



ההסתדרות הציונית העולמית
World Zionist Organization



WZO *Newsletter*

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Message from the Chairman

Shalom and greetings!

This newsletter features events, conferences and seminars in different places around the world covering many various spheres, which bring us joy and present the WZO as an active, hands-on and significant organization in reinforcing Zionist awareness, enhancing the link to the State of Israel and strengthening Jewish identity. These activities are taking root in communities and organizations, making us proud.

In October there were meetings of the Extended Zionist Executive and the Zionist General Council. At these meetings Departments presented detailed reports on their activities, and members were deeply impressed. We were hosted in Peki'in and Hurfeish, we learned about the Druze community and we reinforced our identification and connection with the community, particularly the Druze Zionist Council. The Zionist General Council approved amendments to the constitution, and from here on we are heading down a new path.

Avraham Duvdevani (Duvdud)
Chairman, World Zionist Organization

100th Anniversary of the birth of Israel's 6th president, Haim Herzog – events throughout the United Kingdom



A comprehensive Zionist enterprise was conducted by the WZO throughout the UK marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of Haim Herzog, Israel's 6th president. Herzog, who was an IDF general, our representative in the UN and Israel's president was born in Belfast, to a small community in Northern Ireland.

Joining this journey were Herzog's family, headed by Jewish Agency chairperson Yitzhak Herzog, WZO director-general Eli Cohen, Executive representatives and heads of Jewish organizations in Britain. The journey began in Belfast together with members of Parliament and other leaders, and continued to Dublin, where the delegation was greeted by the Irish president. The journey ended in London with public officials and former British prime minister, Tony Blair.

The Central American Department Conference – “An Eye Gazing to Zion”

At the end of October the second meeting of the “Eye Gazing to Zion” project was held in Quito, Ecuador – a program aimed at reinforcing Jewish-Zionist education in the schools of smaller Jewish communities (“boutique communities”) in Latin America. For three days some 45 educators and policy-makers came together to discuss issues relating to Jewish identity, different models for changing Jewish education in the schools, and more. Also attending the meeting was the WZO chairperson, WZO director-general, and the head of the Education Department.

“Hebrew – A Heritage of Innovation” – Conference of the North American Education Department

The Conference, which was held in November with a peak attendance of 480 people, included 3 tracks: One for educational shlichim, one for members of the Hebrew Teachers Union, and a third track for members of the Council for Hebrew. There were over 40 workshops dealing with innovations in the world of Hebrew language teaching, new methodologies, and participants learned about new initiatives in the field. Among the many activities was a special “hackathon” to encourage educational initiatives in Hebrew. Mr. Silvio Joskowicz, head of the Education Department, remarked: “The growth of the Conference of the North American Education Department over the past 3 years shows that Hebrew has become a central part of forging Jewish identity and a connection with Israel for the future generation living in North America.



Settlement Division



Bidding farewell to the late Mati Droblas, former chairman of the Settlement Division

With great sorrow we learned of the passing of Matityahu (Mati) Droblas, head of the Settlement Division from 1978-1992.

Mati, a Holocaust survivor who made Aliyah from Argentina and a founder of the town of Mevo Beitar, became a settlement leader through and through, and during his tenure as chairman dozens of towns were built (for additional information on Mati's activities you can read his autobiography, "Pioneer").

We are proud to have had the privilege of knowing him, and that we were able to see, with our own eyes, a man who built the state with his own two hands.

Mati, we promise to do everything we can to fulfill your legacy, to build up the land everywhere we can, just as you did throughout your life. Rest in peace.

(In the photo: Ceremony to mark the 50th anniversary of the Settlement Division where Mati Droblas was awarded a Certificate of Recognition as former head of the Division. Photograph credit: Ronen Tepperberg)



Building a new settlement

The JNF has begun development work on the settlement of Meital! Meital is next door to the settlement of Malkishua on the Gilboa Ridge.

