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CLAUDE DUVERNOY

THE PRINCE AND THE PROPHET

Translated from French original of 1966 by
By Jack Joffe
(Revised and indexed Version 1.1)

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To my father
Who according to the Biblical precept
Did consecrate me on the day of my birth
To the service of God
And the love of Christ.

Contents: see page 151

Front cover: Theodeore Herzl, the Prince

Back cover: William Hechler, the Prophet

PREFACE

With the title of Claude Duvernoy's book, the reader is directed at once to the exceptional man who played a central role in the life of Theodore Herzl. Page after page, one's attention is held by the intimate rhythm which gives to this book its tension and value, and the reader will become aware of the "folly" which possessed Reverend William Hechler. Without this folly, attentive to messianic signs, without his generosity, his patience and his efficient friendship, without the certitude of sharing a common prophetic mission—the Prince might have stumbled. Without the prophet's firm hand opening the first doors, the decisive doors, Herzl, just like Moses and Jonah, confronted by divine Call, might have been tempted to flee from his destiny.

After his initial meeting with Herzl, the British clergyman, by virtue of his faith and personal loyalty, turned a vision into historical reality. Thanks to Hechler, the Jewish Prince could apprehend the will of God if on the other hand he understood well the great difference which separated both men. Thus, he said of Hechler, "What an incredible character to a Jewish-Viennese journalist like myself, looking every bit like an Old Testament Prophet!" Incredible Hechler certainly was to Herzl, assimilated and worldly as he was. Indeed theirs was a fateful meeting.

The apparent folly of the former was contagious. Moses, in his time had Jethro, the priest of Midian, to encourage him. Now, there stood at the side of Herzl the chaplain of the British embassy in Vienna. A strange pair! Had not Herzl considered, as a successful writer, the conversion "en masse" of the Jews to the Church, in order to put an end to anti-Semitism? And suddenly jumps in this court chaplain, with his dream of Zion's restoration and redemption!

Herzl and Hechler, in the eyes of their respective communities, were marginal figures. But fifty years after their meeting, this strange vision became historical fact. A common act of faith did modify the course of history. Never before, perhaps, had so profound a revolution been launched by individual intervention.

Reverend Duvernoy's book relates the adventure of the man Hechler, the first person to appraise Herzl his own place in Biblical metaphysical perspective. It places the Huguenot author, now a citizen of Israel, within the spiritual heritage of William Hechler. He is one of the not so many Christians in Israel who has recognized the supreme spiritual value of Zion's resurrection. Has he not written a magisterial work, "The Zionism of God", which interprets the rebirth of Israel in the perspective of a classic like "Kuzari" of Jehouda Halevy, and of Paul's epistle to the Romans (chapters nine to eleven)?

Hechler had a touch of madness, and so did Herzl, for their own time. It would seem that such is the rule today for the ones, Jews or Christians, who believe in the unique destiny of the capital of Israel—Jerusalem—as the place of spiritual espousals and salvation for the entire world.

Blessed is the madness which hungers for the Absolute and can even discern, in our present wilderness, the footsteps of the Messiah!

Dr. André Chouraqui
Jerusalem, June 30 1965
Writer and Translator of the Bible

If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem

The Psalm of the Jewish Passover which contains the warning:

“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning,”

(137:5)

is addressed to the Church as well as to the Synagogue, since to forget Jerusalem means to lose the messianic hope, and thereupon to lose the prophetic sense of history.

Introduction

Within the history of nations, we often sense that there are hidden divinely-ordained directions. A history which God conducts in spite of tyrants, politicians, and from time to time, mediocre individuals who try by dark calculations to lead humanity to ruin and chaos.

Within this history of nations, there is a land of special suffering, especially beloved and chosen to suffer. And it was doubtlessly inevitable that this mysterious election has become for many a narrow nationalism of people chosen by the God of wrath and vengeance in the Old Testament.”

There exists a people particularly beloved, elected and as a result of this, relegated to contempt and suffering; thrown into this history in order to teach men the value of justice and respect for one’s neighbor.

This land and this people, forever inseparable, are at the very heart of the politics of God, not in order to feed anyone’s pride, but rather to embody for the salvation of all nations the messianic, magnetic north of History. This fact is hard to acknowledge: It is neither from Memphis, Babylon, Athens, or Rome that the will of the one God has expressed itself in the midst of a world given to violence and profit — but from Jerusalem. These other capitals have, to be sure, bequeathed to the world cultural and spiritual treasures, but not hope.



We should not be surprised that this Biblical city has been destroyed so many times. The world’s leading forces want men to despair. It was given to this capital and its people to clamor through

the centuries about the coming of another kingdom, one of justice and peace on earth as in heaven, the end of all exile, suffering and exploitation.

Throughout the Biblical period, Israel is the object of threats by her masters and her neighbors, all of them incapable of distinguishing the charismatic nature of her history. Alliances are endlessly created to erase this irritating people from the map; encouraged, incidentally, by many of the wits of ancient time, who believed the transcendental revelation bestowed on the Jewish people is nothing but stupid superstition. Everybody was in agreement to place Israel under the ban of history.



Geographically, the Land of Israel has a tremendous strategic importance by reason of its position as a meeting point for three continents, including three civilizations. From its earliest beginnings it became the stake of imperialistic rivalries among the giants surrounding it. Thus, the coastline belonged (practically without interruption) to the Phoenicians and to Egypt. Israel never had a port worthy of the name. As a matter of fact, what was called the Promised Land was nothing but a province torn between hostile blocs. And Jerusalem was an ignored capital far from any important traffic route. All this was enough to fill the glorious masters of the Nile, the Euphrates, Tyre, Damascus, Athens and Rome with contempt.

Thus we can easily imagine that the tribes, led first by Moses and then by Joshua, aroused indignation by their pretension to take possession of the pearl of the Fertile Crescent. How scandalous for the politicians, the diplomats and the strategists of that world. One can understand that an empire annexed from time to time a small neighboring people by the right of might, but this pack of slaves, the cream of the brave Pharaoh's labor force, slaves without past or culture?



The fall of Jericho's walls marks the entrance of Israel into history, certainly neither through the back door, nor on her toes! What then is this small nation to which even seismic happenings seem favorable? An uneasy feeling steals into the hearts of the great ones of that age.

Indeed, if Israel cannot lay claim to Canaan politically or juridically, what will be their defense before the tribunal of history? Will they argue skillfully about the requirements of vital living space, or about the pressing prerogatives of an excessive birthrate? Will they come up with some forgotten treaty? Not at all, for in the field of diplomatic relations as elsewhere, Israel is not a nation like all the others.

In order to justify this scandalous invasion into the affairs of others. Israel needs the language of the theologian. The conquest of

Canaan constitutes an act of fidelity to the God of the Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

For the theologians of the time this is all a pleasant surprise. Let us indeed speak about this God of Israel, and let us echo Pharaoh when mocking Moses: “Who is this Yahveh I should listen to? I never heard his name!” That slaves revolt is in itself a phenomenon shocking enough, but that they should dare to appeal to some divinity or other, passes all bounds. It threatened in fact the very foundations of ancient society.



The scandalous pretensions of the B’nei [children of] Israel do not end there. Who knows? It is possible that in the long run Memphis and Babylon would have tolerated this new divinity on condition that it would be content with an unobtrusive place. It would have been permitted to throw its thunderbolts from time to time in the desert — an obscure place for the God of Jewish slaves on the loose.

But, did not its originators declare that they wished to set their God up as a sovereign divinity? Must the race of lords, men of power and mastery, bow before the divinity of Semitic slaves whose demands (one will soon learn) represent as many mortal dangers for the Empire’s institutions!

We shouldn’t be surprised if a “sacred league” were immediately set up to crush Israel.

The enigma is posed for us at the outset, forever. This God that Israel introduces to the nations does not affirm Himself as Creator only, but also as the master of every life, for bliss and salvation to all men and singularly enough, to slaves. The great ones of the world willingly accept the notion of a Creator God, on condition that he is content with the position of retired manager. But to submit to His revolutionary laws in the guiding of the world? These princes and tyrants, all of them convinced of their divine rights, how could they take the Biblical demands seriously? May God (evidently a nice old chap who no longer understands the art of playing grandfather) leave them alone and content himself with blessing their projects and their wars; and may the priests and chaplains do their job, too, by blessing the weapons and making the people pray for victory!!



Israel has come to tell the world that history has a meaning, and that the powerful ones of the world will be judged according to their deeds. Israel came to declare to the world that God conducts His politics successfully toward the coming of another Kingdom, in spite of the politics of men. To announce this rule, God chooses an ambassador who shines not by power of nobility, but rather has been, since his origin, used to suffering and contempt. What is more natural

than that politicians and historians should mock this choice, and treat the ambassador just as they treat the King: by silence and contempt?

“Lord, rest content with your priests, temples, and pious rites, and let us make history in accordance with our desires and dislikes. Lord, do not bother us, especially not with this bothersome Jewish history. . . .!”

Let us note that somehow, in His astonishing record of history, the Lord has drawn the remonstrances of historians. Indeed in the Bible there is the mention of only one Promised Land and only one Jerusalem, as if Israel were the navel of the world ... as if all of history were to be judged according to a Jewish touchstone. How then could the masters of Memphis or Babylon, of Rome or Athens, of New York or Moscow accept such a repellant situation? See now how the mocking laughter of Goliath while watching David drawing nigh without armor, endlessly resounds in our ears down through the centuries!

In view of the destiny of Israel, and the gathering of her own for the first time from the four points of the compass, one must choose between Goliath’s laughter, Pharaoh’s gibes, and the prophecies of Moses and others. The complacent vision of history is that of a statesman of good will; it certainly succeeded in placing Hitler into power. The cynical vision of history is that of Hitler himself. The Biblical vision of history estimates men at their proper value. It resolutely proclaims itself to be apocalyptic and eschatological, precisely so that the way in which it opens up is barred to Hitler.

One can call this way of envisioning history, “The Zionist Vision”, in the Biblical sense of the term. That is to say, a vision imposed through Abraham that looks towards a Jerusalem, called upon one day to gather around her all the nations. Then, from this sacred (and therefore separated) city must appear one day the Servant sacrificed for the salvation of all; and all of us (the children of Abraham of the synagogue, churches and mosques) though often confused await His coming, His return, His glorious *Parousia*.

In this perspective, only Zionism, without the knowledge of the Zionists even, is the miracle of God’s grace, and the most political demonstration of the Creator, forcing the nations to salvation.



The blossoming of this long prehistory, which always was subtly uncouth within an authentic harmony of human relationships, depends on the reunion, and in a prophetic sense on the marriage of Israel and its Biblical land.

The end of the Jewish exile proclaims an end to all the exiles of man, and to all his sorrows.

The resurrection of the Negev of Israel proclaims the future victory over all other deserts of the earth, over all famine and thirst among the nations.

The Church of Christ, when it is faithful, proclaims this Kingdom to all creatures; but it rests with the Jewish people to announce the Kingdom in its own way, indeed in a political context. Since when does the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and Christ, forever tied to the earthly and spiritual destiny of Israel, fear to dirty His hands when mingling with men?

If God elected Israel forever, it is not so much for the sake of her loveliness; neither is it so that Israel may draw pride and glory from this, but it is to inaugurate on earth as in heaven a reign of justice and peace for all nations, wherein Jerusalem will again be affirmed as the pivot and heart.

“What Englishman, when reading the words of Isaiah announcing that the Isles would bring the children of Israel back from afar, cannot help ardently wishing that the British Isles (to whom it has pleased God in His Providence to grant such maritime and commercial power) should have the great honor to contribute to the happiness and prosperity of Israel?”

In 1845 pastor Edward Bickersteth, with a study entitled “Restoration of the Jews to Their Own Land,” gave the nations some wise advice which unfortunately was not taken:

“The danger is not small of unjustly exploiting their return home, profiting selfishly by their restoration. Every assistance that we can bring on the national level to their peaceful return will be agreeable to the Lord, and will bring immense blessings upon the country concerned.”

1845? In the same year a child was born who was to bear the name William Hechler. Quite far from London and Budapest, quite far from Jerusalem yet in another sacred city: Benares. He will take his place (and a place of honor it is!) among the rows of those “Zionists” born of the Reformation, of whom this prologue has spoken. He will be the prophet to this uncrowned Jewish prince. A prophet forgotten by all.

1860? In that very year a child was born in Budapest who carried the name of Theodore Herzl. He was destined to be the uncrowned prince of the extraordinary Zionist epic.

This book was written to recall his special ministry, and the moving Judeo-Christian friendship that was built up quite close to the cradle of the State — which before the nations and the churches bears the name (itself “theophore”) of ISRAEL.

May the Jewish reader, in discovering this humble prophet, find a portrayal of a Christian different from that offered by so many centuries of “teaching of contempt.”

And may the Christian reader, by discovering this Prince, whose name signifies “gift of God,” realize that the Ruler of History (and peculiarly Israel’s history) uses whom He likes, in accordance with the glorious liberty of the Holy Spirit.



JERUSALEM? No one has ever completely forgotten her. She has never been completely destroyed. She rises again from her ruins, and her people extricate themselves regularly from the hands of their executioners in an inexorable pilgrimage towards the messianic Zion—the inexorable Zionist adventure.

So Jerusalem remains a stumbling block for historians, politicians and theologians. Let us not be surprised by this spectacle, which is not new. The United Nations refuses to acclaim an Israeli Jerusalem. The Christian world (and not only Rome) does not want to accept it, to this day. And the Toynbees are not lacking to encourage such cases of blindness.

Pharaoh is here once again, and he is polishing up weapons the servants of Hitler have left for him. The colossi of the North and the East (called Gog and Magog in the Bible) are ready for the last rendezvous appointed by the one *Master of History*. Likewise, the servants of the many-faced Imperialism that the seer of Patmos called “Babylon”, Rome, another Rome, has rejoined them, secretly peeved.

Facing so many Goliaths, young David has returned with his ludicrous sling. Despite the European crematoriums and despite the comforts of exile, he could never completely forget his sacred Jerusalem, placed apart like himself.

Nor has the Church been able completely to forget the city of her birth, her youth, and the *Parousia* to come. Despite her flirtation with so many Caesars, despite her hellenized, paganized theology. And despite her Holy Scripture demolishers!



When the Christians don't forget Jerusalem

No human being ever forgets his birthplace. It even seems that the more he is burdened with years, the more he feels himself close to the spot of earth where his cradle stood.

Every Christian was born in Jerusalem, and certain signs make one think that this old Church, at the end of its second millennium, feels its heart beating fast when it looks back to its cradle, which in days past stood in the Promised Land.

Here were Jewish evangelists, who from Jerusalem stormed the strongholds of Greco-Roman paganism that already showed cracks at the time. With very few exceptions, the new faith (more Hebraic than “new”, however) was spreading in the synagogues of the Mediterranean basin; and it was toward Jerusalem that it ascended

with Israel on pilgrimage. Did not the greatest of these evangelists, Paul of Tarsus, take up collections in the Empire “for the poor in Jerusalem”?

Rome saw this new movement as a Jewish sect among others, and often treated it as such. Hadrian, desiring to do away with all traces of Jewish agitation after having razed Judea, deported its inhabitants and built on Jerusalem’s ruins a city which he called Aelia Capitolina (entrance forbidden to any Jew on pain of death). Hadrian also saw to it that a temple to Venus was erected on Calvary, in addition to giving orders for the cult of Adonis to be in Bethlehem’s grotto where Christ was born. These are things which are not altogether forgotten and which compel each Christian not only to affirm himself as being spiritually a Semite, but even (or also) Jewish.



And then, there are the texts. The texts of the New Testament which also delineate a “Zionist” vision of history, and which the Church forgot quite quickly when after being a despised Jewish sect, she suddenly found herself before the steps of the throne of a Caesar, converted for political reasons.

The Zionism of Christian inspiration should be much more than a movement of sympathy for a people that has suffered too much, and has once again found its long-promised land. Numerous are the Biblical passages of the Hebraic Canon to which Jewish Zionism can relate itself, and which the Church should equally accept. Now there are certain New Testament texts which issue from the peculiar vision of history which Christ and the Apostles had that were current at the time, as is witnessed by the entire eschatological literature of the Jewish Bible.

The day will come when Jerusalem will no more be occupied by the nations. That is the conclusion of the age, which Christ called **“the times of the Gentiles”** (Luke 21:24), an expression which Saint Paul takes up again in his principal epistle, and which the translations mutilate (Romans 11:25).

It definitely appears that God has divided the era of Biblical revelation into two different periods, which sometimes overlap and sometimes follow each other: the times of the Gentiles (occupying Jerusalem), and the period of Israel’s independence. When in the course of time after a very long exile, Jerusalem affirms itself once more as the capital of Israel, the latter then enters its proper messianic age, with the dawning of the *Parousia*. In eschatological terms which Jesus makes His own (no matter what those exegetes, who in reality are Holy Scripture “demolishers”, may think of them) these are days when for the first time all nations - indeed the whole earth - is threatened by total destruction.

Without a doubt the central “Zionist” text in the New Testament is found at the beginning of Acts of the Apostles (1:7): **“Lord, is it now that you will restore the kingdom to Israel?”** To which Jesus distinctively replies (it is useless to try to find out the exact meaning of the Greek words, Christ not having used this

language with His disciples), **“It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has placed in His own authority.”**

This amounts to saying that a time has been fixed by History’s Ruler to put an end to Israel’s long and bloody exile, and that the independence of Israel depends solely on His will. Such is the “Magna Charta” of Zionism in the New Testament, and its justification. If there were only this one text — but we have seen that there are at least two others, and this text reproduces Christ’s words — the Church should salute the hand of God in history in the physical resurrection of the Jewish people reassembling around Jerusalem.



We see now how each generation, since the profound return to the Scriptures which characterized the Reformation, has heard protestant voices reminding the Church that Israel would once again find its Biblical homeland; that it was important not to forget this, and it was proper to expedite the grand moment.

By taking the Biblical Scriptures seriously, the Reformation rediscovered the history of Israel, and at the same time, the prophetic sense of History. Wherever this veritable Christian renaissance took root, men sought to interpret and understand the destiny of the Jewish people and its land — a land exposed to dunes and pestilential swamps.



It is surprising to note that particularly in England at the very moment when in Europe the movement for liberalization and assimilation of the Jewish masses timidly announced itself, an authentic Protestant Zionism began to spread. It was a legitimate child of the Puritan faith that can qualify without fear as a kind of “reformed Judaizing.” A John Knox. A Tyndale, immediately evoking certain great figures of the Hebrew Bible, who incidentally are honored in the studies, as well as in the daily lives of this people who baptized their children more in memory of Biblical heroes than of saints of the realm.

The Duke of Cleveland, speaking of Puritans whimsically said, “One can learn about Christ’s genealogy by simply reading the names of their regiments!” Cromwell, in spite of violent opposition, called the Jews back to England, persuading them that this gesture is a decisive step toward their re-establishment in the Promised Land, and that God will not fail to bless this action.

Cromwell’s followers launched a movement in England that nothing would stop, and would not perish in the annals of English Protestantism. They only spearheaded anew the ancient Judeo-Christian hope, a hope their great Milton engraved on the English soul in his poems about returning to a Zion laid waste.

Since this point in British history, one cannot count the many men of letters, scientists, theologians, pious souls, or their deeds, all calling for the re-establishment of the Jewish people in the Biblical land. Even bishops lent their voices to the call, among them Thomas Newton, Samuel Horsby, Robert Lowth.

This is also the time when the movement called “New Israel” was born in England (an outgrowth of British Zionism before the time), seeking to prove the Israelite origins of the English people. Thus we are told that the word “British” should be split into “ish-brit,” which in Hebrew means “man of the Covenant”; also the word “Saxon” becomes ‘Itzak-son,’ son of Isaac. Even stranger: the “merchants of Tarshish” cited by the prophet Ezekiel (38:13) represent the British Isles and their brave sea merchants; and at the end-time, the return of Israel to the Promised Land will not be accomplished without the help of the English “ships of Tarshish”!

When Jeremiah announced the reconciliation of the House of Judah and the House of Israel, he evoked (we are also told) the common interests of London and the New Jerusalem!

It is not superfluous to mention that Queen Victoria had little doubt that her royal descent came through the line of David and the kings of Judah. Kaiser William (Wilhelm II), the famous and unfortunate grandson of this great queen, was to nourish similar illusions.



In the United States where the Puritan trend was powerful, the penchant for Zionism appeared in an American manner, in the form of petitions.

The second President set the example: “I sincerely wish to see the Jews settled again in Judah, forming an independent nation,” John Adams declared.

At the end of the last century, a petition was presented to President Harrison on behalf of the “Conference for Christians and Jews,” which requested of the Berlin Congress “a second Edict of Cyrus.” The same organization in the person of its president, the jurist and theologian W.E. Blackstone, was of the opinion that the Jewish people had never ceased to possess the Promised Land:

“The Jews have never abandoned this land of their own will, and they have not signed any treaty of capitulation, but they have succumbed in a desperate battle before the crushing power of Rome . . . they were sold as slaves . . . Since then, having neither sovereign nor political representation, they are reclaiming their motherland by their writings, their faith and their prayers . . . The violence by which Israel was kept out of its land, without means of appeal, is in principle equivalent to a continual conflict . . . no entreaty can change this situation until Israel will have the opportunity to present its demands before the one and only competent Authority, an International Conference.”



Thus, the Zionist Protestant movement, solidly installed in the lands of the Reformation, readily sought to express itself on the political level, and spread to other European countries.

By an appeal to the king of France in the first third of the 17th century, Isaac de la Peyrere, the Huguenot theologian, Zionist and humanist, introduced the Zionist idea into France, having in view the return of the Jews to the Promised Land. In 1797, the Prince of Ligne sent a memorandum to Emperor Joseph II requesting the same thing. The French Revolution kindled “cabbalistic” movements everywhere in Europe, interpreting catastrophes in an eschatological and “Zionistic” perspective.

In 1799, the Irishman Thomas Corbet submitted a project to the Director Barras which was quite similar to that of the Prince de Ligne. It is not unlikely that Napoleon Bonaparte knew about it. Be that as it may, at the time of his campaign in the East, every Jew was a priori and considered a secret agent of the French general!

In 1839 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, after having sent a committee of investigation to Palestine, addressed the following memorandum to the European monarchs:

“ . . . on the matter of the restoration of the Jewish people in the land of Palestine . . . for we are convinced of the truth of that divine promise which wills that a heavenly blessing repose upon those who come to the aid of the People of God, at present in affliction. . . ”



From this time forward there officially began a real Zionist debate in the English press, stimulated by the crisis in the Middle East. The wheel of history tends to turn rapidly in this part of the world that is somewhat forgotten since the failure of the Crusades.

Mehemet Ali, a former tradesman from Roumelia and appointed head of a Turkish army during Bonaparte’s campaign in Egypt, was promoted to the dignity of pasha, and quickly transformed Egypt by employing European technicians and officers, mostly Frenchmen. In 1832 he laid hands on Syria and proceeded to march on to Constantinople but was stopped by the appearance of a Russian squadron. Yet they compromised: the Czar settled for the Straits, and Ali was given Syria for his lifetime.

The 1832 crisis in effect introduced England into the heart of the Biblical territory, stirring up the envy of other powers, and furnishing Protestant Zionism with a remarkable political springboard.

England, which supported the Sultan (France supported Ali), encouraged Mahmoud II to take Syria back in 1839. On the 24th of June of that year, with French help, Ali crushed the Turks at Nezib,

and threatened Constantinople for the second time. In order to prevent a second entry of Russia, London intervened.

Czar Nicholas I was not unhappy to see Franco-English relations deteriorating. Uneasy about French influence in the Middle East, England, Prussia, Austria and Russia, now forced Ali to withdraw his troops from Syria (treaty of London on July 15, 1840).

The Straits were prohibited to warships, nevertheless British diplomacy led by Palmerston had achieved a beautiful victory, and everyone let it be thought that the grateful Sultan would let London install itself in Syria by the back door, which is to say, in a permanent manner.

Palmerston did not trifle with the Bible. One of his intimate friends, Lord Shaftesbury (himself deeply influenced by the famous Zionist pastor Mac-Caul), had no difficulty persuading him that messianic times were ripening for Israel and that Great Britain, its vital interests regarding a route to India put to one side, should seize this unique opportunity to follow the divine will that leads history.

"And I will bless them that bless thee." Shaftesbury reminded his friend, the Prime Minister, that the promise given to all of Abraham's friends (Genesis 12:3) still remain valid.¹ This Zionist lord pleaded Israel's cause to Palmerston so well that the latter on January 22, 1839 sent the following letter to his young and gracious sovereign:

"I have the great honor of laying at the feet of Her Majesty the enclosed memorandum² on the subject of the present situation and future of the ancient people of God, the Jewish people. The pious sentiments of Your Majesty will be, I have no doubt, moved by the possibility of showing particular kindness to the Biblical hopes that they cherish, in view of the important position that it has pleased God to give to this Protestant country, and to your gracious Throne, center of the Church.

"May it be during your reign that, according to the hopes of this unique people now laid before Your Majesty, 'Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell in peace.' Such is the prayer of the loyal and devoted servant of Your Majesty."

Palmerston

We know that the sovereign had no doubts about her Davidian ancestry. Are we to consider this letter as a document of the "New Israel" School? Be that as it may, the Zionist appeal, through the English Protestant channel, now reached the most gracious and august ears of the century!

To sum up: there were two streams to this Protestant Biblical Zionism. The first one is clearly spiritual, desiring only the welfare of the Jewish people and the hastening of the Parousia. In fact, every

¹Extract from the 'Journal' of Shaftesbury, dated September 29, 1938: "Took leave today of Young, appointed vice-consul of H.M. in Jerusalem! The ancient city of the people of God will again take its place among the Nations, and England is the first country from among the Gentiles to cease trampling it under foot..." (One sees that this Lord did not hesitate to present a daring exegesis to the well known words of Christ cited in Luke, which we have referred to above. In this humble Consulate appointment Shaftesbury discerned the great events which were to come at the end of 1917.)

² This concerns the memorandum sent by the Church of Scotland to the European sovereigns, which we have just cited.

Christian who takes seriously the prophetic Scriptures, and the particular vision of History held by Christ and the Apostles, cannot but share these Zionist sentiments.

The second trend revealed certain anxieties and political hopes within the British Cabinet. But can one seriously blame a Palmerston, a Shaftesbury, and later on a Balfour, for combining a love for the land promised to Israel with the obvious interests of the Crown in the world (plus the route to India!)? All is above-board, but it becomes quite tiresome to distinguish between the two motivating trends; or to say which of the two is getting the best of it by its life and energy: the one born of Biblical, prophetic sources, or the trend picked up by those dyed-in-the-wool Protestant gentlemen of the foreign office?



One does not change divine history. One follows it. At the very best one can deflect its course slightly from time to time. The first half of the last century did not go by before London had stepped into Syria, which then included the province that had been the cradle of the Synagogue and the Church. The descendants of fierce Puritans, themselves brought up on the epic pages of the Bible, met in Jerusalem, guests indeed of the Turkish master, but powerful and respected guests — guests who did not take long to assert themselves as conquerors and victor.

If the British ship (of Tarshish?) is well handled it has every chance of coming to berth alongside the mystical shores of the fatherland of the Patriarchs, the prophets and Christ. All this so as to drop anchor there in joy and in tears—“as in a dream,” declares the Psalm of degrees (126:1)—the children of Israel reaching here the end of their long calvary.

These English statesmen, educated in the colleges and the universities and profoundly influenced by the Reformation and Puritanism while not losing sight of the Crown’s grandeur, will accomplish the pleasure of promoting the actualization of certain prophecies. Will they by word and deed ricochet down the blessing of the Master of History upon Her very gracious Majesty, her people and her ministers. . .?

Yes, London was able to revive the Promised Land! The idea was attractive to the children of Knox and Cromwell; and it could not displease the English merchants of “the isles of Tarshish”!



In **1804**, the Bishop of Rochester, in a paper entitled “Attempt to Remove Prejudices Concerning the Jewish Nation,” announced the beginning of Israel’s restoration would be the decade

Time Line

of 1860. Bishop Thomas Witherby proceeded with the following words:

“What Englishman, when reading the words of Isaiah announcing that the Isles would bring the children of Israel back from afar, cannot help ardently wishing that the British Isles (to whom it has pleased God in His Providence to grant such maritime and commercial power) should have the great honor to contribute to the happiness and prosperity of Israel?”

In 1845 pastor Edward Bickersteth, with a study entitled “Restoration of the Jews to Their Own Land,” gave the nations some wise advice which unfortunately was not taken:

“The danger is not small of unjustly exploiting their return home, profiting selfishly by their restoration. Every assistance that we can bring on the national level to their peaceful return will be agreeable to the Lord, and will bring immense blessings upon the country concerned.”

1845? In the same year a child was born who was to bear the name William Hechler. Quite far from London and Budapest, quite far from Jerusalem yet in another sacred city: Benares. He will take his place (and a place of honor it is!) among the rows of those “Zionists” born of the Reformation, of whom this prologue has spoken. He will be the prophet to this uncrowned Jewish prince. A prophet forgotten by all.

1860? *In that very year* a child was born in Budapest who carried the name of Theodore Herzl. He was destined to be the uncrowned prince of the extraordinary Zionist epic.

This book was written to recall his special ministry, and the moving Judeo-Christian friendship that was built up quite close to the cradle of the State — which before the nations and the churches bears the name (itself “theophore”) of ISRAEL.

***Purpose of
this book***

May the Jewish reader, in discovering this humble prophet, find a portrayal of a Christian different from that offered by so many centuries of “teaching of contempt.”

And may the Christian reader, by discovering this Prince, whose name signifies “gift of God,” realize that the Ruler of History (and peculiarly Israel’s history) uses whom He likes, in accordance with the glorious liberty of the Holy Spirit.

APPRENTICESHIP

Time Line:

- 637** Jerusalem fell to Islam, a pagan power which according to Heckler started the “Abomination of Desolation”
- 1807** London Society for Promoting Christianity Among Jews is founded
- 1818** Lewis Way, one of the society’s first chairman, presents paper at the Sainte Alliance assembly recommending the restoration of the Jewish people in Palestine
- 1840** Treaty of London (England, Austria, Russia and Prussia) to curb French power in the Middle East
- 1845** William Hechler is born in Benaines, India
- 1865** Palestine Exploration Fund established
- 1869** Hechler is ordained in St. Paul’s Cathedral
- 1871** Odessa Massacre of Jews in Russia and formation of the “Lovers of Zion”
- 1884** “The Restoration of the Jews to Palestine According to the Prophets” by William Hechler
- 1896** February 14, “Der Judenstaat”, The Jewish State, by Theodore Herzl



The child born in Benares, India on the first day of October, 1845, was the son of a man who early in life had thrown everything on the scales of his vocation. Dietrich Hechler was born in 1812 in Voegisheim, duchy of Baden, into a family of weavers.

From his first years in school the young boy showed an unusual piety, dampened by the sarcasms of a militantly atheist teacher. This schoolmaster, obliged by law to give his class lessons in the catechism, transformed this into subtle attacks against the Biblical text, even calling the existence of Jesus in question.

Dietrich Hechler, however, sensed in the Old Bible stories and in the parables of Christ a far more powerful inspiration than in the mud-slinging spirit of his master. He never permitted his young faith to be undermined, often holding his own against the whole class. This later in mockery, but impressed nevertheless by his courage, gave him the nickname of “Halbgeistlich,” which can be translated roughly as “half-priest”!

As an adolescent, Dietrich discovered the personality and the work of the first Protestant missionary in Burma, Adoniram Judson — a discovery that was to prove decisive for his own vocation. He

served on his own as a colporteur for several years, on the edge of despair. Then, with others, Dietrich founded the “Chrischona Mission” in Basel. In 1837 he met the well-known theologian Blumhardt, by whom he entered the Mission of Basel, and later Islington College.

On Trinity Sunday in 1844 he was ordained pastor at St. Paul’s in London. Immediately after the ceremony he married Miss Catherine Clive Palmer, twenty-nine years old and three years his junior. The same year (things do not lag in the English Mission) the young couple embarked for India, where they were to direct the Chamar Mission for five years.

Two girls were born after William: Elizabeth in 1848 and Catherine in 1849. On July 4, 1850, the young mother died, a victim of the climate, the exhausting life, and repeated maternities.

Three years later Dietrich Hechler went back to England for reasons of health. His passion for the Jewish people pushed him to work for the “London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews.” This Society had been founded in 1807.³

Dietrich Hechler was to reveal himself as a serious student of the Hebrew language and took successive posts in Alsace, London, Heidelberg, Durlach and Karlsruhe. He remarried in 1857 (one Myriam Campbell) only to lose her in 1862; there followed a third marriage with Elizabeth Priscilla Holloway in 1866. From the first marriage there were three children, from the second four, and two from the third.



William Hechler was thus the firstborn of nine children—an important detail, as we shall see. Being the firstborn, he had to follow in his father’s traces, for on him rested “the blessing and the election.” The Hechlers knew that the law of primogeniture is not defined first and foremost by the inheritance of the paternal wealth but by the transmission of the vocation itself which was to serve God and men. In this family one loved and understood the Jacob of Genesis, not limiting him to the ridiculous dimensions of a mess of pottage and some coins. Moreover, Dietrich Hechler’s heritage could not in the least be compared with Isaac’s!

From an early age William heard and understood, then spoke English and German. We shall see how important a privilege this was to be in his life.

When not yet five years old, the loss of his mother was a first trauma that was to lead to others. Thereafter he no more knew his father, and lived for almost ten years in different orphanages. For

³ One of the Society’s first chairmen, Lewis Way, jurist, theologian, poet and diplomat, went to Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818 where the leaders of the “Sainte Alliance” had assembled. He presented a paper recommending the restoration of the Jewish people in Palestine, which only the Czar Alexander supported. For the first time the Zionist idea was brought before an international conference; there awaited it now a long march of about a hundred years. Let us note that this Society grew as the direct consequence of hopes raised among pietist English circles after Bonaparte’s campaign in the Middle East!

William his father would always seem to be a “chosen” personage, distant and somewhat formidable, devoted only to the service of God, the authentic Father of every creature who meets all our deficiencies.

Luckily for the young boy, a sister of the deceased mother strove to direct this jeopardized destiny. In fact, it was this aunt who placed William Hechler, after many a detour, on the path of a strange pastoral ministry.

William right away revealed himself worthy of the law of primogeniture by his astonishing knowledge, his passion for maps, charts, genealogies and archeological data.

“You will be a pastor!” This had been the parents’ decision. As the years passed, this decision for William went without saying. How, in fact, he thought, could one conceive of a more exalted profession than this one—the noblest of all—for it brings to mankind a divine revelation, the only one which gives sense to life.

Knowing German and English, it was quite natural that he would pursue and complete his theological studies in England and Germany, in Tübingen and London. He was ordained, like his father, in St. Paul’s Cathedral, on Trinity Sunday 1869.



Showing indifference with regard to any established program, William Hechler never proved to be an outstanding student. He sometimes irritated his teachers by his knowing more than they did. Was he not here under the reigning school of German Text Criticism, which could not possibly appeal to Dietrich Hechler’s son?

That one could treat the Scriptures as a riddle would always fill him with a certain indignation, and the academic pretension which decides what is or is not the inspire Word brought to William Hechler’s lips a slight disdainful smile.

The Bible is the Word of life, not an interesting corpse over which surgeons bend full of their book learning and their lamentable vanity. He had felt, from the first years of study in these mysterious pages, a breath coming from *Elsewhere*, which went beyond the limited understanding of man.

More often than not William was bored by his classes, “cutting” class regularly to devote himself to the hobby of his lifetime: strolling around the secondhand book shops in search of the fascinating, the rare, and cabbalistic. His meager pocket money was regularly spent in this manner for sixty years!



His last examinations were passed, with luck, at about the time the Franco-Prussian conflict exploded. He hastened to serve as a chaplain on the side where German was spoken. Of France he had heard little good until now, in spite of certain Huguenot connections of his father — or rather because of these ties. As a matter of fact, for

the Hechler family France remained the country, if not the people, of the “Revocation” and the *dragoons*.

This was the first serious crisis in his life: a hard discovery of the horrors of war, and of men’s stupidity and savagery from the moment they dress up in some uniform, then proceed to live in drab barracks and participate in regular drinking-bouts. He had not expected this, but nevertheless held on and hoped, in his sweet ingeniousness (which was never to leave him), for a combat worthy of David’s valiant companions. He looked for a small miracle from time to time against stolid and stupid Philistines, to shorten battles, save lives, and possibly convert the enemy! Bitterly, he found that the German princes’ armies resembled the bands of David very little indeed. He realized that the war was imbecile.

William Hechler was not satisfied with himself. After all, these Frenchmen, although Catholic and jokers by nature, had not harmed him. Their prisoners did not seem ferocious. He did not dare say it, but they looked less heavy, less narrow-minded than the Germans in their pointed helmets. They seemed rather congenial, and very annoyed to be involved in a conflict the origin and outcome of which they did not understand.

Led astray in this drama of suffering and blood, William had gotten off to a bad start in life and was discontented. He decided to leave this sick Europe for the African sun. Thus in 1871 he settled in Lagos, British Nigeria, as assistant director of Trinity College, responsible for instruction in the catechism. He was just past twenty-six and was to remain there for three years.



Three short, yet three long years of silence and preparation. For what? As yet he didn’t know, but he sought his individual calling. What he realized was that he was not suited for the parochial ministry with its daily constraints, its strict program and its dull succession of births, weddings and deaths — but what could be done about it? No doubt he would be a missionary, a vocation that allows one to work with his hands, to build things which remain.

He waited for doors to open without having to knock at them. This would be the great principle of his pastoral life: not to confound his own desires with the divine will; and not to say, like so many of his colleagues, “The Lord wants me here!” instead of acknowledging frankly, “I would like to obtain this position!” He had a presentiment that in his life doors would open at the last minute, without particular solicitation on his part. That omen was the best, which left entire liberty of action to the Sovereign of all destiny.

But he was not cut out for spending years as the devout vice-principal of an African college, “Trinity” or another! This he wrote to his aunt, the good fairy who had bent over his unattractive cradle and dreamt of a brilliant future for her clergyman nephew. Her godson,

forlorn under a barbarous sun whenever he was not fighting a deluge, deserved more than Lagos!

This good lady lived at the Court in London, not as a lady-in-waiting but as a nurse, bearing noble responsibilities, to put it plainly. From time to time she was able to say a word in high circles and she had already pronounced several in favor of this distinguished young man, whose eyes were of pure and soft blue and whose profile was Davidian, if you please! Not to mention his perfect command of German and English.

It happened that the Grand Duke Frederic of Baden was looking for a private tutor and chaplain for his two little princes. “It is unexpected—you must accept immediately,” wrote the aunt urgently. No need to wait many days or to be consumed by scruples; above all, no need to imagine that the Lord was not in agreement. God desires your welfare, my child, as your mother wanted it. He will know how to find a successor in Lagos, and if you beat around the bush He will find a candidate for the Court of Baden, too.”

“I shall accept it,” says William to himself, “as it is a post of honor I did not ask for.”



