

Lesson 4: The British Mandate

Key message/learning objective: The British ruled Palestine from 1917 to 1948, during which time the Jewish population in Palestine (the *Yishuv*) grew substantially, mostly through *aliyot*.

What to Bring

- Handouts 4.1, 4.2, 4.3a for each student
 - Printout of 4.3b, 4.3c for instructor
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1. Orientation

- Takeaways from last class; questions
- Objective for this class
- Timeline (handout 4.1)

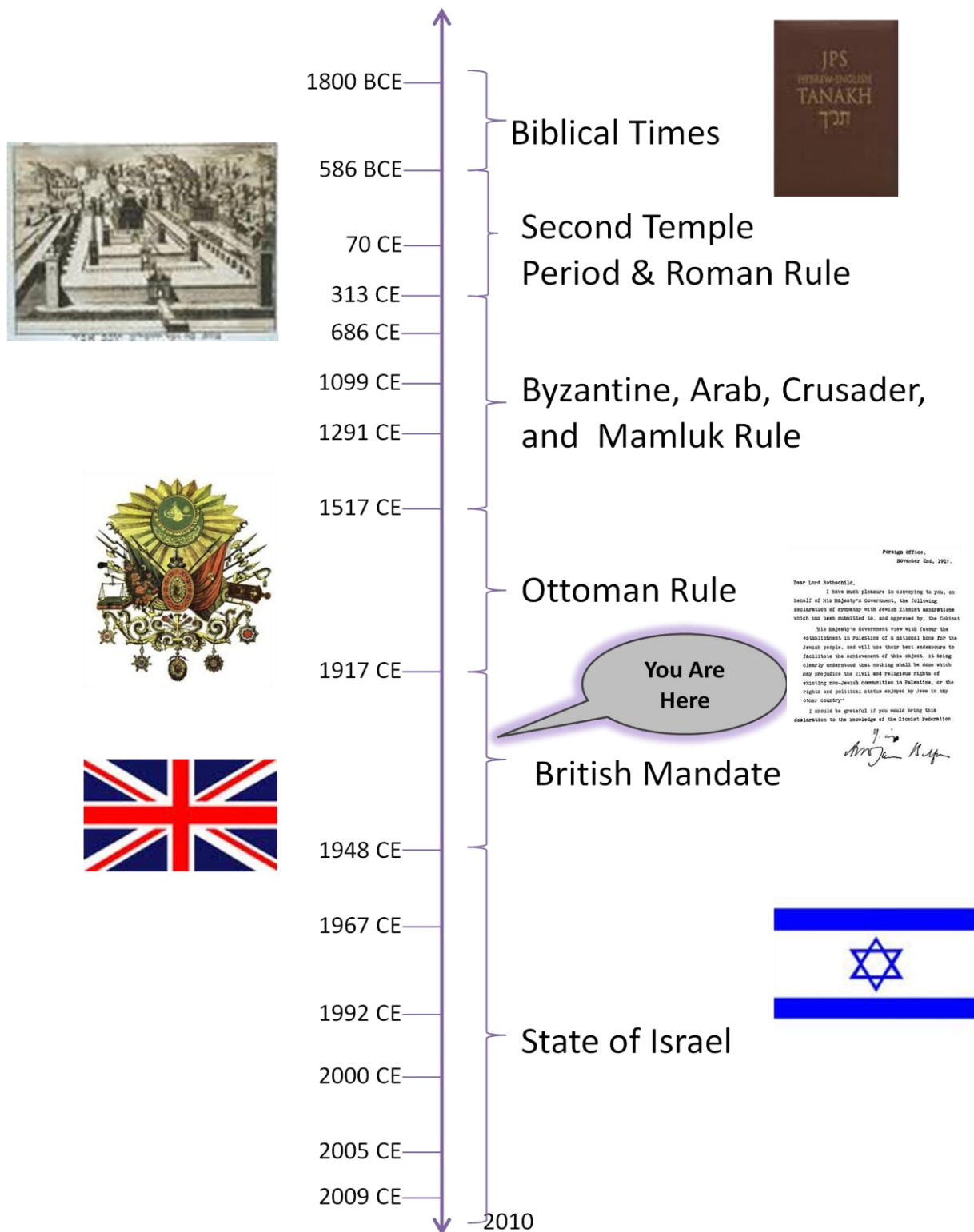
2. The Balfour Declaration

- Background: British sympathy toward the Zionist cause, Chaim Weizmann's efforts, desire for support from American and Russian Jews to enter WWI
- Compare three versions of the Declaration (Handout 4.2). Underline key differences between the versions. What are the changes and what is their significance?
- What do you think was the Arab reaction to the Balfour Declaration?
- Can you come up with a Tweet—140 characters or less—telling all your friends and followers about the Balfour Declaration?

