

Did Herzl Want A “Jewish” State?

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The centennial of Theodor Herzl’s 1897 founding of the Zionist Organization (ZO) met with hardly a tremor of public recognition in Israel,¹ and in general it would be safe to say that Herzl’s works and ideas are of not much interest to contemporary Israeli intellectuals and culture-makers. Yet there is one point in the vast corpus of Herzl’s writings that has become a recurring theme in public discourse: Leading Israeli intellectuals have in the last fifteen years been increasingly insistent that Herzl’s small book *Der Judenstaat* (1896)—traditionally known in English by the title *The Jewish State*—was not intended to inspire the establishment of anything like a “Jewish” state. Instead, it is claimed, Herzl has been misunderstood. What he really meant was to give his book an entirely different title: *The State of the Jews*—intended to suggest a state with a Jewish majority, but which would otherwise not have any particularistic “Jewish” characteristics.

Now, this issue might not be worth discussing were it not a subject of great ideological significance for many of those propagating this claim, and if their ranks did not include some of Israel’s most important legal scholars, academics, educators and civil rights activists—precisely those individuals with the inclination and ability to apply their reading of Herzl to the

transformation of contemporary Israel's national character. Consider, for example, the following assertions made by such prominent Israelis.

Former Education Minister and constitutional scholar Amnon Rubinstein, now Chairman of the Knesset Law and Constitution Committee:

Thus the Jews' own state would... be, as Herzl entitled his famous booklet *Der Judenstaat*, a state of the Jews, hardly a Jewish state.²

Former Education Minister and civil rights leader Shulamit Aloni:

I do not accept the idea of a "Jewish state." It is a "state of the Jews," to be exact. Herzl wrote a book called *The State of the Jews*.³

Hebrew University historian and chairman of a key Education Ministry committee on history textbooks, Moshe Zimmermann:

In Israel... the Herzlian concept of a "state of the Jews" is developing in the direction of a blatantly ethnocentric "Jewish state"....⁴

The novelist Amos Oz:

Herzl's book was called *The State of the Jews* and not *The Jewish State*: A state cannot be Jewish, any more than a chair or a bus can be Jewish....

And this view has been repeated by a remarkable number of other leading intellectuals as well.⁵

Obviously, arguments over nomenclature do not receive this kind of attention unless the semantic question is merely a stand-in for a much larger struggle over history and culture. And this case is no exception. Partisans of Israel as a "state of the Jews" are deliberately seeking to replace a legal and moral concept—that of a "Jewish state"—which until recently was a matter of virtually wall-to-wall consensus. In fact, the expression "Jewish state" had been in common use by Zionists all over the world, including the Jews of Palestine, for decades prior to the establishment of Israel. And when Jewish independence

was finally declared by David Ben-Gurion on May 14, 1948, the term “Jewish state” was so unequivocally associated with the Jews’ political aspirations that it was inserted no fewer than five times into the Israeli Declaration of Independence—a document that was signed by every Jewish political party in Palestine, from the Communists to the ultra-Orthodox Agudat Israel.⁶ (In fact, the Declaration explicitly attributed the term to “Theodor Herzl, progenitor of the vision of *the Jewish state*.”⁷)

Not only was the concept of Israel as a “Jewish state” a matter of consensus at the time of Israel’s establishment; this concept had by that time become part of a political tradition so authoritative that it commanded the support of the overwhelming majority of Jews everywhere for decades. Indeed, as late as 1988, even a political radical such as Yeshayahu Leibowitz—who may have agreed with Ben-Gurion on nothing else—could still define the term precisely as it had been used by the Israeli founders four decades earlier:

A Jewish state... [is one that] directs the best part of its resources to dealing with the problems of the Jewish people, within the state and in the diaspora: To its social, sectoral, educational and economic problems; to the relationship of the state with the Jewish diaspora; to the relationship of the state to Judaism; and so forth.⁸

That is, the Jewish state is a state that is *intrinsically* Jewish in that the purpose it serves is to direct the powers of the state to “dealing with the problems of the Jewish people.” In practice, this principle meant the promulgation of a vast array of particularistic “Jewish” laws and policies, including the Law of Return granting the right of free Jewish immigration to Israel; the State Education Law mandating the inculcation of “the values of Jewish culture” and “loyalty to the Jewish people”; the involvement of the Israeli armed forces and security services in rescue operations of non-Israeli Jews in foreign countries; the use of Israeli courts to try and punish Nazi war criminals for “crimes against the Jewish people”; laws mandating the state’s adoption of Jewish symbols, as well as the Jewish holidays and Sabbath; and many others. Of course, one could argue about the specifics of any of these

particular “Jewish” policies. But virtually all Jews embraced the idea that Israel had been established as a “Jewish state,” not only in terms of its demographics, but also in its purpose, values, policies and institutions.

The present effort to propagate the new concept of a “state of the Jews”—and to read it back into Zionist history beginning with Herzl—therefore represents a conscious choice to break with the most central concept in the Israeli political tradition, and to replace it with something else. As the historian Mordechai Bar-On of Yad Yitzhak Ben-Tzvi has described this movement recently:

In the debate over the Jewishness of Israel... [many] prefer to refrain from calling Israel a “Jewish state.” They prefer to use the more neutral term “the state of the Jews.” This preference implies that... Israel is best described factually as a state in which Jews are a majority....⁹

As Bar-On explains, the term “Jewish state” is being rejected by leading Israeli intellectuals and public figures due to a growing ideological discomfort with the normative implications of a state that is “Jewish” in its essential purpose. The term “state of the Jews,” on the other hand, is descriptive, relating almost exclusively to the fact that Israel is “a state in which Jews are a majority.” Although adherents of the term do not all use it in precisely the same way, the common denominator among them is that they are opposed to, or uncertain about, the idea that the State of Israel should be principally concerned with the interests and aspirations of the Jewish people. They prefer to understand Israel’s purpose as being identical to that of “all other states”—namely, providing for the welfare of the individuals living within its borders. As Amos Oz puts it: “The state is a tool... and this tool has to belong to all its citizens—Jews, Moslems, Christians.... The concept of a ‘Jewish state’ is nothing other than a snare.”¹⁰

It is this contemporary dissent from the political concept of Israel as a “Jewish state” that is in large part driving the insistence that Theodor Herzl never wanted such a state—and that his *Judenstaat* was supposed to be a “state of the Jews.” For if Herzl, as the founder of the Zionist Organization,

never intended to establish anything other than a “state of the Jews”—a neutral state that would contain a majority of Jews, but would in other respects be an essentially *non-Jewish* state—then today’s “state of the Jews” partisans can portray themselves as advocates of the real Zionist tradition on which Israel’s public life rests. In other words, the claim that Herzl might have opposed the idea of a Jewish state is becoming a weapon in the struggle against the explicit intention of David Ben-Gurion and the signers of the Declaration of Independence to establish Israel as a “Jewish state.”

Obviously, one cannot argue that the movement to uproot the traditional concept of Israel as the Jewish state is illegitimate. But there is little to be said for enlisting Herzl in this struggle. For much as today’s “state of the Jews” activists may wish it, Herzl was not one of them. He named his book *The Jewish State* because he believed that this term accurately described the state he sought to establish. In order to establish this claim, I will consider three questions. First, I will examine the semantic issue of whether Herzl did or did not intend the title of his book to be *The Jewish State*. Second, I will ask whether, in terms of political ideals, the state that Herzl proposed in his book was in a significant sense an intrinsically “Jewish” state. And third, since many who have jumped on the “state of the Jews” bandwagon have linked this term with Herzl’s supposed belief in a “separation” of Jewish religion from the state, I will inquire whether the author of *The Jewish State* did in fact embrace such a doctrine. Once these various aspects are taken into consideration, I believe it will be possible to conclude that the argument that Herzl’s *Judenstaat* was intended to be a neutral “state of the Jews” is without merit.

II

Let us begin with the semantic question. Did Herzl intend, as has been frequently claimed, that the term *Judenstaat* in the title of his book be understood to mean a “state of the Jews”—and *not* a Jewish state?

Theodor Herzl wrote *Der Judenstaat* during the course of 1895, originally intending to deliver it in the form of an oral presentation to bankers and other powerful Jewish personalities in Western Europe, who he hoped would take the lead in negotiating with the imperial powers for the establishment of an independent Jewish state. In November of that year, Herzl brought his *Judenstaat* scheme before a group of influential English Jews called the Maccabean Society. As a result of this lecture, he was asked to submit an article for publication in English in the London *Jewish Chronicle*. Appearing on January 17, 1896 under the title “A Solution of the Jewish Question” this article was in fact the public debut of Herzl’s idea. It briefly summarized the main points of his pamphlet, and, significantly, used the term “Jewish state” to describe the independent state he wished to establish for the Jewish people.

