**History of Israel**

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The State of [Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel) ([Hebrew](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_language): מדינת ישראל‎, *Medinat Yisrael*) was [established](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_Independence_(Israel)) on May 14, 1948 after nearly two thousand years of [Jewish dispersal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_diaspora), and after 55 years of efforts to create a Jewish homeland ([Zionism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zionism)). The 61 years since Israeli independence have been marked by conflict with neighboring Arab states and the Palestinian-Arabs. There have also been many negotiations, and peace has been achieved with Egypt and Jordan. Israel's democracy has survived under difficult circumstances and the country has prospered despite war, ethno-religious conflict, boycotts, mass immigration and terror attacks. Since the creation of the Jewish state, the percentage of the world's [Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jews) in Israel has grown; at present, about 40% of the world's Jewish population are Israeli residents.



[Palestine Post](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Jerusalem_Post) headline announcing declaration of independence.

**Introduction: Jewish history in Israel**

See also:

* [History of ancient Israel and Judah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_ancient_Israel_and_Judah),
* [Jewish history](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_history), [Land of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_of_Israel),
* [History of the Jews in the Land of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_the_Land_of_Israel),
* [History of the Southern Levant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Southern_Levant)

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| [**Tribes of Israel**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israelite) |
| **The Tribes**   * [Reuben](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribe_of_Reuben) * [Simeon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribe_of_Simeon) * [Levi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Levite) * [Judah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribe_of_Judah) * [Dan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribe_of_Dan) * [Naphtali](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribe_of_Naphtali) * [Gad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribe_of_Gad) * [Asher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribe_of_Asher) * [Issachar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribe_of_Issachar) * [Zebulun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribe_of_Zebulun) * [Joseph](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribe_of_Joseph)   + [Manasseh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribe_of_Manasseh)   + [Ephraim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribe_of_Ephraim) * [Benjamin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribe_of_Benjamin) |
| **Related topics**   * [Israelites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israelites) * [Tribal allotments](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribal_allotments_of_Israel) * [Ten Lost Tribes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ten_Lost_Tribes) |
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Readers should note that this article uses BCE ("[Before the Common Era](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_Era)") in preference to BC ("[Before Christ](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anno_Domini)"). CE ("[Common Era](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_Era)") is used instead of AD ("[Anno Domini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anno_Domini)", Latin for "Year of Our Lord").

Orthodox Jews use a [Jewish calendar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_calendar) which they traditionally regard as dating back to the creation of the universe.

**Etymology**

In the [Book of Genesis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Genesis), [Abraham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham)'s grandson was [Jacob](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob) who changed his name to **Israel** and had twelve sons who each fathered twelve tribes also known as the "[children of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Children_of_Israel)". [Judah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judah) was the oldest of Israel's sons.

Evidence of a Jewish presence in Israel dates back over 3,000 years, to the formation of the religion and people. The name "Jews" derives from their origin in the [Kingdom of Judah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Judah). Over the course of this long history, the Jews have several times been dispersed and then returned from exile.

**Birth of Judaism and Israel 1400 BCE - 586 BCE**

See also: [History of ancient Israel and Judah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_ancient_Israel_and_Judah)

The [Israelites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israelites) are generally thought to have come into existence between 1400 and 1100 BCE, developing an [independent kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Monarchy) around 1050 BCE. The bible describes constant warfare with the [Philistines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philistines) whose capital was [Gaza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza#Ancient_period) and a single [temple in Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solomon%27s_Temple). Around 950 BCE, the kingdom split into a southern [Kingdom of Judah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Judah) and a northern [Kingdom of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Israel_(Samaria)).

Biblical and Assyrian records describe how the Kingdom of Israel was destroyed by [Assyrian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assyria) king [Tiglath-Pileser III](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiglath-Pileser_III) around 720 BCE and its people sent into exile, becoming the [Lost Tribes of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost_Tribes_of_Israel). The [Samaritans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samaritan) claim to be descended from survivors of this destruction. The Philistine kingdom was also destroyed.

The Bible describes how a later Assyrian King, [Sennacherib](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sennacherib), tried and failed to conquer Judah ([Assyrian records](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taylor_prism) say he punished them and left). Assyria was eventually conquered by [Babylon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylon) in 612 BCE.

**Babylonian, Persian and Greek rule 586 BCE - 150 BCE**

In 586 BCE King [Nebuchadnezzar II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nebuchadnezzar_II) of [Babylon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylon) conquered the [Kingdom of Judah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Judah) and [exiled the population to Babylon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylonian_captivity). According to the bible he also destroyed [Solomon's Temple](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solomon%27s_Temple).

See also: [The Return to Zion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Return_to_Zion) and [Yehud coinage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yehud_coinage)

In 538 BCE [Cyrus the Great](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus_(Bible)) of [Persia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persia) conquered Babylon and issued a [proclamation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus_cylinder) granting subjugated nations (including the people of Judah) their freedom. The Bible describes how 50,000 Judeans, led by [Zerubabel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zerubabel) returned and [rebuilt the temple](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Temple_of_Jerusalem). A second group of 5000, led by [Ezra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezra) and [Nehemiah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nehemiah), returned to [Judea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judea) in 456 BCE. According to the bible, non-Jews tried to prevent the return and wrote to Cyrus.

In 333 BCE [Alexander the Great](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_the_Great) defeated [Persia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achaemenid_Empire) and conquered Judea and sometime thereafter, the first translation of the [Hebrew Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_Bible) (the [Septuagint](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint)) was begun in [Alexandria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandria). After Alexander's death, his Generals fought over the territory he had conquered. Israel became the frontier between the [Seleucid Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seleucid_Empire) and [Ptolemaic Egypt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ptolemaic_Egypt), eventually becoming part of the Seleucid Empire.

**The restoration of Jewish rule 174 BCE - 64 BCE**

See also: [List of High Priests of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_High_Priests_of_Israel) and [Hashmonean coinage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hashmonean_coinage)

In the second century, [Antiochus IV Epiphanes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antiochus_IV_Epiphanes) (ruler of the [Seleucid Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seleucid_Empire)) tried to eradicate Judaism in favor of [Hellenistic religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hellenistic_religion) leading to the 174 - 135 BCE [Maccabean Revolt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maccabean_Revolt) led by [Judas Maccabeus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judas_Maccabeus). The success of this revolt is celebrated in the Jewish festival of [Hanukka](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanukka). The [Books of the Maccabees](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_the_Maccabees) documented the uprising and the end of Greek rule.

The [Hasmonean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasmonean) dynasty of [priest-kings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kohen_Gadol) ruled Israel. The [Pharisees](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pharisees), [Saducees](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saducees) and [Essenes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essenes) were the principal social movements. As part of their struggle against [Hellenistic civilization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hellenistic_civilization) the Pharisees established what may have been the world's first national male (religious) education and literacy program, based round [meeting houses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synagogue).[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Israel#cite_note-2#cite_note-2) This led to [Rabbinical Judaism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabbinical_Judaism). Justice was administered by the [Sanhedrin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanhedrin), whose leader was known as the [Nasi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nasi). The Nasi's religious authority gradually superseded that of the Temple's [high priest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kohen_Gadol) (under the Hasmoneans this was the king).

In 125 BCE the Hasmonean King [John Hyrcanus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Hyrcanus) subjugated [Edom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edom) and forcibly converted the population to Judaism. This is the only known case of forced conversion to Judaism.

**Roman rule and the dispersal of the Jews 64 BCE - 630**

**Pagan Rome 64 BCE - 330**

See also: [Jewish–Roman wars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish%E2%80%93Roman_wars) and [Herod the Great](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod_the_Great)

In 64 BCE the [Roman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Republic) General, [Pompey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pompey#Pompey_in_the_East) conquered Judea. The [Jewish Temple](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Temple) in Jerusalem became the only religious structure in the [Roman Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Republic)/[Roman Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Empire) which did not contain an effigy of the emperor.

From 37 BCE - 4 the [Herodian dynasty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herodian_dynasty), Jewish-Roman client kings descended from [Edomian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edom) converts, ruled Judea. [Herod the Great](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod_the_Great), enlarged the temple (see [Herod's Temple](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod%27s_Temple)) making it one of the largest religious structures in the world. Despite its fame, it was in this period that [Rabbinical Judaism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabbinical_Judaism) began to assume popular prominence over the [Temple priesthood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kohen). After 6 CE most of [the country](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iudaea_Province) became a [province of Syria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Syria), under direct Roman rule.

In 66 CE the Jews [broke free of Rome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Jewish%E2%80%93Roman_War), naming their short-lived kingdom "Israel"[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Israel#cite_note-3#cite_note-3) (see also [First Jewish Revolt coinage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Jewish_Revolt_coinage)). The revolt failed leading to the [destruction of Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Destruction_of_Jerusalem) and the Temple by [Titus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titus) in the year 70. The events were described by the Roman-Jewish historian [Josephus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josephus), including the famous last stand at [Massada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massada).

The [Jewish revolt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_revolt) led the [Christians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Christianity), at this time a sub-sect of Judaism, to completely disassociate themselves from Judaism. The rabbinical/[Pharisee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pharisee) anti-temple movement led by [Yochanan ben Zakai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yochanan_ben_Zakai) made peace with Rome and survived.

See also: [Development of the Jewish Bible canon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development_of_the_Jewish_Bible_canon), [Great Assembly](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Assembly), [Rabbi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabbi), [Rabbinical Judaism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabbinical_Judaism), and [Karaite Judaism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karaite_Judaism)

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| **Rabbinical Eras** |
| * [Zugot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zugot) * [Tannaim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tannaim) * [Amoraim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amora) * [Savoraim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Savora) * [Geonim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geonim) * [Rishonim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rishonim) * [Acharonim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acharonim) |

From 115 - 117 Jews in Libya, Egypt, Cyprus, Kurdistan and [Lod](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lod) rose in [revolt against Rome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kitos_War). This conflict was accompanied by massive massacres of both Romans and Jews. Cyprus was completely depopulated and Jews banned from living there.

In 131 the Emperor [Hadrian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadrian) renamed Jerusalem [Aelia Capitolina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aelia_Capitolina) and constructed a Temple for Jupiter on the site of the Jewish temple. He may have [banned circumcision](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circumcision_and_law#History). Jews were banned from living in Jerusalem and the Roman province, until then known as [Iudaea Province](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iudaea_Province), was renamed [Palaestina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palaestina); no other revolt led to a province being renamed. The names "Palestine" (in English) and "Filistin" (in Arabic) derive from this renaming.

From 132 - 136 [Simon Bar Kokhba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_Bar_Kokhba) led a [Jewish revolt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bar_Kokhba_revolt) renaming the country "Israel", (see [Bar Kochba Revolt coinage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bar_Kochba_Revolt_coinage)).

Although uncertain, it is widely thought that during the Bar Kokhba revolt a [rabbinical assembly decided](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_of_Jamnia) which [books could be regarded](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development_of_the_Jewish_Bible_canon) as part of the [Hebrew Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_Bible). The [Jewish apocrypha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_apocrypha) were left out.

**Christian Roman (Byzantine) rule 330 - 631**

See also: [Rabbinic literature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabbinic_literature) and [Byzantine Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_Empire)

In the fourth century a Christian, [Constantine I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantine_I), became the [Roman Emperor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Emperor), and [Christianity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity) became the official religion. The capital was moved to [Byzantium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantium), which he renamed [Constantinople](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantinople). There was another [Jewish revolt against Gallus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_revolt_against_Gallus) in 351–352. The Roman Empire eventually split (over matters of [Christian doctrine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_doctrine)) into a Western Empire and an Eastern Empire. The Eastern Empire, known as the [Byzantine Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_Empire), was dominated by the (Greek) [Orthodox Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthodox_Church) and ruled Palestine/Israel.

Despite persecution, sacred Jewish texts written in Israel in this period include the [Mishnah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mishnah) (200), the [Gemara](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gemara) (400), the [Jerusalem Talmud](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem_Talmud) (500) and the [Passover Haggadah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passover_Haggadah).

In 614 there was a [Jewish revolt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolt_against_Heraclius) against Byzantine Emperor [Heraclius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heraclius) with [Persian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persian_Empire) support. Heraclius ended the revolt by pledging to restore Jewish rights. He later reneged on this pledge, issuing an edict expelling the Jews from Palestine. (Egyptian) [Coptic Christians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coptic_Christians) still fast as a penance for the unfulfilled pledge.

