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I. Introduction

Let me state right from the beginning that very little information that teachers share with their students consists of truly original material. Most teachers are passing on to others what they have received from classes or what they have learned from researching the work of others. That principle applies significantly to this class as well. This class will not be particularly original. For the most part I will be quoting or paraphrasing the thoughts of other authors. You can see the sources of most of my information in the Bibliography.

Before I get into our material directly, I want to highlight for you two of the major sources for my class. Following the Table of Contents is a brief Bibliography. Of the books that are listed there, the most complete work is Howard Sachar’s, A History of Israel, Volume One and Volume Two. The vast majority of comments that I make during this class are taken out of those books. A History of Israel is considered the most complete and authoritative work on the subject. Of course, Sachar’s book will cover much more material and will have much more depth than I will be able to present to you. I only have time to share with you excerpts from that work. If you wish to study the subject in greater detail, that is the book I would highly recommend you purchase. I am indebted to Howard Sachar’s fine work. Most of the statements I make are simply excerpts or paraphrases of his exceptional scholarship. Without his detailed and articulate work, this class would not have been possible. In this workbook I have footnoted the more important quotes found in A History of Israel so that the student will be able to locate them easily in Sachar’s work.

Another key work, although more limited in scope, is Arthur Kac’s work, The Death and Resurrection of Israel. I will quote from this work, however, it may be out of print.

Another very helpful work is Martin Gilbert’s Atlas of the Arab-Israeli Conflict. This book covers in map form the complete history of the struggle and the efforts to resolve it. I highly recommend that you purchase this book as well.

On the Internet, a good resource is the Jewish Virtual Library.

If you go to Wikipedia, be very discerning as you read the articles. Some are very good but others are definitely tainted with Arab propaganda against Israel.

At this point let me share an overview of the course.
Overview of the Course – Outline

I. The Spiritual War – Introduction

A. What is Zion?

B. What is Zionism?

C. Biblical Support For Zionism

Psalm 137:1-6
Genesis 12:1-3 – The Abrahamic Covenant
Genesis 12:7
Genesis 13:14-17
Genesis 15
Deuteronomy 28:64-30:10 – The Land Covenant
Psalm 105:8-11

D. Prophetic Significance

1. The Pattern of Dispersion and Regathering
2. Russian Invasion of Israel
3. The First Regathering
4. The Characteristics of the First Regathering
5. The Blessings of the Mosaic Covenant
6. The Curses of the Mosaic Covenant
7. The Times of the Gentiles

E. The Principle of Expansion and Contraction

F. Chronological Sequence of Events

G. Islam

H. Rabbinic Thoughts

II. Background – Historical Survey of the Period, 66 A.D. to 1839 A.D.


IV. The Unending War: 1948 to the Present – The Modern State of Israel
A. What is Zion?

Zion – ZIE-uhrn – meaning unknown – perhaps "fortress"? Originally Zion was the fortified mound between the Kidron and Tyropean valleys.¹ It was the name for the Jebusite stronghold, and the SE hill of Jerusalem upon which it stood. The use of the name was progressively expanded to include the Temple and, eventually, all of Jerusalem. It came to be applied figuratively to the nation of Judah and the whole of the Israelite people.²

Through this process of change, the name also developed a religious connotation, emphasizing Jerusalem as the city of God, and the Israelites as God's people.³

At least 163 verses in the Scriptures refer to Zion. A few include: 2 Samuel 5:7, 1 Chronicles 11:5, Psalm 2:6, Isaiah 10:24, Lamentations 5:18, Isaiah 60:14, Hebrews 12:22

Biblical Mount Zion should not be confused with modern Mount Zion.

B. What is Zionism?

1. Jews Not Zionists

   [The Torah] forbids us to strive for the reunion or possession of the Land by any but spiritual means. Rabbi S. R. Hirsch

   Not via our desire did we leave the Land of Israel, and not via our power will we come back to the Land of Israel. Rabbi S. D. Schneerson

   [Zionists] want a state in order to make Jews into heretics. Rabbi C. Soloveichik

   The Zionists have attacked the center point of Judaism. Rabbi V. Soloveichik

² The Revell Bible Dictionary, Lawrence O. Richards, Ph.D., General Editor, copyright (c) 1990 Fleming H. Revell Company.
³ Ibid.
2. United Nations

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3379

(November 10, 1975) (Repealed 1991)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

RECALLING its resolution 1904 (XVIII) of 20 November 1963, proclaiming the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and in particular its affirmation that "any doctrine of racial differentiation or superiority is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous" and its expression of alarm at "the manifestations of racial discrimination still in evidence in some areas in the world, some of which are imposed by certain Governments by means of legislative, administrative or other measures",

RECALLING ALSO that, in its resolution 3151 G (XXVIII) of 14 December 1953, the General Assembly condemned, inter alia, the unholy alliance between South African racism and Zionism,

TAKING NOTE of the Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and Their Contribution to Development and Peace 1975, proclaimed by the World Conference of the International Women's Year, held at Mexico City from 19 June to 2 July 1975, which promulgated the principle that "international co-operation and peace require the achievement of national liberation and independence, the elimination of colonialism and neo-colonialism, foreign occupation, Zionism, apartheid and racial discrimination in all its forms, as well as the recognition of the dignity of peoples and their right to self-determination",

TAKING NOTE ALSO of resolution 77 (XII) adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at its twelfth ordinary session, held at Kampala from 28 July to 1 August 1975, which considered "that the racist regime in occupied Palestine and the racist regime in Zimbabwe and South Africa have a common imperialist origin, forming a whole and having the same racist structure and being organically linked in their policy aimed at repression of the dignity and integrity of the human being".
TAKING NOTE ALSO of the Political Declaration and Strategy to Strengthen International Peace and Security and to Intensify Solidarity and Mutual Assistance among Non-Aligned Countries, adopted at the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Non-Aligned Countries held at Lima from 25 to 30 August 1975, which most severely condemned Zionism as a threat to world peace and security and called upon all countries to oppose this racist and imperialist ideology,

DETERMINES that Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination.

3. Christian Anti-Semite Stan Rittenhouse

For Fear of the Jews: By Stan Rittenhouse

During this period in between the First and Second Coming of Jesus Christ, a Satanic counterfeit political Zionism masquerading as the State of “Israel” will be established.

4. The Palestinian Charter

Section 22: Zionism is a political movement organically associated with international imperialism and antagonistic to all action for liberation and to progressive movements in the world. It is racist and fanatic in its nature, aggressive, expansionist, and colonial in its aims, and fascist in its methods.

5. Definition: The word Zionism describes a feeling. Zionism is an expression of the longing and yearning that the Jewish people have had in the past and still have for their homeland. As soon as any Jew expressed a desire to go back to his land, he is expressing Zionism.4

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Aliyah

“That is where the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord.”
(Psalms 122:4)

The Jewish national-builders of Israel have been gathered from the four corners of the earth. Their return to the land represents the highest of hopes—to “make aliyah.” This Hebrew word for immigration means “to go up,” as though one were ascending to the Temple itself.

Today, almost five million Jewish people call Israel home. About half of them are immigrants and their backgrounds are a vivid illustration of the Jewish struggle for existence. They bring their dreams for freedom and often little else.

Chosen People Ministries is working to bring them the Gospel—God’s promise in the Land of Promise.

The immigrant Jewish population of Israel is as follows:

- Former Soviet Union - 900,000
- North Africa - 380,000
- Romania - 274,000
- Poland - 172,000
- Iraq - 150,000
- Iran - 77,000
- United States - 73,000
- Turkey - 61,000
- Yemen - 52,000
- Ethiopia - 50,000
- Argentina - 45,000
- Bulgaria - 43,000
- Thousands of others from countries all over the world.

Statistics are from Jewish Communities of the World, published in 1989 by the World Jewish Congress and Center Publications Company.

May 2000

Zion: A Profound Biblical Word

by Michael Rydelnik

It’s funny how sometimes modern culture and media can seem to conspire against the ancient and the honorable. For example, the word “Zion” has become so confused with the media’s slant on “Zionism” that the public’s perception of the meaning of the word has become badly confused. This is lamentable, Zion is a Biblical word that should evoke a positive response in those who hear it.

The History of Zion

Although the origin of the word Zion is unclear, we know that it referred to the Jebusite stronghold King David captured and named “The City of David.” Thus, Zion became synonymous with the part of Jerusalem located between the Kidron and Tyropoean valleys.

Before long, Zion came to refer to the entire Temple Mount. When Psalm 132:13 describes the Temple Mount, it says, “For the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place.”

Soon, Zion also referred to the entire city of Jerusalem. Isaiah 2:3 says, “For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” Zion, which earlier referred to the Temple Mount, is now used to encompass all of Jerusalem.

Finally, Zion came to refer to the people and land of Judah. In Isaiah 51, the future restoration of the Jewish people to their land is described as the ransomed returning “with joyful singing to Zion.” Thus, Zion ultimately came to be used of the Jewish people and their land.

The Theological Truths of Zion

In Scripture, Zion is more than just a place. It also stands for some very important theological truths. First, Zion is used as a metaphor for experiencing the blessings of the New Covenant. Describing the New Covenant in Hebrews 12, the writer makes a contrast between Mount Sinai, from which the people needed to keep their distance, and Mount Zion, which believers can confidently approach.

A second vital theological truth is that Zion refers to the location of Messiah Jesus’ ultimate victory and His throne. In Psalm 26, God states, “Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion. Jesus will return and reign from the throne of David on Mount Zion, the capital of the Messianic Kingdom.

A final theological truth about Zion is that it will be the place of Messiah’s redemption. One day, Israel will turn in faith to Messiah Jesus, prompting His return (Matthew 23:37-39). When the Lord returns to Zion, He will redeem His people Israel.

Zion: A Fitting Word

Not only is Zion a profound Biblical word, filled with theological meaning, it is also a fitting term for the Jewish people to use for their return to the land of Israel. Zionism reminds us of the land God gave us—the land we could never forget during our exile (Psalms 137:3-6). It is the land to which we have returned and the land from which Messiah Jesus will ultimately rule and reign.
C. Biblical Support

Psalm 137:1-6

1 By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion.
2 There on the poplars we hung our harps,
3 for there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"
4 How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?
5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill.
6 May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy. (NIV)

Psalm 137 expresses the emotional longing of the Jew contained in the word “Zionism.”

Zionism is likewise supported in two of the covenants God made with the Jewish people. The first covenant is called the Abrahamic Covenant. The Abrahamic Covenant is found in several segments of Genesis: the first segment is found in chapter 12, the first three verses.

Abrahamic Covenant

READ Genesis 12:1

Three promises that make up this unconditional and eternal covenant are stated. Number one, God is going to show Abraham a land. That promise is two-fold. Not only will Abraham be given a land, but the Land will be given to his descendents as well.

READ Genesis 12:7

The second segment of the Abrahamic Covenant comes after Abraham enters the Land that God promised to show him. God proceeds to tell Abraham that Abraham’s descendants – his seed – will be given this land. Nothing more than that is said as far as the Land aspect is concerned. However, there has been an increase in data. We move from merely being shown a land to the promise that the Land will be give to his descendents.

The third segment is in Genesis 13:14-17.

READ Genesis 13:14-17

Two main points come out in this passage. First of all, there is further elaboration upon the Land aspect. Concerning the Land – God says, “TO YOU I will give this land.” Not only Abraham's descendents were promised the Land. Abraham himself was promised the
Land. For that very reason he is ordered to inspect the Land. God says, “Go, walk through the length and breadth of the Land, for I am giving it to you.”

**READ Genesis 12:2a**

The second point we need to note here is the seed aspect. Again, a nation will come forth from Abraham that will eventually become numerous. This promise is two-fold as well.

Another provision covers the relationship the gentiles will experience with the people who come from Abraham. Those who bless Abraham and his seed will be blessed and those that curse Abraham and his seed will be cursed.

**READ Genesis 12:3**

The third provision concerns the spiritual benefits of the covenant. Ultimately, it is in Abraham that the gentiles will receive their spiritual blessings. This promise is, again, two-fold. God will bless Abraham and Abraham will bless the world.

### The Abrahamic Covenant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abrahamic Covenant</th>
<th>Land Promise (Israel)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 12:1-3, 7, 13:14-17, 15, 17</td>
<td>✡ To You&lt;br&gt;✡ To Your Descendants</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Confirmed through Isaac (not Ishmael)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Genesis 26:2-5, 24</td>
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<td><strong>Confirmed through Jacob (not Esau)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Genesis 28:13-15</td>
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<td><strong>Confirmed to all 12 tribes</strong>&lt;br&gt;Genesis 49</td>
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<td><strong>National Promise</strong>&lt;br&gt;✡ National Election&lt;br&gt;✡ Unique Relationship with Gentile Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spiritual Blessing Promise</strong>&lt;br&gt;✡ I will bless you.&lt;br&gt;✡ You will bless others.</td>
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</table>

Another factor relating to the Abrahamic Covenant is the fact that it is an eternal covenant.

**READ Genesis 17:7**

The promise of a great nation is reinforced in Genesis 15:1-6

**READ Genesis 15:1-6**
The fourth segment of the Abrahamic covenant is in Genesis 15. The entire chapter is devoted to this theme. In verses 1-6 there is again the elaboration of the seed aspect. Again, Abraham is assured – although it's been a number of years since the initial promise of a seed was given back in chapter 12 – nevertheless he will have a son, through Sarah, through whom the nation and the people will come. Then in verses 7-21 God deals with the Land aspect. In this segment God states the actual northern and southern boundaries of the Land.

In chapter 15 we observe the sealing of the covenant. The normal pattern by which covenants were sealed or signed back then followed this procedure. The two parties making the covenant would take a number of animals, slaughter them, and cut them in half. They would then line up the carcasses in two rows. Then the two people who are making the covenant would walk through the pieces of the animals. Having walked through the pieces, the covenant or treaty is now binding them both. Both are obligated to keep it. If one is guilty of breaking the covenant that releases the other party of having to fulfill his part.

Now there are certain things that are the same and certain things that are different as this covenant with Abraham is sealed.

**READ Genesis 15:7-11**

**READ Genesis 15:12-16**

In verses 12-16 the future experience of Abraham’s descendents is explained. They will be enslaved for a period of 400 years in a different land. However, after that time of slavery, God will release them from slavery, enrich them and punish the nation that enslaved them. Then they will return to the Land of promise when God’s judgment is about to fall upon the Amorites. Amorite is a generic name for the Canaanites.

**READ Genesis 15:17-21**

In keeping with the way covenants were signed back then, pieces of the animals were lined up in rows. So far everything is normal.
Now the changes come.

If God and Abraham both walked through the pieces of the animals, the covenant would be binding on both. If Abraham broke it, that would then release God from keeping the terms of His promises.

Therefore, God, and God Himself in the form of the Shekinah, walks between the pieces of the animals. This means the covenant is binding upon God alone regardless of what Abraham or Abraham's descendants may do. Hence, this covenant is unconditional. God has made certain commitments to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants regardless of whether Abraham or Abraham's descendants themselves remain faithful. The promise will be kept no matter what. So, in chapter 15, the covenant is sealed.

**READ Genesis 15:18**

The Euphrates River is the northern border, the river of Egypt is the southern border. If we compare other sections of Scripture that describe the boundaries of the Promised Land, this is the information we gather: basically, God gives Abraham the western arm of the Fertile Crescent.

Therefore, the Abrahamic Covenant supports Zionism because Abraham and his descendants are unconditionally promised a homeland. This is long before the Arab peoples arrived on the scene. The year is approximately 2166 B.C. The Arab people would not sweep out of the Saudi Arabian peninsula for another 2,800 years. The people living in the Land when the Abrahamic Covenant was ratified are listed in Genesis 15:19-21.

**READ Genesis 15:19-21**

These people groups have all disappeared from history. Note: None of these people groups are Arab.
### The Abrahamic Covenant

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### The Fertile Crescent

![The Fertile Crescent](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f6/Fertile_Crescent.png)
**Deuteronomy 28:64-30:10 – Land Covenant**

The next covenant that Biblically supports Zionism is the Palestinian Covenant or, as I prefer to call it, "The Land Covenant." The three basic provisions of the Abrahamic Covenant are expanded and developed through three other covenants found in Scripture. The Spiritual Blessings are developed by the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34. The National Blessings are developed by the Davidic Covenant. And the Land Blessings are developed by the Land Covenant. The Land Covenant is found in Deuteronomy 29 and 30. The emphasis of this covenant is the Land of Israel itself. The Land Covenant develops the Land Promise to a fuller degree.

Before I go any further, I believe it is essential that we know something about the provision for disobedience found in the covenants. Even though a covenant is unconditional and eternal in nature, that does not exempt the recipients of the covenant from responsibility. If the recipient of an unconditional eternal covenant is disobedient, they will suffer discipline. What are the disciplines associated with the Abrahamic Covenant?

**Discipline for Disobedience**

**Abrahamic Covenant**

For that, let’s look at Genesis 17.

**READ Genesis 17:1**

In verse 1, we have the command for Abraham to be obedient. He is to live upright, or sincere in heart, speech, and behavior.⁵

**READ Genesis 17:2-8**

In verse 2, God states to Abraham that He is about to confirm the covenant with him. God does so in a number of ways. He exalts Abraham by changing his name from Abram to Abraham. Abram means, “exalted father.” Abraham means “father of a multitude.” This was realized when the descendants of Abraham became the progenitors of whole nations. The change from Abram to Abraham was further evidence of divine determination to fulfill the covenant.⁶ In the ancient Near East, a change of name is an advertisement of

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some new circumstance in the history, rank, or religion of the individual who bears it.\(^7\) This is a major event in Abraham’s life.

Next, the nature of the covenant is repeated – it is everlasting in nature. Finally, God repeats the Land Promise. Now we come to the conditional expectations.

**READ Genesis 17:9-13**

Not only is Abraham expected to live righteously as commanded in verse 1, but also he is required to circumcise all the males in his household. Circumcision was practiced elsewhere in the ancient Near East, but here it achieved a new meaning. It would remind Abraham and his descendants of the everlasting covenant.\(^8\) For Abraham’s family it was to be regarded as a symbol of the covenant.\(^9\) Then we come to verse 14.

**READ Genesis 17:14**

Here is the discipline for disobedience. Anyone who disavowed circumcision had disavowed the covenant and would suffer punishment for that disobedience. They would be “cut off” from the nation. Some feel that the term “cut off” means the death sentence, others feel it means excommunication. Either way, discipline was provided for disobedience.

Thus, the Abrahamic Covenant, although conveying unconditional promises to Abraham, also included obligations by which individual descendants would express their faith and enjoy the blessings. Circumcision was an act of obedience and faith.\(^10\)

For one last point, let’s drop down to verses 19-21

**READ Genesis 17:19-21**

The point of these two verses is the idea that the blessings of the covenant are reserved for Isaac. Blessings were abundantly promised to Ishmael,\(^11\) but it is through Isaac and Isaac alone, that the Abrahamic Covenant will run.

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So that covers the conditional or obedience requirements of the Abrahamic Covenant. Abraham is unconditionally promised an eternal covenant. However, to experience the benefits of the covenant, his descendants must practice obedience.

Now, what about the New Covenant.

**New Covenant**

Let’s look at Jeremiah 31:31-34

**READ Jeremiah 31:31-34**

God’s New Covenant will involve an internalization of His Law. He will put His Law in their minds and on their hearts, not just on stones. There will be no need to exhort people to know the Lord because they will already all know God. God’s New Covenant will give Israel the inner ability to obey His righteous standards and thus to enjoy His blessings.

The prophet Ezekiel also talked about the New Covenant in chapter 36. Ezekiel indicated that this change would result from God’s bestowal of the Holy Spirit on these believers. In Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit did not universally indwell all believers. Thus, one different aspect of the New Covenant is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in all believers.

A second aspect of the New Covenant will be God’s provision for sin. The sins of the people resulted in the curses of the Old Covenant. However, as part of the New Covenant God will forgive Israel’s wickedness and remember their sins no more.

But how could a holy God overlook sin? The answer is that God did not “overlook” sin; its penalty was paid for by a Substitute. In the Upper Room, Christ announced that the New Covenant was to be inaugurated through the shedding of His blood. Forgiveness of sin would be part of the New Covenant only because God provided a Substitute to pay the penalty required of man.\(^\text{12}\)

We live under the New Covenant today. And we are expected to be obedient today as well. In the New Testament, there are over 600 commands that we should obey. If we don’t obey, we will suffer two kinds of discipline. The first discipline is the church restoration procedure of Matthew 18:15 and following.

The second discipline is the loss of rewards talked about in 1 Corinthians 3:12-15. You and I live under an unconditional and eternal covenant today. That means that we are eternally secure. We are guaranteed eternal life. But at the same time, we are expected to

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live righteously. We are expected to obey. Paul put it this way in Romans 6:1: *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? May it never be!*\(^{13}\)

**Davidic Covenant**

The same expectations held true for David’s descendents under the Davidic Covenant. Under the Davidic covenant, David was promised an eternal house, an eternal kingdom and an eternal throne. His son, Solomon, inherited the throne. However, Solomon was told by God that he was expected to live righteously. If he lived obediently, then God would bless his line. However, if he and his descendents disobeyed, God would not bless his line.

You can see this in I Kings 9:3-7 and 11:9, as well as in 1 Chronicles 22:6-13 and 28:6-7. As it turned out there was plenty of disobedience in Solomon’s life and among a good number of his descendents. Finally, it got so bad with a king named Jeconiah that God cursed the descendents of Jeconiah. God said that no descendant of Jeconiah would prosper sitting on David’s throne. And that’s exactly what happened. No descendant of Jeconiah prospered on David’s throne. Only one, Zedekiah, reigned as King, but he did not prosper.

The rest never reigned as king. With the Jeconiah curse, the promise of a king on David’s throne passed from Solomon’s line to the line of another descendant. That other son of David was Nathan. We know from the New Testament that both the line of Solomon and the line of Nathan are traced. Matthew traces Joseph’s genealogy down through Jeconiah and down to Solomon and then to David. Matthew points out that Jesus was not Joseph’s son. If he was, he could not sit on David’s throne because of the Jeconiah curse.

Luke on the other hand traces the genealogy of Jesus down from Jesus through Mary to Nathan and then to David. Jesus could sit on David’s throne because He is a direct, blood descendant of David through Nathan.

The Davidic Covenant is an eternal, unconditional covenant. David will have his eternal throne, kingdom, and house. However, Solomon and his descendents forfeited the Messianic line through disobedience. That is the discipline for disobedience associated with the Davidic Covenant.

Let me summarize:

The discipline for disobedience under the Abrahamic Covenant was to be “cut off from your people.” Under the New Covenant the discipline for disobedience is confrontation under the Restoration procedure or loss of rewards in the Kingdom. Under the Davidic Covenant the discipline was forfeiture of the Messianic line through Solomon.

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\(^{13}\) Romans 3:8; 6:15.
With that background behind us let’s look at the stipulations of the Land Covenant.

**Land Covenant**

The purpose for this covenant arose out of certain statements made in the Mosaic Covenant. It was already clear from Moses’ own prophecies in chapter 28 of Deuteronomy or chapter 4 of Deuteronomy or Leviticus 26 that Israel will fail to keep the Mosaic Law. This failure to keep the Mosaic Covenant will bring on discipline and eventually there will be a worldwide dispersion. That is what the Mosaic covenant predicted. A worldwide dispersion will come because of failure under the Mosaic Law-Mosaic Covenant. The key reference is Deuteronomy 28:15-68, especially verses 64-68.

READ Deuteronomy 28:64-68

The question that can be raised is this: "Does Israel's failure under the Mosaic Covenant render the promises of the first covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, null and void?" The answer contained in the Land Covenant is, "No." The Land Covenant teaches that after a period of worldwide dispersion out of the Land, there will be a worldwide regathering back into the Land. Let's look at this briefly. The provisions of the Land Covenant are found in Deuteronomy 29 through Deuteronomy 30:10.

READ Deuteronomy 29:1

Verse 1 clearly differentiates the Land Covenant from the Mosaic Covenant. In verses 2-27, Moses launches into a discourse in which he makes three main points: 1) Moses summarizes the history of Israel; 2) he entreats them to enter into the Land Covenant sincerely; and, 3) he warns of God's judgment against covenant breakers. The judgment will include a scattering of the nation out of the Land to the four corners of the world.

Let's take a look at this threat of a worldwide judgment.

READ Deuteronomy 29:28

We will see that this dispersion is worldwide in just a moment. Then in Deuteronomy 30:1-10 he lays out the provisions of the Land Covenant. All these provisions center around the thought that after the period of worldwide scattering Israel will be returned to the Land.

READ Deuteronomy 30:1-2

In verse 2, we see that while in worldwide captivity the nation will repent of unfaithfulness.
READ Deuteronomy 30:3-4

In response, the Lord will regather Israel.

READ Deuteronomy 30:5

Israel will possess the Land and prosper.

READ Deuteronomy 30:6

Next Israel will be regenerated – born again.

READ Deuteronomy 30:7-10

Finally, Israel will receive the full blessings of God, specifically the blessings of the Messianic Kingdom. Moses closes in verse 11-20 by, once again, exhorting Israel to enter into this covenant with an honest and sincere heart.

If we were to summarize the Abrahamic Covenant, we could summarize it into three essential provisions. There is the promise of the Land; there is a promise of the seed and the promise of spiritual blessings.

What the Land Covenant reaffirms is the Land Promise of the Abrahamic Covenant. Failure under the Mosaic Law will not render God’s promises in the Abrahamic Covenant null and void. The Abrahamic Covenant is eternal and unconditional. It will find eventual fulfillment.\(^\text{14}\)

Psalm 105:8-11

At this point, I’d like to emphasize the eternal nature of the Land Covenant by a quick trip to Psalm 105:8-11.

READ Psalm 105:8-11

Notice the emphasis on the Abrahamic Covenant. It is an eternal, unconditional covenant in verses 8-10. Likewise Jewish ownership of the Land is eternal according to verse 11.

In addition, Jeremiah the prophet understands the duration of the title deed to be eternal.

Jeremiah 7:5-7, 25:5, 31:35-37

\(^{14}\) Fruchtenbaum, A.G., *The Eight Covenants of the Bible*, MBS021, Ariel Ministries, pg. 31, point D.
The Abrahamic Covenant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abrahamic Covenant (Eternal and Unconditional)</th>
<th>Land Promise (Israel)</th>
<th>Land Covenant</th>
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<td>To Your Descendants</td>
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<td>National Promise</td>
<td>National Election</td>
<td>Davidic Covenant</td>
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<td>Unique Relationship</td>
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<td>with Gentile Nations</td>
<td>1 Chron. 17: 10-15</td>
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<td>You will bless others.</td>
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<td>New Covenant</td>
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The point is this. I've established the validity of Zionism from the Scriptures. The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have been given the title deed to the Land of Israel. The deed to the Land is ours whether we occupy the Land or not. In fact it's predicted in the Scriptures that I just covered that there will be a time of worldwide dispersion out of the Land followed by a regathering. The modern Zionist movement, the subject we'll be looking at in this course, is a brief look at that regathering. Therefore, Zionism is not limited to some subjective emotion, although emotional it is. Zionism is backed by Biblical support.

Zionism and the Jewish return to our homeland is an important part in the plan of God for this world.

Now let's briefly consider the prophetic significance of this worldwide regathering we call modem Israel. This is not a study of eschatology so I will be brief and cover only a few major points of interest.

**D. Prophetic Significance**

1. **The Pattern of Dispersion and Regathering**

Let me begin this section by covering the pattern of dispersion and regathering that Israel consistently goes through.
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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Character</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Returned</td>
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<td>Egyptian Slavery</td>
<td>Circa 1800 BC</td>
<td>Genesis 46-47:12</td>
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<td>Returned</td>
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<td>Babylonian Exile</td>
<td>605 BC</td>
<td>2 Kings 25</td>
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<td>Regathered</td>
<td>536 BC</td>
<td>Ezra, Nehemiah</td>
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<td>Roman Exile</td>
<td>70 AD</td>
<td>Matthew 23:37-38</td>
<td>Worldwide</td>
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<td>Regathered for Judgment</td>
<td>1948</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tribulation Exile</td>
<td>Mid-Point of the Tribulation Period</td>
<td>Matthew 24:15-22</td>
<td>Worldwide</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regathered for Blessing</td>
<td>Second Coming</td>
<td>Isa. 11:11-16, Matthew 24:29-31</td>
<td>Worldwide</td>
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The point I’m trying to establish is the fact that this has happened before and will happen again. Just because Israel is experiencing discipline outside the Land does not nullify her ownership of the Land.

2. Russian Invasion of Israel

The second point I want to cover is the Russian invasion of Israel. Ezekiel 38 and 39 are the important chapters. These chapters describe an invasion of Israel from the north and the subsequent destruction of the invading forces once they reach the mountains of Israel. This event has not yet occurred. Concerning the modern state, there are a number of prophetic related events. Some of them have taken place, some need to take place. The Russian invasion is the next major prophetic event we should anticipate.

I am asked on a regular basis about the significance of the events transpiring in the Middle East. My answer is always the same. The events we see today are setting the stage for the Russian invasion of Israel. Exactly how they will play out we cannot say. All we can say is that the events we observe today are preparing the way for the Russian invasion of Israel.

The next point I want to cover explains the title of this class.
3. The First Regathering

God reveals to us, through the prophet Isaiah, that the nation of Israel will experience **two worldwide regatherings**. The **first worldwide regathering** will be in unbelief for the purpose of judgment – the judgment of the Tribulation period. The judgment of the time of Jacob's Trouble.

The **second worldwide regathering** will be in faith for the purpose of blessing, the blessings of the Messianic Kingdom.

Let's look at this.

Scripture sections relating to this issue are Ezekiel 20:33-38, Ezekiel 22:17-22 and Isaiah 11:11-12.

Let's begin by reading Ezekiel 20:33-38.

