

# The Unwanted Prince

By Jerry Klinger

The Last Herzl, Barred from Israel because he was a Herzl  
Abandoned, forgotten, sixty-one years later, he came home

He was born wanted yet unwanted in Vienna, April 1918. The only child of a marriage that endured yet quickly fell apart. Shortly after his birth, his mother's mind receded into the darkness of mental illness. She could not cope. She could not function. She could not mother. His father, a moderately successful small businessman, much older than his wife, had to do the unthinkable. He institutionalized his wife. It would be the first of many hospitalizations in one failed sanitarium experience after another. The torment of the parents would not end until their murder in Teresienstadt. His mother's body was burned. His father, unknown, other than he too perished in Teresienstadt.

A nanny was hired to take care of the baby as the household struggled to exist. Her name was Wuth.

At eight days the baby was circumcised and named Stephan. Stephan was not a particularly Jewish name. It was never meant to be. It was Austrian. The family were proud Austrians.

Circumcising Stephan, bringing him into the covenant, linked him to the ancient heritage of the Jewish people. There never was any question of uniting him with his heritage. No one questioned it openly. Savage tongues gossiped secretly. Scandalous rumors said his great-grandmother had not been Jewish. Her background was shrouded in a distant fog of mystery. It was rumored that she was not Jewish but chose to raise her children in the faith of her husband. She risked her social status, her very life, her everything to ensure that her daughters were raised as Jews, even if she never went to a mikvah or practiced her own Catholicism. The rumors, the talk of vicious mouths, were never proven. Stephan was circumcised as a Jew as was his father and his grandfather and his great-grandfather and their fathers before them back to Abraham.

Stephan's grandfather died fourteen years before his birth. Stephan was given the middle name Theodor in his honor. No doubt his grandfather would have approved of his joining in the covenant even though he had come to his own Judaism late in his short life.

Stephan's grandfather had once understood Jewish identity and Judaism as part of a past, an anachronism that had brought only misery, oppression and illusionary hope to the chosen people. Being chosen had not brought anything better to the Jews. Their refusal to accept the dominant culture in which they lived, adopt their values, worship their Gods, had only brought millennia of repeated misery and oppression.

In 19<sup>th</sup> century Austrian emancipation, European liberals sang of Jewish freedom, acceptance, a bright hope tomorrow. It was more than a promise. It was real to his grandfather. Jews who abandoned their medieval caftans and side locks were, unprecedentedly, being welcomed into the

mainstream of Austro-Hungarian life. Jewish intermarriage with non-Jews blossomed. Anti-Semitism did not diminish.

Vienna in 1860 had 7,000 Jews. Vienna in 1910 was home to 150,000 Jews. Vienna, the center and affirmation of all that was good about European culture, opened a new future, a better social and material future, to Jews willing to cross the barrier into Christian society. Stephan's grandfather did not attend synagogue or educate his children Jewishly. The grandfather and his children adorned their Christmas tree while he considered that the best course for the Jew's was to renounce Judaism. The Jewish future lay in joining with the universal, welcoming arms of the Catholic Church. It was the natural evolution. It was the natural solution to the Jewish question he reasoned. In the future there would be no Jewish question. They would be normal.

Only one country was considered on a par with the *Hoch Kultur*, the high culture and social advancement of Austria. France, the birthplace of *liberte, egalite and fraternite* offered as much or more than Austria for the Jewish future. Jews by the thousands, liberated from the oppression of the ghetto shaved their beards, donned the uniforms of Napoleon's liberating armies and gave their blood for France.

French Jews saw themselves as part of France. The French military establishment did not. In the late 19th century, the trumped up charge of betrayal and disloyalty against a French assimilated Jew crushed the Jewish illusion. Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a member of the French military command staff, was falsely accused of heresy - treason against France. He was accused, tried and convicted of passing French military secrets to the Germans. How else could the French military have been defeated so easily in the recent war with Germany? How else could the French army have lost, so disgracefully, Alsace-Lorraine to the "Hun" if not for treason, reasoned the French High Command? The disloyal Jew, the treacherous Jewish officer pretending to be a Frenchman had betrayed France.

The French court convicted Dreyfus, the Jew. Though later exonerated and restored to his rank, Dreyfus was sentenced to infamous Devil's Island, off the coast of French Guiana, where they hoped he would die.

