

HISTORY

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Carta orientalis tribuum BENIAMIN et DIXIDIE MANASSE in

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I A M I N A

HISTORY

The birthplace of the Jewish people is the Land of Israel (Eretz Yisrael). There, a significant part of the nation's long history was enacted, of which the two thousand years are recorded in the Bible; there, its cultural, religious, and national identity was formed; and there, its physical presence has been maintained through the centuries, even after the majority was forced into exile. During the many years of dispersion, the Jewish people never severed nor forgot its bond with the Land. With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Jewish independence, lost 2,000 years earlier, was renewed.

זכר ימות עולם בינו שנות דור ודור... (דברים ל"ב: ז')

Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations... (Deuteronomy 32:7)

Section on an illuminated late-medieval map of the Tribes of Israel

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Courtesy
R. Ben-Haim

BIBLICAL TIMES



Moses by
Michelangelo,
San Pietro in
Vincoli, Rome

The Patriarchs

Jewish history began about 4,000 years ago (c. 17th century BCE) with the patriarchs – Abraham, his son Isaac, and grandson Jacob. Documents unearthed in Mesopotamia, dating back to 2000-1500 BCE, corroborate aspects of their nomadic way of life as described in the Bible. The Book of Genesis relates how Abraham was summoned from Ur of the Chaldeans to Canaan to bring about the formation of a people with belief in the One God. When a famine spread through Canaan, Jacob (Israel), his 12 sons, and their families settled in Egypt, where their descendants were reduced to slavery and pressed into forced labor.

Exodus and Settlement

After 400 years of bondage, the Israelites were led to freedom by Moses who, according to the biblical narrative, was chosen by God to take his people out of Egypt and back to the Land of Israel promised to their forefathers (c.13th-12th centuries BCE). They wandered for 40 years in the Sinai desert, where they were forged into a nation and received the Torah (Pentateuch), which included the

Ten Commandments, and gave form and content to their monotheistic faith. The exodus from Egypt (c.1300 BCE) left an indelible imprint on the national memory of the Jewish people and became a universal symbol of liberty and freedom. Every year Jews celebrate *Pesach* (Passover), *Shavuot* (Pentecost) and *Succot* (Feast of Tabernacles), commemorating events of that time.

During the next two centuries, the Israelites conquered most of the Land of Israel and became farmers and craftsmen; a degree of economic and social consolidation followed. Periods of relative peace alternated with times of war, during which the people rallied behind leaders known as judges, chosen for their political and military skills as well as for their leadership qualities. The weakness inherent in this tribal organization in face of a threat posed by the Philistines (sea-going people from Asia Minor who settled on the Mediterranean coast) generated the need for a ruler who would unite the tribes and make the position permanent, with succession carried on by inheritance.

"The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace."

(Numbers 6:24-26)



A tiny, **7th century BCE silver scroll** found in Jerusalem, containing the priestly benediction

A thumb-sized **ivory pomegranate** bearing a paleo-Hebrew inscription, probably from the First Temple in Jerusalem, 8th century BCE.

The Israel Museum, Jerusalem



The Prophets: Religious sages and charismatic figures, who were perceived as being endowed with a divine gift of revelation, preached during the period of the monarchy until a century after the destruction of Jerusalem (586 BCE). Whether as advisers to kings on matters of religion, ethics and politics, or as their critics under the primacy of the relationship between the individual and God, the prophets were guided by the need for justice and issued powerful commentaries on the morality of Jewish

The Monarchy

The first king, Saul (c.1020 BCE), bridged the period between loose tribal organization and the setting up of a full monarchy under his successor, David.

King David (c.1004-965 BCE) established his kingdom as a major power in the region by successful military expeditions, including the final defeat of the Philistines, as well as through a network of friendly alliances with nearby kingdoms. Consequently, his authority was recognized from the borders of Egypt and the Red Sea to the banks of the Euphrates. At home, he united the 12 Israelite tribes into one kingdom and placed his capital, Jerusalem, and the monarchy at the center of the country's national life. Biblical tradition depicts David as a poet and musician, with verses ascribed to him appearing in the Book of Psalms.

David was succeeded by his son Solomon (c.965-930 BCE) who further strengthened the kingdom. Through treaties with neighboring kings, reinforced by politically motivated marriages, Solomon ensured peace for his kingdom and made it equal

among the great powers of the age. He expanded foreign trade and promoted domestic prosperity by developing major enterprises, such as copper mining and metal smelting, while building new towns and fortifying old ones of strategic and economic importance. Crowning his achievements was the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, which became the center of the Jewish people's national and religious life. The Bible attributes to Solomon the Book of Proverbs and the Song of Songs.

Divided Monarchy

The end of Solomon's rule was marred by discontent on the part of the populace, which had to pay heavily for his ambitious schemes. At the same time, preferential treatment of his own tribe embittered the others, which resulted in growing antagonism between the monarchy and the tribal separatists. After Solomon's death (930 BCE), open insurrection led to the breaking away of the 10 northern tribes and division of the country into a northern kingdom, Israel, and a southern kingdom, Judah, the latter on the territory of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

The Kingdom of Israel, with its capital

national life. Their revelatory experiences were recorded in books of inspired prose and poetry, many of which were incorporated into the Bible.

The enduring, universal appeal of the prophets derives from their call for a fundamental consideration of human values. Words such as those of Isaiah (1:17), *Learn to do good, devote yourselves to justice; aid the wronged, uphold the rights of the orphan; defend the cause of the widow* continue to nourish humanity's pursuit of social justice.



Seal bearing the inscription to *Shema, servant of Jeroboam*, from Megiddo • Israel Antiquities Authority

Samaria, lasted more than 200 years under 19 kings, while the Kingdom of Judah was ruled from Jerusalem for 400 years by an equal number of kings of the lineage of David. The expansion of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires brought first Israel and later Judah under foreign control.

The Kingdom of Israel was crushed by the Assyrians (722 BCE) and its people carried off into exile and oblivion. Over a hundred years later, Babylonia conquered the Kingdom of Judah, exiling most of its inhabitants as well as destroying Jerusalem and the Temple (586 BCE).

The First Exile (586-538 BCE)

The Babylonian conquest brought an end to the First Temple period, but did not sever the Jewish people's connection to the Land of Israel. Sitting by the rivers of Babylon, the Jews pledged to remember their homeland: *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy* (Psalms 137:5-6).

The exile to Babylonia, which followed the destruction of the First Temple (586 BCE), marked the beginning of the Jewish Diaspora. There, Judaism began to develop a religious framework and way of life outside the Land,

ultimately ensuring the people's national survival and spiritual identity and imbuing it with sufficient vitality to safeguard its future as a nation.



**On the rivers of
Babylon**, by E.M.
Lilien

THE SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD THE RETURN TO ZION



Ahasuerus-Xerxes, one of the great Persian kings, depicted in relief on the walls of a palace in Persepolis

Persian and Hellenistic Periods (538-142 BCE)

Following a decree by the Persian King Cyrus, conqueror of the Babylonian empire (538 BCE), some 50,000 Jews set out on the first return to the Land of Israel, led by Zerubbabel, a descendant of the House of David. Less than a century later, the second return was led by Ezra the Scribe. Over the next four centuries, the Jews knew varying degrees of self-rule under Persian (538-333 BCE) and later Hellenistic (Ptolemaic and Seleucid) overlordship (332-142 BCE).

The repatriation of the Jews under Ezra's inspired leadership, construction of the Second Temple on the site of the First Temple, refortification of the walls of Jerusalem, and establishment of the *Knesset Hagedolah* (Great Assembly) as the supreme religious and judicial body of the Jewish people marked the beginning of the Second Temple period. Within the confines of the Persian Empire, Judah was a nation whose leadership was entrusted to the high priest and council of elders in Jerusalem.

