

ZIONISM: A NINETEENTH CENTURY ETHNIC NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

“A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people.” – Mohandas Gandhi

The development of many new nation-states denotes the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Europe. Countries such as Ireland, Greece, Czechoslovakia, and others developed in this period of modernization and rising nationalism. Though each of these countries varied in their process toward nationalism, there are numerous similarities found between their movements toward nationhood. Historians such as Eric Hobsbawn, Ernest Gellar, and Rogers Brubaker have sought to define this concept of nationalization for decades using economics, industrialization, and politics as foundational points of motivation for these movements; however, recent trends in social and cultural history have challenged traditional views of nationalization by suggesting that ethnicity and culture play a valuable role in national movements. According to Anthony Smith, in his book *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, nations are not static, but rather they require ethnic cores to survive. He goes on to explain that the cross-class mobilization of nations generates more participation in democratic structures; furthermore, nations need homelands, heroes and golden ages.¹ Smith argues for the significant role that cultural attributes of memory, value, myth and symbolism have on the establishment of nations. It is this argument that shaped the interest for writing this thesis.

Ethnicity and culture provide foundational elements in unifying people groups including language, traditions, and even religion. Traditional interpretations of nationalism transform through an understanding of these ethnic and cultural elements. Recent histories by Mark Suzman (*Ethnic Nationalism and State Power*, 1999) and Aviel Roshwald (*Nationalism and the*

¹ Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (New York: Basil Blackwell Inc., 1986).

Fall of Empires, 2001) have re-examined the nationalist movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Tracing the ethnic and cultural backgrounds for the movements, Suzman and Roshwald found that more than political or economic movements the nations that emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth century were grounded in ethnic and cultural tides.

What separates an ethnic nationalist movement from a nationalist movement? Nationalist movements specifically involve people taking initiative to collectively work together and create a nation-state that reflects the principles and ideology of the people. Nationalist movements do not necessarily mean that the group of people has the same background, whereas ethnic nationalist movements focus on people with similar cultural and ethnic origins. Similarities in language, ethnic backgrounds, cultural traditions, and religion create a framework for evaluating the movement of people groups as they developed into nations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

One people group typically left out of the discussion of nineteenth and twentieth century nationalist movements is the Jewish people. Since the Babylonian captivity of the Israelites in the 586 BC, a desire to return to their homeland developed among some of the Jewish people. Unified by culture, traditions, and religion, the Jewish population survived captivity, pogroms, and anti-Semitism over the years; however, their desire to return to their homeland did not subside. Instead, it expanded into an ideology from the 1890s through the end of the Great War that brought about a rise of nationalism among the Jews, which ultimately resulted in the creation of the modern nation of Israel. Before the 1890s, Jewish scholars focused on keeping Jewish religion, history, and traditions alive despite the widespread assimilation of Jews throughout Europe and the world. Jewish literature consisted of interpretations of the Torah and affirmed strict traditionalist views of Judaism. From the 1890s to 1917, Jewish literature addressed issues

that European societies faced, applied Enlightenment philosophy to Jewish thought, and used attributes of new schools of thought such as socialism, Marxism and nationalism, which resulted in a nationalist movement among the Jews. Although not termed Zionism until 1891 by publicist Nathan Birnbaum, the Zionist movement of the Jews connected directly to the events and thoughts surrounding nineteenth century Europe. Jewish leaders who demonstrated the transformation of Zionist ideology from nationalism to the establishment of the State of Israel include: Moses Hess, Peretz Smolenskin, Leon Pinsker, Theodor Herzl, Ahad Ha'am, Jacob Klatzkin, A.D. Gordon, Rabbi A. I. Kook, Ze'ev Jaboninsky, Richard Gottheil, Mordecai Kaplan, and Chaim Weizmann. Through each of these writers' works, Zionism's appeal moved beyond intellectuals and reached the common Jew. Zionism was able to spread throughout the world through cultural, political and physical movements of the Jews.

Historians typically separate the Zionist Movement from other nationalist movements because of its religious and political natures. The fact that the ideology originated in the late nineteenth century, yet the Jewish people did not form their own nation until 1948 conflicts with traditional trends in forming nations. In addition, there are still disputes as to whether the state of Israel is a nation and if it should remain a nation. However, recent additions by David Vital, Mark Suzman, and Michael Berkowitz to the historiography of the Zionist movement have begun to transform the perspective that many observe in Zionist studies and examine this movement in the context of other ethnic nationalist movements.

Before the 1970s, early Zionist leaders conveyed the information about the Zionist movement. Men like Theodor Herzl, Ahad Ha'am and Chaim Weismann presented their ideology, beliefs, and passions about the ongoing movement through letters, newspaper articles, speeches, and diaries. The leader who wrote the first history of the Zionist ideology and

movement was Max Nordau. Born in Pest, Hungary in 1848, Max Nordau grew up with the strong traditions of Jewish culture and religion. However, Nordau walked away from the Jewish life and pursued careers in journalism and medicine. He became a leading critic of contemporary European art, social and political behaviors.² As anti-Semitism grew throughout Europe, Nordau returned to his Jewish roots out of a sense of duty to the Jewish people. He became actively involved in the World Zionist Congresses, and supported Theodor Herzl's leadership.

With this perspective, Nordau wrote the first history of the Zionist movement, *Zionism and Anti-Semitism* (1903). Nordau explained, "Comparatively few, both among the Gentiles and the Jews themselves, have a perfectly clear notion of the aims and ways of Zionism"³ This pamphlet provided the first look at the ideas and origins of Zionism. Nordau defined Zionism as, "a new word for a very old object, in so far as it merely expresses the yearning of the Jewish people for Zion."⁴ From this perspective, Nordau examined the Jewish culture as it progressed through the period of Enlightenment and into the late nineteenth century. Nordau argued that the origins of Zionism are twofold—within and without the Jewish society. First, Zionism grew out of Jewish traditions and cultures that survived from the ancient days of civilization. Then, "Zionism is the effect of two impulses that came from without—first, the principle of nationality, which for half a century ruled thought and feeling in Europe, and governed the politics of the world; secondly, Anti-Semitism, from which the Jews of all countries have more or less to

² American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, "Max Nordau: Biography," *Jewish Virtual Library*, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/index.html>.

³ Max Nordau, *Zionism and Anti-Semitism* (New York: Scott-Thaw Company, 1903), 9.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

suffer.”⁵ This twofold argument continues to guide most recent trends in the historiography of Zionism.

Following Nordau, Zionist historiography took a different line focusing on the political achievements of Zionism’s leaders and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Leaders, such as Chaim Weizmann, published autobiographies focusing on the political achievements of the Jewish people. Historians sought to legitimize the rights of the Jewish people to Palestine based on the Balfour Declaration, White Paper Agreement, and the tragedy of the Holocaust. Other books examine the First Arab-Israeli War. Many assume that Zionism is the right to the territory gained in 1948, rather than the process of nationalism that allowed for the cultural and political achievements that the Jews accomplished throughout this period.⁶

The 1970s brought in a new era of focus for the Zionism movement—the roots and origins of Zionism. Walter Laqueur wrote *A History of Zionism—From the French Revolution to the Establishment of the State of Israel*, which still is the foundational work on the subject. Laqueur was born in Breslau, Germany (now Poland) on May 26, 1921 to Jewish parents who were victims of the Holocaust. Having moved to the British Mandate of Palestine in 1938, Laqueur pursued a career as a European historian focusing on nineteenth and twentieth century Russian, German and Middle Eastern History. He has published many books and articles on Zionism, Israeli history, the Holocaust, Communism, and the diplomatic history of the Cold War. In addition, he was a visiting professor of history and government at numerous well-known universities around the globe.

⁵ Max Nordau, *Zionism and Anti-Semitism*, 17.

⁶ Examples of this include: *Jews Among the Nations* by Erich Kahler, *Arabs and Jews in the Middle East: A Tragedy of Errors* by James W. Parkes, and *Under Fire: Israel 20-year struggle for survival* by Donald Robinson

His *A History of Zionism* laid the foundation for studies in Zionism because it was the first complete study of the subject from its origins to the establishment of the State of Israel. Laqueur defined Zionism as “the belief in the existence of a common past and a common future for the Jewish people.”⁷ He explained that the Zionist Movement could only be understood within a twofold context: the history of Jewish and European culture and anti-Semitism. This provided an overview of Zionism and reestablished the origins of Zionist ideology.

Building off Laqueur, David Vital wrote the next comprehensive history of the Zionist Movement. As the Nahum Goldmann Professor of Diplomacy at Tel Aviv University, Vital has written extensively on British foreign policy, the development of small nation-states, and Zionism. Using new Hebrew, Yiddish, Russian, German, French and English sources, Vital wrote a three-part history of Zionism *The Origins of Zionism; Zionism: The Formative Years;* and *Zionism: The Crucial Phase*.

Vital’s trilogy on Zionism presented foundational arguments for Zionism being a part of the ethnic national movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He argued, “Zionism recreated the Jews as a political nation; and by doing so it revolutionized their collective and private lives.”⁸ Vital examined the movement in the context of European history, pointing to Jewish social collectivity and religious beliefs as unifying factors for the divergent group of Eastern and Western Jews. He argued “this movement for revival and radical change in Jewry did attain results which may fairly be called revolutionary and, further, that its definitive form dates from 1897.”⁹ Dating the origins of Zionist ideology to the First Zionist Congress in 1897,

⁷ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (New York: Schocken Books, 2003), 589.

⁸ David Vital, *The Origins of Zionism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1980), 371.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 372.

Vital advanced the argument that the establishment of modern Zionism built off of age-old customs within the Jewish life-style and beliefs, and Jews' ability to organize and unify to accomplish their longing for a home in Palestine. Though he focused on their organization and ability to spread Zionist ideology around the world Jewish community, Vital attributed Jewish culture and traditions as being the factors that promoted nationalist tendencies.

Following Vital, historians of the 1990s wrote more comparative histories. Mark Suzman followed with *Ethnic Nationalism and State Power: the rise of Irish nationalism, Afrikaner nationalism and Zionism*. In his examination of the concepts of ethnic nationalism, Suzman finds similarities in cultural traditions, religion, and organization between three nationalist movements of the twentieth century. The significance of this work is its inclusion of Zionism as a nationalist movement of the twentieth century, and its focus “not on how nationalist movements form, but what makes them successful.”¹⁰ Suzman refers back to Anthony Smith's ethnic core as a key to examining nationalism's appeal and its ability to build both the ethnic nation and the political state. He argued, “the prior existence of some sort of ethnic consciousness among a substantial portion of the target population is critical for the emergence of ethnic nationalism.”¹¹ As nationalist ideology spread to the masses through culture, religion and organization, Suzman demonstrated that the process of building the internationally recognized political state occurred. This framework is vital to understanding the Zionist movement and placing it within the context of the concepts of ethnic nationalism during the twentieth century.

The most recent development in the historiography of the Zionist movement is Michael Berkowitz, a professor of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at University College London. In 2003 he

¹⁰ Mark Suzman, *Ethnic Nationalism and State Power: the rise of Irish nationalism, Afrikaner nationalism and Zionism* (Great Britain: Macmillan, 1999), 7.

¹¹ Ibid., 16.

edited a collection of articles entitled *Nationalism, Zionism, and Ethnic Mobilization of the Jews from 1900 and Beyond*. This book differs from earlier Zionist histories because it focuses on areas that historians have undervalued such as art, music, cultural anthropology, mass media, literature, political symbolism, and religion. In examining these areas, Berkowitz sought to show “how nationalism and ethnic nationalism happened, and how it has worked in practice for the Jews... [in order to] explore how religious identities become secularized and nationalized, and to interrogate the interplay between identity formation and ethnic politics.”¹² Berkowitz’s argument links Suzman’s framework of study with Anthony Smith’s argument for an ethnic core. Specifically, Berkowitz demonstrated an ethnic core among the Jewish population in the early twentieth century. His study examined various influences of culture, but left further study toward the ethnic mobilization of Jews open, especially on the subject of religion.

The historiography of the early Zionist Movement is still limited in its exploration of its effect on Jewish society because many historians look ahead to the actual creation of the state of Israel and the continually growing issues with Palestine, rather than focusing on the origins and early developments of the movement. This paper however builds off of the recent arguments and frameworks established by Michael Berkowitz and Mark Suzman for the significance of the early Zionist Movement, and its similarities to other ethnic nationalist movements evolving throughout Europe during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Defining nationalism as “the process of ethnic mobilization around nationalist organizations that develop, promote, and disseminate an ethnically exclusive ideology premised on state control,”¹³ this paper will examine the details of Jewish culture and religious traditions that laid the foundation for Zionist

¹² Michael Berkowitz, *Nationalism, Zionism, and Ethnic Mobilization of the Jews from 1900 and Beyond* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2004), 5.

¹³ Suzman, 14.

ideology and determination to create the State of Israel. Through the examination of Jewish culture, religion and organizational structure, using newspaper articles, diaries and journals of Zionist leaders, archives from the World Zionist Organization, and various secondary sources, this paper argues that the Zionist Movement from 1897-1917, should be considered one of the ethnic nationalist movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Chapter one will examine the Jewish culture and traditions, demonstrating the deep unity that developed among the Jewish people. Tracing the details of Jewish history from ancient Middle Eastern civilization until its developments in the early twentieth century, this chapter will show the customs and traditions that have existed for centuries among the Jewish population. Building on Berkowitz's examination of cultural elements that create national unity, this chapter will also examine language, art, music, education, and symbolism within Jewish culture. It will argue that though there was differences within the Jewish population, these traditions and customs linked them in their efforts to establish the Jewish state in Palestine, and without this initial unification, their nationalist efforts would have been thwarted.

Building upon the ancient history and cultural traditions of the Jewish population, chapter two will specifically examine Judaism within the context of the Zionist movement. It will demonstrate the ability of religion to create a deeper, spiritual unity among the masses, which pushes them together toward their goal of establishing the Jewish State in Palestine. Religion is one of the most overlooked areas of study in the concept of nationalism; however, within the context Europe's growing anti-Semitism, Judaism inspires, encourages and motivates the masses' involvement in the Zionist revolution. Instead of hindering its success, religion enhances the success of the Zionist movement in early twentieth century Europe.

The final chapter draws on the unity established in cultural traditions and religion and examines the organization of the early Zionist movement and its ability to move toward the process of state building. Looking at propaganda, newspapers, finances, migration of people, and the operations of the Zionist organizations, this chapter argues that the strength of the institutions within the Congresses and the World Zionist Organization lies within the national unity previously developed through the cultural and religious traditions. As the twentieth century progresses, and the world eventually moves to war, the Zionist movement continued to gain strength and recognition on the international stage.

The chapters that follow do not pretend to be an exhaustive study of their subject, and they do not fully examine the extent of religion's influence in ethnic nationalist movements. Though there is examination of religion's influence in Jewish nationalism, there is still further research to complete in order to comprehend fully the effects of religion on the development of cultural unity and ethnic nationalism. Judaism itself has a long history with much detail that can be more accurately understood by obtaining fluency in the Hebrew language. In the end, this paper seeks to demonstrate to readers that the significance and lasting success of the Zionists' tendencies are attributable to being rooted in their Jewish cultural traditions and religious beliefs and their ability to develop organizational policies that build on both concepts, so as to demonstrate that the Zionist movement follows similar tendencies of other ethnic nationalist movements of the nineteenth and twentieth century.

CHAPTER ONE

JEWISH CULTURAL TRADITIONS

"This is the kernel of the problem, as we see it: *the Jews comprise a distinctive element among the nations under which they dwell, and as such can neither assimilate nor be readily digested by any nation.*" –Leon Pinsker

Jewish culture and traditions trace back to the days when ancient Egypt ruled the known world of the Nile, and Mesopotamian civilizations consisted of developing and maintaining the strongest cities. Nationalism and the development of a political state were far from the minds of the Jewish people, or so it would seem; however, it is during this period that the same basic traditions exemplified in the early Zionist movement from 1897-1917 took root within this people. By tracing these deeply rooted cultural traditions through the examination of language, literature, music, art, education and symbols, this chapter will demonstrate the lasting Jewish cultural traditions that existed into the twentieth century despite the lack of unity prior to the First Zionist Congress in 1897.