Africa was closed for good, as the gates of India had. In the autumn of 1784, the princely gates of Karlsruhe Castle opened for young Reverend Hechler, not yet thirty. He was not over-impressed. The Grand Duke was a good German daddy, simple and frank. He had assumed his title several years before from an insane older brother. His wife was the daughter of William I of Prussia, whom he himself had proclaimed Emperor three years before in Versailles.

But it was not in Hechler's nature to be unduly upset by those who are called great. He had been associated with important personages for a long time: wasn't he on the best of terms with the figures of the Bible and among a certain number of monarchs who were quite worthy of comparison with the princes of this century? Was he not in the service of a greater One than all these put together?

And in his small way, wasn't he in the line of God's witnesses? Even though he comprehended little of his Creator (although created in His image), he was a representative and ambassador of Christ, the King who would one day reign over all princes. That was worth any official embassy mission, with or without the honor involved.

So the ice was soon broken with this Grand Duke of firm faith, in the evening hours when the little princes slept. His Majesty was sincerely interested in the maps, charts, and strange calculations of the young tutor-chaplain. The latter had recently made a “messianic” map of Palestine and submitted it to the Grand Duke, for the “question d'Orient” was still a vital one. It had been revived by the recent Crimean campaign.⁴

⁴ After this dreadful conflict, the Swiss Henri Dunant had created a “Universal Society for the Renewal of the Orient” and in 1866 proposed to grant diplomatic status to the first Jewish agricultural colonies of Palestine.

In 1865 the famous “Palestine Exploration Fund” had been founded, the successive reports of which (especially those of Charles Warren and Claude Conder) invited new, Jewish colonization in order to restore to the Promised Land its ancient fertility.

Hechler declared to his princely listener that these were: “Signs announcing the near return of the children of Israel to their own land, the dawn of the messianic era for the Synagogue, and of the *Parousia* in the language of the Church,”.

On Hechler’s proposal the Grand Duke ordered several works recently published, dealing with this question, such as that of Napoleon the Third’s private secretary, Ernest Laharanne, and the theological works of pastors Hollingworth, Thomas Johnstone, and Petavel. Then there were the more ancient works dedicated to the “Zionist” question which the zealous amateur quickly brought for the princely library.

Little by little Hechler’s enthusiasm communicated itself to Frederic of Baden. The Court of Karlsruhe was a place frequented by all the princely families that were related to one another. More than once the young pastor agreed to lecture on his studies, wherein Jerusalem was often mentioned, as was also the Promised Land and the great prophetic movement which was to spring up among the Jewish people: “A new Moses will arise, who will lead his people. Then there will soon sound the end of the longest and cruelest of exiles. . . .”

Thus Hechler prophesied before princes, dukes and counts, and more than once an indulgent smile stood out among the bystanders. What a strange bird good old Frederic has unearthed here!



A tragic event broke the comfortable line in the pastor-teacher’s destiny. In 1876 the heir Ludwig died in an accident, and with the upheavals that followed at the castle Hechler decided to leave Karlsruhe. For seven years he was to go from one parish to another, to the great regret of his imploring aunt. What impression in high circles would be made by these brief impromptus of her protégé from one pulpit to another?

In 1876-77 Hechler was in charge of the London parish of St. Clement of the Dane, and at the same time chaplain of Charing Cross Hospital. During the next three years he worked successively at Lisle, Cork and Galway, where he simultaneously held the offices of minister and headmaster of the diocese school. In 1881 he was again in London, in the parish of St. Marylebone.

Obviously serenity was not for him. What did the future hold in store for him? He had already formed a solid reputation for himself as an odd character, old bachelor and incorrigible dreamer. This reputation now followed him from post to post.

Yet wasn’t it true that a greater world than that of the parish still awaited him? He made this point in a letter to his noble friend Frederic of Baden, in 1879:

“Nevertheless, I hope to return to Africa, because my life belongs to the service of Him who gave it to me. . .I can say that I have decided, with the help of God, to devote my life to the well-being of the African race.”

William Hechler felt that he was an outsider in the Church, and consequently that a special task was reserved for him. Actually, to be a missionary in Africa was quite common at that time. What then did God want from his life? This was the question which had haunted him for the past twelve years — how to see clearly? What sign would he be given which would not mislead him? He would soon be in his forties, reminiscent of the forty prophetic years that it is advisable to spend in the desert.



A brutal tragedy now burst upon Europe which closed forever the gates of Africa in Hechler's life and served to open those of another world: Russia. In 1881 the pastor came up against the suffering of Israel for the first time, and nothing could affect him more.

So it was not yet finished, the Calvary of the people of God: it appeared now again, at the end of this century, that a time of risen hopes had come; conquests for the peace of humanity seemed possible. Jews had seemed to be comfortably installed in a Europe proud of its civilization.

But the Inquisition had raised its hideous head again, this time at the other end of Europe where hundreds of thousands of Jews lived in crowded ghettos. Apparently the world had forgotten them.

By the middle of the 17th century Polish Jewry had penetrated into the Russian world, fleeing from the savage attacks of the Cossacks of Chmelnitzky. Up until the death of Czar Nicolas I in 1855, the Russian people lived under difficult conditions, and naturally the Jews represented the most despised element in the nation. With the rise of Alexander II to the throne, a wind of hope had blown over the Empire. In 1861 the Czar “freed” the serfs, who in effect now passed from one master to another.

It was from the University that a serious revolutionary movement began, where in spite of “numerous clauses” laws, a fair number of Jewish students had distinguished themselves. These young men, having decided “to go to the people,” were often misunderstood and more often than not denounced to the police. According to the age-old rule, people demand a scapegoat for everything and the fact that Jewish students were found in the ranks of nihilists, anarchists and other revolutionaries, provided an excellent excuse to organize pogroms.

The first of these organized massacres broke out in 1871 in Odessa. The murder of the Czar ten years later launched a whole series of pogroms, beginning in the middle of the Holy Week. In the single district of Kiev up to forty-six massacres were counted, all taking place with the blessing of the Orthodox Church.

The real ruler of Russia, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, Pobiedonotsev, a former tutor of the Czar, implemented the “Laws of May”: Jews were dismissed from public life and prohibited from entering entire provinces. There was no question of “Russianizing” them, only the suppression of them as an ethnic group.

The new Inquisitor of the Holy Synod proposed the following formula: liquidation of Russian Jewry by converting a third, expelling a third, and exterminating the last third through starvation and cold! The police were charged with the execution of this order!

Europe waxed indignant at this, sometimes in a rather hypocritical manner, protesting more against the Russian regime than against the pogroms themselves.

The hydra of anti-Semitism now arose all over the continent. The emotion felt in Great Britain was considerable. Here the Jews had not been maltreated for several centuries and enjoyed a comfortable existence. Parliament and clergy soon acted together. Numerous relief committees were established, sponsored by the greatest names of the English nation.



William Hechler had just started to work at the Secretariat of the London Bible Society. The latter distributed millions of Bibles in all languages throughout the world—so how could our pastor not be part of it?

At the beginning of 1882, speaking before the board of directors, Hechler pleaded in favor of settling the Russian and Rumanian Jews in Palestine. The meeting took place in the home of Lord Temple, who now made the decision to send this advocate of the massacred Jews to Russia in order to conduct an investigation on the spot. Odessa would be his center of operation. Lord Temple and the brave Zionist octogenarian, Lord Shaftesbury, decided all this.

Hechler, as it turned out, did not go by himself, but with another passionate Zionist, Sir Laurence Oliphant⁵. It was in Odessa that the first pogrom had broken out, but it was also in this town that a group of Jewish intellectuals had gathered together as members of an association with a revealing name: “The Lovers of Zion.”

Throughout their journey in Eastern Europe the London delegation was fervently received. Listen to Oliphant, in his “Diary” entry of March 1882:

“At each stop the Jews had assembled in crowds, carrying petitions asking for settlement in Palestine, being apparently persuaded in their innermost soul that the time fixed for their return to the land of

⁵ English writer and diplomat, born in Cape Town in 1829. Wrote a memorandum in December 1878 asking for the settlement in Palestine of Jewish pioneers, under the protection of the Sultan. A member of Parliament, he won to his cause the Prince of Wales, Lord Salisbury, and the French minister Waddington. Quickly getting in touch with the first “Lovers of Zion” he was well received in Constantinople, but Disraeli’s fall from power in 1880 put an end to his “Zionist” plans. He himself settled later in Haifa and proved to be, until his death on December 23rd, 1888, an authentic “Lover of Zion.”

their fathers had arrived, and that I ought to be the Moses of this Exodus..."

One can imagine without difficulty the effect such adventures had on the mind of Hechler. Arriving in Odessa he soon contacted the group of "The Lovers of Zion," meeting one of its leaders, Doctor Pinsker, who had just published in German (at the risk of his life) an essay entitled "Auto-Emancipation." Our pastor annotated this work with red ink, as was his custom. Here are some passages which produced a strong impression on the Zionist pastor:

"The Eternal Problem presented by the Jewish Question stirs men today as it did ages ago. It remains unsolved, like the squaring of the circle; but unlike it, it is still a burning question. The essence of the problem as we see it, lies in the fact that in the midst of the nations among whom Jews reside, they form a distinctive element which cannot be assimilated, and which cannot be readily digested by any nation... Among the living nations of the earth, the Jews occupy the position of a nation long since dead. With the loss of their fatherland the Jews lost their independence, and fell into a state of decay which is incompatible with the existence of a whole and vital organism... Thus, the world saw in this people the frightening form of one of the dead still walking among the living... Fear of the Jewish ghost has been handed down, becoming strengthened for generations and centuries..."

"The battle against this hatred can only be in vain... for against superstition even the gods fight in vain... Legal emancipation of the Jews is the crowning achievement of our century. But legal emancipation is not social emancipation. Wherever they are congregated in large masses they must, by their very numbers, have a certain advantage in competition with the non-Jewish population. In the western provinces of Russia we behold the Jews herded together, leading a wretched existence in the most dreadful destitution. Nevertheless, there are unceasing complaints of exploitation practiced by the Jews."

"To sum up what has been said: for the living, the Jew is a dead man; for the native population, an alien and a vagrant; for the property owners, a beggar; for the poor, an exploiter and a millionaire; for patriots, a man without a country; to all classes, a hated rival..."

"If all the peoples of the earth were unable to blot out our existence, they were nevertheless able to destroy in us the feeling of our national independence. . . Seeking to maintain our material existence, we were constrained only too often to forget our moral dignity. . . One would think that men of genius would be as plentiful among our opponents as blackberries in August. The wretches! They reproach the eagle that once soared to heaven and recognized Divinity, because he cannot soar high in the air after his wings have been clipped. Grant us the joy of independence, allow us to be the sole masters of our fate, give us a bit of land, grant us only what you granted the Serbians and Rumanians, and then dare to pass a slighting judgment upon us! What we lack is not genius but self-respect and the consciousness of human dignity, of which you have robbed us...."



Hechler was enchanted by this little man who dared to say such things to the nations, and to his own people (one easily imagines the reactions of German and Austrian Jews!). But one passage offended his feelings:

“...We must, above all, not dream of restoring ancient Judea. We must not attach ourselves to the place where our political life was once violently interrupted and destroyed. The goal of our present endeavors must be not the ‘Holy Land,’ but a land of our own. . . Thither we shall take with us the most sacred possessions which we have saved from the shipwreck of our former fatherland — the God-idea and the Bible. It is only these which made our old fatherland the Holy Land, and not Jerusalem or the Jordan. Perhaps the Holy Land will again become ours. If so, all the better. . .”

But the prophets, Doctor Pinsker! Your prophets, whom you count as your sacred heritage. Have you forgotten the promise made by God to Abraham and to his descendants: “This land I give to you, forever!” Do you think that the nations will consent to offer you another land than this one? Upon what other land can you invoke the Biblical text?

Hechler took out a Bible and quoted Amos, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and all the others. Pinsker could not help being moved, to be thus reminded of the old Biblical promises by this new kind of Christian, this enthusiastic and convincing pastor. (Here William was starting a new ministry as an unusual type of preacher; to add soul to these Jewish theoreticians of new-born Zionism.)

The two men did not meet again, but one likes to think that those evenings in Odessa at the end of the summer of 1882 remained vivid in Pinsker’s mind. True it is that, after being elected three years later to the chairmanship of the “Lovers of Zion,” he was to consecrate the last years of his life to heroic efforts of colonization in Palestine.



One fact had struck the Jews of Odessa: Hechler was the bearer of a letter from Queen Victoria to the Sultan! A letter countersigned by Lord Rosebery, and asking the monarch of the Sublime Porte⁶ to make provisions for a Palestinian refuge for the pursued Russian Jews. More than forty years had passed since the day that Palmerston sent his famous letter to the young sovereign, and now the latter was appealing to the Sultan.

This letter never reached its illustrious destination; and William Hechler, for the first but not the last time, discovered the

⁶ French translation from Turkish ‘Bâbiâlî’, ‘Porte’, term for the Government of the Ottoman Empire

backstage of high politics. The British Embassy in Constantinople “blocked” the royal letter, leading one to think there were mysterious, hidden forces at work in the chancelleries, which did not hesitate to “short-circuit” the will of Victoria herself. Nevertheless all this was enough, one sees, to raise immense hopes in the hearts of the “Lovers of Zion.”

As for Hechler, he was overwhelmed at meeting these Jews who had not forgotten Jerusalem. He made one discovery after another, raising enthusiasm wherever he went. The London Bible Society had ordered him to make inquiries on the very location of the pogroms, and to arrive at an estimate of the financial aid necessary for the initial help. But Hechler, upon contacting these touching “Lovers of Zion,” lined up with them at the outset, enlarging his mission in an original way, quite in keeping with his nature. Wherever he went he inquired about the level of Zionism of his interlocutors, and pleaded for their return to the Promised Land.

The public addresses, for which he was paid, also contributed to improve the humble Zionist finances. He plunged into strong Biblical arguments with many rabbis who opposed the “Lovers of Zion” on the pretext that only the Messiah could launch the final Return to the land of Israel. He reminded them that throughout the history of Israel God had never made Jewish fidelity a *sine qua non* [absolute] condition of His own faithfulness.

God never hesitates to use men who are neither theologians nor priests, and anyway, wasn’t it much more the fact of Jewish suffering than the existence of clergymen which was pushing Israel toward Jerusalem? Without Pharaoh and his concentration camps there is no Moses and no Pascal redemption. Without Russian pogroms there are no “Lovers of Zion,” and no heroic colonies in the Holy Land.

Indeed one must count on miracles, but they always come as a supplement to popular action. The men whom God calls are never “little saints,” and the Messiah will come, Israel, when you will have made smooth His paths in Jerusalem itself, and in the desert of the Negev, which also is called to revival!



In Odessa, too, Hechler discovered the works of several Zionist rabbis, and skillfully adopted their arguments. Thus, for example, Rabbi Yehuda Alkalai, born in Sarajevo in 1798, whose ministry became one long plea for the return to Zion⁷ and whose words impressed the Zionist pastor strongly:

“There are two kinds of return: individual and collective. Individual return means that each man should turn away from his evil personal ways, and repent ... Collective return means that all Israel should return to the land which is the inheritance of our fathers, to receive

⁷ This same rabbi was the spiritual teacher of Theodore Herzl’s grandfather.

the divine command and to accept the yoke of Heaven. This collective return was foretold by all the prophets, even though we are unworthy. Heaven will help us for the sake of our holy ancestors. . . We are, alas, so scattered and divided today. These divisions are an obstacle to Redemption. The Redemption will begin with efforts by the Jews themselves; they must organize and unite, choose leaders, and leave the lands of exile. . . .”

And there was Rabbi Kalisher (1795-1870), who succeeded in persuading several wealthy Jews, in particular Sir Moses Montefiore, to finance the Return to Zion. The following excerpt is from his central work: “In Search of Zion.”

“The Redemption will begin by awakening support among the philanthropists, and by gaining the consent of the nations to the gathering of some of the dispersed of Israel into the Holy Land. The prophet Isaiah (chapter 27) expressed this thought as revealing that all of Israel would not return from exile at one time but would be gathered by degrees, as the grain is slowly gathered from the beaten corn. God will bless our work. . . But, above all our labor on our land will hasten the ultimate Messianic Redemption. . . .”

Hechler was delighted to find that some Jewish theologians knew how to interpret the prophetic texts in connection with historical events, which promised to be thrilling in the Middle East. Alas, such rabbis could be counted on one hand, and who in the scientific circles of the church cared about their writings? Who was ready to give them credit for anything?



When the envoy of the Bible Society returned to London in the autumn of 1882, his Zionist sentiments had been considerably reinforced. His eyes had seen the children of Israel in the very heart of suffering, in another Egypt, holding their heads high under blows, and turning toward their mother Jerusalem. He had seen them leave — naïve students, and intellectuals in long black caftans who weren’t prepared at all for hard pioneer labor, to wage battle barehanded against dunes, swamps, malaria, scorpions and death.

How could this initial exodus be possible without the mysterious intervention of the Holy Spirit? Only a Moses was missing to this Exodus. Pinsker was a great man, though first and foremost a theoretician. But where was that man of whom William Hechler had spoken to the Grand Duke Frederic? Was he already in the world?

And how was Hechler to bring his own white, messianic stone to this mystical temple, to the Promised Land that was suffering the pains of childbirth? How was he to reach the royal gates of a sleeping Jerusalem, and have a share in her awakening?

Here a unique opportunity presented itself: if the royal portals of Jerusalem were to open to Hechler, it would be before William, titular holder of the Episcopal seat of Jerusalem!



In 1841 an Anglican Episcopal seat had been established in Jerusalem — an unexpected consequence of the Oriental crisis, and the appearance of British power in Syria. Protestant nationals of the European powers were not recognized as such by the Ottoman Porte. Only the Christian communities found in the Holy Land at the time of the Arab conquest enjoyed legal status as minorities.

By the Treaty of London on July 15, 1840, England, Austria, Russia, and Prussia agreed to curb French power in the Middle East. Thus through this tiny door Prussia in turn, a Protestant power, entered this part of the world and was not long in establishing a solid position there. This became part of its *Drang nach Osten* policy, which was later to become one of the main causes of the First World War and of Turkey's entering the war on Germany's side.

Negotiations between the two Protestant capitals began from the year 1840: London and Berlin on one side, and Constantinople on the other, the latter having every reason to show its gratitude to these two nations which had put an end to the mortal danger embodied by a Mehemet Ali supported by France.

The agreement declared that the two sovereigns would together appoint a Protestant bishop, whose salary would be paid by both Courts. The new bishop was proclaimed to be the pastor and protector of the English and Prussian Evangelical Christians. At the beginning of 1884 this Episcopal seat was unoccupied, by reason of the death of its first incumbent, Michael Salomon Alexander, of Jewish origin.



The name of William Hechler was now put forward by Frederic of Baden, who was close to the Emperor, William of Prussia. Hechler on his part (and for the first time) intervened to plead his own cause, sending the Emperor the treatise which he had just completed entitled, "The Restoration of the Jews to Palestine According to the Prophets."

Did it not concern Jerusalem? His whole life — the forty fateful years which were behind him — was it not all a preparation for this engagement, for this residence? Had he not returned from a moving visit with persecuted Israel? Hadn't he just assisted at the birth-pains of those "Lovers of Zion"? Didn't he openly take their side, going so far as to plead their cause before hostile rabbis? What could he not accomplish in their favor if he could be on the spot where the core of the problem was, endued with considerable spiritual power, a bishop supported by two great powers? From this Episcopal seat would he not be able to contribute significantly to open the doors of the Promised Land to its Jewish children?

This man going on forty had dreamed before his maps and his clay models, his old friendly manuscripts, his ancient engravings of

the Holy City and the destroyed Temple. He had finally reached his goal after having known Asia, Africa, and the royal courts of Europe. Jerusalem had given him a sign; how could it not be from God? How could he resist an appeal from that ancient shy mother, waiting for her children in millennial bereavement for her Temple's stones? Come, William, and knock at doors!

But this portal of the city of David, which began to open before an English pastor would be closed by another English hand. The Anglican Archbishop was not there to show his feelings, nor was he there to fulfill the secret vows of one of his naïve priests. He was there to place his clergymen at strategic places in accordance with the present situation. As is well known, the bishops are not here to do the will of prophets...

This Hechler was a good chap, but still his career was not of the most orthodox! Tutor here, chaplain there — that does not make one a solid theologian! His dogmatism left much to be desired; his antecedents were clearly pietists, but as for his scientific publications (a so-called theological publication, indeed!) it consisted of a humble brochure about the return of the Jews to Palestine, which reeked of Cabbala for miles around.

And finally, William Hechler suffered from the major handicap of having solicited the Episcopal seat. He was not of Jewish origin and it was clear that a converted Jew would be the best thing for this seat in Jerusalem. It would be a fine and discreet way of showing “the superiority of the Church to a humiliated Synagogue.” This was the reasoning of any self-respecting archbishop. - So much the worse for the bold dreams of a Zionist pastor!



William, you will not be the bishop of Jerusalem! Still, another person will promise you this seat, another person whom you will meet in about ten years: this Jewish prince whom you are waiting for with tenacious patience, like a sentry who watches for the dawn. Another dreamer and visionary, like yourself. You two will cherish generous dreams in one another's behalf, but the crown of David will never be put on his head, and you will never sit on an apostolic chair.

Yet, the golden gate of Jerusalem will open before you in spite of everything. But only briefly, like an intrusion into the Kingdom. It will open to both of you, the Prince and the Prophet, and you will advance several steps as in a dream . . . until its massive door will close on you for good.

William Hechler — a prophet who penetrated his Prince's capital only once. The times were not ripe for such royalty or such an episcopate. Be content, both of you, to stand for a moment on Mount Nebo. It is good, and it is enough. You also have an illustrious precedent.



Hechler accepted the blow, but he was hurt at the bottom of his heart by a wound which would never heal. We shall later find these forces of politics and of high ecclesiastical strategy again in action against a progressing Zionism. In the last decades of his long life the Zionist pastor was time and again constrained to separate these diverse elements. For a short moment Hechler found himself at the heart of what he called the politics of God, the only politics that no one can force. Here one has to wait and not solicit any more.

But this was not quite the opinion of his aunt, that good fairy in London, who now made every effort to procure a new position to console her nephew who had been wounded in his faith. Embassy chaplain in the cold capital of Sweden? Hechler agreed. This or something else, what difference did it make! He was to fill this post for fourteen months.

In the spring of 1885 he was appointed to a similar post in the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It seems that after having accepted several parishes this unusual pastor was now prepared to jump from one embassy to another. His semi-retreat had begun while still in his forties. When one has dreamt of Jerusalem, when one's name happens to be Hechler, any other capital tastes of bitterness.

Vienna was a Catholic fortress, a frivolous town of all the pleasures, to the sound of dizzying waltzes. The post of chaplain was almost repose itself: a minimum of ecclesiastic duties, a sermon every Sunday, plus a very pious ambassador who did not mind mounting the pulpit himself. Ten years slipped away monotonously in this manner, during which the chaplain became more solitary and eccentric.

We shall let these years pass, and instead examine Hechler's treatise, which represents his humble but original contribution to the enormous file of Protestant Zionism.⁸



From William Hechler's brochure of several pages, let us single out two essential points.

The first tended to refute the major argument of every theology which opposed the Zionist movement. Such was theology claiming the prophetic passages relating to the *Return to Zion* have all been accomplished by the return from the Babylonian exile. Or else "replacement theology" that claims was accomplished by the ministry, death and resurrection of Christ.

According to this reasoning, Israel could not turn to the Biblical texts in order to justify any political venture. It no longer had a role to play in history, except of course to embrace Christianity. Still, if Israel must one day again receive a certain national independence, it would be reasonable to see this as a result of the play of important

⁸ See appendix "Bibliographical Chronology of Christian Zionists" for Hechler's contribution to this file

political interests in the Middle East, but in no manner due to the hand of God.

Not at all, retorted Hechler. This is to forget, first of all, that the famous return from Babylonian captivity to the Promised Land involved only the representatives of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (accompanied by Levites) — a very partial return, as one can see. How dare one affirm that this minority could represent those that the prophetic texts depict as arriving from the four corners of the earth — “from the distant isles”—speaking all tongues and not only the Babylonian. And how, finally, can one ignore the preciseness with which Amos concludes his book:

“I shall plant you again on your own land, and you shall never again be plucked up out of the land which I have given you!”

Israel, since the Zionism of Nehemiah’s time, had seen itself dispersed to the four corners of the world — its fatherland given back to the desert and its Temple razed. Obviously the return from Babylon was but an unfinished rehearsal of the final Return still to come.

Here the reasoning is well nigh irrefutable, on condition of course that one takes the prophetic writings seriously, not dealing with them as the historian treats a document of profane history, and on condition that one treats the Biblical texts with the respect which Christ Himself had.

Too many theologians, even though the State of Israel already stands among us, hold a garbled view of history which only God directs, and they insist that Israel remain forever under the ban of history. Israel exists, yet these doctors don’t wish to admit that it was born of the divine will, as if indeed anything which concerns this people (with whom God has forever bound Himself by pact and covenant) could occur without Him!

Are not these theologians the victims of a thousand-year-old tradition of hardening of heart, and contempt (true spiritual blindness) toward this unique people? Are they not afraid and embarrassed that they might be witnesses of the collapse of this traditional theological edifice if they would but draw near to this nation which is reviving to this blossoming desert, or this ancient Hebrew language which quickens so many immigrants rescued from so many Babels, from valleys filled with dry bones?

The second point: this was a curious find of a cabbalistic nature, which was later to make a strong impression on Herzl and his associates. According to a passage at the end of the book of Daniel (and taken up again in the book of The Revelation), Jerusalem would be delivered up to “Gentile” occupation for forty-two months, followed by a promised period of blessing.

Two difficulties here present themselves: (1) how should one interpret these characteristically messianic months of bodily and spiritual renewal in the mysterious land? (2) to what precise moment of history can one connect them?

The first difficulty did not lead to much controversy, the majority of exegetes agreeing that one prophetic month is equal to thirty years, which gives for our test 1260 years. This is the number that appears both in the book of Daniel and in that of the seer of Patmos, the Apocalypse.

But how to relate this number to the chain of history? If one starts with the destruction of the Temple by Titus, one arrives at the year 1330 — a dead end.

Hechler reasoned thus: the prophetic texts depict Jerusalem as trodden for a time under the boots of the “*Goyim*”, in other words, by the Nations. On the other hand, mention is made of a period designated as the “abomination of desolation” in the Holy Place. This could not refer to the Byzantine conquest, a power which, in spite of all its misdeeds, still appealed to the God of the Bible and to Christ.

But in 637 Jerusalem fell into the hands of a “pagan” power: Islam, then under the rule of its third Caliph – Omar, Mohammed’s brother-in-law. The latter was not content with taking possession of Jerusalem; he razed the Christian basilica built on the “Holy Place” in Israel, the location of the Temple itself. He then erected on this spot a mosque to the glory of the prophet! (This mosque is still standing today, and bears the name of the Caliph.)

If one now adds to 637 the fateful number of 1260, one arrives at the year 1897, a year which according to Hechler, should mark the dawn of the final restoration of Israel in the Promised Land!

Hechler gambled, and prophesied. Did he have the right to do this? Christian tradition, as well as Jewish, forbids one to calculate “the times of the End”. But Hechler, one might have guessed, was not a man to be embarrassed by prohibitions of this kind, above all when it was a question of the resurrection of the Holy Land.

Speaking apocalyptically, he had announced neither the End nor the *Parousia*. And when all is said, we will have to admit that in reaching the famous year of 1897, Hechler and his strange calculations were right. **That year really marked the starting point of the ultimate restoration of Israel in the entire world.**

Hechler knew that God is a God of order, and that He had determined for all time “the times and the moments” of which Christ spoke in the Gospel of the Ascension on the apocalyptic Mount of Olives facing the Golden Gate of Jerusalem. Certain numbers: 7, 12, 40, 70, always appear in Biblical literature. And the Hebrew Scripture’s expression “*in those times*” is the counterpart of the expression so frequently found in the “New” Testament: “when the times were accomplished . . . so that the Scriptures should be fulfilled.”

On the other hand, God reserves to Himself the right to reveal a tiny bit of His plan, from time to time, to whomsoever He pleases. Why shouldn’t William Hechler be one of those humble and privileged ones? Is it not in “the foolish ones of this world” that God’s glory is realized?

*Hechler
Discerns :
1897*

William Hechler “the prophet” kept telling the Zionist leaders, for almost fifty years and often in desperation, “*God blesses your movement. It will succeed even if you doubt Him!*”

For Israel, awakening painfully from the cruelest of exiles, Hechler was a light, humble and fragile, whose encouraging gleam did not fail.

It was the lot of this Christian theologian to meet Theodore Herzl, “the Prince of the Return”, and remain with him until the latter’s premature and brutal death, so as to proffer him the divine Word in the midst of an exhausting struggle wherein opposition, betrayal and human pettiness became more and more deafening.

As we shall see, Herzl was to stand in real need, throughout a dramatic ministry of service to his people, of prophetic encouragement from his pastor friend.



This picture of friendship between the Jewish prince who would arise, and the Christian prophet who had already announced his coming, is much more fitting and pleasing than the classical image offered by those two statues found on the side porch of the cathedral in Strasbourg — truly a picture of spiritual pride and theological blindness!



The two represent the Church, very proud of herself, and the Synagogue, humiliated and “blind”!

During all these many centuries the Church and the Synagogue had faced each other in a similar manner. At the end of an impressive line of Protestant Zionists, William Hechler was preparing himself to meet another Moses, of a much greater Exodus than the

one out of Egypt, to march side-by-side toward Jerusalem, the mother of all the children of Abraham.

It is thus, shoulder to shoulder, - and not face to face in contempt and good conscience - that the Church of Christ can and should come to the aid of Israel, which alone has buckled down to the exalted, prophetic task of making straight the way of the Lord in the eternal, Promised Land. Not by coming up with shockingly competitive church steeples, chilling dogma, or missionaries of a bygone era (who often, indeed, may have been men of good will) but by declaring the faithfulness of God, and the coming of His reign on earth as it is in heaven...

and by stating an example like that of William Hechler, a prophet most of us have forgotten.



For ten years our embassy chaplain fretted under constraint, alone with his Bibles, messianic charts, and cabbalistic studies, in an austerity worthy of any Puritan. To rise at four in the morning is to assure oneself of the most fruitful study. His table was Spartan, for eating had always bored him. He fasted, and started to skip every second meal.

Books were his only luxury and these he devoured. He knew the geography and geology of Palestine as if he were its chief surveyor. Daily he reviewed several chapters of the Bible thoroughly, being one of those Protestant clergymen who remember not only the content of the Biblical stories but also their chapter and verse!

As a matter of fact, he regularly frequented Vienna's Jewish society and synagogue life. This society, however, struck him as being more Babylonian than Jewish. But still there was a constant influx of Russian and Rumanian refugees, most of them devoted to the Bible. New synagogues would open and it was to these Hechler directed his steps on Friday nights, in search of some appealing rabbinical exegesis for his sermon on the following Sunday!

He was always ready to intercede in favor of some wild person, it might even be an anarchist, whom he would introduce to the goodhearted Ambassador. Among the victims thus saved at the last moment from the police was the daughter of the famous physician, Mandelstamm.

Then one of his former students, the daughter of the benevolent Frederic, came to settle in Vienna, as wife of the Count of Eulenburg, the German Ambassador. Hechler cultivated the new connection faithfully, being formally received at the official residence. He left a lasting impression with the princess as the master of a soothing presence, patriarchal beard, and kind eyes.

He was thus at home in the two protestant embassies of the Empire's capital city. He knew all the chancellery's secrets (for all relied on his discretion), but avidly picked up each new detail in his passion to decipher history.

In this milieu of diplomats, Hechler was soon considered an original bibliophile of the sort England, and only England, produces in all levels of her society. He was invited out, more often than he liked, by this or that dandy, Machiavellian, or adventurer, who enjoyed meeting such a creature sprung from the Bible, his pockets full of mysterious anthologies and harmless projects.

The University of Vienna offered him a post as lecturer, and there at last he was able to find an audience that suited him and a place to exhibit his clay models and charts.

Ten years passed in this way, until the clear spring of 1896 . . .

IN THE SERVICE OF ZION

Saturday morning, March 9, 1896, while pondering about his sermon for the next day at the embassy chapel, and strolling in Vienna, William Hechler discovered a new book title in the window of one of his favorite books stores.

Actually, as was his custom each morning after leaving the office, the chaplain was on the track of some rare edition, some bizarre manuscript. He wore one of his well-known frock-coats, its huge pockets ready to engulf the bulkiest map, or perhaps a folio that had received mistreatment for successive generations.

Now, before one particular title his heart skipped a beat: “*Der Judenstaat.*” *THE JEWISH STATE!*⁹

He came nearer and bent over the name of the author, Theodore Herzl. The name did not bring anything to mind, or any association. Had the trumpet which announces the return to Zion sounded already, without him being the first to hear it, attentive sentinel though he was?

Entering the bookshop he turned to its proprietor, an old acquaintance: “How long has this book been in print?”

“It has just been published . . . wait a minute . . . very recently, on February 14, here in Vienna to be exact.”

“Three weeks late! It is unforgivable on my part,” the embassy’s chaplain told himself. Then: “Do you know the author?”

“Of course! Don’t you read his critical reviews for the theater, in the ‘Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung,’ and for some years now his remarkable political reviews in the *Neue Freie Presse*? Don’t you ever go to the theater, Mr. Pastor?” – with an understanding smile, “where you would applaud the often humorous plays of Doktor Theodore Herzl?”

To tell the truth, the honorable chaplain to the Ambassador of Her Majesty in Vienna never went to the Burgtheater. Biblical dramas were not presented there. But upon reflection, the name of Herzl rang a bell, for although he did not frequent the fashionable comedians, he did read the press of the capital. Herzl . . . wait a bit . . . of course! He wrote the articles about the trial of Captain Dreyfus, exactly the year before!



Hechler bought the book and rushed back to his bachelor lodgings, quite disturbed. It was, at the very least, strange that a man of the world, this producer of boulevard amusement, should publish a book called, “The Jewish State.”

“I know the Jews in Vienna very well,” he thought to himself. “Very faithful subjects of the Emperor, certainly. Lovers of the

⁹ see for instance www.wzo.org.il/cza/herzl/Default.htm

theater, without a doubt. But Jews who remember Jerusalem? Apart from the Russian and Rumanian refugees who once a year at the most, during the Passover service, pronounce the words, 'Next year in Jerusalem'—with careful diction as if ashamed of their own daring—how many remember Jerusalem? The main thing for them was not to forget Vienna and its attractions, and to bind themselves firmly to it. It isn't possible that this chap Herzl . . . Yet I'll read the work quickly, and pay him a visit."

Herzl writes:

"Next year in Jerusalem" is our ancient phrase. It is now a question of showing that the dream can be converted into a living reality . . . We shall not dwell in mud huts. We shall build new, more beautiful and modern houses, and possess them in safety. We shall not lose our acquired possessions. We shall realize them. We shall not sacrifice our beloved customs. We shall find them again . . . Those who are now desperate will go first, after them the poor; next the prosperous, and last of all, the wealthy. Those who go in advance will raise themselves to a higher grade . . . Thus the exodus will also be an ascent of the class. We shall give a home to our people. And we shall give it, not by dragging them ruthlessly out of their sustaining soil, but rather by transplanting them carefully to a better ground"



Hechler was stuck by the mixture of extraordinary self-confidence, realism, and a certain inspired Biblical style of which the author himself was evidently unconscious. Much more a vision than a theory:

"We must not imagine the departure of the Jews as a sudden one. It will be gradual, continuous, and will cover many decades. The poorest will go first to cultivate the soil. In accordance with a preconceived plan they will construct roads, bridges, railways and telegraph installations; they will regulate rivers, and build their own dwellings. Their labor will create trade. Trade will create markets and markets will attract new settlers, for every man will go voluntarily, at his own expense and his own risk . . . The creation of our State will be beneficial to adjacent countries . . . making of the new land a land of experiments and a model State."

It was really a vision. The man was inspired! He did not fear to enter into details, even at the risk of being contradicted by the future, as if the future were mysteriously unveiled to him. He wrote as if this already existed: Our State! From the mouth of a middle-class Viennese this was quite a sign!

"We have no flag and we need one. If we desire to lead many men, we must raise a symbol above their heads. I would suggest a white

flag, with seven golden stars. The white field symbolizes our pure new life. The stars are the seven golden hours of our working day. We shall march into the Promised Land carrying a badge of honor . . . I believe that a wonderful generation of Jews will spring into existence. The Maccabees will rise again. Let me repeat once more my opening words: the Jews who wish for a State will have it. We shall live at last as free men on our own soil, and die peacefully in our own homes. The world will be freed by our liberty, enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness”

Without a doubt, a Prince had arisen in Israel, the Zionist pastor told himself. His time had not been wasted, all these years; straight was his route toward him, through India, Africa and Europe. But this Jewish Prince was not aware that God had called him, that God had taken him in hand and would not leave him even in the midst of the great ordeals which awaited him. It was his own duty to tell him this, and to offer his services.

Before doing this Hechler dashed to the Embassy to tell the extraordinary news to Ambassador Monson, to whom he had already given his “Biblical course” regarding the near return of the Jewish people to the Holy Land. Sir Edmund Monson was a very pious Protestant, and had been won over to that English school of preaching which maintained for the past hundred years or more that there would be a new Exodus of Israel to Zion—possibly supported by London.



Herzl was at his desk. A card is handed to him, of an unknown visitor, a pastor by profession. No doubt a bore who would ask him to support some charitable institution by lauding it to the skies in his paper. Or else he was after a conversion and in that case, the conversation would be brief.

Hechler entered the office. Herzl had no time to note the great nobility of his visitor’s face, who began to speak immediately in an enthusiastic tone, being obviously moved.

“Dr. Herzl, I have been waiting for you four years. Four years I have been announcing you to princes, statesmen, and ecclesiastical dignitaries whom I met. I have prepared the way for you. The hour has rung, and your idea will succeed. Consider me as being at your service, at the service of our cause!”

“But, sir, just who are you?” Herzl interrupted. The British clergyman, under emotion, had failed to follow the most basic English custom of all. He hadn’t introduced himself. This done, the two men got to know each other.

The Grand Duke of Baden was soon evoked, as well as the work of Hechler, which fixed 1897 as the fateful year of the Zionist idea.

“Your book is inspired, Dr. Herzl, in a way you yourself do not realize, and that’s good. This is a sign of the very grace of God.

For, just like everybody else, including every Jew in this capital, you have forgotten your prophets. You don't give them credit any more. But you belong to your people and your prophets and this, combined with the suffering of Israel, will not let you rest.

"Like Moses in the past, it is your people's martyrdom, both in Russia and in the features of a French captain [a reference to Dreyfus] which now brings you back to God and toward the forgotten Jerusalem. I tell you with emotion - and I will always repeat it: *God is with you and you will succeed, come what may!*"

Herzl did not answer, being inwardly moved. He knew himself to be far from the Bible and its prophets. Nevertheless he was aware that he had been inspired when he wrote "The Jewish State."¹⁰ Was this pastor a prophet? Had he judged correctly? He would soon see. Hechler continued,

"Today is the 10th of March. We have no time to lose. We have to act this month. I am on the best of terms with the Grand Duke of Baden, who is, as you know, the uncle of the Kaiser whom I have also met several times. I'll undertake to obtain an audience in Karlsruhe for you which will serve as a start for all future steps. Will you put your trust in me?"