As stated, the JNF is laying the groundwork for a temporary camp to be built by the Settlement Division. We are hopeful that families will begin moving into their new homes in another year!

Diaspora Activities Department

iVision – Meeting again, this time in Budapest

Last October the Department held its 2nd European conference - iVision – in Budapest, Hungary. More than 100 people met for a weekend of lively and exciting Zionism. The conference was opened by Noam Gershuni, a fighter pilot and holder of a Paralympic gold medal. He told his moving story, from his injury to his waving of the Israeli flag. Also speaking was Erez Kaganovich, founder of Humans of Tel Aviv, who gave a different view – colorful and contemporary, complete with photos – of Tel Aviv and Tel Avivians. This special conference opening left participants full of energy for the entire weekend.

This conference continued from last year's conference in Etoile, Paris, and already has a following that has promised to attend next year's conference, in Marseilles, France, at the end of 2019.



The untold Jewish story – Forward Looking Leadership in Romania

For the first time in the history of the "Forward Looking Leadership" trips, a delegation of leaders travelled in October to study the less-well known history of Judaism and Zionism in Romania. The delegation learned about the local Jewish community and the Zionist movement in Romania, the terrible story of the community's destruction by the Romanians themselves, stories of heroism and the contribution of Jewish youth movements during the Holocaust, and mainly the story of the real first Jewish Congress held in Focșani, Romania that never received the recognition given to the Basel Congress. The trip included in-depth discussions on the role of Hagshama movements in shaping Jewish identity, and whether the movement builds the community or the community builds the movement.



The Department for Israel and Countering Antisemitism

The Zionist calendar

The Department for Israel and Countering Antisemitism launched an app that synchronizes with the regular calendar on cell phones, based on previous infrastructure, initiated by the Diaspora Activities Department. The calendar features historic and significant events, dates of birth and death for prominent figures who helped shape the Zionist movement and Israel, and other holidays from the Jewish calendar. For example, on the Zionist Calendar you can find events such as the death of the Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics, as well as happier occasions, such as Maccabi Tel Aviv winning the European championship, as well as the founding of the Hebrew Gymnasia, the date of the Balfour Declaration, and more.

You can download the calendar to your cell phone for free at: www.wzo.org.il/shana.



Reenacting illegal immigration – “We have come...”

The Israel Department, in cooperation with the Ministry of Heritage and the Zionist Council in Israel, held the largest reenactment event in Israel’s history – the illegal immigration during the British Mandate period. For several hours, Gordon Beach in Tel Aviv was turned into a compound that combined nostalgia with an event for the entire family.

Thousands of participants came to celebrate the event, during which two boats sailed to the breakwater on the coast, after which dinghies of the “Maritime Scouts” movement sailed to shore. The scouts, who were dressed as Ma’apilim, met up with the original Ma’apilim who arrived here 72 years ago.

Later on participants took part in a mass flash mob dance to the sounds of “Heveinu Shalom Aleichem.”

On the beach there were origami workshops where participants fashioned paper boats, and also made ship sculptures in the sand. There were also computerized stands with information from the archives of the Ma’apilim camp in Atlit. Participants could get information about family members who arrived in Israel on the illegal ships and look for family in archival photos.



Masorti Olami

Masorti Leadership Seminar in Israel

Between October 18-21, Masorti Olami welcomed its board and executive for a four-day leadership conference in Israel. Meeting at the Ramada Hotel on Hadera’s sunny Mediterranean shore, members of Masorti Olami’s leadership spent an extended weekend learning, discussing and focusing on the organization’s future strategy, strengthening dialogue between leaders from various regions, helping leaders understand the achievements of the global movement and setting realistic priorities for the coming years. The board divided into committees tasked with managing specific goals, and guest speakers talked about global and local leadership, the purpose of a movement, and Zionist leadership. .