To understand the cultural traditions, this chapter will first briefly examine Jewish history from Abraham's covenant to Herzl's cry for a Jewish State focusing on the broad concepts and traditions developed through each major period in Jewish history. Then, the chapter divides into sections that will examine the specific cultural areas that helped to unify the Jews throughout the early Zionist movement. Through this process these cultural traditions establish a Jewish ethnic identity, which as Berkowitz argued, "ethnic identity then serves as the framework for Biblical conceptualizations of Israelite territorial and political sovereignty"¹ in the Palestinian region

¹ Berkowitz, *Nationalism, Zionism, and Ethnic Mobilization of the Jews from 1900 and Beyond*, 13.

because of the Zionist movement in the early twentieth century. This framework of ethnic identity unifies and mobilized the Jews throughout Europe during the early twentieth century.

A long and rich history defines the Jewish people living throughout the world. This history begins during ancient times, following the promise given to Abraham by God, and continues through the current day. During these 4000 years, Jews experienced victory, wealth, prominence, exile, captivity, and destruction; however, in the midst of it all, the Jews remained faithful to their God and clung to the promises that God gave their ancestors.

Covenants and promises are foundational to Judaism and to the understanding of the Jewish people. A covenant is a formal agreement between two parties where they agree to engage in or refrain from specific actions. In the case of the Jews, there are numerous covenants found throughout their sacred scriptures, but of most importance to the ideas behind Zionism is the covenant between the Lord and Abraham.² Found in Genesis chapter 15, the covenant includes promises relating to the inheritance of land, multiplying of offspring, and the flow of blessing through the bloodline of Abraham. Specifically regarding land, Genesis 15:18-20 states, “On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, ‘I give this land to your offspring, from the brook of Egypt, to the Euphrates River: the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaim, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites.’”³ This land area is traditionally located in the modern region of Palestine, in close proximity to the region currently a part of the State of Israel. Zionist leaders throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century based their claim to homeland for the Jewish people upon to this covenant.

² This is traditionally known as the Abrahamic Covenant. There are many details and theological arguments surrounding this covenant; however, for the purpose of this paper, only the basic details of what the covenant entailed are explained to the readers. For more resources on this area see the bibliography.

Leon Pinsker, a proto-Zionist and author of *Auto-Emancipation*, stated, “We need nothing but a large tract of land for our poor brothers, which shall remain our property and from which no foreign power can expel us. There we shall take with us the most sacred possessions, which we have saved from the ship-wreck of our former country, the God-idea and the Bible.”⁴

Following the covenant with Abraham, the Egyptians enslaved the Jewish people for 400 years. According to the sacred scriptures, the Lord, working miracles through His servant Moses, released the Jews from bondage. Then upon reaching the Promised Land, the Jews feared the current inhabitants of the territory, so they wandered in the desert for forty years. During this period, many of the festivals and rituals that are a part of modern Jewish religious law and cultural traditions were established. These laws and traditions are still part of the Torah.

Following the period of wandering, the Jews, under Joshua’s leadership, took claim to the first portions of the territory described in the Lord’s covenant with Abraham. The Jews did not gain the full extent of the territory until the rule of King David and King Solomon around 1000 BC. However, this experience was short lived as the Babylonians and Persians captured the Jewish territory and enslaved the Jews by 500s BC.

The Jews’ faithfulness, traditions and desire to return to their homeland in the Near East developed during their captivity under the Babylonians and Persians. In captivity, the Jews dealt with the culture and traditions of the lands that they inhabited as these nations’ cultures greatly contrasted with the beliefs and traditions of Jewish culture. Although about 50,000 Jews returned to the Promised Land after Cyrus’ decree in 538 BC, hundreds of thousands of Jews remained dispersed throughout the Middle East.

⁴ Leon Pinsker, *Auto-Emancipation*, trans. Dr. D.S. Blondheim (Zionist Library, 1916). www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/pinsker.html.

During the Greco-Roman period, Jews continued their faithfulness to Judaism through worship in the Temple. However, in 70 AD the Romans destroyed the temple, and Jews relied on the scriptures to enhance their faith. Prohibited from living in Jerusalem, Jews migrated throughout Europe and found jobs as moneychangers. These migrations continued throughout the Middle Ages; however, as Europeans' distrust of the Jewish people grew, the Jews moved further east. As the Reformation emerged in Europe, anti-Semitism also grew stronger and pushed more Jews toward Russia.

By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Jews lived all throughout Europe and Russia. The Age of Enlightenment brought intellectual, cultural and political change to Europe during the nineteenth century through the process of human reason and understanding. As social and intellectual schools of thought changed, so did the European treatment of Jews. Hardships, as well as Jewish interpretation of the intellectual thoughts of the nineteenth century, established a strong desire among the Jews to recreate a Jewish nation. It is understood among scholars that, “the term Zionism, appeared only in the 1890s, but the cause, the concept of Zion, had been present throughout Jewish history.”⁵ Despite its recurring presence, nineteenth century Zionism began as an ideology then quickly developed into a cultural movement of the Jews, which would ultimately result in the creation of the state of Israel.

What about Jewish culture helps to unify this diverse people group in order to move forward in the Zionist movement? This chapter shows that the cultural elements of language, education, literature, art, music, and symbols provide the unity necessary to bring the Jewish people together. As they find common ground in the midst of their differences, created by the diverse experiences in the Diaspora and throughout the rest of Europe, these cultural foundations

⁵ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 40.

allow the Zionist ideology to take root, and eventually move forward to creating the political state.

Language

Prior to the origins of the Zionist movement in 1897, the efforts of proto-Zionist leaders helped to establish an essential element in unifying the Jewish people: language. While Anti-Semitism was on the rise throughout both Eastern and Western Europe, leaders arose among the Jewish community during the 1860s, which provided the foundational tenants of Zionist ideology and the Zionist movement. These leaders typically held little standing among the Jews, but often after their lifetime, their written works carried the weight of the Zionist movement.

The person who took the initial steps to reunify the Jewish people was Eliezer Ben-Yehuda. Born in 1858 in the Russian province of Lithuania, Ben-Yehudah received a traditional ghetto education; however, he also became one of the first Jews to attend a scientific high school. During the nineteenth century, universities and other schools of higher education became the breeding ground for revolutionary thought. Despite this environment, Ben-Yehudah “continued to have sufficient interest in Hebrew letters to read *Hashahar*⁶... and to react to the theories of cultural nationalism that were being formulated by the editor.”⁷ As the nationalist idea stirred within Ben-Yehudah, he realized that few Jews during the nineteenth century could read and write, let alone speak, the Hebrew language. Without a common language, little communication occurred throughout the Jewish communities. Attempting to reunify the Jews, Ben-Yehudah played a “crucial role in the revival of Modern Hebrew as a language of everyday speech.”⁸

⁶ *Hashahar* (translated as ‘The Dawn’) was a Jewish monthly newspaper published out of Vienna by Perez Smolenskin until 1885.

⁷ Arthur Herzberg, *The Zionist Idea* (New York: Murray Printing Company, 1972), 159.

During his lifetime, Ben-Yehudah accomplished this task as he authored many volumes of his Hebrew dictionary and established the Academy for the Hebrew Language. In his research, Ben-Yehudah “was constrained to search the classic literature in Hebrew for terms to be used in everyday life, especially in light of modern technology, and to invent what he could not find.”⁹ Ben-Yehudah’s efforts to revive the Hebrew language started the nascent movement toward a unified Jewish people.

Following Ben-Yehudah’s work, Theodor Herzl, the father of Zionism, called for unity among the Jewish people via the establishment of a common language. Though Hebrew was desired, Herzl acknowledged that the Jewish experiences throughout Europe complicated matters in regards to having a language because during the process of assimilation, most Jews learned the languages and dialects of the regions in which they lived. In *The Jewish State*, Herzl explains:

It might be suggested that our want of a common current language would present difficulties. We cannot converse with one another in Hebrew. Who amongst us has a sufficient acquaintance with Hebrew to ask for a railway ticket in that language! Such a thing cannot be done. Yet the difficulty is very easily circumvented. Every man can preserve the language in which his thoughts are at home. Switzerland affords a conclusive proof of the possibility of a federation of tongues. We shall remain in the new country what we now are here, and we shall never cease to cherish with sadness the memory of the native land out of which we have been driven.

We shall give up using those miserable stunted jargons, those Ghetto languages which we still employ, for these were the stealthy tongues of prisoners. Our national teachers will give due attention to this matter; and the language which proves itself to be of greatest utility for general intercourse will be adopted without compulsion as our national tongue. Our community of race is peculiar and unique, for we are bound together only by the faith of our fathers.¹⁰

⁸ Arthur Herzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 159.

⁹ Ibid., 160.

¹⁰ Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, trans. Sylvie D'Avigdor, (American Zionist Emergency Counsel, 1946), 42-43.

By acknowledging the use of jargons and Ghetto languages by common Jews, the Zionist movement moved forward with a desire to find a common language for them as a people. Pamphlets, newspapers, and other propaganda distributed to the Jewish community around the world were published both in Hebrew, and in the language of the region where they distributed the documents (see fig. 1). This was not just common to the Zionist movement, but also in other nineteenth century nationalist movements. “The vision of language based on a print (grammar and dictionary) model, developed by nineteenth century nationalist intellectuals became deeply presupposed in academics.”¹¹ During the process of assimilation throughout the nineteenth century, Jewish intellectuals immersed themselves in the European academic world; moreover, through their experiences in the universities, they learned the influence of printed language and its effectiveness in the process of nationalization. As they built upon these ideas, the Jewish people created the ability to communicate ideas and desires clearly across the diversity of languages in the early movement.



Figure 1. Postcard for Thirteenth Zionist Congress displaying the usage of Hebrew and German languages in propaganda, *Central Zionist Archives*.

¹¹ Bonnie Urciuoli, “Language and Borders,” *The Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 527.

Education

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, assimilated Jews gained opportunities that provided for their advancement in society. These opportunities arose through the Jewish drive for education. As Jews became more educated, more opportunities and advantages opened to them throughout the European community. Laqueur explained this progress of advancement by stating “social assimilation made rapid progress during the early decades of the nineteenth century. Many Jews moved from the villages into larger towns, where they could find better living quarters; they sent their children to non-Jewish schools and... claimed full equality as German citizens.”¹² Although these opportunities were typically available for the upper class of Jewish society who could afford to send their children to secular schools, many of the children who became educated also progressed in society by holding positions of influence. Vital explained that “the new opportunities offered to the Jews of the nineteenth-century Germany, were at least in some principle, opportunities to behave as—and in time to become—Jewish Germans.”¹³ Many assimilated Jews became lawyers, bankers, and some held political positions. Men like Edmund Rothschild (banking), Benjamin Disraeli (politics) and Rundstein Szymon (lawyer) were educated assimilated Jews who became leaders in both the Jewish community and the wider world. These men, and others, accomplished much because of their assimilation to their surrounding cultures; however, many Jews faced serious disadvantages because of assimilation.

As a culture, the assimilation and acculturation of the Jews throughout the nineteenth century threatened the loss of Jewish beliefs, traditions and heritage. This created much disunity

¹² Urciuoli, 8.

¹³ Vital, *The Origins of Zionism*, 25.

among the Jews, and various sects established themselves within the Jewish community; therefore, the “ties between the communities were no longer close”¹⁴ because of the differences in practices and beliefs about Judaism that arose throughout the nineteenth century. In addition to the various beliefs and positions of the Jews, disadvantages also occurred within the European society. While education was a driving force of assimilation, most Jews could not afford to send their children to the universities to continue their education. Therefore, lower class Jews faced poverty in the ghettos rather than freedom within the cities. While the nineteenth century was driven by human reason and education, religious beliefs also became a driving factor within society. “By the middle of the nineteenth century the inroads of religious reform and of secularism, agnosticism and apostasy were considerable even in Central Europe.”¹⁵

Enlightenment ideas spread throughout Europe and established belief systems that segregated the population based on what they believed. Stereotypes specifically of the Jews developed based on the European Enlightenment thought, which considered “Jews as inferior: cowardly, unmanly, preoccupied with money, bereft of idealism.”¹⁶ As stereotypes rooted themselves in society, the few advantages and advances the Jews had made earlier in the nineteenth century faded. Jews within the universities faced religious segregation and were forced to change specialization or in many cases withdraw to Jewish institutions.

Within these Jewish institutions, the development of a common culture reestablished itself within the Jewish population. It was necessary for Zionist’s to stress “schools and

¹⁴ Laqueur, 27.

¹⁵ Ibid., 8.

¹⁶ Jacques Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), 2.

education above farms and buildings, to nurture the Hebrew tongue and a Hebrew literature,¹⁷ in order to train and equip younger generations in Zionist ideology and Jewish traditions. Educated in Judaism, Jewish history, Hebrew, and the growing Zionist movement, students in the early twentieth century became equipped with the knowledge necessary that drove their desires to engage in the growing movement for the creation of the Jewish nation-state.

In addition to educating and attracting the younger generation, the Zionist movement focused on organizing and structuring education as part of the process to unifying the diverse backgrounds of the Jewish population. In 1901, the Ezra (*Hilfsverein*) Society established by Jews in Germany, worked to establish schools and a Teacher's Training College throughout Eastern Europe. By 1912, the first elements of a Hebrew education system existed in Palestine. They established the Training College in Jerusalem and the Reali School in Haifa, as well as elementary schools and kindergartens. Even during a period when the continent was in turmoil, the Zionist movement continued its progress in expanding education. When World War I broke in 1914, "the number of schools administered by the Board grew, reaching twenty-seven in 1918."¹⁸ Through the growth of educational systems in Eastern Europe and in Palestine, the existing differences within the Jewish community decreased and Zionist ideology continued to spread.

Literature

As literacy continued to rise throughout the early twentieth century, the ability of the common person to comprehend written works and form personal opinions based on their knowledge allowed for the ideas of nationalism, politics, and religion to spread throughout the

¹⁷Abram Leon Sachar, *A History of the Jews* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1968), 360.

¹⁸Karl Mannheim, *Education in Israel* (London: Routledge, 1965), 15.

population. Literature carried the ideas and beliefs of leaders into the hands of the common individual. For the Jews, as a common language and educational systems emerged, literature in the form of newspapers grew rapidly as a means to spread Zionist ideology and a unified culture. Hundreds of newspapers began publication in the late nineteenth century including *Die Welt*, *Der Jude*, *Ost und West*, and *The Jewish Chronicle*. In addition to newspapers, Zionist leaders published their ideas in the form of pamphlets to spread Zionist ideology.

The writings of Theodor Herzl, the Father of Zionism, initiated the change within the diverse Jewish ideologies to focus on Zionist ideology. Born in Budapest in 1860, Herzl's parents raised him as an assimilated Jew. Herzl experienced the traditions of cultured Jews as a young child, but as he grew up his family became more assimilated into German culture and society. As a young man, Herzl attended law school at the University of Vienna, but after graduating in 1884, he became a journalist and the Paris correspondent for Vienna's *Neue Freie Presse*. Herzl experienced various forms of anti-Semitism throughout his time in college, but never anything as deliberate as the Dreyfus Affair. Herzl reported for the Vienna newspaper on the French trial of a French Jewish army captain, who was falsely accused of spying for the Germans. Before these experiences, Herzl believed that complete assimilation of the Jews into the surrounding cultures was the only solution to the Jewish Question; however, following college and reporting on the Dreyfus Affair, Herzl's own opinion changed.

