

Document A: *Theodor Herzl (August 25, 1896)*

The Turks have a knife at their throats, financially speaking. ...

Our group wishes to place at His Majesty's disposal a graduated loan of 20 million pounds sterling. This loan is to be funded on the annual tribute which the autonomous Jewish settlers in Palestine have to pay to His Majesty. ...

In return, His Majesty should graciously make the following concessions:

The immigration of the Jews into Palestine which is not only to be completely unrestricted but to be encouraged in every way by the imperial Turkish government. The immigrant Jews are to be given autonomy, guaranteed under international law, in the constitution, government and administration of justice in the territory assigned to them. (Palestine as a vassal state.)

In the Constantinople negotiations it will have to be determined in detail in what form the sovereign protection of His Majesty the Sultan will be exercised in Jewish Palestine and how the preservation of law and order is to be managed by the Jews themselves through security forces of their own.

The agreement could take the following form: His Majesty issues a most gracious invitation to the Jews to return to the land of their fathers: this invitation will have the force of law and will be made known to the powers in advance.

Source: *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl, Vol. II, Edited by Raphael Patai, Herzl Press & Thomas Yoseloff, 1960, p. 457-458.*

Document B: “Opening Address at the First Zionist Congress”, Theodor Herzl (August 29, 1897)

The confidence of the government with which we wish to negotiate about a large-scale settlement of Jewish masses may be gained by plain language and upright dealing. The advantages which an entire people can offer in return are so considerable that the negotiations will be serious from the very beginning. It would be idle to say a great deal at this time about the legal form which the agreement will finally take. There is only one principle to which we must steadfastly adhere: the agreement can be based only on right and not on toleration. By this time we have enough experience with toleration and with the status of *Schutzjude* which could be revoked at any time.

Consequently our movement will be embarked on a sensible course of action only if it strives for guarantees under public law. Previous settlement projects have achieved all that they could accomplish, given their nature. They have confirmed the much-disputed fitness of the Jews for agricultural work; they furnished this proof *zum ewigen Gedachinis* [for all time], as the legal phrase goes. But such settlements are not, and in their present form cannot be, the solution of the Jewish Question. Also, let us frankly admit that they have not met with significant response. Why not? Because the Jews know how to count; in fact, it has been asserted that they calculate too well. If, then, we assume that there are nine million Jews and that it would be possible to settle ten thousand people in Palestine every year, it would take nine hundred years to solve the Jewish Question. This seems impractical.

On the other hand, you know that the figure of ten thousand settlers a year is nothing short of fantastic – under the present circumstances. In the face of such an influx the Turkish government would immediately revive the old restrictions on immigration – and that would suit us fine. For anyone who believes that the Jews can steal into the land of their fathers, as it were, is deceiving either himself or others. Nowhere is the appearance of Jews reported as quickly as it is in the historic homeland of Jewish people – simply because it is the historic homeland. And it would not even be to our interest to go there prematurely.

Vocabulary

Schutzjude: “Protected Jew.” Term used in Germany during the 17th and 18th centuries to denote Jews who were tolerated and who enjoyed special privileges because of their value to various rulers.

Source: Zionist Writings, Essays and Addresses: Theodor Herzl, Vol. 1, Herzl Press, New York, 1973, p. 132-138.

Document C: “Opening Address at the Third Zionist Congress”, Theodor Herzl (August 15, 1899)

One important event which our opponents, as usual, either suppressed or reported in a distorted form was the audience granted to the Zionist deputation by His Majesty the German Kaiser in Jerusalem. The fact alone that the gifted Kaiser should have bestowed his attention upon our national idea would suffice to give us some confidence. Insignificant movements are not noticed from such heights. But it was not merely a matter of taking cognizance of our movement. The people who were received were not just some Jewish deputation, the members of some “practical” settlement society, but the delegates of the Zionist Actions Committee. The principles and aims of our movement were known in advance and, on a day which will be remembered by all of Jewry, His Majesty the German Kaiser assured us of his sympathetic interest. ...

