

BRITISH JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS AND THE POLITICS OF ZIONISM:  
EVOLUTION OF A POLITICAL AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT, 1880-1920

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## ABSTRACT

British Zionism developed into a major political and religious movement between 1880 and 1920. It was initially seen differently by two leading Jewish organizations in Britain, the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the English Zionist Federation. For many years, the work of the Board of Deputies and the EZF involved petitioning the government either in support of or opposition to the development of Zionism in the United Kingdom. For much of its history the Board of Deputies opposed Zionism and instead advocated for relative assimilation into British society, culture, and politics, whereas the Federation consistently advocated for Jewish emigration to Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish state. However eventually the two organizations worked cooperatively to advance the Zionist cause. For many generations Jews in Britain had worked to insure that their loyalty to Britain would not be questioned and to thereby insure that they would have a chance at a prosperous life. The years between 1880-1920 are particularly crucial to understanding British Zionism because of the creation of modern political Zionism under the leadership Theodor Herzl. The onset of the First World War saw British Jewish leaders finally gain support from the British government for a Jewish homeland.

Nineteenth Century Europe experienced a surge in anti-Semitism which affected all levels of European society and many nations including Britain. This rampant anti-Semitism affected the Board's and Federation's efforts to find a solution and led to conflicting approaches, most notably assimilation versus emigration to Palestine. The research set forth herein belies the assumption that all Jews subscribed to the Zionist ideology. However, despite their early differences these organizations ultimately joined together to influence the government during the years leading up to and including the First World War, and their efforts changed British Jewry and Zionism forever.

## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this work to my family and friends who have provided me with so much love and support in all of my endeavors academically, professionally, and personally. I also dedicate this work to my academic and intellectual peers with whom I have developed strong professional and personal relationships up to this point and undoubtedly into the future.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. CHAPTER 2: JEWISH IMMIGRATION & EMIGRATION AND ZIONISM.....	10
Immigration.....	17
Emigration & Colonization.....	22
3. CHAPTER 3: WORLD WAR I AND THE BALFOUR DECLARATION.....	28
4. CONCLUSION.....	45
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	54

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

In Great Britain between the years 1880-1920, two leading Jewish organizations, the Board of Deputies of British Jews (“Board of Deputies” or “Board”), founded in 1760, and the English Zionist Federation (“EZF”), founded in 1899, played crucial roles in solidifying British Jewish identity. While initially in conflict, both organizations were desirous of a solution to British anti-Semitism. Their efforts culminated in the Balfour Declaration of 1917, and the advancement of the Zionist movement. Changing British politics during the First World War were central to the transformation of Jewish life in Great Britain, and crucial to Zionism and Jewish history as a whole. The Board of Deputies and the EZF present appropriate case studies for understanding the issues and events being discussed herein--the competing Zionist and anti-Zionist movements in Great Britain and the related efforts to establish a Jewish identity. These organizations differed profoundly in their respective approaches to achieving primarily similar goals. The Board tended to promote assimilation into British society, while the EZF led the charge for British Zionism. Their initial rivalry eventually turned into an alliance during the years 1910 to 1918. For most of the period between 1880 and 1920 it was difficult for British Jews to be British, Jewish, and Zionist at the same time. However, unification of efforts by the Board and the EZF along with the increasing level of government support which British Jews sought and eventually received helped to successfully merge these identities.

Led by prominent Jews who were already active in British Jewish or secular life, the Board of Deputies and the EZF played important roles in British life in both practical and communal relations. This history is very much an elite and institutional history because the people responsible for British government administration came from the ranks of British elites and they wanted to deal with their elite Jewish counterparts. Even though this work places great emphasis on the

interactions between elite Jews and the British political establishment, the project also discusses the significant degree of influence that these elite Jews and their government counterparts had on common Jews living in Britain. The relationship between elite Jewish leaders and prominent British political figures contributed greatly to the Zionist cause because these Jewish elites had achieved a necessary level of influence through capitalism and particularly by financing many projects which the British empire undertook.

Modern Zionism was founded by Theodor Herzl in the 1890's. European Jews had previously found it difficult at various points in time to create a political identity. Herzl first organized the Zionist Congress which convened in 1897 in neutral Switzerland to discuss the various issues facing Jews including European anti-Semitism and the possibility of creating a national homeland for the Jewish people. Herzl believed that it was almost if not totally impossible for Jews to escape anti-Semitism, and that they would continue to suffer if they remained in Europe because they were seen as foreign and could not speak up as a unified community absent their own nation-state. Zionism as a Jewish nationalist political movement developed in the late 19th Century under Herzl's leadership and was spurred in part by the Dreyfus Affair of 1894. This event was named after Captain Alfred Dreyfus, the only Jewish member of the French army's general staff, who was falsely accused of treason and imprisoned.<sup>1</sup> The Dreyfus Affair was viewed as an extreme example of anti-Semitism in the eyes of many. Both during and after the Dreyfus trial widespread rumors suggested that the treasonous documents attributed to Dreyfus were actually forged by another member of the general staff.<sup>2</sup> This crisis in France certainly encouraged Jews to turn to

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<sup>1</sup> Adele Berlin, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 813-814. "Dreyfus Affair." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 12 Nov.2014. Web. 15 Mar. <<https://britannica.com/event/Dreyfus-affair>>.

<sup>2</sup> Ruth Harris, "The Assumptionists and the Dreyfus Affair." *Past & Present*, no. 194 (2007), 175-177.

Zionism as a solution to European anti-Semitism (see footnote) because if Jews departed from Europe then there would be no more anti-Semitism.<sup>3</sup> Herzl believed that development of a Jewish national identity via Zionism and a return to Palestine was the only solution. The creation of a national identity and a national homeland were thus crucial to Zionist movement.<sup>4</sup> The desire for a Jewish homeland has long been an important belief for members of the Jewish community, whether they were religious or secular. Zionism was promoted as a new religion for those seeking to recruit religious members of the Jewish community, however this effort was largely unsuccessful.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, for as long as Zionism has existed there has been a sharp division within the Jewish community regarding the religious and political legitimacy of this movement.<sup>6</sup> Many members of the Anglo-Jewish community were suspicious of Zionist beliefs because they did not want to jeopardize their post-emancipation status under which they enjoyed political equality as well as more social acceptance.

In Britain, Zionism is best analyzed by considering the Board of Deputies and EZF. Early on these two organizations represented two very different methods for alleviating their constituents of the stigma of “foreignness”, enabling them to avoid constant scrutiny for not being Christian. The Board of Deputies advocated for Jews to assimilate as much as possible into British society, as well as to participate in British political life, so that if they dressed and spoke like their countrymen it would help create a new identity for British Jews. The Board of Deputies provided various means of support within the Jewish community, including education, job training,

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<sup>3</sup> Anti-Semitism is form of discrimination against Jews both on the collective and individual level. Michael Berenbaum, “Anti-Semitism.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 10 June 2014. Web. 15 Mar. 2017. <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/anti-Semitism>>.

<sup>4</sup> “Zionism.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 9 June 2015. Web. 08 Sept. 2016. <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Zionism>>.

<sup>5</sup> Paula Daccarett, “1890s Zionism Reconsidered: Joseph Marco Baruch.” *Jewish History* 19, no. ¾ (2005), 324.

<sup>6</sup> Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (Schocken Books: New York, 1972), 3-39.

healthcare, family support, and other charitable services. Foremost among the important leaders of the Board of Deputies were members of the Rothschild Family, likely the most famous Jewish family in the world. Most prominent among the senior members of the family who were involved in the Zionist movement was the Second Baron Rothschild. The EZF on the other hand believed that the only way for Jews to totally emancipate themselves politically and socially was to forge a separate political entity in which they could also create a new social identity, thereby emancipating themselves from the prejudices they had suffered in British society. Like their Board of Deputies counterparts EZF leaders were all quite skilled politically, most notably Herzl who dominated the Zionist political agenda from the first Zionist Congress in 1897 to 1903.<sup>7</sup> However, by the time of Herzl's death in 1904 British Zionists had developed their organizational infrastructure under the umbrella of the EZF. The Jewish leader who led the final charge was Chaim Weizmann, a Russian emigre to Britain, whose highly developed political skills gained through his years involved in Manchester City politics played a crucial role in his success.<sup>8</sup> The Rothschilds and Weizmann provided great strength to the Zionist cause and to those beneath them in various positions of authority in both the anti-Zionist and Zionist movements.

Jewish immigration, emigration and colonization contributed to the creation of this blended British, Jewish, and Zionist identity, merging these identities at different points at time. Events arising during the First World War changed the whole status of modern Zionism because they led to the British government issuing the Balfour Declaration. The Declaration was transmitted via a letter from Arthur Balfour, aka Lord Balfour, to Baron Rothschild promising government support for the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The aforementioned ideas each provided crucial

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<sup>7</sup> Eugene C. Black, "A Typological Study of English Zionists." *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 9, no. 3 (2003), 25.

<sup>8</sup> Jehuda Reinharz, "Chaim Weizmann: Statesman without a State." *Modern Judaism* vol. 12, no. 3 (1992), 228.

elements for how the Board of Deputies and EZF went about creating identities for Jews in Britain and abroad, as both organizations eventually united and forged a centralized message which they would in order to secure the promised land for their compatriots.

Increased Jewish immigration to Britain in the late 1880's caused Britain's pre-existing Jewish population to fear for their relatively secure status which they had built up for several generations before this mass Jewish immigration began. For many assimilated Jews this expanded Jewish immigration, which continued through roughly 1914, potentially endangered the comfortable way of life which they enjoyed. This lifestyle included the right to vote, relative social acceptance, the ability to run for public office, and an environment in which their loyalty was not questioned. During the period between 1880 and 1910, when the vast majority of these immigrants arrived, these newly arrived Jews became the target audience for both the Board of Deputies and the EZF. These assimilated Jews believed that the increased number of new Jews, because of their dress, language, and way of practicing Judaism, would be viewed as "foreign", therefore increase anti-Semitism and causing people to question whether the native Jewish population was really loyal to Britain.

The Board of Deputies' desire for successful integration of Jewish immigrants led the Board to provide education, social, and business services to these new arrivals. The eventual emigration and colonization of Jews to territories in Palestine were crucial components of any future desire for an independent Jewish state. The Jewish emigration to Palestine was critical because the increased number of Jews in Palestine would provide a greater claim to the land. These emigration and colonization efforts really began after the first Zionist Congress in 1897. The first major proposals were for the colonization of Cyprus and the British colony of Uganda in 1905. However both the Cyprus and Uganda proposals were ultimately considered impossible options

because of cultural and racial reasons. There were concerns for example that if Jews settled in Uganda it would create a biracial state with the native black inhabitants alongside white European Jews.

The First World War and the Balfour Declaration of November 1917 were game changers in the Zionists' quest for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Much of the efforts by Jewish leaders of the time took place in late 1916 through November 1917. This included Lord Rothschild and Weizmann who spent much of their time working together to persuade members of the anti-Zionist camp in the Board of Deputies to renounce their opposition to Zionism, along with other efforts to ensure that the British Cabinet kept it on their agenda. During the war years, the government became committed to a Jewish homeland for reasons which included military convenience because the British found it useful to support the creation of a "Jewish buffer zone" between the Egyptians and regular Ottoman forces in order to relieve stress on regular British forces. The British willingness to support these Jewish units presented an opportunity by which Zionists could extract favors, including further promises to support Zionism. Thus due to these circumstances of the war key members of the British government--despite some continuing personal qualms about making Palestine the Jewish homeland--were amenable to the EZF and its leadership's successful lobbying in support of Zionism. This included the ability to gain funding for expanded Jewish settlement and infrastructure development.

