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**LEO MOTZKIN (1867-1933)  
ZIONIST ENGAGEMENT AND MINORITY DIPLOMACY  
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## **Abstract**

*Leo Motzkin was born near Kiev in 1867. From an early age he engaged with the movement campaigning for Jewish cultural and educational rights in the Russian Empire. One of the most prominent Zionists at the start of the twentieth century, Motzkin represented Jewish interests at the Paris Peace Conference before becoming active in the European Congress of Nationalities. This paper analyses Motzkin's ideas and explores the reaction of Jewish minority leaders to the gradual compromise with National Socialism of ethnic Germans attending the Congress.*

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**LEO MOTZKIN (1867-1933)**

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On the 16 September 1933, the delegates of the *European Congress of Nationalities* convened in the *Ständerat* hall in Bern - i.e. in the building of the Swiss Parliament - for their annual conference. The *European Congress of Nationalities* had been founded eight years before on the initiative of the Baltic-German businessman and publicist Ewald Ammende (1892-1936). Its members - political and other public dignitaries, coming above all from East Central and South Eastern Europe - had committed themselves to the protection of the numerous national minority groups in post-imperial Europe, as it had taken shape as a result of World War I. The *European Congress of Nationalities* had thus been created as an independent, non-governmental forum for the articulation of the political interests and the needs of national minorities on an international level. In practice, it served above all as an organ of representation for several national groups from the newly created or territorially enlarged states of East Central and South Eastern Europe.

As one of its crucial demands, the *European Congress of Nationalities* had always insisted that any national minorities living in those new nation-states should be absolutely on the same footing as the respective state-nations from the point of view of their civil rights. With regard to the rules of international law concerning minority protection which had been adopted in the context of the Paris Peace Conference for the post-imperial states of East Central and South Eastern Europe,<sup>1</sup> the *Congress* had constantly demanded that they should

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<sup>1</sup> On the origins of these minority treaties, see, above all, the following fundamental books and articles: Oscar I. Janowsky, *The Jews and Minority Rights* (1898-1919), New York 1938; Erwin Viehhaus, *Die Minderheitenfrage und die Entstehung der Minderheitenschutzverträge auf der Pariser Friedenskonferenz 1919. Eine Studie zur Geschichte des Nationalitätenproblems im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Würzburg 1960; Carole Fink, 'The Minorities Question at the Paris Peace Conference. The Polish Minority Treaty, June 28, 1919' in Manfred Boemeke et. al. (ed.), *The Treaty of Versailles. A Reassessment after 75 Years*, Washington/Cambridge 1998, 249-274; Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others. The Great Powers, the Jews, and International*

become valid for all European states. Furthermore, it had always argued against any forcible or state-fostered assimilation of ethnic, linguistic, cultural or religious minority to the respective state-nations.<sup>2</sup>

Unlike at previous annual meetings of the *European Congress of Nationalities*, the very preparation of the Bern conference had already been overshadowed by signs of severe conflict. As a result of the rise to power of Hitler's National Socialist party, the Jewish and German *Congress* delegates representing their respective minority groups were irreversibly split over the question of how to deal with the anti-Jewish policy of the new German government. With regard to this, the Jewish members of the *Congress* had been urging their German colleagues to have the plenary session adopt a resolution which was to condemn clearly and explicitly the anti-Jewish actions of the Nazi party. Shortly before the *Congress* members were to gather, the Jewish delegates had ultimately announced they would even stay away from the whole meeting in case the other delegations should refuse to adopt such a resolution unanimously.<sup>3</sup>

For some time it had, however, already become clear that neither the majority of the German representatives in the *Congress* nor the overall majority of its members were ready to approve a resolution which would have broken an unwritten rule of the minority parliament - namely the principle of not criticising concretely or condemning single states or governments. While the preparation of the Bern conference had been under way, the Jewish delegates had, moreover, been informed that there were plans among the German minority representatives to have the plenary session adopt a resolution which would, on the one hand, emphasise the rights and claims of all national minorities, but which would, on the other hand, underline the right of the respective state-nations to 'dissimilate' minority groups, i.e. to refuse assimilation

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*Minority Protection, 1878-1938*, Cambridge 2004 (especially 159/160 and 193-202); David Engel, 'Perceptions of Power – Poland and World Jewry' in: *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts/Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 1 (2002) (17-28), 18-25; Mark Levene, *War, Jews, and the New Europe. The Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf, 1914-1919*, Oxford 1992 (especially 262-302).

<sup>2</sup> There are several good monographs on the *European Congress of Nationalities*, on its purposes and on its political fate. Primarily, see Erwin Kelmes, *Der Europäische Nationalitätenkongreß (1925-1938)*, Köln 1958; Rudolf Michaelsen, *Der Europäische Nationalitätenkongreß 1925-1928. Aufbau, Krise und Konsolidierung*, Frankfurt a.M. etc. 1984; Sabine Bamberger-Stemmann, *Der Europäische Nationalitätenkongreß 1925 bis 1938. Nationale Minderheiten zwischen Lobbyistentum und Großmachtinteressen*, Marburg 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Declaration of the Jewish *Congress* members, 8<sup>th</sup> of September 1933 – Central Zionist Archives Jerusalem (CZA), A 126, 636.

to any ‘different ethnic elements’.

Instead of being in line with the Jews’ wishes, the plenum of the *European Congress of Nationalities* finally approved a draft for a declaration on ‘national dissimilation and the rights of the nationalities’, which had been presented on behalf of the dominant German delegation and which was supported by a overwhelming majority among the German minority representatives. As a consequence of this, the Jewish group left the minority parliament for good on 17 September. Although the *Congress* continued to exist and to work until 1938, they never took part in any of its conferences again.<sup>4</sup>

The policy of depriving Germany’s Jews of their civil rights, implemented by the National Socialist government, had eventually overshadowed and irreversibly damaged non-governmental ‘minority diplomacy’, which had once been initiated with many great hopes and expectations. Even if the *Congress* was still to convene annually for some years, it had in fact ceased to work as an effective political body with the failure of the Bern conference in September 1933.