3. Immigration: Aliyot

- The Jewish community in the Land of Israel, Eretz Yisrael, was called the "*Yishuv*." Its population grew substantially in the decades before and shortly after the establishment of the State of Israel. This was partially natural growth – more births than deaths – but mostly from immigration. Review concept of "*aliya*."
- Distribute handout 4.3a. Read to the students 4.3b and ask them to fill out the table. (Completed table on 4.3c.)

Timeline: Lesson 4



The Balfour Declaration

Version 1: Zionist Draft, July 1917

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

Version 2: Second British Draft, October 1917

“His Majesty's Government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish race, and will use its best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object; it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed in any other country by such Jews who are fully contented with their existing nationality [and citizenship].”

Version 4: Final Text, November 2, 1917

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

*Adapted from “Balfour Declaration” by Rebecca Redinger, Middle East and West Asia Chronology, the Web Chronology Project, <http://www.thenagain.info/webchron/middleeast/Balfour.html>. Original source: Sanders, Ronald, *The High Walls of Jerusalem* (New York, New York; Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984), pp. 558-559, 561, 590-591.*

See also: http://www.zionism-israel.com/Balfour_Declaration_1917.htm

Jewish Immigration to Eretz Yisrael

Aliya	When?	Who? From where?	How many?	Population in Eretz Yisrael at the end of the Aliya
-	1881	Jews already living in Eretz Yisrael	-	10,000

Aliya and Absorption

Following their expulsion and after the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in 70 CE, the majority of the Jews were dispersed throughout the world. The Jewish national idea, however, was never abandoned, nor was the longing to return to their homeland.

Throughout the centuries, Jews have maintained a presence in the Land, in greater or lesser numbers; uninterrupted contact with Jews abroad has enriched the cultural, spiritual and intellectual life of both communities.

Zionism, the political movement for the return of the Jewish people to their homeland, founded in the late 19th century, derives its name from word "Zion", the traditional synonym for Jerusalem and the Land of Israel. In response to continued oppression and persecution of Jews in eastern Europe and disillusionment with emancipation in Western Europe, and inspired by Zionist ideology, Jews immigrated to Palestine towards the end of the nineteenth century. This was the first of the modern waves of aliya that were to transform the face of the country.

The First Aliya 1882-1903

The First Aliya followed pogroms in Russia in 1881-1882, with most of the olim (immigrants) coming from Eastern Europe; a small number also arrived from Yemen. Members of Hibbat Zion and Bilu, two early Zionist movements that were the mainstays of the First Aliya, defined their goal as "the political, national, and spiritual resurrection of the Jewish people in Palestine." Though they were inexperienced idealists, most chose agricultural settlement as their way of life and founded moshavot - farmholders' villages based on the principle of private property. Three early villages of this type were Rishon Lezion, Rosh Pina, and Zikhron Ya'akov. The First Aliya settlers encountered many difficulties, including an inclement climate, disease, crippling Turkish taxation and Arab opposition. They required assistance and received scanty aid from Hibbat Zion, and more substantial aid from Baron Edmond de Rothschild. He provided the moshavot with his patronage and the settlers with economic assistance, thereby averting the collapse of the settlement enterprise. The Yemenite olim, most of whom settled in Jerusalem, were first employed as construction workers and later in the citrus plantations of the moshavot.

In all, nearly 35,000 Jews came to Palestine during the First Aliya. Almost half of them left the country within several years of their arrival, some 15,000 established new rural settlements, and the rest moved to the towns.

The Second Aliya, 1904-1914

The Second Aliya, in the wake of pogroms in Czarist Russia and the ensuing eruption of antisemitism, had a profound impact on the complexion and development of modern Jewish settlement in Palestine. Most of its members were young people inspired by socialist ideals. Many models and components of the rural settlement enterprise came into being at this time, such as "national farms" where rural settlers were trained; the first kibbutz, Degania (1909); and Hashomer, the first Jewish self-defense organization in Palestine. The Ahuzat Bayit neighborhood, established as a suburb of Jaffa, developed into Tel Aviv, the first modern all-Jewish city. The Hebrew language was revived as a spoken tongue, and Hebrew literature and

Hebrew newspapers were published. Political parties were founded and workers' agricultural organizations began to form. These pioneers laid the foundations that were to put the yishuv (the Jewish community) on its course towards an independent state.

In all, 40,000 Jews immigrated during this period, but absorption difficulties and the absence of a stable economic base caused nearly half of them to leave.

The Third Aliya, 1919-1923

This aliya, a continuation of the Second Aliya (which was interrupted by World War I), was triggered by the October Revolution in Russia, the ensuing pogroms there and in Poland and Hungary, the British conquest of Palestine and the Balfour Declaration. Most members of the Third Aliya were young halutzim (pioneers) from Eastern Europe. Although the British Mandatory regime imposed aliya quotas, the yishuv numbered 90,000 by the end of this period. The new immigrants built roads and towns, and projects such as the draining of marshes in the Jezreel Valley and the Hefer Plain were undertaken. The General Federation of Labor (Histadrut) was established, representative institutions for the yishuv were founded (the Elected Assembly and the National Council), and the Haganah (the clandestine Jewish defense organization) was formed. Agricultural settlement expanded, and the first industrial enterprises were established.

