

Lesson 3: Zionism: Jewish Nationalism

Key message/learning objective: Zionism is the national movement of the Jewish people. It emerged in Europe in the late 1800s, with the goal of establishing an independent Jewish state in the Land of Israel (then called Palestine).

What to Bring

- Handouts 3.1, one of 3.2a-3.2d for each student
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1. Orientation

- Takeaways from last class; questions
- Objective for this class
- Timeline (handout 3.1)

2. The Origins of Zionism

Zionism emerged from the confluence of a number of trends and realities in Europe in the late 1800s. Ask the students how familiar they are with each of these, define and discuss.

- Jewish ties to the Land of Israel (discussed in the previous session)
- Anti-Semitism
- Nationalism: The notion that French, Germans, and Poles are different peoples with different cultures, and that the nation-state realizes each people's political rights
- Emancipation: Political rights, religious freedom, equality
- Socialism: A desire for a more just society

3. Early Zionist Leaders

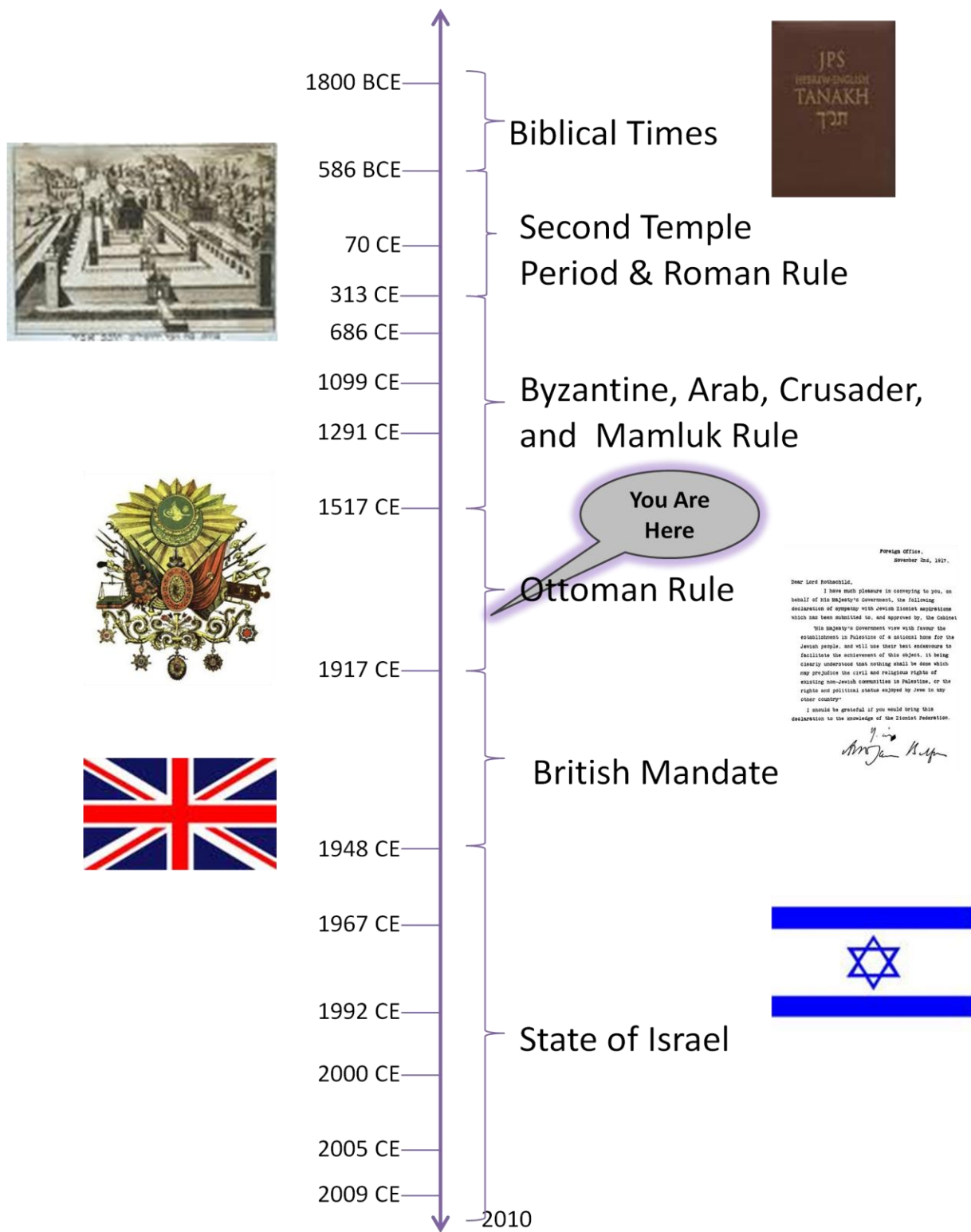
Break into groups of 2-4. Each group gets a biography of a prominent Zionist leader (handouts 3.2a-3.2d). They are presenting in a competition for a new stamp for the state of Israel, which will depict one of these leaders. Each group has 5-7 minutes to read the biography and discuss, then 2-3 minute to present why the new stamp should feature their "Israeli idol" character. Class then votes for which "idol" to select for the stamp.