Naturally, it is very important for us to emphasize and demonstrate our honorable character, particularly in our relations with the Turkish government. We shall not take any step which might even remotely arouse justified suspicion in the sovereign owner of Palestine. We will and can offer the greatest benefits to the Ottoman Empire, and hence we can act quite openly. Someone who steals into a place usually has no intention of bringing something with him. This was the easily understandable reasoning which gave rise to the restrictions on immigration that are now in force in Palestine. We did not evoke these restrictions; as everyone knows, they antedate the movement that is represented here. But even though we cannot be accused of having caused the ban on immigrations, we still want to state clearly our attitude toward it.

What? They wanted to settle people in a country without having publicly stated the entire plan in advance?

If a man approaches a place stealthily, under cover of darkness, he should not be surprised if he is met by cries of “Halt! Who goes there?” And all the worse for him if he cannot give a good, clear answer. What is more, this is hardly a situation in which any answer will sound anything but suspicious. Therefore we will do things differently. We state our intentions in broad daylight which, thank God, we have no need to fear; we want to secure approval before we undertake something which would otherwise be the

riskiest of all experiments. For it is not just a matter of getting people there, but of getting them to stay – and in complete security.

Unfortunately there are many among our brethren who could not be worse off than they are and who therefore will accept anything. But it would not take much sagacity, effort and money merely to shift the patient from one side to another. Let us rather try to cure him. This is such a great goal, and it is so reasonable and sensible that no one will search for ulterior motives therein. Why, then, should we not come right out and say so? In this way our entire plan will be comprehensible all at once. There will be no further mistrust. We are entering upon negotiations which sooner or later will lead to results – provided that we proceed with unity and keep our forces together.

Source: Zionist Writings, Essays and Addresses: Theodor Herzl, Vol. 2, 1898-1904, Herzl Press, New York, 1973, p. 103-105.

Document D: “Theodor Herzl”, Alex Bein (1934)

There the first reaction of the majority of the delegates to Herzl’s speech was one of profound emotion. A storm of applause swept through the hall. “It could not have been greater,” wrote one reporter, “if Herzl, instead of submitting a proposal which obviously thrust the Basle Program into the background, had announced to the Congress: ‘Palestine is ours, the masses can set out.’” Shemarya Levin, who, as one of the secretaries of the Congress, could survey the scene from the platform, saw on the faces of the delegates “amazement, admiration – but not a sign of protest ... The first effect of the magnanimity of the British offer was, to eclipse all other considerations.” The strategy of surprise, which Herzl liked only too well, had begun with a victory.

It was only in the sessions of the separate federations, and particularly that of the Russian, the strongest at the Congress, that critical reconsideration and opposition emerged, to find more and more powerful expression from hour to hour in the debates on the floor of the Congress itself.

In the carefully formulated opening speech which followed on the political report, Herzl had emphasized, at the very outset, that the East Africa project was in no wise intended as a substitute for Palestine. Palestine remained the unchangeable goal, and this had been made abundantly clear in his negotiations with the British government and all its agents. It was nevertheless his opinion that a method could be found of making use of this offer: “The offer has been extended to us in a way which cannot but contribute to the improvement of the condition of the Jewish people, without our relinquishing any of the great principles on which our movement is founded...

“Zion this certainly is not, and can never become. It is only a colonial auxiliary or help – but, be it noted, on a national and state foundation. This will not give the sign to our masses to set themselves everywhere in motion. It is, and must remain, an emergency measure which is intended to come to the rescue of our helpless philanthropic enterprises and prevent the loss of these detached fragments of our people.” ...

Max Nordau, who was at bottom opposed to the plan even now, but who had been impressed by Herzl’s plea for an objective attitude toward the British offer, and was, moreover, reluctant to abandon Herzl in this difficult

moment, delivered an ambitious oration in support of Herzl's arguments; he coined, for the prospective colony in East Africa, the not altogether fortunate phrase *Nachtsyl* – a night shelter for the hundreds of thousands of Jews who were being thrust out of their homes and to whom Palestine could not yet be offered. ...

