

# 6

## The British Mandate

### Zionist Achievements and Arab-Jewish Conflict

textbook pages 52–61

#### Chapter Overview

The Jews and Arabs celebrated when the British defeated the Turks and took control of Palestine. But it did not take long for tensions to escalate between the two groups. In response to attacks by Arabs, the Jews of Palestine formed an illegal underground militia to protect themselves. As a result of Arab riots and growing conflicts, the British limited Jewish immigration to Palestine and land sales to Jews in Palestine. The seeds of the Arab-Jewish conflict were sown during this period.

#### core concepts

- This was a time of great growth and achievement for the Zionists of Palestine.
- A new image of the Jew as a courageous and powerful pioneer and soldier was emerging.
- During this period, seeds of conflict between the Jews and Arabs were sown.

#### Learning Objectives



Students will be able to

- Explain how Zionist settlers found more freedom in Palestine than they had in Russia and Eastern Europe and how that might have affected their Jewish identities.
- Identify at least two causes of the growing tensions between Jews and Arabs in British-ruled Palestine.
- Apply what they have learned to assess and explain what impact the changing identity of the Jews in Palestine may have had on the Jews in the Diaspora.



## Teaching Opportunities

### Getting Started

Give each student a sheet of paper and ask them to divide the paper into two columns. Have them head the left column, “Jews in Russia” and ask them to look at the images of Russian Jews on pages 4, 5, and 8 and list adjectives and short phrases that describe the Jews in these images.

Then have students head the right column, “Jews in Palestine,” and ask them to look at the photographs on pages 28, 32, and 54. Again, invite students to list adjectives and short phrases that describe the Jews in the photographs.

As a class, compare the descriptions of the Jews in Russia to those of the Jews in Palestine. Explain to your class that in this chapter they will see the image of the Jew change from victimized and physically passive to powerful and courageous.

### pages 53–54 **The Roots of the Conflict**

Ask: How did the British deceive both the Jews and the Arabs during World War II? (*The British made conflicting commitments—promising the Jews a national homeland in Palestine and the Arabs an independent state.*) Why did Britain mislead the Jews and the Arabs? (*To gain their support in the war against the Turks.*) What did Britain and France do with the region after they defeated the Turks? (*They divided it up into mandates to be governed by Britain and France.*) How did the Arabs feel about the mandates and about the Balfour Declaration? (*They opposed both.*)

### pages 54–55 **Violence Breaks Out**

Ask: Why did the Jews of Palestine decide to form their own militia? (*The British were not protecting them; the Jews of Palestine needed to protect themselves.*)

Choose two volunteers: one to role-play a member of Tel Hai and the other a Zionist leader. Invite the Zionist leader to explain to the Tel Hai member why he or she should leave the settlement. Have the Tel Hai member respond, explaining why the members of Tel Hai want to remain in their settlement.

### page 54 **A Symbol of Courage and Photograph: Hashomer**

Have students turn to page 32. Call on volunteers to read their responses to the “All-Jewish Fighting Forces” activity. Ask: How did Trumpeldor’s and Jabotinsky’s experiences during World War I prepare them for the challenges of protecting the Jews of Palestine?

Explain that the founders of Hashomer were Russian immigrants who had experienced the pogroms of Russia. When Hashomer was disbanded, many of its members settled in Tel Hai and Kfar Gil'adi.

**page 55 The Pioneer Spirit and The Labor Brigade**

Invite your cantor or music specialist to teach students *Artza Alinu*, a well-known song of the *halutzim*:

Artza alinu (six times)

K'var charashnu vegam zaranu (twice)

Aval od lo katzarnu (twice)

Translation:

We have gone up to our land

There we have plowed and sown

But we have yet to harvest

Discuss how this song reflects the spirit of the pioneers.

Have students explain how the *kibbutzim* embodied the commitment of the *halutzim* to “Hebrew labor” (*Jews did all the work on kibbutzim*), the Hebrew language (*kibbutz members spoke Hebrew*), self-defense (*kibbutzim were built in outlying areas to provide security*), and social justice (*men and women were treated with greater equality than was typical of the time*).

Explain that the Labor Brigade was a Zionist-socialist battalion whose goals were labor, settlement, and defense. Ask: Why is the term *halutzim*, meaning “frontline soldiers,” fitting for the members of this labor brigade? (*Its members were on the front lines, working in dangerous conditions, fighting for the Jews of Palestine.*)

**page 55 The Growth of Urban Jewish Centers**

On a modern map of Israel, have students locate Haifa, Jerusalem, and Tel Aviv. Invite students to share what they know about these cities. Encourage students who have been to Israel, or who have relatives who have visited or who live there, to share personal experiences and/or photographs. Ask students: Which of the three cities might you prefer to live in? Why?

**page 56 Famous Figures: Henrietta Szold**

Invite volunteers to read aloud one paragraph each in the feature. As a class or in small groups, ask students to brainstorm about the qualities that might describe Szold based on the text they just read. Discuss students' responses, including why they think she had those qualities. (*Possible answers to the question include: tikkun olam [healing the world]; tzedakah [the obligation to help others in need];*



*pursuing justice; Jewish peoplehood [we are responsible for each other]; supporting a Jewish homeland in Israel.)*

Invite an active member of your local Hadassah chapter to speak to the class about the historic and contemporary contributions made by Hadassah. You also may want to have a student who is a member of Young Judaea, the Zionist youth movement of Hadassah, speak to your class about its programs and activities.

