

## A HISTORY OF MODERN ISRAEL

*Second Edition*

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*  
*Goldie Pollock (1919–2003)*

# A HISTORY OF MODERN ISRAEL

*Second Edition*

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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.

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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

Achdut Ha'avodah	socialist Zionist party, founded in 1919, by Ben-Gurion and Tabenkin
Agudat Yisrael	ultra-orthodox party, founded in 1912 to oppose the Zionist movement
Alignment	established by Labour and Mapam in 1969
Balad	Israeli Arab nationalist party, advocating Israel as a state for all its citizens, founded by Azmi Bishara in 1995
Betar	nationalist Zionist youth group, founded by Jabotinsky in Riga in 1923
Biluim	the settlers of the first Zionist immigration to Palestine in 1882
Brit Shalom Degel Ha'Torah	early peace group in the 1920s established by Eliezer Schach through the split in Agudat Yisrael in 1988
Democratic Movement for Change	established in 1977 as a centre party by Yigal 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, established 1929
Hadash	Jewish-Arab party, emerging from the pro-Moscow wing of the Israeli Communist party
Haganah	the defence arm of the Yishuv and forerunner of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF)
Hapoel Hamizrachi	labour wing of religious Zionism and builder of religious kibbutzim, established 1922
Hapoel Hatzair	non-Marxist, Tolstoyan pioneering party, established in 1906
Hashomer Hatzair	dovish pioneering Marxist Zionist group, established in 1913
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
Irgun Zvai Leumi	nationalist military group, led by Begin from 1943
Kach	far Right party led by Meir Kahane, banned from participating in elections in 1986
Kadima	centre-Right party established by Ariel Sharon in 2005 in a split from Likud
Labour	established in 1968 from Mapai, Achdut Ha'avodah and Rafi
Left Poale Zion	pro-Communist party, merged with Achdut Ha'avodah in 1946

*Glossaries*

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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 Ze'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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*Glossaries*

Poalei Agudat Yisrael	pioneering ultra-orthodox party, established 1922
Poale Zion	early socialist Zionist party in Palestine, founded by Jewish workers in 1906
Progressives	founded in 1948 by German immigrants and liberal General Zionists
Ra'am	Israeli Arab party, established in 1996 by the Arab Democratic party and the southern wing of the Islamic Movement in Israel
Rafi	established in 1965 after split from Mapai, led by Ben-Gurion, Dayan and Peres
Rakach	pro-Soviet wing of the CP, after the split in 1965
Ratz	civil rights and peace party, led by Shulamit Aloni in the 1980s
Redemptionist Zionists	religious Zionist settlers, who followed Zvi Yehuda Kook
Revisionist party	founded by Jabotinsky in 1925 to return to Herzlian Zionism
Shas	Sephardi ultra-orthodox party established by Ovadia Yosef in 1984
Sheli	dovish party, established in 1977 from Moked
Siach	Israeli New Left, established after the 1967 war
State List	Rafi faction that did not join the Labour party in 1968, led by Ben-Gurion
Ta'al	Israeli Arab party, founded by Ahmad Tibi in the 1990s
Tami	Sephardi breakaway from the National Religious party (NRP), established in 1981



*Glossaries*

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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
<i>Davar</i>	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
Tephilin	phylacteries
Wissenschaft des Judentums	the Science of Judaism
Yeshiva	men's religious seminary

## 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

Bashar al-Assad (1965–)	President of Syria 2000–
Hafez al-Assad (1930–2000)	President of Syria 1971–2000
Meir Bar-Ilan (1880–1949)	leader of Mizrahi and the national religious camp
Menachem Begin (1913–1992)	Prime Minister of Israel 1977–1983
Yossi Beilin (1948–)	architect of the Oslo Accords 1993; leader of the Meretz party
David Ben-Gurion (1886–1973)	founding father of Israel; first Prime Minister 1949
Yitzhak Ben-Zvi (1884–1963)	Israel's second President
Chaim Nachman Bialik (1873–1934)	Hebrew national poet
Nathan Birnbaum (1864–1937)	originator of the term 'Zionism'
Dov Ber Borochoy (1881–1917)	founder and theorist of Marxism–Zionism
Yosef Chaim Brenner (1881–1921)	Hebrew writer and novelist
Martin Buber (1878–1965)	Jewish philosopher and founder of Brit Shalom
Yosef Burg (1909–1999)	leader of the National Religious party; Minister 1951–1986
Moshe Carmel (1911–2003)	commander of the northern front 1948, operation Hiram
Richard Crossman (1907–1974)	British Minister 1964–1970; editor, <i>New Statesman</i>
Moshe Dayan (1915–1981)	IDF Chief of Staff 1955–1958, follower of Ben-Gurion

*Glossaries*

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Abba Eban (1915–2002)	liberal politician, Foreign Minister 1966–1974
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
Racep Tayyip Erdogan (1954–)	Prime Minister of Turkey 2003–
Levi Eshkol (1895–1969)	Prime Minister of Israel 1963–1969
Israel Galili (1911–1986)	Achdut Ha'avodah leader, head of Haganah 1946–1948
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
Shlomo Goren (1917–1994)	leader of religious Zionism, Israeli Chief Rabbi 1973–1983
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–

Naif Hawatmeh (1935–)	radical Palestinian activist, founder of the DFLP
Theodor Herzl (1860–1904)	father of the modern Zionist movement
Chaim Herzog (1918–1997)	President of Israel 1983–1993
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
Abu Jihad (1935–1988)	Palestinian leader, founder of Fatah
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
Teddy Kollek (1911–2007)	Mayor of Jerusalem 1965–1993
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

*Glossaries*

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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
Golda Meir (1898–1978)	Prime Minister of Israel 1969–1974
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
Abbas Mussawi (1952–1992)	Secretary-General of Hezbollah 1991–1992
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
Yitzhak Rabin (1922–1995)	Prime Minister of Israel 1974–1977, 1992–1995
Solomon Rapoport (1790–1867)	Haskalah scholar, rabbi and writer
Walter Rathenau (1867–1922)	German Foreign Minister, industrialist and writer

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