



ההסתדרות הציונית העולמית
WORLD ZIONIST ORGANIZATION

The Zionist General Council

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THE STATE OF ISRAEL

**70 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE - Building
a Nation**

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Plenary No. 1 - Opening of the Zionist General Council Session

Eli Cohen opened the first session and thanked the members of the audit committee and praised the auditor and his team, who - in their attempt to reach a level of satisfaction, which all can find to be acceptable - see all the flaws and improvements.

Rabbi Yehiel Wasserman was invited to the stage for a ceremony conferring honorary fellowships to various members for their activities in the Zionist movement and their significant contribution to shaping its path and activities. This year, thanks to the WZO's extensive activity over the past decade, quite a few people will be receiving this status. Honorary fellows are highly motivated individuals who have devoted many years of their time to the Zionist movement and who are role models for the next generation.

Rabbi Wasserman then thanked the members of the Committee for Honorary Fellows: Barbara Goldstein, Silvio Joskowicz, Dalia Levy, Karma Cohen, Hernan Felman, Jacques Kupfer and Nava Avissar, the committee's coordinator, for their dedicated work.

Honorary Fellows:

Mrs. Ana Marlene Starec – Mrs. Starec has been active in the Zionist movement for the past 54 years. She has been serving as Honorary President of WIZO for many years now and is also engaged in advocacy activities for Israel in the Diaspora in general, and with the Jewish communities of Brazil, in particular. Her human rights activities earned her a medal from the state of Rio de Janeiro, and she has also received a medal from the French Senate for her activities for humanity.

Rabbi Yosef Rosenfeld – Rabbi Rosenfeld is a Zionist activist, and has been so from a young age, he served as president of the Mizrachi movement in Canada, was a member of the Zionist Federation and served as a member of the General Council for five sessions, and was also a delegate to the Zionist Congress. His entire family has made Aliyah and they currently live in Israel.

Mr. Rami Kornblum – Mr. Kornblum has been active in the Zionist movement for many years now, over the past few decades he has served in key positions and headed important organizations in the Zionist movement, including the secretary of the Zionist General Council, and secretary of the Zionist Supreme Court. Mr. Kornblum was as a member of the Zionist General Council and worked extensively to strengthen and develop Zionist heritage among Jewish communities all over the world.

Mrs. Dalia Levy – Mrs. Levy was born in the United States at about the same time as the State of Israel was established, and later made Aliyah all on her own as a young *halutza*. She got married here in Israel and built her home and started her family here. Mrs. Levy has been active in the Zionist institutions since 1994, she has served as a member of the Zionist General Council, as a

delegate to the Zionist Congress and as the Secretary General of ARZENU. She has devoted many years of her life to proudly spreading the message of the Zionist movement to thousands of Jews in the Diaspora.

Mr. Claude Machline - Mr. Machline has been active in the Zionist movement in various positions since 1975. Mr. Machline is a member of the Zionist Federation in France on behalf of Masorti Olami and, together with the Masorti synagogue in Paris, he has also founded the NOAM youth movement in France, which focuses on the younger generation and nurtures ties with the State of Israel.

Mr. Yehezkel Zakai – Mr. Zakai made Aliyah from Kurdistan in 1948. He served as chairman of the Sephardi Federation in Israel for 30 years, while also being active in various capacities in the Zionist movement. He served as a member of the Zionist General Council and as a delegate to the Zionist Congress and was a member of the Zionist Executive for many years.

Mr. Moshe Testa – Mr. Testa has been active in the Zionist movement for many years now, he served as a delegate to the Zionist Congress and as a member of the Zionist General Council, he is a member of the Presidium and chairman of the Zionist Council in Israel. He has worked tirelessly to spread the concept of Zionism out of a sense of mission and devotion, and he currently serves as chairman of Hitachdut Oley Yugoslavia and a member of the institutions of the World Sephardi Federation.

Mr. Mauricio Oberlander – Mr. Oberlander has been an active member in the Betar youth movement and in the Likud movement in Uruguay since he was very young, he contributed greatly to Zionist activity and served in many capacities: Chairman of the Zionist Federation, member of the Jewish Agency's Board of Governors, chairman of the Likud in Uruguay. He also served as a delegate to the World Zionist Congress and as a member of the Zionist General Council for many years. This year he fulfilled the Zionist dream and made Aliyah and he continues to be active in the framework of the World Likud and to influence the Likud movement in Uruguay.

These splendid individuals have worked very hard for the Zionist movement and they receive the Honorary Fellow title for all their activities.

Mrs. Dalia Levy spoke on behalf of the recipients and noted that each one of them contributed greatly to their organizations and to Israel. This year, as the State of Israel celebrates its 70th anniversary, we are all celebrating the fulfillment of Herzl's vision and agree that over the past 70 years, Israel has achieved what no other country has been able to do over such a short period of time.

In Memoriam

Two members of the Zionist Executive have recently passed away, **Mati Drobles** and **Eliezer Sheffer**.

Yaakov Hagoel spoke in memory of the late Mati Drobles.

Mati Drobles was born in Warsaw, Poland, his father died when he was 11 years old. During the Second World War he escaped with his two brothers, they were in hiding for two years and eventually they reached Italy and from there they moved to Buenos Aires where they lived with a relative. Mati made Aliyah in 1950 and was one of the founders of the Moshav Mevo Betar. He was very active in Betar in Israel as well as in the Gahal Movement (the former Herut movement). He served as a Knesset Member between 1974 and 1977. Later, he was appointed as director of the WZO's Settlement Division and while in office, he established some 400 *yeshuvim* (localities).

In 1994, he was appointed chairman of the Central Zionist Archives and served in that capacity for 18 years. In 2011 he lit a torch in the torch-lighting ceremony on Mount Herzl. In a major event organized for *olim*, Mati received a certificate of merit from World Likud and World Betar. **Eli Cohen** also talked about Mati and told the audience that when he returned from a *shlichut* in Latin America he served as Mati's personal assistant and considered him a spiritual father and a mentor.

David Ben Naeh spoke in memory of Eliezer Sheffer.

Eliezer Sheffer was born in Tiberias to a Hasidic family and the values of Hasidism were apparent in all his endeavors. Throughout his life he had worked to realize the Zionist vision. For over 45 years he served in different public capacities: Director-General of the Department of Torah Education and Culture in the Diaspora, Director-General of the Department for Continuing Volunteering and Director of the Department for Spiritual Services in the Diaspora. Mr. Sheffer held many public positions throughout the Jewish world, he was a member of The Zionist Executive for decades, focusing much of his attention on Aliyah, education and settlement. In the Six Day War, Mr. Sheffer was one of the soldiers who were among the first to enter the Old City of Jerusalem with the Paratroopers Brigade, and he later organized a special industrial *garin* (Moriah) that settled in the Old City.

Afterwards, Mr. **Eli Cohen** delivered a eulogy in memory of other members:

Menny Klausner (1926 Frankfurt) was born into a Hassidic family of public activists who moved to London in November 1938, after Kristallnacht. Mr. Klausner, was an enthusiastic Zionist who supported the State of Israel and adhered to the Jewish tradition, he took an active part in the Hapoel HaMizrachi organization and served as its chairman for 20 years. In 1997, at the age of 71, he and his wife, Edith, made Aliyah. From the 1970s until his Aliyah he was a member of the Executive of the World Mizrachi movement, served as a representative and member of the Jewish Agency Executive and as a member of the Zionist General Council.

Eric Graus, was a member and honorary fellow of the Zionist General Council. As a member of the Revisionist movement in England, he was involved in Zionist activities and in advocating for Israel from a young age and was awarded the Decoration of State Warriors. He was active in the

struggle against Soviet anti-Zionism. And until his dying day, despite his old age, remained involved in activities for the State of Israel and the people of Israel.

Sergio Kowensky, who served as Likud chairman in South Africa, was murdered in Johannesburg on June 2, 2018, at the age of 67. Mr. Kowensky worked tirelessly to advance the Zionist idea and helped raise funds for the KKL-JNF and other local Jewish organizations. As a son of holocaust survivors who were partisans *and* served in the Haganah, he made Aliyah to study at the Technion and later left for South Africa, where his children were born, but maintained close ties with Israel.

David Amszynowski was born in Argentina in 1923 to parents who were born in Poland. His father passed away when David was still young, and David had to take care of his younger sisters. David passed away at the age of 93, on October 13, 2017.

After he got married in 1957, he moved to Chile, where he was active in Zionist activities and devoted his life to the Zionist idea and the fulfillment of the Zionist and Jewish vision, while strengthening the connection between the Jewish community in Chile and the State of Israel.

The then Prime Minister of Israel, Menachem Begin ז"ל, stayed at his home during a visit to Chile and practically became a member of David's household. David was very proud of his Jewish identity and Zionism was his compass throughout his life and in all his activities. He participated in Zionist congresses and served in important positions in the Jewish world: chairman of the Zionist Federation of Chile, chairman of the Likud in Chile, chairman of the Betar youth movement, the president of the Jewish community in Chile, director-general of KKL-JNF, a member of the board of the Instituto Hebreo Chaim Weizmann.

Brian Wine was born in 1939 in Saskatoon, Canada. He was a member of the Young Judea Youth Movement and was active in the BBYO organization. He completed his degree in economics and law at the University of British Columbia, where he also served as president of the Jewish Members Club. Through his involvement with various organizations, he met Hanna and the two married in 1962. Three years later they relocated from Vancouver to Jerusalem. They had planned to stay in Jerusalem for only a year, but Brian and Hannah made Aliyah and stayed in Jerusalem. After completing his master's degree in law at the Hebrew University, Brian founded the law firm of Wayne, Misheiker & Co. where he worked until his retirement in December 2017. Wein was active in Masorti Olami, the WZO and many other organizations in Israel. He was very active in the Masorti movement in Israel where he served as legal advisor and made a significant contribution to the structural foundations of a center when the organization joined the WZO. Brian was on the Legal Committee of the World Zionist Organization, served as a member of the Zionist General Council and was a member of the Presidium for many years. He also served as legal advisor to the Jerusalem branch of the AACI.

Yehi Zichram Baruch - May their memory be blessed.

The Chairman of the Zionist Executive, Mr. **Avraham Duvdevani**, presented the candidate for the post of President of the Zionist Supreme Court, Mrs. **Miriam Naor**. He talked about how it was Menachem Begin who coined the phrase "There are judges in Jerusalem." And it seems that

Begin, in whose government, Miriam Naor's husband Arie Naor, served as cabinet secretary, did not know how apt that phrase was when speaking of Justice Miriam Naor.

Justice Naor was born in Jerusalem, studied at the Gymnasia Rehavia high-school, and then proceeded to Law studies at the Hebrew University, from which she graduated with honors. She clerked for the then Supreme Court Judge, Justice Moshe Landau, who served in the past as President of the Zionist Supreme Court. In 1980, she won her first judicial appointment to the Magistrate's Court. In 2001 she was appointed as an acting judge in the Supreme Court, and in 2003 she became a Supreme Court Justice. Her rulings have always been characterized by the fact that she championed and constantly sought to balance conflicting values and the unity of the Israeli society, and in 2017 she completed her service as President of the Supreme Court in Jerusalem.

A vote was held and Mrs. Naor was elected as President of the Zionist Supreme Court – she was voted for unanimously, without any objections or abstentions.

Plenary No. 2 - Whither Israeli Society? – Building a Society: Society and Constitution

The Plenary Chair, Ms. **Gillian Caplin**, opened the meeting and spoke of the society we had sought to create when Zionism came about, more than 120 years ago. Addressing the main issues on the public agenda, she referred to three quotes of the founding forefathers of Zionism, which are a source of inspiration regarding the significance of the Jewish state, and emphasized that Zionism is a return to Judaism, even before it is a return to the land of the Jews. A re-flourishing of the Jewish spirit in a new society in which women have full equality, and women's right to vote and be elected is taken for granted. Regarding minorities, the Jewish people must shape this country so that non-Jews feel comfortable in it. We have succeeded in implementing these ideals in other aspects, but much work still needs to be done, and we must rise to the challenges that lie ahead, and continue to cling to the Zionist dream and to maintain our ideals and the unity of the Jewish people as a top priority.

At the end of her speech, she introduced Dr. Yoaz Hendel, Chair of the Institute for Zionist Strategies, former head of the National Information Directorate in the Prime Minister's Office and invited him to moderate the session.

Dr. Yoaz Hendel stressed the fact that the panel was about Israeli society and questions related to the essence of our being here and raised the question that he believed to be the key question with respect to the Zionist issue. Other nations do not ask themselves what it means to be of their nationality, but this is an important question because it retains a tinge of naïveté, which is depicted in the Bible as a positive human trait. The Bible is full of naïve heroes (Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob), each one of them naïve in his own special way. This is not an acquired trait, but rather a disappearing one, which has been lost over the years. According to Dr. Hendel, the discussions regarding Zionism can retain this beautiful quality.

Then Dr. Hendel invited retired Supreme Court Justice Dalia Dorner, stating that she is still naive because she asks important and essential questions about the things that we do and about the existing arguments.

Retired Supreme Court Justice Dalia Dorner:

Ms. Dorner started out by stressing that the questions about Zionism and identity are new questions that did not concern her generation. To illustrate this point, she said at a celebration for her granddaughter, she quoted a letter from her father, which he wrote to his nephew in the Holy Land in 1943, while he was in a forced labor camp in Turkey. In the letter her father expressed his hope to see his family in Israel, living happily. The father, who was ill when he was released from the camp, took his family and came to Jerusalem. After his death, Justice Dorner and her brother were sent to a Youth Aliyah institution for children who were Holocaust survivors. The children there spoke in different languages, but they all had a common Zionist and Jewish identity.

Justice Dorner said that as a child, when she heard Ben Gurion on the radio reading the Declaration of Independence, she felt it was a miracle: That the Jewish state was a miracle and we must guard it with all our might. The desire to build one society is a weighty issue, and we must strive for it, even though substantial achievements have been made. To illustrate she mentioned a story by Amos Oz in which one of the heroes says to the other: "Why are you talking about the holes and not about the cheese?" The disputes between us are like the holes in the cheese. But we must bear in mind that the Jewish people is founded on disputes and we need not be alarmed by them. In the absence of a constitution, these disagreements may indeed lead to a lack of unity. But we must remember that we live in a Jewish democratic state, which is extraordinary, with nothing else like it in the world. Justice Haim Cohen, who was the attorney general and later Minister of Justice and Supreme Court Justice, wrote: "Judaism does not need to learn from democracy, not about humaneness, nor morality, nor justice, nor honesty, and nor human dignity, nor the sanctity of life." Justice Cohen, an extremely knowledgeable man, added that if our country had strictly adhered to the true values of Judaism, there would be no violence, inequality, racism and fanaticism. The words of Justice Cohen, who lost his religious faith, but not his love for Jewish heritage, illustrate why Judaism and democracy should not be perceived as contradictory. Although we do not have a constitution, we do have a document: The Declaration of Independence, which is an outstanding symbiosis between the Jewishness of the state and its democratic nature. The Declaration of Independence does indeed promise a constitution to be promulgated by the Constituent Assembly no later than October 1, 1948. Yet here we are, 70 years later, and we still do not have a constitution, because of the controversy surrounding the Declaration of Independence, even though it was not disputed at the time. All the founding fathers signed it, both the Communists and Agudath Israel, although they had their disagreements, even back then. Zvi Tal said that when they decided to accept the partition plan and declare the state, he mourned the loss of parts of the land. Moshe Sharett, on the other hand, represented certain parts of the Zionist leadership that worried that the declaration of the

state of Israel would endanger the entire Zionist enterprise. The Americans and Agudath Israel claimed that this was not the time to declare the state, but Ben-Gurion forced everyone to understand that such an opportunity would not be repeated and therefore the declaration must be signed, and the state declared. In her analysis of the Declaration of Independence, it seems to her that this was a document acceptable to the people. The land of Israel is the birthplace of the Jewish people. This is where its spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave the world the eternal Book of Books. Our country shall be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel.

The Bible presents us with a wonderful definition of the role of the judge: "You shall not be partial in judgment. You shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not be intimidated by anyone, do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great". There are those who argue that the statement in the Declaration of Independence that Israel will be open to Jewish immigration and to the Ingathering of the Exiles might be of an undemocratic nature. But we must remember that the State of Israel was not built to establish a democracy in the Middle East, but was established under the shadow of the Holocaust, as a state for the Jewish people. This does not mean that this country is not democratic: as we all remember, the Declaration of Independence states that this country will be built for the benefit of all its inhabitants, will maintain complete equality of rights, regardless of religion, race or sex, and will guarantee culture, education, and a language to all its inhabitants. Presently we have not yet fulfilled this vision, but we can still unite. Druze officers quote from the Declaration of Independence, Muslim Arab Knesset Members may find certain sentences there that they identify with. In conclusion, Justice Dorner noted that she had the privilege of lighting a torch on Israel's 62nd Independence Day and of all the awards she received after her retirement, this one was the most significant for her. Since the lighting of the torch symbolizes our loyalty to our Jewish democratic state, the honoring of human and civil rights - liberty, equality and freedom of expression in particular.

At the end of Justice Dorner's comments, a discussion ensued between her and Dr. Yoaz Hendel.

Dr. Hendel said that during the establishment of the State of Israel, we were too busy with survival, but now that Israel is flourishing and thriving, additional questions arise, and therefore the Declaration of Independence is not as clear as it was. Reading it now, it is difficult to understand what it means with respect to the UN resolution, and the status between the authorities, as well as its judicial practice. Thus, the Declaration of Independence gives rise to a debate regarding the judiciary and the extent of its powers in relation to the legislative branch.

Justice Dorner replied that every document and every law requires interpretation, and that is why democracies apply separation of powers: the legislature enacts laws and the judge interprets them, and the legislature can introduce any necessary amendments. The Declaration of Independence authorized the Constituent Assembly, which was supposed to be elected by the Knesset, to draw up a constitution - thus defining the rules of the game and ensuring the independence of the justices. A constitution in and of itself does not serve this purpose, because

despite the rules defined in it (such as the protection of minorities) it places the judges in a bubble. According to justice Dorner a constitution deprives the legislative branch of power, because it sets clear and rigid boundaries (in order to change it, a majority of at least two thirds is required.) Ben-Gurion did not act to establish a constitution precisely because of this – after all, we are a people that thrives on disputes, no party has ever received a majority of two-thirds; and Mapai did not want a constitution because it thought it would rule forever, and the other side of the government also thought so – concluded Dorner, adding that when she ran for office of the president of the State of Israel, she spoke with various Knesset members, who were very good at their job, and she told them: "The situation will not remain unchanged forever, sometimes you're up and sometimes you're down, you're in government now, but that could change, don't give anyone so much power". Menachem Begin complained, and rightfully so, she said, about the fact that Israel does not have a constitution, and the compromise was to legislate basic laws. However, she emphasized that we do not have constitutional scaffolding, and that the substantive rules are fixed and in order.

Ben Dror Yemini, journalist, academic researcher and public speaker on Jewish studies, politics and current affairs.

Ben-Dror Yemini first commented on the Nation State law - a subject brought up by Dr. Hendel brought who asked whether he thought it appropriate to introduce some changes to the law.

Mr. Yemini admitted that he thought that this was a problematic issue, since although he does support the Jewish nation-state's right for self-determination, the law has become so controversial, arousing such harsh opposition that rendered it useless. From his acquaintance with the Jewish world - his encounters with students, scholars and parliament members - it seems that the law does not contribute anything. Israel is defined as a Jewish state in its Basic Laws, in the Declaration of Independence and in the 1947 Partition Plan, so the enactment of the Nation State law doesn't really add anything. Moreover, it has created a rift between the Jewish majority and some of the state's minorities, as well as internal strife amongst ourselves.

Dr. Hendel probed further and asked why our demand that the Palestinians recognize us as a Jewish state is not backed by a law or a document, serving as a legal authority. Mr. Yemini said in response that the demand to recognize a Jewish state is justified: over the past two decades all Israeli prime ministers demanded that the Palestinians recognize a Jewish state (this recognition is essential for an agreement on a two-state solution), but that does not mean that we need this addition for ourselves when it already exists.

