

“If you will it,
it is no dream”

Theodor Hertzl,
Founder of modern Zionism

Israel: A Great Dream

From the beaches of Tel Aviv to Jerusalem's "Western Wall," and from the sands of the Negev Desert to the snowy peaks and vineyards of the Golan, in this class we'll explore the complicated and beautiful story of the re-birth of the Jewish State.

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People, Land, and State

Each of the three phrases below refers to a different facet of the word “Israel.”

What does each phrase mean? How do each of them relate to each other, and to you?

AM Yisrael

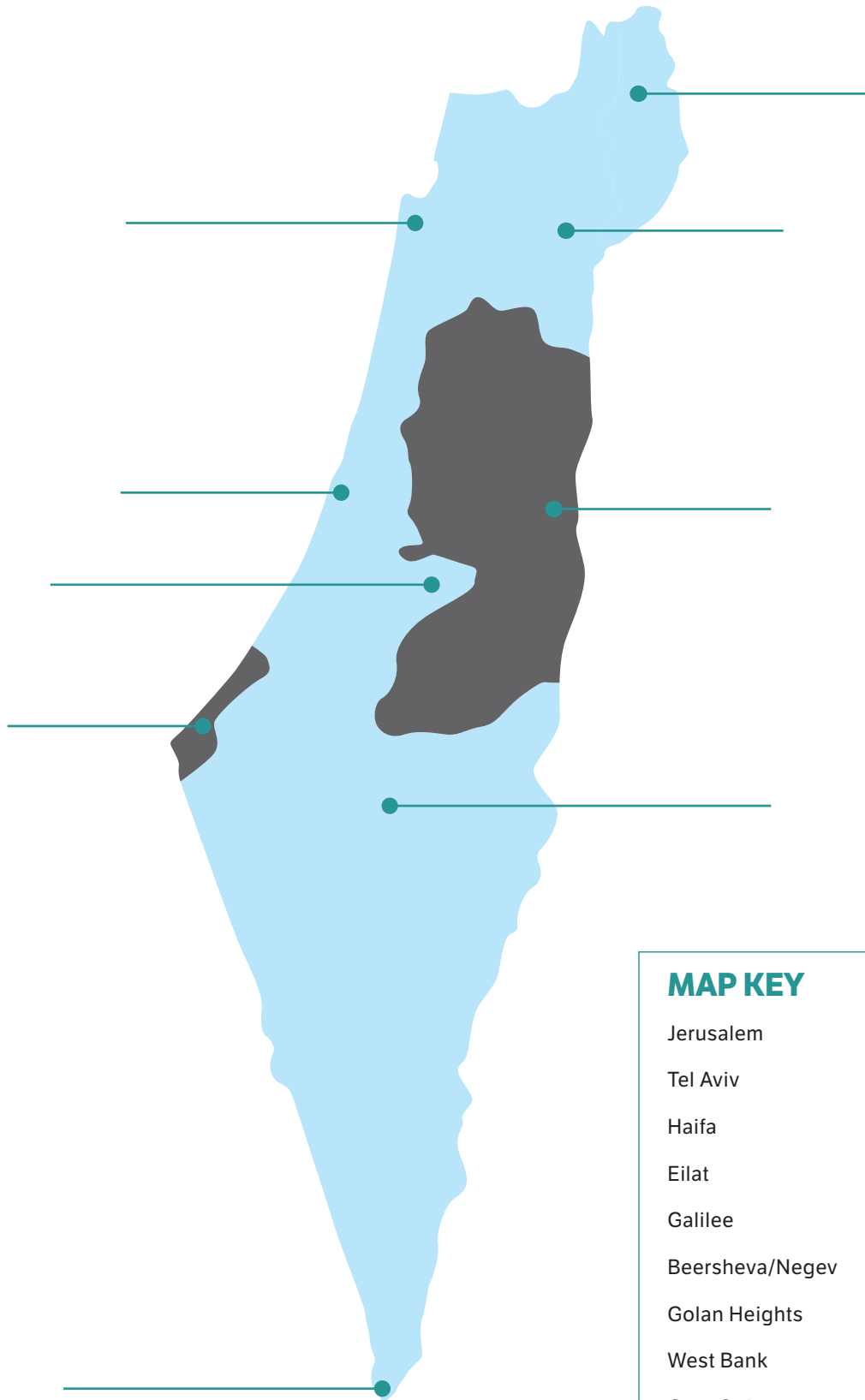
ERETZ Yisrael

MEDINAT Yisrael

“ לְבִי בְּמִזְרָח, וְאַנּוֹכִי בְּסוֹף מִעֶרֶב. ”

My heart is the East, and I am at the ends of the West.

Yehudah Ha-Levi (1075-1141)



By the Rivers of Babylon

Psalm 126

A song for ascending.
When God restores the exiles of Zion
We will be like dreamers.
Our mouths will fill with laughter and our tongues with joyful song.
It will be said among the nations:
God has done great things for them!
God will do great things for us, and we will have joy.
Restore us, Adonai,
Like streams of water to the desert.
The ones who sow in tears
Shall reap with songs of joy!
Though he goes along weeping, carrying his bag of seed,
He will come with joy, carrying his sheaves.

Psalm 137

By the rivers of Babylon, we sat down and wept,
When we remembered Zion.
Among the weeping willows, we hung our harps.
Our captors demanded that we sing a song,
They would say: "Sing us a song of Zion!"
How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?
If I forget you Jerusalem, let me forget my right hand.

