

ISRAEL CURRICULUM

Enduring Understanding

Connection to the Land of Israel is a core component of Jewish identity. It has been a part of the Jewish consciousness throughout our history.

Dalet and Hay (6th and 7th grade) – Series 2

Overview: By means of a mini-course, we will cover a basic historical overview of the later Pre-State through declaring Independence.

Overview

Session #1

- Idea of a dream and where did it come from
- Concept of *aliyah* to Israel
- Brief overview of immigration waves/*aliyot* to Palestine

Session #2

- Obstacles and work ethic of the early settlers
- Poster gallery visit – providing an overview on the following topics:
 - Immigration issues/illegal immigration
 - Political situation in Palestine – Conflicts with the British and the Arabs
 - Need for defense
 - Working together – settlements, *Kibbutzim*
 - Importance and journey of Hebrew as the language of the land

Session #3

- Partition Plan
- UN vote

Session #4

- Study of *Megillat HaAtzmaut*
- Declaration of the State

Session #1 in depth

(Note: The current *Hay* students were introduced to some of these concepts in last year's program. A little more background may be necessary for the 6th grade students.)

Pre-Class: Write the following terms on the board:

- Zion
- Zionists/Zionism
- Theodor Herzl
- Palestine
- British Mandate
- *Halutz/Halutzim*

1. Teacher writes on the board: *Im Tirtzu Ein Zo Agada* – “If you will it, this is not a dream.” [Teacher can sing song if desired.]
2. What dream is this referring to? [with 7th grade students, can see if they remember that the statement comes from] With all students, see what they know about terms/names of the board.
3. Students read “*Yearning for Zion*,” adapted from My Israel. Can be read silently or aloud. Make sure students understand main ideas and can answer questions such as:
 - What are some proofs that the Jewish people never forgot Israel?
 - Can the students think of any other prayers that show our connection to Israel? (*V'Havienu, Or Hadash, Ki Mitziyon Tetze Torah, Ose Shalom, L'Shanah HaBa'a* at end of *Seder*)
 - Can the students think of any other customs to remind us of our connection to Israel? (*Aron HaKoesh*, facing east towards Jerusalem, planting trees in Israel for *Tu Bishvat*, reading and speaking Hebrew.)
4. Teacher explains that even though it was very difficult throughout our history, Jews constantly tried to get to Israel. To introduce the idea of *Aliyah*, write the word *Aliyah* on the board. Give out the cryptogram puzzle provided (from CIE Israel Curriculum – You may choose the simpler puzzle or the more challenging

- one. If you choose to give them the challenge puzzle, you may want to give a set amount of time to try to break the code, and if the students are not able to do so, then give them the simpler puzzle.) Have the students decode the cryptogram. [The answer is - *Aliyah* means “to go up!”]
5. Now that you know what the word means, what is its significance? [going up to Torah or moving to Israel]
 6. Discuss:
 - Why do you think that is the word used for someone being called to recite the *b'racha* at the Torah?
 - Why is this word used for moving to Israel?
 - Does it mean that Israel is really hilly or mountainous? Or something else?
 7. Explain: The word has two meanings: the literal and the spiritual or religious.
 - Literal: In the ancient world one traveling to Israel from Egypt or other surrounding nations would literally have to go up to reach Israel. Jerusalem is 823 meters above sea level, while Cairo in Egypt is only 23 meters above sea level.
 - Spiritual/Religious: Jewish tradition teaches that by traveling to or living in the Land of Israel that one ascends to a higher spiritual place. They become closer to G-d.
 8. Read the following quote or write it on the board: In 1924, Chaim Weizmann, one of the leaders of the Zionist Movement, wrote the following letter: “The number of immigrants which we have been able to bring into the country hitherto (until now) is not large enough...unless we are in a position at least to double the number, our real progress in Palestine will be exceedingly slow.”

Ask:

- What does the quote mean? (In 1924, there still weren't enough Jews living in Palestine for there to be a critical mass for a homeland.)
 - What is Weizmann's goal?
 - Why is this an important step in creating a Jewish homeland? (Without enough people, it will be impossible to create a homeland, develop the economy, and build institutions.)
9. If there is time, have students create a newspaper advertisement to encourage Jews to move to Palestine. The poster should include reasons why moving to Palestine in the 1920s is an attractive option for Jews, especially versus the United States. One option is to use the form created by teacher, Matt Rosenbaum.
10. Give out "*Brief Overview of Jewish Aliyah ["Immigration"] to Pre-State Israel.*" [adapted from www.reformjudaism.org/history-jewish-immigration-israel-aliyah] Divide the students into groups for a jigsaw activity – 5 groups, one for each *Aliyah*. Have them read about their *Aliyah* and report back to the class.

Yearning for Zion

The ancient country of Israel was attacked and the Holy Temple was destroyed two times, and the Jewish people were sent into exile. After the first exile, many Jews made their way back to Israel, as Israel became an independent nation once again. But after the second exile by the Romans in 70 CE, the independent land of the Jewish people was at an end until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

The Jewish prophets viewed the exile from Israel as punishment for the sins of the people. In the *Musaf* ("Additional") Service of the Festivals, we find in the *Siddur*: “Because of our sins we were exiled from our country, and we were moved far away from our land.”

Despite the long exile and the final destruction of *Beit HaMikdash* (the Holy Temple), the Jews of the Diaspora have never forgotten *Eretz Yisrael* and Jerusalem.

Throughout the long years of exile, Jews have prayed to return to Zion, to *Eretz Yisrael*. Three times a day, in their prayers, Jews mention the yearning to return to Zion and to see Jerusalem rebuilt. In the weekday *Amidah* we pray: “G-d, please return to Jerusalem Your city in mercy. And dwell in it as You have said. And built it soon, in our days, as an everlasting building...and may our eyes see when You return to Zion in mercy.”

The hope of leaving the sorrow of exile and coming to *Eretz Yisrael* gave the Jews in the Diaspora the strength to continue existing as a people with one religion, a special culture, and customs. The exile was viewed as a temporary period before better times, to remember the land of our ancestors and to work towards settling the land again.

For thousands of years, *Am Yisrael* has kept customs which remind it every day of its link with *Eretz Yisrael* and Jerusalem.

It has been the tradition at every marriage ceremony to break a glass under the *chuppa* to remember the fact that Jerusalem was destroyed. Another custom in memory of Jerusalem is to leave a corner of wall unplastered when building a new house.

Many prayers have emphasized our hopes for scattered Jews to be gathered, and for Israel to be rebuilt. Another *b'racha* of the weekday *Amidah* states: "Sound the great shofar of our freedom. Raise a flag to gather our exiled people, and gather us together from the four corners of the world."

