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978-0-521-19378-8 - The Rise of the Israeli Right: From Odessa to Hebron

Colin Shindler

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The Rise of the Israeli Right

The Israeli Right first came to power nearly four decades ago. Its election was described then as ‘an earthquake’, and its reverberations are still with us. How then did the Right rise to power? What are its origins? Colin Shindler traces this development from the birth of Zionism in cosmopolitan Odessa in the nineteenth century to today’s Hebron, a centre of radical Jewish nationalism. He looks at central figures such as Vladimir Jabotinsky, an intellectual and founder of the Revisionist movement, and Menahem Begin, the single-minded politician who brought the Right to power in 1977. Both accessible and comprehensive, this book explains the political ideas and philosophies that were the Right’s ideological bedrock, as well as the compromises that were made on its journey to government.

Colin Shindler is Emeritus Professor at the University of London’s School of Oriental and African Studies and the founding chairman of the European Association of Israel Studies. He is the author of eight books on Israel, including the best-selling *History of Modern Israel* (Cambridge University Press, 2008, 2013), which has been translated into Italian, Polish and Estonian.

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*In memory of
Derek Pollock
(1919–2014)*

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32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521151665

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First published 2015

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Shindler, Colin, 1946– author.

The rise of the Israeli right : from Odessa to Hebron / Colin Shindler.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-19378-8 (hardback)

1. Revisionist Zionism – History – 20th century. 2. Jabotinsky, Vladimir, 1880–1940. 3. Jews – Palestine – Politics and government – 20th century.
 4. Jews – Israel – Politics and government – 20th century. 5. Israel – Politics and government – 20th century. I. Title.

DS150.R555 2015

956.94'04-dc23 2015008288

ISBN 978-0-521-19378-8 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-15166-5 Paperback

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Acknowledgements

This book is intended for interested readers – for those who are perplexed by the rise of the Israeli Right to a dominant position in political life and wish to make sense of it.

It would be easy, of course, to write a polemic which is coloured either by a blameless romanticism or alternatively by an all-pervading criticism. Hopefully I have not done this. The struggle of any historian is to separate the striving for objectivity from personal views, no matter how strongly held.

This book builds on my previous works about the Israeli Right. Since the researching and writing of *Israel, Likud and the Zionist Dream* (1995) and *The Triumph of Military Zionism* (2006), there has been a renewed interest in the Israeli Right, particularly in the figure of Vladimir Jabotinsky. Many younger writers have uncovered new perspectives on his ideas and actions and are effectively reclaiming him from those in the political arena who wish to use him merely to meet the political exigencies of the day.

Indeed, Jabotinsky's writings were quoted by many who were opposed to Netanyahu's controversial intention to develop the 'Israel as a Jewish State' bill as an addition to the Basic Law in late 2014. It seems that the gap between intelligent historical analysis and reductionist political expediency is becoming more visible.

The rounded figure of Jabotinsky that comes down to us as a fin-de-siècle writer and activist is in no small measure due to Leonid Katsis in Moscow, who has published several volumes of Jabotinsky's writings in Russian – and in particular from his pre-Zionist period.

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I have drawn upon this and also on Jabotinsky's early contributions to the Italian and Russian press. Moreover, I have attempted to utilise unpublished articles in order not to simply repeat what I and other writers have written in the past. There is always the illusion and the delusion that you know everything about a specific historical character. This is always superseded by the joy and anguish on reading new research and the realisation that in fact you know little about your subject of choice. So my hope is that this book should not be the last word but merely a stepping-stone.

The works of colleagues in Israel, Arye Naor and Yehiam Weitz, have certainly aided my understanding of the life and times of Menahem Begin – particularly during his sojourn in the political wilderness between 1949 and 1977. The book hopefully underlines Begin's shrewd climb to power and the fine balance that he maintained between ideology and ambition.

I am in the debt of several people who have helped me in a variety of tasks. I should like to thank Haya Lewi, Ned Temko, Shmuel Salinger, Naomi Yalin, Yossi Ahimeir, Peter Bergamin, Avi Shilon, Yoram Shamir, Yossi Kister, Becky Kook, Barry Davis and Howard Spier.

