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Jewish Nationalism and Zionism

Imagining a Modern Jewish State

textbook pages 20–29

Chapter Overview

A wave of nationalism in Europe, coupled with the impact of antisemitism and deadly pogroms, set the stage for Zionism. Thousands of Russian and East European Jews began to immigrate to Palestine in hopes of building the Jewish homeland. West European Jews were less interested in Zionism because emancipation had been much more successful in their countries. To this day, Israel draws most of its new immigrants from lands in which Jews have been oppressed.

core concepts

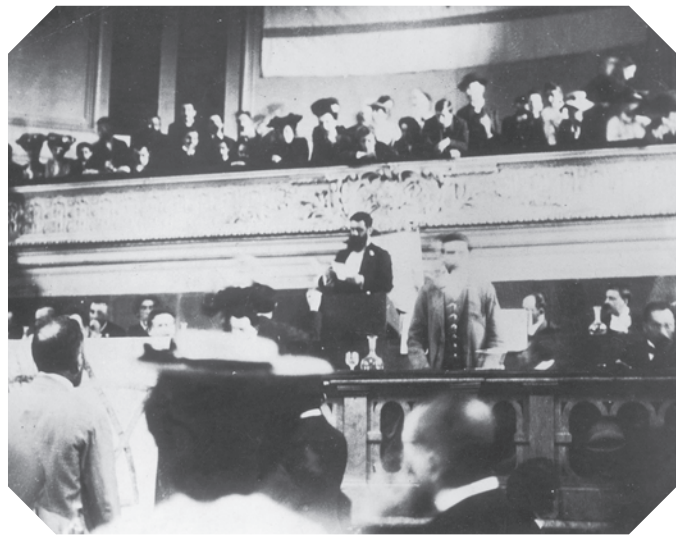
- With the rise of Jewish nationalism and increased antisemitism, many Jews turned to Zionism as a source of hope.
- Early Zionists had diverse beliefs regarding where the Jewish state should be and what it should be like.
- Today, Jews continue to have diverse views regarding the Jewish state.

Learning Objectives



Students will be able to

- Describe how the idea of creating a modern Jewish state developed, along with very different visions for that state.
- Explain how the success or failure of emancipation in a country affected the Jews' support of Zionism.
- Apply what they have learned to analyze, evaluate, and explain how the existence of the modern State of Israel influences our Jewish identities today.



Teaching Opportunities

Getting Started

Divide the class into small groups or have students work independently. Give each group or student four index cards. On the first card, have students describe what they enjoy about being a guest in someone else's home. On the second, have them list the responsibilities of being a guest. On the third, have them note what they enjoy about being in their own home. On the fourth card, have them describe the responsibilities of being in their own home.

Have students share their lists with the class and write their responses on the chalkboard. You may want to discuss whether, in the *long term*, they would prefer to always be guests in someone else's home or to live in their own homes. (Note: Students can refer back to their responses when working on the teaching guide activity below, "The Dream of Jewish Nationalism.")

Explain that in this chapter students will learn about Jews who felt like guests in other countries and what they did to establish a land they could call home.

pages 20–21 **Palestine Before 1880** and **Photograph: Jews at the Western Wall**

After reading the text, ask students to describe the experience of Jews in Palestine in the mid-1880's. (*They were a minority, only about 5 percent of the population; most were poor and lived in cities; had second-class status under Muslim law; lived under the Turks who were tolerant rulers.*)

Direct students' attention to the photograph on pages 20–21 (full image with caption can be seen on page 22). Ask: How does this photograph illustrate the text on page 21? (*People look poor based on their clothing; Jews were allowed to pray at the Western Wall, reflecting tolerant rulers.*)

page 22 **The Dream of Jewish Nationalism**

Explain to students that, in Hebrew, Jews are sometimes called *am Yisrael*, meaning the people, or nation, of Israel. Ask: What is the language of the Jewish people/nation? (*Hebrew*) Where do we learn about the early history of our people/nation? (*in the Bible*) What is the land of our people/nation? (*Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel*)

Ask for a volunteer to read Pinsker's quote in the second paragraph. Refer back to the lists students created about being a guest versus being at home. Discuss how Pinsker and his followers must have felt living in Eastern Europe.

page 22 The First Aliyah

Ask: How did people prepare themselves for making aliyah? (*held classes in Jewish history and Hebrew; organized self-defense groups*) How did these early settlers help set the foundation for the modern State of Israel? (*established approximately twenty farming colonies, many of which are now thriving towns and cities*) What challenges did the new settlers face that caused some to return to Europe or move to North America? (*malaria, poverty, lack of farming experience, differences between the nationalist new settlers and the religious Jews who already were living in Palestine*) Why do you think people stayed despite these challenges?

pages 22–23 Theodor Herzl

You may want to invite students to read this section in small groups and discuss whether or not they think they would have supported the Zionist movement had they been alive in Herzl's time. Then, call on a volunteer to role-play Theodor Herzl. Ask Herzl (the student) to persuade the Jews of Europe (the class) to work together to create the Jewish state. Invite Herzl to explain what led him to create his plan. Encourage students to support or challenge Herzl, depending on their point of view.

