



# ההסתדרות הציונית העולמית World Zionist Organization



**WZO Newsletter**  
**Issue No. 9**  
**October – December 2017**



**120 Years of Zionism ...**



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

### Shalom and Greetings,

The past few months have been very intensive and activity-filled both in Israel and in the Diaspora. The end of the budget freeze had a clear impact in all WZO departments, and is evident in this newsletter.

Many of the events were related to 120 years of Zionism and the centenary of the Balfour Declaration. These are very significant milestones in the history of the Zionist movement and on the path to the foundation of the State of Israel. The main event to mark 120 years of Zionism took place at Mt. Herzl, with the participation of the Prime Minister, Knesset members, and many public figures. The impressive event was attended by many participants and expressed different aspects of WZO activity today.

The departments carried out conferences, meetings and seminars in Israel, Europe, North America, and Central and South America, as described in the newsletter. You are invited to read about the quantity and variety of our activity.

Avraham Duvdevani (Duvdov)  
Chair of the World Zionist Organization

## EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

### “An Eye Gazing to Zion – 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the First Congress”: the Central American Department conference

In December the Department organized a congress for leaders of Jewish education in Central America, hosted by the Jewish community of Costa Rica. The event was attended by **74 participants from 12 Central American countries** and took place in the presence of Israeli ambassador to Costa Rica Mr. Amir Ofek, WZO chair Mr. Avraham Duvdevani, Education Department head Mr. Silvio Joskowitz and WZO's CEO Mr. Eli Cohen. The participants enjoyed singer Nurit Galron's performance, heard about Zionist educational activity in each country, and shared Zionist education projects. **It was emphasized that this is just the beginning of an educational work process in this region.**

### “Hebrew: the key to identity, culture, heritage and linguistic awareness” – an Education Department conference in North America

**“The growth of the Education Department's conference in the past two years shows the centrality of Hebrew in forming Jewish identity and the connection with Israel among the future generation growing up in North America. People at the forefront of activity, whether shlichim or local teachers, have an opportunity to recharge their batteries at this conference and return to their classes with new strengths, knowledge and skills.”** Thus Silvio Joskowitz summed up the conference, held at the beginning of December in collaboration with the Council for Hebrew in North America and the National Association of Teachers of Hebrew in North America. There were 3 tracks and the 300 teachers who attended took part in 40 different workshops. The conference dealt with new research in the field of Hebrew teaching and new teaching methods.

### Sabras From Choice

Sabras From Choice is a project where people who came on aliyah in their youth are sent to their countries of origin after completing meaningful military service.

**The aim is to connect young people to Israel through meeting people like themselves who grew up in the same environment and made a significant decision about Israel's place in their personal identity.** Mariano Somer, who came on aliyah from Uruguay at the age of 20, and Marcus Molina, who made aliyah from Cordoba, Argentina, were in this delegation at the end of October. They visited Buenos Aires and Cordoba in Argentina, and continued to Santiago, Chile, finishing in Montevideo, Uruguay. **It was clear that the meetings made a significant impression on the young people.**





### Expanding the Zionist ethos – Ethiopia

The peak event in the leadership program for Ethiopian youth, in collaboration with Nahshonim, was a delegation to Ethiopia this month. 30 teens, half of them of Ethiopian origin, visited Ethiopia in the footsteps of the Zionist story of the Ethiopian olim. **They visited the villages the olim came from and learned of the story of their heroic aliyah, their thousands of years of longing, their culture and customs, and their long journey in the Sudan desert on their way to Israel.**

As a department whose motto is social justice, our job is to make sure that the story of the aliyah of all ethnic groups is part of the Israeli Zionist story!



### ZIONIST ENTERPRISES DEPARTMENT

#### Expanding the Zionist ethos – Iraq

The Zionist Enterprises Department held a fascinating evening with former minister Ran Cohen, who told the story of his aliyah.

Said (Ran's former name) came to Israel alone from Iraq at the age of 11 by way of Persia in the 1950s. **When you look back at the stations in his life you realize that this is the Zionist story!** Aliyah, absorption in a kibbutz, service as an officer in the IDF, kibbutz secretary, and finally becoming part of the country's leadership as a Knesset member and serving as a minister in Israel's government!