It was too good to be true, Herzl thought. This pastor with his princely and imperial connections had been sent to him from heaven, sharing his own flaming enthusiasm. In fact, he, the non-Jew, cherished a faith still lacking to him, the Jew. Would he keep his beautiful promises? That blue-eyed glance was surely incapable of deception.

The two men shook hands fervently. Hechler did not doubt that he was really and truly before the Prince of the Return of Israel. The man before him lacked nothing except a diadem. His person radiated majesty, dignity, and an incredible beam, suited to the glance of a Biblical hero.

Let us remain together, Theodore Herzl, not "till death separates us" but rather: "Next year in Jerusalem!"



The following Sunday, March 15, 1896, Herzl paid his first visit to his new friend, on the fourth floor of a building at Schillerplatz, in a studio the walls of which were covered from floor to ceiling with shelves bursting with books, Bibles, and various documents.

Hechler first showed the panoramic chart extending from Adam to 1897! The latter date was in red ink. Then the large survey containing messianic frontiers and the exact location of the future Temple, according to the data given by Ezekiel the prophet.

But listen to Herzl, writing later in his "Journal":

¹⁰ Herzl was to note in his short autobiography: "I don't remember ever writing anything in such a state of exaltation. Heine tells us that he heard a noise of wings when he composed certain stanzas. I too heard them when I composed this book, working each day to exhaustion."

"We have prepared the ground for you!" Hechler said triumphantly... He then played for me on the organ a Zionist song of his own composition.

"From the woman who teaches me English I heard that Hechler was a hypocrite.¹¹ I rather take him to be a native enthusiast, with a streak of the collector's mania. Still, there is something fetching in his naïve enthusiasm; I particularly felt it when he sang to me his little song.

"Next, we came to the heart of the business. I said to him: I must put myself into direct and publicly known relations with a responsible and non-responsible ruler — that is, with a minister-of-state or a prince. Then the Jews will believe in me and follow me."

The pastor then proposed to go immediately to Berlin to meet his colleague at the Court, Pastor Dryander, as well as the Princes Günther and Heinrich. But as usual he was without a gulden in his pocket! Herzl was prepared, of course, to subsidize the trip, and he adds in his "Journal":

"...a considerable sacrifice in my circumstances. But I am willing to risk it on the prospect of speaking with the Kaiser. At the same time I am by no means blind to the possibility that Hechler, whom I really do not know, is only an impecunious clergyman with a taste for travel.. Moreover, if he is actually admitted to their presence, I have no idea of how these princely families regard him. The question now is: when he comes to Berlin will they pat him ironically on the shoulder and say, 'Hechler, old man, don't let that Jew stuff your head with nonsense!'

"He is an incredible figure when looked at with the quizzical eyes of a Viennese Jewish journalist . . . I seem, though, to detect from certain clues that he is a sincere believer in the prophets. For instance, he said: 'I have only one scruple: namely, that we must do nothing toward the fulfillment of the prophecy. But this scruple is laid, for you began your work without me'... He considers our departure for Jerusalem to be close at hand and showed me the coat-pocket in which he will stow his big Palestine map when we shall be riding together around the Holy Land. That was his most naïve and convincing touch."

Thus Herzl, as an experienced and able Viennese journalist, began by doubting the sincerity of this pastor who came as a godsend. Perhaps because of the very fact that heaven apparently sent him, but also because the author of "The Jewish State" was not accustomed to meeting persons of Hechler's stamp. That a Christian should place himself at his service in Vienna where anti-Semitism was taking root was very confusing. (Thirty years later it was to be Nazism.) But as we shall see, Herzl was soon to judge his man properly.

For the moment he dreamed and pondered that he still had everything to do, for as he used to say, "until now I have encountered only obstacles to fight against." For this foolish Zionist adventure into which he had thrown himself, his faithful friends could always be

¹¹ A pun by this "charitable" woman concerning the pastor of her community: In fact, hypocrite is "heuchler" in German; one can see the connection with the name Hechler

counted on one hand and among these, until the hour of his brutal death, was this pastor with crazy ideas.

Herzl mused, leaning over Hechler's wheezy harmonium: in another year would come the Passover of 1897, with everything yet to be accomplished. Suddenly, listening to the naïve accents of the Zionist anthem, everything appeared simple and limpid, easy and self-evident—from the clay model of the reconstructed Temple to the messianic frontiers of future Israel.



On March 26 Hechler sent a long letter to Frederic of Baden, several excerpts of which follow:

“ . . . May I venture to draw your Royal Highness' attention to a very remarkable book, which has lately appeared in Vienna, and treats of a subject on which I have repeatedly had the honor of speaking to you. I mean the Return of the Jews to Palestine, foretold by the Hebrew Prophets. 'Der Judenstaat. Versuch einer modernen Lösung der Judenfrage' ('The Jewish State, an Attempt at a Modern Solution to the Jewish Question') is a book which must greatly help forward this movement . . . After reading this book I called to see Dr. Herzl, a perfect stranger to me, because I was wondering whether the Doctor was trying to fulfill the prophecy . . . This was, however, not Dr. Herzl's wish, for he knew nothing of the special prophecies on this subject. His book can therefore be summed up with his own words: 'Der Judenstaat ist ein Weltbedürfniss!' (The Jewish State is necessary to the whole world.)

“I have for years believed that the so-called anti-Semitic movement is the woe of Judah, and also foretold by the prophets of old, which is making the Jews see that they are Jews first . . .and this is now creating a longing in their hearts to return as a nation to the Land of Promise . . . Palestine belongs to them by right, for it is the only country in the whole world of which God has Himself said to whom it is to belong. What startling facts!”

“Jesus said to His disciples (St. Luke 21:24) the Jews 'shall be led away captive into all nations and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled'. The first half of Christ's prophecy has long ago been literally fulfilled. . . And the angel speaking to St. John the Divine (Revelation 11:2) says: 'The holy city shall they [the Gentiles] tread under foot forty and two months'. . .

“Looking over my historical charts from Adam to 1897, which Your Royal Highness will remember my showing you and Prince Hohenlohe at Karlsruhe, on the occasion where His Majesty, the Emperor of Germany, so graciously sent for me, there is one very distinct date, well known to all historical students, which may be the starting point here referred to.”

Hechler then gave his famous calculation already mentioned, and prudently added that he was neither a prophet nor the son of a

prophet, yet wished to study the signs of the times, as recommended in the Scriptures.

Had he not calculated that Isaac was born 1897 years before Christ, being the first child of the Covenant to be born in the Promised Land — this in order to show a necessary parallel with Christ.

Then, leaving the ground of a rather far-fetched exegesis, the pastor presented the political aspect of the matter to the Grand Duke:

“I cannot help thinking that if Germany and England were to take this movement and such a new state under their protection, and Palestine were declared to be a neutral country something like Belgium, the Return of the Jews would become a great blessing to Europe and put an end to the anti-Semitic spirit of hatred which is most detrimental to the welfare of all our nations. In Austria the anti-Semitic movement is most certainly a burning question . . . From the newspapers I see that His Imperial Majesty, the German Emperor, will make a short stay in Vienna on his return to Berlin. Hoping it may be a subject which interests His Majesty, I have sent more than one copy to Your Royal Highness, but I do not know whether I ought to beg for an audience to lay this matter before His Majesty.”

This passage reveals that which was to remain Hechler’s concern until the imminence of the First World War, namely, strong German and English sponsorship of the Palestinian renaissance. We shall return to this, but here let us note that if in Hechler’s mind this sponsorship was imperative, it was for the simple reason that it belonged to Protestant powers. The politico-theological aspect in the Zionist thinking of this Herzlian prophet was to become the cruelest disappointment of his long life, bringing him more than one rebuff.



The die were cast: It was necessary to “appeal to Caesar”, to that king whose throne was in Berlin and whom Hechler knew. It was right to win this ruler to the Cause. Under the circumstances the naïveté of the pastor was equal to that of Herzl. Both the man of God and the Zionist leader overestimated the nobility and piety of ‘Caesar’. They did not know that Biblical demands, even when it was a question of a Jerusalem in ruins, never count for much in the balances of the princes of this world, each with his own politics and superior interests.

For the Kaiser, if he remembered him at all, Hechler represented the type of inoffensive pastor whom one went to listen to with pomp but also absentmindedly. If Palestine had any interest for the Kaiser, it was certainly not because of the Jewish drama involved therein, but rather because it was on the route to India and was therefore a main piece on the chess board on his penetration into the East. His English cousin was already installed there, which annoyed him, Protestant though he was!



On April 14, 1896, Hechler rushed into Herzl's office, quite excited. The Emperor had just arrived in Vienna with his attendants. Among the latter was Dryander, to whom Hechler had shown his friend's book, and with whom he had conversed for two hours while strolling together in the capital. It was now advisable to go to Karlsruhe in order to obtain an audience.

Herzl was against this idea, for if the audience were not granted, he personally would find himself in the street, having met with a rebuff. But Hechler could go to the castle to obtain an audience for him. Hechler agreed, and asked his new friend for a photo of him. Let us see what Herzl thought of all this:

" . . . He apparently thinks that they would picture me as a 'shabby Jew.' I promised to give him a photo tomorrow. Strange that I should just have had my picture taken—something that had not occurred to me in years—for my father's birthday today."

Herzl went that evening to the Opera, in order to study the German Emperor from a loge. Returning home at eleven he found Hechler in the hall. The latter had been waiting for over an hour to tell that he was leaving for Karlsruhe the next morning.

On the 16th, 18th and 22nd of April Herzl received four cables from Hechler informing him of his progress. On the 17th his pastor friend had been received for a short moment by the Kaiser, who, desirous of appearing witty before his retinue, quipped: "Well, Reverend Hechler, I see that you dream of becoming a minister in some Jewish State! Isn't there a Rothschild in the background?"

Hechler, in his candor, was so thrown off by this that he wrote a letter the same evening to Frederic of Baden, confessing: "I am greatly troubled in mind!" He hastened to add that he had no personal reason for his interest in the Zionist movement (which had yet to be born), that he had never met any member of the Rothschild family. And besides that, he had not a single drop of Jewish blood in his veins (this should be told to the Kaiser), his antecedents being a good mixture of the "Schwarzwald and Great Britain.: If he had ranged himself at Dr. Herzl's side, it was simply because twenty years of Biblical studies had convinced him that the Jewish State would soon be a reality. Knowing this, it would have been dishonest on his part not to commit himself personally.

Of course he had taken the liberty, after consulting with his ambassador, Sir Edmund Monson, of sending a message to Salisbury, the Minister of London, and so the news had come to the ears of William II. Then comes a sweet final paragraph which sums up in a single sentence the un-British and unorthodox attitude of this strange embassy chaplain:

“His Excellency, my Ambassador, has kindly telegraphed to state that he will preach for me on Sunday in Vienna, so that I can stay in Karlsruhe over Sunday . . .”

The titular chaplain had written directly to the Foreign Minister, over the head of the ambassador, and the latter was now reduced to preaching the Gospel the following Sunday in the chapel of the embassy, so as to permit his chaplain to pursue his Zionist activities in the service of a Jewish journalist!

Herzl was both moved and slightly amused to learn about this. On April 26, soon after the interview with the Grand Duke, he wrote:

“Hechler is at all events a curious and complicated character. He is given to pedantry, undue humility, and much pious rolling of the eyes; but, on the other hand, he counsels me superbly, and with unmistakably genuine good will. He is at once shrewd and mystical, cunning and naïve. So far, with respect to myself, he has backed me up in quite a wonderful way . . . I wish the Jews to show him a full measure of gratitude.”



Nevertheless, during those few days of waiting, Herzl again had doubts about Hechler. He noted on the 17th:

“I begin to think that Hechler is building on his own illusions.” On the 18th, almost bitterly: “Nothing from Hechler. With his cable he has no doubt wanted to let me down softly. But since he has presented my book to the Grand Duke and perhaps even to the Kaiser, his travel expenses are justified . . .”

And suddenly, on the evening of the 21st, this note:

“I had intended to go to Pest tomorrow morning; and then, late this evening, I received a call from Hechler to come to Karlsruhe. Curious day. Hirsch dies, and I am brought into touch with reigning princes¹². There now begins a new book of the Jewish cause.”



In spite of their excellent rapport over many years, the tutor-pastor of the late prince William had much difficulty in convincing the Grand Duke of the need to receive his friend, Herzl. First it was necessary to wait for the report of his private advisor on this precious “Jewish State.” Then again, the heavy pleasantries of the Kaiser had somewhat cooled Frederic’s good sentiments — after all, wasn’t there a Rothschild behind it all? And finally, Herzl was a journalist and God only knew in what kind of embarrassing situation the press could place the Baden Court!

¹² See Bibliography

But during the last conversation between the Prince and the Pastor, the topic of the deceased crown prince had been brought up, and, while Frederic wept, Hechler — in order to console him - read him a Psalm wherein Zion was a main point. (Herzl was to appreciate this very much.) The listener was thereby persuaded. Hechler had also used the weighty argument that Frederic had been the first among German princes to proclaim William I Emperor in Versailles, and destiny now offered him the opportunity to found a second nation: Israel.

Herzl arrived on the 22nd at eleven in the evening. Hechler welcomed him and took him to the Germania Hotel, it being recommended by the Grand Duke. The following day, during the morning and until the audience at four o'clock, the two friends promenaded in Karlsruhe, lunching together. Listen to Herzl:

"Remember this beautiful day . . . Perhaps a year hence we shall be in Jerusalem."

"Hechler said he would ask the Grand Duke to accompany the Kaiser when the latter went to Jerusalem next year for the church consecration. I was to be present, too, and he — Hechler — would like to accompany the Grand Duke in a scholarly capacity. I said: when I go to Jerusalem, I take you with me."



For almost two hours Herzl presented his project to the good Grand Duke, who kindly listened and whose principal worry (This shows us the man!) was that he pictured himself being accused of anti-Semitism if he were to encourage an exodus of Jews to the promised land! He, too, desired closer cooperation between Germany and England (addressing himself now particularly to Hechler) but would London budge? Herzl answered:

"The English Jews must see to that."

The Grand Duke interjected, a bit annoyed. 'If they can do that . . .'

I said, 'If it were known that the Grand Duke took an interest in the matter it would count enormously.'

He replied, 'That is not true. My position is not great enough. Now if the German Kaiser or the King of Belgium were for it!'

I persisted, 'Still, I venture to say that if an experienced prince, one who had helped in the creation of the German Empire, a statesman to whom the Kaiser turns for counsel, endorses this new enterprise, it would make a profound impression. Your Highness is the Kaiser's advisor.'

He smiled, 'I advise him but he does what he pleases.'"

Frederic, as a preliminary, suggested settling several hundreds of thousands of pioneers in Palestine, and, only then to raise the question of a State. Herzl intervened in a brisk tone, which impressed the Grand Duke:

"I am opposed to that. The Jews would then be obliged to act as rebels against the Sultan. Whereas, I want to do everything in the open and on the level, and fully within the law"¹³."

To close the conversation Frederic declared, *"I would like to see all this come to pass. It would be a blessing for a lot of people."*

This was spoken after goodhearted Hechler had briefly mentioned the maturation of the messianic times, the Grand Duke listening, *"full of faith, with marvelous attention,"* according to Herzl, who found himself much impressed by the interview and could not refrain from saying to his pastor friend after the audience, *"What a marvelous person!"*

Accompanying Hechler (who had to reach Basel) to the station, Herzl opposed his friend's suggestion to send off a cable to friends in London stating, *"Two crowned heads have just conversed about the coming creation of a Jewish State."* Let us listen to Herzl:

"I asked him not to send such a telegram, because the Grand Duke might not approve of it. Now I regret having kept him from sending it. It would have caused a sensation in England and the Grand Duke would not even have been mentioned."



In the train which brought them back to Vienna, the two men had all the time to make their point; not without Hechler's unrolling one of his big maps of Palestine, so as to show his friend the exact and prophetic boundaries of the future State. In the North the mountains overhanging Cappadocia, in the South the Suez Canal.

One key phrase was worth circulating: that it was the land of David and Solomon.

Both worked at a memorandum to be sent to Frederic, to prepare an audience with the Kaiser, having in mind the latter's intervention in favor of a Jewish Palestine. They particularly stressed the following three points:

1. In the Holy Land the Jews would be excellent promoters of western culture.
2. Zionism could only weaken revolutionary elements in Europe.
3. Zionism would displace the activities of Jewish financiers to another sphere.

Here we see that our brave clergyman had his feet on the ground now and then, and knew how to use subtle arguments to plead the cause of Jerusalem before Caesar!

¹³ If Herzl had lived, it is evident that he would have first demanded recognition of the Jewish homeland by the nations, only then commencing with colonization. Those who succeeded him did not comprehend this point.

This meeting with the German ‘Caesar’ was to become during the next years an object of constant concern to Herzl, who had thought that the matter had been settled and that several weeks of waiting would lead to the imperial audience. But ‘Caesar’ – Kaiser did not easily commit himself to this new path which ran counter to the lanes of international politics—which was, moreover, opened up by a Jewish journalist accompanied by an eschatological pastor!

Even kind-hearted Frederic of Baden resorted to a policy of “wait and see” before he finally committed himself in writing positively to his nephew in Berlin. As a matter of fact, the success of the first Zionist Congress in Basel and the stir that it created in the world press were necessary as we shall see to get things going as a result of what our friend Hechler had begun in the first place.



The Kaiser was not exactly a genius; he changed his mind often, and only the prospect of immediate glory could animate him. For a while he thought that the Zionist movement of this mysterious Dr. Herzl could serve German interests in the Middle East, but he quickly abandoned this idea — only to take it up again, curiously enough, during the First World War which he himself launched.

Herzl even pondered the possibility of linking the Armenian drama to the Zionist cause, mediating for the two parties. The English ambassador in Vienna took an interest in this project and submitted it to Salisbury, together with a note written by Hechler, explaining the problem afresh.

At the beginning of June, Herzl met Anglican bishop Wilkinson at Hechler’s home:

“ . . . A clever, slim old man with white whiskers and dark, intelligent eyes. The Bishop had already read my pamphlet and thought it was ‘rather a business.’ I said categorically, ‘I don’t make businesses. I am a literary man.’ Whereupon the Bishop declared that he had not meant this as an insult. On the contrary, in the end he blessed me and invoked God’s blessing on the project.”

Some days before this conversation, Herzl had met the Nuncio of Vienna, Monsignor Agliardi, who seemed satisfied that Herzl did not dream of putting the Holy Places within the boundaries of the State of Israel. Yet after their talk, which had soon been interrupted by the ambassador of France, Herzl was to note this bitter thought:

“I believe Rome will be against us, because she does not see in the Jewish State the solution of the Jewish Question and perhaps even fears it.”

Going against Hechler’s advice, Herzl left on June 15 for Constantinople with the intention of obtaining an audience with the Sultan. Hechler was of the opinion that it was preferable to exert

pressure on Abdul Hamid through Berlin and London instead of launching alone into the venture.

Neither did he approve of the intermediary Herzl had relied on, an Austrian diplomat of Polish origin, a certain Nevlinisky, serving in Constantinople. It was only at his death that Herzl realized he had been completely misled by this man, not to mention the considerable amounts of money he had demanded of him. On the train, however, Herzl wrote this remark: *"Poor Hechler was less demanding when we traveled together."*

Herzl spent ten unprofitable days in the splendid capital of the Sublime Porte, with no outcome other than being presented with the cross of Commander of the Order of Mjidiye. On the day he was to depart, Nevlinisky interpreted as a victory for Herzl the proposal of the Grand Master of Ceremony to visit the palaces and treasures of the Sultan in the company of an officer of the Court! The reaction of Herzl:

« Je ne suis pas assez fabricant de chocolat pour être touché jusqu'aux larmes par cette faveur. » (I am not enough of a chocolate manufacturer to be moved to tears by this kind of favor.)

On June 30 the Zionist leader was given an enthusiastic reception by the Jewish community of Sofia. There was a quasi-messianic atmosphere in the great synagogue. When Herzl showed a certain reluctance to turn his back to the ark where the Holy Scriptures were placed, someone shouted, "Never mind, you are more precious than the Torah!" People pressed forward to kiss his hands . .

The following day he received a cable from Hechler asking him to travel immediately to Karlsruhe in order to meet Frederic again. But in the meantime, the latter had left for Freiburg, upon which Herzl excused himself, traveling directly to London, where he arrived on July 5.

He did not succeed in carrying away the large Jewish fortunes, nor the important Israelites of this capital; but the poor masses of the East End gave him a reception reminiscent of the crazy moments in Sofia. It was always so during the next eight years which were sparingly left for his life. The bankers ignored or feared him; the poor and the persecuted of the pogroms and the ghettos acclaimed him as their king.

During this summer of endless trips for the unrecognized Prince, Hechler on his part, expended his energy in lectures, conversations, contacts with the princely circles of Germany, thinking too, that he could convince William II to grant him an audience, which would mark the beginning of the imperial "protectorate."

Herzl sent numerous messages to his pastor friend:

"You who know all these crowned heads, who read the Bible and are familiar with the Hebrew Prophets, in a matter of weeks you can obtain this audience for me. Hurry up, my friend, let us not waste one moment."

Hechler answered,

“Stay calm and peaceful. Above us, at the head of all things, sits someone who directs our lives according to His will, in spite of the ill will of feeble humans. Let us follow Him. I am preaching everywhere, as you know, spreading the word to Dukes and to Princes. . . but these great personages are still very timorous . . . God bless you!”

At the time that Herzl was preparing to go to London for his first contacts with the Jewish leaders of that capital his friend had written him:

“I am sending you seven letters of introduction to the great Protestant dignitaries. God wishes this, dear friend, so carry on.”



The imperial audience did not materialize . . . What were his friend Hechler and the Grand Duke doing? Did either of them write or intervene? What was happening then? Who was it behind the scenes that was working against them? Or was it already too late to do anything about the entire matter? Hechler replied from Vienna:

“I am very worried on your account. I am afraid that in your impulsiveness you will only succeed in hitting your head against a wall. Let me ask you not to rush too much. The great ones of the world have to be tamed. If all this seems impossible to thousands of the children of Abraham, and not so desirable, how much more impossible it will seem to those who know nothing about the matter. Please be very discreet concerning the subject of which you write and the manner in which you do it. For the good of your cause, I pray that you will let me see what you write before sending it, being one who can judge impartially from the side. May God keep you in His Grace and guide you!”

As a matter of fact, in a letter written to Frederic of Baden on September 17, 1896, after a silence which had lasted for six weeks, Herzl had had the temerity to write:

“If I should not receive any letter or encouragement from you, then for fear of bothering you again I shall put an end, with this letter, to the possibility you had opened to me by permitting me to write to you.”

This is the style in which one prince writes to another and any person other than the kind Duke would have been offended and would have stopped the correspondence then and there. But without doubt Frederic had realized, since their meeting in April, that he found himself before an exceptional man — a statesman of breadth. And finally, Hechler was there to play the role of buffer, pleading the sincerity of his high-flying friend.

Hechler to Frederic of Baden:

"All that this remarkable movement now requires is the public recognition and protection of the Sovereigns of Europe. Is this not now possible, after the question has been so earnestly taken up by the Jews themselves? . . . But some of the rich, unbelieving Jews are still holding back. However, I am sure they will also join as soon as the Jewish State is successful, which it must be according to the Bible, for the Jews are then to be a blessing to the nations."

"If I could, I should go quite quietly to every European Sovereign and plead for God's ancient people, begging that the Land of Promise might be given back to the Jews, to whom God gave it for an everlasting possession some 4,000 years ago."

"Does not the Revolution in Constantinople during the last few days also prove that we are on the verge of some great crisis in the East as foretold in the prophets? ... May I venture to beg Your Royal Highness to say a few kind words to H. M. the Czar on this subject, in case you should see him at Darmstadt. If I could only persuade every one to read Dr. Herzl's 'Judenstaat' and see how wonderfully it agrees with the Bible prophecies - and he wrote it without knowing it himself."



Herzl now went through several weeks of profound discouragement. Baron Rothschild, during an interview in Paris, which took place after the Zionist leader returned from London, had also refused to commit himself, being completely taken up with his beautiful work of supporting the first agricultural colonies in Palestine—a work of badly administered and ill-managed paternalism which was carried out by mediocre representatives of the Baron.

One after the other, on October 3 and 5, Hechler sent Herzl two messages:

"Let us calmly remember, especially at the most trying and darkest of times, that the will of God is accomplished in spite of the foolishness of men. This morning I came to see you in order to bring you a word of comfort. May God guide you in His Grace and grant you His wisdom. Be calm and put your trust in Him."

The letter of October 5 gave rise to a momentary misunderstanding in Herzl's mind, a misunderstanding which was held for a long time by certain members of his family — and which almost became a fable: the classic story that arises as soon as a Jewish-Christian friendship is formed.

"It is nearly midnight, and my thoughts are flying toward Jerusalem and the Holy Land. ... What can be done to awaken these sleeping lazy Christians? On Sunday morning I will preach about the return of the Jews to Palestine. No doubt it will be the last Sunday when our good ambassador will be in our chapel, helping me in the reading of the Biblical passages. Would it not be a good idea for you to write some words in your Journal of your impressions? Do come, Dr. Herzl. Come Sunday morning at 11 o'clock. The sermon is given about ten minutes to

twelve, but one should be there at eleven in order to bear His Excellency officiate. This is good advice. . . May God guide and bless us!"

In his Journal on that same day Herzl after paying homage to the exceptional devotion of Hechler, added: "But I think that he wants to convert me."

Coming across this reflection, one is tempted to reply on Herzl's judgment in the matter — even without the coincidence of Hechler's letter of the same date. So many saddening things have occurred between the Church and the Synagogue in the course of centuries. Israel suffered much oppression in a Europe that was very "Christian." Israel had been so little accustomed to friendship — rather to a disinterested love from the Christian neighbor.

It was difficult to imagine, even if one is called Theodore Herzl, that this Zionist pastor, William Hechler, was not wrapping his friendship and exemplary devotion in ulterior motives of a converter. It was difficult to avoid thinking that the entry into the Anglican Church of a person who already looked like a Jewish prince was not at all the desire of the Anglican chaplain of the British embassy in Vienna.

Nevertheless, it was so. Throughout his whole life, and as long as he was member and secretary of the famous Biblical Society of London, that extraordinary missionary movement and unique distributor of the Scriptures in all languages of the world, William Hechler was considered an eccentric and heterodox figure. When one saw him at work during his mission in Russia and Rumania, it was not the idea of the Jews' entry into the Anglican Church that fascinated the pastor, but rather their entering the Promised Land. Undoubtedly, this attitude, in the eyes of his peers and church superiors, played a big part in the defeat of his candidacy for the Episcopal seat in Jerusalem.

Theologically, Hechler's position was to face the mystery of Israel.

Israel is not a people like other peoples. The sorcerer-visionary Balaam realized this. Only Israel constitutes, at one and the same time, a people, a nation, and a religious entity.

The Synagogue has not been called upon to blend in with the nations, and the Church cannot cause it to disappear. God does not wish the children of Israel to lose their "Jewishness" by merging with a Christian mass remote from the Synagogue where the Church was born. God wants His people to come back to Him through a return to the Scriptures, and indeed, that they realize if possible (while remaining in the Synagogue) that this Messiah who is coming in glory has already come in suffering and death, incognito.

God's desire is that Israel, having once again found its Biblical homeland, should prepare the paths for the glorious Messiah, who one day, as Zechariah announced, "will place his feet on the Mount of Olives which faces Jerusalem," indeed as King of Israel, but also as the unique Master of the Church.

One can easily, in Hechler's opinion, believe and hope for this, while remaining a child of the Synagogue, waiting for this

Parousia in daily and secret exaltation of the heart, sometimes in tears. Hechler would like to restore the messianic aspiration to his friend Herzl, the Prince of Israel, but it is not fitting - with the homeland still to be revived and Jerusalem reconstructed - to place the cart before the horse.

Only on the earth of Israel will the Jewish people again find God and His prophets, as well as deep nostalgia for the Messiah. They need to prepare for the last rendezvous, for the far-off “betrothal in the Desert” so dear to the prophet Hosea.

This letter of October 5 was clear and could not mislead. Hechler was not a young and naïve clergyman who imagined that seeing an ambassador in the pulpit would make an Anglican candidate out of Herzl, but he wished Herzl to make a diplomatic gesture. Such a step, or such homage, would not fail to make an impression on Sir Monson, called back to London to take up a higher position. All the more as Sir Monson had on several occasions manifested kind feelings toward Herzl and his revolutionary cause.

It is undoubtedly regrettable that Herzl, by a kind of unconscious ghetto reflex, if one were allowed to call it so, did not deem it necessary to answer this invitation.



Hechler on several occasions had met the Grand Duke of Hessen, who happened to be the father-in-law of Czar Nicholas II. This was a magnificent opportunity for Herzl, who did not aim only at obtaining an audience from the Kaiser. Accordingly, on October 18, 1896, he sent his friend Hechler a Russian translation of “The Jewish State” (*Judenstaat*), meant for the Czar’s in-law, as well as some notes for two letters to be sent to Princes Günther and Heinrich of Prussia.

Then, on December 1, Herzl sent Hechler a letter which he desired him to forward to London, to Lord Salisbury, the master and the “grey eminence” of high politics in England. Here are some important excerpts:

“Dear Friend:

“Your view that I ought to expound the Jewish plan to Lord Salisbury seems to me to be right. . . For you, my dear friend, the Jewish cause is a theological matter. But it is also a political one, and a very timely one. With the present situation of the world, one dominated by the Russo-French entente, a partition of Turkey would put England at a serious disadvantage. For England such a partition would be a loss now; therefore she must desire the status quo. It can be preserved only if Turkey’s finances are straightened out. This is why Russia has just frustrated the proposed financial arrangement. Russia wants the decay and self-dissolution of Turkey.

“Now, there is a method of straightening out the Turkish finances. . . the creation of an autonomous Jewish vassal state in Palestine, similar to Egypt . . . No power can prevent the Sultan from inviting Jews to immigrate into Palestine. . . England’s advantage would

be that a railroad would immediately be built across Palestine from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf, to India.

“England would have these benefits sans bourse de lier (without expense) . . . If Lord Salisbury considers the matter too fantastic, I can only regret it. But the movement really exists, and a skillful, great statesman will know how to utilize it.”

Hechler transmitted the project and received, on December 14, a reply from Lord Salisbury that Herzl called a soft reprimand: “Lord Salisbury cannot grant an audience to Dr. Herzl.” This lord was in fact one of the few English statesmen of the time who did not show the slightest interest in the Biblical vision of history so dear to Hechler.

Never mind. One door had shut in London; another one could open up in Berlin (the Kaiser!). In fact — as usual from the lips of faithful Hechler — Herzl now learned that the Prussian Minister of War (a descendant of Huguenots) whose name was Verdy du Vernoy had just arrived in Vienna. A letter is sent to him on December 13 wherein one notes this astonishing sentence:

“This (Zionist) Movement that public opinion underestimates is now reaching around the world. The blessings which it holds out, not only for the Jews, are not yet appreciated”

Here one can see that Herzl could also use pious phrases, as in this case where, undoubtedly on his friend’s advices, he addresses himself to a Prussian of Huguenot background, who was, in all likelihood very pious.



Thus ended the year of their meeting—with nine full months of devoted friendship. In this short period, thanks to William Hechler, the Zionist leader’s name and movement had become known essentially through the audience granted by Frederic of Baden, and then echoes had somehow reached all the royal courts of Europe and their representative governments. This made capital for Herzl’s principal concern: to persuade his own people, and especially the powerful and wealthy Jews among them, to follow and support him.

Since the destruction of the Temple by the Roman legions, no Jew had ever approached the princes and powerful ones of the world with such a bold and clear call, and in language so similar to that of Moses: “Permit my people to leave, to go to the land of their fathers!” Naturally, the large Jewish fortunes could not but feel embarrassed at first, being extremely at ease in “Babylon,” and having little desire to rebuild Jerusalem! But the enthusiasm raised among the oppressed or miserable Jewish masses would not die, once it had awakened. It was to keep on growing until a movement of public opinion had been created to which certain statesmen were to respond favorably.

And so the fateful year of 1897 announced itself, circled in red on the large “Prophetic History” map that gentle Hechler had made.

The audience with the Kaiser remained an audacious dream, though Hechler demonstrated great daring. Thus, he composed a letter to William II, in English and on the official letterhead of the embassy. Herzl, amused, found in it a vague “air of officialdom.”

Hechler approached Prince Günther of Schleswig-Holstein, brother of the Empress, on several occasions. The Prince was well disposed toward the new Movement, even though he found it “very strange,” and feared to irritate the Kaiser by transmitting him Hechler’s memorandum.

A pungent anecdote: in the midst of his numerous steps from one royal court to another, the embassy’s chaplain failed in certain of his ecclesiastic duties. When a British gentleman died in Vienna, they sought for Hechler without success. Herzl himself cabled him, but too late. He then heard the cook saying: “What a pity for the Reverend—it was such a rich funeral!” History does not tell us whether the ambassador replaced his chaplain for the burial service!

Through the mediation of Hechler, Herzl now “had a go” at Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria and the Grand Duke Vladimir. To manage the latter, the author of *The Jewish State* used a new argument, undoubtedly on the advice of the devoted pastor but with doubtful effect. It simply stated: “The return of the Jews will ensure the protection of Christians in the East!”

Then Hechler turned toward another ambassador, where he was a welcome visitor: von Eulenburg, the Kaiser’s representative in Vienna and husband of a former student of the pastor. On March 14, 1897, he let his friend know that he would be kindly received at this embassy whenever he wished. Von Eulenburg was one of the Kaiser’s confidants, and who knows — this might well lead to the celebrated audience?

In April Herzl met one of Hechler’s friends, an enthusiastic Zionist like himself. This was Baron Manteuffel who trained young Jewish wine growers on his estate in Italy, sending them later to Palestine. The Baron himself was preparing to go there, in order to study the possibilities of colonization on the spot.

Truly, Herzl thought, when these Christians meddle with Zionism, they go straight to the point! This particular meeting was a healing balm to the heart of the discouraged leader.

Actually, the various “friends”, Jewish movements, had one by one demonstrated coolness. The most telling blow came from the Jewish community in Munich, which announced its refusal to receive the Zionist Congress scheduled to assemble there toward the end of August. Several societies of “the Lovers of Zion,” notably those of London and Berlin, announced their dissociation from the movement.

Personal rivalry and jealousy played a big part in all this. The Parisian friend, Dr. Nordau, was one of the few to remain loyal. Hechler was stupefied at the unanimous opposition of the Austrian and German rabbis. He met with some of them, in particular with Chief Rabbi Gudemann of Vienna, but unsuccessfully.

Hechler soon became aware of two interfering factors which explained this bewildering attitude. First of all, those rabbis and chief

rabbis were leaders of communities composed of wealthy, middle-class citizens (after centuries of contempt and pogroms). To preach Zionism to these good souls demanded courage. Herzl actually invited them to come out against him and his movement, to the end that he might destroy their wall of silence. His reasoning was that he would face anything rather than a conspiracy against himself.

On the other hand, for the great majority of rabbis, Theodore Herzl represented a kind of dangerous ranter who did not practice his religion and therefore a person whom God could not have chosen or blessed. The cause was well understood: doesn't God only concern himself with pious people who, moreover, display their piety?

The Jews of Munich, having refused to welcome Herzl and his own people¹⁴ the leader now turned to the city of Basel.



At the beginning of June 1897, warmly encouraged by Hechler and some other loyal friends, Herzl began publishing his journal as an organ of the Zionist movement, calling it *Die Welt* ["The World"]. This decision aggravated his relations with the *Freie Presse* [Free Press] where he was a star writer. For this celebrated daily paper was managed by two Jews who had converted to Christianity and had never looked favorably upon the strange activities of their colleague.

Herzl thus had to pay out of his own pocket (75 florins) for the notice announcing the publication of the first edition of his Zionist weekly. He envisioned the possibility of being dismissed from his position as editor — his source of livelihood. This fear was to haunt him until his death, wearing him down considerably. From this time forth he began to suffer from cardiac pains.

On August 21, 1897 Hechler sent the Grand Duke of Baden a letter, from which we quote the following:

" . . . I hope next week to attend the Zionist Congress at Basel . . . It is simply marvelous how the Zionist movement has spread in one year all over the whole world, in spite of the opposition of some of the rich Jews, who care but very little for the glorious history of their ancestors and still less (at least most of them) for the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and therefore know nothing of the gracious promises made by God through His prophets to the Jews today . . . After it [the Zionist Congress] I must hurry back to Vienna, for I am expecting some of the Bishops of the Lambeth Conference in Vienna for the Old Catholic Congress."

Together with this letter Hechler sent Frederic of Baden a copy of an appeal which he had just written, part of which appeared in *Die Welt*:

¹⁴ Less than thirty years later the good town of Munich was the springboard of an adventurer named Adolf Hitler.

“Children of Abraham, wake up!

As a Christian, I believe in the Zionist Movement, for according to the Bible and its ancient Prophets, a Jewish State must arise in Palestine. It seems to me that, according to present signs, the Jews will once more regain their beloved fatherland . . . this large and wonderful country that God has given Israel forever, which can easily contain 20 to 30 million inhabitants, and which is one of the most beautiful countries in the world with cool, temperate and warm zones — a land where every sort of culture and civilization is feasible, an industrial and commercial center such as none other in the world.

“Already in our time the ‘latter rains’ have begun to appear. Thus, not only the Prophets, but also nature itself, is responding to God. Children of Israel, return to your land. This country has celebrated its Sabbath, and heaven is once again opening after having been sealed for so long . . .

“Through this return, foretold so long ago by the Lord, the sad situation of so many Jews will certainly be lifted and the effects of anti-Semitism will cease. Turkey can only gain from seeing a Jewish agricultural population established in Palestine, industrious and skillful, under a legal Turkish government and the protection of the European Powers. I am convinced that the establishment of a Jewish State, with the support of European princes, will initiate the salvation announced by Isaiah, Micah, and Zechariah. . .

“All this does not in the least prevent the Israelite from remaining a loyal and faithful citizen of the country where he resides. But if the Zionist Movement quickly becomes a force, then the marvelous 20th century of electricity, railroads and a resurrected German Empire will witness the rising of a Jewish State. God wants it! This is the order of the day!”

Nothing is missing in this naïve appeal to the opponents of his friends, certainly not the Prophets who are given the place of honor, But also convoked is (1) the attraction of great commercial and industrial success; (2) the amelioration of the Palestinian climate; (3) the suffering of brethren in pogroms; (4) the discreet reminder of universal anti-Semitism; (5) the trains; (6) the electricity (all in good neighborliness in William’s Empire); (7) and above all, this artful stroke: the assurance that in spite of all this, it was perfectly possible to remain a loyal German citizen!

