Colin Shindler’s remarkable history begins in 1948, as waves of immigrants arrived in Israel from war-torn Europe to establish new cities, new institutions and a new culture founded on the Hebrew language. Optimistic beginnings were soon replaced with the sobering reality of wars with Arab neighbours, internal ideological differences and an ongoing confrontation with the Palestinians. The author paints a broad canvas that affords unusual insights into Israel’s multicultural society, forged from more than 100 different Jewish communities and united by a common history. In this updated edition, Shindler covers the significant developments of the last decade, including the rise of the Israeli far Right, Hamas’s takeover and the political rivalry between Gaza and the West Bank, Israel’s uneasy dealings with the new administration in the United States, political Islam, the expansion of the Jewish settlements on the West Bank and the potential impact of the Arab Spring on the region as a whole. This sympathetic yet candid portrayal asks how a nation that emerged out of the ashes of the Holocaust and was the admiration of the world is now perceived by many Western governments in a less than benevolent light.

Colin Shindler is Emeritus Professor and Pears Senior Research Fellow at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He is also founding chairman of the European Association of Israel Studies.
In Memory of

Rachel Shindler (1905–96)
and
A HISTORY OF MODERN ISRAEL

Second Edition

COLIN SHINDLER
School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
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Acknowledgements

To write a history of Israel always poses the question of what to leave in and what to leave out. Telescoping momentous events is never straightforward, but I hope that by following a pathway based on the ideologies of the main actors in this drama, I have given a shape to this history.

Several libraries and archives assisted me in my deliberations. In particular, I should like to thank the staff of the Jabotinsky archives, the Beit Berl archives of the Labour movement, the Yad Tabenkin archives, the Central Zionist archives, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee archives (Jerusalem) and the Israeli State archives – all in Israel. In addition, the British Library and the British Newspaper Library in London and the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library were enormously helpful. I must also say a ‘thank you’ to Peter ‘Shmuel’ Salinger, the Hebraica librarian at SOAS, University of London, for his guidance and friendship over many years.

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My family bore the brunt of my anxiety and determination to meet the deadline so that the first edition of the book could appear in 2008, the
Acknowledgements

60th anniversary of the establishment of the state of Israel. It seems that I lived in my office for most of 2006. My wife, Jean, put up with my hermit-like existence and her perceptive nature gave me the time and space to complete this endeavour. Without her support and advice, this book, like all my other works, would not have been possible.

As in my previous books, I have used a normal transliteration system with notable exceptions where familiarity has superseded convention. Any errors of fact or interpretation are mine alone.
### Glossaries

#### Political Parties and Groups

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<th>Description</th>
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<td>Achdut Ha’avodah</td>
<td>socialist Zionist party, founded in 1919, by Ben-Gurion and Tabenkin</td>
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<td>Agudat Yisrael</td>
<td>ultra-orthodox party, founded in 1912 to oppose the Zionist movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alignment</td>
<td>established by Labour and Mapam in 1969</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balad</td>
<td>Israeli Arab nationalist party, advocating Israel as a state for all its citizens, founded by Azmi Bishara in 1995</td>
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<tr>
<td>Betar</td>
<td>nationalist Zionist youth group, founded by Jabotinsky in Riga in 1923</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biluim</td>
<td>the settlers of the first Zionist immigration to Palestine in 1882</td>
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<td>Brit Shalom</td>
<td>early peace group in the 1920s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degel Ha’Torah</td>
<td>established by Eliezer Schach through the split in Agudat Yisrael in 1988</td>
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<td>Democratic Movement for Change</td>
<td>established in 1977 as a centre party by Yigal Yadin</td>
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<td>Free Centre</td>
<td>established in 1967 through a split in Herut</td>
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<td>Gahal</td>
<td>established through an alignment between Herut and the Liberals in 1965</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gahelet</td>
<td>religious youth group which propounded redemptionist Zionism</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Zionists</td>
<td>promoted the views of small businessmen and private enterprise, established 1929</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hadash</td>
<td>Jewish-Arab party, emerging from the pro-Moscow wing of the Israeli Communist party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haganah</td>
<td>the defence arm of the Yishuv and forerunner of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF)</td>
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<td>Hapoel Hamizrachi</td>
<td>labour wing of religious Zionism and builder of religious kibbutzim, established 1922</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hapoel Hatzair</td>
<td>non-Marxist, Tolstoyan pioneering party, established in 1906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hashomer Hatzair</td>
<td>dovish pioneering Marxist Zionist group, established in 1913</td>
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<td>Herut</td>
<td>the Irgun as a political movement, established by Begin in 1948</td>
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<td>Histadrut</td>
<td>General Federation of Workers in the Land of Israel, established in 1920</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irgun Zvai Leumi</td>
<td>nationalist military group, led by Begin from 1943</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kach</td>
<td>far Right party led by Meir Kahane, banned from participating in elections in 1986</td>
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<td>Kadima</td>
<td>centre-Right party established by Ariel Sharon in 2005 in a split from Likud</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>established in 1968 from Mapai, Achdut Ha’avodah and Rafi</td>
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<td>Left Poale Zion</td>
<td>pro-Communist party, merged with Achdut Ha’avodah in 1946</td>
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Glossaries