### The Herzl Center

#### Lamplight tour – a different kind of Zionist experience

This year at Hanukkah we built a special program of a night time lamplight tour of Mt. Herzl, for parents and children. The activity began with candle lighting and donuts, and the families toured Mt. Herzl and heard stories about the nation's leaders and their personal lives. **More than 300 people took part in the event, half of them children. It was clear that the parents were glad to see their children enjoying themselves and receiving educational enrichment based on values.**



#### Kaf Tet B'November at the Herzl Museum

To mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kaf Tet B'November, entry to the Herzl Museum was free of charge for senior citizens. **The 180 visitors toured the museum and heard museum volunteer Adina Aharoni's stories of her experiences and memories as a child on that historic day.** Since then we have had many other visitors (friends and relatives) who have come following the enthusiastic reactions of the seniors.



מוזאון הרצל מזמין אתכם,  
אזרחים ותיקים,  
לחגוג 70 שנה לכ"ט בנובמבר  
המוזאון יפתח את שעריו עבורכם  
בחינם ביום זה, בהרשמה מראש.  
ב 29.11.17 מ 9:00-16:00



## The Center for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora

### “Yeud” (Mission) – leadership seminar for young people in Italy

15 young Italian Jewish leaders took part in a seminar initiated by the Center for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora and UCEI in Italy, and run by Yishai Bonnie, the center’s projects manager. They took part in workshops on leadership and Jewish and Zionist identity and toured the Herzl Museum, the High Court, the Knesset, the Old City, the Kotel Tunnels, and the Yitzhak Rabin Center in Tel Aviv. They met WZO chair Mr. Avraham Duvdevani, Center for Religious Affairs head Rabbi Yehiel Wasserman, and Italian ambassador Mr. Gianluigi Benedetti in the Italian synagogue in Netanya.



## Shabbat in Quito , Ecuador

The Department for Religious Affairs and Tzipor Hanefesh initiated a seminar for 130 members of the Quito community on Jewish-Zionist identity and the connection to Israel. Department CEO Yitzhak Shtiglitz, spoke about 120 years of Zionism and 70 years of the State of Israel. The community’s president Avi Vigoda took part in the seminar as did the local rabbi, Rabbi Nir Koren, **who thanked the department for its support and noted that the seminar was both uplifting and very enjoyable. This is the first time the Department for Religious Affairs has organized a seminar of this size in Latin America.**



## Masorti Olami

### Darchei Noam winter camp

Noam Argentina (the Masorti movement’s Zionist youth movement) led a winter camp for madrichim from October 15–16. **280 madrichim from 13 communities met in the Lamrot Hakol community in North Buenos Aires.** The conference is part of Noam Argentina’s two-year Darchei Noam program for training Noam madrichim. **Training for madrichim, creating a secure, significant place for learning, and use of technologies for education** in Noam activity took place during the conference.



## Renewal

Under the heading of ‘Renewal’ the Masorti movement in Latin America held a conference in Santiago, Chile in November. Some 80 rabbis and community leaders from throughout the continent met to talk about ideology, building an organizational strategic plan, and new initiatives for communities including new partnerships, such as **with WZO’s department for Diaspora Affairs in the Mochileros program, which acquires momentum from one session to the next and aspires to reach as many small communities in the continent as possible, including of course in Chile. The presence of the Masorti movement in the communities enables good cooperation that works for both sides.**





## SETTLEMENT DIVISION

### Momentum and growth in the Gaza perimeter

A moving ceremony at Kerem Shalom in the Gaza perimeter region marked the end of renovation work conducted in the wake of a government resolution taken after Operation Protective Edge. **Against the background of the Hanukkah holiday, it was noted during the ceremony that the mission of the few who support the many stands out in Kerem Shalom: these are pioneers on the country's borders, who by holding onto the land defend all residents of Israel.** Together with Minister of Agriculture Uri Ariel, council head Gadi Yarkoni, CEO of the Settlement Division, Tzviki Bar Hai, and regional manager Itzik Bar **planted a tree and laid the cornerstone for a secure community building to be built this year.** The government of Israel has appointed the Settlement Division to improve infrastructures so this region will attract new residents, and the Division will assume this task and make every effort to ensure that this region will continue to develop, flourish and prosper.

### Students' villages – hope and growth

The Settlement Division, which was the driving force in establishing infrastructures for the student villages throughout Israel, played a significant part in the council of student villages' conference on the late Shmulik Rifman's vision of settlement. Student villages are an important, significant pioneering and Zionist vision, the realization of Ben Gurion's vision of making the Negev bloom. **It is heartwarming to see the power of the amazing young people who have decided to be part of this immense project.**



## The World Union for Progressive Judaism



### The movement's activity in the Commonwealth of Independent States

With the generous support of the World Zionist Organization, the movement for Progressive Judaism runs and organizes many activities in the CIS, and advances Jewish identity, Zionism and Israel.

