The Formation of the Jewish National Movement Through Transnational Exchange: Zionism in Europe up to the First World War

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The longing for Zion, the hope that the dispersed Jews would be brought back to Eretz Israel, the land of Israel, had always been present in Judaism. However, Zionism as an active movement for the return of the Jews to Palestine only emerged in the second half of the 19th century. In the Jewish communities of many European countries, groups formed which supported the Zionist idea and which, in different ways, worked for the realization of that idea. The Jewish national movement emerged from cooperation between individuals and groups across borders. In this process, a multitude of ideologies and concepts developed, which sometimes led to the formation of new groups, and sometimes resulted in the acknowledgement of division. This article deals with the history of Zionism in the decades before the First World War, while focussing on the emergence, function and effect of communication and interaction across national borders. In particular, the article will concentrate on processes of interconnection and network-building which occurred in the context of tension between allegiance to the Jewish nation, rootedness in the nation state, and the cross-border, transnational activities of the Zionists.

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Conditions and Background of the Emergence of the Zionist Movement

In the second half of the 19th century, a variety of factors led to the development and spread of Zionist ideas, and subsequently to the emergence of a national movement with concrete organizational structures. In particular, in the aftermath of the pogroms in the Russian Empire in 1881/1882, the threat posed by anti-Semitism (➜ Media Link #ab) to the Jewish population in eastern Europe was an important motivating factor in attempts to settle endangered Jews in Palestine. However, this threat cannot be considered the sole cause of the emergence of Zionist attitudes. Jewish communities in Europe had experienced several other periods of persecution over the centuries which had not resulted in such a growth in support for the idea of founding a Jewish state and for efforts to colonize Palestine. In the late-19th century, however, this threat was accompanied by other processes, some of which affected the Jewish population alone, and some of which were general European phenomena. In spite of the considerable differences between the Jewish communities in the various European countries, these processes also produced factors which promoted cross-border interactions.

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In the 19th century, the Jewish Diaspora was spread over many countries, though by far the largest concentrations of the Jewish population worldwide were situated in eastern Europe, east-central Europe and south-eastern Europe. Both the legal status of Jewish communities and their internal development differed considerably from region to region. In western Europe, the process of emancipation (➜ Media Link #ac) was well advanced by the end of the 19th century. Legal equality gave Jews new opportunities to integrate themselves economically. However, social integration often proved considerably more difficult.

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The living conditions of Jews in eastern Europe had undergone far-reaching changes since the partitions of Poland in the late-18th century had carved up the Jewish settlement region which had previously belonged to the kingdom of Poland-Lithuania. The Jewish communities of this settlement region were now divided between the Habsburg Empire, Prussia and the Russian Empire, and were thus subject to different legal codes. As a result, the Jewish communities in each of these jurisdictions developed differently. In the territories under Austrian and Russian rule, special forms of taxation, exclusions in the commercial sphere, and restrictions on settlement resulted in the increasing impoverishment of the Jewish population. In 1867, Austria extended legal equality to the Jewish population living in the formerly Polish region of Galicia and in the Bukovina, which had previously belonged to the Ottoman Empire. However, no such emancipation was granted to the Jews in the Russian Empire. The Jewish population in western Europe reacted to the challenges posed by modernity by making greater efforts to integrate, which often meant that Jewish traditions were abandoned. In eastern Europe, by contrast, state restrictions on Jewish settlement, which hampered the migration of Jews into the large cities, and other factors meant that relatively autonomous Jewish communities which retained collective structures far beyond the religious sphere continued to exist on the margin of the majority populations. Parallel to these, a small secular intellectual Jewish elite formed, which initially set its sights on integration and emancipation.

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In addition to industrialization (➜ Media Link #ad) and the consequent changes in the lives of the Jewish communities in Europe, the growth of nationalism among the majority populations among which the Jews lived posed a considerable challenge for Jews, both in western and eastern Europe. However, the reactions to this challenge varied. For many Jews in western Europe, entry into modern societies meant redefining their Jewish existence on a purely confessional basis. While religion had previously strongly influenced all spheres of life among the Jewish population and had been a central factor of identity, a tendency towards acculturation and assimilation spread as a result of increasing secularization. This tendency gave rise to a new mode of self-definition for many Jews in western Europe: They saw themselves as belonging to the nation among which they lived and began to define themselves as Germans (or Englishmen or Frenchmen) of Jewish faith. However, no such frame of reference existed for the various Jewish communities in the multi-ethnic empires of the Habsburgs and the Romanovs. Due to their "wesentlich transterritorial und transnational formierte Lebenswelten", these communities must be described as an "imperiale Bevölkerung".[1]

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As nationalist tendencies in the majority populations were often accompanied by anti-Semitic attitudes which – primarily in eastern Europe – repeatedly expressed themselves in pogroms against the Jewish population, many Jews sought to escape the threat of persecution, impoverishment and legal inequality through emigration. The USA attracted many Jewish migrants in the last decades of the 19th century, but Jews from eastern Europe also migrated to western European states. Massive restrictions in education caused many Jewish students to leave their country of origin to attend university in western Europe. The high degree of mobility among the Jewish population is evidenced by the many "international" biographies – not only of members of the Jewish intelligentsia. As a result of the dire circumstances of the Jewish population in eastern Europe and the pressure to emigrate, various philanthropic initiatives, some of which were organized on a cross-border basis, emerged from the mid-19th century to give humanitarian assistance and to organize emigration.[2] However, contact between Jewish communities in different countries was not only promoted by emigration and the high mobility of the Jewish intelligentsia. Cross-border exchange also occurred in the border regions which the partitions of Poland had created in the previously undivided Jewish settlement regions.

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In the context of the dissolution of traditional Jewish existences and as a result of the spread of nationalism among the peoples among whom they lived, members of the Jewish minority increasingly discussed the question of their own identity. In addition to those who continued to advocate integration into the majority populations, and devout Jews, who largely cut themselves off from life outside their religious communities, another very heterogeneous group emerged which thought of the Jews as a nation in the modern sense. Some members of this group set their sights on a form of autonomy within the Diaspora, while others promoted the idea of the foundation of a nation state for the Jews.