In 1897, Herzl wrote the most influential book in the Zionist movement, *Judenstaat*, or *The Jewish State*, which described that the creation of a political movement to ensure establishment of a Jewish state. Herzl's book consisted of four major sections: the Jewish Question, the Jewish Company, Local groups, and the Society of Jews and the Jewish State. Moreover, the book went beyond the traditional examination of the past and present experiences

of the Jews, and presented a detailed, practical solution to gain recognition from foreign powers as a political entity. According to Herzl, Jews naturally moved to those places where they were not persecuted, and there the Jewish presence produced persecution that would continue, “until the Jewish question finds a solution on a political basis.”¹⁹ Most of *The Jewish State*, explained the practical solution for the creation of the Jewish Company—a business that worked to acquire land and establish colonies—and explained the organization of the Jewish society within the state; however, the call for the creation of a nation was not new within Jewish literature. Herzl explained that the creation of the Jewish State, “cannot even be carried out without the friendly cooperation of interested Governments, who would derive considerable benefits from it.”²⁰ which brought a shift to the Zionist ideology. Rather than the Jews individually seeking to establish their nation, Zionism sought to involve the governments of other nations, which would aid in politically supporting, guiding and establishing the creation of the State of Israel. Despite the advancement that political relationships brought the Zionist movement, the ideology did not quickly change, and opposition arose to challenge Herzl’s position in the person of Ahad Ha’am.

Ahad Ha’am, meaning “one of the people”, was the pen name of the founder of Cultural Zionism, Asher Ginzberg. Born in 1856 in the Russian Ukraine, Ha’am was a member of the high ghetto aristocracy. Ha’am received a strict traditional Jewish education as a child and was not even allowed to study the Russian alphabet. An avid student, he taught himself and as a young teenager was recognized as a scholar of the Talmud. Ha’am wrote various essays from 1884-1910, and despite his desire to remain “one of the people” rather than a distinguished

¹⁹ Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, 75.

²⁰ Ibid., 83.

author, his writing challenged Herzl and other Zionist leaders as Ha'am strived for a Jewish state and not merely a state of Jews.

Various essays such as *The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem* (1897), *The Spiritual Revival* (1902), and *The Flesh and the Spirit* (1904) addressed the major issues that Jews faced because of rising anti-Semitism. Ha'am sought to change the Jewish perspective through the modernization and cultural revival of the Jews. *The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem* confronted the history of the Jewish state through an examination of the Old Testament and concluded that Hibbat (Cultural) Zionism “begins with national culture, because only through the national culture, and for its sake can a Jewish State be established in such a way as to correspond with the will and needs of the Jewish people.”²¹ Ha'am also addressed the cultural and historical roots of the Jews through the essay, *The Spiritual Revival*, by arguing against the idea of “political Zionism.” This essay claims that the purpose of Zionism was twofold: “to perfect the body of culture which the Jewish people has created in the past, and to stimulate its creative power to fresh expression, and in the second place to raise the cultural level of the people in general.”²² *The Flesh and the Spirit* examined the details of Jewish history in the context of previous Jewish states under first the Prophets and second the Pharisees—concluding that it is the body, or territory, that is subordinate to the spirit, or condition of Jewish unity, rather than what other Zionist leaders believed Jews to be the spirit without a physical body in which to dwell. Therefore, the creation of the state was reliant on the idea that the spirit and culture of the

²¹ Ahad Ha'am, “The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem” in *The Zionist Idea*, ed. Arthur Hertzberg (New York: Atheneum, 1972), 269.

²² Ahad Ha'am, “The Spiritual Revival” in *Selected Essays by Ahad Ha'am*, Leon Simon (The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1912), 261.

people must be revived. This position, though not held by most Zionists, led political Zionist leaders to address the cultural issues faced by the Jews.

Herzl and Ha'am's numerous writings filtered throughout European and Jewish societies well beyond their lifetime, but especially during the early twentieth century. Moreover, their perspectives of cultural versus political Zionism officially brought the Zionist movement to the world stage. In addition to their works, many other proto-Zionist's written works also circulated among the Jewish population. Moses Hess' *Rome and Jerusalem*, Leon Pinsker's *Auto-Emmancipation*, and others were republished in numerous languages to meet the needs to spread Zionist ideology to Jews. Political and religious Jewish leaders recognized that the assimilation of Jews would not solve the Jewish problem; therefore, these leaders sought new means to solve the problem. Varieties of cultural and political Zionism sprouted throughout the Jewish leadership, and these ideas sought to define the proper means to establishing the Jewish nation through the circulation of literature.

Art

Another area of common cultural tradition was artwork in *fin-de-sicle* Europe. Art, including paintings, drawings, and photography, reflects the cultural ideas and traditions of a people. The development of Jewish art to create cultural unity emerged during the early Zionist movement. Artists portrayed Jewish life-style and cultural themes through their artwork to create a new Jewish nationalist art, typically seen as an extension of the *art nouveau* genre of the early twentieth century.

Before the twentieth century, there is little Jewish art outside of European depictions of Jews. European artists portrayed the Jews according to the interests and prejudices of the regional and national culture where the Jews lived. Most European paintings and drawings

showed the Jews engaged in their craft or trade, and as with their daily reality, the artwork typically showed the Jews as outsiders in the midst of the European world. At the turn of the century, with Zionist ideology spreading, Jewish artists began circulating their unique presentations of Jewish nationalism and religious culture (see fig. 2).



Figure 2. Jewish nationalist art from 1903 entitled “The Jewish May”

One of the most famous Jewish artists of the early twentieth century is Marc Chagall. Born in 1887 to a Jewish family living in Russia’s Pale Settlement, Chagall exhibited his artistic talent at an early age while attending Russian secular schools. In 1910, Chagall moved to Paris, continuing with his artwork, and it was during this period where his most recognized works were

developed. Chagall's paintings reflected the Jewish life and people in his own unique manner using expressionism, symbolism, cubism, and with his own techniques and medias. Though his style was unique, his works realistically depicted Jewish life. Looking back to his experiences in the ghettos, and Jewish villages became a common theme in many of his painting. His most famous painting, *The Village and I*, uniquely depicted the daily life while also symbolizing the significant role that religion had in the lives of the Jewish people (see fig. 3).²³ Other Chagall artwork from 1910-1917 also reflects his fascination with biblical stories and traditions. Though he assimilated into French and Russian cultures and did not practice the Jewish faith, "what was Jewish about him was his participation in this radical move [away from ghetto life]... moreover, Chagall's looking back to depict the traditional world, when he did, was a part of a movement of some assimilated yet populist Jewish intellectuals at the beginning of the twentieth century who looked back from their new, secular Russian and European position to discover the values and folk art of their grandparents."²⁴ Seeking to find values, tradition and culture that was beginning to disappear from the lives of many Jews, Chagall's artwork played a valuable role in preserving the past, reminding the Jewish people of their commonality.

²³ The symbolism referred to is demonstrated through the synagogue in the background, and the prayer beads around the yeoman. Though not directly pointing to religious significance, their portrayal in the midst of a painting of typical, daily life for Jews in the villages, points out at least that religion was a part of the daily lives.

²⁴ Binyāmīn Haršav, Marc Chagall, and Barbara Harshav. *Marc Chagall and His Times: A Documentary Narrative*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 28.

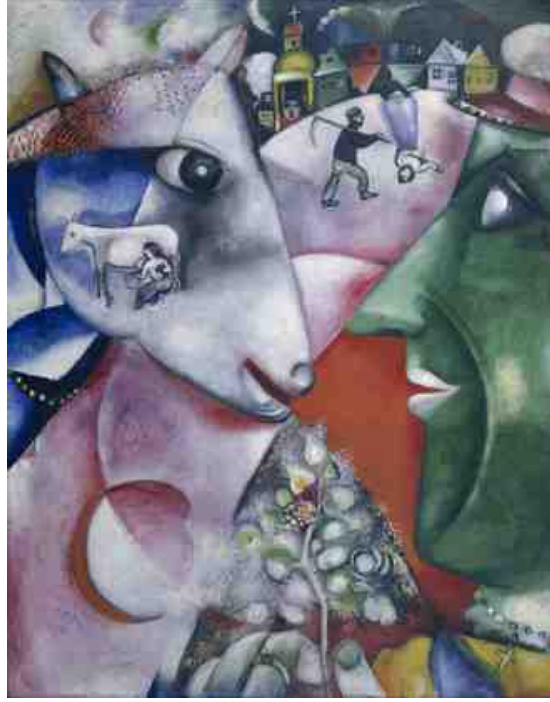


Figure 3. *The Village and I* by Marc Chagall, *Museum of Modern Art*

In a similar manner, Zionist leaders looked back to the experiences of their parents and grandparents, to find commonality in the process of unifying the Jewish people as a nation. Chagall's artwork played a role in this process of unification, as did the concept of developing Jewish national art. In 1906, the Jewish Agency, an institution established by the Zionist Organization, in concert with sculptor Boris Schatz, established the Bezalel Arts and Crafts School in Jerusalem to educate and establish a place of Jewish national and cultural art education to promote the Zionist endeavors. There was division among the Jewish population between depicting distinctly religious attributes or cultural attributes of the Jewish population or merging those images with the styles, images and traditions of the European world (see fig. 4). The Bezalel School played a vital role in this debate. "By World War I Zionist artists abandoned

Jugendstil (art nouveau) and Hebraic motifs, for the newer European artistic styles, while also probing Hebraic sources and Sephardic traditions.”²⁵



Figure 4. “At the Sewing Machine” by Berthold Feiwel (1903). It demonstrates depiction of Jewish culture in the European world.

By combining these elements of artwork, the Jewish population and Zionist leaders were able to find common ground to unify the rising Jewish nationalism in the early twentieth century. Though art may not seem to be a direct factor in bringing people together, the objects depicted within the artwork throughout the early twentieth century show the coming together of ideology. As the Zionist movement and Jewish population were able to overcome their many differences, in the context of creating a national form of artwork, the movement had a more unified process toward the development of a Jewish nation-state. As will be explained later, their organization

²⁵ Zvi Gitelman, ed. *The Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics: Bundism and Zionism in Eastern Europe* (Pittsburg, PA: The University of Pittsburg Press, 2003), 176.

used these forms of art to promote Zionist ideology via propaganda in the forms of flyers, post cards, and newsletters.

Music

Music draws crowds from various backgrounds together. Think of the concerts of music greats—no matter the genre of music—these musicians know how to draw in a crowd. In attendance at a concert, it is understood that not everyone there is the same. Within the crowd, there are young and old, the wealthy and those barely getting by; however, the music brings them together. In the same manner, the early Zionist movement saw the importance of music and song. There are references in the minutes of the Zionist Congress' meetings where discussion takes place to find a song to unify the Jewish people. By finding a song to represent the Zionist ideology, the Zionist leaders could unify the world Jewish population heart and soul despite the differences in background.

Music and songs have been a part of Jewish life and culture since its origins. The Talmud referred to Moses and the Israelites singing praises to the Lord following their exodus from Egypt; moreover, there is an entire book of Psalms from the Jewish scriptures that provides poetry and lyrics that still are put to music and sung. Not until the mid-nineteenth century did Jewish songs appear in European Jewish historiography. During this period, synagogues began to develop small chorus groups, and some Jewish musicians began to travel throughout Europe as the Jewish *Maennerchor*. In addition, songs sung within the walls of universities and fraternities helped to maintain the Jewish ethnic identity while pursuing a secular education.

Music and songs played a vital role in the elements of unification. Music crossed those boundaries that are prohibited with language, and Zionist leaders in the early twentieth century recognized this. Heinrich Loewe, an early Zionist and librarian at the University of Berlin,

published a collection of songs entitled *Liederbuch für Jüdische Vereine* in 1894. Loewe explained in the preface that he intended this songbook to lay the groundwork for a new social intervention of song. He worked throughout the late nineteenth century establishing student groups and organizations that used his songbook to unify Jews. Zionist leaders' experiences in universities and involvement in Jewish student groups caused them to look back at the Jewish traditions and embrace the elements that allowed them to unite.

At the first Zionist Congress in Basel 1897, Zionist leaders collected a few songs into a small songbook, which the Congress sang communally. By the Second Congress, leaders published and distributed the songbooks among the members, and sent to the Jewish communities throughout the Diaspora. "The songs in the earliest Zionist collections were choral and communal, and they were transformed and arranged so that performance by Jewish social organizations would again embody the collective experience of the movement."²⁶ Music became the voice for Jewish nationalism, even before deciding upon a national song, and it bridged the gaps between the differences between the Jewish community and its leaders.

Symbols

If someone asked for the international sign or symbol for Christianity, the most common response would be the cross. Symbols represented common ideas, beliefs, and/or places in a simple and uniform manner. In addition, symbols resonated passion and ideas within a group of people because there is commonality within those individuals. The Zionist movement also relied on common signs and symbols to represent their cause to the world, but most importantly to unify themselves. Using the Star of David, the Menorah, and developing a 'national' flag, the

²⁶ Berkowitz. *Nationalism, Zionism and Ethnic Nationalism*, 26.

Zionist movement of the early twentieth century created the symbols of unity among its people as they rallied toward these symbols of commonality.

Contrary to popular belief, the Star of David and the Menorah are long standing symbols recognized within the Jewish community, not recent developments by the Zionist leadership. The Star of David, also known as the ‘Shield of David,’ is a hexagram. Since the early seventeenth century, Jews recognized it as the traditional symbol for Jewish identity. Before this, the Star of David was displayed on battle flags, arches of Greco-Roman age synagogues in Palestine, and even drawn in the oldest manuscripts of Jewish texts.²⁷ Though a symbol of Judaism for centuries, Zionist leaders chose to use this symbol because of its recognition with the Jewish ethnic identity. Zionist leaders included the Star of David on their literature to identify the Zionist movement with the Jewish national identity (see fig. 4). Eventually, they determined to have the Star of David as the central focus of the flag of Zionism.²⁸

²⁷ The oldest surviving complete copy of the Masoretic text, the Leningrad Codex, dated 1008, has the Star of David emblem depicted on one of its pages.

²⁸ The Zionist flag, designed at the Second Zionist Congress in Basel 1898, eventually became the internationally recognized flag for the modern State of Israel.



Figure 6. Postcard for Fifth Zionist Congress displaying the Star of David's use in literature, *Central Zionist Archives, 1901*

Similarly, the Menorah has also played a significant role in creating a unified Jewish people throughout the world. Though a religious symbol within Judaism and physically used both in the Tabernacle and later in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, the Menorah has been recognized since the ancient foundations of the Jewish people as part of their cultural identity and relationship as 'God's chosen people' to be lights unto the world. Zionist leaders followed this symbolism, as they used the Menorah on pins and pamphlets distributed at the Congress. Though no records show the decisions to use the Menorah, its continued use, and history of use to remind the Jewish people of their position as lights the world, created a reminder for the leaders at the congresses to continue to develop opportunities to place the Jewish community in the forefront of politics in order to accomplish their goals in establishing the State of Israel.

By using symbols, the Zionist leaders created unity among themselves in their presentation at the Congresses. This unity carried over into the literature and symbolism they used to spread Zionism to the Jewish communities and to the rest of the world. Symbols created

a centralized object that people could identify themselves with; moreover, people displayed these symbols to show their support to a cause. Throughout the early twentieth century, Zionist symbols increased their circulation as the Congresses and World Zionist Organization distributed materials, and as Jewish people used these symbols to identify themselves with the movement as well.

