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**Timeline of Women and  
Women's Issues  
in the Yishuv and Israel**

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JEWISH WOMEN AND WOMEN'S ISSUES  
IN THE YISHUV (PALESTINE) and ISRAEL:  
A Timeline of People, Places and Ideas, 1880-1998

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To the best of my knowledge, this is the first overview of Jewish women's experience in Palestine – 1880-1948 (i.e. the Yishuv or Eretz Yisrael) and Israel (1948-1998).<sup>1</sup> The cut-off date of 1998 enables us to consider the first 50 years of the State as a whole.

The lack of a basic timeline has increased the difficulty of learning about women's lives in this historical period and context. Even their names were unknown. Most of the standard encyclopedias and reference works do not include many of the names of the women listed below. To find information about women in this period, one has to dig deep.

The lack of a basic timeline has also hindered the development of a new and more accurate understanding of the history of this period. For example, although the history of the Yishuv and Israel is almost always presented as a history of conflicts among groups, the conflict between women and men, and the struggle for suffrage or women's rights, is never included. It's as if it never happened.

This chart is intended as one step in the direction of addressing these problems. Of course, a chart does not explain but simply states facts. I do hope that readers will use it as a starting point to familiarize themselves with the hidden treasure of women's history and will ask new questions.

<sup>1</sup> There are many terms for the Jewish settlement in this area before the creation of the State of Israel. Historians tend to use the word “Yishuv,” meaning settlement. Residents tended to use the work Palestine or Eretz Yisrael (land of Israel)”

In this chart, important general historical phenomena, significant events specifically related to women, information about less known individuals, and material about women as a group are interspersed. My reason for including women who have not had major roles, as well as those who have made important contributions, is to remind us of the multiple hidden roles of women as well as the more public ones.

I have included a few citations to document some of the entries on the chart and provide suggestions for further reading. I have also provided a few quotes, so that some of the women can be “heard” in their own voices.

I am aware that much of this information is incomplete. For example, those books about the history of the period that do include group photographs, frequently do not point out the names of the women in those photographs. These women may be cooks, laundresses, or wives. They may have been leaders of organizations, farmers or legislators. They, too, were part of history, and yet, since their name is not recorded, we do not know what they role was.

Since this document is a Working Paper additional information or corrections are very much welcome for the upcoming editions. Please contact the HRIJW with material, suggestions or comments.

The next component of this project is to annotate a map of Israel, marking sites relevant particularly important in women’s experience, to create an index of names, and to develop a full bibliography. I welcome your involvement.

For their assistance, I would like to thank Jehuda Reinharz; Deborah Bernstein, Professor of Sociology at Haifa University; Sylvia Barack Fishman, Co-Director of the Hadassah Research Institute on Jewish Women; Gail Reimer, Executive Director of the Jewish Women’s Archive; Rachel Cymrot, HRIJW Summer Intern, 1998; Susan Kahn, Research Director of the HRIJW; Helene Greenberg, Administrator of the HRIJW, Phyllis Hollman Weisbard, University of Wisconsin System Women’s Studies Librarian; Evelyn Benson of Havertown, PA; Jane Zolot, National Board of Hadassah; Libbie Zucker of Washington, D.C.; Muriel Moster of Los Angeles, CA, for continuous, thorough and very useful

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Before the 1880s, Jewish life in Palestine consists of approximately 26,000 people in religious communities in Safed, Tiberias, Jaffa and Jerusalem.

Historians call this population the “Old Yishuv,” as contrasted with the “New Yishuv” initiated by the First Aliyah after 1882. However, women’s positions in the Old Yishuv and the New Yishuv were not so clearly differentiated at first, so the contrast between Old and New does not apply as much to them as it does to the men.

**1878.** Agricultural settlement of Petach Tikva founded, initiating “New Yishuv,” which was part of Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman rule of this area lasted from 1517 to 1917. Settlers were group of observant Jews from Jerusalem and recent<sup>1</sup> immigrants from Hungary. First such settlement in Eretz yisrael in 2000 years.

53 BILU (acronym for Beit Yaakov Lechu Venelcha – The House of Jacob, Let us go and arise; Isaiah, 2:5) immigrants arrive in Palestine from Russia.

**1880.** Jewish community of Jaffa numbers 650 people, mostly Sephardi Jews.

**1882-1903.** First Aliyah – 30,000-40,000 immigrants arrive.<sup>2</sup> Lower middle-class families from Russia. In most cases, the men initiate the moves for their families. Hibbat Zion movement calls for immediate immigration to Palestine. By 1904, the First Aliyah had established 28 new agricultural settlements throughout the country in which 5000 people settled.

Settlement of Rishon leTzion founded by 10 Russian Jews in 1882.

**1882.** Vera Khatzman born (married Chaim Weizmann in 1906 and died in 1966). She studies medicine at the University of Geneva and moves to Manchester,

<sup>2</sup> Richard I. Cohen. The Return to the Land of Israel. Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, p. 63.

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England where she runs medical clinics for children. Cofounder of WIZO, for many years the chair of its executive and later WIZO's honorary president.<sup>34</sup>

**1882.** Aliyah from Yemen in significant numbers. Additional waves of Yemenite immigrants arrived in the early 1890s and 1900s.<sup>5</sup> Between 1881 and 1914, 5000 Yemenite Jews immigrate to Eretz-Yisrael, or 10% of the Jews of Yemen. Jews also arrive from North Africa, Persia, Kurdistan, Bukhara, Georgia, Iran and Syria. Immigration from Yemen begins.<sup>6</sup> .

**1884.** Nine BILUim establish a village at Gedera. Receive support of Hovevei Zion.

**1886.** Ezrat Israel Society founded in Jaffa to deal with problem of lack of medical facilities for burgeoning population.

**1890** A committee was established in Eretz Yisrael to make Hebrew the language used in everyday life.

**1892.** Hemdah Ben-Yehuda (1873-1951), Hebrew author, marries Eliezer Ben Yehuda in Jerusalem, who revives spoken Hebrew. Her sister Deborah was Ben-Yehuda's first wife. Hemdah publishes Ben Yehuda, Hayyav u-Mifalo (1940), a life of Ben Yehuda, and Nose ha-Degel (1944) on her stepson Itamar Ben-Avi. Hemdah incites Eliezer's extremism against halukkah system (charity from abroad to sustain Jewish communities in Palestine). She is

also strongly in favor of Hebrew as a spoken language. She continues work on his dictionary after his death.

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A “Life of Vera Weizmann” is currently in production in Israel.

<sup>5</sup> See Nitza Druyan, “Yemenite Jewish Women – Between Tradition and Change,” in Deborah Bernstein (ed.), *Pioneers and Homemakers: Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel*, 1992, pp. 75-93.

<sup>6</sup> See Nitza Druyan, “Yemenite Jewish Women – Between Tradition and Change,” in Deborah Bernstein (ed.), *Pioneers and Homemakers: Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel*, 1992, pp. 75-93.

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Hemdah Ben-Yehuda (preacher-writer) and Nehamah Pukhachewsky (protestwriter) were the two leading female authors in this period in Palestine.<sup>7</sup>

**1893.** Henrietta Szold and her friends found first Zionist association in Baltimore She becomes literary secretary of Jewish Publication Society of America until 1916.

**1893.** Ada Fishman Maimon born in Russia. Becomes leader of the women’s labor movement in Eretz Israel.

**1895.** Dreyfus Affair.

**1896.** Flu epidemic in Jaffa. Money is sought to purchase building for a hospital. Money is obtained from the Baron de Rothschild, the Baroness Hirsch, and an endowment is provided for in the estate of Wolf Segal - a member of the First Aliyah.<sup>8</sup>

**1897.** World Zionist Organization is founded by Theodor Herzl in Basel, Switzerland. Women attend, not as delegates but as wives. Herzl specifies that women do not have the right to vote. “Most of the women present were there because they accompanied their husbands, and Theodor Herzl, though welcoming them gallantly to the congress and addressing them as ‘honoured guests,’ also specified that they did not have the right to

vote.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See Yaffa Berlovitz, “Literature by Women of the First Aliyah: The Aspiration for Women’s Renaissance in Eretz Israel,” in Deborah Bernstein (ed.), Pioneers and Homemakers: Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel, pp. 49-73.

<sup>8</sup> Shifra Shvartz, "Bnai Brith-Shaar Zion Hospital in Jaffa (1891-1921): The First Jewish Community Hospital in Palestine," Judaism, Summer 1998, v. 47, no. 3, pp. 358-370, p. 364.

<sup>9</sup> Naomi Shepherd, “A Radical in Transit: Manya Shochat and the Zionist Women Pioneers,” in A Price below Rubies: Jewish Women as Rebels & Radicals (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 177.

Rosa Fassel Sonneschein (1847-1932), born in Hungary, citizen of the U.S., attends the First World Zionist Congress, the only American woman present. A journalist, she represents The American Jewess, a journal she founded, edited and published. Although she never visits Palestine, she promulgates Zionism in the U.S.<sup>10</sup>

**1898.** May 30. Golda (Meir) Mabovitz, born in Kiev, Russia. Moves to Milwaukee in 1906. Joins Poalei Zion in 1915. Marries Morris Meyerson in 1917.

**1898.** Second World Zionist Congress. Several women delegates represent women’s Zionist organizations in central and Western, though not Eastern, Europe. The ‘woman question’ does not arise at all.<sup>11</sup>

**1899.** Third World Zionist Congress. Women’s suffrage recognized as a fundamental principle and right.

**1900.** 50,000 Jews in Eretz Yisrael.

**1901.** The Jewish National Fund begins raising money for land settlement and land purchase in Palestine. In 1906, land purchases begin.

**1902.** Shaarei Tzedek Hospital established in Jerusalem.

**1903.** Sixth Zionist Congress, Basle, Switzerland, debates Uganda Proposal. Vera Khatzman (Weizmann) attends. “As Chaim and I were not officially engaged, I sat in the gallery with other young students and followed the proceedings with rapt attention....A dramatic moment occurred when Aberson’s young wife ran on to the platform and tore down the large map of Uganda which had been hung behind the dais.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Prepared for Hadassah-Israel Convention, December 1-3, 1997, by Dr. Ida Selavan-Schwarcz.

<sup>11</sup> Naomi Shepherd, A Price below Rubies: Jewish Women as Rebels & Radicals (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 177.

<sup>12</sup> Vera Weizmann, The Impossible Takes Longer (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 20.