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Emergence of Zionist Ideas and Initial Attempts at Unification

The idea of a return to *Eretz Israel* had always existed among the Jews living in the Diaspora. This idea was expressed

in prayers and was often connected with messianic ideas – with the yearning for a reunification of the Jews in Israel, in Zion,[3] and the coming of the Messiah. However, although there had always been Jews in Palestine, and Zion had always had a central significance as the symbol of the origins of Judaism, of Jewish unity and of redemption, until well into the 19th century there had been no mass migration to Palestine and no plans to prepare for the beginning of the messianic age by founding a new kingdom in Palestine. Indeed, such actions would have contradicted the religious belief that it was God who would lead the Jews home and redeem them, and would have constituted an attempt by humans to pre-empt the will of God. From the Middle Ages, the idea of founding a Jewish state had been mooted a number of times – sometimes by Christians, and sometimes by Jews as a form of protection against persecution. However, the idea received not much support and, as a result, had little effect.[4] By the 19th century, however, the living conditions of the Jewish communities and the attitudes of Jewish people had changed to such an extent that there was increasing debate about how the suffering of parts of the Jewish population could be alleviated by means other than the assistance of philanthropic organizations, how the impending loss of Jewish traditions and their existence as a distinct community could be prevented, and how the Jewish people could escape from the role of the despised outsider.

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Not surprisingly, the first modern Zionist plans, which remained heavily influenced by religion, originated in regions where conflict between different nationalities was particularly virulent in the middle of the 19th century, but which were also interfaces between Jewish life in the west and the east.[5] A native of Sarajevo and employed as a rabbi in Zemun in Serbia, Yehuda Alkalai (1798–1878) (➜ Media Link #af) attempted in his writings to provide a religious justification for practical efforts to settle Palestine, and he called on Jews to return to Palestine. In 1862, Zvi Hirsch Kalischer (1795–1874) (➜ Media Link #ag), who was born in Poznan (*Posen*) and worked as a rabbi in Torun (*Thorn*), published the treatise *Drishat Zion* ("Seeking Zion" in Hebrew), which was reprinted several times during his lifetime. In it, he not only advocated the return of the Jews to *Eretz Israel* and the colonization of the land, but even suggested concrete preparatory steps.[6] The socialist thinker Moses Hess (1812–1875) (➜ Media Link #ah), who was a native of the Rhineland, also saw the solution of the Jewish dilemma as lying in the settlement of Palestine. However, he clearly viewed the Jewish problem as a national problem. In his book *Rom und Jerusalem. Die letzte Nationalitätsfrage* (*Rome and Jerusalem. The Last Nationality Question*) of 1862, he called for the creation of a Jewish-socialist polity in Palestine, and he equated these efforts with the movements for national independence of the 19th century.[7] However, these concepts received little attention in the 1860s. Efforts to settle Jews in Palestine thus initially remained the preserve of the philanthropic initiatives, though cross-border contact between individual Zionist thinkers had already been established.[8]

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Such concepts only gained broader resonance as a result of the waves of pogroms in the Russian Empire. In the context of deteriorating living conditions for Jews in eastern Europe and mass migration westward, and before a background of anti-Semitism also in western Europe and the fear of its further intensification as a result of the immigration of eastern Jews, a consciousness spread among the Jewish communities of many countries in the last two decades of the 19th century: many now felt that they faced a challenge which threatened them all and which required unified action. Supporting the colonization of Palestine was considered as one possible path. However, this path was not only in itself controversial. Even among its advocates, there was disagreement, in particular, over whether colonization should be accompanied by efforts to promote a Jewish nation and calls for a Jewish state.

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In many cities in the Russian Empire, small groups of supporters of the Zionist idea were formed in the early 1880s. These called themselves *Hovevei Zion* ("Friends of Zion" in Hebrew). With their support, a group of students from Kharkov settled in Palestine. In the subsequent years, further colonies were established by Jews from the Russian Empire and Romania.[9] These early settlers were the pioneers of the first wave of migration, or *Aliyah* ("ascent" in Hebrew), which lasted until 1904. In this context, the ideas of the Odessa doctor Leon Pinsker (1821–1891) (➜ Media Link #ai) gained considerable support. Influenced by the pogroms in the Russian Empire, he had come to the view that only a re-nationalization of the Jews and the re-establishment of a territory for the Jews could help to resolve the problems of the Jewish population. Even before he committed his ideas to paper, Pinsker toured the European capitals and conversed with Jewish intellectuals and community leaders. Almost everywhere, however, his ideas were met with indifference or outright rejection. Only the London lawyer and member of parliament Arthur Cohen (1830–1914) (➜ Media Link #aj) encouraged him to write down his ideas and publish them.[10]

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Pinsker published his pamphlet *"Autoemancipation!" Mahnruf an seine Stammesgenossen von einem russischen Juden* (*"Auto-emancipation!" An Appeal to His People by a Russian Jew*) in 1882.[11] Fearing Russian censorship and the wrath of the police, he published anonymously and in German through a publisher in Berlin.[12] In the pamphlet, he expresses his pessimism regarding the possibility of the assimilation of the Jews: "Die Juden bilden im Schoosse der Völker, unter denen sie leben, thatsächlich ein heterogenes Element, welches von keiner Nation assimiliert zu werden vermag, demgemäss auch von keiner Nation gut vertragen werden kann."[13] Pinsker saw a fear of Jews in the peoples among which the Jews were living. He believed this phobia was caused by the fact that these peoples found the Jews ominous because they were a nation which continued to exist only as an intellectual and spiritual entity without the existence of a state.[14] The attainment of legal and political equality could not remedy this, according to Pinsker, but only the self-emancipation of the Jews as a nation outside of the European continent in a single consolidated territory, which need not be in Palestine.