Later, Dr. Hendel wondered whether we were not evading dealing with substantive issues that have to do with the definition of Israel as a democratic state. We all agree, he said, that we aspire to a democracy that includes equal civil rights to all Israeli citizens, but perhaps we need to provide a more discerning definition of democracy, as it is stated in the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty. In his response, Mr. Yemini stressed that this was not a theoretical discussion, and that the principle of equality should be added to the Nation State Law. In the absence of this

element, Israel is often portrayed as an apartheid state, and many claim - out of ignorance - that Israel is constantly committing crimes. The addition of equality will help in the effort to protect Israel and the Jewish people throughout the world. Even if this egalitarian component relates only to civil rights (and not to national rights), it is essential for dealing with the severe phenomenon of hatred of Israel. As an example, he mentioned Lara al-Qassem, the student who headed one of the radical organizations spearheading BDS, who wanted to study at an Israeli university even though Israeli law states that BDS supporters are not entitled to an entry visa to Israel. Israel's refusal to allow her to study in Israel sparked an anti-Israeli campaign, in which senior figures from the Israeli academia (such as the president of the Hebrew University) participated. The anti-Israeli campaign, he said, succeeded because it was accompanied by lies and blatant distortions of reality. Israeli policy, in fact, is identical to that of all countries in the world – banning those who deny the country's right to exist from entering the country. Regarding this point, Mr. Yemini added, he disagrees with Justice Dorner, who believes that truth always triumphs. Judges have this illusion that truth and freedom of expression will always triumph, but unfortunately - too many times the lies prevail, as can be seen when looking at Israel's image in the world.

Polls show that 40% of all Germans think that what Israel does to the Palestinians is what the Nazis did to the Jews. Of course, this is a complete lie, a blood libel - but it is nurtured by the two most important bodies of knowledge - the media and the academia. These two main channels cultivate lies and not the truth. Regardless of one's political positions, it's sad and it's appalling, but we mustn't give up on telling the truth even when it is hard.

Dr. Hendel said that the political debates in Israeli society might actually be blurring the definitions between right and left. Thus, as a result of the general public's critical positions toward the government, they tend to forget that their political views are right-wing, and so perhaps the preoccupation with BDS is used to avoid inter-Israeli issues.

Mr. Yemini responded that Israeli society excels at self-criticism. We do not need international demonization in order to criticize ourselves, but there is one newspaper in the Israeli media, which leads this demonization against Israel in the world and inundates the readers with terrible and false allegations. Certain parts of the Israeli left have become so radical that even Mapainiks (like himself), advocating for a compromise and a two-state solution and peace initiatives, suddenly appear to be right-wingers because they defend Israel and are unwilling to stay silent in face of the lies spread in the media and in universities. Moreover, anti-Israeli trends have an enormous negative impact not only on Israel, but also on the Palestinians. In economic terms, the State of Israel is not affected by the BDS, and on the public-opinion sphere, American Jews can succeed if they act wisely. In order to combat anti-Israeli trends, we must meet with American students and give them response options. It is often claimed that there is no need to preach to the choir, but meetings with students from Hillel clubs have demonstrated that they must be provided with adequate knowledge so that they can deal with the questions that are posed to them. And it is incumbent upon us to provide this information to them, and "us" means – the

Jewish Agency, the General Council and all the different Zionist organizations across the world. We must provide both Jewish students and Israelis living in the Diaspora, with knowledge and tools, in order instill in them confidence and the ability to make an impact.

Dr. Yoaz Hendel thanked Ben Dror Yemini and said that the arguments will continue for a long time, but ultimately, the arguments are indicative of a healthy society, and are a sign of strength and not weakness. Our strength lies there and not necessarily in wars with far away enemies.

Gillian Caplin, the plenary chair, thanked the participants for their contribution in providing additional food for thought and materials for discussion in the coming days. We must stop being so critical and start thinking and acting more positively toward this wonderful country.

Eli Cohen thanked the participants and declared the meeting closed.

Plenary No. 3 - Jews and Druze – A Fraternal Covenant

Eli Cohen opened the plenary by greeting the participants who came to Hurfeish - the Druze town that symbolizes the cooperation between the WZO and the Israel Department, the Zionist Council in Israel and the Druze Zionist Council.

Asher and Shai, graduates of *Amichai*, a *mechina* (pre-military academy) affiliated with the Zionist Council in Israel, talked about their *mechina* (which operates on behalf of the WZO). *Amichai* is located in Kibbutz Kramim in the northern Negev, and girls and boys, secular and religious study there together. The graduates said that their year in the *mechina* was one of the most significant years in their lives. They got to travel all over Israel, met with all the different groups comprising the Israeli society (Religious, secular, ultra-Orthodox, Druze, Bedouin and Arabs) and with different Jewish denominations from Israel and the Diaspora. And most importantly, they learned more about themselves, because they lived together in a mixed *mechina*, where both secular and religious Jews live together, they were given the opportunity to learn and deepen their identity and Zionism, or, as they put it:

During my year at the *mechina* I understood what it means to be a proud Zionist Israeli. I understood that alongside the importance of self-development, we are all a link in the long chain of the Jewish people, and I realized that I did not want to be the one who breaks the chain. On the contrary, I want to continue and deepen the great story. We learned to assume responsibility for this country and its immediate surroundings, and to want to assume responsibility for the Israeli society as well.

The speakers, who will soon be enlisted to the IDF talked about the fact that thanks to the *mechina* they will begin their military service more prepared, and that their year in the *mechina* helped them keenly understand the reason for their service in the IDF and encouraged them to continue to serve as commanders and officers. They thanked the staff at the *mechina* for investing so much in educating the next generation of Israel's leadership, and they also thanked

the Zionist Council in Israel and the World Zionist Organization for standing behind this unique Zionist enterprise.

Yaakov Hagoel, Deputy and Vice Chairman of the World Zionist Organization, praised our wonderful young men and women, and welcomed the organizers, the people attending the session, and the Druze leadership - Mr. Yosef Nasaradin, head of the Druze Zionist Council; Mufid Marie, Mayor of Hurfeish and their host; Maj. Gen. (res.) Yusef Mishleb, Ms. Jamila, who are all part of a true Zionist celebration. The Zionist Council in Israel conducts daily activities with our Druze brethren, who are our brothers to the Zionist idea, the Zionist people and the Zionist movement, and we all see and live Zionism. The joint activities between Jews and Druze are genuine, and these include encounters between Jewish and Druze schools that study each other's heritage together. Mr. Hagoel also said that learning about Druze heritage can be achieved through the activities of the Druze Zionist Council's "Covenant of Life" (Brit Chayim), and as part of the school curriculum in Israel. The Zionist movement has taken upon itself the educational challenge and is very active in this field, already before the army service. The partnership with the Druze started even before the establishment of the state of Israel, and the Zionist movement, with the help of the Zionist Council in Israel, contributes greatly to that end.

Prof. Michael Chlenov, plenary Chair, stressed the importance of this plenary, as it is devoted to the relations between the Druze and the Jews, as well as between Israeli Druze and Israeli Jews.

Later, two young men, about 18-19 years old, were invited; the two were doing a year of service (*shnat sherut*) in *Garin Tzameret*. Or, who serves in Kiryat Ata, presented their group's activities there, and introduced the members of the group and Itay, who is in *Garin Tzameret* in Tzfat, added that they are working to create an intercultural encounter between the different population groups in order to strengthen Israeli-Jewish dialogue and develop local leadership.

Avraham Duvdevani, Chairman of the WZO, welcomed the audience and particularly noted Yusef Nasaradin, who founded the Druze Zionist Council 41 years ago and continues to work with devotion and dedication towards the connection and development of the Zionist side in the Druze movement. Mr. Duvdevani underscored the feeling of affinity between the Druze community and the State of Israel, which was consolidated during the War of Independence, when members of the Druze community enlisted to the IDF to protect the homeland and fight for it. Since then, a covenant of blood was formed, which over the years turned into a covenant of brothers and a covenant of life, but the connection between the Druze community and the Jewish people has a long history of thousands of years. Throughout history, since Jethro, the Druze have been living with us and among us, and they are a paragon of loyalty to the homeland: their military enlistment rates are higher than the Jews', and their military service is exemplary. Their academic achievements are outstanding - the matriculation percentages in Beit Jann are among the highest in the country, and we can learn from them so much on morality, loyalty to the state, motivation, ambition and excellence. The Zionist movement is working to strengthen the Druze community in many areas. In the field of education, we established scholarship fund

for Druze students who study the sciences. This past year, 36 students received scholarships and it was recently decided to double our share in the scholarships and increase their number to 80.

The Zionist movement also assists the Druze in establishing new localities. Since the establishment of the State of Israel, the Druze community has increased tenfold (from 14,000 during the War of Independence to 140,000 today), but no new Druze town or village was founded in Israel over the past 500 years. The World Zionist Organization is committed to this cause and is working to establish a new Druze community in the Galilee. After working on the matter for seven years, we are now waiting to receive government approval for the establishment of a locality near the Poriya junction - not far from Jethro's grave and we hope to lay the cornerstone next year.

Later, Carmi Ibrahim, a graduate of the *Tzameret* youth organization, was invited to talk about his experiences there. Carmi, who comes from a Druze family from the village of Sajur, absorbed Zionist values at home and was raised to love this country and protect its security. He joined *Tzameret* as a member (*chanich*), and after a short period of time he went to a leadership course with three other Druze. He and his friends were among the first to participate in the leadership course, and despite the fears and difficulties they had at the beginning, they managed to fit in and lead and even finished the course with honors. During his years in *Tzameret*, he served in different roles, including a spokesman for the northern district, a counselor (*madrach*) in the leadership course and deputy course director. After completing his military service in the IDF, he returned to work as the movement's coordinator in his village, while studying structural engineering. Carmi concluded by thanking the WZO, the Zionist Council in Israel, and the Druze Zionist Movement, who are strengthening the connection between the Druze community and the Jewish people through the organization and enhancing the dialogue between the various groups in Israel.

Prof. Michael Chlenov also thanked the executive and the elders of Kfar Hurfish for the warm welcome and said that the title of the panel "Brit Achim" expresses the familial relations with the Druze community. As with any family, sometimes there are disagreements and it is important for us to get to know each other better. After he introduced the panelists, Prof. Chlenov gave the floor to the moderator, Dr. Yoaz Hendel.

Dr. Yoaz Hendel noted that in 1173 Benjamin of Tudela traveled around the region and wrote a book describing the attitude of the Druze community toward the Jews, but he did not wish to elaborate on the magnificent heritage stories: anyone who has served in the military does not need these explanations, simply because he lived with his brothers-in-arms who come from all walks of life in Israeli society. As someone who grew up in a modern Orthodox community belonging to the religious Zionism stream, and who did not know any reform and conservative Jews or Druze before his military service - he knows that through the military service you get to meet people from all walks of life and any activity that fosters mutual acquaintance and dialogue is certainly welcome. Dr. Hendel thanked the participants and introduced them: **Col. Mufid Marie**, who was born and raised in Hurfeish, served in the IDF's Nahal Brigade. He was the first Druze

to go for this track. Mr. Marie served in many capacities in the army, among the units he served in are Sayeret Shaked and the Hiram Unit. After completing his military service, he was elected to the local council and has served as the mayor since 2016. His older brother, Col. Nabil Marie, was killed in 1996 while serving as deputy commander of the Gaza Division. **Maj. Gen. Yusef Mishleb** was the first Druze promoted to the rank of Major General. He is married with six children and holds a master's degree in political science. He began his military service in the IDF in 1970 and four years later, after taking on and killing terrorists who infiltrated into Israel, he received a Head of Regional Command Citation from the IDF. In September 2008 he retired from the IDF after 38 years of service, and in recent years he has held senior positions in the Ministry of the Interior and in other fields. **Gamila Khir**, known as Savta Gamila, the first Druze woman who started a factory all on her own. Khir, who comes from a Druze family that settled in Peki'in 300 years ago, was born in 1940, and produces famous natural cosmetics with healing properties, based on pure olive oil and medicinal herbs. In 2006, on Israel's 58th Independence Day, she lit a torch with Stef Wertheimer for their activities that helped develop the Galilee. **Siham Shuah**, Principal of the Achva School in Yarka, promoting a vision in the school that strives to foster an educational climate that provides an educational, ethical social response for all its students. A few years after she became the principle, the failing school became a highly successful and attractive institution.

All the participants are trailblazers in the Druze community, each in his or her own field. Today members of the Druze community are active in all areas of society. In the military we have Druze pilots and Druze serving in the naval commando, and in civilian life you can find members of the Druze community almost everywhere. And the question that arises, precisely in view of the debate over the Nation State law, is whether we can duplicate the success story of the Druze to other sectors in Israel and overcome national religious conflicts.

Col. (res.) Mufid Marie responded positively, saying that the model of Jethro's relationship with the Jews could be replicated everywhere, as well as the model of the Druze in Israel, but in order to achieve that, the final product needs to be replicated. The military system provides numerous opportunities for integration and allows the Druze to advance and break through. General Mishlev is a trailblazer, and today, because of the equal opportunities, young Druze men are in all the units in the army, but in civilian life the situation is different. It is said in Hebrew *sof ma'aseh bemachshavah techilah* - the final outcome needs to be conceived of from the outset – so we must think and plan. We must formulate a comprehensive outline plan that includes all the components - education, society, culture, industry and the economy. And once the plan is finalized, it needs to be promoted, but for that we need the establishment, and the establishment needs us – the members of the community. Col. Marie stressed that the Druze community has no problem with the Jewish people or the State of Israel. Our main problem is with the decision makers, because any decision must be identical for the Druze and the Jews.

As head of the Forum of Druze and Circassian Mayors in the State of Israel (in addition to his role as the mayor of the Hurfeish local council), Colonel Marie spoke about the Nation State Law from

the perspective of a representative of the community and said that the Druze community, who has tied its fate with the Jewish people, should receive equally treatment to the Jews', with whom they fought in the outposts and ditches. The Druze, it was important for him to emphasize, want to be included in the law in order to continue to be part of the state and therefore seek to have an equal opportunity on the civilian level sphere as well.

Major General Yusef Mishleb who lives in the village of Abu Snan, said that he has known Colonel Mufid (who served as a battalion deputy commander in the brigade he established in 1987 during the intifada) for many years. He made it clear that he was opposed to the use of words like "Jethro" and "Covenant": a covenant is established between two enemies who were at war with each other. But the Druze never quarreled with the Israeli Jews, but rather they live with them in partnership. In addition, it is important to emphasize the tremendous motivation and efforts of members of the community to fit into Israeli society. As an IDF disabled veteran, who served in the army in various roles, risked his life for the state and was devoted to the defense of the homeland, he stressed that Israel was his country too. IDF service provides full equality of opportunity, and earlier on, when he started out in the IDF, he did not receive anything without working hard for it, and over time he succeeded in breaking through and paving many new paths for other Druze. As the only Druze soldier in an entire brigade, he managed to pave his way and served as an example for the other members of the community, but Israeli society must recognize the gaps that exist within it, and address the frustrations fermenting among underprivileged populations. Indeed, much has been done to that end, but much still needs to be done, and the Nation State Law, he says, is as unnecessary as an unintentional discharge from a firearm, and needs to be rectified and a plan of action to close the gaps at all levels should be devised to counteract it. Finally, he called upon the members of the Zionist General Council - the ambassadors - to do more to implement these decisions and expressed his pride in being an Israeli and in the loyalty of the Druze community to the state.

Dr. Hendel said he would like to know how they thought the vision could be realized in practice and how the social gaps could be addressed, and he also asked whether the educational resources allocated to the Druze community were identical to those of the Jews.

Siham Shuach said that she has been the Yarka high school principal over the past seven years. Throughout this period, the percentage of matriculated graduations has risen significantly thanks to the resources the school received. However, a huge gap still exists between what the Druze students receive and what the Jewish students receive and compared to the schools that we have projects with, there is a significant gap between the budgets the Druze schools receive and those of the Jewish schools. She added that this year an article was published about excellence in Druze education. Three Druze schools were at the top of the list of outstanding schools last year, one of them was the Beit Jann school, followed by the Yarka School of Science and Leadership, a Druze sectorial school, with an all-Druze student body that studies accelerated math and accelerated English. TheMarker newspaper wrote that the Druze are teaching the Jews how to do education. Despite the cuts in the Druze education budget, the sector was successful not only in

matriculation results, but also in the increase in the percentage of those eligible for accelerated mathematics and English, and many of the students excel in the exact sciences.

Then the moderator turned to Savta Gamila and asked her opinion about the breakthrough in the Druze sector. More and more Druze women are becoming involved in Israeli society and are now in a process of growth. Do you see anything that could restrict them or is the sky really the limit?

Savta Gamila first thanked him for the invitation to participate in the panel and noted that she employs women from four different sectors in her factory. She does not treat a Muslim woman any different than how she treats a Druze woman, and views them all as her daughters. When she began to work, it was very hard for her with the Druze customs that do not allow religious women to work with men. Today, she employs religious women as well, managing to respect everybody's customs. The religious Arab women have no restrictions when it comes to work and studies, and the sky is the limit. Although she never studied, and started out without any means, today she manages a successful business with a national and international success. The Tefen factory employs women with disabilities, and she expressed hope to expand the business, employ more women with disabilities from the region and develop the industry in the Galilee so that Druze women could work.

In conclusion, the moderator thanked Savta Gamila, noting that her son was among the first to join the Golani reconnaissance unit and asked the participants when they thought Israel would have a Druze prime minister.

Col. (res.) Mufid Marie said that for Israel to continue to exist, it is important that its prime minister be Druze and the sooner the better.

Eli Cohen thanked all the panelists and gave the mayor a modest gift on behalf of the Zionist Executive and invited Wushdan, El-AlJal, a Druze folklore band, to the stage.

Prof. Michael Chlenov closed the plenary by saying "If there is disagreement within the family, it should be placed on the table" and wished the Druze community and the members of the Zionist General Council the best of luck.

Plenary 4 - Deliberations on the Constitution & Adoption of Resolutions

Eli Cohen opened the Deliberations on the Constitution and Adoption of resolutions Plenary, he explained the process and the timetable for the day, and invited Dr. Danny Lamm to the stage.

Dr. Danny Lamm welcomed the participants, made sure that there were 90 members of the General Council, and began presenting the draft resolutions submitted to be voted on. Before

they began, he explained that there were two types of resolutions: one was constitutional and the other was regular. The constitutional amendments require a majority of two-thirds while the regulatory resolutions only require a 50% majority.

Resolution No. 4 – The Establishment of a Mandates Committee. Members of the Plenary are not required to vote on this resolution now, but rather to ensure that it be properly submitted to the Zionist General Council.

In accordance with Article 18 of the WZO Constitution, which states that "The Council shall set up, two years before Congress meets, a committee to determine the number of delegates for each Electoral Area, with the exception of the Electoral Areas of Israel and the United States of America. Zionists in the Diaspora shall be suitably represented on this Committee...";

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED:

1. To establish the Committee, to be constituted according to the strength of the groupings at the Congress held prior to the formation of such Committee (the 37th Congress, 2015).
2. To authorize the Presidium to approve the personal composition of the Committee, within two weeks from the date of the approval of this Resolution.
3. The Committee shall begin its work within one month from the date of the approval of this Resolution and shall work continuously until its work is completed.
4. The Committee must conclude its work no later than nine months prior to the upcoming Congress.

The wording of the proposal requires for a regular majority (51%) for approval.

The motion passed.

Resolution No. 3 – Resolution Regarding Federation Relationship and cooperation

WHEREAS Article 7A of the WZO Constitution provides that the Zionist Federations shall be the instrument in conjunction with whom the Executive shall carry out its tasks and duties; and

WHEREAS Article 7A further provides that the Executive, Heads of Departments and its representatives shall work by means of and in partnership with the Zionist Federations;

Now therefore be it resolved that:

- (1) To carry out the intent of Article 7A it is essential that the WZO Departments communicate with the Zionist Federations regularly and actively concerning plans for future activities in each Federation's region, seeking input and coordination. It is equally essential that each Zionist Federation keeps the WZO informed of its future activities by communication with the Department for Zionist activities in the Diaspora.

(2) The Outer Executive appoint a committee (Standing Committee on Zionist Federations) to report annually by April 30 of each calendar year, in writing to the Outer Executive, with a copy to the Zionist Federations, on the compliance during the preceding calendar year of the Executive, the Departments and its representatives, and the Zionist Federations with the provisions of Article 7A and the provisions of this resolution. The membership of this Committee shall consist of members of the Outer Executive at least 50% of whom shall reside in areas with Zionist Federations. The number of members of the Executive with responsibility for Departments on the Committee shall not exceed 25% of its membership.

The motion passed.

Draft resolution regarding the issue of Individual Membership

1.1 Resolved that Article 5, Section 1, of the Constitution be amended, as follows:

“Every Jew who has reached the age of eighteen and is willing to accept the Jerusalem Program and pay membership dues (“the Zionist Shekel”) in an amount to be determined [the words “from time to time” which appear in red are deleted, as stated and as stipulated in the Regulations for the Implementation of the Constitution] may be an individual member of the World Zionist Organization. Registration of membership shall be through affiliation to the Zionist Federation in his place of permanent residence and in accordance with the rules of said Federation, or through a local branch of a Zionist World Union, or through a Zionist Territorial or Inter-Territorial Organization or directly to the World Zionist Organization in Jerusalem. An individual member who registers directly to the World Zionist Organization in Jerusalem, will automatically be considered a member of the local Zionist Federation in his place of permanent residence.