For those who had once been the initiators of European minority diplomacy after World War I, the disastrous outcome of the Bern conference meant the breakdown of a project and of political ideas to which they had dedicated a great part of their political and public activities. Born and bred and socialised as citizens or subjects of the Central and Eastern European empires that had fallen apart as a result of war and revolution - the Russian Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy -, nearly all of them adhered to the ideals of political liberalism. They had shared the common experience of belonging to an ethnic, linguistic or cultural minority in the context of a multinational empire. It was on the grounds of such an ‘imperial’ background that they had actively and constantly striven to mobilise a broader international public against the intolerant minority policies, adopted by several of the newly founded nation-states.<sup>5</sup>

Within the minority parliament they had created they could not – and did not – claim

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<sup>4</sup> The developments that led to the disastrous outcome of the Bern conference are dealt with in a very detailed manner in the following recent article: Hiltrun Glass, ‘Ende der Gemeinsamkeit. Zur deutsch-jüdischen Kontroverse auf dem Europäischen Nationalitätenkongress 1933’ in: *Leipziger Beiträge zur jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur* 2 (2004), pp.259-282.

<sup>5</sup> See Frank Neemann, ‘Minderheitendiplomatie – Leo Motzkin zwischen Imperien und Nationen’ in Dan Diner (ed.), *Synchrone Welten. Zeitenräume jüdischer Geschichte*, Göttingen 2005 (pp.147-171), 149.

to act as elected representatives of their respective national groups. As well-known dignitaries among those minority nationalities in their respective home countries, they nevertheless adopted such a role of quasi-diplomatic representative in political practice. With the *European Congress of Nationalities*, they had founded something that very much resembled what might nowadays be called a non-governmental organisation (NGO). Apart from the personal reputation of its leading figures, the institutional legitimacy of the *Congress* was mainly based on the legitimacy of its central political aim – the realisation of collective rights for the linguistic, ethnic, cultural and religious minorities in Europe's nation-states.<sup>6</sup> With the total failure of the Bern conference, however, this political movement had an inglorious end. The development of international relations, accompanying and following those events, were furthermore anything else than favourable for subsequent attempts to undo the split of the nationality movement which had come about in 1933.

After World War II, given the conditions of the Cold War in Europe, the political legacy of inter-war non-governmental nationality diplomacy remained nearly forgotten for decades. However, with new states having been founded in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe and with both old and new minority problems having emerged since the breakdown of Communist rule in those regions, there has been a growing consciousness for the specific matters of national minorities in European politics. The ideas that were already voiced by the protagonists of non-governmental minority diplomacy in the 1920s and in the early 1930s might thus be expected to be of increasing relevance in today's political thought and debates.

In spite of its importance, however, this topic has never played any major role in historiography until now – not least due to the inefficiency of minority diplomacy in political practice and due to its sad end in the 1930s. As a contribution to scientific research on this still largely neglected chapter of European history, the article presented here intends to shed some light on the political biography of Leo Motzkin – one of the most prominent Zionist leaders during the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who also acted as one of the key figures in the

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

*European Congress of Nationalities* since its very beginnings in 1925.<sup>7</sup> In many respects, his political and publicist activities in this context can be viewed as paradigmatic for the general goals of European nationality diplomacy in the inter-war era. However, Motzkin's Jewish-national background and his Zionist commitment characteristically distinguished him from the other "minority politicians" of the 1920s and the early 1930s.

Endeavouring, above all, to foster the development of a secular Jewish national identity, he acted as one of the leading spokesmen of a Zionist-based 'Jewish diplomacy', which basically claimed to represent and to articulate the political interests of the Jewish population all over the world – both inside and outside Palestine. Working as a 'diplomat of a stateless people', as he himself defined his political activities after World War I, he was among those prominent Zionist representatives at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 who finally contributed to creating a system of protection for the sake of the national minorities living in the territories that had been parts of the former multinational empires. In the years to follow the Paris Peace Conference, he was to become a widely acknowledged theoretician of non-governmental minority diplomacy.

In Motzkin's political thinking, Zionist engagement and universal commitment for the rights of basically all national minority groups thus formed a unique synthesis.<sup>8</sup> Throughout the inter-war era, he passionately voiced his ideas within the Zionist Organisation and within the *European Congress of Nationalities*. Given this, the catastrophic outcome of the *Congress's* annual conference of 1933 hit him especially hard – it meant the disastrous end of a political movement to which he had largely dedicated himself after World War I.

### **Leo Motzkin's biographical background and his Zionist activities before World War I**

Leo Motzkin was born in Brovary near Kiev in 1867. One year after the pogroms of 1881, which he witnessed himself in Kiev, he came to Berlin as the protégé of a Russian-Jewish born doctor, who was a good friend of his family. Having attended grammar school there, he also studied mathematics in the German capital. Although he was a very gifted

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<sup>7</sup> So far, only shorter biographical sketches on Leo Motzkin have been published. Above all, see Simcha Kling, 'Leo Motzkin' in *Herzl Year Book 2* (1959), pp.228-251.

<sup>8</sup> Neseemann, 'Minderheitendiplomatie', p.150.

student and seemed to be on the brink of a successful academic career, he never completed his studies. Instead, he decided to commit himself entirely to the Zionist movement.<sup>9</sup>

As early as in 1889, Motzkin had already been one of the founders of the so-called *Russian-Jewish Scientific Society* (*Russisch-Jüdischer Wissenschaftlicher Verein*), which brought together Jewish students coming from the Russian Empire and studying in Berlin. The leading members of the *Russian-Jewish Scientific Society* – people like Motzkin, Viktor Jacobson, Nachman Syrkin and also Chaim Weizmann, the first president of the state of Israel, who was mentored academically and politically for some years by Motzkin – were to become very prominent protagonists within the *Zionist Organization*, which had been founded in 1897.<sup>10</sup>

These early Zionists were united by their scientific background, which made them adhere to at least agnostic, if not atheist views and develop a definitely secular and also ‘ant clerical’ understanding of Jewish national identity.<sup>11</sup> They all shared the common experience of coming from an empire that clearly defined its Jewish population as ‘second class’ subjects and had developed a political strategy of using the Jews as scapegoats for the great lacks and deficiencies of its political and social structures.<sup>12</sup>

It was in this context that Motzkin and the other prominent spokesmen of the *Russian-Jewish Scientific Society* joined the so-called *Democratic Fraction*, which had been come into being within the *Zionist Organization* in 1901. Opposing Herzl’s policy, which almost exclusively focused on the political goal of Jewish settlement in Palestine, this - rather short-lived - group within the Zionist movement, which was mainly led by Motzkin and Weizmann, insisted on a programme of *Gegenwartsarbeit* (*present-day work*) being implemented (i.e. a programme of immediate political and cultural activity for the sake of the mainly Eastern European Jewish diaspora). They supported contemporary Jewish claims for Jewish cultural and educational autonomy that should enable the Jewish population of Eastern Europe to

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<sup>9</sup> Kling, ‘Leo Motzkin’ p.229.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. Pp.229-232.