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With his absolute rejection of the possibility of the emancipation of the Jews within Europe and his new interpretation of the Jewish nation, Pinsker's musings went far beyond an attempt to alleviate the misery of the Jewish population in eastern Europe. Jews in Germany, in particular, saw this pamphlet, which was published in Berlin, as a challenge to them and an attack on their concept of themselves as "Germans of Jewish faith". Most German reviewers rejected the ideas of the author with varying degrees of zeal. The rabbi and writer Ludwig Philippson (1811–1889) (➜ Media Link #ak) defended efforts to integrate by stating that it was the destiny of the Jews "innerhalb der Nationen zu leben und sich diesen zu amalgamieren durch das Vaterland, in welchem sie geboren, durch die Sprache, die ihre Muttersprache ist, durch die Volksbildung und den in dieser waltenden nationalen Geist ...".[15] The historian Moritz Steinschneider (1816–1907) (➜ Media Link #al) even called for a protest against the pamphlet, considering this type of propaganda to be more dangerous than anti-Semitism.[16]

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In the Russian Empire, on the other hand, reactions were much more positive.[17] Only a few weeks later, the pamphlet appeared in Russian translation in the newspaper *Rassvet* ("Dawn" in Russian). It was subsequently translated into Yiddish and many other languages.[18] In particular, for the *Hovevei Zion* movement Pinsker's pamphlet was of central importance. In 1883, Pinsker became president of the association of *Hovevei Zion* societies, which was founded in Odessa. Together with the societies founded in Congress Poland, he sought to expand the movement and intensify contact across borders.[19] In Germany, societies were founded from 1882 to 1884 in Kattowitz, Berlin and Heidelberg with the aim of supporting the settlement of displaced Jews from eastern Europe in Palestine.[20] In 1884, representatives of societies in Russia, Romania, Germany, England and France came together for the first time at a conference in Kattowitz. There it became clear that the idea of the colonization of Palestine had supporters also in western Europe, but these were sceptical of Pinsker's national tendencies.[21]

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In Pinsker's view, it was essential for the survival of the movement that the societies in the Russian Empire maintain links to groups abroad: "Ohne diesen Stützpunkt verlieren wir unseren moralischen Halt und ist auch unsere praktische Wirksamkeit gefährdet."[22] However, even though great efforts were made to disseminate the results of the conference and to elicit support in letters and through personal contact, the movement grew very little in western Europe.[23] But the ideas of the Russian Zionists were particularly well received in Vienna, due in part to the newspaper *Selbst-Emancipation! Zeitschrift für die nationalen, socialen und politischen Interessen des jüdischen Stamme* (*Self-emancipation! Newspaper for the National, Social and Political Interests of the Jewish People*), (➜ Media Link #am) which Nathan Birnbaum (1864–1937) (➜ Media Link #an) founded there in 1885 having been inspired by Pinsker's pamphlet. The newspaper was intended to counteract the "selbstmörderische Lehre von der Nothwendigkeit des Aufgehens unseres Volkes in die anderen Nationen" by providing, among other things, "Originalberichte aus allen Ländern, in denen Söhne unseres Stammes wohnen".[24]

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Settlement efforts in Palestine faced serious problems in the early 1890s. Due to the difficult living conditions and the lack of agricultural knowledge, the settlements remained dependent on the financial and administrative assistance of European institutions, and efforts to establish an organizational or political basis upon which further settlement could occur proved unsuccessful. Among the critics of the colonization project was the Odessa writer Asher Ginsberg (1856–1927) (➜ Media Link #ao), who criticized the inadequate preparation of the settlers, not only in practical, but

also in spiritual matters. In various writings, which were published under the pseudonym Achad Ha'am (Hebrew for "one of the people"), Ginsberg identified an internal crisis of the Jewish people and called for the spiritual and cultural renewal of the Jewish people as a first step.[25] Others, such as the Russo-Jewish Committee in London, primarily criticized the poor living conditions and the lack of infrastructure in Palestine.[26]

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Immense financial resources and comprehensive organizational structures were needed to improve the situation in the existing settlements, but this would have required the combined efforts of the eastern European and western European Jews. However, efforts to establish cross-border cooperation rarely progressed past initial personal contacts. While the joining together of the *Hovevei Zion* societies in eastern Europe brought together Zionists from various regions, thereby laying the foundation for the subsequent expansion of the Zionist organization, the societies in western Europe consisted mainly of small circles of sympathizers, including many students from eastern Europe. The majority of western European Jews, while wishing to help Jews from eastern Europe, tended to remain sceptical towards the idea of a Jewish national movement.[27] Therefore, in the early phase of the Zionist movement, it was the idea of the unity of all Jews as a nation, rather than a religious community, that hampered the formation of a close connection between east and west, and meant that cross-border cooperation stalled soon after it had started.

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Zionist Programme and Network-Building

A new phase in the development of modern Zionism began with the appearance of Theodor Herzl (1860–1904) (➔ Media Link #ap) and with the Zionist congress which he initiated and which brought together supporters of the Zionist idea and representatives of existing groups from various countries and laid the foundations for an international organization. During his time as a student in Vienna and as the Paris correspondent for the Viennese newspaper *Neue Freie Presse*, Herzl, who came from an assimilated Jewish family in Pest in Hungary, witnessed the growth of modern anti-Semitism. By the mid-1890s, he had – without any knowledge of the writings of Moses Hess or Leon Pinsker – come to the belief that only the existence of a state of their own could solve the problems of the Jewish population in the Diaspora.

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In *Der Judenstaat. Versuch einer modernen Lösung der Judenfrage*[28] (*A Jewish State. An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*), a political manifesto published in Vienna in 1896, Herzl described the problems of Jews in modern society as a national question. He claimed that the Jews were held together as a people by the threat of "äußere Feinde"[29] ("external enemies") and their driving force was the "Judennot" ("suffering of the Jews").[30] According to Herzl, this national question could only be solved by making it an issue of world politics.[31] Herzl's book met with rejection and outrage among many assimilated Jews in western Europe. Many accused him of delivering new ammunition to anti-Semites by stressing the unity of the Jews as a people and by his plans for the foundation of a state. Many Zionist groups, however, enthusiastically welcomed the book, which was quickly translated into several languages and made Herzl famous among Jews throughout the world as a proponent of a secular Jewish nationalism.[32]

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According to Herzl, the "Erforschung der Zustände, Erkenntnis der politischen Weltlage, und Vereinigung aller Kräfte"[33] were required for the success of Zionism, and an international discussion was needed to solve the Jewish question.[34] Thanks in part to his great oratory skills, his personality and his professional experience,[35] supporters of Zionism from various countries were quickly united in an organized movement. This nascent movement was able to make contact with existing groups that were limited to a locality or region, at the same time new modes of expression and organs were created to promote transnational connections. Of central importance were the Zionist congresses, which occurred annually from 1897 and, later, every two years. As a forum for Jews worldwide, the congresses were intended to promote Jewish national self-definition and to serve as an organ for representing Jewish national policies similar to a parliament.[36]