Stephan's grandfather was sent to Paris to cover the Dreyfus story for his newspaper. He had gone to observe the trial accepting that Dreyfus, the French military officer, might have betrayed his country. He never believed that France could or would convict Dreyfus of treason because he was a Jew. He learned he was wrong in Paris. French mouths spit vengeance against the Jew not just against the individual. Dreyfus did not consider himself a Jew. He considered himself a Frenchman and an honorable French officer. Dreyfus was convicted as a Jew and sent to Devil's Island.

The sudden rush of virulent anti-Semitism and systemic hatred of French Jews and all Jews in the heart of European liberalism shocked Stephan's grandfather. Stephan's grandfather had faced anti-Semitism in Vienna. He had joined fencing societies to show that Jews could participate in sports and manly fraternities. Anti-Semitism was declining, vanishing in his rose colored view. Its demise was on the horizon. Jews emerging under emancipation could and were being accepted into normal society.

The Dreyfus story shattered Stephan's grandfather's rose-colored glasses forever. The Jew was not wanted no matter how closely he shaved his beard, how good he was with a rapier, or how much he assimilated. His grandfather realized – in Europe – the Jewish question was real. It was going to remain real. If the world did not want the Jews in Europe there had to be another solution. There had to be somewhere in the world that they could go to and be welcome. There had to be somewhere in the world they could go and show the world they were a normal people. Jews were not just another normal people but an extraordinary people. Once Jewish energies were liberated, they would show the world what good the chosen people could give to humanity.

The grandfather's solution was radical. He proposed a solution so radical for the Jewish question that even the Jews vilified him. The orthodox Jewish community hated him. Liberal Jews, struggling toward emancipation, each in their own country, felt threatened by his rejectionism. He called for the Jews to solve the Jewish question themselves. For those Jews that wished it, a country of Jews, a solution that had not existed since the Romans destroyed Israel almost two thousand years earlier, Stephan's grandfather called for Jews to reach for the Golden Ring. They could and should return to Palestine.

Perhaps it was the confluence of historic events. Maybe it was the universal rise of nationalism. Perhaps it was the merging of jingoistic culture. Maybe it was the re-imposition of horrific Jew hatred in Eastern Europe and all of the Russia's that coalesced into hope. Jewish traditional ability to endure suffering had reached a breaking point. If the Jew was not wanted in Europe there was another proposed solution – return to their ancient homeland.

Twenty-two years before Stephan was born, Stephan's grandfather returned to being a Jew. He returned to Judaism. The Christmas tree was gone from his home forever. The light of the Chanukah candles burned in his window as he took his son and daughters, hand in hand. They learned, they sang the songs of Jewish liberation and of Israel.

Jews around the world, jolted by the cardiac resuscitator of the vision, were invigorated with a dream that might be: a solution, a real solution, to the Jewish problem. Their children would no longer have to suffer. The price - believe. God could still send the Messiah but until then the Jews would no longer wait as victims for the Messianic age. Jewish future, Jewish lives, Jewish hopes would be in Jewish hands.

For nearly eight years, Stephan's grandfather stepped, with electrifying presence, to the very front of the world's stage. He proffered a solution to their *Jewish problem*. The eternal, unwanted Jew would leave; go to their ancient homeland that they had been driven from so many, many years ago. They would go, if they could choose to, to Palestine

Emperors, Kings, Sultans considered the Jewish problem and its final solution. They too wished a solution to the Jew in their midst. In the end, Stephan's grandfather bankrupted his family, destroyed his health, at times sinking into prolonged deep depression. He perished of a heart broken by stress and sickness. His dream unrealized, his hope for his family and his belatedly understood relationship to his people, unfulfilled. His will asked that someday his bones be brought to rest in the land of Palestine, in a reconstituted Jewish State. He wished his children to be buried with him – free at last.

Stephan's grandfather was buried in Vienna's Central Friedhoff, in anguish and pain, as thousands upon thousands of Jews mourned him. The best hope of the Jews, dead. Others picked up his mantle though there was none such as he again. The vision lived on; a fools dream to most, a faith and hope to others.

Stephan's grandfather had three children. His first born, a daughter, he named Pauline. His second child, a son, he named Hans. His third child was Stephan's mother, Trude (Margaret). Of the three, only Trude had had a child.