On January 19, after the appearance of the English-language article, Herzl signed an agreement for the publication of the full-length version of the book, noting in his diary that he planned to replace its awkward title with the far simpler *Der Judenstaat*.¹¹ The German edition was published on February 14, 1896. At the same time, Herzl also brought out French and English editions, for which he paid from his own pocket.¹² For the title of his French edition, Herzl used *L’État Juif* (“The Jewish State”), while he gave his English edition the title *A Jewish State*.¹³

It can hardly be claimed that the titles Herzl chose in the latter two languages were an accident. Herzl’s French was fluent, and his English, although mediocre, was certainly good enough so that he could understand the meaning of the words “Jewish state.” Moreover, the English and French editions of the pamphlet were central to Herzl’s political aims. The leading Jews behind

Jewish resettlement efforts in Palestine and other lands—whom Herzl fervently hoped to attract to his cause—were French-speakers, and their most important organization, the Jewish Colonization Association, was based in Paris. It was in England, on the other hand, that Herzl intended to base his own organization, and *Der Judenstaat* was explicitly written with the assumption that the English Jews would be the backbone of his project.¹⁴ Thus neither in the French nor in the English editions does it seem likely that Herzl would have been willing to misrepresent his political intentions by using a title that he considered ideologically problematic. Similarly, when Herzl approved the publication of a Yiddish edition in 1899, it too bore a title that as a speaker of German he was certainly capable of understanding: It was called *Die Yudische Medineh* (“The Jewish State”).¹⁵

Thus in every language with which Herzl was familiar, the title of his booklet was translated as *The Jewish State*, and not *The State of the Jews*.¹⁶ Moreover, Herzl remained consistent in his usage of the term “Jewish state” in the years that followed, not only in referring to his book, but also in describing the state he was seeking to found. This fact is particularly striking when one examines Herzl’s correspondence, which he generally wrote in German or French: When writing in German, he continued to use the word *Judenstaat*, yet in French-language letters written more or less concurrently, he always referred to the state he wanted to found as an *état juif*.¹⁷ From this it is evident that Herzl believed that the term “Jewish state” served quite well as a translation of the word *Judenstaat*. Indeed, it was as a result of Herzl’s consistent usage of the term “Jewish state” in English and French that this term became so remarkably successful. For over a hundred years after Herzl first used it, statesmen the world over continued to speak in favor of, or against, the idea of a “Jewish state”—including the 1937 British Royal Commission which for the first time recommended Jewish independence in Palestine, as well as the 1947 United Nations partition resolution which gave international sanction to this idea.

The claim of “state of the Jews” activists today is that all of this was a mistake. Those who use the term “Jewish state” in referring to Herzl’s *Judenstaat*, they argue, do not realize that the German prefix *Juden-* means “Jews,”

whereas the word for “Jewish” in German is *juedisch*. Herzl’s real intention can be learned only from the German title of his book: It was a *Judenstaat*, not a *juedischer Staat*. If he had really been proposing a Jewish state, he would have given his book the title *Der Juedische Staat*.

This entire argument, however, is based on a misunderstanding of the way the prefix *Juden-* (“Jews”) was used in Herzl’s German. An examination of Herzl’s writings reveals that they are replete with words using this prefix, where the reference is clearly to something “Jewish.” Thus, for instance, Herzl writes *Judenblatt* in referring to a “Jewish paper” (or, rather, a “Jewish rag”), and *Judenroman* in speaking of a “Jewish novel” he hoped to write. Similarly, he writes *Judenkinder* for “Jewish children” and *Judenkongress* for “Jewish Congress.” One would hardly expect these words to be translated as “children of the Jews” or “congress of the Jews,” “rag of the Jews” or “novel of the Jews.” The clearest way of rendering such terms into English is to use the word “Jewish”: Jewish children, Jewish congress, Jewish rag, Jewish novel. Similarly, the term “Jewish state” (or *état juif*) is the best available translation of the word *Judenstaat*.

But even if “Jewish state” was a reasonable translation of the word *Judenstaat* into English, perhaps it is the German term that nevertheless reveals his *true* intentions? Perhaps Herzl chose to use the prefix *Juden-* (“Jews”) over the word *juedisch* (“Jewish”) because he felt that, in German at least, the second option had a distinct, and less desirable, meaning?

Yet this possibility, too, is refuted by the evidence. In fact, Herzl used the terms *Juden-* and *juedisch* more or less interchangeably. Thus, for example, when writing about the “Jewish question,” he would use both *Judenfrage* and *juedische Frage*; for “Jewish community,” he used both *Judengemeinde* and *juedische Gemeinde*; and for the “Jewish spirit,” he wrote both *Judengeist* and *juedischer Geist*. Similarly, the famous newspaper term *Judenblatt* (“Jewish rag”) also appears in Herzl’s diaries as a *juedisches Blatt*. Moreover, Herzl did not have any hesitation about using the word *juedisch* to describe organs of the Zionist movement; when he established a bank in London whose purpose was to provide financial services to back up his diplomatic activities, he named it

the *Juedische Colonialbank* (“Jewish Colonial Bank”). The fact is that for Herzl, the German prefix *Juden-* was basically synonymous with the word *juedisch*. The terms *Judenstaat* and *juedischer Staat* were essentially synonyms.

Herzl did, of course, have to choose between these terms. One can only give a book one title, and he knew that whichever term he chose would become a slogan and a symbol that would be used for years or perhaps centuries. Thus just as he was always careful to use only the term “Jewish state” in English, he was just as careful to use only the term *Judenstaat* in German. If *Judenstaat* and *juedischer Staat* were for Herzl essentially synonyms, how did he come to choose the former over the latter?

Although it cannot be confirmed conclusively on the basis of his writings, it would appear that Herzl’s grounds for making these decisions were literary. One cannot ignore the fact that *Judenstaat* is the shorter and less cumbersome of the two German options—just as “Jewish state” and *état juif* are the shorter and less cumbersome options in English and French. Moreover, there is also a strong possibility that Herzl was attracted to the word *Judenstaat* because of its value as an ideologically loaded play on words. We can see such considerations operating in Herzl’s choice of a title for his subsequent novel *Altneuland* (“Old-New Land”), which painted a utopian portrait of a future Palestine. As is well known, the title of the novel is just such a pun, being a conscious reference to Prague’s famous synagogue, the Altneuschul (“Old-New Synagogue”).¹⁸ This title was intended to be amusing, but it also sought to make an important ideological point: The Jews of Central Europe had for six hundred years seen the Altneuschul as their spiritual center, and Herzl was gently calling on them to give up on their Old-New synagogue and replace it with something much more spectacular—their Old-New land, Palestine. It is precisely this playful pun and its deeper, deadly serious meaning that Herzl believed would make for a successful title for the book. In his diary, he wrote of the term *Altneuland*: “It will become a famous word.”¹⁹

Herzl may very well have had the same thing in mind in coining the term *Judenstaat*. The Jews in a given city often lived in a particular district, which was sometimes referred to as the *Judenstadt* (“Jew Town”). Indeed, the Altneuschul

itself was situated in Prague's *Judenstadt*. By calling his book *Der Judenstaat*, Herzl thus employed another pun to get across precisely the same central ideological point that he made later with the title of his novel. Jews were called upon to leave their town, their Jewish district, and exchange it for something that sounded similar, but which was in reality far greater: The Jewish state.

In sum, the claim that Herzl intended the word *Judenstaat* to mean “the state of the Jews,” and *not* “Jewish state,” is simply mistaken. Herzl was himself the inventor of the term “Jewish state,” and he was perfectly comfortable and consistent in using this term throughout the years that he led the Zionist movement.

There remains, of course, the problem of the Hebrew edition of Herzl's book, which has been called *Medinat Hayehudim* (“The State of the Jews”) since it was first translated in 1896 at the initiative of the Tushia publishing house in Warsaw. It is this Hebrew-language title which has, of course, been the single greatest factor in persuading Israelis that Herzl was opposed to the term “Jewish state.” But in light of the fact that Herzl himself saw no difficulty in using the term “Jewish state,” it seems unlikely that the choice of the Hebrew title was actually of real significance. Much more plausible is that Herzl—who knew almost no Hebrew—did not delve too deeply into the matter of the Hebrew title; or that he simply asked his translator, the Viennese Hebraist Michael Berkowicz, which option sounded better.