**READ Ezekiel 20:33-38**

Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, in his book *Footsteps of the Messiah* summarizes the significance of this passage

… Ezekiel prophesies, God will regather His people from all parts of the world. It should be noted that it is a regathering out of wrath, and a gathering for wrath. They were gathered out of the wrath of the Holocaust. The events of the Nazi Holocaust, when six million Jewish people died, created the world stage for Israel to become a state, for the regathering in unbelief. That this gathering is not in faith, but in unbelief, is seen from the fact that this gathering is with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out. This phrase is repeated twice and is found in verses 33 and 34. God’s goal is that of Messianic Kingship, but the means of attaining it will be by wrath and judgment. This is a gathering both out of wrath and for wrath. This regathering in unbelief occurs after wrath has been poured out on the people. But because it is a regathering in unbelief, it is a regathering for a future time of wrath. In that future time of wrath, God will once again enter into judgment with His people, and will purge out the rebels among them. Those who remain will turn to the Lord; they will be brought into the bond of the covenant; specifically, the bond of the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34). They will be brought into national salvation. Then it will be a new nation, a regenerate nation, that will be allowed to enter the Land under King Messiah for the final restoration. In these verses, Ezekiel clearly describes a worldwide regathering in unbelief, from wrath and for wrath, in preparation for a specific period of judgment that will then lead to a national salvation, and in turn to their final restoration.\(^\text{15}\)

The key passage dealing with a worldwide regathering in preparation for blessing is Isaiah 11:11-12.

**READ Isaiah 11:11-12**

Again, let me quote Dr. Fruchtenbaum:

The regathering described in this passage is the second one (v. 11a), in faith in preparation for the millennial blessings. This regathering is not merely local, from the nations of the Middle East (v. 11b), but from all over the world (v. 12).\(^{16}\)

The entire context is Isaiah 11:11-12:6. In this context, he is speaking of the final worldwide regathering in faith in preparation for blessing. Isaiah numbers the final worldwide regathering in faith in preparation for the Messianic Kingdom as the second one. In other words, the last one is only the second one. If the last one is the second one, how many can there be before that? Only one. The first one could not have been the return from Babylon since that was not an international regathering from the four corners of the world, only a migration from one country (Babylonia) to another (Judea). The Bible does not allow for several worldwide regatherings in unbelief; it allows for one worldwide regathering in unbelief, followed by the last one, the one in faith, which is the second one. This text only permits two worldwide regatherings from the four corners of the earth. Therefore, the present Jewish State is very relevant to Bible prophecy.\(^{17}\)

The worldwide regathering that we see today will experience the Russian invasion.

In addition, the worldwide regathering we see today is the first regathering, in unbelief, for judgment.

**4. The Characteristics of the Final Regathering**


b. Prophesied – Isa. 11:11-12:6

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5. The Blessings of the Mosaic Covenant

At this point, let me say something about blessings of the Mosaic Covenant. Many believers, especially those of Christian Zionist persuasion and some fellow Messianic Jews, will take serious issue with the following remarks. However, if you look at what Scripture says and compare what is happening in the Land of Israel today I think you will tend to agree with me.

What I want to say is this: the modern state of Israel is not experiencing the blessings of the Mosaic Covenant today – rather we are experiencing the curses of the covenant.

a. Deuteronomy 28

READ Deuteronomy 28:1

First, note that the Mosaic Covenant is conditional. If the Jewish people obey God, then these blessings will shower down. However, the modern state of Israel is basically a secular state. 90% of the Israelis are atheists or agnostic and 99% of all Israelis have rejected the Messiahship of Yeshua. Israel is not diligently obeying the Lord. This fact alone should tell us that God is not blessing the nation in the manner intended under the Mosaic Covenant. Furthermore, Israel is not the most exalted nation on the face of the earth today. In contrast, she is the most reviled nation on the planet today.

READ Deuteronomy 28:2-6

Israel is prospering today. However, that prosperity cannot be the prosperity pledged in the Mosaic Covenant because Israel is a secular nation.

READ Deuteronomy 28:7-10

While the nation has experienced miraculous deliverance from her enemies over the past many years, the nation is not feared by her enemies. Modern Israel has a very powerful military presence. That has caused the surrounding enemies to treat her with respect, but they stand ready to pounce on any perceived Israeli weakness. The military situation is hardly what is envisioned under the blessings of the Covenant.

READ Deuteronomy 28:11-14

Again, the prosperity the modern state experiences is not what is envisioned under the blessings of the covenant. Verse 12 is telling. Verse 12 says that Israel will be so prosperous that she will not borrow from any other nation. The truth of the matter is the fact that Israel has relied heavily on millions of dollars in grants and loan guarantees from the United States in order to survive.

Now let's look briefly at Leviticus 26

b. Leviticus 26

READ Leviticus 26:1-2

Unfortunately, idol worship is back in the Land.

READ Leviticus 26:3-4

Israel has been suffering a time of drought rather than abundant rains. In 2001, the Sea of Galilee sank to an extremely low level endangering Israel's water supply.
READ Leviticus 26:5-10

This state of security is hardly present today. Instead Israel is harassed within and without by her enemies. On April 24, 2002, the Mayor of Jerusalem stated this about the terrorism that stalks the Land of Israel:

In Israel, the war is being fought, not 5,000 miles, but 500 feet from the bedrooms of our children and we do not feel we have to apologize for defending ourselves. Israeli News, 4/24/02

READ Leviticus 26:11-13

God is not walking in the midst of Israel today, although He will during the Messianic Kingdom.

In other words, Israel is not experiencing the blessings of the Covenant today. Rather she is experiencing the curses of the Covenant.

6. The Curses of the Mosaic Covenant

Let me quickly outline the curses of the covenant in Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26. You are currently in Leviticus 26 so let's continue into the chapter.

READ Leviticus 26:14-17

The first curse is sickness, harassment, and insecurity in the Land.

READ Leviticus 26:18-20

Additional curses for disobedience include drought and famine.

READ Leviticus 26:21-22

The next curse promised is danger from wild animals.

These judgments came upon Israel before and during the Assyrian invasions.

READ Leviticus 26:23-26

Then comes war and the hunger caused by siege.

These elements were fulfilled by the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions.
**The First Regathering: Zionism and the Modern State of Israel**

**READ Leviticus 26:27-33**

The awful promise of devastation, deportation, and dispersion follows. Did you notice verse 29? All this will include the curse of cannibalism. These curses have come upon Israel twice.

First during the Babylonian destruction and then during the Roman destruction of 70 A.D.

**READ Leviticus 26:34-35**

Here Moses describes the state of the Land after the fullness of judgment has come. The Land will lay desolate. Again, this was experienced during the Babylonian exile and for the past 2,000 years after the Romans expelled us from the Land.

**READ Leviticus 26:36-39**

During this time of desolation, the state of the people is described. The Jewish people are described as fearful, weak, dispersed all over the world, and persecuted. This is a very apt description of the past 2,000 years. An even more detailed description of these curses is found in Deuteronomy 28:15-68.

However, a dramatic change is then promised in Leviticus 26.

**READ Leviticus 26:40-46**

Here God promises restoration to the Land after a worldwide dispersion.

The topic of our class lies in between verses 39 and 40. How God brought about the promised restoration to the Land – the First Regathering. The regathering in unbelief in preparation for judgment. The final judgment of the Tribulation Period – the Time of Jacob's Trouble.
The Curses of the Mosaic Covenant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sickness, Harassment, Insecurity, Drought, Famine, Wild Animals</th>
<th>Assyrian and Babylonian Invasions</th>
<th>Babylonian and Roman destructions</th>
<th>Roman destruction</th>
<th>Antichrist’s Destruction</th>
<th>Restoration, Peace, End of Suffering</th>
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<td>After the Babylonian and Roman destructions</td>
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<td>Tribulation Diaspora</td>
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</table>
7. The Times of the Gentiles

Just what exactly is the Times of the Gentiles? The definition of this topic can best be derived from Luke 21:24:

…and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

The Times of the Gentiles is best defined as that long period of time from the Babylonian exile to the Second Coming of the Messiah. During this time period, Gentiles are allowed to dominate the city of Jerusalem. This does not rule out temporary Jewish control over the city: the Maccabean Period, the current period. However, the Times of the Gentiles will end when Gentiles will no longer trample down the city of Jerusalem.

Additional passages covering this subject are Daniel 2:31-45, Daniel 7:1-28, Revelation 13:1-10 and Revelation 17:7-14

We are in the "Times of the Gentiles" right now. The evidence of that fact is the dominance of the Temple Mount by the Muslims and the fact that ownership of East Jerusalem is disputed today. There is a spiritual reason why the Palestinians demand that Jerusalem be their capital city.

E. The Principle of Expansion and Contraction

The next introductory topic I would like to cover is the principle of expansion and contraction. Let me begin by asking the question, “Have the Jewish people ever possessed all of the Promised Land?” The answer to that question is a resounding, “No!” The greatest extent of possession occurred during the reign of King Solomon. At that time Israel possessed between 50% to 75% of the Land.

Let’s remember back to what we learned about the Abrahamic Covenant. The two principles we discovered previously were these: 1) Jewish ownership of the Land is unconditional, based on the Abrahamic Covenant, and 2) enjoyment of the Land Blessing, the Land Promise, is contingent on obedience.

Now the principle of expansion and contraction comes into play. If Israel is obedient, then God will increase possession of the Land up to the full borders promised under the Abrahamic Covenant. However, if Israel is disobedient, then God will reduce the territory that the nation enjoys. These principles are found in Deuteronomy 19:8-9 and 2 Kings 10:31-32.

The following charts illustrate how the principle of expansion and contraction has been experienced during the life of the nation.
### Ancient Possession of the Land

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
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### Modern Possession of the Land

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F. Chronological Sequence of Events (Compiled by Fruchtenbaum, A. G., Footsteps of the Messiah (Tustin CA: Ariel Ministries) 2003, pages 91-140)

Prophetic Events That Have Taken Place

World War 1 and World War 2
Reestablishment of the State of Israel
Jerusalem Under Jewish Control

Prophetic Events That Have Not Taken Place

Russian Invasion of Israel
One World Government
The Ten Kingdoms
Rise of the Antichrist
Period of Peace and False Security
The Seven Year Covenant

Prophetic Events That Cannot Be Chronologically Arranged

Rapture of the Church
Worldwide Blackout
Return of Elijah
The Third Temple

G. Islam

My final introductory topic is the topic of Islam. I am not an expert in Islam and I do not want to be. However, I have included a short article in your outline that will help acquaint you with Islam. It’s important to have an introductory knowledge of Islam when you study the history of the modern state. Islam is the most obvious persecutor of the Jewish people today – so you need to know something about it.

Please note what I am not saying – I am not saying that Islam is prophesied in the Bible or that the anti-Christ is a Muslim or anything like that. I am simply supplying you with an article about Islam so you can begin to understand the preeminent enemy of the modern state of Israel.
Islam – The Fastest-Growing Religion on Earth?
SIM NOW

By the turn of the century, nearly one-quarter of the people on earth will consider themselves Muslims.

Islam has exploded from 400 million adherents in 1960 to a projected 1.3 billion by the year 2000. And while part of this growth is due to the dawah, the Koranic command to spread the faith, most of the increase is due to high birth rates in Asia and Africa. From these statistics comes the claim that Islam is the world’s fastest-growing religion.

The highest concentrations of Muslims are currently in Asia and the Middle East, with Indonesia’s 550 million people forming Islam’s largest nation. But Islam is also expanding from its traditional areas into the former Soviet Union, Europe, and North America. In fact, Islamic students today form the largest group of international students in North American universities.

What is Islam?

The word “Islam” means total submission to the will of God, and a Muslim is one who submits. The God of Islam is Allah, and the Koran (Arabic Qur’an) is its primary sacred book.

Muslims believe the Qur’an is the literal word of God, given to the prophet Muhammad by the angel Gabriel. It was put in writing after Muhammad’s death in 632 A.D. and is divided into 114 suras, or chapters.

Angels play an important role in Islam, especially the recording angels who write down each person’s good and bad deeds. Both will have to be accounted for on judgment day, and only those whose good deeds outweigh the bad will be admitted to heaven, if Allah wills.

Islam recognizes Jesus as a prophet – but to the Muslim, it is blasphemy to call Him the Son of God or equal with God, because by Islamic doctrine Allah can have no partner or offspring.

In Islamic tradition, God has sent 124,000 prophets to earth, the first being Adam, “the chosen of Allah”; Noah, “the preacher of Allah”; Abraham, “the friend of Allah”; Moses, “the speaker”; Jesus, “the word and spirit of Allah”; and Muhammad, “the seal of the prophets.”

Of Christ’s crucifixion, death, and resurrection, the Qur’an says: “They killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them . . . they killed him not – Nay, God raised him up unto Himself; and God is exalted in Power, Wise” (sura 4:156-158).
Muslims believe that Jesus will return to earth in the last days as a Muslim, marry, have children, die, and be buried near Muhammad.

Of the Trinity, the Qur’an teaches: “Say not, ‘Three.’ Refrain; better it is for you. God is only one God” (sura 4:171).

**Islamic Life**

Because works play a major role in gaining paradise, Islamic life revolves around its “five pillars” of religious practice:

- **Tashahhud**, the declaration that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is his prophet.
- **Salat**, ritual prayer (in Arabic), performed five times a day facing Mecca.
- **Zakat**, giving alms to the poor.
- **Saum** (fasting), abstaining from food and drink during the daylight hours of the month of Ramadan. Ramadan is said to be the month in which the Qur’an descended from the highest to the lowest heaven. During the month of fasting, Muslims are encouraged to examine their lives and repent from evil.
- **Hajj**, the pilgrimage to Mecca, required of every believer who is financially and physically able to undertake the trip.

Another important segment of Muslim belief is jihad, or holy war against the opponents of Islam. Those who die in jihad bypass the day of judgment and go directly to paradise.

**A Religion of Contrasts**

Despite what some consider its “simplicity, rationality, and this-worldliness,” Islam is a religion of contrasts. On one end of the spectrum is a militant fundamentalism; in the middle, a mainstream, cultural Islam; and on the other end, a folk or popular Islam mixed with animistic practices from pre-Islamic religions.

While many Muslims see Shari’a, Islamic law, as unchanging, others make a distinction between the unchangeable message of the Qur’an and the temporal regulations for everyday life. Shari’a is said to come from four sources: the Qur’an, hadith (traditions about the sayings and deeds of Muhammad), Islamic legal interpretations, and the consensus of the community.

From these varied sources, for instance, come the different practices on a woman’s place in assorted Islamic societies.
In many instances, Shari’a can be brutally strict, mandating amputations and public floggings for sins. To fundamentalists, conversion from Islam is a capital offense.

Yet alongside this orthodoxy, traditions of animism and mysticism remain. Some Muslims still wear talismans, cast spells, consult Tarot cards, and placate jinns (genies).

“Throughout much of the Muslim world,” writes George Otis Jr. in *The Last of the Giants*, “the spirits of violence and divination have become familiar house guests.”

And while Islam is a powerful unifying force for the Muslim community, the average Muslim knows little of the contents of the Qur’an apart from a few commonly recited passages.

**Holy Places**

Islam’s holiest place is the Ka’ba, a massive stone shrine in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. It is 50 feet high and nearly 40 feet square. A smooth black meteorite is embedded in its southwest corner. The Ka’ba is said to have been built by Adam and Eve after they were cast out of the Garden of Eden. Muslims believe the meteorite was given to Ishmael by the angel Gabriel and personally set into the stones by Abraham as he rebuilt the Ka’ba after it had fallen into ruin.

Before the coming of Muhammad, the Ka’ba was a place of idol worship, housing 360 gods.

Today the idols are gone. And each year more than 2 million of the faithful make their pilgrimage to Mecca. Upon returning to their homelands they become, once again, evangelists for one of the fastest-growing religions on earth.

**Muhammad and the Expansion of Islam**

By any standards, Muhammad had little chance of amounting to much in life. Yet during his 62 years on earth, he would light a fire that would one day rule the hearts and minds of hundreds of millions of people.

Muhammad never knew his father, who died before the child was born. His mother died six years later, and the boy was passed to his grandfather and then to his uncle, who cared for him until he was grown.

In the bustling trade center of Mecca, the boy grew to become a respected trader. His travels exposed him to Judaism and Christianity, deepening his interest in spiritual things yet causing him to grow intolerant of the spiritism and idolatry of his people. Nevertheless, his own notion of a sovereign God was mingled with many of the fears and superstitions of his ancestors.
One night, after months of meditation on Mount Hira, 40-year-old Muhammad “suddenly became aware of a ‘presence.’ Moments later, he was caught up in a ‘revelation’ that would prove to be the primal spark of the Islamic religion. There are indications that at first he thought he had been enveloped by an evil spirit. Shaken by his experience, he went home to his first wife, Khadija, who wrapped him in a blanket and persuaded him that he had not been possessed . . .” (The Last of the Giants, George Otis Jr.).

The messages from this and subsequent visitations became what is today the Qur’an, and Muhammad became the prophet of Allah.

Mecca soon became Muhammad’s stronghold, and its Ka’ba, a large stone shrine, became the focal point of Islamic worship. But the people of Mecca, bitter over the loss of their idols, drove out Muhammad and his followers in the summer of 622 A.D. They fled to Medina, 250 miles to the north. Muslims mark the year of the flight, or Hegira, as the beginning of their calendar.

Muhammad’s power grew, however, and six years later the people of Mecca conceded the right of Muslims to make the Ka’ba the center of their pilgrimage.

The rapid growth of Islam was through military, rather than theological, persuasion. In 630 A.D., an army of 10,000 Muslims recaptured Mecca. By the time of Muhammad’s death in 632, Islam’s armies had conquered most of Arabia.

A century after the death of the prophet, Islam embraced more territory than did the Roman Empire.

**H. Rabbinic Thoughts**


One empire cometh and another passeth away, but Israel abideth forever.

*Derek Eretz Zuta, Perek ha-Shalom*

Israel is likened to the dust and the sand. As nothing can grow without the dust of the soil, so the nations of the world cannot exist without Israel, through whom they receive their blessing.

As sand mixed in bread injures the teeth, so those who persecute Israel suffer for it.

As sand cannot be burned in fire, but turns into glass, so Israel cannot be consumed in the fire of Gehenna, but emerges stronger from Purgatory.

*Pesikta Rabbati, 11, 5.*
Why is Israel like an olive? As the olive gives its oil only by being crushed, so does Israel repent only through chastisements.

*Menahot, 53*

Why is Israel likened to an olive? Because as an olive’s oil cannot be mingled with other substances, so Israel cannot be mixed with other peoples.

*Shemot Rabbah, 36, 7*

As oil does not mix with other liquids, so is it with Israel. As oil always rises to the top of liquids, so, too, does Israel.

*Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah, 13*

Israel is like a vine. A vine is trodden underfoot, but later its wine is placed on the table of the king, so too does Israel, at first oppressed, come to greatness.

*Nedarim, 49*

Those who persecute Israel are unwearyingly.

*Sanhedrin, 104*

As the Myrtle is sweet to him who smell it, but bitter to him who bites into it, so Israel brings prosperity to the nation which grants them kindness, and depression to the people who afflicts them with evil.

*Esther Rabbah, 6, 5*
Application

Let me close this section of the class with some thoughts of application. First of all, always remember that Zionism is not subjective. Zionism is backed by objective Biblical support. If you're a Zionist, I would suggest that you defend the Jewish right to the Land from the Scriptures we've looked at. Defend Jewish rights to the Land and the idea of a Jewish national home from the Biblical support I’ve just presented. All other arguments contain a limited amount of clout. All other arguments are simply man's social, political, and economic reasons. Man's social, political, and economic reasoning changes as easily as the breeze. The Word of God, in contrast, is a firm anchor that can never be moved.

Isaiah 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.

Man's reasons are like grass and flowers – here today, gone tomorrow. However, God and His revelation are rocks – mountains we can utterly depend on. Zionism and the Jewish return to our homeland are important ingredients in the plan of God for this world.

Theological Summary

Why the unending struggle in the Middle East? There are five factors in play:

1. There is a religious war in progress: Islamic paganism against Biblical truth.

2. Personal war of Satan against God: Satan is desperately trying to save himself. When the Abrahamic Covenant is fulfilled his career is over. He will be cast into his final abode, the Lake of Fire.

3. The Abrahamic Covenant: there have been promises made to the Jewish people. If the Abrahamic Covenant can be perverted or prevented from being fulfilled, then God is shown to be weak and a liar because He cannot keep his promises. The Glory of God is wrapped up in the Abrahamic Covenant. The character of God is a fundamental component of the Abrahamic Covenant.

4. The discipline of the Mosaic Covenant is in play do to Jewish disobedience. We are suffering from the curses of the covenant.

5. Prophecy must be fulfilled: The Times of the Gentiles. Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.
The First Regathering: Zionism and the Modern State of Israel

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II. Background – Historical Survey of the Period

66 A.D. to 1839 A.D. – Continuous Jewish presence in the Land

Halfway between Safed and Naharia, in northern Israel lies the little village Peki’in. A synagogue can be found near the entrance of the town. This synagogue is an ancient structure. It is claimed that the two carved stones in its walls once belonged to the Herodian Temple in Jerusalem. The Zaïna-ti family that worships there traces their origin back to the first century as well. The family members note with pride that they are the only Jews in Israel whose ancestors lived uninterruptedly in Eretz Yisrael since the first century. They are correct. They are authentic. These Jews are the embodiment of a physical Jewish connection with Israel that never was cut. The Romans may have laid the entire nation waste between 70 and 135 A.D., slaughtering between 600,000 and 1,356,000 Jews and carrying off between 101,700 and 300,000 into slavery. Yet in the aftermath of that monumental dispersion a few thousand Jews somehow remained in the country. Heavily taxed and denied the right to visit Jerusalem, the survivors made their homes in Galilee, farming the Land and working their trades. And they remained. They remained, married and raised families up until this very day.

The point I want to make is that the modern State of Israel did not really begin in 1948. The modern State of Israel is a nation whose heritage spans the 2,000 year gap between the first century and 1948. The Jewish people may have been dispersed from the Land, and the nation cease to be a recognized political entity, yet Jewish people have lived in the Land for the entire time of the dispersion.

We’ll be looking at the rise of the modern State of Israel in this class. As we do, we need to keep in mind that we’re not studying the birth of a nation. Instead we’re studying the resurrection of that nation. There’s a world of difference between the two statements.

We’ll start at a particular point in time as we look at the rise of the modern State, but we’re only doing that because of the limitations of this class. The history of the modern

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19 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 18.
State does not begin with Zionism – the history of the modern State continues with Zionism.

So, before we get into our study of Zionism and the History of Israel I’d like to do an extremely brief historical overview of the Land of Israel from the first century until the rise of Zionism.

**66 to 634 A.D. – The Roman Period**

In 66 A.D., the Jews in Israel rose in revolt against Rome in an effort to free their homeland from Roman rule. Jerusalem fell and the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D., but it took approximately two more years of mopping up operations to finish the job. With the capture of the Dead Sea stronghold of Masada in 73 A.D., the war against Rome came to an end. A strong Jewish presence remained in the Land, especially in Galilee.

In 132 A.D., Emperor Hadrian published new restrictive laws against the Jewish religion. In addition, he decided to build a new city on the ruins of destroyed Jerusalem and erect a pagan temple on the site of the burned-down Jewish Temple. In response the Jews of Israel rebelled once more under the leadership of Bar Kochba. It took three years before the Romans succeeded in putting down this bloody uprising.

Don Cassius states that about 580,000 Jews fell by the sword, not counting those who perished from starvation, disease, and related causes. Many others were sold as slaves. Hadrian now carried out his plans in the belief that he would extinguish forever all Jewish hopes of the Restoration of the National Homeland. A new city was built on the ruins of Jerusalem and called Aelia Capitolina. A pagan temple was reared on the site of the old Temple. An edict was issued prohibiting on pain of death any Jew from entering or even approaching the vicinity of the new city. The name of the province of Judea was changed to that of Syria Palestina. The name “Palestine” was given to the Land of Israel following the failure of the Bar-Kochba rebellion.

In the interval between the end of the Bar-Kochba revolt and the Muslim invasion, Israel enjoyed peace from outside invasion and measure of prosperity. In approximately 395 the extensive territories of the Roman Empire became divided into an eastern and western part. For the next 250 years Israel was part of the eastern half of the empire.
You’ll hear this era referred to as the Byzantine era. The modern name for this time period was derived from the name of the capitol city of the eastern branch of the Roman Empire – Byzantium. This city which gave the era its name was rebuilt and adopted as the capitol of the eastern branch of the Roman Empire by Constantine I. He officially called his capitol New Rome, but it was commonly referred to as Constantinople. From all that – the time period is called the Byzantine era.\(^{20}\)

During this period, the Jews in Palestine were concentrated in Galilee where they formed the majority of the population. The number of Jews in Palestine in the seventh century is estimated to be about 200,000.\(^{21}\)

**634-1099 – The Arab Period\(^ {22}\)**

This long era of external peace and relative prosperity came to an end in 634 with the conquest of Palestine by the Arabs. The Muslim followers of Mohammad poured out of the deserts of the Arabian peninsula. Within a hundred years they overran vast spaces extending from central Asia, through northern Africa, the Spanish peninsula, to the very borders of Southern France. There the Arab onrush was brought to a halt by the French forces under Charles Martel.

During the Arab period the Jews lived in all parts of Palestine and derived their livelihood from agriculture and handicrafts. Tiberias was the Jewish center in the seventh and eighth centuries. There were important Jewish settlements in Lydda, Ramleh, Ashkelon, Caesarea and Gaza. Some Jews took up their residence in Jerusalem.

There was a revival of Jewish religious life in Palestine in this era, probably under the stimulus of a vigorous intellectual activity encouraged by the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphs. This period saw a revival of interest in the study of the Hebrew language, a fresh outpouring of Hebrew poetry, and the activities of the Masoretes which culminated in the


\(^{21}\) Kac, *The Death and Resurrection of Israel*, pg. 19

\(^{22}\) *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Ltd., 1972), vol. 9, col. 259
production of the all-important Masoretic text of the Old Testament. Many of the Synagogue hymns, still in use today, were the works of Palestine poets of that time period.

After the decline of the two great Talmudic centers in Babylonia and the expiration of the Babylonian exilarchate, Palestine became once again the spiritual center of Jewry. The head of the Jerusalem Yeshiva assumed the title of “Gaon of Jacob” and was recognized as the religious authority for all Jews living in the territory ruled by the Fatimid dynasty. The Jewish sect of the Karaites, who rejected the talmudic regulation of Jewish life, established in Jerusalem an ascetic brotherhood called the “Mourners of Zion.” They made Jerusalem the center of their movement.

However, the number of Jews in Palestine in the Arab period was not large. The political unrest and the natural catastrophes which visited Palestine in that period impoverished the economic resources of the Palestinian Jews and reduced their numbers.23

1099-1291 – The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem24

Now we come to the period of the Crusades. The Crusades were motivated by three sets of circumstances: 1) Political – Europe’s readiness for territorial expansion; 2) economic – the desirability to establish commercial relations in the rich East; 3) religious – the sense of solidarity felt by Christendom of the West towards the Byzantine State representing Christendom in the East. There existed a highly emotional desire to deliver the Holy Land of Christendom from the hands of the Muslims.

There were several Crusades, the first of which began in 1096. Jerusalem was captured in 1099. The conquest of Palestine by the Crusaders was followed by massacres of the Jews. The Crusader Kingdom continued until the death of Guy de Lusignan – the last king of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. After his defeat by Saladin in 1187, in the battle of the Horns of Hattin, Palestine became divided into Christian and Muslim sections. Jerusalem surrendered to Saladin in October 1187. The period finally closes in 1291. The next major period we come to is the period of the Mamlukes.

23 Kac, Death and Resurrection of Israel, pg. 20
24 Encyclopaedia Judaica, vol. 6, col. 267
1291-1516 – The Period of the Mamlukes (Mamelukes)²⁵

The word Mamluke means slave.²⁶ The reason for this name lay in the fact that they were foreign slaves. Some of them were Turkish, others of Circassian descent. Forty-seven of these Mamluke Sultans reigned in the space of 276 years. Only one family retained power for four successive generations. Most of the others lasted only for a period of a few years. Some of them were insane; others, illiterate. Many came to the throne by assassinating their predecessors, and were in turn murdered themselves. Yet the Mamlukes repelled successive invasions of the Mongols, and completed the liquidation of the Latin colonies in the Near East. There was a constant trickle of Jewish immigrants to Palestine in the Mamluke era.

1517-1917 – The Period of the Ottoman Empire

While the Mamluke empire was decaying from within, the Osmanli Turks, better known as the Ottoman Turks, were moving up to the forefront of events in Asia. In 1453 Constantinople fell to their arms, and thus came to an end the eastern division of the Roman empire. In 1517, under the leadership of Selim I, Syria, Palestine and Egypt were overrun.

In the beginning of the Ottoman rule, Syria and Palestine were rearranged for administrative purposes. Palestine, as under previous regimes, did not form a single administrative unit. Jerusalem, Nablus, Gaza, Sidon, and Beirut constituted one unit, while Galilee became part of the Pashalik of Sidon.

²⁵ Encyclopaedia Judaica, vol. 6, col. 274
For defensive reasons Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566) rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem which are said to be the same walls surrounding the old city to this day. In the first two hundred years of Turkish occupation Palestine, while ravaged by incessant internal wars, experienced no invasion from the outside.

The first such invasion came at the very end of the 18th century during the Napoleonic wars. After occupying Egypt in July, 1798, Napoleon crossed into Palestine in the beginning of 1799. He took Jaffa and moved on to Tyre where he laid siege to the city, but he failed to capture it. Jerusalem was never attacked. In June, Napoleon recrossed into Egypt and August 1799, he left for Europe.

Turkish policy was favorable to the Jews in general. The Turks probably aimed to attract the Jews from the oppression of the European countries in order that the Turkish empire may benefit from Jewish economic activities. Accordingly, Palestine received a sizable influx of Spanish Jews when the Jews were driven from Spain in 1492.

