthem. Another man began singing "The Watch on the Jordan." People screamed "Next year in Jerusalem," although, as it turned out, the next year the Second Zionist Congress would not be held in Jerusalem but instead would be back in Basel. People in attendance embraced and kissed each other. *Die Welt* reported that there were an unusually large number of moist eyes. The demonstration went on for an hour.

A student choir sang a German patriotic song but adapted it for the Zionist occasion:

> There where the cedar kisses the sky,
> And where the Jordan quickly flows by,
> There where the ashes of my father lie,
> In that exalted Reich, on sea and sand,
> Is my beloved, true Fatherland.

The song is interesting in reflecting the depth of German culture's penetration into the European Jewish intellectual soul. Wagner had even been played for entertainment one night at the Congress. Surely, the words would be seen in horror just forty years later as the Nazis solidified power and prepared for war and the destruction of the entirety of the Jewish people. But on this last day at Basel, the voices were jubilant.

Herzl went off to a small side room and said his simple good-byes. He had slept no more than twelve hours during the previous five days.

The Congress had inserted itself into history. It had renewed a national identity for the Jewish people and provided unity for those who sought such a nation. It created a Zionist program and had established a Zionist Organization, two indispensable steps on the road to statehood.

Chapter 5
Zion's Flame
Reactions around the World

The failure to have a discussion of and policy recommendations for the Arabs living in the Land of Israel, or, in their understanding, Palestine, can be seen as the major weakness of the First Zionist Congress. Its absence can be incorrectly understood as indifference to the Arabs or simply looking past them or Herzl's deliberate political decision to ignore them. In fact, the lack of discussion of the Arabs is part of the inadequate discussion of the Jews living in the Land of Israel. Both of these stem directly from Herzl's ideology. He wanted to push aside all efforts in the Land of Israel to focus instead solely on the political effort to get national status for the Jews from the Turks. So many people among the Russian Jews understood the Jewish communities as vital that Herzl was under political pressure to include mentioning them, but he arranged the Congress so that they were included in public reports but no efforts were made to support them. All the efforts stemmed from Herzl's ideological view that before any efforts to build Jewish communities in the Land of Israel could begin land had to be legally secured so that it belonged to the Jews. Only then, in Herzl's view, could Zionism focus on increasing Jewish immigration and building communities. It was at that point, had he lived long enough to see it, that Herzl would have had to face the question of how to deal with the Arabs.

It is ironic that it was Herzl's ideology that tripped him up, for his very appeal to the Jewish masses was not his ideology but his willingness to take action. That is what the Jews of Eastern Europe yearned for, a leader who did more than talk. Some of Herzl's actions turned out to be ill-founded. Some even angered the very Jews who yearned for Herzl to act. But it was not Herzl's actions, wrong as some of them were, that did him in. It was his ideological limitations.

Of course this ideological failure on Herzl's part was crucial in several ways. He never understood that in building a Jewish political effort on behalf of the Land of Israel he would be producing a counterreaction. For all his vaunted ability to foresee the many dangers facing the Jews, the very dangers that prompted his nationalistic efforts, he could not see the importance of an immediate removal of Jews from hate-filled countries. That is, the biggest failure of Herzl's ideology had the most important of consequences. By naively relying on a political solution that would not come because the Turks didn't want it, Herzl endangered efforts to build up the Jewish communities in the Land of Israel and simultaneously endangered the Jews who might otherwise have emigrated to the Land of Israel but instead remained trapped in hostile lands. As noted, it should be emphasized that history is not static. Any effort by Herzl and the Zionists to increase Jewish immigration to the land might well have been met by further restrictions. Even so, Herzl and the movement were blinded by ideology when clearer eyes were needed to see the scope and depth of hostility to the Jews.

Another effect of Herzl's efforts was that, unintentional though it may have been, he might have even been a sort of perverse inspiration for the Arabs living in Palestine. At any rate, the Jewish political effort was soon followed by a Palestinian Arab nationalism. Jewish immigrants might have provoked hostility toward the new Jewish farmers, but a national movement noted in the international press no doubt had an effect on Arab intellectuals. Indeed, as it turned out, Arab nationalism in Palestine chronologically came soon after Jewish nationalism, so it is not at

all impossible to link the two historically.

It is, however, difficult to determine exactly what the Zionists could have done if they recognized that there would be a conflict with the indigenous Arab population. They might have tried to raise an army, invade the land, and remove the Arabs. No such plan was ever developed, but had it been it would, of course, simply have been a fantasy, an exercise in wish fulfillment. The Jews had no military weapons, preparation, or training for two millennia. They also had no military imagination. Grounded in traditional Jewish ethics, nurtured by two thousand years of learning how to get along with their neighbors and adjust to those with more power than they had, they did not see themselves as descendants of the ancient warriors of Judea but as Talmud-studying scholars and writers and merchants. They wouldn't have been able to envision a martial conflict with the local Arabs. They would have been horrified at the seemingly unending nature of the conflict.

As an alternative to the military view, the Zionists might have followed Ahad Ha'am and forgone a desire for sovereignty and focused instead on establishing a center for culture. But this would never have been acceptable because the very need for Zionism in the first place primarily arose because the Jews needed a haven from murderous attacks and persecution.

If the Zionists believed, as some like Ahad Ha'am did, that the Palestinian Arabs would also claim national rights, they might have concluded that there simply wasn't a place in the traditional Land of Israel for a revived Jewish nation and looked for another place to build their homeland. Such a belief, later known as territorialism, will be considered in the next chapter. But such an alternative would never have been considered acceptable, especially by the Russian Jews. We know this precisely because such an alternative did arise.

In 1903, Joseph Chamberlain, the British colonial secretary, offered the Zionists five thousand square miles in what is now Kenya. (The offer is often called "the Uganda Plan" because the land had not long before been part of the Uganda Protectorate. It was not, however, in Uganda.)

Herzl and Nordau were intrigued by the plan precisely because of what they correctly perceived as increasing attacks on Jews. Herzl therefore took the plan to the Sixth Zionist Congress in 1903, also held in Basel. Nordau described the land as a Nachtasyl, a night station, a temporary haven until the Land of Israel could be secured. Herzl still had power and so by a vote of 295 to 177, the Zionists decided to send a commission to investigate the proposed homeland. The three people who did investigate discovered that the proposed Jewish homeland had lions and bands of Maasai, a tribe not happy about outsiders. Perhaps because Herzl's death in 1904 weakened the political Zionists, the Congress in 1905 declined the offer.

A final alternative might have been to recognize that the Arabs would not accept a Jewish state and would develop a nationalist movement. But given the realities of anti-Semitism a Jewish state was needed, and given Zionist sensibilities the Jews wouldn't accept a land outside their ancient homeland. In that circumstance, they might have devised a plan that didn't include negotiating with the Palestinian Arabs who wouldn't negotiate with them. But such a vision would have required a view into the future far beyond the abilities of anyone living at the end of the nineteenth century. Instead, Herzl and the Zionists were obstinate in clinging to the unreal reality they thought of as the Land of Israel.

So the early Zionists, especially those in 1897, were ideologically stuck. They didn't adequately consider the Palestinian Arabs, who, after all, didn't have a recognizable nationalist movement to consider. But even if they had considered the Arabs, they would have had no

alternative but to continue on the path they did. That path included some delusions, especially that the Arabs would accept and thrive under Zionist rule or that the Arabs were just part of the exotic background. Some nationalist Jews, like Zangwill, flirted with the idea of forcibly removing the Arabs. These writings are useful for pro-Palestinian Arab propagandists now, but in fact they had no support at all. They were never officially part of the Zionist movement. They never had the support of anyone other than the individuals who proposed them, and they couldn't have been carried out because of Zionist ideology and military limitations.

It is, of course, impossible to know what in reality the Zionists would have done if faced with a vigorous Arab nationalism, and different Zionists would certainly have proceeded with different responses. But given the realities of continuing persecution, given the high moral ground on which the Zionists stood, it seems likely that, even had they been able to perceive some future danger, they would have proceeded. "Ein breira," as the Hebrew-speaking Israeli Jews said especially during the War of Independence in 1948 when the painful realities of fighting were all too clear. There is no alternative.

And so, without any alternative, the Zionists did proceed.

Herzl arrived by train back in Vienna and went straight to the print shop bringing a whole sheaf of Zionist manuscripts. Herzl took his assistant, Erwin Rosenberger, across the street to a café, ordered coffee and rolls, and got right back to work. The triumphant return of a successful leader might have merited a few days' rest. Herzl did not stop for a moment. Later at lunch, Herzl said to Rosenberger, "Don't repeat this to anyone, for they would ridicule you, but it is true nonetheless. At Basel we laid the foundation for our Jewish State."

On September 3, 1897, Herzl made the famous prophetic entry in his diary: "Were I to sum up the Basel Congress in a word—which I shall carefully refrain from uttering in public—it would be this: in Basel I founded the Jewish state. If I were to say this out loud today, everybody would laugh at me. In five years, perhaps, but certainly in fifty, everybody will agree."

Israel became an independent state on May 14, 1948. Even the great Herzl wasn't perfect. His prediction was off by a few months, but it was still utterly remarkable. It's interesting that he dates his founding of the state not by writing *Der Judenstaat* but by convening the First Zionist Congress. The mere expression of an idea wasn't a lever that could move history, he thought; it took a concrete and defined political activity. Both to Rosenberger and to his diary, Herzl expressed a wish to refrain from making his seemingly outlandish but extraordinarily prescient idea public. Evidently, he was more subject to a distaste for ridicule than his exterior led people to believe. He had good reason to suspect such a reaction. When, for example, he returned to his job at the *Neue Freie Presse* on September 2, coworkers greeted him as the "future head of state" and made jokes about him.

A few weeks later, Herzl made a public statement: "In order to achieve the homeland secured by international law we had first to present to the world the evidence of our existence as a people. If the people is there, then the piece of land which it needs comes of itself." Herzl, Germanic more than Hebraic in his understanding of the world, was invoking Schopenhauer as he would in *Altneuland* with its motto put as a frontispiece: "If you will it, it is no dream." This notion of the world as will was crucial to Herzl's understanding of the world. It's almost mystical. Somehow the strength of the will can create a concrete reality. This reliance on his will helps explain Herzl's refusal to accept the facts of his deteriorating health or the widespread skepticism, sarcasm, and opposition he faced, or the unbelievably long odds before him in re-

creating a Jewish state after almost two thousand years in exile.