**1903,** August 28. Women categorically are denied suffrage in the town Assembly at Zikhron Yaakov.<sup>13</sup>

**1904-1918.** Second Aliyah. Composed of approximately 3000 young, idealistic, primarily single immigrants; 83% male, 17% female. Create image of the new Hebrew woman worker, pioneer and comrade, in contrast with the Diaspora Jewish woman, and the “bourgeois” women of the First Aliyah. Very high rate of emigration out of Palestine by members of the Second Aliyah (over 50%)

Second Aliyah women aspire to join the men in realizing the Zionist dream by fulfilling jobs that considered important, but they are “allowed” to fill jobs in the productive sector only if there are enough other women to fulfill the domestic duties. “Kibbutzim persistently refused to accept more than a limited number of women - just enough to maintain the necessary services. Some had women only as hired help. The women in Degania...were not considered members with equal rights. They were not registered in the annual contract made with the Palestine Office (of the Zionist movement)...nor received the monthly salary which the Office paid to the men both in Degania and in neighboring Kinneret...‘women work for the men, not for the Palestine Office of the Zionist



movement.”<sup>14</sup>

Yehoshua (1864-1945) and Olga Hankin are in Palestine. Hankin's father came to Palestine in 1882 and settled in Rishon Letziyon. Yehoshua befriends Arab peasants and landowners. He purchases large tracts of land. Olga Hankin, his wife, is midwife to Jews and Arabs.

**1904**, January. Manya Wilbushewitz arrives in Jaffa. Goes on horseback tour of Palestine with brother Nahum Wilbush, Mendel Hankin, Sophia Zevnegordoska, and Arab guides.<sup>15</sup>

**1904**. Chana Orloff, sculptor born in 1888 in the Ukraine, moves to Petach Tikva.

<sup>13</sup> Sylvie Fogiel-Bijaoui, "On the Way to Equality? The Struggle for Women's Suffrage in the Jewish Yishuv, 1917-1926," in Deborah S. Bernstein (ed.), Pioneers and Homemakers: Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel (NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 262. <sup>14</sup> Nira Yuval Davis, Israeli Women and Men: Divisions behind the Unity, (London: International Reports: Women and Society, 198?), pp. 5-6.

<sup>15</sup> Shulamit Reinharz, "Toward a model of female political action: The case of Manya Shohat, founder of the first kibbutz," Women's Studies International Forum, 1984, 7 (4).

**1905**. Atara Shturman emigrates to Palestine.

**1906**. Shoshana Feinberg-Belkind marries Manya's brother, Nahum, in Palestine.

**1906**. Golda Mabovitz goes to grade school in Milwaukee with two future American Zionist women leaders: Sarah Feder who becomes leader of Labour Zionism in the United States, then moves to Palestine; and with Regina Hamburger (Medzini) who makes aliyah at same time as Golda, in 1921, and remains lifelong friend.<sup>16</sup>

**1907**. Artist and writer Esther Slepian comes to Palestine. Born in 1869 in Bessarabia, dies in Tel Aviv in 1919. Signs all her work with pseudonym, Ira Jan. Translated poetry of Bialiki. Left her husband to follow Bialik to Palestine with her child. Becomes part of the "New Jerusalem" circle of secular leaders and artists. Lives with Rachel Yanait. Writes a great deal about the suicides of young

women in the Yishuv, particularly the suicide of Rachel Meisel.<sup>17</sup>

**1907.** Nahum Wilbush's and Shoshana's first child, Zohar, is born. She later becomes specialist in Middle East embroidery.<sup>18</sup>

**1907.** Manya creates first collective (prototype of kibbutz) in Sejera, with members of para-military group, Bar-Giora, led by Yisrael Shohat. Sejera collective is gender-balanced and women work in the field with men. Women wear trousers, not dresses.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Golda Meir, My Life (Jerusalem, Steimatzsky's, 1975), p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> Nurit Govrin, "A Woman Alone: The Artist Ira Jan as Writer in Eretz Yisrael," in Deborah Bernstein, pp. 165-181.

<sup>18</sup> Paper on Zohar Wilbush's life and views given at the HRIJW/Hebrew University conference on the Yishuv, Jerusalem 1998. To be published soon.

<sup>19</sup> For details see Yaacov N. Goldstein, From Fighters to Soldiers: How the Israeli Defense Forces Began (Portland, Oregon: Sussex Academic Press, 1998), ch. 6, "The Status of Women in Hashomer."

**1907.** The Women's Organization for Cultural Work in Palestine, established at the Eighth Zionist Congress at the Hague. Betty Lishansky becomes one of its heads. This organization establishes embroidery workshops for girls in Jaffa, Jerusalem, Tiberias, Ekron and Safed. By 1913, 400 girls employed' 90% from Sephardi communities. Products sold abroad. Established first Jewish hospital in Haifa. Sara Thon organizes women's activities in Palestine. "Most of the members...were wives of men involved in the Zionist Movement. Sara Thom was the moving spirit; she expressed her positions vigorously, openly and without fear."<sup>20</sup>

**1908.** Eliyahu Krause, manager of the training farm, records women with men's names.

Manya listed briefly as bookkeeper.<sup>21</sup>

Manya Wilbushewitz and Yisrael Shohat marry.

**1908.** Rachel Yanait (later Ben-Zvi) arrives in Palestine; founder of the Pioneer Women's Movement in the United States (in 1925). "...during the formative years of the Zionist socialist movement in Palestine, only one woman - Rachel Yanait Ben Zvi - took an active part in political life together with the men (though there were several notable women among the right-wing Zionists) and perhaps for this reason was reluctant to ally herself publicly with the labor feminists."<sup>22</sup>

**1908.** Eliyahu Krause marries Yehoshua Hankin's sister, Chaya.

**1908.** Manya visits Rahel Yanait in Jerusalem. Suggests stealing money to purchase arms.

**1908.** Rahel and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi open secular high school in Jerusalem. Rahel teaches history; Yitzhak teaches Tanach (Bible) and Hebrew.

<sup>20</sup> Shilo, p. 125. <sup>21</sup> Shulamit Reinharz, "The Winding Road to Sejera," in Deborah S. Bernstein (ed.), Pioneers and Homemakers: Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel, 992, pp. 95  
118.

<sup>22</sup> Naomi Shepherd, "A Radical in Transit: Manya Shochat and the Zionist Women Pioneers" in A Price below Rubies: Jewish Women as Rebels & Radicals (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 177.

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At the time, many children are exploited laborers in Jerusalem. Rahel Yanait organizes printing apprentices into a strike that fails.

**1908.** Yael Gordon, daughter of A.D. Gordon and his wife, Faigel, arrives in Palestine. Formerly, she founded school in Podolia for poor girls with her friend, Bat Sheva Greenberg, the wife of the writer, Yaakov Fichman. In Palestine becomes agricultural worker in Rehovot and then joins Hana Meisel's training farm in Kinneret. Also works in the American settlement, "Poriah."

In 1924, she is elected, together with Hana Meisel, Sara Malkin and Leah Meron to the leadership of the founding convention which laid the ground for the Women's Workers' Movement. Throughout her life, helped organize workers and was a leader in the women's farm in Petach Tikva. From 1929 on, lived in Degania. Becomes one of the leading women pioneers of the Second Aliyah. Dies March 26, 1958.<sup>23</sup>

**1909.** Manya Shohat and Ester Becker help found Hashomer, the first organization of Jewish guards employed to guard settlements against theft and attack. Hashomer is primarily a male organization. Rachel Yanait Ben Zvi joins.

Esther Shturman and Zipporah Zaid are turned down for guard duty by Hashomer, led by Yisrael Shohat. Manya disapproves of their rejection by her husband and his colleagues.

**1909.** November. Henrietta Szold comes to Palestine as a tourist with her mother. Travels throughout the country, meets Manya.

**1909.** Hanna Meisel (1883-1972), member of Sejera collective, is a trained agronomist, who "secretly planted a market garden, out of sight of the main settlement in 1909, and a tiny group of women began to produce and market vegetables."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Tidhar, David. Encyclopedia of the Pioneers in the Yishuv and Its Builders. 19 volume. (Hebrew). Tel Aviv: 1947-1062.

<sup>24</sup> Naomi Shepherd, A Price below Rubies: Jewish Women as Rebels & Radicals (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 180.

**1909.** Tel Aviv established.

**1910.** The first workers' collective is established. Sara Malkin joins and becomes the archetype of a "new and innovative figure...the working woman who saw farming as her life's work and was prepared to stand on her own. Her struggle paved the way for all who followed in her footsteps...she described the dilemma which a young woman faced upon her arrival in Palestine. While in her young Zionist group, she had fought as an equal, alongside the men, for the right to make Aliyah and settle the land,... Upon her arrival, the equality vanished: the men went out to work the fields while farm-work was

unavailable to women.”<sup>25</sup> **1912.** “These were the years in which a new and innovative figure was delineated: the working woman who saw farming as her life’s work and was prepared to stand on her own. The archetype of the working woman was Sara Malkin. Her struggle paved the way for all who followed in her footsteps. In her letter of 1912 to Hapoel Hatzair she accurately described the dilemma which a young faced upon her arrival in Palestine. While in her young Zionist group, she had fought as an equal, alongside the men, for the right to make Aliyah and settle the land. However, upon her arrival, the equality vanished: the men went out to work the fields while farm-work was unavailable to women.... Until the establishment of the women’s farm at Kinneret, most of the girls earned their livelihood in sewing, housework and services.”<sup>26</sup> Joseph Baratz, Founder of Degania, writes the following: *“There were only a handful of women and they couldn’t get work at all, though one did manage to get employment by dressing herself as a man (this was Sarah Malkin who was later to be one of the founders of Degania.)”*<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Margalit Shilo, “The Women’s Farm at Kinneret, 1911-1917: A Solution to the Problem of the Working Woman in the Second Aliyah,” in Deborah Bernstein

(ed.), Pioneers and Homemakers: Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel pp; 119-143.<sup>26</sup> Margalit Shilo, "The Women's Farm at Kinneret, 1911-1917: A Solution to the Problem of the Working Woman in the Second Aliyah," in Deborah S. Bernstein (ed.), Pioneers and Homemakers: Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel (NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 119.

**1910.** Anita Miller, born in Vienna in 1890, comes to Palestine and founds Women’s Social Service, now known as the Women’s Social Service for Israel.

**1910.** Batia Lichansky, 10 years old, comes to Palestine with her family. Later becomes prominent sculptor.<sup>27</sup>

**1911,** April. Hannah Meisel starts girls’ training farm at Kinneret with funds from a women’s Zionist group in Germany. 5 young women join. The farm lasts until 1917 and becomes the nucleus of an independent women’s movement from 1919 to 1927.<sup>28</sup> Considered start of women’s movement in Palestine. 17 women attend the first meeting.

The movement had two parts: an annual conference, five of which were held between 1911 and 1918; and the women workers' committee to organize activities between conferences.<sup>29</sup>

**1912.** At the 10<sup>th</sup> Zionist Congress, a women's Zionist organization is founded.

**1912.** Ada Fishman Maimon arrives in Eretz Yisrael. Teaches in Petah Tikva, works as farmhand, founds girls' school in Safed. Ada Maimon is the earliest promoter of the working women's movement in Palestine, and occupied a prominent position in the Palestinian labor movement in general. Represented Ha-Poel haZair and later Mapai in the Histadrut, the Vaad Leumi, Zionist Congresses, the Zionist General Council and the First and Second Knesset. Founder of the Moezet haPoalot and its secretary for 12 years. Active on the Executive of World WIZO and in the struggle for women's rights. Probably the strongest feminist voice in Zionist history.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Ran Schechori, *Art in Israel* (Tel Aviv: Sadan, 1974).