It is, of course, impossible to estimate with any precision the influence exerted by this original appeal, but it is nice to believe that several respectable merchants, or several austere doctors, were converted to the love of Zion by this cry of an excellent “goy” who cited the forgotten Hebrew prophets so nicely!



August 24th, while on the train taking him to Zurich, Herzl described what had been an unlooked-for meeting, writing in his diary:

"This morning, when I came downstairs in the Tiroler Hof, who should step up to me? Hechler! He had arrived the night before and was delivering a lecture in the salon on "Herzl and His Movement" while I was taking a solitary evening stroll through the streets of Innsbruck and never dreaming that the 'upper ten' at the Tiroler Hof were at that moment being instructed in Zionism by a chance clergyman."

Thus it was that from August 29 to August 31, 1897 an astonished world learned about the gathering together in Basel of "The Constituent Assembly of the Jewish Nation" represented by 202 delegates in full dress, in accordance with the explicit wish of Herzl. After so many centuries of trial and tribulations, and for such an important occasion, the extra trouble was well worthwhile.

From time to time the leader and his friend smiled at each other in silence—accomplices. Then it was all true! Here we are, in the summer of the year forecast by Hechler, who had not been crazy in the least.

But neither of them ought to forget that the real difficulties were only beginning. Theodore was aware of this, and he noted on the eve of the solemn opening, curiously enough:

"Taken as a whole, the direction of these proceedings will, I believe, amount to a singular performance that will have no other spectator but the performer himself. An egg-dance—with the eggs invisible.

- 1. Egg of the Neue Freie Presse, which I must not compromise or furnish a pretext for giving me the sack.*
- 2. Egg of the Orthodox.*
- 3. Egg of the Modernists.*
- 4. Egg of Austrian patriotism.*
- 5. Egg of Turkey and the Sultan.*
- 6. Egg of the Russian government, against whom nothing disagreeable maybe said, although the deplorable situation of the Russian Jews will have to be mentioned.*
- 7. Egg of the Christian denominations, with regard to the Holy Places.*
- 8. Egg of Edmond de Rothschild.*
- 9. Egg of the Chovevei Zion ("Lovers of Zion") in Russia.*
- 10. Egg of the Palestine settlers, whose help from Rothschild must not be endangered, tout en considerant leur miseres (while taking proper account of their troubles.)*
- 11. The egg of personal differences. Egg of jealousy; egg of envy."*

It is a Herculean labor — without exaggeration — inasmuch as I have lost my zest for it."

Once back in Vienna, the Congress finished, Herzl was to transcribe the famous words, which were later engraved on the heart of every Israeli:

"At Basel I founded the Jewish State! If I said this out loud today I would be greeted by universal laughter. In five years, perhaps, and certainly in fifty years, everyone will perceive it... At Basel I have created the abstraction which, as

such, is imperceptible to the great majority. At bottom, with infinitesimal means, I gradually worked the people up into the atmosphere of a State and made them feel that they were its National Assembly."

Five years, fifty years? In five years he was worn out, at an impasse and near to his agony. But in fifty years, precisely on November 29, 1947, a different Assembly, of the United Nations, brought to the baptismal font of history, not without bloodshed, a new State with the God-given name of ISRAEL.



For the moment, however, Hechler sits there and smiles in his beard, a kind of beneficent patriarch. His humble morning studies in cold and solitude, the banter and smiles of pity for so many years — had not misled him. He experienced the greatest moment of his life as a man. His close friend had been revealed as God's elected. Was that a diadem which sparkled on his forehead (reminding one of an Assyrian monarch) when all the delegates stood up to acclaim him with cries and tears — or was it simply the play of the lights?

But Hechler lived through this greatest experience as a pastor, too. The prophets — old friends of his childhood — illuminated the moment for him. He had deciphered History well. At this instant of emotion and glory, he knew for certain that Jerusalem would again resume its role as a hinge in the politics of God, far beyond Berlin and London, Paris or Constantinople.

'Your sons and daughters are returning to you—their tender, fierce Mother. They are before my eyes now, a bit awkward in their fine dress. They are turning themselves toward you, and will not forget you any more....'

Among the reactions throughout the world, the Vatican's was plainest. As a matter of fact, the Holy See circulated a note protesting the tendency of the Jews to occupy the Holy Places. Herzl requested an audience with Nuncio Taliani in Vienna. He received a notice from the office of the Nuncio informing him that reception hours were from 10-12 each day. Going there on September 23 to be heard, he was boldly told that the audience had been refused.



The principal objective remained an imperial audience. Hechler made use of all his connections: the Grand Duke and the Princes, his colleague Dryander in Berlin.

Herzl, on his part, wrote a letter on October 22 to Frederic of Baden and enclosed a memorandum for the Emperor's nephew. He was told on December first that the Kaiser had received all this well. He could not receive him at present but asked to see the study published by the Zionist leader, entitled *Der Basler Kongress*. - Half a victory. It was necessary now to wait and hope.

An entry on March 12, 1898: *"Tired, my heart is breaking down. . . "*

April 17: *"In Vienna, Die Welt has 280 subscribers . . . I shall have to cover the large deficit myself."*

Then, on May 21:

"Hechler is going to attend the Church conference in Berlin. I again exhorted him to try and induce the Kaiser to receive me. If he manages that, I promised him that he would be sent to Palestine at our expense in the autumn when the Kaiser takes a trip there. . . He begged me to go to the English church tomorrow, which is Sunday, and pray with him. "Ni plus ni moins". (Neither more nor less). At this I began to speak about how things were growing in our garden, where we happened to be sitting . . . After he had left I wrote to assure him he would go to Palestine in fall ."

Hechler wrote every day to his friend from Berlin, all his messages ending with the formula: "Ora pro nobis!" ('Pray for us!') This did not reassure Herzl. In fact, the pastor returned from Berlin empty handed on the 31st. He told Herzl about an interview with Frederic of Baden, who strongly advised that they do everything in order to win von Eulenburg in Vienna to their cause, for the latter was a counselor to the Kaiser. The Grand Duke recommended Hechler should not hesitate to tell the German ambassador that Zionism could become important for German politics in the Middle East.



Finally, on July 28, 1898, Frederic of Baden, from St. Moritz where he was vacationing, sent William II a long letter wherein he spoke of Herzl, Zionism, and a project dear to Hechler's heart. This project sought to locate the Ark of the Covenant and the Tablets of the Law, hidden away somewhere by Moses before his death on the slopes of Mount Nebo. Hechler was sure on this point. Thus he desired that Germany—or England — should purchase the entire region of the Dead Sea from the Sultan whose finances were known to be low! The old pastor held on to this dream until his death in 1931.

He really hoped that William II, who was hardly excited by Herzl and his idea, would not fail to be moved by this Biblical opportunity to make the German Empire shine in the world, by a fantastic archaeological find. In the end it would be Herzl and his idea that would profit by it!

The mention of Moses and the Tablets of the Law was the last card the Viennese chaplain could play in the battle of bringing the Kaiser over to the Zionist's side. It is touching to report that the kindhearted Frederic set forth this farfetched project at length and in deep seriousness when writing to his nephew in Berlin. On September 29, two months later, he was answered from the Kaiser's hunting lodge in Romintern:

“ . . . it is hot and the deer leave me little free time. . . I have looked at the writings of Pastor Hechler and have had one of my secretaries read Dr. Herzl's work to me. The Zionist idea should be followed up, for one should not miss this opportunity to weaken Jewish power. . . while dealing a serious blow to subversive Socialism. Another good result would be coming to the aid of the Turkish finances through Rothschild and others. . . But I do not forget that the Jews killed Jesus, and that God has made them pay for this crime. If the German subjects show astonishment that the Emperor can support a Jewish movement, I suppose one could remind them of what is written in the Gospel: 'Love your enemies and do good to those who persecute you.' There is also this precept of Christ: 'Make friends with unjust riches!'

This imperial exegesis is 'savoy', throwing a certain light upon the Kaiser who, a number of years later purposely plunged the whole of Europe into horrible carnage, becoming an incarnation of the Devil for a large part of the world . . .

This aside, William now declared himself ready to receive Dr. Herzl in Palestine, during his approaching pilgrimage to that land.

At the end of August, the Second (Zionist) Congress to assemble in Basel, proved to be particularly exhausting for Herzl, who had to preside for twenty-one hours at the last meeting.

Then on September 3, in the company of loyal Hechler, there was a second audience with Frederic of Baden, who declared himself as frankly favoring the creation of a Jewish State. The Kaiser had asked von Eulenburg to undertake a serious study on the problem, to be finished before his autumn interview with the Sultan in Constantinople. Germany was, in fact, about to set itself up in the

midst of the Ottoman Empire. The idea of finding the Ark of the Covenant had won his heart, and he was going to talk about it to Abdul Hamid.

After all this, the Empress of Austria was assassinated, and all the crowned heads came together in Vienna on September 17. Von Eulenburg received Herzl on the 16th, together with Hechler who, in his shirt sleeves, put the final touch to a small Biblical exhibition in the Embassy hall.

Von Eulenburg showed himself cordial, and sincerely ready to do all in his power for them with the Emperor, who certainly would be happy to receive Herzl while in the Holy Land. Herzl was in seventh heaven, and wrote in his diary for September 16, 1898:

"As a reward for his past 'management' Hechler gets his traveling expenses to Palestine — to begin with, one thousand florins. He is such a staunch old soul, modest and humble. He never dreamed of asking for it. It gives me real joy to make the old man's secret wish come true."

On the following day he met, for the first time, the Chancellor von Bülow, who was brimming with fine words and smiles; but Herzl quickly realized that this was duplicity that hid a cold hostility toward the Zionist plans.

The entry for October 8th is both naïve and painful to read:

"Through Zionism it will again become possible for Jews to love this Germany, to which our hearts have been attached despite everything!"

As certain people would have had difficulty in understanding why a pastor should accompany Herzl and the Zionist delegation to the Promised Land, Hechler preceded his friend, embarking at the beginning of October for Constantinople and Jaffa. Before leaving he sent message in succession to Theodore, each one an aid for self-preparation in finding once more the land of the Patriarchs:

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jeremiah 23:5).

"Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance" (Isaiah 19:25).

"Thus saith the Lord: I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth" (Zechariah 8:3).

It was only right that others, besides the dukes, princes and ministers of this world, should have the last word in this unique adventure. It was proper that the Hebrew prophets, speaking on behalf of the only master of History, should open this pilgrimage, and that the men journeying to Jerusalem — out of self-interest, excessive vanity, or love — should keep silent for a moment. . .

There was a long letter to Frederic of Baden, as propriety demanded. Here are some excerpts:

"God has again been very good to me! Thank God! The enclosed will tell your Royal Highness all. I am to go to Jerusalem.

"... the Empress of Austria was murdered at Geneva . . . and in my sermon last Sunday I made an earnest appeal to all parents and teachers, especially to mothers, not to neglect their duty in bringing up their children in the nurture and fear of the Lord and to be loyal subjects. The world is getting worse and worse partly because so many selfish, cruel mothers are only seeking pleasures and amusements, instead of doing their duty to their husbands and children! If only Luccheni's mother had done her duty to her child!"

Notice this specific analysis of anarchist elements of the time: If the murderer of the Empress had had a good mother, raising him to respect royalty, the gentle sovereign would still be alive . . .

"I purpose, D.V. [God-willing], leaving Vienna on October 3 or 4 and going to see the Greek warning tablet, which was in the Temple of Jerusalem in the days of Christ, which our Savior may have seen and which is now in the museum in Constantinople. I shall also pay my respects to his Excellency, the German Ambassador, and his wife who was my pupil at Karlsruhe, and kindly introduced me to her husband when passing through Vienna. I purpose telling him all about Mount Nebo and try to persuade him to have that whole district of East Jordan, near the Dead Sea . . . probably there will be found there also the original manuscripts of the five books of Moses, written by Moses, which were hid in the Ark and which will prove how foolish today's theologians are in claiming that Moses had written nothing..."

One sees that Hechler did not doubt for a moment that this discovery was possible. And why not? Without anyone claiming that the most famous documents in the history of religions were buried somewhere, the discovery of celebrated manuscripts fifty years later in the same region of the Dead Sea came as a tremendous surprise, and dealt a fatal blow to the "senseless" critics stigmatized by Hechler. Unfortunately, men and politicians in the Middle East prefer to fight and hate one another rather than unite in order to search for — why not? — the legendary Tablets, which, for the first time, revealed to the world the menaing of justice and brotherhood.

"I hope to get to Jerusalem at least a week before His Majesty and try to ride over to Nebo, if my means allow it, and photograph it for His Majesty . . . The whole district there is said to be full of most valuable minerals, and I believe wonderful inscriptions will be found in that neighborhood, like the Mesha Moabite stone, found not far from Nebo. And now, God has so wonderfully overruled all, that I may today hope and pray that H. I. M. the German Emperor, will soon be the Protector of all Protestants and Jews in the East . . . How the sainted King Frederic William IV would have rejoiced, if he were still with us!"

Kind of Hechler to make a “saintly monarch” out of the artisan of German unity around the city of Berlin — but was he not an extremely pious king, setting up a Protestant Episcopal seat in Jerusalem?

“I was watching Dr. Herzl very closely when he was with his Excellency, and was thankful to find him still humble and moderate as usual. In Constan  I told him, before we drove to your Royal Highness, that it was his duty to put on the beautiful and valuable order he received some time ago from the Sultan, but he would not. He remains humble, thank God.

“Nor would he publish anything, although your Royal Highness graciously permitted it, and when the Zionist Congress offered him a salary he refused it. Oh! May he not only be an instrument in God’s hand; but may he become God’s worthy and humble instrument to His glory and the good of mankind. In our English Church papers, see that the prayers of Christians are asked for Dr. Herzl, that God may guide him.”

These last lines seem strange, and should be closely studied. It appears that Hechler expected the *Parousia* in his own lifetime, but above all he awaited that final sign of Jewish tradition: the appearance of Messiah’s herald, a reincarnation of Elijah, foretold in the final verses of the Prophets (Book of Malachi).

“The last Congress at Basel proved again how literally the Jews are fulfilling God’s prophecies, and they do not know it. The earnest, God-fearing orthodox Jews did not hesitate this time to bring in the religious question . . . The Chief Rabbi, Dr. Gaster, from London, spoke on Zionism in connection with Religion . . . and they are doing this just as unconsciously as their forefather fulfilled God’s prophecies, when Christ came the first time and lived in Jerusalem. The delegates said they would teach their children to become Zionists. Every detail of this most remarkable movement is of interest to us Bible students and especially to us clergy, who stand as watchmen on the spiritual walls of Zion. We are now seeing the stirring of the bones in Ezekiel’s valley! May we soon see the glorious outpourings of spiritual life predicted in Ezekiel 37. One of the Rabbis at Basel told me that he, as a Reformed Rabbi, had left out the prayer in the synagogue, ‘Next year in Jerusalem!’ and now he is going to pray it again.”

Thus, Hechler did not hesitate to inscribe the Zionist ideal within the general context of Faith, through a profound understanding of the Zionist privileges mentioned by Ezekiel. If God was at work — and how could He not be? — then the physical and material aspects of this spiritual adventure were not in opposition to His will. It was because they did not understand this mystery, integral part of the great mystery of Israel, that the Churches did not support or acknowledge Zionism and its State.

Last portion of this long letter to Frederic of Baden:

"We are looking forward to the visit of the German Emperor to the Holy Land of Promise next month, and perhaps we shall be privileged to see, very soon, Jesus, Who has promised to revisit that same land, 'whose feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives. . . ' Many signs are multiplying around us, indicative of a speedier Advent of Christ than most Christians suppose. Many of these signs are multiplying around us, indicative of a speedier Advent of Christ than most Christians suppose. One of these signs, of which I only heard last week from India, is most startling. It is the growing expectation of the heathen and Mohammedan world of the coming of some great one. The Rev. E. Guildford of the Punjab in India writes that they believe 'a happy era of 1,000 years is predicted, and that a new ruler of the world will shortly be born'.

"In Western India a Mohammedan is earnestly preaching the Second Coming of Christ, and has, in consequence, been reviled and persecuted as a Christian . . . These remarkable facts remind one of the wonderful account given by the Roman author Tacitus, who lived in the days of the Apostles, of the expectations of the heathen in Rome and throughout the Empire. We, therefore, need not be surprised that the Return of Christ, which is the complement to His First Appearing, is now also heralded by voices outside the realm of Christendom."



In the end, the combined efforts of Frederic of Baden, Hechler and Herzl were successful. On October 10 1898 the Grand Duke sent a telegram to Hechler informing him that the Emperor had agreed to meet Herzl, first in Constantinople and later in Palestine. On October 16 in Constantinople the Kaiser received the Zionist leader in the presence of his minister, von Bülow. Here are some of the keen remarks exchanged on that occasion, as transcribed in Herzl's diary on October 19:

"The Emperor explained why he was attracted to the Zionist movement. He constantly referred to the Jews as 'your people' — and not in an entirely friendly tone. He did not doubt that the money and men at our disposal would suffice to colonize Palestine. 'There are elements among your people whom it would be a good thing to move to Palestine. I am thinking, for instance, of Hesse where usurers ply their trade among the rural population'."

At this point the conversation, till then promising, turned sour, stocked by von Bülow's attitude — for Herzl soon took offense and launched into a lively attack against anti-Semitism. But he quickly saw he had made a false step and adroitly led the conversation to France and the Dreyfus affair. This provoked an astonishing tirade from the Kaiser, before a dumbfounded Herzl and an uneasy Bülow:

"What kind of people are they? Do they really think I'm such a crazy fellow as to write letters of this sort to Tom, Dick and Harry? Hanotaux laid 27,000 francs across the counter for those forgeries. They

were offered him, and he, the Richelieu, the great statesman, thought they were genuine — or pretended he did. It's downright unbelievable. The matter went about through Princess Mathilde. Hanotaux declared in her salon, before a number of army people, that he had his hands on letters I had written. She saw at once the sheer impossibility of it and flatly told him so...For quite some time the secret funds of the French army headquarters have been disappearing. Dreyfus also was offered 20'000 francs but he refused to take them saying: 'What would I do with this money?' Since he was thus aware of what was happening they had to get rid of him. Esterhazy and Paty du Clam put themselves likewise in danger and more and more officers got entangled in this affair. Now they all cover each other up. I am often wondering what is becoming of France."

Herzl thus learned from the Kaiser that Dreyfus was innocent! This did not prevent him from getting back to his subject:

" . . . France is in no position to hinder our project. And for Russia it meant a solution — all the familiar points. Encouraged by his nods, I then proceeded to unfold the whole plan. He listened to me with splendid attention. Finally I said, 'The scheme seems to me to be a natural solution.'

'He looked at me intently and said. 'And also to me. One can be sure it will make an impression if the German Emperor himself takes the trouble to show his interest in the plan.' (It was then that I had the magic-forest sensation of meeting the unicorn which said with a human voice, 'I am the fabled unicorn.') He rose and said to me, 'Tell me in a word what I am to ask the Sultan.'

'A Chartered Company — under German protection.'

'Good, a Chartered Company'."

When Herzl landed in Jaffa, the Emperor himself had just arrived and salvoes were being fired in his honor. Hechler, on the contrary, said to whomever would listen to him that in reality the noisy tokens of honor were "prophetically intended" for the valiant Zionist leader who was placing his feet for the first time in his life on the earth of the Promised Land. Let us hope that these words did not come to the imperial ears. The Kaiser was not the man to appreciate their mystical content.

Herzl was dismayed at seeing the condition of the Jewish colonies, which all suffered from malaria and were rather demoralized, in spite of the enormous subsidies of Edmond de Rothschild.

On the way to Jerusalem, October 28, 1898, Herzl briefly met the Kaiser for the second time. Before the entrance of the agricultural school, Mikveh Israel (the first Jewish colony founded by the Alliance Israelite Universelle), they exchanged some thoughts, the Emperor repeating several times, "The country has a great future, a great future — but it will need a tremendous quantity of water."

All the onlookers, and in particular the inspectors of Rothschild who were little inclined to look at Herzl and his following favorably, were flabbergasted.



Two days later in Jerusalem, Herzl told his friend the pastor:

"If I have anything to say at the next vacancy of the Jerusalem English diocese, you must become Bishop of Jerusalem."

Hechler's reaction, *"Quite so! Bishop of Jerusalem!"*



Herzl, however, wished to obtain a formal commitment from the Emperor; and the Zionist pastor was once more sent on a mission to Eulenburg and Bülow. There were long hours of waiting under burning tents, enduring mockery, teasing by the ordinance officers and the knowing smiles in the imperial suite: "Here comes the half-baked reverend with his crazy Jewish ideas!"

Finally, on November 2nd (nineteen years to the day before the famous Balfour Declaration), William II received the delegation led by Herzl — for the last time. This time the Kaiser was very vague, declaring to Herzl, who handed him a new memorandum: "I thank you for this interesting report; the matter certainly warrants discussion and study"

They never met again, and this polite and banal sentence marked the end of the Emperor's interest in the Zionist cause. Herzl learned later that the Kaiser had been disagreeably surprised by the Jewish orthodox presence in Jerusalem, who lived only from the gifts and the support sent by Jewish communities from overseas. On the other hand, he had not taken the trouble of visiting the first achievements of Jewish colonization and was unaware of the heroic struggle against swamps, stony ground and malaria.

In the end, thanks to the efforts of von Bülow, William II became aware of the violent Turkish opposition to Jewish penetration and above all to the movement that Herzl had started "politically." Who knows? Those Zionists could compromise the specific plans of German penetration and influence. This argument of von Bülow was undoubtedly enough to reduce Herzl's and Hechler's fine dream to nothing.



The imperial audience having taken place, Hechler feeling as happy as a Zionist fish in the waters of the Jordan, rode to the

furnace of the Dead Sea, toward Mount Nebo of which he had dreamt for so many years. Sometimes — was it a mirage? — it seemed to him that the Ark of the Covenant was shining in the distance and that the Tablets appeared in the sky, from whence they had been given. In this setting it seemed to have happened only yesterday.

The pastor-archaeologist quickly realized that months of seeking, plus large sums of money, would be called for.

Back in Jerusalem, he went from one pastor to another and from one missionary to another, speaking in a way which was hardly appreciated by them:

“Certainly, dear colleague, you hold to the conversion of the Jews. But times are rapidly changing and one must see farther and higher. Thanks to the Zionist Movement we are entering messianic times of Israel. This does not mean that the doors of your churches should now open to the Jews but rather the doors of their own country, to support them in their coming labor of irrigation, forestation and sanitation. All this, dear colleague, is messianic, announcing the coming of the powerful breath of the Holy Spirit, but first it is necessary that the dry bones revive and assemble together.”

The dear colleagues were little convinced in spite of the respect that this strange pastor inspired in them. He seemed almost a diplomat, living on the best of terms with European princes and being received by the Kaiser. *But it was these very connections that had turned his head, for one could smell the “Judaizing tendency” in this argument from afar. And who knows what this Herzl chap could have promised him? Moreover, wasn’t there the hand of Rothschild behind all this? The mixture of Jewish theology and politics inspires no confidence whatsoever.’* Thus reasoned the missionaries of Palestine, and many are the disciples who follow them until today...



From this pilgrimage we possess the most beautiful photograph of Hechler dressed in a costume of some Biblical sheik, he reminds one irresistibly of some patriarch. One feels that here is a man who knew where he was going. But a veil of melancholy is hidden in his glance, proper to a man who has stood upon the slopes of Mount Nebo, his heart inclined toward a Zion that was close and far-off at the same time — in the midst of a land promised but still prohibited.

It lay before him, this once fertile land, and in his spirit he could only imagine what the others had seen, many centuries before. The magnificent forests of Gilead, Bashan and Lebanon had disappeared, as had the fantastic oasis of the Jordan valley. The hills were now desolate, the valleys full of malarial swamps.

But he knew that all this would revive, and his mind was serene. Prophetic events had been unleashed which no force in the world could check. The uncrowned Jewish prince that he accompanied, who was surely descended from David, guaranteed this by his simple presence.

For the moment, however, the homeland was out of bounds. Already the end of 1898 and all the doors of Berlin and Constantinople had closed. More and more the voices of “friends” tell a discouraged Herzl:

“Didn’t we tell you! Your plan rests on sand, just like the Palestinian sand piled up by the winds of the desert. And it is not your Christian prophet who will be able to save you from being engulfed. Be reasonable! Listen to the wise and pained voice of your wife, think of the future of your children, your vocation as a writer and drama critic. There lies your true glory, Herzl!”

Herzl, in the hollow of a wave, writes:

“To tell the truth, the rich and powerful ones of Israel carry a heavy responsibility in abandoning me. . . . They are letting me wear myself out in sterile efforts; I could die without having laid the foundation of the Enterprise and then the cause would be lost .”

“No!” Hechler rejoins, with his faithful prayers, naïve communications and personal visits. His Zionist anthem at a time when one’s heart was oppressed, took on the tones of a funeral march.



For several months the two men attempted to reawaken the interest of Emperor William II, only to see all their efforts fail before the sweet hypocritical smile of von Bülow and others.

It was then that there took place two concerted and parallel interventions on the part of the two friends, which cast a certain amount of shadow on the heroic story of rising Zionism. We shall call this double step “the nationalist incident” of the friendship which united Herzl and Hechler!

On January 6, 1899, in his weekly *Die Welt*, Herzl published an editorial entitled, *France in Constantinople*,” on the occasion of the appointment to the government of the Sublime Porte of the new French ambassador, Constans. Several days later he sent several copies to Frederic of Baden, together with a short letter wherein the visionary declared:

“I believe I can say that this appointment represents a direct French rejoinder to the Kaiser’s voyage in Palestine. The deep purpose is to undermine German influence in Turkey . . . Constans will shortly be the center of all kinds of intrigues against the German presence.”

On March 2 of the same year Hechler, on his part, sent a very significant letter to Frederic, from which we give some important extracts:

“. . . Dr. Herzl has just informed me that, according to the latest news, the French Government would be prepared to use French Zionists in order to re-establish French presence in Palestine. This line seems to have been adopted soon after H.M. the German Emperor’s homecoming. French Zionists told Dr. Herzl that in case they succeeded, politically speaking, they would range themselves at his side. But since in their perspective success was slow in coming, they allowed themselves to be taken into another direction.

“Dr. Herzl complained strongly about this for he very much favors a German or English solution. French-Jewish organizations for colonization are at work in Constantinople. . . They are rushed to purchase great tracts of land without legal guarantees, instead of first obtaining the agreement and support of a Great Power, as Dr. Herzl wishes. This group, called ‘Lovers of Zion,’ is openly supported by the ‘Alliance Israelite Universelle,’ the headquarters of which is in Paris . . . French Zionists openly asked Dr. Herzl the question, ‘What did you plot with the Kaiser in Jerusalem?’. . . It seems to me that French influence here could be very dangerous in every respect; for as I have long firmly believed, the Zionists should place themselves under the protection of Germany and England, the two great Protestant powers, in accordance with the wish of King Frederic-William IV of Prussia, which he expressed more than fifty years ago”

In our day there are still those who affirm that William Hechler was, throughout the period of his friendship with Herzl, in the service of German and English interests. One even hears that he

was a “secret agent” of the Intelligence Service! According to this view, his Viennese chaplaincy was merely a convenient and pious screen.

But if one analyzes the man, his writings, his nature and his manner of expressing himself, and discovers his passion for everything that concerned Israel and its promised land, one can only smile at such allegations. It is true that Hechler was the secret agent of a very concise politics - that of God, Who was guiding His people's history in its Zionist pre-messianic period. Hechler was an agent of the politics of that Kingdom where God's will is done, “on earth as in heaven,” — with all his heart, twenty-four hours a day, and free of charge!

He was not only an Anglican pastor, but first and foremost the historical outcome of a whole line of Protestant theologians, mostly English, who had all strongly desired that London return Jerusalem to the people of the Promise. No need to be a secret agent for that, and we even would say that the matter is of no consequence, anyway. Secret agents do not embarrass themselves with a theology based on the writings of the Hebrew prophets.

In this letter to Frederic, Grand Duke of Baden, are the key words: “Protestant power.” Historians often tend to underestimate and even ignore, the religious facts of certain historical events. The wars of religion are not so far removed from us and still live in the subconscious of numerous Christians. One hears sometimes, in certain regions, “It happened yesterday!” and another adds, “It could happen again.” Are certain governments so far away from the reign of the Inquisition? How many had scarcely left it in the time of Hechler? Almost all of Europe! Yet even now France seemed to be seriously affected in its very soul — the Dreyfus case was raging — while Germany grew more powerful, with ambitions of her own.

Hechler was not one to feel more sympathy for the France of yesterday (of fanatic kings persecuting Huguenots) than for the France of our time, which several steps from Sainte Chapelle and Notre Dame, called for “Death to the Jews” in the middle of the streets. Drumond was the prophet of this France. To know him was to understand his “cause.”

Certainly in Vienna the situation was also alarming, but Vienna was not Berlin. In Berlin anti-Semitism was not openly supported by the army and the clergy. German blood from his father ran through the veins of the visionary pastor. It was this German prince, the noblest of all, who had taken the uncrowned Jewish prince under his wing. In Hechler's eyes it was not so much the impulsive William II as it was Frederic-William-the-Pious who personified the Germany of his time; and indeed there he was mistaken.

As for Herzl, his sentiments - theology aside — came from a similar experience.

Born in Budapest, Herzl was the subject of a German Emperor whose rule was undeniably turned toward liberalism. Herzl's works, and above all his diary, reveal to us an enlightened upper-middle-class citizen whose dream was to found on the soil of Israel an aristocratic regime that reposed on the human dignity of each and

every individual. The benefits of universal suffrage left him cold. He had studied the parliamentary regime in Paris too much to be a partisan of it.

Like Moses of the first Exodus, he had been bowled over one day by the suffering of his people. And while he had not like Moses “killed the Egyptian,” he had seen his Jewish brother in the person of a captain of the French general staff bullied and dirtied. Alfred Dreyfus was without a doubt the spark which had lit the Zionist fire in Herzl. This fire was to continue to burn in him fed by the same scandal, stoked by pogroms. With all this he liked France tenderly without idealizing it. He cherished a nostalgia for his own picture of France.

In the end, Zionist French circles even more than those in London, failed to understand him, distrusted him, sometimes betrayed him. The noble Dr. Nordau was the classical exception to the rule. But the Rothschilds opposed him, undermining his work even in Vatican circles. And wonderful souls like Bernard-Lazare, Peguy’s friend, condemned his financial projects as if the resurrection of a desert could be managed without banks and loans! The rabbis, on their part, reacted as did their colleagues in Munich and Vienna: it was good to live in a modern Babylon.

Let us summarize. For Hechler, France evoked the double specter of Huguenot martyrdom and strong anti-clerical passions. For Herzl, its daily shout was “Death to the Jews!” It represented, more than anything else, the soil of exile where one sank sweetly and forgetfully. One cannot demand too much of these two men. Can one insist that they snap every patriotic tie, break every natural affinity?

This having been said, the Prince and his Prophet were in a good position not to forget that Zionism was an appeal to the whole world, wherever the children of Israel lived. At this precise moment of their unique adventure they forgot this.

Regarding a sick Turkey, how could any self-respecting Power not feel its vocation to play doctor or nurse? France, after all, still had some titles of nobility to assert in the Holy Land, rights which went back to a time when Prussia was stagnating in its own swamps! French blood had been spilled abundantly in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria — indeed scarcely for pure motives, but it had been spilled, and the shade of Saint Louis¹⁵ haunted more minds than that of King David. Still, the Crusades had never particularly stirred a child of the Reformation, not to mention a child of Israel.



The two friends at the bottom of a wave of utter discouragement were unable to take pleasure in any kind of help or support which could have moved a corrupt Sultan to compliance -

¹⁵ Saint Louis was, as king of France, the leader of the last Crusade. He died in Tunis, and was one of the few “good Christian” monarchs (died in 1270)

beyond all interests of national grandeur and religious prestige. The hostile attitude of the Vatican, from the beginnings of Zionism, did not encourage one like William Hechler to forget for a moment his ties and sentiments for the Reformation. Let us do him this justice: he never used his relations with crowned heads or Protestant bishops for personal interest. He was a theologian without personal ambition and without spiritual pride, completely at the service of his Master, and his friend Herzl. We have already seen him compromising himself, braving the ridicule of the rich and the refined, and serenely incurring the remonstrances of the people in London — all this so that Jerusalem might be soon returned to the people of David and Christ.

It was in good faith and with all his heart that he believed in the “Protestant mission” within the Biblical venture of Zionism. Finally, let us be permitted here to ask a question. How many princes, cardinals and Catholic statesmen in Europe had understood Herzl’s vocation and offered to support it? How many, like Frederic of Baden, knew how to humble themselves before the Hebrew prophets? How many bishops were praying for Hechler’s Jewish friend? - And how many politicians that had been brought up to have a good knowledge of the Bible? How many of them - in very roman and very Christian nations like Austria, France, Italy and Spain —? And what about the men of this world among whom the various Orthodox churches were to be the representative of Christ and his demand for justice and fraternal love? - The less said about this the better...

Providence seemed, therefore, to point to Berlin and London. There was indeed a German saying, “Happy as God in France!” But could such a wayward sally touch our puritan chaplain in the service of a Victorian embassy?

A note by Herzl, in his diary entry for August 16: “My testament to the Jewish people: build your State in such a manner that the foreigner will feel happy there.”



The two friends, having understood that there was no point in expecting anything from Berlin, turned toward other royalty: the Czar and the Sultan. The Czar was not destined to grant them an audience, being not of those who honor the Jews, but one who persecuted them. The Sultan — master of the Promised Land — was ready to receive Herzl.

As for the Czar, Hechler knew the Grand Duke of Hesse, brother of the Czarina. Herzl, therefore, asked his friend to travel with him to Marienbad. This Hechler did promptly, and on August 12 they obtained an audience. The prince promised Herzl to present the idea to his brother-in-law, the Czar, whom he thought “capable of being interested in things of this nature,” a promise that very likely he did not keep.

Meanwhile, the third (Zionist) Congress assembled in Basel where Herzl struggled and wore himself out to get the Congress’ approval for his “bank.” His diary entry for August 24:

*The 3rd
Zionist
Conference*

“J’ai connu la grande blessure de l’argent’ (I experienced how deeply money can wound) — so wrote Henry Becque. I also know it. My work would appear far more remarkable if people knew with what financial worries I have to contend as the result of my outlays on Zionism. I tremble at the thought of being dismissed by the Neue Freie Presse and I don’t dare to take now the holiday which my health requires . . . So, once more, I return today to the office, after having been a free and mighty lord at Basel!”

In Marienbad dwelt another high personage, not yet crowned but in line - the Prince of Wales. Again Hechler was sent on a mission. He returned empty-handed on September 3, and here is Herzl’s thought on the matter:

“The Prince of Wales evidently scented that he was a ‘vieux raseur’ (old bore) and since H. R. H. prefers the photographs of young Jewish women to those of old Jewish walls, Hechler got no farther than the adjutant’s desk.”

Coming back to the Czar, one more incident may be related before we send him back to his pogroms and his Rasputin. He received a letter dated December 8, 1899, written in the picturesque French of Frederic of Baden:

“Your Imperial Majesty will no doubt recall that I have spoken to him of a Viennese gentleman who desired to offer a report about the society called ‘the Zionists,’ an international society which intends to initiate Jewish colonization. The man in question, a Dr. Herzl, who lives in Vienna, has since written his report and I encouraged him to send it to me in order to present it to Your Majesty. I thought that this would be the best way to acquaint you with this person. . . . I hope thus to secure your Majesty’s approval and at the same time to enable him to become acquainted with an enterprise which can become important, among other things with respect to social and political interests in European countries where the Jewish populations exert a certain economic influence on the agricultural and rural settlements and over the poor who are exposed to socialist trends.”

Herzl had on several occasions asked his friend Hechler to influence the kindhearted Grand Duke Frederic, and after a lot of hesitation, Hechler complied with the request.

If one tries to strip from this letter its extremely courteous diplomatic wrapping, it reads something like this:

“Dear Nicholas! If you want to get rid of your Jewish anarchists and revolutionaries easily — not to mention your pogroms — do something to make the Sultan sell a piece of Palestine. A word to the wise is sufficient!”

Who knows? If this foolish Czar had taken such a step, he would have saved himself many unpleasant events. But Nicholas did

not enjoy any special illumination as far as the signs of the time was concerned. Thus, on December 25 (please notice the date) Nicholas answered the Grand Duke in very good French:

"My dear Brother and Cousin,

"It was with great interest that I read the report of M. Herzl which was attached to your letter, and I should like to thank Your Royal Highness for this kind communication.

"The theory of Zionism may be an important factor in connection with increasing the tranquility of Europe; but on my part I doubt whether any application of this is possible, even in the distant future . . .

"I am, dear Brother, the cousin and good brother of Your Royal Highness,

Nicholas"

Truly talented, this cousin Nicholas! Quite in line with the flow of history, even the history of the distant future.



From the year 1896 Herzl wore himself out to contact the Sultan through some European sovereign. He realized at last, as Hechler did, that it was proper for him to knock for himself at the grand Portal. The sleepy and all-powerful monarch who guided its destiny had most likely heard of Zionism and its leader. But how to act? The go-between, Nevliniski, was dead and Herzl had learned that he had been a double agent charged with spying on Zionism from within. He had never made a single effort to help Herzl at all.

Once again Hechler offered some good advice, knowing a man who could obtain a second imperial audience for Herzl. It was to take almost a year.

You may remember that a short time after his appointment to Vienna, Hechler had been entrusted to give lectures at the university of this capital. Now and then he lectured in Budapest and while there he had met a Professor of Oriental Languages named Haim Vambéry.

This man deserves a brief biographical note. Born in 1832 of very religious Jewish parents, he launched out at twenty-two to discover the Ottoman world, became secretary of Fouadpasha and was converted to Islam.

In 1861, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences financed his expedition to central Asia, supposed cradle of the Hungarian nation. Disguised as a dervish, Vambéry wandered through this unknown on foot, learning all the languages of the region!

Three years later he returned to Budapest, converted now to Protestantism. He quickly became famous for his extraordinary knowledge as Professor of Oriental Languages in Budapest until 1905. Being at one time a liberally paid agent of Disraeli and the Sultan, he became one of the latter's consultants, obtaining the post of tutor to the favorite princess, Fatima.

One sees here a person of Hechler's stature, and Hechler was able to skillfully exploit the Jewish origin of this genius, converting him to Zionism! Herzl met him several times in June 1900 and sent him numerous letters in a tone of filial affection.

But we have not yet arrived at Sultanic audience. Let us resume the thread of events.

At the beginning of September 1899, Hechler learned through one of his friends, an English countess whom he had won to the new cause, that Lord Salisbury when asked, "Why don't you take any interest in Zionism?" had answered her, "Wait, I shall!" Hechler told this to Herzl, and the two friends (each separately) devised ways to approaching this Lord...



From the Journal of Herzl, dated September 13:

"The Anarchist Marcou Baruch shot himself in Florence. This obvious madman had pursued me with threatening letters between the Second and Third Congress. I was seriously afraid that he would attempt to assassinate me this time in Basel. Meanwhile, no one protected me. Marcou Baruch stood in front of me, next to me, and behind me, whenever he pleased . . . However, I seem to have given him the right tamer's look for he spoke with me bashfully and amiably."