According to Muslim tradition, in 620 Muhammed [flew from Mecca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isra_and_Mi%27raj) to the "farthest mosque", whose location is considered to be the Temple Mount, returning the same night. In 631, the [Arabs defeated Heraclius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_conquest_of_Syria) and conquered the area. Over the next few centuries,

**Arab rule 636 - 1099**

See also: [Byzantine–Arab Wars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine%E2%80%93Arab_Wars) and [Muslim Conquests](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Conquests)

From 636 until the beginning of the Crusades, Palestine was ruled by the [Medinah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medinah)-based [Rashidun Caliphs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashidun), then the [Damascus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Damascus)-based [Umayyad Caliphate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umayyad_Caliphate) and after that the [Baghdad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baghdad)-based [Abbasid Caliphs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbasid_Caliphs). In 691, Ummayad Caliph [Abd al-Malik](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abd_al-Malik) (685-705) constructed the [Dome of the Rock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dome_of_the_Rock) shrine on the [Temple Mount](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_Mount). Many Jews consider it to contain the [Foundation Stone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foundation_Stone) (see also [Holy of Holies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kodesh_Hakodashim)), which is the holiest site in Judaism. A second building, the [Al-Aqsa Mosque](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Aqsa_Mosque), was erected on the [Temple Mount](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_Mount) in 705.

Between the 7th and 11th centuries, Jewish scribes, called the [Masoretes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretes) and located in the Galilee and Jerusalem, established the [Masoretic Text](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretic_Text), the final text of the [Hebrew Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_Bible).

**Crusader rule 1099 - 1291**

Main articles: [Crusades](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crusades) and [Kingdom of Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Jerusalem)

The name Palestine fell out of use under the Crusaders, who called the kingdoms they established there "[Outremer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outremer)" (overseas). During the [Crusades](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crusades), Jews in Israel were massacred or sold into slavery. The murder of Jews began during the Crusaders' travels across Europe and continued in the [Holy Land](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Land). Ashkenazi orthodox Jews still recite a [prayer in memory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Av_HaRachamim) of the destruction caused by the Crusades. From 1260 to 1291 Israel became the [frontier between Mongol invaders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mongol_raids_into_Palestine) ([occasional Crusader allies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franco-Mongol_alliance)) and the [Mamluks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mamluk_Sultanate_(Cairo)) of Egypt. The conflict impoverished the area and severely reduced its population. Sultan [Baybars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baybars) of Egypt eventually expelled the Mongols and eliminated the last Crusader [Kingdom of Acre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Acre) in 1291, thereby ending the Crusades.

**Mamluk (Egyptian - Islamic) rule 1260 - 1517**

The Egyptian [Mamluks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mamluk) governed the area 1260 - 1517.

In [1267](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1267) the Mamluk Sultan, Babybars, conquered [Hebron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebron) and Jews were banned from worshiping at the [Cave of the Patriarchs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave_of_the_Patriarchs) (the second holiest site in Judaism) until its conquest by Israel 700 years later.

The collapse of the Crusades was followed by widespread expulsions of Jews in Europe, [beginning in England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edict_of_Expulsion) (1290) and followed by France (1306).[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Israel#cite_note-12#cite_note-12) In [Spain persecution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Spain#Turning_point_.281212_to_1300.29) of the highly integrated and successful Jewish community began, including massacres and forced conversions.

In 1453 [the Byzantine capital](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fall_of_Constantinople) fell to the [Ottomans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman), signifying the end of Christian rule in the Middle-East. In Spain, the Christian reconquest led to expulsion of the Jews of [Spain in 1492](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alhambra_decree) and [Portugal in 1497](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Portugal). These were the wealthiest and best integrated communities in Europe. Many converted, however Christian prejudice against [Jewish converts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marrano) led many of these former Jews to move to the New World (see [History of the Jews in Latin America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Latin_America)) and contributed to the development of the [inquisition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inquisition). Most of the expelled Jews moved to North Africa, [Poland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland), Israel and Ottoman Europe. See [Judaeo-Spanish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaeo-Spanish).

**Ottoman (Turkish - Islamic) rule 1517 - 1917**

Under the [Ottomans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottomans) (1517—1917) Israel was part of the [province of Syria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Syria).

During the 1648—1654 [Khmelnytsky Uprising](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khmelnytsky_Uprising) in the Ukraine over 100,000 Jews were massacred in Eastern Europe, leading to further migration to Israel. The Jewish population of Israel was concentrated in the [Four Holy Cities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Holy_Cities).

The American and French Revolutions gave Jews equal rights for the first time since antiquity. [Napoleon spread](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon_and_the_Jews) Jewish rights across Europe. In 1799 [Napoleon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon) briefly [occupied the coast of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleonic_Campaign_in_Egypt) and prepared a proclamation offering to [create a Jewish state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon_and_the_Jews#Bonaparte_and_a_Jewish_state_in_Palestine) but did not issue it.

By the 19th century, the [Land of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_of_Israel) was populated mostly by Muslim and Christian Arabs, as well as Jews, Greeks, [Druze](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Druze), Bedouins and other minorities. In 1844, Jews constituted the largest population group in Jerusalem and by 1890 an absolute majority in the city, although as a whole the Jewish population made up far less than 10% of the region.

**The Zionist Movement**

**1897–1917: The Zionist Revolution**

For a full account of the emergence of the Zionist movement see the [History of Zionism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Zionism).

See also:

* [Napoleon and the Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon_and_the_Jews)
* [Racial antisemitism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racial_antisemitism)
* [Persecution of Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Jews)
* [Aliyah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aliyah), [May Laws](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_Laws)
* [Category:Antisemitic canards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Antisemitic_canards)

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| [**Aliyah**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aliyah) **to** [**Israel**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel) **and settlement** |
|  |
| [**Pre-Zionist Aliyah**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pre-Zionist_Aliyah) |
| [The Return to Zion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Return_to_Zion) • [The Old Yishuv](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yishuv_haYashan) |
| **Prior to the founding of Israel** |
| [First Aliyah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Aliyah) • [Second Aliyah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Aliyah) • [During WWI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aliyah_and_yishuv_during_World_War_I) • [Third Aliyah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_Aliyah) • [Fourth Aliyah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_Aliyah) • [Fifth Aliyah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fifth_Aliyah) • [During and after WWII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aliyah_Bet) • [Berihah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berihah) |
| **After the founding of Israel** |
| [Operation Magic Carpet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Magic_Carpet_(Yemen)) • [Operation Ezra and Nehemiah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Ezra_and_Nehemiah) • [Jewish exodus from Arab lands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_exodus_from_Arab_lands) • [Polish aliyah in 1968](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1968_Polish_political_crisis) • [Aliyah from the Soviet Union in the 1970s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aliyah_from_the_Soviet_Union_in_the_1970s) • [Aliyah from Ethiopia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aliyah_from_Ethiopia) • [Aliyah from the Commonwealth of Independent States in the 1990s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aliyah_from_the_Commonwealth_of_Independent_States_in_the_1990s) • [Aliyah from Latin America in the 2000s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aliyah_from_Latin_America_in_the_2000s) |
| **Concepts** |
| [Judaism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism) • [Zionism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zionism) • [Law of Return](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_of_Return) • [Jewish homeland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeland_for_the_Jewish_people) • [Yerida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yerida) • [Galut](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galut) • [Jewish Messianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Messianism) |
| **Persons and organizations** |
| [Theodor Herzl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodor_Herzl) • [World Zionist Organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Zionist_Organization) • [Knesset](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knesset) • [Nefesh B'Nefesh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nefesh_B%27Nefesh) • [El Al](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Al) |
| **Related topics** |
| [Jewish history](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_history) • [Jewish diaspora](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_diaspora)  • [History of the Jews in the Land of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_the_Land_of_Israel)  • [Yishuv](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yishuv)  • [History of Zionism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Zionism)  • **History of Israel**  • [Israeli Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_Jews)  • [Anti-Zionism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Zionism)  • [Revival of Hebrew language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revival_of_Hebrew_language)  • [Religious Zionism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_Zionism)  • [Haredim and Zionism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haredim_and_Zionism)  • [Anti-Zionism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Zionism) |
|  |

The [French Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolution) and the associated spread of [Enlightenment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment) ideals led to [Jewish emancipation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_emancipation) across Europe. Many Jews actively [embraced the enlightenment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haskalah) and [assimilated](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_assimilation) as ways to attain equal rights. This led to a counter-reaction by European [reactionaries](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reactionary) who sought to prevent Jews from being granted citizenship and who saw them as an alien, morally inferior non-European community. Opponents of Jewish civil rights called themselves [anti-Semites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antisemitism). [Scientific racism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_racism) became increasingly popular as the century wore on and what had been [religious prejudice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_antisemitism) now became [racial prejudice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racial_antisemitism). In Tzarist Russia, the government actively encouraged [pogroms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pogrom) in an effort to divert popular resentment at the government and to drive out the Jewish population. Conspiracy theorists claimed Jews were manipulating European history to cause revolutions. The Russian authorities in particular alleged a [Jewish-Zionist conspiracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Protocols_of_the_Elders_of_Zion) to achieve world domination.

A small percentage of the millions of Jews who fled Russia headed for Palestine. [Mikveh Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikveh_Israel) was founded in 1870 by [Alliance Israelite Universelle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alliance_Israelite_Universelle), followed by [Petah Tikva](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petah_Tikva) (1878), [Rishon LeZion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rishon_LeZion) (1882), and other agricultural communities founded by the members of [Bilu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bilu) and [Hovevei Zion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hovevei_Zion).

European Nationalists generally regarded the Jews as aliens and this led to a "[Jewish question](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_question)". Antisemitism, pogroms and alienation from national movements led many Jews to consider the possibility of re-establishing themselves as an independent nation. Left-wing antisemitism and the desire to preserve their identity encouraged socialist Jews to seek solutions within their own community.

In 1897, the [First Zionist Congress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Zionist_Congress) proclaimed the decision "to establish a home for the Jewish people in Palestine secured under public law." The movement made little political progress before the First World War and was regarded with suspicion by the Ottoman rulers of the Holy Land.

Zionism attracted religious Jews, secular nationalists and [left-wing socialists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labor_Zionism). Socialists aimed to reclaim the land by working on it and formed [collectives](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kibbutz). This was accompanied by [Revival of the Hebrew language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revival_of_the_Hebrew_language).

During World War I, the British sought Jewish support in the fight against Germany. This and support for Zionism from Prime-Minister Lloyd-George led to foreign minister, [Lord Balfour](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Balfour) making the [Balfour Declaration of 1917](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balfour_Declaration_of_1917), stating that the British Government "view[ed] with favor the establishment in [Palestine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine) of a national home for the Jewish people"..."it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine".

The British invasion force, led by [General Allenby](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Allenby), included a force of Jewish volunteers (mostly Zionists), known as the [Jewish Legion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Legion).

**1917–1948: British rule: the Jewish national home**

See also: [British Mandate of Palestine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Mandate_of_Palestine)

When the British conquered the Middle-East in 1917, they created two states, the first called "Palestine" was in an area including modern Israel, the West-Bank and Gaza and Jordan. The second state called "[Mesopotamia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesopotamia)" was made out of several Ottoman regions round Baghdad. It was later renamed "[Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq)".

**The League of Nations Mandate**

After World War I, the [League of Nations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_Nations) formally assigned the [Palestine mandate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine_mandate) to the [United Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom); endorsing the terms of the Balfour Declaration and additionally requiring the creation of an independent [Jewish Agency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Agency) that would administer Jewish affairs in Palestine. Britain signed an additional treaty with the USA (which did not join the League of Nations) in which the USA endorsed the terms of the mandate.

The Jewish Agency was managed by a council of 224 representatives, half elected by the Zionist Congress and half by Jews (not just Zionists) in various countries. The Agency allocated immigration permits (the number of permits was fixed by the British) and distributed funds donated by Jews abroad.

From 1927, the adult Jews of Palestine (including women) elected a 314 member General Assembly every four years which appointed a 40 member [Va'ad Leumi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Va%27ad_Leumi) (National Committee), which functioned as a government and raised taxes (with British permission); most of the revenue raised by the Mandate came from the Jewish minority but was spent on funding the British administration and services to the Arab majority so the Va'ad administered independent services for the Jewish population.

Education and health care for the Jewish population were in the hands of the major Zionist parties: the [General Zionists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Zionists), the [Mizrahi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mizrahi) and the [Socialist Zionists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialist_Zionists) all operated their own public education, health and (except for Mizrahi) sports organizations funded by municipal taxes, donations and fees. Following a campaign by Haim Weizmann the Zionist movement also established the [Hebrew University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_University) in Jerusalem and the [Technion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technion) in Haifa. While educational opportunities for the Arab population improved under the mandate, many remained illiterate (as was the case across the [British Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Empire)) and no universities were created. Modern schooling was not freely available at any age and most education was traditional religious schooling.

**The growth of Arab resistance and immigration restrictions**

See also: [Nazi Propaganda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazi_Propaganda)

Following [Arab rioting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaffa_riots) in 1921, the British mandatory authorities enacted a system of immigration quotas to ensure that Jewish immigration did not disrupt Palestine's economy. An exception was made for Jews with over 1000 Pounds in cash (a large sum in those days), or professionals with over 500 Pounds, who would be allowed in despite the quotas. A decision was made to remove Transjordan (now called [Jordan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordan)) from the mandate and create a semi-independent state there.

