

TIMELINE: David Ben-Gurion

1886 On October 16, David Ben-Gurion is born in Plonsk, Poland, then part of the Russian Empire.

1906 At the age of 19, Ben-Gurion arrives in Palestine.

1915 With World War I, Ben-Gurion is expelled from Ottoman-controlled Palestine for Zionist political activities.

1918 Ben-Gurion returns to Palestine as a soldier in the Jewish Legion, an all-Jewish force within the British Army.

1921 David Ben-Gurion becomes secretary-general of a new trade union, the Histadrut. With Ben-Gurion's leadership the Histadrut will grow to become a state-within-a-state, representing both employers and workers and providing employment, housing, healthcare and even entertainment.

1935 Ben-Gurion is elected chairman of the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency.

1946 At the 22nd Zionist Congress, Ben-Gurion insists on and receives the new defense portfolio, perceiving that the Jews must prepare to defend the Jewish state-in-the-making.

1948 On May 14, Ben-Gurion declares the establishment of the State of Israel. When five Arab armies invade, Ben-Gurion leads the country as both prime minister and minister of defense.

1949 Ben-Gurion pushes through a major immigration effort, doubling the population of the new state within four years.

1953 Ben-Gurion retires from public life to Kibbutz Sde Boker in the Negev.

1955 Ben-Gurion returns to the post of prime minister, spurred by what he perceives as his successor's weak policy in the face of Arab aggression.

1963 Ben-Gurion resigns from the government in June.

1973 Ben-Gurion dies on December 1 at age 87. He is buried at Kibbutz Sde Boker in the Negev.