Chaim Weizmann Encyclopedia Article

Chaim Weizmann

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Chaim Weizmann

1874-1952

Russian-Israeli chemist who pioneered microbiological applications in industrial chemistry, such as using bacteria to break down starches for production of ethanol, butanol, and acetone. A politically active Zionist, Weizmann played a key role in securing the 1917 Balfour Declaration establishing the British mandate of Palestine, which ultimately became the state of Israel in 1947. Weizmann became the new nation's first president in 1948. He established an Institute of Sciences (now named after him) in the city of Rehovot in 1934.