



ההסתדרות הציונית העולמית
World Zionist Organization



World Zionist Organization Newsletter

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Message from the Chairman

Shalom and Greetings,

This year's season of memorial days and national observances is now behind us. From Passover, the festival of freedom, through the last Israel Independence Day event, via Holocaust Remembrance Day and Yom Hazikaron – Memorial Day for Israel's Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Terrorism. The mix is not easy to handle, but it is so very characteristic of our life experience, and it confers meaning on our existence here.

As we hear people tell their Remembrance and Memorial Day stories and see them take center stage on these occasions, we

are filled with the energy we need to continue the work. This was especially true of the encounter with this year's torch-lighters. Each of them represents a personal success story in which the human spirit overcomes physical and social obstacles. The torch-lighters convey a deep sense of mission and a desire to give to others, each in his/her own way. They inspire all of us to persist in the effort to create an exemplary society here, one that integrates all segments of the nation and advances our shared goals in the spirit of Judaism and Zionism: "For we are one single, living human tapestry ..."

Avraham Duvdevani (Duvdud) Chair of the World Zionist Organization

Rural Growth and Development Division



Daylong Northern Tour of Unique Settlement Formats (Singles and Tourism Settlement, Educational Farms)

The Division Head and his staff, Planning Division Director Yaron Sheinin, Yoel Rivlin, Yasmin Ofer, and the Division's Assistant Director General, Achiya Yanai, spent a day touring special settlements in northern Israel. They visited Eran at the Organic Farm at Ein Zeitim, Hillel and Tamar at Namura Farm, Doron and Mica's farm at Kadita, Avner Eyal's farm near Ya'ara – Adama, near Klil, Dalia and Amnon at Goats with the Wind, and ended their tour at Gilboa Herb Farm. It was a day full of aromas, flavors, and the great outdoors. But they were also introduced to the challenges facing these settlements: grazing land allocations, statutory issues, bureaucracy, and more.

In short – special and unique Israeli farms! Let us hope that, together, we'll find ways of promoting rural growth in these unique places as well.



Good Morning Netiv HaAsara

The Rural Growth Division continues to be involved in restoring infrastructures in the Gaza Perimeter, for the benefit of local residents. New light poles are being installed for the overhead network, and undergrounding is in process.

The electrical system's transition to underground infrastructures will keep future safety and security dangers at bay. All of this activity is the outcome of lessons learned from Operation Protective Edge and preparation of the Gaza Perimeter localities for the coming years ...



Farewell Tour in Honor of Rural Settlement Division Accountant Rachel Yarom

Employees of the Rural Settlement Division participated in a farewell tour honoring Rachel Yarom for her years of service as Division Accountant. She is now moving on to her accountant post at the Volcani Institute in the Ministry of Agriculture.

The tour encompassed localities in the Mateh Binyamin Regional Council: Migron, Eli, Amichai, and Ancient Shilo. Numerous dignitaries participated, including Deputy Accountant-General Victor Weiss, Ministry of Finance officials, the Rural Settlement Division administration, and representatives of the Binyamin localities.

"Dear Rachel -- In the name of the Rural Settlement Division's administration and employees, we thank you for your many years of professional and pleasant service. We wish you success in your future endeavors!"

World Zionist Organization Employees Toast the Festival of Freedom at Mount Herzl



When the WZO Chairman asked that we “do it differently this time,” the Human Resources Division and the Herzl Center took up the challenge and organized an afternoon of enrichment, encounter, and pre-Passover celebration.

Employees were divided into three activity tracks at Mount Herzl: a visit to the Herzl Museum, a tour of the National Military Cemetery, and a tour of the National Civil Cemetery.

The tours were guided by Herzl Center professional staff, and gave the participants a glimpse of the themes and issues that lie at the heart of Center activity.

Avraham Duvdevani (Duvdov) participated in the National Military Cemetery tour and said Kaddish at the grave of Zechariah Baumel, one of the three MIAs of the Battle of Sultan Yacoub, whose remains had been brought to Israel for burial just a few days before, after almost forty years.

The event concluded with songs of Passover and spring, and with a shared *lechayim* for the dozens of employees who attended.

Department of Diaspora Affairs



Diaspora Jews Play the Game of Israeli Politics

Surpassing all expectations, the Monopoly game was launched worldwide. In just a few short weeks, the Department succeeded in distributing the game on four continents, reaching teens, students, youth movement participants, schools, community clubs, and a host of other players and venues in over 20 countries. Players competed for mandates, and got to learn about Israel’s political parties hands-on.