Curiously enough it was from the Russian representatives, among whom were the Zionists of Kishineff, who showed themselves unalterably opposed to permitting the Zionist Organization even to negotiate for any other immigration center than Palestine. It signified a departure from the line laid down at the first Zionist Congress, a break with the Basle Program. The problem of meeting the pressure of Jewish need was not the business of Zionism, whose task it was to concentrate on the achievement of its ultimate objective even if it could not, in the interim, be of any assistance to the suffering Jewish masses. Every compromise, every deviation from the road which led straight to Palestine, seemed to the protagonists of the viewpoint to be a surrender of fundamental principle. The debate became converted into a question of principle: Palestine or Uganda.

Source: Theodor Herzl: A Biography, Alex Bein, The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1941 (First Published 1934), p. 455-457.

Document E: “The Founding Fathers of Zionism”, Benzion Netanyahu (1937)

Herzl’s unique greatness was not in teaching that the only solution to the Jewish question was a Jewish state, but rather in teaching *how to put this idea into practice*, and in explaining *the only way* in which it was possible to put it into practice. Herzl himself knew well that herein lay his entire innovation: “Because all the leaders who sought to lead you know where Zion is.” So why have you not been able to come to Zion? “Because it is not possible to arrive at the goal in a straight line.” Since one needs to choose a concrete path, and every such path involves obstacles and delays, and since all the previously chosen paths were quickly blocked, “this is a very complicated question.” “The problem is that of the path,” Herzl said, clearly defining the crux of the matter. Therefore we can say that Herzl’s teaching which, as we have noted, was his alone, was *the teaching of the way to make Zionism a reality*. ...

During these years, Herzl’s idea stood in sharp contrast to the method advocated by those who shared, for the most part, his analysis of the state of world Jewry, but never understood the mode of operation he espoused or the means by which he sought to realize their shared ambitions. ... They wanted to follow the simple laws of arithmetic, believing this was the only practical way to achieve their desired goal. ... they needed only to bring to Palestine one Jew after another and to purchase acre after acre. They never imagined that in traveling this direct path, they were bound to run into brick walls. They never paid attention to the fact that they would encounter a government in Palestine whose opposition to the Zionist plan – an opposition they clearly felt from time to time – might take a form that would eliminate any possibility of their continued activity. ...

Then Herzl arose and boldly declared: No more gradual immigration! No more infiltration! For he considered the notion that the Jews could become the majority in the country through the gradual arrival of settlers, to be childish and absurd. ...

He also explained his thinking by way of a parable of someone trying to build a house of stone. “They are dragging stone after stone to the building site and assume that as a result a house will be erected. Never!” – Herzl claimed without any reservation – “The house will never be built in that way!” For there are countervailing forces whose resistance is as certain as

the laws of gravity. “It’s a folly to construct a building without a plan and folly for us to construct a house without being assured the land on which it is built. For without that, the owner of the land will come one day and raze the building or evict us from the house which we constructed for ourselves.”

...

The right of settlement could be obtained only from the government. ...
“Without the assured right of sovereignty” – he declared – “all this migration is a waste of effort.”

The great revolution which Herzl brought to the Jewish question and to its solution was, therefore, this: A settlement does not achieve its objective unless it is first provided with a legal right to achieve this objective, or in other words, unless the settlement is preceded by a right of settlement. This right of settlement would have no concrete value unless it was secured by external political guarantees and an internal military force. In short, a state cannot be established on the basis of gradual infiltration. On the contrary, in order for gradual infiltration or any other infiltration to be possible, it is first necessary to establish the state.

Source: The Founding Fathers of Zionism, Benzion Netanyahu, Balfour Books and Gefen Publishing, 2012. p. 67-105.