Ha-Tikvah

Israel's National Anthem

כָּל עוֹד בְּלִבָּב פְּנִימָה

Kol od ba'le'vav p'nima

As long as deep within the heart

נֶפֶשׁ יְהוּדֵי הוֹמִיָּה

Nefesh yehudi ho'miyah

A Jewish soul stirs

וּלְפָאֵתֵי מִזְרָח, קְדִימָה

U'lefa-atei mizrach kadimah

And forward, to the ends of the East

עֵין לְצִיּוֹן צוֹפִיָּה

Ayin le'Tziyyon tzofiyah

An eye looks out, towards Zion

עוֹד לֹא אָבְדָה תְּקוּתָנוּ

Od lo avda tikva-teinu

Our hope is not yet lost

הַתְּקוּהָ בַּת שְׁנוֹת אֲלָפִים

Ha'tikvah bat sh'not al-payim

The hope of two thousand years

לְהִיּוֹת עַם חֲפְזֵי בְּאֶרֶצְנוּ

Lih-yot am chofshi b'ar-tzeinu

To be a free people in our land

אֶרֶץ צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם

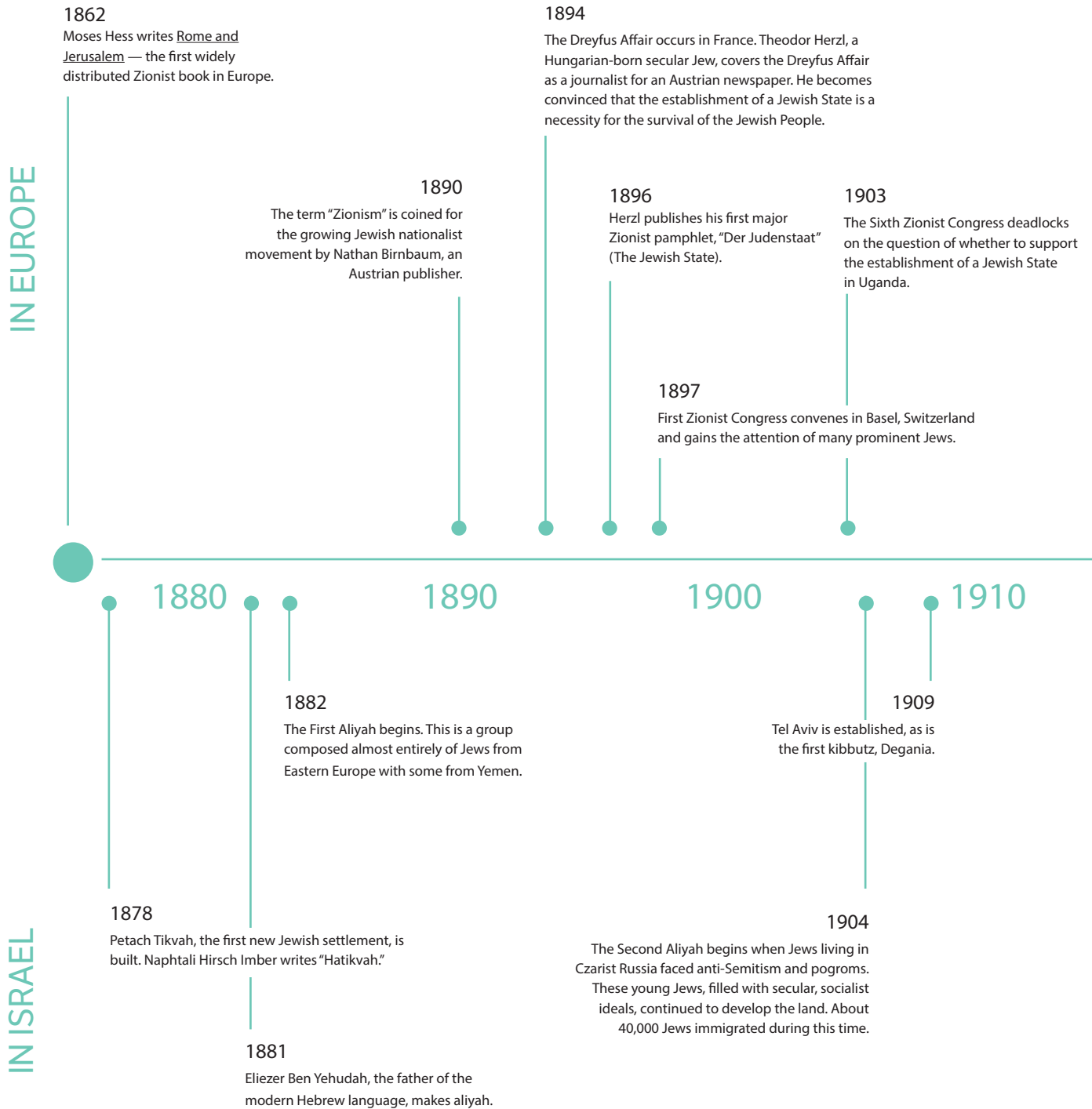
Eretz Tziyyon v'Yerushalayim

The land of Zion and Jerusalem



Use your smartphone's
QR reader to hear Ha-Tikvah sung or
visit intro.aju.edu/music

A Timeline of the Zionist Movement



1917

The beginning of the British Mandate. The British Army gained control of this area from the Ottomans as a result of the treaties ending World War I. In November, the British release a statement called The Balfour Declaration, officially giving support to the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

1939
The British issue The White Paper, effectively cutting-off Jewish emigration to Palestine. WWII begins.

1945
WWII ends with Germany's unconditional defeat. The world is shocked by graphic images from the liberated concentration camps

1947
The UN approves United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181, which would split Palestine into two states, one Arab and one Jewish, with Jerusalem as an international city. It passes with 33 votes in favor, including the United States and the USSR, 13 against, and 10 (including the UK) abstaining.

1941
The "Final Solution" begins in Poland. Over the next four years, six million Jews would be killed.

1920

1920
Haganah is established as an underground military organization; it later becomes the basis of the Israel Defense Force (IDF).

1930

1936
The British Government suggests a Partition Plan that that lead to an Arab and a Jewish state within the current British Mandate.

1940

1948
The State of Israel declares its establishment on May 14th. The next day, five neighboring Arab countries — Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq — declare war, beginning the War of Independence, which lasts until January 1949.