Herzl lived in a mansion of dreams. As Edgar Allan Poe wrote in his short story *Eleonora,* "Those who dream by day are cognizant of many things which escape those who dream only by night." Herzl survived by his vision of a Jewish state. He totally identified his fate with the fate of his national vision. He literally dreamed about making his son Hans a prince in the new nation. His three children, unsure of what to make of their father, once asked, "When father is king, will we still have to go to school?"

Herzl's great awakening was the moral agency of others, especially others not exactly like himself. It was in some ways simply the fact that the very continuing existence of that same Jewish people that went into exile was Herzl's dramatic triumph and the dramatic triumph of the First Zionist Congress. There weren't just Jews; there was a Jewish people. And the Jewish people retained a powerful national memory, one willing to struggle to regain that nation.

Herzl himself got acquainted with those people. He knew those like himself, assimilated Western Jews, cultured, familiar with European culture, unfamiliar with sacred Jewish texts or Jewish rituals. Even with those, however, Herzl had a kind of arrogance, the same arrogance (or, to put it more precisely into a Jewish vernacular, chutzpah) that made some people find him annoying and others think of him as embodying greatness.

Before the First Zionist Congress, however, he wasn't very familiar with the Jews who weren't like him, the Jews of Eastern Europe, poor, often religious, sometimes revolutionary. These *Ost-Juden* created Judaism's spiritual leaders. They were the ones most fiercely loyal to Zion when other Zionists, including Herzl, were willing to consider alternatives. Herzl was shocked. He had thought Zionism's leaders would, like himself, come from the West. "And then," as he wrote in his diary, "at the Basel Congress there arose before our eyes a Russian Jewry the strength of which we had not even expected. Seventy of our delegates came from Russia, and it was patent to all of us that they represented the views and sentiments of the five million Jews of that country." This was a big change for Herzl. He had started out counting on a handful of wealthy Jews, and had ended up not being able to count on them but on a mass of poor Jews. He knew this, for he continued in the diary, "And what a humiliation for us, who had taken our superiority for granted! . . . Nearly all of them are masters of two or three languages, and that they are men of ability in their particular lines is proved by the simple fact that they have succeeded in a land where success is peculiarly difficult for Jews."

In contemplating these Eastern Jews, Herzl was able to see the elusive force he needed, the invisible binding force without which there could be no Zionist movement. He'd get money. He'd get writers, journalists, and thinkers. But the Eastern Jews had a special quality. "They possess that inner unity which has disappeared from among the westerners. . . . They are not tortured by the idea of assimilation. . . . Looking on them, we understood where our forefathers got the strength to endure through the bitterest times."

Herzl also discovered that his political enemy, Edmond de Rothschild, had openly expressed the view that Herzl, especially in writing *Der Judenstaat*, had done a lot of damage.

If Herzl left Basel in a cloud of triumph and certainty of victory, Ahad Ha'am left Basel in a cloud of gloom and despair. He said he had sat at the Congress "like a mourner at a wedding feast." His immediate reaction to the Congress was recorded in a letter to a friend: "Last night the meeting ended. My head still aches, my nerves are on edge, and I do not allow myself to say what I think, because I cannot yet control my feelings. I hate to say it, but one could see how low we have fallen. . . . After the meeting I had a short talk with Herzl, and came to the

conclusion that his hints about what he has achieved in Constantinople are worth nothing at all." Ahad Ha'am was completely correct about Herzl's "achievements." In public, Ahad Ha'am was more restrained, repeating his thematic response that the Congress focused on political Zionism rather than on Jewish cultural and ethical renewal.

Ahad Ha'am attended the Congress as an outsider; he was hardly alone in that identity. Basel was filled with spies and foreign agents. Each country that had someone there keeping track of the Zionists saw the results through its own political perspective. The Austrians were convinced, for example, that the Congress was run by German socialists. The French consul who had been in Basel saw the Congress as an almost laughable fantasy dreamed up by Jewish journalists, a "rampant dream to restore the kingdom of Zion" in Palestine. Unlike the Austrians or the French, the Germans took the Congress with utter seriousness. Von Tottenbach, who served as the German ambassador to Switzerland, wrote a note about the Congress. The note eventually got to the kaiser, who wrote a note in the margin: "Let the kikes go to Palestine, the sooner the better. I am not about to put obstacles in their way." Such a note, written in Germany, is resonant precisely because of what was eventually going to happen to Jews there. Unintentionally, the anti-Semitic kaiser precisely explained the justification for Zionism. The Jews needed to escape to a haven before it was too late, before the hatred felt toward them would translate into intentional physical destruction.

Opposition came from various places. As Herzl noted in his diary on September 4, 1897, "French and Italian papers report that the Vatican has issued a circular letter [in fact, an encyclical] protesting in the name of Christendom against the projected occupation of the Holy Places by the Jews." The Vatican, which had found reasonable peace in Muslim control of the sacred places in the land, could not bring itself to reconcile with Jewish control. After his encyclical, Pope Leo XIII summoned Monsignor Bonetti, the apostolic representative headquartered in Constantinople. The pope wished to strike back against the Zionists. After the consultation, the pope decided that the French were in the best position to protect Christian interests in the Holy Land. Fearing a negative Vatican reaction's effect on Christians worldwide, Herzl wrote to Emigidius Taliani, the apostolic nuncio in Vienna, seeking an interview. Taliani, who had once met one of Herzl's colleagues and, claiming all Jews were rich, asked, "Have you ever seen a poor Jew?," delayed the requested interview for several months. When Herzl finally did get a chance to meet him, Herzl assured Taliani that the Zionists had no intention of seizing any sacred places. He suggested that Jerusalem and Bethlehem might be made extraterritorial, outside any nation's jurisdiction. Taliani tried to be reassuring, telling Herzl that the church "had always been well disposed toward the Jews" and when the Jews had been put in ghettos "it was only to protect them against the mobs."

Herzl, who must have been flabbergasted at the remarks, dryly noted, "There have been interruptions in this benevolent tradition." Eventually, on January 26, 1904, Herzl met with the pope, Leo's successor Pope Pius X. The new pope refused to grant any potential legitimacy to Judaism and so, according to Herzl, the pope said, "We cannot give approval to this movement. We cannot prevent the Jews from going to Jerusalem, but we could never sanction it. The soil of Jerusalem, if it was not always sacred, has been sanctified by the life of Jesus Christ. As the head of the Church I cannot tell you anything different. The Jews have not recognized our Lord, therefore we cannot recognize the Jewish people."

Christian opposition, however, didn't only emerge from the Vatican. The official organ of the Catholic Church in Basel itself, the *Basler Volksblatt*, concluded an article about the First

Zionist Congress with these words: “What would the farms and handicraft workshops of the Jews look like today? These things require hands to *work,* and all of Europe knows only trading Jews, not working Jews. . . . In this and in other respects, the Zionist Congress appeared to the dispassionate observer to be somewhat utopian. . . . We must concur with Dr. Herzl here, when he says that in order to return to Palestine, it is first necessary to return to Judaism . . . but we would like to go one step further and say that a Jewish return home only makes sense if it is done with the recognition of the Messiah . . . who was then not accepted and maliciously crucified by them!”

Oddly, even as philosemitic an observer as Mark Twain was wary of the Zionist plan. “I am not the Sultan,” Twain wrote of the First Zionist Congress, “and I am not objecting. But if that concentration of the cunningest brains in the world was going to be made in a free country (bar Scotland), I think it would be politic to stop it. It will not be well to let that race find its strength. If horses knew theirs we should not ride anymore.” Despite the characteristic humor, there is in Twain’s prose an undercurrent of fear, a perverse belief that the Jews were so smart that they needed to remain in their current state.

But not every observer was as gentle as Twain. In the years after the First Zionist Congress the existence of the meeting itself fed anti-Semitic fantasies about the desire of the Jewish people for world domination. It was a short step from such a long-held anti-Semitic perception to the conclusion that the Congress in reality had been a meeting of Jewish bankers who had gotten together in Basel to make final a plan for the Jewish people to gain control over the whole world. As ludicrous as that sounds, it was nevertheless believed by many.

Indeed, Sergei Nilus, the forger who edited the Russian edition of the most famous of the anti-Semitic tracts to emerge in the years after the Congress, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, claimed that the protocols were first presented in Basel not to the Zionist Congress but to a Council of Elders. Theodor Herzl was, in Nilus’s account, the prince of the Jewish exile. Writing in a 1905 book, Nilus included the full, forged protocols as the final chapter of the book. Of course, it was quickly pointed out to Nilus that the Congress had been open to the public, had been attended by numerous Gentiles, and had been reported on by various papers, including many prominent ones. Nilus then decided that there had been a separate meeting, one of Jewish elders, that had taken place in 1902–1903. Once more, Nilus had to face the unpleasant truth. It turned out that he had already made the statement that he had gotten his copy of the protocols in 1901. But, as in so many cases involving anti-Semitism, truth was not necessary for the promulgation of hatred. The protocols continue to be published and disseminated to this day, such as in the Arab world.

The Zionists who attended the Congress also were prompted into propelling their movement forward. Between the First Zionist Congress and the Second Zionist Congress (in 1898), the Actions Committee that had been elected published the Herzl and Nordau addresses in German, Hebrew, and Yiddish; a pamphlet by Nordau; and another pamphlet that described the aims of Zionism. This one was particularly interesting because besides being printed in Hebrew and French it was also, somewhat astonishingly, printed in Arabic. The pamphlet was therefore, at least in part, aimed at the Ottoman Empire to help their rulers and people understand that Zionism didn’t intend to be militarily or politically confrontational. The printing in Arabic also unintentionally reveals just how naive the Zionists were about what would develop into Palestinian Arab nationalism. In effect such a pamphlet was a provocation to local citizens, alerting them if they were still uncertain of the aims of Zionism. Even if the idea of a

homeland didn't quite rise to the provocation that a call for an independent nation would have, the aims of Zionism became abundantly clear and may have in the long run contributed to the rise of Arab nationalism in Palestine.

