

Progressive ~ Reform Zionist Time Tunnel

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~ Created under the auspices of the World Union for Progressive Judaism ~

“In Jewish history,” said Holocaust survivor and Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel, “There are no coincidences.” If he is right, then the more we know about Jewish history, the better we can understand our religion, our people, and our place in the world.

Jews are masters of marking time – every week we stop for Shabbat and our year revolves around our many holidays. We constantly review the Jewish story in returning to the Torah portion of the week year after year. And we take tours, classes, and read books in an attempt to follow the footsteps of our ancestors around the world.

Our history tells us where we have been in order to help us understand where we are now and decide what direction to take in the future. This is especially true when we examine the phenomenon of the creation of the modern State of Israel 60 years ago. As we celebrate Israel at 60, we pause to reflect on the events of Israel’s 60 years of existence, and the events during the years leading up to its creation. We also reflect on our Progressive/Reform Movement and our evolving relationship with the State of Israel, our fellow Jews who live there, and the development of Progressive Judaism in Israel.

This program can be carried out in the classroom, as part of an adult study session, as a reference for a sermon on the history of Progressive/Reform Zionism. In an educational setting, the information can be written out on a big timeline in order to see what is happening in different areas at the same time (i.e. 1948 - Israel is formed and goes to war and the American Reform Movement just formed a committee to support Israel -- think about the connections. In a day school or high school setting, students can be asked to pick a time period on the timeline and research it more in-depth both from the perspective of Israel's history and Reform Zionist activity. It can also simply be an informational resource sheet.

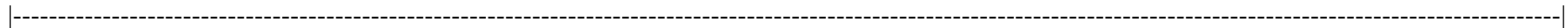
As we examine the history of Progressive Zionism and all issues connected to Israel at 60, we suggest taking into account the following ideas:

- What does Israel at 60 mean for the entire Jewish people? What does it mean for Progressive Jews?

- What have we learned about Israel and where do we see it going?
- Considering our own community and our own lives, where is the Jewish world today and where is it going? What is the place of Israel in the entire Jewish world?

So, fasten your seatbelts and hold on time as you journey down the “Progressive Zionist Time Tunnel”, exploring the history of the establishment of the State of Israel and the JNF, an institution that had a crucial role in the blossoming of the Israel, alongside the history of Progressive Zionism. As you study the facts of our history, try to reflect upon the themes that guide the history, what unifies our history and what differentiates the various factors at work.

Most important of all, try to find *your* place on the Progressive Zionist timeline.



Timeline of the State of Israel

1900s – 1st aliyah - Between 1882 and 1903, approximately 35,000 Jews immigrated to Palestine. The majority came from the Russian Empire with a smaller number arriving from Yemen. Many established agricultural communities.

1910s – 2nd aliyah - Between 1904 and 1914, 40,000 Jews immigrated mainly from Russia to Palestine following pogroms and outbreaks of anti-semitism in that country. This group, many of whom were infused with socialist ideals, established the first kibbutz, Degania, in 1909 and formed self defense organizations, such as Hashomer, to counter increasing Arab hostility and to help Jews to protect their communities from Arab bandits. The suburb of Jaffa, Ahuzat Bayit, established at this time, grew into the city of Tel Aviv. The national language Hebrew was revived; newspapers and literature written in Hebrew published; political parties and workers organizations were established.

1917 -- Issuing of Balfour Declaration: British support for a "Jewish Homeland"

1920s – 3rd aliyah - Between 1919 and 1923, 40,000 Jews, mainly from the Russian Empire arrived in the wake of World War I, the British conquest of Palestine; the establishment of the Mandate, and the Balfour Declaration., The population of Jews reached 90,000 by the end of this period.

4th aliyah - Between 1924 and 1929, 82,000 Jews arrived, many as a result of anti-Semitism in Poland and Hungary. This group contained many middle class families that moved to the growing towns, establishing small businesses and light industry.

1930s – 5th aliyah - Between 1929 and 1939, with the rise of Nazism in Germany, a new wave of 250,000 immigrants arrived. The Fifth Aliyah was again driven mostly from Eastern Europe as well as professionals, doctors, lawyers and professors, from Germany. Refugee artists introduced Bauhaus (Tel Aviv has the highest concentration of Bauhaus architecture in the world) and founded the Palestine Philharmonic Orchestra. With the completion of the port at Haifa and its oil refineries, significant industry was added to the predominantly agricultural economy. The Jewish population reached 450,000 by 1940.

