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University of Southampton

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

History

Between anti-Semitism and political pragmatism:

**Polish perceptions of Jewish national endeavours in Palestine between the
two world wars**

Katarzyna Dziekan

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

October 2019

University of Southampton

Abstract

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Polish perceptions of Jewish national endeavours in Palestine between the two world wars

Katarzyna Dziekan

Since Zionism was endemic within the Polish-Jewish politics of the interbellum, Warsaw's elites, regardless of their political persuasion, were compelled to take a specific stand on the Zionist ideology and Jewish national aims in Palestine. Being chiefly concerned with understanding the reasons behind Polish official engagement with the Zionist cause, this dissertation charts the ideological, socio-political and economic developments of the mutual relations between Poland and the Zionist movement. By analysing crucial discussions that swept through the Polish political scene, this project highlights the diversity of ideological receptions and attitudes within Poland's elites toward Zionism and the Palestine question, arguing that the pro-Zionist approach was not only propelled by anti-Semitism but was also the result of precisely calculated political, economic and diplomatic motives.

The question of Polish-Zionist interdependence is a fascinating and still little-known episode of history. In the existing historiography, Poland's engagement with Zionism remains largely peripheral or is regarded as the most effective means of convincing Jews to emigrate from Poland. While not denying the importance of political anti-Semitism in the late 1930s, this project

departs from the distorting lens of the tragic events of the Second World War and Nazi genocide. Drawing on documentation from Polish, Israeli and British archives and even more extensively on press coverage, this dissertation determines the concerns and objectives of Poland's political elites vis-à-vis Zionism, their perceptions of Jewish endeavours in the Middle East and the political ramifications for both sides. In doing so, it contextualizes the Polish government as an important voice in the international debate on Jewish emigration and the Palestine project.

As this dissertation maintains, attitudes and official perceptions of Zionism evolved significantly during the interwar period and were inextricably intertwined with a complex set of internal and external factors. The implications of Polish interwar politics had a profound effect on the official perceptions of Zionism. The most influential events of this period were Piłsudski's seizure of power in May 1926, the rise of a semi-authoritarian regime, the growth of ethno-nationalism within the Polish society and the process of erosion of the *Sanacja* camp's political significance in the aftermath of the Marshal's death. In addition, subsequent developments within international politics shaped the extent of bilateral Polish-Zionist relations. Thus, this project is embedded within the wider historical, diplomatic and geopolitical context of the rapidly changing political landscape of Poland, Europe and the Middle East.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

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I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission.

Signature:		Date:	8 th October 2019
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Definitions and Abbreviations

AAN – Archiwum Akt Nowych [Archive of Modern Records]

AIPMS – Archiwum Instytutu Polskiego i Muzeum im. gen. Sikorskiego w Londynie [Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum Archives]

Aliyah – the immigration of Jews from the Diaspora to Eretz Israel

ARPL – Polish Embassy in London

BBWR – Bezpartyjny Blok Współpracy z Rządem [Non-Party Bloc for Cooperation with the Government]

CZA – Central Zionist Archives

CO – Colonial Office

Eretz Israel – Land of Israel

FO – Foreign Office

Hachshara – ‘preparation’, Zionist training programmes

Halutsiyut – Zionist pioneerism

HIAS – Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society

JI – Jabotinsky Institute

JA – Jewish Agency

JFA - Joint Foreign Committee

JTA – Jewish Telegraphic Agency

JEAS – Jewish Emigration Aid Society

LMA – London Metropolitan Archives

LMiK – Liga Morska i Kolonialna [Polish Maritime and Colonial League]

LN – League of Nations

MOS – Ministry of Social Security

MSW – Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych [Ministry of the Interior, Poland]

MSZ – Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland]

Definitions and Abbreviations

ND – Endecja, Narodowa Demokracja, [National Democratic Party]

NZO – News Zionist Organisation

OWP – Obóz Wielkiej Polski [Camp of Great Poland]

OZON – Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego [Camp for National Unity]

PIE – Polski Instytut Eksportowy [Polish Export Institute]

PKO – PKO Bank [Postal Savings Bank]

PPS – Polska Partia Socjalistyczna [Polish Socialist Party]

PF - Palestine Pound

SN – Stronnictwo Narodowe [National Faction]

TNA – the National Archives, Kew

Yishuv – Jewish settlement in Palestine

zł – Polish Złoty

ZO – Zionist Organisation

Introduction

In the aftermath of the First World War, *Druga Rzeczpospolita* [the Second Polish Republic] emerged as an independent and sovereign state. The restoration of Poland naturally revived its national spirit, which, though suppressed for one hundred and twenty-three years, had never been entirely eradicated.¹ The resurgence of this pervasive spirit of nationalism had directly contributed to the rise of national consciousness of all ethnic minorities dwelling in the country. As the heartland of European Jewry, Poland became the centre of Diaspora politics. Never before had there been such a favourable environment within which modern Jewish politics could flourish: a plethora of various competing parties and local political organisations could freely evolve along ethnic, religious and social lines. Consequently, during the interwar years, the newly resurrected state 'served as the laboratory of the various modern Jewish approaches to the Jewish question' and 'the major testing ground' for competing socio-political ideologies that developed within the Jewish political tradition.² Polish Jewry, a community of 3.5 million – the largest in Europe and the second largest in the world - gave birth to a number of different nationwide parties. Whereas some of them were successful and attracted many new members, the others ended in failure and were completely forgotten, but each had a profound impact on Jewish national consciousness. Autonomous political ideologies such as Zionism, Bundism and Folkism were of particular interest and successfully attracted the Jewish masses. The Zionists promoted their national agenda, Bundists sought to improve and secure civil rights in the country, whereas the Orthodox Jewish leaders sought to perpetuate a traditional way of life.

The striking transformation of Jewish national consciousness was a result of complex ideological, socio-political and economic developments, involving both Jewish as well as European history.³ In that part of Europe, which in 1918 was to become Poland, Zionism emerged as a

¹ The final partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth occurred in 1795 and ended the existence of independent state for the period of 123 years. Throughout the 18th Century three neighbouring powers – the Russian Empire, the Kingdom of Prussia and Habsburg Austria divided lands of Poland among themselves progressively in the process of territorial seizures. (1772, 1793, 1795).

² Mendelsohn E. (1983) *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp.2, 81.

³ The questions of Jewish national transformation as well as the emergence of political Zionism go beyond the framework of this project. See: Gitelman Z., ed. (2003) *The Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics: Bundism and Zionism in Eastern Europe*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh; Laqueur W. (2003) *A History of Zionism*, London: Tauris Parke

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response to the simultaneous disillusionment with the Diaspora and a feeling that traditional Jewish authorities did not possess appropriate tools to cope with the major challenges of the modern world. Although Zionism was not the only force within politics vying for the leadership of Polish Jewry, at the beginning of the 1920s the movement became a dominant political force, counting more than a quarter million sympathizers.⁴ The political success of Jewish nationalists was certainly a result of the general atmosphere within the Jewish society after the First World War. The turmoil of the Great War, a new geopolitical situation in post-war Europe, the rebirth of the sovereign Polish state and finally the Balfour Declaration provided Zionist leaders with the opportunity to emerge as a great political force that both came to dominate the Jewish political scene in Poland and became a crucial component of Zionism at large.

This project will assess the degree to which the development of Polish politics and the struggle for independence resonated with Zionist national aspirations, and the extent to which Polish nationalist goals and the Jewish national agenda were complementary. With the new political dispensation, the opportunity was given for the entry of Jews into the common political, social and economic life of the country. Zionists quickly took advantage of this propitious socio-political climate and managed to gain considerable power within the Polish Jewish community. At the beginning of the 1920s Jewish nationalism paralleled the development of Polish nationalism to a large extent and there should be no doubt that Polish nationalism had a profound impact on shaping Polish Jewish youth and turned many of them towards Zionism. The idea of reviving a nation-state from empires that partitioned historic territories was, in fact, shared by both Polish officials and Zionists.

Since the Zionist ideology was endemic within Polish-Jewish politics, Warsaw's elites, regardless of political shades, were compelled to take a stand on this doctrine, the question of emigration and Jewish national endeavours in Palestine. This dissertation is chiefly concerned with understanding the reasons behind Polish official engagement in the Zionist cause. For the student of Zionism in Eastern European politics, the pro-Zionist approach embraced by Poland's political and intellectual elites in the late 1920s and the 1930s, is a fascinating and little-known episode of history, which raises a host of questions. My first aim is therefore to fill this gap by addressing following questions: How did subsequent Polish governments perceive the ideological tenets of Zionism and its national endeavours in Palestine? What factors undergirded shifts of

Paperbacks.

⁴ CZA – Central Zionist Archives, Z3/150, *Memorandum on the Zionist Movement and the Zionist organization in Poland and their activities*, 21 October 1918.

perceptions? Why did the *Sanacja*'s officials, who had formerly articulated the assimilation scheme, decide to deploy a pro-Zionist policy? Was this approach motivated by anti-Semitism or political pragmatism, or both? How did Piłsudski's inner circle of acquaintances perceive Zionists, as Poles or foreigners? Was their approach different from that articulated by the right-wing *Endecja* [*Narodowa Demokracja* – National Democracy]⁵, which had ruled the country prior to Marshal Piłsudski's May 1926 *coup d'état*? How did *Piłsudczyks* view Zionists' irredentist territorial claims? Finally, what were the political and economic ramifications of the pre-war relations between the Zionists and the Polish leadership? These questions lie at the heart of this project, which reassesses the question of Polish-Zionist interactions prior to the outbreak of the Second World War.

The re-integration of Polish territories in November 1918 gave rise to a number of difficulties. Admittedly, Poland was re-united and independent, but far from politically organised. The long period of partition, during which the country's three regions were administered by Austria, Prussia and Russia, resulted in a diversification of political traditions. The task of the state apparatus to unite those three regions into a single administrative and economic entity was extraordinarily difficult.

Perhaps the most pressing issue was how to deal with distinct ethnic milieus. Given that the ethnic minorities constituted more than thirty per cent of the total Polish population, policy towards them became a crucial component of internal political debate.⁶ The conception of a national minorities policy, the extent of national minorities rights, their religious and cultural freedom became the subject of a staunch political debate and many times determined the composition of the Polish parliament and cabinet. Under such conditions, the state apparatus had to deploy a policy that would meet the expectations of both the majority as well as particular ethnic minorities.

⁵ Throughout the dissertation terms such as *Endecja*, *Narodowa Demokracja*, *Endeks*, Polish Enthno-Nationalists are used interchangeably in referring to the right sector of Polish political scene in the interwar years. All these terms describe politicians and intellectuals who deployed and promoted political philosophy of Poland's most charismatic right-wing ideologists – Roman Dmowski, Zymunt Balicki and Jan Ludwik Popławski.

⁶ For an overview of the national-minority problem see: Dyboski R. (1923) Poland and the Problem of National Minorities. *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 2: 179-200; Żarnowski J. (1973) *Spoleczeństwo Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej: 1918-1939*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe; Chojnowski A. (1979) *Koncepcje Polityki Narodowościovnej Rządów Polskich w latach 1921-1939*, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich – Wydawnictwo; Blatman D. (2003) National-Minority Policy, Bundist Social Organization and Jewish Women in Interwar Poland. In: Gitelman Z. (ed) *The emergence of modern Jewish politics: Bundism and Zionism in Eastern Europe*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 54-70.

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No other sector of the Polish population was more firmly identified with the national-minority question than Polish Jewry and nowhere in the Diaspora was the so-called Jewish problem more acute than in Poland. But how did interwar elites really perceive the Jewish problem? Socialist thinkers defined this phenomenon in 1904 as the 'mutual internal relationship between Christian societies and Jews who live among them' and 'a matter of differentiation of Jews from the rest of society in traditional, social, and, in general, cultural terms'.⁷ What substantially divided Polish policymakers was the variety of approaches to solving this question. Whereas Socialists viewed acculturation as the only means to ease the internal situation, the ethno-nationalist factions affiliated with Roman Dmowski who believed in creation of 'Poland for the Poles' collectively denied Jews the right to participate in the nation-building process. To what degree, therefore, did these factors undergird their perceptions of Zionism? Was the emergence and rapid development of Zionist ideology seen as a threat to their concepts of solution to the Jewish question?

As Ezra Mendelsohn states, 'the Jewish problem in interwar Poland was a problem for the new Polish state and for Polish society'.⁸ Consequently many important questions were raised, one being the issue of how to deal with Jewish predominance in urban areas. According to the first official census, taken in 1921, Jews constituted some 10.5 per cent of the overall population of Poland and about one-third of its urban population.⁹ In turn, the 1931 national census recorded 3,113,933 people in the country who claimed to be of the Mosaic faith, while almost ninety per cent of them indicated Yiddish or Hebrew as their mother-tongue.¹⁰ Polish Jews, unlike any other minority, were placed in the limelight of right-wing rhetoric. The government faced a real dilemma of how to deal with this economically powerful but poverty-stricken community.¹¹ Indeed, the divergence of interests and views on this matter precluded the governing elites from embracing a balanced and coherent political line toward this issue. An additional dilemma was the fact that the Jewish political scene was riven with competing factions, each making contradictory demands of Polish officialdom.

⁷ Wileński T. (1904) *Kwestia żydowska* Kraków: Latarnia cited in: Śliwa M. (2008) The Jewish Problem in Polish Socialist Thought. *Polin, Poles, Jews, socialists: the failure of an ideal* 9: 14-30.

⁸ Mendelsohn E. (2004) Jewish Historiography on Polish Jewry in the Interwar Period. *Polin. A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies* VIII: 3-12.

⁹ Rocznik Statystyki Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, IV.26, table V.6.

¹⁰ It was the last census conducted before the outbreak of WW II. The previous one, conducted in 1921, recorded 2,855,318 people of the Mosaic confession. Interestingly, the accuracy of census has been repeatedly contested. Some observers of political life in Poland suggested that the census tended to overestimate the number of ethnic Poles.

¹¹ According to the research conducted by the Institute for Research into Nationality Question about twenty per cent of Polish Jews were devoid of all sources of sustenance whereas fifty-sixty per cent lived below the poverty line.

Warsaw-born Yitzhak Gruenbaum, who organised the National Minorities' Bloc, a broad coalition of Jewish, Ukrainian and Belarussian minorities in the *Sejm* [the lower house of the Polish parliament], quickly came to be regarded as the political leader of Polish Jewry.¹² As a well-established Zionist leader, he hoped the creation of this political platform would serve as a crucial instrument to compel the Polish authorities to recognise the political needs of all national minorities inhabiting the country. However, support was forthcoming from *Endeks* [followers of Roman Dmowski], who adopted a very supportive stance towards Jewish national aspirations to reconstruct a Jewish state in the Land of Israel. Polish Zionists, naturally against assimilation and the only large political faction without any irredentist territorial claims within Poland, quickly succeeded in arousing interest in ethno-nationalist circles of Polish elites. Willing to push through the concept of Poland as a 'national state', politicians of the Right found Zionist nation-building rhetoric an attractive and useful instrument in shaping their policy vis-à-vis the Jewish population of Poland.

However, did the seizure of power by the *Sanacja* camp, which was far from being an ideological monolith, change Poland's official policy towards the Palestine question? After May 1926 the Polish governing elites consisted of, in Anita Prażmowska's words, 'military men with whom he [Piłsudski] shared the experiences of the Legions, which he had formed in 1914 to fight for Austria. This group had no political programme to solve Poland's problems.'¹³ The great majority of Marshal Piłsudski's adherents, being united in the praise of their *Komendant* [Commandant], had shared legionnaire and military intelligence experiences. As I will argue, this common past had shaped their views on Zionism and also affected their methods of mutual cooperation in the late 1930s. Aiming to examine the prevailing Polish political thinking on Zionism and Jewish national aspirations in Palestine, I will analyse the factors motivating prominent Polish politicians: Józef Beck, the Minister of Foreign Affairs handpicked for the post by Marshal Piłsudski; Wiktor Tomir Drymmer, the director of the Consular Department; Felicjan Sławoj-Składkowski, Polish Prime Minister; Witold Hulanicki, the Polish Consul in Jerusalem, as well as other key Polish intellectuals such as Stanisław Cat-Mackiewicz, a conservative politician and editor of *Słowo* [Word], Ksawery Pruszyński, a young reporter, and many others.¹⁴

As I will argue, the history of reciprocal interactions between the *Sanacja*'s governing elites and the Zionist leadership can be divided into three consecutive phases – 1926-1929, 1930-

¹² On the National Minorities Bloc, see: Mendelsohn E. (1982) *Zionism in Poland: The Formative Years, 1915-1926* New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 212-224.

¹³ Prażmowska A. (2000) *Eastern Europe and the origins of the Second World War* New York: St. Martin's Press, p.135.

¹⁴ For a glossary of persons see: Appendix.

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1935 and between 1935 and the outbreak of the Second World War. Whereas the initial period was marked by adherence to assimilation scheme, what resulted in embracing rather ambivalent stance by the *Piłsudczyks*, along with the beginning of the 1930s an increasing number of the *Sanacja*'s elites re-evaluated their perceptions of Zionism and the Palestine question. In the second phase, *Piłsudczyks*, being well-aware of state's internal problems and changes that Poland's Jewish population were undergoing at this time, decided to support Zionists' ideological and political tenets. The study will then aim to assess the ways in which the political situation within the country – Piłsudski's death, which initiated a process of erosion of his *Sanacja* camp's political significance, lack of political cohesion and increasing racial hatred – shaped the extent of bilateral, Polish-Zionist, cooperation. Since some sections of Pilsudski's *Sanacja* movement had departed significantly from his vision of state and nation and had embraced ethno-nationalist concepts previously articulated by *Endecja*, the political reality was worsening, all the more so with the advances of Stalinism and Nazism so close to Poland's borders. Racial discrimination was widespread and waves of state-sanctioned anti-Semitism encompassed socio-political, cultural and economic spheres of life.

The death of such a venerated Marshal as Piłsudski in May 1935, also greatly mourned by Polish Jewry, not only brought to an end an era in Polish politics but also significantly shaped the extent of Polish-Zionist relations, culminating the second phase (1930-1935) in bilateral relations. As Antony Polonsky remarks, 'although the Marshal had taken little actual part in the running of government in Poland in his later years, his mere presence had provided an ultimate authority that could settle disputes over the direction of policy and unite the somewhat disparate elements that made up the *Sanacja*'.¹⁵ Consequently, in the late 1930s, the ruling camp plunged into deep internal ideological conflict. Even though some segments of Polish officials, the close circle of Piłsudski's most trusted men, still adhered to the tradition of toleration, which they had inherited from the Marshal, the atmosphere in the country appeared more and more grim. Along with these developments, the assimilation scheme, formerly articulated by the *Sanacja*, evolved into more exclusionary ideologies. The paralyzing influence of ethno-nationalist rhetoric dominated the state's political scene and consequently influenced the socio-political interests of the Polish nation by excluding other ethnic minorities. Willing to abrogate Jewish constitutional rights, the right-leaning forces sought to enforce discriminatory legislation and belligerent administrative practices. Dmowski, the chief ideologue of the *Narodowa Demokracja* political movement expressed in public the view that the very existence of Jews in the country was 'lethal

¹⁵ Polonsky A. (2008) *The Jews in Poland and Russia, 1914 to 2008* Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, p.79.

to our society and we must get rid of them'. The increasing anti-Semitism of the *Endecja* brought the so-called Jewish question to greater public awareness. This issue had risen to the forefront of coverage in all sectors of the Polish press, regardless of political allegiance and brought demands for an effective solution to be found. In a situation where politicians of the internally divided *Sanacja* were feeling the insecurity of their own political position, some yielded to pressure from the Right.¹⁶

The internal developments of the 1930s persuaded a large number of Polish Jews that moderate versions of Zionism could not provide an appropriate solution to the Jewish question. Politically engaged Jews of Poland turned therefore in ever-greater numbers to the Revisionist programme, propounded by Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky and disseminated in *Czas [Time]*. This Polish Conservative newspaper printed material promoting mass emigration to the Land of Israel, military struggle against the British authorities, and a Jewish State be established on both sides of the Jordan River, i.e. encompassing Transjordan and Cis-Jordan as originally envisioned by the 1920 Treaty of San Remo. It is likely that the internal developments with the Zionist movement affected Warsaw's perceptions of Jewish political interests in Palestine? No one can argue that there was unanimity of opinion in the Polish political scene with regard to Jewish national project. The Revisionist New Zionist Organisation, with which the Polish authorities entered into an alliance, was established in September 1935, just as Polish policy towards the Jews started to be re-evaluated by Piłsudski's successors.

As late as the second half of the 1930s, Piłsudski's inner circle of acquaintances engaged into close cooperation with the Revisionist movement, with the result that Polish involvement with the Palestine question was conducted in total secrecy. From this vantage point the project will not only reconsider the Polish government as an important diplomatic channel but also as a strategically significant ally in 'a campaign for the recognition of a distinct Jewish nationality'¹⁷. On the other hand, drawing on British reports from the Foreign Office, official memos and intelligence reports, the study will assess what the Mandatory authorities actually knew about Polish-Zionist cooperation in terms of assistance in training, supplying arms and support for both legal and illegal Jewish immigration - *aliyah bet* - to Palestine.

Relations between the Polish ruling elites and the Zionist leadership cannot be analyzed separately from the wider historical, diplomatic and geopolitical context. Given that

¹⁶ Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press.

¹⁷ Fleming M. (2014) *Auschwitz, the Allies and Censorship of the Holocaust* New York: Cambridge University Press, p.89.

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British foreign policy towards Palestine played a substantial role in shaping the Jewish political agenda, the project will place mutual, Polish and Zionist, cooperation and perception of the Palestine question within a broader context. Embracing such a research approach contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. Particular attention is given to the development of mutual relations over the course of the 1930s. When the European Jewish crisis was deepening, the power of Zionist rhetoric substantially increased. However, the constantly deteriorating political situation in Palestine drove the Mandatory Power to moderate its line of policy in the region. With consecutive British White Papers that substantially curtailed immigration quotas, *Eretz Israel* was becoming less accessible to Polish Jews. As the Mandate authorities acceded increasingly to Arab demands, Zionist hopes to establish a Jewish national home appeared to have been in vain.

In such circumstances, the question arose as to whether Polish politicians should have adopted a passive approach towards the question of Jewish nationhood. The debate over this issue deeply polarised the Polish political scene. As Howard W. Kennard, England's ambassador to Warsaw noted in his 1936 report to Antony Eden:

Apart from the specific question of Jewish emigration, the internal situation in Palestine is followed with much interest in Poland and even the organs of the National Democrat Party, which is the principal stronghold of anti-Semitism here, show more sympathy with the Jews than with the Arabs, since they too realise that a prosperous Jewish Palestine means an easing of Jewish competition in their own country.¹⁸

With this mounting wave of anti-Semitism, Polish diplomats became increasingly active in the League of Nations expressing the state's support for unrestricted Jewish emigration. Given that Jews constituted half of the Polish migrants to all destinations, and of these almost one hundred and forty thousand Jews had left Poland for Palestine (making up approximately forty per cent of the legal immigration to the country), the question of emigration became a matter that affected Polish public debate, both directly and indirectly. Thus, this study will also illuminate crucial discussions on emigration as a solution to the Jewish question sweeping through the Polish political and intellectual elites at this time. During the course of the 1930s, Polish diplomats, Edward Raczyński and Tytus Komarnicki called on London and the League of Nations to abolish immediately restriction of immigration to Palestine and even to open Transjordan for Jewish

¹⁸ TNA – The National Archives, Kew, CO 733/295/3, *Jewish immigration: Poland to Palestine*, pp.27-28.

settlement. This project will therefore contextualise Poland as an important voice in the international debate over Jewish sovereignty in Palestine.

The belief that the *Sanacja*'s elites deployed the pro-Zionist policy and emigration scheme in order to facilitate a speedy exodus of Jews from Poland has had a lasting impact on the public and scholarly discourse.¹⁹ While not denying the importance of political anti-Semitism in the late 1930s in assessing Polish-Zionist relations, this project will depart from the distorting lens of the tragic events of the Second World War and Nazi genocide. What there has not been, so far, is an attempt to reconstruct in one project the question of mutual, both political and economic, relations between Zionists and Poland's policymakers in the interwar years. Also, the question of Poland's perceptions of Zionism and Jewish national endeavours in Palestine has not received adequate attention among academic and scholarly circles. A superficial analysis of mutual relations might have suggested that the pro-Zionist policy deployed by the *Sanacja*'s officials did not contrast with that espoused by the *Endeks* and was based on the premise that the solution for the Jewish question within the framework of the country was impossible; therefore, it was necessary to solve this issue through increased emigration. However, by reassessing the reciprocal Polish-Zionist interactions of the late 1920s and the 1930s, this project seeks to show that the *Sanacja* camp's attitude vis-à-vis Zionism had evolved steadily since it had seized power, being not only propelled by anti-Semitism but was also the result of precisely calculated political, economic and diplomatic motives. My project is, therefore, not only a comprehensive account of the three consecutive phases in bilateral relations (1926-1929, 1930-1935, 1935-1939) but also serves as a historical survey of Piłsudczyks' encounters with Zionist ideological and socio-economic principles.

Literature review

The intriguing question of the rise and development of modern Jewish politics in Polish lands as well as its reception by the ruling elites of Poland is inextricably linked with the larger question of Polish-Jewish relations as well as prospective solutions to the state's Jewish question. Historical scholarship on the centuries-old Jewish presence in the Polish lands grew out of the new intellectual climate of the 19th century. Whereas Jewish scholars were engaged in preserving manuscripts and uncovering primary sources, non-Jewish intellectuals such as Tadeusz

¹⁹ Marcus J. (1983) *Social and political history of the Jews in Poland, 1919-1939* Berlin: Mouton Publishers; Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press.

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Czacki (1765-1813) and Wacław Aleksander Maciejowski (1792-1883) began to explore the depth of Jewish roots in Poland.²⁰

Alongside the rebirth of the sovereign Polish state new approaches to exploring and presenting the longstanding Polish-Jewish coexistence emerged. The tradition of *Haskalah* and *Wissenschaft des Judentums* along with the academic experiences acquired at the Polish Universities had a particular impact on Jewish historical output. In 1927 a group of Jewish intellectuals founded the Institute of Jewish Studies in Warsaw that provided professional training for academics and students engaged with the subject of East European history and Polish-Jewish relations. Basing their research on previously neglected Jewish primary sources, a new generation of Jewish scholars aimed to correct the Polish bias that had arisen in the existing historiography on Jews in the Polish lands. The foundations for the history of Polish Jewry were laid by Majer Bałaban, a prominent Jewish historian and educator.²¹ Also, the question of the political and economic heritage of Polish Jewry has received ample scholarly attention. The Polish-Jewish historian and parliamentarian Ignacy Schiper (1884-1943) published *Dzieje handlu żydowskiego na ziemiach polskich* [The history of Jewish trade in the lands of Poland],²² while Arie Tartakower, an esteemed Polish-Jewish sociologist and demographer, dealt broadly with the question of Jewish emigration.²³

Following the Second World War and establishment of an independent Jewish sovereignty the centre of academic study of Jewish life in Poland shifted to Israel, Western Europe and the United States. Along with this shift, historiography has undergone many methodological and ideological transformations. Historians who survived the Holocaust or left Poland before the outbreak of the war were significantly affected by geographical displacement which severely limited their access to East European archives. An additional dilemma was that many primary sources were irretrievably lost during the war.²⁴ Natalia Aleksun and Brian Horowitz note that 'the geographical and linguistic shifts brought other tensions: while many scholars sought to

²⁰ Czacki T. (1807) *Rozprawa o Żydach*, Wilno: J. Zawadzki; Maciejowski W. (1878) *Żydzi w Polsce, na Rusi i Litwie: czyli Opowieść historyczna o przybyciu do pomienionych krajów działy Izraela - i o powodzeniu jej tamże w przestworze VIII-XVIII wieku, którą jako czwarty dodatek do Historyi prawodawstw słowiańskich drukiem ogłosił Wacław Aleksander Maciejowski* Warszawa: K. Kowalewski.

²¹ Bałaban M. (1920) *Z historji Żydów w Polsce: szkice i studia* Warszawa: B-cia Lewin-Epstein; Bałaban M. (1934) *Żydzi Polscy w okresie Sejmu Wielkiego i powstania Kościuszki*. Warszawa: T.Tomanek.

²² Schiper I. (1937) *Dzieje handlu żydowskiego na ziemiach polskich* Warsaw: Centrala Związku Kupców.

²³ Tartakower A. (1939) *Emigracja żydowska z Polski* Warsaw: Instytut Badań Spraw Narodowościowych.

²⁴ Weinryb B. (1950) Introduction In: *Text and Studies in the Communal History of Polish Jewry*, New York.

document East European Jewish life, they also struggled with the need to commemorate and even eulogise it'.²⁵

Facing these obstacles, many Jewish intellectuals engaged with the subject of Polish-Jewish relations and pre-war anti-Semitism. Among them it is necessary to mention Raphael Mahler, Celia Heller, Paweł Korzec and Isaiah Trunk.²⁶ There is, however, little doubt that their scholarship was significantly affected by tenacious anti-Semitism of the darkest days of the interwar period as well as by the experience of the Holocaust. In this vein, Ezra Mendelsohn, one of the most distinguished scholars of Jewish politics in Eastern Europe, remarks in his essay *Interwar Poland: Good for the Jews or Bad for the Jews?*:

The attitude of most Jewish scholars has been, and continues to be, that interwar Poland was an extremely anti-Semitic country, perhaps even uniquely anti-Semitic. They claim that Polish Jewry during the 1920s and 1930s was in a state of constant and alarming decline, and that by the 1930s both the Polish regime and Polish society were waging a bitter and increasingly successful war against the Jewish population.²⁷

Leading scholars of this 'traditional' approach present Jews as the victims of vernacular anti-Semitic movements that swept over Europe in the interwar period. Polish political culture is in turn portrayed as extremely xenophobic and inextricably intertwined with anti-Semitism. Joanna Michlic notes that Jewish scholarship began to depict Polish anti-Semitism as 'a mythologized phenomenon' which 'has acquired the characteristics of a unique and ahistorical phenomenon, either assessed as incomparable to other forms of anti-minority prejudice and other manifestations of anti-Semitism in Europe or wrongly and simplistically equated with Nazi anti-Semitic genocidal ideology and practice'.²⁸ This tendency is particularly apparent in scholarship that was supposed to delineate the extent to which nationalism and the modern nation-state were responsible for anti-Jewish outbursts. In this context, Poland and its political

²⁵ Aleksun N., Horowitz B. (2017) Introduction. *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry, Writing Jewish History in Eastern Europe* 27: 1-17.

²⁶ Heller C. (1980) *On the Edge of Destruction: Jews of Poland between the Two World Wars* Detroit: Wayne State University Press; Mahler R. (1946) Antisemitism in Poland. In: Pinson Koopel S. ed. *Essays on Antisemitism*. New York: The Conference on Jewish Relation; Trunk I. (1974) Economic Antisemitism in Poland between the Two World Wars. In: Fishman J. ed. *Studies on Polish Jewry, 1919-1939*. New York: Institute for Jewish Research; Korzec P. (1974) Antisemitism in Poland as an Intellectual, Social and Political Movement. In: Fishman J. ed. *Studies on Polish Jewry, 1919-1939*. New York: Institute for Jewish Research

²⁷ Mendelsohn E. (1986) *Interwar Poland: Good for the Jews or Bad for the Jews?* In: Chimen Abramsky Maciej Jachimczyk, and Antony Polonsky (ed) *The Jews of Poland*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

²⁸ Michlic J. (2006) *Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present* Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

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culture of the late 1930s were perceived as a rehearsal for the tragic events of the Second World War and Nazi genocide.²⁹

Both academics and political theorists have sought to evaluate and conceptualise the process of transition of Eastern European Jewry from a traditional to a politically engaged community. However, the first complete academic analyses of the Polish-Jewish community and its political heritage were conducted almost four decades after the Nazi genocide. Undoubtedly, the Cold War has had a substantial impact on historical writings, both Polish and Western, concerning the process of politicisation and nationalisation of Jewish community as well as relations with the Polish authorities. On one hand, the limited access to the great majority of national evidence before the fall of communism significantly constrained researchers. On the other, the paucity of Polish writings on Polish-Zionist interdependence in the interwar years was the result of the particular nature of scholarly writings in the Cold War period. From the point of view of Polish scholars, to a large degree, the question of mutual relations in the interwar years was, simply, a taboo topic and they were expected to adhere to the official ideological line of the Communist regime.

The early assessment of Jewish political life in that part of Europe was almost exclusively based on Jewish documents and press coverage held in Western and Israeli archives. Thus, the main problem of this scholarship is that it tends to be very selective. Unavailability of governmental reports, protocols and official guidelines for many years precluded detailed examination of mutual relations between the Polish authorities and Zionist circles. The scholarly output of the pre-1989 period focuses, for instance, on the general increase of Jewish national consciousness, development of various political parties and their rhetoric rather than political interactions with non-Jewish authorities. The great majority of these writings view therefore the process of Jewish national transformation in isolation from the larger non-Jewish environment. As a result, the historical narrative embraced the attitude of treating Jews as an alien element within Polish society. Only geopolitical changes in Eastern Europe after 1989 allowed both Polish and Western European scholars to undertake unrestricted studies. The opening of East European archives brought to light abundant historical evidence which became an important component of their studies. Primary sources, until then largely unused by researchers, provided valuable

²⁹ Paweł Korzec's conclusion on the pre-1939 bilateral relations is particularly symptomatic: 'The manner in which Poland treated Polish Jews between the two world wars contributed to making the immense tragedy, which was to befall them under the Hitlerite yoke possible'. Cited in Engel D. (1987) *In the shadow of Auschwitz: the Polish government-in-exile and the Jews, 1939-1942* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina.

resources for reassessment of political interactions and made possible the investigation of governmental policy towards Jewish parties, organizations, institutions and their rhetoric.

In the 1980s, as a new generation of historians came of age, the question of Polish-Jewish relations began to be approached from a different angle. Willing to debunk the ‘traditional’ perspective, these scholars described how various aspects of Jewish life had flourished in interwar Poland. Antony Polonsky and Szymon Rudnicki were particularly drawn to the political context of Jewish life in interwar years, while Jerzy Tomaszewski and Jacob Goldberg’s output explored various aspects of Jewish social and economic history.³⁰ Scholarship of historians who were not shaped by the Polish-Jewish experience of the interwar period not only questioned the earlier master narrative but also opened new avenues for discussion. The debate over Polish-Jewish relations became even more open and resulted in a profound re-evaluation of historical writings. This led to an increased interest in various forms of Jewish engagement in the Polish political and social scene. New projects evaluating the attitude of various political parties to the Jewish question, Jewish engagement in Polish parliamentary politics and Polish legislation towards the Jews have been carried out.³¹ Scholars emphasised the necessity of reframing approaches to the study of the Jewish question in the interwar period and analyse it as a problem of the newly re-established Polish state. Also, economic history stimulated great interest. Conferences held at Columbia University (1983), Oxford University (1984) and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1988) along with the scholarly journal *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry* provided a broad platform for further development of the Polish-Jewish studies.

The narrative of the socio-political heritage of Eastern European Jewry paid particular attention to the paradigm of ‘acculturation’, ‘assimilation’ and ‘emancipation’. These terms were used to describe a whole range of Jewish experiences of the Diaspora in the 19th and 20th centuries that contributed to the rise of modern Zionism. Scholars such as Weeks and Michlic analysed how and to what extent, Jewish willingness or unwillingness to assimilate contributed to

³⁰ Polonsky A. (1972) *Politics in independent Poland, 1921-1939: the crisis of constitutional government* Oxford: Clarendon Press, Polonsky A. (2012) *The Jews in Poland and Russia. Vol. 3, 1914 to 2008* Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, Tomaszewski J. (2016) *Żydzi w II Rzeczypospolitej* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Neriton: Instytut Historyczny Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.

³¹ See: Wapiński R. (1980) *Narodowa Demokracja 1893-1939: ze studiów nad dziejami myśli nacjonalistycznej* Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich; Rudnicki S. (1985) *Obóz Narodowo Radykalny: geneza i działalność* Warszawa: Czytelnik; Tomaszewski J. (1985) *Ojczyzna nie tylko Polaków: mniejszości narodowe w Polsce w latach 1918-1939* Warszawa: Młodzieżowa Agencja Wydawnicza; Tomaszewski J. (1990) *Zarys dziejów Żydów w Polsce w latach 1918-1939* Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego; Holzer J. (1986) Relations between Polish and Jewish Left Wing Groups in Interwar Poland. In: Chimen Abramsky, Antony Polonsky (ed) *The Jews in Poland*. New York: Basil Blackwell, 140-146.

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creating a Polish collective perception of Jews.³² As modern Jewish politics in Poland followed a familiar European pattern, researchers embraced a similar perspective in order to examine the emergence and development of this phenomenon. Scholarly output was largely dominated by the question of emancipation – the long struggle to achieve it and then preserve, its influence on socio-political and ideological foundations of local communities as well as virulent anti-Semitic attacks upon it. Much research was devoted to understanding of the motifs or events that triggered Polish politicians to deploy anti-Jewish rhetoric both in the pre-1918 period and in the interwar years. Interwar anti-Semitism was no longer portrayed as 'static ideology', which clearly separated Poles from the Jews, but rather as a 'dynamic political phenomenon'. Exploring the meaning of various forms of anti-Jewish violence, this body of literature is, however, excessively focused on moments of crisis, giving an impression that Poles and Jews constituted two entirely separate groups.³³

More recently, a new generation of historians has not only questioned the utility of the paradigm of emancipation and assimilation that has repeatedly been used to describe Jewish experiences of the Diaspora, but has also carefully began to analyse the particular elements of these notions. By embedding the narrative about the Jewish politics in the broader context of national politics and the status of minorities, their historical writings offer an important re-examination of Jewish political claims. Scholars such as Jerzy Tomaszewski and Timothy Snyder in their critical studies have re-evaluated older views that stressed the crucial role of anti-Semitism in the formulation of the Polish approach towards Jewish national agenda.³⁴ The existence of close political bonds between Polish political elites and Zionists is an incontestable fact. Researchers differ, however, in their assessment of the extent and ramifications of this complex mutual alliance.

Anti-Semitism, ethnic diversity and the question of Polish-Zionist relations

The question of Polish-Zionist interactions is inextricably linked with the general attitude of Poland's authorities towards the problem of national minorities and for years

³² Michlic J. (2006) *Poland's threatening other: the image of the Jew from 1880 to the present* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press; Weeks T. (2006) *From assimilation to antisemitism: the "Jewish question" in Poland, 1850-1914* DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press.

³³ Blobaum T., ed. (2006) *Antisemitism and its opponents in modern Poland* Ithaca: Cornell University Press; Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press; Weeks T. (2006) *From Assimilation to Antisemitism: The "Jewish Question" in Poland, 1850-1914* De-Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press.

³⁴ Snyder T. (2015) *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* London: Vintage.

historiography analysed reciprocal relations from this perspective. The scholarship produced over the past forty years emphasises that the newly resurrected state brought under one authority many culturally, economically and politically diversified communities that had formerly developed in the three partitions. The Second Polish Republic became therefore a 'national entity existing within a multinational state characterized by increasingly antagonistic relations with its restless minorities'.³⁵ The Polish policy towards national minorities was seen through the lens of ethno-centralist ideology developed by the successive governments. In this vein, various political proposals for solving the national minorities question in Poland became a subject of extensive debate within the academia and for many years dominated historical writing. Such approach was embraced by Andrzej Chojnowski in his *Koncepcje polityki narodowościowej rzqdów polskich w latach 1921-1939* [Conceptions of a National Minorities Policy of the Polish Government in the 1921-1939 Period], where the author examines official policy towards the Jewish, Ukrainian, Belarusian and German populations.³⁶ However, very little has been written so far regarding the evolution of ideological approaches towards Zionism as a prospective solution to the state's Jewish question. Since the subject is not only important *per se* but also had far-reaching implications for the shape of Polish-Jewish relations, it cannot be simplified and viewed only as a problem of ethno-nationalist policy and pure anti-Semitism.

Some historians of Polish-Jewish relations have unambiguously linked the Polish endorsement for Zionism and its national project in Palestine with anti-Semitism on the grounds that post-1935 *Sanacja* government accepted the core ethno-nationalist vision of Poland.³⁷ Such a position pictures post-Piłsudski *Sanacja* as a totally anti-Semitic movement, ready to deploy pro-Zionist rhetoric in order to reduce the number of Jews in the country. It ignores the fact that the *Sanacja* regime was far from a politically and ideologically homogenous camp. As I will argue, Piłsudski's death in May 1935 not only further revealed ideological gaps within the camp, bringing the more radical right-leaning section ideologically closer to the *Endecja* camp but also fully exposed differences in the perceptions vis-à-vis Zionism and the Palestine question.

³⁵ Przel I. (1998) *National Identity and Foreign Policy: Nationalism and Leadership in Poland, Russia and Ukraine* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³⁶ Chojnowski A. (1979) *Koncepcje Polityki Narodowościowej Rzqdów Polskich w latach 1921-1939* Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich - Wydawnictwo.

³⁷ Marcus J. (1983) *Social and political history of the Jews in Poland, 1919-1939* Berlin: Mouton Publishers; Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press.

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More recently, scholarly attempts to identify common traits among a variety of attitudes towards Zionism have evoked academic debate about the origins, aims and consequences of mutual cooperation. Scholars who have dealt with this question indicate that the support given by the non-Jewish elites to the Zionist cause was largely motivated by the ethno-nationalist approach of Polish authorities and a willingness to reduce the number of Jews in particular countries. Yet despite the fact that anti-Semitism played an important role in shaping policy towards the Zionist movement in that part of Europe, its adoption as a common denominator seems to be an oversimplified interpretation. The dissertation will instead highlight that national approaches towards the Palestine question and Jewish political aims were motivated by a broad spectrum of factors and behaviours. The following must receive particular attention: idealism; political and economic interest in the Middle East or the aforementioned anti-Semitic inclinations of ethno-nationalist and racist ideologies that dominated political elites in the interwar period. The 1930s became a time of vociferous public debate over Polish support for Jewish national aspirations and a campaign towards the intensification of Jewish emigration. While anti-Semitism primarily determined the ways of thinking on Zionism by the ethno-nationalist right, an increasing number of *Piłsudczyks* came to indicate ideological affinity with the Zionist national project. Their encounters with the Zionist youth in general and young Revisionists in particular played a decisive role in how they conceived Zionist political endeavours. Since Zionism inspired Jewish youth to be chivalrous and fiercely devoted to the fight for independence the *Sanacja*'s officials, deeply rooted in a belief of Poland's romantic-insurrectionary tradition, came to view Zionists' aims through the prism of their own political experiences. Polish-Zionist cooperation met fierce opposition from both, conservative wings as well as the Jewish Left. Some circles, Bundists in particular, indicated that the policy deployed by the Polish authorities was propelled by anti-Semitism. Henryk Erlich, an editor of the *Folks Zeitung*, in his 1938 polemic against Simon Dubnow wrote, 'Zionism has become an ally of anti-Semitism. The worsening situation of the Jews throughout the world is exploited by the Zionists'.³⁸ Jewish leftist politicians openly attacked Zionists for refusing to boycott Poland for cooperating with ethno-nationalist politicians.

While not denying the importance of anti-Semitism and the role played by this phenomenon in interwar Polish politics, this thesis seeks to prove that it was not the only, or even the chief motivating factor in the shaping of Polish perceptions vis-à-vis Zionism and the Palestine question. Focusing on the evolving relationship between the governing elites of Poland and their Zionist interlocutors my research shows that there were other no less important factors that

³⁸ Davies N. (1989) Ethnic Diversity in Twentieth Century Poland. *Polin. A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies* 4: 143-158.

determined the extent of mutual interdependence. Among them one could mention the political and socio-economic opportunism, geopolitical factors as well as purely pragmatic considerations. Throughout every phase of my doctoral research I have sought to embrace a critical approach towards the traditional narrative that presents the troubled history of Jewish politics in interwar Poland as an ongoing struggle against racial hatred and persecution. Undoubtedly, this is a new approach towards this complex and intriguing question. As this thesis indicates the *Sanacja* elites and Zionists took a position that presupposed mutually advantageous cooperation between them. Referring to the ideological, socio-political and economic context I demonstrate that the position taken by the *Sanacja* elites was peculiar and cannot be equated with the Nazi one. By placing Zionist rhetoric within the wider context of Polish policies towards, perceptions of, ethno-nationalist attitudes, intensification of anti-Semitic sentiments and deepening economic crisis this study sheds a new light on Polish-Jewish relations in the interwar period. It also provides a reassessment of the prevailing thinking on Polish political and economic interests in Palestine. Bringing together an analysis of the foreign policy, economic interactions and domestic policy allows me not only to draw a comprehensive picture of the evolving relationship between the governing elites of Poland and Zionists but also to make a contribution to a new school of critical inquiry into the question of mutual interdependence. By embracing wider economic, diplomatic and geopolitical perspectives this dissertation investigates how and to what degree the most important developments in interwar politics determined perceptions of Jewish national aspirations. In this vein, it seeks to challenge various inferences and misconceptions that dominated historiography on Polish policy towards the Zionist agenda in the pre-World War II period.

Mapping historiography on the political heritage of Polish Jewry

Pioneering historical studies of the political heritage of European Jewry in the interwar period were published at the beginning of the 1950s and were written, in large part, by former politicians and activists who survived Nazi persecution in Western countries. From this vantage point particularly interesting is Joseph Schechtman's monograph on Vladimir Jabotinsky and the history of the New Zionist Organisation.³⁹ The author, as a former President of the Revisionist movement in Poland – the New Zionist Organisation 'largely responsible for the formulation and implementation of the policy of alliances', provides unique insights into

³⁹ Schechtman J. (1956) *Rebel and statesman: the Vladimir Jabotinsky story: the early years* New York: Yoseloff. Schechtman J. (1961) *Fighter and prophet: the Vladimir Jabotinsky story: the last years* New York: Yoseloff, Schechtman J. (1970) *History of the Revisionist movement* Tel-Aviv: Hadar Pub. House.

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Jabotinsky's political and diplomatic efforts. Moreover, the biography contains many recollections from the period when Schechtman cooperated with Jabotinsky in Poland. However, leaning primarily on subjective perception of events the study does not provide a balanced perspective. In many cases, his assessment of reciprocal relations is far from scholarly impartiality. The absence of historical evidence from the Polish and British archives had left huge and compelling gaps.⁴⁰ It is thus necessary to bear in mind the impact of the author's ideological background when we consider his historical writing. Nevertheless, Schechtman's account on the Polish-Revisionist alliance is particularly noteworthy, since it offers a right-wing Zionists' perceptions on ideological incoherence and reshuffle in the Polish internal politics in the last days of the Second Republic.⁴¹

Although the sheer abundance of written material may seem overwhelming the historical discourse for years tended to focus on either Polish policy towards the Jews or Jewish politics in interwar Poland rather than mutual relations and perceptions of mutual bias. Despite this, the subject of Jewish political history and Polish-Jewish relations has been quite often studied in isolation and relatively few monographs have been published that examine the wider context in which the Polish Zionists operated.⁴² Such a research approach stemmed from a general perception that the history of every minority can be analysed independently from the development of the majority. In contrast, my dissertation will place Polish Zionism within the context of the political and socio-economic system in which it emerged.

An important exception from the aforementioned trend is Ezra Mendelsohn's *Zionism in Poland: the Formative Years, 1915-1926*, the first comprehensive study of the Polish branch of the Zionist movement. As the author notes in the preface, his intention was to cover the entire interwar period in one volume. However, 'the wealth of material along with the fact that this subject has not yet been dealt with in any comprehensive way' convinced him to limit his research to the period between 1915 and 1926. Unfortunately, Mendelsohn never wrote the second volume that was intended 'to deal with the second period in the history of Polish Zionism,

⁴⁰ The British government released the official document relating to the period of 1930s in the 1980s.

⁴¹ 'The Government had to face the increasing pressure of elemental forces within the country, clamouring for anti-Jewish legislation and occasionally breaking out into murderous rioting. In order to counteract this mounting popular onslaught, the Government must be given a chance to offer a constructive alternative: to relieve the intensity of anti-Jewish pressure by sponsoring a Jewish-initiated scheme of large-scale pressure, orderly and voluntary evacuation. Such a joint Polish-Jewish scheme, as Jabotinsky saw it, was rooted in the community of interests of its two prospective partners' Schechtman wrote, see: Schechtman J. (1961) *Fighter and Prophet: the Vladimir Jabotinsky Story. The Last Years* New York: Barnes and Company, p. 337.

⁴² Mendelsohn E. (2004) Jewish Historiography on Polish Jewry in the Interwar Period. *Polin. A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies* VIII: 3-12. Remarkable exceptions of this trend are: Mendelsohn E. (1982) *Zionism in Poland: The Formative Years, 1915-1926* New Haven: Yale University Press; Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press; Walicki J. (2005) *Ruch Syjonistyczny w Polsce w latach 1926-1930*, Łódź: Ibidem.

which ended in 1939 with the Nazi invasion from the west and the annexation of Eastern Poland by the Soviet Union'.⁴³ This study seeks to complement Mendelsohn by addressing the gap in this historical record. The aforementioned study, based on meticulous archival research, provides an in-depth and detailed description of the emergence and development of Jewish nationalism in Poland before the May 1926 *coup d'état*. Mendelsohn's monograph has certainly contributed important insights into the understanding of the history of Polish Zionism and thereby to a proper understanding of European Jewish politics. His work provides an exhaustive analysis of the changing balance of power and competing political tendencies within the Polish section of the Zionist movement at a critical phase of its existence. Particular attention was given to its ideological and doctrinal basis. By painstaking examination of consecutive phases of the development of the Jewish national agenda in Poland, the author provides a lucid overview on schisms and splits within local branches of the Zionist movement. Mendelsohn also offers a stimulating assessment of the appeal of Zionist rhetoric to the Jewish youth of Poland. A more comprehensive attempts to study the history of Zionist youth organizations in interwar Poland could, however, be found in the study of Daniel K. Heller, which also reveals the ways in which Polish administration viewed the political agenda of Betarists⁴⁴ and their public displays of *Polskość* [Polishness].⁴⁵

Special attention must be also given to Emanuel Melzer's *No Way Out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939*, which features an examination of Jewish politicians' responses to the new political situation they faced after the death of Piłsudski in May 1935.⁴⁶ The publication, which is a shortened version of *Ma'avak Medini beMalkodet: Yehudey Polin 1935-1939* [The Political Struggle in a Trap: Polish Jews 1935-1939], analyses the dismal reality of the late 1930s, the prevailing anti-Semitism and the ever-worsening economic and political conditions of Polish Jewry that had a profound impact on the Zionist agenda. Melzer devotes much space to the revised policy of Jewish nationalists towards securing civil and political rights for the Jews in Poland. Using a balanced spectrum of sources, he provides an examination of the responses of the Jewish leaders to the new political situation. In consecutive chapters the author strives to answer the questions of whether the political situation in Poland affected the mutual relations between Poles and Jews; whether the growing anti-Semitism was a result of the persistent

⁴³ Mendelsohn E. (1982) *Zionism in Poland: The Formative Years, 1915-1926* New Haven: Yale University Press.

⁴⁴ Members and followers of Betar, the Brit Yosef Trumpeldor youth movement, one of the largest Zionist-Revisionist youth movement in interwar Poland. By the mid-1930s the movement gathered approximately thirty-five thousand members across the country.

⁴⁵ Heller D. (2012) *The Rise of the Zionist Right: Polish Jews and the Betar Youth Movement, 1922-1935*.

⁴⁶ Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press.

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economic crisis in Poland or whether it was a consequence of anti-Jewish policies in the Third Reich. Especially noteworthy is Melzer's evaluation of the new political climate in which some of Piłsudski's successors sought to implement strident anti-Jewish legislation in order to bolster their political position. In a similar vein, Jerzy Tomaszewski, observes that Jewish emigration from Poland had one additional aspect 'connected with the increasing extremism of the so-called nationalist camp, which used anti-Semitic demagogic in the fight for influence with the government as well as instigating attacks on the Jews'.⁴⁷ As primary sources and existing historiography suggest, such a stance was largely propelled by the ethno-nationalist tendencies of Polish society.

Both historians, Mendelsohn and Melzer, deal with internal and external aspects of the political environment in which the Zionist movement operated as well as focus on the prevailing mood in Jewish society. According to Mendelsohn, the loss of the Zionists' leading position was propelled by 'the [Jewish] public's growing disgust with the failure of the General Zionists' political strategies and, above all from the collapse of the Zionist movement program for Palestine after 1936'.⁴⁸ Melzer, in turn, suggests that disillusionment with the Zionist rhetoric was directly connected to its failure to prevent anti-Semitic propaganda. Both authors embedded the issue of Jewish politics in the general aspects of Polish political and social history. However, while they record that there were general differences in the perception of the Jewish question between Polish Right and Left, they do not sufficiently analyse interwar Polish domestic politics and Polish economic thought. Little space is given to the perceptions of the revolution that took place in Polish Zionist politics as a whole.

More recently, historians have focused on the complex political mosaic of East European Jewry and their reciprocal relations with neighbouring nations. The great majority of scholarship devoted to the politics of Polish Jewry in the 1930s charts the socio-political, cultural and intellectual developments of socialist parties, particularly the Bund (the General Jewish Workers' Alliance).⁴⁹ Also, the demographic and educational patterns of the Polish-Jewish

⁴⁷ Tomaszewski J. (2003) Ministerwo Spraw Zagranicznych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej wobec Żydów, 1938-1939 (dokumenty). *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny* 3: 198.

⁴⁸ Mendelsohn E. (1983) *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p.78.

⁴⁹ Blatman D. (2003) *For our freedom and yours: the Jewish Labour Bund in Poland, 1939-1949* London: Vallentine Mitchell; Johnpoll B. (1967) *The politics of futility: the General Jewish Workers Bund of Poland, 1917-1943* Ithaca: Cornell University Press; Jacobs J. (2008) *Bundist counterculture in interwar Poland* Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press.

community have been widely discussed.⁵⁰ Along with the Zionist leadership's failure to integrate all factions within the movement, the formerly less popular Bund grew greatly in political influence in the mid-1930s assuming 'the leadership of Polish Jewry' before the outbreak of the Second World War.⁵¹ Its position towards emigration as well as prospects for secure and prosperous life in Poland have been covered extensively by Blatman and Johnpoll.⁵² Embracing such a research perspective was a result of the decline of General Zionism after Piłsudski's *coup d'état*, the collapse of the *Fourth Aliyah* and the relatively huge popularity of labour ideologies among the Jews of Poland. Bernard K. Johnpoll also suggests that the Bund benefited indirectly from both the international politics and situation in the country – Hitler's rise to power, the Moscow trials and increasing anti-Semitic pressure in Poland.⁵³

The 1990s brought new ideas about presenting East European Jewish history. Instead of dealing with disparate aspects of the general subject of Jewish politics in Eastern Europe, the majority of this scholarship began to scrutinise its discrete components – biographies of prominent Jewish political leaders, history of specific Zionist institutions or factions that operated in interwar Poland or their politics against rampant anti-Semitism. Yaakov Shavit and Shmuel Katz analyse the life and political activities of Jabotinsky, the right-wing Revisionist Zionist leader who was 'one of the great tragic figures of the century ... adored hero of the Jewish masses in Russia and Poland'.⁵⁴ Dariusz Stola offers a comprehensive profile of Ignacy Schwarzbart, a prominent leader of the Polish Zionist movement and a member of the Polish National Council.⁵⁵ Also, the great majority of Jewish Pioneer movements operating in interwar Poland, both nationalist and socialist, has received scholarly attention from Heller and Oppenheim.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Nadelhaft E. (2008) Resistance through Education: Polish Zionist Youth Movements in Warsaw, 1939–1941. *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry Volume 9: Jews, Poles, Socialists: The Failure of an Ideal*: 212-231; Kijek K. (2013) Nowoczesność w cieniu orła białego: edukacja żydowska w II Rzeczypospolitej. *Cwiczn*: 6-13.

⁵¹ Johnpoll B. (1967) *The politics of futility: the General Jewish Workers Bund of Poland, 1917-1943* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p.195.

⁵² For an overview look at: Johnpoll B. (1967) *The politics of futility: the General Jewish Workers Bund of Poland, 1917-1943*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press; Mendelsohn E. (1983) *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars* Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Marcus J. (1983) *Social and political history of the Jews in Poland, 1919-1939* Berlin: Mouton Publishers; Blatman D. (2003) *For our freedom and yours: the Jewish Labour Bund in Poland, 1939-1949* London: Vallentine Mitchell.

⁵³ Johnpoll B. (1967) *The politics of futility ...* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p.195.

⁵⁴ Shavit Y. (1988) *Jabotinsky and the Revisionist Movement 1925-1948* London: Cass; Katz S. (1996) *Lone wolf: a biography of Vladimir (Ze'ev) Jabotinsky* New York: Barricade Books.

⁵⁵ Stola D. (1995) *Nadzieja i Zagłada: Ignacy Schwarzbart – żydowski przedstawiciel w Radzie Narodowej RP, 1940-1945* Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa.

⁵⁶ Heller D. (2012) *The Rise of the Zionist Right: Polish Jews and the Betar Youth Movement, 1922-1935*, p.76; Oppenheim I. (1989) *The struggle of Jewish youth for productivization: the Zionist youth movement in Poland* Boulder: East European Monographs.

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In the context of wider Polish-Jewish relations, scholars have also thrown light on questions such as approach of particular political factions and their principal ideologists towards the most burning problem of interwar Poland – the Jewish question. Much less research has been devoted to analyse concomitant issues, such as the Palestine question, Zionism and emigration. In this context, Emmanuel Melzer's attempt to investigate the official stance of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in worthy of note. Due to limited access to the archives of Poland the author drew on limited primary sources.⁵⁷ His argument that Warsaw's elites envied Nazi Germany's achievement in relation to solving the Jewish problem at the state level and was ready to cooperate with Berlin in this case is too far-reaching.

Overall, the approaches of particular states and their authorities towards Jewish national aspirations have rarely been analysed. Studies by Wojciech Jaworski provide an overview of internal Zionist politics in Poland rather than a holistic perspective.⁵⁸ A more comprehensive approach was embraced by Jacek Walicki in his *Ruch Syjonistyczny w Polsce w latach 1926-1930* [The Zionist Movement in Poland, 1926-1930].⁵⁹ Although the author scrutinises the political dimension of Polish-Zionist cooperation, his study mainly focuses on the internal state's legislation towards Zionists within the state. Particular attention is given to the role of Zionists in the Polish Parliament and their struggle to secure equality and civil rights for Jews. In the context of this study, attention should be given to Michał Szulkin's articles on Poland's diplomatic in Mandatory Palestine, which provide an interesting entrée into further investigations of Polish-Zionist interactions.⁶⁰ Szulkin was first Polish scholar to acknowledge that 'Poland's diplomatic service, represented by three consuls in Palestine and a numerous diplomatic posts across Europe and in the United States actively participated in shaping the Palestine question'.⁶¹ Also, the most recent *The Road to September 1939: Polish Jews, Zionists and the Yishuv on the Eve of World War*

⁵⁷ Melzer E. (1973) Ha-Diplomatiyah ha-Polanit ve-Bayata ha-Hagirah ha-Yehudit be-Shanim 1935-1939. *Gal-Ed* I: 211-249. The author based on official documents from the National Archives in London, the Sikorski Archive, and the Central Zionist Archive.

⁵⁸ Jaworski W. (1996) *Struktura i wpływy syjonistycznych organizacji politycznych w Polsce w latach 1918-1939* Warszawa: Wojciech Jaworski; Jaworski W. (2002) *Syjoniści wobec Rządu Polskiego w okresie międzywojennym* Sosnowiec: Wojciech Jaworski.

⁵⁹ Walicki J. (2005) *Ruch Syjonistyczny w Polsce w latach 1926-1930*, Łódź: Ibidem.

⁶⁰ Szulkin M. (1980) Żydzi palestyńscy w świetle raportów polskiej służby dyplomatycznej. Cz. 1, (1923-1935). *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 4: 128-143; Szulkin M. (1981) Żydzi palestyńscy w świetle raportów polskiej służby dyplomatycznej. Cz. 2, (1936-1939). *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 1: 64-82.

⁶¹ Szulkin M. (1981) Żydzi palestyńscy w świetle raportów polskiej służby dyplomatycznej. Cz. 2, (1936-1939). *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 1: 64-82.

// by Jehuda Reinhartz and Yaakov Shavit merits special consideration.⁶² Its authors, drawing on extensive archival sources, portray a nuanced and thoughtful analysis of the engagement of the *Yishuv* leadership with European authorities just prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. Focusing primarily on Poland, this study paints a picture of Zionists' encounters with the Polish governing elites and sheds new light on the Polish official approach towards the Palestine question.

Apart from these, there has been no attempt to provide a comprehensive assessment of the Polish perceptions of the Jewish nation-building agenda or the place of a Jewish National Home in the domestic political discourse over the course of the 1930s. Policies put forward by the Jewish nationalists that dominated Polish political circles have not been sufficiently discussed. A remarkable exception is Laurence Weinbaum's *Marriage of Convenience: The New Zionist Organisation and the Polish Government 1936-1939*, a shrewd analysis of the alliance between Polish authorities and Revisionist leaders in the shadow of events in Poland and Mandatory Palestine.⁶³ Weinbaum's study is a pioneering work based on a wide range of archival evidence uncovered in 1988 by the leading Polish historian of Polish-Jewish relations, Jerzy Tomaszewski, and published as an article entitled 'Vladimir Jabotinsky's Talks with Representatives of the Polish Government'.⁶⁴ These documents relate to the New Zionist Organisation and its intriguing political cooperation with the Polish regime. There can be no doubt that these findings shed a new light on the question of Polish-Zionist relations in the late 1930s.

Weinbaum's evaluation of anti-Jewish prejudices that significantly shaped perception of Jewish politics is particularly interesting in the context of my research. He remarks that the attitudes and behaviours of the Polish right gave an impetus to extremist factions within Zionism and that this resembles elements in Polish nationalism. A similar approach was embraced by Yaakov Shavit who examines the influence of Polish Romanticism on Jabotinsky's political thought.⁶⁵

⁶² Reinhartz J., Shavit Y. (2018) *The Road to September 1939: Polish Jews, Zionists and the Yishuv on the Eve of World War II* Waltham: Brandeis University Press.

⁶³ Weinbaum L. (1993) *A Marriage of Convenience: The New Zionist Organisation and the Polish Government, 1936-1939* Boulder: East European Monographs.

⁶⁴ Tomaszewski J. (1988) Vladimir Jabotinsky's Talks with Representatives of the Polish Government. *Polin. A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies* III: 278.

⁶⁵ Shavit Y. (1985) The Zionist Revisionist Movement and Polish Political Culture. *Studies in Zionism* 6: 229-246.

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The Zionist movement and Polish foreign policy

The attitude of certain Polish elites towards Jewish national aspirations was substantially affected by geopolitical considerations. Some scholars suggest that both the anti-Semitic policy and an official endorsement for the Zionist project were largely attributed to the rapprochement with Nazi Germany that took place in the mid-1930s. In this vein, Emanuel Melzer remarks that the Polish-German ten-year Non-Aggression Pact (January 1934) had a 'profound influence upon Poland's domestic policy as a whole and upon its policy toward the Jews in particular'.⁶⁶ In Melzer's opinion, the effect of these diplomatic manoeuvres indicates the government's decision to rescind its commitments towards the Minorities Treaty.⁶⁷ Interestingly, in the Western and Polish historiography of the Communist era the Polish-Third Reich détente, disavowal of a Minorities Treaty and the ratification of the new constitution in April 1935 were often used as arguments to evaluate (negatively) the question of Polish support for a creation of a Jewish statehood in Palestine.⁶⁸ A tendency to suggest that Warsaw's closer engagement with the Zionist movement was a result of its ideological alliance with Nazi Germany is particularly visible in the works of Tadeusz Walichnowski and Stanisław A. Korwin, which aimed to cultivate a negative image of the *Sanacja*'s elites.⁶⁹

The question of Polish diplomatic activity in the international arena was more complex since it implied not only Poland's domestic political aims but also its foreign policy goals essentially connected to the programme of internal reforms. From this perspective it is necessary to differentiate different political positions of Poland and Germany towards Zionists. Both states conceptualised the Jewish question as a crucial one in their diplomatic agenda, indicating that its solution in Central and Eastern Europe was an international matter. However, Polish and German foreign policy were based upon very different perceptions of national aspirations as well as diverging analyses of global politics. For this purpose, Polish authorities repeatedly supported Zionist aims in Palestine before the League of Nations. Timothy Snyder emphasises that Berlin after Hitler's rise to power embraced a *recolonial* approach in its global position, whereas Warsaw's global attitude was, in turn, *decolonial*. These contrasting approaches had a profound impact on the perception of Jewish national aspirations at the eve of the Second World War. As

⁶⁶ Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, pp.9.

⁶⁷ Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, pp.9, 30.

⁶⁸ Marcus J. (1983) *Social and political history of the Jews in Poland, 1919-1939* Berlin: Mouton Publishers; Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press.

⁶⁹ Korwin S. (1958) *Stosunki Polski z Ziemią Świętą* Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX; Walichnowski T. (1968) *Syjonizm a państwo żydowskie* Katowice: Wydawnictwo Śląsk; Walichnowski T. (1968) *Organizacje i działacze syjonistyczni* Katowice: Wydawnictwo Śląsk.

Snyder notes, 'the covert essence of German foreign policy in the late 1930s was the ambition to build a vast racial empire in eastern Europe; the covert essence of Polish foreign policy was to create a State of Israel in Palestine from the territories granted by a League of Nations mandate to the British Empire'.⁷⁰ Although both Warsaw and Berlin supported Jewish emigration, their policies were fundamentally different. When the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, was released from the prison he found shelter in Nazi Germany. At the same time, the *Sanacja's* policymakers organised secret paramilitary training for *Haganah* and *Irgun* soldiers.

A large number of English-language studies addressing Polish foreign policy in the interwar period has tended to ignore Piłsudski's formula that Poland should pursue a *policy of equilibrium* – a balance between two powerful neighbours, Germany and the USSR. This policy was carried out by Józef Beck, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the period between 1934 and 1939, and derived from the belief that the two canons of Polish diplomacy were 'one, strict neutrality between Germany and Russia, so that each of them would be absolutely certain that Poland would not go against it with the help of the other, and two, alliance with France and Romania as a guarantee of peace'.⁷¹ Also, in the process of shaping policy towards Zionist aspirations, the Polish cabinet had to align to general lines of foreign policy.

Following Piłsudski's death in 1935, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs intensified its international campaign promoting enhanced emigration and the immediate creation of a Jewish State in Palestine. Extent of surviving historiography of the time devotes much space to various projects, particularly emigration and alternative solutions to the quest for territory.⁷² The proposals to settle Polish Jews elsewhere, either on the island of Madagascar, in the Portuguese African colony of Angola or Uganda received appropriate scholarly attention, the issue of Jewish Palestine remained largely peripheral or was regarded as the most effective mean of convincing Jews to emigrate from Poland.⁷³

⁷⁰ Snyder T. (2015) *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* London: Vintage, pp.31-32.

⁷¹ An opinion expressed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs August Zaleski in May 1929 cited in Cienciala A. (2011) The Foreign Policy of Józef Piłsudski and Józef Beck, 1926-1939: Misconceptions and Interpretations. *The Polish Review* LVI: 111-152; Kornat M. (2007) *Polityka równowagi: 1934-1939: Polska między Wschodem a Zachodem* Kraków: Wydawnictwo Arcana.

⁷² Melzer E. (1973) Ha-Diplomatiyah ha-Polanit ve-Bayata ha-Hagirah ha-Yehudit be-Shanim 1935-1939. *Gal-Ed* I: 211-249.

⁷³ For an overview of Poland's proposals for Jewish emigration, see: Trębacz Z. (2018) *Nie tylko Palestyna* Warszawa: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny; Tonini C. (2007) The Polish Plan for a Jewish Settlement in Madagascar, 1936-1939. *Polin* 19:467-477; Melzer E. (2003) Emigration versus Emigrationism: Zionism in Poland and the Territorialist Projects of the Polish Authorities IN: Zimmerman In: Zimmerman J (ed) *Contested Memories: Poles and Jews during the Holocaust and Its Aftermath* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

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Economic aspects of mutual cooperation

Economic cooperation is a critical consideration in the assessment of Polish-Zionist relations during the interwar years. Thus, the study will also analyse a dimension that most historians overlook – the importance of economic factors in shaping the question of Polish-Zionist interdependence in the interwar period. The existing historiography touches on this question primarily as regards the deteriorating economic situation in East Central Europe and discriminatory legislation against the Jewish population. Poland's economic stagnation in the interwar period was undoubtedly critical. The 1929-1935 crisis brought the structural problems of the Polish economy into sharp focus. An economic boycott of Polish Jews received official backing in March 1936, when the Prime Minister Felicjan Sławoj-Składkowski announced, 'Causing injury to any person in Poland is forbidden. [...] An economic boycott – certainly, but we will not allow any injury'.⁷⁴ Jewish activists and politicians repeatedly aimed to provide a solution for this situation. The economic slump of the 1930s as well as its effects – a significant radicalization of social life and an increase in anti-Semitism - have received special attention within Jewish and Polish academic circles. Joseph Marcus in *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland, 1919-1939* devoted much space to this issue.⁷⁵ As an economist, Marcus provides an analytical and comprehensive history of the economic development and socio-occupational structure of Polish Jewish community in the interwar period. His conclusions are well founded and supported with solid statistical evidence. Unfortunately, he analyses only the internal aspects of Polish-Jewish relations, such as social and economic policies, national income and national wealth.

More precise analysis of external economic relations was provided by Jerzy Łazor in his *Brama na Bliski Wschód. Polsko-Palestyńskie Stosunki-Gospodarcze w Okresie Międzywojennym* [The Gateway to the Middle East: Economic Relations between Poland and Palestine, 1920-1939].⁷⁶ The study meticulously examines questions such as trade exchange, tourism, banking, and transportation. In addition, it outlines Polish economic interests in the Mandatory Palestine. For this purpose, Łazor focuses on various correlations between economic relations and migration of Polish Jewry to Palestine. As the author concludes, Mandatory Palestine played a special role in the Polish economic policy. With crucial developments taking place under the British rule, intensified Jewish immigration and a thriving Zionist community in

⁷⁴ Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, p. 50.

⁷⁵ Marcus J. (1983) *Social and political history of the Jews in Poland, 1919-1939* Berlin: Mouton Publishers.

⁷⁶ Łazor J. (2016) *Brama na Bliski Wschód. Polsko-Palestyńskie Stosunki-Gospodarcze w Okresie Międzywojennym* Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej.

the Palestine made economic cooperation more attractive. No other country could compete with Palestine's economic and geopolitical position, and for this purpose some Polish politicians perceived it as the gateway to the Levant. Through a detailed examination of statistical data, Łazor assesses the role of Polish migration as trade-facilitator in mutual relations. Unfortunately, whilst analysing Polish-Palestinian economic relations, the author neglected to include the Zionist perspective. It is therefore impossible to draw constructive conclusions regarding the economic policy of Zionist institutions towards Poland. Łazor could definitely have included more on the Zionist policy and how both the Zionist leadership and the Mandatory Power perceived the Polish-Palestine economic cooperation. Embracing such perspective would have unarguably shed a new light on the question of Polish-Zionist dependence in the interwar years. My dissertation, instead of relying solely upon Polish and British primary sources, will also discuss Zionist perspectives on the issue.

No single monograph has been published that comprehensively examines the Polish policy towards the Zionist movement's aspirations to create a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine.⁷⁷ The question of Polish-Zionist relations, pro-emigration policy and the ardent support for the Zionist cause in the League of Nations for many years has been obscured by politics in Poland. This project seeks to redress that gap, focusing on the concerns and objectives of the Zionists and the Polish government, perceptions of reciprocal bias as well as the political ramifications for both sides of mutual cooperation. It will scrutinize the question of Polish-Zionist relations and examine the changing position on Zionist national aspirations in Polish political discourse over the course of the 1930s. Taking into account intensifying ethno-nationalist attitudes among Polish authorities as well as prevailing anti-Semitism, the project will examine political and economic interactions between the Polish government and the Zionist leadership of various branches – Revisionist, General, and Labour. By shifting the focus away from the traditional approaches towards Zionism, this dissertation will explore the impact of Polish-Zionist relations on the direction of Polish policy towards the Palestine question.

