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The beginnings of the Zionist movement in Galicia in 1898 based on the documents of the Lviv Governorate

The Judaica collected at the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine in Lviv, also customarily referred to as the Bernardin Archive, constitute, without doubt, some of the most important source materials for the history of the Jews of Galicia and Lesser Poland. Particularly noteworthy are the archives devoted to the “National Zionist Organization in Lviv” (fond 338) and the “Jewish Religious Community in Lviv” (fond 701). However, it turns out that valuable materials on Jewish issues can also be found in the archives entitled “C.k. Namiestnictwo Galicyjskie”/“K.k. Galizische Statthaltereie” [Imperial royal Galician Governorate] (fond 146), which includes all documentation (nearly 200,000 archival units) produced for the most important political authority in Galicia in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The archive contains, e.g. the reports of the starostes regarding the activities of Zion (Jewish organizations for the colonization of the territory of Palestine), which are an invaluable source of knowledge about the beginnings of Jewish emigration to Palestine and, above all, its course in Galicia and the attitude of the state authorities. On the basis of the reports of district governors compiled in 1898, it may be possible to reconstruct the origins of the Zionist movement in Galicia.

Keywords: Aliyah Eretz Israel, Galicia, Palestine, Zionism, Salz Abraham

Source materials

Judaica gathered in the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv (Центральний Державний Історичний Архів України у Львові/ Centralnyj Derżawnyj Istorycznyj Archiw Ukrainy u Lwowi), known as the Archive of Bernardines, are undoubtedly one of the most important sources of information concerning the history of Jews in Galicia and the Lesser Poland. Among those which deserve to be mentioned are especially the “National Zionist Organization in Lviv” (fond 338) and the “Jewish Community in Lviv”

(fond 701).¹ It turns out that some relevant information concerning Jews can be found in the “Imperial-royal Governorate of Galicia” / “K.k. Galizische Statthaltereı” (fond 146) which includes all the documents (almost 200 thousand archives) created for the government of Galicia in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. The archives in this fond constitute “one of the most comprehensive historical sources of Galicia”.² This conclusion refers also to documents which have not been investigated yet and refer to Jews in Galicia. Undoubtedly, a thorough research in the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv would lead to new discoveries in this matter, which may be illustrated by the archive materials which are the basis for this article i.e. reports of the poviats starostes referring to the development of the Zionist movement in Galicia. These were created in 1898 on the recommendation of the Lviv Governor – Eustachy Stanisław Sanguszko.³

The researched archive material includes reports created since February to August 1898. A cognitive value of the documents is beyond any doubt.⁴ The information included there is usually a rare source of knowledge about the beginnings of the Jewish nationalist movement in Galicia both in bigger cities (Kraków, Lviv, Stanisławów) and provincial towns (Zaleszczyki).

Zionist movement in Kraków and Lviv

Galicia and especially its eastern part constitutes a unique place for the development of the European Zionist movement due to the high number of local Jews. Between 18th and 19th century an Austrian official Ernest Bogumił Kortum, travelling through Galicia, noticed:

¹ Initially, fond 701 was located in the State Archive of Lviv Oblast (Державний Архів Львівської Области / Derzawnyj Archiw Lwiwśkoji Oblasti), and later it was moved to the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine Львівський Обласний Державний Архів. Путівник, Львів 1965, pp. 69–71.

² *Centralne Państwowe Archiwum Historyczne Ukrainy we Lwowie. Przewodnik po zasobie archiwalnym*, by A. Krochmal, Warszawa 2005, p. 48.

³ Łukasz Tomasz Sroka was the first to research these reports in the article entitled *Migracja Żydów polskich do Izraela. Aspekt antropologiczno-historyczny* [in:] *Nietypowe migracje Polaków w XIX–XXI wieku*, ed. A.M. Kargoł, W. Masiarz, Kraków 2011, p. 69.

⁴ The researched documents were official, however, some of the information is given in a one-sided point of view. Moreover, some starosts were attempting to hide in the reports the information concerning the development of Zionism in the districts administered by them. Another reservation concerning the documents is the personal comments the starosts were making. They judged the significance of Zionism for Galicia and Austro-Hungary in general. Nevertheless, these subjective opinions may also be a treasured source of knowledge, e.g. concerning the topic of viewing the first Zionists by the non-Jewish society in various areas of Galicia.

Should there anywhere in Europe be a country where, on the one hand, one can feel a strong influence which the overpopulation of Jews have on both moral and physical condition of the population, and, on the other hand, unexpected consequences of the citizenship privileges of the Jewish people. Undoubtedly, this country is Poland, especially Galicia.⁵

In the second half of the 19th century the trend, mentioned by Kortum, was still popular. In 1857 Jews constituted 9,69% of the general population in Galicia and in 1890 the percentage was 11,65% which meant that over 770 thousand citizens of the province were declared to be Jewish.⁶ Ten years later (1900) the number of Jews in Galicia was 811 thousand which meant that 70% of all Jews living in the Habsburg's empire were in Galicia.⁷ The process of pauperism began along with the demographic urbanization of Jews in Galicia. As Mateusz Sroka commented, in these circumstances "only Zionists were supposed to have a sensible response to the question of how to solve this issue".⁸

The second determinant which influenced the development of the Zionist idea in Galicia was relatively considerable legal-constitutional privileges. They guaranteed freedom of religion to the citizens of Austro-Hungarian lands but, most of all, they gave the right to establish communities and federations (political, "non-political" and economical) as well as freedom of speech.⁹ During these changes, which influenced the creation of the civil society, were actively participated by Jews who just in the 19th century were on the margins of the Galician and Austrian society.¹⁰ On the basis of the above mentioned autonomy a wide range of federations appeared, which created a social, cultural and economic life among the citizens of Galicia. As time passed by, some federations converted into the organizations which profiled their socio-political views, often also with the national character.

