

Yom Ha'zikaron

Beginning at sundown on May 5, (Iyar 4) we commemorate the soldiers who have fallen while fighting for Israel's independence and defending her security. In Israel, a siren sounds and the country observes two minutes of silence; people stand in honor of those who died. This holiday's placement the day before Israel Independence Day (Iyar 5) is intentional: The soldiers who gave their lives were directly responsible for the existence of Israel as an independent state. In this way, a day of solemn commemoration can be followed by joyous celebration and song.

Program Ideas:

Yom Hazikaron Ceremony from the World Union of Jewish Students:

It is customary in many communities and in Israel to commemorate Yom Hazikaron with a ceremony. WUJS offers a sample ceremony which you can adapt to suit your campus. This can either be used for Yom HaZikaron exclusively, or it can be used for both Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut, in which case, we recommend that you run this program at sunset, as Yom Hazikaron becomes Yom Ha'atzmaut. http://www.wujs.org.il/activist/activities/programmes/yom_hazikaron/tekes.shtml

MIA's: Six Israeli soldiers are officially listed as "soldiers missing but presumed to be alive." Three of the soldiers — Zachary Baumel (an American citizen), Tzvi Feldman and Yehuda Katz — were captured in 1982. The fourth — Ron Arad — was captured in 1986. Over the years there has been a steady flow of information indicating that at least some of these MIAs may be alive and are being held under Syrian and Iranian control. Despite the diplomatic and military

efforts of over seven successive Israeli governments, almost no progress has been made in determining the fate of the missing men. In recent years, two more names were added to the list of the missing. On August 17, 1997, Guy Hever went missing from his army base in the Golan. On October 15, 2000, Hizbullah announced that another Israeli citizen, 54-year-old retired Col. Elchanan Tannenbaum, had also been taken captive. Consider raising awareness of this issue through distributing the petition on this site <http://www.mia.org.il/petition/index1.html>. For more information on how you can support Israel's missing soldiers, please visit www.mia.org.il.

Contributors to the State: Create a display of important figures who have contributed to, or given of themselves to, the State of Israel. Share writings from these figures, who can range from the earliest Zionist thinkers to modern-day victims of terror, and perhaps set up a contest among students to determine who is the most important figure in Israeli history. Or facilitate a discussion among students exploring the price that often must be paid for freedom.

Alex Singer was a student from Cornell who made aliyah (moved to Israel), and was killed in defense of the State of Israel. His story may resonate well with many students. Information about him and his writings, and discussion topics can be found at: <http://www.alexsingergroup.org/>

Film: Remember the soldiers of the Yom Kippur War from a student perspective by viewing the compelling film, "Kippur" by filmmaker Amos Gitai. Available for \$25 from <http://video.barnesandnoble.com>

Yom Ha'atzmaut

On May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion declared Israel's independence. Years of Zionist dreams culminated in this moment – Israel announcing to the world that the Jewish people would once again have a state of its own.

"ACCORDINGLY WE, MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNCIL, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ERETZ-ISRAEL AND OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT, ARE HERE ASSEMBLED ON THE DAY OF THE TERMINATION OF THE BRITISH MANDATE OVER ERETZ-ISRAEL AND, BY VIRTUE OF OUR NATURAL AND HISTORIC RIGHT AND ON THE STRENGTH OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, HEREBY DECLARE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JEWISH STATE IN ERETZ-ISRAEL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE STATE OF ISRAEL."

~DAVID BEN-GURION, MAY 14, 1948

For the full text, please visit: <http://www.wzo.org.il/en/resources/view.asp?id=301>

With those words, the Jewish state was born, and immediately the new nation was fighting for its life. Just a few years earlier, Jews had fought not just for their own lives, but to prevent Hitler's plan to annihilate the Jewish people.

Israeli Independence Day is celebrated on May 7 (Iyar 5). The establishment of the modern State of Israel is marked with festivities, fireworks, fun, and falafel. Whether or not they have visited Israel, Jewish students can express their joy that the State of Israel exists as a haven for Jewish people around the world, and they can connect through Israel to their extended Jewish family.

Unfortunately, many Jewish students are becoming "disengaged" from their relationship with Israel or their Jewish

community because of feelings of discomfort with what they read in the news or because they simply do not feel they have enough information to respond. Engage your peers by creating an entry point for them to learn about Israel and their own Jewish journey.

Depending on your campus climate, and when hostilities end in Iraq, not all activities listed may be appropriate for your Yom Ha'Atzmaut celebration. You may wish to educate about themes like Israel's quest for peace; the dangers of terror, dictatorship and fundamentalism; Israel as a vibrant multi-cultural/multi-ethnic democracy. You should emphasize educational displays, ads/mailings/materials to Jewish students, discussions with advocates, town hall meetings, coalition building/programming with other groups on campus.

Resources:

Explore your own vision of Jerusalem through these evocative verses. This conversation weaves together three texts: a Psalm that includes a prayer for the peace of Jerusalem, the Babylonian Talmud, and Midrash Esther Rabba
[http://www.hillel.org/Hillel/NewHille.nsf/fcb8259ca861ae57852567d30043ba26/a733bcd1d9fa9f4f85256b9f0058793b/\\$FILE/Oh%20Jerusalem.pdf](http://www.hillel.org/Hillel/NewHille.nsf/fcb8259ca861ae57852567d30043ba26/a733bcd1d9fa9f4f85256b9f0058793b/$FILE/Oh%20Jerusalem.pdf)

Reproduce and share this exploration of the Hatikva, Israel's national anthem.