As part of the ancient world conquered by Alexander the Great of Greece (332 BCE), the Land remained a Jewish theocracy under Syrian-based Seleucid rulers. When the Jews were prohibited to practice Judaism and their Temple was desecrated as part of an effort to impose Greek-oriented culture and customs on the entire population, the Jews rose in revolt (166 BCE).

Hasmonean Dynasty (142-63 BCE)

First led by Mattathias of the priestly Hasmonean family and then by his son Judah the Maccabee, the Jews subsequently entered Jerusalem and purified the Temple (164 BCE), events commemorated each year by the festival of Hannuka.

Following further Hasmonean victories (147 BCE), the Seleucids restored autonomy to Judea, as the Land of Israel was now called, and, with the collapse of the Seleucid kingdom (129 BCE), Jewish independence was achieved. Under the Hasmonean dynasty, which lasted about 80 years, the kingdom regained boundaries not far short of Solomon's realm, political consolidation under Jewish rule was attained and Jewish life flourished.

Masada: Nearly 1,000 Jewish men, women and children, who had survived the destruction of Jerusalem, occupied and fortified King Herod's mountaintop palace complex of Masada near the Dead Sea, where they held out for three years against repeated Roman attempts to dislodge them. When the Romans finally scaled Masada and broke through its walls, they found that the defenders and their families had chosen to die by their own hands rather than be enslaved.



The Menorah on the
Arch of Titus, Rome

The Menorah Through The Ages

The Golden Menorah (a seven-branched candelabrum) was a major ritual object in King Solomon's Temple in ancient Jerusalem. Through the ages it has served as a symbol of Jewish heritage and tradition in countless places and in a variety of forms.



The Menorah on a Hasmonean coin
from the first century BCE
(Israel Antiquities Authority)



The Menorah on two plaster
fragments from the first century
CE, found in the Jewish Quarter of
Jerusalem
(Israel Exploration Society)



The Menorah in the mosaic floor of
a 5th - 6th century synagogue in
Jericho
(Israel Antiquities Authority)



The Menorah near the Knesset, by
Benno Elkan
(Government Press Office (G.P.O.) /
F. Cohen)



The Herodian Temple from the Model of Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period

Courtesy of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem

Halakhah is the body of law which has guided Jewish life all over the world since post-biblical times. It deals with the religious obligations of Jews, both in interpersonal relations and in ritual observances, and encompasses practically all aspects of human behavior - birth and marriage, joy and grief, agriculture and commerce, ethics and theology. Rooted in the Bible, halakhic authority is based on the Talmud, a body of Jewish law and lore (completed c.

Roman Rule (63 BCE-313 CE)

When the Romans replaced the Seleucids as the great power in the region, they granted the Hasmonean king, Hyrcanus II, limited authority under the Roman governor of Damascus. The Jews were hostile to the new regime, and the following years witnessed frequent insurrections. A last attempt to restore the former glory of the Hasmonean dynasty was made by Mattathias Antigonus, whose defeat and death brought Hasmonean rule to an end (40 BCE), and the Land became a province of the Roman Empire.

In 37 BCE Herod, a son-in-law of Hyrcanus II, was appointed King of Judea by the Romans. Granted almost unlimited autonomy in the country's internal affairs, he became one of the most powerful monarchs in the eastern part of the Roman Empire. A great admirer of Greco-Roman culture, Herod launched a massive construction program, which included the cities of Caesarea and Sebaste and the fortresses at Herodium and Masada. He also remodeled the Temple into one of the most magnificent buildings of its time. But despite his many

achievements, Herod failed to win the trust and support of his Jewish subjects.

Ten years after Herod's death (4 BCE), Judea came under direct Roman administration. Growing anger against increased Roman suppression of Jewish life resulted in sporadic violence which escalated into a full-scale revolt in 66 CE. Superior Roman forces led by Titus were finally victorious, razing Jerusalem to the ground (70 CE) and defeating the last Jewish outpost at Masada (73 CE).

The total destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple was catastrophic for the Jewish people. According to the contemporary historian Josephus Flavius, hundreds of thousands of Jews perished in the siege of Jerusalem and elsewhere in the country, and many thousands more were sold into slavery.

A last brief period of Jewish sovereignty followed the revolt of Shimon Bar Kochba (132 CE), during which Jerusalem and Judea were regained. However, given the overwhelming power of the Romans, the outcome was inevitable. Three years later, in conformity with Roman custom, Jerusalem was "plowed up with a yoke of

400), which incorporates the *Mishna*, the first written compilation of the Oral Law (codified c. 210), and the *Gemara*, an elaboration of the *Mishna*. To provide practical guidance to the *Halakha*, concise, systematic digests were authored by religious scholars beginning in the first and second centuries. Among the most authoritative of these codifications is the *Shulhan Arukh*, written by Joseph Caro in Safed (Tzfat) in the 16th century.



Coin issued by the Romans after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, inscribed *IVDAEA CAPTA* (Judea captured).

Israel Antiquities Authority



Tetradrachm of year three of the 2nd century Bar Kochba Revolt, inscribed *Simeon for the Freedom of Jerusalem*.

Israel Antiquities Authority

oxen," Judea was renamed Palaestina and Jerusalem, Aelia Capitolina.

Although the Temple had been destroyed and Jerusalem burned to the ground, the Jews and Judaism survived the encounter with Rome. The supreme legislative and judicial body, the *Sanhedrin* (successor of the *Knesset Hagedolah*) was reconvened in Yavneh (70 CE), and later in Tiberias. Without the unifying framework of a state and the Temple, the small remaining Jewish community gradually recovered, reinforced from time to time by returning exiles. Institutional and communal life was renewed, priests were replaced by rabbis and the synagogue became the focus of the Jewish communities, as evidenced by remnants of synagogues found at Capernaum, Korazin, Bar'am, Gamla, and elsewhere. *Halakhah* (Jewish religious law) served as the common bond

among the Jews and was passed on from generation to generation.

FOREIGN DOMINATION

Byzantine Rule (313-636)

By the end of the 4th century, following Emperor Constantine's adoption of Christianity (313) and the founding of the Byzantine Empire, the Land of Israel had become a predominantly Christian country. Churches were built on Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Galilee, and monasteries were established in many parts of the country. Jews were deprived of their former relative autonomy, as well as of their right to hold public positions, and were forbidden to enter Jerusalem except on one day of the year (*Tisha B'av* – ninth of Av) to mourn the destruction of the Temple.

The Persian invasion of 614 was aided by the Jews, who were inspired by messianic hopes of deliverance. In gratitude for their help, they were granted the administration of Jerusalem, an interlude which lasted about three years. Subsequently, the Byzantine army regained the city (629) and again expelled its Jewish inhabitants.



Church of the Holy Sepulchre

I. Sztulman



Fifth-century mosaic in the floor of the Church of the **Multiplication of the Loaves and the Fishes**

Israel Antiquities Authority

Arab Rule (636-1099)

The Dome of the Rock built by the Ummayyad Caliph Abd-el-Malik in the 7th century on the Temple Mount (Haram-esh-Sharif) in Jerusalem

•
I. Sztulman



The Arab conquest of the Land came four years after the death of Muhammad (632) and lasted more than four centuries, with caliphs ruling first from Damascus, then from Baghdad and Egypt. At the outset, Jewish settlement in Jerusalem resumed, and the Jewish community was granted the customary status of dhimmi (protected non-Muslims), which safeguarded their lives, property, and freedom of worship, in return for payment of special poll and land taxes.

However, subsequent restrictions against non-Muslims (717) affected the Jews' public conduct as well as their

religious observances and legal status. The imposition of heavy taxes on agricultural land compelled many to move from rural areas to towns, where their circumstances hardly improved, while increasing social and economic discrimination forced others to leave the country. By the end of the 11th century, the Jewish community in the Land had diminished considerably and had lost some of its organizational and religious cohesiveness.

