

**Proceedings of the  
Zionist General Council 37/3**

The WZO Constitution  
and the Zionist Movement

**Submitted to the  
37/4 ZIONIST GENERAL COUNCIL**

**October- November 2017**

## **Meeting of the Presidium of the Zionist General Council XXXVII/3**

**Helena Glaser, Chair:** I express my apologies for late arrival, welcome those present to the Presidium of the Zionist General Council and invite them to view the scenery of the Jerusalem hills. I hope this will be an interesting, challenging and productive Zionist General Council with many disagreements, as experienced during the course of its preparation.

I wish to return your attention to the 120th anniversary celebrations of the First Zionist Congress at Mount Herzl, attended by the Israeli Prime Minister and thousands of participants, including youngsters. It was a most memorable event and it presented intricate organizational challenges: it brought together people from all the streams of Judaism who cooperated to make it happen and stood together in song: a truly heart-warming experience.

I wish to thank Eli Cohen for his logistical organization of this complex event, which was successful and had a positive outcome. To quote Karma Feinstein Cohen, if one says that the Almighty is found in the tiniest details, everything worked smoothly – from the most complicated aspect to the minutiae – in perfect synchrony and order. Congratulations to you and all the team, it was an uplifting event and impressive in every way.

Since we were unable to complete the discussion of all the resolution proposals from the committees at the last Zionist Congress, it was resolved to review all the proposals this year. The previous Zionist General Council session was dedicated to the theme of the 120th anniversary of the birth of the Zionist movement, which is why it was decided to address the review this year. The material we bring you is not perfect: each year we can improve on the past, submit new resolution proposals and add materials towards the following Council session.

This year, over and beyond the central theme of the Jubilee of the Reunification of Jerusalem, we shall also be addressing the theme of the Constitution within the Zionist movement: we will begin the voting process on the resolution proposals tomorrow. This will be preceded by an instructional briefing from the Legal Advisor on the subject of due and orderly procedure in accordance with the WZO Constitution.

Tzahi Hanegbi, the Minister for Regional Cooperation and former Minister of Justice has been invited to attend. We had wanted to invite a current Minister of Justice to address insights on the constitutional issue, but Minister Ayelet Shaked was unfortunately unable to accept, due to other commitments.

There are two committees, which more or less represent the table here today: the Inner Executive and the Outer Executive, which is also present here today in full: both met on a number of occasions, until

the materials as presented here were all approved. I would especially like to thank Attorney Fern Braniss whose encyclopedic knowledge of the World Zionist Organization's Constitution, professional assistance and first class legal counsel remain unmatched.

**Mikhail Chlenov:** I represent here not only Russia or the Commonwealth of States (FSU) but also the Confederation faction. The Confederation is an issue of great importance – it was once a kind of grouping within the World Zionist Organization and very important in terms of certain regions, including the FSU and Latin America, because it is the faction of the General Zionists, without political affiliation to politics, political parties and all of that.

**Eli Cohen:** Welcomes the two young female members from the Reform Movement and wishing them every success. Gives a brief outline of the planned tour of the Kotel Tunnels after the Plenary, but emphasizes that the issue of major importance is the Constitution and if it proves necessary to prolong the discussion after dinner to enable members to speak, the Plenary will resume, even at the expense of the tour.

**Subject: Incoming and Outgoing Members**

Maccabi – **Ofir Shinhertz**, as deputy member of the Zionist General Council in the case of a vacancy.

MERCAZ – **Nola Lazar**, as deputy member of the Zionist General Council in the case of a vacancy and

**Sandy Starkman** as incoming member instead of **Ariela Rosemberg**, who has resigned.

Bnai Brith – **Tzila Shalom** as incoming member of the Zionist General Council instead of **Ruth Bessekri**, who has resigned, and **Eden Naftali Adler** as incoming member of the Zionist General Council instead of **Felicia Waldman**, who has resigned.

Naamat – **Doris Wexler** as incoming member of the Zionist General Council instead of **Sarah Morgan-Beutel**, who has resigned.

Hanoar Hatzion – **Gabriel Schack** as incoming member of the Zionist General Council instead of **Bendeguz Moldovan**, who has resigned.

Arzenu – **Reeva Forman** as incoming member of the Zionist General Council instead of **Antony Arkin**, who has resigned; **Mallory Kahn-Johnston** as deputy member in the case of a vacancy and **Omri Stark** as deputy member in the case of a vacancy.

Meretz – **Simon Wasserman** as deputy member in the case of a vacancy.

Hadassah – **Sue Polansky** as deputy member in the case of a vacancy.

Over the Rainbow – **Zvi Avisar** as incoming member of the Zionist General Council instead of **Assaf Barr**, who has resigned.

World Mizrahi – **Itzhak Dei** as incoming member of the Zionist General Council instead of **André Elmalek**, who passed away.

WUJS – **Samantha Miretzky** as deputy member in the case of a vacancy.

Kulanu (We're All Zionists) – Adv. **Sahar Pinto** as a member of the Zionist General Council and member of the Presidium instead of **Shalom HaLevi**, who has resigned.

WIZO – **Zohar Shalhevet** as incoming member of the Zionist General Council instead of **Beto Maya**, who has resigned and **Liana Halpern** as incoming member of the Zionist General Council instead of **Shani Moshe**, who has resigned.

All the above exchanges of members were approved.

**Dario Teitelbaum:** Reports that on the previous evening, the International Council of World Zionist Movements met for the first time, an initiative developed by Karma Feinstein and Sergio Edelstein, led by Danny Liberant from Mexico. This Jewish Zionist event was attended by all the youth movements.

**Helena Glaser, Chair:** The voting system at the Council will not be electronic: every Council member will have a voting card, as in previous sessions. The system will be to proceed to vote on issues appearing in the Constitution that have not been in dispute.

In relation to following three issues there will be **no vote**: individual membership, elections and mandates: the floor will be open for discussion. I request that any proposals that are prepared be brought to the next session of the Council; the Committee will address all the proposals brought to it, work on the drafting and submit them for approval.

**Adv. Fern Braniss:** Explanation of the quorum requirement to vote on a constitutional amendment: at least one half of all the members of the Zionist General Council are required to be present in the hall. Of the 187 members, 94 are required to be in the hall at every plenary meeting. Numbers have been rounded upward. Members of the Zionist General Council hold the right to vote at all ballots. Of those present, there must be at least a two-thirds majority among those voting, both for a regular vote and a votum separatum; where a resolution is adopted by more than a two-thirds majority, the votum separatum requires the same majority.

**Lea Muehlstein:** Two questions for clarification. So my first note of clarification is regarding the issues that we wouldn't be voting on. I think it would be really important that we actually list which articles in the Constitution we're referring to, so that there is no doubt.

**Eli Cohen:** Everyone has received a copy of the existing Constitution, without the deletions, as well as the copy of the Constitution with the amendment proposals, with all the additions or deletions marked in two colors. The documents are available in both languages, for the purpose of clarity and ongoing reference.

**Lea Muehlstein:** My second question is about voting yes or no on the things that are not a votum separatum. Are we going to go through each insertion and deletion separately, not by article? Because I think that is going to make a difference, because sometimes we will agree to the first part of a change, but another part of the suggested change is not acceptable. And I think it's important that we entertain those separately.

**Adv. Fern Braniss:** It is possible to vote by section, at the judgment of the Chairman or the Committee Chair. There is also the option to submit a request to do so as a Point of Order.

**Eli Cohen:** A more detailed briefing will be given on the constitutional aspects and the issues presented for vote, but the Plenary Chairs have their authority – while you have the authority to agree or otherwise. An orderly and clear instruction session will explain how the proceedings should be conducted. We remain open to all options and the Legal Advisor will be obliged to furnish answers as required; when there is a Point of Order, there is also the Presidium, which is available specifically to address matters requiring any other decision.

**Helena Glaser, Chair:** Thank you to everyone, I declare this meeting closed.

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## **Plenary No. 1**

### **Opening, Greetings, Comptroller's Report**

**Dina Hahn:** As Plenary Chair extends a welcome to those present from the Holy City, where we celebrate the Jubilee of the city's reunification. Introduces the Chair of the Zionist General Council, Helena Glaser.

**Helena Glaser:** Opens by welcoming Mr. Avraham Duvdevani, Chairman of the World Zionist Organization, Mr. Yaakov Hagoel, Deputy and Vice-Chairman, and all those attending the Zionist General Council XXXVII/3. The present session is special because during the course of the year we are marking a number of significant dates in both the Israeli and Jewish calendar.

We are currently at the high point of the year marking the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First Zionist Congress. In two days' time, we will be commemorating the centenary of the Balfour Declaration, in a few months' time, we will celebrate the State of Israel's 70<sup>th</sup> Independence Day and it is not so long since we celebrated the Jubilee of the reunification of Jerusalem. There can be no doubt that events of such momentous importance to the entire Jewish world - and, may I say, to all of us - represent the fulfilment of the Zionist vision in its entirety.

Granted, the movement for the Return to Zion began well before the convening of the First Zionist Congress, but the Congress was intended to act as a foundation that would facilitate the implementation of Herzl's broader program to move towards a Jewish state, which he envisioned on two levels. At the political level – this would happen through placing the Jewish question on the national agenda and campaigning for support for the idea of a national homeland for the Jewish people among world Jewry. At the practical level, he sought to establish a number of institutions – first and foremost of these being the Zionist Organization and the Zionist General Council.

Twenty years later, on 2 November 1917, after intensive activity by the Zionist Organization, Dr. Chaim Weizmann and others, the Balfour Declaration was presented to Lord Rothschild, to be communicated to the World Zionist Organization. To quote part of the actual text:

*“I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations, which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.”*

Thirty years would pass between the Balfour Declaration and Israel's Declaration of Independence, during which the Jewish people were to suffer the terrible catastrophe of the *Shoah* (Holocaust). Only after such a horrendous tragedy, did the United Nations Assembly vote, on 29 November 1947, to end the British Mandate and adopt the Partition Plan, according to which a Jewish state was to be established. By the date of Israel's declaration of independence, thanks to the foresight of the Zionist Congress, the organizational infrastructure had already been set in place and a plethora of institutions joined forces to effect the creation of the State, bringing hundreds of thousands of *olim* and providing for their absorption. It would be another twenty years before Jerusalem was reunified: today, every member of the World Zionist Organization is obliged to accept the Jerusalem Program, with one of its focal components being the unity of the Jewish people, its bond to its historic homeland, *Eretz Yisrael*, and the centrality of the State of Israel and Jerusalem, its capital, in the life of the nation.

As mentioned previously, we organized a large number of events in Israel and worldwide to celebrate the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the First Zionist Congress and there are many more to come. Educational conferences, a society of excellence, Hebrew language, Aliyah promotion, rabbinical conferences, the campaign to counter Antisemitism, Zionist activity around the world and in Israel, to name but a few categories. And naturally, the main event at Mount Herzl with the participation of the Prime Minister of Israel, the Chairman of the WZO, members of the Zionist Executive and many others from Israel and around the world.

To my eyes, one of the most moving moments (of many) was to see and experience the tremendous work and Zionist achievement in a part of Israel that was desert only six years ago. Yet today, it is home to settlement and prosperous agricultural development, a vision that was brought to fulfilment by the Settlement Division.

Fellow members of the Zionist General Council, the world has changed and, whether we wish it or not, almost the only way to reach the young generation is via different channels from those that were customary in the past, with digital media representing the dominant means of communication, in technical terms.

However, over and beyond the technicalities, we need to do our utmost to convey a new message to the influx of new affiliates, and especially to the young generation. We find ourselves at a critical point in time where we are witnessing both a crisis of identity in some of the Zionist Federations and a crisis in connection to Israel. As a Zionist movement which has always envisioned outreach to all, it is incumbent upon us to do whatever we can to prevent the crisis deepening and to ensure a return to the spirit of solidarity and shared destiny.

The young generation is more distanced from the Israeli reality and, despite the existence of wonderful programs like *MASA* and *Birthright Israel*, such options reach only a relatively small proportion of participants and are not accessible to the entire young generation. Sadly, the subject of Antisemitism, which is a cause of great concern to the Zionist movements, and the reactions that Jewish students around the world experience alongside their fellow Jews, have contributed their tendency to lower their visibility and minimize their Jewishness. Many Jewish students have taken a courageous stance against expressions of Antisemitism, but not everyone is gifted with the ability, or the will, to do so. Some of these expressions of Antisemitism are directly linked to anti-Israeli sentiment and to the BDS movement, thus alienating part of the young generation.

The *Shoah* generation and its successor generation considered affiliation to Jewish organizations as almost a *sine qua non*. For Diaspora Jewry, the connection with the State of Israel formed part of the heritage to which they educated their children, whereas children in Israel grew up with understanding the connection with Diaspora Jewry as being of prime importance, because all the people of Israel is responsible for one another.

It is our duty to examine how we can promote this dialogue between Diaspora Jewry and the State of Israel and reach out to people, via every single department.

The Zionist movement comprises the various streams of Judaism, the World Unions, organizations, and many different movements, all with their own ideology and perspectives, but they all share a common goal. We are therefore obliged to find the middle road that will enable us all to live together as a united people, both in Israel and in the Diaspora.

As you know, the central theme of this General Council session is the subject of the Constitution. There is no doubt in my mind that a Constitution is important and vital to any organization, and the Congress charged the Council with adaptation of the Constitution to the contemporary era. Over the past few months, the members of the Constitution Committee have met on innumerable occasions. They are: Mr. Yaakov Hagoel, Rabbi Yehiel Wasserman, Mr. Yaron Shavit or his deputies – Dario Teitelbaum or Dalia Levy – Dr. David Breakstone, Dina Hahn, Jesse Sultanik, the Chairman of WZO, Mr. Avraham Duvdevani and myself, who acted as joint chairs. The former are faithfully supported by the professional staff: Adv. Fern Braniss, Eli Cohen, the Director General, and Reuben Shalom, the Secretary General. The meetings and discussions have revolved around the need to present the proposed changes, providing a platform for all the entities affiliated to the Zionist movement, offering them all appropriate representation with a view to reaching the broadest-based consensus possible on the proposals before submitting them to the Zionist General Council.

Despite the differences of opinion on various issues which were, at times, tempestuous, all the participants were united in the prime goal of reaching a draft of the Constitution that would reflect everyone's needs with an understanding that at times some flexibility from one or other of them was essential. We reached a consensus on many issues, but there were those where it was agreed that, due to their immense import to the institutions and organizations around this table, they would be discussed - but no resolutions would be voted, unless there was overall agreement on them. These were: individual membership, the electoral system and setting the number of Congress mandates. Opinions were also voiced on the issue of Zionist Federations and their Chairpersons, as well as on others, such as young

people, the organizations and the changes that had ensued over the course of time, without detracting from the status they had held in the past.

We addressed extensively the issue of enlargement of the number of members in the movement, to enable us to become a Zionist movement of significance. As you realize, a great deal of endeavor and thought have been put into these amendments: we place them before you as the optimal outcome possible to achieve, even if not perfect.

At each session, there will be an opportunity to submit additional amendments for the future. A constitution, as has already been mentioned, is essential to any organization, but it is our hope that we will not need to amend it at frequent intervals and that we will be able to conduct our activities in accord and cooperation, while aspiring to fulfil the movement's vision and values to the best possible extent.

I wish to thank all the *haverim* and *haverot* who have contributed their time and energy in expressing their views and, at the same time, appreciated the necessity to reach a consensus. I would like to close on a positive note, with a verse from a song by the late Ehud Manor, entitled "*Shir Tzioni Optimisti*" – "*An Optimistic Zionist Song*".

I wish us all a productive and enjoyable conference. Good evening.

**Avraham Duvdevani:** The Chairman of the World Zionist Organization opened his address with thanks to Helena for planning the program in conjunction with the Presidium, and to Eli and his team. He felt the conference was esthetic, well organized, impressive and conducive to a serious, business-like ambiance.

For the past seven years, we have worked to strengthen, elevate, upgrade and energize the Zionist movement, the World Zionist Organization and all its entities to an ever-higher level. We started out at the Congress where we became independent, which proved difficult initially, to put it mildly. Progress has been constant, consolidation is ongoing, and innovation is happening – we continue to generate lift-off. Before the next Congress comes round, there are still a number of significant matters on the planning board in all spheres of activity. In addition, new departments were established, where new activity programs are being each year. Over and beyond this, our consolidation is happening as a movement and a cohesive, proud, unified Zionist Organization, which can stand up for itself, meet its own needs and is not deterred by the challenges it faces.

The Board of Governors session has just closed after proceedings conducted in a pleasant ambiance. However, in our capacity as being responsible for 50% of the Jewish Agency Board, we noted an

unhealthy process that did not evidence respect for either the Jewish Agency or ourselves. Nonetheless, out of what seemed to be a hopeless situation, a broad-ranging committee was crystalized comprising members of the Executive, which mentored the process of working towards an outcome that achieved all of the pre-stated objectives – in contrast to expectations that had led us to believe that our situation was not stable. The final product proved two points: **A**. That we know how to work; and **B**. That where we accept responsibility, we can work within that framework successfully. To my mind, however, the more significant point is that when the Executive makes a decision with everyone falling in behind it and working in unison, there is no challenge we cannot meet. This week, the Vice-Chairman remarked that our strength lies in our unity – and this only goes to show that if we accept major assignments, we will put behind us our divisive political differences over accounts of one kind or another, however important and legitimate they might be, by placing them in proper proportion. This will allow us to act together in respect of the resolutions we adopt here and in the Executive – in unity, cooperation, with the force of numbers, and equal to any challenge.

This was, in my opinion, an extremely important test, which consolidated and strengthened us, and our belief in ourselves; those of our friends who were involved in one way or another reinforced our sense of pride and community amongst us all as part of the World Zionist Organization.

This Zionist General Council meeting is implementing the resolutions of the preceding session, namely: to update the Constitution and present an amended draft to this session of the Council. The Executive has also fully implemented the duties with which it was charged. It established committee of note, representing the full organizational and political spectrum within the WZO, from which a sub-committee was delegated to address the details in-depth. At the conclusion of those discussions, the issues were referred back to the Plenary, and it is with a sense of recognition and trust in the importance and excellence of their endeavors that we have reached the point where we can now propose an updated version of the Constitution from A to Z.

In dialogue with our members in the Diaspora, and through internal discussions with all the factions and organizations, we reached the conclusion that there are two issues, which would be problematic to process within the framework of this Council session. Despite the fact that they have been prepared, they require further “maturation” in terms of contact between the different entities, in order to seek a proposal that would be agreeable to all. It emerged that there exist serious differences of opinion regarding two major Articles – the issue of Elections to the Congress, and that of Membership in the Zionist Movement. These are both weighty matters. Ladies and Gentlemen: it is far from easy to update the Constitution. It is extremely difficult to engage changes, because they always involve an element of

uncertainty, something frightening; we therefore decided to submit those changes we felt to be ready, in the opinion of all the Committee members and some of our members from the Diaspora. All the material ready for submission to this session of the Council will be submitted here – while the other two issues of significance will be submitted to the next session, pursuant to a process to be initiated here and now, of an informative nature. We will begin a reflective process over the course of several months, in conjunction with the Diaspora, and endeavor to develop ideas that would pass with the broadest-based agreement possible at the forthcoming session of the Council.

I would like to make the point that we are now able to create an amended Constitution, both at the level of the process itself and because you are all more cohesive, more activated, and more deeply involved. From one Council session to the next, this process has intensified – as holds true for everything else in our organization. The Zionist General Council as an institution is upgrading itself from one meeting to the next and it is our hope that it will attain new heights at the current session.

This year we are commemorating the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First Zionist Congress, the Centenary of the Balfour Declaration, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UNO Resolution [on Partition – tr.] and we are already on the threshold of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence of the State of Israel, as well as marking the Jubilee year of the Reunification of Jerusalem. This has also been a moment in time where we realized that the World Zionist Organization needed to celebrate one of these areas in particular - to take ownership of that sphere, organize events, make significant statements, and show that the WZO is acting and making its voice heard.

Here are a few examples: Two academic conferences were held recently on the theme of the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the World Zionist Organization. At Bar Ilan University, we held a conference about Zionism in oriental countries, which originates not only in the yearning for Zion but also in activities on the ground. We also collaborated on the publication of a substantial volume by Dr. Aryeh Azoulay, which covers in extensive detail the history of the Zionist *halutz* (pioneer) movements in Morocco. We felt this was an appropriate way to mark this achievement, namely to inculcate Zionism, add depth to knowledge and seek to achieve as broad a spread as possible to reach a wider spectrum of the public.

The Department for Diaspora Activities organized an academic conference at Ben Gurion University of the Negev, in Beer Sheva, in conjunction with all the pre-IDF preparatory academies.

At the same time, the 120 conference we had envisioned in Basle in August 2017 did not take place, due to security considerations. The guest of honor was to have been the Prime Minister of Israel and it had

been intended that heads of Jewish communities and organizations from around the world as well as thousands of young people from across Europe would attend the commemorative event. Instead, an inspiring central event was organized at Mount Herzl to mark the 120th anniversary of the First Zionist Congress, attended by the Prime Minister of Israel and over 4,000 young people, from across the spectrum of the social strata in Israel and the Diaspora. The TV broadcast went out one week later and was viewed by some 20,000 people, while some 11,000 watched the live online streaming.

At this point, we are engaged in the Centenary of the Balfour Declaration. One of the special events will take place on Thursday at the Israel Zionist Congress and is open to those interested in attending.

We also celebrated the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Zionist movement. At the plenary and in the appropriate committees, there were discussions centered on Zionist themes on which the Israel Knesset and the WZO have collaborated.

In respect of the issue of asset development: The Herzl Law was recently enacted by the Israel Knesset to facilitate our activities on Mount Herzl and at the Herzl Center. As a result of the promotion afforded to this issue by Reuben Shalom and Yaakov Hagoel, the law passed all three stages of reading in the space of one day, ahead of the parliamentary recess. Finally, I would like to tell you that after he made a special request to the Mayor of Odessa subsequent to guided tours of the city, a plaque has been erected on the house where Shaul Tchernikhovsky lived, similar to that on residences of other major figures who lived in the city. To quote him, today, people who work at the WZO are no longer simply employees - they have become *shlichim* of the World Zionist Organization.

**Sondra Sokal:** Introduces the next speaker, **Steven Stav**, the Comptroller, who is going to give us his annual report now. This organization is marked by tremendous transparency and good governance. And the Comptroller is an independent comptroller; he is the Comptroller for all of the national institutions, not only for the World Zionist Organization but for Keren Kayemeth, for Keren Hayesod, and for JAFI. Dr. Baruch Levi, who is sitting here, is the chair of the audit committee. Steven Stav has been, our Comptroller for a while now, in a number of different capacities. I have great respect for his integrity and for his economy of words when he makes his recommendations. So let's try to give him our full attention.

**Steven Stav:** Thanks the Plenary Chair and Duvdev, as well as all those attending the session. In accordance with the Regulations, the Audit is prepared before the convention of the Council, collating the Control reports. These have been printed in hard copy in Hebrew and English and can be accessed and studied online via the website. The reports are open to the public and one of the details has already been

publicized. This is not a matter of a leak but demonstrates, rather, the extent of organizational transparency; it is a positive factor and, true to tradition, copies of the report have also been distributed to the libraries of Israel's leading academic institutions, our own Central Zionist Archive and the National Library of Israel. Thus, the information infers that these reports are consistent with the tradition of transparency that has always prevailed – for better or for worse.

Audit and controlling are two different matters, the common Hebrew root notwithstanding (bet-kof-resh), while English and many other languages employ two separate terms. The Hebrew term “bakarah” is translated in English as “Control” and “bikoret” as “Audit”, which can sometimes be confusing - while the title of the position in English has always been known as Comptroller, to confuse matters even further. However, we understand the term “bikoret” (Audit) as the act of verification and monitoring, which are one-off activities – generally within a specific time frame, related to a specific issue, after which the facts are checked, to establish whether the said actions were conducted properly. Where this is not the case, we make recommendations and adjustments are made, and so on.

Administrative controlling, on the other hand, is an ongoing procedure, whereby there is a continual and continuous process of supervision, oversight and control, which includes procedural work regulations and guidelines. It is an overarching composite along a continuum, to ensure the organization conducts its activities in an efficient and economic manner, in accordance with law, instructions, regulations and standards of integrity, etc.

Thus, we can appreciate that the Audit is actually the single act, whereas the ongoing process conducted by the Executive is that of Control (oversight). The more robust, the better and more stable the Control - the fewer the number of audits required. Where the comptrolling is not so effective or efficient, however, – in other words, where there are fewer regulations or arrangements and procedures are less well established and robust – we find more auditing. This is particularly true for risks engendered as a result of defective auditing – where we find we need recourse to risk assessment reviews, in order to attempt to assess where a greater need for auditing exists and to try to reinforce the processes of oversight in parallel.

It is to my regret that I am obliged to note that the Zionist Executive has not yet adopted the procedural regulations proposed by the Director General of the WZO and his team. This matter has also been raised at meetings of the Executive, but approval remains pending. The above-mentioned regulations include a very important primary tier covering a range of issues, including the drafting of the annual budget, underlying guidelines for tenders of purchase, which are similarly applicable to purchase by means of purchase

committees and those exempt from purchase committees. Its scope also covers the appointment of senior personnel, the procedures for short-term emissary delegations, business travel, and the like.

In respect of the non-adoption of the regulations, which are essentially rules, we will be pleased to see whether they will indeed be approved, because they stand to provide us with a baseline reference from which we will be able to conduct our work.

In my considered opinion, the fact that the WZO Executive has not adopted these regulations has impacted negatively upon and hampered the process of accessing funding from KKL-JNF. There were specialized professionals involved in this process, too, including KKL's consultant/accountant. I believe that we could have achieved more, had procedures been better organized.

In order to focus the auditing activity within the organization, we conducted a risk assessment review. The results have been utilized by ourselves, inter alia, to update the work program and we will remit the document to the senior officers of the WZO. I wish to note here that we received complete cooperation from all Heads of Departments and hope we can learn from this process.

I wish to add an observation about the Comptroller's Office budget. The Comptroller is charged with oversight of all the national institutions, and is funded by the Jewish Agency to the level of 50% and 50% by the WZO, which obviously includes KKL and Keren Hayesod. Due to the cash flow problems experienced last year, funding of the Comptroller's Office for the purpose of Control was not entirely to schedule. It would be highly appropriate to ensure that the work of controlling is not restricted in any way - and I wish to note here that no such restrictions have been encountered thus far. This is purely a cautionary observation. Thank you very much.

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## **Plenary No 2**

### **Elections, In Memoriam, Honorary Fellows**

**Aryeh Azoulay:** Opens the special Plenary dedicated to commemoration of departed Members and to those elected as Honorary Fellows. Invites Shanna Orlik, a young leader, to address the Plenary.

**Shanna Orlik:** Hello, everyone. Dear members of the Va'ad Hapoel, erev tov. In the beginning, there was the vision, the dream. By any parameter of a social, cultural, national revival movement, Israel is a dream that has come true. Those words were written in 1979 by Gal Alon and were the first that came to mind when I was offered to open the second plenary of the Va'ad Hapoel tonight.

Zionism is a vision, a dream, that Jews from all around the world and all history have worked their entire lives to realize and to make happen. And tonight we open together a very special and unique Va'ad Hapoel. We are gathered here in Israel, celebrating not only the 120 years since the first Zionist Congress, not only the 100 years of the Balfour Declaration, but also the concretization of a dream that we are all here to continue shaping together.

We stand in the middle of a chain composed of millions of Jews who have dreamt of our self-realization as a people, who have fought anti-Semitism, who have built this country with their own hands and fought and defended it, and tonight we first need to think about them, about those women and men who have made our common dream happen.

But, as I said, we are only standing in the middle of the chain and, therefore, we have to learn from the past achievement from these people who are icons, and think and create the future we want to see today and tomorrow.

I was lucky enough to join a youth movement called Hashomer Hatzair when I was 10 years old and still living in Paris. I'm sure you can hear the accent. I could talk for hours and maybe even write a book about how grateful I am for this Jewish socialist and Zionist education that I received there, but I'll try to summarize it; I see you're already looking at your watch. Don't worry, I'm not reading the book yet.

I grew up knowing and feeling that I was part of something bigger than my own ideals and values. I was part of a movement. I was educated by youngsters following the vision of the halutzim and halutzot, the pioneers who in their time left their comfortable homes in Vienna, Paris, or Budapest, to live in the dust of the former Palestine and create the social and equal society they dreamed of.

From all the people that we can recall that we want to remember tonight all together, I would like to mention just one: the memory of Heine (ph.) Bernstein, who passed away not long ago and who was one extraordinary figure of our people, of Zionism as a whole. He took part in the last Zionist Congress before the Second World War. He was a member of Hashomer Hatzair from Switzerland. And when the war started, he took upon himself to run the European movement of Hashomer Hatzair, the education, the resistance, and the aliyot to Palestine.

Our presence in the Va'ad Hapoel is in itself a commemoration, a way to honor the memories of those who passed away and did a little or a lot for this big and inspiring movement that is the Zionist movement that we all care about and we're proud to be part of and to call Zionism and to call home.

Strengthened by the socialist and political Zionism that I grew up in, the one of Katznelson, A.D. Gordon, Herzl, and so many more, I decided to join actively the movement of building Israel. I felt that my vision, my dream, my Zionism were pushing me to come here, establish my home in our home and contribute to continuing the dream.

As the educator and social entrepreneur that I am today, I often ask myself and others: what is Zionism today? If Zionism was once the dream of our own state, we have it. If Zionism was once to have a home and sometimes even a shelter, we have this. If Zionism is caring about the Land of Israel, then it's been thousands of years that we all are doing it. So, what now?

As a 26-year-old French and Israeli Zionist who works today in the international board of Hashomer Hatzair as the Hagshama coordinator, and the proud member of The Va'ad Hapoel in the World Zionist Congress, I can say it: Our mission isn't over. I feel just as much as a halutza in my Zionist projects than I could have felt maybe 70, 80 years ago, building a kibbutz.

And being a Zionist today means to keep loving, shaping, and building Israel, because Israel is not perfect - yet. As the Jewish people, we are, unfortunately, divided most of the time. There are millions of people living in total poverty in this country, and the liberal system that rules this country is breaking solidarity and peoplehood, as we speak.

I will not get into political aspects of how I would like to improve this country, because my point is the opposite: that beyond all the different religious streams, the different political affiliations, we are one. We had, and still have, one common dream. And during this Va'ad Hapoel and in the future with the younger generation that I hope to see numerous in those seats in the coming years, we have to unite, not unite against our enemies but unite according to the Jewish values of tikkun adam and tikkun olam, and strengthen what makes us one people. Thank you.

**Eli Cohen:** Thanks the speakers for her words and addresses remarks in memory of those members who passed away during the course of the year.

### ***In Memoriam:***

**Eli Eyal** was born in 1934 in Tel Aviv and majored in Political Science and International Relations at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He worked as a journalist in both the print and electronic media. Eyal spent many years at the Haaretz newspaper, including as their US correspondent during the 1960s, an era fraught by heightened political and social tensions and momentous events. He also published numerous articles concerning American Jewry and their identification with Israel. He later became the Maariv

newspaper's special correspondent on diplomatic, social and cultural affairs and diplomatic correspondent for the IBA (Israel public TV) during the period of Henry Kissinger's 'shuttle diplomacy'.

Eyal was among the founding members of the Democratic Movement for Change (Dash Party) in 1976 and served as its representative as Head of the Hasbara Department in the Jewish Agency and World Zionist Organization. He launched the international campaign to rescind UN General Assembly Resolution 3379, equating Zionism with Racism. Eyal was appointed CEO of the Beit Hatefutsot Museum and later returned to the World Zionist Executive as Head of the Organization and Community Relations Department, chairing the steering committee for events marking the Centenary of the First Zionist Congress. He also headed the Task Force to promote Knesset legislation on the Basic Law: Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State. Eyal subsequently became the Editor of "Kivvunim Hadashim", a journal and platform for non-partisan and independent views and a wide range of pluralistic perspectives on Zionism, Judaism, public policy, social and cultural issues.

**Manuel Junowicz**, Mendele as he was affectionately known, was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. A family man, industrial engineer and economist, he was a dedicated Zionist through and through.

Mendele was both an outstanding and dynamic lay leader and Zionist, always advocating on behalf of Israel. His seemingly inexhaustible fund of positive energy attracted young and old alike to the Zionist cause, and he continued to fulfill his lifelong commitment to the Zionist ideal in word and deed until his failing health prevented further activity.

Mendele served as the Secretary of the Zionist Federation of Argentina (the OSA) and from 2010 through 2012 as representative of the Association of Latin American Olim in Argentina (the OLEI), as well as being Honorary President of the OSA. From 2003 through 2013, he was a member of the Jewish Agency Board of Governors, and in 2015 he assumed responsibility for the OSA's "Habayta" program. It was his wish to be interred in Israel.

**Deborah H. Kaplan** who served as National President of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, from 1991 to 1995, passed away February 29, 2017. She was 91. "We are deeply saddened by the loss of such a great leader" said Ellen Hershkin, Hadassah's current National President. During her term as national president, the organization increased its concentration on women's health and education, spoke out in favor of more AIDS research and advocated for U.S. loan guarantees for Israel. As president, Mrs. Kaplan represented Hadassah numerous times at the White House, including the signing of the first Israeli-Palestinian agreement in 1993 and at the signing of the peace treaty between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel and King Hussein of Jordan in 1995.

Her election to Hadassah's highest office followed decades of Zionist service and activism since her teens. She was a leader in Hadassah's youth movements - Young Judaea and Junior Hadassah. She was president of the Bayonne Hadassah chapter; president of the Northern New Jersey Region, National Vice-President and National Treasurer and Coordinator of the Fundraising, Education and Hadassah-International divisions. Mrs. Kaplan was also active in the wider Zionist movement. She first served as a delegate to the World Zionist Congress in 1978; in 1987, she was elected to the Zionist General Council. In 1992 she was elected to the WZO executive and assumed a leadership position on the Jewish Agency for Israel Board of Governors.

**Heini Bornstein** was born in Brazil in 1920. He grew up in the Hashomer Hatzair movement, becoming a member of its senior leadership. At the age of 19 he was a Mapam-Hashomer Hatzair delegate to the Zionist Congress in Geneva, in 1939. From 1930-1946 he engaged in work to aid and rescue Jews via Switzerland, while continuing to fulfil his responsibilities in the movement's leadership and serving as its liaison officer with Eretz Yisrael. In 1945, he was a delegate to the first post-war Zionist Congress in London, alongside Meir Yaari, Yaakov Hazan, Haike Grossman and Abba Kovner. He made Aliyah in 1947, where he joined Kibbutz Lahavot Habashan. He served as the World Zionist Organization and Hashomer Hatzair shaliach in Europe, as the world coordinator for Hashomer Hatzair and as coordinator for the World Mapam Union.

**Raya Jaglom** was born in Bessarabia and immigrated to Eretz Yisrael in 1939. She became active in WIZO in 1941, taking a break only to serve in the Haganah in 1947-48. She devoted her entire life and public activity to WIZO, visiting almost every country in the world on its behalf, including the former U.S.S.R. In February 1971, she headed the WIZO delegation to the World Conference on Soviet Jewry in Brussels. In 1963, she was elected Chair of World WIZO Executive and its President in 1970, a position she held for 26 years, and represented WIZO on the Executive of the Jewish Agency from 1964. Raya also served on the Board of Governors of both the Hebrew and Tel Aviv universities, the Executive of the World Zionist Organization, the Board of Governors of the Jewish Agency, the International Council of the Israel Museum and the International Directorate of Tel Aviv Museum. A true WIZO pioneer, a social activist for women's rights and a fundraising genius. Her name is synonymous with WIZO and the development of early childhood education, social welfare services across the community, and advocacy for women's rights.

**Avraham Shenkar** (2017-1918) was loyal to the Jewish people, to the Hebrew language and to peace. He represented Mapam and Meretz in the Jewish Agency and the Zionist Executive, Zionist Congress and

Chairman of the Organization Department. He served as shaliach of Hashomer Hatzair and the WZO in England and the USA. A writer and guide to the perplexed.

