



He replaced the "fez" with the Jewish hat

Abdul Hamid sold Palestine and then cried over it

The relationship between Theodor Herzl, the leader of the Zionist movement, and the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II, was neither a joke nor a kind of imagination. Events, their sequence and historical sources confirm this, so let's go together to trace the relationship, how it began, what resulted from it, and how it ended.

Who is Sultan Abdul Hamid?

He is the thirty-fourth ruler of the Ottoman sultans, and his reign is divided into two parts. The first round, which lasted for a year and a half, and he had no real authority in it, and the second round during which he ruled alone, and it lasted nearly thirty years, and it is called the "The round of despotism". This is what prompted many provinces and peoples to seek independence and search for salvation from Ottoman oppression due to Abdul Hamid's policies.

Sultan Abdul Hamid assumed power on August 31 (1876 AD), and he was deposed by an internal movement in which his brother Sultan Muhammad Rashid V participated. Sultan Muhammad Rashid V later assumed power on April 27 (1909 AD). Abdul Hamid was placed under house arrest until his death on February 10 (1918 AD), and he was called the "Red Sultan", and his rule witnessed many major events that changed the world map, such as the war with Russia, Armenia and the Arabs, in addition to an economic and military collapse in his country.

His relationship with the Jews

In the diary of Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement, he talks about his relationship, friendship, and gratitude to Abdul Hamid II, saying: "Abdul Hamid promised us with an independent Jewish state in exchange for paying his debts". That relationship and partnership resulted in the establishment of the State of Israel at the expense of Palestine. The Ottoman Empire was at its worst and its treasury bankrupted. They used to describe it as a sick man. Abdul Hamid found only Herzl to be able to save his declining sultanate, starting secret negotiations and correspondence between them until they came up with a formula titled Money for Palestine. The negotiations over the sale of Palestine lasted for eight years, beginning (1896) and ending (1903 AD), with 5 visits by Herzl to Istanbul.

Abdul Hamid earned £ 20 million in exchange for the sale of Palestine.

in his book "The Ottoman State's attitude towards the Zionist Movement", Dr. Hassan Ali Hallaq mentioned that Abdul Hamid received Herzl with kindness, describing him as a sincere friend. He was asking him to save his country from bankruptcy. Herzl based his negotiations on the Ottomans' urgent need for money, offering Abdul Hamid £ 20 million, divided as follows: Two million for the lands of Palestine and 18 million for the Ottoman Treasury, as a result of which the Jewish immigrants were granted exceptional privileges and facilities. Herzl returned to Europe and held the First Zionist Conference in Basel (1897 AD), announcing his Zionist goals to establish a homeland for the Jewish people under Ottoman auspices.

The mysterious Austrian who opened the door of friendship between Herzl and Abdul Hamid

That person is Philipp Michael de Newlinski (1899-1841), a journalist described as an Austrian politician. He worked as a responsible for political administration at the Austrian embassy in Istanbul, during which he was able to build a close friendship with Sultan Abdul Hamid. He left the diplomatic career in 1879 and resided in Paris as a journalist, then established a news agency in Vienna and published the daily "East Post" newsletter.

In the year (1896 AD), Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement, contacted him and persuaded him to help the Zionist movement, asking him to arrange a meeting with a number of Ottoman leaders, headed by Sultan Abdul Hamid II. From that point on, the story began, which later resulted in the handover of Palestine to the Jews, in a grand bargain between Abd al-Hamid and Herzl.

Theodor Herzl mentions in his diaries that Newlinski told him that Sultan Abdul Hamid trusted him, and even commissioned him to mediate between the Sultanate and the Armenians who launched a war of independence in response to the Ottoman massacres against them. Indeed, Newlinski met them in Brussels, London and Paris to negotiate with them to submit to the Ottoman Empire in exchange for a number of reforms that they had demanded and were previously rejected by the Sultan. Newlinski said that the best way to influence the Sultan is to support him in the Armenian cause, which was confirmed by Herzl in his memoirs of contacts he had made with Armenian leaders in Europe in order to calm down and accept Sultan Abdul Hamid's offer to repair the relationship with them.