<sup>11</sup> Gabriel Motzkin, ‘Nation und Minorität. Zur Geschichte und Wirkung des liberalen Zionismus in der Zwischenkriegszeit’ in *Simon-Dubnow-Institut für jüdische Geschichte und Kultur an der Universität Leipzig. Bulletin 1* (1999) (pp.18-28), p.22.

<sup>12</sup> For detailed information on this subject see Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews. Reform, Reaction and Anti-Semitism in Imperial Russia 1771-1917*, Chur 1993; John D. Klier, *Imperial Russia’s Jewish Questions, 1855-1881*, Cambridge 1995.

develop a modern national identity outside a future Palestinian homeland as well.<sup>13</sup> With regard to the Jewish diaspora in Eastern and East Central Europe, the leading figures of the *Democratic Fraction* thus acted as explicit national-Jewish autonomists already at the turn of the century.

Until the beginning of World War I, Motzkin mainly pursued these political concepts by speaking up for the rights of the Jewish population of the multinational Tsarist Empire. Primarily in the years following the revolution of 1905, he became an internationally well-known and extremely productive publicist in the field of Russian Jewish affairs, turning out to be one of the staunchest and most eloquent critics of the policy of Tsarist Russia towards her Jews.<sup>14</sup>

But Motzkin did not only focus his political activities before World War I on informing the international public about the fate of Tsarist Russian Jewry. Since the turn of the century, he had also developed some very original ideas about Jewish settlement in Palestine, which were not too common among Zionist leaders of that time. In this context, two major political matters caught his attention: how could Jewish settlement in Palestine be secured in international affairs, and, in a future Jewish homeland in Palestine, what should the relationship between the Jewish population and the native Arab population be like? Although he was deeply convinced of the political legitimacy of the Jewish homeland project,<sup>15</sup> he demanded that the Zionist movement should act as cautiously and defensively as possible; he also pleaded for a model of treaties with the Ottoman government that should solve the problem of Jewish settlement in Palestine in the framework of Great Power Diplomacy.

As a matter of fact, Motzkin's ideas about Jewish settlement reveal a remarkable tendency to deal with the problem in terms of international law. Like some other prominent Zionist theoreticians before World War I, Motzkin tended to regard the perspective of a

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<sup>13</sup> On the *Democratic Fraction*, its programme of *Gegenwartsarbeit* and on Motzkin's leading role in the *Democratic Fraction* see Kling, 'Leo Motzkin' pp.235-237; Michael Brenner, *Geschichte des Zionismus*, Munich 2002, pp.76-78.

<sup>14</sup> Under the pseudonym A. Linden, Motzkin published a large documentation on the legal discrimination of the Jews in the Russian Empire, which, translated from the German original, aroused considerable public attention in several countries (including Britain) – A. Linden (=Leo Motzkin), *Die Judenpogrome in Russland*, Cologne 1910.

<sup>15</sup> Manuscript "Parallelen und Konsequenzen" ("Parallels and consequences") – CZA, A 126, 839; Manuscript "Ostafrika und Zionismus" ("East Africa and Zionism") – CZA, A 126, 105.

Jewish homeland in Palestine to be practicable most probably in the framework of the Ottoman Empire being modernised. It might be feasible for example, he thus argued, that an autonomous Jewish-Palestinian province could be established within a reformed Ottoman state. This process of the multinational Ottoman Empire being administratively and politically ‘Europeanised’, Motzkin underlined, could presumably be implemented best under the patronage of the European great powers - by means of international treaties and agreements which were to guarantee the territorial integrity of the empire.<sup>16</sup>

In the context of dealing with the question of Jewish settlement in Palestine, Motzkin also developed a concept of what could be called ‘personal-cultural’ autonomy for the sake of the Arab population of Palestine.<sup>17</sup> According to these ideas – which he, however, never defined definitively –, such a kind of Arab autonomy was nothing else but a logical parallel to those rights of ‘personal-cultural’ autonomy that the protagonists of Zionist *Gegenwartsarbeit* intended to claim for the Jews in the East European diaspora.<sup>18</sup> One should not overlook the fact that Motzkin’s ideas here were influenced by those concepts of ‘personal-cultural’ autonomy that the Austro-Marxists Otto Bauer and also Karl Renner had developed for the Western, Austrian half of the Habsburg Monarchy. In short, Bauer and Renner suggested that forms and institutions of national representation should also be claimable outside the regions of compact national settlement: every subject or citizen of the empire should, in other words, be able to claim his national rights regardless of his place of residence.<sup>19</sup>

Judging from Motzkin’s papers, there can’t be any doubt that he was familiar with Bauer’s and Renner’s theories.<sup>20</sup> However, it seems to be inappropriate to assess his thoughts about a ‘personal-cultural’ autonomy of the Palestinian Arabs in the shadow of the two Austro-Marxists. On the one hand, he was clearly not on very close political terms with them

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<sup>16</sup> Manuscript “Der internationale Charakter der Judenfrage” (“The international character of the Jewish question”) – CZA, 126, 839.

<sup>17</sup> Manuscript “Zur Theorie des Zionismus” (“On the theory of Zionism”) – CZA, A 126, 101 (see, above all, pp. 1, 11 and 26).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1.

<sup>19</sup> Otto Bauer, ‘Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie’, *Otto Bauer, Werkausgabe I*, pp.49-622, Vienna, 1924. The crucial points of Bauer’s and Renner’s theories on “personal-cultural” autonomy are summarised in: Juha Hannikainen, *Kohti modernia politiikkaa Itävallassa. Otto Bauerin parlamenttistrategia 1907-1923*, Tampere 2003, pp.34-36.

<sup>20</sup> See a manuscript by Motzkin on the historical development of the concept of nationality and national identity in CZA, A 126, 623 (above all, pp.8-9).

– adhering to the ideals of political Liberalism, as he did. On the other hand, the special connection that Motzkin had drawn up between national minority rights being protected and this protection being defined in international law clearly pointed beyond the scope of Bauer's and Renner's ideas.

### **Jewish diplomacy and minority diplomacy**

Although the political events since 1917 – above all the Balfour declaration – had opened a realistic perspective for the Jewish homeland project for the first time, Motzkin left the Palestine-oriented mainstream of the Zionist movement by and large. Instead, he almost exclusively focused on the needs and demands of *Gegenwartsarbeit* (i.e. the pressing work of the present day) in Central and Eastern Europe.