**Miriam Roth** (18.9.32 – 20.7.17) grew up in a Zionist Jewish home in Brazil and devoted her life to the Zionist enterprise for the benefit of the Jewish people and the State of Israel. In 1948, when she was 15 years old, she joined the “Habonim Dror” youth movement. For family reasons, she was unable to make Aliyah to Israel, so she decided to work for the local Jewish community in the spirit of the values of the Zionist movement in which she believed. In 1960, she joined the Na’amat “Dor Hemshech” group in Sao Paulo and was also active in Brazil’s labor movement and various Jewish institutions. Over the years, Miriam represented Na’amat in various institutions, such as the Latin-American Congress and the Zionist Movement in Sao Paulo. In 2013, she was elected as Honorary Fellow by the World Zionist Organization in Jerusalem.

**Harold Shapiro** was born in Opelika, Alabama, a rabbi’s son. He defines himself as a "Jew who had justice and peace etched into his bones.” He was a four-time delegate to the World Zionist Congress and a member of the Zionist General Council and the Board of Governors of the Jewish Agency for Israel. An enthusiastic Zionist, he chaired the Board of Partners for Progressive Israel (formerly Meretz USA), was a distinguished member of APN and precursor of The Progressive Symposium for Israel.

**Marcos Bogomolsky** was born in Buenos Aires in 1934, the son of immigrants from Eastern Europe. He joined the Mitzpeh Hashomer Hatzair movement in 1946 and made Aliyah with the Eretz Yisrael Garin which settled in Kibbutz Mesilot, where he lived until the end of his life. From 1970-1973, he served as the Hashomer Hatzair movement and the Youth and Hechalutz Department shaliach in Buenos Aires. One of the leaders of the Kibbutz Artzi movement, he was director of Hashomer Hatzair foundations. He held a deep commitment to the Zionist enterprise and to ensuring the continuation of the Hashomer Hatzair movement in Israel and the Diaspora. He served as delegate to the Zionist Congress and as member of the Zionist General Council. He was also a member of the World Zionist Organization’s Budget and Finance Committee.

***May their memories be sanctified for all time. Amen.***

**Shanna Orlik** thanks Eli and Invites Rabbi Yehiel Wasserman, Head of the Center for Spiritual Services in the Diaspora and Head of the Committee for Honorary Fellows to take the podium.

**Rabbi Yehiel Wasserman:** Good evening. Within the World Zionist Organization, a special committee confers the status of Honorary Fellows. At each Council session, we present certificates to

the distinguished men and women who have contributed their time, endeavors and energies to the Zionist movement in a special manner.

The committee comprises members of the World Unions around the table of the Zionist Executive. As committee Chair, I am a serving member, together with Barbara Goldstein from Hadassah, Silvio Joskowicz from the World Labor Zionist Movement (Mahane Tzioni), Dalia Levy, Karma Cohen-Feinstein, Arnon Felman, Jacques Kupfer and our dedicated committee secretary, Nava Avissar, who manages the committee's business so well with energy and immense efficiency.

Owing to the exacting criteria designated for the award of this status, this year we only elected two members as Honorary Fellows.

The first award of Honorary Fellowship is hereby conferred upon **Mr. Yosef (Giuseppe) Franchetti**, who has served the Zionist movement faithfully for many years. He has been a member of the Zionist General Council twice "chai" (18 years) - i.e. for 36 years - and a delegate to the Zionist Congress for an even longer period – 40 years. He has acted as a the central address for the Zionist movement in Italy since the 1960s and has served as President of the Zionist Federation. He is the founder of "Keshet", an op-ed magazine on Zionism, has fostered the teaching of Hebrew language, brought together the Magshimim movements within the Zionist Federation and promoted Zionist Shlichut in Italy. For all the above considerations, the committee has resolved that you are truly worth of the title of Honorary Fellow.

The second person is **Mr. Yosef Gellert**, one of the founders of the Herut Movement in England. He has worked as a member of the movement, making a significant contribution to the Zionist movement in the United Kingdom and to Israel advocacy. In the course of his Zionist activity, Mr, Gellert played a major role in the Soviet Jewry campaign; he has also been an active and committed member of the Community Security Trust. He has held office in the Zionist Federation of the United Kingdom, been a member of the Jewish Agency Board of Governors, served as Chairman of the Likud movement in the UK, and devoted considerable time and energy to publishing a detailed history of the Likud's activity in the UK.

*Conferment of Award Certificates, Mr. Giuseppe Franchette – Response:* There is a saying that it is difficult to be Jewish: it is also difficult to be a Zionist – and even more so to be the Chairman of a Zionist movement, because there are so many different varieties of Zionists. The right and left wings are mutually hostile: some support Netanyahu and others loathe him; there are those who believe that Zionism's most important objective is to establish settlements throughout Eretz Yisrael, while others feel that its most important objective is to make peace with the Palestinians. It's demanding. It's tough being a Zionist – precisely because Zionism has been successful. Everyone is a Zionist, except for a few

on the extreme left and some of the ultra-orthodox. All Jews are Zionists. Therefore, when I suggest to someone that they become a member of the Zionist movement, they ask what it means. I am a Zionist. There is a need to act to reconcile the different ideologies – an immense challenge for all the chairs within the Zionist movement. I would like to conclude by wishing you, “*Hazak Ve'ematz*” – Be strong and of good courage!

**Rabbi Yehiel Wasserman:** Our thanks to Mr. Giuseppe Franchetti. Wishing everyone a successful Zionist General Council. Thank you.

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### **Plenary No. 3**

## **The Significance of Legal Institutions and Systems** **in the Modern World**

**Galia Wolloch:** Good evening everyone. The Naamat movement is the oldest and largest women’s movement in Israel. It was founded 96 years ago, long before the State of Israel was established and, together with the other movements and organizations, laid the foundations that essentially served as the basis for the institutions of the newly formed state. Naamat, WIZO and Emunah were recognized for their activities and jointly awarded the Israel Prize a few years ago.

The creation of the State of Israel did not make our organizations redundant: we all remain its essential bedrock, acting to protect our society as an enlightened one. We provide services to a professional standard offered out of love and a deep sense of mission; no less importantly, we are the guardians at the gate, issuing early warning.

We ascertain the whereabouts of the needs, the injustices and inequalities and take action on these issues. At times, we do so in conjunction with the organs of state, while at others we take a stand to oppose them and act counter to their will. This is our moral responsibility and it is to our immense satisfaction that we can count significant achievements in the field. In the final analysis, we can all take pride in these improvements – our governments included.

I invite the Minister for Regional Cooperation, Tzachi Hanegbi, to address the Plenary. Tzachi Hanegbi entered public service as a young student and has held senior Israel Government office for many years. Throughout his public service, he has been motivated by his love of *Eretz Yisrael* and concern for Israel’s

peace and security, values imbued from his home and his mother, Geulah Cohen, who dedicated her life to *Eretz Yisrael*. It is an honor for me to call upon Minister Tzachi Hanegbi

**Minister Tzachi Hanegbi:** Shalom and welcome. I would like first to greet all my acquaintances, close friends from across the ideological spectrum and am delighted to have been invited to address you.

I was asked to introduce the session that will be presented by our fascinating and important table of panelists. I intend to address myself briefly to a number of points, but would first like to extend a greeting to the Zionist General Council, which brings together under its wingspan all those in whose hearts beats the hope – those who cherish the values of Zionism. It is to their credit that we are currently marking the centenary year of the Balfour Declaration, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Israel's independence, the Jubilee of the reunification of Jerusalem and the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First Zionist Congress. These may all come together in what appears to be a coincidental, yet symbolic, manner within a single year through events that fill us not only with a sense of immense pride in our tremendous achievements of the past, but also a deep-seated belief in our ability to provide for the future. However, in between, lies an infinite trajectory of challenges – a euphemism delineating both the difficulties and threats that confront us. The Hebrew spelling of Islam - *Aleph-Samech-Lamed[-Aleph]-Mem* – is also a mnemonic for Iran, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt [*Mitzrayim*]. We are surrounded by Islam, in the sense that all these are neighboring countries: they are also the factors representing a strong light, radiating out from the various peace agreements and cooperation, on the one hand; on the other, is the darkness emanating from threats of terrorism and unremitting conflict.

It is no coincidence that the *aleph* comes first in relation to the concept of Islam, because it stands for Iran, which has been the ubiquitous presence hovering over the problems and predicaments in the Middle East for decades. Since 1979 and the Homeini revolution, Iran has been manufacturing terror and incursion and spearheading forces connected to its vision of Islamic revolution. It directs them toward acts of major violence across every continent: however, what is relevant to us here in the Middle East is its relentless assault against any chance to make peace, against parties that would prefer stability and prosperity over death and violence. The dramatic upheavals on the Iranian issue can be located in two spheres. Firstly, in the United States, after a long period under an administration that did not see eye to eye with Israel on the subject of Iran – and this is also an issue over which there is division within Israel, as well as outside Israel. Those who believe in the position led by the Israel government and Prime Minister, as well as myself, are concerned that the nuclear agreement as signed – not between Iran and the United States but, rather, between Iran and the leading world powers and ratified by the UN Security Council and most of the states

around the world – poses major problems for Israel. This holds true even if it is implemented fully; moreover, it terminates within eight or ten years, depending on the context.

This agreement, from the standpoint of the American President, his administration and Congress, is to undergo some kind of review. However, since it took a year to reach the agreement as signed, I expect it will take no inconsiderable period to get to the root of the underlying problems within it and correct its deficiencies. While this represents an extremely positive development, there is nonetheless a negative side to the Iran saga, which is that Iran has invested blood – in the sense of money and fighting forces – with a view to shoring up Syrian President Assad. Today, as the full picture comes into focus, it is possible to see that the organizations that challenged Assad are no longer capable of holding on to territories they held formerly, while Assad and his regime are gaining the upper hand and it appears they will regain control over most of Syria. For its part, Iran expects to receive a return on its investment, in the sense that it seeks absolute control over significant areas of Syria and to be able to introduce forces there, under its dominion. This implies the presence of large numbers of non-Iranian Shiites troops on the ground, the hegemonic control of the Iranian revolutionary guard notwithstanding. They are not sending their own Iranian troops, but forces from Iraq, Pakistan and other countries, drawn from Shiite units that take orders from Iranian command officers, and are deploying them adjacent to the Syrian border with Israel. They also seek grant of an airport and seaport to enhance their ability to strike at Israel. They have done this in the past through the means of Hizbullah, but they now seek to extend an additional front – not inside Lebanon but from within Iran itself. Israel has defined this development as a red line, one it will not tolerate. The Prime Minister's present line of campaign against it is at the diplomatic level and it is being conducted with two major figures – President Trump and President Putin. However, the outcome remains uncertain and there is no guarantee that the issues can be resolved necessarily by diplomatic means. We all hope that this will be the case, but if it appears that the Iranians are acting provocatively and cock a snook at Israel's position, there is a very real possibility that 'evil will make visitation from the North', as the prophet once foretold, thousands of years ago. We hope not and are endeavoring to prevent such constellations.

I now turn to Jordan, which is one of the better news items in the story of our neighborhood. The Peace Agreement signed in 1993 continues to hold and is presently in its twenty-fifth year of existence. A generation of international relations, which have become, over the years, those of close cooperation at many levels. Israel and Jordan signed an agreement to supply Jordan with Israeli natural gas, following the discovery of gas resources under the Mediterranean Sea and are signing the "Sea Conduit" agreement to

provide water and electricity to Jordan, Israel and the Palestinians: in addition, it will channel water to save the Dead Sea, which has been receding for the past century.

We currently find ourselves at an all-time low in the relationship with Jordan, in the upshot of the crisis created by the incident with the security guard acting in self-defense at the [Israeli – tr.] Embassy in Jordan. He was attacked and fired his gun in self-defense. Two Jordanians were killed – the terrorist who attacked him and an innocent bystander. We are endeavoring to resolve the crisis, as we have previously resolved more complex situations - and I hope that at least this ray of light in relation to an important country will shine again, as Jordan returns to being part of the fabric of the Middle East.

Another ray of light is Egypt. I recall my own decision to join the last stand at Yamit, at the age of 26, where we held out for 23 days. We had hoped to prevent the withdrawal from the Sinai and the peace agreement that we, together with a significant number of Israelis, considered a mistake. Fortunately, we were wrong and this has proved to be an extremely successful agreement. Menachem Begin was moved by a vision that led ultimately to the signing of a peace treaty with the late President Sadat – which proved to be at the cost of his own life. Nonetheless, the outcome of his action means that we have been able to enjoy almost 40 years of peace under a viable treaty that has strengthened Israel strategically in every significant sense. Moreover, in recent years, it has evolved into the closest form of coexistence we have ever enjoyed with an Arab state, in terms of the Sinai where we cooperate in the struggle against Da'esh. While this implicates Egypt's involvement to a far greater degree than Israel's, it is ultimately equally important to us that Da'esh and its foothold in the Sinai be defeated, as is indeed happening today in Syria and Iraq. This has turned out to be a positive saga from what were once chilly, and at times icy, relations over this 40-year period, which are now warming up as never before. More than this, Egypt has a leader [President Sisi – tr.] who is now one of the most important figures in the Middle East. For the first time since the Peace Treaty, this is someone who has stood up on the UN rostrum, looked round at his peers from the over twenty Arab states present that have no such treaty with Israel, and declared: I have a peace treaty with Israel and it was 'an excellent step,' to cite his own words. It is good for the Egyptian people, it is good for Israel: he essentially appealed to them to cease hiding behind their anachronistically-oriented, rejectionist attitude to Israel as the enemy. Indeed, many Arab states – admittedly not overtly as yet, but discreetly – have already begun to appreciate that Israel is not the enemy, and not the demonic Zionist monster it has been portrayed throughout the decades. Not only can Israel become a partner, it can also be a real asset in terms of the survival of pragmatic regimes, and particularly the Sunni Arab regimes, in the face of radicalism led by a Shiite Iran.

It is a complex picture. Israel's security forces identified the threat of the tunnels some years ago; however, following our experience in combating the phenomenon during Operation Protective Edge, yesterday they took action to destroy the first Islamic Jihad tunnel to cross the border between Gaza and Israel. Islamic Jihad is a fanatical extremist organization motivated by an ultra-radical ideology. Trained by the Iranians, it acts as their satellite and envoy in the Gaza Strip and has refused to toe the calmer Hamas line of recent years: it is more rebellious, oppositional and rejectionist. The tunnel it was building was intended to break through the crust of the earth in the midst of Kibbutz Kissufim one of these days – targeting the kindergarten, communal dining hall, or wherever else they sought to reach, with a view to slaughtering its defenseless, innocent people. This left the security forces with no other option but to implement a daring, pre-emptive operation based on a combination of intelligence data and technology - one that deserves nothing but praise. The outcome is that the Jihad has paid the price for its aggressiveness.

Calm reigns for the present, but we have previously borne witness to conflicts that began as operational, which became tactical and subsequently deteriorated into wars. We hope that will not prove to be the case in the current scenario: we are staying calm and collected, because we have no interest in [conflict over – tr.] any border – least of all that with Gaza – nor in provoking a new round of conflict.

Our state has grown in strength and is still developing. Israel can justifiably take immense pride in its amazing achievements in so many different spheres: medicine, agriculture, academia, jurisprudence, hi-tech and innovation. It is gratifying to be able to raise our children and grandchildren here - and I hope that many of you have families in our country. To you and those of you not living here who send their children to join us, to grow with us and ensure the future of our very special and amazing Jewish people, we extend our wishes for a successful convention and a wonderful year.

**Masha Lubelsky:** Thanks the Minister and enquires about his responsibilities and powers in respect of the Kotel, further to his address at the Conference of the Reform Movement: insofar as the issue of the Kotel has enflamed world Jewry.

**Minister Hanegbi:** (Response) Yesterday, I toured the southern Kotel plaza, known as the egalitarian plaza. It allows the non-*Hareidi* streams – the Conservative and Reform movements – to conduct prayer services at the Kotel in accordance with their custom, outlook and wishes, and there is no difference from an archeological or historical viewpoint or perspective of sanctity between the southern and the northern Kotel. The issue is, rather, the exacerbation of the problem due to the fact that the plan formulated a year ago that was adopted by the government, known as the “Kotel outline plan,” was not

in fact implemented. This happened after stiff opposition from the *Hareidi* parties, which had consented to it at the outset but later reneged in face of the wave of heavy criticism with which it met within their own communities.

Since the prime minister appreciated that the dispute remained unresolved, he made a decision as follows: To defer the [government] plan but implement it, rather, through the good offices of the prime minister. In other words, we released the *Hareidi* parties as partners to the plan, who therefore have no need to oppose it, because they are not involved. Instead, the prime minister, in his executive role as head of the executive power, announced at a meeting of the government that he would be heading the implementation of the plan on the ground. However, certain parts of the original plan are not being implemented – namely those that aroused severe criticism – and these are still in dialogue. I was appointed by the prime minister as one of the team charged with finding ways to resolve issues still in dispute. Some of these are purely logistical, such as the entrance area to the egalitarian prayer plaza; others are more a matter of principles – the recognition or non-recognition of all the streams of Judaism, in respect of management of the area. It is my sincere hope that this will be taken in good part and that it will meet with willingness on all sides to re-create a constructive dialogue. It is not easy for the Reform and Conservative movements to accept this situation, because they justly contend that, ‘We are continuing the conduct of a dialogue after four years of doing so and already reaching a plan upon which you agreed, only to cancel it. If we now resume the dialogue, in the end who can promise us that the agreements we reach, after further compromises on our part, will indeed be implemented?’ This is very cogent question and there is no answer to it: it is an issue affecting the unity of the Jewish people. Our shared concern is to find a common denominator and set aside our differences, as far as possible. I am actively involved: my own position remains unchanged and we hope to be able to communicate the good news in due course. Thank you all very much.

**At the close of the remarks, the panel members were invited to the rostrum to address the issue of the importance of institutions and frameworks in the modern world – Professor Uzi Arad, Chair, Israel Grand Strategy Forum; Professor Yossi Shain, Head, School of Political Science, Government and International Affairs, Tel Aviv University; and Dr Tamar Ashuri Tzaban, Media and Communication Sociologist, Tel Aviv University.**

**Prof. Uzi Arad:** Good evening. This year and next year fall under the banner of landmark anniversaries of dates in Israeli Zionist history and that of the world, to some extent, and we all realize that we are reaching the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. We marked the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First Zionist Congress a few weeks ago, but there are other dates on the calendar,

such as the centenary of the Balfour Declaration, the centenary of the first Jewish fighting force, the regiment - and several decades have also passed since the Six Day War in 1967. We find ourselves in a time-frame of some eighteen months replete with commemorations and landmarks which are occasionally conducive to inventory-taking by both people and state, moments of introspection and account, of comparing where we stand today in relation to the past and to the vision. Where do we stand, indeed? What is the balance of account, what will the future bring, and how should we achieve it? Such is the essence of this year and it is already beginning to happen as we take note of the various events and ceremonies. The prime minister is traveling to the United Kingdom to participate in the British national event in conjunction with the Jewish people to mark the Balfour Declaration centenary; and hardly a month will pass without some kind of event either a conference being held, or historical, long-term perspectives that offer projections and outlooks into the future.

In this session, there will be two items of this nature, the first meditative, reflecting and expressing understandings about the past and the present. In a further address, there will be a historical perspective on the century since the Balfour Declaration, as a useful landmark to review what took place and explore in greater depth how they came to happen. Sometimes, the historical picture appears more clearly in retrospect. We will also hear a philosophical approach, we will be introduced to academic research and in-depth materials, together with an analysis of two or three political phenomena or focal perceptions in the Jewish experience of the Jewish people, the State of Israel and even of this organization, which is essentially a network of other, additional organizations.

The two emphases at issue are as follows. Firstly, we shall address political institutions, albeit of different types; secondly, we shall address networks or systems. When dealing with systems or networks, the reference is to another construction and this is of consequence for both political activity and behavior – including elections and your own discussions – these are distinctly marked by political activity of the respective organizations and entities.

Towards the end of the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we were frequently be exposed to very broad historical overviews; there were also a considerable number of socio-historical treatments of the subject raising the question of when and how states come to fail and disintegrate. These represent the classic questions that have occupied the minds of the greatest historians since the rise and fall of the Roman Empire - yet, over and beyond this, the question has found a new salience and framing in the contemporary era, as we seek to understand which elements in modern political components lead primarily to the internal collapse of states. When do states begin to fail?

The answers that emerge from the major part of these treatments is, according to one historian: States fail for three reasons: *institutions, institutions and institutions*. In other words, in the simplest terms, he maintains that the successful or deficient nature of its institutions is the factor defining the destiny of states.

It is interesting to note that in many constitutions, these institutions themselves remain undefined. For example, in the Constitution of the United States of America, there is no mention of political parties – and certainly no mention of the word ‘democracy.’

Nonetheless, in true organic terms, there has never been a state without a mediatory organ to interface between the body of state and the single individual, which may be described as a human congregation, or something you could term a political party. It is an organ, a distinct institution; but institutions can also be the apparatus of government and such ministerial bodies are institutions *par excellence*.

Even then, a state and its organs were unable to function without taxation. The institutions are artifices: they were established for this function and their division is amazingly not that different from the basic structure underlying the administration of the modern state in the twenty-first century. This goes to show the quintessential nature that has withstood the test of time of the character of those institutions, without which a state cannot exist. There are, of course, institutions that are less organized, which are possibly of a more social order. The law as social order and traditions as regulators of behavior – these are also institutions. When taken together, it is obvious why the manner in which the institutions function within an organization does in fact determine its fate. Sometimes, through their discharge of functions, the state survives and prospers – at other times, the outcome is less propitious and there may be situations where a significant failure of institutions or social orders lead to a process of atrophy culminating in their decline.

What mention this point? Because it is one of Herzl and the Zionist movement’s greatest legacies – and this is the real reason why it succeeded as an organized movement. Zionism has many faces, but what happened 120 years ago at the First Zionist Congress was an act of organization and it was there that the original institutions were established. Up to that moment, the Jewish people had not been organized in any way – it worked and conducted its affairs through other instruments. This is the true greatness of Herzl as the founder of the first Zionist institutions: indeed, there are those would maintain that the Bank was the most important of them all, some because logic dictates that organs without the fuel that powers them and without fiduciaries were being mobilized – a designation that resembles a car with an empty fuel tank.

Here lies the significance of the analysis Professor Shain will be presenting, namely, in the connection of the Jewish people to its Diaspora today: an observation of the present and possibly on the future, too, in addition to the past. He will share with us his perceptions on the subject of political organization of Zionism's institutions and their importance.

Dr. Tamar Ashouri will talk about the net and the media, with an emphasis on sectors undergoing major changes worldwide. It would be superfluous to go into detailed resolution here on the impact of the digital revolution, technology and other developments of the modern era and the platforms they are producing, which serve to transform the face of organizations and political behavior in their wake. These changes have an immense influence on political life itself, on organizational and institutional life, as well as on ensuing behavior. They generate new phenomena, kill of others – and so, we will be hearing more about a contemporary exploration of insights into what has taken place in those sectors.

Professor Shain is one of the senior academic personnel in the field of political science at Tel Aviv University. He is a leader as well as a prominent, leading figure – both at the university and in Higher Education in Israel. He is also currently Professor at the Georgetown University in the United States, advisor to the Planning and Budget Committee and another major committee on the future of the social sciences in Israel. Professor Shain is the author of eight books, dozens of academic articles and is a frequent contributor to political columns in the press as a commentator, where his span is infinitely more far-reaching than his own designated area of research. His works include *The Language of Corruption and Israel's Moral Culture*, which might be termed a best-seller in contemporary Israel. *The Frontier of Loyalty: Political Exiles in the Age of the Nation-State* was written some years earlier as part of a series of works relating to the field of exile. The following titles represent the breadth of spectrum addressed in his academic and scientific publications: *Kinship and Diasporas in International Affairs*; *Marketing the American Creed Abroad: Diasporas in the U.S. and Their Homelands*; *Between States: Interim Governments and Democratic Transitions*.

**Professor Yossi Shain:** Good evening, everyone. I would like to take you on a fascinating Jewish voyage intended to provoke some serious reflection, as we stand at a historically dramatic crossroads in terms of the Jewish people.

The reason for its significance is that, for the first time in history, Jewish sovereignty is determining what Judaism itself represents and is becoming a highly significant, major player in the experience of Jews and Judaism. This is having far-reaching effects - on our entire national experience, Jewish theology and also on western civilization. I call this the Israelization of Judaism and it is dramatic in

terms previously unknown throughout the course of our history. There has never been a comparable situation, despite the fact that we have undergone a number of similar instances where sovereignty dictated identity. We do not possess a great deal of evidence or facts about the kingdom of David and Solomon, although we obviously do have critical masses of information about the times of King Josiah together with the downfall of the dynasty after its defeat by Pharaoh Necho II and the Babylonian Exile. These are both extremely important translations for a people that had built institutions. The failure in sovereignty and kingdom in the seventh and sixth centuries BCE, leading to the Jewish people's exilic phase over a short period, were responsible for the creation of the Jewish paradigm. This paradigm moves between exile and diaspora, on the one hand, and aspirations to a sovereignty that was slow to arrive, on the other. You will recall the return to the Second Temple during the repatriation to Zion under Ezra and Nehemiah, but you may not be aware that there was no restoration of sovereignty. The repatriates arrived in Zion to rebuild the Temple as subjects of the Persian kingdom who were to represent the Persian Empire. Judah and Israel, which fell earlier, in the eighth century BCE, had persisted in this manner for many years under various foreign empirical dominions, with one replacing the other, empires coming and going – including the Persian Empire, the Macedonian Empire and the Seleucids – and this held true until the arrival of the Romans. At one point, the Jews knew a period of sovereignty, as mentioned recently by the prime minister. This amounted to eighty years of life under the Hasmonean dynasty, which became an important institutional framework in the Zionist experience after the destruction of the Second Temple – and then everyone wanted to forget about sovereignty. Halachic Judaism replaced sovereignty and did not wish to consider it an important factor. The Jews transformed their identity from that of a national state and all that is inherent in it, to a religious people whose concept of identity resided not in the sacred seed but in Halachah and the priesthood.

Nor was the Hasmonean system of sovereignty a simple affair. The Hasmoneans came on the scene after the Great Rebellion that started out as a rather small grass roots phenomenon, but its leaders were chary about assuming the mantle of royalty, despite the fact that the Hellenists held the royal crown. They lacked legitimacy and therefore held onto the crown of the priesthood and the royal crown, together and in parallel. The legend on Hasmonean coins reads "*haver Yisrael*" (a member of Israel), in an endeavor to appeal for and garner popular support. That same critical mass of the Hasmoneans, which fell due to its inability to sustain control within a system that became increasingly non-exclusive but, rather, integrated with the Hellenistic world, proved to be almost the final sovereign institutional framework. The only exception to this was the short episode of the Bar Kochba rebellion, which also took place in this region and led to what has been termed a major disaster for the people of Israel.

During the Bar Kochba rebellion, during the Roman era, as far as we know, the Romans massacred some 600,000 Jews and the remainder were sent into slavery. Many Jews were sold as slaves – and the buying price for a Jewish slave in that period was the cost of the man-in-the-street’s donkey-feed. Jewish institutions *per se* disintegrated to be translated into community ones, because the Jews had fostered their religious identity since the era of the Pharisees, in earlier times. The Jewish historical drama was civilizational, founded on a life of Mishnah and Talmud that were detached from the political experience and led to the creation, not only of communities, but of leadership. Somewhat surprisingly, for example, those Jews who managed to flee from here to Babylon established an institution they called “*Rosh Hagolah*” – the Head of the Diaspora – and founded institutes of study. The Jews lived in communities and endured, but without Jewish diplomacy and a Jewish tradition of someone who spoke in the name of the Jewish people. There were people who spoke on their behalf to the foreign authorities who would be what we call “*shtadlanim*” – interceders or mediators. They would make requests on behalf [of the community –tr.] but they were themselves powerless. The Jews, as a people without any power moved around from place to place and endeavored to conserve itself, in many instances enjoying cultural autonomy, but often enduring intolerable conditions and frequently dying for *Kiddush Hashem* - the sanctification of the Holy Name. This continued from one community to the next, with questions and responsa, and so on. History in a nutshell. The Zionist movement, to which you belong, is actually a new venture in Jewish institutional philosophy. It represents a working assumption about the new state, which came into existence after the Westphalia Agreements – and it is a fascinating fact that the ‘state’ began its existence in 1648, following the Thirty Years War: moreover, from that point on, the Jews began to prosper. I recently published an article that demonstrates how, in the Westphalia Agreements themselves, despite their being a peace agreement between Christians – there were no Jews involved whatsoever – the ancient Hebrew model essentially served the architects in formulation of the treaty. They had no platform upon which to base policies; the Jews did not have a model. James Harrington (England) wrote that we might even create a sovereign state – 300 years before Herzl. Naturally, these ideas were never implemented in real life and – with the exception of the rather strange saga of Shabbetai Zvi, who got up and said that ‘maybe we ought to go and establish a state, together with Nathan of Gaza, here’ – the Jews held no aspirations toward real sovereignty. Nor was sovereignty an integral part of their experience, which constituted a religious community of inferior status. With regard to Christianity, it adopted the idea that sovereignty had been taken from the Jews to be given to the Christians who were the Chosen People, and consequently – according to the revered scholar, St. Augustine, the Jews’ role was to act as a witness within the system, and they must therefore

be preserved and not destroyed. Christianity, therefore, did not liquidate all the Jews, because they served as witnesses to Jesus' fate.

The Jewish condition would at times deteriorate, while at others it really was not that bad. This led to the description of specific centuries as the golden age – in Spain, for example – despite the fact that it would soon be displaced by the exceptionally harsh decrees proclaimed against them. Thus, the Jews followed a kind of zigzag course, alternating between cultural ascent together, at times, with prosperity and the diametric opposite. For the most part, they were subsumed within a Hareidi rabbinic world, without a horizon in terms of the nations around them. From time to time, a court Jew would emerge but this constituted a marginal phenomenon within the Jewish people rather than an institutionalized process from within.

The Jewish people begins to speak about institutions only when the western world addresses the issue, at a time when dynasties are in decline and the star of human sovereignty is rising. With the dawn of this era in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, comes an accompanying question – namely, the Jewish question. How do we address the Jews as a collective while speaking of them as individuals? Jewish institutions were not obliged to respond to this dilemma, which varied in substance from place to place, due to the diffusion of the people as a diaspora. The Jewish people was dispersed around the world, with the vast majority living in the Russian Empire; Jews also lived in Asia, Africa, Western Europe and a very small number in America. Thus, the Jews managed to survive until the Jewish question arose as an acute issue in the wake of the rise of the concept of Man. The entire discussion at the First Zionist Congress was devoted to what we term the 'Jewish Question' and Herzl wrote on the issue, but it took him some time. Others before him, like Moses Hess also turned their pens to the subject that disturbed them greatly precisely because they were unable to offer an immediate solution. The only institutionalized approach to resolving this issue lay within the newly-formed [nation – tr.] states, which is why there was a rush of Jews in modernity to relieve themselves of their Judaism and seek integration within the institutions of those countries that had become liberal states of citizens. This was the case with the Emancipation in France, until 1808, when Napoleon decided when someone told him: You granted the Jews emancipation - and how did they put it? - Everything as individuals, but nothing as a collective. He replied that maybe we should set up some kind of umbrella framework, i.e. the *Consistoire*, a framework established as an institutionalized ethnic entity to circumscribe the Jews – a clear incidence of Jewish conspiracy.

In England, the Jews had always been a community with rabbis and this rabbinate is still in existence today. They were not players on the stage, preferring to seek integration. The Zionist Congress appears

at a time when the Jewish Question has not found a solution within the various states and when the Jews of the former Soviet Union and former Russian Empire are undergoing tremendous metamorphosis. This covers the great Pogroms and the immense waves of emigration to the United States: the United States becomes the Jews' institutional solution to the problem: the *goldene medina*, because no institution is necessary there - it is the state of all people. Alongside this, the Jews in Germany as individuals were attempting to conduct a major integration via the Reform movement, but it always represented an escape from the Jewish framework into the German experience. Moreover, it was accompanied by major clashes, a massive wave of conversions to Christianity and terrible tragedies throughout Jewry, including the saga of Mendelssohn's own children.

This represents the first occasion when the Zionist movement perceived that the idea of sovereignty might be viable. Today, we find ourselves 120 years further on, after this same movement failed miserably in the provision of a solution and succor to the Jewish Question before the Shoah, only to prove successful afterwards.

What has happened here? The Jewish people today numbers some 13.5 or 14 million souls. Within one or two decades, at most, the majority of Jews will be living in Israel, which is phenomenal. All the Jewish models created in modernity are on the wane – modernity has built other Jewish models in their stead. The Bund was a movement founded on the individual that wanted to define him as an ethnic person – the Jewish socialists. We have already mentioned the Reform movement, which sought to define the [Jewish – tr.] experience not as a Halachic, religious but rather, as a cultural one; there was also Jabotinsky and the Yiddishists, and others besides. We could take Dubnov, for example, and the various autonomists. There was not a single Jewish institution that did not seek integration within existing states. Even Brandeis, the high priest of Zionism in America, explained to all that the State of Israel was a state for the small minority and that America remained the true framework. He had no wish to enter into conflict with Blaustein when the latter told him, after the Israel's establishment: Do not define us as a diaspora. We have our own country and it is America.

We thus find ourselves within a significantly different institutional constellation. The State of the Jews that was created and has prospered, is today transforming into a western country with the highest natural population growth rate in the world. It is becoming an extremely significant player in the Jewish experience while, at the same time, the Jews themselves across their various locations, have not discovered a replacement model or a stable model for their lives as a paradigm, or as individuals. ... [Beinart – tr.] wrote: 'We check our Zionism at the door of liberalism.' If Israel disappoints us, we will relinquish our Zionism in favor of liberalism. I replied to him: 'And what will remain of your Judaism?'

This is the major, salient question we need to respectfully address – but we should do so in parallel with duly noting the process of Israelization of Judaism as an accepted format, and alongside our celebration of the State of Israel’s phenomenal achievements across the range of its institutions - although we have no king. Perhaps, it is sometimes important to have such figures - but even so, there can be major disputes in the Israeli Knesset where one may find criticism of the President, whoever he might be. This was the substitution made long ago by the Prophet Ezekiel in the absence of the royal dynasty, when he declared the royal house to be the cause of Judaism’s decline and that therefore there would be no more kings. Even the Hasmoneans hesitated to call themselves kings - and by the time they did so, they had already brought their extinction upon themselves.

At this point, it is pertinent to consider the future character of those Israeli institutions that are currently Jewish in nature, because all the other Jewish institutions – without exception – subsist as secondary to the State of Israel, whether as its critics or proponents. It is difficult to sustain a Jewish institution *per se* unless it is a purely religious Hareidi entity, which does not require sovereignty or rejects it: thus, the criticism of Israel – whether from J-Street or any other organization – serves to prove that Israel is central to the existence of such institutions.

However, the State of Israel returns to a battle of the giants that is not to be underestimated. It is a struggle of unparalleled and historic proportions, between a renewing, sovereign, Israeli Judaism and the *Hareidi* worldview that considers sovereignty, in and of itself, as the source of evil and is undecided on whether to integrate within it or not. The confrontation between the *Hareidi* position and that of sovereignty is fascinating since, at one and the same time, there are ongoing processes of Israelization of the *Hareidi* sector, while it is also our hope that these will amplify, because the *Hareidim* are engaging for the first time in a confrontation with a state that is also their own: indeed, there has never been prior opportunity for them to do so. You may live in ‘Kiryas Yoel’ in New York but you have no claim to autonomy there, even if you believe otherwise.

There are some serious and complex claims and counter-claims about the essence of the state. To what extent should Israel be a modern state in the Zionist vision? To what degree should it deviate from modernity, or how far are modernity and tradition capable of coexistence – as proposed, for example, in Kalischer’s model or Rav Kook’s paradigm, which suggested envisioning the Zionist Knesset as part of Jewish theology?