<sup>28</sup> See Margalit Shilo.

<sup>29</sup> Dafna Izraeli, The Women Workers' Movement: First Wave Feminism in Pre-State Israel, in Deborah Bernstein, pp. 183-209.

<sup>30</sup> See Ada Maimon, *Women Build a Land* (1962), and Dafna Izraeli, "The Women Workers' Movement: First Wave Feminism in Pre-State Israel," pp. 183-209, in Bernstein, op. cit.

**1912.** Anna Ticho, born in Austria in 1894, arrives in Palestine.<sup>31</sup>

**1912-1914.** Sarah Malkin and Tehiya Liberson write a stream of letters to the editor of Hapoel Hatzair (newspaper) revealing their deep disappointments in opportunities for women.<sup>32</sup>

**1912.** Henrietta Szold founds Hadassah in the United States, the Women's Zionist

Organization of America.

**1913**, January 18. Nathan and Lina Straus, Eva Leon (Emma Gottheil's sister), and two Hadassah nurses, Rose Kaplan and Rachel (Rae) Landy, set sail for Palestine, after being recruited in the U.S. by Henrietta Szold. The program is based on the model created by Lillian Wald, an American Jewish nurse, whose work inspired Szold.

**1913**. Hadassah opens first maternity/trachoma clinic in Palestine.

**1913**. Dvora (later Dayan, mother of Moshe Dayan, grandmother of Yael Dayan), born in Kiev district in Ukraine in 1890. She arrives in Palestine alone. Her father, relatively well off, and a Zionist, was the only Jew in the village of Prochorovka on the Dnieper River.

In her son's words: "Her only contact (upon arrival) was a letter of introduction to Yisrael Bloch, one of the original Degania settlers. He failed to meet her because he was away in Damascus buying cows for the kibbutz. She made her way by train to Zemach, at the lower end of the Sea of Galilee, and arrived at Degania on foot. From all accounts, my mother's [Dvora's] efforts to integrate into the life of the small group were at first a painful failure. Whatever her romantic expectations had been, the reality was tough. The kitchen and farmyard chores she undertook were exhausting, especially in the hot and humid summer climate. The living quarters were cramped, the food coarse and unappetizing, and the amenities of life she had taken for granted were lacking. She could not speak Hebrew or Yiddish. The

<sup>31</sup> Jean Owen (ed.), Artists in Israel: 1920-1980 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1982). <sup>32</sup> Nitza Druyan, "Yemenite Jewish Women," in Deborah S. Bernstein (ed.), Pioneers and Homemakers: Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel (NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 85.

others thought her bourgeois in dress and values and had not interest in the Russian culture she loved.

When she applied for membership in the kibbutz, she was turned down, after a long discussion, on the grounds that she did not fit in with the group. There was a kibbutz joke at the time that my father had opposed her membership for he feared rivals for her affections if she stayed.

At all events, my mother went to work and learn Hebrew in another settlement, Sejera, and she and my father kept in touch by correspondence. When my father went to Beirut to have treatment for an ear infection caused by a mosquito, she spent the last of her funds on a one-way ticket to see him there, and they came back to Degania as an engaged couple. This time Dvorah was received in the group without further reservations.”<sup>33</sup>

“She was the person Moshe Dayan most admired throughout his life. She spoke quietly, almost whispering, and her articles, which appeared regularly in Dvar Hapoalot, Davar’s supplement for women, were always beautifully written. Moshe must have inherited his own notable talent for writing, and his love of poetry and prose, from his mother.”<sup>34</sup>

**1914.** Deborah Baron comes to Palestine. “In the writings of the young women who immigrated to Palestine, one finds expressions of their special sensitivity to the status of women in Jewish society, to male dominance, female subordination and inferiority, and the difficult lives led by women. This is especially salient in the stories of Deborah Baron.”<sup>35</sup>

**1914.** Rachel (Blaustein or Bluwstein) (1890-1931), the poet, comes to Palestine She works first as a laborer in Rehovot and later at the agricultural training farm of Kinneret. In 1913 she had gone to France to study agriculture and from there to Russia, where she spent the years of World War I teaching refugee children. “Although she didn’t know a word of Hebrew before she came to Palestine, she

<sup>33</sup> Moshe Dayan, The Story of My Life: An Autobiography (New York: William Morrow, 1976). <sup>34</sup> Shimon Peres, Battling for Peace: A Memoir (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 126. <sup>35</sup> Deborah Bernstein, The Struggle for Equality: Urban Women Workers in Prestate Israeli Society. New York: Praeger, 1987, p. 15.

was to become one of the first modern Hebrew poets, and many of her poems have been set to music and are still sung in Israel.”<sup>36</sup> She dies of tuberculosis and is buried at Kinneret. Many of her poems are set to music. Many people visit her grave.

**1914.** May 30-June 4. Handful of young women of Second Aliyah meet in Merhavia and establish Moetzet Hapoalot (Working Women’s Council of Israel),



the first women's organization in the country. Provides agricultural training and fosters public debate. Deals with issues of special interest to women such as broadening of work opportunities for women, integration of women immigrants, agricultural and vocational training and family and child care. Later it seeks to increase the role of women in Israeli public life. Pupils of the training farm protest that they are not learning important work. Leader of protest was Shoshana Bluwstein.

**1914.** At the Women's Farm at Kinneret, there are 20 female students plus two teachers: Hayyuta and Sara Bussel.

**1915.** Working Women's Council of Israel has first conference, addressing women's role in the workplace and childcare. Additional conferences held in 1916, 1917 and 1918.

**1915 -** 85,000 Jews in Eretz Yisrael live in new settlements outside the historic "holy cities."<sup>37</sup> Many die of starvation during WWI, and many others leave the country.

**1915.** Rahel Yanait goes to work in the Atlit experimental agricultural station, headed by Dr. Aaron Aaronsohn, an anti-socialist. Rahel then goes to Petach Tivka and starts organizing defense training.

**1915.** Levi Eshkol meets and marries Rivka Marshak at Rishon-le-Zion. She was a "former student of the secondary school at Herzliya, who had found work in the

<sup>36</sup> Golda Meir, My Life (Jerusalem, Steimatzsky's, 1975), p. 31.

<sup>37</sup> Richard I. Cohen. The Return to the Land of Israel. Zalman Shazar Center,

Jerusalem, 1986, p. 4.

vineyards....They separated by mutual consent in 1924. Daughter, Noa, born in 1923.”<sup>38</sup>

Keila Giladi, wife and then young widow of Israel Giladi, for whom Kibbutz Kfar Giladi is named, writes of her experiences as a Hashomer wife:

“In Kinneret, Israel [my recently married husband] and I slept in an old, tumbledown, clay building, together with all the other guards....Later, he fixed up a sort of mobile tent on a car, and we would sleep in that...When we actually got a room to sleep in, there were five of us in the one room - not to mention the frequent guests. I used to cook for us all, and we slept on the floor...

We returned to guard duty in Sejera. One night, one of the guards woke us shouting, ‘Get up, Israel. Barel has been killed.’ I was so upset that it made me ill, and this apparently had an effect on my baby, who fell sick. There were no medical facilities in the place, and after a few days he died...”<sup>39</sup>

**1917.** Sarah Schenierer starts small school (Beit Yaakov) in Cracow, Poland to teach traditional Jewish studies to girls. School grows rapidly, begins new direction in traditional education of girls, which influences educational opportunities for girls in Yishuv.

**1917.** David Ben Gurion marries Pauline (whom he calls Paula) Munweis, a nurse. “Her features were handsome enough, her figure attractive. Warm, gay, and unreserved, she involved herself tactlessly in other people’s business.”<sup>40</sup>

**1917,** November 2. Balfour Declaration issued, initiating Zionist organizational activity.

**1917,** November 18. Assembly held at Petah Tikvah denies women’s suffrage in the Yishuv. Rachel Yanait Ben-Zvi present, representing workers’ sector, is member of Temporary Council of the Jews of Eretz Israel.

<sup>38</sup>

Terence Prittie, Eshkol: The Man and the Nation (New York: Pitman, 1969), p. 27

<sup>39</sup> Near, p. 47

<sup>40</sup> Shabtai Teveth, Ben-Gurion: The Burning Ground, 1886-1948 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), p. 119.

**1917.** Turks uncover NILI (Netzah yisrael lo yishaker, tr: The Strength of Israel will not Lie), a secret Jewish intelligence group spying for the British. Sarah Aronsohn, member of the group, caught by Turkish military authorities, tortured, and, in order to avoid disclosing information, kills herself with a pistol at age 27, becoming martyr. Sarah is daughter of wealthy farmers from Zikhron Ya'akov, the "aristocracy" of the Yishuv.<sup>41</sup>

**1918-1926,** controversy over women's suffrage is one of the main political concerns of the Yishuv,<sup>42</sup> separating Old and New Yishuv.

**1918.** Edith Low Eder, born 1887, arrives from London. Later founds WIZO with Rebecca Sieff and Khatzman Weizmann.

**1918,** January. First Constitutive Assembly, is held in Jaffa-Tel Aviv. Its purpose is to devise guiding principles for the election of a national assembly that would decide on matters of the community and represent the Yishuv before the British Mandatory authorities.<sup>43</sup> Rejected women's suffrage even though no representation of the religious sector and Old Yishuv.

**1918,** June. Second Constitutive Assembly, held in Jerusalem.

**1919-1923.** Third Aliyah begins with the end of World War I. 36% female; 64% male; young people organized in collectives.<sup>44</sup>  
Ottoman rule ends; British rule begins.

Pessia Abramson, member of a collective, trains at first all-woman agricultural school at Kinneret, works in settlement of Merhavia...leads the struggle to take

<sup>41</sup> Sarah Aronson, in Great Jewish Women, edited by Elinor and Robert Slater, Middle Village, NY: Jonathan David Publishers, Inc, 1994. p. 7. Photo available in Richard I. Cohen, p.

98.

<sup>42</sup> Sylvie Fogiel-Bijaoui, "On the Way to Equality? The Struggle for Women's Suffrage in the Jewish Yishuv, 1917-1926," in Deborah S. Bernstein (ed.), Pioneers and Homemakers: Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel (NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 261.

<sup>43</sup> Sylvie Fogiel-Bijaoui, "On the Way to Equality? The Struggle for Women's Suffrage in the Jewish Yishuv, 1917-1926," in Deborah S. Bernstein (ed.), Pioneers and Homemakers: Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel (NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 263.

<sup>44</sup> For slightly different figures, but the same gender imbalance, see Henry Near, The Kibbutz Movement: A History, volume 1, Origins and Growth, 1909-1939 (London: Oxford, 1992), p.