The entire people has hoped for the time when the words of the prophet Jeremiah will come true, and the Jewish people will return to its homeland: "And there is hope for your future, says G-d, and children will return to their borders." (Jeremiah 31:16)

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF JEWISH *ALIYAH* (IMMIGRATION) TO PRE-STATE ISRAEL

Introduction

The story of immigration to Israel or *Aliyah* began well before the State was declared. Thus, it is important to start with a historical overview of Jewish immigration to the area at the end of the 19th Century. At least the first three waves of immigration came as a result of “push factors” that came into play in Eastern Europe, primarily pogroms and serious propaganda against the Jews. However, most of the immigrants in those first three waves chose their destination voluntarily, which is considered “pull factors,” that is, they immigrated to Palestine also because they supported Zionist philosophy and the belief that they were about to fulfill their destinies as Jews and as representatives of the Jewish people by making *Aliyah*. However, the later waves of immigration pre-state – primarily those escaping Nazi persecution – were based more on the “push” factors.

First Aliyah (1882 – 1903)

The First *Aliyah* followed in the wake of pogroms in Russia in 1881/1882. The pogroms were not the cause of the immigration, but caused many people to think about *Aliyah*. Many of those who participated in this *Aliyah* were young Jews from two major Jewish-Zionist movements. Most were in their 30s, bringing their families with them. They came more out of a connection to the land of their ancestors than because of persecution. Yemenite Jews also immigrated to Palestine at this time.

The first group included around 30,000 people, but conditions were so difficult that only half of them remained in Palestine. Many lived in *Moshavot* which were agricultural settlements that often failed. Since most people were not trained as farmers they could not sustain the farms economically, and many fell apart.

Many of these immigrants were traditional in their Judaism. They also supported the revival of the Hebrew language and culture in print and theater.

Second Aliyah (1904 – 1914)

The second wave of immigration took place during the height of terrible pogroms in Russia. It is identified primarily with the Socialist-Zionist movement. Most of these immigrants, who came from Russia and Poland, were significantly different from those in the First *Aliyah*. They were younger and secular (not religious), most were single, and they came without any financial resources. David Ben-Gurion, who later became the first Prime Minister of Israel, was among the immigrants in the second wave.

These immigrants began organizing themselves into political parties and began taking control of the pre-state institutions.

Since they knew that the first type of settlements had failed, they decided to develop a new form of rural settlement – the *Kibbutz*. The first such settlement, named Degania, was established in 1909. Most of the new immigrants from the Second *Aliyah* had been involved in defense groups in Europe, and they went on to establish *Ha-Shomer*, the first Jewish self-defense organization in Palestine.

The group also made significant contributions to the revival of the Hebrew language and the cultural life of the new settlements.

Third Aliyah (1919 – 1923) – Halutzim

This very short wave of *Aliyah* is considered a direct continuation of the Second *Aliyah* which was broken off by the challenges of World War I. Most of the newcomers came from Russia, Poland and Hungary, and they were trained in *Halutz* ("Pioneer") movements.

During this time period, as the British were ruling Palestine, they issued the Balfour Declaration, which agreed to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The British still imposed restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine, but even so, almost 40,000 new Jewish immigrants arrived.

The newcomers were disappointed and frustrated by the fighting between the various Jewish-Zionist parties and Palestine, which caused tension between the groups. Nevertheless, the newcomers still believed in Zionist ideas. Most of them spread across the country, following the availability of land and work. They built roads and agricultural settlements, and strengthened the *Kibbutz* movement by founding many new *Kibbutzim* and strengthening the *Kibbutz* idea of communal life.

Unlike previous waves, relatively few of the 40,000 immigrants that made up the Third *Aliyah* returned to their countries of origin.

Fourth Aliyah (1924 – 1929)

The Fourth *Aliyah* had the most significant impact on the size of the Jewish settlement of Palestine. This period saw the arrival of some 80,000 new immigrants, almost double the number of the third wave. Approximately 55,000 of these newcomers stayed in Palestine, almost doubling the number of the Jewish population.

There were major differences between these immigrants and those who had come earlier. Previously, many more had come from Russia, but in this wave, 50 percent came from Poland, and only 20 percent came from Russia (the other 30 percent came from Central Europe). Second, the individuals in this new wave were older, on average, and many of these immigrants came as families. Third, unlike the earlier waves, about half of the newcomers were “capitalists,” not like the young and poor previous immigrants.

This wave of immigration had a significant impact on the Jewish economy. Much of the money they brought with them was invested in construction, mainly in major cities, and there was much invested in industry. The economy received an enormous boost, especially in Tel Aviv, which became the central city.

Fifth Aliyah (1929 – 1939)

The Fifth *Aliyah* is considered to be a continuation of the Fourth.

The Fifth *Aliyah* was divided into two waves, from 1929 until 1931, and from 1932 until about 1936. In the latter four-year period, approximately 180,000 Jews arrived. During the first period there was serious escalation of tensions between Jews and Arabs, and in 1929, there were numerous violent incidents, which resulted in many deaths. However, as many of the immigrants that arrived during this time were young, members of youth movements, and had undergone intensive training to prepare them for the life of pioneers and settlers, they were not discouraged.

The Jews that arrived in the second mini-wave had several reasons to immigrate, including the Nazis' rise to power in Germany. Although most of the newcomers were from Poland, German immigrants figured prominently in this wave. The German Jews differed from all the earlier newcomers because they came from the upper middle class of Central Europe, and most of them were not Zionists.