Oblivious to this, the Actions Committee worked with the different Zionist groups that arose, prompted by the worldwide publicity generated by the Congress. The growth of such groups was spectacular. In Russia, for example, there had been 23 Zionist societies before the Congress; afterward 350 new societies developed. A similar, if slightly less dramatic, pattern emerged in places such as Austria, Romania, and Germany (where there had been no societies before the Congress and 25 afterward). The Congress even had an effect in the United States. Before the Congress there had been 10 Zionist societies; 50 new ones emerged after the Congress.

The Actions Committee also began work on the Jewish Colonial Trust, the first Zionist bank, that would be formed by the Second Zionist Congress. At least the Actions Committee seemed to do so. Herzl, who had up until then covered all his personal and many other expenses (such as *Die Welt*) himself, now asked for five thousand gulden from his colleagues. They ignored his request. Worse still, the "Actions Committee" most often left most of the actual work to Herzl himself. It is therefore no wonder that he referred to them as the "Inactions Committee." It was Herzl, not the Actions Committee, who did the organizational work for the Jewish Colonial Trust. But Herzl was stuck. He couldn't claim in public that he alone was doing all the work. Zionism couldn't be portrayed as an army with a general at the head and an army that wouldn't fight or follow. The fiction of a large, active movement was necessary. However bitter Herzl was, he could not disclose that anger in public.

Israel Zangwill, widely known for being a skeptic and a wit, wrote, beginning with a famous Jewish sacred line and then moving it in a new direction: "By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept as we remembered Zion. By the river of Basel we sat down resolved to weep no more!" Chaim Nachman Bialik, the poet who played such a crucial role in the revival of Hebrew that he eventually became known as Israel's national poet, wrote: "Your memory in dark hours shall rest / A never-fading sun to the oppressed." Bialik's psychological acuity is instructive here. The First Zionist Congress had a stirring effect for those who attended. But for all Jews, those who were there and those who weren't, the Congress became a shining symbol bringing light and emotional warmth to the persecuted Jews. When Jews were suffering they could look up at the bright memory of the Congress and have their strength renewed. In that sense, the Congress was an enormous gift to the oppressed Jews.

There were various European reactions to the First Zionist Congress. The Swiss press was generally deep in its coverage and favorable toward those who attended. In contrast, the French press was decidedly less favorable. The German press, perhaps following the kaiser's unsavory support of Zionism or perhaps genuinely supportive, reported at length and with great sympathy about the aspirations of the Zionists at Basel. The press in Vienna almost uniformly met the Congress with a stony silence. The British press treated the Congress with great seriousness. Oswald H. Simon, reporting for the *Times*, stood in unyielding opposition to the Zionist movement. But other British papers such as the *Daily Mail*, the *Pall-Mall Gazette*, and the *Contemporary Review* (in materials written by Arnold White) came up with the provocative idea of having a World Congress to consider and evaluate the entirety of the status of the Jews in the world. That would have been an interesting meeting.

The Orthodox leaders in Europe continued to dismiss or mock Herzl. A German Orthodox

paper, *Der Israelit*, included in its September 1897 edition this taunt: “Dr. Herzl himself might not attend synagogue very much, may even eat a ham sandwich on Yom Kippur, and yet none would boast, as much as he, of being a Jew.”

The Arab reaction was to have its suspicions aroused. Abd-al Hamid II sent some of his palace staff to govern the province of Jerusalem. The Mufti of Jerusalem, Muhammad Tahir al-Husseini, headed a commission to examine the manner in which the Zionists were acquiring land in Palestine. The Arab press was alerted and unhappy. *Al-Manar*, a journal headquartered in Cairo, claimed the Zionists aimed to possess Palestine.

Albert Antebi, the Jewish Colonization Association’s representative in Jerusalem, would, two years after the First Zionist Congress, conclude that the First Congress’s program had in that brief time negatively affected the relations between the new Jewish immigrants to the Land of Israel and the native Arabs. Antebi would, throughout his career, continue this theme of improving those relations.

By 1900, the Ottoman rulers realized there was a serious problem and sent a commission to Palestine. The commission wanted to explore the long-term implications of the Zionists acquiring land and their plans of mass immigration.

European powers, perhaps out of goodwill, perhaps because of Zionist political pressure, and perhaps to see their Jews emigrate, began to pressure the Ottoman Empire so that in 1901 foreign Jews were allowed to purchase land in the northern part of Palestine. However, Jerusalem, even with its Jewish majority, became a center of ever-greater contention. The Ottomans restricted both Jewish immigration and land acquisition within the Jerusalem district. The Administrative Council of Jerusalem strenuously objected to the Jewish Colonization Association’s attempts to acquire additional land within the Jerusalem district. The Arab farmers in Tiberias, noting the increase in Zionist land acquisition, expressed their dissatisfaction.

The New York *Sun* was the first daily newspaper in America that had called attention to the movement even before the First Zionist Congress was held. In its May 10, 1897, edition, a writer noted: “We shall soon learn the measure of his [Herzl’s] influence upon the Jews in the United States. Probably it will not be great.” That was surely the most inaccurate statement of the Jewish year.

The American Jewish reaction to the First Zionist Congress was filled with fear, suspicion, and some support. The American Jewish community was anxious to be accepted as Americans. When the Hovevei Zion societies were collecting money for the poor Jews in the Land of Israel, the charitable element was emphasized. All American Jews could understand and embrace such an effort. After all, even a Rothschild was supporting the Jews in the agricultural communities. But when Herzl called for a Zionist Congress, he was recasting Zionism not as a charitable movement but as a nationalist one. That fact scared many American Jews.

A debate was held in November 1897 by the New York Judeans. Cyrus Leopold Sulzberger, as mentioned, attended the Congress but spoke as an anti-Zionist. What kind of government, he wondered, could emerge from people who had lived in Russia, Bulgaria, and similar countries? (Cyrus Sulzberger, it should be noted, later became a Zionist.)

The Reform movement, for example, was virtually unanimous in its opposition to Zionism. The Central Conference of American Rabbis held a conference in 1897 and there passed a resolution: “Resolved, that we totally disapprove of any attempt for the establishment of a Jewish State. . . . We reaffirm that the object of Judaism is not political nor national, but

spiritual." There were exceptions, of course. Dr. Bernhard Felsenthal was the most intellectually acute of Zionism's Reform supporters. He argued that not only was dispersion among the nations unnecessary to undertake the Jewish mission of being a light unto the nations, but also the very existence of a Jewish nation was necessary for that mission because they couldn't perform the mission without being a united people in their own nation. Felsenthal accused his fellow rabbis of encouraging assimilation. These were bold and brave words in 1897. But however bold and brave they were, Felsenthal's was a lonely voice. All the principal Reform leaders opposed Zionism. The lay arm of the movement, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, declared in 1898 that "We are unalterably opposed to political Zionism. . . . America is our Zion."

Besides believing that Zionism undermined the Jewish mission (which a cynical observer might note was much written about but rarely practiced by the very people who proclaimed it at the time), the Reform followers were deeply anxious about Zionism injecting a charge of dual loyalty into American Jewish life. Zionism, it was charged, was a foreign invention that didn't belong in the American Jewish mind.

But Felsenthal had persisted. He had urged American Jews to have representatives at the conference. As previously mentioned, there were Americans there, but Adam Rosenberg, who had gone to the Land of Israel to purchase land for Hovevei Zion and who did attend, was only there because he stopped off on his way to America. There was in fact an American Jewish leader and his wife present but they did not register. Professor Richard Gottheil, a quiet scholar, was dutifully impressed.

If Jewish religious organizations and newspapers were hostile, American Jews who supported the Basel program sought to come together.

Arthur Dembitz (whose cousin was Louis Brandeis) may have been the first American-born Jew to organize a group of Herzlian Zionists. He founded the United American Zionists on October 22, 1897, with ten societies brought together. This group developed into the Federation of Zionist Societies of Greater New York and Vicinity, also organized in 1897. Slowly it absorbed other Zionist societies existing outside the New York region. A convention of the Zionists was held on July 4, 1898, which resulted in the founding of a new national organization, the Federation of American Zionists. Richard Gottheil was elected as president. There were originally twenty-four societies in the federation. These societies included perhaps a thousand people. By May 1901, there were 152 societies enrolled in the federation and a membership of 8,000. There were perhaps one and a half million Jews living in the United States in the year 1900, so the call of Zion was, to put it mildly, not very well heard in the Golden Land of America. But the Zionists persisted. A subgroup, the Knights of Zion, was established for Zionism in the Western states. The Knights of Zion had its headquarters in Chicago. The Federation of American Zionists was renamed the Zionist Organization of America in 1917.

There were, of course, many complicated and intense reactions to the First Zionist Congress. There was inevitable disappointment because the Congress didn't bring quick results. Herzl had oversimplified the equation for success. There wasn't enough Jewish money under his control and there wasn't Turkish willingness to allow Jewish sovereignty on Ottoman land. Herzl had failed to grasp the meaning of the Arabs living in the Land of Israel. He had gambled his life and his health, and however gratified he was by the First Zionist Congress, however historic it was, however much a hinge of Jewish history, the Jewish state after the Congress was still in the lonely distance.

Chapter 6
Echoes of the Dream
The Legacy of the First Zionist Congress

The First Zionist Congress was the climax of Theodor Herzl's life. In the few years he had left to live, he continued to work as energetically as the body that betrayed him daily would allow. He met with all kinds of leaders. He traveled to the Land of Israel where he met with Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany and showed the powerful German leader one of the Jewish agricultural communities. The kaiser, however, turned out to be as big a disappointment as so many others had been. He provided Herzl with a publicity triumph, but there was to be no German declaration in favor of a Jewish national home.

Herzl also found his way to the sultan's court to see if he could effect the simple exchange of Jewish money for Turkish land. The sultan wanted the money but not enough to give up any land in Palestine. The sultan did not want Jews in Palestine. He told Herzl that perhaps Jews could emigrate from Europe to different places controlled by the Ottoman Empire. But the negotiations, which extended until 1902, would never be completed in a way acceptable to either. Herzl needed the Land of Israel, and the Ottoman Empire would never give any part of it to him.

Herzl wrote in his diary on February 15, 1902, about a meeting concerning possible negotiations with the Turks: "'All right, let us establish on both sides what is involved here' said the sultan's representative, Izzet. 'His Imperial Majesty is prepared to open his Empire to Jewish refugees from all countries, on condition that they agree to become Ottoman subjects with all the duties that this imposes, under our laws and our military service.' 'Exactly!' I replied. He continued: 'Before entering our country they must formally resign their previous nationality and become Ottoman subjects. On this condition they may establish themselves in any of our provinces except—at first—Palestine.' I did not bat an eyelash, also understood at once that this was only the first offer and that they would be open for bargaining. 'In return,' Izzet went on, 'His Imperial Majesty asks you to form a syndicate for the consolidation of the public debt. . . .'"