1940s – November 29, 1947 - The United Nations issued the U.N. Partition Plan, which divided the area known as Palestine at the time into three entities: a Jewish state, an Arab state, and an international zone around Jerusalem.

May 15, 1948 -- Declaration of the State of Israel

May 15, 1948 – January 1949 -- Israel War of Independence (1948 War). Declaration of Israel as the Jewish State; British leave Palestine; Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia declared war on Israel. Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian invasion began.

January 25, 1949 -- Israel's first national election takes place; David Ben-Gurion elected Prime Minister

May 13, 1949 -- Israel was admitted to the United Nations. 37 nations voted in favor, 12 opposed, and 9 abstained. November 7, 1949 -- Jerusalem was declared as Israel's official capital.

1950s – 1950 - The Law of Return, granting Jews the right to come to Israel as olim (immigrants) and become citizens, is passed by the Knesset.
1950 - Operation Ali Baba begins; brings 113,000 Iraqi Jews to Israel and Operation Magic Carpet completed; 47,000 Yemeni Jews brought to Israel.

1952 - Academy of the Hebrew Language and the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel are Founded

1956 -- Suez Campaign. In retaliation for a series of escalating border raids as well as the closure of the straits of Tiran and Suez canal to Israeli shipping, and to prevent Egyptian use of newly acquired Soviet arms in a war, Israel invades the Sinai peninsula and occupies it for several months, with French and British collaboration.

1960s –

1967 -- Six-Day War -- Israel invokes its right of self-defense by launching a preemptive strike on Egypt; Israel takes control of Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) from Jordan, Gaza and the Sinai peninsula from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria. Jerusalem is officially reunited under Israeli control.

1968-1970 - War of Attrition -- Coordinated by Egypt, the War of Attrition was aimed at engaging Israel in a drawn-out and bloody conflict which would make optimal use of the Arab world's massive resources. Heavy artillery attacks were launched on Israeli positions along the Suez Canal, accompanied by sporadic incursions into Israeli-held territory.

1970s – October 6, 1973 -- Yom Kippur War. In a surprise attack on Yom Kippur, Egypt retook the Suez canal and a narrow zone on the other side. Syria reconquered the Golan Heights. Following massive US and Soviet resupplying of both sides, Israel succeeded in pushing back the Syrians and threatening Damascus.

1977 - Maccabi Tel Aviv basketball team wins European Championship.

1979 - Israel-Egypt Peace Agreement -- Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty in Washington, DC, bringing the 30-year state of war between them to an end.

The first computer anti-virus software package was developed in Israel

1980s – 1980 - Israel destroys Iraq's nuclear reactor -- Israeli fighter bombers launched an air attack against Iraq's nuclear reactor that had been scheduled to go on line shortly. The Israeli government, fearing that nuclear weapons would be used against Israel, took the pre-emptive action of destroying the reactor and disrupting Iraq's plan to become a nuclear power.

1982 – Massive Israeli invasion of Lebanon to fight the PLO.

1984 -- Operation Moses airlifts 7,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel

-- The cell phone was first developed at the Motorola plant in Israel.

1990s -- 1991 – Operation Solomon airlifts 14,400 Ethiopian Jews to Israel

1992 - Israel wins its first olympic medals (silver and bronze) in Judo.

September 13, 1993 -- Oslo Declaration of Principles - Israel and PLO agree to mutual recognition.

1994 – Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Minister of Foreign Affairs Shimon Peres, and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat awarded Nobel Peace Prize.

November 3, 1995 -- Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin assassinated by right-wing Israeli fanatic Yigal Amir.

1996 -- The program ICQ, which is the technological basis for AOL Instant Messenger, was developed by four young Israelis

1998 – Israeli Dana International wins the Eurovision contest

2000s

May 24, 2000 – Israel withdraws from Southern Lebanon

July 12, 2006 – Second Lebanon War -- Hezbollah terrorists cross the blue line border with Lebanon, attack an Israeli patrol, killing 3 and capturing 2 soldiers.

2008 -- The Israeli doubles team of Andy Ram and Yoni Ehrlich become the first Israelis to win a grand slam event (Australian Open).

- From this brief survey of Israel’s history, what are the main achievements of the State of Israel, both over the past 60 years and in the 40 years leading up to its formation?
- What events in Israel’s history are missing from this timeline?
- What do you recall from your life that parallels the events taking place in Israel? How did events in Israel affect you?
- How do you see your relationship with Israel? Your congregation’s relationship with Israel? The greater Jewish community’s relationship with Israel? What would you change?
- How do you envision the future of Israel in the next 60 years?

