

**DRAFT RESOLUTION PROPOSALS
TO THE ZIONIST CONGRESS XXXVII**

COMMITTEE #3: INGATHERING OF THE EXILES



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1 COMMITTEE #3: INGATHERING OF THE EXILES

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3.1. Aliyah and Absorption; Education (1)

*Submitted by Eliezer Shefer, World Organization of Orthodox Communities
and Synagogues in Israel and the Diaspora*

Whereas the Jewish Agency for Israel no longer maintains the Department for Aliyah and Absorption and the Authority for Jewish Education in the Diaspora; and

Whereas the World Zionist Organization is not directly involved with Aliyah to Israel and immigrant absorption; and

Whereas the Government of Israel maintains the Ministry for Aliyah and Immigrant Absorption; and

Whereas the Jewish Agency, with the Government of Israel's consent, is encouraging public bodies, such as "Nefesh BeNefesh" to engage directly in **Aliyah** and **Absorption**,

The Zionist Congress XXXVII resolves:

1. That the World Zionist Organization addresses great importance to public involvement and activism of public bodies in the Aliyah and absorption of new immigrants;
2. The World Zionist Organization shall coordinate its activity to promote and strengthen Zionist awareness and commitment among the formal and informal Jewish education systems in the Diaspora.

3.2. Aliyah and Absorption; Education (2)

*Submitted by Eliezer Shefer, World Organization of Orthodox Communities
and Synagogues in Israel and the Diaspora*

Whereas the National Institutions are no longer involved in Aliyah and Absorption; and

Whereas Aliyah to Israel is the most elevated form of fulfillment of the Zionist vision in practice,

The Zionist Congress XXXVII resolves:

1. To assist the Zionist youth movements educating towards Aliyah and Hagshama;
2. To encourage the voluntary organizations, such as "Nefesh BeNefesh," and assist them in broadening their activity into additional countries and regions around the world.

3.3. Aliyah from France

*Submitted by Eliezer Shefer and David Ben Naeh,
World Organization of Orthodox Communities and Synagogues in Israel and the Diaspora*

Whereas we are fortunate to be witnessing an ongoing rise in the growth of Aliyah from France; and

Whereas cultural and community absorption of new immigrants forms a very important component in the successful absorption of olim,

The Zionist Congress XXXVII resolves:

1. To train male and female students from France studying at educational institutions and universities in Israel as social and community absorption activists for French olim;
2. To operate a central information call-in center and media channels especially for new immigrants from France.

3.4. Enhancement of Activity to Promote Aliyah

Submitted by World Likud

Whereas the number of olim has been dropping annually in recent years; and
Whereas the Zionist movement's very right to existence depends on the promotion of Aliyah;
 and
Whereas Aliyah must be restored to its place as the central issue in Zionist activity; and
Whereas Aliyah must be restored on the public agenda; and
Whereas there is a Jewish majority in the State of Israel and it is imperative to reinforce this trend,

The Zionist Congress XXXVII resolves as follows:

1. The Congress calls to set the bringing of Jews on Aliyah from all the countries of the Diaspora as a primary task.
2. The Congress calls upon the Zionist Executive to redouble its efforts in every sphere of Aliyah promotion, with an emphasis on the education and absorption of olim (new immigrants).
3. The Congress determines that Aliyah promotion must become the central issue in WZO activities.
4. The Congress calls upon the Zionist Executive to intensify its activities towards Aliyah promotion, particularly on campus, and in cooperation with communities in the Diaspora.
5. The Congress calls upon the Zionist Executive and the Israel Government to encourage the return of yordim (returning residents) to Israel and to act to curb the brain drain of Israelis to the Diaspora.
6. The Congress calls upon the Israel Government to establish an Aliyah and Absorption cabinet.
7. The Congress calls upon the Government of Israel to declare next year as Aliyah and Absorption year.
8. The Congress calls upon the Israel government to establish an annual "Aliyah and Absorption Day" in the calendar.

3.5. Ingathering of the Exiles

Submitted by Asher Ben Shlomo, Member of the Zionist General Council

Whereas the Israel Chief Rabbinate does not recognize orthodox rabbis in the Diaspora and, in many cases, rejects the Jewishness of converts and Jews according to Halachah; and
Whereas the definition of who is a Jew in the Law of Return does not recognize the Jewishness of American Reform members, given that the Reform Movement in the USA determines that a Jew may be born of a Jewish mother or a Jewish father, which is in contradiction of the accepted orthodox Halachah that supposedly recognizes the Jewishness solely of someone born to a Jewish mother, despite the fact that rabbinical courts in the State of Israel conduct marriages between halachically Jewish people and Karaites who have returned to observant Judaism without undergoing conversion, while Karaite Judaism, as opposed to orthodox Judaism, determines that a Jew is someone born to a Jewish father; and
Whereas the Law on Shoah (Holocaust) Memorial Day recognizes the Jewishness of all those persecuted by the Nazis, before and during the Second World War, who were sent to the ghettos and extermination camps after having been designated as Jews under the Nuremberg laws which determined that a Jew is someone whose three grandparents are Jewish. This is a matter of recognition of the Jewishness of six million Shoah victims of Jewish origin, despite the fact that this definition is not consistent with the definition of 'Who is a Jew' under the Law of Return; and