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The First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897 was attended by over 200 delegates from at least 17 countries; about one-third of the participants came from eastern Europe.[37] The stated goal of the Basel Programme, which was adopted at this congress, was the "Schaffung einer öffentlich-rechtlich gesicherten Heimstätte in Palästina" by the

"Gliederung und Zusammenfassung der gesamten Judenschaft durch geeignete örtliche und allgemeine Veranstaltungen nach den Landesgesetzen".[38] The structure of the World Zionist Organization (WZO), which was founded at the congress in Basel, provided for the attendance at regular congresses of delegates elected by the participating national associations (i.e., Zionist associations in the various countries). The executive was composed of representatives from all the countries, the number of representatives from each country being proportional to the relative size of the national associations. The congress also introduced a membership contribution. By paying this *Schekel*, members gained the right to vote for delegates. The congresses were thus designed as a representative institution legitimized by the votes of Zionists throughout the world, the decisions of which were to be implemented by the executive, which was responsible to the congress.[39] In the subsequent decades, the WZO, which largely remained a European organization up to the First World War, was the central element in the Zionist network. The spread and intensification of this network was driven by a variety of factors: the expansion of the institutions of the WZO, the diplomatic efforts of Theodor Herzl, increasing communication within the movement, and the work of the national associations.

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The institutional expansion of the organization proceeded in small steps. The Jewish Colonial Trust, which was intended to enable the Zionist movement to financially support colonization by offering credit independently of philanthropic support, was founded in 1902 in London after the share capital had to a large degree been accumulated by means of small subscriptions by supporters of the Zionist movement. In particular, the fact that it was not a philanthropic campaign, but a productive enterprise aimed at supporting Zionist activity motivated many to subscribe to a project, which, however, although it combined the contributions of many, could not ultimately achieve much with the small capital it possessed.[40] The Jewish National Fund (JNF), which was founded in 1901, was charged with buying land in Palestine and leasing it to Jews. Thanks to the generous support of Zionists, the fund became one of the most important organs of the WZO. Its land acquisitions were central to the Zionist project and the fund helped to develop a culture of regular donations, particularly in western Europe, through activities such as the "olive tree donation" and the sale of postage stamps. It also combined the circulation of literature with its collection activities. These factors made the fund a strong connecting force and identifying factor within the Zionist movement. The JNF itself can therefore be considered a "Quelle und Vermittler zionistischer Nationalkultur" ("source and conduit of Zionist national culture").[41]

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In contrast to earlier Zionist groupings, Herzl rejected immediate colonization in Palestine. Instead, he insisted that the desired territory – at the end of the 19th century, he too assumed that this territory would be in Palestine – must first be secured legally. Until this had occurred, Jews could prepare for mass settlement, but no new attempts at actual settlement should be made. Herzl's diplomatic efforts to secure legal assurances followed a number of different avenues. As president of the WZO from the First Zionist Congress to his death in 1904, he lobbied many people – in some cases at the highest level. He was in contact, for example, with the Turkish Sultan and the German Kaiser, with the Russian ministers Viacheslav K. Plehve (1846–1904) (➔ Media Link #aq) and Sergei Iu. Witte (1849–1915) (➔ Media Link #ar), as well as with Pope Pius X (1835–1914) (➔ Media Link #as). However, he was unable to secure the desired charter for the settlement of Palestine from Turkey, or an assurance that Germany would grant protectorate status to a Jewish Palestine. The British government offered to allocate a territory in East Africa for Jewish settlement (the so-called "Uganda Plan"), a suggestion which led to bitter disagreements within the Zionist organization.[42] But even prior to this debate, Herzl's diplomatic efforts met with varying reactions within the movement. On the one hand, his negotiations with important figures were welcomed as a sign that the WZO could influence world politics and was a force with which powers were prepared to negotiate. On the other hand, Herzl's concentration on political Zionism met with opposition which later led to new cross-border coalitions within the WZO.

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The intensification of communication between supporters of Zionism in different countries played a large part in the development and strengthening of the Zionist network. Personal contact and exchange between representatives of the various national associations at congresses and within the executive were particularly important in this regard. However, written communication in the form of the circulation of minutes of meetings, newspapers (the newspaper *Die Welt* [*The World*], (➔ Media Link #at) which was founded by Herzl in 1897, was particularly important in this regard and quickly became a central forum for Zionists throughout the world), pamphlets in the respective national languages, and letter correspondence also played a role.

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The structure of the WZO with its subdivision into national associations corresponded to Theodor Herzl's view of Zionism as a pan-Jewish movement intended to unite all Jewries. However, this required that each Jewish population had a good knowledge of the other Jewries, as well as an understanding for their distinctive characteristics and attitudes. For this reason, in the first years of the existence of the WZO, particular emphasis was placed on exchange between the Jewish populations in the east and the west, and the discussion of the situation of the Jews, the state of Zionism in each country, and the expectations which the Jews in each country had of the Zionist movement. It was often necessary to challenge deep-rooted prejudices. After the First Zionist Congress, Theodor Herzl himself expressed surprise at the participation of so many highly educated delegates from eastern Europe who consciously lived their lives as Jews:

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> ... wir hatten uns nie etwas anderes vorgestellt, als daß sie auf unsere geistige Hilfe und Führung angewiesen seien. Und da tauchte vor uns auf dem Baseler Kongreß ein russisches Judentum auf, das wir in solcher Kulturstärke nicht erwartet hatten. ... Und welche Beschämung für uns, die wir geglaubt hatten, ihnen überlegen zu sein. ... Ich muß daran denken, wie man mir in der ersten Zeit oft entgegengehalten hatte: Sie werden nur die russischen Juden für die Sache gewinnen. Wenn man mir das heute wieder sagte, würde ich antworten: Das genügt![43]

