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**Zionism ‘at the uttermost ends of the earth’:
A New Zealand Social History c.1900-1948**

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a social history that examines why a tiny Jewish community in the far-flung Dominion of New Zealand should become so engaged in a movement that originated on the other side of the world and why the wider community also embraced Zionism so enthusiastically. Investigation in the nineteenth century reveals New Zealanders highly engaged in an international discourse that traversed nations and empires; the Ottoman and British empires, Western and Eastern Europe and Russia. The thesis tracks the growth of Zionism in New Zealand, with a particular focus on Auckland, then considered the most Zionist community in the country. From the establishment of the first Zionist Societies in 1903 until the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, it weaves together the macro-history with micro-histories and shows how and why the local community engaged politically and practically with the plight of fellow Jews overseas. Through the lens of the New Zealand Jewish community, this thesis examines the way in which the tragic Jewish history, from the pogroms of the 1880s to the Nazi persecution of the 1930s and 40s and the resultant refugee crisis contributed to the growing belief that the establishment of a homeland in (then) Palestine would be the solution to the ‘Jewish Problem’.

I have been privileged to access a valuable trove of previously unpublished primary resources, thus enabling a rich analysis of the outworking of a movement in a local setting. Some important and unique stories have been brought to light. The various case studies allow for a in-depth look at how leaders interpreted Zionism for the local community, and how the characteristics of particular individuals contributed immensely to the success of the movement. This thesis discusses the efforts of local Zionists to grapple with the various and divergent ideologies which underpinned their activity. While a great deal scholarship has been undertaken on the topic of Zionism generally, much less attention has been afforded the outworking of the movement in the diaspora. This trans-national, social history is the first scholarly examination of Zionism in New Zealand. It also contributes to New Zealand’s political, war, women’s, philanthropic, religious and imperial histories.

DEDICATION

To the many inspiring members of the Jewish community,
past and present, who have made an immeasurable contribution to this nation.

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Perry and I have been involved with the Jewish community for a number of years, particularly due to our work recording the stories of Holocaust survivors. As a result we have developed many friendships in the community. The inspiration to undertake this particular project arose from a conversation with Dame Lesley Max, who also generously supplied me with significant primary source materials for my research. I am most thankful to Lesley for her encouragement of this work and also the Auckland Hebrew Congregation which allowed me access to their archives. In addition, David Nathan was kindly willing to share valuable material from his grandmother, Simone Nathan's, memoirs. I would also like to thank Michael Clements from the New Zealand Jewish Archives who kindly showed me around. I was also privileged to undertake research at the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem with the assistance of the Doctoral Research Fund granted by the University of Auckland.

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INTRODUCTION

Although as far as the world is concerned, we are really at the uttermost ends of the earth, few in number, and even in our own islands so scattered geographically, we have reason to be proud of our sustained connection with Zionist affairs and of our share in the upbuilding of Palestine over the last 42 years. (Rabbi Astor, 1943).¹

This thesis investigates the growth of the Zionist movement in New Zealand, seeking to understand why a community, ‘few in number’, which lived ‘at the uttermost ends of the earth’, would support a movement that originated on the other side of the world.² The Zionist movement in this period was an international network that sought the establishment of a homeland for the Jewish people. Many people in New Zealand’s Jewish and non-Jewish communities engaged in supporting the ‘upbuilding of Palestine’. Indeed, New Zealand earned accolades for its Zionism. In 1927 Dr Alexander Goldstein, a leader in the international Zionist movement, conducted a speaking tour throughout New Zealand, giving talks about Zionist Palestine projects and the ideas which inspired them. The meetings attracted much publicity and their message was received favourably by audiences around the country and by the Prime Minister, Gordon Coates. Upon his return to England, Goldstein commented, ‘If I were asked which was the best Jewish community in the world from the Zionist point of view, I would say New Zealand’.³ He later added, ‘If there is a roll of honour in the world for communities, the first place in that roll of honour belongs to Auckland’.⁴ My thesis will examine why contemporary Zionist authorities would make such claims and the degree to which histories of New Zealand have recognised the strength of Zionism in this period.

While the return of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland had been envisaged for centuries, Theodore Herzl’s formulation of political Zionism in the 1890s, against a backdrop of rising of European nationalisms, created a new platform for concrete action. The Basle programme put forward at the first Zionist congress held in Basle in 1897 proposed ‘a publicly assured, legally

¹ Notes from the Astor Collection, private archive.

² Ibid.

³ Lazarus Morris, Goldman, *The History of Jews in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1958, p.207.

⁴ Goldman, p.207.

secured home in Palestine'.⁵ What form that would take was not a foregone conclusion, but many New Zealanders became convinced that a Jewish homeland was the only answer to the 'Jewish problem' which afflicted Jews in Russia, Eastern and Western Europe, that of persistent anti-semitism. The persecution of Jews in other places of the world galvanised the local community to support and offer aid and assistance to their suffering co-religionists. Given that New Zealand Jews enjoyed, as local Zionist Louis Phillips asserted, 'a haven of rest and of refuge from the conflicts and cleavages of the old World', this thesis explores why this tiny, well acculturated community, with a comfortable life-style and little visible antisemitism, would engage in the problems of Jews on the other side of the world.⁶

In proportion to its size and presence, New Zealand's Jewish community 'punched above its weight' in supporting fundraising ventures for its suffering co-religionists. As Goldman asserted, 'the local community responded to the many demands made upon it'.⁷ John Efron argued that philanthropy was central feature of Jewish communal life in the nineteenth century. He asserted that, 'the large Jewish philanthropic network throughout the world also created a conscious sense that the Jews, though globally dispersed, were a united people, with a sense of mutual responsibility for each other's welfare'.⁸ This description is certainly consistent with the history of the New Zealand Jewish community, who came to see its contribution to the 'upbuilding of Palestine' as an extension of its traditional practice of charity and philanthropy. In addition to the internal drivers were the external circumstances of Jews in the nineteenth and early twentieth century: pogroms in Russia and Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries; World War One and the vulnerability of Jewish minorities; the onset of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust; the struggle to find homes for thousands of Jewish refugees prior to and following World War Two. The connection of New Zealand's Jewish community to worldwide Jewry was maintained in various ways: by interlocking networks of individuals, familial relationships, charitable, Jewish and Zionist organisations; modern communications and information exchange and the influence of inspiring, dynamic leaders. Through these avenues the local community responded to the persecution of their people overseas and Zionism became the hope for their future.

⁵ Basle Programme, 1897: <https://azm.org/basel-program-1897>

⁶ Louis Phillips, 'Zionism in New Zealand', Ben Green, ed., *The New Zealand Jewish Review and Communal Directory 1931*, Wellington, 1931. (hereafter cited as *1931 Review*), p.41.

⁷ Goldman, pp.206, 220, 221.

⁸ John Efron, *The Jews*, New York, 2019, p.369.

Louis Phillips, in the *The New Zealand Jewish Review and Communal Directory 1931*, recorded that the first stirrings of Zionism occurred in Wellington, where an effort was made to sell shekelim.⁹ The purchase of the shekel signified adherence to the movement and conferred the right to vote for the election of delegates to the Zionist Congress. Indeed, at the Fifth Congress in Basle, 1901, it was reported that Zionism had spread to New Zealand, as well as Chile, India and Siberia, 'in fact to the furthest corners of the globe'.¹⁰ The earliest sources concur that Auckland was the pioneer city in establishing the movement 'on a proper basis and in a corporate form'.¹¹ The Auckland Zionist Society was founded on 23 December 1903, six years after the first Zionist Congress in Basle. Zionism developed slowly in New Zealand over the first decade of the twentieth century, but by the time of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, which inscribed British support for a Jewish home in Palestine, Zionism had become widely accepted. Jewish community member and historian, Louis Phillips, wrote retrospectively in 1931, that 'it was not until the Balfour Declaration that Zionism became a part of the normal Jewish outlook of practically the whole of the Jews in the Dominion'.¹² By 1921 the Zionist Society in Auckland was reportedly supported by 'nearly every member of the community'.¹³ However, New Zealanders had engaged in the discourse over Zionism for several decades prior, so this thesis begins in the nineteenth century, to lay the ground-work for understanding the establishment of Jews in New Zealand and the non-Jewish interest in Zionism. A perusal of newspapers in nineteenth-century New Zealand reveals a general fascination with 'The Holy Land' for a variety of reasons; religious, historical, scientific and political. New Zealanders closely followed the developments in Palestine, which was then part of the Ottoman empire, demonstrating their connection with larger global processes, the vigorous circulation of information and knowledge across international boundaries, and New Zealand's position as part of the imperial world. Considered the 'Britain of the South', New Zealand society was closely connected to the intellectual, theological and cultural currents of the British world. The lines of connection were complex, with an interplay of ideas and agenda at work,

⁹ Louis Phillips, 'Zionism in New Zealand', Ben Green, ed., *The New Zealand Jewish Review and Communal Directory 1931*, Wellington, 1931. (hereafter cited as *1931 Review*), p.41. (Hereafter *1931 Review*)

¹⁰ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, London, 1972, (updated 2002), p.113.

¹¹ Violet Balkind, , 'A Contribution to the History of the Jews in New Zealand', MA Thesis, University of New Zealand, 1928, p.31. *1931 Review*, p.41.

¹² *1931 Review*, p.41.

¹³ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 25 September, 1921.

sometimes intersecting and overlapping and at other times held in tension, or at odds. The interest of New Zealanders in the return of the Jews to their ancient homeland continued into the twentieth century. My thesis will closely explore Zionism in New Zealand within the framework of British imperialism in the nineteenth century and follow the ongoing interest of Jews and non-Jews in the developments in the twentieth century, which led to the establishment of a state in 1948.

Zionism is a challenging phenomenon to understand, and scholars have shown that there existed many diverse formulations of what it meant to be a Zionist.¹⁴ It was a dynamic movement and its meaning shifted over time. Discussion, debate and disagreement took place amongst Zionists; between practical, political and synthetic Zionists, cultural, religious and secular Zionists, Territorialists, Revisionists, Labour Socialists, Marxists, and others. Indeed, there was not even consensus as to what kind of Jewish homeland would eventuate in Palestine. The historian Walter Laqueur asserted that ‘Up to the 1930s the Zionist movement had no clear idea about its final aim’.¹⁵ The views of anti-Zionists were just as varied and contentious. Indeed, many aspects of this topic are fraught with complexity. Questions such as, who is a Jew and what is meant by ‘Jewish community’, will reap varied and conflicting responses. The historian Colin Shindler argued that conceptions of Jewish identity became fragmented and diversified as a result of the upheavals of the nineteenth century, with some choosing a universalist view and others particularist. Indeed, Shindler asserted that ‘even escaping one's Jewish identity through acculturation, assimilation or conversion was so common that it too could be understood as a manifestation of Jewish identity’.¹⁶ My thesis examines the ways in which Zionism played a role in the formation of Jewish identity for this small, diasporic community. It explores the tensions and contradictions of the ideologies that underpinned the activities of the protagonists; Zionism, Nationalism, Imperialism, Judaism, Maternalism, Feminism, Humanitarianism (and the associated conceptions of charity). It shows that while some New Zealand Zionists grappled with the tensions inherent in ideologies such as Judaism and Zionism, or Zionist maternalism and feminism, others simply got on with the work at hand, and were not hindered by apparent inconsistencies. Through various case studies

¹⁴ Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State*, New York, 1981, 2017. Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*, New York, 1997. Colin Shindler, *What Do Zionists Believe? (What Do We Believe)*, London, 2007. Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, 2017.

¹⁵ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, London, 1972, (updated 2002), p.595.

¹⁶ ,Colin, Shindler, *A History of Modern Israel*, Cambridge, p.12. (Kindle Edition)

this thesis provides specific examples of the shaping role of ideology and the ways in which it worked out in a communal setting. It also shows that although diverse opinions and views were held, the outworking of Zionism in New Zealand was remarkably homogeneous. As a small, minority group, unity was highly valued. A degree of 'ethnic inconspicuousness' was seen to provide some protection from the spectre of antisemitism, so the community worked hard to keep conflicts and disagreements within the group.¹⁷ Different viewpoints, for the most part, did not result in divergent associational groupings within the Zionist movement. This unity however became severely tested at the end of the time period of this thesis.

Methodology and Approach to a challenging topic

The political nature of the subject of Zionism creates challenges, particularly from the vantage of the present day. Shindler argued, 'Zionism is seen in pejorative terms today, as a manifestation of political reaction and religious obscurantism in Israel. At worst "Zionist" is used as a term of abuse, an epithet to be hurled at anyone who does not see the Israel-Palestine conflict in monochrome.'¹⁸ Zionism is a topic that is often treated in a presentist manner, fraught with contention and clouded by the ongoing conflict between modern day Israelis and Palestinians. However, the intention of this work is to investigate how Zionism was understood by the protagonists prior to 1948. It seeks to understand the motivation of the historical actors and the conditions which enabled Zionism to grow.

My thesis is primarily a social history which seeks to understand how local Zionists saw their activity and participation. Although the thesis will frequently mention various types of official and unofficial institutions, it is not an institutional history of the movement and does not purport to cover the story of every Zionist group, organisation and individual in New Zealand. It does not seek to engage with every debate and ideological turn within the movement, but will consider the arguments insofar as they contribute to understanding the local community's response to an international movement. Laqueur asserted that many of those involved in the Zionist movement were 'instinctive Zionists', whose actions were not underpinned by a well developed ideology.¹⁹ I would argue that for many New Zealand Jews the pull towards their ancient homeland was in-

¹⁷ Anne Beaglehole, *A Small Price to Pay: Refugees from Hitler in New Zealand, 1936-1946*, Wellington, 1988, p.20.

¹⁸ Colin Shindler, *What Do Zionists Believe? (What Do We Believe)*, London, p.1. Kindle Edition.

¹⁹ Laqueur, p. 162.

stinctive, in the sense that it was deeply ingrained in cultural practises, history and religion. The traditional prayers, recited three times daily, included the aspiration to return to Jerusalem. Embedded in the annual festivals and wedding ceremonies were continual reminders of Jerusalem. However, as mentioned, the meaning of Zionism as it developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was much contested and debated. In a community setting, such as in New Zealand, Zionism developed in the intersection of ideas and practice. This thesis explores the reasons that New Zealanders supported the Zionist movement, when there was no great need for them personally to emigrate to Palestine. It considers not only what was achieved for Jews elsewhere, but also the ways in which Zionism fulfilled the needs of a diaspora community.

This research is grounded in an empirical, chronological study of the events and activities undertaken by New Zealand Zionists. Within New Zealand, my work will have an Auckland focus. The reasons for this are two-fold. I have been able to gather a large and significant body of primary source material from private and community archives in Auckland. Some of this material is particularly valuable, and to my knowledge has never before been consulted by historians, such as the handwritten notes of the successive Auckland rabbis, Samuel Aaron Goldstein and Alexander Astor, and the self-published memoirs of Simone Nathan. The second reason for the concentration on Auckland is that its local rabbis were strong Zionists and leaders of the movement. This contributed to Auckland leading the way in Zionism nationally. However, where applicable, I will seek to provide a nationwide perspective and relevant points of contrast by referring to studies that have been done in other regions, and where possible, selectively examining primary sources from other regions (particularly if they come into contact or diverge from Auckland Zionists).

The topic has an international and local focus which requires an interweaving of macro and microhistories. Case studies of specific personalities within the chronological framework provide a way of organising the material and giving deeper insight into the reasons behind the work of those individuals. These historical actors were not just Zionists but active community members; Zionism was but one aspect of the work they undertook in the community. The two Rabbis, Samuel Goldstein and Alexander Astor, consecutively led the Auckland Jewish congregation from 1880-1934 and 1934-1970. These rabbis had similar backgrounds, training and views and their leadership created a continuity over the period in view. In an age when many rabbis opposed Zionism for religious reasons, Rabbis Goldstein and Astor forged a path that combined the ide-

ologies of Zionism and Judaism. They took seriously their civic responsibilities and both were active in many humanitarian groups and community organisations. They took on the responsibility of following international developments, studying news sources carefully, and keeping their local members informed. They offered guidance, encouraged and exhorted congregants to participate in contributing to the needs of suffering Jews in other places, as a fulfilment of their religious and moral obligations. Both rabbis developed warm friendships with politicians and community leaders and were well respected members of society. They were highly patriotic; loyal to country and empire. Dual loyalty was a pressing issue for Jews in this period. In a time of rising nationalism, loyalty to the state or nation was considered paramount. The concept of a Jewish state therefore, raised questions about the loyalty of Jews to their countries of birth. Many British, Australian and a few New Zealand British loyalists opposed Zionism on these grounds. However, while Goldstein and Astor remained highly loyal to country and empire, they saw no conflict in also embracing the Zionist concept of a homeland for the Jews. They understood that the establishment of such a homeland was not for Jews like themselves who were safe and comfortable, but for the many in other lands facing persecution and deprivation. Other community leaders studied in this thesis include Simone Nathan and Louis Phillips who are discussed later in this chapter. These case studies reveal the significant influence of the individual.

One of the areas in which this thesis will make a new contribution is in understanding how Zionism functioned in a local setting in New Zealand. Many studies have been undertaken on the development of the general Zionist movement; the ideological arguments and debates and the process of building a Jewish state.²⁰ Far less attention has been afforded the diaspora, the everyday histories of those involved in the movement and role of Zionism in local Jewish communities. A brief comparison with Zionism in Australia bears out the fact that although the two communities shared much in common, Zionism developed differently in New Zealand. Both communities retained a strong connection to Anglo-Jewry and faced the challenge of assimilative pressures in a free and open society. Australian Jews, like New Zealand, grappled with the dual loyalty issue, the notion that one could not be a loyal citizen to one's country of birth and to a Jewish 'nation' elsewhere. However, in contrast to New Zealand, Australia had anti-Zionist advocates, who strongly and publicly opposed Zionism. Historian Suzanne Rutland argued that it took the 'events

²⁰ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, London, 1972, (updated 2002). Anita Shapira, *Israel*, Waltham, 2012. Colin Shindler, *A History of Modern Israel*, Cambridge, 2008, 2013. (Kindle Edition). Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State*, New York, 1981, Kindle edition, 2017.

in Nazi-dominated Europe, combined with the arrival of refugees and survivors', to shift Australian views on Zionism and following the creation of Israel in 1948, anti-Zionist sentiment dissipated.²¹ The divergence between two close Anglo-Jewish diaspora communities highlights the need for more scholarship on this topic, a point raised by historian Alan Crowne. He observed that the information recorded in the new *Encyclopaedia Judaica* was based on inadequate data in the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem, which reflected but did not describe the cross-currents within Australian Jewish society.²² If this need for more research is true for Australia, it is even more the case for New Zealand, where far less research has been undertaken on this topic. While Crowne's study of Australian Zionism is now dated and more recent work has been undertaken by historians like Suzanne Rutland and Malcolm Turnbull, New Zealand's Zionist movement has till now received very little scholarly attention.²³

Another area to which this research contributes is the historiographical understanding of Jewish fundraising and philanthropy. The historian Michael Berkowitz has analysed the way in which Zionism built on traditions of 'fundraising, philanthropy and charity' within Jewish society.²⁴ He stated that, 'It may seem obvious that Zionism relied on the tradition of Jews giving to charity, yet this fact is barely reflected in the movement's historiography.'²⁵ Fundraising was a central feature of Zionist activity in New Zealand, where the Zionist goal was not primarily for New Zealand Jews to emigrate to Palestine, but rather to support the work of building a Jewish homeland. Berkowitz pointed out that most scholarly writing on Zionism has focussed on ideology and politics and that there has been less in the way of 'historical' or 'thick description' showing how the movement developed in the diaspora. Berkowitz argued that 'Zionism's appeals to Western-aculturated Jews show that many characteristics of Jewish philanthropic societies were essential to the life of the movement'. This observation certainly holds true for New Zealand. My thesis builds on Berkowitz's insights and tests how well they describe the practices of New Zealand's Jewish

²¹ Suzanne Rutland, *The Jews in Australia*, Melbourne, 2005, p. 79.

²² Alan Crowne, 'The Initiatives and Influences in the Development of Australian Zionism, 1850- 1948', *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Autumn, 1977), p.299.

²³ Malcolm J Turnbull, *Safe Haven: Records of the Jewish Experience in Australia*, National Archives of Australia, 2000.

²⁴ Michael Berkowitz, 'Toward an understanding of fundraising, philanthropy and charity in Western Zionism, 1897-1933', *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (September 1996), p.241.

²⁵ Berkowitz, p.241.

communities. In addition, this thesis explores the contradiction between the Jewish practice of philanthropy and the Zionist opposition to charity. Berkowitz also highlighted the gap in scholarship regarding the contribution of women to the Zionist movement. He asserted that the role of Hadassah, the women's Zionist organization of America, had been minimised, even though they comprised a majority of members of the Zionist movement in the 1920s. A similar phenomenon is evident with regard to the women's Zionist movement in New Zealand, whose remarkable achievements have gone virtually unnoticed. This thesis will contribute to this area of New Zealand women's history.

Literature Review and Primary Sources

The amount of literature on New Zealand Zionism is miniscule. Although Zionism has been included as part of broader work on Jews in New Zealand, no major study has been undertaken on this topic. A general history of the Jewish community by the aforementioned Rabbi Goldman was published in 1958 which included a chapter on Zionism. Goldman covered the settlement of Jews in New Zealand, the development of Jewish structures and organisations around the country, the involvement of Jews within their general communities and various issues of concern to Jews.²⁶ While this is the most comprehensive work to date on Zionism in New Zealand, it is not an academic examination but rather a descriptive chapter written from the perspective of a Zionist celebrating the community's achievements. A few other books include chapters on Zionism. *A Standard for the People: The 150th Anniversary of the Wellington Hebrew Congregation 1843-1993*, edited by Stephen Levine is a multi-authored compilation of essays, written by members of the Wellington Jewish community.²⁷ Approximately four chapters of this large volume are devoted to Zionist groups and organisations, which, in addition to family histories and community minutes books, permit the gleaning of information about Zionist activities. In a similar vein, the historians Ann Gluckman and Laurie Gluckman have compiled the histories of various families and individuals in Auckland in a two-volume series.²⁸ Also written by various members of the Jewish community, there is no specific focus on Zionism, but it is mentioned when relevant to the narrative. Other works that have chapters on Zionism are primary sources for my period. These include

²⁶ L. Goldman, *History of Jews in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1958.

²⁷ Stephen, Levine, ed., *A Standard for the People: The 150th Anniversary of the Wellington Hebrew Congregation, 1843–1993*, Christchurch, 1995.

²⁸ Ann Gluckman & Laurie Gluckman, Eds., *Identity and Involvement: Auckland Jewry Past and Present*, Palmerston North, 1990, Ann Gluckman & Laurie Gluckman, Eds., *Identity and Involvement II: Auckland Jewry, Past and Present*, Palmerston North, 1993.

a 1928 MA thesis by Violet Balkind and the *New Zealand Jewish Review and Communal Directory 1931 (1931 Review)*. The *1931 Review* and Goldman's history built on the research previously undertaken by Balkind.²⁹ Louis Phillips, who authored the chapter on Zionism in the *1931 Review*, was recognised as an expert of Jewish history and knowledge, and was an ardent Zionist. These provide a useful contemporaneous overview of Zionism in New Zealand in this early period.

Other books on the Jewish community are useful, although not directly dealing with this topic. *The New Zealand Jewish Community* by Stephen Levine is part of a series of worldwide studies on Jewish community organisations.³⁰ While it includes information on Zionist organisations, its focus is on contemporary Jewish life and it does not cover the period of this thesis. In 2012, editors Leonard Bell and Diana Morrow published a collection of essays on the contribution of Jewish individuals and families to New Zealand culture in a broad array of areas; from the arts, to business, law and academia.³¹ While this work is a rich compendium of Jewish lives in New Zealand, Zionism is not addressed specifically apart from the occasional passing reference. There has been no extensive work undertaken on this topic and no critical examination of Zionism in New Zealand. Therefore, a gap exists for work such as this thesis, which will enlarge our scholarly understanding of a topic significant to New Zealand's history.

Previous scholarship is sparse but I will acknowledge and build upon recent investigations. For example, the work of Christine Baumberg on the Dunedin Jewish Community in the 1930s and 1940s is a useful complement to my thesis. Baumberg's BA (Hons) dissertation includes a chapter, 'The Dunedin Jewish Community and Zionism', which assessed the importance of Zionism to the Dunedin Jewish community.³² Her research showed that the Dunedin community was cautious and at times concerned about the possibility of an anti-Zionist backlash. Zionist groups were slow to form and their success depended very much on the availability of enthusiastic leaders. Baumberg argued that the refugees who arrived from the 1930s onward proved more committed to the

²⁹ Violet, Balkind, 'A Contribution to the History of the Jews in New Zealand', *M.A. Thesis*, 1928, Ben, Green, ed., *The New Zealand Jewish Review and Communal Directory 1931*, Wellington, 1931.

³⁰ Stephen, Levine, *The New Zealand Jewish Community*, Lanham, 1999.

³¹ Bell, L. & Morrow, D., *Jewish Lives in New Zealand*, Auckland, 2012.

³² Christine Baumberg, 'Ripples from Europe: The Dunedin Jewish Community in the 1930s and 1940s', A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of BA (Hons) in History and German at the University of Otago, Dunedin, November 1988.

Zionist cause than the more established British-based community. These findings provide useful adjunct for comparison with other communities. My research will richly detail the Auckland experience and I will be able to use Baumberg's work, along with Levine's compilation on the Wellington Jewish community, for comparative work and to gauge the attitude across the nation towards Zionism. Another M.A. thesis that contributes to this work is that of Paul Thomas Enright on 'New Zealand's Involvement in the Partitioning of Palestine and the Creation of Israel'.³³ Enright covers an aspect of New Zealand's political history that has received little attention by historians. It traces New Zealand Prime Minister Peter Fraser's contribution to the establishment of the state of Israel and gives insight into his relationship with the Jewish community. This information is difficult to find in the general histories and biographies on Peter Fraser. In addition, Anne Beaglehole's invaluable work on Jewish refugees in New Zealand fills in many gaps in the history of New Zealand's relationship with the victims of Nazi Germany and contributes to our understanding of the way the Jewish community responded to the European crises.³⁴ These events are relevant to the discussion of Zionism in that the tragedy of the European Jews and the subsequent refugee crises, contributed to the push for the establishment of a Jewish state.

There is a vast array of literature on the general topic of Zionism. Given the transnational and transimperial genesis and circulation of Zionist ideas, people, and culture, it is necessary to draw upon a wide literature for appropriate background, perspective and contextualisation of the movement in New Zealand. Michael Stanislawski's work is a good entry point for the intellectual history of Zionism and Walter Laqueur's history on Zionism is a valuable standard (if dated) work on the topic.³⁵ Another dated work is Israeli Cohen's short history, which is useful in giving an insider's view of the development of the movement.³⁶ Anita Shapira's book, *Israel*, is an informative general history as is Colin Shindler's *History of Modern Israel* and the multi-authored text, *The Jews: History*.³⁷ Shindler also penned, *What Do Zionists Believe? (What Do We Believe)*,

³³ Paul Thomas Enright, 'New Zealand's Involvement in the Partitioning of Palestine and the Creation of Israel', A Thesis submitted for the degree Master of Arts in History at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, January 1982.

³⁴ Ann Beaglehole, *A Small Price to Pay: Refugees from Hitler in New Zealand, 1936-46*, Wellington, 1988.

³⁵ Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, 2017, (Kindle version), Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, London, 2002.

³⁶ Israel Cohen, *A Short History of Zionism*, London, 1951.

³⁷ J. Efron, M. Lehman, S. Weitzman, *The Jews: A History*, New York, 2019. (Third Edition)

which gives an overview of the movement, its protagonists and their ideas.³⁸ Arthur Hertzberg presents a valuable survey of the major Zionist thinkers, providing for each, an introduction and biographical notes.³⁹ There are numerous case studies on particular personalities and events, such as Jacques Kornberg's work on Herzl, Jehuda Reinharz on Weizmann and the Balfour Declaration, Hillel Cohen on 1929, as well as studies of more specific aspects of Zionism, such as Michael Berkowitz on philanthropy, and Jolanta Mickute, Deborah Bernstein and G.M. Berg on gender.⁴⁰ Aviezer Ravitzky's work examined the doctrinal tensions between the rabbinical thinking of Orthodox Judaism and Zionist political views and was a helpful tool for analysing the views of New Zealand rabbis, whose roles were pivotal in influencing the movement in New Zealand.⁴¹ The following works provided a useful overview of the Arab-Israeli conflict and an insight into Palestinian Arab perspectives; Benny Morris's *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001* and Rashid Khalidi's *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood*. Kenneth Stein's work gave insight on Zionist land purchasing in Mandate Palestine, providing essential background to the conflict with the Arabs, which became a serious challenge for the Zionist movement.⁴²

I have been privileged to access a number of primary sources from private collections, made available to me for purposes of PhD research. Some of these had been handed down from Rabbi Alexander Astor, who served the Auckland congregation from 1935-1971 and was an ardent Zionist. This unarchived collection includes letters, speeches, sermons, newspaper articles, brochures, programmes, reports, minutes of meetings and pamphlets. It includes three hundred and fifty pages of handwritten notes of Rabbi Goldstein, Auckland's rabbi from 1880 - 1935, and

³⁸ Anita Shapira, *Israel*, Waltham, 2012. Colin Shindler, *What Do Zionists Believe? (What Do We Believe)*. London, Kindle Edition. Colin Shindler, *A History of Modern Israel*, Cambridge, Kindle Edition.

³⁹ Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*, New York, 1959. (Kindle Version).

⁴⁰ Jacques Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism*, Indiana, 1993; Jehuda Reinharz, Chaim Weizmann: The Shaping of a Zionist Leader before the First World War, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Apr., 1983), pp. 205-231; J. Reinharz, The Balfour Declaration and Its Maker: A Reassessment, *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (Sep., 1992), pp. 455-499; Hillel Cohen, *Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1929*, New England, 2015.

⁴¹ Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*, Chicago, 1996.

⁴² Benny Morris's *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001*, New York, 1999, 2001; Rashid Khalidi's *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood*, Massachusetts, 2006; Kenneth W. Stein, 'The Jewish National Fund: Land Purchase Methods and Priorities, 1924-1939', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Apr., 1984), pp. 190-205.

two hundred pages of Rabbi Astor's handwritten notes. I have also been given access to portions of Simone Nathan's personal memoirs that related to her work with the Women's International Zionist Movement in New Zealand, and in particular the establishment of infant welfare centres in Palestine. Other valuable primary source materials include: a collection of the Annual reports of the Board of Management for "Beth Israel" Auckland, now known as the Auckland Hebrew Congregation, from 1921-1948, with a gap from 1939-1944; *Auckland Judean Bulletin*, January 1941- July 1942; *The Judean Bulletin*, March - December 1943; *The New Zealand Judean Bulletin*, March 1944 - February 1948; *The New Zealand Jewish Chronicle*, the official organ of the Zionist Council of New Zealand, September 1944 - December 1947. In addition, research undertaken at the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem uncovered a trove of letters which gave valuable insight into the inner workings of the relationship between the central Zionist organisation, then based in London, and the local Zionist societies. Papers Past also provided a wealth of information from New Zealand newspapers.

Zionism at the 'Uttermost ends of the earth': An outline

Chapter One sets the stage for understanding the development of Zionism in New Zealand. It highlights those aspects of Jewish settlement in the nineteenth century that facilitated the growth of Zionism in the early twentieth century. It traces the way in which Jewish immigrants established places of worship and maintained their distinctive customs and beliefs in a new setting. They saw themselves as part of a wider group, with a particular connection to the Anglo-Jewish world. They maintained active networks of information exchange and kept abreast of developments on the other side of the world. The community was well acculturated and succeeded under conditions of freedom and equality. They enjoyed the peace and prosperity of the 'New World', developed good relationships in the wider community and co-operated with Christians on many ventures. The seeds were sown in the nineteenth century for the uptake of Zionism as a humanitarian venture in the early twentieth century: an active communal life, a culture of charity and a congenial relationship with non-Jews.

However, by the end of the century, Jewish leaders expressed concern that the comfort of life in New Zealand, along with the difficulties of finding Jewish partners in such a small community, led to many leaving the Jewish faith. Leaders, like Auckland's Rabbi Samuel Aaron Goldstein spoke of 'assimilation' as a problem that needed solving and began to see Zionism as a way of

bringing people back into the fold. Another concerning development at the end of the nineteenth century was the persecution of Jews in Russia after the 1880s, which led to a great exodus from that country. New Zealanders responded to the crisis in a range of ways, including the government sending a petition to the tsar and a vigorous newspaper debate regarding the prospect of receiving refugees. Chapter one explores the beginnings of the two-fold motivation to support Zionism; a humanitarian response to suffering and a galvanising movement that met the need of the local Jewish community to strengthen their Jewish identity and consciousness.

Chapter Two is also situated in the nineteenth century and investigates New Zealand's fascination with the return of the Jews to Palestine, which was then part of the Ottoman Empire. It explores the concept of the 'symbolic Jew' to understand how New Zealanders responded to Zionism and constructed particular images of Palestine and the Jewish people. New Zealanders were invested in Palestine and the Jews for a variety of religious and political reasons. The discoveries in Palestine over the course of the nineteenth century affirmed the religious beliefs of Evangelical Christians, which had come under attack from the Higher Critics, particularly with regard to the veracity of the Scriptures. Those of a millennialist stream considered the restoration of the Jews to their ancient homeland as a fulfilment of biblical prophecy. For New Zealand Anglicans, the establishment of a bishopric in Jerusalem paved the way, for the first time, for a Protestant claim in the land. This chapter underpins the salience of religious sentiment in New Zealand identity in this period. In addition, many New Zealanders, still attached to 'Mother England', followed closely Britain's imperial role in the Ottoman empire. British imperial interests sought a foothold in Palestine as a means of securing claims in India and elsewhere. The ideas of British imperialism and millennialism converged in the British-Israelite movement. While never mainstream, the notion that the British were descendants of the so-called Lost Tribes of Israel, commanded much attention. In addition, some Māori prophetic movements identified with the Israelites of the Bible and some saw themselves as part of the Lost Tribes of Israel. For a variety of reasons, many New Zealanders were captivated by Palestine in the nineteenth century.

By the time of the first Zionist Congress in Basle in 1897, New Zealanders had for several decades followed the developments in Palestine. Even though New Zealand was far away from the centre of activity, the events of this new movement were covered closely by the local newspapers. Chapter three tracks the progress of Zionism from 1897-1904 through the lens of newspa-

pers, showing the degree to which New Zealanders, Jewish and non-Jewish, remained engaged. Local newspapers, mediated through a British lens, covered the early Zionist congresses in great detail. Many of the articles that made their way to New Zealand, originated in Europe and were reprinted from British sources. These articles highlighted many of the early challenges that Zionists faced and the divisions within the Jewish world. This chapter tracks the shift in the newspaper discourse in the first seven years, from the skeptical portrayal of the movement as unrealistically idealistic, to one that had begun to gain some international respectability and to be taken seriously. As the centre of Zionism shifted from Europe to Britain, New Zealand's connection to the movement tightened.

Chapter four focusses on the progress of Zionism within the Jewish community from 1903-1914. These were years of 'small beginnings' from an institutional point of view. While progress was slow, Theodore Herzl had certainly captured people's imaginations, inspiring many Zionists. A study of the views of the Dunedin Rabbi Chodowski and Auckland's Rabbi Goldstein on Herzl and his impact reveals the way in which the rabbinical leaders grappled with the contradictions between a secular political and religious view of Zionism. It shows how they were able to reconcile the secularity of Herzl's mission with their own understanding of Judaism. While the predominant rabbinic view in New Zealand was Zionist, Wellington's Rabbi Herman Van Staveren identified as a 'Protest Rabbiner' who did not believe the return to their ancient homeland should come about through human intervention. A brief comparison with the Australian Zionist movement, which faced strong anti-Zionist opposition, supports the argument that rabbinical leaders had a significant influence on their communities.

This chapter also introduces the theme that, for many Jews, Zionism was a humanitarian response to suffering. Louis Phillips asserted that the 1903 Kishniev pogrom 'brought home to New Zealand Jews the reality of antisemitism'.⁴³ Zionism became justified as a 'panacea', an 'alleviant' for their persecuted fellow co-religionists. Many East European Jews immigrated to New Zealand over this period, and while their stories are not recorded in a consistent fashion, they can be gleaned from local histories. Many of these immigrants added the weight of their histories and background to the Zionist movement. While not many emissaries arrived in this period, the few

⁴³ *1931 Review*, p.45.

who did had an impact, encouraging and inspiring local societies. Many would follow in the coming decades.

Chapter five discusses World War One, or as it was often referred to in the primary sources, ‘the Dreadful European War’, and its impact on the Jewish community and Zionism.

The war proved perilous for Jews in Europe and the New Zealand community contributed to the needs of suffering co-religionists, as had long been its practice. Zionist activities in New Zealand were relatively quiet during this period, the various groups devoting their energies along with other community organisations to supporting the war effort. While Zionism in New Zealand took a back seat, the outcome of the war was significant for the movement. The shifts in world power as the war came to an end brought huge gains for the aims of Zionism. The 1917 Balfour Declaration for the first time gave international recognition to the Zionist goal of establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine and launched the movement onto a new level of activity. Its endorsement in the British Mandate for Palestine set the wheels in motion for the Zionist movement to increase its activities in Palestine and around the world. New Zealand played a role in these events militarily, through its involvement in the Palestine Campaign, and politically, through the New Zealand’s Prime Minister William Massey’s participation in the post-war conferences. Both of these factors contributed to a support for Zionism in New Zealand in the post-war years. This chapter also explores the role of Massey as an adherent of British Israelism and a staunch imperialist and the way in which he fitted into a continuum of British Christian leaders who supported Zionism

The British Mandate for Palestine provided the opportunity for Zionists to pursue their goals. Under the Mandate, the Zionist Organisation (ZO) was to ‘take steps in consultation with His Britannic Majesty’s Government to secure the co-operation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of The Jewish National Home’.⁴⁴ Zionists now faced the practical task of providing the means necessary to achieve this goal. Chapter six traces the increased activities of Zionists in New Zealand, in a period of growth and momentum. The visit of Israel Cohen to New Zealand in 1920 spurred on the local Zionist societies, which committed themselves to fundraising for the Jewish National Fund. Upon Cohen’s departure a controversy broke out regarding his remuneration, and communications with the central Zionist organisation became, at times, tense. This was further exacerbated by the failure of some local societies to meet their pledges. Research

⁴⁴ The Palestine Mandate, Article 4. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/palmanda.asp

in the Central Zionist Archive in Jerusalem revealed the extent to which Louis Phillips, a key figure in the Auckland Zionist movement, mediated between the local societies and the Central Zionist Organisation in London. He navigated the challenges of misunderstanding and miscommunication brought about through the cultural differences, trying tactics and strategies of the central organisation. He acted as an advisor, manager and motivator. Much of his hard work for the cause was hidden from the public, showing great self-sacrifice in service to a greater cause. His contribution is an example of the power of the individual to influence and impact a movement.

Chapter seven provides another example of the influence of key leaders. One of the outcomes of Israel Cohen's visit in 1920 was that it motivated Mrs Simone Nathan to establish the Women's Zionist movement in New Zealand and Infant Welfare Centres modelled on New Zealand's Plunket Society clinics in Palestine. Under her leadership the Jewish women of New Zealand were able to contribute to the 'upbuilding of Palestine' in a way that gave great satisfaction and achieved impressive results. As a passionate 'Zionist maternalist', promoting the welfare of women and children, Simone Nathan used all the power at her disposal to advocate for the cause: wealth, connections, great organising skill and an ability to inspire and motivate others. It is unlikely the project would have succeeded to the same degree without her commitment. Her passion impacted the wider movement as well. Goldman stated that Simone Nathan's 'unremitting and inspiring leadership' contributed in 'great measure' to the enthusiasm of the Zionist movement in New Zealand.⁴⁵ While Zionism was a motivating factor for Simone, it was not the only reason for the appeal of 'Plunket for Palestine' for most New Zealanders. The project appealed to New Zealand maternalists, striking a humanitarian chord. It also appealed to New Zealand's sense of pride that a local institution should have international appeal. This chapter explores two aspects of the Zionist movement that have been under-investigated; that of the role of women and the relationship between philanthropy and Zionism. Specifically, this case study of Zionist activity within a local community interrogates the reasoning and motivations for such involvement. It shows that the outworking of a global movement in a local setting was not necessarily consistent ideologically, and that the New Zealand response depended on many factors, not least of which was a tradition of philanthropy.

⁴⁵ Goldman, p.211.

Chapter eight tracks the change over the period 1920-1939 in the Zionist movement in New Zealand from one of optimism, to great disappointment and even despair. An examination of the records of the annual 'Report and Statement of Accounts' of the 'Beth Israel' Auckland congregation over the period 1920-1939 offers a glimpse into the functioning of the community and the place of Zionism within it.⁴⁶ These booklets present a summarised view of the activities of the community, including brief reports from the Zionist groups. While these records do not speak for all of New Zealand's Jewish community, it is a helpful survey of the community that was considered the most Zionist in New Zealand.⁴⁷ The Annual Reports record a period of growth and active engagement throughout the 1920s, as well as glowing reports on the progress in Palestine. New Zealand continued to receive Zionist emissaries, whose visits greatly encouraged the local movement. However, in Palestine, Zionists faced the reality of Arab opposition to the building of a Jewish homeland. As the British authorities in Palestine struggled to fulfil its conflicting commitments to Jews and Arabs, New Zealand's faith and confidence in Britain as the custodian of the Palestinian Mandate became severely tested. Over this period, Britain undertook several commissions of enquiry with the result that the homeland promised to Jews was gradually whittled away, immigration quotas greatly reduced and land purchases restricted. At the same time thousands of desperate Jews were fleeing Germany looking for refuge. For New Zealand Jews, whose loyalty to the 'mother country' was considered sacred, Britain's failure to keep its commitments was deeply disappointing and the hope of a homeland seemed to be fast disappearing. As British commissions and enquiries led to the diminishing of the promises made, the local Jewish community was actively engaged politically and often had the support of the New Zealand government in making their protests known to Britain. For New Zealand's Jewish community the disappointment was more keenly felt, in light of the loyalty they had held towards Britain. While Britain had ordered the closing of Palestine's gates to Jewish immigrants, the refugee crises was rapidly growing and the clouds of war forebode further ill-fortune for the Jews of Europe.

Chapter nine highlights the work of Rabbi Alexander Astor who led the Auckland Hebrew Congregation during the crucial years 1934-1948. An examination of Astor's writings gives insight into his leadership during a time of upheaval and international crisis for the Jewish people. It shows the way in which Astor interpreted Zionism, not only as a movement to build a Jewish

⁴⁶ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 1920 - 1939. Abbreviated as Annual Reports.

⁴⁷ Goldman, p.209.

homeland in Palestine, but one that met the needs of a small Jewish community in the diaspora. It also reveals the strong desire for unity in a community, which allowed for diversity but remained largely homogeneous in its Zionist expression. This chapter also considers the response of the wider community to the plight of the refugees of Nazi Germany; from the government, to community groups and individuals. It examines the position of the New Zealand government, led by Peter Fraser, Prime Minister under the First Labour Government from 1940 to 1949, on the refugee crisis and demonstrates how it contrasted greatly with its attitude towards the Zionist goal of establishing a Jewish state.

While I approached this topic chronologically, a number of themes run through the narrative, emerging at particular junctures with more or less emphasis. The themes which will be explored include: the humanitarianism which motivated the local community; the strong connection to Britain which influenced and impacted the movement, sometimes positively and at other times negatively; the various views of Christians and their contribution to Zionist goals; the symbolic power of the Jew, Palestine and Zionism; the salience of religious sentiment; the role of women; the vigour of networks of information exchange and international connections; the importance of the newspaper culture; the role of significant leaders and the influence of visiting emissaries.

This thesis offers a multi-faceted examination of a movement birthed in Europe, which captured the imagination of not only this ‘distant outpost of Jewry’ but non-Jewish New Zealanders as well.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ *1931 Review*, p.41.

CHAPTER ONE

19th Century New Zealand: Setting the Stage for Zionism

Liberal response was made to every appeal from London for the relief of their brethren in Russia and other countries of oppression and the Jews of New Zealand showed in a practical manner that ‘All Israel are brethren’.⁴⁹

Political Zionism arose in the late nineteenth century in Europe, as a response to antisemitism in Europe and Russia. Theodore Herzl, who wrote the manifesto, *The Jewish State*, and convened the First Zionist congress in 1897 has been credited as the founder of modern Zionist movement.⁵⁰ The goal of Zionism as articulated in the Basle programme at the inaugural Congress, was to establish for the Jewish people a ‘publicly and legally assured home in Palestine’.⁵¹ What form that would take was not yet clear, and for many years Zionists were considered idealists and dreamers, but by 1903 the first Zionist Society was established in New Zealand and by 1917, Zionism had taken hold as a movement to be taken seriously.

The goal of this chapter is to provide background for understanding the growth of the Zionist movement in New Zealand in the early twentieth century. It will begin with a brief summary of the settlement of Jewish people in the nineteenth century and will explore those aspects that laid the foundation for support for Zionism. As Jews settled, they sought to retain their identity as a people, which included keeping religious and traditional practices and the establishment of community life. Synagogues were established and the congregations based their communal organisation on the British model. Many of these groups that formed had the charitable purpose of meeting the needs of poor and needy fellow Jews, locally and internationally. The congregations responded generously to calls for aid from places abroad, like Palestine and Russia. The wider non-Jewish community often supported their fellow citizens by subscribing to these causes. Likewise, Jews, in particular, the civic-minded rabbis, supported wider community causes and congenial relationships developed between Jews and Christians. The combination of the factors of an en-

⁴⁹ Green, Ben, ed., *The New Zealand Jewish Review and Communal Directory 1931*, Wellington, 1931, p. 21.

⁵⁰ Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, New York, 2017 ed., loc.1712

⁵¹ <https://azm.org/basel-program-1897>, accessed 11 November 2019.

gaged community life, a culture of charity and the congenial relationship with non-Jews would, in the future, work together to support Zionism, as a humanitarian venture.

The Jewish community were highly cognisant of the fact that they were a 'distant outpost of Jewry'.⁵² Hence, they maintained strong connections with their co-religionists on the other side of the world. They identified strongly with Britain, and subscribed to Anglo-Jewish organisations which acted as a conduit between the local scene and the wider Jewish world. Vigorous networks enabled New Zealanders to keep abreast of issues of concern: newspapers, cables, letters, travel, trade, and visitors played their part in keeping locals connected to the international scene. New Zealand's response to the plight of Russian Jews in the 1880s provides a case study of the way in which the local community responded to the suffering of fellow Jews in a far distant land and the way that Britain mediated their assistance. The dire situation of Russian Jews attracted the attention of the wider community as well, with New Zealand's Liberal government, in 1891, intervening to express their concern for their plight. However, only two years later, the possibility of New Zealand taking in Jewish refugees from Russia was met with a sharply negative response from the government and general community. A vigorous discourse in New Zealand's newspapers ensued, with some supporting and others opposing the immigration of Russian Jewish refugees. The media coverage revealed many of the antisemitic tropes deeply ingrained in European culture. This chapter will show how the persecution and pogroms in Tsarist Russia prepared the ground for Zionism to be seen as a humanitarian response to Jewish suffering and homelessness.

This chapter will also explore the role Zionism played in meeting the needs of a small, diasporic Jewish community, far distant from the centre of the Jewish world. The new colony provided freedom from discrimination and Jews were well acculturated and flourished in such an environment. Although antisemitism was embedded in the inherited British culture, those traces did not hinder the everyday lives of Jewish people and they lived in peace and prosperity. However, the distance from world Jewry and the favourable conditions in New Zealand led to the increasing problem of assimilation. The sparse Jewish population created difficulties for many in finding suitable spouses, and many chose to marry non-Jews. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Jewish leaders were expressing concern about the loss of Jewish identity and consciousness, particularly amongst the younger generation. Zionism was seen as fulfilling a two-fold function. The

⁵² *1931 Review*, p.41.

first and most pressing was the need for a homeland for the persecuted Jews of Russia and Europe. Secondly, many looked to Zionism to galvanise the people and revive the 'Jewish soul' of this tiny, distant part of the diaspora.

Zionism as a humanitarian movement: nineteenth century pre-conditions

Surveys of the settlement of Jews in New Zealand have been detailed elsewhere.⁵³ They tell the story of the Jewish traders who came to Kororaraka, Bay of Islands in the 1830s; men such as John Israel Montefiore, Joel Samuel Pollack and Israel Joseph. In 1840, David Nathan joined them but later moved to Auckland where he played a prominent role in the settlement of that city and the Jewish community.⁵⁴ Jews arrived on one of the first New Zealand Company ships to Wellington in 1840, including Solomon Levy, Benjamin Levy and Abraham Hort (junior). Three years later, the patriarch of the Hort family, Abraham Hort senior, arrived on the *Prince of Wales*. Hort's journey to New Zealand was mentioned in the Anglo-Jewish publication *The Voice of Jacob*, and New Zealand was promoted as a suitable destination for Jewish colonists, with a favourable 'climate, soil and commercial possibilities'.⁵⁵ Hort had hoped extensive Jewish emigration to New Zealand might eventuate, at a time when Jews were subject to both widespread persecution in various parts of Europe and to the 'conversionist zeal of many Christian churches'.⁵⁶ Although Jews continued to arrive in New Zealand, the goal of mass Jewish immigration never came to fruition. The Gold Rush in Otago in the 1860s attracted many Jews to the South Island, from England, Germany and Poland. Hebrew congregations were formed in the main centres of Dunedin and Canterbury and also the smaller regions of Hokitika, Nelson and

1931 Review, pp.17-23, Bell, L. & Morrow, D., *Jewish Lives in New Zealand*, Auckland, 2012, pp.14-16, L. Goldman, *History of Jews in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1958, pp.27-118, ⁵³ Stephen Levine, 'Jews', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/jews/print> (accessed 5 November 2019), Peter Lineham, *Jews and Christians in New Zealand: An Analysis of the population statistics 1850-2006*, Paper for the Council of Christians and Jews.

⁵⁴ Goldman, p.112.

⁵⁵ S. Levine, ed., *A Standard for the People: the 150th Anniversary of the Wellington Hebrew Congregation 1843-1993*, Christchurch, 1995, p.32.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Timaru.⁵⁷ Although a few dug for gold, most made a living by supplying the needs of the miners.⁵⁸

As Jews settled in New Zealand they established communal institutions as a way of keeping active in their religious practices. This was an important part of maintaining their Jewish consciousness and identity. It was even more necessary for New Zealand Jews because of the distance from the centres of the Jewish world. A similar phenomenon can be observed in Australia. The historian Suzanne D. Rutland asserted that with the paucity of numbers and geographic distances, the synagogues became focal points of the community and performed many of the functions that would, in Europe, have been undertaken by the 'communal super-authorities, including the control of education, dietary laws and charity and the supervision of a burial ground'.⁵⁹

The first attempt to record the history of Jews in New Zealand was an MA thesis written in 1928 by Violet Balkind. She sourced most of the information from newspapers, personal reminiscences and the minute books of the various congregations.⁶⁰ Later histories, the *New Zealand Jewish Review and Communal Directory 1931*, (*1931 Review*) and Goldman's *History of the Jews in New Zealand* 1958, drew heavily on her work.⁶¹ Balkind described the first Jews in New Zealand as 'typical English Jews'; orthodox in their religious views and strict in observance.⁶² Until they had sufficient numbers they would meet in private homes for services. As their population increased, they were able to establish congregational life and build synagogues.⁶³ Prior to 1847, Auckland Jewish residents assembled for worship in a loft at the top of David Nathan's warehouse in Shortland Street, then leased a building in Emily Place, after which the first synagogue opened in 1885. Wellington's first service was held in home of Joseph Nathan in 1850 and a synagogue erected in

⁵⁷ Stephen Levine, 'Jews', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/jews/print> (accessed 5 November 2019)

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Suzanne D. Rutland, "Early Jewish Settlement, 1788-1880", in *The Australian People*, p.638.

⁶⁰ Balkind, Violet, 'A Contribution to the History of the Jews in New Zealand', *M.A. Thesis*, 1928, p.31.

⁶¹ Green, Ben, ed., *The New Zealand Jewish Review and Communal Directory 1931*, Wellington, 1931, L. Goldman, *History of Jews in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1958.

⁶² Balkind p.10.

⁶³ Balkind, p.2.

1870. A congregation formed in Christchurch in 1864 and after a few years in a small wooden building in Gloucester Street, a new synagogue was built in 1881.⁶⁴ A congregation in Dunedin was formally established in 1862 and a synagogue erected in 1881.⁶⁵ Balkind offered the example of Dunedin, known as the ‘southernmost Jewish community’, as a model for the establishment of synagogue-based communal organisations. The Dunedin congregation chose to adopt the prayers and ritual of the English Jews and placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the Chief Rabbi, Dr. N.M. Adler. The purchase of land for a burial ground was a priority, as rituals around death and burial were an important aspect of Jewish practice. Hebrew and religious classes were initiated, as well as social groups. Balkind asserted that most of the communal benevolences which were features of British congregations had been initiated in Dunedin. A philanthropic society was established in 1866 to provide relief of the Jewish poor, whether living ‘in the province or strangers’.⁶⁶ In 1873 the Anglo-Jewish Association formed, which, in co-operation with the Alliance Israelite Universelle of France promoted Jewish education in the East; Greece, Roumania, Turkey and Egypt. A women’s group, the Hand-in-Hand Society was set up for the relief and assistance of distressed women, either ‘in the province or strangers’.⁶⁷ In fact, Dunedin proved to be at the forefront of the Anglo-Jewish world with the formation Chevra Kadisha (The Holy Brotherhood) in 1891. The purpose of this organisation was to prepare the deceased body for burial, to visit the sick, to dispense charitable relief and to care for the cemetery. According to Balkind, Dunedin was the first in the British Empire to form such a society.⁶⁸ In addition, the congregation as a whole contributed regularly to the Chief Rabbi’s Fund and on many occasions raised funds for the assistance of starving Jews in Jerusalem and Turkey, as well as persecuted Russian Jews. The Dunedin model, was replicated to a greater or lesser degree in the other main centres and exemplified some of the core Judaic values; *Tikkun olam* or the repair (or perfection) of the world, the notion that ‘All Jews are responsible for one another’ or are their ‘brother’s keeper’ and giving to the poor and needy outside the Jewish community.⁶⁹ The historian Anita Shapira explained that, ‘Until the early nineteenth century Jews had viewed themselves as a people, albeit a diaspora

⁶⁴ 1931 Review, p.19.

⁶⁵ Balkind, pp.22-26, 1931 Review, p.19.

⁶⁶ Balkind, pp.13-15.

⁶⁷ Balkind, pp.13-15.

⁶⁸ Balkind, p.15.

Ibid. ⁶⁹ Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Wisdom*, New York, 1994, p.4.

people without territory and sovereignty'.⁷⁰ As Efron argued, the international Jewish philanthropic network provided the sense that Jews were a united people.⁷¹ The sense of community and the associated responsibility it carried for the wellbeing of Jews elsewhere would later lead to a growing support for Zionism. In the meantime, the local community responded to the many calls for charity.⁷²

The Jewish community felt deeply their obligation towards persecuted Jews in other parts of the world, particularly in the Holy Land. As Goldman asserted, 'the pioneer Jews could not be accused of parochialism'.⁷³ Goldman cited the example of the hardship suffered by the Jews of Palestine as a consequence of the Crimean War in the 1850s in which a fundraising appeal was published in the newspapers. Wellington's Abraham Hort arranged a concert at Barrett's Hotel and Auckland's David Nathan and Charles Davis collected funds to send to London. According to Goldman, the Chief Rabbi and Sir Moses Montefiore reported that more than half of the £18,000 received for the Jews in Palestine Fund came from Australasia.⁷⁴ According to Goldman, 'The land of Israel stirred the spiritual feelings of colonial Jews'.⁷⁵ Many emissaries arrived from that land seeking aid for the starving, sick and poor in the Jewish centres of Jerusalem, Safed, Hebron and Tiberias. Wellington's Abraham Hort senior's private correspondence records his thoughts on the situation there in the 1850s.⁷⁶ 'What dreadful suffering have been sustained by our co-religionists in Jerusalem, and its suburban Cities, and what a generous Sympathy has it awakened, not only among those of our Faith, but without distinction among the professors of all creeds based upon divine revelation'.⁷⁷ Balkind commented that the Auckland community was extremely generous towards its less fortunate brethren whether they belonged to the colony or from far-off. The concept of belonging to a people for whom you had responsibility would become a major

⁷⁰ A. Shapira, *Israel: A History*, Waltham, 2012, p.6.

⁷¹ Efron, p.369.

⁷² Goldman, p.214.

⁷³ Goldman, p.74.

⁷⁴ Goldman, p.74.

⁷⁵ Goldman, p.144.

⁷⁶ S. Levine, ed., *A Standard for the People: The 150th Anniversary of the Wellington Hebrew Congregation 1843-1993*, p.44.

⁷⁷ Levine, p44.

reason for New Zealand Jews to support Zionism in the early twentieth century, as later chapters will show.

The fundraising for Palestinian Jews in the 1850s highlights a factor that would become significant in the later development of Zionism, which was that the Christian community often co-operated with Jews in their fundraising efforts. Goldman pointed out that when a public appeal was made by the Jewish community, Christians voluntarily contributed to the cause.⁷⁸ In the case of the fundraiser for the Palestinian Jews after the Crimean War, most of the money collected by Nathan and Davis came from non-Jews.⁷⁹ A fundraising Bazaar in Dunedin in 1886 provides another example of the spirit of co-operation between Jews and Christians. The bazaar was the general method of fundraising for churches and on this occasion 'fellow-citizens of all creeds' supported the raising of money for the new synagogue, with a net sum of £1650.⁸⁰ A friendly relationship existed between the two religions. The rabbis were community minded and gained good reputations in their cities. Balkind gives an example that in Wellington, as an indication of the amicable relations that existed between the Jewish settlers and their fellow-citizens, the foundation stone of the Karori Church of England Chapel was laid by Mr Hort.⁸¹ Also, his son, Abraham Hort, jun., donated the land for the site of St Peter's Church in Willis Street.⁸² At times joint prayer meetings were held, such as in 1848 following an earthquake in Wellington. The congenial relationship between Jews and Christians was evident on the occasion of the passing of the Jew's Relief Act (or Jewish Disabilities Bill) in Britain, 1858. In New Zealand, Christians joined in celebrating the fact that now Jews in Britain could enter parliament, since the form of oath taking in the House of Parliament had been modified. A public dinner was held in Auckland in which all branches of the Christian Church attended. According to Goldman, the Jews in attendance acknowledged the 'kindly manner in which they had always been treated by their Christian fellow-citizens in Auckland, who had never sought to inflict any social pains and penalties, or to subject them to any disabilities on account of matters of faith'.⁸³ The friendship between Christians and

⁷⁸ Goldman, p.139.

⁷⁹ Goldman p.74.

⁸⁰ Balkind, p.14.

⁸¹ Balkind, p.27.

⁸² Goldman, p.75.

⁸³ Goldman, p.75.

Jews, established in this period, would provide the basis for cooperation on many Zionist ventures in the coming decades.

Another important aspect of the philanthropic activity to assist needy Jews elsewhere, was the close relationship between New Zealand's Jewish community and Britain, the conduit for the collecting and dispensing charitable contributions. The first wave of Jewish settlers came predominantly from Britain. They saw London as 'home' and New Zealand, as 'a Britain of the South', (a phrase coined by a Jewish traveller to New Zealand, Joseph Barrow Montefiore).⁸⁴ This was also the case for many of the first generation settlers to New Zealand, and indeed the ties to Britain endured well into the twentieth century. For the Jewish community, the connection to Britain was maintained in various ways. Many New Zealand rabbis trained at Jews' College in London and were sent out to New Zealand, sometimes via Australia. As mentioned, the synagogues placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, and services were conducted in a similar pattern to those in London.⁸⁵ Branches of the Anglo-Jewish Association were formed in the major centres of Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. The goals of this institution were 'to further the movement for democracy, to strengthen ties at home and abroad between Jewish communities and the Empire, and to win for Jews outside the British Commonwealth the enlightened treatment and freedom which Jews enjoyed in England.'⁸⁶ The strong connection to Anglo-Jewry was much like the metropolis-hinterland relationship described by Felicity Barnes in *New Zealand's London: A Colony and its Metropolis*.⁸⁷ The multifaceted lines of attachment to Britain, worked to draw New Zealand Jews closer to London, the spiritual centre. They saw themselves as a hinterland, more like a suburb on the outskirts of London rather than a distant colony on the periphery of empire, situated at the 'ends of the earth'. While spiritual sustenance emanated from the centre, the hinterland responded in practical ways, particularly through fundraising for many humanitarian and philanthropic ventures. For the most part, news of events in the wider Jewish world, as well as the calls to action, came via British Jewish organisations. The metropolis-hinterland relationship was not simply one way. When called on by the Chief Rabbi of London, the Russo-Jewish Committee of London or the Anglo-Jewish Association

⁸⁴ Goldman, P.139.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Goldman, p.139.

⁸⁷ Felicity Barnes, *New Zealand's London: A Colony and its Metropolis*, Auckland, 2012, pp.1-13.

to assist in fundraising to alleviate the suffering of Jews impoverished by oppression and persecution, the local communities responded generously, and gained a reputation for ‘openhandedness and generosity’.⁸⁸ However, when visits from emissaries in Palestine became ‘more frequent than pleasant’, a message was sent to the Board of Deputies in London requesting that these visitors receive credentials from the board.⁸⁹ This example shows London’s gatekeeping role, but also the two-way relationship and agency of the local community in setting boundaries.

Modern communications played a significant role in overcoming the 12,000 mile distance between the metropolis and hinterland, by providing a channel of information, knowledge and ideas. Publications like the London based *Jewish Chronicle*, kept New Zealand subscribers informed and educated. Historian Anita Shapira argued that Jewish publications facilitated strong links between communities; ‘...the Jewish press created an international community that was exposed to the same information, enthused over the same events, and identified with the Jewish masses even when they lived in communities that were strangers to one another in language and culture alike’.⁹⁰ As well as subscribing to international newspapers, journals and magazines, locals kept in touch with extended family and friends by letter and cable, and trips ‘home’ were not uncommon. Indeed, many, like Abraham Hort Snr. and Julius Vogel, eventually returned to England. The hinterland of Jewish communities in New Zealand saw themselves as part of the city system, as described by Barnes. They were ‘functionally different yet contiguous in time, and usually space’.⁹¹

The establishment of Jewish community life in New Zealand, the moral imperative towards acts of charity, the congenial relationship with the Christian community, the maintenance of strong links with world Jewry and the close connection with Britain were factors that laid the foundation in the nineteenth century for support for Zionism in the early twentieth century. These factors prepared the way for a humanitarian response to the suffering of Jews, which would culminate in the push for a Jewish homeland.

⁸⁸ Goldman, p.139 144.

⁸⁹ Goldman, p.144.

⁹⁰ Shapira, p.11.

⁹¹ Barnes, p.9.

New Zealand's Response to the Plight of Russian Jews in the 1880s

A case study of the plight of the Russian Jews in the 1880s brings together several themes we have discussed in this chapter. It demonstrates the Jewish community fulfilling its obligation to look after needy and suffering Jews on the other side of the world. It shows the interest of the general community in the plight of the Russian Jews, even to the highest level of power in the country and demonstrates the way in which New Zealanders were fully engaged with international affairs. It also reveals New Zealand's contradictory response, to be repeated in the 1930s, that while it was happy to support Jews elsewhere, it was less willing to entertain the notion of receiving Jewish refugees in this country. While New Zealand's Jews lived largely free from discrimination, antisemitic stereotypes were embedded in the culture, and surfaced in the media from time to time. The antisemitism that drove the persecution of Jews in Russia laid the groundwork for the Zionist argument that a Jewish homeland was a necessity.

The plight of Jews in Russia captured New Zealand's attention in the late nineteenth century. The Auckland Hebrew Congregation minute book mentioned the situation of the Russian Jews over the period 1891 to 1893. The Chief Rabbi (of London) had written to the community informing them of the persecution of their Russian co-religionists and they also received an appeal from the Russo-Jewish Committee of London, 'asking for subscriptions towards the funds in aid of the persecutions in Russia'.⁹² A sub-committee was set up in Auckland to 'solicit subscriptions from every Jewish member of the community' and a notification was put in the papers.⁹³ The committee formulated a plan to organise entertainment in aid of the Russo-Jewish Relief Fund. The 1882 Annual Report of the Wellington Hebrew Congregation mentioned that it had been necessary to raise two appeals 'on behalf of our distressed and persecuted brethren in Russia'.⁹⁴ Both appeals were met with a generous response from the Jewish community and members of all denominations, highlighting again, the support of the Christian communities.

Russian Jews bore the brunt of the backlash following the assassination of Alexander II in 1881. They were blamed for his murder and as a result pogroms broke out, with fanatical mobs killing

⁹² Auckland Hebrew Congregation Minute Book, 15 December 1891.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ S. Levine, ed., *A Standard for the People*, p.73.

and injuring Jews and destroying their properties.⁹⁵ Jews were compelled to live within the economically restricted areas of the Pale of Settlement and any new settlement outside of this area was prohibited by the 'Temporary Laws' of 1881. Jews were over-concentrated in a narrow range of occupations and 'enjoyed only those rights specifically allotted to them'.⁹⁶ The local press reported on the May Laws, and meetings were held to express sympathy for the persecuted Jews.⁹⁷ By the end of the nineteenth century Russian Jews were in an impoverished state. The historian Walter Laqueur described their dire situation; families crammed into small houses, high levels of infant mortality and the struggle to make a living. Laqueur argued that, 'Even antisemitic Russian newspapers admitted that the bulk of Russian Jewry was exposed to slow death by starvation'.⁹⁸ These factors led to a great exodus of Russian Jewry, with an estimated three million Jews emigrating from the Russian Empire to the West from the 1870s to 1917.⁹⁹

The situation in Russia attracted the attention of, not only the Jewish community in New Zealand, but the general public as well. In 1891 a resolution was passed in New Zealand's House of Representatives that a memorial be sent to 'His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias', imploring that 'all exceptional and restrictive laws' imposed upon his Jewish subjects be repealed and that equal rights be conferred upon them.¹⁰⁰ The petition stated:

We have learned with sorrow that that section of this ancient people who dwell within your Majesty's vast dominions are subjected to exceptional disabilities and restrictions, and that numbers of them have been and are being expatriated from Russian soil, notwithstanding their loyalty as a people to your Majesty's Throne and person, a loyalty which has often been sealed with their blood while fighting under the Imperial standard.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, New York, 1973, 2003, p.58.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁹⁷ 'Persecution of the Jews of Russia', *Bush Advocate*, 8 November 1890, Meetings, *New Zealand Mail*, 5 August 1882.

⁹⁸ Laqueur, p.57.

⁹⁹ http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Russia/Russian_Empire

¹⁰⁰ Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representative (AJHR), 1891, Session II A-06, P.1.

¹⁰¹ AJHR, 1891, Session II A-06, P.1.

The petition upheld Britain as a model of enlightenment, referring to the fact that Britain's restrictive legislation had once imposed political and other disabilities and deprivations upon the Jews and that the removal of those restrictions had reaped 'happy results'.¹⁰² A report of a debate in the House of Representatives of New Zealand 30 July 1891, showed that the resolution had been moved by Sir George Grey, who believed that by presenting this petition, New Zealand would be taking 'for the first time a place amongst the nations of the world'.¹⁰³ He spoke about his friendship with a large number of Jewish people over many years, and his 'kindest feelings' towards many of them.¹⁰⁴ (He was known to be a friend of Auckland's Rabbi Samuel Aaron Goldstein).¹⁰⁵ Grey hoped that such a movement made in a part of the earth so distant from Russia might convince the Emperor of the deep feelings of the people of the world regarding the suffering of the Jewish people of Russia.¹⁰⁶ Religious historian, John Stenhouse pointed out that few historians have investigated what 'enlightened Protestantism' meant for such nineteenth-century figures as George Grey, who has often been depicted in a cartoonish, stereotypical way. Stenhouse argued that the secularising tendency of historians, such as Keith Sinclair, led to a discursive underestimation of the 'politically liberal, religiously tolerant, socially inclusive, scientifically-oriented and intellectually progressive' characteristics of this stream of Protestantism.¹⁰⁷ Grey's initiative in sending a petition of protest to the Emperor is one example of enlightened Protestantism. As it turned out, the petition never reached the Emperor. A reply was received by General De Richter, Aide-de-camp to His Majesty, which stated that he was 'not authorized to receive petitions or addresses from representatives of foreign countries concerning questions which relate to the internal policy of Russia'.¹⁰⁸

While George Grey had hoped that the example of this petition on behalf of a suffering minority might 'leave behind an example to those who follow us, when they look back and see that in this

¹⁰² AJHR, 1891, Session II A-06, P.2.

¹⁰³ AJHR, 1891, Session II A-06, P.2.

¹⁰⁴ AJHR, 1891, Session II A-06, P.2.

¹⁰⁵ Ida Israel, 'Rabbi Samuel Aaron Goldstein (1853-1935)', Ann Gluckman, ed., *Identity & Involvement*, Palmerston North, 1990, p.60.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ John Stenhouse, *God's Own Silence: Secular Nationalism, Christianity and the writing of New Zealand history*, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 38, 1 (2004), p.55.

¹⁰⁸ Goldman, p.140.

early stage of the history of this young nation we strove to do good to our fellow-citizens in distant parts of the world’, only two years later, news that destitute Russian Jews might be sent to Australasia was met with a sharp reaction in both Australia and New Zealand.¹⁰⁹ On the 10 February 1893, the Australian Premier received a cablegram with news of the plans of the Jewish Charitable Society of London to send four hundred Russian Jewish refugees to Australasia.¹¹⁰ The *Ashburton Guardian* reported the next day that the Premier would ‘act conjointly with the other colonies in resisting the landing of Jewish refugees’.¹¹¹ The ‘other colonies’ included New Zealand, which during this period was part of Australasia in an ‘imagined community’ described by James Belich as ‘loose, vague, semi-tangible’, but ‘very real’.¹¹² The New Zealand press reported that New Zealand’s Liberal leader, John Ballance replied to the Australian Premier J.T. Downer that there was nothing to prevent indigent persons landing in the colony, but if the influx assumed serious proportions, legislation would undoubtedly be introduced to meet the case.¹¹³ Only a few days later British Rabbi Adler published a statement assuring Sir J. C. Bray, Agent-General for South Australia, that he had no intention of sending destitute Jews to Australia.¹¹⁴

In the meantime, a vigorous debate ensued in the press over whether these Russian Jewish refugees were fit objects for New Zealand support. While some correspondents favoured helping the Russian Jews and others vehemently opposed such action. The discourse revealed elements of xenophobia and racism, but also many of the issues of concern in New Zealand at that time. For the Trades and Labour Council it was the present ‘industrial condition of the colonies’, that was cited as the reason for opposing the introduction of Jewish refugees.¹¹⁵ Indeed, the Council’s resolution ‘viewed with alarm...the threatened influx of alien paupers into the Australian colonies’.¹¹⁶ This period has been labelled ‘The Long Depression’, when, according to New Zealand historian

¹⁰⁹ AJHR, 1891, Session II A-06, P.2.

¹¹⁰ *New Zealand Herald*, 9 February 1893.

¹¹¹ *Ashburton Guardian*, 10 February 1893.

¹¹² James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders From the 1880s to the year 2000*, Honolulu, 2001, p.47.

¹¹³ *New Zealand Herald*, Vol. XXX, Issue 9119, 9 February 1893.

¹¹⁴ *New Zealand Herald (NZH)*, 14 February 1893.

¹¹⁵ *New Zealand Herald (NZH)*, 11 February 1893.

¹¹⁶ *Evening Star*, 10 February 1893.

James Belich, ‘the promised land reneged on its promises and tens of thousands got out’.¹¹⁷ People worried about local issues of poverty, sweated labour and unemployment and these concerns lay behind their objection to immigrants who might threaten their livelihoods.

