



Camp Israel

2006



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Camp Israel/ Camp Eretz

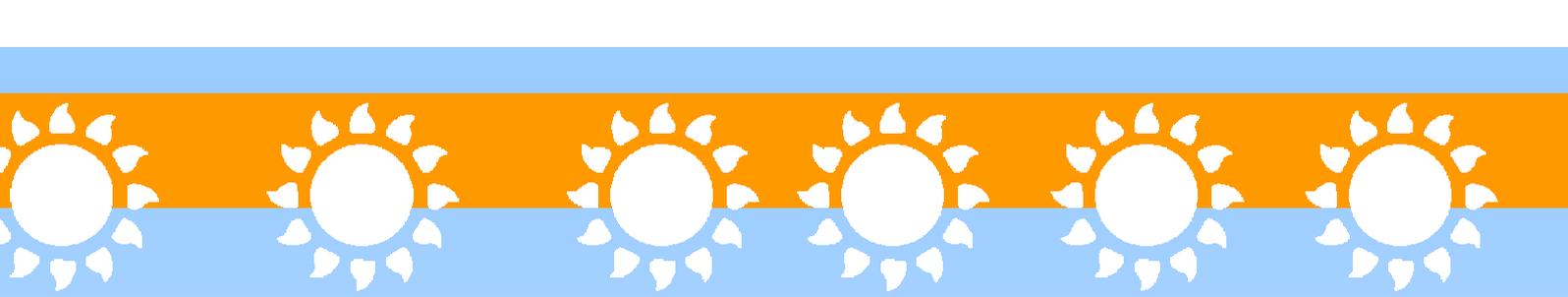
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ISRAELinDC

An Initiative of

The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington & The Jewish Agency for Israel's
North American Coalition for Israel Engagement (Makom)



Day 4:

Israel 1989

Historical background:

When the State of Israel was declared, about 5% of the Jewish people lived in Israel (650,000 Jews). It was clear that masses of Jews must make Israel their home if it were to continue to exist. Between 1948-1951, hundreds of thousands of olim (new immigrants) arrived in Israel, and within three-and-a-half years, Israel's population had doubled. It had absorbed close to 700,000 Jews from dozens of Diasporas - a feat unprecedented anywhere in the world. (In comparison - imagine the US absorbing 300 million people between 2006- 2009)

Although the 1950s were mostly turbulent years for the young State, which struggling to absorb the immigrants, by the end of the decade, Israel had two million Jewish citizens - more than three times the number in 1948. Those new olim established hundreds of new settlements, built roads, new industries and turned Israel into a modern, industrialized country.

In the next few decades, the waves of Aliya continued to strengthen Israeli society. Jews around world came back to their homeland, making a huge demographic change. By the end of the 80s, more than 30% of the Jewish people were living in Israel.

The last decade of the 20th century had a huge surprise in store for the State of Israel. With the opening of the former Soviet Union's gates, an enormous new wave of Aliya started. Four hundred thousand immigrants arrived in 1990/91 alone, and in the following years, 70-80,000 olim arrived each year - a number that would have been considered completely improbable a few years earlier. Aliyah soared to unknown heights, and Israelis looked on in awe at this miraculous spectacle. Close to a million Jews left the FSU and settled in Israel - some because they wanted to and others because they were unable to reach other countries. Israel, yet again, had become an open house, ready, at the drop of a hat, to absorb an unlimited number of olim.

The absorption of a million Jews within a few short years was difficult - in terms of housing, employment and integration into Israeli society. There were a great many problems - as there were with most previous waves of Aliyah. Yet most of the olim were eventually absorbed. When the peak of this Aliya wave was over, Israel became home to close to 45% of the Jewish people in the world.



New Olim Arriving in Israel



**Around
8:00**

Wake up in Israel
Israeli Breakfast
(salad, yogurt and honey, scrambled eggs)

Israeli flags are hung
between the trees.
Boom box with
Israeli music is
heard

**Around
9:00**

Official Welcome Ceremony
Children receive Israeli ID cards
Learn Ha'tikva

Welcome letter
from the President
of Israel

Counselors, although you are camping out, this ceremony should be special.

Try to make it as "official" as you can. Have the campers stand nicely in a line. One of the counselors reads out loud the letter from the President of Israel (have copies so each camper can paste into the journals)

When the campers receive their ID cards- have each one of them step up, shake their hands, make sure you say to them: Welcome HOME.

Stress the fact that Israel is HOME for all the Jews around the world.

Print so that each
camper can get a
copy to paste in
journal

Prepare ID cards

**Around
9:30**

Reflection on what we went through in order to get to Israel
journal time

**Around
10:00**

Take down camp + clean up

**Around
11:30**

* Campers decide what to do in Israel. There are several options. They can do all or several as long as they decide as a group.*

Walk to the water front. Play in sand.
Walk to the pool.
Sculpture in watermelon.

Watermelon (1 for
every 4 kids)
spoons

5:30 - 7:00

Family Night - Israel Scouts



Shalom and Hello friends,

July 14, 1989

For 2000 years our people have been wandering all around the world. In the small villages and big towns of Europe, under Arab rule in North Africa and Spain, suffering the Crusades and enjoying the emancipation in Germany. Two thousand years far away from our homeland. But during these 2000 years we have never forgotten Jerusalem, we dreamed of coming back to Israel. We prayed, we hoped, we wished to be able to live as free people in the land where David conquered Jerusalem, King Salomon built the Temple, the brave Maccabis defended it and Jewish Sages wrote books that compiled into the Bible (what does this mean, wrong word usage), composed the Mishna and the Talmud and created Jewish Philosophy that influenced the whole western world.

My brothers and sisters, you have suffered in the past years life in the Soviet Union. We know that it was almost impossible for you to experience proactive Judaism in communist Russia. We know you could not openly declare your Jewish identity. But all of this is over. You are now at home. I wanted to be the first to welcome you to the State of Israel. We are so happy that you made it to our country. From now on you will live in your homeland and I hope that you to feel at peace in your new home. The citizens of Israel know that your journey here was filled with danger and difficult tasks. From the bottom of our hearts, we welcome you into the country that we, and now you, call home. I wish you luck, happiness and fulfillment in your new lives in Eretz Yisrael.

Shalom,

Chaim Hertzog

President of the State of Israel