These are the foundations underlying the institutions, upon which we hope the State of Israel will be built and prosper without, Heaven forbid, undermining its own sovereignty. Indeed, it is clear to us that

this same sovereignty has led to exceptional and achievement of unanticipated and inconceivable dimensions. For example, it is not just a matter of the numbers of Jews living here today: it is a well-known fact that Israel not only leads in its birthrate but also in terms of longevity and the happiness index. Nonetheless, there is a question of substance in relation to the character of the state – concerns that it should not forget its past but should also not forget its future; that it will have the ability to regulate traditional institutions, while at the same time appreciating that its tempo and development are dependent on future developments of a rational nature. This is at the core of Israeli discord today and one that constitutes a Jewish struggle *par excellence*. All the various Jewish struggles in the Diaspora, to which we afford our respect, relate to community survival – and it is no coincidence that the largest Jewish institution in the world is currently “*Taglit*” – The Israel Experience.

*Taglit* brings young people here for two weeks so they will go on remembering they are Jewish – which is a very good thing, because everyone appreciates that this tribal sentiment, which is ultimately its vocal expression, is one that can swiftly disappear.

We thus find ourselves at a critical point in terms of Jewish transformation, with a great deal of optimism and vision – but, also, with many challenges ahead. I might even suggest that this includes reservations that the latter should not, Heaven forbid, lead to the loss of that prized sovereignty, attained at such immense cost of life and through supreme effort, which constitutes the present reality and is irreplaceable – not only for Israel but for the entire Jewish world.

**Question - Rabbi Abbadi:** How do you define almost one million Jews who came from the Arab world, since they cannot be defined alongside the streams pertinent to European Jewry, despite Rabbi Yehuda Bibas and Rabbi Yehuda Kalischer? They also thought about sovereignty for all their communities, but in terms of a more traditional Jewish sovereignty, more faithful to the dynasty of King David than the western kind.

**Prof. Shain:** There can be no doubt that oriental Jewry made a substantial contribution to the preservation of Judaism – and this while it lived in a condition of lack of sovereignty. However, the modernization that swept Europe went on to cover the United States. Had Communism reached Russia before the pogroms, one can only speculate that all the Jews there would have been crushed.

The above question addressed oriental Jewry living in cultural autonomy within prosperous communities and holding to a messianic dream of sovereignty. However, this did not bring about a national movement, because no sovereignty was present. Even when it was - such as in the case of the Jews of Algiers, particularly, who obtained citizenship – we find (to my mind) the most interesting

model in Rabbi Manitou who was an important rabbi in France and Algiers and later moved to Jerusalem. Here, he opened our eyes to North African Jewry's potential: not to become Hareidi, as Deri has indicated, nor to be persuaded into an anti-modernist worldview but rather, as per his discussions with Rabbi Kook, to integrate that traditional Judaism while embracing Zionism fully, within the framework of the State of Israel. If we wish to observe processes of Israelization, we can find them among French Jewry. This community, where I lived for two years and about which I produced a film, has undergone far-reaching processes of Israelization pervading not only the CRIF, obviously, but all the major Jewish institutions in France: through the entire phenomenon we term 'Boeing Aliyah' – one foot here and one over there – French Jewry has become completely Israeli. Even British Jewry is undergoing a similar experience: whereas, in times gone by, its rabbis were all ordained in Britain, nowadays they all receive *semichah* in Zion. Chief Rabbi Sachs and Chief Rabbi Mirvis are still there, but 101 rabbis came to Jerusalem to be ordained and the same applies to Shas institutions, so that the State of Israel carries exceptional responsibility. Oriental Jewry, however, was unable to survive in their setting – while western Jewry managed to survive despite the Shoah. Therefore, the moment the heavens opened, all of oriental Jewry picked up and left for Israel. They had absolutely no chance of survival despite their community [cohesion – tr.], such as that of Persian Jewry and the small communities that existed in Syria.

Oriental communities that have remained in Europe have also undergone an Israeli metamorphosis and there has therefore been an Israelization of those communities. I note, albeit with regret, that a part of oriental Jewry that came to Israel – for whatever reasons – has adopted precisely the East European form of Judaism, thus creating a situation of "clash" within Israeli society.

**Dr Tamar Ashouri** is a Media and Communication Sociologist, head of the Communications Department at Tel Aviv University. Her area of research addresses the relationships between technology and the media, as well as cultural and economic change, with an emphasis on areas undergoing major changes in the world.

Her current research explores the relationship between digital media and patterns of structural change, particularly within the field of political organizations and collective action. She has a BA in History and International Relations from the Hebrew University, and an MA in Media and General Communications from the University of London. She holds a PhD in Media and Communications from LSE (London.) She has published a book on the Arab-Israel Conflict in the Media and is presently working on a book to be entitled *The State of the Media*, the word play in the title being intentionally susceptible to multiple interpretations.

**Dr Tamar Ashouri:** The Zionist movement is a very special one and it is difficult to enumerate all its achievements. However, I would like to emphasize a component that is not particularly distinctive to the Zionist movement – namely, that, like many other movements, it is composed of people who believed that together they would be able to attain a common goal better than if each and every one of them fought or endeavored to attain that same goal separately.

The idea underlying this concept, known as ‘collective action’, is the perception of a large number of individuals who can work together towards a common goal. This could be a major enterprise, like creation of a state, or it could be something more modest, like building a park: what these groups have in common is the glue that unites them – namely, the shared goal itself.

My main area of focus is the new media and their contribution to this type of organization process, i.e. collective action. By this, I mean how the media can assist individual people to fulfill their aspirations or attain a common goal.

A misconception many of us will fall for is that of not observing history in the rearview mirror – by asking, for example, what would have happened had Herzl said, ‘Click LIKE’. Instead, people attempt to somehow briefly describe changes that have occurred in the world – the collective action and the role the new media play within this sphere (appropriately, because a great deal has changed.) In other words, the scope of new media has indeed opened up new possibilities and, obviously, generated new difficulties. Nevertheless, one can make a statement (albeit somewhat simplistically), based on the decade we have been engaged in research on the media and its role in social organizations. We can see that, at the outset – in the mid-1990s and, naturally, towards the millennium – the thinking went: ‘Hey - look, everything’s changed: the tools are different, new options have opened up to those people seeking collective action and that’s it – from now on, nothing will be the same.’ This would imply that we no longer need a leader like Herzl, for example, because everyone has the capacity to be a leader; that we no longer need a Zionist movement and an organization, because who needs an organization when everyone can click and create a digital manifesto? Why and for what purpose do we need to elect activists? Surely, anyone can become an activist? One does not have to possess specific aspirations or skills.

In recent years, we have witnessed a complete *volte-face*. More and more people are studying not only world [events – tr.], such as the Arab Spring, but also local, small-scale collective action initiatives – like people campaigning for lower rental rates – and, in fact, we are seeing that not much has changed at all.

I would like to spotlight a number of **purported** changes to examine what has changed and the highly important role played by the digital media in social organization, with a big question mark, asking

whether it has really changed at all. Are those major foundations with which we are familiar still alive and kicking, or do we possibly need to reassess them? There are four prime components: the first is the organization process, the second is mobility, the third is selection and the fourth is leadership.

**The organization process.** For example, the Zionist General Council is a hierarchical organization by definition. An organization has leaders, who may be few or many in number. The claim in contemporary literature on collective action is that the new media have created a situation that removes the need for organizations. This means that to achieve a common goal, people do not have to organize themselves collectively into an institution or organizational body - they can act in a manner known as 'flat.' In other words, organizations without organizing.

One such example is [social activist – tr.] Daphni Leef, who is unaffiliated to any organization but created a form of organizing with a click of a button, not even a small organization. Why is this important? Because the literature has been focusing on research into collective action for many years and its logic is known as 'the logic of collective action.' What does this logic say? It states that in order to attain a common goal, there is a need for an organization. For the purpose of argument, if I wanted to create a state today, I could not do so without an organization and I would always need to be a part of it. I might be the leader of an organization or affiliate to an existing one, but I would still need to belong to some organization or other. The upshot is that in order to fulfill particular goals, there are therefore very few entities capable of doing so, because organizational logic filters out anyone who is not an organized body. Thus, people like Daphni Leef do not, in fact, exist – and only the great leaders, like Herzl and the rest of those whom we all recognize, can attain their common goal – but again, only within a framework that is organizational.

**Disillusionment.** There is a contention today that it is possible to point to people like Daphni Leef in the Arab world, too, as well as in other countries – and not only there, but also in much smaller scale frameworks, such as municipal ones, the workplace, etc. More and more frequently, we are seeing that the guiding logic, the intention, is that organizations do retain a major importance, even in the era of online social networks. While it is true that people can create a Facebook page and recruit supporters, it does not necessarily follow that they will be successful in establishing an organized body that will enable them to attain their goals. For this reason, we are increasingly observing the way in which people successfully mobilize these new technologies, such as social networks, in order to create organizations rather than take action without them. We are finding that today, as in the past, organizations have a focal role to play.

The second component is **mobility**. One of the important findings emerging from the literature is the importance of mobility. An organized body exists and needs to attract people to take action within its system, i.e. those who are motivated to work together to further the common goal. How does it accomplish this? How does it present itself successfully to a large audience, part of which is potentially active, and then motivate them to opt for that entity in order to work hand in hand – or, for those who are already members, to activate them to promote the fulfillment of a specific goal? The wisdom of the prevalent complaint about the large media corporations until the 1990s, like radio, TV and the newspapers, was that they played a very important role as “filtering mechanisms.” In other words, organizations that were insufficiently resilient – be it economically, politically or culturally – were not afforded any degree of visibility in the media. Their capacity to recruit people was therefore minuscule and the claim has been made that the monopoly of the old media as we knew it has ended because, *de facto*, we now all have the ability to create sundry kinds of organized bodies or organizing processes and move people about. At face value, this sounds wonderful because it implies that any group, however small and however modest its underlying aims, has the capacity to recruit very large groups of people.

The problem is that in an era with a plethora of organized or organizing entities, it becomes very difficult for a single organization to achieve prominence, which means that if an organization wishes to attract specific people, it needs to push. It requires elbow power to enable it to stand out from others – a difficulty that did not exist earlier on because, as we have mentioned, there used to be sufficiently substantial filters to do the job for you.

Where does the disillusionment lie today? In the realization that mobility, even in the era of new technologies is no simple task. It is crucial for every single organized and organizing entity to become familiar with technological tools in order to be able locate the right kinds of activists and move them around, and recruit them to further the common goal.

**Selection** is important because organizations need activists if they wish to work to attain their common goal. Let us call them “good activists.” They may be good according to a variety of criteria: possibly, they are people who wish to see the fulfilment of a particular goal, or they may be wealthy, politically powerful, or charismatic. The requirement is that they be good for the purpose.

There are organizations where the right “good” persons are of crucial importance, while there are others where they are less so. Organizations where the activity is very high risk require activists willing to make sacrifices. Essentially, very good organizations – as distinct from others – or those that place other people in danger, by definition of their activity, require very good people.

Somewhere around the new millennium or in the wake of the development of new network technology, and especially social networks, it was claimed that the critical issue of selection had now been resolved. Organizations no longer needed to select people because they could now permit themselves to operate different kinds of activists. These might be activists of the self-sacrificing kind, willing to sacrifice time or money, even their lives – or anything else. Others might simply be couch-surfers clicking away, holding a bowl of popcorn: such persons are also capable of recruiting the masses or getting people to sign petitions, without any need to select for people. In other words, a social network offers people different kinds or different contexts of activity.

Now, back to disillusionment - because observation of organizations has shown that it is not as simple as that. In fact, powerful organizations, or those whose activity is dangerous or whose activity endangers others still require powerful or good activists, or people willing to invest in them – who are all far harder to recruit. The major difficulty stems from the fact that social media offer access to almost everyone, or to anyone who has access to social networks. How, then, can an organization select for the powerful people it needs? The answer is – with great difficulty. Since it became clear that organizations could not accept just anybody, or at least that not every organization could accept just anyone, we as sociologists have been attempting to understand how organizations develop or utilize the media as a tool – not just to recruit people, but as a filter – a selection tool to keep others at a distance.

From which we segue into the issue of **leadership**. As mentioned previously, the thinking in the past decade was that there is no call for powerful organizations. The organizational logic here, from our perspective, is non-existent, because in the era of new media freeloaders can also affiliate to an organization without difficulty. Selection or mobility of people is not an issue because we all possess the tools that permit us to reach the individual in his most intimate environment. Therefore, there is no leadership issue because we have no organized entity – *ergo*, there is no need to select for people or make an effort to mobilize them: therefore, anyone can be a leader.

Enter: another disillusionment. The past five years have shown, primarily through structural analysis of the net and people's activity on it, that a close connection exists between a leader and an organization's capacity to sustain itself and attain the goal for which it was created, i.e. the collective goal. What the net shows is the manner in which leaders ascend, as well as the manner of their downfall. At the same time, our focus as researchers is on attempting to identify how leaders utilize the net and how organizations activate leaders on the net for their purpose. That is to say, in order to enable them to exploit or leverage its tools – with a view to being better leaders, or assisting groups of individuals to

collectively build a group that will allow them to better express or fulfill the goals they have set themselves.

**Question from the floor:** Request for clarification of an issue that has recently been of great concern to ourselves in relation to the concept of diaspora. Asks for a philosophical response on the model of center and diaspora that Shimon Rabinowitz, for example, and more recently Prof. Shaul Magid, in his post “Ethnic Americans,” attempted to shatter, as well as a pragmatic response to those willing to forego their Judaism or their Zionism in favor of liberalism. Finally, does their liberalism in fact constitute their Judaism, in terms of diaspora life, across its different expressions?

Response by **Prof. Uzi Arad:** The term “*tefutzah*” [dispersion] in Hebrew has two meanings: “*pezurah*” as a dispersal or distribution and “*tefutzah*” in the sense of burst apart. The English term is “Diaspora”, a generic term used to denote the establishment of a normalization of life in relation to a sovereign state. In the era of the modern state, as in the past, the diaspora was deemed to be a dispersion that lived in contradiction to the centrality of the nation. In the past century, the Jews provided the paradigmatic example, par excellence, of diaspora. After the establishment of the State of Israel, however, the term “diaspora” became the common destiny of many nations. I have written several books on the conduct of Diasporas around the world.

Essentially, the Jewish state should have provided the answer that people and territory are one and the same – which would have implied making endeavors to ensure that the entire world would be composed of nation states: Germany for the Germans, Turkey for the Turks, Israel for the Jews. Yet it is obvious that this is not the case because of the existence of numerous minorities, which is why there are diasporas and new states comprising refugees who have no original nation – and they therefore create diasporas, such as the United States or Australia.

Relations between diaspora and state are of immense importance in terms of political, cultural and economic focus. We know this from our own people and everyone copies from the Jewish model. Just as “*Taglit*” (Israel Experience) exists in Israel, and Jews have connections with the Jewish lobby in Washington, there is an Armenian lobby, and so on, worldwide.

Another concept, known as “transnationals” refers to the people with one foot here and one foot in the global world. This is why it was assumed in the global world that the nation state had become “*passé*” and that everyone would be able to live without borders. It is only today that we can appreciate how powerful and crucial the idea of the nation state remains in terms of the world order – and relations between diaspora and state are consequently extremely important. The Jewish diaspora is the most

significant one today in the United States and the richest, according to *Forbes Magazine* – what it has gained from the Jews notwithstanding. Moreover, relations between various diasporas, such as Jewish relations with the Indian group, are also very important - a finding of the American Jewish Committee.

To conclude this plenary, this evening we have heard various background presentations that may provide helpful insights you may wish to use for reference. These have ranged from organizational life in terms of political activity, within the structure Tamar has presented, and their transformation: these address some of the issues you will be deliberating in relation to Regulations and the Constitution. Some of these concepts find reflection, including within the dramatic ideological struggles that Yossi interpreted, spanning three thousand years of Judaism. Similarly for the import of the address by Minister Hanegbi who enumerated Israel's achievements and reported on its positive state of affairs with satisfaction. While this is true, he nonetheless brought in the prime minister's introspective reference to the short-lived nature of the Hasmonean period, i.e., some 80 years – a point we ourselves are approaching. This *sub-voce* parenthesis on a minor note by the prime minister indeed reflected his hope that, with a little more pull, we will also reach the centenary celebration. In between the lines, however, lies a tangible anxiety that our current sovereignty, born of the Zionist struggle, might not endure – because, as has been noted, the Jews' status of sovereignty remains an exception in the history of the Jewish people.

First Temple [*bayit* = Jerusalem Temple, home – tr.], Second Temple and we are presently the Third Temple era.

I still believe that this effort, even on the ideological plane, is highly contingent upon reciprocal relations within, and the overall experience of, the entire Jewish people – points brought out and emphasized by the speakers. The Zionist endeavor belongs not only to the State of Israel – moreover, in future years its success will be closely related to our strength and ability as one global people, physically dispersed but united in essence, to stand together in the struggle for our very existence as Jews, *per se*, and to preserve Jewish sovereignty here, in Israel.

It is said that worldly glory fades quickly. You are invited to look at the abrupt reversal from “Start-Up Nation” to “Nada Nation” – and consider it. The fight goes on.

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## Plenary No. 4

### **Discussions on the Constitution and Adoption of Resolutions**

**Harvey Blitz:** Today, the State of Israel commemorates the tragic assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, and we all thought it appropriate that before we begin our constitutional discussions, we appropriately recognize the seriousness and the tragedy represented in this day. I'm going to call upon Yaron Shavit to say a few words.

**Yaron Shavit:** 22 years have passed since the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on November 4 1995, 12 Heshvan 5956. It is particularly poignant to reflect that we are staying at Maaleh Hahamisha, on the Jerusalem route via Kiryat Anavim, which Yitzhak Rabin always considered a watershed in terms of his service as Commander of the Harel Brigade in 1948. Every night, they would go out on detail to protect and secure the route that was a lifeline to Jerusalem and the community living there. In his Will, Yitzhak Rabin requested to be buried at Kiryat Anavim. In the 1930s, before the creation of the State of Israel, and since then, Yitzhak Rabin's image was that of the ultimate *sabra* and that was how people related to him. This also applied to his avoidance and minimization of the formalities. Rabin served as Defense Minister for many years and— even when also serving as Prime Minister - always visited the armed forces weekly, but never with an entourage of people. When the discussions with them started and the senior army personnel accompanying him wanted to make a point, he would tell them: “I hear you often enough; I want to hear the soldiers, now. What's important to me is what they're thinking and feeling.”

When I graduated the battalion command course, Yitzhak Rabin was the guest speaker in his capacity as Defense Minister and, to my mind, his words resonate also in terms of his own personality.

He spoke in the perennial brusque style that was particularly his own, saying that one of our most excruciating problems has a name – a given name and a surname – comprising the combination of two words: ‘*yihyeh beseder*’ (Everything'll be alright) – a phrase many of us hear daily in the State of Israel, which is an insufferable expression. Beneath these two words lies everything that is generally anything but alright: arrogance and exaggerated self-confidence, strength and power that have no place. This ‘*yihyeh beseder*’ has been at our side for many years, symbolizing an ambience that borders on the irresponsible, pervading many areas of our lives.

This sloppiness, unfortunately, is to be found in many sectors of the Israeli public and not especially within the IDF. It consumes us wherever it exists and we have learned painfully, the hard way, that ‘*yihyeh beseder*’ means it will be anything but that. IDF service in the new millennium demands numerous qualities and skills from those serving within it – you, or the group to which you belong - that

distinguish you from other groups in the population. It transforms you into a cadre of quality upon which an entire and anxious state can rest its head, assured that its security is in the best possible hands.

I now invite everyone to offer respect to the memory of Yitzhak Rabin by observing a minute of silence, during which I suggest that we each reflect upon the man who truly dedicated his whole life to the public, the State of Israel and Israeli society.

**The minute of silence was followed by a Yizkor ceremony to commemorate Yitzhak Rabin and the reading of the Prayer for the Welfare of the State of Israel.**

*Yehi Zichro Baruch* – May his memory be blessed.

**Aharon Yadlin:** I feel a tremendous emotional need to speak about Yitzhak Rabin and his contribution to Zionism and the State of Israel. It has already been said that Yitzhak Rabin was the Harel Brigade Commander who rescued Jerusalem. The Harel Brigade comprised 2,000 *Palmach* fighters: 500 were wounded and 400 were killed, but the Brigade fulfilled its mission and Rabin, with his stubbornness and soft-heartedness held the brigade together to prevent it from disintegrating. Afterwards, he became Deputy Commander of Southern Command and secured the conquest of the Negev as far as Eilat. He was the Commander in Chief who built the IDF into a strong army across its different forces – the armored corps, IAF and the navy. Moreover, it was the IDF of his making that went on to win a brilliant victory in the Six Day War.

During his period as Israeli Ambassador to the United States, he came to appreciate the importance of the connection between the Jewish people and the State of Israel and ensured US military and strategic support for Israel. Rabin served twice as Prime Minister of Israel. In his first government, I was Minister for Education. This was following the Yom Kippur war and it was imperative to rebuild the IDF and increase the defense budget, but the education budget remained unscathed. On the contrary, additional funds were invested and the education system continued to offer a full school day, providing school meals nationally and an academic framework for teacher training. It was Yitzhak Rabin who made this contribution to the State of Israel, both in defense and education.

**Harvey Blitz:** [Thanks the speakers and opens the session on amending the Constitution, with procedural explanations on rules, time and voting.]

**Alan Silberman:** [Introduces himself] The *votum separatum* before you proposes to add a very few words to paragraph 2A that deals with the subject of discrimination. Why do we have to add this? The answer is very simple. In this section, we are detailing important categories of discrimination, but if we start listing categories, we have to remember that there are other very important categories of

discrimination. Particularly in this organization, we have to be very concerned that we must be against any form of discrimination that is against one or another stream of Judaism. Discrimination against orthodoxy, discrimination against Conservative or Masorti Judaism, discrimination against Reform is wrong and contrary to the principles of our organization.

There is one other sentence. There is only one test for participation in the *Histadrut Hatzionit*: that you accept an act on *Tochnit Yerushalayim*. We accept happily all philosophies of *Tzionut*, so long as the people involved accept and practice the principles of *Tochnit Yerushalayim*. Here again, there may be differences between us within *Tzionut*, but discrimination *bein tzioni vetzioni*, discrimination between people who are Zionists, is not acceptable in this organization.

For the sake of the future of the *Histadrut Hatzionit* and the strength of our organization, I ask you to vote *be'ad ha- votum separatum*, to vote for the *votum separatum*.

**Gael Grunewald:** It will come as a surprise to those present to hear that I completely agree with Alan Silberman's true words.

In the Zionist movement, there is and must be room for everyone. Especially today, when we mark the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin z"l, we are one people, one family, one Zionist movement. And the points that Alan has brought appear in this article without a *votum separatum*. There is no call for this, because people are sufficiently intelligent and able without a *votum separatum* [to understand – tr.] where it reads - Zionism is a movement which adheres to the basic principles of justice, equality and democracy and which rejects discrimination based on... all the grounds mentioned here.

We want to be one family, and for this to happen sometimes the formulation needs to be positively framed, so that everyone can feel what is being stated in the words set down here. Therefore, for the purpose of organizational unity, the unity and existence of the movement, I ask us all to vote for the Article as it currently worded, without need for additions that are already covered in the general definitions about what Zionism and the Zionist movement are.

So that we can vote unanimously, in my humble opinion, it is possible to accept the existing definition as adequate for purpose and inclusive of everyone, because we are one movement and one family.

**Rabbi Mauricio Balter:** Gael, you are right; however, we do have a precedent. In Israel's Declaration of Independence, the same idea appears and the Conservative and Reform movements suffer because no one reads between the lines sufficiently. And what is set down in writing is handed down to future generations. What is not written remains open to interpretation and we don't need Rashi on the Constitution: what we need is a very clear set of laws.

**Yaron Shavit:** If your lips and heart are in the same place, you will vote in favor. I cannot say I am for the motion, but vote for it if you agree with it.

**Dina Hahn:** I have listened to the presentation on behalf of the rigorous, precise and complete wording. The point is that in the legislative process there is never an absolutely rigorous wording. Irrespective of the degree to which we define and detail and state that we want it to be this and that, regardless of the topic, in the final outcome, in reality there will always be some additional detail that is not incorporated in a broader formulation, which covers everything without specifying details. This is the desirable and correct wording and that is how legislation is drafted in the Knesset. I move to retain the existing broad and general wording, as proposed by the committee.

**Yaakov Hagoel:** I strongly identify with the existing wording because I believe it is inclusive of us all, because if we begin specifying details I want *Sephardim* and *Ashkenazim* to appear. I want it to mention people living in Israel and outside Israel, people living in Tel Aviv and the periphery. I believe the article's wording is excellent; it provides an umbrella [*sic*]: all the streams of Judaism are mentioned and we are proud that these streams are here with us within the existing [text of the] article. Let us continue to preserve the unity of [our] home.

**David Breakstone:** What we have to understand here is, if there weren't any categories stipulated on which discrimination would have to be rejected, there would be no need for adding this. But one could easily interpret what's written here in the current constitution: rejects discrimination based on origin, nationality, race, or gender; discrimination based on other things is fine. So, as soon as there's the beginning of the delineation of what you cannot discriminate on the basis of, it has to be more inclusive than what appears here.

**Gil Segal:** I believe that one also needs to give expression to unity in writing in an unambiguous manner. I would like to remind you that only a short while back the Israel Government proved that it is not faithful to this unity to the final letter, in relation to the streams of Judaism. I therefore believe it needs to be set down in writing clearly and concisely.

**Harvey Blitz:** Are we ready to vote? I think we are. I want to make sure that we all have the same voting rules in mind. We've appointed counters from IGT so that they're totally neutral in this. And the way we're going to do this is we're going to vote, they're going to count by sections. I need everyone to be in their seat and raise their voting card and, after your section is counted, stay in your seat so we can make a correct count all the way across. Let's try a show of hands first and see if we have a clear answer. All those in favor of the *votum separatum*? All those opposed?

There's a majority, but is there two-thirds? I don't know if there's two-thirds. It needs a two-thirds majority. I think we ought to count, frankly. We're going to count. It was close enough. I don't want to have any debates later.

Stay in your seats and raise your hand. Let's start all three at a time. Thank you.

*Mi be'ad?* All those *neged?* The vote was 69 in favor and 46 against. That is not two-thirds. I didn't even ask for abstentions.

That could only make the vote more negative. It can only make it more negative. Ask Fern. They want a second count. The rule is in the printed rules and you can speak to Fern, is that if you want a roll-call vote, you need to ask for it before the vote. And you need 20 members.

**Harvey Blitz:** We're going to move on to the next section. The next section is Article 3. This is language proposed by the committee. And throughout the constitution, there are references in the male form. All those in favor of adding this language, raise your hand. Your voting card, rather. All those opposed?

I want to be clear: In my mind, we were voting not on the entire article but on the prefatory language that was added. We're now going to discuss the rest of changes in Article 3. Yaakov.

**Yaakov Hagoel:** I am referring to the second amendment

**Harvey Blitz:** What we just voted on was adding the language, the prefatory language, in Article 3, about the male term including the women. We're now going to discuss -- there are strikes. If you look at the rest of Article 3, in the definitions there are words that have been changed, have been struck. Which definition do you want to discuss?

**Yaron Shavit:** The definition of an organization. First there's the "member" and below that is "organization". We don't have a problem with it. We're in favor of the proposed changes with the exception of one item, namely the proposal to delete the following line: and each of their members have individually accepted the Jerusalem Program. I am saying that we are ready to vote for [amending – tr.] the entire article, save that we request that this line be excepted [from it]. I am requesting the vote be split as follows: in the first instance, with this line remaining and then without it, for that reason.

I wish to remind you that there is a footnote below which states that the amendment does not apply to [those with – tr.] current status. The present article refers to what will happen after the next Congress, i.e. we are committed to working with organizations and World Unions whose members accept the Jerusalem Program. Not only that the organization commits itself to the Jerusalem Program, but that its

members commit themselves to it. This is my position and I therefore ask you, Mr. Chairman, to proceed to vote in two phases.

**Harvey Blitz:** The discussion that we just had from Yaakov was on the definition of "Zionist International Organization". I want to know if I can pass the changes to the definition of "Member" and the definition of "Zionist Federation", leave just that one definition to be debated, so that we can focus our attention on what the question is.

**Helena Glaser:** We also make mistakes, and that probably will not be the only one. That's not what we meant. What is written on the bottom, when you see the clause, the changing on the bottom of the page, it meant all those organizations up to now. From the congress on, for new organizations that join us, each member will have to sign the Jerusalem Program.

So it doesn't change what it was. It needs to be changed. In other words, what Hagoel just pointed was the decision also of the committee. It was just not written. Wasn't this discussed at the meeting?

**Harvey Blitz:** We're voting now on the deletions from the definition of "Member" and "Zionist Federation". Again, please use your voting card, not your credentials. All those in favor of the changes in "Member" and "Zionist Federation"?

**Yaron Shavit:** The point of clarification we are now addressing at length relates to a highly critical issue, and should not have appeared as a footnote.

There is considerable concern about what is obligatory and for whom. These can be found in the Constitution but suddenly they were sidelined to a footnote, which is incorrect procedure. This particular footnote should have been part of the continuation of the article and the definition.

A second point is that it is impossible to create an illegal distinction in advance between existing organizations and those that affiliate in the future.

On the other hand, all the existing organizations have come to an understanding that it will apparently be relatively easy to challenge them, if someone comes along and demands to verify whether every single new member affiliating to them has or has not signed the Jerusalem Program. It is presently extremely easy to contest on this point and so the clarification was made preemptively, in order to protect those within the fold.

On the issue of organizations who join in the future, there is a special amendment to the Constitution providing for the amendment of Regulations relating to the way in which the Executive may approve the Presidium of the Zionist General Council and this will be brought to the Council. It is yet another concept we will address when we reach the Regulations, where we will have the opportunity to present

any demands we wish in relation to the Jerusalem Program. It is impossible, today, to insert in advance a proscribed distinction between those already in the framework and anyone who wishes to affiliate in the future, by rejecting their admission. It is nonetheless, a different status and therefore at the sub-committee and full committee the wording passed with this strikeout – and, with all due respect, one cannot play around with the rules. That is what is before us at this vote and this is the topic on which we need to vote.

**Neriya Meir:** We are talking about an article that already appears. The move to amend here is about deleting an existing [point from the - tr.] article. The Jerusalem Program is the main foundation underlying consensus agreements: it is inconceivable that we should be removing it from its current prime position to insert it in some obscure point in the Regulations. If the Jerusalem Program is indeed the heart and core of the Zionist Program, which everyone affiliated to the Zionist movement is required to sign, it must also be signed individually. Furthermore, woe betide us if among us there are people who are not prepared to sign the Jerusalem Program and want to be members of the Zionist movement. This is why we are requesting the voting be split section by section and vote on this sentence separately, i.e. to retain the individual obligation on their members in respect of the Jerusalem Program.

**Masha Lubelsky:** The subject of membership is a very serious issue in the Zionist movement and we need to scrutinize ourselves now, without regard for whether someone belongs to a particular stream of Judaism or political party. It is inconceivable that organizations, streams or movements should state in general terms, ‘We support the Jerusalem Program’, while, due to technical difficulties, how does an organization, stream or political party know who supports the Jerusalem Program? It requires a massive organizational undertaking that is not currently in existence. What we have today is a very generalized declaration but we should aspire to a situation where everyone carrying a membership card who is affiliated to one or other organization should be registered as supporting the Jerusalem Program. This is a process that will take time to complete but we need to seek to implement it, because it is unacceptable that we should lie to ourselves.

**Harvey Blitz:** We're going to vote first on the definition of "*haver*" or "Zionist Organization", and there are two choices in front of you.

**Reuben Shalom:** The vote will now relate to the section beginning with the definition of a "*haver - Member*". It begins: "individual members joining the World Zionist Organization", continuing and ending with the words where there appears to be a strikethrough in respect of "each of their members have individually accepted the Jerusalem Program," with the (1) in superscript designating the inclusion of the footnote below.

Anyone voting for the motion is voting to adopt the proposal placed before us by the committee, namely that these changes should be incorporated. If you are voting against – and if the motion does not pass – it means that we leave the wording as it has appeared until now.

**Harvey Blitz:** We're going to vote on the language that's in the definition of "*haver*" and we're voting on whether we accept the changes to the language that go through the word "*Tochnit Yerushalayim*," which is eight or nine words before the end of the section. So the question is whether or not we accept the definition of "*haver*" as suggested by the committee, through the words שקיבל את תכנית ירושלים (has accepted the Jerusalem Program), but not including the words שכל חבריו קיבלו באופן אישי את תכנית ירושלים (has individually accepted the Jerusalem Program). We'll vote on that separately. I have the authority to decide how to split sections:

If you vote in favor of the resolution, you're voting to keep the language that's in front of you, not the original language; the revised language that's in front of you, through those words in the definition of "*haver*". And if you vote against it, you're voting to keep the original language, in the Constitution that exists now.

**Ellen Hershkin:** Referring to Article 5, Section 1. I want to understand if an individual person can join the WZO and not necessarily have to come through a Federation, because when you go to Article 5, Section 1, it talks about the fact that you can become an individual member and will then be assigned to the Federation from where you come, which changes it completely - as opposed to an individual anywhere in this world who wants to join the WZO as an individual Zionist. I need to understand the difference. I want to know if this affects individual membership.

**Harvey Blitz:** We're not changing the existing language. All those in favor of the new language, raise your voting cards. All those opposed? Abstentions? **It passes.**

Second part. Now we're voting on language. The existing language in the constitution provides that the individuals have to have signed the Jerusalem Program. That language has been struck in the language that came from the Constitution Committee. So the question we're voting on are just those words to the end in the Hebrew. They read - and each of their members has individually accepted the Jerusalem Program. And those words which are in the existing constitution are being struck in the proposed constitution. If you vote in favor, you're voting to strike the words as has been suggested by the committee. If you vote against, you're keeping the original language that required each one to sign the *Tochnit Yerushalayim*. Let's proceed to a vote. All those in favor of the new language that does not require a signature? This time we're going to count. Now all those opposed?

In favor, 50. Against, 51. **The strikeout did not pass.** The vote was 51 to 50, so not two-thirds, for sure. Now we have to talk about the other less controversial, I believe, changes to the definitions in this section that we haven't voted on yet. We're voting on the changes to Article 3, definitions other than the ones we've already discussed. I think there are some changes here to vote on. All those in favor of the new language with the strikeouts, raise your voting card. Opposed? Abstentions? This appears to be two thirds.

The next section that needs discussion would have been Article 5 on membership, but I have been told there's an across-the-board agreement that that topic is being deferred until plenaries later in the day.

The next changes in the document Article 5, Section 3. There's words that are added in Section 3.

We're not discussing Section 1. Section 2 is not dealing with individual membership. I'm looking to the people from the Constitution Committee who have told me there's agreement to not do Article 5, Section 1. They want to do Article 5, Section 2. So you can look at the amendment there. We'll take a vote on it.

**Yaron Shavit:** The reason is simple – there are no Regulations for this. We wish to see what some of those Regulations would be and then a vote would be possible. As long as there are no Regulations we shall wait until we understand for what we are voting in favor or against, and we therefore propose that 5.2 should be tabled, to be voted on next year.

**Harvey Blitz:** Do you want to discuss - what about 5.3 and 5.4? Do you want to defer those, too, or can we do those? And 5.6 and 5.7? In other words, are you asking to -- is your motion for all of Article 5, or is it just 1 and 2?

**Yaron Shavit:** Tabling 5.

**Harvey Blitz:** Okay, this just needs a majority. Tabling till a later session? I want to be clear that we're tabling it to a time. The whole 5. All those in favor of tabling it to a later session?

All those opposed? Everybody's entitled to understand, including me. What I was told before I came up here this morning was that there was an agreement that Article 5 was going to be discussed at a later session and then tabled 'til next year. I want to know whether you're now suggesting that we table it till next year and not discuss it at all.

**Yaron Shavit:** The vote is tabled. We're having discussions. We want to understand. But the vote is tabled 'til next year.

**Harvey Blitz:** All right, all those in favor of tabling 'til next year the entire Article 5?

All those in favor? All those opposed? Okay, it **passed**. So Article 5 is tabled.