The visit of Herzl to Istanbul

After the Austrian mediator Newlinski gained the confidence of Sultan Abdul Hamid, he began to convince him of the viability of the relationship with Herzl, a relationship that turned into a friendship between the Sultan and the founder of the Zionist movement. The Sultan agreed to visit Herzl and meet with the staff of his government, and this was the first visit, but one of five subsequent visits, which strengthened the relationship between the two parties.

Indeed, Newlinski arranged a visit for Herzl to Istanbul on June 18 (1896 AD), which was his first visit. The visit began with a meeting with the son of Prime Minister Javid Pasha, and the reason was to know Herzl's intentions without counting an official meeting. The meeting revolved around three questions, the first about the fate of the holy sites - the Al-Aqsa Mosque - so he promised that they would be outside the borders of the Jewish state so that it would be for all religions and not for anyone alone, then he asked him about the relationship between the Jewish state and Turkey, then Herzl said: "Despite my desire for independence, it is possible to reach a virtual dependency in government, as is the case in Egypt and Bulgaria". The third question was about the type of government in the Jewish state. Herzl's answer was: "An Aristocratic Republic". Javid advised him saying: Never mention the word republic before the Sultan because people in Turkey fear it like death.

On the second day, June 19 (1896 AD) the official meetings began, in order for Herzl to meet with the Grand Vizier Khalil Rifat Pasha, who listened quietly to him and then said: Palestine is great, in which part of it do you think? Herzl said: It depends on the benefits we will provide.

Herzl concluded his first trip to Istanbul by meeting with an official at the Foreign Ministry, Nuri Pasha. Herzl offered to free Turkey from the delegation of protecting the debts that burdened the Sultanate, which aimed to ensure that the Sultanate repaid its international debts, and that almost destroyed the Ottoman economy. Nuri Pasha was pleased with this, but he asked about Islamic places in Palestine, so Herzl reassured him and said: "Remember that we are the only buyers of something that has no value at all and is not expected to benefit others, and we are buyers of it at high prices".

During Herzl's first visit to Istanbul, he could not meet the Sultan, but he recounted in his diaries, quoting the Austrian mediator: "When Newlinski met the Sultan, Abdul Hamid asked him: Are the Jews determined to take Palestine at any cost? Can they not live in any other country, Newlinski replied: Palestine is their cradle and to it they want to return, so the Sultan said: But it is the cradle of other religions as well. So Newlinski said: If the Jews cannot take Palestine, they will go to Argentina".

Herzl left Turkey on June 28 (1896 AD) without meeting the Sultan. But it was not the end, as Herzl explained it in a letter that he sent regarding his discussions with the Ottoman Sultan to Sadiq Khan, the chief rabbi of Paris and France, and the honorary head of the Lovers of Zion movement. He said: "The Sultan took note of my project (Palestine for the Jews). He treated me with distinction in several ways that made me understand that a deal could be concluded if we found the appropriate formula. It is a matter of preserving dignity, and I received the following offer from the Sultan's entourage: The Sultan warmly calls on the Jews to return to their historical homeland and to settle there with self-rule, independent administration and subordinate to the Turkish Empire, and in return they pay him a tax". Herzl also talks about his contacts with Jewish politicians and financiers in London and Paris with a view to getting them involved in the financial aid project.

Between Abdul Hamid and Newlinski

Certainly, the views on Palestine between the Austrian mediator who represented Herzl and Sultan Abdul Hamid were not about the principle of selling Palestine, but only about the administration of Jerusalem. A letter published by (Palestinian Studies Center) between Newlinski and Herzl states: "The Sultan said that he would never give up Jerusalem. The mosque of Omar must remain in the hands of the Muslims at all times. I told him: We will arrange this and we will make Jerusalem outside the borders of the state, thus not for anyone alone and for all at the same time, the sacred place is owned by all believers, the country of common culture and morals".