Conclusions

To fully understand the concepts of cultural influence on nationalist ideology, this chapter examined the development of language, education, literature, art, music, and symbols within the early twentieth century Jewish community. Through these examinations, these elements of culture demonstrated their capabilities to fully unify a diverse people by finding common ground in the way Jewish culture was represented to the external world. The Hebrew language made the Jewish people distinct. Their ability use Hebrew united Zionist efforts to communicate Zionist ideology uniformly. To educate the youth within Jewish communities on Jewish language and traditions, schools were developed throughout Europe and in the Palestinian region during this period. As more became educated, literature promoting Zionist leaders' ideology circulated throughout the villages, making the common Jew aware of intellectual and political ideas to create Jewish nationalism. Jewish artists emerged during the early twentieth century, depicting Jewish life and culture while using modern techniques of painting, sculpting and drawing. Music bridged the language barrier, because the notes to the songs are the same no matter the language. People united around songbook collections and the eventual use of Hebrew Song as the national anthem. Finally, the symbols used throughout religion and culture formed a central point of identity for the diverse Jewish communities across Europe. As these cultural elements developed throughout the early twentieth century, Zionist leaders used the Menorah,

the Star of David and the national flag to reach the Jewish people. As the movement progressed, Jewish national identity grew in its physical presence and political recognition. There is strength in unity, and that is exactly what the Zionist movement created in the early twentieth century.

CHAPTER TWO

JUDAISM: RELIGION'S UNIFYING FACTORS

“Judaism is not a passive religion, but an active life factor which has coalesced with the national consciousness into one organic whole. It is primarily the expression of a nationality whose history for thousands of years coincides with the history of the development of a humanity and the Jews are a nation which, having once acted as the leaven of the social world, is destined to be resurrected with the rest of civilized nations.” –Moses Hess

Does religion play a role in nationalist movements? Many leading historians like Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, and Anthony Smith neglected the influence of religion in the nationalization process. As a unique and distinct element of culture, religion plays a vital role in the unification process for nationalist movements. Nationalism and religion “both share an imagined community and rely on the importance of symbols (flags, crosses, and so on) to provide shared meaning for members. Both are often concerned with territory. Both offer a belief system to members to assist them as they navigate through a complex world. In addition, religion and nationalism develop a common identity for their members to relate to.”¹ The cohesive nature that religion has in bringing people together spiritually in belief and physically for worship allows for the progression of the nationalist movement to advance quickly.

Not every nationalist movement also has a religious counterpart; however, many of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century nationalist movements have direct or indirect religious factors that push the movements forward.² The primary role of the nation is not always religion, but religion is a principle motivator and cultural unifier in the nationalist process.

Through the examination of Jewish history of monotheistic beliefs, foundations of Judaic faith,

¹ Barbara-Anne Rieffner “Religion and Nationalism: Understanding the Consequences of a Complex Relationship,” *Ethnicities vol. 3* (London: SAGE Publications, 2003), 216.

² Examples of religious based nationalist movements include, but are not limited to, the Irish-Catholic movement, the Arab-Islamic movement, and the Afrikaner movement.

and religious differences, this chapter demonstrates the crucial role that religion has in the process of nationalism for the Zionist movement. Divided into sections, the chapter first will examine the long history of monotheistic beliefs in Judaism. Monotheism distinctly set the Jews apart from society, but it also allowed the unification process of Jewish nationalism to occur quicker because of its central focus on worshipping one God. Following the examination of monotheism, the next section evaluates the foundations of Jewish faith. Specifically, it examines Judaism's Holy Scriptures, the Torah and the Talmud, and the process of faith in that Jews must believe in one God, Yahweh, live out their faith as an example to the world through their worship as a family, and worship as a community. Using the foundational elements of faith, this section argues the Zionist movement progressed beyond cultural bounds to establish unity through faith. Finally, this chapter will consider the religious differences between Orthodox and Reformed Jews. Though differences existed, the arguments between Orthodox and Reformed Jews brought religion to the forefront of the Zionist movement. Ultimately, the combination of political and cultural Zionism with the spiritual unification of the Jewish people through their Judaic faith accelerated the growth of the Jewish nationalist movement globally.

History of Monotheistic Beliefs

Religion and its practices vary. Some follow a distinct path and philosophy, while others consist of various stories and mythology. Ultimately, it creates a cultural system unified through common beliefs and values. Throughout history, monotheism, or the belief in one god, was not typical. It originated thousands of years ago through Abraham, the Father of monotheistic religions. Monotheism continued to exist through the growth of three religions: Christianity, Islam and Judaism. This monotheistic belief system conflicted with the principles, philosophies, and practices of many societies and cultures.

The principle of religion concerns what people believe about supernatural, or spiritual, beings. Atheists do not believe in a supernatural power, whereas Hindus believe that everything embodies spiritual deities. Judaism differs from other religions in principle because it is monotheistic. According to Judaism, there is only one God, Yahweh, who exists as one eternal being. Yahweh created the world as described in Bresheit (Genesis), and Yahweh continues to work throughout the world being omnipotent and omnipresent, merciful and just, transcendent and personable. Understanding these characteristics of God, Jews believe in living a life of faith and worship to God alone, no matter the circumstances of life. This contrasted with the various cultures the Jews interacted with throughout history. Surrounded by the Egyptians, Canaanites, Babylonians, Romans, and other people groups Jews faced the polytheism of these cultures, yet continued to keep their faith in Yahweh. In contrast, the other people groups abhorred anything outside their cultural religious beliefs and often forced outsiders to assimilate to their beliefs. Though many Jews assimilated throughout Europe, the Zionist movement reestablished the uniqueness of Judaism's monotheistic principles as a means to reunify the Jews. Rabbi Kook, a religious Zionist, explained, "This urge to unfold to the world the nature of God, to raise one's head in His Name in order to proclaim His greatness... moves the Jew to affirm, before all the world, his loyalty to the heritage of his people, to the preservation of its identity and values, and to the upholding of its faith and vision."³ Upholding the principle of monotheism, Judaism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries separated the Jews from other people groups and inherently tied them together through what they believed.

The philosophy of religion engages why people believe what they do. Some religions base their beliefs on ideology and teachings passed down. However, Judaism and its

³ Rabbi Kook, 'The Land of Israel,' In *The Zionist Ideology* ed. Arthur Hertzberg (1972), 421.

monotheistic faith based its beliefs on both ideology and historical events. God's interaction on the human level separated Judaism from the external world. "The theological significance of the Old Testament rests on ethical monotheism: the connection of all its literature with the rule of *I AM* according to his covenant commitments."⁴ Judaism traced its history to God's covenant with Abraham approximately 4000 years ago. The covenant promised a nation through Abraham's bloodline and land in the region of Canaan along the Mediterranean Sea. Judaism's origins described a people chosen by God to reflect Him to the world by their relationship with Him. Zionist leaders capitalized on this unique philosophy of Judaism as a way to unify the Jewish people. Cries of returning to Zion arose within the Jewish community. As Herzl implored Jewish leaders, "Next year in Jerusalem' is our age-old motto. It is now a matter of showing that the vague dream can be transformed into a clear and glowing idea."⁵ By applying the philosophy of their covenant with the one and only God, Yahweh, to their nationalist movement, the Zionist leaders encouraged the unification of the Jewish people worldwide.

Religious practices defined Judaism, and separated it from other religions and cultures. The practice of worshiping one god persisted throughout Jewish history. Under Moses' leadership, Jews worshiped Yahweh through the tabernacle system. "God preserves His holiness at the tabernacle by appointing sacred times for meeting him, a priestly caste to enter his dwelling and sacred rituals for consecrating the priests and the people to worship him."⁶ In 950 BC, king Solomon built the first temple and Jews worshiped Yahweh there until the Babylonians

⁴ Bruce Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, Thematic Approach* (Michigan: Zondervan Publishers, 2007), 904.

⁵ Herzl, 'The Jewish State,' In *The Zionist Idea* ed Arthur Hertzberg (1972), 213.

⁶ Bruce Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, Thematic Approach*, 447.

destroyed in 600BC. Jews rebuilt the temple in 535BC, but the Romans destroyed it in 70 AD. The temple represented Yahweh's presence manifested among the Jewish people. Its destruction demonstrated that "God removed his presence from them... [by destroying] the Temple, 'the place of His dwelling' and forced them into exile."⁷ Following the second destruction of the temple, synagogues became the house of prayer and learning for Judaism. Prayer became another difference in religious practice that separated Jews from other religions. Some prayed individually, but Judaism also encouraged communal prayer as a foundation of faith.

Why does Jewish monotheism struggle in the midst of a polytheistic world? Few religions existed as long as Judaism. In addition, the Jews faced more hardship for their faith than most religions, yet continued persevering through history. Confronting numerous polytheistic faiths, Judaism remained consistent in its beliefs and practices. As Herzl claimed, "Affliction binds us together and thus united, we suddenly discover our strength."⁸

Foundations of Faith

The history of Judaism as a persistent, monotheistic faith is central to understanding this people group. These practices established the foundational values and traditions that allowed the Jews to unify and survive throughout the course of history. Jewish foundations of faith are two-fold. First, Jews believe in Yahweh as God. The Hebrew Scriptures—the Torah and the Talmud—explained the principles of who He is and how Jews know they believe in Him. Second, Jewish belief in Yahweh is lived as an example to the world, demonstrated through the faith of the family and the faith of the community. Through this two-fold approach to faith, Judaism demonstrated its ability to bring together its people. Zionist leaders capitalized on the

⁷ Elliot Dorff, *Contemporary Jewish Theology: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 349.

⁸ Herzl, 'The Jewish State,' In *The Zionist Idea* ed. Arthur Hertzberg (1972), 220.

unity established by the foundations of the Jewish faith and focused on those elements during their efforts to spread Zionist ideology.

Jews first unified through their belief in Yahweh as God. The Holy Scriptures of their faith taught Jews their knowledge of who God was and how they interact with Him. Jewish Scriptures (*Tanakh*) and oral laws guided Jewish faith, customs and traditions for centuries. The scriptures consist of three sections—the Talmud (teachings), the Nevi'im (prophets), and the Ketuvim (writings)—each written in Hebrew.⁹ The Jewish scriptures trace the history of the mankind from its beginnings, to God's covenant with Abraham, the establishment of Israel, the captivity of Israel, and ending with the period of the Prophets, just prior to the Greco-Roman period. The scriptures laid the foundation for what Jews knew about Yahweh and established the practices of their faith through written instructions and laws. Over the years, scribes meticulously recorded these scriptures in order to maintain consistency in their contents. "Their view that ultimately all truth was already embedded in the text of Scripture and fundamentally only needed to be extracted from it through careful reading,"¹⁰ implanted the ideology and culture deep in the hearts and minds of Jews. Through their dedication to the scriptures, the inherent nature of Jewish identity passed down clearly to each generation.

The most sacred portion of the Jewish Scripture is the Torah. The Torah traces ancient Jewish history as recorded by Moses from creation through the wilderness journey of the Israelites. Composed into five books—*Bresheit* (Genesis), *Shemot* (Exodus), *Vayicra* (Leviticus), *Bamidbar* (Numbers), and *Devarim* (Deuteronomy)—the Torah provided more than history, but also provided the Jewish teachings, instructions, traditions, and laws. Theologically, Jews

⁹ Christianity translated its Old Testament scriptures from these same texts.

¹⁰ Dorff, 2.

understood the foundational element of their faith was that “God gave the Torah to Israel.”¹¹ Belief that God, not a person, gave them their scriptures set Judaism apart from other faiths. Jews dedicated their lives to the study of the Torah to grow in their understanding of who God was. Jewish meticulous recordkeeping, using scribes, kept these scriptures relatively unchanged over the course of time.

In addition to the Jewish scriptures, Judaism also held sacred the Talmud, the written version of the oral laws passed down from rabbi to rabbi for centuries. The Talmud has two sections, the *Mishnah* and the *Gemara*. “The *Mishnah* is the original written version of the oral law and the *Gemara* is the record of the rabbinic discussions following this writing down”¹² of the oral laws. However, “Jewish ritual laws are by their very nature not universal, they function after all to identify Jews as Jews.”¹³ It is the interpretations, discussions and practices of these laws that have divided the Jews into various religious sects. There are four modern divisions in Judaism: Orthodox, Reformed, Conservative and Liberal Judaism. Each of these sects brought various wants and desires to the Zionist movement of the early twentieth century, especially the Orthodox Jews who were typically from eastern Europe. The Jews ability to set aside differences and move forward with one unified ideology allowed for the success of the Zionist movement. Through the establishment of education, a renewed focus on the basic principles of Jewish faith, and the international recognition of the traditions and customs of Judaism overcame these differences.

¹¹ Dorff, 9.

¹² BBC: Religions. “Judaism- The Talmud.” Last updated 8/13/11. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism/texts/talmud.shtml>.

¹³ Dorff, 35.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, with the renewal of the Hebrew language among the Jewish population, the understanding of the principles within the Jewish scriptures took precedence in education of the Jewish population. It was common for many Jews to memorize the most if not all of the Torah because of the values it provided for daily living. By focusing on the scriptures, rather than the Talmud, for the foundational understanding of the Jewish faith, this created common ground for the differing religious sects to approach Zionism. The purpose was to develop a global Jewish community through the process of religious education. “Attention was paid to training students according to the ideal of educating oneself as a part of an ongoing process—not provide simple answers”¹⁴ toward the depths of religious theology and doctrine. Ahad Ha’am explained in a letter to Dr. J. L. Magnes, Jewish leader in New York, “if you want to build and not to destroy, you must teach religion on the basis of nationalism, with which it is inseparably intertwined.”¹⁵ Schools established by the Zionist leaders focused on this and ensured the establishment of religious education as an essential part of the education process.

Educating oneself began with the understanding of the basic, principles of Jewish faith. These basic principles of knowing Yahweh and having a faith relationship with Him that shines to the rest of the world become the rallying cry for unity in the Zionist movement. As the scriptures taught in Deuteronomy 6:7, Jews were to live out their faith in every day life, teach the laws to their children, and “talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along

¹⁴ Michael Berkowitz. *Western Jewry and the Zionist Project 1914-1933*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 157.

¹⁵ Ahad Ha’am. “On Nationalism and Religion (1910).” *The Zionist Idea*. ed. Arthur Hertzberg. (New York: The Murray Printing Company, 1972), 262.

the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”¹⁶ Acknowledging the basic principles of faith, the Zionist leaders brought focus to common customs and traditions within Judaism in order to unify the widely separated Jewish communities. Common customs and traditions followed in Judaism surrounded the faith of family and the faith of community.

Faith of the family displayed Judaism to the world through its long family heritage and distinct traditions and customs lived out through the daily lives of the family members. Families practiced various traditions and customs distinct to Judaism, which allowed the Jews to unify as a family and as a people group. Traditions revolving around family specifically included the Sabbath and circumcision. The Sabbath, or in Hebrew ‘Shabbat’, is a time for families to come together and worship God. Jewish theology books explained, “the Sabbath is regarded in Jewish tradition as celebrating the creation of the world.”¹⁷ Beginning at sunset on Friday and lasting through sundown on Saturday, Jewish families spend time together eating, praying, and performing other rituals. It is also a day of rest, so together families made the preparations for the meals before the Sabbath began. To begin, the woman of the household lights candles, which symbolizes the family’s recognition of their remembrance and observation of the Sabbath. Then, the family drinks wine and eats three meals in reflection of their joy and celebration for their relationship with the Lord. These customs and rituals of the Sabbath were emphasized in the Zionist literature, as propaganda showed families participating in the Sabbath rituals to encourage other Jews throughout the world to join them.

Ceremonies surrounding circumcision also demonstrated the faith of the family. ‘*Brit milah*,’ meaning the covenant of circumcision, was performed on every male child on the eighth day. “Israel’s symbol of the covenant is circumcision, a searing of the covenant into the flesh of

¹⁷ Dorff, 76.

Israel and not only, or perhaps not even primarily, into its spirit.”¹⁸ Remembering their covenant with Yahweh, families came together to celebrate this ceremony and to dedicate the child to the Lord; however, the only family member required to attend was the father. This ceremony was a testimony and a personal acknowledgement of their relationship with God, and their long-lasting heritage as the people of God. This common custom unified the families together by their faith, and allowed for universal understanding of practices followed by most Jews who diligently practiced the faith.