13.  
women out of the kitchen and into responsible organizational work. Joins the first permanent cooperative settlement in Palestine, Tel Adas, with her husband. "But among these pioneers, starting a family was betrayal of ideals. After bearing two babies, she was slighted by her female comrades. Weakened by childbirth and illness, unable to play her full part in the work of the cooperative, and with her husband constantly absent on missions, she shot herself."<sup>45</sup>

**1919.** Vera Weizmann visits Palestine for the first time, touring the country with Edith Eder and Rebecca Sieff.

"We were very impressed by the hard work done in rebuilding Palestine by the devoted Halutzot...but we... thought these enthusiastic, idealistic women were mortgaging their future motherhood and even risking their health for this principle of equality: they were working ten or twelve hours a day breaking rocks and stones for road-making and mending, carrying heavy loads, performing superhuman tasks...

Pre-natal care had not been heard of and the fate of unborn generations was left to chance...the whole situation worried us a great deal until it dawned on us that something drastic had to be done. On our return home, therefore, we decided to form a women's organization...

Thus it came about that in 1920 we three - Mrs. Eder, Mrs. Sieff, and I - enlisted the help of Mrs. Romana Goodman and later Mrs. Olga Alman, both of whom were active in the English Zionist Federation, and proceeded to work out our plans....Henrietta Irwell

proved to be a person of unique qualities...Thus was our small initial band of six women formed.

The first international meeting of Zionist women's groups was held in Europe in London in July 1920,...a home for infants and a domestic science school at Tel Aviv were among the first projects created and supported by WIZO... We met with a good deal of opposition from men Zionists who were afraid of losing the women members of their Federations to WIZO...

Some little while after WIZO was founded, a group of intelligent and enlightened women in Palestine formed the Histadruth Nashim Zioniot (Organization of Women Zionists)...Mrs. Hadassah Samuel, daughter-in-law of Herbert Samuel, was elected chairman, and under her competent leadership the

<sup>45</sup> Naomi Shepherd, A Price below Rubies: Jewish Women as Rebels & Radicals (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 181.

Palestine group carried out admirably the program adopted by WIZO at its annual conference.”<sup>46</sup>

**1920.** British take control of Eretz Yisrael.

**1920.** Arab nationalists attack new Jewish settlements in the north. Yosef Trumdeldor dies in attack on Tel Hai.

**1920.** Yokheved Bat Rachel, comes from wealthy family, immigrates to Palestine from the Soviet Union and brings with her ideas of gender equality.<sup>47</sup>

**1920.** Lilia Basevitz, from wealthy family, worked as librarian in Red Army, imprisoned for Zionist activities, comes to Palestine, joins Kibbutz Ein Harod.<sup>48</sup>

**1920.** Women obtain the vote in 1920 elections to Yishuv “parliament,” Asefat ha-Nivharim, despite rightwing opposition.

Rosa Welt-Straus (1858-1938), chairperson of newly formed “Association of Hebrew Women for Equal Rights in Eretz Yisrael.” One of the many women who came from the U.S. to Palestine in the 1920's and laid the foundation for women's equality. The Union led the

struggle for suffrage for women in the Jewish community in Palestine from 1919 onwards.

**1920.** Batia Lichansky graduates from Bezalel (Art School).<sup>49</sup>

**1920.** Tziona Tagger, born in Haifa in 1900, co-founds Hebrew Artists Association in Jerusalem. Later it becomes the Association of Painters and Sculptors.<sup>50</sup>

**1920.** Histadrut founded. Of the 87 delegates, 4 were women, but they were not delegates of women's groups. Female labor force was 20% of Jewish workers.

<sup>46</sup> Verz Weizmann, The Impossible Takes Longer (NY: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 91-94.

<sup>47</sup> Deborah Bernstein, The Struggle..., p. 28.

<sup>48</sup> Deborah Bernstein, The Struggle..., p. 29.

<sup>49</sup> Ran Schechori, Art in Israel (Tel Aviv: Sadan, 1974).

<sup>50</sup> Jean Owen (ed.), Artists in Israel: 1920-1980 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1982).

**1920.** Henrietta Szold arrives in Palestine at age 60. Emma Ehrlich is her private secretary for the rest of her life.

**1920.** Lea Nikel, born in the Ukraine in 1918, arrives in Palestine at age 2. Goes on to become superb artist, winning the Sandberg Prize in 1972 from the Israel Museum.<sup>51</sup>

**1921.** December 27. First class of the Hadassah Nursing School graduates in Jerusalem.<sup>52</sup>

**1921.** Junior Hadassah founded in the United States.

**1921.** Golda Meir and her husband immigrate to Palestine.

**1921.** Convention of Working Women meets to elect the Executive Committee of the Moetzet HaPoalot (Women Workers' Council). Lays the foundation for the Working

Woman's Movement. Conference has 43 delegates representing 485 workers. Committed to providing work for women and tries to broaden the range of occupations available to women and to provide training.

**1921.** Miriam Bernstein-Cohen arrives in Palestine, joins David Davidow's company, known as the "Hebrew Theater." Group dissolves after 2 years. Goes to Germany, meets Menahem Gnessin and helps him organize Teatron Erez Israeli, returning with him to Palestine in 1924. Merges with Habimah. Eventually joins the Cameri Theater in Tel Aviv. Also a translator of fine literature.

**1921-28.** Alice Seligsberg founds the Palestine Orphan Committee, which Sophia Berger directs for 8 years. These women introduce "American ideas" into Palestine. Alice Seligsberg is President of Hadassah from 1921-23.

<sup>51</sup> Jean Owen (ed.), Artists in Israel: 1920-1980 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1982). <sup>52</sup> See new Hadassah publication on this class.

**1922.** General Council of Women Workers established within the Histadrut, established training farms, creating 6 farms by 1930. Second conference is held (following the 1921 conference). 37 delegates represent 600 women members.

**1922.** Margalith Ornstein founds in Tel Aviv the first dance studio in Palestine.

**1923.** World Council of Jewish Women established. Holds first meeting in Vienna. <sup>53</sup>

**1923.** Conference Group of National Jewish Women's Organizations, founded in United States.

**1924-1931.** Fourth Aliyah. Petit-bourgeois families from Poland. Urban settlers. Women became housewives. Gender balanced immigration.

**1925.** 120,000 Jews in Eretz Yisrael.

“The appeal of Zionism at least until the 1930s was mainly to young, single petit-bourgeois people, mostly men, who could afford to leave their families and emigrate to Palestine, and as such was basically a male European colonizing movement.”<sup>54</sup>

**1925.** The Pioneer Women of Palestine initiated in the United States by Rachel Yanait Ben-Zvi. Pioneer Women is a women’s labor Zionist organization, with emphasis on socialist and feminist causes. Many members spoke Yiddish and devoted themselves to fundraising.

**1926.** The Women’s International Zionist Organization establishes the Girls' Farm in Nahalal, under the direction of Hannah Meisel. This farm intends to overcome the problems of the first farm established by Meisel at Kinneret.

<sup>53</sup> See Nelly Las.

<sup>54</sup> Nira Yuval Davis, Israeli Women and Men: Divisions behind the Unity, (London: International Reports: Women and Society, 198?), p. 3.

**1920’s.** Golda Meir represents the Pioneer Women in meetings with foreign dignitaries.

**1927.** Eclipse of radical feminism within the women workers’ movements. Ada Maimon is replaced as general secretary of the Women’s Workers Council by Golda Meir.

**1928.** David Remez asks Golda Meir to become Secretary of the Moetzet Hapoalot (The Women’s Labour Council) of the Histadrut (rather than have election among the women). By agreeing, Golda knew she was ending her marriage to Morris. He remained in Jerusalem and she took their two children to Tel Aviv. They separated causally then and more formally after 10 years, but never divorced. He died in her home in 1951.

“The Women’s Labour Council and its sister-organization abroad, the Pioneer Women, were the first and last women’s organizations for which I ever worked. I was attracted to them not so much because they concerned women, as such, but because I was very interested in the work they were doing, particularly in the agricultural training farms



they set up for immigrant girls.

.In the 1930s its emphasis was almost entirely on vocational training for the hundreds of young girls who came to Palestine to work on the land but who had no farming background at all or any trade.

The council's training farms gave those girls a lot more than just vocational know-how. They helped to speed up the girls' integration into the country, to teach them Hebrew and to give them a sense of stability in a new land, to which most of them came without families and some even without the consent of their parents. These 'working women's farms' were set up at a time when the idea that women should be trained for anything, let alone agriculture, was still considered absurd by most people.

I am not a great admirer of the kind of feminism that gives rise to bra-burning, hatred of men or a campaign against motherhood, but had very great regard for those energetic hard-working women within the ranks of the Labour movement - Ada, Beba Idelson, Rachel Yanait-Ben-Zvi, to name just a few - who succeeded in equipping dozens of city-bred girls with the sort of theoretical knowledge and sound practical training that made it possible for them to do their share (and often much more than their share) of the work going on in the agricultural settlements throughout Palestine. That to me is constructive feminism and matters much more than who sweeps the house or who sets the table."<sup>55</sup>

**1929.** 150,000 Jews in Eretz Yisrael. Arab programs in the country; 60 Jews die in Hebron. Survivors move to Jerusalem.

**1929.** Shulamit Aloni born in Tel Aviv to Socialist-Zionist parents. As teenager served in the Palmach, the commando arm of the Hagganah. Later graduated from Teachers Seminary in Jerusalem and from Hebrew University Law School.

**1929.** "Zionist women never achieved occupational equality in the pre-state period, even in the farming battalions which created the myth. The majority of pre-state women immigrant workers in the towns were consigned to work in domestic service, or to the same industries in which their working-class counterparts had worked in Eastern Europe - textiles, clothing, and tobacco.

For political and economic reasons - for experiments in sexual equality were not at the top of the Zionist agenda - the pre-state labour movement did not back the principle of equal pay for equal work and, as the feminist Ada Maimon pointed out in 1929, women workers' status in pre-state Jewish society in Palestine was actually very similar to that in England or

Germany thirty years earlier.”<sup>56</sup>

**1929.** Ben Gurion meets Rivka Katznelson (not related to Berl), “editor of Dvar Hapoelet, the Histadrut women’s monthly, and literary critic” with whom he has an affair.<sup>57</sup>

**1929.** Batia Lichansky has an exhibition of her sculpture in Jerusalem. She goes on to create monumental sculptures throughout Israel, including at the following kibbutzim: Beit Keshet, Einat, Hulda, Netzer Sereni and Kfar Yehoshua.<sup>58</sup>

**1929.** 2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress of Jewish Women. Meets in Hamburg. At this Congress, Irma Lindheim argues in favor

<sup>55</sup> Golda Meir, My Life (Jerusalem, Steimatzsky's, 1975), pp. 87-89.

<sup>56</sup> Naomi Shepherd, A Price below Rubies: Jewish Women as Rebels & Radicals (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 176. See her sources.

<sup>57</sup> Shabtai Teveth, Ben-Gurion: The Burning Ground, 1886-1948 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), p. 402.

<sup>58</sup> Ran Schechori, Art in Israel (Tel Aviv: Sadan, 1974).

of cooperation with the Jewish Agency. (Nelly Las, p. 36).