All three children died under tragic circumstances, each suffering from an inherited malady that reached back into the family for at least five generations – severe, severe – familial depressive illness. The deep, debilitating darkness of familial depressive illness is genetically passed from generation to generation. Each individual sufferer declined into periods of terrible, personal darkness. The disease was not new to the medical world. One of the United State's greatest presidents, Abraham Lincoln, the man who ended the horror of state sanctioned slavery, suffered from horrific bouts with depressive illness. At times, Lincoln's friends would lock him in a room fearing for his safety. They feared that Lincoln, in one of his "black" emotional periods, would harm himself.

Stephan's Uncle and Aunt each suffered terribly in different ways. Stephan never knew them well. His father, Richard Neumann, did his best to protect his son from them. His Uncle and Aunt had little to do with Stephan.

Pauline married early to get away from her "crazy" mother. Her one-year marriage quickly failed and she never remarried.

Pauline's mother, Julie Nachauer, was locked into an unloving emotionally violent relationship with Stephan's grandfather. The two parents grew to detest each other. His grandfather's will left no provision for her to be buried with him. In the end it did not matter. When she died, she was cremated. Her ashes were entrusted to Hans, a boy of 16, who who misplaced them one day. They lived a loveless, dysfunctional life, which they imprinted on their children.

Uncle Hans, his life one failed professional and human relationship after another, sought, like his father, a final solution to the pain and suffering of the Jewish people. He sought an answer, a universal, peaceful solution to the Jewish problem. Hans converted to Catholicism and hoped the Jews would follow his example; so did the Church.

The Church was too limiting, too rigid for Hans. It was not the solution for the Jewish people that he had hoped it would be. Hans left the Catholic Church to become a Baptist. Perhaps, in a simpler Christianity closely linked to what he felt was the true meaning of the Gospels, Hans hoped to find a solution, an end Jewish suffering. The Catholic Church excommunicated him. As a Baptist he realized that the looser structure did not provide an answer to the Jewish problem. The Baptists soon rejected him as well.

His spirit wandered unsuccessfully from one path to God to another. Near the end of his life he returned to Judaism. Han's deep respect for the simple human meaning of the Gospels remained unabated.

It was as a Jew that the news reached him. His older beloved sister Pauline was dead of a drug overdose in Bordeaux. He had failed to protect his family. He was the failed male head of the household and his sister had wandered, like he, from failed relationship to failed relationship. She sank into the morose escape of drugs and death. Hans, in his final letter, wrote of his failed life:

*"If a ritual can really calm our spirits and give us the illusion of being in the company of our beloved dead once more I can't think of anything better than a visit to the Temple: there I can pray for my parents, ask their forgiveness and repent my apostasy before God. I am destitute and sick, unhappy and bitter. I have no home. Nobody pays any attention to the words of a convert. I cannot suddenly turn my back on a community, which offered me its friendship.*

*Without prejudice, even if all my physical and moral impulses urge me to: I have burned all my bridges... What good is the penance which the Church has ordained for my "spiritual healing"! I torture my body in vain: my conscience is torturing me far worse.*

*My life is ruined... Nobody would regret it if I were to put a bullet through my head.*

*Could I undo my errors that way? I realize how right my father had been when he once said: "Only the withered branches fall off a tree – the healthy ones flourish."*

*A Jew remains a Jew, no matter how eagerly he may submit himself to the disciplines of his new religion, how humbly he may place the redeeming cross upon his shoulders for the sake of his former coreligionists, to save them from eternal damnation: a Jew remains a Jew....I can't go on living. I have lost all trust in God, All my life I've tried to strive for the truth, and must admit today at the end of the road that there is nothing but disappointment. Tonight I have said Kaddish for my parents – and for myself, the last descendent of the family. There is nobody who will say Kaddish for me, who went out to find peace – and who may find peace soon..... My instinct has latterly gone all wrong, and I have made one of those irreparable mistakes, which stamp a whole life with failure. Then it is best to scrap it".<sup>1</sup>*

A bullet ended his life, ended his pain. He was buried with his sister in a common grave by a very reluctant Rabbinate forced to act by the Zionists. It was 1930.

Stephan was studying for his Bar Mitzvah in Vienna.