However, despite the shift in views on the part of the British political establishment, the question of Zionism remained a divisive issue among Jews. This is most likely viewed, ironically, as a continuation of the Jewish emancipation process. The political side of this circumstance is that emancipation, through a series of legal developments including gaining the right to vote and to sit in the British Parliament, helped bring about political influence in areas which Jews previously

were unable to have an impact. Social developments arising from emancipation included a redefinition of Jewish identity in Britain, for example how British Jews whether native-born or immigrant were able to merge their British, Jewish, and eventually Zionist ideology when it was applicable.<sup>9</sup> However, these different identities proved to be difficult to merge because of changing circumstances on the international stage, including anti-Semitic attacks in Russia, France, and elsewhere, and the desire for Jewish emigration to Palestine.<sup>10</sup> Thus while many Jews felt more comfortable with their status as British citizens, the sentiment for Zionism continued to grow.

The historiography of Jewish life in Britain is quite extensive, however the historiography used in this project is of course contracted because of the narrower time period and topic. This thesis seeks to provide a more detailed analysis of a microhistory of the activities and events leading up to the Balfour Declaration and the years immediately following the First World War. The historiography draws a connection between the Board of Deputies and English Zionist Federation and explains how Jewish immigration, emigration and colonization, and certain events of the First World War influenced the government to support Zionism. This analysis includes taking a closer look at Anglo-Jewish leaders and how they worked with each other, along with significant British political elites. Organizations like the Board of Deputies and the EZF are useful tools to help understand the battle for the hearts and minds of British Jewish history and its relationship to Zionism. In the 1980's, Stuart Cohen articulated these issues in *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1896-1920* which makes an important contribution to the Anglo-Jewish historiography. One major idea that Cohen highlights involves

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<sup>9</sup> The term "native-born" in reference to Jews in this paper it refers to those Jews born in the United Kingdom or the colonial territories which new legislation applied to. However for some non-Jewish Britain's still saw British Jews born in Britain as "foreign" which perhaps may be classified as a form of cultural anti-Semitism.

<sup>10</sup> In this work I will be using the term "Palestine" interchangeably with the term "Eretz Israel", because some primary and secondary sources use both terms.

the reasons why there was a division between the different parts of the Anglo-Jewish community, one such reason being that not all Jews either supported or opposed Zionism. In *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1920* by Eugene C. Black provides another important contribution to the historiography because Black places emphasis on the politics of Anglo-Jewry among elite British Jews. This focus on elite Jews presents an important method to help understand both the Zionist movement and how the Board of Deputies and EZF because of the elites were the primary representatives of the Zionist movement.

During the 1990's a number of works discussing the status of Anglo-Jewry politically and socially were published. Interestingly, these works do not place great focus on the development of Zionism as a whole. Israel Finestein in *Jewish Society in Victorian England* discusses the status of education and employment issues facing Anglo-Jewry and recent Jewish immigrants predominantly from Eastern Europe. Finestein places great emphasis on the impact of the Jewish immigrants on the social and political standing of the Jewish community, because of the perceived disruption of community cohesion. In *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture 1840-1914*, David Feldman's discussion covers the emancipation era through the first year of the First World War. Feldman connects the influence politics had on society and vice versa, including how Britain transformed into a more liberal nation commencing with the Whig philosophy of relative tolerance and expanding political rights to religious minorities which involved dissenting Protestant movements such as Quakers and Jews. Zionism was as much a social movement as it was a political movement, both of which Finestein and Feldman articulate quite well, a point which is important to acknowledge in subsequent scholarship.

During the 2000's there was an increase in the number of articles concerning more technical aspects of Zionism, including a more detailed analysis of the influence of Jewish

immigrants in urban cities, particularly London. Todd M. Endelman's book *The Jews of Britain, 1656-2000* provides a comprehensive and long-term history of the Jews in Britain including events such as readmission from their exile, emancipation, Zionism, and finally how Jewish life in Britain and abroad was affected in 1948 by the establishment of the State of Israel. One crucial aspect which Endelman includes in his analysis is how religion and nationalism affected British Jewry, because of the rising nationalism in Europe in the 19th Century. Since the publications of the books by Cohen and Black in the 1980's until Endelman's work, there had been a tendency to provide a more general history about Jewish life in Britain rather than trying to understand more technical details about the rise of Zionism.

## CHAPTER TWO: JEWISH IMMIGRATION, etc.

The Board of Deputies and EZF, the two leading Jewish organizations in Great Britain in the latter part of the 19th and first half of the 20th Centuries, began as relative opposites, both with time their goals became one. Initially there was very little government support for reinforcing a uniquely British and Jewish or Zionist identity, and the Board and the EZF were fundamentally at odds. The people and personalities involved in these organizations and movements each had their own, distinct objectives, however ultimately each camp was able to rally behind a common goal and see it to the end. The Board had notable advantages, most significantly its British Jewish establishment leadership provided greater access to money and political connections which in turn enabled the Board to garner support and favors from the government, which arguably also benefited these most powerful members.

It is important to address the issue of Jewish political identity when writing about this phase of Jewish history.<sup>11</sup> British Jewish identity had been undergoing change, or at least its transformation was a subject of open debate, during this time period. For British Jews their recent political emancipation included the right to vote and for some to become members of Parliament. With time, certain Jewish families elevated to the upper echelons of British society and some members of these families entered British politics and gained prominence. This helped establish a political identity, which helped to tie Jews to the land and make them vested in British economic and political success -- ultimately making them British. For centuries Jews sought political and social acceptance to prevent being seen as foreigners. The Board sought to create a unique British Jewish identity, advocating a belief that Britain was their new homeland.<sup>12</sup> This desire to enable

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<sup>11</sup> David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 5.

<sup>12</sup> "Board of Deputies of British Jews." The Jewish Leadership Council, 2011. Web. 09 Mar. 2017.

Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe to assimilate into British society led to the Board engaging in efforts to assist these immigrants.

This expanded Jewish immigration negatively influenced the opinion of the assimilated Jewish community regarding Zionism because established British Jews did not want to risk their elevated social position. This led to the Board of Deputies initially opposing Zionism. The Board was dominated by many prominent Jews and Jewish families including Sir Moses Montefiore and the Rothschilds who sought to maintain their social standing in British society. The Board's initial opposition to Zionism, from 1880 to about 1910, was caused by a desire to make Britain their home, rather than another country or land. The Board sought to demonstrate that British Jews were a constituent group of British people content to have Britain be their new Zion. Important members of the Board believed that Theodor Herzl and the Zionists could not rightly lay claim to ancient Jewish nationalism and history. They argued that all Jews were the natural heirs to their nationality and history, and therefore this nationhood and history did not belong to one person or group of Jews. Some British Jews wanted to establish their own identity--a new British Jewish identity--and write their own history of life in Britain. Lucien Wolf, the one time President of the Anglo-Jewish Association and the Board of Deputies, dramatically stated that "Dr. Herzl and those who think with him are traitors to the history of the Jews, which they misread and misinterpret."<sup>13</sup> Wolf's contention was that Herzl did not have a monopoly on Jewish history and nationalism, and that being Jewish means different things to different people. Wolf did not want his religion's history to support something he did not believe in. He felt that having their own British-based history would allow British Jews to quash a sense of "foreignness" and no longer yearn to need

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<<http://www.thejlc.org/portfolio/board-of-deputies/>>.

<sup>13</sup> Lucien Wolf, *Aspects of the Jewish Question*, London, 1902, pp. 12, 23. As from *A History of Zionism: From the French Revolution to the Establishment of the State of Israel* (Schocken: New York, 1973), 400.

return to Eretz Israel.<sup>14</sup> Not being seen as foreign, he believed, would help reinforce their British identity while merging their Jewish and British history, thereby creating a separate and distinct British Jewish history.

In addition to promoting this philosophy the Board was intent on defending the rights of British Jews as well as the rights of Jews abroad by fighting anti-Semitism. In 1878 the Board and the Anglo-Jewish Association created the Conjoint Foreign Committee which was originally organized to promote joint foreign policy objectives including rejecting pro-Zionist ideology. The Board represented much of British Jewry's establishment including most notably the Rothschilds. It exerted control over Jewish community policy within Britain and also supported efforts overseas, including money and food for suffering Jewish populations in other countries such as Russia.<sup>15</sup> This dual role of the Board as both an internal and external protector of Jews was an effort to protect and defend these Jewish communities both in Great Britain and in places like Russia. The Board also wanted to insure that Russian Jews felt safe enough to remain in their native country.

In mid-1858, Lionel de Rothschild entered Parliament, an event which represented a pivotal step in the social, political, and cultural life of British Jews. Socially speaking Rothschild's elevation demonstrated a greater acceptance for Jews. Politically it provided an elevated voice for Jews on national policies. Culturally, the significance of having a Jewish nobleman in Parliament implied that the British Jews had accepted British culture, and were willing to integrate into British life. Rothschild had been elected to the House of Commons on several prior occasions, however in each instance he was unable to take his seat because he declined to take the required Oath of

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<sup>14</sup> What I mean by foreignness is the idea that some Jews believed that because of their non-Christian background made them isolated from the rest of society.

<sup>15</sup> Israel Finkelstein, *Jewish Society in Victorian England* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 1993), 12.

Allegiance for the reason that it was a Christian oath. However, in the 1850's Parliament enabled both Houses of Parliament to make exceptions regarding the Oath of Allegiance. Lord John Russell offered a motion allowing for Rothschild to be admitted without having to take this Oath.<sup>16</sup> Upon Rothschild's introduction to Parliament he was even allowed to keep his head covered, and to swear his oath on a copy of the Old Testament.<sup>17</sup> These newly enlightened parliamentary actions demonstrated that British politics and life had greatly changed since the return of Jews into British social and political life some two hundred years earlier.

In the late 1880's soon after Rothschild's entrance to Parliament, the modern Zionist movement began to spread in large measure due to the efforts of Chaim Weizmann who later would serve as the first President of the State of Israel.<sup>18</sup> When the Sixth Zionist Congress was convened in Basel, Switzerland in 1903, the English Jewish Federation consulted Lord Rothschild and asked him to approve the list of British delegates for the Congress. Eventually, Lord Rothschild endorsed the candidates and the Congress was happy about the endorsement.<sup>19</sup> In addition to expressing support for the activities of the World Zionist Congress, Baron Rothschild also traveled abroad with other prominent Jewish leaders to help promote Zionism. These efforts were noted in the press which hailed "a new era for Jewry": "Dr. Weizmann and Mr. Sokolow [...] return from San Remo at a notable gathering of the Zionist Organization, including Lord

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<sup>16</sup> "Baron Rothschild in Parliament." *John o'Groat Journal* [Caithness, Scotland] 30 July 1858: 3. *British Newspapers Archives*. Web. 14 Feb. 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Todd M. Edelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 100-107. Joseph Jacobs, Isidore Singer, Frederick T. Haneman, Jacques Kahn, Goodman Lipkind, J. De Haas, and I. L. Brill. "Rothschild." *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Web. 14 Mar. 2017. <<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/12909-rothschild>>. and "Lionel De Rothschild." *Jewish Virtual Library*. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, Web. 14 Feb. 2017.

<sup>18</sup> "United Kingdom." *Jewish Virtual Library*. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, Web. 14 Apr. 2014.

<sup>19</sup> "The Jewish Question." *The Times* [London, England] 17 Aug. 1903: 10. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 9 Feb. 2015.

Rothschild, Baron James de Rothschild, Mr. Herbert Samuel, and Sir Stuart Samuel.”<sup>20</sup> Rothschild’s involvement was quite significant, as it marked a seismic shift by the Jewish establishment in favor of Zionism. Certainly, these early events of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century were crucial for the Zionist movement, not only at that point in time but also for the future success of Zionism. With the Second World War coming several decades later, it was vital to have a substructure already set for the creation of the State of Israel.