Galilee was still the center of Jewish population in Palestine. Safed was the most important city. There Jews developed a thriving wool-weaving industry. Safed was also known as the center of Jewish mysticism. In Safed lived Joseph Caro, Spanish-born Jew who was raised in Turkey. Caro combined with his Jewish mysticism a profound knowledge of the Talmud. It was he who composed the Shulhan Arukh designed to regulate the daily life of the Jew in accordance with Rabbinic teachings. The Jerusalem Jew, Isaac Luria was also active in Safed. Under his leadership the Zohar became the absorbing study of the Jewish mystics.

Safed had a Jewish population of some 15,000 by the middle of the 16th century. In addition the city of Tiberias was rebuilt. Jerusalem occupied third place as the center of Jewish residence and intellectual activity. Hebron had but a small Jewish community which was struggling for survival amidst a powerful and hostile Muslim populace.
Summary – 66 to 1839

During all this period of nearly two thousand years, Palestine was not even a name on the political map of the world. It was a portion of a larger province, whether, Roman Byzantine, Arab, or Turkish. Its people were never conscious of themselves as a national unit, nor did they ever attempt, as they had done in early and later Israelite days, to form an independent Kingdom. At no time in the recorded history of Palestine was the country one independent political state except under the Jews. Palestine’s political identity was destroyed when the Jewish National Homeland was destroyed.

When, at the end of the 19th century, the Jews began to return to the country with a renewed determination to rebuild their National Homeland, Palestine once more re-emerged from obscurity. In 1948 the State of Israel was re-established and Palestine became again, after a lapse of more than two thousand years, an independent State.

With this background in mind let’s pick up our study of Zionism proper. We’re now at Roman numeral 3 on your outline. You’ll notice that I haven’t supplied you with a traditional outline for this class. What I’ve supplied you with is a time line. We’re going to work down that time line year by year covering the important people and events in chronological order. I’m doing this because previous courses of this nature that I’ve listened to usually tackle the material topically rather than chronologically. When that happens I usually get very lost. I loose my reference point regarding when that event transpired. For me, I need a starting point to orient myself. I do better when I can see the events unfold step-by-step one-after-the-other. So, because I wished that others had taught this material chronologically I thought that I would give it a try myself.

With all that in mind, I need to explain that I will not be rigidly chronological. When we come to a specific date I may have to back track a few years and supply you with some essential background material leading up to the event that I am discussing. Likewise, I may take us beyond a specific date so that you can see the effect of that event as a whole.
For example, when I discuss a significant person I will begin by associating him with an important date in the chronology of this course. Then I usually back up and discuss his background, next, I will discuss the key event in the chronology, and finally, I may continue on discussing his life until he dies. In this manner I will usually discuss the topic in one place before going on to another topic. I find it easier to understand if one topic is discussed completely before going on to the next. This dictates that I not be rigidly chronological in my approach.

We’ve surveyed the situation in the Land of Israel from the first century until 1839. In 1839 the beginnings of the modern Zionist movement began to appear. At this point in our study we need to be familiar with a number of political and economic terms that will be showing up on a regular bias.

**Democracy, Socialism, Communism, Capitalism**

**Democracy** is a form of government, a way of life, a goal or ideal, and a political philosophy. The term also refers to a country that has a democratic form of government. The word democracy means rule by the people.

The citizens of a democracy take part in government either directly or indirectly. In a direct democracy, also called a pure democracy, the people meet in one place to make the laws for their community.

Most modern democracy is representative democracy. In large communities – cities, states, provinces, or countries – it is impossible for all the people to meet as a group. Instead, they elect a certain number of their fellow citizens to represent them in making decisions about laws and other matters. An assembly of representatives may be called a council, a legislature, a parliament, or a congress. Government by the people through their freely elected representatives is sometimes called a republican government or a democratic republic.

Most voting decisions in democracies are based on majority rule – that is, more than half the votes cast.

**Socialism** refers to economic and political arrangements that emphasize public or community ownership of productive property. Productive property includes land, factories, and other property used to produce goods and services.

The term **Communism** has several meanings. Communism can be a form of government, an economic system, a revolutionary movement, a way of life, or a goal or ideal. Communism is also a set of ideas about how and why history moves, and in what

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direction it is headed. These ideas were developed mainly by V. I. Lenin from the writings of Karl Marx.

According to Communists, their long-range goal is a society that provides equality and economic security for all. Communists traditionally have called for government ownership rather than private ownership of land, factories, and other economic resources, called the means of production. They also have called for government planning of economic activity, and for strict rule by the Communist Party.

**Capitalism** is an economic model that calls for control of the economy by individual households and privately owned businesses.

1839 – Judah Alkalai

We begin in Belgrade, Yugoslavia with an Orthodox Rabbi named Judah Alkalai. Judah Alkalai was born at the end of the 18th century. Alkalai was an obscure preacher in a little Sephardic community, Semlin, near Belgrade. In 1839 he astounded his congregants by publishing a Ladino-Hebrew textbook *Darchei Noam* (Pleasant Paths). In the introduction he alluded to the need for establishing Jewish colonies in the Holy Land as a necessary prelude to the Redemption. In his later writings – the best known was *Sh’ma Israel* (Hear O’ Israel) – Alkalai noted that self effort taken by Jews toward establishing the Redemption was justified by the very “proof texts” of tradition. In other words Jews could work for establishing the Redemption, they didn’t have to wait for the coming of the Messiah. The dominant view in Jewish life at this time was the view that the Messiah had to come first before Israel could return to the Land.

In 1840 a significant event occurred in Damascus that influenced his thinking deeply.

1840 – Damascus blood libel

In 1840 the efforts of influential Western Jewish leaders achieved the release of several unfortunate Jews imprisoned in Damascus on blood libel charges. Alkalai detected in this “miracle” of vigorous secular action a precedent for the future stages of redemption in Palestine. In 1843 he wrote a booklet entitled *Minchat Yehuda* (Offering of Judah). In his booklet he declared:

> It is written in the Bible: “Return, O LORD, unto the tens of thousands of the families of Israel” ... [But] upon what should the divine Presence rest? On sticks and stones? Therefore, as the initial stage in the redemption of our souls, we must cause at least 22,000 to return to the Holy Land. This is the necessary precondition for a descent of the Divine Presence among us; afterward, He will grant us and all Israel additional signs of His favor.”

During his remaining 35 years, Alkalai continued to publish his ideas extensively. In the end, he himself settled in Palestine as an example to others. Before his death in 1878, the energetic rabbi managed to organize a small group of followers. One of his disciples was Simon Loeb Herzl, the grandfather of Theodore Herzl.

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28 Sachar, *A History of Israel*, pg. 6
1843 – Zevi Hirsch Kalischer

Alkalai’s views were paralleled to a remarkable degree by a contemporary and colleague – the Orthodox rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer. Kalischer served a large congregation in the Polish-speaking city of Thorn, East Prussia. Kalischer enjoyed a rather substantial following. As a result, he was given an immediate and respectful hearing.

In 1843 he published his views in a two-volume work entitled Emunah Yesharah (An Honest Faith). In 1862 he completed his presentation in a final volume, Drishat Zion (The Search for Zion). Three principle ideas were developed in these volumes; 1) The salvation of the Jews, as foretold by the Prophets, could take place through natural means, that is, by self-help and did not require the advent of the Messiah, 2) colonization of Palestine should be launched without delay, 3) the revival of sacrifices in the Holy Land was permissible. He wrote:

Pay no heed to the traditional view that the Messiah will suddenly loose a blast on the Great Shofar and cause all the inhabitants of the earth to tremble. On the contrary, the Redemption will begin with the generation of support among philanthropists and with the gaining of the consent of the nations to the gathering of the scattered of Israel into the Holy Land.29

Only when many pious and learned Jews volunteered to live in Jerusalem would the Creator hearken to their prayers and speed the Day of Redemption.

In addition he urged four more steps be taken: 1) The formation of a society of rich Jews to undertake the colonization of Zion, 2) settlement by Jews of all backgrounds on the soil of the Holy Land, 3) the training of young Jews in self-defense, 4) the establishment of an agricultural school in the Land of Israel where Jews might learn farming and other practical subjects.

Kalischer’s notion of “practical messianism” was appealing enough to win over a small but influential group of contemporaries who joined him in founding a “Society for the Colonization of the Land of Israel.”

1856 – HaYishuv HaYashan (Old Settlement)

During this time Jews were filtering back into the Holy Land. In 1856 the Jewish population exceeded 17,000. Most of these newcomers were devoutly religious and as a result more than 1/3 chose to settle in Jerusalem. The name attached to them was

29 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 7
HaYishuv HaYashan – the “Old Settlement.” Their motivation was the sacred mission of living, worshipping, and dying on holy soil.

**Chalukkah**

Few of the Jews in Jerusalem or elsewhere in Israel were self supporting. They depended heavily upon the charitable generosity of Jews abroad. By the 1860’s the systematic collection and distribution of these gifts amounted to half the income for the Jerusalem Jews and 1/3 of the income for the rest of Palestine Jewry. This system of charity became known as Chalukkah (division).

During this time a tremendous national awaking was sweeping Europe. Rabbi Kalischer wrote in one of his articles:

> All the other peoples have striven only for the sake of their own national honor; how much more should we exert ourselves, for our duty is to labor ... for the glory of God who chose Zion!\(^{30}\)

One of the most original responses to this nationalist awaking in 19th century Europe was the response of Moses Hess.

**1862 – Moses Hess publishes *Rome and Jerusalem***

Moses Hess was the son of an Orthodox Jewish family of Bonn, Germany. In 1857 the writings of Rabbi Kalischer were drawn to his notice. They impelled Hess to begin a systematic study of Jewish history. The result was Hess’s second book *Rome and Jerusalem* published in 1862.

In this book he asserted that return to the Land of Israel was indispensable if the Jews were to shed their function as a historical anomaly, a social parasite in the Lands of other peoples. Only on ancestral soil would Jewish labor find it possible to organize on “correct Socialist” principles.

Hess issued the warning that a national homeland offered the Jews their last and best chance of self transformation into a “normal” people. We would be freed from the vulnerable phantom status that historically had provoked anti-Semitism.

*Rome and Jerusalem* ignited no fires in the Jewish world – not in 1862. Only 200 copies of the work were sold in the five years after its appearance. Hess’s writings carried a warning that more than Jewish religious or national ideals awaited fulfillment in

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\(^{30}\) Sachar, *A History of Israel*, pg. 10
Palestine; sheer physical existence was also at stake. He insisted, “We shall always remain strangers among the nations.”

1869 – Nachlat Shi’vah (Plot of the Seven) purchased

During this period of time doubts were accumulating in Orthodox settlers regarding the viability of the Chalukkah system. Men of unquestioned Orthodox persuasion began to see that the Chalukkah charity system was detrimental both to reverence or survival.

In 1869 the leader of this group, Joel Moshe Salomon and six of his friends bought a tract of land outside the city wall of Jerusalem. Later entitled Nachlat Shi’vah (Plot to the Seven), the purchase represented Jerusalem Jewry’s first voluntary, self-financed undertaking beyond the ancient Jewish quarter.

1870 – Mikveh Israel founded

If you’ll remember back to my remarks about Rabbi Kalischer you’ll recall that he advocated the establishment of an agricultural school in the Land of Israel where Jews might learn farming and other practical subjects. At Kalischer’s initiative the Alliance Israelite Universelle, a renowned French Jewish philanthropy, provided the initial subsidy for a Jewish agricultural school in the Holy Land. It was established near Jaffa in 1870 and called Mikveh Israel (Hope of Israel). This school would eventually have a lasting positive impact on the resettlement of the Land. Note this name Mikvah Israel. It will crop up time and time again in our study.

1874 – Death of Zevi Hirsch Kalischer

Late 1870’s – Chovevei Zion

By the late 1870’s Zionist study circles and clubs had begun to function in the hundreds in Russia. Some called themselves “parties” or “assemblies.” A number adopted such titles as Ezra or Maccabi. All were generally known as Chovevei Zion – Lovers of Zion.

31 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 12
You’ll also hear them referred to by the synonymous term Hibbat Zion (Love of Zion).\textsuperscript{32} While these are essentially synonymous terms there is a distinction between them. Hibbat Zion is a term that primarily identifies the ideology – the philosophy – while Chovevei Zion primarily identifies the people who held to this philosophy. Their common ingredient was acceptance of their credo, “there is no salvation for the People of Israel unless they establish a government of their own in the Land of Israel.”\textsuperscript{33}

A few of these early groups simply offered courses in the Hebrew language and history. Others established choirs or gymnastic and self-defense organizations. The meetings were conducted secretly, for Zionism, like other varieties of minority nationalism, was quite illegal in the Tsarist empire. At this time there was no central direction to the Chovevei Zion cause.

1874 – Mea Sh’arim (100 Gates) purchased

Mea Shearim was established in 1874 as the second settlement outside the walls of the Old City by a building society of 100 shareholders. Pooling their resources, the society members purchased a tract of land outside the Old City, which was severely overcrowded and plagued by poor sanitation, and built a new neighborhood with the goal of improving their standards of living.\textsuperscript{34}

1878 – Petah Tikvah founded

In 1875 Joel Moshe Salomon – the man who spearheaded the purchase of Nachlat Shi’vah (Plot of the Seven) – embarked on a quest for farmland. The search took three years. In 1878 an available tract was located and purchased in the Sharon valley, six miles from Jaffa. It was a wild and desolate stretch, lacking roads or assurance of Ottoman police protection. Even so, the soil appeared fertile and water was available from the nearby Yarkon River. Mud huts were erected for the 26 initial families. Salomon and his companions dubbed the settlement Petach Tikvah (Portal of Hope).

Unfortunately, the river was not only a source of water but also of mosquito’s. During the projects first year many of the farmers were struck down by malaria. Some died. Others were deserted by their families. Until the first grain harvest the survivors were continually racked by hunger as well as disease. When the crops were reaped they found no market among the Jews of Jerusalem, whose religious leaders were unforgiving of Salomon’s “heresy.”

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\textsuperscript{32} Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 16, col. 1037

\textsuperscript{33} Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 16

\textsuperscript{34} http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mea_Shearim
In the second year, the Yarkon flooded the settlement. Broken now in body and spirit the Jewish farmers abandoned their effort and returned to Jerusalem. Petach Tikvah lapsed into wilderness.

Death of Judah Alkalai

1881 – Eliazar Ben Yehuda arrives in Israel

During the years prior to WWI a crucial linguistic framework was being established for the Zionist redemptive effort. While Hebrew studies did exist outside the Land under the agency of Chovevei Zion Groups they were virtually nonexistent in the Holy Land itself. Until the later 1870’s the handful of Jewish schools operating in Israel were almost entirely religious and conducted in the Yiddish language on antiquated Orthodox lines. The emergence of modern Hebrew, a language capable of secular, vernacular use, awaited the heroic achievements of a sparrow chested little Russian Jewish philologist Eliezer Perlman – better known by his adopted surname Eliezer Ben-Yehuda.

He was born of Orthodox parents and received a religious education. Eliezer, however, joined thousands of his generation in turning from pietism to Haskalah secularism. The Haskalah movement was a Jewish philosophical movement in Europe that stressed secularism and assimilation. From Haskalah Eliezer turned to Zionism. His vision of language as the decisive component of modern nationhood awaited his years as a student at the Sorbonne. There he became acutely conscious of the role of literature in the growth of French nationalism. He wrote his fiancee in 1880,

I have decided that in order to have our own land and political life it is also necessary that we have a language to hold us together. That language is Hebrew, but not the Hebrew of the rabbis and scholars. We must have a Hebrew language in which we can conduct the business of life.

35 Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 7, col. 1433
36 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 82
The following year, 1881, Ben-Yehuda, 23 years old, married his fiancée, Devora, aged 27, and they departed for Israel. From the moment they boarded the ship, they vowed to speak no other language but Hebrew. That pledge was never broken.

The couple’s next years in Israel were poverty stricken. In Jerusalem Ben-Yehuda earned a pittance teaching Hebrew for an Alliance school. His every free moment was devoted to editing a succession of Hebrew-language newspapers. In the 1880’s the circulation of these newspapers barely exceeded 200. There were occasions when he and his family were evicted from their room for lack of rent money. At times they nearly starved.

Ben-Yehuda did not make his situation easier because he incessantly attacked the Orthodox. He constantly upbraided them for their opposition to secular Hebrew, secular labor, and for fostering the Chalukkah (charity) community. He called Chalukkah a “social crime.” The Orthodox retaliated by stoning his office and denouncing him to Ottoman authorities for “treason.” He was once briefly jailed. They also placed him under the rabbinical ban of excommunication. When his wife died of tuberculosis in 1891 the Orthodox refused her burial in the Ashkenazic cemetery. This retaliation still goes on today long after Ben-Yehuda’s death. The Israeli government considers Ben-Yehuda’s home an historic spot and so have marked the house with a plaque. However, whenever the government puts the plaque up the Orthodox tear it down. This putting up and tearing down still goes on even today. When I visited Israel in 1994, Arnold took us by Ben-Yehuda’s house. There on the wall, by the door, was the obvious place where a memorial sign had once been affixed.

Nevertheless, Ben-Yehuda’s work began to have its impact. Soon, all the agricultural colonies subscribed to his newspapers and purchased his textbooks. He became a power in the Yishuv, and eventually in the Zionist world at large.

By the turn of the century

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37 Sachar, *A History of Israel*, pg. 82
he was well launched on the project that would absorb the remainder of his life, the creation of a modern Hebrew dictionary. Pursuing his research with books and other materials sent to him by disciples in Europe, he relentlessly tracked down the Semitic roots of words that ultimately he incorporated into a contemporary vernacular.

By 1904, modestly endowed, at last, by grants from Jewish sources, Ben-Yehuda published the first volume of the dictionary. It was virtually an encyclopedia of the Hebrew language. It was a monumental work of scholarship. He would complete three more volumes before his death. Afterward the undertaking would be expanded by his successors into a seventeen-volume series. It became the definitive basis for a revived spoken and written language.

In putting Hebrew into vernacular use, Ben-Yehuda counted heavily on the Yishuv’s teachers. At the turn of the century the largest number of these were employed by the Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden. By 1914 Hilfsverein operated a network of 50 schools throughout the Yishuv, from kindergartens through secondary institutions. They provided instruction for 7,000 children. It was due mainly to Ben-Yehuda’s efforts that the Hilfsverein laid renewed emphasis upon Hebrew studies.

The Alliance schools were conducting the major portion of their instruction in Hebrew as were the schools in the Zionist agricultural colonies. Additionally, 60 Zionist schools in the towns and outlying farm colonies, some 2,600 students, were using Hebrew as their sole medium of instruction. Most of the Zionist’s farmers and workers accepted fully Ben-Yehuda’s contention that a nation was its language no less than its sweat and blood.

Just before WWI, the directors of the Hilfsverein schools began offering a number of courses taught exclusively in German. The issue of German verses Hebrew did not become urgent until plans were laid to establish a Haifa Technical Institute. Funds for such a “Technion” had been made available by the estate of Wolf Wissotzky, a Russian Jewish Tea merchant. The Jewish National Fund supplied the Land in Haifa, with the Hilfsverein as the administrating agency. The Hilfsverein was determined that the Technion should be the very capstone of the Yishuv’s educational structure. The German Jewish members of the Technion’s board of governors proposed that all technical subjects be taught exclusively in German. German was recognized as the language of science and Hebrew, in contrast, was deficient in technical vocabulary.

The decision produced a wave of indignation among the Zionist settlers. Ben-Yehuda was infuriated. He warned the Hilfsverein’s directors that, “Blood will flow in the streets.” At Ben-Yehuda’s instigation protest meetings were organized by Jewish students and teachers throughout the Yishuv. In October 1913, the Hebrew teachers Associations proclaimed a strike in all Hilfsverein schools and the students demonstrated outside the German consulate in Jerusalem. The Technion crises seemingly threatened the entire Hebraic nature of the Zionist renaissance.

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38 Sachar, *A History of Israel*, pg. 84
Aware of what was at stake, the Zionist Organization immediately set about establishing more than a dozen new Hebrew-language schools. Four months later, in February 1914, the language controversy ended when the board of governors reconsidered that matter and agreed that all Technion courses would be taught only in Hebrew. From then on, the commitment to a Hebrew vernacular for the Yishuv was never in doubt.

By 1916, the fulfillment of Ben-Yehuda’s dream was in sight. A census that year indicated that 40% of the Yishuv’s population spoke Hebrew as their first language. The little philologist’s accomplishment was formidable and widely recognized. When Ben-Yehuda died in Jerusalem in December 1922, 30,000 people escorted his body to its grave and Israel’s Jewry observed three days of official mourning.

1882 – Leo Pinsker publishes Autoemancipation

One year after Ben-Yehuda and his wife arrived in Israel and began their early years of poverty another significant Zionist appeared on the scene named Leo Pinsker. Leo Pinsker was the son of an “enlightened” family of Odessa, Russia. Odessa was the nerve center of mid-nineteenth-century Haskalah.

In the 1860’s Pinsker’s vision of the Jewish future was consistent with the Haskalah. It was one of cultural self-expression within a pluralistic Russia. In 1871 an anti-Jewish outbreak briefly exploded in Odessa. Deeply unsettled by the episode, Pinsker withdrew from all Jewish public activities for the next seven years and brooded upon the evident failure of his cherished ideal of enlightenment. Eventually he organized his views in writing and published a lengthy essay in 1882 entitled Autoemancipation.

In this work Pinsker outlined his central idea: normal dealing between peoples were founded on mutual respect, not love. It was unlikely the Jews ever could be accorded such respect because they lacked its prerequisite of national equality. He wrote:

The Jewish people has no fatherland of its own, no center of gravity, no government of its own, no official representation.\(^\text{39}\)

\(^\text{39}\) Sachar, *A History of Israel*, pg. 15
Rather, the Jews were perceived as a kind of “phantom people,” bearing many of the characteristics of nationhood without the final, indispensable, ingredient of a land of their own.

There is something unnatural about a people without a territory, just as there is about a man without a shadow.\textsuperscript{40}

Worse yet, as a phantom people, the Jews inspired fear among the non-Jewish majority. Whatever people feared they hated. The solution to the Jewish condition, Pinsker insisted, lay not in reliance upon the will-o-the-wisp of emancipation, but in a concerted attempt by the Jews to utilize their waning moment of opportunity to restore a national home of their own.

Pinsker attached no special importance to Israel.

The piece of land might form a small territory in North America, or a sovereign Pashalik in Asiatic Turkey ...\textsuperscript{41}

What counted most was recognized nationhood on a land, any land. Until Pinsker, the vulnerability of the Jews as a homeless people had never been demonstrated quite so systematically. For the first time Jew-hatred was analyzed as a deeply complex social phenomenon, bearing little relationship to education or progress in conventional terms.

Almost immediately Autoemancipation evoked a responsive chord among its readers. Very quickly Pinsker became one of the most admired men in Russian Jewry. For a while he was the very heart of the young Zionist movement.

In 1884 Pinsker set about organizing his nondescript collection of followers into a national movement. His followers were that unorganized, unofficial, and illegal group of Zionist study circles and clubs known as the Chovevei Zion. Pinsker, by virtue of his prestige and by virtue of the general recognition that he was the natural leader of the growing Zionist movement, took the initiative. He would bring organization and focus to the Chovevei Zion groups in 1884.

**Beginning of first Aliyah**

Between 1882 and 1903 25,000 Jews entered Palestine. This was the single largest influx since the Spanish Expulsion decree of 1492. This upsurge of immigration is usually described as the First Aliyah – the first immigration wave. The term Aliyah comes from a Hebrew word that means “to go up.” The term eventually became a term describing

\textsuperscript{40} Sachar, *A History of Israel*, pg. 15

\textsuperscript{41} Sachar, *A History of Israel*, pg. 15
immigration. In fact, it consisted of two main waves – one from 1882-84 and one from 1890-91.\textsuperscript{42}

The First Aliyah immigrants came from Russia. There were two main reasons; 1) the Russian Pogroms of 1881, 2) the renewed anti-Jewish policy of the Russian government as reflected in the “May Laws” published in May 1882. The “May Laws” imposed new political restrictions and disabilities on the Jews of Russia and brought to an abrupt end the era of liberalism of the preceding decade under Tzar Alexander the Second.

These new developments caused many Jews in Russia to despair of any hope of a permanent improvement in the position of Jews in Russia. The expulsion of the Jews from Moscow in 1891 provided a fresh impetus to Jewish emigration from Russia and sent more Jews to Israel, thus completing the First Aliyah. The immigrants of the First Aliyah were mainly middle class men, teachers, students, artisans, and tradesman. Some of these had enough of their own means to enable them to settle in the country.\textsuperscript{43}

Many of the immigrants came under the influence of the Chovevei Zion organizations. All but 5% of the newcomers settled in the towns – Jerusalem, Jaffa, Hebron, and Haifa. At this time it became evident that the unorganized Chovevei Zion organizations, while attracting many followers, were ineffective agencies of immigration. This led to the formation of the Bilu.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{42} Sachar, \textit{A History of Israel}, pg. 26
\textsuperscript{43} Kac, \textit{The Death and Resurrection of Israel}, pg. 117-118}
Bilu organized in Russia

It was a group of youthful idealists that decided to take the initiative in establishing a creative foothold in Israel. In January, 1882 thirty young men and women gathered in Kharkov, Russia in the lodgings of a university student, Israel Belkind, to discuss the “plight of the nation.” There they formed an emigration society, later to be know as “Bilu” – a Hebrew Biblical acrostic of “House of Jacob, let us go.”

Nineteen of the youths made a commitment to abandon their studies or professions in favor of immediate departure to the Land of Israel. The others would recruit new members to establish a model agricultural colony in Israel.

In July, 1882 they shifted their headquarters from Kharkov, Russia to Odessa, Russia. At the end of July, 1882, 17 members of the group sailed for Constantinople. From there, an advance guard of 13 men and one woman sailed for Israel, reaching Jaffa 5 days later.

Intent upon securing at least a minimum of agricultural experience before launching a farm of their own the young pioneers eventually received their first opportunity at Mikveh Israel, the training school established 12 years earlier by the Alliance. The French teachers evidenced no sympathy for their ideals. The Biluites were driven mercilessly in their field work, 11 to 12 hours a day, until they neared collapse. One of them wrote:

> The overseers kept pressing us, giving us not a moment’s rest. They had been instructed ... to drive this “spirit of folly” out of us and compel us to leave.44

In the summer of 1882 the Biluites had little reason to be optimistic. Sickness was undermining their will to go on. They had no funds to enable them to develop a model colony of their own.

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44 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 29
Rishon Le-Tzion founded

Almost at the last moment, help materialized in the form of two Jerusalem Jews, Zalmen Levontine and Joseph Fineberg. During the previous year these men had collected money for land purchase from investors in Jerusalem and Europe. They managed to acquire a 100 acre tract of land 8 miles inland from Jaffa. Erecting their shacks there they dubbed the new settlement Rishon l’Zion – “First to Zion.”

At this point touched by the plight of the Biluites, Levontine and Fineberg persuaded the others to allow the youngsters to join the venture. Immediately 11 of the Biluites took up shelter in a make shift dormitory hut set aside for their use. Pooling their last resources they cleared the soil and planted maize and vegetables. Unfortunately, the harvest season had passed. After 2 months both food and money were exhausted and Rishon l’Zion faced the very real threat of starvation. Completely dispirited 5 of the original pioneer group decided to return to Mikveh Israel, 6 to Russia.

At this same time Petach Tikvah which had been abandoned several years earlier was being resettled by newcomers from Europe. They fared no better than Rishon l’Zion. Disease, heat, exhaustion and robbery sapped their will and resources. Jewish settlers were preparing to abandon an evidently hopeless cause.

1883 – Beginning of Baron Edmond Rothschild’s help of Jewish settlements

Their rescue came from an unanticipated source – Baron Edmond de Rothschild. In the autumn of 1882, he granted an audience to Joseph Feinberg, one of the two founders of Rishon l’Zion. Fineberg had gone to Europe on a desperate fund-raising effort to save his colony. Rothschild, the rich and eminent banker, was moved to tears by Feinberg’s account of the pioneers’ self-sacrifice. Immediately he offered 30,000 francs for the purpose of drilling a well at Rishon l’Zion and implied that additional help would be forthcoming.

Soon after Rothschild dispatched an expert French agronomist to Israel to instruct the Bilu farmers and hired the director of the Mikveh Israel school as overseer of Rishon l’Zion. In return for his help, Rothschild stipulated only that his contributions not be made public. His wish was honored for many years. Somewhat cryptically, the settlers referred to their patron as HaNadiv HaYadua – “the well known benefactor.”
Petach Tikvah also turned to Rothschild for help. By 1888, 28 families relied on him for their daily income. However, Rothschild’s support was not a blank check for the colonists to operate their farms according to their own judgment. The experts he sent from France and from Mikveh Israel became his overseers, charged with the day-to-day administration of the settlements.

Before long, a radical change took place in the farmers’ status. Eventually they were stripped of all authority to determine the crops they might plant and sell. It became the decision of the overseers. This kind of paternalism not only eroded the farmers’ initiative, it undermined their morale as well. They resented their dependence upon the caprice of the overseers. Although well aware by then that they might starve without Rothschild’s help the colonists openly voiced bitterness at their transformation into “serfs.” The nine Biluites continuing on at Rishon l’Tzion and Mikveh Israel were fully as despairing under Rothschild’s supervision as they had been in their earlier, hungrier days.

1884 – Gederah founded

Once again, in the fall of 1884, an alternative solution developed unexpectedly. Yechiel Pines, a Russian Jew who had emigrated to Israel in 1878, had brought with him a modest sum collected from the various Chovevei Zion groups. With this and other borrowed funds, Pines had established a craftsmen’s society for the Biluites in Jerusalem in 1882.