I would also like to thank Amira Stern at the Jabotinsky Institute, Anat Banin at the Central Zionist Archives, Assaf Gamzou and Hila Zahavi of the Israel Cartoon Museum and Ori Rub of the Menahem Begin Heritage Center – all in Israel. The staff of the Dorot Division of the New York Public Library were always – as usual – extremely helpful. In London I was always astonished to find unusual works when accessing the tremendous collection of Hebraica which has been put together by Shmuel Salinger over many years at my own institute, the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Shmuel Salinger further helped me to maintain a consistency in transliterating Hebrew titles into English, utilising the Library of Congress system.

I would also like to thank Will Hammell and Kate Gavino of Cambridge University Press for their guidance and expertise.

This book is dedicated to the memory of my late father-in-law, Derek Pollock, who passed away in April 2014. He was a self-educated man who read widely and came of political age during service in the British army in the Middle East in the 1940s. He therefore lived through most of the events described in this book. He read everything that I wrote and was not shy in criticising some of it. It is a pity that he is not with us in order to read this book. Moreover, he understood my odyssey in life.

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I thank him for the years of informal chat and unexpected insights, his generosity of spirit, inspiration and interest.

My wife, Jean, has once again put up with the solitude of research and writing. Her love and support are always central to everything I do.

I have tried to use a transliteration of other languages which is consistent. However, where familiarity occasionally trumps convention, I have utilised the former. Of course, any errors of fact and interpretation are entirely my own.

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Glossaries

POLITICAL PARTIES AND GROUPS

Agudat Yisrael	ultra-orthodox party, founded in 1912 to oppose the Zionist movement
Ahdut Ha'avodah	socialist Zionist party, founded in 1919 by Ben-Gurion and Tabenkin
Amlanim	opposition group within Hapoel Hatzair in Palestine in the 1920s
Berit Ha-Biryonim	nationalist group in Palestine led by Abba Ahimeir in the early 1930s
Berit Shalom	Jewish-Arab reconciliation group in Palestine in the 1920s
Betar	nationalist Zionist youth group, founded by Jabotinsky in Riga in 1923
Biluim	settlers of the first Zionist immigration to Palestine in 1882
Bnei Akiva	mainstream religious Zionist youth movement which embraced the Right after 1967
Degel ha-Torah	established through split in Agudat Yisrael by Eliezer Schach in 1988
Democratic Movement for Change	established in 1977 as centre party by Yigael Yadin
Free Centre	established in 1967 through a split in Herut
Gahal	established through an alignment between Herut and the Liberals in 1965
Gahelet	religious youth group which propounded redemptionist Zionism

General Zionists	promoted the views of small businessmen and private enterprise
Gesher	political group formed by David Levy for the 1996 election
HaBayit Hayehudi	religious Zionist party established by a merger of the National Religion Party (NRP) and the Far Right in 2008
Hadash	left-wing alliance of Jews and Arabs established in 1977
Haganah	the defence arm of the Yishuv and forerunner of the Israel Defence Forces
Hapoel Hatzair	non-Marxist, Tolstoyan pioneering party, established in 1906
Hashomer Hatzair	dovish pioneering Marxist Zionist group, established in 1913
Hebrew Committee for National Liberation	established in the United States by Hillel Kook in 1944
Herut	the Irgun as a political movement, established by Begin in 1948
Histadrut	General Federation of Workers in the Land of Israel, established in 1920
Im Tirzu	nationalist extra-parliamentary group established in 2006
Irgun Zvai Leumi	nationalist military group, led by Menahem Begin from 1943
Kach	Meir Kahane's Far Right party banned from participating in Knesset elections
Kadima	Centre-Right party established by Sharon in November 2005
La'am	Likud component, composed of former Labour party and Free Centre members
Labour	established in 1968 from Mapai, Ahdut Ha'avodah and Rafi
Land of Israel Movement	established after the Six-Day War to retain conquered territories
Lehi	Fighters for the Freedom of Israel, established by Avraham Stern in 1940
Liberals	formerly the General Zionists, established in 1961
Likud	the main right-wing Israeli party, established by Sharon and Begin in 1973
Ma'arakh	alignment established by Labour and Mapam in 1969