Zionism's goal of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine should be seen as a similar type of nationalism to that, which was prevalent in the region, rather than a phenomenon *sui*

⁷⁷ Tomaszewski J. (2003) Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej wobec Żydów, 1938-1939 (dokumenty). *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny* 3: 198; Szulkin M. (1980) Żydzi palestyńscy w świetle raportów polskiej służby dyplomatycznej. Cz. 1, (1923-1935). *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 4: 128-143; Szulkin M. (1981) Żydzi palestyńscy w świetle raportów polskiej służby dyplomatycznej. Cz. 2, (1936-1939). *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 1: 64-82.

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generis. In turn, Zionists' close cooperation with Polish elites needs to be explored through the lens of parallel political and economic experiences. This relationship is particularly important since, in the years immediately preceding the Second World War, Polish Betar (Brit Yosef Trumpeldor), the largest and most influential Betar branch in the world, received the support of the government in Warsaw. My project extends Weinbaum's investigations of the general perception of Zionist political aims. Furthermore, it explores the impact of Polish nationalism and authoritarian patriotic culture on the ideology of Jewish nationalists. This study also strives to reveal why Polish Jews placed so much value in their cooperation with the ethno-nationalist regime. In turn, by exploring the key directions of Polish diplomatic tradition and ideas of thinking about foreign policy, this dissertation reassesses the factors that lay behind the cooperation between the government in Warsaw and the Zionist leadership.

As the question of bilateral relations between Polish elites and the Zionist politicians is relatively complex, it needs to be embedded in a broader context of rapidly changing political and economic landscape of Europe and the Middle East. First and foremost, I will analyse Polish attitudes towards Jewish national aspirations and mutual relations, and only indirectly the character of internal interaction before the outbreak of WW II. I will aim to define this policy precisely by examining the relationship of the Polish government with two important elements of the political scene in Palestine, namely, with the Zionist authorities and the Mandatory power.

Sources

Over the course of the interwar years, questions of Jewish politics, emigration and Jewish national endeavours in Palestine consumed the attention of all parties generating much questioning and discussion throughout society. Therefore, the large number of primary sources in existence makes the process of selecting the most appropriate sources particularly difficult. Due to limited space I had to choose the most relevant and representative articles and memoirs, which illustrate various aspects of the complex relationship between the governing elites of Poland and Zionists.

Researching areas of bilateral cooperation, both political and economic, ultimately requires both Polish and Zionist archival evidence. In order to determine how the Polish government perceived Jewish political interests in the Middle East, I have analysed meeting protocols, letters, official reports and memos held by the Archiwum Akt Nowych [AAN - Archives of Modern Records] in Warsaw. Although part of the archive of official documents was destroyed by Polish politicians prior to their evacuation from Warsaw in mid-September 1939, what is has

survived of the collection sheds interesting light on the question of Polish-Zionist relations. The examination of official protocols provides insight into the broader foreign policy aims and calculations of the Polish regime over the course of the 1930s. For information about mutual interactions between the Poles and Zionists concerning Jewish emigration from Poland to Palestine I consulted the collections of Poland's Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of the Interior and the Praesidium of the Council of Ministers. Attention was given as well to the political and economic reports by Polish diplomats and consuls – Jerzy Adamkiewicz, Bernard Hausner, Edward Raczyński, Tytus Komarnicki and Witold Hulanicki. These official records unarguably pose their own sets of interpretative problems. Detailed reports are not without biases but they provide an insight into various aspects of bilateral cooperation between the Polish government and Zionists. Speeches made during the sessions of the *Sejm*, as well as in the Parliamentary Commissions enabled me, in turn, to assess trends of thought among the most influential sectors of the Polish political scene.

In addition to the Polish-language sources outlined above, my research also draws on a number of foreign, particularly British and Zionist materials. The archival collections stored at the University of Southampton provided the background for this project. The Archive, which contains, among other items, papers and correspondence of prominent Zionist politicians including Selig Brodetsky, a member of the executive of the World Zionist Organisation and Jewish Agency for Palestine; Ivan Marion Greenberg, an editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*; and Leonard Jacques Stein, a political secretary of the World Zionist Organisation provided insight into the Zionist agenda in the interwar period. The study also focuses on the records of the Central Zionist Archives, the Jabotinsky Institute, the Archive of the Polish Institute in London and the London Metropolitan Archives. Particularly noteworthy, in the context of this research, is a collection of correspondence regarding the Polish government and the Zionist movement, predominantly correspondence of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency and Palestinian Central Bureau in Warsaw held by the Central Zionist Archives and the National Library of Israel. I also consulted the collection of the Institute of Jewish Affairs, principally the records of the World Executive and Governing Council of the World Jewish Congress. Finally, British documents on foreign affairs, predominantly reports and papers from the Foreign and Colonial Office held by the National Archives of the UK at Kew, London illuminate how and to what degree the actions and inactions of the Polish government materially affected the political situation in Palestine. Reports by Howard William Kennard, the British Ambassador in Warsaw, constitute an interesting source of information about perceptions of Polish-Zionist cooperation, both official and covert, held by representatives of the Mandatory authorities.

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As one may anticipate, due to the need for secrecy, the analyzed archival sources did not provide satisfactory evidence of Polish-Zionist interactions in the late 1930s. Thus, in order to bring the voices of contemporary politicians to the fore, I have also drawn upon memoirs, diaries and letters written by both Polish and Zionist politicians who operated in this period of massive political and social change.⁷⁸ These sources not only serve as an unprecedented entrée into the political climate of the period under examination but also provide readers with first-hand glimpses of ideological considerations regarding Zionism. Memoirs written by the Polish key interbellum officials, Starzeński or Wiktor T. Drymmer, are perhaps the best evidence of official perceptions of Zionism held by Piłsudski's most trusted men. Although one may say that this kind of literature was written in order to justify their passiveness towards increasing anti-Semitism, it constitutes a significant, and perhaps the only, source that allows me to chart a map of ideological perceptions of Zionism and Jewish national endeavors in Palestine. Particular caution is, however, advisable when we analyse such literature.⁷⁹

The study also pays particular attention to the Polish, English and Hebrew language press, and party journals perhaps the most critical tools in understanding motivations of particular factions. Throughout, most translations are mine unless otherwise indicated. In addition, the study discusses Zionist public discourse. Special consideration is given to press coverage, an important source for understanding trends of thought in political circles during this time. For this purpose, several interwar newspapers have been selected as representative of ideological trends within particular political camps. From the very beginning, the student attempting to examine mutual, Polish-Zionist, relations and Polish perceptions of Jewish national project in Palestine is confronted with a number of difficulties. First and foremost, the Polish interwar political scene was far from being monolithic. Thus, in order to understand the whole and accurate picture it is necessary to trace back the ideological and socio-political background of Poland's official engagement with Zionism.

The examination of Zionist newspapers published in Poland, in Mandate Palestine as well as in England provides an insight into the Zionist agenda and perception of the Polish government's role. In turn, an analysis of the interwar Polish-Zionist press enabled me to assess how local Jewish politicians perceived Polish endorsement for their national aspirations. In

⁷⁸ Beck J. (2015) *Wspomnienia o polskiej polityce zagranicznej 1926-1939* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Wingert; Drymmer W. T. (2014) *W służbie Polsce. Wspomnienia żołnierza i państwowca z lat 1914-1947* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Wingert.

⁷⁹ As Jan Tomaszewski assessed, 'These memoirs, written many years later, are sometimes particularly specious and one may have an impression, that the author wanted to pave some issues over, thus it is necessary to keep this in mind'. In: Tomaszewski J. (1998) *Preludium zagłady: wygnanie Żydów polskich z Niemiec w 1938 r.* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, pp.79-80.

interwar Poland there were three main centres of Zionism – Kraków, Lwów and Warsaw. Since three out of six Polish-language Jewish dailies were published in the capital, Marian Fuks described Warsaw as the ‘world centre of Jewish press’.⁸⁰ Zionist structures that operated in these cities published their own Polish-language dailies. While *Nasz Przeglqd* [Our Review], published in Warsaw between 1923-1939, was recognised as one of the most important newspapers in interwar Poland, *Nowy Dziennik* [New Daily] served ‘the Jews of Kraków as the main source of information, reporting events in the wide world, in Poland, in Palestine’. I also consider the most crucial Polish political periodicals of the time – *Czas* [Time], *Słowo* [Word], Piłsudskite *Gazeta Polska* [Polish Gazette], *Gazeta Warszawska* [Warsaw Gazette], *Kurjer Poranny* [Morning Courier] – in order to contextualize Polish attitudes towards the Zionists’ claims. Given the complexity of this question the dissertation abounds in extensive quotations, which illustrate the views on Zionism held by contemporary politicians, intellectuals, and publicists.

This project seeks to contribute to several fields of historical scholarship, including the political history of Polish Jewry, the history of reciprocal relations between Polish authorities and Zionists, the diplomatic and economic history of interwar Poland and finally the history of Zionism in that part of Europe. I believe that the multi-archival research, undertaken for the purpose of this dissertation, will contribute to a better historical understanding of the evolution of Zionism within the state’s elites. The dissertation is composed of five chapters. It begins with the chapter entitled *Vying for the leadership of Polish Jewry*, which presents an overview of the history of Polish-Zionist interactions. I argue that the main challenge for effective relations between Polish officials and Zionists was a deep factionalism of interwar Jewish politics. Then, the chapter explores the formation and development of the Zionist right and its reception by Polish elites. Analysing interactions between Warsaw’s policymakers and Revisionist politicians, the chapter elucidates why it was that their cooperation was considered mutually advantageous, based on political calculation.

Chapter 2, *For your freedom or ours?*, examines the complex ideological motivations for the political endorsement of Jewish national interests in Palestine. By drawing on an extensive body of primary sources, this section decisively demonstrates that the Polish political scene was far from homogenous in terms of the perceptions of Zionism, questioning thereby the credibility of the notion, accepted by a large part of the pre-1980s scholarship, that Polish officials were mainly motivated by anti-Semitism. The chapter analyses the main trends of thoughts on Zionism, the Jewish national project in Palestine and the creation of a new Jewish society held by specific

⁸⁰ Fuks M., *Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne: od 5 Rano do popołudnia*, ‘Rzeczpospolita Weekend’, 27 October 2008.

Introduction

sections of Poland's political scene: the National Democracy, the *Sanacja*'s officials and the Conservative movement. I argue that Poland's official perceptions of Zionism evolved significantly over the interwar years and were inextricably intertwined with a complex set of internal and external factors, such as the failure of the assimilation scheme and the nation-wide success of *Palestinocentric Zionism*.

[Chapter 3](#) is devoted to the question of emigration of Polish Jews to the Land of Israel over the interwar years. After presenting a discussion on emigration as a solution to the Jewish Question, the chapter explores in detail both legal and illegal emigration of Polish Jews to Mandatory Palestine and its structure. I then analyze then the involvement of Polish officials in organizing the transfer of Polish Jews to Palestine and argue that the huge success of the illegal immigration enterprise would have been impossible without the covert assistance of *Piłsudczyks*.

[Chapter 4](#) is inextricably bound to [Chapter 3](#) and examines the economic relations between Poland and the so-called Jewish Palestine. Moreover, the chapter reveals the deep interest of the particular factions in establishing and developing close commercial relations with the Jewish *Yishuv* in Palestine. Also, this section places Polish-Zionist interactions within the wider ambit of a deteriorating economic situation, Poland's deflationary policies and its economic interests in the Middle East. By analysing mutual trade agreements, the chapter seeks to answer the question of how, and to what extent the pro-Zionist approach was adopted by the Polish government and influenced by economic factors in addition to the willingness to acquire emerging markets in the Middle East. After discussing the significance of the Polish Jews as the 'bridgehead' for developing further commercial relations between interwar Poland and Palestine, the chapter deals with questions such as transportation facilities and capital flows.

The final chapter of this dissertation analyses the international aspect of mutual Polish-Zionist relations. Drawing on documentation from Polish, Israeli and British archives and even more extensively on press coverage, I show that the Polish government became an important voice in the international debate on Jewish emigration and Palestine. This chapter also analyses other areas of Polish endorsement for the Zionist cause, such as covert assistance in supplying arms and ammunition. The section is then devoted to the analysis of the extensive interactions, both official and unofficial, between certain Polish top-ranking politicians and Zionists in Warsaw, London and Geneva. I argue that frequent interventions in the international arena as well as a broad coverage in Polish press clearly indicates that the Warsaw government was eager to persuade Poland's society that the Government was vigorously attempting to find a

solution to the Jewish question. A glossary of political groupings, persons and press sources used in this dissertation is included in the Appendix, page 229.

Chapter 1 Vying for the leadership of Polish Jewry -

Polish Zionism in the 1920s

Ethically, it would be a wicked injustice; historically, it would be blindness if one ignored the Jewish question in Palestine.⁸¹

Władysław Szczępański, 1923

On Thursday evening, January 2, 1930, the Warsaw Symphony Hall was filled to capacity. Polish and Jewish flags flew over the main stage, a huge portrait of Theodor Herzl was visible from every corner of the Hall. Dozens of prominent politicians and guests from across the country as well as from abroad had come to Warsaw for the 'Palestine Academy' in honour of Nahum Sokolow, the famed Zionist leader on a speaking tour. Among those seated in the royal box were Kazimierz Bartel, Poland's Prime Minister, August Zaleski, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Julian Szymański, the Marshal of the *Senat* [the upper house of the Polish Parliament], and many other representatives of Polish political and intellectual elites. As the official ceremony started, *Hatikva* and Poland's national anthem *Mazurek Dąbrowskiego* were sung marking the mutual, Polish-Zionist, alliance. Right afterwards, Yehoshua Heschel Farbstein, a former representative to the Polish Parliament and the President of Warsaw's *Kahal* came on stage to deliver the opening speech. Deputy Farbstein warmly greeted representatives of the Polish cabinet and conveyed a profound gratitude to Tytus Zbyszewski, the Polish Consul General to Jerusalem for his 'noble and humanitarian initiative' during the tragic events of August 1929 in Palestine. The following spokesman, Minister Zaleski, received a standing ovation when he pointed out that the previous governments of Poland had already expressed their sympathies towards the Zionist movement and its proposals for building a new Jewish homeland in the Land of Israel. Zaleski's address signalled the continuance of Polish policy towards Palestine. Concluding his speech, Poland's Minister of Foreign Affairs wished the Zionists further successes in Palestine's up-building process and expressed a hope that 'this endeavour will be particularly beneficial for the world'.⁸² Sokolow, the President of the Zionist Executive Committee, spoke last, reminding that the Polish government was one of the first to officially demonstrate its endorsement for Zionist political aspirations in Palestine.⁸³

⁸¹ Szczępański W. (1923) *Palestyna po wojnie światowej* Kraków: Przegląd Powszechny, p. 39.

⁸² 'Przebieg uroczystej Akademji Palestyńskiej w sali Filharmonii Warszawskiej', *Nowy Dziennik*, 5 January 1930, p.3.

⁸³ 'Akademja Palestyńska', *Nowy Dziennik*, 3 January 1930, p.8.

At the beginning of the 1930s, Warsaw was not only a capital of a newly re-established Polish state, it was also, in Gruenbaum's eyes, 'an important Jewish city, the centre of the national life [of Poland's Jews], the centre of their renaissance and revival, the centre of their redemptive aspirations'.⁸⁴ Since the Zionist movement in Poland, after a temporary crisis of the late 1920s, was now flourishing, Sokolow's schedule was very tight. Over the course of a few weeks the Zionist leader embarked on extensive propaganda tours, travelling through Galicia and Central Poland and delivering speech after speech in major cities - Lwów, Kraków, and Warsaw. Willing to enlist endorsement of Piłsudski's camp, the Zionist leadership initiated talks with the governing elites of Poland. Consequently, Sokolow's arrival in Warsaw, on December 30th, 1929 was followed by a series of one-to-one private meetings with ministers - Kazimierz Bartel, Sławomir Czerwiński and Jan Józefski.⁸⁵ In turn, a few hours before the aforementioned gala performance the prominent Zionist leader alongside Heschel Farbstein approached Minister Zaleski in order to discuss various aspects of Polish-Zionist cooperation. The meeting lasted for an hour. At this point, Sokolow not only highlighted the current state of affairs in Palestine, but also asked the Polish minister to act in favour of Zionist political interests before the League of Nations.⁸⁶



Figure 1. Nahum Sokolow (in the middle) surrounded by Polish-Jewish politicians at Warsaw Railway Station, 30 December 1929. Source: *Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny*, NAC.

⁸⁴ Yitzhak Gruenbaum cited in: Reinhartz J. (2018) *The Road to September 1939: Polish Jews, Zionists, and the Yishuv on the Eve of World War II* Boston: Brandeis University Press, p. 312.

⁸⁵ 'Prez. Nahum Sokołow u premiera Bartla', *Chwila*, 2 January 1930, p.1.

⁸⁶ 'Prezydent Sokołow u Ministra Zaleskiego', *Nowy Dziennik*, 5 January 1930, p.3.

The history of Polish-Jewish relations is far from black and white. Questions of mutual coexistence, interactions between Poles and their Jewish neighbours have always been complex and intertwined with a number of internal and external factors. The emergence of modern Jewish politics in the late 19th century created new challenges, both in terms of adapting to new political circumstances and of interpreting these developments in the light of the external environment. Along with this socio-political transformation, Poland became the main centre of East European Jewish politics, where growing movements that embodied either nationalism or socialism in a variety of permutations flourished. Mass autonomous political ideologies, such as Zionism, Yiddish-favouring Bundism, and Folkism not only enabled Polish Jews to advance their political and socio-economic causes but also substantially affected relations with non-Jewish authorities. Overall, by the end of World War I, Congress Poland counted approximately two hundred Zionist organisations with approximately 40,000 permanent members.⁸⁷ Their political agenda could not have remained unnoticed. In November 1918 Zionists, long the dominant force in Polish-Jewish politics, found themselves in a newly re-established state in which discourses and ideologies on the state's national character virtually dominated the whole of the social, economic and political life.

Polish-Zionist interactions constitute an interesting and largely forgotten chapter of mutual history. By tracing political relations between the governing and intellectual elites of Poland and the Zionist leadership of various branches, General Zionists and Revisionists, over the interwar years, this introductory chapter provides the historical setting and background for my further research. Particular attention is given to the period between 1926 and 1935 – the time between *Sanacja*'s military *coup d'état* when the semi-authoritarian regime attained power in the country and the Marshal's death, which gravely weakened Poland's political scene. What kind of factors undergirded the *Sanacja* movement and led it to espouse the pro-Zionist approach in the late 1920s? Why were Piłsudski's closest associates inclined towards Revisionist Zionism in the following decade? Did they overestimate the political status of Jabotinsky?

Although the Jewish socialist parties were particularly active during the First World War, in the first years of independence the Jewish community of Poland became a stronghold of Zionism and was represented at consecutive Zionist Congresses. New geopolitical ramifications at the end of the war shifted the centre of the movement to the newly re-established Poland. By the 12th World Zionist Congress, the first after the war held in Carlsbad in September 1921, Polish

⁸⁷ CZA – Central Zionist Archives, Z3/150, *Memorandum on the Zionist Movement and the Zionist organization in Poland and their activities*, 21 October 1918.

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Zionists comprised one-third of shekel payers, accounting some 400,000 *shekalim* (those buying a certificate of WZO membership).⁸⁸ And even though the majority of Polish Jewry did not identify themselves with Zionist nation-building aspirations, the large number of Jews who signed the 1917 pro-Palestine petition, and the widespread support for Zionist politicians in the early 1919 elections to the constituent *Sejm*, could not go unnoticed by Polish politicians. The first general election of 1922 saw an even bigger victory for Polish Zionists, providing them with numerous seats in the lower house of the Polish Parliament.⁸⁹

Official support for Zionist national aspirations was expressed a few years later in a memorandum submitted by the Foreign Minister Aleksander Skrzyński to Nahum Sokolow on July 1st, 1925, declaring:

The Government is following with a keen interest the development of the efforts of Zionist organizations directed toward the rebirth of a Jewish national and cultural individuality on the soil of Palestine.⁹⁰

Three days later, on July 4, 1925 a well-known *Ugoda* (agreement) was concluded between the Polish Prime Minister Władysław Grabski and the Jewish parliamentary *Koło* (caucus), which aimed to obtain Jewish support for the government in return for a number of concessions to the Jewish population.⁹¹ A clear coincidence in time between these two events as well as Skrzyński's participation in negotiations clearly suggest that a promised interest in Zionism stemmed from Warsaw's political opportunism. Nevertheless, the very incorporation of this issue into the general debate on Polish-Jewish relations marks an important change in thinking vis-à-vis Zionists' interests in Palestine, which were no longer seen as an irrelevant phenomenon. In the eyes of the governing elites of Poland, the new political reality that emerged in the Middle East as a consequence of the First World War, alongside the growing popularity of Zionist doctrine required certain steps to be undertaken by the Polish administration. In this vein, the Government's declaration of July 1925 not only specified its official position towards Zionism and Jewish national aspirations, but also signalled the emergence of an active policy towards Jewish Palestine with the pivotal aim of securing Warsaw's socio-economic ends.

⁸⁸ Mendelsohn E. (1982) *Zionism in Poland: The Formative Years, 1915-1926* New Haven: Yale University Press pp.184-185.

⁸⁹ Mendelsohn E. (1993) *On Modern Jewish Politics* New York: Oxford University Press, p.67.

⁹⁰ Walicki J. (2005) *Ruch Syjonistyczny w Polsce w latach 1926-1930* Łódź: Ibidem, pp. 133-147; Rudnicki S. (2004) *Żydzi w Parlamencie II Rzeczypospolitej* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, pp. 223-240.

⁹¹ Marcus J. (1983) *Social and political history of the Jews in Poland, 1919-1939* Berlin: Mouton Publishers, pp.308-310; Walicki J. (2005) *Ruch Syjonistyczny w Polsce w latach 1926-1930* Łódź: Ibidem, p. 145.

Such a declaration could not have gone unheard. From the very outset serious reservations were voiced not only by right-wing politicians, but also in prominent Catholic circles. Dmowski's *Związek Ludowo-Narodowy* (the Popular National Association) responded first, questioning the legitimacy of Poland's support for Jewish national endeavours just a few hours after announcing the declaration. The right-wing faction called on ruling elites to withhold Poland's support for Zionism immediately, stating that the Palestine question constituted a 'very thorny and contentious issue in international politics'.⁹²

Conversely, in relation to former governments that operated within the context of parliamentary democracy, *Sanacja* accepted and promoted a multi-ethnic state solution.⁹³ In spite of that, the new regime continued with the former authorities' policy towards Zionism and Jewish national aims in Palestine. Already on May 27th, 1926 Kazimierz Młodzianowski, the Minister of the Interior, circulated a document (*okólnik*) setting out *Sanacja*'s official position towards Zionism.⁹⁴ At this point, one may ask why the *Piłsudczyks*, who flatly rejected each form of national separatism, decided to act in favour of Zionism? In reality, the publication of such a document less than two weeks after Piłsudski's seizure of power was a well-calculated move aiming to generate greater domestic support for an emerging semi-authoritarian regime. Walery Ślawek and his administration were given the task of organising a broad-based coalition with the aim of negating the political significance of deposed factions and started looking for allies. General Zionists, although internally divided along the ideological and territorial axes, constituted the largest political force among Polish Jewry, leading the way both in the Polish *Sejm* and in their endeavours to create Jewish majority in Palestine.⁹⁵ Acting primarily out of political self-interest, Piłsudski's adherents embraced the pro-Zionist approach, as their political opponents had formerly done. At the same time, the *Piłsudczyks*, however, did not abandon their support for an assimilationist scheme.⁹⁶

The pro-Zionist sympathies were again expressed in mid-November 1928, when Kazimierz Bartel, Poland's Prime Minister declared to Leib Jaffe, from the World Zionist Executive,

⁹² 'Rząd Żydzi i Palestyna', *Nowy Dziennik*, 8 July 1925, p.2.

⁹³ This concept will be further discussed in [Chapter 2](#).

⁹⁴ The document stated: 'Within the country, the government does not undermine Zionist actions; in particular actions that aimed at emigration, raising money, change of Jewish vocational structure; and decide that organizations promoting Zionism will not need legalization'. See: AAN – Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw. MSW WN – Ministry of Interior, National Minorities Department. *Żydowskie ugrupowania polityczne w Polsce w dniu 1-go maja 1927*, 246, vol. 5; Walicki J. (2005) *Ruch Syjonistyczny w Polsce w latach 1926-1930* Łódź: Ibidem; Rudnicki S. (1985) *Obóz Narodowo Radikalny: geneza i działalność* Warszawa: Czytelnik.

⁹⁵ Mendelsohn E. (1995) *The ambiguous 'Lessons' of Modern Polish-Jewish History* Oxford: Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, pp. 7, 11.

⁹⁶ See: [Chapter 2](#).

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that his Government had a full understanding of Jewish national aims in Palestine and pledged 'sympathy and readiness for active support in the Palestine up-building process'.⁹⁷ Bearing in mind the political pragmatism that led *Sanacja*'s officials to officially endorse the Zionist rhetoric, there are some solid grounds for believing that Bartel's declaration was a particular token of gratitude for Poland's Zionists who backed Piłsudski's authoritarian framework. As Polish historians Jan Walicki and Szymon Rudnicki meticulously documented, the Zionist leadership of Poland was indeed well disposed towards Piłsudski's regime, viewing it as far better than the other political alternatives.⁹⁸ In this political context, Poland's governing elites around Marshal Piłsudski and Zionists became a community of shared interests.

In early January 1927, general Wyndham Henry Deeds, the former Chief Secretary under Herbert Samuel and a well-known supporter of Jewish statehood in Palestine, went on a tour to Poland with an aim of examining the existing status quo in Polish-Jewish politics. Since Zionists decided to seize this opportunity to disseminate the movement's ideology, Deeds' stay in the country was accompanied by various lectures, readings, demonstrations and political rallies. Not surprisingly, he left Poland in awe of the vitality of Polish Zionism and 'the growing sympathy towards the movement in Christian circles'.⁹⁹ Just after his return to Great Britain, Deeds noted: 'I found Zionists in Poland, although disappointed at the present economic situation in Palestine, quite undismayed. They are longing to renew the work in Palestine, to redouble their efforts, relying on the material assistance of their fellow workers elsewhere, which will enable them to do so. As the true aims of Zionism will become more and more known, the sympathy and interest of non-Jews and Christians will increase'.¹⁰⁰ Deeds, however, failed to notice one of the main features of the Zionist politics in Poland – its extraordinary divisiveness, reflected in the multiplicity of Zionist groupings.¹⁰¹

In the late 1920s, Polish Zionists found themselves in a particularly tough position. A noticeable decline in pro-Palestine initiatives and fundraising activities was paralleled by a decline in Zionist influence over the Polish political scene. The ideological struggles that dominated the

⁹⁷ *Nasz Przeglqd*, 317, 16 November 1928, p.3. Prime Minister Bartel on behalf of his Government declared as follows: 'We have a deep understanding for your cause. We wish you all the best. We pledge our sympathy and readiness for active support in the Palestine up-building process'.

⁹⁸ Walicki J. (2005) *Ruch Syjonistyczny w Polsce w latach 1926-1930* Łódź: Ibidem, pp.133-145.

⁹⁹ 'Sir Wyndham Deeds on the State of Zionism in Poland', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 21 January 1927, p.3.

¹⁰⁰ 'Sir Wyndham Deedes Sees Growing Interest in Aims of Zionism', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 18 January 1927.

¹⁰¹ As historians note the deep ideological rifts and inability to compromise constituted intrinsic characteristics of the new Jewish politics. See: Mendelsohn E. (1982) *Zionism in Poland: The Formative Years, 1915-1926* New Haven: Yale University Press; Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press; Polonsky A. (2000) *The Failure of Jewish Assimilation in Polish Lands and its Consequences* The Third Goldman Lecture, Oxford: Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies.

national branch of the movement along with the collapse of various pro-emigration initiatives had a particularly adverse effect upon the cohesiveness of the Zionist politics across the country. The Zionist movement was split into three autonomous regional federations – one for the territories of the Congress Kingdom, and the other two for Eastern and Western Galicia, constantly riven by the discussion over the question as to whether the Zionist movement should concentrate on Palestinocentric activities or whether it should actively participate in internal Polish politics.¹⁰² Moreover, the Zionist Federation of former Congress Poland had been further divided in 1923 into two warring factions – Yitzhak Gruenbaum's *Al HaMishmar* [On the Guard] and *Et Livnot* [Time to Build] headed by Leon Levite and Yehoshua Gottlieb. Both groupings were divided in terms of their perception of the right political strategy vis-à-vis the Polish government. Whereas Gruenbaum favoured a policy of persistent opposition towards the authorities and uncompromising defence of Jewish national rights, Levite and Gottlieb expressed a willingness to establish lines of cooperation with Poland's highest authorities.¹⁰³

As both factions continued to disseminate mutually exclusive propaganda, the growing popularity of the Revisionist movement additionally highlighted the extent of ideological polarisation of the Polish Zionism. The defeatism that spread among local Zionists around 1927, the severe economic crisis in Palestine, as well as an increasing criticism of the Palestine project not only filled Zionists with bitterness but also shaped the general perception of the movement in the eyes of Polish public. Warsaw's elites were indeed quick to see factional strife and the Zionists knew that. It was a reason why Ignacy Daszyński, a famous socialist and Marshal of the *Sejm*, pointing out that the number of Jews who were born in Poland exceeded the number of those who were leaving the country for Palestine asked Leib Jaffe in 1928 'is this not a proof of the movement's decrepitude?'.¹⁰⁴ Following the collapse of Palestine's economy, as Jewish emigration from Poland began to decline dramatically, Poland's Jews gradually began to direct their political interest towards either Jabotinsky's Revisionist movement or to the Zionist left. This trend was reflected in the results of the elections to the 18th Congress of the World Zionist Organisation in 1933, during which the leftist factions received more than forty per cent of vote, while Revisionists approximately 30 per cent.¹⁰⁵ The Polish elites were well-aware of a leadership crisis within the General Zionists' camp. Although political cooperation with Revisionists gained momentum in the mid-1930s, already in September 1926 representatives of the Polish

¹⁰² Mendelsohn E. (1983) *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp.57-59. These shifts will be further discussed in [Chapter 2](#).

¹⁰³ Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, p. 12.

¹⁰⁴ CZA, KH4/B/2154, *Report by Leib Jaffe*, 17 October 1928.

¹⁰⁵ Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out ...*, p. 13.

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government established relations with right-wing Zionists, attending one of the first meetings of the Revisionist movement in Poland.¹⁰⁶

After a significant decline in strength in the late 1920s, the new decade witnessed a nation-wide revival of Zionism. Pioneering organisations *He-Halutz*, *Gordonia* and *Freyhayt* flourished anew, engaging over 130,000 young Jews.¹⁰⁷ This growing enthusiasm for the Jewish national project visible on the Jewish street was quickly detected by Poland's political and intellectual circles. 'Zionism and the Palestine question constitute one of the most interesting phenomena in modern history' noted *Gazeta Polska* [Polish Gazette], a semi-official organ of the *Sanacja* regime.¹⁰⁸ Although the Palestine initiatives flourished anew, the General Zionists had not re-established their political status during the early years of Polish independence and this was subsequently reflected in the results of the 1930 parliamentary election.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, in the pages of *Sanacja*'s press it was emphasised frequently that the Government shared a keen interest in Zionism, viewing its ideology as 'both the international question and an issue concerning thousands of Polish Jews'.¹¹⁰

This radical reorientation of the *Sanacja*'s stance towards the Zionist doctrine was also triggered by another factor. As has been discussed above, in the first half of the 1920s, the Piłsudczyks perceived nationalism and separatism as the main obstacles to Zionism. Their early, rather ambivalent approach to the ambitions and ideology of modern political Zionism also stemmed from close political connections with the Orthodox *Agudat Yisrael* and the socialist Bundists, who vehemently opposed the emergence and development of the Zionist enterprise.¹¹¹ On the other hand, however, Polish politicians were becoming afraid of a growing popularity of the left-leaning tendencies, which, because of the immediate proximity of Soviet Russia, were mainly Communist. In a situation of this kind, being aware that some Jewish youth sympathized with revolutionary ideas, Piłsudski's associates decided to favour projects and concepts that were

¹⁰⁶ Heller D. (2012) *The Rise of the Zionist Right: Polish Jews and the Betar Youth Movement, 1922-1935*, p.67.

¹⁰⁷ As D. Heller argues it is difficult to provide an accurate data on the youth movement membership since Zionist leaders used to overstate these numbers. Moreover, membership counts were conducted at different times. See: Heller D. (2012) *The Rise of the Zionist Right: Polish Jews and the Betar Youth Movement, 1922-1935*, pp.31-32.

¹⁰⁸ 'Listy Wschodnie', *Gazeta Polska*, 16 September 1931, p.3.

¹⁰⁹ In the 1930 parliamentary election Gruenbaum's Minorities Bloc failed to set up a list, Galician Zionists received four seats, loosing thereby two seats in comparison with the election held in 1928, and the Zionists from Congress Kingdom took two seats.

¹¹⁰ 'Anglia i problem palestyński', *Gazeta Polska*, 31 July 1931, p.4.

¹¹¹ On the political interactions between the *Sanacja* regime and these Jewish parties, see: Bacon G. (1996) *The Politics of Tradition: Agudat Yisrael in Poland, 1916-1939* Jerusalem: The Magnes Press; Johnpoll B. (1967) *The Politics of Futility: the General Jewish Workers Bund of Poland, 1917-1943* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

supposed to 'destroy Jewish ghettos' and encourage an anti-Communist spirit.¹¹² In their perception, the secular nationalist ideology of Zionism became a reliable alternative to either Soviet-style communism or Jewish ghetto backwardness. Not surprisingly, the rhetoric articulated by the Revisionists, which detested the socialist orientation of the other factions of the Zionist movement, began to gain even wider support among the *Sanacja*'s politicians.¹¹³

In the mid-1930s against the background of growing racial discrimination and deteriorating economy, Polish ethno-nationalism started to gain momentum. The triumph of Nazism in neighbouring Germany had an adverse effect on the Polish political scene and attitudes towards Jews. Unarguably, prevailing ethno-nationalist attitudes shaped the extent of mutual, Polish-Zionist, cooperation. After 1935, in conjunction with the international debates over Jewish emigration to Palestine, the internal situation within the country was beginning to influence Warsaw's official position towards Zionism and Jewish sovereignty in Palestine. The year 1935 signalled a turning point in Polish-Zionist relations. At night, on May 12th 1935, Piłsudski died. In September the right-wing Revisionists seceded from the World Zionist Organisation.

After May 1935 and particularly after the creation of OZON [*Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego* – Camp of National Unity] in 1937, the official line of policy pursued by the *Piłsudczyks* to a large extent echoed the rhetoric of nationalists, although the closest associates of the late Marshal strove to suppress the Polish anti-Semitic ethno-nationalist right.¹¹⁴ Consequently, Polish public discourse, whilst veering sharply to the ethno-nationalist right, started to call for taking direct and decisive measures to solve the so-called Jewish question. On the other hand, the internal tensions within the Zionist movement had a profound impact on the perception of Jewish national aims in Palestine amongst Polish politicians. In such conditions, Jabotinsky's scheme of mass exodus had fallen on fertile ground. Whereas the right-leaning segments found it to be a useful instrument to reduce Poland's Jewish population, in the perception of others, the Revisionist evacuation project was starting to sound like a useful political instrument to ease the concerns of the Polish far-right.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Trzebiatowski K. (1970) *Szkolnictwo powszechnne w Polsce w latach 1918-1932* Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, p. 180.

¹¹³ The Revisionist leaders of Poland were increasingly concerned about the high percentage of Jews who were engaged into left-wing politics, see: Goldberg M. 'Yiddishe cosmopolitanism un geto psikhologiyen', *Avodatenu*, December 1932, p.22.

¹¹⁴ Majchrowski J. (1992) Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego wobec kwestii żydowskiej. In: Wrzesiński W (ed) *Polska myśl polityczna XIX i XX wieku* Wrocław, 139-147.

¹¹⁵ Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, p. 138.

The Polish authorities and the Revisionist Zionists

The growing popularity of right-wing Revisionist Zionism among Polish-Jewish youth was a major factor, although not the only one, in establishing close political relations between Warsaw authorities and Jabotinsky's associates. Since the Revisionist movement considered diplomatic activity to be fundamental, embarking upon an initiative that assumed to develop further close cooperation with the Polish government fitted into the wider pattern of Revisionist ideology.¹¹⁶ Consequently, political alliances with East European governments became an integral part of Revisionist rhetoric. As Wolfgang von Weisl (Binyamin Zeev), one of the founders of the Revisionist movement, put it in 1935, 'first of all, we need to do our best in order to exert moral pressure of Christian nations on British policy towards Palestine – and it is our foreign policy, which involves propaganda, diplomacy, commercial aspects and wide canvassing'. In this context Weisel admitted that he was interested in how Polish officials perceived Revisionist endeavours.¹¹⁷

Interestingly, from the outset, Revisionist leaders considered Poland and its Jewish community to be of peripheral importance. A shift in tactics took place in mid-1927, when Jabotinsky, as a consequence of his first official trip to Warsaw, reoriented his political stance towards Eastern Europe in general, and towards Poland in particular.¹¹⁸ Additionally, as Joseph Schechtman recalled that Jabotinsky was becoming increasingly aware of the 'time factor' in Eastern, Central and South-Eastern Europe at this time. The Revisionist leader acknowledged that the deteriorating condition of Jewry was about to lead to a catastrophe and therefore urgent and extraordinary action was imperative.¹¹⁹

After his visit to Poland, Jabotinsky also seized upon a notion that his rhetoric had much in common with ethno-nationalist and conservative Poles, who wanted to reduce the number of Jews in the country. As Heller notes, this declaration was a far cry from his former

¹¹⁶ Rosenblum H. (1991) Promoting an International Conference to Solve the Jewish Problem: The New Zionist Organization's Alliance with Poland, 1938-1939. *The Slavonic and East European Review* 69: 478-501.

¹¹⁷ 'W. von Weisl', *Trybuna Narodowa*, January 1935, p.2.

¹¹⁸ Jabotinsky's first encounters with Polish Jews in general, and the Jewish youth in particular directly shaped his perceptions of his role as a leader of the movement and directions of Revisionist politics. As Heller notes: 'His articulation of the aims of both Betar and the Revisionist movement drew heavily upon the attitudes and behaviours promoted by the leaders of Poland's proto-Revisionist youth movements.' See: Heller D. (2012) *The Rise of the Zionist Right: Polish Jews and the Betar Youth Movement, 1922-1935*, pp. 82-84.

¹¹⁹ Schechtman J. (1961) *Fighter and Prophet: the Vladimir Jabotinsky Story. The Last Years*, New York: Barnes and Company, p. 335.

thoughts on Polish nationalism.¹²⁰ In spite of former animosities, the Polish authorities, being well aware of Jabotinsky's popularity among Polish-Jewish youth, decided to act in favour of his political faction. An additional enforcement was the '1934 petition action' directed to the Government and signed by approximately 217,000 Polish Jews.¹²¹ For this purpose, various steps were undertaken in order to facilitate the organisation of various Revisionist events in Poland. As early as 1933 Warsaw's authorities decided to issue visas free of charge for all attendees of the Revisionist conference in Katowice.¹²²

From the Revisionists' point of view, the political significance of the Polish government increased significantly after the September 1936 publication of Jabotinsky's path-breaking article in the Polish conservative daily *Czas*. Also, the governing elites of Poland found the Revisionist version of Zionism very convincing. In the eyes of the late Piłsudski's associates Revisionism was seen as an attempt to revive the fossilised Zionist movement.¹²³ Unarguably, the growing ideological and political opposition of Polish-Jewish youth against the General Zionists triggered this perception. As Kennard, the British Ambassador in Poland, reported to his supervisors in London in September 1936 'the considerable interest has been shown by the Polish press in the programme put forward recently by the New Zionist Organisation for the solution of the Jewish problem in this country through the wholesale emigration of Jews to Palestine and the movement attracted much support amongst the Polish Jewry'.¹²⁴

Jabotinsky's project indeed fall on fertile ground. Nevertheless, it is necessary to bear in mind that there were Revisionists themselves who were particularly interested in close cooperation with the Polish Government and for this purpose they had established contacts with Warsaw's conservative paper *Czas*. As Schechtman recalled his associates got on to the editors of 'one of the oldest and cleanest Polish newspapers, which had never indulged in anti-Jewish utterances' having been 'anxious to acquaint Polish public opinion with Jabotinsky's policy'.¹²⁵ From the outset, most of newspapers started to follow his pronouncements with a great interest. The aforementioned conservative *Czas* was at the cutting edge, having published a collection of

¹²⁰ Heller D. (2012) *The Rise of the Zionist Right: Polish Jews and the Betar Youth Movement, 1922-1935*, p.76.

¹²¹ The petition stated: 'The only way of normalizing my existence is for me and my family to settle in Palestine ... I ask the Polish government to intervene with the Mandatory Power so that the unjust immigration restrictions may be revised'. Cited in: Schechtman J. (1961) *Fighter and Prophet: the Vladimir Jabotinsky Story. The Last Years* New York: Barnes and Company, p. 345.

¹²² AAN, MSW – Ministry of Interior, 1378, 1933, pp. 220-222.

¹²³ Drymmer W. (2014) *W służbie Polsce: Wspomnienia żołnierza i państwowca z lat 1914-1947* Kraków: Wydawnictwo Wingert, pp.192-212.

¹²⁴ TNA, p.24, *Report by H.W. Kennard to Anthony Eden*, 16 September 1936.

¹²⁵ Schechtman J. (1961) *Fighter and Prophet: the Vladimir Jabotinsky Story. The Last Years* New York: Barnes and Company, pp. 338-339.

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articles written by prominent Revisionists from Poland and abroad and their ideological father. In a front-page commenting article, *Czas'* editor clearly stated that the intention of the publication of the ten-years plan was to initiate an open debate on the question of finding a solution to Poland's Jewish question. '[...] The postulates that they advance in the name of their organisation tally on many points with those about which we have written more than once on the Jewish question'.¹²⁶

The emigration scheme proposed by Jabotinsky quickly received support in *Kurjer Poranny* and *Gazeta Polska*, magazines generally considered to represent the Government's views.¹²⁷ The very appearance of such articles in leading Polish newspapers aligned with governing circles undoubtedly marked a shift of attention from the general and socialist to right-wing Zionism. From this point, cooperation with the World Zionist Organisation only served as a cover for a confidential alliance with the Revisionists. Polish officials, predominantly those around Piłsudski, were in awe of Jabotinsky. Count Michał Łubieński, the Head of the Foreign Minister's Office and one of Beck's most trusted advisors, emphasised that the Revisionist leader 'had made an exceptionally good impression on the Minister [Beck] who has very high opinion of him'. And more than that, as Schechtman recalled, Łubieński and Jabotinsky struck up a very close friendship.¹²⁸ Polish policymakers and Revisionists continued to meet quite regularly. At one of the ministerial meetings, the top-ranking officials agreed that their political interests were thoroughly parallel to those of the Revisionists. As Wiktor T. Drymmer put it 'this approach was expressed in a sentence: 'Jewish, independent Palestine, the greatest as possible with access to the Red Sea'.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ *Czas*, 9 September 1936, p.1 cited in: Garlicki A., Weinbaum L. (1991) The Zionist Revisionists, the Sanacja Regime, and the Polish Press, 1936-1939. *Gal-Ed* XII: 93-106.

¹²⁷ On September 11th 1936, two days after the meeting between Vladimir Jabotinsky and representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs *Gazeta Polska* wrote: 'Within the framework of the Ten-Year Plan the emigration of Jews from Poland at a rate of 60-70 thousand per year is envisioned. According to Jabotinsky, in order to realize this plan the permanent and organic cooperation of the Polish government is needed. The Polish Republic has always demonstrated its full understanding of the aspirations of the Jews to their national centre in Palestine. At the same time Poland, possessing an extensive percentage of Jews, also has a direct interest in a great Jewish emigration to Palestine.' Cited in: Garlicki A., Weinbaum L. (1991) The Zionist Revisionists, the Sanacja Regime, and the Polish Press, 1936-1939. *Gal-Ed* XII: 93-106.

¹²⁸ Schechtman J. (1961) *Fighter and Prophet: the Vladimir Jabotinsky Story. The Last Years* New York: Barnes and Company, p. 354. 'Jabotinsky highly valued Count Łubieński's friendship and cooperation. This highly cultured and sensitive scion of the highest Polish aristocracy met Jabotinsky in the Fall of 1936, and remained from then on a confirmed admirer of his personality, and a staunch supporter of his policy. This writer, whose privilege it was for nearly three years to maintain almost daily contact to Count Łubieński, is glad to be able to testify that Jabotinsky held him in high esteem and fully reciprocated his personal regard'.

¹²⁹ Drymmer W. (2014) *W służbie Polsce: Wspomnienia żołnierza i państwowca z lat 1914-1947* Kraków: Wydawnictwo Wingert, pp.208.

On September 9th 1936, the Revisionist leader approached the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the first time. After the meeting, Apoloniusz Zarychta described Jabotinsky as 'an idealist, of similar nature to Piłsudski, whose words on the need to fight and sacrifice of blood in the name of freedom were close to our hearts, since the great majority of us contributed in the independence movements.'¹³⁰ There were more similarities. Since the Revisionists placed the great value on teaching Jewish youth to be chivalrous and devoted to national ideals, the closest associates of the late Marshal viewed the movement through the lens of their own political experiences in their struggle for independence. Felicjan Sławoj-Składkowski, the Polish Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, in turn, emphasised that his administration was eager to support 'the Zionist cause not because they were eager to be relieved of their Jews, but because they regarded Zionism as a noble and humanitarian ideal'.¹³¹ Such a declaration might be regarded as peculiar, especially when one bears in mind Sławoj-Składkowski's former infamous neutral stance for the economic boycott against the Jews of Poland.¹³² What kind of factors therefore undergirded subsequent shifts of perception of the Zionist rhetoric?

The emigration programme articulated by Jabotinsky, indubitably appealed to the majority of Polish officials frustrated by the inability to solve the country's internal problems – the Jewish question, economic crisis, unemployment and severe overpopulation. The *Polish Information Bulletin*, published in Washington, described the New Zionist Organisation's 'evacuation scheme' as 'the first concrete proposal adjusted to reality, which took into account the needs of the Polish State'. The magazine put forward the political view that emigration would relieve the Polish State of a certain danger if disastrously poverty-stricken Jews were to belong largely to the parties of the extreme left. The magazine concluded 'All proposals which threatened to reduce immigration to Palestine either by means of administrative orders or as a result of the very dangerous proposals for the canonisation of Palestine were really contrary to the essential interests of Poland, and of the Jews'.¹³³

Jabotinsky argued that economic factors even more than growing anti-Semitic tendencies were rapidly making it impossible for Jews to continue their existence in the countries of Eastern Europe, which he called the 'zone of Jewish Distress'. According to him, Polish Jews were unable to change their socio-economic conditions and thus mass emigration was considered

¹³⁰ Schechtman J. (1961) *Fighter and Prophet: the Vladimir Jabotinsky Story. The Last Years* New York: Barnes and Company, pp.354-355.

¹³¹ Schechtman J. (1961) *Fighter and Prophet: the Vladimir Jabotinsky Story* ..., p.355.

¹³² During the opening session of the *Sejm* in June 1936 Felicjan Sławoj-Składkowski declared: 'Causing injury to any person in Poland is forbidden. An economic boycott certainly (*owszem*), however we will not allow any injury'.

¹³³ TNA, FO 371/20763, p.196, The Polish Information Bulletin, 15 July 1937.

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the ultimate and the only solution to the prevailing ‘anti-Semitism of things’.¹³⁴ A predominant part in the ten-year scheme or more acutely called an ‘evacuation plan’ was supposed to be played by the Jews of Poland, who would thus obtain an annual emigration quota of 75,000. Obviously, such a complex and ambitious undertaking was implementable only with backing of state’s apparatus.

The political alliance between the members of Polish cabinet and Revisionist Zionism did not, however, meet with common approval. Even within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs there was a deep scepticism about the prospects of such cooperation. In the eyes of many, Jabotinsky was perceived as a ‘politician with a changeable nature’, whose actions may have been detrimental to Poland’s *raison d’etat*. Also, Betar was viewed with some suspicion.¹³⁵ A confidential report written by the Department for International Organisations advised Poland’s Ambassador in London to proceed with the greatest caution with Revisionists, arguing that: ‘the overdue involvement in this case would disturb our good relations with Great Britain, which is particularly sensitive about Palestine’.¹³⁶

Other sectors of the Polish political scene were also divided in their perception of Jabotinsky’s action. Whereas the ethno-nationalist circles of Poland expressed concern over Palestine Arabs, viewing Revisionists as: ‘the most nationalistic power element in Jewish politics, unwilling to establish any form of cooperation with neighbouring nations’, their message for Revisionists was clear: ‘your politics will find our backing if it comes out in favour of our interests’.¹³⁷ Polish nationalists agreed with the Revisionist leader that ‘Zionism became a question of evacuation’.¹³⁸ In spite of that, right-wing organs spared no criticism of the *Sanacja*’s stance towards the movement. Indicating that the Revisionist programme was essentially tantamount to postulates formerly advanced by Catholic and ethno-nationalist circles, they

¹³⁴ Schechtman J. (1961) *Fighter and Prophet: the Vladimir Jabotinsky Story. The Last Years* New York: Barnes and Company, pp. 335-337.

¹³⁵ Heller D. (2012) *The Rise of the Zionist Right: Polish Jews and the Betar Youth Movement, 1922-1935*, p.167.

¹³⁶ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Confidential report on the New Zionist Organisation*, 1937, pp. 37-39. The report stated: ‘Our restraint is particularly desirable, since Jabotinsky and his representatives repeatedly approached Polish elites in not very tasteful manner willing to exploit our supportive approach towards NZO for enhancing their influences among the Jewry and in order to apply pressure on the British. Although British authoritative circles understand political reasons of our endorsement for NZO, the overdue involvement in this case would disturb our good relations with Great Britain, which is particularly sensitive about Palestine.’

¹³⁷ ‘Żydzi i Arabowie w Palestynie’, *Mały Dziennik*, 22 August 1935, p.5; ‘Jeżeliby 75 tysięcy Żydów emigrowało corocznie z Polski ...’, *Dziennik Poznański*, 22 September 1936, p.2. ‘All these endeavours of Jabotinsky are interesting for us if they come out in our favour. In our opinion it is pretty clear that nobody in Poland would support some kind of Jewish organization, if it would not have enhanced Jewish emigration from Poland. For us it does not matter who [leads the movement] – Jabotinsky or Weizmann – as long as Jewish emigration will reach the level expected by us’.

¹³⁸ ‘Zagadnienie ewakuacji Żydów’, *Kurjer Poznański*, 7 July 1935, p.5.

directly pointed out the perversity of the *Sanacja* authorities' position.¹³⁹ Frequently, attention was also paid to the inequality of treatment between Polish and Jewish nationalists.¹⁴⁰ An even more radical approach was adopted by left-leaning parties, such as the PPS and Bund, which could not remain indifferent to the vehemently anti-Socialist stance of the Revisionists. Stanisław Dubois, a PPS activist, in his reportage published in the pages of *Robotnik*, criticised the Revisionists for encouraging aggression both on Polish and on Palestinian soil: 'these Jabotinskys [adherents of Jabotinsky] will cause a lot of trouble in Palestine. If they want to ape Hitler, would not be better to keep them on in Poland?' Dubois asked.¹⁴¹ Also, the exclusively Palestinocentric focus of Jabotinsky's faction was disconcerting for some left-wing politicians surrounding the PPS party. For these reasons, left-wing opponents of Jabotinsky frequently referred to him and his comrades as 'Jewish fascists' who cherished both the Jewish and Polish public with illusions of a speedy exodus to Palestine.¹⁴²

Also, within the political spheres of Polish Jewry, the Polish-Revisionist alliance caused some controversy. It was generally seen as an invitation for Poles to interfere in internal Jewish affairs and the debate on emigration.¹⁴³ The mainstream and socialist Zionist newspapers operating in Poland at this time were at the forefront of criticism of the Revisionist establishment, being particularly antagonistic towards Jabotinsky's pronouncements. Already in 1932, a Polish-language Zionist *Chwila* warned that Jabotinsky's movement 'would repeat a territorialist experiment and perish, sooner or later'.¹⁴⁴ An East Galicia Zionist politician Emil Schmorak, in turn, emphasised that the mainstream Zionist and Revisionist programmes were no longer parallel and therefore it became necessary to distinguish between Jabotinsky's followers and Zionists.¹⁴⁵ Interestingly, these critical articles were frequently reprinted in the pages of the Polish press, both right- and left-leaning.

The discussion over the circumstances of mutual, Polish-Revisionist, cooperation was also visible in the Jewish press in Palestine. Whereas the leftist *Davar* severely criticised Polish engagement with 'fuhrer Jabotinsky', viewing it as an expression of pure anti-Semitism, *HaBoker*

¹³⁹ Rydlewski C. 'Z chwili', *Kurjer Poznański*, 1 October 1935, p.2.

¹⁴⁰ Mildner T. 'Zjazdy żydowskie w Krakowie', *Kurjer Poznański*, 11 January 1935, p.4.

¹⁴¹ Dubois S. 'W drodze do Palestyny. W pociągu Warszawa-Konstanza', *Robotnik*, 26 April 1936, p.3.

¹⁴² 'Po zabójstwie Arlosoroffa', *Robotnik*, 28 June 1933, p.3; Diamand W., 'Niczyć ... czy budować?', *Robotnik*, 28 October 1935, p.3.

¹⁴³ Garlicki A., Weinbaum L. (1991) The Zionist Revisionists, the Sanacja Regime, and the Polish Press, 1936-1939. *Gal-Ed XII*: 93-106.

¹⁴⁴ H.H., 'Krok ku przepaści', *Chwila*, 3 January 1932, p.2.

¹⁴⁵ Schmorak E., 'Czas do odwrotu', *Chwila*, 17 January 1935, p.2.

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announced that 'Jabotinsky was right'.¹⁴⁶ The alliance also elicited a real interest from mainstream Zionist circles. Shortly after the publication of Jabotinsky's project in *Czas*, Nahum Goldmann even inquired of the Polish delegate in Geneva about the Polish Government's interests in the Revisionist rhetoric. As Komarnicki reported to his supervisors in Warsaw, Goldmann sought to persuade him that Jabotinsky's influence was infinitesimal, both in the Jewish politics as well as in the international arena. Claiming that Revisionists were in precarious financial straits, Goldmann condemned Jabotinsky's mass emigration scheme as a fantasy: 'Jabotinsky loves to create broad, wide-ranging plans and he promises too much but where will he find funding for these projects?'. The Polish delegate advised him that his Government would favour the Zionist Organisation only if Zionists were to present a concrete plan for enhanced Jewish emigration from Poland.¹⁴⁷ Although the World Zionist Organisation's leadership opposed the coercive character of mass transfer, as proposed by the Revisionists, Goldmann declared that Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe was necessary and inevitable and that the Zionist leadership was able to cooperate with Warsaw in this matter. This gives rise to questions over how official perceptions of Zionism evolved and what factors became stimuli to re-define the way of thinking on Zionism and Jewish national aspirations in Palestine? Why did Warsaw's political elites decide to engage into close cooperation with the Revisionists? Was this cooperation mutually advantageous? It is to these questions that the coming chapter will turn, in an attempt to comprehend the diverse perceptions of Zionism and the ideological motifs that triggered Poland's political elites to embrace the pro-Zionist approach.

¹⁴⁶ *Davar* 19 October 1936; 'Polin veZionut', *HaBoker*, 15 November 1936.

¹⁴⁷ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 16 September 1936, *Komarnicki to MFA, Report on his meeting with Goldmann*, pp.24-26.

Chapter 2 For your freedom or ours? - Polish ideological perceptions of Zionism

Over almost ten centuries of mutual coexistence, the attitude of Polish society towards the Jews was peculiar, however, its most recent approach towards Zionism seems to be even more peculiar.¹⁴⁸

Michał Ringel, 1910

Awaking Jewish nationalism by Graetz and Herzl substantially changed the situation allowing Polish anti-assimilationists to embrace a particularly convenient stance. From one hand they are currently allowed to make plans about transferring the Jewish population to other territories, from the other they are swaying the Jewish nationalists sympathy.¹⁴⁹

Adolf Bocheński, 1933

It was the early spring of 1933 when Franciszek Ksawery Pruszyński, a young and promising Polish publicist, travelled to Palestine as a correspondent of Vilna's maverick journal *Słowo* [Word] in order to trace socio-political prospects in the 'New Jewish Palestine'. As a close friend of Marek Pomeranc, a Zionist activist from Kraków, Pruszyński not only had intimate knowledge of Jewish national aspirations in the region but also shared Zionist sympathies. Pacing through sand-swept wastelands of desert, from one kibbutz to another, the Polish writer delved into various aspects of the Zionist project. As Adolf Bocheński, Pruszyński's close friend from neoconservative circles, described, 'He [Pruszyński] was not a regular tourist, a regular reporter. He simply lives and breathes Palestine. He went through *Emek Israel*, dugged ditches in swamps, assisted poor immigrants in reaching the shore, fought with every manifestation of the Communist ideology as well as with the belligerent materialism. No, he definitely was not a regular tourist'.¹⁵⁰ In total, Pruszyński spent five weeks in Palestine. In a letter sent to his family in mid-April 1933 he wrote:

Jews in Palestine are well prepared to build a modern state and to manage it properly. Working the land in very difficult conditions equipped *sabrim* [Jews who had been born in the Land of Israel] with brawn; in turn, having to defend themselves against Arab assaults gave

¹⁴⁸ Ringel M. (1910) *Polacy wobec Syjonizmu*, Lwów: Drukarnia Udziałowa, p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ Bocheński A., 'Palestyna po raz trzeci', *Słowo*, 7 November 1933, p.1.

¹⁵⁰ Bocheński A., 'Palestyna po raz trzeci', *Słowo*, 7 November 1933, p.1.

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them courage and fighting ability. A new tradition is arising within the Jewish nation – a tradition of armed fighting for national independence.¹⁵¹

Pruszyński's visit to Palestine was a response to the growing interest in Zionist political endeavours among non-Jewish readers in general, and within national-democratic circles in particular.¹⁵² His journey also marked the changing approach of Polish neoconservatives and some segments of the *Sanacja* regime towards Jewish national project in Palestine. The detailed and highly sympathetic twenty-two reportage series addressed to the general Polish public was subsequently published in the pages of Stanisław Cat-Mackiewicz's conservative daily, *Słowo*. Its huge nation-wide success, along with the increasing engagement of Polish political elites regarding Jewish Palestine resulted in the publication of a book, *Palestyna po raz trzeci* [Palestine for the third time]¹⁵³, which established enduring paradigms for Polish perceptions of Zionism.

Nearly fifteen years later, in late November 1947, Pruszyński as a minister plenipotentiary and Polish delegate to the United Nations during the discussion on the political future of Palestine, confirmed his impassioned support for Israeli statehood. In his inspiring speech Pruszyński declared:

The Polish people, like no other nation, thoroughly understand longing for a homeland, for a land of your ancestors, where you are neither an intruder nor a wanderer. Thus, the Polish nation understands the struggle of the Palestine Jews, the right of the people for self-determination and the formation of their own independent state in the lands of their ancestors.¹⁵⁴

Often scholars presume that the pro-Zionist stance of the Polish political elites was motivated by the ethno-nationalist approach and desire to put an end to the centuries-long presence of Jews in Poland. Would it be, however, a historical justice to set approach taken by Pruszyński or Piłsudski's acquaintances on a level with *Endecja*'s contemptible politics? As I will show this question is much more complex. Although Poland's political scene was deeply divided ideologically in terms of the perception of Zionism and its national project in Palestine in the late 1930s there was, indeed, a growing consensus between elites that the Jewish emigration must be increased. It has to be noted, however, that ideological motivations for the endorsement of the Zionist rhetoric were substantially different. Historical writings that referred to the pre-war Polish-

¹⁵¹ Pruszyński K. (1996) *Palestyna po raz trzeci* Warszawa: Czytelnik, p.54.

¹⁵² Pruszyński K. (1996) *Palestyna* ..., p.6.

¹⁵³ Although, the title of Pruszyński's book might suggests that it was his third visit to Palestine, the author rather meant the third 'emergence' of Palestine as a modern state of all Jews. As Pruszyński explained it the first emergence occurred during the biblical period, the second one, in turn, during the Crusades.

¹⁵⁴ Szaynok B. (2007) *Z historią i Moskwą w tle. Polska a Izrael 1944-1968* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej, p.105.

Zionist alliance largely neglected other strands of Polish ideological motivations for mutual cooperation, mainly because of the prevailing anti-Semitism and eventual success of the *Endeks'* chauvinist rhetoric. As a result, these studies are almost entirely disconnected from the ideological, economic and geopolitical explanations of pro-Zionist policies enacted by some circles within the *Sanacja* camp in the first half of the 1930s. More recently, Timothy Snyder and Laurence Weinbaum have brought forward convincing arguments that it is anachronistic to view Polish-Zionist interdependence only through the prism of officially sanctioned racial hatred.¹⁵⁵ As I will argue, to understand the complexity of mutual Polish-Zionist relations it is necessary to analyse the ideological attitude of Warsaw's governing elites towards the movement with all its ambiguities and subsequent associations.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the ideological reception and attitudes of Poland's political elites toward Zionism and Jewish national aspirations in Palestine in the period between the world wars. During the years under examination Poland's perceptions of Zionism crystallized into several camps. In the initial phase, between 1918 and 1926, the ethno-nationalist right, propelled by deep-seated anti-Semitism, in spite of its crucial desire to reduce the number of Jews in Poland, explicitly dismissed the very essence of Zionism, that is, the attempt to establish an independent Jewish State in Palestine. Theodor Herzl, the ideological father of Zionism, in *Der Judenstaat* [The Jewish State] correctly predicted such a reaction within some segments of society, writing, 'perhaps someone will say that it put weapons in the hands of anti-Semites'.¹⁵⁶ In the early 1920s, right-leaning circles indicated a few reasons for justifying their rejection of the Zionist doctrine. Although their stance seemed to be related to the concern for Christianity's holy sites located in Palestine, it was predominantly a fear of Jewish political dominance in the Middle East. Since the right-wing doctrine frequently affiliated Zionism with Soviet Bolshevism/Communism, a huge concern arose over the possible effects of a Jewish national project in Palestine. At the beginning of the 1930s, however, the right-wing politicians redirected their stance, embracing a pro-Zionist approach.

What kind of factors triggered subsequent shifts of their attitude towards on-going prospects in the region? With regard to right-leaning elites the answer is fairly simple. Having devised the slogan 'Palestine for the Jews', they were propelled by anti-Semitism and their

¹⁵⁵ Snyder T. (2015) *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* London: Vintage; Weinbaum L. (1993) *A Marriage of Convenience: The New Zionist Organisation and the Polish Government, 1936-1939* Boulder: East European Monographs.

¹⁵⁶ Herzl T. (1936) *The Jewish State: an attempt at a modern solution of the Jewish question* London: Zionist Organisation.

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inherent desire to reject Jews from the national polity. The attitude of the moderate conservative, liberal and left-leaning elites was strikingly different. Also the *Sanacja* regime, having ideological roots close to progressive elements within the Polish Socialist Party [*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna* - PPS, a party established by the descendants of Polish nobility and acculturated Jews] advocated the assimilation scheme.¹⁵⁷ However, this attitude was re-evaluated in the early 1930s, as national exclusiveness and socio-economic upheavals fostered a strong anti-assimilationist trend. Consequently, the *Sanacja*'s officials redirected their position towards Jewish national aspirations, deploying a clearly pro-Zionist stance. At this point, one may argue that Piłsudski's associates, being eager to ease the country's Jewish problem, simply deployed right-wing rhetoric. However, the collected data suggests that it would be a historical oversimplification. In the following chapter I will argue that attitudes towards, and official perceptions of Zionism constantly developed and were inextricably intertwined with a complex set of internal and external factors. The chapter will also assess how and to what degree various internal developments shaped the way of thinking on the Jewish question, and consequently on Zionism.

Poland's politics towards the Jewish question and the national project in Palestine attracted considerable interest in Zionist circles from the outset of the Polish independence. Stanisław Gąbiński, a moderate *Endecja* leader who served as a delegate of the National Committee in Paris, recalls in his memoirs that he was approached by the Zionist theorist Alfred Nossig to learn about prospects for the future Polish-Jewish relations.¹⁵⁸ In the early 1930s, however, Zionist politicians began reacting cautiously to the pro-Zionist declarations of Polish politicians. Some of them indicated that Polish official endorsement for Zionist ideology was motivated by anti-Semitism. Since a large segment of society was convinced that the level of Jewish population in Poland was far too high, the authorities became increasingly occupied with the so-called Jewish question. Dawid Socher, the editor of *Nasz Przeglqd* [Our Review], indicated this tendency and suggested that Polish sympathy towards Zionist doctrine was fading as Jewish emigration began to decline. Nonetheless, the Polish-Jewish journalist concluded that 'in spite of these unfounded claims, Poland has always fostered the Zionist project, both ideologically and strategically'.¹⁵⁹

The chapter will then examine how far the pro-Zionist stance of subsequent Polish governments was motived by anti-Semitism. In attempting to answer this question, my angle of

¹⁵⁷ Paruch W. (1997) *Od konsolidacji państwownej do konsolidacji narodowej. Mniejszości narodowe w myśli politycznej obozu piłsudczykowskiego (1926-1939)* Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, p.24

¹⁵⁸ Gąbiński S. (1939) *Wspomnienia polityczne* Pelplin: Druk. i Księg., p. 394.

¹⁵⁹ D. Socher, 'Mandat Palestyński winna otrzymać Polska', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 4 September 1929, p. 5.

approach will be to analyse the developing perceptions of the so-called Jewish question and the place that Jews were supposed to occupy in modern Polish society. Indeed, in order to understand the ideological motivations that triggered Poland's governing elites to support Zionist endeavours in Palestine, it is necessary to understand the multiplicity of official perceptions of the Jewish question - viewed as particularly 'burning problem' of the newly re-established country. For this purpose, I will reconstruct some of the debates proposing potential solutions. Finally, I will argue that the transformation of the image of the Zionist project was inextricably intertwined with Poland's domestic policy and the failure of the assimilation programme postulated by Piłsudski's camp.

All these shifts taken together reflect the evolution of thought in terms of questions of nation and statehood that occurred in the *Sanacja* political camp after 1935. In the post-Piłsudski period, as the official policy towards the Jewish question began to change, the immense pressure on the governing elites from various segments of Polish society to bring about a reduction in the number of Jews in the country intensified. As a result, anti-Semitic nationalism triumphed decisively over the model advocated by late Marshal Piłsudski and his closest adherents. Internal pressures forced the post-Piłsudski regime to approach the Jewish question more boldly. However, perhaps most puzzling was the fact that a large segment of *Sanacja*'s officials made an ideological volte-face, accepting the rhetoric of their political enemies – the chauvinist *Endeks*. Emanuel Melzer accurately describes these shifts within the camp as 'considerable ideological ferment'.¹⁶⁰ Another stimulus to the popularization of anti-Semitism was growing nationalism, which affected all spheres of internal politics. As David Engel suggests Adolf Hitler's rise to power 'may have played a role in this change by lending anti-Semitic legacy in the public eye'.¹⁶¹ For Polish anti-Semites the racial politics of the Third Reich became a source for particular encouragement for further anti-Semitic agitation.

Reconstruction of a state and the Jewish question

Since the re-emergence of the Second Polish Republic in November 1918 from the territories of three defunct empires – Tsarist Russia, Imperial Germany, and Austria-Hungary - both its political scene and ethno-nationalist composition of the population were extraordinarily heterogeneous. *Polonia Restituta*, undergoing the process of modern nation- and state-building,

¹⁶⁰ Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, p.5.

¹⁶¹ Engel D. (1987) *In the shadow of Auschwitz: the Polish government-in-exile and the Jews, 1939-1942* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, p. 36.

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faced a daunting set of political and socio-economic problems. Perhaps one of thorniest of these was the question of ethnic and national minorities, which had already become a central point of domestic politics by the beginning of 20th century, effectively dividing Poland's political scene from its public discourse. In the early 1920s, as Polish political life finally awakened following over 120 years of repression, the process of Poland's modern nation-building began anew. Although the concept of nationhood was well developed since before the late 18th century it was largely based on political rather than ethnic identity.¹⁶²

Like many heterogeneous societies, the Second Polish Republic spawned a number of socio-ideological programmes of statehood. Although two crucial concepts of a future Polish state were articulated years before the state regained its independence, the period between 1914 and 1922 witnessed a massive revolution in the way Poles and the governing elites of Poland viewed themselves, Poland's national and ethnic minorities as well as their developing political programmes. Dmowski and Piłsudski, the leading figures of interwar Polish politics, formulated mutually exclusive concepts of statehood. Since their outlooks pervaded the entire political discourse, both observers and subsequently historians of the Second Polish Republic came to view the history of the Polish interwar years through the lens of the on-going struggle between these opposing ideologies. Piłsudski's political circles favoured a federalist solution, modelled on a nostalgic or even naïve assumption that all ethnic minorities would be eager to join such a federation. Echoing the socio-cultural roots of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (*Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów*), this idea assumed the equality of the coexistence of ethnic and national minorities within a well-established federal structure, under an implicit Polish hegemony.¹⁶³ Piłsudski and his adherents wholeheartedly believed that Poland was bound together by an ancient tradition of protecting all ethnic minorities.¹⁶⁴ Already at the beginning of the 20th century, Piłsudski postulated that the party's political programme should have included a separate guarantee for the Jews 'as a nationality'.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Walicki A. (1989) *The Enlightenment and the Birth of Modern Nationhood: Polish political thought from noble republicanism to Tadeusz Kościuszko* Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.

¹⁶³ Grygajtis K. (2001) *Polskie idee federacyjne i ich realizacja w XIX i XX w.* Częstochowa: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej.

¹⁶⁴ Rothschild J. (1989) Marshal Piłsudski on State/Society Dialectics in Restored Interwar Poland. In: Wiles T. (ed), *Poland Between the Wars: 1918-1939*, p. 30. As Joseph Rothschild came to observe: The inner core of Piłsudski's entourage, like the Marshal himself, originated from *szlachta*-become-intelligentsia families from the eastern *Kresy* borderlands, where memories of the old Commonwealth and its traditions of aristocratic stewardship of power over immature and ethnic elements.'

¹⁶⁵ Zimmerman J. (2015) *The Polish Underground and the Jews, 1939-1945* New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 273.

The federalist concept was, however, strongly opposed by Dmowski and his *Endecja* camp. This new strain of Polish right-wing nationalism that arose at the beginning of century assumed different form, leaning predominantly on the concept of *Polskość* (Polishness) combined together with a deep attachment to Polish language, national culture and the Roman Catholic faith. Increased feelings of nationalism along with the struggle to resurrect an independent Polish state, gave impetus to modern nationalism and an increasing antagonism towards 'others' – the ethnic and national minorities. With the growing popularity of the *Endecja* movement, political anti-Semitism became an integral component of the socio-political discourse. Anxious to create a unitary nation-state, the right-wing elites of Poland found themselves facing the very complex reality of an ethnically polarised society, where ties of loyalty were significantly shaped by concepts of identity. Alongside the development of a nation-state rhetoric, right-wing circles were beginning to consider minority groups, which constituted approximately thirty per cent of the country's inhabitants, as a menace to others or even aliens. Indeed, in the eyes of ethno-nationalistic factions, ethnic minorities were 'harmful elements' to the newly re-established state, its rightful citizens and socio-economic life. Being considered traitors to the Polish national cause, minorities were frequently accused of favouring the political interests of Poland's chief enemies – Soviet Russia and Germany.¹⁶⁶ All these prejudices significantly shaped the official stance towards every manifestation of ethnic nationalism.

In the first months of independence, Polish Zionists were not unified in their approach to how to present their identity in the context of new political circumstances. On one hand they wanted to be included within the re-emerging national polity, but on the other they articulated the notion of a totally separate national identity.¹⁶⁷ Consequently, this inconsistency led to the internal fracture and the creation of two opposing views on this matter. The first approach, having an emphasis on the centrality of the Land of Israel and Hebraist purism was mainly proposed by the activists who had decided to dissociate themselves from Polish politics. Among them was Puah Rakovsky, a Zionist feminist who actively participated in the building of Zionist frameworks in Poland. She wrote in her memoirs:

Despite my total involvement in social and political activity at that time, my thoughts moved in one direction: that I mustn't stay here any longer, and that now was the time to leave for the land of Israel, to see with my own eyes the land of the most beautiful dreams of my youth.

