

Zionist Profiles: The Lives & Labors of the Founding Fathers of the State of Israel

יום א' לפרשת נשא

Young Israel of Jamaica Estates – May 28, 2017

לעילוי נשמת פרידא בת דוד ז"ל



Part 3 Chaim Weizmann (1874-1952)

I) 1886-1906, Plonsk



Ozer Weizmann (1850-1911)



Rachel Leah Weizmann (1852-1939)



The Russian Pale of Settlement

1) Weizmann to a teacher of his (July, 1885)

Do not imagine that when I attend the gymnasium that I will throw of the garb of Judaism. No! On no account. I have determined in my heart to observe Judaism and I shall oppose the opinion of those who say that one becomes a doctor because he casts off his faith.

I am sending you one of my ideas... and that concerns Hevrat Hovevei Zion and Jerusalem which is in our land...Let us carry our banner to Zion and return to our first mother upon whose knees we were born. For why should we look to the kings of Europe for compassion that they should take pity upon us and give us a resting place? In vain! All have decided: The Jews must die, but England will nevertheless have mercy upon us. In conclusion to Zion! - Jews - to Zion! Let us go.



Weizmann as a child

1874- November 27. Chaim Azriel Weizmann born to Ozer and Rachel Leah Weizmann in Motol (now southwest Belarus). The third of 5 boys (and 7 girls) that lived to adulthood (another 3 children died in infancy).

1879-1882- Lived with maternal grandparents for three years likely due to his father's business travels.

1885- September. At the age of 11, he left home to attend a Gymnasium in Pinsk. He boarded with a Jewish family along with his brother Faivel who came with him.

1886- When visiting home, he would lecture the young children of Motol about Chovevei Zion leading them to form a Zionist youth group – the first in Motol.

1888- Unable to support his sons living away, Faivel returns home to help with the family business leaving Weizmann who tutors the son of a wealthy Jewish family from Pinsk.

2) Chana Weizmann's description of her brother Chaim visiting home (1890)

It was a festival for all of us, and for almost all the people of the town who regarded him as their favorite. At home, and in the homes of the uncles and the rest of the relatives, there were great preparations for his coming...For Chaim in his youth was known for great wit, was lighthearted and happy, would artistically tell humorous stories, mimic every preacher and every rabbi...and everywhere he went he was the spirit of life.

- 1892-** August. Graduates from Pinsk gymnasium and chooses to go west to continue education rather than fabricate papers to continue in Russia.
- 1892-** September. Enrolls in Polytechnic Institute in Darmstadt, Germany (20 miles south of Frankfurt) while teaching at a Jewish school in nearby Pfunstadt to earn room and board.
- 1893-** July. After a year in Darmstadt where he was overworked and deeply turned off by his first encounter with assimilated German Jews, he left school and returned home.
- 1893-** September. Returned west to attend school in Charlottenberg Polytechnic in Berlin, Germany. Pursued Chemistry and explored synthetic dyes.
- 1895-** June. Returned to his family for a full year. By then he wrote of Pinsk Jews and the local intellegensia as sophomoric compared to life and peers in Berlin.
- 1896-** September. Returns to Berlin to continue his studies. Deepens a relationship he already had developed with Leo Motzkin, future Zionist leader. While in Berlin at this stage, he became acquainted with Asher Zvi Ginsburg (Ahad Ha'Am 1856-1927) and looked to him as a mentor for the rest of his life.
- 1897-** August. Leaves Berlin following his academic mentor to the Swiss University in Fribourg, Switzerland.
- 1899-** January. Submitted his thesis on synthetic dyes.
- 1899-** April. Moved to Geneva Switzerland and secured a secured a professorship at the University of Geneva.
- 1900-** August. Attended the 4th Zionist Congress in London, England.



Leo Motzkin, 1933



Ahad Ha'Am, 1921

3) Weizmann, *Trial and Error* (p. 60)

Here, in Berlin, I grew out of my boyhood Zionism, out of my adolescence, into something like maturity. When I left Berlin for Switzerland, in 1898, at the age of twenty-four, the adult pattern of my life was set. Of course I learned a great deal in later years; but no fundamental change took place; my Zionist ideology, my scientific bent, my life's purposes, had crystallized

4) Weizmann, *Speech at 4th Zionist Congress (8/16/1900)* [German]

If the rabbis come as representatives of the people, we welcome them. But if they come as representatives of the synagogues, then it's anti-Jewish – for there is no synagogue in Judaism!