Richard Neumann was nearly financially ruined by the great depression. He struggled mightily to keep his home together. At the same time the heavy expenses of the sanatoriums for Stephan's mother bore heavily on him. The only constant in Stephan's young life was Wuth, his nanny. There was little talk to Stephan about his family. His Aunt and Uncle were dead. His grandfather, a dreamer, had ruined the family financially in pursuit of his dream, killing himself in the process. Stephan knew little of his grandfather, what he believed in or why did anyone care who he was. There was nothing to talk about. The clouds over Europe turned increasingly

dark for all people and especially for Jews. Fear filled the air. Austria and Vienna reemerged as leading centers of European anti-Semitism.

Richard and Trude, in her more lucid moments, worried for their only child's safety, as would any parent. It was clear that evil times were ahead for the Jews of Austria. What to do? They turned, as many Jews did, to the Jewish relief efforts to find safe shelters. Some turned to the Ezra Society to get Jews out of Austria and Germany into other parts, safer parts, of Europe that would have them. Most places did not want Jews. The Neumann's turned to the Zionists to get their only child out of Austria to England. Financially the Zionists had been helping Hans and Pauline while they lived. They agreed to help Stephan. He would go to school in England.

The teenage Stephan left Vienna with tearful faces and sobbing hearts, not knowing for sure when he would see his parents, if ever, again. He was a very young man, with no home, no roots, no family and no clear future. His parents wished him to live and they were sure that that was not assured in Vienna. They were correct. After the Anschluss and the open welcome of Nazism in Vienna, most of Austria's Jews were exterminated. Stephan was safe in England.

Stephan wrote home regularly and received much longed for mail. He was far away, lonely, but at least through the mails he was still home with his family. Stephan still knew little of his grandfather.

There was not much to know about his uncle and aunt, they had been buried and long forgotten. No one wanted to know much about a drug addict and a Christian convert suicide. His mother and father were one set of lives he knew intimately and loved very much. But who was his namesake, Theodor? In England, at boarding school he began to read who his grandfather was. Why did people remember and revere his name even if it was not the same as his.

As Stephan read, he learned, he understood and he believed. He too saw the uncompleted vision of his grandfather. He understood why his grandfather was willing to pay, and did in fact pay with everything, to accomplish the vision that seemingly had failed. But it had not failed totally. The Balfour Declaration was real. The Balfour Declaration was real. Tens of thousands of Jews had gone to Palestine picking up the vision with their hands and their souls. The land, slowly, returned from swamp, miasma, and desolation to productivity. The vision was being built for the lucky few to have gotten there – away from the European death that was unfolding. Stephan read and read everything that he could about his grandfather. Stephan became an ardent believer. Stephan became a Zionist.

It was wartime in 1939. German names were not recommended. Stephan, like many other German/Austrian Jewish refugees, anglicized his name. Stephan could have simply picked a name from the telephone book. Others had done that by running their fingers down a page until they found an English sounding name they liked. Stephan simply anglicized his name. Stephan became Stephen. Theodor became Theodore and Neumann became Norman. He would forever be known as Stephen Theodore Norman.

Stephen graduated from officer training school - an officer of the British Royal Artillery. He was assigned to duty in India and Ceylon. He rose to the rank of Captain of the Royal Artillery. He

also lost contact with his parents and family, as had many other Jews. He feared the worst yet he remained hopeful that somehow their fate would not be as terrible as others. He hoped they would survive the war somehow.

Captain Norman served honorably. The war ended and he like many others was being drawn back to England for discharge. It was late 1945. Passing through the Middle East, he had the opportunity to take a small detour.

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<sup>1</sup> *Princes Without a Home, Modern Zionism and the Strange Fate of Theodor Herzl's Children 1900-1945*. Ilse Steinberger, International Scholars Publications, San Francisco 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Airstop in Israel, Stephen Theodore Norman, Azure Magazine, Autumn 5767, 2006, This essay is reproduced from the Central Zionist Archives, file no. H3425.

<sup>3</sup> *Princes Without a Home, Modern Zionism and the Strange Fate of Theodor Herzl's Children 1900-1945*. Ilse Steinberger, International Scholars Publications, San Francisco 1994.

<sup>4</sup> The Assembly, A Century in the Life of the Adas Israel Hebrew Congregation of Washington, D.C., Stanley Rabinowitz, Ktav Press.

