Zionism and other Jewish parties in Austrian Galicia witnessed a simultaneous explosion of political activity. Taking advantage of expanded male suffrage, Zionists in Galicia founded the Jüdischen Politischen Nationalpartei (Jewish National Party) in July 1906. Of the 62,609 votes cast for various Jewish parties in Galicia, 24,274 went to Zionists, 17,581 to Socialists, and 18,885 to the Polska Organizacja Jydowska (Polish Jewish Organization).

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Disappointed with the lack of concrete political achievements in the Russian and Austrian Empires, many young Jews migrated from Eastern Europe to Palestine as part of the much-celebrated Second Aliyah (1903–1914). Despite the arrival of some 35,000 immigrants in Ottoman Palestine, however, the vast majority of Jews either remained in Eastern Europe or migrated to various locales in the New World from Chicago to Sydney.

The Interwar Years
The interwar period was the heyday of Jewish and Zionist politics in Eastern Europe. With radically redrawn borders and increasingly exclusive concepts of Polishness, interwar Poland provided ideal conditions for the growth of Zionist schools, youth groups, political parties, and cultural activities. Despite anti-Jewish violence and pogroms in Lwów, Pinsk, Vilna, and other cities and towns during the various wars of 1918–1919, much hope was inspired by the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917, the Paris Peace Conference (1919–1920), and the Minorities Treaty of June 1919.

While Yitshak Grünbaum (1879–1970) is the leader most often associated with Zionism and Zionist politics, Ozjasz (Yehoshua) Thon of Kraków (1870–1936) and others were also instrumental in Zionism’s rise to communal influence and political power in interwar Poland. With impressive returns in the first Sejm elections of 1919, when 13 Jewish deputies, 6 of whom were Zionists, were chosen, Zionist parties were particularly popular in the regions of western Galicia and Congress Poland. Encouraged by this early popularity as well as by a growing sense of confrontation with Polish nationalists, Grünbaum led a coalition of Jews, Germans, Ukrainians, and other national minorities known as the Minorities Bloc in the Sejm elections of 1922. Although Zionist organizations in Galicia under the leadership of Ignacy Schwarzbart (1888–1961) chose not to participate in the bloc, the coalition was successful as 32 Zionist representatives and another 15 Jewish deputies from other parties were elected. Ultimately, however, Grünbaum’s strategy led to an increased sense of confrontation between Jewish parties and the larger Polish public. In the end, the bloc produced few real political achievements.