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Maki	Eurocommunist section of the Communist party, led by Moshe Sneh after 1965
Mapai	leading labour Zionist party, 1930–1968, during the state-building years
Mapam	Marxist Zionist party, founded in 1948, second-largest party in first Knesset
Matzpen	anti-Zionist split from the Israeli Communist party, close to European New Left
Maximalists	radical right wing of the Revisionist party in the 1930s
Meimad	dovish religious Zionist group formed for the 1999 election
Meretz	leftist Zionist party established in 1992 by Ratz, Mapam and Shinui
Mizrahi	first religious Zionist party, established in 1902
Moked	Far Left group established for the 1973 election
Moledet	transfer party of the Far Right, established by Rehavam Ze'evi in 1988
National Union	coalition of Far Right parties formed for the 1999 election
Palmah	elite fighting force, allied to Ahdut Ha'avodah, led by Yigal Allon in the 1940s
Poalei Agudat Yisrael	pioneering ultra-orthodox party, established in 1922
Poale Zion	main socialist Zionist party in Palestine, founded by Jewish workers in 1906
Progressives	founded in 1948 by German immigrants and liberal General Zionists
Rafi	established in 1965 after a split from Mapai, led by Ben-Gurion, Dayan and Peres
Rakah	pro-Soviet wing of Communist party, after a split in 1965
Ratz	civil rights and peace party, led by Shulamit Aloni in the 1980s
Redemptionist Zionists	religious Zionist settlers who followed Zvi Yehudah Kook
Revisionist Zionism	founded by Jabotinsky in 1925 to return to Herzlian Zionism
Shas	Sephardi ultra-orthodox party established by Ovadiah Yosef in 1984
Sheli	dovish party, established in 1977 from Moked
Shlomzion	short-lived party formed by Ariel Sharon for the 1977 election

Siah	Israeli New Left, established following the 1967 war
State List	Rafi faction that did not join Labour party in 1968, led by Ben-Gurion
Tami	Mizrahi breakaway from the NRP, established in 1981
Tehiyah	Far Right party, established in 1979 in opposition to Camp David agreement
Tekumah	Far Right group formed in the late 1990s, component of the National Union
Telem	party formed to support Moshe Dayan in the 1981 election
Tserei Tsion	non-Marxist pioneering Zionist group in Tsarist Russia
Tsomet	Far Right party with Labour roots, established in 1983 through a split in Tehiyah
United Torah Judaism	main ultra-orthodox party established in 1992
Yesh Atid	centrist party established by Yair Lapid for the 2013 election
Yishuv	Jewish settlement in Palestine before 1948
Yisrael Beiteinu	party of the Far Right and Russians, established by Avigdor Lieberman for the 1999 election

GENERAL GLOSSARY

<i>Al Hamishmar</i>	Mapam's daily newspaper
aliyah	Jewish immigration to Israel from the Diaspora
aliyah bet	illegal immigration to Palestine (1934–1948) during the British Mandate
Altalena	Irgun arms ship, shelled and sunk on Ben-Gurion's orders in 1948
Ashkenazim	Jews generally originating from Eastern Europe
Balfour Declaration	British declaration in 1917 promising a Jewish national home in Palestine
Bar Kokhba rebellion	uprising in Judea against Roman rule, 132–135
Canaanism	endorsing the evolution of a Hebrew nation rather than a Jewish one
<i>Davar</i>	the Histadrut's Hebrew daily newspaper
Deir Yassin	village in which many Arab civilians were killed in an Irgun and Lehi attack