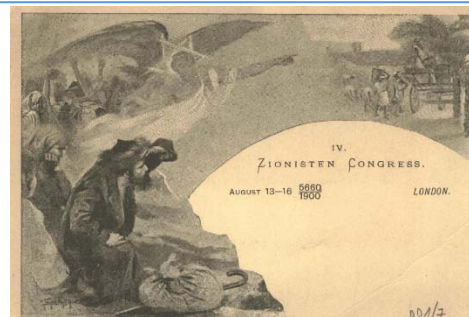
The cultural question must and will be the vital nerve of the sinew. [...] I request therefore adoption of the motion which has already been introduced in the Cultural Commission: to initiate regular cultural activity. [...] I do not acquiesce to having the word "religious" inserted in our program. The moment you do this you exclude a great part of the delegates from our Congress.

1900- Throughout the winter through early 1901, a group of Russian students who felt similarly to Weizmann formed a young Zionist opposition party with Weizmann, Martin Buber and Motzkin as its leadership. They have a conference and establish the Democratic Zionist party whose goal was to foster the cultural component of the new state rather than solely the political.

1901- October. Weizmann meets with Herzl expecting a fight, but Herzl gives his blessing to the program of the young Zionists. In December, they convene their first meeting. Weizmann opens and directs an office for the party in Geneva

1901- August. 5th Zionist Congress convened in Basel. The Democratic Zionists send a group of 37 delegates and get Herzl to adopt a mandate that called for "education of the Jewish people in a national spirit as an essential part of the Zionist program". Weizmann includes, as part of the Democratic platform, the goal of establishing a Jewish University to rejuvenate Jewish culture. This goal consumed Weizmann from 1901-1903.

1903- April 19-20. The Kishinev pogrom shocks the Jewish and Zionist worlds and Weizmann's efforts to establish a Jewish university effectively end until he resurrects the idea 10 years later.



Delegate Card, 4th Zionist Congress

5) Weizmann to Ahad Ha'Am (September, 1901)

I only joined the cultural committee [at the 5th ZC] to tackle this problem...I think there must be two institutions from the start: one in Palestine, devoted especially to Jewish learning, another in Europe – a general university with technical faculty and, of course, a chair of Jewish studies. It will be a synthesis of Yavneh and Europe.

- 1903-** August. Attends the 6th Zionist and votes against the “Uganda Plan” to dispatch a fact-finding mission to the East-Africa offered to Herzl by the British.
- 1904-** February. Begins to complete his university work in Geneva and to close down the office of the Democratic Zionists – a result of much infighting with Motzkin.
- 1904-** July 6. Leaves Geneva three days after Herzl’s death and moves to London to become a chemist at the Manchester University.
- 1906-** January 9. Weizmann meets with Arthur James Balfour, leader of the Conservative party, to explain to him why Jews opposed the East-Africa territory plan.
- 1906-** August 23. Weizmann marries Vera Chatzman, a romantic connection of over five years.



Delegate Card, 6th Zionist Congress

6) Weizmann, *Trial and Error* (pp. 142-144)

I began to sweat blood to make my meaning clear through my English. At the very end I made an effort. I had an idea. I said: ‘Mr. Balfour, if you were offered Paris instead of London would you take it? Would you take Paris instead of London?’ He looked surprised. ‘But London is our own!’ I said: ‘Jerusalem was our own when London was a marsh’. He leaned back, continued to stare at me, and said two things which I remember vividly. The first was: ‘Are there many Jews who think like you?’ I answered: ‘I believe I speak the mind of millions of Jews whom you will never see and who cannot speak for themselves, but with whom I could pave the streets of the country I come from.’ To this he said: ‘If this is so, you will one day be a force.’ Shortly before I withdrew, Balfour said: ‘It is curious. The Jews I meet are quite different.’ I answered: ‘Mr. Balfour, you meet the wrong kind of Jews.’