⁵ S. Schnúr-Peplowski, *Cudzoziemcy w Galicyi (1787–1841)*, Kraków 1902, p. 45.

⁶ K. Zamorski, *Informator statystyczny do dziejów społeczno-gospodarczych Galicji. Ludność Galicji w latach 1857–1910*, ed. H. Madurowicz-Urbańska, Kraków–Warszawa 1989, p. 40–41.

⁷ К. Зелиньски, *Галицийские евреи в 1914–1918 гг.* [in:] *Народы Габсбургской монархии в 1914–1920 гг. От национальных движений к созданию национальных государств*, red. М. Волос, Г.Д. Шкундин, Москва 2012, p. 249.

⁸ M. Sroka, *Emigracja Żydów polskich do Palestyny w świetle doktryny syjonistycznej* [in:] *Nietypowe migracje Polaków...*, p. 57.

⁹ *Ustawa o prawie stowarzyszeń z dnia 15 XI 1867 r.* [in:] *Przekłady Ustaw, Rozporządzeń i Obwieszczeń Prawa, Państwa dla Królestwa Galicji i Lodomeryi, tudzież Wielkiego Księstwa Krakowskiego*, Lwów 1867, p. 275, 280; A. Dziadzio, *Monarchia konstytucyjna w Austrii (1867–1914). Władza, obywatel, prawo*, Kraków 2001, pp. 51–53, 107; M. Śliż, *Galicjyjscy Żydzi na drodze do równouprawnienia 1848–1914. Aspekt prawny procesu emancypacji Żydów w Galicji*, Kraków 2006, p. 28–31.

¹⁰ Cf. M. Bałaban, *Żydzi w Austrii za panowania cesarza Franciszka Józefa I, ze szczególnem uwzględnieniem Galicji 1848–1908*, Lwów 1908, p. 4–12.

These factors made it possible to establish and develop the Zionist organizations in Galicia which can be seen just at the beginning of the 90s of 19th century. In 1897/1898 in Galicia there were over 130 Zionist associations which consisted of 16 or 17 thousand Jewish activists.¹¹ However, one should remember that despite the freedom guaranteed by the December Constitution, Zionist ideas which were widespread during the First Zionist Congress in Basel (in 1897) were noticed by the political officials, causing deep concern. Mainly because of the scope of its competences, the Governorate of Galicia was determined to learn about the scale of the new movement. Therefore, on 11th February 1898 the officials in Lviv ordered all the poviats starosts and court advisors to prepare reports concerning all the Zionist organisations on their land.

The Kraków staroste Kazimierz Laskowski on 17th March 1898 made a report which described the development of Zionism in Kraków. As a consequence, one can learn that at the end of 19th century among Cracovian Jews the idea of emigration to Palestine was present; however, contrary to popular belief, it was not widespread. According to the staroste, between 1896 and 1898 in Kraków, the Zionist organisations consisted of barely 157 people,¹² which meant, in the city of almost 25 thousand Jewish population (data from 1900), a failure for the Jewish movement.¹³ A similar conclusion was expressed by staroste Laskowski, who wrote in the report:

The actions of the Cracovian Zion makes it impossible to make any negative observations; it is not accepted here eagerly. Cracovian Zion organizes from time to time some lectures, concerning the advantages of colonizing Jews in Palestine, which are attended by small merchants, the so-called 'gaberdines'; however, I have not noticed on these meetings any signals encouraging Jews to emigrate.¹⁴

As it can be seen from the quoted fragment of the correspondence between the Cracovian staroste to the Governor, Jewish nationalist movement in the most important city of Western Galicia was represented mostly by the Jews originating from the traditional society.¹⁵ Usually they originated from lower middle class. They made a living by selling, which was often limited to a family shop or

¹¹ Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv / Центральний Державний Історичний Архів України у Львові / Centralnyj Derżawnyj Istorycznyj Archiw Ukrainy u Lwowi (CDIAL), fond 146: Namiestnictwo Galicyjskie, description 58, case 3076: „Raporty starostów odnośnie działalności żydowskich organizacji do kolonizacji terytorium Palestyny Zion”, p. 84.

¹² CDIAL, f. 146, description 58, case 3076, p. 37.

¹³ Ł.T. Sroka, *Żydzi w Krakowie. Studium o elicie miasta 1850–1918*, Kraków 2008, p. 34.

¹⁴ CDIAL, f. 146, description 58, case 3076, p. 37.