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
Maki  Euro-Communist split from the main Communist party (CP) in 1965, led by Moshe Sneh
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
Meretz  Left Zionist party established in 1992 by Ratz, Mapam and Shinui
Mizrachi  first religious Zionist party, established in 1902 to oppose secularized education
Moked  established in 1973 through the merger of Maki and the Blue–Red movement
Moledet  transfer party of the far Right, established by Rechavam Že’evi in 1988
National Religious party  founded in 1956, the main party of religious Zionism
National Union  far Right party, based on a coalition of four parties, established in 1999
Palmach  elite fighting force, allied to Achdut Ha’avodah, led by Yigal Allon in the 1940s
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<td>Poalei Agudat Yisrael</td>
<td>pioneering ultra-orthodox party, established 1922</td>
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<td>Poale Zion</td>
<td>early socialist Zionist party in Palestine, founded by Jewish workers in 1906</td>
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<tr>
<td>Progressives</td>
<td>founded in 1948 by German immigrants and liberal General Zionists</td>
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<td>Ra’am</td>
<td>Israeli Arab party, established in 1996 by the Arab Democratic party and the southern wing of the Islamic Movement in Israel</td>
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<td>Rafi</td>
<td>established in 1965 after split from Mapai, led by Ben-Gurion, Dayan and Peres</td>
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<td>Rakach</td>
<td>pro-Soviet wing of the CP, after the split in 1965</td>
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<td>Ratz</td>
<td>civil rights and peace party, led by Shulamit Aloni in the 1980s</td>
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<td>Redemptionist Zionists</td>
<td>religious Zionist settlers, who followed Zvi Yehuda Kook</td>
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<td>Revisionist party</td>
<td>founded by Jabotinsky in 1925 to return to Herzlian Zionism</td>
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<td>Shas</td>
<td>Sephardi ultra-orthodox party established by Ovadia Yosef in 1984</td>
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<td>Sheli</td>
<td>dovish party, established in 1977 from Moked</td>
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<td>Siach</td>
<td>Israeli New Left, established after the 1967 war</td>
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<td>State List</td>
<td>Rafi faction that did not join the Labour party in 1968, led by Ben-Gurion</td>
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<td>Ta’al</td>
<td>Israeli Arab party, founded by Ahmad Tibi in the 1990s</td>
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<td>Tami</td>
<td>Sephardi breakaway from the National Religious party (NRP), established in 1981</td>
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Techiyah far Right party, established in 1979 in opposition to the Camp David agreement

Tsomet far Right party with Labour roots, established in 1983 through a split in Techiyah

United Torah Judaism main ultra-orthodox party, established in 1992

Yisrael B’Aliyah Russian party, founded in 1996

Yisrael Beitanu far Right and Russian party, founded in 1999

**General Glossary**

aliyah Jewish immigration to Israel from the Diaspora

Aliyah Bet illegal immigration to Palestine (1934–1948) during the British Mandate

Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigade military group often associated with Fatah

Ashkenazim Jews generally originating from Eastern Europe

Balfour Declaration British declaration promising a Jewish national home in Palestine

Bar Kochba rebellion uprising in Judea against Roman rule, 132–135

Canaanism supporting the idea of an evolving Hebrew nation rather than a Jewish one

*Davar* the Histadrut’s Hebrew daily newspaper

Fatah leading Palestinian Arab nationalist organization, founded by Arafat

Fedayeen Palestinian Arab fighters during the 1950s

Fellahin Palestinian Arab peasants and farmers

Green Line 1949 armistice boundary between Israel and the West Bank
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Glossaries

Gush Etzion  
Jewish settlement bloc in the pre-state era, now in the West Bank

Halakhah  
Jewish religious law

Hamas  
leading Palestinian Islamist organization founded in 1988

Haskalah  
Jewish Enlightenment

Havlagah  
military self-restraint in responding to Arab attacks

Islamic Jihad  
Palestinian Islamist organization, originally influenced by the Iranian Revolution

kibbutz galuyot  
ingathering of the exiles

Maronites  
Lebanese Christians who practice the Eastern Catholic rites

Muslim Brotherhood  
leading Sunni Islamist organization founded by Hassan al-Banna

nigun  
humming tune associated with the chassidim

Phalangists  
members of the Lebanese nationalist party, the Phalange

Popular Resistance Committees  
Radical Palestinian Islamist military grouping

Al-Qassam Brigades  
Hamas's military wing

Al-Quds Brigades  
Islamic Jihad's armed wing

Salafists  
followers of a more literal interpretation of Islam, often associated with jihadism