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<i>Doar Hayom</i>	Revisionist daily newspaper in the 1920s
Fatah	leading Palestinian Arab nationalist organization, founded by Arafat
Futurism	intellectual and cultural movement in Italy and Russia
Green Line	1949 armistice boundary between Israel and the West Bank
Gush Etzion	Jewish settlements in pre-state era, now in West Bank
<i>Ha'aretz</i>	leading liberal Israeli daily newspaper
Halakhah	Jewish religious law
Hamas	leading Palestinian Islamist organization founded in 1988
<i>Hamashkif</i>	Revisionist daily newspaper, 1938–1949
<i>Haolam Hazeh</i>	investigative, irreverent journal, edited by Uri Avneri
Hapoel Hamizrahi	pioneering religious Zionist party
Haskalah	Jewish Enlightenment
havlagah	military self-restraint in responding to Arab attacks
<i>Hayarden</i>	Revisionist periodical in Palestine in the 1930s
<i>Haynt</i>	leading Yiddish newspaper in Poland before 1939
<i>Hazit Ha'am</i>	newspaper established by the Maximalist Revisionists in 1932
<i>Ma'ariv</i>	Israeli daily newspaper
<i>Metzudah</i>	journal established by members of the Irgun in 1932
<i>Moment</i>	Warsaw Yiddish daily newspaper, 1910–1939
Shoah	the Nazi Holocaust, 1939–1945
<i>Unzer Welt</i>	Warsaw Yiddish journal of the New Zionist Organisation, 1935–1939
Wissenschaft des Judentums	the Science of Judaism
<i>Yediot Aharanot</i>	Israeli daily newspaper
yeshivah	men's religious seminary

NAME GLOSSARY

Abba Ahimeir (1898–1962)	intellectual mentor of the Zionist Maximalists
Yigal Allon (1918–1980)	founder and commander of the Palmah and foreign minister

Shulamit Aloni (1928–2014)	leader of Meretz and minister of education
Natan Alterman (1910–1970)	Hebrew poet and translator
Arieh Altman (1902–1982)	head of Revisionist movement after 1945 and Herut member of Knesset
Moshe Arens (1925–)	Likud leader, foreign minister and defence minister
Haim Arlosoroff (1899–1933)	Hapoel Hatzair activist and Mapai leader, assassinated in 1933
Yohanan Bader (1901–1994)	Herut ideologist, editor and member of Knesset
Ehud Barak (1942–)	military leader, minister of defence and prime minister of Israel, 1999–2001
Menahem Begin (1913–1992)	prime minister of Israel, 1977–1983
Yossi Beilin (1948–)	architect of the Oslo Accord, 1993 and leader of Meretz
David Ben-Gurion (1886–1973)	founding father of Israel; first prime minister of Israel, 1949–1954; 1955–1963
Naftali Bennett (1972–)	Israeli entrepreneur and leader of HaBayit Hayehudi
Norman Bentwich (1883–1971)	English Zionist and attorney general in Mandatory Palestine
Shlomo Ben-Yosef (1913–1938)	Betar member hanged by the British
Yitzhak Ben-Zvi (1884–1963)	labour Zionist leader and second president of Israel, 1952–1963
Folke Bernadotte (1895–1948)	UN Middle East mediator, assassinated by Lehi
Haim Nahman Bialik (1873–1934)	Hebrew national poet
Yosef Haim Brenner (1881–1921)	Hebrew writer, killed in 1921 disturbances
Yosef Burg (1909–1999)	NRP leader and Israeli minister
Richard Crossman (1907–1974)	British minister, 1964–1970, and editor of <i>New Statesman</i>
Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863–1938)	writer, poet and Italian nationalist
Moshe Dayan (1915–1981)	Israeli Defence Forces chief of staff; minister of defence and of foreign affairs

