



**IMPORTANT EVENTS
IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY**
מאורעות בהסטוריה של ישראל

EVENTS:

The first Zionist Congress – 1897

In 1897, Herzl assembled the first Zionist Congress in Basel. It was the first assembly of Jewish people from all over the Diaspora. Herzl was the keynote speaker in this assembly. It was in this first congress that the foundations of the world-wide Zionist Histadrut Federation were established; and in which the 'Basel Plan' that defined the objectives of Zionism was created. This first Zionist Congress consolidated all the Zionist groups operating at that period and generated a great interest among the Jewish public all over Europe. The formation of a Zionist Jewish organization that put forward an independent proposal for the establishment of a Jewish nation was an innovative idea that reverberated among many.

Balfour Declaration – 1917 – Britain supports the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz Israel:

- On this day, in the month of Cheshvan, Nov. 2, 1917, the British Government published the Balfour Declaration.
- Dr. Haim Weitzman was instrumental in bringing about this declaration; it received the approval of other countries.



A postcard designed at the Art Academy Betzalel honoring the Balfour Declaration.

The period before the foundation of the State of Israel:

The British Mandate ruled in Israel from 1917 until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

The White Book:

The White Book, published in 1939, by the British Government and supported by the British Mandate in Eretz Israel on May 17, 1939 was a compilation of directives (the third book of its kind) which placed many restrictions on the number of Jewish people allowed to immigrate to Israel and made it difficult for Jewish people to purchase lands.

4.

Illegal immigration to Israel (1934 – 1948):

During this period the British Mandate made it illegal to immigrate to Eretz Israel, and it continued to be so until Israel became a state. The British Government restricted the purchase of lands and immigration of Jewish people to Israel (as per the White Book). Only a very limited number of immigration permits were allocated by the British Government which, of course, was not enough for the large number of Jewish people who wanted to come to Israel and were suffering in Europe. Immigration to Israel was initiated by the HeHalutz movement and the Palmach, and after the war, was organized by settlement institutions (Yeshuv) and the Zionist movement, and continued despite the restrictions. British soldiers were on the lookout at Israel's shores for illegal immigrants, and were in pursuit of immigrants' boats. During that period, more than one hundred thousand people arrived in Israel illegally.

When a boat, arriving at Israel's shores, was captured by British soldiers, the various people involved in helping the new comers would try to fight them; or the boat people would be returned to where they came from or they would be sent to camps in Cyprus. Many people got sick and died due to the harsh conditions on the boats at that time.

Declaration of Independence – 5 Iyar, 5708, (May 14, 1948)

On Friday, 5 Iyar, 5708, (May 14, 1948), a few hours before the British flag was lowered from the buildings of the British government, marking the end of the Mandate, David Ben Gurion declared in Tel Aviv Museum the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz Israel called the State of Israel.

The entire nation was glued to their radios to listen to the news – it was the first broadcast of the Israeli radio station – Kol Israel. Immediately, after the announcement, thousands of people came out to the streets and started dancing, expressing their happiness on the birth of the new state.



The day after the declaration, the second stage of the war of independence started when five Arab nations – Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon - invaded Israel.

At the declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel, the “Scroll of Independence” was signed by representatives of the interim government.

The following picture is that of David Ben Gurion making the Declaration of Independence and the “Scroll of

Independence”.



Establishing the IDF

The initials ‘IDF’ stand for Israel’s Defence Forces. The IDF was established on the 24 Iyar, 5708 as the only army of the State of Israel. Serving in the army is based on mandatory service, permanent service and reserve duty. Mandatory service includes Jewish people, Druze and the Adyghe people. Permanent service is on a voluntary basis. The Bedouins and Christians can volunteer to serve in the army. The army is headed by the Chief of General Staff who is responsible through the Minister of Defence to the Israeli government.

Capturing the Western Wall during the Six-Day war The Six-Day war – 5727 – 1967

The Six-Day war was carried out in a few fronts against several armies: Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon; with the help of a number of other Arab countries such Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria. Although there was a large disproportion between the forces, the Israeli army won a glorious victory on the Egyptian, Jordanian and the Syrian armies in six days.



The outcome of this war changed the map of Israel: Eastern Jerusalem was liberated; the Golan Heights, Valley of Jordan, Judea and Samaria, Gaza Strip and Sinai were all transferred to the State of Israel.

- Since the War of Independence, (1948 – 1967) for 19 years Jerusalem was a divided city: the western side of the city was in the hands of Israel and its eastern side, including the old city, was controlled by Jordan. However, on the 28th day of Iyar, the Paratroopers Brigade captured East Jerusalem and within it the Western Wall; Jerusalem was liberated and the divided city was united.
- Leading up to the one year mark of the Six-Day war, the Knesset has declared the date: 28 Iyar as Jerusalem Day – a date to commemorate the re-unification of Jerusalem and the special historical connection that the people of Israel had with Jerusalem throughout the ages. Jerusalem day is celebrated every year since then.
- The following is a very famous picture of the capturing of Jerusalem by the paratroopers.



THE INK FLAG

The Ink Flag (=: דגל הדיג, *Degel HaDyo*) was a handmade [Israeli flag](#) raised during the [1948 Arab–Israeli War](#) to mark the capture of [Eilat](#).

On March 5, 1949, Israel launched [Operation Ovda](#), the last military maneuver of the war. On March 10, the [Israeli Defense Forces](#) reached the shores of the [Red Sea](#) at [Umm Rashrash](#) (=Eilat), west of [Aqaba](#) (the biblical Elath), and captured it without a battle. The [Negev Brigade](#) and [Golani Brigade](#) took part in the operation. A makeshift flag created from a white sheet inscribed with ink was raised by [Avraham Adan](#), company commander of the 8th Battalion of the Negev Brigade.

The improvised flag was made on the order of Negev Brigade commander Nahum Sarig, when it was discovered that the brigade did not have an [Israeli flag](#) on hand. The soldiers found a sheet, drew two ink stripes, and sewed on a [Star of David](#) torn off a first-aid kit.

In Eilat ([Umm Rashrash](#)), a bronze sculpture by Israeli sculptor [Bernard Reder](#) commemorates the event. The photo of the raising of the Ink Flag, taken by the soldier Micha Perry, bears resemblance to the [raising of the American flag at Iwo Jima](#).^[4]