Arab attacks on isolated Jewish settlements and British failure to protect the Jews, led to the creation of [Haganah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haganah) (Defense) a mainly socialist Jewish militia dedicated to defending Jewish settlements. Following the [1929 Arab riots](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1929_Palestine_riots), the [Revisionist Zionist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revisionist_Zionist) leader, [Jabotinsky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jabotinsky), created a right-wing militia called the [*Irgun Tzvai Leumi*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irgun) (National Military Organization, known in Hebrew by its acronym "Etzel"), this smaller group temporarily merged with Haganah in the thirties.

Jewish immigration grew slowly in the 1920s. However, the [increased persecution of European Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuremburg_Laws) by the European Fascist powers (such as the Third Reich) resulted in a marked increase in Jewish immigration.

The rapid increase in Jewish migration led to a large-scale [Arab rebellion in Palestine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1936-1939_Arab_revolt_in_Palestine) from 1936-1939. The Jewish Agency leader, [Ben-Gurion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ben-Gurion) responded to the revolt with [Havlagah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Havlagah), a policy of not responding to Arab attacks in order to prevent polarization. The [Etzel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etzel) left the Haganah because of its failure to avenge Arab attacks on Jews.

Concerned that the revolt would damage Anglo-Arab/Muslim relations, Britain responded by creating a Royal Commission chaired by Lord Peel. The [Peel Commission](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peel_Commission) recommended the partition of Palestine into two separate autonomous regions for Jews and Arabs, with Britain maintaining overall control over the territory and a population transfer to secure full separation between the communities. The proposals were rejected as unworkable by the British Parliament. The commission did not examine the causes of Jewish migration.

**The 1939 White Paper and the Holocaust**

See also: [The Holocaust](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Holocaust) and [Jews outside Europe under Nazi occupation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jews_outside_Europe_under_Nazi_occupation)

In 1939, fear of massive Jewish migration and a desire for Arab goodwill led Britain to halt Jewish migration. The result was the [1939 White Paper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1939_White_Paper) which limited Jewish immigration to 75,000 over the next five years (further levels requiring Arab consent) and a promise to establish an independent Palestine under Arab majority rule within ten years. Both the Jewish and the Palestinian-Arab leadership rejected the White Paper.

The White Paper was published on 9 November 1938, two weeks after Germany annexed [Sudetenland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudetenland). The night it was published a [massive pogrom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kristallnacht) took place in Germany and 25-30,000 Jews were sent to concentration camps, 200 synagogues destroyed and 91 Jews murdered. The White Paper was passed into law by Parliament in May 1939, a few weeks after Britain agreed to [Germany annexing the rest of Czechoslavakia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_occupation_of_Czechoslovakia) (making a further 100,000 Jews stateless refugees).

The 1939 White Paper broke with the terms of the British Mandate as decreed by the League of Nations and the Balfour Declaration. Despite this, the Jewish Agency leader, Ben-Gurion supported Britain and during the war Palestine's Jewish youth were called on to volunteer for the British Army (both men and women). The Etzel also supported this policy, however a small group dedicated to fighting the British broke away and formed the [Lehi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lehi_(group)) (Stern Gang), led by [Avraham Stern](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avraham_Stern). According to [Arthur Koestler](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Koestler), Stern's parents had been on a boat the British returned to Europe in the 1930s where they were killed by the Nazis

In March 1940 the British High Commissioner for Palestine issued an edict banning Jews from purchasing land in 95% of Palestine.

In 1943 the USSR released the [Revisionist Zionist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revisionist_Zionist) leader, [Menachem Begin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menachem_Begin) from the [Gulag](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulag) and he migrated to Palestine, taking command of the [Etzel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etzel) with a policy of increased conflict against the British. Begin's family had been murdered by the Nazis. At about the same time [Yitzhak Shamir](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yitzhak_Shamir) escaped from the [camp in Eritrea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irgun_and_Lehi_internment_in_Africa) where the British had been holding him without trial and assumed command of the Lehi (Stern Gang). Shamir's parents were murdered by the Polish villagers they grew up among.

From 1939 to 1945 72% of European Jews were murdered. 20-25% of those killed were children.

**1945–1947: Jewish uprising against British rule**

Main article: [British Conflict with Zionism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Conflict_with_Zionism)

See also: [Displaced Persons camp](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Displaced_Persons_camp), [Anti-Jewish violence in Poland, 1944-1946](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Jewish_violence_in_Poland,_1944-1946), and [Cyprus internment camps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyprus_internment_camps)

The Second World War left the [surviving remnant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sh%27erit_ha-Pletah) of Jews in central Europe as [displaced persons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Displaced_persons) (refugees); a survey of their ambitions found that 97% wanted to migrate to Palestine. Many turned to the [clandestine migration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brihah). A stream of small boats ensued, carrying stateless Jews to Palestine. The British took counter measures against the holocaust survivors and the [organization helping them](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aliyah_Bet). This led to growing Jewish resistance to the British administration in Palestine.

Shortly after [VE Day](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/VE_Day), the [Labor Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Labour_Party) won the elections in Britain. Although the Labor party conferences for years had called for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, the Labor Foreign Minister, [Ernest Bevin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernest_Bevin), decided to maintain the [1939 White Paper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1939_White_Paper) restrictions. This was due to the continued importance of cordial Anglo-Arab relations to British strategic concerns throughout the region and their weakened empire. Britain governed [Transjordan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transjordan), [Sudan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudan), [Kuwait](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuwait), the [Arab Emirates](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Emirates), [Bahrain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahrain) and the [Yemen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yemen), and had treaties of alliance with [Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq) and [Egypt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt). At this time Jewish militias in Palestine, (the [Haganah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haganah), ['Etzel'](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irgun) and [Lehi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lehi_(group))) decided to form a unified [Jewish Resistance Movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Resistance_Movement) against the British.

In June 1946, following instances of [sabotage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Night_of_the_bridges) and kidnapping, the British launched [Operation Agatha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Agatha) in Palestine and arrested thousands of Jews, including the leadership of the [Jewish Agency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Agency). They were held without trial.

Post-war pogroms in Eastern Europe, led to a wave of Jews seeking to escape Europe. In July 1946, after the [Kielce Pogrom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kielce_Pogrom) in Poland, the British government expected a massive wave of illegal migrants and decided to hold illegal Jewish immigrants to Palestine at [Cyprus internment camps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyprus_internment_camps); migrants were imprisoned indefinitely and without trial. Those held were mostly [Holocaust](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Holocaust) survivors including large numbers of children and orphans; the camps were funded by taxation of the Jewish community in Palestine. In response to Cypriot fears that the Jews would never leave (since they lacked a state or documentation) the administration subsequently began to release them at a rate of 750 per month, allowing those released to move to Palestine.

The unified resistance movement in Palestine split up in July 1946, after Irgun's bombing of the British Military Headquarters, the [King David Hotel bombing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_David_Hotel_bombing), which killed 92, mostly civilians. In the days following the bombing, [Tel-Aviv](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tel-Aviv) was placed under curfew and over 120,000, nearly 20% of the Jewish population of Palestine, were interrogated by [CID](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CID).

The negative publicity generated by British attempts to halt Jewish migration to Palestine added to voices in US Congress delaying the [Anglo-American loan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-American_loan) which was vital to preventing [bankruptcy of the British Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Empire#Decolonisation_and_decline_.281945.E2.80.931997.29). Fearing a parallel conflict with Britain's Arab allies and subjects at a time when the Empire was severely weakened, the Labor Government decided to refer the Palestine problem to the United Nations.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1948 Arab-Israeli War** | |
| Part of the [Arab-Israeli conflict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab-Israeli_conflict) | |
| [David Ben Gurion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Ben_Gurion) (First Prime  Minister of Israel) publicly pronouncing the Declaration of the State of Israel, May 14, 1948. [Tel Aviv](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tel_Aviv), [Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel), beneath a large portrait of [Theodore Herzl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodore_Herzl), founder of modern political [Zionism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zionism) | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Date** | November 1947–March 1949 | | **Location** | [Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East) | | **Result** | Israeli victory, [Tactical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_tactics) and [strategic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_strategy) Arab failure, [1949 Armistice Agreements](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1949_Armistice_Agreements) | | **Territorial changes** | [State of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_of_Israel) established from captured territories, Jordanian occupation of [West Bank](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bank), Egyptian occupation of the [Gaza Strip](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_Strip) | | |
| **Belligerents** | |
| [Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel) [Haganah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haganah) [Irgun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irgun) [Lehi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lehi_(group)) [Palmach](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palmach) [Foreign Volunteers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Machal) | [Egypt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Egypt), [Syria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria), [Transjordan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transjordan),  [Lebanon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanon), [Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Iraq), [Saudi Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia), [Yemen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutawakkilite_Kingdom_of_Yemen), [Holy War Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_War_Army), [Arab Liberation Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Liberation_Army) |
| **Commanders** | |
| [Yaakov Dori](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yaakov_Dori), [Yigael Yadin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yigael_Yadin) | [John Bagot Glubb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Bagot_Glubb), [Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abd_al-Qadir_al-Husayni), [Hasan Salama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasan_Salama), [Fawzi Al-Qawuqji](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fawzi_Al-Qawuqji), [Ahmed Ali al-Mwawi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmed_Ali_al-Mwawi) |
| **Strength** | |
| [Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel): 29,677 initially rising to 115,000 by March 1949 | [Egypt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt): 10,000 initially rising to 20,000 [Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq): 5,000 initially rising to 15–18,000 [Syria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria): 2,500–5,000 [Transjordan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transjordan): 6,000–12,000  [Lebanon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanon): 1,000 initially rising to 2,000  [Saudi Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia): 800–1,200 [Yemen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutawakkilite_Kingdom_of_Yemen): unknown [Arab Liberation Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Liberation_Army): 3,500-6,000 |
| **Casualties and losses** | |
| 6,373 KIA (4,000 troops and about 2,400 civilians) | Unknown (between 10,000 and 15,000) |

**The United Nations decides to partition Palestine**

See also: [United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Partition_Plan_for_Palestine)

The UN appointed a committee to decide how to deal with Palestine, the [United Nations Special Committee on Palestine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Special_Committee_on_Palestine) (UNSCOP). While the UNSCOP mission was visiting Palestine, in July 1947, Jewish and Zionist delegations met with the committee; the Arab Higher Committee boycotted the meetings. At this time, British Foreign Secretary Bevin ordered an illegal immigrant ship, the [Exodus 1947](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exodus_1947), to be sent back to Europe. The migrants on the ship were forcibly removed by British troops at Hamburg after a long period in prison ships.

In July 1947 several [Irgun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irgun) fighters were executed in [Acre Prison](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acre_Prison). The Irgun responded with [execution of two British sergeants](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sergeants_affair) which triggered anti-semitic riots in Liverpool; these spread to other major British cities, including London, Manchester, Cardiff, Derby and Glasgow.

The principal non-Zionist Orthodox Jewish (or [haredi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haredi)) party, [Agudat Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agudat_Israel), recommended to UNSCOP that a Jewish state be created after reaching a [religious status quo agreement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Israel#The_secular-religious_Status_Quo) with Ben-Gurion regarding the future state. The agreement granted future exemption of [yeshiva](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yeshiva) (religious seminary) students and orthodox women from military service, made the Sabbath the national weekend, promised Kosher food in government institutions and allowed them to maintain a separate education system.

In September 1947, one month after [Partition of India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Partition_of_India), (UNSCOP) recommended [partition in Palestine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_General_Assembly_Resolution_181), a suggestion ratified by the UN General Assembly on November 29, 1947. The result envisaged the creation of two states, one Arab and one Jewish, with the city of [Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem) to be under the direct administration of the United Nations.

The General Assembly resolution called upon Britain to evacuate a seaport and sufficient hinterland to support substantial Jewish migration, by February 1, 1948. Neither Britain nor the UN Security Council acted to implement the resolution and Britain continued imprisoning Jews attempting to migrate, in camps on Cyprus.

Concerned that partition would severely damage Anglo-Arab/Muslim relations, Britain refused to cooperate with the UN, denying the UN access to Palestine during the interim period (a requirement of the partition decision). Final evacuation was completed by May 1948. Britain continued to hold Jews of "fighting age" and their families on Cyprus even after leaving Palestine. They were eventually released in March 1949.

In 1946-47, the [Dead Sea Scrolls](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_Sea_Scrolls) were found by a Bedouin Shepherd, [Muhammed edh-Dhib](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammed_edh-Dhib). On the day the UN voted to create a Jewish state, archaeologist [Eleazar Sukenik](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eleazar_Sukenik) identified the scrolls as authentic copies of the bible dating back to before the destruction of Judea. Sukenik bought three of the scrolls the following month.

**The War of Independence: The civil war phase**

See also: [1947-1948 Civil War in Mandatory Palestine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1947-1948_Civil_War_in_Mandatory_Palestine)

Fighting between the Arab and Jewish communities of Palestine began in November 1947, immediately after the UN decision to create a Jewish state. The Arab States declared they would greet any attempt to form a Jewish state with war. [Dr Izzat Tannous](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Dr_Izzat_Tannous&action=edit&redlink=1), the Palestinian Arab representative to the UN declared that

We are now at war, a war in which no quarter will be asked and none will be given. It will be a battle of life and death and woe to the vanquished.

