

THE JEW IN THE MODERN WORLD

A Documentary History

Second Edition

Compiled and Edited by

PAUL MENDES-FLOHR

JEHUDA REINHARZ

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

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NOTES

1. The Bilu was a group of young Russian Jews who pioneered the Zionist program of resettlement of the Jewish people in the land of Israel as a solution to the Jewish question. The group derived its name from the Hebrew initials of *Beit Yaakov lekhu venelkha* (Isa. 2:5). A reaction to the 1881 pogroms in southern Russia, the Bilu was founded at the beginning of 1882 with Kharkov as its headquarters; later the headquarters was

moved to Odessa. The first Biluim arrived in Palestine in mid-1882. After working in a number of Jewish villages for several years, they founded the settlement of Gederah. The manifesto published here was issued by members of the Bilu in Constantinople in 1882 en route to Palestine.

2. Hillel was a first century B.C.E. rabbinic authority.

3. The Western or Wailing Wall.

THEODOR HERZL

2. A Solution of the Jewish Question (1896)¹

I have been asked to lay my scheme in a few words before the readers of the *Jewish Chronicle*.² This I will endeavour to do, although in this brief and rapid account, I run the risk of being misunderstood. My first and incomplete exposition will probably be scoffed at by Jews. The bad and foolish way we ridicule one another is a survival of slavish habits contracted by us during centuries of oppression. A free man sees nothing to laugh at in himself, and allows no one to laugh at him.

I therefore address my first words to those Jews who are strong and free of spirit. They shall form my earliest audience, and they will one day, I hope become my friends. I am introducing no new idea; on the contrary, it is a very old one. It is a universal idea—and therein lies its power—old as the people, which never, even in the time of bitterest calamity, ceased to cherish it. This is the restoration of the Jewish State.

It is remarkable that we Jews should have dreamt this kingly dream all through the long night of our history. Now day is dawning. We need only rub the sleep out of our eyes, stretch our limbs, and convert the dream into a reality. Though neither prophet nor visionary, I confess I cherish the hope

and belief that the Jewish people will one day be fired by a splendid enthusiasm. For the present, however, I would appeal in calm words to the common sense of men of practical judgment and of modern culture. A subsequent task will be to seek out the less favoured, to teach and to inspire them. This latter task I cannot undertake alone. I shall take my part in it, in the ranks of those friends and fellow workers whom I am endeavouring to arouse and unite for a common cause. I do not say "my adherents," for that would be making the movement a personal one, and consequently absurd and contemptible from the outset. No, it is a national movement, and it will be a glorious one, if kept unsullied by the taint of personal desires, though these desires took no other form than political ambition. We who are the first to inaugurate this movement, will scarcely live to see its glorious close; but the inauguration of it is enough to bring a noble kind of happiness into our lives. We shall plant for our children in the same way as our fathers preserved the tradition for us. Our lives represent but a moment in the permanent duration of our people. This moment has its duties.

Source: *The Jewish Chronicle*, January 17, 1896, pp. 12–13.

glendour of civilization, while
of thine dwelt like beasts in
arshes of their dark woods.
lren were clad in purple and
re the rough skins of the wolf
art thou not ashamed to sub-

our state in the West; the star
gleaming in the East. Deep-
all this, and inspired by the
our great master Hillel: "If I
who will help me?" we pro-
ne following society for na-
The Society will be named
to the motto: "House of Jac-
go!" It will be divided into
ccording to the number of
he seat of the Committee
n. (3) Donations and contri-
unfixed and unlimited.

(1) A Home in our country.
s by the mercy of God, it is
l in the archives of history.
Sultan himself, and if it be
ain this, to beg that at least
ed to possess it as a state
te; the internal administra-
have our civil and political
with the Turkish Empire
ffairs, so as to help our
his time of need.
e interests of our glorious
the national spirit in rich
, and that everyone, rich
is best labours to the holy

rethren and sisters.
e Lord our God, the Lord
id, Zion is our one hope.

., 1919), vol. 2, pp. 332–33.

Two phenomena arrest our attention by reason of the consequences with which they are fraught. One, the high culture, the other, the profound barbarism of our day. I have intentionally put this statement in the form of a paradox. By high culture, I mean the marvellous development of all mechanical contrivances for making the forces of nature serve man's purposes. By profound barbarism, I mean antisemitism. . . .