Moreover, one need only read Berkowicz's edition in order to realize that the translator did not feel the need to be too consistent about using the expression *medinat hayehudim* (“state of the Jews”) as the “correct” translation of the German word *Judenstaat*. On the contrary, Berkowicz's translation used a number of different expressions to render this word into Hebrew—one of which was the term *medina yehudit* (“Jewish state”).²⁰

III

To this point, I have considered the semantic evidence that Herzl believed the expression “Jewish state” to be the best available translation of the word *Judenstaat*. But this does not answer the substantive argument that has been advanced concerning Herzl’s intention in publishing his book. For even if Herzl did prefer the term “Jewish state,” as I have suggested, it is still theoretically possible that what he meant by this term was what is today being referred to as the “state of the Jews”: An essentially neutral state much like the one envisioned in Rousseau’s *On the Social Contract*, which, although it would have a majority of Jews, would otherwise not be constituted as a Jewish state in any way. An even more extreme possibility—which is likewise popular among Israeli intellectuals—is that even the Jews *themselves*, once they were living in Herzl’s “state of the Jews,” were not intended to remain distinctively Jewish in a significant cultural sense, but would merely be assimilated Jews (or former Jews), living free of anti-Semitism in a new and more comfortable location. It goes without saying that if this were the case, and the Jews of the Jewish state were to lose their unique Jewish character and ideals, it would not be long before the state would cease to be Jewish in any way as well.

It is therefore worth turning first to the argument that the Jews of Herzl’s *Judenstaat* were not themselves intended to be distinctively Jewish. Thereafter, I will return to the issue of the intrinsically Jewish character of their state.

The idea that Herzl was a proponent of creating a “non-Jewish” state comprised of thoroughly assimilated Jews is almost as old as the Zionist movement itself, going all the way back to Ahad Ha’am’s blistering attacks on Herzl and his lieutenant Max Nordau, whom he accused of wanting to establish a “state of Germans or Frenchmen of the Jewish race.”²¹ And similar claims continue to be made down to our own day. Consider, for example, the description of Herzl by Amnon Rubinstein in his book *The Zionist Dream Revisited: From*

Herzl to Gush Emunim and Back. According to Rubinstein, Herzl was a “cosmopolitan,” whose dedication to the idea of a Jewish state “was neither motivated, nor accompanied, by a return to Judaism.” What Herzl really wanted was a state where the Jews would be free to be “Europeans”:

His attachment to Judaism was minimal; his knowledge of things Jewish nebulous.... He was driven to the idea of a Jewish state [by anti-Semitism]. Yet, his very philosophy remained European, secular, liberal.... There was precious little Jewishness in Herzl’s writings. The new Maccabees who would inhabit the utopian future state were not really different from the cultivated European....²²

Or, as Israeli Justice Minister Yossi Beilin wrote recently concerning Herzl:

If the world had been willing to accept the Jews as human beings, and if, as a result, the Jews had given up their Jewishness, no one would have been happier than he.... Herzl’s real dream was the American dream: Give the Jews the chance to live as human beings—and to assimilate because they have it so good. In many respects, he was the prophet of Jewish life in America much more than he was the prophet of the Jewish state....²³

Nor is this kind of reading of Herzl limited to Rubinstein and Beilin. Similar views are expressed frequently by Israeli cultural figures.²⁴

Yet it is important to recognize that the claim that Herzl wished to found a “state of Germans or Frenchmen of the Jewish race” did not originate with Herzl. He himself never made statements to this effect. To find such a description of his aims, one must go to the writings of his most unrelenting political rival, Ahad Ha’am, whose purpose in making such claims was to discredit Herzl among the traditional Russian Jews who were the largest constituency in Herzl’s Zionist Organization.²⁵ This does not mean that those who repeat this argument today do so out of improper motives. But since Ahad Ha’am outlived Herzl by twenty-three years—eventually moving to Palestine when it came under British rule—it is nevertheless true that

much of what is said today about Herzl's Jewishness is based on what was originally a politically motivated and not necessarily fair rendering of him. To take just one glaring example, no one who knew Herzl's thought reasonably well could have accused him of desiring a state comprised of members of the "Jewish race"—for the simple reason that Herzl consistently rejected the idea that the Jews were a race.²⁶ Instead, he believed that Jews were united *only by a common heritage and culture*, and it was this Jewish cultural identity that he saw as the cornerstone of Jewish nationalism.

To understand Herzl's views on this subject, one must begin with what he himself referred to as his own "return to Judaism."²⁷ As everyone knows, Herzl began his Zionist career as a thoroughly assimilated Jew. Nonetheless, this characterization is often used to imply, incorrectly, that he had no Jewish roots. In fact, Herzl went to a Jewish elementary school, and his father took him to Friday night services as a child. His grandfather, from whom Herzl may have absorbed the idea of the restoration of the Jewish people to their ancient independence, was an observant Jew, and a follower of R. Yehuda Alkai, one of the leading Jewish nationalists of the mid-nineteenth century. But it is nonetheless clear from Herzl's diaries and other sources that, before his embrace of Jewish nationalism at the age of thirty-five, he had become extremely distanced from almost anything distinctively "Jewish." It suffices to recall that on Christmas Eve 1895—*after* Herzl had spent months badgering Vienna's chief rabbi Moritz Guedemann about the idea of establishing a Jewish state—the rabbi walked into Herzl's living room to discover him lighting a Christmas tree. As Herzl writes in his diary:

I was just lighting the Christmas tree for my children when Guedemann arrived. He seemed upset by the "Christian" custom. Well, I will not let myself be pressured. But I don't mind if they call it a Hanuka tree—or the winter solstice.²⁸

The desire not to be "pressured" by rabbis was characteristic of Herzl's personal and political outlook. Yet at the same time, Herzl's growing attachment to the traditions of the Jewish people rapidly outstripped his wariness of

rabbis. “I am taking up once again the torn thread of the tradition of our people,” he noted in his diary,²⁹ and the more he pulled on this thread, the more sympathetic he became to Jewish custom. Indeed, two years after the incident with Guedemann, he published an essay entitled “The Menora,” in which he described the joy he felt at turning his back on Christmas, and for the first time lighting the traditional Hanuka candelabrum with his children. In this essay, Herzl described an unnamed German-Jewish intellectual—quite obviously Herzl himself—as someone who had “long since ceased to care about his Jewish origin or about the faith of his fathers.” Yet despite this distance, he wrote, he had always been “a man who deep in his soul felt the need to be a Jew.” And when he witnessed the rising tide of anti-Semitism around him, this need began to force its way to the surface. As he described the process of change in “The Menora”:

Gradually his soul became one bleeding wound. Now this secret psychic torment had the effect of steering him to its source, namely, his Jewishness, with the result that he experienced a change that might never have taken place in better days... He began to love Judaism with a great fervor. At first he did not fully acknowledge this... but finally it grew so powerful... that there was only one way out... namely, to return to Judaism.³⁰

Herzl describes how he struggled with himself, in the end realizing that even though he was distant from things Jewish, he at least had the opportunity to give his children a Jewish education. And this education was to begin with Hanuka, the festival of the Maccabees:

In previous years, he had let the festival... pass unobserved. Now, however, he used it as an occasion to provide his children with a beautiful memory for the future.... A menora was acquired.... The very sound of the name, which he now pronounced in front of the children every evening, gave him pleasure. Its sound was especially lovely when it came from the mouth of a child.

The first candle was lit and the origin of the holiday was retold: The miracle of the little lamp... as well as the story of the return from the Babylonian exile, of the Second Temple, of the Maccabees. Our friend told his children all he knew. It was not much, but for them it was enough. When the second candle was lit, they repeated what he had told them, and although they had learned it all from him, it seemed to him quite new and beautiful. In the days that followed, he could hardly wait for the evenings, which became ever brighter....

There came the eighth day, on which the entire row of lights is kindled.... A great radiance shone forth from the menorah. The eyes of the children sparkled. For our friend, the occasion became a parable for the kindling of a whole nation. First one candle... then another, and yet another.... When all the candles are ablaze, everyone must stop in amazement and rejoice at what has been wrought.³¹

This is not a tale told by a man who is opposed to the Jewish character of the Jews. On the contrary, the “return to Judaism” which was at the basis of Zionism was for Herzl a “great radiance,” and he was steadfast in his belief that “the greatest triumph of Zionism is having led a youth that already was lost to his people back to Judaism.”³²

Moreover, Herzl’s diaries show that this positive inclination towards the heritage of his people was by no means limited to the lighting of the Hanuka candelabrum. He similarly reports the respect—and sometimes the delight—with which he participated in other Jewish customs: Friday night services, being called up to read from the Tora, the traditional grace after meals, the Passover seder, his children’s recitation of a bedtime prayer in Hebrew.³³ He wrote sympathetically about the Jewish Sabbath, and emphatically about the symbolism of the Star of David.³⁴ He cited the Bible as the basis of the Jewish claim to Palestine.³⁵ His skepticism concerning the possibility of reviving Hebrew similarly gave way to enthusiasm, and he not only took lessons in Hebrew, but had his children tutored in the ancient language of the Jews.³⁶