Whereas the Amendment to the Law of Return in 1971 recognizes the children and grandchildren of Jews on the paternal side as being of Jewish origin, and therefore as eligible to make Aliyah to Israel under the Law of Return, despite the fact that such a person is not considered Jewish from the religious perspective in accordance with orthodox Halachah,

The Zionist Congress XXXVII resolves:

That it is imperative to call upon the Jewish Agency to promote large scale activity in Israel and the Diaspora to foster the national and Israeli unity of the Jewish people, as defined under 'Who is a Jew' in the Law on Shoah Memorial Day, which allows all those eligible to make Aliyah under the Law of Return to be considered Jews from the cultural perspective, to the same extent that Egyptian citizens are considered Arabs from the cultural perspective – i.e., not based on religious considerations – and particularly in the present time, when Hareidi Judaism rejects the Jewishness of Reform Judaism, and Orthodox Judaism rejects Karaite Judaism. In an era of national disintegration based on religious considerations, it is incumbent upon the Zionist Congress to renew a broad-based unity across the entire Jewish people that is based solely on cultural considerations; this, in order to promote social justice within Israeli society for all those eligible under the Law of Return who are the offspring of the citizens of ancient Israel in the United Kingdom of Israel, as established by King David.

3.6. Hebrew Language #2

Submitted by the AMERICAN ZIONIST MOVEMENT

Whereas Hebrew is the living language of the Jewish people and the State of Israel;

Whereas the next generation of youth and youth leadership engage with Hebrew and Hebrew culture in the context of relationships with role models, especially those individuals who enhance the young person's capacity for identification; and

Whereas graduates of both long and short term programs to Israel are looking to continue their engagement with Israel, Hebrew and Hebrew culture; and

Whereas the Zionist youth movements are both a historical and contemporary source for leadership, peer-to-peer outreach, and Aliyah; and

Whereas we note the important role played by the World Zionist Organization in supporting Shlichim to the Zionist youth movements and other frameworks that support Hebrew education for children, youth and young adults;

The Zionist Congress XXXVII resolves:

1. The World Zionist Organization ensure that the framework of shlichim to youth movements and otherwise, will remain active and will be a part of the Zionist Program in North America and other regions; and
2. The World Zionist Organization provide sufficient funding to enable the program of Shlichim to youth movements and otherwise maintain its current or increased level of activity; and
3. The World Zionist Organization direct its departments and partners to expand its outreach towards immigrants to serve as shlichim to their prior communities to facilitate relationship building, the identification of young people with the shlichim, and encourage Aliyah.

3.7. Aliyah

Submitted by the AMERICAN ZIONIST MOVEMENT

Whereas Aliyah is a historic and central tenet of Zionism and the Jerusalem Program;

Whereas Aliyah is often the result of a series of experiences and exposures to Israel, as well as Hebrew and Hebrew Culture, and growing commitment to the Jewish People;

Whereas local leaders in schools, camps, congregations and communities are often a critical point of contact for many considering deeper engagement with Israel or Aliyah;

Whereas this past year has been a historic year for Aliyah, with more than half of the new immigrants coming from the West and the United States seeing an increase of 8% in the number of new immigrants;

Whereas North American Jews are seeking to bring their talents and skills to further the building of the Jewish State and seek purpose and meaning in their lives; and

Whereas many programs already exist to support individuals to increase their engagement with Israel through long-term programs, study abroad, or work and internships in Israel that further expose them to life in the Jewish State; and

Whereas various governmental and non-governmental programs already exist to support both Aliyah and successful absorption,

The Zionist Congress XXXVII resolves:

1. The World Zionist Organization develop a strategic plan to build partnerships and collaborations with local, regional and national organizations in Jewish communities worldwide to further the goal of Aliyah;
2. The World Zionist Organization provide sufficient funding to create marketing materials and training for communal lay and professional leaders that bring the various programs and benefits available to new immigrants to the grassroots level.
3. The World Zionist Organization develop marketing materials built on stories of a diverse group of prior immigrants designed to inspire Jews and to teach them about the accomplishments of *olim* from their country of residence and highlight what they have to give to Israel and not just the benefits they can receive.

3.8. Absorption of Ethiopian Jews

Submitted by the Zionist Council in Israel

Whereas serious deficiencies were recently revealed in the absorption of Ethiopian Jews and their integration into Israeli society; and

Whereas the Zionist movement advocates unity of all the people of Israel in equality and justice, in the spirit of Jewish tradition,

The Zionist Congress XXXVII resolves:

1. To develop special programs and activities for the integration of Ethiopian Jews into Israeli society, and through the assistance of projects that will act to enhance Zionist awareness among Ethiopian Jews and enhance Ethiopian Jewish heritage in Israeli society.
2. To train activists from the Ethiopian community on the Zionist Council in Israel.