The Crusaders (1099-1291)

For the next 200 years, the country was dominated by the Crusaders who, following an appeal by Pope Urban II, came from Europe to recover the Holy Land from the infidels. In July 1099, after a five-week siege, the knights of the First Crusade and their rabble army captured Jerusalem, massacring most of the city's non-Christian inhabitants. Barricaded in their synagogues, the Jews defended their quarter, only to be burned to death or sold into slavery. During the next few decades, the Crusaders extended their power over the rest of the country, partly through treaties and agreements, but mostly by bloody military victories. The Latin Kingdom of the Crusaders was that of a conquering minority confined mainly to fortified cities and castles.



**Seal of the
Crusader King
of Jerusalem**

Israel Antiquities
Authority

When the Crusaders opened up transportation routes

from Europe, pilgrimages to the Holy Land became popular and, at the same time, increasing numbers of Jews sought to return to their homeland. Documents of the period indicate that 300 Rabbis from France and England arrived in a group, some settling in Acre (Akko), others in Jerusalem.

Following the overthrow of the Crusaders by a Muslim army under Saladin (1187), the Jews were again accorded a certain measure of freedom, including the right to live in Jerusalem. Although the Crusaders regained a foothold in the country after Saladin's death (1193), their presence was limited to a network of fortified castles.

Crusader authority in the Land ended after a final defeat (1291) by the Mamluks, a Muslim military class which had come to power in Egypt.

Mamluk Rule (1291-1516)

The Land under the Mamluks became a backwater province ruled from Damascus. Acre, Jaffa, and other ports were destroyed for fear of new crusades, and maritime as well as overland commerce was interrupted. By the end of the Middle Ages, the country's towns were virtually in ruins, most of Jerusalem was abandoned, and the small Jewish community was poverty-stricken. The period of Mamluk decline was darkened by political and economic upheavals, plagues, locusts, and devastating earthquakes.

Ottoman Rule (1517-1917)

Following the Ottoman conquest in 1517, the Land was divided into four districts, attached administratively to the province of Damascus and ruled from Istanbul. At the outset of the Ottoman era, some 1,000 Jewish families lived in the country, mainly in Jerusalem, Nablus (Shechem), Hebron, Gaza, Safed (Tzfat) and the villages of Galilee. The community was comprised of descendants of Jews who had always lived in the Land, as well as immigrants from North Africa and Europe.

Orderly government, until the death (1566) of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, brought improvements and stimulated Jewish immigration. Some newcomers settled in Jerusalem, but the majority went to Safed where, by the mid-16th century, the Jewish population had risen to about 10,000, and the town had become a thriving textile center as well as the focus of intense intellectual activity.

During this period, the study of Kabbala (Jewish mysticism) flourished, and contemporary clarifications of Jewish law, as codified in the *Shulhan Arukh*, spread throughout the Diaspora from the houses of study in Safed.

With a gradual decline in the quality of Ottoman rule, the country suffered widespread neglect. By the end of the 18th century, much of the Land was owned by absentee

landlords and leased to impoverished tenant farmers, and taxation was as crippling as it was capricious. The great forests of Galilee and the Carmel mountain range were denuded of trees; swamp and desert encroached on agricultural land.

Modern Times

The 19th century saw medieval backwardness gradually give way to the first signs of progress, with various Western powers jockeying for position, often through

Zionism, the national liberation movement of the Jewish people, derives its name from the word “Zion”, the traditional synonym for Jerusalem and the Land of Israel. The idea of Zionism – the redemption of the Jewish people in its ancestral homeland – is rooted in the continuous longing for and deep attachment to the Land of Israel, which have been an inherent part of Jewish existence in the Diaspora through the centuries.

missionary activities. British, French, and American scholars launched studies of biblical archeology; Britain, France, Russia, Austria, and the United States opened consulates in Jerusalem. Steamships began to ply regular routes to and from Europe; postal and telegraphic connections were installed; the first road connecting Jerusalem and Jaffa was built. The Land’s rebirth as a crossroads for commerce of three continents was accelerated by the opening of the Suez Canal.

Consequently, the situation of the country’s Jews slowly improved, and their numbers increased substantially. By mid-century, overcrowded conditions within the walled city of Jerusalem motivated the Jews to

build the first neighborhood outside the walls (1860) and, in the next quarter century, to add seven more, forming the nucleus of the new city. By 1870, Jerusalem had an overall Jewish majority. Land for farming was purchased throughout the country; new rural settlements were established; and the Hebrew language, long restricted to liturgy and literature, was revived. The stage was set for the founding of the Zionist movement.

Inspired by Zionist ideology, two major influxes of Jews from Eastern Europe arrived in the country at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. Resolved to restore their homeland by tilling the soil, these pioneers reclaimed barren fields, built new settlements and laid the foundations for what would become a thriving agricultural economy.

The new arrivals faced extremely harsh conditions: the attitude of the Ottoman administration was hostile and oppressive; communications and transportation were rudimentary and insecure; swamps bred deadly malaria; and the soil had suffered



Theodor Herzl

Central Zionist Archives

Political Zionism emerged in response to continued oppression and persecution of Jews in Eastern Europe and increasing disillusionment with the emancipation in Western Europe, which had neither put an end to discrimination nor led to the integration of Jews into local societies. It found formal expression in the establishment of the Zionist Organization (1897) at the First Zionist Congress, convened by Theodor Herzl

in Basel, Switzerland. The Zionist movement's program contained both ideological and practical elements aimed at promoting the return of Jews to the Land; facilitating the social, cultural, economic, and political revival of Jewish national life; and attaining an internationally recognized, legally secured home for the Jewish people in its historic homeland, where Jews would be free from persecution and able to develop their own lives and identity.



Sir Herbert Samuel, first British High Commissioner for Palestine

from centuries of neglect. Land purchases were restricted, and construction was banned without a special permit obtainable only in Istanbul. While these difficulties hampered the country's development, they did not stop it. At the outbreak of World War I (1914), the Jewish population in the Land numbered 85,000, as compared to 5,000 in the early 1500s.

In December 1917, British forces under the command of General Allenby entered Jerusalem, ending 400 years of Ottoman rule. The Jewish Legion, with three battalions comprising thousands of Jewish volunteers, was an integral unit of the British army.

British Rule (1918-1948)

In July 1922, the League of Nations entrusted Great Britain with the Mandate for Palestine (the name by which the country was then known). Recognizing the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine, Great Britain was called upon to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine-Eretz Israel (Land of Israel). Two months later,

in September 1922, the Council of the League of Nations and Great Britain decided that the provisions for setting up a Jewish national home would not apply to the area east of the Jordan River, which constituted three fourths of the territory included in the Mandate and eventually became the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Immigration

Motivated by Zionism and encouraged by British sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations, as communicated by Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour (1917), successive waves of immigrants arrived in the Land between 1919 and 1939, each contributing to different aspects of the developing Jewish community. Some 35,000 who came between 1919 and 1923, mainly from Russia, strongly influenced the community's character and organization for years to come. These pioneers laid the foundations of a comprehensive social and economic infrastructure, developed agriculture, established unique communal and cooperative forms of rural settlement – the kibbutz and moshav – and provided the labor force for building houses and roads.

The next influx of some 60,000, which arrived primarily from Poland between 1924 and 1932, was instrumental in developing and enriching urban life. These immigrants settled mainly in Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Jerusalem, where they established small businesses, construction firms,

and light industry. The last major wave of immigration before World War II, comprising some 165,000, took place in the 1930s following Hitler's rise to power in Germany. The newcomers, many of whom were professionals and academics, constituted the first large-scale influx from Western and Central Europe. Their education, skills, and experience raised business standards, improved urban and rural amenities, and broadened the community's cultural life.