Article 7. Article 7 has changes in it that are -- 7(a), 7(b).

**Yaron Shavit:** It is our understanding that Article 7 also relates to the issue of individual membership. There is wording in 7(b) referring to the number of individual members, but since it is presently impossible to amend that wording - although I presume the intention was to refer to individual members in the organizations and World Unions – but that does not appear in the wording. It specifies “individual members”. Once as it says “individual members” this could mean one thing or something else. We therefore propose to simply split the vote by section, that’s all. We can vote on 7(b) separately and on 7(c) and 7(d), simply to vote on each sub-section separately – for and against – and then to move on.

**Alex Selsky:** I would like to address our members from overseas for a moment, particularly the Reform and Conservative members. At the last Congress there was a decision to make changes to the Constitution – and such changes are needed on many important issues, in order to revitalize the work of this organization – whether in terms of the Federations, elections, or membership. The idea is to attract more members, have more elections, greater democracy, involve more Jewish audiences in Zionist life in the Diaspora. The Congress resolved to charge a committee with preparation of proposals that would be voted at the distinguished Zionist General Council sitting before us.

The committee met for half a year. It comprised members from all the movements, including the Reform and Conservative streams. We convened and held discussions – and only after we agreed on the changes did the Reform and Conservative movement representatives get up and say, ‘Wait a moment, this is not good for us because we have not yet discussed it with our members overseas.’ We asked how it was possible that everyone at the table represented their members while only they did not.

Now we come to the most important changes of all. Ladies and Gentlemen, the changes proposed here are extremely important and we are once again rejecting them with the wave of a hand to June. But I’m not sure that we will be manage to discuss this and vote on it, in June either, and I appeal to you not to defer them. Discussions have taken place, so let us now put all these issues to the vote and move forward with the Constitution rather than tabling it until next time, so that it ends up being deferred until the next Congress.

Let’s vote by section and confront the discussion. Have a discussion and then we’ll vote.

**David Breakstone:** A lot could be said about the way it was handled. I was a part of that -- an integral part of that whole process. And, if there were things that needed to be corrected, it fell on the responsibility of all of the members. However, two points: One: the committee never was intended to

replace the voice of the people, which is why it was brought back to this forum. And two: within the *vaadah* of the Constitution Committee, we didn't take votes of two-thirds, one-third, and so on. Some things passed with one abstention or with two abstentions. It was a majority.

Therefore, what was reflected in the recommendation of the Constitution Committee as a majority doesn't necessarily mean that there's two-thirds. Therefore, the discussion that's taking place here today is appropriate, and the will of the people who are sitting here are the ones that have to determine, not the decisions of the Constitution Committee.

**Harvey Blitz:** So that I certainly agree with. The vote is going to be here.

We're going to go through Article 7 section by section. Are there any adjustments to Article 7(a)?

All those in favor of adding the words "*Tochnit Yerushalayim*" ["Jerusalem Program"] to 7(a)?

All those opposed? **It passes.**

Let's go to: Article 7, Section 1, Subsection (b). It's not clear. I agree it's not clear. I didn't write it.

**Gael Grunewald:** Requests an explanation of the significance of the Article, which is not transparent – the number of individual members of every Federation: it is not a matter of being in favor or against. What does this mean, so that we can vote for or against it?

**Reuben Shalom:** The committee that referred to the issues overall said that when a Zionist Federation is admitted, it wants there to be a minimum number of members. Yaron Shavit, a Member of the Executive, has pointed out that without us having decided to defer the discussion on individual membership in the overall context of individual members, it is incorrect to adopt a resolution right now that incorporates the wording "individual members."

**Yaron Shavit:** This section is unclear in two respects: Firstly, it uses the Hebrew term "haverim yechidim" [individual members] and I have said that there are those who would interpret this wording in a personal sense. Given that there is no mention here of this being *via* an organization or World Union, which is a member of a Zionist Federation, and given that it is presently impossible to add to the wording, and we are unable to pass this, I am suggesting we should not vote on it at this point in time. However, if people insist on a vote, we will oppose the motion and it will fall. It will be resubmitted in corrected form: there's no difference.

**Reuben Shalom:** We can defer a section of the article. The vote will be on the entire article, but there is a motion that this section – Article 7 Section 1 be tabled until next time. Only this section would not be put to the vote today. This is the motion that stands.

**Helena Glaser:** If you are not going to have a discussion, I have a problem with it, where it says that the number of members of a Federation shall be no less than 100. That is all.

**Yaron Shavit:** We are amending the Constitution. With all our desire to amend it, this is not something to be done superficially, and especially not when it might lead to a situation whereby, after the vote it is unclear on what we have been voting. It will not make any difference if there is a deferment, because, under the Regulations, it will be possible to re-present it next time as a proposal to amend the Constitution, only in a clear wording. The Zionist Constitution will be amended, but it will then be amended as we understand it.

In the text as being put to the vote there are still a number of sections where is no option to correct the formulation at the present time. The wording is unclear and we will be obliged to outvote it until it is returned in clear wording: it is not a major tragedy.

**Harvey Blitz:** So your motion is to table 7(b)? All right, we're going to vote on a motion to table Article 7, Section 1(b).

All those in favor of tabling? All those opposed to tabling? It passes. It has more than 50%.

7(c): Can we vote -- 7(c) talks about admitting, as a member, Zionists who are members of the WZO. Is there any issue on 7(c)?

**Yaron Shavit:** We have an observation to make to sub-section (c). We will vote in favor – at least, that is what we are recommending our members to do. However, we have a concern that, while we seek to open up the Zionist movement, in fact we are creating opportunities forward for people to act with discrimination in the distinction between someone already at the table and someone seeking admission at a future date.

Where it reads: “in accordance with conditions that shall be stipulated in its Bylaws”, it is our request to clarify that from our viewpoint, a Zionist Federation that attempts to stipulate conditions that are discriminatory, in terms of distinguishing between someone already within the fold and someone seeking admission from without, is a Federation acting in violation of the Zionist Constitution.

**Harvey Blitz:** We're now going to vote on Article 7(c), Section 1, Subsection (c).

All those in favor of the languages submitted by the committee? All those opposed? **It passes.**

7(d) has no changes. 7(e) has no changes. 7(f) There is a change in (e). There's the striking of the words "the UJA", which doesn't exist anymore, so I assume it's non-controversial.

All those in favor of striking the words "UJA"? Oh, can we do something unanimously? All those opposed? Okay. Thank you. That language in 7(e). **is passed.**

7(f): 7(f) has new language and struck language. Does somebody want to explain? I think we -- yeah, Reuven. Reuven, can you explain what 7(f) is designed to do? There's one sentence, but people should know what they're voting on.

**Reuben Shalom:** We are now in Article 7, Section 1 (f). The addition proposes that those eligible to vote in elections to the Federation's institutions will be those with the right to vote for the Zionist Congress in that Federation. In other words, the two electoral registers will be identical – the Congress electoral roll of that Federation of those eligible to vote for the Congress and those who vote for the Federation, in accordance with the rules set down in Article 22 on who holds the right to vote in elections for the Congress.

There is an option that we decide not to put this to the vote: I am just explaining the wording. People can decide whether to vote in favor against, or even to vote at the next Session, this is open.

It goes on to say, that a Federation can call elections for its institutions concurrently with elections to the Congress. Many Federations work this way, but a Federation can decide to hold the elections separately. What this means is that if elections are conducted separately, the process requires approval of the Zionist Supreme Court, or the Election Committee where the President of the Zionist Supreme Court has delegated the matter to it.

**Neriya Meir:** Given that this sub-section relates to the method of election, there is a request for deferment of the motion.

**Harvey Blitz:** Okay. We're now going to vote on Article 7, Section 1(f). All those in -- who made a motion to table it? Oh, no problem. I didn't hear him. There's a motion to table 7.1(f).

All those in favor of tabling? All those opposed? **It's tabled.**

How about (g)? (g) does not really -- is (g) covered by the tabling? Is there anybody who wants to table (g) or can we vote on it? We can vote on it. All those in favor of 7.1(g)? All those opposed? **It passes.**

(h) that deals with youth-movement representatives. All those in favor of (h)? All those opposed?

Now we're up to (i), also dealing with -- this was an existing section. There's some words added that I think are non-controversial.

All those in favor of Subsection (i)? All those opposed? **It passes.**

(j) is new language. Subsection (j): All those in favor? I have trouble. In the English, J says, "establish local branches of the Federations wherever practicable". It's in the Hebrew.

**Harvey Blitz:** (k) has no change. **Harvey Blitz:** You want to speak to (l)?

**Eli Cohen:** Thank you, Harvey, for chairing the Plenary. I now welcome Nir Barkat, Mayor of Jerusalem and invite Richard Heideman, President of the American Zionist Movement to chair the meeting.

**Richard Heideman:** Please welcome Nir Barkat the Mayor of the City of Jerusalem. He is indeed a visionary, a leader, and a person committed to the betterment of all of the people of *Yerushalayim*.

We gather here to celebrate the Jewish people, to celebrate Israel, to celebrate Zionism, to recall our roots, to appreciate our presence, and to dream and plan so that we may act together as one people for the future.

Our leader in the city of *Yerushalayim*, Nir Barkat, is a Jerusalem patriot and an ardent Zionist. He served in the Paratrooper Brigade, where he served as a company commander during the First Lebanon War, and later served in the reserves up to the rank of major. He is a pioneer, a leader in Israeli hi-tech, and one of the founders of BRM Group, which invested in Israeli startups and in the development of antivirus software.

He holds a degree in computer science from the Hebrew University, studies towards a master's degree in business administration, and lectures on entrepreneurship and leadership. He has been called one of Israel's premier social and educational entrepreneurs. Indeed, a visionary who has committed himself to the establishment of groundbreaking initiatives.

In 2003 he left his business and was elected to the Jerusalem City Council, headed by the Jerusalem Will Succeed faction. In 2008 he was first elected as Mayor of Jerusalem. In 2013 he was reelected as Mayor of *Yerushalayim*.

We Zionists gather from across the world and the American Zionist Movement is proud to be here as one of the Federations, all working together for the common good of Israel, the Jewish people and Zionism. Please welcome Nir Barkat and enjoy the video.

**Nir Barkat, Mayor of Jerusalem:** Shalom to everyone and welcome to Jerusalem. I would like to congratulate the World Zionist Organization, the ZGC and to thank my friends, Avraham Duvdevani and Yaakov Hagoel. Ms. Helena Glaser, distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is an honor for me to stand before you today to speak and share with you what is happening in Jerusalem, in some small degree. I presume that no one disagrees with the importance of Jerusalem's

success for its inhabitants, the State of Israel as a whole, the Jewish people and the entire world. Its prosperity has a far-reaching impact on the future of Israel as a state and on that of the Jewish people: the challenge before us is immense, in terms of how Jerusalem will continue to develop and fulfill its role.

To appreciate the vision of where I would like to take Jerusalem, it is easier to simply look back 3,000 years and understand the model built by King David or to recollect our ancient forefathers who returned to *Eretz Yisrael* after centuries of slavery in Egypt, when each tribe received its inheritance. Those maps of territorial division exist. With the exception of Jerusalem, which was located between Benjamin and Judah, with the Temple in the North and the city gates standing open to all the tribes and pilgrims. At almost any moment in time, people would gather from all over the world to honor the holy city. There were always representatives from all the tribes, with Jews and non-Jews alike to be found within the city.

3,000 years ago, there were, as yet, no Christians – they only arrived a millennium later and the Muslims 1,600 later. Jerusalem as the center of the world, as a holy city and – in my own interpretation to the concept of Jerusalem – as an expression of “*kol Yisrael haverim*” – all of Israel are *haverim* [members and friends tr.]: for everyone who gathered would see all of Israel in Jerusalem, without distinctions as to guest or host. Everyone was equal: this city belongs to me, just as it belongs to the neighboring tribe. This is what creates the dynamics of everyone being *haverim*.

I would also like to offer an extended interpretation of the concept of “*Ki miTzion tetzeh Torah*” – *For the Torah shall go forth from Zion*. As I understand it, when pilgrims returned to their tribal land they would be asked what was new in Jerusalem: if there was a success story in Jerusalem, it automatically became the new international standard, so to speak, because it had been accepted by the *populus* in that city. Thus, a success story in Jerusalem holds immense significance for the future of the people and the State of Israel.

This is the reason why Jerusalem, as a highly inclusive model, needs to be open and fair to all the tribes equally – be they Jewish or non-Jewish. There is room here for everyone.

When people talk to me about the challenges in Jerusalem, as I have just explained, it is almost inevitable that we will touch upon the conflicts we face. If there are no conflicts ongoing between *hareidim* (ultra-orthodox) and secular Jews, or between Jews and non-Jews, it would appear that there must be a tribe missing – but, if all the tribes are represented in Jerusalem there will, by definition, be every conceivable type of conflict on the agenda before us.

To coin an expression from the hi-tech world, I wish to state: “*Conflict in Jerusalem is not a bug, it’s a feature.*” [sic] The challenge is how to manage those processes, because that is Jerusalem’s role and

responsibility. Whosoever seeks to divide Jerusalem does not appreciate its importance as a unifying and unified city.

The model is thus clear: we are presently working to realize the city's tremendous potential in full. As the city's Mayor and an entrepreneur, with experience in new business ventures, we decided to look to economic and classical management models on how to embrace and create change, in order to enable us to fulfill Jerusalem's true potential. I also set three over-arching goals:

The first is to make Jerusalem attractive in residential terms – so that people will want to live here. For many years, Jerusalem has suffered from a substantial negative migration, in terms of the Zionist sector of the population. Through a series of educational reforms that I instituted, we have successfully stemmed the shrinkage of the Zionist sector of the city's population, which is now experiencing new growth. The number of students in the state and state-religious schools had been declining annually: in 2001, the figure was 64,000, and by 2008, this had gone down to 58,000, representing a decrease of 12% in eight years. It was clear that if this negative trend were to continue, the city might lose its color as a Zionist collective, something I perceived as one of the major challenges: it moved me to give up my business concerns some sixteen years ago and to enter the realm public service. The tide has now turned and I view this as excellent news: it was a major issue for me as Mayor of Jerusalem and I look forward with hope and faith, now that we are back on track – although the work is far from finished.

How can we make the city attractive to young people, investors, businesses and visitors?

These circles of interest – the young people who will set up their homes and raise families here, entrepreneurs, investors and visitors – formed the parameters from which I derived a series of goals, strategies and tactics. Naturally, all of these considerations are part and parcel of the vision of a unifying, unified Jerusalem that connects, bringing prosperity to the city. This is my tenth year as Mayor of Jerusalem and I would like to share a few of the major developments with you:

I will start with the world of business. In a number of sectors we have been promoting in recent years, I maintain (and this is already a fact on the ground) that Jerusalem has a relatively important advantage.

**The first sector** is the combination of tourism with culture, known as the cultural and tourist employment cluster. When I explored the city's potential, in comparison to New York with 50,000,000 tourists annually, Rome with 40,000,000, while Paris had 60,000,000 and Cyprus 10,000,000, Jerusalem was attracting barely 2,000,000 tourists per annum.

Over seven milliard people around the world dream of visiting Jerusalem. The target I set was ten million tourists on an annual basis: we are currently almost touching the four million level. Today, we

can see the ongoing cultural renaissance happening in the city, such as the Jerusalem Marathon; the Festival of Light in the Old City and other festivals in the public space; the improvement of sports infrastructure with the largest sports center in the country; the *Giro d'Italia* scheduled to start from Jerusalem. There is also a massive program of activities taking place this year in Jerusalem – in David's City and the Kotel Tunnels, alongside the excavation and development of sites where kings and prophets once trod. The experience of visiting Jerusalem will be enriched – in terms of sanctity, history and connection to the sources, as well as culturally and through sport. It falls to us to connect the plethora of tribes in different ways to the city of Jerusalem and to increase the numbers of visitors substantially, for those who visit Jerusalem, irrespective of whether Jewish or non-Jewish, will connect to the city better, understand it better and return home as ambassadors of goodwill and peace for the City of Jerusalem.

I am pleased to be able to state that this process is developing successfully and that we are currently witnessing a cultural renaissance and growth of tourism in Jerusalem.

**The second sector** that is developing really well is that of hi-tech. We are fortunate to have an excellent university in Jerusalem: the Hebrew University ranks with the top ten leading universities in the fields of Humanities, Mathematics and Computer Science. The only problem has been that the city was formerly unable to retain its wonderful native entrepreneurs, with the brain drain migrating toward the center of the country or overseas.

Through concerted efforts supported significantly by Prime Minister Netanyahu and the Israel Government generally, we have been able to create something known as an *ecosystem*, which has proven highly attractive to young entrepreneurs. Only four years ago, there were 250 start-up ventures in Jerusalem, a relatively low figure: last year we crossed the 600 mark. In the past, Jerusalem did not rank in the top 50 cities for hi-tech: since 2015, it has been there – initially in 35<sup>th</sup> place, it ranked 25<sup>th</sup> in 2016. I would like to point out that Mobileye, a Jerusalem company, was purchased by Intel for 15 milliard dollars. Furthermore, in a conversation with Professor Amnon Shashua and Ziv Aviram it was decided to establish their world center for automated automobiles in Jerusalem – and the company stands to recruit 3,000 engineers over the next four or five years.

Jerusalem has thus added some 4,000 new engineers from 2015 through 2016 to its existing contingent of 14,000 – representing a growth of some 26% in just two years. National growth increased some 8% in parallel with this – in other words, Jerusalem is accelerating its growth in one of the major futurist sectors.

Yesterday, we laid the cornerstone for Rafael Industries' first ever plant in Jerusalem, destined to employ some 350 staff. We can see that companies are choosing Jerusalem as the place of choice to develop the future. For me, this is a dream come true, and I know that as we develop the city in physical terms it is being paralleled by an increasing demand in the business sector because the prime impact factor is the provision of employment opportunities.

Alongside the economic development of the city [is the physical change]: in another seven to ten years from now, those entering Jerusalem will not recognize the city gateway. Between the Central Bus Station and the Convention Center, there will soon be [a new railway station with] the completion of the fast railway line from central Israel, cutting the journey [to Tel Aviv] to 28 minutes and transforming this area into a transport hub. The amazing new train terminal will be located 80 meters below the roadway, complemented by additional light rail routes and the Central Bus Station: this is where the largest business complex in Israel is being constructed, with 24 skyscrapers, nine of which will rise to over 36 storeys. By comparison, this center will be seven times the size of the Azrieli Center in Tel Aviv, with room for 60,000 employees. It will be highly accessible and the most advanced center of its kind in the State of Israel. This is no fantasy, it is already under construction. From the Begin Highway there will [also] be a road directly from the Hebrew University campus to the nearby residential neighborhood of Beit Hakerem.

This will provide an additional half million square meters of surface area for businesses. Together with the growth of the number of plants in Har Hotzvim in the next decade, we will be able to double the size of employment opportunities in Jerusalem, which is the number one magnet for population influx.

**The third sector** is the student population in Jerusalem, which has grown significantly, from 31,000 to 42,000 across all the higher education facilities, including the Hebrew University, in terms of engineering studies and Masters' courses. There has also been a growth in employment opportunities and this has led to more young people deciding to remain in the city.

By comparison with other cities in Israel, Jerusalem is immensely disadvantaged. In recent years, I have unfortunately had to lead a campaign against the Israel Government, and particularly the Finance Ministry, aimed at accessing appropriate budget allocations for Jerusalem. From a comparative survey we conducted on the basket of services at the national level or in other major cities, a Jerusalemite's status is currently inferior in relation to elsewhere: the present allocation per capita for Jerusalemites stands at some 70% of the national average, i.e. 30% below the average rate.

I hold no mandate from the residents of Jerusalem to accede to such a state of affairs. In Jerusalem, compulsory [rates] concessions account for 700,000,000 Shekels: rather than allocating 1.5 Shekels per Shekel of concessions to enable Jerusalem to alleviate poverty, with a rate of 44% of impoverished among its population, the city is being penalized because it possesses fewer resources, relative to other, less impoverished cities.

Jerusalem's success is not that of its Mayor or its residents alone. We need to achieve the transformation of Jerusalem – into a city attractive to more young people so that they will settle here, and particularly those in the Zionist sector. We need to enable Jerusalem to cast off its poverty, become an attractive place for business ventures: only then will we be set on the right path – and the road ahead remains long.

I bring these points because you, as the World Zionist Organization hold shares in the city of Jerusalem: indeed, each and every one of you can follow through. When these issues come up for discussion you need to show your support for Jerusalem's continued development and not to concede on the fine print – because, at the end of the day, with resources and budgets we can show that Jerusalem's condition is improving year by year.

We have a wonderful city. Jerusalem is priceless and therefore we are working together to move it forward. I can promise you one thing: I shall neither rest nor concede on any commitment to the city of Jerusalem, and especially not to the Finance Ministry in respect of its pledge to assist us.

Thank you all for your attention and I wish you an enjoyable conference.

**Richard Heideman:** The Mayor of Yerushalayim epitomizes the principles to which we here at the Zionist General Council are committed: leadership, vision and a commitment to unity. Mr. Mayor, we thank you very much.

**Avraham Duvdevani:** It was inconceivable to hold the present session without commemorating the Jubilee of the Reunification of Jerusalem. As you are aware, the word 'Zion' means Jerusalem and thus the term 'Zionism' derives from Jerusalem: thus, the zenith of Zionist fulfilment is that of rebuilding Jerusalem, ascending to the city in order to build it and stand within it.

I would like to thank Mr. Barkat for his endeavors on behalf of the Jewish people in the context of rebuilding Jerusalem. At a meeting of the Extended Executive last week, we heard an overview of the detailed City Gateway development project. We discussed our own cooperation with the Jerusalem Municipality, because the Central Zionist Archive is located at the city entrance and we are working together to plan the site within the new layout of the City Gateway, which is a development of unparalleled scale. I would like to add my personal thanks to Mr. Barkat, as someone born and raised in

Jerusalem, myself. My own father served on the Jerusalem City Council for 14 years and, at the first Council meeting after the liberation of the city in the Six Day War, held on the following day, he moved the resolution to institute a *Yom Yerushalayim* – Jerusalem Day, a resolution that passed. He was also a paratrooper in the IDF and had been actively involved in the military action to reunite the city.

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## **Plenary No. 5**

### **Discussion of Constitution & Adoption of Resolutions**

**Eli Cohen:** While waiting for a quorum, reported that the summary of the panels from the previous year had been distributed to the participants containing all the topics raised there.

This year, the panels are addressing issues relating to the Departments, and the Department Heads will present their vision. The panels will be moderated by the Chairmen of the Zionist Federations. A book published by the Herzl Center is also being distributed, on the subject of the First 120 Years of Zionism and the 70 Years of the State of Israel. It is a book of reflections, with interesting, topical articles that reflect on Zionism in a contemporary light.

**Nili Nehorai:** I thank and congratulate Mayor Nir Barkat on all his work in developing and nurturing our capital city. This Session will discuss constitutional amendments, but it also marks the Jubilee of the Reunification of Jerusalem. The Constitution is none other than a tool for fulfilling the Zionist dream of the Zionist movement that advocates the return to Zion. It needs to commemorate strongly and joyously the liberation and reunification of Jerusalem, our eternal capital from time immemorial, and this particularly in light of UNESCO's recent absurd resolutions.

We will now resume the voting. We concluded Article 7 Section 1, subsection (i) - we voted on this Article.

We are continuing to the deletion of subsection (h).

There is no modification of subsection (l), this is merely a change in numbering. So we will go on to subsection (h).

In favor of the deletion? (Do you want it in English. I know that only as regards the Articles there is a problem?). In favor of the deletion? Against? **The motion is passed.**

Subsection (i) - In favor of the deletion? Against? Abstentions? One. **The motion is passed.**

Subsection (l) - an addition - In favor? Against? **The motion is not passed.**

Subsection (m) - here there were two options.

**Yaron Shavit:** I wish to make an exceptional request, but the issue of Shabbat and Kashrut is also an exceptional issue. In the debates in the Constitution Committee we arrived at two versions and Rabbi Wasserman and I were charged with trying to formulate an agreed version. We tried very hard, but have not yet been able to do so. Accordingly, on the date indicated in the Constitution we could not present you with an agreed version.

Our exceptional request, agreed by most of the groupings, and also out of respect for Shabbat and for Kashrut, is to vote that a vote will not be held on this topic; and Rabbi Yehiel and I will be charged with trying to formulate an agreed version and will make every effort to present a version that will receive a broad consensus from the members at the next Council Session.

**Rabbi Yehiel Wasserman:** Indeed, in recent months we made great efforts, but as of this time we have not succeeded in finding a wording that would maintain respect of the Shabbat and satisfy both sides. However, we decided for the sake of respect for the Shabbat, and also respect for the Movement and those present, not to bring this up for discussion here in order not to dispute it, but in order to continue with the voting. To return it to the Committee, and to continue to discuss it there in the hope that, God willing, we will find the version that will meet most of the expectations of everyone. We hope we will succeed in this.

**Nili Nahouri:** In favor of postponing the amendment, the addition? In favor of returning the Article to the committee? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

Paragraph 2. In favor? Against? Abstentions? **The motion did not pass.**

Article 7A. There is a request to split it and we will start with the first two lines "A Zionist Federation accepted as a member of the World Zionist Organization". Now we will vote on the addition - "and for as long as it complies with such conditions for recognition, as stipulated in Article 7 above".

In favor of the addition? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

And now on the addition - "must work in that region by means of and in partnership with the Federation" and to delete "must consult with the Governing Body of the Federation". And "must work in the region by means of and in partnership with".

In favor of the addition? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

Now in Article 7A - the last paragraph - "The Outer Executive determined" etc. until the end of the Article. In favor? Against? **The motion did not pass.**

Article 10 - here too there is a request: the beginning of the Article, the addition - "The Executive may, at any time, require any Member that is not an individual member to furnish information". I did not see a definition of individual member. I wish to receive an explanation on this addition.

**Reuben Shalom:** For an understanding of the term - any Member who is not an individual member, I refer you to Article 3 in the Definitions Section, definition of the term "Member", we voted on this at the start of the day. Member means an individual Zionist who joins the World Zionist Organization: as such, this is the one possibility of a member.

A second possibility - a Zionist International Organization, insofar as they are members and a Zionist Federation etc.

Namely, in Article 3 in the definitions of the word Member, they said what the possibilities are of being a member. This motion says that the Executive may, at any time, require any Member that is not an individual member. In this case, this is a Zionist Federation and a Zionist International Organization.

A Union is not a member, to the best of my knowledge. The Legal Advisor confirms what I have said. Today it is written – "The Executive may, at any time, require any Member..." This is an existing Article. We simply emphasized that do not require the individual member to show that he complies. It is simply an addition in order to understand that the right to request the information from the Member also exists today. We emphasized that the request will not be for a private individual who joined the WZO.

**Nili Nehorai:** In favor of the addition that an individual member is not required to furnish information? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

In the second part of Section 1, beginning, "If a Member does not furnish such information within the time fixed by the Executive". The voting on the second sentence, to the end of the Article. Here too there is a request to split it.

**Yaron Shavit:** Members, we will not be able to vote on the second part that relates to the words "The Outer Executive may propose" for a simple reason; we expect to see on basis of what criteria the Executive proposes what it proposes, as regards the Member who fulfills or does not comply. We need to look at the Regulations. Moreover, in our opinion, in those Regulations it must be stipulated that, in the case of a Member who does not comply, not that the Executive "may", but that it "must" – because, unfortunately, there are several cases of which we are aware, where bodies and Federations do not meet all kinds of requirements of the Zionist Constitution and unfortunately nothing was done to address them.

So, when there will be organized regulations, we need to know what happens with a Member who is in breach of the stipulations and directives, or does not fulfill the requirements. Then we can vote in favor.

There are two possibilities. If there is agreement to hold a vote and to postpone this part, we will postpone it. If not, we will have to vote against and to submit an amended proposal next time.

As regards the last part of Section 1 - "Or the Outer Executive determined that it did not fulfill" etc. In these cases simply to postpone all this part until there are regulations. My request in short is to hold the vote and to postpone this part to next time..

**Nili Nehorai:** We are transferring this, pending approval: we are postponing it.

**Silvio Joskowicz:** Excuse me. When you come and say pending approval of the Regulations, will this be approved by a regular majority? This does not depend on approval of the Regulations. We want to discuss and vote after we know what the Regulations are.

**Nili Nehorai:** We are now voting on a proposal to transfer the second part of the Article for discussion in the committee. In favor? Against? B Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

Article 13 - there is a request from Member of the Executive Neriya Meir.

**Adv. Neriya Meir:** We are in Article 13 about the Elections. Historically, the Congresses were fixed once in four years; this changed last time and it was decided that Congress would be fixed once in five years.

We wish to oppose the proposed amendment that in fact extends the current term of office to five and a half years. It is important for the finality of the debate and for democratic processes; it is proper for there to be a fixed period. Five years must be five years and not one day over. This is an opening for manipulation: once you start extending the period to 5.5 years, it then moves toward six years. We moved from 4 years to 5 years. Let us fix this as is, and therefore the amendment now raises this - 68 months, i.e. 5.5 years - there is no reason for this.

**Nili Nehorai:** I propose that we split the Article. Firstly, we will vote on 68 months and then will vote on setting the date at least 36 months before this.

Explanation: we will vote on the first line in the Article. Either you are in favor of the amendment, i.e. to modify as is appears with the amendment, or you are against and in fact wish to leave the Article as it was previously, i.e. at least once in five years.

First of all, there is a request to transfer [this to the Committee]. I need somebody from the Committee to explain why there was a request to postpone convening of the Congress, to determine no more than 68 months, and at least once in five years.

**Reuben Shalom:** Historically, we remember that the Congress, even when it was every four years, was not always held at a specific period. Sometimes it was in June, sometimes in October etc.; there were considerations at the time of setting the Congress date, historic events, considerations of convenience, costs etc. Wars are an exception, but there is also a specific article for this in the Regulations. The question always arose. Sometimes it was postponed for a few months. The last Congress was also held after five years. As you will remember, the Congress in 2010 was on June 16, 2010. However, the last Congress was in late October, in Heshvan. In other words, this difference, the possibility of an extension always existed - and incidentally will also remain, if the Article is not modified. They simply wanted to limit the possibility of this extension to 68 months.

It states “five years” and there is a full stop, but it must be clear that it is impossible to extend this to five years and 11 months. If the motion is not passed, it will remain “once in five years on the date and in the place determined by the Council”. It remains like that and, as I said, we viewed the postponements and therefore defined how far it can be extended. This does not mean that this possibility will be implemented, but this is for you to decide.

**Neriya Meir:** There is a difference between what is written down and what is expressed verbally. Currently, in the existing wording, if there is a modification of a month, two months, it will happen - but once Had they they wanted it to be 5.5 years, they should have written that. In no other article here does it state “five years and no more than 5.5 years”. What is written is “once in five years” - that it will be once in five years. It does not look good to the public that we prolong our own term of office. We can also propose not to hold a vote on this article and to refer it for a vote or, alternatively, to leave this in the existing version.

**Silvio Joskowicz:** If I told you we will not be able to bring the young generation because they are students and cannot come to the Congress, would you not postpone the Congress? This is the reason. It is another example of why this flexibility is needed. I therefore propose we leave the amendment as it was presented here, 68 months.

**Yaron Shavit:** Today, too, there is flexibility regarding the date of the Congress and Reuben spoke about this. The Committee deemed fit to limit the flexibility. As Neriya said, if there is a limit then

everybody understands that it is possible to extend up to the limit. This should be discussed in the Committee.

I also received a comment from member Harvey Blitz that if we write in the second part "The Congress date will be fixed at least 36 months before", it would be a long time before the date, without leaving any consideration. This also leads to difficulties because if the Committee did not formulate or allow for any leeway or judgment in the publicizing the date of the Congress, there may arise a situation where they publicize and later need to retract and say it was erroneous, and publicize a new date - and then our members in the Diaspora will be angry and justifiably so. Let us think about this a little. We will come up with something a little more correct and therefore, if Neriya proposes postponing the vote by a year, we will gladly do so.

**Nili Nehorai:** There is here a proposal to return this to the Committee. We are voting on returning the article to the committee.

In favor? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

Article 14 - This refers to the President of the World Zionist Organization. First we will split it and then we will go on to the President. Subsection (b). In favor? Against? Abstentions?

Subsection (d).

In favor? The amended article says it will discuss and determine the policy of the World Zionist Organization. Instead of "it will determine the financial and budgetary policy for the year etc.

In favor of the amendment? Against? We will count. There must be 2/3 - this is a constitutional amendment. 63 against 49 in favor. **The motion did not pass.**

Subsection (e), here they wish in the amendment to delete the "President of the World Zionist Organization" - in fact in Article 39 there is a request for amendment and abrogation of the institution of the President. I think, and in fact, am asking for confirmation. First we will vote on the amendment of Article 39 and then we will come back to Article 14.

As regards Article 39, I give the floor to Neriya Meir.

**Neriya Meir:** We ask not to amend this. The institution of the President of the World Zionist Organization is an institution that has existed for decades. We see no reason to abrogate it, even if it there is currently no President. It is an important institution. We believe that the option should be left for a President of the World Zionist Organization. We do not come here to abrogate institutions in the national movement and therefore we wish to oppose this article.

**Gael Grunewald:** Unlike my good friends, I am very pleased that we have the option to delete this article from the Constitution. Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the World Zionist Organization is a superfluous position. We want to try and streamline this organization, even though it is an old one. There is no need for a President, a chairman, a deputy, and a Chairman of the Zionist General Council. There are members of the Executive; today there is also an Extended Executive. Adding or leaving in the provision for the President is a burden. It may also lead to additional expenditure for the organization. Therefore, I think the proposal to abrogate the President is the correct one and I appeal to members to vote against the article about the President and in favor of abrogating the article about the President.

**Silvio Joskowicz:** If tomorrow our President Ruby Rivlin agrees or wishes to be the President of the World Zionist Organization, will we not welcome him? I propose leaving this in. The position has never been filled, but if there is somebody worthy we will certainly accept him.

**Nili Naouri:** We will vote. We are voting on Article 39, abrogating the institution of the President.

In favor? Against? Abstentions? **The amendment did not pass.**

**Tal Elovits:** Apoining of order: The Council members may not express themselves on the motions. The discussion and exchanges here are only between the members of the Executive, who do not have voting rights. The number of speakers must be limited - one in favor, one against. At present, the feeling is that the Council members are serving as a rubber stamp.

**Nili Nehorai:** When I feel that it is already unreasonable, I will limit it. I think that in certain articles it is important for the members of the Executive to explain and clarify the points. We now return to Article 14, subsection (e). We will split it. As regards abrogating the position of President, this means that the institution still exists but here, however, there is a request - as it were - that the Congress not elect the President. Yes, this is illogical. Is it possible that in fact someone else will elect the President? We are going to vote.

In favor of the deletion in subsection (e) of the President of the World Zionist Organization? Against? Abstentions?

**The motion passed.** Namely: the President remains. We do not wish to amend this. The motion passed is not to amend the Constitution.

**Masha Lubelsky:** Are we now deciding that the Congress will elect the President? What will happen if the Congress does not elect the President? It means we will have acted in violation of the Constitution. We have a problem and need to reflect on how to deal with it. We cannot decide that the

Congress will elect the President, the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman and that it will not elect only the President. That would be to act against the Constitution.

**Nili Nehorai:** Now we have voted and have understood the importance of the presidential institution. I am convinced that at the next Congress we will elect a President and will not violate the Constitution.

**Silvio Joskowicz:** I think Masha has a point in what she is saying. She is right; the intention here is that the institution that will be elected, if and when it is elected, will be an institution of the Congress. It needs to be worded in such a manner of, if and when, rather than making it binding on the Congress to elect a President. This is what we meant.

**Nili Naouri:** No. An amendment cannot be brought and I apologize again. We have already taken the vote.

We are now voting on the rest of the article. We are still in subsection (e) but the rest of the subsection. Namely, the addition of a Vice and Deputy Chairman of the Executive. Deletion of "Treasurer", addition of the members of the Executive and deletion of the word "Inner".