**Community Sunday School programs teach important Jewish content to young children, who often inspire other family members to research and develop their Jewish identity.** In recent months the Sunday studies have mainly focused on preparation for the holidays, Hanukkah, and continued regular study in Hebrew.



The annual Netzer conference took place in Kiev from October 20–22 . 54 youth leaders and camp counselors took part, together with Maria Abramov, Netzer coordinator in CIS, and guests from the movement in Israel, Eyal Ronder and Rita Fruman. During the conference the participants discussed Netzer-CIS's achievements and aims for the coming year and took part in discussing Jewish and Zionist topics.

From December 22–24, 32 teens took part in a seminar in Minsk. **The aim of the seminar was to plan the movement's summer camps for 2018.** The educational content of the camps will focus on Israeli history, the history of Reform Judaism, and Netzer's core values.



## DEPARTMENT FOR ISRAEL AND COUNTERING ANTISEMITISM

### The Israeli Zionist Congress

The Department for Israel together with the Education Department organized the 2017 Israeli Zionist Congress to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Balfour Declaration and the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First Zionist Congress.

A special exhibition for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, portraying the spirit of the period, was exhibited. The congress had four sessions on: Zionism: A Stable Vision in a Changing World; The People of the Book in a Journey in Time; Judaism: Movements and Compromises; and The New Triangle of Zionism, and it took place with the participation of government ministers, WZO chair Avraham Duvdevani, WZO deputy and vice chair Yaakov Haguel, and WZO department heads and management and was moderated by the journalists and TV presenters Dana Weiss and Danny Cushmaro.



### Conference on combating anti-Semitism

The Department for Israel and Countering Anti-Semitism led a **European conference** in London on **combating the new anti-Semitism**. It also marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Balfour Declaration with an event at the place where Lord Balfour lived at the time of the declaration. Senior representatives, opinion leaders, civil activists and students from throughout Europe and from the USA attended the conference. **The aim was to act against the increased frequency and severity of anti-Semitic incidents, incitement in the foreign media and the surge in violent anti-Semitism, and to give Jewish communities tools for coping with this situation.** Speakers included EU coordinator for combating anti-Semitism Katharina von Schnurbein, UK Zionist Federation chair Paul Charney and Executive Director Arie Miller, deputy Israeli ambassador in London, Sharon Bar-Ili, Jewish Chronicle editor Stephen Pollard, activists in the fight against anti-Semitism throughout Europe, and others.



## ALIYAH PROMOTION DEPARTMENT "Bonus lesson" – meetings with 'Blue and White' Zionist activity

"Hebrew is everything for me! My identity, my history, my love, and everything I am! Hebrew is us: Judaism, the Bible and our culture. Only in Israel is Hebrew spoken and therefore I cannot think of living anywhere else, except in Israel!"

This is how journalist Rina Mazliah answered the question "What is Hebrew for you?" Rina Mazliah was a guest of the "Bonus lesson" project, which brings olim who are leaders in their fields to Israeli communities. She met communities in Nice and Toulouse, and filled the halls. She spoke about her childhood in the *maabara*, her military service as an officer and of course her work in Israeli media. At the end of the final meeting, Rina addressed the audience at a personal level, saying "I beg you to learn Hebrew. This is what will connect all of us as a people and bring you near and prepare you for life in Israel."



## Encouraging aliyah in the "Big Apple" – the Department's events in New York, November 2017

On November 27, 2017 an event took place that was the first of its kind, where awards were presented to 9 Zionist women from Israel and the USA who work for aliyah and absorption. The awards were given for significant and special contribution in different fields and for exceptional achievements in these areas. The festive evening was enhanced by moving performances by local children singing in Hebrew (!).





**We celebrated 120 years of Zionism with an impressive ceremony and spectacular show at Mt. Herzl, next to the grave of Theodor Herzl, the visionary of the Jewish state and the founder of the Zionist movement. In the presence of thousands of participants, the Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Binyamin Netanyahu wished the Zionist movement and the State of Israel a glorious continuation of the Zionist project.**

**The story of the Zionist movement from its beginnings until now was presented in a beautiful audio visual presentation. Its impressive achievements in the fields of education, settlement, absorption of aliyah and the connection with Diaspora Jewry were noted. 120 years are behind us, and we face the future. We continue to dream and realize the vision!**