Administration

The British Mandate authorities granted the Jewish and Arab communities the right to run their own internal affairs. Utilizing this right, the Jewish community, known as the *Yishuv*, elected (1920) a self-governing body based on party representation, which met annually to review its activities and elect the National Council (*Va'ad Leumi*) to implement its policies and programs. Financed by local resources and funds raised by world Jewry, a countrywide network of educational, religious, health, and social services was developed and maintained. In 1922, as stipulated in the Mandate, a 'Jewish Agency' was constituted to represent the Jewish people vis-a-vis the British authorities, foreign governments, and international organizations.

Economic Development

During the three decades of the Mandate, agriculture was expanded; factories were established; new roads were built

throughout the country; the waters of the Jordan River were harnessed for production of electric power; and the mineral potential of the Dead Sea was tapped. The *Histadrut* (General Federation of Labor) was founded (1920) to advance workers' welfare and provide employment by setting up cooperatively-owned enterprises in the industrial sector as well as marketing services for the agricultural settlements.



**Evaporation
pools of the
Sdom Potash
Factory**

G.P.O. / Z. Kluger

Culture

Day by day, a cultural life was emerging which would become unique to the Jewish community in the Land of Israel. Art, music, and dance developed gradually with the establishment of professional schools and studios. Galleries and halls provided venues for exhibitions and performances attended by a discriminating public. The opening of a new play, the appearance of a new book, or a retrospective show by a local painter were immediately scrutinized by the press and became the subject of lively discussion in coffee houses and at social gatherings.

The Hebrew language was recognized as an official language of the country, alongside English and Arabic, and was used on documents, coins, and stamps, as well as for radio broadcasting. Publishing proliferated, and the country emerged as the world center of Hebrew literary

activity. Theaters of various genres opened their doors to enthusiastic audiences, accompanied by first attempts to write original Hebrew plays.

Three Jewish underground

movements operated during the British Mandate period. The largest was the *Haganah*, founded in 1920 by the Jewish community as a defense militia to safeguard the security of the Jewish population. From the mid-1930s, it also retaliated following Arab attacks and responded to British restrictions on Jewish immigration with mass demonstrations and sabotage. The *Etzel*, organized in 1931, rejected the self-restraint of the *Haganah* and

The Jewish national revival and the community's efforts to rebuild the country were strongly opposed by Arab nationalists. Their resentment erupted in periods of intense violence (1920, 1921, 1929, 1936-39), when unprovoked attacks were launched against the Jewish population, including the Hebron Massacre of 1929, as well as the harassment of Jewish transport, and the burning of fields and forests. Attempts to reach a dialogue with the Arabs, undertaken early in the Zionist endeavor, were ultimately unsuccessful, polarizing Zionism and Arab nationalism into a potentially explosive situation. Recognizing the opposing aims of the two national movements, the British recommended (1937) dividing the country into two states, one Jewish and one Arab, to be linked by

an economic union. The Jewish leadership accepted the idea of partition and empowered the Jewish Agency to negotiate with the British government in an effort to reformulate various aspects of the proposal. The Arabs were uncompromisingly against any partition plan.

Continuing large-scale Arab anti-Jewish riots led Britain (May 1939) to issue a White Paper imposing drastic restrictions on Jewish immigration, despite its consequence of denying European Jewry a place of refuge from Nazi persecution.

The start of World War II soon after caused David Ben-Gurion, later Israel's first prime minister, to declare: *We will fight the war as if there were no White Paper, and the White Paper as if there were no war.*

The Holocaust

During World War II (1939-45), the Nazi regime deliberately carried out a systematic plan to liquidate the Jewish community of Europe, in the course of which some six million Jews, including 1.5 million children, were murdered. As the Nazi armies swept through Europe, Jews were savagely persecuted, subjected to torture and humiliation, and herded into ghettos, where attempts at armed resistance led to even harsher measures. From the ghettos they were transported to camps where a fortunate few were put to hard labor, but most were either shot in mass executions or put to death in gas chambers. Not many managed to escape. Some fled to other countries, a few joined

A member of an underground defense organization
hiding rifles (1947)

G.P.O. / H. Pinn



initiated independent actions against both Arab and British targets. The smallest and most militant group, the Lehi, was set up in 1940. The three organizations were disbanded with the establishment of the Israel Defense Forces in June 1948.

the partisans, and others were hidden by non-Jews who did so at risk of their own lives. Consequently, only one third, including those who had left Europe before

the war, survived out of a population of almost nine million, which had once constituted the largest and most vibrant Jewish community in the world.

The **Yellow Patch** which the Nazis forced Jews to wear



Jewish volunteers in World

War II: Over 26,000 men and women of the Jewish community in the Land volunteered to join the British forces in the fight against Nazi Germany and its Axis allies, serving in the army, air force, and navy. In September 1944, following a prolonged effort by the Jewish Agency in the country and the Zionist movement abroad to achieve recognition of the participation of the

After the war, Arab opposition led the British to intensify their restrictions on the number of Jews permitted to enter and settle in the Land. The Jewish community responded by instituting a wide network of "illegal immigration" activities to rescue Holocaust survivors. Between 1945 and 1948, some 85,000 Jews were brought to the Land by secret, often dangerous routes, in spite of a British naval blockade and border patrols set up to intercept the refugees before they reached the country. Those who were caught were interned in detention camps on the island of Cyprus, or returned to Europe.

The Road to Independence

Britain's inability to reconcile the conflicting demands of the Jewish and Arab communities led the British

government to request that the 'Question of Palestine' be placed on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly (April 1947). As a result, a special committee was constituted to draft proposals concerning the country's future. On 29 November 1947, the Assembly voted to adopt the committee's recommendation to partition the Land into two states, one Jewish and one Arab. The Jewish community accepted the plan; the Arabs rejected it.

Following the UN vote, local Arab militants, aided by random volunteers from Arab countries, launched violent attacks against the Jewish community in an effort to frustrate the partition resolution and prevent the establishment of a Jewish state. After a number of setbacks, the Jewish defense organizations routed most of the attacking forces, taking hold of the entire area which had been allocated for the Jewish state.

On 14 May 1948, when the British Mandate came to an end, the Jewish population in the Land numbered some 650,000, comprising an organized community with well-developed political, social and

Jewish recruits
in a British army
camp

• G.P.O. / Z. Kluger



Jews of Palestine in the war effort, the Jewish Brigade was formed as an independent military unit of the British Army, with its own flag and emblem. Comprised of some 5,000 men, the brigade saw action in Egypt, northern Italy and northwest Europe. After the Allied victory in Europe (1945), many of its members joined the "illegal immigration" efforts to bring Holocaust survivors to the Land of Israel.

**Spontaneous
celebration**
in Tel Aviv, 29
November 1947

G.P.O. / H. Pinn



economic institutions – in fact, a nation in every sense
and a state in everything but name.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL

On 14 May 1948, Israel proclaimed its independence. Less than 24 hours later, the regular armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq invaded the country, forcing Israel to defend the sovereignty it had regained in its ancestral homeland.

In what became known as Israel's War of Independence, the newly formed, poorly equipped Israel Defense Forces (IDF) repulsed the invaders in fierce intermittent fighting, which lasted some 15 months and claimed over 6,000 Israeli lives (nearly one percent of the country's Jewish population at the time).

During the first months of 1949, direct negotiations were conducted under UN auspices between Israel and each of the invading countries (except Iraq, which refused to negotiate with Israel), resulting in armistice agreements which reflected the situation at the end of the fighting. Accordingly, the Coastal Plain, Galilee and the entire Negev were within Israel's sovereignty, Judea and Samaria (the West

Partition Plan 1947 (U.N. Resolution 181)



1949-1967 Armistice Lines



Bank) came under Jordanian rule, the Gaza Strip came under Egyptian administration, and the city of Jerusalem was divided, with Jordan controlling the eastern part, including the Old City, and Israel the western sector.