- Theodor Herzl
- Henrietta Szold
- Eliezer Ben Yehuda
- Chaim Weizmann

4. Uganda Plan

- Debate option of creating a Jewish state somewhere other than Palestine, such as British East Africa, as proposed by Herzl in 1903. Was that a good idea? Why or why not?

Timeline: Lesson 3

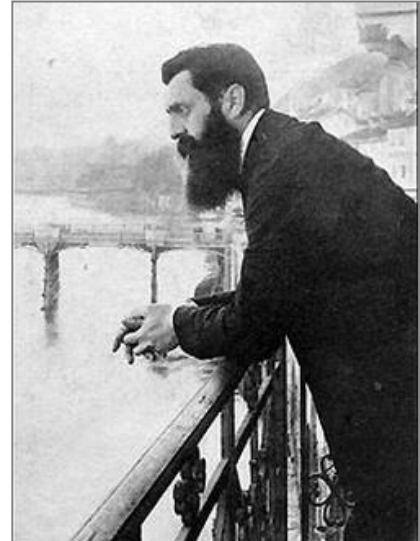


Theodor (Benyamin Zeev) Herzl

Theodor Herzl was born in Budapest in 1860 and moved to Vienna at age 18. He received a law degree, but chose to concentrate on writing, becoming a journalist at a Vienna newspaper. Encountering anti-Semitism, he assumed that the solution was for Jews to totally assimilate. He believed that anti-Semitism occurred because Jews looked and acted differently.

In 1894, Herzl covered the Paris trial of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French army, who was unjustly accused of treason. Herzl witnessed mobs shouting “Death to the Jews” in France, and resolved that assimilation had failed and that the solution to anti-Semitism was mass immigration of Jews to a land that they could call their own.

Herzl decided to create the political framework for an independent Jewish state. He started by trying to raise funds for an international Jewish institution, but was turned down by major Jewish philanthropists who viewed him as a zealous madman. Herzl then wrote a pamphlet, “The Jewish State” (1896), describing his goal of creating a separate nation for the Jews. The pamphlet succeeded to excite some thoughtful European Jews.



In 1897, the First World Zionist Congress met in Basel, Switzerland. It was the first time that Jews from different nations had ever met with a political agenda, the common goal of establishing an independent Jewish nation. Their first task was to create the political organizations needed to found a new country. They elected Herzl president of the organization and approved the design of the Jewish national flag (now the flag of Israel). At that first meeting that Herzl triumphantly declared, “If you will it, then it's not a fantasy.”

Herzl spent the last years of his life struggling to raise the funds for establishing a nation and trying to convince the heads of European states to help the Jews. The Turkish sultan, who controlled Palestine at that time, refused his request to allow Jews to migrate en masse to Palestine. England refused to give the Jews permission to settle on Cyprus. However, British Foreign Minister Lord Chamberlain did offer Herzl the option of settling in Uganda. Herzl excitedly brought

this proposal back to the 1903 World Zionist Congress. While many Western European Jews seriously considered the offer, the representatives of Russian Jewry, dedicated to the dream of a return to Zion, threatened to leave the Congress. The proposal was defeated.

Herzl died in 1904, and was buried on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem. He is credited with being the father of political Zionism.

Adapted from <http://judaism.about.com/od/jewishbiographies/a/herzl.htm>

Henrietta Szold

Henrietta Szold was born in 1860, the eldest of eight daughters of a Baltimore rabbi. She was a brilliant student, fluent in German, Hebrew, and French. Szold studied at the (then male-only) Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and later worked as an editor and translator at the Jewish Publication Society. Seeing the challenges of Jewish immigrants from Russia and Eastern Europe, she organized English language and American citizenship night classes in Baltimore.

Szold was a committed Zionist and, in 1898, was elected as the only female member of the executive committee of the Federation of American Zionists. In 1909 she traveled to Palestine and discovered her life's mission: the health, education and welfare of the Yishuv (pre-state Jewish community of Palestine). In 1912, Szold joined six other women to found Hadassah, which recruited American Jewish women to upgrade health care in Palestine. She served as the first president of Hadassah until 1926. Hadassah funded hospitals, a medical school, dental facilities, x-ray clinics, infant welfare stations, soup kitchens and other services for Palestine's Jewish and Arab inhabitants. Szold insisted that the most up-to-date medical treatment be extended to the Arabs of Palestine as well as to the Jews.

In 1933 she immigrated to Palestine and involved Hadassah in a program to rescue Jewish youth from Germany, and later from all of Europe. The program she created, "Youth Aliyah," saved an estimated 22,000 Jewish children from Nazi Europe. Szold died in Jerusalem on February 13, 1945.