**1930.** Rachel Katznelson-Shazar edits Women Workers Speak, published in English in 1932 as The Plough Woman. Rachel Katznelson is director of cultural activities in the Histadrut and one of the leaders of the women’s workers movement.

**1930.** Nehama Leibowitz, future eminent Bible scholar, immigrates to Palestine with her husband.

**1930.** Organization of Working Mothers established in the Women Workers’ Movement and became very active.

**1930,** July 13. Naomi Shemer, songwriter, born on Kibbutz Kinneret.

**1932-39.** Fifth Aliyah. 50% middle-class families from Germany. 50% labor immigration. 50% of these immigrants are women. Professional opportunities for women are created.

Large influx of capital.

**1932.** Yocheved Bat Miriam (Zhelezniak), (1901-?) admired by Berl Katznelson, was a poetess who “wrote on female figures in the Bible, whom she treated with originality, and with a richness of taste and color that had hitherto been unknown in modern Hebrew literature. Bat Miriam was a tiny, fragile woman who always wore black and spoke to everyone in the third person, an archaic mode of respectful address. She herself seemed to have walked out of the pages of the Bible”<sup>59</sup> Her first volume of poetry Me-Rahok (From Afar) published in 1932, 4 years after she settled in Eretz Yisrael. Produced 6 other volumes of poetry, awarded Israel Prize in 1972.<sup>60</sup>

**1932.** Anna Ticho co-founds the New Bezalel School, which later becomes the Bezalel Academy of Art.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Shimon Peres, Battling for Peace: A Memoir (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 32.

<sup>60</sup> Encyclopedia Judaica, volume 4, p. 326.

<sup>61</sup> Jean Owen (ed.), Artists in Israel: 1920-1980 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1982).

**1933.** Irma Lindheim, 3<sup>rd</sup> president of Hadassah, widow, mother of 5, immigrates to Palestine and joins Kibbutz Mishmar HaEmek at age 47.<sup>62</sup>

**1933.** Recha Freier (b. 1892, d. 1984) creates program in Berlin to bring Jewish youth from Germany to Palestine to escape Nazi persecution, named Society for Youth Aliyah.

**1934.** Henrietta Szold, Director of the Department of Social Services of the Va'ad Leumi, takes over leadership of what is now named Youth Aliyah.

**1934.** Rebecca Sieff (born 1890, England; died 1966 Tel Aviv) founds Sieff Research Institute at Rechovot with her husband, Israel Sieff. In 1949 it becomes the Weizmann Institute of Science.

**1934.** Construction begins of Hadassah Hospital, next to Hebrew University.

**1935.** May. Rega Klapholz, who had a 4-year love-affair with David Ben-Gurion on his visits to Europe, arrives in Palestine. Paula Ben-Gurion discovers the relationship and ends it.

**1936. 18 Jews killed in Arab riots in Tel Aviv. Start of 3 years of "Arab revolts" against Jewish immigration.**

**1936.** Sarah Bodek becomes the first American woman to graduate from Hadassah School of Nursing. She goes on to develop nursing system in kibbutzim, particularly in the northern part of Palestine.

**1937.** 17 year-old Aliza (Ola) Arnold becomes engaged to lawyer and political activist, Menachem Begin. Jabotinsky marries the couple in Trotskowitz, Poland in

**1939.** At age 20, she bravely sends her husband food packages to prison (as have so many Jewish women in various countries). She was “member in good standing

<sup>62</sup> Shulamit Reinharz, “ “Irma Lindheim: An Independent America Zionist Woman,” Nashim, 1998.

of Revisionist Zionism, an old Betari who had studiously kept abreast of events in the movement.”<sup>63</sup>

Aliza was the only person Begin genuinely trusted. Aliza died at the time of the Sabra-Shatila massacre, and some speculate that her death, more than the political fallout from Lebanon, contributed to his resignation, retirement and silence.<sup>64</sup>

**1938.** Kfar Szold, a village in Upper Galilee founded, named for Henrietta Szold.

**1938.** Rachel Maccabi joins Palmach’s Signal Corps. In 1943 becomes wireless operator, trained by Yitzhak Rabin’s sister, Rachel.

**1938.** David Ben-Gurion has affair with his secretary, Doris May.

**1939.** Chanah Senesh (1921-44) arrives in Palestine; in 1941 she settles in Kibbutz Sdot Yam.

**1939.** 400,000 Jews in Palestine. British government announces White Paper which restricts Jewish immigration to 10,000 per year and restricts opportunities for Jews to buy land.

**1942.** Alice L. Seligsberg Vocational School for Girls opens, named for social worker, close friend of Henrietta Szold's, and second president of Hadassah (1921-1923).

**1942.** Council of Women's Organizations established, with Working Women's Council and WIZO as major components.

**1942.** David Ben Gurion falls in love with Miriam Cohen, and employs her as his personal secretary in the United States. This love continues even after she marries, and until his death.

Vera Weizmann becomes chair of Youth Aliyah.

<sup>63</sup> Amos Perlmutter, The Life and Times of Menachem Begin (New York: Doubleday, 1987), p. 129.

<sup>64</sup> Amos Perlmutter, The Life and Times of Menachem Begin (New York: Doubleday, 1987),

p. 103.

**1944.** Boston University awards Henrietta Szold honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities, and transmits ceremony by radio to her in Jerusalem.

**1944.** Hannah Senesh. Kept diary since age 13. Hungarian Jew volunteered to join elite parachute corps formed by the British. Parachuted with 31 others including Haviva Reich into Nazi-occupied Yugoslavia, joined partisans, made her way across border to Hungary to warn Jewish population. In the Carpathian mountains, she tried to organize resistance against the Nazis. As 23-year-old, tortured by Nazis and executed in Budapest in 1944. Becomes martyr.<sup>65</sup>

**1945,** February 13. Henrietta Szold dies at age 84.

**1945.** Sonia Gelman marries Shimon Peres, live in a kibbutz which provides them with their "own tent, although for part of the time we had to share it with Shulamit Aloni."<sup>66</sup>

**1945**, March. Suzy Ambache marries Abba Eban in Cairo. She “was the eldest of three Ambache daughters whose home was in a massive residence in the Zamalek arter of Cairo. Her parents had both been born in Jewish Palestine, the father in the Neveh Tsedek quarter of Jaffa and the mother in Jerusalem...The Ambache son and the three daughters, one of whom, Aura, is the wife of the (late) president, Chaim Herzog, had been brought up in French schools in Ismailiya, where their education was provided by a governess imported for that purpose from Jerusalem...Suzy crowned her Hebrew and French schooling by graduating from the American University in Cairo.”<sup>67</sup>

**1947**. November 29. U.N. Palestine partition resolution.

**1947** Rivka Eliav joins underground in Palestine, age 17.

<sup>65</sup> See Hannah Senesh: Her Life & Diary (Hebrew) (Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1966), English version, Nigel March, 1971.

<sup>66</sup> Shimon Peres, Battling for Peace: A Memoir (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 45.

<sup>67</sup> Abba Eban, Personal Witness: Israel through my Eyes (New York: G.P Putnam & Sons, 1992), p. 59.

**1947**. Leah (later Rabin) joins Palmach.

**1947**. Aliza Gouri joins Palmach as a welfare service officer in the Fifth Brigade. She is responsible for notifying family members of soldier's deaths.

**1947**. Hassida Pail joins Palmach, helps form Negev Brigade and becomes radio operator. The Signal Corps was 30-40% women, the best of whom were wireless operators. They not only sent and received messages, but also coded and deciphered them.

**1947**. National Organization of Nurses established. First professional union for nurses in Palestine. Worked on broadening scope of nurses' education, improving working conditions, and raising salaries.

**1947**. Bracha Habas, labor activist and leader, edits massive Second Aliyah Book; contains only one chapter on all the women of the Second Aliyah.

**1948.** May 14. State of Israel founded. 600,000 Jews.

Declaration of Independence signed, 37 signatories, 2 are women: Golda Meir and Rachel Cohen-Kagan.<sup>68</sup> Cohen-Kagan was born in Odessa in 1888 where she received a university degree in mathematics. Came to Palestine in 1919 and for 17 years chaired Social Services Committee of the city of Haifa. Was elected to the Elected Assembly and administered the social service department of the National Jewish Government (Vaad Leumi). Was particularly interested in improving women's cultural level. Leader in founding WIZO-Israel with assistance of Hadassah. In 1946 elected chair of WIZO, and in that role was elected to first Knesset where she served as member of committees on education, and on law and justice.

**1948.** Golda Meir named Israel's Ambassador to Soviet Union. She is accompanied by Eiga Shapiro and Lou Kaddar, born in Paris. French was the language of the Israeli delegation. "For the better part of the next 27 years, Lou

<sup>68</sup> There is no entry in the Encyclopedia Judaica about Rachel Kagan. Study currently being done about her by graduate student in Canada.

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was my close friend, my indispensable assistant and, more often than not, my travel companion."<sup>69</sup>

**1948.** Lea Gottlieb arrives from Hungary, with her husband Armin and two children. "They had survived the Holocaust by going into hiding. The country they were moving to was fighting for its life. A pat of butter was a luxury, jobs were scarce and the only major export was oranges. Lea pawned her wedding ring and used the money to buy bolts of white organza. She cut and sewed the luxurious material into regal party dresses for little girls. Despite the troubled economy, the dresses were snapped up. 'No matter what the economic situation, there is always a market for beautiful things,' says Lea." In 1956, Gottex was born, world-class producer of women's bathing suits and beachwear.

**1948.** Women's Corps (CHEN) established, military service was made mandatory for women. Women were integrated into regular units in 1949.

**1948.** Tamar Ben-Dror, born in Poland in 1930. Convoy guard.<sup>70</sup>

**1948.** Shoshana Damari. Born in Yemen in 1922. Singer in the front lines in 1948.<sup>71</sup>

**1948.** Margot Singer. Born in Cologne in 1915. Outpost commander in Kibbutz Ein Gev.<sup>72</sup>

**1948.** Rachel Maccabi. Born in Egypt in 1918. Wireless operator, adjunct officer.<sup>73</sup>

1948. Rachel Ogen. Born in Poland in 1927. Palmach member.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Golda Meir, My Life (Jerusalem, Steimatzsky's, 1975), p. 199.

<sup>70</sup> See Aaron Levin, Testament: At the Creation of the State of Israel (New York: Artisan, 1998), p. 63.

<sup>71</sup> See Aaron Levin, Testament: At the Creation of the State of Israel (New York: Artisan, 1998), p. 72.

<sup>72</sup> See Aaron Levin, Testament: At the Creation of the State of Israel (New York: Artisan, 1998), p. 104.

<sup>73</sup> See Aaron Levin, Testament: At the Creation of the State of Israel (New York: Artisan, 1998), p. 150.

<sup>74</sup> See Aaron Levin, Testament: At the Creation of the State of Israel (New York: Artisan, 1998), p. 165.