Founded in 1899, the EZF was the Board of Deputies’ pro-Zionist counterpart -- and sometimes rival Jewish force -- within in the United Kingdom.<sup>21</sup> In the developmental period of the EZF its main organizers were Zionism’s founder Theodor Herzl along with Israel Zangwill and Chaim Weizmann. The EZF and its leaders promoted the importance of Zionist identity but initially they had difficulty combining Zionism with their British identity. Zangwill was a British Jewish author and part of a certain group of political activists who would later lead the Territorialist faction of the EZF discussed herein below. Born in 1874, in Motol, Russia, Weizmann was a British Jewish scientist who eventually became the director of the EZF and as noted above later serve as the first President of the State of Israel. He was a professional chemist trained in both Switzerland and Germany. Finally in 1905 he moved to the United Kingdom and shortly after his arrival he was elected to the Zionist Council.<sup>22</sup> The EZF and similar Zionist organizations promoted opinions which emanated in large part from the people who were leading the movement. It was comprised of seventy-nine “chapters” which carried out the Federation’s work on the local

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<sup>20</sup> “The New Era For Jewry.” *The Times* [London, England] 7 May 1920: 13. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 9 Feb. 2015.

<sup>21</sup> “History.” Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland. World Zionist Organization, 14 Oct. 2006. Web. 8 Oct. 2016

<sup>22</sup> Julian Meltzer, “Chaim Weizmann.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Web. 20 April 2010. 7 March 2017. <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Chaim-Weizmann>>.

level.<sup>23</sup> The EZF's first hurdle to conquer was persuading the British government to allow Jewish sovereignty over Palestine, and the second was attracting British Jews to their cause.<sup>24</sup> Overcoming these obstacles was crucial because granting relative autonomy for Jews in the Mandate of Palestine embodied a new Zionist ideology that would provide relative political independence.

Prior to the establishment of the EZF the Chovevei Zion Association ("the Association") was the main pro-Zionist organization in Britain. Later this organization came under the auspices of the EZF because of its dwindling membership along with the successful development of the EZF and other international organizations. What made the Association become less relevant to many elite Jews was a perception of extremism, exemplified by protests which at times ended in violence.<sup>25</sup> Like the EZF, this organization was firmly pro-Zionist and steadfast in its desire for increased Jewish nationalism and the promotion of other Zionist ideas, including using Hebrew as their primary language.<sup>26</sup> Language helps bind people together politically, a result which the Zionists wanted, believing that Jews across the world needed a language to better connect themselves, just like the Germans, French, or Italians. In the 1890's there was an effort by Zionist leaders to target Jewish communities in Britain in an attempt to convert anti-Zionists to the Zionist cause. Despite the efforts of these Zionist leaders, including Herzl himself who visited Britain in the 1890's, many in the community were still hesitant to join the Zionist cause.<sup>27</sup> The EZF's promotion of Hebrew as a unifying language for Jews in Britain and abroad made it difficult for British Jews to be loyal to both Britain and their Jewish identity.

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<sup>23</sup> "The Religious World." *The Daily News* [London] 8 Aug. 1902. Web. *British Newspapers Archives*. 9 Oct. 2016.

<sup>24</sup> Stuart Cohen, *English Zionist and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1896-1920* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 3.

<sup>25</sup> Stuart Cohen, *English Zionist and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1896-1920*, 7-12.

<sup>26</sup> "Chovevei Zion." *JewishEncyclopedea.com*. Web. 05 Oct. 2016.

<sup>27</sup> Stuart Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1896-1920*, 28-29.

Dr. Moses Gaster, a local Jewish leader, provided a written account concerning the 1898 Zionist Congress, which focused primarily on the status of Zionism in Great Britain. Gaster reported that some believed that it would be detrimental for British Jews to support the creation of Jewish state because this would cause people to doubt their British identity. He argued in response that while Jews feared potential criticism, in reality there was little or no proof that such criticism would come about.<sup>28</sup> This suggestion that there would be very little criticism of British Jewry's support for Zionism was certainly questionable, because in fact while many many Jews expressed support for the Zionist dream many non-Jewish Britons firmly opposed Zionism. During the 1898 Zionist Congress Dr. Gaster discussed with fellow Zionist leaders a view that some "establishment" Jews including the Rothschild family opposed Zionism "not because they are against the principle but because they are not at the head of the movement and because they imagine nothing can be done."<sup>29</sup> This belief that nothing could be done if families like the Rothschilds were not running the Zionist movement suggests a great deal of arrogance on the part of the Jewish elites. Certainly, the Rothschilds were complacent regarding their own circumstances in Britain because they enjoyed significant economic and political success along with relative social acceptance.

Having a collective identity was central to the operating philosophy of both the Board of Deputies and the EZF in seeking governmental approval and support. Recognition as a constituent class or people within British society was important to many leaders of both organizations who wanted their British political identity be seen first rather than their Jewish political identity.<sup>30</sup> Sir

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<sup>28</sup> "Zionists in Council." *The Pale Male Gazette* [London] 5 March 1898: 4. *British Newspapers Archives*. Web. 28 Sept. 2016.

<sup>29</sup> 28 October 1898, Gaster to S. Wise, Central Zionist Archives, Gaster Papers, A203/113, *English Zionist and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1896-1920*, 160.

<sup>30</sup> What I mean by British Jews desiring to be a constituent people within British society is that for many Jewish families who had lived in Britain for several generations.

Francis Montefiore, in August 1900, published an article in *The Daily News* arguing that “in the first place, the number of Jews can be reckoned in the hundreds only, and, in the second place, they have not gone to make the composite body known as the English nation.”<sup>31</sup> In reality the actual number of Jews in Britain by 1900 was closer to 225,000 people, still a relatively small population within Great Britain.<sup>32</sup> This connection between the distinctly minority Jewish population of Britain and a sense of nationhood promoted by Zionism suggests that it was difficult even for Jewish families who had been in England for generations to create a unique British identity separate from their Jewish identity. This quest for a unique British identity was in part a desire for political equality, an issue of paramount importance arising from the age of emancipation in the mid-19th Century.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the desire for acceptance into British society was an important component of the Board of Deputies’ reasoning for supporting assimilation and education about British history and language.

### **Immigration**

Consistent with its core belief of establishing a strong Jewish identity within Great Britain, the Board of Deputies focused more on immigration to Britain rather than emigration to Palestine. Mass Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe to Britain required support from the Board in order to successfully integrate these immigrants into British society. This effort to enable integration was stimulated by the Board’s desire to create a new British identity for Jewish immigrants, so that these new immigrants would be first and foremost politically loyal to Britain. As discussed above, the Board was reluctant to promulgate Herzl’s Zionist ideology. In fact, the British Jewish

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<sup>31</sup> Francis Montefiore, “Letter to the Editor.” *The Daily News* [London] 16 August 1900: 7. *British Newspaper Archives*. Web. 21 Sept. 2016.

<sup>32</sup> Sarah Abramson, Jonathan Boyd, and David Graham, “Key Trends in the British Jewish Community: A Review of Data on Poverty, the Elderly and Children.” Institute for Jewish Policy Research [London], Apr. 2011. Web. 20 Feb. 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, 52-53.

community was really no different from other ethnic communities, with different institutions occupying different cultural parts of the society.<sup>34</sup> By modern standards the Eastern European Jewish population of London was not very large--there were approximately 30,000 residing in the community in 1882. During the 19th Century tabulating the exact number of people from one religious group was likely quite difficult, which would explain why there were at times such discrepancies in population figures, but certainly the Jewish population was relatively small both in London and throughout Great Britain. Beginning in the 1850's many Jewish immigrants, especially those attracted to Western Europe countries including Britain, tended to settle in urban centers, most notably London.<sup>35</sup> The Board targeted these urban Jewish communities with their services, including education, health clinics, and job training, all crucial for integration into mainstream society.<sup>36</sup>

During the 1881 Russian pogrom, Jewish members of Parliament along with representatives of the Board of Deputies and the Anglo-Jewish Association petitioned the government to support Jews in Russia.<sup>37</sup> However the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville rebuffed their petition, explaining that the government would not meddle with Russian internal policies because they did not feel it was necessary.<sup>38</sup> The *Pall Mall Gazette* reported that "Lord Granville contends, with much force, that he is not entitled to make representations to a foreign State upon the defects of its municipal laws."<sup>39</sup> Despite failing to gain the backing of their

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<sup>34</sup> Todd Endelman, "English Jewish History." *Modern Judaism* vol. 11, no. 1 (1991), 93.

<sup>35</sup> David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914*, 166-167.

<sup>36</sup> Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, 140.

<sup>37</sup> A pogrom is a systematic persecution of a group which has come to refer almost exclusively to Jews being attacked and killed and were often organized locally. "Pogroms." *Holocaust Encyclopedia*. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Web. 13 Dec. 2016. .

<sup>38</sup> David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914*, 128.

<sup>39</sup> "Épitome of Opinion." *Pall Mall Gazette* [London, England] 25 May 1881: 2-3. Web. *British Newspaper Archives*. 13 Oct. 2016.

government in dealing with the Russian government, the Board of Deputies was quite successful in integrating Russian Jewish immigrants once they arrived in Britain by providing education, work, and other social services.<sup>40</sup> This ability to continue to help Jewish immigrants despite a lack of governmental support was in keeping with the Board's desire to insure that these immigrants had access to a common program for acculturation into British society, thereby creating a unique British Jewish identity.

The Russian pogrom commenced following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II. It was widely, and of course falsely, rumored that his death was organized by Jews, which caused increased persecution and consequently massive Jewish immigration to Western Europe and the United States. The Board of Deputies was concerned about their oppressed comrades, especially those Jews living under the Russian Tsar, but there was also concern within the British Jewish community regarding further Jewish immigration. Nevertheless, the Board still aimed to provide assistance for the Russian Jews, though many Jews remained skeptical. They felt that "the Jewish communities in England, France, and America, although enjoying more freedom than those of any other country, are numerically so small that they feel powerless to aid the Russian Jews."<sup>41</sup> Faced with the government's negative response, the Board attempted to appeal to public opinion to gain popular support for assistance. The Board of Deputies had hoped that the public would help pressure the government to adhere to their request. However this effort to gain support from the general public proved unsuccessful because the average Briton was not concerned about Russian politics.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Israel Finkelstein, *Jewish Society in Victorian England* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 1992).

<sup>41</sup> "Anti-Jewish Atrocities in Russia." *The Morning Post* [London] 3 Jan. 1882: 3. *British Newspaper Archives*. Web. 26 Sept. 2016.

<sup>42</sup> David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914*, 128.

Jewish immigrants in Britain sympathetic to Zionism were dependent on a relatively small number of leaders. The promotion of political Zionism, especially within the more Orthodox Jewish immigrant community, created a conundrum because the movement lacked strong local leadership, and among this limited leadership there was opposition to Zionism. One of the Orthodox anti-Zionist leaders was Rabbi Israel Hayyim Daiches.<sup>43</sup> Despite the efforts of Rabbi Daiches and other Orthodox rabbis, there was a crisis of leadership in the Orthodox community which led to various problems.<sup>44</sup> Rabbi Daiches attended a conference of municipal Jewish leaders in 1902 in Manchester. He believed that the Zionists were being rash and stated during the meeting that “even if the Lord will grant the Zionists success in their endeavors to obtain a portion in the land of our fathers, how can we be sure that our children...will remain true sons to their people and religion?”<sup>45</sup> Daiches was a man who sought communal cohesion that he believed could only be accomplished through the Jewish community’s unity in Britain which would prevent the spread of Jewish nationalism. A few years later, in 1904 there was a series of Jewish riots in Leeds which led to several injured parties. At least some of the identified fighters were part of the Orthodox Jewish community.<sup>46</sup> A lack of municipal unity made it difficult to organize local support to deal with the situation. Daiches believed that the last thing the community needed was for the Zionists to continue to incite the more religious Jewish community because it would not allow British Jewry to establish a firm anti-Zionist position and solidify his position in the general community.