Fighting spread as the British gradually withdrew. The [Arab League](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_League) could not invade until the British completed their withdrawal, and planned an invasion for the day after. In this phase, before the British departure, the struggle was a civil war. Arab forces consisted of village militias buttressed by the [Arab Liberation Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Liberation_Army), a force composed largely of Arab volunteers from across the Middle-East but which included European mercenaries including British deserters, German Nazis and veterans of the (Bosnian Moslem) [Croatian Waffen SS](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/13th_Waffen_Mountain_Division_of_the_SS_Handschar_(1st_Croatian)) (whose commander had been the Palestinian [Mufti of Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohammad_Amin_al-Husayni)). The Jews had their militias (including many World War II veterans) and a several thousand strong professional force called the [Palmach](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palmach).

Initially the Arabs had the advantage as the British maintained an embargo on Palestine's seas preventing the Jews from importing arms or man power while Arab states could supply local Arabs who also occupied more strategic areas and out-numbered the Jews. The Jews, however, were better organized and believed themselves to be fighting for their lives. Jewish taxes had funded both the British army in Palestine and British support for the Arab population so the Jewish economy benefited from the British departure while the Arab economy collapsed as the war expanded. The Jews had an elected government (the [Va'ad Leumi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Va%27ad_Leumi)) already in place with an independent taxation system.

In the early stages 100,000 Palestinian Arabs, mainly the upper-classes and better off fled to neighboring states. Before May 1948, 150,000 more fled or were evicted during fighting as the Jews slowly overpowered the Arab forces. Jewish preparation for the Arab invasion led to the eviction of hostile Arab communities who controlled access routes. In Haifa the [Arab Higher Committee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Higher_Committee) (who were based in Syria) refused to allow a negotiated cease fire with the Jews or allow the Arab population to remain under Jewish control thus contributing to the departure of the city's Arab population. There was particularly heavy fighting on the road to Jerusalem, whose 100,000 strong Jewish community was cut off from the rest of the country, and this led the Jews to destroy most of the Arab villages along the narrow route they eventually established between Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv.

The impending Arab invasion provided an incentive for Palestinian-Arabs to leave in the expectation that they would soon return. In 1948 Jews were known as a nation with no military tradition who had easily been slaughtered over the preceding century, while the Arabs were a famous warrior nation and an Arab victory was widely anticipated.

**Israel 1948 - Present**

**The State of Israel declared**

See also: [Declaration of Independence (Israel)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_Independence_(Israel))

On May 14, 1948, the last British forces left Haifa, and the Jewish Agency, led by [David Ben-Gurion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Ben-Gurion), declared the creation of the State of Israel, in accordance with the [1947 UN Partition Plan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1947_UN_Partition_Plan). Both [superpower](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Superpower) leaders, U.S. President [Harry S. Truman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_S._Truman) and Soviet leader [Joseph Stalin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Stalin), immediately recognized the new state.

**The Arab Invasion**

See also: [1948 Arab-Israeli War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1948_Arab-Israeli_War)

Arab League members Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq declared war and announced their rejection of the UN partition decision. They claimed the right of self-determination for the Arabs of Palestine over the whole of Palestine. Saudi-Arabia and Sudan also sent forces.

UN Secretary General [Trygve Lie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trygve_Lie) described this as

the first armed aggression which the world had seen since the end of the war”.

The invading Egyptian and Iraqi armies were poorly trained and equipped as the British had feared they would support the Nazis during the Second World War. The Jordanian "[Arab Legion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Legion)" however, was well trained and had aided the British in Palestine. Many Arab Legion forces were still in Palestine when the British left. Arab Legion commanders were high-ranking British officers (who resigned from the British Army in 1948). The Commander-in-Chief was a British General, [Glubb Pasha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glubb_Pasha).

The invading Arab armies were initially successful but met far harder Jewish resistance than they expected, causing them to slow their advance. On May 29, 1948 the British initiated [United Nations Security Council Resolution 50](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_Resolution_50) and declared an arms embargo on the region. [Czechoslovakia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czechoslovakia) [violated the resolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arms_shipments_from_Czechoslovakia_to_Israel_1947-1949) supplying the Jewish state with critical military hardware to match the heavy equipment and planes available to the invading Arab states (who were supplied by Britain).

See also: [Altalena Affair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altalena_Affair)

In early June, the UN declared a month-long truce.

Following the announcement of independence, the [Haganah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haganah) became the [Israel Defense Forces](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_Defense_Forces) and the [Palmach](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palmach), [Etzel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etzel) and [Lehi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lehi) were required to join and cease independent existence. During the ceasefire, Etzel attempted to bring in a private arms shipment aboard a ship called "Altalena". When they refused to unconditionally hand over the arms to the government, Ben-Gurion ordered that the ship be sunk. Several Etzel members were killed in the fighting.

Large numbers of Jewish immigrants, many of them World War II veterans and Holocaust survivors now began arriving, and many joined the [Israel Defense Forces](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_Defense_Forces) (IDF). When the fighting resumed, Israel gained the upper hand.

Arab supply routes were long and fragile and as the war dragged on they had problems replenishing their ammunition supplies. The Jordanian '[Arab Legion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Legion)', refrained from invading Israeli territory and focused on occupying the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

**Armistice**

See also: [1949 Armistice Agreements](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1949_Armistice_Agreements)

In March 1949, after many months of battle, a [permanent ceasefire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1949_Armistice_Agreements) went into effect and Israel's interim borders, later known as the [Green Line](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_Line_(Israel)), were established. By that time Israel had conquered the [Galilee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galilee) and [Negev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negev), however the Syrians remained in control of a strip of territory along the Sea of Galilee originally allocated to the Jewish state, the Lebanese occupied a tiny area at [Rosh Hanikra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosh_Hanikra) and the Egyptians held the Gaza strip and had some forces surrounded inside Jewish territory. The Jordanians had occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Following the ceasefire declaration, Britain released over 2,000 Jewish prisoners it was holding on Cyprus and recognized the state of Israel. On May 11, 1949, Israel was admitted as a member of the United Nations.

Out of a Jewish population of 650,000, some 6,000 men and women were killed in the fighting, including 4,000 soldiers in the IDF. The exact number of Arab losses is unknown but the estimates ranged from 10,000 to 15,000 people.

Main articles: [1948 Palestinian exodus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1948_Palestinian_exodus) and [Jewish exodus from Arab lands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_exodus_from_Arab_lands)

According to United Nations figures, 711,000 Palestinians left Israeli-controlled territory between 1947 and 1949 and, over the next twenty years 850,000 Jews (almost the entire Jewish population) left the Arab world.

At the end of the war, Egypt remained in occupation of the [Gaza Strip](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_Strip) and Transjordan annexed the "[West Bank](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bank)" and eastern Jerusalem, including the [Old City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_City_(Jerusalem)). Jordan and Egypt did not establish an independent state for Palestinian Arabs and made no effort to facilitate the establishment of Palestine. Except in Jordan, Arab refugees that left Palestine were settled in refugee camps and denied full citizenship and rights by the Arab countries that hosted them.

**Labor Party rule 1948–1977**

The new state established a 120-seat parliament, the [Knesset](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knesset), which first met in [Tel Aviv](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tel_Aviv) but moved to [Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem) after the 1949 ceasefire. In January 1949, Israel held its first elections. The first [President of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_Israel) was [Chaim Weizmann](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaim_Weizmann). [David Ben-Gurion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Ben-Gurion) was elected prime minister.

From 1948 until 1977 all governments were led by [Mapai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mapai) and the [Alignment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alignment_(political_party)), predecessors of the [Labor Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labor_Party_(Israel)).

**1948–1953: Ben Gurion and mass immigration**

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| [**State of Israel**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel) |
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| [**Geography**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_Israel) |
| [Land of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_of_Israel) [Districts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Districts_of_Israel)**·** [Cities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Israeli_cities)**·** [Transportation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transport_in_Israel) [Mediterranean Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean_Sea)**·** [Red Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Sea) [Dead Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_Sea)**·** [Sea of Galilee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sea_of_Galilee) [Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem)**·** [Tel Aviv](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tel_Aviv)**·** [Haifa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haifa) |
| **History** |
| [Jewish history](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_history) ([timeline](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Jewish_history)) [Zionism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Zionism)**·** [Aliyah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aliyah)**·** [Theodor Herzl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodor_Herzl) [Balfour Declaration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balfour_Declaration_of_1917)**·** [British Mandate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Mandate_of_Palestine) [UN Partition Plan for Palestine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Partition_Plan_for_Palestine) [Independence Declaration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_Independence_(Israel))**·** [Austerity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austerity_in_Israel) |
| [**Arab–Israeli conflict**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab%E2%80%93Israeli_conflict) |
| [History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Arab%E2%80%93Israeli_conflict) [1948 War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1948_Arab%E2%80%93Israeli_War)**·** [1949 Armistice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1949_Armistice_Agreements) [Jewish exodus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_exodus_from_Arab_lands) [Suez Crisis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suez_Crisis)**·** [Six-Day War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six-Day_War) [War of Attrition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_of_Attrition)**·** [Yom Kippur War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yom_Kippur_War) [1982](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1982_Lebanon_War) / [2006 Lebanon Wars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006_Lebanon_War) [Peace proposals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Middle_East_peace_proposals) [Treaties with Egypt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian%E2%80%93Israeli_Peace_Treaty) / [Jordan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel%E2%80%93Jordan_peace_treaty) [International law](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_law_and_the_Arab%E2%80%93Israeli_conflict) |
| [**Israeli–Palestinian conflict**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli%E2%80%93Palestinian_conflict) |
| [History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Israeli%E2%80%93Palestinian_conflict) ([timeline](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_Israeli%E2%80%93Palestinian_conflict)) [1948 Palestinian exodus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1948_Palestinian_exodus) [Occupation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli-occupied_territories) [Peace process](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_process_in_the_Israeli%E2%80%93Palestinian_conflict)**·** [Peace camp](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_peace_camp) [First Intifada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Intifada)**·** [Oslo Accords](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oslo_Accords) [Second Intifada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Intifada)**·** [West Bank barrier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_West_Bank_barrier) [Unilateral disengagement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel%27s_unilateral_disengagement_plan) |
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| [**Security Forces**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_security_forces) |
| [Defense Forces](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_Defense_Forces) [Intelligence Community](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_Intelligence_Community) [National Security Council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_National_Security_Council) [Police](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_Police)**·** [Border Police](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_Border_Police) [Prison Service](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_Prison_Service) |
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[Labor Zionists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labor_Zionism) led by [David Ben-Gurion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Ben-Gurion) dominated Israeli politics and the economy was run on primarily [socialist lines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialism); however, all governments have been [coalitions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coalitions).

In 1949, the new Government passed a law making education free and compulsory for all citizens until the age of 14. The state now funded the existing party-affiliated Zionist education system and a new body created by the Haredi [Agudat Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agudat_Israel) party. A separate body was created to provide education for the Arab population.

In 1950 the Knesset passed the [Law of Return](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_of_Return) which granted all Jews and those of Jewish ancestry, and their spouses, the right to migrate to and settle in Israel and gain citizenship.

In 1950 50,000 Yemenite Jews were [secretly airlifted](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Magic_Carpet_(Yemen)) to Israel. From 1949-1951, massacres led 30,000 Jews to flee Libya. In 1951 Iraqi Jews were granted temporary permission to leave the country and 120,000 were [airlifted to Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Ezra_and_Nehemiah).

Jews also fled from Lebanon, Syria and Egypt. Jews were not permitted to live in or enter Saudi Arabia. About 500,000 Jews left Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia by the late sixties. The property [Arab Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Jews) abandoned (much of it in city centers) is a matter of dispute.

In three years (1948 to 1951), mass immigration doubled the Jewish population (700,000 immigrants) and left an indelible imprint on Israeli society. Most immigrants were either [Holocaust survivors](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aftermath_of_the_Holocaust) or [Jews fleeing Arab lands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_exodus_from_Arab_lands); the largest groups (over 100,000 each) were from [Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Iraq#Modern_times_.28since_1922.29), [Romania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Romania#The_Holocaust) and [Poland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Jews_in_Poland#Communist_rule:_1945.E2.80.9389), although immigrants arrived from all over Europe and the Middle East.

From 1948 to 1958, the population rose from 800,000 to two million. During this period, food, clothes and furniture were rationed in what became known as the [Austerity Period](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austerity_in_Israel) (*Tkufat haTsena*). Immigrants were mostly refugees with no possessions and were housed in temporary camps known as [ma'abarot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ma%27abarot).

Under the existing system major political parties ran their own education systems and these now competed for immigrants to join them. Fearing that the immigrants lacked sufficient "Zionist motivation", the government banned the existing educational bodies from teaching in the transit camps and instead tried to mandate a unitary secular socialist education[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]. Education came under the control of "camp managers" who also had to provide work, food and housing for the immigrants. There were attempts to force orthodox Yemenite children to adopt a secular life style by teachers, including many instances of Yemenite children having their [side-curls](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Payot) cut by teachers. Immigrants who dissented from political lines sometimes faced discrimination, although no one went hungry and all were eventually housed. This treatment of Orthodox children led to a scandal, and the first Israeli public enquiry (the [Fromkin Inquiry](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Fromkin_Inquiry&action=edit&redlink=1)) investigated the abuses.