**1948.** Mazal Linenberg, born in Jerusalem in 1914. Director of Finance, Central Post Office.<sup>75</sup>

**1948.** Shulamit Ram. Born in Palestine in 1923. Helped defend Kibbutz Nirim.<sup>76</sup>

**1948.** Yona Shapira. Born in Kibbutz Degania in 1921. Defender of Kibbutz Degania Aleph.<sup>77</sup>

**1948.** Rachel Rabin-Jacob. Born in Tel Aviv in 1925. Wireless operator for Kibbutz Manara.<sup>78</sup>

**1948.** Vivienne Tabor. “In 1948, at the time of the War of Independence, the world’s airlines discontinued flights to Lydda airport on the grounds that it was a ‘war zone.’ To help bridge the gap, the South African Zionist Federation established charter flights (Universal Airways)



to ferry Machal pilots, volunteers and supplies from Johannesburg to Lydda. At the height of the war, they decided to extend the flights as far as London in an attempt to break the isolation imposed on the fledgling State. They sent one Machal pilot (Cecil Wulfsohn of Rustenburg) to Lond, to try to establish a London office and terminal to handle the flights.

At that time, I, then a young member of Habonim in England, with some background in wartime intelligence, was asked by the Jewish Agency to help in establishing the non-technical aspect of the service. As luck would have it, Wulfsohn, an expert in pinpoint dropping of supplies from the air, was detained in Israel to help in the Negev fighting. I was left alone to handle the London operation, including aircraft dispatch, flight catering, charter contracts and even crew payments. We continued this service until the establishment of El Al in 1949 when I made aliyah.

<sup>75</sup> See Aaron Levin, Testament: At the Creation of the State of Israel (New York: Artisan, 1998), p. 28.

<sup>76</sup> See Aaron Levin, Testament: At the Creation of the State of Israel (New York: Artisan, 1998), p. 89.

<sup>77</sup> See Aaron Levin, Testament: At the Creation of the State of Israel (New York: Artisan, 1998), p. 94.

<sup>78</sup> See Aaron Levin, Testament: At the Creation of the State of Israel (New York: Artisan, 1998), p. 108.

My own modest role, as a young Jewish women in England, was in the maintenance of an air link with Israel during the War of Independence (via Universal Airways of South Africa).

I record this not because of my role but because I have never seen any reference to this essentially South African Zionist contribution in any official history of these heroic times.”

**1949.** Vera Weizmann devotes most of her time to Magen David Adom and organization for disabled veterans.

**1949.** Sarah Levi-Tannai forms Inbal Dance Theater based on Yemenite traditions. She becomes company’s first choreographer and artistic director.

**1949.** - First Knesset elected. Includes 11 women or 9.1% of members of Knesset. Highest percentage achieved to this date.

**1949.** 210,000 immigrants arrive in Israel as refugees, primarily from North Africa and countries in Asia.

**1949.** International Council of Jewish Women reconvened. No reference to their initial objection to the recently created State of Israel. (Nelly Las, 50), Rather, they had a certain “distance from Zionism” other than their support of the Hebrew University.

**1949.** Shula Cohen begins work smuggling Jews from Syria and Lebanon to Palestine. Book published about her entitled, Shula Cohen begins work smuggling Jews from Syria and Lebanon to Palestine. Book published about her entitled, Shula.

**1949.** Airlifts of Jews from Morocco, Iran and Iraq.

**1950.** “Age of Marriage” Law passed, named for Ada Maimon, stating that children could not marry or be married.

**1950.** 4.2% of local councilors are women.

**1951.** The Law of Equality of Women: “there will be one law for women and men - every legal action and every judicial provision which discriminates against

woman is void.” Similar statement already in Declaration of Independence. **1951.** Prime Minister Ben Gurion doubts American Zionists’ commitment. Mrs. Samuel (Rose) Halprin, national president of Hadassah, takes issue and states that “the sole criterion of Zionist leadership cannot be personal immigration to Israel.”

**1951.** Hannah Senesh’s body brought to Israel, buried with full military honors. **1951.** 2<sup>nd</sup>

Knesset elections. 11 women elected or 9.1% of members of Knesset. **1952.** Ground-

breaking of Hadassah Medical Center at Ein Kerem, Israel. Rebecca

Shulman, Hadassah leader from the U.S., participated in groundbreaking

ceremony.<sup>79</sup> **1953.** The Rabbinical Courts Jurisdiction Law (Marriage and Divorce) awards religious establishment total control over marriage and divorce, legalizing the rules of Orthodox Judaism for everyone in Israel.

**1953.** National Insurance Act establishes that women retire at 60, men at 65.

**1954.** Female Labor Law. The Minister of Labor can limit women's work if it is potentially harmful to the women, set-back for women.

**1954,** September. Immigration of Moroccan Jews begins.

**1955.** 3<sup>rd</sup> Knesset elections. 11 women elected or 9.1% of members of Knesset.

**1956.** Golda Meir replaces Moshe Sharett as Foreign Minister in the Ben-Gurion government.

**1950's.** Prime Minister Ben Gurion establishes prizes for families with ten children or more.

<sup>79</sup> photo, p. 581, Jewish Women in America, vol. 1.

**1956.** Hanna Rovina, founder of Habima Theater, awarded Israel Prize for her life's work as an actress and her contribution to cultural life and art in Israel.

**1957.** Nehama Leibowitz awarded Israel Prize for education (taught Biblical commentary to thousands of people, gave weekly Bible lesson on radio.)

**1959.** The Defense Service Act is passed, making the necessary military service period shorter for women than for men, creating different types of training and employment in the armed service for men and women.

**1959.** Yael Dayan, born in 1939, joined the Israel Defense Forces in 1956 and becomes lieutenant. At 20, publishes first book, New Face in the Mirror.

**1959.** Shulamit Aloni joins ruling Mapai Party.

**1959.** Elisheva Kaplan Eshkol, second wife of Finance Minister Levi Eshkol, dies of cancer. Their marriage was “ideally happy...Like her husband, Elisheva was the best kind of humanitarian socialist, with a deeply rooted determination to help the underdog. She was a good and efficient housewife and a much loved mother; she was especially at home at the Degania B kibbutz.

Like her husband, she was a compulsive worker, but that does not seem to have interfered with the easy gaiety of their private lives, even in the darkest days of the Mandate and the most desperate moments of the War of Independence.”<sup>80</sup>

**1959.** 4<sup>th</sup> Knesset Elections. 9 women elected. 7.5% of members of Knesset.

**1960.** Galia Golan is Miss World runner-up.

**1960.** Golda Meir, Mina Ben-Zvi and Inga Thorsson create Mount Carmel Centre (formal name is International Training Centre for Community Services) to train “women from the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America in social services.”<sup>81</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Terence Prittie, *Eshkol: The Man and the Nation* (New York: Pitman, 1969).<sup>81</sup> Golda Meir, My Life (Jerusalem, Steimatzky's, 1975), p. 276.

**1961,** February 17. Manya Shohat, among leaders of HaShomer and one of the founders of Histadrut, dies at age 81.

**1961.** 5<sup>th</sup> Knesset elections. 10 women elected or 8.3% of members of Knesset.

**1961-1965,** Shulamit Aloni produces radio programs dealing with legislation and legal procedures. As a result of one of these programs, the Office of the Ombudsman was established in 1965.<sup>82</sup>

**1962.** Jewish population of Israel is 2 million.

**1962.** Knesset Member Beba Edelson asked what the Minister of Police intended to do about domestic violence. The Minister of Police said that the Israeli police were aware of the problem and that there was no need for further action.

**1963.** American-born Israeli sociologist, Judith Shuval, publishes Immigrants on the Threshold, the first large-scale empirical work on the adjustment problems of immigrants in Israel, a study of the attitudes and behaviors of almost 2000 people from 20 countries during their first year in Israel. This book goes on to win the Israel Prize in Social Sciences in 1965.

1964. Yehuda Erez edits Third Aliyah Book; only one chapter on all the women of the Third Aliyah.

**1964.** Levi Eshkol marries Miriam Zelikovitz (3<sup>rd</sup> wife), woman of “drive, imagination and considerable intellectual ability, who had served in the War of Independence, had been a schoolteacher, and had then become librarian, first at the Hebrew University and later at the Knesset.”<sup>83</sup> This marriage was also happy. Miriam was the age of Eshkol’s daughters.

<sup>82</sup> Slater and Slater, p. 23.

<sup>83</sup> Terence Prittie, Eshkol: The Man and the Nation (New York: Pitman, 1969), p. 220.

**1965.** Sociologist Yonina Talmon-Garber became the first scholar to shatter the myth of women’s equality in the kibbutz community, tracing social mechanisms that generated gender equality.<sup>84</sup>

**1965.** Anna Ticho wins Art Prize of the City of Jerusalem.<sup>85</sup>

**1965.** 6<sup>th</sup> Knesset elections. 9 women elected or 7.5% of members of Knesset.

**1965.** Shulamit Aloni writes article attacking Ben Gurion for defecting from Mapai to form Rafi Party. This article impressed Prime Minister Levi Eshkol who asks her to join Labor's list, wins seat in the 1965 election. Acts provocatively (wears low-cut dresses and criticizes Golda Meir). Establishes Consumer's Council and serves as its chair. A critic of the religious establishment, she invented "Shulamit Aloni marriage," a contractual accord signed by a consenting male and female in front of a lawyer that bypassed the rabbinical court's monopoly on nuptials.<sup>86</sup>

**1967.** Six-Day War.

**1967.** Vera Weizmann publishes memoir, The Impossible Takes Longer.

**1967.** Yael Dayan publishes A Soldier's Diary, describing the tension and fortitude of Israelis during Six-Day War.

**1967.** Naomi Shemer writes "Yerushalayim shel Zahav" ("Jerusalem of Gold") for Israel Radio.

**1969.** Golda Meir becomes Prime Minister when Levi Eshkol dies. Serves until Yom Kippur War.

<sup>84</sup> Hannah Herzog, "Ways of Knowing: The Production of Feminist Knowledge in Israel," Israel Social Science Research, vol. 12, no. 2, 1997. pp. 2-28, p.3. This article is a wonderful overview of the Israeli academics who have made a contribution to understanding women's lives in Israel.

<sup>85</sup> Jean Owen (ed.), Artists in Israel: 1920-1980 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1982). <sup>86</sup> Slater and Slater, p. 24.

**1969.** 7<sup>th</sup> Knesset elections. 8 women elected or 66% of members of Knesset.

**1969.** Retrospective exhibit of Chana Orloff's sculpture in Tel Aviv Museum.

**1970.** Two professors at Haifa University (Marcia Freedman and Marilyn Safir) start courses on women's issues, initiating resurgence of Israeli feminism.<sup>87</sup>

**1970.** Rivka Bar-Yosef, sociologist at Hebrew University, together with her student, Ilana Shelach, “put the position of women in Israel on the Israeli sociological agenda.”<sup>88</sup>

**1970.** Sara Rivka Feder-Keyfitz makes aliyah at age 70 from the United States. She is Zionist leader, accomplished sociologist, outstanding educator, ardent feminist, and important leader in American Labor Zionist movement. Originally from Poland, she grew up in Milwaukee and became close friend of Golda Mabovitch (Meir). First trip to Palestine was in 1927. Heavily involved in Pioneer Women (now Naamat) as organizer, editor and national president. Joined faculty of American College in Jerusalem in 1970 and established Adult Education Association in Israel.<sup>89</sup>

**1972.** Day-care center established at Haifa University. Important innovation.

**1972.** Kahavi formed, organization for rights of large families. Encourages raising large families, stressing importance of numbers.