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<sup>43</sup> Stuart A. Cohen, “How shall we sing of Zion in a Strange Land?”: East European Immigrants and the Challenge of Zionism in Britain, 1897-1918,” *Jewish Social Studies* vol. 1, no. 2 (1995), 110-111.

<sup>44</sup> Rabbi Daiches was a member of a prominent Jewish immigrant family of Rabbi’s, he was trained in the Yeshiva’s of Lithuania where he was ordained as a Rabbi, when his family moved to Britain he headed up a group of Orthodox Rabbi’s in creating the Union of Orthodox Rabbi’s. Source: “Daiches Family.” *Jewish Virtual Library*. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise. Web. 16 Feb. 2017.

<sup>45</sup> David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914*, 207.

<sup>46</sup> “The Jewish Riot in Leeds.” *Yorkshire Evening Post* [Leeds] 5 Oct. 1904: 6. *British Newspaper Archives*. Web. 26 Sept. 2016.

From an institutional perspective a major priority of the Board was to advocate on behalf of immigrants to the British government. However, many British citizens supported restrictions on immigration including Jews.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, at the turn of the century there was an increasing sympathy for immigration restrictions based in part on anti-Semitism and also on the pseudo-science known as eugenics.<sup>48</sup> This clash between the enhanced advocacy by the Board for Jewish immigrants and the increase in anti-immigrant sentiment came to a head in 1904-1905 when the government proposed the Alien Immigration Act which restricted the number of immigrants including Jews. Prior to the bill's passage the Board sent a delegation, including Lord Rothschild and his cousin Leopold Rothschild, to the government commission responsible for immigration policy to protest the new restrictions. The Rothschilds expressed concern that the government was acting explicitly because of anti-Semitism. However, inquiring about this action they found that a "majority of the commissioners [believed] that the advent of the alien immigrant was not a disadvantage to this country," and instead "the general idea of the Commission was to recommend that a system somewhat analogous to the one in the United States should be introduced here."<sup>49</sup> The system to which the article refers was responsible for determining a person's health and their ability to support themselves and their family members upon arriving to Great Britain. These screenings were supposedly responsible for keeping out "undesirables" which in fact included Jews.<sup>50</sup> The ability or inability to maintain a British, Jewish, or Zionist identity under these immigration restrictions was obviously problematic because like what occurred in the Russian pogroms of the 1880's, British Jews would now have to choose between their Jewish and British identities. This

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<sup>47</sup> Israel Finkelstein, *Jewish Society in Victorian England*, 189-194.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 318-319.

<sup>49</sup> "Jews and the Alien Bill." *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* [Sheffield, England] 20 May, 1904: 8. Web. *British Newspaper Archives*. 13 Oct. 2016.

<sup>50</sup> David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture 1840-1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 290.

dramatic change in circumstance caused the Board of Deputies to shift its position and side with their Jewish compatriots in supporting Zionism.

### **Colonization and Emigration**

Gaining territory somewhere in the world to facilitate Jewish settlement was a crucial aspect of Zionism. Thus the colonization of Israel was an important rallying point for the EZF and other Zionists, and it helped to unify the Zionist community. The EZF's lobbying of the British government for support of colonization was crucial because Britain controlled Palestine. While Palestine was the primary target for colonization there were also plans put forth to colonize in other locations including Cyprus and Uganda. Regardless of location, Zionists realized the importance of international support through some kind of charter endorsing Jewish colonization, because of the need for political legitimacy.<sup>51</sup> Having a land of their own would enable Jews to reinforce a Jewish and Zionist identity because it involved Jews settling the land to create their own state with the support and recognition of British political leadership.

Through the 1880's and 1890's there were debates even among members of the EZF community on the theory of Zionism. These "debates" can be credited to the fact that Zionism as a formal political movement was still in its relatively infancy, which made some leaders question whether or not there was a legitimate argument in favor of assimilation. In 1899 Israel Abraham and Israel Zangwill wrote to each other that in the conflict of identity, "there is no middle term between Assimilation (in the sense of complete religious disappearance)...and Zionism 'a Nation'".<sup>52</sup> This sentiment demonstrated a reluctance for any kind of reconciliation between

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<sup>51</sup> "Zionism." *Jewish Virtual Library*. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise. Web. 30 Oct. 2016.

<sup>52</sup> 2 December 1899, Israel Abrahams to Israel Zangwill, Central Zionist Archives, Zangwill Papers, A120/63(a) and 18 February 1903, Montefiore to Zangwill, *ibid.*, A120/79. *English Zionists and British Jews*, 170.

assimilation and Zionism and potentially threatened any attempt to assimilate Jews into British society. While some like Abraham and Zangwill believed that there was no middle ground between assimilation and Zionism, others believed that Judaism became “purer” because the people did not have to worry about tribal conflict between the different ancient Jewish tribes.<sup>53</sup> This inability to find middle ground and the idea that Judaism was somehow “purer” because Jews were not in Palestine seems unfathomable because Zionist ideology is quite clear in asserting that a return to Palestine is required to reaffirm Jewish life and identity.

Colonization was a major point of discussion at the periodic meetings of the World Zionist Congress. The debate about creating a Jewish state had been a top priority since Theodor Herzl first convened the Zionist Congress in 1897. During the 1899 Zionist Congress the issue of colonization was once again a priority, however a significant conflict arose between members of the American and Russian delegations when it was proposed that the world’s Jews should colonize Cyprus. It was reported that “the entire Russian section rose and hooted, in spite of repeated protests from the chairman.”<sup>54</sup> This conflict within the World Zionist Organization undermined the EZF and its promotion of British Zionism because some delegates questioned whether it would be possible to establish a territorial homeland for Jews. In the beginning supporters of the Cyprus plan believed that it would simply be an interim step toward final settlement of Palestine. Previous attempts to colonize Cyprus in the 1880’s were not successful despite several efforts.<sup>55</sup> The political and legal reasons for this failure to colonize Cyprus were connected because despite various treaties in the 1870’s through 1890’s the island remained under Ottoman-Turkish control.

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<sup>53</sup> Stuart Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1896-1920*, 172-173.

<sup>54</sup> “The Zionist Congress: Colonisation of Palestine to be begun..” *St. James Gazette* [London] 19 Aug. 1899. Web. *British Newspaper Archives*. 8 Oct. 2016.

<sup>55</sup> Yossi Ben-Artzi, “Jewish Rural Settlement in Cyprus 1882—1935: A “springboard” or a Destiny?” *Jewish History* vol. 21, no. 3/4 (2007), 361-83.

At the 1899 Zionist Congress, despite the protestations by the Russian delegates, with the advocacy of Theodor Herzl there was support for the British Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, who was negotiating with the Ottoman Sultan.<sup>56</sup> For some Jews Cyprus was an acceptable short-term solution because they regarded it as a stepping stone toward Jewish control over Palestine, in part because of its relatively close geographic proximity to the Holy Land.<sup>57</sup> The support of Chamberlain, negotiating for the Jews on behalf of the British government helped pro-Zionist British Jews to merge their British, Jewish, and Zionist identities and achieve greater social acceptance.

However, several years passed after the Cyprus solution was proposed in 1899 without any concrete results because of a lack of any Jewish emigration, infrastructure development and foreign cooperation. Four years later in 1903 the Zionist Congress proposed the colonization of certain British-controlled territories including Uganda and a committee was formed to investigate the plan's feasibility. It was perceived by many that it would be difficult for British Jews to colonize Uganda because of culture and race issues. However, the EZF's interest in colonizing Uganda was stimulated by both an immediate desire for a homeland and the willingness of the British to act immediately on the offer.<sup>58</sup> Between 1903 and 1905 a series of British Jewish leaders petitioned Colonial Secretary Chamberlain, who had been previously unsuccessful in securing Cyprus as a home for the Zionists. Gaining the renewed support of senior British officials was very important because it helped provide political legitimacy.<sup>59</sup> As a result of negotiations between the EZF and the Zionist Congress with British government representatives, the government that sent

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<sup>56</sup> Gary William Poole, "Joseph Chamberlain." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, Web. 17 Nov. 2016. <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Joseph-Chamberlain>> and Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 120-121.

<sup>57</sup> "Cyprus." *Jewish Virtual Library*. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise. Web. 20 Feb. 2017.

<sup>58</sup> "The Uganda Proposal." *Jewish Virtual Library*. American-Israeli Enterprise Cooperative. Web. 18 Oct. 2016.

<sup>59</sup> Stuart Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1896-1920*, 81-82.

Lord Hindlip to Uganda to determine whether that African colony would be suitable for Jewish colonization. However, race and culture were identified as conflicts and upon his return to Britain Hindlip was quoted as saying that “I cannot conceive any arguments in favour of letting loose a band of undesirable aliens into a country like East Africa. They will be of all races, and all probably helpless. I do not say this because they be all Jews at all. I would say the same if they dumped down the scraping of an east end street, or west end either.”<sup>60</sup> British Jews, he concluded, would be unable to combine their Jewish and Zionist identities there because Uganda had no spiritual connection with Jewish beliefs and desires. The Uganda plan was later rejected by the Seventh Zionist Congress in 1905 because it was also deemed impractical for financial and infrastructure reasons. In addition, Herzl was apparently not enthusiastic about this idea. If Herzl had really pushed the Uganda proposal the Zionist Congress would have voted overwhelming in favor.<sup>61</sup> In the end the political impediments to Jewish settlement in Africa added to the barriers posed by two different races, languages, and cultures trying to coexist, in the absence of any shared experiences or history.

In response to the rejection of the Uganda plan there was a division within the Zionist movement. One resultant action involved the creation of the Jewish Territorial Organization (“Territorial Organization” or “TO”), its supporters known as Territorialists, which was led by Israel Zangwill, the prominent Jewish author and Zionist activist.<sup>62</sup> The Territorial Organization leaders believed in separation from the Zionist Organization, not because they did not believe there

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<sup>60</sup> “Jews not Wanted in East Africa.” *Dundee Courier* [Angus, Scotland]: 5. 5 Sept. 1903. *British Newspapers Archives*. Web. 25 Oct. 2016.

<sup>61</sup> Adam Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion: Promised Lands before Israel* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 52. “The Uganda Proposal.” *Jewish Virtual Library*. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise. Web. 18 Oct. 2016. and “Israel Zangwill.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 11 Oct. 2016. Web. 03 Mar. 2017. <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Israel-Zangwill>>.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*.

should be a place for Jews, but due to their conviction that the Zionist Organization would not successfully develop a plan for Jewish settlement.<sup>63</sup> The Territorial Organization sent a delegation of five men to Palestine, three from England and two from South Africa.<sup>64</sup> The Territorial Organization also provided to those Jews seeking an alternative to the EZF a place to organize themselves. For the TO, like the EZF, the ultimate goal was to gain control of the Holy Land for the Jewish community. Even before the founding of the EZF, Zionist leaders had acknowledged that anti-Zionist Jews opposed colonization. One leader, Sylvie d'Avigdore, in a letter to Herzl, noted how British anti-Zionists, including many members of the Board of Deputies, were "too comfortable to appreciate the benefits to Palestine would have for the majority of the nation."<sup>65</sup> Class divisions were economic, he argued, and the supposed Jewish leaders were no longer leading the community but rather simply wanted to enjoy their success.<sup>66</sup> This opposition by religious Jews to colonization of a land other than Palestine is understandable, because they believed that eventual salvation of the Jewish people depended on the Jewish people returning to Israel. The idea of experiencing a comfortable or easier life in Britain and therefore not wanting to move to Palestine reflected the relative degree of assimilation achieved by Jews in Britain. Those opposing the Territorial Organization believed that their material comfort in Britain was extremely important and they were likely unsure whether it was worth relinquishing their success in Britain.