¹⁵ This tendency was also typical in other cities of Galicia, both western and eastern parts. K. Węgrzyn, *Statut Krajowej Organizacji Syjonistycznej we Lwowie*, „Studia Judaica”, R. XIII, no. 1 (25), Kraków 2010, p. 27–28.

market trading.¹⁶ The main Zionist organization in Kraków between 19th and 20th century was a Cracovian federation belonging to Austrian “Zion Association” for colonizing Palestine and Syria whose headquarters was in Vienna.¹⁷

The fact that Zionism was not very popular in Kraków must be thought provoking, especially bearing in mind that the world of Jews in Kraków was greatly influenced by the charismatic homilies of Abraham Ozajasz Thon who was an eager follower of the program constructed by Theodore Herzl during the First Zionist Congress.¹⁸ Nonetheless, at first, Cracovian Jews did not show a great interest concerning his homilies, which, perhaps, might have been too emotional and pathetic, e.g. those which were performed in May and June 1898 to the participants of the second day of Shavuot. It was at that time when Thon made an appeal and simultaneously inquired in the Cracovian synagogue Tempel:

What is the main reason of our fall? One obvious answer comes to my mind: while losing the political and national independence we lost a spiritual independence too. There, in our home land, where everything, each stone, each grass told us about great actions of our ancestors, where our creativity developed among cedars of Lebanon and the waves of Jordan, where the prophets could preach greatly and give their thoughts, where the bards could sing their immortal songs. However, in exile on the unknown land, surrounded with the hostile enemies, being persecuted, this power enabling us to reach the top of the original thought could not last [...]. It is the reason of our fall, the true cause of stagnation in our development, the lack of faith in the future which can be seen especially among the best of us.

Thus, I call those braver and the bravest. Do not leave the sinking ship! We are sailing and steering together! There has to be a shore somewhere where we reach. To the shore then! And if it turns out that this is the land from which we came out, and if we reach this shore, then, like the impoverished woman, we will not complain that we left with our hands full and are returning empty-handed, but, on the contrary, with joy and pride in our hearts, we will cry out: Full was the old Israel when it went out from here, and full is the reborn Israel, full and rich in great treasures of spirit and heart, when God restores it to this land.¹⁹

The conclusion of the report showed that Zionism in Kraków was not accepted as it was supposed to. The reason of this was mostly because of the strong assimilation trends at that time, especially visible among the Jewish elite living in Kraków. Also, Jews whose beliefs were more socialist and democratic did not accept Zionism. Some of the Jews who were in favour of socio-democratic parties, according to Kazimierz Laskowski, were strong opponents of Zi-

¹⁶ In other parts of Galicia, what determined the strength of Zionist organizations, was the proletarian and poor working-class whose place of living was traditional “shtelt”. Idem, p. 27.

¹⁷ CDIAL, f. 146, description 58, case 3076, p. 37.

¹⁸ M. Galas, *Ozjasz (Jehoszua) Thon (1870–1936) – kaznodzieja i rabin* [in:] O. Thon, *Kazania 1895–1906*, intro H. Pfeffer, M. Galas, Kraków–Budapeszt 2010, p. 11–12.

¹⁹ O. Thon, *Kazania 1895–1906...*, p. 105–106.

onist organisations in Kraków.²⁰ It is also worth mentioning that in other areas of Cracovian poviát at the end of the 19th century there was no Zionist movement. A report on that topic was addressed to the Lviv Governorate and prepared by the Cracovian staroste on 14th April 1898.²¹

Thus, it should be pointed out that in the major city of Galicia – Lviv, the Zionist ideas were also present among the local Jews, however, as it can be seen from the reports to the Governor, these ideas were not massively shared. At the end of the 19th century the organisation “Eretz Israel” was established in 1894; however, its foundations had been created a year earlier. On 3rd September 1893 the Lviv Governorate agreed to establish “Zion” as a “branch of a Vienna association of Austrian community for colonization of Palestine and Syria”.²² After the year of existence its statue and name were changed. Since that moment “Eretz Israel” was the most important organization promoting Zionism in Lviv in the 19th century. However, its main idea was to “organise the ceremonies of commemorative readings and events, but not encourage masses of people to emigrate abroad...”.²³ At that time, Lviv Zionists did not even have their own press. According to the Lviv staroste, “Eretz Israel” was limited in its actions and was not dangerous for the country, therefore, it did not give any cause for concern.²⁴ All Zionist organisations in Galicia were subject to the Country Committee with the headquarters in Lviv. The main aim of the Committee was mediation in contacts between Zionist in Galicia and Vienna.²⁵

Zionist movement in the province of Galicia

In fact, two most important cities of Galicia: Kraków and Lviv were not the main centres of the Zionist movement in the end of the 19th century. It was mostly developing in provincial towns. Jews from Tarnów were greatly influenced by this movement mostly because of the lawyer Abraham Salz who was a delegate of Galicia at the First Zionist Congress in Basel.²⁶ It was because of him the “Achawas Zion” (or “Achwat Zion”) was established. Its primary aim was to “prevent Jewish proletariat in Galicia from poverty”.²⁷ As time passed by, the organisation evolved. The priority was to organise emigration to Pal-

²⁰ CDIAL, f. 146, description 58, case 3076, p. 37.