Details regarding the manner of joining and registering individual members shall be determined in the Regulations for the Implementation of the Constitution.”

After Adv. Fern Braniss, the legal adviser, gave **Alan Silberman** an affirmative answer to his question regarding the word membership, that it does indeed include all forms of participation and was equivalent in its meaning to the English term "affiliation." It was further explained that the concept was added in accordance with the rules and laws of the local federations.

Helena Glaser noted that the proposal was submitted by the Presidium and after a discussion over the three proposals, it was decided to reject it in its present form.

Yaron Shavit explains that this constitutional amendment does not interfere with the internal rules of any Zionist federation, which conducts itself according to the rules of the constitution. If a federation addresses the membership issue (in the sense of membership, not affiliation) only regarding entities, not individuals, it cannot be forced to accept individuals. This depends on the internal rules of each federation.

Silvio Joskowicz sees great importance in the membership draft resolution because it enables the Zionist Federations to open their ranks to any Jew who wants to connect with the State of Israel. We must help every federation bring the Zionist Jewish message to every Jew, and it is therefore very important to vote in favor of this proposal.

The motion was put to a vote and approved by a majority vote.

1.2. The addition of a Regulation to the Regulations for the Implementation of the Constitution [A regulatory matter, requiring a majority of only 50% for approval].

The motion passed.

Helena Glaser explained that the three issues were presented to the presidium as a whole, not separately. The Presidium convened as committee of the Zionist General Council and discussed them together, and decided that since these were highly sensitive matters, they would postpone voting on them to the next General Council. There is no dispute over the Declaration of Independence - we all agree that it is a founding document and that we must avoid a situation in which people who support the Declaration of Independence will vote against the Nation State Law. These issues are still being deliberated and the decision we make will not change anything from the governmental or the political point of view, and we wish to convey a message of unity and agreement. Therefore, Ms. Glaser asked, on behalf of the presidium, to vote in favor of postponing the proposal as a whole, and to give the Constitution Committee a few months to discuss the matter, in order to bring it to the next General Council, in the hope that we will reach some agreement until then, and then we can vote on it more comfortably.

Silvio Joskowicz objected to postponing the discussion, arguing that it would mean missing the point regarding the main function of the General Council and the Zionist movement. No one disputes the importance of the Declaration of Independence, but some crazy laws were passed in Israel recently, and we must devote a discussion to the matter. The presidium's proposal to postpone means not holding a discussion on key issues in the Zionist movement, such as the Declaration of Independence, Kashrut, or the Nation State Law. It is essential to discuss these issues in order to examine the Zionist contribution and the advancement of the Zionist enterprise. Mr. Joskowicz argued that the discussion should be allowed, for the fulfillment of the Declaration of Independence and its values, and therefore he called for rejecting the proposal of the General Council's Presidium.

Gael Grunewald said he would like to make two comments: first - he emphasized that as the General Council, it is our duty to respect the Government of Israel and its institutions, even if some of us disagree with its policy, and therefore its laws should not be called *crazy*. Second, he supported the General Council Chair's request to postpone the discussion on these issues due to their sensitivity. The resolution refers to matters related to the definition and status of the State of Israel, Judaism and the desired conduct of the World Zionist Organization. These issues are controversial and difficult to decide on in this forum, and therefore the request to postpone discussing them is simple and reasonable. The postponement will enable the committee to

discuss both the Nation State Law and the Declaration of the State of Israel, and the issue of *kashrut* and *Shabbat*, so that they can be brought up at the next session of the General Council.

Dina Hahn joined the Chairman's call for unity and to allow the Constitution Committee to reach a compromise proposal that could be discussed and voted on. An immediate decision, when the Israeli government is still dealing with issues related to the Nation State Law, is liable to cause considerable damage. We all accept, respect and embrace the Declaration of Independence in the Proclamation of the State of Israel, and raising the issue will sabotage efforts to pass the Nation State Law in an agreed manner.

Dario Teitelbaum said that reality is dynamic, and unlike discussions, reality and its consequences cannot be postponed. It is true that you need to be able to consider things seriously, but if we are indeed the only democratic body of the Jewish people and the Zionists, and indeed we are, our voice is very important, and therefore we must reject the presidium's proposal and hold a responsible and reasoned discussion.

Masha Lubelsky strongly opposed the request to reject the presidium's proposal, as a woman who was born in Palestine and who was privileged to live in *Eretz Yisrael* and the State of Israel, she thinks it is a dangerous and divisive proposal, and said that it forces her to start thinking now about whether she supports the Declaration of Independence or the Nation State Law. Ms. Lubelsky emphasized that as someone who devoted her life to the Zionist movement, she is capable of reading both the Declaration of Independence and the Nation State Law and understand the complexity of the matter. Why did the initiative of the Nation State Law come up, even though we have the Declaration of Independence? Because our existence here as the nation-state of the Jewish people is constantly being undermined. Discussions on the matter can be held at any time, but a divisive proposal, claiming that the left is in favor of the Declaration of Independence and the right is in favor of the Nation State Law, is a falsehood. We are all in favor of both, and we must accept the presidium's decision.

Danny Lamm explained that whether this proposal is accepted or not, a vote will be held, and if it is not accepted, it will not be transferred to the General Council.

Eli Cohen announced the results of the vote: 107 members voted, 100 in favor, 6 opposed and one abstention, 107 votes, thank you.

The motion passed. This means that the presidium will discuss this as a committee and the matter will come up in the future, at the appropriate meeting.

II Draft Resolution regarding the Distribution of Mandates

Jesse Sultanik suggested rejecting the resolution because last time the mandate division process led to numerous disagreements, and the proposal now formulated is not conducive to attaining the original

goal of pushing the federations into action and to get them working. In addition, the criteria for the distribution of the remaining 25 percent are not clear enough to give a mandate to the committee, and therefore the decision should be sent back to the committee in the hope that by next year the criteria will be clarified.

Danny Lamm:

1. It is proposed to amend Regulation 2 in the *Regulations for the Implementation of the Constitution* in respect of the Committee responsible for the Determination of the Number of Delegates to the Congress (with the exception of Israel and the United States):
2. (a) The Committee will be constituted according to the strength of the groupings at the Congress held prior to the formation of such committee. The committee will begin its work no later than one month from the date of its constitution and will continue its work continuously until it is concluded.

Section 1a was voted on. **The motion passed.**

(b) - The Committee shall determine the number of delegates of all electoral areas, except Israel and the United States. The basis of the calculation shall be the maximum number of delegates to Congress, as fixed by Article 17, sub-section 1, of the Constitution, in accordance with the following rules:

The motion is to delete the words "less a deduction of 5-10 percent, as the committee may deem fit."

The Motion passed.

1. Every country (Electoral Area) where there is a Zionist Federation that is a member of the World Zionist Organization, shall be represented by at least one delegate.

The Motion passed.

2. The number of delegates from a country (Electoral Area) where a new Zionist federation has been established that was not represented at the last three (successive) Congresses shall be no more than 2.

Jesse Sultanik's commented that if the federation is a new federation than how is it possible that it had representation in previous congresses, and Danny Lamm replied that that was because there was some ambiguity regarding the definition of "new." But in any case, the main point was that in the case of a Zionist federation that was just established, it could be represented by two delegates only.

Danny Lamm asked for clarification as to the differences in the wording and their meaning, and Mr. Sultanik admitted that the matter was unclear and asked for an explanation from the Zionist court.

Reuben Shalom explained that the changes were relevant to the definition of the rights of federations that ceased to function and then became active again. If, for example, a country has a federation that is no longer functioning, it will be re-established and recognized by the General Council, then it will not have to start with only two delegates. Thus, a country that was represented in previous congresses but its federation ceased to function, and after a while gained a new Zionist leadership and an active federation approved by the General Council - could start from a "better position" and have more than two delegates, right from the beginning. In the case of a new federation, established where there was no federation in recent decades, it could only send two delegates, and the wording must be changed accordingly.

The motion passed, a few members opposed.

3. Every country (Electoral Area) shall be allocated a number of delegates not greater than 15% of the total number of delegates from the rest of the Diaspora, (with the exception of Israel and the United States).

Neria David noted that despite the good intentions of this article, it is worth deciding on an agreed number of representatives because in the current format, the article is discriminatory. The Constitution speaks of the principles of equality, democracy and the foundations of justice, and currently this section discriminates against two countries outside of Israel and the United States, which are close to 15%, and in fact it prevents these countries from growing even if they will have extensive Zionist activity. In conversations with several representatives of the house, we have reached an agreement with some of the organizations for the following proposal. We ask that this article not be approved for now and be sent back to the committee in order to determine the maximum percentage. Fifteen percent is a serious blow to certain countries. This section is important, but its percentage has changed in the committee, therefore it is best to send it back to the committee and update the numbers.

Yaron Shavit explained that the restriction issue was discussed thoroughly in the committee, and it was agreed to set a restriction in order to prevent minority-zation. All in all, we are talking about 164 mandates that divide up between the rest of the world, except for Israel and the United States; the percentages (15%, 17%, 10%) were never strictly enforced - but obviously there should be a restriction. In view of all that, it has been made known that two Federations (at least) feel threatened by the 15% limit. Out of our respect for these federations and our great appreciation to our members from these federations - France and Canada - it is important to go back to the committee and engage in a dialogue and come up with a number agreed by all.

Danny Lamm explained that there are actually 165 mandates that are divided among the rest of the Diaspora. Fifteen percent of 165 is 25, and only countries with large populations and large

activity cannot reach 25. Therefore, the request is to send the resolution to the presidium or to the committee.

The motion to remove Article 3 from the discussion and resubmit it to the Committee **passed**.

4. Every country (Electoral Area) shall be allocated a number of delegates equivalent to 75% of the number of delegates determined for that Area at the previous Congress, where that Area held representation*, in accordance with the notice of the President of the Zionist Supreme Court, a remainder of 0.5 or above shall entitle that Electoral Area to an additional delegate.

The Article was accepted.

5. *An ad hoc provision was made in respect of the forthcoming (XXXV!!!) Congress: 75% of the average number of delegates at the last three Congresses where that Electoral Area had representation.

The article was accepted.

6. The Committee shall distribute the remainder of mandates, giving consideration, *inter alia*, to the number of those affiliating to the Zionist Federation, relative to the overall number worldwide, with this being subject to its ability to verify and check the number of those affiliating in each Electoral Area; to the number of Jews in said Electoral Area; the achievements of the Zionist Movement in the electoral area and Zionist activity in that locality.

In light of Jesse Sultanik's request to send this article back to the presidium in order to clarify the entire issue of criteria, a vote was held on suspending the article. **The motion to suspend did not pass.**

In the vote on approval of Article 5 – **the motion passed.**

7. In any case, a country (Electoral area) shall not receive a supplement of more than 20% to its number of delegates, relative to the number of delegates it held at the last Zionist Congress where it was represented. When the supplement of 20% represents less than one delegate, the Committee is entitled to decide to allocate one additional delegate to that country.

This Article passed.

8. "Whereas the Zionist Supreme Court has ruled on the number of mandates to be distributed to an Electoral Area and or Zionist Federation, or the number of delegates from that Electoral Area, the court's decision shall override that of the Committee."

The motion passed.

(c) "The Committee must complete its work no later than nine months prior to the Congress."

(d) "The Committee shall inform all the said electoral areas of its decision by registered letter."

Regarding this section, Dr. Lamm wanted to open the e-mail lists to the whole world as an immediate and reliable means of communication, since in today's world it is no longer customary to use registered mail, and letters sent by mail might not reach their destination.

(e) "Every electoral area may appeal against the decision of the Committee within one month of receipt of a registered letter dispatched to the electoral area concerned, containing the decision of the Committee."

(f) "The Zionist Supreme Court shall decide finally on the number of delegates in respect of each electoral area in which an appeal has been lodged against the Committee's decision. The Court is entitled to increase the number of delegates from the rest of the Diaspora by no more than five delegates beyond the framework of Article 17, Section 1 of the constitution, having regard to the grounds of the appeal."

Danny Lamm: The motion to add the words from "the rest of the Diaspora" **passed**.

(g) Subsequent to the decisions being taken in terms of sub-paragraph (f) thereof, the Committee will finally determine the total number of representatives to Congress from the rest of the Diaspora within the limits provided for by Article 17, Section 1 of the *Constitution*.

(h) "Should representation for a particular Electoral Area be annulled by the Zionist Supreme Court, whether in part or in entirety, on any grounds, the mandates intended for that Electoral Area shall not be re-allocable by the Committee, unless the Zionist Supreme Court has annulled representation for said Electoral Area at more than two consecutive Congresses."

Now we must vote on resolution number 1 in its entirety, without the last paragraph.

Article 2 of draft resolution II (1) - It is proposed to amend Article 18 of the Constitution by the addition of a new paragraph, as follows:

"Where delegates have been allocated to new electoral areas that were previously unrepresented and / or where the Zionist Supreme Court has ruled on the allocation of additional delegates, the number of delegates to the Congress from Israel and the USA shall be adjusted under the provision of Article 17, section 1 or 2 above, to restore the ration of delegates to Congress, as stipulated in Article 17, section 3. "

The motion, which is a constitutional amendment, **passed** with the required majority (at least two thirds).

Eli Cohen thanked Danny Lamm and concluded the plenary session.

Plenary No. 5 - Deliberations on the Constitution & Adoption of Resolutions

The plenary chair, **Lea Muehlstein**, opened the plenary and said that we must believe in our ability to work together, out of mutual respect, with the ability to bridge over whatever separates us and to reach agreements in order to guarantee the survival of the Zionist movement. The WZO's constitution determines that at least 30% of the delegates should be under the age of 35, but in practice this is not the case, as shown by the fact that fewer than 30% of the participants in the plenary are young. Therefore, she called on the members to encourage the active involvement of young people in the movement, since their participation is significant for enacting future constitutional amendments.

Yaron Shavit suggested voting first on only part of this motion, so it would be possible to vote on the entire amendment or on the parts that need to be discussed in the committee once again, instead of voting on each section separately. He proposed to resubmit to the committee the subsection that begins with the words "where a Zionist federation determines that the electoral system to its management entities" because it caused unease among many of the federations, making it necessary to find a different formulation. Mr. Shavit suggested resubmitting this part to the committee and then vote on every amendment proposal.

Reuben Shalom stated that in view of a request from a number of federations that is still looked into, some of the words written at the end of the section were deleted and the draft resolution that was submitted to the committee reads: "Where a Zionist federation determines that the electoral system to its management entities shall not depend on elections to the Zionist Congress, it shall apply six months in advance to the Zionist Supreme Court for approval, except where President of said Court delegate such authority to the Central Elections Committee."

Neriya David further reinforced the comments regarding the participation of the younger generation and youth movement representatives. According to the new addition, each Zionist Federation will have at least one representative from the Zionist youth movements operating in that area, and that representative shall have the right to vote. This is the maximum that we, as a small committee and the General Council can ask of the Federations. But the message is that the Zionist Federations need to give the young generation a stronger position, and not just sufficing with one young representative voting.

Leah Muehlstein said that the motion is to suspend the discussion on section 2 and send it back to the committee to improve the language.

The motion to resubmit the matter Issue III, article 2 (f), to the committee for further discussion passed.

The other amendments included in motion no. III: Rights, obligations and status of Zionist Federations, **passed unanimously.**

The three sub-sections included in Issue IV, Amendment of Rules for Elections to the Zionist Congress - **passed unanimously.**

Then, Ms. Muehlstein addressed the participants, making an extraordinary request - to allow all interested delegates to speak up during the remainder of the plenary. **The motion passed.** So she invited anyone and everyone who wished to do so, to express their views on the three draft resolutions that were sent back to the presidium without being voted on.

Alan Silberman noted that the reason certain matters had to be sent back to the presidium and the Constitution Committee for further discussion, was that the relevant information reaches everyone too late, even the materials of the expanded executive and its committees. Therefore, he would like to emphasize the need to receive the information early on in the process, so that the issues could be examined before the discussions begin, and to streamline the processing of the information in the committees.

David Dormont, from the United States, said that the Nation State Law has a negative impact on Jews and Zionists around the world. It is a racist and discriminatory law that undermines people's love and appreciation for Israel. The other day we visited a Druze village, and some of the people we met there had risked their lives for the State of Israel, and now the law treats them like second-class citizens. Mr. Dormont added that Herzl believed that this country would be open to Jews and Arabs, and they would all be treated equally and benefit from all the rights stated in the Declaration of Independence. To conclude his comments, he recommended that the presidium adopts the motion to support the Declaration of Independence and strongly denounce the Nation State Law, which is harmful to the Jewish people.

Sam Rubin, one of the younger members attending the session, said that the state makes it difficult for young people to fight BDS on campuses. In order to be able to preserve the future of the Jewish people, we must be liberal and democratic, and in order to defeat BDS on campuses, we must be more attentive to students. Supporting laws like the Nation State law is inconsistent with these goals and makes our work as true Zionists more difficult.

Yigal Bibi expressed his shock at the previous member's remarks, claiming that they demonstrated a lack of understanding, because a Human Dignity and Liberty Law had already been amended by the Knesset, already back in 1994.

Liz Berney from ZOA, talked about the problematic situation on campuses throughout the United States, where lies were being spread about the Nation State Law, presenting it as a racist law that violates the rights of minorities and the status of the Arabic language. She said that the struggle against BDS in campuses should focus on breaking the myth of Israeli occupation. In addition, she also said that in the US the laws and the constitution are significant and important, and that should also be the case in Israel, instead of giving the Declaration of Independence a higher status than the laws of the state. She said she was willing to distribute pamphlets on the subject and requested the other members' support for the Nation State Law.

Yigal Bibi reiterated that as early as 1994, the Knesset passed the Human Dignity and Liberty Law and its articles stipulate that the law should be interpreted in the spirit of the Declaration of

Independence. The law was passed, and he is certain that if the Knesset wants to amend it, it will do so and change a few words, so this was much ado about nothing.

Reeva Forman from South Africa asked to take all the minorities living in the State of Israel into consideration, the Torah says "When a foreigner resides among in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born." The Nation State Law does not express respect and esteem for the minorities who are an integral part of this country. The 250,000 Arabs who remained in Israel when it was established, now number more than 2 million people, and the Druze also feel abandoned. An inclusive and considerate attitude towards these minorities will not harm the Jewish state, on the contrary – such an approach has a moral value that expresses Israeli democracy.

Jackson Pincus praised Sam Rubin for his words, a young man boldly expressing his opinion to prominent and older members of the Zionist movement. He said it is important for the next generation to lead a process in this direction. But with respect to the Nation State Law, his opinion is different. Although he agrees with Sam Rubin's premise, he does not agree with the way it was done. It is not difficult to treat ourselves as a Jewish state and at the same time also respect the rights of other people living here. This is not only our home; it is the home of others as well. We must respect the fact that they live here and bear in mind that if we do not care for them, we will not be safe in our own country.

Nili Nehorai expressed her astonishment at the fact that there are voices in the Zionist movement that speak against the Nation State Law, since after all we are here to realize the Zionist vision - the establishment of a Jewish state with a Jewish majority, as determined by the Nation State Law. The Law, she claims, does not include any clause that excludes minorities. Do the establishment of an Arab state in the State of Israel, or the expulsion of Jews from the Land of Israel, mean Zionism? Does encouraging Jewish settlement in the Galilee mean racism? Ms. Nehourai concluded that if the members of the plenary interpret Zionism as racism and are incensed by the Nation State Law or view the Law of Return as ostensibly racist discrimination in favor of the Jews, they should express these ideas in their non-profit organizations And not in the Zionist institution devoted to the Jewish people and to guaranteeing a Jewish majority in the Land of Israel.

Dario Teitelbaum asked for his voice to be heard, even though it was different from the one expressed so enthusiastically by the previous speaker. As a member of Kibbutz Gvulot in the Gaza vicinity, and as someone who wasn't born here and made aliya, he claimed that despite all the difficulties, we must talk about a common homeland for two nations. Diaspora Jews aspire for their rights as Jews to be recognized, not only their personal rights but their collective rights too – to be allowed to organize as communities and maintain a Jewish education system. The current situation in Israel has a profound impact on the State of Israel, and moreover, on world Jewry. Thanks to democracy we can all be Jews in the Diaspora, because we can be equal among equals on both the individual and the collective levels. If the State of Israel takes this away from its citizens here, it will backfire and lead to the collapse of the Jewish people.

Kevin Ross from the US argued that there was no need to include support for the rights of Arabs or minorities in the Nation State Law, since these already exist in the Basic Law and in the human rights provisions. The rights of Arabs are not under attack, but on the other hand, one couldn't miss how the Arab MKs were speaking against the State of Israel.