While some of the adverse reaction in the press could be explained in terms of the financial pressures that refugees might place on a colony in the midst of an economic crisis, some of the commentary had clear antisemitic undertones. The *Auckland Star* published a letter to the editor by an unnamed writer who quoted from Joseph Pennell, who had been specially commissioned by the *Illustrated London News* (December 1891) to inquire into and report on ‘the habits and customs of the Jew when at home in Eastern Europe’.¹¹⁸ Penney described their towns as ‘a hideous nightmare, of dirt, disease and poverty, the street...nothing more than an open sewer’.¹¹⁹ The Russian Jew, he continued, is ‘clannish and so dirty, who is so entirely bent on making a little money simply for himself...simply a race of middlemen and money changers.’¹²⁰ Such people, it was argued, must be prevented from immigrating to New Zealand. These antisemitic stereotypes, in which Jews are depicted as an Oriental ‘other’, had a long history in Europe. Jewish people had endured many centuries of Christian anti-Semitism having been accused of the ultimate crime of deicide by early church fathers. The historian, Robert Wistrich, suggested that opposition to Judaism came partly from rivalry and a fear that Gentiles would be drawn to the teaching and worship of the synagogue.¹²¹ Greek Church Father St. John Chrysostom wrote in the 4th Century that ‘If the Jewish rites are holy and venerable, our way of life must be false. But if our way is true, indeed it is, theirs is fraudulent.’¹²² With this binary thinking, a flourishing Judaism was seen as a threat to Christianity. Influential church father St. Augustine added to the divide between Judaism and Christianity by teaching that the Christian Church had replaced Israel as the new chosen people, since the Jewish leaders had rejected the message of Christianity. Wistrich explained, ‘The Augustinian theology reinforced the notion of the Jews as a wandering, homeless, rejected and

¹¹⁷ James Belich, *Paradise Reforged, A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the year 2000*, Auckland, 2001, p.32.

¹¹⁸ *Auckland Star (AS)*, 14 February 1893.

¹¹⁹ AS, 14 February 1893.

¹²⁰ AS, 14 February 1893.

¹²¹ Robert Wistrich, *Anti-Semitism: The Longest Hatred*, London, 1991, p.17.

¹²² Wistrich, p.16.

accursed people who were incurably carnal, blind to spiritual meaning, perfidious, faithless and apostate.’¹²³ From these beginnings, centuries of persecution of Jews followed, which included forced conversions, expulsions, periodic accusations of ‘ritual murder, host profanation, causing the Black Death by poisoning wells’.¹²⁴ The dehumanised Jews were stereotyped as ‘usurers, bribers, secret killers, sorcerers, magicians and oppressors of the poor’.¹²⁵

By the end of the nineteenth century, antisemitic stereotypes such as Pennell’s ‘race of middlemen and money changers’ had become embedded in the Europe’s cultural consciousness. The ‘reprobate status’ of the Jewish people was legislated by the Church in the 13th century under the doctrine *Servitus Judaeorum* (‘the perpetual servitude of the Jews’). As part of a raft of humiliating restrictions, Jews were prohibited from landownership, constricted in trade and excluded from guilds. Moneylending was one of the areas open to them and conversely forbidden to Christians by church decree. Wistrich wrote, ‘Jews became associated in the popular mind with banking, money, exchange and the parasitical exploitation of a land-based peasantry which formed the backbone of European nations’.¹²⁶ The publishing of Pennell’s work in the *Auckland Star* showed that New Zealand was not immune from currents of antisemitism that emanated from London. Indeed, the stereotypes were so entrenched that Jews themselves, at times, internalised the deprecatory images and employed them. Jewish politician and later premier, Julius Vogel, employed an antisemitic trope in a work of fiction, *Anno Domini*. He had one character, Laurient, declare, ‘You know that I come of a race of money-lenders, and I have sent for you to ask you for my money and interest’.¹²⁷

This background of antisemitism may well have motivated one Jewish member of the House of Representatives, S.E. Shrimski, to argue vigorously in support of his fellow Jews. He challenged the Premier to prove that the Jews would make unworthy citizens of the colony. He believed that the designation of pauper assigned to these refugees was unproven and made to influence public opinion against them. Further, the actions of the philanthropists ‘at home’, i.e. in Britain, should

¹²³ Wistrich, p.19.

¹²⁴ Wistrich, p.29.

¹²⁵ Wistrich, p.29.

¹²⁶ Wistrich p.27.

¹²⁷ J. Vogel, *Anno Domini*, London, 1889, p.210.

have been applauded, but they were instead unfairly stigmatised.¹²⁸ At a time when charity was largely a private affair, and the distribution of such was tied to notions of morality and the ‘deserving poor’, Shrimski defended the Russian refugees, raising the questions, ‘How many Jews are in receipt of public charity? How many are in the industrial schools? How many are in the gaols of the colony? How many of their deserted wives and families are a burden on the State?’¹²⁹ He stated that while not surprised that the Liberal Labour Councils had taken action against the refugees, he had expected more from the Liberal government, ‘who are supposed to look upon all men as equal, irrespective of race or creed’.¹³⁰ He accused them of, taking a ‘narrow-minded and illiberal step’.¹³¹ Shrimski would also take up the cause of Chinese immigrants a few years later, strongly opposing the 1896 Asiatic Restriction Act.¹³² In this period of economic downturn, xenophobic tendencies came to the fore. British immigration was favoured, which included British Jews, but ‘others’ like Chinese or Russian Jewish refugees were clearly not welcome.

The public discourse over the plight of the Russian Jews continued for a couple of years. Some correspondents challenged the view that these refugees would be a drain on New Zealand society. A *Waikato Times* article argued that although they arrived in London with only a few shillings, the Jewish community in England contributed generously, so that they should not be regarded as paupers by the country to which they were sent, and so that they would have the means to provide for themselves in their new abode.¹³³ Curiously, some viewed negatively, the propensity of Jews to provide charitable aid to fellow brethren. Joseph Pennell, in his scathing description of Jews in Russia wrote, ‘The charity of the Jews to their own people is a well-known fact’, the implication being that they only contribute to their own community.¹³⁴ As we have previously mentioned,

¹²⁸ Thames Advertiser (TA), 16 February 1893.

¹²⁹ New Zealand Herald, (TA) 11 February 1893.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² L. Bell & D. Morrow, eds., *Jewish Lives in New Zealand: A History*, p.317.

¹³³ *Waikato Times* (WT) 20 August 1891.

¹³⁴ Joseph Pennell, *The Jew at Home*, New York, 1892, P.14.

many Jews in New Zealand were generous benefactors in the general community, as giving back to the community was treated as an ethical obligation.¹³⁵

While the poverty of the Russian Jewish refugees proved a contentious issue, others questioned whether religious bigotry was behind the opposition to their immigration to New Zealand. Shrimski believed this was so and he was not the only one.¹³⁶ A letter to the editor penned by 'Mosaic' questioned why the religion of any individual should make them a less useful settler, and asked whether Jews were bad settlers or citizens, whether they took most of the Charitable Aid Funds, or formed a great part of the criminal community. In a clear reference to antisemitism and xenophobia, the writer raised the possibility that this outcry was really 'part of the old persecuting spirit which seems unextinguishable' or a 'revival of that religious hatred which views an enemy in every man who thinks not as we think?'¹³⁷

Another article in the *Otago Witness* took a different view, referring to New Zealand's lack of such prejudice. The writer stated that one of the first things to strike a visitor to this country was the 'utter absence of anything of the kind in the colonies'.¹³⁸ 'There is a certain freedom and joyousness engendered in the life people lead in these sunny lands that makes them impatient of any restraint on their own religious observances, and at the same time tolerant of those practised by others'.¹³⁹ He went on to describe the happy co-existence of various Protestant religions, Catholics and the freedom 'those of Hebrew persuasion' have to conduct their services. As we have seen, the relationship between Jews and Christians in colonial New Zealand, was, on the whole, congenial.¹⁴⁰

Another antisemitic notion that correspondents propagated was that Jews were subversive and ever plotting against the state. An article in the *Wanganui Herald* suggested that a law was necessary 'to keep out the pauper dregs of Europe, who are neither industrious or peaceful, but on the

¹³⁵ Bell & Morrow, p.23.

¹³⁶ *New Zealand Herald (NZH)*, 11 February 1893.

¹³⁷ *Auckland Star (AS)*, 10 February 1893.

¹³⁸ *Auckland Star (AS)*, 14 February 1893.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Goldman, p.141.

contrary idle and disorderly, ever plotting against the safety of the State and the security of the accumulated savings of the industrious and frugal'.¹⁴¹ This was the kind of thinking that led to the publication of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in Russia at the end of the nineteenth century. It was a pamphlet, later shown to be a fabrication, which claimed to be the minutes of meetings held secretly by Jewish wise men plotting to control the world.¹⁴² Jews were viewed with suspicion by some, because they were seen as a 'state within a state' and dual loyalty was an accusation that Jews would often face.¹⁴³ As a consequence, many Jews worked hard to distance themselves from the idea of Jewish nationhood, so that they would find acceptance within the country within which they lived. They went to lengths to emphasise their loyalty to the land of their birth. Indeed, the desire to prove one's loyalty to the state influenced many Jews to become anti-Zionist and/or 'excessively patriotic'.¹⁴⁴ Patriotism was a value fully embraced and preached by Auckland's Rabbi Goldstein. The evidence of Jewish involvement in civic and community life shows the opposite of the notion that New Zealand needed protection from Jews 'plotting against the safety of the State'.¹⁴⁵ Finally, a comment by one writer, 'Colonial', pre-empted the kinds of questions that undergirded the Zionist movement; 'If every country in the world is barred to the Jews, where in Heaven's name are they to go?'¹⁴⁶ With millions of Jews fleeing Russia and countries like New Zealand and Australia reluctant to allow them to enter, the stage was set for the growth of a movement to establish a homeland for these homeless refugees.

It appears that few of the four to five hundred destitute Russian Jews found their way to New Zealand. Balkind's statistical survey showed that in the period 1880-1896 there was an increase of

¹⁴¹ *Wanganui Herald*, 9 February 1893.

¹⁴² <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/protocols-of-the-elders-of-zion/>

¹⁴³ Laqueur, p.20.

¹⁴⁴ Until the French Revolution, when Jews for the first time gained equal rights as citizens, Jews were subject to the whims and fancies of the rulers of the countries within which they lived. As a survival technique, many became excessively patriotic, as far as their country would allow. Historian Walter Laqueur gives one such example, 'When the Prussian king called his subjects to the colours to fight Napoleon, the patriotic response of the Jews was second to none: 'Oh, what a heavenly feeling to possess a fatherland!' one of their manifestos proclaimed; 'Oh what a rapturous idea to call a spot, a place, a nook one's own upon this lovely earth'. Laqueur, p.3.

¹⁴⁵ *Wanganui Herald*, 9 February 1893.

¹⁴⁶ *Press*, 22 February 1893.

thirteen persons in the Jewish population.¹⁴⁷ It is difficult to know how many of these might have been Russian refugees. In 1882, Wellington's Rabbi Van Staveren welcomed twelve Russian Jews to the Wellington community. It appears that he took personal responsibility for their care, in spite of also having to provide for his own large family. These newcomers were said to have integrated into the community and strengthened it.¹⁴⁸ A small handful of immigrants were also received in Dunedin and Christchurch.¹⁴⁹ Compilations of family and local histories reveal the stories of those who came from Russia. Ted Gluckman was born in Lithuania in 1881, then part of Russia. He eventually came to New Zealand in 1907 after having spent time in Germany and South Africa. Louis Arnoldson (who had changed his surname from Uschisoff, to make it less foreign sounding) and his cousin Max Liechtenstein fled Russia in the early 1890s and after many adventures arrived in New Zealand in 1895.¹⁵⁰ Lewis Domb, one of nineteen Wellington Jews to serve at Gallipoli in World War One, was born in Russia in 1891, and his parents immigrated to New Zealand around the turn of the century.¹⁵¹

It appears that in spite of opposition, Jews did emigrate from Russia over this period, but probably not the 'destitute' Russian Jews, via London. Rabbi Goldstein commented that recently arrived 'foreign coreligionists' to New Zealand felt such a sense of relief that they were 'not interfered with by anyone', and found it a 'novel experience' to be able to go about their business unmolested.¹⁵² For some Jews, the reaction against Russian Jewish refugees served as a reminder of the vulnerable position Jews found themselves in times of persecution. Many were beginning to see Palestine as a place of refuge. However, even from Palestine came reports of Russian hatred towards the Jews. 'Our own correspondent' from the *Otago Witness*, in his report of 1877 commented on the bitter treatment of Jews in Palestine at the hands of the Russians.¹⁵³ He noted the vigorous political activity of Jews across Europe, especially in 'Austria, Italy, Turkey, and Ger-

¹⁴⁷ Balkind, p. 62.

¹⁴⁸ Goldman, p.143.

¹⁴⁹ Goldman, p.143.

¹⁵⁰ A. Gluckman & L. Gluckman, eds., *Identity and Involvement II*, Palmerston North, 1993, p.42.

¹⁵¹ Janet Salek, *Wellington Jews at Gallipoli*, Wellington, 2015, p.13.

¹⁵² Goldstein notes

¹⁵³ *Otago Witness*, 7 April 1877.

many' seeking to 'secure an amelioration of the condition of their fellow-Hebrews'.¹⁵⁴ He exhorted readers to 'keep their eyes alike on Palestine and on the doings of the Jews. Everything seems to point to both the country and the people playing a prominent part in the great drama whose commencement only has been seen during the past year in Turkey'.¹⁵⁵ The view that Palestine might play a role in the future of Jews was becoming more commonly held by the end of the nineteenth century and the movement towards a political solution was gaining momentum.

Zionism as an answer to assimilation: the nineteenth century background

In the early twentieth century, Jewish leaders began expressing great concern over the shift in Jewish consciousness and identity of the younger generations who were drifting from the faith of their forbears. Balkind summarised the conditions for Jews in New Zealand in the early twentieth century. They lived peaceful and sheltered lives, in a 'happy corner of the world'. They were far removed from the turmoil and trials which their fellow Jews experienced in other parts of the world. They had prospered in this land of freedom and plenty. In this ideal state of affairs, Balkind argued, they faced a problem which threatened to destroy the vitality of Jewish life in the Dominion. The 'lifeblood of Judaism', its youth, was being 'lost to an alarming extent'.¹⁵⁶ Many leaders began to see Zionism as a galvanising instrument, 'resuscitating forces hitherto dormant and bringing into prominence qualities lying fallow, unfilled and untrained and awakening our people into vigorous activity, fostering ideals hitherto ignored'.¹⁵⁷ These were the words of Auckland's Rabbi Alexander Goldstein, uttered at a memorial to Herzl in 1915. Goldstein saw Zionism as the 'strongest antidote' to the assimilation which was steadily growing and 'playing such havoc with Jewry'. He argued that Zionism had introduced a 'new epoch' to Judaism and given life to 'many strangers from their nation and religion'.¹⁵⁸ He described assimilation as the process of disintegration which came about through the neglect of Jewish thought, the loss of identity and subsequent disloyalty to Jewish history and its mission.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Balkind, p.55.

¹⁵⁷ 'Herzl Memorial', 1915, Goldstein Notes.

¹⁵⁸ 'Herzl Memorial', 1915, Goldstein Notes.

The process of assimilation began in the nineteenth century and followed a similar pattern to the developments in Western Europe where emancipation accelerated the process. In New Zealand, Jewish immigrants were able to build their lives as free citizens, as the new colony had been established upon the basis of religious and political freedom.¹⁵⁹ Jews did not face the discriminatory legislation they had experienced in Britain. In the early nineteenth century British Jews were subject to a raft of restrictions and were prevented from free participation in business, parliament and most professions.¹⁶⁰ It was a thirty year struggle before emancipation was achieved. The lack of discrimination in New Zealand enabled Jews to flourish and succeeded in commerce in the main settlements in Auckland, Dunedin and Wellington: men such as, David Nathan who who opened his first store in Auckland in 1841, on the corner of Shortland Crescent and High Street.¹⁶¹ He was a benefactor of many Auckland societies and institutions, founding member of the Auckland Chamber of Commerce, trustee of the Auckland Savings Bank, an early commissioner for the port of Auckland, and served on the city council in 1854–55.¹⁶² Other prominent Jewish families in the Auckland business community were the Keesings and Ashers. Jewish families also established successful enterprises in Dunedin: the Fels, de Beers, Hallensteins, Braschs and Theomins.¹⁶³ Jacob Joseph arrived in Wellington in 1840 and established a hardware business on Lambton Quay and later founded the firm Joseph Nathan and Co. with Joseph Nathan.¹⁶⁴ Their dried milk product 'Glaxo' achieved worldwide success. Joseph Nathan became President of the Wellington Chamber of Commerce and pioneer of the Wellington and Manawatu Railway. Balkind argued that the pioneer Jewish settlers progressed from retail to wholesale warehousing and importing and became influential in the development of international trade between England, Australia and New Zealand. She remarked, 'Nowhere else in the world, have Jews, in proportion to their num-

¹⁵⁹ Balkind, Introduction.

¹⁶⁰ U. R. Q. Henriques, 'The Jewish Emancipation Controversy in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Past & Present*, No. 40 (Jul., 1968), p. 134.

¹⁶¹ Janice C. Mogford. 'Nathan, David', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1990. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1n1/nathan-david> (accessed 6 November 2019)

¹⁶² Janice C. Mogford. 'Nathan, David', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1990. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1n1/nathan-david> (accessed 6 November 2019)

¹⁶³ Stephen Levine, 'Jews - 19th-century immigration', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/jews/page-1> (accessed 6 November 2019)

¹⁶⁴ Balkind, p.6.

ber, attained to such prominence'.¹⁶⁵ Indeed the contribution of the Jewish people to New Zealand in the areas of business, politics, arts and medicine has been well documented in *Jewish lives in New Zealand*, and is all the more remarkable in light of their small numbers.¹⁶⁶ According to Balkind's statistical survey, the Jewish population of New Zealand in 1867 was 1247; in 1911 - 2128; in 1926 - 2567.¹⁶⁷ In terms of percentage of the population, Jews represented 0.28% in 1886 and 0.22 % in 1916.

However, success had unintended consequences. The favourable conditions contributed to a loosening of ties to Jewish religion, culture and consciousness. Balkind referred to this when she commented on the Russian Jewish immigrants that arrived in the 1880s, following the mass exodus from Russia due to antisemitic persecution. Balkind asserted that these Jews brought with them a 'more profound Jewish outlook, and were the main source from which the communities developed, the sons of the earlier immigrants having become assimilated and absorbed in their surroundings'.¹⁶⁸ Another factor that contributed to assimilation and was a consequence of the small Jewish population was that of intermarriage. This was viewed seriously by religious leaders and indeed, Balkind, writing in 1928 claimed that it was 'a problem that threatens to destroy the vitality of Jewish life in the Dominion'.¹⁶⁹ The fact is, that intermarriage and extra-marital sexual liaisons between Jewish men and Māori women occurred from the earliest period of contact. John Israel Montefiore had business interests in the Bay of Islands and then Auckland, establishing a land agency and general merchant's store at 3 Lower Queen Street. Montefiore was community-minded, a foundation member and generous supporter of the Jewish congregation and, with David Nathan, on 4 December 1843 secured a grant of land from the governor for a burial ground to be established on the corner of Karangahape Road and Symonds Street. He was regarded as an honourable man, and remembered for his philanthropy.¹⁷⁰ He never married, but had a Māori daugh-

¹⁶⁵ Balkind, introduction.

¹⁶⁶ D. Morrow & L. Bell, eds., *Jewish lives in New Zealand*.

¹⁶⁷ Balkind, *A Statistical Survey*, appendix.

¹⁶⁸ Balkind.

¹⁶⁹ Balkind.

¹⁷⁰ Roger Wigglesworth. 'Montefiore, John Israel', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1990. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1m50/montefiore-john-israel> (accessed 6 November 2019)

ter.¹⁷¹ The Jewish trader Joel Samuel Polack arrived in New Zealand in 1831 and developed good relationships with Māori. He wrote two books of his New Zealand experience which were well received in England.¹⁷² He also lived for a time with a 'chief girl' in Hokianga, but apparently later repented his 'former indiscretion'.¹⁷³ Extra-marital relationships were not endorsed by the Jewish religion, but neither was 'marrying out' of the faith. On 16 December 1880 Samuel Yates married Ngawini Murray of Te Rarawa and Te Aupouri. They had eight children and ran a thriving business and farming venture in the far north.¹⁷⁴ Even though Samuel Yates had departed from the Jewish convention on marriage, he considered it important to have a Jewish burial. His last wish, faithfully carried out by his wife Ngawini was his burial in the Jewish cemetery in Karangahape Road, Auckland, in 1890.¹⁷⁵ Marriages also took place between Jews and other Pakēhā settlers. Julius Vogel, New Zealand's Premier from April 1873 to July 1875 and from February to August 1876, was of Jewish parentage, but married Mary Clayton in a Christian ceremony in Dunedin in 1867. He was also buried in a Jewish cemetery at East Molesley in 1899, suggesting that he still identified as Jewish.¹⁷⁶ As Balkind intimated, it was often the descendants of the original pioneers who married non-Jews. When Abraham Hort, sen., widely known for his staunch faith, philanthropy and public service, arrived in New Zealand to join his family at Port Nicholson, he discovered, to his displeasure, that two of his sons had married non-Jews, and later his daughter, Margaret Joachim Hort, married Francis Dillon Bell, a Public administrator, runholder and

¹⁷¹ Roger Wigglesworth.

¹⁷² Joel Polack, *New Zealand, being a narrative of travels and adventures during a residence in that country between the years 1831 and 1837, two volumes, 1838*, J. Polack, *Manners and customs of the New Zealanders; with notes corroborative of their habits, usages, etc., and remarks to intending emigrants*, two volumes, 1840.

¹⁷³ Jocelyn Chisholm. 'Polack, Joel Samuel', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1990, updated March, 2006. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1p18/polack-joel-samuel> (accessed 6 November 2019)

¹⁷⁴ David A. Armstrong. 'Yates, Ngawini and Yates, Samuel', from the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/3y1/yates-ngawini> (accessed 8 June 2017).

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Raewyn Dalziel. 'Vogel, Julius', first published in the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, vol. 1, 1990, and updated online in April, 2013. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/1v4/vogel-julius> (accessed 21 June 2017).

politician.¹⁷⁷ The mixed marriage was also frowned on by the Anglican hierarchy. Goldman asserted that when Dillon Bell requested the Bishop of New Zealand, Bishop Selwyn to officiate, the latter refused to do so. Bell sought Sir George Grey's advice and was counselled to marry in a registry office.¹⁷⁸ New Zealand conditions made it challenging to keep some Jewish laws, and while a number of Jews succumbed to the environment and compromised certain requirements of Judaism, they still retained some cultural practices. The rabbinical leaders of the period preached against marrying outside the faith, which they feared would lead to assimilation, endanger Jewish identity and ultimately Jewish survival. As mentioned, Zionism would be heralded as an answer to the problem of assimilation in the coming decades.

Conclusion

This chapter showed how the ground was prepared in the nineteenth century for the support of Zionism in the early twentieth century. As Jewish people settled in New Zealand they established congregations where they could practice their religion and traditions and maintain their identity. Following the moral imperatives of their faith, they set up charitable organisations to meet the needs of their less fortunate co-religionists, locally and overseas. Jews contributed to their communities, as an ethical obligation and warm relationships developed with non-Jews, such that they often co-operated on fundraising and other such ventures. Local Jews were ever conscious of their physical distance from the main centres of world Jewry and maintained a close connection through vigorous networks of communication and exchange. They established their synagogues on a British model and to a large extent the Anglo-Jewish organisations facilitated their relationship with the wider Jewish world. A combination of these factors laid the foundation for the growth of Zionism in the coming decades. Furthermore, the plight of Russian Jews in the 1880s provided a strong case for the need of a homeland for the Jewish people. New Zealanders responded to the calls for assistance in various ways, from concern and compassion to self-interested xenophobia and traces of antisemitism.

By the early twentieth century Zionism became seen by many Jewish leaders in New Zealand, as performing a two-fold function. The first and most pressing was, as mentioned, the need for a

¹⁷⁷ Goldman, p.62., Raewyn Dalziel. 'Bell, Francis Dillon', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1990. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1b16/bell-francis-dillon> (accessed 6 November 2019)

¹⁷⁸ Goldman, p.80.

homeland for the persecuted Jews of Russia and Europe. Secondly, Zionism was seen to fulfil a variety of needs for Jews in New Zealand. Or uppermost concern was the trend of younger generations to drift away from the faith. This chapter traced the factors in the nineteenth century that contributed to this trend towards assimilation, including the favourable conditions in New Zealand which facilitated peace and prosperity, and the practise of intermarriage. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Jewish leaders, like Rabbi Goldstein, were looking to Zionism to provide answers. Goldstein believed that Zionism was able to mould the (Jewish) nation as no other ideology was capable of doing, that it was a 'propelling force' that was 'galvanising into life powers hitherto dormant'. He credited the movement with bringing many co-religionists back into the fold. Zionism had, he believed, 'sounded the death knell of assimilation or annihilation' and 'heralded the awakening of a strong nationalist ideal'.

CHAPTER TWO

Palestine and the ‘Symbolic Jew’ in the Nineteenth Century New Zealand Imagination

‘Palestine and the Jews must now occupy a prominent place in the minds of most thinking men...’, ‘Palestine and the Holy Land’, *Nelson Evening Mail*, 28 January 1893.

This chapter examines the notion that Palestine and the Jews occupied the minds of New Zealanders in the nineteenth century, seeks to understand why and to show how that interest laid the groundwork for New Zealand’s response to Zionism. The modern reader might be surprised by the frequency and detail with which Palestine and Jewish issues are mentioned in nineteenth-century newspapers. While geo-political considerations account for some of the interest, religion was also a significant driver. The reader’s astonishment is not surprising given the secularising thrust of much historical writing in New Zealand, which has ‘written out’ the significant influence of religion in New Zealand’s past. This lacunae has been pointed out by a number of historians.¹⁷⁹ Anders Gerdmar, in studying the roots of theological anti-semitism in Germany, argued that the Bible played a leading role in shaping the world-view of individuals and society in this period.¹⁸⁰ The same can be said of New Zealand. Still very much a part of the British Empire, New Zealand was closely connected to the intellectual, theological and cultural currents of that world. Tony Ballantyne argued that the British Church in the nineteenth century witnessed an ‘Evangelical Revival’, which was a global phenomenon whose effects were also felt in New Zealand. Ballantyne referred to this ‘tremendous eruption of religious enthusiasm, debate and reform’ as a ‘great social and intellectual force that recast European society and moulded New Zealand’s early development’.¹⁸¹ According to Gerdmar, this period was formative for modern biblical interpretation

¹⁷⁹ I. Breward, ‘Religion and New Zealand Society’, *New Zealand Journal of History* (NZJH), 13, 2 (1979); Allan K. Davidson, ‘New Zealand History and Religious Myopia’, in Susan Emilsen and William W. Emilsen, eds, *Mapping the Landscape: Essays in Australian and New Zealand Christianity. Festschrift in Honour of Professor Ian Breward*, New York, 2000; Peter Lineham, ‘Religion’, in Colin Davis and Peter Lineham, eds, *The Future of the Past: Themes in New Zealand History*, Palmerston North, 1991; John Stenhouse, God’s Own Silence: Secular Nationalism, Christianity and the writing of New Zealand history, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 38, 1 (2004).

¹⁸⁰ Anders Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann*, Leiden, 2009, p.3.

¹⁸¹ Tony Ballantyne, ‘Christianity, Colonialism and Cross-Cultural Communication’, ed. J. Stenhouse, *Christianity Modernity and Culture*, Adelaide, 2005, p.26.

and ‘the place of Jews and Judaism in society and theology was a perennial question’.¹⁸² He explored the way that Jews and Judaism were symbolically constructed by German theologians and suggested that this construction impacted the social outcomes for Jews. The same phenomenon, but conditioned by the Evangelical revival, can be seen in nineteenth and early twentieth century New Zealand. New Zealanders assigned a role to Jews that flowed from their own symbolic world of ‘ideas, values, faiths, convictions, ideologies, cultural codes’. Gerdmar argued that the Jew played a particular symbolic role in a total ideological structure.¹⁸³ This chapter explores the concept of the ‘symbolic Jew’ to understand how New Zealand responded to Zionism and constructed particular images of Palestine and the Jewish people.

The nineteenth century was a dynamic period in that part of the Ottoman Empire known as Palestine. The opening of Palestine to European powers during the course of the century led to a competition between these countries for influence in the region. The various Christian groups in the land of Palestine became politicised as their western backers jostled for position. Britain was at the forefront of the charge to establish a foothold in the region. The period was also one of great change in the Church of England. Various factions emerged in Britain’s state church, with deep theological and liturgical divisions between the Tractarians, Evangelicals and Liberals. The differing positions in the church meant that Britain’s engagement in Palestine on a religious level was multifaceted and changed over the course of the century. New Zealanders closely followed these religious debates and many found a place of identification with one or other of the various theological stances. Evangelicals saw in the archeological discoveries in the Holy Land, carried out by the British-backed Palestine Restoration Fund PEF, evidence for the truth of Scripture at a time when its authority was being challenged by the school of higher critics. The PEF was established in 1865 as part of Britain’s imperial thirst for scientific knowledge and discovery. Although the stated purposes were general, its goals shifted over time between cartography for geopolitical goals and archeological discovery for religious purposes. New Zealanders financially supported and keenly followed this organisation. Another stream that arose within Evangelicalism held that the return of Jews to their ancient homeland, Israel, (Restorationism) was necessary for the inauguration of the thousand year reign of the Messiah (Millenarianism, millennialism or an

¹⁸² Gerdmar, p.3.

¹⁸³ Gerdmar, p.11.

older term chialism).¹⁸⁴ More mainstream Anglicans were interested in the discovery of holy places in order to strengthen their position in the land, in opposition to their rivals, the Catholics, who had been in the 'Holy Land' for a much longer period.

The establishment of new Protestant churches and missions in the Holy Land in the nineteenth century was followed by the setting up of consuls, whose role was ostensibly to protect the interests of their nationals living in the empire. In this way, churches became politicised and religious conflicts in the land at times devolved into full-scale war, as was the case with the Crimean War, 1853-56. Britain, in this period, was at the height of its imperial power. Some Britons saw their country's imperial position as affirmation of an exceptional status in the world and as connoting God's favour. British Israelism encapsulated the idea that the Old Testament promises to Israel, in fact applied to Britain.¹⁸⁵ While never accepted as mainstream, the movement gained many adherents and the ideas were much discussed and debated in New Zealand's press and in public meetings. Although many rejected the teachings of the movement, they expressed sympathy with the idea that Britain was a favoured nation and had a unique role to play in the world. In this way British imperialism was given tacit divine sanction. A combination of these sentiments led to a fascination with the land of Palestine and the symbolic Jew. The Jew was, in a sense, made abstract, separated from personal identity and made to play a role in a grand cosmic drama. In a similar vein, Palestine was a place and space that fulfilled a symbolic role for New Zealanders, in their self-identification as Christians and Britons. Locals discussed and debated these issues in the newspapers, attended public meetings of visiting speakers, contributed financially to work in Palestine and distributed and read much literature on the topic. It was against this background of several decades of interest in Palestine and the Jews that Theodore Herzl's proposal of political Zionism was introduced. The return of Jews to their homeland would be a topic intensely scrutinised and debated in New Zealand as well as the wider British empire.

¹⁸⁴ C. Gribben, *Evangelical Millennialism in the Trans-Atlantic World, 1500-2000*, London 2011, Glossary p. xiii, 'Conventionally, scholars working in millennial studies have followed Ernest L. Tuveson in distinguishing 'millennialists' (believers who adopt postmillennial, optimistic and gradualist theologies) from 'millenarians' - (believers who adopt premillennial, pessimistic and radical theologies). Ernest Sandeen has noted, however that the terms are interchangeable in the literature of the emerging fundamentalist movement and a strict distinction should probably not be imposed'. The term Restorationism can also be used for a more general movement to return to the New Testament pattern of worship and service to God. Mladen, Jovanovic, 'The Restoration Movement of the Churches of Christ', *Kairos: Evangelical Journal of Theology*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2007), pp. 117-129.

¹⁸⁵ C.T. Dimont, D.D., *The Legend Of British-Israel*, London, 1933. https://theologicalstudies.org.uk/article_legend_dimont.html

Nineteenth Century Palestine: An imagined space

In the nineteenth century, the area we are referring to as Palestine was a small part of the vast Ottoman Empire and had no official status as such, until after World War One when it became the British Mandate for Palestine. Palestine was a district, with imprecise boundaries, whose administration shifted over the period from Damascus until 1831, to Sidon, to Acre and back to Damascus. Districts became more or less fixed by 1887-8, being divided into Nāblus and Acre, both linked with the province of Beirut and the autonomous district of Jerusalem.¹⁸⁶ Palestine had been part of the Ottoman Empire since around 1453 CE, but the connection with the land for Jews, Christians and Muslims pre-dated this conquest by centuries. Jewish connection with the land went back three thousand years, Christian two thousand years and Islamic almost fifteen hundred years. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Muslims were by far the largest group in the land, followed by Christians and then Jews. For each, Palestine was a place of special religious significance. Accurate figures are difficult to determine and much debated amongst scholars. Alexander Schloch's study of the Palestine's demography estimated the population in the period 1850-1865 to be around 350,000 inhabitants; approximately 85% were Muslims, 11% Christians and 4% Jews'.¹⁸⁷ By 1882 the population had risen to 470,000. Other demographic studies reach very similar conclusions.¹⁸⁸ Although a vague geographical entity, Palestine had great symbolic value for the nineteenth century Christian. It was commonly referred to as the 'Holy Land' by Christian European powers and indeed John Moscrop, in writing of the PEF, argued that the term was of Victorian origin.¹⁸⁹

The position of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century was weakening and so the 'Eastern Question', that is, the contest for power in light of the 'sick man of Europe's' decline, occupied

¹⁸⁶ Nabih Amin Faris, Rashid Ismail Khalidi, 'Palestine: Ottoman Rule', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Palestine#ref45065>

¹⁸⁷ Alexander Scholch, 'The Demographic Development of Palestine 1850-1882', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol 17, No. 4 (Nov., 1985), p.501, Table 15 combines the work of K.H. Karpat, S.J.Shaw, Justin McCarthy, Meir Zamir, A, Ruppin, Zamir.

¹⁸⁸For example, Justin McCarthy estimated the 1850-51 total population at 340,000; Muslims 300,000 (88%), Christians 27,000 (8%), Jews 13,000(4%) J. McCarthy, 'The Population of Palestine. Population History and Statistics of the Late Ottoman Period and the Mandate', *The Institute for Palestinian Series*, New York, 1990, 10, 37.

¹⁸⁹ Moscrop, John James, 'The Palestine Exploration Fund: 1865 - 1914', PhD Thesis, University of Leicester, 1996, p.50.

competing western interests. The period 1831-1840 proved highly significant for British interests in Palestine. Egyptian forces, led by Ibrahim Pasha, son of the governor of Egypt Mohammad Ali, conquered the Palestinian and Syrian regions of the Ottoman Empire in 1831. Under Egyptian rule, reforms were introduced that opened the region to further European influence and contributed to the shifting of social structures in the country. Christians were afforded equal rights with their fellow Muslim citizens and permission granted to restore places of worship and build churches. The liberalisation of policies towards Christians also gave them the right to be represented in the town councils. The way was opened for European countries to set up consulates to protect the interests of their nationals living and travelling in the land, including their church-related interests. Britain was the first, establishing a consulate in Jerusalem in 1838. This was followed by Prussia 1842, France 1843, America 1844, Austria 1849 and Russia 1858.¹⁹⁰ Schloss argued that in this period European powers, in their competition for influence, used the protection of minorities as an excuse to establish consulates.¹⁹¹ The French had Catholic interests to protect and Russia had Eastern Orthodox interests. This period of liberalisation allowed for the British and Germans to establish a Protestant foothold in the area for the first time. A vigorous programme of church building ensued as well as the construction of orphanages, hospitals, and schools. With improved transportation and lines of communication, as well as a more stability, thousands of pilgrims began to travel to the 'Holy Land'. When rulership was restored to the Ottomans in 1840, the country could no longer be closed to non-Muslims and a system of capitulations was established to protect the rights of Europeans trading or residing in the empire.

Britain establishes a foothold in Palestine

In the competition for influence in the region, Britain was at the forefront. A British consul was appointed in 1838 and an Anglo-Prussian Episcopal See was established in Jerusalem in 1841. The first Protestant church, Christ Church, was dedicated in 1849. New Zealand had a connection to these developments through New Zealand's first Anglican Bishop, Bishop George Augustus Selwyn. Selwyn participated in the consecration ceremony for Bishop Michael Solomon Alexander, the first Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, along with the Archbishop of Canterbury (Howley),

¹⁹⁰ Charlotte van der Leest, 'Christians and the Protestant missionary interest in nineteenth-century Ottoman Palestine', *Conversion and conflict in Palestine : the missions of the Church Missionary Society and the protestant bishop Samuel Gobat*, PhD Thesis, Leiden University, 2008, p.36.

¹⁹¹ Alexander Scholch, 'Britain in Palestine, 1838-1882: The Roots of the Balfour Policy', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1, Autumn, 1992, p.41.

the Bishop of London (Blomfield) and Bishop of Rochester (George Murray). The ceremony was held in Lambeth Palace Chapel, London on 7 November 1841 and was attended by ‘many eminent men’, including Chevallier Bunsen (representing the King of Prussia), Lord Ashley*, British politician William Gladstone and Sir Stratford Canning (1786-1880), the English ambassador extraordinary to the Porte**.¹⁹² Selwyn contributed to the consecration with a Scripture reading, ‘And now I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem’, which was said to bring Bishop Blomfield to tears. According to a report from the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews (LJS), ‘his [Bishop Selwyn’s] own earnestness of manner, joined with the touching propriety of various passages caused many an eye, long unaccustomed to such betrayal of emotion to overflow’.¹⁹³ The historian Charlotte van der Leest reported of this ceremony, that some who attended the Bishop’s commissioning saw the ‘whole event’ in a millenarian way.¹⁹⁴ In particular, Lord Ashley (later known as Lord Shaftesbury) was said to be ‘very enthusiastic’ about the ceremony, and attributed Scriptural significance to the event.¹⁹⁵

Selwyn’s attendance at the consecration of the first Anglican bishop of Jerusalem raises the question as to whether Selwyn had a particular interest in Palestine, the Jews, millennialism or restorationism. The evidence suggests otherwise. In the divisions of the Anglican church in nineteenth century Britain, between Evangelicals who emphasised a high view of Scripture, missionary activity, morality and humanitarian activism, and Tractarians or those of the Oxford movement, who valued sacraments, apostolicity and other elements of Catholicism, Selwyn’s sympathy’s lay more with the latter. While he never fully embraced the Oxford movement he was influenced by the traditional High Church outlook.¹⁹⁶ This perspective was apparent in Selwyn’s main achievement in New Zealand, which was to lay foundations for the colonial church. He established a voluntary

¹⁹² Charlotte van der Leest, ‘Bishop Alexander and the mission to the Jews’, *Conversion and conflict in Palestine : the missions of the Church Missionary Society and the protestant bishop Samuel Gobat*, Leiden University, 2008, p.84. *(Lord Ashley from 1811 to 1851 and then Lord Shaftesbury following the death of his father). **The government of the Ottoman Empire.

¹⁹³ Monthly Account of the proceedings of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, *Jewish Intelligence*, December 1841, <https://messianicjewishhistory.wordpress.com/2015/11/07/7-november-1841-consecration-of-rabbi-michael-solomon-alexander-as-bishop-of-jerusalem-otdimjh/>

¹⁹⁴ van der Leest, p.85.

¹⁹⁵ van der Leest, p.85.

¹⁹⁶ Allan Davidson, *Selwyn’s Legacy: The College of St John the Evangelist, Te Waimate & Auckland, 1843-1992, A History*, Auckland, 1993, p.10.

compact agreed by lay and clergy leaders in 1857 and set out a definition of Anglicanism as based on the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty Nine Articles of faith.¹⁹⁷ The beliefs enshrined in these books and in Selwyn's reforms did not support a restorationist, millennialist position.

The evidence thus suggests that Selwyn's attendance at the consecration of Bishop Alexander was incidental. According to his wife's memoirs, Selwyn's own consecration to the bishopric took place a couple of weeks before on 17 October, at the same place, Lambeth Palace, with some of the same people in attendance, Archbishop Howley and Bishop Blomfield.¹⁹⁸ Sarah Selwyn mentions that after this event they spent twelve days at Plymouth waiting for the arrival of the ship from London. There is no mention of the consecration of the Jerusalem bishop. The historian Warren Limbrick's study of Selwyn, notes that the bishop used the time between his consecration and his departure on 26 December 1841, 'in a constant round of organisation, lobbying the colonial office, and advising his legal counsel in the matter of objectionable aspects of his letters patent, canvassing for funds, recruiting acceptable clergy, consulting the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) and New Zealand Company officials'.¹⁹⁹ His discussions revolved around the question of 'how to mould the institutions of the church (in New Zealand) from the beginning according to true principles'. Church historian Allan Davidson records that eight days after Selwyn's consecration in 1841, he had a meeting with Oxford leaders who were hoping to influence him in their direction. Davidson argued that 'Selwyn was much more a pragmatist in working with the Evangelical CMS and adapting the Church and episcopacy in NZ than the "Oxford Apostles" allowed'.²⁰⁰ In the absence of any mention of Palestine, the Jews or the consecration of the Jerusalem Bishop in the records of Selwyn's movement over this period, it appears that his attendance at the consecration of the Jerusalem Bishop was perhaps a matter of pragmatism. Either way, the absence suggests that these issues were for him not a high priority.

The nineteenth century was a dynamic period in the Anglican church and many congregants held vastly different views. The type of millenarianism that marked the consecration of the first

¹⁹⁷ Peter Lineham, *Sunday Best: How the Church Shaped New Zealand and New Zealand Shaped the Church*, Auckland, 2017, p.14.

¹⁹⁸ Harry Bioletti, ed., *Reminiscences of Sarah Harriet Selwyn, 1809-1867*, Auckland, 2002, p.17.

¹⁹⁹ Warren Limbrick. 'A Most indefatigable Man', ed. W. Limbrick, *Bishop Selwyn in New Zealand 1841-68*, Palmerston North, 1983,

²⁰⁰ Davidson, p.10.

Jerusalem bishop was not a majority position. New Zealand Anglicans for the most part did not follow the path of such millenarians as Lord Shaftesbury and William Gladstone. However, the millennialist view was embraced by the Brethren movement established in New Zealand in 1852 by James G. Deck.²⁰¹ The movement had its beginning in 1831 in Plymouth, England. One of its leaders, John Nelson Darby, became closely associated with a theological view later called pre-millennialist dispensationalism. This doctrine affirmed a future, literal one thousand year reign of Jesus Christ in which Israel played a major role, with a reconstituted kingdom and restored land, all of which pre-supposed a restored nation of Israel.²⁰² In his history of the Brethren movement in New Zealand, Peter Lineham noted that the premillennial view was held by most Brethren and ‘speculation on the fulfilment of prophecy was a popular pastime...’²⁰³ Indeed, one of the movement’s most dynamic and popular evangelists, Alfred Brunton held a public meeting on the topic ‘The late Zionist Congress of Jews held at Basle, Switzerland, and its bearing on both Politics and Prophecy’, in October 1897.²⁰⁴ However, for the Brethren movement as a whole, eschatology was less significant than other issues, such as the nature of the church. Differences on the latter led to the division between the Exclusive and Open Brethren churches.

The historian Michael Barkun, in discussing Millenarian thought, argued that these ideas produced an ambivalent attitude towards the Jews. While God’s promise of a restoration to their homeland would be fulfilled, Jews were also expected to go through a time of tribulation, after which they would accept Jesus as Messiah. The suffering of the Jews was often interpreted as divine punishment, for rejecting Jesus as the Messiah.²⁰⁵ Despite this doctrinal position, there were many examples of Christian Zionists who showed genuine care for the Jews for their own sake. Albert Hyamson, a Zionist writing in 1918, while enumerating the many British proposals and schemes in the nineteenth century for the restoration of the Jews to Palestine mentioned several examples, such as that of James Finn who was appointed British consul in 1845. Finn and his

²⁰¹ Peter J. Lineham, *There We found Brethren: A History of Assemblies of Brethren in New Zealand*, Palmerston North, 1977, p.13.

²⁰² Arthur Carl Piepkorn, ‘Plymouth Brethren (Christian Brethren)’, *Concordia Theological Monthly* 41 (1970), p.166.

²⁰³ Lineham, *There we found Brethren*, p.43, 47.

²⁰⁴ Page 3 Advertisements Column 4, *Evening Star*, 23 October 1897, Lineham, p.22.

²⁰⁵ Michael Barkun, ‘British-Israel Millennialism’, *Religion and the Racist Right: The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement*, North Carolina, 1997, p.78.

wife were said to have displayed a genuine commitment to the people and were ‘true friends of the Jews’, wholeheartedly supporting ‘every project for the amelioration of their condition’.²⁰⁶ However, author Regina Sharif argued that it was a ‘curious feature’ of some Christians, that support for Zionism derived not ‘for the sake of the Jews, but for the sake of the promise made to them according to Puritan biblical teachings’.²⁰⁷ This ‘curious feature’ at times resulted in non-Jewish Zionists opposing Jewish aspirations. Sharif gives the example of Lord Shaftesbury, a noted British Zionist, who opposed the 1858 Emancipation Act as it would violate his religious principles, or later, Earl of Balfour, as Britain’s Prime Minister in 1905, supporting the Aliens Bill which restricted Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe to England.²⁰⁸ These examples affirm the argument that the Jew was viewed as an object, a symbolic or abstract figure in certain doctrinal formulations, fulfilling a purpose determined by a theological interpretation of Scripture. In the examples given, the aspirations and rights of the Jewish people themselves were ignored.

Palestine Exploration Fund fulfils geo-political and religious aspirations

Many New Zealand Christians followed the theological debates of the British world and were fascinated by the discoveries taking place in the Holy Land. Britain had made its presence felt in Palestine with the setting up of a consul in 1838, the establishment of an Anglican Bishopric in 1841 and the consecration of a church in 1849. By 1865 when the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF) was founded ‘under the royal patronage of Queen Victoria’, ‘by a group of distinguished academics and clergymen’, Britain had gained a foothold in the land. Newspapers in New Zealand reported regularly on the findings of the PEF from the 1870s to the 1890s.²⁰⁹

Newspapers played an important role in the social, cultural, religious and political life of colonists. The laying of the first telegraph line in 1861 greatly sped up the transmission of news from overseas. Prior to this development, international news came via ship, which could take up to three months.²¹⁰ New Zealanders were avid consumers of newspapers, as it was a source of lo-

²⁰⁶ Albert M. Hyamson, ‘British Projects for the Restoration of Jews to Palestine,’ *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, No.26 (1918), p.135.

²⁰⁷ Regina Sharif, Christians for Zion, 1600-1919, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3/4, (1976), p. 140.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ <https://www.pef.org.uk/history/>

²¹⁰ Guy H. Schofield, *Newspapers in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1958.

cal and international news, as well as performing a function as a community notice board. David Hastings, in discussing newspapers in the nineteenth century, argued that readers were highly engaged consumers of newspapers.²¹¹ He cited as an example the hundreds of letters published in 1863 on a wide range of issues. He also argued that both newspapers and politicians were limited in their power to shape and form opinion. Movements like the Unions and Women's suffrage created change and newspapers, for the most part, followed the consensus. Tony Ballantyne, in discussing the interconnectedness of local places to global networks, pointed out the important role of newspapers. He claimed that often the news from overseas contributed to fierce local debates.²¹² All of these disparate facets of colonial newspaper media identified by historians can be seen in the active engagement of New Zealanders in the developments in Palestine.

Through the medium of newspapers, New Zealanders followed the activities of the PEF in the 'Holy Land'. An article on the surveying of Palestine in 1873, sourced from *The Scotsman* and published in the *West Coast Times*, detailed the PEF's 'important' work. The production of maps of the Holy Land were praised for their 'mathematical accuracy laying down every object that stands upon the ground—the trees, the plantations, the villages, and the houses', showing forth the 'most beautiful examples of the highest and most scientific kind of map making'.²¹³ Readers were reminded that the 'great end to be gained' by the survey was the 'right understanding of the historical portions of the Bible'.²¹⁴ The writer opined that the 'recent explorations in Palestine and Sinai do undoubtedly bear out and confirm in a most remarkable manner the geographical accuracy of the Bible'.²¹⁵ In 1870 'Dr Russel's Diary in the East', excerpts of which were published in the *New Zealand Herald*, described the tour of the Prince and Princess of Wales to Egypt and Jerusalem. Dr Russel's attention was particularly attracted to the excavations taking place which were said to be 'clearing away many mistakes and bringing to light facts which illustrate the statements of history, some of which have been long disputed, but are now proved to be true'.²¹⁶

²¹¹ David Hastings, *Extra! Extra!: How the People Made the News*, Auckland, 2013, p.248.

²¹² Tony Ballantyne, On Place, Space and Mobility, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 45, 1 (2011), pp. 62, 3.

²¹³ The Survey of Palestine, *West Coast Times*, (WCT)18 March 1873.

²¹⁴ WCT, 18 March 1873.

²¹⁵ WCT, 18 March 1873.

²¹⁶ Dr. Russel's Diary in the East, *New Zealand Herald*, 17 February 1870.

The Palestine Exploration Fund, established in 1865, held as its goals the promotion of ‘research into the archaeology and history, manners and customs and culture, topography, geology and natural sciences of biblical Palestine and the Levant’.²¹⁷ John James Moscrop’s study of the PEF traced the change over time in the purposes and emphases of the PEF and teased out the conflicts between the various parties. Moscrop argued that a number of factors contributed to the formation of the PEF; social, religious, political, military and strategic. While the PEF met the religious aspirations of British Christians, the organisation also pursued imperial and military goals. For example, the Western Survey, carried out between 1871 and 1877, mapped the Jordan Valley in order to meet Britain’s strategic and military goals of protecting both the Suez and India against France and Russia. Strategically, Palestine was of interest not for its own sake but as a bulwark against incursions of Britain’s major imperial holding in India and interests in Egypt. Royal Engineering officers were employed as surveyors for the period 1865-84 and Moscrop argued that intelligence work was done under the cover of cartography. However, Moscrop admitted that this agenda would not have been obvious to the organisation’s supporters who were primarily interested for religious reasons.

While the goals of the PEF were general and it was not established as a religious society, its work and findings could not be divorced from its religious context, nor the conflicts within the Church. Almost all the members of the executive belonged to the Church of England. At the inaugural meeting of the Fund, the Archbishop of York, William Thompson, emphasised the desire to ‘apply the rules of science’ in the investigation of the Holy Land and to avoid the controversies that plagued the Church. However, the very use of the word ‘science’ revealed the theological position of the Archbishop, placing him in the liberal camp. As Moscrop asserted, ‘The Anglo-Catholics would have none of the scientific doubting of Holy Land sites and the Evangelicals would have none of the critical methods implied in the word ‘scientific’.²¹⁸

Archeological discoveries support New Zealand Christian Aspirations

Local newspapers regularly reported on the surveying activity and archeological discoveries in Palestine, the land of the Bible. The findings were thought to provide evidence and affirmation of

²¹⁷ <https://www.pef.org.uk/history/>

²¹⁸ Moscrop, p.46.

the veracity of the Scriptures at a time when this were being undermined by the ideas of higher criticism. German biblical scholars in the late eighteenth century viewed the ancient texts from an entirely secular perspective and sought to find independent confirmation of the events of the Bible. This was a direct challenge to a central tenet of Evangelicalism, the divine inspiration of Scripture. Evangelicals saw the discoveries in Palestine over the next two decades as affirmation of their views. The newspapers engaged in the debate by publishing and interpreting the archeological findings. An article published in the *New Zealand Herald* 1891 argued that the excavations at Tell-el-Hesi provided confirmation ‘as remarkable, as unexpected’ of the ‘substantially historical character of the Jewish records’. As opposed to the ‘self-styled higher critics’ the author asserted that the ‘spade and axe of the explorer’ had given a more ‘satisfactory’ reading of history. Indeed the writer opined that knowledge had been ‘revolutionised’ in the thirty years since the establishment of the PEF.²¹⁹ The discourse regarding historiography and Bible interpretation suggests a high level of intellectual engagement in the newspaper reading public. For example, a review of a book by Capt. Warren, *Our Work in Palestine*, was published in the *Otago Daily Times* in 1873. The reviewer discussed the types of evidence presented which, he argued, cleared up some of the ‘vague notions which many persons have with regard to the history and geography of the Holy Land’. He believed the historical evidence from archeological discoveries brought confirmation of the writings of Josephus, Eusebius, the pilgrims and ‘Mohammadan’ historians. He compared written evidence with ‘traditional evidence’ (taken as a reference to oral evidence), arguing that the latter was an adjunct, which could be used to corroborate, but never to originate.²²⁰

The archeological discoveries in the Holy Land not only provided evidence for Evangelical Christians who sought to affirm their views on the veracity and reliability of the Bible, but also strengthened the position of Protestants in their competition with Catholics. This rivalry was evident when the Protestant bishopric was established in Jerusalem in 1841. The guidelines laid out in the ‘Statement of Proceedings’ were distinctly anti-Catholic.²²¹ For example, it was stated that the bishopric might be a ‘means of establishing relations of amity between the United Church of England and Ireland and the ancient Churches of the East, strengthening them against the en-

²¹⁹ ‘Exploration in Palestine’, *New Zealand Herald*, 19 December 1891.

²²⁰ ‘Exploration in Palestine’, *Otago Daily Times*, 19 March 1873.

²²¹ Charlotte van der Leest, *Conflict & Conversions*, p. 71.

croachments of the See of Rome'.²²² Moscrop argued that, 'Protestant claims to have uncovered and recovered parts of the original biblical Holy Land, to have identified sites, and in some cases to have physically taken possession of significant Hebrew Bible locations, strengthened the established Protestant churches of England and Scotland in their theological and academic confrontations with the Roman Church'.²²³ The contention for the 'custody of the Holy Places' was noted in the New Zealand press and recognised as a struggle for influence and power by various European powers and their respective Church denominations.²²⁴

The process of taking possession of holy sites was a type of colonisation, of establishing a foothold and taking control of the 'cradle of Christianity'.²²⁵ One such example was that of Rev. Haskett Smith, who reportedly discovered the true site of Calvary and the tomb of Christ. According to the *New Zealand Herald* report, due to his discoveries those sacred sites were taken as British property.²²⁶ Haskett Smith held a series of lectures in New Zealand, on behalf of the PEF in 1895. He was considered an expert on Palestine having lived there for eleven years and spent much time exploring and examining the country. He wrote a handbook 'Syria and Palestine', considered to be the recognised guide to those countries. In September 1895 the *New Zealand Herald* stated that one of its representatives spent a 'very pleasant half-hour' with Haskett Smith.²²⁷ The introduction to this 'Special Interview' attests to the great interest the topic attracted. The interviewer wrote, 'Bible lands, their history, their present position, and their prospects, form a fascinating subject for countless thousands, not only from a religious, but from a political, point of view.' Haskett Smith claimed that through the work of the PEF, the knowledge of the country had been 'virtually revolutionised'. The interviewer chose to focus on political issues (since he said he did not want to reveal the more religious content that would form the content of his upcoming lectures). The discussion ranged from the German colonisation in Palestine to the political needs of the country, and the relationships between the Turks, Armenians and Russians.

²²² Charlotte van der Leest, *Conflict & Conversions*, p. 71.

²²³ Moscrop, P.161.

²²⁴ 'Colonising Palestine', *Bruce herald*, 2 October 1888.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ Special Interviews, *New Zealand Herald*, 18 September 1895.

²²⁷ Special Interviews, *New Zealand Herald*, 18 September 1895.

Further indication of the interest of mainstream New Zealand Protestant churches in the Holy Land could be seen in the support given to visiting speakers, whose meetings were well subscribed. A large attendance at a 'Lecture on Palestine' at the Presbyterian Church in Gisborne was reported in 1890, where the Rev. Mr McCallum presented 'reminiscences of travel in Palestine and recent discoveries in the Holy Land'.²²⁸ The talk was reported in some detail and described as 'most entertaining'. The conclusion was reached that the descriptions given of the work of the PEF provided 'a remarkable confirmation of the historical accuracy of the biblical history'.²²⁹ Rev. McCallum also gave a lecture later that year entitled 'Egypt and the Holy Land, the Cradle and Home of the Jewish People', at St. Luke's Church, Remuera, Auckland.²³⁰ Visiting speakers played an important role in the dissemination of information, in educating and inspiring audiences. A series of lectures was undertaken by Rev. Theodore S. Dowling in 1893. As chaplain to Dr. Blyth, Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, and also honorary secretary to the Jerusalem Association of the PEF, Dowling arrived with letters of commendation from Bishop Blyth. He had been lecturing in Australia where he had been 'very highly appreciated'.²³¹ Dowling's presentation was illustrated by maps, diagrams, photographs and 'other objects of interest' brought from Jerusalem. His well attended lecture at the Shelbourne Street School in Nelson included a limelight presentation of photographic transparencies which were part of a series taken by G. Robinson Lees, in Jerusalem. The newspaper article which was part report and part advertising for an upcoming lecture stated, 'Palestine and the Jews must now occupy a prominent place in the minds of most thinking men, and that fact alone, irrespective of the attraction of having a resident in Jerusalem describe the country, and illustrating it by photographs specially prepared for the purpose, should ensure a crowded audience on Monday evening'.²³² Dowling also lectured in Auckland, at St Michael's, St John's, Young Men's Christian Association Rooms, the Chapel of College, St. John's, Tamaki and at St. Sepulchre's, and raised funds for the Jerusalem and East Mission fund.²³³ For the more mainstream Protestant churches, the discoveries in the Holy Land affirmed their religious views, particularly in light of their rivalry with Catholics. Moscrop argued that the

²²⁸ 'Lecture on Palestine', *Poverty Bay Herald*, 5 July 1890.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ 'Egypt and the Holy Land', *New Zealand Herald*, 26 September 1890.

²³¹ 'Jerusalem and the East', *New Zealand Herald*, 11 February 1893, *Star*, Issue 4545, 17 January 1893.

²³² 'Palestine and the Holy Land', *Nelson Evening Mail*, 28 January 1893.

²³³ 'Jerusalem and the East', *New Zealand Herald*, 11 February 1893, *Star*, Issue 4545, 17 January 1893.

aim of the PEF was not just imperial expansion but also to root the faith and religion of the British 'in the soil of the Holy Land'.²³⁴ Moscrop asserted that many British saw the exploration and mapping of Palestine by the PEF and the acquisition and discovery of its antiquities as the fulfilment of a divine destiny. By exploring and walking through the land the British were to become a 'chosen people'. New Zealand Christians participated in this Holy Land colonisation vicariously, imbibing the information through the printed word and visiting speakers, with their varying forms of media. The work achieved by the PEF affirmed the faith of many believers in this distant land. While few New Zealanders literally walked the Holy Land, in imagination the discoveries in Palestine were embraced as important affirmations of the Christian identity of many New Zealanders.

British Israelism: British Imperialism, fundamentalism and racial ideologies

The idea that the British were God's chosen people was further developed in the British Israelite movement and was much discussed in New Zealand, the 'Britain of the South'. This ideology combined British imperialism with a peculiar interpretation of the Bible, by which Britain replaced the Jews as God's chosen people, Israel. The notion that the British were the lost tribes of Israel was much discussed and debated in the middle of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, reaching the height of its popularity in 1920, when its followers were estimated to number 20,000.²³⁵ While the view never became mainstream, it certainly garnered much attention. The development of the British Israel idea would seem to be at odds with the fact that Britain had played a significant role in the development of the Zionist movement. For example, the scholar Regina Sharif argued that 'Nowhere in Europe has support for Zionism been as widespread and popular over the ages as in England. It was there that the idea of Jewish restoration in Palestine became prominent and developed into a doctrine that lasted well over three centuries'.²³⁶ Indeed the early Zionist writer Albert Hyamson in 1918, recorded numerous publications and proposals, beginning in the first decade of the nineteenth century of British writers,

²³⁴ Moscrop, p.62.

²³⁵ J. Wilson, 'British Israelism: A Revitalization Movement in Contemporary Culture', *Archives de sociologie des religions*, 13e Année, No. 26 (Jul. - Dec., 1968), p. 74.

²³⁶ Regina Sharif, 'Christians for Zion, 1600-1919', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3/4, 1976, p. 123.

ministers, statesmen and politicians advocating for the return of Jews to their homeland.²³⁷ The Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, (Lord Anthony Ashley Cooper) known as a ‘great Evangelical reformer’, was one such statesman who presented a paper to British Foreign Minister Lord Palmerston (also his father-in-law), in 1840, calling for the ‘recall of the Jews to their ancient land’.²³⁸ Zionist historian Nahum Sokolow wrote in 1919, ‘For nearly three centuries Zionism was a religious as well as a political idea which great Christians and Jews, chiefly in England, handed down to posterity.’²³⁹ Israel Cohen in 1951 wrote, ‘In England the idea of the restoration found frequent championship from the beginning of the nineteenth century in the most varied circles - theological, literary, and political’.²⁴⁰

However, British Israelism took the return of the Jews to their homeland on a different track, by inserting the British into the scenario as the true Israelites. One of the first adherents of the theory that the British were descendants of the lost tribes of Israel, was Scottish born John Wilson, who in 1840 published a book, *Our Israelite Origin*.²⁴¹ His work influenced Edward Hine, considered the chief representative of British Israelism (BI) in England and who published many books and pamphlets on the topic.²⁴² Hine’s 1874 book, *Forty-seven identifications of the British nation with the lost Ten Tribes of Israel: founded upon five hundred scripture proofs* had thirty-six editions published between 1874 and 1900.²⁴³ His ideas found their way to New Zealand and were the subject of much discussion. An 1875 *New Zealand Herald* article reviewed a pamphlet entitled, ‘Are the English People the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel?’ by Philo-Israel. The sub-title read: ‘An Inquiry Establishing THE TRUTH OF THE IDENTIFICATION (sic) of the British Nation with

²³⁷ Albert Hyamson, ‘British projects for the Restoration of Jews to Palestine’, *American Jewish Historical Society*, No. 26 (1918), pp. 127-164.

²³⁸ Eitan Bar-Yosef, ‘Christian Zionism and Victorian Culture’, *Israel Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Summer, 2003), p. 26.

²³⁹ Nahum Sokolow, *History of Zionism, 1600-1918*, 2 Vols., London, 1919, Vol. I, Introduction, p. xxvi.

²⁴⁰ Israel Cohen, *A Short History of Zionism*, London, 1951, p.16.

²⁴¹ Joseph Jacobs, ‘Anglo-Israelism’, *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1906, <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/1524-anglo-israelism>

²⁴² Hine published 81 works in 215 publications in 1 language and 460 library holdings, <http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-nr98013604/>.

²⁴³ Ibid.

the Lost Tribes'.²⁴⁴ The reviewer stated that if proved true, the subject would 'completely revolutionise the world'. The pamphlet claimed to be a shorter, condensed version of the writings of Edward Hine who authored the monthly magazine 'Life from the Dead'. The reviewer reported that the 'theory' of the British nations being the literal descendant of the ten tribes of Israel had 'taken some hold' upon the minds of 'a number of the leading men of the day' and Anglo-Israel Associations had been formed in London and most large towns in the United Kingdom. The reviewer showed his acceptance of the proposition that the Bible was authoritative when he stated of Philo-Israel's pamphlet that, 'All his arguments are based upon the "sure word of prophecy," and grounded upon the fact that "God is not a man that He should lie," and that the promises He made by "the mouth of His holy prophets" will most certainly be literally fulfilled'.²⁴⁵ This example shows the flexibility and utility of the symbolic Jew. Here, the concept of chosenness is appropriated by Britain, the new chosen people of God.

British Israelism took hold in New Zealand in organised form in the 1870s. The Anglo-Israel Association AIA was founded by John Wilson in London in 1874. The first New Zealand branch of the AIA was established in Auckland 1881 by local adherent Harry Warner Farnall.²⁴⁶ The first annual report of the Auckland Anglo-Israel Association in November 1882 noted the encouraging rise in numbers from the original six (which a *New Zealand Herald* article had mocked the year before) to the current thirty-six subscribing members, and many more in the community who had not yet subscribed.²⁴⁷ Fortnightly meetings had been held at the residence of Mr Thomas Craig in Graham Street. Farnall, who established the group lectured frequently on the topic.²⁴⁸ On one occasion, the Young Men's Christian Association hosted Farnall, in November 1883. He spoke on the connection of the Tribe of Dan to the early settlement in Ireland.²⁴⁹ The establishment of the

²⁴⁴ Review, *New Zealand Herald*, Volume XII, 19 October 1875.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Neill Atkinson. 'Farnall, Harry Warner', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1993. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2f1/farnall-harry-warner> (accessed 5 February 2019).

²⁴⁷ 'Auckland Anglo-Israel Association', *Auckland Star*, 18 November 1882.

²⁴⁸ Neill Atkinson. 'Farnall, Harry Warner', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1993. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2f1/farnall-harry-warner> (accessed 5 February 2019).

²⁴⁹ 'Lecture on Anglo-Israelism', *New Zealand Herald*, 22 November 1881

AIA in New Zealand only seven years after its formation in Britain, as well as the vigorous discourse via the printed word and public meetings, attests to the great interest the subject held, the degree of attachment to Britain and the vigorous circulation of ideas that flowed from the imperial centre of London to colonial New Zealand.

New Zealand papers published articles both for and against British-Israelism. The logic followed by adherents was simply articulated in the *New Zealand Times*, 1878, that God had promised that Israel would always remain a nation ('as long as the sun, moon and stars lasted'), therefore Israel was still a nation somewhere.²⁵⁰ Britain supposedly fulfilled all the conditions identifying the nation of Israel, therefore, Britain must be Israel. Hence the reason the movement was often referred to as the identity or identification movement. Under this formulation, the prophecies involving curses and punishment were assigned to Judah; these belonged to the Jews. However, the prophecies of blessings given to Israel, belonged to Britain. Therefore, when Scripture said that Israel was to be called by another name, the British Israelites identified Britain as fulfilling this prediction, having apparently re-discovered their ancestry going back to the Median Empire. Israel, according to Isaiah and Jeremiah, was to go to the 'Isles of the western sea' to the 'north west from Palestine', the very locality where Britain found itself. Britain of the nineteenth century was seen to fulfil the prophecies given to Israel that they would become a multitudinous people and would acquire much territory.²⁵¹ At times the theory was stated quite bluntly:

There are hundreds of marks and signs recorded in the Bible by which Israel may be known. Great Britain and America possess them all; other nations may perhaps possess one or two, but to only one nation were the promises given, viz., Israel; but Israel, we say, is lost, and, strange to say, we find another people, presumably a Gentile race (the British), in the actual enjoyment of the blessings promised to Israel.²⁵²

Britain's identifying characteristics were summed up in an article in 1898, as a 'vast multitude, all powerful, possessing the gates of its enemies; a nursing mother of nations, a company of nations;

²⁵⁰ England and Russia, *New Zealand Times*, 9 April 1878.

²⁵¹ 'The Identity of the Lost Tribes of Israel with the Anglo-Saxon Race', *Auckland Star*, 6 August 1878.

²⁵² 'The dying out of Aborigines before the Anglo-Saxon Race', *New Zealand Herald*, 17 May 1879.

inhabiting the isles, pushing with the horn a unicorn, none daring to make them afraid...'.²⁵³ Again, the Jew performed a symbolic role in the grand theological scheme of the British Israelites, in which Britain appropriated the biblical concept of the 'chosen Jew'.

While the first AIA was established in New Zealand in 1881, the ideas were still attracting much attention at the end of the century and would indeed continue to gain adherents in the early twentieth century.²⁵⁴ (As we will see, New Zealand's Prime Minister William Massey identified as a British Israelite and played a significant role in supporting Zionist claims after World War One). In June 1899, Rev. J. Idrisyn Jones (minister of Welshpool, England) delivered a lecture in the Y.M.C.A. Rooms, Auckland on the subject of "The Expansion of the British Empire: Are the Anglo-Saxons Hebrews of the Kingdom of Israel?". Mr R. J. Roberts (Chairman of the Auckland Anglo-Israel Association) presided, and there was a 'crowded attendance'.²⁵⁵ A week later, Jones lectured at the Opera House in Wellington to a large audience, which inspired the formation of a British-Israel Association in that city.²⁵⁶ According to the *New Zealand Times* the establishment of this group proved the 'vitality' of what was perhaps 'the greatest religious question of the age'. The writer argued that the British Israelism had survived, in spite of nearly thirty years of 'every kind of hostile criticism', 'intermittent attacks of ridicule', 'the neglect of the masses', 'scorn of the learned' and the silence of the churches.²⁵⁷ The article suggested that even though the idea was not openly embraced by the majority, many were influenced and inspired by it.

Many New Zealanders were captivated with the idea that Britain was God's chosen nation destined to carry out His purposes on the earth. However, the arguments failed to convince everyone. The local press covered both sides of the debate. A monthly lecture was reported in the *Feilding Star*, in 1884 on the topic 'The Ten Tribes of Israel'.²⁵⁸ The Rev. H.M. Murray commented on the prevalence of this 'remarkable class of beliefs, or speculations' which to most would seem

²⁵³ 'Who are the Lost Tribes', *Taranaki Herald*, 26 November 1898.

²⁵⁴ J. Wilson claimed BI reached its maximum strength in the 1920s with a membership of about 20,000, J. Wilson, 'British Israelism'. p. 74.

²⁵⁵ The Origin of the Anglo Saxon Race, *Evening Post*, (EP) 7 July 1899, p.5.

²⁵⁶ EP, 7 July 1899.

²⁵⁷ Anglo-Israelis, *New Zealand Times*, 8 July 1899.

²⁵⁸ 'Monthly lecture', *Feilding Star*, (FS), 5 June 1884.

‘groundless and extravagant’. While Murray proceeded to refute the theory, he argued that as in every belief which gained large acceptance, it contained a grain of truth, which kept it alive and gave it power. He did accept the notion that, ‘Both in providence and in grace, God has favoured the English speaking races more than any other, and as ones privileges are great so are our responsibilities’.²⁵⁹ Another opponent of BI, W.H. Creighton, a layman of the Church of England expressed his concern over the widely spread ‘craze’.²⁶⁰ For his ‘brethren’s sake’ he felt he could not keep silent. He explained that since the publication of Edward Hine’s views he had received ‘divers communications and pamphlets’ seeking to convert him to the BI view. Creighton argued that Britain could not be the literal Israel, that they were not the descendants of Israel’s ten tribes. They were, rather, ‘spiritual Israel’, a nation to which the kingdom of God had been committed. Christians were the spiritual seed of Abraham, children of God to whom the promises belonged. By them the nation was preserved and powerful. They had a mandate to be a ‘light to the world’ through ‘ministering his word’.²⁶¹ This was a commonly held theological view, again exemplifying the use of the ‘symbolic Jew’ motif. What belonged to the Jews as the physical seed of Abraham, was appropriated and applied to Christians, now viewed as ‘spiritual Israel’.

Another minister, Rev. Dr Horatius Bonar expressed his opposition to BI in the *Thames Advertiser*, 1881, in an article entitled ‘The Anglo-Israelite Delusion’. Bonar argued that the widely propagated ‘modern theory’ that the British were Israelites was based on invented resemblances or ‘identifications’ which were unsupported by ‘authentic history’ or ‘national tradition’. He listed a number of factors to support his argument: The languages of Saxon, Welsh and Celts had no affinity with Hebrew; the histories of the various tribes whether Teutonic Saxon, Caledonian, Latin or Scandinavian were totally distinct from that of the ten tribes of Israel; manners and customs had no resemblance; the physiognomy of the English, Welsh, Scotch, Celtic Norwegian or Norman was the opposite of the Eastern, Israelitish face; the names and places in Britain were not Hebrew or Semitic. Also, there were no traces left upon the ‘barbarous Britons’ and Caledonians whose territory the Israelite tribes were supposed to have invaded, in spite of the fact that Israelite culture was highly developed. Whereas, the Romans who came later and briefly occupied the land

²⁵⁹ FS, 5 June 1884.

²⁶⁰ W. Creighton, ‘The Ten Tribes, (“The House of Israel”): An appendix to a Refutation of E. Hine’s Theory’, *Thames Advertiser*; (TA), 4 August 1880.