In favor of the amendment? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

Subsection (e1). In favor? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

Subsection (f) - the deletion. In favor of the deletion? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

Subsection (g). In favor of the deletion? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

Article 15. In favor of the addition? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

Article 16. In favor? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

We voted on Article 16 in its entirety. There was no request to split it.

Article 17 in its entirety. In favor? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

Articles 18, 19 and 20 - were not put to the vote.

Article 21 - there is no amendment.

**Yaron Shavit:** Article 22 with the subtitle - *Right to Vote and Eligibility for Election* - as I understand it, it relates to the elections. This must be discussed - it is part of the entire question of who is eligible to vote and who is not.

**Nili Nehorai:** We will vote now on Yaron's motion that this will not be submitted to the vote and will be transferred to Plenary no. 9 also. We will split it. Paragraphs 1 and 2, which are indeed related to the Elections will be transferred to Plenary 9 but we are voting on Paragraph 3.

In favor? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

Paragraph 1 and 2 are transferred to Plenary 9.

Article 23(c). Amendment of the age in the second paragraph of subsection (a), lowering the minimum age to 17. We cannot vote on it, because we rejected voting on the age in another article. There must be rationality and uniformity in the Constitution.

We are going on to Article 23(c). In favor of the addition? Against? The addition **did not pass.**

Article 24. In favor of the amendment? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

Article 25 A. In favor? Against? Abstentions? **The motion did not pass.**

Article 26 is split:

Section 1 - deletion of Section 1. In favor of the deletion? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

Section 2. In favor? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

Section 3. In favor? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

**Yaron Shavit:** In Section 4 we wish to split the voting in the subsections, too, even before the *votum separatum* in general. In the debate held here, I believe there is a broad consensus that the entire issue that relates to the Hadassah Organization, which we see as Section 4(c), at this stage should not be deleted. Accordingly, we will be happy to vote for the deletion of sections (a) and (b) but against deletion of (c).

**Nili Nehorai:** Subsection 4(a). In favor of the deletion? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

Subsection (b). In favor of the deletion? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

**Yaron Shavit:** As regards subsection (c), we asked to hold a vote on postponement of the issue for a year so that we can discuss it and reach an understanding. I believe it will be possible to reach a solution. Our motion for order is to postpone the vote for a year. In the meantime, the Committee will be able to present a new motion.

**Yaakov Hagoel:** Supported Yaron and asked to vote to refer this for further discussion in the Committee.

**Nili Nehorai:** I put to the vote the motion to refer this for further discussion in the committee.

In favor? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

Section 4 (a) was deleted. Here there is a *votum separatum*. I call on Yaakov Hagoel to explain this, i.e. deletion of the words "the other institutions of the World Zionist Organization".

**Yaakov Hagoel:** The Committee discussed extensively in an attempt towards clarification and prevention of confusion. Certainly, the Zionist Council has a status. It is a body that represents the public and Israel in our organization - all the streams and all the parties, and it has held a status for the last 42 years. This is very similar to what we said about Hadassah previously: there are sensitivities here and they need to be provided for. This Article (and I am in favor of it) explains what that status is and what its dimensions are, i.e. rather than something amorphous, but at the same time, that status should not be impaired. If something holds a specific status, that needs to be preserved - and if the Zionist Council had a status in all the National Institutions, it must be preserved in all of them, and not be amended along the way with removal of the other items. I am in favor of leaving the [existing] wording, except for the amendment of the quantities that was well clarified here: to leave "the other institutions" as they were and to continue with this and not to amend it, and I ask you to support this motion.

**Aharon Yadlin:** As someone who created the Zionist Council in Israel, the idea was to attract the young generation and all Israeli society to the National Institutions. After the establishment of the State of Israel, there were those who claimed that the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency for Israel were no longer necessary, that they had already fulfilled their function. This is untrue. There is still a need for the institutions of the entire Jewish people, for *Aliyah*, for combating assimilation. Therefore, there should be representatives of Israeli society in every institution of the Zionist Movement. What do we lose by this? We are just strengthening the attachment to Jewish society in Israel.

**Yaron Shavit:** I filed a *votum separatum* on this motion and I think we have forgotten what the institutions of the Zionist Movement are. The institutions of the Zionist Movement are far more extensive than the concept of the Zionist General Council and the General Assembly of the Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael. Today, the representatives of the Zionist Council, to the best of my knowledge, sit in the Zionist General Council, according to a key that I hope truly reflects the political distribution there; they also sit as representatives in the General Assembly of the Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael.

They do not have representatives, for instance, on the Zionist Executive and when they are entitled to representatives in the Finance Committee sometimes they come and sometimes not. We know that they are pulled one way or another and these are controversial matters in no way related to the status of the Zionist Council and the representation of Israeli society as we see here. There is no lack of representation of Israeli society in the Zionist General Council.

I propose simply to clarify that the Zionist Council representatives will be members of the Zionist General Council and the General Assembly of the Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael and nothing more. However, if we want to go back to the Committee and continue to discuss in an endeavor to reach an agreed list of places where there will be representation of the Zionist Council, so be it. We do not accept a generalization of "in all the institutions of the Zionist Movement".

**Nili Nehorai:** Thank you. In fact Yaakov Hagoel's *votum separatum* is to leave in the words "and in the other institutions of the World Zionist Organization", namely to oppose the deletion. We will now vote on this question:

In favor of the deletion?      Against?

In order to carry the amendment, a majority of 2/3 is required and to carry the *votum separatum*, 2/3 must oppose the deletion, so that it is much easier to know who is in favor of the deletion. It is all the same and then we will go on to Yaron's *votum separatum*. It does not detract from it.

We will go on to the vote on the addition of members: 15 delegates and 5 members.

Those in favor of the addition of "15 delegates and 5 members"? I am not talking about deletion of the other institutions. Without the deletion. In the voting. **The motion passed.**

In favor of the *votum separatum* to leave in the words "the other institutions"? The objection to the *votum separatum* means that you approve the deletion, but a majority of 2/3 is required in order to approve the deletion. So if you vote against it will be carried only if there are 2/3. This is a constitutional amendment.

Against the *votum separatum*?

It was decided to count the eligible voters in the room, in order to know that the vote passed by 2/3. In favor of Yaakov Hagoel's *votum separatum*, namely in favor of leaving this article as it was?

**Reuben Shalom** There are two stages here. It is a little confusing. It is very possible that Yaakov's *votum separatum* will not pass, but ultimately there will be no deletion.

**Eli Cohen** supervised the vote.

There were 124 eligible voters. 54 were against the *votum separatum*, i.e. in favor of deleting. This was not 2/3 and therefore the amendment **did not pass.**

We are now moving on to the *votum separatum*.

The **Legal Advisor** explained the process as it is binding, so that nobody has any doubts.

**Nili Nehorai:** The *votum separatum* was not passed. We will split it - we will do it again as regards the deletion.

We are now going on to Yaron's *votum separatum*. If you are against Yaron's *votum separatum*, raise your hand.

There is a majority of 60% and therefore the *votum separatum* **did not pass**.

We are now returning to the amendment. 4 voted in favor. 49 voted against. A total of 123.

**Eli Cohen:** Out of 124 eligible voters.

**Adv. Fern Braniss:** I have no argument with the Plenary Chair's determination. The majority required in order to amend the Constitution is 2/3 in favor out of those present and the voters. Of the voters there must be a quorum and over half. We determined that there is a quorum. There are over 100.

**Nili Nehorai:** **The vote passed.** There was a vote and therefore the issue is closed.

**Yaakov Hagoel:** Let us place the discussion on a positive track. If you want to appeal, you can appeal.

**Nili Nehorai:** We are now proceeding to [voting on] the Article without a *votum separatum*, since neither was passed. Namely, we are now voting on deletion of "the other institutions of the World Zionist Organization". Please do a formal count.

In favor of the deletion? Against? 71 in favor, 32 against. **The motion pass**.

**Eli Cohen:** Concluded the session, thanked the Plenary Chair for her work throughout the period of preparation of the Constitution and noted how fortunate we are that these are the people who wish to conduct the matters. Well done.

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## Plenary No. 6

### **Discussion of the Constitution & Adoption of Resolutions**

**Rabbi Steve Wernick:** A few opening words. I am from the World Masorti stream. I just want to say that the religious streams work in Zionist activities - in synagogues, in youth movements, in youth camps, in schools, in study groups. We are all doing Zionism. All these places are places where you can bring friends, and particularly young people. The streams in the WZO are Zionist organizations. Don't forget this.

We are now ready to vote on Article 26, Section 5.

In favor? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

We are in Article 26, Subsection 6. In favor? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

Article 27, old Section 2.

We want to delete the paragraph.

In favor of the deletion? Against? One against. **The motion passed almost unanimously.**

Article 29, subsection 1. In favor? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed.**

Article 29, subsection 2. In favor? Against? Abstentions? **The motion passed unanimously.**

We are going on to Article 30A Section 2 - and this is my *votum separatum*.

When I have a *votum separatum* I cannot serve as Plenary Chair in these matters.

**Rabbi Rafi Ostroff:** This is a discussion on Article 30 A, Section 2 - there is a *votum separatum* from my colleague Alan Silberman and therefore he will present his motion and then we will vote.

**Alan Silberman:** Many of you know that I have the honor of being a Diaspora Co-Chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee. This committee serves as a "second pair of eyes" for the budget. What we call check and balances, particularly around the table, where there are members from other countries who came to deal with the budget, but when they ask and want to see a budget line or a budget expense, we are told that this is forbidden.

In the Budget Committee Regulations, there is permission to go line by line and to ask about every expenditure, but when we ask, most of the time we are told that this is not allowed. We want to participate in the committee. Those who come from the Diaspora ask why we are members of the committee if it is only to say yes and no. The object of this *votum separatum* is to guarantee that the committee will be able to vote on details but, at the same time, we do not want to approve that one or two members of the committee can ask for information on every single detail. Therefore the *votum separatum* also proposes that before the committee meeting at least 30% of the members must relate to it. It is important to hold a separate discussion and to vote on a separate issue. The motion is a balance between good procedure and the right of the committee members to participate in the important budget questions. I hope that you will vote in favor of the *votum separatum*.

**Rabbi Rafi Ostroff:** Since nobody wishes to speak, we will vote on this article, whether the committee is in favor of the *votum separatum* filed by Alan Silberman.

In favor? Please raise your card. Against? Abstentions? None. 72 in favor, 37 against.

**The motion did not pass.**

Even though there was a request for a recount since there was a question on one vote as to whether it carried or not, the Plenary Chair decided not to allow a recount.

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## **Plenary No.7**

### **Discussion of the Constitution & Adoption of Resolutions**

**Lea Muehlstein:** Ladies and gentlemen, I really hope that we can continue this session in an orderly manner. We read in Pirkei Avot: לא עליך המלאכה לגמור ולא אתה בן חורין להבטל ממנה. [*You are not expected to complete the labor yourself, but you don't have the liberty of refraining from it.*]

Let's see if we can try and actually get through this, not delay things unnecessarily.

I'll be speaking in English but I will try to refer to the Constitution in Hebrew because that's the wording that is valid. So, following the discussion on the *votum separatum*, which has now ended, we are still on Article 30A, סעיף 30 א', and we are, in the English, in Section (c); in the Hebrew, that's ג. So I would like to call for a vote on Article 30A, Section 2 (c).

Who is in favor? Who is against? The motion **passes**. So, Section 30A, Section 2(c) has been struck.

We're moving on to Article 31. If there are no requests to split the vote on Article 31, I'd like to call a vote on Article 31 in completion. I'm going to wait for everyone to find Article 31. In the English, it's on page 23; *b'Ivrit*, 19. Okay, voting on Article 31:

Who's in favor? Who's against? Any abstentions? **The motion passes**.

Moving on to 32. I'm going to do this section by section because Article 32 is very long. So we're going to be voting on Section 1 first; Article 31 [*sic*], Section 1. Who is in favor? Who is against?

I think we're going to have to count. Everyone needs to sit down, and I instruct very clearly -- Quiet; otherwise we're not going to count or do anything. We're talking about Article 32, Section 1. Votes will only count where there's only the voting card, not your badge. Not this; just the voting card. I don't want to see any lanyards at all.

So who is in favor? You need to sit down; otherwise your vote doesn't count. Who is against?

The motion **does not pass**. The insertion will not be included in Article 32, Section 1.

We're now moving to Article 32, Section 1(a). There's no change in *aleph* א. There's just a change in *bet*. I'm going to call a vote on Section 1(a) ב. Who is in favor? Who is against?

The motion **does not pass**.

We're now moving to 24, Section 2, where there are two changes: There's a deletion and an insertion; we're going to vote on them together unless somebody requests otherwise. In the *Ivrit* it's 20. Section 2. Who is in favor? In favor, please vote if you're in favor. Who is against? **The motion passes.**

Okay, if you want to count, we can count.

Who is in favor? Please count. It definitely carries. Is there really a need to count? Who is against? **The motion passes.**

In the English we're now on page 25; Section 3. Same page in the Hebrew, on page 20. We're going to do this one by one, each change. So we're going to start in *bet* ב. In the English, that's (b). In favor of the deletion in (b)? Who is in favor? Who is against? **The motion passes.**

Moving on to Section (e). In the *Ivrit*, it's *heh* ה.

Who is in favor of the deletion? Who is against? The motion **The motion passes.**

We're now moving on to (f), *vav* ו *Ivrit*.

Who is in favor? Sorry, one second. Point of order. Yaron would like to speak.

So we first have to vote just under deletion of "the President of the World Zionist Organization". Just that deletion, not about the numbers, not about anything else. We're just talking about the wording, "President of the World Zionist Organization". So we're just voting about the deletion and then we can decide if we're going to have a vote about the insertion of the Chairman, because it's a swapping-over and, if you're going to leave the President in, we don't want to necessarily have the Chairman there, because we're going to have some confusion.

So, there is a President. We did not delete the section of the President. So, there is a President, but it gives you a choice. We're going to vote on whether we're going to have the President make this decision, or afterwards we can decide if we want to have the Chairman make the decision.

Who is in favor of deleting "the President of the World Zionist Organization"? In favor of the deletion? Who is against?

So the President of the World Zionist Organization will continue to be in charge.

I'm going to just speak for formality's sake because it's proposed there. I ask you to vote about the Chairman also. It doesn't really make any sense. We will have to at least add an "and" if we leave both in -- or if we have both in. But we're going to vote whether you want to insert here also "the Chairman of the Executive". Who is in favor of adding the Chairman here also?

So we're going to have the President and the Chairman, which gives us the options if...

Who is against? Sorry. "And/or", yes. We're going to have to fix it -- I'm sure Fern will advise us what happens in that case so that it makes sense.

We're now going to vote on the remaining parts of this section. So there's a change in the number, the Zionist leaders not to exceed a certain number, and it's a deletion at the end. So we're going to vote on both of those together. Who is in favor of those changes?

Sorry, sorry, sorry, we need to explain again. They don't know what we're voting on.

So far, in that section, we have voted on leaving the President in and putting in the Chairman. We're now going to vote on the two other changes that are in there. So it's a question whether the Zionist leaders are not to exceed 16 versus 10, and that we're going to ask for deletion and approved by the Congress and the Council. I'm proposing we vote on both of those in one go, unless somebody really wants to separate the two.

Sorry. It's only in the English. I apologize. There's a mistake in the English. So we're just going to vote on the final few words that we're deleting.

Who is in favor of the deletion? Who is against? Any abstentions? **The motion passes.**

Moving on to the next section, (g) in the English, *ṛ b'Ivrit*.

Who is in favor of deleting the section? Who is against? Anyone abstaining? **The motion passes.**

Moving on to the next section, (h) in English. We're voting on all the changes together in one go.

Who is in favor? Who is against? Any abstentions? **The motion passes.**

Section (i) in the English; in Hebrew, *tet v*. It's former presidents. If it's members of the *hanhalah*, please speak in the microphone so everyone can hear you. So we're going to call a vote on this. Who is in favor? Who is against? Abstentions? **The motion passes.**

Who is in favor? Who is against? Any abstentions? **The motion passes.**

Section 4. So in Section 4, I just want to explain that there's -- I think in the English there's a slight mistake that it doesn't highlight one of the changes that is clear in the Hebrew. In the Hebrew the final line is an insertion. So I'm going to vote [*sic*] on those things separately because in the English it's different. So we're going to first vote on deleting the section in Section 4. Just the deletion, not the insertion.

Who is in favor? Who is against? Any abstentions? **The motion passes.**

Okay, in Section 4, in the Hebrew there's now an insertion, and in the English I believe it's -- it doesn't have the English translation at all of that section.

**Lea Muehlstein:** No, that's what I mean; we need to have a translation of it so people know what they're voting for. I'm sorry. We're going to have the translator come up and just translate that section so that it's okay, because I don't want to make a mistake and I don't want to have everyone shouting just because we didn't get the language right.

**The Translator:** The last sentence in English will read: "This duly authorized controlling body of each grouping shall be set down in the regulations for the implementation of the Constitution..."

**Lea Muehlstein:** So we're going to vote on just this insertion. Who is in favor of inserting the last Hebrew phrase? Who is against? We're going to count. We're going to count.

Who is in favor of the insertion? Just in favor. Who is against? The motion **did not pass**.

We're now in Section 4A. *B'Ivrit, ze bet 2*. In English it's A, Section 4, and then in brackets (a), not to be confused with Section 4A, on page 25 still.

Who is in favor of deleting (a)? Who is against? **The motion passes**.

**Section 5.** Who is in favor of deleting Section 5? Who is against? Any abstentions?

**The motion passes**.

Who is in favor of deleting Section 6? Who is against? Any abstentions? The motion **passes**.

In what used to be Section 8, it's going to be Section 6 because we've just struck two. I'm going to propose splitting the vote, because I know that our grouping talked about this for a long time. I'm proposing that we first vote about the insertions up to the point of "the Zionist Council in Israel". So we're going to vote first on the first part of this sentence and then we're going to vote on the next four words.

Who is in favor of the first half? Who is against? Any abstentions? **The motion passes**.

We're now going to vote on the next four words, "or with the Zionist Council in Israel".

Who is in favor of including the Zionist Council in Israel? Who is against? We're going to have to count again, I think. Please sit down.

Who is in favor? But you must be seated to count. Who is in favor of inserting the four words? Same words. Who is against? We're just going to wait a moment. How are we voting?

Who is against? Any abstentions? **The motion passes**.

Number A, *aleph 8*. All changes in one go, unless somebody requests otherwise. We're including everything. **Everything passed**.

Voting on what's now Section 6, it used to be Section 8A, *aleph x b'Ivrit*.

Everyone in favor? Anyone against? Any abstentions? **The motion passes.**

**Dina Hahn:** It says here [in the Hebrew]: *Upon confirmation of the replacement, the new member or deputy-member shall have the full rights of the replacement* - whereas it should read: *the person replaced*.

**Lea Muehlstein:** But the problem is we can't make that change, I believe, because it's not a suggested change. Fern, I don't think we can vote on this. Can we?

Okay. So we're just voting on the suggested change. The comment was accepted and it will be looked at so that we can change it for the future. So we're voting on B, ג.

Everyone in favor? Anyone against? Abstentions? No. **The motion passes.**

Moving on swiftly. Article 35. On page 27 in English, 22 in Hebrew. We're voting section by section just to not confuse ourselves. Section 1, we're voting on the insertion here.

Everyone in favor? Anyone against? Any abstentions? **The motion passes.**

We're on Section 3 where there are changes. It's the same page in Hebrew but it's on page 28 in the English.

Who is in favor? Who is against? Any abstentions? **The motion passes.**

**Lea Muehlstein:** Article 36. Who is against? Any abstentions? **The motion passes.**

Now we're going to 37. Who is in favor? Who is against? Any abstentions? **The motion passes.**

We've already voted on 39, so we're going to move to Article 40, Section 3. Section 3 is the first change. So, Article 40, Section 3: Who is in favor of the proposed changes?

Who is against? Any abstentions? **The motion passes.**

Section 4. Who is in favor? Who is against? Any abstentions? **The motion passes.**

Moving on to Article 41. Page 32 in the English. Sorry, there's a mistake here. So we're going to split the vote on this and we're just going to go through bit by bit so that we're all clear where we are. First I'm just going to ask for a vote of the very first changes in the introductory sentence of Section 1, just that one word, "inner Executive", to delete the "inner".

Who is in favor of the deletion? Who is against? Any abstentions? Okay, we've got some abstentions noted. **The motion passes.**

We're now still in Section 1D. There's an error in the Hebrew "מכל" - it shouldn't be deleted, but it should be "מכל ארגון ציוני" – of every Zionist organization. We're going to fix the language.

**Gael Grunewald:** Request: Someone on the Committee should explain the whole Article, because it mentions the World Chairman of Keren Hayesod. While I support it, there are other functions within the National Institutions that do not currently appear here – Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael, the Jewish Agency, as well as Keren Hayesod. Please can I ask for an explanation of the rationale behind this Article?

**Lea Muehlstein:** It doesn't make sense also to discuss it in context with D, because it does talk about all the organizations. So if somebody would like to give an explanation -- we're still going to take the vote separately, but if somebody from the committee would like to give an explanation? We just had a request for an explanation. Nobody wants to give an explanation? We need some clarification here from a member of the *Hanhalah*. Yaron.

**Yaron Shavit:** It is indeed an honor for me to speak here also on behalf of our WIZO members, who feel slighted by the fact that the words “the WIZO organization” have been struck, which is, on its own, sufficient cause for offense. I would be pleased to receive a clarification from the Legal Advisor, namely – that once we have inserted the change to read: “One representative of each of the ... Zionist organizations,” WIZO will also be represented on the Executive. There will consequently be no further need for the previous additional wording, because of the structured definition of what comprises a Jewish organization, and so on. From now on, every organization will be represented: there is therefore no problem – but it is important to state this publicly.

**Lea Muehlstein:** We're going to vote on D.

Everyone in favor? Anyone against? Any abstentions? **The motion passes.**

Now, we are on *heh* ה. We're going to hear about the World Chairman of Keren Hayesod.

**Reuben Shalom:** Prior to the 2010 Zionist Congress, the Chairman of the World Zionist Organization was the Chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel, and there was therefore no need to state that the Congress has the right to elect the Chairman of the Executive of the Jewish Agency as a member of the Executive.

At the Congress in 2010, after the separation, this amendment was passed whereby, “during the inter-Congress period the Zionist General Council shall be empowered to elect the Chairman of the Executive of the Jewish Agency and the World Chairman of Keren Hayesod as members of the Inner Executive.”

The proposal in relation to the Chairman of Keren Hayesod, given that we are 50:50 partners in it under the terms of the Keren Hayesod Constitution, is of immense significance to ourselves. The Chairman of Keren Hayesod is elected at the Congress and we obviously wish this state of affairs to continue to hold true. If only it were possible to maintain this situation in respect of the election of the Chairman of the Jewish Agency at the Congress...

This resolution proposal as presented by the Committee makes it clear that the situation regarding the Chairman of the Jewish Agency is different, because it does not appear in the Jewish Agency's Statutory Regulations. However, in the case of Keren Hayesod, where it appears in their Statute Book, the motion is to insert this sub-section.

**Yaron Shavit:** I have spoken to the issue that, in accordance with the Constitution of Keren Hayesod, it is the Congress that elects the World Chairman of Keren Hayesod - while this particular Article addresses who shall be elected as a member of the Executive. There is therefore no reason that only the World Chairman of Keren Hayesod should be included, because the Article begins with: "The Congress shall elect an Executive..." - in which we are referring to the Executive.

**Reuben Shalom:** From the outset, the Chairman of Keren Hayesod has been a member of the Executive with the portfolio for Keren Hayesod. In the Constitution of Keren Hayesod, it states that he is a member of the [WZO] Executive, similar to all other members of the Board of Trustees, who are members of the Executive.

**Lea Muehlstein:** We're going to move on to the next section. We're going to just check the bylaws; we're just changing the order of voting.

So we're now moving on to Section 1(a) of Article 41. It's a deletion, and the comment goes with both of these, so we will vote on this comment also to go in here. So we're deleting Section 1(a). We're just going to do Section 1(a) here. We're not talking about 2 at the moment.

Who in favor of deleting Section 1(a)? Who is against?

Okay, we need to count. Order. We are talking about deleting Section 1(a), which begins

"The Congress or during the inter-congress period, the Zionist General Council shall be authorized to elect a chairman of the Jewish Agency", and so on...

Who is in favor of deleting this? Who is against? Any abstentions? **The motion passes.**

Moving on to Section 2; Article 41, Section 2. It's a very small change; just a deletion of one word.

Who is in favor? Who is against? Any abstentions? **The motion passes.**

We're now on to a *votum separatum* and it's my pleasure to invite Alan Silberman to speak to his *votum separatum*.

**Alan Silberman:** Here is our problem: We now have, for sure, intervals of at least – [it] will be five years or even more, between Congresses. At the time of a Congress, in many of our organizations we appoint individuals to *tafkidim*. Why? Because they are part of our *tnua* or because they have a particular position in our organization.

During the inter-Congress period, there are times where they resign or they leave the organization. Therefore, we ask them, before they enter into the position, to agree with us in writing that there will be a -- that if these things happen, and on request of the Executive or directors of our organizations, that we will submit, with their permission, the already-signed resignation; we just add the date.

To be very clear, we are not intending, at any time - no one is intending - to use this resignation where there is an issue of how the individual voted in performance of their fiduciary duty as a member of the *hanhalah*. We are not using it simply because someone says there is a new king and they don't remember Joseph and so take them out. But we have the *tnayim* in the letter.

We understand that there could be a situation where this letter would be given to WZO and Fern would opine that because of the context, because of the circumstance, there is a problem and it's not affected. We understand that is possible. But the general principle is the one that we are asking for here, that where there is an advance agreement with the individual and it occurs he or she has signed and it occurs, then that resignation should be recognized. That is the purpose of the *votum separatum*, and we ask you to support it.

**Masha Lubelsky:** I believe there is a problem with this proposal. It is not accepted in the Knesset, the Government, or local government, that a person elected - presumably by secret ballot - should immediately be required to deposit a letter of resignation. I feel it will only lead to problems and pressure. I don't feel that it is compatible with a democratic regime.

If a person commits a criminal, i.e. illegal, or an improper act, there are ways and means to engage with him in dialogue and negotiation. Why would anyone stand for election, if he or she were required to deposit a letter of resignation in advance? I feel we are creating a complication here, in that this will render the elected person inferior in status - which might leave him or her exposed to various influences, possibly even of an undesirable kind. I believe we need to reflect seriously on the matter.

**Neriya Meir:** The truth of the matter is that this is a discussion on a matter of principle. We not only support what our Executive Member Alan Silberman has said: we believe it should have been even

more extensive. If someone is elected on behalf of a particular grouping and later betrays its ideological values by moving to another faction, or simply betrays the ideological concepts of that grouping, that person can no longer represent it within the National Institutions. I believe it goes without saying that if a person were to betray the values of his or her faction and had previously signed such a document in advance, the World Zionist Organization would not be able to let this pass and be held hostage, or shelter political and ideological refugees acting against the interests on which they were elected.

**Lea Muehlstein:** I'm going to call a vote on the *votum separatum*. Everyone in favor of the *votum separatum*, please vote now. Who is against? Abstentions? **The vote passes.**

There was one abstention. We don't need to count. **The motion passes.**

Article 41A. Deletion of Article 41A, about the former presidents.

Everyone in favor? Everyone against? Abstentions? **The motion passes.**

Deletion of 41B: Who is in favor? Who is against? Any abstentions? **The motion passes.**

41C. All those in favor? All those against? Abstentions? **The motion passes.**

Article 42: All those in favor? Who is against? **The motion passes.**

Article 43: All those in favor? All those against? Abstentions? **The motion passes.**

But we are on Article 45A.

**Neriya Meir:** We oppose this Article because it lowers the threshold. Until now, the terms specified the attendance of at least one third of the members eligible to vote at the beginning of a meeting. As soon as this becomes the attendance of one quarter of the members eligible to vote, it offers too much leeway and *de facto* provides incentive for people not to attend, because one quarter will be sufficient. We believe that one third is a larger number and if the intention is to adopt resolutions within the Zionist movement, they should pass with at least one third of the members.

**Lea Muehlstein:** Does anyone else want to speak on this? No? Thank you for the explanation. We're now going to vote on Article 45A. All those in favor? All those against?

Okay, we're going to do a count just because we need to see if it's two-thirds. We need two-thirds; it's a constitutional amendment. All those in favor. Who is against? **The motion does not pass.** So that motion does not carry.

Do we have some clarification about the question of Keren Hayesod?

**Lea Muehlstein:** We're going to talk about Article 41, Section 1(e) in the English.

**Yaron Shavit:** In view of the situation in which we find ourselves during the course of this Zionist General Council Session and the entire inter-Congress period - and, given the significance that might be attributed to the fact that we are also completely deleting the mention of the World Chairman of Keren Hayesod - at the present time, we are withdrawing our opposition to his insertion and, for my part, the vote can go in its favor. We will discuss it again in Committee and see what we propose for a vote at the next Congress, in terms of which portfolio holders would be rightfully deserving of a place on the Zionist Executive. In order to avoid the appearance that we might be taking some personal action against someone currently in office, we will leave this vote as is, given that other portfolio titles have been deleted.

**Lea Muehlstein:** So we're going to call the vote formally. We're on Article 41, Section 1(e),  
Thank you very much to all of you.

**Eli Cohen:** Thanks Lea Muehlstein who, although she opened by saying the assignment was not hers to complete, has indeed done just that.

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## **Plenaries No. 8 & 9**

### **Discussions on the Constitution and Adoption of Resolutions**

**Eli Cohen:** With the amalgamation of Plenaries #8 and #9, invites Rabbi Vernon Kurtz, the Plenary Chair, to come to the rostrum. Partial copies of the PowerPoint presentation are being distributed, as prepared before receiving additional contributions from members.

**Rabbi Vernon Kurtz:** (Conservative Rabbi from Chicago and former President of the American Zionist Movement, former President of MERCAZ Olami.) I hope we can conduct a dialogue with everyone: members of the Zionist General Council, Members of the Executive and everyone who participated in the Constitutional Review Committee's work.

**Helena Glaser:** I wish to thank the Members chairing the Plenaries, which are far from easy, and welcome the dynamic young women – women with ideas who have something to say, and I believe we are very fortunate to have them with us.

I have already mentioned that we had many disagreements about the Resolution proposals we brought before you and that we agreed to present today the issues I will read out shortly and on which I shall call a vote. I am appealing to members to offer proposals, rather than just opposing them.

We are addressing a period in which our movement has not experienced enlargement or growth: what we want to achieve is a big movement. We can see many new men and women members in our movement. Any proposals brought will be noted so that we can discuss them and present them to the next Council Session.

**The issue of personal membership in the World Zionist Organization.** The situation as of today is that membership is via the Zionist Federations - membership in the WZO has been through the Zionist bodies that belong to the respective Zionist Federations, these being - for the most part - branches of the World Unions around the world. Individual membership in the WZO via the Zionist Federations has been mainly only on paper. The age of eligibility to vote was set at 18.

We are proposing that anyone who purchases the Zionist Shekel will be an individual member of the WZO in his or her place of permanent residence. There will be no requirement to affiliate to a local branch of a World Union – registration will be centralized and overseen by the WZO Executive. This will be an ongoing and continuous process operating throughout the inter-Congress period. We are also proposing that the age of eligibility to vote be set at 17. I open this for discussion.

**Rabbi Vernon Kurtz:** This is important for those involved in the Zionist Federations, large and small alike. I suggest that the Congress groupings take some time now to hold internal and inter-factional consultations.

**Dr. Marilyn Wind:** I am the President of MERCAZ USA. In the United States, we have a very defined and good organization to run the elections. Even with that, we found fraud during the elections. To go out and sell Zionist Shekels to people who are not members of any of the Zionist organizations in the United States and let them vote will just add to the possibility of fraud and I am very opposed to it.

I think that since we already have a manner in which we do the elections and we come together, all the Zionist groups in the United States, under the American Zionist Movement, that we can run our own elections, and this should not be imposed on us.

**Zvi Raviv:** The World Zionist Organization's structure as we know it is old: it is historically based on a structure onto which two organizational wings were added as well as one for the different streams of Judaism. It is, however, a structure that speaks to established Judaism that is continually shrinking, wherever we are, while we are losing Jews who do not affiliate to their communities or belong to bodies that are not represented here, such as the communities in the United States. They will certainly not affiliate to Zionist parties – whether they exist or not – nor to organizations such as the one I represent, which is Maccabi, despite the fact that it is possibly the largest organization in the Jewish world with

some 400,000 members. We need to figure out who is responsible for this state of affairs – and I believe that yesterday, in his lecture, Professor Shain did so when he said that the major event that happened to the Jewish people in the past 70 years were the passage to sovereignty. I am of the impression that we have not been successful in conveying that we are part of this sovereignty [Hebrew: *Ribonut*]. I believe we are declaring and sending the message that we are on the side of the Rabbinate [Hebrew: *Rabbanut*] – the same Rabbinate that it wants to have nothing to do with: not the orthodox Rabbinate, but from the point of view of leadership for the community. I think we need to reflect together how we can demonstrate our sovereignty – how we can take it and display it to the Jewish people in terms of the advantages of being sovereign and independent. Once we do this - which is not a matter to be taken for granted in terms of the young generation, where most young Jews cannot understand even why there is a State of Israel today because they did not experience the Shoah and because they live in freedom. In my opinion, we need to follow through with Professor Shain's line of thought and see how we can convey sovereignty rather than the Rabbinate.

**David Breakstone:** It's healthy that we are able to have discussions between the *siy'ot* [*sic* - factions]. It's also healthy to have discussion with the *siy'ot* - so those'll be a little bit public. But I feel obligated and I want to address this because it was MERCAZ that put the proposals forward in the first place. It's not a proposal about elections, it's not a proposal about positions: it's a proposal about whether or not we want to keep this tremendous, huge Zionist movement that we have, of a few thousand people and that's it, – or whether we want to try to open our doors and whether we want to try to open our doors to young people on college campuses who, quite frankly, couldn't care less – not about *Likud*, not about *Avodah*, not about *Yesh Atid*, not about MERCAZ, and not about ARZA. They don't have a clue about these things. We're trying to draw them in. We want them to become members of an enlarged Zionist movement. We want a new younger generation. And what can we do? They don't belong to the organizations that we represent.

If we're really honest about wanting to expand our movement, the only way to do it is to allow those who are not affiliated to become affiliated. It also should put more pressure upon us to reach out to our young people and our own young constituencies so that the representatives of our organizations also increase.

All that being said, the fact that somebody becomes a member of a Zionist Federation does not automatically give them the right to run for office. These things still have to be worked out. It might well be that we can find some kind of compromise that those who put forward the candidates for different office can only come from established groups that have X number of members and X number of countries,

and so on. Then those people who have been brought into the circle would have an option of either organizing themselves and becoming such a party or voting for an existing party.

But the idea is to open up our ranks, to look at ourselves honestly in the mirror and to say: do we want to keep this small little exclusive group that nobody knows about and nobody cares about, to ourselves, or do we want to try to bring in others? Thank you.

**Moises Salinas:** My name is Moses Salinas and I'm from Mexico. I am a member of Meretz and of the Zionist General Council from Mexico and the Sephardi Zionist Organization. In the past, I was involved in the AZM in the United States and President of Meretz USA, so I can count experience from Mexico and in different organizations. I think that the idea of opening up membership in the Zionist Federations to individuals singly will weaken the movement as a whole because I believe that elections, Zionist activity and our reflection in the World Zionist Organization is less important than what we do throughout the year.

The most important thing is the everyday activity being conducted with young people, children, and adults – and this activity is run by the organizations. We do need to be more open and more flexible with the definition of the organizations – whether they are community, educational or political ones – in that they can affiliate to the [Zionist] Federation. But if we are enrolling people who are not part of any organization and not participating in organizational activity on the ground, this will weaken us, because I believe that if you are truly running activity programs, people will come. It's not about being part of a Federation, its about being doing things, organizing interesting programs that are relevant to the life of a modern Jew in the community. And this is something we do much better when we are organized within institutions rather than as solitary individuals.

