Chapter 22

**Choices: Theodor Herzl Creates Modern Zionism**

This activity corresponds to the “Theodor Herzl Creates Modern Zionism” feature in your textbook. The following questions are designed to help you recollect the story of Joan of Arc. Once you have answered the questions in the Comprehension section, submit your answers and move on to the questions in the Analysis and Outside Sources sections. Each section is designed to build upon the one before it, taking you deeper into the subject you are studying. After you have answered all of the questions, you will have the option of emailing your responses to your instructor.

**Introduction**

To be a Jew in the 1880s was a problematic situation for most individual Jews who lived in Central Europe, like Theodor Herzl. Most urban Jews had made accommodations to being a gentile society. Some even became adherents to the German branch of Judaism called Reform Judaism; disparagers of which called it a variety of Protestantism, and not Judaism. During most of his life, Herzl was proud of his Austrian heritage and was a proponent of the German culture. He believed that Judaism was compatible with living in a non-Jewish state. However, it was his experience with the trial of Captain Alfred Dreyfuss in 1895 that convinced him that there could be no normal life for a Jew among gentiles in European societies. His concept of the Jewish homeland was his response to his experience, and his last years would be dedicated to this end: the foundation of Eretz Israel (the land of Israel) in Palestine. Though he would die in 1904 without seeing his dream fulfilled, others would see his vision to fulfillment in light of the Shoah (Holocaust), in the years after the conclusion of World War II.

**Comprehension**

1. Explain how Herzl had experienced anti-Semitism as a youth? What was his realization about the meaning of being a Jew in a gentile society?

2. What was the cultural atmosphere of late nineteenth-century Vienna like? What other accomplished Jews were thriving in Vienna at this time?

3. What was the Dreyfuss Affair? Why did this court-martial so deeply affect Herzl?

**Analysis**

1. What was Herzl’s response to the trial of Captain Dreyfuss? What did his book, *The Jewish State*, advocate in response to the anti-Semitism of the era?

2. What does the term *Zionism* mean? Was Herzl the first to use the term? Why is the term controversial in some quarters?
3. Herzl called a congress of European Jews to meet in Basel, Switzerland in 1897. What was the purpose for this assembly?

Outside Sources

1. The Dreyfuss Trial was covered by another journalist, the great French essayist and novelist, Émile Zola. Investigate Zola’s famous front-page excoriation of the French government in L’Aurore, in the essay entitled, J’accuse! (I accuse!) The text can be found in an English translation, as well as its original French at http://www.chameleon-translations.com/sample-Zola.shtml.

2. View the Internet film, Herzl and Zionism (sic) (והציונות הרצל) at http://www.shofar.net/site/imedia.asp?id=962&Category=3&Prourl=mms://il12.cast-tv.com/list_vod_shofar/Languages/english/Herzel-eng.wmv. This Hebrew language film, with English subtitles, gives a provocative overview of Herzl’s development of his Zionist vision, including documentary evidence that he had advocated mass conversion of Jews in Austria to ease their social and economic problems. The film also communicates the effect of the concept of Zionism upon the subsequent history of Palestine. After watching this film, discuss Herzl’s Zionist vision and the effects Zionism had on Palestine.

3. In response to Herzl’s call for a Jewish homeland, the British government proposed the so-called “Uganda Project.” Investigate this idea and explain what the British were proposing and why the Zionists rejected the idea. Also, during the phase before World War II, members of the Nazi German leadership proposed to implement what they called the “Madagascar Plan.” Explain this idea.