Timeline of Reform/Progressive Zionism

1900s -- Though the overall community expressed ambivalence toward Zionism, some leaders of the Reform movement in England expressed support. Reverend Dr. Wolf, minister of the Manchester Reform Synagogue from 1901-1908 preached that it was ‘the duty of all true Jews to support the Zionist cause.’. In Bradford, a Zionist Society was formed.¹

1910s – Most Progressive/Liberal movements are not Zionist –

Union Liberale Israelite in France held that “since the emancipation of 1791, ‘there is no longer a history of the Jews in France; there is only a history of French Judaism.’”²

¹ Anne J. Kershen and Jonathan A. Romain. *Tradition and Change, A History of Reform Judaism in Britain 1840-1995*, p. 117.

² Michael Meyer. *Response to Modernity*, p. 224.

1920s – In 1922, Rabbi Stephen Wise opened his own seminary called the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York to rival Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and to be a Zionist seminary for Jews of all denominations.

1927 – The Association of Liberal Rabbis of Germany passed a resolution leaving the attitude toward Zionism to the personal decision of each Liberal rabbi or layperson, provoking the wrath of the lay leadership of the VLJ (Vereiningug fur das Liberal Judentum – Association of Liberal Jews) who were anti-Zionist.³

1930s – 1930s – 1933 – Rabbi Moses Cyrus Weiler arrives to Johannesburg, a “community that prided itself on Zionism....” Weiler “possessed impeccable Zionist credits.” South African Progressive Jewry was always Zionist.⁴

1935 – In England, Reverend Maurice Perlzweig published an article in the *Liberal Jewish Monthly* entitled ‘Why I am both a Liberal Jew and a Zionist,’ in which he explained his support for creating a home in Palestine for the Jewish people which coincided with his ideology as a Liberal Jew believing in progressive revelation.⁵

1936 – The first Progressive Rabbi arrives to Australia, Rabbi Herman Sanger, a German Liberal rabbi, who was Zionist.

1935 -- Reform Rabbi Judah Leon Magnes, becomes President of the Hebrew University.

1937 – The Columbus Platform of the central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) is ratified, saying, “we affirm the obligation of all Jewry to aid in its [Palestine’s] up-building as a Jewish homeland by endeavoring to make it not only a haven of refuge for the oppressed but also a center of Jewish culture and spiritual life.”

In 1938, Rabbi Meir Elk, a graduate of Germany’s liberal Breslau Rabbinical Seminary, established the Leo Baeck School in Haifa, today one of the most successful educational institutions in the country.

³ Micahel Branner and Derek J. Penslar, Eds. *In Search of Jewish Community, Jewish Identities in Germany and Austria, 1918-1933*, p. 84.

⁴ Ibid., p. 341.

⁵ Lawrence Rigal and Rosita Rosenberg. *Liberal Judaism, The First Hundred Years*.

1940s – The CCAR founded the Committee on the Relation of Reform Judaism and the State of Israel in 1949.

1950s -- The first Reform synagogue, Jerusalem's Congregation Har El, was founded in 1958.

1960s -- 1963 – Hebrew Union College establishes a campus in Jerusalem which would come to serve as the academic center for the Year-in-Israel Program, Israeli Rabbinic Program, the Beit Midrash / A Liberal Yeshivah Program of Jewish studies, and training programs for Israeli teachers and educators.

1965 – The Israeli Movement for Progressive Judaism is formed and holds its first conference.

1967 – When the Union of Liberal Progressive Synagogues (ULPS) published its new prayer book, Service of the Heart, it contained several prayers for the State of Israel which were said in all congregations of the movement. It was also the first prayer book in all of the British movements to contain prayers for Israel Independence Day.

1968 – The World Union for Progressive Judaism holds its first biennial conference in Jerusalem.

1970s – In 1973, the World Union for Progressive Judaism moved its headquarters from New York to Jerusalem, establishing Progressive Judaism's international presence in Zion and reflecting its commitment to help build a strong indigenous movement.

1976 -- Kibbutz Yahel, the first Reform Kibbutz, was founded in the Arava.

1977 -- The Union of American Hebrew Congregations establishes the Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA).

1979 -- Establishment of Netzer Olami in Melbourne Australia, as Temple Youth.

1980s – Kinneret Shiryon is the first woman rabbi to practice in Israel.