**Shanna Orlich:** Hi. My name is Shanna Orlich. I'm with the World Union of Meretz. I hear the discussion. And for those who remember what was my main idea yesterday, which was talking about the dream that came true, I think here we're dreaming but something that is not realistic at all. I hear you saying that the young people in college, that are not affiliated, are going to join if we open it to, like, open membership. This is not going to happen. People that are not part of a community, of an organization, are not suddenly going to reach out and feel connected to this organization and come.

I can speak, I think, as one of the young Zionists of today and I can tell you, if I wasn't part of Hashomer Hatzair, of Meretz, of any kind of Jewish Zionist community, I would not even know that this exists. I can tell you I have friends that are part of our organization and don't even feel affiliated to this.

I think we need to talk, like, very *tachles*. If we, as an organization, are unable to get to these people, young people, unaffiliated, not part of communities, with all the means and the financial means that you have as an organization, we're not going to do it with no budget just by saying it's open to them. They're not going to come. So let's bring our forces together and think how to get to these people, people that are not part of our communities, people that are unaffiliated - and work together to bring them - but they're not going to come on their own, and even less if they don't feel part of something, they're not going to feel part of the *tnua hatzionit* [Zionist movement]. That's not going to happen. So let's dream about things that we can make happen and not about evasive things.

**Solomon Vas Diaz:** My name is Solomon. I'm a Zionist and I love Israel - and that's really how I came to the Zionist movement in the 1980s. My *madrish* was Duvdev at the time, in Bnei Akiva and I wanted to make a difference at the time. The movement I came here [with] was called World Union of General Zionists - and that's what I miss.

I'm happy with this proposal, but for me it doesn't go far enough. The country I came from, the Netherlands, we had a union of Zionists: we had no political parties - we didn't know any of that. I only discovered it when I came to Israel and I saw that there were people looking for a job - and that disturbed me tremendously and it became more and more...

This is maybe a way back. In America we switched from a Federation to having a movement. I would love to see the proposal in June or whenever the *Va'ad Hapoel* is meeting again, saying we're eliminating Zionist Federations and all those political bodies outside of Israel, and we're having again the old system with Zionist territorial organizations, where people can just be Zionist and love Israel and get together. And I think that's what people [want] -- we heard it this morning when our faction met, from people from the Former Soviet Union. People want to identify with their love for Israel, with Zionism, and not with the local political struggles in this country. That's for the people in this country, it's not for us. So it would be a marvelous move forward, back to the idea of general Zionism and love for Israel and getting together for all Jews in Diaspora.

**Lauren Keiles:** Hi, everyone. My name is Lauren Keilis, I'm from the UK and I am a Jewish Zionist student. I think a few people have come up and said students aren't Zionist, they don't care. I think that's a massively inaccurate statement. I'm here and I think, if the organizations that are here opened it up to students and young people from their communities where they are, then I think there would be more people here. I'm going to speak from the UK. Jewish students who are on campus fighting BDS all the time and also having very positive Israel campaigns on campuses, so, people really do care. I also think that without speaking to many students, assuming that individual membership will increase student

attendance is a big statement to make. And without asking students what they want, I don't think a decision like that can be made.

From my point of view, the reason why I came here - it's my first conference being here - is because ARZENU reached out to me and invited me. I think if more people did that, there would be more students here, because we do care. So, thank you.

**Josh Weinberg:** I agree with Loren and Shana. As to what David Breakstone said, I think we agree on the same issue with different methodologies, or different *shitot*, for how do we want to attack the issue. Let's say we opened it all up and it would be an individual-membership-based system. Just by natural process, we would create this. We would create an organized structure through which we could then go and approach the masses, because, as it is, the WZO operates as an umbrella organization and it goes through its organized system that's meant to trickle down to *amcha* [grass roots – tr.], essentially. So, now that we have the system, I think we need to really work on improving the *system*.

Fellow Members, the reason young people don't come here is because we spend three whole days on Regulations and Constitutional Amendments, which does not exactly enthrall the average young person. Whereas Israel Experience and the volunteering options are successful in inspiring young people who do not feel close to or part of a Jewish or organized community, according to the thesis presented by Professor Shain. So let's invest in organizations and ideology. It is perfectly alright for there to be different ideologies – in fact, it's to our credit. We should ask the organizations: What do you believe in? What inspiration do you wish to give? How can you attract young people, the next generation, and show them that we came here to build and be built?

**Alan Silberman:** I want to expand - I'm sure we all want to expand - the number of people, particularly young people, who will stand up and say, "*Ani Tzioni.*" That I think we all agree. The next question is how do we recognize the fact that some, but not all, some young people look at organizational structure and certainly look at the agenda of this meeting and say, "Why do I want to be part of that?" But that doesn't tell us that there is one pathway to bring people in from where they are into a sense of *Tzionut*. In particular, we have to learn to distinguish between those areas where we have functioning Federations and functioning member organizations within Federations, that can be used and should work to reach out in various ways to bring people in: as compared, for example, to areas where there is no Federation functioning, and where the right way to begin in that community is to either begin with existing *irgunim* [organizations – tr.] – because if you're in an *irgun*, then maybe it's an easier path – or with individuals. The idea that there is one solution that works, and particularly a solution that

creates challenges for existing Federations, doesn't get us to the goal. The goal is to shape approaches that will work in different areas of the world. *Todah.*

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**Helena Glaser:** The second issue on the agenda is the **Electoral System for the Zionist Congress**. The system determined by the Zionist Federation of the Area Election Committee established by the Zionist Federation for that purpose was required to be consistent with accepted democratic principles, be conducted on the basis of recognized electoral regulations, with (proportional) electoral system options including indirect, either by ballot or postal vote, as well as the recognition of an online electoral system that operated successfully in the United States on a number of occasions. Any other electoral system required the approval of the Central Elections Committee.

The amendment proposed is a centralized, unified electoral system, coordinated by the Extended Executive. Details will be set down in new Regulations for Elections to the Zionist Congress that are pending formulation. Area Election Committees will still be established by the Zionist Federations in each area to oversee the proper conduct of the centralized and unified electoral system.

**Hernan Felman:** This is a focal discussion. The young members here possibly find it superfluous to dedicate an entire Council Session to amendments, but as someone who is part of the Zionist movement I believe that this process is of major importance for many years to come. Moreover, when we complete it, the ideological agenda should indubitably take first priority.

**Dario Teitelbaum:** This is not a separate issue, because elections are an act of sovereignty. As sovereign Jews, here in Israel, we can elect people who are citizens of Israel and this is an expression of our sovereignty, while there is also sovereignty that comes with the WZO process – that is how I define it. At the centenary event for the Hashomer Hatzair movement, the Chairman of the World Zionist Organization said that the Zionist movement is first and foremost an educational one and there are no shortcuts in education.

This is where I return to the proposal of individual membership. Membership of an organization provides an answer to specific needs and where it does not do so, it is superfluous. Most of us are members of Facebook and other relevant platforms that provide a response to our various needs for our respective age groups. Only organizations can do this. Moreover, if and when we see the process of identification, rapprochement, participation, creativity and commitment happening – such as coming to Israel, which is a fantastic opportunity offered by all the organizations here – we effectively throw it all

away, diminishing its value; and in the final outcome, its only value is that of voting. We need to address the issue of individual membership.

**Silvio Joskowicz:** I have just this minute been informed that tens of thousands of Jews in Argentina are waiting for the opportunity to go online and pay the Shekel contribution to become part of the Zionist movement. They are awaiting the Council's decision in order to join the Zionist movement. If this is not related to the subject of elections currently under discussion, what is? Is the [Zionist] Federation not working properly in Argentina, so that tens of thousands of Jews want to bypass it – because it's no good? Is that what you are implying? Let us suppose that the computer robot admits the member who wishes to make the Shekel contribution: what is that robot going to do with that person who has registered by computer and wishes to be a member of the Zionist movement? Are we going to work directly from Jerusalem? Are we going to communicate with that Jew who wants to affiliate to the Zionist movement from here, rather than via the Zionist Federation? By the way, this could amount to several hundred thousand individuals, because we have here the representatives of three streams of Judaism, and also the organizations. From this umbrella, through the Zionist Federations, World Unions, streams of Judaism and the organizations, we reach hundreds of thousands of Jews around the world who want to be proud Zionist Jews. They are not interested in voting, they come to seek serious Zionist activity.

**Shoshana Dweck:** I'm Shoshana Dweck. I'm a second-generation here. It seems to me that what both of these [proposals – tr.] are trying to do is to sit down and eat a meal without doing the cooking and without doing the cleaning. The Federations are best able to do the engagement and the follow-up that keep people connected. And what we at the higher level have the opportunity to do and the resource to do is to engage in the radical ideas of social entrepreneurship, of trying different things, of supporting piloting, of recognizing that each country engages in a different way. The Zionism is different; the communities are different: some have similarities across the Federations within a particular country, and some do not.

We need to respect who the individuals are you're trying to reach - if you're trying to reach the millennials, if you're trying to engage more people - and provide the support that can only come from the international body, to help the local bodies do what they are good at. The last thing the Jewish world needs is more organizations stepping on each other's toes.

**Yaron Shavit:** I am in favor of opening up the Zionist movement but for genuine purposes, not as a gimmick. Why is it that when we invite teenagers here we also tell them that we cover part of the costs,

and you will have to find the rest of the money yourselves? We should be covering all the expense and offer them respect without being manipulative.

In respect of the enrolment of people for individual membership and online elections – we have no way of checking in any country where there is no [Zionist] Federation. No-one can check up on the identity of the person voting, whereas when people voted we [currently] know what party they belong. All these problems demand resolution, in order to prevent abuse of the system of an online elections platform and of online membership campaigns in areas without a [Zionist] Federation.

In conclusion, we sit here in comfort in our own country, confident of the appropriate nature of our actions. The Zionist movement's relative advantage over the Israeli electoral system is that it enjoys local representation in many locations worldwide – and this system that is democratic **throughout** the Jewish world, not only the State of Israel.

The Israelis say: "Let's do everything from Jerusalem." Are we going to be able find from here to seek out a few votes and people to affiliate over there? Apparently, the fact that this will kill off the [Zionist] Federations, because they are superfluous – let them work on their own – is of no interest to us. I am telling you that if there are no Federations, there is no need for a Zionist movement: the Israel Government does it all far better!

**Sondra Sokal:** *Todah rabah.* I'm going to wear my AZM hat at this moment. I've spent a lot of years on this election process, really a lot of years and a lot of Congresses, and tried out all sorts of election procedures. I have to tell you, it's really hard, and that's only in the United States. To think that, from Jerusalem, you're going to figure out how to do a centralized election system for the whole world, in all the languages that are required, and to make every country feel comfortable that you've done it, observing their best interests as well as your best interests, that's a pipe dream.

We have worked very hard in the United States to develop a system that's really expensive and could be better. But that's just in one country. It boggles the mind to think that -- it's almost a *chutzpah* to think that -- you're going to accomplish this for the whole world. I really do believe that unless you want to emasculate the Federations, you really need to leave this in the hands of the Federations. You have to do a better job of ensuring that Federations have democratic procedures but have procedures that are appropriate to their countries. I think we'll do a better job that way.

**Jim Schiller:** Jim Schiller from the American Zionist Movement. We have a saying in America: If it's not broken, don't fix it. We've worked real hard in getting our system good. And one of the problems you have to worry about is verification. When you go onto the internet, it's very difficult to make sure

you have a secure system. I'm not sure that all over the country, from a centralized basis, that's so easy to do. We have Social Security numbers; other countries have other ways. There's all kinds of security items that you need to take care of. Another saying we have is "All politics are local." So to run a campaign that's going to be in centralized place, like from Jerusalem, for the entire world, you're not going to get the local activity, the local support that you get from the Federations. Thirdly, if the WZO wants to find out about how to run elections, I would suggest they start by running elections for Israel. Thank you.

**Male Speaker:** Hello. I come with two different hats here: from Maccabi World Union on one side, and from Maccabi Tzair Olami on the other side. There are different ways of showing affiliation to the Zionist idea; very different ways. When somebody comes to a program here in Israel, of course they're showing their affiliation to the Zionist idea. When 32,000 people around the Maccabiah come to Israel because of a Maccabiah, that's another way of showing their affiliation in terms of their love and support and action, on behalf of their organizations, to the State of Israel.

The fact that we here represent those numbers, okay -- and now I would like to use here the hat of the *Mo'etzet Tnuot Hanoar Hatzioniot Ha'olamiot*, the Council of all Jewish Zionist movements, youth movements, our guys worldwide. Okay? We're covering the whole world. If you want to engage into supporting and bringing more youngsters to our organizations, all the young guys who spoke here grew up in youth movements. So support our youth movements. That's the best way you want to grow with ... So support what we have. We're part of ourselves.

We are one organization with you. So if you want to grow, start with us. That's the first thing. And in terms -- if we want to show the numbers, show the numbers of all organizations together. We have amazing numbers. I don't know why the obsession here is on registering people in personal ways -- we're so many. Actually, we're dealing with Zionism every day, in each one of our seminars worldwide, and we're doing -- all of us. I'm talking about not only Maccabi - for sure, Maccabi - but I'm talking also about the whole movements. So let's support that with our youth movements, and of course we'll keep on growing together. Thank you.

**David Dormont:** Introduces himself. I'm from Philadelphia in the United States, and also have an obligation to Meretz. I strongly support what was said by the last two AZM speakers, and let me add a little more color to that, at least from an American perspective. One, when we hold elections, at least our last ones, the money that -- we charge people for it because, once again, we're trying to prevent fraud, because, whether we like it or not, we know that that's a possibility. And we want to have a democratic institution.

In fact, what we represent is the most important democratic institution in the Jewish world, because that's what we are: representatives from around the world. And when we charge people, one of the things that has happened is that actually has created a surplus that's helped us allow us to run our Zionist activities in between elections.

The other thing that it does - and we have lots of factions here and we had some disputes -- by having a Federation and making each Federation run an election that's fair and democratic, people have to cooperate, people have to put aside their partisan differences and try to work together. And to say that we're not going to do that and we're not going to work together and, instead, we're going to defer everything to Israel, is only going to create more problems for us both locally and internationally. So I strongly urge us to keep things the way they are and, where things aren't democratic, we have to find out ways to make it better. So let's improve our democracy where we have issue - and there may be some issues - and let the Federations in each country try to figure out how to make it work best for all of us. Thank you.

**Lea Muehlstein:** Rabbi Lea Muehlstein. I want to say something about individual membership and that we are -- if we are talking about this as if this is going to attract younger people. I think we're completely mistaken. We need to take real action to bring younger people. It means giving up your seat and giving it to somebody younger. It's not going to happen any other way. That's why we as ARZENU decided to nominate a young person to the Board of Governors, and I'm very glad to be giving up my seat to the next generation, very soon I hope.

So it's really something - don't get blinded by this internet, whatever, it's not going to work. The only way you're going to make it happen is if you give up your seat and you find a young person to take it.

I also want to say something about the elections. I think it's really important that we remember why we do this. If the elections are only there for us to get our seats, what are we doing? How much money are we wasting? If we can't use the election to build community, to spread the Zionist message, to motivate each one of us, to work harder for the Zionist cause, to bring more people on board, what are we doing? And I'm really sorry to say that if we are going to just centralize it, that's not going to happen, because we're not going to work as hard. What we need to do is: we need to spread the message; we need to work hard in our communities, because this is not what it's about. Out there is what it's about: this is just a zoo.

**Bill Hess:** I'm Bill Hess. I'm also a past leader of American Zionist Movement. I don't want to reflect on anything that's been said now. I worry that we in the World Zionist Organization spend an awful lot of time blaming ourselves for things, rather than trying to make the movement attractive. I think the idea of

adapting institutions is tremendously important. I think the World Zionist Organization needs to find ways to support developing communities and also support the more developed communities, such as the United States and some of the other English-speaking Federations. What I don't hear is the *halom tzioni*. We have to look up, I'm tired of everybody looking down. We can't progress if we're only looking at our feet and saying, "Oy, oy, oy." The Zionist movement created a miracle. This country is a miracle by any measure. If we can celebrate the miracle, people will come and be attracted. How we do it, the mechanisms and the working out, making the sausage, as we say, is almost irrelevant. I urge the leadership of the WZO to lift your eyes and to find that dream and to make it real for the next generation.

**David Breakstone:** One more word about individual membership, then elections. There may not be the hundred thousand that Silvio is imagining, but I don't understand why we as an organization - when we work so hard to bring people to Gusti's *Beit Ha'am* kinds of programs, or the *hishtalmuyot*, the in-service-training programs for those involved in Israel education - why we don't want to tell them, when they get excited about this, that they have a way of becoming part of this larger body - and, unless they want to affiliate with one particular political party or another, they have no way to enter. I think it's absurd and I think mostly what people are concerned about here is that the slice of the pie that they're going to end up getting is going to be a tiny bit bigger because 20 people from here or 13 people from there want to join us. But that's about that.

In terms of elections, Sondra, all of your hard work and what the AZM has done over the years in fact is the inspiration for this amendment, for the proposed amendment of having a digital platform that's going to allow people to vote.

Other countries with 18,000 Jews, with 4,000 Jews, with 30,000 Jews, can't afford to invest in the infrastructure of a digital internet kind of electoral system. Year after year, they've said to us that "If you provided us with a platform for it, we would be able to do it." Rather than spending our limited resources, the limited energy, the little money that we have, on fighting with each other or setting up a website, we could take that money and do exactly what Rabbi Muhla [*sic*] suggested and what Bill is suggesting - and turn the elections into a celebration of Zionism, go out to people and tell them, "Here, you have an opportunity to vote."

The idea of an internet platform is not to dictate to the Zionist Federations what they have to do; it's to offer them the gift of a platform. It states very explicitly that the Area Election Committee would still exist in order to govern and to determine the specific ways that that site would be adapted to the realities, to the circumstances of the community.

It also doesn't say that it's going to happen in Jerusalem. My Zionist dream is that this digital platform would happen from the AZM, because they're the only ones who know how to do it right now. It has to be overseen, it says in this, by the expanded Executive, not by the Executive, because the expanded Executive has more representation from the Diaspora - and I think that that's critical. It doesn't say that the platform has to be developed in Jerusalem or run out of there: it's offering an opportunity to every community around the world, to take advantage of the kinds of things that AZM has developed.

I think we also all know that the only place that elections took place over the last 20 years, pretty much, is in the United States; here and there and other countries. Ukraine. Okay. Wonderful. I think the numbers speak for themselves. We haven't been able to do it. I worked hard on it for years, Gusti worked hard on it for years; others have worked hard on it for years. And everybody in this room that's not from the United States knows very well the energy and the time that you spent, wasted on trying to figure out how to get your one or two or three delegates to the congress. Thank you.

**Salomon Vas Dias:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Look, the World Zionist Organization was one of the first, if not the first, organization which structured itself over almost 20 years ago in a democratic way: democratically elected representatives. Now, the people who were through the years elected and elected in an Executive, which today said "Thank G-d", in Jerusalem had big difficulties getting elected every single time. Once we arrive here in Jerusalem as in our elected positions, we have to deal with people looking very serious to get reelected or elected in executive positions.

To me it seems that we as legislators have a responsibility, and the Executive has a responsibility. It cannot be that those people who are in executive positions are going to mix directly in how the legislation, which has eventually to elect them themselves, are going to be. That's double-dipping. You cannot do such a thing. It is impossible that the same people we are going to elect control who are going to be the people to elect them. That's wrong. And that's why I have some problems. I like part of this thing, this propose but, in general, it cannot be that you do it in such a manner, and I strongly recommend against it, because you have to keep it democratic.

We have, as is said before, experience in the United States. Corruption can be very easy there, with computer systems, you can do a lot of things. It's very complicated. You don't have the resources, you don't have the experience, you don't have the people in the Zionist Executive. You are looking for jobs to mix in elections, and you shouldn't do it.

**Liz Berney:** Hi. I'm Liz Berney from the ZOA, and I had a couple of quick comments. On the elections, all I wanted to say was that whatever system is decided upon, we have to be very aware of the issue of - and which Salomon mentioned - corruption and integrity of the elections. It's very important for us to be an example, as a Zionist organization, of an organization that conducts itself with integrity. We had problems in this past election, with people buying votes and running illegal lotteries and so on. So we have to be very careful that we abide by the laws of the countries that we're working in. And Israel makes lotteries illegal; most states in the United States do. Buying votes is certainly something that shouldn't go on, so let's make sure that whatever system that we end up with, that we really think about those issues and having an election that has a lot of integrity.

Another comment I wanted to make was to tell you about something that we're just in the process of doing at AZM, and I'm proud to say that ZOA was the one who proposed this. There're many issues that we confront as Jews and that Israel's confronting, and we have our differences of opinion on many issues, but there are issues that we can really work on together. I suggested one of those at the last board meeting that we had. I don't know if everybody's aware of this: The U.S. State Department came out with an announcement in September that they were going to "return" to Iraq Jewish Iraqi objects that belong -- holy objects, Torah scrolls and so on, that were stolen from the Jewish community by Saddam Hussein and then recovered by the American armed forces in 2003. We were obviously very upset by this. Some of the people in AZM - one of them - his grandfather was murdered by the Iraqis for being a Jew. And this belongs to the Jewish community: the Jewish community in Israel, the Jewish community throughout the world, the Jewish Iraqi community. And that's where it should go.

I suggested that we write -- ZOA had already come out with a statement on this. I suggested that AZM, as an umbrella group of all these different organizations, come out with a statement also. I was really pleased to see that everybody, right, left, and in between, voted to do this. This was an example of an issue that we all came together on. We're in the process of writing -- finalizing that letter.

So let's think of those issues that we could all work together on and where we can do something for Israel, where we can do something for the Jewish community.

I wanted to mention very quickly one other issue that I brought up at AZM and I was planning to bring up if we had resolutions, which is, hiking safety, and this is something very important. A friend of mine -- his son died on a hike in Israel from heat stroke, and he's been on a mission to make sure that no other young people die from this-- and we have [a] safety [leaflet - tr]. I can hand this out to anybody who likes it: a whole list, a checklist, called "Ariel's Checklist", named after the son who died. I think this is another thing that we can contribute to Israel, it's an example of something where we can all come

together and work for the benefit and to save lives. These are sorts of issues that are really important to work on. Thanks.

**Rabbi Yehiel Wasserman:** Like everything else in life, every electoral system has its advantages and disadvantages. Nothing is perfect and when we look to find a good electoral system, one needs to see where the advantages outweigh the disadvantages and what would benefit the movement or organization in question.

We need to strengthen the local [Zionist] Federations. If we want there to be activity everywhere, i.e. a public Zionist dialogue and a Zionist ambiance, we need to strengthen the Zionist Federation.

The elections are only a means to the end, not the goal itself. They provide the means for holding regular Zionist activity in a particular place, with the elections being part of that process. The voting is for the people who will serve on the local Executive Board, who will be sent to represent that community at the Zionist Congress. Therefore, if we want to reinforce the Zionist Federation, it is important to provide them with both tools and framework, with the elections, in my humble opinion, being one of those items with the capacity to do so.

My second point, from an entirely different perspective, is that we need to be able to control the elections. Jews will register from every conceivable location in the Diaspora. Who is going to check them out to see if they even exist, whether they are indeed Jewish, and whether they are eligible to vote? Maybe they even belong to a different organization altogether? A person could go online, register and that would be that. How much money will we need to invest in the location and verification of such persons, and finding others to establish whether they are eligible to vote, or not? It will be extremely difficult to control and I believe it will prove impossible to do so on the contemporary internet, where two or three million people might register. I wish they would, too. There are elderly people. People could register from anywhere – who would know? And the resulting elections would not be those we seek to hold.

On the other hand, when elections are held through the local Zionist Federation, this usually provides options for control. We are aware of the weaknesses and disadvantages, we know the whole story, but the former are minute in comparison with those a system that might or would be via a public internet platform.

Therefore, in my humble opinion, it is far more advantageous to remain with the existing system and render it more efficient. With more oversight and greater scrutiny, it will be better – so that Federation members and those eligible to vote will do so and be integrated as delegates to the Congress.

**Richard Heideman:** My name is Richard Heideman. I'm President of the American Zionist Movement and past President of B'nai B'rith International. I think it's appropriate that the decision was

made to combine the debate on these two proposals, because they really have a great deal of commonality. Both proposals, respectfully, are ill-advised. Both proposals, respectfully, should be withdrawn or defeated. Both proposals, respectfully, will work against the interests of the Jewish people throughout the world and of Zionism throughout the world.

As the sun sets here in the hills of Jerusalem, let us remember none of us are computer-generated members. We are all involved with friends, with associates, with families, with organizations who have spent time and energy and money for decades, many decades, to be involved with the work of the World Zionist Organization. But we come to the World Zionist Organization not as individuals; we come as groups of proud people who work together. At the American Zionist Movement, we have 25 organizations that cut across the spectrum. Those 25 organizations represent between two and three million people; two and three million American Jews. If we want to strengthen the World Zionist Organization, I urge you, Mr. Chairman, strengthen the Federations in every country, strengthen the federations in every community, strengthen the organizations who are not organizations on paper but who are organizations of real people, real Jews, real Zionists.

And lastly, there are many organizations not here, not because they don't qualify, but because they no longer exist. How many Jewish organizations lost their way, decided to centralize, decided to say, "We will no longer have districts" or "We will no longer have this" or "We will no longer have that"? And before they knew it, their own people fell out of love with them.

Let us use this opportunity to send the message from here, from this particular conference, from this particular Zionist General Council, that we are committed over the next five years to building abroad in a partnership with the World Zionist Organization in a way that will reach to the younger generation and will reach to every one of the hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of organizations and communities who collectively have the potential in reality to reach out to the tens of millions of Jewish people here and around the world. It is that connectivity where the internet, where computers can make sense, but let's not compete with our own to say, "Join me, don't join you. Join the sky, don't join the community."

We need the people in the community to be reactivated, and they will do so if they receive inspiration, leadership, and vision from us. Thank you.

**Helena Glaser:** I am very pleased to see such enthusiasm and that people are talking: this is a partnership, even if they do not agree, and even where the idea was lousy, just the fact that you are expressing yourselves means we already did something right!

It's wonderful that there are so many Zionists in the world: the organizations are large, the World Unions are big, and the Zionist Federations are flourishing. But we need to face facts: the size of the membership in the organizations is declining; in Jewish communities today, the issue being discussed is that people are not affiliating to Jewish organizations, let alone Zionist ones. You are constantly complaining that the Zionist movement is shrinking. It is helpful and important to hear your proposals, but we should not delude ourselves that everything's fine and there are millions out there – if only that were the case.

Everyone should look inwards to what is happening on his or her own territory. As the Chair of the Zionist General Council, the issue of the Zionist Federations is in my blood. I grew up in an organization that worked only with the Federations and I think they require reinforcement and that a lot more should be done for younger people.

On the issue of [Congress] mandates and establishing the size of delegations to the Zionist Congress, with the exception of the United States and Israel. In Israel, by the way, it works according to the outcome of Knesset Elections. Under the existing system, the number of delegates from each Zionist Federation is determined by a local committee and by the Council two years prior to the Congress. Details of the powers of the committee are to be found in Regulation 2 of the *Regulations for the Implementation of the Constitution*.

Our proposal is that the number of delegates from each Zionist Federation should be determined according to the number of those enrolled who paid the Zionist Shekel before a predetermined date set by the Extended Executive. That date would be at least 15 months before the Congress. No Federation from those countries would be represented by an overall number of delegates. A Zionist Federation that complied with the requirements for recognition would be represented by at least one delegate.

**Yaakov Hagoel:** Ostensibly, this is quite clear, but we are only talking about one third of the world here, because it is irrelevant to Israel and the United States. It only affects the rest of the world and this proposal is possibly inequitable. We need to think about that.

On the other hand, maybe we are interested in awakening and attracting “new blood” into the Zionist movement and we need to see how we can help Zionist Federations, organizations and the World Unions at the local level so that they can reach larger audiences, and this is the way to go. I think that it would be worth thinking about in the United States, too.

**Alex Selsky:** The intention of this Article and the others was to enable true and democratic representation of the different groups within the Jewish people and there are some groups that are inadequately represented.

In previous discussions, our brothers and sisters in the Reform movement spoke about the fact that they need to be given room, as do other groups, and not to be discriminated against; they also talked about equality. I would also like to address the subject of equality in relation to another group within the Jewish people that for 70 years did not belong to the Zionist movement – not because it did not wish to be part of it, but because it was not allowed to do so: people who taught Hebrew were imprisoned. I am talking about Soviet Jewry – and when the USSR disintegrated, some of them came on Aliyah to Israel, while most of them emigrated to the United States and Europe. When they reached those shores, they wanted to be part of the Jewish and Zionist dialogue, only to be told by many people that they could not: We love you when you are weak and small and you should listen because we are going to tell you what to do. However, once they began to integrate, they encountered numerous obstacles, including from our Reform and Conservative friends in the United States. This is what happened, to the best of my recollection, in the last elections and we are seeking fair play in this respect, too. I think that if there are Jews who want to engage in Zionist activity, they should be allowed to do so, that's all.

It is inconceivable that France, for example, has over 20 mandates, while two other communities – Russia and Ukraine, where there are twice that number of Jews – have almost half that number of mandates. In Latin America, where there are many Jewish members and [the key is] approximately 2,500 people per mandate – while in the former Soviet Union and Europe there are 30,000 Jews per mandate. Why?

Let's make this fair: places where people affiliate and vote should receive a mandate; places without affiliates and voters should not receive mandates and this should also apply to the United States. Unfortunately, at the last elections and the ones before that, Jews from the former Soviet Union felt that people did not really wish to grant them due representation. These Jews who finally found freedom want to be part of this and what they want is fair play.

I will look for means of improvement before next time. North America is currently home to one million Jews who immigrated from the former Soviet Union. Proportionally, they should have a far larger representation. I do appreciate that there are those here who will say: Wait a moment, we don't want them because if they come, we're going to lose power. Do you want new members? These are they! There is no other group in the Diaspora Jewish world in the West that is as under-represented as the Jews from the former Soviet Union. Bring them in – but without patronizing them, as happened in the

past. They have already been active on behalf of the State of Israel and have a lot of potential, in Europe as well as in the US – but only if you integrate them. There are also other groups, such as Israelis living in the US, etc. Let's make this fair.

**Hernan Felman:** Thank you, everyone. The goal of the meeting was to hear members' opinions and this has been achieved.

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## **Plenary No. 10**

### **Centenary of the Balfour Declaration**

**Eli Cohen** Invites Ms. Ellen Hershkin, Chair of the Plenary and her deputy, together with our keynote Plenary speaker, Dr. Martin Kramer, President of the Shalem Academic College, to the rostrum.

**Ellen Hershkin:** *Boker tov*. I am the National President of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, a 105-year-old movement - older than the Balfour Declaration - founded by visionary Henrietta Szold, with 330,000 members in the United States and supporters throughout the world. We are proud builders of Jerusalem, *bonei Yerushalayim*, throughout two citadels of healing, the Hadassah Medical Center on Mt. Scopus and Ein Kearem.

We, and our sister women's organizations in the WZO, have made it our responsibility to sustain Israel's youth. Hadassah has supported Youth Aliyah to rescue young people, and continues to serve youth at risk. All over the United States, we advocate for Israel. We are proud to advance the mission of our grandmothers, our mothers, and to ensure it's passed on to our daughters and granddaughters.

The Zionist movement of dreamers and doers, thrilled at the words of the Balfour Declaration 100 years ago. The Balfour initiative was created to proactively counter the attempts to delegitimize the Jewish rights, the Jewish voice, and our connection to Jerusalem and Israel as a whole. *Kulanu yachad*: together we can encourage individuals, organizations, and communities everywhere to learn, teach, and act upon Balfour's legacy, to initiate informative engaging programs and events, and to ignite the Jewish spirit of activism and leadership that has been a part of our continued survival for 3,000 years.

To learn more about the Balfour Declaration, it gives me great pleasure to introduce Martin Kramer, Ph.D., the leading authority, on the history and politics of the Middle East, contemporary Islam, and modern Israel. Dr. Kramer was the founding President of Shalem Academic College in Jerusalem, Israel's first Liberal-Arts college, where he continues to teach the modern history of the Middle East. He earned his undergraduate and doctoral degrees in Near Eastern Studies, from Princeton University. He then spent 25 years at Tel Aviv University, where he directed the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and

African Studies. He has taught as a visiting professor at Brandeis University, the University of Chicago, Cornell University, Georgetown University, and the Johns Hopkins University, as well as being a visiting fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, and at Harvard's Olin Institute for Strategic Studies. He has authored and edited several books on Islamic revival and the Middle East.

It gives me great pleasure to present to you today Dr. Martin Kramer. Thank you.

**Dr. Martin Kramer:** Good morning to on this day, one hundred years to the Balfour Declaration. It is a distinct honor for me to appear here today. Of course, there are many events taking place, in both London and Jerusalem, in connection with this centennial - and one does not want to take away from all the other bodies in the organizations that are busily celebrating this occasion. However, the World Zionist Organization has the unique distinction of having helped to bring the Balfour Declaration into the world 100 years ago. Therefore, speaking here, on this day, is an honor that an appearance, for example, in the Knesset cannot match.

[Here is the original Balfour Declaration.] The role of the World Zionist Organization in 1916 and in 1917 is not always recognized, for a very simple reason: The text of the Balfour Declaration makes no reference to it. Balfour addressed his letter to Lord Rothschild with a request that he convey the cabinet decision to the Zionist Federation: not to the world organization, but the English Zionist Federation - and the key figure there was Chaim Weizmann, although he was not yet its head.

Nevertheless, this fact does not begin to suggest the actual division of Zionist labor that went into the Balfour Declaration. Of course, almost from the day the Balfour Declaration was issued, Zionists have differed among themselves over who should get credit for it - which is hardly surprising.

It is not something worth arguing over today, but the distortions of the record detract from the understanding of the Declaration itself. (I'll come back to this in a moment.) The Balfour Declaration is actually more than it is usually assumed to be, but to know that, you have to know more about the role of the World Zionist Organization and its top representative at its birth.

Before I go into this, just what are we supposed to celebrate on this centennial? It is worth pointing out that the celebration of the Balfour Declaration has a very checkered history in Zionism. When it was first issued, it set off waves of euphoria in Jewish communities around the world. During the early Mandate period, Zionists celebrated the 2nd of November as Balfour Day. In the 1930s, as the British backed out of their support for Zionism, Jews stopped celebrating Balfour Day: the British were betraying their pledge, so what was there to celebrate? By the 1940s, anniversaries went completely unnoticed, and the revival only occurred when British-Israel relations improved.

The big to-do surrounding this year's centennial is largely a result of the enhanced relationship between the United Kingdom and Israel, whose leaders seek to give their present ties some historic depth. Moreover, needless to say, Britain and Israel now have an interest in smoothing over the very rocky history of their relations.

It could be well argued that smoothing over is all for the good if you're interested in contemporary politics and not in history, but I'm a historian, so I think history does matter. So, what is the proper historical way to view the Balfour Declaration, one hundred years later? It is the first international recognition of Jewish rights in Palestine. At the time, there were only 60,000 Jews in the country: only about 10% of the population - Zionism was a small movement of enthusiasts. Yet, in this improbable confluence of circumstances, the world's greatest power promised to facilitate the establishment, for the Jewish people, of a national home in Palestine and, as I will show, also worked with Zionists to bring other major powers in line.

Furthermore, this would serve as the foundation for the British Mandate, where the entire text of the Balfour Declaration appears in the preamble. The British would later whittle down their commitment and even rescind it entirely in the white paper of 1939, but not before 400,000 Jews had entered the country as immigrants. While they were only a smart part of European Jewry, which then numbered over 9 million - but those 400,000 gave the *Yishuv* the critical mass needed in 1948 to create the State of Israel.

Therefore, the Balfour Declaration is the foot in the door. In fact, Weizmann called it just that, with a slight moderation and I quote him: "There is a British proverb about the camel and the tent," - and this he said just a few days after the Declaration - "at first, the camel sticks one leg in the tent and eventually it slips into it. This must be our policy." So it became: it was essential for the creation of Israel, not sufficient - far from it - but without Balfour, there is no allowance for Jewish immigration in the Mandate, and without that immigration, there is no victory in 1948.