²¹ Idem, p. 109.

²² Idem, p. 83.

²³ Idem, p. 83.

²⁴ Idem, p. 83–84.

²⁵ Idem, p. 84.

²⁶ Idem, p. 83–84.

²⁷ Idem, p. 84.

estine. Therefore, the general gathering of the members of the organisation in Tarnów on 19th-29th March 1897 agreed to establish close contact with “Zion” in Vienna. Since that moment the Association Department was supposed to create the National Committee for Galician organisations in Vienna. In a short time, “Achawas Zion” with headquarters in Tarnów supervised 90 local committees all around the province.²⁸ For instance, because of the Jews from Tarnów, Zionism developed in Delatyn (Nadwórna powiat), Plizno,²⁹ Tarnobrzeg,³⁰ Rohtyn³¹ or Tarnopol.³² Abraham Salz and his closest co-workers attempted to start another part of “Achawas Zion” in Czortków.³³ New local committees were obliged to donate 70 % of their income to the Galicia headquarters in Tarnów. 60% of the funds which had been donated were used to buy the shares of “Achwas Zion” and thus, the headquarters could implement their aim. The 10% was sent to Vienna.³⁴

In Galicia, besides Tarnów, another important place for Zionism was Zaleszczyki. According to the starost Bolesław Studziński,³⁵ since September 1897 in the town there was an organisation called “Jüdisch nationaler Verein Zion”. As the staroste claimed, the activity of the organisation was limited because of financial matters.³⁶ Despite this, the number of members was quite impressive. In Zaleszczyki, which was a small town – in 1898 – there were 179 Zionists. In comparison, at that time in Kraków with the population of about 100 000 people, there were 157 professed Zionist Jews. “Jüdisch nationaler

²⁸ Idem, p. 84.

²⁹ The beginnings of Zionist organisations in Pilzno, which was the part of “Achwas Zion”, were created thanks to the Governor on the 8th October 1894. The local Zionist association was named “Jeruszum” even though it was closely connected to the people of Tarnów. However, it is worth mentioning that until 1898 in the Buczacz powiat there had not been any case of emigration to Palestine. Idem, p. 99.

³⁰ In Tarnobrzeg the part of „Achwas Zion” was called “Eretz Israel”. It consisted of a few members, however, their activity was limited because of the financial reasons. Idem, p. 117.

³¹ On 24th October 1894 in Rohatyn a new Zionist community called “Bnei-Zion” which was a part of “Achwas Zion” with its headquarters in Tarnów, appeared. The main activity of the members of this group was focused on the spreading the knowledge concerning the national Jewish ideology. It was in Rohatyn where the help to Jews expelled from Russia and Romania was provided. Each year the headquarters in Tarnów was given from 100 to 200 złr from “Bnei-Zion”. Idem, p. 101–102.

³² Idem, p. 41, 45.

³³ Idem, p. 51.

³⁴ Idem, p. 85.

³⁵ *Szematyzm Królestwa Galicyi i Lodomeryi z Wielkiem Księstwem Krakowskiem na rok 1898*, Lwów 1898, p. 38.

³⁶ Each member was obliged to pay 1złr once and 20 cents every month. Moreover, the organisation did not have any mobile assets. The savings were 50 złr in the end of March 1898. CDIAL, f. 146, description 58, case 3076, p. 77.

Verein Zion” was mostly concentrated on self-education based on reading Zionist press or books. Among the citizens of Zaleszczyki who decided to emigrate to Middle East between 1897 and 1898, there were only two orthodox Jews in an elderly age.³⁷

The Zionist ideology was also popular in the Borszczów powiat. Until 1898 in Borszczów there had not been any organisation which would have promoted emigration to Palestine. However, in a small town of Skała there were some attempts to establish this type of organisation, which was supposed to be a part of “Achawas Zion”. The group was started by Jakub Neiger and Abraham Seinder. Ultimately, the Governorate did not allow the registration of the organisation. Despite this fact, Jewish youth living in Skała followed the Zionist propaganda eagerly. Yellow badges in the shape of the Star of David with an inscription “Zion” and “Grüss” were propagated in order to symbolize the support for the Zionist ideas and to unite the whole environment.³⁸

At this point, it is necessary to mention the significance of Rzeszów in the context of the development of the Jewish national movement in Galicia at the end of the 20th century. The first Zionist organisation “Hovevei Zion” (“Lovers of Zion”) was set up in 1891 when it was approved and registered by the officials in Lviv.³⁹ According to the report by the staroste of Rzeszów, until 1898 – despite the 8 years of operation – it did not gain a big popularity among the local Jews. In the end of the 19th century there had only been 130 active members.⁴⁰ Most of the activists were poor. Hence, the budget was tight. An annual income was between 500 and 600 koronas which was mostly spent on the current activities: the maintenance of the premises and the purchase of Zionist press. At first, the savings were given to the Zionist organisations in Vienna and Lviv. Since 1896 “Achawas Zion” in Tarnów was actively supported too, which was showed by promoting and encouraging to purchase shares (10 koronas each), dedicated for the colonisation of Palestine.⁴¹

The “Zion” organisation (branch of the Lviv association which had the same name) was active also in Brody in the east of Galicia. Its beginnings date back until 1897. The statute was approved on the 13th January 1898. However, the

³⁷ Idem, p. 77.