It was on these grounds that Motzkin played a crucial role in the context of the Jewish being represented at the Paris Peace Conference - as the secretary-general of the *Comité des Délégations Juives auprès de la Conférence de la Paix* (*Committee of the Jewish Delegations at the Peace Conference*), which primarily advocated the demands of the Jewish populations in the newly founded or territorially enlarged European states. It was also Motzkin who summarised the *Comité's* central political claims for Jewish cultural and political autonomy in East Central, South Eastern and Eastern Europe in the leaflet *Les revendications nationales des Juifs* (*The national claims of the Jews*).<sup>21</sup>

For this catalogue of political measures that should be taken immediately for the sake of the Jewish population in the newly founded nation-states of East Central and South Eastern Europe, Motzkin had apparently used the treatise *Chego khotiat evrei?* (*What do the Jews want?*), which the renowned Russian-Jewish historian and politician Simon Dubnov had written after the February Revolution of 1917.<sup>22</sup> In accordance with what the non-Zionist Dubnov had stated there with regard to the Jews of the Russian Empire, Motzkin now

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<sup>21</sup> Leo Motzkin, 'Les revendications nationales des Juifs' published in Comité des Délégations Juives (ed.), *Les droits nationaux des Juifs en Europe Orientale*, Paris 1919, 7-27. (The leaflet can, besides, also be found in CZA, A 126, 668.)

<sup>22</sup> Simon Dubnov, *Chego khotiat evrei?*, Petrograd (St. Petersburg) 1917. For more information on Dubnov's programme of Jewish autonomy, see Viktor E. Kelner, 'Nation der Gegenwart – Simon Dubnow über jüdische Politik und Geschichte' in *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts/Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook 2* (2003) (pp.519-544), pp.541-542.

demanded that the Jews of the newly founded or territorially enlarged European states should be given 'personal-cultural' autonomy throughout their respective countries of residence – even if they lived in smaller diaspora groups. According to him, a larger national representation of each national Jewry was to be established, based on the Jewish communities, and it was to be entitled to supervise and to administer all internal concerns of the respective national Jewries – cultural and educational affairs and even matters of taxation.<sup>23</sup>

All these demands, however, were not simply an eclectic borrowing of Dubnov's ideas: they rather contained several programmatic points that were quite typical of Motzkin's conviction that the establishment of Jewish autonomy – as well as of any other national autonomy - could only be realised in the framework of some broader, international legal settlement. Consistently with this, he also argued that the Jews should be granted a kind of diplomatic mission at the League of Nations, which was to act as the universal diplomatic mission of what he considered to be a universal, albeit still stateless nation.<sup>24</sup>

It was not least because of the assiduous activities of the *Comité* - which were mainly supported by American diplomacy - that ideas about national minority groups being entitled to claim their political and cultural rights became relevant at the peace conference and were even made a part of international law. This happened in the form of the treaties on the rights of linguistic, religious and cultural minorities that most of the newly founded or territorially enlarged states had to sign. To a considerable extent, the wording of the minority treaties corresponded – partly even literally – to the respective drafts the *Comité* had presented.<sup>25</sup>

Given the fact, however, that the system of minority protection the treaties had established in the context of the League of Nations was far from working effectively – which became quite obvious soon after the treaties had been signed -, the *Comité* did not dissolve. Headed by Motzkin, who had been acting as its secretary-general since the Paris Peace Conference – and, since 1924, also as its president -, the *Comité* continued to deal with the situation of the Jews

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<sup>23</sup> Leo Motzkin, 'Les revendications nationales des Juifs', pp. 7-10 and 20-24.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 23-24.

<sup>25</sup> Vieffhaus, *Die Minderheitenfrage*, pp.74-173, 193-209 and 228-234; Martin Scheuermann, *Minderheitenschutz contra Konfliktverhütung? Die Minderheitenpolitik des Völkerbundes in den zwanziger Jahren*, Marburg 2000, pp.22-30, 30-48 and 413-453.

inside and outside the states that had been forced to adopt the rules of minority protection. Thus, it acted as a major defender of those rules, which were, in fact, infringed quite regularly in some of the states in question (above all Rumania and Poland).<sup>26</sup>

It was primarily due to Motzkin's prominent position within the Zionist movement that the *Comité* maintained close contacts with the Zionist Organisation and the American Jewish Congress throughout its entire existence. As far as the League of Nations and its subdivisions were concerned, the *Comité* developed, in political practice, into a permanent Jewish board of representation with regard to all matters that did not directly have to do with Palestinian affairs. The *Comité* continued to exist until 1936. Together with the American Jewish Congress, it advocated the project of a joint, representative assembly of the world's Jewries in addition to the Zionist mainstream, which had by that time concentrated nearly all its political activities on the goal of a Jewish homeland or even Jewish statehood in Palestine. With the World Jewish Congress being founded in 1936, such an assembly was finally established. Simultaneously, the *Comité* became merged into this newly founded federation of Jewish organisations.<sup>27</sup>

Quite consistently with his 'Jewish universalism', Motzkin had always viewed the existence of the *Comité* – from the very beginning of its activities - as an institutional warrant for the claim of the Jewish people to develop and to perfect a secular national identity inside and outside Palestine. Starting out from this assumption, he even drafted the idea in 1919 that all Jews in the world should be granted a special, common citizenship and corresponding passports and that such an internationally acknowledged Jewish nation should be able to act as an independent subject of international law.<sup>28</sup>

During the 1920s, Motzkin developed such thoughts into more complex and more abstract considerations regarding the relationship between the national interests of this

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<sup>26</sup> On this subject see Paweł Korzec, 'Polen und der Minderheitenschutzvertrag (1919-1934)' in *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas (Neue Folge)* 22 (1975), pp.515-555; Mariana Hausleitner, 'Intervention und Gleichstellung – Rumäniens Juden und die Großmächte 1866-1923' in *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts/Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 1 (2002) (475-531), pp.522-528.

<sup>27</sup> Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, New York etc. 1972, 475; World Jewish Congress (ed.), *Unity in Dispersion. A History of the World Jewish Congress*, New York 1948, 31-34.