Let us go back and trace this concept of international legitimacy. Now, of course legitimacy of the Jewish claim has always existed independent of its recognition by others - that is, for Zionists. However, from the beginning, Zionists also understood that the project of establishing Jewish sovereignty would require the assent and the assistance of others, holding more power than the Jews. The first Zionist Congress in Basle adopted this objective as the key aim in the Basle program, and I quote: "Zionism seeks to establish a home for the Jewish people in Palestine, secured under public law." This is usually translated into Hebrew as '*mishpat haklal*.'

Some delegates at the first Zionist Congress wanted to say "under public international law", but Theodor Herzl vetoed that. He was afraid that the Ottomans would see that as a Zionist call for international intervention in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire, but he reconciled the others by saying that "under

public law" included international law. Thus, gaining international legitimacy was the aim of Zionism from the outset.

Herzl tried his own hand at diplomacy with the Turks as well as the Germans, who were their principal allies of the Ottoman Empire, but came away emptyhanded. For the first twenty years of organized political Zionism, it made virtually no progress toward realizing the goal of international legitimation. However, in 1914, the Ottoman Turks made the mistake of entering the war in Europe on the side of Germany and Austria. No one knew how it would end, but many Zionists realized that a possible consequence might be the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. If it fell, the Land of Israel would be back in play, after four centuries of continuous Turkish rule.

With the surrender of Jerusalem to British forces, the Land of Israel and the rest of the Middle East came into play - and the biggest player was Britain, which had massed troops for the conquest of Palestine, crossed the Sinai, and entered Palestine in the spring of 1917. The war in Palestine would take a year and a half: some 16,000 Commonwealth soldiers would die in Palestine.

Britain could have claimed the country as its own by right of conquest, which was a right at the time still widely acknowledged by nations. However, something was changing in the international order. The American President, Woodrow Wilson, had become the champion of what would become known as 'the right of self-determination'; that is, all nations, large and small, had the right to govern themselves. Yes, they were empires, but this war should not add to their store, and defeated empires should be made to disgorge the territories so that subject peoples might enjoy their freedom.

This was the opening for the Zionists. If Britain wanted to control the Middle East, it needed noble causes, people whose rights it could champion. In Arabia, this role was played by the Hashemite Arabs; the Arab Revolt. They promised to launch a revolt with British backing. While in Palestine, the Zionists played that role, and they also made a promise.

The British and the French were worried: they were in a war alliance with Russia and America, but these two powers were reluctant allies, at best. America came into the war late, and Russia was on the brink of leaving the war. The British and the French thought the Jews of America and of Russia had such influence that they might persuade their governments to stay in the war.

Obviously, this was an exaggeration of Jewish power, but the question was how those Jews were to be moved. Chaim Weizmann persuaded Lloyd George and Balfour - the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary - that if the Jews were promised a national home in Palestine, the Zionists would then go out and galvanize the Jews to support the war and see it to its conclusion.

This is what I call the two-dimensional version of the genesis of the Balfour Declaration, and the star of the show is Chaim Weizmann. He had lived in England since 1904, had British nationality, even

conducted military research for the war effort. He was a charmer, an impressive man, with a very sharp political sense and a deep understanding of the workings of the British elite. Later on, as Weizmann and his associates would tell it, the Balfour Declaration was his work, alone.

The problem is that this omits a key part of the story, in which the World Zionist Organization looms large. Britain was indeed part of an alliance and, as the war grew evermore desperate on the Western front, Britain needed its allies still more. That meant that Britain could not promise anything in Palestine without the approval of its allies.

France posed a particular problem because it also claimed Palestine, something that we forget. In 1916, in an accord with France known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement, after the British and the French diplomats who negotiated it, Britain effectively agreed to a condominium with France in Palestine, shared rule. It was to be an area controlled jointly by Britain and France.

However, when he became Prime Minister at the end of 1916, after this agreement, Lloyd George thought this gave too much to France. After all, Britain and the Commonwealth were to do all the fighting, but how could Britain neutralize the French claim, enshrined in the secret treaty? Well, Mark Sykes, who formulated the treaty, came up with the expedient of the support of Zionism. Balfour reinforced it by claiming that this support would mobilize American and Russian Jews to keep America and Russia in the war. Would the French buy into this logic for supporting Zionism? The short of it is that the British asked the Zionists to do the work, and in particular, the top Zionist diplomat, Nahum Sokolow.

Sokolow is a perfect example of the erosion of memory over time. In his day, he was seen as the equal of Chaim Weizmann - but no drama can have two heroes, so Sokolow was written out of the story, which suited Weizmann just fine and which he even helped to accomplish. But in the campaign for the Balfour Declaration, Weizmann and Sokolow acted as a team. If Weizmann was the English end of Zionist diplomacy, Sokolow, as representative of the World Zionist Organization, was the European end.

In the First World War, the World Zionist Organization was neutral - it had to be. Prior to the war, the organization had operated mostly from Germany: the Turks and the Germans controlled Palestine. During the war, its center of activities moved to Copenhagen in neutral Denmark. It was neutral because there were Zionists of all nationalities, on both sides of the conflict.

However, in the Zionist Organization, there was an understanding that, beneath the neutrality, it had to cover all bases by pursuing diplomatic offensive in all of the Allied capitols - and this was the task of Sokolow. It is why he went to London in 1914 to work alongside Weizmann - Weizmann, the English Federation; Sokolow, the World Zionist Organization.

Sokolow is an interesting character. He was Polish and therefore considered more European than Weizmann. He was fluent in many languages and, of course, Hebrew and Yiddish: he was a founder of the

Hebrew press. Someone called him a diplomat of the school of the Quai d'Orsai, that is: the French Foreign Ministry - someone who comported himself as though he belonged to the diplomatic club, which was quite an achievement for any East European Jew a century ago.

Sokolow began to meet with French diplomats; the famous being Picot, of the Sykes-Picot agreement; then he met with higher-ups in Paris and even with the French Prime Minister. (In 1917). His mission was to persuade the French that support for Zionism would help the war effort and that the Zionists, once installed in their national home, would be amenable, friendly, to France.

And he succeeded. Most importantly, he got the French to issue him a now-forgotten letter, the Cambon letter of June 4th, 1917, ahead of the Balfour Declaration, which recognized the justice of the Zionist cause as reparation. Historians agree that this letter went further than the Balfour Declaration. First, it mentioned an actual rationale for itself. If you look at the Balfour Declaration, there is no explanation within the letter for what it's doing: no mention of history; no mention of the Jewish connection to the land.

This letter said, and I quote, "It would be a deed of justice and reparation to assist in the renaissance of the Jewish nationality in that land from which the people of Israel were exiled so many centuries ago." That is the historical context.

Once Sokolow had this assurance, he then deposited it with the British Foreign office and the British officials begin to mumble to themselves, "We're falling behind the French" - something the British don't like to do.

Sokolow did even more. He went to Rome and he got a favorable expression of support from the Italian government and even got an audience with Pope Benedict XV. The Catholic Church in 1917 was not exactly friendly towards the Jews and the previous Pope had thrown Herzl out on his nose - but this one told Sokolow that, in Palestine, Zionists and the Church would be good neighbors. This was an amazing triumph, valuable in its own right, but also *vis-à-vis* the French and the Catholics around the world.

America entered the war in the spring of 1917, as an ally in the war against Germany, so now Woodrow Wilson also had to be persuaded. The Zionists were told by the British that without American pre-approval, there could be no Declaration. This was no easy task, because the American Arabists of the old Protestant missionary type were opposed to Zionism. However, Louis Brandeis made the case, and Woodrow Wilson finally approved the text of the Balfour Declaration, in advance of its issuance. How many Americans know that without Wilson there would be no Balfour Declaration? I think very few.

In the crucial War-Cabinet meetings that discussed the Declaration, the big question of all the critics and the doubters was what would be the attitude of our allies - and thanks to Zionist diplomacy, Balfour could tell the Cabinet that the French and the American allies were fully on board. He even read the Cambon letter in the cabinet. Thus was born the Balfour Declaration - not a British Declaration, but an

Allied one. Remember, in 1917 there was no United Nations, there was no League of Nations: no place where a vote could be taken. There was only the consensus of the Allies, and this the Zionists had secured.

In 1919, at the Versailles Peace Conference, Sokolow made the Zionist case. I want to quote from his opening remarks, which were made to all the assembled Foreign Ministers of the Allied countries, including Britain, France, Italy, and the United States. "In the midst of this terrible war, you, as representatives of the Great Powers of Western Europe and America, have issued a declaration which contained the promise to help us, with your goodwill and support, to establish this national center for whose realization generations have lived and suffered."

So, in Sokolow's carefully chosen words, the Balfour Declaration had morphed into the Allied Declaration: 'You gave us this declaration, all of you' - and he knew no one could contradict him. In 1930, looking back, Lloyd George (he was the Prime Minister at the time) said, and I quote: "In wartime we were anxious to secure the good will of the Jewish community throughout the world for the Allied cause. The Balfour Declaration was a gesture not merely on our part but on the part of the Allies to secure that valuable support. It was prepared". Still quoting Lloyd George, "after much consideration, not merely of its policy, but of its actual wording, by the representatives of all the Allied and associated countries, including America, and of our dominion premiers."

This consensus is also what put the Balfour Declaration in the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine, where it became the guiding principle, the Mandate. And, whenever Britain thought to retreat from the Balfour Declaration - it began to do so in 1923 - the Zionists reminded them that it wasn't just their commitment: it was a collective commitment; it wasn't a unilateral declaration but the product of a consensus, as much as a Security Council resolution might be today.

Telling the story of the Balfour Declaration as a British story is to tell it in two dimensions; it's to flatten it - and that's how it's being told to some extent on this centennial. Prime Minister Netanyahu is off in London for a festive dinner with Prime Minister May, hosted by the descendants of Balfour and Rothschild. Britain is full of events celebrating the centennial - or lamenting it if you're Palestinian.

What about Paris? Rome? and Washington? Nothing - they've forgotten and no one is there to remind them. This does history, I think, a disservice - and it does Israel a disservice. To tell the story as it really evolved has a third dimension, and in that dimension the Balfour Declaration is not a unilateral ploy by a colonial power: it is the product of a multilateral process of international legitimation, which is exactly what the first Zionist Congress imagined.

The full story also deepens the legitimation of Israel; it shows how Zionist diplomacy learned to use leverage - Sokolow understood that while the French and British were allies, they were also rivals and he

understood that he needed both of them. If he could foster competition between them in support of Zionism, he could persuade each to go further than it might have gone on its own - and he did.

Weizmann never gave Sokolow the credit he deserved: he always told the story only in two dimensions, with himself at the center – easier, since Sokolow died in 1936. (By the way, from '31 to '35, I think he was President of the World Zionist Organization.) He never wrote an account. Weizmann, of course, went on to become the first President of Israel: he wrote memoirs which became an international best-seller translated into every language - but I think enough time has passed to tell the full story of the Balfour Declaration, without having to worry that someone's ego might be chipped.

This brings me finally to the legacy of the Balfour Declaration. To listen to Palestinians, you would think that the Balfour Declaration gave birth to the State of Israel and destroyed Arab Palestine, the British are to blame and owe the Arabs an apology. This does violence to history. The Balfour Declaration gave Zionism an opening but not more than that. In fact, the Balfour Declaration didn't legitimate a Jewish state but a Jewish national home, which is an ambiguous phrase but something that clearly fell short of "a state". Much had to happen between 1917 and 1948 to make a Jewish state feasible; Zionists had to make wise decisions and Arabs had to make mistakes - and at any number of turning points, things could have turned out very differently.

By blaming the Balfour Declaration for their plight, Palestinians effectively absolved themselves from all responsibility for the errors they made subsequent to it. The biggest one, of course, was the rejection in 1947 of the UN Partition Plan for Palestine: if they had accepted it, there would be a Palestinian state today. That too had international legitimacy, of both the world's post-war superpowers: the United States and the Soviet Union. If the Palestinians had made a reasonable assessment of their international position, they would accept the plan, but they decided to go against the powers that were - and paid a high price for doing so.

The real tragedy of the Balfour Declaration is that most of the people it was designed for never benefited from it. The Balfour Declaration was not issued for the 60,000 Jews then in Palestine: it was a miniscule number - there were as many Jews in Baghdad at the time. Nor was it [issued] for the Jews of the assimilated countries of Western Europe: it was [intended] for the Jews of the Russian Empire, some five and a half million people, that included Poland as well.

They were deprived of rights of citizenship; they were confined to the so-called Pale of Settlement; they were subject to pogroms and persecution. Over two million had already left for America and elsewhere. Everybody talks about the Western front in the First World War: in World War I, the Eastern front passed right through their homes. Here the Eastern front was just as devastating and costly in terms of lives, and it passed right through the Pale of Settlement. Hundreds of thousands fled as refugees from

their towns and villages, which were ravaged by this repeated back-and-forth of the German and the Austrian and the Russian troops.

Weizmann, himself from a small village in Russia, knew their plight and it pained him; he imagined that millions would be on the move after the war: a tidal wave of refugees. He knew, too, that Western Europe would close its doors in their faces and so would America, as did happen in the 1920s. These would be the wandering millions with nowhere to go: the Balfour Declaration was for them.

The main debate among proponents and opponents in British circles was not whether the Jews would displace the Arabs, but whether Palestine was big enough for these millions. Weizmann regularly talked about four or five million. The British, who remembered their Roman history, thought that the country had a carrying capacity of about two million. Weizmann used his authority as a scientist to argue that in modern conditions the country could support many more.

The way the war ended momentarily improved the situation of the Jews: those in the new Soviet Union – remember, the Bolshevik Revolution takes place in parallel to the Balfour Declaration – suddenly received equal rights and were recognized as a distinct nationality. The czar was gone: there was a new regime; Yiddish gained recognized status; many of the high figures in the new regime were also Jews. Not only did Jews not leave the Soviet Union - some Jews even left Palestine to go there, thinking it would be the setting for the Jewish national revival along socialist lines.

As for Poland, it regained its independence, and Jews were given collective minority rights. Things were looking up for Polish Jewry in the 1920s and they flourished as never before.

The Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate established that Jews were in Palestine by right and that Palestine was their national home –but very few were prepared to leave their real homes. In the 1920s, immigration certificates went begging: no one to take them: only 100,000 Jews in that decade immigrated to Palestine. In the 1930s, after Hitler's rise, Jews desperately wanted those certificates, but now the British began to retreat from the Jewish-home policy and restrict Jewish immigration. Only 220,000 entered Palestine in the whole of the 1930s. By the 1940s, the British had closed the gate, and most of those who came in the '40s were desperate illegals.

So, under the whole of the British Mandate, only about 400,000-plus Jews entered Palestine. That Israel successfully defended itself in 1948 with a population of only 600,000 was really astonishing: an astonishing achievement – but it arose too late to save the millions for whom the Balfour Declaration had been intended. Weizmann had talked about four or five million in 1917: Israel's population did not reach two million until 1960. The Holocaust nearly cancelled out the historical effect of the Balfour Declaration.

So, should we celebrate? "Celebrate" seems to me too strong a word. We celebrate Israel's independence, [the] Declaration of Independence, May 14 1948, and it is the decisive turning point in the history of the Jewish people. Our Declaration of Independence is our defining text; our declaration also mentions the Balfour Declaration, and I quote, that "The right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country was recognized in the Balfour Declaration of the 2nd November, 1917 and reaffirmed in the League of Nations."

But it seems to me that the proper Zionist position is to acknowledge the Balfour Declaration and to celebrate our own Zionist leaders, whose versatile mastery of diplomacy made it possible and who kept the promise of the Declaration when even the British reneged on it. Balfour made the promise; Israel kept it.

**Joshua Weinberg:** I think it was particularly important the way that you framed and really complicated the story of the Balfour Declaration, in terms of the multilateral relations that led to it. I'm particularly interested in the tension between narrative and history and how the dual or multi-narratives in the region have unfolded in the past one hundred years. Can you help complicate that more, with relation to the Faisal-Weizmann exchanges and the McMahon letter of 1919 and how different people see that as sort of their Balfour Declaration?

**Dr. Martin Kramer:** As some of you may know, there was previous correspondence in 1915 and in the beginning of 1916 between the British High Commissioner and Egypt - Sir Henry McMahon and the Sharif Hussein, the titular head of the Arab revolt, which had not yet occurred. And in that correspondence, which took place in Arabic, promises were made by the British to recognize an Arab kingdom within a certain area, south of a certain line, which would have included Palestine. However, there were reservations in the letter, some of them geographic – and there was another reservation: that Britain would recognize Arab independence in those territories in which it was free to act without detriment to its ally, France.

Most historians today believe that that so-called 'French exclusion' excluded Palestine from the area promised to the Arab kingdom but the Sharif Hussein was never persuaded of this – and so they continued to claim Palestine. It was the Emir Faisal, his son, who understood the complications of Palestine and basically reached an agreement with Chaim Weizmann, in which the Balfour Declaration is explicitly mentioned. Faisal accepted the Balfour Declaration, but with the proviso that he would respect that acceptance if the British kept their promises to him, which they did not: he believed that he was entitled to Damascus, but that was given over to the French, instead.

The Faisal-Weizmann Agreement and the Felix Frankfurter letter, and a few other aspects, are indications that, from the point of view of the Hashemites, what was important to them was not Jerusalem or

Damascus, and that they were prepared to forego control of Palestine if the British would help them elsewhere. At Versailles, the peace conference, Faisal got up and said: it's true, Palestine has an overwhelming Arab majority, but we cannot bear the responsibility of dealing with the clashing interests in that country and therefore allow another to be a trustee - which was the British.

Was this an early [incidence] of Israel going to the other Arabs to circumvent the Palestinian Arabs? It may well be argued that this was the case, but there was no Palestinian Arab leadership to speak to. There was only one Arab leader and it was the Sharif Hussein's son, Faisal; the Palestinian Arabs had been defeated in the war. The British had to create a Palestinian Arab leadership: the Mufti - they elevated him from nowhere.

Given the fact that there was only one interlocutor on the Arab side, the Zionists made every effort to bring them on board, too - and the British encouraged them, just as they said: bring on board the French, bring on board the Americans, bring on board the Arabs - and Weizmann made a huge effort to do that. Sokolow, by the way, also met with Faisal - twice, but the story of Faisal is a tragic one. What was the mistake that Faisal made and the Arabs made? They didn't have an Arab Sokolow: they didn't have anyone to go to Paris to get the French on board - and so, when the French decided to push Faisal out of Damascus as they did in 1920, he had no letter in hand to say: 'wait a minute, you promised me something.' The success of Zionist diplomacy makes a striking contrast to the failure of Arab diplomacy at the time.

**Nili Nehorai:** Dr. Kramer, I wish to point out that you omitted to mention the prominent role played by the Nili espionage organization and Jabotinsky's *G'dud Halvri* [Jewish Legion]. They were Jews who proved they would not wait for the British to present the *Eretz Yisrael* on a silver platter by satisfying themselves with words alone: they proved they were ready to fight to obtain it.

**Dr. Martin Kramer:** Jabotinsky's crucial contribution was his attempt to prove to the British that the Jews were ready to fight on their side with a view to liberating *Eretz Yisrael*, just as the Arabs at that time fought with "Lawrence of Arabia", and on the British side, to liberate the eastern sector.

The question that arises about what the *Yishuv*'s Jewish population could contribute and potentially receive in relation to a British victory (on the assumption that there would be a pay-off) is of a dual nature. Firstly, there was Jabotinsky's work and the integration of Jewish troops into the war effort by Egypt, which was a frontline engagement under Allenby's command. Secondly, it concerns the flow of intelligence information emanating from Zichron Yaakov, which was also helpful. Nonetheless I would place greater emphasis on the aspect of the contribution to the British war effort, in terms of seeking a reward. The scenario was not that the Jews believed they were going to liberate *Eretz Yisrael* by

themselves: they did not have the capacity to do so. They were capable of achieving their goals only by means of cooperation with the British, and what they did represented a contribution.

Incidentally, the absence of contribution to the war effort by the Arabs in *Eretz Yisrael* is also a significant point. The Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula made an important contribution to Britain's military victory through the Arab Revolt, whereas, in a reference in his memoirs to the Arabs of *Eretz Yisrael*, Lloyd George wrote that they were cowards. In other words, 'we could have used their support, but they were not prepared to help us.' Towards 1930, Lloyd George also wrote, "People ask me ... why I did not consult with the Arabs of Palestine before issuing the Balfour Declaration." His response: "I was too busy warring with them." The Jews' contribution, therefore, alongside the absence of a contribution from the local Arabs, would later on play a crucial role in crystalizing the thinking about the Mandate. Afterwards, bureaucrats from all over the British Empire would arrive who opposed Zionism, thus seriously hampering the everyday operation of the Mandate and the fostering of a Jewish national home. At the outset, however, there was an aversion towards the local Arabs, who had sided with the Turks against the British.

**Elana Heideman:** In much of your writing, you have talked about the importance of the leadership in enacting diplomacy, Sokolow being one of the, kind of, forgotten individuals. We are one hundred years later and we are immersed in a debate over the significance of Balfour. My question to you, to help everyone here as we sit in a forum that is the heir to this leadership is: what would you say to today's Jewish leadership, as to how to utilize the Balfour Declaration and its legacy for future generations? What should we tell the next generation and what can we do that isn't reactive, but proactive, for a hundred years and onward?

**Dr. Martin Kramer:** That is a very interesting question - and my lesson from the story of the Balfour Declaration and, by the way, from the story of the Partition Resolution of 1947, is that Israel cannot afford to rely only on the external support of one power.

Great power in this world waxes and wanes. Look back at the 20th century: it began with the Ottoman Empire and the British Empire: both are long gone; and the Austro-Hungarians went to the Hapsburgs. We had the rise of the Soviet Union: it came; it went. We are in an era of American power and we do not know how long it will last.

You ask about the next hundred years. The genius of Zionist diplomacy was always to understand that there were multiple centers of power - and even if one connected more with one than the other, one had to cultivate all of them.

By the way, I have an article about the Partition: there is a forgotten aspect of Partition, too -- that without the support of the Soviet Union, it would not have happened. Israel's existence owes as much to Joseph Stalin as to Harry Truman.

So what does that mean, going forward? We don't know what powers will emerge over the next hundred years, but we must have a very active, proactive diplomacy in reaching out to all of them and to understanding that our current “what is” will not be.

Now, just another, just, final point about the quality of our diplomacy and leadership. We had a huge advantage one hundred years ago, in that our diplomats knew the world, because they came from there. Weizmann and Sokolow knew exactly what buttons to push. They could persuade in the languages of their interlocutors and this was true, even in 1947. The Soviet Ambassador to [Britain] met with Weizmann in 1941 and, in his memoirs, he said: here was this elderly gentleman - this is Weizmann - elegantly dressed, who spoke perfect Russian, even though he had been out of the country for 45 years. In those days, even in 1947, most Israelis were born outside the country. Today, about 75 to 80% are born in Israel: so we have to impart to them what they do not have as part of their baggage - a knowledge of that greater world and an ability to interact with that, as though they had come from there. We have to do that by educational means, and one of the reasons I presided over a college was to try to do precisely that.

However, it is going to be a huge challenge because eventually it will be 90% of Israelis who are born in Israel, a small country in the Middle East. Giving them the ability to communicate effectively with the whole, wider world, - which will include then not just Europe and North America but much of Asia - is a huge, huge challenge. I believe we are up to it, but it is going to take a lot of work.

**Ellen Hershkin:** Dr. Kramer, I thank you on behalf of myself but I thank you on behalf of not only all the people in this room - and our job has just begun.

**Eli Cohen:** You are invited to read the booklet entitled, “*Celebrating Balfour – Today, Tomorrow and Forever,*” produced at the initiative of the Israel Forever organization, which has been distributed here. It includes an introductory letter from the Vice-Chairman of the Executive, Mr. Yaakov Hagoel and another by the organization’s CEO, Dr. Elana Heideman, as well as an appendix. You are also invited to participate at the celebration event to mark the Balfour Centenary, which will be held at the Jerusalem Convention Center at the end of the session of the Israel Zionist Congress, organized under the aegis of the Israel Department and the Education Department.

I would like to express our thanks to Dr. Kramer for his courtesy and for the highly informative presentation from which we have all benefited immensely.

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## **Plenary No. 11 – Round Tables – Challenges of the Zionist Movement in the Jewish World**

**Zvi Avisar:** Opens the round table plenary that will address challenges facing the Zionist movement in the Jewish world:

These are essentially those challenges facing the National Institutions that brought about the fulfillment of the Zionist political idea, which, even today, act as compass and guide for the entirety of Zionist forums, with the present forum representing the heart beating within the wider body and the Zionist Congress.

In addition to the eight challenges confronting the contemporary Zionist movement, students of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem demographer, Sergio della Pergola, suggest two additional challenges that will impact on each of the above issues and can be expected to engage the Zionist movement throughout the twenty-first century.

The first is the demographic challenge facing Diaspora Jewry in the twenty-first century, while the second is that of the relevance of the Zionist Congress to the Jewish people.

The early years of the present century marked the endpoint of the Jewish people's major demographic movements, with the last of these – from the former Soviet Union – having an especial impact on Israel, although similarly on other countries, such as Germany. The overall picture today is of some 15,000,000 Jews in the world, 40% of whom reside and live in Israel while 60% are in the Diaspora: indeed, it is a fascinating fact that the overwhelming majority of Diaspora Jewry prefers to remain in their respective Diaspora communities.

We live in an era with a Jewish state for the Jewish people, but the majority of the Jewish people does not live there: therein lies the challenge posed by the global world. Most of Diaspora Jewry is threatened by an assimilationist movement in relation to the Zionist idea and concept – not from assimilation through intermarriage, although there is an overlap.

The National Institutions need to address this threat, as it will inevitably accompany us through the course of this century: the question thus arises of our relevance in this exigence. Over the past thirty years, we have been able to identify a consistent decline in the numbers of Diaspora Jewry engaged in democratic processes within the National Institutions. While the total number of Jews has not dropped over the course of the same thirty years, their dwindling involvement expresses itself in a number of ways - two of these being of evident significance and demanding specific mention:

The first is what I term a trend towards the privatization of the Zionist movement. I refer to the fact that, while there is a decline in the numbers of Jews actively involved in the National Institutions,

the established Zionist movement, - since the late 1990s - there has, nonetheless, been a pronounced growth in the number of private Zionist entities assuming the mantle of a particular zone of Zionist activity. This might be “Aliyah promotion”, *Hasbara* (Advocacy), countering Antisemitism, welfare, settlement, or a private individual in a particular community who decides to initiate independent activity and it represents a widespread and significant phenomenon and speaks to one finding, namely, that there is a demand for Zionist activity – yet it raises a number of questions.

The second expression is complementary to the first, and can be perceived from the Zionist Federation election results in the United States over the past three decades. This slide shows the statistical trend in terms of the numbers of American Jews participating in elections to the Zionist Congress since 1998. It represents a dramatic state of affairs from any perspective we might choose to examine it. The Zionist Federation in the United States is not without its problems, but in attempting to interpret this trend, it points out that it is the most organized, most transparent and largest of all the Federations – both at the level of its umbrella framework, the AZM, and at that of the individual sub-organizations.

The number of those participating in the elections has declined: this constitutes a challenge to us all – including the Reform, Conservative, Orthodox and other movements.

I would like to wish all the discussion leaders at the respective round tables a productive discussion and wish all those present every success.

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Following the round table discussions, one representative from each group was invited, together with the relevant Head of Department, to present its vision.

**Dror Morag:** Our table addressed issues that possibly represent all our futures. Questions were raised, as to whether the idea of an exemplary society is relevant today; whether Diaspora Jewry has a say – a right to speak or to intervene in what is happening in Israel; whether the Zionist movement needs to engage in issues such as social justice and equality. All of these related to the first question about an exemplary society.

**The Department for Zionist Enterprises’ vision:** To a considerable extent, Zionism has been successful in establishing a democratic Jewish state. This represents our central tenet – and we reflected on what would happen in the next 120 years and where we see Zionism in another 120 years’ time. How can we ensure that the democratic Jewish state remains steadfast, in terms of those extremely important prime principles? To my mind, the answer in relation to the next 120 years of Zionism is a social *Tikkun* – redress - within Israeli society, in the eyes of world Jewry.

Moreover, if we are successful in this endeavor, Zionism, as we know it today, will survive and remain strong.

This is the same vision of an exemplary society that Herzl conceived and wrote of at length: if we can complete the second part of the vision, we will be able to ensure and sustain its first part over the long term. Herzl's vision of an exemplary society signifies true engagement with Israeli society: narrowing the gaps, creating social justice, *Tikkun Olam*, building equality between different sectors of the population – whether between Jews in our midst or between Jews and non-Jews living in Israel, as well as in communities around the world.

It was clear to all the partners around the table that the answer is affirmative – i.e. there is cause for an exemplary society: there is a call to address these issues both in terms of world Jewry and of everything happening within the State of Israel.

Should world Jewry have a say in what happens within the State of Israel? Many in Israel are accustomed to the fact, or have come to expect, that world Jewry will continue to underwrite the State of Israel financially, with that constituting the total sum of its support – but I believe that we will be unable to sustain ourselves indefinitely in this manner.

In my opinion, if the young generation of world Jewry in the United States and elsewhere in the world does not feel that it has a part or a say in matters and that it can identify successfully with what is happening in the State of Israel, we will lose them to indifference. They may not become our opponents, but they will sink into apathy. They can manage just fine as Jews in the world without engaging in Zionism or with Israel. What we need to do is to provide them with a connection: we need to understand how to communicate with them, correspond with them in an appropriate manner – including at the values-based level, given that most of world Jewry is generally more liberally inclined. At times, they may feel somewhat uncomfortable: we call the State of Israel the state of the Jewish people; however, we cannot make this statement and simultaneously declare that world Jewry has no right to involvement - particularly when we are engaging in diplomatic efforts with many other countries, and most especially, in relation to the United States, where there are existing Jewish communities, or hold that they should not express their own opinions – indeed, it is crucial that they should do so. It is vital that we should hear them out: what we need is a much more profound dialogue about our shared future, because that conversation is almost non-existent between ourselves and world Jewry, or even among ourselves, within the different sectors of Israeli society. This represents the greatest challenge if we do not wish to lose the Jewish community, to continue to enjoy its support and feel they should also feel far more committed and engaged in representing the State of Israel's positions. It is similarly

sometimes OK for them to express a degree of criticism on some or other action [by Israel], as long as both sides are able to distinguish between the fact that they support the State of Israel but may sometimes criticize a particular action, and that these are two entirely separate issues: and this is why such a connection is crucial.

The responsibility is ours. The idea raised at our table was that there ought to be a reverse “Israel Experience”, where we send young Israelis out to visit Jewish communities. We would become familiar with life in Diaspora Jewish communities, understand what it means to be a Jew in the Diaspora, what matters most to them, and what they wish to learn, in order to enhance the quality of the connection between us.

This is, without doubt, an important issue, one we need to expand and address to theoretical and academic depths, as well as in practical terms – with the latter representing the bottom line.

At the Department for Zionist Enterprises, we focus on a wide-ranging variety of amazing projects engaging with the periphery, [ethnic] minorities, a great deal involving the absorption of new *olim*, such as the Ethiopian Jews, as well as the development of social initiatives in Israel’s periphery. We need to lay emphasis on these issues today within the World Zionist Organization, as being our major focus of attention for the years ahead.

The following table addressed the issue of the WZO **strengthening Israeli-Diaspora relations** and the **vision of the Department for Diaspora Activities**:

**Gusti Yehoshua Braverman:** Wishing everyone a happy Zionism month. The Department for Diaspora Activities has just launched Zionism month commencing with Balfour Declaration Day on November 2. This will be followed by events to mark the 29<sup>th</sup> of November and a number of other events, which the Department is organizing in Israel and the Diaspora. During the course of the month, a seminar on Religion and State will be held at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev and a daily study sheet will be published focusing on a Zionist subject.

The Department for Diaspora Activities’ goals can be defined in English as the three I’s: **Identity**, referring to the development of Zionist identity; **Identification**, i.e. with Zionist values and Israel; with the third being **Israel** as a central value in the building of a Zionist identity.

Anyone who travels around the world and talks to the young generation today will realize that we face an immense challenge in the incorporation of Israel as a component of their Zionist identity – and that is our focus. When we needed to ascertain where to allocate the major part of our resources, it was [decided to focus] in the direction of promoting a highly complex dialogue on the

subject of Israel among Diaspora Jewry – because, once again, the challenge today is to ensure that people speak and connect to Israel.

The young generation does not like to be told how or what to think and, possibly, before speaking about Aliyah promotion, there is a need to first bring them to the point where they are interested in Israel. In other words, this needs to go hand in hand, which is why all the WZO departments work in full synchrony to build that commitment among the young generation to becoming interested in the State of Israel.

One of the areas in the Department's remit is the subject of the Zionist Federations, of which there are 33 around the world. We need to see and scrutinize the reality as is, without beautifying it: most Zionist Federations in the world begin functioning ahead of the Zionist Congress as a political body, rather than acting today as a body that generates dialogue on the issue of Zionism and the connection with the State of Israel.

At the beginning of my present term of office, in 2015, one of the objectives I set myself was to strengthen Zionist Federations around the world. Today, two years on, I am able to state that we are in the midst of an impressive process with a number of Federations. A number of Heads of Federations are present here today, like Sergio Pickholtz, the Chairman of the Argentinian Zionist Federation, and Les Rothschild, of Canada. I mention them because both have initiated processes of renewal. Richard Heideman, incoming President of AZM, led the discussion at our table, with AZM currently being in a process of restructuring and growth, as part and parcel of this same approach.

**Richard Heideman:** Gusti, thank you very much. We began today's session with recognition that there are 14.9 million Jewish people worldwide. Whether it is through 33 Federations, or all the different organizations that are part of those Federations, most of the Federations themselves are not existing. We put on our table the challenge of how to achieve greater outreach, greater education, greater penetration, greater accomplishment, greater leadership, greater professional partnership with the leadership, greater funding; and how can we achieve addressing what we have described as “the elephant in the room”, that is, a disaffection - particularly among young people - with Zionism, even some absolutely unwilling. not only to use the word, but to hear the word - and, lastly, not being interested in learning [about] the word, or our rich history.

The themes that we concluded are necessary relate not only to funding and staff but to activities year-round; to true partnership with the different organizations in each country that make up the Zionist community; addressing Aliyah; addressing Zionist education; finding a way to outreach to

the general population; highlighting with pride Israel, through not just celebrations but engagement as well as education.

- We concluded that there is a real need for strategic planning. We have had an excellent process led by some of our leaders over the last two years in the United States. We are following the strategic plan and we are going to share that with everyone else.
- We felt as though there is a need to broaden our sharing of materials, ideas, thoughts and suggestions in order to integrate all of us around the world working together, built around the same themes with an educational content: support for Israel, pride in the history, the present, and the future of Zionism.
- We recognized that there are *shlichim* in communities all across the United States and elsewhere, and that there should be a full partnership between the WZO and each of the Federations, as it relates to utilizing, working together with the *shlichim*.

The last three issues we covered are:

- How do we address the challenge of what appears to be reducing Jewish identity?
- What appears to be disaffection with Israel?
- And: How do we reach our young people?

I am going to combine all three issues in my concluding minute:

The young people come to college incapable of dealing with the challenges put before them. It is too easy to feel ashamed, to not participate; it is too easy to simply buy into the arguments that are put forward that cause them to feel uncomfortable with Israel; and it is certainly too easy for them to believe that, indeed, what they hear as accusations are accusations they should buy into.

Around this room, how many young people are there? A few? You are indeed our future. What we concluded at our table is that for us to do a job assisting and working cooperatively in partnership with Gusti and her Department, if we start with a focus on the young people we can then perhaps build back up. Thank you.

