



ההסתדרות הציונית העולמית World Zionist Organization



Newsletter No. 1 - March 2016



Message of the Chairman of the WZO, Mr. Avraham Duvdevani

I am pleased to present Newsletter No. 1 in its new format. The Newsletter, distributed for the first time since the last Congress, reflects the changes in the organization since then and overviews some of the activities that have been carried out.

The structural and organizational changes that have taken place in the WZO derive directly from the significantly increased scope of activities during the previous term. The Congress recognized our achievements and gave us its blessing to continue in the path we set for ourselves, with an organizational structure suitable to the scope and nature of our activities. We have established additional departments, integrated new resources and can already report significant activity.

Continuing as the Head of the Office of the Vice Chairman-Acting Chairman of the WZO is Vice Chairman-Acting Chairman, Yaakov Hagoel. The Office is expanding its activities in Israel within a diverse population and is intensifying its struggle against anti-Semitism in response to events around the world.

Dr. David Breakstone, Vice Chairman of the WZO, is Head of the (new) Department. Department for Zionist Operations. The Department engages in Israel advocacy, Internet activity and "Education for Israel", as in the past, and new areas of responsibilities, which will be specified, are being incorporated into the Department. Among these, is a Bible contest for adults to be held, G-d willing, on Hanukkah December 2016.

Gusti Yehoshua-Braverman continues to head the Department for Diaspora Activity. The Department focuses on programs that were successful in recent years particularly among students and youth, such as "Beit Ha'am" and "Tachlis" and it held special activities for Bar/Bat Mitzvah children in the Winter Camps in France.

Rabbi Yehiel Wasserman is the Head of the Center for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora. The Center is expanding its activities within new audiences and within small communities that usually do not

Gael Grunwald is the newly elected Head of the Settlement Division. The Division is currently redesigning its historical status and continues to implement the programs approved and budgeted by the Israel Government in 2015. Its main project is rehabilitation of the settlements around Gaza, after the Gaza War .

Marina Rozenberg-Koritni was elected to head the (new) Department for Aliyah Promotion. The Department actively promotes aliyah from Western countries, as well as immigration of Russian speaking populations from a number of Western countries. Naturally, the main focus of the Department's activities is in France and we are proud to have initiated 125 (!!) Ulpan classes as preparation centers for olim .

Head of the (new) Education Department is Silvio Joskowitz. The Department is responsible for Hebrew education and Hebrew teacher/emissaries within formal as well as informal educational frameworks abroad .

The Herzl Center, directed by Dror Morag, continues to develop and to expand its target audiences and its programs .

In light of the significant increase in activity and departments, we have appointed, as WZO Director General, Eli Cohen who is energetically overseeing overall organizational performance .

With the new structure, we are beginning a new phase and we look forward to many and more significant achievements during this term .

I wish every success to all those involved in this effort .

Avraham Duvdevani (Duvdev)
Chairman of the Zionist Executive



THE DEPARTMENT FOR DIASPORA ACTIVITIES

The Department reaches everywhere, providing large and small communities with Zionist content and relevant contemporary activities

"From the Blue of the Israeli flag to the White of the Alps"

With this slogan, during 10 days, a Department caravan, visited hundreds of French children and youth in 8 Winter camps in the Alps. Caravan staff, including an artist and educational staff, presented a fascinating "Israel Night" to the campers. Many of the children had participated in the Department's Summer Camp Bar Mitzvah program and, for them, this event provided both follow-up and closure.



"Beit Ha'am" on Wheels

The Department Representative in North America, Rotem Malach, concluded a shuttle to 15 communities in the U.S., including Chicago, New Orleans, Miami and others. He conducted "Beit Ha'am" seminars and marketed and sold the material. The "Beit Ha'am" program, conceived and led by Department Head, Gusti Yehoshua-Braverman, continues to create new materials and to reach more communities. The journey inspired great enthusiasm and we are already working on the next trips.



EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Hebrew Festivals in North America

Participating in The Hebrew Festivals in North America, in March, Director of the Hebrew Unit, Inbal Barel and Director of the Teaching Mission in the Diaspora Unit, Orit Avital, were sent to New York and Miami, where they presented a theatrical story to children, organized sessions for youth, conducted continuing education classes for teachers and visited schools and community centers. The activities were very successful and additional communities throughout the U.S. have already requested similar events for their communities next year.



Hebrew Teacher Training in Paris

The Education Department, headed by Silvio Joskowicz, together with the Department for Aliyah Promotion, headed by Marina Rozenberg-Koritni, conducted Hebrew teacher training, in Paris, for 49 Ulpan teachers, who will teach in 125 classes that will be set up by the Department in 2016. The project was managed by WZO Representative, Mr. Simcha Felber, in cooperation with local organizations and the Hebrew University and was funded by the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption.