At times there was a comic note:

"On many other occasions, too, madmen come to see me. I am haunted by messiahs of every stripe. The latest thing is a 'Jesus Christ' named Lichtneckert who writes me in an otherwise intelligent letter that I am Elijah, his Elijah, and wants me to give him 5,000 guilders for the publication of a work that will redeem the world. I turned the letter over to my good Hechler, who will call on him and calm him down.

"Hechler took the occasion to tell me the following story: 'When I was in Stockholm a similar false Jesus Christ appeared in the vicinity. He again gathered his twelve apostles. But when Good Friday approached, he saw his apostles tying sticks of wood together. He asked them what they were doing. They said, We are going to crucify you again now! But this was too much for him and he disappeared from that vicinity'."

On April 18, 1900 Herzl again met Frederic of Baden, after having seriously prepared for this conversation with Hechler. This was an attempt to interest the Grand Duke in the well known joint action, London-Berlin. Herzl was sincerely touched by the frankness of his interlocutor, who gave him a complete picture of German aspirations in Europe. Let us cite this comment of Herzl upon leaving the castle of Karlsruhe:

"In the antechamber General von Muller stiffly returned my formal bow and only a group of younger officers in gala dress who had been obliged to wait such a long time looked with some astonishment and respect at the Jewish stranger who had been with the sovereign for so long. I passed through the group without a greeting because I know their ways and did not want to give them an opportunity to take my greeting as Jewish servility . . ."

The following footnote dates of May 1 - Herzl was again in the throw of a wave of disillusion:

"I have thought of an appropriate epitaph for myself: 'He had too good an opinion of the Jews'."

In August, the fourth Zionist Congress convened, this time in London. Hechler was present after having interested all his relatives in the capital and organized services of intercessory prayer in favor of the Movement and its leader. A strong impression had been made in English circles and several Jewish bankers appeared to be thinking of joining Herzl. Hechler and Sir Francis Montefiore had arranged a quiet lunch for the leader. One never knew . . .

*The forth
Zionist
Congress*

A huge garden party was organized in the Botanical Gardens. Listen to Herzl's comment:

"The whole public circled about me in a compact mass. I would have gladly enjoyed seeing this beautiful English garden, but I was smothered under royal honors. People gaped at me in admiration while I drank a cup of tea. They presented their children and introduced their ladies; old men wanted to kiss my hand. I am always tempted to ask on such occasion, 'Pardon me, but why are you doing this?'"

"During yesterday's afternoon session I handed over the gavel to Gaster and Nordau and slipped away to Kensington Gardens where, in charming surroundings and with a view over the water, I took a cup of tea in peace."



The year 1901 began badly for Herzl. A subtle press campaign was now launched against him accusing him of priding himself that he was on excellent terms with princes and with the Emperor. Immediately after having learned of it, Herzl requested an audience with the ambassador of Vienna, von Eulenburg, in order to make himself perfectly plain. Observe Herzl's note in this connection with regard to Hechler, who had perhaps rashly given occasion for the press campaign:

"In the evening he received me, amiably as always. My enemies, I said, seek to place me in disfavor with the Court of Berlin. Believe me, I have never exploited in any manner, whether in the press or in my conversation, the audiences which I received . . ."

"Our good Mr. Hechler seems to have been too talkative. It is the only fault of this thoroughly honest man."

In Jerusalem, too, Herzl had asked his friend not to chatter too much, for it was there rumored that Dr. Herzl was in the pay of the English Protestant missions! Hechler indeed lauded his friend to the skies everywhere, but we know how praises turn to calumny when other “friends” lay hands on them.

In June of the same year, Hechler began to be concerned about his friend’s health. Herzl, while in the middle of a discussion in the office of *Die Welt*, had experienced a strange indisposition which he was to call cerebral anaemia, having a sensation of losing half of his consciousness even while being aware of what was happening to him. He had to keep to his bed for a few days.

It would take more than a trip to Constantinople to put him on his feet again. Still, Vambery, realizing that Herzl was unknown to the Sultan, had done his best. He invited Herzl to Budapest on May 8 and told him that the Sultan would receive him, but not as a Zionist! Rather, as an important journalist.

Vambery wrote:

“When I arrived the Sultan received me with suspicion. ‘Why are you here?’ I told him I had been invited to see the King¹⁶ of England; perhaps he had a message to give him. Secondly, I thought it necessary to improve public opinion on his behalf and for that purpose he should give an audience to one of the most respected and influential journalists (myself). He made me come six times before he agreed to it. The fellow is completely crazy and a robber. His latest feat is to seize the whole European mail; and he thinks this won’t lead to war. You mustn’t talk to him about Zionism.”

Herzl appreciated this introduction at its true value. Still, another Herculean task was awaiting him, no doubt.

On May 9, 1901 he got on the Orient Express that brought him to Constantinople on the 13th. During four days he strolled about as he pleased, pondering both day and night what he would say to the Sultan. A few hours before the great moment, in his bathroom before the mirror, Herzl rehearsed his difficult ‘act’:

“Will His Majesty permit me to speak plainly, frankly, seriously? I have not come to render small services, but great ones. Newspaper articles cost 50 to 500 gold coins. As for me, I cannot be bought — I give myself. The story of Androcles and the lion, etc.

“How much of all this shall I be able to get in?”

All of it! was his answer, in the first line of his “Journal entry” on May 19, wherein he gives a long account of the audience. At the outset the Sultan told Herzl that he regularly read the *Freie Presse* (without knowing a word of German, Herzl thought, flabbergasted). It was the newspaper from which he gleaned important news items about China and other places. How wonderful to enjoy such good relations with Austria. . . . “I have always been a friend of the Jews!”

Then Herzl launched out:

¹⁶ King Edward VII (1841-1910) (Ed.)

"I can not help thinking of the charming old story of Androcles and the lion¹⁷. Your Majesty is the lion; perhaps I am Androcles, and perhaps there is a thorn that needs pulling out . . . The thorn, as I see it, is your public debt"

The Sultan sighed and smiled in turn. His interpreter soon explained, His Majesty has concerned himself, ever since he began his glorious reign, with removing this thorn but in vain. His exalted predecessors had acquired the thorn and it seems impossible to extract it. If the gentleman could do anything about it, it would be more than handsome of him. Herzl replied that the first and fundamental condition was absolute secrecy.

"Der Herr raised his eyes to heaven, placed his hand upon his breast and murmured, 'Secret, secret!'"

Herzl's Journal continues:

"In exchange for my help, His Majesty would be prepared to assist me, under the form of a decree particularly favorable to the Jews. The interpreter: 'His Majesty has a court jeweler who is a Jew. He might say to him something agreeable about the Jews and have him give it to the press. He has, besides, a chief rabbi for his Jews, the Haham Bashi; he could say something to him also...'"

Herzl, appalled, rejected the last proposal. He knew that this chief rabbi spit every time he heard the Zionist leader's name! The entire conversation, lasting about two hours, revolved around the possibilities of developing industry and mining so as to strengthen the Treasury — with the assistance of Jewish financiers, of course! At one time the Sultan declared that he would willingly grant asylum in his land to Jews who desired it. Herzl rose and bowed. At the conclusion of the audience the great emblem of the Order of Mejdije was bestowed on the Zionist leader.



For more than one year the relations between Herzl and the Sublime Porte remained in a state of *quid pro quo*. Finally, the Sultan gave notice that he was ready to concede any part of his Empire except Palestine. From the wings, Germany and France had also shown an interest in the Treasury of the old fox and they quickly grasped now that their gold was more substantial than that promised by the mysterious Viennese journalist!

Few people understood the steps taken by Herzl, even among the Zionist committees. To meet "that butcher, the Sultan," seemed ignominious, and Herzl was flooded with telegrams of protest from various groups and organizations. Among others one man conducted

¹⁷ George Bernard Shaw's play - A Christian in the Roman Empire is about to be sent to the lions. Meeting a lion with a thorn in its paw he pulls out the thorn and once in the arena the lion remembers his kindness and in gratitude spares his life (Ed.)

a campaign against him, carrying along with him a whole intellectual elite before whom he posed as their mentor — Ahad Ha'Am.

In Paris Herzl learned that mischievous rumors were being spread about him, that he wanted, in fact, to appear as a second Baron Hirsch and do business at the expense of the Jewish people:

"Yesterday evening, another attack of brain anemia. One day I shall remain in such a condition. I was just taking a drive in the Bois when I fainted in the carriage. At first I lay down on two chairs in the bushes, then drove home with greatly diminished consciousness. These rumors are enough to destroy a man."

On the following day he met chief rabbi Zadok Kahn:

"He defended the mauvais vouloir (ill will) of the Rothschilds, and said in his funny Alsatian French, 'Il vaut bourdant bleintre les riges (instead of: 'il faut pourtant plaindre les riches' - one has to feel sorry for the rich).' Bleintre les riges! That sufficiently characterizes the pious man."

He then went to London to prepare the ground for the fifth Congress. There several meetings sufficed to pour some balm into his wounded heart. Thanks to Hechler, he was introduced to several bishops:

"Hechler is staying with him. Bramley Moore, too, is an ardent Zionist and wanted to have me join him for luncheon yesterday. The bishop's house is very elegant. But in the drawing room a tabernacle is set up. He felt moved, it seemed, to be collaborating on the 'Jewish restoration.' He is a charming, good-humored old man 'qui a la religion gaie' (whose religion is cheerful). Bramley Moore proposed that we approach the Duke of Northumberland as mediator with Carnegie."

Then in his diary of June 17 we read:

"On Saturday I sent Hechler to the Bishop of Ripon, a good friend of the King, in order to get me an audience with the King. Good Bishop Bramley Moore also thought this would raise my prestige. I would ask the King to tell his big Jews that they could help me without prejudice to their English patriotism."

"On this occasion Hechler told me that after the first time I had called on Bramley Moore, the latter had immediately gone to the nearby Irvingite church with him. There Bramley had put on his bishop's vestments and said, 'Now let us pray to God and ask him what our duty is.'"

"Good Hechler wept as he told me this and I, too, was very touched."

"These simple Christian hearts are much better than our Jewish clerics who think of their wedding fees from the rich Jews."

Before returning to the continent, Herzl met the bishop of Ripon, Dr. Boyd Carpenter, who declared himself ready to intercede

before the King. The two men took leave of one another as friends. However the new sovereign was quite different from the Empress, his mother, and scoffed at the project of “Jewish restoration.” In a final judgment we should not forget that he could not ignore the great Jewish families in Parliament and in banking circles, who were quite frightened of Herzl—even while they viewed him as an inspired personality!



The year 1901 ended with harassing days of the Congress in London wherein the foundations for the “National Fund” were laid — for funds which would systematically lead to the resurrection of the soil in Palestine. Hechler saw in this one more important sign on the messianic highway.

*The fifth
Zionist
Congress*



Herzl reflected on January 24, 1902, “*Zionism will be the Sabbath of my life.*”

For years he was a man of great loneliness, which was to grow still heavier. The acclamations and the ephemeral glory of the Congress did not touch him anymore. He wrote somewhere, “The bounce is gone.” The warning signals of his heart became more pressing and more regular.

At home his wife was on the verge of hysteria, while their children naturally felt the effects of having their father, whom they adored, abandon them continually because of endless trips to London or Constantinople.

Actually, on his side were only the poor, a small handful of loyal ones, the persecuted of his people.

Also Hechler, with his unaffected but comforting visits, with his messages of exhortation, “May God protect you; He will not abandon you. Trust in Him, you will conquer . . . Together we shall return to Jerusalem.”

Herzl smiled sadly and answered, “Yes, dear William, and I shall even succeed in appointing you bishop of Jerusalem!”

Herzl felt his life was running out. He had only that to give to his people.



The year 1902 marked the only disagreement in the fraternal relationship of the two friends.

German and Turkish doors having closed (but had they closed for good?) and with nothing to be expected from St. Petersburg, Herzl was haunted by the pogroms still breaking out — at that moment especially in Rumania. What was most important? To find any kind of asylum for the persecuted of his people or to reject

even now any other proposal than the Promised Land? This dilemma consumed him, wore him down. It was to kill our visionary prince.

Isn't it my duty, he asked himself, in the present state of my diplomatic steps and political contacts, to find a refuge at any cost? A distressing equivalent of the forty years in the desert outside of the promised land, but safe from Egyptian persecutions. Isn't this what God demands of me, of all of us, and of you, dear Hechler? Or does He desire that still more Jewish blood should flow, at the pleasure of an idiotic and capricious potentate?

Hechler hesitated, not knowing what to say in reply.

'Still, the doors of Palestine could swing open at any moment. After all, the Kaiser, the Czar and the Sultan were but pawns on a chessboard; the game had begun and the result was certain, a Jewish State. Facing these monarchs, the little pawn Israel was the main piece of the whole drama and the nations didn't know it! Each birth takes place in pain. Many pains are still before us and you, my friend, are at the core of all this sorrow.'

Insomnia was added to Herzl's troubles. During the night he hatched out crazy ideas such as: to establish himself in Cyprus and then one day to give the order, "Let's be off to the coasts of our motherland." To reject every other land would be Biblical; the Sinai was really necessary, at least.



A peal of thunder: on June 4 in Paris, Herzl received an invitation to appear before the "Royal Commission for Alien Immigration." This Commission was presided over by the elderly Lord Rothschild and met essentially to ponder the grave situation caused by the pogroms. Thus, from July 5 to 7, the Zionist leader appeared before men who were all hostile to the Zionist movement.

Traveling to London on June 9, Herzl learned of the death of his father, Jacob, a loss that he felt grievously. The idea struck him as an announcement of an uprooting,

"What a support he was to me, what an adviser! He stood by me like a tree. Now the tree has fallen."



In spite of everything, he went back to Constantinople and desperately offered the old fox, , the amount of money he had succeeded in tearing away from his prudent bankers — 1,600,000 pounds sterling. He met with a refusal. It was a ridiculous sum to the Sultan, who exclaimed, "If you want to dismember my Empire you will have to wait until my death!"



Still, the door of the Royal Commission now opened another one. This was Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial minister, a man won to Zionism through his Protestant faith, and some friends of Hechler who were bishops.

‘Cyprus? Yes, it falls within the competence of my Ministry. But you have there too many Turks and too many Greek Orthodox to permit your Jews to find it a choice spot, Dr. Herzl.

‘Sinai? There is really a strip of land there which they say is quite fertile, the territory of El Arish. It was, if I’m not mistaken, a region once granted to your ancestors! Really a predestined land! ... But it falls within the competence of our representative in Cairo, Lord Cromer. For, Dr. Herzl, Egypt is not Crown property ... If Lord Cromer will consent to it, I am ready to support the matter.’

Herzl was pleased, and Hechler, too. This fitted in very well with the Divine will in the history of Israel. A glance on the “messianic map” reassured the two friends Sinai was really a part of the future realm.

Herzl cheered up a bit. He met Lord Lansdown who held the portfolio of foreign affairs. The latter recommended on the spot sending a Zionist commission of investigation. If at its return, it presented a positive report, then no obstacles.

“No major obstacles, Mr. Herzl, for you are not unaware that the Egyptian government is an independent government.”

His heart contracted. Herzl was not naïve enough not to know very well that the representative of His Majesty was master in Egypt - and the only one.



At this strained point of Zionist negotiations, when the Zionist expedition is about to sail to Egypt, let us pause and enter the promised land, the Land of Israel via a vision; with Herzl. He had just published his second “prophetic” book, entitled “Altneuland” (a bit difficult to render in English—“Ancient and New Fatherland”). The promises had been kept. Palestine awakens from its millenary sleep, frees herself of her dunes, and rids herself of pestilential swamps. Once again it is a country flowing with milk and honey.

Behind the fictitious names of the characters one easily recognizes Herzl’s entourage — in particular, a good-natured pastor, one Reverend Hopkins¹⁸, who happens to be the Bishop of Jerusalem!

In this astonishing work of vision, Herzl successively described the cooperative life in Israel, the voluntary contributions of world Jewry, the preponderant position of industry, the extraordinary progress in exploiting the minerals of the Dead Sea, irrigation and motor power. He reported prodigious development in housing, and architecture in general.

He envisioned renowned centers for scientific research — today the “Weizmann Institute”, and the “Technion” in Haifa.

¹⁸ In our research in the Zionist archives of Jerusalem we found several messages from Hechler to Herzl signed, “Your Hopkins.”

He foresaw the special form that military service would take in Israel. But he did not imagine the danger at the frontiers. Israel was portrayed as a force for peace and progress for all of her neighbors, glad because of her presence.

Here is perhaps the most thrilling passage of all:

“Now that I have lived to see the restoration of the Jews, I would like to open the way to the emancipation of the Negroes.”

This passage bowled over Hechler-Hopkins who saw therein a new aspect of the great promise of the Hebrew prophets, “You shall be a light to the nations.” Herzl did not live to see the expansion of Israeli presence in Africa fifty years later, but those who knew how to produce it had only to follow his vision and remain faithful to it.

It is interesting to note that on only one point was Herzl wrong. In effect, the renaissance of the Hebrew language seemed to him too miraculous to be true! Thus, he opted in favor of the Babylonian solution...with each person speaking his own language, but with good German dominating - naturally!

But it was to Jerusalem (which he had found so dirty, depressing and degraded) that the visionary awarded his most precious thoughts and most impressive project — a universal center of prayer, the heart of world peace. He even used the up-to-date expression, “Jerusalem, Capital of Ecumenism”, to identify the children of Abraham, according to flesh and also according to the spirit.



Hechler rediscovered in his uncrowned Prince a being in the line of the great kings of Israel, quite in the line of David, that other prince-visionary. In turning through the pages of this anticipatory novel, the aging pastor smiled impishly. It was good to be cited among the glorious band of valiant companions of this new David.



The Al Arish expedition left in January, fortified with Lord Rothschild's blessing, but all of its members were not fit for this delicate mission. Nevertheless, Colonel Goldsmith (thanks to his resourcefulness and his rank) and Dr. Hillel Jofee distinguished themselves. The Commission traveled about for two long months and on March 27th gave a favorable decision for initiating colonization on condition that an entire irrigation system be established.

Herzl, who had to leave Cairo quickly, left an agent there — Greenberg whose clumsy conduct compelled the Zionist leader to return to Egypt. There he met the cold and reserved Lord Cromer, who evidently did not take to this Viennese. Too much authority for a civilian!

In May the “Sinai solution” collapsed. Lord Cromer rejected the project and several days later, as expected, the Egyptian “government” rejected it also. Thus, after Berlin and Constantinople, Cairo, too and London indirectly, also opposed the return of the Children of Israel.

Enemies as well as “good friends” were to unite again, during the Congress held at the end of August. Herzl had to fight on two fronts and was sadder than ever. “Never mind!” exclaimed Hechler, “If Sinai is barred it is a sign that he would not have to wander about in the desert for forty years!”



Herzl thought of Mozambique and asked Hechler, who was on good terms with the Portuguese ambassador, to obtain an audience for him. This was soon done but Count Patay was both courteous and evasive.

Mozambique was out. Try the Congo. But a certain Philipsohn, who had entrée to the Belgian Court, refused to intercede and so Congo was out, too.

They were compelled to turn to Russia again, for blood flowed in new pogroms in Kishinev. Hechler, and then Herzl, had a go at Frederic of Baden once more, who addressed himself to Grand Duke Constantin who was supposed to have great influence in St. Petersburg. The Czar let them know courteously that they should leave him alone in the management of his own Jews - Kishinev style! Constantin advised that they communicate with one or two Russian ministers, Plehve, if possible, the Minister of Interior. Now the Russian police had played a shady role in the recent pogroms and all Europe pointed to Plehve. He was really responsible!

Things were falling into place, for Herzl had made friends with one of Hechler’s acquaintances, a brilliant, intellectual Polish lady, Mrs. Korvin-Piatrovska, who was on the best of terms with Plehve. An audience was granted at the beginning of August. Herzl met “the executioner,” who seemed particularly impressed by the personality of his Zionist interlocutor. He had no objection to encouraging a Jewish exodus on condition that wealthy Jews would finance the vast project. This did not displease Herzl...

Thanks to Lord Rothschild he had an interview with Witte, the financier of the Czar, and quite a skunk. There was no chance of meeting Nicholas. This mediocre, superstitious, unwise being on the throne of Russia, did not receive Jews. Other crowned heads could meet other emperors, but a Jew could not talk to the great Nicholas. Moreover, for him the Jewish problem demanded a very simple solution, which the Grand Inquisitor as well as several Orthodox dignitaries had whispered to him:

The Jews have killed Jesus; there is therefore no other salvation for them except to enter the holy, Orthodox Church — but above all, not in the Holy Land. Their very presence would soil the Holy Places. Let them be content with their Wall of shame and a

thousand years of lamentation! We, Nicholas II, allow Israel to cry and lament, nothing more.

Poor Nicholas, who forgot, without a doubt, the fate reserved to the Pharaohs, small or great, who dream of exterminating Israel, closing to her the route to the Promised Land.



Herzl returned from Russia rich with experiences. To be sure, the “Russian executioner” had smiled and promised his support (yet many were those who reproached him, as they had previously opposed his contacts with the Sultan — after all, Moses should not meet with Pharaoh!).

The poor, the humble, persecuted and believing had pressed about him on the Russian roads, and they were not mistaken. “Long live the King!” several shouted, greeting him as the Prince of Liberation.

Herzl was shaken, and cried with them. They had recognized his deep love and passion for his own people, knowing that it was with suffering and disgust that Moses met Pharaoh. Herzl wept with them, for he knew he was neither king nor liberating Messiah. At the most he was a Jewish messiah of sorrow, like others before him. His heart would soon break under the strain of it.

In the course of a conversation with Herzl, who once more had come to London, some time after the failure of the El Arish project, the minister Chamberlain had a sudden idea.

“What would you think of Uganda? I stayed there recently. Very hot on the coast but excellent climate in the interior. Cotton has a great future there. What do you think?”

Herzl was thinking that blood was being spilled in Russia and elsewhere. He pressed the minister to extract an official declaration from the Cabinet, that he could submit to the sixth Congress, which was to be held once again in Basel from the 23rd to the 28th of August. On August 16 a letter from Sir Clement Hill of the Foreign Office reached the desk of the author of “Altneuland,” officially offering the land of Uganda to Jewish colonization and inviting a Zionist delegation to undertake an investigation on the spot. It was the first recognition of the Zionist Movement by a government. Herzl was aware that an irreversible political sequence had begun.

*Sixth Zionist
Congress in
Basel*

For the first time, Hechler refused to go along with his friend. He expressed himself strongly, “Don’t you realize, my friend, that if part of your people settles down in an African land, Jerusalem will ultimately be lost to them?”

But Jewish blood was being spilled in Kishinev and Herzl could only repeat, “We shall have a Jewish governor and autonomy within five years. This is in response to the Kishinev drama which demands an immediate solution. We have to practice emergency

politics. To accept Chamberlain's offer strengthens our position." It was now that he showed himself to be a statesman:

"We shall press him for another motion, in case the Congress rejects the project. In any case, we will have wrenched from this mighty power (Great Britain) the recognition of the NATION DE PUISSANCE!"

This the Zionist delegates in Basel did not understand. They saw but a scandalous paradox - maybe even a trick - for in the inaugural speech of their leader, he had affirmed that Palestine remained the only fatherland and the only supreme goal. Negotiations with the Sultan were not dissolved, but it was desirable to appoint an investigation committee. For whatever decision would be taken, negotiations would take place between the Zionists and the government of England, to whom they should show their gratitude.

Loyal Max Nordau then supported his friend and leader, but reluctantly. One of his phrases started a tempest, "To tell the truth, Uganda will only be shelter for one night!"

The opposition raged, grouped around the Russian delegates and the men of Kishinev. "Either Palestine or death!"

In the gallery Hechler was upset and fixed his eyes on his friend. What would happen? Would not this vote cause a breach in the Movement, the unity and energy of which the pastor admired so much? The consequences of a rupture could mean a mortal blow to Zionism. My friend, brother and Prince, where are you heading? Toward which new seclusion, worse than Uganda itself?

Herzl braved the situation, for he was the one who had proposed the African exile as preferable to pogroms and he was still the chief. He had this cry,

"Time is running out. It is precisely the duty of a leader to place his people on a way which, apparently roundabout, still leads to the goal. Moses himself did not act differently. . ."

The vote was 295 delegates for Herzl, 177 against, and 100 abstentions. The whole Russian delegation got up and left the hall. Herzl suspended the session, and asked to be heard by his Russian brethren. While he waited in the lobby, a door soon opened. There was the sound of weeping, and then a cry that struck at his heart, "Traitor!"

Again he took the floor, as dignified as only a father can be. He explained that he still believed what had happened was basically a sign of disagreement, but someone had come to tell him that the Russian delegates were weeping:

"Then I understood that you had been bewildered, believing that I had abandoned the program of Basel. That is why I have come to tell you that it is not true. In 1901 I could have obtained a Charter for Palestine if I had been able to raise the sum that was demanded. Those

whom I approached refused me the money. That was the situation I was in. Inasmuch as you did not give me the money, there remains the avenue of diplomacy. I have betrayed no one, but we do not have the right to reject the English offer which gives a respite for the martyrs of Israel."

His heart was broken, but he loved the violence of these Russian Jews, for it had its source in the same love of the same homeland lost for so many centuries.

The delegates then accepted a compromise: an investigation committee would be sent out but the next Congress would decide. Standing, they swore an oath after Herzl:

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning!"

The same evening Herzl opened his heart to some of his closest friends, Hechler among them:

"I will tell you the speech I am going to make at the Seventh Congress—that is, if I am still alive. By then I shall have obtained Palestine, or else realized the complete futility of my efforts. In the latter case, this will be my speech:

"It was not possible. The ultimate goal has not been reached and cannot be reached within a foreseeable time. But an intermediate result lies within grasp: a land in which we can settle our suffering masses on a national basis with the right of self-government. I do not think that for the sake of a beautiful dream or for our true banner we are entitled to withhold this relief from the unfortunate.

"But I recognize that the choice has led to a decisive cleavage in our movement and that the rife is centered about my own person. Although I was originally in favor of a Jewish State no matter where, I later lifted up the flag of Zion. Palestine is the sole land where our people can come to rest. But hundreds of thousands crave immediate help.

"There is only one way to solve the conflict: I must resign the leadership. The things I accomplished have not made Zionism poorer, but Jewry richer. Farewell!"

Hechler was deeply affected by one sentence: "The split goes through my own body . . ." He thought of a letter that he himself had sent to the Zionist Action Committee in Vienna. The phrases resounded in his mind as he walked about the deserted streets of Basel:

" . . . So many Christians are praying every day for you that God may grant you the wisdom to accomplish this great task. I myself pray three times each day, facing toward Jerusalem following the example of your dear Prophet Daniel... I am convinced that you have a leader chosen by God... Remain constantly loyal to him. Comfort him by your faith, your obedience, your loyalty, and your unity... We ought to feel grateful for the tempests in our lives for they strengthen us and bring us closer to God."

“Our God, celestial Father, guide and bless our dear Benjamin¹⁹. Grant him power and wisdom to do Thy will, and only Thy will....”



“Lord, what is Your will now? You inspire from time to time the powerful of this earth. Do so now so that the Sultan, who is not a servant of Yours but a puppet, may give back the land of Israel. You hear these cries from the land of slavery. You have placed me at the side of this Prince. Do not let him break down in dreadful solitude. Surely You do not want to gather Your people on African earth, but rather around Jerusalem, like a mother hen gathers its chicks.

“You, who have prepared my way to him since early childhood, You who made my life to be one long, straight road toward him, I pray that you will not allow the iron of schism to pass through his heart, nor permit secession now in route to the Promised Land. O keep him alive until that happy hour when we shall leave together for a free, Messianic Jerusalem.”

Hechler no doubt prayed in some such manner after this drama at the end of August in Basel, 1903. He was the only one, among hundreds of people, who had seen the shadow of the Angel of Death on the face of the insulted and pursued Prince.



A last respite - or was it Herzl's last vacation? The softness of Italy had a flavor in disguise. Rome particularly drew Herzl, for the Roman card had not yet been played. Nor should such a state of affairs be tolerated. ‘What do you think, William, my friend?’

Hechler loved Rome's sunshine and its sweetness of existence, but he prized the Vatican fortress much less; he belonged to those who readily identified the Vatican with that Babylon stigmatized by the seer of Patmos.

‘See the King by all means. But why lose your time at the Vatican, where the only interest shown to you will be due to a possible conversion of a Jew of some quality? This [Vatican] world, more political than religious, has always opposed you more or less subtly. For it, Palestine leads one to places called Holy and to convents and schools. Zionism will never be to their liking. For political reasons as well as no transfer of authority, nor financial. Their “spiritual” exploitation of this land theologically condemns Israel. She is rejected - although Saint Paul said the contrary. The men of the Roman Curia and their Inquisitors will oppose by all means.’

¹⁹ Herzl's Hebrew name

But Herzl, seduced, thought of the positive effect a Papal audience could produce upon comfortably settled and well-to-do Jews!

Due to a chance encounter in a Venetian shop — the same Venice that had inspired him when he was writing *The Jewish State* — Herzl met Count Lippay, the Pope's portraitist. The Count had visions of Herzl some day "returning to the bosom of Mother Church."

So the Papal audience was easily obtained and Herzl came quickly to the point, "I come to the Vatican neither as a pilgrim, nor as a candidate for baptism, but as a spokesman for my people! I like and admire Jesus whom I consider the most moving of the children of Israel, but I do not in the least share the Catholic ideology."



We have, then, in the life of this Jewish prince without a kingdom, three savory scenes at the close of January, 1904: the Cardinal, the King, and the Pope, that we will here reduce to three short monologues, all of them inspired by Herzl's diary.

SCENE I: THE CARDINAL

Cardinal Merry del Val. Secretary of State of His Holiness - a true Spaniard, in his forties:

"So long as the Jews deny the divinity of Christ, we certainly cannot side with them. Not that we have any ill will toward them. On the contrary, the Church has always protected them. They are for us the indispensable witnesses of what took place in the days when God dwelt on earth. But they persist in denying the divinity of Christ. How then, short of abandoning our highest principles, can we agree to their regaining possession of the Holy Land?"

"The history of Israel is our own history, it is our foundation. But in order that we should come out for the Jewish people in the way you desire, they would first have to accept conversion."

Poor Mr. Merry del Val evidently took his interlocutor to be one of the boys in his choir!

SCENE II: THE KING

Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy - very short, dressed in general's uniform, erect, simple, and gracious:

"I know the country well. I have been there on several occasions, also, at the very time my father was assassinated. It will and must become yours. It is merely a question of time. I am glad you have given up Uganda. I like this love for Jerusalem. I took you at first for a rabbi... The only thing that has any effect on the Sultan is money; everything can be done with baksheesh. Wait till you have half a million Jews there"

SCENE III: THE POPE

Giuseppe Sarto, Pope now several months - a good and simple man. Often makes use of his big handkerchief:

"We are unable to favor this movement. We cannot prevent the Jews from going to Jerusalem, but we could never sanction it. The ground of Jerusalem, if it were not always sacred, has been sanctified by the life of Jesus Christ. As head of the Church I cannot answer you otherwise. The Jews have not recognized our Lord, therefore we cannot recognize the Jewish people . . .

"I know it is disagreeable to see the Turks in possession of our Holy Places. We simply have to put up with it. But to sanction the Jewish wish to occupy these sites - that we cannot do. The Jewish faith was the foundation of our own, but it has been superceded by the teachings of Christ. And so, if you come to Palestine and settle your people there, we will be ready with churches and priests to baptize all of you."



Hechler had been right again, in spite of his sweet guilelessness. Herzl had no luck with the men of power whom he found favorable to his cause. Frederic of Baden and Victor Emmanuel were princes without direct power of action. And one dares to think that if these two men expressed their support, it was only because they knew they were without power over the Sultan.

So the anti-clerical and "atheist" king was the only one of these three Roman heads who pronounced beautiful words, full of confidence in the future, and, it could be said, prophetic in their own way!

The princes of the Vatican, prisoners of their own cold dogmatism, engulfed in anti-Jewish, secular tradition, could not understand. Why? They couldn't even realize that their words had no real connection with the present, with the Israel of the early twentieth century, nor any relation to the teachings of Christ, of Saint Paul, and the entire New Testament.

It was most bewildering to make the conversion of Israel to the Roman Church a *sine qua non* (absolute) condition of its return to the homeland. Such mentality has prevailed for seventeen centuries, from the time the Church herself, then despised and persecuted, found herself at the throne of a Caesar "converted" for political reasons.

When he left the Papal presence, Herzl noticed a large painting in the hall of an Emperor kneeling before a seated Pope and receiving a crown from his hands. His remark was, "That's how Rome wants it." For too long a time Rome has distributed crowns, established kingdoms, "confessed" kings and guided politics, even to the provoking and organizing of so-called wars of religion. Rome imposed the yellow star on the Jews, and diffused through the centuries a catechism of contempt which paved the way to Nazi persecutions. (Nor must we forget, alas, the dreadful responsibility of one Martin Luther.)

For centuries now the Church has lost sight of the particular and unique position of the people of Israel in the history of the nations. For centuries Christendom, while claiming for itself the blessings contained in the Bible, cast only condemnation upon Israel, besides stirring up, subtly if necessary, scorn and contempt, in which the Jewish people were plunged.

The Roman Church took quite a few steps to prevent Israel from recovering her homeland. And the State of Israel was in existence many years before being recognized by the Holy See — even while they had diplomatic relations with the main Arab States.

Elsewhere, a certain official Protestant world, which has its seat in the city of Calvin, also has nothing to be proud of in this sphere where prudence, fear and spiritual blindness still reign.



One man like William Hechler, appearing now and then, is not enough in Christ's eyes to rescue the honor of the universal church, of theologians, cardinals and popes before a Jerusalem again threatened with total extermination.



Herzl's vacation in the softness and sunshine of Italy was his last breather.

On April 30, 1904, in Vienna, Herzl broke down. Hechler had just time to see him for a moment before the doctors sent him for six weeks to the hot baths of Frazensbad. Herzl hid the state of his health from his mother and closest relatives. He was haunted by the obsession that his last years had been useless for his people, that he had been an unprofitable servant for Israel.

On May 16, while bent over his "Journal" (begun in Paris on Pentecost, 1895), a coughing of blood interrupted eclipsed his confidences forever.

Painfully he returned to Vienna, only to leave immediately for the peaceful mountain resort of Eldach. He was overwhelmed by mail coming from everywhere. How many must have been violently aggressive? He noted on a large, white sheet of paper as if to answer everyone:

"In the midst of life there is death."

On Friday, the first of July, early in the morning, he awakened to a fit of coughing up blood. All day he wrestled against coughing, suffocation, fever, hemorrhage. He rose to his feet, trying to stand erect before the declining day, before the light which was fading in the middle of the summer. He realized all that he had not accomplished, he would not be able to accomplish anymore. No, there was no need to cry—only to remain so, standing, endeavoring to smile.



On the following day his door, forbidden to all visitors, opened for The Friend, his naïve prophet — whom he saw weeping for the first time. Once more Herzl took in immense kindness in the eyes of the person who had best understood him, who indeed thrice daily during eight years had prayed for Zion's prince.

Were they back in the office of the *Freie Presse* in Vienna? On that 10th day of March 1896, their eyes had met for the first time . . . Or were they in the lounge of kindhearted Frederic of Baden when everything seemed marvelously easy? . . . Or in Jerusalem after the din of the salvoes in Jaffa which must have sounded for them! Perhaps they were back in the pastor's studio, in great disorder with its piles of books. One can hear the accents of the Zionist anthem. My friend, when we enter the new Temple, I shall not wish to be a bishop anymore.



“Hechler, you should not cry; it is not permitted at this time. I, too, shed a few tears yesterday, at the close of day, yet each day revives things. It is not like this that two friends such as we should leave each other. Don't you have any more words of encouragement and consolation?”

Hechler pulled himself together with difficulty. He was not at the bedside of a dying parishioner! God knew he was before his Prince, who was in agony! He did not understand anything anymore. But it was not the moment to read a psalm of the return to Zion, in tears and as if in a dream.

The hour was not one for banal words of misleading encouragement, but for heartfelt words:

“Life is a pilgrimage toward the Kingdom, and you are already an overcomer, my friend. You are preceding us to the messianic glory, and you'll come back with our King to Jerusalem. It won't be long now; you have made a breach, and are already a victor.”

There is a sudden shot of pain on the agonized face before him; a hand seizes Hechler desperately while the other hand closes upon the heart. Then a sentence which is barely pronounced,

“Greet all of them for me — all! Tell my people that I am giving my blood ... the blood of my heart ... for them, for my people!”

Another attack interrupted him and he turned away, making a farewell motion with his hand. For a few moments the pastor remained silent, in a daze. He would have liked to pray, silently, but could not find the words. At last he left the room without seeing anyone, without saying goodbye to anybody, but saying to himself, *“They were not worthy of him; they were not worthy of him!”*



On Sunday morning, July 3, Herzl had enough strength to see the members of his family. He asked for his mother and then his absent children, whom he saw for the last time at noon.

In the afternoon he was calm. Then a bit before five he declared,

“Now, my friends, leave me alone. Don’t be afraid; it will be good to sleep.”

Hechler, keeping vigil, searching for words in mute prayer, thought of Mount Nebo. It was in solitude that the Prince had to return his breath to his Creator, to the master of the Promised Land. It is incumbent to remain silent in this mystical encounter, far from the Jordan Valley and Jerusalem surrounded by its barren hills.

Called by the God of Jerusalem to the tumultuous trial of a small Jewish captain [Dreyfus] then led to the great ones of the world and to several Pharaohs — and now the hour of the Burning Bush, of an ultimate revelation: God taking back to Himself the spirit of a suffering servant. There is no greater love than to give one’s life for those whom one loves.



His desire was to be buried like the poor, without flowers or speeches. But behind his bier, on this Wednesday of July 7, 1904, a tremendous crowd in Vienna was weeping and lamenting, chanting the ancient Hebrew litanies. They had come in crowded trains from all corners of Europe; many of them bearded Jews of the Ghetto who only yesterday had acclaimed him with tears in the savage Russia.

As the coffin was lowered into the grave a veritable hysteria took hold of the mortified crowd. In the torrid heat and before ill-at-ease and dazed officials, people pressed around the grave, tearing their clothing and casting a bit of the insensitive earth on their heads.



Do not be shocked, you journalists, politicians, official delegates, and men of letters. This is the small people of the Bible—whom Sadducees and Pharisees once called “the despised people”—weeping for their uncrowned king. They feel that an immense blessing, a glorious feast, as it were, has been cruelly interrupted. But this evening they will be clear of the streets of your anti-Semitic city, taking their trains back to their reserved neighborhoods of contempt. Only now they ask with tears of despair, *“Who will lead us to the promised, inaccessible land?”*

Hechler marched with the close relatives and friends, before the officials. The drama beside the tomb had not surprised him, did not shock him. He knew Israel, was ever a part of this people. He had understood and loved them for a long time, indeed.

Others were there, too, in their beautiful black frock coats — those who had killed his friend...He died also for them who had broken his heart.