²⁶¹ TA, 4 August 1880.

left a distinct mark in names, traditions and ruins.²⁶² A range of perspectives was debated in newspapers and public meetings. Even though BI was dismissed by many, the theory appealed, as it provided support and justification for Britain's imperialist ambitions.²⁶³ J. Wilson, writing of BI in 1968 argued that the movement arose in a time when British Imperialism, fundamentalist evangelicalism and racial ideologies combined to support the theory.²⁶⁴

In considering how the Jewish people fitted into the BI scheme, Barkun argued that British Israelites, in similar fashion to the Brethren movement had an ambivalent attitude toward the Jews. BI ideas developed simultaneously with millenarian views within English evangelical circles and while various doctrines of end times circulated, BI took no orthodox position on eschatology. Indeed, BI did not develop along sectarian lines and its adherents could be found in a variety of denominations.²⁶⁵ One view regarding the place of Jews was put forward by 'Anglo-Israel' in a letter to the editor of the *Auckland Star* 1881 in an article, 'Return of the Jews to Palestine'. According to 'Anglo-Israel', Jews were 'unmistakably accomplishing' the divine condemnation, while Britain, 'now proved to be Israel', was accomplishing the divine mission of 'going into all the world and preaching the Gospel to every creature' and would shortly accomplish another divine mission of replacing the Jews in Palestine. The writer then claimed that Judah (the Jews) would be restored to Palestine by Israel (the British) for, according to the Bible, when the return would take place the two nations of Israel and Judah would return together. It is not clear how the two opposing propositions of replacing the Jews in Palestine and helping the Jews return, fitted together, but lack of logic did not prevent many embracing these ideas.²⁶⁶ Once again the Jew fulfilled a symbolic role in an elaborate scheme whereby all the promised blessings were assigned to the British, while Jews remained the recipients of God's curses.

Māori identification with Israel: a Lost Tribe?

Some Māori in the nineteenth century also considered themselves part of the so-called Lost Tribes of Israel. This view originated with missionaries, like Samuel Marsden, who drew up a list of

²⁶² 'The Anglo-Israelite Delusion', *Thames Advertiser*, 18 February 1881.

²⁶³ 'The mystery of English colonisation', *New Zealand Herald*, 12 May 1883.

²⁶⁴ J. Wilson, p. 74.

²⁶⁵ Michael Barkun, p.78,79.

²⁶⁶ 'The Return of the Jews to Palestine', *Auckland Star*, 21 February 1881.

similarities between the cultural practices of Māori and Jew and from this deduced that there was a connection.²⁶⁷ Other missionaries and academics, such as Thomas Kendall, Professor Samuel Lee of Cambridge (England) and Robert Maunsell, advanced the view that there was a similarity between the Māori and Hebrew languages.²⁶⁸ This was but one of a number of European views about the origins of Māori and other Polynesian groups. The historian, Kerry Howe, argued that the theories that circulated in the western discourse of the nineteenth century, were a ‘transference of various versions of the European prehistoric past’.²⁶⁹ Thus, some traced Polynesians to classical Greek culture and others to Aryan or Caucasian origin. However, the idea of Hebraic descent found resonance amongst Māori, in a way that the other theories did not. Many Māori identified with the marginalisation and suffering of the ancient Hebrews and came to see themselves as Israelites. Bronwyn Elsmore argued that as early as 1840, Māori saw parallels between the position of the two peoples. Like the Israelites of old, they had become captives in their own land, which had been plundered, while their people had been subjected to foreign powers.²⁷⁰ Elsmore cites the examples of Hone Heke comparing his people to the ‘persecuted children of Israel’ in 1845, and chief Te Aroha saying, in a speech in 1869, ‘We are like wandering Israelites without a home’.²⁷¹

New Māori prophetic movements like Pai Marire and later Ringatū drew on Old Testament imagery and motifs, their leaders, Te Ua Haumene and Te Kooti seeing themselves as prophets, like Moses, destined to lead their people out of slavery. While these leaders identified themselves as Jews (Tiu), or Israelites and named places after biblical names, their movements did not seek to adopt Judaism, as such. As Elsmore argued, the Māori prophetic movements were a form of protest against the colonisation that had inadvertently accompanied the Christianity of the missionaries. The Jew held great symbolic value for Māori. The symbolism did, on occasion, have a practical outworking with regard to the Jewish people in their midst. One such example was on the occasion of the murder of the missionary Rev. D.S. Volkner in Opotoki in 1865 wherein the

²⁶⁷ Kerry Howe, *The Quest for Origins*, Hawaii, 2003, p.38.

²⁶⁸ Bronwyn, Elsmore, *Like Them That Dream: The Maori and the Old Testament*, Kindle Locations 1370-1376.

²⁶⁹ Howe, p.23.

²⁷⁰ Elsmore, Kindle Location 1527.

²⁷¹ Elsmore, Kindle Locations 1355-1362.

Pai Marire leader, Patara, chose to spare the lives of the Levy brothers.²⁷² According to Levy's written account of the incident, Parata expressed his fondness for Jews for the reason that, 'the Jews were once a very grand people, but were now reduced to a very small one through the persecutions they had gone through, the Māoris believing themselves to be undergoing the same'.²⁷³ While identification with the Israelites did, at times, lead to a favourable view of Jewish people in their midst, there is no indication that Māori concerned themselves with the issue of Zionism, the return of Jews to their homeland. Māori identification with the Israelites of the Bible provides another example of the symbolic role of the Jew.

Evangelicalism, Eschatology and the Return of the Jews

The symbolic Jew played a role in various theological schemes. For many Evangelicals, the return of the Jews to their ancient homeland was seen as a fulfilment of Bible prophecy. An 1894 article, 'Exploration in the Holy Land', reported that the large migration of Russian Jews seemed to indicate a fulfilment of prophecy of the 'restoration of Jews to their ancient city' and considered that modernisation, extension, and improvement of the town would be necessary. The return of Jews was but one point of discussion for readers. It was also thought that the vigorous exploration and building activity occurring as a result of the Sultan's firman (edict) ought to result in some discoveries of great interest to the student of Oriental and Bible lore.²⁷⁴ For Hackett Smith, in the aforementioned article, the return of the Jews was but one of the many Palestine-related topics that he addressed. He claimed that between 50,000 and 70,000 Jews had returned to Palestine and opined that the return of Jews to Palestine was not general, but was principally due to persecution in Russia and Eastern Europe. It was his belief that the Western Jews, 'the well-to-do Jew of England and other places', would never go back.²⁷⁵ The persecution of Jews in Russia was also mentioned in a 1892 *New Zealand Herald* report as contributing to the acceleration of the movement of Jews toward 'their ancient homeland'.²⁷⁶

²⁷² Elsemore, Kindle location 2022.

²⁷³ Elsemore, Kindle location 2022.

²⁷⁴ 'Exploration in the Holy Land', *Tuapeka Times*, 30 May 1894, 'Exploration in the Holy Land', *Hawke's Bay Herald*, 12 May 1894.

²⁷⁵ Special Interviews, *New Zealand Herald*, 18 September 1895.

²⁷⁶ 'Exploration in the Holy Land', *Tuapeka Times*, 30 May 1894. 'Exploration in the Holy Land', *Hawke's Bay Herald*, 12 May 1894.

Sometimes the return of Jews to Palestine was reported for its own sake, as could be seen in a 1890 *Auckland Star* article, 'Chovevi Zion' (Lovers of Zion). The article explained that this was a group of Jews formed with 'the sole object of hastening the return of the Jews to Palestine'. Readers were informed that Baron Hirsch, 'whom old Aucklanders would remember', as a former Auckland citizen, was a significant person in the movement. While attempts to establish colonies in 'United States, Canada, and the Argentine Republic' had been unsuccessful, Jewish colonies were doing well in the land of Palestine. The Turkish Government was said to be now assisting Jewish settlement by removing restrictions so that Jews could settle in any part of the country. The writer suggested that if Britain recognised this Jewish colonisation, many Jews would flock there, especially from Russia, and 'an era of prosperity will set in where now desolation reigns'. The article concluded, 'Very many people are earnestly and curiously watching this movement'.²⁷⁷

When Theodore Herzl published *The Jewish State* in 1896 and launched the First Zionist Congress in 1897, the groundwork had already been laid for an engaged and vigorous response by the New Zealand public. New Zealanders were invested in Palestine and the Jews for a variety of religious and political reasons. The discoveries in Palestine over the course of the nineteenth century affirmed the religious beliefs of Evangelical Christians and strengthened the position of other mainstream Protestant Christians, in competition with Catholics. Many New Zealanders, still attached to 'Mother England' followed closely Britain's imperial role in the Ottoman empire. The Jew performed a symbolic role in many theological formulations, whether it was in their chosenness, their restoration to the Holy Land or their divine punishment, variously seen as fulfilment of Bible prophecy. For some, the symbolic Jew, in his suffering merely served to highlight Britain's superiority as the recipients of God's blessings. Many Māori identified with the suffering of the ancient Israelites and powerful new prophetic movements arose, based on Jewish symbols and motifs. Some New Zealanders followed the return of Jews to Palestine out of general interest or humanitarian concern for the plight of a people under Russian persecution. Palestine of the nineteenth century captured the imagination of New Zealanders and played a significant role in the self-perception of New Zealanders as Christians and as Britons. Jews were, in a sense, a minor player in this British Christian imperialist drama. However, the situation in Palestine was far from static and shifted significantly over the course of the century, socially, economically and political-

²⁷⁷ 'Chovevi Zion', *Auckland Star*, 15 September 1890.

ly, and by the end of the century the Jews were gaining significance as greater numbers immigrated to the land. New Zealanders would follow these developments closely in the coming decade leading up to World War One and would indeed play a role in the establishment of the British Mandate for Palestine following the war.

CHAPTER THREE

The launch of Herzl's Zionism, 1897-1904: The newspaper discourse in New Zealand

Amid shouts of thanks and loyalty and tumultuous applause, the first Zionist congress came to an end. It was a milestone in modern Jewish history...Jewish and non-Jewish newspapers all over the world reported the congress and reflected on its significance.²⁷⁸

The first Zionist Congress in Basle 1897, convened by Theodore Herzl, launched political Zionism, for the first time onto the world stage. Although the idea of a return of the Jews to their homeland was ancient, the manner in which Herzl promoted his particular version of Zionism marked a new phase in the development of Zionism. Even though New Zealand was far from the centre of this activity, the events of this new movement were covered closely by the local newspapers, and followed by New Zealanders, Jewish and non-Jewish, demonstrating New Zealand's connectedness to the global network. Felicity Barnes has highlighted London's centrality in New Zealand's international news gathering from the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. Special correspondents were based in London and a group of newspapers formed the London-based New Zealand Associated Press agency to share the costs of a correspondent.²⁷⁹ In the early stages, many of the articles originated in Europe. However, the articles that made their way to New Zealand were generally written or reprinted in Britain. Modern communications collapsed the distance from the London metropolis to its hinterland in the antipodes, creating a sense of propinquity.²⁸⁰ The British focus strengthened New Zealand's connection to the Zionist movement.

A perusal of the newspaper coverage of the early congresses reveals a marked shift in perspective in the space of a few short years. The reporting of the initial responses to Herzl's 'scheme' in 1896 and 1897, portrayed the movement as idealistic, anti-establishment and lacking in common sense; the terrain of dreamers, radicals and university students. Within a very short period, the

²⁷⁸ Laqueur, Walter, *A History of Zionism*, London, 1972, (updated 2002), p.107.

²⁷⁹ Barnes, Felicity, *New Zealand's London: A Colony and its Metropolis*, Auckland, 2012, p.202.

²⁸⁰ Barnes, p.18.

discourse shifted, and by 1900 the articles displayed a more Zionist outlook, some being penned by Zionists themselves. The newspapers covered the early Zionist Congresses in much detail, tracking the volatile years up until Herzl's death in 1904, which followed his last and most difficult convocation. At this meeting, the fierce debate over Britain's offer of land in 'Uganda' for Jewish settlement, led to a walk-out by the Russian contingent. Herzl's death and the defeat of the Uganda Plan led to a split in the movement which caused a loss of momentum. However, Herzl's legacy lived on in New Zealand. The movement he birthed would continue to have an impact on the local community. As Herzl's attempts to win the favour of world leaders like the German Kaiser and Turkish Sultan failed, his attention shifted to cultivating the support of the British government. New Zealand, through its close ties with Britain, and with the aid of modern forms of communication, remained engaged in the plight of the Jews, and the progress of Zionism.

The early Zionist Congresses through the lens of New Zealand newspapers

Theodore Herzl hoped to 'open a general discussion on the Jewish question' with the publication of his pamphlet, *The Jewish State: An attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*, 14 February 1896.²⁸¹ With the launch of Herzl's 'scheme' at the First Zionist congress, local media, as elsewhere, discussed, analysed, dissected and sought to explain this new incarnation of an ancient idea, as people grappled with the meaning and implications of Zionism. Less than two months after the first Zionist Congress, held in Basle, 29-31 August 1897, a comprehensive report was published in the *Auckland Star*. Titled 'Hebrew Kingdom Scheme', the article foregrounded many of the issues that would arise as the movement developed: the divisions between philanthropists and Zionists, the concerns over dual loyalty, Zionism's rise as a response to antisemitism in Russia, Eastern and Western Europe and finally Herzl's political strategy to cultivate the support of the Ottomans.²⁸² The centrality of London is evident in the subtitles and opening remarks of the article. Subtitled, 'Hertzl's (sic) Project Interests Hirsch Representatives in London, Divided Opinions on the subject', the writer asserts, 'The representative of the Baron Hirsch charities in London seem to take very seriously the scheme of Dr. Theodore Herzl, of Vienna, for the formation of an independent Jewish state in Palestine'. (According to an article in 1890, Baron de

²⁸¹ Theodor Herzl, 'A Solution of the Jewish Question (1896)', *The Jewish Chronicle*, 17 January 1896, pp.12-13, Paul Mendes-Flohr & Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, New York, 1995, fn2, p.537

²⁸² 'Hebrew Kingdom Scheme', *Auckland Star*, 4 October 1897.

Hirsch had been a citizen of Auckland for a period.²⁸³ Although corroborating evidence is hard to find, it does indicate that the name Hirsch was familiar to New Zealanders).

The 'Hebrew Kingdom' article includes a report from a Viennese correspondent, dated 4 August, which was prior to the First Congress. It addressed the tension between the Jewish philanthropists and Herzl's political Zionism. The article mentioned that Herzl's political Zionism arose out of a frustration with the lack of progress of Jewish colonisation efforts in spite of the 'many millions' spent by Barons Hirsch and Rothschild. Zionist historian, Israel Cohen, noted that Herzl's ideas countered the gradualist approach taken by Jewish philanthropists, such as Barons Hirsch and Rothschild, who had for many years supported colonising ventures in Argentina and Palestine and opposed a political solution to the 'Jewish Question'.²⁸⁴ According to the historian Walter Laqueur, Herzl had sharply criticised Hirsch's philanthropic methods because, in his opinion, it debased the character of the people and produced beggars.²⁸⁵ According to the aforementioned article, 'now Zionism actually means the revival of the Jewish nationality by the establishment of a Jewish State. In short, new Zionism has become a political and social movement'. As Laqueur argued, Herzl took a narrow movement that aimed at a '...cultural renaissance which incidentally also engaged in philanthropic-colonising activities' and thrust it onto the European stage, while transforming it into a national and political entity to be taken seriously by world powers. For the New Zealand Jewish community, philanthropy was an important part of their culture, and they generously supported the calls for assistance that regularly came from overseas. They also valued their British connections and respected philanthropists, such as Hirsch and Rothschild. Laqueur argued that many were 'instinctive Zionists', who were not necessarily consistent in their views. As later chapters will show, humanitarianism was a major driver of Zionism in New Zealand, and the conflict between humanitarianism and nationalism did not raise many concerns.

'Chovevi Zion', *Auckland Star*, 15 September 1890. I haven't found any corroborating evidence that Baron de Hirsch was a citizen of Auckland. See Kurt Grunwald, *Turkenhirsch: A Study of Baron Maurice De Hirsch*, New Jersey, 1 January 1966, Isidore Singer, Oscar S. Straus, *Hirsch, Baron Maurice De*, The unedited full-text of the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia. ²⁸³ 'Entertainments and Meetings', *New Zealand Herald*, 29 December 1903. This will be covered in the next chapter. This will be covered in more detail in the next chapter.

²⁸⁴ Israeli Cohen, *A Short History of Zionism*, London, 1951, p.43.

²⁸⁵ Laqueur, p.89.

One of the issues that worried Jewish philanthropists such as Hirsch and the Rothschilds was the accusation of dual loyalty, and this also concerned some local Jews. The 'Hebrew Kingdom' article alluded to this by pointing out, 'Only a few years ago no educated Jew in England, Germany, or Russia would have dreamt of calling himself anything but an Englishman, a German, or Russian. To-day many are heard to say that they are nothing but Jews'.²⁸⁶ This was considered a 'detrimental tendency' that particularly attracted young people who were seized by 'fantastical enthusiasm' for the dream of a Jewish state. The established British Jews, such as Nathaniel Meyer Lord Rothschild, feared the accusation of dual loyalty. Rothschild expressed his concern in a conversation with Herzl, that British Jews would face the charge that 'a Jew could never become an Englishman'.²⁸⁷ British Jews had worked hard to gain equal rights and stature and did not want their position threatened. Many prominent Australian Jewish leaders opposed Zionism for the same reason, while in New Zealand the anti-Zionist voices were more muted.²⁸⁸

Another point of contention for religious Jews was the notion, propagated by political Zionism that the restoration to the land should come about by human effort, rather than divine intervention. The article mentioned the protest of a group of German rabbis, who issued a manifesto declaring that the establishment of a national Jewish State would be contrary to the Messianic prophecies and that Judaism laid upon its adherents the 'obligation to support and foster with all devotion and with all their might the State in which they live'.²⁸⁹ Wellington's Rabbi Van Staveren's views were consistent with those of the 'Protest Rabbins'. Auckland's Rabbi Goldstein, however, was able to reconcile Messianic prophecy and patriotism with the Zionist goal. He described the 'restoration to the land of our Fathers' as a 'perennial hope transmitted from generation to generation of the scattered Jews, a hope which animated every Jewish heart'. Goldstein's view was consistent with Laqueur's observation, that many were 'instinctive' Zionists. As Goldstein put it:

The belief has become almost an instinct, and it was his hope and prayer, that the future might be soon at hand. He might pray for material welfare, but Jerusalem was not forgotten.

²⁸⁶ AS, 4 October 1897.

²⁸⁷ Laqueur, P.119.

²⁸⁸ The stance and influence of New Zealand and some Australian rabbis and leaders will be discussed in the next chapter.

²⁸⁹ 'Hebrew Kingdom Scheme', *Auckland Star*, 4 October 1897.

Whatever country the Law might dwell in, proud of the law which gave him birth, and sheltered him under the shadow of her laws, praying and working for its welfare, mingled with his prayers, was the restoration of Zion.

The ‘Protest Rabbiners’, as they were called, also opposed the idea of establishing a Jewish nation to meet the needs of Jews in distress, but rather advocated fighting for the removal of discriminatory laws in the countries where Jews lived.²⁹⁰ The Jewish world was divided between those who considered Zionism the answer to antisemitism in East Europe and Russia and those who thought Zionism threatened the position of those minorities and saw advocacy for minority rights as the best approach.²⁹¹ Later chapters will show that New Zealand Jews were practically minded and pursued both issues concurrently.

The role of antisemitism in the universities in Germany and Austria was one factor that pushed Herzl towards his formulation of a solution to the ‘Jewish Problem’. The ‘Hebrew Kingdom’ article elaborated on this issue, claiming that the ‘Gentile’ students were ‘mostly antisemitic’, that Jewish students were met with ‘blind racial hatred’, ‘socially banished’, denied any noble qualities and ‘declared to be nobodies’.²⁹² Indeed Herzl’s own experience of antisemitism in Austria as a student contributed to his conversion to Zionism. Many historians have seen the antisemitic backlash that followed the trial of the Jewish Captain Alfred Dreyfus (1894), as the trigger for Herzl’s turn to Zionism. Others have presented a more complex picture. Jacques Kornberg offered a different analysis from a social psychological perspective, that situated Herzl in the Central European context of the late nineteenth century.²⁹³ Kornberg argued, based on a study of Herzl’s literature and life in Austria, that he was ambivalent in his attitude towards his Jewishness. According to Kornberg, Herzl simultaneously felt much self-disdain, as well as pride, loyalty and solidarity with Jewishness. He was an assimilated Jew and had internalised the Jewish stereotypes of the European enlightenment; supposed cowardliness, unmanliness and preoccupa-

²⁹⁰ Dr. S. Maybaum, Dr. H. Vogelstein, ‘Protestrabbiner: Protest Against Zionism (1897)’, Mendes-Flohr, P. & Reinhard, J., eds., *The Jew in the Modern World, A Documentary History*, New York, 1995, p.539.

²⁹¹ Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878-1938*, Cambridge, 2004.

²⁹² AS, 4 October 1897.

²⁹³ Jacques Kornberg, *Theodore Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism*, Indianapolis, P.2.

tion with money.²⁹⁴ However, the history of victimisation was one that Herzl could identify with, and the ability of the Jews to withstand persecution evoked his admiration. He blamed the ‘unpleasant Jewish traits’ on the ‘Christian overlords’ who had assigned the Jews to ghettos for centuries. Herzl hoped that there would be an avenue for Jews to assimilate, and toyed with various ideas to achieve this, including mass conversion to Christianity, duelling as a means of gaining honour and mass adoption of socialism. However, Austrian antisemitism increased throughout the 1890s with the rise of the Christian Social Party. Led by Karl Krueger, the party gained mass support through the use of antisemitic rhetoric and slogans.²⁹⁵ According to Kornberg, Herzl lost hope that Jews would be allowed to assimilate. This was the background to Herzl’s experience of antisemitism in France, a supposedly liberal, enlightened and modern country without the baggage of the traditional Christian antisemitism of Eastern Europe. As Herzl observed antisemitism in France, he concluded that assimilation did not provide the answer to ‘the Jewish problem’. As he wrote in his later novel *Alteneuland* (1902), ‘Jewish merchants were boycotted, Jewish workmen starved out, Jewish professional men proscribed... Whether Jews were rich or poor or middle-class, they were hated just the same’.²⁹⁶

The ‘Hebrew Kingdom’ article continued to detail many aspects of Herzl’s scheme, the practical steps that he advocated, and the progress he had thus far made. The amount of detail contained in this one article at such an early stage of the launch of Herzl’s programme attests to the attention the new movement garnered. Zionism was, at this early stage, presented, as a new and radical idea, embraced by students, enthusiasts, and the poor masses of Russia and Eastern Europe, but rejected by those with a more serious outlook. The tone of caution was evident in another article entitled ‘Zionism: What is it?’ which was published in at least three New Zealand papers in November 1898.²⁹⁷ The article expressed sympathy for the idealism of the movement, but ultimately found its goals unrealistic. This investigation into the movement was written from the perspective of a British observer and prompted by a recent cablegram suggesting that the Kaiser’s visit to Palestine was giving impetus to Zionism. The article drew a distinction between what it considered

²⁹⁴ Kornberg, p.2.

²⁹⁵ Michael, Ray, ed., ‘Karl Lueger, Austrian Politician’: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Karl-Lueger>

²⁹⁶ Shlomo Averini, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, New York, 1981, p.94.

²⁹⁷ ‘Zionism’, *South Canterbury Times*, 21 November 1898, *Taranaki Herald*, 29 November 1898, *Timaru Herald*, 22 November 1898.

the idealistic dreams of Zionism as opposed to a realistic 'British' common sense. The dreams of a rebuilt Temple, a Palestine blossoming once more like the rose, nationality renewed, a religion revived, long exile forgotten, no more divisions of race and place, Jews once again ascending the holy hill of Zion and God remembering His people, were juxtaposed against 'certain candid criticisms'. For, the writer argued, 'our present friendship', i.e. the friendship of the British with its Jewish population, required such candour. The article proceeded to point out that the English rabbis had not been supportive and the 'great financiers', 'the great Jewish families', such as the Rothschilds, were equally silent. After enumerating several difficulties the article concluded with a barbed comment, 'For all this, it must be confessed that the proposals of the Zionists, vague as they are, have elicited an amount of enthusiasm and idealism which is refreshing after the dead level of bourgeois satisfaction which has characterised much of modern Judaism'.²⁹⁸

By 1899 one can see a change in the public dialogue in the local New Zealand press, as the tone of caution which marked the discourse in the first two years after the launch of the Zionist Congress began to shift and more pro-Zionist perspectives were published. Articles begin to speak in terms of 'progress', evidenced by such developments as the establishment of a bank, with one million dollars subscribed from 'principally poor Jews', a seven-fold increase in the number of enrolled Zionists and the doubling of the number of delegates to the annual congress.²⁹⁹ A favourable view of Zionism was presented in the *Auckland Star* in March 1899, in an article entitled, 'A Zionist Dinner Party: Sanguine Views of the Success of the Movement'.³⁰⁰ The dinner party celebrated the birth of the English Zionist Federation and the chairman, Sir Francis Montefiore, claimed that the Zionist movement had quickly gained in respectability, whilst only a short time ago, it was seen as a 'romantic folly'. Montefiore appraised the prospects for productivity in Palestine optimistically, which, combined with the Jewish aptitude for mercantile and commercial undertakings would, he believed, vastly increase the commercial resources of the country. The chairman joined with Dr. Gaster, chief of the Sephardim Jews in the British Empire in heaping high praise on Zionism, described as a 'beacon light, showing the way towards the land which

²⁹⁸ SCT, 21 November 1898.

²⁹⁹ 'The Zionist Movement, *Marlborough Express*, 1 April 1899, *North Otago Times*, 22 March 1899. The number of delegates doubled to 400 and Zionist groups numbered 117 at the first congress to 913 at the second. Laqueur, p.109.

³⁰⁰ 'A Zionist Dinner Party: Sanguine Views of the Success of the Movement', *Auckland Star*, 18 March 1899, supplement.

belonged to their ancestors, and which the highest of all authorities had declared should again be theirs'. Gaster called the movement, 'one of the greatest, one of the strangest, and one of the most remarkable that had marked the history of any nation'. Both speeches were reportedly met with applause.³⁰¹ There is no indication from which source the article was derived, but it showed a sympathy towards Jewishness and Zionism. The article opened with the Hebrew dating system, 'On the eleventh Shebat, in the year 5659...' and offered detail on the menu which followed Jewish food laws. Kosher meats had been prepared 'according to the ritual of the Hebrews, and there was no milk with the coffee that followed'. The favourable tone of the article both towards Jewish culture and Zionism would have swayed the local Jewish community, who followed developments in Britain closely.

Included among the guests at this Zionist dinner party was L.J Greenberg, Hon. Secretary of the English Zionist Federation. Greenberg was a Zionist who had been elected to the Propaganda Committee of the Zionist Organisation at the Third Zionist Congress in 1899 and his reports began to appear in New Zealand newspapers soon after.³⁰² (At this time, the word 'propaganda' was used frequently to describe promotional and educational materials and did not have the negative connotations that would later attach to the word).³⁰³ Greenberg was a key figure in British Zionism who would later function in a mediatory role between the British government and the Zionist organisation.³⁰⁴ He was voted onto the Executive, (the Inner Action committee), of the Zionist Organisation at the Seventh Zionist Congress in 1905. This was a small group of seven members of which Greenberg was the British representative.³⁰⁵ He would become editor of the London-based *Jewish Chronicle* in 1907, bringing a Zionist influence to that publication, to which many locals subscribed. Greenberg's report on the Third Zionist Congress written for the British *Daily Mail* was reprinted in the *Auckland Star*, 7 October 1899.³⁰⁶ Greenberg's described the Congress

³⁰¹ Other guests in attendance included Dr. Werner, Rabbi of the Orthodox East End congregation; Dr. Friedlander, Mr Elkan Adler, Mr Herbert Bentwich, Rabbi Hermann Gallancz, and Mr L.J. Greenberg (Hon. Sec).

³⁰² David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry 1841-1991*, Cambridge, 1994.

³⁰³ Erwin W. Fellows, "'Propaganda", History of a Word', *American Speech*, Vol 34, October 1959, pp. 182-189.

³⁰⁴ Laqueur, pp. 121-2, 126, 167, 129, 138, 145, 157.

³⁰⁵ Laqueur.

³⁰⁶ 'Next Year in Jerusalem', *Auckland Star*, 7 October 1899, Supplement.

in glowing terms and commented on the impressive ‘array of intellectual prowess’ of the attendees, which included, according to his calculation, twenty-nine delegates who were either Doctor, Professor or Rabbi, out of thirty-five elected to the executive committee of the Congress. This, he argued, was the best that the Jewish world had to offer, representing every variation of religious thought, culture, and learning. According to Greenberg, it was to this calibre of person that the Jewish people would look, to build the foundation for a Jewish State. Greenberg argued that in spite of the emancipation achieved in western countries, where Jews had gained the rights of citizens, hatred towards Jews had not ceased. Whether it was the discriminatory laws and poverty of the East or equality and wealth in the West, the Jews were destined to be a ‘vulgar anomaly’. For Greenberg, Zionism provided the answer and hope. Greenberg was encouraged that practical steps had been taken at the Third Congress. The financial instrument of Zionism, the Jewish Colonial Trust, had been established as well as a code of constitution. Zionism was, he announced, ‘crystallising into a definite movement’.³⁰⁷ Greenberg’s enthusiasm was conveyed in the New Zealand press and the positioning of an Britisher in the inner circle of the Zionist organisation, dominated by Europeans, gave it a familiarity that would have influenced the local community.

A year later Greenberg argued even more ardently, in an article for the English paper *Daily Mail*, reprinted in the *New Zealand Herald*, that a national home was needed for Jews who had ‘had enough and to spare of the buffetings, the cruelty, the viciousness, the prejudice of his world’.³⁰⁸ Reporting from the Fourth Zionist Congress in London, Greenberg’s call to activism was clear. No longer were Jews to weep as they had beside the waters of Babylon and be content to be a lodger in every land. It was time to strive and labour for the new nation with a spirit of determination. Greenberg claimed that while Jews had fared reasonably well in England, their population of 150,000 was a mere drop in the bucket of the worldwide population of 12 million, most of whom faced persecution. Furthermore, even in ‘free, hospitable England’, the call to restrict the immigration of ‘aliens’ was increasing.³⁰⁹ As in New Zealand, British public opinion had turned against the idea of allowing needy Russian and East European Jews to immigrate because of the fear of

³⁰⁷ ‘Next Year in Jerusalem’, *Auckland Star*, 7 October 1899, Supplement.

³⁰⁸ ‘Dreaming of Zion’, *New Zealand Herald*, 6 October 1900.

³⁰⁹ Destitute Aliens (Immigration).cc.1154-1222, Commons Sitting of Saturday, 11 February 1893, House of Commons Hansard, Parliament Session: 1893-94.

the competition of cheap labour.³¹⁰ Their suffering added to the Zionist argument that a Jewish homeland was needed.

By 1900, a shift towards Britain was evident in the newspaper coverage of Zionism. A report on the Fourth Zionist Congress, held in London, 13-16 August 1900, was infused with a pro-British sentiment. According to this article, Britain was the place where the 'down-trodden race' of Jews was 'received on terms of absolute equality with the Anglo-Saxon and other races'.³¹¹ Another report on the London Congress, published in the *Thames Star*, was replete with references to how well the Jews had fared in England. Herzl reportedly stated that England was one of the few countries in the world in which 'God's ancient people' were not detested and persecuted, Indeed, Laqueur argued that Herzl had by this time become disillusioned after his failure to win the support of the German and Turkish leaders and had begun to look to Britain for the future of Zionism.³¹² He believed that from Britain the Zionist movement would 'soar to further and greater heights'.³¹³ Of course, the rhetoric did not match the reality. As noted, opposition to immigration had increased. However, the praise for England continued, as Zionists sought to gain favour with the British government. They expressed their deepest gratitude for the benevolent interest the government had shown the 'poor Jews in Rumania'. A report on the status of the Jews in England was read by the secretary of the English Zionist Federation according to which 'practically there was no prejudice in England against the Jews'.³¹⁴

From the perspective of the New Zealand Jewish community, the gratitude towards Britain and devotion to the monarchy resonated with their own genuine and deeply held sentiments. It was well articulated in Rabbi Goldstein's sermon on the passing of Queen Victoria in 1901 in which he identified himself as an English Jew, 'with all the instincts and impulses of an Englishman'.³¹⁵ As well as expressing appreciation for the Queen's personal qualities, Goldstein spoke of the favour she showed 'co-religionists', such as the late Sir Moses Montefiore, 'at a time when barri-

³¹⁰ Laqueur, p.119.

³¹¹ *The Otago Daily Times*, 30 October 1900.

³¹² Laqueur, p.112.

³¹³ Laqueur.

³¹⁴ Zionist Congress, *The Thames Star*, Resurrexi, 2 October 1900.

³¹⁵ Goldstein Notes, private collection.

ers, social, political and otherwise, which blocked the way, still stood'. Jews in Britain now enjoyed the privileges of full citizenship and for this, Goldstein and the Jewish community were grateful and would be among those 'subjects of the Empire' who would mourn her loss deeply.³¹⁶ Goldstein's claim to Englishness caused a minor stir, with a letter of protest to the editor of the *New Zealand Herald*, entitled, 'Can a Jew Be An Englishman', (sic) Signed by 'A Real Englishman'. He argued that just as a 'Bengali Babu', a 'Sikh Majhommedan', and Irishman or Scotchman could not claim to be English, neither could a Jew.³¹⁷ This letter received a further response from 'a true born Berkshireman' who defended Goldstein on the basis that, in addition to being born in England, along with his parents, he lived according to the principles of an Englishman; truth, justice and charity. Further, he did not advertise every charitable deed, but steadily pushed what he considered to be the right course.³¹⁸ Being British in this sense extended beyond ethnicity to embrace universal conceptions, which in this case, included living by a set of principles; truth, justice and charity. This could be read as code for living by Judeo-Christian values.

New Zealanders in this period saw themselves as part of the British Empire and, as such, Britain's relationship with the Zionist movement was followed closely. Newspaper coverage in the coming few years presented Britain's perspective, some seeing much progress and growth in the movement and others noting difficulties and problems. Contrasting views were presented to the news reading public. One *New Zealand Herald* report in June 1901 suggested that Zionism was beginning to be respected among a 'large and increasing number' of Jews in Britain, while a 1902 report in the 'Social News' of the *New Zealand Herald* claimed that most British Jews were opposed, stating, 'The general opinion of those most competent to judge in English Jewry is that the return to Zion in the fashion now proposed would result in utter failure'.³¹⁹

³¹⁶ 'The Jewish Synagogue', *Auckland Star*, 28 January 1901.

³¹⁷ 'Can a Jew be an Englishman', *New Zealand Herald*, 1 February 1901. Goldstein was born in London 1852 and moved to New Zealand in 1880 where he remained until his death in 1935, Ann Beaglehole. 'Goldstein, Samuel Aaron', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1996. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3g15/goldstein-samuel-aaron> (accessed 14 March 2019)

³¹⁸ 'An Englishman', *New Zealand Herald*, 2 February 1901.

³¹⁹ *New Zealand Herald*, 3 June 1901, Items of Social News, *New Zealand Herald*, 24 May 1902, Supplement.

The focus on the British view might explain why the London-based Israel Zangwill's opinion appears frequently in the New Zealand press from 1901, in a similar fashion to Greenberg, who was a colleague.³²⁰ Biographer, Meri-Jane Rochelson, wrote of Zangwill that he was 'probably the best known Jew in the English-speaking world at the start of the twentieth century'.³²¹ The historian, David Vital, concurred that at that time Zangwill was considered eminent in literary circles.³²² An interview with Zangwill, entitled, 'The Jew in the Twentieth Century' was published in the *New Zealand Herald*, 22 June 1901.³²³ The article presented Zangwill's argument for Zionism. He believed that the persecution of the Jews over centuries contributed to strong Jewish communities and identity. However the 'absolute freedom granted to them in almost all civilised countries' had had a detrimental effect in destroying their identity as a 'race'. The 'Jewish race' was in danger of merging with other 'races' and disappearing altogether. Zangwill believed that one of two things were necessary to maintain identity, either a political organisation or a spiritual idea. The former he saw in Herzl's movement, the latter he described as 'a modern intellectual movement'. The contemporary reports showed Zangwill's ideas as they were developing. In a later examination of Zangwill's writing and work, historian, Vital, concluded that in terms of his political ideas he did not hold to rigorously worked-out ideas, or consistent and systematic political positions. He believed, like Herzl, that Jews needed to become a political nation or they were doomed. According to Vital, Zangwill did not consider religion and 'ethnie' a sufficiently strong basis for Jewish identity, but what was needed was the universalisation of Judaism. In order to survive, Jews needed to let go of the stringencies of orthodoxy, re-connect with pre-Talmudic principles and open up to new recruits and populations.³²⁴ Zangwill would later lead the break-away territorialist movement, which was not wedded to the idea that Palestine was the only possible place for a Jewish settlement. They attempted to find territory in various parts of Africa, Asia,

³²⁰ 'The Zionist Crusade', *Marlborough Express*, 21 July 1902, Here and There, *Evening Star*, 8 April 1902, 'Czar or Sultan', *New Zealand Herald*, 12 April 1902, A Picturesque Movement, *Auckland Star*, 4 April 1903, Supplement.

³²¹ Meri-Jane Rochelson, Israel Zangwill, 1824-1926, Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/israel-zangwill>

³²² David Vital, 'Zangwill and Modern Jewish Nationalism', *Modern Judaism*, Vol. 4, No. 3 Oct., 1984, p. 43.

³²³ Vital, p.43.

³²⁴ Vital, p.244.

and Australia, but the movement became redundant after the Balfour Declaration and disbanded in 1925.

New Zealanders continued to follow Herzl's attempts to win international support for his scheme and his diplomatic ventures were duly reported. By 1902, as previously mentioned, Herzl's attention had shifted to Britain. Greenberg was to play a key role in mediating between Herzl and the British government.³²⁵ He was involved in talks in Cairo in 1902 with Lord Cromer, the viceroy and the Egyptian Prime Minister over a proposal for Jewish settlement in the Brook of Egypt (Wadi el Arish). By the time of the Sixth Zionist Congress conference in Basle, August 1903 it was clear that Herzl's diplomatic courting of Ottoman, Egyptian and German leaders had failed.³²⁶ However, the British government had made an offer of territory in British East Africa for Jewish settlement. Again, Greenberg mediated the offer between the government and the Zionist organisation.³²⁷ The Sixth Congress would mark a significant shift for the Zionists. By this time, hope of gaining a charter for Palestine was fast fading, and the persecution of Jews in Russia intensified with the outbreak of another pogrom. Herzl found himself pushed to his limits, and this would be his last conference. A report of the Sixth Congress was published in the *Oamaru Mail*, entitled 'The New Jerusalem'. This article was penned by Esley Zeitlyn for the *London Daily Mail*, clearly considered important or relevant enough to be reprinted in the New Zealand press. The article captured the sense of disappointment and dissension which marked this conference. Describing it as a 'counsel of despair', Zeitlyn wrote that the British offer of territory in East Africa for a Jewish homeland, 'divided the members of the Congress like a riven tree'. The divisions were as a 'throbbing, palpitating triangle, the sides of which were in disagreement with each other, and the base with both'. The British offer of a large tract of territory in East Africa, as an autonomous Jewish settlement under British control, was received with great enthusiasm by some, with gratitude expressed to Great Britain for its official sympathy. However, the Russian delegates refused to give their sanction to the scheme and left the hall in protest.³²⁸

³²⁵ Laqueur, p.119.

³²⁶ 'Czar or Sultan', *New Zealand Herald*, 12 April 1902.

³²⁷ Laqueur, pp. 126,127.

³²⁸ 'The New Jerusalem', *Oamaru Mail*, 13 October 1903.

The Sixth Zionist Congress occurred against a backdrop of increasing concern over the plight of Jews in Russia. A pogrom had broken out earlier in the year on the 6 April, in the town of Kishinev. Laqueur commented that the greatest opposition to the Uganda Proposal came from the Kishinev delegates, who were ‘...unwilling to go anywhere except Palestine’.³²⁹ Newspapers in New Zealand covered the Kishniev pogrom in some detail. A report in the *New Zealand Herald* on 25 April 1903 stated that ‘the workmen at Kishniev attacked the Jews, killing twenty-five and wounding two hundred and seventy five’.³³⁰ Further information was reported a month later, supplied by the presidents of the London Committee of Deputies of the British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association, according to which fifteen streets had been sacked, four thousand families left homeless, seven hundred houses and six shops pillaged, forty-three people killed and four hundred and seventy four wounded.³³¹ ‘Children were flung into the streets out of windows, and many women were outraged and horribly mutilated. Some of the atrocities were incredibly ghastly’.³³² On May 25, the *Poverty Bay Herald* reported the descriptions given by a German doctor who assisted at Kishniev Hospital, ‘One man's legs were sawn off. All a child's teeth were extracted. Another infant's eyes were burned out with a red-hot iron while in the mother's arms. In the father's presence the mother was outraged, and her breast cut off while trying to protect her child’.³³³ According to Laqueur, this pogrom, where approximately fifty Jews were killed, many more wounded and many Jewish women raped, was a turning point for Jews. Laqueur argued that the horror and shame that they had been like defenceless sheep, led to an indignation that prompted the beginning of Jewish self-defence.³³⁴ The detail with which it was reported in the New Zealand press and horror that it evoked demonstrates that it was a key event which had a great impact on Jewish communities, not only highlighting the need to defend themselves, but also the need for a home. Louis Phillips wrote retrospectively in the *1931 Review* that the Kishniev pogrom ‘brought home to New Zealand Jews the reality of antisemitism’. “Pogrom” passed into the language of current speech and a new vocabulary of Jewish terms began to express the change of

³²⁹ Laqueur, p.128.

³³⁰ *Marlborough Express*, 25 April 1903, Page 2, *New Zealand Herald*, 27 April 1903, Page 5.

³³¹ *Press*, Volume LX, Issue 11588, 20 May 1903, Page 8.

³³² *Press*, Volume LX, Issue 11588, 20 May 1903, Page 8.

³³³ *Poverty Bay Herald*, Volume XXX, Issue 9753, 26 May 1903, Page 2.

³³⁴ Laqueur, p.123.

outlook. Antisemitism and assimilation, names for processes of which we had always been aware but had never clearly felt began to hover upon our lips when speak of Jewish matters'.³³⁵

Support for Zionism grew in New Zealand against this backdrop of Jewish persecution. While it was perhaps expected that many Jews would respond to the suffering of their co-religionists by seeking for their amelioration in a Jewish homeland, the idea was also raised in the general community. An opinion piece in the *New Zealand Illustrated Magazine* expressed shock at the 'horrible persecution' of Jews at Kishniev. A return to the 'promised land of their forefathers' was suggested as a possible solution to the difficulties of the Jews by the writer, who wondered '...why this long persecuted people do not do all in their power to hasten the day of their gathering together from all parts of the earth to the promised land of their forefathers, and thus make of themselves a nation which could defy persecution even from Russia'.³³⁶ Many Christians responded to the suffering of the Jews. The Rev. W.E. Gillam of St. Matthews church in Auckland stated that the Kishniev massacre had 'roused the indignation of British Christians everywhere'.³³⁷ He found it intolerable that such persecutions could be allowed by a civilised power. The minister was willing to join a public demonstration if one should be organised so that 'a remonstrance reaching them from far-away New Zealand would show how worldwide is the indignation felt at the recent atrocities'.³³⁸ Not all newspapers were sympathetic to the Jews however, as demonstrated by this report in the *Southland Times*, with the titles, 'Eternally Intriguing', 'A Fanatic'.³³⁹ The article reported that a certain Father John of Kronstadt who had initially denounced the 'Kishniev Jewish outrages', later retracted the statement because he had received further information which showed that the Jews were to blame for the outbreak. Although a brief article with little more information than this, the title, 'A Fanatic', suggests that the opinion expressed in the article was not considered mainstream. Against the backdrop of the Kishniev pogrom, came the rejection of the Uganda Plan at the Sixth Congress.

³³⁵ *New Zealand Jewish Review and Communal Directory 1931*, p.43.

³³⁶ *New Zealand Illustrated Magazine*, Volume VIII, Issue 3, 1 June 1903, Page 239

³³⁷ *New Zealand Herald*, Volume XL, Issue 12339, 3 August 1903, Page 6.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

³³⁹ *Southland Times*, Issue 19076, 18 June 1903, Page 3.

The Sixth Zionist Congress was Herzl's last. A comprehensive article on Herzl, drawn from the 'The *Jewish Chronicle* of July 8' was published in the *Otago Daily Times*. It reported Herzl's death died on 3 July 1904 at Edlach, near Reichenau (Austria) mentioning that for some time previous to his death Dr Herzl had been in a serious state of health, the result, it was thought, of anxiety on account of the opposition manifested by the late Zionist Congress to the East African scheme.³⁴⁰ The article proceeded to give an overview of Herzl's life, including his upbringing, education, career and Zionist work up until the most recent congress. It concluded by speculating that the schism at the Sixth Congress 'worked upon the mind and health of Dr Herzl and assisted to break down his health during the period which preceded his death'.³⁴¹ New Zealand's Jewish community mourned Herzl's death and services were held in the synagogues. His legacy lived on however, and he continued to have a powerful impact on the development of Zionism. The next chapter will address the ways in which the rabbinical leadership interpreted Herzl's life and message for the local community. Zionism became a vehicle to achieve much more than Herzl envisaged.

The period 1897-1904 was a dynamic one for the Zionist movement. A perusal of the newspaper coverage of Herzl's launch of political Zionism and the early Zionist Congresses showed that New Zealand vigorously engaged in the international discourse that traversed Britain, Western and Eastern Europe, Russia and the Ottoman Empire. New Zealand's newspapers, mediated through a London-based press organisation, reflected the shift in perspectives on Zionism over the period in question. The commentary in the initial stages narrated the movement as idealistic, but unrealistic. By the turn of the century the Zionist position was articulated more forcefully. As the centre of Zionist activity shifted from Germany to Britain, British Zionist commentators like Greenberg and Zangwill gained media exposure and New Zealand's connection to the movement tightened. The next chapter will focus on how the Jewish communities in New Zealand responded to Herzl's Zionism and will show that small beginnings were made in the formation of Zionist groups and societies in New Zealand. The movement developed slowly until the Balfour declaration of 1917, in which, Britain's support for the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine substituted for the political charter which Herzl had hoped would give weight to his 'scheme'.

³⁴⁰ 'Death of Dr Herzl', *Otago Daily Times*, 18 August 1904.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

Zionism and the New Zealand Jewish Community: c.1900-1914

...though there were momentous happenings in the Jewish Communities of the Old World, years passed before their influence was felt in this distant outpost of Jewry and even a longer period before their full import was realised. Though the establishment of the Zionist movement in our midst was a landmark in the history of Jews and of Judaism in the Dominion, the process of its extension was a gradual one and indeed it was not until the Balfour Declaration that Zionism became a part of the normal Jewish outlook of practically the whole of the Jews in the Dominion.³⁴²

These are the words of Aucklander, Louis Phillips, a well-known Zionist, respected in Jewish and non-Jewish circles for his knowledge of Jewish matters and history.³⁴³ Writing retrospectively in the *New Zealand Jewish Review and Communal Directory 1931 (1931 Review)*, Phillips described a period of small beginnings for the Zionist movement in New Zealand.³⁴⁴ New Zealand Jews had arrived along with the earliest settlers to New Zealand in the early nineteenth century, had become established in communities around the country with synagogues and communal institutions. They enjoyed peace and prosperity in a nation where very little antisemitism existed. The greatest threat to their community in this land of plenty was assimilation and the loss of their Jewish identity. Zionism was seen as a galvanising movement which met the need of strengthening Jewish consciousness and culture. In addition, the concept of the re-establishment of a Jewish homeland was viewed as a solution to another pressing and more practical problem, that of providing a place of refuge and safety for the persecuted Jews of Russia and Europe. The New Zealand community followed closely the plight of their distant co-religionists and their charitable contributions towards those in need built on a deep cultural tradition. Jewish humanitarianism found an expression in Zionism.

³⁴² Louis Phillips, Zionism in New Zealand, Ben Green, ed., *The New Zealand Jewish Review and Communal Directory 1931*, p.41.

³⁴³ Israel Meltzer, 'Mr Louis Phillips: A Personal Tribute by Israel Meltzer', Lionel Albert, ed., *Some of the Jewish Men & Women who Contributed to the History of Auckland 1840-1982*, Manuscript No.22, Auckland, 1982, p.64. See more on Louis Phillips in Chapter 6.

³⁴⁴ *1931 Review*, pp. 41-43.

According to Phillips, news of Theodore Herzl's 'scheme' to establish a homeland for the Jews on a political basis, filtered down to New Zealand's Jewish community slowly. He described the community as somewhat detached and distant from the centres of Jewish culture and thought. Phillips recalled, as a child, hearing his elders speak of the Dreyfus case and although he did not understand its meaning or implications felt that it somehow affected the destiny of his 'race'.³⁴⁵ What Phillips may not have known, because he was seven years old in 1897, was that the news of Herzl's ideas received considerable coverage in New Zealand's press, with the views and implications vigorously discussed, as explained in the previous chapter. However, extant records do support the view that the establishment of Zionist groups progressed slowly in New Zealand. The historian Walter Laqueur noted that at the Fifth Zionist congress in Basle 1901, Zionism had spread to New Zealand, along with Chile, India and Siberia.³⁴⁶ Phillips recorded that an effort had been made to sell shekolim in Wellington in 1901, signifying adherence to the movement.³⁴⁷ However, the first Zionist societies were not established until 1903 in Wellington and Auckland. In piecing together the history of Zionism in New Zealand in the period 1897- 1914, one is limited by access to and the availability of consistent records and sparse primary source materials. The Auckland Hebrew Congregation has an archive of Annual Reports beginning in 1910, which is an important record of their community's activities. The Wellington Hebrew congregation has a useful overview in their one hundred and fiftieth commemorative volume *A Standard for the People*.³⁴⁸ Several reports in the newspapers of the period, particularly of meetings, offer a glimpse into the activity and thinking of the period. In addition, the handwritten notes of the Auckland's Rabbi Goldstein, kept in a private archive, provide further insight. Louis Phillips' chapter on Zionism written for the *1931 Review* built on the 1928 Master of Arts thesis by Violet Balkind, 'A Contribution to the History of the Jews in New Zealand'.³⁴⁹ Balkind's thesis and Phillips' chapter form the most comprehensive coverage of the topic up until that time.

³⁴⁵ *1931 Review*, p.43. The french Captain Alfred Dreyfus was falsely accused of treason and the anti-semitic treatment he was subjected to was thought to have greatly influenced Theodore Herzl's views.

³⁴⁶ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, London, 1972, (updated 2002), p.113.

³⁴⁷ *1931 Review*, p.41.

³⁴⁸ Stephen Levine, ed. *A Standard for the People: The 150th Anniversary of the Wellington Hebrew Congregation 1843-1993*, Christchurch, 1995.

³⁴⁹ Violet Balkind, by, 'A Contribution to the History of the Jews in New Zealand', *1928 Master of Arts History thesis*, University of New Zealand, November 1928.

Local Zionist Societies and Activities

At the dawn of the twentieth century the Jewish community in New Zealand was small indeed. In 1900-1901 the Jewish population was estimated to be 1,611, with a distribution as follows: Auckland 438, Wellington 506 and Otago 311. (New Zealand's 'Total Population at Census' in 1901 was 815,862).³⁵⁰ Christchurch and the smaller regions made up the rest of the total. Dunedin's Jewish population would decrease in the coming decades, while both Auckland and Wellington increased, along with the general population. The Jewish community was comprised of descendants of early settlers, many of whom were British-born, along with more recent immigrants, primarily from Russia and East Europe.³⁵¹ While records were not kept of the demographic makeup of immigrants, local histories record examples of immigration, such as Goldman's *History of the Jews in New Zealand*. Goldman noted that following the persecutions in Russia in 1882, twelve Jews immigrated to Wellington. Dunedin agreed to accept five immigrants on trial in 1889 and Christchurch accepted five.³⁵²

Phillips argued that it took some time for Zionism to become established in New Zealand. Since Auckland was considered the most Zionist city in New Zealand a perusal of the community records provides a useful gauge to test Phillips' assertion and indeed confirms his view.³⁵³ There is no mention of Zionist activities in the report of the 'Board of Management, Beth Israel Auckland', 1910.³⁵⁴ The 1915 report notes the Zionist Society's assistance with fundraising for 'Distressed Jews in the Countries of the Allies'.³⁵⁵ It is not until 1920 that the Zionist society had a specific segment and a substantial report in the Annual Report. Although Zionist records in this period are sparse, the following newspaper item offers a glimpse into the movement. While the previous chapter followed the international discourse over Zionism through the lens of newspapers, this chapter shows that political Zionism was being discussed and debated within the com-

³⁵⁰ S. Levine, *The New Zealand Jewish Community*, Lanham, 1999, p.37, Salinger, M. J., 'Wellington Jewry 1983: a survey of the Jewish community in the Wellington area', B'nai B'rith Unit Chazon, Wellington, 1985., p.3.

³⁵¹ L.M. Goldman, *The History of Jews in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1958, p.144.

³⁵² Goldman, p.144.

³⁵³ Balkind, p.31.

³⁵⁴ Report of Board of Management, Beth Israel Auckland, 1910.

³⁵⁵ Report of Board of Management, Beth Israel Auckland, 1915.

munity as well, and causing some division between secular and religious Jews. Herzl's Zionism posed a challenge to those religious Jews who did not support the notion that humans should intervene in the divine programme of restoration of Jews to their homeland. A Zionist meeting was mentioned in the Advertisement section of the *New Zealand Herald* in 1904.³⁵⁶ Chaired by Mr. M. Copland, it noted that an interesting discussion took place. A Mr Whitefield is reported as stating that 'they should seek further than their natural vision, because the Jews in Auckland were divided on the matter. Justice should be done to all'. Mr A. Green (who was appointed the new secretary), explained that political Zionism did not intend to take steps that would offend the religious sentiment of any Jew.³⁵⁷ Although a brief article, it showed the discussion that was occurring within the Jewish community. While political Zionism had raised difficult questions, the proponents of the movement did not want to offend the religious sensitivities of any Jew.

In a letter to the editor two months later, the aforementioned secretary of the Auckland Zionist organisation, A. Green, offered an explanation of Zionism in response to an article on the topic of the British Aliens Immigration Bill introduced in 1904.³⁵⁸ Having noted that the article conveyed a 'kindly sympathy' towards Zionism, he took the opportunity to reflect on the present position of the Zionist movement. He engaged in the debate between religious and political Zionism, arguing that the prophets were greater political Zionists than the current spiritual leaders. He accused the pious rabbis of keeping their people in a 'miserable blind condition' for two thousand years. He argued that the goals of Zionism were humanitarian, with the purpose to 'relieve the misery' for 'their oppressed brethren', in Russia, Romania, and Galicia, who, he claimed, had suffered so much, 'both morally and materially from antisemitism'. He referenced to massacres, thousands of miles away which were marked by 'barbaric and savage cruelty', and called on the humanitarian religions (i.e. Christians and Jews) to help rescue these needy people. He also suggested that Zionism provided a solution to the alleged 'evils' that would accompany the mass immigration of destitute Jews into England.

³⁵⁶ *New Zealand Herald*, 3 February 1904, Advertisements, p.6.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁸ Correspondence, *New Zealand Herald*, 13 April 1904. The 'Aliens Act' was passed in 1905, https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1905/13/pdfs/ukpga_19050013_en.pdf

Green's contemporary perspective on the humanitarian goals of Zionism was consistent with the retrospective view posited by Phillips in 1931. Phillips argued that the suffering and persecution of Russian Jewry played a large role in New Zealand's support for Zionism. As explained in the last chapter, the Kishniev pogrom of 1903 drove home the reality of antisemitism and the need for a home for suffering Jews.³⁵⁹ Phillips asserted that Zionism was a 'panacea' motivated by pity and philanthropy rather than a spiritual or cultural revival or expression of national spirit. It was an alleviant for the suffering of the Jewish people and that was its justification. The New Zealand Jewish community had a tradition of responding to the needs of fellow Jews and accordingly the 'Wellington Hebrew Congregation Annual Report' records that in light of the 'dastardly outrages' against the Jews in Kishniev, a general body of the Jewish community came together, a subscription list was opened and a generous response made to the fundraising appeal. Business people in the city were also personally canvassed.³⁶⁰

According to Laqueur, the Kishniev riots were followed by other outbreaks of violence against Jews which reached a climax in 1905 and led to another mass migration of Jews from Russia. He argued that the brutality of the attacks, combined with inaction of the authorities and participation of locals created a 'storm of protest' in Western Europe and the United States.³⁶¹ Local histories tell the stories of some Russian and East European Jewish immigrants who arrived in New Zealand around this time, escaping persecution and hardships in their countries of birth. Flora Shieff (nee Shenkin) related the story of her parent's arrival in New Zealand in 1911. Originally from Latvia, they came to New Zealand after a short sojourn in Scotland. She wrote:

Our family like so many others tore ourselves away from home, relatives and all that was familiar, knowing that the alternative was the loss of means of a livelihood because of cruelly restrictive laws, very substantial exclusion from higher education, and the constant danger of pogroms with their components of destruction, rape and massacre.³⁶²

³⁵⁹ Ibid. p.43.

³⁶⁰ Stephen Levine, ed. *A Standard for the People: The 150th Anniversary of the Wellington Hebrew Congregation 1843-1993*, Christchurch, 1995. p.76.

³⁶¹ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, New York, 2003, p.59.

³⁶² Flora Shieff & Lesley Max, 'From the Dvina to the Waitemata, Eds. Ann & Laurie Gluckman, *Identity & Involvement II: Auckland Jewry Past & Present*, Palmerston North, 1993, p.91.

Augusta Manoy, also from Latvia arrived in 1910. Historian Laurie Gluckman wrote that Augusta suffered from nightmares for most of her life, having witnessed the cruelty with which the 1904 revolution in Tukum had been suppressed.³⁶³ Space does not permit the stories of other families who came in the first decade of the twentieth century: the Tossmans, Faines, Manoy, Ketkos, Gotliebs, Dabschecks, Triesters and many others.³⁶⁴

In 1903 a 'Choveve Zion' or 'Lovers of Zion' group began in Auckland. This was a movement that began in the Russian Empire and Romania in the early 1880s. Their organisation had been reported on in New Zealand as early as 1890.³⁶⁵ A notice in *New Zealand Herald* in 1903 advertised a meeting of the Auckland Zionists and noted the formation of this new society, which was to be conducted and organised according to the rules and regulations adopted at the first Zionist Congress (1897). Mr A. Green was appointed temporary chairman, and Mr E. Esterman secretary. After a speech by Green on 'Zionism and what it has done for Judaism', it was resolved that every member of this society should become a shareholder of the Jewish Colonial Bank of London, and that each member should pay the regulation shekel yearly for the Vienna Committee's expenses as well as a monthly payment to cover the local expenses for 'propagating Zionism' among the Jews of New Zealand.³⁶⁶ 'Lovers of Zion' was originally founded by Leon Pinsker who, as an assimilated Jew and passionate Russian patriot, had initially adopted the ideas of Haskalah and the Jewish Enlightenment movement, but had become disillusioned by the outbreak of pogroms in Russia following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881. The goal of Haskalah was the modernising of Jewish life by adopting the language, culture, customs, and dress of the country in which they lived. Through these efforts Jews sought to show themselves worthy of, and to ultimately attain, emancipation. After the Russian pogroms Pinsker changed his views. He published *Auto-Emancipation* in 1882 in which he argued that Jews were despised because they were not a 'living nation' but 'aliens' in their countries of residence.³⁶⁷ The only remedy for such a problem, he asserted, was the creation of a Jewish nationality, of a people living on

³⁶³ Laurie Gluckman, 'Some Jewish Doctors in Auckland', ed. Ann Gluckman, *Identity & Involvement: Auckland Jewry Past & Present*, Palmerston North, 1990, p. 130.

³⁶⁴ S. Levine, ed., *Standard for the People*, pp. 293, 382, 384, 385, 396, 403, 406.

³⁶⁵ 'Chovevi Zion', *Auckland Star*, 15 September 1890.

³⁶⁶ 'Entertainments and Meetings', *New Zealand Herald*, 29 December 1903.

³⁶⁷ Leon Pinkser, 'Auto-Emancipation: An Appeal to his People by a Russian Jew', Arthur Hertzberg, ed., *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*, Philadelphia, 1997, location 3498, Kindle Version.

its own soil. The approach of the 'Lovers of Zion' was a slow gradual process of strengthening Jewish presence in Palestine by establishing agricultural settlements.³⁶⁸ However, due to scanty resources, haphazard methods and poor organisation, they achieved limited success. Zionist historian Israel Cohen argued that, in spite of these factors, the 'Lovers of Zion' movement played a useful role in 'familiarising the Jewish world with the idea of the return to Zion and in recruiting the first band of pioneers to begin converting the idea into a reality'.³⁶⁹ There is no evidence that the group which began in Auckland in 1903 had any lasting presence. It is most likely that it became absorbed into the general Zionist movement.

Rabbinical Views and their influence in Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin and Sydney

Political Zionism was a radical departure for religious Jews and many grappled with its implications and meanings. However, some rabbis did embrace the movement.

One of the most significant factors in the success or otherwise of Zionism in the regions was the influence of the community leaders, in particular the rabbis. Balkind argued, with regard to the establishment of the Auckland Zionist Society in 1903, that it was a source of pride for Auckland that the Zionist movement was first established on 'proper basis and in a corporate form' in their city.³⁷⁰ While there is little extant record of their activities, an archive of Rabbi Samuel Aaron Goldstein's personal papers reveals his strong support for Zionism. He became the president of the Zionist Society in Auckland in 1912 and retained that position for 22 years, providing stability for the movement.³⁷¹ Indeed, Phillips wrote in 1931 that there was no Jewish minister in Australia or New Zealand who had been so actively involved with the movement and rendered such 'yeoman service'.³⁷²

Goldstein came to New Zealand in 1880 to serve the Auckland Hebrew congregation and continued in that role until his death in 1935. He was London born and continued to see England as 'home'. Like other settlers, he lived in Australia initially, serving as Rabbi in Queensland and

³⁶⁸ Laqueur, p.137.

³⁶⁹ Israel Cohen, *A Short History of Zionism*, London, 1958, p.38.

³⁷⁰ Balkind, p.31.

³⁷¹ Gluckman, Ann & Gluckman, Laurie Eds., *Identity and Involvement: Auckland Jewry Past and Present*, Palmerston North, 1990, p.61.

³⁷² *1931 Review*, p.49.

New South Wales before immigrating to New Zealand. Rabbi Goldstein received his rabbinical training at the London Jews' College and led the Auckland Hebrew Congregation for over 50 years. He placed high value on civic involvement as a display of gratitude, an ethical obligation and a safeguard, based on the instruction from the Hebrew Scriptures, 'Seek ye the welfare of your city, for in its welfare shall be your peace'. Goldstein lived by the injunction to contribute to his community, in the belief that in the well-being of his city, lay his own well-being and that of his people.³⁷³ This Scripture was quoted in eulogies and memorials of Goldstein, as a driving principle in his life and his many community activities were an outworking of this teaching. He served on numerous boards and committees; New Zealand Society for the Protection of Women and Children, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Auckland Ladies' Benevolent Society, the Patriotic Society, the Auckland City Council's library committee, a Freemason lodge and the Société Littéraire Française'.³⁷⁴ Goldstein had great influence, not only within the Jewish community but also in the general community.

Goldstein maintained a high degree of devotion to Britain. He was ever conscious of and deeply grateful for the relatively recent emancipation of Jews in Britain. He asserted, 'We who enjoy the fullest rights of citizenship under the British flag which we love, recognize and appreciate British ideals, her love of fair play, her passion for freedom, her ready sympathy with those who are striving for freedom...'³⁷⁵ In an eulogy to Lord Rothschild, who died 31 March 1915, Goldstein mentioned that Rothschild's entrance, as the first professing Jew, to the House of Lords, 'completed the political freedom of our brethren in our beloved empire'.³⁷⁶ This, he believed, 'set the seal' on Jewish emancipation in England. Goldstein's sense of citizenship and British loyalty was partly derived from the gains he felt Great Britain had achieved for Jews as a minority group. The opportunity to participate 'in all the privileges which the salutary laws of the British Constitution offer(ed)' was seen as a 'great boon'.³⁷⁷ The loyalty towards Empire was evidenced in the dis-

³⁷³ Ida Israel, 'Rabbi Samuel Aaron Goldstein (1853-1935)', Ann Gluckman, ed., *Identity & Involvement*, Palmerston North, 1990, p.60.

³⁷⁴ Ann Beaglehole. 'Goldstein, Samuel Aaron', first published in the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, vol. 3, 1996. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/3g15/goldstein-samuel-aaron> (accessed 17 July 2017)

³⁷⁵ Thanksgiving for Victory over Germany, Goldstein Notes, 1918, p.15.

³⁷⁶ Eulogy to Lord Rothschild, Goldstein Notes, 1915, p.5.

³⁷⁷ Centenary of the Battle of Trafalgar, 1905, Goldstein Notes, p.59.

plays of devotion to the royal family. Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee was celebrated in New Zealand congregations with special commemorative services.³⁷⁸ Upon the death of King Edward VII, Goldstein expressed his thankfulness that under King Edward's rule, 'religion was not to be made a bar to political, civic or social distinction'.³⁷⁹

Goldstein also considered patriotism a sacred duty of Judaism:

Patriotism is taught by our religion as a sacred obligation, it enjoins obedience to the laws of our country...It is the duty of everyone, say our sages, to pray for the welfare of his country... The last act of a party of Roumanian Exiles driven from their country through repressive legislation was to fall on their knees, kiss the earth and shout Long Live Roumania, they could never forget the land of their birth.³⁸⁰

As discussed in the previous chapter, while many rabbis opposed Zionism for fear of the accusation of 'dual loyalty', Goldstein saw no contradiction between the loyalty to one's country and a Jewish nation. He also found no difficulty in accommodating the notion of human involvement in the divine programme to restore the Jews to their ancient homeland, as did the 'Protest Rabbiners'.

In the *1931 Review*, Phillips commented that it was significant that the first Zionist sermon was delivered in the Auckland Synagogue by Rabbi Goldstein on the occasion of Theodore Herzl's death in 1904.³⁸¹ Phillips' comments were offered as a tribute to the role Auckland would play as leading the Zionist movement in New Zealand. However, Goldstein's sermon may not have been the first, as Dunedin's Rabbi Chodowski also gave a sermon on this occasion, and this was published in the local paper. Writing in 1931, Phillips was likely not aware of this, as the movement had made faltering progress in Dunedin. A comparison of the views of Chodowski and Goldstein show much similarity, whilst the meagre available information on Wellington's Rabbi Van Staveren's Zionist views reveals a contrasting position.

³⁷⁸ Goldman, p.139.

³⁷⁹ Death of King Edward VII, 1910, Goldstein Notes, pp.88-91.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ *1931 Review*, p.45.

It is clear from Goldstein's sermon notes that the Hebrew Scriptures provided the basis for his views on Zionism. He described the desire for restoration to the 'land of our Fathers', or 'Zion', as a 'perennial hope transmitted from generation to generation', one that was spoken of by the prophets of the Bible and prayed for daily.³⁸² An article about Goldstein in the *1931 Review* claimed that he regarded religious and national sentiments as inseparably linked and that he found a 'certain incongruity in a Jew not being a Zionist'.³⁸³ Goldstein's sermon on Herzl is instructive for understanding the perspective of a devout religious leader who was able to reconcile the secularity of Herzl's mission with his own understanding of Judaism. He assigned a prophetic role to Herzl's work and mission, comparing him to Moses. Like Moses, Herzl's calling was to liberate the Jewish people from slavery and establish them in their own land. Both of their lives were marked by tragedy and they would ultimately not see the fruits of their labour: 'they both only saw the Promised Land from the heights of Pisgah, but were not allowed to enter the land flowing with milk and honey'.³⁸⁴ Goldstein saw Zionism as providing room for a wide variety of opinion and all shades of religious thought. He believed that Zionism, the sense of belonging to a nation, was a vehicle for strengthening Jewish identity, and credited Herzl with providing a galvanising movement for scattered Jews. Indeed, one of the main challenges for the New Zealand rabbis was that of assimilation and keeping Jewish people within the fold and they discouraged marriage to non-Jews.³⁸⁵ Goldstein eulogised Herzl in grandiose tones which spoke of his greatness, loftiness, purity, tenderness and sincerity. The attributes assigned to Herzl by Goldstein and others, were largely a reflection of their own hopes and dreams and a stark contrast to the proud, arrogant, unkind picture that has emerged from Herzl's diaries.³⁸⁶ Furthermore the claims made by Goldstein and others, that Herzl gave doubting, scattered Jews a new lease of life by 'fostering a new love for their history, language and literature' came not so much from Herzl's own writings, but rather

³⁸² Sermon on Jewish Ethics and the Bible, undated, Goldstein Notes, pp.157-163.

³⁸³ *1931 Review*, p. 36.

³⁸⁴ 'Death of Dr Herzl', *Otago Witness*, 31 August 1904, *Goldstein Notes*, p.192.

³⁸⁵ Ann Beaglehole. 'Goldstein, Samuel Aaron', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1996. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3g15/goldstein-samuel-aaron> (accessed 6 April 2019)

³⁸⁶ Martin Lowenthal, Ed., *The Diaries of Theodore Herzl*, London, 1958.

the hopes imputed to him by others.³⁸⁷ Herzl made clear that the fostering of Jewish culture was not his goal. Indeed, historian Michael Stanislawski argued that Herzl's Zionism was thoroughly political, rather than religious or cultural, and that Herzl believed that the only thing Jewish people needed was a 'national polity of their own'. This, Herzl believed, would put an end to the problem of antisemitism.³⁸⁸

Dunedin's Rabbi Chodowski also delivered a sermon upon Herzl's death, which was published in the *Otago Witness*. Chodowski's tenure in Dunedin lasted from 1898-1909, (he had held previous positions in Christchurch, 1889-95 and Brisbane 1895-98). As well as paying tribute to Herzl's character and achievements, Chodowski's message offered a glimpse into his interpretation of Herzl's life and work. He described Herzl's work as striving to 'convert the old Messianic dreams and hopes into realities by the return as a united nation to the land which is ours by tradition and divine promise'.³⁸⁹ Chodowski expressed the deep sorrow of the Jewish 'nation', 'all its ranks and classes, and of all ages and countries', for the loss of a leader of such 'intellectual gifts', 'moral courage' and 'mighty eloquence, was indeed great for 'Israel, especially young Israel'. His use of the terms 'nation' and 'Israel' as synonyms for the Jewish people, shows that he considered Jews everywhere to be one people, one nation. This view ran counter to those who were anxious to show themselves loyal citizens of their respective nations for fear of the accusation of dual loyalty.

The views of Wellington's Rabbi Van Staveren on Zionism are not publicly recorded. One can deduce his opposition to Zionism from the silence on the matter in the public records, and the fact that Zionism in Wellington progressed very slowly in the first decade. We do have a glimpse into his views from the opponents he made. In 1920, British Zionist Israel Cohen wrote about Van Staveren's opposition to Zionism in his book, *Journal of a Jewish traveller*.³⁹⁰ This is covered in more detail in a later chapter. We also have a more explicit reference in Simone Nathan's memoirs written in 1958. She described Van Staveren as one of the 'Protest Rabbiners' who 'could not see

³⁸⁷ Commemoration of Herzl: Meaning of Zionism, undated, Goldstein Notes, pp.191-197.

³⁸⁸ Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism: A Very Short History*, Oxford, 2017, Kindle, loc.960.

³⁸⁹ *Otago Witness*, 31 August 1904.

³⁹⁰ Israel, Cohen, *Journal of a Jewish traveller*, London, 1925, p.66.

the redemption of Zion come about by such mundane means as the Zionist Organisation'.³⁹¹ As explained in the previous chapter, the Protest Rabbiners were a group of German rabbis, both Reform and Orthodox who protested Herzl's plans to hold a Zionist congress in Munich in 1897. They strongly opposed the Herzl's nationalism, believing that it was only religion that set them apart from their fellow citizens. In every way they sought to be loyal citizens to their countries. In a protest letter Dr. S. Maybaum and Dr. H. Vogelstein wrote, 'Regarding nationality, we feel totally at one with our fellow Germans and therefore strive towards the realisation of the spiritual and moral goal of our dear fatherland with an enthusiasm equalling theirs'.³⁹² The Executive committee of the Union of Rabbis in Germany made a declaration stating that the creation of a Jewish National State in Palestine was 'antagonistic to the messianic promises of Judaism', that Judaism obliged its followers to serve their countries with the utmost devotion, and that they supported colonisation of Palestine which was unrelated to nationalist goals.³⁹³

Rabbis within New Zealand represented the broad spectrum of views on Zionism. Van Staveren's views were more aligned with those religious groups who opposed man-made attempts to restore Jews to their ancient land. There were a range of ideas about Zionism amongst religious Jews. At one end of the scale, were the anti-Zionist ultra-Orthodox or Haredi Jewry, (groups such as Satmar Hasidim, Edah Haredit in Jerusalem, Neturei Karta). These groups, to varying degrees, believed that the State of Israel was conceived in sin, and represented a betrayal of faith in redemption.³⁹⁴ In the middle was a group known as Mizrahi (an abbreviation of Merkaz ruhani, meaning spiritual centre) whose motto was 'the land of Israel for the people of Israel according to the Torah of Israel'. This group wrote a manifesto in 1902 which argued that the spiritual life of the Jewish people could not be 'preserved in full strength' in the diaspora, for the forces of assimilation were too great. The one remedy to the 'affliction of the people' was, 'to direct their hearts to that one place which has always been the focus of our prayers, that place wherein the oppressed

³⁹¹ Simone Nathan's Memoirs, p.100.