3.9. Recognition of the Secular-Cultural Stream of Judaism

Submitted by the World Meretz Union Faction

Whereas numerous works of research point to a constant growth in the alienation of young generations in Diaspora Jewry from a commitment to Israel; and

Whereas the Zionist movement, from the days of Binyamin Zeev Herzl to our times, has been a pluralistic movement which recognizes the fact that there is room for different opinions and positions, and even grants unique allocations to these movements; and

Whereas the State of Israel is a Jewish State of all its citizens, in its cultural and historic essence, and its democratic character; and

Whereas among Israel and Diaspora Jewry there are many whose lifestyle draws upon the values and traditions of Judaism and upon the history of Jewish the Jewish people, in manners consistent with their outlook,

The Zionist Congress XXXVII resolves:

To recognize the Secular-Cultural Stream of Judaism, including the granting of an allocation to this stream.

3.10. Recognition of the Sephardi Haredi Stream

Submitted by Members of the Ohavei Zion Faction

Whereas, in the Constitution of the Zionist movement, it mentions on a number of occasions – both in the Jerusalem Program (Article 2, point #3) (as well as in Article 2A) that there should be respect for the multi-faceted nature of the Jewish people; and

Whereas the Ohavei Zion movement – the Sephardi Haredi Zionist movement – represents an important stream in Israel and the world; and

Whereas at the only elections that were held worldwide in the USA, it was proven that a large Sephardi Haredi public participated in the elections,

The Zionist Congress resolves:

1. To recognize the Sephardi Haredi stream for all purposes and intents.
2. That the Zionist Executive shall budget allocations for the Sephardi Haredi stream.

3.11. Olim from the former USSR: Jewish Advocacy

*Submitted by Amiad Taub, World Organization of Orthodox Communities
and Synagogues in Israel and the Diaspora*

Whereas statistics indicate that the number of converts to Judaism among immigrants from the former USSR who are entitled to immigrate under the Law of Return is significantly lower than among all other Aliyot; and

Whereas the Jewishness of the olim is very important to the future of the Jewish people,

The Zionist Congress XXXVII resolves:

1. To train young Jewish activists from the former USSR and Israel to promote Jewish advocacy in the former USSR.
2. To send out students after training into high schools in the FSU, for the purpose of conducting advocacy there on the importance of Jewish conversion.

3.12. Olim from the former USSR: Conversion

*Submitted by Amiad Taub, World Organization of Orthodox Communities
and Synagogues in Israel and the Diaspora*

Whereas statistics show that the number of converts to Judaism among immigrants from the former USSR who are entitled to immigrate under the Law of Return is significantly lower than among all other Aliyot; and

Whereas the subject of Conversion is hotly disputed in the State of Israel

Whereas the Jewishness of the olim is very important to the future of the Jewish people,

The Zionist Congress XXXVII resolves:

1. To establish a Conversion Committee under the auspices of the Congress incorporating all the Rabbis of the organizations and the orthodox Unions.
2. This committee shall present its recommendations within six months on how to increase Conversion among olim from the FSU.

3.13. Conversion in Accordance with the Laws of the State of Israel and Government Decisions

Submitted Members of the Ohavei Zion Faction

Whereas the true significance of a conversion request is primarily human and religious, a person desiring to convert because he or she feels a sense of belonging to the Jewish people, its Torah and heritage; and

Whereas the statistics disseminated in the media are inaccurate: according to the Statistical Yearbook, from the year 2000 through today, 231,000 olim are not of the Jewish religion, 100,000 of whom are elderly, so that the relatively young population with a potential for conversion amounts to under 100,000; and

Whereas the Israel Democracy Institute, in its latest research, has brought data on thousands of people that refute the statistics being disseminated, and there are other works of research besides; and

Whereas, each year, there are an additional 6,000 olim who are not Jewish; and

Whereas, every year, there are 2,000 conversions, primarily of women of childbearing age; and

Whereas it is imperative to do everything possible through unity and love of Israel, and prevent divisions within the people,

The Zionist Congress XXXVII resolves:

1. To accept the statistics as they appear in the Statistical Yearbook from the IDI's research.
2. To work for unity in the people and prevent divisions and conflicts of interest between sectors of the people.
3. To work to encourage olim to undergo the conversion process, primarily for young people, and to assist the government entities in the implementation of this important task.
4. To increase the number of activities to enhance Jewish identity and teaching Jewish heritage among the olim.
5. To ensure that courses in Judaism and Zionism are provided prior to their Aliyah to Israel, as part of Aliyah preparation, as well as asking them on arrival in Israel to express their opinion as to whether they wish to convert.