Three simultaneous seminars in Paris

The weekend of November 22-25 marked a monumental occasion in the European Masorti Movement. For the first time ever, three simultaneous Masorti seminars were held at Paris’ Dor VaDor community, uniting Masorti activists from across Europe with visiting speakers including Sophie Fellman-Rafalovitz, President of Masorti Israel. The weekend featured a Masorti Europe board meeting and seminar on anti-Zionism in Europe and the changing political climate around the world. In addition to the Masorti Europe seminar, there was also a meeting of MERCAZ representatives from across the continent and NOAM Europe also held its first-ever meeting, as the organization embarks on its mission of uniting NOAM groups across Europe and developing closer, shared identity between the youth group’s European branches.



Zionist Enterprises Department

“Limited Inventory” – Employment Fair people with disabilities

People with disabilities encounter many difficulties in finding employment, and they are often offered jobs that do not match their skill set. “Limited Inventory” is a social initiative that addresses this issue. It comes from an incubator of the “Mofet” program – the accelerator for social initiatives of the Zionist Activities Department.

This is the first employment fair of its kind for people with disabilities, held at Tel Aviv University in early October 2018, with leading companies in the spheres of banking, insurance, government ministries, security services, food companies, legal firms and more. There were also lectures, panels and workshops on employment-related topics and integrating people with disabilities.

At the event, the head of the Zionist Enterprises Department, Dror Morag, said: “What I see here today is exactly what we had in mind when we created ‘Mofet’. Ambitious projects creating social change, promoting equality and creating a better future for everyone living here.

“I hope that through this Fair, every job-seeker finds something that will help them utilize their talents and skills, and we see a more just and egalitarian society,”



The first cycle of the “Mofet” Entrepreneurship Accelerator Program – Settlement Track is complete!

Following an emotional ceremony in the presence of Dror Morag, head of the Zionist Enterprises Department, Silvio Joskowicz, head of the Education Department, and Gil Linn, Deputy Secretary-general of the Kibbutz Movement, certificates were awarded to program graduates and grants were given to selected initiatives to help them get started.

Program participants are young people from the settlement movements who learned about leadership and entrepreneurship, and worked to develop professional tools.



Aliyah Promotion Department

Promoting Aliyah on the West Coast

A delegation of publicists led by the head of the Aliyah Promotion Department, Marina Rozenberg-Koritni, visited the West Coast of the USA in late November, and held a series of meetings with the Russian-speaking community, which numbers some 200,000 Jews.

In addition to Department personnel, the delegation included five former olim who are successful in their respective fields – from advertising to medicine and nursing, from business and finance to theater and film. Each one made aliyah from the FSU and they all had stories to share with their target audiences,

Sessions were held in Los Angeles, San Jose and San Francisco with groups of potential olim, including families and students. Some 100,000 people were exposed to these events.

The head of the Department stated, “For the first time in its history this major Jewish community had the opportunity to see the Israeli spirit firsthand, and to almost touch the State of Israel... We will continue to build meaningful and strong bridges with Jewish communities everywhere, particularly the community of Russian-speaking Jews in the USA.”



Expanding our ranks in Latin America

The number of the Department’s ulpanim in Latin America has reached 45. There are 27 in Argentina, 16 in Brazil and 2 in Uruguay. The Department is working vigorously to achieve the strategic goal as stated by the head of the Department, Marina Rozenberg-Koritni, “to bring aliyah promotional messages and materials to every Jew, no matter where.” This why we are enhancing our content, holding in-service training for ulpan class teachers, sending publicists from Israel to target communities and, of course, expanding the geographic reach of our ulpanim. In Argentina we have aliyah preparation classes not only in Buenos Aires (19 classes), but also in Rosario, Santa Fe, Salta, Parna and Mendoza. In Brazil, in addition to classes in the major centers of Rio De Janeiro and São Paulo (7 and 4 classes, respectively), we were active in Cortiva and Puerto Allegra. And our big achievement this year was opening to ulpan classes in Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay. Well done!