The crisis led to the collapse of the coalition and an [election](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_legislative_election,_1951) in 1951, with little change in the results from the previous election.

By 1952, over 200,000 immigrants were living in tents or pre-fabricated shacks built by the government. Most of the financial aid Israel received were private donations from [outside the country](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Jewish_Joint_Distribution_Committee) (mainly in the USA).

The need to solve the economic crisis led Ben-Gurion to sign a [reparations agreement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reparations_Agreement_between_Israel_and_West_Germany) with [West Germany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Germany). During the Knesset debate some 5,000 demonstrators gathered and riot police had to cordon the building. During the debate, the [Herut](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herut) leader [Menachem Begin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menachem_Begin) and Ben-Gurion called each other fascists and Begin branded Ben-Gurion a "hooligan."

Dalia Ofer estimates that by 1952 about 400,000 Israelis were Jews who had been severely displaced by the Holocaust, and the Israeli government's demand for German reparations was in lieu of the expenses involved in resettling them. Israel received several billion marks and in return Israel agreed to open diplomatic relations with Germany.

Main article: [Foreign relations of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_relations_of_Israel)

See also: [Arab League boycott of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_League_boycott_of_Israel)

In its early years Israel sought to maintain a non-aligned position between the super-powers. Both the USA and the USSR had widespread support in Israel, however in 1952 an anti-Semitic public trial was staged in Moscow of a group of Jewish doctors accused of trying to poison Stalin (the [Doctors' plot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doctors%27_plot)), followed by a similar trial in Czechoslovakia ([Slánský trial](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sl%C3%A1nsk%C3%BD_trial)). That and the failure of Israel to get invited to the [Bandung Conference](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandung_Conference) (of [non-aligned states](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-Aligned_Movement)), effectively ended Israeli non-alignment. At this time the United States pursued close relations with the new Arab states, particularly the Egyptian [Free Officers Movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_Officers_Movement) and [Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Saud_of_Saudi_Arabia).

Israel's solution to the diplomatic isolation resulting from Arab boycotts was to establish good relations with the emerging states in [Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Africa) and with France which was then engaged in the [Algerian War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algerian_War).

In 1953 the party-affiliated education system was scrapped. The General Zionist and Socialist Zionist education systems were united to become the secular State education system while the Mizrahi became the State Modern-Orthodox system. Agudat Israel were allowed to maintain their existing school system.

At the end of 1953, Ben Gurion retired to [Kibbutz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kibbutz) [Sde Boker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sde_Boker) in the [Negev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negev).

**1954–1955: Moshe Sharett and the Lavon Affair**

Main article: [Lavon Affair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lavon_Affair)

In January 1954 [Moshe Sharett](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moshe_Sharett) became Prime-Minister of Israel, however his government was brought down by the [Lavon Affair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lavon_Affair), a crude plan to disrupt US-Egyptian relations, involving Egyptian Israeli agents planting bombs at American sites in Egypt. The plan failed when the eleven agents were arrested. Defense Minister [Lavon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lavon) was blamed despite his denial of responsibility.

Archaeologist and General [Yigael Yadin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yigael_Yadin), purchased the [Dead Sea Scrolls](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_Sea_Scrolls) on behalf of the State of Israel. The entire first batch to be discovered were now owned by Israel and housed in the [Shrine of the Book](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shrine_of_the_Book) at the [Israel Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_Museum).

In 1954 the [Uzi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uzi) submachine gun first entered use by the Israel Defense Forces.

The Lavon affair led to Sharett's resignation and Ben-Gurion returned to the post of Prime-Minister winning the [1955 election](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_legislative_election,_1955).

**1955–1963: Ben-Gurion II: Sinai Campaign & Eichmann Trial**

Main article: [1956 Suez War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1956_Suez_War)

In 1955, Czechoslovakia began supplying arms to Egypt, and France became Israel's principal arms supplier.

[Rudolph Kastner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolph_Kastner), a minor political functionary, was accused of collaborating with the Nazis and sued his accuser. Kastner lost the trial and was assassinated two years later. In 1958 the [Supreme Court](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supreme_Court_of_Israel) exonerated him.

The Egyptian government began recruiting former Nazi rocket scientists for a missile program. Some Nazi war criminals found asylum in the Arab world, including [Alois Brunner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alois_Brunner).

The [Sinai Campaign](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinai_Campaign) came about as conflict between Egypt and Israel increased in 1956. During the Fifties, hundreds of Israelis were killed in [Fedayeen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fedayeen) attacks from [(Egyptian occupied) Gaza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occupation_of_the_Gaza_Strip_by_Egypt) into Israeli territory. The attacks began as private initiatives by Palestinian refugees and the victims were frequently Jewish refugees from Arab countries. Fedayeen attacks led to a growing cycle of violence as Israel launched [reprisal attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unit_101) against Gaza and the Egyptian government organized and sponsored the Fedayeen.

In 1956 Egypt blockaded the [Gulf of Aqaba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_of_Aqaba), and closed the [Suez canal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suez_canal) to Israeli shipping. The canal was then nationalized, to the dismay of its British and French shareholders. In response, [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France) and the [United Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) entered into a [secret agreement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protocol_of_S%C3%A8vres) with Israel to take back the canal by force.

In accordance with this agreement Israel invaded the [Gaza Strip](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_Strip) and the [Sinai Peninsula](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinai_Peninsula) in October 1956. Israeli forces reached the Suez canal and then French and British forces stepped in on the pretext of restoring order. It is believed the French also agreed to build a [nuclear plant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negev_Nuclear_Research_Center) for the Israelis and that by 1968 this was able to produce [nuclear weapons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_weapons_and_Israel).

The Israeli, French and United Kingdom forces were victorious, but withdrew in March 1957 due to pressure from the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) and [USSR](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USSR). The [United Nations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations) established the [UN Emergency Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Emergency_Force) (UNEF) to keep peace in the area. In return for the withdrawal Israel was guaranteed freedom of access to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal and action to end attacks from Gaza. In practice the Suez Canal remained closed to Israeli shipping.

In October 1957 a deranged man threw a hand grenade inside the Knesset wounding Ben-Gurion. Ben-Gurion was once again victorious in the [1959 elections](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_legislative_election,_1959).

In May 1960 the [Mossad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mossad) located [Adolf Eichmann](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolf_Eichmann), one of the chief administrators of the Nazi Holocaust, in Argentina and kidnapped him to Israel. In 1961 he was put on trial and after several months found guilty and sentenced to death. He was hanged in 1962 and is the only person ever sentenced to death by an Israeli court. Testimonies by Holocaust survivors at the trial and the extensive publicity which surrounded it has led the trial to be considered a turning point in public awareness of the Holocaust.

In 1961 a [Herut](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herut) non-confidence motion over the Lavon affair led to Ben-Gurion's resignation. Ben-Gurion declared that he would only accept office if Lavon was fired from the position of the head of [Histadrut](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Histadrut), Israel's labor union organization (due to his role in the [Lavon Affair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lavon_Affair)). His demands were accepted and he won the [1961 election](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_legislative_election,_1961).

In 1962 the [Mossad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mossad) began assassinating German rocket scientists working in Egypt after one of them reported the missile program was designed to carry chemical warheads. This action was condemned by Ben-Gurion and led to the Mossad director, [Isser Harel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isser_Harel)'s resignation.

In 1963 Ben-Gurion quit again over the Lavon scandal. His attempts to make his party [Mapai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mapai) support him over the issue failed, and Ben-Gurion left the party to form [Rafi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rafi_(political_party)). [Levi Eshkol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Levi_Eshkol) became leader of Mapai and the new Prime-Minister.

**1963–1969: Levi Eshkol and the Six-Day War**

In 1963 [Yigael Yadin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yigael_Yadin) began excavating [Massada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massada).

In 1964, Egypt, Jordan and Syria developed a unified military command. Israel completed work on a [national water carrier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Water_Carrier_of_Israel), a huge engineering project designed to transfer Israel's allocation of the [Jordan river](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordan_river)'s waters towards the south of the country in realization of Ben-Gurion's dream of mass Jewish settlement of the [Negev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negev) desert. The Arabs responded by trying to divert the headwaters of the Jordan and this led to growing conflict between Israel and Syria.

In 1964, Israeli Rabbinical authorities accepted that the [Bene Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bene_Israel) of India were indeed Jewish and most of the remaining [Indian Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Jews) migrated to Israel. The 2000 strong Jewish community of [Cochin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cochin_Jews) had already migrated in 1954.



[Levi Eshkol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Levi_Eshkol)

In the [1965 elections](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_legislative_election,_1965) [Levi Eshkol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Levi_Eshkol) was victorious.

Until 1966, Israel's principal arms supplier was [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France), however in 1966, following the withdrawal from [Algeria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algeria), [Charles de Gaulle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_de_Gaulle#1962.E2.80.9368:_Politics_of_grandeur) announced France would cease supplying Israel with arms (and refused to refund money paid for 50 warplanes).

In 1966 security restrictions placed on [Arab citizens of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_citizens_of_Israel) were lifted and efforts began to integrate them into the country's life. Black and white TV broadcasts began.

Main article: [Waiting period (Six-Day War)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waiting_period_(Six-Day_War))

On May 15, 1967 the first public performance of [Naomi Shemer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naomi_Shemer)'s classic song "[Jerusalem of Gold](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem_of_Gold)" took place and over the next few weeks it dominated the Israeli airwaves. Two days later Syria, Egypt and Jordan amassed troops along the Israeli borders and Egypt closed the [Straits of Tiran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Straits_of_Tiran) to Israeli shipping. Nasser demanded that the [UNEF](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Emergency_Force) leave Sinai, threatening escalation to a full war. Egyptian radio broadcasts talked of a coming genocide.

Israel responded by calling up its civilian reserves, bringing much of the Israeli economy to a halt. The Israelis set up a national unity coalition, including for the first time [Menachem Begin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menachem_Begin)'s party, [Herut](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herut) in a coalition.

During a national radio broadcast, Prime-Minister Levi Eshkol stammered, causing widespread fear in Israel. To calm public concern [Moshe Dayan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moshe_Dayan) (Chief of Staff during the Sinai war) was appointed defense minister.

Main article: [Six-Day War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six-Day_War)

On the morning before Dayan was sworn in, June 5, 1967, the Israeli air force launched pre-emptive attacks destroying first the Egyptian air force and then later the same day destroying the air forces of Jordan and Syria. Israel then defeated (almost successively) Egypt, Jordan and Syria. By June 11 the Arab forces were routed and all parties had accepted the cease-fire called for by UN Security Council Resolutions 235 and 236.

Israel gained control of the [Sinai Peninsula](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinai_Peninsula), the [Gaza Strip](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_Strip), the [Golan Heights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golan_Heights), and the formerly Jordanian-controlled West Bank of the [Jordan River](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordan_River). [East Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Jerusalem) was immediately arguably annexed by Israel and its population granted Israeli citizenship. Other areas occupied remained under military rule (Israeli civil law did not apply to them) pending a final settlement. The Golan was also annexed in 1981.

On November 22, 1967, the Security Council adopted [Resolution 242](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_Resolution_242), the "land for peace" formula, which called for the establishment of a just and lasting peace based on Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967 in return for the end of all states of belligerency, respect for the sovereignty of all states in the area, and the right to live in peace within secure, recognized boundaries. The resolution was accepted by both sides, though with different interpretations, and eventually provided the basis for peace negotiations.

For the first time since the end of the British Mandate, Jews could visit the [Old City of Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_City_(Jerusalem)) and pray at the [Western Wall](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Wall) to which they had been denied access by the Jordanians (in contravention of the 1949 Armistice agreement). In [Hebron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebron), Jews gained access to the [Cave of the Patriarchs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave_of_the_Patriarchs) (the second most holy site in Judaism) for the first time since the 14th Century (previously Jews were only allowed to pray at the entrance). A third Jewish holy site, [Rachel's Tomb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rachel%27s_Tomb), in [Bethlehem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bethlehem), also became accessible.

After 1967 the USA began supplying Israel with aircraft. [Anti-Semitic purges](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1968_Polish_political_crisis) led to the final migration of the last [Polish Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish_Jews) to Israel.

In 1968 [Moshe Levinger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moshe_Levinger) led a group of [Religious Zionists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_Zionist) who created the first Jewish settlement, a town near Hebron called [Kiryat Arba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiryat_Arba). There were no other religious settlements until after 1974.

In 1968, compulsory education was extended until the age of 16 for all citizens (it had been 14) and the government embarked on an extensive program of [integration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_integration) in education. In the major cities children from mainly [Sephardi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sephardi)/[Mizrahi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mizrahi) neighborhoods were [bused](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Busing) to newly established [middle schools](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_school) in better areas. The system remained in place until after 2000.

