

BEVERLY HILLS *COURIER*

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Beverly Hills Renames Block After Theodor Herzl Today

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Beverly Hills will mark today's 150th anniversary of the birth of Theodor Herzl by renaming the 300 block of North Clark Drive for the father of Zionism.

The Beverly Hills City Council voted 4-1 at its Feb. 2 meeting to name the block where Temple Emanuel is located Herzl Way. The remainder of the street will continue to be known as Clark Drive.

“It's truly an honor that the city of Beverly Hills would acknowledge a visionary whose dream of a Jewish state came to fruition,” Israeli Consul General Jacob Dayan said. “Israel is blooming today because of the dream of Theodor Herzl.

“It gives me tremendous pride to see a piece of Israel's heritage and culture amidst this beautiful city.

“Such a gesture and such an event truly deepen the bond between two communities -- the United States and Israel -- which share the same values that guided Herzl in his vision. These are the values of freedom, democracy and faith.’

Temple Emanuel “is thrilled to have Herzl Way as our address,” Rabbi Laura Geller told City News Service.

“Israel really matters at Temple Emanuel and the idea that every time anyone walks on our street they understand our deep connection to Israel is wonderful,’ Geller said.

The block's new name will have the positive effect on children for years to come, Geller said.

“They'll walk past the street sign and say to their mom or dad, ‘Who was Herzl?’ Geller said.

“It becomes an opportunity for us to continue into future generations a sense of the significance of the creation of the State of Israel and all that it took to make this dream to come true.’

Born on May 2, 1860 in Budapest, Hungary, Herzl was a writer, a playwright and journalist.

Covering the 1894 trial of French Army Capt. Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer unjustly accused of treason, Herzl witnessed mobs shouting “Death to the Jews.”

Herzl resolved that there was only one solution to anti-Semitism -- the mass immigration of Jews to a land that they could call their own -- leading to the start of Zionism, the movement of the Jewish people to return to their homeland, Israel.

Herzl convened and chaired the First Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland in 1897, which led to the formation of the Zionist Organization, the political arm of the Jewish people, which Herzl was elected as its president, a position he held for the rest of his life.

Herzl wrote and met with various world leaders in an attempt to fulfill the Zionist goal of a Jewish homeland in Israel, which would be realized in 1948, 44 years after his death in 1904 at the age of 44.—CNS