The importance of solidarity in achieving the ultimate Zionist goal required the Jewish community's leaders to utilize their talents together. This belief is noted by one H.A. Stack who

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<sup>63</sup> Gur Alroey, "'Zionism without Zion'? Territorialist Ideology and the Zionist Movement, 1882-1956", *Jewish Social Studies* vol. 18, no. 1 (2011), 9.

<sup>64</sup> "Zionists and East Africa." *The Daily News* [London] 26 Aug. 1904. Web. *British Newspaper Archives*. 18 Oct. 2016.

<sup>65</sup> 13 January 1897, Sylvie d'Avigdor to Theodor Herzl, Central Zionist Archives (Jerusalem), Herzl Papers, H VIII 33.

<sup>66</sup> Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, 209.

in a letter to Zangwill stated that “I warn you sir that you misuse your undoubtedly great talents by deluding those poor creatures who have not yet got sense enough to save themselves, that you incur a heavy responsibility.”<sup>67</sup> This sentiment reflected a belief that the leaders of the Jewish organizations should utilize their strengths for something that could be reasonably achieved. The Board of Deputies believed that gaining the territory was simply too difficult for one person to accomplish without the involvement of the British government and private organizations including the Board of Deputies and the EZF. The EZF had always supported Herzl’s desire for an international recognition through some kind of charter.<sup>68</sup> However, the Territorial Organization on the whole was largely unsuccessful in its goals to colonize any major part of any territory. Even within the pro-Zionist/colonization movement there was conflict but by the 1910’s these issues of emigration and colonization presented their own set of complications concerning the identity of Jews within Britain.

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<sup>67</sup> H. A. Stacke (Cleveland Gardens, Hyde Park), to Israel Zangwill, 2 February 1902, Central Zionist Archives (Jerusalem), Zangwill Papers, A120/78

<sup>68</sup> Stuart Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1896-1920*, 79-80.

### CHAPTER THREE: WORLD WAR ONE, etc.

The First World War provided the pro-Zionist institutions and leaders with the opportunity to finally achieve their goal of having the Board of Deputies fall in line with EZF policies. The war also marked the historical period during which Zionists were first able to advocate successfully for support of Zionism by the British government. The Balfour Declaration of November 1917 was the central achievement of Zionism--a formal expression of support for Zionism by the British government. However, before it was finally signed a major conflict arose over whether such a declaration should be issued, because of the continuing debate concerning assimilation versus creating a new Jewish nationalist identity. Pro-assimilation Jews sought to preserve their British identity because they enjoyed relative social acceptance and political rights, while the Zionists utilized the circumstances presented by the war to further their own political movement and the development of a new identity. As discussed in the first chapter, the Board of Deputies had initially opposed the development of Zionism in Britain and the British government's support for the Zionism. The period between the pre-war and 1914-16 wartime period witnessed a breakdown in communal relations although this breakdown was relatively subtle because the disagreement remained within upper-class Jewry, which encompassed the main leadership of the Zionist and anti-Zionist movements. The Rothschild family believed that they still "reigned supreme" over British Jewry and its institutions, however the increasing social divisions caused a lack of faith in the "establishment Jews".<sup>69</sup>

During the early days of the First World War pro-Zionist organizations led by the EZF and the pro-Zionist faction of the Board of Deputies petitioned the government for support.<sup>70</sup> This

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<sup>69</sup> Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, 209-210.

<sup>70</sup> David Lloyd George was politically very astute and was not afraid to be ruthless in his agenda, however during the period in which the pro-Zionist faction of the Board of Deputies along with the EZF petitioned the government for

greatly changed the primary mission upon which the Board was founded, for through its history the Board fundamentally wanted to promote a sense of pride in being a British Jew. Now the Board sought the government's support for Zionism. The beginning of the war in 1914 had provided British Jews and the Board of Deputies with an opportunity to show their non-Jewish compatriots that Britain was in fact their Zion and that it was their duty to fight for Britain. The Board of Deputies' President David Alexander worked to promote Jewish philanthropic support for the war effort and the belief among Jews that it was their patriotic duty to join the military.<sup>71</sup> This sense of duty toward one's nation was an important goal of the Board of Deputies an effort to create a British Jewish community which placed its nation above its faith. But soon the Jewish community pivoted to the efforts which culminated in the Balfour Declaration.

Helping to support foreign Jews during the war was also an important and controversial issue fostered by the Conjoint Foreign Committee, which was created to help foreign Jewish communities.<sup>72</sup> There was an unwillingness among some British Jews to help their foreign Jewish compatriots during the war. The Board of Deputies demonstrated a desire to place their British identity above their Jewish identity, because they believed that it was most important to serve their country. Early in the war the Board's leadership felt that it was be wrong to lobby the British government about the plight of foreign Jews because they believed that it would be inappropriate to do so during a time of foreign conflict. In a private letter written in 1914 about the situation in Poland the Committee stated:

We think it a most inopportune time to take any steps, and if any such steps were taken

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support for the colonization of Palestine he was distracted by the First World War.

<sup>71</sup> "Alexander, David Lindo (1842–1922)," Sharman Kadish in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. David Cannadine, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/70147> (accessed November 14, 2016) and Stuart Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1896-1920* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1982), 215-216.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

they would probably do more harm than good; that we shall be occupying our time studying the question in case an opportunity arises, & that it is important not in any case to give any grounds for the proposition that the Jew is cosmopolitan & thinks of his own affairs before those of the country to which he owes allegiance.<sup>73</sup>

This statement reflected the attitude that Jews should put their allegiance primarily with the nation in which they live, a position firmly held by many members of the Jewish community, especially the Board of Deputies. British Jewish elites feared creating a perceived self-interest by helping foreign Jews which they believed would increase anti-Semitism and focus suspicion on Jews, inspiring a fear that Jews would somehow undermine the British war effort. However, British Jews actually found that they were in fact trusted as evidenced by their relative acceptance into society and strong political rights, whereas in other nations including Germany while Jews gained the vote their treatment in society was not always good.

Nothing important, however, is easily achieved. In the early part of the 1910's while both pro- and anti-Zionists were courting the opinion of the British government and leaders, the government was also making promises to Palestine's Arab population for a homeland via the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence. This correspondence consisted of a series of letters in 1915 and 1916 between Sir Henry McMahon ("Sir Henry"), the British High Commissioner in Egypt, and Sheikh Sharif Husayn of Mecca, the leading Arab political power in the region which now comprises Palestine (Israel) and Jordan. Zionists were highly uncomfortable with the prospect of a rise in Arab nationalism because it would likely encourage the British government to surrender territory to the Arabs which may have otherwise gone to the Zionists. The McMahon-Hussein Correspondence came during the same time period in which the British were working with their

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<sup>73</sup> 13 November 1914, C. Emanuel to Wolf, London DEPS, General Correspondence, C11/2/5 as found in *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1896-1920*, 215-216.

allies to determine who would control the territories of the Ottoman Empire at the war's conclusion, and they wanted as much Arab support as possible. In this message the British promised Sharif Husayn that the Arabs had an equal right to a homeland in Palestine and would have government support.<sup>74</sup> In August 1915 Sir Henry wrote to Sharif that "We [the British government] declare once more that His Majesty's Government would welcome the resumption of the Khalifate by an Arab of true race."<sup>75</sup> This apparent sentiment of the British government that the Arabs were somehow superior to the Jews struck a major blow to British Zionists because it suggested that Jews might not be able to acquire a land which they could call their own, which is of course the central mission of Zionism. However, despite the promises made to the Arabs in the Correspondence the British eventually delivered at least in part on their promise to support a Jewish state in Palestine by letting the United Nations ultimately decide the issue. Thus in 1948 British Jews along with their foreign Jewish counterparts were finally able to combine their secular, religious and cultural identities, however this time it involved creating a new nationalist feeling as Israelis rather than as British Jews.

At the very beginning of World War I Jewish immigrants from Russia knew that the war would negatively influence their lifestyle in their new home in Britain. One key event in this regard was the conscription of British males into the army which began in April 1916. This development influenced many of these immigrants and their children to flock to the EZF which in turn attempted to prevent conscription.<sup>76</sup> This opposition to mandatory military service, along with more and more

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<sup>74</sup> Yisrael Medad, "Hogarth Message." *The Jewish Press*. Web. 5 November 2012. accessed 24 October. 2016. and Sahar Huneidi, *A Broken Trust: Sir Herbert Samuel, Zionism and the Palestinians* (New York: I.B.Tauris, 2001), 65.

<sup>75</sup> Sir Henry McMahon. Letter to Sherif Hussein. 30 Aug. 1915. *Jewish Virtual Library*. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, Web. 27 Nov. 2016.

<sup>76</sup> Stuart Cohen, "How Shall We Sing of Zion in a Strange Land?" *East European Immigrants and the Challenge of Zionism in Britain, 1897-1918*," *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1995), 114.

Jews joining the EZF, resulted in the pro-Zionist movement gaining strength, thereby providing a “mandate” and a better negotiating position for Weizmann. Military conscription made people realize that the war was going to be far worse than many had previously hoped. Zionist opposition to the draft included the threat that Zionists would not serve unless the government made certain guarantees including further support for a Jewish homeland.

Members of the Anglo-Jewry’s establishment were called upon to help further Zionist priorities. Notably, the Rothschild family which previously believed that they should make Britain “their Zion”, reached the conclusion that despite some gains in political rights such as the right to vote and hold office, British Jews would not be entirely successful because of continued social anti-Semitism which they suffered at Christian hands. By attempting to redefine the nature of Zionism, some anti-Zionists sought to persuade the pro-Zionists to change their minds. However, this effort ultimately did not come to fruition. In 1916 Walter Rothschild (2nd Baron Rothschild) was tasked by Chaim Weizmann to persuade former colleagues on the Conjoint Foreign Committee to discontinue their anti-Zionist efforts. Despite this entreaty Weizmann still questioned how loyal the Rothschilds were to the EZF's mission of gaining open support for Jewish emigration. In a letter to a friend, Weizmann hinted at this uncertainty when he noted that they supposedly “agreed to keep their hands off Zionism, not to interfere with our negotiations with the government.”<sup>77</sup> However, despite this temporary setback the Board of Deputies and its Conjoint Foreign Committee were ultimately persuaded to not interfere with the Zionists plans.<sup>78</sup> The advocacy of the Rothschild family to their colleagues in the Conjoint Foreign Committee demonstrates that there was a degree of internal lobbying by Jewish leaders to win over anti-

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<sup>77</sup> 17 October 1916, Chaim Weizmann to I. Steif as found in Simon Schama's, *The Two Rothschilds* (London, 1978), 305-306, Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, 246.

<sup>78</sup> Stuart Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1896-1920*, 259.

Zionists to the Zionist program. At this point, the Conjoint Foreign Committee was on a decline in influence over policy concerning the Jewish community.

As one might expect, many of the recent Jewish immigrants to Britain were reluctant to fight on behalf of a country which had not always been supportive of their plight in Eastern Europe.<sup>79</sup> A British government report published in 1916 calculated that there were approximately 25,000 Russian Jews living in Britain, not including other Eastern European Jewish immigrants, who were eligible for military conscription.<sup>80</sup> The government declared that in exchange for these immigrants joining the armed forces they would be granted British citizenship. The government also offered to increase support for Zionism should immigrants enlist, however only approximately 700 Jewish immigrants volunteered. The EZF worked to disassociate themselves from the anti-conscription movement that developed amongst immigrant Jews.<sup>81</sup> There was a division of opinion between various members of the EZF caused by some skepticism about whether not the British would honor their commitments to further support Zionist ambitions. Some believed that the British government supported the establishment of a Jewish homeland so that it could also be used by the British as a buffer between several Arab neighbors who had quarrels with the British.<sup>82</sup> This idea of a “Jewish buffer zone” as part of the deal for supporting Jewish emigration to Palestine certainly provided an incentive for the British government. Not having to send British military personnel to Palestine was also seen as a blessing, because it enabled the government to focus on the Western Front of the First World War.