1980 -- ARZENU, the umbrella organization of Reform and Progressive Religious Zionists, is founded as an "ideological grouping" or Brit Olamit within the World Zionist Organization with constituent groups in ten countries representing the interests of these groups and of Reform and Progressive Judaism world-wide in the governing bodies of World Zionist Organization and in the Jewish Agency for Israel.

1982-3 -- Chazit Mitkademet of Brazil was formed to increase awareness about Liberal/Progressive Judaism and to Jewish Zionist life in Brazil.

1982 – The Council of Israeli Progressive Rabbis (MaRaM) published a prayer book, *Ha-Avodah She-Ba-Lev* (The Service of the Heart).

1983 - Kibbutz Lotan is founded in the Arava by twenty Israeli and twenty American youths whose members strive to balance an ecological approach to living in Israel through recycling, permaculture, and other projects.

1985 - Har Halutz, a communal village designed for "free enterprise" living and Reform Jewish practice, was settled by a *gar'in* (dedicated group) that was established in the U.S. and consisted of nine families who were a mix of English speaking immigrants and native Israelis.

1986 – With the support of ARZA's Religious Rights Fund, American Reform convert Shoshanna Miller was recognized as a Jew by Israel after Israel's High Court of Justice ordered the Ministry of the Interior to register her as one when she had made *aliyah* to Israel.

1987 -- The Israel Religious Action Center was established as the public and legal advocacy arm of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism. The Center's mission is to advance religious freedom and pluralism, tolerance, social justice and civil liberties in Israel. The Center fights for the rights of the disenfranchised and to create a diverse society in which all individuals and groups will be able to express their uniqueness.

1990s -- Naamah Kelman-Ezrachi is the first woman ordained a rabbi in Israel and Maya Leibovich is the first native Israel woman ordained a rabbi.

1992 -- The ARZA Reform Zionist Think-Tank is established with the goal of trying to define Reform Zionism. Under the auspices of ARZA executive director, Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch, the Think-Tank published two journals, in 1993 and 1995, called *Journal of Reform Zionism*.

The first Association of Progressive (Reform) religious Zionists in Switzerland was founded in Zürich in January 1990 under the name ARZA-Schweiz, it was followed 2 years later by ARTZA-Suisse, a French-speaking Section in Geneva

2000s -- In 2008, the Israel Movement for Progressive has 24 congregations throughout Israel most with youth groups and kindergartens, performs over 500 weddings and many conversions per year, operates a Pre-Army preparation course studying Jewish texts and volunteering in the community, and teaches in over 40 schools throughout Israel.

- How has Progressive/Reform Zionism evolved over the past 100 years and specifically in the last 60 years since the State of Israel was created?
- What have been the main initiatives of Progressive/Reform Zionism over the years?
- What is missing from this timeline that we as a Progressive Movement should consider for the future?
- Where does your congregation's history fit on this timeline?

People:

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, who served as both president of the CCAR and the Zionist Organization of America was a staunch defender of Reform and Zionism. “For him, Zionism represented a vital addition to Reform, not a substitute.”⁶ While studying at Yeshivat Etz Chaim (later, the Rabbi Yitzhak Elchanan Theological Seminary; see *Yeshiva University), he founded the Dr. Herzl Zion Club, a Hebrew-speaking group which evolved into *Young Judaea , the first Zionist youth organization in the U.S. A brilliant orator, Silver had the greatest impact and made his most important contributions as a founding chairman of the American Zionist Emergency Council (1943–45), and later as chairman of the American section of the Jewish Agency (1946–49). His public and private eloquence resulted in the passage of Congressional resolutions favoring the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth, as well as in commitments of support enunciated in the Republican and Democratic Party platforms. The high point of his Zionist leadership came on May 8, 1947, when he presented the case for an independent Jewish state before the General Assembly of the United Nations, which passed the Partition Resolution on November 29 of that year, establishing the legal basis for the creation of the state of Israel. He returned again to the United Nations in May 1948 to announce that Israel had declared itself an independent state. Silver believed that Reform and Zionism complemented each other. He wrote that Zionism and Reform are “an expression of this self-same Messianic hope.”⁷

Rabbi Stephen S. Wise founded the New York Federation of Zionist Societies in 1897, working in close cooperation with Theodor Herzl. He helped formulate the text of the Balfour Declaration of 1917. He spoke on behalf of Zionist aspirations in Palestine at the Versailles Peace

⁶ Ibid., p. 117.

⁷ Ibid., p. 119.