³⁹² Dr. S. Maybaum and Dr. H. Vogelstein, 'Protestrabbiner, Protest Against Zionism (1897)', eds. Paul Mendes-Flohr & Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, Oxford, 1995, p.539.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism*, Tel Aviv, 1993, p.37.

of our people will find their longed-for respite: Zion and Jerusalem'.³⁹⁵ Goldstein was most likely in agreement with this stream of Judaism.

Dunedin's Rabbi Chodowski was born in Posen and was likely influenced by the Eastern European rabbinic thinkers of the period, such as Rabbis Yehuda Hai Alkalai and Zwi Hirsch Kalischer. The political scientist, Shlomo Avineri, cites Alkalai and Kalischer as two nineteenth-century rabbis who contributed significantly to demystifying the redemptive process, with pragmatism and a focus on the 'natural aspects of the messianic process'. For example, Alkalai supported the buying of land in Palestine and the revival of Hebrew as pragmatic preparatory steps in the redemptive process.³⁹⁶ Rabbi Kalischer (1795-1874) was also born in Posen. According to Avineri, Posen was a multiethnic border area, where conflict between communities often erupted and Jewish communities were often caught in the cross fire. This, Avineri argued, gave Kalischer (and Alkalai who faced a similar situation in Sarajevo) a unique sensitivity to issues of 'culture, nationalism and linguistic politics' which undergirded their ability to adjust to the new ideas presented by Zionism. Avineri argued that these rabbis were able to adapt to and absorb the new Zionist ideas

Given Chodowski's background, it is likely that Chodowski was familiar with the thinking of Rabbis Alkalai and Kalischer who were forging new paths in seeking to bring together the ideas of Judaism with the emerging nationalism. In a 1901 article about the Dunedin Hebrew Congregation, Chodowski was described as being 'Altogether free from religious prejudices with experience of many phases of life, he throws himself heartily into works of that kind, (all social movements of a benevolent, charitable, and elevating nature) and is welcomed by all classes of Christians as a liberal minded man'.³⁹⁷ Chodowski had a cosmopolitan background and impressive educational record. He was the youngest son of the late Rabbi Isaac Jacob Chodowski, whose four sons were Rabbis.³⁹⁸ He first studied under his father, and subsequently under the well-known Rabbi, Dr. Zomber, President of the Talmudical College, in Berlin. On the recommendation of Dr Herman Adler and Dr M. Friedlander, the Principal of Jews' College, London, he was admitted to

³⁹⁵ 'The Mizrahi Manifesto (1902)', Mendes-Flohr P & Reinhard J., *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, New York, updated 1995, p.546.

³⁹⁶ Avineri, Shlomo. *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (Kindle Locations 1101-1107). Basic Books. Kindle Edition.

³⁹⁷ 'Dunedin Hebrew Congregation', *Otago Witness*, 3 April 1901.

³⁹⁸ Otago and Southland Provincial Districts, *The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand*, Christchurch, 1905, p.190.

the Jewish College, an honour never previously conferred on a foreigner. After studying for two and a half years, he was sent by the Chief Rabbi to Belfast, where he officiated during the holy days. In 1887 he was appointed minister of the Leicester congregation, and in 1889 he was selected out of twenty candidates, by the Chief Rabbi, for the congregation of Christchurch, New Zealand. He left Christchurch in 1895 to become minister of the Brisbane congregation and returned to take up a position in Dunedin in 1898 where he remained until his retirement 1909. Chodowski's career path, once again exemplifies London's pivotal role in the functioning of Judaism in New Zealand. For the most part, London was the spiritual centre for New Zealand's rabbinical leadership, and this example also shows the close trans-Tasman relationship.

Chodowski was probably aware of the teaching of Rabbi Kook (1865– 1935) who contributed significantly to developing a new understanding of the relationship between Zionism and Judaism. Avineri argued that Kook played a key role in presenting a 'comprehensive Zionist religious-national philosophy'.³⁹⁹ Perhaps in an effort to reconcile Herzl's Zionism with his Judaism and to sanctify a vision that was fundamentally secular, Chodowski stated that it was necessary to look beyond the mere man and rather look 'with the eye of Faith (sic)', to see in Herzl 'the embodiment of some portion of God's designs for our nation'. While not unexpected in an eulogy, he questioned whether Herzl might not have been 'a messenger from God Himself' in light of the 'divine' attributes he displayed of 'earnest faith, high hopes, noble aspirations, and unsparing devotion to his oppressed and scattered brethren'. The attribution of messianic qualities to Herzl was quite common at that time. However, Chodowski's desire to look beyond the mere man to perceive more spiritual attributes is strikingly similar to the thesis that Kook developed. Kook argued that secular Zionists did not necessarily understand the full import of their actions and that they may in fact have been actors in a 'cosmic scheme of a divine will' for which they were consciously unaware. He argued that 'unbeknownst to themselves, they serve the labour of the Divine'.

Chodowski's sermon reveals how closely he followed the Zionist movement. His division of Jewish conceptual frameworks into three categories; 'the ultra-orthodox Judaism of the Russians and Poles, the freer doctrines of the West of Europe, and the cosmopolitan ideas of the New World',

³⁹⁹ Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State*, New York, 1981, 2017. Kindle Edition, Kindle Locations 1101-1107.

was a useful summary of the divisions in the Jewish world.⁴⁰⁰ The geographical distance of Dunedin, as the southernmost Jewish community in the world, did not prevent the flow of detailed and in-depth information. Chodowski followed the London-based *Jewish Chronicle*, as did Goldstein. His East European background and his London-based rabbinical training positioned him to understand the issues facing Jews on the other side of the world, and may have contributed to a sense of connection to those events.

In terms of Chodowski's influence on the Zionist movement in Dunedin, it appears a beginning was made, but he left Dunedin in 1909, and the movement waned. The movement had another enthusiastic supporter in Dr. W. Heinemann. The *1931 Review* recorded that the Dunedin Zionist Society was established on 18 July 1904 by Dr. W. Heinemann. Heinemann had been an active figure in the Zionist movement in England. He was the first Jewish professor to hold an appointment in the New Zealand University.⁴⁰¹ The Dunedin community showed their support for Zionism in 1904 by passing a resolution in response to the death of Herzl, to take up a spontaneous collection for Herzl's widow and family.⁴⁰² Heinemann's death in September 1906 meant that the Zionist movement in Dunedin lost a strong advocate and was short-lived.

A brief comparison with Australia supports the view that the rabbinic and other community leaders had a great impact on the growth of Zionism. The movement developed more slowly in Australia and a significant reason was the strong opposition of some leaders. While anti-Zionists in New Zealand, for the most part, did not publicise their views widely, some Australian leaders propagated their opposition to a wide audience through the Jewish and general press. Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen presided over the Sydney congregation from 1905 - 1934. His anti-Zionist views influenced the local Jewish newspaper, the *Hebrew Standard*, which became his mouthpiece. The historian Rabbi Raymond Apple asserted that arguments for and against Zionism embroiled the Sydney Jewish community during Cohen's ministry. The main points of contention were consistent with other protesting rabbis: dual loyalty, the opposition to human intervention in the redemptive programme and whether Zionism was substituting a secular for a religious emphasis in

⁴⁰⁰ 'Death of Dr Herzl', *Otago Witness*, 31 August 1904.

⁴⁰¹ Cheryl Pearl Sucher, 'The Southernmost Jewish Community in the World', ed. L. Bell and D. Morrow, *Jewish Lives in New Zealand*, Auckland, 2012, p. 320.

⁴⁰² The Founder of Zionism, *Evening Star*, 12 September 1904.

Jewish identity.⁴⁰³ Another Australian public figure who opposed Zionism was former Governor-General Sir Isaac Isaacs. The historian, Malcolm J Turnbull, asserted that Isaacs subscribed ‘fervently to the view that a Jewish state must render Australian Jews second-class, “tolerated aliens” in other lands’. As a proud imperialist he insisted that Jews were a religious group rather than a nationality, and believed that nationalist activity would lead inevitably to antisemitism.⁴⁰⁴ Support for Zionism would later grow in Australia as the persecution of Jews under Nazi-led Germany increased and as the door of refuge in Palestine began to close under the British Mandate. The examples of Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin and comparison with Sydney demonstrates the influence of the rabbinic and other leadership on the growth, or otherwise, of Zionism in the various communities.

Turnbull argued that in Australia, ‘political Zionism was dominated by Eastern European Jews, and was generally viewed with either scepticism or indifference by the Anglo-Australian Jewish establishment’. In New Zealand the East European influence could be seen in Rabbis like Chodowski, and as in Australia, the arrival of immigrants of East European or Russian background stimulated the growth of Zionism. One such group, which arrived in 1907, included David Levy, Sam Harris and Herchel Corn (originally Cohen).⁴⁰⁵ They were born in Romania but lived in England for a period before immigrating to New Zealand. While in England they were active in the Hebrew Romanian Lodge No.6, a philanthropic organisation which sought to assist Jewish refugees and those in poverty and, along with other Lodge members heard Theodore Herzl give an address. The power of Herzl’s words and presence so inspired them that they became convinced that Zionism was ‘the dream that was stirring into reality’.⁴⁰⁶ Although living in the safety of New Zealand, the fear of the anti-Jewish raids experienced in Romania stayed in their memories and they shared the stories of their past in their frequent social gatherings. They also received regular letters and newspapers from overseas, through which they followed the latest developments in the Zionist cause. Corn’s daughter, Nellie Charles wrote that she and her brother grew up

⁴⁰³ Raymond Apple, ‘Zionist Controversies’, *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 12,4 (1995) 720-747.

⁴⁰⁴ Malcolm J Turnbull, ‘Safe Haven: Records of the Jewish Experience in Australia’, National Archives of Australia, Canberra, 1999, online 2000, Zelman Cowen, ‘Isaacs, Sir Isaac Alfred (1855–1948)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 9, (MUP), 1983.

⁴⁰⁵ Nellie Charles, ‘New Zealand’s Early Zionists: A Story of Romanian Jews in Napier’, Levine, S. ed., *A Standard for the People*, P412.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

thinking that Judaism and Zionism were the same thing, so closely were they intertwined in their lives. These Zionists were motivated by their own experience of persecution and inspired by Herzl's presence and message. Zionist and Jewish culture was cultivated through various publications and interaction with like-minded people. Their passion rejuvenated many other New Zealand Jews for the Zionist cause and for Jewish culture and beliefs.

The visits of Zionist emissaries to New Zealand also impacted the growth of the movement. While there were not many in this early period, the visits that took place had an impact. One such visitor was Samuel Goldreich, President of the South African Zionist Federation, who arrived in December 1905. The *Auckland Star* reported that his aim was 'to arouse the enthusiasm and obtain the moral support of his people in assisting the persecuted of their race to find a permanent home in Palestine'.⁴⁰⁷ Goldreich spoke of the Romanian government's designation of their Jewish residents as 'aliens not under the protection of a foreign power', despite the fact that they had been in Romania over one thousand years.⁴⁰⁸ This, he argued, highlighted the need to find a permanent solution to the 'Jewish problem', which was the goal of the Zionist movement. Goldreich's visit had an impact on the Wellington community which established the Wellington Zionist League, following his visit, in order to further his mission. Phillips credited Goldreich with broadening their Zionist perspective and bringing the community into 'more intimate contact with Zionist realities'.⁴⁰⁹ Goldreich had been a delegate at several Zionist Congresses and managed to relay the atmosphere of those conferences to his audiences through his graphic descriptions. The personal contact with someone who had been close to the centre of Zionist activity was persuasive. There is no indication that there were any New Zealanders at the early Zionist congresses, so the first-hand account offered by Goldreich acted as a substitute.

By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century Zionism was becoming accepted throughout New Zealand. The blue and white Jewish National Fund boxes were placed in most Jewish homes. These were a popular way of raising funds for purchasing land and planting trees in Palestine. Modest sums were collected in the boxes, usually weekly, or to mark special occasions.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁷ *Auckland Star*, 30 December 1905, Page 4.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ *1931 Review*, p. 47.

⁴¹⁰ Goldman, *History of the Jews in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1958, p. 206.

They were symbolically significant as a reminder of the land of Israel and its renaissance. Phillips stated that prior to the war, ‘practically the whole community’ in Auckland had subscribed to the Zionist organisation and much literature was being distributed. In 1910 the annual Herzl memorial service began in Auckland and in the same year the Auckland Zionist Society raised funds for the cost of five houses for Yemenite Jews who had immigrated to Palestine.⁴¹¹ Phillips noted the achievement of the Auckland Zionist Society in 1914 of successfully obtaining a modification of the New Zealand immigration regulations, such that Yiddish was recognised as a European language for immigration purposes.⁴¹² One of their members had compiled a memorandum on the history and status of Yiddish and its use in Eastern Europe as well as its recognition in the immigration legislation of other countries. The non-recognition of Yiddish by the government had caused hardship for some Europeans wishing to immigrate to New Zealand. This example serves to highlight, that the activities of the Zionist organisation spilled over into many humanitarian causes to support, help and advocate for fellow Jews.

Balkind and Phillips were correct in their assessment that the Zionist movement developed slowly in New Zealand in the period 1897-1914. Political Zionism raised new ideas that had to be processed and some of the discussion and discourse reached the public in newspapers and public meetings. Political Zionism challenged the religious views of some, who opposed human intervention in the restoration programme. For others, it threatened their desire to be considered loyal citizens. However, supporters believed the movement was a galvanising force for the community and an avenue by which Jewish identity could be strengthened, particularly in light of the threat posed by assimilation. The most significant argument for Zionism was its humanitarian role in providing a solution to the problem of Jewish persecution and suffering in Russia and East Europe. New Zealand Jews willingly responded to the appeals to help their fellow Jews. The success of Zionism in the regions depended to a large degree on the attitude of the rabbis, and the availability of leaders. Auckland led the way in Zionism becoming established and gained the general support of the community. Wellington was slower to develop, lacking the rabbinic support over this period. The influx of Russian and East European immigrants however brought new impetus to the movement. The fortunes of Zionism in Dunedin fluctuated depending on the availability of local leaders willing to support the movement. In Australia, vocal anti-Zionist leaders hindered

⁴¹¹ *1931 Review*, pp.45, 49.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*

the support for the movement, affirming the argument that the rabbis had a significant influence over their communities. As war approached, the Zionist society joined other groups in fundraising for the war effort. The outcome of the war would bring significant changes to the movement, giving new hope that the dream of a homeland might in fact become a reality.

CHAPTER FIVE

Zionism and the 'Dreadful European War'

The war crashed upon us and left us numb. We glimpsed its magnitude and its chaos too, and we were swept along in a stronger current.⁴¹³ Louis Phillips

The Great War, or the European War as it was commonly referred to in contemporary Jewish sources, was an all encompassing event for New Zealanders, including the Jewish community. The opening quote intimates the trauma of the war, its totality and the response of the Jewish community.⁴¹⁴ For the most part, Jewish participation in the war effort followed along similar lines to other New Zealanders. The war proved perilous for Jews in Europe and the New Zealand community contributed to the needs of suffering co-religionists, as had long been its practice. Zionist activities in New Zealand were relatively quiet during this period, the various groups devoting their energies, along with other community organisations to supporting the war. While Zionism in New Zealand took a back seat during the war, the outcome of the war was significant for the movement. The shifts in world power as the war came to an end brought huge gains for the aims of Zionism. New Zealand played a role in these events militarily, through its involvement in the Palestine Campaign, and politically, through the New Zealand's Prime Minister's participation in the post war conferences. Both of these factors contributed to a support for Zionism in New Zealand in the post war years.

The opening words of this chapter were part of an article on 'Zionism in New Zealand', written by Louis Phillips for the *The New Zealand Jewish Review 1931*.⁴¹⁵ Phillips was a leading New Zealand Zionist and respected as an authority on Jewish history. Newspaper editors often called on him for comment on political developments in Palestine. As well as writing on Zionism and other Jewish matters he had a central role in the development of Zionism in New Zealand.⁴¹⁶ His contribution in this field is discussed more fully in the next chapter. According to Phillips some

⁴¹³ Louis Phillips, 'Zionism in New Zealand', Green, Ben, ed., *The New Zealand Jewish Review and Communal Directory 1931*, Wellington, 1931, p.49. (Hereafter *NZ Jewish Review 1931*)

⁴¹⁴ *NZ Jewish Review 1931*, p.49.

⁴¹⁵ *NZ Jewish Review 1931*, p.49.

⁴¹⁶ A later chapter will discuss further Phillips' role.

young Jewish volunteers went off to war believing that in the re-shaping of boundaries after the war ‘some at least of the problems of the Jew would be solved’.⁴¹⁷ Phillips claimed that Zionism, along with the ‘natural spontaneous impulse of citizenship’ was a powerful motivation for young Jews to join the war effort. It is likely that Phillips was in fact referencing himself with these words. He had served in World War One in the Signal Corps and was injured in France in 1918. The *Northern Advocate* reported in June 1918 that Phillips had been admitted to hospital in France having suffered multiple wounds.⁴¹⁸ The article noted that he was a ‘prominent worker in the various Jewish activities, more particularly in connection with the Zionist movement.’⁴¹⁹ Phillips would later attend the International Zionist conference in London in February 1919, as the Dominion Zionist delegate, along with delegates from all Allied and neutral countries and would become a key figure in Zionism in New Zealand.⁴²⁰

For the most part, the Jewish community responded to the war in similar fashion to fellow New Zealanders and Zionist activity over this period took a back seat to more pressing claims. Phillips’ opening words give a sense of the profound impact the Great War had on the Jewish community, as it did on all New Zealanders. Along with fellow citizens, Jews dutifully took up the call to demonstrate their loyalty to empire by fighting for Britain, in a war that was seen as just and right. The historian, Steven Loveridge, employed the term ‘sentimental equipment’ to describe the various meanings, emotions, beliefs and values that motivated New Zealanders to support the war effort. The phrase is taken from F. Scott Fitzgerald’s ‘Tender is the Night’, and describes what was required to endure the seeming futility of battle on the Western Front, where so little progress was made at such great cost. Fitzgerald writes, ‘You had to have a whole-souled sentimental equipment going back further than you could remember’.⁴²¹

Rabbi Goldstein, the spiritual leader of the Auckland Hebrew Congregation made use of much ‘sentimental equipment’ in exhorting his congregation. He praised those volunteers who ‘from the

⁴¹⁷ *NZ Jewish Review* 1931, p49.

⁴¹⁸ *Northern Advocate* , 20 June 1918, Page 2.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁰ Israel Cohen, *A Short History of Zionism*, London 1951.

⁴²¹ Steven Loveridge, *Call to Arms: New Zealand Society and Commitment to the Great War*, Wellington 2014, p.10.

remotest corners of the Empire' had 'come forward cheerfully to do their bit for the British flag and shoulder their share in the conflict', stating, 'British patriotism has been put to the test and has not been found wanting'.⁴²² Goldstein spoke of the responsibility and duty of all those who shared in the 'blessings and privileges' of the British flag. The British patriotism expressed by Goldstein was not a unique feature of the Jewish community, but highly consistent with the sentiments of a majority of New Zealanders. The historian, Hew Strachan, asserted, '...New Zealanders in 1914 neither doubted their Britishness nor disputed the legitimacy of Britain's war. They marched in step with London in embracing the 'big idea' which underpinned the conflict from its outset - that this was a war for freedom, democracy and international law...' ⁴²³ The strong identification with Britain, according to Loveridge, was part of a collective identity that comprised an important piece of sentimental equipment.⁴²⁴ Phillips also argued that many Jews going to war had 'linked their fortunes with Great Britain as the home of constitutional freedom and her aims in the war seemed to fuse with our common purpose'.⁴²⁵ Great Britain would play a significant role in the Zionist endeavour, and New Zealand's close link with Britain contributed to a favourable attitude towards Zionism following the war.

Jewish young men enlisted enthusiastically in the early stages of the war, along with thousands of other New Zealanders. Though the number of Jews was small, they responded to the call to fulfil their patriotic duty to country and empire and were no less fervent than their non-Jewish compatriots. Amongst the eager volunteers at the beginning of the war were young men from the Wellington Jewish community. Local historian, Janet Salek wrote about the involvement of eighteen Wellington Jews who served in Gallipoli, distributed across various units.⁴²⁶ According to a survey of 8,500 soldiers in the Main Body who set sail in October 1914, there were nineteen Jews on board. The annual "'Beth Israel" Auckland Report of the Board of Management' kept records of those within the Auckland community who served in the war. The 1914-15 Report listed twen-

⁴²² Goldstein Notes, p.175.

⁴²³ Hew Strachan, 'Foreword', Steven Loveridge, ed., *New Zealand Society at War: 1914-1918*, Wellington, 2016, p.12.

⁴²⁴ Loveridge, *Call to Arms*, P.244, p.28.

⁴²⁵ *NZ Jewish Review 1931*, p.51.

⁴²⁶ Levine, Stephen, ed., *A Standard for the People: The 150th Anniversary of the Wellington Hebrew Congregation, 1843-1993*, Christchurch, 1995, p. 98.

ty-one names of those serving with ‘various sections of the British army’.⁴²⁷ The following year the original number was listed along with new names, amounting to another sixteen persons. In addition the names of those killed and wounded in action were recorded; ‘Oscar Simons has died of wounds and Morris Caro has been killed in action’. Three people were noted as wounded.⁴²⁸ The 1917 report listed fifty-names plus a nurse.

While Jews responded to the call to war in similar fashion to other New Zealanders, they diverged in their distinctive religious requirements, which the army sought to meet. Jewish soldiers were issued with the Khaki Prayer Book, compiled for all Imperial Jewish troops by the senior Jewish Chaplain to the British forces, the Rev. Michael Adler. The New Zealand army authorities allowed for the celebration of the Jewish festivals of Passover, Pentecost, New Year, Day of Atonement and Tabernacles under order No. 72, on 17 February 1915.⁴²⁹ When the New Zealand forces were stationed in Egypt members of the Jewish faith were welcomed by the President of the Israelite community, Maurice de Cattaoui Pasha, and invited to participate in the Easter fetes(sic).⁴³⁰ They were able to attend the synagogue services in Cairo.

New Zealand Jewish congregations were somewhat depleted due to the absence of their young men who had volunteered to serve in the war, however the war had the effect of stimulating communal activity.⁴³¹ The Jewish contribution to the general war effort was noted by Salek and was a matter of pride. Two Jewish firms provided supplies; Abraham Levy supplied uniforms, and Levin & Co. supplied canteens on board the transport ships.⁴³² In addition, the ‘Wellington Hebrew Congregation: Extracts from the Annual Reports’ noted that individual members of the congregation had made contributions to the Empire Defence Fund.⁴³³ Various patriotic funds were supported and Wellington’s Rabbi Van Staveren noted the good work done for the Red Cross So-

⁴²⁷ It is assumed that ‘various sections of the British Army’ means broader than the New Zealand contingents.

⁴²⁸ “Beth Israel” Auckland Report of the Board of Management, 1914-15, 1916.

⁴²⁹ Levine, Stephen, ed., *A Standard for the People*, 79,99.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.100.

⁴³¹ *NZ Jewish Review 1931*, p25.

⁴³² *A Standard for the People*, p.98.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, p.79.

ciety by some of their students who were 'keen to aid in every matter to grant comforts to our soldiers'.⁴³⁴

The Humanitarian Response of New Zealand's Jewish Community

One of the main ways that New Zealand Jews at home participated in the war effort was through contributing to the needs of Jews who were suffering in the countries at war. Unfortunately, whether in the countries of the Allies or the Central powers, the Jewish communities who were minorities in those lands were vulnerable. When war broke out, the Jews of Poland, Lithuania, White Russia and Ukraine were in a perilous position. The Poles became more openly antisemitic and widespread pogroms ensued.⁴³⁵ European historian Carole Fink wrote about the German attack on the Jewish quarter of Kalisz in Congress Poland, which saw the destruction of 150 homes and the killing of 33 people.⁴³⁶ She argued that even more devastating was the Russian policy that saw brutal mass deportations of Jews. In Western Russia and Ukraine, between June and December 1917, 100,000 Jews were murdered.⁴³⁷

The Jewish response in Europe to the plight of suffering 'co-religionists' took on two main forms. Jewish advocates were active in seeking international minority protection in Eastern Europe and Russia which sought to ameliorate the conditions of Jews in the countries where they lived. Seemingly opposed to this were the Zionists who believed that anti-Semitism would always be present in those countries, and worked instead to facilitate the immigration of Jews to Palestine and to seek there an improvement in conditions. In New Zealand the line between these two groups was ill-defined. As a small community, far from the centre of Jewish life, New Zealand Jews did not experience the deep divisions within the wider Jewish world, to the same degree. The various groups within the community worked together to raise funds in a humanitarian effort to meet the needs of fellow Jews who were suffering and responded to appeals from both groups.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., p.80.

⁴³⁵ Laqueur, Walter, *A History of Zionism*, New York, 2003, p.174.

⁴³⁶ Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878-1938*, Cambridge, 2004, p.72.

⁴³⁷ Hew Strachan, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War: New Edition*, Oxford, 2014, p. 228.

An examination of the reports of the Board of Management of Auckland's 'Beth Israel' Congregation over the war period gives a useful contemporary view of the response of the Auckland Jewish community. The reports show that the Auckland community continued its tradition of helping fellow Jews in need. Funds were raised for fellow Jews in Russia, Poland, Belgium as well as for Jewish refugees in London, Jews in the countries of the Allies and Jewish victims in Palestine. At times the general community participated in the fundraising: in particular, the Patriotic Society; and the women's contribution was repeatedly acknowledged. Further, the Zionist Society was but one of the Jewish communal organisations that participated in the fundraising, along with such groups as the Aid Society and the Literary and Debating Society.

While the war was more commonly referred to as the Great War, the aforementioned reports of the Auckland Jewish community from 1915, 1916 and 1917 refer to the war as 'The dreadful European War'.⁴³⁸ The 1914 Annual Report noted the 'distress amongst our unfortunate co-religionists in Russian Poland and elsewhere'.⁴³⁹ A collection had been taken earlier in that year to help the Jewish refugees from Belgium who had migrated to London. The sum of £305 was raised and forwarded to London. A later collection raised £280 and a fundraising event, 'Cafe Chantant', £220, to aid the 'Distressed Jews in the Countries of the Allies'. The assistance of the Zionist society was acknowledged in these fundraising efforts. It was noted that this sum was remitted free of exchange 'by the kindness of Mr N.A. Nathan', to the Chief Rabbi, who was asked to distribute the amount where it was considered most needed. The board also placed on record their appreciation of the 'excellent work done by the Ladies' Committee'.⁴⁴⁰

The 1916 Annual Report bemoaned the fact that the 'dreadful European War' was still raging and that the conditions of fellow Jews in the war zone continued to be 'most distressful'.⁴⁴¹ The report listed the 'special efforts' made by the board to render assistance. These efforts included a 'white fair' which was open to all citizens and organised under Patriotic auspices. The sum of

⁴³⁸ A search of newspapers for the period 1914-1918 showed that Great War was used 525,794 times and European war 54,324 times. The war was repeatedly referred to as the 'dreadful European War' in the Beth Shalom AGM records 1914-1918. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the preference for this appellation, which at this stage would be speculative.

⁴³⁹ "Beth Israel", Auckland, Report of the Board of Management, 5 September, 5675-1914-5.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ "Beth Israel", Auckland, Report of the Board of Management, 1916.

£820 was considered a 'handsome sum'. Once again the efforts of the 'ladies of the community' were acknowledged, whose 'untiring efforts' were seen to contribute 'in no small measure' to its success. In addition nearly £1000 was collected from among the members of the community with a total of £1780 being forwarded during the year. It was noted in brackets that 'By the kindness of the firm of L.D. Nathan & Co., Ltd., the amount was remitted free of exchange'. The board expressed satisfaction that a total of £2600 had been sent by the Auckland community and the report noted that letters of appreciation were received from the Chief Rabbi and Lord Swaythling.⁴⁴²

Yet again, the 1917 Annual Report opened with regret that the 'dreadful European War' was showing no signs of a prospect for an early peace. As well as information about fundraising activities, the report elaborated on some of the situations faced by Jews in the conflict zones, such as the Russian revolution which had 'liberated from oppression one half of the Jewish race'.⁴⁴³ While recognising that the Russian Jews would temporarily suffer deprivation along with other Russians, it was hoped that eventually the Jews would be given the political and religious freedom 'for which they had suffered so much'. A sum of £531 10s had been sent to the Chief Rabbi for Russian and Polish Jewish Relief Funds. A request had also been made to the committee for funds for the relief of 'Jewish victims of Turkish outrages in Palestine'. Over £1,300 was raised and it was noted that more than half of the amount was raised from non-Jewish subscribers.⁴⁴⁴ The 1918 Statement of Receipts and Disbursements included £17 3s for the Palestine Distress Fund.

A similar pattern of humanitarian activity can be seen in the Wellington Jewish Community. The 'Wellington Hebrew Congregation: Extracts from the Annual Reports' from the 150th Commemorative publication of the Wellington congregation records the community's various contributions. In 1915, £1000 was sent to a committee in London for Belgian Jewish refugees and a contribution was also made for the 'destitute Polish Jews'. In 1916 collections were taken up for the 'destitute Jews' in the Russian war zone and the Polish Jewish fund.⁴⁴⁵ In May 1917, £1100 was collected for the suffering Jews in Palestine.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ "Beth Israel", Auckland, Report of the Board of Management, 16 September, 1917.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Standard for the People, P.79.

The fundraising continued after the war. The *Jewish Review 1931* noted that money was raised for the Ukrainian Jewish community after the war where a massacre of hundreds of thousands took place and the conditions were ‘terrible beyond description’.⁴⁴⁶ The Jewish community responded to the tragedy of war with humanitarian activities to assist their co-religionists. As previous chapters have argued, the British Anglo-Jewish organisations were the conduit for the exchange between Jews in Europe, Palestine and New Zealand. They notified the New Zealand communities, who raised funds and sent them to Europe and Palestine, via Britain. The Zionist societies co-operated with other organisations and many of the fundraising ventures were supported by the wider community. It is also noteworthy that women were credited with much of the success of the fundraising efforts.

War with Germany and Complex Identities

New Zealand Jews willingly took up the call to stand with Great Britain in fighting the German enemy. However, this complicated the issue of identity for Jews of German background. Rabbi Goldstein firmly believed that right was on the side of the Allies who, he argued, were fighting for freedom and the right of small nations to live and ‘work out their destiny’ without the ‘German sword always hanging over them’. Goldstein saw Germany as in the grip of the ‘cult of brute force’, driven by a ‘mad ambition for world conquest’ and ‘enemies of civilisation’. The historian, Gary Sheffield, likewise asserted that Germany’s aggression and drive to achieve world power were the root causes of the war. He argued, ‘Whether one sees Germany as deliberately starting (or risking) war in a bid for European hegemony and world power, or for some lesser stake, the finger of guilt points firmly at Berlin’.⁴⁴⁷ In his view, Britain had no choice but to fight a defensive war which ‘took on the character of a struggle between liberal democracies (for all their faults, and notwithstanding an alliance with Czarist Russia) and an anti-democratic, illiberal, militarist autocracy’.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁶ *NZ Jewish Review 1931*.

⁴⁴⁷ Gary Sheffield, ‘Britain and the Empire at War 1914-18: Reflections on a Forgotten Victory’, Crawford, J. & McGibbon, I., eds., *New Zealand's Great War: New Zealand, the Allies and the First World War*, Auckland, 2007, Kindle Edition, Kindle Locations 740-742.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

The German enemy on the battlefield of Europe also became the enemy within New Zealand society. An Aliens Board was established which carried out investigations of ‘alien enemies’ within New Zealand. The 1917 Registration of Aliens Act led to the establishment of a database of the ‘unnaturalised enemy population’ of New Zealand.⁴⁴⁹ Popular movements arose, such as the Women’s Anti-German League with the motto, ‘New Zealand for New Zealanders; No Germans need Apply’.⁴⁵⁰ For Jews of German descent, the anti-Alien sentiment that broke out created another layer of complexity in the question of identity. As Germans became targets, many Jews redoubled their efforts to affirm and assert their British identity. David Theomin, a leading Jewish citizen in Dunedin changed the name of his Pianoforte company from the Dresden Pianoforte Manufacturing Agency to the Bristol Piano Company.⁴⁵¹ Other Jews with German backgrounds found it necessary to distance themselves from that heritage. Hallensteins Bros advertised to clarify that they were not pro-German and the Jewish tailors, the Schneideman brothers, also took steps to affirm that they were ‘true British subjects’.⁴⁵² These steps were not enough for the Wanganui mob who targeted the Bristol Piano Company and Hallensteins in May 1915 along with other German owned businesses. During the tumult, the mayor, bleeding from a stone attack, appealed to the mob, ‘not to disgrace the town and to be British’.⁴⁵³ The newspaper report noted that, ‘A feature of the disturbance was the number of women and boys among the crowd’.⁴⁵⁴

Ironically, at the beginning of the war the executive of the World Zionist movement was located in Berlin. Two members were German, three Russian and one had just acquired Austrian citizenship.⁴⁵⁵ The Zionist executive in Berlin had a two-fold task; ‘to safeguard the interests of East European Jewry as large sections of it passed under German rule, and to protect the Zionist settlements in Palestine’.⁴⁵⁶ The movement sought to remain neutral but this was a challenge as Zion-

⁴⁴⁹ Steven Loveridge, *Calls to Arms: New Zealand Society and Commitment to the Great War*, Wellington, 2014, p.69.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p.72.

⁴⁵¹ Steven Loveridge, *Calls to Arms*, P.97.

⁴⁵² *Ibid*.

⁴⁵³ ‘Anti-German Feeling’, *New Zealand Herald*, Volume LII, Issue 15919, 19 May 1915, p.6.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid*.

⁴⁵⁵ Laqueur, p.171.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.175.

ists were to be found in Allied, Central and neutral countries, and were for the most part loyal to their own countries. German Zionists believed their country's cause was just. They were fighting against 'darkest tyranny, bloodiest cruelty and blackest reaction' of the Russian Tsarist regime. They believed their war was 'holy, just self-defence'.⁴⁵⁷ Tsarist Russia was identified with pogroms and persecution of Jews, which only intensified with the outbreak of war. This was a situation which allies, France and Britain, seemed able to overlook.

While the leadership of the Zionist movement was in Germany at the beginning of the war, and they played an important role in facilitating aid to suffering Palestinian Jews, the loci shifted to Great Britain as the war progressed.⁴⁵⁸ A series of events, led by Britain, took Zionism from a small, struggling movement to a major player on the world stage, in particular, the issuing of the Balfour Declaration, later incorporated into the British Mandate for Palestine and the capture of Jerusalem by the British-led forces. The 1918 'Beth Israel' Annual Report stated that 'The advance of the British forces in Palestine, and the capture of Jerusalem, following the Declaration of the British Government, have given a new outlook to the Jewish people throughout the world. As a result, the Zionist movement in particular has been marked by enthusiastic activity'.⁴⁵⁹ This thesis argues that New Zealand's involvement in the Palestine Campaign and the post-war Peace conferences contributed to this country's commitment to the Zionist programme.

The Military Campaign: Palestine

The capture of Jerusalem in December 1917 held great symbolic meaning for Jewish people and the eventual overthrow of Ottoman rule of Palestine was a monumental step towards the attainment of the Zionist dream. New Zealand was connected to these events through its participation in the British-led campaign against Ottoman forces. After the evacuation from Gallipoli, the New Zealand Mounted Rifles (NZMR), along with New Zealand companies of the Imperial Camel Corps, joined other units from across the British Empire to form the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF). While the Main Body moved to the European theatre of war, the New Zealand contingent of the EEF remained in the Middle East to fight 'little known, unpublicised campaigns in

⁴⁵⁷ Laqueur, p.172.

⁴⁵⁸ John Efron, *The Jews*, Third Edition, New York, 2019, p. 406.

⁴⁵⁹ "Beth Israel", Auckland, Report of the Board of Management, September, 1918.

deserts of Egypt & Palestine'.⁴⁶⁰ The NZMR Brigade was commanded by Brigadier Edward Chaytor, from Motueka and formed part of the ANZAC Mounted Division, led by the Australian commander, Major General Harry Chauvel. The historian, Terry Kinloch, asserted that the Palestine Campaign received less attention than the other areas of conflict for several reasons.⁴⁶¹ The NZMR Brigade was small and the casualty rate was much lower than the Western Front and Gallipoli due to the different style of desert warfare. Also there was no official war correspondent or historian accompanying them. While there was a fallacy that the Brigade were 'merely tourists', historian Christopher Pugsley argued that they were 'perhaps the finest body of New Zealanders ever to serve overseas'.⁴⁶² New Zealand troops participated in the battle of Beersheba, made famous by the movie version of the charge of the Australian light brigade. W.T. Massey, the official war correspondent for London Newspapers wrote that all that occurred on the Gaza-Beersheba line was part and parcel of the taking of Jerusalem.⁴⁶³

The capture of Jerusalem in December 1917 was the most significant part of the Palestine campaign from a Zionist perspective, this ancient city being the object of Zionist hopes and dreams. In the Jewish Bible, Jerusalem's Mount Zion was the centre of King David's kingdom, the memory of which was kept alive in daily prayers, and annual festivals. Jerusalem was the centre of worship for religious Jews, if not physically, certainly spiritually. Jerusalem was not significant for Jews only. For Christians too, even for nominal Christians, the city was seen as 'the greatest prize of the campaign'. According to W.T. Massey 'The Holy City' was the goal of every officer and man in the army.⁴⁶⁴ Indeed, General Allenby, who was to lead the campaign, had received instruction from Prime Minister Lloyd George that Jerusalem was wanted 'as a Christmas present for the British nation'.⁴⁶⁵ W.T. Massey's contemporary portrayal captured a sense of the signifi-

⁴⁶⁰ Glyn Harper, *Johnny Enzed: The New Zealand Soldier in the First World War 1914-1918*, Auckland, 2015, p. 481.

⁴⁶¹ Terry Kinloch, *Devils on Horses: In the Words of the Anzacs in the Middle East 1916-19*, Auckland, 2007, p.24.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

⁴⁶³ W.T. Massey, *How Jerusalem was Won: Being the Record of Allenby's Campaign in Palestine*, New York, 1920, p.v.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid, p.15. Wavell, Field-Marshal Earl, *Allenby, A Study In Greatness: The Biography Of Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby Of Megiddo And Felixstowe*, Kindle Edition, Kindle Locations 2619-2621.

cance of the event.⁴⁶⁶ He wrote that although the surrender of Jerusalem was a simple affair, the scenes in the streets reflected the feelings of ‘the civilised world’ that this was a world event which ‘gave more satisfaction to countless millions of people than did the winning back for France of any big town on the Western Front’.⁴⁶⁷ Part of the ‘sentimental equipment’ at play was religious feeling. The Allied victory was seen as bringing to an end the ‘Ottoman dominion over the cradle of Christianity, a place held in reverence by the vast majority of the peoples of the Old and New World’. Four centuries of the ‘blighting influence of the Turk’ had been brought to an end and the ‘Golden city’ was now liberated for all creeds; Christians, Jews and Muslims.⁴⁶⁸ The official entry into Jerusalem by British General Allenby was, according to Massey, a simple, dignified affair which took no more than fifteen minutes. Massey records that Allenby’s entrance was markedly different to the German emperor’s visit to Jerusalem in 1898, where, in a display of power the Kaiser rode into the city on richly decorated horses, his retinue clothed in white and red, blue and gold. The ancient walls needed to be widened for his entry. In contrast, Allenby, aware of the gravity of the moment dismounted his horse and in an attitude of respect for the holiness of Jerusalem, walked through the city.⁴⁶⁹ The historic Jaffa gate was opened after years of disuse and an Imperial guard of honour stood outside the gate, made up of those who had helped secure the victory. In the British Guard of fifty were English, Scottish, Irish, and Welsh troops. Opposite them were fifty dismounted men of the Australian Light Horse and New Zealand Mounted Rifles.⁴⁷⁰ Allenby was aware that Jerusalem was important to Muslims as well as Christians and Jews and determined that each religion should be respected. As part of his official statement of marshall law he proclaimed that, ‘...every sacred building, monument, holy spot, shrine, traditional site, endowment, pious bequest, or customary place of prayer of whatsoever

⁴⁶⁶ W.T. Massey, New York, 1920.

⁴⁶⁷ W.T. Massey, p.158.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., p.203.

⁴⁷⁰ C. Guy Powles, ‘The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine’, *New Zealand in the First World War 1914–1918*, Auckland, 1922. For this occasion the Brigade sent a troop as a bodyguard to General Sir E. Allenby. The troop was commanded by 2nd Lieutenant C.J. Harris, Canterbury Regiment, and was composed of 1 sergeant and 10 men from the Auckland Regiment, 9 men from the Canterbury Regiment, and 9 men from the Wellington Regiment, with 3 men from the Machine Gun Squadron and 1 from the Signal Troop—a total of 1 officer and 33 other ranks.

form of the three religions will be maintained and protected according to the existing customs and beliefs of those to whose faith they are sacred'.⁴⁷¹

A New Zealand Zionist element to the story is recorded by Stephen Levine in Wellington's 150th commemorative volume. Levine tells how Louis Salek, a Jew from Wellington, was given 'a unique opportunity to make a small, yet symbolically striking contribution to Jewish history...'⁴⁷² Salek found himself in Egypt in 1917 following the Gallipoli campaign, and while attending the local synagogue, the idea was presented to him to take a specially made flag to Jerusalem. This flag, a blue and white banner, was hand cut and sewn in Cairo, placed in a tefillin bag and entrusted to Salek's care.⁴⁷³ In December 1917, Salek was one of the number who entered the Old City on foot with General Allenby. The corporal quietly made his way up to the David's Tower and there tied the flag to the top of the citadel. While it only remained for twenty minutes or so, the symbolism of the act was meaningful for Salek as he believed it represented the hopes and dreams of many Zionists. The story surfaced many decades later, and the flag was presented to the Museum of the History of Jerusalem in a ceremony in 1992. Louis Salek's son, Arthur Salek commented, 'The return of this small flag, and its historical significance, is a valued symbol of the link between Israel, the Salek family and this far distant Jewish community in the diaspora... My father hardly knew anything about Zionism, but he felt that was the place where the flag should be hoisted'.⁴⁷⁴ This sentiment is consistent with Historian Walter Laqueur's view that many were 'instinctive Zionists' and not ideologically motivated.⁴⁷⁵

New Zealand forces fought in the Palestine Campaign under the British flag, providing a connecting link between New Zealand, the Jewish people and Britain. One of the outcomes of the expulsion of Jews from Palestine, by the Ottomans, at the beginning of the war was the establishment of a Jewish fighting force, the first in 2,000 years. Of the 18,000 Palestinian Jews who were ex-

⁴⁷¹ Charles Francis Horne, ed., *Source Records of the Great War*, Vol. V, ed., National Alumni 1923.

⁴⁷² *A Standard for the People*, p.113.

⁴⁷³ Tefillin (sometimes called phylacteries) are cubic black leather boxes with leather straps that Orthodox Jewish men wear on their head and their arm during weekday morning prayer.

⁴⁷⁴ *A Standard for the People*, p.115.

⁴⁷⁵ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, New York, 2003, p.162.

pelled, more than 11,000 ended up in Alexandria, Egypt.⁴⁷⁶ In March 1915 a committee of refugees put forward a proposal to the British Military establishment to form a Jewish Legion to be deployed in Palestine. The Zion Mule Corps, led by a Christian Zionist, General Patterson, was established with 650 volunteers. Of these, 562 would serve at Gallipoli alongside Anzac forces.⁴⁷⁷ Although the force was deactivated 26 May 1916, many joined together to re-form as the 38th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers in 1917. These regiments became part of Chaytor's Force. New Zealand commander General Chaytor took responsibility for the taking of the Jordan Valley in September 1918. Under his command were 11,000 troops made up of a disparate range of regiments. In addition to the Anzac Mounted Forces were the 20th Indian Brigade, the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the British West Indies Regiment and the 38th and 39th (Jewish Volunteer) battalions of the Royal Fusiliers. A number of soldiers took the opportunity, while serving in Palestine, to explore sites of Biblical significance armed with their Active Service New Testament or their Soldier's Handbook, Palestine and Jerusalem.⁴⁷⁸ The involvement of New Zealanders in Palestine and camaraderie of fighting together with the Jewish regiment in a common cause, provided a familiarity and context which arguably, in the coming years, contributed to support for Zionism.

The following letter shows the warm relationship that developed between one Jewish community and New Zealanders. One of the fiercest battles in the Palestine campaign took place near Rishon le Zion on 14 November 1917. The NZMR Brigade captured nearby Ayun Kara and held off fierce Turkish counterattacks. It resulted in the heaviest toll of the campaign with 44 killed and 141 wounded. Christopher Wilson-Archer wrote that the battle of Ayun kara was the 'most significant and the most costly engagement' of the New Zealanders during the whole of the Palestine campaign. He recorded that, 'In the year that followed a firm relationship developed between this

⁴⁷⁶ Eretz Israel Refugees in Alexandria, Egypt, The Israel Genealogical Society, National & University Library, Jerusalem, Israel: <http://www.isragen.org.il/siteFiles/1/153/4973.asp>

⁴⁷⁷ Martin Sugarman, 'Modern Jewish History: The Zion Muleteers of Gallipoli': <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-zion-muleteers-of-gallipoli>, Yanky Fachler, The Zion Mule Corps - and its Irish commander, *History Ireland: Ireland's History Magazine*, 18th-19th Century History, Features, Issue 4 (Winter 2003), Volume 11. <https://www.historyireland.com/18th-19th-century-history/the-zion-mule-corps-and-its-irish-commander/>

⁴⁷⁸ Kinloch, p.299.

Jewish community and the Anzac Troops when they returned to bivouac in this area'.⁴⁷⁹ A year later a memorial service was held for fallen comrades. The Jewish inhabitants of Rishon le Zion and Wadi Hanein erected a Memorial Column and planted trees to show their gratitude. On Christmas 1919 the following letter was published in the *New Zealand Herald*, written by a farmer from the Jewish village of Rishon le Zion,

*Receive, gentlemen, testimonies of our highest human gratitude we owe you as our redeemers. How many kindnesses you showed us during your stay at Richonle (sic) Zion. Permit us, you noblest and brave sons of New Zealand and Australia, to assure you of the sentiments of our hearts and of the esteem and veneration with which we will always hold you. We wish you all well. We wish you a safe and pleasant life.*⁴⁸⁰

Another example of the friendship that developed between Jews and New Zealanders is found in an essay by a Jewish schoolgirl in Rishon le Zion, recorded in the 1920 account, *Mounted Riflemen in Sinai and Palestine*. The student writes of the relief to be liberated by British forces after several fear-filled days of fighting around the village, '...it seems that our dream has at last come true, and we can already see visions of a new life free from Turkish mis-rule..' The spectacle of New Zealanders on horse back entering the village caused quite a stir. She described the attempts to communicate with the New Zealanders and their efforts to learn Hebrew words, writing, ' So both parties are fraternising and are becoming every day closer friends'.⁴⁸¹

The liberation of Palestine from Turkish rule revealed the true extent of the suffering of the people. In Jerusalem, many thousands of civilians had died from starvation, including Jews, Christians and Moslems. London reporter Massey, blamed the dire situation on the 'insufferable bondage of bad government'.⁴⁸² Turkey's alliance with the Central Powers led to ruthless oppression against Jews in Palestine. The Generalissimo in Palestine, Djemal Pasha had issued a manifesto against 'the subversive element aiming at the creation of a Jewish government in the Pales-

⁴⁷⁹ Christopher Wilson-Archer, *Saviours of Zion: The Anzac Story from Sinai to Palestine, 1916-1918*, Tauranga, 2017, p. 130.

⁴⁸⁰ *New Zealand Herald*, Vol. LVII, Issue 17397, 18 February 1920, p.8.

⁴⁸¹ A. Briscoe Moore, *Mounted Riflemen in Sinai & Palestine*, Dunedin, 1920, p.93.

⁴⁸² W.T. Massey, p. 158.

tinians part of the Ottoman Empire'.⁴⁸³ Jews who were subjects of Allied Powers could either become Ottoman citizens and serve in the army or leave the country. Some were arrested, tortured and jailed, while others were deported or escaped. Many suffered deprivation, causing death.⁴⁸⁴

New Zealand Jews soon became aware of the suffering of their Palestinian co-religionists and, as previously noted, responded generously to their humanitarian needs. In May 1917, a cable was received by His excellency the Governor General from General Sir Francis Wingate, Sirdar of Egypt detailing the 'sufferings and privations of the Jewish colonists' in Palestine.⁴⁸⁵ An urgent request had been made to the New Zealand Jewish communities for funds for the relief of 'Jewish victims of Turkish outrages in Palestine'. Over £1,300 was raised in Auckland and it was noted in the AGM Report that more than half of the amount was raised from non-Jewish subscribers.⁴⁸⁶ That such a significant amount was raised by non-Jews strengthens the argument that the wider community was interested and concerned about the events in Palestine. An amount of £1100 was also collected in Wellington district.⁴⁸⁷

The Political Campaign: The Balfour Declaration

The British-led military campaign to overthrow Turkish rule in Palestine would be instrumental in opening the way for the establishment of a Jewish homeland. No less important and also British-led, was the political campaign to achieve the same end. New Zealand, through Prime Minister William Massey's involvement in the post-war conferences became aligned and committed to the Zionist goal.

Alongside the military victories, 1917 would see significant political developments for Zionism. The central stage for Zionist activity had moved to Britain by this time and was led by Russian born Scientist Chaim Weizmann, who had lived there since 1905. Writing of Weizmann's central role in the progress of Zionism at this time, historian Jehuda Reinharz wrote,

⁴⁸³ Cohen, p.68.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ "Beth Israel", Auckland, Report of the Board of Management, 16 September, 1917.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ Standard for the People, P.79.

From the earliest days of World War I Weizmann worked almost as an independent agent in his efforts to persuade England and his fellow Zionists that a British protectorate over Palestine was the best course of action for the empire as well as for the Jewish national cause.⁴⁸⁸

The historian, Regina Sharif, argued that Weizmann, was motivated to move to England because he recognised the potential of British sympathy for Zionism.⁴⁸⁹ She asserted that Zionism had been more widespread and popular historically in England than anywhere in Europe and traced the beginning of this support to the Puritan movement of the 17th century. Sharif asserted that the nineteenth century Evangelical revival in Britain further undergirded support for Jewish restoration by its emphasis on a literal interpretation of Scripture. By the end of 1914, Weizmann had established a series of relationships with British statesmen that would prove fruitful. Weizmann was introduced to C.P. Scott the editor of *Manchester Guardian*, through whom he met Herbert Samuel and Lloyd George. He would also meet Lord Balfour, a connection which would have a profound effect on the Zionist movement. According to Laqueur, Weizmann successfully convinced Scott, ‘a Bible-reading man’, to become a supporter of Zionism.⁴⁹⁰ Samuel was a Jewish parliamentarian who sympathised with Zionist aspirations. In 1915 he put forward a memorandum in support of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine, which made no progress. Although Samuel failed to gain the support of Asquith’s Liberal government, his effort arguably prepared the ground for the subsequent Balfour declaration. Lloyd George first came into contact with Zionism in the days of Herzl when as a lawyer he was consulted about the Uganda proposal.⁴⁹¹ George would later become Britain’s Prime Minister and under his leadership the declaration supporting a Jewish homeland would be issued. Weizmann had first met Balfour in 1905 when he was Prime Minister, also regarding the Uganda scheme. This conversation had impressed Balfour

⁴⁸⁸ Jehuda Reinharz, ‘The Balfour Declaration and Its Maker: A Reassessment’, *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (Sep., 1992), p 458.

⁴⁸⁹ Regina Sharif, ‘Christians for Zion, 1600-1919’, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3/4 (Spring - Summer, 1976), pp. 123-141.

⁴⁹⁰ Laqueur, p.182.

⁴⁹¹ At the Sixth Zionist Congress at Basel on August 26, 1903, Herzl proposed the British Uganda Program as a temporary refuge for Jews in Russia in immediate danger.

greatly as he wrote to his niece years later, ‘Their love of their country refused to be satisfied by the Uganda scheme. It was Weizmann’s absolute refusal even to look at it that impressed me’.⁴⁹²

Weizmann pursued the idea of formal recognition of the Zionist platform with members of the British government, but Britain as part of an alliance could not act alone. The agreement of Allies was sought on several fronts. Nahum Sokolow, General Secretary of the World Zionist Congress was by this time also based in London. He travelled across Europe seeking to gain support for Zionism. He gained expressions of sympathy from the Italian and French governments as well as from the Pope. On June 4, 1917, French diplomat, Jules Cambon issued Sokolow with a letter expressing that ‘it would be a deed of justice and of reparation to assist, by the protection of the Allied Powers, the renaissance of the Jewish nationality in that land from which the people of Israel were exiled so many centuries ago’.⁴⁹³ Balfour travelled to the United States in May 1917 for discussions with President Woodrow Wilson and Justice Louis D. Brandeis, a prominent Zionist. The German government was lobbied by Zionists to publicly support their cause, but, while somewhat sympathetic, the government was ultimately reluctant to upset its Turkish allies. However, the lobbying process was used as leverage in negotiations with Britain.⁴⁹⁴

Meanwhile, in Britain, Jewish anti-Zionists made public their opposition. A joint letter signed by the presidents of the Board of Deputies and the Anglo-Jewish Association was published in *The Times*, 24 May 1917. While happy to support humanitarian ventures in Palestine to improve the lives of Jews, they did not agree with the national idea, but believed religion was the only ‘certain criterion’ for Jewishness and were concerned about accusations of disloyalty.⁴⁹⁵ However the press campaign backfired. Ordinary Jews favoured Zionism and felt the elite was out of touch.⁴⁹⁶

The Balfour declaration, a letter from Lord Arthur Balfour representing the British Government to Lord Rothschild, a representative of the Jewish community, came about after many months of ne-

⁴⁹² Laqueur, P.188.

⁴⁹³ Edy Kaufman, The French Pro-Zionist Declarations of 1917-1918, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Oct., 1979), pp. 383-384.

⁴⁹⁴ Laqueur, p.176,7.

⁴⁹⁵ Laqueur, p.186.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.194.

gotiation and with the knowledge and consent of Britain's allies. The letter dated November 2nd, 1917 declared the British government's sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations and that it viewed favourably,

...the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

Although the Balfour Declaration fell short of Zionist expectations it was generally recognised to be a highly significant symbolic statement. One of the main effects of the declaration was the impact it had on the Zionist movement and the support it galvanised throughout the Jewish and non-Jewish world. When the Balfour Declaration was endorsed at the Paris Peace Conference, New Zealand Jewry held special services in their synagogues.⁴⁹⁷ Phillips claimed that it was not until the Balfour Declaration in 1917 that Zionism became a part of the 'normal Jewish outlook of practically the whole of the Jews in the Dominion'.⁴⁹⁸

Rabbi Goldstein believed that the Balfour Declaration, as part of 'British Imperial policy', was going to be the solution to the 'Jewish Problem'.⁴⁹⁹ For him it meant that the Jewish people could 'stand today before the world, not as outcasts, but a recognised nation among nations'.⁵⁰⁰ He considered the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate for Palestine as steps along the path to solving the 'Jewish Question'. Goldstein expressed confidence, that with Great Britain as the mandatory power over Palestine and Mesopotamia the development of a Jewish national home in Palestine would progress 'by leaps and bounds'. Although Rabbi Goldstein considered Palestine the 'land of their fathers', he was not presumptuous about what form the 'Jewish national home' would take. He expressed confidence that regardless of which power would eventually gain 'suzerainty', Jews would be 'ever faithful subjects of the ruling Power'. His hope and the content

⁴⁹⁷ Goldman, p.206.

⁴⁹⁸ *New Zealand Jewish Review*, 1931, p.41.

⁴⁹⁹ Goldstein Notes

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

of his exhortations to ‘brother Zionists’ was that ‘Palestine the land hallowed by our history..... will yet be the smiling home of millions of Jews where they may live unfettered, unhampered and unpummed with room for expansion, every life living the Jewish life with its distinctive religion culture and aspirations’.

British Christians and William Massey: Support for Zionism

Historians have debated various reasons why Britain chose to support the Jewish aspiration for a national home, such as the view that Palestine would provide an Imperial Defence barrier separating the Suez Canal and the Black Sea or that Weizmann was rewarded for his scientific contributions to the war effort. Others suggest that Weizmann used his powers of persuasion to convince Britain that Jews in the United States and Russia had the influence to sway their governments to stay committed to the Allied cause in exchange for support for a Jewish homeland.⁵⁰¹ However, this was largely an exercise of ‘smoke and mirrors’ being based on a myth about Jewish power. Laqueur argues that ‘neither allied difficulties nor Zionist strength’ sufficiently explained Britain’s willingness to support the Zionist goal.⁵⁰² He concluded that the concept of the return of the Jews appealed to the tradition and faith of British statesmen like George and Balfour. They believed that ‘the Jews had been wronged by Christendom for two thousand years and they had a claim to reparation’.⁵⁰³ Balfour believed that he was ‘instrumental in righting a wrong of world-historical dimensional quite irrespective of the changing world situation’. Indeed, evidence for this view can be found in the diary of Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen who quotes Balfour as saying, ‘Both the Prime Minister and myself have been influenced by a desire to give the Jews their rightful place in the world; a great nation without a home is not right’.⁵⁰⁴

William Massey also shared a high regard for the Bible which informed his views on Zionism. He explained some of his ideas in a 1920 meeting in the Wellington Town Hall for visiting speaker Israel Cohen and in a parliamentary debate in 1922. He argued that the Allied (particularly British) success in taking Jerusalem, under Allenby, the signing of the Turkish Armistice and the

⁵⁰¹ Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism: A Very Short Introduction*, New York, 2016.

⁵⁰² Laqueur, P.203.

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ Carroll Quigly, Lord Balfour's Personal Position on the Balfour Declaration, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Summer, 1968), p.341.

British Mandate, were fulfilment of Bible prophecy.⁵⁰⁵ Massey's Zionist and religious beliefs have received little attention from historians. Indeed, some New Zealand historians have noted the general absence of research on the role and significance of religious belief in New Zealand historiography.⁵⁰⁶ Massey's role, in general, in the post-war peace conferences has been treated lightly. The historian, Erik Olssen wrote a chapter reassessing Massey's legacy and raised the question as to whether, in fact, he was one of New Zealand's greatest Prime Ministers.⁵⁰⁷ Olssen made the point that every other Prime Minister who took part in the post war peace conferences and the establishment of the League of Nations has been the subject of numerous scholarly biographies. While Massey's achievements may have been undervalued by historians, contemporaries acknowledged his contribution to Empire during the trying war years. Upon his passing in 1925 the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Stanley Baldwin, stated, 'We gratefully remember his fortitude in every crisis of the war: his determination that New Zealand should play a part worthy of her destiny in helping the cause of the Allies; his own unsparing efforts in that cause, and the success which they achieved'. Baldwin mentioned the 'conspicuous service' he rendered at the Imperial War Cabinet of 1917 and 1918, the Paris Peace Conference and later Imperial conferences, as well as 'his wide human sympathy, his ripe experience in affairs, and his sagacity in counsel'.⁵⁰⁸ Massey was acknowledged in the bestowal of many honours in Great Britain, including the freedom of ten cities, three honorary degrees as well as French and Belgian honours.⁵⁰⁹

Massey found himself at the centre of world events in the post-war period, and yet as the leader of a small Dominion, had to fight for due recognition. Olssen notes that at the Imperial War Conference convened for all the Empire's Prime Ministers in 1917, Massey insisted that he, along with the other Prime Ministers, had a right to be consulted and have their views heard by Britain, re-

⁵⁰⁵ 'Mr Massey on Prophecy', Ashburton Guardian, 8 September 1920.

⁵⁰⁶ I. Breward, Allan K. Davidson, Peter Lineham, John Stenhouse. (see footnote 46)

⁵⁰⁷ Erik Olssen, 'Towards a Reassessment of W.F. Massey: One of New Zealand's Greatest Prime Ministers (Arguably)', James Watson & Lacy Paterson eds., *A great New Zealand Prime Minister: Reappraising William Ferguson Massey*, Dunedin, 2011, P.25.

⁵⁰⁸ Parliamentary Debates.v.206.1925, P.M. Coates, p.6.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid. "He received the Freedom of ten leading cities, including London, Edinburgh, York, Belfast, Londonderry, Manchester, Cardiff, Bristol, and Sheffield. The honorary degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred upon him by the Universities of Cambridge, Edinburgh, and Belfast. He was a Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour of France, and a Grand Officer of the Order of the Crown of Belgium".

garding the constitutional basis for the Empire.⁵¹⁰ When the New Zealand delegation reached the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 the decision had been made, much to Massey's annoyance, that New Zealand would have only one seat at the conference while the other Dominions had two. Regardless, Massey was determined to pursue New Zealand's interests, even if it meant confrontation with United States President Woodrow Wilson, who had a prominent role in proceedings. The historian, James Watson, described the clash that occurred in one particular meeting, in which Massey insisted on a 'fairly clear and definite statement' that New Zealand would receive a mandate over Western Samoa before signing Wilson's proposed League of Nations covenant.⁵¹¹ Wilson questioned whether the Dominion leaders were issuing an ultimatum. Australian Prime Minister Hughes responded 'that's about the size of it' while fiddling with his ear-piece, and Massey made a noise which sounded like a grunt of agreement. Lloyd George called this the 'only unpleasant incident of the whole Congress'.⁵¹²

Massey was not convinced that Wilson's proposed League of Nations with its collective security ideals would provide for New Zealand's security needs, and fully believed that the power of Germany would have to be again faced. Wilson envisaged a new global order that would allow for the self-determination of nations and opposed the annexation of conquered territories. Massey, along with Australia Prime Minister William (Billy) Hughes and South African General Smuts belonged to the key sub-committee which worked out the policy of mandates, an interim system of governing captured territories until the 'native' people were sufficiently prepared for self-government.⁵¹³ Olssen concludes that Massey's 'indefatigable and lonely work' ensured that New Zealand 'enjoyed the full benefits of autonomy and equality'.⁵¹⁴ Massey gained for New Zealand the mandate for Samoa, a share in Nauru's phosphates and curbed the potential threat of Japanese power in the

⁵¹⁰ Erik Olssen, 'Towards a Reassessment of W.F. Massey: One of New Zealand's Greatest Prime Ministers (Arguably)', James Watson & Lacy Paterson eds., *A great New Zealand Prime Minister: Reappraising William Ferguson Massey*, Dunedin, 2011, P.25.

⁵¹¹ James, Watson, *William Massey : New Zealand*, Haus Publishing, 2011,p.vii. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/auckland/detail.action?docID=3038287>, p.7.

⁵¹² Ibid.

⁵¹³ Erik Olssen, 'Towards a Reassessment of W.F. Massey: One of New Zealand's Greatest Prime Ministers (Arguably)', James Watson & Lacy Paterson eds., *A great New Zealand Prime Minister: Reappraising William Ferguson Massey*, Dunedin, 2011, P.27.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., P.29.

Pacific. Massey's involvement on the mandates committee meant he was well positioned to know what was developing with regard to Palestine and his expertise would be called upon by Zionists.

Jewish sources mention that the New Zealand government was lobbied at the Peace conferences on two issues, minorities' protection and Zionism. These two matters, as previously mentioned, were cause for division in Europe, although not so in New Zealand. The editor of *The New Zealand Jewish Review 1931* wrote that the New Zealand Jewish communities, responding to the appeal of the Board of Deputies of British Jews sought from the New Zealand government support for the proposals for minorities' protection at the Paris Peace conference, (another example of the close connection the New Zealand Jewish community had with British Jewry, whose lead they followed). A message delivered by Rabbi Goldstein about the upcoming Paris Peace Conference revealed how closely he followed the deliberations on the establishment of the League of Nations and the machinery it had set in place for the 'settlement of disputes and creation of mutual trust among nations'. Goldstein wrote, 'The whole civilised world is looking forward with calm and chastened spirit combined with that of rejoicing to the event which is to take place in Paris on Tuesday next, viz, the signing of the World Peace Pact by 15 Powers...'⁵¹⁵ He held great hope that a new regime by which international differences would be settled by arbitration rather than the sword would be 'a new era in the world's history'. The Rabbi made reference to the words of the American Secretary of State who warned 'it may not immediately and fairly banish all war from the earth, but it will be the most impressive declaration ever made by mankind of a determination to preserve peace, and will inspire the nations with a confident hope such as they have never had till now of deliverance at last from the sickening abomination of war'. Goldstein also hoped that the new international instrument would provide the guarantee of full religious and civil rights for the minorities living in the newly formed states.⁵¹⁶ The provisions of the Minorities Treaties were to apply to all racial, religious and linguistic minorities and included the right to use their own language, to maintain their own institutions and to receive an equitable share of the public funds.⁵¹⁷ Massey and Ward (who was part of the British Empire Delegation) along with the other British delegates duly voted for these clauses to be included in the peace treaties.⁵¹⁸ How-

⁵¹⁵ Goldstein Notes.

⁵¹⁶ Goldstein Notes, pp.171-174.

⁵¹⁷ Israel Cohen, *A Short History of Zionism*, London, 1951, p.85.

⁵¹⁸ *The New Zealand Jewish Review 1931*, p.25.

ever, Jewish hopes were largely dashed as most states flouted these rights and the ability of the League of Nations to enforce them was inadequate.⁵¹⁹

New Zealand Jews also sought to have the Balfour Declaration endorsed at the Paris Peace Conference. Goldman wrote that the New Zealand delegates Massey and Ward ‘did champion the Jewish cause. When the Peace Conference endorsed the Balfour Declaration, New Zealand Jewry held special services in the synagogues’.⁵²⁰ Very little has been written about Massey’s support for the ‘Jewish cause’. However, a document entitled ‘Notes of Interview with the Right Hon. W. Massey, Premier of New Zealand, 30 June 1921, housed at the Central Zionist Archive sheds light on Massey’s views and gives insight into his position.⁵²¹ It demonstrates how Massey was well positioned to advise the Zionist executive of the developments regarding Palestine and the progress in establishing the mandate system. The notes record an interview between Massey and prominent Zionist Nahum Sokolow, Chairman of the Executive of the Zionist Organisation. The notes begin with Sokolow reporting that he had called to see Mr Massey, because a mutual friend had intimated that Massey wanted to see him to discuss the ‘question of Palestine’. Sokolow affirmed that the Jews of the Dominions took great interest in the future of Palestine, as the Dominions had ‘taken a great part in redeeming the country from Turkish rule’. The Balfour Declaration had been enthusiastically received and the Jews of the Dominions were contributing to the economic development of Palestine. Sokolow enquired of Massey whether the Imperial conference would discuss Palestine in their deliberations on foreign policy. The notes record that Massey explained his personal interest in the Zionist cause and great sympathy with Zionist aspirations. He stated that Palestine was not on the agenda of the Imperial conference, but that it was a question that the Dominion premiers had discussed informally on several occasions. Sokolow then presented his concerns to Massey. He described the ‘difficult and uncertain’ situation in Palestine, the outbreaks of violence in Jaffa and the events that followed. Previously the Zionist Organisation had been in close contact with the Foreign Office under Balfour and especially the late Mark Sykes, but the contact had become less close. The leaders were not being consulted with regard to changes of policy but had been recently informed that there were proposals underfoot for an

⁵¹⁹ Cohen, p.85.

⁵²⁰ Goldman, *History of the Jews in New Zealand*

⁵²¹ ‘Notes of Interview with the Right Hon. W. Massey, Premier of New Zealand, 30 June 1921, Central Zionist Archive, Z4\40446.

elected Assembly in Palestine and a draft constitution, but no official information had been given. Sokolow knew the Mandate had been postponed and asked Massey if he could give some indication of whether the Mandate was likely to go through in September, and what were the exact reasons for the postponements. Massey informed Sokolow that there was no certainty of the Mandate going through in September, the main reason being the general opposition of the United States to all mandates.⁵²² The Palestine question could not be separated from that of Mesopotamia. There were also uncertainties about the attitude of the French and whether the Mesopotamian experiment would succeed. Massey stated however, that if the Mandate failed to go through, British policy in regard to the future of Palestine was unchanged. Palestine would remain under British rule with or without the Mandate system. Massey affirmed that the Treaty of Sevres would have to be radically altered.⁵²³ Sokolow enquired whether the Balfour Declaration would be incorporated into whatever new instrument might replace the Mandate, to which Mr Massey replied unhesitatingly ‘Yes, certainly - that is self-evident, and he added that whatever proviso was necessary to carry out the policy would also be inserted’. Sokolow suggested that a ‘clear statement from the British Government of their intentions’ was required, to which Massey promised that he would discuss the matter with his colleagues from the other Dominions on the next day.

A number of interesting factors emerge from this exchange. Sokolow affirmed that the interest of Dominion Jews in Palestine was related, in part, to their involvement in the Palestine campaign and their contributions to the economic development of Palestine. Massey’s firm support for Zionism was evident and he was adamant that whether or not a mandate system would eventuate Britain would be involved Palestine’s near future. Massey was clearly close enough to the centre of deliberations to be able to give Sokolow authoritative answers. The exchange hints at the ongoing tensions with the United States and also Zionist concerns that Britain was, even at this early stage, backtracking on its commitment to their cause.

⁵²² The draft was formally confirmed by the Council of the League of Nations on 24 July 1922 and came into effect on 29 September 1923, with the United Kingdom as the administering mandatory. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/palmanda.asp

⁵²³ Treaty of Sèvres, (Aug. 10, 1920), post-World War I pact between the victorious Allied powers and representatives of the government of Ottoman Turkey. The treaty abolished the Ottoman Empire and obliged Turkey to renounce all rights over Arab Asia and North Africa. The pact also provided for an independent Armenia, for an autonomous Kurdistan, and for a Greek presence in eastern Thrace and on the Anatolian west coast, as well as Greek control over the Aegean islands commanding the Dardanelles. Rejected by the new Turkish nationalist regime, the Treaty of Sèvres was replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Treaty-of-Sevres>

Massey stated that the Dominion premiers had discussed the matter of Palestine informally on several occasions and he clearly implied their support. While the Zionist views of all the Premiers are unclear, at least one other Dominion leader had strong Zionist leanings. South African General Jans Smuts, along with Prime Minister Botha was a key negotiator at the Peace conference and a supporter of Zionism. Jewish Studies academic, Gideon Shimoni, wrote that Smuts ‘...must surely rank as one of the foremost gentile promoters of Zionism in the world’.⁵²⁴ A Calvinist Christian and motivated by a sense of ‘historic justice’, Smuts believed that Christianity owed a debt to the Jews. In a speech to honour Weizmann in 1949, he stated, ‘I also had the strong feeling that something was due from the Christians to the Jews, not only as compensation for unspeakable persecutions but as the people who produced the Divine Leader, to whom we Christians owed the highest allegiance’.⁵²⁵ Shimoni noted the ‘remarkable agreement’ of Smuts’ views with those of Balfour and George.

Massey shared, along with these leaders, a Christian belief system that motivated his support for Zionism. Massey was known for having ‘a firm faith in God and the British Empire’.⁵²⁶ He was described as ‘the staunchest Imperialist of them all.’⁵²⁷ Among the eulogies presented in Parliament upon Massey’s death, Mr Wright of Wellington stated, ‘The late Mr. Massey believed quite conscientiously that the British people were the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel. This opinion stimulated his Imperialism, and he held tenaciously that the British Empire could never be destroyed, but must soar to greater heights’.⁵²⁸

This combination of religious belief and imperialism undergirded Massey’s involvement in the post-war conferences in London and Paris and influenced his view on Zionism. Massey was an adherent of British Israelism, a theory which held that the British people descended from the ten

⁵²⁴ Gideon Shimoni, ‘Jan Christiaan Smuts and Zionism’ *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Autumn, 1977), p. 269.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

⁵²⁶ *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates* (NZPD), 1925, 206, p.6.

⁵²⁷ *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates* (NZPD), 1925, 206, p.11.

⁵²⁸ *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates* (NZPD), 1925, 206, p.14.