Now, with the remainder of the money, he purchased 700 acres of land near Yavneh, a few miles inland from the coast. He turned it over to the Biluites. In December of 1884, their number reduced to 8, the Biluites set up a single wooden shack on the site. They called the farm Gederah (Sheepfold). Deprived of access to Rothschild’s experts the Bilu youths misplanted their subsistence crops and in the end were reduced to meals of radishes and potatoes. By the beginning of 1886 their situation was quite desperate. It appeared that Gederah would not survive. Gederah did, in fact survive, but it was only through the generosity of Baron Rothschild. The handful of settlers that remained abandoned the notion of a cooperative community. Like the colonists at Rishon l’Zion, Petach Tikvah and other villages, they began to accept handouts from Paris and hire cheap Arab labor.
The original Biluites refused to endure this surrender. By the end of the 1880’s all of them had abandoned Gederah, some for the cities, some for western Europe. Their experiment apparently had failed.

**Kattowitz conference of Hibbat Zion**

It was apparent now that the idealism, motivation, dedication of the Chovevei Zion groups were inadequate to bring about independent immigration to Israel. At this point Leo Pinsker took the initiative and summoned as national conference of the various Chovevei Zion societies. To circumvent the Russian authorities, the meeting was convened in Kattowitz, a German city.

Thirty-four delegates attended the initial gathering. They reached a consensus that financing Jewish settlement in Israel was their first priority. Only in the Land of Israel, it was agreed, could the People of Israel be transformed into a viable society and nation.

The organization’s central office was established in Odessa. As president there of the Chovevei Zion, Pinsker was charged with directing a growing stream of Jewish immigrants to the Holy Land. In the 1890’s the Chovevei Zion grew rapidly in many parts of Europe and overseas. Dr. Nathan Birnbaum, a leader in the movement first coined the term “Zionism.”

By the time Theodore Herzl appeared on the scene in the 1890’s he encountered in Europe and in America the nucleus of a thoroughly respectable Zionist movement. Its various societies provide him with the largest number of his followers, including 90% of the delegates attending the First Zionist Congress in 1897.

**1889 – Benei Moshe founded by Achad HaAm**

In 1889 the Zionist dream of a Jewish national home was shaky. This crisis was perceived at the very outset by Asher Ginzberg, a leading member of the Chovevei Zion in Russia. He was born in the Ukraine of a Chasidic family. He was married off at the age of 17 to a girl he had never set eyes on until the day of the wedding. Then he was locked in a modest family business for which he exhibited neither enthusiasm or aptitude. He became an insatiable reader in virtually all European languages. Eventually he took up residence in Odessa, a major Jewish intellectual center. Only upon reaching Odessa did Achad HaAm become an active member in the Chovevei Zion.

He then began to devote his phenomenal scholarship to one cause, the solution to the Jewish problem. Ginzberg wrote under the pen name of Achad HaAm (One of the People). In 1889, in an article entitled “Lo Zeh Derech” (“This Is Not the Way”), Achad
HaAm had warned his fellow Zionists about the failure of Zionism’s infiltrationist methods of establishing a Jewish homeland. He insisted that the basis of Jewish national revival in Europe itself was not capable of supporting a major pioneering venture in the Holy Land. One recourse alone was open, Achad HaAm insisted. The was to mobilize the help of Western Jews in organizing an international society for building the Yishuv. Only such a body was capable on negotiating a charter of Jewish settlement with the Ottoman Empire, and afterward of buying and preparing land for “systematic and orderly habitation.”

His purpose was to ensure that the national spirit of the Jewish people was fully ignited. The essay aroused widespread resentment among the members of Chovevei Zion. Somewhat taken aback by the reaction Achad HaAm later modified his views. He proceeded to elaborate upon his conception of the Land of Israel as essentially a “national spiritual center” for the revival of Judaism throughout the world – the proper goal of the Zionist movement. His obsession with spiritual and cultural awakening began to have its impact, even among the most relentless “practical” Zionists. His pen name soon became the most important in the Zionist world. Wiezman recalled of him:

He had the profoundest effect on the Russian-Jewish students in Europe ... the appearance of one of Achad HaAm’s articles was always an event of prime importance. He was read and discussed endlessly ... He was … what Gandhi had been to many Indians, what Mazzini was to young Italy a century ago.

It was to cultivate the spiritual-cultural ideal that Achad HaAm, in 1889, founded a select elitist group, the Benei Moshe, within Chovevei Zion. The societies accomplishments were important. It founded a national land-purchasing fund, which later was handed over to the “official” Jewish National Fund. They published a series of newsletters in Jaffa giving accurate information on developments within the Yishuv. They established the first Hebrew-language school, also in Jaffa, and later a collection of Hebrew libraries throughout Israel. They organized a nucleus of secular, Hebrew-language day schools in Russia proper as well as the influential Achiasaf (Hebrew-language) Publishing Company.

This Russian Jewish essayist became the conscience of tens of thousands among the east European Jews who flocked to the Zionist movement. He insisted that political Zionism, far from developing naturally out of Jewish tradition, was hardly more than an artificial concoction of Europeanized Western Jews. From the late 1890’s then, Achad HaAm’s campaign against “mere” political Zionism and Herzl’s diplomatic leadership transformed him into the most feared and respected critic of the Zionist world. Achad HaAm was destined to become the most influential of “cultural” – as distinguished from “political” – Zionists.

45 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 35
46 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 57
1890 – Rehovot and Haderah founded

During the latter part of the 1890’s emigration to Israel slowed to a trickle. The Chovevei Zion organization itself remained in the doldrums. Denied legal status in Russia it was unable to collect funds.

However, in 1890 the tsarist regime permitted Chovevei Zion to begin conducting activities. From 1890 on the organization had a permanent office in Odessa. In 1890 and 91, as a result, 3,000 Russian and Rumanian Jews departed for Israel. In 1890 the Odessa Committee – as the Chovevei Zion organization was known to the rest of the Zionist world – opened a bureau in Jaffa under the direction of Ze’ev Tiomkin.

Unfazed by the Ottoman government restrictions, he managed to purchase several large tracts of land on behalf of Chovevei Zion. He resold the Land to settlers. In this fashion two important farm colonies, Rehovot and Haderah, came into Jewish hands outside the influence of the Rothschild administration.
1894 – Theodore Herzl and the Dreyfus affair

He was exceptionally striking in appearance with dark burning eyes, chiseled features and a rich “Assyrian” beard. His demeanor was consciously aristocratic. The self-assurance was magisterial to the point of arrogance. This was Theodore Herzl.

He was born in Budapest in 1860, the son of an affluent banking family. His parents maintained a nominal Jewish allegiance, attending the Liberal (Reform) temple each week and observing the major Jewish festivals.

Theodore Herzl underwent Bar Mitzvah, and even attended Jewish communal school. Yet his ambitions, as those of his family, were to excel in the realm of German culture. He attended the University of Vienna, enrolling in the faculty of law. Receiving his doctorate of jurisprudence in 1884, he accepted a quasi-official position in the ministry of justice.

Virtually every free moment, however, was spent in the writing of plays and literary essays, and before a year had passed he had abandoned the law entirely. Herzl’s chosen medium of expression was a popular European literary form that offered commentary on the social and cultural events of the time (feuilleton). He became an instant success. In 1887 he took an editorial position with a newspaper and later held other senior editorial positions. In 1891 he accepted the envied position of Paris correspondent for Austria’s leading newspaper.

His wife, the beautiful, wealthy, Julie Naschauer, was high-strung and unstable. Following the birth of their first two children, she lived in a state of near-chronic hysteria. Separations of the couple were frequent; after the birth of their third child they lived together only intermittently.

Herzl was increasingly preoccupied by the Jewish question. During his university days, he had accepted the fashionable liberal view that religious and racial prejudices ultimately would vanish in an enlightened age. Yet the mounting intensity of nationalist anti-Semitism began to leave its mark. From 1892 on, his columns from Paris devoted increasing attention to anti-Semitism in the French capitol.
Herzl’s despairing preoccupation with the Jewish question predated the Dreyfus Affair. However, it was markedly intensified by the arrest and degradation of that unfortunate French Jewish army captain.

**Alfred Dreyfus** was an assimilated Jew who was falsely accused of spying. Herzl as a reporter covered his trial. When Dreyfus was found guilty, Herzl wrote of the anti-Semitism of the mob. The bystanders taunted Dreyfus with shouts of, “Death to the Jews.”

This was Herzl’s critical moment of recognition. He saw most clearly that assimilation was not the solution to the Jewish question. Religious and racial prejudice would not disappear with the advent of a so called “enlightened age.”

For the first time in his adult life he began attending Jewish religious services. He even began formulating a Jewish novel that envisaged the revival of the Promised Land by a suffering race. Sometime, surely in the winter and spring of 1895, the Zionist idea took form in Herzl’s mind. He began transcribing his thoughts on the Jewish question in a notebook:

> For some time now I have been engaged in a work of indescribable greatness. ... It has assumed the aspect of some powerful dream. But days and weeks have passed since it has filled me utterly, it has overflowed into my unconscious self, it accompanies me wherever I go, it broods above all prosaic conversation ... it disturbs and intoxicates me. What it will lead to is impossible to surmise as yet. But my experience tells me that it is something marvelous. Even as a dream and that I should write it down – Title: “The Promised Land.”

So began Herzl’s astonishing diary. The opening pages described an electrifying vision that left its author breathless, that possessed him;

> walking, standing, lying down, in the street, at the table, at nighttime, I must above all master myself, I believe that for me life has ceased and world history begun ... The Jewish State is a world necessity.

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47 Sachar, *A History of Israel*, pg. 38

48 Sachar, *A History of Israel*, pg. 39
An early “chapter” of the diary was especially titled “An Address to the Rothschilds.” Herzl intended to read it to the banking family assembled in council, and if necessary to rework it later into a book.

In August 1895, Herzl consulted Dr. Moritz Gudemann, Chief Rabbi of Vienna, and read him the “Address to the Rothschilds.” The rabbi evidently was moved, and suggested that the document be published. Herzl discussed the suggestion with a friend, Doctor Max Nordau. Nordau was enthralled. Embracing his friend, he cried, “If you are mad, we are mad together! Count on me. I am with you!” From then on, Nordau remained Herzl’s most intimate collaborator.

It was Nordau who proposed, at this point, that Herzl visit Israel Zangwill, an eminent Anglo-Jewish novelist, and a man of considerable reputation among British Jewry. His reception of Herzl’s ideas was courteous, if generally noncommittal. Encouraged by the visit, nevertheless, Herzl returned to Vienna, where he set about pruning, taming, and organizing the notes for his “Address to the Rothschilds” into a formal 65 page essay.

1896 – Herzl publishes Der Judenstaat (The Jew State)

What emerged from this effort was Der Judenstaat. In English the title reads “The Jew State.” Herzl was deliberately flinging the word “Jew” into the teeth of anti-Semites and those acculturated Western Jews who preferred such euphemisms as “Hebrew” or “Israelite.”

Herzl declared in his preface:

The idea which I have developed in this pamphlet is an ancient one. It is the restoration of the Jewish State. ... I shall do no more than suggest what cogs and wheels comprise the machinery I propose, trusting that better mechanics than myself will be found to carry the work out ... The world needs the Jewish State; therefore it will arise.

Herzl’s central thesis of Der Judenstaat is this:

We are a people – one people. We have sincerely tried everywhere to merge with the national communities in which we live, seeking only to preserve the faith of our fathers. It is not permitted us.

49 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 39
50 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 40
51 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 40
Only one solution remained. It was an exodus, a gathering together of the Jews from their worldwide dispersion into a land of their own. Political principle will provide the basis, technology the means, and the driving force will be the Jewish tragedy. As you can tell from these quotes, Herzl was a Europeanized, nontraditional, agnostic Jew.

*Der Judenstaat* was published in Vienna on February 14, 1896. English and French translations soon followed. *Der Judenstaat* introduced Zionism to European readers, to editors, university men, statesmen, an other molders of public opinion, in the kind of language they were accustomed to reading. However, the initial reception of *Der Judenstaat* was less than favorable. The central European press, shocked by the “aberration” of one of its most distinguished, ridiculed Herzl as the “Jewish Jules Verne.” Even Chief Rabbi Gudemann, whose loyalty Herzl felt was assured now changed his mind.

Scorn and exasperation were by no means the only reactions. *Der Judenstaat* was received warmly by Kadima, the Zionist student society of Vienna. David Wolffsohn, a leading Zionist of Cologne, Germany was entirely overwhelmed by *Der Judenstaat*. He immediately traveled to Vienna to meet Herzl. It was through Wolffsohn, in turn, that Herzl was introduced to the leader of the German Chovevei Zion. Through them he learned of the writings of Pinsker and Hess and of the tremendous Zionist renaissance in eastern Europe. Although the Tsarist censorship forbade publication of *Der Judenstaat* in Russia, central European Jews began smuggling copies of the book into Russia.

Soon Herzl’s name and legend grew. Telegrams and letters of thanks poured in to Herzl from Chovevei Zion societies in Bulgaria, Galacia, Russia, and Palestine, calling upon the “new Moses” to accept leadership of the movement.

**1897 – First Zionist Congress convenes in Basle, Herzl president**

The notion of calling a “general Zionist day,” which ultimately evolved into a Zionist congress, was first suggested to Herzl in January, 1897 by Willi Bambus and Theodore Zlocisti, members of the German Kadima society. Official invitations were issued for the gathering, scheduled for late August in Munich.

The western Jewish response was one of outrage. The idea was denounced as treason to the Fatherland and a danger to Judaism. The site of the Congress was finally shifted to Basle, Switzerland. Delegates from 15 countries, 204 representatives in all, were present.

During his presentation to the congress Herzl emphasized that the older methods of piecemeal colonization in Palestine, deprived of international legal recognition, no longer were adequate. A new, permanent, and “official” body was required henceforth in order
to cope with the Jewish question more directly and forcefully. The aim of Zionism would be “a Jewish homeland openly recognized, legally secured.”

For the achievement of the goal the Congress approved 4 steps: 1) The encouragement of settlement in Palestine by Jewish agricultural workers, laborers, and artisans 2) The unification of all Jewry into local and general (Zionist) groups, 3) The strengthening of Jewish self-awareness and national consciousness, 4) Diplomatic activity to secure the help of various governments.

The Congress established as its instrument a permanent Zionist Organization. Herzl was unanimously elected president of the Zionist Organization. The three days of discussion finally concluded with the singing of a Hebrew anthem “Ha Tikvah” (The Hope). In his dairy, Herzl later wrote:

If I were to sum up the Basle Congress in a single phrase – which I would not dare make public – I would say: “In Basle I created the Jewish State.”

The First Zionist Congress gave powerful impetus to Zionist propaganda throughout the world. Hundreds of societies were formed to augment the old Chovevei Zion groups in affiliation with the Zionist Organization. Membership in the organization was climbing steadily.

1898 – Second Zionist Congress

52 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 46
53 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 46
In August 1898, a Second Zionist Congress was convened, also in Basle, and this time the number of delegates had risen to 349. Among the new representatives were those who would emerge subsequently as the future giants of the movement. One of those new representatives is a man we’ll encounter more and more in our study – Chaim Weizmann.

At the Second Congress detailed reports were given not merely on the circumstances of Diaspora Jewry, but of Palestinian Jewry as well. Leo Motzkin, whom the Zionist Organization earlier had sent to Palestine, now warned that under current legal restrictions a mass migration to the Holy Land was impossible. On the other hand, in Herzl’s view, infiltration was equally out of the question; it was the very opposite of his entire purpose. A third choice accordingly was endorsed by the Congress. This was to simultaneously improve the unification of the Yishuv by colonization and industrialization and at the same time to pursue all possible diplomatic efforts to acquire a charter of Jewish settlement in the Holy Land.

1899 – Third Zionist Congress

During the year of 1899, Herzl recognized that German influence was essential to convince the Ottoman Empire to look favorably upon a Jewish charter. Eventually he obtained an audience with Kaiser Wilhelm II. The Kaiser was at first enthusiastic about the Zionist idea because he thought that it would free his country of politically radical Jews. However, when it had been made clear that the Ottoman Sultan would have nothing to do with Zionism and an independent Jewish kingdom, the Kaiser dropped the Zionist cause and refused to receive its representatives. This was a bleak period of Herzl.

The third Zionist Congress met in August of 1899. Herzl explained his diplomatic efforts and asked drafts of a charter be written.

Jewish Colonial Trust Fund founded

At this meeting a bank “The Jewish Colonial Trust Fund” was established. This organ would become the depository of funds that were raised for the Zionist Organization. However, impatience with Herzl’s failing diplomatic efforts was growing.

1900 – Fourth Zionist Congress

Not surprisingly the Fourth Zionist Congress meeting in London in August, 1900 was confused and dispirited in its proceedings. At the same time, Herzl’s employers were warning him about ignoring his journalistic responsibilities and his personal fortune was rapidly being depleted by his Zionist expenditures.
1901 – Fifth Zionist Congress

In January, 1901 he wrote in his diary:

The wind blows through the stubble. I feel my autumn approaching. I see before me the danger of leaving no achievement to the world and no inheritance to my children.  

On May 17, 1901 his diplomatic efforts seemed to be bearing fruit. He was received by Sultan Abdul Hamid of the Ottoman Empire. The meeting which received much publicity and enhanced the reputation of the Zionist Organization, but it bore no practical results.

During the Fifth Zionist Congress, assembled in Basle on December 26, 1901, all Herzl could do was speak of the "highest hopes" he entertained following his meeting with the Turkish ruler.

Jewish National Fund established

At this meeting the Jewish National Fund was established for land-buying purposes in Palestine. During the Fifth Zionist Congress an important concern of eastern Jewry reached a climax.

The concern of the “Easterners” – led by Achad HaAm – was the obvious lack of Judaic “spirit” in the activities of secular Herzl and his closest collaborators. A group of 37 concerned delegates met and formed a party within the Zionist Congress. This party was not without influence and it presented a resolution that Herzl accepted. The resolution affirmed that “the education of the Jewish people in a national spirit is an essential part of the Zionist Program.” The resolution advocated the election of a cultural commission whose members included Achad HaAm. The group served essentially as the rallying point for those devoted to the goals of “spiritual, cultural” Zionism.

1902 – Mizrachi founded

As the Zionist Organization grew various parties formed within the movement. This was a testimony to its strength. Various approaches and philosophies within the movement began taking political form.

One of these emerging philosophies was religious Zionism. Religious Zionism was a conscious blending of Orthodoxy and Jewish nationalism. Religious Zionism played an important minority role with the Congresses. Its inspiration was provided by Rabbi Samuel Mohilever. Rabbi Mohilever was an early supporter of Chovevei Zion. He was willing to work side by side with avowed secularists like Herzl. His intention of working pragmatically with the secularists was to induce his fellow Zionists into religious

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54 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 50
observance. As early as 1893, Mohilever had founded a society for promoting his views. It was called Merkaz Ruchani (Spiritual Center) or simply “Mizrachi.”

It was not until the organizational efforts of Rabbi Isaac Jacob Reines, however, one of the authentic giants of Zionist history, that the Mizrachi became a conscious political movement within Zionism. Reines, too, was an early supporter of Chovevei Zion and then of Herzl’s political Zionism. In 1902 he restructured the Mizrachi organization as a faction within the Zionist movement.

Both as a delegate to successive Zionist Congresses and as an author on numerous books on religious philosophy, he preached a form of dual redemption: of the Land of Israel and of the Jewish spirit. Neither could be accomplished, he argued, except within the precepts of strict Orthodoxy. The contribution of Mizrachi lay in the fact that it made Zionism acceptable to traditional elements within Jewish life.

Even with these accomplishments Zionism was in the doldrums from 1901-1903. Very little progress was being made. It happened, then, in early 1902, that the British Parliament appointed a Royal Commission to study the “threat of cheap labor” posed by the influx of Russian Jews into London’s East End. Herzl was asked to appear before the parliamentary body on July 7, 1902 to describe the wretched conditions of east European Jewry and express hope that Britain would continue to offer asylum for fugitives.

Eventually, Herzl was interviewed by Joseph Chamberlain, the British Colonial Secretary. He listened with interest when Herzl explained to him that Palestine was still the ultimate goal of Zionism, but that negotiations were dragging. Herzl outlined a plan to Chamberlain for temporary Jewish colonization of either Cyprus or al-Arish in the northern Sinai Peninsula. Cyprus was ruled out immediately, but Chamberlain set in motion negotiations regarding the al-Arish site and Herzl journeyed to Cairo.

The Egyptian government rejected the idea because they disliked the notion of a Jewish enclave in their territory. Herzl now fell into black despair, even this proposal was unrealized. “It’s simply done for,” he wrote in his diary on May 11. During this period of ebbing morale he dashed off the novel Altneuland (Old-New Land). This novel ends with the famous line, “But if you will it, it is no dream.”

1903 – East Africa Proposal (Uganda project)

In April, 1903 Herzl returned from his ill-fated Cairo trip to report to British Colonial Secretary Chamberlain. Chamberlain unexpectedly dropped another proposal in Herzl’s lap. He proposed that the territory for the Jews was British East Africa – erroneously but popularly known as Uganda. Herzl rejected the location at first.
As it soon developed, Herzl’s commitment to the Holy Land, or something nearby, was shaken by events in Russia. The next month, in May, a savage pogrom broke out in Kishinev. Herzl was shattered by the news of the atrocity. He notified Chamberlain that a Zionist commission of investigation would be sent to British East Africa. At the same time he requested that a charter of Jewish autonomy be written. In Herzl’s mind East Africa was not intended as a substitute for Palestine, but rather as a training ground for it. “We must have and answer to Kishinev.”\(^{55}\) was his thinking. The Jewish people needed something and right away.

**Sixth Zionist Congress**

This same mood of concern and urgency was shared by all factions within Zionism following the Kishinev pogrom. This mood of deep concern filled the Basle assembly hall on August 22, 1903 as the Sixth Zionist Congress got underway. Some kind of rescue effort had to be launched. East Africa was proposed as an asylum for the night.

Reaction was divided and emotional. The resolution to dispatch an investigative commission was passed 295 to 177 with 100 abstentions. The 6th Zionist Congress was soon deeply polarized. To balance out the East Africa investigative commission, a Palestine Commission was also appointed to study the circumstances in the Yishuv. The split soon extended far beyond the meeting hall of the Sixth Congress. Eliezer Ben-Yehuda wrote articles in defense of the East Africa proposal. Bitter debates and threats and impassioned protests followed. Throughout the Zionist world, family bonds and lifelong friendships were shattered over the issue.

While the East Africa Proposal created a crises within Zionism the availability of East Africa rapidly ended. English colonists strenuously opposed a mass influx of Russian Jews and the idea faded into obscurity.

**Vladimir Jabotinsky**

A 23-year-old delegate to the Sixth Zionist Congress was the young man Vladimir Jabotinsky. Jabotinsky was reared in a secular Russian Jewish home. As a youth he passed directly into Russian life, immersing himself in its literature and ideals. Tsarist persecution subsequently shattered his love for Russia. Like Herzl and Nordau, he detected in the vision of a Jewish state an immediate and thrilling opportunity for national freedom and self-assertion. He was overwhelmed by Herzl at the 6th Zionist Congress and became a fiery advocate of “political Zionism.”\(^{55}\)

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\(^{55}\) Sachar, *A History of Israel*, pg. 59
For Jabotinsky, as for Herzl, Zionism prefigured a revolution in character as well as in status. He regarded Zionism as the instrument by which Jews would shuck off their qualities of submissiveness and timidity and become instead bold, proud, and militant.

Jabotinsky traveled widely afterward, becoming a versatile linguist. In Italy, Jabotinsky developed his forceful oratorical style with an instinct for the theatrical. He generated an extraordinary personal magnetism. Ultimately he would become the single most charismatic figure, after Herzl, in Zionist history.

1904 – Death of Theodore Herzl

However, the bitterness of the crises had taken its toll on Herzl. Herzl’s physical strength had already been undermined by his dedication to the Zionist cause. The East Africa struggle was the final assault on his health. A friend was startled by the change in Herzl at this time. He wrote of his experience:

The imposing figure was now stooped, the face sallow, the eyes, those mirrors of a fine soul were darkened, the mouth was drawn in pain and marked by passion.56

In the late spring of 1904, Herzl suffered a mild heart attack, and on June 3 he left for a resort to recuperate. However, on July 1, 1904 his breathing became labored, he coughed blood and lapsed into a coma. On the afternoon of July 3, 1904, Herzl died at the age of forty-four. In his will, the Zionist leader had requested that his body be interred in Vienna, next to his father’s grave, “to remain there until the Jewish people carry my remains to Palestine.”57

The funeral took place in Vienna in July, 7. Six thousand people walked behind the cortege. Stefan Zweig recalled the huge procession was dignified when suddenly:

a tumult ensued at the cemetery; too many had suddenly stormed to his coffin, crying, sobbing, screaming in a wild explosion of despair. It was almost a riot, a fury. All order was overturned through a sort of elemental ecstatic mourning such as I have never seen before or since at a funeral. And it was this gigantic outpouring of grief from the depths of millions of souls that caused me to realize for the first time how much passion and hope this lone and lonesome man had borne in the world through power of a single idea.58

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56 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 63
57 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 63
58 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 63-64
On August 16, 1949, Herzl’s remains were flown to Israel. The next day they were interred on a ridge facing Jerusalem and bearing the name Mount Herzl.

Beginning of Second Aliyah

At the turn of the century two groups of Jewish settlers could be found in Israel – the “Old Yishuv” and the “New Yishuv.” Both groups depended mainly on outside help for survival. The “Old Yishuv” on the Chalukkah charity and the “New Yishuv” on Rothschild or Zionist support.

Jewish population totaled 50,000. Only 5,000 were to be found in the twenty rural colonies. The First Aliyah had been less than successful in producing a “new” Jewish farmer.

In 1903 came the Kishinev pogrom. Russian Jews began making their way to the Holy Land in 1904. Russia was in turmoil at that time. She was involved in the Russo-Japanese war. Taking advantage of the situation the liberal element in Russia staged an uprising demanding social reforms. Its hands tied by the war, the reactionary Russian Government showed at first a willingness to conciliate the revolutionary movement. But when the war ended the Government turned against the liberal elements and the revolutionary movement was crushed in 1905.

The upheaval was suppressed in a nationwide chain reaction of pogroms. For the Jews, in fact, the attendant political and economic oppression was the grimmest yet in their modern experience. Their survival as a people now literally hung in the balance. Accordingly, a massive new Jewish emigration overseas started and gained momentum each year until the outbreak of World War I.

In 1907 an appeal was issued from the Yishuv, specifically by one Yosef Vitkin. Vitkin was a schoolteacher in a remote Galilee farm colony. Vitkin insisted that departure for Palestine should neither be determined by mere doctrine nor be inhibited by earlier failures in the Holy Land. What was required now was simple courage, a mighty joint effort of “chalutziut” – a mighty joint effort of pioneering. It was an eloquent plea.

The vision of becoming chalutsim – pioneers – suddenly exerted a new and compelling attraction. For the majority of the 30,000 Jews who departed for the Holy Land in the Second Aliyah years between 1904 and 1914, Vitkin’s pioneering challenge was the catalyst. This 10 year wave of immigration began another aspect of Zionism called Labor Zionism.
At this point in time we have an number of streams of Zionism flowing:

Political Zionism was started by Herzl and his supporters. Political Zionism stressed the formulation of a state established through political means.

Religious Zionism was promoted by Mizrachi. Religious Zionism stressed religious observance and orthodoxy.

Spiritual/Cultural Zionism was promoted by Achad HaAm and his followers. They focused on the cultural aspect of the Jewish people.


The circumstances awaiting the newcomers in the Land was bleak. Life was physically very harsh. In the largest Jewish village, Petach Tikvah, the attitude of the established capitalist farmers was distinctly unfriendly and even hostile.

Faced with this antagonism, the immigrants wandered from settlement to settlement, in rags, on the edge of collapse from malnutrition. David Ben-Gurion, a 19 year old former student, was one of these immigrants. He succumbed to malaria and nearly died. Possibly 80% of the Second Aliyah returned to Europe or continued on to America within weeks or months of their arrival. Perhaps 2,000 hung on.

The onset of the Second Aliyah coincided with a growing momentum of Jewish agricultural settlement in Palestine. A number of new agricultural settlements were established by capable farmers. However, these settlements were more interested in creating productive villages than in fostering employment for the newcomers.

**1905 – Seventh Zionist Congress rejects Uganda project**

In 1905 the Seventh Zionist Congress met in Basle from July 27 to August 2, 1905. A huge void existed in the Congress due to the death of Herzl. David Wolffshon was elected to the presidency. The Congress likewise gave urgent attention to its future stance. In overwhelming numbers, the delegates rejected any colonizing activities outside of Palestine and voted in favor of emigration and settlement there. The Congress also voted to actively encourage Jewish agriculture and industry in the Holy Land.

**Pogroms in Russia and Poland, mass emigration continues**

**1906 – Hebrew High School established in Jaffa**
**David Ben-Gurion**

In 1906 a 19 year old Polish immigrant named David Green arrived in Jaffa harbor. He would change his name and subsequently would become the single Jewish person most fully identified with the Yishuv. The name this young Polish man adopted was the name **David Ben-Gurion**.

Every facet of his life reflected a stage in the history of Zionism. In the years before 1914 he labored as a farmhand in the citrus groves. During WWI he served in the Jewish legion. After the war he became a leader of the political party Achdut HaAvodah. He would become secretary-general of the Histadrut. In 1935 he was elected chairman of the Palestine Executive of the Jewish Agency and would therefore find himself thrown headlong into the world of statesmanship.

Ben-Gurion was no suave diplomat. In heart he remained a tough union leader – forceful and outspoken and stubborn. He looked the militant role he was to play; short, stocky, his hands still callused, his face hard and weather beaten with a gigantic chin thrusting belligerently forward.

His colleagues remembered a single-minded devotion to the cause of the Jewish National Home that approached fanaticism, a total disinterest in material comforts, and a lack of personal vanity that was not to be confused with indifference to authority. Ben-Gurion was determined to ensure his nation’s security against any opposition and any odds.