In April 1917 the British cabinet circulated a memorandum, written by W. Ormsby-Gore,

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<sup>79</sup> Eugene C. Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1920*, 374.

<sup>80</sup> Home Office Files, CID Reports, 1916-1917, Home Office 45/10819, file 318095/132, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1896-1920*, 253.

<sup>81</sup> Stuart Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1896-1920*, 253.

<sup>82</sup> Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 191.

a junior cabinet minister responsible for the colonies, discussing the establishment of Jewish military units to be deployed to the Middle East on behalf of the British armed forces.<sup>83</sup> The memo acknowledges a degree of lobbying efforts from segments of the Jewish community, including representatives from the American Jewish and Anglo-Jewish communities. The organization of Jewish military units changed the nature of Britain's support for Zionism, because by providing military training for these units future generations of Jews would be prepared to fight on behalf of their cause for a homeland. Besides providing military support another crucial means of support was infrastructure funding, because the Ormsby-Gore memorandum also advocated that the government "increase the income of the Palestine Fund". This provision of more money for Jewish settlement leading up to the Balfour Declaration was important because it assisted in developing infrastructure and industry both crucial for Jewish success in Palestine.<sup>84</sup> Besides advocating for infrastructure for the Jewish community, Ormsby-Gore acknowledged the fact that members of the British and American Jewish communities were encouraged that the increases "of Zionist activity in Palestine have been recent and rapid."<sup>85</sup> This expansion of Jewish colonization during World War One certainly helped support the Zionist lobbying efforts, because it placed pressure on government leaders to accommodate Jewish needs in Palestine.

The Zionist movement needed political legitimacy to support its primary goal of gaining control of Palestine, and also to assist in achieving acceptance not just by the British but by all nations. While international recognition of a Jewish emigre community in Palestine was important, it was not always welcome because it was perceived as threatening the Jewish community's

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<sup>83</sup> W. Ormsby-Gore, "Zionism and the suggested Jewish Battalions for Egyptian Expeditionary Force." Memo. Cabinet Office. CAB 24/10/47. 14 April 1917. National Archives: London. Web. 22 February 2017. <<http://discover.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D7638929#imageViewerLink>.>

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

political rights back in Britain. On May 20, 1917, the presidents of the Board of Deputies and the Anglo-Jewish Association, David Alexander and Charles Montefiore, respectively, published a letter in the *Times* newspaper, titled “Palestine and Zionism - Views of Anglo-Jewry” which responded to a speech by Chaim Weizmann promoting governmental support for Zionism.<sup>86</sup> Alexander and Montefiore stated that “the Zionist programme which has aroused the misgivings of the Conjoint Committee is the proposal to invest the Jewish settlers in Palestine with certain special rights in excess of those enjoyed by the rest of the population, these rights to be embodied in a Charter and administered by a Jewish Chartered Company.”<sup>87</sup> Demanding extra or special rights for Jews in Palestine may have caused friction back home in Britain because British Jews generally did not seek to be treated as a special or privileged class, which could hinder their ability to further assimilate into British society. Alexander and Montefiore’s opposition to an increased Jewish emigre community in Palestine, although representing a desire for equality, was founded on a concern that Jews “will probably long remain, a minority of the population of Palestine, and because it might involve them in the bitterest feuds with their neighbors.”<sup>88</sup> The idea that the Jewish community would likely remain small in Ottoman-controlled Palestine presented an excellent argument for Jews to remain in Britain.

Prime Minister David Lloyd-George, who served from 1916 to 1922, was not initially inclined to support Zionist ambitions because he did not want to make promises he could not keep. There was also opposition to Zionism expressed by Edwin Montagu, the British Secretary of State for India.<sup>89</sup> Montagu advocated for alterations to the text of the Balfour declaration which were

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<sup>86</sup> Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 193-194.

<sup>87</sup> “An anti-Zionist Letter to the *Times* [London] (May 24, 1917).” Jehuda Reinharz, ed., *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2011), 658-659.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 659.

<sup>89</sup> *A History of Zionism: From the French Revolution to the Establishment of the State of Israel*, 184. And Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, 250.

intended to change the way it was to be interpreted. In one instance, Montagu advocated that “Palestine was referred to as *a* rather than as *the* national home for the Jewish people.”<sup>90</sup> This distinction of being “*a* rather than as *the*” home which Zionists sought, helped reinforce the Hogarth communications which promised the Arabs a homeland in Palestine. These small, and to some seemingly insignificant, details constituted a perfect “get out of jail free card” which would potentially be useful for the British should they need to renege on their promise to the Jewish community. Montagu also discussed his belief that a majority of native-born Jews opposed Zionism which is one reason why he questioned the necessity to guarantee the ceding of complete control of Palestine to the Jews.<sup>91</sup>

Having the right people in leadership is always very important when conducting high level policy decisions and securing territory, and that was certainly the case for British Jews as they were negotiating for a Jewish homeland. Chaim Weizmann was considered to be the only acceptable representative of the EZF for both Jews and the British government, because “he could speak to the Britons in tones of intimacy while simultaneously rebuking them and protesting with credibility.”<sup>92</sup> Weizmann’s ability to speak frankly with British leaders insured that no fact or concern would be missed. Weizmann had emigrated from Russia to Manchester and became a naturalized British subject in the early 1900’s. He and Arthur Balfour met when they were both involved in Manchester political life.<sup>93</sup> Weizmann’s “mentor,” Ahad Ha’am, the pen name for Jewish author Asher Ginsberg, wrote to him that “you began your work here...as a private Zionist. Your personal qualities and favorable conditions brought it about that in a short time you became

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 250.

<sup>91</sup> Edward S. Montagu, “The Zionist Movement.” The India Office-Foreign Office. 14 September 1917. CAB 24/27/93. London: The National Archives.<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D7640698#imageViewLink>. Web. 13 Feb. 2017.

<sup>92</sup> Jehuda Reinharz, “Chaim Weizmann: Statesman without a State.” *Modern Judaism* vol. 12, no. 3 (1992), 229.

<sup>93</sup> Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, 227.

practically the symbol of Zionism for many men of influence [...].”<sup>94</sup> Weizmann’s rise to prominence provided another human face to Zionism in Britain beyond that of Theodor Herzl. Because he was a naturalized British subject who entered government service during the First World War, Weizmann was therefore able to bridge the gap between the Zionists and government officials.<sup>95</sup> Combining the respect in which he was held by both the Zionists and government ministers proved useful because it provided an “easier” entrance for petitioning the government. Another factor in play was international “intervention,” which certainly influenced British government opinion because of the shared cultural backgrounds of the political elites. An even more important detail was that the United States was home to the largest Jewish population outside of Europe, and therefore exerted some level of influence on the British.

In October 1917, following the American entrance into World War I, the United States played a role in supporting Weizmann and Zionism, because President Woodrow Wilson and Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis lobbied both Balfour and David Lloyd George. However even before the United States entered the war there were private communications on this subject between President Wilson and British officials. Wilson was influenced in part by American Jewry because many successful American Jews supported Democratic Party politics.<sup>96</sup> Weizmann communicated to Lloyd George and Balfour that the French and Italians were prepared to support the American sympathies, stating that “the French have already given an assurance of sympathy to the Zionists...on the same lines as is now proposed for His Majesty’s Government...the Italian

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<sup>94</sup> Ahad Ha’am to Weizmann, September 5, 1917, *Igrot Ahad Ha’Am* (Jerusalem, 1923-1925), Vol. 5, p. 316.

Mr. Ginsberg (“Ha’am”) in the 1890’s had traveled to Eretz Israel and became convinced that the Zionist cause was just, however he did acknowledge that the battle for achieving the ultimate goal would not be easy. He also believed that Zionism was the only way for European Jews to reconcile Jews with European philosophical developments.

<sup>95</sup> Julian L. Meltzer, “Chaim Weizmann.” *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica. Web. 28 Oct. 2016. <<https://britannica.com/biography/Chaim-Weizmann>>.

<sup>96</sup> Eugene C. Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1920*, 357.

Government and the Vatican have express their sympathy, and we know that President Wilson is sympathetic.”<sup>97</sup> Before the United States entered the war the British government feared that the large ethnic German Jewish community would not sympathize with Britain's needs.<sup>98</sup> Suddenly, with the support of American political figures, British Zionism became an international political issue, although in the end American support did not greatly influence future British political considerations.

The Board of Deputies and the EZF reached a point where their views on Zionism were the same. Their representatives spent a few more months during the spring and summer of 1917 participating in the closing rounds of negotiations preceding the Balfour Declaration, with the final details being hashed out. Foreign Secretary Balfour appointed Sir Mark Sykes (“Sir Mark”) as his chief liaison officer with the Zionists. Sir Mark was an accomplished diplomat who had represented the British in negotiating the Sykes-Picot Agreement.<sup>99</sup> During late 1916 and early 1917, the initial draft which had been proposed by Nahum Sokolow was far more extensive compared to the final version of the Declaration.<sup>100</sup> Herzl and Weizmann lobbied Sir Mark and Sokolow by proposing the inclusion of the following statement: “His Majesty’s Government regards as essential for the realisation of this principle the grant of internal autonomy to the Jewish nationality in Palestine, freedom of immigration for Jews, and the establishment of a Jewish

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<sup>97</sup> Arthur James Balfour and Chaim Weizmann. Letter to David Lloyd George. 25 Oct. 1917. *The Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1920* (New York and Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 363.

<sup>98</sup> Todd Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000*, 190-191.

<sup>99</sup> The Sykes-Picot Agreement was an agreement between the main allied powers including France and Great Britain about how they were to divide the territory of the Ottoman Empire. Britain was to get Palestine, Jordan, and other important territories. “Sykes-Picot Agreement.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 31 May 2016. Web. 21 Mar. 2017. <<https://www.britannica.com/event/Sykes-Picot-Agreement>>.

<sup>100</sup> Mr. Sokolow was a leading Zionist and writer from the Russian Empire who later emigrated to Great Britain. He worked with other leaders to petition various governments for support, especially the government in Britain and he helped negotiate the Balfour Declaration in its early phases. “Nahum Sokolow.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 16 Nov. 2009. Web. 27 Feb. 2017. <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nahum-Sokolow>>.

National Colonising Corporation.”<sup>101</sup> This successful lobbying led by Herzl and Weizmann along with support from Sykes and Sokolow, though not every single part of what was requested was ultimately included, did result in the British being relatively open minded regarding the degree of internal autonomy in Palestine. Providing for this new “corporate” colonizing organization, this time with government backing, helped to reinforce a combination of Jewish and Zionist dreams of emigration to Palestine. This was crucial to the development of modern Zionism because it established a centralized method to insure proper movement of Jews from Europe to Palestine, essentially a corporate institution with all of the structural support that would prove important in establishing a new nation. During this period Sir Mark was warned by leading government officials including the Prime Minister and Cabinet Secretary to avoid offending the Arab community. After all Sir Henry McMahon and Sir Mark himself had previously negotiated deals which directly affected Palestine’s Arab community.<sup>102</sup> The main difference between the initial draft statement by Sokolow and the final one sent by Balfour to Rothschild and Weizmann is that the November 2, 1917 Balfour Declaration provided a more general, less definite promise to support the creation of a Jewish state. These differences demonstrate that the British decided to take a more “diplomatic” approach, realizing that they could not make such a large and specific public gesture of support for Jews because of pre-existing promises with Arabs in Palestine.