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Abba Eban (1915–2002)	Labour leader, writer, diplomat and minister of foreign affairs
Rafael Eitan (1929–2004)	Israeli Defence Forces chief of staff and founder of Tsomet
Levi Eshkol (1895–1969)	Mapai politician and prime minister of Israel, 1963–1969
Israel Galili (1911–1986)	Haganah chief of staff and Ahdut Ha'avodah politician
Nahum Goldmann (1895–1982)	leading Diaspora Zionist diplomat with dovish views
Eliahu Golomb (1893–1945)	Haganah founder and labour Zionist
A. D. Gordon (1856–1922)	Zionist pioneer and Tolstoyan mentor of labour Zionism
Yehudah Leib Gordon (1831–1892)	Hebrew poet and writer
Shlomo Goren (1917–1994)	Ashkenazi chief rabbi and leading religious Zionist
Maxim Gorky (1868–1936)	progressive Russian writer
Uri Zvi Greenberg (1894–1981)	Zionist Maximalist and Hebrew poet
Meir Grossman (1888–1964)	leading Revisionist, editor and journalist
Ahad Ha'am (1856–1927)	Zionist intellectual and writer
Theodor Herzl (1860–1904)	father of the modern Zionist movement
Chaim Herzog (1917–1998)	lawyer, writer, diplomat, president of Israel, 1983–1993
Moses Hess (1812–1875)	socialist theoretician and early progenitor of socialist Zionism
Vladimir Jabotinsky (1880–1940)	liberal nationalist, Revisionist Zionist and head of Betar
Meir Kahane (1932–1990)	Far Right politician and founder of Jewish Defence League
Zvi Hirsch Kalischer (1795–1874)	early progenitor of religious Zionism
Rudolf Kastner (1906–1957)	subject of controversial trial, assassinated by Far Right
Karl Kautsky (1854–1938)	leading Marxist thinker who opposed October Revolution

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Teddy Kollek (1911–2007)	Mapai politician and mayor of Jerusalem, 1965–1993
Avraham Yitzhak Kook (1865–1935)	first Ashkenazi chief rabbi in Mandatory Palestine
Hillel Kook (1915–2001)	Revisionist thinker and leader of the Bergson group in the United States
Zvi Yehudah Kook (1891–1982)	spiritual mentor of Gush Emunim and religious settlers
Vladimir Korolenko (1853–1921)	leading Russian writer and journalist
Antonio Labriola (1843–1904)	leading Italian Marxist thinker
Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–1864)	founding father of German Socialism
David Levy (1937–)	Likud Mizrahi politician and Israeli minister
Avigdor Lieberman (1957–)	founder of Yisrael Beiteinu and foreign affairs minister
Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919)	Polish-German revolutionary and Marxist thinker
Judah Magnes (1877–1948)	chancellor of Hebrew University and binational state advocate
Julius Martov (1873–1923)	leading Menshevik who opposed the October Revolution
Golda Meir (1898–1980)	Mapai politician and prime minister of Israel, 1969–1974
Robert Michels (1876–1936)	German political thinker
Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855)	Polish national poet and fighter for Polish independence
Binyamin Netanyahu (1949–)	prime minister of Israel, 1996–1999, 2009–
Max Nordau (1849–1923)	founder of the modern Zionist movement, writer and philosopher
Ehud Olmert (1945–)	founder of the Free Centre, prime minister of Israel, 2006–2009
Amihai ‘Gidi’ Paglin (1922–1978)	chief operations officer of the Irgun after 1946
Józef Pilsudski (1867–1935)	founder of the modern Polish state in 1918
Leon Pinsker (1821–1891)	Zionist leader, writer and publicist
Aharon Propes (1904–1978)	founder and first member of Betar

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Yitzhak Rabin (1922–1995)	prime minister of Israel, 1974–1977, 1992–1995
Yonatan Ratosh (1908–1981)	Revisionist, Canaanite, poet and writer
David Razieli (1910–1941)	head of the Irgun, 1937–1940
Duc de Richelieu (1766–1822)	first governor of Odessa and prime minister of France
Herbert Samuel (1870–1963)	first British high commissioner of Palestine
Pinhas Sapir (1906–1975)	Labour politician and leading economist
Eliezer Menahem Schach (1898/9?–2001)	spiritual mentor of Degel ha-Torah
Menahem Mendel Schneersohn (1902–1994)	<i>rebbe</i> of Lubavitcher Hassidim
Mendele Mocher Sefarim (1836–1917)	Yiddish and Hebrew writer and editor
Yitzhak Shamir (1915–2012)	Lehi leader and prime minister of Israel, 1983–1984, 1986–1992
Moshe Sharett (1894–1965)	minister of foreign affairs and prime minister of Israel, 1954–1955
Ariel Sharon (1925–2014)	military leader and prime minister of Israel, 2001–2006
Nahum Sokolov (1859–1936)	writer, journalist, editor and Zionist leader
Georges Sorel (1847–1922)	political thinker and writer on revolutionary syndicalism
Oswald Spengler (1880–1936)	political philosopher on the structure of history
Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677)	Dutch philosopher and exponent of biblical criticism
Avraham Stern (1907–1942)	poet and theoretician of Lehi
Yitzhak Tabenkin (1887–1971)	maximalist labour Zionist and kibbutz movement ideologue
Shmuel Tamir (1923–1987)	lawyer, politician and Israeli minister
Yosef Trumpeldor (1880–1920)	military figure and founder of the Zion Mule Corps