<sup>28</sup> Motzkin, 'Les revendications nationales des Juifs', p. 23; Gabriel Motzkin, 'Nation und Minorität' pp. 22-23. Furthermore, see Leon Chasanowitsch/Leo Motzkin (ed.), *Die Judenfrage der Gegenwart. Dokumentensammlung*, Stockholm 1919; 71-72; Jolanta Żyndul, *Państwo w państwie? Autonomia narodowo-kulturalna w Europie środkowoschodniej w XX wieku*, Warsaw 2000, 66.

‘universal nation’ (*am ‘olam*) and the corresponding ambitions of other linguistic, religious or cultural minorities in Europe for national autonomous rights in their respective home countries. He argued that the representatives of political Zionism had to respect and to acknowledge such legitimate claims on the part of other national minority groups without any reservations: in case they should not do so, he underlined, they would also inevitably delegitimise the political demands and national aims of the Jews as a diasporic, stateless nation in the context of international diplomacy.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, Motzkin insistently advocated an active commitment of the Zionist movement to those political organisations which championed the rights of national minorities in interwar Europe on the level of international politics and diplomacy. Zionist claims for a universal national identity of the Jews inside and outside Palestine, on the one hand, and universal commitment to the interests of any other ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious minority groups in Europe, on the other hand, were thus mutually dependent in Motzkin’s theoretical thinking.<sup>30</sup> Only by respecting and advocating the political and cultural interests of other national minorities independently of their respective size and influence, he argued, were the Jews as a ‘universal’, diasporic nation fully entitled to similar demands with regard to their own national identity - in whatever state they lived.<sup>31</sup>

### **The European Congress of Nationalities**

It was just on the grounds of these theories and of his great experience as a quasi-diplomatic representative of a nation living in diaspora that Motzkin was mainly responsible for the decision of the *Comité des Délégations Juives* to take part in the *European Congress of Nationalities* from the very beginning of its activities. Starting from the first annual conference of the *European Congress of Nationalities*, which took place in October 1925, Jewish representatives participated in its activities, with Motzkin playing a dominant role

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<sup>29</sup> See an undated manuscript by Motzkin on the specific interests and problems of Jewish representation within European minority diplomacy (to be found in CZA, A 126, 623), a manuscript by Motzkin on the results of the 2nd annual conference of the *European Congress of Nationalities* [1926](to be found in the same archival unit) and a speech by Motzkin before the 2nd annual conference of the *European Congress of Nationalities*, August 1926 (to be found in the same archival unit as well).

<sup>30</sup> Gabriel Motzkin, ‘Nation und Minorität’ 24-25.

<sup>31</sup> It was exactly this context that Motzkin underlined in a speech which he delivered at the 3rd annual conference of the *European Congress of Nationalities* in August 1927 (in German) - CZA, A 126, 624.

within the Jewish delegation (together with the Bohemian-born Emil Margulies [1877-1943], who was a leading spokesman of Zionist *Gegenwartsarbeit* like Motzkin himself). From 1925 on, Motzkin was one of the vice presidents of the *European Congress of Nationalities*.

In a speech which he delivered at the second annual conference of the *Congress*, held in Geneva in August 1926, Motzkin emphasised the special importance of the European ‘minority parliament’ from the point of view of Jewish political interests. For the Jews in their respective countries of origin, he said, even a more or less theoretical, academic treatment of general minority problems was very valuable and immediately useful: the repeated ‘objective stipulation’ of internationally acknowledged legal principles was a strong and efficient weapon in the interest of Jewish minority rights.<sup>32</sup>

As Motzkin underlined in the same speech, the Jews considered themselves to be the oldest minority population in the whole world: according to him, there was scarcely any other nation which had similarly experienced the situation of being a disadvantaged or even oppressed national minority for centuries.<sup>33</sup> It was on these grounds, Motzkin wrote after the Geneva conference, that the Jews regarded their own destiny to be closely intertwined with the fate of other national minorities – something that the Jewish representatives at the Paris Peace Conference had already taken into account when drafting their political claims. Insofar, Motzkin stressed, Jewish participation in the minority parliament was likely to guarantee ‘that such congress meetings will maintain pure minority character’ – given the fact that the Jews were the archetypal representatives of typical minority interests.<sup>34</sup>

On the other hand, Motzkin emphasised in the same paper, the Jews themselves should always be aware of the unique possibilities which the *European Congress of Nationalities* offered them – namely the opportunity to word their political claims and interests on an international scale, ‘without having to hide their own nature’ and on equal terms with ‘more than one and half a dozen other nations’, the representatives of which apparently even held their Jewish colleagues in high esteem.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Motzkin before the 2nd annual conference of the *European Congress of Nationalities*, August 1926 - CZA, A 126, 623

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Paper by Motzkin on the results of the second annual conference of the *European Congress of Nationalities* (undated) - CZA, A 126, 623.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

In his function as vice president of the *Congress*, Motzkin cooperated intensively with the leading theoretician of minority rights in the interwar era – the Baltic German Paul Schiemann (1876-1944), a widely acknowledged political leader of the German minority group in Latvia and the editor-in-chief of the *Rigasche Rundschau*, the most important German-language newspaper in interwar Latvia. Motzkin's own views on the rights of national minorities had indeed very much in common with the corresponding theories of Schiemann – not least with his thoughts on the so-called 'anational' state, a theory that Schiemann had developed as a member of the Latvian parliament (to which he was elected throughout the 1920s). In short, Schiemann's theory demanded above all that the linguistic, ethnic and cultural-religious minorities within every state should be granted far-reaching autonomy with regard to their own cultural life, to educational matters – including university curricula – and to religion: national-cultural interests of the minorities had thus to be separated from the general political interests of the state. On the other hand, Schiemann argued, the minorities had to be loyal to the state and to refrain from any *irredenta* claims – in order for 'anational' political nations to come into being in the end.<sup>36</sup>

According to Schiemann, every citizen of a state should also be free to define his national identity himself, regardless of any 'objective criteria' such as ethnic origin or historical background.<sup>37</sup> What Schiemann referred to in his theory of the 'anational state', basically had very much in common with what Motzkin had once defined as the fundamental basis for the relationship between autonomous Jewish minority groups and their respective nation-states.

Such theoretical and political similarities, but also the high personal esteem in which the leading protagonists of the *European Congress of Nationalities* held each other – apart from Motzkin and Schiemann, one should also name the founder and secretary-general of the *Congress*, Ewald Ammende, and its president Josip Wilfan, a Slovene from Trieste – finally contributed to turning Ammende's originally private initiative into a viable and internationally respected institution. Starting from its first annual conference in 1925,

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<sup>36</sup> Cf. a speech delivered by Paul Schiemann before the 6th annual conference of the *European Congress of Nationalities* in 1930 – CZA, A 126, 627. For more information on Schiemann's theory of the 'anational state' see John Hiden, *Defender of Minorities. Paul Schiemann, 1876-1944*, London 2004, pp.127-148.