In November 1917 when the Declaration was finally issued, Balfour wrote that: “I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of his Majesty’s Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which have been submitted to, and approved by the Cabinet”. However Balfour included the caveat “that nothing shall be done which

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<sup>101</sup> Nahum Sokolow, “Declaration for Jewish State” (English Zionist Federation, London), Shmuel Tolkowsky, *Yoman Zioni Medini, London, 1915-1919*, ed. Dvorah Barzilay-Yegar (Jerusalem, 1981), 131-132.

<sup>102</sup> Eugene C. Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1920*, 361.

may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country. I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.”<sup>103</sup> The Board of Deputies and EZF were thrilled that the Declaration was finally issued, because both had rallied behind the need for a Jewish homeland and were excited that it was to be in Palestine. Although Rothschild and Weizmann played important roles in representing the EZF, it was EZF as an institution that was advocating for Zionism and lobbying the British government. The Balfour Declaration, issued on November 2, 1917 was the culmination of the pre-Israeli independence Zionist agenda and it also represented the best example of how one could be British, Zionist, and Jewish all at the same time.

The communal breakdown which occurred during 1917 actually led to quite smooth transitioning between anti and pro-Zionist Deputies. At the Board of Deputies meeting on November 17, 1917 Zionist sympathizers within the Board of Deputies’ own ranks took control. The Balfour Declaration changed everything and enabled those pro-Zionists on the Board to feel safe in challenging the anti-Zionists, because they recognized that it was finally possible to be British, Jewish, and Zionist. The internal breakdowns included a combination of differences over policy and how future Board Deputies were selected, the resolution of which enabled the Zionists among the Board of Deputies to take over the Board’s institutions.<sup>104</sup> This provided an opportunity for the EZF to move into the government’s favor. In the months leading up to this event certain senior Board of Deputy officials who had trepidations about Zionism, including Sir Stuart Samuel and Sir Philip Magnus, were willing step out to allow the pro-Zionist Deputies to gain control.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Arthur James Balfour, “Balfour Declaration.” Letter to Lord Rothschild. 2 Nov. 1917. *Jewish Virtual Library*. American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise. Web. 21 Nov. 2016. <<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/balfour.html>>.

<sup>104</sup> Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, 248 and Stuart Cohen, *English Zionist and British Jews*, 286-288.

<sup>105</sup> Stuart Cohen, *English Zionist and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1896-1920*, 288-289.

This willingness to withdraw from senior leadership demonstrated that these anti-Zionists realized that attitudes were changing and that people were gradually accepting a new identity as British Zionists.

Despite Magnus' continued opposition to Zionism, and his willingness to relinquish his senior leadership in the Board of Deputies, he subsequently was elected one of several Vice Presidents of the Board. Magnus is an important example of how anti-Zionist leaders were persuaded to refrain from acting upon their anti-Zionist opinions. This effective form of internal political maneuvering helped Zionists to take over positions of power in the Board of Deputies. In a July 1917 meeting Magnus discussed with his colleagues that "my views are unchanged...I can take no part, for reasons which I have stated, encouraging the establishment of Palestine as an autonomous Jewish State...I accept my views on Zionism are not inconsistent with my tenure of this office."<sup>106</sup> This belief that one could be Jewish without an autonomous Jewish state restated a longstanding idea previously held by many that Britain rather than Palestine was their new Zion. However, Magnus realized that it was impossible to stop the inevitable and with the now diminished internal opposition the pro-Zionists succeeded. Despite this inevitable conclusion Magnus continued for a while to lodge his complaints and to lobby the cabinet on the Zionism issue. In an October 1917 cabinet meeting, anti-Zionists including Magnus were discussed along with their grievances. Magnus while acknowledging that Jews were at one point part of a national system because they were "a people", argued that since they were driven out of Palestine by the Romans they had lost much of their identity as a nation-state.<sup>107</sup> This idea that the Jewish people

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<sup>106</sup> Minutes of meeting of 15 July 1917, and 28 July 1917, Magnus to Emanuel, London, DEPS, Minute Book, A17, pp. 69-73.

<sup>107</sup> Morris Hankey, "The Zionist Movement." Memo. Cabinet Office. CAB 24/4/14. The National Archives, London. Oct. 1917. Web. 3 March 2017. <<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D7644748#imageViewerLink>>

lost their status as a nation was obviously upsetting to many Zionists, for they believed that a modern functioning nation-state was crucial in order for Jews to no longer suffer from anti-Semitism.

In November 1917 the Board of Deputies held a “Parliament” during which it first “issued a pronouncement against Zionism, but were overthrown, and Lord Rothschild voted with the majority.”<sup>108</sup> Prior to this “Parliament” the pro-Zionist faction in the Board of Deputies had comprised only a small number of the total delegates to the Board of Deputies.<sup>109</sup> A majority had feared that the creation of a highly organized Jewish community would imply a continued desire for a distinct Jewish national identity therefore branding those Jews “as strangers in their native lands.”<sup>110</sup> This idea was finally rejected by the Deputies and they proceeded to vote to join the Zionist movement. This resolution of the internal conflict within the Board coupled with the strong opinions of the Board’s leaders and members in favor of Zionism demonstrated that by the end of the First World War, the Board of Deputies had changed its attitude toward Zionism.

In 1920 the future of pro-Zionist activities was subject to an important discussion when the EZF convened for a meeting to acknowledge its recent achievements. Between the end of the war and the EZF conference of 1920, Chaim Weizmann along with other senior Zionists continued to solidify their position.<sup>111</sup> A combination of EZF and government leaders presided over this meeting including Weizmann, Lord Rothschild, Lord Arthur Balfour and Lord Robert Cecil. Both Balfour and Cecil addressed the meeting. Sentiments expressed included caution, pride, and the belief that with Jews now enjoying government backing there was real hope for a Jewish homeland.

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<sup>108</sup> “The Chosen Zionists.” *Birmingham Daily Gazette* [West Midlands, England] 13 Nov. 1917. Web. *British Newspapers Archives*. 12 Oct. 2016.

<sup>109</sup> Stuart Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1896-1920*, 273-274.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

Following the war the British government, upon gaining control of Palestine, began to organize the Mandate of Palestine. The Mandate was the administrative structure for the British government in the Holy Land, the authority for which was granted to Britain by the League of Nations.<sup>112</sup> This action by the League of Nations as the international sanctioning body allowing Britain to administer Palestine certainly enabled it to fulfill the fundamental promise made in the Balfour Declaration.

On July 12, 1920 Lord Balfour addressed the English Zionist Federation at the Royal Albert Hall in London where he spoke about how Great Britain was managing Palestine. This event helped reassure British Zionists that the British would keep their wartime promise. Balfour expressed the belief that Jewish colonization “will require tact, it will require judgement, it will require above all sympathetic goodwill on the part of both Jew and Arab.”<sup>113</sup> On July 13th, Lord Cecil stated during the EZF meeting that two of the biggest achievements of the First World War were the creation of the League of Nations and the government’s support for Zionism as embodied in the Balfour Declaration.<sup>114</sup> Lord Cecil had served under Lord Balfour in the British Foreign Office which placed him in a position to work with both Balfour and the EZF.<sup>115</sup> In Cecil’s speech to the gathering he stated that “we have given you national existence. In your hand lies your national future.”<sup>116</sup> Cecil’s belief in Jewish self-help can be attributed to a desire for Jews to take

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<sup>112</sup> “The Mandate of Palestine.” *The Avalon Project*. Yale University Law School. Web. 2008. 14 Feb. 2017. [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/palmanda.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/palmanda.asp).

<sup>113</sup> Arthur Balfour, “Great Britain and Palestine.” English Zionist Federation Conference. Royal Albert Hall, London. 12 July 1920. *Speeches on Zionism* (London: Arrowsmith, 1928), 21-31.

<sup>114</sup> “Jewish National Home: Mr. Balfour’s Prophecy.” *The Scotsman* [Midlothian, Scotland]: 6. 13 July 1920. *The British Newspapers Archives*. Web. 25 Oct. 2016.

<sup>115</sup> “Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, 1st Viscount Cecil.” Encyclopedia Britannica, Web. 28 Oct. 2016. <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Robert-Cecil>>. and “Robert Cecil.” *Nobelprize.org*. Nobel Prize, 2017. Web. 19 Mar. 2017. <[http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureate/1937/chelwood-bio.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureate/1937/chelwood-bio.html)>.

<sup>116</sup> “Jews in Palestine: One of the Greatest of Experiments.” *The Aberdeen Daily Journal* [Aberdeenshire, Scotland]: 6. 13 July 1920. *British Newspaper Archives*. Web. 25 Oct. 2016.

responsibility for themselves once the British gave them official recognition. This support from Cecil and Balfour was necessary for the Board of Deputies and EZF to accomplish their goal for Jewish settlement in Palestine.

Global politics during and after the First World War were changed forever because of the horrific level of fatalities suffered on both sides, but on the Zionist front the First World War resulted in a victory because the British proclaimed total support for a Jewish homeland. Another significant development was the willingness of the Jewish population to place their future in the hands of the pro-Zionist leaders which required these predominantly pro-assimilationist Jews to risk their British identity in order to gain territory. These territorial claims and the eventual granting of support for Jewish colonization in Palestine was a crucial issue for both the EZF and Board of Deputies. This unique combination of changing political and physical landscapes, most notably the critical support of the British government enabled the Zionist movement to gain traction with its culmination in the Balfour Declaration and the eventual colonization of Eretz Israel. In the end, the unified efforts of the Board of Deputies and EZF coupled with increasingly significant support from the British government finally made it possible to be British, Jewish, and Zionist.

## CONCLUSION

This story recounts the respective Zionist and anti-Zionist attitudes of the English Zionist Federation and the Board of Deputies, as they evolved in Britain between 1880 and 1920, and the influence those beliefs had over the Anglo-Jewish community and the British government. Ultimately the British government was able to successfully use Zionism for its own strategic advantage while providing the Zionists what they sought, which in the long term led to the establishment of the State of Israel. By providing a more micro-history analysis of the aforementioned period this study seeks to provide a valuable contribution by analyzing the internal rivalries and issues facing the Jews of Britain, including how those assimilationist Jews who wanted to built a new life in Britain sought at first to separate themselves from the Zionist community but ultimately came to support the Zionist movement. The end to the rivalry between the Board of Deputies and the EZF which which occurred at the conclusion of the First World War was crucial because it provided a united Jewish community to lobby the British, and also insured that post-WWI Zionist leaders could continue to push their agenda forward in unity. Both the Board of Deputies' and EZF's leadership were extremely clever in figuring out how to work together. Despite the perceived elitist Board of Deputies leadership by the EZF, in the end the EZF leaders were quite similar to those running the Board of Deputies.<sup>117</sup> This similarity in leadership and those leaders' political savvy certainly helped both the EZF and the Board, which is not totally surprising since the Rothschild family was serving both organizations.

Given the sophisticated political skills developed by the Board of Deputies and the EZF leadership, especially Chaim Weizmann who in the historiography was nicknamed as a "Statesman without a State", each organization was able to successfully lobby the British government

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<sup>117</sup> Eugene C. Black, "A Typological Study of English Zionists." *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 9, no. 3 (2003), 45-46.

concerning certain points of interest in their respective platforms.<sup>118</sup> However, the EZF's leaders and their associates were ultimately more successful because they were able to gain control over the Board of Deputies and their pro-Zionist position prevailed. In addition they forged alliances with the British political elites including the British Foreign Secretary Balfour to gain support for Zionism. The successful lobbying by the EZF clearly demonstrates how the development of nationalism can influence war policy at least to a degree along with the political and social attitudes of a nation, for after all the British government used pro-Zionist Jews to protect British interests in the Middle East. Contributing and challenging factors to the efforts of the Board of Deputies and the EZF were Jewish immigration, emigration and colonization. Both groups also took advantage of the onset of the First World War, however, they did so in different ways, and each of these sub-topics of immigration, emigration and colonization provided important steps toward the Zionist goal whether or not it was always intended by each organization. Significant to their ultimate success, the Board of Deputies and the EZF were also responsible for developing and providing to Jews in Britain the power to insure their status as loyal British subjects while at the same time being able to choose whether or not to support Zionism.