³⁸ Idem, p. 113.

³⁹ At the beginning of the 90s of the 19th century the “Lovers of Zion” was going through a hard time of their activity. On the one hand, since 1890 “Hovevei Zion” could officially function in Russia. On the other hand, its credibility was questioned in the Zionist environment because on the internal fights. Asher Ginzberg, who represented “Ahad Ha’am”, was the author of the main source of critique. Despite all the numerous problems of the “Lovers of Zion” it had its structures in Russia, Poland, Berlin and Vienna. W. Laqueur, *A history of Zionism*, New York 2003, p. 79–81.

⁴⁰ CDIAL, f. 146, description 58, case 3076, p. 69.

⁴¹ Idem, p. 69.

association had not been officially formed until the end of February 1898. Until that time in Brody there had been no attempts at emigration or even no attempts to collect money officially. The founder of “Zion” in Brody was Henryk Gabel⁴² from Lviv. Surprisingly, the ideas of Zionism in Brody were promoted quite late – in comparison to other Galician areas – and they did not gain any spectacular popularity. What is more, it is Brody which was the town where Jewish people were the majority. What was the reason for such a delay when it comes to setting up Zionist organisations in the town which was perceived as one of the most influential Jewish areas in Galicia?⁴³ The answer to this question should be found in the financial state of Jews from Brody. Most of them were professionally active, being employed as traders whose activity extended often farther than Brody or even Galicia. The idea of travelling to Palestine and starting a new life far from the world they knew was questionable. Similarly, the staroste of Brody while describing the “Zion” organisation pointed out that its main idea was to “send to Palestine only those people who do not and cannot have a proper occupation, which referred mostly to the elderly people unable to work.⁴⁴ This idea was not far from the truth, especially because of the numerous emigrations of the elderly. In February 1898 the officials in Brody believed that if Zionist ideas was popular among the local Jews, the potential emigration of the young people to Palestine would be rare.⁴⁵ As time passed by, these assumptions proved to be wrong and at the beginning of the 20th century a true exodus of Jews from Brody began. Apart from Palestine, the USA was a desired destination (but also Germany and France). This refers to almost all bigger Galician towns.⁴⁶

“Zion” had its branch in Podhajce, however, at the end of the 19th century its activity was restricted to “maintaining the national consciousness among Jews, however, without any political tendencies [...]”.⁴⁷ Thus, it can be concluded that Zionists from Podhajce did not create a widespread propaganda promoting national emigration to Palestine.

In Tarnopol – the fourth city of Galicia with the biggest population – until March 1898 two Zionist associations appeared. The first called “Bnei-Zion”

⁴² Idem, p. 11.

⁴³ P. Adelsgruber, L. Cohen, B. Kuzmany, *Getrennt und doch verbunden: Grenzstädte zwischen Österreich und Russland 1772–1918*, Wien–Köln–Weimar 2011, p. 27–37, 130–132, 191–196. In 1880 Jews were 76,35 of the whole population of Brody. In 1910 their number was more than 12 thousand which meant that 67,5% of citizens of Brody professed to be Jews. K. Broński, *Rozwój gospodarczy większych miast galicyjskich w okresie autonomii*, Kraków 2003, p. 74.

⁴⁴ CDIAL, f. 146, description 58, case 3076, p. 11.

⁴⁵ Idem, p. 11.

⁴⁶ The Ukrainian historian Stefan Kaczaraba described the emigration from the Eastern Galicia and Lesser Poland. С. Качараба, *Еміграція з Західної України (1919–1939)*, Львів 2003.

⁴⁷ CDIAL, f. 146, description 58, case 3076, p. 95.

was established in 1894. According to the local authorities its activity was far from those of the same type in Galicia. The budget of the association from Tarnopol in 1898 was 400 guilders which was sufficient only for the day-to-day maintenance of the administration of the association and the purchase of the press. According to the report by the starost, “‘Bnei-Zion’ converted into the reading room which did not advocate any of its initial aims”.⁴⁸ Therefore, between 1897 and 1898 there had been some attempts to establish a second association in Tarnopol which would advocate the emigration to Palestine. The effect of these attempts was the beginning of the local organisation “Achawas Zion”. Officially, it was initiated on 17th February 1898 when its statute was accepted by the Governorate from Lviv. It is worth mentioning that “Achawas Zion” was started as a consequence of Zionist propaganda from Tarnów.⁴⁹

Apart from Tarnopol “Bnei-Zion” was also active in Brzeżany. Its beginnings date back to December 1894 when the statute was registered. According to the staroste from Brzeżany the association did not show any particular activity, to the point of being very passive. In the correspondence with the Governor from 23rd March 1898 he reported:

The activity of the association is not harmful to the country; as far as I could learn, the association does not have any funds, likewise it does not advocate emigration to our Jewish people thanks to the press. Also I have learnt that the association did not support any of emigrants of military age to emigrate abroad.⁵⁰