<sup>37</sup> Paul Schiemann, 'Das Wesen der Volksgemeinschaft' in *Rigasche Rundschau*, 2nd of July 1927.

primarily the liberal-democratic representatives of the German minority groups in Europe – the largest and most influential member group of the *Congress* – and the Jewish representatives, led by Motzkin and Margulies, developed rather close forms of cooperation, which even played a crucial role in the overall political activities of the minority parliament.<sup>38</sup> In contrast, the relationship between the German minority representatives and their Hungarian colleagues – the second largest member group of the minority parliament – was far from being similarly good. In fact, there were quite a few controversies between German ‘minority politicians’, on the one hand, and the Hungarian *Congress* delegates, on the other hand, on the subject of the revisionist goals that the foreign policy of interwar Hungary pursued.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, Hungary and Germany, the ‘mother countries’ of the two largest member groups in the *European Congress of Nationalities*, sought actively to influence European minority diplomacy – mainly by financing it. First, the Hungarian government played a major role in funding the *Congress*. However, this role was taken over rather soon by Germany, after the government of the Weimar republic, primarily under the influence of foreign minister Stresemann, had decided to explicitly use European minority diplomacy for its own purposes in international affairs. From 1928 on, it finally even paid for almost the entire budget of the *Congress*.<sup>40</sup>

Although European minority diplomacy was thus under a certain patronage of the German government, the leading protagonists of the *European Congress of Nationalities* were very careful not to lose their political autonomy in view of their fundamental dependence from German financial support. All in all, especially Motzkin, who had always advocated Jewish commitment to European minority diplomacy, had reason to be satisfied with the results of the German-Jewish cooperation in the *Congress* for a long time. On repeated occasions, he generally stressed the great significance that Jewish involvement in the minority movement had for the presentation of national Jewish interests in the framework of international, governmental diplomacy – not least in the context of the League of Nations. In two speeches which he delivered before the 8<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the *European Congress*

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<sup>38</sup> Glass, ‘Ende der Gemeinsamkeit’ pp. 261-265.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p.262; Bamberger-Stemmann, *Der Europäische Nationalitätenkongress*, pp.292-295.

<sup>40</sup> Glass, ‘Ende der Gemeinsamkeit’ p. 261; Bamberger-Stemmann, *Der Europäische Nationalitätenkongress* pp. 147-158.

of *Nationalities* in Vienna in 1932, he enthusiastically emphasised the great reputation that the minority parliament – as a representation of more than 40 million people - had achieved in the eyes of the European public.<sup>41</sup>

Shortly afterwards, in a speech before the First Jewish World Conference (of which he had been one of the main organisers) in August 1932, he pointed out that the members of all delegations at the Vienna conference had unanimously supported their Jewish colleagues, when they had criticised and condemned the forms of anti-Semitism that had been increasing in many European countries. This had happened in an overall political climate, Motzkin said, in which even the German public was becoming more and more receptive for anti-Jewish propaganda – and in which the largely assimilated German Jews could no longer have the illusion of being totally secure.<sup>42</sup>

At the Vienna conference of the European minority parliament, the German and Jewish delegates had also been in agreement on rejecting any forms of assimilation policy, put into effect by a nation-state towards its linguistic, ethnic, cultural or religious minority populations. On this point, there had been consensus among all the other *Congress* delegations as well – except for the Hungarians, who apparently wanted to avoid anything which could have looked like concrete criticism of Hungary's restrictive minority policy.<sup>43</sup>

### **The crisis and the end of minority nationality, 1932/1933**

Yet, it was not to be long until the Jewish-German harmony in the *European Congress of Nationalities* came to a rather abrupt end. Since the beginning of the 1930s, some major personal changes had gradually taken place in the political associations of the German minority populations. In the course of these shifts, quite a few liberal and more or less democratically-minded persons who had played an important role in the German minority associations<sup>44</sup> had subsequently also been replaced by nationalist and revisionist

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<sup>41</sup> The respective manuscripts are to be found in CZA, A 126, 624.

<sup>42</sup> Motzkin before the First Jewish World Conference, 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1932 – CZA, A 126, 681.

<sup>43</sup> Glass, 'Ende der Gemeinsamkeit' p.264.

<sup>44</sup> Primarily, they were represented by the *Verband der deutschen Volksgruppen in Europa* (*Association of the German populations in Europe*)

representatives in the German *Congress* delegation.<sup>45</sup>

As a first result of this development, an article, written by Norbert Gürke, a functionary of the Austrian Nazi party, and openly supporting the racist goals that the Nazi movement wanted to pursue in its minority policy, was published in *Nation und Staat* (*Nation and state*), the leading review of the German minority representatives. According to the author, the German nation – as well as every other state-nation – had the right to determine what ethnic and cultural elements belonged to it – and what ethnic and cultural elements did not.<sup>46</sup> This applied, the author continued, above all to the Jews: given the fact that they were not only of non-German origin, but also ‘racially alien’, their ‘relationship with the German people’ had to be ‘determined’ on different grounds than ‘the relationship between the Germans and other European nations’.<sup>47</sup>

The publication of this article outraged Motzkin and most of the other Jewish delegates in the *European Congress of Nationalities*, and it led to serious disagreement between Jewish and German ‘minority politicians’ in the autumn of 1932. The leading German representatives in the *Congress* – above all Ammende, its secretary-general, and Schiemann, who also acted as editor of *Nation und Staat* – eagerly sought to convince Motzkin and his Jewish colleagues that they did not at all approve of the author’s point of view. As Ammende explained, the article had only been published in order to pave the way for an ensuing critical debate, concerning the position of the National Socialist party in minority questions, in the following issues of *Nation und Staat*. Given the fact, Ammende underlined, that the Nazi party had recently been gaining considerable support among German minority nationals, such a discussion was highly necessary. According to Ammende, the debate was supposed to be disapproving of any extremist or racist ideas – and it was Ammende himself who was going to take issue with the author’s ideas soon.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Above all, these revisionist groups were represented by the *Deutscher Schutzbund für das Grenz- und Auslandsdeutschum* (*German Protection Association for Germanness at the Border and Abroad*). For more information on the personal shifts in the political associations of the German minority populations see Bamberger-Stemmann, *Der Europäische Nationalitätenkongreß* pp.188-192 and 197-202.