In the context of the distinguished relationship between the Jews and the Ottoman Sultanate, which is confirmed by Herzl's relationship with the Sultan, the Zionist Organization studied financially supports the Ottoman Sultanate with huge sums. Here, the Palestinian Studies Center also publishes the following document: "Herzl suggested financial aid to the Ottoman Empire in exchange for Palestine. Things went according to the following text: Twenty million Turkish lira is spent to fix the financial situation in Turkey, we pay two million of the current amounts instead of Palestine. This amount is based on the transfer of capital from the present government income, which is eight thousand Turkish lira per year. By using the eighteen million, Turkey was freed from the European delegation of protection. As for the shareholders of the first, second, third and fourth classes, we will make them satisfied with the extension of the delegation by granting them special privileges, higher benefits and an removal of the land ownership.

He tasked the new ruler with providing plots of land to the immigrants and exempting them from insurance.

In a letter from the head of the Zionist movement to the British journalist Sydney Whitman, a friend of Sultan Abdul Hamid, about the Zionist financial aid to Turkey with the aim of establishing the Jewish state in Palestine, Herzl spoke in the letter about the support provided by the Jews to the Ottomans. He also spoke about the willingness to revive the economy of the Ottoman Empire if the Ottoman Sultan accepted the settlement of Jews in Palestine. Herzl stressed that Jewish immigrants to Palestine would become subjects of the Sultan, provided they obtain an absolute right to self-protection and be given the right to purchase land without any restrictions. Herzl asked Whitman to persuade the Sultan to send a representative to attend the Zionist Conference that will be held in August of the year (1897 AD) to ascertain the feelings of the Jews towards the Ottomans.

Herzl's correspondence to his friend, the Sultan

"Our group wishes to offer a graded loan of £ 20 million based on the tax that Jews in Palestine pay to His Majesty. This tax, which is guaranteed by our community, amounts to 100,000£ in the first year and increases to 1 million annually. This gradual growth in the tax relates to the gradual emigration of Jews to Palestine. The detailed workflow is set up in personal meetings to be placed in Istanbul".

In return, His Majesty grants the following privileges: Jewish immigration to Palestine, which will not only be indefinite, but will be encouraged by the royal government in every possible way. Jewish immigrants are given the autonomy guaranteed in international law in the constitution, the government, and the administration of work in the land that is decided for them (Palestine as a semi-independent state). It must be decided in the Istanbul negotiations the detailed form in which the protection of the Sultan will be exercised in Jewish Palestine and how the Jews themselves will preserve order and law through their security forces.

The agreement may take the following form: His Majesty issues a gracious invitation to the Jews to return to the land of their fathers. This invitation will have the force of law and states will be informed of it in advance.

Abdul Hamid's role in selling Palestine to the Jews

In her book "The Role of Sultan Abdul Hamid in Facilitating Zionist Control of Palestine", the writer Fadwa Nuseirat stated that the letters of the two friends Herzl and Abdul Hamid continued to follow up on the implementation of the deal. They were joined by German Kaiser Wilhelm II. He was an ally of the Sultan and visited the Ottoman Empire to support the two men. During the meeting that was held in October of the year (1898 AD) in Istanbul, Wilhelm II showed sympathy for the Zionist aspirations, and the three reached to consolidate partnership relations until the birth of the Israeli homeland. Abdul Hamid pledged to the Kaiser to implement the deal as soon as possible, so he opened the gates of Palestine wide and responded to the immigrants' demands to dismiss the governor of Jerusalem, Tawfiq Pasha, who tried to disrupt their administrative procedures. Abdul Hamid assigned the new governor to provide land to immigrants, and to abolish the laws that restricted them that were issued in the year (1887 AD), so he exempted them from insurance and the requirement to limit residency for a period of 31 days.

He opened the gates of Palestine to the Jews and responded to their demands to remove the ruler of Jerusalem.

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