1950

1949
First elections in Israel make David Ben Gurion Israel's first Prime Minister.

1950
The Knesset passes the "Law of Return" guaranteeing all Jews the right to make aliyah and claim immediate citizenship.

Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel

ERETZ-YISRAEL was the birthplace of the Jewish People. Here their spiritual, religious, and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance, and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

After being forcibly exiled from their land, the People kept faith with it throughout their Diaspora and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom.

Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades, they returned in their masses. Pioneers and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself, bringing the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants, and aspiring towards independent nationhood.

In the year 5657 (1897), at the summons of the spiritual father of the Jewish State, Theodore Herzl, the First Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish People to national re-birth in its own country. This right was recognized in The Balfour Dec-

laration of November 2, 1917, and re-affirmed in the Mandate of the League of Nations, which, in particular, gave international sanction to the historic connection between the Jewish People and Eretz-Yisrael and to the right of the Jewish People to rebuild its national home.

The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish People — the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe — was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Yisrael the Jewish State, which would open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish People the status of a fully privileged member of the family of nations.

Survivors of the Nazi Holocaust in Europe, as well as Jews from other parts of the world, continued to migrate to Eretz-Yisrael, undaunted by difficulties, restrictions and dangers, and never ceased to assert their right to a life of dignity, freedom, and honest toil in their national homeland.

In the Second World War, the Jewish community of this country contributed its full share to the struggle of the freedom and peace-loving nations against the forces of Nazi wickedness. And, by the blood of its soldiers and its war effort, gained the right to be reckoned among the peoples who founded the United Nations.

On November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Yisrael. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish People to establish their State is irrevocable.

This right is the natural right of the Jewish People to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.

Accordingly we, members of the People's Council, representatives of the Jewish community of Eretz-Yisrael and of the Zionist movement, are here assembled on the day of the termination of the British mandate over Eretz-Yisrael and, by virtue of our natural and historic right and on the strength of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Yisrael, to be known as the State of Israel.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the ingathering of the exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the Prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race, or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education, and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

WE APPEAL — in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months — to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.

WE EXTEND our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish People settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