You or your music teacher may want to lead students in singing Israel's national anthem, Hatikvah. (Hatikvah can be found in *Gates of Prayer*, 1975 edition, page 765; *Kol Haneshamah*, 1994 edition, page 851; and *Siddur Sim Shalom*, 1998 Shabbat and Festival edition, page 395.)

Review the English translation with your students and ask how the anthem reflects the hopes and dreams of Herzl and other Zionists.

page 23, 25 To Be or Not to Be a Jewish State

Ask: What is the difference between a state for the Jews and a “Jewish” state? (*Jews would be guaranteed the right to freely live and work in a state for the Jews. A Jewish state incorporates Jewish religion and culture.*) How might our lives be different if the Jewish state had been created in Uganda rather than in the Land of Israel? (*Answers may include: we would not have access to Jerusalem and all the other cities that are part of our history; many Jews would still want to return to the Land of Israel; Jews outside of Uganda might feel little connection to that state.*)

page 24 Famous Figures: Theodor Herzl

Write these words by Theodor Herzl on the chalkboard: “If you will it, it is not a dream.” Ask students to explain the statement.

Invite students to describe a time when they worked to make a dream of theirs come true. For example, they might have practiced playing a sport or musical instrument until they became skilled. Ask them if in the process they ever felt frustrated or doubted that they would achieve their goal. Ask them what gave them the strength and courage to persist.



page 25 You Are There: The Uganda Plan

Divide the class into two groups: One group will support the view that a Jewish home can be established in Uganda. The other group will stand firm on the belief that a Jewish state must be in the Land of Israel. Ask the groups to prepare arguments to debate their positions. Give students time to prepare the reasoning behind their points of view. Once each group has presented its views and reasoning, encourage the groups to question and respond to each other.

pages 25–27 The Second Aliyah

Invite volunteers to each read aloud one paragraph in the section. Then have students work with a partner to create a list of similarities and differences between the First Aliyah and the Second Aliyah. After several minutes, ask each pair to share its list with the class. (Allow more time if you want students to do additional research in your synagogue library or on the Internet.)

As a class, create a chart that compares and contrasts these two waves of *aliyah*. (Some similarities include: both settled lands that would later become thriving cities; both faced harsh living conditions; both groups were from Eastern Europe. Some differences include: timeframe—1882–1903 versus 1905–1914; nationalists versus socialists; worked as artisans, shopkeepers, and hired farmhands versus experimented with new forms of cooperative living and farming.)

page 26 Warning: Danger Ahead

Have students turn to page 21. Ask: What percentage of Palestine’s population was Jewish in the mid-1800’s? (*5 percent*) Who made up the majority of the population? (*Muslim and Christian Arabs*) Why do you think Aḥad Ha’am was afraid that the Arab population would be hostile to Zionism? Why do you think others ignored his fears? Why do you think his fears were realized as the Jewish population increased?

page 26 The Revival of Hebrew

Explain that just as new Hebrew words were needed in Ben-Yehuda’s day to help people discuss new inventions and ideas, new Hebrew words continue to be created today. As in Ben-Yehuda’s time, some words are constructed by using the roots of older, related words. (*Maḥshev* which means “computer” has the same root letters as *ḥoshev*, meaning “thinks.”)

page 27 Chart: Jews in Russia; Jews in Western Europe

Invite volunteers to each read aloud one bulleted item in the chart. Then ask: Why were Russian Jews motivated to move to Palestine during the Second Aliyah while West European Jews largely remained in their countries of birth? (*Conditions for West European Jews were much better than for East European and*

Russian Jews. West European Jews could live where they wanted to, generally had the same rights as other citizens, and antisemitism was on the decline.)

page 28 Photographs: Tel Aviv and Women in the Field

The following story is based on a teaching in the Talmud:

One day, Honi observed an elderly man planting a carob tree. He asked, "How long will it be before your tree bears fruit?"

The man answered, "Seventy years."

Honi asked, "And will you be alive in seventy years to eat the fruit?"

The man answered, "That is not my concern. Just as I found the land full of carob trees planted by my parents and grandparents, so will I plant for my children."

After reading the story to your class, ask: How might the people in the pictures on page 28 and the many other Jews who helped build the Land of Israel have exemplified the lesson of this story?

page 28 Foundation for the Future

Ask: Why do you think the majority of Russian Jews chose to move to the United States rather than to Palestine? What might you have done if you were in their position? Why?

page 29 Then & Now

After students have completed the activity and shared their responses, ask: Do you think Diaspora Jews do or do not have a right to say what Israel's policies should be? Why or why not? How might Diaspora Jews be affected by events in the State of Israel?



Family Connection

Create a chart of all the Hebrew words students know. Invite students to interview their parents and other relatives, as well as family friends, in order to collect additional words and phrases. (Remind students that words from prayers and names of ritual objects, such as *sh'ma* and *tallit*, count!) Invite students to bring in the list of words to class. You may then want to create a class dictionary of Hebrew words. Encourage students to begin to pepper their English with Hebrew words.

In addition or alternatively, you may want to develop one of the family-based activities described on pages 7–8 of this guide.