

**Nordau, Max (born Simon Maximilian Suedfeld
1849–1923)**

**Co-founder of the World Zionist Organization,
philosopher, writer, orator and physician.**

Nordau was born in Pest, Hungary, to an Orthodox family, but later abandoned all religious observance and was even accused of being anti-religious. He became a physician, settling in Paris in 1880 and also pursued a career as a journalist, eventually becoming a correspondent for leading newspapers in the western world. He achieved fame as a thinker and social critic with the publication of several works highly critical of society, religion, government, art and literature. His works aroused much controversy and continued to be studied and discussed many years after their first appearance. Among his most famous publications are *The Conventional Lies of Our Civilization* (1883); *Paradoxes* (1896); and *Degeneration* (1895).



Nordau became acquainted in 1895 with Theodor Herzl's idea of a Jewish state and immediately accepted it with enthusiasm. He served as vice-president and then as president of several Zionist Congresses. Nordau was a political Zionist and believed that large numbers of Diaspora Jews should be transferred to Erez Israel. Once they attained a majority in Palestine, he thought, Jewish political independence would follow. This proposal, however, was rejected by the Zionist leaders as unrealistic.

Nordau died in Paris in 1923 and was re-interred in Tel Aviv in 1926.