As for me, William Hechler, I shall be around, Russian and Rumanian brethren, and you others, in order to repeat to you until I die: He has been taken from you thirty or forty years too soon, your Prince. But he should inspire you to return in unity, and it is undoubtedly because of this that he died so early.

Was it not destined that he should not resign like an ordinary chairman of the board? He would never give up his crown because of a passing defeat. No doubt it was much better Moses did not take part in the conquest of the land of the Patriarchs, for that matter; since every fatherland is won in sorrow, and all victories are obtained in the spilling of blood.



Solitude and Bitterness

On August 10, 1949, according to a desire of the deceased, and while Israel had scarcely emerged as victor of the battle waged against her by five armies intent on destroying her (the most formidable enemy had been the tactics of Great Britain), on this day the Israel Parliament decided to fulfill the last wish of the dead Prince.

After reaching an agreement with that which remained of the Jewish community in Vienna, an Israeli airplane brought home the mortal remains of Herzl on August 16, after having flown over the whole area of the State.

Ben Gurion, perhaps having in mind the last wish of Joseph once delivered from captivity in Egypt, spoke to the nation in the following words:

"It will not be a mourning procession which will conduct the mortal remains of Herzl to Jerusalem, but a triumphal procession which will celebrate the victory of vision over reality."

All night Herzl was encircled by a guard of honor on the coast of Tel Aviv, in order to give the population an opportunity to do homage. Then the next day, taking the same road followed by the leader in 1898, the procession arrived in Jerusalem in the morning hours.

From all over the country, and even from the four corners of the earth, many delegations (including those of all the kibbutzim) met together on the mount selected to carry the name of the Prince who had returned. Each one threw a bit of earth into the grave — the earth of Israel.

Present also were the survivors of the Nazi death camps — authentic, resurrected bones, in an austere circle but secretly happy to be near the visionary prince.

If Hechler had been there, undoubtedly he would have taken note of the very sign of the Messiah's advent—the nearby Mount of Olives. Then Israel will dance, not before a dead Prince, but before the King of Glory, being delivered from all evil!



After that day of the funeral in 1949, Hechler was alone in life. Herzl's death and various European upheavals, which were to bring about the first world conflict, had isolated him completely. When one has spent eight years in deep friendship with the Prince of the Return, devoting one's existence to the common ideal, everything else seems a bit flat.

The pastor reached his sixtieth year — happily for him he did not know that he was still to live another twenty-five years! Awaiting him was an almost uninterrupted series of bitter deceptions, rebuffs and disappointments. He had to witness the dramatic deteriorations of relations between the Protestant powers and then the sabotage of the unborn Jewish State by English politics and arms. And what shall we say of the rise of a satanic movement in Germany, which he was among the few to diagnose from its first manifestations, in terms of its mortal effects upon the Jewish people.

The events of 1917 marked the only period in his life, after the death of his friend, which perhaps compared with the exalted hours of the first Zionist Congress.



For eight years he had watched Herzl meeting important personages: Frederic of Baden, William II, the Sultan, Princes Heinrich and Günther, Ferdinand of Bulgaria and Victor Emmanuel of Italy. Among the ministers: Chamberlain, Landsdown and Cromer in England; Plehve and Witte for Russia; von Bülow and Eulenburg for Germany; Koeber for Austria. Also Cardinal del Val, Secretary of State to Pius X, and the Pope as well! Plus an imposing number of ambassadors, deputies and high religious dignitaries of Anglican and other churches.

All this in eight brief years, in great part due to his own tireless activity. Such memories can furnish souvenirs for as long as twenty-five years, even to a Jonathan who has lost his David!

The moment has come to pose an essential question in relation to this exceptional friendship of eight years, Chaim Weizmann, the first President of the State of Israel, posed it himself in his Memories²⁰:

“Herzl, attending important men, princes and leaders who were supposed to give us Palestine, pursued a mirage . . . Herzl battered the rich and powerful. He counted on diplomacy to acquire Palestine . . . and the practical result was nil”

To begin with, it is amusing to note this contempt for diplomacy and for the great powers on behalf of Weizmann, who, when he became head of the Zionist movement, outdid Herzl by far in naiveté and in mistaken political judgment.

In fact, neither the good will of Frederic of Baden, nor the imperial and sultanic audiences, nor the meetings with some prince or pope had won Palestine for Herzl. Nor had the “sympathetic sentiments” of the Russian, Plehve, and the English ministers. But

²⁰ Chaim Weizmann: “The Birth of Israel” (pages 70-71 in the French edition, Gallimard 1957.)

why don't critics like Weizmann see that in those very brief years Zionism was made known throughout the whole world, in all the embassies and courts — an achievement which the "Lovers of Zion," groups working in isolation, or the "correct" revolutionary and socialist activities of Weizmann could never achieve? Wasn't this already half a victory?

Can they not understand that the pursuit of the "Herzlian mirage" in fact prepared the way for the political and Zionist career of Chaim Weizmann as well as for the well-known BALFOUR DECLARATION? Here is the proof:

It was this same Lord Balfour whom Herzl had met in London in 1903 who had obtained the well-known letter concerning Uganda. Weizmann saluted that letter of Herzl's as "establishing afresh the identity and legal personality of the Jewish people." At about the same time a certain Lloyd George prepared an African Charter for Herzl, and also defended the Zionist ideals before Parliament in June 1904. During the time of negotiations, which had in view the eventual colonization of the El Arish region in Sinai, Herzl met Lord Cromer, who later on gave his support to the Balfour Declaration. Finally, there was Sir Edward Grey, whom Hechler had recommended to his Zionist friend and who revealed himself a constant supporter of Zionism, even with debates in the House of Commons.

When Weizmann met Balfour much later in London, this statesman expressed his deep admiration for Herzl. Moreover, all of the statesmen who had come in contact with the seer expressed themselves in a similar way. Herzl was conscious of the grandeur, or, to be more exact, of the unusual dignity of his vocation, and thus, he spoke to everyone, even to princes, as an equal. This offended a good number of lesser Zionist personalities. Such was the case with Weizmann, who had moreover succumbed to the strange and cold charm of Asher Ginsberg," the most determined of Herzl's enemies and a typical product of the intellectual and spiritual ghetto of Eastern Europe.

As early as the first Zionist Congress the world realized that a movement had been launched which nothing could stop. Even anti-Semitic circles realized this. So did one of Herzl's good friends, Alphonse Daudet, as well as the fierce anti-Semite, Drumont, who had been thoroughly affected by the writings and the person of the author of *The Jewish State*.

The Jewish world had grown unaccustomed to seeing one of its own children received by the great and powerful on an equal footing. This was secretly flattering to any Jewish conscience, whether friendly or hostile to Herzl as a man. It was decisive in placing more than one Jewish fortune at his disposal during his lifetime and after his death.

Who, then, was this Jew who met kings and ministers with erect bearing, yet was neither banker, court doctor, nor a solicitor of fleeting favors, but who claimed on behalf of Israel the right to independence, and the dignity of a forgotten homeland? There was

enough here to make even a Rothschild dream, enough to awaken in a good many consciences nostalgia and love for the divine promises given to the patriarchs.

It was in this sense that William Hechler was prophet to Theodore Herzl. And to Zionism still in its cradle. A servant of the Hebrew prophets, no less than of a Jewish Messiah, he came on the scene modestly, bringing more soul power, a quality which every rabbi was then bound to offer the seer. Their friendship symbolized a reality only too rare; the friendly confluence of two Zionist streams, one Jewish and the other Christian, marching side by side toward the same kingdom and the same Jerusalem.

Herzl was the cornerstone upon which rested the whole Zionist edifice. Far from being the dreamer of idle fantasies that Weizmann saw him to be, he was most realistic, far more than the Russian theoreticians of his time, among whom the dry Ahad Ha'am was the mentor. Herzl concentrated all of his efforts on influencing the only master of Palestine in his time, the Sultan, both by direct contacts and by pressure exerted through others.

It was certainly not the fruit of blind chance when, at the beginning of his Zionist vocation, Herzl met a Protestant theologian who had exceptional connections. Hechler started the machinery of meetings and steps which later on, after the death of the immolated prince, was to bear fruit on the international scene.



Herzl was not mistaken in requesting his people never to forget his friend William Hechler, loyal from the very beginning, confidant of his last moments, and now the bearer of the spiritual testament of one who had died so that Jerusalem could revive, so that once more the shouts of joy of its children would resound, and the aged would assemble together in the holy city.



Until 1910, the year of his retirement, William Hechler continued his functions as an embassy chaplain; it may be said, with more zeal and devotion than during the eight years of Herzlian companionship! No need anymore going to such and such a prince, or bishop, or to travel to Berlin to sound out Dryander, the court chaplain, about the Kaiser's frame of mind. For that matter, His Majesty's ambassador no more would be asked to substitute for his own chaplain on Sunday, or to "cover up" for some petition or other sent to London behind his back!

Instead Hechler began to devote a large part of his time to the study of a Viennese phenomenon that was steadily growing, called "anti-Semitism." Vienna has, in fact, the sad distinction of being the cradle of Nazism. The mayor of this imperial capital, Karl Lueger,

leader of the Christian socialist party in Austria, made hatred against any Jewish presence or manifestation his chief battle-axe; yet not without some difficulty inasmuch as his appointment to the office of mayor was held up for several years until the Emperor himself approved it.

Hechler began to have a presentiment that the German-speaking world would take over the pogroms of Eastern Europe. To the old pastor the danger seemed much graver because this politically organized movement, well prepared beforehand, presented a completely different context than its Russian predecessor. A veritable theory of official anti-Semitism, state directed and controlled, was being constructed.

For several years Hechler was a member of the society combating anti-Semitism, under the direction of Baroness von Suttner, whom he knew well. President of the World Association for Peace, she was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1905. The chaplain had long conversations with her in order to convince her that Zionism was the only satisfactory solution to the tragedy of anti-Semitism.



Though its prince was dead, the movement went on, with difficulty, but in the right direction. The Seventh Congress, assembled in Basel from July 27 to August 2, 1905, under Max Nordau's chairmanship, decided to abandon the Uganda project and to devote all its efforts to colonizing arid Palestine.

*7th Zionist
Congress in
Basel*

On the occasion of preparations for a Zionist Committee in Vienna, a banquet in Hechler's honor was organized by the Zionist students of the capital. Hechler began his address by asking his listeners if everyone had recited the morning prayers! For a true Zionist is both practical and a practicing believer, since the movement was in line to realize the ultimate promises of the Bible. Such tight reasoning made the majority of the young socialists smile; just like good old Hechler, preaching on every occasion and not only on Sundays in the chapel of the English embassy.

After the banquet Hechler invited several students, among them Martin Buber, to accompany him to Herzl's tomb for an important ceremony. Arriving at the tomb, Hechler took out a small bag from one of the large pockets of his frock coat and turned to the guardian in charge,

"Sir, would you arrange to open this tomb? I have here something to put on Dr. Herzl's heart."

The civil servant was as stupefied as the Zionists themselves:

"Are you, sir, a member of the family? Do you have a special permit?"

"Surely there is no need of special permission to deposit some earth from Jerusalem on Dr. Herzl's heart!"

The guardian shrugged his shoulders and withdrew, thinking he had to do with a madman. Hechler, rebellious, was obliged to return home with his tiny bag, which he had especially ordered from Jerusalem. The students, moved in spite of the comedy of the

situation, could not but note the quality of the friendship which had joined together the absent seer and this Christian.



In 1907 it was Frederic of Baden's turn to leave this world, and Hechler received the Zionist delegation which came to take part in the mourning ceremony. One more bridge to those exalted years of the past had disappeared. One more palace whose threshold Hechler would not cross again and perhaps the last European prince with whom Hechler would study his Bible.

A year later he witnessed a characteristic gesture, showing his naïve and touching love for Zion. It was mentioned by none of the newspapers, and forgotten by Zionism. On the very day that the Sultan had granted an audience to Herzl (on the anniversary of that very day, that is), William Hechler showed up at the Zionist Committee offices in a noble machine — the coach in which Sir Moses Montefiore had traveled through Palestine some twenty years before Herzl was born, Montefiore having the same vision. As the “state coach of Zion” it symbolized some new exodus, both dignified and orderly. Hechler had pestered the municipal officials until the coach was given to him. He had no desire to make use of it as a British chaplain. It was given as a gift to the Bezalel Museum in Jerusalem!



William Hechler retired to live on his pension after spending some twenty-five years in Vienna. A higher Will than that of the British Foreign Office had placed him in his capital city; and it would not be long before Zionism would establish its headquarters in the capital he had chosen to live in — London.

He foresaw a grave European crisis, which would upset the balance of power in the Middle East. More interested than ever, he applied himself to deciphering the historical process, accelerating from moment to moment; all the more since his old naïve dream of Anglo-German sponsorship of a Palestinian resurrection was seen to be no more than a dream whose outlines were lost in the secret rivalries of various embassies. Still, an *entente cordiale* had been formed between London and Paris and relations were being revived between London and Berlin. Meanwhile, the specter of Pan-Germanism spread not only to Turkey, but also to that ‘reserved’ Franco-British area, Africa.

In Turkey the “Young Turks” fomented a palace revolution. The Sultan and a good part of his clique were swept away in 1909, thanks in large measure to the activities of German officers and agents. The railway line to Baghdad indicated quite clearly that India was the next target! If all succeeded, the German army would be stationed not far from this British fortress.

The maps in Hechler's possession were becoming blurred. His data, showing alliances through religious affinity, had outlived their usefulness. He plunged into a renewed study of the Hebrew prophets in order to determine whether Zion's birth would be achieved harmoniously or through conflict.



From August 9 to 15, 1911, Hechler was in Basel on the occasion of the Tenth Zionist Congress, which marked a turning point that Herzl hadn't dared to predict — Hebrew was made the official language! Sitting in the gallery, the old protestant theologian smiled in his beard remembering his first lessons in this “dead language.” Decidedly, these Jews would continue to amaze the world, and the Church.

*10th Zionist
Congress in
Basel*

At this Congress, too, the growth of the new agricultural communities was examined for the first time. These communities about which one would hear much, the “kibbutzim.” Many new names were appearing on the map of the Promised Land, recalling old archaeological sites now deserted. Hechler saw that a remarkable attempt was being made to realize the social ideals of the prophets, where words like equality and fraternity were not empty and beautiful electoral slogans.

No doubt it had to be in the Promised Land that such a human revolution would start, and undoubtedly it had to come from Jewish workers! From men whom the laws of society (and so often the Church) had banished from the soil and from a noble life on the land. Biblical verses came spontaneously to the Zionist pastor's mind:

“They will plant vineyards and will drink their wine. They will cultivate orchards and eat of their fruit . . . They will dwell in peace . . . every one in his own vineyard and under his fig tree . . . And never again will they be uprooted from their land.”



In his London retreat William Hechler was approaching his seventieth year. He held himself straight and lived like a Spartan, to the astonishment and amusement of his neighbor. He would rise at daybreak and light two candles, which from the commencement of his studies, had served for both light and heat in the wintertime!

He never wore glasses, confiding to his few close relatives that he had stopped wearing them ever since the day when, as a young tutor, he had mislaid them in a forest while in the company of Prince Ludwig of Baden.

Nor since that time did this strange person wear socks. He had found something much better than those hateful things that one has to change and wash constantly. Much more comfortable and warmer were the pages of the daily “Times”. All the more since the

ladies, lords, princes and bishops who received him evidently never noticed it.

He did not eat, if one may say so, and seemed to live on toast and tea. What he did devour with an astounding appetite at any hour of the day or night were books, many piles of which hid him from his visitors in the studio. Only he could find his way through this confusion, where he always lacked room to unroll his charts and maps. His harmonium had been moved out to make room for something more suitable (in any case, it never had done justice to the accents of the Zionist anthem). He possessed at the end of his life more than 1,000 Bibles in all languages and dialects, for which he somehow found room (one has to keep some space for a bed and some other indispensable furniture). When he learned back in 1898 from his colleague Dryander that the Kaiser had decided to go to the Holy Land, he had written Cook's Agency (the agency that William II had deigned to accept). Cook then conveyed to Hechler in acknowledgment word that he could have a free cruise of his choice.

"Many thanks," was Hechler's response, *"I am returning from Jerusalem, and as for travel, I am at Dr. Herzl's service and have no time for pleasure cruises. But if you could find a place where I could put my hundreds of Bibles, which will eventually push me out of my studio, that would be of great help."* So Cook's travel agency became the benevolent guardian, until the pastor's death, of a mass of Holy Scriptures.

The pastor's finances had always been very precarious. It appears that the only reckoning that he could manage was history on the prophetic level. Books, charity and many missionary societies all over the world got the better of his embassy chaplain budget every month. His pension did not remedy the situation, for it was rather small. In fact, the pastor lived for more than twenty years in poverty, without showing it and without complaining. If he scraped through at all, it was thanks to those days when he visited others, especially his Jewish friends like the families of Chief Rabbi Gaster and jurist Herbert Bentwich.

Intimate Zionist friends were aware of his poverty, and in accordance with Herzl's desire that his friend's loyalty should not be forgotten, they obtained for him an allowance of ten pounds sterling a month from Zionist organizations. Hechler accepted this, not with the thought that he merited Jewish gratitude, but for two reasons: First, it was the wish of the absent prince; secondly, "the laborer is worthy of his hire," and until his death he considered himself to be at the command of Zion's cause.



In September, 1913 the eleventh Zionist Congress decided to build a Hebrew University in Jerusalem. (It's first stone for obvious reasons was only laid in 1918 in the presence of Lord Balfour.) This decision gratified Hechler very much for he saw in it a future nursery for Israeli geniuses in the service, not only of Zion but also of Arab neighbors (a light to the nations).

11th Zionist Congress

In London several months before, , he had placed himself at the service of the itinerant ambassador of the Zionist Congress, Nahum Sokolov. He undertook to contact for him various personages in the Foreign Office and in the Anglican clergy as he had done for Herzl. With the passing of years, however, highly placed friends had become scarce. One by one they had died. Here it is interesting to note that at the various Zionist Congress meetings that he attended '*religiously*', more than one delegate would ask, "Who is this noble rabbi?"

At the close of 1913, Hechler traveled to Greece to visit a princess who had been his student. Actually, he wished to take the pulse of the Balkan fever on the spot. This part of Europe was a permanent grab-bag, one could say. The Young Turks, having fallen into the pitfall of nationalism, were angering the small nations and especially Serbia, secretly stirred up by St. Petersburg. In 1912 Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece had formed a "Balkan League" whose secret clauses aimed at settling Bulgarians in Constantinople, and Serbians on the shores of the Adriatic Sea.

In the first round the Turks were swiftly defeated, to everyone's surprise. Only the area of the Straits remained in Turkish hands; and Austria announced another grab in the well-known basket — Albania. Turkey's defeat secretly annoyed Berlin, which strongly urged its Viennese neighbor to intervene against Serbia. But the latter was a protégé of Russia, which was joined to France, which was tied to England, and so on . . .and on.

Still, at the beginning of 1914 a perceptible improvement initiated a rapprochement between London and Berlin. But Hechler remained uneasy. The arms race, the fantastic burden of the nations' military budgets, and, above all, nationalistic passions in the countries he visited (quite often on foot), did not fool him. He saw that Vienna and Berlin were in favor of a localized war at any price, just as Turkey was seeking revenge. "Les jeux sont faits!" (The die was cast.)

Hechler — it was just like him — now went to Berlin with the crazy intention of meeting the Kaiser. Hadn't the Kaiser been an intimate friend of his uncle? He himself was a friend of the chaplain whom William II used to listen to so readily. For the last time, perhaps, he would be able to open his old Bible before one of the great, pleading the cause of unity of the Protestant powers for the sake of Jerusalem.

In March 1914, he left Athens for Berlin, walking when possible. - He would be seventy the next year. ..

Naturally, he got no further than the office of pastor Dryander, in the capital. He was firmly given to understand that there was no point in bothering the Emperor with nonsense of this kind. Old Hechler realized sadly that the chaplain had been won to the cause of Pan-Germania, for the glory of the Kaiser, if possible up to India itself. One more high priest in the service of Caesar. The two chaplains did not see one another again.

But it was in Berlin as well that Hechler met Martin Buber for the second time, at his own (Hechler's) request. They had been intrigued by one another since a long trip together by train on the eve

of the second Zionist Congress. The philosopher now has to listen to strange prophecies:

“Dr. Buber, your fatherland will soon be given back to you. For a severe crisis will break out, the deep meaning of which is the liberation of your messianic Jerusalem from the yoke of the pagan nations . . . We are moving toward a ‘Weltkrieg’ . . .

“Weltkrieg?” In what obscure passage of his Apocalypse had this old man with the face of a seer found such an expression? It was to be a European conflict by all means, seeing that this spring of 1914 was auspicious. Martin Buber, when telling the story²¹, did not hide his profound astonishment.

How often would he relive this conversation with Hechler later on, especially after the assassination of the Archduke in Sarajevo (several weeks after the old man’s enigmatic words.) Hechler was altogether full of his Biblical vision of history.

Austria now had an opportunity to strangle Serbia. The World War might start . . .



From the moment the first shots were fired, Hechler realized the naiveté of his “political” dream concerning Jerusalem. Nothing in the Scriptures indicated in an indubitable manner that the birth of Israel would be affected through the loving meditation of the nations, whether Protestant or not.

In his conflict with London and Berlin fighting each other and Turkey on Germany’s side, a student of the Bible could have no doubt as to the outcome: Berlin would be defeated and Constantinople would lose its Middle-Eastern empire. Jerusalem would be liberated by English troops setting out from Egypt; and London would have the formidable privilege of organizing a new exodus — the last one for the children of Israel.

In the end he was only half wrong, this venerable student of Ezekiel, and the Tarshish ships, once the war ended, did have the power to bring the Twelve Tribes home — “as in a dream.”

The retired pastor delivered this message during the entire horrible conflict to all of his Jewish and Christian friends, even in the darkest moments of the terrible year 1917 when the war truly became worldwide...

From then on it was fitting that he should contribute in some humble measure to prepare the ground, warning the archbishop and notifying a few friends who were bishops and high officials.

Above all he encouraged the Zionist leaders who needed encouragement badly, inasmuch as the conflict split the rows of the Zionist movement into two necessarily hostile camps. Bridges

²¹ When Buber described Hechler’s person to the author, he always used the term “visionary.”

between German-speaking Zionists and English-speaking Zionists tumbled down. As long as the war lasted no Congress was possible.

William Hechler did not fail to use this painful argument: “My friends, as you can bitterly see, the folly of European politics forces you to fight. This is another sign pointing you to the Promised Land, where nobody will be able to force the children of Israel to fight one another...”



It was undeniable that Judaism was a power in the world. Both camps vied with one another to bring Judaism to their side, though it was not directly involved in the conflict — especially the Americans, but curiously enough, the Russians also.

Three reasons now led London, in the game of politics, to firm support of Zionist aspirations:

1. To block the route to India to the Germans.
2. To establish themselves more solidly in the Middle East, protecting Egypt by using Palestine as a buffer.
3. The revival of desert land. The British Treasury would not have to spend too much money, Jewish Zionists being already on the job.

In this manner, Hechler mused, the nations were led to accomplish the will of God in sacred history, in Israel’s history...

On November 2, 1915, while reading the “Manchester Guardian,” Hechler came upon a leading article demanding the transforming of Palestine into a Jewish State. The reasons were like those enumerated above, but the pastor quickly sent a long letter to the editor setting forth still another reason, supported by prophetic passages.

Involved here was the need to beat Germany to the punch, for people were speaking about a “Zionist” Declaration from the Berlin government. One heard of mysterious meetings (in Switzerland and in Holland) between German diplomats and certain important Jews.

The French ally also was not losing time, no doubt recalling the glorious epoch of the Crusades! London was not unaware that today’s allies are tomorrow’s rivals, knowing quite well that France, speaking through Monsieur Picot in 1915, would claim for herself all of Syria up to the frontier of Egypt—when the hour to divide the Turkish empire would arrive. Taking good note of this, London thought that a Jewish State (which in fact would be no more than a protégé) was a good trick to play on the ally which still pretended to be the “Protector of the Holy Places.”

It was clear to everyone that the Russian ally was beginning to go under, and 600,000 Jews were serving in its armies. The “psychological service” of the German army (in existence even then) parachuted leaflets of the following kind behind the Russian lines:

"The powerful advance of our armies has forced the despotic Russian government to retreat. Our flags bring you social and religious liberty. Remember Kishinev and hundreds of other pogroms! You have to arise as one man in order to support this holy cause. Participate in the victory of justice and freedom"

London definitely had to overtake Berlin at the end of 1917 when the defeat of the Russian ally liberated a considerable number of enemy divisions. The Zionist leaders were consulted; they were requested to formulate their wishes! To satisfy at one and the same time Jewish allies and Russian Jews (a great percentage of whom were known to be in the rows of the revolutionaries) was not something to sneer at, if it *could* be a single gesture!

But what the Zionists did not know (for a good reason) was that the High British Command in Egypt had made marvelous promises to Sherif Hussein, letting him think he would get all of Syria once the conflict came to an end! The same High Command constantly overestimated the Arab contribution in the war against the Turks. One can say that in 1919 it was mainly Hussein who pulled the most chestnuts out of the fire, in return for a few Arab cavalry charges well organized by the famous Lawrence. It was Lawrence who stated,

"Nothing but this flow of gold (eleven million pounds of gold) could have accomplished the miracle of maintaining this mass of tribes in campaign during several months. My men were hereditary foes coming from thirty different clans. Without my presence they would have killed one another daily"

Never had men received so much for giving so little. Be that as it may, on November 2, 1917, Lord Rothschild received the following letter signed by Arthur Balfour:

"I have the great pleasure to address to you on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following Declaration, which sympathizes with the Jewish Zionist aspirations. This Declaration has been submitted to the Cabinet and approved by it.

"The Government of His Majesty envisages favorably the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish national home and will employ all its efforts to facilitate the implementation of this objective, it being clearly understood that nothing would be done which would harm the civil and religious rights of non-Jewish communities in Palestine, as well as the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in other countries. I would be grateful to you if you would present this Declaration before the Zionist Federation."

Hechler immediately noticed the strange and ambiguous form of the British promise, which he found much less satisfactory than the one given to Abraham! What was meant by the expression, new in diplomatic jargon, of a "National Home"? Why not "State"?

But neither did Hechler know about the secret clauses of the MacMahon-Hussein agreement²². He had complete trust in London and was wholeheartedly pleased, for wasn't this an additional sign?

Several days later Jerusalem miraculously fell, without a shot being fired, thus inaugurating the prophetic period when the "Goyim" cease to tread the City of David under foot, according to the prophecy of Christ himself. A Christian flag was raised over Jerusalem, presaging the Israeli flag of tomorrow.

How tempted the dear man was to calculate the hour of Christ's *parousia*! But he was wise enough to realize that he would not witness it in this world. If the uncrowned prince had not had the joy of witnessing the Balfour Declaration, why should he, William Hechler, have the pleasure of living on earth until his Savior returned?

One aspect of Zionism in particular was dear to his heart: Arab-Jewish friendship. When he had accompanied Herzl to the Holy Land the pastor had been most interested in seeing the good relations that generally existed between the Zionist pioneers and Arab fellahin. The latter had begun to see, thanks to their Jewish cousins, the possibility of freeing themselves from secular enslavement to large landowners living in luxury in their manors in Lebanon and elsewhere.

Hechler met the writer, Farid Kassab, who had given him his book entitled *"The New Arab Empire, The Roman Curia and the So-called Universal Jewish Peril."* Notable were the following words:

"Palestine is the land of the Jews, their only fatherland, they have no other."

One of Hechler's intimate friends in London, Chief Rabbi Gaster, had often told him that he knew of a good many Palestinian sheiks who had rejoiced at the arrival of Zionist pioneers. They believed in fact that with the Zionists the "brachah" [blessing] had returned to the Biblical land since their appearance coincided with that of new blessings of rain. So everything permitted one to foresee the fine fraternity between Jews and Arabs, in accordance with the amazing prophecy of the Prophet Isaiah (chapter 19).



On December 12, 1918 there appeared in "The Times" an account of a famous interview with Emir Feisal, of which the main passage follows:

"Arabs and Jews, the two main branches of the Semitic family, understand one another perfectly. I hope that, after the debate of the Peace Conference, inspired by the principle of the right of peoples and nationalities to determine their own destiny, each nation will advance progressively toward its ideal. The Arabs are not envious. They do not

²² Referring to an exchange of letters between the High Commissioner for Egypt, MacMahon, and the Sheriff Hussein of Mecca in 1915-16. Britain would stipulate independence of Arabs if they rebelled against the Turks. Definitions were left vague. (Ed.)

want to hinder the Zionist Jews in their efforts, and intend to use straightforward procedures in relation to them. The Jews have told the Arab nationalists that they do not wish to encroach upon their rights. The Turks, by their intrigues, created a feeling of jealousy between Jewish settlers and Arab peasants. But mutual comprehension of national rights will erase this last trace of bitterness, which already before the end of the war was almost forgotten, thanks to the activity in Syria and elsewhere of the Arab secret revolutionary committee . . .”

Hechler found a new reason to rejoice in the following declaration appearing at the beginning of January 1919:

“His Royal Highness Emir Feisal, representing and acting on behalf of the Arab Kingdom of Hedjaz, and Dr. Chaim Weizmann representing the Zionist Organization and acting on its behalf, taking into consideration the kinship of race and the ancient ties which exist between the Arab nations and the Jewish people, understanding that the surest means to realization of their reciprocal national aspirations is to establish the closest possible collaboration for the development of the Arab state and Palestine, and furthermore desiring to strengthen the good understanding which reigns between them, have agreed on the following articles:

“ARTICLE IV: All necessary measures will be taken to encourage and stimulate the immigration of Jews to Palestine on a large scale and to establish these Jewish immigrants on their territory with the least delay, by greater colonization and intensive cultivation of the soil.

“ARTICLE VII: The Zionist Organization proposes to send a commission of experts to Palestine, charged with drawing up a general survey of the economic possibilities of the country, and drafting a report as to the best means of developing the territory. It will place this commission at the disposal of the Arab State . . . it will make use of all efforts to help the Arab state obtain indispensable means, with respect to development of its natural resources and its economic possibilities.”

Finally, on March 3, 1919, a letter addressed by Feysal to the Zionist delegation, at the beginning of the Peace Conference:

“We are convinced that the Arabs and Jews are descended from closely related races, both having been subjected to persecution at the hands of superior forces. We greet the Jews with our cordial wishes of welcome on the occasion of their return to their fatherland. . . There is enough space in Palestine for both peoples. I think each needs the other and his support in order to really succeed. . .”

Yes, it had all truly started, marvelously. —

Then this — in April 1920 massacres broke out in the old city of Jerusalem, where gangs of fanatic Arabs attacked the Jewish population (even in a hospital) while shouting, “The government is with us.”

The English military government refused to receive the Jewish delegation and imprisoned any Jew defending himself with some

weapon in his hand. Result: sixty dead, several wounded, and hundreds of houses destroyed or seriously damaged, among them the hospital.

Simultaneously in the Galilee and Jaffa identical incidents occurred. The valiant leader of the Jewish militia, Vladimir Jabotinski, a former officer of His Majesty (after having been an officer under the Czar) was condemned to fifteen years in prison. The Arab murderers were not arrested.

What had happened? That question even the Government in London asked itself. They sensed that their British Mandate could be taken from them and given to France, as was indeed demanded by a strong Zionist minority. Hechler could not believe that a pogrom could erupt in Jerusalem while London was master there.

The entrance of the Allies into Jerusalem under command of General Allenby on December 9, 1917 had corresponded exactly to the Jewish Feast of Lights ("Hanukkah" of the Maccabee brothers). For many, this was more than a simple coincidence.

The British army let it be understood, through its general staff, that it viewed the Balfour Declaration as a regrettable error. In fact, during three years of provisional military government, no mention of this Declaration was made. English generals and high officers acted in tacit agreement with the High Command in Cairo which was strongly opposed to any Jewish autonomy in this preserve of the Middle East under the care of the Colonial Office.

The army, as well as high civil servants, looked upon the Zionist pioneers as "disguised Bolsheviks" who cherished perfidious desires of undermining the Empire! General Moyne, the Commander in Cairo, told everyone that in his eyes the Balfour Declaration was the foolishness of a nonprofessional person and that he had met no one "able to explain what it means."

Thus from 1918 on, it was published throughout Palestine that Hebrew would not be one of the official languages, and that Jewish delegations had to address the administrative power in English or Arabic. Many officers were of the opinion that deceiving the Jews by beautiful promises had been a royal sport for centuries. Nordau, Herzl's disciple, begged the Zionist leaders to lead half a million immigrants to Palestine right away, saying,

"You have the Balfour Declaration, but you don't know English policy!"

At this time Allenby disbanded the Jewish Legion (whose action had been decisive during the last months of his campaign) and to a great extent blocked Jewish immigration and the sale of land to pioneers. One sign, among others, of the mentality of the anti-Zionist military: during a school ceremony as the Zionist anthem was played, Moyne and his entire English staff remained patently seated, while the audience rose to its feet. No Zionist leader criticized the offense, but one can imagine what Herzl's reaction would have been...!

Furthermore, (as a comment on what was going on behind the curtain,) the English generals did their best to expel the French from Syria and fomented revolts in Damascus.

One must say it, for it is the sordid truth: the pogrom in Jerusalem had been organized by the English High Command. The aim was simple, and “classic” for any colonial policy: to pit two ethnic groups against one another through the work of hired killers, in order to prove to the League of Nations that the Jewish National Home was a “regrettable error” from the very beginning and completely unrealizable, and that it was consequently desirable to leave Palestine in the good care of the Colonial office.

Hechler learned this with bitterness and inward revolt. Poor William, who fixed his eyes on Jerusalem until his death, had to view the continual degradation of that which should have been exalting and simple.

Luckily, Herzl was not around anymore to see a pogrom in his Jerusalem! Yet, if the author of “Altneuland” were alive, there was one expression in the Balfour Declaration he would in all probability never have accepted: ‘foyer national juif’ (‘national Jewish home’).



Herzl’s pastor friend realized that he had not studied the prophets well enough. He started to re-read them, in the light of the tragic events in Palestine.

Carried along by his enthusiasm, patriotism, candor, and let us admit it, by his faithful Protestant conscience, he had thought that English men, whether soldiers or otherwise, could not but keep their word once given before God, before Jerusalem, and to all the nations. He realized now that the message of the Hebrew prophets did not leave any room for illusion as to the affection of the nations toward Jerusalem and its people. From the time of Pharaoh’s attempt at genocide, the men who guide high politics have always chosen plans of occupation and submission so far as the City of David was concerned. Of course, there was fortunately a Cyrus who would come along having completely different ideas, but this happened once in a millennium.



What then is this people, slaves from Egypt, Babylon, Athens, and Rome, and finally slaves of an imperialist regime that one calls Christian, a people that refuses to take pleasure in slavery and exile?

What then is this people that insists on claiming, throughout the centuries, this land which - irritating the history teachers! - they call their Promised Land? And this land located, incidentally, at the crossroads of three continents, fertile and privileged among all the others in the Fertile Crescent.

What people is this that finally refuses to kneel before the imposing gods of Memphis, Babylon and Rome, or before the rigid

dogmatism of the new “doctors of the Law” of the Christian world? This people allowing itself for so many centuries to propagate subversive ideas (“Bolsheviks,” you gentlemen in the military service cry), ideas of equality and human dignity. This people that pretends, (and this beats all!) to be intimately bound up to the salvation of the world — as if the salvation of the world can be of interest to tyrants and the servants of Mammon!

Their prophets represent them as giving the world a Liberator, who will judge the nations and their rulers; and here’s a good one: he’s supposed to be coming on the clouds. In the final analysis, however, whom are they mocking? Only a Jewish King sitting (in this despised city of Jerusalem) one day, in judgment upon the Caesars, Constantines, and no doubt also His Gracious Britannic Majesty?

What was wrong with a pogrom from time to time, to remind this loathsome people of the fragile reality of its situation, — thus teaching it humility as good manners?

This people had refused to join the ranks of triumphant Christendom (presumptuously elevating itself above certain “Jewish” teachings attributed to Jesus and the Apostles). This people to this day refuses to throw itself, crying, into the arms of “the Holy Father,” or, into the arms of the “holy synod,” or the Anglican cathedrals!

Was it just to such a people one should offer the Holy Land on a silver platter? Let them be converted first, just as that good Pope said. Then one may perhaps consider trying to satisfy their nationalistic and carnal claims...

Rationalization of this nature was what William Hechler discovered when he re-read his old friends of the Bible at seventy-five years of age, in the bloody glare of a pogrom in Palestine!

In London, on July 24, 1922, he attended the ratification of the Palestinian Mandate under England’s guardianship, being without enthusiasm and indeed filled with baneful presentiments. All the more as it was no longer a question of Biblical or “Messianic” Palestine, for the gentlemen in Cairo and in the Colonial Office had perceptibly altered the naïve maps of our Zionist pastor!

How did they manage it?



Among the Articles of Ratification of the League of Nations appeared paragraph 25, which did not escape Hechler’s attention:

“In the territories lying between the Jordan and the eastern boundary of Palestine as ultimately determined, the Mandatory shall be entitled, with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations, to postpone or withhold application of such provisions of this mandate as he may consider inapplicable to the existing local conditions.”

It was clear that Herzl would never have agreed to such a clause, coldly implying as it did the possible amputation of the Holy Land. In fact, since 1920, 75,000 square kilometers of land had been extracted from the Jewish National Fund as possibly being very fertile. Learning of this mutilation, President Wilson, as a good student of the Bible, aware of the indivisibility of Palestine, had sent the following message to London:

“The Zionist cause is tied to the security of Biblical boundaries and has in view the economic development of the country. This means that in the north Palestine should reach to the River Litani and the source of the streams of Mount Hermon; in the east it should include the plains of Jaulon and Haran. Otherwise we would have a case of mutilation. I would like to remind you that neither Washington nor Paris have manifested opposition to the Zionist plan, nor to securing indispensable Biblical boundaries . . .”

But this move of London ensured her of a strong base in Transjordan, in the sad event that the Jews would succeed (in spite of everything) in obtaining their state. Later Transjordan became the only country completely closed to Jewish immigration—“Judenrein,” as the Nazi expression would have it. Between 1921 and 1931 tens of thousands of Arabs settled freely in Palestine, whereas the Jewish immigrant had to furnish multiples guarantees when he entered. One sees the Machiavellian nature of the first partition. Indeed, only Wilson, who constantly remembered the Hebrew prophets, dared to challenge it.



One of Hechler's friends during his London period, Leo Lauterbach, told us of his surprise at the old pastor's reticence to discuss any question of a political nature. It appears that this man, who for forty years had based his entire Zionist Biblical idea on an Anglo-German “Protestant” policy, this man so respectful of all authority, could only keep silent; and silence was the measure of his bitterness.

It is hard to admit, at seventy-five, that one has reasoned in one's whole life like a child. It is difficult to acknowledge at this age that the German Emperor (who could have opened the gates of Jerusalem to Jews) was nothing but a hypocrite and a bellicose neurotic. At such an age, which should be a period of patriarchal wisdom, it is hard to admit that the Government of His Majesty, composed of men who were brought up on the Bible, could so cynically push aside the Biblical promises in favor of interests that pertain to Mammon.