State-Building



The war over, Israel focused on building the state which the people had struggled so long and so hard to regain. The first 120-seat Knesset (parliament) went into session following national elections (25 January 1949) in which nearly 85 percent of all eligible voters cast their ballots. Two of the people who had led Israel to statehood became the country's leaders: David Ben-Gurion, head of the Jewish Agency, was chosen as the first prime minister; and Chaim Weizmann, head of the World Zionist Organization, was elected by the Knesset as the first president. On 11 May

1949, Israel took its seat as the 59th member of the United Nations.

In accordance with the concept of the 'ingathering of the exiles' which lies at the heart of Israel's *raison d'être*, the gates of the country were thrown open, affirming the right of every Jew to come to the country and, upon entry, to acquire citizenship. In the first four months of independence, some 50,000 newcomers, mainly Holocaust survivors, reached Israel's shores. By the end of 1951, a total of 687,000 men, women, and children had arrived, over 300,000 of them refugees from Arab lands, thus doubling the Jewish population.

The economic strain caused by the War of Independence and the need to provide for a rapidly growing population required austerity at home and financial aid from abroad.

Assistance extended by the United States government, loans from American banks, contributions of Diaspora Jews and post-war German reparations were used to build housing, mechanize agriculture, establish a merchant fleet and a national airline, exploit available minerals, develop industries

David Ben-Gurion,
man of vision
•
G.P.O. / K. Zoltan



A new immigrant woman sitting with her children on their luggage at the main square of Yehud
•
G.P.O. / K. Zoltan

and expand roads, telecommunications, and electricity networks.

Towards the end of the first decade, the output of industry doubled, as did the number of employed persons, with industrial exports increasing four-fold. Vast expansion of areas under cultivation had brought about self-sufficiency in the supply of all basic food products except meat and grains, while some 50,000 acres of mostly barren land were afforested and trees were planted along almost 500 miles (800 km.) of highways.

The educational system, which had been developed by the Jewish community in the pre-state period and now included the Arab sector, was greatly expanded. School attendance became free and compulsory for all children aged 5-14 (since 1978 it has been mandatory to age 16 and free to age 18). Cultural and artistic activity flourished, blending Middle Eastern, North African, and Western elements, as Jews arriving from all parts of the world brought with them the unique traditions of their own communities as well as aspects of the culture prevailing in the countries where they had lived for generations. When Israel celebrated its 10th anniversary, the population numbered over two million.

1956 Sinai Campaign

The years of state-building were overshadowed by serious security problems. The 1949 armistice agreements had not only failed to pave the way to permanent peace, but were also constantly violated. In contradiction to the UN Security Council Resolution of 1 September 1951, Israeli and Israel-bound shipping was prevented from passing through the Suez Canal; the blockade of the Straits of Tiran was tightened; incursions into Israel of terrorist squads from neighboring Arab countries for murder and sabotage occurred with increasing frequency; and the Sinai peninsula was gradually converted into a huge Egyptian military base.

Sinai Campaign 1956



Upon the signing of a tripartite military alliance by Egypt, Syria and Jordan (October 1956), the imminent threat to Israel's existence was intensified. In the course of an eight-day campaign, the IDF captured the Gaza Strip and the entire Sinai Peninsula, halting 10 miles (16 km.) east of the Suez Canal. A United Nations decision to station a UN Emergency Force (UNEF) along the Egypt-Israel border and Egyptian assurances of free navigation in the Gulf of Eilat led Israel to agree to withdraw in stages (November 1956 – March 1957) from the areas taken a

few weeks earlier. Consequently, the Straits of Tiran were opened, enabling the development of trade with Asian and East African countries, as well as oil imports from the Persian Gulf.

Years of Consolidation



Concrete pipe section
(108" diameter)
of the **National Water Carrier**

Courtesy of the
Central Zionist
Archives

During Israel's second decade (1958-68), exports doubled, and the GNP increased some 10 percent annually. While some previously imported items such as paper, tires, radios, and refrigerators were now being manufactured locally, the most rapid growth took place in the newly established branches of metals, machinery, chemicals, and electronics. Since the domestic market

for home-grown food was fast approaching the saturation point, the agricultural sector began to grow a larger variety of crops for the food processing industry as well as fresh produce for export. A second deep-water port was built on the Mediterranean coast at Ashdod, in addition to the existing one at Haifa, to handle the increased volume of trade.

In Jerusalem, a permanent home for the Knesset was built, and facilities for the Hebrew University and the Hadassah Medical Center were constructed on alternative sites to replace the original buildings on Mount Scopus, which had to be abandoned after the War of Independence.

At the same time, the Israel Museum was established with the aim of collecting, conserving, studying, and exhibiting the cultural and artistic treasures of the Jewish people.

Israel's foreign relations expanded steadily, as close ties were developed with the United States, British Commonwealth countries, most western European states, nearly all the countries of Latin America and Africa, and some in Asia. Extensive programs of international cooperation were initiated, as hundreds of Israeli physicians, engineers, teachers, agronomists, irrigation experts, and youth organizers shared their know-how and experience with people in other developing countries. In 1965 ambassadors were exchanged with the Federal Republic of Germany, a move which had been delayed until then because of the Jewish people's bitter memories of the crimes committed against them during the Nazi regime (1933-45). Vehement opposition and public debate preceded normalization of relations between the two countries.

The Eichmann Trial: In May 1960, Adolf Eichmann, the chief of operations of the Nazi murder program during World War II, was brought to the country to stand trial



under Israel's Nazis and Nazi Collaborators (Punishment) Law (1950). In the trial, which opened in April 1961, Eichmann was found guilty of crimes against humanity and the Jewish people and sentenced to death. His appeal to the Supreme Court was rejected and he was hanged on 30 May 1962. This was the only time that the death penalty has been carried out under Israeli law.

Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann on trial in Jerusalem • GPO / J. Mill



Ceasefire Lines After the Six-Day War, 1967

Paratroopers at the Western Wall

G.P.O. / D. Rubinger



1967 Six-Day War

Hopes for another decade of relative tranquility were dashed with the escalation of Arab terrorist raids across the Egyptian and Jordanian borders, persistent Syrian artillery bombardment of agricultural settlements in northern Galilee, and massive military build-ups by the neighboring Arab states. When Egypt again moved large numbers of troops into the Sinai desert (May 1967), ordered the UN peacekeeping forces (deployed since 1957) out of the area, reimposed the blockade of the Straits of Tiran, and entered into a military alliance with Jordan, Israel found itself faced by hostile Arab armies on all fronts. As Israel's neighbors prepared to destroy the Jewish state, Israel invoked its inherent right of self-defense, launching a preemptive strike (5 June 1967) against Egypt in the South, followed by a counterattack against Jordan in the East and the routing of Syrian forces entrenched on the Golan Heights in the North.

At the end of six days of fighting, previous cease-fire lines were replaced by new ones, with Judea, Samaria, Gaza, the Sinai

peninsula, and the Golan Heights under Israel's control. As a result, the northern villages were freed from 19 years of recurrent Syrian shelling; the passage of Israeli and Israel-bound shipping through the Straits of Tiran was ensured; and Jerusalem, which had been divided under Israeli and Jordanian rule since 1949, was reunified under Israel's authority.

From War to War

After the war, Israel's diplomatic challenge was to translate its military gains into a permanent peace based on UN Security Council Resolution 242, which called for *acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force*. However, the Arab position, as formulated at the Khartoum Summit (August 1967) called for *no peace with Israel, no negotiations with Israel, and no recognition of Israel*. In September 1968, Egypt initiated a 'war of attrition', with sporadic, static actions along the banks of the Suez Canal, which escalated into full-scale, localized fighting, causing heavy casualties on both sides. Hostilities ended in 1970, when Egypt and Israel accepted a renewed cease-fire along the Suez Canal.