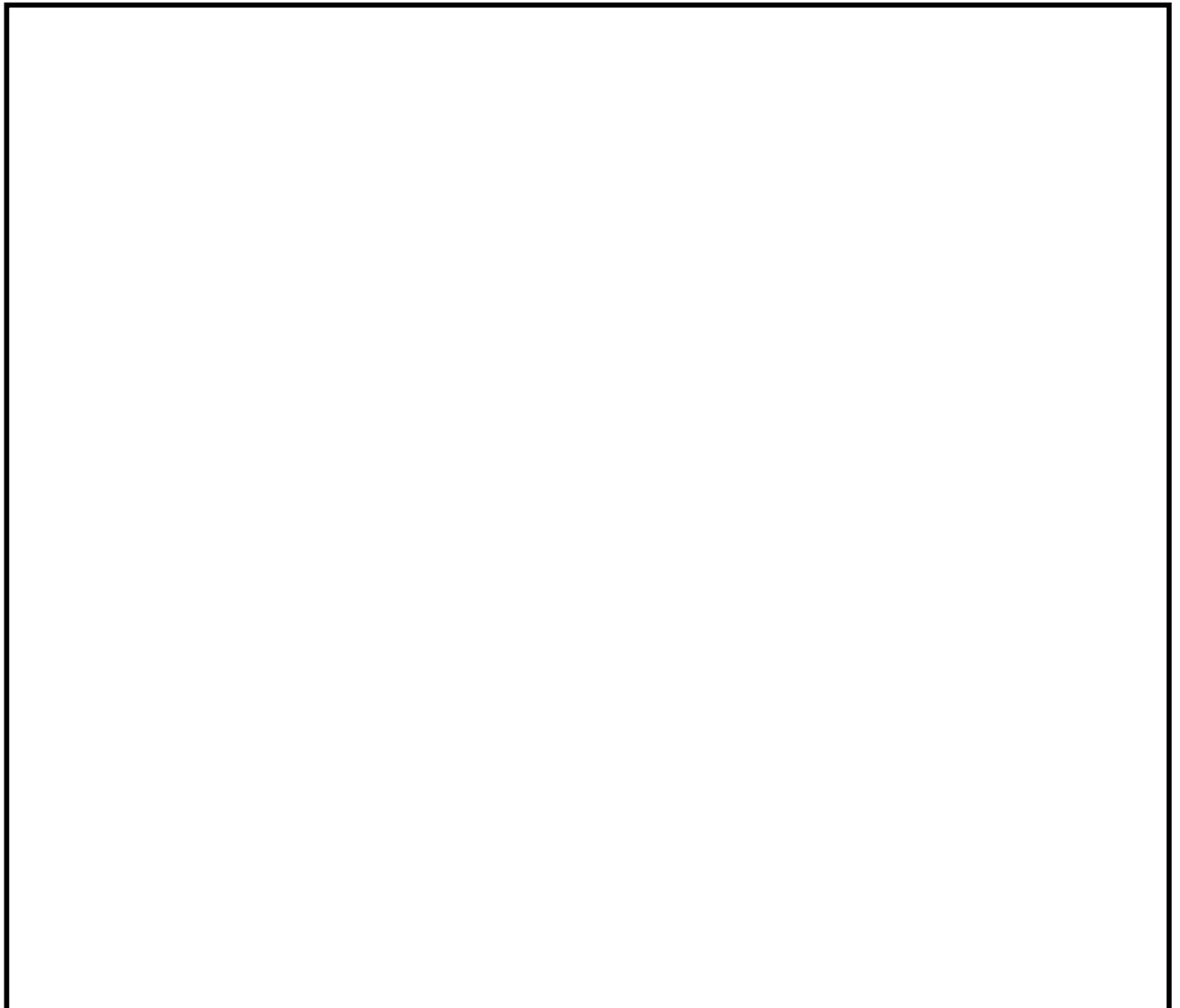
In comparison with the earlier waves of immigration, the numbers during this period were enormous and, by 1939, nearly 250,000 Jews arrived, and very few returned home. This brought the Jewish population of Palestine to approximately 450,000. The newcomers came with much needed money and professional expertise in various areas. Industry grew significantly, trade became a substantial source of income, and export became an important element in the economy. Members of this group also took their places in the academic, social, and cultural life of the new society.

BTBJ – MINI UNIT ON ISRAEL (LESSON ONE ON ALIYAH) – MARCH 2016 – created by 7th grade teacher, Matt Rosenbaum

Newspaper Ad Encouraging *Aliyah* to Palestine

Obviously, from what we read about the five different periods of *Aliyot* to Israel, there were various reasons to go make *Aliyah*. This is a 2,000 year-old wish that people were trying to make come true. ***Get our homeland back!*** Of course, there were issues about increasing Arab anger and then violence. There was the hard work. But the goal was to give Jews all over the world a relatively safer place to be where they could either practice Judaism or just live their lives and “walk the Land” as Abraham did. The “New Jew” didn’t have to be religious. So, how would you promote this so that people would WANT to go?

In the box below draw with pencil (and hopefully color in) a picture, symbol, or logo that would encourage immigration to *Eretz Yisrael*. It has to appeal to everyone – religious, secular (non-religious), Socialist (share everything like on a *kibbutz*), capitalist (good place to start a business and make money), etc. Then write a paragraph corresponding to your picture that would appear in a newspaper where you REALLY urge people to move to Israel with strong reasons.



Notes:

Much of this material was gathered from A Young Person's History of Israel, by David Bamberger.

The information on *Aliyah Bet* was from an internet article by Eliyha Bergman: "Facing the British Blockade With Rusty Ships."

6th and 7th grade - Session #2 in depth

1. Review phrase: *Im Tirzu, Ein Zo Agadah*. If you really want something, is it enough to just dream of it? What else do you need?

2. In order to work towards a new state, there was a lot of hard work required.

3. Distribute “We Shall Be The Groundbreakers” – a pioneer song ca. 1920 [from *CIE Sourcebook*].
 - Read through it together.
 - What kinds of hard work did this song show that the *Halutzim* had to perform? [Consider the note about the double meaning of the word *tzur*.]
 - Teacher elicits from the students words or phrases that show the kind of work that was needed. List on the boards.
 - Does this song carry a positive message? How so?
 - Why do you think the *Halutzim* sang this song? Who is the intended audience of this song/poem?

4. What obstacles were standing in the way of the Zionists from establishing their own independent nation? (Many possible answers, here are a few to try to elicit: Currently being ruled by the British under the British Mandate, Arab resistance and attacks, need for unified language, need to establish infrastructure – towns, settlements, water supply, schools, etc., need to “tame” the land, need to get more immigration to provide for more citizens.)

5. Teacher informs students that many of these issues were serious obstacles to the foundation of the State, and that we will learn more about them now in our poster gallery.

6. Proceed to the Social Hall, where small groups of students should work throughout the exhibit and answer the questions on their poster gallery worksheets. The teacher should float between the different groups.

7. At the end, students sit on the floor of the Social Hall and share some things they have learned.

POSTER #1 – WORKING TOGETHER – Part 1

The best-known result of the Second *Aliyah* was the collective farm. Everyone shares equally in governing the community, in doing the work and in enjoying its benefits.

The idea came about almost by accident.

In 1909, a privately-owned farm near the *Kineret* ("Sea of Galilee") was failing. Its Jewish workers requested a voice in running it.

An experiment was tried. Seven excellent farmhands were given 75 acres to plant. They did all their planning together, and shared all the work.

At the end of the year, they had made a substantial profit!

In 1911, another small group decided to carry on the experiment. They created a settlement at the southern end of the *Kineret*, where the Jordan River begins its journey to the Dead Sea. They named the settlement *Degania* ("God's Grain"). It, too, was a success.

The first collective farms were very small. This type of farm was actually called a *kvutza*. Eventually a larger settlement was attempted. Many predicted that fair sharing on a bigger scale was impossible. However, the larger collective settlement was also successful. This kind of settlement became known as *Kibbutz*.

POSTER #2 – WORKING TOGETHER – Part 2

Over the years the *kibbutzim* have multiplied, prospered, and adapted themselves to changing realities. Today some 270 *kibbutzim*, varying in size from 80 to over 2,000 people, are scattered throughout Israel. They represent about 2.8 percent of Israel's population.