Hechler was not the type to accuse or deny his fatherland. He chose to keep still, suffering in silence, and returning to the school of the prophets. What he discovered there encouraged him even more to remain silent.



For Hechler understood, in the end, the irreducible antagonism between Israel and the Nations. The Jewish State would rise one day, but in blood. The Biblical phrase, “to go up against Jerusalem,” referring to all the nations, not only signifies an advance with weapons in hand, but also implies the whole gamut of subtle maneuvers to ensure that Jerusalem should not live again and be the capital of Israel.

A network of Arab killers for hire - who speedily murder ten times as many Arabs who are friendly to Zionism as they do Jewish pioneers - is set up. It could only bring on swift and violent conflict. Hechler knew now that he would not witness the prophesied independence; that the Lord’s “*Parousia*” (how he had misunderstood the prophet Zechariah!) would not mark the solemn and peaceful inauguration of a world reconciled about Jerusalem, but that it would be the last move of God, in extremis, to prevent the destruction of all Israel, and perhaps of the entire world.



Gentle Hechler, had you imagined the British Cabinet saluting the State of Israel, Bible in hand and tears in every eye, while the general staff intoned the Passover psalms?

“Caesar” will sometimes affirm his pity, on Sunday mornings, or in glorious Te Deum. He is not above placing God on his side or inscribing His name on military belts. But this is the limit of his good sentiments.

Colonial ministers are prepared to make the natives sweat to the utmost. And so for the professional soldiers, they have the task, it is true, to give an order now and then to the soldiers who man the machine-guns, but above all they see to it that their civilian superiors should not become mystical.

But carry on, Hechler! Continue to scrutinize your Bible by candlelight, while your feet are warmed by an edition of the “Times.” Hold up Herzl’s banner and be loyal to his spiritual testament, by preaching the return to Zion to your Jewish brethren.

But Lord you know, it is not easy. They are more attached to their comfortable exile than to the future Jerusalem. Of course, one does one’s best, sending over the unfortunate ones, who are only too happy to escape the pogroms, and one gives a generous contribution sometimes.

As for the reassuring terminology of this Balfour Declaration - thanks to the care taken by some English Jews of quality, like Edwin Montagu, who deemed that his rank of Minister was incompatible with the notion of a “Jewish fatherland” - the text didn’t even mention the word “State”. Or even “independence,” come to think of it!

In London itself individuals were being moved by the duty of reviving the land of the patriarchs. Such was the case with some of the children of Herbert and Suzanne Bentwich, a family Hechler visited regularly. He was encouraged by their example not to lose hope that the day would come when he would see how the Jews from the twelve dispersed tribes would return to the land of Israel — not to escape from pogroms, but willing to sacrifice their comfortable standard of living.



But generally the Zionist preaching of this old minister was considered one of his fads. It did not surprise anyone now, for hadn't he been intimately acquainted with Herzl, rendering distinguished service, so much so that on Herzl's death bed he had received a brief but moving testament from him? They let the octogenarian chatter on, or gave him a sickly smile. Those who did not know him took him for a rabbi for he had adopted the gait of a rabbi years ago. But a rabbi who always talks about Zionism surely deserves to be listened to where ever he gives his Zionist conferences.



On Friday evenings he would regularly visit his Jewish friends and on Saturdays one of the London synagogues. He liked to greet the members of the congregation with an energetic "Shabbat Shalom", in particular, for the pleasure of hearing, "Shalom, rabbi," in response.

This patriarch seemed to come straight from the mysterious Book itself, one of the messianic rabbis of the new Israel having come to replace many others . . .



Hechler was present at still other dramas, before he died.

The large majority of England's Palestinian civil servants came from the Colonies: Rhodesia, Sierra-Leone, Gold Coast, or Kenya — places where it was proper to treat the native inhabitants with a cudgel. And who would dare claim that these "Jews" were not "natives" like the others? More difficult to control, indeed, and not submissive, but rather proud and bad-tempered with their heads full of senseless projects. Luckily the Arab fellah and the middle class Arabs were there, too, and accepted the superiority of the master.

The British administrators prepared to rid themselves of the last two high-ranking Jewish officials of the Mandate: A.M. Hyamson, director of the immigration department (who had done his best, in

accordance with his orders, to limit the number of Jewish immigrants) and the attorney-general, Norman Benwich.

They had found zealous men, expert killers who were ready for any job and whom one could blame “officially” while consoling them behind the scenes!! The leader of these killers, Haj Amin al Husseini of Egyptian origin, was a gang leader who had been condemned after the disturbances of 1920 but escaped to Syria with the complicity of the police. He was pardoned as a sign of good will by the first High Commissioner of Palestine, the English Jew, Herbert Samuel. In spite of very strong Arab opposition, he was installed by the High Commissioner of Palestine in the post of Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, a title not even recognized by Islam!

He was a kind of Palestinian Aga Khan, fabricated for the needs of the British cause in the very heart of the Jewish National Home! This man was capable of rapidly and officially organizing pogroms or murders under the cover of his administrative and religious duties. Nor did he deny himself! At the time of the earliest manifestation of the Nazis he was their agent in Palestine. We find him later in Berlin as Hitler’s personal guest, charged with creating Moslem S.S. regiments and making propaganda for the extermination of the Jews and the “liberation” of Palestine.²³



From 1922 on, a White Book, which bore Churchill’s name, limited Jewish immigration considerably. Still, three years of calm and prosperity followed the mediocre reign of Herbert Samuel under the next High Commissioner, Lord Plumer, who would not stand for trouble and said so to the Mufti and his gang on his first day in office. He ruled the Mandatory government until 1928.

However, soon after the second High Commissioner’s departure, Husseini set in motion a pogrom even more serious than the preceding one, by circulating a rumor that the Zionists were preparing to destroy the Mosque of Omar so that they could rebuild the Temple!

Several steps away from the Mosque stands the Western Wall (then called the Wailing Wall). Garbage was being unloaded there and an English officer appeared, halting the Jewish prayers. Within moments the classic cry was heard in the ranks of the killers, “The government is with us!”

On August 16, 1929 massacres burst out simultaneously in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed, in the neighborhood of certain agricultural colonies, and also in Jaffa. The riots continued for an entire week, usually before the indifference of the English police forces. All Jews found carrying weapons were arrested. A delegation from Kibbutz

²³ When taken prisoner by the French army in 1945, and put under house arrest in the Department of “Seine-et-Oise,” he disappeared, no doubt thanks to the Intelligence Service. After that he was the “gray eminence” - the ‘power behind the throne’ - of the Nazi advisors to Nasser of Egypt preparing to exterminate the State of Israel.

Ekron, seeking advice from the English officer of their district regarding their menaced livestock, was given the following answer: "Put them into your synagogue!"

There was commotion in the whole world. Lawrence of Arabia declared that 400 policemen could immediately reestablish order. Rebindranath Tagore²⁴ accused England of deliberately stimulating a condition of civil war in Palestine in order to put an end to the "Jewish National Home" and remain master in the region forever.

Two officials responsible for keeping order were "penalized" as follows: Luke, who was acting Governor, was appointed Governor of Malta; and the second one, Caffetera (who had stood by and watched the massacres in the holy city of Hebron) was decorated for heroism...!

A British investigating commission was sent to Palestine and it published the "Shaw Report" in the spring of 1930. It would be difficult to find a more cynical report. Responsibility for the massacres was thrown upon the "activity of Zionists." Also, by buying land they were dispossessing the poor fellah! Jewish immigration was consequently limited still more.

Only one member of this commission, Lord Snell, allowed himself to doubt the conclusions of this strange report. He accused the Mandatory power of encouraging the Arabs "to believe that they suffered great injury and that the Jewish immigrant constitute a permanent threat to their lives. . .while Zionist activity has (in fact) launched the prosperity of the country and raised the standard of living of the laborer and the Arab fellahs."

Lloyd George, attacking the Shaw Report, declared in the House of Commons:

"The report released by the government in 1919, prepared by technicians and engineers, had shown that by intelligent planning a million acres could be added to the arable lands of the country, and as a result of this fact the population could be multiplied by sixteen!"

It should be stated that Lord Snell had allowed himself a note at the end of the Shaw Report where he condemned the criminal activities of the Mufti. This note was not published...

A second commission was sent to investigate on the spot (in order to verify the conclusions of the first one) led by Sir Hope Simpson. The second report was published on November 20, 1930, being tougher and more cynical than the first one. Lloyd George exclaimed in the House of Commons,

"He doesn't dare to kill Zionism with a single stroke; he simply tries to put it on ice!"

Finally, to crown everything, London published a second "White Paper" bearing the name of Lord Passfield, a queer personage who flirted with Marxism but condemned Zionism as "deviationism"!

²⁴ Famous Hindou humanist and mystic

This lord declared to the “Jewish Daily Forward” on November 11, 1930, “Being a socialist myself I do not oppose new immigrants because they are socialists and syndicalists, but because they are Zionists.”

May he who is able, understand this! The fact is, that the socialism of this wealthy member of the House of Lords seems quite far from that of pioneers fighting against malaria and laying the base of a new society.

This “White Paper” recommended the complete stopping of immigration, the surest means of “killing Zionism with one stroke” and also burying the Cabinet Declaration bearing Balfour’s name. Chaim Weizmann, president of the Jewish Agency, who had submissively followed until now British policy in Palestine (of curbs and appeasement) sent his resignation.

In concluding this sad chapter which saw the death of the noble idea of Jewish-Arab reconciliation, let us remember that the British government was then “socialistic,” headed by MacDonald!



For some years William Hechler had been following the progress of a new German party, led by a man called Hitler, whose program included “the extermination of the Jewish plague in all German territory.”

It was not considered to be in good taste to take this party and its “Fuehrer” seriously. However, Hechler was not fooled. The financiers, the industrialists, and Nuncio Pacelli supported this adventurer. He had, then, everything needed for success. Was this the movement heralding “the birth pangs of Jacob”?

Political, rational and “scientific” anti-Semitism, born in Austria, spread all over Europe where the ground had been well prepared by centuries of bad Christian catechism. With Moscow opposing Zionism as a heretical movement and London already pursuing its policy of suffocation, one really could not see how this ferocious Nazi could fail in his plan for Jewish genocide. In closing Palestine to Jewish immigrants (which was done in 1939) London delivered up millions of European Jews to the ovens of the crematoriums soon to come – without wishing this, of course.

Hechler had a presentiment of the massacre. No mists confused the heart-vision of this Zionist prophet. He was ready to die.



Indeed, this man, who had pleaded the cause of the Return to Zion before so many princes and diplomats, was prepared to die. He understood the value of human promises.

Once he had shouted, on the occasion of the liberation of Jerusalem in 1917, “The prophecies are being fulfilled.” But seeing the army careerists and the colonialists at work, and their pogroms

fomented in the very heart of Jerusalem, left him quite prepared for death.

As there was need of a first world war, to force the liberation of Jerusalem from the pagan yoke of the Turk, undoubtedly a second world conflict was inevitable to form a Jewish homeland through much suffering and blood, but he did not dare to think of it.²⁵

He met death in the neglect, solitude and poverty of a common room in the Midway Memorial Hospital in London on January 30, 1931, over 85 years old. He had met the Prince of his vision almost 45 years earlier.

An official Zionist delegation went to the humble funeral of this “most devoted friend”, on his final exodus toward Zion. Homage was paid him in the Jewish press throughout the world. The not so banal destiny of this knight of Jerusalem was printed in quite a few languages.

Then, weeks later, certain Zionist personalities in London went to the last residence of the deceased to gather up all relevant papers concerning the history of the Movement and his friendship with Herzl. One can only speculate on the number of cabbalistic charts, plans and astonishing visions contained in his papers. But the proprietors of German origin had burned everything, for quite mysterious reasons! Thus, we will never know what were the private studies of this outstanding theologian whom we may call the Protestant sponsor of the State of Israel from its earliest beginnings.



May we be permitted to believe that among all these destroyed papers this man of patriarchal visage had left us a last message, representing his spiritual testament to his own people and to Israel now marching on the painful path to the Promised Land?

²⁵ Several months before his death Hechler declared to the son-in-law of the Zionist leader, Sokolov, “A part of European Jewry is going to be sacrificed for the resurrection of your Biblical fatherland.” Nobody understood him at the time.

Spiritual Testament

William Hechler, you left this world when I was a little boy. But the same Lord calls us all, beyond times and moments, nations and languages, dogmas and traditions.

You had preceded us, have shown us the way, having become an old master, a friend. We understand you well, beyond words. We are enlisted in the same fight, charmed by the same Jerusalem, loving the same Zion. It is the same Spirit that guides us.

Flames devoured your touching studies and humble writings more than 30 years ago. But they did not destroy the hope of your prince and yourself. They have not destroyed Israel. They did not and cannot efface the Messianic frontiers of the motherland of the Israel of God.

Old master, you died in the solitude and poverty of the true servants of God, 26 years after your prince, who reposes on a high hill in Jerusalem which bears his name. We know the text of your last message to your Jewish brethren by heart — and to your Christian brethren:



Children of Israel, my brothers!

From Benares to Jerusalem, my route was a long and exciting one. My life is over, and soon you will have forgotten me.

I feel no bitterness at all, for haven't I been a simple sign on your endless path of suffering and exile; a sign of hope; a Christian hand showing you Jerusalem and a voice urging you to Return?

When you gain your homeland, remain united, as so many of you have united around your Prince, my friend who died for your sake.

Much more than your courage, which is great, and more than your labor, which is admirable, the Holy Ghost has brought you back to Zion. Don't forget it. May the writings of Moses and the prophets live always in the heart of your nation, not only as the respected Book of your Biblical past, but as a veritable flame, which in former days burned in the Sinai desert and guided your forefathers. You will have to fight and struggle. But Another will win the battles for you, and you know one day the armaments will be thrown into the dust-heap, when that One comes whom we are both waiting for. Then we will understand everything.

You will be alone among indifferent and hostile nations. Never forget that a true alliance is founded only in God.

Your desert, which will soon blossom, and your children, who already sing in the sweetness of the night. What is this, my friends and brothers, if not the cheerfulness of the Messiah, this time returning in glory and with power?

My Israeli brothers, it is my desire that one day you will place my body close to that of the friend whom I loved so much, and whom I saw die.



To my Christian brothers!

My name is not important. At the hour of my death who among you remembers me? It is not customary in the Church to remember and love those who love Zion and its people.

I was on familiar terms with princes, and found their company bitter. But it was necessary, in order to open some doors toward the New Jerusalem.

You have forgotten Judah, your older brother, and did not rejoice about his coming back to the Father's House. We have also forgotten Jerusalem and all it represents. Our hope is dried up, and therefore, we place our hope in the powers of death and falsehood.

Try not to abandon Israel when she will stand alone, surrounded by enemies, toiling in the desert, overwhelmed by the crushing task of receiving her children from the four corners of the world. Remember the pagans who gave presents to the Jews who returned to Zion from Babylon in former times, and try to be as good a Christian to Israel as were those pagans.

Let it not be that only certain names from the Bible thrill and excite you, or certain ruins and holy places (which often deceive and mislead one). Don't leave it to Israel alone to prepare the highway before the Lord!

Theologians of the Church, and colleagues, you have scrutinized the Texts long enough, performing an autopsy over the words of the prophets and treating their words of life as you liked; as if they were words of unhalloved history; as if they did not belong to Israel first! The time has come for you to demand peace for Jerusalem, for the sake of the happiness and reconciliation of all the children of Abraham. If the pioneers of Israel do not realize it is the Holy Ghost gathering and protecting them, it is your duty to tell them so—instead of vainly seeking to bring them under your steeples (which are not Christ), and instead of imprisoning them in your dogma and your traditions, which are not Christ's words.

You and I are like Ezekiel, surrounded by the dried-up bones of Israel, among the graves of the nations.

Whence cometh the breath of their Messianic revival, and whom does he herald?

*Jerusalem
Kibbutz Nezer-Sereni (formerly "Buchenwald")
June 1962 – December 1964²⁶*

²⁶ I wrote this book when we (my wife Marianne and our first daughter, Suzan, aged 3, lived in that kibbutz. I did complete it in Jerusalem in 1964.

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- 1629 – JOSEPH MADE, Clavis apocalyptica
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- 1671 – GILES PLETCHER, Essay . . . that the Present Tartars are
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Daniel and the Apocalypse of John
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Jews
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destinées d'Israel)
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Prophecies
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Prophecies
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BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX

ABDUL, Hamid II (1842-1918): Became Sultan in 1876. His reign was but a succession of failures, which led him to resign in 1909. In 1877 defeat inflicted by the Russians; in 1878 he lost Cyprus, then successively Tunis (1881), Egypt (1882) and Crete (1897). As he had in fact isolated himself in an ivory tower, he left his ministers and their entourages to their scandals and corruption. Herzl had impressed him deeply but could never raise 50 million pounds in gold, which undoubtedly would have opened the way to a premature State of Israel.

ALLENBY, Lord: English general who had the remarkable honor of liberating Jerusalem "from the Pagan yoke" on December 9, 1917, when the Biblical capital fell without a shot being fired (for the first time in its tragic history!). General Allenby, at the beginning of the siege, had cabled to his king as he did not want to bombard Jerusalem on his own authority. The sovereign in London showed respect for his scruples and the general then had the idea of sending a squadron hedgehopping above the Holy City, which provoked the Turkish troops to run away.

(Thirty years later another English General, Glubb, called Pasha, was to set up his field batteries right next to the Holy Places in order to bombard Jewish Jerusalem for weeks, without provoking a protest from the bishops and Christian dignitaries on the spot.) After the Palestine campaign Allenby was promoted to the rank of Viscount of Megiddo in memory of his victory in the famous valley of Armageddon. He then became High Commissioner in Egypt where he governed with an iron hand.

BALFOUR, Arthur (Lord) (1848-1930): Scottish statesman. Went through his first major test as Secretary for Ireland in 1887. He was Prime Minister of Great Britain 1902 to 1904. First Lord of the Admiralty at the beginning of hostilities of World War I, and then served in the Cabinet of Lloyd George in the Foreign Office during the war. When in that post he signed the famous Declaration which bears his name in history, making him a second Cyrus. Took part in the Versailles Conference and was the representative of his country at the League of Nations. He made a triumphant trip to Palestine in 1925 but had to leave Syria because of Arab threats.

BEACONSFIELD, Lord (1804-1881): His real name was Benjamin Disraeli. A highly cultured author and statesman, he was devoted to the supreme grandeur of Great Britain. He offered Queen Victoria the title of "Empress of India," obtained possession of Cyprus, and played a leading part at the Congress of Berlin. Converted at a young age to Protestantism, he yet remained very proud of his Hebrew heritage and was one of the precursors of political Zionism.

- BEN-YEHUDA, Eliezer (1858-1922): Beyond question the father of modern Hebrew. He arrived in Palestine in 1882 and took an oath before members of his family that he would henceforth speak to them only in Hebrew. Author of the Hebrew Thesaurus, he always had to fight against the conservative elements of the Synagogue, who considered his activities a sacrilege.
- BENTWICH, Herbert (1856-1932): English lawyer. He organized a pilgrimage to Israel in 1897 and later advised Weizmann in efforts which led to the Balfour Declaration. Together with his wife Suzanne, born Solomon, he brought up a distinguished family, whose members settled mostly in Israel. William Hechler was one of the intimates of this authentic "Zionist clan" in London.
- BOLD-CARPENTER (1841-1918): Anglican clergyman who became Bishop of Ripon in 1884, then Canon of Westminster. Author of numerous theological works, he cordially supported Herzl, through Hechler.
- BUBER, Martin (1874-1965): Israeli humanist and theologian, born in Galicia, Poland. Specialist of the mystical movement called "Chassidism." More admired abroad than in his homeland, he was the author of a translation of the Hebrew Bible in poetic German. He was vividly impressed by his various meetings with William Hechler, whom he was pleased to call "a great visionary."
- BÜLOW, Bernhard von (1849-1929): German statesman and astute diplomat who became Foreign Minister to William II in 1894, then Imperial Chancellor in 1900. He was a subtle enemy of Zionism.
- CHAMBERLAIN, Joseph (1836-1914): English statesman, leader of the liberal party and Colonial Minister from 1895 on. Born in a family whose members were dissident Anglicans, he was in a good position to understand Herzl's vision.
- CROMER, Lord (1841-1917): His real name was Evelyn Baring. Colonial Administrator in India. Charged with the task of investigating the Egyptian public debt, he caused the fall of Khedive Pasha in 1879. After another three-year stay in India he returned to Egypt with the harmless title of "Consul General" but was actually its ruler until his resignation in 1907. Hostile to the Zionist project of El Arish, he considered Herzl a "wild enthusiast."
- DREYFUS, Alfred (1859-1935): French Staff Officer accused of spying for Germany in 1894. Condemned to life imprisonment on Devil's Island. The sentence was reduced to ten years by the Supreme Court of Appeals in 1899; then the condemned man was pardoned by the President of the Republic. In 1906 the same Court declared him not guilty. He was promoted to Commander's rank, received the "Legion of Honor," and was a lieutenant colonel at the end of World War I. Overwhelmed by his own drama, this French Jew did not notice the conversion to

- Zionism of a parliamentary journalist who covered the trial and whose name was Herzl.
- DRUMONT, Edouard (1844-1917): A French journalist, deputy for Algiers. Fanatic theoretician of anti-Semitism. His publication, "La France juive" (Jewish France) passed through hundreds of editions and his "La Libre Parole" (Free Speech) was a forerunner of Nazi anti-Semitism. Drumont, in spite of himself, admired Herzl's personality and project. The Prince of Zionism once declared bitterly, "Now the rich Jews who have a subscription to 'Libre Parole' will get to know me . . ." (Eulogy by the Israeli army in the French Journal 'Rivarol' in 1956)
- DRYANDER, Ernst von (1843-1922): Prussian Lutheran pastor, Court Chaplain of William II in the best tradition of the Grand Century and often listened to by the Emperor. Well acquainted with Hechler, but not a close friendship.
- ELISABETH (1837-1898): Empress of Austria, wife of Franz Josef. She was assassinated in Geneva.
- EULENBURG, Philip von (1847-1921): German diplomat, and close friend of William II. Ambassador in Vienna from 1894 to 1902. A famous raconteur and composer, he was promoted to the rank of prince in 1900. Nine years later, following a scandalous affair, he had to retire from political life.
- FEISAL: Princely heir of Hedjaz, and son of the Sherif in Mecca (the latter was forced to flee by Ibn Saud). Close friend of Colonel Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) and important instrument of English penetration in the Middle East. Proclaimed king of Syria in 1919, he fomented a revolt against the French authorities and was in turn deprived of his throne. He saw in Zionism a unique opportunity for the Arab peoples to gain a measure of independence from European powers. He became king of Iraq after being king of Syria. His brother Abdullah (grandfather of King Hussein of Jordan) obtained Transjordan in 1921 as compensation, a land being wrenched away from Palestinian territory ascribed to the Jewish people from Biblical times – as well as by the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations.
- FERDINAND I (1861-1948): Second son of the prince of Saxe-Coburg, to whom the throne of Bulgaria was offered in 1886. In 1908 he broke off all relations with Turkey and proclaimed Bulgaria's independence. He met Herzl and was favorably disposed to Zionism. Abdicated in 1918, in favor of his son Boris.
- FREDERIC OF BADEN (1826-1907): Brother of Louis II of Baden, who became insane. Was Regent for six years, then reigned from 1858 on. Through his marriage with the daughter of William I he became the uncle of Kaiser Wilhelm II. He was too liberal and too good a prince to be seriously listened to by the Emperor. In Versailles in 1871 he proclaimed William of Prussia the Emperor of Germany. He had great admiration for Herzl, to whom he had been introduced by Hechler.
- GASTER, Moses (1856-1939): Born in Bucharest, he became Chief Rabbi of the Sephardic communities of Great Britain. He was

almost the only Zionist rabbi in England at the time. Later on he played an important role in the promulgation of the Balfour Declaration and was one of the intimate friends of Hechler in London.

GEORGE, Lloyd (1863-1919): English statesman upon whom a Protestant upbringing had left its stamp. A member of Parliament from the year 1890, he was a fierce opponent of the politics of the Conservatives. He drafted a projected Zionist charter in Uganda and was very impressed by Herzl. As the “Churchill” of the First World War, he took an active part in drawing up the Palestinian Mandate (at Versailles), seeing to it, in particular, with his co-religionist, Wilson that “the Biblical boundaries” would be returned to the Jewish people.

HIRSCH, Maurice de (1831-1896): Railway magnate and famous philanthropist, he founded a society for persecuted Jews in Argentina and spent millions on this project. He did not understand Herzl’s vision. It was in the year that Hirsch died that Herzl consecrated himself to the vocation just revealed to him.

JABOTINSKY, V. (1880-1941): Palestinian humanist born in Russia, where he was an army officer. Organized, during World War One, a Jewish legion that made a considerable contribution in the liberation of Palestine. Was imprisoned in 1920 by the British because he defended the Jews, then threatened by a pogrom in Jerusalem. Considered a spiritual heir of Herzl, whose visionary realism he possessed, he opposed the policy of compromise of Zionist leaders after successive violations of the spirit and letter of the Palestinian Mandate. He died in New York in 1941 while active in organizing a second Jewish Legion. Since the summer of 1964 his ashes rest on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem.

JOFFE, Hillel: Physician, born in Odessa. Settled in Palestine in 1891 where he fought against malaria and typhoid fever. Joffe left, among the Jewish as well as the Arab population, the memory of a marvelous doctor completely devoted to his patients. In 1903 he took part in the Zionist investigation expedition in El Arish. A kibbutz in upper Galilee bears his name (Kfar Hillel).

KAHN, Zadok (1839-1905): Born in Alsace. Chief Rabbi of Paris in 1868 and of France in 1889. Founder of the “Societe d’Etudes Juives,” and Honorary President of the “Alliance Isrealite Universelle,” supported the philanthropic works of Baron de Hirsch and Baron de Rothschild, but supported Herzl very little.

KOERBER, Ernest von (1850-1919): Austrian statesman. Several times minister, then Prime Minister from 1900-1904, and again in 1916.

KORVIN-PIATROVSKA: Polish countess and sociologist. Sympathized with Zionism as early as the first Congresses (she devoted several poems to this subject). Intimately acquainted with the Russian minister Plehve, she made repeated efforts to introduce Herzl to Nicholas II but without success.

- LAZARE, Bernard, (1865-1903): Man of letters and French socialist, born in Nîmes. Collaborator of the "Revue Blanche" of the "Figaro," among other periodicals. Author of "L'Antisemitisme, son histoire et ses causes" (Anti-Semitism, Its History and Its Causes), 1894. Spent himself for Captain Dreyfus until his death. A talented polemist, he was on very good terms with Peguy and one of his intimate friends. Broke off with Herzl as Zionist financial policy did not harmonize with his socialist convictions. Peguy praised him in extremely warm terms.
- LIPPAY, Berthold (1864-1920): Austrian painter, born in Hungary. Among his subjects was Pius X. Having met Herzl in Venice by chance, he introduced him to the Pope.
- LUEGER, Karl (1844-1910): Leader of the Austrian anti-Semitic party called "Social-Christian Party." While elected Mayor of Vienna in 1895, the Emperor as well as the government opposed his taking up his duties until 1897. Important forerunner of Nazism, which originated in Austria.
- MERRY DEL VAL (1865-1930): Roman Catholic prelate born in London where his father was attached to the Legation of Spain. Became priest in 1888 and quickly reached the top of the Vatican hierarchy. Secretary of the Conclave in 1903, which elected Guiseppe Sarto to become Pope Pius X. Sarto appointed Merry Del Val to be his Secretary of State. He was at the head of the Holy Office from 1914 until his death.
- MONTEFIORE, Moses (1784-1885): English financier of Italian origin, he retired from business when he was forty. Devoted his life and fortune to assist the persecuted Jews of the world, in particular in Poland, Russia, Rumania, Syria and Palestine. Foresaw the resurrection of the Promised Land and laid foundations for Zionist colonization. Was on friendly terms with Queen Victoria.
- MONTEFIORE, Claude (1858—1939): Leader of English liberal Judaism. Remarkable theologian and lover of classical works dedicated to the rabbinical literature and to Hebraic source of the Gospels. In 1888 he founded the "Jewish Quarterly Review." He was president of the Anglo-Jewish Association until 1920 and an opponent of Zionism and the Balfour Declaration.
- NEVLINSKI, Philip (1841-1899): Adventurer of Polish origin, he served in the Austrian Foreign Office. Posted in Constantinople, he was not above fishy deals, betraying Herzl's confidence by claiming an illusory relationship with the Sultan and his government and by publishing a shady periodical called "Eastern Correspondence."
- NORDAU, Max (1849-1923): Famous physician, philosopher, author, orator and politician, born in Budapest of a rabbinical line. (His real name was Simon Sudfeld.) In 1883 published "Les mensonges conventionnels de notre civilisation" (The Conventional Lies of Our Civilization), then "Psychophysiologie du Genie" (Psychophysiology of Genius). One of Herzl's intimate acquaintances, he was the first to salute him as a genius.

An outstanding speaker, he was, after Herzl, the star of the first Zionist Congresses. Supporting the Uganda project, he escaped an attempt on his life by a Russian Zionist zealot.

He was among those who opposed the policy of compromise of the Zionist leaders after Herzl's death.

PIUS X (Guiseppe Sarto) (1835-1914): Elected Pope at the death of Leo XIII in 1903, thanks to a special right exercised by the Emperor of Austria. The interview he granted to Herzl admirably expresses the 'dialogue des sourds' (relationship full of misunderstandings) which has existed between Rome and Jerusalem for so many centuries.

PINSKER, Leo (1821-1899): Physician in Odessa and a supporter of Jewish assimilation within Russia. The pogroms disrupted him completely. His book in 1882, entitled "Auto-emancipation" called for a Jewish State. One of the leaders of the movement called "The Lovers of Zion," he made a deep impression on William Hechler. Herzl himself declared that if he had been shown Dr. Pinsker's propositions, he would not have thought it necessary to write his "Jewish State."

PLEHVE, Viacheslav (1846-1904): Russian statesman born in Lithuania. During the pogroms he was pointed out as the man chiefly responsible, since he held the position of Minister of Interior at that time. He met Herzl, who impressed him so much that he expressed his regret at not having him in his service, in order to "settle" the grave Russian problems. Assassinated in 1904.

POBIEDONOTSEV, C. (1827-1907): Russian lawyer and statesman. He was appointed the Procurator of the Holy Synod of the Russian Church in 1886. One of the few close counselors of Czar Nicholas II and a savage anti-Semite who liked to repeat: "There is only one solution to the Jewish problem: to expel one third, to baptize another third, and to exterminate the rest!" He symbolized the attitude of Russian Orthodoxy toward Judaism and Zionism until the present day.

ROTHSCHILD, Edmond (1845-1934): Head of the French house of banking of this name. Full of enthusiasm for the colonization of Palestine, he financed the establishment and continued survival of some forty agricultural colonies. This most paternalistic support of necessity ran counter to Herzl's Zionism. The two men did not understand each other. Still, after the Balfour Declaration, "the Baron" became more sympathetic to political Zionism.

In 1929 he was appointed honorary President of the Jewish Agency. His burial place is on Mount Carmel on the grounds of one of "his colonies," the charm of which evokes Provence. The town is called Zichron Yaakov.

SAMUEL, Herbert (1870-1963): English statesman and humanist. Served in the Cabinet several times and was a leader of the liberal party in the House of Commons, and later in the House of Lords. First High Commissioner in Palestine (1920-1925). It was unfortunately under his administration that Mufti Husseini

was pardoned and later appointed to the highest duties in Palestine, which permitted him to organize several pogroms in Jerusalem and throughout the country.

It was also under the rule of Herbert Samuel that the Holy Land was dissected from Transjordan, which led to a crisis that has steadily worsened until the present day. It would seem that choosing a Jew as High Commissioner was not altogether a good idea.

SOKOLOV, Nahum (1860-1936): Journalist and prolific Hebrew author, born in Poland to a family of Cabbalists. At first opposed to Herzlian Zionism, he joined the Movement after the death of the visionary and quickly became its Secretary General. Settled in London in 1914, as the diplomat of the Jewish Agency. In 1931 he was elected President of the Zionist Movement.

SUTTNER, Bertha von (1834-1914): Born Countess Kinsky, in Prague. Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905 while holding the office of President of the World Association for Peace. Also founded, together with her husband, Baron von Suttner, a society to combat anti-Semitism.

She offered her services to Herzl in the sphere of "public relations." She was spared the outburst of the First World War, dying several weeks before it started.

VAMBERY, Armenius (1832-1913): Enigmatic, brilliant Hungarian, and first-class orientalist. Born in a Jewish orthodox family, he freed himself from all ties with the Synagogue. Master of many European and Middle Eastern languages. He was in all probability in the service of Disraeli. Traveling through Central Asia (disguised as a dervish), he took the name of Rashid Effendi. Later in life he embraced Protestantism and occupied the chair of Oriental Languages at the University of Budapest. Often sent on missions to Constantinople, he succeeded in becoming friendly with the Sultan. After meeting Herzl, thanks to Hechler, he obtained an audience for him with the Sultan.

It may well be that when he encountered Herzl, he remembered Jerusalem with nostalgia.

VERNOY, Julius du (1832-1910): Prussian officer and statesman of Huguenot origin. Military governor of Strasbourg; then Minister of War (1889-1890). Wrote a considerable number of essays on military strategy.

VICTOR EMMANUEL III (1869-1947): King of Italy from 1900, after the murder of his father, Umberto I. He abdicated at the end of World War II in favor of his son, Umberto. During his conversation with Herzl he showed an astonishing knowledge with regard to Zionist destiny in the Holy Land.

WEIZMANN, Chaim (1873-1952): Chemist of renown, whose discoveries contributed to the victory of the Allies in 1918. Leader of Zionist Movement until 1948 when he became the first President of the State of Israel.

WILLIAM (WILHELM) II (1859-1941): Emperor of Germany. Paralyzed in his left arm, he compensated for this by an

outrageous militarism. Abdicating in 1918, he lived in Doorn, Holland until his death.

In the beginning he was rather attracted by the Zionist vision, which appealed to authentic Biblical aspirations and to a good knowledge of the Scriptures. But soon, surrounded and ill-advised by numerous anti-Semites such as von Bülow, his chancellor, he devoted himself to insane projects of conquest in Europe and the Middle East. Dragging Turkey at his side into the World War, he thereby provoked the liberation of the Holy Land and of Jerusalem after exactly four centuries of Turkish occupation.

WOLFSOHN, David (1856-1914): German businessman born in Lithuania. Leader of the “Lovers of Zion” in Cologne, he was one of Herzl’s first followers and his best friend. He succeeded Herzl at his death, serving until 1911.