¹⁶⁶ Stanisław Grabski, a leading politician of Narodowa Demokracja (National Democracy) in 1922 assessed: ' [...] in every strife Jews from all around the world used to embrace and are currently embracing the position of Poland's opponents the Germans, Bolsheviks, Ukrainians or Lithuanians'.

¹⁶⁷ Brykczyński P. (2016) *Primed for Violence: Murder, Antisemitism, and Democratic Politics in Interwar Poland* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, pp.78-79.

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I wanted to work to restore the land. Another consideration influenced me as well: I felt constrained in independent Poland. I was envious of the Poles, and I was unable to rejoice at their victory or participate in their happiness. I hope my friends, the warm sympathizers and outspoken supporters of Poland, forgive me for telling the truth: for forty-four years, I lived in the capital of the Polish state, in Warsaw. But I never believed the promises of the Polish rulers or the integrity of the Polish people with regard to us.¹⁶⁸

The other approach taken by the Polish Zionists, known as *Gegenwartsarbeit* (work in the Diaspora) was articulated by those who wanted to actively participate in the political life of their home country. As Anna Landau-Czajka notes, these activists found themselves in an even tougher position. Official journals had to convince Jewish readers that whilst the Jewish future was in an emerging state in Palestine, the newly re-established Poland should be regarded as a 'home country'.¹⁶⁹ Zionists whose national aspirations were inextricably linked to the vibrant hope of a return to the Promised Land, should, nevertheless, remain loyal to Poland as the country of their origin or citizenship. However, this kind of reasoning brought within a number of ideological questions, especially within Polish political circles. How should we perceive Jews? Do they constitute a separate nation? The question of dual loyalty became an issue provoking further anti-Semitic attacks.

Are the Jews a separate nation?

The emergence of modern Jewish politics in the late 19th century, as manifested in the rhetoric of the Zionist movement, the Bund and the Folkist party, profoundly shaped how Poland's political and intellectual elites viewed Jews in the newly reborn Polish state.¹⁷⁰ Hoping for cooperation with the Bund, Polish Socialists were the first to acknowledge the formation of a distinct Jewish nationality. Already in 1904 Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, a distinguished theorist of the PPS, advanced this argument, suggesting that the emergence of Jewish nationality was a consequence of the nineteenth-century process of democratization.¹⁷¹ Intrinsic autonomist claims

¹⁶⁸ Rakovsky P. (2002) *My life as a radical Jewish woman: memoirs of a Zionist feminist in Poland* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p.133.

¹⁶⁹ Landau-Czajka A. (2015) *Polska to nie oni. Polska i Polacy w polskojęzycznej prasie żydowskiej II Rzeczypospolitej* Warszawa: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, p. 79.

¹⁷⁰ Michlic J. (2006) *Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present* Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, p.51.

¹⁷¹ Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, a prominent PPS ideologist in the pages of *Krytyka* [Critique] wrote: 'Jews are becoming a nation ... the Jewish nationality is being created under the influence of the same factors which strengthened and called to life or sparked the French, German, Italian, and Slavic nationality, all the way through the Serbian-Lusatian rebirth. At any rate, the influence of the most important of these factors is certain – that great current of history whose starting point is the French Revolution and which led to the democratization of culture, facilitating the people's access to the acquired wealth of civilization, their continual mastering of that wealth, and its further development by the human

of Jewish political doctrines also contributed to the shift in the general perception of Jewish nationality. In Kelles-Krauz's view both the Bund and the Zionist movement were indicative of the transformation of the Jewish people into a modern nation.¹⁷² This challenge of developing a viable Jewish identity had a considerable influence on the extent of mutual Polish-Jewish and later Polish-Zionist relations. Although Zionism originally purported to replace various national sentiments with a loyalty to Jewish nation, a number of Polish Zionists articulated the notion of dual loyalty. This particular coexistence of Zionist ideology and loyalty to Poland, as a country of origin, of necessity led to mutual relations with non-Jewish authorities. Of course, the notion of Jews as a separate nation meant different things to different segments of Poland's political scene.

Meanwhile, Poland's most charismatic right-wing ideologists (Dmowski, Zymunt Balicki and Jan Popławski), being greatly influenced by the writings of leading European nationalist theorists and quasi-biological Social Darwinist concepts, indicated that Jews did not constitute a separate nation but only a religious group scattered among the nations.¹⁷³ The political philosophy bequeathed to *Endecja* ideology had a profound impact on the perception of Zionism, understood as a manifestation of Jewish nationalism. Although Dmowski, the political and ideological founder of *Narodowa Demokracja* explicitly opposed the assimilationist scheme, frequently expanding on its superficiality, the right-wing political journalists unequivocally rejected the Zionist doctrine. In his 1909 *Kwestia żydowska, część I: Separatyzm Żydów i jego źródła* [The Jewish Question, part I: Jewish separatism and its sources] Dmowski argued that politically engaged Jews, both Zionists and Bundists, constituted a hostile camp that had declared war against the Polish nation.¹⁷⁴ Being steeped in the anti-Semitism prevalent at the time and with political thinking deeply rooted in ideas of world Jewish conspiracy, *Endeks* used well-known stereotypes and accusations to disseminate pure anti-Semitic propaganda.

In this vein, in 1924 Dmowski declared that the crucial aim of Zionism was to establish 'the operational basis for action throughout the world'.¹⁷⁵ Roman Rybarski, an interwar

masses.' Cited in: Śliwa M. (2008) The Jewish Problem in Polish Socialist Thought. *Polin, Poles, Jews, socialists: the failure of an ideal* 9: 14-30.

¹⁷² Snyder T. (2017) *Nationalism, Marxism, and Modern Central Europe: A Biography of Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz (1872-1905)* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 154.

¹⁷³ Oppenheim Y., Yachasah shel ha-Demokrat'yah ha-L'umiyt ha-Polaniyt (ha-Endet'yah) le-Sh'elah ha-Y'hudiyt ba-Shil'hey ha-Meah ha-19 ve-Reshiyt ha-Meah ha-20. *Gal-Ed* X: 87-120. Maj E. (2001) Od Biernej masy plemiennej do komiwojażera. *Narodowa Demokracja* (do 1939). IN: Jachymek J (ed) *Między rzeczywistością polityczną a światem iluzji*. Lublin: UMCS.

¹⁷⁴ Dmowski R. (1909) *Kwestia żydowska. Separatyzm Żydów i jego źródła* Warszawa:, pp. 28-29.

¹⁷⁵ Patterson D. (2015) *Anti-Semitism and its Metaphysical Origins* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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economist and another prominent *Endek* shared similar visions of Zionism. In his 1926 pamphlet *Naród, jednostka i klasa* [Nation, entity and class] Rybarski declared:

Palestine does not satisfy the Zionist movement. Zionists not only want to live, as other nations do, but also view themselves as called upon to fulfil a mission. Among the Jews, the concept of a chosen people is taking on a whole new meaning, or rather is transferring from a latent to an open state. The Jews want to impose their ethics on the world, they want to be an intermediary between the nations.¹⁷⁶

Rybarski's pamphlet, belligerent in tone employed an old theory of Jewish omnipotence and international Jewish/Zionist endeavours to dominate the world. Being deeply anchored in right-wing political anti-Semitism, this thinking regarding a world Jewish conspiracy vis-à-vis Zionism became an integral part of Endeks' political rhetoric, eventually finding its way into the right-wing press. Zionism was widely perceived as a real threat to both Polish and European politics. In 1933 *Głos Monarchisty* [Monarchist's Voice] speculated over the destructive implications of Zionist endeavours in Palestine. The official organ of the *Monarchistyczna Organizacja Wszechstanowa* [The Monarchist Association of all States] emphasised that the ultimate goal of Zionism - the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine - would additionally reinforce the position of Jews in the Diaspora. At this time, it was indeed a dominant perception of Zionist endeavours among right-leaning politicians around the *Endecja* movement. To prevent this, the writer suggested enacting legislative measures to confiscate the property of those who wanted to leave Poland for Palestine.¹⁷⁷

Right-leaning organs questioned the ideological tenets of the Zionist ideology and the legitimacy of Jewish immigration to Palestine. The right-leaning *Gazeta Poranna* [Morning Gazette] suggested that the Jewish masses had always expressed reluctance towards every emigration scheme as well as to the establishment of agricultural settlements. This was bitterly summed up as follows:

A few idealists head to Palestine, as a sacred land, as a homeland. The prevailing Jewish inertia and general discouragement successively defeat the Zionist project. Only severe economic conditions may force Jews to move [to emigrate]. The ideology cannot tear them

¹⁷⁶ Rybarski R. (1926) *Naród, jednostka i klasa* Warszawa: Gebethner i Wolff.

¹⁷⁷ 'Nasze postulaty konstytucyjne', *Głos Monarchisty*, 1933, 7-8, p.7; Landau-Czajka A. (1998) *W jednym stali domu ... Koncepcje rozwijania kwestii żydowskiej w publicystyce polskiej lat 1933-1939*, Warszawa: Neriton, p. 264.

away from their current place, cannot force them to change their way of living and finally cannot force them to resemble other nations.¹⁷⁸

In the second half of the 1920s, the *Endecja* camp reassessed its perception of the Jewish settlement project in Palestine. Stanisław Grabski, its leading politician declared 'Polish nationalism may easily understand and acknowledge that the aim of the Jews is Palestine. We shall gladly support the Jews in accomplishing this goal, not only because we are anxious to reduce their number in Poland, but also because of humanitarian reasons. The Jews' destructive role would decrease significantly if they had a state of their own and territory of their own like other nations'.¹⁷⁹ Although National Democrats viewed Jewish emigration as a possible solution to Poland's Jewish question they were not absolutely convinced of the validity of the creation of a Jewish state. Their doubts stemmed from a several factors. First of all, it was considered that Jews would be unwilling to live in the primitive conditions of Palestine. Secondly, it was emphasised that favouring Zionism led to local Arabs' rights being significantly flouted.¹⁸⁰

More profound changes took place in the aftermath of Piłsudski's *coup d'etat*. To a large degree, it was linked with the generational shift that occurred within the camp. Following its failure in the 1928 parliamentary elections, the movement's younger activists being reluctant to adhere to the former democratic outlook, began to take control of the party, changing its name to the *Stronnictwo Narodowe* [SN, National Faction]. Soon afterwards, leaders of the SN began to look favourably on the Zionist national project in Palestine. In their eyes, it was a simple solution to Poland's Jewish question. As the Nazis came to power in neighbouring Germany, right-wing activists only strengthened their anti-Semitic propaganda. Indeed, 1933, the year of Hitler's coming to power, brought a fundamental change of thinking amongst right-leaning politicians with regard to the solution to the Jewish question. As Szymon Rudnicki wrote, 'the Nazi upheaval lifted the spirits of the whole nationalist camp. It showed that with a proper usage of nationalist and racial slogans one may seize power'.¹⁸¹ In the mid-1930s, those on the right side of Poland's political scene started demanding the isolation and forced emigration of the Jewish population. Referring to the political distinctness of the Jewish nation, right-leaning politicians called for the need for its total isolation from its Polish neighbours. This kind of thinking directly echoed the official rhetoric of the Third Reich.

¹⁷⁸ 'Rozłam w żydostwie. Sprawy emigracji i kolonizacji', *Gazeta Poranna*, 13 August 1925, p.4.

¹⁷⁹ Grabski S. (1923) Istota konfliktu. In: *Z codziennych walk i rozważań* Poznań: Wielkopolska Księgarnia Nakładowa K. Rzepeckiego, p.78.

¹⁸⁰ Maj E. (2001) Od Biernej masy plemiennej do komiwojażera. Narodowa Demokracja (do 1939). IN: Jachymek J., Paruch W. (eds) *Miedzy rzeczywistością polityczną a światem iluzji*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, pp.44-45.

¹⁸¹ Rudnicki S. (1985) *Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny. Geneza i działalność* Warszawa: Czytelnik, p. 190.

Representations of Zionists as the political enemies of Poland and Christianity were also common among the Catholic clergy in Poland.¹⁸² Such rhetoric was aggravated in the early 1920s as the Catholic Church and the *Endecja* movement embraced mutually supportive positions on this issue. In the official rhetoric Zionists were, for instance, made responsible for all setbacks of Christians. Echoes of right-wing ideology can be easily found in the Polish Catholic press, which frequently portrayed Zionism as an essential element of the Jewish plan to dominate the world.¹⁸³ In a similar way, the representatives of the Polish Catholic clergy skilfully incorporated the narrative of the destructiveness of Zionism to the state of affairs in the Holy Land as articulated by the Vatican.¹⁸⁴ Having emphasised their concern with Christianity's holy sites located in Palestine, Poland's clergy directly opposed the Zionist national project. In the pages of *Przewodnik Katolicki* [Catholic Guide] an anonymous author wrote, 'the fact that Palestine cannot absorb all the Jews is well-known to me. [...] I also know that a true believer takes a dim view of a massive influx of Jewish immigrants to the Holy Land and sacred sites'.¹⁸⁵

Conservatives

Since the Jewish question was outside the main sphere of interest of Polish Conservatives, their views on this matter were profoundly fragmented and polarised.¹⁸⁶ Nonetheless, Polish historian Włodzimierz Mich defines six diversified ideologies that developed within the Conservative camp.¹⁸⁷ The concepts of assimilation, pacification, segregation and evacuation are particularly interesting from my vantage point. In the early 1930s, the younger generation of neoconservatives from the organ *Myśl Mocarstwowa Związek Akademicki* [Imperial Thought. Academic Association] and publicists of *Słowo* preached the primacy of Poland's *raison d'état*, emphasising simultaneously the harmful effect of nationalist ideologies. As they indicated, every manifestation of Polish nationalism was tantamount to a potential national

¹⁸² The position of the Roman Catholic Church on the Zionist project constitutes an enormous issue for discussion that lies beyond the scope of this dissertation. Since the Catholic clergy had a substantial impact on shaping the position of both the Polish political scene and a large segment of Polish society towards the Jewish politics as a whole, this question merits further research and analysis in a separate project.

¹⁸³ Ostoja A., *Głos Kapłański*, 1932, pp. 217-222.

¹⁸⁴ For a detailed Vatican's perception of Zionism look at: Minerbi S. (1990) *The Vatican and the Zionism: Conflict in the Holy Land, 1895-1925*, New York: Oxford University Press.

¹⁸⁵ Wuj z Baranowa, 'Skrzynka do listów', *Przewodnik Katolicki*, 1935, p.775 cited in: Landau-Czajka A. (2015) *Polska to nie oni. Polska i Polacy w polskojęzycznej prasie żydowskiej II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, p.264.

¹⁸⁶ It is however necessary to bear in mind that Polish Conservatives stood in the ideological opposition to the *Endecja* movement. The conservative vision of relations between Poles and Jews was deeply tied with the age-long tradition of mutual coexistence. For this purpose, they vehemently rejected anti-Semitic views advanced by Roman Dmowski and Zygmunt Balicki.

¹⁸⁷ Włodzimierz Mich defines ideologies of restraining, assimilation, pacification, segregation, evacuation, and ejection. See: Mich W. (1992) Problem mniejszości narodowych w myśli politycznej polskiego ruchu konserwatywnego (1918-1939). IN: Jachymek J. (ed) *Mniejszości narodowe w polskiej myśli politycznej XX wieku*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS.

defeatism. In 1924, a conservative publicist from Vilna, Stanisław Cat-Mackiewicz, propagated the idea of national segregation, believing that 'arranging the Jews as a separate nation within Poland would provide the solution to the Jewish question'. His ideas included the creation of separate schools and institutions.¹⁸⁸

In the early 1930s, as the assimilation programme advocated by Piłsudski began to fail, some segments of Polish conservatives decided to re-evaluate their views on Jews and their place in modern Polish society. Being confident that the growing Polish anti-Semitism was a fundamental aspect of the Jewish question, conservatives began to lean towards the concept of 'pacification'. At this juncture a few essential points need to be emphasised. First and foremost, Conservatives as opposed to the ethno-nationalist politicians affiliated with the OWP and SN, supported the Zionist scheme of emigration, simultaneously combating and restraining anti-Semitism. Faced with an upsurge of political and economic anti-Semitism, they argued, they simply wanted to protect the country against Polish-Jewish war, through opposition to shameful excesses against Jews. The 1932 article *Jankiel Poturbowany* [Battered Jankiel] by Vilna editor Stanisław Cat-Mackiewicz, expressed the first sign of this changing approach towards the Jews. The article expressed unanimous views against the process of assimilation, considered undesirable by both Poles and Jews. At the same time, Cat-Mackiewicz was in favour of right-wing Revisionist Zionism. Since he was one of the most prominent Polish publicists, his interest in the Palestine project was warmly greeted by the right-wing Zionist leadership. He also objected to the obligatory military service for those Jews who wanted to leave the country for Palestine.¹⁸⁹

The idea of 'evacuation' formulated in the mid-1930s in close cooperation with Vladimir Jabotinsky was in fact a continuation of the concept of 'pacification'. As Mich puts it, publicists of *Bunt Młodych* and *Czas*, a conservative dailies with ties to leading landowners, having realised a failure of previous projects began to lean towards more radical solutions. According to this perception, the sustainable solution to the problem could only be found through close cooperation with the Zionist leadership. The close-knit circle of young conservatives – the so-called *mocarstwowcy* [supporters of imperialism] considered the question of Poland's national and ethnic heterogeneity to be of the utmost importance to the state, a particular condition of its cohesiveness and effectiveness.¹⁹⁰ One need only mention the names of Jerzy Giedroyć, a prominent publicist of *Polityka* [Politics] and a Paris-based émigré *Kultura* [Culture], Stanisław Estreicher, the Jagiellonian University professor, young and rising publicists such as Bocheński or

¹⁸⁸ Cat-Mackiewicz S., 'Jedyny sposób wyjścia', *Słowo*, 11 March 1924, p.1.

¹⁸⁹ Cat-Mackiewicz S., 'Jankiel Poturbowany', *Bunt Młodych*, December 1932.

¹⁹⁰ Jaruzelski J. (1994) Introduction to the third edition of Pruszyński's *Palestyna po raz trzeci*.

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Pruszyński and many more. As devoted nonconformists they skilfully combined aspects of both conservative and democratic currents. Articles published in the pages of *Bunt Młodych* [Youth Rebellion; in 1937 renamed *Polityka*] and *Czerwowa Róża* [Red Rose], leading organs of the neoconservative intelligentsia, were the first signs of changing policies towards the Polish Jewish question, Zionist national aspirations and Palestine. Interestingly enough, the group of young writers affiliated with these journals consistently opted to support the emigration project. Pruszyński in 1932 wrote, 'Zionism should be seen as a form of a future Jewish life. We have to learn from the older generation's mistakes and offer a hand of friendship to our fellow Zionists'.¹⁹¹

Pruszyński believed that Poland, being home to a Jewish population of three million, should have kept a careful watch on all internal developments in Jewish political life and society. As a talented and diligent observer, he noticed that in the early 1930s, Polish Jewry was undergoing a process of profound socio-political and ideological change. In his perception, ghetto separatism and ideas of cultural assimilation were successively replaced by Zionism, the ideology of national revival.¹⁹² Commenting on Pruszyński's engagement with Zionism, his fellow neoconservatist Bocheński noted that the Polish press likewise the Polish landowners of former times 'embodied sentimental philo-Semitism with a moderate political anti-Semitism', which was understood at this time as a willingness to cultivate 'spiritual (cultural and national) separation of Poles and Jews'.¹⁹³

The issue of perception of Zionism was also raised by Jerzy Giedroyć in his *Autobiografia na cztery ręce* [Autobiography for four hands]:

We were sure that the Jewish question in Poland was a problem of the ghetto and could not be resolved through assimilation. Since the Jews are all scattered across the country, we could not call for political autonomy for them, as we did for the Ukrainians. Under such circumstances, there was no other choice than simply giving endorsement for the Zionist crucial aim – the creation of a Jewish State and mass emigration of Polish Jews to Palestine.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ Pruszyński K., 'Ormuzm żydowskiej przyszłości', *Bunt Młodych*, December 1932, no 33, p.5.

¹⁹² Pruszyński M. (1999) *Mojesz i Ksawery* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Książkowe Twój Styl, p. 22.

¹⁹³ This concept was developed by Stanisław Cat-Mackiewicz in his 1927 *Kropki nad i*. According to Mackiewicz Polish landowners were inclined to combine keen philo-Semitism with a moderate political anti-Semitism. In other words they had a positive approach towards Jewish population and Judaism but at the same time they opposed their acculturation and integration with Polish society. See: Bocheński A., 'Palestyna po raz trzeci', *Słowo*, 7 November 1933, p.1; Cat-Mackiewicz S. (1927) *Kropki nad i* Warszawa: Słowo.

¹⁹⁴ Giedroyć J. (1999) *Autobiografia na cztery ręce* Warszawa: Czytelnik, pp.62-63.

At the same time the editors of *Słowo*, began to put an emphasis on the necessity of finding a solution to the state's overpopulation and socio-economic difficulties. This approach marked a fundamental change of thinking regarding Jewish question within the Conservative camp. Mackiewicz himself, as a leading ideologist of the camp, substantially shaped his views on the Jewish question. In his eyes, the Jews constituted a cohesive cultural and religious entity or nation devoid of their own state.¹⁹⁵ It has to be noted, however, that although Mackiewicz was willing to accept particular legal regulations from Nazi Germany, such as separation of the Jewish nation, he had never indulged in anti-Semitic utterances.¹⁹⁶ Bocheński, in turn, who viewed himself as a true *mocarstwowiec* [supporter of imperialness]¹⁹⁷, called for a complete rejection of wishful thinking and embraced a realistic stance in his political writings. Being born to a landowning family from *Kresy* [Eastern borderlands, now the territory of Ukraine], Bocheński modelled his outlook on the nostalgic or even naïve assumption that all ethnic-minorities would be eager to join a Polish-led federation. The political reality of the 1930s, however, forced him to take a more pragmatic position. Nevertheless, both Bocheński and Pruszyński remained opposed to any manifestation of racism, chauvinism or anti-Semitism to the very end of their lives.

***Sanacja* regime**

The period of state consolidation, 1926 - 1935

Waldemar Paruch distinguishes two phases of development of Piłsudczyks' political thinking on national minorities. The first phase - state consolidation (*konsolidacja państwową*) lasted between 1926 and 1935, the latter – the national consolidation (*konsolidacja narodowa*) was implemented in the post-Piłsudski period, between 1935 and 1939.¹⁹⁸ When we analyse the ideological position of *Sanacja*'s officials towards the minorities question in general, and the Jewish question in particular, it is necessary to bear in mind the socialist lineage of many of them. The political ideology of the Polish Socialist Party [*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna* - PPS] represented the synthesis of Polish romanticism with a profound dedication to the concept of liberty. Thus for many years, the PPS remained free of anti-Semitic rhetoric and imagery. Referring to their chief

¹⁹⁵ Gałka B. (2006) *Konserwatyści w Polsce lat 1935-1939* Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, p. 237.

¹⁹⁶ Landau-Czajka A. (1998) *W jednym stali domu ... Koncepcje rozwiązymania kwestii żydowskiej w publicystyce polskiej lat 1933-1939* Warszawa: Neriton, p. 84.

¹⁹⁷ As Marcin Król emphasises the context for the term *mocarstwość* was different from this used today 'Currently, the very concept of *mocarstwość* means only the following assumption: the creation of a strong state as the only way to protect the Polish right to existence between two great powers. Imperialism was not understood as a stirring dream about colonies nor any kind of imperialism as we understood it today, but the expression of a conviction and not a totally naïve one, that in order to preserve its independence, Poland must be an imperium – a huge, strong state'. See: Król M. (1979) *Styl politycznego myślenia wokół "Bunt Młodych" i "Polityka"* Paryż: Libella, pp. 9-11.

¹⁹⁸ Paruch W. (1997) *Od konsolidacji państwowej do konsolidacji narodowej. Mniejszości narodowe w myśl politycznej obozu piłsudczykowskiego (1926-1939)* Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, pp. 66-71.

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ideologist – aforementioned Kelles-Krauz, Polish Socialists indicated that the ends of both Polish and Jewish nations would be best served by a state that provided civic equality and broad cultural autonomy.¹⁹⁹ Since the Jews were considered an inseparable part of modern Polish society, the civic vision of Poland gained a powerful endorsement of liberal and left-leaning intelligentsia. Drawing on Adam Mickiewicz's concept of the union between Poland and Israel [understood as the Jewish people], Marshal Piłsudski advanced the idea that a solution to the Jewish question was inextricably linked to the re-emergence of Poland as an independent state.²⁰⁰

Even though Piłsudski had formally left the PPS in 1914, he could count on its support, because socialist circles 'identified their political aims with those postulated by Piłsudski'.²⁰¹ The semi-authoritarian *Sanacja* camp, which had come to power in the aftermath of the successful May 1926 *coup d'état*, ruled the country until the outbreak of WW II in September 1939. With the crucial task of 'healing the state' [in Polish *sanacja państwa*] the camp identified itself with a wide range of political and socio-economic interests. Since the broad coalition, originating in *Obóz Niepodległościowy* [Independent Camp] had always been far from homogenous, it is particularly difficult to correctly situate the movement in Poland's political mosaic.²⁰² Within the governing bloc there was nothing like a clearly defined ideological outlook. Indeed, socialists, liberals, radicals and even moderate conservatives coalesced around charismatic Marshal. Within this situation, neither Piłsudski himself nor his closest associates attempted to conceptualise a cohesive ideology.

Bezpartyjny Blok Współpracy z Rządem [Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government, BBWR], a broad-based political framework established by the *Sanacja*'s officials in November 1927, indeed obtained support from deeply diversified circles, ranging from left-leaning factory workers through ethnic minorities to wealthy bourgeoisie and landowners.²⁰³ Also,

¹⁹⁹ Snyder T. (2017) *Nationalism, Marxism, and Modern Central Europe: A Biography of Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz (1872-1905)* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 158.

²⁰⁰ Michlic J. (2006) *Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present* Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, p.59.

²⁰¹ Holzer J. (1977) *PPS: Szkic dziejów Warszawa*: Wiedza Powszechna, p.91. Eventually, the PPS declared joining to opposition in November 1926.

²⁰² Paruch W. (1997) *Od konsolidacji państwownej do konsolidacji narodowej. Mniejszości narodowe w myśl politycznej obozu piłsudczykowskiego (1926-1939)* Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, p.23.

²⁰³ For an overview of the BBWR, a 'non-political' organisation affiliated with Józef Piłsudski and *Sanacja* movement that operated. See: Chojnowski A. (1986) *Piłsudczycy u władzy: dzieje Bezpartyjnego Bloku Współpracy z Rządem* Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich; Polonsky A. (1972) *Politics in independent Poland, 1921-1939: the crisis of constitutional government* Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

a number of assimilated Jews, consisting mainly of the intelligentsia, backed the bloc in consecutive campaigns.²⁰⁴

It is worth mentioning here that because the various ideological tendencies flourished within the faction, modern-day scholars dealing with the Polish political thought during the interwar period struggle to find appropriate nomenclature for the ruling elites. Among the most commonly used are – Piłsudski's camp, the *Sanacja* regime, post-May regime and *Piłsudczycy* [Piłsudczyks]. However, as Waldemar Paruch indicates defining political and ideological affiliation of Piłsudski's camp is almost impossible, because even his followers perceived themselves as an 'open-ended group'.²⁰⁵ This nomenclature must be taken into account when we analyse the various ideological concepts and motivations of the governing elites towards the Jewish question, Zionism and Jewish national aspirations in Palestine.

Zionists, like the majority of Polish Jews dissatisfied with the socio-economic instability that had accompanied the state's parliamentary politics, welcomed Piłsudski's rise to power with some relief. Speaking a few days after the coup, Henryk Rosmarin, a Zionist member of the Polish Parliament, envisaged two other alternatives for Piłsudski's regime. First, seizure of power by the far-right, and second, the spectre of Soviet Bolshevism.²⁰⁶ Jakub Appenzlak, the editor of *Nasz Przeglqd* [Our Review], in turn, described the coup as the end of the *Endecja* dictatorship.²⁰⁷ Likewise Gruenbaum, the political leader of the *Al HaMishmar* faction, writing in the Yiddish-language *Haynt* declared that the new government under Kazimierz Bartel was 'perhaps the best, from the Jewish vantage point, government that has ever existed in Poland'.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, it was frequently argued that the assimilation scheme, articulated by the *Sanacja*'s officials, was not coercive in its character.²⁰⁹ It has to be noted, however, that there were also opposing voices amongst more radical Zionists, suggesting that the *Sanacja*'s assimilationist tendencies may affect the national-cultural autonomy of Polish Jewry.²¹⁰ Polish historians, Jacek Walicki and Edward Jeliński, suggest that such allegations being made by some Zionists against

²⁰⁴ Jaworski W. (1996) *Struktura i wpływy syjonistycznych organizacji politycznych w Polsce w latach 1918-1939* Warszawa: Wojciech Jaworski; Jaworski W. (2002) *Syjoniści wobec Rządu Polskiego w okresie międzywojennym* Sosnowiec: Wojciech Jaworski.

²⁰⁵ Paruch W. (1997) *Od konsolidacji państwownej do konsolidacji narodowej. Mniejszości narodowe w myśl politycznej obozu piłsudczykowskiego (1926-1939)* Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, p.24, Jędrzejewicz J. (1972) *W służbie idei*, London: p.342-343.

²⁰⁶ 'Przywódcy żydostwa', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 29 May 1926, p.4.

²⁰⁷ Pierrot, 'Miedzy wierszami. Dyktatura', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 3 June 1926, p.4.

²⁰⁸ 'Przywódcy żydostwa o przewrocie i najbliższych perspektywach. Ankieta Naszego Przeglądu: co mówi poseł Grynbau'm' *Nasz Przeglqd*, 26 May 1926, p.3.

²⁰⁹ 'Od maja do maja. Co dał przewrót majowy ludności żydowskiej? Wywiad 'Naszego Przeglądu' z prez. Koła Żydowskiego pos. Hartglasem', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 13 May 1927, p.10.

²¹⁰ S.H., 'Na posterunku', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 7 March 1929, p.4.

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the policy of the *Sanacja* camp were greatly exaggerated, since at this time the ruling party opted for a solution of the ethnic minorities question by means of national-cultural autonomy.

Interestingly, according to them, such opinions were rather motivated by the *Sanacja*'s reluctance towards Zionist ideology.²¹¹ The very fact of maintaining close political links with the socialist Bund, which vociferously opposed Zionism, was also not without significance.

Piłsudski himself despised every kind of political or ideological doctrinarianism. In a conversation with Prime Minister Kazimierz Świtalski, the Marshal expressed concisely and precisely 'things can change so quickly in one's life, everything goes forwards, but the doctrines stand still'.²¹² Bearing in mind the aforementioned socialist lineage of the *Sanacja* camp as well as its close political ties with the Jewish Labour Party - the Bund - it has to be noted that the *Piłsudczyks* were neither for nor against Zionism *per se*, at least in the first years of independence. Indeed, in this period Jewish socialists who considered Zionism a movement that encouraged Jewish separatism substantially influenced the *Sanacja*'s official perception of the Palestine project. Moreover, unlike the *Endeks*, Piłsudski's adherents did not view the Jewish question as a fundamental problem facing the newly resurrected Polish state.²¹³ After the May 1926 military coup Kazimierz Młodziankowski, the Minister of the Interior, explicitly rejected former approaches to the minorities' problem by establishing a special committee that aimed at reassessing Polish politics towards this question.²¹⁴ A few months later, in December 1926, guidelines for action were published on behalf of the Government. Among them there were two declarations particularly important for Zionists. First that Warsaw would be favourably disposed towards 'the Zionist ideal and to the action of realising of this ideal on Polish soil', and second that the authorities 'would make efforts to ease the passport procedure for Jewish youth willing to study abroad'.²¹⁵ In spite of that, in line with the Marshal's policy, the governing elites continued advocating of Jewish integration into Polish society instead.²¹⁶

It is perhaps for this reason that the *Sanacja*'s official organs and periodicals devoted so little attention to the Jewish question. Since Piłsudski's camp continued to view the Jews as a religious community, the emergence and development of Jewish nationalism was initially ignored.

²¹¹ Walicki J. (2005) *Ruch syjonistyczny w latach 1926-1930* Łódź: Ibidem, pp. 225, 233; Jeliński E. (1983) *Polityka Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej wobec mniejszości narodowych w latach 1918-1939. Dzieje Najnowsze*.

²¹² Jędrzejewicz J. (1989) *Kronika życia Józefa Piłsudskiego 1867-1935* Warszawa: Sanacja, p.403.

²¹³ Paruch W. (2001) *Od konsolidacji państwownej do konsolidacji narodowej. Mniejszości narodowe w myśl politycznej obozu piłsudczykowskiego (1926-1939)* Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, p. 71.

²¹⁴ 'Former cabinets did not embrace a clear stance towards ethnic minorities. Their politics lied between two divergent directions: assimilation schemes and ultraliberal approach towards these minorities' declared Kazimierz Młodziankowski.

²¹⁵ 'Przewrót majowy w Polsce. Jego następstwa i dalsze po nim wydarzenia', *Biuletyn Polityczny*, 2/3 1927, pp.77-78.

²¹⁶ Rudnicki S. (2010) Szacunek z wzajemnością. Piłsudski a Żydzi. *Więź*.

Zionist doctrine, which was based on the premise that the Jewish people, for a variety of national, cultural and religious reasons, should not assimilate, stood in contradiction to the ideology articulated by the *Sanacja* camp. Nevertheless, although their official stance towards Zionism was rather ambivalent by this time, on May 27th 1926, the Ministry of the Interior informed the provincial authorities that the Government would, indeed, support Zionist endeavours. Being convinced that the assimilation programme would eventually succeed, Warsaw's ruling elites were rather indifferent towards any manifestation of Jewish nationalism along with Zionist aims in Palestine and expressed doubts about the Zionist ideal.²¹⁷ Nevertheless, internal and external political developments forced Piłsudski and his associates to reassess their line of policy towards Jews, and consequently towards various sectors of Jewish nationalism.

In fact, all the developments that took place within the Jewish political scene in Poland could not any longer be ignored. There can be no doubt, however, that to some degree this shift of perception was motivated by pragmatic considerations. The Government simply wanted to enlist Zionists, still such a potent force in Polish-Jewish politics, in helping to pursue the *Sanacja*'s political line. For this purpose, in January 1927, Government officials expressed their views on Zionism in a series of interviews for Krakow's Polish-language Zionist journal *Nowy Dziennik* [New Daily]. Zaleski, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, emphasised that since Palestine could not absorb all the Jews from the Diaspora, Zionism must develop a 'philosophic stance' that would reconcile loyalty towards Jewish national aspirations in Palestine with loyalty towards Poland. Śląwoj-Składkowski who served as the Minister of the Interior declared that drive for independence was 'the most sacred duty of each nation' and thus Poland greatly welcomed the development of this aspiration among the Jews.²¹⁸ These interviews clearly indicate that there was a contradiction in the official approach of the *Sanacja*'s officials towards Zionism. Although both ministers officially declared their support for Jewish nation-building in Palestine, assimilation was still seen as the main solution to the Jewish question in the Diaspora.

Zionist rhetoric, whilst luring Jews with promise of speedy emigration, was viewed by some of *Sanacja*'s politicians as a possible threat to their assimilationist scheme. Tadeusz Hołówko, a prolific writer who contributed significantly to the *Piłsudczyks* ideology, summarized it as follows:

The Zionist movement does not pose a threat for Poland because it aims to create a Jewish state in Palestine, but because of its international character. Zionism, being entirely

²¹⁷ Jaworski W. (2002) *Syjoniści wobec Rządu Polskiego w okresie międzywojennym* Sosnowiec: Wojciech Jaworski, p. 59.

²¹⁸ *Nowy Dziennik*, January 1927.

dependent upon British policy may, in the event of a conflict between Polish and British policy, cooperate with the latter. Moreover Zionism, by luring with a promise a speedy transfer to the 'homeland' teaches the Jews to perceive themselves as aliens in Poland.²¹⁹

In the early 1920s, concerns arose regarding the 'international character' of the Zionist movement. Hołówko believed the growing popularity of Zionism amongst Polish Jewry was a result of the largely unregulated policy towards minorities. In 1922 he asserted, 'as soon as we normalize relations between the state's minorities, the position of Poland's Zionism will most likely decline'.²²⁰ In spite of some ideological reservations, the *Sanacja* camp decided to continue the previous administration's policy of supporting Zionism and its national aims in Palestine both on the domestic front and a foreign level. Nevertheless, sharing the civic vision of Poland, many Piłsudski's followers were indeed ambivalent towards Zionism. Among their chief concerns was the belief that Zionism might fuel perceptions of mutual bias as well as nationalism among both Poles and Jews, fanning at the same time the flames of anti-Jewish hostility throughout the country. Interestingly, these views directly echoed the socio-intellectual perspective held by formidable figures of late nineteenth-century Polish Positivism. Aleksander Świętochowski, perhaps one of the most prominent liberals, even warned that the development of Zionism would severely endanger mutual relations between Jews and Poles, generating reluctance or even hostility in those segments of Polish society that previously had been free of any anti-Semitic inclinations.²²¹ Such thinking was also a recurrent theme among assimilated Jews and Jewish integrationists, who were affronted by the emergence and rapid spread of nationalist tendencies amongst Polish Jewry. Amongst publications that expressed slogans of assimilation and full integration with Polish society were *Izraelita* [Israeli], *Ojczyzna* [Homeland], *Jedność* [Solidarity], *Zjednoczenie* [Unification]. Whilst there were concerns in the Jewish community about embracing Polishness (*Polkość*) whilst belonging to the Jewish nation, integrationist tendencies eventually succeed to gain predominance. The 1923 article 'Na przebój' published in the pages of *Zjednoczenie* [Unification] confirmed this approach, stating: 'Polish Jews are not foreigners here. They do not have another homeland; they will not emigrate to Palestine or elsewhere. We are the co-hosts in Poland and we will defend the right to coexistence as long as we have strength left'.²²²

²¹⁹ Hołówko T. (1922) *Kwestia narodowościowa w Polsce* Warszawa: Księgarnia Robotnicza, p.64.

²²⁰ Hołówko T. (1922) *Kwestia narodowościowa* ..., p.64.

²²¹ Świętochowski A. (1902) 'Odpowiedź p. Jahrblumowi', *Prawda*.

²²² 'Na przebój!', *Zjednoczenie*, 1923, p.1.

As Ezra Mendelsohn noted, the rapid process of assimilation of Polish Jews did not stem from accepting of one or another form of Jewish nationalism.²²³ For this purpose, Piłsudski's associates, although by the late 1920s were staunch supporters of Jewish assimilation, had to acknowledge that taking assimilation beyond a certain point was simply not acceptable. This shift was crucial in moulding subsequent relations between Warsaw and the Zionist leadership. As the assimilation scheme was denounced, Piłsudski's camp began instead to advocate a programme of effective engagement of Poland's Jews into the national life of the country. While not aiming at the obliteration of Jewishness, the newly embraced policy was directed towards the consolidation of all citizens. They therefore expected that Polish Jews would eventually embrace Polishness (*Polskość*) in terms of nationality and civic involvement.

As I have already noted, a broad-ranging concept of nation was a crucial component of the ideology presented by Marshal Piłsudski and his closest followers. Conversely, to the right-wing and centre factions, the *Sanacja* regime did not view Jews as being in opposition to the state. Thus, in the period between 1926 and 1935 the ruling elites effectively embraced a 'state consolidation (*konsolidacja państwową*) policy, rejecting the National Democrats' concept of 'national assimilation' (*asymilacja narodowa*). The policy of state consolidation not only marked an official stance towards Poland's national minorities but also confirmed their inalienable rights to cultivate distinctive national cultures, languages and identities.²²⁴ In this vein Janusz Radziwiłł, in the 1926 interview for the Zionist *Nasz Przegląd* affirmed, 'the Jewish nation should have a right to cultivate its national and religious culture. But at the same time, it has to be emphasised that the Jews should be loyal to the Polish state'.²²⁵

Indeed, the question of loyalty towards the state occupied a central position in Piłsudski's movement. Moreover, since the claim of Zionists' dual loyalty was frequently used as a weapon against Zionist rhetoric by *Endeks*, many of *Sanacja*'s politicians were becoming increasingly suspicious about this issue. Hołówko pointed out that Poland's authorities should have striven to make Zionists proud of their connections with their country of origin. In his perception, 'Zionists in Poland shall combine loyalty and attachment to Poland with longing for their homeland'.²²⁶ However, following Marshal Piłsudski's realisation that 'Poland does not

²²³ Mendelsohn E. (1989) The Jews of Poland Between Two World Wars - Myth and Reality. IN: Gutman Y. (ed) *The Jews of Poland Between Two World Wars*. Hanover: Brandeis University Press, p.17.

²²⁴ Paruch W. (2001) *Od konsolidacji państwowej do konsolidacji narodowej. Mniejszości narodowe w myśli politycznej obozu piłsudczykowskiego (1926-1939)* Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, p.75.

²²⁵ 'Słowo Polskie', *Nasz Przegląd*, 22 November 1926, p.1.

²²⁶ Hołówko T. (1922) *Kwestia narodowościowa w Polsce* Warszawa: Księgarnia Robotnicza, p.64.

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deserve second-class citizens, who cannot be emotionally bound to the country', *Sanacja's* officials unequivocally rejected the model of dual loyalty advocated by some Polish Zionists.²²⁷

Between 1926 and 1935, Piłsudski's camp actively sought to weaken the stereotype of the ghetto/shtetl separatism of Polish Jews, which they considered a root of viciousness and alienation. Also, for this purpose, at the beginning of the 1930s the governing elites profoundly shaped their stance towards Zionism. This change was not, however, motivated by growing anti-Semitic tendencies. Overall, the *Piłsudczyks'* press treated 'shameful anti-Semitic excesses', as its publicists used to describe it in the first years of independence, as a temporary phenomenon inextricably linked with the National Democracy.²²⁸ This radical change of position towards Zionism was therefore a result of both the indisputable success of the Zionist Palestiocentric doctrine and the failure of the assimilation project. Leading ideologists of the *Sanacja* camp emphasised that Jewish loyalty to Poland was necessary. In their perception, Zionism had become a useful instrument to weaken Jewish separatism:

Jewish nationalism is not only a battering ram with which we will be able to destroy the wall of the ghetto, it will be also a bridge facilitating cultural and language rapprochement between Poles and Jews.²²⁹

This conceptual shift had a profound impact upon the mutual Polish-Zionist relations. In spite of these changes, a large segment of Polish Zionists was becoming increasingly sceptical towards the *Sanacja* regime, accusing its politicians of leaning towards a semi-authoritarian approach. Ozjasz Thon who had formerly praised the Marshal's intervention in Polish politics, in October 1930 declared: 'The Zionists are vivid supporters of democracy and for this purpose this camp would have the intention of steering an impartial course towards the regime, which bluntly violated the principles of the democratic state under the rule of law that had been confirmed in the constitution'.²³⁰

The period of national consolidation, 1935-1939

After Piłsudski's death in mid-May 1935, official involvement with the Jewish question increased. Deep ideological shifts, brought about by certain internal and external

²²⁷ Jędrzejewicz J. (1989) *Kronika życia Józefa Piłsudskiego 1867-1935* Warszawa: Sanacja, p.49.

²²⁸ 'Brody żydowskie', *Gazeta Polska*, 2 July 1919.

²²⁹ Hołówko T. (1922) *Kwestia narodowościowa w Polsce* Warszawa: Księgarnia Robotnicza, p.68.

²³⁰ Thon O. 'Vos bedaytet Józef Piłsudski?' *Haynt*, 30 May 1926; Jaworski W. (2002) *Syjoniści wobec Rządu Polskiego w okresie międzywojennym* Sosnowiec: Wojciech Jaworski, p. 59.

developments resulted in the right-leaning section of the *Sanacja* movement embracing ethno-nationalist elements. This revision of internal and external conditionality led to a substantial change of Warsaw's official attitude towards Zionism and Jewish national aspirations in Palestine. Owing to the subsequent emigration limitations, severe urban overpopulation and socio-economic crisis former concepts of assimilation lost their appeal amongst the *Sanacja*'s elites. 'Assimilation has gone bankrupt' noted Drymmer of the Foreign Ministry Consular Department.²³¹ Indeed, the vast majority of Polish Jewry being immensely conscious of their national identity looked to Zionism (of whatever variety), viewing emigration as the only viable solution to the mounting racial hatred and prevailing anti-Semitism. This appeal of the Zionist ideology to assimilated Polish Jews, 'Poles of Mosaic faith' should be, however, analysed through the lens of Polish-Zionist relations and the complex history of the Zionist movement. As Laurence Weinbaum pointed out, 'most Zionists arrived at their ideas only after their attempts at assimilation into non-Jewish society failed'.²³²

The growing popularity of ethno-nationalist tendencies and the tragic agrarian situation resulted in a deepening ideological polarisation of Polish society and the reshaping of the very concept of nationhood. These socio-political and ideological changes were taking place alongside the increasing despair and a real fear of war. For Piłsudski's political camp, the new situation meant a weakening of the conservative/semi-authoritarian factions. Shortly after the Marshal's death, as the weaknesses of the *Sanacja* regime were fully exposed, the governing camp divided into three factions: a group of generals coalesced around Edward Rydz-Śmigły, a group of the colonels headed by Prime Minister Waleri Sławek and a group called *Zamek* [Castle], led by the President Ignacy Mościcki.²³³ Facing a lack of political cohesion, the right-leaning section of the *Sanacja* movement assumed greater authority, establishing in early 1937 the *Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego*. The right side of the Polish political scene welcomed this move. Being compelled to fall back on the political backing of the anti-Semitic *Endecja*, the movement postulated to merge former Piłsudski's vision of Poland with ideological concepts articulated by the *Endeks*.²³⁴

²³¹ AAN, MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Wymiar międzynarodowy problemu żydowskiego*.

²³² Weinbaum L. (1993) *A Marriage of Convenience: The New Zionist Organisation and the Polish Government, 1936-1939* Boulder: East European Monographs.

²³³ Pobóg-Malinowski W. (1991) *Najnowsza historia polityczna Polski* Gdańsk: Oficyna Wydawnicza Graf; Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, p.17.

²³⁴ Majchrowski J. (1992) *Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego wobec kwestii żydowskiej*. In: Wrześniński W (ed) *Polska myśl polityczna XIX i XX wieku* Wrocław, 139-147.

The question that therefore arises is why the particular segment within the *Sanacja* decided to adopt a slew of anti-Semitic measures similar to those espoused by its political rivals on the right. According to Joanna Beata Michlic, the rapprochement of the right-wing section of the post-1935 *Sanacja* with *Endecja* was motivated by two crucial factors. Firstly, following the death of Piłsudski, his weak camp officially employed anti-Jewish imagery within its political discourse in order to gain wider influence among the various political factions. This led to a deterioration in the conditions for Polish Jews. Secondly, this radical move to the right was a result of a generational change.²³⁵ Although, as Michlic argues, the change of elites was a widespread phenomenon within the Polish political scene in the late 1930s, it cannot entirely explain the radicalisation of approaches amongst the *Sanacja*'s officials.

External factors such as the huge economic crisis and the advent of Nazism in neighbouring Germany also exerted no small impact upon political tactics within the ruling camp. As virulent anti-Semitism came to play a dominant role in post-1935 Poland, some segments of the *Sanacja* regime began to accept ethno-nationalist rhetoric, claiming that Jews constituted only a 'surplus' element within Polish society. Consequently, Jabotinsky's ambitious mass emigration scheme, began to be widely considered as the only viable solution to the Jewish question. It was later confirmed in May 1938, when the aforementioned OZON passed the strongest anti-Jewish resolution to date, entitled *Thirteen Theses on the Jewish Question*.²³⁶ This resolution not only labelled Jews as a foreign element with separate national aspirations, but also declared that they were a hindrance to Polish national aims.²³⁷ In its official rhetoric, the OZON faction employed the libel, formerly used by ethno-nationalists, that the Jews were a 'superfluous' element within Polish society. Zionism, in turn, was seen as another proof 'that the Jews throughout the world consider themselves to be a distinct political entity'.²³⁸

At the same time, the *Sanacja*'s officials departed from their ideology, which embraced Jews as predominantly religious community. As the assimilation programme was deemed a failure, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted, 'Jews should be transformed into a normal nation, concentrated in their own territory'.²³⁹ This perception, along with the application

²³⁵ Michlic J. (2006) *Poland's threatening other: the image of the Jew from 1880 to the present* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, p.71.

²³⁶ Majchrowski J. (1992) Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego wobec kwestii żydowskiej. In: Wrzesiński W (ed) *Polska myśl polityczna XIX i XX wieku* Wrocław, 139-147.

²³⁷ Rosenblum H. (1991) Promoting an International Conference to Solve the Jewish Problem: The New Zionist Organisation's Alliance with Poland, 1938-1939. *The Slavonic and East European Review* 69: 478-501.

²³⁸ 'Jewish Rights in Poland', *Zionist Review*, 1936.

²³⁹ AAN, MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 6290, p.19.

of the concept of a state for Jewry, resulted in a new approach towards the Jewish question. The 1938 strictly confidential memorandum of the Consular Department referred to Polish Jews as 'masses, which not only evade assimilation but also retain their religious and linguistic characteristic'. Zionists were portrayed as those who were responsible for deepening the sense of Jewish national separateness. According to the document, along with the national revival and a creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, the Jews of Poland 'would distance themselves from the Polish state'.²⁴⁰

Zionists were well-aware of ideological changes that occurred within the *Sanacja* camp.²⁴¹ Indeed, this unquestionable trend towards the radicalisation of the political discourse was looked upon with genuine concern by the mainstream Zionists, for whom the aforementioned *Theses* were a clear signal that the OZON was 'resolved to make anti-Semitism an official government policy'.²⁴² The Polish-language *Nasz Przeglqd* unambiguously noted that the Piłsudczyks around OZON accepted the differentiation between the nation and the state, as articulated by their former ideological foes.²⁴³ The foreign press was even more critical. Whereas the British *Zionist Review* considered the OZON's approach as an attempt to exploit Zionist rhetoric, the JTA's correspondent argued that it was 'becoming more analogous to approaches of the Nazi Party in Germany or Italian Fascists'.²⁴⁴ Others accused the Revisionists of adopting right-wing rhetoric on the one hand and being too soft in dealing with state-sanctioned anti-Semitism on the other. Since the Jewish *Yishuv* leadership opposed any scheme aimed at transferring European Jews to Palestine *en masse*, Jabotinsky's pronouncements and his close links to Poland's officials were fiercely criticised. Gruenbaum, in a letter to Goldmann speculated over the true aim of Polish-Revisionist cooperation. In his eyes, by doing so, the General and Labour Zionists not only weakened their own position among Poland's ruling elites but also encouraged Warsaw's elites to turn towards Revisionist rhetoric.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁰ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10005, pp. 67-74, *Problem żydowski*, Warszawa 1938.

²⁴¹ Reinhartz J., Shavit Y. (2018) *The Road to September 1939: Polish Jews, Zionists, and the Yishuv on the Eve of World War II* Boston: Brandeis University Press, p.17. David Ben-Gurion himself expressed deep concerns over the political situation in Poland in a conversation with the High Commissioner in April 1936: "You may still remember what I told you two years ago, that only Piłsudski stood between Polish Jewry and a catastrophe that might be worse than in Germany. Piłsudski is dead, Piłsudski's opponents have yet to take power, but Piłsudski's party, which is still at the helm, is facing increasing anti-Semitic pressure".

²⁴² 'Poland and the Jews. Government Party's Attitude', *Zionist Review*, 18 August 1938, p. 5.

²⁴³ 'Bogusław Miedziński declared that OZON is rather social than national organisation with an aim to consolidate Polish nation, rather than Polish state. This differentiation between nation and state is an imitation of Endeks' concept, which Piłsudczyks opposed so far.' See: 'Strzały ze starego kołczanu', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 27 May 1938, p.3.

²⁴⁴ 'Jewish Rights in Poland', *Zionist Review*, 1936; AAN, MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10009, *Prasa zagraniczna. Francja. Osytuacji Żydów w Polsce*, 8 May 1937, p.10.

²⁴⁵ Weinbaum L. (1993) *A Marriage of Convenience: The New Zionist Organisation and the Polish Government, 1936-1939* Boulder: East European Monographs, p.91.

Jews, Zionism and Communism

As Yuri Slezkine noted, on the threshold of the 20th century, East European Jews had three options in terms of choosing their socio-ideological affiliation – multi-ethnic American liberalism, constantly developing Zionism and Bolshevism.²⁴⁶ Although the bulk of Polish Jewry welcomed the re-establishment of an independent Polish state and only a very tiny minority of them chose the latter option, Poland's right-wing politicians exploited the argument of Jewish engagement in establishing and maintaining Communism at each possible stage. The emergence of a new regime, internationalist in character, which lured the people with the promise of being 'a citizen of the world' and its growing popularity among country's Jewish community had a profound impact on Polish official perceptions of Jews, and consequently of Jewish political life. At the beginning of the 1920s, as the Polish eastern policy began anew with the outbreak of the Polish-Bolshevik war, the widespread anxiety and prevailing suspicion towards 'others' dominated public discourse. Obviously, these sentiments were triggered by the ethno-nationalist Right and National Democrats. At a popular level, it became widely believed that Poland's ethnic and national minorities – the Belarusians, Jews and Ukrainians – were ready to betray the newly re-established state through close cooperation with Soviets. Questioning the loyalty of the Jews, these right-wing segments embraced and successively pursued pejorative slogans of *żydokomuna* (Judeo-Communism) or *żydobolszewizm* (Judeo-Bolshevism). Ethno-nationalist circles surrounding the *Endecja* camp continued to exploit these themes in the Polish public debate, rehearsing the assertion that the Bolshevik leaders were mostly of Jewish origin. In the pages of right-wing journals, pamphlets and brochures Jews, above all other minorities dwelling in interwar Poland, were depicted as the driving force behind the Communist doctrine in order to effect internal decay within the newly resurrected state.²⁴⁷

Jewish participation in Communism and the key role played by Jews in the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, became dominant themes in Polish ethno-nationalist rhetoric as well as a powerful emotive instrument in a nation building process. The very presence of these anti-Jewish images and stereotypes had a profound impact on public discourse, successively gaining ground among the Poles and pervading the rhetoric of other political factions. In this vein, Wincenty Witos, a prominent leader of the moderate wing of the peasant movement, recalled: 'In 1920 I

²⁴⁶ Slezkine Y. (2004) *The Jewish Century* Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 104

²⁴⁷ A radical nationalist paper *Rozwój* charged Jewish politicians with waging war on Poland and favouring Soviet political interests. See: N.A. 'Krucjata Salomona przeciw Białemu Orłowi', *Rozwój*, 1 July 1920, p. 2; Walicki J. (1995) *Położenie Żydów polskich podczas kampanii 1920 r. Acta Universitatis Lodziensis* 52: 113-125.

saw for myself the regular Jewish troops who alongside Bolsheviks went against the Polish army. I also saw the numerous Jews who gladly awaited the Soviet troops' entry to Warsaw'.²⁴⁸

While in the mid-1920s the Polish Zionist leaders became increasingly anxious over the impact of radical Marxist ideology on Jewish youth, ethno-nationalist activists affiliated with the OWP and SN began to interweave the theme of Judeo-Communism with the political ideology of Zionism.²⁴⁹ Being motivated by a deep-seated anti-Semitism, they employed the world Jewish conspiracy discourse and portrayed the Zionist enterprise as an integral part of this conspiracy. These viciously anti-Semitic views of the *Endecja* spread freely and they seem to have found many adherents. The political success of the Zionist doctrine and its alleged Soviet roots caused lively debates at almost all levels of the Polish political spectrum. With questions being asked such as: Is the Zionist rhetoric consonant with Soviet Bolshevism? Does Zionism cause harm to the local Arab population in Palestine? Will a future Zionist state in Palestine become a strategic base for the international Jewish conspiracy? By the mid-1920s, these themes became increasingly apparent in the right-wing Polish press affiliated with the *Endecja* movement. Its publicists insinuated that there were resemblances between socialist Zionism and the Soviet experiment, suggesting at the same time that the establishment of a sovereign Jewish State in Palestine would pose strategic and ideological dangers to anti-Communist opposition. In this vein, *Gazeta Poranna 'Dwa Grosze'* [Two Penny Morning Gazette], one of the *Endeks'* largest organs, disseminated rumours that the Third International (Comintern) purportedly shaped Palestine into a centre for Communist agitation, in order to diffuse its ideology firstly across the Middle East, and then across Asia. This right-wing journal suggested that Jewish canvassers were given passports with special permission to head for Palestine as colonists but then left Palestine for Syria, Egypt and North America.²⁵⁰ The so-called Jewish Palestine was therefore seen as a particular 'base camp' in Communists' attempts to subjugate other countries in the region. Indeed, many Jewish emigrants from Eastern Europe around movements such as the *Poale Zion* [Workers of Zion] or the kibbutz-based *Hashomer Hatza'ir* [Young Guard] were committed socialists. However, associating them with Soviet-style Communism was an intentional misinterpretation that merely aimed at entrenching anti-Jewish sentiments among Poles. Implicit in these suggestions was the established ideological opposition towards Jewish national endeavours, which, in the eyes of Polish anti-Semites, could possibly endanger their political interests.

²⁴⁸ Witos W. (1988) *Dzieła wybrane. Moje wspomnienia* Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, pp. 28-29, 179.

²⁴⁹ Zait D. (2002) *Ha-utopia ha-szomrit: Ha-shomer ha-tsa'ir be-Polyin, 1921-1931*, Givat Haviva: Ha-Merkaz le-moreshet Ben Gurion, pp. 186-196.

²⁵⁰ 'Centrala komunizmu – Palestyna', *Gazeta Poranna*, 11 January 1925, p.2.

Ethno-nationalist publicists were not the only ones to speak of the alleged links between Zionism and Communism. Contemporary efforts to stigmatise Polish Jewry for their leaning towards Soviet Russia also became a recurrent theme in Poland's political discourse. In 1925 Kazimierz Kippendorf, the political referent in the Ministry of the Interior, under the pseudonym of Rudolf Korsch published a pamphlet, *Żydowskie ugrupowania wywrotowe w Polsce* [Jewish revolutionary parties in Poland]. As revealed a year later, the brochure was printed and disseminated by the Warsaw District Political Police on behalf of the state administration to promote a better understanding of the political and social diversity of Polish Jews.²⁵¹ Although the publication was supposed to serve as a guideline to distinguish the affiliation of a specific group towards Zionism or Communism, the writer, drawing upon the aforementioned stereotype of *żydokomuna*, suggested the Jewish roots of Soviet communism. Almost each Jewish political party was seen as revolutionary and infiltrated by the Communists, excluding General Zionists, Folkists and Orthodox Jews.²⁵²

Sanacja's officials embraced a different approach. After May 1926, Polish Jewry was no longer seen as a threat to the newly re-established state, at least in the official perception. Ministerial reports issued after Piłsudski's *coup d'état* emphasised Jewish unconditional loyalty towards Poland. A clear sign of the stoppage of political efforts to defame Polish Jewry was given by entrusting the offices of Adviser on Minority Affairs and a Counsellor on Jewish Affairs to the Polish Interior Ministry to Aleksander Hafftka, a Jewish historian and publicist. In fact, Hafftka replaced the aforementioned Kippendorf and remained in charge of the surveillance of the political developments in the Polish-Jewish community until 1937.

From the very beginning, Polish Zionists bitterly criticised the identification of Zionism with Soviet Bolshevism, arguing that such a misconception was particularly mendacious and harmful to Jewish national endeavours both in Palestine and in the Diaspora. In order to reach a wider group of Polish readers, *Nasz Przegląd*, a Polish-language Zionist daily, issued several articles taking up this theme. Nathan Szwalbe in one of his articles entitled *Bolszewizm w Palestynie* [Bolshevism in Palestine], stressed that the political aims of Communism and Zionism were opposing both in shape and in form, in turn, the Comintern did everything in its power to prevent the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. The article's author went on to criticize identifying his fellow activists with Bolshevism, emphasising that Communists were the most vociferous foes of Jewish national endeavours, who regarded Zionists as envoys of British

²⁵¹ Stach, S. *Zyd Polski Odrodzonej. Studium przypadku Aleksandra Hafftka, urzędnika ministerialnego i zydowskiego działacza społecznego w IIRP*. In: *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów*. 2006, no. 2 (258). pp. 381–405.

²⁵² Korsch R. (1925) *Żydowskie ugrupowania wywrotowe* Warszawa: PKO.

Imperialism.²⁵³ In November 1933, in turn, Juliusz Wurtzel, the editor of the Polish-Jewish newspaper *Chwila*, overtly objected to ethno-nationalist claims there was a connection between Zionist ideology and Soviet Bolshevism, emphasising, 'Communists and the Communist ideology are the sworn enemies of Zionism. Not just because these ideologies are mutually exclusive!'.²⁵⁴ Interestingly, in the eyes of the Polish Revisionists, socialist Zionism was considered no less a threat to Jewish political and economic interests in Palestine than Soviet-style Communism. The prevalence of such voices and perceptions among the Polish Revisionist Zionists only deepened the general antipathy of Polish political elites towards left-leaning Zionism.

The increasingly sharp tone of these accusations along with the spread of political anti-Semitism raised deep concerns among more moderate, left-wing elites. From the onset of the 1920s well into the 1930s, Piłsudski's camp was far from using these kind of stereotypes. Its press repeatedly resisted identifying Jews as Bolsheviks, emphasising that Communism stood in ideological opposition to Jewish fundamental values.²⁵⁵ Instead of employing anti-Semitic discourse of the world Jewish conspiracy and the alleged Zionist links with Communism, *Piłsudczyks* emphasized the importance of ideological and geopolitical factors. Their stance was therefore substantially different from that embraced by the *Endeks*. The political ideologies of Bolshevism and Communism were considered harmful to the Polish *raison d'état*, and with the late 1920s development of Zionism, the secular nationalist ideology that was supposed to keep Jewish youth away from Communism, was becoming increasingly welcomed by the Polish elites affiliated with Marshal Piłsudski. This kind of ideological reasoning remained a permanent feature of the Marshal's closest associates. Bearing in mind their former ambivalent attitude towards all forms of Jewish nationalisms one may ask what kind of factors undergirded this shift of perception?

The existing historiography, especially that written before the late 1980s generally expresses this shift as a manifestation of anti-Semitism.²⁵⁶ However, a more thorough analysis of primary sources indicates that the *Sanacja* officials' turn towards Zionism was largely triggered by political awareness and calculated pragmatism. Geopolitical factors, indeed, played a crucial role in shaping the *Sanacja*'s foreign strategies and diplomatic alliances. The *Piłsudczyks*, being well aware of these geopolitical inclinations, had no desire to drive Poland's citizens into the arms of

²⁵³ N. Szwabe, 'Bolszewizm w Palestynie', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 15 August 1930, p.3.

²⁵⁴ Wurtzel J., 'Jaki siew, taki plon', *Chwila*, 10 November 1933.

²⁵⁵ Polak J. (1926) *Sprawa żydowska, „D”*, 1926, p.58.

²⁵⁶ Marcus J. (1983) *Social and political history of the Jews in Poland, 1919-1939* Berlin: Mouton Publishers.

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the Fascists or into the embrace of Soviet Bolshevism.²⁵⁷ Yet the extreme poverty and increasing anti-Semitism of the ethno-nationalist factions were, in their perception and also in the perception of many prominent Jewish politicians, likely to direct young Jews towards Marxist propaganda, so deleterious for the newly re-established Polish state.²⁵⁸ For this purpose, they turned towards Zionism, deliberately viewing its rhetoric as a viable solution to the state's socio-political, ideological and geopolitical problems.

In the official Polish perception of the mid-1920s, it became clear that the embracing of Zionism by Jewish youth meant a repudiation of a leaning towards Communism. Being aware of a huge ideological dissonance between Communism and Zionism, Poland's leading politicians of the *Sanacja* governing camp appealed to the Jews to lean towards Jewish nationalism. In the late 1920s, as it became clear that the assimilation programme would not succeed, *Sanacja*'s elites proposed to use Zionism as a tool to eradicate precarious pro-Bolshevik tendencies. Poland's leading politicians and intellectuals simply believed that official endorsement for Zionist nationwide propaganda would deter young Jewry from embracing Communism.²⁵⁹ At this point, it is worthy to note that Western politicians also shared these views. Among them was Winston Churchill, who in 1920 published a provocative article entitled 'Zionism versus Bolshevism'.²⁶⁰ Drawing on a mixture of conspiratorial theories and perceptions of Jews, he presented Zionism as an antidote to Bolshevism. In the late 1930s, this sort of thinking was embraced by the closest associates of Piłsudski and the Promethean activists, who appropriately adjusted their doctrine to new political ramifications. Bocheński, for instance, opted for a voluntary emigration to *Eretz Israel* and openly supported Zionism, understood as a counterbalance to Jewish youth's drive towards Communism.²⁶¹

Since the *Endencja* camp along with its radical offshoots had a major impact on shaping the attitudes of the Polish population, the representations of the Zionist doctrine as deeply rooted in Bolshevism persisted in the Polish political discourse until the outbreak of the Second World War. In a similar vein, right-wing politicians and Roman Catholic Church circles drew attention to the link between the extreme poverty of the Jewish masses in Poland and the growing interest in Communism among them. Referring to Sokolow's address at the 1935 Zionist Congress in Lucerne, the daily Franciscan *Mały Dziennik* [Small Daily], which was known for

²⁵⁷ Snyder T. (2015) *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* London: Vintage.

²⁵⁸ Heller D. (2012) *The Rise of the Zionist Right: Polish Jews and the Betar Youth Movement, 1922-1935*, pp.69, 159-160.

²⁵⁹ Pruszyński K. (1996) *Palestyna po raz trzeci* Warszawa: Czytelnik.

²⁶⁰ Churchill W., 'Zionism versus Bolshevism', *Illustrated Sunday Herald*, 8 February 1920, p.5.

²⁶¹ Ujazdowski K. (2005) *Żywotność konserwatyzmu. Idee polityczne Adolfa Bocheńskiego* Warszawa: Iskry, p.54.

sharing the right-wing rhetoric of the National Democracy, admitted that Poles should have supported the Zionist doctrine because the socio-economic misery of Polish Jewry might have inclined them to Soviet Communism. In spite of that, the Catholic daily emphasised the risks associated with the rapid development of socialist Zionist ideology in Palestine. As the editor of *Mały Dziennik* came to observe, in August 1935, socialist Zionists imitated 'the worst Soviet models'.²⁶²

In the early 1930s, as the governing elites redirected their stance towards Jewish national endeavours in Palestine, the pro-government press initiated a broad-ranging campaign promoting Zionism amongst Polish society. Publicists from *Gazeta Polska* [Polish Gazette], speaking in the name of the *Sanacja* camp, assigned an important role to Zionist ideology especially with regard to its ability to eradicate cosmopolitan tendencies among Poland's Jewry.²⁶³ Not surprisingly, the Revisionists, who frequently indicated that Zionism and Communism were in conflict in key areas, quickly gained official endorsement by the Polish elites. As Tadeusz Gwiazdoski, the vice director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reported in October 1936, the highest authorities in Warsaw adopted a more favourable approach towards Jabotinsky's movement because its political aspirations were 'in line with the separation of Jews from the Communist movement'.²⁶⁴ The belligerent anti-Socialist stance taken by the Polish Revisionists spoke to the Polish political elites, especially the right-leaning sectors of the *Sanacja* regime. This stance was undoubtedly more attractive to Warsaw, especially in the late 1930s, as the left-leaning Bund was rising in both power and influence amongst Polish Jewry.²⁶⁵ Thus, the Polish authorities affiliated with the *Sanacja* movement decided to support Polish Betar (Brit Yosef Trumpeldor), the largest and most influential Betar branch in the world, which proclaimed itself as 'a fruit of national revolution that took place in a Jewish spirit against the red plague (Communism), which weakens the vitality of the Jewish nation'.²⁶⁶ The confidential interdepartmental memo from March 1937 noted, 'the anti-Communist stance of the New Zionist Organisation is another argument for our support for this movement'.²⁶⁷

²⁶² 'Żydzi i Arabowie w Palestynie', *Mały Dziennik*, 22 August 1935, p.5.

²⁶³ 'Kresy: Żydzi', *Gazeta Polska*, 24 July 1930, p.3.

²⁶⁴ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2292, *A confidential report by Tadeusz Gwiazdoski*, October 1936, pp.102-103.

²⁶⁵ For an overview of Bund's politics in Poland, see: Polonsky A. (1997) The Bund in Polish Political Life, 1935-1939. In: Mendelsohn E. (ed) *Essential Papers on Jews and the Left*. New York: New York University, 166-197; Blatman D. (2003) *For our freedom and yours: the Jewish Labour Bund in Poland, 1939-1949* London: Vallentine Mitchell.

²⁶⁶ 'Ballila i Brit Trumpeldor', *Trybuna Narodowa*, 1937.

²⁶⁷ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Interdepartmental memo*, March 1937, p. 37.

Pruszyński's 1933 reportage entitled *Groźa armaty sowieckie* [The Soviet cannons threaten] on alleged ties between Zionism and Communism serves as another proof that the tendency of viewing Zionism, as an offshoot of Communism was prevalent among the Polish public.²⁶⁸ The young correspondent, who had spent five weeks in Palestine, travelling from one kibbutz to another, sought to put a definite end to this sort of thinking. Numerous meetings and conversations with the leading figures of the Zionist *Yishuv* as well as ordinary settlers enabled him to confront popular visions on the settlement project with the reality of life in Palestine. Being profoundly impressed by the pace and extent of Zionist constructive work, Pruszyński affirmed that the Communist rhetoric was detrimental to the settlement project to the same degree as that of Arab nationalism. According to him, Zionists' initial interest in Communism was triggered by their willingness to fight against British imperialism. On the other hand, there was clear political opportunism amongst Soviet policymakers, who despite their anti-Jewish or anti-Zionist attitude, decided to direct their attention towards Zionists. Communists simply sought to use Zionists as a tool to enlarge the Communist sphere of influence in the Middle East. Why? Because, in the official perception, Jews had always been susceptible to revolutionary movements and ideologies.

In this fight every ally is good. In this fight Soviets used their favourite method – *poputchik* [rus. попутчик].²⁶⁹ *Poputchik*, as it is widely known, is such a partner in the fight and is currently regarded as an ally. Although in the current game he is seen as an ally because of a common enemy, both in the past he was and in the future will be a foe. After a victory against the common enemy and the order for *poputchik* to be executed will be given, even so, he is currently an ally.²⁷⁰

Pruszyński, as a sharp and insightful observer of Palestine's political reality, correctly noticed that Communists were unable to find supporters for their rhetoric regarding the Middle East, which was directed towards populists disseminating nationalist and anti-European slogans. They, therefore, became an ally of pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism. 'Emissaries of the USSR are stirring the Arab masses against the Jews no less bitterly than radical chauvinists' the Polish publicist observed during his stay in Palestine.²⁷¹ These suspicions were confirmed by the *Daily Mail*, in its July 1936 article, which further revealed that the Soviet Union had paid subventions to

²⁶⁸ Pruszyński K. (1996) *Palestyna po raz trzeci*, Warszawa: Czytelnik, pp. 191-199.

²⁶⁹ *Poputchik* – a Russian word for 'fellow traveller'. In political jargon a derogatory term for 'useful idiot', probably first used by Vladimir Lenin to describe people (predominantly non-Communists regarded susceptible to Communist manipulation) who used to propagate an ideology, which they did not fully understand. As Max Lerner explained in 1936: 'the term has a Russian background and means someone who does not accept your aims but has enough in common with you to accompany you in a comradely fashion part of the way'.

²⁷⁰ Pruszyński K. (1933) *Palestyna ...*, p. 191.

²⁷¹ Pruszyński K. (1933) *Palestyna ...*, p. 192.