Nor was Herzl an atheist—as is frequently claimed—and early on his diaries begin to reflect his struggles to explain why the idea of God should be retained, criticizing Spinoza’s deity as being too “inert”:

I want to bring up my children with what might be called the historical God.... I can conceive of an omnipresent will, for I see it at work in the physical world. I see it as I can see the functioning of a muscle. The world is the body and God is the functioning of it. The ultimate purpose I do not and need not know. For me it is enough that it is something higher....³⁷

Indeed, Herzl’s diaries, in which he scrupulously recorded his evolving feelings, often refer to God. And although these references are erratic, uncertain and generally embarrassed, they are sometimes also straightforward in the belief they express:

By means of our state, we can educate our people for tasks which still lie beyond our horizon. For God would not have preserved our people for so long if we did not have another destiny in the history of mankind.³⁸

Obviously, none of this means that Herzl became an Orthodox Jew, either in his observance or in his beliefs. Until his death at the age of forty-four, Herzl’s understanding of the Jewish faith remained fiercely independent of all movements. But his need to struggle with the Jewish tradition rather than to reject it outright rendered Herzl’s attitude to being a Jew so very different from the facile anti-Jewish views that are attributed to him. Certainly, he did not find Jewish customs and traditions and ideas *easy* to accept, but he was far from being an opponent of such traditions. On the contrary, he believed that his overexposure to non-Jewish culture had robbed him of the “spiritual counterpoise which our strong forefathers had possessed”—and this was an error he would not repeat with his own children. As he wrote in “The Menora”:

He had absorbed ineradicable elements from the cultures of the nations among which his intellectual pursuits had taken him.... This gave rise to

many doubts.... Perhaps the generation that had grown up under the influence of other cultures was no longer capable of that return [to Judaism] which he had discovered as the solution. But the next generation, provided it were given the right guidance early enough, would be able to do so. He therefore tried to make sure that his own children, at least, would be shown the right way. He was going to give them a Jewish education from the very beginning.³⁹

A man who considers it important that his children be “shown the right way” by receiving the Jewish education he himself had not received may be many things, but he is not a man attempting to bring up a family of “Germans or Frenchmen of the Jewish race.” No, Herzl believed that his children must be raised as Jews, so that they would not suffer the distress that comes of an over-rootedness in “non-Jewish customs.”

And far from seeing this as a personal matter for his family, Herzl understood that the raising of a nation of Jewish children, who would develop a *unique* Jewish character, was one of the essential reasons for founding a Jewish state. As he wrote in an essay called “Judaism,” which he published not long after the appearance of *The Jewish State*, the only path to the development of such a unique Jewish character was to regain the inner security possessed by past generations of Jews:

The atrocities of the Middle Ages were unprecedented, and the people who withstood those tortures must have had some great strength, an inner unity which we have lost. A generation which has grown apart from Judaism does not have this unity. It can neither rely upon our past nor look to our future. That is why we shall once more retreat into Judaism and never again permit ourselves to be thrown out of this fortress.... We shall thereby regain our lost inner wholeness and along with it a little character—our own character. Not a Marrano-like, borrowed, untruthful character, but our own.⁴⁰

These words were written at the very beginning of Herzl’s career as a Jewish public figure. In 1903, a year before his death, the Zionist leader returned

to this subject in a letter in which he scored Jewish life in the Western countries as being blighted not because of anti-Semitism, but because the possibility of developing a unique character and contributing to the world *as Jews* had been eradicated. As he wrote:

What political, social, material or moral influence do the Jews have on... the European peoples?... It may happen that people of Jewish descent exert a certain influence.... However, they do this only as individuals who deny any connection with their real national traditions. The Jews of today... strive for no greater aim than to live *unrecognized* among the other peoples.... They are better Anglo-Saxons than the English, more Gallic than the French, more German than the Germans. Only my comrades, the Zionists, wish to be Jewish Jews.⁴¹

IV

As is evident from his writings, Herzl hoped for the “return” of Western Jews to their heritage, “first one candle then another,” until this revival became a “great radiance.” But unlike Ahad Ha’am, Herzl did not see himself as the man who would dictate the exact content of this Jewish revival. On the contrary, Herzl consistently emphasized that both “freethinkers” and the most traditional Orthodox Jews had a place within the Jewish national movement.⁴² In order to make this possible, he resisted every effort to determine precisely what the “Jewishness” of the Jewish state would look like. Such premature determinations, he argued, would only serve to alienate one segment of Jewry or another.

This is among the reasons that *The Jewish State*, which is so rich in detail on political and economic subjects, is starkly lacking in particulars concerning the way in which the return to the Jewish heritage would express itself once the state had been established. Even where Herzl had something

important to say about the Jewish culture of the state, he speaks only in the vaguest terms so as to avoid unnecessary controversy. For example, when, in *The Jewish State*, he turns to the issue of establishing great Jewish religious centers to meet the “deep religious needs of our people,” he only mentions the crucial role of Mecca in the Islamic world, but is careful not to go further with the analogy. “I do not wish to offend anyone’s religious sensibilities with words that might be misinterpreted,” he writes.⁴³ Yet we know from his diaries that when Herzl later visited Jerusalem, he was still intent on making the city a powerful religious center that would be for the Jews what the city of Mecca was for Moslems.⁴⁴

But Herzl’s reticence in painting detailed pictures of what the Jewish culture of the state would look like did not prevent him from arguing for the Jewish particularism of the state *in principle*. Indeed, in *The Jewish State*, Herzl explicitly rejects Rousseau’s universally applicable citizens’ state (what is today referred to as a “state of its citizens”), arguing that no state actually receives its political mandate from a social contract among all its citizens of the type Rousseau envisioned. In fact, argued Herzl, the political guardianship of a people always comes into being when individuals motivated by “higher necessity” step forward to attempt to protect their people’s welfare.⁴⁵ In the case of the Jews, he proposed assembling a “Society of Jews,” to consist of influential Jewish leaders, which would undertake to negotiate with the European states for the creation of a new Jewish polity. In Herzl’s view, it was this Society of Jews that would itself become the sovereign Jewish state:

The Jews who espouse our idea of a state will rally around the Society of Jews. Thereby, they will give it the authority to speak in the name of the Jews and negotiate with governments on their behalf. To put it in the terminology of international law, the Society will be recognized as a state-creating power, and this in itself will mean the formation of the state.⁴⁶

And this new sovereign state, the Jewish state, would not be a “neutral” regime such as that envisioned by Rousseau. On the contrary, the Jewish state would be established with a particular purpose:

At present, the Jewish people is prevented by its dispersion from conducting its own political affairs. Yet it is in a condition of more or less severe distress in a number of places. It needs, above all things, a guardian.... And that is the Society of Jews... from which the public institutions of the Jewish state are to develop....⁴⁷

Thus, Herzl's new state was to be characterized by a specific and intrinsically Jewish mission: Serving as the guardian of the Jews. Of course, such a state could come to be characterized by various "Jewish" cultural attributes; for example, it might work to build up Jerusalem as a center of Jewish religious pilgrimage, as Herzl advocated. But such particularist characteristics were not the essence of what would make the state "Jewish." They would merely be *consequences* of the one central principle—that the Jewish state was to serve as the guardian of the Jewish people.

For an example of how this principle of Jewish guardianship would work, one can look to Herzl's formal testimony before the British Royal Commission on Alien Immigration in London in July 1902. The commission was considering the imposition of restrictions on Russian-Jewish immigration—restrictions that Herzl believed would mean a resounding defeat for Jewish interests, signaling to the world that even a liberal country such as England could not tolerate more than a certain number of Jews.⁴⁸ He therefore testified that Britain could avoid the need to enact such anti-Jewish legislation by assisting in the creation of a self-governing Jewish colony, whose policies would make it "naturally" attractive to Jews, "for they would arrive there as citizens just because they are Jews, and not as aliens."⁴⁹ Although the Zionist Organization, the real-life version of the "Society of Jews," had not yet acquired a foothold in Palestine, Herzl was already acting as guardian of the interests of the Jewish people. By publicizing his desire to grant automatic citizenship for immigrant Jews, he was demonstrating how his embryonic Jewish state could do much more than serve as a safe haven for Jews fleeing persecution. It could also assist Jewry in Britain and other countries by reducing the pressure for radical anti-Jewish "solutions" by their respective governments; and at the same time, those Russian Jews who truly wished to go to England

rather than to the Jewish state might be able to keep the right to do so. Herzl's intercession with Britain thus served as an example of how the Jewish state would be able to pursue policies that would benefit Jews the world over, whether they chose to immigrate to this state or not.