<sup>5</sup> Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem

<sup>6</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balfour\\_Declaration\\_of\\_1917](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balfour_Declaration_of_1917)

## The Unwanted Prince



Plot for Zionist Leaders, Mt. Herzl

By Jerry Klinger

The Last Herzl, Barred from Israel because he was a Herzl  
Abandoned, forgotten, sixty-one years later, he came home

Norman wrote in his diary:

*"My ever-mounting excitement at the prospect of seeing Palestine had been a matter of days: My desire to visit it was of many years' standing. I cannot say that my upbringing had been markedly Jewish or Orthodox. Nor was the idea of Zionism, in spite of my family connection with it, ever at any time rammed down my throat, either at home or subsequently at school and university. But I had found and read my grandfather's writings, which make, I think, fascinating reading to anyone even remotely interested in Judaism, and which were, of course, of considerable interest to me.*

*I had long determined to see this Palestine that had grown from the prayers and longing of centuries of dispersed Jews; that had been shown the way to practical realism by Herzl; and that had, especially in the last thirty years, become socially and economically real.*

*As soon as the news of my leave had come through, I knew I would be going by air: Knew, too, that Palestine lay en route. I was not aware of the length of my stay there, which might be a ninety-minute fuel stop or a two- or three-day "acclimatization halt." How I hoped it would be the latter.*

*It had been my intention to visit Palestine after the completion of my studies in 1939, but the war that had been threatening for so long came at last, and once again my visit was postponed indefinitely. Now, chance had presented me with an opportunity. I determined to make the most of my few hours in the land of Israel. I believed in the idea and the aims of Zionism, and in the moral, ethical, economic, and social need for it that had been made even more urgent and important by world events and the tremendous problems created by the new scientific anti-Semitism of the last decades.*

*The Dakota, caught in an air pocket, bumped, leveled, and bumped once more. The tarmac of the landing strip rushed towards us, appeared below our windows, straightened out. Braking gently, the plane came to a stop, turned, and taxied rapidly to dispersal. A last revving of engines and silence, but only momentarily; the door of the plane was opened, and a red-haired, sandy-faced flight lieutenant appeared, grinned, and said: "Welcome to Palestine. This is Lydda." Another moment and I stood, inhaling fresh air, on the soil of Palestine.*

*I hitched a lift into Tel Aviv as soon as I was free. Driving along good, even roads, we soon reached the outskirts of the city and saw the first Hebrew street sign. Notices warned drivers to proceed slowly and beware of children. I looked around, and there they were, the children. They were playing, like children play in an English street. But here they romped in a Jewish street. I thought of their little brothers and sisters who had not been allowed to play in German streets, and it was good to see these free Jewish children. I had been told, you will be amazed at Jewish youth in Palestine: They are fair and sturdy and handsome. Therefore, I might have known what to expect, yet when I saw them, it was somehow new. These children bore the mark of freedom. It was quite unmistakable: In their bearing, in their eyes. I did not know who they were; workers' children, no doubt, for this was a workers' district, not a residential quarter. They might have been born in Palestine-sabras, cactuses, as they are called-or they might be recent arrivals. Whoever they were, they had the look of freedom. I thought of the dark, sallow, unhappy Jewish children of Europe. I had seen pictures of their faces; their youthful frames had borne the features of old men and women, and now I saw these little ones who look like children again.*



*I strolled around most of the day, occasionally sitting in one of the many boulevard cafés. I watched the busy life of the city before me, and saw also many unhappy continental faces.*

*For in the faces of young Jews in Palestine, there is a quiet strength of feature and of purpose the likes of which I had never witnessed before. It made the contented faces of English Jewry seem decadent. These young Jews and Jewesses, whether they were Palestinian-born or had succeeded in throwing off the shackles of Europe, were strong. And about them was the breath of freedom.*

*To happy people like the English or Americans, such freedom is a birthright; to Jews, it is not. Yet here in Palestine, looking at them dispassionately and even critically, I saw it. You may hear about these things and read of them, and you may be glad; but to understand this look of freedom, you must see it with your own eyes. Only then will you know its meaning. The Jews of the world are an old, old people. But the Jews of Palestine are young - the youngest people in the world. They are not carefree. They have great and difficult problems. And in their hearts they carry the memory of the fate of their brothers and sisters in Europe, a fate that an indifferent world is rapidly forgetting. But they are young and strong, the Jews of Palestine, and they are eager to shoulder their problems, although they will never forget their Jewish brothers and sisters.*