However, increased communication between east and west did not only have the effect of forging connections. It also highlighted differences and distances. With the intensification of communication across borders and the discussion of topics which divided Jews in the west and the east, the collective term "eastern Jews" (*Ostjuden*) was increasingly used to refer collectively to Jewries with very different religious, political and cultural backgrounds.[44] At the same time, the perception emerged that there were two distinct groups within the Jewish population. Referred to as "western Jews" (*Westjuden*) and "eastern Jews" (*Ostjuden*), these groups represented two different "Kulturpersönlichkeiten" ("cultural personalities").[45] A central role was played in the exchange between east and west by the many Jewish intellectuals who were of eastern European descent, but had been living in western Europe for a long time. They were proficient in many languages. They were acquainted – many at first hand – with the way of life of Jews in eastern Europe and the difficulties they faced, but they were also acquainted with the situation and the views of Jews in western Europe – in many cases they knew the circumstances of Jews in several different countries in western Europe. Due to their special knowledge, contacts and mobility, many Zionists who had lived "European" lives occupied leading positions in the WZO and often functioned as mediators between east and west.[46]

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The societies and associations at national level in the various countries formed the foundations of the Zionist movement. The structure of these associations varied in accordance with the laws of the various jurisdictions. On the one hand, their function was to disseminate the Zionist programme, to attract new members, to collect members' contributions, and to elect delegates to be sent to the congresses, whose responsibility it was to report back to the national organizations on how the congress went and what had been decided. On the other hand, the members of the national associations discussed the work of the executive in the context of the conditions in their own countries, and, taking into account the central decisions, developed their own programmes. These discussions revealed diverging opinions about the goal of the organization and the means of achieving it. In discussions of the Zionist programme, Zionists in western Europe generally approved of the goal of founding a state and of the initial emphasis on diplomatic efforts.[47] Debate among western European Jews centred around whether Zionism was about creating a place of refuge for persecuted eastern European Jews, or whether the Jewish people must be defined as a nation and unmolested Jews in the west should therefore also consider themselves as potential migrants to the Jewish homeland.[48] The contention that a Jewish "nation" existed challenged particularly Zionists living in western European nation states to clearly define their relationship to the majority population and to reconsider the relationship between citizenship and national identity.[49]

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In the Zionist groups in eastern Europe, on the other hand, there was strong criticism of the priorities set by the central WZO institution, the executive, which was initially located in Vienna, then in Cologne, and then in Berlin between 1911 and 1915. In eastern Europe, the foundation of a state and the search for a political solution was seen as less urgent. It was felt that precedence should be given to providing concrete assistance to Jews in danger and in poverty by intensifying support for colonization and emigration. Many also emphasized the need for cultural work within the Zionist movement.[50] Under Theodor Herzl, the policies of the central organ were guided by the attitudes of the western European Jews. However, at the beginning of the 20th century there were already signs of change, which was brought about not

only by the failure of Herzl's diplomatic efforts, but also by more intensive communication between western European Jews and eastern European Jews, as well as the growing influence of the latter.

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Fragmentation of the WZO and Intensification of the Transnational Network

With the formation of "factions", not only the structure of the WZO was transformed, but also the function of the Zionist congresses. They changed from being a platform for bringing together the national associations to becoming a forum which now accommodated not only the national associations but also interest groups which were active across borders.[51] The formation of parties as a result of internal differences over the aim and policies of Zionism resulted, on the one hand, in a fragmentation of the WZO and, on the other hand, further promoted exchange and cooperation across borders and thus intensified the transnational Zionist network.

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The impending fragmentation of the organization manifested itself publicly for the first time at the Fifth Zionist Congress in 1901 with the appearance of the Democratic Faction, as 37 delegates from various countries rejected purely political Zionism and demanded the creation of a new, secular Jewish culture in Hebrew and, to this end, called for the foundation of a Hebrew university in Jerusalem, as well as a publisher for Zionist publications. Led by the Viennese religious philosopher Martin Buber (1878–1965) (➜ Media Link #au) and the Belorussian chemist Chaim Weizmann (1874–1952) (➜ Media Link #av), who had been educated in western Europe, this group subscribed to a cultural Zionism similar to that of Achad Ha'am. Among the achievements of this group was the establishment of a permanent cultural commission with members from several countries, which was tasked with reporting on cultural activities in the various countries.[52] Shortly afterwards, the *Jüdische Verlag* (Jewish Publishers) was founded with the help of young cultural Zionists from a variety of countries. It was hoped that this publishing company would build a bridge between western and eastern Jews and provide a centre for artists and intellectuals "von dem aus ihre Werke in alle Kreise des Volkes getragen werden sollen".[53] In the subsequent years, it became an essential publishing organ of the Zionist movement.[54]

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The appearance of the Democratic Faction and the discussion of cultural questions within the WZO provoked the formation of another cross-border group. Due to their rejection of a secular, Jewish-national education, religious Zionists under the leadership of Rabbi Isaak Jacob Reines (1839–1915) (➜ Media Link #aw) formed the grouping *Mizrachi* (abbreviation of *Merkas Ruchani,* or "Spiritual Centre" in Hebrew) in 1902 in Vilnius. While supporting the political Zionism of Herzl, this grouping also considered the promotion of religious education to be a central element of their Zionist work. With its head office in Lida in Belarus, the grouping quickly founded affiliated groups in many parts of the Russian Empire, as well as in Galicia, Romania, Austria, Hungary, Germany, England and Switzerland. At the first international conference in Poszony (Bratislava) in 1904, the worldwide *Mizrachi* organization was formally established on the basis of the Basel Programme.[55] The Zionists who participated in this new organization did not belong to the national associations of the WZO. Instead, this grouping sent its own delegates to the Zionist congresses.[56]

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Also founded in the Russian Empire, socialist Zionism developed into another movement that was organized on a cross-border basis within the Zionist movement. Among the ranks of the competing socialist-Zionist parties, the party *Poale Zion* (Hebrew for "Workers of Zion"), which had Marxist leanings, was particularly prominent. Its supporters tried to combine political Zionism with the promotion of the class interests of the Jewish proletariat and efforts to establish socialism. In 1907, *Poale Zion* founded its own worldwide association whose sub-groups mostly belonged to the WZO.[57]