The workings of the principle of Jewish guardianship were also evident in documents that Herzl and his colleagues prepared as the basis of negotiations with the imperial powers. Almost from the establishment of the Zionist Organization, Herzl was active in developing various versions of what was in those days called a "charter"—essentially a constitutional document describing the aims and powers of a government operating in a given territory with the sanction of Britain or one of the other European powers. On the basis of such a charter, Herzl expected to found a Jewish colony or settlement as a prelude to full Jewish independence. Since these drafts described the actual terms under which the Zionists hoped to establish a Jewish state, they are among the more compelling indicators that we have of the kind of state Herzl wanted to establish.

Of these, the most significant is the proposed charter submitted by Herzl to the British government on July 13, 1903, which led to the offer by the British Foreign Office to negotiate over the establishment of a Jewish colony in British East Africa. (The Zionists had been hoping to persuade the British to allow them to establish the settlement in the British-controlled Sinai Peninsula, but this option had fallen through two months earlier.) Prepared by the English Zionist leaders Leopold Greenberg, Joseph Cowen and Israel Zangwill, together with the British lawyer and parliamentarian David Lloyd George—later the prime minister who would actually establish Palestine as the Jewish national home—this draft charter provided that:

1. A "Jewish settlement" would be established which would permit "the settling of Jews under conditions favorable to their retention and encouragement of the Jewish national idea."

2. The Jewish settlement would be "founded under laws and regulations adopted for the well-being of the Jewish people."

3. The Jewish settlement would have a “popular government... which shall be Jewish in character and with a Jewish governor....”

4. It would follow English law except where the colony made “alteration and amendments therein based upon Jewish law.”

5. The settlement would have a Jewish name and a Jewish flag.⁵⁰

Thus the colony that Herzl envisioned as eventually gaining independence was not to be a neutral non-Jewish polity that happened to have a majority of Jews. On the contrary, it would have Jewish purposes—the advancement of the “Jewish national idea” and the “well-being of the Jewish people” as a whole. To this end it would have Jewish leaders, a governmental form Jewish in character, and the ability to adopt the provisions of Jewish law. And these Jewish characteristics would be represented by particularist symbols such as a Jewish flag. As Herzl wrote to Max Nordau a few days after this draft charter was submitted to the British government: “We colonize on a national basis, with a flag... and with self-government. The draft charter that we submit today on July 13 on Downing Street contains these demands... and the Jewish nation is there.”⁵¹ (Although the British government did not commit itself to the details of the plan, the Foreign Office responded favorably to the plan in principle, agreeing to entertain favorably proposals for a “Jewish colony or settlement” whose purpose would be to enable Jews “to observe their national customs.” A Jewish governor and Jewish legislation in “religious and purely domestic matters” were also accepted as reasonable.⁵² Due to opposition within the ZO to any negotiations with Britain over settlements outside of Palestine, these discussions with the British were suspended until 1914 when it became evident that Britain might invade Palestine.)

In sum, Herzl’s Jewish state was one whose purpose was to serve as the legal and political guardian of the interests of the Jewish people, and it was this purpose that made the theoretical state he envisioned a “Jewish” one. Nor did Herzl pursue a different course in practice: It was the principle of Jewish guardianship that dictated the policies of the Zionist Organization, the Jewish “government in exile”; and it was this principle that characterized

the proposed charter the Zionists submitted to Britain, which envisioned a government that would be “Jewish in character” and that would promulgate “laws and regulations adopted for the well-being of the Jewish people.”

On the other hand, a “state of the Jews” that would have been “neutral”—which is to say, *non-Jewish*—with regard to the character of its government and the purposes of its policies, would not have served Herzl’s purposes at all. In fact, it is fair to say that it would have been worthless to him.

V

As evidence that Herzl was an advocate of a neutral “state of the Jews,” Israeli intellectuals invariably point to his argument in *The Jewish State*, to the effect that the Jews have no intention of establishing a theocracy. Through endless repetition, this passage has surely become the best known in Herzl’s writings, and it is constantly being pressed into service as proof that Herzl did not want a Jewish state; or else that he wanted to see a complete “separation” between the state and the Jewish religion; or that he was opposed to the involvement of rabbis in politics. But *none* of these claims have a basis in Herzl’s thought, and none of them can reasonably be read into the passage in question.

The famous “theocracy” passage reads as follows:

Shall we, then, end up by having a theocracy? No!... We shall permit no theocratic inclinations on the part of our clergy to raise their heads. We shall know how to restrict them to their temples, just as we shall restrict our professional soldiers to their barracks. The army and the clergy shall be honored to the extent that their noble functions require and deserve it. But they will have no privileged voice in the state... for otherwise they might cause trouble externally and internally.⁵³

Herzl here compares the rabbinate to the officers of the military, arguing that both have “noble” functions within the state, but that neither should be permitted to extend their authority beyond its proper sphere. It does not take too much effort, however, to recognize that this passage in no way advocates a “separation of religion and state.” No state in Europe had attempted a separation of “military and state,” of course, and if the rabbinate were to have a place in the Jewish state similar to that of the military, then Herzl was in fact arguing for the opposite of such a separation: He was assuming a government such as that familiar from Britain, Germany and Austria of his own day, in which religion, like the military, was politically subordinated to the government of the state, but was nevertheless an integral part of it.⁵⁴ The actual meaning of this passage is that the sphere of state policy belongs to the elected authorities, and that those fulfilling other functions in the state—including generals and chief rabbis—should be firmly prevented from usurping the authority to make such policy.

What, then, did Herzl actually believe concerning the role of the Jewish religion and its representatives in the Jewish state?

One cannot answer this question without first recognizing the place of Judaism in Herzl’s understanding of the Jewish people. As presented in *The Jewish State* and elsewhere, Herzl’s theory of nationality was based on the belief that peoples appear within history as the result of adversity.⁵⁵ That is, it is the struggle against a common enemy that fuses a great mass of individuals into a people. This view has often been criticized as being exclusively “negative,” but it is really nothing of the sort. On the contrary, as is evident from his essay “The Menora,” Herzl believed that this adversity is to an important extent the catalyst for the creation of the *positive* content of civilizations—the struggle of the Maccabees and the Hanuka festival being an example of precisely this phenomenon.

An important concomitant of Herzl’s theory of nationality is that if peoples are created in the struggle against adversity, then there is no simple formula—neither land, nor language, nor race, nor even a combination of these—that will exhaustively describe the unifying characteristics of all

peoples. That is, not every people would necessarily have the same kind of positive elements at the basis of its civilization. Indeed, a people such as the Germans might be divided religiously and geographically, and its essence might be best expressed in the German language. The Swiss, on the other hand, lacked a common language, but were nevertheless united by history and territory. And the centerpiece of the positive Jewish civilization that unites the Jewish people, according to Herzl, is not language or territory, but *religion*—“We recognize ourselves as a nation by our faith.”⁵⁶

This is not to say that Herzl opposed efforts to forge Jewish culture beyond the bounds of religion—the revival of the Hebrew language, Jewish art, Jewish literature and a Jewish academia. Herzl supported them all, and he wished to contribute to the Jewish cultural revival himself.⁵⁷ He hoped to write a biblical drama, to be entitled *Moses*,⁵⁸ and he spoke to his colleagues about his dream of establishing a “neo-Jewish” style in architecture in the Jewish state, even drawing sketches for them so that they could see what he had in mind.⁵⁹ But unlike Ahad Ha’am, who believed he could change the core content of the Jewish people by overthrowing the Jewish religion and replacing it with a “modernist” Jewish culture, Herzl adopted as a political principle the idea that Zionism must “hold tradition sacred.”⁶⁰ (Or, as he liked to say, “I am not planning anything harmful to religion, *but just the opposite....*”⁶¹) Every individual could make his own contribution to Jewish civilization, but it was not neo-Jewish architecture that was going to be at the heart of the Jewish national identity. It would be Judaism.

The significance of this idea could easily be seen after the founding of the Zionist Organization in 1897. Herzl established the ZO as a democratic movement with a mass membership and annual elections. The Zionist Organization granted women the vote—at a time when virtually no democratic state had yet done so⁶²—and Herzl’s support for other liberal principles, especially freedom of conscience, is well known. As he wrote in *The Jewish State*, individuals belonging to other peoples or faiths would find themselves welcome and well treated in his state: “Should it happen that men of other creeds

and other nationalities come to live among us, we will accord them honorable protection and equality before the law.”⁶³

And yet despite this concern for the welfare of the stranger, Herzl was from his first steps as a Jewish nationalist unwilling to accommodate Jews who had converted to Christianity, whom he considered to have betrayed not only the Jewish faith, but the Jewish *people*.⁶⁴ Thus while he was adamant that the Zionist Organization and the Jewish state would be willing to take *every* Jew—“all beggars, all peddlers”⁶⁵—he was overtly hostile to Jews who had betrayed the faith of their fathers:

Let the cowardly, assimilated, baptized Jews remain.... We faithful Jews, however, will once again become great.⁶⁶

Nor was this just rhetoric. It was policy. The Zionist Organization would not accept baptized Jews as members.⁶⁷ Despite having been established on a democratic basis, it nonetheless retained this crucial element of the aristocratic republic that Herzl had wished to found: The ZO was the political guardian of the Jews, and would one day become the government of the Jewish state.⁶⁸ And a person could hardly be expected to serve as guardian of the Jews if he could not understand that in apostasy he had betrayed his people.