### 1907 – Eighth Zionist Congress

### 1909 – Deganyah founded

In 1903 the Zionist Organization established, in Jaffa, a subsidiary of the Jewish Colonial Trust Bank. Known initially as the Anglo-Palestine Company, later as the Anglo-Palestine Bank, it granted loans at low interest to merchants and manufactures, to farmers and building societies.

Later in 1908 the Zionist Organization opened its first Palestine Office in Jaffa. From these headquarters, it was anticipated that Jewish National Fund properties would be administered and
additional land purchases negotiated. The office’s first director was a thirty-two-year-old German Jew, **Dr. Arthur Ruppin**.

Ruppin fostered one of the Yishuv’s most noteworthy social innovations, the “kvutzah” – the collective settlement. The term “kvutzah” refers to a smaller collective settlement and the word “kibbutz” refers to collective farms of greater size. The kvutzah and the kibbutz are known today by the all-embracing term “kibbutz.”

The first one was established at the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee. In 1909, on behalf of the Jewish National Fund, Arthur Ruppin acquired a 300 acre stretch of uncultivated land, Um Juni, on the shores of Lake Galilee. Shortly afterward, he funded a group of immigrants who proceeded to work the tract along conventional lines. They failed. A year later, 1910, 36 members of a labor Zionist group asked permission to farm Um Juni on a collective basis. Ruppin approved, this time providing the farmers with a rather larger stretch of land adjacent to Um Juni, complete with mud-brick dormitories, some basic farm equipment, and a half dozen mules.

The experiment was a grim ordeal: the Jordan valley was an inferno, and malaria took a heavy toll of the little group. Nevertheless, discipline and organization saw the farmers through. The farm brought a decent harvest in 1911 and its members purchased additional livestock. By then they had given the little kvutzah the name Degania – Cornflower. Degania’s fame spread rapidly. Shmuel Dayan, the father of Moishe, joined Degania the following year. Inspired by the success of Degania, other groups moved onto JNF land and started collective farms of their own. The collective was to become Zionism’s most innovative and influential experiment in human relations.

**Ha-Shomer organized**

In September, 1907 ten young men gathered in the attic of **Yitzchak Ben-Zvi’s** rooming house in Jaffa. Addressing the group, Israel Shochat reminded it that the conquest of labor also necessarily embraced the Jewish right to self-defense. For several months Shochat had been traveling through the Yishuv, entreating his fellow agricultural workers to assume responsibility for guarding the Land they were plowing. It was unthinkable, he insisted, to maintain the practice of hiring
Arab or Circassian guards to protect Jewish property or lives. This was no way to revive the nation. The future of a Jewish nation was at stake, Shochat warned. If the Jews were capable now of farming their land, should they not be capable of defending it?

Now, finally, in September, 1907 a program was drafted to form a secret society of Jewish watchmen, to be called Bar-Giora, after the celebrated Jewish warrior of antiquity. The founding members pledged themselves to accept employment as guards wherever the opportunities arose. They resolved as well to speak only Hebrew, and to live together whenever possible on a collectivist basis.

It was Bar-Giora members who pioneered the kvutzah at Sejera. It was at Sejera, too, that the would-be Jewish guards requested jobs as watchmen from the manager of the neighboring farm school. When the man proved skeptical, the young activists proceeded to steal a mule from under the nose of the hired Circassian and return it the following morning. The director was convinced. From then on the farm remained under Jewish protection.

The little Bar-Giora group subsequently offered itself out to other, neighboring villages. Soon the Jewish village of Mescha ventured to dismiss its Moroccan watchmen and hire two of the Bar-Giora group.

With two villages won over by 1909, Shochat and his friends recognized that a small, clandestine society no longer was adequate. Additional watchmen were needed to offer protection else where throughout the Yishuv. To achieve that goal, Bar-Giora was reincarnated under a new title – HaShomer – The Watchman. Its new charter defined the guild’s purpose as the formation of a society of Jewish guards.
Requirements for admission were so inflexible that after two years the original group of eight increased to only 26. The training program was exceptionally rigorous. Candidates were drilled in night maneuvers, scouting, direction finding and conversational Arabic. Those few who were accepted into the society were known as exceptional horsemen and crack shots. Mounted, armed, brawny, and confident of bearing they evoked respect among the Arabs.

Soon all Lower Galilee came into HaShomer’s fold – the settlements of Yavneel, Beit Gan, Menachemia, Sarona, Mizpah, Kinneret. By 1911 the guild had acquired a foothold on Samaria. From there its fame spread to Judea, then to the coastal plain, where the large capitalist plantation villages invited HaShomer to take charge of the watch.

Few settlers ever regretted their choice of protection. Despite repeated Bedouin attacks, the shomerim kept security tight. Other villages subsequently were added to their clientele: Rishon l’Zion, Ben Shemen, Beer Ya’akov.

By 1914, the watchman’s guild operated four squads in Judea alone, one hundred men throughout Jewish Palestine, all on instant call whenever danger threatened. By the eve of WWI HaShomer’s legend of valor had dramatically raised the morale of the Yishuv.

Tel Aviv founded
In 1909, from Jaffa, a new suburb emerged that was destined ultimately to become the metropolitan center of Jewish life in Israel. Jaffa’s Jewish population numbered only 6,000 at that time. Jaffa the port city was squalid and largely Arab. Ruppin was intrigued by the notion of building and all-Jewish satellite community. With the endorsement of the Eighth Zionist Congress he agreed to lend JNF funds to a private development company, the Achuzat Bayit. They, in turn, sold individual plots in both Europe and the Yishuv for future Jewish settlers.

In 1909 construction began on the sand dunes outside of Jaffa town limits. By 1914 a modest community had grown up, encompassing 139 houses and 1,419 Jewish inhabitants. The community was named Tel Aviv – Hill of Spring. The population reached 16,000 by 1924 and continued to explode. 5 years later, in 1929, the population was 46,000 Jewish people. By 1939 the population had grown to 139,000 Jewish people.

1911 – Tenth Zionist Congress

In 1911 the Tenth Zionist Congress convened. At this meeting the Congress approved extensive land purchasing activities of the Palestine office in Jaffa – headed by Dr. Arthur Ruppin. Furthermore the Congress resolved that Hebrew from then on should be
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recognized as the official language of the Zionist movement. As a result the teaching of Hebrew intensified in the Diaspora.

1914 – World War I

By 1914 the Zionist movement had grown to 127,000 shekel paying members. Zionist associations were functioning in South Africa and North and South America, Hebrew schools were being organized. Zionist literature was being translated into many languages. The little blue-and-white Jewish National Fund box could be found in growing thousands of Jewish homes and hundreds of synagogues. In 1914, on the eve of WWI Practical Zionism embracing both colonization in Israel and cultural activity in the Diaspora, became a meaningful Jewish force.

1915 – Refugees from Israel form Zion Mule Corps

For all its impressive progress, the Yishuv itself remained the most vulnerable component in the Zionist movement after the outbreak of WWI. Up until that time the Yishuv’s Jews relied upon European countries to ensure their physical security. Now, with Turkey’s entrance into the war, that assurance was gone. The dangers of Turkish rule became all too apparent due to an increase in government brutality and expulsions. Jews throughout the Yishuv hurriedly began packing for departure. By March, 1915 some 10,000 had found asylum in Egypt. Half of them were lodged in refugee camps at Gabbari and Mafruza where they were sustained by Jewish communal funds.

It was among these refugees that the first efforts were launched to recruit a Jewish legion for battle service against the Turks. Initiated by Vladimir Jabotinsky, a Russian Jewish journalist, the appeal aroused a mixed response.

Notable among these refugees was Joseph Trumpeldor, one of the most attractive and charismatic personalities in Zionist history. A handsome 6-footer, Trumpeldor originally had been trained as a dentist. As a volunteer officer in the Russian army, he had lost an arm and had been decorated for heroism in the Russo-Japanese War. In more recent years he had been serving as a farmer-pioneer on a kvutzah in Galilee. After the war began, Trumpeldor was one of those deported by the Turks. Immediately he made his way to Alexandria, Egypt to volunteer for the British army. There he met Jabotinsky in the Mafruza camp, and the two promptly collaborated in the effort to recruit a Jewish legion. While the British authorities in Egypt were not unreceptive to the notion, they preferred to limit it to a Jewish transport unit for service in an
alternative Allied war theater. Despite Jabotinsky’s initial misgivings, Trumpeldor favored the scheme. As long as the enemy was the Turk, the latter insisted, “any front leads to Zion.”

Thus, in March and April of 1915, some five hundred Jews were accepted for enlistment in a special transportation unit, the Zion Mule Corps, and allowed to wear their own shoulder flashes bearing the Shield of David. Their assignment was the impending Dardanelles campaign. A British officer, Lieutenant Colonel John Patterson, was placed in charge of the force, but its animating spirit was Trumpeldor, now commissioned a captain in the British army.

Upon disembarkation at the beaches of Gallipoli, the Zion Mule Corps performed credibly enough, the men leading their supply mules to the front trenches through heavy fire. Eight of the troops were killed, 55 others wounded, among them Trumpeldor. Another 150 young Jews from Egypt promptly volunteered as replacements.

With the subsequent evacuation of Gallipoli in the winter of 1915, the Mule Corps was among the last of the units to be withdrawn. Its reputation by then had spread throughout the Zionist world. The Zion Mule Corps was dissolved once the Gallipoli campaign ended. The episode of the Zion Mule Corps appeared on the surface to be just a short and unimpressive detail in the vast machinery of WWI. Unrecognized at the time by British and Jews alike, the episode of the Zion Mule Corps represented the first tentative step in a developing Anglo-Zionist collaboration.

1916 – Sykes-Picot Agreement

It was the outbreak of World War 1 that suddenly invested Palestine with a new importance in Allied military calculations. From then on, England based its Near Eastern policy on a central immutable criterion, the security of the Suez Canal.

To cope with any threat to the canal, military headquarters in Cairo devoted increasing attention to a new political strategy. It was to mobilize the Ottoman Empire’s restless subject peoples in a joint military effort against the Turks. In fact, the idea initially had been suggested by a distinguished Arab personality, the Emir Abdullah, eldest son of Hussein, the Hashemite sherif of Mecca and Medina. Even before the war Abdullah had visited General Kitchener in Cairo to request British help in protecting his fathers’ dynasty against its suspicious Ottoman overlords. In return for British support it was understood that the Hashemite Arabs would join the Allied war effort against Turkey. Moreover, after the war, the newly established Arab government would “seek the advice and guidance of Great Britain only ...”

On this basis the Arab revolt finally began in June 1916, under the leadership of Husseins’s second son, the Emir Feisal, and later with the help of such British liaison

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59 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 93
officers as T. E. Lawrence. During the subsequent year and one-half, the uprising of between 10,000 and 20,000 Arab irregulars played a major role in the British military effort against Turkish forces in Arabia and eastern Palestine.

Britain had dutifully informed the French and Russian governments of its agreement with Sherif Hussein. It was in January 1916 that Sir Mark Sykes, the British representative, and Charles Francois Georges-Picot, the French emissary reached a meeting of minds on the allocation of postwar spheres of influence in the Arab world. Britain would be invested with supervision over Arab territories encompassing the largest part of Mesopotamia, most of Transjordan, and southern Palestine. The French would exercise various degrees of influence over southern Turkey, Syria, northern Palestine, and the Mosul area of upper Mesopotamia. Militarily Sinai and Palestine began to function increasingly as Britain’s chosen battlefield against the Turks. The Sinai Peninsula offered a more direct and manageable invasion route toward the Ottoman Levant.60

Once this plan of action was agreed to by the imperial general command, in June of 1916 British military headquarters in Cairo set about organizing and equipping a 150,000 man “Egyptian Expeditionary Force” in anticipation of a straight-line plunge into Palestine. The force was commanded by General Sir Edmund Allenby.

1917 – Balfour Declaration

At this time, as WWI progressed, Zionism had become well known among some British politicians and statesmen. In fact, the Fourth Zionist Congress had been held in London, and had received considerable publicity. Anglo-Zionism was faring very well in England during 1914 and the start of WWI. One reason for the quality of these Zionist activities lay in the character of the Zionists living in England at the time. Their acknowledged spokesman was Dr. Chaim Weizmann, 40 years old, a chemistry instructor at the University of Manchester.

In March, 1916 Weizmann was summoned to London to help solve the shortage of acetone, an ingredient in the naval explosive cordite. After two years of laboratory

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60 (le-vànt’) The countries bordering on the eastern Mediterranean Sea from Turkey to Egypt. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition is licensed from Houghton Mifflin Company. Copyright © 1992 by Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.
research, he accomplished the task by devising a special fermentation process. During this period the friendships Weizmann made in the highest levels of British government were firmly cemented.

Weizmann’s efforts as a Zionist were further strengthened by other advantages. One was the mystical veneration with which many devout Anglo-Saxon Protestants regarded the Old Testament traditions, the Children of Israel, and particularly the Holy Land itself. Two of these devout men were Lloyd George (L) and Arthur James Balfour (R). These man possessed a life long interest in the Holy Land and its traditions. These men felt deeply Christianity’s historic obligation to the Jews. That debt was compounded by Weizmann’s personal services to the Allied war effort.

Against this background of Anglo-Zionist cordiality, Weizmann’s allusions to a “British protectorate over a Jewish homeland” struck an increasingly responsive chord among government officials. The moment of decisive reappraisal in Middle Eastern policy came in the last weeks of 1916, when Lloyd George and Balfour became prime minister and foreign secretary respectively. The new government recognized that the Sykes-Picot agreement was not an airtight guarantee for British interests in Palestine. Perhaps, then, the Jews, as a client people, might be as useful an opening wedge for British domination as were the Arabs?

Sykes was the official who served as a “marriage broker” in the progressively intimate relationship between the British government and the Zionist leadership. Sykes met with Weizmann in February 7, 1917. By then it had become Syke’s mission in life to wed Zionist and British interests.

Balfour had been nurtured in the Old Testament and his extensive study of Jewish history had filled him with inner remorse about Christendom’s treatment of the Jews. He told Harold Nicolsen in 1917:

They have been exiled, scattered, and oppressed. If we can find them an asylum, a safe home, in their native land, then the full flowering of their genius will burst forth and propagate.61

Imperial self-interest obviously was paramount in the government’s calculations. Yet, in Balfour’s case, a genuine vein of Biblical influence unquestionably strengthened commitment to the Jewish national home.

61 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 106
On June 17, 1917, the British statesman urged the Zionists themselves to formulate an appropriate declaration. He would submit it to the War Cabinet with his endorsement. Weizmann and his closest associates immediately prepared such a statement and it was submitted on July 18, 1917. The declaration originally read:

His Majesty’s Government accepts the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as a National Home of the Jewish People. His majesty’s Government will use its best endeavors to secure achievement of this object and will discuss the necessary methods and means with the Zionist Organization.62

Ironically, the only forceful opposition came from the one Jew in the Lloyd George government, Edwin Montagu. Montagu’s opposition had the effect not of changing the minds of Balfour, George and other Zionist sympathizers but of persuading them that a milder text was needed.

The declaration was reworded and approved by the War Cabinet on October 31, 1917. The declaration now read:

His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.63

Lady Dugdale, Balfour’s niece wrote:

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62 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 107
63 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 109
Near the end of his days he said to me that on the whole he felt that what he had been able to do for the Jews had been the thing he looked back upon as the most worth doing.\textsuperscript{64}

Balfour told a friend in 1918:

My personal hope is that the Jews will make good in Palestine and eventually found a Jewish state.\textsuperscript{65}

That same year Lord Robert Cecil declared:

Our wish is that Arabian countries shall be for the Arabs, Armenia for the Armenians, and Judea for the Jews.\textsuperscript{66}

In 1920, Churchill, who had served as minister of munitions when the Balfour Declaration was issued spoke of:

a Jewish State by the banks of the Jordan ... which might comprise three to four million Jews.\textsuperscript{67}

In 1919, Smuts, also a former member of the War Cabinet envisaged the rise of, “a great Jewish State.”\textsuperscript{68}

Prime Minister Lloyd George was quite explicit in his description of the cabinet’s proposal:

It was contemplated that when the time arrived for according representative institutions in Palestine, if the Jews had meanwhile responded to the opportunity afforded them by the idea of a National Home and had become a definite majority of the inhabitants, then Palestine would thus become a Jewish Commonwealth. The notion that Jewish immigration would have to be artificially restricted in order to ensure that the Jews should be a permanent minority never entered into the heads of anyone engaged in framing the policy. That would have been regarded as unjust and as a fraud on the people to whom we were appealing.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{64} Sachar, \textit{A History of Israel}, pg. 109
\textsuperscript{65} Sachar, \textit{A History of Israel}, pg. 110
\textsuperscript{66} Sachar, \textit{A History of Israel}, pg. 110
\textsuperscript{67} Sachar, \textit{A History of Israel}, pg. 110
\textsuperscript{68} Sachar, \textit{A History of Israel}, pg. 110
\textsuperscript{69} Sachar, \textit{A History of Israel}, pg. 110
The Jews in England were thrilled and grateful. When news of the declaration reached Russia it evoked wild rejoicing. Petitions and cables of gratitude flooded in on Balfour from Jewish communities as far removed as Shanghai, Alexandria, and Capetown. If the War Cabinet’s major objective was to swing “neutral” Jewish opinion toward Britain, it succeeded beyond all expectations.

**The British capture Jerusalem**

It was in October, 1917 that Edmund Allenby launched his invasion of Palestine. The initial phase of the campaign was successful beyond the general’s highest expectations. Augmented by tens of thousands of Commonwealth troops, the Egyptian Expeditionary Force struck quickly in the interior of the country, overrunning Beersheba, capturing Jaffa on November 16, and finally taking Jerusalem three weeks later.

On December 11, 1917, Allenby himself marched bareheaded into the historic capital to address a gathering of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish notables which had been convened on the steps of the Tower of David. “We have come,” he declared, “not as conquerors, but as deliverers.” It is our intention to open a new era of brotherhood and peace in the Holy Land.”

It was the anniversary of Chanukah, the commemoration of the Maccabean triumph that had liberated ancient Israel and opened a renewed era of Jewish national glory. Now, in December, 1917, as menorah candles gleamed in Jerusalem and in Jewish homes throughout the world, observant Jews everywhere uttered prayers of gratitude for an astonishing coincidence.

**1918 – World War I ends**

Ultimately, when the British finally overran the last of the enemies forces in September, 1918, the Jewish population had been reduced from its prewar figure of 85,000 to less than 55,000. The country had been starved by Allied blockade, ravaged and ruined by the Turkish forces. Scores of villages had been laid waste, trees and orange groves damaged, public security all but extinguished.

The British naturally gave their first and most urgent attention to food supplies, which Allenby ordered imported directly from Egypt. The American Near East Relief soon followed with shipments of clothing and medicines for the Christian and Muslim populations. The Zionist Organization and Hadassah, its women’s counterpart, matched these efforts for the Jews.
Zionist Commission appointed

In December, 1917 the British foreign secretary had approved the departure of a Zionist Commission for Palestine to organize relief work and supervise repair of damage to the Jewish colonies. The Commission embarked for Israel in March of 1918. It was eventually given official status as an advisory body to the military government in all matters relating to the Jews.

At this point in time no one raised any objections to a Jewish National home in Israel. France rejected British and Zionist claims to the headwaters of the Jordan but the French Prime Minister did not dream of challenging the notion of a Jewish national home. Neither did the Italian government. President Wilson remained firmly committed to the Balfour Declaration throughout the San Remo Peace Conference. He stated to Felix Frankfurter a leading American Zionist,

and so far I have found no one who is seriously opposing the purpose which it embodies.  

When entrusting Palestine to Britain the Allied statesman at the San Remo Peace Conference incorporated into their allocation award the verbatim text of the Balfour Declaration. The basic moral support of the Western governments appeared firmly established as a result.

For a while, too, the friendship of the Hashemite Arab leadership seemed equally beyond question. In January, 1918, after the Balfour Declaration was issued, Commander D. H. Hogarth, research director of the Arab Bureau in Cairo, was dispatched to Arabia to clarify for Hussein the implications of the Zionist program. Sensing the potential financial advantages of Arab-Jewish cooperation Hussein was enthusiastic. The Sherif issued the Jews several warmly phrased invitations to return to their “sacred and beloved homeland.”

At the end of the year, December, 1918, Sykes brought Weizmann and Feisal together in London. Each expressed mutual understanding and support for each others position. The discussions and courtesies between them were ultimately formalized in a document signed by both Weizmann (L) and Feisal (R). It was a pact envisaging a common stance at the peace conference. It declared:

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70 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 119
71 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 120
His Royal Highness the Emir Feisal, representing and acting on behalf of the Arab Kingdom of Hejaz, and Dr. Chaim Weizmann, representing and acting on behalf of the Zionist Organization, mindful of the racial kinship and ancient bonds existing between the Arabs and the Jewish people, and realizing that the surest means of working out the consummation of their national aspirations is through the closest possible collaboration in the development of the Arab State and Palestine, and being desirous further of confirming the good understanding which exists between them, have agreed upon the following articles ...

This treaty was signed on January 4, 1919. As it turned out, however, Feisal expected Zionist diplomatic support against the French. It soon became evident the Weizmann was unwilling to act independently of his British patrons. By mid-1919, as a result, Feisal terminated his public meetings with the Zionists. His January 4, “treaty” with Weizmann was not published, and the Zionists, respecting Feisal’s wishes withheld comment on it for many years. Increasingly disillusioned with the Zionist connection, the emir chose now to envisage the Jewish National Home as merely a subprovince within the Arab kingdom. “... when some Zionists speak about Palestine becoming as Jewish as England is English they are really talking unreasonably.” he declared. In late autumn of 1919, Feisal ceased public communication with the Zionist leadership altogether. His policy of invoking Jewish cooperation for Arab diplomatic purposes in Syria had failed.

1919 – Pogroms in Ukraine and Pland; abolishment of community organization and Jewish institutions in Russia

Third Aliyah

Although the population of the Yishuv had fallen to 55,000 by the end of WWI the numbers were replenished almost immediately in 1919. This influx became known as the “Third Aliyah.”

Jews poured in from eastern Europe at the rate of 1,000 a month by 1920 and ultimately reached a total of 37,000 newcomers between 1919 and 1923. Most of the immigrants were simultaneously fleeing revolution, counterrevolutionary pogroms, and civil wars. Many came under the illusion that a Jewish state was about to be established. All of them, in any case, regarded postwar eastern Europe as a dead end.

The Russian Revolution of March 1917 and the overthrow of the tsarist regime initially ended all Jewish disabilities, removed the shackles on Zionist activity in Russia, and even led briefly to an unprecedented burst of Russian Zionist enthusiasm and growth. By early autumn the movement embraced some 1,200 local groups and a membership of 300,000. 1917 was Russian Zionism’s golden opportunity. However, it was cut short by the Bolshevik Revolution in November of that year.

72 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 121
73 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 122
The new Communist regime in its early stages placed few limitations on Zionist activities. Palestine emigration bureaus at first functioned without interference in major cities, and during 1918 some 4,000 Jews managed to depart Russian for Palestine. In December, however, the Yevsektsia, the Jewish section of the Communist party, began to denounce the “counterrevolutionary essence” of Zionism. In February, 1919 Zionist offices were closed and Zionist periodicals banned. Soon a full-scale anti-Zionist crusade was unleashed in the Ukraine and other Jewish centers. By 1923 Zionist organizational activity had all but expired in Russia.

HeChalutz

Despite the Bolshevik repression and unusually effective Zionist emigration organization sprang up. It was allowed to function in Russia during the early 1920’s. It was known as HeChalutz – the Pioneer. The organization’s formal training program infused the Third Aliyah with a practical dynamic unique to Zionist history. Their unique emphasis was pre-immigration agricultural training.

The notion of advance agricultural experience was first promoted widely by Joseph Trumpeldor. He returned to Russia from Israel in February, 1917. At the outset, his intention was to recruit a Jewish legion for the liberation of Palestine. In the following year, when the Bolshevik Revolution aborted this plan, Trumpeldor immediately issued another call to his admirers,

If we cannot be an army, let us be pioneers, let us sow the seeds a handful at a time, until we conquer the Land of Israel.74

Trumpeldor warned his listeners that it was not simply enough to depart for Palestine to become workers or farmers. The pioneers of the Second Aliyah had followed this course certain that they would build a utopian society by sheer force of tenacity and will power. They had failed. Trumpeldor instead urged Jewish youth to equip themselves in advance for the tasks ahead. They must train while still in Russia, cultivate the soil adjacent to their own villages, and learn from the farmers living around them.

To that end, he himself and a number of close associates traveled throughout western Russia organizing HeChalutz groups and establishing training centers in Minsk and Simferopol. Tens of thousands of young men and women joined the organization during the summer and autumn months of 1918. Enthusiastically they took up the study of agriculture on purchased or rented tracts of land closely following the advice of Jewish and occasional Russian instructors.

74 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 145
The Bolsheviks tolerated this activity for a purely functional reason. It attracted badly needed American Jewish philanthropic funds.

In 1921 a world HeChalutz Organization was founded. By 1925 HeChalutz membership had reached 33,000 and by 1933, 83,000. As early as 1919, however, the first HeChalutz youngsters began arriving in Israel.

1920 – British granted mandate over Israel

Rarely had the fruits of military victory been as tangible as those savored by England when World War I came to a close. By December, 1918 200,000 Commonwealth troops had planted the Union Jack in Syria, western Turkey, Palestine, Mesopotamia, and lower Iran. It was a swath of territory encompassing all the historic land routes between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. Palestine would be awarded to Britain as a British Mandate.

Now, what is a “mandate” or “The Mandate?” The Mandate by definition is: a commission from the League of Nations authorizing a member nation to administer a territory or a region under such administration. The purpose for a mandate was to prepare and eventually release that territory for independent statehood. The Supreme Council of the Peace Conference formally validated this understanding at San Remo, Italy on April 25, 1920.

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75 The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition is licensed from Houghton Mifflin Company. Copyright © 1992 by Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.
On the basis of exhaustive geographic and geological surveys, Weizmann and his Zionist colleagues asked the Supreme Council for a Palestine bounded in the north by the slopes of the Lebanon range, the headwaters of the Jordan and the crest of Mount Hermon; in the east by the Transjordan-Mesopotamian desert and in the south by the Gulf of Aqaba.

The French were not prepared to accept these boundaries. On December 4, 1920 the British and French prime ministers reached a final understanding on this boundary issue. The accord represented a painful setback for the Jews. To the north and northeast the country was deprived of its most important potential water resources, including the Litani River, a key headwater of the Jordan, the spring coming from Mt. Hermon, and the greater part of the Yarmuk river. The boundaries similarly ignored the historic entity of Palestine as envisaged in the original negotiations leading to the Balfour Declaration. Moreover, by failing to approximate any natural geographic frontiers the borders left the country perennially exposed to armed invasion. This heritage of economic and military vulnerability was to curse the Palestine mandate, and later the entire Middle East, for decades to come.

Tel Hai

In August 1919 Joseph Trumpeldor returned to Israel to arrange facilities for the expected influx of Chalutzim. He lived at his kibbutz, Tel Hai, in Galilee. However, in 1919 fear and distrust of Zionist aims grew daily among the Arabs. Barbed Arab newspaper editorials began to appear. Public Arab threats and instances of unrest in Arab towns grew month by month. In February 1920 a party of Arab raiders attacked the Jewish colonies of Metulla and Tel Hai along Israel’s northern border. These settlements were located in a grey area between British and French zones of occupation. Among those who were killed defending the outposts was Joseph Trumpeldor.

Arabs riot in Jerusalem

More ominously yet, it was the season of Nevi Musa, a traditional Arab counterpart to Easter and Passover when devout Muslims traveled in pilgrimage on the Jericho road to the grave of Moses. The Arabs arrived in Jerusalem on April 4, 1920. Soon a large crowd gathered to hear a nationalist harangue by agitators, not all of them local, who extolled the name of Feisal. Their purpose was clearly to influence the allies, who were scheduled to dispose of the mandates in San Remo within the next few days. The crowd became unruly, the Arab police joined in the applause, and violence began.

During the next three hours, 160 Jews were wounded. Eventually British troops arrived and quelled the disturbances. The next morning, however, instigators who had been detained overnight were released and attacks on the Jews promptly resumed. Order was not restored until the third day. A number of Jews and Arabs had been killed by then, and several hundred wounded.
Sir Herbert Samuel High Commissioner

It was in San Remo, a day before the assignment of the mandates, that Herbert Samuel was informed of his selection by Lloyd George as civil high commissioner for Palestine. He was known as a loyal Jew and as a Zionist. This reputation seemingly emphasized the government’s commitment to the Jewish National Home. The appointment obviously was not without its risks. Feisal regarded it as a provocation of the Arabs. So did Allenby, who warned that violence would follow.

Samuel arrived in Jerusalem on June 30 under tight security. The misgivings and precautions soon appeared unwarranted. Most of Samuel’s initial appointments aroused enthusiasm among Jews and Arabs alike. The Zionists were particularly gratified by Samuel’s firm open door policy on immigration. Even Arab nationalists respected Samuel. However, this very impartiality proved to be the high commissioner’s Achilles heel. It was his obsession with fairness that influenced him to make conciliatory gestures to the Arabs. Far from satisfying Arab nationalism these gestures only encouraged it. Arab restlessness throughout Palestine grew.

Weizmann elected President of Zionist Organization

The Zionist Organization was in some disarray following WWI. Its political machinery had ceased to function during the 4½ years of hostilities. The central Zionist offices had remained in Germany, the bulk of its membership in Russia.

Weizmann’s stupendous coup in achieving the Balfour declaration transformed London into the operative political headquarters of Zionism. It was Weizmann and his associates who convened a special conference of Zionist leaders in London in July, 1920. The London conference took it upon itself to elect Weizmann president of the Zionist Organization.