At a time when Israel's Jewish character is under attack and certain people were constantly questioning the very existence of the only Jewish state that exists - the Nation State Law reinforced the basic reality that many Israel-deniers were desperately trying to destroy. We mustn't side with people who seek to destroy Israel's sovereignty and self-determination. Moreover, the claim that the Nation State Law is exceptional or different or racist is a false claim, since most European countries are multiethnic and multilingual, yet confer official status only to the language of the majority. This policy is acceptable in most countries in the world, but when it is carried out by Israel, the state of the Jewish people, it is criticized. This double standard is absurd, and the Nation State Law is necessary to support the basic and fundamental idea that Israel is a Jewish state.

Elana Heideman emphasized the need to work together to find solutions, instead of arguing with each other: Jewish rights were being threatened all over the world, but instead of discussing ways to repair the damage, we are engaged in fruitless quarrels over the details of how to realize the goals before us. However, it is important to emphasize that the Nation State Law was meant to affirm the rights of Jews, and presenting it in a distorted manner, accompanied by unfounded lies, is fundamentally mistaken and reflects our unwillingness to stand up for our rights.

We must stand up for the rights of the Jews all over the world, deal with the defamation against us and overcome the issues that divide us. It has taken us fifty years to pass a law that guarantees equal rights for all citizens, of all ethnicities and all religions. It has taken us seventy years to pass another law, guaranteeing the rights of the Jews over the homeland of our forefathers. And now we are arguing about a law that upholds these rights. We can continue arguing about it within the framework of the Zionist movement, but in our activities in the international arena we must inspire the next generation and our generation, and assure them that we are affirming the rights of Jews all over the world, and are combating the defamatory stereotypical images and blood libels. There are lawyers out there fighting the legal battles pro bono, because there is no budget for this, while there's a huge budget (\$ 512 million) to fight BDS on campuses. What about combating this in workplaces? What about the school systems? What about your communities?

To conclude Ms. Heideman asked to stop focusing on internal wars inside the movement and find a way to start a conversation in which more voices would participate. She proposed forming a coalition of people interested in shifting the discussion, which would meet every year at the General Council, and instead of discussing the resolutions from the previous year - deal with key issues and think about tactical, tangible solutions.

Samantha Miretzki of the World Union of Jewish Students expressed her organization's position against the Nation State Law, the organization she belongs to along with 37 member student

unions, who are democratically elected representatives of the Jewish student bodies in their countries; and all members of the organization are fighting BDS on campuses but condemn the Nation State Law, in order to protect the rights of minorities. All the member unions, except the Israeli union, are minorities in their countries, where their rights are respected. Why can we not offer the same rights to our minorities here in Israel?

Avraham Batito, (World Mizrachi), said he was shocked by the reactions of Diaspora Jews. As a native of the northern town of Shlomi, which is under a constant security threat, he has lived in the shadow of Katyusha rockets and terrorists since he was a child. The residents of the south of Israel live in a similar situation today, but the Jews from the Diaspora are not rallying to defend Israel and do not come to live here. The Druze, with whom he served in the army and who fought alongside him in Israel's wars, do not complain about the Nation State Law, but they do condemn the Diaspora Jewry for talking against the State of Israel and its laws. Instead of talking about the nation-state and its significance, it would be better to make Aliyah, serve in the military and live in the Galilee. Only then, when words become actions, would Diaspora Jews be entitled to judge.

Shahar Alon from Beiteinu Olami wondered why they were manipulating reality. Israel has the Human Dignity and Liberty Law, which protects the individual rights of all its citizens. He went on to say that if they were saying that the Nation State Law violates the rights of minorities why didn't they mention the Human Dignity and Liberty Law? Moreover, Abu Mazen has expressed his desire that if a Palestinian state is established, it would be free of Jews. Why, then, are we not appealing to the leaders of the Palestinian Authority and demanding equal rights?

Lea Muehlstein thanked everyone and declared the meeting closed.

Helena Glaser thanked the members of the General Council for their eagerness to conclude the subject of the constitution, and congratulated the Constitution Committee's work, which facilitated the decision-making. She also thanked the members of the committee and the professional staff for their intensive and elaborate work, devoting entire days to deliberations, amendments and changes until the result could be brought to the Zionist General Council.

Avraham Duvdevani thanked Helena, the chair of the Constitution Committee, who took the lead and orchestrated the entire procedure over a long period of time.

Eli Cohen announced that since the deliberations on the constitution have ended, the next plenary was canceled and invited the members of the executive to respond briefly.

Shimon Ohayon wondered whether there was any follow-up on the resolutions adopted in previous ZGC sessions and / or Congresses. He said that the Zionist Executive established a committee to monitor the implementation of resolutions. The committee, which was established by the Zionist Executive, convened several times to categorize 45 topics divided into various articles and resolutions and follow up on them. Department heads were required to report on their progress in implementing the resolutions, and indeed they explained in detail everything they're done. The Settlement Division, for example, was asked to present its activities promoting

the development the Galilee and the Negev and reported also on its activities together with *gar'inei klita* to help new localities (*yeshuvim*) and establish student villages. The Zionist Enterprises Department operates the "Back to the Declaration of Independence" program in collaboration with Nahshonim, in addition to its educational activities in hundreds of schools all over Israel, on the topic of the Declaration of Independence. Each department reports on its activities, and even though some resolutions may fall between the cracks, the activities are reported on and the department is closely monitored. However, it is important to emphasize that there are certain areas where the implementation is divided up between several departments - such as Hebrew teaching or activities on campuses. Better coordination between the departments will provide a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the situation, but these summaries will be submitted to the Executive, which will present its findings in the next ZGC session, for optimal implementation of the Congress' resolutions.

Eli Cohen thanked Mr. Ohayon and declared the plenary closed.

Members of the Zionist General Council Honor Mr. Natan Sharansky

Eli Cohen began by paying tribute to Mr. Sharansky. He said that he has had the honor and the privilege to work with him and recalled how when he hired him as director general of the Aliyah Department, he read, from the book Sharansky wrote, the prayer that Sharansky used to pray when he was in the Soviet prison - to make Aliyah, to meet Avital and start their family here. He also talked about how excited he had been to be working with Mr. Sharansky and thanked him wholeheartedly for the opportunity to work with him and simply said to him - "I love you."

Hanan Mor, Chairperson of the Workers' Committee, congratulated the members of the Zionist General Council, the Zionist Executive and Mr. Natan Sharansky, and said that he was so moved to be standing there, in front of the employees of the WZO and the Jewish Agency, who are turning Zionism into reality. He noted that although his mother tongue was Arabic and Mr. Sharansky's mother tongue Russian, they were able to connect and speak a common language, one filled with humor. Finally, he thanked Mr. Sharansky and expressed his admiration and appreciation for him.

WZO Chairman, **Avraham Duvdevani**, emphasized that this was not a farewell but a continuation, and that the joint work with the Jewish Agency will continue to flourish. Mr. Duvdevani said that the campaign to release Anatoly Sharansky started at his home, some 44 years ago, when he was a *Shaliach* in Paris, sent to Europe by the Youth and Hehalutz Department. One night the phone rang and Rabbi Eli Sadan, Israel Prize laureate, was on the other side of the line, and he said he was at the airport in France with Avital and they wanted to meet with the president of the French parliament the following morning.

They two arrived at midnight and said that there were signs indicating that Anatoly was about to get arrested, and it must be prevented. If he is tried, he will be sentenced to a long prison term,

and the problem must be solved. Only international pressure will help, and therefore it is necessary to meet the president of the parliament and other key figures.

French friends helped then contact the head of Herut in France at the time, who knew important people in the French community, who immediately volunteered to help. Menachem Begin, who was in Brussels at the time, also volunteered to help. Despite the late hour, he listened to the story and was thankful for the opportunity he was given to act on the matter. It was very moving. The wife of the Bnei Akiva Shaliach, who spoke several languages, was recruited as an interpreter. When Sharansky got off the plane he recognized her. "you're Brigitte, Avital sent me your picture." At that moment I did not even know what he looked like, but we have an emotional bond.

After the words of praise and appreciation, Eli Cohen presented Sharansky with a plaque with a dedication, representing Sharansky's love for Jerusalem.

Natan Sharansky thanked the participants and said that during his nine years in office as chairman of the Jewish Agency, he has refrained from talking about politics and now he would like to speak more freely and express his views on current trends and phenomena.

Mr. Sharansky mentioned that he had served in four governments and resigned twice: the first time was when it became evident that Ehud Barak, then Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, was negotiating on an agreement that included the division of Jerusalem; the second time was due to his objection to the disengagement from the Gaza strip. This resignation occurred after lengthy conversations with the then Prime Minister, Arik Sharon. Sharansky stated that he supports independence for the Palestinians but is afraid of the possibility that a terrorist authority would emerge in the Middle East, launching missiles at Sderot and Ashkelon. In retrospect, he added, it was naive, because "I did not know that the missiles would reach Tel Aviv, and I do not know anyone on the left who would not agree with every word I wrote regarding the resignations." Therefore, it is difficult to present this move as an achievement, especially since it exacted such heavy costs.

He objected to the Oslo Accords, he added, because he feared that the next generation of Palestinians would develop an even greater hatred of Israel than its predecessors. Arafat ruled the Palestinian Authority as a dictator and that led to an escalation and increased the hatred towards us. However, he stressed, throughout his years in office as chairman of the Jewish Agency, he has always refrained from expressing his political views, believing that Zionism and Aliyah must unite all of us.

Aliyah from Russia and other countries increased not because we yelled: How dare you not make Aliyah. I made Aliyah and Geula Cohen was very supportive of our Aliyah, but today it seems as if anyone who supports a different political policy is presented as a traitor.

The Jewish people does not make its decisions under the influence of commissars, and we must do everything we can to attract our people, to encourage them and bring them to Israel, because

Israel is highly attractive. I know how much life in Israel is fuller, deeper, and more interesting, but you cannot force people to come.

A.B. Joshua says, "Well, you see, it's because the government stopped talking that people are leaving Israel." But it's important to remember that people emigrated from Israel already back in the 1970s, and most of Israelis who live in America today, are the ones who emigrated back then. While the government was vigorously encouraging Aliyah from Russia and trying to do everything it could to close America to Russian immigrants, hundreds of thousands of Israelis left Israel and moved to the US, it was not up to us, but up to our movement's activities. The important areas of activity in order to encourage people to make Aliyah are education, Aliyah and absorption: establishing youth movements in the Diaspora, to teach them to love Israel, to recruit Jews from the Diaspora to the programs we offer, and to assist in their absorption. The example of the Aliyah from France demonstrates this very well. On the one hand, the French Jews are encouraged to make Aliyah, but on the other hand it is a painful experience, since they do not receive a proper opportunity for successful absorption. Due to their absorption difficulties and housing problems, we have already lost thousands of them, therefore we should not be angry with those "traitors" who do not make Aliyah, but rather we should embrace them and remind ourselves that the State of Israel belongs to all of us.

In my article I criticized A.B. Joshua after his speech in America. I wrote: "We have no right to be here in the Middle East if we do not see the Jews of America as part of our people, just as much as we are." The Zionist movement cannot serve as a commissar demanding of people to make Aliyah, but we must reach every Jew in the world and find a way to share with them the beauty, the interest and the challenge involved in the Israeli experience, and at the same time fight the despicable phenomena that plague the state of Israel and its society.

Eli Cohen warmly thanked Natan Sharansky.

Plenary No. 7 - Israel-Diaspora Relations

The chairman of the plenary, **Aryeh Azoulay**, welcomed the participants and explained that this plenary is the first in a series of three plenary sessions about Israel-Diaspora relations. The keynote speaker in this session was Isaac Herzog, who was elected as Chairman of the Jewish Agency and took office on August 1, 2018 and this will be his first appearance before the WZO, which constitutes 50% of the Jewish Agency. Mr. Herzog comes from a well-known Jewish-Zionist family. His father, Major General Chaim Herzog, served as the sixth president of the State of Israel, and his grandfather was the first Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel. During the time they lived in New York when his father represented Israel in the United Nations, Mr. Herzog studied at a Yeshiva in Manhattan. He has served in different capacities in the Israeli Knesset and government, including the Minister for Diaspora Affairs.

Mr. Avraham Duvdevani also congratulated Mr. Herzog and commended the appointment of a person who took up the post with such enthusiasm, faith, devotion and concern for the Jewish people and their future. After the greetings they all watched a video and then Mr. Herzog was invited to speak.

Mr. Isaac Herzog greeted the members of the Presidium and the members of the Zionist General Council, telling them all how excited he was at the occasion and thanked Yitzhak Sonnenschein, the WZO's *shaliach* to Britain, who produced the film that was just shown. The movie documented the moving event held in honor of the 100th birthday anniversary of his father, Chaim Herzog; the movie a WZO initiative, executed by the Department for Diaspora Activities. The moving reception hosted by the President of Ireland and the heads of the British Parliament attest to the ability to fulfil Zionism and to generate the world's sympathy to Israel. Mr. Herzog also thanked the chairman of the WZO and the members of its executive and said how delighted he was over the fruitful cooperation with the chairman of the organization, Mr. Avraham Duvdevani.

Mr. Herzog emphasized the dangers facing the Jewish people and the need to take them on together - first and foremost the demographic threat. The Jewish people today numbers approximately 14.5 million people, half of whom live in the Diaspora. Assimilation, as well as the difficulties faced by those who wish to join the Jewish people, might lead to an even further reduction of the Jewish population, and to compound Diaspora Jews' identity problem. In this complex and modern world of ours, we are compelled to deal with issues of Jewish identity and continuity, and the two largest Jewish communities in the world - Israel and North America - must deal with these questions. We must be engaged in a dialogue with the entire Jewish people, contending with issues of Jewish identity and continuity, bearing in mind the various streams, and recognizing that Jews from all streams are entitled to equal treatment.

In our day and age, we do not face an existential threat but are subject to an internal threat from within, and therefore we must cooperate and act together. We must also mobilize as one, to promote Hebrew and its dissemination in the Diaspora. The WZO sends Hebrew teachers all over the world, and we must demand of the Israeli government to allocate resources to this cause, so that all the Jews all over the world will be able to learn the Hebrew language. In addition, we must foster genuine dialogue between all the Jewish denominations, so that they all know each other. The political leaders from all denominations in North America and the rest of the world should be encouraged to listen to others and to engage in a sincere dialogue that will bring Diaspora Jews closer to us. Israeli society is a profound and complex society, and it is important to expose all its different facets. Our challenge is to bridge, connect, and strengthen all communities in the world in order to ensure the future of the Jewish people.

Nili Nehorai (Likud) asked to speak on behalf of the Jews of France, and to draw attention to their sad situation. Recent surveys indicate that 200,000 French Jews want to make Aliyah, but due to various bureaucratic difficulties many of them find it difficult to do so. Some 70,000 Jews in

France face difficulties because their diplomas are not recognized in Israel, and it is important to help them in their absorption and acclimatization.

Debra, a graduate of a Zionist movement, who made Aliyah, talked about the gap between the values of encouraging Aliyah and the attitude towards the new immigrants, reflected in the difficulties they encounter immediately upon their arrival in Israel, sometimes already at the airport.

Isaac Herzog responded at length that, as far as he knew, the immigration and absorption of French Jews was in a reasonable condition, and it should be looked into whether there were any delays. Nevertheless, he said, unaffiliated Jews, who were not involved in the community at all, were a challenge. The leaders of the communities in France indeed sought assistance in integrating new forces and encouraging them to participate in Zionist and Jewish activities. Regarding the delays at the airport, he explained that these problems were the exception, and were basically different than the general issue of Aliyah and absorption. There were indeed some unfortunate cases in which *olim* encountered problems at the airport, but these specific cases are addressed, and they should not be considered to be characteristic.

Binyamin Sayada (Mizrachi Party, France) asked Mr. Herzog about his position on the question of who is a Jew; what did he think a Jew should be like?

Isaac Herzog responded with a quote from the Book of Ruth: "Your people are my people, your God my God" and said that he believed that the door should be open to anyone who wishes to join the Jewish people. The Orthodox conversion process presents the converts with difficult tests, which most Israeli Jews would not be able to pass. A significant question regarding the desire to be a part of the Jewish people should be posed to potential converts, and if the answer is positive - every effort should be made to enable this absorption. We must avoid turning the question of conversion into a political issue measured according to the criteria of one denomination or another. It is best to establish a dialogue, find common ground and do everything possible to maintain the processes through dialogue and mutual respect.

Avraham Batito wanted to know what should Jews in Muslim and North African countries (Tunisia, Morocco) who wish to make Aliyah, do, because the Zionist institutions do not have representatives in those countries, therefore it is difficult to do so.

Isaac Herzog replied that the issue should be thoroughly looked into. To the best of his knowledge, there are 2,000 Jews in Morocco and there was no data regarding the number of Jews in Tunisia. If there is a critical mass, it may be worth exploring collaborations.

Kevin Ross, from North America, expressed his concern about the growing strength of the BDS movement in the U.S. and on American campuses. Israeli professors teaching in U.S. universities are subject to a cultural attack by the members of this organization. Would Mr. Herzog, as a man of influence over the Left and its movements, be willing to declare that it is impossible to be a Zionist

and support B.D.S simultaneously? Making an unequivocal statement that Zionists cannot operate in such an organization?

Mr. Herzog replied that he does not support categorical declarations regarding specific positions and denominations, because the Zionist movement belongs to everyone, not to a specific camp. However, he did stress that the BDS was a very dangerous movement, and we are at the forefront of the fight against it, for example, through *shlichim* advocating for Israel in American campuses. We are relentlessly fighting against those who call for boycotting Israel, but we must avoid not accepting new *olim* because of their positions and opinions, but rather we must focus on international *hasbara* activities in order to denounce BDS and explain why Israel's existence is justified.

The plenary chair, Aryeh Azoulay, declared the meeting closed and expressed his hope for further fruitful discussions.

Plenary No. 8 – Israel – Diaspora Relations

Part I – Israel

Eli Cohen invited **Prof. Rivka Lazovsky**, chair of World WIZO and an educator to open the plenary session on Israel-Diaspora relations.

Prof. Lazovsky began by saying that the subject of the session speaks to her personally. Born in Uruguay to a Zionist family, that was very committed to the community and to the State of Israel, she received a Jewish and Zionist education that made it easier for her to make Aliyah and to immediately fit into academic studies, conducted in Hebrew. As third generation to WIZO leadership worldwide and as the chair of world WIZO, she continues a strong Zionist tradition that is aware of the importance of the connection between Israel and the Diaspora. Much of her work is devoted to visits to WIZO Federations worldwide, which are an integral part of the Jewish communities. Prof. Lazovsky emphasized that we must devote great resources to strengthen the ties between Israel and the Jewish people in the Diaspora, and explained that the ways to increase awareness to Israel's importance and its relationship with the diaspora – an awareness that needs to be enhanced both in Israel and in the Diaspora – will be discussed in this session. The relationship between the Jews in the Diaspora and the State of Israel is an existential necessity, and the Jewish people cannot exist in the Diaspora without the State of Israel, and Israel needs the Diaspora to exist as a strong and robust state.

Israel must step up its activities in the face of growing Antisemitism and assimilation. We must combat Israel's distorted representation in the media, help Jewish students who deal with Antisemitism on campus, and stop incitement against Israel. Young Jews from all over the world, whose knowledge is based on misinformation and hostile media, are swept away by criticism of Israel and demonstrate against Israel, waving our enemies' flags. If we do not fight for these young men and women, what future do we have? Today more than ever, Israel has a

responsibility over entire Jewish people in the Diaspora. Israel has a central role as a safe-haven and we must spread this message both in Israel and in the Diaspora, in particular among the younger generation. Most Israelis are not aware of the situation in the Diaspora and the difficulties Jewish communities are facing. We must make sure that they are aware of this and that Israel serves as a beacon that illuminates the path in various ways: helping to preserve Jewish roots, providing good and up-to-date education, advocacy activities and activities that will make them want to be in contact with Israel. We must provide practical, systematic, and well-organized help for those who voluntarily choose to make Aliyah, such as access to studies, work and housing, and to facilitate their absorption in Israel.

WIZO, which is 100 years old, represents the full richness of Israeli society and it is an up-to-date organization, responsive to the needs of the Diaspora. This is expressed in prioritizing children and infants and helping women's absorption here in Israel. In addition, the women of WIZO foster the relationship with our sisters in the Diaspora, and volunteer in the areas of *hasbara* and education. The secret of Jewish existence throughout the generations, despite all the persecutions and tragedies, has always been mutual responsibility. Today, more than ever, we need solidarity. Israel should play a central and proactive role, taking the lead in mutual responsibility and acting for our people despite the various disputes.