Thus for Herzl, loyalty to the Jewish religion was at the heart of Jewish nationalism. And it was this fact, so central to his thought and his politics, which dictated the place he envisioned for organized Judaism in the Jewish state. Indeed, far from being removed from politics, Herzl expected the rabbis of all persuasions (“I want to work with the rabbis, all rabbis,” he wrote⁶⁹) to be *central* to the Jewish state, both in the effort to bring about the immigration of Jewry, and in the subsequent effort to build the Jewish homeland. As he wrote in his diary,

The rabbis will be pillars of my organization, and I shall honor them for it. They will arouse the people, instruct them... and enlighten them....⁷⁰

He envisioned the rabbis—whom he referred to hopefully as “our spiritual leaders,” and even as “the leaders of the Jewish people”⁷¹— playing a critical political role, with immigration being conducted on the basis of “local groups,” each one centered around a rabbi who would serve as the chairman of the committee organized to lead the local group. The rabbis would be the leaders of every Jewish community, spreading word of the great event of the return to Palestine from their pulpits:

The appeal [to emigrate] will be included in the religious service, and properly so. We recognize our historic unity only by the faith of our fathers.... The rabbis will then regularly receive the announcements of the Society [of Jews]... and they will share them with and explain them to their congregations. Israel will pray for us...⁷²

Similarly, prayer services would be an important part of preparing the Jewish immigrants on the journey to Palestine.⁷³ Moreover, he hoped that rabbis would use their influence to apply pressure on recalcitrant wealthy Jews to choose the right path and return to their homeland with their people.⁷⁴

Established religion was also meant to have a role in the Jewish state itself. Herzl’s theory of religious centers, mentioned earlier, was part of a greater picture. As he wrote in *The Jewish State*: “We shall not give up our cherished customs. We shall find them again.”⁷⁵ And in Herzl’s estimation, the Jewish state should do what it could to assist in this process. Thus his diaries repeatedly reveal his intention for the state to appoint leading rabbinic figures as the rabbis of cities or regions, and he noted that these would receive a salary from the state.⁷⁶ Similarly, each town would have its synagogue, which would be built by the Jewish authorities so that “the synagogue will be visible from afar, for the old faith is the only thing that has kept us together.”⁷⁷ The great Temple in Jerusalem would also be restored.⁷⁸ Up until his death, Herzl continued to take an interest in other efforts that might similarly enrich the religious drawing power of the new state, including archaeological efforts to find the biblical ark of the covenant.⁷⁹

Nor was Herzl's pro-religious orientation contradicted in any way by his politics as the leader of the Zionist Organization. Much to the consternation of young radicals such as Chaim Weizmann and Martin Buber, Herzl's political strategy was characterized by an alliance with Jewish religion and with religious Jews from his earliest days at the head of the ZO—an alliance that expressed itself, for example, in his speech before the Third Zionist Congress, in which he argued that the poor Jews of the Russian empire would be “the best Zionists, because among them the old national tradition is still un-forgotten, [and] because they have strong religious feelings....”⁸⁰ He was even involved in the founding of the Mizrahi, the Zionist Orthodox party, which he hoped would serve as a counterweight to the growing strength of Ahad Ha'am's followers.⁸¹

In short, the claim that Herzl's *Der Judenstaat* aimed at separating Jewish religion from the state is without basis in fact. Herzl did not see himself as a religious man, but his belief in the crucial role played by religion in the state—and especially his belief in the importance of Judaism for the Jewish state—made him an ally of the Jewish faith throughout his political career. And while his firm belief in freedom of conscience would likely have made him a supporter of substantial pluralism among rabbinical functionaries of the state, this does not alter the fact that Herzl believed in Judaism as the established religion of the Jewish state.

VI

The claim that Herzl never intended to establish a Jewish state, but only a neutral “state of the Jews,” is far from being just an academic question. It is an important part of the ideological and political efforts to delegitimize the concept of the Jewish state today. Obviously, this does not mean that everyone who is propagating the idea that Herzl sought a “state of the Jews” has

signed on to all of the ideological implications that have been hitched to this supposed historical fact. Indeed, this idea has gone so far that by now even those who wish to see Israel remain a Jewish state are found repeating the fallacy of Herzl's "state of the Jews," thus becoming unwitting accomplices in the effort to discard the political ideal they support.

For example, Claude Klein, a professor of law at the Hebrew University, has become so convinced that Herzl wished to establish a "state of the Jews"—and that the world must understand this—that in 1990 he went so far as to release a new French-language edition of the book in Paris, in which he changed the title from the one that Herzl gave it to a title of his own devising. Thus after ninety-four years of being published under the title of *L'État Juif* ("The Jewish State"), one can now buy the Claude Klein edition, which sports the title *L'État des Juifs* ("The State of the Jews"). Klein does not offer any new historical research to demonstrate that Herzl was unsatisfied with the original French title. Indeed, the only evidence Klein brings in support of changing the title is the famous theocracy section, in which Herzl compares the role of the rabbis in the state to that of the army. "There can be no doubt," concludes Klein. "It is definitely about a state of the Jews, not about a Jewish state."⁸²

Since then, Klein's innovation has been picked up by an American publisher as well, and as of 1996, one can for the first time buy an English-language edition of Herzl's *Der Judenstaat*, under the newly invented title *The Jews' State*.⁸³

This meddlesome retouching of Zionist history may have been conducted out of pure motives. But in the end it serves only one purpose: It renders a not insignificant service to the ongoing war to discredit the idea of the Jewish state. Obviously, those who wish to see the State of Israel change its course have every right to express their political preferences, and to work for a new non-Jewish Israel that will be more to their liking. But an honest appraisal of Herzl's ideas leaves little room to involve his name in this effort. Not only did the founder of political Zionism create this term, using it as the title of his book by that name. He also spent the last years of his life working

to popularize this expression throughout the world. And this was not merely a semantic choice. For Herzl was also unequivocally committed to the establishment of an intrinsically Jewish state: One that would not only have a Jewish majority, but that would be Jewish in its purposes, government and constitution, as well as in its relationship to the Jewish people and the Jewish faith. Indeed, when examined in the context of Herzl's writings and political activities, it becomes clear that the ideal of the Jewish state, as advocated by David Ben-Gurion and the mainstream of the Zionist movement, and as expressed in Israel's Declaration of Independence, is perfectly in keeping with Herzl's vision of a Jewish state.

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Notes

This article was written with the assistance of Evelyne Geurtz.

In the notes that follow, I have endeavored to refer the reader to English-language sources wherever these are available. In cases where the English translation was not adequate, I have supplied the foreign-language citation first, and the material available in English second.

1. The Israeli government felt no need to mark this, the decisive event on the road to Jewish national independence, nor did it bother to send a representative to the commemorative events in Basel (where Herzl's Zionist Congresses were held) which had been organized by the Swiss. The Canton of Basel and the University of Basel, on the other hand, were at the forefront of organizing several days of events with the participation of the Jewish Agency. *Ma'ariv*, August 28, 1997. See also *The Jerusalem Post*, August 26, 1997; Calev Ben-David, "Zionism, R.I.P.," in *The Jerusalem Post Magazine*, August 29, 1997; Israel Harel, "Prophet of Truth," in *Ha'aretz*, August 29, 1997; Aharon Papo, "The Great Lost Opportunity," in

Ma'ariv, September 11, 1997; Yoram Hazony, "The Jewish State at 100," in *AZURE* 2, Spring 1997, pp. 17-46.

2. Amnon Rubinstein, *The Zionist Dream Revisited: From Herzl to Gush Emunim and Back* (New York: Schocken, 1984), p. 11.