<sup>46</sup> Norbert Gürke, ‘Der Nationalsozialismus, das Grenz- und Auslandsdeutschum und das Nationalitätenrecht’ in *Nation und Staat* 1/1932 (7-30), pp.20-25.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.22-23

<sup>48</sup> Ammende to Jacob Robinson, 21 November 1932 – CZA, A126, 633.

Such explanations, however, completely failed to soothe Motzkin. Unlike his colleague Margulies, who rather tended to play down the significance of the whole affair, he did not either conceal his great disappointment at the whole affair from the German minority representatives. As there was no reason at all to personally impute anything on Ammende or Schiemann, Motzkin pointed out, he was even more dismayed by the fact that a Nazi functionary had been given the chance to publish an anti-Jewish pamphlet in the leading journal of the German minority groups.

The weeks and months to follow the publication of the article in *Nation und Staat* were to show that this crisis of confidence between Jewish and German ‘minority politicians’ was not temporary, but in fact fundamental and deep. ‘One can’t help getting the impression’, Motzkin wrote to the more placatory Margulies on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 1932, ‘that a part of the German minority representatives is getting in with National Socialism and might be willing to drag along the others. I surely do not need to tell you what blow this “singular case” has dealt to the Jews’ cooperation with the other minority representatives.’<sup>49</sup>

When the German minority representatives were – as a consequence of the whole affair - accused generally of hypocrisy and of tolerating anti-Jewish attitudes among themselves in the Polish-Jewish newspaper *Nasz Przegląd (Our review)*, Motzkin, however, objected to such generalising views in the internal Jewish discussion.<sup>50</sup> As he wrote to his colleague Jacob Robinson,<sup>51</sup> those attacks went too far: in the present situation, Motzkin stressed, it was not very helpful to lament and to collectively blame the German ‘minority politicians’ without any distinction.<sup>52</sup>

On the other hand, Motzkin did not fail to utter harsh criticism especially towards

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<sup>49</sup> „Man bekommt unwillkürlich den Eindruck, dass ein Teil der deutschen Minderheitenführer in das Fahrwasser des Nationalsozialismus hineingleitet und möglicherweise die anderen mitschleppen will. Ich brauche Ihnen nicht erst zu sagen, welchen Schlag dieser ‚Einzelfall‘ (sic!) der Zusammenarbeit der Juden mit den anderen Minderheitenvertretern versetzt hat.“ – Motzkin to Margulies, 16th of November 1932: CZA, A 126, 633.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Jacob Robinson, a lawyer from Kaunas, had gained considerable reputation as one of the most important Jewish spokesmen in the *European Congress of Nationalities*. After his emigration to the United States, he was the main initiator of the Institute of Jewish Affairs, which was founded in New York in 1941 with the support of the World Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Congress. Finally, Robinson also acted as counsellor of the American prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials and published documentary materials on the Holocaust. On his biography see Omry K. Feuereisen, ‘Geschichtserfahrung und Völkerrecht – Jacob Robinson und die Gründung des Institute of Jewish Affairs’ in *Leipziger Beiträge zur jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur* 2 (2004), 307-327.

<sup>52</sup> Motzkin to Robinson, 11 of November 1932 – CZA, A 126, 633

Ammende. Reminding the secretary-general of the *Congress* of the many years of close cooperation of German and Jewish minority representatives, he stressed how disappointed he was by the fact that an ideologist of the Nazi party had been given the opportunity to publish his thoughts in *Nation und Staat*. When Ammende, in a letter to Motzkin, protested against the accusations in *Nasz Przegląd*,<sup>53</sup> Motzkin replied that the campaign of this Polish-Jewish newspaper would only lose its reason if *Nation und Staat*, which had always been a renowned review for minority questions, stopped tolerating anti-Jewish and racist allegations in its issues and clearly condemned Gürke's views. According to Motzkin, the minority movement as a whole had already heavily been damaged by the affair: if any of the national groups, represented in the *Congress*, was denied the right to develop and to articulate its cultural identity according to its own will, the collective claims of any other nation which did not object to such discrimination would equally stop being justified.<sup>54</sup> However, Motzkin concluded in a more placatory manner, he was pleased to know that Ammende himself was going to deal with the article in question, and he was looking forward to reading his critical comments on it.<sup>55</sup>

With Hitler's party having risen to power and having started its discriminatory policy against Germany's Jews, the fundamental blow which the controversy about *Nation und Staat* had dealt to the traditional cooperation of German and Jewish minority representatives finally became a real abyss in the spring of 1933. Since the very first anti-Jewish measures of the National Socialist government, Motzkin, whose *Comité des Délégations Juives* simultaneously sought to effectuate political sanctions against Germany on the part of Great Power Diplomacy, urged his German colleagues in the *European Congress of Nationalities* to explicitly and unambiguously condemn the Nazis' policy of discrimination and deprivation.<sup>56</sup>

In this context, Motzkin referred to the fact that the *Congress* had always opposed political measures which aimed at the forcible assimilation of national minorities in any state: however, it had never rejected the right of single individuals or even of whole minority groups to voluntarily assimilate to the corresponding state-nations. In a speech he delivered

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<sup>53</sup> Ammende to Motzkin, 7<sup>th</sup> of November 1932 – CZA, A 126, 633.

<sup>54</sup> Motzkin to Ammende, 16<sup>th</sup> of November 1932 – CZA, A 126, 633.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> A lot of sources showing these Jewish efforts can be found in CZA, A 126, 635 and 636.

before the minority commission of the League of Nations Union in Montreux on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June 1933, Motzkin emphasised this point especially. He pointed out how shocked he was to see that the government of a country that the Jews had always regarded as a 'source of the highest culture' had been adopting a policy of deprivation, formally based on legal acts, but put into effect 'against all laws of morality and religion'.<sup>57</sup> To his own regret, Motzkin continued, he had always had to take into account since he came to Germany that the vast majority of the country's Jews identified themselves 'nearly unconditionally' with Germanness instead of being aware that they belonged to the Jewish nation: it was on these grounds, too, that most of the German Jews had refused to see the impending danger for such a long time. Although he himself had foreseen all this quite intuitively and far more clearly, Motzkin emphasised, he would, however, never have thought of a situation in which Germany's Jews were to be turned into a national minority – against their own will and without being able to rely on any corresponding minority rights.<sup>58</sup>