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Glossaries

Wolfgang von Weisl (1896–1974)	journalist, writer and early Revisionist
Chaim Weizmann (1874–1952)	founding father and first president of Israel, 1949–1952
Ezer Weizmann (1924–2005)	minister of defence and president of Israel, 1993–2000
Yigael Yadin (1917–1984)	archaeologist, military leader, politician and minister
Yehoshua Hirsh Yeivin (1891–1970)	writer, journalist and Maximalist Revisionist
Natan Yellin-Mor (1913–1980)	editor, Maximalist Revisionist, founder of Lehi
Ovadiah Yosef (1920–2013)	Talmudic scholar, founder and spiritual mentor of Shas
Rehavam Ze'evi (1926–2001)	military figure, minister and founder of Moledet

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Chronology

- 1791 The Pale of Settlement established by Catherine the Great
- 1794 Odessa founded
- 1799 Napoleon invades Palestine from Egypt
- 1860 Theodor Herzl is born in Budapest
- 1881 Pogroms in Russia following the assassination of the Tsar
- 1882 *Autoemancipation* by Leon Pinsker is published
- 1882 The emigration of the 'Biluim' from Russia to Palestine
- 1896 *The Jewish State* by Theodor Herzl is published
- 1897 First Zionist Congress takes place in Basel
- 1903 Jabotinsky becomes a Zionist after the Sixth Zionist Congress
- 1905 First Russian Revolution
- 1905 Ben-Gurion and Ben-Zvi establish Poale Zion in Palestine
- 1909 The first collective settlement established in Palestine
- 1915 Jabotinsky and Trumpeldor establish the Zion Mule Corps
- 1917 Formation of the Jewish Legion
- 1917 The Balfour Declaration promises a national home for the Jews in Palestine
- 1921 TransJordan, the eastern part of Mandatory Palestine, promised to Abdullah
- 1923 Betar formed in Riga
- 1923 Jabotinsky's article 'The Iron Wall' is published
- 1925 Jabotinsky establishes the Union of Revisionist Zionists
- 1928 Ahimeir, Greenberg and Yeivin join the Revisionists
- 1929 The killing of Jews in Hebron
- 1930 Mapai, the labour Zionist party, formed
- 1930 The Shaw Commission and the Passfield White Paper on the disturbances
- 1931 First activities of Berit Ha-Biryonim

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Chronology

- 1931 Irgun Zvai Leumi formed
- 1933 Murder of Haim Arlosoroff
- 1933 Revisionist movement splits at Katowice conference
- 1935 Establishment of the New Zionist Organisation
- 1936 The Arab Revolt breaks out in Palestine
- 1937 Peel Commission advocates a two-state solution
- 1938 Shlomo Ben-Yosef hanged by the British
- 1938 Third World Conference of Betar in Warsaw
- 1938 David Raziel orders Irgun attacks on Arab targets on Black Sunday
- 1940 Jabotinsky dies in New York
- 1940 The Irgun splits over allying itself with Britain to fight Nazi Germany
- 1940 Avraham Stern establishes the Irgun B'Yisrael, later Lehi
- 1942 The systematic mass extermination of Jews commences in occupied Europe
- 1942 Avraham Stern killed
- 1942 Menahem Begin arrives in Palestine
- 1943 Yellin-Mor, Shamir and Eldad take over the leadership of Lehi
- 1944 Menahem Begin, commander of the Irgun Zvai Leumi, proclaims the Revolt
- 1945 Liberation of the concentration camps – 6 million Jews exterminated
- 1947 Partition of Western Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state
- 1948 The State of Israel proclaimed by the Jews during the War of Independence
- 1948 Menahem Begin transforms the Irgun into a political movement, Herut
- 1949 Mapai wins the first Israeli elections
- 1956 Suez campaign in collusion with Britain and France ends in a military victory over Nasser
- 1965 Ben-Gurion breaks away from Mapai to form Rafi
- 1965 Herut and the Liberals form Gahal under Menahem Begin
- 1967 A national unity government established which includes Menahem Begin
- 1967 Israel's victory over Egypt, Jordan and Syria in the Six-Day War
- 1968 The beginning of Jewish settlements on the West Bank
- 1968 The formation of the Israeli Labour party
- 1973 Gahal and remnants of the Labour party form Likud under Begin
- 1973 Yom Kippur War ends in a muted victory for Israel at the cost of thousands of lives