Israelite tribes taken captive into Assyria 721 BC.⁵²⁹ Based on dubious historical and linguistic beliefs, British Israelism was not a sect as such but rather the views were held as a supplement to the doctrinal position of whichever church the adherent attended.⁵³⁰ Massey believed that Britain was the House of Israel and the Jewish people, the house of Judah, and that a 'distinct line of demarcation' was drawn between these two groups. He pointed to the prophecy of Ezekiel which predicted there would come a time when the two houses would '...be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more.'⁵³¹ The British Empire, according to his reckoning, was 'preserved for some great purpose', which was to bring about the peace prophesied by the prophet who said 'the time when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks and men shall not learn the art of war any more'.⁵³² Massey's comments to Sokolow that regardless of whether or not the Mandate system would eventuate, Britain would be involved in Palestine's future is consistent with his British Israelism which saw Britain as having a significant role in carrying out God's plans in world affairs.

Conclusion

The period of the Great War was quiet for Zionism in New Zealand. The Jewish community participated in the war effort in much the same way as other New Zealanders, although burdened with additional concerns for their suffering co-religionists in Europe and Russia. The question of identity continued to be a challenge for Jews. Loyalty to country might mean, for those with Germanic backgrounds, rejecting one's heritage, or distancing oneself from Zionism, as did the British anti-Zionists and the advocates of minority protection in Eastern Europe and Russia. However, the outcome of the Great War was significant for the progress of Zionism as it brought geo-political changes which opened the way for the Zionist dream to become a reality. New Zealand participated in those events militarily in the Palestine Campaign and politically through Prime Minister William Massey's work at the post-war conferences. These two arenas, military and political, provided strong connections to Palestine for many New Zealanders. Along with other British imperialist statesmen, William Massey's Bible-based beliefs motivated his support for a

⁵²⁹ F.L. Cross & E.A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd Edition, Oxford, 2005, 3rd edition revised.

⁵³⁰ William H. Brackney, *Historical Dictionary of Radical Christianity*, Plymouth, 2012, p.61-62.

⁵³¹ 'Mr Massey on Prophecy', *Ashburton Guardian*, Volume XLI, Issue 9310, 8 September 1920.

⁵³² *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates* (NZPD), 1922, 196, p.485.

homeland for the Jews. New Zealand's attachment to empire in this period undergirded her commitment to the Zionist cause. British support for the Zionist programme would prove to be fleeting in the coming years, as Britain came under pressure from other political interests and struggled to carry out mandatory responsibilities. However, New Zealand's commitment to the Zionist cause would prove to be relatively stable in the subsequent two decades.

CHAPTER SIX

Post World War One: A time of momentum and challenge

The problem now assumed a practical character and the material aspect became of prime importance in securing the means necessary for the re-creation of a Jewish homeland.⁵³³
(Louis Phillips)

As the 'Great War' came to an end, the Zionist dream of a Jewish homeland seemed closer than ever. The terms of the Balfour Declaration of 1917, ratified by the Allies in the post-war conferences and incorporated into the British Mandate for Palestine prepared the ground for Zionists to pursue their goals. Under the Mandate, the Zionist Organisation (ZO) was to 'take steps in consultation with His Britannic Majesty's Government to secure the co-operation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of The Jewish National Home'.⁵³⁴ The practical task now confronted Zionists, of providing the means necessary to achieve this goal. New Zealander, Louis Phillips, wrote, 'The magnitude of the task was readily realised and it became necessary to mobilise all the resources of the Jewish people to ensure that adequate advantage would be taken of by the opportunities created by the Balfour Declaration'.⁵³⁵

While Zionist Societies had been established in New Zealand from the first decade of the twentieth century, progress in the movement had been slow. The new post-war reality spurred the movement onto a heightened level of activity, and the small New Zealand community contributed way beyond its size. However, the progress of Zionism was not without challenges and difficulties and success from a Zionist perspective was not evenly spread across the nation. Along with the distance between the central organisation in London and local societies, came misunderstanding and mis-communication. Cultural differences and Zionist tactics and strategies at times proved challenging and required careful management by local community leaders. Although only minority voices in New Zealand, opponents of Zionism had an impact on the fortunes of the movement in their respective communities.

⁵³³ Louis Phillips, 'Zionism in New Zealand', Green, Ben, ed., *The New Zealand Jewish Review and Communal Directory 1931*, Wellington, 1931, p.53.

⁵³⁴ The Palestine Mandate, Article 4. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/palmanda.asp

⁵³⁵ 1931 Review, p.53.

In spite of these challenges, Zionism enjoyed a period of momentum and growth. A number of factors contributed to its success in the post war period, such as the support of influential people within the community, the distribution of literature and educational programmes and the visits to New Zealand of inspiring Zionist speakers. The degree of success in the various communities around New Zealand depended in large part on the personalities of locals involved in the movement. The influence of particular individuals had a significant impact on the progress of the movement. One such individual was Louis Phillips, who played an key role in establishing, supporting and overseeing the movement in New Zealand. He corresponded regularly with the central office in London, advising and, at times, functioning as a mediator between the organisation and local communities. Without his skill and ability, the movement in New Zealand and particularly in Auckland would likely not have succeeded to the same degree. This chapter will survey the progress of Zionism in New Zealand in the post-war period with a particular emphasis on the role of Louis Phillips.

Louis Phillips: Background

Louis Phillips was a devoted Zionist and regarded as a specialist on Jewish history and Zionism. He wrote an informative chapter on Zionism in the *New Zealand Jewish Review*, 1931 and his opinion was often sought by newspapers.⁵³⁶ He was also the Dominion Zionist representative in the post-war conferences in London and Paris.⁵³⁷ While Phillips played a key role in the progress of Zionism in New Zealand, little has been written about his work: a couple of paragraphs in a chapter about the Phillips family, written by his nephew; three sentences in Goldman's *History of the Jews in New Zealand* and a page of tributes in Lionel Albert's compilation, *Some of the Jewish Men and Women who Contributed to the History of Auckland, 1840–1982*.⁵³⁸ However, the correspondence between Phillips and the Zionist Organisation housed at the Central Zionist Archives

Israel Meltzer, 'Mr Louis Phillips: A Personal Tribute by Israel Meltzer', Lionel Albert, ed., *Some of the Jewish Men & Women who Contributed to the History of Auckland 1840-1982*, Manuscript No.22, Auckland, 1982, p.64. ⁵³⁶ A couple of examples of newspaper commentary; the first article is about German Jewish refugees and in the second his opinion was sought regarding the controversy over King Feisal's apparent agreement to the Zionist proposals in the Paris Peace Conference. *New Zealand Herald*, Volume LXXI, Issue 21788, 1 May 1934, Page 9, *New Zealand Herald*, Volume LXXIII, Issue 22450, 20 June 1936, Page 10.

⁵³⁷ Goldman, Lazarus Morris, *The History of Jews in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1958, p.206.

⁵³⁸ Albert; Goldman; Leo Phillips, 'The Phillips Family', eds., Ann Gluckman & Laurie Gluckman, *Identity & Involvement II: Auckland Jewry, Past & Present*, Palmerston North, 1993, pp.66-68.

provides a fascinating insight into the extent to which Phillips superintended the Zionist movement in New Zealand.⁵³⁹ He wrote regular, detailed reports to the Zionist Organisation in London, offering insights and advice, at times confidential, as to how to handle situations and people in the New Zealand context.

Phillips' father, Nathan Phillips (originally Fivovsovitch) left Lithuania in 1887 in order to avoid serving in the Russian army and to escape persecution.⁵⁴⁰ Following a common pattern, the family lived in Australia for a few years before immigrating to New Zealand and settling in Ponsonby, Auckland. Phillips was born in 1890, the fifth of eight children.⁵⁴¹ According to a report in the personal column of the Northern Advocate June 1918, prior to the war, Phillips worked in the Dargaville office of Messrs Nicholson and Gribbin, solicitors.⁵⁴² The article reported on the fact that he had been admitted to hospital in France having suffered multiple wounds. Phillips was a signaller with the 22nd Specialists and had been in France about a year. The report noted his interest in debating for which he won the Athenaeum cup, (along with other team members) and represented Auckland University College.⁵⁴³ A friend later wrote of him that 'He was a debater second to none', who was in great demand from many organisations to act as a judge in their debates and was a prominent member of the NZ Historical Society'.⁵⁴⁴ In later years Phillips devoted much energy to obtaining immigration permits for Jewish refugees to New Zealand oftentimes with little or no remuneration.⁵⁴⁵

It is not surprising that Phillips should be chosen to represent the Dominion at the International Zionist conference in London, February 1919 since he was stationed in France and a known Zionist with abilities in law and debating. As Goldman put it, Phillips, 'deserved, as a stalwart Zionist

⁵³⁹ Central Zionist Archive, Z4\42313.

⁵⁴⁰ Phillips, *Identity & Involvement II: Auckland Jewry, Past & Present*, pp.66-68.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid. They spent 7 years in Melbourne.

⁵⁴² *Northern Advocate*, 20 June 1918, Page 2.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ Meltzer, Lionel ed., p.64.,

⁵⁴⁵ Phillips, *Identity & Involvement II: Auckland Jewry, Past & Present*, pp.66-68.

the honour of being New Zealand's first delegate at the International Zionist Conference'.⁵⁴⁶ The Zionist convocation included delegates from all Neutral and Allied countries and was a significant gathering following the Balfour Declaration, where foundational decisions were made.⁵⁴⁷ The Central Office of the Zionist Organisation was to be London and Dr. Weizmann was elected to the Zionist executive. The fact that Phillips was at the centre of international deliberations was noted in a 1936 *New Zealand Herald* article which commented that Phillips had been 'associated with Dr. C. Weizmann and other Zionist leaders in formulating the Zionist proposals for the (Paris) Peace Conference'.⁵⁴⁸

The Mandate for Palestine was not ratified until 24 July 1922, at which time the ZO was appointed the appropriate Jewish agency to advise and co-operate with the new administration in Palestine in matters related to the establishment of the Jewish National Home. However, the ZO wasted no time in reaching out to Jewish communities around the world to enlist their support in the task of working towards a homeland. At the end of July 1919, the ZO sent a circular letter to leaders in Dunedin, Wellington, Christchurch and Auckland informing them of the decision made at the London conference that Zionist federations should contribute to the Palestine Restoration Fund in proportion to their membership and financial strength. The obligation to fulfil one's duty was imposed on Jewish communities with exhortations and chidings. A letter from the Treasury Department to Arthur Myers esq., (honorary president of the Auckland Zionist Society and politician), stated, 'I am sure you will do your utmost to gather in and transmit the balance within the period mentioned, for it would be in the highest degree deplorable if the execution of the plans for our great political work and economic revival of Palestine should be jeopardised by the failure of any section of our people to contribute the essential funds'.⁵⁴⁹ The plea for Jewish people to fulfil their obligation to the wider community was a message continually repeated by the Zionist organisation in the coming period. The persistence with which the ZO pursued its goals, at times, caused offence to local communities and proved counter-productive.

⁵⁴⁶ Goldman, p.207.

⁵⁴⁷ Israel Cohen, *A Short History of Zionism*, London, 1951, p.84.

⁵⁴⁸ 'Arabs and Jews', *New Zealand Herald*, 20 June 1936, p.10.

⁵⁴⁹ Zionist Organisation Treasury Department to Arthur Myers Esq., New Zealand Zionist Federation, 24 July 1919, Z4\40446, Central Zionist Archive

Upon his return to New Zealand in 1919, Phillips undertook a lecture tour of New Zealand speaking about Zionism and the deliberations of the Zionist delegates at the Paris Peace conference, where they had received a sympathetic hearing from the Allied representatives.⁵⁵⁰ He addressed meetings in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin, following which nearly £600 was raised in Auckland and over £1000 in New Zealand.⁵⁵¹ His address in the Dunedin Synagogue was described in the *Evening Star* as ‘forceful and eloquent’.⁵⁵² To a ‘large and appreciative audience’, Phillips explained the aim of Zionism as providing ‘a place of refuge for persecuted and unemancipated Jews’. The Zionists hoped to reconstitute Jewish life and thought ‘on the basis of the Mosaic code of righteousness and equity’. It was expected that these goals would be accomplished under the ‘benign sway’ of the British Mandate. They were seeking an intensification of the ‘privilege’ of local administration, which they already enjoyed in small measure. Phillips praised the ‘pertinacity, self-sacrifice and endurance’ of the pioneers who laboured to reclaim the malaria ridden swamps. Not only were practical achievements noted by Phillips but also cultural; the newly established University in Jerusalem and the ‘great revival’ of the Hebrew language.⁵⁵³

Educating Jewish communities on Zionism was a role that Phillips would undertake in the coming decade in various ways. The response of the local Dunedin community to his message in 1919 exemplified the need for Phillips’ persuasion. Community leader and Jewish philanthropist, David Theomin found comfort in learning that, according to his interpretation of Phillips’ message, Zionism was not a political movement, and that ‘Zionists did not contemplate setting up in Palestine a State within a State’.⁵⁵⁴ He referred to the ‘appalling’ suffering of the Jews in Eastern Europe and felt that the humanitarian attempts to relieve that suffering was justification for supporting Zionism. While the war had officially ended, the violence and suffering had not, and all across Eastern Europe; Lithuania, Russian, Ukraine and Poland, Jews were subject to harassment, pogroms and murder. The historian, Robert Gerwarth, offered one such example, ‘...vari-

⁵⁵⁰ *Evening Star*, 14 November 1919.

⁵⁵¹ “Beth Israel” Auckland Annual General Meeting Report, 1 September 1920.

⁵⁵² *Evening Star*, 14 November 1919.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁴ *Evening Star*, 14 November 1919.

ous peasant armies also participated in the slaughter of Jews, usually in alcohol-fuelled pogroms of which 934 were recorded in Ukraine alone in 1919'.⁵⁵⁵

The humanitarian concern for fellow Jews was a powerful driver for Zionism in New Zealand. However, at this point in history, it was not clear to Zionists exactly what form a Jewish homeland would take. It was not presumed that Jews would necessarily have a state. Theomin's caution towards Zionism as a political movement came from the worry about accusations of 'dual loyalty', that supporting a Jewish state would raise questions about their loyalty to country and threaten the hard-won position of Jews, in the countries where they lived. As an immigrant to New Zealand Theomin had made every effort to assimilate and prove himself a worthy citizen. In 1885 Theomin anglicised his name and had it changed by deed poll from the very Jewish sounding David Ezekiel Benjamin to David Edward Theomin.⁵⁵⁶ His reasoning for doing so can be seen in his advice to Alexander Astor, when the latter was still in England contemplating Theomin's invitation to take up a pastoral position in Dunedin. Theomin recommended that Astor change his birth surname Ostroff to Astor, as there was a 'certain prejudice' in New Zealand against foreigners.⁵⁵⁷ Although Theomin was born in England his father was Prussian, while Astor's parents were Lithuanian and Latvian. The 'prejudice' may not necessarily have been directed towards Jews or Zionists *per se*, but rather non-British. Another occasion on which Theomin took steps to distance himself from his heritage was during World War One, when he was subject to anti-alien attacks.⁵⁵⁸ In this case it was his German background from which he sought distance.

In the coming months, the Dunedin community would continue to express reservations about the Zionist programme. Phillips wrote to the Zionist Organisation (ZO) in March 1920 that a 'peculiar position' had arisen in Dunedin. The previous November 1919 he had managed to dispel

⁵⁵⁵ Robert Gerwarth, 'No End to War, Hew Strachan, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War: New Edition*, Oxford, p. 297, (Kindle Edition).

⁵⁵⁶ Mervyn Palmer, 'Theomin, David Edward', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1993. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand: www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2t38/theomin-david-edward (accessed 3 December 2019)

⁵⁵⁷ Ann J. Gluckman, 'Astor, Alexander', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 2000. *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5a23/astor-alexander> (accessed 11 September 2018)

⁵⁵⁸ Steven Loveridge, *Calls to Arms: New Zealand Society and Commitment to the Great War*, Wellington, 2014, p.97.

doubts about Zionism in his address to the Dunedin community. Since that time, questions had arisen due to the influence of 'one or two chief contributors' who were in sympathy with the 'League of British Jews'.⁵⁵⁹ They were holding back their contributions 'pending further information'.⁵⁶⁰

Opposition of the Anti-Zionists

The anti-Zionist 'League of British Jews' formed on 14 November 1917. They were an elite group of assimilationist Jews who viewed the nationalist aspirations of Zionists as a threat to Jews in the diaspora who wished to be considered loyal citizens of their countries. For them, Jewishness was a religion, not a nationality. The historian, Robert Wistrich, noted that the group included some of the 'wealthiest and most prestigious families in Anglo-Jewry'.⁵⁶¹ The League formed as a result of a controversy that challenged their position in the community. The leading organisation representing Jews in Britain was the Board of Deputies of British Jews (BDBJ), founded in 1760. In 1871 the Anglo-Jewish Association (AJA) was formed to advocate for the interests of persecuted Jews outside of Britain and to work towards their 'social, moral, and intellectual progress'.⁵⁶² In 1878, the BDBJ and the AJA formed a Conjoint Foreign Committee, for the task of advising the British government on Jewish related concerns.

The aforementioned Jewish institutions were dominated by a small group of Jews, well established in British society. In the cross currents of Jewish views in Britain in this period, this group came to be seen as increasingly out of touch with majority opinion. The demographics of the Jewish community was changing with an increasing immigrant population of Russian and East European Jews located in the East End and a rising middle class. When the presidents David Alexander and Claude Montefiore of the two groups, BDBJ and AJA, published a letter challenging Zionism in *The Times*, May 1917, on behalf of the Conjoint Committee, a backlash ensued. Prominent Jewish leaders such as the Chief Rabbi and Lord Walter Rothschild, opposed the ac-

⁵⁵⁹ Louis Phillips to S. Lipton, Secretary E.Z.F., London, 7 March 1920, Z4\41749, Central Zionist Archive.(CZA)

⁵⁶⁰ Report by Israel Cohen regarding his visit to New Zealand, Z4\41957, CZA. Top three pledges: H. Halsted £1k; D. Theomin £500; S. Solomon £500- never received. p.585.

⁵⁶¹ Robert Wistrich, 'Zionism and Its Jewish "Assimilationist" Critics (1897-1948)', *Jewish Social Studies*, New Series, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1998, p.87.

⁵⁶² M. Duparc, 'Anglo-Jewish Association', *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1906.

tions of Alexander and Montefiore. They felt that these matters should have been dealt with internally. A vote of no confidence in the Conjoint Committee was passed by the BDBJ a month later, followed by the resignation of the President and the dissolution of that body in September 1917. This turn of events did not necessarily signal support for Zionism. Historian Walter Laqueur suggested that mixed up with the arguments over Zionism was a power struggle within the community between the old guard and new forces within the community.⁵⁶³

The Anti-Zionists believed that Zionism portrayed the idea that Jews in the diaspora constituted ‘one homeless nationality’ incapable of assimilation and that the Jew was ‘an alien’ in the land of his birth. They wished to be seen as ‘fully and sincerely identified with the national spirit and interests’ of the countries of their birth.⁵⁶⁴ The policies of the League of British Jews were formally adopted at the inaugural General Meeting held in London in March 1918. Their goals were, ‘To uphold the status of British subjects professing the Jewish religion. To resist the allegation that Jews constitute a separate Political Nationality. To facilitate the settlement in Palestine of such Jews as may desire to make Palestine their home’.⁵⁶⁵

The possibility of an anti-Semitic backlash as a result of accusations of dual loyalties worried the League of British Jews. These were not idle concerns for, as Wistrich pointed out, conservative British newspapers like the *Morning Post*, the *Daily Mail*, and even *The Times* used these accusations to attack British Jews.⁵⁶⁶ L. Phillips reported in a letter to the ZO in July 1920 that the League of British Jews had attempted to gain followers in New Zealand and had sent a large amount of literature the previous year. According to Phillips, the anti-Zionist arguments ‘fell on barren ground’ and the attempts to win converts were a ‘signal failure’, as there was only one adherent in Auckland and one in Dunedin.⁵⁶⁷ Phillips concluded that Zionism was growing stronger,

⁵⁶³ Laqueur, p.194.

⁵⁶⁴ *The Times* of May 24, 1917

⁵⁶⁵ Peter Egill Brownfeld, ‘The League of British Jews: Challenging Nationalism in Behalf of Jewish Universalism’, *Issues*, Fall 2001.

⁵⁶⁶ Wistrich, p.87.

⁵⁶⁷ This is likely to be Saul Solomon, as will be shown later.

especially in Auckland and Wellington and ‘all NZ Jewry were better informed about the aims and achievements of Zionism’.⁵⁶⁸

While the anti-Zionist movement opposed the nationalism of the Zionist movement, it was not opposed to Jews settling in Palestine as such, and supported philanthropic projects. The questions addressed to Phillips at his meeting in Dunedin in 1919 affirmed that Theomin’s interest was humanitarian rather than political, and his own history suggests he was anxious to be considered a loyal citizen of New Zealand.⁵⁶⁹ Not all who attended Phillips’ Dunedin meeting were as cautious as Theomin. The Rev. M. Diamond thought the only solution to the ‘pitiable state’ of the Russian and Rumanian Jews was a settlement in Palestine on the lines laid down by the Balfour Declaration.⁵⁷⁰ Mr Emil Hallenstein (president of the Synagogue) expressed his ‘gratification at the renaissance of the holy tongue in Palestine, so that the little children in the house and in the street spoke fluently the Hebrew’. He was heartened by the reports of non-productive soil being converted into rich fields and vineyards. He expressed ‘great indebtedness’ to Phillips ‘for coming all the way south’ to inform them on the aims and immediate prospects of Zionism.⁵⁷¹ Phillips concluded his address with what was described as ‘a stirring appeal for whole-hearted support to the Zionist movement’.⁵⁷²

Israel Cohen’s Tour 1920

Goldman wrote that Louis Phillips’ lectures ‘paved the way for the magnetic Israel Cohen to win the hearts of the people when he came out on behalf of the Palestine Restoration Fund’.⁵⁷³ Not only did his lectures pave the way, but Phillips was closely involved in organising the tour of the

⁵⁶⁸ L. Phillips to ZO, July 1920, Z4\42313, CZA.

⁵⁶⁹ The Theomins were prominent citizens in Dunedin and well known philanthropists. David has been described as one of the community’s ‘most generous and public-spirited business men’. He was a leader of the Jewish community, the president of Dunedin City council for many years, a generous supporter of civic affairs, a benefactor of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery and patron of young artists. He was active in the Shipwreck Relief Society of New Zealand, the Patients’ and Prisoners’ Aid Society and the Chamber of Commerce. Marie Theomin was also highly respected and devoted her energies to voluntary, charity and philanthropic work. She was the Dominion treasurer of the Plunket Society and a founding member of the Victoria League.

⁵⁷⁰ Jewish religious leaders were often given the title Rev. or referred to as Ministers in this period.

⁵⁷¹ *Evening Star*, 14 November 1919, *Colonist*, 6 January 1920, Page 2

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*

⁵⁷³ Goldman, p.207.

Zionist leader. When Phillips received a cable in May 1920 informing of Cohen's upcoming visit, he immediately called a meeting and informed the other centres, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin, of the news. It was thought that Cohen's visit would 'supply a much needed organising and driving force' for the movement.⁵⁷⁴ A publicity campaign was organised with the publication of leaflets to be distributed all over New Zealand which, it was thought, would foster the necessary interest in Cohen's visit. In a letter to the ZO, Phillips reported that 'A large quantity of Zionist literature has been distributed in practically every Jewish home here and the Zionist feeling is growing perceptibly'.⁵⁷⁵ The Auckland leadership appealed to other communities to support the upcoming visit. A letter from Mr N.A. Nathan, President of the Auckland congregation and Rev. Goldstein, President of the Auckland Zionist Society had been sent to the presidents of the southern communities, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin asking them to 'secure the united support of their congregations on the occasion of Mr Cohen's visit'.⁵⁷⁶ Phillips also succeeded in gaining publicity about Israel Cohen's visit in the daily newspapers of the four main centres. Phillips reported 'There is growing interest among the many and enthusiasm among a few - a small but intelligent group who are endeavouring to mould communal thought along Zionist lines'. Reading like a glowing report card, Phillips wrote, 'New Zealand Jewry as a result of the distribution of about two thousand Zionist pamphlets, the addresses given by Rev. Goldstein of Auckland who has a thorough knowledge of all Zionist literature in the English language, the cable Zionist news, and the influence exerted by *The Jewish Chronicle* and the work of the Zionist Societies, is more Zionist than it has ever been'.⁵⁷⁷

Cohen supplied the Australian and New Zealand Zionists with detailed information about his upcoming tour; how long he hoped to spend in each city, the purposes of his trip and methods and tactics for the all important task of fundraising.⁵⁷⁸ His method was to address at least one public meeting and one private meeting in each centre. Long-standing Zionist workers and those sympathetic to the cause should be invited to the private meetings which should take place first. It was thought that they were more likely to get donations in this type of setting and the hope was that

⁵⁷⁴ L. Phillips to ZO, 16 May 1920, Z4\41749, Central Zionist Archive.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁶ L. Phillips to ZO, July 1920, Z4/42313, CZA.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁸ Cohen to L. Phillips, 7 May 1920, Z4\41957, CZA.

those present would set an example for the rest of the community in the giving of large donations for the Restoration Fund. These instructions and explanations were sent to both Australian and New Zealand communities, and the approach proved successful.

In the advertisement for his visit to New Zealand, Cohen was described as ‘a distinguished author and journalist and a recognised authority on the Zionist movement.’⁵⁷⁹ Cohen’s mission was seen as ‘the first of its kind in the history of the movement’, which was to ‘explain the significance of the Peace Conference’s decision concerning Palestine, to extend and strengthen the ramifications of the Zionist movement, and to raise funds for the furtherance of Zionist projects in Palestine’.⁵⁸⁰ Cohen’s tour included Jewish communities in Australia, New Zealand, India, Japan, Java, the Straits Settlements, and the Far East. Cohen’s Zionist mission received support from the highest level of British authority. To pave the way for his reception, credentials had been furnished by the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office, from the British Government to the Prime Minister, with letters of introduction from Lord Milner and other members of the British Cabinet and with special messages from the Zionist leaders, Dr. Weizmann and Mr N. Sokolow, as well as Lord Rothschild, Lord Robert I Cecil, Mr Herbert Samuel, Dr. Nordau, and others.⁵⁸¹ The message was clearly conveyed, ‘Zionism is now part and parcel of British Imperial policy’.⁵⁸² British endorsement of the tour meant that Cohen received civic receptions in Auckland and Wellington presided over by the respective mayors, Mayor Gunson and Mayor J. P. Luke. The Wellington meeting was also attended by Prime Minister Massey and the Acting-Governor Sir Robert Stout, who each gave addresses.⁵⁸³ Both public meetings were well attended and Phillips stated that over two thousand people attended the Wellington meeting. He also commented that a feature of Cohen’s meetings was the interest aroused in the general community.⁵⁸⁴ The meetings in Dunedin and Christchurch were held in Synagogues to primarily Jewish audiences.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁷⁹ *New Zealand Herald*, 24 August 1920, Page 5.

⁵⁸⁰ *Press*, 10 July 1920, Page 12.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸² *Evening Post*, 3 September 1920, Page 8.

⁵⁸³ *Free Lance*, 1 September 1920, Page 5.

⁵⁸⁴ 1931 Review, p.53.

⁵⁸⁵ *Sun*, 8 September 1920, Page 13, *Otago Daily Times*, 10 September 1920, Page 6.

Cohen's visit was given comprehensive coverage in the newspapers. The *Evening Post* presented Zionism as a two-pronged mission; to meet compelling need and as an ideal cause.⁵⁸⁶ Cohen argued that the 'tragic conditions' of the Jews in Central and Eastern Europe and the need to assist the recovery of 'miserable survivors of the massacres and outrages' created an urgency for the Zionist cause. The idealistic vision consisted of the establishment of a 'model community under the benign British Administration' in which 'they (the Jews) would bring all the moral, material, and intellectual resources of their race from all parts of the world'.⁵⁸⁷ Cohen made clear that he was not seeking recruits for immigration, as 'In other lands there were more numerous deserving and urgent cases for immigration to Palestine than in New Zealand'. He recognised however, the important contribution New Zealand could potentially offer in financially supporting the venture. Significant resources were required for land to be purchased and developed.⁵⁸⁸

According to the *New Zealand Herald*, Cohen successfully delivered twelve addresses at public meetings in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, a private gathering in Masterton, plus spent a few days in Rotorua. According to Phillips, a total of £21,480 was raised for the Palestine Restoration Fund; Auckland £8,800, Wellington £7,400, Dunedin £3,950 and Christchurch £1,330.⁵⁸⁹ In thanking the Jewish community for their generous response to his appeal, Cohen stated, that although they were small in numbers they had 'set an excellent example to all the Jews in the rest of the world'.⁵⁹⁰ Goldman noted that one of the most outstanding results of Cohen's trip was the influence it had on Simone Nathan who established a Women's Zionist movement and began a venture to establish Plunket-style infant welfare centres in Palestine. (This will be discussed in the next chapter).

From Cohen's perspective the New Zealand trip was a resounding success. He wrote about his travels to New Zealand and the other communities in *Journal of a Jewish traveller (1925)* and stated, 'Little did I dream that my visit to NZ was to prove the most successful chapter in the

⁵⁸⁶ *Evening Post*, 6 September 1920, Page 7.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁸ *Auckland Star*, 26 August 1920, Page 5.

⁵⁸⁹ Collections for the PRF and the JNF per Mr. I Cohen, Z4\41957-103, CZA.

⁵⁹⁰ *Dominion*, 16 September 1920, Page 4.

whole of my tour'.⁵⁹¹ He had raised over £20,000, 'the largest sum ever subscribed by local Jewry for a Jewish cause' and received 'sympathetic' and 'knowledgeable' press coverage.⁵⁹² Cohen reported on the excitement and enthusiasm that his visit aroused around the country. In Auckland, the local press reported that it was 'the most enthusiastic meeting held in the eighty years history of the Jewish community of Auckland'.⁵⁹³ While newspapers in the nation's capital informed Cohen that his mission had 'aroused general interest, for Wellington did not receive too many public speakers from the mother country'.⁵⁹⁴

While Israel Cohen's tour proved successful and created a flurry of activity, with promised donations far exceeding what was envisaged, the initial enthusiasm soon ebbed and the collection of funds over the coming years proved challenging. One of the issues that quickly arose was the circulation of rumours that Cohen had received a commission on the funds raised during his 1920 tour. In May 1921 the Treasurer of the ZO wrote to Alfred Nathan, Chairman of the PRF, Auckland that they had learned 'with much pain' of this rumour, declared it 'utterly untrue' and expressed concern that it would likely do considerable harm to the fund. Further, it was considered grossly unfair to Mr Cohen, whose work over many years had been sacrificial. The Treasurer requested that 'prompt and adequate steps' be taken to emphatically deny the rumour.⁵⁹⁵

The Cohen Commission Controversy

The correspondence between the ZO and New Zealand Zionists over this period indicated that the rumour had an impact on support in Wellington and to a lesser degree in Dunedin. Cohen believed the rumour was started by Rabbi Van Staveren who was anti-Zionist. Cohen was later to write disparagingly of the rabbi in his book *Journal of a Jewish Traveller*, bemoaning the rabbi's attitude during his visit in 1920.⁵⁹⁶ While some Wellingtonians were willing to accept the statements

⁵⁹¹ Israel Cohen, *Journal of a Jewish traveller*, London, 1925, p.66.

⁵⁹² Cohen, p.89.

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.68.

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.77.

⁵⁹⁵ 31/5/21 Letters defending I. Cohen, Z4\41749-52

⁵⁹⁶ Cohen, *Journal of a Jewish Traveller*, p.79.

of the ZO at face value, others were not so easily convinced.⁵⁹⁷ They considered it a matter of integrity, that while in Wellington, Cohen definitely denied the rumour that he would be receiving a commission. In August 1921 the Wellington Zionist Society sent a letter to the ZO signed by L. Moss, ex officio, S. Gordon, President and A. Rosen, Secretary, indicating that they were 'compelled under force of circumstance, to voice the sentiments of the whole community in connection with Mr Israel Cohen's visit to New Zealand'.⁵⁹⁸ Cohen had forcibly impressed on them that no arrangements had been made between headquarters and himself regarding a commission and claimed that he only received a salary. However, the Australian communities had procured a copy of the agreement entered into by Mr Cohen with headquarters, which indicated that Cohen was to receive a commission. This was contrary to Cohen's statement to New Zealand Jewry. While Cohen might have since waived the commission, (as indicated in the May letter) the fact remained that they were led to believe, by him, that he was doing this for the good of the movement. Because of this statement which was later found to be untrue, many leaders of New Zealand Jewry were inclined to disbelieve the May letter. The writers suggested that while that letter might convince the 'old standing Zionist', they were now dealing with a new type of Zionist who needed a lot of persuasion and convincing to support the movement. They requested the date of Cohen's letter waiving commission and the country he was in when he wrote to the ZO, disclaiming his right to the commission. It was expected that future collections would be hampered unless the atmosphere was cleared. The signatories to the letter urged that their correspondence be taken seriously, as the dissatisfied members were those who had promised large amounts and all four centres were affected.⁵⁹⁹

The Wellington group requested a response from the President of the Zionist Organisation, Chaim Weizmann. He duly replied 14 October 1921 and after expressing regret that further correspondence was needed, offered a full explanation regarding Cohen's remuneration. He emphasised that Cohen 'never suggested', 'never asked', 'never received' and 'refused to accept' any commission. Evidently, a commission was the idea of the treasurer who was concerned about whether the trip would prove successful and wanted to provide some kind of insurance in case Cohen should

⁵⁹⁷ L. Moss, president of WZS to ZO said that he knew it was a rumour and waived aside all criticism. However, he is a signatory to the later letter of complaint. Moss to ZO, 15 July 1921, Z4\42313, CZA

⁵⁹⁸ Wellington Zionist Society to Secretary to the Treasury, The Zionist Organisation London, 17 August 1921, Z4\42313, CZA.

⁵⁹⁹ Wellington Zionist Society to Treasury, ZO, 17/8/21, Z4\41749-52, CZA.

incur some serious disability or contract some serious malady (such as tropical disease) in the course of his prolonged and occasionally perilous journey. The Executive was affronted by the accusations and strongly defended Cohen stating that his journey involved considerable sacrifice, discomfort and prolonged absence from his wife and child. Further, he had been a 'zealous and indefatigable Zionist worker' for twenty years.⁶⁰⁰

The Cohen controversy caused concern in Dunedin as well, but to a lesser degree. David Phillips, took up the matter with the ZO on behalf of the Trustees of the PRF in Dunedin. Phillips explained that the effect on the local community was a lessening of enthusiasm for the cause and reiterated that while the Dunedin community was sympathetic towards the idea of a 'home for Judaism in Palestine', their main interest was with the charitable side of the work to provide rescue for the 'downtrodden tortured Jews in Eastern Europe'.⁶⁰¹

It took some time for all to be satisfied with the explanation of the Zionist Organisation regarding the Israel Cohen controversy and at times communication between the London based organisation and the far distance diaspora community was difficult. Five months after the aforementioned letter from the ZO, David Phillips responded to a terse cable, 'Please cable immediately instalment due Palestine collection', stating, 'I regret that you deemed it necessary to cable for this money...'. He went on to explain the reason for the delay, which was that meetings needed to be held to discuss the reports circulating about the remuneration accorded to Mr Israel Cohen. In addition, the committee wanted assurance about the work they were supporting in Palestine, that it proved to be on the 'right lines and successful'. The information available to them was meagre and they were keen to know that the funds they provided were being expended in the directions which would give them satisfaction.⁶⁰²

A year later, the Dunedin community was still unsettled by conflicting reports in the press, particularly the Australian Jewish Press. David Phillips informed the Zionist Organisation that he had been instructed to hold the collected monies until the local community was satisfied with its expenditure. The response from the General Secretary was more scolding than sympathetic, stating,

⁶⁰⁰ ZO to Rosen, Wellington Z Society, 14 August 1921, Z4\41749-52, CZA.

⁶⁰¹ D. Phillips to Zionist Organisation, London, 27/6/21, Z4\41749-52, CZA.

⁶⁰² D. Phillips to ZO London, 16 January, 1922, Z4\41749-52, CZA.

‘It is a pity that you allowed yourselves to be influenced by the conflicting reports in the press...’ Cohen explained that they had been subjected to these attacks for years and they had been repeatedly shown to be baseless. The ZO was determined to push on, regardless, with the task of the ‘upbuilding of a Jewish home’ and hoped that their Dunedin supporters would be satisfied with their detailed reply to Mr Zeltner which was published in the *Australian Jewish Herald* on 2 March 1923.⁶⁰³

The Cohen Commission controversy provides an example of the complex relationship that existed between the central Zionist organisation and the local Jewish communities. The central organisation was entirely focused on its goal and totally convinced by the moral rightness of the cause. At times its leaders failed to take into consideration the concerns and problems local communities faced and seemed to not recognise that a relatively remote community, reliant mostly on second hand information, might not share their convictions. While the Zionist Executive liberally appealed to notions of obligation, their fumbling over the commission issue raised the possibility that their own integrity might be questionable. The local societies exercised their agency in demanding accountability and were not intimidated by the pressure placed upon them. Most New Zealanders were satisfied with the explanations offered, however, the impatience of the central office in dealing with questions from local societies, which were called upon to contribute large amounts, showed a lack of understanding of valid concerns. As it turned out, Dunedin was the first city to fulfil its obligations to the ZO. David Phillips was duly commended in 1925 by the ZO, with ‘sincerest appreciation’ for the zeal and energy with which he regularly collected and transmitted instalments of the fund.⁶⁰⁴

Louis Phillips: Mediator

In light of Cohen’s lacunae in communication skills, Phillips often found himself functioning in a mediatory role. With regard to the situation in Wellington, Phillips felt the need to apologise for their low level of activity, explaining to Cohen that in addition to ‘hostile influences at work...in high places within the community’ they were in a generally poor financial position.⁶⁰⁵ Phillips offered very detailed and specific advice as to what the ZO could do to improve the relationship

⁶⁰³ ZO to D Phillips, 24 May 1923, Z4\42546, CZA.

⁶⁰⁴ Zionist Organisation to David Phillips, 24 April 1925, Z4\42546, CZA.

⁶⁰⁵ Phillips to Cohen, 20 February 1921, Z4/42313, CZA.

with Wellington. He suggested to Cohen that it might be diplomatic to write to the editor of *The Jewish Times*, stating that he had had the pleasure of seeing a copy of the publication and congratulating the members on its appearance, for it reflected great credit upon them and the management. Phillips further suggested that Cohen could express his pleasure that the paper struck 'so Jewish a note', that he wished the paper a long period of usefulness and trusted that it would extend its circulation and influence until it become the 'organ of NZ Jewry'. Also, Cohen could congratulate the members on the opening of the new Social Club of which he had heard most glowing reports. Phillips then gave his own assurance that the Club was doing excellent social work and was regarded as the best Jewish Club in the Southern Hemisphere. After a few other suggestions Phillips concluded that these suggestions would serve a Zionist purpose and the letter should come 'spontaneously from yourself and there you will please preserve as confidential the source from which the suggestion emanated'.⁶⁰⁶

Cohen responded to Phillips that he was aware that the activity of the Wellington Society had been at a low ebb as he was in regular communication with them, but was happy to act upon Phillips' suggestions and assured him that he '...need not fear that the authorship of the suggestions will be betrayed'.⁶⁰⁷ Indeed, Cohen had been in touch with the Wellington community, but it is hard to imagine that the scolding tone of his communications would have inspired an enthusiastic response. A letter from Cohen to A. Rosen the Hon. Sec. Zionist Society Wellington, July 1922, dispensed with pleasantries and got straight to the point of expressing 'surprise' that the amount collected five months earlier had not been remitted and surely by now the sum should be larger and the next instalment was almost due. Cohen often employed the tactic of making comparisons with other cities in order, presumably, to motivate the transgressors to improve their performance. On this occasion, he pointed to Dunedin as an example of what should be possible, for, even though they had no Zionist society they had kept their obligations up to date. What was possible in Dunedin should certainly have been accomplished in Wellington.⁶⁰⁸ Again in October 1922 Cohen continued to berate the Wellington community. It was with 'great regret' that he pointed out their failure to keep up with their payments, and again comparisons were made, this time with Auckland. Whereas Wellington had so far remitted only £2620, Auckland had already

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁷ Cohen to Phillips, 29 March 1922, Z4\42313, CZA.

⁶⁰⁸ Cohen to Rosen, 10 July 1922, Z4\42546, CZA.

paid £4400. Surely, Cohen opined, the business depression had not affected Wellington more than Auckland? He suggested that with 'a little effort and goodwill' Wellington could 'respond as well as your brethren in the northern city'.⁶⁰⁹

Unfortunately, Phillips advice seems not to have had the desired effect on Cohen. Although Wellington's slump lifted with the visit of Madame Pevsner in 1923, which resulted in the formation of a new group, the Wellington Palestine League, a terse letter from A. Rosen to Israel Cohen, 6 December 1923, gives some insight into what might have been going on behind the scenes.⁶¹⁰ Rosen wrote, 'Your various letters and pamphlets to hand also cable and letter to Mr Semeloff and I can say that the ambiguous way in which the cable was written has resulted in the closing down of the Zionist Society and the setting up of Mdme Pevsner's affair - the Wellington Palestine League'. He went on to explain that practically all of the Zionists have ceased to hold office and the PRF appeal was in jeopardy. Rosen was no longer Secretary and the new Secretary MR J. Meltzer had stated that he would have nothing to do with Cohen's fund. The new group was 'all for' Mdme Pevsner's National Fund, he continued. He then informed Cohen that it was now for him to attempt to 'knock some enthusiasm into them' as 'we no longer exist', signing off with, 'Trusting I have made myself clear'. Needless to say, Cohen's blunt manner oftentimes placed him on the wrong side of people.⁶¹¹ The letter also shows that the local communities viewed their giving in a personal way. They had warmed to Mdme Pevsner, whose 'fiery eloquence and sincerity of purpose' was said to have provided a 'much needed tonic to the Zionist movement in Wellington' and were now 'all for' her. In actual fact, the Jewish National Fund which she represented had always received half of the remittances to 'Cohen's' Palestine Restoration Fund.⁶¹²

The Shekel

The Jewish National Fund and Palestine Restoration Fund were not the only fundraising burdens placed on local Zionist societies. They were also expected to distribute the Shekel. The Shekel was established at the First Zionist Congress at Basle in 1897 as an annual tax to the Zionist Or-

⁶⁰⁹ ZO to Gordon, 5 October 1922, Z4\42546, CZA.

⁶¹⁰ The Wellington Palestine League - First Annual Report, 31 December 1924, Z4\42313, CZA.

⁶¹¹ Rosen to Cohen, 6 December 1923, Z4\42546, CZA.

⁶¹² ZO to Meltzer, Palestine League, 14 January 1924, Z4\42313, CZA.

ganisation and served as a symbol of membership which also conferred the right to vote for delegates at the Zionist Congress. The local groups however needed reminding of the significance of the Shekel. In a letter to the Auckland Zionist Society, in October 1921, Cohen stated, 'We regret to note, however, that while your community subscribed most generously to the various funds, the Shekel work appears to have been entirely overlooked'.⁶¹³ Whereas the PRF was devoted to assisting immigration into Palestine and for the work of reconstruction of Erez Israel, the sale of the Shekel was to provide for the administration costs of the Zionist Organisation. The price of the Shekel varied from country to country and the amount set at a level small enough to be within reach of every member of the community.⁶¹⁴ Cohen requested that the New Zealand Zionist Societies hold public meetings to read the report of the Zionist Congress and promote the sale of shekolim (plural of shekel).

While the Zionist Executive gave directions as to how they thought things should be done, they did not always understand local conditions and Phillips undertook the task of educating the London-based organisation. In February the following year, Phillips replied to Cohen, explaining that the Auckland Zionist Society had decided not to hold a public meeting as the time of year was considered 'importune' and, particularly over January and February, many people were away. As it was the hottest time of the year there would be a small attendance, even of those who were in town. The decision was made therefore to stencil copies of the reports (at least 300) to be distributed in Auckland and sent to Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. Phillips explained that economic situation in New Zealand was impacting the success of their fundraising: the country was passing through the 'greatest industrial and financial depression it has ever suffered'; the fall in the price of products overseas had ruined many of the farming community and businesses had suffered heavy losses; the government had discharged several thousand civil servants and was reducing the wages of the remainder by as much as thirty percent in some cases and fifteen percent in others. Conditions were very uncertain and Phillips warned that this would reflect upon the outcome of their fundraising efforts. Furthermore, conditions in the southern cities were even worse than in Auckland. Nevertheless the AZS decided that in order to meet their obligation for Shekel payment they would increase their subscription by 2/6 for every male member over twenty one. To this, Cohen responded by pointing out that in the Zionist movement the suffrage was not

⁶¹³ Cohen to Ak Z. Society, 26 October 1921, Z4\42313, CZA.

⁶¹⁴ General Circular, 15 November 1921, Z4\42313, CZA.

confined to men, and that there was no reason why the women should be exempt from paying the Shekel. Indeed, Cohen considered that it would be unfortunate for such discrimination to be maintained as it was quite contrary to the regulations of the organisation. Indeed, at every Zionist Congress, women who held the Shekel held the same right as men to vote for delegates to the Congress. Further, women could act as delegates, and there were always a large number of women delegates.⁶¹⁵

Cohen's style of communication was less than subtle, and one gets the impression that the collection of funds was uppermost in Cohen's mind rather than discrimination towards women. His bluntness continued, when a year later the collection of Shekel payments was still proving difficult. The Secretary of the AZS, H.N Jacobs, informed the ZO that it was a 'matter of impossibility' to launch a campaign for the sale individually of Shekelim. He complained about the continual appeals and explained that their community was very limited and the bulk of the weight fell on a few members who were the mainstay of most of the communal groups and could not be called on too often.⁶¹⁶ Cohen replied that he could not understand the difficulty given the amount was so small and undertook to remind the Auckland Zionists of their duties to support the cause.⁶¹⁷

Louis Phillips: Advisor

Louis Phillips role as advisor was significant for the Zionist movement in New Zealand. He even advised how his letters from the ZO, which he considered 'semi-private' should be treated. These ought to be differentiated from the official letters, which needed to be brought before the local committee and should be sent to Rev. Goldstein. Goldstein's usual practice was to contact Phillips and together they would decide what course to take. Replies would be forwarded by the Secretary, whose letters would in any case be drafted by Phillips.

Early on Phillips became convinced that the cablegram was an effective method of cultivating support for the cause and mentioned its use to the ZO on several occasions. In February 1920, af-

⁶¹⁵ Cohen to Phillips, 29 March 1922, Z4\42313, CZA. There appears to be a discrepancy between the date of Phillips' letter and Cohen's response. The context suggests that Phillips' letter was likely 20/2/22, rather than 1921. (The alternative is that Cohen responded a year later, which is unlikely given the regularity of their correspondence and Cohen's direct answers to Phillips' suggestions.

⁶¹⁶ Jacobs, Auckland Z. Society to Cohen, 26 June 1923, Z4\42313, CZA.

⁶¹⁷ Cohen to Jacobs, Ak.ZS, 1 October 1923, Z4\42313, CZA.

ter the publication of three cablegrams in local papers, plus a summary of Winston Churchill's article in the Sunday *Herald*, Phillips reported that three wealthy Jews previously opposed to Zionism and with a leaning to the anti-Zionist group, League of British Jews gave substantial donations. Phillips saw this as evidence of the value of the cablegram.⁶¹⁸ Three months later he wrote, 'Kindly utilise the cables as much as lies within your power as a cabled paragraph of Zionist interest is read by every Jew and by many who do not come into active contact with Zionist affairs'.⁶¹⁹ A month after that he again advised, 'The Zionist cable has great moral effect in the overseas dominions and I would again stress the value of short pithy paragraphs re Zionism being handed to the Press Association of the Australian & New Zealand Service'.⁶²⁰ Modern forms of communication and the circulation of news played an important role in the growth and strengthening of Zionism.

The creation and distribution of literature was another vital part of the work undertaken by the Zionist organisation and seen as necessary to educate, inform and motivate supporters. In early 1920, Phillips sent a copy of a pamphlet issued by the Auckland Zionist Society to the ZO, in order to keep the central organisation informed of their work.⁶²¹ The pamphlet for the PRF appeal reminded readers of their obligations, drawing on sentiments of 'patriotic duty', 'Jewish responsibility' and exhorting readers to 'liberally' support the Zionist cause. It mentioned the great need of suffering Jews, referring to the situation in Eastern Europe where appalling conditions were decimating their people through pogroms, disease and famine. The pamphlet drew on the notion of agency and the self-determination of Jewish people, that while Great Britain may be the Mandatory power over Palestine, it was 'for us to give the mandate its meaning and to carry it into effect'. An overview of the pioneering work in Palestine followed, which mentioned; the agricultural colonies, a 'well developed' educational system, repairing the 'ravages of war', the erection of five thousand houses, purchase of land for further settlement, town planning of Jerusalem, establishment of public works and a Jewish university. The appeal concluded with quotes from a number of British dignitaries and politicians and called for a response 'proportionate to the greatness of the cause and the urgency of the work'. The endorsement of British officials did much to gal-

⁶¹⁸ Phillips to ZO London, 18 February 1920, Z4\42313, CZA.

⁶¹⁹ Phillips to Cohen, 6 May 1920, Z4\42313, CZA.

⁶²⁰ Phillips to Secretary, 8 June 1920, Z4\42313, CZA.

⁶²¹ Phillips to Cohen, 18 February 1920, Z4\42313, CZA.

vanise the support of the local community, for whom devotion to Empire was a strong element. The document drew upon sentiments of duty, patriotism, compassion for the needy, active agency, imperial loyalty and was endorsed by the community's spiritual leader Rabbi Goldstein, who as acting President of the Auckland Zionist Society, as well the Secretary and Treasurer signed the document.⁶²² While there was a need for information, it had to be the right kind and locally produced material by those who understood the local mind-set. Oftentimes, the material sent from overseas would be deemed unsuitable. As an example, David Phillips highlighted in a letter to the ZO 16 January 1922 that while he considered the 'Reports of the Executive of the Zionist Organisation' valuable, much of the printed matter from 'The Keren Kajemeth' in Holland was 'waste paper and unnecessary expense'.⁶²³

Louis Phillips frequently advised the ZO regarding the cultivation of relationships with influential people. When former Auckland Mayor and politician, Hon. A Myers planned to visit London, Phillips suggested to the ZO that they send the *Zionist Bulletin* to Myer's London address to keep him informed of Zionist concerns. He then wrote to Mr S. Lipton, Secretary of the English Zionist Federation, informing him of Myers credentials; former minister of Munitions and Supplies, acting Minister of Finance in the National Cabinet and the Hon. President of the local (Zionist) Society. His contribution of £50 to the Palestine Restoration Fund was noted and Phillips advised that Mr Myers be brought into contact with Herbert Samuel or other leading English exponents of Zionism. Since Myers was considered influential, the advantage on his return would be considerable and it was hoped it would offset the 'League outlook' which it was thought he would 'imbibe in the circles with which he will mingle'.⁶²⁴ Samuel Goldreich, a South African Zionist emissary who had visited New Zealand in 1905, was nominated New Zealand's Zionist representative in London and conveyed the same message to Chaim Weizmann, Chairman of the Zionist Executive, that the Auckland Zionists wished for Myers to be initiated into Zionist activities, as he could be of great value to the movement upon his return to New Zealand.⁶²⁵

⁶²² Circular appeal letter, 'Palestine Restoration Fund',

⁶²³ D Phillips to Zionist Organisation, London, 16 January 1922, Z4\41749-14.

⁶²⁴ L. Phillips to S. Lipton, Secretary E.Z.F., London, 7 March 1920, Z4\41749, CZA.

⁶²⁵ Goldreich to Weizmann, 9 June 1920, Z4\41749, CZA.

The Nathans were a prominent Auckland family whose support was considered vital for the success of the Zionist movement. In 1925, Phillips wrote to Cohen regarding Alfred Nathan's upcoming visit to Palestine, that it was important he should be well impressed by all that he sees.⁶²⁶ As suggested, London based Israel Cohen contacted Colonel Kisch of the Palestine Zionist Executive in Jerusalem giving him background on Nathan and instructions. He was informed that Alfred Nathan was the head of the largest business firm in Auckland and also the son of pioneer Jews in NZ. He was very sympathetically and generously disposed towards the movement, and contributed £1,000 to the Palestine Restoration Fund on Cohen's 1920 visit to NZ. His nephew, Mr David Nathan who visited Palestine a couple of years ago, also contributed a similar amount, and his wife, Simone Nathan had been very largely instrumental in promoting the 'Plunket Nursing Institutes', in Palestine. Therefore, in view of the favours already received from the Nathan family it was considered highly important that Mr Nathan and his party should be given a suitable reception and that every step should be taken to ensure that he leave the country with a very favourable impression. It was thought that his visit would influence not only his future support for the movement but also the Jewish community in Auckland. So, Colonel Kisch was requested to arrange for Mr Nathan to be received by the High commissioner, or the District Governor and other high officials at his house.⁶²⁷

The support of influential members of the community was vital for the success of the movement. In 1924, when the Auckland community was fully stretched with financial commitments, Phillips informed the ZO that they could not take on any speakers at that time. For one thing, Messrs N.A. Nathan and David Nathan, two important members of the community were at that time opposed to further visitors. Phillips advised that 'without their moral and material help we have little prospect of success' adding that, 'A good deal depends upon the attitude of the two Nathans and especially of Mrs David Nathan' (Simone Nathan).

It seems that Cohen was not totally blind to the offence his bluntness sometimes evoked. He acknowledged in a letter to Phillips that it was not desirable that the only communication between the ZO and communities be regarding financial aid.⁶²⁸ However, it was not only New Zealanders

⁶²⁶ Phillips to Cohen re Nathan's visit to Palestine 14 September 1925, Z4\42313, CZA.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

⁶²⁸ Cohen to Phillips, 29 May 1924, Z4\42313, CZA.

who balked at his single-minded persistence. British historian Stuart Cohen noted the following remarks from Lord Northcliffe to Israel Cohen,

Will you permit me to say plainly and bluntly, that this pressing to see me, immediately after I have been away for eight months, and before I have had time to see my own relatives, is somewhat typical of the tactlessness of the extreme Zionists. This kind of thing explains a good deal of the intense dislike in which they are held in many Jewish circles. You are overdoing it with this telephoning and general pushfulness, just as you are overdoing it in Palestine.⁶²⁹

Zionists were seen by some British Jews as a ‘pack of uncouth louts, who lack(ed) manners’, and this was attributed to their foreignness.⁶³⁰ Indeed Zionism was a populist movement whose leaders were not part of the Anglo-Jewish aristocracy.⁶³¹ Israel Cohen was the son of Polish Jewish immigrants and other members of the Zionist executive Weizmann and Sokolow were Russian-born. They were ‘outsiders’ to British society and their Zionism was seen as a threat to the assimilationists who feared an antisemitic backlash. The dominant members of the New Zealand Jewish community identified strongly with Britain and a few also reacted to Cohen’s dogged style of communication. Louis Phillips role as a mediator was highly valuable in managing and negotiating relationships between the local societies and the central organisation in London. It was said of Phillips that his ability to understand his ‘fellowman’ was an ‘inherent part of his make-up’.⁶³² His friend Israel Meltzer attributed to him the ability to ‘mix with kings and yet not lose the common touch’.⁶³³ Phillips’ management of the relationship with the Zionist Organisation went a long way to smoothing the way for the Zionist cause in New Zealand.

⁶²⁹ Stuart Cohen, ‘English Zionists and British Jews’, *The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1896-1920*, p. 286.

⁶³⁰ Stuart Cohen, p. 349.

⁶³¹ Wistrich, p.78.

⁶³² Meltzer, Albert, Lionel, ed., p.64.

⁶³³ Meltzer p.64.

Conclusion

The Post War period was a time of vigorous activity for the Zionist movement. For the first time in its history the Zionist Organisation had the opportunity to bring its dream to reality. This would involve galvanising the energy and commitment of Jewish people around the world, to work together to provide the means to achieve the goal of a homeland for the Jews. It was a time of turmoil and change in Europe and the persecution of Jews continued unabated, particularly in Eastern Europe. The concern for these Jews motivated many in New Zealand to join the Zionist cause, as it provided a possible solution to the problems Jews faced. Humanitarianism continued to be a strong motivating factor for New Zealand's Jewish community.

Zionism did flourish in New Zealand in this period, but it was contingent on a number of factors. The role of leaders like Rabbi Goldstein and Louis Phillips in Auckland was a vital component of success. The support of wealthy, prominent and long-standing members of the community such as Alfred Nathan, David and Simone Nathan in Auckland and David & Marie Theomin in Dunedin was significant. They led the way and without their approval the Zionist Organisation would have struggled to gain widespread support. The distribution of literature, educational programmes and international networks of communication were important ways of keeping the community informed and inspired. Visiting speakers also revitalised and re-energised the local societies.

The London-based Central Zionist Organisation was single-minded in its goals and their leaders at times failed to consider the local conditions of Jewish communities in the diaspora. Their tactics and communication style were at times counterproductive. However, the effort and dedication of individuals like Louis Phillips went a long way to smooth the relationship and mediate between the different cultural styles. Much of his work was conducted behind the scenes. Phillips was later called the 'Seer of the congregation' living not for the present but the future, a future based on his extensive knowledge of the past.⁶³⁴ Phillips was captured by the vision of a Jewish homeland for his people and sacrificially devoted himself to the Zionist cause without seeking any reward other than the satisfaction of seeing the movement furthered in this country and the humanitarian hope that a homeland would indeed be established for suffering Jews.⁶³⁵ His tireless efforts contributed significantly to the progress of Zionism in New Zealand in this post-war period.

⁶³⁴ Meltzer p.64.

⁶³⁵ Meltzer p.64. 'He refused to accept any reward for his good works'.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Plunket to Palestine: A Case Study of the Women's Zionist Movement in New Zealand in the 1920s

It is gratifying to note that a typically New Zealand institution has made so wide an appeal, and that its application to the conditions of Palestine has been attended with such successful results'.⁶³⁶

The outlook for Zionists in New Zealand at the beginning of the 1920s was one of hope and optimism. The war had ended, Britain had captured Jerusalem and the British Mandate for Palestine was being established. The Balfour Declaration had signalled British support for the 'establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people' and Zionists embraced the new opportunities enthusiastically.⁶³⁷ In 1920, British Zionist Israel Cohen conducted a successful speaking tour of New Zealand, following which, Simone Nathan, (usually referred to as Mrs David L. Nathan), initiated the establishment of the New Zealand Women's International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) societies in the four main centres of Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.⁶³⁸ *The New Zealand Jewish Review and Communal Directory*, 1931, called this the 'most fruitful result of the visit of Israel Cohen'.⁶³⁹

This chapter will consider the work of Simone Nathan in establishing the women's Zionist movement in New Zealand and pioneering Plunket-style Infant Welfare Centres in Palestine. It considers a variety of factors that contributed to the success of the movement, such as ideology, a period of favourable political conditions, effective international networks, and strong leadership. Mrs Nathan's work also provides an opportunity to explore two aspects of the Zionist movement that have been under-investigated; that of the role of women and the relationship between philanthropy and Zionism. Specifically, this case study of Zionist activity within a local community interrogates the reasoning and motivations for such involvement. It shows that the outworking of a

⁶³⁶ 'Infant Welfare', *Auckland Star*, 19 June 1926.

⁶³⁷ <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/text-of-the-balfour-declaration>

⁶³⁸ Ben Green, ed., 'The Women's Share', *The New Zealand Jewish Review and Communal Directory*, 1931, p.97.

⁶³⁹ Green, p.97.

global movement in a local setting was not necessarily consistent ideologically, and that the New Zealand response depended on many factors, not least of which was a tradition of philanthropy.

Simone Nathan's background and influences

This chapter focuses primarily on the work of one individual, as a window to exploring these wider issues. Simone Nathan (nee Oulman) was born in Paris in 1888, of French/Portugese parents. She met New Zealander David Laurence Nathan while he was travelling in Europe. David Nathan hailed from a well-established and respected Auckland family. Simone and David married, returned to New Zealand in 1909 and began their own family. It was prior to Israel Cohen's speaking tour to New Zealand in 1920 that Mrs Nathan turned to her husband and exclaimed, 'Wouldn't it be wonderful to send Plunket Nurses to Palestine?'⁶⁴⁰ Mrs Nathan had just read the annual report of the Plunket Society followed by a *Jewish Chronicle* article about the work of the American Women's Zionist organisation, Hadassah.⁶⁴¹ Over the ensuing decade, Nathan achieved far more than she had at first envisaged. Her initial plan to send a Plunket nurse to Palestine expanded to sending two nurses, establishing two Infant Welfare Centres in Palestine, motivating other countries to do the same and promoting the Plunket Society internationally. Why would a woman in a small, Jewish community in Auckland be so enthusiastic to send Plunket nurses to the distant land of Palestine? Undergirding this vision lay a confluence of ideologies that, on the surface, did not always cohere; Zionism, Judaism, Humanitarianism, Feminism and Maternalism. However, like many contemporaries, Nathan's Zionism had primarily a practical and humanitarian outworking that was not held back by ideological inconsistencies.

Mrs Nathan's views on Zionism developed through her own study and reading, and through the influence of a mentor, Rabbi Solomon Katz.⁶⁴² Katz immigrated to New Zealand in 1911 to take up the position of junior minister to Auckland's Rabbi Goldstein. He was Russian born and educated at the Lomza Rabbinical Institute in Kishinev and then at Jews College in London. After nine years in Auckland, during which time Mrs Nathan received his tuition, Solomon Katz went on to the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York where he graduated as a Rabbi. He returned to New Zealand in 1931 and served the Wellington community until his death in 1944. Rabbi

⁶⁴⁰ Simone Nathan Memoirs, unpublished, Auckland, p.100.

⁶⁴¹ SN Memoirs, p.100.

⁶⁴² SN Memoirs, p. 94.

Katz came to be held in high regard as a ‘learned and cultured gentleman’, ‘a clever and erudite speaker who always drew large audiences’ and who was in demand beyond Jewish circles.⁶⁴³ One Wellington youth remembered him as a great story teller who kept young people entertained with exotic tales of Jewish communities in far off lands, such as India. He was remembered with ‘continuing affection as the man who taught that Judaism was not a state of mind you put on for Friday nights and Saturday mornings’.⁶⁴⁴

Solomon Katz and Simone Nathan shared a love of learning and culture. They also shared a European background which may have created an affinity. Rabbi Katz introduced Mrs Nathan to a range of Zionist literature, including the work of Ahad Ha’Am, whose views became known as Cultural Zionism. Ahad Ha-Am, meaning ‘One of the People’, was the pen name of Asher Ginsburg (1856-1927) born in a village Skirva, in the Russian Ukraine. Dubbed a ‘secular Hasidic rebbe’, Ahad Ha'Am disavowed his religious upbringing and developed a view of spirituality based on Jewish literature, language and culture.⁶⁴⁵ A writer and teacher who focussed on religion, ethics and philosophical themes, Ahad Ha’Am opposed Herzl’s political Zionism. He believed that strengthening the spiritual and cultural life of Jews was the highest priority. Rather than merely creating a physical home for Jewish people, his interest was in restoring a homeland in Palestine as a spiritual centre from which ‘Judaism’ (according to his universalist, rather than orthodox definition) would diffuse outward to the rest of the diaspora. Ahad Ha’Am saw more danger in the loss of Jewish identity for Jews in Western Europe than the loss of physical and material comforts for the Jews in Eastern Europe. He greatly influenced many East European Jewish leaders, such as Chaim Weizmann. Whereas Ahad Ha’Am’s conception of Zionism built on an ethnic national identity, Herz’s vision of political Zionism ignored Jewish particularity. Dov Waxman argued that the former was representative of a East European milieu, while Herzl’s more cosmopolitan Zionism developed in Western Europe.⁶⁴⁶ For Rabbi Katz and Mrs Nathan, these conflicting perspectives seem not to have impacted their support for Zionism. Nathan through her

⁶⁴³ S. Levine, ed., *A Standard for the People: The 150th Anniversary of the Wellington Hebrew Congregation 1843-199*, Wellington, 1994, pp.218, 238.

⁶⁴⁴ *Standard for the People*, p.139. A reference to the keeping of Shabbat.

⁶⁴⁵ Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: a Historical Analysis and Reader*, Philadelphia, 1997, loc. 4610, Kindle Version.

⁶⁴⁶ Dov Waxman, *The Pursuit of Peace and the Crises of Israeli Identity: Defending/Defining the Nation*, New York, 2006, p.17.

study became convinced that ‘Zionism was the only answer to the “Jewish problem”’, shorthand for the persistent antisemitic persecution that Jews faced in Europe and Russia throughout the 19th century and into the 20th century. However, what form Zionism would take was not yet clear in 1920. Nathan wrote, ‘The question of a State was left for the future and did not trouble us. It was now for the Jews of the world to help make of Palestine a land of refuge for persecuted Jews’.⁶⁴⁷ Reconciling the various and conflicting views of Zionists, like Herzl and Ahad Ha’am, did not concern Mrs Nathan nor prevent her pursuing charitable work. This is consistent with Laqueur’s analysis that the vast majority of Zionists ‘needed no ideological justification’.⁶⁴⁸ The suffering of fellow Jews was sufficient motivation to support humanitarian initiatives.

In addition to the influence of a mentor, and the reading of books, Mrs Nathan also followed the Anglo-Jewish publication, *The Jewish Chronicle*. This newspaper played a significant role in keeping Mrs Nathan informed of the latest happenings and developments in the Jewish world. It also provided a forum for discussion and debate on Judaism and other cultural matters. Labelled the ‘organ of Anglo-Jewry’, the *Jewish Chronicle* was founded in 1841, and many in the New Zealand Jewish community were subscribers. David Cesarani, in his book, *The “Jewish Chronicle” and Anglo-Jewry 1841-1991*, argued that the newspaper played a significant role in shaping Anglo-Jewish identity.⁶⁴⁹ The *Jewish Chronicle* initially took an anti-Zionist stance, seeing it as a divisive movement that invited accusations of dual loyalty. The nationalist aspect of Zionism drew criticism that Jews would not prove loyal citizens in their countries of abode, because of a conflicting loyalty to a Jewish state. Many Jews were sensitive to this issue, and worked hard to prove themselves loyal citizens. However a new editor, Leopold Greenberg, took over editorship of the *Chronicle* in 1907, and brought a more Zionist outlook to the newspaper.

Although a British publication, the *Jewish Chronicle* kept abreast with the latest currents of thought in Europe. For Nathan, this provided a connection to her European roots. It is perhaps an understatement to say that living in New Zealand was a contrast to the cultural richness of Simone’s life in Paris. Her son Denis Nathan wrote that his mother was inclined to see herself as a

⁶⁴⁷ Nathan Memoirs, p.100.

⁶⁴⁸ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, London, 1972, (updated 2002), p. 162.

⁶⁴⁹ David Cesarani, *The “Jewish Chronicle” and Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991*, Cambridge, 1994, p.329.

pioneer, so great was the difference in her life in New Zealand.⁶⁵⁰ Simone did not readily identify with the ‘society’ ladies, whose lives consisted of ‘cards and parties with too many cakes’ and for whom England was ‘home’.⁶⁵¹ However, she was not happy about all aspects of her European background and was particularly critical of the ‘assimilationist attitude’ of the Jews she knew in France.⁶⁵² She was inspired by her study of Judaism and Jewish history and could not understand those Jews who were ‘always apologising for existing and with such a passion for Gentiles and Gentile ways’.⁶⁵³ Nathan was determined to raise her children to be proud of their Jewish heritage.

The Plunket Movement, Maternalism & Judaism

The Zionist perspective Mrs Nathan gained from her study of books, journals and teachers, combined with a maternalism, which was undergirded by Judaism. The combination of ideologies eventually led to her work in Palestine. As a mother of young children Mrs Nathan became involved in the Plunket movement and was grateful for the assistance the Plunket nurses provided. Nathan explained how she had been ‘driven nearly frantic’ with her first three babies.⁶⁵⁴ As an inexperienced mother she had fed one of her babies cream from a cow in the nearby paddock, having misunderstood the doctor’s instructions to feed her baby ‘top milk’. She commented that the Plunket nurse who assisted her with her fourth baby ‘made all the difference’ to her life.⁶⁵⁵ Nathan became a passionate supporter of Plunket and a great admirer of its founder, Dr Frederic Truby King who introduced modern infant-welfare methods into New Zealand. Nathan joined the Plunket committee in 1914 and served on the committee for over twenty-six years. Linda Bryder’s history of the Plunket movement in New Zealand records the involvement of many Jewish women: Marie Theomin from Dunedin became an honorary treasurer; Mrs Harris, vice-president; Mrs Vera Myers, the wife of Sir Arthur Myers, a prominent Jewish businessman, Mayor of Auck-

⁶⁵⁰ A. Gluckman & L. Gluckman, eds., *Identity & Involvement II: Auckland Jewry, Past & Present*, Palmerston North, 1993. p.224.

⁶⁵¹ *Memoirs*, p.94.

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁴ *Memoirs*, p.100.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

land 1905-9 and Liberal MP 1910-21; and Simone Nathan's mother-in-law Emily Nathan.⁶⁵⁶ Goldman's history noted that 'Mrs D. E. Theomin of Dunedin sponsored the Plunket scheme, Wolf Harris donated the first Karitane Hospital for Dunedin and Sir Arthur H. Myers presented a Karitane Hospital for Auckland'.⁶⁵⁷ The high proportion of Jewish women involved in this voluntary organisation was demonstrated by the 'Plunket Square', a report which measured the member representation of Plunket committees. It showed that, 'Jews, who made up 0.2 per cent of the population, were listed second after Anglicans, who made up 41% of the population in 1911'.⁶⁵⁸ To give a sense of how small the Jewish community was, the 1921 New Zealand census recorded 703 Jews in Auckland and a total Jewish population of 2,380.⁶⁵⁹ Bryder discussed the way in which the Plunket movement provided a satisfying outlet for women, many of whom were influential and wealthy, to advocate for the welfare of women and children. 'They did this as an act of citizenship, in the firm belief that, as educated women and as mothers, such control was their duty and right'.⁶⁶⁰ In speaking of her idea to send Plunket-trained nurses to the Holy Land, Mrs Nathan reasoned, 'what better gift could the Jewish women of New Zealand give to Palestine?'⁶⁶¹

Maternalism was a feature of the Plunket movement, but also of Judaism. Jewish ideals placed great weight on the maternal power to mould and shape the future 'race' and Zionism. This view was expressed by a visiting Zionist speaker Dr. Goldstein who stated, 'with the women lay the power to make or mar Zionism and the character of the child, and the future race depended entirely upon the motherly influence'.⁶⁶² Women were seen to have an important role as educators within their families and women Zionists embraced this idea. The 1929 Fifth Biennial Conference Report of WIZO stated that one of its goal was 'to create an atmosphere which will influence Jewish women all over the world and will lead to the zionising [sic] of their homes so that the younger generation may grow up in surroundings impregnated with love for Palestine, and to whom in

⁶⁵⁶ Linda Bryder, *A Voice for Mothers, The Plunket Society & Infant Welfare, 1907-2000*, Auckland, 2003, pp. 20-21.

⁶⁵⁷ Goldman, p.215, Bryder, pp.20-21.

⁶⁵⁸ Bryder, p.21.

⁶⁵⁹ "Beth Israel" Congregation, Report of the Board of Management, 1928, p.84.

⁶⁶⁰ Bryder, p.xiii.

⁶⁶¹ Bryder, p.xiii.

⁶⁶² *Auckland Star*, 8 July 1927, Page 12.

time to come the carrying on of the work of upbuilding Erez Israel can safely be entrusted'.⁶⁶³ These women saw it as their mission to 'educate the Jewish woman to work for the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine'.⁶⁶⁴ Women Zionists in New Zealand were for the most part middle-class women who had the means and the time to devote to charitable endeavours. They largely viewed their Zionist work as an extension of charity, Consistent with Jolanta Mickute's analysis of a segment of Polish women Zionists, they constructed a 'women's type of Zionism. They put a thick maternalist gloss over Zionist ideology, making it less feminist, more nationalist, and hence more cohesive'.⁶⁶⁵ Indeed, they saw their communal and political activism as an extension of their primary duties as mothers and caregivers.

Involvement in civic and community affairs was an important outlet in which Jewish women were prominent and this too was underpinned by the teachings of Judaism.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Jewish women were at the forefront of the establishment and maintenance of the Plunket movement. The close connection between Plunket and the Jewish community was demonstrated in 1930 when the Zionist society paid tribute to Truby King by having his name inscribed in the Golden Book of the Jewish people. This was considered the highest honour bestowed upon those who have served mankind and the Jewish people. King's name joined that of other friends of the Jewish people, such as His Majesty the King, Earl Balfour and General Allenby. King, in turn, acknowledged the valuable work rendered to the Plunket movement by Jewish women such as Mrs Theomin and Mrs L. Harris of Dunedin and Mrs Nathan of Auckland.⁶⁶⁶

Hadassah: A Blueprint for New Zealand Women Zionists

Bryder points out that the Plunket movement was part of a wider movement in the Western world 'whereby voluntary networks of women controlled welfare services relating to women and children'.⁶⁶⁷ Labelled 'Maternalist welfare', this was also one of the drivers of the American women's

⁶⁶³ Report of the 5th Biennial Conference, Proceedings of Women's International Zionist Organization, Zurich, 1929, p.35.