Arab agitators and financially supported the Arab revolt against the British authorities and increased Jewish immigration to Palestine.²⁷² Pruszyński's conclusion was particularly bitter:

The consequences of recent developments in Palestine might be far-reaching not only for the Middle East but also for all the countries with a substantial Jewish population. Until quite recently, the only star shining on the misery of the ghetto was the red star of communism. When the six-pointed Zionist star of revival began to rise no one knew that it would raise to fight against the red star on behalf of numerous Jewish souls, and that this fight would be so great. The Palestine project is jeopardised not by Arab knives, but by Soviet cannons.²⁷³

Poland's political elites, both the Conservatives and Piłsudski's inner acquaintances were becoming increasingly aware of Soviet Russia's growing antipathy to Jewish national interests in Palestine. In the latter half of the 1930s, the governmental press devoted many of its columns to linking Soviet and Arab interests. The first-page article 'Moskwa and Palestyna' [Moscow and Palestine] in *Gazeta Polska*, unambiguously noted, 'Moscow's secret involvement in recent Palestine crisis is obvious'.²⁷⁴ Conversely to the anti-Zionist propaganda disseminated by the right-wing journals, this and other articles confirmed that the *Sanacja*'s officials continued to view Zionists as their vital allies.

Common experiences

There is no doubt that when analysing Polish elites' perceptions of Zionism and the Jewish national endeavours in Palestine, it would be mandatory to consider how and to what degree these perceptions were affected by their own political experiences and the struggle for independence. From this vantage point, both groups of Zionists and Poles who had yearned for national renewal found themselves in analogous political circumstances. After the split within the PPS, Marshal Piłsudski and his closest followers fully devoted themselves to non-partisan clandestine military units. As the Zionists came up with a similar initiative, Polish politicians affiliated with the *Sanacja* regime began to view them as fellow nationalists whose commitment to the up-building of Palestine clearly resembled their own struggle for independence. In their eyes, the Zionist leaders were not only activists who had engaged in a nation-building process by raising the Jewish masses' dormant national consciousness but had also engaged in state-building at the same time. Commenting on this process *Gazeta Polska* noted:

²⁷² Daily Mail's article mentioned in 'Palestyna w oczach Polaka', *Nasz Przeglqd*, July 1936.

²⁷³ Pruszyński K. (1933) *Palestyna*, pp. 47-49

²⁷⁴ 'Moskwa i Palestyna', *Gazeta Polska*, 23 June 1936, p.1.; Kubacki W. 'Reportaż palestyński', *Gazeta Polska*, 10 October 1936, p.3.

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Zionism teaches Jews how to understand and admire the very concept of homeland. A Jew loving Palestine, dreaming about a creation of an independent state there, well understands our love for Poland, our constructive work towards the rebuilding our statehood.²⁷⁵

This sort of thinking was particularly apparent among the older generation of Poles who were reminiscing nostalgically about their own political struggle and the closest associates of Marshal Piłsudski. Their deep attachment to the liberal romantic values and tradition of the multi-ethnic Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth significantly shaped their perception of Jewish national endeavours. This argument was used by Beck in his 1935 letter to Yaffe, the President of *Keren HaYesod*, in which the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs declared, 'Poland, a state that has had to battle long and hard for its national existence can best express sympathy to Jewish national renaissance in Palestine'.²⁷⁶ In a similar vein, Stefan Korboński, a Polish publicist and prominent activist of the People's movement argued, 'because of their own plight the Poles have always had sympathy for people who were deprived of their own independence'.²⁷⁷ This perception, to a large degree, echoed the romantic ethos encompassed in the slogan 'for your freedom and ours' (*za wolność waszą i naszą*).

Parallels between the Polish struggle for independence and the situation faced by Zionists were also articulated by intellectual elites. Echoes of this kind of thinking can be easily found in Pruszyński's output. In one of his articles, the rising neoconservative writer compared the situation in Palestine with the Polish November Insurrection of 1831. A different idea was disseminated by Władysław Studnicki, a prominent, albeit controversial politician with a pro-German leaning. In his article for the *Berliner Tageblatt*, Studnicki emphasised that the pauperisation of the Jewish masses had become a real danger for Poland. In his perception, Zionists yearned and strived for statehood, as Polish people once did.

Zionists also indicated parallels between Poland's political struggle and their prospects in Palestine. Moreover, many Polish Zionists envisioned Poles as models for their future political behaviour. This sort of political thinking was particularly prevalent among the right-wing Zionists, headed by Jabotinsky. Piłsudski's heirs deeply appreciated the Revisionist leader. Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski, who was far from sharing ethno-nationalist tendencies of the *Endecja*, recounts, 'Jabotinsky combined a profound intelligence with an abundant literary talent;

²⁷⁵ 'Kresy: Żydzi', *Gazeta Polska*, 24 July 1930, p.3.

²⁷⁶ CZA, *Letter submitted by Józef Beck to Leib Yaffe*, 8 December 1935.

²⁷⁷ Korboński S. (1979) Unknown chapter in the life of Menachem Begin and Irgun Zvai Leumi. *East European Quarterly* XIII.

he entranced people with his ideology and unyielding logic'.²⁷⁸ Although Jabotinsky initially expressed a slightly ambivalent stance towards the re-established Polish state, he found much inspirations in its successful struggle for independence. His doubts mainly concerned the official position towards the national minorities question, especially the rhetoric articulated by the *Endeks*. In spite of that, the Revisionists, to a large extent followed Piłsudski's cue, believing that they would 'play the same role in Jewish society that the supporters of Piłsudski will play in Polish society'.²⁷⁹ In their eyes, the Second Polish Republic, was an extraordinary example of the newly re-established national state and a model that they wished to emulate. This, which particularly impressed local supporters of Jabotinsky, was the intense national inspiration and 'Poland' - as stated at the Betar conference - 'was liberated because it wholeheartedly believed in its power and a will of its nation. Poland claimed its headman, regardless of the will of other nations'. Many Polish Zionists came of age at the time Poland was on the threshold of regaining independence, when Polish society was soaked with the hope of national liberation. The newly re-established state also appealed to the collective consciousness of Zionist circles. Many of them, being raised on the legend of Marshal Piłsudski and his Legions, accepted the militarization of Jewish youth as a central demand.

To a large extent, Polish patriotism stimulated the further development of Zionism, both politically and ideologically. General Zionists also looked to Piłsudski's Poland as a model in the national struggle for independence. Zionists perceived Piłsudski's circles as nationalists motivated by 'humanitarianism and generosity to the minorities rather than by a narrow chauvinism'. The older generation of Polish Zionists, being well attached to the Polish insurrectionary tradition, repeatedly referred to the most prolific champions of Polish patriotism as viable role models. The national literature, especially the Polish romanticist literature of Adam Mickiewicz and Juliusz Słowacki, appealed to them precisely because it stirred their hopes for national resurrection. In this vein, Gruenbaum, a leading figure of Polish Zionism, in his memoir recalled how the literature of Polish Romanticism 'awakened my love for the Poles, who fought for their rights'.²⁸⁰ Similarly, Yehuda Arazi, who headed the delegation of the *Haganah* to Warsaw in the late 1930s, compared Zionists' endeavours in Palestine with the Polish struggle for freedom.

²⁷⁸ Pobóg-Malinowski W. (1991) *Najnowsza historia polityczna Polski* Gdańsk: Oficyna Wydawnicza Graf, p.627.

²⁷⁹ Heller D. (2012) *The Rise of the Zionist Right: Polish Jews and the Betar Youth Movement, 1922-1935*, p.67.

²⁸⁰ Heller D. (2017) *Jabotinsky's Children: Polish Jews and the Rise of Right-Wing Zionism* Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 17.

Not surprisingly, newspapers with ties within governmental circles looked favourably upon the phenomena of the emergence of the new Jew. The Zionist programme that postulated training Jewish youth to be chivalrous and committed to national ideals spoke to a large segment of Polish elite. *Gazeta Polska* continued to offer unadulterated praise for Zionism for shaping 'the inherent Jewish psychology of the national minority' into 'the psychology of majority'.²⁸¹ Also, the emergence of 'the militarised Jew' found many ardent supporters among Warsaw's politicians. To a large degree, this form of perception echoed former attempts that aimed to liquidate the ideal of the ghetto Jew. In this vein, *Morze i Kolonie* [Sea and Colonies] in August 1937 lavished repeated accolades upon Zionism for shaping 'the Jewish psyche'. The magazine indicated that the solution to the Jewish question partially lay in the hands of the Jews and this was a military resistance to the Arab terror in Palestine. 'A fatherland cannot be bought, even for the sum of 100 million pounds, a fatherland must be attained through a sacrifice of blood'.²⁸²

Yet, in January 1939, when officially-sanctioned anti-Semitism was mounting, the Revisionist daily *Nasze Jutro* [Our Tomorrow] wrote:

Polish national uprisings have always been recognised for their religious-fanatical spirit. The longing for a sovereign homeland was so strong, that other feelings paled in comparison with it. [...] Monism and the faith in the exclusivity of our cause – the ideas, which had become a mission statement of the Brit Trumpeldor movement decades later – for years served as a mission statement for the Polish nation. Only the strong will of those people to re-gain political freedom and re-establish a sovereign state had led to the achievement of these objectives. We, the Jews, should at this point re-consider these methods, which allowed the Poles to achieve all these impressive goals. We should finally realise that restoration of a homeland is not possible without fight and sacrifices.²⁸³

Deeply rooted in a belief in Poland's romantic-insurrectionary tradition, the *Sanacja*'s officials shared the view that Jews should have been given an opportunity to establish a state of their own in Palestine. Already in 1922, Hołówko, a close friend to Piłsudski, wrote, 'We the Poles know all too well what the fate of a nation without a state of its own can be. Thus, we should appreciate more than any other nation regained independence and, on the other hand,

²⁸¹ Kubacki W. 'Reportaż palestyński', *Gazeta Polska*, 10 October 1936, p.3.

²⁸² *Morze i Kolonie*, August 1937.

²⁸³ H. Brandwein, 'W rocznicę stycznia 1922 r. i jego czynu', *Nasze Jutro*, 21 January 1939, p.1. cited in: Landau-Czajka A. (2015) *Polska to nie oni. Polacy w polskojęzycznej prasie żydowskiej II Rzeczypospolitej* Warszawa: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, p. 79.

sympathize with nations deprived of their sovereignty'.²⁸⁴ This kind of thinking was inextricably linked to Promethean ideology, which will be discussed below.

Promethean policy as a crucial incentive for a Polish-Zionist alliance?

Prometheism (*prometeizm*) within the context of political and intellectual thought was initiated by Marshal Piłsudski in the early 20th century. Originally, the concept evolved as a complementary geopolitical strategy, that aimed at supporting people groups within nations of the East – Georgians, Tatars, Azeris, Armenians but above all Poland's neighbouring Ukrainians, in their struggle for emancipation and further political liberation from the Tsarist Empire in order to build a common front against Russian domination. Since Prometheism was intrinsically intertwined with socio-political and geopolitical factors, the doctrine was frequently described as 'a product of Poland's political geography'.²⁸⁵ Placing the liberal romantic values of freedom, integrity, and independent existence at the top of its ideological agenda, Prometheism called the nations to fulfil their irredentist ambitions. In turn, by promoting the idea of the liberation of nations from empires and placing them under 'Poland's protection' Prometheism referred to the federalist concept, becoming, to some degree, its continuation.²⁸⁶ This ambitious strategy not only aimed to undermine the imperial position and integrity of Russia but also strove to create a particular Polish sphere of influence. The Polish state, by the virtue of its history, love of freedom and political experience was supposed to play a crucial role in East Central Europe geopolitics.

This ideology was particularly popular among Piłsudski's most trusted associates. Already, before the outbreak of the First World War, Leon Wasilewski, a prolific ideologist of the PPS camp, preached these ideas calling for 'the breakup of Russia and the establishment of national states'.²⁸⁷ However, as the existing historiography argues the doctrine fully evolved at the beginning of the 1920s partially as a result of the federalist concept fiasco. Becoming the main policy direction of Piłsudski's camp, Prometheism quickly gained the support of leading policymakers. Among the most prominent were ministerial officials from the Eastern Department – Tadeusz Hołówko, Tadeusz Schaetzel, Tadeusz Kobylański, as well as officers of the Polish Military Organisation [*Polska Organizacja Wojskowa, POW*]. Close followers of Piłsudski deeply believed that oppression might result in growing separatism and the development of ethno-nationalist

²⁸⁴ Hołówko T. (1922) *Kwestia narodowościowa w Polsce* Warszawa: Księgarnia Robotnicza, p.5.

²⁸⁵ Bączkowski W. (1939) *Czy prometeizm jest fikcją?* Warszawa: Drukprasa, p.1.

²⁸⁶ Wyszczelski L. (2015) *Polska mocarstwowa: wizje i koncepcje polityczne obozów politycznych II Rzeczypospolitej* Warszawa: Bellona, p.197.

²⁸⁷ The existing historiography argues that the Promethean movement was a specific direction of Poland's foreign policy that evolved and developed after the federalist concept fiasco. See: Wyszczelski L. (2015) *Polska mocarstwowa: wizje i koncepcje polityczne obozów politycznych II Rzeczypospolitej* Warszawa: Bellona, p.198.

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tendencies. This sort of thinking was expressed by Hołówko, the member of the Committee of Experts on National Minorities Problems and the President of the Research Institute on National Minorities Problems, who was killed by Ukrainian nationalists in August 1931. 'The national oppression, decline of national minorities' right to create an independent national life result in emergence of national minorities' separatism – a phenomenon so dangerous for a state, and cutting Poland's society off with a wall of bitterness and hatred' he wrote.²⁸⁸

In 1932, as the Polish government signed the Non-Aggression Pact with Soviet Russia, a huge crisis hit the Promethean movement. The new political ramifications and *détente* in bilateral relations with Soviet Russia forced Polish policymakers to abandon the formerly embraced anti-Soviet line, at least officially. According to Paweł Libera, this ideological crisis pervaded the movement until 1935, when some profound reforms were undertaken.²⁸⁹ As Timothy Snyder suggests, the official endorsement for the Zionist Revisionist doctrine in the late 1930s may be regarded as a new form of Prometheanism.²⁹⁰ This was expressed by Feliks Zahora-Ibiański, the editor of a fortnightly magazine *Myśl Polska* [Polish Thought] in 1938, when he appealed, 'Our Promethean programme should find room for Jewish national aspirations'.²⁹¹

Not surprisingly, Zionism with its developing national project spoke to Polish Prometheans. The propagators of Prometheism who had inherited the model of Polish Romanticism, wholeheartedly believed that at the very heart of the national struggle for independence was the quest for universal freedom and liberation from the yoke of imperial powers. In their eyes, there were striking similarities between the Zionists' political position and Poland's struggle. Whilst the Poles had striven for years to restore their independence and sovereignty, the Zionists had opposed British imperialist rule in Palestine. Piłsudski's most trusted men responsible for Jewish affairs were staunch advocates of an active Promethean policy. Both Wagner and Drymmer were among those who advocated the implementation of the Promethean programme within Poland's foreign policy towards Jewish national aspirations. As Snyder suggests, after 1935 as the responsibility for Jewish issues was transferred from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland's Promethean policy began to evolve from its previous form to a new evolving variant presumed abandoning the former anti-Soviet line and

²⁸⁸ Hołówko T. (1922) *Kwestia narodowościowa w Polsce* Warszawa: Księgarnia Robotnicza p.69.

²⁸⁹ Libera P. (2012) Ewolucja ruchu prometejskiego w okresie międzywojennym. IN: Kornat M. (ed) *Ruch prometejski i walka o przebudowę Europy Wschodniej (1918-1940)* Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 219-244.

²⁹⁰ Snyder T. (2015) *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* London: Vintage, pp. 67-69.

²⁹¹ Zahora F., 'O sprawie żydowskiej', *Myśl Polska*, December 1938, p.1.

aiming at assisting Zionists in their political and military struggle against British rule in Palestine.²⁹² It was therefore a new form of liberating of a nation from an empire.

As Snyder's study suggests, the line of continuity is particularly evident when we look at the personal and ideological dimensions of the Promethean movement.²⁹³ Indeed, the closest associates of Piłsudski were self-confessed Prometheans. Wiktor Tomir Drymmer, Tadeusz Pełczyński, a director of the Polish Military Intelligence, Witold Hulanicki, the Polish Consul in Jerusalem and Adam Skwarczyński, a leading ideologist of the *Sanacja* camp, emphasised that the nation could only flourish if possessing a state or territory of its own. 'The nation without a state is like a cripple, because only as a state can the nation become complete' he concluded.²⁹⁴ As Snyder suggests, this evolving version of Promethean doctrine substantially differed from the previous one. The movement not only polarised into those who became liberal critics of the new line of policy and those who backed the right-leaning approach but also shaped its perception in terms of solidarity and mutual coexistence. A common interest became the crucial value in the process of building relations between various nations in general, and between Poles and Zionists in particular.

The strategy embraced by Polish Prometheans involved a number of intertwined public and strictly confidential threads. Their activities ranged from financial support through various intelligence operations to paramilitary training of diverse groups, carried out by Polish officers. Warsaw's strategy also encompassed official engagement with the pro-Zionist and pro-Palestine campaign at both domestic and international levels. As Weinbaum argues, the extent of the Polish-Zionist alliance known to the Polish public in the late 1930s was limited to a recognition of Poland's willingness to reduce the number of Jews living in the country. This common perception was confirmed by aforementioned *Myśl polska* [Polish thought], an official organ of *Stronnictwo Narodowe* [National Party] in December 1938:

The history of the Polish Promethean struggle is well known. Poland, often motivated only by the sentiment rather than its own interest, supported and supports nations liberating themselves. The Jewish nation cannot enjoy our sentiment – this is true – but here comes into play our own interest of prime importance.²⁹⁵

²⁹² Snyder T. (2015) *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* London: Vintage, p.68.

²⁹³ Snyder T. (2015) *Black Earth...* London: Vintage, pp.68-70.

²⁹⁴ Skwarczyński A. (1934) *Wskazania* Warszawa: Straż Przednia, p.48.

²⁹⁵ Cited in: Weinbaum L. (1993) *A Marriage of Convenience: The New Zionist Organisation and the Polish Government, 1936-1939* Boulder: East European Monographs, p.125.

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The dimension of covert and semi-covert activities supporting Zionism and its national aim in Palestine, however, indicates that some segments of Warsaw's politicians, Piłsudski's inner circle of acquaintances, had embraced a refocused form of the Promethean programme in their policy towards Revisionist Zionists. Before the outbreak of the Second World War, a large number of Polish Prometheans risked a lot assisting Revisionist Zionists in their national struggle. This risk significantly increased as the spectre of war was looming over Europe. As the political leaders of Poland understood that in the event of sudden aggression they had no chance against Nazi Germany alone, Warsaw initiated extensive diplomatic negotiations with two potential allies - France and Great Britain. Eventually in the spring of 1939, the Polish government obtained formal guarantees from both Paris and London. Having secured military alliances, the Polish intelligence continued to support the Revisionists covertly who were openly waging a campaign of resistance and terror against the British. The possibility of jeopardising diplomatic relations with Great Britain had not prevented Poland's governing elites from pursuing these actions.

The strategy of supporting right-wing Zionists was not only closely intertwined with the unequivocal opposition to Soviet Communism but also stemmed from a sense of shared political experiences. A more thorough analysis of Prometheans' ideological motivations for embracing the pro-Zionist approach clearly indicates that there was also a particular line of continuity. Indeed, the aforementioned abandonment of the anti-Soviet line has only a superficial character. Polish Prometheans perceived the active political and military support of right-wing Zionists as tantamount to an endorsement of their fellow anti-Communists. Zionists, therefore, became a vehicle for the achievement of more important goals, inextricably linked to Poland's foreign and economic policies along with geopolitical considerations. In the chapter that follows, I will examine the successive waves of emigration of Polish Jewry and their impact on both shaping perceptions of Jewish national interests in the region and enhancing relations between Poland and emerging 'Jewish Palestine'.

Chapter 3 From the country of origin to homeland – interwar Polish-Jewish emigration to Palestine

Filled with enthusiasm and hope, many with secondary education qualifications, a number of academics who had quitted their studies and head for Palestine to take a shovel and work the land.²⁹⁶

Gazeta Polska

On Wednesday morning, September 27th 1933, the passenger ship *S.S Polonia* left the Black Sea harbour of Constanta, in southeast Romania for its maiden voyage to Palestine. The Polish Transatlantic Shipping Company had made the decision to establish its first Levantine route only a few months before.²⁹⁷ As the movement of Polish shipping to Palestine was almost entirely bound up with the Jewish settlement, the day of departure was widely covered by both Polish and Jewish newspapers. Among the passengers were prominent Polish politicians and journalists.²⁹⁸ The following day during a press conference, Miroslaw Arciszewski, the Polish Ambassador in Bucharest, admitted that extensive diplomatic efforts had been made to establish the new shipping route. He also pointed out that the intense stream of migration between Poland and Palestine had motivated the Polish government to make adequate provision. In a similar vein, Bernard Hausner, a political activist affiliated with the Mizrachi Zionist Organisation and the Polish Commercial Councillor in Tel Aviv, declared, 'for us as Jews, these are not just vessels. For us it is a bridge. The bridge between Poland and Palestine'.²⁹⁹

The vessel, with several hundred passengers - mainly Jewish immigrants from Poland - anchored three days later, on Sunday morning, at Haifa port. An official reception was held on board. Polish representatives were officially welcomed by Tel Aviv's Mayor, Meir Dizengoff, the Mayor of Haifa, Hassan Bey Shukri, and the highest Government officials. In a festive speech, Dizengoff emphasised the importance of the new shipping route in enhancing and developing further economic relations between Poland and Palestine. Particular attention was given to

²⁹⁶ Mohuczy B. 'Pod polską banderą do Palestyny', *Gazeta Polska*, 13 October 1933, p.3.

²⁹⁷ 'Sherut Aniyah Polani Le-Eretz Yis'rael', *Doar HaYom*, 26 July 1933, p. 1.

²⁹⁸ 'Eretz Yis'rael ve-Poliyn', *Davar*, 3 October 1933, p.4.

²⁹⁹ Filochowski W. (1937) *Ziemia dwakroć obiecana: notatki z podróży do Palestyny* Pelplin: Drukarnia i Księgarnia, pp.40-41.

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mutual economic and trade exchange.³⁰⁰ He also recalled that the Polish authorities had all been in favour of the Balfour Declaration and Zionist nation-building aspirations. After the playing of *Mazurek Dąbrowskiego* - the Polish national anthem - Arciszewski gave a speech in which he stated that 'besides the commercial reasons for the new service, the harmonious relations between the Polish and Jewish peoples had prompted it'. 'The Jewish people', he continued, 'were establishing their national home, advancing towards an independent existence, and the sentiments of the Polish nation were with them. The new line was proof that the Polish government was anxious to ensure that its Jewish citizens should sail to their homeland under satisfactory conditions'. The Deputy Minister to Romania, on behalf of the Polish cabinet, expressed great admiration for 'the great constructive activity' of Jews in Palestine and concluded his speech with 'long live the Land of Israel'.³⁰¹

Changing perceptions of Palestine

From a political and economic point of view, Palestine had for many years been seen as a loosely defined territory, commonly perceived as a 'derelict part of the Ottoman Empire'.³⁰² However, in the late nineteenth century, the situation changed and the increasing strategic value of Palestine became more of a focus within international politics. Following the peace agreements that officially ended the First World War, the region turned into a well-defined geopolitical and administrative entity, unified under the British Mandatory Government. The Balfour Declaration, signed on November 2nd 1917, became an integral part of the Sèvres Peace Treaty as well as the Versailles Treaty, establishing the Mandatory system in Palestine. At the San Remo conference (April 1920) the newly confirmed Mandate Government committed to place 'the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home, and the development of self-governing institution'.³⁰³ By incorporating these obligations into the aforementioned treaties, the Balfour Declaration evolved from being a political declaration into a legal document.³⁰⁴ The ramifications from these events led to the provision of a unified political administration, encompassing a well-defined legal structure and fiscal systems in the region, enabling its inhabitants to develop their economy both internally and externally. On the other hand, the major developments that occurred under British rule, namely

³⁰⁰ 'Eretz Yisrael vePolin', *Davar*, 3 October 1933, p.4.

³⁰¹ 'Polish-Palestine Steam Ship Service Opened', *The Palestine Post*, 2 October 1933, p.5.

³⁰² Samuel E. (1956) The Immigration Cycle in Palestine and in Israel, 1919–1954. *South African Journal of Economics* 24:29-36.

³⁰³ Article 2, The Palestine Mandate.

³⁰⁴ Grief H. (2008) *The Legal Foundation and Borders of Israel under International Law* Jerusalem: Mazo Publishers, p.675.

the substantial increase in Jewish immigration, Zionist land purchases and a thriving Jewish community, profoundly shaped the general perception of Palestine.

The economic and strategic significance of the region started to be appreciated by political circles in Europe. Particular attention was given to Palestine's geopolitical positioning:

Palestine looks upon Europe and upon Asia, and provides a possibility of traffic, which is independent of the costly charge of the Suez Canal. Palestine is therefore capable of becoming a distributing centre between Europe and Asia on an economical basis, and one largely independent of the chances of war. (...) With the growth of the Jewish National Home in Palestine, and a large active enterprising Jewish population in the country, the commercial chain – which is to a large extent a chain of persons – between Palestine and the Middle and Far East, becomes perfected. It is not an exaggeration to anticipate that Palestine as the Jewish National Home may well become something like the heart of commerce between Europe and Asia.³⁰⁵

Lord Melchett, in turn, at the American Non-Zionist Conference held in October 1928 in New York, described Palestine as 'a highway of the world' and 'Belgium of the East'.³⁰⁶ In the Polish official perception, Palestine, along with the Haifa-Baghdad railway and the oil pipe line between Haifa and Mosul was creating a bridge between East and West.³⁰⁷ Marian Turski, the director of the Ministry of Industry and Trade's State Export Institute, admitted that 'Palestine, despite its relatively small capacity, is important as a particular school of export to the Middle East'. In a similar vein, Polish diplomats drew attention to the fact that, with the completion of Haifa Harbour, Palestine was able to take full advantage of its position as the hub of Middle Eastern communications.

This chapter illustrates the successive waves of immigration of Polish Jews to Palestine, while the next chapter scrutinises the economic relations between the Second Polish Republic and the emerging Jewish *Yishuv*. Particular attention is given to the connection between the emigration of Polish Jews to Palestine and the intensification of trade exchange. Successive waves of immigration not only shaped the socio-demographic pattern of Palestine, but also had a profound impact on the perception of the region held by the governing elites in Warsaw. Recent studies on economic effects of migration confirm the fact that emigration has a positive influence

³⁰⁵ Sacher H. (1928) The Economic Significance of Palestine. *Palestine and Near East Economic Magazine* III: 264.

³⁰⁶ (1928) Proceedings of the Non-Zionist Conference Concerning Palestine. New York.

³⁰⁷ CZA (Central Zionist Archives), S25\5742-41, *Letter by E.J. Kirschenbaum to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, April 1933.

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on commercial relations between the country of settlement and the country of origin.³⁰⁸ As I argue in the following chapter, this theory can be also applied to interwar migrations of Polish Jews to Palestine and developing connections between both countries. Indeed, the official view was that Palestine was no longer a distinct territory but a region with a substantial number of Jews of Polish origin. Within the most prominent circles of Poland, these developments began to be seen as an unparalleled opportunity to enhance foreign trade. According to this perception, former Polish citizens who had emigrated to Palestine were considered as a bridgehead for enhanced economic cooperation between both countries. In the eyes of the officials, Palestine was becoming a strategic partner in Polish trade policy. Over the course of the interwar years, subsequent cabinets in Warsaw, regardless of their political persuasion, actively continued to promote export opportunities for Poland to *Eretz Israel*.

The next chapter aims to identify the mechanism behind the economic dimension of mutual Polish-Palestinian cooperation, which took place between the two world wars. For this purpose, I investigate the changing perception of Jewish Palestine as an important commercial outlet for Polish merchandise goods and products. By exploring how Polish politicians and prominent publicists perceived the role of the Zionist leadership and the Jewish *Yishuv*, the chapter illuminates the economic aspect of these mutual interactions. In addition, the study assesses how and to what degree the actions and inactions of the Polish government materially affected the political and economic situation in Palestine. The first section discusses the successive waves of migration to Palestine and the process of creating a 'Polish-Jewish minority' in Mandate Palestine. Special consideration is given to the question of emigration in the 1930s, the structure of Polish-Jewish emigration and the so-called *aliyah bet* (illegal immigration). Then, I analyse the export-enhancing aspect of Jewish migration to Palestine. Given that throughout the 1930s, Polish elites and politically engaged publicists regularly followed events in Palestine, I strive to assess how they reacted to the economic and political state of affairs in the region. In turn, by analysing commentary articles published in the Polish and Polish-Jewish press, I conceptualise the main trends in a discussion on the so-called Palestine question.

The economic revival, witnessed in Palestine in the mid-1920s, was inextricably linked with the large influx of Jewish immigrants from Europe and found its full expression in the market returns of the country. The increasing process of immigration as well as the rapid growth

³⁰⁸ Gould D. (1994) Immigrant Links to the Home Country: Empirical Implications for U.S. Bilateral Trade Flows. *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 76: 302-316; Dunlevy A. and Hutchinson W. (1999) The Impact of Immigration on American Import Trade in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries. *The Journal of Economic History* 59: 1043-1062.

of Jewish national income per capita equally raised the overall demand for various goods, raw materials, and intermediate products.³⁰⁹ As contemporary statistics show, the overall rise in imports was almost analogous to the increase of the Jewish population - approximately thirty-seven per cent in 1925.³¹⁰ Overall, throughout the interwar period, the Jewish economy in Palestine experienced an annual rate of growth of income of 4.8 per cent. According to Charles Issawi's analysis, Palestine with its trade growth of 516 per cent over the period between 1928 and 1948 became the most vibrant economy in the Middle East.³¹¹ This transformation of Palestine's economy over the course of the interwar years, was motivated by two crucial incentives – the ideology of economic nationalism and a substantial growth in population.

Another factor that substantially sped up the economic development of Palestine was Zionism, which emerged as a potent political force, aiming to establish a Jewish state in the historic lands of Israel (*Eretz Israel*). Its political agenda became a particular stimulus for Jewish immigration to Palestine, although it did not initiate the process entirely. From the late nineteenth century onwards, the national awakening along with racial hatred and discriminatory anti-Semitic policies motivated Jews to leave their homes in Europe. Following the 1881-1882 pogroms in Tsarist Russia, the first wave of mass immigration began. At this time Palestine, nonetheless, was not the most desired destination for Eastern European Jews. It is estimated that between 1882 and 1903, a mere three per cent of 1.98 million migrants headed there whereas 1.5 million Jews decided to settle down in the United States.³¹² Of greater importance was to be the influx of immigrants during the subsequent decade. The *Second Aliyah* that took place between 1904 and 1914 brought to Palestine approximately 35,000 Jews.³¹³ Soon after the Balfour Declaration was announced and the British authorities were entrusted with the mandate over Palestine the flow of immigrants intensified. It is estimated that during the *Third Aliyah* (1919-1923) about 35,000 Jews reached the shores of Palestine. The great majority of them originated in Eastern Europe, and over one-third was of Polish origin.³¹⁴ The existing

³⁰⁹ Metzer J. (1998) *The Divided Economy of Mandatory Palestine* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.11, 19.

³¹⁰ Grunwald K. (1925) Foreign Trade of Palestine in 1925. *Palestine and Near East Economic Magazine* I: 126-134.

³¹¹ Issawi C. (1982) *An economic history of the Middle East and North Africa* New York: Columbia University Press.

³¹² Smith B. (1993) *The roots of separatism in Palestine: British economic policy, 1920-1929* Syracuse: Syracuse U.P, pp. 10-11.

³¹³ For the analysis of Palestine's demographic growth and profile of immigrants in the period of the *Second Aliyah*, see: Alroeij G. (2014) *An unpromising land: Jewish migration to Palestine in the early twentieth century* Stanford: Stanford University Press; Rosenzweig R. (1989) *The economic consequences of Zionism* Leiden: E. J. Brill.

³¹⁴ According to the *Statistical Handbook of Jewish Palestine* the *Third Aliyah* was dominated by immigrants from USSR (13,363). Polish Jews constituted roughly one-third of immigrants (9,158), in turn 5,140 immigrants did not hold specified citizenship.

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historiography, both that written before the Second World War as well as the more recent, usually links the fluctuations of economic activity with the subsequent inflows of Jewish immigrants from Europe.³¹⁵ The influx of capital flow is considered another well-established incentive that provided widespread economic development of Palestine. The newly arrived immigrants brought their capital into Palestine, which provided an opportunity for social and economic developments within the region.

Table 1. Jewish immigration to Palestine and immigration of Polish Jews, 1920-1923

Year	Jewish immigrants	Jewish immigrants from Poland	Percentage of Polish-Jewish immigrants
mid-1920-1921	15,075	4,975-6,115	33-40,6%
1922	7,844	3,053	38,9%
1923	7,421	1,862-2,252	25,1-30,4%

Source: CZA Z4\41484-13 Statistical Figures of Emigration from Poland to Palestine 1920-1923; (1923) Emigracja z Polski, *Miesięcznik Statystyczny*; Gurevich D. (1947) Statistical Handbook of Jewish Palestine, Jerusalem: Jewish Agency for Palestine.

Developments in Palestine and the need to establish a Consular post

Poland's diplomatic post in Palestine has a significant meaning for Polish Jewry both regarding its crucial role in the emigration pattern to *Eretz Israel*, and due to the fact that Palestine is the only ground for encounter of Polish political representatives with the potential Jewish entity.³¹⁶

Soon after the First World War, the Second Polish Republic faced a plethora of internal and external problems. November 1918 not only marked a beginning of the process of building up the state but also a struggle for international recognition. From this perspective, the question of defining policy towards Palestine, a territory so far away and unknown to a large segment of Polish elites, became of secondary importance. Furthermore, since the region was officially a British dependency, there was no need at least initially to establish direct bilateral relations. Thus, until September 1920, when the Polish Legation in Athens took the responsibility

³¹⁵ Halevi (1983) The political economy of absorptive capacity: growth and cycles in Jewish Palestine under the British mandate. *Middle Eastern Studies* 19:456-469; Metzer J. (1998) *The Divided Economy of Mandatory Palestine*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³¹⁶ 'Na mównicy. Zmiana na placówce jerozolimskiej', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 7 April 1927, p.3.

for Polish citizens in Palestine, consular affairs were conveyed to Antonio de la Cierva y Levita, the Spanish Consul in Jerusalem. Such a state of affairs, however, generated many administrative and political difficulties for both Jewish emigrants from Poland and Polish authorities.³¹⁷ Facing these developments, on February 14th 1923, Aleksander Skrzyński, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, came forward with a proposal to establish a Polish Consulate in Jerusalem. In his explanatory statement he wrote:

A substantial increase in the emigration flow between Poland and Palestine requires keeping a watchful eye in order to obtain comprehensive information about the political situation in Palestine and to maintain direct contact with respective institutions [in Palestine] in order to adjust of Jewish emigration, which will be profitable for the Polish state. [...] Moreover, Palestine and Egypt are significant as economic entities – as sources for raw materials and as important market outlets for Polish goods.³¹⁸

Two days later, on March 16th 1923, the Polish Council of Ministers decided to establish a consular branch office in Jerusalem, appointing Jerzy Adamkiewicz, a former Secretary of Poland's Legation in London, as Consul to Palestine.³¹⁹ Right after the nomination, Colonel Kisch reported 'Mr. Adamkiewicz's appointment should be of considerable benefit to the Political Secretary of the Zionist Organisation'.³²⁰ Since at this time Poland did not have a clearly defined policy towards Jewish national aspirations in Palestine, Adamkiewicz was forced to manoeuvre around the deeply divided and contending interests of Zionists, Arabs, British and Poles.

Although Adamkiewicz was all in favour of increased Jewish emigration to Palestine, considering it as a possible solution to the so-called Jewish question in Poland, he referred to the Zionist national endeavour with caution. In his book, *Stan gospodarczy Palestyny w 1923* [The economic conditions of Palestine in 1923], Adamkiewicz even speculated that the creation of a Jewish state could weaken Poland's international position. Consequently, in August 1924, he was recalled from his post. At the beginning of October 1924, the post of Consul General in Jerusalem was entrusted to Dr. Otto Sas-Hubicki.³²¹ As the former Consul in Tokyo, Sas-Hubicki was well aware of the political situation in the Middle and Far East. During his term of service in Jerusalem, he shared pro-Zionist sympathies, which raised some concerns amongst Zionist politicians who

³¹⁷ Łazor J. (2016) *Brama na Bliski Wschód ...*, pp. 93-94.

³¹⁸ AAN (Archiwum Akt Nowych), *The Second Polish Republic Cabinet Protocols*, Vol. 21, p.438.

³¹⁹ Szulkin M. (1980) *Żydzi palestyńscy w świetle raportów polskiej służby dyplomatycznej*. Cz. 1, (1923-1935). *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 4: 128-143.

³²⁰ CZA, S25\11034-2-3, *Letter submitted by Colonel Kisch to the Political Secretary of the Zionist Organisation in London, 28 May 1923*.

³²¹ Although Adamkiewicz had been recalled from his post as early as August 1924 he headed the Polish Consulate until November 20th 1924 when his successor Otto Sas-Hubicki arrived in Palestine.

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were suspicious about his true intentions. Colonel Kisch, in his diary, noted ‘the Polish Consul’s enthusiasm for the Jewish National Home, to which he is always referring as such, and for *Eretz Israel*, is startling, until one remembers Poland’s desire to reduce the number of her Jewish citizens by emigration’.³²² Nevertheless, it was Sas-Hubicki’s initiative to establish the Polish-Palestine Chamber of Commerce. Sas-Hubicki held his post until April 1st 1927, when the nomination was given to Zbyszewski, the artillery captain and devoted follower of Marshal Piłsudski – a *Piłsudczyk*. An official statement, circulated by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, confirms that the newly appointed Consul received a warm reception from the Polish Jews who had emigrated to Palestine. Referring to Zbyszewski’s pro-Zionist attitude, *Doar HaYom* emphasised that Zionists ‘should welcome this nomination with satisfaction’.³²³

Zbyszewski was deeply interested in the so-called Jewish Palestine, admired the progress of the region and even started learning Hebrew. In an interview for the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, the newly appointed Consul declared, ‘Zionism is a historic movement and although it is now living through temporary mishaps which are unavoidable, the main thing is to continue the work with persistence’.³²⁴ He repeatedly emphasised that the Polish Jews in Palestine were deeply attached to Poland as their country of origin, ‘demonstrating their love and faithfulness to their Polish Fatherland’.³²⁵ In his perception, the close attachment to Poland had never interfered with Zionism and their constructive work for the national up-building.³²⁶ It was particularly symptomatic in terms of the ideological and economic perceptions of Jewish immigrants from Poland. The view that Zionists remained loyal to their country of origin continued to be the preserve of Piłsudski’s inner circle and was frequently emphasised in its organs.³²⁷

Zbyszewski was admired by Palestine’s Zionists for his devotion to the Jewish cause during the riots of 1929. Indeed, at the time when Konstanty Skirmunt, Poland’s ambassador to Great Britain, intervened in the Foreign Office in order to secure rights for vulnerable Polish-Jewish settlers, Zbyszewski visited victims in the *Hadassah* hospital and held a fund-rising drive in Jerusalem.³²⁸

³²² Kisch F. (1938) *Palestine Diary* London: Gollancz, p.177.

³²³ *Doar HaYom* article cited in: ‘Konsul Gen. T. Zbyszewski o stosunkach polsko-palestyńskich’, *Chwila*, 13 June 1927, p.7.

³²⁴ ‘Polish Consul in Jerusalem Gives His Views on Palestine Situation’, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 2 November 1927.

³²⁵ ‘Polish Consul’s Report on His Palestine Visit’, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 16 August 1927.

³²⁶ ‘Przywiązanie Żydów do Polski nie koliduje z ich patriotyzmem żydowskim’, *Chwila*, 2 February 1931, p.4.

³²⁷ Mohuczy B. ‘Pod polską banderą do Palestyny’, *Gazeta Polska*, 13 October 1933, p.3. The author recounts ‘repeated assurances of Jewish allegiance to Poland’.

³²⁸ ‘Ofiarność Konsula Zbyszewskiego’, *Chwila*, 1 September 1929, p.3.

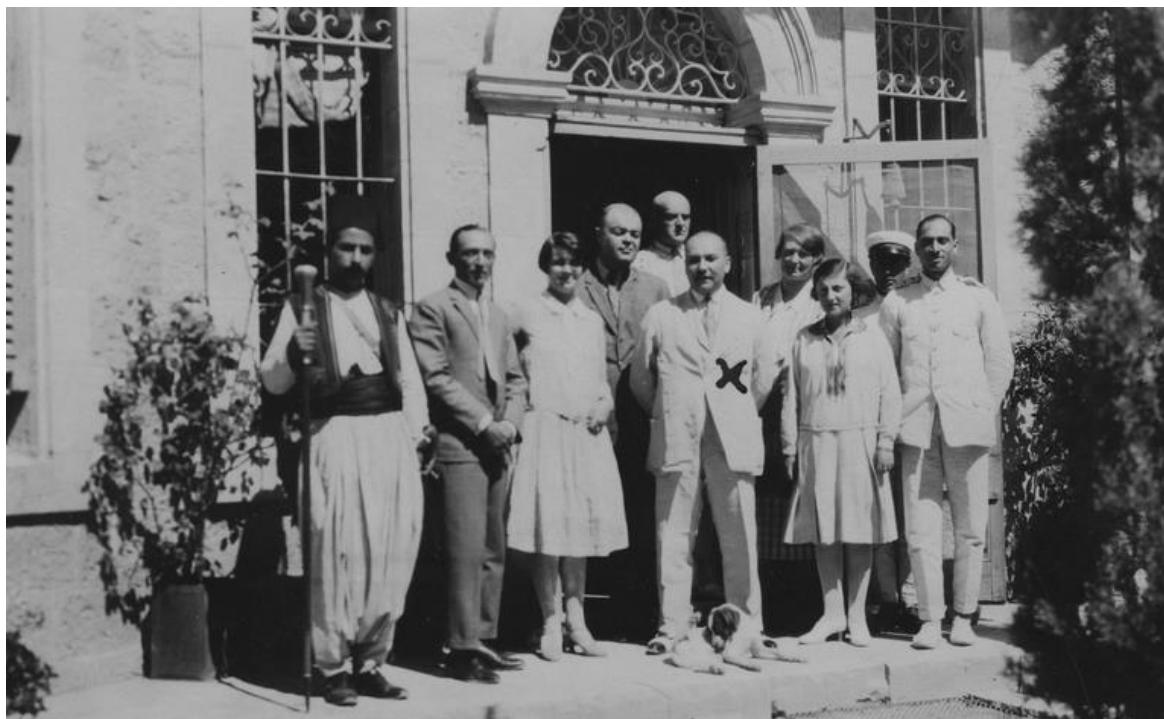


Figure 2. Personnel of the Consulate General of the Polish Republic in Jerusalem, 1927-1930.
Source: *Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny*, NAC.

Until the outbreak of the Second World War, the post of Poland's Consul was entrusted consecutively to Zdzisław Kurnikowski (1931-1934), Stanisław Łukaszewicz (1934-1936) and Tadeusz Piszczykowski (1937) as Consuls in Tel-Aviv and Witold Hulanicki (1937) who was viewed as philosemitic.³²⁹ Over this period, Poland's envoys as well as the top-ranking officials of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained keen observers of the political situation in Palestine. Diplomatic reports by Polish officials throughout the interwar years depict various aspects of complex Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine. The public response to dreadful events in Palestine was immediate. Also, the Polish press did not remain silent. The Polish Consulate reported on 'the sharp and ruthless economic agitation' carried out by Arabs.³³⁰ At a time when Arab terror against Jews was raging, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs instructed Poland's Legation in London to seek compensation for Polish Jews in Palestine from the Foreign

³²⁹ In his letter to Michał Łubieński Hulanicki wrote: 'On my departure from Warsaw I was perceived as viewed as philosemitic, I was called so also in London' see: IPMS, KRPJ, A 16/6/25, *Letter by Witold Hulanicki to Michał Łubieński*, August 1938, pp.41.

³³⁰ AAN, ARPL – Polish Embassy in London, 503, *Report submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 1929.

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Office.³³¹ For this purpose, Zbyszewski prepared a detailed report based on his extensive research conducted soon afterwards the August 1929 riots.³³²

Polish Jews who had immigrated to Palestine dply appreciated Zbyszewski's stance during and after the bloody clashes in Palestine, which resulted in the deaths of 133 Jews (19 of them were Polish citizens) and 116 Arabs.³³³ Their stance was reflected in the September 1929 letter to the Polish Consul General in Jerusalem, in which the Association of Poland's Jews wrote:

Our defensive struggle in *Eretz Israel* sent shock waves across the Polish Nation, whose heroic past teems with similar glorious struggles. [...] We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the Polish authorities in Warsaw for their favourable approach and immediate actions towards our interests in *Eretz Israel* at the international forum.³³⁴

Also, the Palestine Zionist Executive conveyed thanks to Poland's Consul for his 'personal sympathy and generosity displayed towards our people in their hours of stress'.³³⁵ Unarguably, through his engagement with Palestine's internal affairs, Zbyszewski further enhanced Poland's prestige and position among Yishuv inhabitants and in the eyes of the Zionist leaders. This was reflected in Colonel Kisch's diary: 'Of all the foreign Consuls at Jerusalem during the riots he showed himself by far the most helpful and sympathetic towards the Jews, and maintained this attitude in spite of a good deal of criticism'.³³⁶

³³¹ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Instruction submitted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Poland's Legation in London*, 24 September 1929, pp.85-86.

³³² AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Report submitted by Tytus Zbyszewski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 4 October 1929, pp.87-88.

³³³ AAN, ARPL – Polish Embassy in London, 503, *Tytus Zbyszewski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 22 August 1928, pp. 41-44.

³³⁴ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Letter submitted by the Association of Poland's Jews in Palestine to Consul General in Jerusalem*, 9 September 1929, p.79.

³³⁵ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Letter submitted by the Palestine Zionist Executive to Consul General in Jerusalem*, 1 September 1929, p.81.

³³⁶ Kisch F. (1938) *Palestine Diary* London: Gollancz, p.364.



Figure 3. Polish Consul General Zdzisław Kurnikowski visiting Kiryat Anavim in July 1931

In April 1927 Warsaw's Zionist daily *Nasz Przeglqd* [Our Review] noted that Poland's diplomatic mission to Palestine was playing an important role in establishing close political and economic discussions with the Zionist leadership.³³⁷ Indeed, over the course of the 1920s, the Polish Consulate in Jerusalem served as a platform for further development of bilateral Polish-Zionist relations. Although Poland's representatives to Palestine were directly subordinated to their ministerial superiors in Warsaw, in many instances the lack of unambiguous instructions along with the complexity of the Middle Eastern politics created a very difficult environment in which they became responsible for setting the strategic orientations of Poland's policy in the region. Consecutive Polish delegates to Palestine, by enhancing relations with former Polish citizens as well as with the *Yishuv* leadership, built a solid basis for further mutual cooperation. Consular reports from Palestine as well as frequent interviews reflect an ideological understanding of the Zionist doctrine and a willingness to cultivate the Polish-*Yishuv* alliance. In this vein, shortly after his appointment, Hulanicki declared that 'he would strive to support Jews in Palestine in their heroic struggles to restore their country'.³³⁸ In a private correspondence to Michał Łubieński, in turn, Hulanicki wrote, 'During a four-month period, I drove some five to six thousand kilometres in the company of the representatives of the Jewish Agency. Among them were the intransigent Ussishkin, the marxist Jaffe and the fascist-Revisionist activist Cessler, all of whom have become regular guests in my office and house. When Shertok, the Minister of Foreign

³³⁷ 'Na mównicy. Zmiana na placówce jerozolimskiej', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 7 April 1927, p.3.

³³⁸ Rozmowa z nowym konsulem generalnym Polski w Palestynie', *Nowy Dziennik*, 3 February 1937, p. 5.

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Affairs, wants to know what the British think, he approaches me first.³³⁹ Indeed, as Hulanicki himself admitted, he got engaged in the Zionist doctrine and Palestine issues already in the late 1920s during his civil service in London.³⁴⁰

The role played by consecutive Polish diplomats in developing cultural relations between Poland and the Jewish *Yishuv* in Palestine is also undeniable. Seeking to enhance these relations, alongside promoting Poland's economic interests, particularly Poland's exports in the Middle East, diplomats in Jerusalem and then in Tel Aviv undertook various cultural initiatives.

Emigration as a solution to the Jewish question in Poland

The idea of solving the Jewish question in Poland by means of increased emigration has deep roots in Polish political ideology. It emerged in the 19th century, when both theoretical and practical guidelines for Jewish emigration had been formulated and disseminated across Europe. An additional factor was ethno-nationalist anti-Semitism, which began to spread virally in the late 1880s. Initially, it was proposed that Polish Jews should settle down in Southern Russia or within the Tatar settlement.³⁴¹ This kind of literature was filled with the prevalent antipathy towards Jews prevalent at the time. Polish views on the so-called Jewish problem were further revealed in subsequent projects. Some of them reinforced the general perception that emigration was the only solution to the Jewish question, whereas others emphasised socio-economic motivations. In 1854 Józef Gołuchowski, a prominent Polish philosopher with a messianic-leaning, published a book in which he considered the question of Jewish nationality and the right to self-determination.³⁴² As a precursor of the Romanticist 'national philosophy', Gołuchowski emphasised the urgent need to create a Jewish state under a foreign protectorate, under which full facilities would be given to the Jews in order to pursue national independence. In his ambitious project the Polish philosopher, however, rejected the possibility of transferring European Jews to Palestine, claiming that the capacity of the region was limited.

The rapid development of the Zionist rhetoric was paralleled by the growing interest of Polish elites in the movement's political aspirations. The perspective held by Poland's

³³⁹ IPMS, KRPJ, A 16/6/25, *Letter by Witold Hulanicki to Michał Łubieński*, August 1938, pp.41.

³⁴⁰ 'I had excellent teachers, who familiarised me with Zionist ideals. Among them was late Nahum Sokolow, the President of the Zionist Executive. During my six-year stay in London I frequently visited him and made friends with his family. At this time, I have heard a lot details on Jews in general, and on the Zionist movement in particular. At Sokolow's home I have been introduced to a number of prominent Jewish and Zionist activists' Cited in: 'Rozmowa z nowym konsulem generalnym Polski w Palestynie', *Nowy Dziennik*, 3 February 1937, p. 5.

³⁴¹ This idea was embraced in the anonymous brochure *Sposób na Żydów* that was published in 1818.

³⁴² Gołuchowski J. (1854) *Kwestya reform Żydów* Lipsk: Breitkopf i Haertel.

conservative circles was presented by Count Agenor Maria von Gołuchowski, a prominent statesman who subsequently served as the Foreign Minister of the Austria-Hungarian Empire. On April 30th 1904, during a meeting with Theodor Herzl, Count Gołuchowski admitted that the Zionist project was particularly praiseworthy and each government should have considered supporting it financially.³⁴³ Such a declaration unarguably exceeded what Herzl had dared to expect. A few days after the reception, the founding father of Zionism wrote in his *Tagebücher*:

He favours my solution. Only in his opinion, there must be no petty or half-way measures. If it were to be a question of only one or two hundred thousand Jews, the Great Powers could not be stirred into action. Something could be done, however, if we demanded from Turkey land and legal protection for five-six million Jews.³⁴⁴

At this point, it is worthy to refer to the argument that has been put forward by Anna Landau-Czajka. In her study on interwar Polish-Jewish relations, Landau-Czajka emphasises that emigration projects, articulated by various political factions, in contradiction to other concepts of solution to the Jewish question, should not have been motivated only by anti-Semitic reasons. According to her, various emigration schemes, of course voluntary, were also articulated by those who saw no other option to stop the mounting wave of anti-Semitism.³⁴⁵ The position taken by the closest associates of Marshal Piłsudski and some neoconservatives seems to confirm this sort of reasoning. Thus, in the period of the so-called state consolidation (*konsolidacja państwową*) that lasted from 1926 to 1935, as has been already discussed in [Chapter 2](#), the Piłsudczyks did not perceive emigration as an end in itself but rather as complementary process to assimilation. In this vein, Conservatist Piotr Dunin-Borkowski argued, 'the regularisation of Polish-Jewish relations is impossible without emigration'. In his eyes, emigration would break the existing tensions between Poles and Jews and would allow more Jews to make their decision on assimilation with neighbouring Polish society at the same time. In order to achieve this goal Dunin-Borkowski proposed to establish close links with Jewish political activists from abroad.³⁴⁶ In a similar tone, Pawłowski of the Sea and Colonial League in his *O emigracji Żydów z Polski i ich kolonizacji* [On the Jewish emigration from Poland and their colonisation] agreed that emigration is the only viable solution for Poland's Jewish Question. Willing to provide a rationale for emigration schemes aforementioned authors referred to common argument of country's overpopulation.³⁴⁷

³⁴³ Friedman I. (1997) *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism 1897-1918* New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, p. 112.

³⁴⁴ Weinbaum L. (1993) *A Marriage of Convenience: The New Zionist Organisation and the Polish Government, 1936-1939* Boulder: East European Monographs, p.59.

³⁴⁵ Landau-Czajka A. (2015) *Polska to nie oni. Polska i Polacy w polskojęzycznej prasie żydowskiej II Rzeczypospolitej* Warszawa: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, p. 241.

³⁴⁶ Dunin-Borkowski P., 'Sprawa żydowska w Polsce', *Droga*, [9] 1929, p.823.

³⁴⁷ Pawłowski S. (1937), *O emigracji Żydów z Polski i ich kolonizacji* Warszawa: Liga Morska i Kolonialna.

Another example of such stance can be found in the official rhetoric of conservative and neoconservative circles around Kraków daily *Czas* [Time] and *Bunt Młodych* [Youth Rebellion]. Along with the increasing anti-Semitism in late 1935 the organ began to articulate the necessity of cooperation with the Zionist organisations in order to facilitate the process of emigration of Jews from Poland. At the same time, its editors openly and bitterly condemned every manifestation of anti-Semitism.³⁴⁸ Their stance was backed by two essential reasons. First, emigration was supposed to serve as a remedy against the mounting wave of anti-Semitism. Second, the process should not be coercive in its character.³⁴⁹ In September 1938 Jerzy Giedroyć while 'utterly condemning any anti-Jewish excesses', which in his eyes 'directly led to barbarism and moral degeneration' at the same time stressed that emigration was the fairest solution to Poland's Jewish question³⁵⁰

The PPS and other left-leaning circles had different views on this question. Although Leon Wasilewski, a leading ideologist of the PPS camp, agreed that authorities should have supported the abolition of emigration restrictions and ease the process of leaving the country, his faction has never considered emigration as a solution to the Jewish question in Poland. Their activities, along with the economic concession award procedures and acceptance of national aspirations in the field of education, were rather supposed to serve as a tool in the assimilation process.³⁵¹ In the pages of left-wing press, there can be found, in turn, numerous articles indicating utopianism of every emigration scheme. Close political links with the socialist Bund were particularly visible in the official perception of the legitimacy of immigration to Palestine. In this vein, left-leaning publicists emphasised that discussions on emigration only served as an encouragement for further anti-Jewish propaganda.

A vivid discussion on emigration arose in the late 1930s along with the intensification of ethno-nationalist tendencies amongst Polish elites. Although the political left had not defined an unambiguous stance towards Zionism and the Palestine question, in spring 1937 *Robotnik* [Worker], the publishing house of the PPS, circulated a brochure by Jan M. Borski *Sprawa żydowska a socjalizm: polemika z Bundem* [The Jewish question and socialism: a polemic with the

³⁴⁸ Chojnowski A. (1979) *Koncepcje Polityki Narodowościowej Rządów Polskich w latach 1921-1939* Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich - Wydawnictwo, p.137.

³⁴⁹ Mich W. (1992) Problem mniejszości narodowych w myśli politycznej polskiego ruchu konserwatywnego (1918-1939). IN: Jachymek J. (ed) *Mniejszości narodowe w polskiej myśli politycznej XX wieku*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, p.82.

³⁵⁰ Giedroyć J. (1938) Problem żydowski. IN: Giedroyć J. (ed) *Polska idea imperialna*, Warszawa: Polityka, pp. 42-48.

³⁵¹ AAN, Leon Wasilewski, 74, p.33.

Bund].³⁵² Although Borski was born to a Jewish family he called for voluntary emigration, asserting that Jews were spiritually and culturally alien to Poles.³⁵³ Borski's position on emigration, unarguably, reflects how deeply ethno-nationalist vision of Poland articulated by *Endecja* affected public sphere, including assimilated Jews and intellectuals. As Borski emphasised it was not an official stance of the PPS party. 'Many of our comrades share the opinion of Comrade Wiktor Alter [a leading politician of the socialist Bund], many others have opposite views'.³⁵⁴ Indeed, his publication sparked a vivid discussion in the socialist camp. Socialists frequently indicated delusive character of emigration projects.³⁵⁵ Z. Zaremba in a polemic published in the pages of *Światło* [Light] wrote that emigration slogans stood in contradiction to socialist values. In his opinion, these slogans were inextricably linked to critical socio-economic conditions within the country, in turn, mutual antagonisms could be eased by raising the quality of life.³⁵⁶

In the second half of the 1930s, with the exception of the PPS, the left-leaning section of the *Sanacja* camp and the Democratic Party, emigration began to be seen as an antidote for prevailing anti-Semitism and social radicalisation. Although emigration appeared the only viable solution to easing the Jewish situation in Poland, there was no coherent policy or scheme for its actual implementation. While the right-leaning sections of the *Sanacja* called for gradual emigration, the closest associates of late Marshal Piłsudski proposed enhanced cooperation with the Zionist leadership in this matter. After 1935, it was political opportunism and pragmatic considerations that clinched Warsaw's support for Zionism. *Myśl Polska* [The Polish Thought], in the 1936 article *O dom dla "wiecznego tułacza"* [For a home for 'a wanderer'], agreed that the solution for a Jewish question on a Polish soil was utopia.

The Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also referred to the question of emigration in its strictly confidential memorandum. The 1938 document listed emigration as one of the two effective solutions for Poland's Jewish question. Interestingly, arguments used for a rationale for emigration project referred to well-known ethno-nationalist preconceptions. According to the document emigration scheme was legitimate, because the Jews constituted culturally distinctive immigrants who settled down in Poland in the late 14th century. The document also emphasised their inability to assimilate with Polish society and reluctant attitude towards Polish statehood. Moreover, the unknown author indicated that the centres of

³⁵² Borski J. (1937) *Sprawa żydowska a socjalizm: polemika z Bundem* Warszawa: Robotnik.

³⁵³ Borski J. (1937) *Sprawa żydowska* ..., p. 19.

³⁵⁴ Borski J. (1937) *Sprawa żydowska* ..., p. 24.

³⁵⁵ Landau-Czajka A. (1998) *W jednym stali domu ... Koncepcje rozwiązania kwestii żydowskiej w publicystyce polskiej lat 1933-1939* Warszawa: Neriton, p. 242.

³⁵⁶ Landau-Czajka A. (2015) *Polska to nie oni. Polska i Polacy w polskojęzycznej prasie żydowskiej II Rzeczypospolitej* Warszawa: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, p.256.

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Jewish politics were located beyond the borders of Poland.³⁵⁷ Jan Tomaszewski, however, draws the attention to the fact that this document was prepared by radical Zarychta.³⁵⁸ This question is further discussed in a chapter on political interactions between Poland and the Zionist leadership.

Jewish emigration in the first years of independence

In the early years of the Second Polish Republic the anti-Jewish hatred was propelled by high birth rate among the Jewish populace and deteriorating economic conditions. The political ideology of Zionism, offering a quick solution to the Jewish question – an autonomous territorial setting, which would separate them from non-Jewish population, spoke to large segments of Polish officials and gradually gained strong adherents among them. Shortly after the First World War, Polish Zionists were slightly ambivalent about Jewish emigration and the idea of the quick establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Some of them even rejected the idea of immigration *en masse* into Palestine as a crucial goal of the Zionist doctrine, hoping to secure a proper life in Poland as a minority.³⁵⁹ This approach largely stemmed from the *fin de siècle* Jewish politics that propounded creation of Jewish national autonomy in the Diaspora.³⁶⁰

The situation began to change along with the development of modern ethno-nationalist rhetoric in the country. As I have discussed in [Chapter 2](#), during the 1920 Polish-Soviet war a significant sector of right-wing Polish politicians questioned Jews' patriotism, accusing them of sharing pro-Bolshevik sympathies. The rightist National Democrats, firmly advocating the idea of 'national state' solution, openly accused Jewish deputies of acting on behalf of neighbouring powers - Germany and Soviet Russia.

With the beginning of the 1920s mutual relations between Poles and Jews had been poisoned anew. Robberies and other forms of harassment were relatively frequent. Coming to

³⁵⁷ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10005, pp. 67-74, *Problem żydowski*, Warszawa 1938.

³⁵⁸ 'The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was free from anti-Semitism in the sense that the Jewish nationality, practicing Judaism, and most of all having a Jewish background did a direct consequences neither in formulating approach of supervisors towards employees nor in private relations between them. However, some of these officials, perhaps even a large group of people, shared prevalent stereotypes about the alleged Jewish majority in Poland. In their minds the ideas of depriving Jews living abroad their citizenship or promoting mass emigration as a solution to state's economic problems were formulated'. Cited in: Tomaszewski J. (1998) *Preludium zagłady: wygnanie Żydów polskich z Niemiec w 1938 r.* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, pp.83-84.

³⁵⁹ Aberbach D. (2012) *The European Jews, patriotism and the liberal state, 1789-1939: a study of literature and social psychology* Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp.100-103.

³⁶⁰ The most recent historiography on Jewish nationalism in Europe suggests that Zionists were the most vocal advocates of this project. See: Karlip J. (2013) *The Tragedy of a Generation: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism in Eastern Europe* Cambridge: Harvard University Press; Shanes J. (2012) *Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Habsburg Galicia* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Pianko N. (2010) *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken: Rawidowicz, Kaplan, Kohn* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

grips with the prevalent atmosphere of suspicion and increased outbreaks of anti-Semitic hatred many Jewish youth became interested in Zionism. Furthermore, the difficult economic conditions, severe overcrowding of small cities and mass destruction after the war induced Jews to leave the country. Many of them decided to seek a better life in America and *Eretz Israel*. By the mid-1920s the stream of Polish-Jewish emigrants had been chiefly directed to the United States. However, in 1924 the American Administration decided to tighten its immigration policy, which had a particularly adverse effect on further immigration from Eastern Europe.³⁶¹ These developments along with the worsening economic situation motivated many Polish Jews to make their way to Palestine. In 1924 the Warsaw branch of the Palestine Office noted 'the average number of people applying to the Office daily is about 100, comprising actual immigrants, people seeking information, etc.'³⁶² Next year 'the number of applications for visas for Palestine, both from emigrants and tourists, has increased very considerably in Warsaw and the very large area of Poland served from that city, involving an allotment of as many as 3,000 visas a month'.³⁶³

In spite of the fact that both Polish and Jewish institutions were interested in the size of immigration flow, accurate data about the early 1920s' Jewish immigration from Poland is almost unavailable. The existing statistics prepared by the Mandate Authorities, the Jewish Agency and Polish institutions show significant discrepancies both in the overall number of immigrants as well as in the percentage rate of immigrants. This may partly be explained by the fact that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Emigration Department started to collect data in 1925, before that statistics were provided by the consular institutions. In many cases the country where immigrants obtained visa for entering Palestine did not correspond with their real citizenship. Furthermore, at the beginning of the 1920s organized groups of Polish Jews were trying to reach Palestine from other territories.³⁶⁴

The policy adopted by the Zionists in Poland – their work for Jews in the country alongside constructive work for Palestine – was apparently succeeding and Poland became 'a main emigration reservoir'.³⁶⁵ Also, the Polish government deeply appreciated the Zionist nation-

³⁶¹ From the late 19th The United States absorbed throngs of Jewish immigrants from Poland. However, in 1924 the US deployed a policy, which was supposed to deliberately discourage further immigration. The country not only decided to impose a special tax on the new arrivals but also specified immigration quotas. The Johnson-Reed Act reduced entry visas to two per cent of the total number of people of specific nationality in the US as of the 1890 national census.

³⁶² CZA, Z4\41484-5, *Report of the Palestine Office in Poland, Warsaw, 1924*.

³⁶³ CZA, S25\2339-113, *Letter submitted by Israel Cohen to the Foreign Office, 19 May 1925*.

³⁶⁴ TNA (The National Archives, Kew), Colonial Office CO 67/258/13 Immigration of Polish Jews into Cyprus; Foreign Office 371/5185; Foreign Office 608/99/4 Palestine: Immigration, containing: Immigration of Ukraine Jews to Palestine. Permit for certain Polish Jews now in Italy to enter Palestine.

³⁶⁵ *Palestine and Near East Economic Magazine*. February 1933.

building endeavour. On May 26th 1923, Polish Consul General in Palestine, Adamkiewicz, paid a visit to Colonel Kisch, from the Palestine Zionist Executive's political department. During the meeting, a newly appointed representative of Poland declared that he would: 'do his best to assist in any possible way in connection with immigration from Poland.' He emphasised as well that his Government was anxious to maintain close contacts with former Polish citizens who had settled in Palestine in order to develop trade relations between the two countries.³⁶⁶

In the mid-1920s, when the renewed economic crisis hit the Second Polish Republic and the socio-economic conditions within the country began to deteriorate, interest in Palestine rekindled. The high percentage of Jews living from trade and crafts was another incentive for the emigration. The Jewish population of Poland had significantly different pattern of occupational concentration to their non-Jewish neighbours. Despite the fact that agriculture was the strongest sector of the interwar Polish economy and almost seventy-three per cent of its non-Jewish residents worked in this sector, the rate of Jewish workers was infinitesimal, not exceeding five/six per cent. As the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*'s correspondent reported in 1926: 'For over a year the unemployment among the Jewish workers and artisans (who formed thirty per cent of the Jewish population) had embraced about seventy to ninety per cent of the total number of Jewish workshops. The Jewish population, especially in the provincial towns, was starving. In the small towns in the frontier districts the situation was appealing'.³⁶⁷ It was repeatedly emphasised by Polish politicians, across the political spectrum, that Jews were overly concentrated in the trade industry. Facing huge economic problems, the Polish government decided to implement a reform package.³⁶⁸ The stabilisation policies implemented by Władysław Grabski, the Polish Finance and Prime Minister, including state control over a wide range of economic activities, new fiscal policy and protective taxation on trade particularly affected urban middle-class, Jewish merchants and manufacturers. As the taxes began to substantially increase, thousands of the middle and lower-middle class Polish Jews made their decision to leave the country. Although as Tomaszewski points out, no existing data suggests that this policy was intentionally directed against the Jewish population of Poland the measures taken by the government in Warsaw hit the Jews especially hard.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁶ CZA, S25\11034-2-3, *Letter submitted by Colonel Kisch to the Political Secretary of the Zionist Organisation in London, 28 May 1923*. Consul Adamkiewicz made a good first impression on the Zionist politician. Not without a reason Kisch reported: 'I am of the opinion that Mr. Adamkiewicz's appointment should be of considerable benefit to us'.

³⁶⁷ 'Our Daily News Letter', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, Warsaw, 8 April 1926.

³⁶⁸ In the mid-1920s Poland faced a huge economic crisis. In 1925 the Weimar Republic, particularly affected by hyperinflation declared economic war on Poland. As a result, Polish currency lost more than 50 per cent of its value.

³⁶⁹ Tomaszewski J. (1992) Władysław Grabski wobec kwestii żydowskiej. *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, pp.38-41.

What factors therefore caused a substantial worsening of the personal situation of hundreds of thousands of Polish Jews? It was due to defective socio-economic structure, the economic statism that had been launched along with Grabski's reforms particularly hurt small Jewish businesses. All of these measures contributed to the sudden breakdown of the Polish-Jewish middle class in the mid-1920s and eventually caused its intensified emigration. The Zionist historiography reflects this wave of immigration as the *Grabski Aliyah* or the *Fourth Aliyah*. According to the official statistics, between 1924 and 1931, approximately 76,000 Jews crossed the borders of Palestine.³⁷⁰ As the table below shows, approximately forty per cent of these immigrants came from Poland. The immigration was individual, unorganised and largely directed to Tel Aviv.

Table 2. Jewish immigration to Palestine and immigration of Polish Jews, 1924-1928.

Year	Jewish immigrants	Jewish immigrants from Poland	Percentage of Polish-Jewish immigrants
1924	12,856	5,695-6,797	44,3-52,9%
1925	33,801	13,696-17,740	40,5-52,5%
1926	13,081	6,840-7,393	52,3-56,5%
1927	3,034	836	27,6%
1928	2,178	282	13%

Source: Gurevich D. (1947) *Statistical Handbook of Jewish Palestine*, Jerusalem: Jewish Agency for Palestine.

By the end of 1926, when the mass Jewish migration from Poland started to decline, Tel Aviv was home to sixty-five per cent of urban Jewish population in Palestine.³⁷¹ Zbyszewski, the Polish Consul General in Palestine, in a correspondence with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that the tendency of settling in urban centres was also adopted by immigrants from Poland. On October 28th 1928, he reported that 'newly arrived immigrants from Poland had settled chiefly in cities (approximately eighty-one per cent of immigrants), where they opened

³⁷⁰ Gurevich D. (1947) *Statistical Handbook of Jewish Palestine* Jerusalem: Jewish Agency for Palestine.

³⁷¹ 'Dizengoff's Programme for Statistical Colonisation', *Zionische Welt*, 17 December 1926, pp.9-10.

Chapter 3

various workrooms.³⁷² Antoni F. Ossendowski, a famous interwar traveller and a prolific writer, in his memoirs from a visit to Palestine, in a similar way noted:

Along the dusty and noisy streets, there are plenty of homes. Not so high, mainly one storey, with various signboards. Unarguably, it is a shopping district. I was able to read the names from the signboards, the great majority of them was Jewish. Surely, the local merchants have close relatives among the merchants from our Nalewki, Leszno and Dzika [the main business districts in Warsaw, largely populated by the Jews].³⁷³

Polish-Jewish immigrants, who had arrived in Palestine in the mid-1920s, faced many pre-existing prejudices. There was a common perception, for instance, that the great majority of them was induced by economic factors and did not have an appropriate ideological background. Since a significant number of them had arrived in Palestine as 'capitalists', the established *Yishuv* inhabitants scornfully called newcomers the *Nalewki aliyah*. The fact that a substantial number of immigrants settled down in urban areas, even though the Zionist ideology encouraged rural way of life, only deepened animosities. Chaim Weizmann commented:

Dzika and Nalewki are coming to Palestine. [...] We have to control the building of *Eretz Israel* and create a balance between urban and rural population. Dzika and Nalewki cannot exist in *Eretz Israel* [...].³⁷⁴

Within the Polish Zionist movement the collapse of the *Fourth Aliyah* in 1926 initiated a passionate debate over the question of who was entitled to go to Palestine, which was inextricably linked to the question of ideological character of a Jewish state.³⁷⁵ Gruenbaum, the famed leader of Polish Zionism, was even more critical, warning that the 'vulgar spirit of shopkeepers, traders and *lufmentshen*' would destroy the Zionist doctrine.³⁷⁶ For this purpose, at the June 1926 Zionist Conference held in Warsaw, he emphasised that 'Palestine is not a Jewish variation of America', and only Zionists should be allowed to immigrate there.³⁷⁷

³⁷² AAN, ARPL - Polish Embassy in London, 61, *Report submitted by Tytus Zbyszewski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 28 October 1928*, pp.1-3.

³⁷³ Ossendowski A. (2011) *Gasiące Ognie: Podróż po Palestynie, Syrii i Mezopotamii* Poznań: Zysk i S-ka, p. 67.

³⁷⁴ 'Dookoła Spraw Palestyńskich', *Chwila*, 12 March 1925, p.5.

³⁷⁵ Mendelsohn E. (1982) *Zionism in Poland: The Formative Years, 1915-1926* New Haven: Yale University Press, p.261.

³⁷⁶ Mendelsohn E. (1982) *Zionism in Poland ...*, pp.263-264.

³⁷⁷ 'Trzecia doroczna konferencja warszawskiej organizacji syjonistycznej', *Nasz Przegląd*, 8 June 1926, p.4.