The Jewish Question still exists. It would be foolish to deny it. It exists wherever Jews live in perceptible numbers. Where it does not yet exist, it will be brought by Jews in the course of their migrations. We naturally move to those places where we are not persecuted, and there our presence soon produces persecution. This is true in every country, and will remain true even in those most highly civilised—France itself is no exception—till the Jewish Question finds a solution on a political basis. I believe that I understand antisemitism, which is in reality a highly complex movement. I consider it from a Jewish standpoint, yet without fear or hatred. I believe that I can see what elements there are in it of vulgar sport, of common trade, of jealousy, of inherited prejudice, of religious intolerance, and also of legitimate self-defence.

Only an ignorant man would mistake modern antisemitism for an exact repetition of the Jew-baiting of the past. The two may have a few points of resemblance, but the main current of the movement has now changed. In the principal countries where antisemitism prevails, it does so as a result of the emancipation of the Jews. When civilised nations awoke to the inhumanity of exclusive legislation, and enfranchised us—our enfranchisement came too late. For we had, curiously enough, developed while in the Ghetto into bourgeois people, and we stepped out of it only to enter into fierce competition with the middle classes. Historical circumstances made us take to finance, for which, as every educated man knows, we had, as a nation, no original bent. One of the most important of these circumstances was the relation of the Catholic Church to

"anatocism."³ In the Ghetto we had become somewhat unaccustomed to bodily labour and we produced in the main but a large number of mediocre intellects. Hence, our emancipation set us suddenly within the circle of the middle classes, where we have to sustain a double pressure, from within and from without. The Christian bourgeoisie would not be unwilling to cast us as a sacrifice to Socialism, though that would naturally not improve matters much. But the Jewish Question is no more a social than a religious one, notwithstanding that it sometimes takes on these and other forms. It is a national question which can only be solved by making it a political world-question to be discussed and controlled by the nations of the civilised world in council.

We are one people—One People. We have honestly striven everywhere to merge ourselves in the social life of surrounding communities, and to preserve only the faith of our fathers. It has not been permitted to us. In vain are we loyal patriots, in some places our loyalty running to extremes; in vain do we make the same sacrifices of life and property as our fellow-citizens; in vain do we strive to increase the fame of our native land in science and art, or her wealth by trade and commerce. In countries where we have lived for centuries we are still cried down as strangers; and often by those whose ancestors were not yet domiciled in the land where Jews had already made experience of suffering. Yet, in spite of all, we are loyal subjects, loyal as the Huguenots, who were forced to emigrate. If we could only be left in peace⁴. . . .

We are one people—our enemies have made us one in our despite, as repeatedly happens in history. Distress binds us together, and thus united, we suddenly discover our strength. Yes, we are strong enough to form a state, and a model state. We possess all human and material resources necessary for the purpose. . . . The whole matter is in its essence perfectly simple, as it must necessarily be, if it is to come within the comprehension of all.

Let the sovereignty be granted us over a

portion of the globe large enough to meet the requirements of the nation which we shall manage for ourselves. Can we expect that each word of this statement will be taken by each letter of each word, will be taken by scoffers and doubters; that we must do the thing cautiously, if we are to avoid ourselves sensitive to ridicule. The new state has in it nothing impossible. We have, in our day, a process in connection with which we were not in the bulk of the past, poor, less educated, and than ourselves. The gove countries, scourged by an anarchy to serve their own interests, in order to obtain the sovereignty we want, our governments will be all the more anxious to do us half-way, seeing that the greatest danger is not likely to bring about a crisis. Such crises, as much as they are where as a natural consequence of the baiting, will rather be preventing the carrying out of my plan. For I have seen the migration of Christians into the East, and systematically evacuate the East are not merely suffered to die, but are actually helped, we shall have a transfer of property from the Christians in a manner so peaceful that it will be on an extensive scale as has never been known in the annals of history.

Everything must be carried out with consideration for acquired rights, absolute conformity to law, absolute freedom of opinion, and by light supervision of authority and public opinion. . . .