**1973.** Yom Kippur War.

**1973.** 8<sup>th</sup> Knesset elections. 8 women elected or 6.6% of members of Knesset.

<sup>87</sup> See "Thunder on Mount Carmel," in Geraldine Stern, Israeli Women Speak Out (NY: Lippincott, 1979). pp. 36-64. <sup>88</sup> Hannah Herzog, p. 4. <sup>89</sup> Jewish Women in America, p. 398.

**1973.** Shulamit Aloni founds Citizens' Rights Movement and in a remarkable success, wins three seats. Becomes most prominent female politician in Israel.<sup>90</sup>

**1973.** Marcia Freedman elected member of Knesset on Civil Rights list, raises issue of violence against women, does not hide her lesbianism.

**1974.** First Women's Center established (Haifa).

**1974.** Attempts to legalize abortion. Bill passes.

**1974.** Shulamit Aloni (Citizens Right Movement) becomes Minister without Portfolio in Yitzhak Rabin's government, only second woman in Israel's history to hold a cabinet post. Mafdal (National Religious Party) joins Coalition government. In protest, Shulamit Aloni quits her post.

**1974.** Connie Smukler of Philadelphia travels to Moscow where she meets Ida Nudel and becomes one of her most impassioned voices in the free world. Connie sensitizes Philadelphia Jewish women to Ida's plight, helps build the Soviet Jewry movement, advocates, pressures, demonstrates nationally and internationally, until Ida Nudel is finally liberated and arrives in Israel in 1987, becoming a revered symbol of the effort to "Let My People Go."

**1974.** Two Soviet Jewish ballet dancers, Valeri and Galina Panov, are finally permitted to emigrate to Israel.

**1975.** International Women's Year officially inaugurated in Israel by President Ephraim Katzir. Declaration calls for equality between women and men. Initiated Commission on the Status of Women, including politicians, academic scholars, trade union activists, social workers, army officers and others.

**1975.** Anna Ticho wins Sandberg Prize, given by the Israel Museum for excellence in art in Israel.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>90</sup> See "Rebel with a Cause," in Geraldine Stern, Israeli Women Speak Out (New York: Lippincott, 1979), pp. 15-35 (about Shulamit Aloni)..

<sup>91</sup> Jean Owen (ed.), Artists in Israel: 1920-1980 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1982).

**1976.** For the first time, Miss Israel - Rina Mor-Messinger - wins the Miss Universe Beauty Pageant.



**1976.** Shulamit Aloni publishes Women as People (in Hebrew).

**1976.** Esther Roth-Shahamorov reaches finals of the Olympic 100 meter hurdles. First time in history of Israel's athletics. She comes in 6<sup>th</sup> with a tie of 13.04 seconds.

**1976.** Marcia Freedman asks Knesset to put violence against women on the agenda. A subcommittee of Police Affairs starts to investigate family violence in Israel.

**1976.** Miriam Ben-Porat becomes first woman appointed to the Supreme Court of Israel.

**1976.** Aviva Uri, born in 1927 in Palestine, wins the Sandberg Prize for art from the Israel Museum.<sup>92</sup>

**1977.** Yitzhak Rabin withdraws as Labour party's candidate for the premiership in the upcoming Israeli elections following revelation that his wife (Leah), violated Israeli law by opening a bank account in the United States while he was Israeli ambassador (Shimon Peres elected).

**1977.** 9<sup>th</sup> Knesset election. 8 women elected or 6.6% of members of Knesset.

**1977.** For the first time, the Likud Party in power.

**1977.** Marcia Freedman forms Women's Party. Suggests law against violence against women.

**1977.** First women's bookstore/center, Kol Isha (Haifa).

<sup>92</sup>

Jean Owen (ed.), Artists in Israel: 1920-1980 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1982).

**1977.** First battered woman's shelters founded (Haifa). Herzliya and Jerusalem establish shelter in next 3 years.

**1977-78.** Commission of Inquiry on the Status of Women meets. Thirty-eight

recommendations made dealing with education, including sexism in textbooks, feminization of staff, sexist curricula and many other issues. Recommends establishment of a National Authority on the Status of Women.

**1978**, January 23. 140-page Report on the Status of Women in Israel, prepared by 92-member commission headed by Knesset member Ora Namir, was presented to Prime Minister Menachem Begin. Listed 241 recommendation to improve the status of women at work, at home, in education, in political, economic and social life. “Notably omitted...is the problem of discrimination in marriage and divorce...The commission found that half the women in Israel have had education of 8 years or less, one quarter less than three or four years.”<sup>93</sup>

**1978**. Gail Rubin - American nature photographer, killed at Kibbutz Maagan Michael.

**1978**. First Israeli feminist conference. Haifa University.

**1978**. Golda Meir dies at age 80, after 15 years of cancer.

**1979**. Ilana Dorfman founds feminist consciousness-raising group in Kibbutz Harel.

**1980**, April. Israeli attorney general Yitzhak Zamir empanels committee chaired by Judge Judith Karp to investigate alleged civil rights violations in administered territories.

**1980**. Actress Hanna Rovina dies at age 90. Called the “First Lady of Hebrew Theater.”

**1980**. Israeli Supreme Court rules women can sue husbands for rape.

<sup>93</sup> See "I-Thou Redefined," in Geraldine Stern, Israeli Women Speak Out (New York:Lippincott, 1979), pp. 82-99,  
p. 97 (about Judith Buber Agassi)

**1980**. First Mayor's Women's Commission established in Haifa.

**1980**. The Magazine, NOGA, established. Noga is a feminist magazine, “wishing to express the radical feminist voice of Israeli women.”

**1980.** Anna Ticho wins Israel Prize. Dies later that year at age 86 in Jerusalem.<sup>94</sup>

**1981.** First International Interdisciplinary Congress, “Women’s World,” held in Haifa.

**1981.** 10<sup>th</sup> Knesset elections. 9 women elected or 7.5% of members of Knesset.

**1982.** Women’s Studies Program established at the University of Haifa.

**1983.** Shoshana Shmuely starts Parents Against Silence, calling for peace in Israel and protesting war in Lebanon.

**1983.** Amira Dotan (1947-), Chief of the Women’s Corps (CHEN), becomes the first female General in the Israel Defense Forces, at age 35. Responsible for all women serving in Israeli military. Served for 22 years, took an active part in 4 wars. Mother of 3, now devotes her time to peace, empowerment of women and Jewish identity. Managing Director of Business Network Israel (BNI), division of Operation Independence, to provide worldwide connections to new, small and medium-sized Israeli companies.<sup>95</sup>

**1984.** American Jewish Congress sponsors 4-day dialogue in Jerusalem of Israeli and American Jewish women to discuss “Jew as Woman, Woman as Jew.” Includes topics of family, work, religion and politics. This meeting spurs creation of IWN, see next item.

<sup>94</sup> Jean Owen (ed.), Artists in Israel: 1920-1980 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1982).<sup>95</sup> Personal Dimension, "Amira Dotan: Israel's First Female General," in Barbara Swirsky and Marilyn P. Safir (eds.), Calling the Equality Bluff: Women in Israel (New York: Teachers College Press, 1981), pp. 139-141.

**1984.** IWN (Israel Women’s Network) founded. Israeli women form this organization to work across political lines. Issues include 1) improving public image of women in the media and advertising which is sexist and offensive; 2) "humanization of the workforce" with emphasis on equal opportunities for employment; also promotion of legislation making it easier for wives and mothers to remain in the work force or return after leave; 3) pressuring the rabbinic courts to become more sensitive to the problems women face in areas of personal status, marriage and divorce.

**1984.** 11<sup>th</sup> Knesset elections. 10 women elected or 8.3% of members of Knesset.

**1984.** Joan Goodnick Westenholz moves to Israel and becomes curator of the Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem, one of the finest museums of archaeology in the Middle East.

**1984.** Women's International Zionist Organization opens a shelter for battered women in Ashdod.

**1985.** Naamat, the Movement of Working Women and Volunteers, focuses on educational and social service goals. It sponsors 750 day care centers throughout Israel, has 750,000 members, and does public education on the status of women. It does a public advertising campaign on status of women each November-December. It holds seminars to encourage high school girls to go into high-tech fields. Masha Lubelsky is chair.<sup>96</sup>

**1985.** Operation Moses brings 7,000 Ethiopians to Israel.

**1985.** Poet Yona Wolach dies.

**1985.** Alice Shalvi, Professor of English Literature at Hebrew University, becomes chairperson of the Women's Lobby, a burgeoning national group of women politicians, academics, businesswomen and other activities which hopes to become

<sup>96</sup> Lisa Hostein, JSPS Israel Bureau, April 1985, reprinted in Newvoices, National Jewish Student Magazine, volume 6, number 8, May 1998, p. 30.

an umbrella organization for all feminist activity in the country.<sup>97</sup> Lobby evolves into Israel Women's Network.

**1986.** The Israel Supreme Court rules against Interior Minister Shimon Peretz, in the matter of Shoshana Miller, a Reform convert to Judaism, whose request for citizenship under the Law of Return had been granted. Miller had objected to Peretz's requirement that the word "convert" be printed on her identity card. The court rules that traditional law forbade shaming a convert.

**1986.** Chaya Shalom (born 1944) organizes events for Kol Haisha (Women's Voice), a women's center and newspaper in Jerusalem. She also started KLAF, a lesbian feminist organization meant to foster a united lesbian community in Israel.

**1987.** Ida Nudel, leading Soviet refusenik, arrives in Israel. She had been refused an exit visa for 17 years, including 4 years in exile in Siberia.

**1987.** 6 of 42 members of Histadrut's Central Committee are women, or 14%. This is the highest ranking committee within the National Labor Union. The next highest level is the Executive Committee, in which there are 15 women out of 196 members, or 8%.

**1987.** Israela Oron becomes the first woman to earn a diploma from the High Military Education for Brigade Commander's Course.

**1987.** Nehama Leibowitz teaches at a rabbinical seminary. This was controversial because it was an Orthodox seminary and she refused to teach behind a screen.

**1988, January.** Women in Black movement begins. Attempt to persuade government to end the occupation. This is a peace group run by women.

**1988, May 23.** The Supreme Court of Israel rules that women may vote in the upcoming elections for Tel Aviv's Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi.

<sup>97</sup> Lisa Hostein, JSPS Israel Bureau, April 1985, reprinted in Newvoices, National Jewish Student Magazine, volume 6, number 8, May 1998, p. 29.