As a matter of fact, Motzkin and the other Jewish delegates in the *European Congress of Nationalities* did not succeed in making their German colleagues condemn the Nazis' anti-Jewish policy before the *Congress's* annual conference of 1933. Moreover, as a consequence of the personal shifts that had taken place within the groups of German 'minority politicians' since the beginning of the 1930s, it even became visible that a clear majority among them was not at all reluctant to accept the principle of 'national dissimulation' in determining their official viewpoint on the persecution of Germany's Jews. Most of the German minority representatives were certainly not in line with National Socialist racist rhetoric, and most of them did not approve either of the measures of anti-Jewish discrimination that had been adopted by the new German government. However, they insisted on the German nation – like any other state-nation - basically having the right to decide on its 'ethnic composition'. Eventually, it should even be entitled to 'exclude' such population groups which it did not regard to be a part of the 'nation's body': those 'dissimilated' groups should, in turn, be equipped with all the minority rights that the *Congress* had always advocated.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Motzkin before the Minority Commission of the League of Nations Union, 4<sup>th</sup> of June 1933 – CZA, A 126, 622 (see especially pp. 4-6).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. (see especially pp. 5-8).

<sup>59</sup> Glass, 'Ende der Gemeinsamkeit' pp.268-277.

A position which was quite contrary to what Motzkin and his Jewish colleagues had demanded thus became capable of winning the majority of the German *Congress* members. It was just on these grounds that the German declaration on ‘national dissimulation’ was elaborated and finally presented to the plenum of the *Congress*.<sup>60</sup>

Schiemann, who was one of the rather few German ‘minority politicians’ to reject such a categorical declaration on ‘national dissimulation’, did not carry his point in the German delegation before the annual conference of the *Congress* was to assemble in the Swiss capital.<sup>61</sup> As a consequence of this, he refrained from taking part in the meeting: officially, he pretended to be prevented from doing so by an illness.<sup>62</sup> Ammende and Wilfan, in turn, tried to act as mediators between the German and the Jewish *Congress* members already in the run-up to the Bern conference, as soon as it had become clear that the fundamental conflict of both groups was threatening the unity of the minority parliament.

During the summer and the autumn of 1933, it was above all Ammende who kept stressing in his contacts with Motzkin and the Jewish *Congress* members that they could always count on the solidarity and sympathy of the German minority representatives. On the other hand, he asked for Motzkin’s understanding with regard to the standpoint of the German *Congress* delegation even after the éclat of Bern. He implored him and his Jewish colleagues in the *Congress* to convince the German Jews they should acknowledge their status as national minority: in this case, Ammende said, there was at least some prospect of their problems being solved on the basis of internationally accepted minority rights.<sup>63</sup>

In the situation that had come about with the disaster of Bern, such arguments of Ammende’s were hardly appropriate in order to save the unity of the minority movement. All in all, they did not have the slightest effect on Motzkin, who had been extremely attentive to the tectonic shifts that had been taking place in the political associations of the German

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<sup>60</sup> Declaration of the German *Congress* members, presented by Hans Otto Roth - to be found in: CZA, A 126, 636, and in: *Sitzungsbericht des Kongresses der organisierten nationalen Gruppen in den Staaten Europas, 16. bis 19. September 1933*, Vienna/Leipzig 1934, 26.

On the German declaration on “national dissimulation”, which was approved by the *Congress* plenum, see, furthermore, *Sitzungsbericht* pp.11-13, 25-27, 63-65 and 68-70.

<sup>61</sup> See Schiemann’s draft in CZA, A 126, 636.

<sup>62</sup> Hiden, *Defender of Minorities* pp.196-217 (above all pp.211-213); Glass, ‘Ende der Gemeinsamkeit’ p. 276.

<sup>63</sup> Ammende to Motzkin, 9<sup>th</sup> of October 1933 – CZA, A 126, 636; Ammende to Margulies, 6<sup>th</sup> of October 1933 – CZA, A 126, 636.

minority representatives. When their standpoint concerning the question of ‘national dissimulation’ had emerged during the summer of 1933, it had been Motzkin who, together with Robinson and Margulies, had mainly determined the Jewish position with regard to the German ‘minority politicians’ and the *Congress* as a whole.<sup>64</sup>

After the central lifeline of the minority movement had been cut at the Bern conference, Motzkin consequently defended the decision of the Jewish minority representatives to leave the *European Congress of Nationalities*. To Ammende and Wilfan, he made it clear that one could not even think of the Jews returning to the *Congress* before its German members unambiguously and convincingly dissociated from their position - and before they showed their Jewish colleagues that kind of solidarity which they owed them in view of the dramatic events in Germany.<sup>65</sup>

The German minority representatives, however, never made any efforts to correct their official position concerning the question of ‘national dissimulation’. European minority diplomacy had thus come to a very sad end in 1933 – even if the *European Congress of Nationalities* still continued to convene until 1938. Motzkin, who was deeply disappointed at the breakdown of the European minority movement, did not experience the inconceivable events that were to follow in Germany and in Europe during the 1930s. Amidst a political campaign that he had started in order to bring about international boycott measures against Germany,<sup>66</sup> he died of a heart attack in Paris in early November 1933. With his person, the most prominent protagonist of what could be called a unique mixture of Zionist *Gegenwartsarbeit* and commitment to the universal rights of national minorities had passed away.

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<sup>64</sup> E.g. Motzkin to Robinson and Margulies, 10<sup>th</sup> of March 1933 – CZA, A 126, 635; Robinson to Motzkin, 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 1933 – CZA, A 126, 635; Robinson to Motzkin, 17<sup>th</sup> of April 1933 – CZA, A 126, 635; Robinson to Motzkin, 7<sup>th</sup> of August 1933 – CZA, A 126, 635; Robinson to Motzkin, 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 1933 – CZA, A 126, 636.

<sup>65</sup> Motzkin to Wilfan, 26<sup>th</sup> of September 1933 – CZA, A 126, 636. Several letters and telegrams from Motzkin to Ammende, concerning the fate of the *European Congress of Nationalities* after the Bern conference, can be found in CZA, A 126, 633.

<sup>66</sup> In this context, he was the main editor of a large documentation on the situation of the Jews in Germany, which was published after his death – Comité des Délégations Juives (ed.), *Das Schwarzbuch: Tatsachen und Dokumente. Die Lage der Juden in Deutschland 1933*, Paris 1934.

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