Our clergy, on whom we must call, will devote their energies to the carrying out of this idea. They must, however, understand from the outset that we do not mean to found a theocratic state, but a modern civil state. We shall build the Temple in glorious Jerusalem, the faith of our fathers. We shall have seven stars on a white field, which symbolizes our pure new religion, the seven golden ho-

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portion of the globe large enough to satisfy the requirements of the nation—the rest we shall manage for ourselves. Of course, I fully expect that each word of this sentence, and each letter of each word, will be torn to tatters by scoffers and doubters. I advise them to do the thing cautiously, if they are themselves sensitive to ridicule. The creation of a new state has in it nothing ridiculous or impossible. We have, in our day, witnessed the process in connection with nations which were not in the bulk of the middle class, but poor, less educated, and therefore weaker than ourselves. The governments of all countries, scourged by antisemitism, will serve their own interests, in assisting us to obtain the sovereignty we want. These governments will be all the more willing to meet us half-way, seeing that the movement I suggest is not likely to bring about any economic crisis. Such crises, as must follow everywhere as a natural consequence of Jew-baiting, will rather be prevented by the carrying out of my plan. For I propose an inner migration of Christians into the parts slowly and systematically evacuated by Jews. If we are not merely suffered to do what I ask, but are actually helped, we shall be able to effect a transfer of property from Jews to Christians in a manner so peaceable and on so extensive a scale as has never been known in the annals of history.

Everything must be carried out with due consideration for acquired rights and with absolute conformity to law, without compulsion, openly and by light of day, under the supervision of authority and the control of public opinion. . . .

Our clergy, on whom I most especially call, will devote their energies to the service of this idea. They must, however, clearly understand from the outset, that we do not mean to found a theocracy, but a tolerant modern civil state. We shall, however, rebuild the Temple in glorious remembrance of the faith of our fathers. We shall unroll the new banner of Judaism—a banner bearing seven stars on a white field. The white field symbolizes our pure new life, the seven stars, the seven golden hours of a working-

day. For we shall march into the Promised Land carrying the badge of labour. . . .

Let all who will join us fall in behind our flag [and] fight for our cause with voice and pen and deed. I count on all our ambitious young men, who are now debarred from making progress elsewhere. . . .

Thus we also need a "gestor" [manager] to direct this Jewish political cause. The Jewish people are as yet prevented by the Diaspora from undertaking the management of their business for themselves. At the same time they are in a condition of more or less severe distress in many parts of the world. They need a "gestor." A first essential will therefore be the creation of such.

This "gestor" cannot, of course, be a single individual, for an individual who would undertake this giant work alone, would probably be either a madman or an impostor. It is therefore indispensable to the integrity of the idea and the vigour of its execution that the work should be impersonal. The "gestor" of the Jews must be a union of several persons for the purpose, a body corporate. This body corporate or corporation, I suggest, shall be formed in the first instance from among those energetic English Jews to whom I imparted my scheme in London. Let that body be called "the Society of Jews," and be entirely distinct from the Jewish Company⁵ previously referred to. The Society of Jews is the point of departure for the whole Jewish movement about to begin. It will have work to do in the domains of science and politics, for the founding of the Jewish state, as I conceive it, presupposes the application of scientific methods. We cannot journey out of Mizraim [Egypt] today, in the primitive fashion of ancient times. We must previously obtain an accurate account of our number and strength.

My pamphlet [*The Jewish State*] will open a general discussion on the Jewish question. Friends and enemies will take part in it, but it will no longer, I hope, take the form either of violent abuse or of sentimental vindication, but of a debate, practical, large, earnest and political. The Society of Jews will gather all available information from statesmen,

parliaments, Jewish communities and societies, from speeches, letters and meetings, from newspapers and books. It will thus find out for the first time whether Jews really wish to go to the Promised Land, and whether they ought to go there. Every Jewish community in the world will send contributions to the Society towards a comprehensive collection of Jewish statistics. Further tasks, such as investigation by experts of the new country and its natural resources, planning of joint migration and settlement, preliminary work for legislation and administration, etc., must be judiciously evolved out of the original scheme. In short, the Society of Jews will be the nucleus of our public organizations. . . .

Shall we choose [the] Argentine [Republic] or Palestine? We will take what is given us and what is selected by Jewish public opinion. Argentina is one of the most fertile countries in the world, extends over a vast area, and has a sparse population. The Argentine Republic would derive considerable profit from the cession of a portion of its territory to us. The present infiltration of Jews has certainly produced some friction, and it would be necessary to enlighten the Republic on the intrinsic difference of our new movement.