⁶⁶⁴ WIZO Report, 1929, p.35.

⁶⁶⁵ Jolanta Mickute, 'Making of the Zionist Woman: Zionist Discourse on the Jewish Woman's Body and Selfhood in Interwar Poland', *East European Politics and Societies*, 2014, p.142.

⁶⁶⁶ *New Zealand Herald*, 5 May 1930, Page 10.

⁶⁶⁷ Bryder, p. xiii.

Zionist group Hadassah, which Mrs Nathan also credited as the inspiration for her idea. Mrs Nathan had read in the aforementioned 'beloved *Jewish Chronicle*', how Hadassah had sent a team of doctors and nurses to Palestine to organise hospitals for the local population and for the Jewish immigrants who were expected from all over the world. She wrote, 'I visualised the young mothers in an unknown country, in an unknown climate, far from their mothers, perplexed and anxious as to how to bring up their baby - just as I had been - and thought of the comfort and help Plunket nurses would be to them.'⁶⁶⁸ As an immigrant to New Zealand, far from her own family, Nathan identified with these other Jewish immigrants in another land and it stirred her imagination. The idea of sending Plunket nurses was conceived and Hadassah was to be the blueprint for accomplishing this dream.

Mrs Nathan referred to the work of Hadassah in Palestine, in a 'powerful appeal' given to the Jewish women of Wellington in June 1921.⁶⁶⁹ In an address reported as 'most interesting and illuminating' Mrs Nathan described the way that Hadassah, a 'Zionist medical unit maintained by American women', had organised medical work in Palestine on a 'modern basis' and had established hospitals and training-schools for nurses and clinics.⁶⁷⁰ While 'much of the spadework' had been done, Simone felt that there was still much more to be accomplished. She presented a compelling argument, that as New Zealand was a leader in infant welfare with a death-rate considered the lowest in the world, an opportunity existed for New Zealand women to establish a 'special link' with the women and children 'making their homes in the Holy Land'.⁶⁷¹ Mrs Nathan pointed to the fact that one out of every three babies in Jerusalem died, and stressed that a special effort needed to be made for these young ones.⁶⁷² Nathan also referred to life in New Zealand as 'happy' and 'sheltered' where there were no 'Jewish poor' as compared to the 'ghastly conditions' under which their fellow Jews were trying to exist.⁶⁷³

⁶⁶⁸ SN Memoirs, p.100.

⁶⁶⁹ 'Plunket Nursing for Palestine', *Evening Post*, 21 June 1921.

⁶⁷⁰ EP, 21 June 1921.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid.

⁶⁷² 'Plunket Nursing for Palestine', *Kai Tiaki : The Journal of the Nurses of New Zealand*, Volume XIV, Issue 3, July 1921, Page 143. (Originally from *Evening Post*)

⁶⁷³ Ibid.

While most of Mrs Nathan's wide-ranging speech focussed on the plight of the 'mothers and babies' in Palestine, and highlighted their poverty and needs, one sentence revealed her nationalist views. The *Evening Post* reported, 'For 2000 years their ancestors had made the return to Palestine an ideal, and this was likely to be realised, as under the British mandate a Jewish National Home in Palestine was being made possible'.⁶⁷⁴ This sentence revealed a number of elements. The connection with 'their ancestors' and the longing for a return to the ancestral homeland had never left the Jewish people. These hopes were retained in religious and cultural practises. Religious Jews prayed three times daily towards Jerusalem and every year at the festival of Passover, the cry was heard, 'Next year in Jerusalem'. Though the Jewish people might live in distant places, Jerusalem, the holiest place in Judaism, was near in imagination. Secondly, Mrs Nathan expressed the mood of optimism felt by Zionists, that under a British Mandate, as opposed to the former Ottoman governance, a homeland for the Jewish people would be established. Finally, at this stage in the Zionist project, discourse centered on the concept of a homeland, rather than a state. Exactly what form a homeland would take was much debated and contemporaries did not presume that statehood would be the final outcome.

While Mrs Nathan's Zionism was present in her speeches, the more practical aspect of her plans received the greater attention, and these appealed to the maternalist and humanitarian sentiment of her audience. These aspirations were shared by the American Zionist organisation Hadassah, which provided a model for Mrs Nathan. Hadassah, as an organisation, combined the ideas of American progressivism with Zionism. Progressives worked for social change through reform activities, advocating a 'scientific' approach to health, which elevated principles of 'accountability, systemization, and respect for professional expertise'.⁶⁷⁵ The latest scientific ideas on nutrition, hygiene and sanitation were delivered to the community through public health nurses working amongst the people.⁶⁷⁶ Hadassah sought to create a medical system in Palestine based on these ideals. Erica B. Simmons in *Hadassah & the Zionist Project*, has labelled the synthesis of Pro-

⁶⁷⁴ 'Plunket Nursing for Palestine', *Evening Post*, Volume CI, issue 146, 21 June 1921.

⁶⁷⁵ Erica B. Simmons, *Hadassah and the Zionist Project*, Lanham, 2006, p.2.

⁶⁷⁶ Simmons, p.2.

gressive Maternalist and Zionist ideas ‘Zionist maternalism’, whose core idea was that ‘Jewish women bore a special responsibility for social welfare in the *Yishuv’.⁶⁷⁷

Even though Hadassah was the largest Zionist organisation in the U.S. from the mid-1920s until the end of the Second World War, according to Simmons the organisation has received little scholarly attention.⁶⁷⁸ An example of this lacunae can be demonstrated by perusing Walter Laqueur’s standard, ‘A History of Zionism’.⁶⁷⁹ Barely a paragraph is devoted to the work of Hadassah, and nothing on the Women’s International Zionist movement. Simmons suggested that the ideologies of Zionism and American Progressivism, did not always fit together neatly, which may have contributed to the lack of scholarship on Hadassah. Proponents of Hadassah believed their work in Palestine combined these two ideologies, and presented a unique opportunity to establish a Jewish state upon the ‘best of American Progressive ideals’.⁶⁸⁰

Hadassah’s founder Henrietta Szold, 1860-1945 was born in Baltimore, Maryland and raised in a German-Jewish, ‘liberal but traditional’ household.⁶⁸¹ Szold was well educated and a ‘dynamic and tireless activist’.⁶⁸² Szold’s Zionist vision was essentially ‘humanistic and universalistic’.⁶⁸³ Although her ideas were not identical to Ahad Ha’am, she shared the view that a Jewish centre was needed, not only as a sanctuary for those in distress but for the cultivation of Jewish culture which would radiate to those in the diaspora.⁶⁸⁴ Unlike Mrs Nathan, Szold’s maternalism was not born from personal experience, as she was to remain single and devoted her life to her work in Palestine.

⁶⁷⁷ Simmons, *Hadassah and the Zionist Project*, p.2, *(community in Hebrew) the term used for the Jewish community of pre-1948 Palestine. p.7.

⁶⁷⁸ Simmons, p.1.

⁶⁷⁹ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, New York, 1973, 2003, pp.160, 448, 464.

⁶⁸⁰ Simmons, p.1.

⁶⁸¹ Shulamit Reinharz & Mark A. Raider, eds., *American Jewish Women and the Zionist Enterprise*, Waltham, 2005.

⁶⁸² Simmons, p.2.

⁶⁸³ Reinhard & Raider, pp.26-28.

⁶⁸⁴ Reinhard & Raider, p.27, 35.

The Role of Women in the Zionist movement and WIZO

The perception that the work of Hadassah and WIZO represented the women's domain has contributed to the lack of scholarship in these areas. A brief survey of Henrietta Szold's career reveals a highly talented woman forging a pathway in a male dominated world. To give a couple of examples, in 1888 she was the only woman of a nine-member group on the publications committee of the Jewish Publication Society of America.⁶⁸⁵ She also enrolled in the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York even though there was no possibility at that time of a rabbinic career. Hadassah was at first seen as 'a ladies' auxiliary', but was to become the 'largest and most successful of all America Zionist groups'.⁶⁸⁶ In a similar fashion, this thesis will later show how the Women's Zionist movement in New Zealand remained remarkably vibrant, in spite of an economic downturn. While other Zionist groups were beset by a variety of difficulties, the women's organisation flourished and kept its financial obligations.

Simone Nathan wrote that she had been introduced to the women's rights movement through her children's governess, Miss Gibson. Nathan had the resources to hire domestic services, which enabled her to pursue her interest in 'committee work', which was the avenue by which she could advocate for women.⁶⁸⁷ She was a member of the National Council of Women, representing the Union of Jewish Women and later the Hospital Auxiliary. Zionism provided an opportunity for women to engage in meaningful ways for causes outside their own homes. Hanna Steiner writing in the Ten Year WIZO commemorative booklet, 1930, discussed the way in which Zionism contributed to the development of the women's consciousness of their agency. She argued that while Herzl's political Zionism, had brought to life a new feeling of solidarity and of a common aim amongst the Jewish people, women's awareness of their capabilities developed only gradually. She asserted,

As yet they were only conscious of themselves as individuals among the nation, as yet they were quite inexperienced in communal work. The Jewess was - as most women in the pre war years- quite ignorant that she owed a duty to the body corporate of the nation. The war period brought in its train the emancipation of women and the development of her personality.

⁶⁸⁵ Reinhard & Raider, P.23.

⁶⁸⁶ Reinhard & Raider

⁶⁸⁷ SN Memoirs, p.94.

The Zionist movement was established on a democratic basis, with ‘no sex distinction’ and women could be elected to all positions.⁶⁸⁸ However, women chose to establish their own independent organisations; WIZO in Britain and Hadassah in the USA. In reality, women’s groups had to battle discrimination. The undervaluing of the women’s contributions and the sense that women needed to prove their worth to be considered significant, was evident in New Zealand’s records. The Auckland “Beth Israel” Annual General Meeting report of 1922 noted that the local work of WIZO in the form of frequent sewing bees and its overseas work establishing Plunket-style centres in Palestine had ‘justified its formation and earned the right to be regarded as a vigorous and useful institution’.⁶⁸⁹ This comment highlights the reality that it was not sufficient for women to establish an institution that they deemed valuable, but they had to prove the worth of their activities. New Zealand women affiliated with London-based WIZO which was established by the wives of Zionist leaders; Rebecca Sieff, Dr Vera Weizmann and educator, Edith Eder. In 1918, these women had travelled to Palestine as part of a Zionist Commission and were shocked by the post-war conditions of disease and famine which wracked the population. They were particularly taken by the difficult situation for women who were suffering both ‘physically and spiritually.’⁶⁹⁰ Their desire was to set up an independent body for women to make a contribution to the ‘rebuilding of the Zionist home’, one that would function in co-operation with the male dominated organisations.⁶⁹¹ They argued that women had a ‘particular approach... stemming not from motives of prestige, or privilege, but in answer to genuine needs, and to ensure functioning on a firm basis’.⁶⁹² The founding WIZO conference was held in London on July 11, 1920. A detailed plan of work was decided upon at the first conference in Carlsbad in 1921, which included the establishment of a home for immigrant girls, an agricultural school for girls, provision of kitchen equipment for the girls school in Haifa and the establishment of a centre for the care of babies.⁶⁹³ According to Steiner, WIZO encapsulated the mission of creating an organisation which would

⁶⁸⁸ I. Cohen, *A Short History of Zionism*, London, 1951, p.93.

⁶⁸⁹ Auckland “Beth Israel” AGM report, 1922.

⁶⁹⁰ <http://www.wizo.org/who-we-are/our-history.html>

⁶⁹¹ Ibid.

⁶⁹² Ibid.

⁶⁹³ Ibid.

embrace all the Jewish women of the Diaspora and which would provide the conditions for women to flourish:

Within its boundaries the new Jewish personality of women shall come to fullest bloom, and ultimately, independent yet a citizen of her people, she shall prove her worth by her great and productive achievement in Palestine itself. By means of its work WIZO fills a special place within the scaffolding of the upbuilding of the National Home, and forms a link of tested strength for an inter-territorial chain of Jewish women.⁶⁹⁴

WIZO provided an avenue by which Jewish women could find personal satisfaction in their own self-development, as well as contributing to a greater cause, a higher purpose.

Women's International Zionist Movement in New Zealand and Infant Welfare Centres in Palestine

Mrs Nathan's project for Palestine was pursued under the auspices of WIZO. It is an indication of Nathan's forward thinking, that when she conceived her idea, WIZO had not yet formed as an organisation. On his visit to New Zealand, Israel Cohen informed Mrs Nathan about a group of Jewish women in England, who intended to do work for women and children in Palestine.⁶⁹⁵ Cohen recommended writing to Mrs Rosa Ginzberg, secretary of the committee, which also included Dr Vera Weizmann, Mrs Rebecca Sieff, Mrs Edith Eder and Mrs Romana Goodman, the founders of WIZO. According to Mrs Nathan, her letter to Rosa Ginossar was received as a 'bombshell', because she had proposed a definite scheme and New Zealand was the first country outside England to do so.⁶⁹⁶ Nathan's pioneering role was acknowledged by Henrietta Irwell, one of the early WIZO members, in the Ten Year WIZO commemorative booklet.⁶⁹⁷ She wrote that the early history of Infant Welfare in Palestine went back to the first year of the existence of the WIZO when Israel Cohen visited NZ and came across a 'party of women' led by Mrs David Nathan of Auck-

⁶⁹⁴ Hanna Steiner, 'The Ethical Values of the WIZO', *Ten years of WIZO Endeavour and Achievement*, WIZO, London, 1930, p.41.

⁶⁹⁵ SN Memoirs, p.102; Fay Grove-Pollak, ed., *The Saga of a Movement WIZO 1920-1970*, Department of Organisation and Education of WIZO, The Women's International Zionist Organisation, 1970, Tel Aviv.

⁶⁹⁶ SN Memoirs p.102.

⁶⁹⁷ *Ten years of WIZO Endeavour and Achievement*, WIZO, London, 1930, p.36.

land. These women were involved in the Plunket movement in New Zealand and suggested that a similar work should be undertaken in 'Erez Israel'. In her memoirs, Nathan felt that the New Zealand branch of WIZO was always treated with particular understanding and affection, because the women in the WIZO headquarters were heartened to get help from such a tiny and far-off community.⁶⁹⁸ Indeed, the Ten Year commemorative publication acknowledged the 'continuous help from New Zealand'.⁶⁹⁹ The Jewish women of New Zealand were part of an international network that not only fulfilled an aspiration to contribute to their wider community in the 'upbuilding of Palestine', but also enabled them to develop their consciousness and vitality as a women's movement. Simone Nathan, as the visionary leader of the local movement, cultivated and maintained personal connections locally and internationally and this also contributed to her success.

The idea of extending the Plunket system to Palestine was a central reason for the establishment of the Auckland Women's Zionist Society according to an *Evening Post* report in June 1921.⁷⁰⁰ At this point, Mrs Nathan undertook a speaking tour of New Zealand to explain and raise interest and funds for her vision. She had managed to gain the support of 'leading Plunket authorities in Auckland and Dunedin' as well as the cooperation of the leaders of Hadassah.⁷⁰¹ Most importantly, Dr Truby King had given his enthusiastic support to the project, which was considered a 'unique tribute to the appeal the Plunket ideal has made to Jewish women'.⁷⁰² The goal was to raise the funds to send a Jewish nurse to Palestine, who had undergone training in the Plunket system at the Babies of the Empire Training Centre founded by Dr Truby King in London.⁷⁰³

Three months after her speaking tour, Mrs Nathan organised a fundraising event that exceeded all expectations. The level of success Mrs Nathan achieved was due in no small part to the co-operation she gained from the general community, particularly amongst those in positions of power. The Nathan family mixed comfortably with 'society Christians' who were business and profes-

⁶⁹⁸ SN Memoirs, p.102.

⁶⁹⁹ Ten Years, p.35.

⁷⁰⁰ *Evening Post*, 18 June 1921, Page 6.

⁷⁰¹ *Kai Tiaki : The Journal of the Nurses of New Zealand*, July 1921, Page 143.

⁷⁰² *Evening Post*, 18 June 1921, Page 6.

⁷⁰³ *Press*, 20 June 1921, Page 2.

sional leaders.⁷⁰⁴ This was not the norm for the majority of the Jewish community at that time. According to Nathan, many in 1921 were relative newcomers, from Poland or Russia, Orthodox, hardworking and worked in trades and small business. They were not wealthy, and may have started with a 'peddler's pack' or were small shopkeepers.⁷⁰⁵ It was through one of Mrs Nathan's 'Gentile' contacts that the idea of an 'Eastern Fair' arose. Mrs Tolhurst, daughter of Reverend Coates and president of the 'Ladies' Benevolent Society' paid tribute to the generosity of the Jews in supporting fundraising efforts in the Christian community, and expressed a desire to return the favour. She stated, 'Since the founding of this colony, you Jews have given to every and any appeal of ours and we have never had a chance to help you. This time don't have a collection but give a big Fair and let us help you'.⁷⁰⁶ And so the idea of the 'Eastern Garden Fair' was born.

The 'Eastern Garden Fair' was a great success. It ran for two days, over which time nine thousand people attended.⁷⁰⁷ The officiating of the 'Grand Opening' by Mayor James Gunson and the patronage of 'Their Excellencies The Governor General and Viscountess Jellicoe' were demonstrations of support for the Zionist project at the highest levels.⁷⁰⁸ The advertising for the event drew upon romanticised ideas about the exotic East, combined with the pulling power of '200 Girls in Eastern Costume'.⁷⁰⁹ The newspaper promotion intensified for the final day, 'The verdict of thousands: A magnificent success, and a crowning triumph. Novel. Startling, wonderful. Town Hall Crowded'. It continued, 'The Talk of Auckland is the glorious spectacle and unsurpassed attraction'.⁷¹⁰ The advertising was evidently effective, as the *New Zealand Herald* reported that several hundred people had to be turned away: 'The ground floor was crowded, while the galleries were well filled with spectators'.⁷¹¹ The *Herald* reported the event in descriptive detail conjuring up

⁷⁰⁴ L. Bell & Morrow, D., *Jewish Lives in New Zealand*, Auckland, 2012, pp. 260, 264.

⁷⁰⁵ SN Memoirs, p.102.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid, p.103.

⁷⁰⁷ *New Zealand Herald*, 1 July 1926, Page 20.

⁷⁰⁸ *New Zealand Herald*, 10 August 1921, Page 14.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁷¹⁰ *Auckland Star*, 17 August 1921, Page 14.

⁷¹¹ Ibid.

images of the East, and conveying an atmosphere of ‘gaiety’ wherein much ‘good business was done in every department’.⁷¹²

The spectacular nature of the event, effective advertising and assistance of the Christian community certainly contributed to its success, but just as important was the support of the mayor, dignitaries and community leaders. Gunson spoke favourably of the work of reconstruction in Palestine by Jews throughout the world and hoped that the example of New Zealand’s Jewish women would inspire Australians to also send nurses to Palestine.⁷¹³ Such was Mrs Nathan’s influence that she received the co-operation of the Postal Department to frank letters with a stamp advertising the carnivals, and tram cars and picture theatres also advertised the events.⁷¹⁴ The New Zealand government was ‘anxious to help’ and for a month every letter which left the Auckland post office was marked with the slogan ‘Send a Plunket nurse to Palestine’.⁷¹⁵

The Eastern Garden Fair was so successful that not one but two nurses were sent to Palestine and an Infant Welfare Centre was opened as well.⁷¹⁶ According to the Fiftieth Commemorative WIZO report, £2,300 net was raised in two days, with the assistance of ‘practically the whole of Auckland’.⁷¹⁷ The funds were augmented by contributions from Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, and also smaller centres, Gisborne and Masterton, such that two nurses could be trained and equipped and an infant centre could be maintained for three years.⁷¹⁸ Miss Ashberry was a trained infant welfare nurse, and had served on the Palestine front with the British forces during the war. Nurse Ashberry and Nurse Hymans were fully qualified midwives who underwent six months special Plunket training at the ‘Babies of the Empire’ Training Centre, which had been established in London by Dr Truby King.⁷¹⁹ It is interesting to note that it is rarely mentioned in the advertis-

⁷¹² *New Zealand Herald*, 17 August 1921, Page 9.

⁷¹³ *New Zealand Herald*, 17 August 1921, Page 9..

⁷¹⁴ Goldman, p.209.

⁷¹⁵ Fay Grove-Pollak, ed., p.199.

⁷¹⁶ Fay Grove-Pollak, ed., p.199.

⁷¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁹ ‘Nurses for Palestine’, *New Zealand Herald*, 1 May 1922.

ing or reports, that these two Jewish nurses were English.⁷²⁰ This supports the argument that these British nurses were considered ‘ours’ in the same way that England, for many, was ‘home’ and further affirms the contiguity of the relationship between New Zealand and Britain and between Jews here and elsewhere. It also supports the notion that the connection to Britain made the Zionist project feel comfortable for many New Zealanders.

The first New Zealand Infant Welfare Centre began its operation at Jaffa under nurses E. Ashberry and E. Hymans in April 1922. From the outset, infant welfare services were intended for Jews and Arabs alike and information leaflets were published in both languages.⁷²¹ The *Auckland Star* recorded that the official opening was held ‘in the presence of a distinguished gathering’ and received widespread attention. It was considered a notable occasion in the history of the city.⁷²² An advisory committee had been established which included British, Jewish and Arabic women with Lady Herbert Samuel as chairperson. Its aim was the general welfare of women and children ‘of all denominations’ throughout Palestine.⁷²³ Further indications of establishment approval could be seen in the fact that the work was supported by Sir Herbert Samuel, British High Commissioner of Palestine, and Sir Wyndham Deedes, Governor of Jerusalem.⁷²⁴

Regular reports were received via the nurses and Mrs Nathan, which helped to maintain interest in the project. A report in the *New Zealand Herald*, 4 June 1923 detailed the problems and progress and the programme was seen as highly successful: ‘The latest report of the centre was described as very encouraging, there being an obvious improvement in the general appearance of the babies, and also in the way the mothers listened to the advice given, which was very different from their first sceptical look and hopeless shrug when they found they could get no medicine and nothing but wholesome advice’.⁷²⁵ Mrs Nathan discussed some of the initial challenges in introducing Plunket ideas. They had to overcome the preference for the services of doctors, and the value of the ‘advice’ of nurses needed to be demonstrated. Nathan explained that once Dr Zlocisti, a child

⁷²⁰ SN Memoirs, p.101.

⁷²¹ ‘Nurses for Palestine’, *New Zealand Herald*, 1 May 1922.

⁷²² *Auckland Star*, 19 June 1926, Page 13.

⁷²³ Ibid.

⁷²⁴ Ibid.

⁷²⁵ *New Zealand Herald*, 4 June 1923, Page 9.

specialist from Berlin, joined the staff, the mothers and babies began to make use of the service.⁷²⁶ A nurses' report in 1921 emphasised the necessity of preventive measures in a land where the infant mortality rate was, in some places 480 deaths per 1000 births. There were only fifty qualified midwives, and a very large number of unqualified ones, while many of the former were out-of-date in their methods.⁷²⁷ The nurses' reports provided a visceral connection between the mothers of New Zealand and those in the Holy Land, bringing Palestine near in imagination.

Even though Mrs Nathan had achieved far more than she originally envisaged, she was not content to 'rest on her laurels'. In July 1923 Simone undertook a trip to Europe advocating both for extending Plunket to other countries, as well as persuading other centres to support infant welfare work in Palestine, with the result that the Jewish women in Paris agreed to establish a branch at Haifa, the principal port of Palestine. Mrs Nathan managed to raise £2,000 in two weeks.⁷²⁸ The branch in Haifa was established in 1924, but 'owing to difficulties of organisation' was later handed over to Hadassah.⁷²⁹ Mrs Nathan also persuaded the medical authorities in Lisbon of the value of the Plunket method such that a decision was made to set up an infant welfare centre in that city.⁷³⁰ A branch of WIZO was also established in Portugal, led by Nathan's sister-in-law Nicole Oulman.⁷³¹ Mrs Nathan used every opportunity to advocate for her causes and boasted of the fact that the Plunket system which had originated in New Zealand was being applied in distant lands: 'East and west of the Mediterranean there are outposts of the Plunket system'.⁷³² By the time Mrs Nathan returned to New Zealand at the end of 1923, she had been travelling for eighteen months and had advocated for infant welfare in France, Portugal, Spain and Palestine.⁷³³ Her advocacy was not just for Palestine, but also for extending Plunket worldwide.

⁷²⁶ SN Memoirs, p. 105.

⁷²⁷ *New Zealand Herald*, 4 June 1923.

⁷²⁸ *Press*, 24 July 1923, Page 8.

⁷²⁹ *Auckland Star*, 19 June 1926; *Ten years of WIZO Endeavour and Achievement*, WIZO, London, 1930, p.20.

⁷³⁰ *Press*, 24 July 1923, Page 8.

⁷³¹ SN Memoirs, p.107.

⁷³² *New Zealand Herald*, 4 June 1923, Page 9.

⁷³³ *New Zealand Herald*, 11 December 1923, Page 10.

Contemporary reports of Mrs Nathan's work emphasise its pioneering nature. When one considers the tiny size of the New Zealand community compared to large organisations like Hadassah, New Zealand's achievement were notable. So it is understandable that Mrs Nathan took pleasure in reporting in 1924 that in a decision to streamline the infant services being offered in Palestine, Plunket's infant welfare system had been chosen over the American system run by Hadassah. It was reported that Hadassah had adopted many of the Welfare Centre's methods which was seen as a triumph for the New Zealand system.⁷³⁴ Evidently it took some time for Hadassah to become convinced of Plunket methods. In the WIZO Ten Year commemorative bulletin, Henrietta Orwell stated that she and Mrs Nathan met with the medical director of Hadassah, and at that point Hadassah was not willing to introduce the Plunket system into its organisation.⁷³⁵ Mrs Nathan wrote about this 1926 meeting in her 1958 Memoirs. She explained that 'the social implication of preventive welfare work as understood in New Zealand had not yet percolated to the United States'.⁷³⁶ She explained that there were many changes in Hadassah during those early years, with 'five head doctors in five years, each with other methods'. Her dilemma at that stage was, whether to amalgamate the three modern WIZO Infant Welfare Centres with the sixteen Hadassah 'Tipat Halav' stations, milk and clothes distribution centres. Nathan recorded that, 'They (Hadassah) decided to keep up their methods which they felt were superior'. Hadassah would eventually adopt Plunket methods and there was an agreement in 1932 with the head of Hadassah for co-operation to supervise the infant welfare work.⁷³⁷ However, the two groups never amalgamated. Eventually the Tel Aviv Municipality took over the Infant Welfare Centres. WIZO kept the Mothercraft Training Centre which was later handed over to WIZO South Africa to manage.⁷³⁸

The Arab community also benefitted from WIZO's work. It was reported in January 1925 that a committee of Arab women had been formed to establish an Arab centre in Jaffa, on the Plunket model and the head nurse Miss Ashberry was assisting in this venture.⁷³⁹ According to Irwell this was instigated by an Arab doctor who showed interest in the WIZO work, and 'was anxious to

⁷³⁴ *Evening Post*, 30 May 1924, Page 9.

⁷³⁵ Ten years of WIZO Endeavour and Achievement, WIZO, London, 1930, p.36.

⁷³⁶ SN Memoirs, p.108.

⁷³⁷ Auckland 'Beth Israel' AGM Report, 1932, p.21.

⁷³⁸ SN Memoirs, p.108.

⁷³⁹ *New Zealand Herald*, 26 January 1925, Page 11.

start a centre at Jaffa for Arab babies'.⁷⁴⁰ Infant Welfare Centres had also been established in Haifa, Tiberias, Safed, Jerusalem and in the agricultural colonies.⁷⁴¹ An *Auckland Star* report boasted, 'Citizens of the Dominion are naturally proud of the success that has attended the establishment of the centre and of the ready acceptance by the mothers of Palestine of the methods initiated in New Zealand by Sir Truby King. It is gratifying to note that a typically New Zealand institution has made so wide an appeal, and that its application to the conditions of Palestine has been attended with such successful results'.⁷⁴²

A consistent theme in the reports of the period is the notion that Mrs Nathan and the New Zealand WIZO movement led the way and inspired others to follow suit. The *Auckland Star*, in reporting on the establishing of infant welfare centres in Haifa by French women in 1924, stated, 'The example set by New Zealand has been widely followed'.⁷⁴³ It also mentioned that 'Sydney also followed suit' and set up an infant welfare centre for the Yemenites, in Tel Aviv.⁷⁴⁴ In a 1927 letter Mrs Nathan stated that New Zealand's example had been followed; 'Sydney also has a centre, Perth pay for the Doctor and Adelaide has a special nurse'.⁷⁴⁵ In her memoirs, Mrs Nathan explained how she collected £1,000 from the Council of Jewish Women of Sydney over three years, which, she stated, was the first work for Israel undertaken by the Jewish women of Sydney.⁷⁴⁶ Contemporary WIZO publications also acknowledged the role Mrs Nathan played in influencing the women of Australia. Henrietta Irwell, writing in the ten year WIZO commemorative publication stated, that, 'encouraged by the example of their New Zealand sisters, the interest of the women of Australia had already been aroused'.⁷⁴⁷ Dr Fanny Reading of Sydney conducted a successful fundraising fete, and raised £1,500 with which the Sydney Centre was started.⁷⁴⁸ A fifty-

⁷⁴⁰ Ten years of WIZO Endeavour and Achievement, WIZO, London, 1930, p.36.

⁷⁴¹ *New Zealand Herald*, 26 January 1925, Page 11.

⁷⁴² 'Infant Welfare', *Auckland Star*, (AS), 19 June 1926.

⁷⁴³ AS, 19 June 1926.

⁷⁴⁴ AS, 19 June 1926..

⁷⁴⁵ S. Nathan letter to Mrs Astor, 22 September 1927.

⁷⁴⁶ SN Memoirs, p.106.

⁷⁴⁷ Ten years of WIZO Endeavour and Achievement, WIZO, London, 1930.

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid.

year commemorative WIZO bulletin also attributed the interest of Australian Jewish women in WIZO's child welfare work to Mrs Nathan's visit to Australia in 1927.⁷⁴⁹

Mrs Nathan's efforts received due recognition overseas and in New Zealand. The municipal authorities in Tel Aviv received Mrs Nathan with a civic welcome in 1927. Mr and Mrs Nathan donated £1,000 to the Keren Hayesod (Foundation Fund) for the purpose of starting a Mothercraft Training Centre at Tel Aviv. The *New Zealand Herald* in 1927 reported, 'As a result of the efforts of the Jewish women of Auckland, under the inspiration of the personality of Mrs. David L. Nathan, who had become one of the outstanding figures in world-wide Jewish women's activities for Palestine, the special building for the New Zealand infant welfare centre in Palestine would be shortly erected at Tel Aviv, to perpetuate New Zealand Jewry's work in Palestine'.⁷⁵⁰

In 1928, the Foundation Stone for the Mothercraft Training Centre in Tel Aviv was laid and the building was completed and consecrated in April 1929.⁷⁵¹ Henrietta Irwell, in the ten year commemorative bulletin of WIZO, described the 'admirable construction' of the new building as the 'first of its kind, and a model one' in the region. It provided not only for the town of Tel Aviv, but also for the 'difficult cases brought in from the Colonies and even from Jerusalem'.⁷⁵² The building housed the Mothercraft Training Centre and the New Zealand Infant Welfare Centre until space became limited. The Infant Welfare Centre was transferred elsewhere and the whole building was devoted to mothercraft work. A second story was added in 1937 with money raised by New Zealand WIZO and the enlarged building was named New Zealand House, which was located on King George Street, Tel Aviv.⁷⁵³

⁷⁴⁹ Fay Grove-Pollak, ed., 'The Saga of a Movement WIZO 1920-1970', Department of Organisation and Education of WIZO, The Women's International Zionist Organisation, 1970, Tel Aviv.

⁷⁵⁰ *New Zealand Herald*, 15 July 1927.

⁷⁵¹ Ten years of WIZO Endeavour and Achievement, WIZO, London, 1930.

⁷⁵² Ibid.

⁷⁵³ Fay Grove-Pollak, p.199. In 1970 it was still used as a WIZO Training centre for women and was still called NZ House.

Zionism, WIZO and Philanthropy

The work of Mrs Nathan and New Zealand WIZO in New Zealand was largely that of fundraising. However, philanthropy has been largely overlooked in the historiography of Zionism, according to Michael Berkowitz. He argued in his article, 'Toward an understanding of fundraising, philanthropy and charity in Western Zionism, 1897-1933', that histories of Zionism have tended to focus on ideology, politics and the process of 'national-identity' formation.⁷⁵⁴ Part of the reason for the gap in the history is that the concept of charity was opposed by many Zionists. The background to the antipathy towards charity lay partly in the Zionist's opposition to the tradition of *halukka*, whereby funds were collected outside the Holy Land, to support yeshiva scholars in the land who devoted themselves to religious study. Most of these scholars did not work and lived in severe poverty. Zionists also opposed the charity of those like Baron Edmund de Rothschild who propped up colonising ventures in the land, that, for a number of reasons, ultimately proved unsuccessful.⁷⁵⁵ When Herzl approached well-known philanthropist Baron von Hirsch, he made clear that the support he was seeking was not in the same category as charity, which, he believed 'debased the character of the people'.⁷⁵⁶ The movement Herzl conceived would be a national movement, not a philanthropic one. According to Berkowitz, Zionists carefully cultivated an image that projected strength where attributes of 'fierce independence', 'ruggedness' and 'willingness to make personal sacrifices' were valued. Zionists preferred to distinguish their work from that of the existing Jewish communal and philanthropic societies, which they believed were ineffective and did not share the aims of 'self-help' and 'national regeneration'.⁷⁵⁷

The women who formed WIZO shared the antipathy towards their work being viewed as charity. Nathan explained that when she first introduced her idea to WIZO, they were convinced that infant welfare work was philanthropy, to which they were opposed.⁷⁵⁸ In fact, Plunket's founder, Truby King, also emphasised that the infant-welfare movement was not a charitable institution, but educational. Nathan's view was that initially WIZO failed to comprehend the social implica-

⁷⁵⁴ Michael Berkowitz, 'Toward an understanding of fundraising, philanthropy and charity in Western Zionism, 1897-1933', *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (September 1996), p. 243.

⁷⁵⁵ Laqueur, p.78.

⁷⁵⁶ Laqueur, p.89.

⁷⁵⁷ Berkowitz, p.243.

⁷⁵⁸ SN Memoirs, p.105.

tions of preventative infant-welfare work. ‘The word “help” aroused antagonism, as the new pioneers saw it as symbolizing the old ways of distributing charity, which was inconsistent with the image of the modern Jew, who was self sufficient’.⁷⁵⁹ The Hebrew Women’s Society (HNI) worked with WIZO to supervise the establishment of Infant Welfare Centres in Palestine. The two groups would eventually amalgamate in 1933. HNI held the belief that the ‘needy should not be given charity, but they should receive what is owed to them as members of the community, i.e. not philanthropy, but constructive aid’.⁷⁶⁰ Henrietta Szold, who chaired the NHI, argued that ‘the correct meaning of social work was working for the good of the whole community including education and health. If all the factors were not taken into account it cannot be classified as social welfare work’.⁷⁶¹ The NHI was eventually able to reconcile the notion that infant welfare work was consistent with Zionist ideals.

WIZO’s publications explicitly stated that the organisation was ‘not a philanthropic institution whose activities are confined to the raising of funds’, but rather the goal was ‘so to educate and develop the women of Palestine that they may take their own proper place in the upbuilding of the National Home’.⁷⁶² Education was considered highly important and was an integral part of the infant welfare work. Mrs Nathan gave the example of the Jewish Yemenite immigrants who knew little of the methods necessary to preserve infant life. Their practices included many superstitions, such as the use of amulets to protect against the ‘evil eye’. Education reaped outstanding results. According to a 1923 report, ‘Whereas the mortality rate had been as high as 40% there had been no deaths amongst 500 babies in the past two years.’⁷⁶³ Dr Theodore Zlocisti, who worked in the centres, elaborated that the fatalism of Yemenite culture, led to a resignation to the fate of their babies when they failed to thrive. He further addressed the need for ‘Education not only amongst women but amongst the men regarding the dignity of the individual and the dignity of women. Women were still more or less an object of barter’.⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁵⁹ <http://www.wizo.org/who-we-are/our-history.html>

⁷⁶⁰ <http://www.wizo.org/who-we-are/our-history.html>

⁷⁶¹ <http://www.wizo.org/who-we-are/our-history.html>

⁷⁶² Ten years of WIZO Endeavour and Achievement, p.20.

⁷⁶³ *Press*, 11 December, 1923.

⁷⁶⁴ WIZO, Ten years of WIZO Endeavour and Achievement, p.38.

While the central Zionist organisation, whose focus was the ‘upbuilding of Palestine’ abhorred the concept of charity, an important element of Mrs Nathan’s success was the appeal to the humanitarian and charitable impulses of New Zealanders; Jewish and non-Jewish. For the Jewish community, WIZO’s Infant Welfare mission was just one cause that they supported. In some ways the Jewish women were simply replicating in Palestine, their activities at home. They were prominent in the Plunket movement, which was a service available to ‘mothers and babies’. The Auckland Women’s Zionist Society at times joined in charitable ventures with other organisations, for other causes. In 1927 they cooperated with the Jewish groups Chevra Kadisha and the Benevolent Society to produce 2000 garments for distribution for the poor and needy of Auckland.⁷⁶⁵ There were also regular appeals for needy Jews in other parts of the world. A letter from the American Relief Administration to the Auckland Hebrew Congregation in 1922 brought the plight of the ‘one million starving co-religionists in the Ukraine’ to their attention.⁷⁶⁶ A cable was also received by Alfred Nathan the previous week stating, ‘Terrible crisis East European Jewry makes fresh appeal by United Relief organisations of Great Britain. Million co-religionists in the grip of starvation and pestilence. Over 100,000 homeless orphans...’⁷⁶⁷ The local community responded readily to the local needs of the general community as well the appeal for assistance for suffering Jews in other lands. While political Zionist thinkers opposed charity, in a diaspora community like New Zealand, the work for Palestine was not necessarily distinguishable from the other humanitarian functions performed by the community. Charitable sentiment motivated many of those involved in the Zionist movement.

Certain aspects of the women’s charitable ventures aided its effectiveness. The personal nature of fund raising efforts like sewing bees cultivated a sense of connection, from the antipodes to the Middle East. A dispatch of garments to Palestine was described as ‘the special work of some of our devotees to the Cause’, expressing the attitude women brought to the task.⁷⁶⁸ A comparison with another Zionist Fund at the time indicates that the women’s work was more successful. The Palestine Foundation Fund was established after Israel Cohen’s tour in 1920 and got off to a good

⁷⁶⁵ “Beth Israel” Congregation, Report of the Board of Management, 25 September 1927.

⁷⁶⁶ “Beth Israel” Congregation, Report of the Board of Management, 20 September 1922.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁸ “Beth Israel” Congregation Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 15 August, 1933, p.21.

start with first instalment of £2542 1s 6d.⁷⁶⁹ By 1922, £4,260 had been raised and it was hoped that the response to the third appeal would ‘further establish Auckland as one of the strongest Zionist centres in the Southern Hemisphere’.⁷⁷⁰ Indeed Alexander Goldstein later reported this to be the case. However, by 1924 the fund was in arrears and the decision made to close it. It was closed in 1925, but resurrected again in 1927, after the successful visit of Zionist emissary Goldstein. Whereas the WIZO project was maintained by Mrs Nathan’s careful management, and the practical, hands-on nature of women’s involvement, the fortunes of the Palestine Foundation Fund fluctuated and depended on the stimulus of visiting speakers to keep it afloat.

The general New Zealand community also responded to the humanitarian call. As previously mentioned, the overwhelming success of the Eastern Garden Fair in 1921 was largely attributable to the fact that the whole community took up the cause. New Zealand women readily identified with the ‘mothers and babies’ in Palestine. In addition, there was a sense of pride that what was considered a uniquely New Zealand institution should have a pioneering role in the land of Palestine. The Plunket organisation continued to follow and support the work in Palestine. In 1926 there was some confusion over two fundraising events, as to which were for the Auckland Plunket Society or Palestine. The President of the Auckland Plunket Society, Mrs Maude Parkes, gave reassurance of Plunket’s support for the work in Palestine in an *Auckland Star* article. She wrote, ‘It must be clearly understood that the Auckland branch of the Plunket Society is in entire sympathy with the movement to support Plunket nurses in Palestine, and will heartily co-operate in the effort of the New Zealand Women's Zionist Society in July’.⁷⁷¹ Charity was an important part of the work undertaken in New Zealand for Palestine. The ideal that a Jewish homeland be built through work rather than charity was in contradistinction to the fact that many of the institutions being developed in Palestine relied on the philanthropy of supporters, Jewish and non-Jewish, in distant lands.

Simone Nathan: A powerful leader

Among the many reasons for the success of the work of WIZO in Palestine in the 1920s was the particular set of skills, abilities and resources Mrs Nathan brought to the task. Fundraising was a

⁷⁶⁹ “Beth Israel” Congregation Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 25 September 1921

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁷¹ *Auckland Star*, 19 March 1926.

challenging task and required determination and management ability to achieve success. A letter from Simone Nathan to Rebecca Astor in 1927 highlighted some of the issues that she faced, and the way she handled them. Rebecca Astor, the wife of Rabbi Astor, was at that time domiciled in Dunedin, but would later be called to Auckland to eventually take over from Rabbi Goldstein, after his death. Mrs Astor was fully involved in the work of the community and would later play a significant role in editing major Jewish publications. In the aforementioned letter, Mrs Nathan outlined the history of her organisation's involvement in establishing the Infant Welfare Centres and sending nurses to Palestine. She explained the arrangements regarding finances. It was realised that Auckland alone could not carry the burden, so other centres were approached. The cost for the first three years was estimated at £1,500. Mrs Nathan had approached Mrs Walter Nathan of Wellington and the late Mrs David Theomin and together they agreed to distribute the cost as follows: Auckland £750, Wellington £500, Dunedin £150, and Christchurch £100. Auckland had raised £2,300, and the other centres gave the allotted amounts as agreed. A difficulty had arisen that after the initial donation, Dunedin had not continued to contribute as had been agreed, the reason being that due to Mrs Theomin's many other commitments, it had been decided not to set up a Women's Zionist group in Dunedin. While Mr Theomin had put out a call for donations, he had ultimately contributed the greater part of the £150 himself. Mrs Nathan did not think it appropriate to expect him to repeat such a generous gift.

Mrs Nathan went to quite some length at times, in her passion to raise funds. She described in her memoirs that on one occasion she headed home from Palestine via Perth. Mrs Breckler of Perth had suggested to Nathan, that if she found a project in Palestine which they could support, she would arrange a meeting. However, the ship's arrival in Perth was later than expected because of the rough voyage. Nathan sent off a wireless message to ask that the meeting be delayed. However the captain informed her that they would not arrive till midnight, and they would have to leave at 8am the next morning. Mrs Nathan was met at the port of Perth by two women, who informed her that they had held the meeting without her and decided they could not contribute at that time. Nathan insisted on meeting with the president of the community, Mr Sharp, and by 2.30am had convinced him to let her stay an extra day, to call on people individually. By the next evening she had the money she needed, and proceeded to catch a train through the West Australian desert to her next destination.⁷⁷²

⁷⁷² SN Memoirs, p.109.

Another aspect of Nathan's management was her frequent trips to Palestine to monitor progress. She wrote in her memoirs that she used to visit Palestine every couple of years to see how the money was being spent, before collecting more. She visited six times before settling there permanently in 1955.⁷⁷³ Upon her return to New Zealand, Mrs Nathan would report her findings at meetings around the country. Mrs Nathan successfully supervised the project she initiated and was able to maintain the interest of others in the work.

Mrs Nathan's contribution to the work cannot be underestimated and she was thus acknowledged with the bestowal of an honorary life membership of WIZO. Nathan is one of an exclusive group of twenty-seven honorary life members, a group that also included Golda Meir, who later served as Israel's Prime Minister 1969-74.⁷⁷⁴ However, it should also be mentioned, that many other dedicated women contributed to the success of the movement. Nathan commented that many devoted WIZO workers gave a lifetime of service, and some whose names of which no-one hears. In particular Vera Ziman, was acknowledged for her many years of service as secretary to WIZO. Nathan described Ziman's general knowledge, intelligence and knowledge of the community as a New Zealand born Jew, as of the utmost value to the cause'.⁷⁷⁵ Another aspect that cannot be overlooked, is that Mr and Mrs Nathan's own financial support contributed significantly to the success of Plunket in Palestine. While the 'Eastern Garden Fair' proved highly successful, a similar event in 1926 proved less so. 'In a Persian Garden' followed similar lines to the previous fair and was also supported by the Mayor and Governor General. However, the amount raised (£1,000) disappointed Mrs Nathan, who felt that the interest of the Christian community had waned. Of course, difficult economic times were encroaching as the decade progressed. The Nathan's £1,000 donation in 1927 for the Mothercraft Training Centre in Palestine was a significant amount and underlines the importance of the Nathan's financial investment in the project.⁷⁷⁶

One last factor that contributed to the success of Zionist activities in this period was the perception that the British government supported the movement. This was the flow-on effect of the issu-

⁷⁷³ SN Memoirs, p.105.

⁷⁷⁴ Fay Grove-Pollak, p.10.

⁷⁷⁵ SN Memoirs, p.102.

⁷⁷⁶ "Beth Israel" Congregation AGM Report, 25 September 1927.

ing of the Balfour Declaration, its validation by the San Remo conference, and incorporation into the British Mandate for Palestine. As loyal citizens of Empire, New Zealand followed Britain's lead and so the fundraising ventures for Palestine were enthusiastically supported at all levels of New Zealand society. Further, the place itself, considered a 'Holy Land', had a powerful pull on the New Zealand imagination. This had a two-fold basis; a Christian heritage and the sense that New Zealanders had helped overthrow Ottoman rule and replace it with a more 'enlightened', 'humanitarian' one in the form of the British Empire. Mrs Nathan wrote:

Palestine was the Holy Land; there had as yet been no unpleasantness over the Mandate; New Zealand troops had been with Allenby and the owners of Rishon-le-Zion had let our boys drink all the wine they wanted free. The Plunket Society was New Zealand's pride and joy and to think that "our" Plunket nurses were going to save the lives of the babies in the Holy Land pleased everyone.⁷⁷⁷

A *New Zealand Herald* report noted that, 'New Zealand was well and affectionately remembered in Palestine on account of her soldiers, and that happy memory was now being perpetuated in a welfare movement that already was giving valuable results'.⁷⁷⁸ Indeed, the benefits of the Plunket method were seen as having almost immediate benefit. It was reported in the *New Zealand Herald* in 1924 (and repeated in 1926) that prior to the establishment of the infant centre the death rate among babies under one year old exceeded thirty per cent. Of the five hundred children of all denominations attended by the nurses of the centre during the first year of its existence, only three died, and these had been brought to the centre too late to receive the full advantage of its methods.⁷⁷⁹

⁷⁷⁷ SN Memoirs p.103.

⁷⁷⁸ *New Zealand Herald*, 11 December 1923.

⁷⁷⁹ 'Enfant Welfare', *New Zealand Herald*, 11 July 1924. *Auckland Star*, 19 June 1926.

Conclusion

A number of factors contributed to the success of Simone Nathan's work in establishing Plunket-styled Infant Welfare Centres in Palestine. As a passionate 'Zionist maternalist' Nathan used all the power at her disposal to advocate for the cause: wealth, connections, great organising skill and an ability to inspire and motivate others. It is unlikely that the project would have succeeded to the same degree, without the commitment she showed. Her passion impacted the wider movement as well. Goldman stated that Nathan's 'unremitting and inspiring leadership' contributed in 'great measure' to the enthusiasm of the Zionist movement in New Zealand.⁷⁸⁰ A combination of ideologies undergirded Nathan's vision and work, and that of the WIZO in New Zealand. While Nathan embraced cultural Zionism, her nationalism was founded on the ancient Jewish connection to their homeland. She was active in the women's movement whilst embracing a maternalism built on the ideals of Judaism. She saw no inconsistency in pursuing charitable fundraising ventures, while supporting WIZO's educational priorities. The inconsistencies in the ideologies which undergirded her activities did not interfere with her work, affirming Laqueur's thesis that many Zionists did not need ideological justification for their activity but were rather 'instinctive Zionists'. While Zionism was a motivating factor for Nathan, it was not the primary reason for the appeal of 'Plunket for Palestine' for most New Zealanders. The project struck a humanitarian chord with maternalists and many others who felt invested in the 'Holy Land' for a variety of reasons. It also appealed to New Zealand's sense of pride that a local institution should have international appeal. Ultimately, the Jewish women of a tiny, distant diasporic community contributed to the 'upbuilding of Palestine' in a manner that was significant and disproportionate, personally satisfying and by any standards, impressive.

⁷⁸⁰ Goldman, p.211.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Zionism in New Zealand during the British Mandate for Palestine: 1920-1939

Millions of our brothers and sisters in lands of oppression are knocking at the doors of Palestine, and if the gates are closed to them, whither shall they go? As for us, we shall not give way to despair, but renew our faith and trust in God. Neither bitterness nor exile shall destroy that hope which has sustained us in the past. With renewed courage we shall continue to work and to sacrifice in order to bring about the vindication of our cause. Steadfastly we shall stand by the side of our people in this dark hour of our history. Our brave brethren in Palestine must be backed by the Jewish people of the Diaspora, whose duty it is to pour out freely the funds necessary for the struggle to defend our National Home.⁷⁸¹ Rabbi Astor, 1939.

This chapter tracks the change over the period 1920-1939 in the Zionist movement in New Zealand from one of optimism, to great disappointment and even despair. The 1920s was a time of momentum for the Zionist movement in New Zealand. The Balfour Declaration of 1917, then incorporated into the British Mandate for Palestine, in 1922, by the League of Nations were seen as significant steps on the path to the Zionist dream of a homeland for Jewish people. For the first time, the international community had formally recognised the Zionist goal and made a commitment to support it. This chapter will focus on the impact of these international trends on New Zealand.

An examination of the records of the annual ‘Report and Statement of Accounts’ of the ‘Beth Israel’ Auckland congregation over the period 1920-1939 offers a glimpse into the functioning of the community and the place of Zionism within it.⁷⁸² These booklets present a summarised view of the activities of the community, including brief reports from the Zionist groups. While these records do not speak for all of New Zealand’s Jewish community, it is a helpful survey of the

⁷⁸¹ Rabbi Astor, ‘Jewish Crisis: Palestine Trouble’, Pentecost Service, *Auckland Star*, 24 May 1939.

⁷⁸² Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 1920 - 1939. Abbreviated as Annual Reports.

community that was considered the most Zionist in New Zealand.⁷⁸³ This was also a period when the views of the Rabbis on significant events were reported in the newspapers. These reports offer valuable insights into the views of the leaders of the communities.

The Annual Reports record a period of growth and active engagement throughout the 1920s, as well as glowing reports on the progress in Palestine. As the 1930s approached, difficulties for the movement began to appear. Economically, New Zealand, along with the rest of the world faced a period of recession. This downturn however, highlighted the success of the Women's organisation, which was able to continue its financial commitments, while other local Zionist groups struggled.

The main political struggle that Zionists faced in Palestine was the Arab opposition, at times violent, to their efforts to establish a homeland. The political activism of New Zealand Zionists had a complicating factor. The New Zealand Jewish community, like many other New Zealanders, were loyal members of the British Empire. Britain had governance of the Mandate for Palestine over this period, and while the British government initially seemed to fully support the Zionist programme, it soon became bogged down in the mire of trying to meet the competing expectations of the Arabs and the Jews. Both parties made claims upon Britain, based on promises made. As the British authorities in Palestine struggled to fulfil its conflicting commitments to Jews and Arabs, the faith and confidence of local Jews in Britain as the custodian of the Palestinian Mandate was severely tested. Britain undertook several commissions of enquiry with the result that the homeland promised to Jews was gradually whittled away, immigration quotas greatly reduced and land purchases restricted. At the same time thousands of desperate Jews were fleeing Germany looking for refuge. For New Zealand Jews, whose loyalty to the 'mother country' was considered sacred, Britain's failure to keep its commitments was deeply disappointing and the hope of a homeland seemed to be fast disappearing.

Zionism in New Zealand in the 1920s

Until 1929, the tone of the Auckland community's Annual Reports were overwhelmingly positive, with many superlatives applied to descriptions of the year's events. 1921 was an 'active year' for the Zionist Society and it was noted that the Society was supported by 'nearly every member of

⁷⁸³ See footnote 15. L.M. Goldman, *History of the Jews in New Zealand*, Wellington 1958, p.209,

the community'.⁷⁸⁴ The 1922 Annual Report congratulated subscribers for fulfilling their obligation to Israel Cohen's Palestine Restoration fund, even though Auckland had not escaped the world-wide financial depression.⁷⁸⁵ It was hoped that the response to the third appeal would 'further establish Auckland as one of the strongest Zionist centres in the Southern Hemisphere'. According to the 1923 Annual Report, local activities had been 'well maintained'.⁷⁸⁶ The committee put on record their grateful appreciation of the 'devoted and valuable service' of Rev. Goldstein, as President of the Zionist Society for the past twelve years. It noted that, in December, the Zionist Society would have completed twenty years of communal service.

The 1923 report also included a glowing summary of progress in Palestine, commenting that since the commencement of immigration, 30,000 immigrants had entered Palestine, and immigration was proceeding at the rate of 10,000 a year. The first faculties of the Jewish University at Jerusalem would be opened early the next year. There were fifty-five agricultural colonies in Palestine. It referenced the many tributes that had been paid during the past year to the 'fine character' of the new Jewish settlers and their 'physique, intelligence and idealism'. Other achievements included the Rutenberg scheme for the electrification of Palestine and the establishment of a Company with a capital of one million pounds, to which Baron Edmond de Rothschild, of Paris had subscribed £100,000. Electricity had been supplied to Jaffa and the surrounding districts and Hebrew was being spoken as a living language by 95 percent of the Jews in Palestine. The opening of Hebrew University by Lord Balfour in 1925 was considered the 'outstanding event of the year' and was seen to have significance for Jews everywhere.⁷⁸⁷ It was hailed as an example of the worldwide community of interest shared by Jewish people. The event was reportedly attended by 'ten thousand people from all parts of the world', and considered 'one of the greatest events' in the history of the Jewish people. The year 1925 was also the twenty-first anniversary of the Auckland Zionist Society which was considered to have been 'a powerful stimulant to the growth of the Jewish spirit, particularly among the younger generation'. The Zionist Society in 1927 boasted a 'record year' in which every phase of Zionist activity had received enthusiastic support.⁷⁸⁸

⁷⁸⁴ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 25 September, 1921.

⁷⁸⁵ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 20 September, 1922.

⁷⁸⁶ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 9 September, 1923.

⁷⁸⁷ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 3 September, 1925.

⁷⁸⁸ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 9 September, 1927.

The visits of Zionist emissaries played an important role in encouraging and strengthening the movement. Britain's role as the caretaker of the Mandate gave Zionism a respectability, which meant that New Zealand politicians and the general public welcomed visiting Zionists and for the most part supported the progress towards a Jewish homeland. The Annual Reports showed the continued engagement of local Zionists with British statesmen and leaders. The visit of Israel Cohen in 1920 which had been a great success, would be followed by the visits of many other emissaries. The 1921 Annual Report referenced a letter of appreciation from Dr. Weizmann the President of the Zionist Organisation on behalf of the Executive of the Zionist Organisation, expressing his appreciation for the enthusiastic welcome Mr Israel Cohen had received in Auckland and for the generous response to the appeal for the Restoration Fund.⁷⁸⁹ Weizmann commended Auckland for setting 'a fine example of generosity and devotion' to the cause.⁷⁹⁰ According to the 1924 Annual Report, the visit of Madame Pevsner, the representative of the Jewish National Fund, was voted the 'outstanding event' of the year.⁷⁹¹ Described as the 'gifted daughter of our people', Pevsner was welcomed enthusiastically and her appeal resulted in a general response. (A total of £2174 was promised). Pevsner addressed a public meeting of over one thousand people in the concert chamber of the Town Hall on the topic, 'Palestine - the secret of the Jewish Survival'. She also gave a lantern slide lecture in the clubrooms on 'The Old and the New Palestine' and to a meeting of ladies she spoke on 'Judaism and the Jewish Women'. Pevsner's meetings prompted the formation of the Jewish National Fund Squad for the purpose of making fortnightly collections. Also the Young Judean Club was formed during her visit under the auspices of the Zionist Society, 'for the stimulation of the Jewish spirit among the children of the community'. Another visiting Zionist considered to have given great impetus to the movement was American philanthropist David A. Brown, who visited New Zealand in 1925 and delivered a public address on 'Recent Progress in Palestine'. He addressed the Jewish community of Wellington on three occasions; to a mixed audience at the Town Hall, to the Rotary Club and to the Chamber of Commerce and also held meetings in other centres.⁷⁹²

⁷⁸⁹ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 25 September, 1921.

⁷⁹⁰ Letter from Weizmann to Alfred Nathan mentioned in report, '180411 AHC' archive, p.51.

⁷⁹¹ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 1 September, 1924.

⁷⁹² Louis Phillips, 'Zionism in New Zealand', ed. Ben Green, *The New Zealand Jewish Review and Communal Directory 1931*, p.55.

In 1927, Zionist envoy, Dr Alexander Goldstein's visit was recorded as 'the most memorable event of the year'.⁷⁹³ He was considered a brilliant orator and was given a civic reception by Auckland's deputy Mayor, Mr A.J. Entrician, a communal reception and a public meeting in Scots Hall which was attended by over 1200 people. He also held meetings in Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin, and was received by the Prime Minister Gordon Coates, who 'expressed his sincere sympathy with the cause of building up a Jewish National Home in Palestine'.⁷⁹⁴ The following year, while delivering a lecture at Jew's College in London, Goldstein paid tribute to the Jews in New Zealand for their services to the Zionist movement. According to Jewish historian L.M. Goldman, Goldstein declared, 'If I were asked which was the best Jewish community in the world from the Zionist point of view, I would say New Zealand.' He later added, 'If there is a roll of honour in the world for communities, the first place in that roll of honour belongs to Auckland.'⁷⁹⁵

New Zealand, in this period, was a proud member of the British Empire and Jews considered loyalty to Britain a sacred duty. Many of the Jewish pioneers in New Zealand were of English background and had regarded England as home. They kept the bonds strong through their affiliation to British institutions such as the Anglo-Jewish association.⁷⁹⁶ Their congregations came under the jurisdiction of the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, who visited New Zealand on a pastoral tour in 1922. Britain's endorsement of Zionism meant that Zionist meetings were supported by politicians, mayors and other leaders and were reported in the general press. Members of the New Zealand Jewish community were also invited to state receptions for visiting British statesmen. In 1926, a deputation of representatives of the Jewish community, including Louis Phillips, Rabbi Goldstein and Mrs Nathan, were invited to Government House for a reception for Lord Allenby, described as 'Liberator of Palestine'.⁷⁹⁷ In 1928, a deputation of representatives of the Zionist Society was received by the Right Hon. L.M.S Amery, Secretary of State for the Colonies in the British Government. Rabbi Goldstein expressed the appreciation of the Zionists of the Do-

⁷⁹³ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 25 September, 1927.

⁷⁹⁴ Zionism in New Zealand, *1931 Review*, p.55.

⁷⁹⁵ L.M. Goldman, *History of the Jews in New Zealand*, Wellington 1958, p.209,

⁷⁹⁶ L.M. Goldman, *History of the Jews in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1958, p.139.

⁷⁹⁷ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 26 August, 1926.

minion for Mr Amery's sympathy for and interest in the Zionist movement.⁷⁹⁸ Amery stated that the quality of the work done by the Zionists in Palestine was of a very high order and it was the intention of the British Government to carry out their work in Palestine in the spirit of the Balfour Declaration. The formation in London of the Palestine Mandate Society was considered notable. This was the initiative of Earl Balfour, the Rt. Hon. D Lloyd George and other statesmen, under the Presidency of Lord Robert Cecil. Its goal was to further the work of the Zionist Organisation in Palestine. In 1929, the year of the Silver Jubilee of the Auckland Zionist Society, a special event was held in the Auckland Jewish Club, which was reportedly one of the largest and most enthusiastic held for many years. Jubilee greetings were received from Dr Weizmann, President of the Zionist Organisation, Colonel F.H. Kisch, Chairman of the Palestine Zionist Executive, Australian Jewish General Sir John Monash and other distinguished leaders. New Zealand Prime Minister Sir Joseph Ward sent a Jubilee message in which he congratulated the Society upon its record of progress during the past 25 years and stated that 'the action taken in 1919 in re-establishing Palestine as the National Home of the Jewish people was the outcome of a far-sighted policy and one which has been justified by results'.⁷⁹⁹

This brief survey of the Zionist movement in Auckland over this period showed that it was time of momentum, growth and optimism. This was reflected in the triumphalist tone and frequent use of superlatives. It was also evidenced in the amounts of money raised by the community even in the face of difficult economic times, in the civic events held for Zionist speakers and the large audiences in attendance. Various activities, such as the reception of British statesmen, highlighted the close connection between the New Zealand community and Britain. The engagement of the Jewish community with Palestine was largely mediated through British channels. In 1929, the Jewish Agency, the public body working with the administration of Palestine for the establishment of the Jewish National Home, expanded its membership beyond the Zionist Organisation. The Board of Deputies of British Jews (BDBJ) held a conference in London, 21 April 1929, to consider the proposal that congregations and institutions in all parts of the world should co-operate with the Zionist Organisation in furtherance of its work in Palestine. New Zealand was represented on the BDBJ by Auckland, Moss Davis. Auckland's 1929 Annual Report recorded that

⁷⁹⁸ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 31 August, 1928.

⁷⁹⁹ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 15 August, 1929, p.6.

there were 200 delegates representing congregations and other Jewish bodies in the UK.⁸⁰⁰ The conference unanimously decided on behalf of Anglo-Jewry to enter the Jewish Agency and to use its best endeavours to promote the work of reconstruction in Palestine. Australia and New Zealand would jointly be entitled to two representatives on the Jewish Agency, one to be appointed by the Zionist Societies and the other by the congregations and institutions. Through this British avenue, New Zealand was actively involved in the 'upbuilding' of Palestine.

Conflict with the Arabs in Palestine

The 1920s was a time of optimism and growth for the Zionist movement in New Zealand and local Zionists lauded the progress and development in Mandate Palestine. However, conflict with the Arabs in Palestine was brewing. Historian Benny Morris pointed out that Arab opposition to the Balfour Declaration began within months of its issuance.⁸⁰¹ The Palestine Arab elite (Notables) established Muslim-Christian Associations (MCA) and nationalist clubs, which presented petitions and complaints to the British administration expressing their disquiet. They asserted that Palestine was 'the land of their fathers and the graveyard of their ancestors, inhabited by Arabs for long ages'.⁸⁰² Extremist secret societies like the 'Black Hand' were formed and the First National Congress was held in 1919. The King-Crane Commission, dispatched by the Paris Peace Conference to ascertain the wishes of the indigenous populations, was told by a Jerusalem notable, Aref Pasha Dajani, that living with the Jews was impossible and that if the League of Nations did not listen to the Arabs, the country would become a 'river of blood'.⁸⁰³ Representatives of the Jaffa MCA summed up the situation, 'We will push the Zionists into the sea - or they will send us back into the desert'.⁸⁰⁴ The commissioners reported the deep Arab antipathy towards the establishment of a Jewish homeland in what they considered to be their land.

The British administration found itself in a difficult position. The provisions of the Mandate had conferred upon Britain responsibilities towards the Jews and Arabs, which were often in conflict.

⁸⁰⁰ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 15 August, 1929.

⁸⁰¹ Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001*, New York, 2001, p.91.

⁸⁰² Morris, p.91.

⁸⁰³ Morris, p.91.

⁸⁰⁴ Morris.

In addition, Britain had made commitments to the Jews which seemed to have contradicted apparent commitments made to the Arabs, thus exacerbating the tension. A series of letters between Arab Nationalist leader Hussein bin Ali, Sharif of Mecca and Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner for Egypt, during World War One created a seedbed of contention whose consequences would be felt over the coming two decades. The letters laid down the terms for Arab involvement in the war against the Turks, which involved an understanding of which territories Britain would cede to the Arabs. However, a dispute arose over Palestine's inclusion in the agreement and this became a source of ongoing conflict. So persistent was the disagreement that an Arab-British committee was set up in 1939 to consider the correspondence.⁸⁰⁵ The subsequent report was presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament in London March 1939 and adopted at the Fourteenth Meeting of the Arab and United Kingdom Delegations to the Conferences on Palestine, 17 March 1939.

The Arab interpretation of the McMahon-Hussein correspondence was diametrically opposed to the British. The Arabs representatives argued, 'There is no room for doubt that Palestine was in fact and in intention included by both parties to the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence in the area of Arab independence. This is abundantly plain from the terms of the correspondence itself and is, moreover, borne out by the evidence of the historical background.'⁸⁰⁶ The United Kingdom representatives contended that, '...the effect of the correspondence when read in the light of all the surrounding circumstances, including especially those set forth in sub-paragraph (a), was to exclude what is now called Palestine from the area in which Great Britain was to recognise and support the independence of the Arabs'.⁸⁰⁷ McMahon had previously sought to clarify his intention by publishing a letter stating, 'I feel it my duty to state, and I do so definitely and emphatically, that it was not intended by me in giving this pledge to King Hussein to include Palestine in the area in which Arab independence was promised. I also had every reason to believe at the time that the fact that Palestine was not included in my pledge was well understood by King Hussein'.⁸⁰⁸

⁸⁰⁵ Report of a Committee set up to consider certain correspondence between Sir Henry McMahon, His Majesty's High Commissioner in Egypt and The Sharif of Mecca in 1915 and 1916, March 16, 1939. Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty, March 1939, London. <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/4c4f7515dc39195185256cf7006f878c>

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁸ *London Times*, 23 July 1937.

While Britain tried to project an image of an impartial referee between the Arabs and Jews, the administration in Palestine struggled to fulfil its commitments and ultimately failed to satisfy either group. As historian Anita Shapira summed it up, ‘The story of the thirty-year-long British rule in Palestine is a tale of Britain’s slow withdrawal from its pro-Zionist commitments, the Zionist leadership’s efforts to exert pressure on the British to meet those commitments, and Arab pressure in the opposite direction, with each party accusing Britain of betrayal, reneging on its promises, and unfairness.’⁸⁰⁹ Initially, some Zionists were optimistic about the possibility of cooperation with the Arabs. At the Paris Peace Conference an agreement was signed between Zionist leader Dr Chaim Weizmann and Emir Faisal, son of the Sherif of Mecca, whereupon the Arabs recognised the Balfour Declaration and agreed to encourage Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine. According to Laqueur, this agreement was seen as highly significant by Zionists everywhere, and this was certainly so in New Zealand.⁸¹⁰ The document acknowledged the ‘racial kinship and ancient bonds existing between the Arabs and the Jewish people’, and expressed a desire for the ‘closest possible collaboration in the development of the Arab State and Palestine...’⁸¹¹ However, Faisal included a caveat, that his agreement was contingent upon Arabs obtaining their independence, and that if any changes were made to the agreement, he would not be bound by it.

In a 1936 *New Zealand Herald* article, New Zealander Louis Phillips was asked for comment on the Weizmann-Faisal letter, in response to recent Arab claims that Lawrence of Arabia had deliberately mistranslated the Arab/Jewish treaty signed in London. Faisal subsequently repudiated this agreement.⁸¹² The article pointed out that Phillips was associated with Weizmann and other Zionist leaders in formulating the Zionist proposals for the Peace Conference in 1919-20. According to the *Herald*, Phillips believed that the letter in question was probably the one addressed to Professor F. Frankfurter of Harvard University, one of the American representatives on the Jewish Zionist delegation to the Peace Conference on 3 March 1919. The *Herald* reported the following extract from this letter,

⁸⁰⁹ Anita Shapira, ‘A State in the Making’, *Israel*, Waltheim, 2012, p.74.

⁸¹⁰ Laqueur, p.238.

⁸¹¹ ‘The Weizmann-Feisal Agreement’, 3 January 1919, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-weizmann-faisal-agreement-january-1919>.

⁸¹² ‘Arabs and Jews’, *New Zealand Herald*, 20 June 1936.

We Arabs, especially the educated among us, look with the deepest sympathy upon the Zionist movement. Our deputation here in Paris is fully acquainted with the proposals submitted by the Zionist Organisation to the Peace Conference, and we regard them as moderate and proper. We will do our best, so far as we are concerned, to help them further; we wish the Jews a hearty welcome home. ... I look forward, and my people with me look forward, to a future in which we will help you, and you will help us, so that the countries in which we are mutually interested may once more take their place in the community of civilised peoples of the world.⁸¹³

Phillips claimed that at no time during the period referred to was the authenticity of the document questioned by Faisal and that the latter had raised no objection to the proposals that were being discussed. Neither did King Hussein, Faisal's father, when advised of the terms of the Balfour declaration, make any protest. Phillips argued that Faisal desired that recognition be given to the Arab claim in Mesopotamia, and he was prepared, in recognition of sympathetic support being accorded by Zionist representatives to Arab aspirations, to accord reciprocal sympathy to Zionist claims to Palestine. Phillips believed that Faisal's attitude indicated the acceptance by the Arabs of the proposed Palestine settlement as an endorsement of Zionist aspirations. The article claimed that several years later, when relations between the Jews and the Arabs in Palestine had become strained, Emir Faisal denied knowledge of the letter. Morris highlighted Faisal's fickle attitude towards the Zionists. In 1920, as the new 'king' of Damascus, Faisal appealed to Britain to give Palestine to its Arab inhabitants and in 1921, after his ouster from Damascus by the French, he claimed that Palestine had in fact been included in the Arab state area in the McMahon-Hussein correspondence.⁸¹⁴ Historian Rashid Khalidi explained Faisal's initial apparent support for Zionism as a strategy to gain British backing for his claims to Syria in opposition to the French.

Optimism about the relationship with the Palestinian Arabs was soon clouded by the events of the new decade. A series of Arab attacks on Jewish settlements took place in the Galilee panhandle and the North.⁸¹⁵ Then on 4 April 1920, Jews were attacked in Jerusalem on the Jewish festival of

⁸¹³ 'Arabs and Jews', *New Zealand Herald*, 20 June 1936.

⁸¹⁴ p.82.

⁸¹⁵ Morris, pp.92,3.

Passover. Many were wounded and killed, and property was damaged.⁸¹⁶ Another outbreak of violence against the Jews of Jaffa occurred the following year, in May 1921. The violence continued for several days, and, combined with subsequent military actions, 95 persons were killed and 219 seriously injured.⁸¹⁷ Thereafter a pattern developed whereby the British authorities undertook investigations into disturbances, followed by an official report with recommendations. A series of White Papers, official reports by a British Government commission, were produced in 1922, 1930 and 1939.

Following the riots in 1920-21 the Haycraft Commission of Enquiry was established. The commission concluded that the fundamental cause of the Jaffa riots and the subsequent acts of violence was a ‘feeling among the Arabs of discontent with, and hostility to, the Jews, due to political and economic causes, and connected with Jewish immigration’.⁸¹⁸

We have already noted the frustration of the Notables to the notion that ‘their land’ might be overtaken by Jews. Khalidi highlighted the political discontent Arabs felt, arguing that the ‘constitutional’ structure of the Mandate for Palestine was ‘...specifically designed by its British architects to exclude national self-determination for the Arab majority, even while facilitating the same end for the Jewish minority’.⁸¹⁹ He claimed that when various Arab deputations pressed Great Britain to grant them national and political rights, they were obliged to accept the terms of the Mandate as a precondition for any change in their constitutional position, and Arab leaders were not willing to accept terms that would have subordinated them as a people. Kenneth Stein concurred that Britain’s policy of dual obligation to the Arabs and Jews under the Mandate failed because the ‘obligation to establish a Jewish national home was not equivalent to protecting the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish communities. One was a statement of right; the other was a state-

⁸¹⁶ Shapira, p.76.

⁸¹⁷ Laqueur, p.209.

⁸¹⁸ Appendix A, Resume, Haycraft Commission of Enquiry into the 1920-21 Arab Riots, George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 1938, pp. 437,439. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/haycraft-commission-of-inquiry-into-the-1920-21-arab-riots-october-1921>

⁸¹⁹ Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood*, Boston, 2006, p. 32.

ment of sufferance'.⁸²⁰ Further, Khalidi contended that the Jews were recognised as a people, while the Arabs were not.