1973 Yom Kippur War

Three years of relative calm along the borders were shattered on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), the holiest

day of the Jewish year, when Egypt and Syria launched a coordinated surprise assault against Israel (6 October 1973), with the Egyptian Army crossing the Suez Canal and Syrian troops penetrating the Golan Heights. During the next three weeks, the Israel Defense Forces turned the tide of battle and repulsed the attackers, crossing the Suez Canal into Egypt and advancing to within 20 miles (32 km.) of the Syrian capital, Damascus. Two years of difficult negotiations between Israel and Egypt and between Israel and Syria resulted in disengagement agreements, according to which Israel withdrew from parts of the territories captured during the war.

1982 Operation Peace for Galilee

Israel has never wanted a conflict with its northern neighbor, Lebanon. However, when the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) redeployed itself in southern Lebanon after being expelled from Jordan (1970) and perpetrated repeated terrorist actions against the towns and villages of northern Israel (Galilee), which caused many casualties and much damage, the Israel Defense Forces crossed the border into Lebanon (1982). "Operation Peace for Galilee" resulted in removing the bulk of the PLO's organizational and military infrastructure from the area. For the next 18 years, Israel maintained a small security zone in southern Lebanon adjacent to its northern border to safeguard its population in Galilee against attacks by hostile elements.

Second Lebanon War

In May of 2000 Israel withdrew all its forces from the security zone in southern Lebanon. Lebanon however failed to comply with UN Security Council Resolutions 425 and 1559, which call for the dismantling of Hizbullah and the deployment of the Lebanese army in southern Lebanon.

As a result of this failure, violence erupted in July of 2006, following Hizbullah's abduction of two Israeli soldiers and bombardment of Israel's northern cities. In the ensuing conflict, which came to be known as the Second Lebanon War, over 4,000 rockets were fired at civilian targets in Israel. The fighting concluded in August of 2006 and UNSC Resolution 1701 was passed, calling for the unconditional release of the captured Israeli soldiers, the deployment of UNIFIL and Lebanese soldiers throughout southern Lebanon, and the establishment of an embargo on weapons supplied to Lebanese armed groups.

2008 Gaza Operation

Following Israel's 2005 withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and four settlements in the northern West Bank, and the election of Hamas in 2007, terrorism against Israel increased. Thousands of rockets have been fired into southern Israel from the Gaza Strip, resulting in damage to property and both physical and psychological injury to the population living in the south; and creating a

Every year, Israel holds a special commemoration to mark the anniversary of the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. His murder on 4 November 1995 by a Jewish extremist plunged the country into deep mourning for the soldier-statesman, who had traveled from the battleground to lead the nation on the road to peace.

situation in which Israel was forced to take military action in the form of Operation Cast Lead (27 December 2008 through 18 January 2009).

From War to Peace

The 1977 Knesset elections brought the Likud bloc (a coalition of right-wing and centrist parties) to power, ending almost 30 years of Labor Party dominance. The new prime minister, Menachem Begin, reiterated the commitment of all previous prime ministers to strive for permanent peace in the region and called upon the Arab leaders to come to the negotiating table.

Prime Minister
Yitzhak Rabin
and **King**
Hussein of Jordan
•
G.P.O. / Y. Sa'ar



The cycle of Arab rejections of Israel's appeals for peace was broken with the visit of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to Jerusalem (November 1977), followed by negotiations between Egypt and Israel under American auspices. The resulting Camp David Accords (September 1978) contained a framework for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, including a detailed proposal for self-government for the Palestinians.

Egyptian President **Sadat**,
U.S. President **Carter** and Israeli Prime Minister **Begin**
•
G.P.O. / Y. Sa'ar



On 26 March 1979, Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty in Washington, DC, bringing the 30-year state of war between them to an end. In accordance with the terms of the treaty, Israel withdrew from the Sinai peninsula, exchanging former cease-fire lines and armistice agreements for mutually recognized international boundaries.

Three years of talks between Jordan and Israel, following the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference, culminated in a declaration by King Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (July 1994), which ended the 46-year state of war between their two countries. The Jordan-Israel peace treaty was signed at the Arava border crossing (near Eilat in



Peace with Egypt and Jordan

TERRORISM: Arab and Palestinian terrorism against Israel existed for decades prior to the establishment of the State of Israel and since then. Thousands of terrorist attacks which resulted in the death and injury of Israeli civilians occurred during the two decades preceding the 1967 Six Day War (which led to Israel's presence in the territories). The establishment of the PLO in 1964 put it at the forefront of this terrorist campaign.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the various terrorist organizations under the PLO launched numerous attacks inside Israel and abroad. One of the most notorious

Israel and Akaba in Jordan) on 26 October 1994, in the presence of American President Bill Clinton.

Domestic Challenges

During the 1980s and 1990s, Israel absorbed over one million new immigrants, mainly from the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and Ethiopia. The influx of so many new consumers, as well as a large number of skilled and unskilled workers, boosted the economy into a period of accelerated expansion.

The government that came into power after the 1984 Knesset elections was made up of the two major political blocs – Labor (left/center) and Likud (right/center). It was replaced in 1988 by a Likud-led coalition, which was followed in 1992 by a coalition of Labor and smaller left-of-center parties. After the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, new elections were called in 1996. In direct elections for prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu came

to power, and formed a Likud-led coalition. Less than three years later, his government was defeated. In 1999, Ehud Barak, leader of the One Israel Party (left/center),

was elected prime minister and formed a coalition government; he resigned in December 2000. Ariel Sharon, leader of the Likud, was prime minister from early 2001 until he suffered a stroke in early 2006. Ehud Olmert, head of the Kadima Party formed by Sharon in November 2005, succeeded him as prime minister.

Following the resignation of Ehud Olmert, Benjamin Netanyahu was elected as Prime Minister in early elections held in February 2009, and formed a broad-based coalition government.

Each government worked towards the achievement of peace, economic development, and immigrant absorption according to its own political convictions.

attacks was the murder of 11 Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in 1972.

In spite of the Palestinian commitment made in 1993 to renounce terrorism, thus providing the basis for the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, terrorist attacks nonetheless continued, and strongly intensified after September 2000, resulting in the death of more than 1,000 Israeli civilians and the wounding of many thousands more.

THE PEACE PROCESS

Since the signing of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty (1979), various initiatives were put forth by Israel and others to further the peace process in the Middle East. These efforts eventually led to the convening of the Madrid Peace Conference (October 1991), held under American and Soviet auspices, which brought together representatives of Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and the Palestinians. The formal proceedings were followed by bilateral negotiations between the parties and by multilateral talks addressing regional concerns.

Bilateral Talks

Israel and the Palestinians: Following months of intensive behind-the-scenes contacts in Oslo between negotiators for Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), a Declaration of Principles (DOP) was formulated outlining self-government arrangements of the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Its signing, on 13 September 1993, was preceded by an exchange of letters between PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, in which the PLO renounced the use of terrorism, pledged to invalidate those articles in its covenant which deny Israel's right to exist, and committed itself to a peaceful resolution of the decades-long conflict. In response, Israel recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people.

The DOP contained a set of mutually agreed general principles regarding a five-year interim period of Palestinian self-rule and a framework for the various stages of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. The arrangements for Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area were implemented in May 1994; transfer of powers and responsibilities in the West Bank in the spheres of education and culture, health, social welfare, direct taxation, and tourism was implemented three months later. The DOP and other agreements signed by Israel and the Palestinians culminated in the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement of September 1995.

This agreement included a broadening of Palestinian self-government by the means of an elected self-governing authority, the Palestinian Council (elected in January 1996), and continued redeployment of the IDF in the West Bank. The agreement also set out the mechanism governing Israeli-Palestinian relations that would lead to a Final Status Agreement. Under the Interim Agreement, the West Bank was divided into three types of areas:

Area A – comprising the main cities of the West Bank: full Palestinian Council responsibility for internal security and public order, as well as full responsibility for civil affairs. (The city of Hebron was subject to special arrangements set out in the Interim Agreement; the protocol concerning the redeployment in Hebron was signed in January 1997.)