Judaism has a long history of community and establishing unity within the community both locally and globally. “The communal organization of much of the Old Yishuv was strongly related to ritual functions.”¹⁹ Being a religious people, spread out around the globe, community revolved around the value of common/unified prayers, songs, holidays, and festivals. Ahad Ha’am explained, “when the individual loves the community as himself and identifies himself completely with its well-being, he has something to live for; he feels his personal hardships less keenly, because he knows the purpose for which he lives and suffers.”²⁰ Three main areas that reflected the faith of the community were the synagogue, prayer and song.

The synagogue became a gathering place for Jew during the period of exile. Synagogue actually means assembly. Jews used the synagogue as a gathering place for prayer and study. Following the Sabbath rituals, families gathered at the synagogues to pray together with other families. These times of prayer established a sense of community throughout the region, but also

¹⁸ Dorff, 252.

¹⁹ Jehuda Reinharz. “Zionism and Orthodoxy: A Marriage of Convenience” *Zionism and Religion*. (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1998), 130.

²⁰ Ahad Ha’am, “Flesh and Spirit,” In *The Zionist Ideology* ed. Arthur Hertzburg (1972), 256.

throughout the world. Knowing that other families gathered at synagogues following the Sabbath bonded the Jewish people spiritually, and beyond boundaries. In addition to being a house of prayer, the synagogue was also a house of study. As people grew in their knowledge of the law, and became masters of the subject, they earned the title of rabbi, or ‘teacher’. In the synagogue, families listened to rabbis teach from the scriptures about God and about the laws. Rabbis led the spiritual community through their clarifications of the text. Zionist leaders recognized that by having the rabbis on their side they could reach more Jews for the cause of Zionism. Herzl read a letter at the First Congress from the French Grand Rabbi, which stated, “he would not fail to follow with much interest the deliberations of the Congress.”²¹ From that point forward, the Zionist movement emphasized the membership of rabbis in the Zionist Organization in order to continue to spread Zionist ideology.

In the synagogues prayer became another foundational element of the faith lived out through the community of Jews. “Prayer is the format by which the community is brought together for the purposes of comradeship, education, celebration, mourning, training and moral stimulation.”²² Communal prayers using ‘we’ and ‘our’ in their approach to God allowed for a sense of unity to form within the congregations. Similarly, within the Zionist Congress meetings a typical prayer spoken was, “*Baruch atah adanoi, eloheynu melech haolam, shehehayanu, vekiyemanu, vehegianu, lazman hezah.* (Blessed art Thou, O Lord Our God, King of the Universe, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this time.)”²³ Praying together

²¹ Nahum Soklov, *A History of Zionism 1600-1918*, vol.1 (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1969), 271.

²² Dorff, 119.

²³ Berkowitz. *Western Jewry and the Zionist Project 1914-1933*, 27-28.

unified Jews by speech and thought, mind and spirit, even if for a few moments, which helped Zionism progress with a unified purpose.

Similar to prayer, Jews also sang songs together, which unified them. As chapter one explained, music crosses boundaries that languages are restricted by through the common notes and tune within the song. Zionists built on this principle through their use of songs in the Congresses. The Congresses often began by singing *Hatikvah* ('The Hope'):

<i>Kol od baleivav penimah</i>	As long as Jewish spirit
<i>Nefesh yehudi homiyah,</i>	Yearns deep in the heart,
<i>Ulfa' atey mizrah kadimah,</i>	With eyes turned East,
<i>Ayin letsiyon tsofiyah;</i>	Looking towards Zion.
<i>Od lo avdah tikvateinu,</i>	Our hope is not yet lost,
<i>Hatikvah bat shenot al payim,</i>	The hope of two millennia,
<i>Lihyot am hofshi be'artzeinu,</i>	To be a free people in our land,
<i>Eretz tziyon veyerushalayim.</i>	The land of Zion and Jerusalem.

Initially a simple poem, this song later became the national anthem for the State of Israel.

Unified in voice, spirit and purpose the Zionists continued to pursue the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine.

Through the examination of Jewish foundations of faith—to believe in Yahweh, and to live out life as an example of worship to Him—the unity within the Jewish community emerged. This tradition of unity through faith formed the bond necessary to progress Zionism beyond political boundaries. Jews throughout the world identified with each other through their common faith. Zionists used this common faith to promote membership to the Zionist Organization. As the organization grew, Zionists used their unity to reason with nations for their support in obtaining Jewish territory in Palestine.

Religious Differences

Though many Jews aligned with Zionism, there was not consistency in direction for the movement. Religious differences caused many disputes in the early congresses. Despite the differences between Orthodox and Reformed Jews, religion remained a central driving force for the Zionist movement. Clashes between these differences kept religion as a vital element to the success of the Zionist movement. Without some compromise along the religious front, Zionism's ability to reach the common individuals would shrink significantly.

Orthodox Jews remained rigorous to the faith, and its foundational practices. The Orthodox Jews mainly lived in Eastern Europe, and Russia. Their separation from western thought and modernization allowed traditionalism to remain a significant portion of their faith. Dedication and focus on the Torah remained the key. Orthodox Jews believed that their faith was a continuation of the beliefs and practices of Judaism, as accepted by the Jewish nation under Moses, and passed down from generation to generation. In regards to Zionism, Orthodox Jews opposed its advances without a greater influence from the religious sphere. "They wanted a special rabbinical council, set up independently under the highest rabbinical authority, and charged with supervising all Zionist Cultural and propaganda activities."²⁴ Persistent that religious leadership should guide the direction of the movement, and that all should strictly follow the traditions of the faith created tension during meetings of Zionist leadership.

Reformed Jews adhered to different philosophy of Judaic principles and practices than the Orthodox Jews. Most Reformed Jews formerly assimilated into European culture and saw the difficulty in living out the strict traditions and laws of Judaism in the modern world. They believed that modernization allowed Jews to best live out their faith; therefore, they encouraged

²⁴ David Vital, *Zionism the Formative Years*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1982), 42.

the process of change in the laws and traditions of Judaism. The transformation of the traditions and customs of the faith challenged the Orthodox theology, and brought religion to the forefront of the Zionist debates.

From the First Congress, lack of support from the religious sects ensued, but there were members from the Orthodox Jewish leadership in attendance at the Congress. Orthodox Jews in attendance “believed that the shift of attention to ‘politics’ would help steer people away from excessive concern with ‘culture’ and cognate matters, all of which served to promote the disposition to religious reform.”²⁵ This position demonstrated the two main clashes of religion throughout the Zionist movement: religious reform versus religious orthodoxy, and political versus cultural approaches to Zionism. Both rooted in religious foundations, these differences became vital compromises for the Zionist movement.

Religious reform versus religious orthodoxy created differences in the approach to spreading Zionist ideology to the common Jews. Religious reform looked to appeal to the masses by allowing for change and modernization in religious laws. In contrast, religious orthodoxy pushed for the reestablishment of Jewish community life through traditions and practices. Ultimately, compromise became necessary in order to ensure Jews worldwide joined the Zionist movement, so that the movement could gain the political recognition necessary to establish a Jewish nation in Palestine. Orthodox Jews gained the promotion of traditions and holidays through propaganda. Newspapers and postcards promoted both family and community traditions, while they also encouraged supporting the Zionist Organization.²⁶ In contrast, Reformed Jews gained the understanding that the religious organizations would not run the organizational

²⁵ Vital, *Zionism the Formative Years*, 42.

²⁶ Specifically, see the postcard for the Second Zionist Congress in figure 8.

structures of the Zionist movement. Orthodox Jews resubmitted their request for a rabbinical counsel, “carefully drafted and moderately phrased... [recognizing] there were two forms of nationalism...” one that lasted for over three thousand years, and the other “a nationalism which purports us to exist independently from our heritage.”²⁷ These religious compromises allowed the Zionist movement to reach its fullest potential while reaching Jews throughout the world.

Religious conflict also existed between the Jews over political versus cultural Zionism. Political Zionism looked to establish the organizational structure of a nation in order to gain a charter from another country, so a Jewish nation could be established. Cultural Zionism looked to institute Jewish community through the establishment of cultural traditions and practices. Orthodox Jews tended to support the cultural elements of Zionism because it encouraged the traditions and religious practices of Judaism passed down for centuries. The Reformed Jews pushed for Political Zionism and argued that the most essential point of Zionism was to have a homeland for Jews to dwell in peacefully—community and traditions would follow once the nation was created. Again, compromise became inevitable for the future success of the Zionist movement. The Fifth Congress determined to blend cultural and political Zionism into Synthetic Zionism. “In 1902, in response to the decision of the Fifth Zionist Congress to consider cultural activity as part of the Zionist program, Rabbis Reines and Ze'ev Yavetz established the Mizrachi organization (mizrachi being the Hebrew abbreviation of *merkaz ruhani*-“spiritual center”). Mizrachi held its first world convention in 1904 and composed the movement's platform, which concerned itself principally with observance of the commandments and return to Zion.”²⁸

²⁷ Vital, *Zionism the Formative Years*, 43.

²⁸ “Religious Zionism.” *Jewish Virtual Library*. (The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2011). Retrieved from http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Zionism/Religious_Zionism.html.

Similarly, the Political Zionists continued to develop relationships with foreign leaders in effort to gain a charter to support a Jewish nation in Palestine. Religious differences challenged Zionist leaders to work together, and shaped the course and success of the Zionist movement.

Differences between Orthodox Jews and Reformed Jews created conflict and disunity in the Zionist movement, which prevented the movement from initially progressing culturally and politically. However, as these two groups, recognizing they did not agree completely, chose to focus on principles of faith, the movement experienced rapid expansion and success. The valuable role of religion in the Zionist nationalist movement greatly attributed to the overall success in creating the State of Israel.

Conclusions

“Undoubtedly, the nation state has become the cornerstone of international relations. But it is equally true to say that religion has not withered away and is reappearing in issues of moral and political contestation.”²⁹ Throughout this chapter, the lasting influence of religion throughout the early twentieth century Jewish nationalist movement is significant. Not limited by physical territory or the concentration of a people group in one region, the efforts of religion encouraged nationalist ideas to cross boundaries and unify a people group that identified with the common beliefs of faith.

Judaic culture and religion prepared the road for Jewish nationalism. It allowed the people to have one common voice and focus. Judaism identified the cultural and ethnic ties for Jews dispersed throughout the world. Even in periods of religious disagreement, without a discussion of religion, there was no potential for progress with the movement. Without the support through religious and cultural traditions, it is unlikely that the initial minority of Zionists

²⁹ Rieffner, 236.

would have been able to organize and maintain the progress of the Zionist movement throughout the early twentieth century.

Jewish Zionism defied boundaries through its ability to utilize the foundational beliefs of its religion to establish the needed the ethnic and cultural unity necessary for the Zionist nationalist movement. By tracing the history of Judaic monotheism, the basic principles of faith, the sacredness of scripture, common cultural practices, and religious differences this chapter demonstrated the significant role the religion had in directly and indirectly preparing the Jewish people for the organizational process of their early twentieth century nationalist movement.

CHAPTER THREE

JEWISH ORGANIZATION

“If I were to sum up the Congress in a word – which I shall take care not to publish – it would be this: At Basle I founded the Jewish State. If I said this out loud today I would be greeted by universal laughter. In five years perhaps, and certainly in fifty years, everyone will perceive it.”

–Theodor Herzl

Herzl believed with the foundation of the first Zionist Congress in 1897 that the movement toward a Jewish nation-state was an inevitable result. The hardest step was getting Jewish leaders and representatives together to discuss the issues Jews were facing globally and then to discuss possibilities for the future of the Jewish population. Once together, it became an issue of getting the leaders to agree with each other. Finally, these ideas to establish a Jewish State then had to spread beyond the intellectuals who gathered at the Congress and reach the common Jewish people in a way that motivated them to get involved, support and participate in the goals of the organization.

Nationalism is “the process of ethnic mobilization around nationalist organizations that develop, promote, and disseminate an ethnically exclusive ideology premised on state control.”¹ The Jewish nationalist movement of the early twentieth century reflected this definition of nationalism clearly as Zionism spread politically, culturally, and religiously through the organizations established at the Zionist Congress in 1897. Typically, historians used politics, culture, or even religion to separately approach the Zionist movement; however, the movement is rarely examined as a collective whole. Without the political, cultural, or religious elements of the Zionist movement there would have been little progress in the creation of the State of Israel. This

¹ Suzman, 14.

chapter builds on the two previous chapters by arguing that cultural and religious elements of the Zionist movement laid the foundation for the organization of the Zionist movement and the political movement that later ensued. Through the organization of the early Zionist movement, and its grounding in the cultural and religious aspects of the Jewish people, Zionist ideology spread throughout the world bringing recognition to the cause of Jewish nationalism to both the Jewish people, and to the world.

Basic infrastructure for the Zionist movement was established at the First Zionist Congress. Over the years, this structure continued to exist as an efficient and effective means to unify the Jewish population under Zionist ideology. Institutions such as the Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency, the Jewish Colonial Trust and the Jewish Fund were each planned and organized at one of the early meetings of the Congress. This chapter will trace the history of the Zionist Congress' from 1897 through 1917 focusing on key people and meetings of the Congress'. Details regarding the significance of specific Congress meetings will demonstrate the organizational effectiveness, and the emergence of Zionism to the global stage of politics. Then, the chapter will examine the various organizations created out of the early Zionist Congress' leadership. Through the examination of the purposes, leaders, and methods of the Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency, the Jewish Colonial Trust and the Jewish National Fund, these organizations will demonstrate the cultural and religious elements of the nationalist process used to effectively communicate, organize and mobilize the Jewish population. The purpose of this chapter is to argue that the strength of the organizations developed and coordinated with the Congresses from 1897 until 1917, lies within the national unity previously developed through the cultural and religious traditions. As the early twentieth century progressed, and the world moved

to war, the Zionist movement continued to gain strength and recognition on the international stage.

Zionist Congresses

“To Jewish distress no-one can remain indifferent, neither Christian nor Jew. It is a great sin to let a race to whom even their worst enemies do not deny ability, degenerate in intellectual and physical distress. It is a sin against them and against the work of civilization, in the interest of which Jews have not been useless co-workers. That Jewish distress cries for help. To find that help will be the great work of this Congress,”² concluded Max Nordau in opening remarks to the First Zionist Congress. Meeting in Basel, Switzerland on August 29, 1897, this congregation of Jews marked the official beginning of the Jewish national, or Zionist, movement. This first congress, called by Theodor Herzl, signified the initial parliamentary structure of the world Jewish community (see fig. 6). In this first assembly, approximately two hundred Jewish intellectuals who recognized the rising anti-Semitism throughout Europe joined Theodor Herzl, Max Nordau, and other delegates to listen to Herzl’s plans for the Jewish State, establish the World Zionist Organization, and declare Zionism’s goals.³

² Max Nordau. “Address at the First Zionist Congress.” *Jewish Virtual Library*. (The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2011). Retrieved from <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/nordau1.html>.

³ Anti-Semitism has existed for many centuries. Though not addressed in detail for this paper, it was the Enlightenment’s ideas that brought rise to new forms of anti-Semitism in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Since its formation as a religion, Judaism has fought against anti-Semitism of a religious nature. Being a monotheistic religion within a polytheistic world has brought persecution from all sides toward the Jews; however, the Enlightenment approached anti-Semitism from a scientific perspective. Jews were no longer seen as outsiders simply because of their faith and practices, but they also were seen as being biologically different from the rest of the world. These fundamental changes in culture stirred new animosity toward the Jews, and became a driving factor in the heightened desire for Jewish nationalism, and the creation of a Jewish political state.