3. Shulamit Aloni in "Zionism Here and Now," a film produced by the Diaspora Museum, 1997. [Hebrew]

4. Moshe Zimmermann, "The Historians' Debate: The German Experiment and the Israeli Experience," in *Theory and Criticism* 8, Summer 1996, p. 102. [Hebrew]

5. Amos Oz, "A Loaded Wagon and an Empty Wagon? Thoughts on the Culture of Israel," in *Yahadut Hofshit*, October 1997, p. 5. [Hebrew]

For other, similar arguments, see David Kretzmer, "A Jewish and Democratic State: Between Paradox and Harmony," in *Ravgoni* 2 (July 1998), p. 22 [Hebrew]; David Vital, "A Prince of the Jews," in the *Times Literary Supplement*, June 7, 1996; David Vital, "Zionism as Revolution? Zionism as Rebellion?" in *Modern Judaism*, October 1998, p. 206; comments by Ruth Gavison in Ron Margolin, ed., *The State of Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1999), p. 46 [Hebrew]; Gideon Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology* (Hanover: Brandeis, 1995), pp. 93-95; Michael Harsegor, "Has the Zionist Revolution Failed?" in *Al Hamishmar*, December 4, 1987; Claude Klein's introduction to Theodor Herzl, *L'État des Juifs*, ed. Claude Klein (Paris: Editions de la Découverte, 1990), pp. 10-11 [French]; Aviad Kleinberg, "A Nostalgic Glimpse into the Future," in *Ha'aretz*, June 2, 1999.

In some cases, these authors attempt to describe Herzl's overall view of the state through a combined reading of Herzl's practical program in *The Jewish State* along with the society depicted in Herzl's utopian novel *Altneuland*. The assumption that one can read the two books as being of a piece is not, however, sustainable. Herzl's this-worldly "Jewish state" is radically different from the end-of-days vision of a "New Society" in *Altneuland*, which is not even a "state" in any sense in which we are familiar with the term.

6. In fact, the identity of the term "Jewish state" with Israel was so self-evident that the Declaration used the term as though it were the very definition of the new state: "We herewith declare the establishment of a *Jewish state* in the land of Israel, which is the State of Israel.... The People's Administration will constitute the provisional government of *the Jewish state*, which will be called by the name Israel." Similarly striking was the speech of Meir Wilner, representative of the Communist Party, at the assembly that ratified the text of the Declaration of Independence. As Wilner said: "All of us are united in our appreciation of this great day for the Jewish settlement and for the Jewish people—the day of the termination of the Mandate and the declaration of the independent *Jewish state*." Emphasis added. In the third meeting of the Peoples' Council, May 14, 1948. Minutes of the Peoples' Council, vol. 1, pp. 13-15. [Hebrew]

7. Emphasis added. In addition, the Declaration uses variations on the term “state of the Jewish people” (*medinato shel ha’am hayehudi*). Like the term “Jewish state,” the concept of Israel as the “state of the Jewish people” is today understood as representing the intrinsically Jewish character of the state, since it suggests a particularistic link with one specific people.

8. Yeshayahu Leibowitz, “At the End of Forty Years,” in *Politika*, Fall 1988. [Hebrew] See also Jacob Talmon, “Herzl’s *The Jewish State* after Seventy Years,” in *The Age of Violence* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1974), pp. 143-184. [Hebrew]

9. Mordechai Bar-On, “Zionism into Its Second Century: A Stock-Taking,” in Keith Kyle and Joel Peters, eds., *Whither Israel? The Domestic Challenges* (New York: Royal Institute of International Affairs and I.B. Tauris, 1993), p. 34. On Bar-On’s reading, the “state of the Jews” does, however, include retaining the Law of Return, which is understood as related to maintaining a Jewish majority.

10. Amos Oz, “A Loaded Wagon,” p. 5. For a more general discussion of the decay of the ideal of the “Jewish state” in Israeli culture, see Yoram Hazony, *The Jewish State: The Struggle for Israel’s Soul* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

11. Diary entry, January 19, 1896. Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, ed. Raphael Patai, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Herzl Press, 1960), p. 286 (hereafter “Herzl diary”).

12. Herzl diary, July 10 and 27, 1896, pp. 414, 443.

13. Later editions of the English version were changed to *The Jewish State* to match the specific form of the German and French.

14. The principal backers of Jewish settlement activity whom Herzl wished to attract were Baron Maurice de Hirsch and Baron Edmond de Rothschild, both of Paris. For the centrality of English Jews, see Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Herzl Press, 1970), p. 94.

15. Only in 1915, eleven years after Herzl’s death, was the Yiddish title adjusted to match the German, and thus became *Der Yiddenstot*.

16. During Herzl’s lifetime, there were also three other editions of the book: Russian, Romanian and Bulgarian—*Yevreyskoye gosudarstvo* (Russian; 1896); *Statul evreilor* (Romanian; trans. Martin Spinner, 1896); *Evreyska drzhava* (Bulgarian; trans. Joshua Caleb and Karl Herbst, 1896). The Russian and Bulgarian translations are entitled “The Jewish State”; the Romanian title means “The State of the Jews.”

17. See, for example, Herzl to Solomon Joseph Solomon, May 12, 1896; and Herzl to Wilhelm Gross, September 18, 1896, p. 139. Both in the new German-language edition of Herzl’s letters and diaries. Theodor Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebuecher* [Letters and Diaries] (Berlin: Propylaeen, 1983-1996), vol. 4, pp. 103, 139.

18. Herzl diary, August 30, 1899, p. 869.

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19. Herzl diary, August 30, 1899, p. 869.
20. Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, trans. Michael Berkowicz (Warsaw: Tushia, 1896), p. 67. [Hebrew]
21. Ahad Ha'am, "The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem," in Ahad Ha'am, *Ten Essays on Zionism and Judaism*, trans. Leon Simon (London: Routledge, 1922), pp. 45-47.
22. Rubinstein, *The Zionist Dream Revisited*, pp. 8-10.
23. Yossi Beilin, *The Death of Our Uncle in America: Jews in the Twenty-First Century* (Tel Aviv: Yedi'ot Aharonot, 1999), pp. 45-48. [Hebrew] Herzl explicitly says that he does not desire assimilation for the Jews because "our national character is too famous in history... and too noble to make its decline desirable." Herzl, *The Jewish State*, p. 48.
24. For similar presentations of Herzl, see Tom Segev, "The First Post-Zionist," in *Ha'arets*, April 3, 1996; Rachel Elbaum-Dror interviewed in *Kol Ha'ir*, March 22, 1996.
25. Scholars who have studied Ahad Ha'am's attacks on Herzl carefully have found it difficult not to notice the effects of his political aims on his judgments of Herzl. See Steven J. Zipperstein, *Evasive Prophet: Ahad Ha'am and the Origins of Zionism* (Berkeley: University of California, 1993), p. 128f; Yosef Goldstein, *Ahad Ha'am: A Biography* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1992), pp. 243f. [Hebrew]
26. Herzl diary, November 21, 1895, p. 276.
27. In Herzl's speech before the First Zionist Congress, he famously said that "Zionism is a return to Judaism even before there is a return to the Jewish land." Minutes of the First Zionist Congress in Basel, August 29-31, 1897 (Prague: Barissa, 1911). [German] Cf. Theodor Herzl, *Zionist Writings: Essays and Addresses*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Herzl Press, 1973), vol. 1, p. 133. The German word translated here as "Judaism" is *Judentum*, which can also be translated as "Jewishness." As is clear from my discussion below, Herzl would not likely have distinguished between the two terms.
28. Herzl diary, December 24, 1895, p. 285.
29. Herzl diary, June 10, 1895, p. 64.
30. Herzl, "The Menora," in *Die Welt*, December 31, 1897. Cf. Herzl, *Zionist Writings*, vol. 1, p. 203.
31. Herzl, "Menora." Cf. Herzl, *Zionist Writings*, vol. 1, pp. 204-206.
32. Herzl to Chaim S. Schor, January 30, 1900. Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebuecher*, vol. 5, pp. 302-303.
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33. Herzl diary, June 2, 1895, November 23, 1895, March 29, 1896, September 6, 1897, January 10, 1901, pp. 11, 278, 317, 588, 1040.

34. Theodor Herzl, "The Congress," in *Die Welt*, August 26, 1898, translated in Herzl, *Zionist Writings*, vol. 2, p. 13; Herzl to the Zionists of America, July 5, 1901, in Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebuecher*, vol. 6, pp. 241-242.

35. Theodor Herzl, "For a Jewish State," in *The Jewish Chronicle*, July 6, 1896, translated in Herzl, *Zionist Writings*, vol. 1, p. 38; address before the Second Zionist Congress, August 28, 1898, translated in Herzl, *Zionist Writings*, vol. 2, p. 19; address before the Fourth Zionist Congress, August 13, 1900, translated in Herzl, *Zionist Writings*, vol. 2, p. 153. Cf. Herzl's description of the return of the Jews to Palestine as a "holy moment." Herzl to the Zionists of America, July 5, 1901, in Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebuecher*, vol. 6, pp. 241-242. See also his treatment of the position of women in traditional Judaism, in an address before a Vienna women's group on January 12, 1901. Translated as "Women and Zionism," in Herzl, *Zionist Writings*, vol. 2, p. 160.