*I had joined up with a fellow traveler from my aircraft, a flying officer of the RAF. Together we went into the Old City..... In the midday sun we stood at the foot of the Wailing Wall, towering high above our heads in space and in time. Untold numbers of Jews had come here throughout the centuries, had wept, and had received consolation. Into its thousands of crevices the prayers of our people had been inserted.*

*I had never been a religious Jew, but the silent, regal dignity of the Wall stirred me deeply.... There were few people present at this time of day. Among them was an old lady who wept quietly as she prayed close to the Wall. A sturdy peasant girl stood near us and kissed the sun-baked stone with infinite tenderness. Walking backwards, she seems almost unable to take her farewell. And strangely, my companion and I had the same feeling. We left slowly and almost unwillingly, casting another and yet another glance back, hesitating to depart from "a sight so touching in its majesty."*

*... I wanted to see something especially representative of Jewish initiative and endeavor, and was delighted when the Jewish Services Club arranged for a visit to Hadassah Hospital. A short drive took us to Mount Scopus, with the beautiful buildings of the university and the hospital. We were met by the secretary and given the history of this magnificent hospital. Its erection had been the work of the American Hadassah, and it ranked among the foremost hospitals in the world. ... The hospital will take all but the very rich: These must go to private clinics or nursing homes. Patient's pay according to their means; the poor, of course, not at all. The hospital takes all patients irrespective of race or creed. Arab women, used throughout the centuries to giving birth at home and without medical assistance, were at first reluctant to come; now, having heard of the wonders of modern medicine, they are arriving in increasing numbers. I saw Arab women of all classes in various parts of the hospital. The presence of these women impressed me. You read so much, these days, of the insoluble differences between Jew and Arab. In this Jewish hospital, unobtrusively and without any fuss, patients were sick people whom it was desired to heal, and there were no differences. ...*

*I returned to Jerusalem early the next morning, for there was so much I still wanted to see. Most of all a room that means a great deal to Jews the world over, to Palestine's Jews even more, and that had for me a great personal interest: The room from his house in Vienna where Theodor Herzl worked for Zionism. It had been transferred bodily to Jerusalem and was situated in the building of the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund.*

*It is difficult for me to describe my feeling as I entered that room and saw, for the first time, all those belongings of which I had heard so much. Loving hands had arranged everything in the precise way it had been in Vienna, forty-one years ago: The pens, the rulers, the blotting paper on the desk were exactly as they had been left. The very building itself had been altered structurally to permit the addition of the alcove window, which had been in Herzl's home. The books, the tables and chairs, all were there, and the topoe which he had worn during his visit to Palestine, and in which, in Roman letters, he had written his Hebrew name: Benjamin Ze'ev. I could have spent many hours in the room.*

*I was shown the golden books of the Jewish National Fund, enormous in their beautiful bindings. I went into the vaults where the Herzl archives are kept. I saw the original manuscripts of Der Judenstaat and of the Diaries, and other writings; files of personal documents and letters, all kept with loving care and devotion. I met the head of the archives and other officials. From Leib Jaffe, that Grand Old Man of Jewry, I heard many tales of the early Congresses. Together with him I visited the Hebrew University. Together we stood in the amphitheater where Balfour had declared this Jewish university open, and we looked for miles across the hills to the Jordan and beyond. Together we stood at Pinsker's grave. He, too, had a vision. Independently, and indeed, before Herzl. Throughout the centuries of the Diaspora, Jews had had that vision: It was given to a few to express the prayer and the dream that had been in the heart of every Jew, if not in his mind.*

*And now the dream was coming true. Daily, hourly, it was becoming more of a reality. A new land was growing out of this old, old country, and it would continue to grow, as surely and irresistibly as the passing of time.*

*Wenn ihr wollt, ist es kein Märchen-if you will it, it will be no fairy tale.*

*You willed it, Jews, with your hearts and with your souls, with your minds and with your bodies, with your work, with your sweat and with your blood, with all the sorrow in your hearts-yes, and with your gladness too. And see, it is no fairy tale"<sup>2</sup>*

Aboard ship, continuing his return to England for discharge, Captain Norman wrote the following of his visit to Israel:

*"Oh, there might be resting places elsewhere in the world for a few of them [Jewish Holocaust refugees]. Here and there a country might take a score or two, an odd hundred. But that, they knew, was no solution, not their salvation...*

*"As I write those words, my thoughts too are of home... But there is no peace. For I can see the homeless faces of Jewry. They have not come home. Sick and despairing they lie in the camps of Europe...*

*"It is not of politics I write. For I am a soldier, and I have no politics. But I write of humanity...*

*My visit to Palestine is over... It is said that to go away is to die a little. And I know that when I went away from Erez Israel, I died a little.*

*"But sure, then, to return is somehow to be reborn.*

*"And I will return."<sup>3</sup>*

Stephen returned to England for a few months of advanced training with the British Commonwealth's Scientific Office. He was posted to the British Embassy in Washington in the summer of 1946. He lived alone in Washington and did not form any deep associations, except with Dr. Eliahu Elath, head of the Jewish Agency in Washington. Dr. Elath knew who he was, the last descendent of Theodor Herzl. The two spoke often of Israel and its future.

It was during this period that Stephen contacted his family servant and nanny, Wuth, in Vienna to try and learn the fate of his parents. He dreaded the contact, but it was something he had to do. In early November he learned that they were dead. His parents had been exterminated.

A deep, unendurable pain rose from within him. It was a typical gray November day in Washington as Stephen walked to the Massachusetts Ave. Bridge spanning Rock Creek Park, 30 meters below. He laid his tweed jacket neatly on the bridge railing and suddenly vaulted to his death.

On November 27 Elath was horrified to read about Stephen's suicide in the Washington papers. As there was no family, he contacted Adas Israel Congregation and undertook the funeral arrangements. Internment was in the Adas Israel cemetery on Alabama Ave, in southeast Washington.

It took a few days to organize, as Stephen was a British citizen and numerous Jewish groups wanted to be present. An honor guard from the Jewish War Veterans, Post #58 attended Stephen. Rabbi Israel Metz of Adas performed the tearful ceremony.

Moshe Frelichov observed in his graveside tribute, "*With the death of Captain Norman, no descendant is left of the great founder of the Zionist movement. The great Herzl now lives only in his great work.*"<sup>4</sup>

The Jewish Agency paid \$100 for the burial.

It was 18 months from the end of the Holocaust. It was 18 months until the birth of the State of Israel. Stephen, mistakenly believing that the darkness would never lift, could not see the sun rising that morning in November.

There is little doubt that the traumatic news of the extermination of Stephen's parents triggered his depressive illness. But it most likely the news was not the only factor that unleashed his terrible response.

Stephen was know to the Jewish community in Palestine, England and America as the last descendent of Theodor Herzl. He was feted with the honored respect of near royalty wherever he traveled – no matter how modestly he tried. It is quite possible that Stephen recognized, or it

possibly was suggested to him by the Palestinian Zionists, that he was the new Herzl returning ready to lead his people home. He was the Prince returned.

He was the only Herzl to have ever been to Palestine. He was the only Herzl to have ever loved the land, the people and to deeply believe in the Zionist dream. He was also, potentially and logically, a major threat to the British.

There never had been any action on his part to suggest to the British any disloyalty except for the fact of who he was. On July 2, 1946 Stephen wrote to Mrs. Stybovitz-Kahn in Haifa. Her father, Jacob Kahn had been a good friend of Herzl and a well know Dutch Banker before the war. Stephen wrote "*I intend to go to Palestine on a long visit in the future, in fact as soon as passport & permit regulations permit. But the dreadful news of the last two days have done nothing to make this easier.*" <sup>5</sup>

The cryptic line is better understood in the context of events. June 29, 1946 was the Black Sabbath in Israeli history. On June 29, 1946, British military operation Agatha unfolded on Saturday – the Jewish Sabbath. Between 10,000 and 25,000 British military and police personnel fanned out across Palestine arresting Jews in an attempt to break the back of the Jewish self defense forces, the Palmach, and disrupting the shadow government of a future Israel. Over 2,700 individuals were arrested. Anyone who might be a leader or a symbol of the future state of Israel including future Prime Minister's David Ben Gurion and Moshe Sharet, were locked up. The British scoured the country for weapons and munitions to hamstring the Jew's ability to defend themselves. British goals were to break the spirit of the Palestinian Jews and defeat the goal of an incipient Jewish State being declared unilaterally. It raised British moral as Jews, fresh from the concentration camps, were rounded up into new camps in what seemed to them a new police state action.