<div align="right">▲ 31</div>

Theodor Herzl's support for the East Africa plan of the British led to the formation of new groupings within the WZO. These groups were largely characterized by an east-west division. In western Europe, many supporters of the plan to establish a Jewish polity on its own territory had no objection to this territory being outside Palestine. However, the majority of leading Zionists in the Russian Empire rejected such solutions and issued an ultimatum to Herzl to reject the East Africa plan in writing or risk splitting the WZO.[58] The majority of religious Zionists supported the East Africa project because they were primarily interested in saving lives and because they did not support messianic claims.[59] On

the other hand, the issue of territory brought about a new alliance between Zionists in the east and west. In 1905, the Zionist Socialist Workers Party, which was founded in the Russian Empire under Nachman Syrkin (1868–1924) (➔ Media Link #ax), joined forces with other territorial Zionist groups which rejected the existence of an organic connection between Zionism and Palestine.[60] This alliance led to the formation of the Jewish Territorial Organization led by the English writer and politician Israel Zangwill (1864–1926) (➔ Media Link #ay), which founded affiliated groups in eastern and western Europe, and subsequently in the USA, and had its central organs in various eastern European cities.[61]

▲32

Due to the fact that political Zionism under Theodor Herzl did not achieve any concrete successes, and due to the increasing influence of Zionists in the Russian Empire, a new direction developed within the WZO after Herzl's death, which combined the demands for practical work in Palestine – made primarily by eastern European Zionists – with the concepts of political Zionism. The pogroms in the Russian Empire in 1905 resulted in a second great wave of emigration among the Jewish population, thus setting in train the second *Aliyah*. As a result, providing concrete assistance became again a primary goal and activity of the WZO, whose leaders cooperated with representatives of the Jewish Territorial Organization, the Anglo-Jewish Association and the *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden* (Aid Society of German Jews) in 1906 to organize assistance for the victims of the pogroms.[62] From the Eighth Zionist Congress in The Hague[63] in 1907 onward, the synthesis of practical and political Zionism called for by Chaim Weizmann and others became more and more dominant. Referred to as "synthetic" or "general" Zionism, this became the main direction of the WZO and it devoted considerable attention to settlement work in Palestine.[64]

▲33

In the context of the changed political circumstances in the Russian Empire after 1905, the national association there formulated a programme with clear political demands regarding the position of Jews within the empire. This programme identified efforts to secure national minority rights as an important prerequisite for the realization of Zionism. Among other things, this programme set the goal of "Anerkennung der jüdischen Nationalität als eines Ganzen mit dem Selbstverwaltungsrechte in allen Angelegenheiten des jüdischen Lebens".[65] Such demands – which were directed at the Russian Empire, reflected conditions in that multi-ethnic empire, and sought to define the Jewish population as a national minority – initially rather hindered interaction and integration across state borders. In the longer term, however, the question of national minority rights contributed to the formation of a new cross-border coalition. In response to the demands of the Zionists from the Russian Empire for "efforts to improve the present" (*Gegenwartsarbeit*), the mostly Zionist-dominated Jewish delegations at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 – with the exception of the French and British delegations – created the cross-border alliance *Comité des Délégations Juives* and submitted a memorandum regarding minority rights in the nation states in east central Europe, southeast Europe and eastern Europe which had been newly created or had their borders redrawn. As advocate of minorities, the committee helped bring about the signing of the minority protection treaties. The Zionist-dominated committee continued to exist after the conference ended. It made a name for itself by campaigning vehemently for the full implementation of the rules regarding the protection of Jews and other minorities, and it cooperated with the European Nationalities Congress from 1925.[66]

▲34

Prior to the First World War, however, it was not possible to form an alliance to promote this issue. Although the WZO could do very little during the First World War, the movement achieved its first big diplomatic success – primarily through the personal efforts of leading Zionists – with the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917, which expressed British support for the foundation of a national Jewish homeland in Palestine and signalled Britain's cooperation in the realization of that aim. Even though the declaration did not offer any assurances regarding the foundation of a Jewish state, it was nonetheless celebrated by Zionists as a great political success. As a first official document promising support for Zionist demands, the Balfour Declaration had a strong integrating effect within the Zionist movement in the period after the war, in spite of a number of critical reactions to the declaration.

▲35

Function and Effect of Cross-Border Communication and Interaction

Early Zionism can be described as a "nationale Bewegung mit kosmopolitischem Hintergrund"[67] not only because of the transnational lives of leading Zionists and their high degree of mobility. The many connections that came into being on different levels also meant that the Jewish national movement was defined to a large degree by cross-border communi-

cation and interaction. While cooperation across borders was viewed by some Zionists primarily as a prerequisite for the organization of assistance for Jews in danger in the east, other Zionists saw such cooperation as an important demonstration of the national allegiance of the various Jewries.[68] Unification across borders was considered an important factor on the path to the formation of a Jewish nation. Additionally, the cross-border organization, the holding of Zionist congresses in various countries, and the establishment of contacts with various European governments were intended to demonstrate that the concerns of the Zionist movement were relevant to all states and that the "Judenfrage" ("Jewish question") was a "politische Weltfrage" ("global political question")[69] that could only be solved by the states collectively.

▲ 36

From the beginning, efforts were made to establish a broad international basis for the movement, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to establish a strong organizational structure with central institutions. The high degree of mobility of leading Zionists and their wide-ranging network of contacts provided the foundation upon which the movement could be expanded worldwide. Initially, this expansion was influenced by the relationship between the central organization and the national associations, as well as by discussions of the social and political conditions in the countries of origin of the members, as well as in Palestine. An important element which built bridges between the various Jewish populations – with their individual traditions and cultures – and promoted connections on all levels was the founding of a "zionistische Kultur" ("Zionist culture") with newspapers and gatherings, but also with heroes, myths, shared memories, values and symbols, which served as collective points of reference and unifying factors, and contributed to the establishment of a "jüdische Öffentlichkeit" ("Jewish public sphere").[70]

▲ 37

After only a few years, diverging views about the methods and aim of the movement lead to the founding of associations with individual interests, in which Zionists from the national associations in western and eastern Europe came together. These groupings caused fragmentation within the WZO. On the other hand, however, they had the effect of intensifying cooperation between Zionists across state borders. Moreover, efforts to establish an international basis for the Zionist movement were not only directed at the Jewish population itself, but also engaged with the non-Jewish population and sought to secure broad support among that population for Zionist aims. Of primary importance in this regard were the diplomatic efforts of Theodor Herzl, his travels and his conversations with leading politicians.