Keren Ha-Yesod established

At the London conference Weizmann emphasized that the priority need in building the Jewish National Home was knowledge, modern methods, and above all money. For the purpose of gathering all important money Weizmann and his colleagues on the Zionist Executive Committee authorized the establishment of a Keren Ha-Yesod – a foundation fund – to tap the resources of Diaspora Jewry.
Histadrut founded

In 1920 the Jewish Labor Federation of Palestine – or Histadrut – was formed. The essential postwar impetus for the Histadrut was supplied by two political factions – Achdut HaAvodah (Union of Labor) and Hapoel HaZair (The Young Worker). The two labor groups submerged their differences and tried to create an “apolitical” – a nonpolitical – and purely labor federation. On that basis the Histadrut was founded in Haifa in December, 1920.

It was significant that a majority of the Histadrut’s early members belonged to kibbutzim and moshavim, and that the federation placed its heaviest emphasis on creating work opportunities for Jews on the Land. The Histadrut began to organize strikes against planters who refused to give work priorities to Jews. Not infrequently pickets used strong-arm tactics to induce Arab workers to return to their homes. With the bulk of Jewish manpower pouring into the cities, the Histadrut increasingly turned its attention to the urban areas. It organized unions not simply among manual laborers, but among clerks, technicians, and even doctors and lawyers.

In 1923 the Histadrut established a central economic corporation, the Chevrat Ovdim (Workers Association). It functioned as a cooperative wholesale society to buy the products from the kibbutzim and moshavim and, in turn, through its chain of retail stores, to sell the farm villages foodstuffs, clothing, and industrial goods. In 1926 the Chevrat Ovdim organized a marketing outlet, Tnuva, for kibbutz and moshav dairy products; then a workers’ bank (Bank HaPoalim) as its major credit instrument for the farm settlements and labor enterprises in the cities. The Chevrat Ovdim’s housing company, Shikun, provided workers with flats at the lowest, nonprofit rentals.

The Histadrut forestalled the worst of the Yishuv’s economic inequalities, and minimized cutthroat competition. The Histadrut’s most important innovations undoubtedly was its program of universal medical coverage. Known as Kupat Cholim (Sick Fund), it had been launched as far back as 1911, with some 2,000 participants on the eve of the war. By 1930 it membership had climbed to 15,000, a number that would double to 30,000 by 1935.

The Histadrut formed a school network in 1921. By 1934, 135 Histadrut schools represented 44% of all schools in the Hebrew educational system. In 1925, the Histadrut founded its own dramatic company, Ohel, and began publication of its newspaper, Davar. This workers federation also launched a number of its own industrial companies. The most important of these firms was Solel Boneh (Paving and Building). This company

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drained swamps in the Jezreel and Chula valleys, built roads, erected housing and office buildings, and in the process opened up thousands of new job opportunities.

As early as 1930, the multitude of these activities drew into Histadrut’s fold three-quarters of the Jewish working population of Palestine. Nearly all phases of a man’s life, and the life of his family, were embraced by the vast canopy of the worker’s organization. By the eve of WWII, the Histadrut had become much more than a powerful institution in Jewish Palestine. For a majority of the Yishuv, the Histadrut was all but synonymous with Jewish Palestine itself.

**Haganah founded**

As we come to our next subject we come to the growth of Jewish self-defense. An important consequence of the Arab uprising in 1920 was its effect on Jewish military activity. The tradition of self-defense went back as far as HaShomer, the Jewish Watchman’s guild of the early 1900’s. After the war however, those members of the guild who had survived Turkish mistreatment were prevented by the British from bearing arms. An abortive self-defense effort was initiated by Jabotinsky during the 1920 riots, but once more was suppressed by the mandatory authorities.

Yet shortly afterward the Achdut HaAvodah party appointed a special committee to establish a more widely based and clandestine self-defense organization called simply Haganah – defense. It was understood that the organization would be broadly based, for henceforth defense clearly required more than the protection of an outpost or an occasional settlement; the entire Yishuv would now fall within the circle of Jewish security.

Thereafter, as the Histadrut assumed responsibility for the Haganah, officers’ training courses were organized, weapons were purchased illegally from Europe and smuggled in, and eventually secret armories were built for the production of light weapons.

When we advance to the year 1929 we’ll encounter more Arab riots. The riots of 1929 were the critical juncture for the defense program. It was evident now that training would have to include most of the able-bodied Jewish youth in Palestine. Newer and more modern weapons would have to be secured.

From the outset, the Haganah had functioned under the supervision of the Histadrut. Most of its leaders were Histadrut officials, and its membership was recruited almost exclusively from laboring ranks. Operating out of a single room in Histadrut House in Tel Aviv, Haganah’s headquarters became an embryonic ministry of defense. By 1936 it was receiving larger quantities of Jewish Agency funds, accumulating a number of illegal weapons, and enlarging its program of military training.

When renewed Arab violence broke out that year the Jewish military leadership decided at first upon a policy of restraint. In practice, this meant simply that Jewish communities
would be defended vigorously, without resorting to acts of retaliation against Arab villages.

However, **Yitzchak Sadeh**, the Haganah field commander, placed his own interpretation on the concept of restraint. His young officers included such teenagers as Yigdal Allon and Moshe Dayan. It was Sadeh who taught his youthful commanders to plan ambushes, to organize mobile patrols, to anticipate Arab marauders by striking first.

The shift from purely defensive to preemptive tactics was made feasible too, by an agreement newly reached with the mandatory government. Even before the worst of the Arab attacks, the British had raised no objection when the Jews accumulated a certain quantity of their own weapons for the protection of outlying farm settlements.

As fighting gained in intensity throughout 1936 the Jewish Agency demanded additional – free, legal – equipment to protect its isolated farms, and recognized status for its own guards. Hard pressed for military manpower, the administration decided to grant these requests. Light weapons were distributed to some 3,000 authorized “ghaffirs”, uniformed Jewish auxiliary guards whose parallel membership in the Haganah the British accepted. Even more significantly, the man appointed by the British as operating commander of the ghaffirs, Captain Orde Wingate, vigorously and imaginatively enlarged Sadhe’s concept of “active defense.”

We’ll pick up Orde Wingate and his contribution to the Haganah when we get to 1938.

**National Assembly elected**

Another important event that occurred in 1920 was the election of an Asefat HaNivcharim – a National Assembly. This took place in April 1920. Some 20,000 persons, more than 70% of all registered Jewish voters, participated in the balloting. The newly elected National Assembly formally opened in Jerusalem in October, 1920. Its 314 members belonged to 20 different parties. Its first order of business was to elect a Va’ad Le’umi – an executive board of 36 men and women. Sir Herbert Samuel, impressed by this evidence of Zionist communal purpose offered the National Assembly a certain functional latitude over Jewish religious, cultural, and social welfare activities.

**1921 – Twelfth Zionist Congress**

**Arabs riot in Jaffa**
In 1920 there had been a major Arab riot in Jerusalem. During that year Sir Herbert Samuel took up his position as British High Commissioner in Israel. His obsession with impartiality led to conciliatory gestures being extended to the Arabs. This action only encouraged Arab nationalism and Arab restiveness continued to grow.

Renewed trouble began in Jaffa on May 1, 1921. When a ragtag group of Jewish Communists brashly marched through the center of town in the wake of a Zionist labor parade the incident served the Arab nationalists as a useful pretext. They rioted, violence extended immediately to the countryside, and soon Petach Tikvah and other Jewish farm colonies were besieged. By the time British troops finally suppressed the last attack at the end of the week, forty-seven Jews and forty-eight Arabs had been killed and several hundred others of both peoples wounded.

The riots in Jaffa emptied the port city of its Jewish inhabitants. The exodus of Jews from Jaffa tripled the population of the suburb known as Tel Aviv. The population of Tel Aviv jumped from 3,600 to over 10,000 because of this incident.

THE BALFOUR DECLARATION HAD BEEN INCORPORATED DIRECTLY INTO THE SAN REMO MANDATORY AWARD, IN BRITAIN ITSELF, BY LATE 1921 GROWING RESERVATIONS WERE BEING EXPRESSED AT THE GOVERNMENT’S PRO-ZIONIST POLICY.

Transjordan created

In 1921 the British Colonial Secretary was Winston Churchill. In late March of 1921 he journeyed to the Holy Land. Then and there, to Jew and Arab alike, he firmly repeated his support of the Jewish National Home. Yet his tour resulted in the separation of Transjordan from Palestine, and a “reclarification” of the Balfour Declaration. With the end of the war, the entire region east of the Jordan river was vaguely included within the Arab sphere. Emir Feisal77 made no attempt to administer the area. By the summer of 1920 Transjordan was reduced to a no-man’s land. At this time Emir Abdullah, Sherif Hussein’s oldest son, appears on the scene. In March of 1921 T. E. Lawrence and Churchill revived an idea that they had discussed earlier. They would ask Abdullah to stay in Transjordan where he could reign (although not rule) for Britain. Churchill immediately cabled London and obtained its permission to make the offer. He and Abdullah met on May 26, 1921.

The offer to Abdullah was as follows. He would establish an orderly government in Amman,
recognize Transjordan as an integral part of Britain’s Palestine, and administer the territory in the name of the mandate. Abdullah accepted, thus establishing an Arab government east of the Jordan river. This was Britain’s first explicit admission that Transjordan was included in the zone of Arab autonomy. In Britain’s thinking restrictions were slowly being placed upon a Jewish National Home.

**Beginning of Jewish industry**

The 1920’s witnessed the beginning of Jewish industry in Palestine. In 1921 a brick factory was constructed in Tel Aviv. That same year a Russian Jewish engineer, Pinchas Rutenberg, obtained a concession from the mandatory government to build the first electric power station in Tel Aviv. From then on private Jewish capitol steadily established industries of every stripe.

**1922 – Churchill White Paper**

In 1922 still other restrictions were imposed on the Jewish National Home. In May 1922, Herbert Samuel returned to London to impress on the Colonial Office the need for dispelling Arab fears on the Palestine question once and for all. This could be accomplished only by a “definitive” interpretation of the Balfour Declaration. His recommendation was accepted. A statement of policy was drafted, mainly by Samuel himself, for issuance over **Winston Churchill’s** signature. Known afterward as the Churchill White Paper, the document restricted the Jewish National Home to the area west of the Jordan, avoided the notion of creating a predominantly Jewish state and limited Jewish immigration to the “economic capacity of the country.”

In stating that immigration should not exceed Palestine’s absorptive capacity the mandatory government adopted the system of issuing permits by categories – laborers, farmers, capitalists, and others. The restrictions imposed no severe hardship on Jewish immigration during the early years of the mandate. What was ominous to the Zionists, rather, was the precedent established for conceivably more drastic limitations in the future.

The draft was submitted to the Zionist Organization in June. Fearful of losing British support altogether, Weizmann and the Zionist Executive reluctantly signed it. The Arab delegation, on the other hand, rejected it flatly. The mixed reception notwithstanding, the government published the Churchill White Paper on July 1, 1922 as the official interpretation of the British Mandate in Palestine. On this basis, too, the mandate won swift acceptance by the House of Commons five days later and by the League of Nations on September 29, 1922.
The Zionists had suffered a reverse of sorts, but hardly a fatal one. In the preamble of its mandatory award to Britain, after all, the League Council 1) recited the Balfour Declaration almost verbatim 2) alluded specifically to “historical connection to the Jewish people with Palestine” 3) alluded to the moral validity of “reconstituting their National Home in that country” 4) imposed on the British the obligation not simply to permit but to secure a Jewish National Home 5) expected the British “use their best endeavors to facilitate” Jewish immigration and encourage Jewish settlement of the Land.

In addition, Hebrew was recognized as an official language. A Jewish Agency was authorized to cooperate with the mandatory in the development of natural resources and in the operation of public works and utilities.

It was plain, then, from beginning to end, that the League award was framed to protect the Zionist redemptive effort. The British were accordingly invested with "full powers of legislation and administration” in which the obligation was imposed of ensuring self-government.

Self-government obviously was not intended for the Holy Land on the basis of an obvious Arab majority. It was significant, for example, that the word “Arab” did not once appear in the mandatory award, and that the Arabs and other nations in Palestine were repeatedly described merely as “non-Jews.”

Nor was there doubt that the British government intended to stand behind the mandate. The Bonar Law cabinet, which succeeded the Lloyd George coalition in October, 1922 firmly rejected every Arab effort to alter Britain’s support of Zionism and of the Jewish National Home.

A law, therefore, upon which the mandatory administration based its functional activities was signed by the king in London on August 10, 1922 and proclaimed by Sir Herbert Samuel in Jerusalem on September 1. This was the Palestine Order of Council. It included the traditional provisions of freedom of worship, liberty of conscience, and Britain’s responsibility to foster the Jewish National Home.

Sir Herbert Samuel did not hesitate to use his powers of legislation extensively. With its 9,000 square miles, Palestine was divided now into three districts – north, south, and Jerusalem. The city of Jerusalem functioned both as the headquarters for its own district and as capital of the mandatory government.

The operation of the mandate

When Britain assumed responsibility for the Holy Land, it took over an economic cripple. Britain’s initial efforts in Palestine during the first two years of its occupation were devoted simply to restoring a minimal degree of law and order. Perhaps the mandatory’s single most impressive accomplishment was the establishment of an honest and efficient judiciary.
The mandatory administration expended much effort and talent, as well, on fostering agriculture, a sector of the economy the Turks had ruinously neglected. The government’s agricultural department established research stations for improving cultivation and livestock. With this help, the ravages of cattle plague, locusts, and fruit flies were markedly reduced.

Wide ranging improvements in communications were accomplished by enlarging the rail network, building roads and bridges, and further modernizing and augmenting postal, telegraph and telephone services. Air links were established with Europe and the rest of the Middle East. An international airport was constructed at Lydda.

Unquestionably, there were also shortcomings in the government scheme of administration. The Jews complained that the mandatory had virtually abandoned its legal and moral responsibility to foster the economic growth of the Jewish National Home. The Arabs benefited most impressively from government expenditures. The departments of agriculture, public health, and education all concentrated heavily on the Arabs.

These weaknesses and inequities notwithstanding, it was soon evident that the improvements wrought by Samuel’s administration were light-years beyond anything Palestine had ever known. The high commissioner himself completed his term of office in June 1925.

In that month the Hebrew University was inaugurated on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem with the visit of distinguished figures from abroad. Allenby came from Egypt. Balfour came from England and was moved to tears by the evidence of the progress he saw everywhere around him.

Writing in his final summary report from Parliament, Samuel could allude not merely to the organization of a civil police force, the gradual pacification of the country, the excellent legal system, and public services. He could refer meaningfully, as well, to the spectacular rise of the Jewish population since 1917, from 55,000 to 103,000. Much of this Jewish growth and progress admittedly was the result of Zionist enterprise alone. Yet it benefited in measurable degree from a quality of peace, order, justice, and administrative integrity far superior to that provided by any neighboring government.

Death of Eliazer Ben-Yehuda

1923 – Mandate confirmed by League of Nations78

1924 – Fourth Aliyah

78 Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 8, pg. 766y
In 1924 the population of the Land was augmented by an unexpected and sizable influx of Polish Jews. The Polish government had nationalized those branches of industry and commerce in which Jews were most heavily represented and then dismissed Jewish employers in favor of Poles. As a result, fully a third of the nation’s Jewish merchants were driven to bankruptcy and emigration soon became their only hope.

Between 1924 and 1928, 70,000 of them made their way to Palestine. The arrival of this “Fourth Aliyah” included some 8,000 Jews from the Caucasus and the Middle East. The Fourth Aliyah raised the Jewish population of Palestine from 84,000 in 1922 to 154,000 in 1929.

Few of the newcomers were animated by Labor Zionist or even agricultural ideals. Fourth Aliyah immigrants generally gravitated to the cities and towns, where they set up duplicates of the enterprises they had left behind. It was the newcomers of the Fourth Aliyah who laid the basis for the Yishuv’s urban economy. Within five years they doubled the Jewish population of Jerusalem and Haifa. By the same token, their immigration was largely responsible for making a city out of Tel Aviv. It was the influx of the Fourth Aliyah that swelled Tel Aviv’s population to 16,000 in 1924 and to 46,000 by 1929. From then on growth produced its own momentum. Tel Aviv boasted 160,000 inhabitants by 1939 – all Jewish.

**Technion opened in Haifa**

**1925 – Hebrew University in Jerusalem opened**

A Hebrew University had been a dream that began fairly early in the Zionist movement. Weizmann referred to such a dream as early as 1903. This dream came to pass in June 1925, with the inauguration of the school on Mount Scopus. Judah Magnes an American born Reform rabbi became the first Chancellor of the school.

**1927 – Death of Ahad Ha-Am**

**Roots of self-government**

In July of 1927 the government issued an ordinance formally recognizing a single Jewish community – the Knesset Israel – with its own religious and secular organs. The religious organ was the Rabbinical Council that had already been functioning for a number of years. In the secular area, the National Assembly and its Va’ad Le’umi now also were granted official status. For the Yishuv these measures represented a limited, but potentially important, new avenue to self-government.

**1929 – Arabs riot in Jerusalem**

In 1929 Arab restlessness had continued to grow. As it happened violence was to be ignited in an unlikely location, the Old City of Jerusalem, where Jews and Arabs had been
living in close proximity for several centuries. There, abutting the Haram es-Sharif complex of Mosques was the venerated Jewish Western Wall, a remnant of the ancient Temple. The wall belonged to the Muslim community. By tradition extending back at least to the Middle Ages the Jews enjoyed an easement to the strip of pavement facing the historic buttress and the right of prayer at the Wall itself.

In 1928, shortly before Yom Kippur, the Jewish sexton at the Wall placed a screen on the flagstones to separate men and women, according to Orthodox Jewish practice. The Arabs immediately complained that the status quo had been violated. The British authorities agreed and ordered the screen removed. The Jews complained, but to no avail. Subsequently, the entire Yishuv, religionists and non-observant alike, expressed indignation at the “wanton interference” with Jewish freedom of worship. The Zionist Organization submitted protests to London and Geneva.

The Arabs meanwhile appealed to the Muslim world, charging that the Jews intended to seize control of the venerated al-Aqsa Mosque, within the Haram area. At the initiative of the Mufti’s Supreme Muslim Council, Arab workers set about building operations in the neighborhood of the Wall to interfere with Jewish worship. An especially noisy Muslim religious ceremony was launched to disrupt Jewish prayers there. Months of protests and counterprotest followed.

On June 11, 1929 after prolonged evasiveness by the mandatory government and repeated consolations with the legal officers of the Crown, the High commissioner notified the Mufti that the Jews were entitled to worship without disturbance. The building operations might continue, provided “no disturbance is caused to Jewish worshipers during the customary times of their prayer.”

Neither Jews nor Muslims were satisfied with this decision. On August 16, a right-wing Jewish youth group sought permission to conduct a peaceful march on the Wall. The British acting high commissioner, Sir Harry Luke, acceded to the youth group’s request. Immediately the Muslim leadership organized a turbulent counterdemonstration near the Wall, delivering inflammatory speeches and provoking minor skirmishes. During the subsequent week Muslim agitators traveled throughout the country exhorting the peasantry to “protect al-Aqsa against Jewish attacks.”

Finally, on the night of August 23 and the next morning, crowds of Arabs armed with weapons poured into Jerusalem. The newcomers gathered near the mosque courtyard to be harangued by the mufti. Then, at noon, the mob attacked the Orthodox Jewish quarters and violence spread rapidly to other areas of Palestine.

Massacres in Hebron, Jaffa, and Tel Aviv

In the late afternoon Arab bands descended on the orthodox Jewish community of Hebron, murdering 67 and wounding 50 inhabitants. Other assaults were carried out in
Haifa and Jaffa and even in Tel Aviv. Numerous Jewish agricultural villages were similarly attacked.

The Royal Air Force contingent in Amman was inadequate to restore order, while the Arab police were sympathetic to the rioters. The acting high commissioner was obliged to telephone Egypt for military assistance, but the main body of troops did not reach Palestine until three days afterward.

Order was not restored until August 28. By then 133 Jews had been killed, 399 wounded. The Arabs had suffered 178 casualties of which 87 had been killed. The high commissioner rushed back from England and issued a proclamation on September 1 that furiously condemned Arab atrocities. He then proceeded to levy heavy collective fines on Arab towns and villages. However, the effect of these measures was soon dissipated. No sooner had the Mufti protested the high commissioner’s “brutality” that the high commissioner issued a second proclamation a few days later, stating that an inquiry into the conduct of both sides would be held as soon as possible. In response, the Jews, appalled at the implication that the murders and their victims were somehow on a common level turned to London for redress.

1930 – Shaw Report

At this critical moment in the Yishuv’s fortunes, the Zionists learned to their dismay that they no longer enjoyed the backing of a sympathetic government in England. Ramsey MacDonald was now the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary was Lord Passfield. MacDonald himself had visited Palestine in 1922 and returned declaring that British promises to Jews and Arabs were contradictory.

Weizmann soon discovered which way the wind was blowing upon reaching London. For the first time in his experience, the Zionist leader encountered a chill atmosphere. He was unable at the outset to secure an interview with Passfield. When Passfield finally received Weizmann, he bluntly declared himself opposed to mass Jewish immigration into Palestine.

Other shocks were in store. The political ramification of the violence would continue for a year and a half and encompass a torrent of controversy that threatened the very future of the Jewish National Home.
In mid-September, the Colonial Office dispatched a Royal Commission to Palestine to inquire into the immediate causes which led to the recent outbreak in Palestine and to make recommendations as to the steps necessary to avoid a recurrence. The chairman of the commission was Sir Walter Shaw. The commission conducted its hearings over a period of five weeks and finally issued its report on March 31, 1930. It found the Arabs responsible for the violence. The commission went on to state that the fundamental cause of the tragedy was the “Arab feeling of animosity and hostility towards the Jews consequent upon the disappointment of their political and national aspirations and fear for their economic future.”

The mandatory administration was urged to tighten its control of Jewish immigration, protect Arab tenants from eviction by Jewish land purchasers, and ensure that the Jewish Agency understood henceforth that it was in no sense empowered to share in the government of Palestine.

The Shaw report aroused consternation among the Zionists and jubilation among the Arabs. Subsequent governmental measures intensified these reactions. On May 12, the Colonial Office instructed the mandatory to suspend the latest Jewish immigration schedule of 3,300 labor certificates. Two weeks later, in a statement presented to the League Mandates Commission, the British government declared that it viewed the Shaw recommendations favorably and was considering additional measures for suspending Jewish immigration and for protecting the Arab population.

Although the League body, for its part, rejected the contention that Arab rights could best be protected by limiting Jewish immigration and land purchases, London nevertheless proceeded to explore further the recommendations outlined by the Shaw Report.

**Passfield White Paper**

In May, London dispatched Sir John Hope Simpson to Palestine. Hope Simpson embarked upon three months of travel and investigation and aerial surveys of landholdings. He then issued a massive 185 page report of his own on October 20, 1930.

It was Hope Simpson’s conclusion that the Land available to Arabs was less than previously had been believed. The Arabs, he said, gradually were being driven off the soil by Jewish land purchases and the JNF policy of not reselling to Arabs or allowing them employment on Jewish tracts. He felt that this was a distinct breach of the mandate. The report doubted Palestine’s capacity to sustain any meaningful industrial growth. Further measures should be taken to restrict both Jewish immigration and Jewish land purchases. Hope Simpson expressed his personal belief that when all development schemes were in full operation there would be room in Palestine for 20,000 additional immigrant families, about 100,000 people and of these not more than half should be Jews.

The Zionists, shocked and angered, were not tardy in rejecting Hope Simpson’s data and conclusions. The man
had grossly underestimated the amount of cultivable land in Palestine and he overestimated the quantity required either by Arabs or by Jews. His attempt to blame Jewish immigration for Arab village poverty was libelous and inflammatory. In contrast, there had been a dramatic rise in Arab living standards as a consequence of Jewish settlements. The irrefutable evidence was that Arab immigrants, no less than Jews, were flooding into the country as a result of new economic opportunities provided by the Jewish National Home.

Yet, before these arguments could be marshaled, London released an official statement on the same day, October 20, that the Hope Simpson Report was published. It took the form of a 23 page White Paper issued by Lord Passfield. The document proceeded to skewer virtually every Zionist hope for the future. For example it stated:

There remains no margin of land available for agricultural settlement by the new immigrants with the exception of such undeveloped lands as the various Jewish agencies hold in reserve.80

Jewish immigration must be suspended too, as long as extensive unemployment in Palestine continued.

The Passfield White Paper appeared to repudiate the very purpose of the Balfour Declaration and the terms of the San Remo award. It foreshadowed serious immigration restrictions and threatened the Jews with an embargo on additional purchases of land. More significantly it commented upon the work of the Jews in Palestine in disparaging terms, omitting altogether to credit the Zionists for the benefits they had conferred upon the country and all its peoples.

It was little wonder that the Arabs expressed general satisfaction with the document. The Jewish reaction was quite different. Outraged, Weizmann immediately resigned as president of the Jewish Agency.

Weizmann’s was perhaps the most temperate Zionist reaction. The response in the Jewish world – in Palestine, Britain, and America – was altogether infuriated. Besides letters, petitions, cables of protest, and impassioned newspaper editorials, it took the form of endless individual and collective meetings with British public figures.

Some of these hardly needed persuasion that the British government had betrayed a solemn trust. Stanley Baldwin and the Conservative Party promptly dissociated themselves from the Passfield White Paper. Leopold Amery and Winston Churchill

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80 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 176
anathematized the document in the house of Commons. In a heated parliamentary debate on November 17, Lloyd George criticized McDonald for breaking the word of England.

MacDonald was shaken by the intensity of the attack upon him, and the schisms even among his own Labor party. The Prime Minister invited Weizmann to lunch on November 6. Years later, Weizmann’s widow published her husband’s account of the meeting. The Prime Minister acknowledged errors in his White Paper and stated:

The errors have to be put right, and the misunderstandings to be cleared up; and any new statement which is to be, is to be issued in agreement with you ... (But) we cannot simply withdraw the White Paper ....

1931 – MacDonald’s letter

The agreed face-saving device for a policy shift took the form of a letter from the prime minister to Weizmann on February 13, 1931. MacDonald’s letter significantly re-interpreted the Passfield White Paper. In effect, the document was a reversal for it said:

The obligation to facilitate Jewish immigration and make possible dense settlement of Jews on the Land is still a positive obligation of the Mandate, and it can be fulfilled without jeopardizing the rights and conditions of the other part of the Palestine population.

The letter admitted that the number of Arabs dispossessed was surely less that Hope Simpson had determined and required more extensive investigation. Meanwhile, it gave additional assurance that the prohibition of further land purchase by Jews was not a government policy. The authority of the Jewish Agency to employ Jewish labor on purely Jewish ventures was confirmed, as was the right of Jewish workers to secure a fair share of employment in the mandatory government and in public works projects. In MacDonald’s summary he stated:

The obligation laid upon the Mandatory are solemn international promises and there is no intention at present, as there was not in the past, of disregarding them.

Although the letter did not enjoy the status either of a Command paper or of a Colonial Office announcement, MacDonald released it to the press, transmitted it as an official document to the League and embodied it in a dispatch as instructions to the Palestine high commissioner. Weizmann rightly interpreted it as “official”, and hailed it as reestablishing a basis for Zionist cooperation with Britain.

81 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 177
82 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 178
83 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 178
It did little, however, to encourage cooperation between Arabs and Jews. Instead the Passfield White Paper and the MacDonald letter revealed British policy at its worst. BOTH DOCUMENTS CONVINCED, FIRST THE ARABS, AND THEN THE JEWS THAT SUFFICIENT AGITATION AND PRESSURE COULD REVERSE THE INTENTIONS OF THE MANDATORY. In other words, if you’re vocal enough or violent enough you’ll get your way with Britain.

Certainly the Arabs did not regard the MacDonald letter as the final word. The president of the Arab executive, Musa Kazem al-Husseini wrote to the high commissioner these words in February 19, 1931:

I want to assure you excellency that Prime Minister MacDonald’s letter has ruined hope of a policy of cooperation between Arabs and Jews, if there existed such a hope, and has rendered the possibility of understanding between the two parties absolutely impossible.84

**Seventeenth Zionist Congress**

**Split in the Haganah – Irgun Z’vai Le’umi (Etzel) founded**

The Irgun Z’vai Le’umi, the National Military Organization or Etzel for short, originated in 1931 as Haganah Bet – Defense “B” – a faction that broke away from the official but Labor dominated underground. The policy of the new organization was based squarely on Jabotinsky’s teachings: 1) every Jew had a right to enter Palestine 2) only active retaliation would deter the Arabs 3) only Jewish armed force would ensure the Jewish state. The Etzel’s symbol was a hand grasping a rifle over a map of Palestine – including Transjordan – with the motto “Rak Kach” (Only Thus).

From the outset, the Jewish Agency sternly denounced the Etzel (Irgun), and the British countered by mass arrests of its suspected members. Until 1939, the activities of this group generally were limited to retaliation against Arab marauders. After 1939 Etzel (Irgun) engaged in activities against the mandatory government. When WWII broke out Etzel (Irgun) announced a cessation of anti-British activities and offered its cooperation in the war effort. After the war, Etzel (Irgun) received an infusion of new recruits, many of them deserters from the Polish army. The newcomers were consumed by recent memories of their kinsman’s fate in Nazi Europe. Trained militarly, they were intent upon following an activist policy of resistance. Even with these enlarged numbers Etzel’s numbers rarely exceeded 2,000.

84 Sachar, *A History of Israel*, pg. 178
Even so, the quality of the group’s leadership was fanatical. Its most famous personality was Menachem Begin. He commanded Etzel (Irgun) during its most violent phase. A Polish Jew, Begin had been arrested in Soviet Lithuania for Zionist activities in 1941 and sentenced to imprisonment. In a Siberian labor camp he displayed exceptional physical and moral courage among his anti-Semitic fellow prisoners. A year later he was allowed to enlist in the Polish army. His force was temporarily stationed in Palestine, he promptly deserted, joined Etzel (Irgun), and rose to its command in December 1943.