Nili Nehorai further emphasized that this conference celebrates Israel's 70th anniversary and the building of one nation. Since the establishment of the state of Israel, 70 years ago, we have become a political, economic and military superpower. The pogroms, the persecutions, the deportations, and the Holocaust did not lessen the Jewish people's longing for its homeland, and the frustration we've experienced throughout our two thousand years in exile became a strong desire to build a glorious state. Even though we were scattered in exile, thanks to the Torah that protected us from assimilation, we remained united and connected. The Torah told us that the Land of Israel was given to the people of Israel and promised us that after the exile we will return to Zion and will have the ingathering of the exiles. And we are here today thanks to our forefathers who observed the Torah generation after generation, strictly, and did not try to adapt the Torah to the changing reality, but rather adapted reality to the Torah. Throughout the generations our forefathers repeated the vision "Next year in Jerusalem," they dreamed of a sovereign Jewish state and fulfilled that dream. In this forum, she said, we are all mobilized to the Zionist ideal. Ze'ev Jabotinsky spoke of the concept of *had ness* –only one flag - and said that it was impossible to adhere to two different ideals at the same time. Thus, if we want the Zionist ideal, our only concern should be the Land of Israel, the Torah, and the people of Israel, so we can build and establish the Jewish nation as the only legitimate sovereign of the Land of Israel, and only those who recognize this fact will be able to be true partners to the Jewish people.

MK Shuli Mualem, President of the Jewish Home, started out by saying that she felt it was a great privilege to take part in this event. She expressed her excitement over their collaborative efforts for the State of Israel and the Jewish people and said that she will focus on changing the paradigm led by Israeli government in recent years. Until the Ministry of the Diaspora was established in

2009, the State of Israel's treatment of Diaspora Jewry was not satisfactory. The connection between Diaspora Jewry and the State of Israel was expressed either by Jews making Aliya or financial contributions. Thankfully the Government of Israel chose to change this reality and take responsibility. The establishment of the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs meant that the government was making a significant statement to the Israeli public, expressing the importance of Diaspora Jewry and of the integrity of the Jewish people to the State of Israel. In her opinion, this significant change is connected to the understanding that we should call upon world Jewry to make Aliyah, to live a Jewish, Zionist and democratic life in Israel, to influence and promote the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic country. However, we should also respect the choice made by those Jews who have decided to live as citizens of other countries, as both parties seek to strengthen the connection between the State of Israel and Jews living elsewhere in the world. The State of Israel today is less in need of donations from Diaspora Jewry, moreover, it is devoting many resources to strengthen the connection with them. One example for that is the Ministry of Diaspora affairs' activities to strengthen Jewish identity and the connection young Jews in the Diaspora feel with Israel, both personally and in community settings. Two years ago, a social startup was established (Mosaic United), and for the first time in history, the State of Israel is investing hundreds of millions of shekels in Jewish education on campuses all over the world. We do not presume to understand the challenges that Jews living in New York, Sydney or Vienna, face, and how to solve them. Therefore, we have chosen to use a model based on success cases: organizations and initiatives that succeeded in operating at the community level, connecting them and promoting their activities in order to significantly impact the maximum number of Jews worldwide. Some additional examples are the activities to strengthen Jewish schools all over the world, the initiatives to establish connections between educators in Israel and the diaspora. In this context, it should be noted that a few days ago Jewish principals and educators from Jewish schools around the world came to Israel to receive a pedagogical support and to establish connections with Israeli educators. This project is held in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs together with CET (the Center for Educational Technology) and Jewish foundations from around the world. In addition, educational tours are organized for opinion leaders and educators from Israel and the Diaspora. These tours that are held in partnership with *Gesher*, deepen the mutual acquaintance and help Israeli educators to understand the extensive activities conducted by their colleagues in the Diaspora and the challenges they face. Projects such as these illustrate our connection to Diaspora Jewry and our commitments to them, and we must continue with them. There is still much to be done, and the road is still long, but there is no doubt that the State of Israel is significantly changing its attitude toward Diaspora Jewry. At the same time, we must also address the alarming trend among the younger generation of Diaspora Jews, of a weaker affiliation with the Jewish people and the State of Israel. Recent data indicate that their affiliation is steadily declining. According to a study conducted in 2013, 58% of Jewish families were comprised of only one Jewish parent, which is indicative of an assimilation trend (in 1990 only 43% were comprised of one Jewish parent and in 1970 only 17%). In view of these figures, it appears that the chances of a young man or woman of Jewish descent marrying a member of their community will decrease over time - a clear

symptom of the fact that the younger generation is growing further apart from the community. According to the same study, only 45% of Jews feel that their Jewish identity is very important for them, and among Jews who are not affiliated with a specific community or denomination, the sense of alienation is even greater. Other alarming findings show that 85% of the 8 million Jews living in the Diaspora do not feel that they are significantly connected to the State of Israel and to Judaism. The State of Israel must take action and understand that there is a gap between the sense of national pride and the personal experience of the connection to Israel, and to fill in the gaps. To this end, resources must be invested in projects such as Birthright and Masa, which create an inseparable bond to the State of Israel.

With regard to the Nation State Law, MK Mualem emphasized that it includes three basic elements: the basic rights that speak of civil equality, the system of government in Israel, and elements related to Israel's Jewish identity. The Law includes three articles relating to the relationship between the State of Israel and Diaspora Jews: Israel will strive to ensure the well-being of Jews and of its citizens who are in distress because of their Judaism or citizenship. Israel will act in the Diaspora to maintain the connection between the State of Israel and the Jewish people, and it will strive to preserve Jewish cultural, historical and religious heritage among Diaspora Jews. The Law states that the Jewish and democratic State of Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people, and the fact that an entire article in the Law refers to the connection between the State of Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora demonstrates the importance we all attach to the integrity of the Jewish people in Israel and the Diaspora. *Netzach Yisrael lo yeshaker* is a moral edict and we must all do our very best to ensure the future of the Jewish people, its identity and that every Jew will feel that he or she belongs to the Jewish people and to the state of Israel. Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people and it belongs to every Jew in the world, and the Law of Return, which sees every Jew as a potential Israeli citizen, was enacted as a part of this worldview.

Studies show that Diaspora Jewry's contribution to Israel's economy is most significant, not only in theory but also in practice. A recent study by the Ministry for Diaspora Affairs showed that the extent of the impact is about 6.35% of the GDP, approximately NIS 58 billion come into the Israeli economy from Diaspora Jews, a considerable sum that influences and boosts the Israeli economy. On the political and public sphere as well, diaspora Jewry is working tirelessly to advance the interests of the State of Israel across various government bodies, through lobbying and advocacy activities, mobilizing against the BDS movement, and more. Until now, the major enterprise was the establishment of the State, and now the question is what will the next project be. According to MK Mualem, the answer to this question is *Tikkun Olam*. As a symbol of Tikkun Olam, she mentioned the "Carmel 6000" project, in which young women who have volunteered to do national service, work to promote social high-tech. Thirty brilliant talented young women who have completed the highest study level in the STEM subjects and in English, serve for two years, during which they are in search for technological solutions for social organizations and NGO's focusing on educational, health and welfare issues – they design applications and develop technological innovations to help disabled adolescents, the deaf, people who have suffered head

injuries, and battered women. Their peers from Jewish communities in the Diaspora are planned to join this amazing project, and that is one form of collaboration between the State of Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora aimed at *Tikkun Olam*. The State of Israel exists and is thriving, but the challenges have not yet ended, and we have a long way to go. In order to realize our aspiration to create an exemplary society, we must establish the connection between the State of Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora and channel it into cooperation that does *hesed* with the entire world, this is the root of Judaism, and we must remember that all Jews are responsible for one another.

She concluded her comments by appealing to the Jews of the Diaspora, emphasizing that every one of them is part of the State of Israel, which belongs to each of them. Sure, just like anywhere else in the world, Israel has a variety of voices and hues, but despite the differences of opinion, it is important to remember that we all share one fate and a common future in the revival of the Jewish people in the State of Israel.

MK Ilan Gilon (Meretz) opened with an anecdote and said that he made Aliyah from Romania in the mid-1960s thanks to a deal the JDC made, paying the Romanian government \$ 5,000 for every person allowed to make Aliyah. Our discussion here, he said, is based on a common premise, that the State of Israel is a haven for the Jewish people returning to their land. However, when we talk about Zionism beyond an existence in Zion, we must examine its special characteristics, while paying attention to some important points. The origins of a person, as Sartre said, are essential to understanding his/her identity and life. For MK Gilon, who examines our legacy as a free man, the basis for his existence in the State of Israel is the moral basis outlined by three prophets: Amos; Isaiah and Jeremiah. The prophet Amos, who spoke of "that which is altogether just shalt thou follow" and called for fair treatment of the weak (foreigners, orphans and widows), characterizes well the State of Israel's current situation, the age of the cows of Bashan, of cultural degeneration. The prophet Isaiah, who proclaimed a vision of peace ("And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more"), teaches us that in order to fulfill the eternity of Israel one must make compromises and understand that compromise is the way to ensure our life in our beloved country. The prophet Jeremiah says, "I despise your sacrifices," and in the spirit of this statement, we must shake off and condemn the negative things that plague our society. Thus, we must remember that despite all our achievements, Israel is the only country in the democratic world that discriminates against and excludes, not only Arabs, but Jews as well, and Orthodox Judaism excludes Reform Jews. Instead of wallowing in fear of assimilation, it is best to act to make Judaism accessible, to realize the tradition of hospitality that has characterized us throughout history and to open our doors to those who wish to take part in the return to Zion. Even people who are persecuted to their necks deserve to feel some kind of identification with our people, and to know that we are willing to help them.

Gilon said that he came to Israel with his family when he was 8 years old. The family lived in Ashdod and they were poor, but his parents believed in Zionism and his mother was sure that if, god forbid, they reached dire hardship, the government would step in to help them. Today,

however, people don't feel this reassurance. The State of Israel is a place of refuge for the Jewish people, but nowadays its people do not know whether there will be anyone who will help them if they fall.

This is the essential difference, he says, between the past and the present. During its first 70 years, Israel had to fight for its existence as a state, and so socio-economic problems were pushed to the sidelines. But nowadays, when the state has managed to establish itself and has a thriving economy, the gaps between the upper percentile and the general population are widening. Ninety percent of Israelis barely understand the economic map because the information they can access only comes through the filter of the upper decile, lawyers who don't want them to understand what they're saying. Therefore, when we ask today 'to whom does this country belong to', we must consider these things. I do not ask myself why young Jews choose to stay in Manhattan, but, rather, I ask myself how come we do not have enough factors that would encourage them to come here. We were taught that we are a light unto the nations, but we must recognize the level of anxiety. We must ask ourselves what we would do if we were to find ourselves in a crisis and see where our level of anxiety is set and whether other people share similar feelings. MK Gilon said that the prophet Amos speaks to his heart because of the idea of redistribution of national wealth. Poverty means an incorrect division of wealth, and the State of Israel must ensure that every individual has an economic basis that will free him/her from their level of anxiety." From the prophet Isaiah he draws the idea of compromise and believes that the land should be divided. The Greater Land of Israel will never disappear, and it is in the consciousness of all of us, but we must establish it in two separate political entities. Until the Palestinians live the experience of their national liberation, as we did in 1948, this problem will not be solved. He embraces prophet Isaiah's call "I despise your sacrifices" because the most significant law, which he himself cannot legislate, is that human beings would be free. In Hebrew we have a saying 'the entire Torah on one leg' (in a nutshell), and as a man with one leg, said Gilon, the basic, most essential leg of the Torah is "Love thy neighbor." If we lose this principle, we will lose the Jewish people, the solidarity of mankind, the ability to establish a society in which every individual asks himself every day what he/she can contribute to society and every other day dares to ask what society can give back to him. Based on these two questions, which present altruism every day and egotism every other day, it is possible to build a proper society that enables us to increase joy and minimize pain, and this is Zionism. The terms "Zion" and "Zionism" are like couscous, whatever you put into them, is what they will become. If in the first 100 years the narrative was nation-building, now, we already have a state and we must transform it into a normal country in which people live, and children grow up with their parents, and their parents raise children or grandchildren.

MK Gilon concluded his comments by saying that we should judge people only according to their actions, and not based on their religion, color, race, gender or sexual orientation. The time has come, he said, to sober up from Zionist movement's spirit of revolutionary war and to start moving towards a class-based Zionism, which will give the citizens of the State of Israel and those who will continue to come from the Diaspora full equality, giving them their home and homeland

back, freeing it from people who care about themselves more than they do for the cause they claim to work for. We must know that people in public office are working for the cause and not for their own personal aspirations. Their human virtues are more important than their ideological positions and knowing that our leaders are moral people upholding honorable standards. The feature that we must create today is accessibility: making Zionism and Judaism accessible out of a broad and open heart.

MK Oded Forer (Yisrael Beiteinu) first commented on the previous speaker's remarks about the Jewish people and the Jewish world, arguing that unlike MK Gilon, he believes that Israel's wholehearted commitment to the Jewish people today, is not smaller than it was a few decades ago. The State of Israel is an insurance policy for Jews wherever they are, and nowadays in terms of the connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel and the State of Israel - whether it is helping out in times of crisis, or Jewish education outside of Israel - the State of Israel is doing things it has never done before, even if it does not do enough, it is undoubtedly doing more today. With respect to Israel as an insurance policy for the Jewish people, it is important to examine the role of the ZGC and emphasize its importance. Some people ask why it is needed in our day and age, and the answer is simple: Most of the Jewish people live in the Diaspora. Seventy years since the establishment of the State of Israel, of the 14.5 million Jews in the world, only 6.5 million live in Israel. What would Israel look like if most of the world's Jews lived here? The big waves of Aliyah in the 1950s and the 1990s produced tremendous economic growth. Imagine how the country would have grown if it had had 9.5 million Jews! A massive Aliyah to Israel would dramatically change our situation and we must place it as a central goal.

In his prophecies of consolation, the prophet Isaiah speaks of the Jewish people moving back to the land of Israel, not out of some well-thought-out reasoning or desire, but simply because they know that this is their home. Isaiah describes the Return to Zion as a dynamic movement of returning home, but when we look at the Jews today, we can see that some of them will make Aliyah in a similar manner ("as the doves to their windows") and some will make Aliyah because they have no choice, they will be kicked out of their countries. Both are fine by us. The State of Israel is open to all, and it is our duty to assist in Aliyah at this day and age.

In Deuteronomy, the return to Zion is described in the verse: "Then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gathered thee from all the nations, whither the lord thy God hath scattered thee." According to Rashi, the day of the ingathering of the exiles is a great day and the difficulty is God's, who must take them one by one, hold them in his hands and bring them from the Diaspora to the *Eretz Yisrael* and plant them here. This difficulty is our, the State of Israel's, greatest challenge. The Israeli government must resolve it, and today it has the necessary means to do so. The government must work together with Diaspora Jewry to help Jews make Aliyah and help them in their absorption here. MK Forer said that when he was director-general of the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption, he was a part of a dramatic revolution in Aliyah: together with the WZO and the Jewish Agency, they founded a company that encouraged Aliyah to Israel. It was the first time that the government had actively

committed itself to encouraging Aliyah to Israel, invested money in this cause, and as a result, *ulpanim* started popping up across the globe. A growing number of Jews, and those who are discovering their Jewishness, are now tying their fate with the Israel's, and are working hard to study Hebrew, and even if they will not make Aliyah today, but in another 20 years, they will still be better absorbed. This project realizes the vision of Ben-Gurion, who said that Aliyah is not about "transporting *olim* from one place to another", but rather the planting of *olim* here in Israel. Aliyah is not merely immigration, it is the creation of an identity and belonging, and the Israeli government should set this as its goal. The State of Israel should invest in Jewish education in the Diaspora, now more than ever, as the economy is strong and growing, and significant collaborations can be created. If the Israeli government invests a million dollars a year in the development of Jewish education in the Diaspora, the Jewish people will match the investment for this cause. As a result, budgets could be increased so that *olim* could tie their fate with that of the Land of Israel. We are deeply committed to this issue, because under the current situation many Diaspora Jews are unable to provide their children with a Jewish education. Due to the high cost of studying in the appropriate educational institutions, Jews and Israelis living in welfare states are unable to provide their children with Jewish education and Hebrew studies. In 2000 years of exile, it was never the case that a Jewish child could not receive proper education due to financial difficulties, whereas nowadays due to the high tuition fees, parents cannot afford to send their children to Jewish schools. How can it be that today, when we have a Jewish state, parents in the Diaspora cannot provide their children with Jewish education because they cannot afford it? We, along with the entire Jewish people, have a shared responsibility to embrace and strengthen Diaspora Jewry and to make sure that the younger generation can access Jewish education. Moreover, we must also ensure that every Jew can vote in the elections to the national institutions. I find it inconceivable that due to a bureaucratic problem, Holocaust survivors and the elderly cannot vote. And this is the place to correct this and act to rectify the injustices.

The State of Israel is made up of Jews from all over the world. We must bring Jews closer together and not distance them, and we must allow every Jew to exercise at least the right to vote for the national institutions, the Zionist Congress, the Jewish Agency, the World Zionist Organization and KKL-JNF. MK Forer concluded by expressing his hope and belief that we could connect the Jews of the world to this cause, and that in the future most Jews will live in their land.

The Chair thanked the speakers and opened the floor to questions.

Kevin Ross from the United States clarified that in his previous remarks he did not intend to depict all the left-wing movements as supporting BDS, and apologized if anyone was offended by that.

Sandra Sokal (Mizrachi, former president of Amit) thanked MK Mualem for mentioning the Carmel 6000 program, which is part of the Amit program, and emphasized that over the years, the relations between Israel and the Diaspora have become reciprocal, and the women's organizations were doing a lot to solidify these ties. The women of WIZO, Na'amat, Hadassah and

Emunah are working in a variety of ways to further establish the State of Israel, and now they must think about how the Israelis will support and help communities in the Diaspora. One possible activity is in the field of Jewish education: now that Israeli skills could assist them they would bring the skills that they have acquired to Jews all over the world. There are so many areas (such as technology, health, etc.) in which mutual collaborations could be established and it would be worthwhile to find the ways to do so.

Masha Lubelsky asked the MKs whether they were aware of the bureaucracy that new *olim* encounter when they arrive in Israel, which makes their absorption so much more difficult.

MK Oded Forer said in response that Knesset members were indeed aware of the bureaucratic problems and were working with all the factions to address that. He mentioned several bills that were submitted to The Ministry of Health and other ministries, for example, the Passport Law, which allows *olim* to receive a passport in the first year, and a law facilitating the recognition of different medical diplomas by the Ministry of Health. Bureaucratic problems are a problem not only for the *olim*, but for all Israelis as well, and the Knesset members were trying to find a solution for them.

Neriya Meir (Likud, head of World Beitar) turned to MK Gilon and said that he was ignoring Israel's great achievements and was depicting a bleak picture, even though the country was currently at its best situation since its establishment. The country was prospering, unemployment rates were low, and despite the arguments, there was a high level of solidarity in Israel, which is expressed, for example, in altruistic organ donations that people were making on their own initiative.

MK Ilan Gilon responded by saying that Israel's main challenge was to create a situation in which people would want to be Zionists, so it was important to continue to rectify economic distortions and guarantee that people receive more, not less. Instead of creating a divisive discourse, warning, for example, from the Arabs who were rushing to vote, it is important to preserve multiculturalism, which is Zionism's most valuable asset. Organ donation is a noble act that cuts across every ideological debate, but most of us still die because of health problems, and not because of 'Arabs who are flocking to the ballot boxes', and the time has come to stop being divisive. If we were to take from the best things from every culture, we could have created an original Israeli culture, but the problem is that people are using multiculturalism as an instrument for divisiveness, for separating, for creating splits, and for frightening.

MK Shuli Mualem praised the participants for their activities, saying that much of the change has started, and is continuing, and god-willing will continue and make progress with educational activity, and she also praised participants' ongoing educational work.

Rivka Lazovsky concluded the session and said that we must keep in touch with the Diaspora and that we are responsible for creating close cooperation between the leaders.

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Plenary No. 9 – Israel – Diaspora Relations

Part 2 – Diaspora

Eli Cohen invited Mr. Richard Heideman, President of the American Zionist Movement, Dr. Danny Lamm from Australia, Mr. Sergio Pikholtz of Argentina and Dr. Nordmann Frédéric from France.

Marion Mayman invited the heads of the Zionist Federations from the world to the stage to talk about the relationship between Israel and the Diaspora. The first speaker: Richard Heideman from the United States, president of the American Zionist Movement, former president of B'nai B'rith International, founder of Israel Forever Foundation, and author of *The Hague Odyssey - Israel's Struggle for Security on the Front Lines of Terrorism and Her Battle for Justice at the United Nations*.