▲ 38

The Zionist movement was founded as a "jüdische Nationalbewegung" ("Jewish national movement") and, due to the dispersal of the Jewish population in the Diaspora, was aimed at population groups of varying sizes in various states, including nation states and multi-ethnic empires. As a result, the development of the Zionist movement occurred in the tension between nationality, transnationality and internationality. While the concept of the Jewish people as a "nation" was frequently combined with calls for communication, interaction and connections across borders, as well as for the formation of a "national culture" and "national consciousness" connecting the various Jewish communities, these efforts led to an open discussion – particularly within the Jewish population rooted in the western European nation states – about how important the Zionist movement should be for Jewish identity in Europe.[71] Among Jewish opponents of Zionism, these discussions often resulted in the rejection of cross-border links which went beyond philanthropic initiatives. In the case of Zionists, however, these discussions often led them to re-define their attachment to nation states and their national allegiance.

▲ 39

In the history of the development of the Zionist movement, processes of transfer and transformation of very different types played a decisive role. The emergence of Zionist ideas was closely connected with processes of social change within, as well as outside of, the Jewish communities in many countries of the Diaspora. However, during the foundation and spread of the WZO, and during the formation of its programme and concepts, transformational processes which can be attributed to cross-border communication, interaction and transfer were particularly important. Programmes, concepts and resolutions which emerged in the committees of the Zionist movement were discussed and adopted in a variety of contexts, usually with a degree of adjustment to the respective conditions. Positions adopted in debates about the policies of the central organization and about ideas and concepts of Zionists in other countries often constituted adaptations of the actual programme of the movement. These adaptations in turn affected the overall concept of the WZO and led to new developments, as demonstrated by the emergence of "synthetic Zionism". The effects of processes of change brought about by exchange are not only evident within the WZO, but also with regard to other "kul-

turelle Systeme" ("cultural systems").[72] Due primarily to its international basis, the Zionist movement also elicited reactions from those large portions of the Jewish communities which did not engage with Zionism (➜ Media Link #az), and these reactions were also sometimes cross-border in nature, such as the foundation of an international alliance of Orthodox Jewish opponent of the secular Zionist movement in 1912 under the name "Agudat Israel". The goals, programme and modus operandi of the transnational Zionist network also prompted many European governments to engage with Zionism. Up to the First World War, however, the demands of the Zionists were not a subject of multilateral politics. Nonetheless, Zionist politicians gained acceptance as negotiating partners on the European stage and as advocates of European minority policies on the basis of national-cultural autonomy.

▲40

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Appendix

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Notes

1. ^ Diner, Editorial 2002, see p. 11. ("essentially trans-territorial and transnational lives", "imperial population", transl. by N.W.)
2. ^ Most notable among these organizations was the Alliance Israélite Universelle, which was founded in Paris in 1860 and had committees in various states.
3. ^ In biblical times, the name "Zion" referred to the Temple Mount. The meaning subsequently expanded to refer to the city of Jerusalem and, subsequently, to Eretz Israel in general. (See Haumann, Zionismus und die Krise 1998, p. 10f., which also lists further literature on the topic).
4. ^ See Gelber, Zur Vorgeschichte des Zionismus 1927.
5. ^ See Brenner, Zionismus 2002, p. 10f.
6. ^ See Avineri, Profile 1998, pp. 65–73. On Alkalai and Kalischer, see also Rahe, Frühzionismus und Judentum 1988, pp. 127–139.
7. ^ See Avineri, Profile 1998, p. 58.
8. ^ See, for example, Haber, Josef Natonek 1997.

9. ^ See Laqueur, A History 2003, pp. 75f. On the early settlement in Palestine, see also Penslar, Zionism and Technocracy 1991.
10. ^ See Schoeps, Leon Pinsker 2005, pp. 23–25.
11. ^ Pinsker, "Autoemancipation!" 1882.
12. ^ See Schoeps, Leon Pinsker 2005, p. 30.
13. ^ Pinsker, "Autoemancipation!" 1882, p. 1. ("In reality, the Jews constitute a heterogeneous element in the midst of the peoples among which they live. This element cannot be assimilated by any nation and it is therefore not tolerated well by any nation.", transl. by N.W.)
14. ^ See ibid., p. 4.
15. ^ Philippson, Eine alte Frage, No. 40 (1882), p. 651. ("to live within nations and to amalgamate with these according to the fatherland in which they were born, the language which is their mother tongue, and the education and the national sentiments which pervade it ...", transl. by N.W.)
16. ^ See Schoeps, Leon Pinsker 2005, p. 31.
17. ^ See Bilz, Hovevei Zion 2007, pp. 52f.
18. ^ See Avrahami, The Editions of Jehuda Leib Pinsker's Auto–Emancipation 1973.
19. ^ See Schoeps, Einleitung 2005, pp. 11f.
20. ^ See Reinharz, Dokumente 1981, documents 1–3.
21. ^ See Schoeps, Einleitung 2005, p. 13.
22. ^ Leon Pinsker to Isaak Rülf, 7th/19th of January 1885, in: Schoeps, Palästinaliebe 2005, p. 169. ("Without this support we lose our moral ground and our practical effectiveness is also endangered.", transl. by N.W.)
23. ^ See the letters to and from Pinsker reproduced in Schoeps, Palästinaliebe 2005.
24. ^ Programm, in: Selbst-Emancipation 1 (1885), vol. 1, p. 1. ("suicidal doctrine of the necessity of the incorporation of our nation into the other nations", "first-hand reports from all the countries in which the sons of our nation live", transl. by N.W.)
25. ^ See Rahe, Frühzionismus 1988, pp. 272–295.
26. ^ See Russo-Jewish Committee, Bericht 1892.
27. ^ See Eloni, Zionismus in Deutschland 1987, pp. 36–72.
28. ^ Edition refered to here: Herzl, Theodor: Der Judenstaat: Versuch einer modernen Lösung der Judenfrage, Zürich 1988.
29. ^ Herzl, Judenstaat 1988, p. 19.
30. ^ Ibid., p. 6.
31. ^ Ibid., p. 14.
32. ^ See Brenner, Zionismus 2002, p. 40; Dethloff, Einleitung 1986, pp. 43f.; Schoeps, Theodor Herzl 2004, p. 92.
33. ^ [Herzl], Programm, in: Die Welt 1 (1897), vol. 1, p. 1. ("investigation of conditions, recognition of the global political situation, and the unification of all [Jewish] forces", transl. by N.W.)
34. ^ See the speech by Theodor Herzl at the First Zionist Congress, in: Zionisten-Congress 1898, pp. 4–9, here p. 5.
35. ^ See Avineri, Profile 1998, pp. 111–113.
36. ^ See ibid., p. 85. On the purpose of the congresses, see the speech by Theodor Herzl at the First Zionist Congress, in: Zionisten-Congress 1898, pp. 4–9.
37. ^ See Gelber, Art. "Congress, Zionist" 1971, p. 206.
38. ^ Zionisten-Congress 1898, pp. 114, 119. ("creation of a legally protected home in Palestine", " organization and unification of the entire Jewish people by means of suitable local and general organizations in compliance with the laws of the respective countries", transl. by N.W.)
39. ^ See Organisations-Statut, in: Die Welt 3 (1899), vol. 37, pp. 2–3.
40. ^ See Böhm, Bewegung 1935, p. 224; Grunwald, Art. "Jewish Colonial Trust Ltd. (Jüdische Colonialbank)" 1971, p. 620.
41. ^ Berkowitz, Zionist Culture 1993, pp. 165–187, here p. 165. See also Böhm, Bewegung 1935, pp. 226–229.
42. ^ See Vital, The Afflictions of the Jews 1996, pp. 119–132.
43. ^ Herzl, Der Baseler Kongreß 1934, pp. 198f. ("... we had always expected that they would be dependent on us for intellectual assistance and leadership. But at the congress in Basel, we experienced a Russian Jewry with a cultural strength which we had not expected ... And how humbling it was for us, having believed ourselves to be superior to them. ... I remember how often people said to me at the beginning 'You will only win the Russian Jews for your cause'. If anyone said that to me today, I would answer 'They are enough!'", transl. by N.W.)
44. ^ See Schwara, Unterwegs 2007, p. 201.
45. ^ M. A. [Mathias Acher], Polnische Juden 1916/17, p. 561. On this question, see also the speech by Nathan Birnbaum at the First Zionist Congress, in: Zionisten-Congress 1898, pp. 82–94.
46. ^ David Wolffsohn and Chaim Weizmann are prime examples of this. On Wolffsohn, see Petry, David Wolffsohn 1998, p. 166. On Chaim Weizmann, see Reinharz, Chaim Weizmann 1993.

