

Golda Meir

Key Words

pogrom	a government-condoned riot in which a mob would ride through streets pillaging and burning homes and often killing or injuring inhabitants
emigrate	to leave one's country and live elsewhere
initiated	started; did something for the first time

In 1902, in Kiev, Russia, four-year-old Golda watched as her father barricaded the windows of their family's small apartment in a **feeble** attempt to shield them from the violence of a **pogrom** he believed to be **imminent**. Dreaming of a life without fear, her family **resolved** to **emigrate** to the United States. Golda's father departed in 1903, and the rest of the family followed three years later by means of illegal passports and bribes. Many Jews remained in danger in Russia and throughout the world, but Golda and her family were finally safe.

Golda loved her new life in America, especially school. As wonderful as school was, however, Golda noticed room for improvement. The families of many students could not afford to purchase the books required for school. Golda did not simply wish to correct this problem—she acted. While in fourth grade, she **initiated** the American Young Sisters Society and the group collected donations door-to-door and organized a fundraiser.

When Golda was only 14, her parents arranged for her to marry a middle-aged man and demanded that she discontinue school. Golda desired more from life, so she ran away to her older sister in Denver and resumed her education.

Recalling the terror of her years in Russia and listening to the opinions expressed by her sister caused another dream to form in Golda's mind and heart. She believed the Jewish people needed a **sovereign** nation if they were to stop being victims and become masters of their own fates. In 1917, the British announced a commitment to establishing a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine. The Jewish people would have to build

this homeland themselves though. Many people would need to settle in Palestine, develop the necessary **infrastructure**, and create a **viable**, if unofficial, government. Golda's hope was **renewed**, and she knew she could contribute to the effort.

In the following years, Golda **devoted** herself to the **Zionist** movement. She raised money, recruited people to live in Palestine, moved to Palestine herself, and served in the unofficial government. Finally, in 1948, Golda signed Israel's Declaration of Independence.

Even after Israel became an independent nation, Golda continued to assist the new country in its development. She served in Israel's parliament, as Israel's foreign minister, and as chair of the Israeli delegation to the United Nations. In 1969, she agreed to come out of retirement to become prime minister.

Golda died in Jerusalem in 1978 at which time her doctors revealed her 15-year struggle with cancer.

Golda once said, "I was never so **naïve** or foolish as to think that if you merely believe in something it happens. You must struggle for it." Throughout her life Golda proved that strong **convictions** can only make a difference in the world if they are **backed** by decisive actions.



words read _____

- errors _____ = _____
cold score

words read _____

- errors _____ = _____ goal _____
hot score expression date passed

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Comprehension Questions

Identifying the main idea

1. What is the main idea of the story?
 - a. Golda Meir's devotion to the Zionist movement helped establish a sovereign Jewish state.
 - b. Golda Meir made positive changes in the world by being so devoted to the things she believed in.
 - c. Golda Meir proved at a young age that she was capable of making a difference in the world.

Recalling a fact

2. What was the name of the group that Golda initiated when she was in fourth grade?
 - a. The American Young Sisters Society
 - b. The Zionist Movement
 - c. Children For An Independent Israel

Getting meaning from the context

3. What does **backed** mean in this story?
 - a. moved backwards
 - b. supported
 - c. blocked up

Making connections within the text

4. Why did Golda's family emigrate from Russia to the United States?
 - a. Russia was not safe for Jews.
 - b. The United States had better schools.
 - c. The United States had more jobs.

Connecting the author's and the reader's ideas

5. Why is it remarkable that Golda Meir struggled for 15 years with cancer and never told anyone?

Developing vocabulary

6. Write the bold-faced words from the story that mean the same as the definitions below.

- | | |
|---------------|-------|
| a. started | _____ |
| b. reasonable | _____ |
| c. beliefs | _____ |
| d. weak | _____ |
| e. innocent | _____ |
| f. decided | _____ |
| g. revived | _____ |

Attending to details

7. List three ways in which Golda assisted the new country of Israel in its development.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

List three ways in which Golda contributed to the Zionist movement.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Processing information

8. Why did recalling the pogroms in Russia cause Golda to want a sovereign Jewish nation?

Finding supporting details

9. Golda Meir was devoted to the things she believed in. Write three facts from the story that support this statement.

Enrichment Activity

Read more about Israel and Palestine. Have the two states been able to coexist peacefully? Write a paragraph about what you learn.