**page 57 Photograph: Hadassah Food Donations**

Ask students which Jewish value is depicted in this photograph. (*ma'achil re'eivim [feeding the hungry]*) You may want to create a mitzvah project in which students collect nonperishable food items to donate to a local food pantry in memory of Henrietta Szold or in honor of a member of your congregation.

**page 57 Separate Lives**

As a class, list changes in the Jewish and Arab populations from 1924 to 1928 that might have elevated tensions between the two groups. (*80,000 Jews immigrated to Palestine; Palestinian Arab population grew quickly; many peasants moved to cities; Arab nationalism became stronger; Arabs and Jews led separate lives; Zionists created their own economy and cultural institutions.*) Encourage critical thinking by helping students evaluate why each factor might have added tension.

**page 57 The 1929 Riots**

Have students locate Safed and Hebron on a modern map of Israel. Explain that the riots also took place in Tel Aviv, in Jerusalem, and in settlements near Jerusalem. Explain that many Jews were saved by Arab neighbors who risked their own lives to hide their Jewish friends.

**pages 57–58 The Arab Revolt**

Invite volunteers to read aloud one paragraph each. Then have other students describe what the Palestinian Arabs did in hopes of halting the growth of the Zionist nation and ending British rule. You may have the students present their descriptions in the form of a television newscast.

**page 58 Photographs: Habimah Theater and Pioneers in Berlin**

Have students turn back to page 43 in their textbooks. Ask: Why do you think that in Russia the Habimah Theater produced plays in Hebrew, while at the same time American Jews—many of whom came from Russia—enjoyed seeing plays in Yiddish? (*The Zionist movement was strong in Russia, thus inspiring an interest in Hebrew; new Russian-American immigrants were not fluent in English and may have missed aspects of their old lives, including the Yiddish language.*) What might have been a Russian Jew's emotional response to seeing a play performed in Hebrew in 1917?

What might the pioneers have been thinking when the photograph on page 58 on the right was taken? (*Will I see my family again? What will life be like in Palestine?*)

**page 59 The White Paper**

Write Ben-Gurion's statement (appearing at the end of the last paragraph on page 59) on the chalkboard: "We shall fight the war as if there were no White Paper and we shall fight the White Paper as if there were no war."

Ask: Why did the Jews of Palestine have to fight the war? (*Europe, especially the Jews of Europe, was endangered by Hitler's rise to power.*) Why did the Jews of Palestine have to fight the White Paper? (*It restricted Jewish immigration to Palestine and land sales to Jews. These restrictions would prevent the Jews of Europe, who needed to escape Hitler, from immigrating to and finding refuge in Palestine.*) How did these two actions conflict with each other? (*One action supported the British; the other defied the British.*)

**page 59 Chart: Arab and Jewish Population**

Write the following on the chalkboard: almost doubled; more than ten times greater; less than one-tenth; almost half. Tell students that they may use the answers from the board to respond to your questions. Ask: How did the Jewish population in 1914 compare to the Arab population? (*less than one-tenth the size*) How did the Jewish population in 1946 compare to the Arab population? (*almost half the size*) What was the growth of the Arab population between the years of 1914 and 1946? (*it almost doubled*) What was the growth of the Jewish population between the years of 1914 and 1946? (*more than ten times greater in 1946 than 1914*)

Ask for a volunteer to figure out what percentage of the population of Palestine was Jewish in 1914 versus 1946. (*1914—0.8 percent; 1946—47.5 percent*) Invite students to discuss how the Jews might have felt about the change in percentage, and how the Arabs might have felt. Ask for a volunteer to research current population figures in Israel today.

**page 60 You Are There: The Haganah and the Irgun Respond to Violence**

Ask: What situations in your own life might cause you to respond, "*Ein breirah*," because you feel that you must take an action? (*Encourage students to describe circumstances in which they feel that they must put their Jewish values into action, e.g., demonstrate to end an unjust war; stop a bully from teasing or threatening another student, or refuse to shop in a store that does not treat its workers fairly.*)

**page 60 Photograph: Flyer of Haganah Members**

Explain that the Haganah was an illegal organization according to the laws of the British mandate. However, the British cooperated with the Haganah during

the Arab riots. It was only after the riots were squelched that the British clamped down on the Haganah and arrested Haganah members. Remind students that the Jews of Palestine worked *with* the British in regard to the situation in Europe, but *against* them in regard to the White Paper.

**page 61** **Then & Now**

Read the following values that are part of today's Israel Defense Forces (IDF) doctrine. After reading each value, ask students to explain how the value requires that Israeli soldiers treat all people fairly, with dignity, and with awareness that all human life is sacred.

**Human Dignity** The IDF and its soldiers are obligated to protect human dignity. Every human being is of value regardless of his or her origin, religion, nationality, gender, status or position.

**Human Life** The IDF servicemen and women will act in a judicious and safe manner in all they do, out of recognition of the supreme value of human life. During combat they will endanger themselves and their comrades only to the extent required to carry out their mission.

**Purity of Arms** The Israel Defense Force servicemen and women will use their weapons and force only for the purpose of their mission, only to the necessary extent, and will maintain their humanity even during combat. IDF soldiers will not use their weapons and force to harm human beings who are not combatants or prisoners of war, and will do all in their power to avoid causing harm to their lives, bodies, dignity, and property.

You may discuss why it is important to state and teach such values even if people in the armed services do not always succeed in living up to the ideal.



## Family Connection

You can invite students to bring in family stories and/or photographs related to this period in Jewish history. Students may, for example, bring in information about relatives who were in Palestine or Europe before 1948. If students are working on a scrapbook or other collection of family stories and photographs, these stories can be saved and included.

Alternatively, families can create a timeline that integrates the key events of this period in Jewish history with major events in their family life.