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- 1974 The establishment of Gush Emunim, the religious settlers group
- 1974 Yitzhak Rabin becomes prime minister for the first time
- 1977 Menahem Begin elected prime minister
- 1977 Anwar Sadat visits Jerusalem and speaks to the Knesset
- 1979 Begin and Sadat sign the Camp David Accord
- 1980 Basic Law proclaims Jerusalem the capital of Israel
- 1981 Golan Heights annexed by Israel
- 1981 Israel bombs the Osirak nuclear reactor in Iraq
- 1982 The Sinai settlement of Yamit evacuated and destroyed
- 1982 Sharon's invasion of Lebanon brings out 400,000 demonstrators for Peace Now
- 1984 Labour's Peres and Likud's Shamir form a rotational government
- 1987 The First Intifada breaks out
- 1988 Hamas emerges from the Muslim Brotherhood
- 1988 Hussein separates the West Bank from Jordan
- 1988 Yitzhak Shamir wins the election for the Likud
- 1990 Several Far Right parties enter government
- 1991 Iraqi missiles hit Tel Aviv during the first Gulf War
- 1992 Yitzhak Rabin elected prime minister
- 1993 Rabin and Arafat sign the Oslo Accord in Washington
- 1994 Hamas's first spate of suicide bombings
- 1995 Yitzhak Rabin assassinated by an opponent of the peace process after a peace rally
- 1996 Peres loses the election to Likud's Netanyahu
- 1997 Netanyahu and Arafat sign an agreement on Hebron
- 1998 Clinton oversees the Wye Plantation agreement between Israel and the Palestinians
- 2000 The breakdown of the Camp David negotiations and the outbreak of al-Aqsa Intifada
- 2001 Ariel Sharon defeats Ehud Barak and becomes prime minister at seventy-two
- 2002 Bush's Rose Garden speech
- 2003 Sharon advocates disengagement from part of the territories
- 2004 President Bush's letter recognizes Israel's right to annex some settlements
- 2005 Mahmoud Abbas elected president of the Palestinian Authority after Arafat's death
- 2005 The Gaza settlements evacuated without violence
- 2005 Likud and Labour split and realign to form the Kadima party under Sharon
- 2006 Hamas defeats Fatah in elections for the Legislative Council

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- 2006 Ehud Olmert, head of Kadima, following Sharon's stroke, wins the election
- 2006 Hezbollah fights Israel in Lebanon in a thirty-four-day war
- 2007 Conflict between Hamas and Fatah ends in the takeover of Gaza by Hamas
- 2009 Israel initiates Operation Cast Lead against Gaza
- 2009 Netanyahu becomes prime minister for the second time
- 2011 Hamas and Fatah sign reconciliation agreement in the light of the Arab Spring
- 2011 The Muslim Brotherhood emerges victorious in Egyptian elections
- 2012 Magnetic car bomb kills senior official at Iranian nuclear plant
- 2012 Israel's population increases to 7,836,000 citizens
- 2013 Muslim Brotherhood government in Egypt overthrown by army
- 2013 Netanyahu becomes prime minister for the third time
- 2014 Israel initiates Operation Protective Edge against Hamas
- 2015 Jewish victims of Islamist attack in Paris buried in Jerusalem
- 2015 Likud wins the election with an increased representation
- 2015 Netanyahu becomes prime minister for the fourth time