For the Jewish settlers, the 1921-1929 period was, as Stein put it, 'marked by prosperity and development, due to improved infrastructure, efficient administration, cooption into the British imperial economy and the de facto inter-communal truce'.⁸²¹ However, the vast majority of Arabs, the fellaheen, faced conditions of economic hardship. The precarious position of the rural economy prior to World War I worsened as a consequence of the war and the successive crop failures in the 1930s. Stein asserted that,

The continued retention of small and unproductive parcels of land became untenable. Factors such as insufficient plow animals, plagues, locusts, drought, usurious interest rates - all totally unrelated to Zionist policies - helped create a landless Arab population. Furthermore, economically solvent Palestinian Arabs sold land enthusiastically, voluntarily, and collusively.⁸²²

Stein argued that during the 1920s, Arab Palestinian complaints focussed primarily on the illegality of the Balfour Declaration, the Mandate system, and Jewish immigration, but not on land purchase. Indeed, statistics bear out the marked increase in Jewish immigration. In 1918 there were 60,000 Jews and almost 700,000 Arabs; by 1931 there were 175,000 Jews and 880,000 Arabs.⁸²³ Stein claimed that the opposition to land purchase arose largely in response to the British inquiries which imposed prohibitions on these acquisitions. Indeed, the while Jewish landholdings had nearly doubled during the first decade of British rule, from 650,000 dunams in 1920 to 1,163,000 in 1929, land purchases were limited not by available supply and Arab readiness to sell, but by lack of funds and initiative.⁸²⁴

⁸²⁰ Kenneth W. Stein, 'Conclusions', *Land Question in Palestine: 1917-1939*, University of North Carolina Press, 1984.

⁸²¹ Morris, p.107.

⁸²² Stein, 'Conclusions'.

⁸²³ Morris, p.107.

⁸²⁴ Morris, pp. 107, 111.

In New Zealand, the first indication of the tensions in Palestine with the local Arab population is recorded in the 1929 'Beth Israel' Annual Report.⁸²⁵ An item headed 'Palestine Disturbances' reported the 'recent excesses of the Arabs in Palestine, whereby large numbers of our co-religionists have been massacred in cold blood'.⁸²⁶ The 1929 riots were ostensibly sparked by a dispute about the respective rights of Jews and Arabs at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. Shapira records that from 23 August 1929 and for over a week Arabs attacked Jewish communities in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed, and elsewhere, destroying settlements and looting property. The attacks included 'particularly brutal acts against two helpless, non-Zionist ultra-Orthodox communities in Hebron and Safed'.⁸²⁷ The British-run security forces were inadequate to contain the violence and reinforcements were called in from Egypt and Malta. Arabs killed 133 Jews, while British forces killed 116 Arabs. Scores of people on both sides were injured.

The New Zealand Jewish community responded to the attacks on their fellow Jews by making representations to the Prime Minister, Sir Joseph Ward, which resulted in the latter communicating with the British Government and expressing the 'confidence of New Zealand Jewry that the measures taken by the present (British) Government would prove adequate to meet with and remedy the present situation'.⁸²⁸ According to the *1931 Review* a message was cabled to the British Prime Minister directly, by Alfred Nathan to voice the deep concern of the community. It recorded that, 'The Jews of NZ were deeply disturbed by the Palestine massacres on August 1929, which shocked the civilised world'. Generous contributions were made to the Palestine Emergency Fund in response to an appeal by Lord Melchett, and the Auckland Synagogue held a memorial service in memory of the victims of the massacres.⁸²⁹ However, the Jewish community's confidence in Britain would be significantly tested by the measures that eventuated. These included the Shaw Commission, followed by the Hope-Simpson Report and the 1930 White Paper.

Following the 1929 Riots, Britain established a commission of inquiry, chaired by Sir Walter Shaw, to investigate the cause and to propose policies which would prevent further violence. The

⁸²⁵ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 15 August, 1929.

⁸²⁶ Ibid.

⁸²⁷ Shapira, p.78.

⁸²⁸ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 15 August, 1929.

⁸²⁹ 1931 Review, p.101.

Shaw Commission concluded that the violence occurred due to ‘racial animosity on the part of the Arabs, consequent upon the disappointment of their political and national aspirations and fear for their economic future’.⁸³⁰ It argued that Arabs feared that with increasing Jewish immigration, the Jews would become the ‘overlords of the future’. The report expressed concern that a ‘landless and discontented class’ was being created. It recommended the restriction of ‘land alienation’ and a reconsideration of immigration policies. The commission insisted that a clear statement of policy in Palestine was required and that the government needed to clarify what was meant by the provisions in the Balfour Declaration regarding the safeguarding of the rights of non-Jewish communities in Palestine.⁸³¹

In response to the rising frustration of the Arab population of Palestine, the Shaw Commission ordered the immediate halting of Jewish immigration, until after another inquiry was undertaken to clarify British policy. The response of the New Zealand Jewish community was recorded in the 1930 ‘Beth Israel’ Annual Report which noted that the ‘restrictions imposed on immigration in the Labour schedule were the subject of world-wide protests’.⁸³² Indeed, the Jewish Agency and other representative Jewish bodies had protested to the British government. New Zealand was represented by the British Jewish Board of Deputies, which spoke on behalf of the Jews of the British Empire. The President, O. E. d’Avigdor Goldsmid, and Lord Rothschild conveyed their protest to the Colonial Secretary. The initial confidence of New Zealand’s Jewish community in Britain was severely diminished by the outcome of the Shaw Commission. This was the beginning of a series of measures that Britain would undertake, which would reverse their commitment to establishing a Jewish homeland.

The Shaw Commission was followed by the Hope-Simpson Report, 1 October 1930, which addressed the wider issues of immigration, land settlement and development. This report made several recommendations as to future British policy in Palestine, some of which were adopted in the Passfield White Paper, also published 1 October 1930. The White Paper reiterated the recommendation to restrict Jewish immigration and land purchases. Zionists interpreted the White Paper as extremely hostile and reacted strongly. Weizmann resigned as president of the Zionist Organisa-

⁸³⁰ https://ecf.org.il/media_items/1464 Shaw Commission Report excerpts.

⁸³¹ https://ecf.org.il/media_items/1464 Shaw Commission Report excerpts.

⁸³² Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 15 August, 1930.

tion in protest, stating that Britain had betrayed its promises. The *1931 Review* reported that the temporary stoppage of immigration into Palestine pending John Simpson's report aroused deep concern and this deepened into indignation with the issue of the White Paper by the British Government in October 1930. The Auckland Zionist Society had been assured by Lord Allenby in 1926 of 'his faith in the success of the movement', and by the Right Hon. L.M.S. Amery formerly the Minister responsible for the Administration of Palestine, during his visit to Auckland 'that the British Government would carry out the Balfour Declaration in favour of a Jewish National Home in Palestine both in the letter and the spirit'.⁸³³ Alfred Nathan and Rabbi Goldstein conveyed the protests of the New Zealand Jewish community to New Zealand's Prime Minister, George Forbes, who passed them on to the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald. Many prominent British statesmen and jurists claimed that the White Paper contravened the Mandate instrument and demanded its annulment.⁸³⁴ It was denounced by Lloyd George and General Smuts who had played a part in the establishment of the Mandate and was the subject of debate in the British House of Commons.⁸³⁵ In response to the furore, the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald published a letter on 13 February 1931, to Weizmann, seeking to soften some of the provisions of the White paper. It reaffirmed the obligation to facilitate Jewish immigration and make possible dense settlement of Jews on the land, without jeopardizing the rights and conditions of the non-Jewish population.⁸³⁶ MacDonald's letter appeared to ease the concerns of New Zealand Zionists. The 1931 Annual Report recorded that it was fortunate that the assurances given by the Rt.. Hon Mr Ramsay MacDonald and other leaders had abated 'the storm' raised by the publication of the White Paper and expressed confidence that the spirit embodied in the Balfour Declaration was to be interpreted as intended by the original signatories. It was noted that in spite of the worldwide economic depression, the activities, in connection with direct colonisation and immigration, were 'proceeding on satisfactory lines'.

Israeli scholar Hillel Cohen has highlighted the significance of the 1929 riots, which would have a long lasting effect on the way that the Jews and Arabs viewed each other. He claimed that,

⁸³³ 1931 Review, p.103.

⁸³⁴ Shapira, p.79.

⁸³⁵ Cohen, P.132.

⁸³⁶ Shapira, p.79.

the fears and hopes of the Arabs of Palestine collided head-on with the aspirations and frustrations of the Jews... During the course of the riots, many — perhaps most — Jews and Arabs came to believe that they were caught in an unbearable, bloody conflict with each other, and this view became indelibly fixed in their minds.⁸³⁷

Cohen argued that 1929 brought the Yishuv together in unity for the first time. The majority of Jewish victims were from undefended groups that predated the more recent Zionist settlements, the long-established Mizrahi, Maghrebi, and religious Jewish communities. The new settlements were able to defend themselves with the help of the Haganah (the Yishuv's defence force). The non-Zionist groups realised that they now needed the sort of defence that the Zionist settlements had developed. Arabs also began to see Jews as a homogeneous group, in the sense that whether they were Mizrahi, Haredim, or Secular, they each (in the Arab view) shared the goal of establishing a Jewish state. As Cohen put it, '...the 1929 riots founded the Yishuv. That is, following the riots, the disparate Jewish community in Palestine became the single Yishuv'.⁸³⁸ The lines of division could be clearly seen; the Arabs believed the Zionists were taking over their land and taking control of their country, while the Zionists viewed their movement as both a 'national liberation movement and a humanitarian rescue mission'.⁸³⁹

Another outcome of the 1929 Riots was a shift in the Zionist approach to land purchase to provide for the strategic and security requirements of the Jewish communities. Whereas in the 1920s the goal was to buy large blocks from as few owners as possible, after the 1929 Disturbances, buying land close to other Jewish settlements and seeking to create strings of contiguous settlements became a priority. In the early 1930s the Jewish Agency and JNF began to work together to establish blocks of uninterrupted Jewish ownership, particularly in the fertile coastal and valley regions. Resident Arab tenants who received monetary compensation from either the purchaser or seller were now expected to vacate the land they once worked and would not be physically resettled between existing Jewish settlements. According to Stein, 'the factor of location and the degree of disturbance an acquisition could evoke, or the amount of security it might require became impor-

⁸³⁷ Hillel Cohen, *Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1929*, Brandeis University Press, 2015, p.xi.

⁸³⁸ Cohen, p.xi.

⁸³⁹ Cohen, p.259.

tant to the JNF's decision-making process as the Mandate progressed. Political ramifications and strategic considerations became paramount.⁸⁴⁰

The Zionists in New Zealand tended to focus on the positive contributions of Jewish land purchase and settlement, as exemplified by Wellington's Rabbi Katz's speech delivered in 1937. The Rabbi listed a number of benefits that had accrued to Christians, Arabs, and Moslems, such as the draining of malarial swamps and the establishment of sanitary systems and medical services. He argued that the setting up of industrial and commercial enterprises had resulted in increased prosperity for the poverty-stricken Arab peasants and improved labour conditions through advanced laws protecting the worker.⁸⁴¹

Arab Riots, Peel Commission and Partition Plan: 1936-1939

By 1936 Palestinian Arab nationalism had grown and the Jewish population had continued to increase. In 1935, 62,000 Jews immigrated to Palestine, (fuelled by the exodus of Jews from Europe), representing the largest intake in a single year during the Mandate period.⁸⁴² Shapira argued that, 'For the first time, radical political forces appeared in the Arab street'.⁸⁴³ New forces outside the traditional clan power structures emerged in the 1930s. The Istiklal (Independence) party was established in 1932, and espoused pan-Arabism, independence (with Palestine part of a Greater Syria) and the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration.⁸⁴⁴ It appealed to educated urban Arab youth, at least in the initial stages and directed its violent demonstrations and demand for self-government towards the British authorities. Adding fuel to the fire was the fact that Arabs elsewhere, in Iraq, Egypt, Syria, were making progress towards independence, while in Palestine they were foundering. Khalidi argued that the British used well-honed methods to keep control of the Arab majority in Mandate Palestine, which included cultivating relationships with the Notables, the traditional aristocratic elites and creating new or re-fashioning institutions with no precedent in the country's history.⁸⁴⁵ He contended that the efforts of the Notables to lobby and

⁸⁴⁰ Stein p.196.

⁸⁴¹ 'Local and General', *Thames Star*, 13 September 1937.

⁸⁴² Shapira, p.81.

⁸⁴³ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁴ Benny Morris, p.125.

⁸⁴⁵ Khalidi, p.42.

advocate for the national aspirations of the Arabs in Palestine were ultimately fruitless and by the mid 1930s, the frustration caused by loss of land and livelihoods, the lack of political rights and the fear that the country was being overtaken by Zionists, broke out in violence on the streets.

The Palestinian Arab Revolt was sparked by the death of Sheikh 'Iz al-Din al-Qassam in November 1935. A Syrian-born, Egyptian-educated preacher and cleric, al-Qassam preached fundamentalist Islam and called for *jihad* against the British and the Yishuv.⁸⁴⁶ He established a clandestine terrorist network called the Black Hand and gathered a following amongst poor, uneducated peasants. His death at the hands of British troops led to a huge popular demonstration at his funeral. Morris argued that 'his deeds and death captured the imagination of a generation of Palestinians and helped spark the Arab revolt that erupted six months later'.⁸⁴⁷ The Arab Higher Committee, led by Haj Amin al-Husseni, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, and which included leaders of Palestinian Arab clans and political parties under the mufti's chairmanship, took command of the uprising and demanded cessation of immigration and land sales, and called for representational governance. A ceasefire was called by surrounding Arab states in October 1936 and this enabled the British Government to launch another official enquiry. The Palestine Royal Commission (the Peel Commission) was a high-ranking body whose task was to examine the entire issue of Palestine and propose a long-term solution. Shapira commented that the subsequent report was 'the most thorough, comprehensive, and intelligent document ever written on Palestine during the British Mandate'.⁸⁴⁸ Its conclusion was also considered radical, as it admitted that the promises given to the Jews and Arabs could not be reconciled and the Mandate was unworkable. The commission proposed a plan to partition the country and establish two independent states, Jewish and Arab. The partition proposal led to dispute among the Jews with some seeing it as the beginning of an independent Jewish state, whilst others opposed giving up so much of the historical land of Israel, especially since a large portion of the original Mandate had already been handed over to the Arabs to create Transjordan. For the Arabs the response was universal rejection and in 1937, Arab rebellion in Palestine resumed and continued until 1939. The British authorities struggled to quash the rebellion, even though martial law had been imposed and harsh punishment was meted out to rebels.

⁸⁴⁶ Morris, p.126.

⁸⁴⁷ Morris, p.127, Khalidi, p.105.

⁸⁴⁸ Shapira, p.84,85.

Rabbi Astor's view of the proposed partition plan was recorded in the *Auckland Star*, July 1937. He doubted whether the plan would solve the conflict, commenting that the area of the Jewish section was too small and that millions of Jews in countries of persecution, such as Poland and Germany, who had looked to Palestine as their hope of salvation, would have their expectations dashed to the ground. He reiterated that Jerusalem was the spiritual centre for the Jewish people throughout the world, and they had prayed for peace for Jerusalem during the 2000 years of their exile, and that even though Jews were the majority in the city of Jerusalem, it was not to be in the portion assigned to them. The Rabbi was disappointed that the national home of the Jews would be reduced to less than a third of what they had hoped for. He reminded readers that the original Mandate had already been partitioned in 1922 when Transjordan was created and given to the Arabs under the Emir Abdullah. Astor believed that the Arabs who would live under Jewish administration would be protected, but that there was no guarantee that the Jews living in Arab portions would be secure. Indeed, he argued, past experience had shown that at any time they might be attacked. Astor reiterated that the Jews had time and again expressed their desire to live at peace with the Arabs and he believed that, had the original terms of the Mandate been carried out, there would be no fear of Jewish domination of the Arabs nor of interference with holy places. He blamed outsiders for aggravating the situation.⁸⁴⁹

The views of Wellington's Rabbi Katz on the 'Arab Crisis', presented at a meeting of the International Study Circle in Wellington, were recorded in the *Thames Star*, September 1937. Katz believed that there had likely been some misunderstanding on the part of the Arabs, partly due to Lawrence, and that they had expected that the expulsion of the Turks would automatically place Palestine under Arab rule. But, he argued, the British Government had promised the Arabs independence but never sovereignty. He further claimed that the Arabs had no historical claim to Palestine, whereas the Jewish claim and the Jewish faith that some time the Holy Land would be restored to them was age-old. Katz recounted some of the social and cultural developments in the land, such as the establishment of the university and the resurrection of the Hebrew language, and further reiterated that the power behind all this progress was the 'Jewish idealism' that had sustained them 'during the darkest ages'.⁸⁵⁰

⁸⁴⁹ 'Jews and Arabs', *Auckland Star*, 10 July 1937.

⁸⁵⁰ 'Local and General', *Thames Star*, 13 September 1937.

The predominant view as espoused by Zionist publications in New Zealand, foregrounded the existential needs of the Jewish people who had suffered centuries of dispossession and deprivation, which had culminated in the threat of annihilation in Germany and desperate attempts to rescue refugees. These issues, combined with a sense of ancient historical connection to the land were powerful drivers. Arabs were largely seen as a homogeneous group that they had fared well under the League of Nations post-war agreements. The perspective of many New Zealand Zionists is summarised by an article in the 1944 *New Zealand Jewish Chronicle*, which displayed a map of the Middle East comparing the territory that Arabs had received following the Allied victory in World War I to that received by the Jews. The article explained that the Arabs had gained sovereignty over more than 1,200,000 square miles, which included six large Arab States: Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iraq, Transjordan, Syrian and Lebanon. The Jews received a promise which involved Palestine, 'their never-forgotten historic homeland'. The article continued, 'Its small area of 10,500 square miles West of the Jordan can be the salvation of the Jewish people. Jewish achievement in Palestine during the last two decades has proved this'.⁸⁵¹ Indeed, some, like Katz did not acknowledge that the Arabs had any historic right to the land.

The Partition Plan presented by the British government failed to meet the expectations of either side of the conflict. Zionist bulletins reported on the benefit that Jewish immigration had brought to the Arabs and spoke favourably of the progress and development that had taken place in Palestine. Laqueur argued that 'the immigration wave of 1933-1935 (134,000 legal immigrants), far from reducing absorptive capacity of the country, actually increased it. The more immigrants, the more work they created for local industry. Palestinian imports and exports rose by more than 50 per cent between 1933 and 1935'.⁸⁵² However, Morris pointed out that the economy underwent a crisis following the League of Nations imposed sanctions on Italy, which led to businesses closing and the spread of unemployment. The Yishuv prioritised 'Hebrew labour' which led to joblessness for many Arab workers, which in addition to a drought during 1931-1934 and the fall of agricultural production in some areas, increased the pauperisation of many Arab families.⁸⁵³

⁸⁵¹ 'Palestine and the Arab Lands', *The New Zealand Jewish Chronicle*, September 1944, No.1, Vol.1, p. 14.

⁸⁵² Laqueur, pp.508,9.

⁸⁵³ Morris, pp.127,8.

In 1939 another British White Paper was published. An attempt to bring Arabs and Jews together in a conference in London had failed. Britain had conceded to most Arab demands: immigration would be limited to 75,000 over a period of five years and any further immigration would be conditional upon Arab consent; Palestine would become an independent Arab majority state after a ten-year transitional period, and land sales in most regions of the country would be restricted.⁸⁵⁴ The immigration restrictions were devastating for the Jewish community with thousands of refugees pouring out of Germany under Nazi rule.

The New Zealand Jewish community reacted strongly to the White Paper. The Annual Report that year recorded that the White Paper evoked worldwide protest and noted that in the British parliament it was condemned by the Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Snell, the Earl of Lytton, the Rt.Hon L.S. Emery and the Rt. Hon Winston Churchill, later Prime Minister.⁸⁵⁵ The Board of Deputies of British Jews, which New Zealand subscribed to, unanimously resolved that the White Paper represented a ‘fundamental departure from the pledges given and the obligations accepted in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine’, and rejected the proposed policies. The Board resolved to appeal to His Majesty’s Government to reconsider its policy and to carry out the terms of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine. The 1939 Annual Report noted that immediately upon the publication of the White Paper a committee was constituted in Auckland to deal with the response. Several meetings were held. Telegrams were sent to the Presidents of the southern congregations and representations were made to the Prime Minister, Michael Joseph Savage, who conveyed the protest of New Zealand Jewry to the British Government. Cables were sent to Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and also to the leading members of the Government in the House of Lords and in the House of Commons, whom Zionists believed were sympathetic to their cause. The message was reported in the local papers, which read, ‘Auckland Jewry appalled at Palestine proposals, and deplore repudiation of Balfour declaration and mandate reducing Jews to ghetto status in promised national home. We loyally urge retention of British mandate and fulfilment of solemn world pledges’.⁸⁵⁶ In addition, the four congregations drew up a Memorandum of Protest, which was published in the daily pa-

⁸⁵⁴ Shapira, p.87.

⁸⁵⁵ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 15 August,1939.

⁸⁵⁶ ‘Strong Feeling in New Zealand’, *Press*, 20 May 1939.

pers in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. A Service of Intercession was held during Shevuoth when special prayers were offered on behalf of the Jews in Palestine. The Annual Report recorded that ‘an impressive address was delivered by the Rev. A. Astor’. The congregation expressed its indebtedness to Professor Julius Stone, at that time working at Auckland University College and from 1942 Challis Professor of Jurisprudence and International Law at the University of Sydney. They thanked him for his valuable services in the preparation of the Memorandum of Protest and for his and Mrs Stone’s contribution since their arrival in Auckland to a better knowledge of Zionism and Jewish world activities.⁸⁵⁷ The Wellington Jewish community despatched a cablegram to the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, stating that ‘the Jewish citizens join the world-wide protest against the contemplated abrogation of the Palestine Mandate, and urging the reconsideration and fulfilment of the Balfour Declaration and Britain’s solemn pledges’.⁸⁵⁸ A response to the White Paper was recorded in the Annual Report of the Wellington congregation that year, which also exhorted the community, ‘It behoves every Jew and Jewess to scorn any defeatist attitude, and to stand firmly and loyally in defence of our ideals and principles.’⁸⁵⁹

While the Annual Reports give an insight into the actions and responses to the events taking place in Palestine, the words of Rabbi Astor give a sense of the deeper sentiments of the people. Astor’s views on the developments in Palestine were presented during a Pesach service at the Synagogue, and printed in the *Auckland Star* and the *New Zealand Herald*, in May 1939.⁸⁶⁰ Astor expressed the shock of the Jewish people who deplored the British Government’s new plans for Palestine. Indeed the proposals had ‘struck consternation into their hearts’.⁸⁶¹ The Rabbi reminded his audience of the deeply held desire of the Jews to return to the ancestral homeland, ‘the cradle of our faith, where the Jew can live unhampered and unfettered a full Jewish life, and our ideals be de-

⁸⁵⁷ Stone was born in Leeds, England to parents who were poor Lithuanian Jewish refugees.

⁸⁵⁸ ‘Jewish Non-Co-op Programme’, *Northern Advocate*, 23 May 1939.

⁸⁵⁹ The Wellington Hebrew Congregation: Extracts from the Annual Reports (1930 - 1977), Eds. Stephen Levine, A Standard for the People, The 150th Anniversary of the Wellington Hebrew Congregation 1843-1993, p. 124.

⁸⁶⁰ ‘Palestine Plan’, *New Zealand Herald*, 25 May 1939, Jewish Crises, *Auckland Star*, 24 May 1939.

⁸⁶¹ ‘Palestine Plan’, *New Zealand Herald*, 25 May 1939.

veloped and find expression'.⁸⁶² He spoke of the two thousand years of suffering and trial, where Jews prayed daily for a return to their spiritual centre. He recounted the history of Britain's commitment and support for the Zionist movement, beginning in the nineteenth century, mentioning the many statesmen who had advocated on behalf of persecuted Jews, and especially Lord Balfour. He noted that Britain had been admired as the protector of the oppressed and persecuted. Astor gave a detailed description of the way in which the national home had been reduced, even in the face of the growing tragedy of 'six million European Jews'. He made the point that throughout these 'cruel deprivations' Jewish loyalty to Britain never wavered. The Rabbi argued that the Jews had constantly sought agreement with the Arabs and, according to the Peel Commission, the Arabs had had a generous share in the material benefits which Jewish immigration had brought to Palestine. This sharing, Astor believed, had been a spontaneous gesture by the Jews. Jewish health services, like the Plunket infant welfare centres, were open to Jew and Arab alike. Jewish workers had organised Arab and joint Arab Jewish trade unions to raise the Arab standard of living. Astor further submitted that no proof existed that the Jews had displaced anyone, 'save the mosquito and its malarial parasites', or that there was the slightest danger of Jews dominating Arabs, but rather the opposite. Astor praised the energy and industry of the Jews in conquering 'almost insuperable obstacles' in the task of restoring land, which had deteriorated through centuries of neglect. He argued that the Jews sought in every way to co-operate with the Arabs. He concluded his sermon by calling on fellow Jews to show courage, to have faith and trust, and to work and sacrifice for the cause. He urged his congregants to stand by their people in the 'dark hour of our history', stating, 'Our brave brethren in Palestine must be backed by the Jewish people of the Diaspora, whose duty it is to pour out freely the funds necessary for the struggle to defend our National Home'.

Zionists in New Zealand and Australia had held out hope that Palestine would become a part of the British Commonwealth. While recognising the great difficulties which Britain had faced in discharging its obligations, Astor argued that bringing the Holy Land within the framework of the British Commonwealth of Nations, that is, making Palestine a Crown colony, was a solution that should be considered. This idea had been discussed amongst Zionists in Australia and New Zealand over the previous years. In 1935 Wellington's Rabbi Katz had stated in a thanksgiving service for the Silver Jubilee of his Majesty's accession to the throne, that 'nothing would please the

⁸⁶² Jewish Crises, *Auckland Star*, 24 May 1939.

Jewish people more than for Palestine to become the seventh Dominion, so that it may permanently become a unit of the British Empire'.⁸⁶³ In fact this argument had been articulated by British politician Josiah Clement Wedgwood in his book *The Seventh Dominion*, published in 1928.⁸⁶⁴ In 1937 Rabbi Israel Brodie of Melbourne visited New Zealand and expressed the hope that one day Palestine would achieve Dominion status within the British Commonwealth of Nations.⁸⁶⁵ In 1938, Astor attended the annual conference of the Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand in Sydney, along with forty representatives from the various Australian States.⁸⁶⁶ A resolution had been passed with unanimous support from the members of the conference, affirming confidence in the British Government and expressing the hope that Palestine would become a colony under the protection of Britain and the Empire.⁸⁶⁷

Women Zionist Movement

The early 1930s were relatively quiet for New Zealand Zionists. New Zealand, as part of a global recession, was passing through a difficult financial period. The 1931 Annual Report noted the difficulties Zionism faced both politically and economically.⁸⁶⁸ In 1932, finances towards Zionist projects were suspended in order to assist with Synagogue finances.⁸⁶⁹ 1933 was the first time in many years that New Zealand was not represented at the Zionist Congress, which was held in Prague. It was also the year of the rise of Hitler in Germany, and despite the financial stringency, an appeal was made for the relief of refugees with over £336 raised.⁸⁷⁰ Goldstein, a stalwart Zionist leader, was coming to the end of his tenure, and passed away in 1935. A new leadership was ushered in with the arrival of Rabbi and Mrs Astor in Auckland. Rabbi Astor became the president of the Zionist Society in 1936.

⁸⁶³ 'Palestine', *Evening Post*, 13 May 1935.

⁸⁶⁴ J. C. Wedgwood, *The Seventh Dominion*, London, 1928.

⁸⁶⁵ 'Aorangi Arrives', *Auckland Star*, 19 April 1937.

⁸⁶⁶ 'Palestine Haven', *Auckland Star*, 29 March 1938.

⁸⁶⁷ 'Zionists Meet', *New Zealand Herald*, 30 March 1938.

⁸⁶⁸ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 15 August, 1931.

⁸⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 15 August, 1932.

⁸⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 15 August, 1933.

A noteworthy feature of this period is that despite the economic depression in the 1930s which affected other Zionist Societies, the Women Zionists continued their work unabated and remained strong. In 1931 when the Auckland Zionist Society reported on the economic difficulties affecting their work, the New Zealand Women Zionist Society (Auckland Branch) recorded that even though it was a time of economic stress their Branch was able to meet its obligations without making a special appeal. The annual subscriptions had come in so generously, despite the bad times, that together with the funds in hand they were able to contribute their quota of £150 toward their commitment to help maintain the New Zealand Infant Welfare Centre in Tel Aviv. Mrs Nathan had taken a trip overseas, and even though hindered by illness, she was able to visit Palestine and inspect the infant welfare work. She met with Dr Grunfelder, medical head of Hadassah Infant Welfare work in Palestine, and negotiated an agreement of co-operation between that organisation and the Women's International Zionist Organisation. A Board was established on which WIZO, Hadassah and the Municipality would be represented and which would supervise all the infant welfare work in Tel Aviv. Nathan was 'more than satisfied' with the way in which the work was being carried out. The Annual Report recorded that when the infant welfare work began, the infantile death rate was 333 per thousand; now the figures were 60 per thousand for the Jews of the whole country, and 50 per thousand for Tel Aviv.⁸⁷¹ Mrs Nathan had taken with her a large parcel of garments from the Auckland Branch, the product of many sewing bees, which had been gratefully acknowledged from 'Erez Israel'. The Women's organisation was endeavouring to establish a link with their 'sisters' in Palestine through a correspondence group.⁸⁷² In 1932, when many of the community groups pooled together their finances to help the flailing Synagogue fund, WIZO was able not only to help with the Synagogue debt but also to maintain its quota towards its Centre in Tel Aviv. This was due to a Reserve Fund that had been established when times were prosperous. At the 1933 Second Dominion Conference of NZWIZO a commitment was made to send annually £350 from the four branches towards maintenance of the NZ Infant Welfare Centre in Palestine. There had been an influx of German refugee mothers and babies to Palestine, in response to the rise of Hitler in Germany, and the work in Tel Aviv was expanding. Tel Aviv had grown so much as a city that the New Zealand Centre was moved to the northern quarter with funding assistance from Keren Hayesod. Women Zionists in New Zealand were kept

⁸⁷¹ John Efron records, 'As a result the Jewish mortality rate fell from 12.6 per 1,000 in 1924 to 9.6 per 1,000 in 1930. Jewish infant mortality in the Yishuv also declined sharply over that same period, from 105 per 1,000 to 69 per 1,000', Efron, John. *The Jews*, New York, 2019, Kindle Edition, p.408.

⁸⁷² Beth Israel Congregation, 15 August, 1931.

busy with a round of fundraising activities; a 'Happy Day Thought Fund', Bridge parties, afternoon teas, stalls with goods from Palestine displayed and sold, raffles, and sewing bees. Business meetings were held during the sewing bees where reports of the infant welfare work were read. The NZWIZO report's concluding remarks on the local movement, was that, 'All are still working diligently for Zionism and are anxious to gain as many new members as possible'.⁸⁷³

The infant welfare centres established by New Zealand women Zionists were at the centre of the new round of Arab violence that broke out in 1936, but as a place of refuge. The 1936 WIZO report included an article published by WIZO London, on the Mothercraft Training Centre which housed the New Zealand Infant Welfare Centre. The centre had been used by the civic authorities as a refuge for homeless women and children from the colonies suffering from Arab attacks. The same report commented on 'the splendid manner in which all the women of TA (Tel Aviv) rallied to the emergency and proved their efficient organisation'. It was also recorded that in spite of the 'critical time' through which Palestine was passing and despite the many calls on all members of the Community, WIZO had been able to meet its obligations and show a satisfactory balance sheet towards that year's commitment. While the work of the women Zionists has been covered in more depth elsewhere in this thesis, it is worth noting the success with which they were able to maintain their commitments, regardless of general financial pressures, and the ebbing of enthusiasm in other local Zionist groups. Nathan's indefatigable leadership surely contributed, along with the identification and visceral connection women were able to establish with the 'mothers and babies' in Palestine. After her return to New Zealand Nathan gave a talk at the Auckland branch of the Federation of University Women on 'The Progress of Modern Palestine'.⁸⁷⁴

⁸⁷³ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 15 August, 1934.

⁸⁷⁴ *Poverty Bay Herald*, 20 November 1937.

Conclusion

By 1939, New Zealand's Jewish community, along with those in other nations, was greatly disappointed by Britain's failure to uphold its commitments as laid out in the Mandate for Palestine. The hope which Zionists held in 1920 after their initial political successes had all but vanished. The local societies had worked steadily at fundraising throughout this period, and responded to urgent pleas for assistance at times of crisis. The women's Zionist group, in particular, continued strongly, despite economic downturns and political challenges. The practical tasks kept women busy, and the pull of helping their 'sisters' in Palestine kept them motivated. As British commissions and enquiries led to the diminishing of the promises made, the local Jewish community was actively engaged politically and had the support of the New Zealand government in making their protests known to Britain.

Rabbi Astor as a passionate Zionist and leader of the Auckland community, expressed the disappointment of many, when he stated that it seemed that the 'solemn legal obligations, reinforced by humanity and approved by the civilised world' and the strenuous work put into building up the land had come to nothing and that now there was to be no national home for the Jews.⁸⁷⁵ In his 1939 Pentecost sermon, Astor opined that it appeared the world was willing to 'surrender the Jewish people in Palestine to the mercy of an Arab majority' and 'ignore the tragic plight of the Jews in Europe'. He believed that the Jews had sought in every way to co-operate with the Arabs. On the eve of another world war, the flush of the success of the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate for Palestine had long since dissipated. Although there had been much progress in the 'upbuilding' of Palestine, the conflict with the Arabs and Britain's failure to manage the competing expectations of Arabs and Jews was a massive blow for Zionists. For New Zealand's Jewish community the disappointment was more keenly felt, in light of the loyalty they had held towards Britain. While Britain had ordered the closing of Palestine's gates to Jewish immigrants, the refugee crises was rapidly growing and the clouds of war forebode further ill-fortune for the Jews of Europe.

⁸⁷⁵ 'Palestine Plan', *New Zealand Herald*, 25 May 1939.

CHAPTER NINE

The Astor Years and How New Zealand's Response to the Nazi Persecution of Jews contributed to Zionism: 1934-1948

Let us deepen our Jewish consciousness, participate heartily and sincerely in all that concerns our people, and let our sentiments become translated into deeds. Let us all be united in the great effort of regeneration, in the gigantic work of reconstruction which lies before us. Then we will be able to rejoice in the satisfaction that we have had a share in the edifice of Israel's liberty, Israel's regeneration, Israel's glory.⁸⁷⁶ (Rabbi Astor, 1937).

Rabbi Alexander Astor became the leading rabbi of the Auckland Hebrew Congregation in 1934 and led the community in the crucial years leading up to the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Astor was an ardent Zionist and an eloquent spokesman, who used his platform to rally the people for the cause he believed in. Newspapers and Jewish publications often published his speeches and messages, which were delivered on Jewish festivals, commemorative events and other special occasions. An examination of his work gives insight into the way in which he led his congregation during a time of upheaval for the Jewish people globally. It shows how he interpreted Zionism for the local community in the context of the international crises faced by Jews over this period. This chapter considers the purposes of Zionism, as articulated by Astor, not only for the Jews in Palestine, but for the local community living in the diaspora. It also explores the cohesiveness of the community. While intra-communal differences arose, leaders like Astor worked hard to maintain unity. Records show that while divergent views were held within the community, for the most part, opposing forces within Zionism did not result in associational divergence. However, as Zionists moved closer to their goal, Astor's religious concerns led to one of the rare instances of an intra-communal conflict on an ideological basis, as will be discussed.

The year 1933 saw the rise of Hitler and the Nazi party in Germany which led to the increasing persecution of Jews. By the late 1930s many New Zealand Jews became actively engaged in assisting refugees fleeing Nazi Germany and Europe. This activity built on a history of providing help to fellow Jews in need. Indeed, some members of the community exerted much effort in helping their co-religionists. Many who were prominent in this activity were also ardent Zionists

⁸⁷⁶ 'Israel's Glory', *Auckland Star*, 16 September 1937.

who have been studied in this thesis; Simone Nathan, Louis Phillips and Rabbi Astor, strengthening the argument that humanitarianism was a key driver of Zionist activity. This chapter will trace the varied New Zealand responses to the Jewish refugee crises, from the government, to community groups and individuals. It seeks to understand how the plight of European Jews contributed to the push towards a Jewish state and what role New Zealand played in that endeavour. It considers the position of the New Zealand government on the refugee crises, led by Peter Fraser, Prime Minister under the First Labour Government from 1940 to 1949, and shows how it contrasted greatly with its attitude towards the Zionist goal of establishing a Jewish state. It also explores the conflict that arose for local Jews as loyal Britons and dedicated Zionists, when the British administration in Palestine became increasingly vexed and volatile.

Rabbi Astor and the two-fold mission of Zionism

This enquiry into Zionism in New Zealand has shown that the traditional humanitarianism and philanthropy of the Jewish people motivated their support for a homeland for fellow suffering Jews in other lands. This chapter will investigate more closely the role Zionism fulfilled, not just for suffering Jews elsewhere, but for Jews in New Zealand. It will focus on the work and writing of Rabbi Astor, precisely because, as a significant leader in the Jewish community and a committed Zionist, he influenced many people. Furthermore, in Astor we have the relatively rare phenomenon of a significant body of writings, published and unpublished, by which one can trace his thinking.

Rabbi Astor took up the reins of the Auckland Hebrew congregation in the months leading up to Rabbi Goldstein's passing in 1935. He would serve the community until his retirement in 1971. In his final sermon in 1971, Rabbi Astor attributed his passion for Zionism to his father, Theodore Ostroff, whom he described as 'a pious and devout scholar and rabbi' who embraced Zionism at a time when many rabbis opposed the movement because it was seen as a man-made attempt to hasten the time of Messiah.⁸⁷⁷ Astor's parents hailed from southern Lithuania, then ruled by Russia, but Alexander, one of eight children, was born in Helsinki Finland.⁸⁷⁸ The Ostroffs immigrated to London in 1900, and Alexander was registered as a British citizen. Theodor Ostroff was a

⁸⁷⁷ 'Rabbi Astor's last sermon 17 July 1971', *New Zealand Jewish Chronicle*, 27 June, 1988.

⁸⁷⁸ Ann J. Gluckman. 'Astor, Alexander', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 2000. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5a23/astor-alexander> (accessed 27 July 2019)

rabbi and Talmudic scholar. An essay on Astor, written by fellow Masonic Lodge member, A.A. Israel, in 1988, described Astor's father, Theodor Ostroff, as a 'lifelong Zionist' and a writer of international reputation within world Jewry.⁸⁷⁹ According to Israel, Ostroff's closest friend was Rabbi Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of Palestine. Today, scholars regard Kook as a significant thinker who bridged the gap between religious Judaism and modern Jewish nationalism; in the view of the political scientist, Shlomo Avineri, Kook formulated a 'comprehensive Zionist religious-national philosophy'.⁸⁸⁰ Israel records that Theodor Ostroff eventually emigrated to Israel, died there and was buried next to his friend, Rabbi Kook. I would argue that Astor's embrace of both Judaism and Zionism reflected the influence of Theodor Ostroff and his friend Rabbi Kook.

Zionism had been an integral part of Astor's life since childhood. He claimed that as a young boy, he saw the Jewish National Fund as 'a living thing' and had fond memories of dedicating many hours to selling Jewish National Fund stamps and distributing Blue Boxes (collection boxes kept in people's homes).⁸⁸¹ He recalled hearing Arthur Balfour speak in 1917, at a celebration of the Balfour Declaration at Kingsway hall in London.⁸⁸² This experience made a deep impression on him. Astor trained for the ministry at the Yeshiva Etz Chaim theological seminary and then Jews' College, London. In 1925, Chief Rabbi J. H. Hertz persuaded Astor to serve in the British Empire. With the encouragement of visiting New Zealanders, the Theomins and Halsteds, Astor made the decision to minister in Dunedin. Theomin, who had anglicised his own name, recommended the change of name from Ostroff to Astor. This reflected their perception that the post-war climate in New Zealand was xenophobic. There was said to be a 'certain prejudice' against foreigners.⁸⁸³ Astor arrived in Dunedin in 1926 with his new bride Rebecca Astor. In 1931 he was

⁸⁷⁹ Bro. A.A. Israel, 'V.W. Bro. Rabbi Alexander Astor, O.B.E. Past Grand Chaplain: The Minister, The Mason, The Man', Waikato Lodge of Research, No, 445, 1988.

⁸⁸⁰ Shlomo Avineri, 'Rabbi Kook: The Dialectics of Redemption', *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State*, New York, 2107 Kindle Edition, loc. 3683.

⁸⁸¹ 'Rabbi Astor's last sermon 17 July 1971', *New Zealand Jewish Chronicle*, 27 June, 1988. (Original copy, Rabbi Astor collection, p.111).

⁸⁸² Abba Eban, *An Autobiography*, 1977, Republished by Plunket Lake Press, 2015, p.7; Dennis Brian, *The Seven Lives of Colonel Patterson*, New York, 2008, p. 115.

⁸⁸³ Ibid.

called to assist the Auckland rabbi, Samuel Goldstein, and took over in 1934 when the ageing rabbi retired.⁸⁸⁴

In his 1988 retrospective, Israel suggested that a compilation of Astor's sermons would provide a 'useful and revealing insight into the hopes, fears and aspirations, as well as the political views of British Jewry throughout the period'.⁸⁸⁵ In reality, Astor was the son of immigrants to Britain, so he represented a particular demographic within British Jewry of those with an East European background. His was not the dominant British establishment perspective which tended to be anti-Zionist out of a sense of British loyalty. Rabbi Astor did maintain a high degree of loyalty to the Crown, but, like his predecessor Rabbi Goldstein, he managed to reconcile his devotion to Empire with his Zionist views. Astor understood the prejudices faced by Jews in Eastern Europe from whence his family originated. Like Goldstein, Astor expressed gratitude for the benefits Jews had received under the British Crown, such as the acquisition of equal rights of citizens. He regarded King George V with particular affection, partly due to his perceived connection to Jewish aspirations in Palestine. The king was compared to Cyrus, a reference to the Persian King, who held a special place in the history of Israel. He is recorded in the Bible as one who was chosen by God to save Israel, and whose edict paved the way for the return to Zion and the re-building of the temple.⁸⁸⁶ King George was perceived as having 'delivered them and enabled them to return to their historic home in Palestine'.⁸⁸⁷ Astor recounted that in the King's boyhood days, when the future George V was a young midshipman on the *Bacchante*, he spent the Passover of the year 1882 in Jerusalem, and was a deeply interested participant in the Jewish service and ceremonies. More than forty years later, the Balfour Declaration became, in Astor's view, the crowning glory of his reign. As a tribute on behalf of British Jewry, the King George Forest was to be planted in Israel.⁸⁸⁸ Astor continued to declare Jewish allegiance to the Crown, as a sacred duty, throughout his ministry. During the 1930s he expressed great faith in Britain's role in overseeing the task of

⁸⁸⁴ Ann J. Gluckman. 'Astor, Alexander', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 2000. *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5a23/astor-alexander> (accessed 27 July 2019).

⁸⁸⁵ Bro. A.A. Israel, p.8.

⁸⁸⁶ <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/cyrus>

⁸⁸⁷ 'Jewish Tribute', *New Zealand Herald*, 27 January 1936.

⁸⁸⁸ 'Colourful Rites accompany first planting of Jubilee Forest', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, Vol 1, no. 114, 20 December 1935.

Jewish restoration to Palestine.⁸⁸⁹ As we have seen, the events of that decade would shake Astor's confidence in the Empire.

The Auckland Hebrew congregation was recognised as having led the way in Zionism in New Zealand.⁸⁹⁰ A number of key people contributed to the strength of Zionism in Auckland including those already mentioned in this thesis; Rabbi Goldstein, Louis Phillips and Simone Nathan and many others. Among these contributors, Rabbi Astor, along with his wife Rebecca played a significant role. One means by which the Astors influenced the community was through the publication of *The Judean Bulletin*, which they founded and Rebecca edited. In a farewell address delivered in Sydney in 1972, Astor recalled that 'for twelve years it was sent free of charge to every Jewish home in the Dominion' and was considered an important source of local and international Jewish and Zionist news and information.⁸⁹¹ Astor recalled that these were crucial years when every family needed to know what was going on in Europe, and he and his wife were amongst the few who received air-mailed first-hand news from all over the world.⁸⁹² Astor exhorted his people to become actively engaged in meeting the needs of suffering Jews in other places. He also looked to the needs of his own community, diagnosing its problems and pointing to answers. He saw Zionism as one of those answers and one which had a two-fold purpose. Palestine or Eretz Israel was seen to be a solution to the growing humanitarian crisis facing European Jews in the 1930s. In addition, Astor believed that Zionism played a vital role in meeting the identity and spiritual needs of the Jewish community in the diaspora.

In Astor's writings throughout this period, a number of key themes recur. He was very conscious of the isolation of the community from world Jewry, or as he put it, 'the rest of our brethren of the House of Israel'.⁸⁹³ This isolation posed difficulties in keeping 'Judaism a living reality' in the Dominion. Astor's views on this topic were revealed in a Jubilee speech he gave in Dunedin in 1931. At a special service to mark fifty years of the Jewish congregation in Dunedin, Astor re-

⁸⁸⁹ 'Broadcast in Church: large Congregation Listens in the Churches', *New Zealand Herald*, 13 May 1937.

⁸⁹⁰ *The New Zealand Jewish Review*, 1931, p.41.

⁸⁹¹ Farewell message at Great Synagogue, Sydney, 1972. (Rabbi Astor Collection, pp.120).

⁸⁹² Ibid.

⁸⁹³ 'Jubilee of the Dunedin Synagogue', *Otago Daily Times*, 4 September 1931.

flected on the problems facing Judaism, posing a challenging question to his listeners: ‘Is the faith for which our ancestors suffered unparalleled torture and martyrdom still a living force among us, or is it an outworn moribund system failing to satisfy the yearnings of our soul, failing to exercise a blessed and ennobling influence on our lives?’⁸⁹⁴ In response, Astor encouraged regular attendance at services in order to cultivate Jewish and social consciousness and to maintain the ‘consecrated traditions’ of their fathers.

New Zealand’s isolation and also the small size of the community, contributed to another theme that is often evident in Astor’s work; his great desire for unity. One of the first actions undertaken by Rabbi Astor and his wife Rebecca Astor when called to serve the Auckland Jewish community, was the establishment of the Judean Association. The purposes of this organisation were retrospectively articulated at the Eleventh Annual General Meeting of the Judean Association, in December 1943. Astor explained that the association had been formed in 1932 to fulfil an urgent need in the community, to provide a unifying influence. The young people were seen to require a common meeting ground and the new organisation was envisaged as a means of uniting religious, social and cultural activities in the community. Astor and his wife showed an astuteness and great understanding of the workings of communities in that in establishing the association, they were careful not to encroach on the province of other societies. They took the advice of established leaders of the congregation in forming the executive and ensured that leaders of every important communal society in Auckland was represented. At this particular meeting in 1943, the following groups were represented; Hebrew Congregation, Board of Management, Chevra Kadisha, WIZO, Women’s Benevolent Society, Auckland Jewish Social Club, General Committee, Literary Committee, Young Zionist Representative and the Bulletin Finance Committee. The fact that no major differences broke the appearance of unity in the Auckland community over this period is a testament to the intentional and well managed policy of the Astors.

New Zealand Zionists were not unaware of the tensions that threatened to tear the international Zionist movement apart. Indeed, in 1931, Rabbi Goldstein wrote in the New Zealand publication, *The Jewish Times*,

The events which have led up to the present crisis in connection with the Zionist movement for the progress of which means so much for us, the differences and widely diverse

⁸⁹⁴ Ibid.

views of our leaders on questions which strike at the very heart of Zionism, the increasing dissatisfaction among the rank and file with present day proceedings, especially the breach among those to whom we have looked as our guides are a cause of much disquietude and fear.⁸⁹⁵

At this time, the 1931 Zionist Congress in Basle was faced with reconciling the opposing views of the Mapai Party, formed in 1930 by the merging of two Labour Socialist groups Ahdut HaAvoda and Hapoel Hatzair and the Revisionists, supported by other centrist and right-wing parties. The Revisionist leader, Ze'ev Jabontinsky held strongly militaristic and nationalist views that clashed with the more moderate position of the Labour Zionists. Many other delegates also opposed Weizmann's commitment to maximum cooperation with the Mandate authority. Shapira argued that a competition ensued between the Revisionists and the Labour movement for hegemony over the Zionist Organisation. While this jostling for power took place mainly in Poland, the effects were also felt in Palestine where the Zionist consensus was badly shaken and the vulnerability of a 'voluntary society in the face of resolute ideological minorities' was exposed.⁸⁹⁶ Such was the tension that civil war threatened, as violence spilled onto the street in the early 1930s. An indication of the New Zealand view can be retrospectively deduced from a remit from the Wellington Zionist Society report in April 1943, which spoke of the necessity of unity in Zionist ranks, stating, 'For many years we have felt deeply about the spirit between Zionists and Revisionists and all of us will be glad to support the agreement between the two organisations worked out'. Self-consciously aware of their small size and minority status the Jewish community in New Zealand highly valued and worked hard to maintain unity. For most of the period in view, an appearance of unity prevailed, however, we will later see the fraying around the edges.

Astor continued to express concern about the diminishing connection between his people and their culture and religion. In a speech given on the occasion of the Jubilee of the Auckland Synagogue in 1935, Astor bemoaned the fact that Judaism had seemingly lost its hold on many Jewish people.⁸⁹⁷ Indifference, materialism, and a non-Jewish environment militated against strict observance. However, Astor also saw signs of hope. Jewish culture and education had advanced and he

⁸⁹⁵ AS/p.8. *The Jewish Times* 31/8/31

⁸⁹⁶ Anita Shapira, *Israel*, Waltham, 2012, p.125.

⁸⁹⁷ 'Jewish Jubilee', *Auckland Star*, 1 April 1935.

believed there were clear signs of a Jewish renaissance. Astor placed high value on education of youth, as a key to keeping Jewish consciousness alive. He rejoiced in the notion that the ‘national idea’ had given an impetus to the study of Hebrew, which had become once more a living language, while the re-establishment of Palestine as a Jewish national home under British protection had, he asserted, helped to arouse historic consciousness in untold numbers of the people.⁸⁹⁸ At this stage New Zealand and Australian Zionists hoped the ‘national idea’ would take the form of Palestine becoming part of the British commonwealth.⁸⁹⁹

Meanwhile, the humanitarian aspect of Zionism continued to have a strong pull throughout the 1930s, as persecution increased for German Jews under Hitler’s rule. The Jubilee speech of the Dunedin congregation was delivered prior to the Nazi party’s takeover of government in 1933. By 1935, Astor’s message carried the added burden of the worrying situation in Europe. Astor declared at a Herzl memorial service in 1935, ‘Is there a Jew today, who regarding the plight of our brothers and sisters in Germany and Poland, does not raise his hands to Heaven and cry out: “Thank God for Palestine”?’⁹⁰⁰ Astor considered Palestine the ‘speedy solution’ to the misery of his people and urged his congregants to put forward their best efforts and continued sacrifice for the ‘upbuilding of Palestine’ as the source of salvation for their people. The visible suffering of European Jews certainly added weight to the argument for a Jewish homeland. In addition, the saving of life was considered the most noble Jewish cause, a great “Mitzvah” (or good work) which would make them ‘feel better Jews and Jewesses’. So, the action of saving lives through supporting the ‘upbuilding of Palestine’ was considered to have spiritual benefit to the individual’s sense of fulfilment and purpose as Jews. In this way Zionism held a two-fold purpose; meeting the physical needs of persecuted European Jews and the spiritual needs of Diaspora Jews. Astor’s exhortations seemed to bring results, as the following year’s financial reports were considered successful. The Zionist Society in 1936 recorded ‘a very successful year’, which included over £26 in subscriptions and donations, £553 in Jewish National Fund box collections, a £59 remittance to Palestine, £150 for the Keren Hayesod special appeal, plus a Goldstein Legacy of £25.⁹⁰¹

⁸⁹⁸ ‘Jubilee of the Dunedin Synagogue’, *Otago Daily Times*, 4 September 1931.

⁸⁹⁹ ‘Zionists Meet’, *New Zealand Herald*, 30 March 1938.

⁹⁰⁰ Rabbi Astor, ‘Herzl Memorial Service’, *The Jewish Review*, August, 1935, p.23.

⁹⁰¹ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 15 August, 1936.

Astor's speech at Herzl's 1935 memorial service highlighted the way that he adapted Herzl's ideas to the needs of his community in New Zealand.⁹⁰² Astor was keenly conscious of the isolation of his congregation, both geographically and culturally. In New Zealand, Jews faced little persecution, enjoyed relative ease and comfort, and were distant from the centres of the Jewish world; to men such as Astor, this meant New Zealand Jews were in danger of drifting away from their culture, beliefs and heritage. So while Herzl was completely secular, he was lauded, by Astor, as a modern 'prophet' and 'seer' whose work, *The Jewish State*, was said to 'infuse new life into the slumbering soul of the Jews'. Astor attributed to him the gathering together of the scattered forms of his people and uniting them into one solid body, awakening 'dormant national consciousness' and thus delivering Jews from conditions which were leading to gradual decay. Herzl was said to have made Zion, once more, 'the central force uniting the scattered and broken elements of Jewry', so that 'Eretz Israel' was looked upon as a 'centre of hope and salvation'. Astor's conclusion that 'The Jewish revival is no longer a dream, it is a fact, a reality' is strikingly similar to Herzl's well known phrase, 'If you will it, it is no dream'. However, Astor was referring to a concept of Jewish revival, while Herzl was speaking more specifically of a Jewish National home. This exemplifies the way Astor employed a Herzlian motif, attributing to it a different meaning from the original intention. Astor saw the intensification of Jewish religious life and burgeoning national consciousness as closely linked and as key components of restoring and maintaining Jewish identity in the diaspora, whereas Herzl was solely concerned with a political goal of establishing a homeland for Jews, recognised by the world. Much like cultural Zionist, Ahad Ha'Am, Astor argued that Palestine stood for more than just an escape from antisemitism. It stood for 'the saving of the Jewish soul as well as the body'. Astor described Palestine as 'the centre from which rays of spiritual light radiate and penetrate the soul of world Jewry'.⁹⁰³ The regeneration of a national entity was seen to be bringing youth back into the Jewish fold. Astor regarded assimilation into non-Jewish society as an ongoing problem, and he hoped the sense of belonging wrought by Zionism would ease the trend.

⁹⁰² Rabbi Astor, 'Herzl Memorial Service', *The Jewish Review*, August, 1935, p.23.

⁹⁰³ Ibid.

Following Germany's annexation of Austria in March 1938 and the union of the two countries in April (Anschluss), widespread violence against Jews broke out and further anti-Jewish legislation was implemented. In July, a special prayer service was held in the Auckland synagogue, in common with Jewish communities throughout the British Empire.⁹⁰⁴ Astor declared, 'The scenes of the Book of Lamentations are again being enacted in Nazi Germany and Austria, where our brothers and sisters are facing untold miseries, indescribable insults and degradation, battling for their very lives against a tidal wave of fanatical hysteria and racial persecution that threatens to destroy them. Never have such vast numbers been subjected to persecution so destructive and deceitful'.⁹⁰⁵ Astor attacked the Nazi ideology that branded the Jews as a 'depraved race, as pariahs whose blood contaminates and whose every thought defiles'. He prayed that the upcoming Evian conference would offer new avenues of escape for refugees and that, in view of the urgency of the situation, immigration restrictions might be relaxed for a time by the democratic countries of the world. The Evian conference was convened by President Roosevelt in July 1938. He had invited thirty-two countries, including New Zealand, to the French town, for the purpose of discussing the problem of the Jewish refugees of Germany and Austria. By that date, more than 150,000 Jews had already fled Germany and Austria and many countries had taken them in.⁹⁰⁶

In September 1938, Astor's New Year message reflected his pessimistic appraisal of the situation. He wrote, 'The world was pervaded with doubts and misgivings, with disquietude and despondency'. He opined, 'Never since the advent of Nazism in Germany has a year been so darkened by clouds that refuse to be lifted and never has the panorama of the coming year promised less prospect of more favourable conditions'.⁹⁰⁷ On 10 November 1938, a further wave of violence broke out against Jews in Germany. Euphemistically named Kristallnacht or the Night of Broken Glass, the renewed attacks came in purported reprisal for the actions of a Polish-German Jewish youth, Herschel Grynszpan, who assassinated German official, Ernest Vom Rath.

⁹⁰⁴ Jewish Prayers, *New Zealand Herald*, 18 July 1938.

⁹⁰⁵ NZH, 18 July 1938.

⁹⁰⁶ Britain had admitted 8,000 refugees, Palestine 40,000, United States 50,000, Brazil 8,000, France 15,000, Belgium 14,000, Switzerland 14,000, Sweden 1,000, Denmark 150 and Norway 150. J. Hope Simpson, *The Refugee Problem, Report of a Survey*, London, 1939, France, p.340, Britain, pp.350-1, Scandinavia, p.397, Switzerland, p. 473, note I, USA, Appendix VI, tables LXV and LXVI.

⁹⁰⁷ Jewish Protest, *New Zealand Herald*, 27 September 1938.

Astor expressed shock at the violent German reaction, ‘the wholesale slaughter of innocent human beings, the burning of synagogues, the wanton destruction and brutality’.⁹⁰⁸ Grynszpan’s family were Polish Jews who lacked German citizenship. Along with thousands of other Jews, they were dumped on the Polish German border, with both sides refusing to assist them. This was the situation that prompted Grynszpan’s actions. The plight of refugees would become an issue for the whole world to deal with, and New Zealand’s response would prove pitiful, as will be seen.

Astor continued to advocate on behalf of Jewish refugees and encouraged his congregation to give assistance to their needy brethren. In 1939 war descended upon the country and the Jewish community considered it important to fulfil its patriotic duties. During the war Rabbi and Mrs Astor, amongst their many activities, continued to publish the *Judean Bulletin*. It was sent to every Jewish home regardless of affiliation to Synagogue of Society and was considered a unifying influence. The Astors were amongst the few that received news via international sources; the Australian paper ‘Ivriah’ and the Palcor news agency cables. Even though it was in a reduced format due to wartime restrictions, their Zionist bulletin relayed war news from Europe and Palestine, published letters from Jewish soldiers, as well as keeping readers informed of local events, news items and activities. Zionist visitors continued to arrive. In 1941, these included David Ben Gurion, Chairman of the Executive of the Jewish Agency in Palestine, en route to Palestine, Dr. Leon Jona, surgeon of Melbourne and president of Zionist Federation of Australia and NZ and Dr. W. Fischell, Orientalist, Hebrew University.⁹⁰⁹

Keen to show themselves loyal citizens, the Jewish community fully supporting the Allied war effort and were proud that their ‘Jewish boys’ were fighting with the Anzac forces in North Africa.⁹¹⁰ With young men and women occupied by wartime activities, locally and overseas, Zionist and community events were less well attended, but continued regardless. Locally, the first full Jewish service held in a Military Camp took place. The Sabbath service conducted by Rabbi Astor for fifteen men in Waiouru, was considered a milestone.⁹¹¹ Astor, in future years would re-

⁹⁰⁸ Jews in Germany, *New Zealand Herald*, 21 November 1938.

⁹⁰⁹ *The Auckland Judean*, Monthly Bulletin No. 6, January 1941

⁹¹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹¹ Ibid.

gard his wartime service to Jewish soldiers, the most satisfying aspect of his career. He later received many letters of gratitude from American soldiers, attesting to the impact he and his wife had on these Jewish men away from home. The Jewish community locally and worldwide were anxious to show their loyalty to the Allies by having a Jewish force established. While 350,000 Jews had registered to fight for the Allies, only 20,000 volunteers had been accepted.⁹¹² The Women's International Zionist Organisation celebrated when, in 1942, the war work of WIZO as the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) of the British Army was recognised.⁹¹³ They considered this the first step in the recognition of the Jewish people as a fighting unit in the Allied Army. NZ WIZO enthusiastically supported the formation of the ATS in Palestine and voted to raise £500 pounds for an ambulance to be used by the service in co-operation with the British Army, in Palestine and the Middle East. The activities of the local Jewish community demonstrated the international network of loyalties and alliances that were at work. They identified as Anglo-Jews, loyal to Britain and the Allied cause and also as Zionists, who worked for the 'upbuilding of Palestine' as a future Jewish home. The lines between Zionist, patriotic and humanitarian activity were not clearly demarcated but rather intertwined. Furthermore, the ATS example demonstrates the dynamism of the Women's Zionist movement.

New Zealand's Response to the Persecution of Europe's Jews and the Refugee Crisis

The plight of European Jewish refugees attracted the attention of many New Zealand individuals and groups, as well as the government. A non-Jewish correspondent signing himself 'British Colonial' wrote to the editor of the *New Zealand Herald* in April 1938 urging that Jewish farmers in Central Europe who had had all their land confiscated, be invited to settle in Australia and New Zealand.⁹¹⁴ 'British colonial' argued, 'The Jew is an asset to a country, as he soon organises and employs labour. Look at Palestine: the Jew has made Palestine a second California'. Another letter writer Roslyn Esme R. Turner expressed her 'feelings of profound disappointment and dismay' to the editor of the *Otago Daily Times* on 29 June 1938, that according to the cabled news, New Zealand was not to be represented at the Evian conference. She lamented, 'If we, as a nation, are content thus to "pass by on the other side," let us no longer as individuals vapour about personal freedom, for we are conniving at the ferocious persecution of thousands of our fellow

⁹¹²*The Auckland Judean*, Monthly bulletin, 16, Feb. 1942

⁹¹³ Ibid.

⁹¹⁴ Jewish Refugee Farmers, *New Zealand Herald*, 1 April 1938.

creatures.’⁹¹⁵ One correspondent, Katrine Hursthome, writing from New Zealand House in London, admitted that she was ashamed to admit to German Jews that she was a New Zealander, for they knew of it as a ‘lovely country’ that was democratic and progressive, and yet our government claimed we had our own economic problems that prevented us taking in refugees.⁹¹⁶ She wondered why New Zealand could not take in some of the scholars and professors forced to leave Germany. However, in the same paper, a letter signed by ‘Pro Bono Publico’ used antisemitic stereotypes about Jewish control of resources and domination of various spheres of national life to argue against the admittance of Jewish immigrants.⁹¹⁷ Yet another correspondent, Anne Page, writing in the *Press* pointed out that the government had not yet formulated any policy on this matter and had not considered the refugee problem as a special issue. The government had also been vague on how many refugees New Zealand was willing to take or under what conditions they would be admitted. Page argued that this was a crisis which called for a great national effort and suggested that there must be hundreds of families in New Zealand who would take one or more refugees into their houses until they were able to provide for themselves.⁹¹⁸

As it turned out, whether through public pressure or otherwise, New Zealand was represented at the Evian conference by C. B. Burdekin, of the New Zealand High Commissioner’s Office. Burdekin expressed the New Zealand Government’s sympathy with the ‘unfortunates compelled to seek new homes’ and then went on to explain that New Zealand’s acceptance of refugees would be governed by a number of conditions, including the numbers accepted by other countries, economic conditions, the usefulness of the refugee to New Zealand’s requirements and the financial status of the applicant.⁹¹⁹ The response of the Prime Minister, Michael Savage, to the crisis, as reported in newspapers in November 1938 did not offer great hope for the Jewish community, nor those advocating for more determined action.⁹²⁰ Savage repeated the line that the Government was dealing with refugees individually and had not discussed the extent to which their plight could be addressed collectively. He argued that they had to see what the other nations were doing

⁹¹⁵ ‘The Refugee Problem’, *Otago Daily Times*, 29 June 1938.

⁹¹⁶ ‘Can New Zealand Help?’, *Evening Post*, 26 October 1938.

⁹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹¹⁸ Refugees from Europe, *Press*, 26 November 1938.

⁹¹⁹ ‘The Refugee Problem’, *New Zealand Herald*, 11 July 1938.

⁹²⁰ Refugees, *Evening Post*, 17 November 1938.

in the first place and reiterated that their first obligation was to British immigrants. According to Savage, the question was one of getting the nations of the world to accept a fair share of their obligations rather than to saddle a few with the obligation to solve the problem.⁹²¹ The historian Anne Beaglehole, who investigated the government's response to the refugee crisis, concluded that it was haphazard, marked by indifference, occasioned no debate in the House of Representatives and only a few questions were raised. Beaglehole pointed out there was no quota for refugees and no standard set of rules or criteria, so that each application was 'treated on its merits' and secrecy surrounded the number of applicants accepted or declined.⁹²²

The increasing violence against European Jews evoked protest from non-religious community groups in New Zealand as well. A meeting was called in December 1938 by the Auckland branch of the League of Nations Union to record their opposition to the treatment of racial, political and religious minorities in central Europe. While framed as a minorities issue, the context is clear that the focus of the protest was primarily the treatment of Jews. About four hundred citizens filled the Town Hall and an appeal was made to the Government to adopt a more generous attitude to refugee immigrants by relaxing the existing immigration restrictions. Other organisations officially represented at the meeting included the National Council of Women, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the New Women's Club, the Young Women's Christian Association, the Auckland branch of the Federation of Labour, the Fabian Club, the Friends of the Soviet Union, the Crusade for Social Justice, and the Christian Pacifism Society.⁹²³

The Response of Christians in New Zealand to the Plight of the Jews

While the government's response to the refugee crises was apathetic, many individuals expressed their concern and some humanitarian community groups actively opposed the persecution of Jews. Amongst the churches, a range of views were held. New Zealand historian Anne Beaglehole argued that the church's attitude to the refugee crisis was ambivalent. She argued that although church leaders generally favoured letting in more refugees, guarantors for refugees among church people were scarce and churches were dubious about taking responsibility for individual

⁹²¹ Ibid.

⁹²² Anne Beaglehole, *A Small Price to Pay: Refugees From Hitler in New Zealand, 1936-1946*, Wellington, 1988, p.16.

⁹²³ Refugees' Plight, *New Zealand Herald*, 5 December 1938.

families.⁹²⁴ Beaglehole particularly noted the silence of the Catholic Church and conversely the active advocacy of the Society of Friends, on behalf of the refugees. Some of the Christian groups and organisations responded to the plight of the Jews in this period, out of humanitarian concern and sympathy for a suffering people. Christian leaders responded to the refugee crisis in Europe with special prayer services and calls for action. In September 1938, a combined service of intercession for Jewish sufferers throughout the world was held in St. Matthew's Church, Auckland, led by the Vicar of the Parish, Rev. P. Gladstone Hughes, who was also the chairman of the Council of Christian Congregations. Gladstone hoped that their sympathy would result in a movement to open the doors of New Zealand and that some of the victims of the 'modern terrorism' may find in this country a safe sanctuary and home.⁹²⁵ In another meeting, the Auckland Presbytery adopted a resolution, 'That in view of the increased persecution of the Jews in Europe the Presbytery urges the Government of New Zealand to make it possible for some of these long-suffering people to find in this country a sanctuary and a home'.⁹²⁶ Auckland's Rabbi Astor expressed deep appreciation for their 'heartening' and 'encouraging' words of sympathy.⁹²⁷ Meanwhile, the Hon. Mark Fagan, acting Minister of Customs, wrote that the suggestion that a sanctuary should be found here for persecuted Jews would be placed before the Government at the earliest opportunity.⁹²⁸ The Baptist Assembly in Wellington adopted the recommendation that all Baptist churches hold a day of special prayer on behalf of the persecuted Jews and that offerings be collected.⁹²⁹

The outbreak of violence that followed Kristallnacht evoked further supportive responses in the churches. Rev. F. Copeland offered the sympathy of the Methodist Church at a representative session of the Methodist district synod at Auckland's Pitt Street Methodist Church. He declared, 'The moral sense of the world could never accept such a state of affairs as existed in Europe to-day. The sympathy of Christian men was with the Jewish people, and newly settled countries should

⁹²⁴ Beaglehole, *A Small Price to Pay*, p.19.

⁹²⁵ 'Prayers for the Jews', *New Zealand Herald*, 9 September 1938, 'Sympathy for the Jews', *Auckland Star*, 9 September 1938.

⁹²⁶ Plight of Jews, *New Zealand Herald*, 15 September 1938.

⁹²⁷ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 15 August, 1938.

⁹²⁸ Persecuted Jews, *New Zealand Herald*, 12 October 1938

⁹²⁹ Baptist Sympathy, *Evening Post*, 2 November 1938.

be prepared to make a home for the refugees of this persecuted race.’⁹³⁰ Bishop of Wellington, the Rt Rev. H. St. Barbe Holland, urged Christian action to be taken to secure the protection and relief of the Jews in Germany. He proclaimed a day of prayer on behalf of Jews and the rulers of the world, in all the Anglican churches in the diocese of Wellington. He argued that while the whole question of opening the doors of Christian countries to Jewish immigrants was a matter bristling with difficulties, it was one which in the name of Christian charity must be regarded as a practical issue at the present moment.⁹³¹

The Nazi persecution of Jews in Europe increased the call, in some quarters, for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Some church leaders, such as Bishop Holland, Rev. P. Gladstone Hughes and Archbishop O’Shea, became part of the pro-Palestinian committees, discussed later in the chapter. These groups consisted of prominent community members and were organised to assist and support the goal of establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine. There were certain streams within Christendom that were theologically disposed to show a particular interest in the Jewish people and their return to their ancient homeland. Groups with a restorationist, millennialist bent, saw the return of the Jews to Israel as a fulfilment of prophetic Scripture, the first stage in God’s plan to ultimately inaugurate a thousand year reign of the Messiah from Jerusalem. One such institution was the New Zealand Bible Training Institute, a leading educational institutional for Evangelical Christians founded in 1922.⁹³² The founder of the NZBTI, Rev. Joseph Kemp, articulated this view in an article published in the organisation’s month magazine, *The Reaper*. Entitled ‘The Jewish Tragedy’, Kemp expounded an overview of Jewish history, past, present and future.⁹³³ He considered the present condition of the Jew as ‘de-nationalised’ and ‘dispossessed’, ‘sad’ and ‘heart rending’. Yet he marvelled that they had retained their identity and were preserved as a people after centuries of persecution. This was, he considered, a miracle. Kemp argued that the welfare of the nations was bound up in Israel’s restoration. He taught that a restored Israel would bring ‘universal peace and concord’, and ‘war and want’ would be no more. In the decade leading up to the 1938 refugee crisis, many reports were published in *The Reaper*

⁹³⁰ Methodist Synod, *New Zealand Herald*, 17 November 1938.

⁹³¹ Transfer of Jews, *Otago Daily Times*, 17 November 1938.

⁹³² In 1972 the Institute was renamed the Bible College of New Zealand (BCNZ) and then Laidlaw College in 2008. <https://www.laidlaw.ac.nz/about-us/our-heritage/>

⁹³³ Rev. Joseph Kemp, ed., ‘The Jewish Tragedy’, *Reaper*, July 1923, Vol.1, May, 1923, No.3.

on progress in Palestine, antisemitism, Zionism, controversies, such as the fabricated ‘Protocols of the Elders of Zion’ and the British Israel ‘heresy’, as well teaching on Israel and prophecy from a biblical perspective.⁹³⁴ The words of the editor of *The Reaper*, J. Oswald Sanders, in 1938, represented a portion of the evangelical church that supported the restoration of the Jews. He wrote, ‘Jerusalem is proving a burdensome stone to Britain, but we trust she will be true to the trust reposed in her, and keep Palestine for the Jews’.⁹³⁵

One religious organisation that showed ongoing support for the Jewish people was the Christadelphians. This movement was founded in the USA in 1848 by John Thomas. While regarding themselves as Christian, they rejected some mainstream doctrines, such as the Trinity. They shared with Jews a similar view of the unity of God and saw themselves as closely related to them, being ‘adopted into the family through faith in God’s promises to Abraham’.⁹³⁶ The worldwide movement showed great interest in and support for the Jews and this manifested locally as well. A letter to the Auckland Zionist Society, from S.H. Thompson, from the Auckland Christadelphian Ecclesia was published in the local Jewish publication, *The Judean Bulletin*.⁹³⁷

Thompson hoped that their fundraising would be a ‘true indicator of their very real interest and concern for the upbuilding of Jewish Palestine’.⁹³⁸ Thompson explained that the Christadelphians saw the Jewish claim to Palestine as a matter of historical justice and Divine decree because of the mission entrusted to them of disseminating of the ‘Truth of the Law’. They also wished to record their abhorrence and unqualified condemnation of the atrocities being perpetrated against Jews in enemy occupied countries of Europe. They believed that Palestine offered the only field

⁹³⁴ ‘Palestine’, *The Reaper*, December 1930, p.218; ‘Regarding Israel’, *The Reaper*, February 1931; ‘The Land and the People: The Crisis in Palestine’, *The Reaper*, May 1931, no.3, p.66; ‘The Scattered People’, *The Reaper*, May 1931, no.3, p.68; Rev. Joseph W. Kemp, ‘The Re-Trial of Jesus’, *The Reaper*, March 1932, No.1, p.3; ‘The Jewish Protocols’, *The Reaper*, January 1923, J.O. Sanders, ed., ‘Those Protocols’, *The Reaper*, 25 July 1935, No.6, ‘The Scattered Nation’, (Reprinted from Jewish Missionary Magazine), *The Reaper*, 28 November 1935, p.232; Gleanings (Reports on antisemitism, Palestine, Nazi Germany), *The Reaper*, 29 October 1936, No.9, p.174, ‘The Palestine Problem’, *The Reaper*, 30 September 1937, No. 8, ‘Chinese Israelities’, *The Reaper*, 1 March 1938, No.1, p.3, ‘Will Hickey Interviews the Zionist Leader’, *The Reaper*, 1 June 1938, No.5, p.98, Rev. L.A. Day, ‘Is the Jewish Race Doomed?’, *The Reaper*, 1 September 1938, p.175-177, No.8; Harry Rimmer, ‘British Israelism and the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel’, *The Reaper*, 1 September 1940, No.7. pp. 163-65.