Approximately 40,000 Jews arrived in Palestine during the Third Aliya; relatively few returned to their countries of origin.

The Fourth Aliya, 1924-1929

The Fourth Aliya was a direct result of the economic crisis and anti-Jewish policies in Poland, along with the introduction of stiff immigration quotas by the United States. Most of the immigrants belonged to the middle class and brought modest sums of capital with which they established small businesses and workshops. Tel Aviv grew. Notwithstanding the yishuv's economic woes, with an economic crisis in 1926 - 1928, the Fourth Aliya did much to strengthen the towns, further industrial development and reinstate Jewish labor in the villages.

In all, the Fourth Aliya brought 82,000 Jews to Palestine, of whom 23,000 left.

The Fifth Aliya, 1929-1939

The signal event of this aliya wave was the Nazi accession to power in Germany (1933). Persecution and the Jews' worsening situation caused aliya from Germany to increase and aliya from Eastern Europe to resume. Many of the immigrants from Germany were professionals; their impact was to be felt in many fields of endeavor. Within a four-year period (1933-1936), 174,000 Jews settled in the country. The towns flourished as new industrial enterprises were founded and construction of the Haifa port and the oil refineries was completed. Throughout the country, "stockade and tower" settlements were established. During this period - in 1929 and again in 1936-39 - violent Arab attacks on the Jewish population took place, called "disturbances" by the British. The British government imposed restrictions on immigration, resulting in Aliya Bet - clandestine, illegal immigration.

By 1940, nearly 250,000 Jews had arrived during the Fifth Aliya (20,000 of them left later) and the yishuv's population reached 450,000. From this time on, the practice of "numbering" the waves of immigration was discontinued - which is not to say that aliya had exhausted itself.

Youth Aliya

Youth Aliya was originally founded (1933) to rescue Jewish youth from Nazi Germany. Some 5,000 teenagers were brought to the country before World War II and educated at Youth Aliya boarding schools; followed, after the war, by an additional 15,000, most of them Holocaust survivors. Today Youth Aliya villages continue to play a vital role in the absorption of young newcomers, as well as offering thousands of disadvantaged Israeli youth a second chance.

1939-1948

During World War II, the aliya effort focused on rescuing Jews from Nazi-occupied Europe. Some olim entered the country on visas issued under the "White Paper" quota; the majority came as illegal immigrants. This immigration, called Aliya Bet, arrived by land and by sea, from Europe and the Middle East, in contravention of the Mandatory Government's orders.

The loss of contact with European countries, the hazards of maritime travel under wartime conditions, and the difficulty in obtaining vessels for transport of illegal immigrants placed severe constraints on Aliya Bet. Several boatloads of immigrants who managed to reach Palestine were sent back by British authorities upholding the quota system. Many lost their lives at sea or in the Nazi inferno in Europe.

During the years 1944-1948, the Jews in Eastern Europe sought to leave that continent by any means. Emissaries from the yishuv, Jewish partisans and Zionist youth movements cooperated in establishing the Beriha (escape) organization, which helped nearly 200,000 Jews leave Europe. The majority settled in Palestine.

Illegal Immigration

From the end of World War II until the establishment of Israel (1945-1948), illegal immigration was the major method of immigration, because the British, by setting the quota at a mere 18,000 per year, virtually terminated the option of legal immigration. Sixty-six illegal immigration sailings were organized during these years, but only a few managed to penetrate the British blockade and bring their passengers ashore. In 1947, 4500 immigrants on the Exodus were sent back to Europe by the Mandatory government. The British stopped the vessels carrying immigrants at sea, and interned the captured immigrants in camps in Cyprus; most of these persons only arrived in Israel after the establishment of the state. Approximately 80,000 illegal immigrants reached Palestine during 1945-48.

The number of immigrants during the entire Mandate period, legal and illegal alike, was approximately 480,000, close to 90% of them from Europe. The population of the yishuv expanded to 650,000 by the time statehood was proclaimed.

Source: Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/History/Modern+History/Centenary+of+Zionism/Aliya+and+Absorption.htm>

Jewish Immigration to Eretz Yisrael (key)

Aliya	When?	Who? From where?	How many?	Population in Eretz Yisrael at the end of the Aliya
-	1881	Jews already living in Eretz Yisrael	-	10,000
1	1882-1903	Russians fleeing pogroms	35,000	45,000
2	1904-1914	Russians and Poles	40,000	85,000
3	1919-1923	Socialists from Russia, Poland, and Galicia	40,000	125,000
4	1924-1928	Polish Middle Class	80,000	205,000
5	1929-1939	Jews fleeing Nazi Germany, Poland, and Austria, incl. 50,000 children (the Youth Aliyah)	250,000	455,000
Bet	1933-1948			600,000
	1948-			