**1988.** The Supreme Court of Israel rules that Leah Shakdiel, an orthodox woman who was elected to the Religious Council in the Negev town of Yerucham, could not be denied service solely because of her sex. Orthodox circles had objected. She becomes the first woman to participate in Religious Councils as a full member.<sup>98</sup>

**1988, June 14.** Miriam Ben-Porat, alternate justice of the Israeli Supreme Court, is nominated to be the first female comptroller of the State of Israel.

**1988.** Equal Employment Opportunity Act passes, prohibiting discrimination and sexual harassment. This was a secondary clause and related solely to employer-employee relations.<sup>99</sup>

**1988.** WIZO starts a hot line for domestic violence in Tel Aviv.

**1988.** 12<sup>th</sup> Knesset Elections. 7 women or 5.8% of elected members.

**1989.** February. For the first time, an Israeli film, Because of that War, produced by Edna Ben-Dor-Niv, is shown at the Leningrad Film Festival. Dealing with the relations between first, second and third generations of Holocaust survivors families, the film wins 3<sup>rd</sup> prize.

**1989.** Ultra-Orthodox Israelis attack Jewish women holding a prayer service at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. Women intended to read from the Torah and are wearing “talitot.”

**1989. May.** Israeli-Palestinian Women’s Conference held in Brussels.

**1989.** Israel’s Cabinet has 26 ministers, including 5 without portfolio. No woman in the cabinet.

<sup>98</sup> Marilyn Safir, in Calling the Equality Bluff, p. 208, says this event occurred in 1989.

<sup>99</sup> Networking for Women: A Quarterly Publication of the Israel Women's Network, Spring 1998, vol. 11, no. 2, p. 3.

**1989.** Studies show that women in public service earn 30% less than do men.

**1989.** 8.6% of locally elected town councillors are women.

**1989.** 29 women ran for mayoral positions, on independent lists, one was elected.

**1990.** Mass immigration to Israel from the USSR begins.

**1990.** Movement begins to establish Yeshivot for women called "Midrashot", run

by women, and staffed by women teachers. **1990.** Female rabbinic decisors recognized by orthodox rabbinate for the first time.

**1990.** Israeli magazine "Laisha" (For the Woman) provides funds for Yael Arad to train for Olympics. **1990.** Miriam Ben-Porat goes before Knesset Committee and speaks about the government's lack of preparation for absorbing Soviet immigrants.

**1991.** Operation Solomon brings 15,1000 Jews from Ethopia.

**1991.** Miriam Ben-Porat wins Israel Prize for her "special contributions to society and state."

**1992.** Shulamit Aloni merges three left-wing parties (Citizens Rights Movement, Shinui and Mapam) into Meretz, and becomes its head. Meretz wins 12 Knesset

seat, making it the third largest party, after Labor and Likud, in the Knesset. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin makes Aloni the Education Minister.

Shas Party (Interior Minister Aryeh Deeri) wants her removed. Aloni argues that

the Interior Minister "has no right to claim guardianship over Jewish heritage. Women were also present at Mount Sinai."<sup>100</sup> Aloni is forced to leave post, and

<sup>100</sup> Slater and Slater, p. 25.

becomes Minister for Communications, Science and Technology. This election brings significant number of feminists into the Knesset.

**1992.** July 30. Yael Arad wins silver medal at Barcelona Olympics, first Israeli to win Olympic medal. Dedicates medal to Israeli athletes murdered at 1972 Olympics.

**1993.** January. Yael Dayan meets with PLO officials in Tunis.

**1993** Paula Weiman-Kelman becomes film archivist at Jerusalem Cinematheque. Her husband Rabbi Levi Weiman-Kelman founds popular Reform synagogue, Kol Hanishama, Jerusalem.

**1993.** First Gay Pride event (Tel Aviv).

**1994.** Israela Oron becomes Commander in Chief of the Women's Corps, and has the rank of Brigadier General.

**1995.** Alice Miller's request to be trained as a pilot, accepted by Supreme Court. IDF had argued that the army was not an instrument for the attainment of social goals. Miller then fails test for training. 1996, seven women accepted for training. None graduate.

**1995.** Amira Dotan founds Middle East Career Forum, to establish a strong network of professional women throughout the Middle East. As successful career women in various countries, women involved in the Forum have similar experiences. Members use these experiences to forge bonds to facilitate cooperative regional projects.

“By building bridges between the peoples of the region and involving each other in mutually beneficial projects, we can begin to break down the barriers between the countries of the Middle East. Women can and should play a crucial role in the process.”<sup>101</sup>

<sup>101</sup> NCJW Journal, spring 1998, vol. 21, no. 1, p. 6

**1996.** Jewish population is over 5 million.



**1996.** Knesset passes Embryo-Carrying Agreements Law, making Israel the first country in the world where surrogacy contracts are publicly legislated by a government-appointed commission.<sup>102</sup>

**1996,** November 18. Following a 7-year legal battle, the High Court of Justice rules that Conservative Rabbi Ehud Bendel and Reform Rabbi Naama Kelman can serve on the Jerusalem Religious Council as representatives of Meretz.

**1996-97.** Membership data for Israel Academy of Science. Of 36 members in Natural Science Section, 2 are women. In the Humanities Section, which includes Social Sciences, there are 31 members, of which one is a woman.

**1997.** April. Nehama Leibowitz dies at age 92. Professor Leibovitz, created a revolution in the teaching of Bible and the establishing of Biblical commentaries as an academic field of study.

A letter to Lilith magazine (Summer 1997, p. 8) by Susan Isserman of Manhattan states: "Professor Leibowitz was one of the greatest biblical scholars in this century.... She parsed, contrasted, explained, elucidated, drew sharp distinctions and formulated new hypotheses. She lives in a society that rewarded women for being private, inside the house and pious, and she was pious and public and sharp. Her teachings crossed religious boundaries. Everyone was her student and all invited her to give lectures, and pored over her mimeographed sheets of wisdom. She was the mother of several generations of Bible scholars. Perhaps once in a century does someone bestow such richness upon society. May her name be blessed."

**1997.** Rivka Meller Olshitzky, former head of IWN's Legal Committee, replaces Alice Shalvi as chair. Rivka Olshitzky had advocated for Alice Miller before the Supreme Court in her case against the Israel Air Force. She had also represented the IWN in its case against the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, which enabled women to join boards of directors.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Susan Martha Kahn, "Putting Jewish Wombs to Work: Israelis Confront New Reproductive Technologies," Lilith, Summer 1998, p. 10.

<sup>103</sup> IWN letter, December 20, 1997.

**1997.** Alice Shalvi (an orthodox woman) becomes Provost of the Schechter Institute in Jerusalem (a Conservative Jewish seminary).

**1997.** Women's incomes in Israel are 70% of men's.<sup>104</sup>

**1997.** 140,000 families live below the poverty line. The majority of these families is headed by single women.<sup>105</sup>

**1997.** 90% of people waiting to be converted in Israel are women.<sup>106</sup>

**1997.** 26 women are killed by their spouses or "boyfriends."<sup>107</sup>

**1997.** Brigadier-General Orit Adato, Commander of the Women's Corps, reports that 280 women soldiers lodged complains of sexual harassment - 20% more than in the previous year.<sup>108</sup>

**1997.** November. Kol HaIsha holds march in Jerusalem to mark International Day Against Violence Against Women.<sup>109</sup>

**1997.** Ministry of Transportation considers introducing separate seating for men and women on bus lines serving ultra-Orthodox communities in Bnai Brak and Jerusalem. IWN petitions Supreme Court to prohibit this practice as well as numerous other efforts by religious authorities to restrict women's rights.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>104</sup> IWN statistic. December 20, 1997.

<sup>105</sup> IWN statistic. December 20, 1997.

<sup>106</sup> IWN statistic. December 20, 1997.

<sup>107</sup> Networking for Women: A Quarterly Publication of the Israel Women's Network, Spring 1998, vol. 11, no. 2, p. 14.

<sup>108</sup> Networking for Women: A Quarterly Publication of the Israel Women's Network, Spring 1998, vol. 11, no. 2, p. 4.

<sup>109</sup> New Israel Fund Report, 16, no. 2, Fall 1997, p. 4.

<sup>110</sup> New Israel Fund Report, 16, no. 2, Fall 1997, p. 5.

**1997.** Sharon Plotkin denied job as a salesperson in a biotechnology company because of her sex. In a precedent-setting ruling from the National Labor Court, she receives 60,000 shekels in damages.<sup>111</sup>

**1998.** March 10. Passage of law establishing an Authority on the Status of Women (within Prime Minister's office). Lawyer Naomi Liran is the appointed head of the Authority. Passage of Sexual Harassment Law forbidding sexual harassment in schools, in the army, on the street - anywhere. New law prohibits gay-bashing as well.<sup>112</sup>

**1998.** December. "The first woman has graduated from the toughest combat course in the Israeli armed forces. The 20-year old pilot will serve as a navigator in a fighter squadron of F-16's. Women had to go to the high court to get accepted for the course." (New York Times, 12/31/98, p. A6.)

**1998.** Israel Prize awarded to seven women:

Judith Arnon and Professor Hassia Levi Argon - dance

Professor Judith Birk – agriculture

Professor Trude Dotan - archaeology

Dalia Ravikovitz - literature

Sarah Stern-Katan - life achievements

Yaffa Yarkoni - Hebrew song<sup>113</sup>

**1998.** Knesset prohibits Israeli women soldiers from singing in the Knesset to celebrate Israel's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**1998.** Israel Academy of Science holds 50 year overview of scientific achievements in Israel, and includes no women speakers.

To find information about women in this period, one has to dig deep. The lack of a basic timeline has also hindered the development of a new and more accurate understanding of the history of this period. For example, although the history of the Yishuv and Israel is almost always presented as a history of conflicts among groups, the conflict between women and men, and the struggle for suffrage or women's rights, is never included. It's as if it never happened. This chart is intended as one step in the direction of addressing these problems. Of course, a chart does not explain but simply states In 1933, Hadassah [an American Jewish women's organization] and Henrietta Szold [its founder] established Youth Aliyah, an institution to bring German Jewish children to Palestine and provide them with homes. Between 1933 and 1942, more than 5,000 children were brought into Palestine and integrated into kibbutzim. Again the Yishuv and the Haganah opposed these actions. In 1939, when Europe's Jews most desperately needed a haven, Britain issued another White Paper further limiting Jewish immigration to Palestine. Seventy-five thousand Jews would be permitted to enter over a five-year period, and then a fixed ratio of two Arabs per Jew would be maintained. Many famous Israeli generals received their training and experience in the Palmach. Patterns of assimilation varied not only between men and women but also according to geographical locale and social class. Germany, France, England, and the United States offered some degree of civic equality to their Jewish populations, and by the last third of the nineteenth century, their relatively small Jewish communities were generally defined by their middle-class characteristics. I have been interested in the history of Jewish women since my days as a graduate student some twenty years ago. including the prestate yishuv and Israeli society. The publication of this book provides me with the happy opportunity of thanking a series of individuals who contrib-. **SUBSCRIBE TODAY!**