Herzl continued his discussion of the negotiation in a February 17 entry: "Thereupon Izzet took my letter to the Sultan. While we were waiting, Ibrahim and Ghalib raved about the happy conditions to come: how it would be when the Jews came. They dreamed aloud of the improvement of agriculture and industry, of banks which would not serve foreign interests, etc. But then Izzet returned with the Sultan's decision, and it was unfavorable. The Sultan is willing to open his Empire to all Jews who become Turkish subjects, but the regions to be settled are to be decided each time by the government, and Palestine is to be excluded. . . . . A charter without Palestine! I refused at once. And so the meeting ended."

The last line must have been heartbreaking for Herzl to write, for it was not only the meeting that had ended but also Herzl's dream of success. His failure with the sultan was what led him to meet with the British colonial secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, and it was then that Britain offered the land in East Africa. This was the offer to which the Russian Zionists at the Sixth Zionist Congress, which met on August 26, 1903, were adamantly opposed. The opposition was especially puzzling to Herzl who saw a desperate Jewish need for some safe refuge. Not

being as religiously tied to Eretz Yisrael, Herzl was, for temporary purposes, willing to accept any real land where Jews could go.

There had been a very recent horrendous and infamous pogrom in Kishinev, at the time the capital of Bessarabia, a province of the Russian Empire. The pogrom began on April 19, 1903. Over the two days of rioting that followed, at least 47 Jews were killed, 92 severely injured, and approximately 500 more sustained some injury. About 700 homes of Jews were destroyed, and about 600 Jewish-owned stores were attacked.

The *New York Times* on April 28 had the following story, which included a slight overstatement of the number of dead: "The anti-Jewish riots in Kishinev, Bessarabia, are worse than the censor will permit to publish. There was a well laid-out plan for the general massacre of Jews on the day following the Russian Easter. The mob was led by priests, and the general cry, 'Kill the Jews,' was taken up all over the city. The Jews were taken wholly unaware and were slaughtered like sheep. The dead number 120 and the injured about 500. The scenes of horror attending this massacre are beyond description. Babes were literally torn to pieces by the frenzied and bloodthirsty mob. The local police made no attempt to check the reign of terror. At sunset the streets were piled with corpses and wounded. Those who could make their escape fled in terror, and the city is now practically deserted of Jews."

Despite this, the Russian Jews would accept only the Land of Israel, and Herzl bowed to their wishes. (The British withdrew the offer as well, effectively killing any possibility of following through with it.)

Herzl developed a final illness starting in May 1904. He returned to Vienna, where he died on July 3 of pneumonia, which was a direct consequence of his heart condition.

In 1949, in accordance with his wishes, Theodor Herzl's remains were transferred from a cemetery in Vienna and flown to Tel Aviv in the new nation of Israel. The body was covered in a pall that had been woven by Austrian Zionist women and hidden during the Holocaust. The next day, the coffin was taken to Jerusalem following the same path Herzl had taken on his one visit to the Land of Israel. There were no speeches; he had requested in his will that no speeches be given, but Hebrew prayers were chanted. Fifteen hundred people brought blue and white bags of earth, and, following a Jewish custom, threw the earth onto the coffin.

Herzl's family did not fare well. His wife, Julie, died in 1907. She was only thirty-nine but had continued to suffer severe mental problems. The Herzl children were themselves still young. Hans, the only son, was sixteen, and sisters Paulina and Trude were seventeen and fourteen. Hans was given the task of taking his mother's cremated ashes back home, but so anguished was he that he left the urn on the train. Heartbroken by her death, he was taken for several months to a sanatorium.

Trude also suffered from mental problems and entered various hospitals to treat her condition. She had a painful romantic relationship with Richard Neumann, who was twenty-seven years older than she was. They married, had a son named Stephen, and separated after several difficult months. Trude ended up in a Jewish hospital in Austria. The Nazis had her transferred to a public hospital. In 1942, Trude Herzl was sent by train to Theresienstadt, a concentration camp. She died there in 1943 at the age of fifty, although it is not clear if her death was caused by disease or by being executed or put in a gas chamber by the Nazis.

Trude's older sister, Paulina, was a drug addict, as Julie had been. Like her mother and sister, she went to various mental hospitals and died in 1930, at age forty, evidently of a heroin overdose, though it might have been a suicide.

Shortly after attending Paulina's funeral, Hans, who had converted to a variety of Christian denominations, shot himself to death. He was forty years old.

Trude's son, Stephen Theodor Neumann, changed his name during World War II to Stephen Norman. Herzl's only grandchild killed himself by jumping off a Washington, DC, bridge in 1946 after he learned that his parents had died during the Holocaust. He had been the only Zionist among Herzl's descendants and had even visited Eretz Yisrael in 1945.

There are no direct descendants of Herzl.

Even the location of the Congress has physically changed. It is a concert hall now. The structure of the building didn't change because it is a designated landmark, but the seating, stage, and other infrastructure has been altered. There is a plaque to mark the building as the setting for the Congress.

It is difficult to argue that had Herzl lived beyond 1904 he would have made any progress in bringing about a Jewish nation in the Land of Israel. Indeed, had the Ottoman Empire stayed in power rather than losing the land to Great Britain in World War I, it is likely that Zionism as a movement would have slowly faded away, especially without the sustaining power of a leader like Herzl to rally around.

Max Nordau, in theory, may have seemed like that natural leader. Nordau's speeches were rousing; they were, as speeches, more powerful than Herzl's. But he had intermarried, not religiously Jewish or interested in placating religious Jews as Herzl had been, and lacked the grasp of politics that Herzl had.

Nordau was an early and faithful adviser to Herzl, and, however jealous, Nordau remained by Herzl's side. For example, at the Sixth Zionist Congress when Britain's East Africa offer was discussed, Nordau continued to support Herzl's willingness to accept the British land.

Indeed, when Herzl died Zionist leaders offered Nordau the position of World Zionist Organization President. Instead, Nordau watched as his position as an author declined in the wake of the emergence of modernism, the emergence of other thinkers, and especially the enormous changes brought about by World War I. Nordau remained a man of the nineteenth century. As Zionism evolved into a more practical program of upbuilding the Jewish communities in the Land of Israel, Nordau stayed committed to the Herzlian vision of political Zionism. He didn't attend a Zionist Congress after 1911 and although later Zionist leaders, especially Chaim Weizmann, tried to bring Nordau back to the movement, he maintained his distance because he thought the movement had strayed too far from what Herzl had envisioned. But Nordau, who had explored the idea of a "muscular Judaism" as early as the Second Zionist Congress in 1898, could not convince his fellow Zionists of impending doom. In 1920, he argued that half a million Jews from Europe needed to be evacuated to the Land of Israel. No one considered the idea a serious one.

Nordau died in 1923 in Paris. Three years later, his remains were transferred to the Trumpeldor Cemetery in Tel Aviv.

David Wolffsohn was the man who succeeded Herzl as president of the World Zionist Organization after Nordau had refused the office. Wolffsohn was a faithful follower of Herzl's, although the two disagreed over Wolffsohn's handling of the Jewish Colonial Trust. In his capacity as president, Wolffsohn continued the political Zionist ideas Herzl had defined. But Herzl's Zionist competitors, especially the Practical Zionists, grew stronger. They had the political strength to oppose Wolffsohn's reelection in 1911, and he was replaced by Otto Warburg. Wolffsohn died in 1914.

Ahad Ha'am moved to London in 1907 where, besides working for a tea company, he continued his Zionist efforts. Indeed, although shy, he was a clever negotiator and played that role in helping the Zionists secure the issuance of the Balfour Declaration in 1917. Ahad Ha'am moved to the Land of Israel in 1922 and lived there until his death in 1927.

Ahad Ha'am's version of Zionism received support with the emergence of one of his disciples, Chaim Weizmann, as president of the World Zionist Organization in 1921 and the building of Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1927.

While Herzlian Zionism blended with Practical Zionism, some of the early Zionists went their separate ways from the movement.

Nathan Birnbaum, the man who had coined the word "Zionism," left the movement. He became a believer in the idea of developing a cultural autonomy outside of the Land of Israel. For the Jews to survive in the Diaspora, Birnbaum at first argued, there had to be a stress on Yiddish and Jewish culture. Birnbaum eventually distanced himself from the secularism inherent in this cultural approach and moved more and more toward an embrace of traditional Jewish practices. Birnbaum sought to inculcate Judaism's spiritual insights in what he saw as an assimilating Jewish world. He wanted, for example, to promote agricultural communities and reduce the number of Jews living in cities. Birnbaum lived for a long time in Germany, but with the rise of Nazism, he moved to the Netherlands, where he died in 1937.

When the Zionists finally formally rejected the British offer of territory in East Africa, Herzl and the other Zionists simply accepted the passion of the Russian Jews and the overwhelming support of the delegates for the Land of Israel as the only acceptable home for the Jewish people.

But not everyone agreed with this movement. Israel Zangwill, famous throughout the world for his writing, fundamentally disagreed with the decision. He thought territory needed to be located anywhere, not necessarily in the Land of Israel, so that Jews could be safe. To make his dissatisfaction formal, Zangwill organized the Territorialist Jewish Organization in July 1905.

Territorialism as an idea predated the Zionist movement. The territorialist idea might be said to begin with Mordecai Manuel Noah, a prominent American writer and diplomat. In 1825 the enormously prescient Noah developed the idea of a refuge for the Jews of Europe. He bought land on Grand Island in the Niagara River. The island was near Buffalo, New York, and was then at the edge of separation between Native Americans and white settlers. For $4.38 an acre, Noah purchased the land and intended to call his refuge Ararat, named after Mount Ararat, where Noah's Ark had come to rest.

On September 2, Noah was joined by what was reported, perhaps with exaggeration, to be thousands of Christian supporters but very few Jews. With help from nearby St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Noah led his procession. A ceremony was held. Hebrew psalms were sung. Noah laid the cornerstone on the church's communion table and a proclamation was read. No one ever stepped onto Grand Island itself. Indeed, Noah left several days later without himself visiting his proposed Jewish homeland.