Sephardim  
Jews generally originating from Spain and north Africa

Shechinah  
the Divine Presence

Shoah  
the Nazi Holocaust, 1939–1945

Shulchan Aruch  
the code of Jewish law by Joseph Caro

Talmud  
a compendium of rabbinical and scholarly opinions and teachings

Tefilin  
phylacteries

Wissenschaft des Judentums  
the Science of Judaism

Yeshiva  
men's religious seminary
Glossaries

NAME GLOSSARY

Mahmoud Abbas (1936–)
known as Abu Mazen, President of the Palestinian National Authority 2005–

Haidar Abd al-Shafi (1919–2007)
non-aligned Palestinian politician

Abba Achimeir (1898–1962)
intellectual mentor of the Zionist Maximalists

Jamal al-din al-Afghani (1838–1897)
intellectual mentor of nationalist pan-Islamism

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (1956–)
President of Iran 2005–

Musa al-Alami (1897–1984)
Palestinian activist during the Mandate period

Yigal Allon (1918–1980)
founder and commander of the Palmach, Foreign Minister 1974–1977

Shulamit Aloni (1928–)
leader of Meretz and the peace camp, Minister of Education 1992–1993

Natan Alterman (1910–1970)
Hebrew poet and translator

Yehuda Amichai (1924–2000)
Hebrew poet

Yasser Arafat (1929–2004)
PLO chairman, President, Palestinian National Authority

Moshe Arens (1925–)
Likud leader, Foreign Minister, Defence Minister

Chaim Arlosoroff (1899–1933)
Hapoel Hatzair activist, Mapai leader

Hanan Ashrawi (1946–)
Palestinian political activist
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<td>President of Syria (2000--)</td>
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<td>Meir Bar-Ilan (1880–1949)</td>
<td>leader of Mizrachi and the national religious camp</td>
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<td>Yossi Beilin (1948--)</td>
<td>architect of the Oslo Accords (1993); leader of the Meretz party</td>
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<td>David Ben-Gurion (1886–1973)</td>
<td>founding father of Israel; first Prime Minister (1949)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yitzhak Ben-Zvi (1884–1963)</td>
<td>Israel's second President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chaim Nachman Bialik (1873–1934)</td>
<td>Hebrew national poet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nathan Birnbaum (1864–1937)</td>
<td>originator of the term ‘Zionism’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dov Ber Borochov (1881–1917)</td>
<td>founder and theorist of Marxism–Zionism</td>
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<td>Yosef Chaim Brenner (1881–1921)</td>
<td>Hebrew writer and novelist</td>
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<td>Martin Buber (1878–1965)</td>
<td>Jewish philosopher and founder of Brit Shalom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yosef Burg (1909–1999)</td>
<td>leader of the National Religious party; Minister (1951–1986)</td>
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<td>Moshe Carmel (1911–2003)</td>
<td>commander of the northern front (1948, operation Hiram)</td>
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Rafael Eitan (1929–2004) IDF Chief of Staff 1978–1983, founder of Tsomet party
Liova Eliav (1921–2010) peace activist and Secretary-General of the Labour party under Golda Meir
Raccep Tayyip Erdogan (1954–) Prime Minister of Turkey 2003–
John Glubb (1897–1986) British commander of Transjordan’s Arab Legion 1939–1956
Nachum Goldmann (1895–1982) Zionist diplomat, founder of the World Jewish Congress
A. D. Gordon (1856–1922) Zionist pioneer, Tolstoyan mentor of Labour Zionism
Yehudah Leib Gordon (1831–1892) Hebrew poet and writer
Uri Zvi Greenberg (1894–1981) Zionist Maximalist, Hebrew poet
Ahad Ha’am (1856–1927) Zionist intellectual and writer
George Habash (1926–2008) radical Palestinian activist, founder of the PFLP
Ismail Haniyeh (1963–) Prime Minister of Gaza 2006–
Glossaries