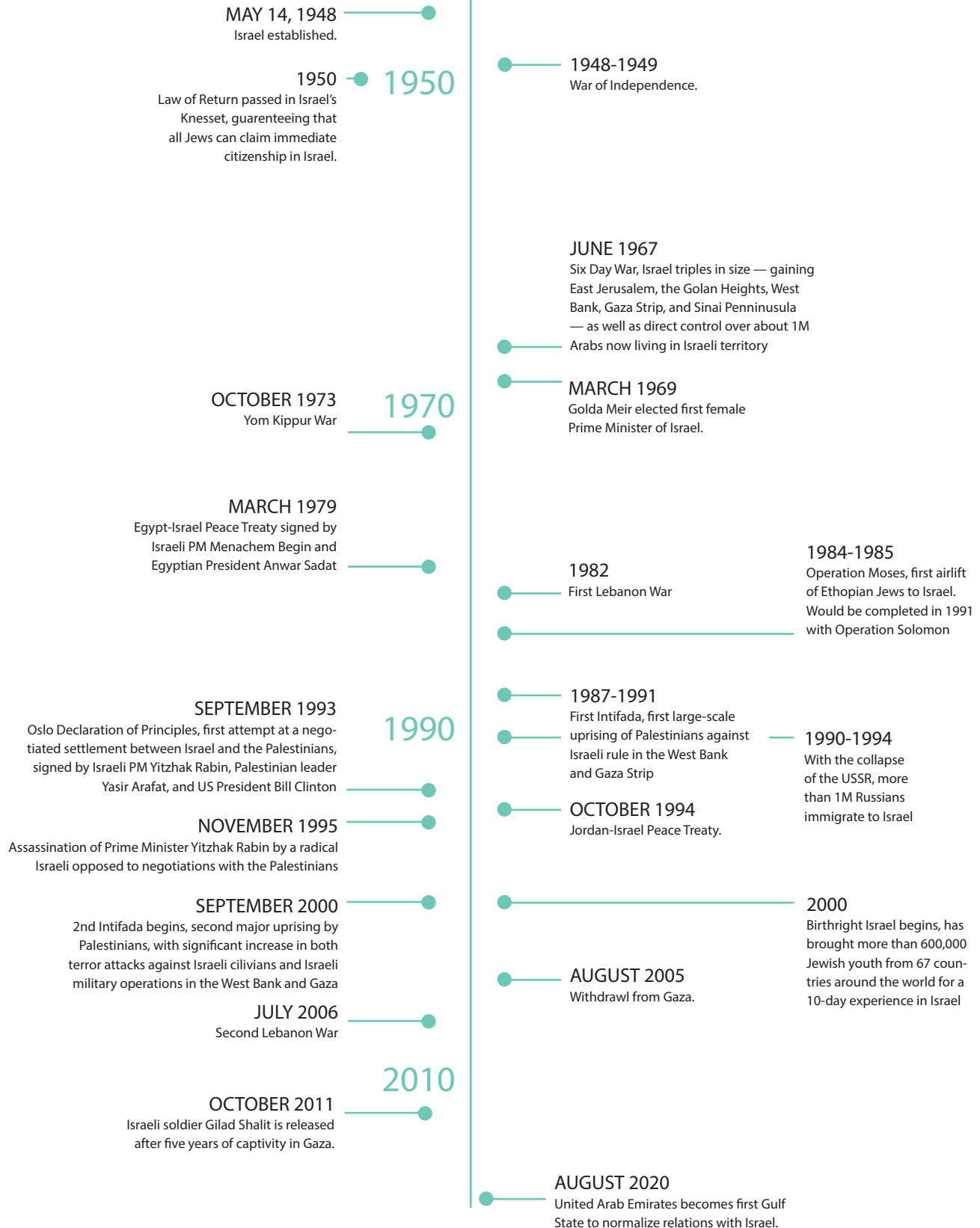
WE APPEAL to the Jewish People throughout the Diaspora to rally round the Jews of Eretz-Yisrael in the tasks of immigration and up-building and to stand by them in the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream — the redemption of Israel.

Placing our trust in the “Rock of Israel,” we affix our signatures to this proclamation at this session of the Provisional Council of State, on the soil of the homeland, in the city of Tel-Aviv, on this Sabbath eve, the 5th day of Iyar, 5708 (May 14, 1948).



David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister of the State of Israel, reads the Declaration of Independence on May 14, 1948, in Tel Aviv, beneath a portrait of Theodor Hertzl, the founder of modern Zionism.

Modern Israel Timeline (1948–Present)



Voices of Israel

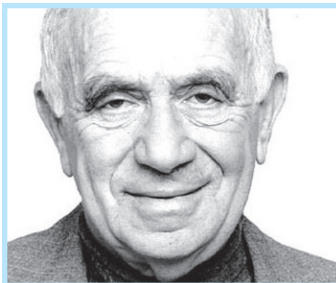
Tourists

by Yehuda Amichai

Visits of condolence are all we get from them.
They squat at the Holocaust Memorial,
They put on grave faces at the Wailing Wall
And they laugh behind heavy curtains
In their hotels.
They have their pictures taken
Together with our famous dead
At Rachel's Tomb and Herzl's Tomb
And on Ammunition Hill.
They weep over our sweet boys
And lust after our tough girls
And hang up their underwear
To dry quickly
In cool, blue bathrooms.

Once I sat on the steps by a gate at David's Tower,
I placed my two heavy baskets at my side. A group of tourists
was standing around their guide and I became their target marker. "You see
that man with the baskets? Just right of his head there's an arch
from the Roman period. Just right of his head." "But he's moving, he's moving!"
I said to myself: Redemption will come only if their guide tells them,
"You see that arch from the Roman period? It's not important; but next to it,
left and down a bit, there sits a man who's bought fruit and vegetables for his family."

