

# Rejection of Zionism

Corresponding to this fundamental position, the CV also declared its sharp rejection of Zionism. Thus a resolution passed by the main council of the CV on April 10, 1921, concluded with the words: *"If the work for settlement in Palestine were nothing more than a task of aid and assistance, then from the point of view of the Centralverein nothing would be said against the promotion of this work. However, the settlement in Palestine is in the first place an object of national Jewish policy and hence its promotion and support should be rejected."*<sup>8</sup> Consequently, it was the CV above all which, in the years prior to Hitler's assumption of power, stood in the forefront of the progressive parties and organizations in their fight against anti-Semitism. Regarding this attitude the Jewish author Weener E. Mosse remarked: "While the leaders of the CV saw it as their special duty to represent the interests of the German Jews in the active political struggle, Zionism stood for... systematic Jewish non-participation in German public life. It rejected as a matter of principle any participation in the struggle led by the CV,"<sup>9</sup>

The attitude of the Zionists towards the encroaching menace of fascist domination in Germany was determined by some common ideological assumptions; the fascists as well as the Zionists believed in unscientific racial theories, and both met on the same ground in their beliefs in such mystical generalizations as "national character (Volkstum) and "race", both were chauvinistic and inclined towards "racial exclusiveness." Thus the Zionist official Gerhart Holdheim wrote in 1930 in an edition of the *Suddeutsche Monatshefte*, dedicated to the Jewish question (a publication in which, amongst others, leading anti-Semites aired their views): "The Zionist programme encompasses the conception of homogeneous, indivisible Jewry on a national basis. The criterion for Jewry is hence not a confession of religion, but the all-embracing sense of belonging to a racial community that is bound together by ties of blood and history and which is determined to keep its national individuality."<sup>10</sup> That was the same language, the same phraseology, as the fascists used. No wonder then that the German fascists welcomed the conceptions of the Zionists, with Alfred Rosenberg, the chief ideologue of the Nazi party, writing: "Zionism must be vigorously supported so that a certain number of German Jews is transported annually to Palestine or at least made to leave the country,"<sup>11</sup> With an eye on such statements, Hans Lamm later wrote: "...it is indisputable that during the first stages of their Jewish policy, the National Socialists thought it proper to adopt a pro-Zionist attitude:"<sup>12</sup>

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