

FAVORS ZION MOVEMENT

Russia Gives Official Encouragement to the Jewish Project.

Minister De Plehve's Letter to the Congress in Session at Basel, Switzerland.

BASEL, Switzerland, Aug. 25.—At today's session of the Zionist Congress, Dr. Herzl, the President, submitted to the delegates a letter which he had received from the Russian Minister of the Interior, de Plehve, apparently pledging the support of the Russian Government to the Zionists in their movement to establish an independent State in Palestine. The Minister, in the letter referred to, said his Government was quite favorable to the original programme of Zionism, which can rely on its moral and material support when its practical measures tend to decrease the Jewish population of Russia. Such support might take the form of supporting the Zionist demands on the Ottoman Government and helping the Jewish emigration societies by co-operating with the Jews who are contributing to the necessities of these societies.

The Russian Government, the Minister adds, has been obliged to act toward the Jewish question as the interests of the State require, but it has never deviated from the great principles of morality and humanity. It had recently enlarged the rights of residence in the Jewish region, and he hoped nothing would prevent the development of such measures tending to improve the conditions of the existence of the Russian Jews, especially if emigration decreased their number.

The discussion by the congress of Great Britain's offer of an African settlement to Jewish immigrants promises to be prolonged. The Russian delegates opposed the project, while the German, English, and Italian delegates urge the appointment of a committee of investigation. Judge Sulzberger of Philadelphia spoke to-day in favor of the scheme. It is believed that Dr. Herzl is in favor of the British proposition, and his views are likely to influence the final decision.

The Jewish Daily News of this city has received the following dispatch from Jacob De Haas, Secretary of the American Federation of Zionists, who is attending the Zionist Congress now in session at Basel, Switzerland:

"During a discussion regarding Dr. Herzl's statement that the Russian Government would hereafter lighten the burden of the Jews and favor Zionism, and would allow it to be propagated in Russia, Prof. Richard Gottlieb, President of the American Federation of Zionists, questioned Dr. Herzl in regard to his authority for making such a statement, and asked for some documentary proof of the accuracy of his information. The interpellation of Prof. Gottlieb was seconded to-day by Cyrus Sulzberger, Treasurer of the United Hebrew Charities of New York City, who insisted on the importance of the interviews which Dr. Herzl had recently at St. Petersburg with a number of prominent Russian officials, and asked whether the assurances which he had received were verbal or written. Dr. Herzl, in reply, presented the following communication from Minister Plehve to the Zionist Congress:

"You have expressed the desire to retain proof of your interview with me. I agree to this willingly, in order to avoid all which might arouse exaggerated hopes or doubts and anxiety. I have had the occasion to make known to you the point of view from which the Russian Government at the present moment regards Zionism. This point of view could very easily inspire it with the necessity of exchanging its policy of tolerance for measures dictated by its safeguarding of national interests.

"So long as Zionism consisted in the desire to create an independent State in Palestine and promised to organize the emigration in Russia of a certain number of its Jewish subjects, the Russian Government could very well be favorable to it. But from the moment that this principal object of Zionism is abandoned in order to be replaced by a simple propaganda of the national concentration of the Jews in Russia, it is natural that the Government cannot in any case tolerate this new departure of Zionism. It would not have any other result than to create groups of individuals, perfect strangers to and even hostile to the patriotic sentiments which constitute the strength of each State.

"This is why faith could not be placed in Zionism but on the condition that it return to its old programme of action. It could in that case count upon moral and material support for certain of its practical measures, which would serve to diminish the Jewish population in Russia. This support might consist in protecting the mandatories of the Zionists to the Ottoman Government and in facilitating the work of the emigration societies, and even in assisting these societies, evidently outside the resources of the State, by means of contributions levied on the Jews.

"I think it necessary to add that the Russian Government is obliged to conform its manner of acting toward the Jewish question to the interests of the State, but it has nevertheless never deviated from its great moral principles and the interests of humanity. Quite recently, besides, it has enlarged the rights of residence in the confines of the localities set apart for the Jewish population, and nothing prevents the hope that the development of these measures will serve to ameliorate the conditions of existence of the Russian Jews, especially if emigration diminishes their number."

"Mr. Sulzberger prefaced his remarks to the Congress, by referring to President Roosevelt's splendid action in voicing the respectful demands of the Jewish people of the United States.

"Prof. Max Nordau yesterday delivered a magnificent address and received a great ovation. He advocated the acceptance of the offer of the British Government to provide land for the establishment of a Jewish colony in East Africa, and it is believed the Executive Committee will accept the offer."

The following dispatch was received last evening by Jacob Saphirstein from Dr. Henry Bluestone of 224 Henry Street, who is a United Zionist delegate to the congress at Basel:

"The United Zionists have been victorious after a hard fight and the Federationists are pleading for peace. Cyrus Sulzberger, Francis Montefiore, and Col. Goldsmith of New York are among the delegates. Russia has promised to support the movement. The British Government has offered autonomy to the Jews in the colonies of East Africa. A commission has been appointed to attend to the matter."