In a sense of grandeur, these representatives arrived in Basel dressed in formal attire, and spent much of the first day singing Jewish hymns, and listening to the opening speeches. It is significant to note that those representatives in attendance at the First Congress were not the leading figureheads in the Jewish community at the time. For example, one of the individuals in attendance was Leo Motzkin, founder of the Russian Jewish Academic Association at the University of Berlin. Other individuals in attendance also held academic or intellectual positions in universities or small Jewish academic societies, but these men did not reflect the key Jewish leadership. Instead, this First Congress represented those intrigued by Herzl's cry for Jewish nationalism, and reflected a small, minority group in Jewish leadership. David Vital notes, "The view of the contemporary Jewish condition represented at the Congress, and of which the Zionist movement was henceforth to be the spokesman, could under no circumstances be described as anything but a minority view in Jewry."⁴



Figure 6. Postcard for First Zionist Congress, *Central Zionist Archives*

⁴ David Vital, *Zionism the Formative Years*, 4.

Following the introductory remarks by Nordau, the first day continued with Herzl speaking to the delegates. His address to the delegates explained the task of the Congress was to “lay the foundation stone of the house that is to shelter the Jewish nation.”⁵ On the second day of the Congress, the representatives from seventeen different countries voted to establish the purpose of the Congress. According to the records kept in the Central Zionist Archives, the intentions of Zionism and the Congress were as follows:

Zionism seeks to establish a home for the Jewish people in Eretz-Israel secured under public law. The Congress contemplates the following means to the attainment of this end:

1. The promotion by appropriate means of the settlement in Eretz-Israel of Jewish farmers, artisans, and manufacturers.
2. The organization and uniting of the whole of Jewry by means of appropriate institutions, both local and international, in accordance with the laws of each country.
3. The strengthening and fostering of Jewish national sentiment and national consciousness.
4. Preparatory steps toward obtaining the consent of governments, where necessary, in order to reach the goals of Zionism. (see fig. 7)⁶

From the beginning, the Zionist movement set out to organize the Jewish people culturally and politically. The First Congress even established a permanent institution in the Zionist Organization, later named World Zionist Organization, in order to maintain communication and organization for the Jewish population throughout the world.

⁵ Laqueur, 103.

⁶ These policies are also known, and later referred to as the ‘Basel Program’ meaning that these were the policies and ideas established at the First Zionist Congress held in Basel, Switzerland. Zionists, and later historians, have continued to refer to these policies by this name.

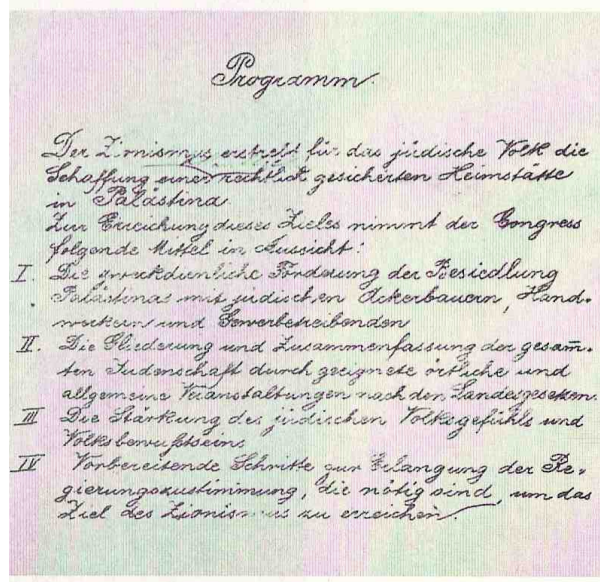


Figure 7. Handwritten version of Basel Program from 1897, *Central Zionist Archives*

As an institution, the Zionist Congresses were not a governing body over the Jewish people. It did not dictate to synagogues and local Jewish groups what policies and principles they must adhere to within their organizations. Instead, the Congresses purpose in these early years of the Zionist movement was to assemble Jewish leaders from around the world in order to make them aware of the hardships within the Jewish community and to plan a form of action to enhance Jewish nationalism and create a Jewish state in order to eliminate many of the Jewish hardships. To attain these purposes, the delegates voted on the direction, purpose, and plans they desired to support. Voting rights were granted as long as invited delegates were Jewish. There were some non-Jewish international officials at the congresses that arrived to observe and report the outcome to their respective governing authorities. Moreover, at the First Congress, women that were in attendance could not vote; however, at the Second Congress, a year later, those rights were granted to them and never revoked. As the years progressed, the Congresses were able to maintain the purpose, gain strength in their unity, and achieve recognition on the international stage. The Congress continued to meet annually through 1901, then met every other

year until 1913. World War I prevented the Congress from gathering, but the Zionist movement continued to gain strength.

Each Congress throughout the early period was unique in its meeting; however, some of the Congresses played a more vital role in the Zionist movement than others. Herzl's leadership and ambitions dominated the first six congresses. His dominance of the early congresses was natural since he was the father of Zionism, and the individual who organized the first gathering of the Jewish leaders. Following Herzl's sudden death in 1904, the Zionist Congresses maintained organization and influence in the Jewish population, despite the loss of its key leader. For the organizational purpose of this chapter, the Second Congress (1898), Fourth Congress (1900), Seventh Congress (1905), and the Tenth Congress (1911) have the most significant roles in demonstrating the organizational capabilities of the Jewish people.

At Basel in 1898, the Second Congress demonstrated a rise in attention toward Zionism within the Jewish community. Fearing opposition, and the potential for backlash, Herzl purposed the congress to 'conquer the communities,' by focusing on the development of Zionist ideology within the Jewish society (see fig. 8). This proved significant because Herzl's personal actions reflected his political motivations in establishing an internationally sanctioned State of Israel. He spent most of his time developing relationships with international heads of state in hopes to gain a charter for a Jewish state. However, Herzl's statement to the Congress demonstrated his recognition of the need for both cultural and political organization in order for the Zionist movement to be successful. It is this congress that established the Jewish Colonial Trust in order to organize and finance the Jewish migrations of the Zionist movement.



Figure 8. Postcard announcing Second Zionist Congress, *Central Zionist Archives*

Following the Second Congress, the most significant congress was the Fourth Congress in 1900. This congress is not significant for its decisions, announcements, or organization, but rather was significant for its location. For the first time the Zionist Congress did not meet in Switzerland, a traditionally neutral country and a safe haven for peace negotiations and international meetings. Instead, the Fourth Congress met in London. Herzl explained in his inaugural address, “I feel there is no necessity for me to justify the holding of the congress in London. England is one of the last remaining places on earth where there is freedom from Jewish hatred.”⁷ The rise in political recognition and sympathy toward the Zionist movement encouraged the congress to change locations for its annual meeting. They hoped improve their relationship with Great British needing their assistance in obtaining territory in Palestine for the State of Israel. As Berkowitz explains, “the fact that an international meeting of over four hundred nationalist-minded Jews, mostly from abroad, could gather in a world capital, and hold a

⁷ Nahum Sokolow. *History of Zionism 1600-1918*, vol. 2. (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1969), xlv.

mass meeting attended by enraptured thousands before its official opening, was remarkable.”⁸

The growing international recognition of Zionism, specifically in Britain, shows the strides that the national identity of the Jewish population had made in four short years.

Next in significance, the Seventh Zionist Congress of 1905 represented a change in the era of Zionism. Since its origins, Herzl’s leadership dominated the political scene and balanced the differing attitudes toward Zionism. After his death in 1904, the Congress was left in the hands of its now well-structured and organized delegation of international Jewish leaders. This encouraged a more cultural and religious approach to Zionism through leaders such as Ahad Ha’am, Chaim Weizmann, Martin Buber, and others. Following this Congress, Central Zionist Archive records show an increase in membership and dues paid to the Congress and the Zionist Organization. The increase in membership pointed to the growing recognition and support within the international Jewish community because of its focus on a common Jewish cultural identity.

The last congress examined is the Tenth Zionist Congress held in 1911. It was the next to last congress to meet before World War I. As the international situation progressed toward war, the Zionist movement reached a moment of peace. Chaim Weizmann, later the first President of the Israel, unified the differing factions of the Zionist Congress under the doctrine of ‘Synthetic Zionism.’ This principle merged political and practical Zionism by advocating political activity in gaining Palestinian territory while conjoined with investing in the cultural, educational and religious development of the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora. The educational system referred to in the first chapter was established throughout Europe because of this doctrine.

⁸ Michael Berkowitz. *Nationalism, Zionism and ethnic mobilization of the Jews in 1900 and Beyond*, 5.

Ultimately, synthetic Zionism and Chaim Weizmann's leadership became the dominant ideology of the Zionist movement through the founding of the State of Israel in 1948.

The Congresses demonstrate the progressive efforts to unify the Jewish leaders throughout the early twentieth century. Each congress allowed Jewish leaders to interact with each other, and understand the situation for Jews worldwide. In addition, the Congresses established an organizational foundation for the institution of additional organizations that allow the Zionist movement to progress culturally, economically, financially and politically.

The Zionist Organization

The First Zionist Congress planned the Zionist Organization before it dispersed in 1897. This organization became the worldwide organization dedicated to the 'Basel Program,' or the ideals and principles of Zionism laid out at the Zionist Congress. It sought to establish a home in Palestine for the Jewish people, and to create unity between all Jews worldwide. From their initial organization, many sister institutions have developed, but the Zionist Organization remains the umbrella organization for the Zionist movement.

Membership in the Zionist Organization was guaranteed through the individual's acceptance of the vision established in the Basel Program, and purchase of a Zionist shekel. According to Zionist leader Nahum Sokolow, "Only shekel payers (paying the sum of one schilling or a corresponding sum in foreign coinage) have the right to elect delegates to a Congress. The payment of that sum by a person who accepts the principles of Zionism as adopted by the First Congress entitles him or her to membership of the International Zionist Organization."⁹ Zionist groups around the world began promoting individuals membership into the Zionist Organization. Newspapers including *Die Welt* (Germany), *The Jewish Chronicle*

⁹ Nahum Sokolow, *History of Zionism 1600-1918*, vol. 2, 359.

(England), and others ran advertisements and articles promoting membership into the Zionist Organization following the First Congress. In addition, these publications also reported the exponential growth in membership to the Zionist Organization.

Divided into three permanent institutions, the Zionist organization worked to establish and sustain the development of Jewish nationalism between the meetings of the Congress. The three institutions maintained under the Zionist organization included the Zionist Congress, the Zionist General Council, and the Zionist Executive. Each component consisted of elected officials that provided the leadership necessary to maintain function and organization. The supreme body under the Zionist Organization is the Congress, which as previously explained met every year until 1901 when it began to meet every other year. During the inter-Congress period, the Zionist General Council was the superior authority. It approved and implemented the ideas and decisions made by the Zionist Executive. The Zionist General Council had all of the powers of the Congress except those specifically designated for the Congress, as expressed in the constitution. Consisting of a percentage of delegates representing each of the differing factions of Judaism present in the organization, the General Council provided a balance of opinion for the Zionist Executive. The Zionist Executive also acted as the president of the Zionist Congress and Zionist Organization.

From 1897-1917, there were three Presidents of the Zionist Organization: Theodor Herzl, David Wolffsohn, and Otto Warburg. Each led the organization with distinction and provided the necessary leadership to continue the Zionist movement through the early twentieth century. Through a brief examination of each of these presidents' leadership over the Zionist Organization, and the major events under their leadership, this section demonstrates the effective

growth and expansion of the Zionist movement through the cultural and religious principles built upon throughout the early years of the movement.

Herzl's background and significance to the Zionist Movement has already been discussed in earlier chapters; however, his efforts as president of the Zionist Organization are now examined in more detail. As founder and father of the Zionist movement, Herzl's leadership is distinct and immensely significant. "For six years, between 1897 and 1903, Herzl dominated the Zionist movement, virtually without challenge. His ability to do so owed something to his person, the figure he cut, the impression he made. It owed more to the simple fact that the movement, as it emerged in 1897, was, in its formal structure and in its public aspect, largely his own creation—a movement in which others, new Zionists and old, had joined him."¹⁰ From the first Congress, Herzl provides the balance of politics, culture, class and intellect that allows for his policies and visions to captivate Jewish leaders and motivate them to act. According to Herzl, his leadership of the Zionist movement was "an egg dance with the eggs invisible."¹¹ He worked to balance the differing views between Reformed and Orthodox Jews, assimilated and non-assimilated Jews, and Eastern and Western Jews. Though having a diplomatic agenda to build relationships with political figures to gain support and sympathy for the Zionist movement, Herzl also recognized the necessity for Zionist Organization and its ability to maintain the collective unity of the world Jewish population. Working within the Zionist Organization Herzl, being a journalist himself, presented to the General Council ideas to establish publications to spread the Zionist ideology. Through his work, various newspapers were established and they published numerous articles recording the Zionist activities. In addition, under Herzl's leadership the

¹⁰ David Vital. *Zionism the Formative Years*, 45.

¹¹ Laqueur, 104.

Zionist Organization established the Jewish Colonial Trust and the Jewish National Fund, both to be examined later. In the end, Herzl's leadership proved vital to the organizational foundation and structure to the Zionist movement. Without it, it is likely that the recognition and configuration of the movement would have taken longer to establish.

After Herzl's death in 1904, Zionists assumed that Max Nordau, Herzl's close friend, and co-laborer in the Zionist movement, would take the leadership initiative; however, this was not the case. Instead, David Wolffsohn was elected the president of the movement and Zionist Organization. Born in Lithuania, and becoming a successful businessman in Cologne within the timber trade, Wolffsohn, at age forty-nine, was one of the older members of the progressively student driven Zionist movement. "Wolffsohn genuinely did not want to be the new leader. He went to Paris to persuade Nordau to accept the succession, and when he was called by his interlocutor the 'only possible choice,' he countered by saying Nordau was out of his mind."¹² Reluctantly, Wolffsohn accepted the position as president of the Zionist Organization in 1905.

As an early lover of Zionism, and staunch supporter of Herzl, Wolffsohn followed the traditions of Herzl's structural organization. Vital describes him as "a man of strong feelings, but little imagination and with few ideas of his own to offer except in the specific respect of organization."¹³ His biggest contributions to the Zionist Organization during his term as president included moving the Central Zionist office from Berlin to Cologne, and organizing the establishment of the Jewish Agency. Wolffsohn was a practical individual rather than an intellectual, notably because of his business experiences. Although this did not let him bring about many new ideas as president of the Zionist Organization, these skills permitted him to

¹² Laqueur, 138.

¹³ Vital, *Zionism the Formative Years*, 422.

provide balance to the many factions within the Zionist leadership at the time, and allowed for the movement to continue to progress following the sudden loss of its founder.

In 1911, Otto Warburg, a professor and scientist as well as a prominent banker, replaced Wolffsohn. Known for his efforts in establishing settlements throughout Palestine from 1905-1911, Warburg's leadership to the Zionist Organization brought the changes necessary to blend the political movement with practical and cultural elements of Zionism. He was a practical Zionist, yet "a gentleman through and through, he was one of the very few leaders who did not have a single enemy in the movement."¹⁴ In addition to not having enemies, Warburg stuck to what he knew. He focused on the process of colonization and the issues surrounding that process, and allowed his colleagues to work through the political disagreements. One key element of importance within the Zionist Organization that Warburg immediately enacts is the movement of the Zionist Organization's headquarters back to Berlin. A higher concentration of Zionist leaders resided in Berlin in comparison to Cologne where Wolffsohn lived and relocated the headquarters under his presidency. Warburg's practical focus allowed the political movement to blend with the cultural movement and increase the Zionist movement's awareness and influence.

The last congress met before the start of World War I in 1913. With Warburg's leadership confirmed, the Zionist Organization did not lose pace with the spread of Zionism. Newspaper records show an increase in publications printed in specific dialect for the regions they were published. In addition to an increase in publications, these newspapers provided awareness for the progression of the movement by documenting the membership dues increased through the war-period, and showed the new Zionist Societies emerging worldwide. The last few pages of the newspapers listed, by name and amount, new members of the Zionist Organization.

¹⁴ Laqueur, 148.