At this point, special consideration should also be given to the question of the ratio of returning emigrants. In the second half of the 1920s, Palestine, indeed, struggled with high levels of re-emigration. At the 1926 Buffalo Zionist Convention, the World Zionist Organisation leadership acknowledged that:

The situation in Palestine is and must be closely affected by the situation in other parts of the world, and more especially in Eastern Europe. Poland in particular, from which so many of our best immigrants are drawn, has been passing through an economic and political crisis from which it has not yet fully emerged. For this and similar reasons, as well as to some extent on account of certain features of the existing Immigration Regulations, the influx of private capital into Palestine has recently shown a tendency to shrink, while at the same time, the receipts of the *Keren Hayesod*, taken as a whole, do not compare as favourably as might be desired with those of a year ago.³⁷⁸

Due to a general crisis in Poland, Jewish capital could not have been transferred to Palestine. This led to a crisis in Palestine. As a consequence, as it was estimated approximately twenty-two of every one hundred immigrants who came to Palestine left the country within a few months.³⁷⁹ Unarguably, it was a result of the collapse of the *Fourth Aliyah* and the economic crisis, which hit Palestine. Moreover, many of Jews who came to Palestine in that period were not appropriately prepared to face the conditions of the new country, neither in the financial nor in the occupational respect. As Jakub Appenzlak, the editor of Warsaw's Zionist daily *Nasz Przeglqd* [Our Review] came to observe in his article *Syjonizm u progu nowej ery* [Zionism at the Brink of a New Era]:

The majority of the *Fourth Aliyah* was made up of penurious petty merchants and middlemen, poor artisans, and déclassé petty bourgeoisie. They could not yet be fed by the Palestinian land, which was just barely invigorated by the first phase of farming, most of it still not liberated from the burden of sand and boulders that had weighted them down for centuries.³⁸⁰

Also, the Zionist apparatus and the local population was not adequately prepared to receive such a strong and immediate influx of immigrants. In consequence, the prices of goods

³⁷⁸ 'Weizmann Reviews Palestine Situation in Message to Buffalo Zionist Convention', Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 28 June 1927.

³⁷⁹ (1927) Immigration to Palestine. Palestine and *Near East Economic Magazine*, pp.57-58; 66-68.

³⁸⁰ Appenzlak J., 'Syjonizm u progu nowej ery', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 3 July 1927.

dramatically increased. In many cases, the newly arrived immigrants could not fulfil their financial obligations, 'as they reckoned upon the income from their capital in Poland; on account of the general crisis this money could not be sent to Palestine, and this caused the crisis in Palestine and then a chaotic re-emigration of such impoverished families began'.³⁸¹ According to official statistics, in 1925, 268 Jews decided to leave Palestine for Poland. In 1926 there was a sudden surge in the overall number of re-emigrants and 1,886 people returned to Poland. In 1927, in turn, when the total level of emigration exceeded immigration, the number of emigrants who returned to Poland increased to 2,214. From 1928 onwards, the total number of emigrants systematically declined – 754 people in 1928, 563 in 1929 and 179 – 1930.³⁸² Interestingly, the emigration flow was mainly directed to the overseas colonisation countries and only in small degree to the countries of origin. In this vein, the Palestine Office in Warsaw noted that Polish-Jewish immigrants who returned to Poland were very few in numbers.³⁸³

Interestingly, the Polish Zionist press did not devote much attention to the question of Palestine crisis and returning immigrants. For some time, the mainstream organs of the Polish branch of the Zionist movement even tried to cover up the Palestine crisis. *Nasz Przeglqd* [Our Review], for instance, in 1926 published an interview with Józef Szpryncak, a member of the Zionist Executive, who denied the existence of the acute economic crisis in Palestine.³⁸⁴ Newspapers, which referred to economic crisis largely perceived it as 'a continuation of the economic crisis of Jewish petty bourgeoisie in Eastern Europe'. Aforementioned Jakub Appenzlak observed 'the middleman who first went bankrupt on Nalewki Street, went bankrupt again on Allenby Street in Tel Aviv. Different geographical coordinates did not alter his situation. And his situation would be the same, by the way, in economically developed countries like the United States or Australia, where there is currently also no place for déclassé petty bourgeoisie'.³⁸⁵ In a similar tone, Mojzesz Frostig indicated that the crisis would 'clear the air' in Palestine, by putting an end to all those who wanted to preserve the economic tradition of the *galut* [Diaspora].³⁸⁶

The failure of the *Fourth Aliyah* alongside a severe economic crisis that hit Palestine in the mid-1920s not only strengthened anti-Zionist opposition among Polish Jewry, but also significantly affected Polish perception of Zionism. Warsaw's politicians, especially those around

³⁸¹ CZA, S25\5742-43 *Letter by E.J. Kirschenbaum to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 1933.*

³⁸² Zarychta A. (1939) *Emigracja polska 1918-1931 i jej znaczenie dla państwa Warszawa: Związek Pisarzy i Publicystów Emigracyjnych*, p.41.

³⁸³ CZA, Z4\41484 – 4-5, *Report of the Palestine Office in Poland, Warsaw, 1924.*

³⁸⁴ 'Sytuacja ekonomiczna w Palestynie', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 29 August 1926, p.7.

³⁸⁵ Appenzlak J., 'Syjonizm u progu nowej ery', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 3 July 1927.

³⁸⁶ Mojzesz Frostig cited in: Walicki J. (2005) *Ruch Syjonistyczny w Polsce ...*, p. 101.

the *Endecja* camp, truly feared that the socio-political unrest in the region might impede Jewish emigration from Poland, thus this phenomenon was seen as particularly unfavourable. The anxiety was particularly visible in the Polish press, which published or reprinted from the Jewish journals, relations of those who decided to return to Poland. Already in 1925 *Sztandar Ludowy* [People's Banner] noted, 'the increasing number of emigrants from Palestine are passing through the Katowice railway station. The Jews who are leaving Palestine claim that they did not find there any sources of earnings and thus they sell out their goods and chattels in order to come back to Poland, which provides sufficient resources.'³⁸⁷ Although the Zionist leaders of Poland severely criticised returning *olim*, accusing them of 'spreading slander about Palestine in order to justify their return in the eyes of their neighbours' news about the collapse of the Zionist project quickly went through to the Polish public.³⁸⁸ These unflattering opinions were frequently used as an effective tool for the widespread dissemination of anti-Zionist and anti-Palestine propaganda both among Poles and Jews. A quote of Isaac Bashevis Singer's hero best captures climate of this time: 'It's the almighty's desire that the Jews should be in exile, this is why a Jew can make a living even in the most miserable countries. The only land where a Jew has no hope is the Land of Israel'.³⁸⁹

Jewish emigration played a very important role in overall Polish emigration patterns. It was larger and more constant than the emigration of non-Jewish citizens of Poland, thus its serious decline in the late 1920s caused deep concern within the political circles.³⁹⁰ Official reports seem to confirm that the authorities in Warsaw expected a larger scale of emigration. Clinging to the hope that the increased immigration to Palestine would provide a solution for the Jewish question in Poland, many politicians adopted rhetoric of a surplus number of the Jews in Poland. Particular attention was given to the fact that the Jewish birth rate highly exceeded the number of emigrants. In this vein, correspondence from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicate that the annual Jewish emigration of the late 1920s constituted roughly sixty per cent of the natural increase of the Jewish population.³⁹¹ This tendency was mentioned by Ignacy Daszyński, a socialist activist in his private correspondence with Leib Jaffe in 1928.³⁹²

³⁸⁷ 'Powrót Żydów z Palestyny do Polski', *Sztandar Ludowy*, 30 August 1925, p.5.

³⁸⁸ CZA, Z4/3569, Letter submitted by Leon Lewite to Chaim Weizmann, 8 November 1925; Mendelsohn E. (1982) *Zionism in Poland: The Formative Years, 1915-1926* New Haven: Yale University Press, p.260.

³⁸⁹ Singer I., 'Tsurikvegs' *Literarishe bleter*, 30 November 1928 cited in: Mendelsohn E. (1993) *On modern Jewish politics ...*, p. 70.

³⁹⁰ In February 1926 the National Council for Emigration (Państwowa Rada Emigracyjna) recommended further analysis of the question of Jewish emigration from Poland.

³⁹¹ AAN, MSZ - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, B26304 - 9901, *Memo to the Minister of Foreign Affairs regarding the Inter-ministerial Commission for Emigration (Międzynarodowy Komitet Emigracyjny)*, 15 November 1938, p.24.

³⁹² CZA, KH/B/2154, *Report of October 17, 1928*.



Figure 4. 'A crowd of Jews saying goodbye to volunteers heading to Palestine to defend their co-religionists from the Arabs', *Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny*, 28 August 1929. Source: NAC.

Emigration of the 1930s

The developments of the 1930s, both within the country and in the international arena, had an immense effect on further Jewish emigration. Whereas the wave of emigration of the 1920s was chiefly motivated by deteriorating social and economic conditions, such as raging inflation, high level of unemployment and defective social structure, emigrants who decided to leave Poland in the next decade were also induced by radicalisation of ethno-nationalist attitudes within the society.³⁹³ An accurate observation was made by Melchior Wańkowicz, a prominent Polish writer and political publicist of the interwar period. In his work devoted to Zionism Wańkowicz remarks, 'on the threshold of Palestine there was already its prominent builder – Adolf Hitler'.³⁹⁴ The economic crisis of the early 1930s, which hit Poland very hard combined with the increasing anti-Semitic attitudes significantly worsened position of the Jews. According to the national census, conducted in 1931, Poland was the home of twenty per cent of all Jews. Within a country where every tenth citizen was of Jewish origin and ethno-nationalist rhetoric developed a large and loyal following, pressures for emigration were much stronger than in the preceding

³⁹³ Pajewski J. (1995) *Budowa Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej 1918-1926* Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności.

³⁹⁴ Wańkowicz M. (1943) *De Profundis Tel-Aviv: Przez Lądy i Morza*, p.174.

decades. As Laurence Weinbaum suggests, in the 1930s every fifth Jewish citizen was interested in emigration.³⁹⁵ The *Bnai Brith* [Children of the Covenant] correspondent from Poland in December 1932 noted:

Now a little door has opened and Polish Zionism is reviving. Palestine is again a reality. In every Jewish town and township there is a talk of going to Palestine, as emigrants, as tourists, as excursionists. Everybody is directly involved. People are busy planning, exchanging experiences, advising friends how to go, through which tourist agency, by the aid of a particular newspaper, or with a party being arranged by some organisation.³⁹⁶

Unfortunately, a willingness to leave the country significantly exceeded existing possibilities. During the *Fifth Aliyah*, which began in 1929 and lasted until the outbreak of WWII access to Palestine was becoming more and more limited, as the Mandate power modified its immigration policy. Facing the mounting tensions between Jews and Arabs in Palestine, the British authorities decided to cut down the immigration quotas by publishing the Passfield White Paper of 1930.

This situation generated widespread criticism. Polish newspapers, like the Jewish press published in Palestine, commented that immigration quotas were too low in relation to the needs of Palestine's economy. An official report from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that in 1932 21,439 people left Poland and among them were 8,640 Jewish emigrants. Although from the beginning of the 1930s Palestine experienced substantial economic growth, the number of Jewish emigrants from Poland who decided to choose different destination still exceeded sixty-five per cent. The statistic prepared by the Jewish Agency is indicative of this trend, pointing out that only 2,987 immigrants from Poland reached Palestine during this year. In the following years, the increasing number of immigration quotas and economic revival, however, stimulated further influx of new immigrants from Poland.³⁹⁷ From 1933 onwards, the number of emigrants steadily increased. Prevalent anti-Semitism and the deteriorating economic conditions of European Jewry largely propelled this situation. In 1933 Arie Tartakower, the vice-president of JEAS [Jewish Emigration Aid Society] in Poland and esteemed Jewish sociologist, estimated that almost one-third of Polish Jews did not have regular employment.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁵ Weinbaum L. (1993) *A Marriage of Convenience: The New Zionist Organisation and the Polish Government, 1936-1939* Boulder: East European Monographs, 166.

³⁹⁶ 'Polish Jewry Excursioning to Palestine', *Bnai Brith Messenger*, 30 December 1932.

³⁹⁷ AAN, MOS – Ministry of Social Security, 106, p.31.

³⁹⁸ Rajnfeld E. (1933) *Momenty gospodarcze w emigracji z Polski do Palestyny. Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*. Warszawa:

In this period the Jewish Agency launched an extensive campaign promoting further immigration to Palestine. For this purpose, Zvi Lieberman from the Jewish Agency in 1935 visited Poland on a two-month mission to enlist 350 middle-class Jewish families and 100 men with the capital of PE 80-100 for emigration to *Eretz Israel*.³⁹⁹ Polish central and local administration not only cooperated with various Zionist institutions but also granted necessary facilities for their delegates travelling to Poland. Overall in 1935, among 53,812 emigrants from Poland were 30,703 Jews and almost eighty-one per cent of them chose Palestine as their final destination.⁴⁰⁰ The rise of Nazism in Germany and its possible implications for Poland motivated Zionists for further actions promoting emigration to Palestine. In September 1936, following the March 1936 pogrom in Przytyk, Eliyahu Dobkin, the Histadrut's member, visited Poland's major centres of Jewish emigration – Warsaw, Kraków and Lwów.⁴⁰¹

Interestingly, in the second half of the 1930s also Zionists began to shape their views on the importance and scale of emigration, viewing it as the only means of alleviating the worsening conditions of Poland's Jews. Although the Congress of the Zionist Organisation of Poland fiercely opposed Jabotinsky's project of emigration *en masse*, Gruenbaum, became convinced that emigration was the only solution to the Polish-Jewish question and started to talk about the necessity of transferring East European Jews to Palestine. At the press conference, held on August 2nd 1936 in Warsaw, he declared 'the elevation of market stall (*nobilizacja straganu*) is taking place in Poland. We need to leave. The time of great exodus of European Jewish masses had arrived. Even after the socialist revolution, the Jews will have to emigrate from Poland. Even if a worker-peasant party got government, the emigration would not be stopped. The emigration provides Poland with some reprieve. Without emigration there would be five-six million Jews'.⁴⁰²

Gruenbaum's declaration marked a profound change of his political outlook. A departure from a project of gradual, controlled immigration promoted by Mapai, the ruling political power of the Yishuv and the Mandatory Government was of significant meaning to political elites of Poland. For both, ethno-nationalists and less radical politicians, it became a clear sign that Jews were interested in leaving the country for Palestine. Overall, in the period between 1933 and 1939 approximately 215,000 Jews decided to settle in Palestine, more than doubling its Jewish population, from 180,793 in 1932 to 445,500 in 1939.

Polsko-Palestyńska Izba Handlowa, 2-3.

³⁹⁹ Rajnfeld E. (1933) *Momenty gospodarcze w emigracji z Polski do Palestyny. Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*. Warszawa: Polsko-Palestyńska Izba Handlowa, 2-3.

⁴⁰⁰ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9903, *Conclusions and reference material for the Cabinet concerning the question of Jewish emigration*, p.12.

⁴⁰¹ AAN, ARPL – Polish Embassy in London, 290-292.

⁴⁰² Warszawski Dziennik Narodowy, 2 August 1936.

Table 3. Jewish immigration to Palestine and immigration of Polish Jews, 1929-1939.

Year	Jewish immigrants	Jewish immigrants from Poland	Percentage of Polish-Jewish Immigrants
1929	5,249	1,881-1,979	37,3%
1930	4,944	2,378-2,388	48,3%
1931	4,075	1,535-1,610	39,5%
1932	9,553	2,879	30,1%
1933	30,327	10,344-13,251	34,1%-45%
1934	42,359	12,674-17,723	29,9%-45%
1935	61,854	24,758-29,407	40,2-47,5%
1936	29,727	12,929	43,5%
1937	10,536	3,578-4,035	34-38,3%
1938	12,868	3,357	26,1%
1939	27,561	1,892	6,9%

Sources: Kaznelson R. (1931) Palestine Immigration in 1930. *Palestine and Near East Economic Magazine* VI (6): 100-102; VIII (2): 75; AAN, MSW - Ministry of Internal Affairs, 1068; (1938) Jewish Immigration in 1937. *Palestine and Middle East Economic Magazine* IX (1): 78-79; AAN, MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9909, p.48; Gurevich D. (1947) *Statistical Handbook of Jewish Palestine*, Jerusalem: Jewish Agency for Palestine; TNA, FO 371/20024, p.215 Memorandum on the Position of the Jews in Poland, with Special Reference to the Question of Immigration to Palestine, 8 September 1936.

Immigration from Poland occurred on the basis of certificates, which the Mandatory power officially entrusted to the World Zionist Organization, and from 1930 onwards to the Jewish Agency. It was the general practice of the Jewish Agency to submit to the British Mandate authorities its proposals in connection with the Labour Schedule, specifying the branches of industry that would absorb new immigrants.⁴⁰³ In 1924, due to the huge number of Jewish immigrants coming from Poland the Palestine Immigration Officer was transferred from Trieste to Warsaw and was attached to the local British Consular Staff.

⁴⁰³ These proposals based on analysis conducted by the Statistical Department and the Labour Department of the Jewish Agency in all spheres of Palestine's socio-economic life.

Within the country, the issuing of immigration certificates was entrusted to the Warsaw branch of the Palestine Office, a legal organ of the Jewish Agency approved by the Polish government and as Puah Rakovsky described it 'a prosperous emigration company'.⁴⁰⁴ Its office was established in 1919 at Mariańska 7 and from the beginning of 1920 was under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Works' (*Ministerstwo Robót Publicznych*) Immigration Department. Selection and approval of immigrants according to the prevailing regulations as well as representation of the Jewish Agency before the Polish authorities fell under the Office's competence. The Warsaw office as well as the local branches in Vilna and Lwów, were steered by the prominent Zionist activists – Barlas, Finkelstein, Levin-Epstein and Dubkin - who closely cooperated with various Polish institutions – the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Board of Trade and the National Bank.⁴⁰⁵ Over the course of 1930s the Warsaw office was headed by Raphael Shafar. The Office, employing in the mid-1920s seventy-five clerks only in the capital, was responsible for arranging all formalities in connection with the departure of prospective immigrants to Palestine, securing special trains and carriages as well as arrangements with the steamship companies. Furthermore, there were several other Jewish institutions assisting in the process of emigration, which operated in Poland. In 1924 the JEAS – Central Jewish Emigration Society replaced the HIAS Jewish Emigration Bureau. Its headquarter located in Warsaw along with local branches – in Białystok, Brześć, Kraków, Lublin, Łódź, Lwów, Równe and Vilna assisted in obtaining more than 60,000 passports and almost 20,000 entry visas to Palestine.⁴⁰⁶ Unfortunately, the institution reduced in significance in the following decade, what is confirmed in Antoni Eiger's letter to A. G. Brotman of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. In January 1939 Eiger wrote 'the JEAS is very closely linked to the ICA. It has not till the present moment developed its activities in our country to a very large extent, concentrating rather on the technique of emigration than on the problem itself'.⁴⁰⁷

In 1933, Dr. Kirschenbaum, a Polish Zionist who had emigrated to *Eretz Israel* in the 1920s, evaluated, 'there is no country at present which presents to its citizens such good possibilities for emigration as does Poland. Thousands of Polish citizens emigrate every month to Palestine, creating a majority here and keeping a strict family, citizen, financial and commercial contact with Poland, at the same time furthering their commercial influence on the whole of the

⁴⁰⁴ Rakovsky P. (2002) *My life as a radical Jewish woman: memoirs of a Zionist feminist in Poland* Bloomington: Indiana University Press p.161.

⁴⁰⁵ CZA, Z4\41484-4-14, *Report of the Palestine Office in Poland, Warsaw, 1924.*

⁴⁰⁶ Tartakower A. (1939) *Emigracja żydowska z Polski Warszawa: Instytut Badań Spraw Narodowościowych*, p.53.

⁴⁰⁷ LMA, ACC 3121/E3/515, Letter by Antoni Eiger to Mr. Brotman, January 1939.

Near East. This factor is undoubtedly of economic and political importance for Poland'.⁴⁰⁸ [...] 'The permanent and mass immigration of Polish citizens may cause the absolute majority of Polish Jews in the country. These prospects have a historical meaning'.⁴⁰⁹ Jewish emigration would be impossible without the professional assistance of both Polish and Jewish organisations. A complex legal procedures and ever-changing restrictions significantly affected the process of obtaining certificates. Polish officials interested in securing the largest immigration possibilities in Palestine not only supported the formation of the Zionist offices in Poland but also provided full consular assistance for the newly arrived emigrants in Palestine.

Polish Zionism in the 1930s and internal pro-Palestine initiatives

Along with the 'revolution' in Polish Jewish politics that occurred in the early 1930s the revival of interest in Palestine was widely witnessed. Celia Stopnicka Heller describing atmosphere among Polish Jewry at this time refers to the passage by the nineteen-year-old Polish Jewish boy: 'what a mass mania. The Jewish youth is dominated by a Palestine mania'.⁴¹⁰ Internal developments within the Zionist movement resulted in reorientation of Polish Zionism, which became a genuinely Palestinocentric movement. General Zionists, who were the leading force within Polish Zionism over the 1920s, were consequently replaced by both the socialist Zionists and the Revisionists. Although both factions promoted a complete detachment from local Polish politics and focus on Palestine's issues, their solutions to the deepening Jewish crisis differed widely. While the socialist front started to call for the *halutsiyut* and *hachshara* - constructive efforts preparing for *aliyah* and kibbutz life, the Revisionist movement promoted radical slogans of emigration *en masse* to Palestine.⁴¹¹

Poland's authorities could not remain indifferent to this omnipresent phenomenon. Former pro-Zionist declarations had to adequately be reflected in concrete projects and initiatives. Thus, from the early 1930s onwards the Polish government continued to encourage local Zionists to set up various associations and committees promoting the Jewish settlement in Palestine also on the domestic front.

⁴⁰⁸ CZA, S25\5742-41 *Letter by E.J. Kirschenbaum to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 1933.*

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibidem.*

⁴¹⁰ Heller C. (2014) *On the edge of destruction: Jews of Poland between the two World Wars* Detroit: Wayne State University Press, p.280.

⁴¹¹ Mendelsohn E. (1993) *On modern Jewish politics* ..., pp. 73-75.

For this purpose, in October 1933 Polish Minister of Labour, Stefan Hubicki met with Gruenbaum in order to discuss the aspect of mutual, Polish-Zionist, cooperation in terms of assistance in agricultural training for young Jewish pioneers. It had been then agreed that Polish officials would support establishment of *hachshara* training centres across the country.⁴¹² Perhaps as a result of these agreements, in the same year the Toporol [Towarzystwo Popierania Rolnictwa – the Society for the Promoting of Agriculture] was established. The growing strength of labour Zionism in Poland was best reflected in the total number of *hachshara* centres. As *Nasz Przeglqd* recounted in 1936 their total accounted to 160, bringing together approximately 20,000 pioneers.⁴¹³

Structure of Polish-Jewish emigration to Palestine

Until the outbreak of the 1936 Arab revolt the criteria for granting entry permits were overtly non-political, being predominantly based on the 'economic absorptive capacity of the country'. The decision for determining the total quota lay with the High Commissioner for Palestine. In turn, their distribution was in the hands of the Jewish Agency. These criteria provided a guideline for controlling the flow of immigrants into Palestine. According to the Mandate policy, entry certificates were issued in four categories – labour, capitalists, people of assured maintenance and dependants of permanent residents belonging to the aforementioned categories.⁴¹⁴ Initially, preference was given to materially independent and qualified immigrants as well as to those within freelance occupations. Particular attention was given to the immigration of capitalists, whose assets amounted to P£ 4,000 per family.

From a Foreign Office report of 1930 we come to learn that the policy of Warsaw's Palestine Office was confined to the selection of 'good types of emigrants' and preference was given to those who were in favour of Zionist doctrine. Attention was also given to knowledge of the Hebrew language as well as the history and geography of the country. The selection was carried out by a special committee, consisting of representatives of different Zionist bodies, in strict accordance with the Labour schedule submitted by the Palestine Government.⁴¹⁵ Overall, as the Jewish Agency estimated 72,640 Jews with definite prospects for employment

⁴¹² 'Zionists Get Pledge of Support from Polish Government', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 27 October 1933.

⁴¹³ 'Między wierszami', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 20 February 1936.

⁴¹⁴ People who possessed a certain amount of wealth, ranging between £500 (members of liberal professions) and £1,000 (land and industrial equipment taken into account) and assured a secure income stream of £60 annually. See: Metzer J. (1998) *The Divided Economy of Mandatory Palestine* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴¹⁵ TNA, FO 688/28/4, pp.93-94, Report by H.W. Kennard to Arthur Henderson, 2 September 1930.

(Labours/category C) came to Palestine between May 1925 and December 1934, sixty-two per cent of them originated from Poland.⁴¹⁶

Table 4. Immigration categories of Polish Jews, 1933-1937

Year	Capitalists- category A (%)	Labours- category C (%)	Dependants- category D (%)	Others- category B(%)
1933	9,6	67,3	9,6	13,5
1934	13,7	51,1	22,5	12,7
1935	10,2	46,2	30,5	13,1
1936	6,7	43,1	39,2	11
1937	6	28,1	48,1	17,8

Source: Tartakower A. (1939) *Emigracja żydowska z Polski* Warszawa: Instytut Badań Spraw Narodowościowych.

The table above clearly reflects the policy adopted by the Palestine Government over the course of 1930s. Following subsequent cuts in the number of labour certificates from 1933 onwards, the number of immigrants of category C gradually decreased. Already in 1935, during Stanley Baldwin's second premiership British authorities began the process of limiting the number of Jews who could legally enter Palestine. The subsequent years the political situation in the region became more tense. These limitations on immigration often seemed to run in parallel to difficulties faced by the Mandatory government such as the general labour strike and the Arab revolt (1936-1938). Initially, the authorities favoured immigration of relatives, reducing the number of certificates given to workers and capitalists. In October 1933 David Ben Gurion wrote, 'obviously Palestine does not yet offer a solution for all Polish Jews. Immigration to Palestine is necessarily limited, and therefore there is a need for selective immigration'⁴¹⁷.

Throughout the interwar period, various branches of Polish Zionists sought to secure an appropriate number of immigration certificates. The more radical left-leaning *Al HaMishmar* [On the Guard] faction, originating from the lands that had formerly been under Russian rule, rejected the idea of mass emigration, calling for the emigration of only those settlers who were ideologically motivated. Under the leadership of prominent Zionists such as Gruenbaum, Ellenberg, Apolinary Hartglas, Abraham Podlzewski and Ignacy Schipper *Al HaMishmar*

⁴¹⁶ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Report - Emigration of Polish Jews to Palestine*, pp.177-180.

⁴¹⁷ Ben Gurion D. (1982), Vol.1, 674: Letter to Chaim Weizmann, 26 October 1933.

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demanded a limit on the number of certificates for urban, middle-class immigrants commonly perceived as an 'unproductive social strata'.⁴¹⁸ Although its leaders did not oppose the influx of middle-class immigrants into Palestine in general, they emphasised the need for more profound engagement with the Zionist ideology. By contrast, Joshua Heschel Farbstein, a prominent leader of the *Mizrachi* Zionist movement and a member of the Zionist Executive's Immigration Department, emphasised that the emigration of middle-class was necessary for the further economic development of Palestine. The major rival to *Al ha Mishamar, Et Livnot* [Time to build], headed by Leon Lewite and Yehoshua Gottlieb, opted for cooperation with *Sanacja* officials in emigration matters and unrestricted immigration to Palestine.⁴¹⁹ In this matter, *Et Livnot* was loyal to Chaim Weizmann's policies. Insisting that Polish Zionists should focus on their national goals, the group blamed Gruenbaum for his persistent interest in the domestic politics of Poland. During the 1928 Zionist nationwide conference, *Et Livnot* activists agreed that they should have embraced pro-Palestine approach and leave aside the internal politics of Poland.⁴²⁰

In July 1937 the Mandatory Government, publishing the findings and recommendations of the Peel Commission, introduced non-economic restrictions on Jewish immigration. As a result of this policy, less than 11,000 certificates were issued. The impasse in the region was deepening. This development reduced both the relative attractiveness of and access to Palestine as a destination for migrating Jews, and drove increasing numbers of Jews to the United States, whose overall share of Jewish migration (thirty-three per cent) matched that of Palestine (thirty-five per cent) in 1936-1939.⁴²¹ Immigration to Palestine continued to decline, reaching in its lowest point for three years prior to November 1937.⁴²²

In a period when every single certificate mattered, the *Yishuv* leadership found itself in a very tough position. Faced with a vastly deteriorating situation amongst the Jewish community following Hitler's rise to power, the Jewish Agency decided to reduce the number of certificates for Polish Jews by between ten to fifteen per cent. David Ben-Gurion at the March 1936 meeting of the Jewish Agency voiced his concerns claiming, 'that even the Zionists in Poland will stop being Zionist if Palestine cannot offer Polish Jewry any help'. Nevertheless, he

⁴¹⁸ Walicki J. (2005) *Ruch Syjonistyczny w Polsce w latach 1926-1930* Łódź: Ibidem, p.152.

⁴¹⁹ Appenzlak J., 'Syjoznim u progu nowej ery', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 3 July 1927; Jaworski W. (1996) *Struktura i wpływy syjonistycznych organizacji politycznych w Polsce w latach 1918-1939* Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Rytm, pp. 36-37.

⁴²⁰ Appenzlak J., 'Żydowska konferencja pokojowa w Łodzi', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 5 May 1928, p.4.

⁴²¹ Metzer J. (1998) *The Divided Economy of Mandatory Palestine* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.69.

⁴²² (1938) *Bulletin of the Economic Research Institute of the Jewish Agency for Palestine* 1/2.

emphasised that, 'the Zionist ideology cannot oppose reality. We must act decisively'.⁴²³ The preference given to German Jews became a subject of a vivid debate among both Poles and Jews. Representatives of Polish Jewry opposing the British policies in Palestine, particularly restrictions imposed on further immigration met with British Ambassador to Poland, Kennard and in a special memorandum emphasised that:

The interruption of Jewish immigration to Palestine, even for a temporary period, would be a painful blow for the Jewish Community in Poland, the majority of which, particularly the working youth, is preparing since a number of years to work for the reconstruction of Palestine and is impatiently awaiting the opportunity to apply its powers and capacities in Palestine.⁴²⁴

Also, a substantial number of Polish intellectuals remained critical of the Zionist leadership's detachment from the worsening position of Polish Jews. In the pages of *Wiadomości Literackie*, the most influential weekly periodical of Warsaw's intellectuals, Pruszyński, commenting on March 1936 Przytyk pogrom, wrote bitterly:

Before the war, there was emigration; now there is none. Zionist organisations have opened Palestine to Jews from Germany, but they keep it nearly closed to Jews from Poland. Those who think that Jews will leave after Przytyk should know that only one person moved to Palestine after everything that has happened here.⁴²⁵

⁴²³ Ben-Gurion (1982), vol.3, pp.93-94.

⁴²⁴ TNA, FO 371/20024 – Foreign Office, *British Embassy in Warsaw*, pp.116-120.

⁴²⁵ Pruszyński K., 'Przytyk i Stragan', *Wiadomości Literackie*, 12 July 1936, cited in: Michnik A. ed. (2018) *Against anti-semitism: an anthology of twentieth-century Polish writings* New York: Oxford University Press, p.42.

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Table 5. Number of certificates given by the Jewish Agency to the Polish Jews

October 1931 – September 1936

Period	Overall number of certificates	Number of certificates given to Polish Jews	Percentage of certificates given to Polish Jews (%)
October 1931 – March 1932	350	200	57
April 1932 – September 1932	2,000	1,029	50,6
October 1932 – March 1933	4,500	2,409	55,5
April 1933 – September 1933	5,500	2,060	37,4
October 1933 – March 1934	5,500	1,640	29,8
April 1934 – September 1934	6,800	1,914	28,1
October 1934 – March 1935	7,500	3,090	41
April 1935 – September 1935	7,600	3,500	46
October 1935 – March 1936	4,450	1,135	25,6
April 1936 – September 1936	4,500	1,400	31,1

Source: AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Report - Emigration of Polish Jews to Palestine, pp.177-180.

New immigration restrictions imposed over the course of the 1930s were seen as serious obstacles to the further development of Palestine. Lewite, the President of the Polish-Palestine Chamber of Commerce and simultaneously the President of Poland's General Zionist Organisation, in 1934 commented:

The country, which in spite of imposed restrictions and an increasing number of limitations is able to accommodate thousands of displaced people (and may be therefore a safe harbour for German Jews), in which there is no unemployment but conversely urgently needs labour, where new settlements are developing - thousands of new houses, plantations and hundreds of new innovative industries are established - [this country] is at a time of continuing global economic collapse a particular economic oasis.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁶ Lewite L. (1934) 'Komitet Pro-Palestyna', *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*, pp.5-6.

Along with the new immigration limitations, Polish elites and political publicists began to indicate that the Mandate Authorities were not acting in favour of Zionism and were failing to fulfil international obligations.⁴²⁷ At the 1936 World Jewish Congress held in Geneva, Arieh Tartakower emphasised that Polish-Jewish emigration needed to reach a level of 100,000 people per year. In this vein, Polish politicians stated that obtaining this level of emigration was necessary to maintain an appropriate structural balance.⁴²⁸

In January 1938, the Jewish Agency in Geneva asked the Polish delegation to approach Antony Eden with the question of immigration and avoid unnecessary delay in the solution of the Palestine problem.⁴²⁹ When the 1939 White Paper was published Polish publicists focused their attention on the question of further Jewish immigration to Palestine. The right-wing publicists expressed their negative attitude towards MacDonald's resolutions. However, one may notice clear pro-Arab sympathies from reading between the lines. These contradicting tendencies led the Polish ethno-nationalist press to look for new territories for Jewish emigration. The conservative *Czas*, in turn, indicated the necessity of further Polish engagement in the Jewish emigration question regardless of political consequences. They also discussed the possibilities of the Jewish settlement in Transjordan.⁴³⁰

Within the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs the question of Jewish emigration was seen as 'particularly important and complex'. Both Polish and Jewish officials emphasised that the question of emigration should be approached from the perspective of its being economic and social problem.⁴³¹ On April 20th 1936, Drymmer, as the Head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Consular Department issued a confidential brief for Polish diplomats around the world in which he stated that 'the intensified Jewish emigration is unquestionably in line with the Polish government's policy. The widespread economic crisis impedes the Polish government from resolving the Jewish question within the country [...]'⁴³² Following the formulation of the general outline of the emigration programme, the state's authorities launched an extensive campaign in the international arena. It was repeatedly emphasised that Poland suffered from a surplus of population. Emigration was therefore supposed to solve problem of state's economic and social life. To avoid anti-Semitic allegations Polish politicians emphasised that there was a need of

⁴²⁷ This question is further discussed in [Chapter 5](#).

⁴²⁸ AAN, B26304 - 9901, *Memo to the Minister of Foreign Affairs regarding the Inter-ministerial Commission for Emigration (Miedzynarodny Komitet Emigracyjny)*, 15 November 1938, pp.22-24.

⁴²⁹ CZA, Z6\2752 – 31, *Letter to Moshe Shertok submitted by the Geneva Office of the Zionist Organisation and of Jewish Agency for Palestine*, 11 January 1938.

⁴³⁰ *Gazeta Polska*, December 1934.

⁴³¹ *Gazeta Polska*, December 1934.

⁴³² AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 6259, *Brief for Polish diplomatic posts issued by W.T. Drymmer*, 20 April 1936, p.36.

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emigration both for a part of Polish peasants as well as for a part of Jews. As the British government began to tighten Palestine's immigration policy in the mid-1930s Polish representatives undertook various diplomatic actions within the international forum in order to hinder this procedure. Komarnicki, as the Polish delegate in the League of Nations, repeatedly called for obtaining for Palestine the maximum possible absorptive capacity. In a memorandum submitted to the League of Nations in 1935 it was indicated that the Jewish question and the Palestine question were inextricably linked and the emigration was an economic necessity.⁴³³

Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Józef Beck, in his memoirs, emphasised that his true intention was to 'solve the perilously immense Jewish problem through fair agreement'.⁴³⁴ Whereas a substantial group of Polish politicians expected close cooperation between the Polish government and the Zionist movement in terms of facilitating Jewish emigration to Palestine General Zionists were becoming more suspicious of the intentions of the Poles. As Melzer asserts, at this point general Zionists were becoming more reluctant to cooperate with Polish policymakers, as Warsaw's support for their national aims was not accompanied by a confirmation of equal rights for Polish Jews.⁴³⁵

As I have already discussed in [Chapter 2](#) after the death of Piłsudski a large section of his *Sanacja* camp accepted the rhetoric of their political opponents. Consequently, the officially sanctioned anti-Semitism rendered the Jews' position in the country untenable. As Moses Schorr, a prominent Rabbi and political activist, came to observe:

In a very short space of time, in the unaltered political structure, in the same legal and economic terms, from the citizen representing aspirations and need of a huge section of state's population I was downgraded to the citizen – emigrant *in spe* who represents some unfamiliar, ephemeral group of Jewish outlanders.⁴³⁶

Emeryk Hutten-Czapski from the Parliamentarian Emigration and Colonial Circle indicated that emigration was in Jews' interests since they had lost chances for existence and sense of security in Poland. Politicians affiliated with the Camp of National Unity, such as Colonel Skwarczyński, Zdzisław Stahl and Feliks Karśnicki, emphasised that Jewish emigration may

⁴³³ Melzer (1997), *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, p.212.

⁴³⁴ Beck J. (2015) *Wspomnienia o polskiej polityce zagranicznej, 1926-1939* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Wingert, p.182.

⁴³⁵ Melzer E. (1982) *Ma'avak Medini baMalkotet: Yehudei Polin 1935-1939* Tel-Aviv: Diaspora Research Institute, p.145.

⁴³⁶ Rudnicki S. (2004) *Żydzi w Parlamencie II RP* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe.

ameliorate the detrimental effects of economic crisis and even heal the country.⁴³⁷ Also, the opposition politicians shared these views. The *Front Morges*, for instance, put voluntary Jewish emigration forward as a solution to Polish economic backwardness. In its status the faction called for 'systematic development of Polish trade and industry, the facilitation of Jewish emigration with limitations on export of capital'.⁴³⁸

During the interwar period approximately 362,000 Jewish immigrants crossed the borders of Palestine. As a result, its Jewish population grew from 83,790 in 1922 to 445,457 in 1939.⁴³⁹ These immigrants came mainly from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The Second Polish Republic with the total of approximately 140,000 emigrants was the country with the highest level of Jewish emigration. The question of emigration became the central issue in relations between Warsaw and the Yishuv's leadership. However, as Arieh Tartakower indicated, the most burning problem of Jewish emigration from interwar Poland was the deepening gap between demand for emigration and its possibilities.⁴⁴⁰

Illegal immigration

Along with the consecutive immigration restrictions imposed over the course of the 1930s, illegal forms of immigration – *aliyah bet* – started to develop. The Mandate authorities estimated that between the two world wars (1920-April 1939) between 30,000 and 40,000 illegal immigrants crossed the borders of Palestine.⁴⁴¹ The Polish government deployed double standards in its policy towards Jewish emigration to Palestine. Alongside the pro-Zionist campaign at the international forum Polish authorities turned a blind eye to the process of organising illegal emigration from Poland. As Artur Patek shows, Warsaw instructed local administrative departments not to hinder those who wanted to leave the country unlawfully.

Between the two world wars Poland was the largest reservoir of potential illegal immigrants. Interestingly, the Polish authorities were well-informed about all prospects of this matter. Bernard Hausner, the Consul General in Tel Aviv, in October 1933, provided his Polish supervisors in Warsaw with information that approximately 10,000 illegal tourists from Poland

⁴³⁷ Fałowski J. (2006) *Mniejszość żydowska w Parlamencie II Rzeczypospolitej, 1922-1939* Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza AFM.

⁴³⁸ Zimmerman J. (2015) *The Polish Underground and the Jews, 1939–1945* New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 47.

⁴³⁹ Gurevich D. (1947) *Statistical Handbook of Jewish Palestine* Jerusalem: Jewish Agency for Palestine.

⁴⁴⁰ Tartakower A. (1939) *Emigracja żydowska z Polski* Warsaw: Instytut Badań Spraw Narodowościowych, pp.17-21.

⁴⁴¹ Patek A. (2009) *Żydzi w drodze do Palestyny 1934-1944* Kraków: Avalon, p.85.

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had entered Palestine.⁴⁴² According to the statistics prepared by the Ministry of the Interior the number of Jewish emigrants from Poland who illegally crossed the borders of Palestine in 1935 accounted for 5,600-6,000 persons.⁴⁴³ Is it worthy to note that in 1938 the number of illegal Polish-Jewish immigrants to Palestine (3,965) exceeded the number of those who possessed entry permissions (3,357).⁴⁴⁴ Some of them came as tourists and simply remained in the country instead of applying for the necessary permission whereas the others were smuggled in by the Revisionist Zionists.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the Polish government was greatly interested in the so-called tourist emigration and assisted in this process. In 1932, for instance, the authorities in Warsaw allocated 2,000 cheap foreign passports for prospective travellers to Palestine which significantly eased the migration process. In order to curtail the actual size of this tourist immigration from November 1933 the Mandate authorities required a deposit of £60 to be paid by people applying for a tourist visa. Furthermore, the British Consul in Warsaw demanded evidence from the Polish authorities confirming that each tourist had property in his native town or a small business enterprise that would guarantee his return to the country.⁴⁴⁵ As the new restrictions were imposed, illegal immigration gradually gained wider acceptance amongst the ruling elites in Poland.⁴⁴⁶ Already in 1932 Hausner, in his correspondence to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw, pointed out that tourism to Palestine displayed all the characteristics of the hidden emigration and for this purpose it should have been implicitly supported.⁴⁴⁷

The process of transferring illegal immigrants intensified in the second half of 1930s engaging Polish and Jewish travel agencies, various institutions as well as smuggling organisations. Among the most active were the Turgal Association of the *HaHalutz* [pioneer] movement, the

⁴⁴² AAN, ARPL – Polish Embassy in London, 902, *Report submitted by Bernard Hausner to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 1933*, p.60.

⁴⁴³ AAN, MSW – Ministry of the Interior, 189; AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Report - Emigration of Polish Jews to Palestine*, 1938.

⁴⁴⁴ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9909, *Report – Emigration of Polish Jews to Palestine*, 1938, p.48.

⁴⁴⁵ 'Polish Jewry Excursion to Palestine', *Bnai Brith Messenger*, 30 December 1932, p.10.

⁴⁴⁶ The question of illegal immigration and Polish support for this phenomenon was taken up on the peripheries of broader reflections of Jewish life in interwar Poland. See: Weinbaum L. (1993) *A Marriage of Convenience: The New Zionist Organisation and the Polish Government, 1936-1939* Boulder: East European Monographs; Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press; Patek A. (2009) *Żydzi w drodze do Palestyny 1934-1944* Kraków: Avalon.

⁴⁴⁷ AAN, ARPL – Polish Embassy in London, *Letter submitted by Bernard Hausner to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 21 September 1932*, p.64. In the mid-1935 Bernard Hausner, however, reevaluated his views on illegal immigration indicating its potential adverse effects – further restrictions of immigration quotas, see: Aleksun N. (1994) Listy Konsula Generalnego RP w Tel Awiwie do Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych w sprawie nielegalnej emigracji żydowskiej. *Bulletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 172-174, pp.113-122.

tourist section of *Unser Welt*, Poltour and the Polish travel Agency – Orbis.⁴⁴⁸ Since the Zionist Executive had been forced by the Palestine Administration to register and legalize the stay of every illegal immigrant in Palestine at the expense of legal certificates the mainstream Zionists under the leadership of Gruenbaum did their best to reduce the influx of illegal immigrants.⁴⁴⁹ His actions met, however, with sharp criticism both among Polish officials and the local Zionist-Revisionist organisations.

Following the withdrawal of the New Zionist Organisation from the World Zionist Organisation in 1935, close cooperation developed between the Polish authorities and the NZO, resulting in greater Polish support for illegal *aliyah*. Zarychta, in his report on Poland's emigration policy, emphasised that 'until the establishment of proper migration conditions for Polish Jews, the so-called tourist emigration will be accepted and endorsed by Warsaw'.⁴⁵⁰ However, for the Polish government it was extremely important to keep Warsaw's cooperation in this endeavour strictly confidential, as 'of the utmost secrecy'.⁴⁵¹ Yet in early 1939 the question of financial subventions for illegal emigration was discussed by Minister Beck and Prime Minister. According to a strictly confidential memo from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Polish policymakers considered the allocation of 100,000 zł for this endeavour.⁴⁵² In the first months of 1939 Jabotinsky's organisation was planning to send 2,000 'tourists' to Palestine.⁴⁵³ Polish officials indicated that the right-wing Zionists were utilizing this from of 'tourist emigration' an element within their political propaganda. Thus, the Ministry instructed both Polish officials and Zionist organisers of this endeavour that 'emigration should be conducted in small groups to avoid the unnecessary suspicion of the British authorities'.⁴⁵⁴ The analysed sources from the National Archives, Kew suggest that the Mandate authorities were entirely unaware of scale of mutual cooperation between Poland and the Zionist movement in this matter.

⁴⁴⁸ Patek A. (2009) *Żydzi w drodze do Palestyny 1934-1944* Kraków: Avalon.

⁴⁴⁹ Łazor J. (2016) *Brama na Bliski Wschód ...*, p.73.

⁴⁵⁰ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9906, *The report on the progress of Emigration Policy Department's activities with regard to Jewish emigration*, 1938, p.91.

⁴⁵¹ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9935, Department for Emigration Politics of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Department for National Minorities' Affairs of the Ministry of Interior, 21 August 1939, p. 10.

⁴⁵² AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9908, *Memo on the meeting of Wiktor Tomir Drymmer and Józef Beck*, February 1939, pp. 53-54.

⁴⁵³ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10004, *Memo on current state of Jewish affairs*, 1939, pp. 154-155.

⁴⁵⁴ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9935, Department for Emigration Politics of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Department for National Minorities' Affairs of the Ministry of Interior, 21 August 1939, p. 9.

Chapter 4 A key to the Middle East - Economic cooperation between Poland and Jewish Palestine

Every single country in the world strives to acquire Palestine's market due to its absorptive capacity and liberal trading policies towards the countries forming the League of Nations.

J. Thon, *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*

Following the end of the First World War the economy of the newly re-established Polish state faced a number of daunting problems. It is estimated that over eighty per cent of territories subsequently included in the Second Polish Republic had been affected by the destruction of the First World War, upsetting its socio-economic infrastructure from the very beginning.⁴⁵⁵ Since Poland's territories had been partitioned in favour of Prussia, Austria and Russia substantial differences in the economic development of particular regions were noticeable. Whereas the former Prussian zone was well developed and industrialised, Congress Poland and the lands in the east incorporated directly into the Tsarist Empire saw a relatively moderate economic growth.

The process of uniting the country's regions and implementing a single set of economic procedures went slowly. Under such circumstances, the policy of promoting Polish trade abroad was rendered secondary. However, in the mid-1920s as the country began to experience a relative economic upturn, due to the process of rebuilding following damage from the war, Warsaw directed its efforts to find new outlets for the export. Not surprisingly, the emerging 'Jewish Palestine' with a substantial number of immigrants from Poland was becoming a viable economic partner.

The economic rapprochement between Poland and Palestine took place in the mid-1920s, as a consequence of the Anglo-Polish Treaty of Commerce and Navigation. This was concluded on November 26th 1923 in Warsaw and was subsequently extended by the Polish-British Commercial Treaty of February 1935. Under the provisions of article 8, Mandatory Palestine as a dependency of the British Crown, could have been subjected to the legal

⁴⁵⁵ Slay B. (2014) *The Polish Economy: Crisis, Reform, and Transformation* Princeton: Princeton University Press, p.14.

frameworks of the treaty on the basis of a separate agreement. Such regulations were extended over territory of Palestine by the Sikorski government in March 1925.⁴⁵⁶ The export of Polish goods remained unrestricted throughout the interwar years whereas import of Palestinian products occurred on the basis of quotas and other tariffs imposed by the Government in Warsaw. The trade relations between the two countries were not therefore established on a reciprocal basis. This approach fitted into the wider context of Polish commercial policy, which envisaged further development of national strategy for export promotion. Along with focusing on internal reforms and a stabilisation policy, the governing elites of Poland pinned their hopes on establishing strong economic connections with emerging markets, such as Palestine's. In the eyes of Polish officials, Mandate Palestine with its increasing number of Polish-Jewish immigrants was becoming an alternative economic partner. Particularly symptomatic in this matter was the opinion expressed by Adamkiewicz. Shortly after his appointment, the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* conducted an interview with the Polish Consul in Jerusalem and reported that he had admitted, 'the promotion of commercial relations between Poland and Palestine was to be his principal purpose'.⁴⁵⁷ He also declared that he would seek to cooperate with all Jewish institutions in general, and with the Jewish Agency in particular in order to pursue this matter.

Adamkiewicz, reporting to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the late 1923, evaluated 'everything suggests that our economic expansion has a bright future in these countries [countries of the Middle East]'.⁴⁵⁸ Despite various diplomatic efforts, the economic links between Poland and Jewish Palestine remained infinitesimal until the late 1920s. To a large degree, this situation stemmed from Polish state's internal economic difficulties and fiscal crisis that lasted until early 1926. Indeed, these trends towards a pro-Palestine policy, indirectly triggered by the need to re-orientate the direction of exports, intensified in the second half of the 1920s, after the *Grabski Aliyah*.⁴⁵⁹ Unarguably, this policy was inextricably intertwined with the country's internal socio-economic conditions.

As the first signs of the Great Depression began to affect Poland's economy in the late 1928, the governing elites started to draw attention not only to the essential need of finding new commercial outlets for Polish exports but also to the necessity of accelerating activities promoting emigration. In order to boost exports of Polish merchandise to Palestine a conference

⁴⁵⁶ Łazor J. (2016) *Brama na Bliski Wschód ...*, pp.147-148.

⁴⁵⁷ 'Polish Consul to Cooperate with the Jewish Agency', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 31 May 1923.

⁴⁵⁸ Tomaszewski J. (2003) Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej wobec Żydów, 1938-1939 (dokumenty). *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny* 3: 198.

⁴⁵⁹ Landau Z., Tomaszewski J. (1991) *Gospodarka Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej* Warszawa: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, pp. 226-234.

on trade exchange between both countries was organised in September 1928. Among participants were prominent *Sanacja* officials – a member of Parliament Wacław Wiślicki, Józef Wojtyna, the Counsellor of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Wernicki from the State Export Institute [*Państwowy Instytut Eksportowy, PIE*] and ‘numerous merchants and industrialists from a very wide range of sectors’. During a conference it was agreed that ‘Palestine could partially retrieve Poland’s negative trade balance’.⁴⁶⁰ In a similar tone Gustaw Załęcki, a member of the Institute for Emigration and Colonisation Research, wrote in 1929 ‘the overseas policy became a crucial need for Poland as a newly re-established state [...] Our export chokes within Europe’s post-war political order’.⁴⁶¹

Nevertheless, merchandise trade from Poland was still infinitesimally small. In 1927, for instance, the total value of Polish exports constituted merely 0.9 per cent of global shipments. From this time Polish exports began to increase along with increasing Jewish immigration from Poland and it influenced the government’s view of Palestine as being an important economic partner. In order to boost overseas trade and commercial relations in September 1927 the State Export Institute was established having been modelled on American and French commercial institutions. The PIE reported to the Minister of Industry and Trade.⁴⁶² A subsequent step in developing economic cooperation was the establishment of the Polish-Palestine Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Warsaw and the Palestine-Polish Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Tel Aviv.⁴⁶³

The consecutive waves of immigration had a profound impact on the perception of Polish economic interests in Palestine. From year to year the Polish-Jewish community of *Eretz Israel* was growing and becoming more influential. This increasing economic potential was quickly detected by Poland’s diplomatic mission in Palestine. Along with the so-called *Grabski Aliyah*, which brought to Palestine approximately 35,000 Polish Jews the Ministry of Industry and Trade noticed the linkage between emigration and export flows.⁴⁶⁴ Particular attention was given to the significance of the Polish-Jewish minority in Palestine. Polish Zionists also frequently put this argument forward. Leon Lewite, for instance, indicated that ‘100, 000 Polish Jews dwelling

⁴⁶⁰ ‘Handel polsko-palestyński. Konferencja w C.Z.K. w sprawie eksportu do Palestyny’, *Przegląd Handlowy*, 7 September 1928, pp. 5-6.

⁴⁶¹ Załęcki G. (1929) *O polską politykę zamorską* Warszawa: Liga Morska i Rzeczna, p.6.

⁴⁶² Dz.U.27.83.739, Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 17 września 1927r. o Państwowym Instytucie Eksportowym.

⁴⁶³ Grosskopf J. (1936) ‘Niewykorzystane możliwości’, *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*, p.217.

⁴⁶⁴ Łazor J. (2016) *Brama na Bliski Wschód ...*, p.151.

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Palestine is the most important factor and a guarantee of enhanced cooperation between Poland and Palestine. Poland like any other country might take advantage of its Jewish migration for further economic expansion in Palestine and in the Middle East.⁴⁶⁵ The question of enhanced commercial relations between Poland and Palestine continued to catch Polish authorities' interest. Various options and schemes were discussed in Warsaw. As a result, in September 1925 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a circular obliging Polish diplomatic mission abroad to promote all initiatives aiming to enhance export through emigration.⁴⁶⁶ According to this policy, Polish Jews were considered bridgeheads for the developing economic cooperation between Poland and Palestine.

Both Jerzy Tomaszewski and Jerzy Łazor indicate that 1927 was a watershed year for the shaping of bilateral relations. After the 1926 Piłsudski's *coup d'état*, mutual economic cooperation was given a new dimension due to new appointments in the Polish consular service. In January 1927 the decision was made to transfer Zbyszewski from Leipzig to Mandatory Palestine. The former Polish Consul General in Leipzig and the Vice-Director of the Administrative Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs replaced Dr. Otton Has-Hubicki as Polish Consul General on April 1st 1927. Soon after his appointment, in a conversation with the editor of *The Palestine Bulletin*, Zbyszewski admitted that despite being 'only at the beginning of his work, he is thinking of preparing some definite plans for extending the trade connections between Poland and Palestine.' Given that Poland was one of the 'cheapest countries in the world, authorities in Warsaw expected that extensive export promotion would bring about a reduction of prices in Palestine. He believes that the two countries help each other. Poland can export to Palestine timber, cement, agricultural and textile products, while Palestine can export to Poland fruits: particularly oranges and wine' the magazine concluded.⁴⁶⁷

The second appointment took place in mid-May 1927. Aleksander Skrzyński, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, appointed Dr. Bernard Hausner Polish Commercial Councillor in the city of Haifa.⁴⁶⁸ The nomination, widely commented in Poland and abroad, was referred to as 'a bold and calculated political move'. The Polish and Jewish press reported this unprecedented nomination, speculating as to who might have made the decision to appoint a Jew to the Polish Consular service for the first time, who was a former Polish Parliamentarian affiliated with the

⁴⁶⁵ Lewite L. (1934) 'Komitet Pro-Palestyna', *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*, p.6.

⁴⁶⁶ Łazor J. (2016) *Brama na Bliski Wschód* ..., p.151; Okólnik z dn. 3.09.1925 r. w sprawie wyzyskiwania emigracji dla celów ekspansji gospodarczej, *Buletyn Urzędu Emigracyjnego* (1925), 9/10/11, pp.56-57.

⁴⁶⁷ 'Polish Consul on Palestine-Polish Relations'. *The Palestine Bulletin*, 25 May 1927, p.3.

⁴⁶⁸ After a few months the Polish diplomatic post was moved to Tel Aviv. According to the sources from the AAN it was requested by Bernard Hausner who referred to the economic importance of the Polish-Jewish community in this city and Jaffa port.

Mizrachi Zionist Organisation of Galicia. Within Jewish circles it was stated that Piłsudski had insisted on this nomination.⁴⁶⁹ Unarguably, by entrusting the post of Commercial Councillor in Haifa to Hausner, a prominent activist and Zionist leader, the Polish authorities explicitly expressed its eagerness to develop further economic relations with the Palestine *Yishuv*. The question in this matter was specifically one of Polish perception of Jewish national interests and mutual relations between Poland and the *Yishuv* in Palestine. In an interview given to the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* Hausner admitted:

The Polish government has made this appointment knowing the facts and after careful consideration. It was not the ordinary appointment of a consul. [...] I am fully aware of the responsibility of my post. I shall have to represent the double interests of Poland and of reviving Palestine, the interests of the Polish immigrants who form the largest part of the immigrant stream and also the interests of the Polish State. I trust that Polish government circles will as a result be convinced that it is possible to be a devoted Zionist and also to safeguard the interests of the Polish State no less than if one is an assimilationist. I regard the action of the Piłsudski Government in making this appointment as a blow to assimilationism and an expression of confidence in Zionism.⁴⁷⁰

Indeed, within Warsaw political circles Hausner was well known for his deep engagement in strengthening economic bonds between Poland and Jewish Palestine. In late 1926, for instance, he initiated a wide-ranging campaign, promoting the export of textile goods manufactured at Łódź to Palestine and from there to other countries of the Middle East.⁴⁷¹ Since Jewish Palestine was supposed to serve as a hub for international trade, the Zionist leadership viewed these nominations as a step of great importance for the development of trade relations between the two countries. In spite of some friction and misunderstanding, Zbyszewski and Hausner immediately began to look into ways of strengthening and integrating the economic relationship with Mandatory Palestine.⁴⁷² Soon afterwards, Polish diplomatic representatives began to point out the crucial need of using Jewish immigrants from Poland to develop export potential. Already in September 1928 Hausner referred to this factor insisting that 'Jewish immigrants from Poland frequently manifest their sympathy and deep attachment to the country of their origin. [...] Poland has an unprecedented chance to use those people to take additional

⁴⁶⁹ 'Appointment of Deputy to Palestine Consular Service widely commented on in Poland', *The Sentinel*, 10.06.1927, p. 16.

⁴⁷⁰ 'News Brief, Interview with Dr. Bernard Hausner, Lemberg 16 May 1927', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*.

⁴⁷¹ 'Sprawy palestyńskie. O rozszerzeniu eksportu towarów łódzkich do Palestyny', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 15 September 1926, p.5.

⁴⁷² According to Jerzy Łazor, Tytus Zbyszewski's disappointment was motivated by the fact that appointment of Bernard Hausner was not consulted with him. Additionally, the post in Haifa was supposed to be fully autonomous. See: Łazor J. (2016) *Brama na Bliski Wschód ...*, p.96.

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shares of the Palestine and other Middle Eastern markets'.⁴⁷³ Also, from the official reports submitted to Warsaw over the next few years, it appears that this theme became the main factor in shaping commercial relations between the two countries.

The aforementioned large-scale 'commercial use' of former citizens who settled in Palestine was, in fact, part of the wider context of Polish trade policy. Within the structures of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs it was widely acknowledged that the emigration link might have a substantial impact on bilateral trade flows. Stanisław Głabiński, a political activist, prominent lawyer and publicist wrote in his *Emigracja i jej rola w gospodarstwie narodowem* [Emigration and its role in the national market], 'establishing proper commercial relations with emigrants and through them with the colonial power could not only reduce our dependence on primary raw materials but also could boost our balance of payments'.⁴⁷⁴ In their view, the size of Palestine's Polish-Jewish population became the crucial determinant of bilateral trade. This rhetoric received considerable support in the early 1930s alongside the revival of Polish-Jewish immigration to Palestine. As the previous section shows, already in 1931 immigrants from Poland constituted one-fifth of the total Jewish population of Palestine, accounting for 35,775 people. Over the next five years their number rose to between forty and fifty per cent.

The *Sanacja* camp, aware of the scale of Polish-Jewish immigration to Palestine, also began to see the importance of the Jewish *Yishuv* in relation to the Polish economy. This approach was inextricably intertwined with the ideological stance held at this time by the *Sanacja*'s intelligentsia. As I have already discussed in [Chapter 2](#), in the period between 1926 and 1935 Piłsudski and his adherents promoted an ideal of state consolidation. Since this concept envisaged unification of all citizens around the state, including ethnic minorities and emigrants, its implications could also affect the economic realm of Polish policy. The immense development taking place within Palestine and the role played by Polish Jews in reconstruction work confirmed their belief. Newly arrived immigrants from Poland repeatedly emphasised their role in building the bridge between Poland and Palestine.⁴⁷⁵ As a consequence, politicians and intellectuals around Marshal Piłsudski repeatedly emphasised the impressive involvement of Polish Jews in the process of building up Palestine and importance of maintaining close ties with Poland. They sought to develop further the commercial relations between Poland and Palestine by organising

⁴⁷³ 'Handel polsko-palestyński. Konferencja w C.Z.K. w sprawie eksportu do Palestyny', *Przegląd Handlowy*, 7 September 1928, pp. 5-6.

⁴⁷⁴ Głabiński S. (1931) *Emigracja i jej rola w gospodarstwie narodowem* Warszawa: Naukowy Instytut Emigracyjny i Kolonialny.

⁴⁷⁵ CZA, S25\5742 – 42, *Letter by E.J. Kirschenbaum to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Polish Jews in Palestine, April 1933.*

various exhibitions, fairs and official meetings. In 1928, for instance, the Polish Consulate General assisted in the organisation of a Palestine entrepreneurs' excursion to Poland.⁴⁷⁶ The strong and well-organised majority of Polish Jews in Palestine was also seen as an important partner in opening the doors of the Middle East to the Polish trade and industry. Thus, the creation of the 'Polish-Jewish Diaspora' in Palestine not only closely corresponded with the Polish economic agenda but also essentially echoed the ideological stance of the *Sanacja* camp in the years between 1926 and 1935.

Polish Jews actively participated in Palestine's economic life, becoming productive and creative members of modern society.⁴⁷⁷ Many of them found entrepreneurial activities to be an accessible niche within Palestine's market. At the same time, they were intimately familiar with Polish products and significantly contributed to the dissemination of this production in Palestine and other neighbouring countries. Already in 1927, Polish diplomats scattered throughout the Middle East informed that Jewish immigrants from Poland and Russia were keenly concerned with developing commercial relations between Poland and Palestine.⁴⁷⁸ Moshe Shertok in July 1935 wrote:

It is obvious that Poland stands in a special relationship to the Jewish work of reconstruction in Palestine. The majority of the recent Jewish immigrants have hailed from Poland and they naturally still maintain close contacts with their native land. It is significant for instance that Poland is the only foreign state which maintains in Palestine a branch of its Postal Savings Bank [P.K.O.], through the agency of which very considerable sums are transmitted every year by Jewish residents in Palestine to their relatives in Poland. On the other hand, Poland is doing a very profitable export trade with Palestine. Large consignments of Polish cattle, eggs, furniture and glassware are being exported every year to Palestine. Finally, the Polish government, by virtue of its membership of the League of Nations and by the most important positions it holds therein as a member of the council, is able to support and assist the Jewish efforts of the national reconstruction in Palestine.⁴⁷⁹

Polish Jews themselves continued to indicate the necessity of establishing close economic cooperation throughout the interwar years. Kirschenbaum, in April 1933, emphasised that Polish authorities should grant financial and political aid to the Unions of Polish Jews in

⁴⁷⁶ 'Palestine Excursion to Poland', *The Palestine Bulletin*, 10 January 1928, p.3.

⁴⁷⁷ Sroka T. (2015) *Polskie korzenie Izraela: wprowadzenie do tematu: wybór źródeł* Kraków: Wydawnictwo Austeria.

⁴⁷⁸ AAN, ARPL – Polish Embassy in London, 290-292, *Report submitted by the Polish diplomatic posts from the Middle East, 1927*.

⁴⁷⁹ CZA, 25\2262-3 *Correspondence between Stanley Philipson, the Gazeta Handlowa's editor and Moshe Shertok, July 1935.*

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Palestine.⁴⁸⁰ The Zionists continued to maintain close relations with the governing elites in Warsaw. Various conferences and seminars on mutual trade cooperation were organized both in Palestine and in Poland. In June 1934, for instance, Henryk Gruber, the director of Polish Postal Savings Bank, gave a lecture entitled 'Experience of Palestine'. Interestingly, these public events also attracted Polish anti-Semites, who were all in favour of the Palestine project, viewing it as a means of realising their primary goal - 'the dejudaization of Poland' [*odżydzenie Polski*]. Indeed, as the picture below shows, among the meeting's attendees was right-leaning Prof. Zygmunt Cybichowski, a recognized specialist in international law, who called for the separation of Poles and Jews.⁴⁸¹



Figure 5. A public lecture given by Henryk Gruber in the Polish Institute for International Cooperation in Warsaw, 7 June 1934. Source: *Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny*, NAC.

In early 1935 Shlomo Jaffe, the Levant Fairs' director, came to Warsaw. In an article published in the magazine *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód* Jaffe admitted that 'a significant part of Palestine's population know Poland well and is accustomed to Polish goods and maintains close relations with this country'. He also emphasised that the potential as well as favourable economic

⁴⁸⁰ CZA, S25\5742 -39 Letter by E.J. Kirschenbaum to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Polish Jews in Palestine*, April 1933.

⁴⁸¹ For an insight into Cybichowski's ethno-nationalist look see: Cybichowski Z. (1939) *Na szlakach nacjonalizmu: rozważania prawno-polityczne* Warszawa: Gebethner i Wolff.

prosperity were not fully exploited.⁴⁸² Also, according to the Zionist perception the large scale of Jewish immigration had facilitated a massive surge of Polish imports into Palestine. According to the study conducted by Halperin (1954) the Palestine *Yishuv* bought almost seventy per cent of the total merchandise imports from Poland in the mid-1930s. Both the Polish authorities and the Polish Zionists found the pro-export effect in Jewish immigrants' deep affection for Poland. In this vein, Bernard Hausner in 1933 reported once again, 'the Jews of Poland, when they come to Palestine retain their preference for Polish goods. This sentiment they display here, not only because they are accustomed to articles of Polish manufacture, but because of their desire to maintain close relations with friends and relatives in Poland.'⁴⁸³

As the analysed data suggest immigrants from Poland maintained close ties with the country of their origin. By doing so, they substantially affected dimension of mutual economic relations. Their in-depth knowledge of Polish markets, language and business connections provided solid foundations for bilateral trade cooperation. Both in Poland and in Palestine specialised institutions operated that enabled immigrant entrepreneurs to foster trade linkages. In September 1928 the Association of Polish Jewish merchants funded a special commission 'to further commercial and credit relations between the Republic of Poland and Palestine'.⁴⁸⁴ The Information and Advisory Service of the *Mishar W'Taasia* (Trade and Industry), for instance, published advertisements about commercial offers and business opportunities. In 1926 'a wholesale importer from Poland' expressed an interest in buying 'any quantities of Oriental fruits, condiments and other Colonial produce'.⁴⁸⁵ Similar adverts and commercial news were also published in the pages of *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód* [Palestine and the Middle East], a monthly magazine subsidised by the Polish Bank.⁴⁸⁶ A crucial role, however, was played by the aforementioned Chambers of Commerce, which served as particular intermediaries in business contacts between Polish and Palestinian entrepreneurs. Primary sources held by the National Archive in Poznań provide very suggestive evidence of bilateral trade linkages. The overall number of requests for proposals and offers clearly suggest that both merchants in both Poland and Palestine were greatly interested in mutual trade exchange. The example below is representative of how particular entrepreneurs or trading agencies approached the Polish Chambers of Commerce. Michael Rozenzweig, a former Polish citizen opened the 'Palestine and Near East Trading House' in Tel Aviv and in 1932 asked the Polish-Palestine Chamber of Commerce to

⁴⁸² Jaffe L. (1936) *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*, p.7.

⁴⁸³ Hausner B. (1933) *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*, 14.

⁴⁸⁴ 'Create Commission for Palestine Commerce', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 8 September 1928.

⁴⁸⁵ (1926) 'Business Opportunities', *Palestine and Near East Economic Magazine* I: 280.

⁴⁸⁶ Stending S. (1935) *Polska a Palestyna: stosunki wzajemne w dobie obecnej* Warszawa: J. Neuman, pp.31-32.

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connect him with Polish exporters interested in trade cooperation.⁴⁸⁷ The Chamber of Commerce provided him with detailed information regarding Polish firms willing to export their products to the Middle East. Another Jewish immigrant from Poland approached the Chamber with a request to set up connections with Poland's biggest meat producers. Interestingly and surprisingly, his aim was to export 'Polish ham to the Middle East'.⁴⁸⁸

On the other hand, the Polish authorities were keenly interested in the fate of Polish-Jewish emigrants. The Zionist nation endeavour attracted considerable interest among political activists and publicists affiliated with the *Sanacja* camp. Polish consuls repeatedly visited settlements established by Jewish immigrants from Poland. Zbyszewski in June 1927 paid a visit to Rishon Le Zion and Bnei Brak. During a banquet organised by the Organisation of Polish Jews in Tel Aviv Zbyszewski expressed his delight at the rapid progress made by Zionists in Palestine and at the substantial part that the Jews from Poland played in it.⁴⁸⁹ Among the political circles around Piłsudski, Polish Jews were seen as 'builders of Palestine'. With great respect and interest it was observed how Zionists were building their National Home and at the same time were developing industry and agriculture. It was frequently emphasised that enhanced economic cooperation emerging between both countries was based on strong ideological foundations. For instance, Marian Turski, the Director of the National Institute for Export, wrote in 1939:

We are fully aware both in Poland and in Palestine that the ideological basis for economic cooperation between our countries is much broader than elsewhere. Furthermore, there is much more than just a calculated interest, which triggers our real cooperation. [...] The question of commercial relationship between Poland and Palestine is relatively simple and does not stem from any economic circumstances. [...] This does not seem to be the case that the question of Palestine's revival raises universal interest in Poland and that Palestine's merchandise products are particularly popular. There are much deeper causes for that.⁴⁹⁰

The question of the Zionist nation-building endeavour in Palestine continued to receive much attention from both Polish intellectuals and political publicists. As detailed in [Chapter 2](#) Pruszyński, a journalist and activist affiliated with the neo-conservative circles, in *Ślово* published a series of articles devoted to Jewish reconstruction work in the Land of Israel.⁴⁹¹ Bogdan Richter, in turn, appraised the industrial and economic achievements of Zionists – the

⁴⁸⁷ The National Archive in Poznań, *Letter by Michael Rozenzweig to the Polish-Palestine Chamber of Commerce, 20 November 1932*, p.16.

⁴⁸⁸ The National Archive in Poznań, *Requests submitted from Palestine, 1930-1933*.

⁴⁸⁹ 'Beekur ha-Consul ha-Polani ha-Hadash', *Davar*, 20 June 1927.

⁴⁹⁰ Turski M. (1939) 'Naturalne związki gospodarcze', *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*, pp.194-195.

⁴⁹¹ See: Chaper 2.

opening of the Haifa Harbour, land acquisition, the launching of Haifa-Mosul pipeline and urban development. He was especially struck by the rapid expansion of Jewish urban centres. The editor Józef Brodzki in *Kurjer Poranny* praised modern Tel Aviv where 'Berlin's Kurfustendamm Avenue tangled with Mała Ziemiańska'. The author was also in awe of the idealism of Zionist youth and wrote, 'In kibbutz Ein haHoresh, I saw both unusual people and their unusual work. With my own eyes I saw the advantages gained by them and the inland progress, which shaped the desert earth into fertile soil full of joy and wealth'.⁴⁹²

The governmental press admired the urban and industrial development of the new Jewish *Yishuv*'s in equal measure. Attention was also given to the creation of educational institutions and the change of profile of Jewish emigrants from Poland. Correspondent T. Mohuczy in October 1933 wrote about emigrants travelling on the board the ship Polonia, 'all of them were passionate and full of hope. There were many with secondary education qualifications, many academics who had dropped out of universities and headed to Palestine to work the land'.⁴⁹³ All these developments, both ideological and socio-economic, led the editors of *Gazeta Polska* to general conclusions, 'Jewish Palestine serves as the best evidence that prosperity backed up by science achievements and diligence could shape a land that was badly maintained for ages.' Although the semi-official organ of the government agreed that Jewish immigration to Palestine was advisable since the influx of foreign capital stimulated further the economic development of the region, the newspaper also emphasised that it should serve the interests of both Jewish and Arab communities simultaneously.⁴⁹⁴

The rapid development and unprecedented economic stability of Palestine's *Yishuv* had a substantial impact on the further re-evaluation of the *Sanacja*'s approach towards Zionism that occurred in the first half of the 1930s. All these political and economic factors contributed to the acceptance of a notion that Jewish Palestine was able to take a leading role in solving the Jewish question in the Diaspora. Although from a historical perspective this would seem to be wishful thinking and an overestimation of the Zionist leadership's ability to manage the geopolitical situation in the region, this kind of reasoning gained ground among many Eastern European politicians. To a large degree, it echoed the official line of policy of the *Yishuv*

⁴⁹² Brodzki J., *Kurjer Poranny*, May 1935, p.3.