Etzel (Irgun) was noted for the unshakable discipline of its members and for its ruthlessness. They extorted funds from Jewish businessmen and occasionally “executed” Jewish informers. Their world was entirely conspiratorial. With a price on their heads, under threat of hanging or long prison terms they adopted false names and moved from one hiding place to another. We’ll encounter Etzel (Irgun) again when we come to some of their more notable military activities.

1933 – Hitler becomes German Chancellor

Anti-Jewish economic boycott in Germany; first concentration camps, immigration from Germany

In 1933 Adolph Hitler became the German Chancellor and with his rise to prominence dark shadows began to descend on the Jewish world and the Zionist cause. Hitler was very interested in gaining influence in the Muslim world. It was his intention to erode the Allied position in a region widely considered as critical to English and French imperial and defensive power.

One particularly successful Axis technique of winning favor among the Arabs had its basis in ideology. German diplomats revealed no hesitation whatever in publicizing the Nazi anti-Jewish campaign. Hardly a German Arabic language newspaper or magazine appeared in the Middle East without a sharp thrust against the Jews.

Upon introducing the Nuremberg racial laws in 1935, Hitler received telegrams of congratulation and praise from all corners of the Arab world. It was fateful irony, therefore, that transformed Nazi Germany – self appointed patron of the Arab world and inspiration for Arab right-wing nationalism – into an involuntary benefactor of Zionist growth and expansion in Palestine.
As the tempo of persecution mounted in Germany Jewish emigration to Palestine and other lands grew correspondingly. Nazi leadership favored policy that would speed the exodus of German Jews. Germany was hardly alone in disgorging its Jews by the tens of thousands.

Government sponsored anti-Semitism was a fact of life in the states of eastern Europe as well. By 1939 275,000 Jews fled the Third Reich and approximately the same amount of Polish, Hungarian, and Rumanian Jews departed their countries.

**Fifth Aliyah**

Between 1932 and 1935 the Jewish population of the Yishuv doubled, from 185,000 to 375,000. This was the largest number of Jews immigrating into any country in the world during those years. The majority continued to arrive from eastern Europe, where the quasi-official Judeophobia of the Polish and Rumanian governments made life all but insupportable for their Jewish populations. For the first time a significant minority began to arrive from central Europe as fugitives of Nazi anti-Semitism. This central European group, by virtue of its culture, skills and capital imports set its own unique imprint on what henceforth was to be known as the Fifth Aliyah.

Economically, the German speaking immigrants were the most successful in the history of the Yishuv. A majority of the newcomers in fact had been Zionists in their lands of origin. Committed, educated, and reasonably affluent, they managed to get back on their feet in Palestine within a very few years.

The most extensive impact of the 5th Aliyah was in the development of larger Jewish urban centers. These now underwent a complete transformation and began taking on the aspect of modern cities. Tel Aviv and its suburbs absorbed not less than half the new immigrants. Its metropolitan population, including Jaffa, grew from 46,000 at the end of 1931 to 135,000 in 1935. The number of Jews living in Jerusalem rose from 53,000 in 1931 to 70,000 by 1935. Haifa witnessed the opening of a modern British port in 1933 and the completion of an oil pipeline terminal from the Mosul field in 1934. The city’s Jewish population nearly tripled between 1931 and 1935, from 16,000 to 40,000. Tiberias and Safed each absorbed and additional 11,000 Jews during the same period. Petach Tikvah, with a population of 18,000 was awarded the status of municipality in 1938. By 1939 the newcomers of the Fifth Aliyah had raised the kibbutz population to 25,000 living in 117 collective settlements or 5.2% of the Yishuv.

Urban progress, in turn, reflected a dramatic infusion of German Jewish funds. German Jewish newcomers brought with them millions in imported capital. Invested in commerce and industry, these funds launched a significant economic expansion, notable in metal trades, textiles, and chemicals. The number of industrial firms rose from 6,000 in 1930 to 14,000 in 1937 and employed a work force that grew from 19,000 to 55,000 in the same period. The tempo of growth could be measured in the sevenfold rise of electricity sold
for industrial purposes by the Palestine Electric Corporation between 1931 and 1939. During the same period, the nation’s other main enterprise, the Palestine Potash Company registered a six-fold gain in the value of its Dead Sea output. By the mid-1930’s with trade and new sea and air routes opening in Europe and Asia optimism for the Yishuv’s economic future appeared solidly based.

1935 – Nineteenth Zionist Congress

Nuremberg Laws

1936 – World Jewish Congress founded

Arab riots and strike

It was the unprecedented Jewish immigration of the Fifth Aliyah that provided fuel for the fires of Arab revolt. By 1936, inflamed by German and Italian propaganda and by the religious prejudice of the Mufti’s partisans, Arab fear and hatred assumed uncontrollable dimensions. The Palestine Arab press warned that the British were introducing Jews into the country “to push the Arabs into the sea and finish them,” that the Zionists were being incited to kill the Arabs, to attack and torture Arab women, and defile mosques.

The first acts of violence occurred in a spontaneous and unrelated way during April, 1936. Arab bandits stopped a bus, killing two of its Jewish passengers. The following night two Arabs were murdered as a Jewish act of revenge. Whereupon Arab followers of the militant Sheikh Farhan al-Sa’ada began destroying Jewish property, uprooting Jewish crops, and killing occasional Jewish civilians.

In response, the British administration imposed a curfew on Palestine’s larger cities and issued other emergency regulations. On April 25, the Mufti induced several of Palestine’s clan leaders to establish an Arab Higher Committee, with himself as the president. President Haj Amin loosed a series of grim warnings of the “revenge of God Almighty.”

The initial outburst of Arab violence was then followed by a mass strike against the government’s immigration policy. It was destined to endure for nearly 7 months. Enforced by the Mufti’s strong-arm men, the work stoppage paralyzed government and public transportation services, as well as Arab business and much of Arab agriculture. Ironically, one of its most decisive effects was to stimulate the Jewish economy. For the first time large numbers of Jewish workers supplanted cheaper Arab labor in Jewish citrus groves, and Jewish produce replaced Arab fruit and vegetables in the markets.

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85 Sachar, *A History of Israel*, pg. 199
the other hand the cost of the strike to the Arabs themselves became increasingly punitive.

By midsummer of 1936 the intensity of the fighting mounted as Arab irregulars poured into the hill country around Jerusalem, into Galilee, and Samaria. A majority of them at first were local Palestinians recruited by Haj Amin’s agents. But soon “Committees for the Defense of Palestine” were established in neighboring Arab lands. Syrian and Iraqi volunteers began arriving in Palestine at the rate of two or three hundred a month.

Their leader Fawzi al-Qawukji, played a vital role in the ensuing civil war. He was a compact, sandy-haired man in his early forties when the civil war began. Gruff, vigorous, and endowed with an unquestionable dynamism that he cultivated in open imitation of his hero, Adolph Hitler.

During the summer of 1936, it was Qawukji who organized military training among the Arab nationalists, imposing a single, unified command over the disparate rebel forces and helping smuggle in Axis weapons. His guerrilla technique rarely varied. It took the form of night assaults on Jewish farms, and destruction of cattle and crops, the murder of civilians.

Yet armed rebellion soon became a tactic of desperation for the Mufti as the strike’s most crippling effects were experienced mainly by the local Arabs. In July 1936 the Iraqi government persuaded the Arab Higher Committee to negotiate an end to the uprising. By then 20,000 British troops were stationed in Palestine and 10,000 more were on the way. The high commissioner allowed it to be known that if the fighting and strike came to an end, a Royal Commission of Inquiry would be dispatched to Palestine and the Arab Higher Committee might then present its complaints in the appropriate diplomatic circles. The offer was accepted. On October 11, the Arab Higher Committee called off the strike. Work resumed the next day. The guerrilla bands, already severely mauled by the British Army, were permitted to leave Palestine quietly. Fawzi al-Qawukji departed for Transjordan. Organized violence slowly died out. By then some 1,300 casualties had been incurred throughout the country including 197 Arabs, 80 Jews and 28 British personnel killed.

1937 – Peel Commission proposes partition of Israel

On November 11, 1936, the Royal Commission of Inquiry arrived. Its instructions were to determine the fundamental causes of the unrest, to explore Arab and Jewish grievances, and to make recommendations for the future. The chairman was Lord Robert Peel.

Although the Zionists were hardly delighted that their National Home should be reevaluated by yet another Royal Commission they agreed to cooperate. By contrast, the Arab Higher Committee decided as a matter of strategy to boycott the proceedings.
The Commission accepted this setback and began collecting evidence from British and Jewish witnesses. Once again the Zionists grievously underestimated the depth of Arab fear and hatred. This became apparent when the Mufti and his colleagues decided, at the last moment, to drop their boycott of the Royal Commission. In their testimony not one of the Arab spokesmen found redeeming qualities of any kind in the Jewish National Home. They denied that the British mandate or Jewish economic growth had brought other than grief to their people.

It was during Weizmann’s testimony at the fifty-first meeting of the commission, held in Jerusalem on January 8, 1937, that the notion of partitioning the country was first broached. Professor Coupland said to him at the hearing:

> If there were no other way out to peace, might it not be a final and peaceful settlement – to terminate the Mandate by agreement and split Palestine into two halves, the plain being an independent Jewish state ... and the rest of Palestine, plus Trans-Jordania, being an independent Arab state....

Weizmann recalled years later:

> I saw in the establishment of a Jewish State a real possibility of coming to terms with the Arabs. As long as the Mandatory policy prevails, the Arabs are afraid that we shall absorb the whole of Palestine ... A Jewish State with definite boundaries internationally guaranteed would be something final ... Instead of being a minority in Palestine, we would be a majority in our own State, and be able to deal on terms of equality with our Arab neighbors in Palestine, Egypt, and Iraq.

After five months of preparation, the Royal Commission report was issued in July 1937. It filled 404 pages, contained elaborate maps and statistical studies, and ranked as one of the major documents of British foreign policy.

The only feasible solution, the report concluded, was to divide Palestine into two self-governing communities. The reports proposal was for [Diagram of the Peel Commission Partition Plan of 1937]
Palestine and Transjordan to be divided into three regions: 1) a Jewish state comprising, essentially the coastal plain and Galilee 2) a much larger Arab state embracing the rest of Palestine and Transjordan 3) a permanently mandated British enclave including the Jerusalem-Bethlehem areas with a corridor to the sea and British bases on Lake Galilee and the Gulf of Aqaba.

The proposal was so revolutionary that it left most observers stunned. Even more astonishing than the plan itself was the speed with which the British government accepted it. Simultaneously with the publication of the Peel Report, on July 7, London announced its commitment to the recommendations, including the blueprint for partition as “the best and most hopeful solution of the deadlock.”

The Mufti and his followers rejected the plan with contempt and ensured that the Arab Higher Committee turned it down. The Jewish reaction was slow in coming. The Zionist Congress assembled a month after the issuance of the Peel Report. Eventually, the Congress passed a resolution withholding overt approval of the Peel scheme but empowering the Jewish Agency to explore with London the precise terms upon which a Jewish state might be created.

In September 1937, at the invitation of the Syrian government, a Pan-Arab Congress of some 500 delegates assembled in Bludan, Syria. The theme of the gathering was struck by the chairman, Naji Suweidi. He stated that Zionism was “a cancer,” that the Jewish National Home and the Palestine Mandate must be terminated immediately in favor of a sovereign Arab state. Unless Jewish immigration were halted forthwith the Arab nations might turn their back on the Western Democracies in favor of a new alliance. The implication of support for the Axis was plain. Attacks on the Peel Report increased in frequency and vehemence throughout the Arab world.

**Arab revolt**

The Arab alternative of alliance with the Axis powers was systematically encouraged by Rome and Berlin at this time. Throughout 1937 the Palestine issue opened new opportunities for Nazi activity in the Middle East. Grobba, the German minister in Baghdad, was increasingly in contact with Arab nationalists and members of the Palestine Arab Higher Committee, assuring them of German opposition to the Peel plan. In September, Syrian nationalists requested German weapons to be shipped to the Arab rebels in Palestine. In November and December the president of the Arab club of Damascus, traveled to Berlin on behalf of the Mufti to seek German financial and military help. These appeals did not go unanswered.

In this atmosphere violence was inevitable. On Sunday morning, September 26, 1937, Lewis Y. Andrews, district commissioner of Galilee and Acre and a known friend of the Zionists started out on foot for church in Nazareth with an assistant and a police

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88 Sachar, *A History of Israel*, pg. 205
constable. As the men turned up a steep narrow lane, they were fired on at point blank range by a group of Arabs. Andrews and the Police constable were killed instantly.

By mid-October, violence surpassing the level of the previous year raged throughout Palestine, with attacks on Jewish settlements and buses and the murder of Jewish civilians. For the first time British patrols also were cut down by snipers. As the killings and sabotage increased so did British reprisals. From July to November 1938, when the uprising was at its fiercest, perhaps 16,000 local and imported guerrillas were engaged in the insurrection. They succeeded in almost completely paralyzing civil authority outside the nation’s larger cities and in the Jewish agricultural areas. By mid-October the rebels virtually had taken control of the Old City of Jerusalem. This was the high point of their uprising.

By the end of the year some 20,000 British troops were launched on a campaign that was hardly less than a second military occupation of Palestine. Even these heavy troop concentrations barely managed to restore a semblance of order in the northern and central districts of the country. The fighting among Jews, Arabs, and British ultimately claimed several thousand lives and inflicted millions in property damage. Even in exile Haj Amin was making a supreme bid to consolidate his power in Arab Palestine.

**Stockade and watchtower settlements**

After the issuance of the Peel Report the Jewish Agency was convinced that the partition of Palestine was imminent. It was certain, too, that the boundaries of any future Jewish state would be determined by the practical evidence of Jewish habitation. Accordingly, land was now to be purchased on the borders of Palestine, especially in western Galilee and matched by immediate settlement. In order to provide instant protection for the young Kibbutz members, a tower and stockade method was devised. The emphasis here was on prefabricated construction. What at day break was an empty patch of ground by nightfall would be covered with a solid encampment protected by an outer stockade and a wooden tower with a searchlight. There was little concern for economic viability in this crash program of infiltration. In most urgent priority during the late 1930’s was simply to achieve a Jewish foothold, even with the barest nucleus of pioneers, in the outlying regions of the country.

**1938 – Wingate organizes special Jewish units to fight Arab terrorism**

As the Arab uprising of 1936 to 1939 drove on the Jewish community took up the posture of “active defense.” Yitzchak Sadeh, the Haganah field commander pioneered this concept. In addition, the Mandatory government, hard pressed for military manpower at this time authorized the existence of 3,000 “ghaffirs” – uniformed Jewish auxiliary guards. Even more significantly, the man appointed by the British as operating commander of the ghaffirs, Captain
Orde Wingate, vigorously and imaginatively enlarged Sadhe’s concept of “active defense.”

A Bible believing Protestant, Wingate was a passionate adherent of the Zionist cause. He told his closest Jewish friend David HaCohen:

I count it my privilege to help you to fight your battle. To that purpose I want to devote my life. I believe that the very existence of mankind is justified when it is based on the moral foundations of the Bible. 89

Wingate eventually became a confidant of Weizmann and of the Jewish Agency leaders.

In studying Arab tactics, Wingate noted the manner in which the guerrillas would strike and escape from heavily armed government columns. He was determined to retaliate by developing fast patrols and placing emphasis on night operations. Wingate was authorized to organize the ghaffirs into special night squads. With official approval Wingate was able to innovate a technique even more aggressive than that employed by Sadeh’s semilegal Haganah units. The young Scottish officer’s tactical adaptability in the field, his leadership and resourcefulness, soon evoked the admiration of his Jewish troops. So did his method of exploiting the night and every trick of decoy and feint to carry out audacious surprise raids against guerrilla hideouts. Indeed, Wingate’s conception of “active defense” went so far as to include crossings into Lebanon and Syria and attacks on guerrilla villages there. Throughout 1938, during their scores of forays and ambushes, the Jewish special night squads inflicted heavy casualties on the Mufti’s rebels and kept them off balance and increasingly ineffective.

Wingate himself was considered expendable, his pro-Zionist views were becoming a embarrassment to the government. Eventually, in the spring of 1939, he was sent back to England. His superiors wrote in his file:

A good soldier but a poor security risk. Not to be trusted. The interests of the Jews are more important to him than those of his own country. He must not be allowed to return to Palestine. 90

Accordingly on the front page of his passport was written the words, “The holder of this passport is not allowed to enter Palestine or Trans-Jordan.” 91

Wingate ultimately wanted to lead a Jewish army into battle against her enemies. He never got his wish. Brigadier General Orde Wingate was killed in a plane crash while fighting in the jungles of Burma during WWII (1944). 92

89 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 215
90 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 216
91 Jerusalem Post International Edition, Week ending April 1, 1995, pg. 10
The Haganah’s ability to cope with the rebellion infused a new confidence into the Jewish population.

**The Woodhead Report (Palestine Partition Commission)**

It was in reaction to the mounting Arab violence in Palestine that London announced the impending visit of yet another commission, this one to determine methods by which partition might be carried out and to recommend boundaries for the proposed Arab and Jewish states. The commission chairman was Sir John Woodhead.

The commission arrived in the Holy Land in April 1938. The Arabs boycotted the Woodhead hearings. Instead, the mandatory officials presented the Arab case no less effectively than the Arab Higher Committee. The mandatory officials were traditionally hostile to Zionism.

On November 10, 1938 the Palestine Partition Commission Report – the Woodhead Report – was submitted to Parliament. It declared the Peel partition plan unfeasible. Predictably the Zionists were enraged by the Woodhead Report. The Arabs, though less critical of the plan, rejected it on the grounds that it still envisaged Jewish sovereignty, even in diluted form.

On November 26, 1938 yet another White Paper was issued, this one formally rejecting as impractical any notion of dividing Palestine. The statement resorted instead to the familiar observation that “the surest foundation of peace and prosperity in Palestine would be an understanding between the Jews and Arabs.”

To that end the government announced its intention of inviting representatives of the Zionists, of the Palestinian Arabs, an the neighboring Arab states to a conference in London. If negotiations did not produce an agreement within a limited time, the government would make a policy decision itself and enforced it with or without Arab or Jewish cooperation. These talks would be known as the London Round Table Conference.

So after the initial phase of the uprising in 1936-1937, London had admitted that the Palestine mandate was unworkable, a claim Arab nationalists had advanced from the start. Now, the second phase of the Arab rebellion was followed by abandonment of the Partition plan well before any effort could be made to put it into operation. The Arabs plainly had mastered a crucial lesson – **VIOLANCE ON BEHALF OF THEIR RIGHTS IN THE HOLY LAND WAS EFFECTIVE DIPLOMACY WITH BRITAIN.**

**Kristallnacht; economic ruin of the Jews**

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93 Sachar, *A History of Israel*, pg. 219
1939 – Beginning of World War II

London Round Table Conference

The London Round Table Conference opened on February 7, 1939, at St. James Palace. When the Arabs refused to sit in the same room with the Jews, arrangements were made for the two delegation to enter the palace by separate entrances. What evolved, therefore, were essentially two parallel conferences.

In a private meeting with the Zionists, Colonial Secretary MacDonald asserted frankly that Britain’s lifeline in the Middle East largely depended upon the sympathetic understanding of the Arab world. With war imminent, His Majesty’s Government was left with no choice but to ensure that the Arab governments were not tempted to accept support from hostile powers. If it came to a choice between Arab and Jewish support, MacDonald explained, Jewish help, however valuable, represented no compensation to Britain for the loss of Arab and Muslim goodwill.

The key Arab demand remained unchanged; it was for termination of the mandate and the award of independence to Palestine in the form of an Arab dominated state. The British now agreed to this demand in principle. MacDonald revealed the contours of the government’s emerging Palestine formula on March 15. He proposed that Jewish immigration be limited to 75,000 during the next 5 years, with further immigration to depend on Arab consent. Land sales would similarly be curtailed.

Both sides rejected MacDonald’s formula. As it developed, the British had made the decision to appease the Arabs at the very moment when the rebellion in Palestine was sputtering out. In August 1939 the disturbances finally ended after three years of fighting. By then the toll had reached 6,768 casualties – 2,394 were Jewish, 610 were British and 3,764 were Arabs.

MacDonald White Paper

On May 17, 1939 London issued the MacDonald White Paper. His Majesty’s Government had decided to establish a quota of 10,000 Jewish immigrants for each of the next five years, plus another 25,000 refugees. After a period of five years and 75,000 immigrants, no further Jewish immigration would be permitted without Arab permission. The sale of land to Jews was prohibited immediately.

The declaration of British policy was a foreclosure of any subsequent growth for the Jewish National Home. It sealed off Palestine as a haven for all but an insignificant fraction of Jewish refugees, and this at the moment when European Jewry faced a mortal threat to its continued physical survival.

The Arab Higher Committee chose for tactical reasons to denounce the White Paper. The Zionist response was clear cut. On May 18, the day after the White Paper was issued, the
Jews of Palestine conducted demonstrations throughout the country, furiously denouncing the White Paper in synagogues, and public meetings. Isolated riots broke out, and one policeman was killed. The revisionist paramilitary organization, the Irgun Z’vai Le’umi, bombed a number of government buildings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv and sabotaged rail lines. In Britain itself, the White Paper met with serious criticism on all sides. No criticism was as harsh as Churchill’s:

This pledge of a home of refugees, of an asylum was not made to the Jews of Palestine, but to the Jews outside Palestine, to that vast, unhappy mass of scattered, persecuted, wandering Jews whose intense, unchanging, unconquerable desire has been for a National Home ... That is the pledge which was given, and that is the pledge which we are now asked to break ... 94

When the Palestine issue reached a vote in the House of Commons at the end of the month the Cabinet won a slim majority. But a bare 268 votes were cast in approval out of a total of 413. 179 voted against the White Paper, with an unprecedented 110 abstentions.

The Chamberlain government’s stringently anti-Zionist interpretation of the mandate required the approval not only of Parliament, however, but also of the League of Nations’ Permanent Mandates Commission. The members of the Commission did not accept the argument. In their report to the League Council, they declared the “the policy set out in the White Paper was not in accordance with the interpretation which, in agreement with the Mandatory Power and the Council, the Commission had placed upon the Palestine Mandate.” 95

Vindication by the world body was of little consolation to the Jews. At this time Zionist resistance began to take shape. The Jewish Agency publicly sanctioned and privately organized clandestine immigration. The influx of illegal refugees became unusually heavy after the Spring of 1939. Agricultural settlements continued to go up under cover of darkness. The Agency ordered a secret Haganah registration of all men and women between the ages of 18 and 35.

For Britain, the White Paper of 1939 appeared to pay off. A major part of the oil resources of the Commonwealth were in the Arab world. The MacDonald White Paper by and large succeeded in keeping the Arab world quiet, and this was its rationale. However, for the Jews the White Paper of 1939 was a likely death warrant for their people in Europe and conceivably for their hopes in Palestine.

United Jewish Appeal founded

94 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 224
95 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 224
Fund raising was by no means an experimental venture for the American Jewish community in 1939. Jewish federations had been operating in American cities for decades, although earlier in the century they were oriented primarily to local and a few national Jewish communal needs. Then, during WWI and the post war years, welfare funds were devoted increasingly to such overseas needs as the National Refugee Service, the Joint distribution Committee, and finally the United Palestine Appeal. Later, too, as the Nazi horror began to unfold in the 1930s, the decision was taken to integrate the campaigns for these overseas philanthropies into a single fund-raising organization, to be known henceforth as the United Jewish Appeal. Henry Montor was appointed the first executive director of the newly founded United Jewish Appeal in 1939.

However the United Jewish Appeal became more than just a fund raising organization. Over the years the UJA has become an important educational factor in American Jewish affairs. Through its widening program of institutes, lectures, and workshops, the UJA brought before the Jewish public information regarding Jewish history and contemporary Jewish life.

**Lohamei Herut Israel (Lechi) founded**

Beyond the control of the Jewish Agency itself there emerged a number of activist splinter groups, limited in number but fanatical in purpose that were unwilling any longer to accept Zionist discipline at time when Jews were being exterminated in Europe and the British were barring the doors of Palestine to survivors. The technique adopted by these militants was violence.

The most ungovernable faction in the emergent underground movement was the “Fighters for the Freedom of Israel,” known simply as the Lechi – for its Hebrew initials. Consisting of barely 300 members, the Lechi was one of a handful of Jewish paramilitary organizations that sprang up during or immediately following the Arab insurrection of 1936-1939. Its founder was Avraham Stern. His guerrilla group was commonly known as the “Stern Gang.”

**Avraham Stern** was a blond, Polish-born Jew in his early thirties. A teacher and dabbler in poetry, he had briefly studied classics at the University of Florence and had been decisively influenced there by what he saw of Fascist tactics and Mussolini’s intense fear of England. He was soon convinced that Britain’s presence in the Middle East was harmful to the future development of the Jewish National Home. He came to the conclusion that all emphasis should be placed on an anti-British rebellion. No other Jewish underground group was willing yet to go that far – not even Etzel (Irgun).

After the outbreak of WWII, Stern moved even(197,891),(769,995)
1942, a Sternist bomb attempt meant for a British intelligence officer, instead, killed two Jewish police inspectors. A few weeks later, Stern was shot dead by the police. Far from ending the Lechi’s militancy, these events seemed to impel its remaining members to acts of even greater desperation. Their hatred of the British transcended reason or control.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Significant movement/event</th>
<th>Method of immigration</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
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<td>1839</td>
<td>Chovevei Zion</td>
<td>Infiltrationist</td>
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<td>1882</td>
<td>First Aliyah</td>
<td>Infiltrationist</td>
<td>Russian Anti-Semitism</td>
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<td>1897</td>
<td>First Zionist Congress</td>
<td>Obtain, land, permission, and support from the Ottoman Empire</td>
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<td>1904</td>
<td>Second Aliyah</td>
<td>Infiltrationist</td>
<td>Russian Anti-Semitism</td>
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<td><strong>Opposition:</strong> Indifferent German government, hostile Ottoman Empire</td>
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<td>1914-1918</td>
<td>World War I</td>
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<td>opposition removed: Germany/Ottoman Empire defeated – British/Zionist Cooperation</td>
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<td>1917</td>
<td>Balfour Declaration</td>
<td>British support for a national homeland for the Jewish people.</td>
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<td>1919</td>
<td>Third Aliyah</td>
<td>Infiltrationist</td>
<td>Eastern European Anti-Semitism</td>
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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>British granted the Mandate over Palestine</td>
<td>Both sides of the Jordan to be the Jewish National Home.</td>
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<td><strong>Opposition:</strong> the Arab Peoples</td>
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<tr>
<td>1921-1937</td>
<td>Restrictions placed on the Jewish National Home</td>
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<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Transjordan created</td>
<td>East side of the Jordan closed to Jewish settlement. Palestine redefined and reduced by more than 50%. Palestine now exists only on the west side of the Jordan.</td>
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<td>1924</td>
<td>Fourth Aliyah</td>
<td>“Legal” but limited</td>
<td>Polish Anti-Semitism</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>Fifth Aliyah</td>
<td>“Legal” but limited</td>
<td>German/Eastern European Anti-Semitism</td>
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<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Peel Partition Plan</td>
<td>Create two separate national homes in Palestine. Jewish National Home reduced to approximately 20% of the territory.</td>
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<td>1939</td>
<td>World War II</td>
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As WWII progressed the British suffered stunning defeats in North Africa at the hands of the German tank commander Erwin Rommel. Throughout the long and painful ordeal of retreat Britain derived small encouragement from its Arab treaty partners. King Farouk of Egypt communicated admiration and support for Hitler. Iraq was intensely anti-British. No courtship of the Axis was more avid, however, than the one carried out by the Mufti of Jerusalem.

Although sorely tried, the British were not entirely without local support in the Middle East. The Jews proved loyal. We faced a common enemy. The Jewish Agency mobilized the Yishuv’s resources for wartime agricultural and industrial purposes. In the first month of the war, the Va’ad Le’umi announced the registration of volunteers for national service. 136,000 men and women enrolled. Their motivation was not simply an understandable desire for battle against the Nazis, but the expectation that an armed and active Jewish force would obligate Britain to reconsider the Zionist case. Additionally, military skills acquired during the war could be put to good use later.

It was the Jewish Agencies hope to organize these troops as a separate force under its own flag, something akin to the Zion Mule Corps of WWI. From the outset the idea was opposed by British military and civilian officials in the Middle East. General Sir Evelyn Barker, the British army commander in Palestine, warned London that the establishment of a Jewish fighting unit in the region would provoke a renewed Arab uprising.

In the spring of 1940 Winston Churchill assumed the prime ministry. Churchill was intrigued by the idea of arming Palestine Jewry, if only to release British troops in the Holy Land for other fronts. The decision was postponed by Churchill and by the time anything came of a Jewish army concept, the war in the Middle East was over. However, when the military situation turned against Britain Senior Haganah officers were invited to collaborate with the British in preparing lists of bridges and tunnels that were vulnerable to sabotage in Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, and Iran. Other joint efforts followed.

In early spring of 1941, Rommel’s Panzerarmee launched its operations in the Western Desert and Nazi infiltration of Syria became more overt. Haganah cooperation was urgently needed. The need soon became evident for a permanently mobilized Jewish task force. Such a unit accordingly was established by the Haganah in May 1941 and classified as the Palmach (Plugot Machaz Strike Companies). One of its purposes was the defense of the Yishuv against Arab bands that inevitably would harass Jewish towns and settlements the moment the British retreated from Palestine. More importantly, if and when Axis armies entered the country, the Palmach would be employed to attack the enemy whenever possible, disrupt his communications, sabotage his transport and airfields. The commander of the new elite force, not surprisingly, was Yitzchak Sadeh. As in the 1930’s the veteran night fighter immediately set about recruiting the Haganah’s ablest young men, mainly from the Kibbutzim.
On the eve of the Allied invasion of Syria, June 8, 1941, Palmach volunteers were needed for a final reconnaissance of Vichy positions. Sadeh chose two companies for the task. Their officers were the commander’s favorites, Moshe Dyan and Yigdal Allon. The troops were divided into 12 squads. Two of these units guided the advancing Australians, others cut wires, ambushed Vichy patrols guarding bridges over the Litani River, blew culverts and sabotaged roads. In the attack on Iskandern, Dyan showed exceptional bravery, capturing 12 Vichy troops. Later, in an exchange of fire he lost an eye.