Conference of 1918–19. On several occasions he served as chairman of the United Palestine Appeal. **Wise** led in the organization of the American Jewish Congress, of which one his goals was to lead American Jews into more Zionist channels.⁸

Rabbi Bernhard Felsenthal of Chicago, the great champion of Classical Reform, called Zionism “the most significant and profound Jewish endeavor of the present century.”⁹ He was one of the founders of the Chicago Zionist Organization, and if he were younger, he would have attended the First Zionist Congress in Basle. He was a realist and saw Zionism as a safeguard against those wishing to attack Jews. Felsenthal also believed that a Jewish state would be the best vehicle to promote the Mission of Israel. He wrote in the 1899 HUC Journal: “. . . will you dare say that their [Russian Jews’] Zion is Russia . . . ‘Have faith in Humanity! Wait till to-morrow!’—This tomorrow may be at a *very* distant day, it may occur after a thousand years or more; it may never come true.”¹⁰

Rabbi Max Heller of New Orleans was the CCAR’s first Zionist president. He was also the honorary vice-president of the Zionist Organization of America from 1911-1929. In his presidential message to the Conference in 1911 Heller said: “In my view . . . the religious life must be the crown and summit of any full-blown culture; the real point of divergence between Zionism and anti-Zionism cannot be the question, as it is sometimes crudely put, whether we are a religion or a race, but whether we shall achieve our religious mission as a people scattered to the four corners of the globe, or as a nation up-building a typical culture upon its ancient soil.”¹¹

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the UAHC, pushed for the creation of a Reform Zionism, leading to the creation of ARZA and a vital Reform Zionist movement. Three weeks after the United Nations declared Zionism a form of racism, Schindler proclaimed in his 1975 Biennial sermon: “We are all of us Jews and whether we use the small z or the large Z, we are all of us Zionists. The land of Israel which is Zion, and the children of Israel who constitute the Jewish people, and the God of Israel are all bound together in a triple covenant. At no time in our history have we ever stopped praying or longing or working for Zion.”¹²

Rabbi David Polish -- Already an outspoken Zionist at the time of his ordination, Polish started his rabbinic career at the Congregation of Judah in Cedar Rapids, Iowa (1934–39), where he formed a statewide Zionist organization. He served as national chairman of the Committee on Unity

⁸ Encyclopaedia Judaica.

⁹ Meyer, p. 294.

¹⁰ Polish, p. 105-106.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 110.

¹² Alexander M. Schindler, UAHC Presidential Sermon, November 7, 1975, Dallas, TX, p.11.

for Palestine (1947), as well as president of the Chicago Zionist Federation (1975–76). He represented the CCAR at the Prime Minister's Conference in Jerusalem in 1968, where he delivered an address in Hebrew, and planned the first CCAR conference in Jerusalem in 1970. During his tenure in office, the CCAR embarked on a series of dialogues with the *kibbutz movement in Israel, resulting in the establishment in the *Aravah of Kibbutz Yahel and Kibbutz Lotan. Polish was a founder of the Association of Reform Zionists of America and author of ARZA's Statement of Principles.

Rabbi Richard (Asher) G. Hirsch, born in 1926 in Cleveland, Ohio, is presently Honorary Life President of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, the international organization of the Reform Movement. He served as Executive Director of the World Union, from 1973 – 1999, establishing the organization's headquarters in Jerusalem.. He was a congregational rabbi in America as well as the founding director of the Reform Movement's Religious Action Center in Washington, D.C. from 1962 – 1973. Always an ardent Zionist, he made aliyah to Israel with his wife Bella and children in 1973 and became the leading Reform activist for developing Reform Judaism in Israel. He was instrumental in bringing Progressive Judaism into the framework of the Jewish Agency / World Zionist Organization, having served over the past decades on the agency's Board of Governors, as co-chairman of the Jewish Agency's Commission on the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and presently as chairman of the Zionist General Council. He was elected president of the 33rd World Zionist Congress. He is the author of five books on the application of Judaism to contemporary social problems: *There Shall be no Poor*; *Judaism and Cities in Crisis*; *The Way of the Upright*; *Thy Most Precious Gift*; and *From the Hill to the Mount – a Reform Zionist Quest*.

- Compare and contrast how these Reform leaders expressed their Zionism?
- With which ideas do you agree? Disagree? Why?
- Would you consider yourself a Progressive/Reform Zionist? How would you express your relationship with Israel?