At the same time, the Department held online elections for Diaspora Jews, allowing their voices to be heard and enabling them to feel closer to Israel. We of the Department are doing all we can to enable Diaspora Jewry’s voice to be heard in Israel – the state of the entire Jewish people!

Israeli Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Macedonia – a First Seminar of its Kind for the Balkan Countries

In a first initiative of its kind, and in cooperation with the Ambassador of Israel to Macedonia, Dan Orian, the Department held an iVision Innovation seminar on the topic of Israeli Entrepreneurship and Innovation, in Bitola, Macedonia. The event was an opportunity to meet and bring together Jews from smaller, less-involved Jewish communities, and to introduce them to the “Israeli story” and the Startup-Nation. At the same time, the Department got to know Bitola’s Jewish Quarter while, of course, offering enrichment in the form of new Department material.

The Israeli guest lecturer was Modi Zandberg, a former Minister of Science and Technology and Keren Hayesod chairman. Zandberg’s lecture on Israeli politics today, and another lecture on Israeli innovation, enthralled the audience. In light of the seminar’s success, dates were set for a similar event, to be held in September in Brussels, Belgium.



Flying Ambassadors – El Al Aircrew Join Forces with the Department in a Meet-the-Communities Project

Another win-win Diaspora Affairs Department project was launched: El Al aircrew, staying abroad between flights, speak to gatherings of local Jews organized by Department staff, relating their personal narratives and the story of Israel’s national airline. Five such meetings have been held to date, in Canada, the US, India, and South Africa.

We are pleased to report that the encounters have been a resounding success. The El Al personnel have fascinating stories to tell, the audiences are mesmerized, and the events continue well into the night.

Invitations for more such meetings keep coming in.



Center for Orthodox Religious Affairs in the Diaspora

Argentinean Province Rabbis Conference

The Center for Orthodox Religious Affairs in the Diaspora held a conference in Buenos Aires for rabbis in the Argentinean provinces. The conference was attended by rabbis from ten cities, including San Miguel de Tucumán, Córdoba, Rosario, Santa Fe, Corrientes, and others.

The conference addressed the problems on the rabbis' agenda. A special session entitled "May Our Eyes Behold Your Return to Zion" dealt with World Zionist Organization activity in Argentina. The session was attended by some of the Department representatives, WZO Representative in Argentina Shraga Wilk, the Chairman and members of the Zionist Federation, and Amiya President Ariel Ichibaum.



Italian Young Leadership Visits Israel

The Italian Jewish community and the Center for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora held a leadership seminar for a group of 15 young men and women from Italy, in Jerusalem's Kiryat Moriah neighborhood.

The seminar was organized by Ilan Friedman, the Center's Acting Director, and it featured lectures and workshops. The attendees visited Mount Herzl, the Supreme Court, and Yad Vashem.



World Union for Progressive Judaism



Biotel Leadership Seminar

In February 2019, a Biotel Leadership Seminar was attended by 15 participants from Australia, Israel, Russia, the United States, and India. The group toured Israel and met with Reform movement leaders and with social change organizations. The seminar participants studied ancient and historical texts, discussed current political and social issues, and engaged with Jewish spiritual/intellectual content from the perspective of Progressive Judaism. The goal of the seminar is to provide participants with tools for leading their communities and introducing needed improvements, once they return home.

International Purimspiel Festival

The International Purimspiel Festival was held this year in Vitebsk, Belarus, from March 29-31. Eighteen teams from Jewish communities and clubs marked the Festival's 50th anniversary this year, along with thousands of guests from Belarus, Israel, the Ukraine, Russia, the United States, Germany, and Latvia. During the Festival, against the background of the former ghetto, the participants honored the victims of the Holocaust. Netzer Olami representatives from Minsk, Kiev, and Moscow placed first, second, and third in the Festival.



World Masorti

Rabbinical Students Visit Masorti Communities and Marom Centers in Europe

During the second week of March 2019, World Olami, in cooperation with Marom Olami, recruited 14 Conservative movement rabbinical students from the JTS and the Shechter Institute, for emissary and experiential activity in Masorti communities and at Marom centers across Europe. The students got a first taste of "what it's like to be a European Masorti community rabbi," and deepened their knowledge of the communities. The aim was to strengthen global connections between the communities/the future leaders of the Conservative movement in the US and the Masorti communities of Europe.