Translated by Glenda Abramson



Yehuda Amichai is recognized as one of Israel's finest poets. His poems — written in Hebrew — have been translated into forty languages, and volumes of his work have been published in English, French, German, Swedish, Spanish, and Catalan. Translator Robert Alter has said: "Yehuda Amichai, it has been remarked with some justice, is the most widely translated Hebrew poet since King David."

Connect: 10 Ways to Build a Relationship with Israel

- **Read an Israeli newspaper**
Often called Israel's version of The New York Times, Haaretz is Israel's newspaper of record. Other English-language news sources are the Jerusalem Post and Times of Israel.
- **Attend an Annual Israel Festival in your community**
Celebrate Israel's birthday with great food, live music, and lots and lots of blue and white.
- **Read a book about Israel's history**
There are thousands of books about Israel, but two to start with are Howard Sachar, *A History of Israel* and Ari Shavit's *My Promised Land*.
- **Hang a mizrach (eastern wall marker) in your home**
During prayer, it is traditional for Jews to face east toward Jerusalem. Place a mizrach marker on an eastern-facing wall so the residents and visitors of your home will always know where Israel is and will always have the Jewish land on their mind.
- **Purchase and use Israeli products**
Whether it is Ahava Dead Sea lotions or "Made in Israel" Judaica, buying and using products made in Israel is a great way to support the State while enjoying fantastic products.
- **Begin a collection of Israeli music**
Israeli music is a lot like rap: fun to listen to, even if you don't understand the words. Some contemporary recommended artists are Idan Reichel and David Broza.
- **Get involved with an Israel advocacy organization that matches your values**
There is more than one way to love and support Israel. Get involved with organizations that strengthen the Jewish State and match your vision for what that State can and should be.
- **Begin learning Hebrew**
It's the language of our people, it's the language in our prayer book, and knowing this language is a great way to connect to both of those things.
- **Read Israeli fiction/poetry or watch Israeli film**
If there is a genre of fiction, poetry, or film that you enjoy, there is most definitely a recognized Israeli author, poet, filmmaker who has explored these subjects. Works by writers like Shai Agnon, Etgar Keret, Yehuda Amichai, and many others are wonderful.
- **Visit Israel — for a short trip or for a longer program**
Nothing will make you fall in love with Israel like a visit. See the sights, meet the people, and eat the food. Soon enough, you will feel Israeli yourself. (Hopefully their driving habits won't rub off on you as well.)

Additional Readings

Books

- Howard Sachar, *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*
An authoritative and comprehensive look at Israel's history, from the origins of Zionism until the 1990s, and surprisingly readable and engaging even at more than 1,000 pages.
- Yossi Klein Halevi, *Letters to My Palestinian Neighbor*
A profoundly personal piece of writing by one of Israel's most thoughtful journalists and commentators, addressed across the physical, spiritual, and political divides that separate Israeli Jews and Palestinians.
- Yehuda Amichai, *Poems of Jerusalem*
Amichai is Israel's definitive poet. His words offer a glimpse at the heart of Israel beyond what could be expressed in prose.
- Lawrence Hoffman, *Israel: A Spiritual Travel Guide*
A great book to bring on your first trip to Israel — this is designed to be used, written in and dog-eared — and to allow you to capture what your experience of Israel means to you.

Websites

- Haaretz (haaretz.com)
Often called Israel's version of the New York Times — Haaretz is Israel's newspaper of record and one of the best ways to learn about what's happening in the Homeland.
- Times of Israel (timesofisrael.com)
Like an Israeli version of the Huffington Post, this site brings together bloggers and journalists of all backgrounds to share a wide variety of perspectives about Israeli current affairs.
- Birthright Israel (birthrightisrael.com)
Jewish, 26 or under, and never been to Israel on an organized trip before? Answer YES to all three things and you qualify for an all-expenses paid trip to Israel. Check out their site to find out details.
- Honeymoon Israel (honeymoonisrael.org)
Honeymoon Israel (HMI) takes couples in their 20s and 30s on an incredible nine-day trip to Israel, and provides a community that lasts a lifetime.