In the early days of the *kibbutz* movement, all *kibbutzim* were based on a foundation of agriculture. These days, however, the economies of *kibbutzim* cannot be sustained by agriculture alone. Most *kibbutzim* have branched out into industry to increase their productivity. *Kibbutz* factories manufacture a wide variety of products from electronics, furniture, household appliances and plastics to farm machinery and irrigation systems. Most *kibbutz* members work in some section of the *kibbutz* economy: orchards, factory, dairy, fishponds, or in one of its maintenance units. Routine jobs such as dining room duties are rotated among members.

Children of the *Kibbutz*

“Working together.” That is the theme of people on a *kibbutz*. Therefore, in the early years of the movement, children were generally raised together. Instead of living with their parents, they lived in a children’s house. There the community provided adults to take care of them, as well as places to sleep and eat, places to study and to play.

Children would see their own parents regularly, during the day or after work. They would spend time together before the children had to go back to the children’s house.

In today’s Israel, the *Kibbutzim* do not raise the children in this manner, and they live in houses with their own parents.

POSTER #3 – DEFENSE – Part 1

In many instances, the Jewish farmers got along with their Arab neighbors. However, this was not always the case.

Having a settlement meant being willing and able to defend it from attack, sometimes from thieves, sometimes from angry Arab neighbors.

This idea may seem obvious to us today, but in the early 20th Century, it was quite surprising. There had been no Jewish armed force in 1800 years.

At first, defense was left to non-Jews who were paid to defend the settlements. But ten Jewish men decided to change this. They themselves would do guard duty. But how could these volunteers prove their ability to the Jewish farm managers? In one case, the young men stole a mule from under the nose of an Arab guard. They returned it the next morning to the manager, before anyone even realized it had been taken. The Jewish guards were hired!

In 1909, Jewish workers organized their defense forces under the leadership of Israel Shohat, a young Russian of the Second *Aliyah*. The organization was called *Ha-Shomer* – “The Watchman” or “Guard.” Members of *HaShomer* were like a posse of cowboys, galloping on horseback to defend their fellow Jews. They often wore Arab clothes as a sign of friendship to Muslims who wished to live in peace. But Arabs who attacked were met with force.

Ha-Shomer chose to remain small. Yet the tiny band successfully defended the lonely Jewish outposts and created the basis for what became the very efficient Israeli army.

POSTER #4 – HEBREW

The people who arrived in the Second *Aliyah* were determined to make Hebrew the language of the land. Today that seems like a natural choice, but not at that time. The native language of most of the immigrants was Russian, Polish, or Yiddish. Moreover, Hebrew was the holy tongue of the Torah, and some of the Orthodox Jews strongly objected to hearing the language of the Torah used to say, “Go clean the cattle barn.”

There was another problem. Hebrew was an ancient language that had no words for many aspects of modern life. It had no vocabulary for “radio,” “telephone,” “babysitter” or “car.”

This issue was addressed by a small Russian scholar who took the Hebrew name, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda.

Ben-Yehuda came to Palestine before the First *Aliyah*. He was passionate about one idea. He believed strongly that Hebrew was the only language capable of uniting the Jewish people in a Jewish homeland.

At the age of 23, he and his bride set sail for Palestine. They vowed never again to speak any language but Hebrew. They had to make terrible sacrifices to keep this pledge. At times they nearly starved. Often no one would play with their children. When Ben-Yehuda’s wife died, she was refused burial in a Jewish cemetery.

Despite it all, the Ben-Yehuda family spoke only Hebrew. And Eliezer Ben-Yehuda compiled a brilliant dictionary which included new words he had created to make Hebrew usable in all areas of modern life.

Ben-Yehuda wrote the following in a letter to the editor of a Jewish newspaper in 1880:

"But we will be able to revive the Hebrew tongue only in a country in which the number of Hebrew inhabitants exceeds the number of Gentiles. Therefore, let us increase the number of Jews in our desolate land [Palestine]; let the remnant of our people return to the land of their ancestors; let us revive the nation and its tongue will be revived too!"

Ben-Yehuda was not the only person to work toward implementing Hebrew as the normal language of the Jewish land. For example, David Shuv helped in this cause as well. David Shuv was a Romanian who immigrated to Palestine in 1882. He was a leader of the settlers in Rosh Pina, one of the earliest *Moshavot* ("agricultural settlements") in Israel, and was involved in purchasing and working the land. In 1886 he was appointed as the principal of the Rosh Pina School. Below is an excerpt of Shuv's diary:

"I was the first in the Upper Galili that began to teach in school according to the system of Ivrit B'Ivrit ("Hebrew in Hebrew"). It should be understandable how difficult this work was for me at the time, when I did not have the elementary textbooks, and was

forced to write and organize the lesson plans myself...I fought with all my strength those who sought to oppose me, both those children who disturbed me during the lesson sessions, and their parents who rejected this system they were not used to and the language they didn't understand. There were those who mocked me and laughed at me."

Ben-Yehuda and others who supported his work triumphed. Schools began to teach Hebrew. The *Halutzim* of the Second *Aliyah* became his allies, and they worked hard at learning Hebrew as they struggled to work the land. At times they were almost fanatic. When a girl was stricken with malaria and began to rave in Russian, her nurse criticized her for not using Hebrew!

In later years, Israel was flooded with immigrants who spoke dozens of languages. As Ben-Yehuda had predicted, the Hebrew language was an important force to unite them as one people.

POSTER #5 – CONFLICT WITH THE BRITISH

In the first half of the 20th Century, Palestine belonged to Great Britain. The Jewish settlers and the British ruling in Palestine had a tumultuous (up and down) relationship.

At times, there was support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. For example, in 1917, Lord Balfour, then Foreign Secretary of Great Britain, issued a letter which stated: “His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.” This letter became known as “The Balfour Declaration,” and for decades it was used as proof by the Jews that Great Britain would support a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

Some British politicians were Zionists – like Lord Balfour they truly supported this cause. Others supported the Declaration in order to gain Jewish support for the British cause during World War I.

However, Britain also wanted Arab support, because the Arabs made up so much of the population of the Middle East. They wanted the Arabs to help them fight against the Turks. To some, independence included Arab control of Palestine. For various political reasons, Great Britain began to help the Arabs more and more.

By 1929, the Arabs decided it was time to show their power. The Arab leaders called on their followers to attack the Jews. The attackers went wild. They did not fight the armed Jews of the *Kibbutzim*. They attacked the old, unarmed Jews who spent most of their time in prayer. 133 Jews were killed and many hundreds were wounded. Jewish property was destroyed. The British did nothing.

POSTER #6 – DEFENSE – PART 2

In the early years of the settlement of Palestine, the cowboy-like guards of *Ha-Shomer* had done a great job protecting Jewish settlers. By 1920, however, a larger organization was needed for protection. It was formed with the name *Haganah* (“Defense”).

***Haganah* was an unofficial army with two enemies – the Arabs and the British. The Arabs wanted to destroy the Jewish population. The British wanted to destroy the *Haganah*.**

In the early years of its existence, the *Haganah* showed great restraint. They tried not to fight, even when Jews were murdered.