In July, 1942, Rommel’s forces were hurled back at al-Alamein, and four months later driven out of Libya altogether by a reorganized Eighth Army under the command of Lieutenant General Bernard Montgomery. Once the danger to Palestine ebbed in the autumn of 1942, the British closed the various Palmach training bases. The British in turn relegated the Haganah to its former illegal status.

Refusing dissolution, however, the Jewish defense force simply became underground once again. Indeed, its members swelled to 21,000 men and women. The Palmach also remained intact in various scattered kibbutzim, training secretly, even organizing a clandestine naval program and developing a rudimentary air arm under the facade of a tiny aviation club. By then, having worked closely with the British, the Haganah and Palmach leadership understood better the ways in which a European regular army functioned and what its strengths and limitations were.

1942 – Massacres in occupied Russia

Death camps of Aushchwitz, Maidanek and Treblinka begin to function at full capacity

“Struma” sinks in Black Sea with 769 refugees

In 1942, an incident occurred which became for the Yishuv the very symbol of Britain’s unrelenting wartime policy toward the refugees. On December 16, 1941, the SS Struma entered the harbor of Istanbul and dropped anchor. It was an unseaworthy vessel of 180 tons. Several weeks before it had departed, the Rumanian port of Constanta had limped along the Black Sea coast with Palestine as its goal. Now, with its engine malfunctioning and its hull leaking badly, the Struma was forced to anchor for repairs. The ship was packed with 769 refugees for a voyage across the high seas. Unable to proceed farther, the Jews implored the Turkish government for sanctuary. The appeal was turned down.
Barred from going forward and unwilling to return, the Struma passengers remained in Istanbul harbor for two months, suffering from hunger, overcrowding, and mounting panic. The Jewish Agency implored the British to allow the refugees entrance to Palestine, if only for transshipment later to Mauritius. The mandatory government refused. Eventually, on February 24, 1942, the Turks ordered the Struma towed out of the harbor. Five miles beyond the coastline the ship took on water and sank with the loss of 428 men, 269 women, and 70 children. Recent reports indicate that it was torpedoed by a Russian submarine.\textsuperscript{96} The horrified reaction of Palestine Jewry was at least partially echoed in other allied countries. Even in Britain, the tragedy was angrily debated in the House of Commons.

1944 – Etzel (Irgun) and Lehi strike at the British

After 1942 the Lehi, under its new leaders, Nathan Friedmann-Yellin and Dr. Israel Scheib, concluded that violence was the one method capable of driving the British from Palestine. Thus, extorting funds from Jewish shopkeepers, the Lehi soon engaged in indiscriminate shootings of British police. Not infrequently, Lehi’s members were themselves shot down in gun battles. The attacks mounted in intensity. So did British retaliation, with mass arrests, curfews, and the imposition of the death penalty on those carrying weapons. Still the underground campaign went on, and once included an unsuccessful murder attempt against the high commissioner, Sir Harold MacMichael, on August 8, 1944.

Three months later, the Lehi perpetrated its most audacious crime. It took place in Cairo and was directed against Lord Moyne, the British minister-resident. On November 6, 1944, two Sternists shot Moyne fatally as he was leaving the British residence. The youths were placed on trial in Cairo on January 10, 1945 and were swiftly convicted and hanged. With few exceptions, the Zionist community was horror-stricken by Moyne’s

The First Regathering: Zionism and the Modern State of Israel

assassination. Ben Gurion issued a passionate appeal to the Yishuv “to cast out all members of this underground gang and deny them shelter and assistance.”

Thereupon, the Haganah launched a full-scale attack against Etzel (Irgun) and Lechi members alike, denouncing them to the British police. But the damage to the Zionist cause was already far-reaching. Jewish goodwill had come to an end. British patience was now similarly exhausted.

**Jewish Brigade organized and fights in Italy**

Upon the invasion of Italy in the autumn of 1943, the front line shifted north from the Arab countries. It was a much simpler matter by then to justify Zionist participation in the struggle for Europe, where millions of Jews were being exterminated by the enemy.

On July 12, 1944, therefore, Churchill sent a memorandum to the war secretary instructing him to begin organizing a Jewish army group. In October, the War Office appointed Brigadier Ernest Benjamin as commanding officer of the brigade. A Zionist banner was approved, together with a blue-and-white shoulder flash inscribed with the Shield of David. A recruiting and training program was launched, and early in 1945 the 3,400 Palestinian members of the brigade were shipped off for combat duty in Italy, where they were attached to the British 8th Army.

As it turned out, this Jewish fighting force represented the important political accomplishment of Zionist diplomacy during the war. Equipped with its own staff services and artillery support, it became the training ground where hundreds of Jewish officers and NCOs first mastered logistics, organization and tactics on a brigade scale. The experience added, of course, to the Haganah reservoir of trained fighting men in the event of a postwar struggle against the British or the Arabs.

**1945 – World War II ends**

**Bevin’s declaration on Israel**

Following the end of WWII Europe was teeming with displaced persons. President Truman paid special attention to the plight of the Jewish refugee and directed that no Eastern European Jew be turned away from refugee camps in Germany. Therefore, refugee traffic from the East to German relocation camps gained momentum. By the summer of 1945 nearly 100,000 Jewish DPs had reached Germany. At the same time the Labor party in Britain had won a stunning upset victory. The **Clement Atlee** government came to power. Hopes in the Yishuv revived dramatically. “The British workers will understand our aims.” Ben-Gurion declared exultantly, upon hearing the news.
The community that now demanded recognition was no longer a precarious minority settlement. By 1944 the Jewish population of Palestine had reached 560,000. Its economy had been profoundly stimulated by the war. Almost half of its food needs could now be supplied by its own farms. Industrial production had risen dramatically.

Ben-Gurion led a deputation to London within 109 days of the Labor parties accession to power. He carried with him a request for the immediate admittance into Palestine of the 100,000 Jewish displaced persons. On August 25, 1945 the Colonial Office replied with an offer of 2,000 immigrant certificates remaining unused from the original White Paper allotment, with a supplemental monthly quota of 1,400 – provided the Arabs agreed. This response dumbfounded and appalled the Zionist leadership.

By then a guideline for the entire Middle East already had been prepared by the Labor foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin. It accepted as unchallengeable the importance of maintaining the friendship of the Arab world. One reason was economic. Britain in 1945 was virtually bankrupt. One of Bevin’s priority concerns during the grim postwar era was to assure the single most important of Britain’s remaining overseas resources. This was oil, the power source of the country’s very industrial existence and a foreign currency earner of near sacred importance. Britain’s vast holdings were concentrated in the Middle East, partly in Iran, but largely too, in the vast Kirkuk field of Iraq, in Kuwait, and in Qatar.

If a need for oil and pipeline easements was on factor in determining Bevin’s Middle Eastern policy, geopolitical strategy was another. The Soviet Union was emerging as a potentially far more serious threat to Britain’s military and economic dominance in the Middle East. Bevin felt that Britain’s influence in the Middle East had to be protected at any cost.

Bevin was not unfamiliar with the Palestine question. At the time of the second Labor government under Ramsay MacDonald, when the Zionists were denouncing the Passfield White Paper, representatives of the Histadrut had called on Bevin as a fellow trade unionist for help. He had given it willingly. His intercession with MacDonald had played a decisive role in safeguarding the Zionist cause. Now, however, 15 years later, Bevin was unwilling as foreign secretary to thrust himself into the Palestine question without detailed additional study.
In the United States, by early 1945, the State Department had moved firmly to a position of anti-Zionism. Undersecretary Joseph Grew warned the Roosevelt administration that, “Zionist activities in this country will remain the gravest threat to friendly relations between the United States and the countries of the Near East until a solution to the problem is reached.”

For the previous two years a series of research studies on Palestine had been conducted by State Department interdivisional committee. In their summary of January, 1945 the committee members urged that Palestine be stipulated an international territory under United Nations trusteeship.

Franklin Roosevelt was vague on the issue. Roosevelt assured Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia that he would not adopt a hostile stance to the Arabs and that Washington would not alter its basic approach toward Palestine “without full and prior consultation with both Jews and Arabs.” Roosevelt subsequently remarked that “on account of the Arab situation, nothing could be done in Palestine.” David K. Niles, was probably correct when he once remarked: “There are serious doubts in my mind that Israel would have come into being if Roosevelt had lived.”

Harry Truman’s approach was rather less equivocal. He had been a pro-Zionist since his early manhood. Truman sent Churchill a brief note on July 24, 1945 expressing hope that the British government would “take steps to lift the restrictions of the White paper into Palestine,” and that the prime minister would let him have his “ideas on the settlement of the Palestine question so that we can at a later... date discuss the problem in concrete terms.”

Before a reply could be sent Churchill was defeated in the general election. Soon afterward Truman dispatched Earl G. Harrison to study the conditions of the Jewish DPs. Harrison’s report not only indicted American military insensitivity but also laid out a number of uncompromising proposals for solving the refugee question. With thinly veiled indignation, Harrison described the appalling circumstances of the death camp survivors, their despair, their frantic anxiety to leave the European morgue. At least 100,000 of them, the report suggested, ought to be evacuated immediately and, “Palestine is definitely and preeminently the first choice.”

97 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 254
98 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 255
99 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 256
100 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 256
Truman endorsed the proposal without qualification. In a letter to Prime Minister Attlee on August 31, 1945, the President urged that 100,000 Jews be allowed into Palestine forthwith. The appeal took Attlee by surprise, so much so that it required two and a half weeks until Bevin and the Foreign Office could prepare a response.

The reply offered a clue to London’s emerging approach to the Palestine question. It rejected the notion that Jewish displaced persons had suffered more than non-Jewish victims of Nazism, and it rejected the plea to allow the 100,000 into the Holy Land.

There is little doubt that the British government made a serious error in its refusal to accept the 100,000. It would have been useful if Bevin had exercised verbal restraint, rather than warn, on November 2, 1945, “that if the Jews, with all their suffering, want to get too much at the head of the queue, you have the danger of another anti-Semitic reaction through it all.” This remark elicited a day of mourning in the Yishuv.

“Illegal” immigration intensified

Even before WWII the Zionist leadership had sponsored illegal immigration of Jews from Europe and the Middle East, known as Aliyah Bet – immigration plan “B.” Immigration plan “B” was simply a euphemism for nonofficial or illegal immigration. From the inception of this program in 1938, its director was Shaul Avigur. When the war ended, Avigur returned to Europe to open a new office, this time in Paris. His instructions from the Jewish Agency were clear and unequivocal. They were to organize the immediate departure of Jewish DPs for Palestine. Nor was this to be a clandestine smuggling effort of a few hundred or even a few thousand refugees. What was intended, rather, was a traffic organized on a scale of far reaching proportions, involving tens of thousands of Jews. The homelessness of these victims of Nazism was to be exploited fully, even ruthlessly to dramatize the fate of the Jewish people and the callousness of the British immigration policy in Palestine.

By autumn of 1945, the first groups of several hundred refugees were taken out of their camps in the American zone of Germany. In trucks supplied by the Jewish Brigade, they were carried to the French and later Austrian borders. Here they made their way over mountain passes by foot, to be transported afterward to the French or Italian coasts and waiting Haganah ships. The largest numbers of Haganah vessels were Italian coastal ships of prewar vintage. Hardly one of these obsolescent tubs was fit for a Mediterranean crossing; it appeared unthinkable to load them with hundreds of passengers. Nevertheless, hastily repaired at various Italian shipyards, they were sent to their embarkation

101 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 257
rendezvous, usually secluded inlets near larger Adriatic ports. Initial sailing’s caught the British by surprise. Half a dozen ships slipped by the British coastal watch in Palestine during the late autumn and early winter of 1945-46, unloading 4,000 refugees.

**Cooperation between Haganah and Etzel (Irgun)**

In 1945 the Zionist leadership had rightly concluded that if Britain’s attitude was based upon Arab strength, then Britain must be equally impressed by Jewish strength. For the first time the Agency approved specific measures of physical resistance. Thus, in November, 1945 the commanders of the Haganah and the two dissident Jewish underground forces reached an agreement that all future Etzel (Irgun) and Lechi operations would be coordinated under Haganah direction. For the next eight months the three groups undertook systematic attacks on British installations.

During later 1945 and early 1946, the Etzel (Irgun) and Lechi embarked on a number of daring and successful raids against British armories. In October, 1945 a joint Haganah-Etzel operation dynamited the British rail network at two hundred different points throughout the country, effectively paralyzing British troop movements. The Haganah also destroyed three British naval launches that had been for intercepting refugee vessels. Other acts of sabotage were carried out against British airfields, radar stations and coastal lighthouses.

Military reinforcements were promptly sent in. The government’s retaliatory measures became increasingly severe. Yet underground agents were rarely caught. General Barker, the commanding officer in Palestine, had to admit later that “the Jews knew all government secrets and military plans within a day of our making a decision. Their intelligence system is uncanny.”

The attacks continued, hitting police, army, and naval garrisons. The British were confounded. Until the postwar period, they had been accustomed to thinking of violence in Palestine as exclusively an Arab phenomenon. The force and savagery of Jewish resistance came as a shock to them. Nevertheless, Bevin’s determination to solve the refugee issue and the future of Palestine in his own way was not easily undermined.

**1946 – Anglo-American Committee publishes its conclusions**

In 1946 London formulated a new compromise approach to Truman’s request. On October 26, 1945, before the House of Commons, and on November 13, in a letter to the American president, Attlee proposed a joint Anglo-American committee to investigate the tragedy of the refugees and devise a solution to it. Truman accepted the challenge with the qualification that Palestine alone, rather than any alternative refuge, become the focus of inquiry. Atlee and Bevin grudgingly accepted this condition.

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102 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 258
A unanimous report of less than one hundred pages was issued on May 1, 1946. It recommended the immediate authorization of 100,000 immigration certificates. The report turned down either an Arab or a Jewish state. Without offering a detailed solution the report proposed a regime in which further Jewish immigration would neither be subject to an Arab veto nor be allowed to grow to such numbers as to produce a Jewish majority. During the interim, the mandate should continue to function.

The Anglo-American report was categorically rejected. London’s response was frigid. The text of the document was published in Washington on May 1, 1946 and the same day Truman publicly announced his approval of the recommendations for admitting 100,000 DPs into Palestine. E. F. Francis-Williams, Bevin’s friend and biographer, wrote later that Truman’s statement “threw Bevin into one of the blackest rages I ever saw him in.”

If rejection of Truman’s appeal was a serious tactical blunder, Bevin insisted upon compounding it by the harsh insensitivity of his remarks. Thus, his irritated reaction to the president’s position was to declare publicly that the Americans favored the admission of 100,000 Jews into Palestine because, “they didn’t want too many of them in New York.” The outrage provoked by this statement was not limited to Jews. Sailing to the United States shortly afterward, Bevin discovered that the stevedores in the port of New York refused to handle his baggage.

103 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 263
104 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 264
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Etzel (Irgun) blows up the King David hotel

On July 22, 1946 a group of armed Etzel (Irgun) members entered the kitchen of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. An entire wing of this building was occupied by government offices, together with the headquarters of the CID, the Criminal Investigation Divisions. The saboteurs deposited heavy milk cans packed with gelignite in the hotel’s lower quarters. Time fuses were set and the men departed. According to Menachem Begin’s later account, a warning of the impending explosion was telephoned to the CID. The British subsequently denied that the warnings were ever received. When the explosion went off in the hotel 25 minutes later, 91 Britishers, Arabs, and Jews were killed, 45 injured.

The Agency was no less horrified than the British government by the King David bombing. Ben-Gurion, who had never brought himself totally to disavow earlier underground raids on British installations, now furiously condemned the Etzel (Irgun) and urged Palestine Jewry to turn its members in wherever they were discovered.

On a later occasion, the Haganah managed to foil an Etzel (Irgun) scheme to blow up British Police Headquarters in Tel Aviv. Begin and his men were not to be that easily deterred. Rather they intensified their attacks on military transport, destroying vehicles, paralyzing railroad traffic, and occasionally killing British personnel.

British deport “illegal” immigrants to Cyprus

Early in 1946, the British intensified their blockade against illegal immigration. With nearly 8,000 displaced persons sailing from Italian ports by then interception was almost certain, usually just inside Palestine territorial waters. The refugees were forcibly transferred to British vessels and carried off to Cyprus. To discourage immigration, the internment camps at Cyprus were made as forbidding as possible. The heat in the summer was infernal, water was always short, and food barely adequate.

Even so, the flow of illegals continued with growing momentum. To the Jewish survivors, Cyprus was merely another stepping stone to Palestine. Not infrequently the DPs resisted British boarding parties and deaths occurred on both sides. All but five of sixty-three refugee ships were intercepted between 1945 and 1948, with the internment of 26,000 DPs on Cyprus. Yet this was precisely the message of the refugee tragedy that the Zionists were determined to convey. Its impact on world opinion and the British taxpayer turned out to be the Jews most effective weapon.
1947 – UNSCOP

In 1947 the United Nations was chosen as the instrument to cope with the issue of Palestine. Britain turned the fate of Palestine over to this world body on April 2, 1947. Subsequently, an eleven nation investigative board was set up on May 13 and entitled the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine – UNCSOP.

The committee was a balanced group. However, troubles were brewing from the beginning. Britain insisted that it would neither abandon the mandate nor enforce a decision unless the solution were “just” and acceptable to both Arabs and Jews – a rather improbable expectation. Upon learning that UNCSOP included the plight of the refugees in their thinking the Arab states warned that they, too would not necessarily be bound by the United Nation’s recommendation.

The UNCSOP group arrived in the Holy Land in mid-June of 1947. The Arab Higher Committee decided to boycott the UNCSOP hearings. That decision was probably a tactical blunder. Although the United Nations group managed to interview Arabs unofficially during its five week stay in Palestine, and sample their views, this informal poll hardly compared to the elaborate and documented testimony offered by the Zionists. In addition the strident aggressive statements of the Arabs convinced the UNCSOP members that it would be fatal to leave the Jews as a minority in Arab hands.

Exodus – 1947

While the UNCSOP group was in Israel, in mid-July, a battered little American Chesapeake Bay ferry, packed with 4,500 DPs set out from the French port of Sète. Six British destroyers and one cruiser were waiting offshore. They immediately “escorted” the refugee ship, appropriately named “Exodus-1947” across the Mediterranean. Twelve miles outside of Palestine territorial waters, the British armada closed in on the Exodus for boarding. A furious hand-to-hand struggle ensued. The DPs fought off the boarding party for several hours. Eventually the British put machine guns and gas bombs into action, killing three and wounding 100. All the while a detailed account of the battle was radioed to Haganah headquarters in Tel Aviv, and later rebroadcast through the world. The crew of the Exodus surrendered only when the British began ramming the vessel, threatening to sink it. Listing badly, the ferry was then towed into Haifa harbor.
Under ordinary circumstances the British would have transshipped the boat’s passengers to Cyprus. But, in the previous twelve months some 26,000 Jews had been packed onto that island, hopelessly overcrowding its two internment camps. In this case, therefore, Bevin personally decided to “make an example” of the refugees by sending them back to their port of origin. Shortly afterward, on British transports that were essentially prison ships, the DPs were carried off to Marseilles.

There they refused to disembark. The French government offered the refugees hospitality and medical care. The offer was rejected. The passengers insisted that their destination was the Land of Israel. After three weeks, the French government, concerned about the possibility of epidemics, ordered the vessels to depart. At this point the British cabinet held an emergency meeting and decided that its only alternative was to ship the Jews back to Germany. Most of the refugees were thereupon returned to Hamburg.

Some 1,500 refused to disembark. They were carried off by British troops wielding clubs and hoses. Eventually they were transported by rail to German internment camps. For a month the British attempted to register them, but the only response they got to all questions was, “Eretz Israel.”

The Exodus tragedy prolonged over three months was extensively reported in newspapers throughout the world. The UNSCOP members were not unaffected by the episode. The representative from Yugoslavia stated of the Exodus episode, “It is the best possible evidence we can have.”

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105 Sachar, *A History of Israel*, pg. 283
U. N. General Assembly decides on partition of Israel

The UNSCOP report was finished on August 31. UNESCOP laid down eleven guiding principles. The most important of these principles stated that the mandate should end and independence be granted at the earliest practicable date. UNESCOP was divided, 7 to 3, into a majority recommending partition and a minority proposing federation.106

In favoring partition, the majority scheme, envisaged an Arab area comprising western Galilee, the hill country of central Palestine except for the Jerusalem enclave and the coastal plane from a line south of Ashdod to the Egyptian border. The Jewish territory would include the rest, except for the Jerusalem-Bethlehem area which would be internationalized. Jewish immigration would continue at the rate of 6,250 monthly in the first two years – for a total of 150,000 – and thereafter at the rate of 5,000 monthly or 60,000 per year.

There was little in the majority report to set the Zionists dancing in the streets. Territorially, it envisaged for both peoples asymmetrical segments that were “entwined in an antagonistic embrace like two fighting serpents,”107 as Herbert Samuel had once described the Peel plan. However, it offered two indispensable prerequisites: sovereignty and uninterrupted flow of immigration for the reasonable future.

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106 federation, federation (fĕd´ə-rā´shen) noun, Abbr. fed. 1) The act of federating, especially a joining together of states into a league or federal union; 2) A league or association formed by federating, especially a government or political body established through federal union. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition is licensed from Houghton Mifflin Company. Copyright © 1992 by Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

107 Sachar, A History of Israel, pg. 284
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The Jewish agency therefore expressed cautious satisfaction with the majority report. The Arabs, conversely, rejected it with a passion. The Arab League formally threatened war if the United Nations approved the UNSCOP report.

On November 25, 1947 the Palestine Committee approved an amended partition plan, 25 to 13. The Arab state would embrace 4,500 square miles, 804,000 Arabs, and 10,000 Jews. The Jewish state would encompass 5,500 square miles, 538,000 Jews and 397,000 Arabs.

On November 29, the partition resolution was submitted to the full session of the General Assembly for the desired vote. The General Assembly resolution was approved by a vote of 33 to 13, giving it the necessary 2/3’s majority. The British Mandate was scheduled to end on May 14, 1948.

**Beginning of Arab attacks**

The initial Arab response to the Partition Resolution was to carry out their often repeated threat of violence. It set the pattern for the months and years ahead. The Arab Higher Committee proclaimed a three-day general strike from December 2 to December 4, 1947. Violence began immediately with attacks on Jewish quarters in Jerusalem, Haifa, and Jaffa. Soon after, the Higher Committee began recruiting volunteers throughout Palestine Arab towns and villages. The result was Arab “militia’s.” Their opening tactics were essentially hit-and-run assaults on isolated Jewish settlements and transportation and the pillage and destruction of Jewish property.

Left to their own devices, Arabs and Jews for the most part continued to live together peacefully, if fearfully. The Higher Committee’s violence alone would not have precipitated a full-scale war between the two peoples. But the Palestine Arabs and Jews were not left alone. During the September 16, 1947 meeting at Sofar, Lebanon, the Arab League Political Committee appealed for economic reprisals against Britain and the United States, and for money and weapons for the Palestine Arabs. Soon an “Arab Liberation Army” was organized. General Sir Ismail Safwat Pasha, an Iraqi staff officer was appointed its commander. Field command was invested in Fawzi al-Qawukji, guerrilla leader of the Palestine civil war of 1936.

In late January of 1948 elements of the Liberation Army began infiltrating over the Palestine border. By the end of March the number had grown to 7,000 soldiers. Assaults were launched against Jewish quarters in the cities, particularly in Jerusalem. There were concentrated attacks against outlying kibbutzim in the Hebron hills. The Arabs succeeded during this period in cutting the roads between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, between Haifa and western Galilee, between Tiberias and eastern Galilee, and between Afula and the Beisan Valley. Jewish farm colonies in the Negev soon were isolated from the rest of Palestine.
In Jerusalem the situation of the Jews was particularly grave. By the end of March 1948, as the gauntlet of Arab attacks from the hill areas became increasingly lethal, the entire Haganah convoy system was in danger of collapse. By then, too, the three roads leading to Jerusalem were in the hands of Arab irregulars, and the Jewish population of the city faced the imminent likelihood of being starved or overrun.

In late 1947, once the United Nations decision for partition was assured, the Haganah leadership concentrated on two major objectives. The first was the security of the Yishuv against local Arab forces during the half-year period of British withdrawal. The second was defense of the country against a possible full scale Arab invasion after May 15.

**Arab refugees**

There were other changes in the configuration of Israel at this time. These were demographic rather than political or geographic. The first of two phases took place in the months immediately following the Partition Resolution. Approximately 30,000 Arabs decided to leave Palestine. Most of these emigrants were businessman and their families from the larger cities.

The second phase took place in April and May of 1948. As the Jews began to secure the upper hand in Palestine Arab public services collapsed in the pandemonium of British evacuation. The exodus of Arab families resumed, and this time it included large numbers of communal officials, village mayors, cadis’ (Muslim priests), and judges. Thousands of fellahin and town dwellers began to accompany them.

The most dramatic episode of flight in this second phase of Arab departure occurred in Haifa. Approximately 70,000 Arabs lived in this harbor city. On the afternoon of the 22nd, the Jewish mayor of Haifa and his colleagues met with Arab leaders and pleaded with them to remain in the city with their fellow townsmen. That same afternoon the reply was conveyed to the mayor and his associates: the Arabs would not live for a single day under Jewish rule. Within 36 hours the remaining Arab population that had not already gone, 30,000 souls, left the city and departed for Lebanon, either overland or by sea.

Elsewhere, the Arab exodus gained momentum, reaching nearly 175,000 during the last weeks of the mandate. There were various reasons for this flight, but none of them could be traced to an alleged appeal for evacuation by the Arab governments themselves, ostensibly to make way for the impending invasion of Arab armies. This was a frequently
repeated Israeli claim after the war. Yet no such order for evacuation was ever found in any release of the Arab League or in any military communiqués of the period.

Rather, the evidence in the Arab press and radio of the time was to the contrary. By and large the Arab league ordered the Palestinians to stay where they were, and stringent punitive measures were reported against Arab youths of military age who fled the country. Even Jewish broadcasts in Hebrew mentioned these Arab orders to remain. Assam Pasha, Abdullah, and the various “national committees” appealed repeatedly to the Arabs not to leave their homes. The Ramallah commander of the Arab Legion threatened to confiscate the property and blow up the houses of those Arabs who left without permission. At one point the Lebanese government decided to close its frontiers to all Palestinians, except women, children, and the aged.

The most obvious reason for the mass exodus was the collapse of Palestine Arab political institutions that ensued upon the flight of the Arab leadership – at the very moment when leadership was most needed. The departure of mukhtars, judges, and the like from Haifa and the New City of Jerusalem, from Jaffa, Safed, and elsewhere, dealt a grave blow to that Arab population. The semifeudal character of Arab society rendered the illiterate fellah almost entirely dependent on the Landlord and once this was gone the Arab peasant was terrified by the likelihood of remaining in an institutional and cultural void.

Jewish victories obviously intensified the fear and accelerated departure. In many cases Jews captured Arab villages, expelled the inhabitants and blew up houses to prevent them from being used as strongholds against them. In other instances, Qawukji’s men used Arab villages for their bases, provoking immediate Jewish retaliation.

Arab leaders gave wide publicity to authentic or rumored acts of atrocity committed by the Zionist enemy. In April and May, entire Arab communities were fleeing in terror even before Jewish forces overran their homes. By June 11, when the first UN truce came into effect, some 250,000 Arabs had fled the Jewish occupied areas of the country.

Once on the offensive Israel changed its policy toward the local Arabs. No effort was made to persuade them to stay and share the anticipated benefits of the Jewish state. By spreading warnings ahead of them the Jews ensured that most Arab settlements were evacuated even before the Israeli army arrived.

The number of Arab emigrants reached 300,000 by July 9. After hostilities ended, the UN placed the number of Arab fugitives from Israeli-controlled territory at approximately 720,000 – 70% of the Arab population. Jewish estimates were 538,000.

180,000 refugees fled toward the Gaza area. The fate of these Gaza derelicts was to be particularly cruel. Refused employment and resettlement by Israelis and Egyptians alike for the next generation, they were destined to vegetate in a confinement as tragic as that endured by the Jewish displaced persons in Europe between 1945 and 1948.
Joseph Farah summed up the refugee crisis in this manner.

From: MERIT [info@ocmerit.org]
Sent: Sunday, October 27, 2002 11:35 PM

JOSEPH FARAH-IN CANADA

WorldNetDaily Editor Joseph Farah "Mideast truth tour."

Farah attacked the idea that Israel is responsible – morally, legally or any other way – for the displacement of Arab refugees in 1948 or thereafter.

“The revised history has given the guilty a free ride,” he said. “The Arab states that initiated the hostilities have never accepted responsibility – despite their enormous wealth and their ability to assimilate tens of millions of refugees in their largely under-populated nations. And other states have failed to hold them accountable. It’s bad enough the Arab states created a small nation of refugees by their actions. It’s worse that they have successfully blamed that international crime on the Jews. Today, of course, this cruel charade continues. The suffering of millions of Arabs is perpetuated only for political purposes by the Arab states. They are merely pawns in the war to destroy Israel.”

Farah says the world has dealt with far more serious refugee crises in the past in much less than 50 years.

“There were some 100 million refugees around the world following World War II,” he said. “The Palestinian Arab group is the only one in the world not absorbed or integrated into their own people’s lands. Since then, millions of Jewish refugees from around the world have been absorbed in the tiny nation of Israel. It makes no sense to expect that same tiny Jewish state – representing just one-tenth of 1 percent of the Mideast landmass – to solve a refugee crisis it did not create.”