The World Union for Progressive Judaism

Young Reform leaders from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine come to Jerusalem to connect with Israel

MASA FSU, in partnership with Netzer Olami, opened a special program in October 2018 to eight participants, ages 18-30, from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine who were active in Progressive communities across the region. For four months, participants will live in Jerusalem while learning Hebrew and connecting to Israel and Judaism as they tour the country and visit Reform congregations across Israel. A major component of our program is dedicated to leadership training and volunteering; participants are asked to create their own social action project during the program.



Netzer student camp celebrates 70 years of Israeli Statehood in Odessa

In August 2018, Netzer Olami, the Reform Zionist global youth and young adult movement, ran a five-day summer camp for 47 students and 23 counselors in Odessa. The Student Summer Camp celebrated 70 years of the State of Israel through formal and informal educational and cultural activities that examined issues across Israeli social, religious and political spheres. Participants also learned Hebrew and studied Israeli history, alongside the values and teachings of Reform Judaism and tikkun olam (social justice).



World Center for Leadership - Mt. Herzl



Round trip home

The center holds training seminars for young adults from the Ethiopian community, in cooperation with the Zionist Enterprises Department. Selected young people living in Ethiopia who are not approved for Aliyah, came to Israel for half a year of personal enrichment so they could lead the Jewish community in Ethiopia. The Center for Leadership is in charge of their leadership training with workshops and visits to sites such as Masada, Jerusalem's Old City and the Diaspora Museum.



Young Jewish leadership seminar in Germany

The Center held a leadership training seminar in cooperation with ZWST, the umbrella organization of German Jewish welfare organizations. The seminar entailed four intensive days on the subject of "Recognizing each person's individual management style" based on Zionist and Jewish sources. The 30 seminar participants came from all over Europe, along with our UK representative Izchak Sonnenschein and the shaliah for the Diaspora Activities Department, Nissan Strauchler. The seminar began with a walking tour of Jewish Frankfurt to mark the 80th anniversary of Kristallnacht.

The Herzl Center



120 years since Herzl's visit to the Land of Israel

To mark the 120th anniversary of Herzl's only visit to Israel (October 26 to November 4, 1898), the Herzl Center held a series of extensive and meaningful activities, including:

- Publication of the supplement, "The Visit That Became A Legend" This colorful handbook is packed with information, telling the story of Herzl's visit: the goals, successes, disappointments, photos and vignettes, and of course, the significance of the visit and its importance for Herzl's activities. The supplement can be downloaded from the Herzl Center website:

<http://www.herzl.org.il/files/gallery/hoveret.pdf>

- Production of a series of TV programs

In order to trace Herzl's journey, we produced a series of three episodes for which we actually went to all the places he visited. At each site we learned in depth about the reality of those days, how Herzl experienced each place and the impact of those experiences on the way he chose to lead the Zionist movement.

The series was broadcast on Channel 10 and now the episodes are available to watch on the Herzl Center's You Tube channel.

Episode 1: Arriving in Jaffa and the meeting at Mikveh Israel.

To watch, [click here](#).

Episode 2: Visiting the Moshavot. To watch, [click here](#).

Episode 3: Jerusalem. To watch, [click here](#)

- Reenacting the visit

On November 1 we took an activity-filled day trip, to reenact Herzl's visit. In colorfully decorated bus that could be seen for miles around, we crowded on board – Herzl and members of his delegation (actors), Herzl Center staff and an Israeli dance troupe. Joining us were members of the Zionist Council from Ashkelon. Throughout the day we visited the major sites of Herzl's historic visit:

- Tel Aviv – Jaffa – corner of Herzl and Rothschild streets, with a dance parade and special event: A reconciliation between Herzl and the Baron.
- Mikveh Israel – Meeting with pupils and reenacting Herzl's meeting with the Kaiser.
- Participation in an official ceremony to mark the 120th anniversary of the visit, in conjunction with the Herzl Forum of Council for the Preservation of Heritage Sites.
- Nes Ziona – Rehovot: Parade of horses to mark Herzl's visit to the "Moshavot"
- Jerusalem – Reenacting his visit, dancing at the Mamilla Compound and a closing ceremony at Mt. Herzl.