Outside of the war, the second most published topic in Jewish newspapers became the Zionist movement. Through the operations of the Zionist Organization and the influence of its leadership, the Zionist movement expands exponentially and increases its international awareness on the political stage despite an ongoing war.

The Jewish Agency

In addition to establishing a presence throughout the European world, the Zionist movement from 1897 through 1917 focused on developing and establishing a Jewish presence in Palestine. Migration of Jewish people into Palestine traced back to Cyrus the Great's decree allowing the Jews to migrate back to Jerusalem; however, even then only 50,000 of the 600,000 Jews that left Israel actually returned. Many remained in the Diaspora, migrating and assimilating into the cultures throughout the surrounding world. With the renewed sense of Jewish nationalism, the early twentieth century provided opportunity for the Jewish people to return once more to the Promised Land through the efforts of the Jewish Agency.

Return to Palestine began at the turn of the century. Though debates occurred throughout the Congresses as to where the Jewish state should be,¹⁵ many Jews from Eastern Europe looked to escape the pogroms and anti-Semitism by migrating back to Palestine. By 1905, the Jewish return to Palestine in order to establish a Jewish State became the ultimate goal of the Zionist movement, but the groundwork for this mass movement started with the colonization of the Jews in Palestine in the nineteenth century. Through the migration of the Jews to Palestine, the establishment of colonies through the financial backing of the Rothschild's, the formation of the

¹⁵ Early in the movement the focus was on finding a homeland for the Jewish people. While some focus was given to the Palestinian region, there were also pursuits to establish a Jewish state in Uganda and Argentina. Both of these efforts caused serious debates between traditionalists of the Judaic faith, and those more reformed. In the end, both of these attempts failed to progress forward, and the unified push to resettling Palestine ensued. For more information on the attempts to establish a Jewish State in these regions, see the bibliography.

Jewish Agency, and finally the plans for a political Jewish state, the Zionist movement progressed beyond ideas and into visible action.

Migration of the Jews into Palestine began hundreds of years before the nineteenth century. However, significant numbers of Jews began to migrate there during the pogroms in Russia during the nineteenth century. “Some orthodox Jews left Europe for Erez-Israel because they believed it would serve them as a refuge from the disastrous and ineluctable effects of the Emancipation on the traditional patterns of Jewish life.”¹⁶ Others sought a safe haven, and a place to start anew. During this time, “the miniature community that had always been maintained there by a constant influx of pious Jews now grew to proportions which, though still small, presented new problems of economic maintenance and legal security.”¹⁷ Problems of economic maintenance and legal security within the communities in Palestine found the support of the Jewish banking family of Edmund Rothschild.

Edmund Rothschild was the head of one of the wealthiest of Jewish families in Western Europe. His family was of the Rothschild Paris bankers, and represented not only wealth, but influence among the Jewish and European communities. Before 1882, Rothschild clung to Palestine as the only possible habitat for the Jewish people; however, following 1882, Rothschild believed himself to be the necessary but insufficient condition for the establishment of a Jewish Palestine. Edmund Rothschild, along with his son James, became known as the entrepreneurs of the Jewish empire because they would seek to fund and establish Jewish colonies in Palestine until the formation of the political state of Israel. According to Simon Schama, “From its inception in 1882 to its consummation in 1957, there was declared intention by Baron Edmund to

¹⁶ Vital, *The Origins of Zionism*, 8.

¹⁷ Halpern, *The Idea of the Jewish State*, 13.

make a highly distinctive and irrepressibly unorthodox contribution to the perplexities of staying alive and stay Jewish in an era of savage violence.”¹⁸ Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, Rothschild strove to demonstrate that the establishment of these colonies was a test “of the colonist’s ability to survive as an autonomous cultivator class.”¹⁹ By proving this, then the political leaders in Europe would see the necessity for, and survival rate of a potential Jewish state.

The late nineteenth century consisted of a two-part process for Rothschild in the establishment of the colonies in Palestine: the encounter and the experiment. His encounter with a rabbi from Bialystok began Rothschild’s involvement with the colonies in Palestine because prior to this Rothschild did not know of any attempts to establish colonies of Jews in Palestine. Typically, this encounter is romanticized as the establishment of the first colony in Judea financed willingly by Rothschild; however, no records of this meeting actually exist. After Rothschild’s encounter with the Jewish colonies, he began his involvement with the *Rishon Le Zion* (First in Zion) colony. Schama explains Rothschild’s experiment by stating that:

Behind it all was an increasingly passionate identification with the fate of the Jewish people and a conviction that Palestine would have a central part to play in its future, but at the same time he was concerned to harness the technical expertise of the West so as to put into the hands of the Palestinian settlers the practical tools of their social as well as moral emancipation. Jewish Palestine has first to be a working economic organism or it could be nothing.²⁰

Following the experiment, the Rothschild’s involvement continued by avoiding legal association with purchases of land and financially investing in the colonies by paying their taxes and other

¹⁸ Simon Schama, *Two Rothschild’s in the Land of Israel*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 24.

¹⁹ Ibid., 18.

²⁰ Ibid., 67.

debts so that the colonies would survive. By the establishment of the Jewish state of Israel in 1948, an estimate of the Rothschild financial support and contributions for the colonies totaled around 118 million pounds. Without the financial support of the Rothschild's and Edmund's involvement in the establishment of first colonies in Palestine, the plans for the State of Israel would not have continued beyond Herzl's cry for a political Jewish State.

Plans for the Jewish State grew exponentially at the end of the nineteenth century, with the establishment of the World Zionist Organization and the Zionist Congress in 1897. As colonization progressed, the need for organization within these colonies in order to maintain unity as a Jewish community arose quickly. In 1908, the Zionist Organization decided to form the Palestinian Bureau, later becoming the Jewish Agency, in effort to support the economic and cultural infrastructure of the future state in Palestine. Under the initial leadership of Arthur Ruppin, the Jewish Agency, stationed in Jaffa, worked with the colonies to develop a systematic organization to the migration of Jews and the colonization of towns.

In addition to organization of new migrants into the territory, the Jewish Agency also worked to establish the cultural Jewish heritage within the colonies. They oversaw the organization of the school systems, and sanctioned the collective organization of Zionist societies within Palestine. Furthermore, the Jewish Agency conducted surveys and reported to the Zionist Congress about the population, economy, and establishment of the Jewish community in Palestine. The 1913 report as recorded in Nahum Sokolov's *History of Zionism*, shows the population increase to over 85,000 Jews living in Palestine, and an increase from forty colonies in 1910 to over sixty colonies in existence in 1914.²¹ During World War I, reports demonstrated a drop in Jewish population throughout Palestine; however, this fact can be attributed to the high

²¹ Nahum Sokolov, *History of Zionism 1600-1800*, vol. 2, 326-331.

percentage of Jews who served in various Allied forces, and left their wives and children in Palestine as they performed their military duties.

Overall, the Jewish Agency's reports and organizational ability provided a needed service to the Zionist Organization. Following the end of the war, it was the Jewish Agency reports on the advancing and unified community in Palestine, in combination with the political ties in England that allowed for the increased sympathy and support from the British government to acknowledge the efforts of the Jews to establish a nation-state in Palestine.

Jewish Colonial Trust

At the Second Congress in 1898, Herzl addressed the Congress, and called upon the delegates to 'conquer the communities'. One of the manners that the Congress worked to establish a unified Jewish community was through finances. Financial stability and capabilities signified to the world a place of standing; therefore, the Zionist leaders sought to collectively invest in their wealth into the Zionist goals in order to create a state in Palestine for the Jewish population of the world. Providing organization to the financial endeavors of the Zionist leaders, the Second Congress established the Bank Leumi and the Jewish Colonial Trust in 1899. Working out of London, the Bank Leumi collected, managed, and invested Jewish funds collected through dues, and later collections from the Jewish National Fund, in order to establish financial credit for the Zionist Organization. "The Jewish Colonial Trust was intended to be the financial instrument of the Zionist Organization, and was to obtain capital and credit to help attain a charter for Palestine."²² By obtaining credit, the Zionist leaders understood that they would be able to practically purchase a charter from another nation, so that they could become a politically recognized and sanctioned entity in the western world.

²² 'Jewish Colonial Trust,' Jewish Virtual Library, 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/jct.html>.

The Jewish Colonial Trust set out to obtain a credit of £2 million. This proved to be a daunting task as initially many wealthy Jews, like the Rothschilds, invested in personal endeavors rather than in the Zionist Organization. “The Zionist organization was so poor, the income from subscriptions so small, that the executive kept its finances secret for years in order to avoid ridicule.”²³ For the early years of the Zionist Organization, there are few reports of the financial situation. During the Fourth Congress, reports demonstrated that the revenue for the Zionist Organization from 1899 through 1900 was F115,771.40 with only F12,423.56 of that money going to the Jewish Colonial Trust.²⁴ With a shortage of funds initially, the Zionist leaders moved to establish fundraisers and charities to promote the financial stability of the organization, and to engage the wealthier Jewish individuals in supporting the Zionist movement (see fig. 9). By 1914, reports showed a significant increase in funds. *Die Welt* reported, “Since the last Congressional period, the national fund has grown again. The private donations in the last two years show an amount of 1,253.519 M, compared to those of the previous two years, which is an increase of about M 360,000.”²⁵

²³ Laqueur, 108.

²⁴ *Die Welt*, Heft 34 (24.8.1900), 8.

²⁵ *Die Welt*, trans. Heft 38 (19.9.1913), 1304.



Figure 9. Certificate of Donation to the Jewish Colonial Trust, *Central Zionist Archives*

Throughout the early years, the Jewish Colonial Trust also worked in Palestine to establish sound financial institutions. In Jaffa, the first Anglo-Palestine Bank began under the Jewish Colonial Trust’s authority in 1903 and “quickly made a name for itself as a reliable and trustworthy institution, which did not consider business transactions and profitability its only goals.”²⁶ The bank worked through the processes of purchasing land, as well as importing and obtaining concessions. Eventually, the Jewish Colonial Trust added additional branches in Jerusalem, Haifa, Beirut, and other colonized cities throughout Palestine.

The outbreak of World War I and the nationalist revolution in Turkey brought financial concerns for the colonies throughout Palestine. Without an Allied victory, the colonies would be destroyed under the new Turkish government. “The Turkish government, considering the bank an enemy institution because it was registered in Britain, ordered its branches shut and its cash

²⁶ ‘Jewish Colonial Trust.’ Jewish Virtual Library, 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/jct.html>.

confiscated;”²⁷ however, through the Jewish Colonial Association, and the support of other sister Zionist organizations, the banks in Palestine were able to secure the finances in other locations. These efforts allowed the Zionist Organization to maintain its financial stability, and to obtain recognition from other political entities as a legitimate organization that sought to obtain an independent state.

Jewish National Fund

As the Zionist Organization developed organizations to develop their recognition politically, there were other institutions established to reach to Jewish people and gain their support toward the Zionist efforts. The main institution established to engage with the common Jewish people was the Jewish National Fund. Founded at the Fifth Congress in 1901, a key last minute speech given by Herzl challenged delegates to not disperse without voting on establishing a fund.

Zionist leaders discussed the idea of a national fund at each congress, but it was not until the Fifth Congress that they established the official Jewish National Fund. “From its inception, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) — *Keren Kayemet* — was charged with the task of fundraising in Jewish communities for the purpose of purchasing land in Eretz Yisrael to create a homeland for the Jewish people.”²⁸ To accomplish this task, the Jewish National Fund established the ‘Blue Box’ campaign. Blue and white boxes were sent around the world to Jewish families and communities as a reminder to donate to the Zionist cause (see fig. 10). Families and communities would keep their Blue Box in a visible location, and would set aside any extra change for the fundraiser. The Zionist Organization received the boxes once they were filled. Their willingness

²⁷ ‘Jewish Colonial Trust.’ Jewish Virtual Library, 2011.

²⁸ ‘Jewish National Fund.’ Jewish Virtual Library, 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Orgs/jnf.html>.

to sacrifice their extra finances to support the cause of Zionism demonstrated the desires of the Jewish people, and their rise of Jewish nationalism.



Figure 10. JNF coin boxes, *JNF Archives*

Records show that initially the funds were minimal. Overtime, donations continued to increase through the Zionist Organizations propaganda techniques (see fig. 11). Even during the war, donations continued to come in, though they were significantly less than previous years; however, by 1917 donations doubled the earlier collections at the beginning of the war. The Jewish National Fund collected more than £1,747,000 by the end of the war. According to Nahum Sokolov, “the results attained by the National Fund must be attributed to the general growth of the Zionist movement as well as to the effective organization of its propaganda, to the popularity of its fundamental idea—the acquisition of land as National property—and the

importance attached by Jewry at large to the role that the National Fund will have to discharge in the forthcoming colonization of Palestine.”²⁹

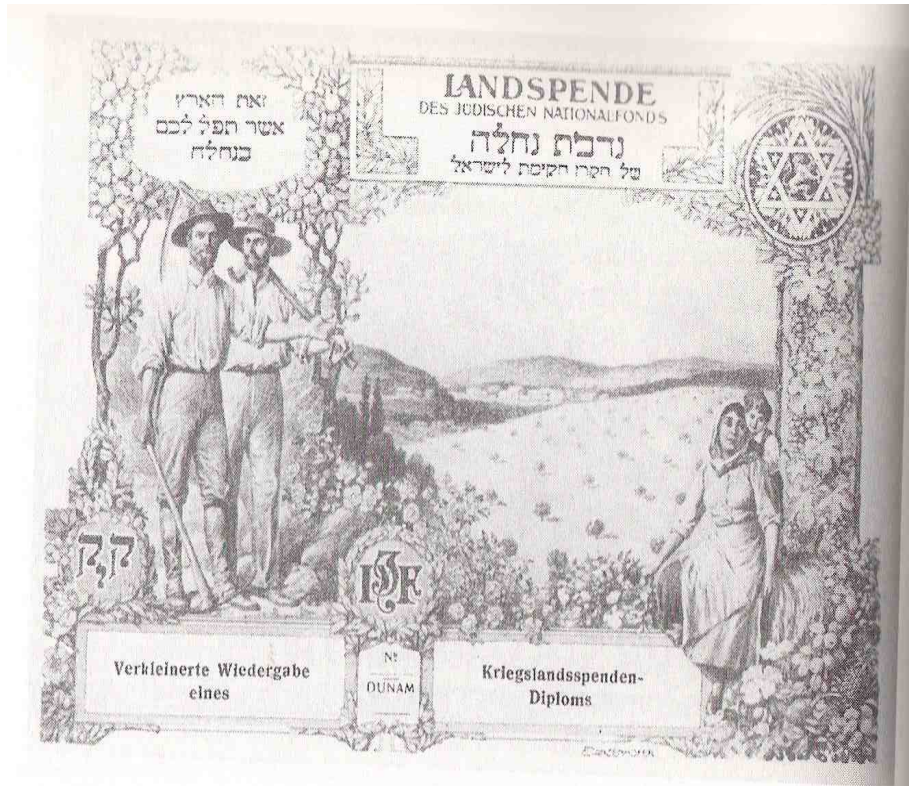


Figure 11. Certificate of Wartime Donations to the JNF, *Central Zionist Archives*

Through the Jewish National Fund, a global awareness arose for the Zionist movement. Financial support for the Zionist movement continued to spread within the Jewish community, as well as within the international community. The ability of the Jewish National Fund to increase its fund, even through the war, showed the continued rise in national tendencies of the Jewish people.

²⁹ Nahum Sokolov. *History of Zionism 1600-1918 vol. 2*, 31.

Conclusions

Through the Zionist Congress, the Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency, the Jewish Colonial Trust, and the Jewish National Fund, the Zionist leaders organized their movement beyond the intellectuals to reach the common Jew. Support for these organizations demonstrated itself through their increased memberships and dues. Increased propaganda and newspapers allowed the Zionist movement to clearly spread its ideology beyond ordinary barriers. Linked by their cultural and religious affiliations, the Jewish people pushed forward with their nationalist movement.