Palestine is our ever-memorable historic home. The very name of Palestine would attract our people with a force of extraordinary potency. Supposing His Majesty the Sultan were to give us Palestine, we could in return pledge ourselves to regulate the whole finances of Turkey. There we should also form a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilisation as opposed to barbarism.⁶ We should remain a neutral state in intimate connection with the whole of Europe, which would guarantee our continued existence. The sanctuaries of Christendom would be safeguarded by assigning to them an extra-territorial status, such as is well known to the law of nations. We should form a guard of honour about these sanctuaries, answering for the fulfillment of this duty with our existence. This guard of hon-

our would be the great symbol of the solution of the Jewish Question after nearly nineteen centuries of Jewish suffering. . . .

I know full well that in bringing forward a very old idea in a new form, I am laying myself open to derision and to every kind of attack. Gentler spirits will call my idea Utopian. But what is the difference between a Utopian scheme and a possible one? A Utopian scheme may be a piece of cleverly combined mechanism, lacking only the requisite force to set it in motion; a possible scheme on the other hand rests on a known and existent propelling force.

The force we need is created in us by antisemitism. Some people will say that what I am doing is to kindle antisemitism afresh. This is not true, for antisemitism would continue to increase irrespective of my project, so long as the causes of its growth are not removed. Others will tremble for their goods and chattels, and professional business interests. . . .

What form of constitution shall we have? I incline to an aristocratic republic, although I am an ardent monarchist in my own country. Our history has been too long interrupted for us to attempt direct continuity of the ancient constitutional forms without exposing ourselves to the charge of absurdity.

What language shall we speak? Every man can preserve the language in which his thoughts are at home. Switzerland offers us an example of the possibility of a federation of tongues. We shall remain there in the new country what we now are here, and shall never cease to cherish the memory of the native land out of which we have been driven.

People will say that I am furnishing our enemies with weapons. This is also untrue, for my proposal can only be carried out with the free consent of a majority of Jews. Individuals, or even powerful bodies of Jews, might be attacked, but governments will take no action against the collective nation. The equal rights of Jews before the law cannot be withdrawn where they have once been conceded, for their withdrawal would

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immediately drive all Jews, rich and poor alike, into the ranks of the revolutionary party. Even under present conditions the first official violation of Jewish liberties invariably brings about an economic crisis. The weapons used against us cut the hands that wield them. Meantime, hatred grows apace.

Again, it will be said that our enterprise is hopeless, because, even if we obtain the land with the supremacy over it, the poorest Jews only will go there. But it is precisely the poorest whom we need at first. Only desperados make good conquerors. The rich and well-to-do will follow later, when they will find the new country as pleasant as the old, or even pleasanter. . . .

But we can do nothing without the enthusiasm of our own nation. The idea must make its way into the most distant miserable holes where our people dwell. They will awaken from gloomy brooding, for into their

lives will come a new significance. Let each of them but think of himself, and what vast proportions the movement must assume! And what glory awaits those who fight unselfishly for the cause! A wondrous generation of Jews will spring into existence. The Maccabees will rise again.

And so it will be: It is the poor and the simple who do not know what power man already exercises over the forces of nature, it is just these who will have firmest faith in the new message. For these have never lost the hope of the Promised Land.

This is my message, fellow Jews! Neither fable nor fraud! Every man may test its truth for himself, for every man will carry with him a portion of the Promised Land—one in his head, another in his arms, another in his acquired possessions. We shall live at last, as free men, on our own soil, and die peacefully in our own home.

NOTES

1. Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), father of political Zionism and founder of the World Zionist Organization. While serving as the Paris correspondent for the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna, from 1890 to 1895, Herzl—an assimilated Jew of minimal Jewish commitment—was aroused by the growing antisemitism in the birthplace of liberalism and Jewish emancipation. The Dreyfus Case—the trial and the public demand for “Death to the Jew”—prompted Herzl to draw the conclusion that the only feasible solution to the Jewish problem was a mass exodus of the Jews from the countries of their torment and a resettlement in a land of their own. He devoted the remainder of his life to the realization of this idea. This article, published in the influential London Jewish weekly *The Jewish Chronicle*, adumbrates the main points of his *Der Judenstaat: Versuch einer modernen Loesung der juedischen Frage* [The Jewish State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question] (Vienna: M. Breitenstein, 1896), in which he introduced his plan to the world.