One can safely conclude that Jewish immigration to Britain from Eastern Europe led to the development of a new British identity for the newly arriving immigrants forged in part by the Board of Deputies, despite the EZF's belief that the great influence of European anti-Semitism would prevent acceptance into society. This battle for the hearts and minds of Eastern European immigrants was a major focus of the efforts of these organizations to develop Zionism in Britain, and certainly these immigrants influenced the future activities of the Board of Deputies and the EZF including how Jews would support Britain. Government attempts to restrict Jewish

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<sup>118</sup> Jehuda Reinharz, "Chaim Weizmann: Statesman without a State." *Modern Judaism* vol. 12, no. 3 (1992): 225-242.

immigration were in the end a double-edged sword because on one hand the Board of Deputies fought against the proposed restriction by which the government hoped to keep out “undesireable” persons while at the same time the Board focused on recreating Jewish identity and allegiance to a British way of thinking. The Board of Deputies did not alter its policies regarding Jewish immigration to Britain throughout the years 1880 to 1920, which certainly provided much stability for the Jewish community already in Britain as well as those coming from Eastern Europe. One can safely conclude that Jewish immigration to Britain was a significant component to the development of modern Zionism in Britain, because Europe on the whole experienced an increase in anti-Semitism while both the Board of Deputies and the EZF sought to “cure” the suffering that their community experienced. The EZF regarded the ever increasing number of Jewish immigrants to Britain as a means of “fixing” the foreigner problem, should the British seek to “remove” unwanted foreigners from their shores, which the government attempted to do via the Alien Act of 1905 by restricting the number of immigrants permitted to enter Britain each year. The Britain of the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century was certainly a nation seeking to insure that it would retain its own identity by keeping the nation as a fairly homogeneous population, which ironically was similar to the Zionist goal of Jews emigrating to Palestine to insure a homogeneous Jewish state.

Jewish and government proposals for colonization and emigration plans in locations other than Palestine were ultimately unsuccessful because of cultural and racial reasons, including most significantly the Zionist belief that only Palestine was suitable for a Jewish homeland. In addition, Cyprus and Uganda, two places that were proposed, did not share the an historical connection to the Jewish people. Undoubtedly the ethnic and cultural issues which Jewish leaders cited and could or would not overcome in relation to a move to either Cyprus or Uganda demonstrated Zionists’

firm resistance to British politicians who supported colonization. The Russian Jewish delegation's dramatic opposition to the Cyprus proposal can be attributed to the conclusion that the majority of Jewish emigration to Cyprus would have been Russian Jews, since the vast majority of Europe's Jews lived in Russian controlled territory. Uganda was in the end impossible because of the negative report from Lord Hindlip who was sent to determine whether or not Jewish settlement was possible. Hindlip concluded that there were potential racial and cultural complications caused by combining two different peoples which would make it impossible to create a new identity. The native African population of Uganda had no cultural or religious connection to the Jewish people and Cyprus persuaded similar concerns about European Jews, and therefore, it is safe to conclude that Zionism would not have been well served by Jews settling in either Cyprus or Uganda. Both proposals faced opposition from members of the Zionist Congress because of previous failed colonial adventures even though the British government had smiled upon the Cyprus and Uganda proposals because they would have satisfied to a degree the Zionists' desire for a homeland. Even today the Jewish population in Palestine is having enough difficulty in creating a well organized society in which they can coexist with their Arab neighbors with whom they are at least somewhat closer in matters of religion and culture compared to the Ugandan and Cyprus populations.

During the war the EZF and related pro-Zionist leaders were successful in part because of their response to growing international military and political concerns. The Zionist leaders proposed investment in infrastructure in Palestine, and support for Jewish military units to be raised in defense for Palestine and Egypt. In contrast the Board of Deputies and its followers voiced strong support for Jews to join the British military, for they felt that it was their duty to support their new homeland without advocating Zionist policies. The EZF's and Board of Deputies' lobbying efforts were noted in Cabinet meetings and in correspondence between various

government ministers which demonstrates the importance of personal communications between political leaders and private individuals representing the Zionists. Clearly both the Board of Deputies and EZF used the war to their respective advantages to gain favor in British society and politics. In the end the EZF was able to overcome its difficulties with the Board of Deputies because of the changing life of Anglo-Jewry which led to their mutual efforts for the Zionist cause during and following the First World War.

The Zionists gained the tangible support of the British government despite the government's previous promise to support the creation of a new Arab state in Palestine. However, in the Balfour Declaration of 1917 the British government included a line which required the Zionists to protect the religious, social, and political rights of the various non-Jewish minorities, most notably the Arab community. This need for a guarantee was reaffirmed at the EZF conference of 1920 in London.<sup>119</sup> The Zionists' affirmation of a guarantee to protect the Arab minorities status in Palestine was effectively a consolation gesture to the Arab community for the government's renegeing on its promise in the Hogarth communications of 1915-1916 to create an Arab nation in Palestine.

The creation of the Mandate of Palestine in 1922 provided the system by which the British government ruled Palestine pursuant to the League of Nations' charter. The sentiments expressed in the Mandate are quite similar to those expressed in the Balfour Declaration, most notably that Palestine should be the national home for the Jewish people while not infringing upon the religious and cultural rights of the non-Jewish peoples.<sup>120</sup> This repetition of a requirement of relative tolerance for the non-Jewish community in Palestine is a policy which the post-Independence

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<sup>119</sup> Arthur Balfour, "Great Britain and Palestine." English Zionist Federation Conference. Royal Albert Hall, London. 12 July 1920. *Speeches on Zionism* (London: Arrowsmith, 1928), 21-31.

<sup>120</sup> "The Avalon Project: The Mandate of Palestine." *The Avalon Project*. Yale University Law School. Web. 2008. 14 Feb. 2017. [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/palmanda.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/palmanda.asp).

Israeli government has strived for, however with ever increasing political difficulty because of the growing threat of terrorism and dissent from the political right in the Knesset. It is also safe to conclude that for Zionists the Mandate was an important step toward independence. All of the existing Jewish organizations in Palestine set up shadow administrative structures, most notably the Jewish Agency, an organization which played an important role following the Mandate's creation. This creation of shadow administrative and governmental structures proved crucial for eventually declaring a sovereign Israeli state.

British support for Zionism created a legacy which has endured a long and difficult journey, because of the political and social implications it has brought about including more ethnic rivalries and conflicts among political various nation-states today. Zionism, which finally resulted from the efforts of British government officials along with the Board of Deputies and the EZF has influenced modern Middle East politics not only because of the development of a democratic, modern nation in Israel, but also due to the expansion of the Arab-Israeli conflict which has come to involve many of the world's superpowers. Despite this long burning conflict between Arabs and Israelis, it is important to recognize that the Jewish, British and Arab leaders were and are primarily looking after the best interests of their respective communities. The Jewish community's goal was to develop their own nation, the British wanted to protect their Middle East interests, and for the Palestine community of today the desire is to seek and obtain international recognition for their own state. Certainly, if the world is to understand these complex and controversial socio-political events which tend to be long lasting and without a clear resolution in the foreseeable future, we must appreciate how crucial the study of political history is for the global community. After all, while one cannot change or fix every problem of today, the world can hopefully detect future problems earlier and minimize the impact of those events impact on the world.

Although the primary focus of this work is intended to understand how Zionism in Great Britain evolved in the years leading up to the Balfour Declaration, one should also acknowledge the more recent legacy of the Zionist movement. Zionism, not just in Britain but around the world, has come under greater scrutiny because of the lack of a peaceful resolution to the fragile and often dangerous relations between the Israeli Jews and Palestinians. This lack of a peace accord will also likely cause even greater scrutiny by non-Israeli Jews and question their sense of a connection to Israel and its dream as a home for all Jews. Two such examples which deserve attention include recent increases in anti-Semitism and the diminishing connection that Jews have with Israel in the two nations with the largest Jewish populations outside of Israel, the United States and Britain.

According to a study published by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research in June 2014 there has been an increase in anti-Semitism in Britain which is correlated with an increase in Israeli attacks on Palestinians. About one-third of the respondents to this survey also state that they have heard people compare Israeli treatment of Palestinians to how the Nazis treated Jews, which is certainly a harsh and distorted viewpoint. The Institute's study also acknowledges that among those most likely to stir up these anti-Semitic attitudes whether actual or perceived are many younger members of Britain's Muslim community.<sup>121</sup> This increase in both perceived and actual anti-Semitism in Britain clearly illustrates how Jews in Britain have "suffered" because of Zionism, and is a demonstration of a continued ethnic distrust between Jews and Arabs. This negativity about Zionism is somewhat different than Jewish attitudes in the United States, reflected by a Pew Poll published in October 2013 which states that six out of every ten American Jews feel that they have a close emotional connection with Israel.<sup>122</sup> These recent developments concerning

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<sup>121</sup> "80% of British Jews Feel Blamed for Israeli Actions." *Haaretz*. Haaretz Newspaper, 21 July 2014. Web. 19 Mar. 2017. <<http://www.haaretz.com/jewish/news/1.606402>>.

<sup>122</sup> Joseph Liu, "Chapter 5: Connection With and Attitudes Toward Israel." *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project*. The Pew Research Center, 30 Sept. 2013. Web. 19 Mar. 2017.

attitudes toward Jews and the opinions of British Jews about Israel and their likely connection to the future prospects of modern Zionism seem almost guaranteed to affect the future of Israel and the Middle East.

This combination of factors which occurred between 1880 and 1920 along with the opinions of today's Jews will likely change future attitudes toward Zionism. Some may question whether Zionism has caused more problems for Jews rather than advancing the cause of independence and non-discrimination. Countries like Britain and the United States where many wealthy and influential Jews live are undoubtedly affected by the Israeli political climate which in turn influences the level of support for Israel in their home nations. It is tempting to believe that Jews in Britain and America will always be unfairly influenced by the amount of perceived anti-Semitism to either support or oppose future Zionist projects or criticize or support the State of Israel because of the success of the British Zionist leadership. However like the Jewish population of Britain between 1880 and 1920 there will likely continue to be a division in opinion among members of the Jewish community.

Future scholars will benefit from producing more micro-analysis of the relationship between the Board of Deputies and the EZF because they will be able to build upon this work. However, scholars will have to take into account how additional sources will be accessed, for without excellent primary sources one cannot write excellent history. While the National Archives and the British Newspaper Archives have been valuable tools for gathering sources including but not limited to newspaper articles, speeches, and cabinet papers, it would be helpful if organizations like the Board of Deputies and the EZF published more of their materials online. It would also be beneficial if the Rothschild family and other prominent Jewish families who were heavily involved

in the Zionist movement created their own personal online archives for all historians and other interested parties to access, rather than having to go to an archive which may have limited resources and hours. Zionism and the politics from which it emanated along with the political conflicts it will likely create will continue to be fascinating subjects to all interested parties. Certainly, should there be a peace accord in Palestine one day this would certainly be worth writing about in the context of the Zionist movement in Britain. Considering how much material belonging to Jewish organizations including the Board of Deputies and EZF remains unpublished, thus leaving a lack of accessible archive material, it is clear that there are plenty of future potential avenues of new scholarship. However until this currently unpublished or otherwise inaccessible material is opened up, the historical community will simply have to wait to further explore the events of 1880-1920, when the leading organizations of the British Jewish community came together to influence and enlist the support of their national government to transition Zionism from a dream to reality.

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