Richard Heideman welcomed the joint gathering of Jewish leaders from the Diaspora and Israel, and stressed that despite the popular trend to criticize each other and paint a picture of a deep rift within us, we must once again develop the spirit that connects us and place Zion's centrality in our heads and hearts, culture, lives and families, and our commitment not only to the Zionist concept, but also to the reality of Israel and the Jewish people. The members of the American Zionist Federation - the AZM - believe that we are all one. The American Zionist movement includes 29 member organizations - that cut across the wide spectrum of Jewish life - who have chosen to work together, to discuss together, and to respect one other. We recognize that across the spectrum of American Jewish life there are people from all different beliefs - some are purely, or mostly, committed to social justice, some are purely, or mostly, committed to the Halacha, and others who are committed to a certain aspect of Judaism, a certain aspect of Zionism, a certain aspect of their own beliefs and advocacy. What we have chosen to do is to bring our people together with a spirit of respect, with a commitment to the divine rightness of every person and each organization to have and to express their own individual views, and in their own way. But we ask that it be done in a privileged way, we ask that it be done in a respectful way. We are work to police inwardly, to make sure that no one is attacked, and that means no one being attacked from the inside, from our own house, nor from the outside.

Jewish life in America is composed of a wide spectrum and people of different faiths: some are committed primarily to social justice, some are primarily committed to halakha, others are committed to a certain aspect of Judaism or Zionism. The Zionist Federation of America chose to connect all parts of the people with a spirit of respect and commitment to the divine right of every individual and organization to strengthen his positions, to disseminate them and to realize them in his own way. But we ask that it be done respectfully so that no one will tolerate attacks and slander, neither from within the organization nor from outside it.

This issue is one of the most important challenges facing our communities all over the world - the safety and security of the Jewish people, and their inalienable right to live in Israel, to be in

Israel and to visit it. Israel is not just an organization, but a concept to which we all must be committed, and when we attack one another, we cannot blame others for not treating us with respect. I began my comments with this topic as an introduction to the presentation of our activities, and I would like to tell you how our 29 member organizations are reaching out to more than 6 million Jews in the United States. The American Zionist movement, under the leadership of Michael Laufer, devoted a lot of time, to ARZA, to bring together commonality of views expressing the principles of Zionism. After 6 months of work, the American Zionist movement unanimously adopted the following principles:

1. The sovereign State of Israel's unconditional right to exist as a Jewish democratic homeland, and the right of the Jewish people to live in peace and security.
2. Pride in the common history, culture, destiny and religious heritage of the Jewish people,
3. Pride in Israel's rich contributions to the world and its aspirational role to be an exemplary society for all of humanity.
4. Israel's centrality to Jewish identity and life.

These basic principles of Zionism, as now announced by the American Zionist movement, are not just for our movement, they are for all of us.

When we come together here in Israel, we must do so with less accusatory attitudes toward our governments, toward our leaders, toward our fellow organizations. We must remember what we stand for - we stand for kindness, we stand for scholarship, we stand for teaching, we stand for dignity, we stand for human rights, we stand for humanity, we heal the sick, we seek to repair the world, so that we can work for a better future. We must look for the positive truth and to rely on the proud tradition of the Zionist movement, to see the beautiful aspects of the State of Israel and the Jewish world and their cultural and scientific contribution to the world; we must promote the Zionist movement out of respect for democracy and human rights.

On behalf of the American Zionist movement, thank you for welcoming us.

The plenary chair, **Ellen Hershkin**, thanked Marion Mayman for her introductory remarks, but emphasized that although all the people in the room were Zionists, for many of them their personal base was the Diaspora and for most of them the language which they are most comfortable speaking and reading is not Hebrew, and there are differences between participants from Israel and from the Diaspora. Ms. Hershkin mentioned Henrietta Szold, the president of Hadassah, who described the gaps between the American and Israeli members of the organization, stressing that the Zionist leadership today must address the Diaspora as it is, and then aim to instill a greater love and commitment to Israel.

And then she moved on to explain that now they will be hearing from devoted Zionists from four different places (the United States, Australia, Argentina and France) and invited Dr. Danny Lamm to speak.

Danny Lamm introduced his role in Australia and his efforts to promote Australia-Israel relations. The Australian Zionist Federation was established in 1927, and its first president was General Sir John Monash, who served as a senior Australian general during World War I, who proud enough of his Judaism to accept the role of the president of the Zionist Federation. The status of the Zionist movement in Australia, therefore, was quite strong from the day it was founded, and over the years it even became more well-established. The relations between Australia and Israel today are good, and despite the impression that Diaspora Jewry's attitude to Israel has been impaired - in Australia the situation is different.

Mr. Lamm noted that even when he himself spoke against the Israeli government's decision to discontinue with the agreement on the Kotel, his statement did not affect Australian Jewry's interest in Israel. On the contrary, people said that that was an issue they want to fight for, that it made them want to get more involved. Mr. Lamm added that even though he came from the Mizrachi movement, as president of the Zionist Federation, he was everybody's president, representing Jews of all movements and streams. He added that he wanted to have the widest representation for as many streams and opinions as possible, so that all Australian Jews could feel part of the Zionist movement.

Then Mr. Lamm presented the findings of an Australian report regarding the Zionist identity of Australian Jews and their feelings towards Israel.

The sample included 8421 respondents.

- 69% Identified as Zionists.
- 88% feel a personal sense of responsibility to ensure that the State of Israel continues to exist.
- 12% of Australian Jews visited Israel.
- Birthright has double the applicants to the amount that they can send, and the number of young men and women who want to come on MASA is increasing, even though it costs about AUS\$ 40,000 and they need help to come up with that sum.

Interestingly enough, the sense of commitment to Zionism is greater among the younger generation. The young people are exposed to the media that denigrates Israel, and yet they stand up proudly and consider themselves Zionists. These figures prove that despite the feeling that the Zionist consciousness of the younger generation has diminished, they feel a connection and the Zionist leadership must support this and look after the Jewish world. We must encourage the younger generation to get involved, to study in Jewish schools, to join Zionist youth movements. This important activity has proven itself and the Jewish community in Australia is known as an avid supporter of Israel.

Mr. Lamm urged other communities to do the same: to instill national pride in young people and to encourage their involvement. To this end, support must be provided by the Government of Israel and its bodies - the WZO, the Jewish Agency and the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This

kind of support is essential to increase the motivation and for the work of communities all over the world to continue as enthusiastic pioneers.

Ellen Hershkin thanks Dr. Danny Lamm and invites Mr. Sergio Pikholtz from Buenos Aires, Argentina. Mr. Pikholtz who has extensive experience in working with Jewish organizations, served as President of the Yona Center for seven years. He has served as Secretary General of MERCAZ in Argentina since 2015 and is president of the Zionist Federation of Argentina since 2016. As a central figure in the community he has lectured widely on Israel Advocacy, particularly to evangelical audiences.

Sergio Pikholtz spoke in Spanish but introduced himself in Hebrew and emphasized that the leaders of Jewish communities in the Diaspora need to know and speak Hebrew and that he himself has recently begun to learn the language.

First, Mr. Pikholtz referred to the Nation state Law and to the significant controversy surrounding it. The complex issues related to the Nation State Law are unique to Israel, and do not characterize other places in the world: the values of Zionism and the values of the State of Israel are higher than morals and ethics, and Israel gives much space to the discussion regarding respecting human rights and how minorities are treated. All of us, both in Israel and in the Diaspora, encourage discussion of these issues out of a bi-directional perspective: on the one hand, the State of Israel that instills values, and on the other hand, the Jewish faith that has been instilling values throughout the generations. In light of the open and mutual dialogue conducted between Israeli Jews and Diaspora Jews, there is a feeling that "everybody is right, and nobody is right."

I believe that we are currently in the process of building, and meetings like the ZGC session invite us to think about ways to connect Israel to the Diaspora. When diaspora Jews hear about the wonderful achievements of the State of Israel in the fields of technology, entrepreneurship and more, they feel happy and grateful, and we can use it to build our identity in the Diaspora. Jews in the Diaspora have several distinct characteristics that we could focus on. A study conducted by the Zionist organization in Argentina found, for example, that members of the community feel a strong bond to Israel in their daily lives. The study examined a mixed and diverse group of respondents – Jews who participate in community activities and send their children to Jewish schools, as well as Jews who are not involved in community activities - but the results showed that Israel has a high presence in the respondents' lives (8.5 out of 10) and we must use this advantage to our benefit.

Mr. Pikholtz suggested working more with the people themselves, to bring Israel and Judaism closer to their personal lives. For that end, cooperation between Israel and the Diaspora community is needed, and we can indeed see such cooperation in Argentina. Together with the World Zionist Organization, they have started operating programs aimed at promoting Israel as a concept, in every Jewish community in Argentina. Most of the programs were carried out in cooperation with the Department for Diaspora Activities and with the Department for the

Encouragement of Aliyah. It is important to establish collaborations with other departments and the executive, and to take advantage of the wonderful resources that the community has, in order to bring Israel into people's lives. It is especially important to act among the young generation, and to instill the meaning of the concept of Israel into their consciousness. Mr. Pikholtz explained that when he was young, there was an excellence program called "Tapuz", which brought young Jews from Argentina to Israel, but only wealthy people could afford it. Today, however, almost every teenager can come to Israel and enjoy the country, and yet Aliyah rates are lower than they were in the past. Therefore, it is important to develop programs that will bring young Jews closer to Israel and encourage them to make Aliyah in the future. This can be achieved by recruiting the best Israelis, including some who have made Aliyah from Argentina, such as Dr. Alejandro Roisental who works at the Ziv hospital in Zefat. Dr. Roisental is a well-known physician in Argentina, and after he made Aliyah he continued to work as a physician in Zefat, where he also devoted himself to treating Syrian civilians wounded in the terrible civil war there. We must teach the Diaspora about all the good things in the State of Israel: its good and talented people, the fact that a modern, vibrant, flourishing and unique state was established here. These facts make the Jews of the Diaspora feel proud and sow the seeds of Zionism in the Diaspora in general, and in Argentina in particular.

Ellen Hershkin invited Dr. Frédéric Nordmann, a retired psychiatrist who worked in the French hospital service, he is presently the deputy mayor of the 20th arrondissement in Paris and serves as Vice-President of the FOSF, The Zionist Federation of France. In his previous capacities he served as a member of the Betar Executive in France; Secretary-General of the Jewish Student Front, later serving as its president; President of the French Aliyah Movement; and president of KKL France.

Dr. Frédéric Nordmann first spoke in memory of Matti Drobless, who died recently, not long before the conference. Dr. Nordmann emphasized that Mati Drobless, who served in senior positions in Betar and in the Zionist movement, faithfully expressed Jabotinsky's vision and was a role model for him.

Dr. Nordmann devoted most of his speech to presenting the activities of the Zionist Federation in France, which he was representing instead of Dr. Robert Zevili, President of the Federation and President of KKL-JNF's French Department. The complex situation in France, which is characterized by internal contradictions – the contradiction of the Jewish community living in France and the contradiction of Zionism.

Dr. Nordmann cited several examples of these contradictions:

- Freedom of religion for Jews - France was the first country in Europe, and in the Western world, which granted the Jews freedom of religion, but this freedom was granted to Jews individually and not on a community basis.

- The Dreyfus Affair - The clearest expression of Antisemitism in France and for hatred of the Jews there, but it was this affair that ultimately led to the realization of the Zionist vision and the establishment of the World Zionist Organization.
- Discrimination against the Jews in World War II - The Vichy government in France introduced laws that discriminated against the Jews, but ultimately the war ended with the victory of the Allies.
- France's policy towards Israel – When Israel was first established, France expressed immense support for it, but when General de Gaulle came to power, this policy changed, and over since early 1967 until the Six-Day War, France's positive attitude toward Israel changed completely.

Thus, to this day, France is proud of its good relations with Israel, but at the same time, has a staunch anti-Israeli policy.

This purpose of this historical background was to explain the current situation of French Jewry. A large Jewish community lives in France, a community that has grown and expanded following the migration of North African Jews to France in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Dr. Nordmann, comes from a Jewish family that has been living in France for decades - and his family, like many other families, felt part of the French state without assimilating. Approximately half a million Jews live in France today, most of whom feel a strong connection to Israel, yet they do not receive adequate representation in the French government. The community is exposed to dangers and the Zionist Federation organizes activities in France's main community centers (mainly in Paris and in the south of France). The Zionist Federation and the Zionist Movement, together with KKL-JNF, are conducting activities to combat the phenomena of antisemitism and hatred of Israel, promoted by Arab and Muslim communities in France. Thus, the Zionist movements initiate numerous activities to express support for Israel, such as celebrating Independence Day (and especially this year, when Israel celebrated its 70th anniversary).

Dr. Nordmann concluded by noting that the use of the word "Zionism" in France today is accompanied by discomfort, but we are not ashamed of this word and we very clearly declare our affiliation with the State of Israel.

Ellen Hershkin, Plenary Chair, thanked the speakers and the heads of the Zionist Federations, since their role has a crucial impact it is a very important one, they are the ones who lead the effort in their countries, help with Aliyah and are certainly supportive. Like many others who do not live in Israel, she also lives in America, but feels that Israel is her home and is always happy to be welcomed at her home.

Plenary No. 10 - The Achievements of the Israeli Society

The Plenary Chair, **Elizabeth (Liz) Berney**, presented Prof. Israel Aumann, 2005 Nobel Prize laureate for his research on game theory.

Prof. Israel Aumann began his talk by presenting the achievements of Israeli society. According to him the first and most important achievement is the return to Zion after 2,000 years, but we are losing our understanding of the magnitude of this event. The concept of “the return to Zion” in its various formulations, appears in Jewish prayers, and has been said 3 times a day for 2,000 years, and it is important to remember that we have accomplished what we had yearned for, for so many years. The second achievement is the revival of the Hebrew language as a spoken language, an unparalleled phenomenon in the world. Different countries (such as Ireland) are trying to revive their ancient languages without success, but in Israel, Hebrew is a spoken language, and this is a tremendous achievement, both for Israeli society and for the Jewish people, which preserved Hebrew as a living language. Throughout the years in exile, Hebrew was not spoken but was maintained as a living language: people wrote in Hebrew and the entire *halacha* and Jewish philosophy books were all written in Hebrew, and that made it possible for Ben Yehuda and his contemporaries to revive it into a spoken language. Another achievement of the Israeli society is the fact that a tremendous center of *Torah* studies has evolved here. Today, a great number of people study the *Torah* in Israel. Such extensive Torah studies - both in quantity and in quality – were not seen for centuries, or even millennia, perhaps since the Talmudic times.

We have many other achievements in the economy and in other fields. The economy is booming: The Israeli shekel is one of the strongest currencies in the world, the economy here is booming, and unemployment rates are very low. We have innovations in agriculture, medicine, high-tech and science, even though we are in a constant state of war. Professor Aumann also talked about his contribution to science, explaining that the Nobel Prize was not awarded to him because he invented game theory, but because of the innovations he introduced into the theory. Game theory is a strategic analysis of situations involving several factors striving to achieve different, and not necessarily opposing, goals; for example, in chess, poker, soccer, etc, the goals are opposing goals. In chess, the players have completely opposite goals: If the player with the white pieces wins, then the player with the black pieces loses, if the black wins the white loses, but usually that’s not the case. Because when there are more than two players (like in poker), the goals are not opposite. The principles of game theory can be applied to many other areas. In business, for example, negotiations are held between the seller and the buyer, with the seller's aim being to receive more money and the buyer's goal is to pay less. Both sides want the deal to be carried out, and therefore these are not conflicting goals, but rather different ones. The same applies to international relations: every country wants to promote its own interests, but usually countries want to cooperate for the benefit of both sides, so their goals are not conflicting, but different. When it comes to war and peace, the parties generally prefer peace over war. Even in the Middle East, where many parties are involved, in principle, everyone prefers peace over war. Off course they want to win, but they also want the situation to end with minimal destruction and loss. Justice and politics are also played as a game. In the field of justice, a game is played between the plaintiff and the defendant’s side; And in politics, every party wants to gain more clout, when in both cases, the goals of the participants are different, but not opposite. These were but a few examples. The most important principle is the name of the game - incentives, i.e.

to make others want what you want (a win-win situation). We use incentives in all areas of life: giving the other side negative or positive incentives, so that they will want the same things we do. Let's take a simple example – dividing up a cake. When my mother would slice a cake, she used to let me and my brother do it, so that we would not argue with each other about who got the larger slice. In doing so, she behaved like an expert in game theory without even knowing it, because it was an incentive for me and my brother to slice the cake evenly. Strikes are also a game in a way, as exemplified by the big strike in Israeli universities in the early 1990s. The senior staff demanded more money, the Ministry of Finance did not agree. After a prolonged strike that lasted several months, when it was feared that the entire school year would be lost, the professors gathered and decided by a majority vote to continue with the strike, and after three days the Ministry of Finance caved in and the strike ended. In this case, the prolonged strike was an incentive for the staff to convince the Treasury of their serious intentions.

What about political matters? Is it possible to apply the principles of game theory to such matters, and to use incentives for peace? One possible incentive for peace is conceding to the other side and taking action in line with its goals, as Chamberlain did at the Munich Conference, when he surrendered to the demands of Nazi Germany and claimed he had achieved peace. But his concession led to World War II, which broke out a year and a half later. This case proves that when the other side views the concession as surrendering, it is not an incentive for peace, but rather for war. Deterrence measures may be an incentive for peace, as can be seen from the fact that the Swiss are equipped with fighter planes, although they have not been engaged in combat for over 400 years. Their weapons were not built to be used, but to ensure their peaceful existence.

Another example is the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Cold War between the two superpowers was never played out in the battlefield because both sides had nuclear weapons, which served as a means of deterrence.

Examining the situation here in Israel, we can see that the incentives for peace are not effective. Calls for peace, posters, concessions, gestures and the expulsion of thousands of people from their homes do not lead to peace, but rather to war. The withdrawal from Gush Katif in 2005 led to the Second Lebanon War and to other military campaigns. Concessions and gestures did not culminate in peace, but rather, on the contrary, led to a sharp decline in Israel's status in the international arena. Prof. Aumann ended his talk and said that in order to achieve peace, we must convince our cousins, the Arabs, that we intend to stay here, but in order to do so, we need to convince ourselves that we belong here, so instead of adopting post-Zionism, we must believe in Zionism and act to advance it.

Plenary No. 11 - The Significance of Zionism Today

Zvi Raviv, the plenary chair, briefly described the activities of Maccabi World Union, which spans 70 countries and 400,000 members, an organization that holds sports and educational activities,

develops young leadership, is engaged in Jewish education, fights BDS, advocates for Israel in campuses, organizes educational tours in Israel, maintains extensive sports activities and a holds its highlight program, a major competition that takes place once every four years - the Maccabiah Games. Mr. Raviv described the Maccabiah as the largest Jewish gathering in the world, adding that Maccabi is the largest Zionist movement in the world that does not belong to any religious denomination.

This discussion will be devoted to the meaning of Zionism in our day and age. At the beginning, Zionism sought to create a political framework, and after the establishment of the state of Israel, it aspired to establish an exemplary, tolerant and enlightened society that would serve as a light unto the nations. After the War of Independence, we thought that the political framework had been established, and all that remained was to strengthen it. Today, 70 years later, it seems that what keeps this framework intact, is not universal recognition of our right to exist, but the military power built up by Israel's leaders since its foundation. The State of Israel is facing a tremendous problem because it does not belong to any political bloc. The international arena is locked in a web of alliances and interests revolving around natural resources, trade routes, etc. But Israel, as the only Jewish country in the world, does not belong to any of these political blocs and is often used as the "hidden mistress." We have a lot to offer but global interests are more dominant. Many countries like to 'speak with us under the table' while they send us and other countries double messages that match their calculations.

Throughout Israel's 70 years of existence, we have managed to create not only a political framework, but also a productive society, yet, this society is divided - and we have not managed to come up with a broad common denominator that will guarantee an inner strength that will help us deal with external challenges. We have come a long way, but we must remember the words of the philosopher Hegel, who claimed that every revolution encounters problems posed by its grandchildren, who do not understand why the grandparents organized the revolution.

Before he finished, Mr. Raviv said that we must have a third way, conducive to finding what unites us so that we can formulate the Zionist foundation in the third millennium and thereby strengthen our political framework.

After his comments he introduced the writer A.B Yehoshua, one of Israel's most prominent intellectuals, who served in the past as Secretary General of WUJS, and later moved on to the academia, wrote books, plays and articles, and won many awards in Israel and overseas.