The efforts of the Jewish Colonization Association in various places have already been discussed.

Zangwill's new organization set out to search for some safe place for the Jews. They looked in Africa, Australia, and Asia. There were, it turned out, no places that were acceptable. The organization's singular success involved its cooperation with Jacob Schiff in the Galveston

Movement, which sought not an alternative to Zion but to spread new American Jewish immigrants away from urban centers. The movement brought about ten thousand Jews to the United States.

The Territorialist Jewish Organization dissolved in 1925. The Zionists seemed to have had a real chance for success after the Balfour Declaration, and there were in fact no suitable alternatives. Zangwill died in 1926.

There continued to be various attempts to find an alternative to Zion. Most of these were well meaning; some were not, and after Israel's creation in 1948 some were designed to foster the emigration of Jews from Israel. None of these plans had the financial resources or support from Jewish immigrants to succeed.

That there were so many efforts in so many places over such a long span of time provides remarkable evidence that there was no nationalist alternative to Zionism. There were, and are, other alternatives, such as living in a comfortable Diaspora such as the United States, where the focus is in part on supporting Israel but also on local Jewish life and culture. It is unclear whether such Diaspora life even in so welcoming a place as America will lead to the survival of a distinctly Jewish population rather than, say, the comfortable existence of people with Jewish roots who don't identify with or participate deeply in Jewish life.

But, in any case, for those who believe that Jews ultimately need sovereignty, there has been and is simply no alternative to Israel. That conclusion helps answer the moral and practical question about whether the Zionists could have gone elsewhere other than the Land of Israel. The clash between Zionists and indigenous Arabs in the Land of Israel seems, even from a distance, to have been inevitable.

It is worth considering, from a moral more than a historical perspective, what happened to various peace plans after the First Zionist Congress. There were, from all sides, all kinds of plans for "peace" in the Land of Israel, or Palestine. There were Zionists, such as Israel Zangwill, who argued that the Zionists had a choice. As he wrote in the December 1904 issue of *The Maccabaean*, a Jewish newspaper in the United States, "So we must be prepared either to drive out by the sword the tribes in possession as our forefathers did, or to grapple with the problem of a large alien population." What is most important about this proposal is that it was Zangwill's alone. There was no similar proposal by the Zionist Organization. Additionally, at the time Zangwill was going further and further away from Zionism and toward territorialism, and so soon after publishing this article he himself rejected its premise. Those who seek to find in Zangwill some kind of Zionist plot to transfer Arabs are simply misstating history.

Indeed, a fair-minded review of efforts at peace in the century following the First Zionist Congress finds just the opposite of what Zangwill proposed. The efforts at peace began with the British. In the years 1936 to 1939 the Arabs in Palestine revolted against British rule. The Arabs demanded that mass Jewish immigration be halted and that the Arabs be granted independence. Disturbed by the revolt, the British government sent a royal commission of inquiry to evaluate the root causes of the conflict between the Arabs and the Jews and to determine how to solve the conflict. Lord Robert Peel headed the commission. On July 7, 1937, what became known as the Peel Commission issued its recommendations. The commission concluded that the British should end the mandate they had been given over the land after World War I. Instead, the conclusion was that the country should be partitioned so that there was a Jewish state and an Arab state. According to the Peel Commission's recommendations, the Jewish state would include a strip along the coast from Mount Carmel to south of Be'er

Tuvia. Additionally, the Jewish state would include the Jezreel Valley and the Galilee. The Arab state would include various hill regions and the Negev as well as Judea and Samaria. There would also be a separate zone between Jaffa and Jerusalem that would be controlled by the British and supervised by the wider international community. The Peel Commission also recommended that once the Jewish state and the Arab state were established, Jews would no longer be allowed to purchase any land in the area allocated to the Arab state. The commission, noting the intermingling of populations, proposed that there be various land exchanges and transfer of populations from one area to the other one. A partition committee was therefore established to determine the precise borders between the Arab and Jewish states.

The British government formally accepted the Peel Commission's recommendations regarding partition. The British Parliament also agreed with the proposal.

The Arabs rejected the Peel Commission's proposals unanimously, because, as they testified, they "objected to the whole principle of awarding territory to the Jews." Partition was for the Arabs in principle not a solution. The Arabs wanted the British to create an independent Arab state.

The Jews considered the proposal on August 20, 1937, at the Twentieth Zionist Congress, held in Zurich. David Ben-Gurion, who then chaired the executive committee of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and as such was the effective head of the Jews living in the Land of Israel, tried to placate delegates opposed to the Peel Commission recommendations by agreeing with them that the Jews shouldn't have to give up any part of the Land of Israel. But, he argued, their ultimate goal could be most quickly achieved by accepting the proposals. Both Ben-Gurion and Zionist Organization president Chaim Weizmann suggested that the commission's recommendations be accepted because the borders could be considered temporary. The two Zionist leaders ultimately convinced the Congress to approve the Peel recommendations as a basis for additional negotiations. Ben-Gurion was forceful in his view of the need to accept the Peel Commission recommendations. It is even unclear whether he ever believed further negotiations could take place or whether they would be successful. His entire focus was on a Jewish state of some kind. As he noted, "We are being given an opportunity which we never dared to dream of in our wildest imagination. This is more than a state, government and sovereignty—this is a national consolidation in a free homeland . . . if because of our weakness, neglect or negligence the thing is not done, then we will have lost a chance which we never had before, and may never have again."

And so the Jews, torn by dissent, but guided by Ben-Gurion's iron will and firm hand, agreed. But implementation without even an Arab willingness to negotiate for better terms meant the plan had no future. The British ended up abandoning it.

As Jewish history turned out, the failure of the Peel Commission recommendation had deadly results. Ben-Gurion wrote twenty years later of the Peel Commission plan: "Had partition been carried out, the history of our people would have been different and six million Jews in Europe would not have been killed—most of them would be in Israel."

The heart-wrenching historical reality is accompanied by a moral point. A plan was offered by an objective third party, the country that had a mandate to rule the land. The Jews, however torn, accepted the partition. The Arabs refused even to discuss it. The Jews had the moral high ground in uniquely seeking to maintain a homeland for themselves but also to consider the national needs of the indigenous Arab population.

The saga of the Peel Commission recommendations turned out to be the first instance of

what developed into a historical pattern. Once more, in 1947, an outside body (in this case the United Nations) proposed partition.

United Nations Resolution 181 was adopted by the UN's General Assembly on November 29, 1947, by a vote of 33 in favor, 13 opposed, 10 abstentions, and 1 absent. The vote required a two-thirds majority and so the resolution was approved.

The resolution, very much like the Peel Commission's plan, recommended that there be created on the land controlled by a British mandate two independent states, a Jewish state and an Arab state. The city of Jerusalem was, according to the resolution, to be under the control of a Special International Regime. The resolution had a specific Partition Plan attached to it. The proposed Arab state would have a majority Arab population, and the proposed Jewish state would have a majority Jewish population.

The Jewish Agency, despite some misgivings, accepted the plan. All Arab leaders and Arab governments specifically rejected the plan and, as with the Peel Commission recommendations, rejected the idea of partition of the land in principle.

The British parliament voted to end the mandate on May 14, 1948, and so on that date David Ben-Gurion declared an independent Jewish nation to be named the State of Israel.

Arab nations invaded the new State of Israel on the following day, May 15, 1948.

There were additional, later Israeli plans for partition, such as those offered by Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. Neither of these plans ended with an agreement.

For a long while, then, the heart of the moral problem for Zionists was that the Palestinian Arabs, at least formally, would not accept a Jewish nation on any part of the land west of the Jordan River. As of the writing of this book, the situation continues to exist that there is no partition plan acceptable to both sides. The Zionist/Israeli side can make a moral claim that they have acted in an ethical manner because they have, on multiple occasions, agreed to partition the land while the Arabs have never agreed to partition plans even by objective third parties. The Palestinian Arab position is that the original UN partition agreement guarantees them a country and they wish to have one. What the future will bring is uncertain.

The attack by the Arab states after Israel declared its independence was a principal moral turning point of the conflict. Both individual Jews and Jewish communities had been attacked before (as had Arab individuals and communities, but often by dissident groups of Jewish fighters whose actions went against official Jewish policy). But with the attack by multiple Arab nations seeking to destroy the new Jewish nation at birth, there was for the first time an existential threat to the entire Jewish national enterprise. Precisely because the Jews didn't seek to destroy an Arab nation while Arab nations sought to destroy a Jewish nation, the Israelis have a claim to higher moral ground.

Indeed, an additional moral argument can be made by the sheer fact that there are over fifty Muslim countries and even more Christian ones. Surely the existence of a single Jewish nation becomes morally appropriate, even a moral imperative.

The Holocaust becomes the last compelling and continuing moral argument for a Jewish nation's continued existence. Had anyone doubted that the Jews were still subject to hatred and deadly violence in the modern world, the Holocaust put an end to such arguments. The Holocaust offers definitive proof that the Jews need a secure homeland where they can seek a haven and defend themselves. Since that haven legally exists, it is Israel that provides that haven.

The early Zionists neither envisioned, nor expected, nor desired the need to use military might to protect themselves against the Arabs. Had they been able to foresee the length and depth of the resistance to their national aspirations, they would have prepared with a military plan. They might have even considered forming military stockades instead of farming communities. Even if they were able to understand the Arab resistance, however, they would not have forsaken the dream of Zion. A haven was needed. The Land of Israel was the only homeland acceptable to the overwhelming majority of Jews.

It is fanciful, but perhaps useful, to consider what the delegates at the First Zionist Congress might have done differently had they known what history had in store for the Jewish people.

As Rabbi David Wolpe wrote in a private correspondence with the author, "The single greatest urgency was to get as many Jews out of Europe and to Israel . . . by any means possible." Even with their awareness of the painful realities of the Dreyfus affair and the pogroms in Eastern Europe, no Jew, no one anywhere, could have envisioned the scope of Nazi evil.

Yossi Klein Halevi puts the problem in contemporary political terms: "Lay aside all extraneous differences over obscure socialist doctrines and prepare the way for mass aliyah."

From beginning to end the Zionist goal is to focus on increasing the Jewish population in the Land of Israel.