In early 1969, fighting broke out between Egypt and Israel along the Suez Canal. In retaliation for repeated Egyptian shelling of Israeli positions along the Suez Canal, Israeli planes made deep strikes into Egypt in the 1969-1970 "[War of Attrition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_of_Attrition)". The United States helped end these hostilities in August 1970, but subsequent U.S. efforts to negotiate an interim agreement to open the Suez Canal and achieve the disengagement of forces were unsuccessful.

In 1969 some 50 of the remaining Iraqi Jews were executed, 11 were publicly executed after show trials and several hundred thousand Iraqis marched past the bodies amid a carnival-like atmosphere. In late 1969, Levi Eshkol died in office, of a heart attack, and was succeeded by [Golda Meir](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golda_Meir).

**1969–1975: Golda Meir and Yom Kippur War**



Golda Meir

In the [1969 election](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_legislative_election,_1969), [Golda Meir](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golda_Meir) became Prime Minister with the largest percentage of the vote ever won by an Israeli party. Meir was the first female prime minister of Israel and is the only woman to have headed a Middle Eastern state in modern times.

In [September 1970](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_September_in_Jordan) [King Hussein](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Hussein) of [Jordan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordan) drove the [Palestine Liberation Organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine_Liberation_Organization) out of his country. On 18 September 1970 Syrian tanks invaded Jordan, intending to aid the PLO. At the request of the USA, Israel moved troops to the border and threatened Syria, causing the Syrians to withdraw.

The center of PLO activity then shifted to [Lebanon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanon), where the 1969 [Cairo agreement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cairo_agreement) gave the Palestinians autonomy within the south of the country. The area controlled by the PLO became known by the international press and locals as "Fatahland" and contributed to the 1975-1990 [Lebanese Civil War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanese_Civil_War). The event also led to [Hafez al-Assad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hafez_al-Assad) taking power in Syria. Egyptian President Nasser died immediately after and was succeeded by [Anwar Sadat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anwar_Sadat).

During 1971, violent demonstrations by the [Israeli Black Panthers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_Black_Panthers), made the Israeli public aware of resentment among [Mizrahi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mizrahi) Jews at ongoing discrimination and social gaps.

Increased [Soviet antisemitism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zionology) and enthusiasm generated by the 1967 victory led to a wave of Jews applying to [emigrate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aliyah_from_the_Soviet_Union_in_the_1970s) to Israel. Most Jews were [refused exit visas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Refusenik) and persecuted by the authorities. They became known as [Prisoners of Zion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prisoners_of_Zion). Those who left could only take two suitcases.

In 1972 the US [Jewish Mafia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Mafia) leader, [Meyer Lansky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meyer_Lansky), who had taken refuge in Israel, was deported to the USA. At the [Munich Olympics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Munich_Olympics), 11 members of the Israeli team were taken hostage by [Palestinian terrorists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_September_(group)). A botched German rescue attempt [led to the death](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Munich_Massacre) of all 11 Israeli athletes and coaches. Five of the terrorists were shot and three survived unharmed. The three surviving Palestinians were [released without charge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Day_in_September) by the German authorities a month later. The Israeli government responded with an [assassination campaign](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Wrath_of_God) against the organizers and a [raid on the PLO headquarters in Lebanon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1973_Israeli_raid_on_Lebanon).

Main article: [Yom Kippur War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yom_Kippur_War)

The 1972 expulsion of [Soviet advisors](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Soviet_advisors&action=edit&redlink=1) by the new Egyptian President, [Anwar Sadat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anwar_Sadat), led to Israeli complacency about the military threat from the Arab world. In 1973, 11 days before Yom Kippur, King Hussein repaid Israel for its assistance in September 1970 by warning Golda Meir of an impending Syrian attack. Meir ignored the warning.

The Yom Kippur War (also known as the October War) began on October 6, 1973 (the Jewish [Day of Atonement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yom_Kippur)), the holiest day in the Jewish calendar and a day when adult Jews are required to fast. The Syrian and Egyptian armies launched a well-planned surprise attack against the unprepared Israeli Defense Forces. For the first few days there was a great deal of uncertainty about Israel's capacity to repel the invaders, however the Syrians were repulsed and, although the Egyptians captured a strip of territory in Sinai, Israeli forces had in turn crossed the Suez Canal and were 100 kilometers from Cairo.

Although the war's results were generally favorable to Israel, it cost over 2,000 dead and resulted in a heavy arms bill. The war generally made Israelis more aware of their vulnerability. Following the war, both Israelis and Egyptians showed greater willingness to negotiate. On January 18, 1974, following extensive diplomacy by US Secretary of State, [Henry Kissinger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Kissinger), a [Disengagement of Forces](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Disengagement_of_Forces&action=edit&redlink=1) agreement was signed with the Egyptian government, and on May 31 with the Syrian government.

On the international scene, the war led the Saudi Government to initiate the [oil embargo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1973_oil_crisis), in conjunction with [OPEC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OPEC), against countries trading with Israel, contributing to [stagflation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stagflation) in the US economy. As a result, many countries broke off relations with Israel or downgraded relations and Israel was banned from participation in the [Asian Games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_Games) and other Asian sporting events.

In May 1974, [Palestinians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DFLP) attacked a school in [Ma'alot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ma%27alot_massacre), holding 102 children hostage. Twenty-two children were killed. In November 1974 the PLO was granted observer status at the UN and [Yasser Arafat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yasser_Arafat) addressed the General Assembly.

Later that year the [Agranat Commission](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agranat_Commission), appointed to assess responsibility for Israel's lack of preparedness for the war, exonerated the government of responsibility and held the [Chief of Staff](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Elazar) and [head of military intelligence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eli_Zeira) responsible. Despite the report, public anger at the Government led to [Golda Meir](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golda_Meir)'s resignation.

**1975–1976: Yitzhak Rabin I: Operation Entebbe, start of Religious Settlements**

Following Meir's resignation, [Yitzhak Rabin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yitzhak_Rabin) (Chief of Staff during the Six Day War) became prime minister.

[Modern Orthodox Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_Orthodox_Jews) ([Religious Zionist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_Zionist) followers of the teachings of [Rabbi Kook](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Isaac_Kook)), formed the [Gush Emunim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gush_Emunim) movement and began an organized drive to settle the [West Bank](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bank) and [Gaza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza) Strip.

In November 1975 the United Nations General Assembly, under the guidance of Austrian Secretary General [Kurt Waldheim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurt_Waldheim), adopted [Resolution 3379](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UN_General_Assembly_Resolution_3379) which asserted [Zionism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zionism) to be a form of racism. The General Assembly rescinded this resolution in December 1991 with [Resolution 46/86](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UN_General_Assembly_Resolution_46/86). (*See also* [*Israel, Palestine and the United Nations*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel,_Palestine_and_the_United_Nations)*.*)

In July 1976, an [Air France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_France) plane carrying 260 people was hijacked by [Palestinian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popular_Front_for_the_Liberation_of_Palestine_-_External_Operations) and [German](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolutionary_Cells_(RZ)) terrorists and flown to Uganda, then ruled by [Idi Amin Dada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idi_Amin_Dada). There, the Germans separated the Jewish passengers from the Non-Jewish passengers, releasing the non-Jews. The hijackers threatened to kill the remaining, 100-odd Jewish passengers (and the French crew who had refused to leave). Despite the distances involved, Rabin ordered a daring [rescue operation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Entebbe) in which the kidnapped Jews were freed. UN Secretary General Waldheim described the raid as "a serious violation of the national sovereignty of a United Nations member state" (meaning Uganda). Waldheim subsequently turned out to be a former Nazi officer, whose name appeared on a 1947 list of wanted war criminals submitted to the UN by Yugoslavia.

In 1976, the ongoing [Lebanese Civil War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanese_Civil_War) led Israel to allow some South Lebanese to [cross the border](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good_Fence) and work in Israel.

At the end of 1976, Rabin resigned after it emerged that his [wife](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leah_Rabin) maintained a dollar account in the United States (illegal at the time), which had been opened while Rabin was Israeli ambassador. The incident became known as the [Dollar Account affair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dollar_Account_affair).

[Shimon Peres](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shimon_Peres) replaced him as prime minister, leading the [Alignment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alignment_(political_party)) in the [subsequent elections](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_legislative_election,_1977).

In January 1977, French authorities arrested [Abu Daoud](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Daoud), the planner of the Munich massacre, releasing him a few days later.

In March 1977 [Anatoly Sharansky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anatoly_Sharansky), a prominent [Russian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russians) [Zionist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zionist), was sentenced to 13 years' hard labor.

**Likud domination 1977–1992**

**1977–1981: Menachem Begin I: the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty**

In a surprise result, the [Likud](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Likud) led by [Menachem Begin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menachem_Begin) won the [1977](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_legislative_election,_1977) elections. This was the first time in Israeli history that the government was not led by the left. A key reason for the victory was anger among [Mizrahi Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mizrahi_Jews) at discrimination, which was to play an important role in Israeli politics for many years. Moroccan-born [David Levy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Levy_(Israeli_politician)) made a major contribution to winning Mizrahi support for Begin. Many Labor voters voted for the [Democratic Movement for Change](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Movement_for_Change) in protest at high-profile corruption cases. The party joined in coalition with Begin and disappeared at the next election.



Celebrating the signing of the Camp David Accords: [Menachem Begin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menachem_Begin), [Jimmy Carter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jimmy_Carter), [Anwar Al Sadat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anwar_El_Sadat).

In addition to starting a process of healing the Mizrahi-[Ashkenazi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashkenazi_Jews) divide, Begin's government included [Ultra-Orthodox Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agudat_Israel) and was instrumental in healing the Zionist - Ultra-Orthodox rift. Begin's liberalization of the economy led to [hyper-inflation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyper-inflation) but enabled Israel to begin receiving US financial aid. Begin actively supported [Gush Emunim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gush_Emunim)'s efforts to settle the [West Bank](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bank), thus laying the grounds for intense conflict with the Palestinian population of the occupied territories.

Begin had been tortured by the [KGB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KGB) as a young man and one of his first acts was to instruct the Israeli secret service to "use wisdom rather than violence" in interrogations. "In July 1977, Begin met with [President Carter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jimmy_Carter) in Washington. Their talks revealed a wide disparity of views. Begin defended Israel’s right to establish and expand Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. Carter reminded him that the United States opposed such actions as contrary to international law."

In November 1977, Egyptian President [Anwar Sadat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anwar_Sadat) broke 30 years of hostility with Israel by visiting Jerusalem at the invitation of Israeli Prime Minister [Menachem Begin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menachem_Begin). Sadat's two-day visit included a speech before the [Knesset](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knesset), and was a turning point in the history of the conflict. The Egyptian leader created a new psychological climate in the [Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East) in which peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors seemed possible. Sadat recognized Israel's right to exist and established the basis for direct negotiations between Egypt and Israel.

Following Sadat's visit, 350 Yom Kippur War veterans organized the [Peace Now](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_Now) movement to encourage Israeli governments to make peace with the Arabs.

In March 1978, eleven armed Lebanese-Palestinians reached Israel in boats and [hijacked a bus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coastal_Road_Massacre) carrying families on a day outing, killing 35 people, including 13 children. The attackers opposed the Egyptian-Israeli peace process. Three days later, Israeli forces crossed into Lebanon beginning [Operation Litani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Litani). After passage of [United Nations Security Council Resolution 425](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_Resolution_425), calling for Israeli withdrawal and the creation of the [United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Interim_Force_in_Lebanon) (UNIFIL) peace-keeping force, Israel withdrew its troops.

Main article: [Camp David Accords](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_David_Accords)

In September 1978, U.S. President [Jimmy Carter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jimmy_Carter) invited President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin to meet with him at [Camp David](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_David), and on September 11 they agreed on a framework for peace between Israel and Egypt and a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. It set out broad principles to guide negotiations between Israel and the Arab states. It also established guidelines for a West Bank-Gaza transitional regime of full autonomy for the Palestinians residing in these territories and for a [peace treaty between Egypt and Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel-Egypt_Peace_Treaty). The treaty was signed on March 26, 1979, by Begin and Sadat, with President Carter signing as witness. Under the treaty, Israel returned the Sinai peninsula to Egypt in April 1982. The final piece of territory to be repatriated was [Taba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taba_(Egypt)), adjacent to [Eilat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eilat), returned in 1989.

In December 1978 the Israeli [Merkava](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merkava) battle tank entered use with the IDF.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Development of Israel by decade** | | | | | | |
|  | **1950** | **1960** | **1970** | **1980** | **1990** | **2000** |
| Population (millions) | 1.4 | 2.1 | 3 | 3.9 | 4.8 | 6 |
| % of world's Jews | 7% |  | 20% | 25% | 30% | 39% |
| GDP per capita 1995 NIS | 10,100 | 16,800 | 27,800 | 36,000 | 42,400 |  |

The [Arab League](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_League) reacted to the peace treaty by suspending Egypt from the organization and moving its headquarters from [Cairo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cairo) to [Tunis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tunis). [Sadat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sadat) was assassinated in 1981 by [Islamic fundamentalist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_Islamic_Jihad) members of the Egyptian army who opposed peace with Israel.