Annotated General Index of Events, People and Places

“British”		Anglican Episcopal.....	31
origin of this word.....	14	antagonism	
“cabbalistic” movements.....	15	between Israel and the Nations.....	114
“Magna Charta” of Zionism.....	13	appeal to Caesar.....	45
“New Israel”.....	14	appeal to opposition	
“Zionist” Declaration		Hechler published it in ‘Die Welt’ prior to	
rumors that the Germans would issue a		1 st Congress in Basel.....	58
declaration to restore the Jews to		Arab-Jewish friendship	
Palestine	107	Hechler's special concern.....	109
“Zionist” vision of history	12	<i>At Basel I founded the Jewish State!</i>	
		Herzl's words in Vienna after the 1st	
Abdul Hamid		Congress in Basel	60
Sultan in Constantinople	50	Babylonian captivity	
Abdul Hamid, Sultan		a partial return only.....	34
Kaiser wants to talk to him to find Ark of		Baden, Frederic of	23
the Covenant	64	an exceptional statesman in his	
abomination of desolation.....	35	understanding and support of Zionism	75
Adams, John		emotional over prospect of his founding the	
2nd President of the U.S.	14	State of Israel	47
Aelia Capitolina	12	excerpts of Hechler's long letter of March	
Agliardi, Nuncio of Vienna.....	50	26, 1896	44
Al Arish		Herzl's bold letter to the Grand Duke	52
Lord Lansdown recommended creating a		seeks to promote Hechler as Bishop of	
Zionist Commission of Investigation,		Jerusalem	31
1902 expedition to investigate feasibility		'wait and see' attitude	50
of Jewish settlement in the Sinai (Gaza		Baden, Frederic von	
strip)	86	died in 1907	102
Alexander II, Czar		Balfour	17
'frees' the serfs in 1861	25	Balfour Declaration	112
Alexander, Czar	20	British army declares it as a 'regrettable	
Alexander, Michael Salomona		error'.....	111
first Bishop in Jerusalem.....	31	consequences of British retraction in 1918	
Ali, Mehemet			111
of Roumelia, Turkish General.....	15	General Moyne, Commander in Cairo,	
supported by France	31	declares it to be foolishness.....	111
Alkalai, Rabbi Yehuda.....	29	letter to Lord Rothschild of Nov 2, 1917	
Allenby, General			108
entrance into Jerusalem, Dec 9, 1917	111	Balfour, Lord	
Alliance Israelite Universelle.....	72	Herzl's meeting him in 1903 had after all	
Altneuland		not been in vain.....	99
Herzl's second book, 1902	85	lays corner stone of Hebrew University in	
Amos	28	1918	104
Androcles and the lion		Balkan League	
Herzl's intention to use the story when		Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece	105
talking to the Sultan	80	Barras, Director.....	15
Anglican Archbishop	32	Baruch, Marcou	

a madman who shot himself in Florence, having threatened Herzl	78	Bülow, von	
Basel		Chancellor of the Sultan, duplicity	64
August 24, 1900, third Zionist Congress ..	75	hypocrit, preventing Hechler and Herzl to reawaken interest of the Kaiser after Palestine visit of 1898.....	72
August 29-31, 1997 Constituent Assembly of the Jewish Nation.....	60	made the Kaiser aware of violent Turkish opposition to Jewish penetration and feared Jewish competition	69
first Zionist Congress	58	Caesar	
second Zionist Congress	63	Kaiser Wilhelm II, comment on 'the princes of this world'	45
seventh Zionist Congress, 1905, Max Nordau, abandons Uganda	101	Caffetera	
sixth Zionist Congress, August 1903, voted for Uganda but Russians walked out....	88	English official who stood by idly watching massacres in Hebron was decorated for heroism	117
tenth Zionist Congress, Hebrew declared official language, kibbutzim as agricultural communities.....	103	Calvin	
Basel Mission.....	20	Geneva's spiritual blindness with regard to Israel	93
Becque, Henry.....	75	Catholic ideology	
Ben Gurion		Herzl's experience at his Papal visit, 1904, based on his diary	91
his words on the occasion of Herzl's funeral	97	Chaim Weizmann	
Bentwich, Herbert and Suzanne		Memories, commenting on Herzl's pursuit of a mirage	98
providing hope for Hechler at the end of his life	115	Chamberlain, Joseph	
Benwich, Norman		Colonial minister won to Zionism through his Protestant faith	84
Jewish attorney-general.....	116	Chartered Company	
Berlin.....	73	what Herzl suggested to the Kaiser to ask the Sultan in Constantinopl, Oct 1898.	68
Church Conference 1898, Hechler hoping to meet the Kaiser	61	<i>Children of Abraham, wake up!</i>	
dissociated itself from Zionism.....	57	Hechler's appeal in 'Die Welt'	58
Bernard-Lazare		Chmelnitzky	
friend of Peguy	74	Cossacks of, persecuting Polish Jewry	25
Biblical promises	28	Chouraqui, André	4
Biblical Society of London	54	Chrischona Mission	
Biblical vision of history	8	founded by Dietrich Hechler	20
Bickersteth, Edward	18	Church and Synagogue	37
Bickersteth. Edward	9	Church of Scotland	16
Bishop of Ripon		General Assembly of 1839	15
Dr. Boyd Carpen, a good friend of the Kingter	82	colonization in Palestine	
Blackstone, W.E.....	14	Dr. Pinsker's concern	28
Blumhardt.....	20	Conder, Claude	24
Bonaparte, Napoleon.....	15	Congo	
boundaries of the future State of Israel		Herzl's further hope also collapsed	87
Hechler and Herzl in the train from Karlsruhe to Vienna	49	conquest of Canaan.....	7
Buber, Martin		Constans	
Hechler in Berlin meets him for the second time and announces a 'Weltkrieg'	105	French ambassador in Constantinople.....	72
student in Vienna after Hechler's retirement	101	Constantin, Grand Duke	
		St. Petersburg.....	87

Constantinople	15	Dreyfus, Alfred	
British Embassy blocked the Queen's letter		he lit the Zionist fire in Herzl	74
to the Sultan	29	Drumond	73
Herzl's attempt to obtain audience with the		Drumont, Edouard	
Sultan	50	French anti-Semit who had called for the	
May 13, 1901, Herzl to meet the Sultan ..	80	expulsion of the Jews but sonn gave a	
October 16, 1898, Kaiser receives Herzl in		glowing review of Herzl's book	99
presence of Bülow	67	Dryander	46
summer 1902, the Sultan rejects Herzl's		Hechler meets the chaplain in March 1914	
money from London bankers	84	but Dryander had turned away from	
Corbet, Thomas	15	Zionism to Pan-Germania	105
Count Patay		Dryander, Pastor in Berlin	43
Portuguese Ambassador	87	Duke of Cleveland	13
Cromer, Lord		Duke of Northumberland	
English representative in Cairo	85	proposed by Bishop Bramley Moore to be	
Governor for Egypt rejects the Al Arish		mediator with Carnegie	82
report even though it was positive	86	Dunant, Henry	
Cromwell's followers	13	Universal Society for the Renewal of the	
Crusades		Orient	24
failure of	15	Edict of Cyrus, a second one	14
Cyprus		El Arish	99
considered by Josphe Chamberlain but		Election of Israel	
found wanting because of Turks and		purpose	9
Greek Orthodox population	84	eleventh Zionist Congress	
Czar		1913, Vienna, decision to build a Hebrew	
F. v. Baden's letter of Dec. 8, 1899	76	University in Jerusalem	104
he declines to become interested in 'the		<i>emancipation of the Negroes</i>	
theory of Zionism'	76	Herzl's vision of Israel as a force of peace	
Czar and the Sultan		and progress for all of her neihgbours .	85
in 1900 Hechler and Herzl turn their		Emir Feisal's declaration	
attention to Russia and Turkey	75	1919, of kinship and collaboration, on	
Czar Nicolas II		behalf of (Hashemite) Arab Kingdom	
his character, anti-Semite	87	and Chaim Weizmann of Zionist	
Daniel		Organization	110
interpretation of days and months	34	Empress of Austria	
Daudet, Alphonse		assassinated, memorial in Vienna Sept 17,	
French author, one of Herzl's good friends,		1898	64
died in 1897	99	Episcopal seat of Jerusalem	31
David		essential question	
line of	14	why did the world during eight years of	
<i>Der Basler Kongress</i>		Herzl's and Hechler's dimplomacy, of the	
Herzl's study, to be submitted to the Kaiser		‘Herzlian morage’ fail to understand how	
.....	61	much Zionism was made known	98
<i>Der Judenstaat</i>		Esterhazy	68
Herzl's book - The Jewish State	39	Eulenburg, von	63
<i>Die Welt</i>		Kaiser would be happy to meet Herzl in	
The World, Herzl's journal	58	Holy Land	64
Dreyfus		representative of the Kaiser in Vienna	57
Herzl learns from the Kaiser that Dreyfus		Vienna, Ambassador, counsellor to the	
was innocent	68	Kaiser	62

Eulenburg, Count of	
German Ambassador in Vienna.....	38
Exodus of Israel to Zion.....	41
Ezekiel	
Hechler's special study, he believed that	
England would win the war and would	
organize a new Exodus	106
false Jesus Christs'	78
Farid Kassab	
The New Arab Empire, conceding that	
Palestine belongs to the Jews	109
Feisal, Emir	
Ali's son, ruler of Syria, interview with	
T.E. Lawrence, claiming mutual	
comprehension with Jewish settlers...	109
Ferdinand of Bulgaria	57
Fift Jewish Congress	
London, 1901, foundations for the	
'National Fund'	83
fifth Zionist Congress	
London 1901	82
forty-two months	
in the book of Daniel.....	34
fourth Zionist Congress	
London 1900	79
France.....	74
first third of 17th century	15
Franco-Prussian conflict	22
Frederic-William IV of Prussia	
mid-19 th century had expressed wish to see	
the Zionists placed under Germany and	
England, the two great Protestant powers	
.....	72
Gaster, Chief Rabbi	
London, told Hechler that Palestinians	
rejoice over arrival of Zionist pioneers	
.....	109
Gaster, Dr.	
Chief Rabbi from London on Zionism and	
religion at 2nd Congress of Basel	66
George, Lloyd	
attacked Shaw report.....	118
George, Loyd	118
Ginsberg, Asher	
'Ahad Ha'am' ('One of the people'), a	
Russian Jewish activist, the most	
determined enemy of Herzl's	99
Giuseppe Sarto	
Cardinal, in 1903 Pope Pius X, monologue	
in Herzl's third scene	92
Grand Mufti of Jerusalem	
Haj Amin al Husseini, an expert killer in	
the Jerusalem massacres of 1920, of	
Egyptian origin	116
Grey, Sir Edward	
Hechler had recommended him to Herzl ..	99
Gudemann, Rabbi	
Vienna, like German Rabbis opposed to	
Zionism	57
Guildford, E. Rev.	
Punjab, India, believes that Millennium is	
soon to begin.....	67
Günther	
Günther and Heinrich, Princes in Berlin..	43
Prince of Schleswig-Holstein	56
Hadrian	12
Haham Bashi	
the Sultan's chief Rabbi for the Jews, an	
anti-Zionist.....	81
Hanotaux.....	68
Harrison, President	14
Hebrew	
renaissance of Hebrew seemed to be too	
miraculous for Herzl who opted for	
Babylonian solution, with German	
dominating	86
Hebrew University in Jerusalem	
decision at the eleventh Zionist Congress	
1913	104
Hechler	
after the drama of the sixth Congress in	
Basel, an imagined cry of his heart.....	90
expecting the reincarnation of Elijah and	
the Parousia in his life time	66
Final words to his Christian brothers.....	122
Final words to his Jewish brothers.....	121
his attempt to win the Kaiser with a project	
to find the Ark of the Covenant.....	63
his Bible collection	104
his death on January 1931 in London....	119
his desire to have Germany or England buy	
land from the Sultan.....	63
his London retreat and spartan life	103
in the service of German and English	
interests and not a 'secret agent' of the	
Intelligence Service	72
not of Jewish descent.....	46
October 1898, Constantinople and Jaffa ...	64
photograph, in sheik garb	71
presentiment of German anti-Semitism' ..	101

prophetic calculations: 1897, final restoration of Israel in the Promised Land	35	three scenes, monologues inspired by Herzl's diary	92
retires in 1910, but continues as Chaplain and studies anti-Semitism in Vienna, cradle of Nazism	100	warning signals of his heart in 1902	83
'the historical outcome of a whole line of Protestant theologians who desired that London should return Jerusalem to the Jews.....	73	what set the spark off in his heart	73
was a prophet to Herzl and to Zionism ..	100	Herzl, Theodore	
Hechler William		birth of	9, 18
first serious crisis of his life	22	first encounter with Hechler	41
Hechler, Dietrich.....	19	the Prince of the Return	36
Hechler, William		Hessen, Grand Duuke of	
birth of.....	9, 18	father-in-law of Czar Nicholas II.....	55
childhood of	20	historical charts	
Embassy Chaplain at Vienna	33	reference in his letter to Frederic of Baden	44
first encounter with Herzl	41	History	
interpretation of prophetic texts	35	its prophetic sense.....	13
ordination at St. Paul's Cathedral	21	Hitler	
rejected as Bishop of Jerusalem.....	33	heading a new German party	119
Hechler's concern		Hollingworth, pastor	
German and English sponsorship of Palestinian renaissance.....	45	Thomas Johnstone and Petavel. pastors and authors of works on the "Zionist" question.....	24
Hechler-Hopkins		Holloway, Priscilla	
Hechler and the Bishop of Jerusalem united in their vision for Israel.....	85	William Hechler's mother	20
Heine, Heinrich		Hopkins	
Herzl's comparison in his autobiography ..	42	Bishop of Jerusalem.....	85
Herzl		Horsby, Samuel.....	14
1896 Journal entry on his doubts about Hechler.....	43	Hussein, Sherif	
beginning illness of June 1901	80	was made to believe he would get all of Syria at the end of WW1	108
breaks down in Vienna April 30, 1904	94	Husseini	
cardiac pains over fear of being dismissed	58	prisoner in France in 1945, escaped and became chief Nazi advisor to Nasser in Egypt.....	117
changes his mind about Hechler on April 21, 1986.....	47	set in motion another pogrom in 1929 ...	117
death of his father Jacob, 1902.....	84	Husseini, Haj Amin	
his assessment of Hechler, April 26, 1896	47	leader of expert killers in riots of 1920, escaped to Syria	116
his death on Sunday, July 3, 1904.....	95	Husseini, Hal Amin al	
insomnia over the dilemma to care for the persecuted or to push for the land, Cyprus or at least the Sinai	84	Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, expert killer in Jerusalem massacre of 1920, agent of German Nazis	117
misunderstanding in Jewish-Christian friendships.....	53	Hyamson, A.M.	
testament to the Jewish people.....	75	Jewish official who on order limited immigration of Jews	116
the 'Jewish Prince'	41	In Search of Zion	
		Moses Montefiore's central work	30
		India	
		Hechler discerns German ambitions to build railway line to Baghdad.....	102

intermediate solution	
heartbroken Herzl's plan in 1903 for the seventh Congress in 1904 if all other solutions would fail.....	90
Jabotinski, Vladimir	
former officer under the Czar, put in prison because of massacres, no arrests for Arab murders.....	110
Jeremiah	28
reconciliation.....	14
Jerusalem	
Capital of Ecumenism, Herzl's vision	86
Herzl meets the Kaiser a second time, October 28, 1898.....	68
pogrom of 1920 organized by the English High Command.....	111
various motivations for October 1898 pilgrimage	64
JERUSALEM	11
Jewish National Fund	
League of Nations partitions Arab land and mutilates what belongs to the JNF	113
prepared for at the fifth Zionist Congress in London, 1901	83
Jewish national home	
formula used by Balfour Declaration of 1917	108
Jewish restoration	
scoffed at by the King of England because Jewish bankers opposed to Zionism were in his Parliament.....	82
Joseph II, Emperor	15
Judson, Adoniram	
influence on Dietrich Hechler	20
Kahn, Zadok	
chief Rabbi in Paris defending the Rothschilds.....	82
Kaiser	
September 3, 1898, changed his mind	63
shows anti-Semitic traits in his meeting with Herzl in October 1898.....	67
'the Jews killed Jesus', his 'Christian' anti-Semitism	63
Kaiser Wilhelm II	
August 1899 willing to receive Herzl in Palestine	63
his character and interests	50
reason for political interests in Palestine..	45
Kaiser William II	
illusions of descent.....	14
Kalisher, Rabbi	30
Karlsruhe.....	24
April 22, 1896, Hechler and Herzl's expectations and conversation with Frederic of Baden	48
Grand Duke Frederic of Baden, uncle of the Kaiser-Wilhelm II.....	42
King of England	
scoffed at 'Jewish restoration'	82
Kishinev	
pogroms in 1903	87
Knox and Cromwell	
the generation they had influenced	17
Knox, John.....	13
Korvin-Piatrovska, Mrs.	
Polish intellectual and friend of Plehve...	87
Lagos.....	22
Laharanne, Ernest	24
Lansdown, Lord	
London, foreign affairs, recommended Zionist commission for investigation ..	85
Laws of May	26
League of Nations.....	111
Lloyd George	
had prepared an African Charter for Herzl and defended the Zionist ideas before parliament in 1904	99
London	
closing Palestine to Jewish immigrants in 1939	119
dissociated itself from Zionism	57
Hechler returns for his pension after 25 years in Vienna	102
Herzl with the Jewish leaders and letters for Protestant dignitaries	52
three political reasons for support of Zionist aspirations during WW1.....	107
London Bible Society	26
London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews.....	20
Lord Cromer	
in spite of his refusal to accept the Al Arish report, later gave his support to the Balfour declaration	99
Lovers of Zion	29, 31, 57
Lowth, Robert.....	14
Lueger, Karl	
leader of the Christian socialist party in Austria.....	100

Luke	a Jew responsible for the ambiguity in the Balfour Declaration	115
acting Governor in Palestine ‘punished’ for lack of preventing massacre was appointed Governor of Malta.....		117
Luther, Martin	his anti-semitism toward the end of his life	93
Mac-Caul, Pastor.....		16
MacDonald, James Ramsey	socialist heading the British Government as PM from 1924-1935.....	119
MacMahon-Hussein agreement		108
Malachi	reappearance of Elijah in his life time, Hechler's belief.....	66
Mandelstamm.....		38
Manteuffel, Baron		57
Marienbad	August 12, 1900, the two men meet with the Grand Duke of Hessen to interest the Czar	75
massacre	Jerusalem, 1920, motivated and organized by English High Command.....	111
massacres	Galilee and Jaffa, 1920.....	110
	Jerusalem, April 1929	110
memorandum	Hechler's, in the hands of Prince Günther	57
	Herzl's of October 22, 1997 for the Kaiser	61
memorandum for the Kaiser	three points in favor of Jewish Palestine..	49
Merry del Val	Cardinal, monologue of the first scene..	92
Milton.....		13
missionaries of Palestine	they disagree with Hechler's and Herzl's Zionist movement and suspect hidden motives	70
modern Babylon	the rabbis preferred living in European towns to living in Palestine	74
Monson, Sir	called back from Vienna to London.....	55
Monson, Sir Edmund		46
	Ambassador in Vienna	41
Montagu, Edwin		
	traveled through Palestine with Hechler's and Herzl's vision.....	102
Montefiore, Sir Francis	London, Botanical Gardens, Herzl's popularity,.....	79
Montefiore, Sir Moses		30
Moore, Bramley	one of a number of Bishops sympathetic to Zionism	82
Moslem S.S.	created by the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Husseini	117
Moyne, General	British Commander in Cairo declares Balfour Declaration to be foolishness	111
Mozambique	After Uganda, Herzl and Hecgler tried but failed	87
Munich	refusal to receive the Zionist Congress....	57
mystery of Israel	Churches fail to understand and therefore do not support Zionism and Israel	66
	Hechler's theological position.....	54
Napolean, Bonaparte.....		15
nationalist incident	the double step of Hechler and Herzl, with Herzl trying to win the French.....	72
Nazism	Vienna, its cradle	100
Negev of Israel	resurrection of.....	8
<i>Neue Freie Presse</i>		39
Nevlinsky	Austrian diplomat of Polish origin in Constantiople	50
Newton, Thomas.....		14
Next year in Jerusalem	Excerpt from Herzl's book	40
Nezib.....		15
Nicholas II, Czar.....		55
Nicholas, Czar.....		16
Nicolas I, Czar	death of, 1855	25
Nordau, Dr	one of the few loyal friendsof Zionism....	57
	the exception to the rule, a faithful friend	74

Nordau, Lord Max	
dispised the Uganda solution at sixth Congress in Basel.....	89
Odessa	29
Odessa massacres	
first one in 1871	26
Oliphant, Sir Laurence	26
Omar	
Mohamed's brother in law	35
Ora pro nobis	
Pray for us - Hechler's daily call from Berlin, waiting to meet the Kaiser	62
Order of Mejdiye	
all that Herzl received from the Sultan in Constantinople	81
Ottoman Empire.....	64
Palestine Exploration Fund	24
Palestinian Mandate	
Hechler in London in 1922 to attend ratification.....	113
paragraph 25, possibility of amputation.....	113
Palmerston.....	16, 29
Pan-Germanism	
spreading to Turkey and even to Africa.....	102
panoramic chart	
Hechler's calculations for 1897	42
<i>Parousia</i>	8, 11, 12, 16, 54, 115
partition	114
Passfield, LOrd	
published second report calling for stopping immigration altogether	118
Paty du Clam.....	68
Paul of Tarsus	11
Peyrere, Isaac de la.....	15
Picot, George	
diplomat through whom France claimed Syria up to frontier of Egypt	107
Pinsker, Doctor	
a leader of the 'Lovers of Zion', published 'Auto-Emanzipation'.....	27
Plehve	
Russian minister in 2003, responsible for pogroms.....	87
Pobiedonotsev	
Procurator of the Holy Synod, Inquisitor, dismissed the Jews from public service	26
pogroms	
in Russia under the Holy Synod.....	26
Rumania, 1902, a consuming dilemma for Herzl	83
politico-theological aspect	
in Hechler's thinking	45
press campaign	
1901 accusations against Herzl that he was in the pay of Protestant missions	79
Prince of Ligne	15
Prince of the Return	42
Prince of Wales	
in Marienbad	76
Princess Mathilde.....	68
Prophetic History	56
protection of Christians in the East.....	57
Protector of the Holy Places	
London's pretence for a Jewish State to overtake France in WW1 with its ambitions for Sysria.....	107
protectorate	
Hechler's attempt to present the plan to the Kaiser.....	51
Protestant Biblical Zionism	
two streams of.....	16
Protestant bishop in Jerusalem	
appointment by two Sovereigns.....	31
Protestant mission	
Hechler's belief within the Biblical venture of Zionism.....	75
Protestant power	
what historians often underestimate - the religious facts of historical events	73
Protestant Zionism	13, 15
Hechler's brochure	33
Prussia, William I	23
Prussia, William of - Emperor	31
Puritan	
penchant for Zionism.....	14
Puritanism	17
Purpose of this book	9, 18
rabbis	
in France and Munic preferred to live in comfortable Europe	74
Reformation	17
refugees	
Russian and Rumanian	38
replacement theology	
Hechler's refutation.....	33
restoration of Israel	
and the entire world, 1897 in Hechler's calculation.....	35

Revelation	
book of, interpretation of months.....	34
rivalry and jealousy	
factors explaining Jewish opposition to Zionism	57
Rochester, Bishop of.....	17
Roman Church	
for 17 centuries the conversion of Israel to Rome as a condition for its return to its homeland.....	93
Rome	
Herzl's assessment.....	50
imposed the yellow star of David on the Jews.....	93
Rosebery, Lord.....	28
Rothschild	47
The Baron refused to commit himself.....	53
the Kaiser's suspicion regarding Hechler's motives	46
Rothschilds	
opposed Herzl's plans even in Vatican circles	74
Royal Commission for Alien Immigration	
presided by hostile Rothschild , June 4, 1902.....	84
rumors, mischievous	
Herzl heard in Paris that he was accused of wanting to be another Baron Hirsch	81
Russia	
opens to Hechler in 1881	25
pogroms in Kishinev forced the the two men to try Petersburg but the Czar refused.....	87
Russian and Rumanian Jews	26
sacred history	
God's will accomplished through political aspirations	107
Saint Louis	
King of France, leader of the last crusade	74
Salisbury, Lord	
no interest in the Biblical vision of History	56
Salisbury. Lord	
grey eminence of high politics in England	55
Samuel, Herbert	
English Jew, first Commissioner of Palestine, who pardoned Haj Amin al Husseini who became Grand Mufti of Jerusalem.....	116
High Commissioner	117
Sarajevo, Archduke	
his assassination in Serbia leads to WW1	106
Schillerplatz	
Herzl's first visit to Hechler	42
Second Coming of Christ	
1989, even a Mohammedan in India is announcing its imminence	67
secret agent	
why Hechler was not a 'secret agent'	72
secret deal	
between Britain and France concerning partition of the Ottoman empire	108
Seventh Zionist Congress	
Basel, 1905, Max Nordau's chairmanship , abandons Uganda.....	101
Shaftesbury	17, 26
Shaftesbury, Lord	16
Shaw Report	
Commission of 1930 to investigate massacres	118
did not publish the endnote by Lord Snell condemning the Mufti.....	118
Simpson, Sir Hope	
Second Commission to investigate the Shaw Report.....	118
Sinai	
considered by Josphe Chamberlain but under Lord Cromer in Cairo	84
Sixth Zionist Congress	
2003, Basel, after Al Arish, Uganda was accepted but Russians walked out	86
Snell, Lord	
doubted the conclusions of the Shaw Report of 1930	118
Sofia	
Herzl's visit, June 30, 1896.....	51
Sokolov	
Hechler's son-in-law to whom he prophezied that part of German Jewry would have to sacrificed for the resurrection of his Biblical fatherland	119
Sokolov, Nahum	
itinerant ambassador of the Zionist Congress as from 1918	104
St. Moritz	
July 28, 1898, F. v. Baden's letter to the Kaiser about Herzl and Zionsism	63
1881	25

Strasbourg		Turks	
the two statues.....	36	defeated by the Balkan League in the first	
Sultan	80	Balkan war of 1912.....	105
Herzl's attempts to win his interest	77	Twelve Zionist Congress	
superiority of the Church	32	during WW1 no Congress possible due to	
Suttner, Baroness von		German-English conflict.....	106
President of the World Association for		Tyndale	13
Peace	101	Uganda	
Syria	17	Chamberlain's ideo proposed to Herzl	88
Englis Generals attempting to get the		United Nations	
French out of Syria.....	111	November 29, 1947 vote to create the State	
Tagore, Rebindranath		of Israel	60
accused England of deliberately stimulating		Vambery	
Civil war in Palestine	117	invites Hezl to Budapest to meet the Sultan,	
Taliani, Nuncio in Vienna		but not as a Zionist, on May 8, 1901 ...	80
Vienna, refusal to audience with Herzl....	61	Vambery, Prof. of Oriental Languages, then	
Tarshish, ships of	14	consultant to the Sultan.....	77
Technion		Vatican	
envisioned by Herzl	85	Herzl's visit to the Pope	91
Tenth Zionist Congress		in Hechler's view	91
Basel, 1911, Hebrew declared official		protesting Jewish intentions to 'occupy' the	
languaage	103	Holy places	61
testament to the Jewish people		Verdy du Vernoy	
Herzl's advice of August 16, 1899	75	Prussian Minister of War, Huguenot	
Text Criticism, German.....	21	background	56
the Jewish Question		Victor Emmanuel	
excerpts from Pinsker's Auto-Emanzipation		King of Italy, monologue in Herzl's	
.....	27	second sceene.....	92
The Jewish State		Victoria, Queen.....	14
Hechler's assessment.....	42	Victoria. Queen	
Russian translation of 'Der Judenstaat' for		Hechler carried her letter to the Sultan of	
Nicholas II.....	55	Turkey, a letter that never reached him	28
<i>THE JEWISH STATE</i>		Vienna	
Herzl's book - Der Judenstaat	39	Burgtheater	39
The Lovers of Zion		capital of Austro-Hungarian Em.....	33
Jewish Intellectuals in Odessa.....	27	Hechler as lecturer at University	38
The Restoration of the Jews to Palestine		Jewish society and Synagogue life	38
According to the Prophets.....	31	the Jews in Vienna	39
the times and the moments.....	35	the Kaiser's arrival in 1986	46
The World		Vladimir, Grand Duke	57
Die Welt, Herzl's journal.....	58	Voegisheim	
The Zionist Vision	8	duchy of Baden, Hechler's family	19
Theologians of the Church		Warren, Charles	24
Final words in Hechler's spirit	122	Way, Lewis	20
Time Line.....	19	Weizmann Institute	
Turkey	74	envisioned by Herzl	85
Reason why it joined the Germans for		Weizmann, Chaim	
WWI.....	31	resigned from Government service under	
Sultan swept away by Palace revolution in		the British over the content of the second	
1909 under German influence.....	102	White Paper	118

Weltkrieg		William-the-Pious.....	73
London against Berlin with Turkey on the		Wilson, President	
German side	106	message to London protesting the League	
White Book		of Nation's mutilation of Palestine	113
Churchill's, limiting immigration of Jews		Witherby, Thomas - Bishop.....	17
.....	117	WW2	
White Paper		Hechler's assessment.....	119
Lord Passfield's	118	Zechariah 8:3	64
Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung.....	39	Zionism of Nehemiah's time	34
Wilhelm II		Zionist appeal	
meets Herzl a third and last time November		through English Protestant channel	16
2, 1898, requesting a new memorandum		Zionist French circles	
.....	69	failed to understand Herzl.....	74
Wilkinson, Anglican Bishop.....	50	Zionist Protestant movement	15
William II	73		

Annotated Index of Dates and References

637	Jerusalem falls to Islam.....35	Birth of William Hechler.....9
1270	Saint Louis, leader of the last Crusade.....74	Edward Bickersteth's advice.....9
1784	Hechler at Karlsruhe Castle23	Oct 1, Hechler born in Benares, India 19
1795-1870	Rabbi Kalisher.....30	William Hechler born 18
1797	Prince of Ligne's Memorandum.....15	1850
1798	birth of Rabbi Yehuda Alkalai, Sarajevo, 29	July 4, Hechler's mother died 20
1799	Thomas Corbet's project15	1857
1804	Bishop of Rochester's prediction17	Hechler's second marriage till 1862.....20
1807	London Society for Promoting Christianity Among Jews.....20	1860
1812	Dietrich Hechler born.....19	birth of Theodore Herzl9
1818	Lewis Way's paper for the restoration of the Jews in Palestine20	predicted date for Israel's restoration..... 17
1829	birth of Sir Laurence Oliphant26	Theodore Herzl born..... 18
1832	England's protestant Zionism.....15	1861-1864
	Mehemet Ali is given Syria15	Chaim Vambery in Central Asia..... 77
	Vambery, Chaim born, later converted to Islam.....77	1864-1905
1837	Hechler meets Blumhardt.....20	Chaim Vambery, Prof. of Oriental Languages in Budapest, now Protestant, consultant of the Sultan 77
1839	G.A. of the Church of Scotland15	1865
	June 24, Ali crushes the Turks at Nezib...15	Palestine Exploration Fund.....24
1840	July 15, Treaty of London.....16	1866
	Treaty of London31	Hechler's third marriage.....20
1841	episcopal seat established in Jerusalem ...31	1869
1844	Dietrich Hechler ordained in London20	William Hechler ordained in the Anglican Church.....21
1845	Bickersteth's 'Restoration of the Jews...' 18	1871
		Hechler in Lagos, Trinity College22
		Odessa's first massacre26
		1876
		Hechler leaving Karlsruhe24
		1876-77
		new London parish and hospital chaplaincy24
		1878
		Laurence Oliphant's memorandum.....26
		1879
		Hechler's desire to return to Africa.....25
		1881
		Russia opens to Hechler.....25
		1882
		Hechler returns to the London Bible Society30
		Hechler's plea to settle the Jews in Palestine.....26
		March, Diary of Oliphant27
		1884

Embassy Chaplain in Sweden	33	the date on the panoramic chart	42
Episcopal seat in Jerusalem unoccupied ..	31	the fateful year	56
1885		the fateful year of the Zionist idea	41
Dr. Pinsker chairman of 'Lovers of Zion' ..	28	year calculated for final restoration of	
Embassy Chaplain in Vienna	33	Jerusalem	35
1888		1897 before Christ	
Dec 23, Laurence Oliphant dies	26	Isaac, a parallel with Christ	45
1895		1898	
Herzl begins to write his 'Journal'	94	August	
1896		2nd Zionist Congress in Basel	63
April 14, Emperor arrives in Vienna	46	Hechler on the 2nd Congress at Basel	66
April 17, the Kaiser suspects Rothschild to		July 28, F. v. Baden	
finance Hechler	46	letter from St. Moritz to William II about	
April 22, Herzl and Hechler in Karlsruhe ..	48	Hechler's projects	63
Dec 13, The Kaiser in Vienna	56	March, Herzl tries again to reach the Kaiser	
Dec 14, Salaisbury's response			61
no interest	56	May 31, Hechler emptyhandad back from	
December 1, Herzl's letter to Hechler for		Berlin	62
Salisbury	55	November 2, the Kaiser meets Herzl third	
February 14, Herzl's book published in		and last time	69
Vienna	39	October	
Herzl's attempts to contact the Sultan	77	Hechler to Constantinople and Jaffa,	
June 30, Herzl in Sofia	51	preceding Herzl	64
March 10, decides to meet Grand Duke of		October 10, F. v. Baden's telegram about	
Baden	42	meeting in Constantinople and Palestine	
March 10, first meeting of Herzl and			67
Hechler	94	October 16, The Kaiser meets Herzl and	
March 15, Herzl's first visit to Hechler ...	42	Hechler in Constantinople	67
March 26, Hechler's letter to Frederic of		October 28, Mikveh Israel, Herzl meets the	
Baden	44	Kaiser a second time	68
March 9, Hechler discovers Herzl's book ..	39	October 3, Hechler's long letter to Frederic	
Oct 5, Herzl's misunderstanding	55	of Baden about his intent to find the	
October 5, Herzl's misunderstanding	53	originals of the Torah and meeting the	
October, 18, Herzl sends Hechler Russian		Kaiser in Jerusalem as 'the Protector of	
trl. of his book for the Grand Duke of		all Protestants and Jews in the East'	65
Hessen	55	September 17, Vienna memorial because of	
Sept 17, Herzl's bold letter to the Duke of		the death of Empress of Austria	64
Baden	52	September 29, The Kaiser's anti-Zionist	
1897		reply	63
August 21		September 3	
Hechler's letter to F. v. Baden about 1st		The Kaiser had changed his mind	63
Zionist Congress	58	1899	
August 29-31, Basel		August 16, Herzl's 'testament' to the Jewish	
Constituent Assembly of the Jewish		people	75
Nation	60	December 25, the Czar's reply on the	
June, Herzl's new publication		'theory of Zionism'	77
Die Welt	58	December 8, letter of Frederic v. Baden to	
October 22, Herzl to F. v. Baden with		the Czar	76
Memorandum	61	January 6, Die Welt - 'France in	
		Constantinople'	72

March 2, Hechler's letter to F. v. Baden about French interests in Palestine and the 'two Protestant powers' of England and Germany.....	72	Herzl meets Balfour in London to receive letter concerning Uganda.....	99
September: Herzl on gaining Lord Salisbury's friendship	78	May, Lord Cromer rejects the.....	86
1900		1904	
April 18, Herzl on Frederic of Baden on Lord Salaisbury	78	April 30, Vienna\ Herzl breaks down	94
August 12, Herzl and Hechler in Marienbad with Grand Duke of Hessen to interest the Czar	75	July 7, Vienna, Herzl's burial.....	96
August 24, 3rd Zionist Congress in Basel.....	75	June, Lloyd George defends Zionist ideals before Parliament.....	99
August, London, fourth Zionist Congress.....	79	May 16, Hezl coughing blood	94
June, Herzl meets Chaim Vambery.....	78	The Cardinal, the Kinng and the Pope - Herzl's three sceenes.....	92
May 1, Herzl's disillusion	79	1905	
1901		Basel, seventh Zionist Congress, July 27-August 2.....	101
June 17, Herzl on sending Hechler to Bishop of Ripon, Dr. Boyd Carpenter, a friend of the King of England in hope of an audience.....	82	1907	
June, Herzl's beginning illness.....	80	Death od Frederic of Baden.....	102
London, Fifth Zionist Congress, foundation of 'National Fund'.....	83	1910	
May 13, Herzl in Constantinople	80	Hechler retires.....	100
May 19, Herzl's account of meeting the Sultan	80	1911	
May 8, Vamabery invites Herzl to see the Sultan but not as a 'Zionist'	80	Basel, 10th Zionist Congress, Hebrew declared official language.....	103
Press Campaign against Herzl.....	79	1912	
1902		Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece formed the 'Balkan League'.....	105
Herzl's dilemma of rescuing those persecuted under pogroms and rejecting any other solution than Palestine	83	1913	
January 24, Herzl realizes that his heart is sick	83	Hechler travels to Greece.....	105
June, Herzl before hostile commission of Lord Rothschild, then learns of his father Jacob's death.....	84	Vienna, eleventh Zionist Congress, decided to build Hebrew University in Jerusalem	104
publication of Herzl's Zionist novel 'Altneuland'	85	1914	
summer, Constantinople, Sultan rejects Herzl's money to open Palestine to the Jews.....	84	Hechler foresees 'Weltkrieg' to Martin Buber's astonishment, London against Berlin with Turkey on German side ..	106
1903		London and Berlin moving closer together	105
Basel, August 23-28, Sixth Zionist Congress, first governmental recogition of Zionist movement: British invitation for Jewish homeland in Uganda.....	88	March, Hechler leaves Greece for Berlin at age 69.....	105
		1915	
		France claims Syria up to frontier of Egypt for herself.....	107
		November 2, Manchester Guardian demands formation of Palestinian State	107
		1917	
		December 9, entrance of General Allenby into Jerusalem	111
		defeat of England's ally Russia allowed Zionist leaders to express their wishes but British-French secret deal concerning	

the partitioning of the Ottoman empire (joined with defeated Germany) prevented them.....	108
Hechler's exhilaration on the occasion of the liberation of Jerusalem.....	119
November 2, Arthur Balfour's letter to Lord Rothschild.....	108
WW1 becomes worldwide.....	106
1918	
British army considers Balfour Declaration an error and declares English or Arabic to be the official languages rather than Hebrew.....	111
December 12, 'The Times' interview with Emir Feisal, Ali's son whom at Lawrence's insistence the British installed as ruler of the 'madate' of Syria	109
Jerusalem, Lord Balfour lays corner stone for Hebrew University.....	104
1919	
date referred to by Lloyd George in his attack on the Shaw Report of 1930 to show that population could be increased by intelligent land planning.....	118
January, declaration of Emir Feisal acting on behalf of the (Hashemite) Arab kingdom of Hedjaz.....	110
March 3, letter by Feisal to the Zionist delegation - headed by Chaim Weizman - at the Paris Peace conference.....	110
the sherif of Mecca, Hussein ibn Ali, became King of the West coast of Arabia (Hedjaz, NW Saudi Arabia) because of Colonel T.E. Lawrence's promise to the chieftains of the Hasem tribe.....	108
1920	
April, massacres in the old city of Jerusalem.....	110
Arab riots in Jerusalem and attacks in Galilee.....	116
League of Nations partitions Arab lands into 'mandates' and Britain gets Palestine - from which land belonging to the JNF, Jewish National Fund, a land redemption agency, is extracted.....	113

1921 - 1931	
tens of thousands of Arabs settle in fertile Palestine.....	114
1922	
Churchill's White Book limits Jewish immigration.....	117
July 24, Hechler in London to attend ratification of Palestinian Mandate, negotiated between Great Britain and the United States and approved by the League of Nations.....	113
1928	
End of High Commissioner Lord Plumer's rule of Mandatory Gvt.	117
1929	
August 16, massacres in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed and Jaffa.....	117
1930	
November 11, newspaper article by anti- Zionist Lord Passfield with reference to Second White Paper calling for complete stopping of immigration.....	118
November 20, second report investigating the Shaw Report.....	118
Shaw Report on investigation of massacres	117
1931	
January 30, Hechler dies in London at 85	119
1938	
Sept 29, Shaftesbury's journal, fn.....	16
1939	
closure of Palestine to Jewish Immigrants	119
1947	
November 29, U.N. votes to create the State of Israel.....	60
1949	
August 16, Ben Gurion's speech: Herzl - 97 Herzl's death end eight year of companionship for Hechler.....	97

Acts 1:7.....	12
Ezekiel 37.....	66
Ezekiel 38:13.....	14
Genesis 12:3.....	16
Isaiah 19.....	109
Isaiah 19:25.....	64
Isaiah.....	28

Isaiah 27		Psalm 137:5	5
Montefiore, 'In Search of Zion'	30	Revelation 11:2	44
Jeremiah 23:5	64	Romans 11:25	12
Luke 21:24	12, 44	Time Line.....	19
Psalm 126:1	17	Zechariah 8:3	64

Contents

Front Page: Theodore Herzl - the Prince	
Preface by Dr. André Chouraqui	4
Introduction	5
Apprenticeship	18
In the Service of Zion	38
Solitude and Bitterness	97
Spiritual Testament	121
Works Consulted	122

Appendices

Christian Zionist Chronological Bibliography	125
Contemporary Studies	127
Bibliography	128
Annotated General Index ²⁷ of Events, People and Places	136
Annotated Index of Dates and References	147
Postscript 2003	152
Back Page: William Hechler - the Prophet	154

Websites for further Studies after this e-book:

www.jafi.org.il

www.c4israel.org

<http://christianactionforisrael.org/judeochr.html>

²⁷ It is possible for Index page numbers occasionally to refer to one page before or one page behind the page indicated

Postscript 2003

So many dramatic events have occurred since the first edition of this book in 1966!

Two bloody Intifadas - the confrontation between Jews and Arabs (called Palestinians) in the land that is still the 'Promised Land'; the coming to power of General Sharon which increased the feelings against Israel all over the world and isolated her even further from the other nations.

Many in the churches are questioning if it is still possible to talk about the 'Zionism of God'. This indicates that many have forgotten that God's Plan of Salvation is unchangeable and that the fulfillment of the prophetic promises is certain.

Biblical history presents us with a similarly long and dramatic succession of violence in the ancient Land of Israel. The Kings who did 'what was agreeable in the eyes of the Lord' were few. Only some of them knew how to repent from their evil doings. This is why it is necessary that the ultimate and dramatic events predicted by the prophets find their fulfillment in Israel and specifically in Jerusalem.

My thoughts go to the divine and dramatic intervention announced by the prophets Zechariah and Ezekiel. The earthquake they prophecy about has its epicenter at the Mount of Olives.

That will be the only event that will end the hatred and the diabolical cycle of killing and revenge. It will throw Jews, Christians and Muslims into tears and repentance. Without a doubt, this will rapidly lead to the glorious return of Jesus, the King and Messiah accompanied by his celestial hosts in order to neutralize and destroy the satanic forces that push our beautiful planet to the verge of destruction.

May we pray, therefore, that the times be shortened according to the solemn promise of the Savior.

February 26, 2003

Claude Duvernoy

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