As it turned out, Herzl's political Zionism turned out to be inadequate for the start of this task. By focusing virtually exclusively on achieving political sovereignty by reaching an agreement with the Ottoman Empire, Herzl turned away from the practical need to get as many Jewish immigrants as possible to move to the Land of Israel.

It should be noted that Ahad Ha'am's spiritual Zionism, often presented as the alternative to Herzl's vision, was as inadequate as his rival's. Ahad Ha'am's plans didn't include a mass immigration to the Land of Israel.

The practical Zionists, the people who argued that it was vital to bring Jews to the land whether or not there was yet a political agreement, and the philanthropic Jews, those who didn't necessarily support a national vision but who did believe in providing support for a haven for persecuted Eastern European Jews in the Land of Israel, needed a much greater voice at the First Zionist Congress than Herzl allowed them to have. In retrospect, it is clear that Herzl should have worked with Rothschild and others even if he had to frame his support as a humanitarian effort for Jews to escape hatred.

As it happened, Herzl was unable to effect any political progress. It is unclear if any ever would have been achieved if Palestine had permanently remained under the control of the Ottoman Empire. This was particularly true after Herzl's death. The political progress that eventually did take place was only possible because Great Britain gained control of the land after World War I.

The delegates at the First Zionist Congress might have deemphasized their national ambitions (which was, it must fairly be noted, their reason for being). That is, they might have subjugated their ideological purity for political shrewdness and practical necessity. Had they done so and instead, for the time being, focused more fully on humanitarian rescue efforts and support for the Jewish communities in the Land of Israel, it is possible that many more Jews could have been brought to safety. This outcome, though, was by no means a certainty. First of all, it was the ideological zeal felt at the Congress that gave momentum to a push for statehood.

Without that momentum the additional Jews who might have lived in the Land of Israel would have been subject to attack without the self-defense organizational capacities of a nation. Additionally, bringing in more Jews to the Land of Israel would certainly have triggered greater Arab resentment and resistance to the new immigrants as well as a probable increase in Turkish legal restrictions on Jews who sought to immigrate to land controlled by the Ottoman Empire. It is possible that increased Jewish immigration might have prompted an earlier Palestinian Arab nationalism.

One alternative, had the Congress delegates had the superhuman ability to foresee the scope of the tragedy awaiting the Jews, would have been to get the Jews out of Europe to the Land of Israel and anywhere else, such as the United States. This seems at odds with fundamental Zionist ideology, which focuses exclusively on getting Jews to the Land of Israel, but in the 1930s and 1940s the Jewish need for survival would have taken precedence over the ideological preference to bring Jews out of Europe only if they could go to the Land of Israel. Escape for the moment was more important than in which country the Jews could find a haven. From a Zionist ideological viewpoint, once the Jews were safe, the Zionists could then have encouraged them to make aliyah.

In addition to an increased focus on getting Jews out of Europe and on upbuilding the Jewish communities in the Land of Israel, the Congress might have worked with Ahad Ha'am and his followers on building a university and developing cultural enterprises.

Had the Congress delegates gotten a glimpse of the future of Arab-Jewish relations, they might have considered the indigenous Arab population in the Land of Israel with more focus. They might, for example, have established a commission to study Jewish economic, social, and political relationships with local Arabs.

The story of the First Zionist Congress does answer many of the initial questions posed at the beginning of the book. First of all, the Jews did have a moral right to reestablish a Jewish nation in the Land of Israel. Those with a fundamentalist religious belief, of course, simply cite the biblical passage in which God promises the land to Abraham and his descendants. But that particular kind of religious view need not be invoked at all when considering the Jewish right to the land.

The Jews lived on the land, had a nation there, built two Temples there, and would have remained had they not been conquered and slaughtered by the Romans. It is the history of the Jewish people and their attachment to the land throughout that history that provides them with a moral deed to the Land of Israel.

It was the Arabs who militarily conquered the land. Their descendants therefore don't have a moral exclusivity to the land in perpetuity.

The ideal solution to the dispute was and remains a partition of the land. The particular political, military, and other conditions of the moment will determine whether such a partition is possible. The consistent invasion of Israel by Arab states, the consistent level and scope of terrorism against Israeli and Jewish targets, the ongoing refusal to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, and many other conditions render it unclear, whatever the rhetoric, when that moment will arrive.

The next question to consider is whether the arriving Zionists adequately took the Arabs living in Palestine into account. Here the answer is clearly that they did not. The Zionists underestimated the Arab resentment and resistance to the arrival of so many Jews with their national aspirations. The Jews mistakenly engaged in wishful thinking. In one sense their zeal

for the land made them overlook obstacles. When the young Russian students arrived with the first aliyah, they were completely unprepared for the realities of the life they would face. Their ideology was a magic carpet flying them from the desolation of Russia to what they believed truly could become the land of milk and honey. They were idealistically capable of self-delusion, and part of that self-delusion, for some at least, was ignoring the Arabs there, seeing them essentially as no different from the other parts of the landscape. A few of the settlers looked disdainfully on the Arabs. Most, more hopeful, drew on their socialist beliefs to conclude that the Arabs would ultimately act in their own economic best interests and so once the Jews provided prosperity and the latest technology the Arabs would be glad to welcome the Jews and glad to be part of their new nation. This was, of course, Herzl's view.

The Jews needed the Arabs to be cooperative, and so, with notable exceptions, simply didn't see the problem or refused to judge it adequately. It would have been useful simply to ask the Arabs about their views.

Another question the book wanted to consider was: Did the Jews steal the land or were they legally and morally entitled to it? Legally, the Jews bought the land, most often from Arab absentee landlords. They certainly didn't steal any land. Still, it is a morally fair question to ask if they took the interests of the Arab peasants living on land they didn't own whether they were adequately treated. The Jews didn't come in with an invading army as the Arabs had done. They didn't conquer and slaughter the Arabs.

It is a more difficult question to answer whose land it was. The land technically belonged to the Ottoman Empire until they lost it to the British in World War I, and the British decided to surrender the mandate in favor of partition. Therefore certainly what was declared to be Israel is certainly Israel's land. After that, the laws of war and conquering enter. The Israelis own the land now. If the Arabs thought owning the land were sufficient to determine whose land it was, they would have no hesitation about accepting the land as Israel's. But ownership is just as often a political and military as a legal question. What is clear is that the Zionists were morally entitled to reestablish their nation in the Land of Israel and are entitled to it now.

Finally, the question, more internal than external to Jewish life: Was Zionism a retreat from internationalism and a withdrawal into narrow ethnic nationalism?

This was the original charge of the early Reform movement, which, especially after the devastating realities of the Holocaust became known, became avid supporters of a Jewish nation. Here, too, however, the Zionists were on safe ground. To engage in a worldwide mission, as the Reform movement proposed, it made more logical sense to have a safe center. Being a light unto the nations requires a secure place for the light to stand. A secure nation can provide the organizational money and planning to engage in the very mission work the Reform movement started. That is, Zionism was not a retreat from internationalism. Nor did Zionism's founders, apart from the relatively few ultrareligious who were Zionists from its beginnings, believe that Judaism itself or Zionism should be seen as an ethnic enterprise. Zionism was supposed to provide reconciliation and offer a message to humanity.

It can't, with appropriate fervor, be argued that Zionism has completely succeeded with this effort. In some ways, Zionism has replaced racism as the source of hatred of the Jews. Identifying anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism is more complicated than racism because it is certainly possible to disagree with particular Israeli policies and not be anti-Zionist, a term that should be restricted to a refusal to accept the legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish nation and a right for it to exist. Even such a definition becomes complicated. What if someone dislikes virtually all

Israeli policies but claims not to object to Israel's existence? Also, unintentionally or not, persistent and loud anti-Zionism encourages anti-Semites, gives them emotional nourishment, and offers them arguments.

In a crucial way, then, Zionism's revolution is not yet complete. It needs to consolidate the security of the nation it established. It needs to welcome all the immigrants who wish to make aliyah or are forced to emigrate because of the intensity of hatred and persecution in the countries in which they live. Zionism still needs to come up with creative ways to live with the Arab world. Zionism needs to define its own mission in regard to the Jewish and non-Jewish world outside it.

These unfulfilled Zionist missions, of course, don't take away from the genuinely miraculous, awe-inspiring, virtually unbelievable successes that Zionism has had. Israel's technological prowess in particular would have made Herzl proud.

And Zionism and Israel have had profound effects on the career of Judaism and on Jews living not only within the nation but also outside it.

Zionism's principal effects on Jews still living in the Diaspora are physical, political, and psychological. The greatest physical effect, of course, is that Zionism's success provides a real haven for any endangered Jew anywhere in the world. There have been famous aliyot from such places as Yemen, the former Soviet Union, and Ethiopia. Jews in Western Europe today, facing a frightening and all too historically resonant resurgence of the hatred of the Jews, know that if anti-Semitism becomes even more dangerous or threatening, Israel is always there as a new home for them. But Jews have also come to Israel even when the danger is not physical but communal. Rates of assimilation in the United Kingdom and United States, among other Western countries, are very high. Intermarriage rates, falling Jewish birth rates, and so on have proved to be alarming to some Jews and they have decided that their Jewish identities and the Jewish identities of their children and all future descendants will be more fully secured in the nation of Israel. Additionally, Jews continue, as they have through the entirety of Diaspora history, to come to Eretz Yisrael for religious reasons, seeing Israel as the land promised by God to the Jewish people in the Torah. That is, Israel's reality is first and foremost a physical reality providing a concrete nation to engage in all the traditional duties nationalism implies, most especially the defense of its citizens. Uniquely, however, the defense provided by Israel is, in theory and sometimes in practice, extended to the entire Jewish world.

The political effects of having a Jewish state are also profound. It is not the case that the Jewish people had no political history from the fall of the Second Temple in 70 CE to the birth of Israel on May 14, 1948. But the allocation of power in the community, the relations of the community with the power structures and later nations around them were distortions of normal power. As a permanent minority, with no form of communal self-defense, no governing body apart, usually, from religious figures, and no economic security, the Jews could not practice the normal patterns of national existence. Whatever political experience they did have, then, could not adequately prepare them to navigate politically in the modern world. The Jews tried (and in many cases continue to try) to apply moral or religious concepts to political situations, with varying degrees of success. The lesson of Israel for these Jews is a lesson of realpolitik. Israel provides a lesson in the politics of the ongoing real political world. Some Jews find playing in the rough and tumble of international politics to be distasteful. Some ignore it and continue to focus on keeping the mitzvot. But for many Jews, Israel has been a provocative and extremely useful lesson in how the wide world works. Additionally, the quest for Israel's

birth and after it the quest for Israel to be secure, develop economically, establish relationships regionally and internationally and in other ways provides Israeli Jews and some of their supporters with an explicit political agenda. Jews can provide funding, lobby for pro-Israel bills in their home nation, and in other ways seek to contribute to Israel's well-being.