Timeline of JNF History

1900s – During the Fifth Zionist congress held in Basle, Switzerland, it was decided to establish the Jewish National Fund whose purpose would be to purchase land in what would become the Jewish State.

1910s –At the end of its first decade of existence, JNF acquired land, set up and administered farms, continued its afforestation programs, set up an experimental agricultural station at Ben Shemen in mixed farming which is the basis of most Israeli agriculture, and was instrumental in founding secondary schools and pioneering higher education.

1920s – In July 1920, representatives of Zionist organizations from all over the world convened for the first time since the outbreak of World War I and decided that the land which had been purchased for Jewish settlement belonged to the Jewish people as a whole, and that JNF's function was to use its donations collected from Jews around the world to acquire land which would be allotted according to inheritable leasehold. By 1921, JNF had purchased up to 25,000 acres of land.

1930s –At the end of 1935, after 15 years of tireless effort, JNF held 89,500 acres of land on which stood 108 communities. Most of the land was in the center of the country and in the valley regions.

1940s – When the State of Israel is established, JNF holds almost 1 million dunams (250,000 acres) of land and has planted 5 million trees. With the soaring immigration that follows, JNF provides tens of thousands of immigrants with jobs in forestry and land reclamation.

1950s – JNF plants the Jerusalem Forest and more than 600 agricultural communities have been established on JNF lands.

1960s – JNF begins planting the Yatir Forest in the northern Negev which was previously considered too arid for afforestation (today it is one of the largest JNF forests). JNF builds the road to Mt. Hermon and completed the Jordan Valley road from the North to the Dead Sea.

1970s – The number of trees planted in JNF forests reaches 100 million. The Jewish Children Forest is inaugurated as a link between Israeli and Diaspora children.

1980s – New methods of water harvesting are developed in the Negev. Extensive rehabilitation work is undertaken to drain the soil of the Jezreel Valley and overcome the salinization which has destroyed its fertility. Major archaeological projects are undertaken in Beit Se'an and in Shuni.

1990s – JNF prepares land infrastructure for tens of thousands of housing units, new jobs, and children's summer camps for the massive waves of immigration from the Soviet Union and Ethiopia. JNF constructs water reservoirs in the Beit She'an Valley and in the northwestern Negev. In response to the peace agreement between Israel and Jordan, JNF contributes to solving regional bilateral water issues.

2000s – In 2001, JNF celebrated its Centennial, having planted over 240 million trees, built over 180 dams and reservoirs, developed over 250,000 acres of land, created more than 1,000 parks throughout Israel and educated students around the world about Israel and the environment. JNF has increased its water resources to furnish water to more than 1.2 million Israelis.

- What roles has the JNF played in Israel's history?
- How have the JNF's activities in Israel evolved over the years?
- What do you see as possibilities for JNF to continue help developing the State of Israel in the future?
- What do you see as the role of Jews in the Diaspora in JNF endeavors?

Names:

Zvi Hermann Schapira was a university professor and a lifelong Zionist who, after initial hesitation he became an enthusiastic supporter of the new Zionist movement founded by Theodore Herzl . To the First Zionist Congress (1897) he brought two proposals: the first was the creation of a "general Jewish fund," to which the whole of world Jewry, poor and rich, would contribute. Two-thirds of the fund would be assigned to purchasing land, and the remaining third would serve for the maintenance and cultivation of the land acquired. The land would not be sold but only leased for a period not exceeding 49 years. The suggestion was accepted only by the Fifth Congress (1901), at which the Jewish National Fund was founded.¹³

Moshe Rivlin served as chairman of the board of directors of the Jewish National Fund for 21 years. During Rivlin's tenure at the Jewish National Fund, from 1977-1998, he oversaw several key projects, including the rehabilitation of the Hula Valley wetlands, drainage in the Jezreel Valley, and preparation of lands for the establishment of communities during the period of greatly increased immigration from the former Soviet Union. Rivlin was also instrumental in the JNF's work to reverse the effects of desertification and to establish water reservoirs in the Beit She'an Valley, the Galilee, the Arava and the Negev. Rivlin's long years with the JNF earned him the nickname, "the national forest ranger."¹⁴

- Zvi Hermann Schapira was a simple university professor with a big idea. What do we learn from his initiative at the First Zionist Congress?
- Looking at the work of these two men, what kind of qualities must they have had to make the Jewish national dream come true?

¹³ Encyclopaedia Judaica

¹⁴ <http://www.jafi.org.il/education/100/people/bios/mrivlin.html>