The Zionist ideas were neither present in the third city of Galicia – Stanisławów where “Eretz Israel” operated. However, its basic activity was restricted to promoting religious, cultural and patriotic issues. Young people were the dominant groups among Zionists from Stanisławów, which negatively influenced the organisation’s economy. Financial problems of “Eretz Israel” in Stanisławów were so immense that even paying the rent was almost impossible. On 25th March 1898 the staroste of the city reported to Lviv that the aims of Galician Zionists “may be called a utopia”.⁵¹

While writing about religion in Pokucie, more attention should be devoted to Kołomyja. In the town near Prut at the end of the 19th century there were two organisations which attracted the supporters of Zionism. The first was “Bnei-Zion” and the other “Yeshivat Erec Israel”.⁵² The aim of the first was to support the Jewish colonists who already lived in Palestine and Syria. The other aimed

⁴⁸ Idem, p. 45.

⁴⁹ Idem, p. 45.

⁵⁰ Idem, p. 129.

⁵¹ Idem, p. 61.

⁵² Idem, p. 71.

at spreading national propaganda among Jews living in Galicia, especially to those who lived in the south-eastern part. One of its aims was to organise the “pilgrimage” to Jerusalem, however, the efficiency of the association was not high, as shown by its funds, in 1898 – 300 guilders. “Achawas Zion” was active in the area of Pokucie. The activity of the organisation focused on encouraging people to emigrate to Palestine. In Kołomyja, Meneasz Koller was contacted as is displayed willingness to leave Galicia with his family and to go to Palestine. A similar declaration was made by five families from Jabłonów in the Kołomyja powiat. In 1898 it turned out that those plans were only empty declarations and because of the lack of funds emigration of these people turned out to be impossible. The estimated cost of one family from Kołomyja going to Palestine was 500 guilders.⁵³

One of the mainstays of the national movement among Jews from the east Galicia was the powiat of Drohobycz. It was thanks to Ignacy Schreiber vel Schneider who lived in Drohobycz. On 25th November 1898 he got a permission from the Ministry of Home Affairs to organise (from 1st May 1897 to 30th April 1900) public fundraising which aimed at supporting impoverished Austro-Hungarian Jews who had emigrated to Palestine. Thanks to many supporters Schreiber collected money in other parts of East Galicia.⁵⁴ According to the law the reports from the fundraising were given to the powiat officials and transferred to the Head of the Police in Lviv.⁵⁵ Moreover, Schreiber was obliged to submit a report each year to the staroste of Drohobycz on the donations made with the data about people who conducted the fundraising in the area and a document officially signed by the Jewish officials proving that the money was sent to Palestine. To make everything clear, once a year Schreiber published in the “Lviv newspaper”⁵⁶ information about money which was spent or collected. In the powiat of Drohobycz there was also a branch of “Achawas Zion”. It was popular in the industrial Borysław. Twice a year, they organised selling lottery tickets – worth 5 guilders each – all the money was dedicated to financing emigration.⁵⁷

Apart from the above mentioned cities, the Zionist organisations were also in Kolbuszowa (1894), Horodenka (28th February 1898)⁵⁸, Pruchnik in the powiat of Jarosław (20th February 1898) and Czortków where in 1898 “Bnei Zion” was

⁵³ Idem, p. 71.

⁵⁴ A region – except from Drohobycz – where Schreiber was active, was Brzeżany and Sambor which was reported by the starosts from those powiats. Idem, p. 129, 131.

⁵⁵ Idem, p. 127.

⁵⁶ Idem, p. 127.

⁵⁷ Idem, p. 133.

⁵⁸ Idem, p. 39, 57, 67.

established.⁵⁹ Also, in February 1898 thanks to Zionists from Lviv, some Zionist organisations were formed in Nowy Targ.⁶⁰

A lot of attention was devoted to the cities where the Jewish community had been attempting to develop and implement the national ideas in reality. However, as starostes in Galicia reported to the Lviv Governor, the local Jews showed lack of interest in Zionism. From the documents which were found and studied it was concluded that till 1898 there had not been any Zionist activity in the area of Biała, Bochnia, Bóbrka, Brzesko, Cieszanów, Dąbrowa Tarnowska, Dobromil, Dolina, Gródek Jagielloński, Grybów, Jaworów, Kamionka Strumiłłowa, Krosno, Lesko (then called Lisko), Limanowa, Mielec, Myślenice, Nisko, Nowy Sącz, Podgórze, Rawa, Rudki, Sambor, Sanok, Skałat, Stryj, Strzyżów, Śniatyn, Tłumacz, Trembowla, Turka, Wadowice, Wieliczka, Żółkiew, Żydaczów, Żywiec and the region of Buczacz.⁶¹ Nevertheless, in Buczacz in the mid-90s of the 19th century there was a Zionist organisation but due to lack of interest in its activity amongst the local Jews and due to lack of the funds the organisation was closed.⁶² A similar situation was in Ropczyce, where “a local group of Zion” was dissolved in February 1896.⁶³ Even though, the region of Sambor did not have any formal Zionists, it stayed under the influence of Juliusz Schreiber from Drohobycz.⁶⁴