Henrietta Szold is regarded as one of the genuine heroic figures of American-Jewish history, a scholarly woman, a passionately committed Jew and a person who saved many thousands of lives. The organization she founded, Hadassah, has as more than 300,000 members and supporters and is the largest Jewish organization in the United States.



This Five Lira note issued by the Bank of Israel between 1976 and 1984 depicts Henrietta Szold in front of the Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus.

Adapted from:

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Szold.html>

<http://www.hadassah.org/site/c.keJNtWOvElH/b.5651301/>

http://www.zionism-israel.com/bio/biography_Henrietta_Szold.htm

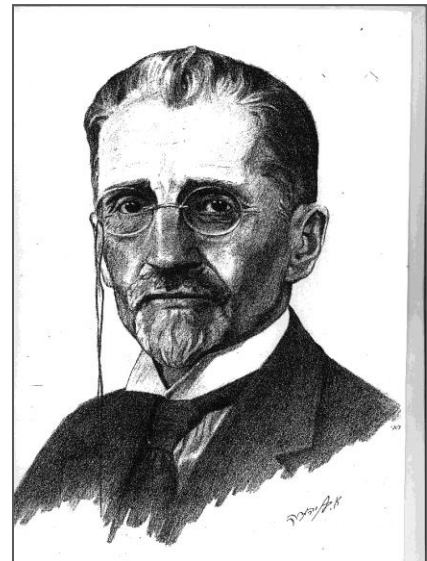
Eliezer Ben Yehuda

Eliezer Ben Yehuda was born Eliezer Yitzhak Perlman in 1858 in Lithuania, where he received a traditional Jewish education. After completing high school, Ben Yehuda realized that he would not be accepted in a Russian university because of discriminatory laws against Jews, and went to the University of Paris to study medicine.

The struggle for independence in the Balkan countries made Ben Yehuda aware of the homelessness of the Jews and of the need to restore the ancient, wandering people to its homeland - Palestine. In 1879 Ben Yehuda published his first Hebrew article in *Hashahar* (The Dawn), the foremost Hebrew monthly of the time. He presented the then novel idea of the return to Zion and revival of the ancient Hebrew tongue as the spoken language of a resurrected people.

From Paris, Ben Yehuda went to Algiers, where he continued to publish articles in the Hebrew press, including the weekly *Havazelet*, printed in Jerusalem. In 1881 he moved to Jerusalem to become assistant editor of that weekly. On his way he married Dvora Jonas, who shared his ideals. Upon his arrival in Jerusalem he organized a group which dedicated itself to the task of using Hebrew as a daily language.

It took Ben Yehuda many years of persistent work to convince the skeptics that Hebrew could be made to live again. He was also bitterly attacked by religious factions in Jerusalem, who opposed the secular use of the holy tongue. In his own newspapers, which he had begun to publish, he coined new Hebrew terms and words for daily use. His children were the first in modern times to speak Hebrew as their mother tongue.



To make available the riches of ancient as well as modern Hebrew, Ben Yehuda concentrated his efforts on his monumental lifework, *The Dictionary of the Hebrew Language, Old and New*. He worked daily on the dictionary and continued the task during the years of World War I, which he spent in New York. At his death in 1922, five volumes of the dictionary had been published. Ben Yehuda left enough material to complete the work, 16 volumes in all.

Adapted from <http://www.answers.com/topic/eliezer-ben-yehuda>

Chaim Weizmann

Chaim Weizmann was born in Motol, Russia in 1874. He studied biochemistry in Switzerland and Germany and became active in the Zionist movement. In 1905 he moved to England and was elected to the General Zionist Council.

Weizmann's scientific assistance to the Allied forces in World War I brought him into close contact with British leaders, enabling him to play a key role in the issuing of the Balfour Declaration, in which Britain committed itself to the establishment of a Jewish home in Palestine.

In 1918, Weizmann was appointed head of the Zionist Commission sent to Palestine by the British government to advise on the future development of the country. There, he laid the foundation stone of the Hebrew University. Shortly after, Weizmann led the Zionist delegation to the Peace Conference at Versailles, and in 1920 became the president of the World Zionist Organization (WZO). He headed the Jewish Agency which was established in 1929.



In the 1930's, Weizmann laid the foundations of the Daniel Sieff Research Institute in Rehovot, later to become the Weizmann Institute, a driving force behind Israel's scientific research. In 1937, he made his home in Rehovot.

Chaim Weizmann again served as President of the WZO from 1935-1946. During the years that led up to World War II, he invested much effort in establishing the Jewish Brigade. He also tried, unsuccessfully, to prevent the British from issuing the White Paper in 1939, which in effect halted Jewish immigration to Palestine.

After the end of World War II, Weizmann was instrumental in the adoption of the Partition Plan by the United Nations on November 29, 1947, and in the recognition of Israel by the United States.

With the declaration of the State of Israel, Weizmann was chosen to serve as the first President of Israel. This role he filled until his death in 1952.

Adapted from <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/weizmann.html>