⁴⁹³ Mohuczy B. 'Pod polską banderą do Palestyny' *Gazeta Polska*, 13 October 1933, p.3.

⁴⁹⁴ 'Kłopoty palestyńskie: dlaczego Arabowie są niezadowoleni?', *Gazeta Polska*, 23 July 1930, p. 3.

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leadership, which articulated the idea that the Diaspora was in need of the immediate support of Palestine's Jewry.⁴⁹⁵

Tadeusz Nieduszyński, the Polish Consul and Economic Adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, considered 'Jewish Palestine' a crucial overseas market for Polish products. In an article devoted to this question, Nieduszyński wrote, 'by virtue of their deep emotional attachment to Poland, Polish Jews are becoming the ultimate element of our economic expansion to the region. Every effort should be thus made to further develop cultural and economic cooperation between Poland and Palestine'.⁴⁹⁶ Antoni Paprocki, the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Research Section in his confidential report on Palestine wrote, 'the Jews with their persistence, work and capital turn the wasteland into flourishing areas. The sphere of Jewish influence is moving from the sea to the East and gradually encompasses a large part of Palestine's territories, which suggests that this process cannot be slowed down and even in the event of fierce political misfortunes this Jewish sphere of influence will subjugate Palestine, first economically, then politically'.⁴⁹⁷

Palestine's unprecedented economic stability and prosperity also aroused great interest amongst Polish merchants. Facing severe economic conditions and significant industrial backwardness in Poland, many of them even expressed a willingness to emigrate to Palestine for business purposes. At the beginning of 1935, for instance, a group of Warsaw's engineers seeking to enter the Palestine market established a company with a capital of £20,000. In the mid-1930s the voices of Palestine's prosperity also reached the poorest segments of Poland's non-Jewish population, so deeply affected by the overpopulation of the countryside and severe unemployment. In March 1935, *The Palestine Post* noted that, 'Palestine immigration fever has lately begun to spread to the Poles. The Palestine immigration offices in Warsaw and in provinces are being flooded with the requests from non-Jews who want to emigrate to Palestine'. Applicants, who were largely of peasant or poor backgrounds, having heard of Palestine's prosperity were ready to leave the country in order to settle down in the Middle East. The newspaper recalls the situation that occurred at the beginning of the year when, 'a delegation of eighty peasants from a village located thirty miles from Warsaw walked all the way to the Warsaw Palestine Office, told a pathetic story of their poverty and asked for immigration certificates to

⁴⁹⁵ Mapai's leader Berl Katzenelson in 1933 declared: ' [...] We took from the Diaspora every able-bodied person we could find. But now times have changed. Today it is we who are strong, settled, and materially secure. We also possess spiritual riches that the Diaspora lacks. Today, for our own sake, not simply out of pity for others we must turn our faces back toward the Diaspora'. Cited in: Ofer D. (1990) *Escaping the Holocaust: Illegal Immigration to the Land of Israel, 1939-1944* New York: Oxford University Press, p.8.

⁴⁹⁶ Nieduszyński T. (1936) 'Palestyna – nasz czołowy rynek zamorski', *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*, p.199.

⁴⁹⁷ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1008, *Problem Palestyński*, 1938, pp.1-18.

Palestine. They were ready, these peasants, to sell their households and land to cover the expenses of their journeys. They only wanted to have permission to enter the country. Interestingly, this was not just a one-time situation. In Białystok, in turn, 'a group of Polish unemployed workers came to the Palestine Office with the same plea. They were skilled workers, having been on good and friendly terms with the Jews and were willing to help in the building up of the Jewish National Home. In the same city, a Polish servant girl came to ask for a certificate. The girl spoke an excellent Yiddish with a few words of Hebrew and assured the Palestine officials that she would learn Hebrew very quickly'.⁴⁹⁸ Although it is very difficult to assess the scale of this phenomenon such situations are very symptomatic of Poland's perception of Palestine. It not only marks the success of Zionist propaganda in Poland but also clearly suggests that interest in Palestine was enormous, including among the poorest segments of Poland's society.

Palestine as a new commercial outlet

The economic potential of Palestine was acknowledged as early as 1923 by the Polish Consul in Jerusalem. Adamkiewicz in a report submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wrote 'In the whole Middle East, not only in Palestine, but also in Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Arabia, Mesopotamia and Turkey, nothing had been done by us. Everything, however, suggests that our commercial expansion would have a great future in these countries. With adequate energy, consistency and skills we could find here an unrestricted demand for our goods'.⁴⁹⁹ Despite extensive diplomatic efforts, the participation of Palestine and the Middle Eastern countries in foreign trade with Poland remained peripheral throughout the 1920s. The situation changed at the beginning of 1930s alongside with the reorientation of export directions. Facing the severe economic crisis of 1930s Poland, like the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, was forced to look for new commercial outlets.⁵⁰⁰ Although the exchange of goods with continental partners played a dominant role in Poland's foreign trade, there was a serious risk of depending just on European markets. For this purpose, at the beginning of 1930s the Polish government adopted a strategy of establishing close commercial relations with the emerging and developing markets of the Middle East. According to this policy, Palestine was seen as a crucial economic partner as well as the main commercial chain in the region. The aforementioned Polish State Export Institute gave much attention to supporting the endeavours of Palestine's Jewish merchants in an effort to expand their trade activities beyond the borders of Palestine. The

⁴⁹⁸ 'Palestine fever spreads in Poland', *The Palestine Post*, 1 March 1935, p.6.

⁴⁹⁹ Adamkiewicz J. (1924) *Stan gospodarczy Palestyny w 1923 roku* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych, p.25.

⁵⁰⁰ Landau Z., Tomaszewski J. (1991) *Gospodarka Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej* Warszawa: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, p. 239.

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conservative publicist Wasermanm affiliated with the political daily magazine *Czas*, indicated that Poland was allowed to exploit the markets of the Middle East in general, and Palestine's market in particular.⁵⁰¹ Between 1931 and 1934 Palestine was one of very few countries where economic activity showed an upward trend in the midst of a worldwide economic depression.⁵⁰² The unprecedented economic development which Palestine experienced in the interwar years was largely propelled by the renewed influx of European immigrants and their capital. According to the memorandum submitted to the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations by the National Council of the Jews of Palestine from 1920 to 1929 Jews brought into Palestine PE 45,000,000. Jewish immigration not only raised the standard of life in Palestine far above that of neighbouring countries but also led to constant development of the region. Adam Paszkowicz, political publicist affiliated with the daily newspaper *Kurjer Warszawski* frequently emphasised that Polish trade could not remain indifferent to the real possibilities of further economic expansion in the Middle East.⁵⁰³ Numerous articles on a wide range of economic issues of Mandate Palestine published in the Polish press, of all political shades, suggest that the Palestine question attracted not only official but also public attention in the 1930s.

Since Palestine as opposed to other countries in the region, eliminated all exchange restrictions its market became extremely attractive for European exporters. Moreover, the 'open-door' provision was set forth in article 18 of the Palestine Mandate, obliged the Mandatory power to abide by the rule that, 'there is no discrimination in Palestine against the nationals of any State Member of the League of Nations (including companies incorporated under its laws) as compared with those of the Mandatory or of any foreign State in matters concerning taxation, commerce or navigation, the exercise of industries or professions, or in the treatment of merchant vessels or civil aircraft'.⁵⁰⁴ Apart from the special tariffs on grain and flour import, access to Palestine's market was unrestricted. In turn, capitals and commercial receivables could not be frozen. Polish economists and Ministry of Industry and Trade officials repeatedly emphasised these conditions in

⁵⁰¹ Waserman P. (1935) 'Penetracja gospodarcza Polski na Bliskim Wschodzie', *Czas*.

⁵⁰² (1937) *Bulletin of the Economic Research Institute of the Jewish Agency for Palestine* 1, p.64.

⁵⁰³ *Kurjer Warszawski*, 26 November 1937, p.5.

⁵⁰⁴ Article 18th of the Palestine Mandate states: 'The Mandatory shall see that there is no discrimination in Palestine against the nationals of any State Member of the League of Nations (including companies incorporated under its laws) as compared with those of the Mandatory or of any foreign State in matters concerning taxation, commerce or navigation, the exercise of industries or professions, or in the treatment of merchant vessels or civil aircraft. Similarly, there shall be no discrimination in Palestine against goods originating in or destined for any of the said States, and there shall be freedom of transit under equitable conditions across the mandated area.

Subject as aforesaid and to the other provisions of this mandate, the Administration of Palestine may, on the advice of the Mandatory, impose such taxes and customs duties as it may consider necessary, and take such steps as it may think best to promote the development of the natural resources of the country and to safeguard the interests of the population. It may also, on the advice of the Mandatory, conclude a special customs agreement with any State the territory of which in 1914 was wholly included in Asiatic Turkey or Arabia. See: Danon D. (2012) *Israel: The Will to Prevail* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p.197.'

determining export capacity. Particular attention was also given to the economic liberalism of Palestine. Zionists, who sought to transform Palestine into a modern Jewish state, were seen as offering a place of economic safety. The Polish economic magazine in 1933 reported, 'as opposed to almost all other countries affected by severe economic crisis, Palestine offers a safe haven, far from economic storms and catastrophes'.⁵⁰⁵

Leaving that aside, in the early 1920s and 1930s, Polish exports to Palestine based predominantly on small and medium-size enterprises, remained unsatisfactory. Adamkiewicz in his Consular report mentioned that in 1923 the total value of Polish imports to Palestine constituted only Pf 18,236.⁵⁰⁶ Correspondence and reports by public officials clearly suggest their deep disappointment with the level of trade flows between Poland and Palestine. In Zbyszewski's opinion, the situation was caused by the absence of direct commercial shipping routes between Poland and Palestine.⁵⁰⁷ Of significant importance for enhancing bilateral interchange was the establishment of radio communication between both countries on April 6th 1927.⁵⁰⁸ It was also emphasised that Warsaw should actively promote Polish merchandise and goods, through participation in international events and trade fairs. Finally, Zbyszewski in close cooperation with Hausner in November 1927 prepared a draft scheme for opening a branch of a Polish bank in Tel Aviv, Jaffa and Beirut (*Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego*).⁵⁰⁹

Interestingly, the political opposition to the *Sanacja* regime also shared the opinion that Poland should maintain close trade links with Jewish *Yishuv* in Palestine. Stanisław Stroński, a vocal opponent of Piłsudski affiliated with the right-wing National Party (*Stronnictwo Narodowe*, SN), emphasised that commercial relations with Palestine would continue to improve since the governing elites of Poland were aware that Polish economic expansion to the Middle East was possible only through Palestine.⁵¹⁰ Both in the eyes of Polish Zionists and governing elites Palestine was seen as 'the Middle East's fertile granary'. It was repeatedly emphasised that Palestine was, first and foremost, a particular gateway to other countries in the region. For this

⁵⁰⁵ (1933) 'Żydzi z Polski – Budowniczymi Palestyny'. *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*, 370-372.

⁵⁰⁶ Adamkiewicz J. (1924) *Stan gospodarczy Palestyny w 1923 roku* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych, p.14.

⁵⁰⁷ AAN, ARPL – Polish Embassy in London, 290. *Palestine in 1927. Economic Report by Tytus Zbyszewski, the Polish Consul General in Palestine and Dr. Bernard Hausner*, p.64.

⁵⁰⁸ 'Radio Connections Established Between Poland and Palestine', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*.

⁵⁰⁹ AAN, ARPL – Polish Embassy in London, 500. *Tytus Zbyszewski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 2 August 1927, pp.48-49.

⁵¹⁰ 'Poylens interest in a yidisher Eretz Yisroel', *Der Moment*, 16 January 1934, p.4.

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purpose, in their opinion Palestine's market should have been treated with a great deal of respect.⁵¹¹

Throughout the 1930s, British Mandate Palestine in addition to the 'Jewish Palestine' were great customers of Polish goods. In 1931, the Jewish population accounted for twenty-five per cent of Palestine's total population and its share of imports steadily increased, reaching the level of sixty per cent at the beginning of the 1930s.⁵¹² Polish exports to Palestine steadily increased after the mid-1920s in conjunction with the huge influx of Polish-Jewish immigrants to Palestine – the aforementioned *Grabski Aliyah*. The numerous export promotion activities, initiated in the late 1920s, not only facilitated the bilateral trade exchange but also resulted in the intensification of trade flows between Poland and Palestine. Over the interwar years the *Yishuv* leaders and activists, anxious to promote settlement in Palestine, were frequent visitors to Warsaw. The majority of them travelled across the country inspecting local Zionist organisations and met with representatives of the Polish authorities, who after the re-evaluation of their stance, were particularly keen to initiate talks with the Zionists. These more and more frequent interactions soon brought the results that both sides were hoping for. In August 1930 David Bloch, who had served as Mayor of Tel Aviv, organised a conference in Yafo promoting commercial relations between Poland and the Jewish *Yishuv*. It was agreed that it was in the interests of both sides that 'Poland as a country actively seeking for export opportunities in the Middle East should exploit Jewish Palestine as an intermediary'.⁵¹³ A few weeks later, on September 18th 1930, Arthur Ruppin came to Warsaw to confer with the Ministry of Industry and Trade's officials about commercial exchange and the migration of Polish Jews to Palestine. As a result of Polish Zionists' endeavours in January 1930 the Emigrants Bank Eretz Israel-Polonia Ltd. was established in Tel Aviv with a share capital of P£10,000. Its main purpose was to facilitate the commercial exchange between the two countries and the granting of loans for Polish products.⁵¹⁴ Furthermore, the Polish government agreed to approve the budget of every Jewish institution including subsidies for Palestine's institutions.⁵¹⁵ This change of attitude was of profound importance.

According to official statistics, in 1932 Palestine imported Polish goods with a value of P£101,355. It was the most striking rise in imports from Poland, compared with 1931 when

⁵¹¹ Friede M. (1938) 'Palestyna jako brama wypadowa i Bliski i Środkowy Wschód', *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*, pp.192-193.

⁵¹² Jaffe S. (1935) 'Widoki Rozwoju Polsko-Palestyńskich stosunków handlowych', *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*, p.130.

⁵¹³ 'W sprawie obrotu polsko-palestyńskiego', *Gazeta Polska*, 17 August 1930, p.7.

⁵¹⁴ The National Archive in Poznań, *Correspondence between the Palestinian-Polish Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Tel Aviv and Polish-Palestine Chamber of Commerce in Poznań*, 26 January 1930, p.3.

⁵¹⁵ 'Polish Government Subscribes £1,000 Towards Share Capital of Palestine Poland Immigrant Bank', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*.

Palestine received Polish goods with a value of P£38,499. The timber, steel and textile industries were of particular interests among the importers both for the primary and semi-primary products of these industries. Between 1932 and 1933, subsidies to the amount of nearly 49 milion zł had been granted in the form of customs duty refund.⁵¹⁶ In order to encourage export to Palestine, the government in Warsaw implemented a policy of export subsidies for grain, cattle and textiles. An unparalleled opportunity to enhance commercial exchange between Poland and Jewish Palestine occurred in 1933 as the boycott movement against German products and services began. The boycott generated a lot of interest in the Polish political press, evoking a vociferous debate. Jabotinsky, as the political leader of the Revisionist movement, undertook several trips across Europe in order to boost the boycott. Giving a speech on Warsaw's radio Jabotinsky declared that, 'any Jew in any country who buys goods that come from our persecutors' homeland' will be perceived as a traitor'.⁵¹⁷ The Polish authorities perceived the anti-German boycott as a moment of unprecedented economic opportunity and for this purpose undertook widespread diplomatic action against German products.

In 1935 Japan and Germany left the League of Nations and therefore lost the privilege of unrestricted trade with Palestine. Since their products were considered the direct competition for Polish export goods, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' officials started to see these international developments as a unique opportunity to enlarge Poland's sphere of economic influence over the Middle East.⁵¹⁸ Leon Lewite in January 1936 wrote, 'we wish to draw attention to these opportunities and the need of preparing the Polish economy for the possible replacement of exports from these countries by the export of Polish products'.⁵¹⁹ Moreover, the ministerial officials repeatedly called for applying special measures regulating trade exchange between Palestine and these countries. In spite of the fact, that alongside with Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations, Palestine was entitled to place its commercial relations with Japan on a new basis, the application of the Anglo-Japanese commercial treaty of 1911 to Palestine had prevented such an amendment. A lengthy discussion on this question took place during the 27th session of the Permanent Mandates Commission held in June 1935.

From 1931 onwards, Polish exports to Palestine steadily increased reaching the highest level in 1935. Indeed, during the four-year period Polish exports increased fourteen-fold, whereas Palestine's exports to Poland only increased six-fold. With imports totalling

⁵¹⁶ TNA, FO 371/20024, p.252, *Review of the economic situation in Poland*, 31 January 1934.

⁵¹⁷ 'Noem Jabotinsky ba-Radio ba-Warsha ba26 le-April'. *Hazit Haam*, 5 May 1933.

⁵¹⁸ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1572, *Materials for the 90th Session of the League of Nations, Report on economic cooperation with Palestine by Dr T. Lubaczewski*, 11 January 1936, p.2.

⁵¹⁹ Lewite L.(1936) *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*.

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approximately ten per cent of the total Polish exports, Palestine was the second largest importer of Polish goods, after the United States.⁵²⁰ Whereas the commercial exchange between Poland and its European partners was decreasing, economic relations with overseas entities flourished. This tendency was registered by Henryk Floyar-Rajchman, who served as the Minister of Trade and Industry between 1934 and 1935. At the meeting the *Sejm* budget committee he emphasised that in 1934 Poland's trade with the Middle East significantly increased.⁵²¹ After a temporal drop by approximately fifty-three per cent in 1936, the import of Polish merchandise products to Palestine began to stabilize, reaching a level of P£419,709 in 1938. Overall, in 1937 Poland was ranked seventh among Palestine's suppliers.

The aforementioned decline of 1936 was partially caused by the tense international situation. The Italian invasion and capture of Eritrea caused a panic among exporters. Also, the political situation in Palestine had a negative impact on the flow of trade. As Stanisław Łukaszewicz, the Consul in Tel Aviv in November 1935 reported to his colleagues in Warsaw, several Polish companies even decided to stop further dispatches of their products.⁵²² Moreover, the Polish government decided to introduce currency restrictions in mutual exchange, which had a particularly adverse impact on trade.⁵²³

Table 5. Import of goods to Palestine, 1932-1938

Year	Total value of imports P£.	Value of imports from Poland P£.	Percentage
1932	7,768,920	101,355	1.30%
1933	11,123,489	289,718	2.60%
1934	15,152,781	475,375	3.14%
1935	17,783,493	778,789	4.38%
1936	13,979,023	368,367	2.64%
1937	14,292,633	428,779	3%
1938	14,472,724	419,709	2.9%

Source: Annual Report of the Department of Customs, Excise and Trade for year 1933-, IX (106); Palestine. Statistics of Imports, Exports and Shipping, 1936; Thon J. (1938) Polsko-Palestyńska wymiana towarów w roku 1937, Palestyna i Bliski Wschód, p.74.

⁵²⁰ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10543.

⁵²¹ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Handel Polsko-Palestyński na postawie liczb i faktur*, 127.

⁵²² AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 6274, Stanisław Łukaszewicz to the State Export Institute, p.136.

⁵²³ Drozdowski M. (1963) *Polityka gospodarcza rządu polskiego 1936-1939*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, p.161.

Over the course of the interwar years capital continued to flow towards Palestine. This state of affairs met with fierce opposition from the right-wing *Endecja*. Its principal organ, *Dziennik Narodowy* [National Daily], emphasised that large sums of capital were irretrievably withdrawn from Poland by the Jews, who had decided to leave the country for Palestine. The daily stated that approximately 37.1 per cent of the capital brought to Palestine in 1936 came from Poland against only thirty-four per cent from Nazi Germany. Unarguably, the right-wing journal meticulously type-casted evidence by selecting the most appropriate facts for the ethno-nationalist segments of Poland's population. In an article in *The Palestine Post* the correspondent commented:

The *Endek* organ chooses to forget the large sums sent from Palestine to Poland in support of relatives left behind, over ten million zloties in 1935 alone, and the fact that during 1935 Polish exports to Palestine aggregated 14,398,000 zloties against only 4,026,000 zloties for Palestinian exports to Poland. [...] Palestine is becoming one of Poland's most important markets, which will be lost if the *Endek* journal's suggestion is carried out, that Polish Jews should be allowed out of Poland – but their money left behind.⁵²⁴

The Polish currency restrictions had been effective in reducing the export of capital from one of Palestine's most important sources, but the clearing agreement that was brought into force in May 1937 substantially eased mutual economic relations.⁵²⁵ A few months earlier Dr. Fishel Rottenstreich, a member of the Jewish Agency's Trade and Industry Department, came to Warsaw in order to discuss the terms of the agreement.⁵²⁶ The Zionist negotiator was an expert on economic issues and a former member the Polish *Senat* budget commission. Like Gruenbaum, Rottenstreich expressed his reservations towards the clearing agreement with Poland. In his July 1936 column for the *Haaretz* Rottenstreich commented:

We negotiate with the Polish government. Since we want to enable Polish Jews to immigrate into Palestine, we are compelled to agree to such trade schemes, for which we would not agree under different conditions. But it does not mean that we accept all conditions and demands. [...] We are prepared to purchase Polish goods, only if the Polish dumping remains a subject of competition rules, as it was formerly. [...] Thanks to us, the Polish government established commercial relations with the countries of the Middle East, and without our assistance these relations would not solidify. We, the Jews, and Jews from Poland in

⁵²⁴‘Polish Palestine trade in heavily in Poland's favour’, *The Palestine Post*, 1 April 1936, p.11.

⁵²⁵ Bonne A. (1937) *Bulletin of the Economic Research Institute of the Jewish Agency for Palestine* Jerusalem: Azriel Press, p.7.

⁵²⁶ ‘Polish-Palestine Transfer’, *Palnews*, 8 September 1936.

particular contributed to the economic expansion of this country [Poland]. The Poles – Christian emigrants do not fulfil this task. The Polish emigrants in America did not enhance Polish exports despite the fact that they are constantly agitated, despite the fact that there are organised various conventions for them. The propaganda costs a lot, but does not enhance Polish exports. If the Jews, emigrants from Poland are in favour of Polish exports to a great extent, thus we have a right to demand a proper approach from the Polish government.⁵²⁷

The debate over who should have been a party to the agreement raged amid Polish political elites in the late 1936. As a result of the October 1936 conference held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs it was decided that 'it would not be advisable that the Polish government or any of its bodies resort to be a contracting party'. In this vein, Aleksander Łubieński, a top-ranking official of the Foreign Ministry indicated that the Clearing agreement should have been signed by the Polish Settlement Institute (*Polski Instytut Rozrachunkowy*) or by the Polish Society for Compensation Trade (*Polskie Towarzystwo dla Handlu Kompensacyjnego*).⁵²⁸ Eventually, the transfer agreement for imports and exports between Poland and Palestine was reached in January 1937 as a result of long negotiations between the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Jewish Agency's Directorate. Overall, the agreement was supposed to imitate the *haavara* (transfer) agreement signed with Germans in 1933 and particular attention was given to the export of Jewish capital to Palestine. In accordance with the document, prospective Jewish immigrants were allowed to export their capital up to the value of PE1,000, for which transfer was possible by way of purchasing Polish goods. In contrast to the *haavara* agreement, it was supposed to be reciprocal – to provide a basis for commercial exchange between Poland and the Jewish *Yishuv* in Palestine. After the opening of the clearing office in May 1937 both imports and exports significantly increased.⁵²⁹ As a result, before the outbreak of the Second World War, Jewish emigrants deposited large sums in clearing banks in Poland which then were transferred to Palestine's banks. Maksymilian Friede, the Vice-President of the Polish-Palestine Chamber of Commerce, assessed that the clearing agreement had a profound significance for commercial relations between the two countries.⁵³⁰

Although Palestine's export trade was relatively small in comparison with the value of imports, its vitality and expansionist character were of great importance. The distribution of Palestine's import trade shows that throughout the interwar period the United Kingdom was

⁵²⁷ *HaAretz*, 2 July 1936.

⁵²⁸ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Memo on the Conference in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 24 October 1936.

⁵²⁹ 'Chamber of Commerce. Stimulating effect on trade', *The Palestine Post*, 24 December 1937, p.8.

⁵³⁰ Friede M., *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*, 1937.

Palestine's biggest supplier. Also, Palestine's exports were mainly directed to the United Kingdom. The Second Polish Republic was far behind, with Palestine's exports mostly unchanged at about P£17,000 at the beginning of 1930s.⁵³¹ In 1933 Palestine imported Polish goods to the total value of P£289,718 and in exchange sent goods to the value of P£15,122. As the figure suggests, the Polish-Palestine balance of trade had been distinctly favourable to Poland throughout the interwar years. Exports to Poland continued their upward movement through the 1930s. In 1934 imports from Palestine was sevenfold lower than export. This huge discrepancy could be explained by the specific nature of Palestine's international trade. In accordance with British Mandate provisions, all members of the League of Nations as well as the United States benefited from the same rights concerning trade in goods with Palestine. Palestine was therefore disqualified from imposing protective tariffs as well as practicing compensatory trade.⁵³²

Over the next few years, Palestine's exporters initiated various export promoting activities. In March 1933, for instance, a Palestine Trade Delegation was appointed to visit countries abroad to investigate outlets for Palestinian goods.⁵³³ At the same time, within influential circles in Palestine the Polish market was seen as a very important and potential market with fair chances of establishing and developing economic relations.⁵³⁴ It was hoped that Poland would equally become a great customer of Palestine's products. The Zionist leadership in the mid-1930s pointed out that 'Poland could greatly assist the Jewish work in Palestine by permitting a growing import of Palestinian products'. For this purpose, representatives of Zionist economic circles repeatedly approached Polish elites. The conversations, which took place in both Poland and Palestine aimed at setting forth the possibilities of increasing exports of Palestine's commodities to Poland. Moshe Shertok, the head of the political department of the Jewish Agency – the so-called 'almost government' of Jewish Palestine – emphasised in 1935 that, 'certain alleviations have recently been granted in this respect but much still remains to be done under this head and we have every confidence that Polish sympathy for our work in Palestine will in growing measure find expression in the absorption of the products of Palestinian agriculture and industry'.⁵³⁵ Export promoting initiatives succeeded in their task. As indicated in table 6 below, between 1935 and 1938 Palestine's export to Poland increased more than fourfold in comparison with previous years. These developments were largely attributed to the relatively

⁵³¹ (1933) Trade in 1932, *Palestine and Near East Economic Magazine* VIII (7): 184.

⁵³² Waserman P. (1935) 'Rozwój Gospodarki Palestyńskiej w roku 1934', *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*, p.10.

⁵³³ (1933) Current Topics: Agriculture, *Palestine and Near East Economic Magazine* VIII (3): 125.

⁵³⁴ Benari I. (1929) Continental Markets for Jaffa Oranges. *Palestine and Near East Economic Magazine* IV: 47-48.

⁵³⁵ CZA, S25\2262-4 Correspondence between Stanley Philipson, the *Gazeta Handlowa*'s editor and Moshe Shertok, July 1935.

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strong condition of Palestine's economy, close commercial cooperation between Poland and Palestine and finally due to the increased quota allowed by the Polish government for the import of citrus fruit from Palestine.

Table 6. Export of Palestine's products, 1932-1938

Year	Total value of Palestine's export P£.	Total value of Palestine's export to Poland P£.	Percentage
1932	2,381,491	16,499	0.7%
1933	2,591,617	15,122	0.58%
1934	3,217,562	31,990	1%
1935	4,215,486	122,245	2.9%
1936	approx. 3,500,000	136,406	3.9%
1937	approx. 5,800,000	135,406	2.34%
1938	approx. 5,000,000	133,981	2.7%

Source: Waserman P. (1935) *Rozwój Gospodarki Palestyńskiej w roku 1934. Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*, p.10.

Since agriculture was the most important economic activity in the region, citrus fruit, olive oil, grapes and wine were among the most popular products developed for export. The citrus industry dominated Palestine's interwar growth pattern and quickly became a main component of its entire economy, almost entirely dependent on external markets. Metzer indicates that although the citrus share in aggregate farm output significantly declined in the late 1930s, it still played a crucial role in Jewish agriculture reaching almost sixty-five per cent of its entire output just before the outbreak of the Second World War.⁵³⁶ The branch remained the largest agricultural branch in interwar Palestine in the period with almost eighty-ninety per cent of the citrus crops exported.⁵³⁷ Nevertheless, until 1929 Palestinian oranges were almost entirely unknown in Poland. This was largely attributed to the existing system of the obligatory licensing of fruit imports. As a consequence of the Trade Treaties with Italy, permits for the import of oranges were granted mainly to Italy and imports from Palestine remained significantly reduced. Eventually, after the 1929 trade negotiations the Polish government allowed the import of

⁵³⁶ According to Jacob Metzer citrus industry accounted for thirty-six per cent of the Jewish economy already in the 1920s, reaching the peak of seventy-five per cent in the mid-1930s.

⁵³⁷ Metzer J. (1998) *The Divided Economy of Mandatory Palestine* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 145-146

Palestine's oranges up to ninety per cent of the total amount brought to the country.⁵³⁸ In 1933 Polish exporters concluded a compensation agreement with six export companies from Palestine. According to the agreement, citrus fruit exporters were obliged to purchase wooden packing cases in Poland with a value of at least sixty per cent of the total value of their supply. At the beginning of 1935, in turn, Poland's Ministry of Industry and Trade allowed a quota of 5,000 tons of Palestinian oranges and grapefruits as well as an unlimited consignment of wine, raisins, and oil.⁵³⁹ This state of affairs did not, however, meet with the expectations of the Zionist leaders. Horowitz, who served as a journalist for *Doar HaYom*, in 1935 pointed out that the Polish government should have granted to Palestine exporters the same authorisations as to European partners.⁵⁴⁰

Institutions

Establishing close commercial relations with Jewish Palestine would not be possible without the assistance of professional institutions. Already in January 1926, *The Palestine Bulletin* reported that Count Skrzyński, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, had promised to do his best to support the foundation of the Polish-Palestine Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Warsaw and its sister organisation in Tel Aviv.⁵⁴¹ Two weeks later, the foundation meetings were held both in Poland and in Palestine. The swiftness of the operation suggests that the Polish authorities were interested in establishing close economic cooperation between the two countries as well as aiming to develop commercial, industrial and financial relations with Zionists. Over the interwar period, Warsaw's Chamber, along with the local branches in Łódź and Poznań comprised of 385 permanent members, in turn, its sister organisation in Palestine had a membership of over eighty-two members. The number and nature of departments, which formed the institution - trade department, department of fairs and exhibitions, emigration department, tourist department, press department and fiduciary department – clearly reflects its extensive competences and prerogatives. The Polish-Palestine Chamber of Commerce and Industry took numerous initiatives seeking to improve trade connections between Poland and Jewish Palestine, the great majority of them was subsidised by the Polish Ministry of Industry and Trade. Chamber's executives and members repeatedly participated in international conferences and meeting with the governing elites of Poland. In consequence both Polish and Palestine's Jewish companies could have taken advantage of the widespread trade promotion opportunities, such as trade fairs,

⁵³⁸ 'Poland Further Trade with Palestine', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 23 October 1929.

⁵³⁹ 'Poland's quota for Palestine goods', *The Palestine Post*, 3 February 1937, p.11.

⁵⁴⁰ *Doar HaYom*, 17 November 1935, 133.

⁵⁴¹ 'Polish Chamber of Commerce in Palestine', *The Palestine Bulletin*, 6 January 1926, p.3.

commercial missions etc. The institution played a crucial role in promoting Palestine's products – *totzeret haaretz*.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the tightening of commercial relations between Poland and Palestine became an essential component of Polish Foreign policy. In this regard, the *Sanacja*'s politicians in Warsaw focused their activities on establishing proper institutions and committees. General Gustaw Orlicz-Dreszer, who promoted the development of the Polish merchant marine in close cooperation with Sokolow and Zdzisław Lubomirski initiated the establishment of the Pro-Palestine section within the structure of the Polish Maritime and Colonial League (*Liga Morska i Kolonialna*).⁵⁴² At the beginning of 1934, after two years of negotiations between Poland's officials and Sokolow, the Pro-Palestine Committee (*Komitet Pro-Palestyna*) was founded in Warsaw. The opening session took place in the *Senat* – the upper house of the Polish Parliament in January 1934 in the presence of many prominent statesmen as well as representatives of the army and universities.

According to its agenda, the Committee called for a nationwide promotion of Jewish national endeavours in Palestine. Among the Committee members were prominent representatives of Polish political and intellectual elites – Orlicz-Dreszer, Tadeusz Schaetzel, Tadeusz Gwiazdowski, Antoni Ossendowski, Zofia Nałkowska and others. The crucial support of the Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was additionally reinforced by the membership of former Minister Zaleski, and the Undersecretary of State Jan Szembek. Such a long list of influential personalities representing every shade of politics and ideology reflected Poland's on-going support for Jewish national aspirations in Palestine. Prince Lubomirski in the inaugural speech emphasised that Poland shared pro-Zionist sympathies since 'Palestine was a fulfilment of Jewish dreams about state of their own.' Sokolow, in turn, assessed that the establishment of the Committee would 'solidify Poland's sincere approval for Jewish national development.' The Zionist leader continued, 'Jewish Palestine has faith in Poland, because the Second Polish Republic embraces the national idealism in harmony with human idealism'.⁵⁴³ The Committee's establishment was seen as the great achievement resulting from effective Zionist propaganda activities in Poland and also expressed the sympathy of Polish officials towards Jewish national

⁵⁴² The Maritime and Colonial League was funded in October 1930 and aimed at preparing Polish market for further development of export and pricing foreign brokers out. Before the outbreak of WW II it was the biggest and one of the most influential organisation in Poland. As a mass and social organisation, the League aimed to educate Poles about maritime issues, develop merchant fleet and navy. In its status, the League also called for granting Poland overseas territories for settlement. For an overview of LM&K's aims see: Białas T. (1983) *Liga Morska i Kolonialna: 1930-1939* Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Morskie.

⁵⁴³ 'Ukonstytyuowanie się Komitetu Propalestyńskiego w Polsce', 5-ta rano, 9 January 1934, p.2.; 'Mowa N. Sokołowa', *Gazeta Polska*, 9 January 1934, p.2.

aspirations in 'the new Palestine'. Samuel Stendig evaluated this as 'a sign of the shaping of political ideas within the Polish government and its particular interest in the Jewish national ideology'.⁵⁴⁴ Jakub Appenzlak, the editor-in-chief of *Nasz Przeglqd*, in turn, indicated that the foundation of the Pro-Palestine Committee stemmed from sympathy between 'a revived Polish nation and reviving Jewry'.⁵⁴⁵

Becoming the main instrument for promoting Poland's policy towards 'Jewish Palestine' domestically, the Committee argued that Warsaw's political and economic interests were best served by acting in favour of Zionism and the Jewish colonisation of Palestine. Janusz Makarczyk, the first chairman of the Committee, in an interview given to *Der Moment* assessed that the scope of the Committee's activity and prerogatives was relatively wide, ranging from information and advisory activities, to organising exhibitions and trips to Palestine.



Figure 6. Proceedings of the Pro-Palestine Committee in the Senat's Hall, January 1934, Source: NAC.

⁵⁴⁴ Stendig S. (1935) *Polska a Palestyna w dobie obecnej* Warszawa: J. Neuman, pp. 13-15.

⁵⁴⁵ Appenzlak J. 'Misterje polsko-palestyńskie', *Lektura*, 14 January 1934.



Figure 7. The Praesidium of the Pro-Palestine Committee. From the left: August Zaleski, Gustaw Orlicz-Dreszer, Prince Zdzisław Lubomirski, Janusz Makarczyk and Nahum Sokolow, Source: NAC.

In February 1934, for instance, the Committee asked the Jewish Agency to co-organise a trip of Polish youth to Palestine in order to show that 'the flowering of desert has resulted from a love of the homeland'.⁵⁴⁶ In September 1934, Wiesław Czermiński, the Director of the Polish Maritime and Colonial League and a member of the Polish Pro-Palestine Committee visited Palestine in order to investigate the economic development of the country and to further develop mutual commercial relations.⁵⁴⁷ Furthermore, the Committee published a monthly magazine *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód* [Palestine and the Middle East] devoted to the economic issues of the region. Among them were prominent Polish and Jewish politicians – Lewite, Aleksander Leszczyński (Gdynia-Ameryka), Krzyczkowski (LOT) and Zamojski (a representative from the chemical industry)⁵⁴⁸.

To facilitate the currency exchange between Poland and Palestine the P.K.O, one of the largest Polish banks established some branches in Tel Aviv. Facing a rising in the circulation of capital – in the year 1934 this amounted to P£300,000 – the bank decided to establish another

⁵⁴⁶ 'O żydowskiej Palestynie i idealizmie', *Nowy Dziennik*, 28 February 1934

⁵⁴⁷ CZA, S25\1391-68 *Letter to the Jewish Agency*, CZA, S25\1381-68 *Pro-Palestine Committee 1934*.

⁵⁴⁸ 'Poylens interest in a yidisher Eretz Yisroel', *Der Moment*, 27 December 1933, p.4.

branch in Haifa. The official ceremony took place in May 1933 and was attended by members of Consular Corps, prominent bankers and business representatives. Addressing the gathering, the Polish Consul reiterated Polish political and economic interest in the building up of the Jewish National Home in the Land of Israel.⁵⁴⁹ According to the official figures of 1935, former Polish citizens who had emigrated to Palestine sent the sum of P£387,000 to their relatives in Poland via the P.K.O. bank in Tel Aviv.⁵⁵⁰ Unfortunately, there is no precise data as to what proportion of private capital of Polish Jews was transferred to Palestine between the two world wars.

During the interwar years, Polish-Jewish politicians played an important role in the international Zionist framework. Gruenbaum, who was born in Warsaw, emigrated to Palestine in 1933 after being appointed head of the Jewish Agency's Immigration Department. He held the office till 1935, when he was transferred to the Labour Department. Joshua Heschel Farbstein and Fishel Rottenstreich were both members of the Executive of the World Zionist Organisation and headed the Department of Trade and Industry. Unarguably, their engagement in the Zionist cause as well as experiences gained in Polish politics had a significant impact on the further development of mutual relations between the government in Warsaw and Jewish Palestine. Joshua Farbstein made frequent visits to the Polish diplomatic mission in Palestine and its consuls repeatedly mentioned the fruitful cooperation with former Polish MPs.⁵⁵¹

Transportation facilities between Poland and Palestine

The growth of economic relations between Poland and Palestine brought with it the necessity of improving transport facilities between the two countries. Already in 1933, Polish Jews in Palestine indicated that Roumanian shipping services were not frequent enough and that the establishment of a direct and cheap steamship along with transport by air between Poland and Palestine was necessary.⁵⁵² At the beginning of 1932 when commercial exchange between Poland and the Middle East in addition to a general interest in emigration to Palestine began to increase, Polish authorities initiated direct negotiations with the Jewish Agency in order to establish a new passenger line between Constanza, Roumania and Haifa. Soon afterwards, the idea was endorsed

⁵⁴⁹ 'Polish Bank Opens in Tel Aviv', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 15 May 1933.

⁵⁵⁰ 'Palestine Residents Support Relatives in Poland', *The Palestine Post*, 24 March 1936, p.5.

⁵⁵¹ AAN, ARPL – Polish Embassy in London, 503, 139-140 *Palestine 1923-1939*, pp.85-85; MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 6288, 9936, p.13.

⁵⁵² CZA S25\5742 -40, *Letter by E.J. Kirschenbaum to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 1933*.

by the PIE (State Export Institute) as 'a significant improvement of Polish-Levantine freight transportation'.⁵⁵³

Facilitated by an agreement between the Polish government and the Jewish Agency's Immigration Department, the *S.S. Polonia* service was mainly used by passengers and immigrants. However, as Mieczysław Fularski, the Chairman of the Marine Department in the Maritime and Colonial League, admitted, 'the inclusion of the *Polonia* to the Polish-Roumanian Levantine tariff will create an increase in the exchange of goods'.⁵⁵⁴ Indeed, the establishment of the first national deep sea service to Palestine was proof that the Polish authorities were keenly interested both in enhancing export with the region and the establishment of close relations with the emerging Jewish state.⁵⁵⁵ The ship, was in fact the largest on the Constanza-Haifa route. Between September 1933 and November 1934 the *S.S. Polonia* shipped 21,462 people and more than 5,000 tons of freight cargo. Launching this line was the result of the unarguable success of Polish diplomacy in the region. Overall, in 1933 six Polish steam vessels entered Palestine's ports in with the total tonnage of 27,114 tonnes.⁵⁵⁶ In the following year, the number of trips increased to 24 with a total tonnage of 108,456. Along with the renewed flow of immigration to Palestine, the Zionists began to indicate that existing rail and shipping services were insufficient to cope with the growing number of passengers.⁵⁵⁷ In 1935 the Jewish Agency's Immigration Department began extensive diplomatic negotiations with Polish shipping companies in order to launch new services to Palestine.⁵⁵⁸ As a result, in October 1935 a second Polish vessel, *S.S. Kościuszko*, able to carry 700 passengers, was transferred to this route. Both ships sailed regularly (once a week) between Constanza and Palestine's ports until 1938.

⁵⁵³ Łazor J. (2016) *Brama na Bliski Wschód* ..., p.130.

⁵⁵⁴ 'Maritime and Colonial League and the Palestine Problem. Interview with Major M. Fularski, *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*, 1932, p.13.

⁵⁵⁵ 'Polska Lewant', *Gazeta Polska*, 25 August 1935.

⁵⁵⁶ Annual Report of the Department of Customs, Excise and Trade for year 1933.

⁵⁵⁷ Lewite L. 'W sprawie komunikacji lotniczej między Polską a Palestyną', *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*, 1934.

⁵⁵⁸ AAN, ARPL – Polish Embassy in London, 290-292, *Report on activities of Jewish politicians*, 1935.



Figure 8. Advertisement of S.S. *Polonia* sea service, 1933. Source: *Palestine and Near East Economic Magazine*.

At the same time, a project to launch an air service between Poland and Palestine's Lod [Lydda] Airport was advanced. Samuel Stendig emphasised that establishing a regular air link between the two countries was necessary to facilitate economic transactions (carriage of letters for the postal service) and to encourage export. It was also suggested that air transportation might serve up to ten per cent of the total number of passengers travelling between Poland and

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Palestine.⁵⁵⁹ Eventually, in April 1937 the Polish LOT service started to operate flights between Lod Airport and Warsaw, as the fourth air service from Palestine. The flight, with refuelling stops in Lwów, Bucharest, Sofia, Thessaloniki, Athens and Rhodes, took approximately twenty-seven hours.⁵⁶⁰ This regular service not only improved passenger transportation but also provided a basis for further development of commercial relations. As Palestine ranked second in the world with respect to the quantity of postal traffic with Poland, the establishing of air transportation was of significant importance. Planes were supposed to carry mail three times a week to a number of destination countries - Poland, Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Bulgaria, Roumania, Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia and Rhodes.⁵⁶¹ Since the question of transportation was of paramount importance, the establishment of these new routes was seen as an international success. The officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were particularly proud of the results of these diplomatic efforts. Samuel Stendig summarised, 'whereas the Consulates in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem represent the Second Polish Republic in Palestine and the Levant, [S.S. *Polonia*] became an unofficial Polish "Consul" at sea for the South-East'.⁵⁶²



Figure 9. The launch of the first air transport service between Warsaw and Palestine's Lod Airport. Leon Lewite, the President of the Poland-Palestine Association, giving a letter to Palestine to pilot Ludwik Zejfert, April 1937. Source: NAC.

⁵⁵⁹ Stendig S. (1935) *Polska a Palestyna w dobie obecnej* Warszawa: J. Neuman, p.29.

⁵⁶⁰ 'R'ishme Maasa Polyin', *Davar*, 7 July 1937.

⁵⁶¹ 'Polish-Palestine Air Line Initiated', *The Palestine Post*, 6 April 1937.

⁵⁶² Stendig S. (1935) *Polska a Palestyna w dobie obecnej* Warszawa: J. Neuman, pp. 24-27.

Better transportation facilities not only triggered further commercial exchange between both countries, but also contributed to the greater exchange of people. Consequently, Jewish Palestine became a popular destination among Polish travellers, pilgrims, intellectuals, and artists. Whilst religious pilgrims gravitated to Palestine to visit the holy sites, others – mainly Polish journalists and reporters - came to investigate the Zionist experiment. These reporters were trying to look into the phenomenon of the ‘new Jew’ and to experience at first-hand the development of the new country. Andrzej Strug in his column entitled ‘Renesans duszy żydowskiej’ [Renaissance of the Jewish Spirit], wrote:

I did not head for Palestine for tourist impressions and experiences [...]. I went there, because I simply wanted to encounter all these things, I had read about before. I wanted to see for myself the transformation of Jewish people in Palestine, all spiritual changes and prevalent joy. I encountered all these things.⁵⁶³

Public knowledge on Palestine affairs increased markedly in the second half of the 1930s. The Palestine-mania that dominated Polish Jewry along with the worsening socio-economic conditions within the country resulted in heavy coverage given to the Palestine question not only by Polish-Jewish newspapers and periodicals but also by all sectors of the Polish press. Unarguably, the reality that Polish travellers encountered in Palestine was to some degree affected by preconceived values and ideological opinions disseminated at this time in Poland. From this vantage point it is particularly interesting to consider how these travellers perceived Palestine. Was it for them an inseparable part of the Orient? How did they perceive Zionists? The vast majority of Polish travellers affiliated with *Sanacja*, indeed, subscribed to the view of a backward former Ottoman province into which European culture needed to be imported, whereas Zionists in their eyes, were the ones who would bring the advantages of Western civilization to the Middle East.

Jan Hupka, a Galician Conservatist and landowner, who visited Palestine twice, was impressed at seeing, ‘*halutzim* who dream about the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine and the modernisation of the social pattern of Jewry’. However, as a Conservatist activist he considered Jewish statehood in Palestine a dim prospect, claiming that it would disrupt the socio-political balance in the region. In May 1925, he came to the conclusion that Palestine would, eventually, be an Arab state. In turn, Jewish colonists would either return to the countries of their

⁵⁶³ ‘Renesans duszy żydowskiej’, *Czarno na białem*, 10 April 1938, p.7.

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origin or would assimilate completely within Arab culture including clothing and language.⁵⁶⁴

Echoes of Polish Conservatist thought can be also found in his *Przez Palestynę i Syrię oraz uwagi o kolonizacji żydowskiej w Palestynie* [Through Palestine and Syria and remarks on Jewish colonisation in Palestine], a brochure published after a visit to Palestine in 1928. The author emphasised that the 'settlement experiments may simply offend [people], in turn, the British recklessness of assuming responsibility for shaping the Holy Land into a Jewish national home, may outrage [them]. Dreams of the Jewish colonisation of Palestine, along with the transformation of Jews within a rural society, against their centuries-old customs have turned out to be a fantasy, even in the eyes of clear-headed Zionists.'⁵⁶⁵

Whilst expressing his criticism of the Zionist settlement project, this Galician politician contemplated instead the moralising effect of Zionism on Diaspora Jews. This perception was common among other Polish Conservatists, mainly monarchists and well-established landowners and directly echoed the ideas of Ahad Ha'Am (Asher Zvi Ginsberg) who encouraged the spiritual renaissance of Judaism. In this vein, Hupka indicated that Palestine should remain a spiritual centre nourishing the Jewish people in the Diaspora rather than in a sovereign state. 'I wish with all my heart for such a spiritual national home, for such a perfect Zion for both the Zionists and the Jews dispersed all over the world. [...] We should esteem *Halutzim* for their idealism but endorsement for Zionists' political aspirations is not in the interest of the Christian and Muslim world.'⁵⁶⁶

Levant Fairs

Since the quantity of imported goods to Middle Eastern countries totalled over £80,000,000 every year, Polish entrepreneurs sought new opportunities to enlarge the sphere of their commercial activity. Due to the progress of colonization as well as the development of suburban and rural areas, imports for consumption in Mandatory Palestine steadily increased in volume.⁵⁶⁷ The Levant Fairs organized from 1926 onwards were supposed to serve as a unique platform for European manufacturers and exporters to establish and enhance their commercial relations with Middle Eastern partners. Indeed, the event aimed at 'restoring to the Near East the economic status it enjoyed in ancient times'. Over time, however, Arabs began to boycott it,

⁵⁶⁴ Rudnicki S. (2008) *Równi ale niezupełnie* Warszawa: Stowarzyszenie Midrasz, p.59.

⁵⁶⁵ Hupka J. (1928) *Przez Palestynę i Syrię oraz uwagi o kolonizacji żydowskiej w Palestynie* Kraków: Drukarnia Czasu, pp.9-12, 115-121.

⁵⁶⁶ Hupka J. (1928) *Przez Palestynę i Syrię ...*, p. 112.

⁵⁶⁷ 'Levant Fair 1932, Tel Aviv'. *Palestine and Near East Economic Magazine*, 1931, p.186.

viewing it as a British-Jewish exhibition.⁵⁶⁸ Although the participation of Arab partners in the event was decreasing, the Polish government continued to see this event as providing a significant economic stimulus.

The exhibition and trade fairs held in April 1932 in Tel Aviv were planned on a far larger scale than the previous event, which had a local rather than international scope. Siegfried Hoofien, the President of the Jaffa and District Chamber of Commerce emphasised that 'the development of these Fairs as a permanent institution may open up for Jaffa and Tel Aviv a new vista and give them new significance in the life of the Near East generally as the appropriate meeting ground between the commerce of the East and West'.⁵⁶⁹ The fairs were indeed a great success, attracting dozens of foreign participants and shaping Tel Aviv into a commercial center within the Middle East.

Also, the Polish authorities became keenly interested in this event. Since Palestine became a crucial trade area, participation in Tel Aviv's fairs was seen as a unique opportunity to further and develop commercial relations with Middle Eastern partners. Ferdynand Zarzycki, the Polish Minister of Industry and Commerce expressed his hope 'that the Levant Fair will contribute to the intensification of commercial and cultural relations between Poland and the countries of the Near East'. Thus, intense activities were undertaken by the Polish-Palestine Chamber of Commerce in close cooperation with the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Association of Industrial and Trade Chambers in order to prepare the Polish pavilion. Lewi Lewin-Epstein became the Honorary Representative of the Fair, for which tickets were available to buy in the Palestine Office of the Jewish Agency in Warsaw. Special facilities were afforded for visitors from Central and Eastern European countries; Polish railways for instance offered fare reductions of twenty-five per cent and a reduction of fifty per cent on freight.⁵⁷⁰

The attendance at Levant Fairs was, in fact, the first, far-reaching attempt to bring Polish goods into vogue. During the Fairs of 1932, forty-seven Polish companies, representing over thirty sectors and industries displayed their products. In turn, the 1934 Fairs provided the opportunity to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the founding of Tel Aviv and attracted 227 firms

⁵⁶⁸ Helman A. (2010) *Young Tel Aviv: A Tale of Two Cities* Waltham: Brandeis University Press, p.53.

⁵⁶⁹ 'Palestine. The Economic Position'. *'Palestine and Near East Economic Magazine*, 1932, p.11.

⁵⁷⁰ 'List of Railway, Motor and Steamship Reductions accorded in connection with the Levant Fair 1932, Tel Aviv, to holders of Fair Permanent Tickets'. *'Palestine and Near East Economic Magazine*, 1932, p.17.

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from Poland. After Palestine, the United Kingdom and France, Poland was the fourth the biggest exhibitor.⁵⁷¹ For this purpose, the Polish-Palestine Chamber of Commerce built a 400 square meter brick pavilion along with two other provisional show pavilions. Overall, over 1,000 square meters were given to Polish entrepreneurs, representing chiefly textile, chemical and food sectors.⁵⁷² The central pavilion was almost entirely dedicated to public and governmental institutions. Among the exhibitors were also the P.K.O bank, the Polish Overseas Mercantile Society. The Gdynia-America vessel service and Polish harbors authorities also were given display stands. Up until 1934, the Fairs were mainly an informative in character, but the 1936 Fairs were devoted to the acquisition of new customers. *The Palestine Post* assessed the Polish pavilion as one of the most interesting and best-organized exhibitions of the Fairs. Interestingly, before the Fairs of 1936 Polish exhibitors were offered transport for their goods from Poland to Palestine free of charge.⁵⁷³

⁵⁷¹ 'Rozwój stosunków gospodarczych między Polską a Palestyną. Wywiad z prezesem L. Lewite', *Czas*, 23 January 1936, p.13.

⁵⁷² (1934) 'The Levant Fair, 1934'. *The Palestine Commercial Bulletin* XI (9): 267-279, p.274; Lewite L. 'Wystawa Polska na Targach Lewantyńskich w Tel-Awiwie' *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*, pp. 66-69.

⁵⁷³ 'Bezpłatny przewóz eksponatów na Targi Lewantyńskie', *Biuletyn Gospodarczy*, 7 February 1936, p.11.



Figure 10. Levant Fairs 1932, a map showing a precise location of each country's pavilions. Source: *Palestine and Near East Economic Magazine*.



Figure 11. One of the three Polish pavilions at the 1934 Levant Fairs, May 1934. Source: NAC.

Since the event had not only a commercial but also a political character it drew the attention of tourists, influential entrepreneurs and elites from Poland. Among those who came to Palestine especially for this occasion were Minister Aleksander Bobkowski, Henryk Gruber, the director of the P.K.O bank and the head of the Polish Institute for International Cooperation, M. Sokołowski from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and J. Wojstomska, the Ministry of Industry and Trade's delegate. Leon Lewite and Maksymilian Friede, in turn, represented the Polish-Zionist community. A significant involvement of Polish elites in the event clearly indicates the importance of Jewish Palestine in Polish economic policy. Stanisław Świsłocki, a Polish-Jewish journalist, evaluated, 'the Levant Fairs might trigger further economic exchange between Poland and Palestine'.⁵⁷⁴ *Der Moment*, in turn, wrote about the possibilities of acquiring new markets and economic expansion into the Middle East.

The evaluation of Marian Turski, the Director of the State Export Institute claimed that:

The development of Palestine as a new national and political centre creates an entirely new and interesting problem and must, due to its nature, raise interest and response in Poland. For, on the one hand, a new society full of youth, energy and initiative is arising, building foundations for a future State in a manner seldom met, putting into their efforts unlimited enthusiasm, faith in the future and success of their undertaking. On the other hand, there

⁵⁷⁴ 5-ta rano, 15 March 1934.

are a large number of people who, living in Poland and being intellectually connected with these efforts are watching with equal enthusiasm all that is being accomplished. As one who is observing this evolution from an economic standpoint, it is interesting not only because of its arising but, also as an occurrence which should greatly reflect on the national economy of Poland.⁵⁷⁵

Throughout the interwar period, migration continued to be an immensely important economic force. Jewish emigrants' ties to Poland not only had a profound impact on fostering bilateral trade links but also significantly shaped Polish perceptions of Palestine. Being aware of the scale of Polish-Jewish emigration to Palestine, the representatives of the Polish government began to maintain close relations with the *Yishuv* leadership under the assumption that both sides constituted a community of shared interests. Polish Jews, by virtue of the advantages associated with their language, preferences, knowledge of home-country products and business contacts, established prosperous import companies dealing with Polish merchandise products. In the eyes of the governing elites of Poland, cooperation with emerging Jewish Palestine became an unparalleled opportunity, not only to enhance Polish exports, but also to promote national products in the region. According to this perception, Polish Jews who sought to establish state of their own in the Land of Israel were 'invaluable as pioneers for Polish commercial expansion in the Near East'.

The question of Jewish emigration and Polish-Palestine relations, being of a great interest to the political and economic life of Poland, became one of the most vital questions in the interwar years. Both members of consecutive Polish cabinets as well as prominent publicists observed with admiration the political and economic development of Jewish Palestine. Since the Zionists were seen as those, who had brought prosperity to the former backward Ottoman province, cooperation with them became a matter of strategic importance for Poland. Existing evidence clearly suggests that the cultivation of commercial relations between Poland and Jewish Palestine developed over the interwar period and became an integral part of Poland's trade policy at the beginning of 1930s. Apart from wide-ranging diplomatic activity, Polish elites embarked on an extensive campaign, promoting commercial exchange between the two countries. Within the official Polish perceptions, Palestine's Jewish *Yishuv* was seen as an important partner and in turn, cooperation with the Zionists brought an unparalleled economic opportunity. Did these contribute to Poland's international engagement with the Palestine question? I will strive to answer this question in the following chapter.

⁵⁷⁵ Turski M. (1932) 'Polish-Palestine Commercial Relations'. *Palestyna i Bliski Wschód*, pp.11-12.

Chapter 5 A dedicated alliance or calculated diplomacy?

A few days after the venerated Marshal Piłsudski's death, Jan Kozielewski-Karski, a young and promising diplomat, approached Wiktor T. Drymmer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Szucha Alley in Warsaw. His main concern was the future of Warsaw's stance towards the Palestine question. In response, the Director of the Consular Department assured him, 'Jews have a right to settle in Palestine and, therefore, Poland continues to emphasise this fact before the League. Jews also have a right to receive the benefit of our experiences in our struggle for independence. They also have a right to follow the Marshal's cue, primarily because they have served in the Legions. Nobody can stop us from supporting the Jews in their settlement and independence endeavours. We believe that the Balfour Declaration was fair'. Karski, referring to the ideological splits that had riven the Polish discourse, continued, 'However, the *Endecja* asserts that being a Pole and a Jew, at the same time, is fundamentally inconsistent. Polish-Jewish settlers in Palestine, in turn, cannot have a right to hold a Polish passport'. This provoked Drymmer to retort, 'It is, fundamentally, certain that *Endeks* are idiots. Bernard Hausner, a Lwowian, professor and the Rabbi of the Polish Army during the 1920 Polish-Bolshevik War is currently our Consul to Palestine. He headed to Palestine because he is a Jew, but he is also a Pole and for this purpose he is Poland's envoy. It is possible to live in Palestine and be a Pole, even if you celebrate Shabbat. [...] And this is one of reasons, why we should remain at the helm'.⁵⁷⁶

In post-Piłsudski Poland, emigration and the opening of the gates to Palestine for unrestricted Jewish immigration became the main pillars of Beck's policy with regard to the Jews. While the existing scholarship correctly underscoring the pervasive racial hatred continues to view Poland's international interventions as yet further manifestations of anti-Semitism, this chapter, in addition, examines the pivotal role of the Polish government in disseminating pro-Zionist and pro-emigration propaganda.⁵⁷⁷ In examining Polish encounters with the Zionist leadership, this chapter engages with the international aspect of bilateral cooperation. Although Poland's diplomatic representatives continued to support Jewish national endeavours in Palestine throughout the 1930s, when the Palestine question was high on the political agenda, this question

⁵⁷⁶ Piasecki W. (2017) *Jan Karski. Jedno życie. Kompletnej opowieść. Tom I: Madagaskar (1914–1939)* Warszawa: Centrum Europejskie Natolin.

⁵⁷⁷ Marcus J. (1983) *Social and political history of the Jews in Poland, 1919–1939* Berlin: Mouton Publishers; Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935–1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press.

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of international bilateral cooperation has not garnered much scholarly attention. Embracing a wider geopolitical perspective allows me to assess Warsaw's global position towards the Zionist project in Palestine. This chapter analyses how and to what degree the actions and inactions of the Polish government materially affected the political situation in the Middle East. Zionist circles in general, and the Revisionists in particular, were convinced that the *Sanacja* camp was adopting a positive approach towards the Jewish aspirations of statehood in Palestine and consequently believed that the camp's leadership might even be induced to support Zionist claims before the British authorities. As in the 1930s the questions of Jewish emigration and Palestine stood at the crossroads of diverging political interests, the Polish government's active involvement in the multilateral debate became an important factor in all international negotiations.

Over the interwar years, Poland's diplomatic corps not only actively worked to facilitate the requirement for large-scale Jewish immigration to Palestine, but also frequently sought clarification from the British, regarding their former policy obligations given to the Jews in the Balfour Declaration. The role of Polish representatives, who actively served as pro-Zionist lobbyists in the international arena, in transnational Zionist politics, should not be marginalized. Referring to the frequency and richness of Polish diplomatic interventions, the chapter argues that there was no coherent policy from the *Sanacja* camp towards Jewish national aspirations in Palestine. Even within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs there were several strong personalities particularly eager to cooperate with Zionists. Moreover, I argue that frequently, the policy towards the goals of Zionism was shaped by particular top-ranking officials within this Ministry. I, therefore, analyse the perspective held by politicians such as Beck, who held the position of Poland's Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1932 and 1939, and his closest associates - Drymmer, Zarychta, Wagner and Paprocki. Furthermore, taking into account the wider context of mutual relations, attention is given to Polish diplomats and politicians, who not only represented the state's interests in the international arena but also had a crucial role in shaping the main directions of Poland's foreign policy. Among the most prominent it is necessary to mention Tytus Komarnicki, the permanent delegate in the League of Nations, Count Edward Raczyński, the Ambassador in London, and Witold Hulanicki, the Polish Consul to Palestine. Polish diplomats acted tirelessly in the international arena to exert pressure on the British administration to allow more Jews to Palestine. Tracing their positions, I assess Poland's position towards Jewish statehood and socio-political developments in Palestine.

In addition to this, my research relates to the international context of the late 1930s, perhaps the most important element in understanding Polish-Zionist relations. Poland's foreign policy has hardly been mentioned in the existing scholarship, yet it should be analysed as a crucial

factor in international debates on the Palestine question and the evolution of Poland's official stance towards Zionist aspirations in the region, especially in the second half of the 1930s as the balance of power in Europe was severely altered. Following Piłsudski's death in May 1935 Poland was left deprived of his guidance in terms of the foreign policy. Even though Minister Beck reaffirmed that he would continue realising the Marshal's vision of Polish foreign policy, many new developments significantly affected the directions of his political course.⁵⁷⁸ Among the most important it is necessary to mention the growth of Nazism in neighbouring Germany, the British policy of appeasement towards Hitler, and the acceptance by the government of France – Poland's western ally – of further German claims towards Poland. All these factors contributed to the belief of a large segment of Polish decisionmakers that some aspects of Poland's foreign policy should be revised.

Through an examination of the political, diplomatic and military interactions between the Polish government and Zionists this chapter provides insights into mutual relations in the rapidly changing political landscape of the second half of the 1930s. How and to what degree did the evolution of Poland's foreign policy after May 1935 affect the Polish position towards the Palestine question? Was the Polish-German détente a factor that brought Revisionists to the fore? With regards to the foreign policy Beck had a very tough task before him: securing counterbalance with the neighbouring powers (Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany) while maintaining the political alliance with France. Although there is no documentation outlining Piłsudski's geopolitical instructions for Beck, immediately after May 1935 the Minister continued the Marshal's directions. The most pressing issues such as relations with the neighbouring powers, Danzig's status⁵⁷⁹, the Lithuanian question⁵⁸⁰, and the Minorities Treaty were handled in accordance with the late Marshal's recommendations.⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁸ On his deathbed Marshal Piłsudski enjoined Beck to 'maintain as long as possible the present relationship with Berlin, but also preserve at any price the alliance with France'. Furthermore Beck was advised that Warsaw's policy can never depend either on Moskow or Berlin. See: Wandycz P. (1988) *The Twilight of French Eastern Alliances, 1926-1936 French-Czechoslovak-Polish Relations from Locarno to the Remilitarization of the Rhineland*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 403.

⁵⁷⁹ Throughout the interwar period the Danzig question was considered as vital to Polish independence. Pursuant to the Treaty of Versailles Danzig was given the status of the Free City under the protection of the League on Nations. Since the city was linked both politically and economically to the newly reborn Polish state, Germans deployed a policy that aimed at revising this settlement. In 1933, as Hitler issued some claims against this territory, the Polish government decided to send additional troops to Danzig. Polish-German talks after these events led to negotiations over the Non-Aggression Pact of 1934. For a detailed analysis see: Cienciała A. (2011) The Foreign Policy of Józef Piłsudski and Józef Beck, 1926-1939: Misconceptions and interpretations. *The Polish Review* LVI: 111-152.

⁵⁸⁰ Relations between Poland and Lithuania became detrimental after the Polish seizure of Wilno in 1920. Officially the city was incorporated to Poland in 1923. The growing nationalist sentiments poisoned Polish-Lithuanian relations for most of the interwar period. For a detailed analysis of Polish-Lithuanian relations see: Łossowski P. (1997) *Stosunki polsko-litewskie 1921-1939* Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN.

⁵⁸¹ Cienciała A. (2011) The Foreign Policy of Józef Piłsudski and Józef Beck, 1926-1939: Misconceptions and interpretations. *The Polish Review* LVI: 111-152.

As the bilateral non-aggression pacts concluded respectively in 1932 with the Soviets and in 1934 with the Germans seemed to be short-lived, Beck realised the drawbacks of Poland's dependency on these two increasingly hostile neighbours. The policy of appeasement that clearly suggested that Britain would not insist on maintaining the *status quo* of 1919 had an equal impact on the evolution of his foreign policy. Eventually, being able to operate without Piłsudski's restraint Beck deployed a policy that gradually aligned Poland with the Third Reich. As Anna Cienciała notes, there were two key features of Beck's foreign policy in the late 1930s - the aforementioned pact with Nazi Germany and Poland's official position during the Czechoslovak Crisis of 1938.⁵⁸² To the further detriment of relations with Western countries, the Minister supported Hitler's claims during the Munich Conference of September 29, 1938, which resulted in annexation of two-thirds of Teschen Silesia (predominantly German part of the Sudetenland) by the Third Reich. These two features were strongly criticized by contemporaries, which had a lasting impact on the historiography. Particularly strongly condemned was the method used to seize Zaolzie, the territory of east and west of the Olza River, in September 1938.⁵⁸³ Although over the interwar years almost each Polish party, except the Communists, called for the unification of Zaolzie with Poland, along with this annexation Beck's foreign policy began to be seen in the West as favouring Nazi Germany.⁵⁸⁴ Neither the international context nor the Polish *raison d'état* was taken into account in the assessment of Beck's decision. Consequently, all aspects of Polish foreign policy including Poland's position vis-à-vis the Palestine question were viewed through the lens of the alignment with Germany.

In the assessment of Beck's policy the decisive role was also played by the fact that on the eve of the Second World War the British government pursued the policy of appeasement toward Hitler, essentially abandoning its long established policy of promoting the Zionist enterprise in Palestine at the same time. The British decisions ultimately determined Poland's vision of foreign policy and perceptions of the Zionist aspirations in the region. As I discuss later in this chapter, for many *Sanacja*'s key policymakers the consecutive White Papers and immigration

⁵⁸² In the years between 1935 and 1939 Minister Beck supported German territorial claims against Czechoslovakia, promoting at the same time the Slovak independence. See: Cienciała A. (2011) The Foreign Policy of Józef Piłsudski and Józef Beck, 1926-1939: Misconceptions and interpretations. *The Polish Review* LVI: 111-152.

⁵⁸³ In view of the expansion of German territory very close to the Polish frontier, Beck made a decision to seize Zaolzie. He was convinced that Poland must immediately react to international developments. 'If we hesitate and delay, Germany may seize this valuable and highly industrialised patch of land, eliminating Polish claim to Zaolzie for a long time to come' Beck spoke to Polish policymakers. See: Cienciała A. (2011) The Foreign Policy of Józef Piłsudski and Józef Beck, 1926-1939: Misconceptions and interpretations. *The Polish Review* LVI: 111-152.

⁵⁸⁴ Western historians frequently depicted this action as Polish cooperation with Nazi Germany or even an action 'at Hitler's urging'. See: Keylor W. (2001) *The Twentieth-century World: An International History* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.82.

restrictions meant that the *Yishuv* Zionist leaders lost their power and influence, becoming incapable to solve the immediate Jewish question in the Diaspora. All these developments brought Jabotinsky's acquaintances, who offered a clearly delineated scheme for the speedy emigration, to the fore. The nationwide success of the NZO and the support given by the Polish officialdom for its programme had grave implications for Jewish politics in Poland, and particularly for other Zionist groupings there. As I observed in Chapter 1 not all strains of Zionism were treated equally in the second half of the 1930s. There is no doubt that the approach taken by the representatives of the *Sanacja* camp was based on both ideological and practical grounds. The government in Warsaw could no longer accept the Zionist establishment's overt condemnation of the Polish-Revisionist alliance. Even though due to the consecutive British restrictions the mass Jewish emigration to Palestine was becoming an unrealizable chimera the right-wing Revisionist Zionism had become by far the leading force among Polish Jews enjoying wide support of Polish elites. As I show in this chapter the preferences given by the Polish authorities to the Revisionists' activities were clearly visible over the late 1930s.

Since an open endorsement of Zionism by the Polish governing elites might have resulted in the permanent endangerment of Polish interests in Europe and relations with Great Britain, the alliance between the *Sanacja*'s officials and the Revisionist leadership had to become a hidden part of Warsaw's foreign policy. Due to Revisionists' worldwide influence in Zionist circles and the support given by the Polish government to *Betar* before the outbreak of the Second World War in the form of assistance with military training Zionist presence in interwar Palestine was considerably enhanced. The chapter, therefore, considers both sides as a community of interests. Indeed, the similarity between the Polish and Jewish political situation was indicated by Abraham Stern at the beginning of the Second World War. Both sides have been striving to realise their crucial goals. The chapter reconsiders the Polish government as an important diplomatic channel in terms of assistance in training, supplying arms and support for illegal immigration to Palestine, as well as a strategically significant ally in 'a campaign for the recognition of a distinct Jewish nationality'.⁵⁸⁵ The chapter's conclusion highlights an argument that is apparent throughout the chapter and the dissertation as a whole – that the political and diplomatic history of Zionism is inextricably linked to the history of Poland.

⁵⁸⁵ Fleming M. (2014) *Auschwitz, the Allies and Censorship of the Holocaust* New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 89.

Responsibility for Jewish Affairs

In 1935 responsibility for Jewish affairs, both internal and external, was transferred from the Ministry of the Interior to the Consular Department of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The existing historiography largely regards this shift as an inevitable result of the 1934 Polish government's treaty with Nazi Germany and a clear indication of the Government's anti-Semitic tendencies. According to this interpretation, the Jewish question was no longer an internal but rather an international issue in the eyes of the ruling elites of Poland.⁵⁸⁶ In this vein, Timothy Snyder argues that 'the Jews were no longer normal citizens to be integrated and protected by the state, but somehow aliens'.⁵⁸⁷

Recent studies by Polish historian Wojciech Skóra may, however, shed new light on the question of these departmental reshuffle. Skóra refers to the first six years after the May 1926 military coup as a 'latency period' in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, arguing that more significant changes were brought about only at the beginning of 1930s. Also in his opinion, the appointment of Beck in 1932 was accompanied by the 'militarisation' of the Foreign Ministry. As a result, Drymmer and Zarychta, former officers of the Polish Legions, were given key management positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Consular Department.⁵⁸⁸ From 1935 onwards, the direction of Poland's policy towards Jewish emigration, its relations with Zionists and Palestine depended largely, therefore, on the *Sanacja*'s top-tier politicians, the closest associates of Piłsudski.

Drymmer, whose idea it had been to transfer responsibility for Jewish issues to the Consular Department, writes in his memoirs *W służbie Polsce* [In the service of Poland], 'after a year of managing the Consular Department and seeing the duality of work within the Ministry, I tabled to Minister Beck an idea of transferring Jewish issues to the Consular Department, whose responsibilities included dealing with emigration. For the Jews, emigration and particularly emigration to Palestine as it is restricted by the Mandate Authority was both an emotional and vital issue'. Drymmer then emphasised, 'the Ministry of the Interior dealt with the Jewish question exclusively in terms of security, imposing penalties or submitting more complicated cases to the

⁵⁸⁶ Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press; Reinharz J., Shavit Y. (2018) *The Road to September 1939: Polish Jews, Zionists, and the Yishuv on the Eve of World War II* Boston: Brandeis University Press, p.9; Łazor J. (2016) *Brama na Bliski Wschód ...*, pp.100-101.

⁵⁸⁷ Snyder T. (2015) *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* London: Vintage, pp.58-59.