A.B Yehoshua started out by saying that before he came, he did some research on the national institutions and their activities. Following this brief research on the Zionist General Council, KKL-JNF, Keren Hayesod, the Zionist Federations and other organizations, he believes that the most important issue at hand is Aliyah, because in his opinion, in the future, the State of Israel will be a bi-national state. Some 6 million Jews currently live inside the Green Line, and about 2 million are Palestinian Arabs with Israeli citizenship, and another 2.5 million Palestinians live in the West Bank. Therefore the two-state solution option seems almost impossible, both because of the

demographics, and because it would be impossible to uproot tens of thousands of Jews and Palestinians from their communities. Evacuation of settlements, as well as the uprooting of Palestinians, involves a high economic cost and may lead to a war and to the deaths of many, just like what happened following the evacuation of the Jews of Gush Katif. It would be impossible to repeat a similar course of action in Judea and Samaria, and it is also clear now that it is impossible to separate this land into two states, and that is why we will have a bi-national state here in the future. We are all involved in this outcome: we, the Palestinians and the countries of the world, and we must face this future situation. The opposition is constantly telling us that at the end, we will become a minority in a country with a Palestinian majority, but we have found ourselves in this situation out of the belief that the settlements will become well established and that in the balance of power between us and them, we will even out with the Palestinians. We assumed that we have an enormous potential and a large pool of potential *olim*, who will come to Israel and guarantee a Jewish majority here. The wave of *olim* from the Soviet Union strengthened this belief, and possibly even led Yasser Arafat to back down from his demand for a general secular state, and to recognize, to a degree, the State of Israel and embrace the idea of two states. However, the current government has stopped talking about Aliyah which stopped being a central theme, as it has been since the beginning of Zionism.

In 1917, when the Balfour Declaration was made, permission was given to the 15 million Jews who lived throughout the world to come to the land of Israel, but only a small minority (about 100,000 Jews) chose to come here. The Zionist movement encouraged Jews from all over the world to make Aliyah, but the vast majority of them did not accept Zionism and did not make use of the historical opportunity given to them, thus millions of Jews were lost and perished in the Holocaust. Today, unfortunately, Aliyah is no longer a national top of priority, even though it is the only solution to maintaining a Jewish majority here in Israel.

If we want to encourage Aliyah, it is important to emphasize the essential difference between those living in Israel and those living in the Diaspora and emphasize the fact that the Jewish identity of those who do not live in Israel is partial. Being an Israeli is a complete identity, it is ancient and primal, and it is different from Jewish existence in the Diaspora, and this difference must not be blurred. The National State Law also causes such blurring, because it speaks of a Jewish nation without distinguishing between life in Israel and in the Diaspora.

A Jew who lives in Baltimore and spends his Sundays playing bridge with friends is not like someone who lives in Israel under a Jewish regime, pays taxes, speaks Hebrew and leads his/her life in Jewish-Israeli territory. Emphasizing this difference will reduce emigration from Israel and will boost Aliyah. It is important to emphasize that this has nothing to do with religion. The Jewish meanings of the religious Jews living in Israel are different from those of the religious community in the Diaspora, because here the discussion of the commandments and laws is not a theoretical one, but rather focuses on their actual implementation in daily life.

These differences are also evident in the Hebrew language, which was on the decline in the Diaspora. Jews from different places can communicate today in broken English, and even the Jews of South America - who used to excel at learning Hebrew – no longer speak Hebrew.

These problems stem from the blurred concept of a "Jew", which puts Jews from all over the world under one umbrella and does not distinguish between Israelis and Jews from other countries. Jews in Israel are obliged to a life of commitment and mutual responsibility for each other, while in the Diaspora there is no need for such solidarity. Their mutual responsibility is voluntary, while Israelis are bound to it by law: soldiers who defend settlements even if they oppose their existence, and religious Jews who are required to evacuate settlements even if they resent doing it. The framework in Israel is more binding and it is characterized by actual mutual responsibility, and therefore it cannot be compared to Jewish existence in the Diaspora. The blurring of the boundaries between the two spheres, undermines the importance of Aliyah. If a Jew in Los Angeles is equal to a Jew in Tel Aviv, why should he move to Israel?

Perhaps it is the government that blurs these differences, but the members of the Zionist General Council are required to focus on what has stood at the center of the Zionist movement from its inception, and to proclaim the importance of Aliyah. Ben-Gurion did not hesitate to express his indignation with American or French Jews who chose to remain in their homeland and not make Aliyah, and this approach must be adopted. Aliyah, inherently, involves problems of acclimatization and absorption, but it always creates new potential for an additional Aliyah. The large Aliyah waves from the FSU brought a breath of fresh air to Israeli reality and created a significant momentum and serve as a good example. And there is no reason why American or French Jews should not act in a similar manner, so that one day we will see multitudes of American and French Jews making Aliyah.

A.B. Yehushua also called to restore respect for the word "Israeli" and reminded everyone that the Declaration of Independence proclaims "the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz Israel, to be known as the State of Israel," and said he was puzzled by the fact that the word "Jewish" receives precedence over "Israeli."

Except for the Book of Esther, the word "Jew" does not appear in the Bible, while the concept of "Israeliness" refers both to identity and to citizenship. Thus, there are Israeli citizens who are not Jewish, and ultimately, it's been a success. In 1948, when Ben-Gurion granted Israeli citizenship to some 170,000 Israeli Arabs who had been fighting against us only a short while before, majority-minority relations were formed within the State of Israel within the Green Line, and the Arab citizens, the minorities, were given the opportunity to be fully integrated into society. We should be proud of the fact that we have Arabs serving as senior judges in the judiciary, and the director of the Nahariya hospital is an Arab, and we must recognize that in the current reality, we cannot withdraw from the West Bank and allow the establishment of a Palestinian state, which a million refugees would flock to, but we also cannot keep two million people under a military regime, without giving them rights. In order to meet the humanitarian standard that we demand of ourselves and that the world demands of us, only one action is required: to increase the Jewish

majority in Israel by means of Aliyah. Ben-Gurion did not try to win over American Jews with sweet talk, but he angrily told them that by staying in America they were not fulfilling their duty, and it is the role of the national institutions to reinstate Ben Gurion's uncompromising approach and encourage Diaspora communities to make Aliyah, and even if only two or three percent will come, this will create some momentum and drive other Jews to come here. This policy should guide us, and it should have nothing to do with questions of right and left, religious and secular. I recently read in the newspaper that young Jews with progressive leftist views are coming to Israel to participate in the struggle over Israel's moral character. We should not fear that. The *olim* who will come will be a diverse group - religious and secular, with different political views and beliefs, and we must open the door to all of them, to be thankful for each and every Jew who choose to make Aliyah, and to provide them with all the conditions for optimal absorption, as Aliyah is difficult in many ways: economically, psychologically etc.

Over the years, the Jewish people have become accustomed to being a minority among other peoples, and the price they paid was a terrible one. During the Holocaust they killed us not because of territory, ideology, religion, or material possessions, but simply because we were Jews. Throughout history, red lights flashed to warn the Jews to be careful and to understand that "things won't end well for them." These warning lights said that we must be like all other nations, to claim a territory and live in it, and fortunately for us there were those who did just that - that small Zionist group, which although it constituted a tiny portion of the Jewish people at the beginning of the 20th century, it took action, made Aliyah and established the Jewish *Yeshuv* (pre-state Israel). The success of Zionism lies in the fact that its people did not ask permission from the Jewish people to come here. Had they applied for such permission, they would have found themselves caught up in the struggle between the various streams (ultra-Orthodox, Reform, assimilated Jews, the autonomists), but fortunately Ben-Gurion, Jabotinsky and others did not ask for permission, but resolutely encouraged Aliyah. Jabotinsky, who said that "if you do not annihilate the Diaspora, the Diaspora will annihilate you," died in 1940, before he saw his prophecy of rage being fulfilled, but today it is not a physical liquidation that is threatening us, but rather a different problem: will the State of Israel rise to the challenge presented to it, sooner or later - to grant citizenship to two million people it rules over.

Zvi Raviv, Plenary Chair, thanked the author, A.B. Yehoshua and declared the meeting closed.

Plenary No. 12 – Departmental Programs - Achievements over the Past Year and Brief Outlook for 2019

The plenary chair, **Dimitry Shiglik** emphasized the importance of this plenary for the members of the Zionist General Council from the Diaspora and stressed that this was an opportunity for them, after two very busy days of discussions, thoughts and exposure to different points of view to hear, share and present their work.

Gusti Yehoshua Braverman, Head of the Department for Diaspora Activities, talked about the Department's work promoting dialogue over relevant and up-to-date Zionism. The department's *shlichim* operate in various countries around the world, cooperating with the Federations and the *Magshimim* movements to realize the department's vision.

In order to realize this vision, the department worked to produce educational materials, but over time, as their understanding of the needs in the field deepened and grew, they realized that the main challenge was to provide opportunities and operating space for every Jew in the world, especially for the younger generation, to create for themselves a Zionist identity, either within their Jewish identity, or as a part of it. The Department for Diaspora Activities has defined its vision, goals and objectives, and formulates its work plans, which change from one year to the next, in accordance with them.

Ms. Braverman listed some of the department's achievements: the strengthening of federations, the extensive activity among young Jews worldwide, and the projects designed to bring them closer to the Jewish world and Israel.

Strengthening Federations – Jewish Federations around the world are an important and significant pillar, and the department works to build them up. Certain federations (such as Uruguay and Belgium) are experiencing a generational change, and in other federations (such as Canada) we see trends of renewal and prosperity. The department cooperates with the local federations to help bolster them and increase their activities, and works to strengthen the ties with them, formulating joint work plans (for example, with the AZM). Some of the other activities are Zionist quizzes that take place in different regions, and the trend to expand the activity from capital cities to other cities as well (in France, for example, activities are held not only in Paris, but in Marseilles as well).

The main challenge is to encourage Diaspora Jews to cooperate. When they want to do so, the mission succeeds, but at times communities do not commit to this challenge, and their activity soon turns into a political issue, and is rekindled only before the Zionist Congress.

However, it is important to note some of the achievements:

- A conference in Argentina held in collaboration with the Federation, attended by many young participants who came to discuss Zionism and Israel.
- Beit Ha'am and Jerusalem. The Beit Ha'am project was meant to stimulate a modern and relevant discourse on Zionism, and to discuss substantive issues from an up-to-date perspective, in line with the 21st century. This year the Department produced four new booklets aimed at bringing the project to smaller communities and creating authentic and meaningful discourse in remote places (Colorado, Arizona, and more). As part of this project, called "Beit Ha'am on Wheels", staffers from North America visit small communities and offer them intensive seminars, packed with activities. In Louisville, Kentucky, for example, 19 different activities were held in

just three days, and over 1,500 people were exposed to them. We are prepared to go to any place that is interested, and we are committed to fulfilling every request.

- Zikaron BaSalon - The department is very focused on National Days and collaborates with the Zikaron BaSalon project, which offers an opportunity for people, groups and communities to commemorate and discuss Holocaust Day from different angles. The project connects Holocaust survivors with people in their community, facilitating personal acquaintance with the survivors' stories and a fruitful and important discussion. The project takes place in many locations across the globe and has a great impact. Additional projects are held on the Memorial Day for IDF Fallen Soldiers and on Independence Day, giving an additional touch to these national holidays.

- Additional important events take place on Jerusalem Day. A special initiative on the subject is "Shabbat Yerushalayim", which was celebrated among thousands of participants, allowing all the Jews in the world to celebrate Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish people, beyond any political dispute. The project has its own website that offers a rich variety of texts on Jerusalem, suitable for all denominations and political perspectives.

Conferences:

"Walking a Tightrope" – a conference held over the past three years in collaboration with the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. The conference's purpose is to discuss various issues and tensions in Israeli society, which affect Diaspora Jewry and young liberal Judaism in particular. In the first year Prof. Aharon Barak spoke in the conference, and in the second year A. B. Yehoshua and Prof. Israel Aumann. This year's conference will be devoted to the topic of Israel-Diaspora relations, and 450 people have already registered, and another 150 are on the waiting list. This year a group of 70 participants from the Masa program will attend the conference, in order to converse with young Israelis and promote a dialogue among the younger generation that will shape our future - the future of the State of Israel and its future relations with the Diaspora.

- IVISION – a conference that was held recently in the format of an "Israeli party" – with discussions, arguments and a joint celebration. 120 people from 15 countries participated in the conference, attending 19 workshops in a young and dynamic atmosphere.

Projects:

- "Cooking Up in Hebrew" – a successful program that enables Jews in the Diaspora who like cooking to combine their hobby with love for the Hebrew language. It involves a series of monthly meetings that focus on topics related to Israel or the cycle of the Jewish year. The program is a great success: dozens of meetings are held throughout the year, and this last Independence Day, some 1000 people, from all over the world, participated. This engagement with Israel through culture, language and culinary culture is gaining a great deal of popularity and is flourishing in North America, South Africa, Poland, Hungary and other countries.

- Mochileros - a unique project in which young Israelis traveling all over the world join local communities, conducting diverse educational, cultural and informative activities etc. The project,

which has been very successful, contributes greatly both to the small communities in the Diaspora and to the State of Israel, which gains an understanding of the challenges of Diaspora Jewry. This year the project has expanded to Canada as well, and we hope to further expand it and apply it in other countries.

- Tachles - a program that teaches spoken Hebrew, intended for young Jews who do not want to learn Hebrew thoroughly, offering them a hands-on opportunity to experience and practice simple everyday Hebrew as it is used in Israel. The program is suitable for Birthright and Masa participants and anyone who wants to have some familiarity with Hebrew in a fun hands-on way.

Finally, Ms. Yehoshua-Braverman said that these were merely examples of the department's extensive activity and invited everyone to partner with the department.

Dimitry Shiglik thanked the Head of the Department for Diaspora Activities for her remarks and emphasized how important the activities and projects that she had outlined were for Diaspora Jews. Meeting the Israelis who visit communities all over the world is extremely significant and raises some thoughts regarding future collaborations. Many Israeli professors express their criticism over Israel when they visit the Diaspora, so these encounters with young Israelis have such an encouraging power, allowing for authentic and meaningful dialogue.

Yaakov Hagoel, Deputy and Vice Chairman of the World Zionist Organization and Head of the Department for Activities in Israel and Countering Antisemitism, started out by saying that something good was happening in the national institutions, and we should be proud of the processes that have taken place in recent years and the progress that has been made, as was evident from everything presented so far.

He went on to talk about the department he heads. First, he presented the department's vision: positioning the World Zionist Organization as the leading Zionist organization in Israel and marketing it in Israel and overseas, strengthening Zionist identity and the affinity to the State of Israel among Israelis, in Israel and the Diaspora, deepening the cooperation with the Israeli government and promoting and operating Zionist projects, expanding the WZO's activities in social media networks and the organizational web site, enhancing the organization's advocacy and countering Antisemitism activities, and improving the *shlichim* screening and dispatch processes.

Mr. Hagoel then elaborated on several topics.

- Countering Antisemitism - The department operates a media center that identifies and fights anti-Semitic expressions and phenomena in new media, on websites and on social media networks. In addition, the department organizes conferences to eradicate Antisemitism in Israel and abroad, in full cooperation with the Zionist Federations.

- Empowering Zionism in Israel - The department strives to strengthen Zionist values among our brethren in Zion, with the help of the Zionist Council in Israel. Israel's ethical scale has become "confused" and is increasingly becoming similar to the scales of other countries: placing the

individual at the center and placing a smaller emphasis on the connection with the Jewish people and the State of Israel. With the help of the Zionist Council, we are trying to become a reasonable marker and infuse Israel with Zionism. The flagship program is the Great Zionist Quiz for Families, held over the past five years. Last year, 12,000 families from all over Israel participated in the program and studied the history of Zionism and its related concepts. The quiz has proven itself and has managed to cross boundaries: The quizzes are also held in other countries, in collaboration with the Department for Diaspora Activities.

Finally, he thanked all the units for their cooperation: The Finance Department, the CEO's Office and all the employees who provide excellent support that's so helpful in moving things forward.

Dimitri Shiglik thanked Mr. Hagoel and congratulated him for his activity in general, and in Eastern Europe in particular. He commented that he grew up in the Ukraine, and the Jewish community there had been disconnected from its roots for a long time, and now it had the opportunity to understand its origins and to reconnect with them.

Marina Koritny, Head of the Department for Aliyah Promotion and **Mark Dovev**, Director of the Department presented their work: The Department for Aliyah Promotion was established in 2016, shortly before the celebrations in honor of the 120th anniversary of the establishment of the WZO, as 57% of the Jewish people live in the Diaspora and need some encouragement to make Aliyah. In the 20th century, the Jewish people needed a state and took action to establish one, whereas today, in the 21st century, the State of Israel needs the Jewish people, and the department is doing everything it can to persuade Jews to make Aliyah. Even though the department's staff is small (5 employees at headquarters and 13 employees worldwide) – it has very good achievements, which are reflected both in the Department's activities and in the direct relationship between the department's staff and a quarter of a million Jews across the globe. The department operates in several key areas and aims to connect Diaspora Jews to Israel, primarily through the Hebrew language. The Hebrew language is a focal point for connection. We have a nation, we have a state, we have a language and there is no reason why Jews from all over the world shouldn't speak Hebrew. The WZO conferences are conducted in Hebrew, and so should the Board of Governors' sessions, in order to encourage the entire Jewish people in the Diaspora.

The department operates in 450 Jewish communities worldwide, and there's a plan to develop a new project ("Unit 2068 Israel and the Diaspora"), a strategic plan for 50 years, which would be research-based and aimed at building a multi-year plan for promoting Aliyah.

Mark Dovev then explained that there was a growing trend of learning Hebrew in small communities, and the *ulpanim* in these communities were evolving into new community centers. Small communities in Belgium, England and France were reporting that a new community life was evolving thanks to the Hebrew *ulpanim* that had opened. The *ulpan* is not used only for teaching Hebrew, it also functions as a center for preparing for Aliyah. Therefore, the Hebrew studies are conducted according to a unique program adapted for potential *olim*. The content includes, among other things, unique texts, simulations of job interviews in Israel or themes

related to orientation in Israel. The students from the *ulpan* meet with Israelis who come there chiefly to talk to them about the Israeli society and culture, as well as Israelis who live in their community. Over the past three years, 750 such *ulpan* classes have been opened. 230 classes over the past year alone, and dozens of additional classrooms are scheduled to open over the next few months.

Marina and Mark emphasized that the *ulpanim* are visited by delegations of experts and reputable people involved in *hasbara* with knowledge and experience. The journalist, Rina Matzliach, for example, was involved in projects in France, and now, before traveling abroad, she always inquires whether new *ulpan* classes have opened up, so that she could pop in. Meeting senior Israeli officials has a great impact, and Israeli official delegations in the Diaspora are always willing meet with potential *olim*.

Recent data indicate that the Aliyah centers have a very positive effect: 20% of the graduates of the department's *ulpanim*, who completed their first year of study between 2016 and 2017, have made Aliyah and settled here. This is a very significant achievement and it is hoped that the Aliyah percentages will increase over the years.

The department also works in other ways to encourage Aliyah. In France, for example, they opened *ulpanim* for professionals (doctors, lawyers, etc.), so that they could learn their professional language. In addition, Israeli students studying in France volunteer to help teachers and students in the *ulpanim*.

In addition, the department has also developed special programs for women, which help them with their Aliyah and absorption. These programs were created following a large study conducted together with the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration, which found that the women are the ones setting the tone for the decision to make Aliyah. Thanks to this research, it was also decided to award a prize to women who encourage Aliyah (the Golden Golda Award), and it was awarded by the Department for the second year.

Dimitry Shiglik thanked the Head of the Department for Aliya Promotion and emphasized the importance of the Hebrew language for Aliyah and absorption and the connection to Israel.

Gael Grunewald, Head of the Settlement Division, explained first that indeed his department was defined as a "division," but to a certain extent, it is actually a department in the WZO. However, it is important to note that the Settlement Division is budgeted by the Government of Israel, which has granted the WZO authority to foster, strengthen and grow *yeshuvim* throughout the country.

The division numbers 80 employees, and is headed by Mr. Grunewald and its Director, Zviki Bar Hai. It is divided into three regions: Northern, Central and Southern and is responsible for supporting and developing Israel's rural area from Zar'it up north to Be'er Ora in the south, all the way through the Golan, the Jordan Valley, Judea and Samaria and the Negev. The Division

has an annual budget of NIS 200 million, as well as several hundreds of millions of shekels for special projects.

The Settlement Division operates on two main levels: strengthening existing communities and establishing new rural localities. The decisions regarding their establishment are made by the government, and the division is responsible for implementation. The strengthening and development of the communities is achieved through several aspects: society and absorption - helping the communities to build themselves up and expand socially, by bringing in new *gar'inim* and populations.

Growth anchors: Developing institutions in the communities that will contribute to their strength, for example: *ulpanot* and yeshivas, pre-military academies and student villages. This activity is carried out in collaboration with regional councils.

Infrastructure: Developing infrastructure in communities (water, electricity, etc.) and providing all the residential necessities (trailers). Employment: assisting the residents with employment. In Tzukim, in the heart of the Arava, for example, the division helps the residents establish a business - whether it is an agricultural farm, a tourism enterprise or high-tech.

The Settlement Division recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. One of the historical examples for the division's activities is the opening of a daycare in Manara, a kibbutz in the northern Galilee, following a request made by the sister of the late Yitzhak Rabin, who asked if they could open a daycare in her kibbutz in order to ensure its survival.