36. Michael Berkowicz, "Herzl and Hebrew," in Meyer Weisgal, ed., *Theodor Herzl: A Memorial* (New York: The New Palestine, 1929), p. 74; Shlomo Haramati, "Next Year in Hebrew," in *Ha'aretz*, March 26, 1996.

37. Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebuecher*, vol. 2, p. 241. Cf. Herzl diary, August 18, 1895, p. 231. Herzl's diaries frequently refer to God, although it is clear that he is self-conscious about this. The first time that he speaks of the consequences of Zionism being "a gift of God," he immediately stops himself to explain: "When I say God, I don't mean to offend the freethinkers. As far as I am concerned, they can use World Spirit..." Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebuecher*, vol. 2, p. 124. Cf. Herzl diary, June 12, 1895, p. 96.

38. Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebuecher*, vol. 2, pp. 128-129. Cf. Herzl diary, June 14, 1895, p. 101. See also June 15, 1895, pp. 165, 183. On the other hand, in his political activities, he emphasized that he was not "a religious man," but a "freethinker." See Herzl to Guedemann, July 21, 1895, p. 205; Herzl diary, November 26, 1895, p. 283.

39. Herzl, "Menora." Cf. Herzl, *Zionist Writings*, vol. 1, p. 204.

40. Theodor Herzl, "Judaism," in *Oesterreichische Wochenschrift*, November 13, 1896. Cf. Herzl, *Zionist Writings*, vol. 1, pp. 57-58.

41. Emphasis added. Herzl to unknown, June 9, 1903. Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebuecher*, vol. 7, pp. 148-149. Similarly, see Herzl's statement before the British Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, July 7, 1902, in which he testified, regarding the Jews of the proposed Jewish national territory, that, "I am convinced they would develop a distinct Jewish cult[ure]—national characteristics and national aspirations...." Reprinted in *Zionist Writings*, vol. 2, p. 186.

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42. Herzl, *The Jewish State*, p. 88.
43. Herzl, *The Jewish State*, pp. 87-88. See also Herzl diary, June 15, 1895, p. 155. In a letter, Herzl explains that he decided not to elaborate on this point in *The Jewish State* after a rabbi had told him that further discussion might give offense to the pious. See Herzl to Ahron Marcus, May 8, 1896. *Briefe und Tagebuecher*, vol. 7, pp. 607-608.
44. Herzl diary, October 31, 1898, p. 747.
45. Herzl, *The Jewish State*, pp. 91f; Theodor Herzl, "A 'Solution of the Jewish Question,'" in *The Jewish Chronicle*, January 17, 1896. See also Herzl diary, June 7 and 11, 1895, pp. 41, 80.
46. Herzl, *The Jewish State*, p. 51. The flag of the Society of Jews would likewise become the flag of the new state. Herzl diary, June 12, 1895, p. 91.
47. Theodor Herzl, *Der Judenstaat* (Vienna: Breitenstein, 1896), pp. 69-71. Cf. Herzl, *The Jewish State*, pp. 94-95.
48. In retrospect, we know that Herzl's instincts were right; the imposition of immigration restrictions by England marked the beginning of a general policy shift in the West that was to culminate in the failure to provide a haven for Jews during the Holocaust.
49. See Herzl's opening statement before the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, July 7, 1902. Reprinted in *Zionist Writings*, vol. 2, p. 186.
50. See Oskar K. Rabinowicz, "New Light on the East Africa Scheme," in Israel Cohen, ed., *The Rebirth of Israel: A Memorial Tribute to Paul Goodman* (London: Goldstein and Sons, 1952), pp. 81-91. Almost all of the Jewish provisions in the draft charter submitted to the British government on July 13 had been included in draft charters that Herzl and his colleagues had been working on for months. See, for example, Greenberg's draft charter for a Jewish settlement in Sinai, dated February 10, 1903. Central Zionist Archives, H 842. Cf. Herzl diary, April 2, 1903, p. 1460.
51. Herzl to Nordau, July 13, 1903. Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebuecher*, vol. 7, p. 208.
52. Sir Clement Hill to Leopold Greenberg, August 14, 1903. Michael Heymann, ed., *The Uganda Controversy* (Jerusalem: Hasifria Hatzionit, 1997), vol. 2, p. 124. [Hebrew]
53. Herzl, *Der Judenstaat*, p. 75. Cf. Herzl, *The Jewish State*, p. 100.
54. See Herzl diary, June 15, 1895, p. 104.
55. Herzl, *The Jewish State*, p. 49.
56. Herzl diary, June 9, 1895, p. 56.
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57. "If I should live so long..." Herzl wrote, "I would like to begin work on this spiritual regeneration...." Herzl to Carl Friedrich Heman, October 11, 1899. Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebuecher*, vol. 5, pp. 226-227. See also Herzl to Emil Eisner, September 25, 1900, in Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebuecher*, vol. 6, p. 46.

58. Herzl diary, March 26, 1898, pp. 623-624. Herzl also mentions a "neo-Jewish" style in theater. See entry of April 25, 1897, p. 538.

59. Herzl diary, June 8, 1895 and July 10, 1898, pp. 45, 645.

60. Herzl diary, June 11 and 14, 1895, pp. 72, 149.

61. Emphasis added. Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebuecher*, vol. 2, p. 135. Cf. Herzl diary, June 16, 1895, p. 109.

62. Minutes of the Second Zionist Congress in Basel, August 28-31, 1898 (Vienna: Industrie, 1898), p. 239. [German]

63. Herzl, *The Jewish State*, p. 100; Herzl diary, June 15, 1895, p. 171. Similarly: "Make your state in such a way that the stranger will feel comfortable among you." Herzl diary, August 26, 1899, p. 856.

64. See, for example, Herzl diary, August 10, 1895, pp. 227-228.

65. Herzl diary, June 8, 1895, p. 44. See also Herzl diary, June 6, 7, 9, 13, and 15, 1895, pp. 35, 38, 55, 135, 160.

66. Herzl diary, June 7, 1895, p. 36.

67. Max I. Bodenheimer, *Prelude to Israel*, trans. Israel Cohen (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1963), p. 140.

68. As he told the assembled delegates at the Zionist Congress: "Our Congress must live forever, not only until we are redeemed from our age-old sufferings, but even more so afterwards." Speech before the First Zionist Congress, August 29, 1897, p. 19. Minutes of the First Zionist Congress, p. 19. Cf. Herzl, *Zionist Writings*, vol. 1, p. 138.

69. Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebuecher*, vol. 2, p. 135. Cf. Herzl diary, June 16, 1895, p. 109.

70. Herzl diary, June 15, 1895, p. 104.

71. Herzl, *The Jewish State*, p. 81; Herzl diary, June 14, 1895, p. 151; Herzl to the Theological Society of the Students of the Israelite Theological Educational Establishment of Vienna, December 7, 1901, in Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebuecher*, vol. 6, p. 379.

72. Herzl, *The Jewish State*, p. 81; Herzl diary, June 14, 1895, p. 151.

73. Herzl, *The Jewish State*, p. 71.

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74. Herzl diary, June 15, 1895, p. 103.
75. Herzl, *The Jewish State*, p. 39.
76. Herzl diary, June 6 and 15, 1895, pp. 34, 37, 171.
77. Herzl, *The Jewish State*, p. 59.
78. Herzl, "A 'Solution of the Jewish Question,'" in *The Jewish Chronicle*, January 17, 1896, in *Zionist Writings*, vol. 1, p. 27; Theodor Herzl, "Zionism," in *Zionist Writings*, vol. 2, p. 116. The article was originally written for publication in *North American Review*, but was never published. It was then published in Leon Kellner's German edition of Herzl's writings in 1934. Leon Kellner, *Theodor Herzl: Gesammelte Zionistische Werke* (Tel Aviv: Hotza'a Ivrit, 1934). [German]
79. Ernst Pawel, *The Labyrinth of Exile: A Life of Theodor Herzl* (London: Collins Harvill, 1989), p. 361.
80. Speech before the Third Zionist Congress, August 15, 1899. Minutes of the Third Zionist Congress in Basel, August 15-18, 1899 (Vienna: Eretz Israel Organization, 1899), p. 8. [German] Cf. Herzl, *Zionist Writings*, vol. 2, p. 107. For a discussion of Herzl's alliance with religious Jewry, see Ehud Luz, *Parallels Meet: Religion and Nationalism in the Early Zionist Movement (1882-1904)* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1988), pp. 141-142; Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1996), p. 15.
81. Joseph Adler, "Religion and Herzl: Fact and Fable," in *Herzl Year Book 4* (New York: Herzl Press, 1961-1962), pp. 298-300; Pawel, *Labyrinth*, p. 453.
82. Herzl, *L'État des Juifs*, pp. 10-11.
83. Theodor Herzl, *The Jews' State*, ed. Henk Overberg (Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1997).