Naif Hawatmeh (1935–) radical Palestinian activist, founder of the DFLP
Theodor Herzl (1860–1904) father of the modern Zionist movement
Moses Hess (1812–1875) socialist theoretician, early progenitor of Socialism Zionism
Faisal Husseini (1940–2001) Palestinian politician, Fatah representative in East Jerusalem
Abu Iyad (1933–1991) Palestinian leader, founder of Fatah
Vladimir Jabotinsky (1880–1940) Liberal nationalist, Revisionist Zionist, head of Betar
Zvi Hirsch Kalischer (1795–1874) early progenitor of religious Zionism
Chaim Kalvarisky (1868–1947) early peace campaigner
Shimon Bar Kokhba (?–135) leader of the Jewish revolt against the Romans 132–135
Avraham Yitzhak Kook (1864–1935) first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Palestine
Zvi Yehuda Kook (1891–1982) spiritual leader of Gush Emunim
Yitzhak Lamdan (1899–1954) Hebrew poet and editor
Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–1864) founding father of German socialism
Yitzhak Meir Levin (1894–1971) leader of Agudat Yisrael
David Levy (1937–) Israeli politician and Sephardi leader
Moses Leib Lilienblum (1843–1910) Hebrew writer, Zionist publicist and literary critic
Karl Lueger (1844–1910) Viennese politician, leader of the Christian Social party
Judah Magnes (1877–1948) founder and President of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem
Abraham Mapu (1808–1867) early Hebrew writer
Khalid Meshal (1956–) Hamas leader and chairman of its political bureau
Leo Motzkin (1867–1933) Zionist leader, colleague of Herzl and Weizmann
Imad Mughniyeh (1962–2008) Hezbollah leader
Benjamin Netanyahu (1949–) Prime Minister of Israel 1996–1999, 2009–
Max Nordau (1849–1923) founder, modern Zionist movement, writer and philosopher
Shimon Peres (1923–) Nobel Prize winner and President of Israel since 2007
Leon Pinsker (1821–1891) Zionist leader, writer and publicist
Solomon Rapoport (1790–1867) Haskalah scholar, rabbi and writer
Walter Rathenau (1867–1922) German Foreign Minister, industrialist and writer
Glossaries

Yonatan Ratosh (1908–1981) Hebrew writer and thinker, founder, Canaanite movement

David Raziel (1910–1941) leader of the Irgun
Yitzhak Reines (1839–1915) founder of the religious Zionist movement, first leader of Mizrachi

Mohammad Rashid Rida (1865–1935) progenitor of nationalist pan-Islamism

Edmond de Rothschild (1845–1934) supporter of early Jewish settlements

Arthur Ruppin (1876–1943) facilitator in acquiring land for Jewish settlement

Yitzhak Sadeh (1890–1952) founder and first commander of the Palmach

Herbert Samuel (1870–1963) first British High Commissioner of Palestine

Pinchas Sapir (1907–1975) Labour politician and Israeli Minister of Finance

Yossi Sarid (1940–) former leader of Meretz and leading peace campaigner

Eliezer Menachem Schach (1898?–2001) Talmudic scholar and founder of Degel HaTorah

Menachem Mendel Schneersohn (1902–1994) leader of the Lubavitcher chassidim

Mendele Mocher Sefarim (1835–1917) Hebrew and Yiddish writer

Chaim Moshe Shapira (1902–1970) Israeli politician and National Religious party (NRP) leader
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<th>Glossaries</th>
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<tr>
<td>Moshe Sharett (1894–1965)</td>
<td>Mapai politician, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister</td>
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<td>Ariel Sharon (1925–)</td>
<td>Prime Minister of Israel 2001–2006</td>
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<td>Menachem Sheinkin (1871–1924)</td>
<td>early Zionist leader</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avraham Shlonsky (1900–1973)</td>
<td>Hebrew poet, writer and translator</td>
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<td>Peretz Smolenskin (1842–1885)</td>
<td>Haskalah publicist, advocate of cultural nationalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moshe Sneh (1909–1972)</td>
<td>Zionist activist and Israeli left-wing politician</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hatam Sofer (Moses Schreiber) (1762–1839)</td>
<td>leader of ultra-orthodoxy and scholar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677)</td>
<td>Dutch philosopher, rationalist and exponent of Biblical criticism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avraham Stern (1907–1942)</td>
<td>poet, far Right ideologue and founder of Lehi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nachman Syrkin (1868–1924)</td>
<td>early leader of Socialism Zionism and ideologue</td>
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<td>Yitzhak Tabenkin (1887–1971)</td>
<td>founder, Labour Zionist and kibbutz movements</td>
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<td>Saul Tchernikovsky (1875–1943)</td>
<td>Hebrew poet</td>
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<td>Yosef Trumpeldor (1880–1920)</td>
<td>Zionist activist and founder of the Zion Mule Corps</td>
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<td>Menachem Ussishkin (1863–1941)</td>
<td>Zionist activist and head of the Jewish National Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zerach Warhaftig (1906–2002)</td>
<td>NRP leader and Israeli politician</td>
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