The psychological effects of Zionism and Israel on Jews, of course, vary widely. The First Zionist Congress stands as the threshold between two kinds of thinking. On the one hand, Jews focused on thinking and learning. They could argue, a skill honed by generations of Talmudic discourse, and they could discuss. What the First Zionist Congress did was to advance the idea of Jewish thinking to include the idea of Jewish political action.

Zionism also transformed Diaspora Jewish thinking. Sometimes the radical nature of Zionist thought about the Diaspora is softened to avoid friction between Jews who live in Israel and those who don't. But it should be noted that Zionism at its core believed in the negation of the Diaspora. Herzl thought that Jews could choose to live in the Jewish homeland or to remain in the lands where they resided and assimilated. This was not meant by Herzl to be demeaning but rather to be a simple statement of reality. Indeed, Jewish history in the years since Israel's birth seems to, on some interpretations at least, be confirming this viewpoint.

Other Zionist thinkers were more strident than Herzl, blunter, more unforgiving of Jews who refused to make aliyah. The heart of this negation is the assertion that no form of Diaspora life can be lived fully as a free Jew. The standard accompanying premise of such a view is that Jews will always face persecution, discrimination, and hatred or the embrace they receive will be so overwhelming that they will acculturate and eventually assimilate into the host culture.

Sometimes the Zionist theorists most attached to this theory (such as Yosef Haim Brenner and Mikhah Yosef Berdyczewski) used language to describe Diaspora Jews that if used by people who were not Jewish themselves could be interpreted as prejudiced. So convinced were the Jews who wished to negate the Diaspora that it is fairer to interpret their remarks as deliberately provocative (which is not to say they didn't believe what they were writing) in order to prompt Jews to see their real condition and therefore have no alternative other than to move to the Land of Israel. Diaspora Jews were, for example, accused of holding an unrealistic view of real life and refusing to engage in self-defense during attacks such as the pogroms in Russia. These Diaspora Jews, it was claimed, were linguistically disfigured as well, for they had been separated from the everyday use of Hebrew, employing it only in religious contexts and relying for everyday life on Diaspora languages, which had the effect of accelerating assimilation.

Some Jewish thinkers were less radical in their denunciation of Diaspora life. Ahad Ha'am is a prime example, seeing Zionism's most potent use as a spiritual center that would have the effect of providing the spiritual sustenance to Jews in the Diaspora to prevent them from assimilating.

Herzl and Ahad Ha'am in this sense were more alike than even they believed. They were Zionists who wished to rescue Jews, the very Jews they perceived were in danger of physical attack (in Herzl's case) or spiritual deprivation (in Ahad Ha'am's case). The Jews who were living in Eretz Yisrael were more likely to see Zionism as an attempt to save the Jewish nation and incidentally to save individual Jews. Of course, once the State of Israel was established, there was less of a gap between these two views, though some within Zionism continue to believe in the ultimate lack of viability of Diaspora Jewish life.

Psychologically, there was a distinction made between a Zionist mentality and a Diaspora

mentality. According to proponents of this view, the mentality of exile was characterized by Jewish passivity. Typically, this passivity was exemplified by the waiting for a Messiah, waiting for God to redeem the Jewish people rather than the Jews taking responsibility for redeeming themselves.

The new mentality, the Zionist mentality, that Jews living in the Land of Israel developed had several aspects that included (1) Jews engaging in physical labor, especially farming because it brought Jews in direct contact with the land, in contrast to the European Jewish vocations such as commerce or the needle trades; (2) the willingness and the development of the ability to use defensive weapons to maintain security of the land; (3) employing the ancient, sacred Hebrew language—with a Sephardic rather than Ashkenazic pronunciation—rather than the languages of exile, especially Yiddish; (4) illustrating the birth of a new being in a new land using a new language by making their names more Hebraic; and (5) adopting local customs such as in dress or food.

Naturally, these anti-Diaspora sentiments had opponents who saw evidence of the value of the Diaspora in the most obvious of historical facts: the Diaspora had continued to exist without assimilation; the Diaspora had in fact given birth to the Zionist movement; and the Diaspora would continue to be needed not only to provide support for Zionism and Israel but also to provide an alternative Jewish identity for those who didn't make aliyah.

The overall attempt to negate the Diaspora slowly dissipated as the Jews of Eretz Yisrael and the Jews of the Diaspora needed more and more of a political and psychological reconciliation to work together in their efforts to secure Israel and rescue endangered Jewish communities.

Despite this modus vivendi, the Jews in Israel and the Diaspora lead very different lives. Some in the Diaspora argue that Israel's existence has made the Jews less radical because the Jewish people had a nation and its inhabitants and culture to conserve. The argument continues that Israel made some Diaspora Jews tougher, more willing to engage in self-defense, less morally naive, more able to temper their idealism by an increased ability to observe the consequences of their idea.

That is to say, for some Jews in the Diaspora, their ideology moved to the right and for some, also seeking to have an Israel in their idealistic image, their ideology moved to the left. For still others, the reality of politics trumped ideology itself, and the necessity of looking at the real world directly in the face led to a deeper understanding of politics and history.

The psychological effects of Zionism on the so-called Diaspora mentality leave unanswered the question of whether or not the Diaspora life in such places as the United States can sustain itself.

But there is a darker side of Diaspora Jewish life. One danger for every minority in every country is that minority group members absorb the stereotypes about themselves believed in and passed on by some or many members of the majority group. For Jews, this phenomenon took the form of self-hatred—someone born Jewish who accepts one or more anti-Semitic views. Such self-loathing is one reaction, often a neurotic or even psychotic one, to the onslaught of anti-Semitic taunts and acts. Zionism was a very different reaction, one of self-defense and finding a safe place to separate from the anti-Semites. Self-hating Jews, however, were more passive or more sensitive.

The term "self-hating Jew" is sometimes used very loosely by one Jew to describe another Jew with a different political or religious viewpoint. More precisely, the term should be

restricted to the spectrum of Jews who range from someone who, say, loathes the Jewish religion or the State of Israel all the way to people who hate any part of themselves that is connected to being Jewish in any way.

In his book *Der Judenstaat*, Herzl described an opponent as an "anti-Semite of Jewish origin" and the idea stuck. Herzl, of course, was a bit of a wit and provocateur, so his anger at his opponents may have clouded his judgment of at least some of them. The context of Herzl's remarks, perhaps prompted by the rejection of him by the most prominent wealthy Jews such as de Hirsch and the Rothschilds, was his distaste for the philanthropists who refused to make aliyah themselves and preferred the comfort and power found in their home countries while at the same time encouraging Jews they found unseemly, the poor especially, to leave their countries and move to the Land of Israel. Evidently Herzl thought they were being hypocrites, and it is at least possible that their philanthropy was less a case of loving other Jews than in seeking to alleviate anti-Semitism in their countries by removing those Jews they believed contributed to the perceptions of Jews used by anti-Semites. Herzl's rant didn't take long to backfire. His refusal to go along with the socialist activities of many Jews gave ammunition to his political opponents who urged revolution not emigration or continued Diaspora living or even assimilation rather than moving to an ancient homeland in the desert. In turn, the Zionists continued to belittle those who believed in Diaspora life as self-haters.

There have been many prominent Jewish self-haters. Theodor Lessing was one of the most interesting. Indeed, in 1930 he published not the first but at the time the most prominent discussion of Jewish loathing of being Jewish. His book *Der Judische Selbsthass* (or "Jewish Self-Hatred") made the term very widely known. Lessing's book is particularly interesting, even instructive, because in part it charts his own evolution from someone who hated being Jewish to becoming a passionate Zionist. Seven months to the day after Hitler came to power, Lessing was assassinated by three Nazi agents who shot him through a window.

In the years after the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel became a divisive point among American Jews who were put on a spectrum of how deep their affection for Israel and how much time, money, and political effort they put into defending Israel. In a way, what Israel and Zionism did, then, was transform the concept of Jewish self-hatred from a psychological category to a political one. Especially after the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the term "self-hating Jew" more and more came to be the description some pro-Zionist Jews used to describe those who opposed the Zionist enterprise in its entirety or, more loosely, was a term applied to those who didn't support a militant Zionist interpretation of Israel's political policies.

This sort of rhetorical battle is indicative of the fact that Zionism continues to be what it was at its birth: a controversial ideology. Put another way, Zionism continues to have unresolved questions.

The first of these unresolved questions is a definitional one. Did Zionism end with the creation of Israel? Zionism was originally defined as a specific political movement with a specific political goal of creating a Jewish nation in the Land of Israel. That goal was accomplished on May 14, 1948, and so, in some sense at least, there should no longer be a need for Zionism as a term, and it should be replaced by Israel, the name of the nation Zionism sought to establish. But in the nearly fifty-one years between the First Zionist Congress and the birth of Israel, the word "Zionism" became so emotional and so powerful a term that Zionists were understandably reluctant to abandon so meaningful a word that had rallied so many to the cause. For most pro-Israelis, especially perhaps those who remain in the Diaspora, Zionism as a

term has been expanded to include the various ways in which the nation of Israel can be supported. As happened virtually from the beginning of the Zionist movement, there have been and continue to be major disagreements among Zionists, but almost all find an adjective to describe their viewpoint (e.g., religious, socialist, political, Revisionist, territorial, and so on) while continuing to use "Zionism" as the noun those adjectives describe. For most Jews, Zionism remains a useful if malleable term.