As a more recent example of the division's activity, Mr. Grunewald mentioned Kerem Shalom, located near the border between Egypt and Gaza, a complex and problematic area, because of its security and employment issues. Kerem Shalom was organized as a Hashomer Hatzair kibbutz, but due to its difficulties many of its residents have left it. Together with the regional council, the division worked to change its character from a kibbutz to a community village, open to both religious and secular people. The change was a success, and last summer 13 families (religious and non-religious) moved to Kerem Shalom, a synagogue was opened, and the place began to grow and thrive. Other examples include the establishment of a new *yeshuv* in Meital, near the Gilboa, and advocacy activities for settling the land.

Recently, a rural growth fair was held at the Exhibition Grounds in Tel Aviv, in order to encourage people to relocate and move to the periphery. During the two days of the fair, some 200 communities presented their plans and raised interest among 2,000 visitors, who came to hear about and check out the possibility of moving to one of the proposed localities.

Mr. Grunewald concluded by inviting all the members of the General Council to learn more about the Division's activities and understand its importance in empowering the State of Israel.

Rabbi Yechiel Wasserman, Head of the Center for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora, explained that his department works mainly with the Orthodox communities, together with their community leaders and rabbis in the Diaspora, to disseminate the Zionist idea and to make it a

part of public discourse. In today's reality, Zionism is not always a top priority, but nowadays it is all the more important, when the Jewish-democratic State of Israel allows all the Jews in the world to make Aliyah, that we also remain committed to maintaining Jewish physical and spiritual continuity in the Diaspora. The department consists of 5 employees in Israel, and one in South America. The activity takes place in 4 circles of action, all of them facing the complex challenges with two purposes: on the one hand, ensuring Jewish physical and spiritual continuity in the Diaspora, and on the other hand guaranteeing the centrality of the State of Israel in the lives of Jews in the Diaspora. The best candidates to achieve that are the community rabbis, due to their central role and status in the community. Therefore, the center acts to turn the rabbis into "ambassadors", and holds various activities for that end:

- An Annual Conference - Once a year an international conference is held in Jerusalem for Rabbis from the Diaspora, exposing them to Israel's achievements. In the past year, a three-day conference was held, attended by 140 rabbis from 41 countries. The conference included two days of study in Jerusalem devoted to the security, economic, demographic and spiritual achievements of the State of Israel, and one day they went on a study tour of the Jordan Valley, during which the participants could see from up close the challenges and problems faced by the people living in that region.

The comprehensive tour, conducted by Col. Uzi Dayan, presented Israel's demographic and security problems and provided an incentive for them to return to their communities with new messages, to encourage their people to make Aliyah, to identify and to assist the State of Israel in every way.

These annual conferences have a theme. Two years ago, the conference's theme was the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem; This year it celebrated the State of Israel's 70th anniversary. Ten years ago, after the Second Lebanon War, the conference was held in solidarity with the residents of the north, and another conference was intended to show solidarity with the residents of the south and included tours of Sderot and other communities in the area.

Regional Conferences and Events:

- The department also organizes regional rabbinical conferences both in Israel and the Diaspora, in collaboration with local organizations: The Conference of European Rabbis, the Consistoire, the United Synagogue in England, and more. The department conducts various activities with these organizations and organizes regional conferences for rabbis in Germany, Poland and France.
- In addition to the conferences, the department also hold "shabatons" retreats, as well as special activities for the holidays, such as Tu B'Shvat *seders*, Independence Day celebrations and Jerusalem Day events. This past year, for example, rabbis from South Africa came to Israel on Independence Day to mark Israel's 70th anniversary, and a big conference (attended by 2000 people) was held on Jerusalem Day, in cooperation with the Eretz Hemda Institute.

Publications:

- The department has dozens of publications in many languages, such as the Passover Haggadah for children in 21 languages, enabling Jewish children from all over the world to have a meaningful Seder experience and increase their sense of identification with the Jewish people and the State of Israel.
- The department produced additional educational kits, including the Independence Day kit for Israel's 70th anniversary; a booklet titled *120 Years to the First Zionist Congress*, which describe events and figures related to Zionism, and was translated into a number of languages, as well as many other publications distributed to Jewish communities throughout the world.
- *Shlichim* in the Diaspora: The department sends two types of shlichim: long-term *shlichim* (the Ben Ami program), in which young men with some religious background, who have finished their military service, are sent to serve as informal educators in small communities. These *shlichim* work under the auspices of the local rabbis, assisting them in various activities: in kindergartens, schools and Sunday Schools, synagogues, retirement homes, etc. the Ben Ami *shlichim* are the core of the Sowing Zionism project - one of the WZO's largest projects of the WZO, which is constantly expanding.

Brief *shaliach* missions for the holidays - young *shlichim* who are sent to small European communities for the High Holidays and Passover.

Special Events:

- The center also organizes other projects such as the Siddur party, a poster competition for Independence Day and it established a Jewish-Zionist library that is open and accessible to the public.

Finally, Rabbi Wasserman said that his department is committed to do its best to strengthen Jewish communities and spread Zionism all over the world, in collaboration with all the other WZO departments.

Dimitry Shiglik, Plenary Chair, thanked Rabbi Wasserman and added that Rabbi Kook serves as a role model for Jewish Zionism, which realizes Jewish values in its way of life.

Dror Morag, Head of the Zionist Enterprises Department, explained that his department was new to the organization and was established recently. The department participated in a strategic process in order to decide on its focus, and it was decided to concentrate on the future goals of Israeli society: social reform, narrowing the gaps and fulfilling Herzl's vision of a model society. The department aspires to work for *tikkun olam*, while discussing Israeli society's significant issues - rights, democracy, treatment of minorities and the periphery. The department has a small staff that works to create projects in this spirit and assists other institutions in the organization, such as the Zionist Archives and the Bialik Institute. The Zionist Archives are being upgraded and revamped – this change will include improving the

employees' terms and conditions, raising funds for activities and strengthening infrastructures.

The Bialik Institute - a publishing house for quality books under the responsibility of the WZO, is undergoing a significant reform, which will promote the status of the publishing house and the distribution of its products.

The department also works for the *Magshimim* movements: In addition to transferring their earmarked budget (approx. \$ 1 million), the department decided to invest in them additional funds and to promote their activities through various projects, such as:

A social network the *Magshimim* movement's graduates in Israel that stays in touch with them and assists them in their absorption in Israel, and The International Bible Quiz for Adults – planned to take place in December 2019. The adults' quiz is under the department's responsibility and will be held in Israel every two years, in addition to the quiz held in Israel, continental quizzes will be held throughout 2019 and the winners will participate in the International Quiz held in Israel and produced by the Ministry of Education. The Bible Quiz for Adults is intended for all Jewish denominations - Orthodox, Reform and Conservative – therefor it can be considered as an expression of a new spirit.

In addition to these projects, the department also set up a social accelerator - a term borrowed from the high-tech industry, aimed at inducing social change. In the framework of the accelerator, a request for proposals was sent out, inviting entrepreneurs to propose projects to empower disadvantaged population groups, strengthen democratic values and lead social change. Hundreds of entrepreneurs responded to the invitation and 30 ideas were selected for projects that could change Israeli society. The department provided the entrepreneurs who were chosen with training to help them develop their ideas, some even received a grant, and all of them set out on their missions with an adequate basis and tools.

One example is the initiative of a young woman named Nurit who wanted to organize an employment fair for people with disabilities. The entrepreneur, who received training and a modest grant (\$ 8,000) from the department, managed to recruit all of Israel's major corporations and organized a conference at The Tel Aviv University called *Mlai Mugbal* (literally translated as limited inventory, a play on words for the Hebrew word for disabled). Hundreds of people attended it, and important organizations and companies (such as Amdocs, Tnuva, Strauss, the Ministry of Education, etc.) participated, offering people with disabilities employment opportunities. It was a great success and hopefully it will be further implemented in other places.

It is important to note that the department does not manage these projects, but rather sets the social process in motion by providing entrepreneurs with the tools to create social initiatives.

Additional examples include projects for the integration of Haredim in the employment market, an initiative connecting the elderly with young people, and an annual leadership course for adolescents from the Ethiopian community, held in four disadvantaged neighborhoods in Israel (Kiryat Moshe in Rehovot, Jesse Cohen in Holon, Atikot in Ashkelon, Amidar in Nahariya). One hundred Ethiopian teenagers from these neighborhoods attend courses on leadership and Zionism throughout the year and strengthen their Ethiopian heritage alongside the Zionist heritage and the Zionist vision.

At the end of the course, the department's staff went on a six-day tour of Ethiopia with a group of teenagers. The tour included visits to big cities, as well as visits to transit camps, where many people are waiting to make Aliyah. The tour participants were both Israeli teenagers from the Ethiopian community as well as non-Ethiopian Israelis, and its aim was to expose young Israelis to the Ethiopian community and to expand the Zionist ethos so that it would not only include trips to Poland but to other places as well.

This fascinating and empowering journey also included some moving encounters with the Ethiopian Jews living in the transit camps, who feel a strong connection to Israel. Some of them have spent more than 20 years in the camps, and Mr. Morag said that they should be allowed to make Aliyah and that they should not be discriminated against, and their Aliyah should not be restricted.

Another project focuses on the Declaration of Independence and its values. The project's program, which discusses the Declaration of Independence's values, is taught for 18 months in 300 classrooms in high schools all over Israel.

The Department's current activities include the continuation and expansion of existing projects, as well as two new projects:

- Establishing volunteer centers across the globe as part of the TEN project, which is held in collaboration with the Jewish Agency. This project provides an opportunity for young Jews from Israel and the Diaspora to take part and volunteer in various *tikkun olam* ventures. Many of the project's participants ultimately decide to make Aliyah, and a new center is being set up in Mitzpeh Ramon, where young Jews from Israel and the Diaspora will come to do social volunteer work. The first volunteers will be arriving in March and will stay at the center for a few months, and volunteer in the community and in nearby places.

- "Discovering America" - a project designed to bring Israel closer to the North America, so that Israelis would get to know the different Jewish communities and denominations in the United States. The project is tailored for senior Israeli officials (mayors and deputy ministers, directors-general of government ministries etc.) who will be trained in Israel and then travel to the United States to meet with Diaspora Jewry and get to know the different denominations from up close.

- A Television Series on Zionism for teens: The Department produced, together with the Ministry of Education and IETV (Israel Educational Television), a 30-episode series on Zionism. Each episode is centered around an item found in the Zionist Archives or elsewhere and talks about Zionist history in a humorous way that appeals to a younger audience. The series has high ratings, and everyone is invited to watch it on IETV.

Plenary No. 13 - Closure of the Session

Renato Beckerman, Plenary Chair, greeted his partners to the presidium and all those present. Growing up in a Zionist home in Brazil, he was in the *Hashomer Hatzair* youth movement and today he is a delegate to the Zionist Congress and the General Council. He expressed his excitement and thanked the Zionist movement for the revolution it has brought to the Jewish word, and then invited Helena Glaser, Chairperson of the General Council.

Helena Glaser, Chair of the Zionist General Council, concluded the session and noted that the program was decided on based on requests from members of the Zionist General Council. She spoke of the visit to the Druze sector – Peki'in and Hurfeish – and how it was an important experience and thanked the conference staff and noted that the departments' activity reports and the materials for distribution will be available.

Eli Cohen, Director-General of the World Zionist Organization, briefly summed up the past three special days titled Building a Nation, which included meetings with our Druze brothers, Justice Dorner, journalists, Knesset members and federation heads. A new constitution was agreed upon, we heard from the incoming Chair of the Jewish Agency and parted from the former. Finally, he thanked all the members of the executive who cooperated and contributed, following a complex and lengthy process, to the session's success, and the chair of the executive for his friendship and personal and professional backing throughout.

Avraham Duvdevani, Chairman of the WZO, joined the congratulations and praised the Chair of the Zionist General Council and Eli Cohen, in particular, for orchestrating the conference and the processes that led up to it. The Zionist movement has undergone real change in recent years. Eight years ago the WZO operated with no budget, no agenda, no work program, and now, with great effort and the help of the Executive, the General Council and the Congress, the movement is alive and kicking, it has a vision and a constitution and it functions better than any other organization in the national institutions. The day after the last congress, the members of the Executive met at the youth village in Nitzana, to discuss the significance of the Zionist movement today and formulate a work plan. The members of the Executive came to an understanding that they must act to instill Zionism in Israel and the Diaspora, but to do so without competing with similar organizations, so it was decided to establish three units, among them the Unit for Promoting Aliyah and the Hebrew Unit. The Zionist movement realized that it had to work to promote Aliyah, and when the Jewish Agency stopped being active in this field, we decided to take up the issue. And indeed, the

Department for Aliyah Promotion is now a very active department. As for the Hebrew language, we came to the conclusion that there was a need to reinforce Hebrew among schoolchildren in the Diaspora, as well as among Jewish leadership and Jews in general. We considered this to be a Jewish Zionist mission, and have succeeded in promoting it: The Council for Hebrew Language and Culture was established in the United States, and it holds annual conferences and grants awards to a key figure promoting Hebrew language and culture. The Hebrew Teachers Association was also founded in North America, with a membership of 1,000 teachers who teach Hebrew in schools and in various settings. In addition, we also hold seminars for Hebrew teachers in different location worldwide and send 220 *morim-shlichim* to schools in the Diaspora. All this came about thanks to the WZO's hard and earnest work, and we have no intention to let the Jewish Agency re-enter this field.

Mr. Duvdevani emphasized that all the Hebrew activity is the product the WZO's serious work and sought the support of the members of the Zionist General Council to continue their activities on the subject, even if the Jewish Agency says that it once again wishes to be in charge of Hebrew-teaching.

After singing *Hatikva*, the Zionist General Council Session was closed.

Zionist General Council Participants

Zionist Executive

Alex Kagan	Alex Selsky	Arnon Giladi
Aviad Oshri	David Ben Naeh	David Breakstone
Debbie Ben Ami	Dina Hahn	Dr. David Korenfeld
Dror Morag	Eliezer Sandberg	Ellen Hershkin
Esther Mor	Gael Grunewald	Gary Zaltzman
Gil Segal	Gilad Kariv	Gusti Yehoshua Braverman
Jacques Kupfer	Jesse Sultanik	Marina Koritny
Masha Lubelsky	Mauricio Balter	Nathan Sharansky
Nerya Meir	Oria Caspi	Rabbi Yehiel Wasserman
Sergio Edelstein	Shimon Sousan	Silvio Joskowicz
Steven Stav	Yaakov Hagoel	Yaron Shavit
Yizhar Hess		

Honorary Fellows

Chaim Meguri Cohen	Dalya Levy	Paula Edelshtein
Philip Meltzer	Yigal Zachor	

Zionist General Council Members with Voting Rights

Arzenu

Arielle Bouaniche	Deborah Blausten	Dekel Houmash
Jack Luxemburg	Joshua Weinberg	Lea Anna Muehlstein
Mark Samuel Anshan	Marla Gamoran	Michael Laufer
Mili Haber	Miriam Pearlman	Reeva Forman
Steven Bob	William Hess	Yair Lootsteen
Zoe Dressner		

B'nai B'rith**Alan Schneider****Eden Naftali Adler**

Michael Nathan

Batsheva Schwartz**Elana Heideman**

Valerie Achache

Daniel Greats

Ira Bartfield

Confederation

Jim Schiller

Simon Klarfeld

Michael Chlenov

Salomon Louis Vas Dias

Hadassh

Elizabeth Alpert

Marcie Natan

Judy Shereck

Marlene Edith Post

Leah Reicin

Orly Tamir

Hanoar Hatzioni**Henry Akerman Roterman**

Nisan Cialic

Herut

Gaston Binyamin Sayada

Roi Abekasis

Kadima-Over the Rainbow

Netanel Teitelbaum

Zvi Ammar

Kulanu

Assaf Yossef Damari

Sahar Pinto

Mazal Ayubi

Rivka Balistra

Lavi Olami

Ilan Roth

Nachi Eyal

Maccabi Olami

Carlos Alberto Tapiero

Ofir Shinhertz**Rodney Sonders**

Stella Syrkin

Zvi Raviv

Masorti Olami

Alan Silberman

Alejandro Simon Bloch

Gillian Caplin

Hannah Burnett

Mary H. Sanders

Mercaz Olami

Alan Silverstein

David Sefton

Dr. Marilyn Gail Lishnoff Wind

Edgardo Daniel Band

Janet Tobin

John Fuestenberg

Marion Mayman

Sandy Renee Starkman

Tehila Reuben

Na'amat

Rochelle (Chellie) Goldwater Wilensky

Clarice Schucman Jozsef

Doris Wexler

Galia Woloch

Shirli Shavit

Ohavey Zion

Rubi Shemesh

Shalom Kabessa

Shifi Sananes

Yehuda Shteinberger

The Student Delegation

Avigayil Benshtein

Krupman Avi

Navah Edelstein

Robert Jonathan Snyder

Samantha Miretzky

The Zionist Council in Israel

Ata Pharchat

Irit Ahdoot

Yigal Bibi

Yosef Nasaradin

Yossi Tzadok

Wizo

Ester Mor

Halpern Liana

Helena Glaser

Janine Gelley

Prof. Rivka Lazovsky

Zohar Shalhevet

World Emunah

Carole Golding	Frieda I. Ross	Michelle (Mindy) Stein
Tamar Rabin-Laufer	Tammy KLAUSNER	

World Israel Beytenu Movement

Alon Shahr	Dmitry Shiglik	Ksenia Dobron
Mikhail Yudanin	Tsipi Manheimer	Yehudit Prisman

World Likud

Aryeh Habani	Avi Harari	Chezi Eini
Danny Lew	Dor Harlap	Elizabeth Berney
Fabio Andre Rosenfeld	Juliet Lasker	Kevin Ross
Mati Itzhak	Nicolay Amiel Trzhascal	Nili Nehorai
Pinchas Feinberg	Shalom Edri	Vicky Cittone
Yifat Ovadia	Yves Hazout	

World Mizrachi

Avraham Batito	Deborah Isaac	Doron Peretz
Francine Stein	Harvey Blitz	Idit Silman
Jack Kahn	Karma Feinstein Cohen	Maxine Piczenik
Solly Sacks	Sondra Sokal	Yifa Segal

Zeev Shvarzt**World Organization of Orthodox Communities and Synagogues**

Amiad Taub	Avraham Ben-Nun	Itzhak Dahan
Rafi Ostroff	Yifat Raphael	

World Sephardi Federation

Albert Levy	Andre Derhy	Angel Calderon
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Haim Cohen

Jacqueline Schwartz

Liliane Shalom

Meir Kahlon

Moise Amselem

World Union for Progressive Judaism**Andrew Keene**

Carole Sterling

Eyal Ronder**Miriam Olchansky**

Rabbi Daniel Freeland

World Union of Meretz

Alain Grabarz

David Dormont

David Teitelbaum

Efrat Levy

Renato Bekerman**Tamara Kasztan****Yesh Atid**

Na'ama Schultz

Tova Dofman

Vladimir Beliak

Zohar Blum

Zionist Union

Amir Nachshon

Arieh Azoulay

Avi Koriat

Barak Hadrian

Binyamin Boblil

Dalia Hibner

David Berson

Efrat Katash

Haya Cohen

Michael Dahan

Patricia Tiomno Tolmasquim

Tal Elovitz

Federations Heads

Dr. Danny Lamm

Artem Kobzan

Karina Sapolinsky

Giuseppe Franchetti

Paul Charney

Sergio Pikholtz

Richard Heideman

Bretholz Simon

Ben Swartz

Judit Kardi

Alberto Bierman Levy

Beny Zlochisty Burakoff

Oscar Kleinkopf

Robert Zbili

Leslie Rothschild

Natalia Schmidt

Marcel Engelmayer

Names appearing in bold are the Deputy Members who replaced absent members during a session

Participants in an Advisory Capacity

WZO Director General		Eli Cohen
Secretary of the Zionist Executive		Reuben Shalom
Zionist Supreme Court Members		Rena Shashua Hasson
		Shoshana Berman
Comptroller of the World Zionist Organization		Steven Stav
Legal Advisor		Adv. Fern Braniss
Professional Leadership		
Dov Barel-Gottesman	Dov Bergman	Eran Berkowitz
Haim Ben Nazraf	Itzchak Shtiglitz	Mark Dovev
Moshe Preisler	Yaniv Nachmias	Nava Amidi Dagul
Tzofia Dimant-Yossef	Uri Zaki	Yaakov Aharoni

Zionist General Council Bureau

Director of the ZGC Anna Givati

Staff

Bracha Cohen	Nava Avisar
Gila Ansel Brauner	Haya Yaakov
Itzkin Yaakov	Malka Festinger
Meira Azenkot	Ronit Bash
Sahlom Dotan	

LL"N

Ariel Weisel Shlomit Atun