But when Jewish immigration to Palestine was greatly restricted, they felt they had to act. They had to bring Jews from Europe to Palestine, as it became more and more dangerous for Jews to stay in Germany and some of the other European countries.

The *Haganah* set out to rescue Jews by smuggling them from Europe into Palestine. By the time the State of Israel was created in 1948, more than 100,000 Jews had been saved from death “illegally.”

POSTER #7 - ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

In 1939, the world situation was growing very serious. Hitler was rising in power. Arab violence in Palestine was increasing. However, Great Britain did not protest the Arab violence; rather they gave them everything they wanted.

Great Britain issued a document called “The White Paper.” It stated that Great Britain intended to set up an independent state in Palestine with a permanent Arab majority. Jewish immigration would be cut back to 15,000 people per year for five years, and then it would be entirely shut off.

The Zionists in Palestine knew that this was unacceptable. Not only would they not have their Jewish homeland, but the safety of millions of Jewish lives was at risk.

The world was closed to the Jews. They could not survive in Europe. A few were able to enter the US and Canada, and even far-off places like Hong Kong and Shanghai, China, but most had to remain in their European countries.

Jewish refugees sometimes faced terrible fates. The *Struma*, a rickety old ship, escaped from Rumania in 1941. The British would not permit it to land in Palestine. It was kept in a Turkish harbor for two terrible months of hunger and panic. At last the

unsafe ship was towed out to sea – where it sank. More than 700 men, women and children drowned because they were not allowed to enter Palestine.

A rescue operation was mounted by the Palestine Jewish underground, and conducted under clandestine (secret) conditions. It was called "illegal immigration." The popular name for this campaign was "*Aliya Bet*" (since *Bet* is the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet), because it ran parallel to the "legal" immigration process (Immigration *Aleph* or Immigration A).

All told, a fleet of 68 ramshackle ships transported more than 73,000 "illegal immigrants" from European ports between 1946 and 1948. Among them were 10 American ships, acquired as war surplus, and crewed by 240 volunteer sailors and contract officers. The 10 American ships carried 31,000 would-be immigrants, or 43 percent of all immigrants to Palestine in that period of time.

Only a handful of ships - not one US vessel - penetrated the British air and sea blockade set up to prevent any arrivals in Palestine. The ones that succeeded in arriving safely in Palestine were met in the dark of night on the Mediterranean Sea. The illegal travelers were smuggled off the ships, escorted through the waters and were brought to places in Palestine where they could be safe.

Upon reaching the Palestine Coast, the ships were routinely apprehended by the Royal (British) Navy. With one exception, their passengers were transported to prison camps in Palestine or Cyprus, where they remained until after the War of Independence in 1948.

POSTER 1 – WORKING TOGETHER

- 1. What is a collective farm?**
- 2. How did the idea of a collective farm happen?**
- 3. The root of the words *Kibbutz* and *Kvutza* mean “group” or “coming together.” Why are these appropriate terms?**

POSTER #2 – WORKING TOGETHER – Part 2

- 1. What are some differences between the early *Kibbutz* and the typical *Kibbutz* of today?**
- 2. What was unusual about the care and upbringing of children on early *Kibbutzim*?**

POSTER #4 – HEBREW

- 1. Why were some Jews opposed to speaking Hebrew in Palestine?**
- 2. What was so important about Eliezer Ben-Yehuda?**
- 3. According to Ben-Yehuda, what was the connection between Hebrew and Jews immigrating to Israel?**
- 4. Do you think Ben-Yehuda's life was easy? Why or why not?**
- 5. What challenges did David Shuv face?**
- 6. Why is it so important to have Hebrew be the language of Israel?**

POSTER #5 – CONFLICT WITH THE BRITISH

- 1. What was the Balfour Declaration? Did it show the British supporting or not supporting a Jewish homeland?**
- 2. In what ways did the British not support the idea of a Jewish homeland?**
- 3. What horrible event happened in 1929?**

POSTER #6 – DEFENSE – Part 2

- 1. What was the *Haganah* and what was its purpose?**
- 2. What illegal action did the *Haganah* perform?**
- 3. Do you think that in this case it is acceptable to break the law – why or why not?**

POSTER #7 – ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

- 1. Why was the "*White Paper*" such a terrible blow to the Jewish hope for Palestine?**
- 2. What was the *Struma* and what was its fate?**
- 3. What was *Aliya Bet* and why was it necessary?**
- 4. What happened to people whose ships were prevented by the British from entering Palestine?**
- 5. Based on the information in this poster, who do you think should be considered a hero?**

Session #3 in depth

1. Review some of the obstacles discussed at the last session preventing Israel from becoming an independent nation. One way to do this is to list all the items discussed from last class on the board and ask the students what significance they have. You can also rank order them as most important to achieve or most difficult to achieve.
2. Read through the overview about United Nations and the Partition plan. One suggested interactive activity: Divide the class into groups or pairs. Give each group one piece of the overview. Discuss their portion with other groups and see if they can put the sections together in the correct historical order. Dates are not always given – they have to look at context. [I am providing the overview formatted two different ways – with standard spacing, and with large spaces for the teacher to easily cut up each portion for the students to put in the correct order.]
3. After the UN activity, ask the students: How do you think the Zionists felt upon learning that the partition plan had been passed? Write a diary entry, a poem, or a song with your feelings.

6th and 7th grade Israel Program – Session 3

Adapted from “My Israel” – The Worldwide Quiz for Children and A Young Person’s History of Israel by David Bamberger

BECOMING A STATE – THE UNITED NATIONS AND ISRAEL

By the start of 1947, the situation in Palestine had reached a crisis point. British soldiers found themselves fighting against *ma’apilim* (illegal immigrants) who had survived the *Shoah*. They were also fighting Jewish underground organizations which were resisting British rule more than ever. In addition, the Americans were constantly putting pressure on the British to solve the problem of the *ma’apilim* whom the British had prevented from entering Palestine.

In April of 1947, the British government gave up. They could not control the growing violence in Palestine, and they were unable to deal with the refugee problem. So they turned over the responsibility for Palestine to the United Nations.

The United Nations appointed a special committee to investigate the situation in the land and to suggest a solution. The members of the committee called a “United Nations Special Committee on Palestine” (UNSCOP) traveled to Palestine to investigate the issues.

The Zionists met with the UNSCOP representatives eagerly, and explained their needs, plans and dreams for a Jewish homeland. The Arabs refused to speak to the UNSCOP representatives. They told journalists that a decision to give the Jews land in Palestine would cause riots against Jews who lived in Arab lands. But their attempt to frighten the UNSCOP people failed.