47. ^ See Haumann, Zionismus und die Krise 1998, pp. 26f.
48. ^ See Lowenstein, Zionismus 2000, pp. 290f.
49. ^ See Reinharz, Dokumente 1981, p. XXX. See also ibid. the documents 19, 20, 36, 43; Weill, Art. "France, Zionism in" 1971, p. 357; Zakheim, The British Reaction to Zionism 1999.
50. ^ These demands were made particularly vociferously at the conference of Zionists in the Russian Empire in Minsk in 1902. See the report of the conference by Davis Trietsch (Ein russisch-juedischer Kongress, in: Ost und West 2 (1902), vol. 10, columns 649–656) and the speech of Achad Ha'am (Über die Kultur, in: Ost und West 2 (1902), vol. 10, columns 655–660). See also Svet, Russkie evrei 1960, p. 255; Schwara, Zinismus 1998, pp. 153–155.
51. ^ It was decided at the Fifth Zionist Congress in 1905 to allow the founding of so-called "federations" within the WZO. (See Organisations-Statut, in: Die Welt 6 (1902), vol. 2, pp. 10f.).
52. ^ See Stenographisches Protokoll der Verhandlungen des V. Zionisten-Congresses 1901.
53. ^ Document 27: Die Gründung des "Jüdischen Verlages", in: Reinharz, Dokumente 1981, pp. 60f. ("from which their works could be disseminated to all sections of the [Jewish] people", transl. by N.W.)
54. ^ See Schenker, Der Jüdische Verlag 2003.
55. ^ See Goldschlag, Art. "Mizrahi" 1971, p. 792.
56. ^ See Böhm, Bewegung 1935, p. 206.
57. ^ See Shimoni, The Zionist Ideology 1995, pp. 170–189.
58. ^ See Svet, Russkie evrei 1960, p. 260.
59. ^ See Morgenstern, Von Frankfurt nach Jerusalem 1995, pp. 26f.
60. ^ See Laqueur, History 2003, p. 414.
61. ^ See Hirschler, Art. "Jewish Territorial Organization" 1971.
62. ^ See Böhm, Bewegung 1935, pp. 377–379.
63. ^ By choosing this city, in which the Second International Peace Conference was taking place simultaneously, the Zionist hoped to draw more attention to the "Jewish question" as an international issue. (See Böhm, Bewegung 1935, pp. 380f.).
64. ^ See Shimoni, Zionist Ideology 1995, pp. 113–116.
65. ^ Quoted from the German translation in: Jüdische Rundschau 22 (1917), vol. 23, p. 190. ("recognition of the Jewish nationality as a whole with the right of self-administration in all areas of Jewish life", transl. by N.W.)
66. ^ See Nesemann, Jüdische Diplomatie und Minderheitenrecht 2005; Viefhaus, Die Minderheitenfrage 1960.
67. ^ Brenner, Zionismus 2002, p. 51. ("national movement with a cosmopolitan background", transl. by N.W.)
68. ^ See, for example, the lead article in Die Welt on the occasion of the First Zionist Congress: "[...] it has been shown that the Jewish national idea has the power to combine in a unified mass all the people who are linguistically, socially, politically and religiously diverse. This was vehemently denied up until now and this in particular was proved in the most dazzling manner in Basel." (Die Welt 1 (1897), vol. 15, p. 2, transl. by N.W.).
69. ^ Herzl, Judenstaat 1988, p. 14.
70. ^ Berkowitz, Die Schaffung einer jüdischen Öffentlichkeit 2002, pp. 79f.; Berkowitz, Zionist Culture 1993, p. 6.
71. ^ See Lowenstein, Ideologie 2000, p. 290.
72. ^ On the effect which the processes of adaptation had on the movement, see Hödl, Zum Wandel 2006, p. 81.

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