Following the agreement Israel and Egypt became the two largest recipients of [US military and financial aid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Agency_for_International_Development) (Iraq has now [overtaken them](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Financial_cost_of_the_Iraq_War) by a large margin).

**1981–1983: Begin II: the First Lebanon War**

See also: [1982 Lebanon War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1982_Lebanon_War)

On 30 June 1981, the Israeli air-force [destroyed the Osirak nuclear reactor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Opera) that [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France) was building for [Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq).

Three weeks later, Begin won yet again, in the [1981 elections](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_legislative_election,_1981) (48 seats Likud, 47 Labor). [Ariel Sharon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ariel_Sharon) was made defense minister. The new government annexed the [Golan Heights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golan_Heights) and banned [El Al](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Al) from flying on the Sabbath.

In the decades following the 1948 war, Israel's border with [Lebanon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanon) was quiet compared to its borders with other neighbors. But the 1969 [Cairo agreement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cairo_agreement) gave the PLO a free hand to attack Israel from South Lebanon. The area was governed by the PLO independently of the Lebanese Government and became known as "[Fatahland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatahland)" ([Fatah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatah) was the largest faction in the PLO). Palestinian irregulars constantly [shelled](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katyusha_rocket_launcher) the Israeli north, especially the town of [Kiryat Shmona](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiryat_Shmona), which was a Likud stronghold inhabited primarily by Jews who had fled the Arab world. Lack of control over Palestinian areas was an important factor in causing [civil war in Lebanon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanese_civil_war).

In June 1982, the attempted assassination of [Shlomo Argov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shlomo_Argov), the ambassador to Britain, was used as a pretext for an Israeli invasion aiming to drive the PLO out of the southern half of Lebanon. Sharon agreed with [Chief of Staff](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chief_of_Staff) [Raphael Eitan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raphael_Eitan) to expand the invasion deep into Lebanon even though the cabinet had only authorized a 40 kilometer deep invasion. The invasion became known as the [1982 Lebanon War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1982_Lebanon_War) and the Israeli army occupied [Beirut](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beirut), the only time an Arab capital has been occupied by Israel. Some of the [Shia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amal_Movement) and Christian population of [South Lebanon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Lebanon) welcomed the Israelis, as PLO forces had maltreated them, but Lebanese resentment of Israeli occupation grew over time and the [Shia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shiite) became gradually [radicalized](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musa_al-Sadr) under Iranian guidance. Constant casualties among Israeli soldiers and Lebanese civilians led to growing opposition to the war in Israel.

In August 1982, the PLO withdrew its forces from Lebanon (moving to [Tunisia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tunisia)). Israel helped engineer the election of a new Lebanese president, [Bashir Gemayel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bashir_Gemayel), who agreed to recognize Israel and sign a peace treaty. Gemayal was assassinated before an agreement could be signed, and one day later [Phalangist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phalange) Christian forces led by [Elie Hobeika](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elie_Hobeika) entered two Palestinian refugee camps and [massacred](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabra_and_Shatila_massacre) the occupants. The massacres led to the biggest [demonstration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-war_protest) ever in Israel against the war, with as many as 400,000 people (almost 10% of the population) gathering in Tel-Aviv. In 1983, an [Israeli public inquiry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kahan_commission) found that Israel's defense minister, Sharon, was indirectly but personally responsible for the massacres. It also recommended that he never again be allowed to hold the post (it did not forbid him from being Prime Minister).

**1984–1988: Yitzhak Shamir/Shimon Peres rotation government and first Intifada**

See also: [First Intifada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Intifada)

In September 1983, Begin resigned and was succeeded by [Yitzhak Shamir](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yitzhak_Shamir) as prime minister. The [1984 election](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_legislative_election,_1984) was inconclusive and led to a power sharing agreement between [Shimon Peres](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shimon_Peres) of the Alignment (44 seats) and Shamir of Likud (41 seats). Peres was prime minister from 1984-1986 and Shamir from 1986-1988.

In 1984, continual discrimination against Sephardi ultra-orthodox Jews by the Ashkenazi ultra-orthodox establishment led political activist [Aryeh Deri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aryeh_Deri) to leave the [Agudat Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agudat_Israel) party and join former chief [Rabbi Ovadia Yosef](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabbi_Ovadia_Yosef) in forming [Shas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shas), a new party aimed at the non-Ashkenazi Ultra-Orthodox vote. The party won 11 seats in the first election it contested and over the next twenty years was the third largest party in the Knesset. Shas established a nationwide network of free Sephardi orthodox schools.

In 1984, during a severe famine in [Ethiopia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopia), 8,000 [Ethiopian Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beta_Israel) were [secretly transported](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Moses) to Israel. In 1986 [Natan Sharansky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natan_Sharansky), a famous Russian human rights activist and Zionist [refusenik](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Refusenik) (denied an exit visa) was released from the [Gulag](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulag) in return for two Soviet spies.

In June 1985, Israel withdrew most of its troops from Lebanon, leaving a residual Israeli force and an Israeli-supported [militia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Lebanon_Army) in southern Lebanon as a "[security zone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_Security_Zone)" and buffer against attacks on its northern territory.

By July 1985 Israel's inflation, buttressed by complex [index linking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Index_linking) of salaries, had reached 480% per annum and was the highest in the world. Peres introduced emergency control of prices and cut government expenditure successfully bringing inflation under control. The currency (known as the [Israeli lira](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_lira) until 1980) was replaced and renamed the [Israeli new shekel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_new_shekel).

In August 1987, the Israeli government cancelled the [IAI Lavi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IAI_Lavi) project, an attempt to develop an independent [Israeli fighter aircraft](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Israeli_fighter_aircraft&action=edit&redlink=1). The Israelis found themselves unable to sustain the huge development costs and faced US opposition to a project that threatened US influence in Israel and US global military ascendancy. In September 1988, Israel launched an [Ofeq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ofeq) reconnaissance satellite into orbit, using a [Shavit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shavit) rocket, thus becoming one of only eight countries possessing a capacity to [independently launch satellites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satellite#Launch-capable_countries) into space (two more have since developed this ability).

Main article: [First Intifada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Intifada)

Growing Israeli settlement and continuing occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, led to the [first Palestinian Intifada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Intifada) (uprising) in 1987 which lasted until the [Madrid Conference of 1991](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madrid_Conference_of_1991), despite Israeli attempts to suppress it. [Human rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights) abuses by Israeli troops led a group of Israelis to form [B'Tselem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B%27Tselem), an organization devoted to improving awareness and compliance with human rights requirements in Israel.

**1988–1992: Shamir II: the Gulf War and Soviet immigration**

See also: [Aliyah from the Commonwealth of Independent States in the 1990s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aliyah_from_the_Commonwealth_of_Independent_States_in_the_1990s)

The Alignment and Likud remained neck and neck in the [1988 elections](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_legislative_election,_1988) (39:40 seats), Shamir successfully formed a national unity coalition with [the Labor Alignment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alignment_(political_party)).

In March 1990, Alignment leader [Shimon Peres](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shimon_Peres) engineered a defeat of the government in a non-confidence vote and then tried to form a new government. [He failed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_dirty_trick_(Israel)) and Shamir became Prime-Minister at the head of a right-wing coalition.

In 1990, the [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) finally permitted free [emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aliyah_from_the_Commonwealth_of_Independent_States_in_the_1990s). Prior to this, Jews trying to leave the USSR faced [persecution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Refusenik_(Soviet_Union)); those who succeeded arrived as refugees.

Over the next few years some one million Soviet citizens migrated to Israel, and there was concern that some of the new immigrants had only a very tenuous connection to Judaism and many were accompanied by non-Jewish relatives.

Main article: [Gulf War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_War)

In August 1990, Iraq invaded [Kuwait](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuwait), triggering the [Gulf War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_War) between Iraq and a large allied force, led by the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States). Iraq attacked Israel with 39 [Scud missiles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scud_missile). Israel did not retaliate. Israel provided gas masks for both the Palestinian population and Israeli citizens.

In May 1991, during a 36 hour period, 15,000 [Beta Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beta_Israel) (Ethiopian Jews) were [secretly airlifted](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Solomon) to Israel.

The coalition's victory in the Gulf War opened new possibilities for regional peace, and in October 1991 the U.S. President, [George H.W. Bush](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_H.W._Bush) and Soviet Union Premier, [Mikhail Gorbachev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Gorbachev), jointly convened a [historic meeting in Madrid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madrid_Conference_of_1991) of Israeli, Lebanese, Jordanian, Syrian, and Palestinian leaders. Shamir opposed the idea but agreed in return for loan guarantees to help with absorption of immigrants from the former Soviet Union. His participation in the conference led to the collapse of his (right-wing) coalition.

**1992–1995: Rabin II: Oslo peace talks**

Main article: [Oslo Accords](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oslo_Accords)

See also: [Peace process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_process_in_the_Israeli-Palestinian_conflict)



[Yitzhak Rabin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yitzhak_Rabin), [Bill Clinton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Clinton), and [Yasser Arafat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yasser_Arafat) during the Oslo Accords on 13 September 1993.

In the [1992 elections](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_legislative_election,_1992), the [Labor Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labor_Party_(Israel)), led by [Yitzhak Rabin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yitzhak_Rabin), won a significant victory (44 seats) promising to pursue peace while promoting Rabin as a "tough general" and pledging not to deal with the PLO in any way. The pro-peace Zionist party Meretz won 12 seats and the Arab and communist parties a further 5 meaning that parties supporting a peace treaty had a full (albeit small) majority in the Knesset.

On September 13, 1993, Israel and the [Palestine Liberation Organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine_Liberation_Organization) (PLO) signed a [Declaration of Principles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_Principles) on the South Lawn of the [White House](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House). The principles established objectives relating to a transfer of authority from Israel to an interim Palestinian authority, as a prelude to a final treaty establishing a Palestinian state. The DOP established May 1999 as the date by which a permanent status agreement for the West Bank and Gaza Strip would take effect.

In February 1994, a follower of the [Kach](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kach_and_Kahane_Chai) movement killed 25 Palestinian-Arabs at the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron ([Cave of the Patriarchs massacre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave_of_the_Patriarchs_massacre)). Kach had been barred from participation in the 1992 elections (on the grounds that the movement was racist). It was subsequently made illegal.

Israel and the PLO signed the [Gaza-Jericho Agreement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza-Jericho_Agreement) in May 1994, and the [Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Agreement_on_Preparatory_Transfer_of_Powers_and_Responsibilities&action=edit&redlink=1) in August, which began the process of transferring authority from Israel to the Palestinians.

On July 18, 1994, a [Jewish day center in Argentina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1994_AMIA_bombing) was blown up, killing 85 people. Argentine investigators concluded the attack was by Lebanese [Hezbollah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hezbollah) with Iranian assistance.

On July 25, 1994 Jordan and Israel signed the [Washington Declaration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington_Declaration) which formally ended the [state of war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_of_war) that had existed between them since 1948 and on October 26 the [Israel-Jordan Treaty of Peace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel-Jordan_Treaty_of_Peace), witnessed by US President [Bill Clinton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Clinton).

Prime Minister [Yitzhak Rabin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yitzhak_Rabin) and PLO Chairman [Yasser Arafat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yasser_Arafat) signed the [Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli-Palestinian_Interim_Agreement) on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip on September 28, 1995, in Washington. The agreement was witnessed by President Bill Clinton on behalf of the United States and by Russia, Egypt, Norway and the European Union and incorporates and supersedes the previous agreements, marking the conclusion of the first stage of negotiations between Israel and the PLO.

The agreement allowed the PLO leadership to relocate to the occupied territories and granted autonomy to the Palestinians with talks to follow regarding final status. In return the Palestinians promised to abstain from use of terror and changed the [Palestinian National Covenant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_National_Covenant) which had called for the expulsion of all Jews who migrated after 1917 and the elimination of Israel.

The agreement was opposed by [Hamas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamas) and other Palestinian factions which launched [suicide bomber attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Hamas_suicide_attacks) at Israel. Rabin had a [barrier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_Gaza_Strip_barrier) constructed around Gaza to prevent attacks.

Tensions in Israel, arising from the continuation of terrorism and anger at loss of territory, led to the [assassination of Prime Minister Rabin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassination_of_Yitzhak_Rabin) by a right-wing Jewish radical on November 4, 1995.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_Israel&action=edit&section=39)**] Direct elections for the Premier 1996–2005**

In 1996 the Israeli electoral system was changed to allow for direct election of the Premier. It was hoped this would reduce the power of small parties to extract concessions in return for coalition agreements. The new system had the opposite effect; voters could split their vote for prime-minister from their (interest based) party vote and as a result larger parties won fewer votes and smaller parties becoming more attractive to voters. It thus increased the power of the smaller parties. By the 2006 election the system was abandoned.