In some regions – with the increasing interest of the Jewish national movement – there were some successful attempts to establish local Zionist organisations in Galicia; nevertheless, except for the registration of their statutes these organisations remained passive. This was true for Łańcut, where on the 2nd of August 1894 “a local group Łańcut-Zion, a union of the Austrian associations for colonizing Palestine and Syria”⁶⁵ was started. However, the whole initiative was connected to the activity of local Zionist and actually finished when the Lviv Governorate approved the statue.⁶⁶ In other places like Kosów a group favouring Zionism was established, however, despite many attempts it did not get approved by the Governorate.⁶⁷ It is not possible to determine the reasons

⁵⁹ Idem, p. 51.

⁶⁰ Idem, p. 93.

⁶¹ Idem, p. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 15, 17, 23, 25–35, 43, 47, 49, 53, 55, 59, 63, 65, 73, 75, 79, 81, 87, 89, 97, 103, 105, 107, 111, 115, 135, 151.

⁶² Idem, p. 97.

⁶³ Despite dissolving the Zionist organisation in Ropczyce, one of the citizens of the city, a market trader Leib Koretz led an illegal – according to the local starosts – contribution to “Ach-was Zion” in Tarnów. He was punished for that by the local authorities. Idem, p. 145, 149.

⁶⁴ Idem, p. 131.

⁶⁵ Idem, p. 21.

⁶⁶ Idem.

⁶⁷ Idem, p. 91.

for the disapproval of the statute of the association in Kosów due to the lack of archives. Probably it was caused by some formal regulations which were not followed by the group.

What were the reasons of the common indifference to the idea of emigration to Palestine then? It is intriguing because in contrast to Kraków and Lviv, the Galician provinces were inhabited mainly by the Jews who were not included in the elite, so the assimilation was not visible there. It is worth remembering that the creators of the Zionist movement addressed “the masses of Jews”. Without their action it would not be possible to realize the Zionist programme of the colonization of Palestine.⁶⁸ Hence, there were many “visits” to the Galician provinces paid by the main Zionist activists, e.g. Abraham Salz. They attempted to promote the idea of going to *Eretz Izrael* by giving public speeches.⁶⁹ Similarly, Jewish agents tried to spread widely the Zionist idea and programme. According to the documents, the propaganda of Zionism by the tradesmen and the dealers was especially strong on the Galician territory of Pokucie and the south-eastern Galicia. According to the local officials it was the effect of the activity of the market traders from Kołomyja, among whom there was a strong Jewish movement present.⁷⁰ Nonetheless, many attempts made by the Zionists were unsuccessful too. The answer to the stated question concerning the lack of massive interest for Zionist ideas was given by Juliusz Friedrich,⁷¹ a starost of Nowy Sącz and an honourable solicitor of the Governorate in 1898 in his official letter to the state government:

The local Jewish people belonging mostly to the so called “Chasids” are against the emigration to Palestine because of religious reasons, because they think that the return should be made there only after the coming of the Messiah. The small number of Jewish intelligentsia is simply indifferent to emigration.⁷²

Interesting conclusions were also made by the above mentioned starost in Bohorodczany, who in contrast to his counterpart from Nowy Sącz, saw that the reason for indifference to the Zionist matter was the economic condition of the group to whom the idea of emigration to Palestine was directed. He reported to the Lviv Governorate:

The bulk of the Jewish population, which is very poor, acts with complete indifference to the matter, for having no property to liquidate, they also see no way to emigrate; the

⁶⁸ Ł.T. Sroka, *Żydzi w Krakowie...*, p. 55.

⁶⁹ CDIAL, f. 146, description 58, case 3076, p. 9.

⁷⁰ Idem, p. 13.

⁷¹ *Szematyzm Królestwa Galicyi i Lodomeryi z Wielkiem Księstwem Krakowskiem na rok 1898*, Lwów 1898, p. 26.

⁷² CDIAL, f. 146, description 58, case 3076, p. 9.

wealthier ones, as such, do not think at all of leaving what is certain for the promises of what is doubtful.⁷³

A totally different opinion was presented by the staroste of Sanok, who saw the Jewish poor as the potential emigrants to Palestine. On the 1st March 1898 he wrote to the Governorate:

I note that the activities of Jewish colonisation societies, even if they directly support colonisation, do not oppose the interests of the state and are not dangerous to it. Experience teaches us that only the poorest families emigrate, the destitute who cannot find a living, thus increasing the ranks of malcontents, susceptible to social-democratic agitation.⁷⁴

All the conclusions made by the starostes of Jasło and Dobromil were similar. The first one, named Jews emigrating to Palestine as people who are “disruptive” or “eager fanatics”. Their leaving Galicia and Austro-Hungary – as he claimed – might have “only been beneficial for the country and the state”.⁷⁵

Conclusions

Reports of the Galician starostes and the court officials about the condition of the Zionist organisations active in Galicia to 1898 presented in this article are undoubtedly one of the most interesting source materials which allow a better, more precise outline of the beginnings of the Jewish national movement on the territory of today’s south-eastern Poland and western Ukraine. What is interesting, those reports are not only the crucial source materials for researchers of the Zionism in particular towns of Galicia (the basis for present-day researchers of regional history) but also they facilitate the investigation into the relations between the government and the Zionist organisations in the time of the first Aliyah and just before it.