Area B – comprising small towns and villages in the West Bank: Palestinian Council responsibility for civil affairs (as in Area A) and maintenance of public order, while Israel retained overriding security responsibility to safeguard its citizens and to combat terrorism.

Area C – comprising all Jewish settlements, areas of strategic importance to Israel, and largely unpopulated areas of the West Bank: full Israeli responsibility for security and public order, as well as civil responsibilities related to territory (planning and zoning, archeology, etc.). The Palestinian Council assumes responsibility with regard to all other civil spheres of the Palestinian population.

The timetable for the implementation of further redeployment phases, as specified in the Interim Agreement, was revised on a number of occasions by the two sides, most notably in the Wye River Memorandum of October 1998. Following these agreed revisions, Israel completed the first and second phases of the Further Redeployment (FRD) process in March 2000. As a result of the redeployments, over 18% of the West Bank was currently designated Area A and over 21% was designated Area B, with 98% of the Palestinian population of the West Bank under Palestinian authority.

Final Status negotiations between the parties, to determine the nature of the permanent settlement between Israel and

the Palestinian entity, began as scheduled in May 1996. Suicide bomb attacks, perpetrated by Hamas terrorists in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv during 1996, darkened Israel's view of the peace process. A hiatus of three years followed and Final Status talks were resumed only after the Sharm e-Sheikh Memorandum (September 1999). Issues to be dealt with included: refugees, settlements, security matters, borders, Jerusalem, and more. At the invitation of US President Bill Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat attended a summit at Camp David in July 2000 to resume negotiations. The summit ended without an agreement being reached due to PA Chairman Arafat's refusal to accept the generous proposal. However, a trilateral statement was issued, defining the agreed principles to guide further negotiations.

In September 2000, the Palestinians initiated an Intifada, a campaign of indiscriminate terrorism and violence, causing heavy loss of life and suffering to both sides. Numerous efforts to end the violent confrontation and renew the peace process failed due to the ongoing Palestinian terrorism.

Israel accepted the vision presented in the speech by U.S. President George W. Bush on June 24, 2002 for ending Palestinian terrorism, to be followed by the final settlement of all issues and peace.



Prime Minister
Ariel Sharon
announced the
Disengagement
Plan (Dec. 2003)

G.P.O. / Moshe
Milner

On May 25, 2003, Israel accepted the Roadmap, accompanied by comments that Israel considers integral to its implementation and a U.S. commitment to address these comments. However, the Palestinians have yet to live up to their obligations under the first phase of the Roadmap, primarily the unconditional cessation of terrorism and end to incitement.

Among the measures taken by Israel against terrorism has been the construction of an anti-terrorist fence.

In August 2005, Israel disengaged from the Gaza Strip and from four settlements in northern Samaria (the West Bank) in an effort to end the stalemate in the peace process following five years of Palestinian terrorism. However, Palestinian terrorism continued, following the election of the Hamas government, including Kassam missile attacks from the Gaza Strip on the northern Negev and the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier, necessitating Israeli military action.

The new Israeli government, elected in early 2009, made several concerted attempts to restart the peace process. Unfortunately, these attempts were consistently frustrated by the Palestinians, and their novel demand that the Israelis meet several pre-conditions before negotiations could even begin. It was only in May 2010 that the Palestinians agreed to hold proximity talks.

Israel and Syria: Within the framework of the Madrid formula, talks between Israeli and Syrian delegations began in Washington and were held from time to time at ambassadorial level, with the involvement of high-ranking American officials.

Two rounds of Syrian-Israeli peace talks (December 1995, January 1996) focused on security and other key issues. Highly detailed and comprehensive in scope, the talks identified important areas of conceptual agreement and convergence for future discussion and consideration. Negotiations between Israel and Syria were renewed in January 2000 in Shepherdstown, US, after a standstill of more than three years. However, these negotiations did not bring about a breakthrough, nor did the meeting between President Clinton and President Hafez Assad in Geneva (March 2000) lead to renewed talks.

Syria, along with Iran, backs the most violent and dangerous terrorist organizations, such as Hizbullah and the various Palestinian terrorist groups.

Israel and Lebanon: On May 23, 2000, Israel completed withdrawal of all military forces from the Security Zone in Southern Lebanon, in accordance with the Israeli government's decision to implement UN Security Council Resolution 425. Lebanon, unfortunately, has yet to comply fully with UNSC Resolution 425, as well as with

UNSC Resolution 1559 (which calls for the dismantling of Hizbullah and the deployment of Lebanon's army in southern Lebanon). Violence again erupted, following the abduction of two Israel soldiers and the bombardment of Israel's northern cities by the Hizbullah on 12 July 2006. Israel was forced to act to remove the entrenched Hizbullah terrorist presence in Southern Lebanon, which included tens of thousands of heavy artillery rockets provided by Iran and Syria and aimed at millions of Israeli civilians. In the ensuing conflict, which later become known as the Second Lebanon War, over 4,000 rockets were fired at civilian targets within Israel, causing 44 civilian casualties and extensive damage to civilian infrastructure and property. 119 Israel soldiers were also killed in the conflict during military operations. The fighting concluded with the adoption on 11 August 2006 of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which calls for the unconditional release of the abducted soldiers, calls upon Lebanon and the new UNIFIL to together deploy throughout southern Lebanon and establishes an embargo of weapons to Lebanese groups other than the government of Lebanon.

Multilateral Talks

The multilateral talks were constituted as an integral part of the peace process, aimed at finding solutions for key regional problems, while serving as a confidence-building measure to promote development of normalized relations among the Middle East nations. Following the Moscow

Multilateral Middle East Conference (January 1992), with the participation of 36 countries and international organizations, the delegations broke up into five working groups dealing with specific areas of common regional concern (environment, arms control and regional security, refugees, water resources, and economic development) which meet from time to time in various venues in the region.

The Steering Committee, comprised of representatives of key delegations and chaired by the US and Russia, coordinates the multilateral talks. Since the outbreak of Palestinian violence in September 2000, most of the activities in the multilateral track have been frozen.

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

BCE – Before the Common Era



17th-6th C. BCE – Biblical times

- c. 17th C. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob – patriarchs of the Jewish people settle in the Land of Israel. Famine forces Israelites to migrate to Egypt
- c. 13th C. Moses leads Israelites from Egypt, followed by 40 years of wandering in the desert
Torah, including the Ten Commandments, received on Mount Sinai
- 13th-12th C. Israelites settle in the Land of Israel
- c. 1020 Jewish monarchy established; Saul, first king
- c. 1000 Jerusalem made capital of David's kingdom
- c. 960 First Temple, national and spiritual center of the Jewish people, built in Jerusalem by King Solomon
- c. 930 Divided kingdom: Judah and Israel
- 722-720 Israel crushed by Assyrians; 10 tribes exiled (Ten Lost Tribes)
- 586 Judah conquered by Babylonia
Jerusalem and First Temple destroyed;
most Jews exiled

The Second Temple Period

538-142 Persian and Hellenistic periods

- 538-515 Many Jews return from Babylonia; Temple rebuilt
- 332 Land conquered by Alexander the Great; Hellenistic rule
- 166-160 Maccabean (Hasmonean) revolt against restrictions on practice of Judaism and desecration of the Temple
- 142-129 Jewish autonomy under Hasmoneans
- 129-63 Jewish independence under Hasmonean monarchy
- 63 Jerusalem captured by Roman general Pompey



63 BCE-313 CE – Roman rule

- 63-4 BCE Herod, Roman vassal king, rules the Land of Israel
- Temple in Jerusalem refurbished

CE – Common Era

- c. 20-33 Ministry of Jesus of Nazareth
- 66 Jewish revolt against Romans
- 70 Destruction of Jerusalem and Second Temple
- 73 Last stand of Jews at Masada
- 132-135 Bar Kochba uprising against Rome