<http://www.hillel.org/hillel/newhille.nsf/669e75f27e96d8a1852567d9005462b1/E749C626194910A385256AF00060351B?OpenDocument>

Readings: Incorporate readings into your programming, or use this material to create educational displays. <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH00y90>

Program Ideas:

Israel Festivals: Several campuses have held Israel education and cultural festivals in public places on campus. The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill held a cultural festival for Yom Ha'atzmaut in the center of campus during the lunch hours, with flashy and attractive stations including: free falafel, Israeli dancing, Hebrew name writing, historical information Q&A, peace quilt, notes for the Wall, Turkish coffee, religions of Israel, "Shalom Sesame", opportunities to go to Israel and a reflection station. A camel was brought in to help draw attention to the festivities.

Music: Incorporate Israeli music into every celebration. Israeli music highlights the desire of Israelis for peace and the diversity within Israel. Create a personal CD and ask members of your Israel group to recommend their favorite songs to add to the mix. Also – highlight how Israel has expressed its aspirations for peace through song. Use the following link for lyrics, translations and music. <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH00tx0>

Food: What is a party without food? Move beyond the typical falafel balls and pita and bring the ethnic flare and diversity of Israel to the palates of every student. Either prepare the food beforehand and provide information or add some real spice to your celebration by conducting an Israeli-style "Iron Chef" contest. For information on the many cultures that inform Israeli cuisine and some great recipes check out: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0hy70>
http://www.stratsplace.com/rogov/israel/i_cuisine.html

Town Hall Meeting or Panel Discussion: Celebrating the State of Israel is always fun, but consider using Yom Ha'atzmaut to reflect on some of the major ideological issues facing the State of Israel. You

can view this as a way to energize your Israel advocates, or to bring the broader Jewish community into the discussion. Some ideas are listed below, or check out <http://israel.hillel.org> for more information. Why is it important for Israel to remain a Jewish state? What is the role of Israel as a democracy? Is the supreme duty of a government to protect the lives of its citizens who are being attacked or is it a higher ideal to protect all civil rights? Who should be required to serve in the army?

A Helping Hand: This Yom Ha'atzmaut, celebrate Israel by celebrating her children. A great programming idea can be found at [http://www.hillel.org/Hillel/NewHille.nsf/fcb8259ca861ae57852567d30043ba26/a733bcd1d9fa9f4f85256b9f0058793b/\\$FILE/Yom_Ha_Atzmaut.pdf](http://www.hillel.org/Hillel/NewHille.nsf/fcb8259ca861ae57852567d30043ba26/a733bcd1d9fa9f4f85256b9f0058793b/$FILE/Yom_Ha_Atzmaut.pdf)

A Package From Home, is a perfect example of one person's ability to effect change. Barbara Silverman, an American who made aliyah several years ago, knew that the soldiers fighting this latest war in Israel (particularly the chayalim bodedim, soldiers with no family in Israel) could use some extra attention. She and many volunteers assemble special gift boxes filled with goodies and a personal note to say "Thank you" for defending this country. <http://www.apackagefromhome.org>

Films: Use films to engage students and engender discussion in a relaxed atmosphere. The Hillel at the University of Wisconsin purchased the film, "Promises," and hosted a screening for almost 200 students. "Promises" follows the journey of filmmaker B.Z. Goldberg as he travels to Palestinian communities and settlements in the West Bank — places he had never visited before — and to the familiar neighborhoods of Jerusalem. You can learn more about "Promises" at www.promisesproject.org. During the showing of the film, the JCSC and other campus professionals posted butcher paper around the room for students to write reactions and comments. Hillel's Center for Israel Affairs has a number of free films available, including "On the Front Lines," about a group of secular and religious young adults living in Gilo. Or, you can go to a video store and rent movies like "Exodus."

Israel at Heart: Israel at Heart, a non-profit independent organization founded by Hillel International Board of Governors member Joey Low, brings articulate and compelling Israeli students to college and

university campuses across North America. From April 1 – April 13, 60 Israeli students, broken into teams of three, will travel to college campuses telling their stories and connecting with a variety of audiences, both Jewish and non-Jewish. These Israeli students come from various countries of origin and levels of religious observance, and they speak from their heart about what life is really like in Israel. For more information or program ideas around Israel at Heart, visit: http://cms.hillel.org/NR/Hillel_Files/Israel/docs/program_for_iah.doc

Other Programming Ideas:

- ⇒ Hold an Israeli fashion show to educate about the diversity of Israel and raise money for Israel's economy. Contact slandau@hillel.org for more information.
- ⇒ Bring Israel to life on campus by inviting students to experience Israel with all five senses. Jaffa oranges and Dead Sea mud are all part of the fun!
- ⇒ Create a small Israel journal on your campus so students can express their feelings toward Israel and at the same time share their views with other students.
- ⇒ Reach out to students who are intimidated by the politics surrounding Israel by holding an Israeli-style picnic Seder. Contact slandau@hillel.org for materials.
- ⇒ Check out other wonderful program ideas that emerged from the Young Zionist Leadership Conference at www.wzo.org.il/en/yzl.
- ⇒ You, too, can order Israeli goods and support Israel. Contact Jeremy Poock at (866) 739-6400 or jpoock@celebrateisrael.com