Zionism, for example, can deal with efforts in the wider world to delegitimize Israel. One prominent effort at the time of the writing of this book is known as BDS. This boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement is a worldwide effort to increase political, economic, and psychological pressure on Israel and its supporters in order to meet certain specific political goals. The stated goals of BDS include the end of what is claimed to be the Israeli "occupation" and "colonization" of land that BDS supporters claim rightfully belongs to Palestinian Arabs. The specific geographic goals vary according to the followers of BDS. The movement also seeks equality for Arab citizens of the nation of Israel and the "right of return" of Palestinian Arab refugees, or more precisely the refugees and their descendants, who voluntarily left or who were forced out during the 1948 War of Independence. The BDS movement has gained a lot of attention especially in academic circles and on college campuses. It seems so far to have had limited economic influence on Israel or on Israeli policies, but there is widespread concern in the Jewish community that it loosens the ties between Israeli and Diaspora Jews. Therefore, Zionists see as one of the goals beyond establishing the Jewish state to fight efforts to deem the state as illegitimate.

The second unresolved question is about the future of Zionism. This broad category covers a variety of issues that need to be discussed. It is difficult, however, to separate issues about the future of Zionism from issues about the future of Israel. For example, questions about Israel's permanent borders, questions about the resolution of the area west of the Jordan River that isn't part of Israel and includes an enormous number of Palestinian Arabs, questions about Israel's enemies, most prominently Iran at the time of the writing of this book, questions about Israel's relationships with other nations such as the United States, and so on.

These are properly the questions to be settled by the nation of Israel. In some cases, the Jews of the Diaspora feel compelled to enter the debates about these issues and to call these issues Zionist ones. In that sense "Zionist" and "pro-Israel" are synonymous terms.

But such an overlap of definitions reduces Zionism's power as a term. Zionism began by assessing the entire Jewish people, seeing the dangers to them, and finding a solution in a nationalism centered in the Land of Israel. Therefore a Zionist continuity requires more than engaging in support for Israel or questions of Israeli policy. A Zionism in the spirit of the First Zionist Congress instead requires an assessment of the Jewish world today and how, emanating from the nation of Israel, a solution to the most prominent of those problems can be found.

It is possible to reduce Zionism to simply its nationalist aspirations. But such a reduction misunderstands Zionism's ultimate aims. Zionism can be seen, inaccurately, as focusing only on one numerically small group of people as opposed to more universal ideologies such as humanism or the socialism so popular among many of Zionism's Jewish and Gentile opponents in Eastern Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. These various universalist ideologies had advocates who asserted that their views could explain not only the specific predicament of the Jews but also the predicament of all humanity and, after providing such an explanation, provide a solution for the predicament.

But Zionism as an ideology also focused on the wider need for the transformation of the world, specifically the humans in the world. Socialists, for example, believed that a transformation of the economic relationships among human beings would alter humanity in a positive way. Zionists believed the transformation had to be spiritual, or at least primarily spiritual, and therefore the transformation for Zionists can more accurately be called a redemption.

The Zionist plan to redeem humanity was to provide for the world a model state (not, it should be noted, a perfect state: that would be utopian) in that the Jewish state would conform to the ethical monotheistic principles of Judaism in such a way that other nations could use the model as a paradigm to shape themselves according to their own beliefs and practices.

That is, a Jewish state as a protective haven for persecuted Jews and a spiritual, cultural, ethical, and ethnic homeland for all Jews was the first but not the end goal of Zionism. Herzl repeatedly stressed this point: "It is fine that we aspire to our ancient land. But what we want in that ancient land is a new blossoming of the Jewish spirit." The Jewish state as haven and homeland was to be superseded by the Jewish state as nourisher of a Jewish spirit that had been warped but was miraculously intact, savaged but still alive, stymied in its attempt to redeem the world but still chosen to do so.

David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, was eventually able to render explicit what Herzl had not dared to utter: "The renaissance of Israel did not and does not consist merely of the establishment of state-national instruments for the Hebrew nation; but it will express its fullest and highest form in the revelation of its eternal spirit and the fulfillment of its historic mission in redeeming mankind."

Such a broadening of Israel's mission was naturally seen by the religious community as well. Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the first Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi under the British Mandate for Palestine, wrote: "To regard *Eretz Yisrael* as merely a tool for establishing our national unity—or even for sustaining our religion in the Diaspora by preserving its proper character and its faith, piety and observance—is a sterile notion; it is unworthy of the holiness of *Eretz Yisrael*. The hope for the return to the Holy Land is the continuing source of the distinctive nature of Judaism. The hope for the Redemption is the force that sustains Judaism in the Diaspora; the Judaism of *Eretz Yisrael* is the very Redemption."

The central notion in Redemption is that the Jews in Zion will be the moral teachers for all humanity. The question for the future of Zionism today, then, is to ask how Judaism is to spread its moral message.

Surely one such way is simply educational. The Jewish nation can be a learning center, a moral laboratory, a religious theme park that people can visit for spiritual sustenance, that can provide learning materials in print, film and video, music, and in various online sites. Israelis can become literal teachers who give lectures and teach courses in classrooms, videos, and online about Judaism, Jewish values, and the Jewish vision for a moral humanity.

But there is another aspect of this Redemptive action that has received inadequate attention. Not only might the aim be an educational one to teach others, but also an educational activity to acquire more teachers. It is not that Redemption requires that every human be a moral teacher but surely it makes sense that the more moral teachers there are, the easier and faster the Redemption will take place.

One of the explicit aims of Zionism might be, beyond teaching, the welcoming of sincere converts to Judaism who in turn would become moral teachers.

It is useful and possible to form a bridge between the first goal of Zionism, the security of a Jewish nation; the second goal, training sincere converts to Judaism who seek of their own accord to join the Jewish people; and the final goal, the redemption of humanity. Having more Jews in Israel will aid in providing more military personnel and more people to aid in economic growth. At the same time that Zionism can help secure the Israeli nation it can seek converts who will provide additional security help.

Therefore Zionism should continue to engage in political, economic, cultural, and other support for Israel while simultaneously being more vigorous in matters of Israeli policies regarding the welcoming of converts and the establishment of schools and sending of teachers to expand the number of converts.

The flow of history, the consequences for millions of Jews, and the influence of the State of Israel were all irreversibly affected by the First Zionist Congress. The story of the Congress stands as a monument to the power of the poor, powerless, and homeless to take charge of their own lives, to organize, and to work hard.

The Zionists had a dream. The dream had a dreamer. The dreamer told his dream to others, and, to his shock and surprise, he found out that others had already had the same dream. But this dreamer was different. Herzl's dream didn't stay a dream. When he woke he didn't let the dream simply evaporate from his imagination. He pondered it, he moved it around in his conscious mind, and he considered what that dream would look like in the real world. When he began he decided to write about his dream. But he was scared. And so, as a creative artist, he thought he might escape what he all too precisely saw as the inevitable ridicule he would endure by casting his dream the way dreams were cast at the end of the nineteenth century, as a novel. But as he wrote, it was not a novel that escaped his pen. It was an extended essay, a passionate plea deliberately cast in passionless words, again to make the dream not seem like a dream, not appear to be a utopian fable, but as a dream that could quite easily and logically become reality. And so this dreamer wrote his dream. Then those who had dreamed it before but could not move it into the real world saw in this dreamer someone who might move human history. It was then that Theodor Herzl convened the First Zionist Congress. It was a meeting, but it was more than that. The Congress was a huge journey. For Jews it was a journey across two thousand years of mostly accepting their exile while they longed for Zion. For individual Zionists, it was a more personal journey.

It was at the First Zionist Congress that those who longed for a Jewish nation in the ancient Land of Israel stepped out of the pleasant warmth of their dream into the cold and sometimes cruel world of reality.

But what heroes they were. What sacrifices they made all for the sake of a hope. What a story they have left all of us. The First Zionist Congress was a moment for all people to see the possibilities in life, to see how dreams can lead to a vision and how a vision can lead to an incredible, vital, sustaining, and even heroic life in the real world.

First Zionist Congress Chronology

1843	The first Zionist writings of Rabbi Alkalai and Rabbi Kalischer are published.
1844	The first census in Jerusalem shows 7,120 Jews, 5,760 Muslims, and 3,390 Christians.
1856	The Ottomans require that ownership of land in Palestine be registered and that taxes be paid on it.
1860	Mishkenot Sha'ananim, the first Jewish community outside Jerusalem's walls, is established.
1860	2 May. Theodor Herzl is born.
	Hayim Lurie (Chaim Lorje) establishes the first society for agricultural communities in the Land of Israel.
1862	Publication of *Rome and Jerusalem* by Moses Hess.
1870	Mikveh Israel Agricultural School is founded.
1870s	Hovevei Zion are formed in Russia.
1878	Petach Tikvah, the first modern Zionist agricultural community, is founded.
1881	Wave of Russian pogroms. This directly brings about the beginnings of the First 1882 Aliyah.
1881	Ottoman government announces its permission for foreign Jews to settle all through the Ottoman Empire except for Palestine.
1882	*Auto-Emancipation* by Leon Pinsker published.
	Rishon Le-Zion, Zikhron Ya'akov, and Rosh Pina are founded.
	Formation of BILU.
	Beginning of First Aliyah; 25,000 Zionists enter the land.
	Russian May Laws.
	Baron Edmond de Rothschild begins backing Jewish settlements.
	The Ottoman government adopts a policy of allowing Jewish pilgrims and businessmen to visit Palestine but not to settle there.
	The Ottoman government informs the Jewish leadership in Constantinople that it views Zionist communities in Palestine as a political problem.
1883	Three more agricultural communities founded.
1884	Gedera founded.
	Katowice Conference founds a central organization of Hibbat Zion (Hovevei Zion).
	The Ottoman government closes Palestine to foreign Jewish businessmen but not to Jewish pilgrims.
1887–1888	The land is divided by the Ottomans into the districts (*sanjaks*) of Jerusalem, Nablus, and Acre. Jerusalem was attached directly to Istanbul, the others to the wilayet of Beirut.
1891	The Jewish Colonization Association is founded in London by the German baron Maurice de Hirsch.
1892	The Ottoman government forbids the sale of state land to foreign Jews in Palestine.
1893	European powers pressure the Ottoman government to permit Jews who are legally residents in Palestine

	to buy land provided they establish no communities on that land.
1896	2 February. Publication of *Der Judenstaat* by Herzl.
	The Jewish Colonization Association starts aiding Zionist communities.
	Ottoman Sultan Abd-al Hamid II rejects Herzl's proposal that Palestine be granted to the Jews.
1897	4 June. First publication of *Die Welt.*
	29–31 August. First Zionist Congress.
1904	3 July (20 Tammuz). Death of Herzl.
1949	17 August. Herzl's remains are reburied on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem.

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