THE DEPARTMENT FOR ALIYAH PROMOTION

Israel: Get Connected - Aliyah Event of the Year in London



The WZO Department for Aliyah Promotion, the Jewish Agency, the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption and "MASA" hosted 400 people interested in Aliyah or in returning to Israel, in an Aliyah Fair held in January in London. Under the concept of "one stop shop", representatives of government offices and various institutions joined together to enable participants to obtain, in one place, all the necessary information from the experts: career, education, absorption, social security and so on. Additional Aliyah Fairs are planned for the near future.

THE OFFICE OF THE VICE CHAIRMAN-ACTING CHAIRMAN

Conference on the Struggle Against Anti-Semitism: BDS - The New Anti-Semitism

As part of the events for International Remembrance Day for Holocaust Victims, the Office held a conference attended by many participants. Speakers included WZO Chairman, Avraham Duvdevani, Vice Chairman-Acting Chairman, Yaakov Hagoel, Israel's Ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon and journalist, Boaz Bismuth. A booklet was produced, summarizing trends in anti-Semitism in 2015 and the results of the survey conducted among Israelis on their opinions regarding the BDS movement and the state of Diaspora Jewry.



Conference of Israeli Women in Zionist Society

The Zionist Council in Israel held its first ever conference for "Israeli Women in Zionist Society", which was attended by 530 women from across the country. For 3 intensive days, there were cultural performances, lectures and panels, with the participation of members of Knesset, local council heads and senior figures from academia and from the public and economic sectors.



THE WORLD UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM

The Conference of Reform Zionist Youth (Netzer Olami), held in Jerusalem last month, included 31 branch representatives from 14 countries, who gathered for 5 intensive days of Zionism, bonding with Israel, Hebrew study and fellowship. Participants studied, experienced, prayed, connected and primarily received a booster shot of love of the Jewish people and country, that they will take back with them to various branches around the world.





MOUNT HERZL

World Presidents Visit Herzl's Grave

Last month, the President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis and the President and Supreme Commander of the Security Forces of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, visited the State Visionary's grave. The President of Romania heard from Avraham Duvdevani, and the President of Kenya from David Breakstone, about Herzl's work towards the establishment of the Jewish State and the Zionist Movement. The Presidents laid wreaths on Herzl's grave and signed the official guest book.



HERZL CENTER

Hapoel Katamon at Herzl Center

The Herzl Center hosted the management and fans of "Hapoel Katamon" soccer team. Some hundred participants took a timeout from sport in favor of Zionist educational activities at the Herzl Center. The participants noted the technological innovations at the Center and marveled that Herzl himself found time for sport, as a bike rider enthusiast.



Herzl Center Cultural Celebration - 19th Century Style

Herzl Center has produced two cultural events dedicated to Julie Herzl, wife of Theodore. In efforts to expand Center activities to additional audiences, the events were held in Herzliya and Rishon Lezion. Hundreds of participants watched a monodrama about Julie Herzl, enjoyed a lecture on the subject and had a Viennese dessert -- leaving with them a "taste of wanting more". The events were produced in cooperation with the Council to Commemorate Herzl of the Prime Minister's office.



MASORTI OLAMI

Building a Relevant Zionist Language for Young People

Masorti Olami held a Zionist Leadership Seminar at Kibbutz Tzuba, attended by Masorti Movement leaders from around the world. Participants discussed, inter alia, strengthening Zionist values within communities around the world. The seminar was addressed by WZO Vice Chairman, Dr. David Breakstone, and Vice Chairman-Acting Chairman, Mr. Yaakov Hagoel, who spoke about anti-Semitism, Israelis abroad and the challenges of the Zionist Movement in our time.





THE SETTLEMENT DIVISION

Projects in Spring Valley

Newly appointed Chairman of the Settlement Division, Gael Grunewald, held a get-acquainted visit between the Spring Valley Regional Council and the Division, in order to promote demographic growth and settlement. Division and Council staff presented projects such as establishing Shlafim as a joint "neighborhood" of the Reshafim and Shluchot kibbutzim, a nucleus of families in Tel Teomim and economic and demographic engines in the Valley such as Eden Technologies and Eden Farm. There is excellent cooperation between the Division, the Council and the settlements and its impact is felt in many areas.



Vision and Zionism with Excellence

Division Chairman, Gael Grunewald and Executive Member, Debby Ben-Ami, led some 60 Zionist Congress labor representatives on a tour of the settlements surrounding Gaza. Grunewald said, "We combine vision and Zionism with excellence. Investment in communities under the Division's responsibility, establishment and expansion of settlements in general and agriculture in particular are vital and fulfill the Zionist vision." Delegates were impressed by the scope of activity and agricultural development throughout the region, and by infrastructure development by the Division for the settlements surrounding Gaza as in all areas of settlement.