⁹³⁵ J. Oswald Sanders, ed., *The Reaper*, 1 December 1938, no.11, p.258.

⁹³⁶ Morrell, Leslie. ‘The Christadelphian Response to the Holocaust’: <http://lesliemorrell.com/papers/Response.pdf>, Retrieved 26 September 2019.

⁹³⁷ *The Judean Bulletin*, Vol.2, No.23, April 1943, p.17.

⁹³⁸ Ibid.

of settlement for the unsettled millions.⁹³⁹ The Christadelphians showed their support for Zionism with donations, accompanied by letters of encouragement. A donation of £130 to the Auckland Zionist Society in March 1945 included a message conveying the hope that authority would be given for unrestricted Jewish immigration into Palestine. Writing on behalf of the national body, W.S. Yearly expressed the conviction that democratic nations were under a moral and judicial obligation to see that Jewry was re-instated in their 'fatherland'.⁹⁴⁰ The Zionist societies also received messages from individuals, such as K.R. MacDonald of Whangarei, who declared himself a Christadelphian. He wrote to the Auckland Zionist Society asking for copies of *The New Zealand Jewish Chronicle*, for as a Christadelphian 'he was always keenly interested in everything concerning the Jews, particularly their return to the land covenanted to Abraham'. He went on to quote several Scriptures.⁹⁴¹ The Christadelphians were active right across the nation. W.J. Mackintosh wrote to Mrs D. Markham, WIZO's past president in Wellington, on behalf of the small Christadelphian group in Invercargill. Mackintosh offered good wishes and encouragement and conveyed that the decision had been made to reserve the freewill offering of their meeting every last Sunday in the month for the work of WIZO. The writer had been prompted by Mrs Markham's address which had been published in the 'Ivriah Journal'.⁹⁴² Another donation of £150 on March 1947 was accompanied by a letter that expressed 'deep concern' over the ordeal the Jews of Palestine were enduring and the pain and agony of those refugees who were being turned back from the land they believed to be rightly theirs. The writer, W.S. Yearly, expounded on their reasons for affirming their belief in the rightness of the Jewish cause. The editors published a response expressing gratitude for the inspiring letter and 'magnificent generosity' of the Christadelphians.⁹⁴³

The Jewish community deeply appreciated the expressions of support by Christian groups, churches and individuals and responded in a variety of ways, such as acknowledgement in Jewish publications and sometimes nominating people for an inscription in the Golden Book. On one occasion, at a special service of prayer on behalf of the Jews of Germany held at the Auckland Syn-

⁹³⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁰ *The New Zealand Jewish Chronicle*, Vol 1, No.s 9 & 10, June/July 1945, p.226.

⁹⁴¹ *The New Zealand Jewish Chronicle*, Vol.3, no.6, April, 1947. p.116.

⁹⁴² *The New Zealand Jewish Chronicle*, Vol.2, No. 8, August 1946, p.198.

⁹⁴³ *The New Zealand Jewish Chronicle*, Vol.3, no.6, April, 1947. p.116.

agogue, Astor thanked the many Christian bodies who had responded with sympathetic messages, and the large number of individual citizens who had offered their help in the settlement of refugees and had subscribed to the funds for relief.⁹⁴⁴

Some churches, while expressing support for the suffering of the Jews, held to a theological position that explained their plight in terms of God's judgement. Rev. W. Bower Black of St. David's Presbyterian Church articulated a view, typical of his denomination and many others.⁹⁴⁵ Quoting the scripture, 'His blood be on us and on our children', he argued that the Jews, in rejecting Jesus had 'been reaping the inevitable consequences of their bitter and determined opposition to the will of God'. According to this perspective, the Jews had been replaced by the Church, which now was the instrument of God.⁹⁴⁶

While it was generally groups within Christendom that supported Zionism, on occasion, particular individuals stood with the Jews in their struggles. Charles Walker Chandler was one such individual, who over a period of time showed great commitment to the Zionist cause. His friendship with Rabbi Astor developed into a close and enduring relationship based on shared sympathies and respect. Chandler's career ranged across continents, but ended in New Zealand. He was assistant to Auckland City Mission in 1928, Vicar in Queensland 1930-34, Vicar of Cambridge, England, 1934, elected Canon in 1944 and appointed Dean of St. Peter's Cathedral Hamilton 1948 - 57. Chandler wrote a weekly church column for several New Zealand papers and often articulated his views on the relationship between Christianity and Judaism.⁹⁴⁷ A later article summed up his biblically based views on Zionism.⁹⁴⁸ Chandler believed that the Jewish return to Israel had been in the process of fulfilment throughout the centuries since God entered into a Covenant with Abraham and established a promise of land. In his view, Zionism was a new name for an old ideology that had been expressed in the prayer of the annual Passover celebration, 'Next year in Jerusalem'. Current events, he argued, must be viewed against a background covering 4,000

⁹⁴⁴ Jews in Germany, *New Zealand Herald*, 21 November 1938.

⁹⁴⁵ Persecuted Race, *New Zealand Herald*, 5 September 1938.

⁹⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁷ 'Once a Jolly Swagman - Then a Dean', Newspaper clipping from 1971 upon his death. Part of Rabbi Astor's private collection.

⁹⁴⁸ 'Next Year in Jerusalem', *Auckland Star*, 31 January 1970.

years. The Auckland Hebrew congregation showed their appreciation for the Vicar and Mrs Chandler by holding a reception for them on 11 November 1943.⁹⁴⁹ According to the *Judean Bulletin* report, the Chandlers were greeted with ‘hearty applause’, which was seen as ‘evidence of the warm regard felt by the community assembled to honour the man, who by his outspoken articles in the press, was doing such fine service in the cause of tolerance and freedom of thought’. Rev Astor spoke of Chandler’s outstanding charm, friendliness and breadth of vision. Chandler responded that he was keenly conscious of the debt owed by Christianity to its parent, Judaism. He felt it his duty and joy to use the privilege of the printed word and his position as minister to influence all with whom he came in contact to break down their prejudices against people whom they did not understand’.⁹⁵⁰ The article concluded with a remark that Chandler’s words had lifted the spirits of those heavy with sorrow, and given hope that there was ‘a growing understanding and tolerance which must precede any new world order’.⁹⁵¹ The friendship between Astor and Chandler was enduring. Upon his retirement in 1971, Astor referred to Dean Chandler as his ‘oldest and closest friend’, who from the time they had first met over 30 years ago had been like a brother. Astor praised Chandler’s great courage ‘in championing the Jewish cause at times when we most needed friendship and understanding by the non-Jewish world’.⁹⁵² The feeling was evidently mutual. A few days before his passing, Chandler wrote from his hospital bed the article entitled, ‘I am a Jew-Plus’, in which he stated, ‘My greatest single friendship among men in New Zealand is with the Rev. Rabbi Alexander Astor, of Auckland. It is of more than 40 years standing and is as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar’.⁹⁵³

In 1975 Chandler’s grandson, Phillip Chandler, who attended Christ’s College in Christchurch, wrote to Rabbi Astor to seek information about his grandfather for a sixth form English school project.⁹⁵⁴ In his reply, Astor described Chandler as a ‘kindred spirit’.⁹⁵⁵ Chandler and his wife

⁹⁴⁹ *The Judean Bulletin*, Vol.3, No.27, November 1943.

⁹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵² ‘40th Celebration of Rabbi Astor’s Ministry’, Astor Scrapbook, (pp.67-72)

⁹⁵³ ‘I am A Jew-plus’, *Auckland Star*, 9 January 1971.

⁹⁵⁴ Letter Phillip Chandler to Rabbi Astor, 5 August 1975, Astor Collection.

⁹⁵⁵ Letter Rabbi Astor to Phillip Chandler, 14 August 1975, Astor Collection.

were often invited to special meals and occasions at the Astor's home and synagogue; Shabbat, Pesach, Bar Mitzvah's. These had made a deep impression on him, and became the subject of some of his articles. Astor described Chandler's sympathy for the Jewish people as being born of his 'broad human spirit'. According to Astor, Chandler '...felt deeply the great injustice that had been done to the Jewish people through nearly 2,000 years of cruel hatred and persecution and he made it part of his life's work to break down this wall of misunderstanding and prejudice.' Astor mentioned that, like Winston Churchill and Peter Fraser, who often quoted Old Testament in their speeches, Chandler became a Zionist. He saw the return of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland as the righting of an ancient wrong. Chandler received the highest honour from the Jewish community, which was his inscription in the Golden Book acknowledging 'his championship of just dealing with all peoples'.⁹⁵⁶ Chandler's commitment to Zionism derived from a number of elements. His personal relationship with Astor was significant and gave opportunities to experience and understand the Jewish way of life as expressed in festivals, celebration and commemorations. This contact deepened his understanding of Judaism. Underlying his viewpoint however, was a theological perspective of God's relationship with the Jewish people and the Church.

The Response of the New Zealand Jewish community to the Refugee Crisis

Within Christendom, a range of views towards the Jews and the refugee situation existed. Beaglehole argued that Jews also held a variety of opinions. She argued that the attitude of some in the Jewish community towards receiving refugees, was, at times, ambivalent. These folk, she argued, were extremely sensitive in the matter of maintaining the good name of the Jews and felt conflicted between the traditional humanitarian obligation to their people, and the demand to be loyal to their country. Beaglehole claimed that the prevailing ethos of 'ethnic inconspicuousness and the fear of antisemitism made them wary of taking action which could endanger the existing Jewish community'.⁹⁵⁷ However, others in the Jewish community exerted huge efforts on behalf of refugees, made necessary by the government's stringent requirements. According to community member and Zionist, Vera Ziman, 'We were bombarded by people in distress, but still we tried to obtain and check their credentials'. Eager to be considered 'very good New Zealanders', Ziman

⁹⁵⁶ The Golden Books have become a kind of "medal of honor" awarded to all who have been recognized by the Jewish people for their contribution to Zionist work. https://secure.jnf.org/site/SPageServer/%3B-jsessionid=E9B08FFAA3363E4654E72B80E2D976E1.app205a?pagename=PR_Books_of_Honor

⁹⁵⁷ Beaglehole, *A Small Price to Pay*, p.20.

told of their efforts to make sure the refugees would be considered valuable to New Zealand.⁹⁵⁸ In Christchurch, Rabbi Salas was reported in 1938 as saying there were fourteen refugee German Jews in the community and so far as he knew, ‘no refugee in Christchurch was a charge on the community’.⁹⁵⁹ He quoted examples of people who had already advanced themselves. According to Salas, there were about three thousand Jews in New Zealand and, although some of them were poor, they had given generously to assist the immigrants. In addition, New Plymouth residents had sponsored five refugees from Central Europe in response to appeals. Three New Plymouth citizens had undertaken assurances that the persons named, if they came to New Zealand, would not become a charge on the State for a given period. The refugees were Austrians who had been the victims of terrorism that made it impossible for them to remain in the land of their birth. Among the five were a dentist and his wife. Another man had been for more than twenty years employed as a locksmith in a large manufacturing concern, and the remaining two were women who had been employed in clerical and secretarial work. The three New Plymouth sponsors were Miss D. N. Allan, Principal of the Girls’ High School, Archdeacon G. K. Gavan, and Mr W. C. Weston.⁹⁶⁰ The refugees and their sponsors had to prove that they would be good citizens and not a drain on the country.

New Zealand’s policy on refugees made very little allowance for the fact that the applicants were fleeing a life-threatening predicament. Beaglehole pointed out that immigration policies based on economic grounds were rigidly enforced and the policies often discriminated against refugees who were without means and contacts.⁹⁶¹ Applicants needed to have a guarantor or sponsor or had to be self-supporting. An insight into the effort required to facilitate the immigration of relatives and friends to New Zealand is offered in a letter from Rabbi Astor to Mark Fagan, Acting Minister of Customs, Wellington on 10 February 1939. Astor’s letter followed a meeting he had with Fagan, where he had made representations on behalf of the relatives of Mrs B. Levinson and Mrs H. Tichauer. The letter listed the names of those who would be guarantors for certain applicants. One particular applicant was Bruno Friedman, who was in a concentration camp, and so it was impossible to obtain a signed application from him. Astor suggested that Friedman’s sister be giv-

⁹⁵⁸ Beaglehole, p.20.

⁹⁵⁹ Australian And New Zealand Jews Helping, *Northern Advocate*, 3 December 1938.

⁹⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁶¹ Beaglehole, p.9.

en permission to sign on his behalf and hoped that this would be acceptable under the circumstances. The fact that the tragic circumstances of the applicant were not taken into account demonstrates the harshness and rigidity of the system. The sponsoring families were obliged to sign a statement that they would not apply for any more relatives or friends.⁹⁶² E.D. Good, Comptroller of Customs commented that 'Non- Jewish applicants are regarded as a more suitable type of immigrant'.⁹⁶³ The view that Jewishness was as an obstacle was not uncommon and the refugees had to prove they were 'absorbable'. In this context, Rabbi Astor wrote in 1945 about the ninety families that had been given refuge in Auckland, many as a result of the sympathy of church bodies and Christian citizens. Vouching for them, he stated that he knew them intimately and believed they were an asset to the country. He felt there was no question of their loyalty and urged against further discrimination of those who had been through the worst persecution in history.⁹⁶⁴

Simone Nathan, who in 1920 established the Women's International Zionist Organisation in New Zealand and spearheaded the setting up of Plunket-style infant welfare centres in Palestine, also actively engaged in advocating for increased immigration. In her memoirs she tells of meeting Robert Menzies, later to be Australia's Prime Minister, on an overseas trip in 1935. She recalled speaking to Menzies and other members of the Australian Federal Government, of the plight of the Jews under Hitler's regime and suggesting that these Jewish refugees would be an asset for Australia.⁹⁶⁵ She believed that Menzies, was of Scottish origin and brought up on the Bible, and so was very sympathetic. She recalled that her son Lawrence worked on behalf of refugees while they were in London - going to Woburn House and helping Otto Schiff, a Jewish philanthropist, who chaired one of the first committees in Britain to aid Jewish victims of Nazism.⁹⁶⁶ They dealt with the hundreds and thousands of Jewish refugees who were looking for assistance.⁹⁶⁷ Mrs Nathan wrote, 'He did some fine work there, which he later continued in Australia and New Zealand'. Mrs Nathan recounted that upon her son's return to New Zealand he formed Welfare Soci-

⁹⁶² Letter from Rabbi Astor to Hon. Mark Fagan, Acting Minister of Customs, Wellington, 10/2/39.

⁹⁶³ Beaglehole, p.16.

⁹⁶⁴ *The Judean Bulletin*, August 1945, Vol 5. N0. 41.

⁹⁶⁵ Simone Nathan Memoirs, p.391.

⁹⁶⁶ 'Otto Schiff Dies in London; Aided Jewish Refugees', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 18 November 1952.

⁹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p.397.

eties and ‘for two years did practically nothing but look after refugees on the 6th floor of L.D. Nathans’.⁹⁶⁸ For five years Simone worked to acquire guarantors for potential immigrants, further underlining the humanitarianism that undergirded the work of many in the community. Mrs Nathan remarked that in many cases they knew ‘practically nothing of the peoples whose behaviour they were guaranteeing to the New Zealand government except they were Jews and needed help’. In Simone Nathans’s opinion, the community responded nobly to this appeal and the new arrivals were a worthy acquisition. ‘They all settled very well’. For six months she worked as her son’s secretary and also formed Welcome Committees for the newcomers.⁹⁶⁹

Mrs Nathan also mentioned that for many years Louis Phillips worked on behalf of refugees, free of charge.⁹⁷⁰ Phillips’ nephew also wrote of his Uncle’s unrelenting efforts:

Louis’ greatest achievement was his untiring zeal and devotion in obtaining permits for Jewish refugees to migrate to New Zealand. He personally knew many members of the then Labour Government, being on first-name terms with several who had been his mates in the army. He would visit them, telephone them, badger them, until his demands were granted. He met and helped many refugees on their arrival. His legal services were freely available with little or no recompense. He had no interest in money, being a true idealist. He enjoyed the confidence and friendship of the then Prime Minister, Peter Fraser, and it was in no small measure due to Louis’ influence that New Zealand voted in favour on Israel’s independence in 1948.⁹⁷¹

Louis Phillips, Simone Nathan and Rabbi Astor advocated strongly for the Jewish refugees as they had done for the ‘upbuilding of Palestine’. Their Zionism intertwined with Judaism and humanitarianism to provide a powerful motivation for their work.

⁹⁶⁸ This was most likely at the Fort Street Warehouse which, by the late 1920s, had an area of 100,000 square feet, which comprised a sales department and showroom, displaying the vast range of goods handled by the firm. Diana Morrow, 'Enterprise and Obligation: Jewish Business in Auckland and Wellington', eds. Bell & Morrow, 'Jewish Lives in New Zealand: A History', p.260

⁹⁶⁹ Ibid., p.398,399.

⁹⁷⁰ Simone Nathan Memoirs, p.106.

⁹⁷¹ Leo Phillips, 'The Phillips Family', eds. Ann Gluckman and Laurie Gluckman, *Identity and Involvement II: Auckland Jewry, Past and Present*, Palmerston North, 1993, p.68.

In the period between 1933 and 1939 New Zealand had accepted the modest number of 1,100 Jewish refugees, from Central and Eastern Europe.⁹⁷² Beaglehole wrote that from 1948-52, 4,500 displaced persons came to New Zealand, but amongst these were very few Jews.⁹⁷³ Those of British or North European stock were prioritised, while Jews and Slavs considered the least desirable. She pointed out the difficulty in determining exactly how many were Jewish because accurate figures which distinguished between refugees and ordinary immigrants were not kept. In addition, officials classified people by nationality which was not always an accurate reflection of the background of refugees who had fled their homes. Figures presented to the High Commissioners office in London for the period 1933-42 were as follows: German 874, Austrian 27, Czechs 126, Hungarian 85.⁹⁷⁴ These were different from other records taken at the same time, demonstrating that they were merely estimates. Goldman recorded that 120 permits had been granted out of the 588 requested by displaced persons and then another 200 at a later date, though he did not specify the dates.⁹⁷⁵

While the government was reluctant to receive refugees in the 1930s and 1940s, it was more enthusiastic about supporting the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Some voices in the public discourse argued explicitly for the settling of Jews in Palestine rather than receiving immigrants to New Zealand. In a letter filled with antisemitic tropes, such as the notion that Jews dominated the world through the manipulation of currencies, writer, 'Cold Blood' concluded, 'This is a British country, and it is in the best interests of New Zealanders to keep it wholly British. I favour settling all of them in a Jewish national home. Then would they be like other folk, instead of wanderers upon the face of the earth'.⁹⁷⁶ For the most part, New Zealanders supported the establishment of a Jewish homeland for more altruistic motives.

Galvanising Support for a Jewish Homeland

In 1943, for the first time, New Zealand Zionists in the various regions united their efforts to work towards the establishment of a Jewish homeland. The 'first Dominion Zionist Conference

⁹⁷² Beaglehole, p.1.

⁹⁷³ Beaglehole, p.6.

⁹⁷⁴ Beaglehole, p.121.

⁹⁷⁵ Goldman, p.235.

⁹⁷⁶ 'Refugees', *Press*, 16 December 1943.

in the history of New Zealand Jewry' was held on 24-26 July in Wellington.⁹⁷⁷ The object of the conference was to consolidate not only Jewish but the wider New Zealand effort towards the establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine. The public meeting held in the State Theatre was attended by Prime Minister Peter Fraser and Mayor Thomas Hislop and both Christian and Jewish leaders.⁹⁷⁸ The meeting passed a number of resolutions. New Zealand's role as a signatory to the Mandate given to Britain for Palestine in 1922, was highlighted. One of the outcomes of the meeting was a resolution that the British White Paper of 1939 violated the letter and spirit of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine, and that Palestine was the only country in the world able and willing to solve the urgent need of the Jewish people for a home of refuge and settlement. The meeting urged the repeal of the 1939 British White Paper and the opening of the door of Palestine for Jewish settlement and immigration.

As well as inaugurating the New Zealand Council of Zionists, the conference resolved to establish non-Jewish Pro-Palestinian committees consisting of men and women from every walk of life ready to assist and cooperate in the goal of establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The conference was timed to coincide with the visit of Zionist emissary, Michael Traub, and he assisted greatly in the establishment of these committees. The formation of the first non-Jewish Pro-Palestine committee was mentioned in the *Judean Bulletin* in November 1943.⁹⁷⁹ It was established in Wellington and included prominent representatives of the clergy and university, as well as politicians.⁹⁸⁰ Their goal was to give expression to the interest and sympathy of the New Zealand people for the Jewish National Home in Palestine, and to obtain their moral support for the implementation of the Balfour Declaration. The meeting adopted unanimously the following resolution:

...that this first meeting of the New Zealand Palestine Committee expresses its horror at the unprecedented atrocities which have been and are being committed against the Jews in Europe, in pursuance of the barbarous Nazi policy to exterminate the Jews, and offers its deep-

⁹⁷⁷ Zionist Movement, *Otago Daily Times*, 26 July 1943.

⁹⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁹ *Judean Bulletin*,(JB), Vol 3, No. 27, November 1943, p.2.

⁹⁸⁰ JB, Nov. 1943, p.2.. The members of the Executive were: President, Bishop Holland, Vice-President, Mr C.H. Chapman, M.P., Mayor of Wellington, Thomas Hislop, Rev. P. Gladstone Hughes, Sir Thomas Hunter, Hon. Major C.F. Skinner, Archbishop O'Shea, Hon. secretary, Mr. Oliver Duff.

est sympathy to the sufferers. It further affirms that the present terrible plight of Jewry has strengthened the need for the full implementation of the Balfour Declaration and asked that in their critical hour the gates of Palestine shall be opened wide to Jewish immigration.⁹⁸¹

The establishment of pro-Palestine committees was, in itself, seen as a mark of progress by the Zionists. They saw it as indicative of the place that Zionism held in the Jewish life of the Southern Hemisphere and showed that Zionism had become a mass movement. These groups had first been established in Britain after the 1917 Balfour Declaration and included conservative politicians Winston Churchill and L.M. (Leo) Amery. America had established committees in 1941 with similarly influential members and Australia followed suit.

Traub's campaign was considered an outstanding success. The editors of *The Judean Bulletin* reflected on the value of personal contact with a man who was in touch with the great leaders of the day, and who understood the Jewish problem in all its perplexity, from personal experience. His messages were seen to have a galvanising effect on the youth and strengthened the Zionist organisation. He also successfully managed to enlist the support of many prominent citizens for the cause of a Jewish Palestine. Before Traub left New Zealand he attended a public meeting held by the Auckland Zionist Society where two hundred members protested against the White Paper of 1939, (covered in chapter eight), and signed a petition calling on the government to 'use its best efforts to ensure that the gates of Palestine will be thrown open as a sanctuary for those Jews who survive the cold-blooded mass extermination in Nazi occupied Europe'. It also called for the White Paper, which recommended the closing of the doors of Palestine on 1 April 1944, to be abolished. It urged that Palestine be allowed to play its full part in rescuing the remnants of the Jewish people. Similar meetings were held in other centres. Astor who addressed the Auckland meeting declared, 'Never was it more important for New Zealand Jewry to show its traditional sympathy for its oppressed brethren in Europe and to use its own freedom and power of expression in the vital cause of keeping open the doors of Palestine'.⁹⁸² Through public meetings, petitions, the establishment of a new organisation and committees, concerned New Zealanders responded to the suffering of Jewish Europeans by engaging in advocacy for a Jewish homeland.

⁹⁸¹ JB, Nov. 1943, p.2.

⁹⁸² *Judean Bulletin*, Vol3, No.28, December 1943.

Community Differences and the Desire for Unity

Ironically, it was in the wake of the First Dominion Zionist Conference in 1943 that fractures in the unity of Zionists in New Zealand began to appear, notwithstanding the fact that, as in any community, differences had arisen from time to time, and these were often hinted at in the reports and publications. In the Wellington Zionist Report, April 1943, on the Youth Aliyah campaign to assist European orphans going up to Eretz Israel, it was noted that ‘all personal difficulties and group differences were forgotten and everybody helped, not only with money but with a full heart’.⁹⁸³ Likewise, the editorial of the Auckland-based *Judean Bulletin*, April 1943, in commending those who worked hard for the community, mentioned, ‘We will not go into the history of petty rivalries which, as in most other communities, unfortunately hampers the endeavour of earnest public spirited people to a heart-breaking degree’.⁹⁸⁴ In spite of these references to dissension, as a small community and a minority group, unity was highly valued. Indeed, at the farewell event for Professor Julius and Mrs Stone held in Auckland February 1942, Julius Stone commented that, ‘it was almost a unique experience for both of them to see that in Auckland there was a community where the possibility of friction over any serious matter simply did not occur to the people’s minds’.⁹⁸⁵ He encouraged the community to ‘preserve and treasure that harmony in the Community as long as possible, as wealth of harmony and tradition gives to a community a potentiality for achievement and fecund contribution to the diffuse problems of the Jewish people which otherwise lie completely out of reach’. Of course the context for Stone’s remarks was the acrimonious debate in Australia, with which he was engaged against anti-Zionist Sir Isaac Isaacs, former Governor General of Australia.⁹⁸⁶

New Zealand Zionists certainly held diverse views and opinions, however these generally did not go beyond the sphere of intra-communal debates and discussions. Indeed, fora were designed for the purpose of discussing differing perspectives. One such evening was a cultural event organised by the Auckland Judean Association in which an article by Professor Brodetsky on Zionism ver-

⁹⁸³ *Judean Bulletin*, May 1943.

⁹⁸⁴ *Judean Bulletin*, April 1943

⁹⁸⁵ ‘Farewell to Prof. Julius and Mrs Stone’, *Judean Bulletin*, February 22, 1942, p.43; *Judean Bulletin*, March 1944. Julius Stone was Professor of Law at Auckland University for three years and left to take up the post of Challis Professor of International Law at Sydney University.

⁹⁸⁶ *JB* February 22, 1942, p.43.

sus Evacuation or Assimilation was discussed.⁹⁸⁷ One of the audience, Mr E. Fried (Te Awamutu) argued that the world's troubles emanated from nationalism, and that another small nation around which raged so much controversy would further aggravate the position. It was reported that his views were 'hotly contested' by a number of speakers, including Rabbi Astor and Captain Weiner from Detroit.⁹⁸⁸

However, the formation of the Zionist Council in 1943, a body designed to represent all Zionist groups in New Zealand, led to some minor ructions in the wider community. The new Zionist Council had resolved that a paper under the control of the Zionist Council for New Zealand would be published. It appears that the source of contention was their lack of recognition of the *Judean Bulletin* which had functioned since 1940 as a Zionist publication. Rabbi Astor recounted the history of the *Judean Bulletin* in his address at the First Dominion Zionist Conference 24-6 July 1943. He explained that the *Bulletin* had followed on from the *Jewish Times* and *Jewish Review*, edited by Ben Green and Mr M Pitkowsky. Mrs Rebecca Astor was the main editor of the *Bulletin*, which was at first sent only to members of the Auckland community, but had expanded into a full-sized journal with 1200 copies being distributed throughout the Dominion. It was considered 'of the highest value to Zionism' to send the *Bulletin* to every Jewish home regardless of affiliation to synagogue or society, so as to reach many who were out of touch with both. In this way the *Bulletin* served an important function of not only informing, but also galvanising the community.

The Auckland Judean Association had refused to affiliate to the new Zionist Council while the Council had on its minute books a resolution, 'requesting that all Zionist bodies and organisations in NZ to discontinue all support, financial and literary towards the *Judean Bulletin*, as the controllers were apparently unwilling to carry out the instruction of the Executive of the Dominion Zionist Council'. The editor of the *Judean Bulletin*, Rebecca Astor, had been under the impression that her paper would be the official organ of the Zionist Council and would receive a substantial subsidy. This point was recorded at the Eleventh Annual General Meeting of the Judean Association, 6 December 1943. However, this was not to be and the *Jewish Chronicle* went to publication on 2 September 1944 as the 'official organ of Zionist Council of NZ'. This example

⁹⁸⁷ The article explained Evacuation as 'the settlement of Jews in other parts of the world than Palestine'. *Judean Bulletin*, April 1943.

⁹⁸⁸ *Judean Bulletin*, April 1943.

of disunity can be understood as an intra-communal jostling for power and position with the emergence of a new body asserting its dominance over other long established organisations.

In the editorial of the *Judean Bulletin* in September 1943, the Astors expressed their wish for ‘unity of action and the speediest solution for the redemption of Israel and our Homeland’. They acknowledged that it was in the hands of the newly formed Zionist Council ‘to achieve great things for the unity and benefit of the Zionist cause in the Dominion’. In wishing the Council the greatest success, and promising it ‘all the support in our power’, they also suggested that in its early stage it would be in the Council’s own interest to collaborate with the ‘more experienced and proved Zionists of NZ’. They also expressed the hope that, ‘the unity which we so strongly desire will also be extended to include the religious and every other aspect of Jewish life in this Dominion’.⁹⁸⁹ However, the Astors’ desire for religious unity would later be tested.

It appears that the dispute was resolved by the time of the Second Dominion Zionist Conference in November 25-27, 1944. The December issue reported of the Second Dominion Zionist Conference that a ‘sphere of solidarity was created’ and ‘the most rejoicing feature’ of the conference was the atmosphere of goodwill. Leading the Auckland delegation, Mr Klippel had congratulated the Executive and affirmed that the Council had the full support of the Auckland Zionist Society. His comment that there was ‘nothing to criticise’ was received as an ‘unexpected balm to the battered memories of the Executive. In this atmosphere of goodwill even the discussion regarding former differences with the *Judean Bulletin* lacked all vehemence, and it was highly appreciated’. Furthermore, ‘it was highly appreciated that the Auckland Judean Association, represented by Mrs Astor, had finally decided to affiliate with the Council...’⁹⁹⁰ Rabbi Astor would later write in a letter dealing with another matter of concern, that they had given up their ‘independent and excellent Judean Bulletin’ for the ‘good of Zionist unity in New Zealand’.⁹⁹¹

The desire for unity also led to the formation of the Council of Wellington Jewry in October 1945. A report in the *NZJC* in November 1945 explained the reasoning behind the formation of a new

⁹⁸⁹ p.139. The *Judean Bulletin*, (Only Journal of Jewish and Zionist News in NZ), September 1943

⁹⁹⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, December 1944.

⁹⁹¹ Undated letter to Mr Faine, Zionist Council NZ.

organisation: that it would create a basis for co-operation and ‘bring forth a unity of spirit and action, beneficial to the cause, to each Jewish organisation engaged in furthering some Jewish aim or interest, beneficial to every Jew of Wellington as well’. The article asserted that:

NZ Jews, whether they be orthodox or liberal in the performance of their religious duties, whether their conception of Judaism be national or religious, their background a NZ or a Continental one, their general attitude towards the work conservative or progressive, NZ Jews - as Jews all over the world - have two great things in common: They are the bearers of a great ideal “JUDAISM” towards which they have an everlasting obligation, for which they have to live and which they must keep alive . They have, moreover a common enemy, “ANTISEMITISM”, an accumulation of sinister and powerful forces aiming at the destruction of Judaism and Jews alike.

The local communities greatly desired unity, and for the most part, divisions were of a organisational and relational nature. The ideological divisions of the international Zionist organisation were generally not replicated in the local associations. However, an ideologically- based dispute would emerge towards the end of the time period of this thesis. At the end of the war in 1945, the Astors undertook a trip to Palestine. Rebecca Astor became acquainted with the work of the Mizrahi Women’s Organisation, MZO, which sought to strengthen the religious basis of homes in Eretz Israel. She was particularly moved by her contact with orphans who had survived incredible hardship. While their physical needs were being met by organisations like WIZO, she believed the work of the religious organisations, like MWO, needed to be recognised and supported. She made a promise to the president of the MWO, Sara Herzog (wife of the Chief Rabbi of Palestine), that she would advocate for their work. On her return to New Zealand Rebecca Astor travelled to Wellington, Dunedin and Christchurch to fulfil this promise. In December 1947 she made a plea (reported in the *NZJC*):

We must see to it that at least some of the large sums of money sent annually by NZ to build up the Land of Israel is directed to strengthen the hands of the religious Mothers in Israel who have taken over the responsibilities of all the martyred mothers of Europe.

She commented that there was no special organisation in New Zealand working for the religious upbuilding of Palestine, nor did she think there was room for yet another society. However, she implored subscribers to respond generously to an appeal on behalf of the MWO.

However, sometime later, (probably between 1948-1951), in an undated letter of resignation from Rabbi Astor as ex-officio member of the Council and President of the Zionist Society, to Mr Faine of the Zionist Council, Astor expressed deep concern over the attitude of the Council towards the 'just claims of Mizrahi'.⁹⁹² Astor asserted that contrary to the decisions formulated by the WZO whereby Mizrahi was entitled to appeal for the funds in New Zealand, if not sharing in the United Israel Appeal, the Council had maintained their 'singular opposition'. He claimed that he had 'for the past five years tried hard to get an agreement for Mizrahi to receive an allocation'. He argued that, not only had nothing been done since then, but the opposition of the Council had become even more determined, and the President had stated publicly that he was against the remit sent to Conference asking for a share of the Appeal. Furthermore, he maintained that Council would not have the Mizrahi Jubilee mentioned in the NZJC. Astor's strength of feeling over this issue, such that he was willing to resign from the Zionist Council, is a reflection of his conviction that Zionism could not be divorced from Judaism. He asserted that religious Zionism was 'the one link for the average Jew in the Diaspora'.⁹⁹³

Astor had articulated his view on nationalism and Judaism in his speech at the 1943 Dominion Zionist Conference. He argued that those who saw Zionism as only a national movement would be merely creating another small nation and continuing the 'material selfishness of narrow nationalism' which had brought the world to its present 'parlous condition'.⁹⁹⁴ He believed that Jewish education that included knowledge of the Bible as well as the land of Palestine was a necessity. Astor continued to emphasise the continuity of the Jewish faith, articulating that New Zealand Judaism did not want to be isolated, but remain part of the Judaism which had come down through the ages. Astor elaborated on the complex challenges in maintaining Judaism. He believed that in Palestine itself, where the Jew was at home spiritually, it would be easier to keep

⁹⁹² Possibly Alick Faine, Wellington based Treasurer of the Zionist Society for many years. *Standard for the People*, P.403.

⁹⁹³ Letter Astor to Faine, Undated (probably 1948-1951), Astor Collection.

⁹⁹⁴ Editorial, *Judean Bulletin*, March 1945, p.26.

the essence of their religion without adhering strictly to the multitudinous laws of traditional observance. Outside Palestine, once persecution ceased, if there were no religious observances, assimilation would be so rapid that Judaism would inevitably disappear. He believed it was religion that had kept his people intact through the ‘darkest persecutions of two thousand years’, and that gave them the right to their homeland. Astor considered the biggest threat to Jewish existence to be not physical, but spiritual. He believed that physical persecutions strengthened the Jewish people spiritually, whereas cultural degeneration was and still remained the biggest threat.⁹⁹⁵ Astor greatly valued unity within the Jewish community in New Zealand, and worked hard over many years to maintain harmonious relationships, for the sake of the wider concerns of his people. He and Rebecca Astor were even willing to give up their dearly loved publication for the sake of unity. However, he was increasingly concerned over the loss of religious belief in New Zealand and a Zionism which divorced Judaism from nationalism. A small reflection of that concern can be seen in the change of the by-line for the *Judean Bulletin*. In 1943 it read, ‘Only Journal of Jewish and Zionist News in NZ’. In 1947 it had changed to, ‘This journal is dedicated to the strengthening of our Faith in New Zealand, to justice for our people everywhere; and to the upbuilding of Zion according to the Torah of Israel’. When the over-arching Zionist body in New Zealand appeared unwilling to support the religious basis of Zionism, Astor was prepared to show his opposition by taking firm action and resigning from that body.

Prime Minister Peter Fraser’s support for Zionism

In 1940 Prime Minister M.J. Savage died and Peter Fraser became New Zealand’s leader. In Paul Thomas Enright’s work on New Zealand’s involvement in Palestine, he claimed that Peter Fraser had extensive contact with the Jewish community and visiting Zionists.⁹⁹⁶ This fact is hard to find in the general biographies on Fraser, but a perusal of newspapers and Jewish sources, affirms Enright’s assertion. As mentioned, Louis Phillips was known to have a friendship with Fraser. Enright also mentioned that Fraser, like Savage, was a close friend of the prominent Jewish businessman Ernest Davies. When David Ben Gurion, the leader of the Jewish Agency and future Prime Minister of Israel, visited New Zealand in 1941, Fraser attended the reception organised by

⁹⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁹⁶ Paul Thomas Enright, ‘New Zealand’s Involvement in the Partitioning of Palestine and the Creation of Israel’, A Thesis submitted for the degree Master of Arts in History at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, January 1982.

the Auckland Jewish community.⁹⁹⁷ Hannah van Voorthuysen argued that many in the Labour Party felt an affinity with the Zionist project in Palestine, because of a shared socialist heritage, and similarities of ‘small size, democratic tradition, reliance on agriculture, and the desire to create a better society’.⁹⁹⁸

Fraser on many occasions advocated on behalf of the Jews during his Prime Ministership. He spoke at a public meeting convened by the Wellington City Council, February 1943, to protest against Nazi atrocities. He deplored ‘the Hitler policy of the utter annihilation of races in Europe, which is being carried into effect by wholesale murder, mass execution, starvation and other means’ and he particularly mentioned ‘the order for the extermination of the entire Jewish people in Europe’.⁹⁹⁹ The meeting was also attended by other community and religious leaders.¹⁰⁰⁰ Fraser spoke of the shame and revulsion one felt when reading the stories of the transportation of the Jews. He spoke of the ‘savagery of the civilised barbarians of today, of the Jew baiters and killers’, and re-affirmed the Government’s support for the United Nations declaration on December 1942 against the German treatment of Jews.¹⁰⁰¹ Fraser declared that, ‘both the Government and the New Zealand people express, in protest, their horror at the shocking and inhuman cruelties now being perpetrated by the German aggressors’.¹⁰⁰²

Fraser continued to speak out about the Nazis’ planned ‘deliberate, coldblooded, scientific extermination of the Jewish race’, arguing that it was a matter of justice that this country stand for ‘those people who have suffered so much at the hands of Nazism and Fascism’.¹⁰⁰³ However, Fraser was far more willing to support the return of the Jews to Palestine than the admission of

⁹⁹⁷ Goldman, p.207.

⁹⁹⁸ Hannah van Voorthuysen, “Just a Damned Nuisance”: New Zealand’s Changing Relationship with Israel from 1947 until May 2010, Masters of Arts thesis, International Relations, Victoria University of Wellington 2011, p.20.

⁹⁹⁹ *Judean Bulletin*, Vol 2, No. 22, March 1943

¹⁰⁰⁰ Wellington Mayor, Thomas Hislop, Leader of the Opposition, Sidney Holland, Bishop of Wellington, Rev. H. St. Barbe Holland, Monsignor T.F. Connolly, on behalf of Archbishop O’Shae, Rev. P. Gladstone Hughes, Rabbi Katz, Consul General of Belgium, M.Z. Nihotte, on behalf of the Allied nations.

¹⁰⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰² *Judean Bulletin*, Vol 2, No. 22, March 1943, *Otago Daily Times*, 23 February 1943.

¹⁰⁰³ ‘Zionist Movement’, *Otago Daily Times*, 26 July 1943.

refugees to New Zealand. He argued that, 'The Jewish people naturally and rightly want to go back to Palestine', and urged that, 'Whatever could be done to help that persecuted people should and must be done to the limit'.¹⁰⁰⁴ At a public meeting in Wellington in July 1943, Fraser declared New Zealand's intention to stand 'four-square for justice for the ancient home'.¹⁰⁰⁵ He then explicitly stated New Zealand's limited commitment to taking refugees in contrast to its enthusiastic support for the Zionist goal. He declared, 'New Zealand, of course, has not the means to itself offer a solution of the problem. That must remain very largely, an Imperial responsibility. New Zealand's part will be to offer her most sincere support, based upon admiration for what the Jews have already achieved in Palestine and practical sympathy for their terrible sufferings, towards the working out of a solution which Mr. Churchill and the British and American leaders assuredly desire. Thus the aspiration for a national home may be realised'.¹⁰⁰⁶

Following the end of the war and the discovery of the scale of the devastation wreaked upon Jewish communities in Europe, conditions for Jews continued to be difficult. Thousands of refugees remained in displaced persons camps in Europe and the British administration in Palestine continued to impose harsh restrictions on the Jewish population. The calls became louder and more insistent for a Jewish homeland to be established in Palestine. The editor of *The New Zealand Jewish Chronicle*, August 1945, wrote, 'Our part is to atone for the losses of the defenceless dead by making a permanent home in Palestine for the living. Palestine has become our Peace Programme, for Zionism is the path that leads from annihilation to triumphant survival'.¹⁰⁰⁷

In the local scene, an area of contention arose when the Returned Services Association (RSA) passed an Anti-Alien Resolution at its annual conference in 1945, 'That any person who arrived in NZ from Germany, Australia, Hungary, or Italy, since 1939 must return to their own countries within two years after hostilities with Germany have ceased...'¹⁰⁰⁸ The Jewish community raised its voice in protest and a deputation met with the RSA on 12 July. Astor expressed the shocked reaction of the Jewish community to the resolution. He explained that some ninety families had

¹⁰⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁵ 'The Hope of Zion', *Evening Post*, 27 July 1943.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁷ *The New Zealand Jewish Chronicle*, Vol. 1, no.11, August, 1945, p.229.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Ibid.

gained refuge in Auckland, many as a result of the sympathy of church bodies and Christian citizens. Astor knew these refugees intimately, and he felt 'it would be heaping further injustice to discriminate against those who had been through the sourest persecution in history'. He gave assurances that they would be loyal citizens and a great asset to the country, and furthermore, he argued, there would be no place for them in Germany for the next two or three generations. A deputation also met with the Prime Minister and was given assurances of his disapproval of the resolution.¹⁰⁰⁹ Indeed, Fraser spoke out against racial hatred and animosity on a number of occasions.¹⁰¹⁰ Upon Fraser's return from the 1945 post-war San Francisco conference, which established the United Nations, he gave a speech in Auckland in which he issued a warning against the stirring up of racial feelings which, he argued, had led to the Nazi concentration camps. He pointed out that both the Atlantic Charter, 1941, and San Francisco charter, 1945, forbade racial discrimination.¹⁰¹¹ Biographers Michael Bassett and Michael King argued that as an 'old fashioned human rightist', Fraser had great hope that a new world order would bring improved Labour standards and economic, social and global security.¹⁰¹²

Members of the Jewish community continued to meet with Fraser to discuss their concerns. A deputation consisting of Jewish, Christian and other delegates from all centres of the Dominion met with him on August 1945 with a request to the government to remove the disabilities of refugee Aliens and to restore the facilities for their naturalization. The *Judean Bulletin* recorded that the deputation was received most favourably and their representations were given a very sympathetic hearing.¹⁰¹³ In August 1946, London-based Dr Maurice Perlzweig, Political Head of the World Jewish Congress, visited New Zealand and was said to have created a profound impression with his brilliant address. He also conferred with Fraser, with regard to the position of the Jews in Europe and the protection of their rights under the Peace Treaties.¹⁰¹⁴ In May 1947 Major

¹⁰⁰⁹ *Judean Bulletin*, August 1945

¹⁰¹⁰ Beaglehole, pp.97,98.

¹⁰¹¹ From *The Standard*, 19 August 1945, Vol. 5. No.41.

¹⁰¹² Michael Basset & Michael King, *Tomorrow Comes the Song: A Life of Peter Fraser*, Auckland, 2000, p.258.

¹⁰¹³ *The Judean Bulletin*, September 1945, Vol 6 No.1.

¹⁰¹⁴ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 15 August, 1946.

Michael Comay, representative of South African Jewry on the Jewish Agency for Palestine, flew from Palestine to Australia and New Zealand to interview the respective Prime Ministers in connection with the submission of the Palestine problem to the United Nations. Comay conferred with Fraser in Auckland and he was 'given a cordial and sympathetic hearing'.¹⁰¹⁵ The *NZ Judean Bulletin* recorded that within two hours of Comay's arrival in New Zealand the Prime Minister extended to him a lengthy interview lasting an hour and a half where all the problems of Palestine and the position of the Jewish people were fully discussed.¹⁰¹⁶

Fraser's support for the Zionist goal was also evident on the international stage. In addressing the United Nations delegates at the San Francisco Conference in April 1945 Fraser asserted that, 'Whatever can be done to help the persecuted Jewish people shall and must be done to the utmost ability of all right-thinking men. There should be no antagonism or misunderstanding between the Jewish and Arab peoples, as everyone living in Palestine would naturally benefit from what the Jewish people have made out of a land which was once desert.' He declared the ideals of the Jews in Palestine as akin to New Zealand, except that the Jewish people went into Palestine with a 'tradition of privation'.¹⁰¹⁷ However, the outbreak of Jewish terrorist activity in Palestine in the 1940s, undertaken by paramilitary and terrorist groups, Irgun, the Stern Gang and later Lehi, raised a challenge for New Zealand Jews being both loyal Britons and dedicated Zionists. When Irgun blew up the King David Hotel in July 1946, New Zealand Jewish communities made clear their disapproval of any acts of terrorism, however they also protested against the response of the British administration in Palestine which they accused of 'the indiscriminate arrests of thousands of citizens and the unwarranted excessive use of military force'. They saw the terrorist activity as arising from frustration with Britain's restrictive policies towards European refugees, and accused the British government of failing to implement the recommendations of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry that 100,000 Jews be immediately transferred to Palestine.¹⁰¹⁸

¹⁰¹⁵ Beth Israel Congregation, Auckland, N.Z., Report and Statement of Accounts, 15 August.

¹⁰¹⁶ The *NZ Judean Bulletin*, Vol.7, no. 4, May/June 1947. (The bulletin had minor adjustments to its title. Now NZ is included).

¹⁰¹⁷ *New Zealand Jewish Chronicle*, Vol 1, No.s 7/8, April/May 1945, p.155.

¹⁰¹⁸ *NZJC*, August 1946

Astor, who had recently returned from Palestine, had attended the meetings of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. He described the military measures taken against the Jews as ‘provocative and unnecessary’ and claimed that Britain was antagonising her only friend in the Middle East. He asserted that the Palestinian Jews had proved by their war effort that they were staunch supporters of democracy and at present were the only people willing to receive the unfortunate refugees from Europe. He claimed that, ‘The repressive legislation that had been issued by the British administration had made us (he and his wife), as British people, feel very uncomfortable’. They believed that the Jews had shown great restraint in the face of great provocation.¹⁰¹⁹ He considered the arrest of Jewish leaders, alleged to have been involved in terrorist activities, as unwarranted as they were people who had been foremost in recruiting for the British forces during the war. He thought a distinct line should be drawn between the Haganah, the Jewish defence force, which was armed by Britain against the Arabs and which represented the majority of Palestinian Jews and the terrorists. He argued that the Foreign Office, by its ruthless methods had offered no reward for that loyalty shown by the Jews.

When two British sergeants were murdered by the Irgun in August 1947, Astor expressed in the *NZH*, ‘The horror of New Zealand Jews at a terrible outrage which was altogether contrary to Jewish ethics’.¹⁰²⁰ He stated that he was quite certain that everything possible was being done by the Jewish Agency in Palestine to suppress acts of this kind. He made clear that acts of terrorism were criminal and must be condemned without question, and affirmed the statement of the Board of British Jews, of ‘its unqualified abhorrence and condemnation of these acts of terrorism by irresponsible groups whose criminal behaviour was contrary to all the teachings of Judaism’. Astor further added that, ‘He wished Britain would give way, if only a little on the immigration question. There had been no ray of light for the desperately placed Jews of Europe who had suffered so much. Their kinsfolk in Palestine were prepared to go to any lengths to bring in these refugees’.¹⁰²¹ A.A. Israel wrote retrospectively of this period in Astor’s life that in the addresses he delivered after his return to New Zealand, the inner conflict, which he, as a loyal and demon-

¹⁰¹⁹ *NZJC*, October 1946

¹⁰²⁰ ‘Jews Horrified, Reaction to Murders in Palestine, Terrorism Opposed’, *NZ Herald*, 2/8/47.

¹⁰²¹ ‘Jews Horrified, Reaction to Murders in Palestine, Terrorism Opposed’, *NZ Herald*, 2/8/47.

strably patriotic British subject, was evident, when confronted by the activities of Jewish terrorist organisations struggling to frustrate the designs of the British administration.¹⁰²²

New Zealand Jews were placed in the difficult position of defending their fellow Jews in the face of much opposition in the local press. Their indignation was evident. While they deplored the actions of the terrorists, they believed that British failure had created the conditions for these extremists to take action.¹⁰²³ The editor of *Judean Bulletin*, December 1947 wrote that as loyal British Jews it was ‘extremely painful’ to see the reaction of a section of the press to the decision of the United Nations on partition. The editor accused the press of producing one-sided and biassed reports of the events in Palestine, and complained that they had shown a ‘callous indifference’ to the ‘unparalleled slaughter of six million human beings and the shameful episode of the ‘Exodus’ victims’. The editor asserted that ‘the record of the administration in Palestine since the end of the war could not have produced other than grave damage to the British-Jewish good relationship’.

Fraser believed strongly enough in the justice of the Zionist cause, that he was willing to challenge Britain. By 1947 Britain had given up hope of finding a solution to the Palestinian problem and signalled its intention to withdraw from Palestine, without making any provision for the maintenance of law and order. As Enright argued, ‘Fraser recognised that Britain’s decision to withdraw from Palestine was “within her rights” but considered such an action to be neither responsible nor morally correct’.¹⁰²⁴ In a lengthy telegram to the Office of the Colonial Secretary in London, Fraser reminded Britain that twenty-five years ago the United Kingdom had undertaken the responsibility of the Mandate. He argued that because Britain’s successive policies were inextricably woven into the present Palestine situation and its people, they had the most intimate knowledge of that country and a responsibility to help the United Nations carry out its policy.¹⁰²⁵

On 29 November 1947, New Zealand voted, along with 32 other countries, for the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state, alongside an Arab state. Thirteen countries voted against partition

¹⁰²² A.A. Israel.

¹⁰²³ *Judean Bulletin*, December 1947

¹⁰²⁴ Paul Thomas Enright, pp.180,181.

¹⁰²⁵ Enright, p.182.

and ten abstained, among them Great Britain. At this point Fraser was willing to vote on his convictions, even if it went against the 'mother country'. When Israel declared statehood on 14 May 1948, Fraser was eager to recognise the new state as soon as possible but he faced sustained pressure from Great Britain to withhold recognition and his own Cabinet favoured the British position.¹⁰²⁶ In addition, van Voorthuysen pointed out that the creation of a Jewish state was opposed by many in the National Party, which identified closely with Britain and the conservative press, due to the ongoing acts of Jewish terrorism against British officials in Palestine.¹⁰²⁷ New Zealand accorded *de facto* recognition to Israel simultaneously with the United Kingdom on 29 January 1949. In May 1949 the United Nations General Assembly voted to grant Israel UN membership. New Zealand supported the resolution along with thirty-seven other countries and finally accorded *de jure* recognition to Israel on 28 July 1950 at the same time as Britain.

Conclusion

The declaration of the state of Israel in 1948 brought great rejoicing in New Zealand's Jewish community. Rabbi Astor continued to advocate for a Zionism that combined religious and nationalist ideals and spoke out against a purely secular view of Zionism.¹⁰²⁸ As a loyal Briton, Astor expressed deep disappointment at what he considered to be Britain's failure toward the Jewish people. Upon the news of Britain's delayed *de jure* recognition of Israel in 1950, Astor stated that it had been a source of much bewilderment and sorrow that with Britain's centuries-old tradition of sympathy and understanding of the Jewish position, its parallel obligations to the Arabs and accompanying difficulties had prevented earlier recognition.¹⁰²⁹

This chapter has investigated the role of Zionism in New Zealand, not only in supporting the establishment of a Jewish state, but also in meeting the needs of the Jewish community in New Zealand. It has also shown the impact of a spiritual leader like Rabbi Astor, who held strong beliefs about Zionism and took seriously the task of influencing and educating those over whom he had responsibility. For this small, distant, diasporic community, Zionism was seen to galvanise the

¹⁰²⁶ Hannah van Voorthuysen, p.24.

¹⁰²⁷ Ibid, p.20.

¹⁰²⁸ Notes from private 'Rabbi Astor Collection', p.171.

¹⁰²⁹ 'New chapter Opened: Auckland Rabbis Comment', newspaper clipping in Rabbi Astor's private collection.

people and strengthen Jewish consciousness and identity. The Jewish communities in New Zealand placed a high value on unity and while diverse views and opinions were held, this generally did not translate into divergent associations within Zionism. For Astor, however, a purely secular Zionism posed a challenge and at the end of the period of this thesis, he was willing to break with fellow Zionists over that matter. According to Astor, Judaism revolved around and depended upon the ancient link with Zion. Israel had become the 'lodestar' and hope for survival for millions of his people. Zionism also provided a 'feeling of belonging', which Astor believed needed to be passed onto the new generation, for to not do so, would deny them 'that for which our fathers for thousands of years suffered all things to keep intact 'Achdut Yisrael' - the unity, oneness of Israel'.¹⁰³⁰

While New Zealand responded sympathetically to the Nazi persecution of Jews, that sentiment did not translate into a willingness to receive Jewish refugees. Immigration was curtailed by restrictive policies intended to limit the arrival of newcomers who were not considered desirable. A range of views existed within the Christian denominations, with some groups and individuals showing particularly avid support for Zionism. At a communal level, this support derived, for some, from theological and biblical understandings of the place of Jews in God's plan for humanity and for others, from a humanitarian stance. On an individual level, support similarly arose out of a combination of theological conviction, humanitarianism as well as meaningful relationships with Jewish people. Many in the Jewish community worked extremely hard on behalf of the refugees, their task made all the more difficult by an unsympathetic government policy. While the government did not encourage the settlement of refugees in New Zealand, it did support the immigration of Jews to Palestine. Indeed, New Zealand's Prime Minister from 1940, Peter Fraser, stood in the tradition of previous Zionist leader William Massey, by advocating strongly on the post-war world stage for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Fraser expressed great sympathy for the plight of Jews and believed it was a matter of justice that they should be established in their own homeland. New Zealand's Jewish community expressed its gratitude for Fraser's advocacy for a Jewish state by nominating him for the highest honour, an inscription in the Golden Book housed in Jerusalem.

¹⁰³⁰ Rabbi Astor's Last Sermon, 17 July 1971.

CONCLUSION

The launch of Herzl's political Zionism in 1897 marked a new phase in Jewish history. The idea of the return of the Jewish people to their ancient land was not unfamiliar. A scattering of Jews had always remained in the land, and ventures into Ottoman Palestine had been undertaken by small groups of pioneers during the nineteenth century. However, Herzl's scheme to create a homeland on a political basis, recognised by the international community, progressed the notion in a previously unknown form. Political Zionism captured the attention of Jews and non-Jews all over the world, who discussed and debated its significance and meaning. This thesis has examined how and why a tiny, diasporic community, the furthest distance from the centre of Jewish life and thought, would be labelled 'the best Jewish community in the world from the Zionist point of view'.¹⁰³¹ It has also investigated the factors that drew the wider community of this small nation into the discourse and developments in Palestine and Zionism.

A number of considerations contributed to the growth of the Zionist movement in New Zealand. External historical circumstances drove the Jewish people to look for solutions for the perilous situation of many of their people. A number of internal drivers created the conditions for the local Jewish community to take up the Zionist cause, including the humanitarian impulse and the role of Zionism in meeting their identity needs. In addition, other elements played a part in the development and success of the movement; the British affinity, Christian support, strong leaders and vigorous networks of information exchange.

This thesis began in the nineteenth century in order to understand the background conditions that prepared the way for the reception of Zionism at the beginning of the twentieth century in New Zealand, as elsewhere. It then tracked the development and changes in the progress of political Zionism in New Zealand from 1903 to 1948. Herzl's 'scheme' was heralded by Zionists around the globe as a solution to the persistent problem of antisemitism which drove the persecution of Jews in Russia, East Europe, and also in West Europe and Palestine. It took a few years before concrete steps were taken in New Zealand; the first Zionist societies were established in 1903. Activity escalated after the 1917 Balfour Declaration and gained momentum by the 1920s. The Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate for Palestine established in 1920, propelled the

¹⁰³¹ Lazarus Morris Goldman, 'Zionism', *The History of Jews in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1958, p.207.

movement onto a new level of activity and Britain's explicit support for the Zionist goals heightened the expectations of New Zealand's local Jewish community. During the 1930s, Arab opposition to the Zionist project led to a severe diminishing of the promises undertaken by the British to the Jews. New Zealand's Jewish community considered loyalty to the Crown an ethical duty and so found Britain's failure to keep its commitments under the Mandate deeply disappointing. They made their views known to the British authorities and often the New Zealand government advocated on their behalf. Meanwhile, in Germany, under Hitler's leadership and Nazi rule, the Jewish population came under increasing and relentless persecution. New Zealanders responded sympathetically to the plight of the Jewish refugees, with prayer services and messages of support. However, the government's policy towards the refugees was highly restrictive, and New Zealand received a mere 1,100 immigrants in the period between 1933 and 1939. Local Jewish advocates exerted strenuous efforts on behalf of the refugees. The closing of the doors of immigration in Palestine and the failure of the world to take in Jewish refugees, combined with the revelation of the murder of millions of Jews in the Holocaust, contributed to the increasing calls for a homeland for the Jews. New Zealand's Prime Minister Peter Fraser joined that chorus of voices, and advocated strongly for the Jews. New Zealand supported the United Nations Partition Plan of 1947 and later recognised the state of Israel which formed 1948.

While the historical events of the twentieth century created the conditions by which some Jews looked to Zionism to meet the needs of persecuted and homeless Jews, the internal imperative driving the New Zealand Jewish community's response can be understood as a continuation of well-established practices of philanthropy and charity. The national ideal was not entirely absent from the debate, but the suffering of fellow Jews provided an unassailable argument for supporting the movement. The response of the Jewish community fits the analysis offered by Laqueur that many Jews were 'instinctive Zionists' and needed no ideological justification for their actions.¹⁰³² The ground was prepared in nineteenth-century New Zealand for the uptake of Zionism as a humanitarian venture in the twentieth century. Jews quickly established the institutions of a synagogue-based communal life. They maintained their sense of identity as a people by keeping connected to the wider Jewish world. One of the expressions of this relationship was the philanthropic and charitable activity that bound people together across the miles. This tradition continued in the twentieth century with the ongoing appeals to assist their 'co-religionists' who were

¹⁰³² Laqueur, p. 162.

often persecuted minorities in Russia and East European countries. With this background and perspective, Jewish communities easily embraced Zionism as an extension of a tradition of charity. Zionism in New Zealand, for the most part, involved fundraising ventures for the ‘upbuilding of Palestine’, and as the suffering of Jews increased and intensified with the rise of Hitler and Nazi Germany, a homeland for the Jews was seen as an answer to the ‘Jewish problem’ of anti-semitism. While the central Zionist leaders opposed the notion of charity, as it was considered demeaning and contravened the active and dynamic mentality they sought to cultivate, in the New Zealand context Zionism was embraced as a continuation of the humanitarian projects that had been established in the nineteenth century and a part of Jewish religious belief and culture. Most Zionists were involved in a range of community activities and projects, and some of the most ardent Zionists, such as Louis Phillips, Simone Nathan and Rabbi Astor worked assiduously in other areas, such as assisting Jewish refugees. This strengthens the argument that humanitarianism was a driving force in their activity. Zionism outworked in New Zealand in practical ways, and the local communities for the most part, were not hindered by the ideological differences that divided many Zionists elsewhere.

For New Zealand Jews, Zionism performed a primary role of meeting the needs of suffering Jews elsewhere. However, the movement also fulfilled a number of functions for the local community. The rabbis considered the greatest threat to Jewish existence in this small ‘distant outpost of Jewry’ to be ‘assimilation’. The ease of life and freedom in New Zealand and the difficulty of finding Jewish marriage partners in a small community led to a gradual drift away from the Jewish religion and culture. Zionism was seen as a galvanising movement to strengthen Jewish identity and bring Jews back into the fold. Rabbis Goldstein and Astor in Auckland, Katz in Wellington, Chodowski in Dunedin managed to combine their Judaism with Zionism, and recognised its value in keeping Jewish consciousness and identity alive. According to Goldstein, prior to the establishment of Zionism, many Jews were ignorant of the fact that they ‘belonged to the Jewish nation’, and now were declaring their love for their people. Astor retrospectively articulated the spiritual and religious needs that Zionism met:

The Jewish communities scattered throughout the diaspora must also be saved spiritually and religiously. Israel's rebirth calls for a corresponding renaissance of Jewish Faith and Jewish Thought through the Dispersion.¹⁰³³

Astor urged his people to show by practical example that Zionism and Judaism were synonymous, that 'a Jew and a Zionist were one and the same being'.

One of the elements that played a part in the progress of Zionism was the interest and involvement of the wider public. A perusal of newspapers in the nineteenth century revealed that the general community was fascinated by the developments in Palestine and the plight of the Jews, for a variety of religious and political reasons. New Zealanders followed closely Britain's imperialist endeavours in the region, particularly the surveying ventures in the land. The Evangelical revival that took hold in Britain had ripple effects here as well, affirming the salience of religious belief in New Zealand at this time. Evangelicals viewed the archaeological discoveries in Palestine as confirmation of the veracity of the Bible. Millennialists saw prophetic significance in the 'restoration of the Jews' and Anglicans sought a foothold in the land in competition with the Catholics. Māori identified with the suffering Israelites, while British Israelites, with a combination of imperialism and millennialism, saw themselves as the 'chosen people'. Palestine captivated the minds of New Zealanders in the nineteenth century and the launch of political Zionism at the end of the century added a new aspect to the discourse.

The support for Zionism within Christian circles continued into the twentieth century, and New Zealand leaders joined a wider stream of British Christian statesmen who had a significant impact on the movement; men such as the Lord Anthony Ashley Cooper, Lord Arthur James Balfour, and David Lloyd George. New Zealand Prime Minister William Massey was a British Israelite, who through his work in the post-World War I conferences contributed to the development of Zionism. Christians supported Zionism for a range of reasons. In the nineteenth century, Jews and Christians often worked together to support each others' projects. This continued in the twentieth century, in many charitable appeals. It was a natural transition for Christian organisations to support Zionist ventures, such as the highly successful Easter Garden Fair, organised by Simone Nathan

¹⁰³³ This document addresses the uniqueness of the Jews. It is one extant page of a longer message and is part of the Rabbi Astor Collection, held in a private archive. (p.171).

in 1920. Zionism became simply another outlet for humanitarian activities. As Jewish citizens in Germany came under increasing persecution, Churches expressed their sympathy in messages of support and convened prayer services. Christian Zionist groups, like the Christadelphians gave ongoing assistance, both moral and financial. While in some Christian circles, the restoration of the Jews to Israel was a theological abstraction, others were very personal in their approach. Sometimes individuals showed deep commitment to the Jewish cause, such as Rev. Charles Walker Chandler, the Anglican Dean of Hamilton, who developed a close relationship with Auckland's Rabbi Astor.

A thread that runs through the thesis from the time of the settlement of Jews in New Zealand to the establishment of the state of Israel was the close ties the Jewish community maintained with Britain. Many of the original Jewish settlers to New Zealand were British, and they tightened their relationship to Anglo-Jewry by modelling their synagogues after the English model, placing themselves under the jurisdiction of the Chief Rabbi in London and building connections with Anglo-Jewish organisations. As mentioned, the British Jewish groups acted as a mediator between the local communities and the wider Jewish world. This mechanism facilitated the two-way exchange, providing a channel for the international calls for assistance and the distribution of funds raised. The binding affinity with Britain was consistent with much New Zealand sentiment at that time, wherein New Zealanders saw England as 'home' and New Zealand as the 'Britain of the South'. While many Anglo-Jews (in Britain, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere) opposed Zionism because of fear of the accusation of dual loyalty, local leaders like Rabbis Goldstein and Astor saw no contradiction in embracing both loyalty to the state, the Crown, and a Jewish homeland in Palestine. As the perception of British endorsement for Zionism grew, with the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the establishment of the British Mandate for Palestine, the New Zealand government and wider public also showed favour towards the movement. New Zealand's participation in the Palestine Campaign in World War One also contributed to a sympathy and support for the Jewish people. As mentioned, New Zealand leaders like Massey joined a stream of British statesmen who supported Zionism, and those like Lord Allenby and Right Hon. L.M.S Amery were honoured with civic receptions when they visited New Zealand. However, Britain's failure to fulfil its promises under the Mandate complicated the relationship, and many local Jewish leaders expressed their opposition to British policies regarding Palestine and at times became conflicted by competing loyalties.

One of the ingredients that contributed to the support or otherwise of Zionism in the regions was the role of leaders. Success depended very much on the stance of the rabbinical leadership. A number of rabbis covered in this work were ardent Zionists; Rabbi Goldstein, Rabbi Chodowski, Rabbi Astor and Rabbi Katz. Their influence could not be underestimated. Conversely, in those communities where leaders failed to support the movement, the local groups floundered or developed more slowly, such as Wellington under Rabbi van Staveren's leadership. In Dunedin the progress was faltering, depending on the availability of local personnel. As well as the rabbis, other individuals in the community brought their unique set of skills and personality, which made a significant impact on the movement; Louis Phillips' wisdom, humility and dedication, and Simone Nathan's charismatic and passionate persuasiveness. Local leaders had a powerful impact on the growth of the movement.

Another component that facilitated the growth of Zionism was the development of modern communications, which enabled the exchange of information between Zionist and Jewish centres overseas and the local community. Sometimes the lines of communication to New Zealand took a circuitous route, which might include Europe, Palestine, Britain, Australia, South Africa and the USA. However, New Zealand was particularly bound to Britain as the imperial centre. Newspapers facilitated the vigorous discourse and the Jewish Press kept the local community informed of the latest developments affecting their people. Cables enabled people to keep up-to-date, and opportunities for travel allowed for the strengthening of relationships and first-hand perusal of Zionist projects. Locally produced bulletins were highly valued for their educative role. Through these avenues New Zealand participated in the global discourse and contributed to the Zionist cause in practical ways. While the New Zealand Jewish community might have felt at the end of the line in this global network, it made up for its distance, by contributing to the work far in excess of their size.¹⁰³⁴ Whereas most of the information exchange came by way of the printed word, the visit of Zionist emissaries had a powerful impact on the local communities as well. Beginning in 1905 with Samuel Goldreich and continuing throughout the period, many of these were powerful and eloquent speakers who roused local communities. Some were particularly inspiring, such as Israel Cohen in 1920, Madame Pevsner in 1923 and Alexander Goldreich in 1927. Their visits often led to the formation of new groups or fundraising ventures.

¹⁰³⁴ Goldman, pp. 213, 214.

This research has broken new ground by investigating New Zealand's engagement with Zionism up to 1948. However, many topics could not be covered in-depth in this project, leaving much room for further study. A more in-depth trans-Tasman comparison would provide understanding of the way in which New Zealand and Australia, while sharing much in common, responded differently to Zionism. Likewise, trans-national comparisons with other countries of the British Empire/Commonwealth would be fruitful. Another area for further study is the role of youth in Zionism. Zionist leaders like Rabbi Astor recognised the value of educating young people on Judaism and Zionism, and youth groups were established, such as the Zionist Youth League, which later became Habonim.¹⁰³⁵ The youth movement played an important role in sustaining the Zionist spirit for generations to come. Further study in this area will broaden our understanding of the important place of youth in Jewish communities and deepen our conception of their value and importance as agents of change.

The women's movement is another area that deserves further investigation. Their pioneering contribution to Zionism in the establishment of infant welfare centres in Palestine was but one example of the dynamism and strength of the women's movement. A closer examination of women's roles would cast further light on their engagement in philanthropy and the role of gender in Jewish communities and the Zionist movement. Another project awaits, to examine the history of those who opposed Zionism and the reasons why. We have discussed some of the Protest Rabbins who opposed Zionism for religious and dual loyalty reasons, and have also found that many East European and Russian immigrants injected new life into communities and strengthened the Zionist movement. However, the religious studies professor, Paul Morris, noted that a significant number of Jewish refugees from Nazism were ideologically opposed to Zionism because they embraced socialism or Marxism. Herbert (Bert) Roth was one such example. He became a prominent socialist, and wrote on the history of Marxist and Trade Union movements in New Zealand, but was opposed to Zionism. Another well-known figure who stood against Zionism was the Austrian philosopher Karl Popper who lived in New Zealand from 1937-1945. Popper, according to Morris, advocated a cosmopolitan utopia and rejected all forms of national, religious, ethnic and racial identities and differences. Morris argued, 'He considered Zionism a pointless step back-

¹⁰³⁵ Levine, Stephen, ed., *A Standard for the People: The 150th Anniversary of the Wellington Hebrew Congregation, 1843-1993*, Christchurch, 1995, p. 177.

wards away from cosmopolitanism toward the ethnocentric, tribalism characteristic of a “closed society””.¹⁰³⁶ Yet, at times the ideological position of these refugees did not always align with their actions, affirming Laqueur’s notion that many responded instinctively. Frank Monk (Munk), 1911-1994, was a communist activist in Czechoslovakia in the 1930s, who, according to Morris, damned Israel as ‘fascist’ while simultaneously donating to the Zionist Jewish National Fund.¹⁰³⁷ This is perhaps the prime example of the humanitarian and charitable sentiment which drove much of the Zionist activity in New Zealand, even amongst those who did not support the concept of a Jewish state. Finally, this research has provided an overview of the Zionist movement in New Zealand up until 1948. The history of the relationship between New Zealand and Israel from that point on is yet to be told in a comprehensive manner. Further research in this area will give valuable insight into the current relationship between these two countries.

This thesis explored the tensions and contradictions of the ideologies that arose as the protagonists engaged in Zionist activities. Zionism did not always sit easily alongside Judaism and humanitarianism (and the associated conceptions of charity), however community members did not require consistency and Zionism outworked in practical ways. Many fully embraced the movement, others gave measured support while still others contributed to projects while turning a blind eye to the political aspects of Zionism. The community worked hard to maintain unity, and while differences arose from time to time, the movement retained a remarkable homogeneity in its outworking.

While Zionism in New Zealand was propelled by external circumstances, sustained by internal drivers and facilitated by many contributing factors, it was also undergirded by an ideal, a vision, a dream, which was cogently articulated by Rabbi Goldstein:

Only by unanimity of purpose and singleness of ideals can we bring about the consummation which is the desire of our hearts. Palestine the land hallowed by our history..... it will yet be the smiling home of millions of Jews where they may live unfet-

¹⁰³⁶ Bell, L. & Morrow, D., *Jewish Lives in New Zealand*, Auckland, 2012, pp.140-141.

¹⁰³⁷ Bell & Morrow, p.165.

tered, unhampered and unpummelled, with room for expansion, every life living the Jewish life with its distinctive religion, culture and aspirations.¹⁰³⁸

¹⁰³⁸ Part of a memorial message to the late Chief Rabbi, Hermann Adler, from the Goldstein Notes, held in a private collection, p.45.

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