2. Herzl arrived in London on November 21, 1895. Through Max Nordau (see document 8) he met Israel Zangwill (see document 11) who introduced him to some influential people and also

obtained for Herzl an invitation to a banquet of the Maccabaeans Club, at which Herzl expounded his ideas and where he established important contacts. Herzl met Asher Myers of *The Jewish Chronicle* at the club. Myers asked Herzl for an article, with the result that *The Jewish Chronicle* preceded *The Jewish State* by four weeks in its publication of Herzl's views.

3. The principle of charging compound interest.

4. This paragraph appears to have been taken verbatim from *The Jewish State*.

5. According to Herzl's plan, the Jewish Company was to be entrusted with the execution of the transfer of the Jews to their own state. The society that Herzl proposed was later to be called the World Zionist Organization.

6. This passage, which also appears in *The Jewish State*, is frequently cited as proof of the colonial, imperialist intentions of Zionism. However, this statement by Herzl must be viewed in light of his vision of the Zionist homeland as an ally of colonized people in their struggle for liberation and restored dignity. See, for example, the passage in his novel *Old-New Land*—Herzl's romantic vision of the New Society of a sovereign Jewry—

in which Professor Steineck, head of the Scientific Institute of the New Society, relates to two foreign visitors, Dr. Loewenberg and Mr. Kingscourt, his hopes for using the institute's knowledge "to open up Africa."

"Yes, Mr. Kingscourt . . . I hope to find the cure for malaria. We have overcome it here in Palestine. . . . But conditions are different in Africa. The same measures cannot be taken there because the prerequisite—mass immigration—is not present. The white colonist goes under in Africa. That country can be opened up to civilization only after malaria has been subdued. Only then will enormous areas become available for the surplus populations of Europe. And only then will the proletarian masses find a healthy outlet. Understand?"

Kingscourt laughed. "You want to cart off the whites to the black continent, you wonder-worker!"

"Not only the whites!" replied Steineck gravely. "The blacks as well. There is still one problem of racial misfortune unsolved. The depths of that problem, in all its horror, only a Jew can fathom. I mean the Negro problem. Don't laugh Mr. Kingscourt. Think of the hair-raising horrors of the slave trade. Human beings because their skins are black, are stolen, carried off, and sold. Their descendants grow up in alien surroundings despised and hated because their skin is differently pigmented. I am not ashamed to say, though I be thought ridiculous, now that I have lived to see the restoration of the Jews, I should like to pave the way for the restoration of the Negroes." (Theodor Herzl, *Old-New Land*, trans. Lotta Levensohn [New York: Bloch Publishing Company and the Herzl Institute, 1960], pp. 169–70).

PROTESTRABBINER

3. Protest Against Zionism (1897)¹

[A]. We recently received from Vienna the new newspaper of the "Zionists," *Die Welt*.² It appeared on the eve of the holiday of the Feast of Weeks, which reminds us more than any other holiday that it was Israel's destiny from the start to be a "Kingdom of Priests." This newspaper contains propaganda for a Congress of Jewish Nationals, called for the twenty-fifth of August of this year [1897] in Munich.

Die Welt is a calamity and must be resisted. As long as the Zionists wrote in Hebrew they were not dangerous, but now that they are writing in German, they must be opposed. It is not a question of refuting their claims. For how can one speak with people who on the one hand are fanatics regarding

Jewish nationhood and, on the other hand, complain that the Austrian government required a baptismal certificate from the candidate for the position of secretary of Bukowina. If the Austrian Jews support the efforts of the Zionists, then they should not complain that they are treated by the government like foreigners and are barred from public office.

We, however, can say to our fellow countrymen with complete conviction that we comprise a separate community solely with respect to *religion*. Regarding nationality, we feel totally at one with our fellow Germans and therefore strive towards the realization of the spiritual and moral goals of our dear fatherland with an enthusiasm equalling

Source: *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*, June 11, 1897. Trans. by M. Gelber. *Berliner Tageblatt* (July 6, 1897), trans. in *The Jewish Chronicle*, July 9, 1897, p. 9.