THE CENTER FOR RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS IN THE DIASPORA

Limmud Conference, Finland - January 2016

In a joint initiative, the Center for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora and the Jewish community in Helsinki, held the community's first ever Jewish Limmud Conference, attended by some 250 community members, at the local university. Rabbi Yehiel Wasserman, Head of the Center, delivered opening greetings and an address on "Community Responsibility to Jewish Education".



Union of Zionist Rabbis in the United Kingdom

At the initiative of the Center, the founding conference of the Union of Zionist Rabbis in the UK was held in London, attended by 30 rabbis. They discussed the challenges that lie ahead and ways to bring the Zionist message to the Jews of the Diaspora. Center Head, Rabbi Yehiel Wasserman and the Chairman of Zohar, Rabbi David Stav, participated.

Establishing Hebrew Libraries in Small Communities

At the initiative of the Center, Hebrew libraries are being set up in small communities. These will house basic books on Judaism and on the State of Israel, including Herzl's "Altneuland". The goal is for community members to learn about their roots, the foundations of the Jewish people and about contemporary Israel. The two libraries inaugurated recently are in Belgrade, Serbia and Zagreb, Croatia. The Center is planning to set up libraries this year in Krakow, Poland and Lisbon, Portugal.



THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATAN SHARANSKY'S RELEASE FROM SOVIET PRISON

In the presence of leaders of the WZO and the Jewish Agency, an impressive tribute took place in Tel Aviv on Feb. 26, 2016, marking the 30th anniversary of Natan Sharansky's release from Soviet prison. The event was moderated by Haim Yavin, who was the first to interview Sharansky, upon his arrival in Israel in 1986. Speakers included Israel's Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Knesset, the former President of Israel and the Opposition Leader. The event was patterned after "This is Your Life" and included songs sung by Anya Buckstein.



DEPARTMENT FOR ZIONIST OPERATIONS

Delegation to Sweden- A Department delegation, headed by Dr. David Breakstone, went to Sweden in January to attempt to balance the attitude of the Swedish Parliament to the State of Israel. In its meetings, the delegation succeeded in touching on incitement on the Palestinian side and media bias and it clarified existing perceptions, in the hope of influencing future policy.



INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COOPERATION

The "Tachlis" program for the study of spoken Hebrew expands to new audiences.

Youth movements, whose graduates come for a year of training in Israel, have sought to transform "Tachlis" into an alternate program for the conventional Ulpan which served them up to now in their Hebrew studies. A pilot program for graduates of "Hechalutz L'Merhav" in Kibbutz Barkai is currently taking place. Four departments -- Diaspora Activities, Aliyah Promotion, Education and Diaspora Operations -- are partnering in the project, which was initiated and is overseen by Rollo Weiner, Director of the Latin American Desk in the Diaspora Activities Department



Teachers Conference in Mexico

Head of the Department and Vice Chairman of the WZO, Dr. David Breakstone, delivered the keynote address at a conference sponsored by the Department, for 100 teachers from Mexico and Central America. Dr. Breakstone led 4 seminars as well as other activities for counselors of Zionist movements.

Internet

The department launched a Facebook page - "Israeli Lives Matter" - that received tens of thousands of "likes". Those interested receive a daily post commemorating terrorists victims of recent years.



A project of the Department of Zionist Operations of the World Zionist Organization



AND A BIT MORE ZIONISM IN PICTURES. . .

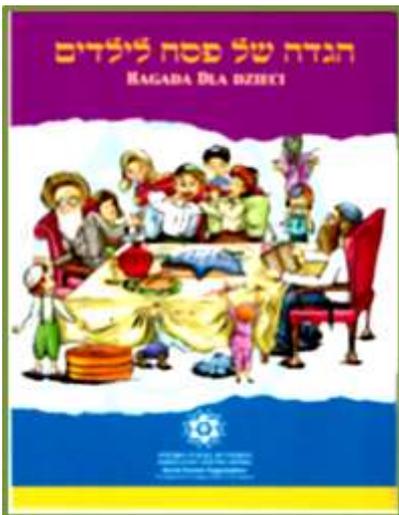


Aliyah Fair, London - Department for Aliyah Promotion



Training of Hebrew Teachers, Paris - Education Department

Passover Haggadah in Estonian Center for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora



"Beit Ha'am" Seminar -- North America Department for Diaspora Activity

Local Congresses for Youth - Zionist Council Office of the Vice-Chairman-Acting Chairman



Israel Solidarity Rally - Geneva Department for Zionist Operations