Chaim & Vera Weizmann at their wedding, 1906

- 1907-** September. Visits Palestine for the first time.
- 1910-** Receives British citizenship.
- 1914-** July. The Great War breaks out. Weizmann among others see the opportunity for the Zionist cause in the British liberating Palestine from the Ottoman Empire and begins to Lobby for British support for a Jewish home in Palestine after the war’s conclusion.
- 1915-** Invents a new method for producing acetone, a solution that was essential for the production of explosive materials. Weizmann moves to London and is appointed as an advisor to the British Admiralty and Ministry of Munitions for the supply of acetone.
- 1916-** December. Lloyd George succeeds Herbert Henry Asquith as PM of UK. Appoints former PM Arthur Balfour as his Foreign Secretary. Shortly after, Weizmann meets with both and lobbies further for the Zionist cause.
- 1917-** Becomes President of the British Zionist Federation, an organization that was established after Britain conquers the Palestine from Ottoman rule. Conducts negotiations with the British Government which end on November 2nd with the issuing of the Balfour Declaration.
- 1918-** Heads the Zionist Commission for Palestine, a delegation that traveled to the Palestine at the initiative of the British Government with the aim of making recommendations regarding the settlement and development of the country. Meets with Emir Faisal, leader of the Arab Revolt.
- 1919-** Head of the Zionist delegation at the Paris Peace Conference in Versailles, which tried to obtain international approval for the Balfour Declaration.

6) Weizmann to Vera (Sept. 1907)

I traveled by boat from Beirut to Jaffa. My feet stepped on the land that had been, since the days of my childhood, an inseparable part of my thoughts. Finally, I was face-to-face with reality. I came to the firm decision that I should return to Europe and continue to increase the pressure—with double the energies—for urgent, practical work in the Palestine.



Foreign Secretary Balfour speaking at laying of Cornerstone for Hebrew University (7/24/18)

Foreign Office,
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.



Draft	Text	Changes
Preliminary Zionist draft July 1917 ^[89]	<p>His Majesty's Government, after considering the aims of the Zionist Organization, accepts the principle of recognizing Palestine as the National Home of the Jewish people and the right of the Jewish people to build up its national life in Palestine under a protection to be established at the conclusion of peace following upon the successful issue of the War.</p> <p>His Majesty's Government regards as essential for the realization of this principle the grant of internal autonomy to the Jewish nationality in Palestine, freedom of immigration for Jews, and the establishment of a Jewish National Colonizing Corporation for the resettlement and economic development of the country. The conditions and forms of the internal autonomy and a Charter for the Jewish National Colonizing Corporation should, in the view of His Majesty's Government, be elaborated in</p>	

	detail and determined with the representatives of the Zionist Organization. ^[89]	
Lord Rothschild draft 12 July 1917 ^[89]	<p>1. His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the national home of the Jewish people.</p> <p>2. His Majesty's Government will use its best endeavours to secure the achievement of this object and will discuss the necessary methods and means with the Zionist Organisation.^[86]</p>	<p>1. His Majesty's Government ===== accepts the principle of recognizing that Palestine <u>should be reconstituted</u> as the national home of the Jewish people.=====</p> <p>2. His Majesty's Government =====<u>will use its best endeavours to secure the achievement of this object and will discuss the necessary methods and means with</u> the Zionist Organisation.</p>
Balfour draft Mid August 1917	His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the national home of the Jewish people and will use their best endeavours to secure the achievement of this object and will be ready to consider any suggestions on the subject which the Zionist Organisation may desire to lay before them. ^[86]	1. His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the national home of the Jewish people. <u>and 2. His Majesty's Government</u> will use its <u>their</u> best endeavours to secure the achievement of this object and will discuss the necessary methods and means with <u>be ready to consider any suggestions on the subject which</u> the Zionist Organisation <u>may desire to lay before them.</u>
Milner draft Late August 1917	His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that every opportunity should be afforded for the establishment of a home for the Jewish people in Palestine and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object and will be ready to consider any suggestions on the subject which the Zionist organisations may desire to lay before them. ^[86]	His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that <u>Palestine should be reconstituted as the national home of every opportunity should be afforded for the establishment of a home for the Jewish people in Palestine</u> and will use their <u>its</u> best endeavours to secure <u>facilitate</u> the achievement of this object and will be ready to consider any suggestions on the subject which the Zionist o rganisations may desire to lay before them.
Milner-Amery draft 4 October 1917	His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish race, and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed in any other country by such Jews who are fully contented with their existing nationality. ^[86]	His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that every opportunity should be afforded for <u>views with favour</u> the establishment <u>in Palestine</u> of a <u>national</u> home for the Jewish people in Palestine <u>race</u> , and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object and will be ready to consider any suggestions on the subject which the Zionist organisations may desire to lay before them , it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed in any other country by such Jews who are fully contented with their existing nationality. ^[86]
Final version	His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.	His Majesty's Government <u>views</u> with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish race, and will use its <u>their</u> best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed <u>by Jews</u> in any other country <u>by such Jews who are fully contented with their existing nationality.</u> ^[86]