**1996–1999: Binyamin Netanyahu - the peace process slows**

In February 1996 Rabin's successor, [Shimon Peres](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shimon_Peres), called early elections. The May 1996 [elections](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_legislative_election,_1996) were the first featuring [direct election of the prime minister](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_prime_ministerial_election,_1996) and resulted in a narrow election victory for [Likud](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Likud) leader [Binyamin Netanyahu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Binyamin_Netanyahu). A spate of suicide bombings reinforced the Likud position for security. [Hamas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamas) claimed responsibility for most of the bombings.

Despite his stated differences with the [Oslo Accords](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oslo_Accords), Prime Minister Netanyahu continued their implementation, but his Prime Ministership saw a marked slow-down in the Peace Process. Netanyahu also pledged to gradually reduce US aid to Israel.[[92]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Israel#cite_note-91#cite_note-91)

In January 1997 Netanyahu signed the [Hebron Protocol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebron_Protocol) with the [Palestinian Authority](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_Authority), resulting in the redeployment of Israeli forces in [Hebron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebron) and the turnover of civilian authority in much of the area to the [Palestinian Authority](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_Authority).

**1999–2001: Ehud Barak and withdrawal from South Lebanon**

In the [election](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_legislative_election,_1999) of July 1999, [Ehud Barak](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ehud_Barak) of the Labor Party became Prime Minister. His party was the largest in the Knesset with 26 seats.

On March 21, 2000 [Pope John Paul II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_Paul_II) arrived in Israel for a historic visit.

In 2000, Israel unilaterally withdrew its remaining forces from the "security zone" in southern Lebanon. Several thousand members of the [South Lebanon Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Lebanon_Army) (and their families) left with the Israelis.

The UN Secretary-General concluded that, as of June 16, 2000, Israel had withdrawn its forces from Lebanon in accordance with [UN Security Council Resolution 425](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UN_Security_Council_Resolution_425). Lebanon claims that Israel continues to occupy Lebanese territory called "[Sheba'a Farms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheba%27a_Farms)" (however this area was governed by Syria until 1967 when Israel took control). The Sheba'a Farms provide Hezbollah with a ruse to maintain warfare with Israel. The Lebanese government did not assert sovereignty in the area (in contravention of the UN resolution) which came under the control of [Hezbollah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hezbollah).

In the Fall of 2000, talks were held at Camp David to reach a final agreement on the Israel/Palestine conflict. Ehud Barak offered to meet most of the Palestinian teams requests for territory and political concessions, including Arab parts of east Jerusalem; however, Arafat abandoned the talks without making a counterproposal.

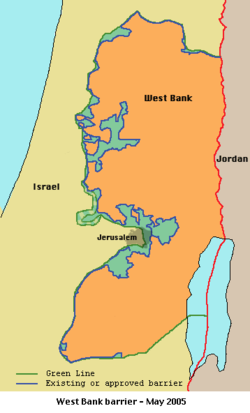
On September 28, 2000, Israeli opposition leader [Ariel Sharon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ariel_Sharon) visited the [Temple Mount](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_Mount), the following day the Palestinians launched the [al-Aqsa Intifada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Aqsa_Intifada). Israel claims the Palestinians had planned violence far in advance of Sharon's visit. In his book *The High Cost of Peace*, [Yossef Bodansky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yossef_Bodansky) describes the event: "When Sharon expressed interest in visiting the [Temple Mount](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_Mount), Barak ordered [GSS](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GSS) chief [Ami Ayalon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ami_Ayalon) to approach [Jibril Rajoub](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jibril_Rajoub) with a special request to facilitate a smooth and friendly visit... Rajoub promised it would be smooth as long as Sharon would refrain from entering any of the mosques or praying publicly... Just to be on the safe side, Barak personally approached [Arafat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arafat) and once again got assurances that Sharon's visit would be smooth..." (p354)

In October 2000, Palestinians destroyed [Joseph's Tomb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph%27s_Tomb), a Jewish shrine in [Nablus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nablus). The [Arrow missile](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arrow_(missile)), a missile designed to destroy [ballistic missiles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ballistic_missile), including [Scud missiles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scud_missile), was first deployed by Israel.

In 2001, with the Peace Process increasingly in disarray, Ehud Barak called a [special election for Prime Minister](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_prime_ministerial_election,_2001). Barak hoped a victory would give him renewed authority in negotiations with the Palestinians. Instead opposition leader [Ariel Sharon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ariel_Sharon) was elected PM. After this election, the system of directly electing the Premier was abandoned.

**2001–2006: Ariel Sharon and withdrawal from Gaza and the Northern West Bank**

The failure of the peace process, increased Palestinian terror, and occasional attacks by Hezbollah from Lebanon led much of the Israeli public and political leadership to lose confidence in the [Palestinian Authority](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_Authority) as a peace partner. Most felt that many Palestinians viewed the peace treaty with Israel as a temporary measure only. Many Israelis were thus anxious to disengage from the Palestinians.



The approved [West Bank barrier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_West_Bank_barrier) route as of May 2005

In response to a wave of suicide bomb attacks, culminating in the "[Passover massacre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passover_massacre)" (see [List of Israeli civilian casualties in the Second Intifada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Israeli_civilian_casualties_in_the_Second_Intifada)), Israel launched [Operation Defensive Shield](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Defensive_Shield), and Sharon began construction of a [barrier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_West_Bank_barrier) around the West Bank.

In January 2003 separate [elections](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_legislative_election,_2003) were held for the Knesset. Likud won the most seats (27). An anti-religion party, [Shinui](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shinui), won 15 seats on a secularist platform, making it the third largest party (ahead of orthodox [Shas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shas)). Internal fighting led to Shinui's demise at the next election.

In December 2003, [Ariel Sharon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ariel_Sharon) announced he would consider a [unilateral withdrawal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel%27s_unilateral_disengagement_plan) from parts of the occupied territories. This crystallized as a plan for total withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

In 2004, the [Black Hebrews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Hebrew_Israelites_of_Jerusalem) were granted permanent residency in Israel. The group had begun migrating to Israel 25 years earlier from the United States, but had not been recognized as Jews by the state and hence not granted citizenship under Israel's [Law of Return](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_of_Return). They had settled in Israel without official status. From 2004 onwards, they received citizen's rights.

In 2005, all Jewish settlers were evacuated from [Gaza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza) (some forcibly) and their homes demolished. [Disengagement from the Gaza Strip](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel%27s_unilateral_disengagement_plan) was completed on September 12, 2005. Military disengagement from the northern West Bank was completed ten days later.

Following the withdrawal, the Israeli town of [Sderot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sderot) and other Israeli communities near the frontier became subject to constant [shelling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qassam_rocket) and mortar bomb attacks from Gaza.

In 2005 Sharon left the Likud and formed a new party called [Kadima](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kadima), which accepted that the peace process would lead to creation of a Palestinian state. He was joined by many leading figures from both Likud and Labor.

The Israeli withdrawal from Gaza was interpreted by the Palestinians as a Hamas victory and the January [Palestinian legislative election, 2006](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_legislative_election,_2006) was won by Hamas, which rejected all agreements signed with Israel, refused to recognize Israel's right to exist, and claimed the Holocaust was a Jewish conspiracy.

On April 14, 2006, [Ariel Sharon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ariel_Sharon) was incapacitated by a severe [hemorrhagic stroke](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hemorrhagic_stroke), and [Ehud Olmert](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ehud_Olmert) became [Acting Prime Minister](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deputy_leaders_of_Israel#Acting_Prime_Minister).

**2006–2009: Ehud Olmert and growing Islamist confrontation**

[Ehud Olmert](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ehud_Olmert) was elected Prime Minister after his party, [Kadima](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kadima), won the most seats (29) in the [Israeli legislative election, 2006](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_legislative_election,_2006).

Main article: [Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahmoud_Ahmadinejad_and_Israel)

In 2005 [Mahmoud Ahmadinejad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahmoud_Ahmadinejad) was officially elected president of Iran; since then, Iranian policy towards Israel has grown more confrontational. Israeli analysts believe Ahmadinejad has worked to undermine the peace process with arms supplies and aid to Hezbollah in South Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza and is [developing nuclear weapons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran_and_weapons_of_mass_destruction), possibly for use against Israel. Iranian support for Hezbollah and its nuclear arms program are in contravention of UN Security Council resolutions [1559](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_Resolution_1559) and [1747](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_Resolution_1747). Iran also [encourages Holocaust denial](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Conference_to_Review_the_Global_Vision_of_the_Holocaust).

Following the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, Hezbollah had mounted periodic attacks on Israel which did not lead to Israeli retaliation. Similarly, the withdrawal from Gaza led to incessant shelling of towns around the Gaza area with only minimal Israeli response. The failure to react led to criticism from the Israeli right and undermined the government.

On June 25, 2006, a Hamas force crossed the border from Gaza and attacked a tank, capturing wounded Israeli soldier [Gilad Shalit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilad_Shalit). On July 12, Hezbollah [attacked Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zar%27it-Shtula_incident) from Lebanon, shelled Israeli towns and attacked a border patrol, taking two dead or badly wounded Israeli soldiers. These incidents led Israel to initiate the [Second Lebanon War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006_Lebanon_War), which lasted through August 2006. The Israeli army proved unable to prevent Hezbollah from shelling the north of Israel, and the military failure led to a [public inquiry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winograd_Commission).

In 2007 education was made compulsory until the age of 18 for all citizens (it had been 16).

Olmert also came under investigation for corruption and this ultimately led him to announce, on July 30, 2008, that he would be stepping down as Prime Minister following election of a new leader of the [Kadimah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kadimah) party in September 2008. [Tzippi Livni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tzippi_Livni) won the election, but was unable to form a coalition and he remained in office until the general election.

On December 27, 2008, following the collapse of an unofficial cease-fire between Israel and Gaza and resumption of shelling of southern Israeli towns from Gaza, Israeli forces mounted a [three-week campaign](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008%E2%80%932009_Israel%E2%80%93Gaza_conflict) in Gaza, leading to widespread international protests.

**2009-present: Netanyahu II**

In the [2009 legislative election](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_legislative_election,_2009) Likud won 27 seats and Kadima 28; however, the right-wing camp won a majority of seats, and President Shimon Peres called on Netanyahu to form the government.

Russian immigrant-dominated [Yisrael Beiteinu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yisrael_Beiteinu) came third with 15 seats, and Labor was reduced to fourth place with 13 seats.

**See also**

* [Archaeological sites in Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archaeological_sites_in_Israel)
* [Israeli literature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_literature)
* [Music of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_of_Israel)
* [Culture of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Israel)
* [History of the Levant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Levant)
* [History of the Jews in the Land of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_the_Land_of_Israel)
* [History of Zionism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Zionism)
* [Paris Peace Conference, 1919](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_Peace_Conference,_1919)
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* [History of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Israeli%E2%80%93Palestinian_conflict)
* [Peace process in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_process_in_the_Israeli%E2%80%93Palestinian_conflict)
* [Projects working for peace among Arabs and Israelis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Projects_working_for_peace_among_Arabs_and_Israelis)
* [List of Middle East peace proposals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Middle_East_peace_proposals)
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**External links**

* Knesset Website
* IDF website
* Prime Minister's Office
* President's Website
* [The Jewish History Resource Center](http://www.dinur.org/1.html?rsID=219) Project of the Dinur Center for Research in Jewish History, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
* [Israel Genealogy](http://www.israelgenealogy.com)
* [History of Israel and Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict](http://www.mideastweb.org/briefhistory.htm)
* [Timeline of Israeli and Palestinian History from Earliest Times](http://www.mideastweb.org/timeline.htm)
* [Full Profile of Israel](http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3284752,00.html) Ynetnews Lexicon
* Etzel website
* [Extensive political historical and detailed maps of Israel and Palestine](http://www.mideastweb.org/misrael.htm)
* [A history of Zionism and the creation of Israel](http://www.zionism-israel.com/zionism_history.htm)
* [A photo gallery of the history of Zionism and the creation of Israel](http://www.zionism-israel.com/photos.htm)
* [First Photos of the Holy Land](http://www.eretzyisroel.org/~dhershkowitz/)
* [A timeline of Zionism and Israeli history](http://www.zionism-israel.com/zionism_timeline.htm)
* [Labor Zionism and Socialist Zionism](http://www.mideastweb.org/labor_zionism.htm)
* [Zionism: Historical Source Documents and texts](http://www.zionism-israel.com/zionism_documents.htm)
* ["Zionism" — from the Jewish Virtual Library](http://www.jsource.org/jsource/zion.html)
* ["Centenary of Zionism" from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs](http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH00un0)
* [The Jewish Agency for Israel — The Department for Zionist Education](http://www.jafi.org.il/education/index.html)
* [The UNISPAL web site](http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf) contains the full texts of hundreds of official documents, including those of the League of Nations and the United Nations, the British government, the Israeli government, the Palestinian authority, and many others.
* [Economic History of Israel](http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/halevi.israel) from EH.NET's Encyclopedia
* [Israel History Timeline](http://www.historyexplorer.net/?Other_History_Timelines:Timeline_-_History_of_Israel)
* ["History of Israel: Key events"](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7385661.stm), [BBC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BBC)