During the day many people learned about this activity and it was widely covered by the media. [Click here](#) to see the clip.



Center for Orthodox Religious Affairs

Conference of young rabbis in Sofia, Bulgaria

In Sofia, capital of Bulgaria, a conference of young rabbis was held with 20 rabbis from all over Europe participating. The conference was initiated by the Union of European Rabbis in collaboration with the Center for Orthodox Religious Affairs in the Diaspora of the WZO. During the conference a delegation of the Union of European Rabbis and heads of the Jewish community met with Mr. Boyko Metodiev Borisov, the prime minister of Bulgaria.

The delegation included, among others, Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt and Rabbi Gershon Gutman-Segen, who presided over the conference; Rabbi Yoel Yifrah, chief rabbi of Bulgaria; Dr. Alex Oskar, president of the Jewish community, and Rabbi Yechiel Wasserman, head of the Center for Orthodox Religious Affairs in the Diaspora



Representatives of the Zionist Executive report from the field

The Executive's North American Representative, Esther Struk

A conference of Israeli high-tech companies, "Beresheet-Tech," took place in New York on December 12, 2018, which was attended by WZO representative Esther Struk, who presented the WZO's activities before the 150 conference participants. In addition to the varied activities of WZO's different departments, there was a presentation on the exhibition of 120 years of Zionism, and the various companies were invited to sponsor bringing the exhibition to North America.

In May 2019 the exhibit will be displayed in Grand Central Station, after which it will travel to Toronto, Chicago, Florida, Los Angeles and other North American cities.



The Executive's representative in France, Moshe Cohen

On October 8-10 an in-service course was held in Paris for teachers in WZO ulpanim in the greater Paris area.

The course was led by an experienced teacher from Hebrew University, and was also attended by Marc Dovev, head of the Aliyah Promotion Department, and Moshe Cohen, the WZO representative in France. The in-service was dedicated to the university ulpan program for those planning Aliyah (Ulpan 300); it garnered much interest and was highly successful.

On November 7 we were visited by Gael Greenwald, chairman of the Settlement Division and together with Moshe Cohen, we visited an ulpan class in Clichy, a Parisian suburb.

Gael spoke with the students, who expressed their desire to come on Aliyah and were pleased to speak to Gael in simple Hebrew.



The Executive's UK Representative, Izchak Sonnenschein 100th anniversary of the birth of Israel's sixth president, Haim Herzog

Guests at the splendid Spencer Castle left no room for doubt. Great Britain had not seen a special event such as this in years, marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of Haim Herzog, who initiated and ran the WZO in Great Britain. The extended Herzog family, former prime minister Tony Blair, and many invited guests were greeted by WZO representatives: Eli Cohen, the Director-general; Gusti Yehoshua-Braverman, head of the Diaspora Activities Department; Izchak Sonnenschein, UK representative, and other distinguished guests. Jewish Agency chair, Yitzhak Herzog, spoke of the Herzog dynasty, including his grandfather, Rabbi Isaac Herzog, and his father, Haim Herzog.



(Members of the Herzog Family in Belfast, Ireland, near the home where Haim Herzog was born.)



The famous joke about the Jew on a deserted island who builds two synagogues, because he won't set foot in one of them, represents the challenge for the WZO to unify the Zionist communities in the UK. WZO activities brought synagogues and community centers together. The activities began with a day of study led by the Center for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora headed by Rabbi Yechiel Wasserman, and continued with prayers and lectures marking Israel's 70th anniversary by the Liberal community. Events for Herzog's 100th birthday included an impressive event at the Reform synagogue and a festive prayer led by Canter Shai Abramson. As UK representative Izchak Sonnenschein noted: "'Lev el Lev' was created from the national Jewish awakening and rebirth, recognizing our unity."