Noam Olami International Seminar

In early April, 35 leaders of the Conservative/Masorti youth movement from all over the world (Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Kenya, Uganda, Israel, the UK, Sweden, Spain, France, the US) gathered in Barcelona for Noam Olami's annual four-day seminar. The local Masorti community Atid hosted them at its synagogue. The Noam Olami leaders enjoyed the magical Shabbat ambience, along with the community and leaders of the Masorti movement's young adult community, Marom, which was holding its own seminar at the site.

During the Noam Olami seminar, the participants learned from each other, shared professional experiences, and planned joint global projects on topics related to Israel and the Jewish calendar. They also heard speakers and addressed burning Israeli issues with an eye to the Knesset elections scheduled for the following week. The experience amplified the sense of movement solidarity and peoplehood, and filled the participants with motivation for joint activity throughout the year.



Department of Aliyah Promotion

Zionist Women Take Center Stage – Golden Golda Comes to France

On March 12, the Golden Golda prize ceremony was held in Paris. The Golden Golda prize is a mark of recognition for women who have made major contributions to the Zionist enterprise, to aliyah promotion, and to the Jewish communities of their home countries. This time there were two prize winners: Joelle Lezmi, until recently president of WIZO France, whose contribution to the Jewish community needs no elaboration, and Josayne Sberro, a longtime France-Israel activist, chair of the Hermeau [?] Jewish community, and prominent educator. Sberro's Golden Golda signaled recognition of her efforts to build bridges between French Jewry and the Jewish state and to strengthen and develop the Jewish community to which she belongs; it also honored her educational/informational activity countering anti-Semitism, and her Jewish-Christian outreach work.

The head of the Department of Aliyah Promotion, Marina Rozenberg Koritny, congratulated the prize winners and thanked them for their important work on behalf of the Jewish people and the Zionist enterprise.



The Never-Ending Chain

On March 6, in cooperation with the Federation of Local Authorities in Israel, a first event of its kind was held at Mount Herzl: an award ceremony honoring local authorities that encourage aliyah. The idea was conceived by the Department of Aliyah Promotion; the event itself was the result of full and productive cooperation with the Department of Activities in Israel and Countering Antisemitism, and the Herzl Center.

The heads and employees of the award-winning local authorities were congratulated by the current Minister of Aliyah and Integration, MK Yoav Gallant, by former Minister of Aliyah and Integration MK Sofa Landver, by Dimitri Aperchev, Chair of the Aliyah and Integration Committee in the Federation of Local Authorities and Mayor of Katzrin, Avraham Duvdevani, Chairman of the World Zionist Organization, Yaakov Hagoel, Vice Chairman of the World Zionist Organization and Head of the Department of Activities in Israel and Countering Antisemitism, and Marina Rozenberg Koritny, Head of the Department of Aliyah Promotion.

Marina Rozenberg Koritny expressed confidence that this urgently-needed cooperation would not cease, and would produce new and meaningful outcomes. "A century ago, when Herzl founded the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish people needed a country of its own. Now, in the 21st century, the Jewish state needs its people. We are all working tirelessly to advance this great and sacred mission."



Department for Activities in Israel and Countering Anti-Semitism

Countering-Antisemitism Day on International Holocaust Day

As in earlier years, the World Zionist Organization marked International Holocaust Day and Countering Antisemitism Day with a conference at the Ben Zvi Institute in Jerusalem, with some 300 participants.

Event speakers included WZO Chairman Avraham Duvdevani, and WZO Vice Chairman Yaakov Hagoel. During the first part of the conference, journalist Ben-Dror Yemini gave a fascinating lecture on antisemitism in the global media. In the second part of the conference, a panel discussion was held with the participation of: Dr. Robert Rozett – Director of the Yad Vashem Libraries, attorney Yifa Segel – Executive Director of the International Legal Forum, Dr. Elana Yael Heideman – Executive Director of the Israel Forever Foundation, Major Keren Hajioff – Head of IDF Social Media in the IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, and Professor Dina Porat – Head of the Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry at Tel Aviv University. The entire event was moderated by Benny Teitelbaum.



No More Hatred, No More Anti-Semitism!