David Ben-Gurion made a powerful speech before the UNSCOP Committee. He claimed that the Bible gives us the right to the Land of Israel. He declared: “Why should the People of Israel have the Land of Israel? Because this is the only land which the Jews as a People, not as individuals, regard as their homeland. No other people in the world views the Land of Israel as its land...”

While UNSCOP was doing its work, an old ferryboat named *Exodus 1947*, jammed with 4500 Jewish displaced people sailed for Palestine. It was attacked by a fleet of seven British ships. The British navy captured the refugee ship.

What was to be done with the refugees aboard the *Exodus 1947* ship? The British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, was angry that Jews kept sneaking into Palestine against his orders. He decided to make an example of the Jews of *Exodus 1947*. He ordered them sent back to Europe. First the ship docked in France, but the Jews refused to get off the ship. They only wanted to go to Palestine. Then the British sent the ship to Germany, where the British used force to get the Jewish passengers to return to the country of their nightmares.

Most of the world was appalled by the way the passengers of the *Exodus 1947* were treated. World opinion was growing for a Jewish state in Palestine. The UNSCOP Committee recommended to the United Nations that Palestine should be divided into two states – a Jewish state and an Arab state. Jerusalem, because of its importance to three religions would become international territory. This proposal was known as the “Partition Plan.”

The Zionists were disappointed, for they wanted control of their holy city, Jerusalem. They were afraid the division of the land would not be fair, and that they would not be able to defend it. But they were thrilled with the plan to have a Jewish state and a safe place to welcome Jewish refugees. They accepted the UNSCOP recommendation. The Arabs rejected the report entirely.

The “Partition Plan” was put to a vote to the United Nations. Frantic negotiations took place as Arabs and Zionists tried to get support for their sides. President Truman pledged American support of the UNSCOP Partition Plan. But still it was not certain if the plan would be accepted. However, Russia surprised the world by coming out in favor of the Partition Plan.

Even though Russia and the US were supporting the partition plan, the outcome was not guaranteed. No one was sure there were enough votes. Most of the European nations, many of the Latin American countries and the British Commonwealth joined the US and Russia in supporting the partition plan that would provide for a Jewish homeland. All the Arab states opposed it. Great Britain abstained (didn't vote for or against).

The final result of the UN voting was 33 dividing Palestine into a land for the Jews and a land for the Arabs, 13 opposed and 10 abstained (didn't vote for or against). The Zionists had gotten their two thirds majority.

BECOMING A STATE – THE UNITED NATIONS AND ISRAEL

By the start of 1947, the situation in Palestine had reached a crisis point. British soldiers found themselves fighting against *ma'apilim* (illegal immigrants) who had survived the *Shoah*. They were also fighting Jewish underground organizations which were resisting British rule more than ever. In addition, the Americans were constantly putting pressure on the British to solve the problem of the *ma'apilim* whom the British had prevented from entering Palestine.

In April of 1947, the British government gave up. They could not control the growing violence in Palestine, and they were unable to deal with the refugee problem. So they turned over the responsibility for Palestine to the United Nations.

The United Nations appointed a special committee to investigate the situation in the land and to suggest a solution. The members of the committee called a "United Nations Special Committee on Palestine" (UNSCOP) traveled to Palestine to investigate the issues.

The Zionists met with the UNSCOP representatives eagerly and explained their needs, plans and dreams for a Jewish homeland. The Arabs refused to speak to the UNSCOP representatives. They told journalists that a decision to give the Jews land in Palestine would cause riots against Jews who lived in Arab lands. But their attempt to frighten the UNSCOP people failed.

David Ben-Gurion made a powerful speech before the UNSCOP Committee. He claimed that the Bible gives us the right to the land of Israel. He declared: "Why should the People of Israel have the Land of Israel? Because this is the only land which the Jews as a People, not as individuals, regard as their homeland. No other people in the world views the Land of Israel as its land..."

While UNSCOP was doing its work, an old ferryboat named *Exodus 1947*, jammed with 4500 Jewish displaced people sailed for Palestine. It was attacked by a fleet of seven British ships. The British navy captured the refugee ship.

What was to be done with the refugees aboard the *Exodus 1947* ship? The British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, was angry that Jews kept sneaking into Palestine against his orders. He decided to make an example of the Jews of *Exodus 1947*. He ordered them sent back to Europe. First the ship docked in France, but the Jews refused to get off the ship. They only wanted to go to Palestine. Then the British sent the ship to Germany, where the British used force to get the Jewish passengers to return to the country of their nightmares.

Most of the world was appalled by the way the passengers of the *Exodus 1947* were treated. World opinion was growing for a Jewish state in Palestine. The UNSCOP Committee recommended to the United Nations that Palestine should be divided into two states – a Jewish state and an Arab state. Jerusalem, because of its importance to three religions would become international territory. This proposal was known as the “Partition Plan.”

The Zionists were disappointed, for they wanted control of their holy city, Jerusalem. They were afraid the division of the land would not be fair, and that they would not be able to defend it. But they were thrilled with the plan to have a Jewish state and a safe place to welcome Jewish refugees. They accepted the UNSCOP recommendation. The Arabs rejected the report entirely.

The "Partition Plan" was put to a vote to the United Nations. Frantic negotiations took place as Arabs and Zionists tried to get support for their sides. President Truman pledged American support of the UNSCOP Partition Plan. But still it was not certain if the plan would be accepted. However, Russia surprised the world by coming out in favor of the Partition Plan.

Even though Russia and the US were supporting the partition plan, the outcome was not guaranteed. No one was sure there were enough votes. Most of the European nations, many of the Latin American countries and the British Commonwealth joined the US and Russia in supporting the partition plan that would provide for a Jewish homeland. All the Arab states opposed it. Great Britain abstained (didn't vote for or against).

The final result of the UN voting was 33 dividing Palestine into a land for the Jews and a land for the Arabs, 13 opposed and 10 abstained (didn't vote for or against). The Zionists had gotten their two thirds majority.

6th and 7th grade - Session #4 (in depth)

This session will probably take up most of the evening.

First Unit – Studying *Megillat HaAtzmaut* (Israel’s Declaration of Independence)

This portion of the program will probably take place in the classrooms.

1. Teacher asks the students to identify from where they recognize these words:
“When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature’s G-d entitle them...We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among them are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness...”
2. Once the students identify these remarks as The Declaration of (American) Independence, discuss the circumstances of the writing of this document – why was it needed, who wrote it, etc.
3. Remind the students that last week we learned that the United Nations had granted statehood status on Palestine through the partition plan, which brings us to the need for a statement from the Zionists declaring their vision for the new State. Therefore one of their first steps was to write *Megillat HaAtzmaut* – their Declaration of Independence.
4. What things need to be decided at this point? Brainstorm with the students, but make sure they include that they needed a name for the new country, and they needed to include the values of this country. If it is to be a Jewish state, will religion be included in the document? Will ideas from the Torah be included? Will the history of the Jewish people be mentioned?
5. Teacher gives out abridged version of *Megillat HaAtzmaut* divided into four sections, and divides the class into groups. Each group is responsible for a section of the Declaration. Each group should come up with a short “title” or “description” of their section and answer the pertinent questions on the work sheet. Then come back together as a class to share the titles and some of the answers.
6. Go to the Social Hall for the second unit of this session.