On the basis of the reports by Starostes in Galician Governorate in the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Lviv, an image presenting years of activity of the Galician Zionists can be seen. Among those, Abraham Salz played a major role. Undoubtedly, thanks to him at the end of the 19th century Tarnów became the local centre of Zionism. Zaleszczyki located in the eastern Galicia was also a special place for Galician Zionists. What is more, at the end of the 19th century, both Kraków and Lviv did not become an important centre of Zionism even though they contained large Jewish minorities. The situation

⁷³ Idem, p. 13.

⁷⁴ Idem, p. 15.

⁷⁵ Idem, p. 19.

changed at the beginning of the 20th century. In the Interwar Period, Lviv was one of the most important places for Zionism.⁷⁶

Last but not least, it is worth mentioning the approach of the organs and the officials to the idea of massive emigration of Jews to the Middle East. Contrary to popular belief, it turns out that among the Galician starostes, the views favouring the development of Zionism were widespread. In my opinion, this was because of the hidden anti-Semitic tendencies. Almost universally, the starostes, in arguing their favour of Jewish emigration to Palestine, raised the fact that it involved poor population, and thus not only constituted a burden for the state, but was also the group most susceptible to socialist-democratic agitation. As an example of these opinions, it is possible to refer to the correspondence of the already quoted staroste of Nowy Sącz, who took the liberty of addressing to the Governorate rather emotional and expressive remarks containing his personal view on the issues concerning Zionism and its possible benefits for the Christians living in Nowy Sącz. In the report he wrote, among other things:

Having assumed that, in spite of unfavourable conditions, agitation for emigration will develop here, I must point out that it would be beneficial for the local district not to hinder possible emigration [...], as the Jewish proletariat, numerous here, is a burden for the town and contributes most to the exploitation and demoralisation of the peasant and craftsmen population; therefore, the removal of this harmful element can only have a positive influence on local relations.⁷⁷

One of the biggest threats for the state in the shade of growing Zionism was the protection of national defence. Hence, that was the reason why Galician Governorate reviewed in 1898 all Zionist organisations and their activity. This was because in the Galician capital, as well as in Vienna, there were well-founded fears that the new movement might meet with a considerable backlash among Jewish youth. In the conjecture of the political authorities, a mass emigration of men of conscription age would have to have a negative effect on the defence forces of the state. This opinion is confirmed by the reports of the Galician starostes in question. In these reports, attempts were often made to raise this important issue from the perspective of the War Ministry. At the same time, the role of Jewish youth in universal military service was usually played down. Among the arguments put forward, the main ones were that young Jews, wanting, among other things, to avoid conscription into the army, emigrated irretrievably to the

⁷⁶ In 1916 in Lviv there was a Zionist Federation of Eastern Galica (*Hahistadrut hazionith haarzith b'Lvow*). It was formed during the 1st Conference of Zionism organised in Warsaw. Hence, Lviv was a headquarters for one of the four districts which Zionists divided Polish land (the other three districts were the capitals in Warsaw, Cracow and Wilno). Lviv district was from Eastern Galicia to San river on the west, more written in Kinga Węgrzyn, op. cit., p. 27–37.

⁷⁷ CDIAL, f. 146, description 58, case 3076, p. 9.

United States of America.⁷⁸ Thus, according to the Sanok staroste, for example, “Jewish youths who decided to evade military service – and without the activities of emigration associations – leave before their military appearance without a passport, and also after serving in the army, with a passport, to overseas countries and do not return, as the annual census of reservists proves”.⁷⁹ The staroste of Brześć went even further in his arguments, pointing out the unjustified weakness and unfitness for military service of the Jewish conscripts.⁸⁰

The second factor that caused the state authorities concern in the face of the vision of increased Jewish emigration was the real loss of possible income from taxes. In particular, this issue could regard the better-off, who would possibly wish to take advantage of the opportunity to emigrate to the Land of Israel.⁸¹

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⁷⁸ In 1881–1914 from Austro-Hungary to the USA around 320 thousand of Jews emigrated, 85% were the Galician Jews. К. Зелиньски, op. cit., p. 250.

⁷⁹ CDIAL, f. 146, description 58, case 3076, p. 15.

⁸⁰ Idem, p. 25–26.

⁸¹ Idem.

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Streszczenie

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Słowa kluczowe: Alija Erec Israel, Galicja, Palestyna, syjonizm, Salz Abraham

⁸² Pierwotnie zespół nr 701 znajdował się w Państwowym Archiwum Obwodu Lwowskiego (Державний Архів Львівської Облaсті / Derzhavnyy Arkhiv Lwiv'skoji Obłasti), po czym przeniesiono go do zasobu Centralnego Państwowego Archiwum Historycznego Ukrainy we Lwowie. Por. Львівський Обласний Державний Архів. Путівник, Львів 1965, pp. 69–71.