In response to the intolerable events taking place before our very eyes – the resurgence of anti-Semitism and the near-daily occurrence of anti-Semitic incidents and acts of violence around the world that threaten the lives of Diaspora Jews, the Department for Activities in Israel and Countering Anti-Semitism has been organizing local rallies in the Diaspora and in Israel, on the theme of “No More Hatred.”

On Sunday, March 10, 2019, local activists and Jewish community members gathered in ten locations around the world, bearing signs calling for an end to the hatred. The Israeli rally took place in the plaza of the National Institutions Building.



Herzl Center



Thousands Celebrate Freedom at the Herzl Center During the Intermediate Days of Passover

Participants were treated to a wide range of enjoyable and enriching experiences: visits to the Herzl Museum, Zionist comics workshops, The Race to Zionism – a family field game, two walking performances for different age groups and, of course, the Smart Wall – an interactive digital experience.

An arts and crafts corner and photography stations “on Herzl’s balcony” and “on the Congress speakers’ podium” were made available to the visitors.

A fun and exhilarating way to greet the spring and the Festival of Freedom!

The Branco Weiss School Network Marks Ethiopian Aliyah Day at Mount Herzl

On 2 Nissan – the Hebrew date on which, according to Jewish tradition, the Israelites entered Eretz Israel under Joshua’s leadership – the Branco Weiss nationwide school network commemorated the Ethiopian community’s aliyah to Israel.

Despite the wintry weather, 150 schoolchildren from the Ethiopian community and their families toured Mount Herzl and viewed the Memorial for Ethiopian Jews Who Perished on Their Way to Israel.

The participants also visited the Herzl Museum and concluded their tour with a moving ceremony in Jerusalem Auditorium, where they heard stories of the community’s aliyah to Israel.

Education Department



Herzl and Janusz Korczak Stage Productions on Tour

Two stage productions – *Herzl: the Dream that Came True*, and Janusz Korczak's *Ten Matchboxes* – came to the US East Coast on tour, reaching greater Washington D.C., Pittsburg (non-Jewish audience as well), New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia.

The productions are part of a collaboration between the Education Department and Orna Porat Children's Theater.

In addition to the performances, the organizers (schools/JCCs/synagogues) assembled relevant material for educational activity with the pupils, to prepare them for the viewing and to summarize the experience.

There were 30 performances in total, which were attended by over 2000 pupils. The plays were translated. Some of the performances were in Hebrew, some in English.

The pupils expressed great enthusiasm and many of them sent letters of thanks to the actors.

Celebration of Hebrew in North America

The third Hebrew Choir Festival was held this year as part of Hagigah Ivrit – a monthlong Hebrew language festival held in North America.

Hagigah Ivrit events aim to raise awareness of Hebrew's importance, and to promote knowledge of the language in North America.

The Festival was organized by the Education Department, in cooperation with the Steinhart Foundation and the Council for Hebrew Language and Culture in North America.

Hebrew Choir Festival participants included 100 pupils from the choirs of 5 New York day schools: Kinneret Day School, Ramaz, Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School, HLA, and HLA2. They performed songs of Arik Einstein (in his memory) for an audience numbering in the hundreds, and concluded with a moving rendition of Hatikva by all of the participating choirs.

Zionist Enterprises Department



Mofet Social Accelerator Opens Its Second Participant Round

The Zionist Enterprises Department's flagship program, the Mofet social accelerator, is launching its second round of activity. The program's second group will include 40 social entrepreneurs who aspire to generate social change in the spirit of Herzl's "exemplary society," and to promote social justice and *tikkun olam*.

Over the next four months, the participants will undergo intensive training, via workshops, lectures, tours, and personal mentoring. The aim is to provide them with a complete toolkit for social entrepreneurs starting out.

The entrepreneurs in the program's second group are involved in a variety of social change efforts aiming to improve education, strengthen the periphery, eliminate social disparities, safeguard the environment, promote tolerance, equality and democracy, and connect different population groups in Israeli society.



Local-Government Leaders – Building a Better Society! Program Launched

The program brings together key figures in Israeli local government – local council heads, director generals and senior deputy director generals – for bi-annual "beit midrash" learning that draws on Zionist and Jewish sources.

The program addresses the major challenges facing senior local-government officials, including issues related to local government's role in building an exemplary society in Israel, managing a shared space for different communities and identities, social disparities within and between localities, and inter-locality collaboration.