⁵⁸⁸ Skóra W. (2007) Konsekwencje przewrotu majowego w polskiej służbie konsularnej. IN: Sioma M. (ed) *Zamach stanu Józefa Piłsudskiego*. Lublin, pp.405-424.

courts', adding that 'in terms of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' activity within the country we aimed at making Poles and Jews aware that we considered emigration as an important issue for the state, concerning all citizens, not like some wanted to present it - as an attempt to evacuate Polish Jews [reduce the number of Jews in the country]. Certainly, we had Jewish emigration and the securing of their own national interests in mind. Anyway, our activities and influences did not aim at shaping the Jewish question or the Jewish emigration into political tools. It seems that after a few years of bilateral cooperation with Jewish leaders, who in large measure were people with pure and noble intentions, we understood and trusted each other'.⁵⁸⁹

Drymmer, with vast experience in military intelligence, was a keen observer of foreign policy and an ardent supporter of Jewish national endeavours in the Land of Israel.⁵⁹⁰ As the Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Consular Department for many years he had been one of Minister Beck's closest associates and an eminent figure within the Polish diplomacy. The aforementioned Zarychta, as the head of the Department for Emigration Policy, was responsible for emigration politics and interactions with Jewish leaders. In turn, Wagner pursued research in these matters.

An interesting interpretation has also been provided by a prominent historian of Polish-Jewish relations, Jerzy Tomaszewski, who suggests that actions that aimed at accelerating of Jewish emigration were directed towards weakening ethno-nationalist opposition. By referring to pro-emigration tendencies, the *Sanacja*'s policymakers simply aimed at gaining the wider support of the Polish public.⁵⁹¹ Moreover, Tomaszewski argues that the Consular Department's shift towards more radical solutions such as the emigration of Jews was a result of the strong influence of Zarychta and his ideological concepts. Zarychta was closely associated with people around *Zadruga*, an anti-Semitic and neo-Pagan magazine preaching the biological nationalism of all Slavic nations.⁵⁹² According to Tomaszewski, the director of Consular Department 'fell under the great influence of the personality of his eloquent colleague [Zarychta], and it consequently affected the dimension of Department's internal activities.'

⁵⁸⁹ Drymmer W. (2014) *W służbie Polsce: Wspomnienia żołnierza i państwowca z lat 1914-1947* Kraków: Wydawnictwo Wingert, pp.192-212.

⁵⁹⁰ Drymmer W. (2014) *W służbie Polsce: ...*, pp.192-212.

⁵⁹¹ Tomaszewski J. Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej wobec Żydów, 1938-1939. *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*.

⁵⁹² Tomaszewski J. Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej wobec Żydów, 1938-1939. *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, p. 203.

In July 1937 Wagner, under the name of J. Ziemiański, published a comprehensive study - *Problem emigracji żydowskiej* [Problem of Jewish emigration].⁵⁹³ The analysis, backed by detailed numbers and graphs was disseminated to the Parliament's Foreign Commission and diplomats primarily for information purposes.⁵⁹⁴ To prevent this information from falling into unauthorised hands for the use of anti-Semitic agitation, the study was considered strictly confidential. The question of Jewish emigration to the Land of Israel was further researched in a subsequent departmental publication. Wagner travelled to Palestine to track the Peel Commission proceedings especially for this purpose. As Poland's envoy to Palestine he had the unparalleled opportunity to have a closer look at the Palestine question and to confer with both Arab and Zionist political leaders about this issue. Upon his return to Warsaw in early 1938, a brochure was released entitled *Problem palestyński* [The Palestine problem], tracing the recent clashes between Arabs and Jews. Wagner's inauspicious comments marked a serious shift in official thinking on Zionism and the Palestine question. According to his assessment, Zionists were incapable of building independent sovereignty without the British 'protectorate' and they were also unable to solve the Jewish question in the Diaspora.⁵⁹⁵

The question of Jewish emigration as an international problem

Throughout the interwar years, Poland's government frequently claimed the right to participate in any discussion on the future of Jewish emigration to Palestine and prospects for the creation of a Jewish State. Although the large segment of Polish politicians considered the so-called Jewish question as a domestic rather than a European problem, they still sought a solution at international fora – in London, Washington, Paris and perhaps most intensively before the League of Nations in Geneva. Over the course of the 1920s, such a perspective had been largely apparent among the right-wing, ethno-nationalist politicians associated with *Endecja* camp. However, in the following decade the idea of an international solution for the Jewish question became a recurrent theme in Polish public discourse, gaining the endorsement of Marshal Piłsudski's old comrades. Such an approach was triggered by the common conviction that Poland's 'vital interests' were best served by supporting an enlarged, but still voluntary, Jewish emigration to Palestine.

⁵⁹³ Ziemiński J. (1937) *Problem emigracji żydowskiej* Warszawa: Związek Pisarzy i Publicystów Emigracyjnych.

⁵⁹⁴ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of the Foreign Affairs, 1443, *Letter submitted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to all Polish offices abroad*, 5 July 1937, p.5. Circulating the study to Poland's offices abroad Drymmer wrote: 'Bearing in mind the evolution, which the Polish-Jewish relations are currently undergoing in connection with changes in domestic politics and current relevance of the emigration question, it is necessary for all offices subordinated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to familiarise with demographic and economic basis of Jewish question in Poland.'

⁵⁹⁵ Wagner J. (1938) *Problem palestyński* Warszawa: Drukarnia Współczesna, p. 18.

At this point, it has to be noted, that the early 1930s shift of Warsaw's official position towards the Zionist project was inextricably linked to Poland's domestic politics and relations with local Zionist politicians, whose political influence among Polish Jews was on the decline. In January 1932 a Zionist *Chwila* bitterly noted, 'Warsaw Jewry has little interest in Zionism. Warsaw, indubitably, does not share pro-Palestine feelings'.⁵⁹⁶ Although the Zionist organisation faced a deep lack of internal cohesiveness, its political and social influences upon various aspects of Jewish politics in general and the Jewish community in particular were still relatively strong. Since Polish Zionists did not intend to remain stagnant, they had to enhance their political position in the eyes of the Polish ruling elites. In a similar vein, the *Yishuv* leadership who found itself in a particularly tough position after the outbreak of 1929-1930 Palestine riots, became vitally interested in obtaining the official endorsement of European regimes and enthusiastically welcomed Poland's expressions of support for its national cause in Palestine. The *Sanacja*'s politicians, in turn, aware of the profound changes, which had occurred within Jewish society and bearing in mind the position which the Zionist movement had enjoyed in the first half of the 1920s, began to see Zionists as attractive allies for their broadly based coalition.⁵⁹⁷ It was therefore decided to adopt tactics that aimed at enlisting Zionist activists. In such political circumstances, both sides became a community of shared interests. This was a purely pragmatic approach, based on cold political calculation.

Indeed, Poland's leading politicians of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed a special interest in the future development of the Jewish settlement project in Palestine. Emphasising the dramatic consequences of a reduction in the numbers of immigration certificates granted by the British, they actively lobbied for unrestricted emigration of Jews from the Diaspora and the East European countries in particular, to Palestine. Throughout the interwar years, the diplomatic corps of Poland was authorized to intervene with respective foreign institutions in the matter of the severe curtailment of Jewish immigration. Poland's representatives to Great Britain, France and the United States, as well as the government's representatives in Geneva were fully briefed in this matter, receiving frequent instructions from Warsaw.⁵⁹⁸

Formally, as a member of the League of Nations, the Polish government was bound to act in favour of the implementation of the Balfour Declaration. Based on the fact that Poland's moral and legal obligations towards the League of Nations were inextricably linked with its

⁵⁹⁶ Hazofe, 'Spowiedź Żabotyńskiego. Zjazd Rewizjonistów w Warszawie', *Chwila*, 1 January 1932, p.5.

⁵⁹⁷ See: [Chapter 1](#).

⁵⁹⁸ Drymmer W. (2014) *W służbie Polsce: Wspomnienia żołnierza i państwowca z lat 1914-1947* Kraków: Wydawnictwo Wingert, p.205.

domestic and foreign policy, *Sanacja*'s officials believed that through their membership in the League of Nations, they had been entrusted with partial responsibility for creating a Jewish National Home in Palestine.⁵⁹⁹ For that reason, throughout the interwar years Poland's representatives in Geneva consistently supported Zionist endeavours in the region, calling upon the British Mandatory Authority to allow more Jews into Palestine and to fulfil the obligations of the Balfour Declaration as soon as possible. As the political situation in Palestine began to deteriorate, Zionist leaders accelerated their diplomatic activities with the aim of gaining European support for their policy regarding Palestine. Already at the beginning of 1930, the Foreign Minister, Zaleski promised the Zionists that the Polish government would act in favour of their ideology and put the Palestine question on the international agenda.⁶⁰⁰ With the aim of enhancing mutual relations, local Zionists in Palestine frequently approached the Polish Ministry in order to seek Warsaw's backing for their cause.⁶⁰¹ The Polish side kept this commitment, closely cooperating with representatives of the Jewish Agency who were operating from a base in Geneva.⁶⁰² Indeed, Warsaw's endorsement of Zionism's crucial demands – unrestricted Jewish immigration to Palestine and the fulfilment of the Balfour obligations as soon as possible – became an integral part of Poland's international agenda and was clearly demonstrated throughout the debate, both with the British Foreign Office officials as well as before the League of Nations. After 1935, Poland's démarche voicing the necessity of finding a solution to the so-called Jewish question became even more frequent. Although at this time Poland's domestic policy pursued by Piłsudski's successors to a large extent echoed the rhetoric formerly disseminated by the right-wing, ethno-nationalist circles, Poland's diplomatic envoys continued to exert pressure upon British administration to allow more European Jews to Palestine.

Embracing a specific stance regarding Jewish emigration and policy in the Middle East became essential, particularly as the question of Palestine began to preoccupy international discourse from the early 1930s onwards. The task of specifying Poland's official approach towards Jewish national aspirations in Palestine was entrusted to Anatol Muehlstein, who served as an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Paris accredited to the League of Nations.⁶⁰³ Muehlstein was born to a Hasidic family in 1889 in Warsaw, and immediately after the regaining

⁵⁹⁹ 'Rząd MacDonalda i problem palestyński', *Gazeta Polska*, 27 May 1930, p.2; 'Anglia i problem Palestyński', *Gazeta Polska*, 31 July 1931, p.3.

⁶⁰⁰ 'Rząd MacDonalda i problem palestyński', *Gazeta Polska*, 27 May 1930, p.2.

⁶⁰¹ 'Koło żydowskie wobec ograniczenia emigracji do Palestyny', *Nasz Przegląd*, 24 May 1930, p.5.

⁶⁰² 'At a difficult time, when we addressed the Polish delegation in Geneva, we have always been given a sympathetic response for the idea of Jewish National Home in Palestine. It gave us encouragement and confidence', 'Ukonstytuowanie się Komitetu Propalestyńskiego w Polsce', *5-ta rano*, 9 January 1934, p.2.

⁶⁰³ The right-wing circles viewed Muehlstein's nomination as 'a judaization [zażydzanie] of the Polish Embassy in Paris'. It was emphasised that after Piłsudski's coming to power it was a second nomination a Jew to the post in France. See: 'Zażydzanie ambasady polskiej w Paryżu', *Kurjer Poznański*, 22 July 1930, p.4.

of Polish independence in 1918 joined the Polish diplomatic service. Privately, being an ardent supporter of Jewish assimilation and a close friend to Piłsudski, he shared the ideology of the *Sanacja* camp.⁶⁰⁴ At the October 1931 session of the Committee on Political Affairs, Muehlstein outlined Poland's approach towards Jewish National Home in Palestine, stating that his country was deeply interested in the affairs of Palestine for two reasons: firstly because of Poland's membership in the League of Nations, and secondly because of the large segment of Polish citizens of the Mosaic faith ready to rebuild their homeland in the Land of Israel. Indicating that the treatment of Palestine's Jews was not a 'question of maintaining minority rights but rather the rights to a Jewish National Home', Poland's envoy wished to draw the distinction between the Jewish *Yishuv* and 'minorities' as the term was then understood officially in Geneva.⁶⁰⁵ From the Zionists' point of view, Muehlstein's address was particularly significant since it supported the on-going development of a constitutional system in Palestine, which was considered an important measure to secure the political presence of Jews in the region.

The question of securing a larger allotment of Palestine immigration certificates for Polish Jews was regularly raised by Polish politicians over the course of the 1930s. Poland's diplomats, in close cooperation with the Zionists, sought to intervene in London, stressing the chronic shortage of immigration certificates as well as the increasingly high demand for them. Already in December 1930, Skirmunt, the Polish Ambassador in London, approached the Foreign Office indicating that over 2,000 Polish Jews had sold their businesses and had begun preparations for departure to Palestine.⁶⁰⁶

During the interwar years, Warsaw's streets witnessed intense protests against British policies in Palestine. The number of protests and massive demonstrations clearly suggests that Polish Jewry reacted vehemently to the subsequent restrictions on immigration. These various forms of protest against British rule in Palestine were widely covered by both the Polish and Jewish press, becoming the subject of intense debate amongst Polish elites. In May 1930, when the British government decided to withdraw 2,350 certificates previously issued by the Palestine administration, the Polish-Jewish community raised its strongest protest yet. As a spokesman for the Polish Jewry stated in the May 1930 Memorial, 'the last decree, forbidding the

⁶⁰⁴ Muehlstein's views on assimilation were enclosed in his 1913 publication *Asymilacja, Polityka i Postęp* [Assimilation, Politics and Development]. See: Muehlstein A. (1913) *Asymilacja, Polityka i Postęp*, Warszawa: E. Wende.

⁶⁰⁵ 'Polish Statesman says League must accept rights of Jewish National Home', *The Sentinel*, 2 October 1931, p.20; League of Nations Official Journal: Special Supplement, 1931: 93-102, p.20.

⁶⁰⁶ TNA, FO 688/28/4, pp.85-87, *Foreign Office report*, 18 December 1930.

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immigration of young pioneers to their Homeland, overfilled the cup of bitterness⁶⁰⁷. Consequently, on June 12th, 1930 approximately 50,000 Jews, singing Jewish national songs and carrying banners with the slogan *England where is thy conscience?* paraded through the streets of Warsaw in opposition to the suspension of emigration to Palestine. Interestingly, the Zionist protest movement enjoyed a significant level of endorsement from the capital's non-Jewish inhabitants. As a *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* correspondent noted, 'the balconies and roofs and windows of all buildings along the line of march were filled with cheering watchers. The Polish populace watched the parade with the greatest of reverence'.⁶⁰⁸



Figure 12. Polish Jews protesting against immigration restrictions and British policy in Palestine, Nalewki Street, Warsaw, 11 June 1930. Source: *Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny*, NAC.

The policy of putting the Jewish question on the international agenda adopted by the representatives of the Polish government in the 1930s, stemmed, in fact, from enhanced cooperation with the Revisionists. Koskowski, an influential editor of *Kurjer Warszawski*, noted that it was Jabotinsky who had postulated the shaping of the Jewish question into an international issue. Referring to the Revisionists' proposal for a Polish-Zionist alliance, the article cited

⁶⁰⁷ TNA, FO 688/28/4, p.118, *Memorial submitted by the Conference of Jewish Communities to the Ambassador W.J. Erskine*, 30 May 1930.

⁶⁰⁸ '50,000 Jews in Warsaw Parade in Protest Against Palestine Immigration Ban', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 13 June 1930.

Schechtmann, who claimed that Warsaw could bring pressure to bear upon the Mandate authorities to open the gates of Palestine for unrestricted immigration. ‘Poland has a right to vigorously intervene in the League of Nations and Mandate Authorities’ the Revisionist politician concluded.⁶⁰⁹ The mainstream Zionist leadership also shared this view, perceiving Warsaw to be an important political ally able to exert pressure on international opinion. Moshe Shertok, the Director of the Jewish Agency’s Political Department, confirmed this in 1935, stating:

The Polish government by the virtue of its membership in the League of Nations and by the most important position it holds therein as the member of the Council, is able to support the Jewish effort of national reconstruction in Palestine. The Executive of the Jewish Agency is gratified to record that Jewish aspirations in Palestine have received the sympathetic support from the Polish government especially from the late Marshal Piłsudski and the present distinguished Foreign Minister of the Polish Republic, Colonel Beck. We also greatly appreciate the helpful assistance, which has been extended to Zionist aspirations by the Polish Pro-Palestine Committee composed of prominent Polish statemen under the distinguished chairmanship of Prince Lubomirski. We sincerely trust that the Zionist movement will continue to have the support of these eminent friends and especially of the Polish Cabinet and Foreign Ministry.⁶¹⁰

Indeed, at this time, Polish-Zionist cooperation in the League turned out to be beneficial. However, in 1934, Mieczysław Kahane, the Zionist delegate in Geneva, reported to Gruenbaum that ‘the possibilities of constructive Zionist work in Geneva are currently modest and limited’. Nevertheless, Zionists found Poland’s diplomats to be keen supporters of their national cause.⁶¹¹ On September 22th 1934, Poland’s delegation, with the assistance of the Zionists, submitted to the Sixth Committee of the League of Nations a request for more immigration certificates to Palestine. In an official petition, the Polish envoy argued that the number of certificates did not correspond to the needs of his country.⁶¹² In a similar vein, at the session of the League of Nations General Assembly held in Geneva in 1935, Polish delegate Michał Tomasz Łubieński admitted that the Polish authorities were keenly interested in the question of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, since Poland was home to more than three million Jews. Łubieński emphasised that the Polish state considered this approach to be a moral obligation on their part.⁶¹³ Poland’s policy was once again expressed in a memorandum of December 1935, being the

⁶⁰⁹ ‘Problemat żydowski’, *Kurjer Warszawski*, 10 September 1936, p.2.

⁶¹⁰ CZA, S25\2262-3, *Moshe Shertok on the Polish Government*, 1935.

⁶¹¹ CZA, A127\1686-10, *Letter submitted by Kahane to Y. Gruenbaum*, 6 November 1934.

⁶¹² ‘Palestine Mandate before League’, *The Palestine Post*, 23 September 1934, p.1.

⁶¹³ Piasecki W. (2015) *Jan Karski. Jedno życie. Kompletnej opowieść. Tom I: Madagaskar (1914–1939)* Warszawa: Centrum Europejskie Natolin.

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direct outcome of political dialogue, which had taken place held at the beginning of the month in Geneva between Colonel Beck and Leib Jaffe of *Keren Hayesod*. The Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs had committed to act in favour of Zionist national aspirations before the League's Assembly.⁶¹⁴ The memorandum submitted to the League's Council outlined Poland's policy, stating that the question of Palestine and the Jewish question was inextricably linked. It was also emphasised that emigration was a 'burning need' for their overpopulated country.⁶¹⁵

Three months later, on March 18th 1936, Antoni Jaźdżewski, the Counsellor of the Polish Embassy approached the Eastern Department of the British Foreign Office in order to discuss the quota of 'labour' certificates allotted to Polish Jews. Jaźdżewski relayed Poland's displeasure at the British government's decision to grant Poland only double the number of certificates than the quota allotted to Germany. Supporting his claim Jaźdżewski admitted that Polish Jews were mainly working class, whereas comparatively few German Jews were of that class. According to Baggalay's report, one of the Polish delegates admitted that the Polish government was under constant pressure from various organisations to secure a substantial increase in the number of Jews allowed to proceed to Palestine.⁶¹⁶

In September 1936, Count Raczyński called upon Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden to discuss this question. It was their second meeting on the matter. From a Foreign Office report, it may be concluded that Eden acknowledged that the question of Jewish migration to Palestine either directly or indirectly affected the Polish government and the internal situation in Poland. Moreover, Eden acknowledged the Polish diplomats' anxiety over the Palestine's future and their plans to reduce immigration quotas.⁶¹⁷ Following this meeting the *Polish Telegraphic Agency* circulated a statement reporting that 'the Polish government attaches great importance to the question of emigration to Palestine, since the Polish Jews constitute a significant number of immigrants and achieving unrestricted emigration as a prime and urgent need for Poland'.⁶¹⁸

The Ambassador's visit to the Foreign Office was widely covered by both the Polish and Jewish press. Jakub Appenszlak in the pages of *Nasz Przeglqd* wrote:

⁶¹⁴ 'Poland to Back Palestine Jewish Aims Before League', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 3 December 1935.

⁶¹⁵ Reinharz J., Shavit Y. (2018) *The Road to September 1939 ...*, p. 9.

⁶¹⁶ TNA, FO 371/20805, pp.121-122, *Record of conversation between Mr. Baggallay and M. Jazdżewski*, 18 March 1937.

⁶¹⁷ TNA, CO 733/295/3 – Colonial Office, *Report submitted by H.W. Kennard to Anthony Eden*, 16 September 1936, pp.31.

⁶¹⁸ *Polish Telegraphic Agency*, September 1936.

So far nobody but the Jews has directly inquired of Britain's administration in what way it is fulfilling its responsibilities regarding the Mandate. No country has officially claimed entry certificates for the Jews. Poland was first to do this.⁶¹⁹

While the Polish Zionist press continued to praise the Polish delegation, the *Yishuv* in Palestine as expressed through the press was becoming more and more sceptical about the true intentions of this Polish initiative. Along these lines, *Haaretz* suggested that this Polish intervention had been inspired by feelings of anti-Semitic and should be considered as an 'indignity'. 'If the United States, France, Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia had intervened and claimed that their internal situation regarding the Jewish question had motivated them it would make an impact, since the Jews of these countries enjoy equal rights. But Poland intentionally and consciously harms the Jews economically, depriving them of the wherewithal to live guarantee by the Constitution, and finally is a place of pogroms. The Polish government, therefore, intentionally exacerbates the Jewish problem, and after that intervenes in favour of these Jews. Can such an intervention succeed?' asked the editor of *Haaretz*.⁶²⁰

Despite these negative comments, the Zionist delegation in Geneva continued enlisting the support of European countries with substantial Jewish populations. For this purpose, on September 6th 1936, Nahum Goldmann approached Komarnicki, Poland's envoy to the League, in order to discuss the Palestine question further. As a political analyst, Goldmann induced Poland's representative to take the floor in the discussion on Palestine before the Council of the League of Nations. After a long discussion, a consensus was reached. It was agreed that the Jewish immigration to Palestine should reach the level of 40,000 people a year, and that approximately forty per cent of these immigrants should be of Polish origin. Soon after the meeting, Goldmann submitted proposals to Poland's representative in Geneva drafted by the Jewish Agency's officials. At the same time, he openly stressed that from the Zionist point of view it would be highly desirable if Poland's declaration could embrace the following issues: (a) a condemnation of violence and terrorism; (b) a hope that the Mandatory Power would be able to comply with its obligations, and (c) unrestricted immigration to Palestine. In Goldmann's perception, Poland was not only a country with a substantial number of Jews, but was also a state with political influence in the international arena.⁶²¹

⁶¹⁹ Appenszlak J., 'Interwencja Polska na Downing Street', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 7 November 1936, p.3.

⁶²⁰ *Haaretz*, 13/14 September 1936.

⁶²¹ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1443, *Proposals drafted by the Jewish Agency's officials*, September 1936.

However, at this time the question of Poland's international position was at this time a subject of political controversy. Following Minister Beck's proposal to convene an international conference to create a universal minority system on September 13th 1934, the Minister on behalf of the Polish government officially announced that Poland would refuse to cooperate with the League of Nations in the application of minority guarantees. It has to be noted that this move was inextricably linked with the upcoming admission of the USSR to the League of Nations.

Throughout the interwar period the Polish government viewed the imposition of the Minorities Treaty as an affront against Polish sovereignty. When the news broke that Moscow did not sign the Minorities Treaty and was allowed to join the League reached Warsaw, the Polish government decided to abrogate the Treaty. Poland's declaration was greeted with great amazement. Indeed, nobody even speculated that the Polish government would decide to withdraw from the Minorities Treaty.⁶²² Even the countries of the Little Entente were unanimously opposed to Poland's declaration. Rumours quickly spread that the Polish government was intending to resign from the League of Nations.⁶²³ Soon afterwards, the Polish spokesmen informed the Assembly that 'the Polish Foreign Minister did not denounce the Minority Treaties, but only the methods of procedure under the treaties'.⁶²⁴ Although Poland's position in the League of Nations, following the 1934 repudiation from the Minority Treaties was questioned, its vocal support for increased immigration remained strong.

The Zionists' response to Beck's declaration was divided. Whereas Polish Jews affiliated with the BBWR expressed solidarity with this diplomatic action, the mainstream Zionist leadership had some reservations. Jewish politicians pointed out time correlation between Beck's statement and the signing of the Polish-German Non-Aggression Pact. This sort of thinking was particularly apparent among the *Yishuv*'s representatives and left-leaning Zionists within *Al haMishmar* section. A number of Zionists who previously regarded the *Sanacja* regime as the antidote to the right-wing propaganda and political oppression, changed their perception. Moshe Kleinbaum (Sneh), in a letter to his political mentor Gruenbaum, observed that the bloc had 'lost all of its popularity in the Jewish street, mainly because of the pact with Hitler'.⁶²⁵

In spite of these comments and the deteriorating relations with Polish Zionists, Beck continued his diplomatic mission, seeking support for Poland's emigration scheme within Geneva's corridors. At the League of Nations Council's meeting on September 20th 1936, Poland's

⁶²² The Minorities Treaty, which imposed upon Polish state the duty of securing and protecting the rights of national minorities was signed on June 28, 1919.

⁶²³ 'Polish Action Widely Condemned', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 16 September 1934.

⁶²⁴ 'Little Entente Opposes Stand', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 16 September 1934.

⁶²⁵ CZA, A127/491/3, *A letter submitted by Moshe Kleinbaum to Yitzhak Gruenbaum*, 11 March 1934.

Minister expressed the hope that the Mandate Commission would enlarge the number of its members, allowing states such as Poland to be given a voice. When asking for an enlargement of the membership of the Mandate Commission, Poland's Foreign Minister emphasised that Warsaw was interested not only in further Jewish emigration but also in direct involvement in the issues and administration of Mandatory Palestine. As the magazine, *Palestine and Transjordan* speculated, such an initiative was the product of the former consultations between Beck and Jabotinsky.⁶²⁶

Indeed, at the press conference held on October 16th 1936, Jabotinsky declared that the Polish government aimed to convene an international conference on the Palestine question. The issue not only attracted the attention of many Zionists, but also raised concerns among foreign diplomats in Warsaw. Amongst the great amount of speculation on this matter, *Haaretz* thought that Warsaw was seeking to raise the question of revising the Palestine mandate. Alberto Bellardi Ricci, the Counsellor from the Italian Embassy approached the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to learn more about the Polish government's plans for future action. In a conversation with Tadeusz Gwiazdoski, the Vice-director of the Political and Economic Department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and former *Charges d'Affaires* in the League of Nations, Ricci learnt that the Polish government had three main reasons for its essential support of right-wing Zionism:

1. Jabotinsky's project of emigration *en masse* is parallel with interests of the Polish government;
2. Ideologically, Warsaw sympathizes with the Jewish national movement acknowledging the legitimate right of Jews to re-establish a state of their own;
3. Jabotinsky's intentions are to detach Jewish youth from communism.⁶²⁷

Soon afterwards, in November 1936, *Gazeta Polska*, a magazine closely affiliated with the governing circles, published an article *Żydowska Emigracja* [The Jewish Emigration], promising the forthcoming visit to the British capital by Beck, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs. Beck came to London at the invitation of Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary only a few days after the announcement of a new immigration schedule, which granted only a few hundred certificates to Polish Jews. As the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* noted, 'it is generally believed he [Beck] will either seek concessions from Great Britain on behalf of Polish-Jewish emigration to Palestine, which Britain controls as the Mandatory Power for the Holy Land, or else concessions

⁶²⁶ *Palestine and Transjordan*, 3 October 1936 cited in: AAN, MSZ - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Reports from Jewish press*, September 1936, p.300.

⁶²⁷ AAN, MSZ - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Note on conversation with Alberto Bellardi Ricci from the Italian Embassy*, 24 October 1936, pp.112-113.

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making possible emigration to other overseas countries in exchange for favours which Britain may ask of Poland.⁶²⁸ In actual fact, Beck merely expressed the hope that the Palestine question would not be perceived as 'a local but rather European problem' in the eyes of the British Government.⁶²⁹

The editor of *Haaretz*, in an article commenting on this meeting, pointed out that Beck should not have used the argument of the Jewish plight in the Diaspora to reinforce Poland's policy in this matter. Moreover, the magazine suggested that Warsaw's approach was no longer envisaged as supporting Zionist interests but was designed for Poland's own ends.⁶³⁰ Lord Melchett, a life-long supporter of Zionism, had more understanding of Beck's intentions. In an article for *Spectator* Melchett wrote:

At Geneva he was forced to point out that, as he himself expressed it with much regret, Poland was not able to provide a satisfactory standard of living for the whole of her large and increasing population, and that emigration was of vital necessity to the Polish people. Within this larger problem arises the question of Jewish migration, and it is natural that the recent decision severely to curtail Jewish immigration to Palestine during the period of the enquiries of the Royal Commission will cause him serious anxiety.⁶³¹

A few weeks after that, at the meeting of the Economic Committee of the League of Nations on October 5th 1936, Adam Rose, the Polish delegate, emphasised that 'the Jewish question in Poland is a particularly burning issue'. Addressing the Commission, he delineated Poland's stance towards its domestic problems connected to severe overpopulation and the need of emigration, however, he failed to engage directly to the question of Palestine and Jewish national aspirations in the region.

The question of Palestine was, however, discussed the next day, on October 6th 1936, at the meeting of the Sixth Political Committee. Komarnicki, Poland's permanent representative to Geneva, admitted that 'numerous declarations submitted by the Polish delegation over the course of annual discussions at the Sixth Committee of the League of Nations on the question of the activity of the Mandates Committee indicate that the Polish government is interested in the

⁶²⁸ 'Poland to Seek Aid for Emigration at London and Geneva Parleys', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 27 October 1936.

⁶²⁹ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Report on the conversation between Minister Beck and Minister Eden*, November 1936, p. 119.

⁶³⁰ AAN, MSZ - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Reports from Jewish press*, September 1936, p.300.

⁶³¹ Melchett, 'European Jews: the Polish problem', *Spectator*, 13 November 1936, p.14.

unfettered development of a Jewish National Home in Palestine'.⁶³² Pointing out that Poland was the home to the largest Jewish community in Europe, Komarnicki emphasised that the government was obliged to follow Zionist endeavours with great interest and sincere sympathy. Although the question of Palestine - 'an exclusive and natural immigration territory for the Jews' constituted a substantial part of Komarnicki's plea, he also referred to a need for finding new immigration outlets.

Poland's appeal reflected the political line embraced by the countries of Little Entente.⁶³³ Georges Crutzesco, a representative of Roumania in the League of Nations, in conversation with Nahum Goldmann admitted that his Government closely cooperated with Poland and already had several conversations with Komarnicki regarding the question of Palestine. As Goldmann noted, the Roumanian delegate was, 'open minded, intelligent and seemed to be in full and entire sympathy with Zionism'.⁶³⁴ Crutzesco's attitude was of significance for the Zionist cause since he was preparing a report on Palestine for the Council of the League of Nations.

While the Revisionist press praised the Polish delegation for supporting Zionist interests before the League, General Zionists, the united socialist front and anti-Zionist Jews remained largely critical. Nathan Szwabe, in the pages of *Nasz Przeglqd*, described Komarnicki and Rose's démarche in Geneva as a hopelessness action that only aimed at 'sanctioning the process of Jewish expulsion from economic entity'. Referring to the *Sanacja*'s international support for the Revisionist evacuation plan, the appraised Zionist journalist, Szwabe, retorted 'enough with this comedy!'.⁶³⁵ In a similar vein, the well-known folkist Samuel Hirschhorn indicated that the actions of the Polish representatives were utopian and even demagogic.⁶³⁶

Domestic political discourse during the second half of 1930s was once again dominated by the discussion over the shortage of certificates for Polish Jews. At the conference, held on October 5th 1936, Henryk Suchenek-Suchecki emphasised that the number of certificates

⁶³² AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1443, *Report by Tytus Komarnicki*, October 1936.

⁶³³ Little Entente – an alliance formed in 1920 and 1921 by Roumania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, the three succession states of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in order to protect the Danube River basin against German and Hungarian domination. Although their motivations were different concerning the Palestine question both Poland and the Little Entente spoke with one voice, unequivocally supporting the official Zionist position. See: Lichtenstein T. (2016) *Zionists in Interwar Czechoslovakia: Minority Nationalism and the Politics of Belonging* Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Wein M. (2015) *A History of Czechs and Jews: A Slavic Jerusalem* Routledge: London.

⁶³⁴ CZA, Z6\2754-93 *Report about a conversation with Mr Crutzesco, Delegate of Roumania to the League of Nations, Geneva*, 8 June 1937.

⁶³⁵ Nathan Szwabe's article cited in: 'Żydzi', *Kurjer Poznański*, 14 October 1936, p.1.

⁶³⁶ 'O emigracji Żydów', *Kurjer Warszawski*, 8 October 1936, p.2.

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for Polish Jews had systematically decreased since Hitler's coming to power. Stating the fact before 1933, Polish Jews had been allocated approximately forty per cent of the overall immigration quota, but by 1936 number of certificates was oscillating at around twenty per cent. Suchenek-Suchecski called for a restoration of the former proportion. Wagner, the head of the Research Section in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Consular Department, went even further. He suggested that the Polish government in its negotiations with the Jewish Agency should have demanded sixty per cent of the overall number of certificates for Polish Jews and control over the process of allocating the certificates.⁶³⁷ In support of this claim, Wagner indicated that Polish-Jewish labour immigrants – the so-called 'working class or pioneer element' constituted approximately sixty-two per cent of the overall immigration of this category. A similar opinion was expressed in 1937 by Prof. Stanisław Korwin-Pawłowski, a member of the Polish Maritime and Colonial League [LMiK – *Liga Morska i Kolonialna*]. Demonstrating that Palestine could have absorbed between two and three million people, Korwin-Pawłowski postulated that fifty-sixty per cent of immigrants should come from Poland.⁶³⁸ Speaking to the *Senat's* Foreign Affairs Commission on December 18th 1936, Beck admitted that the question of Jewish emigration is particularly significant since it envisaged the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.⁶³⁹

At the same time the situation of the Jews in Poland had begun to deteriorate. Following the nationalist swing within the Polish government in 1937, anti-Semitism became an officially sanctioned movement. This worsening reality engendered untold consternation, not only among the Zionist leadership in Poland but also abroad. In February 1937, the Zionist activists convened in Vienna to discuss the impact of recent developments in the *Sanacja* camp in connection with the situation of Poland's Jewry. Among the participants were prominent *Yishuv* representatives - Gruenbaum, as well as Zionist politicians from Poland – Yitzhak Schwarzbard, Moshe Kleinbaum, the political editor of the Yiddish-language *Haynt*, Ashell Reiss, Henryk Rosmarin and Baruch Cukiermann. The main incentives for this strictly confidential meeting were the advances put forward by OZON's ideological declaration, denying Polish Jewish citizens equal rights. As Emanuel Melzer affirmed Zionists who gathered in Vienna were fully aware of the reshuffling within the governing camp and of the internal opposition to the anti-Semitic rhetoric articulated by OZON.⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁷ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1443, *Memo on the inter-departamental conference*, 5 October 1936, pp. 172-173.

⁶³⁸ Korwin-Pawłowski S. (1937) *O Emigracji Żydów z Polski i ich kolonizacji* Warszawa: Liga Morska i Kolonialna, p. 62.

⁶³⁹ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1443, *The declaration of Polish Government and representatives of public opinion on Jewish question in Poland*, p.3.

⁶⁴⁰ Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, pp.32-34.

While the closest adherents of the late Piłsudski, his most-trusted men from military circles, were seen as those who refused to join anti-Semitic campaign of OZON, General Rydz-Śmigły was viewed as a real initiator of economic boycott. At some point, participants of the meeting even considered founding the force to conduct anti-OZON propaganda within the country. For this purpose, a group of Zionist politicians – Reiss, Kleinbaum and Rosmarin - was supposed to travel to the United States in order to canvass sources for this campaign. Their plan envisaged launching a pro-French paper, a likely platform for all those who vehemently opposed officially sanctioned anti-Semitism.⁶⁴¹ Kleinbaum, as an ardent supporter of Gruenbaum and his political views [and not without a reason he was nicknamed Kleingruenbaum], advocated encouraging the Polish democratic elements – the PPS and the Peasant Party – in their campaign against right-wing propaganda.⁶⁴² While the Revisionists closely cooperated with some segments of the *Sanacja* regime, the mainstream Zionists along with the Bund began to call for a left-leaning orientation. Although the highly heterogeneous Polish Jewry proved to be unable to coalesce a common front against the prevailing anti-Semitism, the proceedings of this meeting clearly indicate that the Zionists were still eager to cooperate with the Pro-French elements within the *Sanacja* movement along with the closest associates of late Piłsudski and perceived them as vehement opposition to the ethno-nationalist right.

The extent of mutual cooperation was once again confirmed in July, when Chaim Weizmann approached Raczyński, the Polish Ambassador to Great Britain, in order to discuss a potential mutual stance towards the Royal Commission's proposals. During the meeting held in the Polish Embassy in London, Weizmann asked Polish diplomat if Poland could exert extra pressure on Britain to secure the largest possible territory for a Jewish state. Furthermore, Weizmann committed to transfer 100,000 Polish Jews to Palestine in the course of one year if the Jewish Agency could be granted new privileges in the matter of immigration control.⁶⁴³

Back in Geneva on the eve of the proceedings, September 9th 1937, Minister Beck met again with the President of the World Zionist Organisation. As Nahum Goldmann noted their discussion was rather satisfactory for Zionists since Polish Minister was the one of those who 'stressed the Jewish side of the problem: the necessity of maintaining the Mandate until a new solution will be found and confirmed by the League, the importance of continuing Jewish

⁶⁴¹ Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry ...*, p.32; *Nasz Przeglqd*, 16 July 1937.

⁶⁴² In: Drynner G., Guesnet F. (eds) *Warsaw. The Jewish Metropolis Essays in Honor of the 75th Birthday of Professor Antony Polonsky*. Leiden: Brill, p.262.

⁶⁴³ Reinhartz J. (2018) *The Road to September 1939 ...*, p. 79.

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immigration, and the necessity of giving the Jews, if partition takes place, an adequate territory'.⁶⁴⁴ This clearly suggests that in the eyes of the Zionist leadership the Polish government was still seen as an important political ally. Goldmann made a note of admission of the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs:

The Polish government is in full sympathy with the aim of the Jewish people, and he as a representative of a country which has the largest Jewish population in Europe regards it as its duty to help the Jewish citizens of Poland to achieve their national ideal and to defend the rights which have been given to them by the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate.⁶⁴⁵

This was a powerful endorsement of Zionist nation-building aspirations in Palestine. Beck also emphasised that Jewish emigration was a 'sub-chapter of the more general Polish emigration' and for this purpose Warsaw sought to secure the largest immigration possibilities in Palestine through helping them with 'getting the best possible territory'.⁶⁴⁶ At the same time Beck agreed that the scale of emigration should have reached the rate of approximately 30,000 people per annum. After the meeting, the Polish Minister held discussions with Victor Antonescu, the Roumanian representative in the Palestine Commission, seeking to arrange for the Roumanian delegation to represent Poland's interests in the Mandates Commission.⁶⁴⁷ In fact, the idea of enlisting the support of Bucharest government had emerged a few months before as a result of meeting between the Secretary Michałowski and Benjamin Akzin of the Revisionist Movement.⁶⁴⁸

Both the Polish and Polish-Jewish press followed Beck's démarche in Geneva with great interest. 'Minister J. Beck actively deals with the Palestine question in Geneva. There is nothing suspicious about that, since the partition of the region and an independent Jewish Palestine concerns Poland very deeply' wrote *Na Posterunku* [On the Guard], an official organ of the Polish Police.⁶⁴⁹ Mieczysław Kahany, the correspondent of Lwów's Zionist daily *Chwila*, in turn, assessed 'The fact that Minister Beck unofficially expressed an interest in Poland's participation in the Mandates Commission's proceedings and from the other side that the Polish delegation aims

⁶⁴⁴ CZA, Z6/2752-27, *Report about our activities in Geneva in connection with the meeting of the council and the assembly of the League of Nations in September 1937*.

⁶⁴⁵ (1984) *The letters and papers of Chaim Weizmann*, v.2, paper 31, The Polish Government and Partition, Geneva 12 September 1937.

⁶⁴⁶ (1984) *The letters and papers of Chaim Weizmann*, v.2, paper 31, The Polish Government and Partition, Geneva 12 September 1937.

⁶⁴⁷ 'Beck, Antonescu seeks united stand', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 14 September 1937.

⁶⁴⁸ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Report from the Polish Embassy in London*, 6 January 1937, pp.40; 'Rozszerzenia Komisji Mandatowej domagał się Minister Beck na poufnym posiedzeniu Ligii Narodów', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 21 September 1936.

⁶⁴⁹ 'Polska wobec nadchodzącego podziału Palestyny', *Na Posterunku*, 26 September 1937, p.13.

to raise the demographic question before the socio-economic Commission of the League, indicates that Poland's Foreign Minister does not perceive this matter in terms of fanatical and groundless projects of Jewish evacuation, but only from the perspective of Poland's *raison d'etat* as well as state's expansionist and emigration needs'.⁶⁵⁰

Representatives of the Jewish Agency, who cooperated with Poland's delegations in Geneva, also shared these views and continued to see the Polish government as an important political partner. Nahum Goldmann's statement was particularly indicative of this perception. He raised some aspects of Zionists' cooperation with Governments of Warsaw and Budapest on November 14th 1937 in a lecture before the Zionist Association of Switzerland. The Jewish Agency's representative stressed the importance of Polish support and sympathies towards Jewish national aspirations in Palestine in general and support in obtaining the biggest possible territory for a Jewish state.⁶⁵¹

The discussions in the Assembly and the Sixth Committee took place on September 10th 1937. Beck emphasised that the 'transitional period' [envisioned at the end of the British Mandate before the Jewish National Home is founded] should not last too long, since it might affect Jewish Palestine from both economic and spiritual perspective. 'The Polish state desires a huge Palestine' emphasised the Polish Foreign Minister. 'Let the Jews rule their own country. This is in the interest of the whole of Europe.'⁶⁵² Unfortunately, this pledge had only theoretical and moral importance. Particular attention was given to 'the general and human importance of Jewish constructive work in Palestine, the necessity of finding a solution to the Jewish problem'. The partition scheme of the Royal Commission was widely criticised along the same lines as it had been within the Zionist public arena. The Norwegian representative, who opened the discussion, drew attention to some strategic issues – colonisation in the Negev as well as the necessity for Jewish territory of strategic importance in the mountainous region. Moreover, the Polish diplomat, along with his Latvian colleague stressed the necessity of emigration *en masse* to Palestine.⁶⁵³ Beck, on September 14th 1937, applied in the League of Nations to reserve a seat for Poland's representative in the Commission regarding Palestine. The question was further discussed later that September. During the debate, both Beck and Komarnicki indicated that a Jewish State in Palestine was the only solution for the Jewish question in Europe. The League's

⁶⁵⁰ 'Sprawy żydowskie w Lidze Narodów', *Na Posterunku*, 25 September 1936, p. 2.

⁶⁵¹ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Report by Polish Deputy in Bern about meeting of Zionists in Zurich*, 17 November 1937, pp.134-135.

⁶⁵² 'Trzy Palestyny', *Gazeta Polska*, 19 September 1937, p.1.

⁶⁵³ *Na Posterunku*, 26 September 1937, p.13.

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Mandates Committee agreed that the transition period should be extended. However, the Revisionists began to criticise the Polish government, indicating a lack of consistency in its approach towards Palestine. A week later, on September 21st, Poland raised this question again. Poland's envoy then argued that proposed partition scheme might prevent the Jewish 'masses' from entering Palestine, limiting access to the country to 'selected elites'.⁶⁵⁴

Eventually, it was decided that the Council would nominate a special committee to investigate further the territorial and socio-economic aspects of the Palestine question. As Goldmann correctly deduced, the Polish delegation decided to apply further pressure for the convening of this committee. Eden assured Beck that his Government would not object to the nomination of such a committee and would recommend Poland as one of its members.⁶⁵⁵ A few days later, on October 8th, the Polish delegation officially asked the League of Nations to convene a conference on international emigration aiming to discuss possible solutions to the Jewish question in Central and Eastern Europe. As the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* reported the request envisaged that the conference would be held under the auspices of the League's International Labour Bureau.⁶⁵⁶

Poland's representatives, Beck and Komarnicki, also formally raised the issue of a 'surplus' Jewish population and the need to find new emigration outlets. From the Western Jewish perspective, it became clear that the Polish government was seeking 'some action on the Jewish question to counteract the growing popularity of the opposition's anti-Semitic National Democratic Party.'⁶⁵⁷ The Polish delegation in Geneva was fully aware that anti-Semitic biases were being sought by international players in relation to Poland's diplomatic support of Zionism. In a coded telegram, sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw on October 9th 1936, Komarnicki indicated, 'our démarche in the League of Nations regarding the question of Jewish emigration met with a Soviet reaction which considers our address to be propelled by anti-Semitism clearly related to Nazi racial politics. In my opinion, we should expect harassment in the press.' Moreover, he emphasised that Soviet actions intended to point out the close bilateral cooperation between the Government in Warsaw and Nazi Germany.⁶⁵⁸ It is difficult to amply assess Soviet's role in this propaganda. The question whether and to what degree such propaganda was disseminated by the Soviets still remains open. Although the evidence from the

⁶⁵⁴ Reinhartz J. (2018) *The Road to September 1939: Polish Jews, Zionists, and the Yishuv on the Eve of World War II* Boston: Brandeis University Press, p. 79.

⁶⁵⁵ Reinhartz J. (2018) *The Road to September 1939* ..., pp.79-81.

⁶⁵⁶ 'Poland Asks League to Sponsor World Parley on Jewish Emigration', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 0 October 1936.

⁶⁵⁷ 'Poland to Seek Aid for Emigration at London and Geneva Parleys', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 27 October 1936.

⁶⁵⁸ AAN, *Telegram submitted by Tytus Komarnicki to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 9 October 1936, p.346.

Polish archives clearly suggests that top-ranking politicians suspected Soviet bloc agents of disseminating such information within the international arena, more research in this field is still required.

Willing to respond to criticism in the Western media as well as to avoid further anti-Semitic accusations, Poland's delegation continued to stress that the emigration question applied not only to Jews but also to Poles, and in some respects this non-Jewish aspect was even more acute. The Jewish question was, therefore, presented as 'a special Jewish chapter' within the whole emigration scenario.⁶⁵⁹ The *Sanacja*'s leaders also frequently exploited the argument that the occupational structure of Poland's Jewish community was at fault. Minister Beck in an interview for the *New York Times* pointed out that 'the problem suffered from oversimplification. To be understood it must be seen as a whole'. Emigration was considered one of Poland's long-term stemming from defective socio-economic structure. Beck continued, 'In the West the Jewish population is engaged in all kinds of activities, but in Eastern Europe the Jews are chiefly petty middleman or traders in small towns. With Poland's development after the war [WW I] and the growth of railways, automobiles, and more especially cooperatives, the people get merchandise more directly, and the petty middleman is losing his occupation. That has made the Jewish emigration problem more acute than ever. The main pressure comes from these small traders as regards Jews, and from peasants, as regards non-Jews'.⁶⁶⁰

In late 1937, as the rumours spread that the intention of influential British circles was to make the Jews a permanent minority in Palestine, the political battle again returned to London. To clarify this question, a delegation of Polish Zionists approached the British Ambassador in January 1938. The Head of delegation, Dr. Hartglass, the Chairman of the Central Committee of the Zionist Organisation, urged that return should have been made to the principle of regulating Jewish immigration solely according to Palestine's natural ability of absorb the new immigrants.⁶⁶¹ A memorandum was also submitted to Neville Chamberlain with a request 'to accelerate their decisions [of the British Government and Parliament] concerning a solution to the Palestine problem' and 'to abolish immediately the restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine'.⁶⁶²

⁶⁵⁹ Weizmann Ch. (1984) *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann: Series B* Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, p. 288.

⁶⁶⁰ 'Beck says Poland is not Anti-Jewish', *New York Times*, 30 January 1937. In the interview Beck stated: 'We would appreciate the Jews if we had 50,000 of them. Our negative attitude is caused by the fact that there are 3,000,000. A change in this abnormal situation is the only way to a solution of the thorny Jewish problem'. See also: AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9904, *Declarations by Poland's officials concerning the Jewish Question abroad*, February 1937, pp. 19-22.

⁶⁶¹ TNA, FO 371/21886, *Report submitted by Kennard*, 8 January 1938, p.3.

⁶⁶² TNA, FO 371/21886, *Memorandum submitted to Neville Chamberlain*, 1938, pp.21-22.

Also, in Geneva, the Jewish Agency's delegate approached Komarnicki with a request to ask Minister Beck to discuss with Eden the question of further Jewish immigration to the region. Komarnicki immediately sent a telegram to Warsaw and arranged a meeting between Beck and the Jewish Agency leadership for the following week.⁶⁶³ A few months later, as it became clear that the partition plan would not be carried out, the Polish diplomats were instructed to undertake necessary actions. Consequently, on November 15th 1938, Count Raczyński visited the Foreign Office in order to inquire of Sir Alexander Cadogan, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, as to the British Government's stance towards Palestine.

Since British policy in Palestine was considered of the prime importance to Poland, the Ambassador's visit was widely commented on in Poland by the press, both Polish and Jewish. It was stated that the Polish government would, from this time onwards, show a much keener interest in the Palestine question and would take much more effective steps to ensure that the Jewish immigration to the region would not be restricted. Communications in the press emphasised that Warsaw's authorities would be 'watching very carefully' further political developments in Palestine. *The Palestine Post* observed that:

Poland's official quarters are noncommittal concerning whether or not the Polish government favours the partition plan or any other alternative solution, though it is emphasised that the Polish government will support any policy which opens Palestine for Jewish immigration. There are some indications that official quarters are rather disposed to favour a solution in the matter suggested by the Revisionists.⁶⁶⁴

The frequent requests by Poland's Government to the British, requesting that precedence be given to Polish Jews in the distribution of emigration certificates, began to fluster British officials. Eventually, despite extensive diplomatic efforts the British administration informed Warsaw that London did not intend to change its policy in any case and that Palestine would not be able to absorb mass Jewish immigration.⁶⁶⁵

Although Poland's authorities continued to call for the international solution to the Jewish question and opening the gates of Palestine for mass immigration, their plea remained

⁶⁶³ CZA, Z6\2752-31, *Report on Zionist activities in Geneva*, 1938.

⁶⁶⁴ 'Poland's interest in Palestine', *The Palestine Post*, 20 October 1938, p.1.

⁶⁶⁵ Reinhartz J. (2018) *The Road to September 1939: Polish Jews, Zionists, and the Yishuv on the Eve of World War II* Boston: Brandeis University Press, p.91.

largely unheard. The hope of Jewish emigration *en masse* on the part of the Polish government and the Revisionists was ultimately dashed due to the events surrounding the Evian Conference in July 1938. Despite extensive diplomatic attempts undertaken by Count Jerzy Potocki, Poland's Ambassador to the United States, Poland was not invited to participate in the Conference.⁶⁶⁶ In spite of that, a Polish delegation decided to attend the conference as observers in order to raise a protest against the omission of the question of Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe.

In late January 1939, following a conference with Minister Beck, a delegation of Polish Zionists, headed by Chief Rabbi Moses Schorr came to Great Britain to table various proposals to facilitate Jewish emigration from Poland simultaneously with that from the Third Reich. Raczyński, Poland's Ambassador in London, assisted in bringing the delegates together with Britain's government bodies. They were anxious to secure a promise that '14,000 Polish Jews deported from Germany be helped to emigrate from Poland on the same basis as the German Jews'. For this purpose, the Zionist delegation met with Myron Taylor, American Vice-Chairman of the Intergovernmental Refugee Committee, officials from the Colonial Office, President Chaim Weizmann of the Jewish Agency and other personnel from important British institutions.⁶⁶⁷

The emigration propaganda deployed by Warsaw in the late 1930s met with fierce opposition from British Jewry, who were of the opinion that the very existence of the Mandate system in Palestine should not be considered a starting point for discrimination against its Jewish population or as a reason for adopting a method of emigration confined to Jews. A view that the existence of a surplus Jewish population in Poland entitled the Polish government to seek international recognition for a resolution of this urgency of this problem, especially through enlarging the extent of Jewish emigration quota to Palestine was roundly criticised. Neville Laski and Leonard Montefiore expressed their attitude towards Polish policy in their 1936 letter to Colonel Beck: 'It would, we believe, be incompatible with either to divide the population of a State into two parts, with reference to religious differences, and to regard one of them as surplus population whose emigration alone can secure economic prosperity. [...] the Polish government may use an early opportunity for correcting the impression made by some of its recent pronouncements that it is intended to establish a distinction in the matter of emigration between the various sections of Polish nationals'.⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶⁶ Richard Breitman in the *FDR and the Jews* writes 'Count Jerzy Potocki, Polish ambassador to the United States, implied to Assistant Secretary Messersmith that the upcoming Evian Conference should help Poland deal with its Jewish problem. Messersmith said that Poland could send representative to the conference, but otherwise gave Potocki no encouragement'. See: Breitman R. (2013) *FDR and the Jews* Cambridge: The Belknap Press.

⁶⁶⁷ Schorr Delegation, in London, Asks Linking of Polish Exodus to Reich's', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 27 January 1939.

⁶⁶⁸ TNA, CO 733/396/3, *Letter by the Joint Foreign Committee to Colonel Józef Beck*, 11 November 1936, pp.8-11.

In the years directly preceding the Second World War, Poland's position with regard to the Jews was becoming more extreme. Consequently, in the perception of the majority of Poland's political elite the only solution to the state's Jewish question was emigration.⁶⁶⁹ Although the *Sanacja*'s leaders repeatedly emphasised that their support for Jewish emigration was motivated by a willingness to ease a complex set of the state's internal problems and the anti-Semitic propaganda disseminated by the right-wing elements with Polish politics, in the Western perception it became clear that the country had no room for three and half million Jews, and therefore the majority of them would have to emigrate.

Polish Responses to the late 1930s Palestine dilemma

In the early 1930s a large segment of the Polish political scene, mainly *Sanacja*'s officials and a group of Kraków's neo-conservatives, shared a conviction that it would be possible to establish relatively peaceful and 'brotherly' relations between Zionists and Arabs in Palestine.⁶⁷⁰ In this vein, they not only expected Jews and Arabs to live in harmonious coexistence in the Land of Israel, but also to derive mutual benefits from the economic development resulting from the significant influx of people and foreign capital.⁶⁷¹ However, as internal tensions triggered by the clash of Jewish and Arab nationalists intensified, this kind of political thinking proved to be naïve. Already in 1934 Konstanty Symonolewicz, a prominent orientalist and diplomat assessed that recent developments in Palestine did not bode well for Zionists' political interests.⁶⁷² Zbigniew Grabowski, the *Kurjer Poranny*'s publicist also shared this conviction. Emphasizing that for Poland the Palestine question was of the same significance as the question of Arab-Jewish politics was for Great Britain, the author indicated that Polish elites could not remain indifferent to the political and economic developments in the Middle East. He, also, expressed a hope that the Jews would create a state of their own in Palestine.⁶⁷³ The aforementioned Suchenek-Suchecski assessed the Mandate power as egoistic and acting to the detriment of the Jewish national interest.⁶⁷⁴ Attention should be given to the fact that all these opinions were expressed by politicians, activists and publicists affiliated with the ruling camp.

From 1936 onwards more and more devastating news was coming from Palestine. General Arab frustration stimulated by a large influx of European Jewish masses, Zionist land

⁶⁶⁹ Polonsky A. (2014) *Dzieje Żydów w Polsce i Rosji* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, p.361.

⁶⁷⁰ 'Palestyna w oczach Polaka', *Gazeta Polska*, 1930.

⁶⁷¹ 'Kłopoty palestyńskie: dlaczego Arabowie są niezadowoleni?', *Gazeta Polska*, 23 July 1930, p. 3.

⁶⁷² Symonolewicz K., 'Żydzi a polska ekspansja terytorialna na Dalekim Wschodzie', *Kurjer Poranny*, 17 July 1934, p.3.

⁶⁷³ Grabowski Z., 'Polska-Palestyna', *Kurjer Poranny*, June 1935, p.4.

⁶⁷⁴ 'Referat naczelnika Suchenka o Palestynie', *Nasz Przegląd*, 16 October 1935, p.8.

acquisition and deteriorating socio-economic conditions resulted in the eruption of a violent revolt. Many Jews of Polish origin had been murdered as a result of this violent uprising by the Arabs. Polish politicians concerned about the worsening situation in the region frequently sought clarification both from the Foreign Office in London and the British Embassy in Warsaw. After one of these top-level meetings, the British Ambassador cabled his supervisor, Anthony Eden, in London, 'the [Polish] Government was much perturbed by the recent developments in Palestine. [...] Apart from the specific question on Jewish emigration, the internal situation in Palestine is being followed with much interest in Poland and even the organs of the National Democrat Party, which is the principal stronghold of anti-Semitism here, show more sympathy with the Jews than with the Arabs, since they too realise that a prosperous Jewish Palestine means an easing of Jewish competition in their own country'.⁶⁷⁵

Over the course of the 1930s a substantial part of the *Sanacja*'s politicians and intellectuals remained critical of various aspects of British politics in Palestine. Already in 1929 *Polska Zbrojna*, a semi-official organ of the Ministry of Military Affairs, indicated that 'Great Britain was playing on both, Jewish and Arab, sides in Palestine' and 'the deepening antagonism between these two nations was an inevitable consequence of this politics. Further restrictions on Jewish immigration were perceived as 'a sign of wobbly and two-faced politics'.⁶⁷⁶ With subsequent developments in the region, Piłsudski's adherents were becoming aware that whereas London's relations with the Zionist leadership were at their worst, the need to appease the local Arab population was steadily gaining support among Foreign Office officials. In this vein, *Gazeta Polska* wrote about 'the ravenous Pan-Arab concepts'.⁶⁷⁷ The British policy of appeasement with respect to the Arabs was particularly criticised by the older generation of *Piłsudczyks*. Raczyński, followed these developments in London closely and in his confidential report submitted to Warsaw on October 9th 1936 wrote, 'I cannot help feeling that even if the principle 'first and foremost the peace, then reforms' is applied, so as the Arab revolt is muted, the British Government, being faithful to its well-tried appeasement approach, will seek to fulfil Arabs' demands at least partially'.⁶⁷⁸ Poland's diplomat expressed a hope that the 'incidents in Palestine would not affect the development of the region and would not constrain Palestine's

⁶⁷⁵ TNA, CO 733/295/3 – Colonial Office, *Report submitted by H.W. Kennard to Anthony Eden*, 16 September 1936, pp.29-30.

⁶⁷⁶ 'Z szerokiego świata żydowskiego. Na marginesie wypadków w Palestynie', *Polska Zbrojna*, 27 November 1929, p.2.

⁶⁷⁷ Korab-Kucharski, 'Trzy Palestyny', *Gazeta Polska*, 19 September 1937, p.1.

⁶⁷⁸ AAN, ARPL – Polish Embassy in London, *Political report submitted by Edward Raczyński to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 9 October 1936, p. 382.

significance for the Jewish nation'.⁶⁷⁹ Raczyński also pointed out that in such conditions Jewish emigration *en masse* would be impossible.

In the years directly preceding the Second World War, the *Sanacja*'s organs frequently expressed the view that the British were losing control in region. Newspapers affiliated with the governing elites reported, 'In spite of a clever colonial policy, Great Britain is making mistake after mistake in Palestine'.⁶⁸⁰ It was argued that the British administration deployed a detrimental 'wait and see' politics, which only succeeded in freezing the political situation in the region.⁶⁸¹ Particularly critical towards actions and inactions of the British administration in Palestine was Professor Stanisław Korwin-Pawłowski. In his 1937 publication, *O Emigracji Żydów z Polski i ich kolonizacji* [On the Jewish Emigration from Poland and their settlement], he expressed the bitter assessment that 'the Palestine Mandate is inextricably linked with the constitution given in 1922. This constitution is however just a paper, since Palestine is treated a British colony'.⁶⁸² Korwin-Pawłowski argued that British indecision in the matter of Palestine was motivated by the fact that the region was shaping into one of the most important political, economic and communication channels. In his perception, Palestine with its ports of Haifa and Jaffa were, according to British policy most important assets, and for this purpose Britain would not agree to terminate the Mandate but, on the contrary, would enhance its position in the region.⁶⁸³

The 1939 MacDonald White Paper announced new British proposals for Palestine, but these had a mixed reception. While the right-wing political circles urged the impersonal assessment of the 1937 Peel Commission Partition Plan, Piłsudski's successors regarded it as a betrayal or retreat from former obligations. The local press, affiliated with the governing circles, expressed a deep concern over the 'miniature Jewish state' and detrimental effects of proposals to both Yishuv inhabitants and East European Jewry. 'An attempt to accommodate two entities in one, tiny place is a hopeless endeavour, doomed to failure' noted Bogdan Richer, a correspondent of *Gazeta Polska*.⁶⁸⁴ The conservative *Czas* was less sceptical, arguing that the Peel Report was a progress of great importance, which would 'allow all Jewish idealist to live there'.⁶⁸⁵ Polish

⁶⁷⁹ AAN, ARPL – Polish Embassy in London, October 1936, *Political report submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, p.1443.

⁶⁸⁰ 'Z szerokiego świata żydowskiego. Na marginesie wypadków w Palestynie', *Polska Zbrojna*, 27 November 1929, p.2.

⁶⁸¹ Richter B., 'Przyszłość Palestyny', *Gazeta Polska*, 28 April 1937, p.3. Richter wrote: 'So far, the British did not care about their political failures in Palestine. With true British phlegm they followed a 'wait and see' politics, expecting perhaps that both, Arabs and Jews, would resign from the further fight'.

⁶⁸² Korwin-Pawłowski S. (1937) *O Emigracji Żydów z Polski i ich kolonizacji*, Warszawa: Liga Morska i Kolonialna, p.49.

⁶⁸³ Korwin-Pawłowski S. (1937) *O Emigracji Żydów ...*, p. 57.

⁶⁸⁴ Richter B., 'Przyszłość Palestyny', *Gazeta Polska*, 28 April 1937, p.3.

⁶⁸⁵ Rościszewski L., 'Palestyna leży w Europie', *Czas*, 22 July 1937, p.5.

diplomats, in turn, stressed that 'the new Jewish state in the proposed territories, would be vulnerable to constant unemployment and financial deficit. Moreover, the states of East and Central Europe would not agree to further fundraising actions for Palestine as an independent state'.⁶⁸⁶ Dailies published in Warsaw even called upon the Polish authorities to support Zionist political aspirations, which were parallel to Poland's interests in the League of Nations.⁶⁸⁷ Unarguably, their attitudes towards the proposals depended on the further possibilities of the emigration to Palestine. Most believed that the project was a result of an agreement between Chaim Weizmann and the British Government.

Within the governing elites of Poland it became widely acknowledged that the partition of Palestine was imminent, as London had to adjust its policy in the region to accommodate new geopolitical ramifications. As the possibility was looming large on the horizon of a war with Nazi Germany, it became obvious to the Piłsudczyks that the British Foreign Office would seek to appease the Arabs. They were well aware that the British need to reorient its policies in the region stemmed from its dependence on Middle Eastern oil and transportation routes. This mode of political thinking was also prevalent among Polish diplomats and publicists. Already in February 1937, Konstanty Symonolewicz in the pages of *Kurjer Poranny* wrote that the activities of Sir Arthur Wauchope indicated 'the utmost acquiescence towards the Arabs'. Symonolewicz also blamed the Mandatory Authorities for being ineffective in suppressing the Arab Revolt. In his eyes, the British tardiness was triggered by a necessity to protect their colonial interests in the Middle East.⁶⁸⁸ Piszczykowski, the Vice-consul in Tel Aviv, in his September 1938 report for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed former assumptions stressing that the decision of partition was chiefly motivated by Britain's imperial interests and geopolitical inclinations.⁶⁸⁹ Hulanicki speculated, in turn, that the British decision to organise the Arab and Muslim Parliamentary Conference in Cairo was a well-calculated political manoeuvre. According to the Polish Consul, the British administration sought to stress a possible peril from the Arab side and necessity of preparing European public opinion for further concessions in favour of Arabs.⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁶ AAN, ARPL, 139-140, *Report by Witold Hulanicki*, 21 March 1938.

⁶⁸⁷ Symonolewicz K., 'Przed decyzją o losach Palestyny', *Kurjer Poranny*, 1 February 1936.

⁶⁸⁸ Symonolewicz K., 'Przed decyzją o losach Palestyny', *Kurjer Poranny*, 1 February 1936. Symonolewicz wrote: 'A decisive action to put down the riots was initiated only when the Arab movement rose against the British, directly threatening the Mandate power. Until then, an Arab terror towards the Jews was defeated by means of persuasion and penalty payments imposed on particular communities.'

⁶⁸⁹ AAN, ARPL 503, *Report submitted by Dr. T. Piszczykowski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 2 September 1938, pp. 229-231

⁶⁹⁰ AAN, ARPL – Polish Embassy in London, *Report submitted by W. Hulanicki to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 12 October 1938, p.253.

Although British Foreign Office officials informed the Polish Embassy in London that 'in the circumstances of the present situation in Palestine it is not possible to make any forecast to what the future quotas will be', Polish representatives in Great Britain continued to pay close attention to this matter.⁶⁹¹ For this purpose, the Counsellor of the Polish Embassy met with John Sterndale Bennet, the First Secretary at the Foreign Office. The conversation, however, did not yield the expected information. Raczyński cabled to Warsaw, 'At this moment it is not just an anti-Jewish revolt, but also an increase in Arab nationalism directed against the British Administration. There is, therefore, a serious fear that the British Government, being unable to confront this movement with strength, will be willing to compromise [with Arabs] at the cost of Jewish immigration'.⁶⁹²

In contrast to the critical response of a large segment of officials affiliated with the Colonels, the right-wing politicians warmly welcomed British pronouncements. Less radical publicists, such as monarchists surrounding *Słowo Wileńskie* [Vilna Word], indicated that the publication of the White Paper should have been welcomed positively since it could ultimately resolve doubts that emigration might be a solution to the Jewish question.⁶⁹³ The ethno-nationalist press also insisted that the government refrain from any political and diplomatic actions at an international level. Emphasised that Poland should not be used as a tool for the exercise of Zionist aspirations, the editors of *Głos Narodu* [Nation's Voice] insisted that new territories be found for further Jewish settlement. With Palestine closed to further immigration, the right-wing press considered this option as the only just course for the Polish government to take.⁶⁹⁴ *Myśl Narodowa* [National Thought], a weekly journal affiliated with the nationalist *Stronnictwo Narodowe*, in July 1937 commented as follows:

These developments in the Holy Land evoke in many countries, and particularly in Poland, vivid and sympathetic reactions in the eyes of the public, who desire to bring some magic features to the Royal Commission for Palestine regarding its possible consequences for the Diaspora. This optimism is based on very fragile fundations and unarguably will evolve into extreme pessimism after being tested against reality.'

The newspaper article concluded bitterly that even the proclamation of a Jewish State would not ease the painful reality of the Jewish question outside Palestine, because the Jews would not be

⁶⁹¹ AAN, ARPL – Polish Embassy in London, *Robert Vansittart from the Foreign Office to the Polish Embassy in London*, 24 July 1936, pp.287-289.

⁶⁹² AAN, ARPL – Polish Embassy in London, *Confidential report by Edward Raczyński to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 24 July 1936, pp.290-293.

⁶⁹³ *Słowo Wileńskie*, July 1937, p.3.

⁶⁹⁴ 'Co sądzić o podziale Palestyny?', *Głos Narodu*, 13 July 1937, p. 3.

eager to leave the Diaspora.⁶⁹⁵ The anti-Semitic publicists shared similar convictions. Studnicki, known for his radical approach towards the Jews, in the pages of the Vilna journal *Słowo* assessed possible partition as, 'very detrimental as it may hamper the process of the de-Judification of Poland [odżydzenie Polski]'. Studnicki believed that proposed territory would not be able to absorb more than two million Jews, so could not be longer perceived as a solution to the Jewish question in countries such as Poland, Roumania and Hungary. For this reason, these countries, Studnicki proposed, should protest against any partition of Palestine and restricted immigration quotas.⁶⁹⁶ Just prior to the Second World War, right-wing journals radicalised their anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist tone.⁶⁹⁷ Defamatory articles published in these newspapers repeatedly referred to the plight that had befallen Palestine's Arabs as a result of the development of the Zionist project in Palestine. From this vantage point, the far-right *Warszawski Dziennik Narodowy* [Warsaw National Daily], for instance, welcomed the 1939 White Paper as a triumph of Arab nationalist values in the Middle East and 'the announcement of new solutions to the Jewish question'.⁶⁹⁸

Although one may regard this statement as directly echoing the Nazi rhetoric, which had impacted upon Poland's far-right factions, such commentaries had in fact frequently appeared in the Polish nationalist press from the late 1920s onwards. The Nazi regime and Hitler's coming to power, therefore, had not evoked these anti-Semitic and anti-Palestine sentiments among Polish right, but further inflamed them. The graphic depiction illustrated below (figure 13) is a typical example of the nationalist thinking of the time regarding Palestine's politics. Zionists were portrayed as the only political beneficiaries of the British imperial presence in the Middle East, who were building their enterprise on the plight of local Arab population. Interestingly, this kind of argumentation became common in the Nazi press during the second half of the 1930s.⁶⁹⁹ Polish right-wing organs did not refrain from taking clearly anti-British and pro-Arab positions, frequently suggesting that European Jewish immigrants perceived Arabs as an ethnic minority and were seeking to deprive them of the territories in which they had dwelled for centuries (see figure 14).

⁶⁹⁵ 'Państwo żydowskie w Palestynie', *Myśl Narodowa*, 18 July 1936, pp.1-2.

⁶⁹⁶ Studnicki W., 'Polska wobec podziału Palestyny', *Słowo*, 9 July 1937, p.3.

⁶⁹⁷ Aforementioned *Myśl Narodowa* in July 1938 wrote, 'The struggle on the both sides of Jordan exposes the whole futility of the Zionist settlement project in Palestine. This through and through doctrinal policy of a creation of a Jewish State, deployed as a result of Jewish domination in Britain, proved to be a horrible mistake. This policy only created a new centre of conflict. We have to destroy the diaspora, however, a creation of a Jewish State in such form as it was created in Palestine is nothing but maintaining the diaspora. Why? Because this territory became for them [Jews] only a spiritual centre, enhancing their nationalist spirit.' See: 'Palestyna i diaspora', *Myśl Narodowa*, 24 July 1938, pp.492-493.

⁶⁹⁸ *Warszawski Dziennik Narodowy*, 1939, p.1.

⁶⁹⁹ Nicosia F. (2008) *Zionism and anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Nicosia F. (2015) *Nazi Germany and the Arab World* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 79-82.



Figure 13. Graphic entitled 'A solution to the Jewish Question'.

Source: *Mucha*, 27 September 1929, p.5, NAC.



Figure 14. 'Our Jews in Palestine.' Comment below: 'Look how beautiful is our Palestine, but there are far too many Arabs'. Source: *Mucha*, 24 November 1933, p.4, NAC.

The months directly preceding September 1939 not only witnessed a resurgence of state-sanctioned anti-Semitism but also a widespread criticism of Zionist politics in Palestine. The growth of pro-Arab tendencies became particularly apparent among the far-right politicians and publicists. A contributing factor to this state of affairs was the intensification of ethno-nationalist attitudes among Polish society, which fed the aforementioned state-sanctioned anti-Semitism. Interestingly, Polish nationalists, referring to common interests and mutually shared anti-Semitic biases, began to view Palestine Arabs as their political and ideological allies. In July 1938, *ABC*, a radical daily affiliated with the far-right, even published a declaration of mutual friendship

between Polish and Arab nationalists. The declaration was published along with greetings from Fakhri al-Nashabibi, a prominent Palestinian activist and propagandist (see figure 14).⁷⁰⁰

Following the Irgun's bomb attack in Haifa in July 1938, *Głos* [Voice] magazine published an article entitled 'Terror żydowski w Palestynie' [Jewish Terror in Palestine], charging Zionists with carrying out revenge acts of terror against Arab civilians as well as manipulating and misleading European public opinion. Moreover, the article openly accused the Mandate Authority of supplying arms to the Jews. Describing Jews as 'audacious invaders', the author assessed that such terrorist actions would close the door to an agreement with Palestine's Arabs, therefore, preventing the partition of the land. Also, the article's conclusion was very symptomatic: 'the bomb attack in Haifa indicates, that the experiment, dreamt by Herzl and pursued for twenty years with such physical and financial efforts, merely ends in bankruptcy'.⁷⁰¹

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Figure 14. Greetings from Fakhri al-Nashabibi. 'From an Arab Nationalists in Palestine to Polish Nationalists in Poland and Dr. Jan Kucharski, Correspondent of the national paper ABC. Fakhri al-Nashabibi'. Source: Kucharski J., 'Palestyna należy do Arabów', ABC, 29 July 1938, p.4.