Megillat HaAtzamut –
Questions on the Israeli Declaration of Independence

Note: Remember to come up with a title or description of the section you are assigned.

Part #1

1. What is meant by “The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people?”
2. What is the “the eternal Book of Books?”
3. What history is being referred to in the paragraph that begins: “After being forcibly exiled from their land...?”
4. Who are the pioneers and immigrants they are referring to and what did they do that was worth including in this document?

Part #2

1. Why is Theodor Herzl the only person mentioned by name in this document?
2. What is the Balfour Declaration and why is it mentioned here?
3. Why is the Holocaust mentioned in this document?
4. Why is it important that the United Nations Resolution is included? What does it mean to say that the recognition by the UN of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is “irrevocable?”
5. What does it mean for the Jewish people to be “masters of their own fate” like all other nations?

Part #3

1. Who is mentioned as being assembled to declare the State?
2. What is meant by “our natural and historic right?”
3. What other justification is offered for the right to declare the State?
4. What is the name of the new nation?
5. When does the new State officially come into existence?

Part #4

1. Why do you think that the authors of the Declaration of Independence chose to mention that the State of Israel will be “open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles” as its first official statement of law?
2. What other rights are promised in this document?
3. With whom are the Zionist leaders hoping to make peace?
4. What is the “*Diaspora*” and what is being asked of the world Jewish community?
5. What is meant by “the rock of Israel?” Do you think this is a religious document?

The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel

Tel Aviv, 5th Iyar 5708 – May 14, 1948

(abridged by Hazzan Arlyne Unger)

Section 1

Eretz Yisrael was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom.

Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades they returned in their masses. Pioneers, defiant immigrants, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself...

Section 2

In the year 5657 (1897), at the summons of the spiritual father of the Jewish State, Theodor Herzl, the First Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country.

This right was recognized by the Balfour Declaration of 2nd November, 1917, and re-affirmed in the Mandate of the League of Nations...which gave international sanction to the historic connection between the Jewish

people and *Eretz Yisrael* and to the right of the Jewish people to rebuild its National Home.

The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people – the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe - was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in *Eretz Yisrael* the Jewish State, which would open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew...

Survivors of the Nazi holocaust in Europe, as well as Jews from other parts of the world, continued to migrate to *Eretz Yisrael*, undaunted [not stopped] by difficulties, restrictions and dangers, and never ceased to assert their right to a life of dignity, freedom and honest toil in their national homeland...

On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in *Eretz Yisrael*... This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable.

This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.

Section 3

ACCORDINGLY WE, MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNCIL, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF *ERETZ YISRAEL* AND OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT, ARE HERE ASSEMBLED ON THE DAY OF THE TERMINATION OF THE BRITISH MANDATE OVER *ERETZ YISRAEL* [eve of Shabbat, the 6th of Iyar, 5708 – 15th May, 1948) 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 YISRAEL*, TO BE KNOWN AS THE STATE OF ISRAEL...

Section 4

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions...

WE APPEAL to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building-up of its State and to receive the State of Israel into the community of nations.

WE APPEAL – in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months – to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship...

WE EXTEND our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land...

WE APPEAL to the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to rally around the Jews of *Eretz Yisrael* in the tasks of immigration and upbuilding and to stand by them in the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream – the redemption of Israel.

PLACING OUR TRUST IN THE “ROCK OF ISRAEL,” WE AFFIX OUR SIGNATURES TO THIS PROCLAMATION AT THIS SESSION OF THE PROVISIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE, ON THE SOIL OF THE HOMELAND, IN THE CITY OF TEL AVIV, ON THIS SABBATH EVE, THE 5TH DAY OF IYAR, 5708 (14TH MAY, 1948).

Signed by various Zionist leaders, the first being David Ben-Gurion

Second Unit – Reenactment of Declaring of the State

All of the 6th and 7th grade students will meet in the Social Hall. Various parts will be given out for the reenactment.

News Journalist (Hazzan):

This is Simona Gideon, your reporter on the spot in Tel Aviv, Palestine. The date is Friday, May 14th, 1948. There is excitement in the air – I can feel it. Something is definitely going on.

Let's take a look at what is happening in the Tel Aviv Museum, where David Ben-Gurion is meeting in secret with other important officials...

Ben Gurion:

My friends, today is a day of promise and risk – great promise, and grave risks, the likes of which we have not seen for generations:

- a. The Mandate is over, the foreign regime is gone, and we must establish Jewish rule.
- b. War has been waged against us. It is possible that the war that has been waged against us will intensify through an invasion by regular Arab armies.

My dear members of the People's Council - We must finish this important document. How can we declare an independent State without a Declaration of Independence? We must get the wording just right.

Rabbi Yehuda Fishman:

David, I believe that we have almost completed our holy task. But what remains is to include The Holy One in our document. I cannot sign the Declaration without mentioning HaShem's involvement in our process.

Aharon Zisling:

With all due respect, Rabbi, this is nonsense! We achieved all of this progress through our own sweat and hard work. There is no place for religious expression in this declaration. I demand that the entire section on religion be removed!

Rabbi Fishman:

As I already stated, I will refuse to sign and withdraw my support and that of the other religious Jews in the land if the G-d of Israel is not included!

Zisling:

But I will walk out if you include this G-d of Israel business!

Golda Myerson:

David, we need you to have the wisdom of Solomon to bridge this divide. We do not want to lose anyone's support – every Jew in this room must be united for our cause!

Ben Gurion:

Haverim – Friends – I have the solution. We will change the text to include the phrase *Tzur Yisrael* – the rock of Israel, to be written as follows:

“Placing our trust in the Rock of Israel, we affix our signatures to this proclamation...”

To you, my dear Rabbi Fishman, we of course know that the “Rock of Israel” is the Almighty. And to you, Aharon and your secularist followers, you can understand the “Rock of Israel” as the “Strength” of Israel.

Does everyone approve? If so, let's take a vote...

News Journalist:

So they did vote – actually they voted twice. In the first vote there were 8 abstentions, 16 voted in favor, although no one opposed it. For the second round of voting, the wording of the declaration was accepted unanimously.

Now let's go back outside, and see what is happening.

Here is somebody in a big hurry – why it's Ben-Gurion's secretary. Let's see where she is off to!

Excuse me, can you tell me why the big hurry?

Secretary:

I am on an important mission for David Ben-Gurion.

Journalist:

Can you tell us about it?