Program participants went to the US for a learning tour, in which they gained familiarity with the various streams of US Jewry, deepened their understanding of Jewish, Zionist, and Israeli identity, encountered colleagues in US local-municipal government, and learned about different community models.

The participants also toured Zionist sites in Jerusalem. While visiting the Central Zionist Archives, they were excited to see historical photos and maps of the cities and local councils they lead.

World Zionist Organization Representatives Report from the Field



The Zionist Executive's Representative in Argentina, Shraga Wilk

In early March, at the request of the Entre Rios communities, the WZO representative in Argentina, Shraga Wilk, toured the province's 8 communities, including those based in Concepción del Uruguay, Concordia, San Salvador, Viva Dominguez, and the province capital Paraná. These communities originated with Baron Hirsch's Argentinean settlement enterprise, but the decisive majority of them today comprise only a few dozen Jews. Most are by now not halachically Jewish, but they have Jewish souls that cling to the remnants of tradition remaining them, and they yearn to maintain their Jewishness and their identification with Israel. The tour was troubling and revealed a complex reality. In most of these places there is an awareness that everything is fading, and a strong desire for assistance in "postponing the inevitable" – a sad admission. It should be emphasized that the communities are not in economic distress; the problem is social/ideological.

On Wilk's return to Buenos Aires, he recommended that all of the relevant parties meet to draw up a long-term strategic plan and develop out-of-the-box solutions for addressing the situation (or not). The Israeli ambassador to Argentina took up the challenge and called a meeting, appointing Wilk to coordinate the steering committee.

WZO Representative in the North America, Esther Serok

On March 10, a cold and rainy day, we took part in an initiative of the Department for Activities in Israel and Countering Anti-Semitism (a joint initiative with Jewish communities worldwide) by holding a No More Hate rally at New York City's Times Square, with 100 participants.

During the rally, additional participants joined us and expressed solidarity. These included Holocaust survivors, Anti-Defamation League members, and many young people who were invited by the WZO.

Several black women suddenly appeared at one point and expressed interest in the reason for the rally. After hearing what the reason was, they disappeared for a few minutes, then returned with pizza for the participants – their way of expressing support and solidarity. This touching gesture is worthy of note in these times of raging hatred based on race, religion, and skin color. All hope for a better world has not been lost!



WZO Representative in the UK, Itzhak Zonnshine

Dedication of WZO UK Office

In March 2019 the World Zionist Organization dedicated its UK office. This historic event took place 120 years after the First Zionist Congress, and a century after the World Zionist Organization founded the Jewish Agency and Keren Hayesod in London [?]. The ceremony opened with the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, Ephraim Mirvis, affixing a mezuzah. Later, World Zionist Organization Chairman Avraham Duvdevani explained the ideology behind the WZO's efforts, and affirmed that we must act in a manner consistent with the goals set by the organization 120 years ago, updating them as needed and in accordance with the communities' present-day characteristics. Regarding the UK community, he called upon all those present to unite on behalf of aliyah and Jewish-Zionist educational activity. Other speakers included Ofek Israeli Director Shimon Cohen, INF Chairman Shmuel Hayek, Federation heads, and Israel's Deputy Head of Mission in London, Sharon Bar-Li.



WZO Representative in France, Moshe Cohen

Hebrew Ambassadors Project

The idea behind the project is to familiarize ulpan students with Israeli culture and everyday life, through visits by young Israeli adults and students to classrooms in Paris and environs. Yael Yisraeli, an Israeli art history teacher currently studying in Paris, inaugurated the project and is now visiting ulpanim and lecturing about Israeli art.

Using a slideshow entitled Israel in Local Landscape, she is introducing students to the famous painters Nachum Gutman and Reuven Rubin. The lessons with Yael, which are conducted entirely in Hebrew, generate much interest and are greatly enjoyed by the students.



Chef Yossi Ben Dayan, who came to France in the framework of the Department for Aliyah Promotion's hasbarah program, was hosted on Tuesday, March 27, by students in central Paris.

Yossi, who made aliyah to Israel at the age of 18, shared his aliyah and absorption story with the audience. He also talked about being a chef in Israel, about Israeli cuisine and its presence worldwide, and, of course, about how the various waves of immigration contributed to modern Israeli cooking. During the course of the evening, Yossi demonstrated the preparation of a dish that the audience then got to taste at the event's conclusion.