The 1937 Report of the Peel Commission, announced by the Colonial Secretary William Ormsby-Gore, deprived the Jewish masses of the opportunity to settle in Palestine due to yet further limitations on Jewish immigration. This naturally met with wide criticism from Polish

⁷⁰⁰ Kucharski J., 'Palestyna należy do Arabów', ABC, 29 July 1938, p.4.

⁷⁰¹ 'Żydowski terror w Palestynie', *Głos*, 3 August 1938.

Zionists, who perceived these developments as a profound violation of Jewish rights. Various manifestations of dissatisfaction with the British proposals resulted in mass protest meetings in Warsaw and other Polish cities. On March 4th, a huge demonstration took place in front of the British Consulate. That night, a brick, wrapped in a map of Palestine with the inscription 'this (Palestine) belongs to the Jews' was thrown through the window of Vice-Consulate in Lwów.⁷⁰² The Zionist Organisation of Poland issued a proclamation declaring that Polish Jewry would do all within its power to prevent the infringement of Jewish rights in Palestine. In support of these protests, a general closure Jewish shops for two hours was ordered on May 22nd. Similar manifestations were organised by the youth groups attached to the right-wing Zionists organisations, such as – *Brit HaChayal* and *Trumpeldorite*. In response to the deteriorating situation in Palestine a mass protest was organised on March 31st outside the British Embassy in Warsaw by activists of the New Zionist Organisation. These demonstrators demanded unlimited immigration to Palestine, the creation of a Jewish State on both sides of the Jordan River and resignation of General Wauchope.⁷⁰³ Such rallies became a magnet for the Revisionists from across Poland and beyond.

Whilst the mainstream Polish-Jewish press referred to the partition plan as 'a triumph for the Zionist ideal with great struggle and effort'.⁷⁰⁴ The Revisionist leaders considered this as a Jewish *targowica* [a Polish synonym for betrayal] and wanted the Polish government to support the abolition of the Partition Plan entirely.⁷⁰⁵ Jabotinsky, claiming that British involvement in Zionist history was about to come to an end, suggested that Poland should inherit the Mandate for Palestine from Great Britain or that it should seize the Syrian Mandate in order to establish commercial relations with the Jewish *Yishuv*. As Timothy Snyder asserts, 'this sort of thinking about foreign policy was very much in the Polish diplomatic tradition: an imaginative attempt to turn nothing into leverage'.⁷⁰⁶

The Polish authorities condemned the British partition plan. In their eyes, it provided far too small a territory for a Jewish state. Willing to dispel uncertainties regarding Palestine's future status and the Polish-Jewish emigration scheme, Warsaw initiated negotiations with the Zionist leadership. At the same time, discussions were conducted with Weizmann and the Revisionists – Akzin and Schechtmann - who together sought to convince Poland's policymakers to

⁷⁰² TNA, CO 733/410/1, *Report submitted to Lord Halifax*, 11 March 1939, p.21.

⁷⁰³ TNA, FO 371/20805, *Demonstration by the New Zionist Organisation outside His Majesty's Embassy in Warsaw*, 7 April 1937, pp.221-222.

⁷⁰⁴ Gottlieb J., 'Joy and Fear', *Der Moment*, 9 July 1937.

⁷⁰⁵ Shavit Y. (1988) *Jabotinsky and the Revisionist Movement 1925-1948* London: Cass, pp. 332-333.

⁷⁰⁶ Snyder T. (2015) *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* London: Vintage, p.63.

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support their political line. In London, Count Raczyński, who discussed with Akzin, got the impression that for the right-wing faction the question of partition was of 'a huge inner-political and tactical significance'. In this vein, Raczyński predicted that 'along with the implementation of Palestine's partition and the transformation of the Jewish allocation into an autonomous entity, the political role of Jabotinsky would be undermined'. From Weizmann, the Polish Ambassador learned that the Zionists were pinning their hopes the Polish government exerting large-scale diplomatic pressure on Britain.⁷⁰⁷

Meanwhile, Hulanicki, the Polish Consul in Jerusalem, was the only foreign representative who had followed the proceeding of the Partition Commission and the discussions with Benjamin Akzin with adequate attention. Participation in the hearing of prominent member of the New Zionist Organisation Presidency was of a great importance. In his March 1938 report, Hulanicki noted that, 'the Commission, driven by its own terms of reference, refused to give a hearing to leaders from either the Jewish or the Arab camps, who were known to have anti-partition views.'⁷⁰⁸

Officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were also in disagreement with the pro-Arab line as supported by the ethno-nationalist circles. In spite of this, as early as the beginning of 1938, a decision was reached on the appointment of Weber, an appraised specialist in Arab affairs, as an attaché in Jerusalem.⁷⁰⁹ This move clearly suggests that Warsaw was becoming increasingly interested in Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine. Paprocki, who conducted research in Palestine in 1939, reported to his supervisors in Warsaw:

Agreement between Poles and Arabs is the wrong policy direction and cannot be taken into consideration, because of two reasons: firstly, we do not have the money to bribe them, and secondly we cannot interfere relations between Great Britain and Arabs, given that there are approximately forty per cent of Polish Jews in Palestine. This country needs to be conquered by the means of the economic strength of the Jews, who need to become a permanent majority. Only later, will it be possible to shape it into an independent entity on the basis of land, ideology and humanity.⁷¹⁰

⁷⁰⁷ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Political report on the Royal Commission's approach towards Palestine and conversations with Chaim Weizmann and Benjamin Akzin*, 5 May 1937, pp. 138-140.

⁷⁰⁸ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ARPL, 139-140, *Report by Witold Hulanicki*, 21 March 1938, p.78.

⁷⁰⁹ Szulkin M. (1981) Żydzi palestyńscy w świetle raportów polskiej służby dyplomatycznej. Cz. 2, (1936-1939). *Buletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 1: 64-82.

⁷¹⁰ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1008, Palestine Problem, 1939, pp.1-18; 6257, *A confidential report by Antoni Paprocki on his journey to Palestine*, pp. 9-12.

In March 1939, Beck approached Ambassador Kennard to provide him with the information that Germany was inciting a new Arab revolt in Palestine and Transjordan. Basing on information from a 'reliable Jewish source', Beck mentioned 50,000 as the number of Arabs to be involved in this alleged anti-Jewish riots. As British Ambassador noted in a confidential telegram, 'this message, whether well founded or not, is interesting evidence of the change of Polish attitude towards ourselves, Germany and the Jews of Transjordan'.⁷¹¹ At the time of the issue of the May 1939 White Paper, the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted, 'the White Paper is a new step in the history of Palestine. It signals that the British Government has adjusted Jewish political interests to Arabs' expectations'.⁷¹² In the eyes of Polish officials it became clear that with the enactment of the White Paper, Palestine would lose its primary importance as an emigration outlet for Polish Jewry. A letter by Piszczykowski, the Polish Vice-Consul in Tel-Aviv, bitterly confirmed this seeming triumph of ethno-nationalist propaganda over ideological affinities, commercial exchange and political cooperation.⁷¹³

Poland as a Mandatory Power in Palestine?

The aforementioned suggestion, both at this time and previous occasions, that Poland should have inherited the Mandate for Palestine from Great Britain always seemed to emerge at times of great crisis when all seemed lost. The first time this proposition was tabled had been at the 15th Zionist Congress, held between August and September 1927 in Basle. That such an idea was being considered is further confirmed by Nathan Szwalbe, who referred to the ideas of transferring the Mandate to Italy or Germany.⁷¹⁴ In 1929 *Nasz Przeglqd* published an article proposing that Poland should have been given the Mandate for Palestine. The article's author, Dawid Socher, stated that Great Britain, whose empire included a population of 100 million Muslims, should not have been entrusted with Mandate for Palestine. 'The only state which is able to properly exercise supervision over Palestine with benefits to the Jews is Poland' began Socher, arguing that the Polish administration, directly interested in the Jewish colonisation of Palestine would facilitate emigration, instead of rendering it more difficult. Moreover, as Socher pointed out, Warsaw's policy could support the development of understanding and a *modus vivendi* between Jews and Arabs.⁷¹⁵

⁷¹¹ TNA, CO 733/410/1, p.29, *Telegram from Poland*, 21 March 1939.

⁷¹² AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10004, *Confidential memo on current affairs in Jewish politics*, 1939, pp. 153-157.

⁷¹³ Tadeusz Piszczykowski in May 1939 wrote, 'Poland is interested in the Palestine question, predominantly from the emigration point of view. Neither our political nor economic interest can be compared with it'. See: AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9570, *A letter by Tadeusz Piszczykowski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, May 1939, p.15.

⁷¹⁴ 'Mandat Palestyński', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 17 September 1927, p.4.

⁷¹⁵ 'Mandat Palestyński winna otrzymać Polskę', *Nasz Przeglqd*, 4 September 1929, p.5.

A similar project was tabled by Jabotinsky in the early 1930s. The Revisionist leader went even further, proposing that Poland should have been given the Mandate for Syria as well, in order to develop commercial relations with the Palestine *Yishuv* or to use this territory as leverage against the Arabs.⁷¹⁶ For this purpose, in November 1933, the Revisionist Zionists formed a League that was supposed to campaign for the transference of the Palestine Mandate to Poland. This initiative was partially a consequence of the article published by *Słowo Wileńskie*, an organ that officially supported the *Sanacja* regime.

Although the idea that interwar Poland could have inherited the Mandate for Palestine was naïve and bizarre from the very outset, it came back again alongside with the Partition Plan. At this point, however, this question was deployed by ethno-nationalist intellectuals. In July 1937, Studnicki in the pages of *Słowo* wrote, 'for Great Britain only railways and Palestine's harbours matter. Poland could pledge to make these ports available to England both in time of peace and in time of war'.⁷¹⁷ Although a great majority of Poland's politicians perceived the idea of transferring responsibility for the Palestine Mandate to Poland as a 'concept from an illusionary world', it nevertheless appeared frequently within public discourse.⁷¹⁸ It is difficult to assess precisely how seriously Zionists or the Polish elites considered such a solution. However, the interest in the matter aroused within Zionist circles and their attempts to bring about this transfer of the Mandate, reflects how serious a notion it had become within official circles of Poland.

These naïve and utopian views continued to thrive among Poland's Revisionists until the late 1930s. Aryeh Altman, a prominent Revisionist politician and a member of the *Nessiut*, referred in September 1936 to 'Poland's strategic importance and its deciding role in international affairs'.⁷¹⁹ Taking into account geopolitical inclinations particular interest should be given to Poland's links with the Revisionists from Ireland in relation to Palestine. In December 1938 Robert Briscoe, a prominent Irish Fianna Fail politician and privately a close friend of Jabotinsky, was asked by his fellow Revisionists to meet with Colonel Beck. At the initiative of the New Zionist Organisation, Briscoe met with the Polish Minister and put forward Jabotinsky's plan of

Nasz Przeglqd, 245, p.4., 247, p.3.

⁷¹⁶ Snyder T. (2015) *Black Earth* ... London: Vintage, p.63.

⁷¹⁷ Studnicki W., 'Polska wobec podziału Palestyny', *Słowo*, 9 July 1937, p.3; Studnicki W. (1936) *Sprawa polsko-żydowska* Wilno: J. Zawadzki.

⁷¹⁸ 'Chybiony pomysł', *Kurjer Warszawski*, 6 September 1929.

⁷¹⁹ Altman A., *Trybuna Narodowa*, 18 September 1936. Similar attitude was expressed by Jakub Perelman in his study *Rewizjonizm w Polsce 1922-1936 r.* [Revisionism in Poland 1922-1936]. See: Perelman J. (1937) *Rewizjonizm w Polsce 1922-1936 r.* Warszawa: Europa.

transferring responsibility for the Mandate to the Polish government.⁷²⁰ It may well be that Briscoe's political mission was arranged by Eamon de Valera, a renowned leader of Ireland's struggle for independence and simultaneously the newly appointed President of the Assembly of the League of Nations, who had been approached by Jabotinsky that same month. Given that political connections between Poland and Irish Republicans could have resulted in dissonance within Polish-British relations, Warsaw's politicians did their best to keep these connections highly confidential.

Mapping of Eretz Israel

Although the question of the territorial boundaries of a Jewish homeland had occupied a central place in Zionist discourse since the earliest phase of Herzlian Zionism, a consensus in this matter had never been reached. However, various debates surrounding the emigration of Polish Jews to Palestine and the extent of mutual, Polish-Zionist, cooperation resulted in an increased interest in this subject amongst Polish political and intellectual elites. Consequently, it became an integral part of the national debate. Over the course of the 1930s, the Zionist leadership continued to enlist Polish diplomatic endorsement for expanding territory to be assigned to a Jewish state. These diplomatic actions intensified in 1937, soon after the publication of the Peel Commission's proposals, which suggested the partitioning of Palestine between Jews and Arabs and the creation of a small Jewish state encompassing the Mediterranean shoreline, most of the Galilee and the upper Jordan Valley (see Map 1). During a lengthy conversation between Beck and Weizmann pursued in Geneva in September 1937, Poland's Foreign Minister even declared that his cabinet 'will do its utmost to assure a territory as large as possible for the Jews'.⁷²¹

This statement clearly contains ideological echoes of the Polish-Revisionist alliance. Jabotinsky, who stoutly opposed the Peel Commission, indeed, greatly influenced Polish perception of this matter. Consequently, officials within the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs even began to raise objections to Weizmann's particular vision of a Jewish state. Amongst their main concerns were the inadequate amount of territory and loss of Palestine's most economically

⁷²⁰ In his memoirs Robert Briscoe recalls 'On behalf of the New Zionist Movement ... I suggest that you ask Britain to turn over the Mandate for Palestine to you and make it in effect a Polish colony. You could then move all your unwanted Polish Jews into Palestine. This would bring great relief to your country, and you would have a rich and growing colony to aid your economy.' See: Briscoe R. (1958) *For the Life of Me* Boston: Little, Brown and Company, p.258.

⁷²¹ 'Poland to Back Widest Borders for Jewish State, Beck Tells Weizmann', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 14 September 1937; Korab-Kucharski, 'Trzy Palestyny', *Gazeta Polska*, 19 September 1937, p.1.

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productive port cities – Haifa, Jaffa and Acre. ‘This is the creation from a Jewish Palestine of a ‘Vatican city’ – a tiny, centre, standing rather as a symbol than a reality, rather ‘a temple of the nation’ than a ‘national home’ noted Poland’s Legation in Bern.⁷²² This was perceived by Polish officials as an elitist concept, based on the conviction that the majority of Jews would remain in the Diaspora.

A substantial sector of Polish intellectual elites shared these views. Korwin-Pawłowski, in his considerations of the future territory for a Jewish state went much further, suggesting that it should have encompassed Transjordan, Syria, Cyprus and Iraq, which he considered ‘a natural extension of Palestine’s territory’. ‘If Palestine is supposed to constitute a strong state entity, it should border with countries, having a full understanding for Palestine’s political and economic role’, he argued. Considering that these territories could have absorbed a few million Jewish immigrants, Korwin-Pawłowski continued, ‘colonial settlement actions should have embraced these countries and should have been pursued with all necessary means, without respect to Arab or Greek opposition’.⁷²³

⁷²² AAN, Poselstwo RP w Bernie – Poland’s Legation in Bern, 166, *International aspects of Jewish question*; Weinbaum L. (1993) *A Marriage of Convenience: The New Zionist Organisation and the Polish Government, 1936-1939*, Boulder: East European Monographs, p.25.

⁷²³ Pawłowski S. (1937) *O Emigracji Żydów* Warszawa: Liga Morska i Kolonialna, p.62.



Map 1. The Peel Commission Partition Plan, 1937. Source: Tessler M. (1994) *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p.243.

Being committed to the political alliance with the Revisionists, Warsaw instructed Count Raczyński to approach the Foreign Office in order to discuss the possibilities of colonising the Negev. As the Polish Ambassador learned, this option had not been completely rejected by the British side, at least at the beginning of 1938. At the same time, Paprocki, a top-ranking official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the head of its Research Section, was instructed to analyse the possibilities of colonisation in the hinterland of Palestine. Since, as Paprocki reported, 'an in-depth examination of technical possibilities of settlement, sending there a commission or a group of specialists could have overcomplicated the situation' it became necessary to enlist some Zionists in this secret undertaking. In this matter, Polish officials closely cooperated with Henryk (Chaim) Szoszkies, a prominent Polish-Jewish journalist and political activist. According to the

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March 1938 report, Paprocki instructed Szoszkies to pay close attention to developments in the socio-political situation of Palestine.⁷²⁴

A few months later, during the summer 1938, at the bequest of the Zionist Revisionists, Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs instructed the Legation in Cairo to analyse the possibility of Jewish colonisation in the Sinai Peninsula. The idea was discussed with local Muslim and Syrian elites at Pan Arab Conferences in Cairo, Damascus and Beirut. A confidential report submitted to Warsaw stated that Poland's representative suggested setting up Jewish colonies in the area between the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gulf of Suez. For this purpose, Alfons Kula, Poland's *Charge d'Affaires* in Cairo approached Nuri Pasha al-Said, the Iraqi Prime Minister. Initially, he seemed to be in favour of Jewish colonisation in the Sinai and even declared his support of the project at the London Round Table Conference. Although the proposal was formulated by the Polish Legation, Kula induced al-Said to table the proposal as an Iraqi one 'by virtue of prestige and tactical reasons'.⁷²⁵ After numerous discussions, Kula reported to Warsaw that the Jewish settlement project in the Sinai had met with fierce opposition from the Egyptians. Eventually, they asked the Iraqi delegation to cease from submitting this document. In an attempt to counter the Egyptian opposition, a propaganda drive via the *L'Orient Arabe* press agency was initiated but did not bring about the desired effect. The main concerns were in the area of military defence of the region. Thus, as Roman Michałowski from the Poland's Embassy in London concluded 'the project could also meet with a resistance of the British Military Authority'.⁷²⁶

Moreover, they did not believe that either Arabs or Jews would agree to being a national minority within the borders of Palestine. Wagner, concluding his study, wrote bluntly, 'Neither the British Mandate resolves the conflict, nor the British governance over Palestine. [...] Perhaps the Jews, with much experience of misery, will be those who win the land of their forefathers'.⁷²⁷ In Wagner's eyes, the vagueness and dubiousness of British policy in Palestine only aggravated the already disturbed political situation in the region and relations between Zionists and local Arabs. Interestingly, echoes of the Revisionist rhetoric can be easily seen in this publication. Especially in its reference to the military conquest of Palestine, as proposed by Jabotinsky.

⁷²⁴ AAN, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Project by Antoni Paprocki*, March 1938, p.37.

⁷²⁵ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Ministerial note by W.T. Drymmer*, 10 February 1939; AAN; 9905, *Report regarding colonization of Sinai*, 12 May 1938.

⁷²⁶ AAN, ARPL, *Confidential report submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 23 August 1938, p.4.

⁷²⁷ Wagner J. (1938) *Problem Palestyński*, AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10007.

Looking for new territories

Considering the political implications of the Arab revolt, a substantial number of the *Sanacja*'s politicians came to understand that the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine would not be able to provide an effective solution to the Jewish question in the Diaspora. Although right-wing Zionists believed that Warsaw would remain supportive towards their ideological agenda and would continue to consider Palestine as the principal destination for Jewish emigration, Polish policymakers of the late 1930s gradually diverted their attention from Palestine and began to consider different territorial schemes.⁷²⁸ This is further proof that in the late 1930s, officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs deployed the right-wing rhetoric of their former political opponents becoming centrally focused on Jewish emigration.⁷²⁹ Since the absorptive capacity of Palestine was limited and the Mandate Authorities had imposed new immigration restrictions, Ministry officials had to acknowledge that acquiring additional territories suitable for Jewish emigration would be necessary.⁷³⁰ As early as February 1936 Raczyński was instructed to make contacts with the British Zionist leader Lord Melchett in order to discuss colonisation possibilities beyond Palestine. Melchett, then, expressed his deep concern over Sir Arthur Wauchope's policy towards the future of a Jewish National Home. In his opinion, the High Commissioner's legislative and agrarian scheme could adversely affect Zionist interests in Palestine.⁷³¹ Two months later, on May 22nd 1936, in response to rumours in the press forecasting limitations of the general quota of Jewish immigrants to Palestine, Raczyński visited Sir Robert Vansittart, the Permanent Undersecretary at the British Foreign Office. At the meeting, Raczyński emphasised that the Jewish problem in Poland was chiefly of an economic nature, since there had been an increase in birth rate amongst the Jewish population. A Foreign Office memorandum stated, 'the quorum of emigrants so far allotted to Poland, though small, has made it possible to dispose of at least a fraction of the natural increase of the Jewish population, and has thus given some relief to the Jewish community in Poland, which is labouring hard under the stress of economic difficulties. It is not without relevance to note that there is some reliance on the Balfour Declaration among many thousands of Polish Jews emigrated to Palestine and constituted some of the most valuable elements of the Jewish population now in that country. It is, accordingly, a vital matter to the

⁷²⁸ Jan Wagner in a letter to Apolonia Zarychta indicated that at the fate of the Palestine project 'territorialist projects will probably be fully developed and fleshed out in the near future'. See: AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9928, *Correspondence regarding projects of Jewish settlement in Ecuador*, pp.104-108.

⁷²⁹ See: [Chapter 3](#).

⁷³⁰ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9908, *Conference on Jewish matters in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 24 February 1939, pp.14-15.

⁷³¹ AAN, ARPL – Polish Embassy in London, *Report on the meeting with Lord Melchett and his emigration project*, 21 March 1936, p.254.

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Polish government from the point of view of the particular interest of this Jewish population in Poland, that there should be no diminution in the previous quoutum of emigration'.⁷³²

Efforts undertaken by officials within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in late 1936 indicated the first signs of a changing approach towards Palestine as the only territory for Jewish settlement. Already in October 1936, Tadeusz Gwiazdoski inquired of the Italian diplomat in Warsaw regarding the possibility of Jewish settlement in Abyssinia.⁷³³ Embracing such a diplomatic course was extremely risky. First and foremost, Italians were disseminating anti-British propaganda at this time and secondly, Poland and England, despite relatively frosty mutual relations, had common political and economic interests.⁷³⁴

In December 1936, Zarychta, the Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Emigration Department, released a memorandum stating that, 'from a political and economic point of view, Palestine is the natural immigration territory for the Jews, however it cannot absorb the entire Jewish emigration from Poland'.⁷³⁵ The document also confirmed that the government of Poland supported 'every healthy Jewish initiative' aiming to find new territories for Jewish settlement. Soon afterwards, recommendations such as these were submitted to the *Sejm* (the lower house of Polish Parliament). In late January 1937, Polish Parliamentarians spent long hours debating over the question of further Jewish emigration to Palestine. During this debate Minister Beck admitted that it was necessary to look for other destinations.⁷³⁶ Commenting on these developments, the Revisionist weekly *Trybuna Narodowa* [the National Tribune] noted, 'Hysteria and ill will are not new to us and cannot undermine historical cooperation between Poles and Jews in terms of a Jewish national resurrection. This cooperation is not a fabrication or extravagancy, but is an international activity, based on mutual interest aiming at resolving the problems of both sides'.⁷³⁷ Did the Revisionists, indeed, continue to believe in the true integrity of the Polish elites? Since the process of directing Jewish emigration beyond Palestine would make Zionism irrelevant, the Revisionists embarked upon a public campaign aimed at defending their crucial ally.

⁷³² AAN, ARPL – Polish Embassy in London, *Memorandum by the Polish Ambassador*, 22 May 1936, pp. 276-277.

⁷³³ AAN, MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10004, *Memo by Tadeusz Gwiazdoski*, October 1936.

⁷³⁴ Indeed, in 1937 *Daily Herald* speculated that the riots in Palestine were directly triggered by Italian agents. The anti-British propaganda pursued by Italians began alongside with the second Italy-Abyssinian War.

⁷³⁵ AAN, KNY, 499, p.69, *Memorandum by Apoloniusz Zarychta*, 23 December 1936.

⁷³⁶ Fałowski J. (2006) *Mniejszość żydowska w Parlamencie ...*, pp. 226-230.

⁷³⁷ 'Nie – tylko Palestyna', *Trybuna Narodowa*, 22 January 1937, p.1.

After Beck's declaration in the *Sejm*, the *Nessiut* (Executive) of the New Zionist Organisation admitted that Minister Beck, indeed, expressed his deep understanding of the tragic situation of Polish Jewry. In January 1937, Merdinger of the NZO approached the British Foreign Office regarding Poland's inability to find solutions to the emigration problem of its surplus Jewish population. Merdinger emphasised that the Polish attitude towards this question was considerably misunderstood by the international public and that there was no intention on the part of the Polish government to pursue a policy of imperialism or to insist on colonies.⁷³⁸ Beck expressed similar views. In his *Wspomnienia o polskiej polityce zagranicznej, 1926-1939* [Memoirs on Poland's foreign policy, 1926-1939] Beck strongly dissented from Poland's alleged colonial aspirations, stating that the existence of this matter in Polish public debate was, 'a subconscious result of such rhetoric in Nazi Germany'. 'If the colonial question on one hand, and the Jewish question on the other were not debated in the international arena, I as the Minister of Foreign Affairs would refrain from paying particular attention to these matters'.⁷³⁹

Confidential proposals for the Council of Ministers stated, 'recent developments in Palestine, as well as an increasing interest within British and Zionist political circles in the immigration of German Jews may significantly hinder the further influx of Polish Jews to Palestine'.⁷⁴⁰ The same document suggested that the Polish government should support Jewish organisations that aimed at establishing a Jewish state outside Palestine such as territorialists or the idea of creating a Jewish state in Birobidzhan. It was also emphasised that emigration to Birobidzhan would not affect Poland's balance of payments, as the emigration to Palestine did. Amongst the possible settlement territories, the document considered Angola, Uganda, Ecuador, Guatemala, Argentine, Brasil, Australia and Columbia. Moreover, the document recommended that adequate steps be taken to prevent the re-emigration of Jews.

This new line of policy was also affirmed during various diplomatic démarche. On October 1st, 1937 Jerzy Michałowski, the First Secretary of the Polish Embassy in London approached Randall of the British Foreign Office in order to discuss the Palestine question as a solution to the major demographic problems of Central Europe. From Randall's memo we learn that Palestine was no longer seen as the only territory for further Jewish emigration, however, it 'could still exert a moral influence and form a safety valve which would be of the greatest value'. During a conversation, Michałowski insisted that, 'Colonel Beck was most anxious to maintain the closest contact with His Majesty's Government over this question [Jewish immigration to

⁷³⁸ TNA, FO 371/24098, pp.175-177.

⁷³⁹ Beck J. (2015) *Wspomnienia o polskiej polityce zagranicznej, 1926-1939*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Wingert, p.178.

⁷⁴⁰ AAN, MFA, 9905, *Proposals for the Council of Ministers*, p.7.

Palestine]'. Moreover, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs proposed sending the Polish expert, Wagner, from Geneva to London in order to discuss with the Colonial Office the question of Palestine. Michałowski had discussed this matter with Sir John Shuckburgh of the Colonial Office. Randall noted that 'there was no need therefore for the Poles to plead the cause of the Jews, which already had many keen and able advocates'. He also advised Michałowski to postpone Wagner's visit until the Commission returned from Palestine.⁷⁴¹

In late November 1938, as it became clear that the British were preparing a Round Table Conference on Palestine in London, which would likely result in further immigration restrictions, the Consular Department of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs convened a nationwide conference to include Jewish leaders from all political factions, ranging from Agudists through Zionists to the Bund. Unanimous consent was reached in the matter of the necessity of finding new territories for further emigration. Consequently, a Jewish Emigration and Colonisation Committee was established with Professor Moses Schorr as a President, and Henryk Rosmarin, Maksymilian Friede and Sachs as its members.⁷⁴² As a result of these initiatives, Minister Beck sent a coded telegram to the Polish Ambassador in the United States instructing him to inform the American institutions that Warsaw has 'a huge need to initiate constructive emigration activity on a large scale'. The Polish ICA [Jewish Colonisation Association] insisted that 'the question of the emigration of Jews from Poland is one link in the chain within the wider international problem of the emigration of Jews from Europe, and must be included within all relevant decisions and negotiations'. At the same time, the Committee emphasised that, 'the steps taken and deep interest in the emigration from some Nazi countries will never solve the problem of the Jewish emigration as a whole, but on the contrary, can only prejudice it and may finally result in very disastrous consequences for the Jews in Poland [...].'⁷⁴³ The Committee established a fund of three million Polish Złoty in order to provide 'agricultural training for Jews as well as further productivisation of Polish Jewry'.⁷⁴⁴ Maksymilian Friede, the Committee prominent member, paid a visit in early July 1939 to British Zionists in order to emphasise keeping the emigration needs of Polish Jewry on the agenda. The Foreign Committee of the Joint [Joint Foreign Committee, JFA] was fully aware of the situation in Poland, and endeavours to obtain outlets for further Jewish

⁷⁴¹ TNA, FO 371/20815, p.103, *Palestine: Polish Attitude*, 4 October 1937.

⁷⁴² Drymmer W. (2014) *W służbie Polsce: Wspomnienia żołnierza i państwowca z lat 1914-1947* Kraków: Wydawnictwo Wingert, p.207; Pobóg-Malinowski W. (1991) *Najnowsza historia polityczna Polski*, Gdańsk: Oficyna Wydawnicza Graf, p. 817. Interestingly, the establishment of such a committee was already proposed in December 1936 by Nahum Goldmann during his stay in Warsaw.

⁷⁴³ LMA, ACC 3121/E3/515, *Memorandum of the Jewish Colonisation Committee in Poland*.

⁷⁴⁴ W.T. Drymmer in his memoirs mentioned that the Committee allocated 5,000,000 PLN, an equivalent of 1 million USD at this time, as its initial budget. The Polish official commented 'This was a tiny sum considering the needs, however sufficient for initiation of work and possible purchase of territory for settlement'. See: ⁷⁴⁴ Drymmer W. (2014) *W służbie Polsce ...*, p.220.

emigration.⁷⁴⁵ The JFA member, Brotman, recalled his meeting with Mościcki, the First Secretary of the Polish Embassy on July 6th 1939:

Mr. Mościcki expressed an interest in Jewish organisations in this country, the relationship of the Board to the Jewish Agency etc. [...] He deplored the apparent disunity in Jewish ranks but appreciated that there was a fundamental division in Jewry in relation to the 'Nationalist' and the 'International' concepts.⁷⁴⁶

Along with the foundation of the Committee, the Government established a non-Jewish organisation called *Friends to Promote Jewish Emigration to Madagascar*. Its foundation may be considered as another step in the Polish government's official departure from its pro-Palestine policy. Zionists' political expectations vis-à-vis Warsaw's policy were ultimately shattered when the Zionist leaders – Dr. Rosmarin, Reich and Kleinbaum (Sneh) - were notified that Palestine was not considered the only place for emigration, even though the number of 10,000 Polish Jews would cross the borders of Palestine in the course of a year. Embracing such an approach was tantamount to a disavowal of the former alliance between Warsaw's elites and the Revisionists. Unarguably, it was the result of the vociferous debate on the necessity of Jewish emigration, which had dominated public discourse prior to the outbreak of the Second World War.⁷⁴⁷ As it turned out, Jabotinsky had been correct in his 1937 assumptions, as Poland's position in Geneva would become worse, 'unless the wave of brutality [in Poland] stopped and a clear line against anti-Semitism adopted'.⁷⁴⁸ Anti-Semitic tendencies, incited by radical nationalist groups, triumphed and even those politicians who had formerly despised such rhetoric, succumbed to the nationalist vision of Poland. A few, who remained devoted to Piłsudski's ideal, engaged in confidential dealings with the Revisionist Zionists.

The secret alliance on the eve of the Second World War

In 1938, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that there was 'a contradiction between Polish interests and the interests of the dominant Zionist faction in Palestine'.⁷⁴⁹ This statement was, however, only partially true. Although the ideological gap between the officials in

⁷⁴⁵ LMA, ACC 3121/E3/515, *Note of interview with Dr. Celia Sokolow and Mr. Maksymilian Friede of Warsaw*, 5 July 1939.

⁷⁴⁶ LMA, ACC 3121/E3/515, *Note of interview with the First Secretary to the Polish Embassy*, 6 July 1939.

⁷⁴⁷ Fałowski J. (2006) *Mniejszość żydowska w Parlamencie ...*, pp. 219-237.

⁷⁴⁸ In a letter Jabotinsky wrote: 'Poland's position in Geneva made worse that awkward, unless the wave of brutality stopped and a clear line against anti-Semitism adopted' See: Jabotinsky Institute in Israel – Archive, A 1-2/27, *Ze'ev Jabotinsky to Shlomo Jacobi*, 12 October 1937.

⁷⁴⁹ AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10004, *Foreign Ministry Report*, 1938, p.13.

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the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the mainstream Zionists had deepened, Poland remained an important ally for the Revisionists. Both these Polish officials and Revisionist activists confirmed this fact in their memoirs. In one such example, Drymmer admitted that the Polish-Zionist cooperation had a strictly confidential hidden agenda, which envisaged 'supporting Zionist national interests comprehensively through money transfers and military training'.⁷⁵⁰ In the late 1930s, Polish elites surrounding Minister Beck closely cooperated with Zionist and Revisionist paramilitary organisations operating in the Mandatory Palestine – the *Haganah* and the *Irgun Tzvai Le'umi* (IZL). This particularly sensitive issue of Warsaw's support for Zionist militant groups in Palestine was enveloped, for justifiably political and geopolitical reasons, in a shroud of secrecy.

The question of providing assistance with training was first raised in mid-1936. It was in late July when Yirmiyahu Halperin and Dr. Levi from the New Zionist Organisation approached the Polish Counselor in London, Mr. Niedźwiecki, in order to discuss the education programme for Jewish youth and the foundation of a naval academy for Betarists in Gdynia. At the same time, Jabotinsky negotiated with Raczyński, the Polish Ambassador in London, the possibility of organising of trainings sessions for paramilitary officers for approximately one hundred suitable candidates taken from Poland's Jewish youth.⁷⁵¹ Colonel Beck, however, refused this request, stating that, 'recently a range of opposition parties in Poland have attempted, under the guise of creating new military training organisations, to create their own militias of an aggressive character. The government must oppose these attempts. Under these conditions, permission for the establishment of a Jewish paramilitary group would be inconsistent with general Polish policy'.⁷⁵² Beck's official refusal was, however, only a cloak for further cooperation in this matter. Indeed, three months later in September 1936 Eliyahu Dobkin of the Jewish Agency Executive approached the Minorities Department of the Polish Ministry of the Interior to request official permission for providing Zionist youth with the so-called 'instruction in sports'. As Emanuel Melzer indicates, 'such instruction was to prepare Jews to serve as policemen in Palestine, and on that basis he encountered no difficulties from the Polish official'.⁷⁵³

The issue of supplying right-wing Zionists with arms and providing a paramilitary training through the Polish army returned a year later. In November 1937 Abraham Stern, one of the Irgun's leaders, arrived in Warsaw with a mission to lay practical foundations for further

⁷⁵⁰ Drymmer W. (2014) *W służbie Polsce: Wspomnienia żołnierza i państwowca z lat 1914-1947* Kraków: Wydawnictwo Wingert, pp.208.

⁷⁵¹ Weinbaum L. (1993) *A Marriage of Convenience: The New Zionist Organisation and the Polish Government, 1936-1939* Boulder: East European Monographs, pp.142-145.

⁷⁵² AAN, MSZ – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10004, *Letter by Colonel Józef Beck to Count Edward Raczyński*.

⁷⁵³ Melzer E. (1997) *No Way out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-1939* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, p.57.

military cooperation between the Revisionists and the Polish government. Drymmer noted that Stern, known in Poland under the name Ben Moshe, along with Jabotinsky had approached the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs asking for a loan, weapons, and paramilitary training for *Irgun* soldiers, particularly in sabotage. The leadership of the *Haganah*, the main Zionist self-defence force, also came forward with a similar request. However, the Polish government, being aware of their good financial standing refused any financial assistance, offering paramilitary training instead. Yehuda Tennebaum Arazi, a *Haganah* envoy born in Łódź, had succeeded in establishing contacts within the top echelons of the Polish intelligence service and frequently approached Warsaw to secure supplies of arms for the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine.⁷⁵⁴ These missions to Poland to purchase arms were coordinated in close cooperation with Warsaw. Beck himself approved these requests after the consultation with General Rydz-Śmigły and instructed the Consular Department to favour the idea of an independent Jewish Palestine. Consequently, between 1938 and 1939 special training camps for *Haganah* and *Irgun* soldiers were organised in various locations in Poland and were modelled on a curriculum determined by the Polish Ministry of War. Whereas the Revisionists were trained in Andrychów and Warsaw, the *Haganah* cadres underwent courses in Rembertów, a military base just outside the capital.⁷⁵⁵

This training was funded from secret budgets of the Consular Department of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and carried out by the most trusted military officers and generals, mostly old comrades of Marshal Pilsudski from the so-called *Dwójka* [the second Division of Polish Intelligence].⁷⁵⁶ In addition, Warsaw provided the Zionists with large quantity of arms and military machinery. For this purpose a special warehouse was prepared in the centre of Polish capital. Yaakov Meridor, in charge of conducting weapons smuggling operations to Palestine, recalled that upon coming into the building, he 'almost fainted', as it was filled to capacity with wooden boxes, containing arms and ammunition.⁷⁵⁷

Since the *Irgun* was considered an illegal military organisation in Palestine, both the Polish officials and the Revisionists did their best to keep the subject of paramilitary training

⁷⁵⁴ Reinhartz J., Shavit Y. (2018) *The Road to September 1939: Polish Jews, Zionists, and the Yishuv on the Eve of World War II* Boston: Brandeis University Press, p.58.

⁷⁵⁵ Weinbaum L. (1993) *A Marriage of Convenience: The New Zionist Organisation and the Polish Government, 1936-1939* Boulder: East European Monographs, pp.149-150. As one of the Zionist participants recalled: 'The military subjects included individual training, platoon, and company training lectures on the operations of larger formations, military tactics, fortifications, communications and topography. The underground subjects included terrorist bombings, conspiracy, secret communications, partisan warfare, and underground planning of terrorist activities against various objectives. Sabotage was taught on a scientific basis'.

⁷⁵⁶ The Polish Government granted Revisionists a loan of 212,000 Polish zloty in spring 1939.

⁷⁵⁷ Brzeski R. (2018) *Fundamenty Izraela w Zofijówce i Andrychowie*. (Accessed 2 September 2018).

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camps absolutely secrecy. Moreover, in early 1939, as the internal situation was deteriorating in the face of advancing Nazi menace, Warsaw was eager to obtain guarantees from London in the event of a military invasion. In order to avoid raising suspicions, the *IZL* officers from Palestine crossed the borders of Poland in small groups. Nevertheless, the links between Poland, Polish Jewry and the right-wing Zionists did not escape the notice of British diplomats in Warsaw. Reacting to mere rumours and assumptions, Kennard reported his suspicions regarding the possible connections between Polish Jews and the *Irgun*. In correspondence with the Colonial Office, he mentioned an article published in *Nasz Przeglqd*, in which the author indicated that a great number of Jewish volunteers in the Diaspora along with the all necessary financial aid were ready to be available for right-wing paramilitary activities. Kennard concluded his report, 'I do not attribute any intrinsic importance to this communiqué, but it is significant of the feelings of the wilder spirit among the Jewish minority in Poland. There is a persistent rumour here that there is some connection between this organisation and the mysterious departures of Danzig and other Jews from Constanza but of that I have not of course been able to obtain any evidence.'⁷⁵⁸ Existing evidence clearly suggests that the involvement of the top-level Polish government officials in the supply of military training and arms remained unnoticed by the British authorities. However, with the threat of war looming, assistance provided by the Polish elites to the Zionist underground in Palestine could jeopardise the Anglo-Polish military alliance. It has to be noted therefore that Polish-Zionist cooperation went far beyond the limits of political pragmatism or a willingness to reduce the number of Jews in the country.

There is no precise data either with regard to the number of arms supplied by the Polish government to Palestine or regarding the overall number of Jewish trainees who underwent military training in Poland. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the assistance in these many instances of paramilitary training for Zionist youth along with Polish facilitation of *aliyah bet* (illegal immigration) activities provides the most tangible evidence of the Polish-Zionist alliance on the eve of the Second World War. In late May 1939, shortly after imposing the restrictive White Paper, paramilitary organisations such as the *Haganah* and the *Irgun* became the core element in the struggle for Jewish national interests in Palestine. By supporting these organisations, the contribution made by the ruling elites of Poland had an indirect impact on the political situation in the Land of Israel. The best evidence of this is the fact that Hulanicki, the Polish Consul in Jerusalem was fully informed about Irgun's actions before they took place.⁷⁵⁹

⁷⁵⁸ TNA, CO 733/410/1, pp.31-32, Report submitted to the Viscount Halifax by C.J. Norton from the British Embassy, 11 March 1939.

⁷⁵⁹ Snyder T. (2015) *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* London: Vintage, p.66.

The question of whether this Polish-Zionist secret alliance might have been continued had the Second World War not broken out still remains open.

Conclusion

Timothy Snyder in *Black Earth* notes that, 'the question of the settlement of European Jews was a general European one, in which Poland occupied a position somewhere between the Nazi one (Jews must be eliminated, and emigration seemed the practical way to achieve this) and the Zionist one (Jews had a right to a state, which would have to be created from an existing colony)'.⁷⁶⁰ As my doctoral research demonstrates, there existed a third, 'alternative' position which presupposed mutually advantageous cooperation between the governing elites of Poland and Zionists. This stance became the main direction of the *Sanacja* camp's policy with regard to the Palestine project and lasted until the outbreak of the Second World War. Complementing previous studies on the subject written by Mendelsohn, Weinbaum and Snyder, my work shows that from the standpoint of Warsaw's foreign policy, the Zionist project to create a Jewish State in Palestine was a welcomed endeavour. As I argue, the explicit acceptance of the Jewish national project was reflected in the Polish government's official support for Zionist politicians on the domestic as well as the international front. By tracing the evolving perceptions of Zionists and their national project in Palestine, this study provides both a survey and synthesis of Polish-Zionist relations in the difficult years directly preceding the Second World War. In addition to offering a synthesis, my research proposes new directions in the study of Polish-Zionist interdependence. By doing so, my dissertation not only opens new venues for discussion but also contributes to modern political and diplomatic history of Poland and the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine, the study of nationalism, economic history and to a new school of critical inquiry into the question of Polish-Zionist political interdependence.

As my research indicates, Polish interwar elites were deeply divided in terms of their perception of Zionism and the Palestine question. In reality, *Endecja* and *Sanacja* embraced mutually contradictory policies regarding these issues. It is, therefore, anachronistic to analyse Polish engagement in the Zionist cause only through the prism of the officially sanctioned anti-Semitism and a willingness to reduce the number of the Jews in the country. Moreover, as I argue, attitudes and official perceptions of Zionism developed significantly over the interwar years and were inextricably intertwined with a complex set of internal and external factors. Perhaps the best example of this evolution can be found in the approaches of Piłsudski's camp. The history of

⁷⁶⁰ Snyder T. (2015) *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* London: Vintage, p.59.

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reciprocal relations between the *Sanacja*'s governing elites and the Zionist movement can be divided into three consecutive phases – 1926-1929, 1930-1935, and between 1935 and the outbreak of the Second World War. The first period was marked by the adherence to the assimilation scheme and a willingness to put into practice a federalist solution, modelled on the nostalgic and naïve assumption that all ethnic minorities would be eager to join a federation. For this purpose, the majority of Piłsudczyks decided to embrace a rather ambivalent stance towards the question of Zionism and Jewish national endeavours in Palestine. In spite of some reservations vis-à-vis Zionist rhetoric, *Sanacja* decided to give official endorsement to the Zionist cause in order to win the political backing of the Zionists. The majority of the governing camp was therefore motivated by political opportunism.

When analysing Poland's official position towards the Palestine question in the pre-1935 period one may observe a clear line of continuity. The pro-Zionist component became an integral part of both Warsaw's domestic and international policies. The *Sanacja*'s governing elites, were directed towards the Zionist leadership, believing that the Zionist movement would eventually become the main vehicle for securing their socio-economic interests. In this vein, the Jewish *Yishuv* in Palestine began to be seen as a framework within which Poland could pursue its interest in the region. On the other hand, Zionist politicians continued to maintain enhanced relations with Warsaw, under the assumption that both sides had common interests. In the eyes of the Zionists, the Polish government had become a strategically significant ally in a widespread 'campaign for the recognition of a distinct Jewish nationality'.⁷⁶¹

From the beginning of the 1930s, an increasing number of the *Sanacja*'s officials grew to appreciate the political doctrines of Zionism. The re-evaluation of their perceptions was inextricably intertwined with the nation-wide success of Palestiocentric rhetoric, domestic policy and the failure of the assimilation programme. The governing camp well aware of changes that the Jewish society were undergoing at this time decided to give official endorsement for Zionist aims. Many of Piłsudski's adherents even came to admire Zionism, which meant for them the regeneration of the Jewish people. They were particularly favourably impressed with what they encountered among the young Revisionists. Since Jabotinsky taught Jewish youth to be chivalrous and devoted to the fight for independence, some sections of the *Sanacja* movement came to view Zionism through the prism of their own political experiences. Thus, this project has argued that the *Sanacja*'s official position towards the Zionist project did not evolve from mere political pragmatism but was also based on more deeply seated ideological motivations.

⁷⁶¹ Fleming M., *Auschwitz, the Allies and Censorship of the Holocaust* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 89.

As this dissertation frequently shows, the Polish official endorsement of Zionism and Jewish national endeavours in Palestine was also purely tactical in nature. Politicians of the governing *Sanacja* camp acknowledged the importance of the demographic facts. Being aware that the overwhelming majority of the immigrants who came to Palestine during the *Second Aliyah* originated from Poland, they also acknowledged that these immigrants laid the foundations for the economy of the evolving Jewish polity. Seeking to obtain the most beneficial outcome for their own national economy, the governing elites of Poland directed their eyes towards the emerging Jewish *Yishuv*, at the time when Poland was experiencing the severe socio-economic crisis brought about by the Great Depression.

The death of Piłsudski in May 1935 marked the beginning of a serious stage of deterioration both in the status of Polish Jewry and in the official approach towards Zionist national endeavours. Lack of a coherent ideological programme and increasing internal tensions resulted in the serious fragmentation of his camp and further revealed serious divergences of opinion amongst the *Sanacja*'s politicians. While some segments of the movement succumbed to nationalist ideology, displaying tendencies similar to those espoused by their former political opponents, many prominent figures, Piłsudski's most trusted men, continued to secretly endorse Zionists.

Why, however, did Beck and his circle of his closest associates accept overtly the anti-Semitic projects and legislation that dominated Poland's political scene in the late 1930s? Was it the deployment of a well-calculated tactical measure in the effort to consolidate greater public support for their camp in the wake of intensifying ethno-nationalism? This dissertation not only presents a more complicated picture of the situation than is presented by scholars of Poland's engagement with Zionism, it also maintains that although there was a growing consensus amongst Poland's officials that emigration must be increased, the ideological motivations for this stance were fundamentally different. Right-wing factions exploited the rising wave of anti-Semitism to their political advantage. Being convinced that the very presence of Jews severely threatened Poland's *raison d'état*, from the floor of the *Sejm*, they encouraged Polish citizens to boycott their Jewish neighbours in the hope of encouraging them to leave the country. Political opponents of the ethno-nationalist groupings, in turn, repeatedly emphasised that the Jewish question had become an element of political game pursued by their ideological foes who were unwilling to find a remedy for this difficult situation.

All these developments led to an apparently preposterous and paradoxical situation. While anti-Semitism became an officially sanctioned movement, some circles within the Polish

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elites continued to confidentially support Zionist endeavours in Palestine covertly. This suggests that the *Sanacja*'s officials were deeply divided regarding their stance towards Jewish nationalism and the Palestine question. I therefore conclude that Poland's official perception of Zionism held by some segments of the *Sanacja* camp in the late 1930s was not primarily the result of prevailing anti-Semitism. *Sanacja*'s position developed significantly during the interwar years from the ambivalence to international support for the political aims of the growing Jewish *Yishuv*. I argue that certain political developments led to the endorsement of the ethno-nationalist rhetoric by a large proportion of the *Sanacja*'s officials who otherwise displayed ideological opposition to the ethno-nationalist movements.

An analysis of historical sources and press published in the interwar years allows us to confirm the existence of divergent motives for deploying a pro-Zionist stance. The approach taken by ethno-nationalist politicians around Dmowski and his *Endecja* camp has successfully contributed to the elimination of different scholarly interpretations of the Polish-Zionist alliance. My dissertation maintains that Polish official approaches towards Zionism, Jewish national endeavours and the Palestine question had always been ambiguous. Despite the 1937 Government's swing to nationalism, both Piłsudski's closest acquaintances and right-wing Zionists continued to consider one another as political allies. Polish involvement in the Zionist cause became a particular vehicle for the provision of additional assistance in support of the Jewish *Yishuv* in its fight to establish sovereignty in Palestine. In this vein, the study indicates that the assistance that was afforded by the top-ranking Polish officials not only facilitated the illegal immigration of Polish Jews to Palestine but was also extended to other forms of bilateral cooperation. These included a wide range of strictly confidential activities such as assistance in *aliyah bet*, supplying arms and assistance with paramilitary training. Consequently, the factions with the Polish officialdom became the secret patrons of the right-wing Zionists. In this period, however, this mutual relationship was maintained in the strictest secrecy since it could adversely affect bilateral relations with Great Britain, a crucial ally of Poland at the eve of the Second World War. In spite of political developments in Europe, they did not refrain from supporting Revisionist political endeavours. From the point of view of Zionists, the skills acquired during paramilitary camps as well as arms smuggled from Poland significantly contributed to the Jewish struggle for independence, which would take place in the lead-up to 1948. The unprecedented success of the Revisionist rhetoric would not have been possible without Warsaw's significant endorsement. From this vantage point, we should acknowledge that the diplomatic and political history of Zionism is inextricably linked with the political history of Poland. Not without a reason, over the interwar years, Zionist politicians continued to believe in Warsaw's ability to change the British Government's policy towards Jewish national endeavours in Palestine.

Stanisław Cat-Mackiewicz, a prominent conservative publicist, in his 1923 article *Antysemityzm krzykliwy* [A vociferous anti-Semitism] neatly assessed Polish-Jewish relations, pointing out that 'Poland's politics towards the Jews remains characterised by prevailing, vociferous anti-Semitism and a silent agreement with the actions of the Jews'.⁷⁶² It seems that this same description could also be applied to describe political relations between the governing elites of Poland and Zionists in the late 1930s. Although the stance embraced by Piłsudski's successors to a large degree resembled right-wing agitation, Polish-Zionist interests remained parallel. In spite of the rise of state-sanctioned anti-Semitism, both the ruling elites of Poland and the Zionist leaders perceived themselves as a community of shared interests. Poland, by constantly presenting the need for unrestricted Jewish emigration to Palestine within the international arena, both directly and indirectly became an important voice in multilateral discussions on the Palestine question whilst remaining a reliable supporter of Zionism. It is not without significance Chaim Weizmann reported to Moshe Shertok in September 1936, 'the recent pronouncements of the Poles have made a very good impression. The Polish problem transcends the ordinary boundaries and makes it patent to everybody that our misfortunes will soon grow to a first-rate international calamity for which we cannot take the responsibility and which may affect vitally the state of affairs in the East and South-East Europe'.⁷⁶³ As history has shown, international opinion was not drawn, however, to resolving Poland's internal problems. Unarguably, Polish-Zionist cooperation was further hindered by the fact that Warsaw's pro-Zionist policymakers had failed in opposing the growing wave of state-sponsored anti-Semitism. Their partly evasive and partly passive stance towards this prevailing racial hatred is evident against the background of both the significance of and the achievements of the mutual Polish-Zionist cooperation. Although the feeble démarche of the late 1930s proved to be fruitless, Warsaw became not only an important voice of the interwar debate about Jewish national interests in Palestine but also an important diplomatic channel in terms of putting extra pressure on British.

⁷⁶² 'Antysemityzm krzykliwy', *Słowo*, 8 September 1923, p.2.

⁷⁶³ Reinhartz J., Shavit Y. (2018) *The Road to September 1939: Polish Jews, Zionists, and the Yishuv on the Eve of World War II* Boston: Brandeis University Press.

Appendix

Political groupings

Al HaMishmar [On the Guard] – a radical left-leaning section of the Warsaw-based Polish Zionist organisation headed by Yitzhak Gruenbaum, who favoured a policy of persistent opposition towards the authorities and uncompromising defence of Jewish national rights. For this purpose, the faction had aligned itself with Poland's ethnic minorities.

Bezpartyjny Blok Współpracy z Rządem (Non-Party Bloc for Cooperation with the Government, BBWR) – a pro-government faction established in November 1927 by the *Sanacja*'s officials, at the urging of Józef Piłsudski. The bloc obtained support from deeply diversified circles, ranging from left-leaning factory workers through ethnic minorities to wealthy bourgeoisie and landowners.

Bund – the Jewish socialist party founded in 1897 in Vilna. According to the programme declaration, Bund fundamentally disagreed with the Zionist rhetoric over the Jewish national question. The movement was preoccupied with the international class solidarity as opposition to Zionist national endeavours.

Et Livnot [Time to Build] – a Zionist faction, coming to Gruenbaum's *Al HaMishmar*, led by Leon Levite and Yehoshua Gottlieb. Conversely to *Al HaMishmar*, *Et Livnot* expressed a willingness to establish lines of cooperation with the Warsaw authorities. Moreover, it closely cooperated with the two centres of Galician-Zionist politics in terms of formulating a common political line.

Narodowa Demokracja/Endecja [National Democracy, ND] – a right-wing political movement led by Roman Dmowski. Over the interwar years, the party called for 'de-judaization' of Poland's economy and political life.

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Obóz Wielkiej Polski [Camp of Great Poland, OWP] – an extra-parliamentary faction, founded by Dmowski in December 1926, to oppose the *Sanacja* movement. The camp, up to its dissolution in 1933, inspired and organised anti-Semitic boycotts and attacks.

Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego [Camp for National Unity, OZON] – a parliamentary and social movement founded in 1937 by the right-leaning *Sanacja*'s officials. Its official line of policy, to a large extent, echoed the rhetoric of *Endeks*. In May 1938, when the OZON passed the strongest anti-Jewish resolution to date, entitled *Thirteen Theses on the Jewish Question*.

Polska Partia Socjalistyczna [Polish Socialist Party, PPS] – a left-wing party founded in 1892. In the interwar years, the party initially supported Piłsudski's *coup d'etat*, however, later the party moved into the opposition to the *Sanacja* regime.

Sanacja – a political movement founded just prior to the May 1926 coup d'etat, which came to power in the wake of Piłsudski's coup. The camp steadily advocated semi-authoritarian rule and the primacy of Poland's *raison d'état*. Following the Marshal's death, as the weaknesses of the *Sanacja* regime were fully exposed, the governing camp divided into three factions: a group of generals coalesced around Edward Rydz-Śmigły, a group of the colonels headed by Prime Minister Walery Śławek and a group called *Zamek* [Castle], led by the President Ignacy Mościcki.

Newspapers

ABC – a Warsaw's daily closely affiliated with Polish far-right ONR [National Radical Camp]. In its pages the newspaper disseminated an overtly anti-Semitic and xenophobic propaganda.

Bunt Młodych [The Youth Rebellion] – a neo-conservative journal issued from 1932 on a biweekly basis under the editorship of Aleksander Gierdoyć. Amongst the editorial team were many prominent young intellectuals such as Adolf Bocheński, Ksawery Pruszyński, Piotr Dunin-Borkowski and many others. In 1937 renamed *Polityka*.

Chwila [Moment] – a Zionist, liberal-democratic and anti-assimilationist journal published between 1919 and 1939 in Lwów. During the interwar period *Chwila* was one of the most popular Jewish daily in Poland.

Czas [Time] – a leading Conservative daily with close ties to Polish landowners. It was founded in 1848 by Kraków's Conservatsts. In the interwar years the organ generally supported Marshal Piłsudski and his *Sanacja* camp. After 1935 it was published in Warsaw and actively opposed both the rise of Polish ethno-nationalism and drastic increase of violent anti-Semitic attacks.

Davar [Word] – a Hebrew-language official organ of the Histadrut (Federation of Labour) founded in mid-1920 in Palestine.

Doar HaYom [Daily Mail] – a Hebrew daily founded in 1919 by Itamar Ben-Avi. In 1928 its editorship was transferred to Vladimir Jabotinsky and newspaper began to disseminate Zionist Revisionist rhetoric.

Kurjer Poranny [Morning Courier] – a leading socio-political daily published in Warsaw between 1877 and 1939, considered a semi-official organ of Piłsudski's circle.

Kurjer Poznański [Poznań Courier] – a Polish daily established in Poznań in 1872. During the interwar years the newspaper was affiliated with right-wing circles.

Kurjer Warszawski [Warsaw Courier] – an organ associated with the right-wing National Party. One of the oldest and the most influential dailies of Warsaw.

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Mały Dziennik [Small Daily] – one of the most radical and anti-Jewish Catholic newspapers published in interwar Poland. Published on a daily basis between 1935 and 1939 with a daily circulation of 137,000 on weekdays and 225,000 for a Sunday edition.

Myśl Polska [Polish Thought] – an overtly anti-Semitic periodical published under the auspices of *Stronictwo Narodowe* [the National Party].

Na Posterunku [On the Guard] – an official organ of Polish police.

Słowo [Word] – the first issue of the maverick and conservative *Słowo* was published in August 1922 in Vilna. The newspaper was established by a group of local conservatists supported by wealthy landowners from *Kresy* with an aim to promote conservative values. The position of editor-in-chief was held by Stanisław Cat Mackiewicz.

Gazeta Polska [Polish Gazette] – a political daily published in Warsaw between 1929 and 1939. widely considered the leading organ of the *Sanacja* movement. After Marshal Piłsudski's death the newspaper favoured Edward Rydz-Śmigły circles, becoming a leading press organ of OZN in December 1937.

Gazeta Poranna 'Dwa Grosze' [Two Penny Morning Gazette] – one of the leading organs of the Endecja movement.

Nasz Przegląd [Our Review] – a non-partisan Polish-language daily associated with Zionist circles published in Warsaw between 1923 and 1939. One of the most widely read Jewish daily in interwar Poland.

Palestyna i Bliski Wschód [Palestine and Middle East] – a magazine published by the Polish-Palestine Chamber of Commerce between 1932 and 1939. According to Samuel Stending the organ was subsidized by the Polish Bank.

Rozwój [Development] – a political daily affiliated with the National Democratic party published between 1897-1931 in Łódź.

Rzeczpospolita [Republic] – a Conservative magazine founded by Ignacy Jan Paderewski in 1920. Among the contributors were Wojciech Korfanty, Stanisław Stoński, Adolf Nowczyński and Stefan Żerowski. Its last issue was published in December 1931.

Warszawski Dziennik Narodowy [Warsaw National Daily] – the principal paper of the *Endecja* movement with extremely anti-Semitic leaning. Published in Warsaw between 1935 and 1939.

5-ta Rano [5 o'clock in the Morning] – a non-partisan Jewish journal published in Warsaw between 1931 and 1939.

Glossary of Persons

Adamkiewicz Jerzy (1881-1958) – a Polish lawyer and diplomat who served as the first Polish Consul in Palestine (1923-1924). Adamkiewicz came from a Polonised Jewish family, which converted to Christianity when he was a child. During his tenure in Palestine Adamkiewicz published *Stan gospodarczy Palestyny w 1923*, the first Polish-language analysis of Palestine's economic conditions. His reports submitted to the Polish Embassy in London, in turn, provide an interesting entrée into question of establishing Polish-Zionist relations.

Arciszewski Mirosław (1892-1963) – a diplomat involved in Poland's foreign policy from 1918. During his tenure in Bucharest he actively lobbied for the opening of a Polish-Palestine sea route.

Bartel Kazimierz (1882-1941) – a Polish scientist and politician. Shortly after the 1926 Piłsudski's *coup d'état* Bartel was appointed the Prime Minister. During his tenure, Bartel was particularly keen on securing rights of national minorities dwelling in Poland. In the late 1930s he was among Professors who opposed segregation of the Jews in the universities.

Beck Józef (1894-1944) – an intelligence officer and a close adherent of Marshal Piłsudski. Having been appointed in 1932 Beck was the longest serving Minister of Foreign Affairs in interwar Poland. In terms of foreign policy Beck considered himself a loyal executor of Piłsudski's vision.

Bocheński Adolf (1909-1944) – a prominent Polish publicist affiliated with neo-conservative circles. He was an editor in chief of *Bunt Młodych* (in 1937 renamed *Polityka*). Although Bocheński deeply appreciated politics of Marshal Piłduski. Privately, a close friend to Ksawery Pruszyński.

Brodzki Józef – editor of *Kurjer Poranny*.

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Cat-Mackiewicz Stanisław (1896-1966) – a conservative Polish writer, publicist and historian. He was an editor-in-chief of a maverick Vilna periodical *Słowo*.

Czerwiński Sławomir (1885-1931) – a Polish politician and public activist. As a Minister he lively supported development of secular education in Poland.

Friede Maksymilian (1887-after 1958) – a prominent Polish-Jewish activist, politician and economist. the vice-President of the Polish-Palestine Chamber of Commerce.

Grabski Stanisław (1871-1949) – a Polish economist and politician affiliated with the National Democracy camp.

Grabski Władysław (1874-1938) – a Polish national Democracy politician, economist and Prime Minister. As the Prime Minister Grabski was responsible for the foundation of the Bank of Poland and implementation of the new currency - Polish złoty, which replaced the Polish mark. In consequence of his monetary reforms and substantial increase of taxes approximately 40,000 middle and lower-middle class Jews emigrated to Palestine.

Gruenbaum Yitzhak (1879-1970) – a Polish-Jewish political activist and a leader of the radical *A/ HaMishmar* [On the guard] faction. Together with Apolinary Hartglas he established a Jewish bloc in Polish Sejm. Shortly after his election to the Jewish Agency Executive Gruenbaum emigrated to Mandatory Palestine in 1933.

Gruber Henryk (1892-1973) – a Polish banker and financier. He came from an assimilated Jewish family. The director of P.K.O bank and the head of the Polish Institute for International Cooperation.

Hausner Bernard (1874-1938) – a Polish Zionist and politician affiliated with the Mizrachi movement. In 1927 he was appointed with the post of the Polish Commercial Councillor in Tel Aviv.

Hołówko Tadeusz (1889-1931) – a Polish politician and social activist. Hołówko as a close associate of Marshal Piłsudski not only supported liberal approach towards national minorities dwelling in Poland but was also responsible for improving relations with minorities. In the historiography he was considered the chief ideologist of the Promethean movement.

Hulanicki Witold (1890-1948) – the Polish Consul in Jerusalem between 1936 and 1939. Being a close friend of Abraham Stern, Hulanicki remained loyal to the Revisionists. Considered as influential anti-Communist who engaged into cooperation with Americans Hulanicki was murdered by Lehi activists in February 1948.

Józefski Jan (1892-1981) – a Polish politician and social activist. An associate of Marshal Piłsudski. In 1928 Józefski was appointed the Governor in Volhynia. During his tenure Józefski involved in close cooperation with Jewish politicians, mainly with Zionist circles.

Jabotinsky Vladimir, Ze'ev (1880-1940) – political and ideological leader of the Zionist Revisionist movement.

Jaźdżewski Antoni (1887-1967) – a Polish diplomat. In the second half of the 1930s he served as the Counselor of the Polish Embassy in London.

Kahany Mieczysław – a political correspondent of a Zionist *Chwila*.

Komarnicki Tytus (1896-1967) – a Polish lawyer and diplomat. Between 1934 and 1938 he served as a Polish delegate to the League of Nations, where he frequently raised the Jewish question in Poland and ramifications of Jewish emigration quotas.

Kisch Frederic (1888-1943) – an officer of the British Army and Zionist. Serving as the head of the Zionist Commission in Jerusalem he frequently met with Polish Consuls.

Kurnikowski Zdzisław (1885-1965) – a Polish lawyer and diplomat. Between 1931 and 1937 he served as the Polish Consul in Jerusalem.

Lewite Leon (1878-1944) – a Polish Zionist born in Warsaw. Over the interwar years he was in the front line of Polish-Zionist politics. In 1925 Lewite established the Polish-Palestine Chamber of Commerce, remaining its President until 1939. Ideologically, he stood in opposition to Yitzhak Gruenbaum.

Lubomirski Zdzisław (1865-1943) – a Polish politician, lawyer and community activist. Being born to a noble family, he was raised in a spirit of ethnically diversified Poland. Over the interwar years he actively supported Marshal Piłsudski and his political programme. Lubomirski served as the President of the Senat's Committee on Foreign Affairs. In 1934 Lubomirski initiated the

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establishment of the Pro-Palestine section within the structure of the Polish Maritime and Colonial League.

Łubieński Michał (1896-1967) - a top-ranking official of the Foreign Ministry. In April 1934 he was appointed the Head of the Foreign Minister's Office – Józef Beck. Known for his close contacts with the Revisionists.

Makarczyk Janusz (1901-1960) – a prominent publicist, diplomat, and a gunnery officer of the Polish Army. From May 1926 to January 1927 he worked as a clerk in the Polish Consular post in Jerusalem. In 1934 Makarczyk was appointed the first chairman of the Pro-Palestine Committee.

Michałowski Roman (1895-1974) – a Polish diplomat and a lieutenant colonel of the Polish Army. In 1924 he was appointed military attaché in the Polish Embassy in London. Between 1933 and 1938 Michałowski served as the First Secretary of the Polish diplomatic post in London. During his tenure he frequently approached the British Foreign Office in London in order to discuss the Palestine question as a solution to major demographic problems of Central Europe.

Młodzianowski Kazimierz (1880-1928) – a Polish legionnaire and Piłsudski's trusted man. Between May and October 1926, he served as the Minister of the Interior. Along with Tadeusz Hołówko and Leon Wasilewski he postulated the reassessment of Sanacja approach towards national minorities. In their eyes, the politics of national assimilation was unsuccessful and therefore should have been replaced by the programme of state assimilation.

Muehlstein Anatol (1889-1957) – a Polish diplomat closely affiliated with Piłsudski's camp. Along with his 1930 appointment for a post of a Minister Plenipotentiary in Poland's Embassy in Paris, Muehlstein was entrusted with a task of specifying Poland's official approach towards Jewish national aspirations in Palestine.

Nieduszyński Tadeusz (1988-) – the Polish Consul and economic adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Orlicz-Dreszer Gustaw (1889-1936) - the general of Polish Army and a close associate of Marshal Józef Piłsudski. Orlicz-Dreszer was one of those who actively promoted the establishment of Polish merchant marine and along with Nahum Sokolow and Zdzisław Lubomirski initiated the establishment of the Pro-Palestine section within the structure of the Polish Maritime and Colonial League (*Liga Morska i Kolonialna*).

Paprocki Antoni - the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Consular Department Research Section. Along with Jan Wagner he analysed emigration issues and settlement possibilities. In 1939 he published a 'Report on a journey to Palestine'.

Piszczkowski Tadeusz (1904-1990) – a Polish historian, lawyer and diplomat. Between 1939 and 1945 he served as the vice-consul in Tel Aviv.

Raczyński Edward (1891-1993) – A Polish politician, diplomat and publicist. He joined Polish diplomatic service in 1919. Until his appointment as the Polish Ambassador in London, Raczyński served as a Polish envoy to the League of Nations. He repeatedly voiced Polish objections to limitations of immigration quota for Polish Jews before British authorities.

Rydz-Śmigły Edward (1886-1941) – an honored Polish politician and general. Following Piłsudski's death in May 1935 he succeeded Marshal as the General inspector of the Armed Forces. Being promoted as natural heir of Marshal Piłsudski, he was named the second person in the state by Ignacy Mościcki in 1936. Prior to the Second World War Rydz-Śmigły inclined clearly ethno-nationalist approach with regard to the Jews.

Richter Bogdan (1891-1980) – a prominent Polish orientalist and publicist. In the early 1930s Richter was associated with the Polish Legation in Cairo. Following the development of political situation in Palestine, he published a number of articles on economic development of Jewish Palestine in the leading Polish dailies.

Sas-Hubicki Otto (1888-after 1931) – a Polish diplomat entrusted with the post of Consul General in Jerusalem in October 1927. During his term of service in Jerusalem he shared pro-Zionist sympathies, which raised some concerns among Zionist politicians. Nonetheless, it was his initiative to establish the Polish-Palestine Chamber of Commerce. Sas-Hubicki was recalled from his post in March 1927.

Schechtman Joseph (1891-1970) – a Zionist Revisionist politician and a close associate of Ze'ev Jabotinsky. In the late 1930s Schechtman maintained close contacts with representatives of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Skirmunt Konstanty (1866-1949) – a Polish politician and diplomat. Shortly after regaining independence by Poland he was appointed the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Later, between 1922

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and 1934 he served as the Polish Ambassador in London, actively supporting the Zionist cause in the British Foreign Office.

Sławek Walery (1879-1939) – a Polish politician and military officer who served three times as the Prime Minister of Poland. One of Piłduski's closest friend. After his death on 1935, Sławek headed a group of Colonels.

Sławoj-Składkowski Felicjan (1885-1962) – a Polish general and politician. Following the May 1926 military coup he was appointed the Minister of Internal Affairs. After Marshal Piłsudski's death he became a protégé of general Edward Rydz-Śmigły, serving as the last Prime Minister of interwar Poland.

Skrzyński Aleksander (1882-1931) – a Polish politician and diplomat. Between 1922 and 1923, and 1924 and 1925 he served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in turn from 1925 to 1926 he held a position of the Prime Minister of Poland. During his first tenure as the Minister of Foreign Affairs Skrzyński lobbied for the establishment of Polish Consular post in Palestine.

Studnicki Władysław (1867-1953) – a prominent and controversial publicist well known for his strongly pro-German approach.

Symonowicz Konstanty (1884-1952) – a prominent Polish orientalist and Consular officer. In the mid-1930s his articles on the Palestine questioned frequently appeared in the leading Polish newspapers – *Kurjer Poranny*, *Gazeta Polska*, and *Przegląd Współczesny*.

Szembek Jan (1881-1945) – a Polish diplomat. In 1932 he was appointed the undersecretary of state in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Over the 1930s Szembek was one of the closest associates of Minister Józef Beck.

Turski Marian – the director of the National Institute for Export.

Wagner Jan (1899-1943) – an official of the Consular Department of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1937 under the name of J. Ziemiański, published the first comprehensive study - *Problem emigracji żydowskiej* [Problem of Jewish emigration].

Zaleski August (1883-1972) – a Polish diplomat who served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1926 and 1932. Although by some of his contemporaries Zaleski was regarded as a

‘wyrziciel woli Piłsudskiego’, Zaleski enhanced Poland’s international position by access to the League of Nations. A member of the Praesidium of the Pro-Palestine Committee. During the Second World War Zaleski was appointed the President in the Polish government in exile.

Zarychta Apoloniusz (1899-1972) – one of the top-ranking officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs responsible for Polish policy towards Jewish emigration, Zionism and Palestine. He repeatedly emphasised the necessity of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. In the late 1930s, as the Head of the Division for Emigration Policy Zarychta maintained close contacts with the top-tier representatives of the New Zionist Organization.

Tytus Zbyszewski (1886-1942) – an artillery captain and a Polish lawyer. In 1927 appointed a Consul General in Jerusalem. Zbyszewski was deeply interested in Zionism and the so-called Jewish Palestine, admiring the progress of the region. During his tenure he actively promoted creation of a strong connections between Poland and Jewish Palestine, contributing immensely to enhancing economic and political relations between both countries. Privately, an ardent supporter of Marshal Piłsudski.

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