- c. 210 Codification of Jewish Oral Law (Mishna) completed
- 313-636 Byzantine rule**
- c. 390 Commentary on the Mishna (Jerusalem Talmud) completed
- 614 Persian invasion
- 636-1099 Arab rule**
- 691 On site of First and Second Temples in Jerusalem, Dome of the Rock built by Caliph Abd el-Malik
- 1099-1291 Crusader domination (Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem)**
- 1291-1516 Mamluk rule**
- 1517-1917 Ottoman rule**
- 1564 Code of Jewish law (*Shulhan Arukh*) published
- 1860 First neighborhood built outside walls of Jerusalem's Old City
- 1882-1903 First *Aliya* (large-scale immigration), mainly from Russia
- 1897 First Zionist Congress convened by Theodor Herzl in Basel, Switzerland, Zionist Organization founded
- 1904-14 Second *Aliya*, mainly from Russia and Poland
- 1909 First *kibbutz*, Degania, and first modern all-Jewish city, Tel Aviv, founded
- 1917 400 years of Ottoman rule ended by British conquest



- British Foreign Minister Balfour pledges support for establishment of a "Jewish national home in Palestine"
- 1918-48 British rule**
- 1919-23 Third *Aliya*, mainly from Russia
- 1920 Histadrut (General Federation of Labor) and *Haganah* (Jewish defense organization) founded
Vaad Leumi (National Council) set up by Jewish community (*Yishuv*) to conduct its affairs
- 1921 First moshav (cooperative village), Nahalal, founded
- 1922 Britain granted Mandate for Palestine (Land of Israel) by League of Nations. Transjordan set up on three fourths of the area, leaving one fourth for the Jewish national home
 Jewish Agency representing Jewish community vis-a-vis Mandate authorities set up
- 1924 Technion, first institute of technology, founded in Haifa
- 1924-32 Fourth *Aliya*, mainly from Poland
- 1925 Hebrew University of Jerusalem opened on Mount Scopus
- 1929 Hebron Jews massacred by Arab terrorists
- 1931 Etzel, Jewish underground organization, founded
- 1933-39 Fifth *Aliya*, mainly from Germany



- 1936-39 Anti-Jewish riots instigated by Arab terrorists
- 1939 Jewish immigration severely limited by British White Paper
- 1939-45 World War II: Holocaust in Europe
- 1940-41 *Lehi* underground movement formed;
Palmach, strike force of Haganah, set up
- 1944 Jewish Brigade formed as part of British forces
- 1947 UN proposes establishment of Arab and Jewish states in the Land
- 1948** **State of Israel**
- 1948 End of British Mandate (14 May)
State of Israel proclaimed (14 May)
Israel invaded by five Arab states (15 May)
Israel Defense Forces (IDF) established
War of Independence (May 1948 – July 1949)
- 1949 Armistice agreements signed with Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon
Jerusalem divided under Israeli and Jordanian rule
First Knesset (parliament) elected
Israel admitted to United Nations as 59th member
- 1948-52 Mass immigration from Europe and Arab countries
- 1956 Sinai Campaign



- 1961-62 Adolf Eichmann tried and executed in Israel for his part in the Holocaust
- 1964 National Water Carrier completed, bringing water from Lake Kinneret in the North to the semi-arid South
- 1967 Six Day War; Jerusalem reunited
- 1968-70 Egypt's War of Attrition against Israel
- 1973 Yom Kippur War
- 1975 Israel becomes an associate member of European Common Market
- 1977 *Likud* forms government after Knesset elections; end of 30 years of Labor rule
Visit of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to Jerusalem
- 1978 Camp David Accords include framework for comprehensive peace in the Middle East and proposal for Palestinian self-government
- 1979 Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty signed
Prime Minister Menachem Begin and President Anwar Sadat awarded Nobel Peace Prize
- 1981 Israel Air Force destroys Iraqi nuclear reactor just before it is to become operative
- 1982 Israel's three-stage withdrawal from Sinai Peninsula completed
Operation Peace for Galilee removes Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) terrorists from Lebanon



- 1984 National unity government (Likud and Labor) formed after elections
Operation Moses, immigration of Jews from Ethiopia
- 1985 Free Trade Agreement signed with United States
- 1987 Widespread violence (Intifada) starts in Israeli-administered areas
- 1988 *Likud* government wins elections
- 1989 Four-point peace initiative proposed by Israel
Start of mass immigration of Jews from former Soviet Union
- 1991 Israel attacked by Iraqi Scud missiles during Gulf War
Middle East peace conference convened in Madrid
Operation Solomon, airlift of Jews from Ethiopia
- 1992 Diplomatic relations established with China and India
New government headed by Yitzhak Rabin of Labor Party
- 1993 Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements for the Palestinians signed by Israel and PLO, as representative of the Palestinian people (Oslo Accords)



- 1994 Implementation of Palestinian self-government in Gaza Strip and Jericho area
Full diplomatic relations with the Holy See
Morocco and Tunisia interest offices set up
Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty signed
Rabin, Peres, Arafat awarded Nobel Peace Prize
- 1995 Broadened Palestinian self-government implemented in West Bank and Gaza Strip;
Palestinian Council elected
Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin assassinated at peace rally
Shimon Peres becomes prime minister
- 1996 Fundamentalist Arab terrorism against Israel escalates
Operation Grapes of Wrath, retaliation for Hizbullah terrorists' attacks on northern Israel
Trade representation offices set up in Oman and Qatar
Binyamin Netanyahu elected prime minister; forms Likud-led coalition government
Omani trade representation office opened in Tel Aviv
- 1997 Hebron Protocol signed by Israel and the PA
- 1998 Israel celebrates its 50th anniversary
Israel and the PLO sign the Wye River Memorandum to facilitate implementation of the Interim Agreement



- 1999 Ehud Barak (left-wing One Israel party) elected prime minister; forms coalition government
Israel and the PLO sign the Sharm-e-Sheikh Memorandum
- 2000 Visit of Pope John Paul II
Israel withdraws from the Security Zone in southern Lebanon
Israel admitted to UN Western European and Others Group
Renewed violence (Second Intifada)
Prime Minister Barak resigns
- 2001 Ariel Sharon (*Likud*) elected prime minister; forms broad-based unity government
The Sharm-e-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee report (the Mitchell Report) issued
Palestinian-Israeli Security Implementation Work Plan (Tenet cease-fire plan) proposed
Rechavam Ze'evy, minister of tourism, assassinated by Palestinian terrorists
- 2002 Israel launches Operation Defensive Shield in response to massive Palestinian terrorist attacks
Israel begins building the anti-terrorist fence to stop West Bank terrorists from killing Israeli citizens.
Prime Minister Sharon disperses the Knesset, calling for new elections to be held on 28 January 2003

- 2003 Right-of-center coalition government formed by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon
Israel accepts the Roadmap
- 2005 Israel carries out the Disengagement Plan, ending Israel's presence in the Gaza Strip
- 2006 After Prime Minister Sharon suffers a stroke, Ehud Olmert becomes acting prime minister
Following elections on March 28, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert forms new government led by the Kadima Party
Israel carried out military operations against Palestinian terrorists in Gaza after kidnapping of Israeli soldier
The Second War in Lebanon, during which Israel carries out military operations against Hizbullah terrorism from southern Lebanon, following missile attacks and kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers
- 2007 Shimon Peres elected President by the Knesset
Israel declares Gaza "hostile territory" following Hamas violent takeover of Gaza Strip
- 2008 Israel celebrates its 60th anniversary
Israel launches its Gaza Operation (Operation Cast Lead) in response to the barrage of over 10,000 rockets and mortars fired from the Gaza Strip

- 2009 Benjamin Netanyahu is elected Prime Minister in national elections held in February 2009, and forms a broad-based coalition government
The city of Tel Aviv celebrates its 100th anniversary
- 2010 Israel joins the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)