Secretary:

My boss, David Ben-Gurion, is a very wise man. He knew that the People's Council would be meeting today and voting on accepting this important document – the Declaration of the new State. He also fears that as soon as we declare our independence, the Arabs will attack our new state

Earlier in the day, Mr. Ben-Gurion asked me to go across the street to the bank and rent a safe deposit box. I was supposed to ask the bank manager for the bank to stay open until 7:00, even though Shabbat is coming, but he did not tell me why I was to do this.

Now that the Declaration has been read and signed, Ben-Gurion has asked me to take this declaration across the street and place it in a safe deposit box. He is afraid that otherwise an Arab attack may destroy this important document. He told me that in several days time, if all is well, the document will be taken out of the box for our people who are currently stranded in Jerusalem because of the fighting, to be able to get a chance to sign.

Now please excuse me – I must place this Declaration of Independence in its safe place.

Journalist:

How fascinating, but I will let you continue on your important mission.

Now I see someone else who may have an interesting story to tell.

Excuse me, sir – are you Otto Wallisch, advertising agent and graphic designer?

Otto Wallisch:

Yes, I am.

Journalist:

Can you share with the public your role in today's events?

Wallisch:

Actually, my involvement started yesterday, around noon on May 13th. When I walked into my studio, I found a note: "Come to see Zeev Sharef at the Jewish Agency right away."

I was actually rather annoyed at this request. I was exhausted, having barely slept the night before. I had been going non-stop for the last ten days doing so many jobs for the new State, including preparing a new set of nine stamps, bearing the inscription, "Hebrew post." All I wanted to do was take a nap, or at least rest in my office – instead I get this puzzling summons!

Journalist:

So what was so important that you had to drop everything to visit Zeev Sharef at the Jewish Agency?

Wallisch:

When I arrived I was directed to a room on the second floor, where I was greeted with an impatient sigh. "Finally!" Sharef said. He told me emphatically, "You have 24 hours to prepare the main hall of the Tel Aviv Museum for holding the ceremony of the declaration of the state. And remember – this is TOP SECRET!"

I was stunned and shocked at this news! But before I could even react or ask a single question, Sharef had already left the room.

Later, Ben-Gurion himself called on my services. He said that a scribe was needed to write the text of the declaration on a parchment, which by the way, I had to find. It is not easy finding parchment in the middle of Tel Aviv in 1948! But somehow I managed. Anyway, Ben-Gurion said that they first tried using a Torah scribe, but it didn't work out so well. So he asked me and my assistant to carry out the delicate work ourselves. We

chose a font from a Sephardic Torah scroll as it was pleasant and easy to read. And we had the honor of writing out the entire declaration to be a historic document for all times!

So excuse my rush, but there are still so many preparations to be made – after all, we are becoming a free and independent Jewish country tonight – and there is so much left to do. But remember – you didn't hear it from me – it's a secret!!

Journalist:

Now you have it – breaking news from Tel Aviv!

Wait – I see another potential source of information. Rachel Cohen-Kagan, the chairperson of WIZO Israel (that is the Women's International Zionist Organization) is just over there. Mrs. Kagan, can you speak with us a moment? Can you tell us what it was like at the signing ceremony?

Rachel Cohen-Kagan:

The scene felt unreal. We felt like we were all part of history. Meir Grabovsky told me that his hands actually shook while he was signing; he trembled so much he could barely sign his name. When it was my turn to sign, I hesitated, thinking about including my maiden name. I wanted my father's name, Lubarsky, to be mentioned there. He was a veteran Zionist, and I thought that perhaps he deserved it...

And now you ask me how I feel? Like a good Jew, I answer a question with a question: "How does a bride feel under the wedding canopy?"

Now excuse me, I have more duties to perform, but look, there is Golda Myerson, the other woman who signed the document. I am sure she has much to share with you.

Journalist:

Mrs. Myerson, what can you tell me about this moment in time?

Golda Myerson:

Let me give you a little background. First of all, even secularist Ben-Gurion would not declare the state on Shabbat. He sent out secret invitations to 250 people. It stated that on May 13 (the next day) you are invited to a meeting at which we are going to

declare independence, but no state was mentioned. After all, we didn't even know yet what the new state would be called. The invitation invited us for 4:00 in the afternoon, at the museum at 16 Rothschild Blvd. We were asked to please keep secret this invitation and the circumstances of the meeting here.

Everything moved very quickly, and all was decided in two days' time.

On our way to the ceremony we knew what was about to happen, but it still seemed unreal. It's difficult to describe my impressions of a ceremony like that. There was a festivity and a tension and a special quiet, although the museum was jam-packed. I was very emotional and wasn't sure I'd manage to reach the dais and sign. Also, I was thinking all the time of the many friends who had played such a great part in paving the road to that occasion, and had not been able to reach it. I couldn't bear the thought of our 6 million murdered people...

Journalist:

Thank you, Mrs. Myerson, for your moving words.

Look, the crowd is growing larger and larger. People are spilling out from the square all throughout the area. Even though this event was supposed to be a great secret, everyone in Tel Aviv is turning out to be a part of our history.

4:00 is drawing near. Let's see what is happening!

Look, there are David Ben-Gurion and his wife arriving, followed by many other council members.

Now it is exactly 4:00. Even though we are outside, if you listen closely you can hear the sound of a wooden gavel pounding on the table.

Now you can hear those gathered inside singing *HaTikvah*.

[Crowd sings *HaTikvah*]

Let's try to peak in and see what is happening.

Ben-Gurion (rising from his place, and taking the Scroll of Independence in his hand, begins to read in a strong voice):

"Eretz Yisrael was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books."

[Crowd cheers...]

“Accordingly we, members of the People’s Council, Representatives of the Jewish Community of *Eretz Yisrael* and of the Zionist Movement are here assembled on the day of the termination of the British Mandate over *Eretz Yisrael*...[We] hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish state in *Eretz Yisrael*, to be known as ***M’dinat Yisrael – the State of Israel!***”

[Crowd cheers...]

{Play Youtube of Ben Gurion’s speech, then continue with dialogue below}

“Placing our trust in the ‘Rock of Israel,’ we affix our signatures to this proclamation at this session of the Provisional State Council, on the soil of the homeland, in the city of Tel Aviv, on this Sabbath even, the 5th day of Iyar, 5708, May 14, 1948.”

Now let all of us here stand to receive the founding Charter of the Jewish State.

[Crowd – silence, then loud cheers...]

And now, the blessing of *Shehecheyanu*, led by Rabbi Yehuda Leib Fishman...

Rabbi Fishman:

Baruch Ata...*Shehecheyanu*...*LaZ’man HaZeh*.

Journalist:

You heard it here first – *M’dinat Yisrael* – the independent State of Israel has been declared. And even though there is fear and anxiety that tomorrow will bring a massive Arab attack, today the people are in the streets, cheering and singing and dancing the hora. Let’s enjoy the moment.

Live from Tel Aviv, I am Simona Gideon – your reporter for World News. Laila Tov and good night!

Crowd joins in a hora.