The British promise in the Balfour Declaration of 1917, had become a broken promise, a false promise.

*"November 2nd, 1917.*

*Dear Lord Rothschild,*

*I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet:*

*"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country".*

*I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Arthur James Balfour"*<sup>6</sup>

The British could not and would not let a Herzl return. The British never understood Herzl's vision of a peaceful solution to the Jewish problem. They never understood Herzl's vision of Arab and Jewish cooperation to build up Palestine. Stephen Norman was never granted permission to return. Instead he was assigned to a job in Washington, D.C., 7,000 miles from Palestine.

A direct consequence of the British police state action, to break the back of the Jewish government, occurred on July 22, 1946. The Palmach and the Hagannah held off from additional anti-British action. The Irgun did not. In a carefully planned operation, Irgun volunteers dressed as Arab deliverymen smuggled huge amounts of explosives into the basement of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. The King David was the military command center for the British Mandate government. Warning phone calls were sent to the British and the French before the entire southern wing of the hotel was destroyed in a horrific blast that killed scores of British, Arabs and Jews. It was the worst bombing in Palestinian history surpassed, easily now, by Arab terrorist activity since 1980.

Stephen Norman, the last Herzl, understood clearly, the doorway to Palestine, for Jewish refugees, was cynically blocked by British warships.

It seemed to him there was no hope for the Jewish people. The world did not care. His parents were exterminated; his grandfather's vision a distant, unobtainable dream. He had failed in his wish to become part of the Jewish solution and return to Palestine. The door to Israel was closed to him because he was a Herzl. There was no hope for the Jews or for him.

Loving too deeply, unable to endure the pain, Stephen leaped to his death.

After Stephen's burial, the Zionists, every one of them, the government of Israel, the Jewish agency walked away. He was abandoned and forgotten.

The Jewish Agency never had the time or the funds to place a memorial marking Stephen's grave. Members of the Adas Israel community came together and erected a tombstone for Stephen at their own expense. Another member of the Adas community donated his own gravesite so that the last Herzl would have a resting place.

Stephen was buried in section 13, grave #35, near a fence that acts as a wall separating the Conservative section of the cemetery from the Reform's Washington Hebrew Congregation cemetery.

His headstone is respectful: Stephen Theodore Norman, Captain of Royal Artillery, April 21, 1918, Nov. 25, 1946 Grandson of Theodore Herzl.

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After five year's of bitter struggle against indifference marked by apathy, disinterest, post-Zionism and Zionist sclerosis, Stephen finally came home.

In a belated affirmation of faith by the Jewish people and the State of Israel, the Zionist returned home to the land that he loved, to the people that he loved, to his family.

Stephen Theodore Norman, the last descendent of Theodor Herzl, was reburied on Mt. Herzl, in a ceremony open to the public, at 12:30 pm. Dec. 5, 2007.

Stephen is buried in the plot for Zionist leaders with his family.

*The writer is president of the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation. He was the driving force behind the return of Stephen Norman.*

*Additional information is available at:*

<http://www.jewish-american-society-for-historic-preservation.org/thelastherzl.html>

[www.JASHP.org](http://www.JASHP.org)

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<sup>1</sup> *Princes Without a Home, Modern Zionism and the Strange Fate of Theodor Herzl's Children 1900-1945.* Ilse Steinberger, International Scholars Publications, San Francisco 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Airstop in Israel, Stephen Theodore Norman, Azure Magazine, Autumn 5767, 2006, This essay is reproduced from the Central Zionist Archives, file no. H3425.

<sup>3</sup> *Princes Without a Home, Modern Zionism and the Strange Fate of Theodor Herzl's Children 1900-1945.* Ilse Steinberger, International Scholars Publications, San Francisco 1994.

<sup>4</sup> The Assembly, A Century in the Life of the Adas Israel Hebrew Congregation of Washington, D.C., Stanley Rabinowitz, Ktav Press.

<sup>5</sup> Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem

<sup>6</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balfour\\_Declaration\\_of\\_1917](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balfour_Declaration_of_1917)