These organizations allowed for Zionism to have “all the marks of a Centre political force; weakly organized, it operated not as a party but as a federation of territorial associations... with the stated ambition of creating unanimity around a single practical objective—establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine.”³⁰ The Congresses established a political structure that allowed for the democratic process within the Jewish community. The Zionist Organization was umbrella organization for each of the additional institutions created under the Zionist leaders. Within the umbrella the Jewish Agency focused on culturalization and colonization in Palestine, the Jewish Colonial Trust financially organized the movement, and the Jewish National Fund raised support and awareness about the movement. Through each institution, the Zionist leaders established a body recognized by European political entities, and were able to make headway toward creation of the State of Israel in Palestine. Following the war’s end, the synthesized cultural and political Zionism became internationally recognized and supported by England through the Balfour Declaration. Without the creation of these organizations, their promotion internationally, and their financial, economic, and political structure grounded in their cultural and religious Judaic

³⁰Dieckhoff, *The Invention of a Nation*, 194.

traditions allowed for the Jewish nationalist movement to move forward on the international stage.

CONCLUSION

"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 religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country." -Arthur James Balfour

While progress of the Zionist movement made headway on the cultural and religious fronts through the inner working of the Congresses, and the institutions within the Zionist Organization, the intellectual and political leaders also worked to establish relationships with various political leaders to gain recognition as a legitimate nationalist movement. Since the turn of the century and the meeting of Fourth Zionist Congress in London, sympathy toward the Zionist cause developed in England.

Herzl set out at the beginning of the movement to establish relationships with the political leaders of countries such as England, Russia, and Turkey. Travelling tirelessly, his efforts brought the Zionist cause to the forefront of international politics. Though the national unity among the Jews became a necessity to move forward with the movement, Herzl saw the Congresses and the Zionist Organization as the cultural and religious unifiers, while he and other intellectuals paved the way for the creation of a political state. Following Herzl's death in 1904, Edmund Rothschild, Nahum Sokolov and Chaim Weizmann continued to work tirelessly creating relationships with various international political leaders. Specifically, these men began developing close and significant relationships with Arthur James Balfour, later Foreign Secretary of England, and David Lloyd George, future Prime Minister of England.

Through 1917, the British looked to carry on its favorable Allied relations with America and Russia. In effort to accomplish this task, Arthur Balfour thought that supporting the Zionist

cause, with which many of its supporters were in Russia and America, would allow these relationships to continue. Therefore, on November 2, 1917 Balfour wrote to Edmund Rothschild what has become known as the Balfour Declaration (see fig. 12).

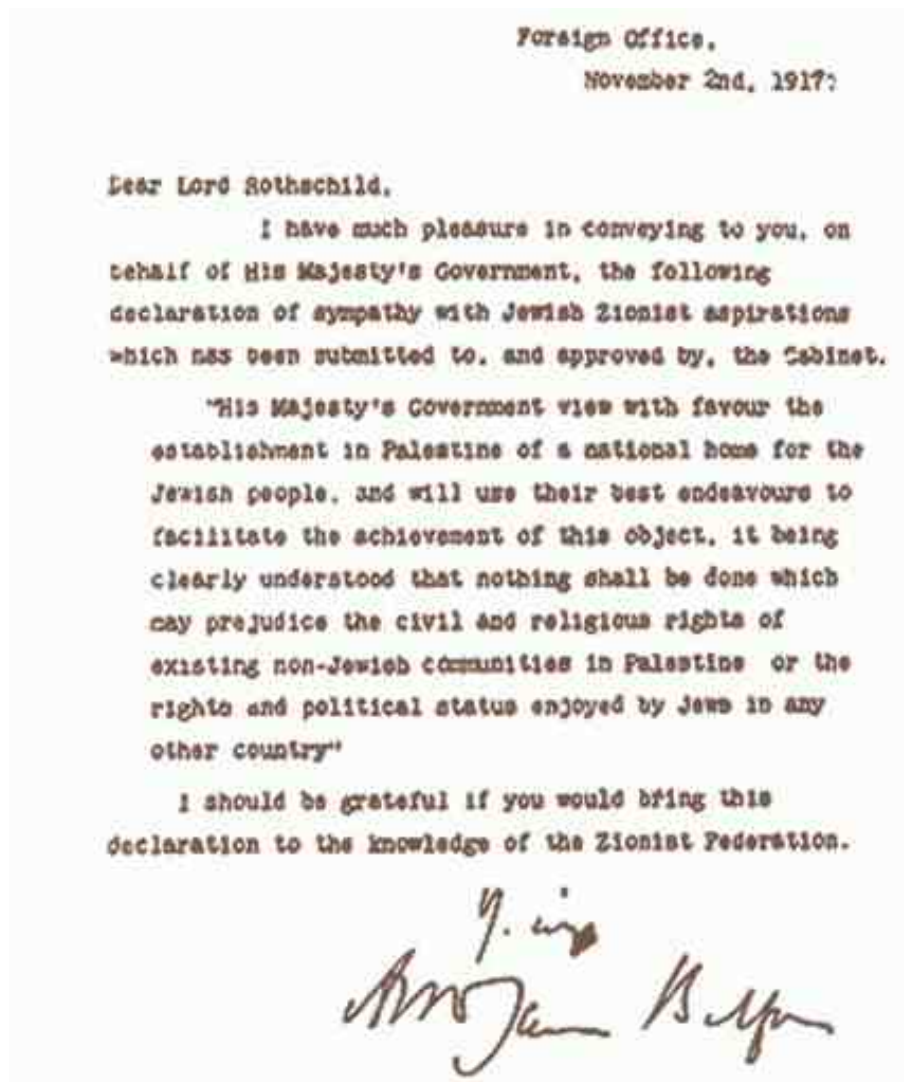


Figure 12. Balfour Declaration, *History of Zionism* by W. Laqueur

Upon its reception, Rothschild presented this letter to the Zionist Organization, and immediately Jewish migration and settlements increased throughout Palestine. Though there were countries and people, like the Arabs that disagreed with the Balfour Declaration the support needed to begin the process of nationhood for the Jewish people in Palestine began with this declaration.

This paper examined the process the Jewish people went through in order to reach this point of political recognition. It argued that this declaration was not an incidental circumstance in history, but rather a pinnacle moment in Jewish nationalism reflecting the ethnic and religious unity of the people. In addition, the Zionist movement demonstrated the elements necessary to place it alongside other ethnic nationalist movements of the twentieth century. Through the renewed focus on Jewish culture, a foundational unity in Judaic faith, and the ability to globally organize as a dispersed people the Jewish people gained significant recognition as a nationalist movement throughout the early twentieth century.

Renewed efforts in focusing on the Jewish culture as a means to unify the Jewish people throughout the world demonstrated the significant influence culture has on the development of nationalism. In effort to fully understand the concepts of cultural influence on nationalist ideology, chapter one examined the development of language, education, literature, art, music, and symbols within the early twentieth century Jewish community. These examinations demonstrated Jewish culture's ability to unify a diverse and dispersed people. Foundational elements of culture established common ground both within the Jewish population and in the way Jewish culture was represented to the external world.

Finding common language became the first cultural hurdle to overcome. The Zionist movements early focus on the Hebrew language made the Jewish people separate from the European world, but uniquely unified together as a people. Their ability to progress toward the use of this language created united efforts to communicate Zionist ideology. Zionist propaganda often reflected this push for common language through its use of both regional dialects and Hebrew on its distributions.

To educate the youth within Jewish communities on Jewish language and traditions, schools were developed throughout Europe and in the Palestinian region during the early twentieth century. As more Jews became educated, literature promoting Zionist leaders ideology circulated throughout the villages, making the common Jew aware of intellectual and political ideas to create Jewish nationalism. Jewish artists emerged during the early twentieth century and began depicting Jewish life and culture while using modern techniques of painting, sculpting and drawing. Music bridged the language barrier, because the notes and tunes of songs are the same no matter the language. People united around songbook collections, and the eventual use of *Hatikvah* as the national anthem. Finally, the symbols used throughout religion and culture formed a centralized focus for the diverse Jewish communities across Europe. As these cultural elements developed throughout the early twentieth century, the Zionist leaders used them to practically reach the Jewish people. Jewish national identity grew in its physical presence and political recognition, but without the cultural traditions, the progression of the movement would have taken longer to fully develop.

Building upon the cultural foundations established through the early Zionist efforts, Zionism also became unified through the religious traditions and faith found in Judaism. Religion allowed for the people to have one common voice, and focus through their foundational beliefs of faith. The belief in one God, Yahweh, and having a relationship with Him, provided common ground for Jews around the world. Synagogues emphasized the importance of being one Jewish community through weekly reciting of common prayers. Additionally, a refocus on religious traditions such as the observation of the Sabbath and the sacredness of their holy scriptures allowed for the theological diversity between Jewish leaders to minimize. Judaism identified the culture and ethnic ties for Jews dispersed throughout the world. Zionism

capitalized on these communal structures firmly established within the Jewish community, by opening each Congress with prayer and singing collections of religious-based songs. Without the use of these religious and cultural traditions, it is unlikely that the initial minority of Zionists would have been able to organize and maintain the progress of the Zionist movement throughout the early twentieth century.

Through the examination of Judaism's religious influence and traditions within Jewish culture, the obvious role of religion as a key to unifying people groups and to the forward progress of these ethnic nationalist movements is significant. The lasting influence of religion throughout the early twentieth century nationalist movements is also noteworthy. Religion by its own nature establishes a universal ideology that unifies people across cultural and intellectual barriers. Throughout history, religion continues to remain a foundational and influential element of society.

The Zionist movement built upon these cultural and religious foundations, and utilized the traditions established through them, as the leaders organized and structured a political framework. The framework of the Zionist Organization had two key purposes: to establish Jewish nationalism, and to create a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine. The Zionist Congress maintained supreme authority in determining the direction of the Zionist movement and the decisions of Zionist Organization. Under the Zionist Organization, various institutions emerged throughout the early twentieth century that allowed the Zionist ideology to reach the common Jew. Newspapers, pamphlets and additional propaganda emphasized the cultural and religious heritage of the Jewish people and increased in circulation and distribution throughout the early twentieth century. Focus on migration and colonization within Palestine became the focus of the Jewish Agency. The Jewish Colonial Trust and Jewish National Fund focused on the

financial elements of creating a national fund. Using key elements of religious and cultural tradition to promote fundraisers and campaigns, these organizations brought recognition of the Zionist movement to the world stage.

Through the examination of the institutions established through the Zionist Organization, chapter three argues that the cultural and religious influences unified the Jewish people in a manner that allowed them to gain the international-political recognition necessary to support the Zionist movement. Without these organizational structures, people and politicians alike would have overlooked their efforts. Instead, during World War I, Jewish newspapers reported two things—movement and progress on the warfront, and the Zionist nationalisms cry for a homeland for the Jewish people. Without the focus on Jewish culture and religious traditions, the diverse and dispersed Jewish people would have remained disunified and continued to individually struggle against rising anti-Semitism. Instead, Zionism became the rally cry of the Jewish people throughout the twentieth century. Support for the Zionist cause increased steadily, even during World War I. The expansion and progress of the Zionist movement on cultural, religious, and organizational fronts brought needed recognition of the movement to the forefront of international relations.

Historians typically separate the Zionist Movement from other ethnic nationalist movements because of its religious and political natures. The fact that the ideology originated in the late 19th century and the Jewish people did not receive their own nation until 1948, caused debates about the origins and successfulness of the movement. Even with the sixty-year establishment of the state of Israel, there are still disputes as to whether the state of Israel is a nation and if it should remain a nation. These debates do not take away from the argument that the Zionist movement is also an ethnic nationalist movement of the early twentieth century. After

the short examination of the Judaism's religious influences on the Zionist movement, the Zionist movement held its own in regards to cultural and religious attributes influencing the nationalist ideology. The exponential growth of the movement following organizational institutions that rise out of the Zionist Congresses and promoted Jewish nationalism through culture, religion, and politics demonstrate the effectiveness and success of the movement. Rather than differing from these ethnic nationalist movements, the Zionist movement seemingly added to the influence of culture and religion in the process of nationalism.

This paper supplements recent trends in social and cultural history, which have challenged traditional views of nationalization by suggesting that ethnicity and culture play a valuable role in national movements. Ethnicity and culture provide foundational elements in unifying people groups through language, traditions, and even religion. Through an understanding of the ethnic and cultural elements, the traditional interpretations and understanding of nationalism transforms to show the need of these elements in understanding nationalism fully. Nationalism requires commonality within the people under its influence. Though some argue that politics, economics or citizenship stir this desire of nationalism within people, it is argued here, that without commonality in cultural traditions there is no progress in these other areas. Focus within the leadership of these movements on these basic and common cultural traditions between the people is essential for the movement to progress. In addition, in movements where religion is a key part of the culture and is used as part of the process to unify the people, the successfulness of that movement increases considerably.

The Zionist topic presents new ideas and philosophies to the study of nationalism. This is by no means an exhaustive study on the subject. Further research is still needed. Through the study of Hebrew, additional documents and resources could supplement the findings argued

within this paper. In addition, the inability to travel out of the country to examine more primary source documents prevented a broader analysis of the Zionist movement. The Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem would provide additional primary resources on the cultural, religious, and organizational effectiveness of the Zionist movement. Furthermore, additional resources can be found throughout the United States in libraries that are in association with the American Jewish Libraries (AJL).

Beyond the use of additional resources to support this study, research in various subjects could also bring more light to the history of the Zionist movement. More detailed comparison and contrast between twentieth century nationalist movements, specifically examining the process and progress of the Zionist movement would provide more insight to the complex interworking of nationalist organizations. Also, a focus on the influence of anti-Semitism throughout the early twentieth century would enhance the understanding the Zionist movement's progress. Finally, detailed case studies of the influence and progress of Zionism throughout the world—the United States, Russia, Palestine, etc.—would clarify the influence this ideology had on the common Jews. As research continues and the Zionist movement is placed within its proper historical context, the implications of this general study will prove both valid and significant.

Zionism did not end with the Balfour Declaration in 1917, but it also did not begin here. Rooted in a long history of traditions, religious faith, the unity of Jewish nationalism and the longing for Zion begins centuries before 1917. From its foundation, the Jewish people have persevered through numerous trials, and remained one of the only existing ancient people groups throughout history. The early twentieth century Zionist movement reunified the Jews who lived for centuries dispersed throughout the world. Their renewed unity through faith and culture

allowed them to continue to pursue their longing for a home in Zion, and allowed them to gain recognition as a legitimate organization and ethnic group among international communities.

The Jewish culture continued to emerge on the world stage throughout the later portion of the twentieth century. As a people, they continued to face hardships, regardless of the early support from Britain. Anti-Semitism singled out Jews from the rest of the world's population throughout the twenties and thirties. Jews in Russia faced threats and more pogroms under Stalin. European Jews withstood Hitler's attempt to rid the world's population of their presence. Even in the United States, a place of religious tolerance, Jews faced persecution from the others as they competed for jobs in a struggling economy. Despite these factors, Zionism continued to develop and progress throughout the twentieth century. Migration into Palestine doubled throughout the 1930s as the Zionist Organization continued to promote the Zionist desire of a Jewish nation, and as anti-Semitism separated Jews from the rest of society. Following the end of World War II, and in acknowledgement of the severe treatment of the Jewish population throughout the early twentieth century, the state of Israel was established by the United Nations in 1948. Though definitions of Zionism changed since the establishment of Israel, the Zionist origins remain the same. Unified through cultural traditions and religious beliefs, the Jewish population demonstrated its ability to effectively organize and obtain its goal through perseverance and endurance. Their successes place them firmly within the ranks of various nationalist movements, and permit continued respect toward their accomplishments as a nation.

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