**The Aliyah Promotion Department's Vision – Oded Feuer:** Introduces the discussion leader at the table, Dimitry Shiglik. Following an overview of the Department's activity, discussion centered on a few focal issues. First of these was the focus of our future activities in terms of Aliyah promotion within the family, with an emphasis on the female figure in the family. This comes in the wake of a survey we conducted together with the Ministry [for Aliyah and Immigrant Absorption]. The discussion raised the following issues:

- What is the appropriate message to promote *Aliyah* by Choice in the reality of 2018?

- How to reinforce the subject of *Aliyah* as a legitimate – and even crucial - discussion topic in relation to activity in the Diaspora? A number of suggestions were brought by participants for effective programs in this respect.

The Department's baseline for its activities is the conduct of quality programs related to bridge-building between Diaspora Jews and Israel, that will also provide tools and knowledge with the capacity to impact significantly in terms of the decision to make *Aliyah*.

The dialogue about Zionist *Aliyah* remains relevant to all communities in the Diaspora today and generates positive outcomes, whether in terms of the actual decision to make *Aliyah* or strengthening the sense of Zionist and Jewish identity that lie at the core of the connection to Israel.

In the world of *Aliyah* by Choice, rather than Rescue, the focus needs to be on positive messages emphasizing the opportunities offered by living in Israel, personal growth, success, Jewish life that is replete with meaning, and raising Israel's future generation.

To operate effectively, it is vital to target programs at areas that have the most impact, first and foremost of which is the focus on the family, with women at the center. This insight emerged from the survey I mentioned earlier, which shows the influence of women as the crucial factor in terms of a decision to make *Aliyah* to Israel. After working with the female partner, we are also committed to finding solutions for spouses and children, with a particular emphasis on [their] parents – the grandmothers and grandfathers, or, shall we say, the third agers – who may, at times, represent a minor factor in holding back the *Aliyah* out of considerations for their care – or even act as a pull factor towards Israel.

Another area of emphasis is on Hebrew language study, as a major factor in removing barriers to *Aliyah* and a helpful way to prepare for life in Israel. We also surveyed our *Ulpan* programs around the world [and] the continued collaboration with the Ministry for Immigrant Absorption towards sustained activity to remove barriers and develop Absorption programs.

One idea raised was the creation of *Aliyah* kits or packages that are custom-made for the various communities, or secondary groups: this evolved into revisiting a concept based on the *Aliyah garin* [core group]. There was a call to all the Zionist Magshimim movements to take this on board as a goal – so that each movement should create an *Aliyah garin* to come to Israel from a particular place.

Another point was the consolidation of targeted cooperation with Israeli mayors and Heads of local Councils, to invite parents to join their communities, and that these figures should assume a personal responsibility for this area of activity. This includes addressing potential *olim* currently spending time in Israel, whether on programs, as students or lone soldiers before formal *Aliyah*, during their respective programs. Finally, another area that typifies and is appropriate for our work

in many [Jewish] communities around the world is the immense importance of pushing to expand existing circles outwards – to reach beyond the familiar ranks towards new target populations currently outside the community framework.

**Eli Cohen** Thanks Oded Feuer and invites Rabbi Yehiel Wasserman to represent the table that discussed **Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Jews around the same table.**

**Rabbi Yehiel Wasserman:** I shall open with a summary of the discussion, after which Mr. Benny Slutzky, Chairman of the Zionist Federation of Mexico, will add a number of points. Our table is distinct from everyday reality, insofar as only at the Zionist Executive do representatives of all three streams of Judaism sit together around one table to discuss all the issues that concern us and attempt to reach a consensus or compromise, with a view to attaining the Zionist movement's goal, its aspiration and its vision.

Many people joined our table to express their opinions, but we were not always successful in the enabling this. The conversation was vibrant and interesting, covering a range of views, but there were a number of fundamental points on which everyone was in agreement.

Firstly, there was common agreement that the streams of Judaism play an important role in raising awareness of the subject and elevating a public Zionist dialogue within Diaspora Jewish communities. This is because of the existence of synagogues and communities where a large number of people gather on weekdays, *Shabbatot* and Jewish festivals, as well as at other opportunities, and where the religious leader or head of a community raise the subject, there will be a considerable audience. Any [Jewish] leader anywhere in the world who wants to assemble several hundred Jews in one place will experience some difficulty in doing so – but a rabbi, irrespective of the stream, may have an audience of anywhere from 500 to 1,000 people every *Shabbat* and can deliver the message.

I recently spent one *Shabbat* in Montevideo and another *Shabbat (Simchat Torah)* in Rio de Janeiro, where I gave a sermon to congregations numbering approximately 250 people in each. People came to hear me, while the rabbi speaking afterwards and addressing the same topic. We thus have an important role to play in terms of placing the dialogue about Israel on the public agenda as well as inculcating the Zionist idea. This is why the streams also have the potential to expand the circle of participants and affiliates by enlarging their ranks and increasing attendance at the Zionist movement's activities as a whole.

In conclusion, a number of questions arose, such as:

How do we implement the Zionist challenge in practical terms? *And* - What does the Zionist challenge represent in practical terms?

**Reeva Forman:** [South Africa] Speaking from experience, experiential programs are the most significant because affective and experiential programs draw people towards the Zionist movement. Recommends that the three streams of Judaism, or anyone who comes to a synagogue, over and beyond cognitive activities, lectures and discussions, should place more emphasis on experiential activity, particularly for teenagers.

**Yizhar Hess:** [Question] Given that we are a political Zionist movement, how do we resolve difficulties between the streams here, in the State of Israel?

**Sandra Sokal:** [Response] We should not be transferring Diaspora problems here. We have a single idea, and that is to convey the Zionist message. We need to strengthen the Zionist movement and that represents the common denominator for us all, for all the streams of Judaism. We need to augment Zionist activity, insure the fulfilment of the Zionist dream and raise awareness to the issues, with all three streams working to achieve the goal of bringing the Zionist idea to the public that attends our synagogues and visits our community centers. They can convey the Zionist message in the form of the brochure we published last year in a Hebrew edition, entitled “*50 Zionist Concepts*”, which has since been translated into English, Spanish, German, French and Russian.

**Benny Slutzky,** Chairman of the Zionist Federation of Mexico, added the following to Rabbi Wasserman’s presentation: I am very glad to be here. It is our first time here and it’s a pleasure having many people thinking about Zionism like we are thinking.

It is not easy to sell Zionism today, but we are doing our best, especially in Mexico. We are a small community, with 40,000 Jews, and this is a very special community. We have Keren Hayesod, Keren Kayemeth. We work very, very hard in relation to all the Zionist institutions.

About the topics we discussed today: Well, like a conclusion, or the last question, was whether all the different streams of Judaism can work together and do Zionism. The conclusion was: Yes, we can do it - each one in their own way, but we can do it. I appreciate it very much to be here and thank you all - it has been a pleasure. Thank you.

**Dina Hahn:** “**Back to Settlement**” Round Table. The Settlement Division’s activity was frozen for the last three years, as the outcome of a [legal] opinion from the Assistant Legal Advisor to the Israel Government, which maintained that the government could no longer transfer funds to the Division, pending a change to the specific wording in the relevant legislation, which has now been

amended. Clear new regulations have now been set down and our discussion focused on what will happen from now onwards.

The group around our table included the Head of the Settlement Division, Gael Grunewald, and the Advisor to its Director General, Elad Meir, together with members of the Zionist General Council from the respective factions.

At the outset, there was a need to clarify the meaning of the concept of “settlement” in the context of the “Settlement Division” as a title. The English connotation, both in Israel and worldwide, is of settlement in Judah and Samaria, but this is not strictly true, so there was a need to clarify that the Settlement Division addresses settlement all over Israel – in the Galilee, and the Negev, as well as Judah and Samaria.

The direction of discussion was based on the report by the Head of Division on the Division’s activity, in compliance with the new regulations formulated by the Israel Government and its Legal Advisor, in conjunction with the Ministry of Justice, the Treasury, and the Ministry for Agriculture, which holds responsibility for the Division’s activity. [The summary covered] how calls for tender for rural settlement may be issued, how projects are submitted for implementation, how criteria are established by the Government, and so on. Equally: how an applicant for those tenders is selected from the submissions, consistent with the very clear regulations and criteria. Finally, there was an overview of the very close scrutiny of expenditure conducted by the Ministry of Finance and its Accounting Division.

The question arose of why a need exists for the Settlement Division, given that it operates under the auspices of the Israel Government, which sets its policy? The response was brought by Gael, to the effect that Zionism has always rested on four pillars, these being education, Aliyah, Hebrew and settlement and that this has held true since the early days of pioneering settlement in *Eretz Yisrael*, and remains so today, while a fifth pillar was added later, namely – security.

Yaron Shavit observed that, in the World Zionist Organization, everyone has the right to speak democratically, but the Division’s policy is determined by the Israel Government – and those decisions are not in our hands. The question is, therefore, why the Division implements it, rather than any other government body doing so. The reason for this is that the Division has proven successfully over many years that it is both efficient and effective. Indeed, during the tours we organized for Members of the Zionist Executive to meet with clients on the Golan Heights and the Gaza perimeter, those clients stated that they prefer to work with the Settlement Division and expressed opposition to the management of their affairs being transferred to the regular channels of government bureaucracy.

The Israel Government is aware of this situation and therefore allocates the budget, which is not sourced from the WZO's core budget but from the government, with the implementation being via the Settlement Division. The World Zionist Organization accrues public credit for being those who continue to work in the area of rural settlement throughout the State of Israel and *Eretz Yisrael*.

Another important question concerned the transparency of the Division's activity. How can one ensure that money is not being transferred under the table or along invisible channels, especially into settlement in Judah and Samaria, as was the claim in respect of earlier years? The Head of the Division's report has started to address the new regulations set down by the government that act to ensure such instances will not recur in the future.

A further question was raised as to the possibility of restricting the Settlement Division's activity to areas within the Green Line, in order to prevent disagreements around our table at the WZO. The answer to this was that policy is set by the Israel Government and that we, as the World Zionist Organization, are implementing the policy of the current government on activity throughout *Eretz Yisrael*.

The report from the **Education Department's "Jewish Education – Zionist Education"** table was presented by **Mr. Moises Salinas** of Mexico.

The discussion began by enumerating the various challenges and impediments involved in Jewish Zionist education in the Diaspora and we noted that there are a number of factors in play that need to be taken into consideration.

First of these is Jewish demography and assimilation: Latin American Jewish communities are becoming increasingly religiously observant, while emigration to the United States and other factors render it more difficult for Zionism to remain relevant, particularly to the younger generation.

Next were [the issues of] Israel and Zionism's image in the world in the BDS era, along with social and cultural changes occurring globally and within Israeli society, as well as ideological change in general terms. Young people are far more skeptical and view the world differently – this is not the Israel of yester-yore: today it is impossible to "sell" Israel, from the ideological perspective, as easily as in the past.

The question was asked as to how make Israel relevant to the young generation in the digital and globalized era via education. The discussion revolved around the following ideas:

- a. To lay emphasis on the training of local educators, by increasing the number of educational training seminars, in both formal and informal education; to develop apps, such as Ted Talks, etc.
- b. *Hasbara* (Advocacy). The new generation views *Hasbara* as problematic and do not agree that Israel is always right in terms of its actions: the same critique holds true for their own countries, the US and

Israel. We need to teach about the real Israel, with all its problems and everything going on in our society.

- c. Israel needs to become relevant and ideological. Our national ideology is no longer relevant to the young generation. We need to look to hi-tech, the Sciences, the economy, entrepreneurship. One interesting idea raised was that rather than sending ideological *shlichim*, we should be sending entrepreneur *shlichim* in the Sciences to the Diaspora.

**Silvio Joskowicz:** We believe we need to influence Jewish communities via the respective [Zionist] Federations, since we view them as the operative arm of the same Zionist idea. Moreover, it is our responsibility to reinforce them and lead the processes, acting as the catalyst for national projects that will allow us to impact the Jewish people as a whole, in whatever countries they reside. I emphasize yet again that this needs to happen through the Zionist Federations.

**Eli Cohen:** Yitzhak Sonnenschein and members of the Executive were at the **Israel at 70** round table, where we were also honored by the presence of the Chairman of the Executive. The focus of the discussion centered on the opening of celebrations in honor of Zionism and the State of Israel's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence from the WZO's perspective.

**Yitzhak Sonnenschein:** The discussion at this table focused on specific ideas for the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, as brought by the Zionist movement and the World Zionist Organization. For example, Israel's achievements, its visibility, the hi-tech state, education, prosperity, and so on. We also distinguished between national events organized by the State of Israel and those of the Zionist movement per se.

Duvdev noted that there was a disagreement after the establishment of the State of Israel as to whether the Zionist movement had completed its task. Today, seventy years later, our statement needs to be about the nature of the Zionist movement's tasks in the future. Mr. Yadlin spoke of an integration between Herzl and Ahad Ha'am, where Herzl essentially stated that without a state there is no future for the Jewish people. Ahad Ha'am viewed the state as the spiritual center of the entire Jewish people. What we are referring to is the integration of both these ideas as our ideal.

It has been said that the WZO is the parliament of the Jewish people: essentially, the advantage of the state began with the Zionist movement in moving for a division between the Zionists in Israel and those in the Diaspora, the need for Aliyah and the commitment of Jews to the State of Israel. This also connects to what was said earlier, about the [Zionist] Federations revitalizing the connection to Israel and the next generation requiring new direction if it is not to be lost.

Educational processes are paramount in this respect: there is a need to create a sense of identification with the word “Zionism”; young leadership needs to be brought to visit Israel. In terms of the young generation, we need to draw the distinction the difference between a regular state and a Jewish state together with the significance of the Jewish state, and activities need to be set in place to convey its uniqueness.

**Eli Cohen:** We now move to the subject of **Countering Antisemitism – The Department for Israel Activities and Countering Antisemitism.**

**Dina Hahn:** In my opinion, this is one of the most dynamic and important departments in the World Zionist Organization and it operates in two major spheres, its goals being:

1. To empower Zionism among Israelis in Israel and around the world;
2. Countering Antisemitism.

We focused the discussion on the issue of how the Department copes with the challenges of Zionism in the globalized world and the world of relocation. Where we once called Israelis who left Israel “*yordim*”, we now speak in terms of “relocation.” Young people have opportunities to work overseas and travel out to the global village to do so; this is a worldwide phenomenon, without borders. One of the major problems is that in a few generations, we will suddenly notice that our grandchildren and great-grandchildren are no longer living in *Eretz Yisrael* because there are challenges overseas. Therefore, one of the Department’s main challenges in relation to Israelis who leave to find employment elsewhere while another, naturally, is to bring *olim* to Israel.

In this respect, we reached a number of operative decisions and recommendations – first and foremost being the need to engage in education towards values from a young age, and to refer teenagers and young people to schools or pre-IDF academies where they can be introduced to Zionist values, love of Jewish heritage, the Land of Israel, and much more.

Furthermore, since many young people want to come on Aliyah to Israel, but encounter innumerable obstacles in their quest, a committee has been established within the World Zionist Organization, headed by Yaakov Hagoel, with a view to removing the impediments and assisting those young people arriving in Israel who are contending with so many difficulties. Possibly, we may even need to initiate a project to “adopt” young new *olim*, show them the way, refer them, guide them and help them learn – rather than leaving them to grope their way in the dark without any idea of what to do. Naturally, we would still need to lead the battle to remove the various obstacles, and gain recognition from government clerks at the bureaucratic level.

Another important subject we discussed was the issue of countering Antisemitism, in light of the appalling findings from the surveys among European Jewry – it is simply unbelievable.

Asked whether they have experienced any antisemitic violence, over 74% claimed they had been injured, but had not reported it to any authority. As long as there is a Diaspora, we will pay the price of living there as Jews: this implies not wearing a *kippah*, concealing *mezzuzot*, changing one's surname – all actions that work to enhance assimilation processes and the fear of being Jewish.

**Yaakov Hagoel:** Today is truly a happy day for all of us, *Chag Sameach*, the Centenary of the Balfour Declaration. We live in difficult times: every year the increasing number of violent antisemitic incidents is greater than in the previous one – not only in Europe, but worldwide, including the United States. We are concerned because we believe that the process we are witnessing in Europe will affect the rest of the world. What we are seeing is the concealment of Jewish symbols – it is difficult to find a Jew wearing a *kippah* in public today in France. We also know that there are many Jews who have moved their *mezzuzot* to the inside of the doorpost. I am worried, not only because Antisemitism is escalating, but by our response as a people, namely that people are really afraid to be Jewish, and because of that fear they are concealing markers of their Jewishness. In another generation or two, we will see this evidenced in a further rise in the assimilation graph. I have no doubt that Antisemitism is damaging to us in spiritual terms, to an even greater extent than in its physical manifestations. By the same token, I believe that we, as the World Zionist Organization, are duty bound to continue leading the response to it, through education towards Jewish identity as well as pursuing our endeavors to help our people raise their heads in pride as Jews. We shall prevail and we will be successful.

As the discussion came to a close, Mr. Avraham Duvdevani noted that we are engaging in matters of prime importance and that it is the Members who are suggesting ideas about what needs to be done in the various areas of concern. The Zionist movement will work to implement the ideas it has heard and those brought by the Council.

We have heard all the points that were brought and will study them in greater depth for their significance and relevance to the present time, as well as to what needs to be done immediately. It was all truly most impressive.

I hope that at the next session of the Council we will continue to involve our members actively in generating ideas and the principles of everyday concerns, so that our activity will reflect the direction set by the Zionist General Council.

At the round table, which focused on Israel's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, our discussions today focused on the generation that has not witnessed any of the State of Israel's most difficult trials. The generation

that endured the *Shoah* and *Tekumah* was followed by one that experienced the Six Day War. These were two landmark events in relation to Israel's history and shed light on how important this State is to the Jewish people. Today, however, the 30 to 40 something generation was already born into a reality where the State of Israel is taken for granted. It has a strong economy, a strong army and hi-tech industry: it is an amazing country. Jews have played their immense potential – not only in the Diaspora – but also here, in Israel. They established a unique state, which – within a period of 70 years – has managed to create things that remain unparalleled elsewhere. One only needs to look at where we were 70 years ago and where the State of Israel is today.

Yet all of this relates to the physical framework, the systemic pragma, that allows us to run this country. In his heyday, Ben Gurion said that the State is not the end in itself, but the tool with which to achieve other goals – and this is the spirit in which Aharon Yadlin said: *Hevreh* (friends), Herzl was OK: we established a Jewish state, we have the framework. We still need to make good on *Aliyah*, the ingathering of the exiles, and now we need to integrate the issue of being a spiritual center, i.e. the content of the state. This country was built, not only as a place of refuge for Jews fleeing Antisemitism: the vision presaged the creation of an exemplary state – a state formed in the spirit of the Prophets. This is the quintessential substance of Zionism and role of the World Zionist Organization in this seventieth year of Israel's existence: namely, to endeavor to introduce the spirit of Zionism, to transform Israel into a country to which young people will want to come on *Aliyah*.

We have learned from the demographic analysis that over 90% of Diaspora Jews do not wish to come on *Aliyah* to Israel. We believe they should do so anyway because this is their home. However, when one engages the young generation that observes this country judgmentally, as if it were any other country, or the country where they live, we need to ensure that even as they do so, the Jewish state should enjoy a preferential status. Young people are judgmental because they take Israel for granted: it is not considered a miracle that befell the Jewish people or [a phenomenon that] finds no parallel in human history. We can see this for ourselves today, in the manner in which young Jewish people relate to this country and judge it by measure of one or other form of political conduct, for better or for worse. They do so with the same tools they use to evaluate any other country.

What we need to do is to ensure that, during this analytical process and categorization, these young people will state that this country is unique - special. Why? Because the Jewish state behaves in a different manner, in terms of its ethic, its society, justice, equality and the vision of the Prophets. There is no other country that would or could be like this, because other systems operate according to standards related to achievement, materialism and other parameters.

This is the task we are charged with in this 70<sup>th</sup> year, if we are to leverage and offer visibility to the kind of country we have, to highlight what is special about it and what it should aspire to attain. I would like to thank all the participants at the various tables and their discussion leaders for their outstanding contribution.

**Yigal Bibi:** I have here the Minutes of the First Zionist Congress in Basle and feel it is important for us to understand from Herzl himself how he managed to achieve the impossible. How Rabbi Reines democratically brought together Weizmann, Motzkin, and the young assimilationists together to conduct discussions peacefully and amiably for a period of two days.

Indeed, why did the Congress take place in Basle? Because Rabbi Arthur Cohen, the Chief Rabbi of Basle, agreed to come and greet the Congress. In his address to them on the second day, he said: *“I was no friend to Zionism, and even now I am not enthused by the issue that fills your hearts. I have sat here. You invited me to the Congress. You have afforded me some unforgettable hours of reflection on the addresses by Dr. Herzl and Dr. Nordau, and my heart beats with excitement at Dr. Nordau’s remarks. Any and every Orthodox Jew can sign onto his each and every word, each and every sentence...”*

An Orthodox rabbi who opposed Zionism listened and was enthused by the assimilationist Nordau – and said that his words could be countersigned by any Orthodox person. It is my hope that this message will reside in our midst, 120 years later on. May we all engage and be rewarded by success.

**Silvio Joskowicz:** As we celebrate the Centenary of the Balfour Declaration, I received the following message written by those who hate Israel: *“Today we mark the centenary of the continuation of British colonialism and monarchy, and the continuation of ethnic cleansing against the Palestinian people.”*

This is an announcement by left wing anti-Zionist groups in Brazil and it is absolutely horrific. However, this implies that we need to address two major goals, the first being to act to counter those who hate Israel and [the other, to] convey our Zionist and Jewish message. This means strengthening the hands of those Jews who wish to embrace Zionism and Judaism, and giving them the tools to help them continue walking the Zionist and Jewish avenue.

**Eli Cohen:** I would like to welcome to the rostrum Mr. Avi Gabbay, Chairman of the Israel Labor Party, accompanied here today by Ms. Chaya Cohen, the faction Chair, and Mr. Benny Slutzky, Chairman of the Zionist Federation of Mexico.

**Benny Slutzky:** Avi Gabbay was elected the Chairman of the Israeli Labor Party in July of 2017 at the party leadership primaries; prior to this, he was one of the founding members of the Kulanu Party. Mr. Gabbay holds a BA in economics and an MBA from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His business experience began in government service; he went on to become CEO of Bezeq, which became one of the most profitable global communication companies despite its dramatic transition into the competitive market environment.

In 2013, Gabbay shifted his focus to politics, becoming Acting Chairman of the Board at Appleseeds Academy, a non-profit organization bringing technology to underserved communities in Israel. He is a former Minister of Environmental Protection. In late 2016, Gabbay joined the Israeli Labor Party.

**Avi Gabbay:** Thank you for inviting me to speak in this forum. I am most impressed by the agenda of the Zionist General Council in that it addresses many practical aspects, as indeed it should. It is a pleasure to be together here on the Centenary of the Balfour Declaration, probably the most significant historical act by a British minister in our respect. It was truly a landmark in that it determined there would be a Jewish state and a Jewish homeland for the Jewish people in *Eretz Yisrael*. Without it, we would have continued our progress towards the Zionist dream at a far slower rate: we need to recall where we stood in 1917 and appreciate that the Balfour Declaration was a catalyst in that it allowed us to speed up the process greatly. The document itself was brief – all of five lines – mentioning only “*the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.*” Were such a document required today, one hundred years later, I presume it would run into a thirty-page booklet, that legal specialists from around the world would have cooperated on the draft – and that it would have been considerably less substantial.

We can appreciate that some things deteriorate over time, rather than improve – and that the legitimation that this Declaration imparted held an immense importance, disagreements notwithstanding, in terms of changes and different interpretations. Yet it proved to be a highly significant factor in terms of the international and world community.

Our own parents, and even some of you here today, are the people who built the Zionist dream. At the age of 50, I look at you and see the people who built the dream, established the State of Israel, set its borders, created the army and developed its economy. We ourselves were born into an era when the State already existed – self-confident, sure of its existence and our power: but it was you who engaged in its construction, who managed to bring millions more to join you here in its settlement within a very short time frame, despite differences of opinion, and you who produced the tangible and almost incredible outcomes we see today. An amazing country – one that only came

into being seventy years ago; an instance with neither precedent nor parallel, nor even anything remotely resembling this anywhere else in the world, today or at any time throughout world history.

In the eyes of the twenty-first century, the Zionism of our generation is primarily the assurance of a secure state – that the State of Israel should remain secure. We remain constantly on alert to ascertain we have not missed anything, while, at the same time, Zionism is called upon to ensure this will remain a state that is good for all its citizens: a state that cares about its citizens and addresses their genuine concerns, whether this is the cost of living, social gaps, or the rapidly disappearing dream of owning an apartment among the young people of today. It should be a state that respects its elderly and provides for the weakest in its midst – an exemplary state for the entire world.

May I propose that we focus on our young people today – who are far superior to ourselves: the new generation is much improved, rather than less worthy. They also do far more than those who went before them, be it national service or attending a pre-IDF military academy, and they make a much greater contribution to this country. At the age of 18, our children are drafted into the army, enter combat units and are prepared to endanger their lives for our country. This represents an endless cycle of self-sacrifice on behalf of the State of Israel – and some of them decide to leave the country between the ages of 25 to 27.

I ask myself repeatedly what we did here: what happened between the time they were discharged from the army at age 21 and the ages of 25 to 27? What took place during those four or five years to produce a change of attitude among those young people? The answer is clear to me: we managed to transform young people into people without a belief, without hope, people who have lost their faith that the administration truly cares about them or that their circumstances could improve. They lose the hope that something good will happen in their lives – and they therefore go elsewhere.

I do believe that most of them will return some day, but we are losing the best among us at the most critical stage of their lives. In my opinion, wherever you represent Zionism, this is one issue on which you should engage. You need to understand how we are impacting on these young people over a period of five years, and ensure the State of Israel realizes that this represents the transformation which Zionism is called upon to generate - so that these men and women will remain in Israel. This issue was also at the core of my decision to leave the business world and enter politics, a world in which I have now lived for three years. I believe it is important that Zionism of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is [about] the person who is capable, who can give of himself or herself and contribute his or her skills to the community – which is what I am doing – in order to change this reality, for – as you well know – it is not a reality decreed on Mount Sinai. It is not something that has been imposed upon us, a situation without remedy but, rather, a state of affairs brought

about by man's own actions. Each of us, in his or her way – good or bad – contributes to this situation and is equally capable of changing it – which is precisely what we should be doing.

When I look at the Jewish world, at this country and the Zionist institutions, I am in no doubt that they all face new challenges. Every age brings its own challenges and I believe that the Jewish people and the people in Israel have great strength, know how to deal with each of them, and that we will continue to meet them successfully. I am one of those people who is confident in our strength and ability to overcome almost any difficulty. Our people is thousands of years old and has endured immense hardships far beyond those we see around us today, which means we can afford to be optimistic. Nonetheless, we are certainly witnessing a disturbing growth of extremist right-wing organizations in Europe and the United States today, with radicalist youth movements. Once unknown in the United States, they are gradually gaining some kind of legitimation among wider audiences, such as the bands that hide out in the forests and focus action against a particular target community, all in the eyes of the nation. These phenomena cast a heavy shadow over world Jewry and demand that we address them in a resolute manner. In Austria, for example, a young 31-year-old right-wing man has been elected Chancellor. He is currently engaged in negotiations to form a coalition government with the Austrian Freedom Party - a blatantly antisemitic party led by Mr. Strache, whom the President refused to meet when he visited Israel, because he is an antisemite. To my great regret, there are elements in the Likud Party who nonetheless believe it legitimate to meet with him. While it is true that Strache is currently focusing his attention on Muslims, there is no such thing as an antisemite opposed to Muslims without being opposed to Jews. I call from this podium upon the Prime Minister of Israel, as someone who knows how to conduct a campaign, to spearhead a European campaign against the recognition of a government that incorporates antisemites in its midst. It is inconceivable that the State of Israel should observe what is happening in Austria and state that it is none of our business. It is indeed our business and we can make a difference: this is precisely the kind of action we should be taking because we are talking about what we can do to combat Antisemitism. As soon as Israel takes action to do so, everyone will realize that we are taking it seriously, not just mouthing slogans – and when there's a war, Israel knows how to wage it.

The **second challenge** is the major crisis between Israel and the Diaspora, partly and primarily as a result of the Kotel crisis and over the outline plan for the Kotel. In recent months, I have met many representatives of Diaspora Jewry and, naturally, most of them were from the United States. They come from across the board – Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative – and they are all calling this a major crisis and saying that if such crises are not resolved while still minor, the rift only becomes

more pronounced. Indeed, it might lead entire generations or sectors of people to remove themselves from any contact with Israel in terms of engagement or support, and we will find ourselves unable to return them to the fold. They will not come back, because anyone who leaves generally finds a new direction in life and does not retrace his or her steps. I am a believing Jew, someone who is naturally Orthodox – my own parents came from Morocco where there was no Reform Judaism: people did not know about Reform or secular Jews. Nor did they know about being religious Jews – they understood what a Jew was. There might be Jews who were more observant of the *mitzvot* while others were less so – but the belief itself was constant and deeply rooted, as it should be. However, I continue to believe that every Jew has the right to define himself or herself in his or her own manner – whether as secular, Orthodox, Conservative or Reform: everyone is entitled to this right of self-definition. I similarly believe that it is our duty to permit everyone his or her own modes of prayer and manner of observing the *mitzvot*, and most especially so in terms of the major sites of Jewish heritage we hold here, with the Kotel being foremost among them. I recently remarked that the paratroopers who liberated the Kotel in 1967 could not have imagined that, in fifty years' time, a Jewish group would be informed they could not follow their own method of prayer, their mode of practice, at the Kotel they liberated. This is an intolerable situation and it is deeply painful that we should be acting hurtfully against any group - and hurting only ourselves, too, in the final analysis.

I served as a government minister at the time when the Kotel outline plan was approved, but admit to not having explored the subject in any depth: a team was appointed, headed by Avishai Mandelblit, then Government Secretary. Essentially, our leadership is unable to come to significant decisions; it is incapable of coping with oppositionist action. It is a leadership founded in pronouncements: however, when there is a need to take a courageous stand, people are unable to adhere to their principles. Yet we are not entitled to sever connections with broad sectors of Diaspora Jewry: we cannot permit ourselves to do so, either morally or ethically. Diaspora Jewry's contribution on educational issues and towards Israeli society is crucial – we cannot manage without them – and is all the more critical in terms of Israel's security. Without Diaspora Jewry's contribution, we will experience difficulty in coping, because the capacity of the Jews in the United States to preserve the State of Israel's [interests] represents a security asset of the first order. Israel's social unity is, similarly, a security asset and we have no right to do any harm to either of these, because such action would ultimately be detrimental to ourselves.

Some people may be pleased with President Trump, his is the friendliest administration ever towards Israel. We are all aware that this is politics and that the administration in the USA can change at any time. Anything could happen and we need to hold on to what we have, because

fortunes do change and no one is immune: we need to look ahead in terms of several generations, rather than one or two years.

Our **third challenge** concerns the political situation in Israel, which, to my mind, is not positive. We are all acquainted with the divisive and disruptive dialogue, seething with hatred that flows in our midst, fueled by politicians spurred to consolidate their own hold – a dialogue without any material critique. This constitutes a danger to us all. It projects onto Diaspora Jewry, while the history of the Jewish people teaches us that the Jewish people in Israel managed to form its own unified and sovereign state across the board only twice. History also teaches us that on the two occasions that it fell, it did so not because of an external enemy, but from internal conflict.

The Roman General Pompey was called in from Damascus in an attempt to resolve the internal discord. He agreed to come – and simply took *Eretz Yisrael*, without any need to fight. People tend to forget that it was us who called in the Romans: they just walked in through the open door. I therefore believe that this sovereignty is paramount to the Jewish people and we have no right to forego it. We have no right to endanger it, and certainly not for internal political issues. I expect there are people present today who represent the opposition, the coalition and all the political parties. As Chairman of a party that forms the Opposition in Israel, I travel around all of Israel; I also have the great advantage of not being a Member of Knesset, which allows me to organize conferences. I can confidently state, after filtering out all the background noise made by politicians, that 80% of the people in Israel hold the same position. There are about 10% on the extreme right and 10% on the far left. Without relating to their positions, which are irrelevant, 80% of the Jewish people in this country want four basic items:

*Firstly*, an aggressive position on the preservation of security – and we understand that we have no right make any compromises in this regard, and that is acceptable to them. It is indubitably important that we learn how to intimidate and deter our enemy, rather than Israelis – whereas the political dialogue attempts to intimidate Israelis, rather than our enemies. Rabin, by the way, engaged in intimidating our enemies, not Israelis. Nowadays, the dynamics are reversed: we are being told that ISIS on the back of a Toyota truck will reach Jerusalem. In 1973, when we were far weaker than now, the Syrians only reached Nafah [on the Golan] – but ISIS is going to reach Jerusalem – and when the government tells people something, they naturally believe it and are frightened. I vote we intimidate the other side, rather than our own people.

The *second* point on which we are all agreed is the need for some kind of diplomatic horizon, so that we can understand where we are heading with the Palestinians. I personally hold a strong belief in our right to existence as emanating from the Divine promise to our forefather Abraham, Who promised him **all** of

*Eretz Yisrael* – in its entirety, including Judah and Samaria, or possibly even mainly Judah and Samaria, since that is where they lived then. However, for most of our time here we were not alone - the Philistines lived in Gat. We know that there are four and a half million Arabs living here, right here: we cannot ignore it. They are here and we need to reach a solution, which I believe amounts to two states for two peoples. Obviously, provided we can ensure all our own security requirements.

The *third* point of consensus is for a growing and just economy. The scale of inequality and poverty in Israel are intolerable and show up as such on all the international statistical surveys. Incidentally, it also happens to be an outcome of a political decision, let us not be mistaken in this respect. PM Netanyahu holds a legitimate political standpoint: he identifies with an extremist, Republican school of thought, which states simply that if you succeeded in life – good for you; but if you didn't – it's your own problem. Our starting point is that of the Jewish school of thought, which believes in *Areivut hadadit* – mutual assistance – nothing else: not socialism or communism. Everything begins with *Areivut hadadit*, which – incidentally – forms the basis for all the later schools of thought. This represents the immense distance between ourselves and the Netanyahu and the Likud Party.

*Finally*, there is the issue of freedom of religion and worship. I have a personal respect for religion and people's religious needs, their desire for Shabbat observance and so on – but I also respect other citizens' rights to have a life on Shabbat, including public transport on Shabbat, which, in my opinion, is the number one social injustice in Israel today. Because we are essentially telling a child whose parents do not possess a car that he or she needs to stay home. We would like to see change here: it has nothing to do with religion – it has everything to do with society. These regulations only impinge on the poorest members of society.

In conclusion, today we commemorate 22 years since the political assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. We must never whitewash this fact and we need to return to a leadership that provides a guiding star in the healing, unification and unity of our people, in terms of sharing our life together, in true democracy, along with personal democracy. As a politician, I assume this role in the State of Israel and shall implement it, both now as Chairman of the Labor Party as well as my intention to do so in my future role, which I am certain you can anticipate. Thank you.

**Nili Nehorai:** With reference to your mention of the soldiers who liberated the Kotel and to sovereignty, we are presently marking the Jubilee of the Liberation of Jerusalem. What do you think those soldiers who liberated the Temple Mount would have thought if we told them that in fifty years' time Jews would be prohibited from free access to ascend the Temple Mount, that it would be forbidden to raise the Israeli flag or for Jews to pray on the Temple Mount?

**Avi Gabbay:** Sometimes, I can personally accept observations made by the public. The public is sometimes right. We live here under a Netanyahu government and this is not the case, so the first point is to bear that in mind.

Secondly, there is a religious disagreement over whether it is permissible to ascend the Temple Mount and we do not know what Rabbi Ovadia Yosef's opinion was in this matter. At the outset, there is a religious disagreement on the matter – and since I am not an expert on exegesis or a religious authority to say what is right or wrong, I cannot express an opinion on this issue either. I accept the government's position on the issue that there are sensitivities that we need to take into consideration.

Even in 1967, Moshe Dayan established the *status quo* on the Temple Mount, and from the moment such a *status quo* was determined, it is generally difficult to change it. We need to be considerate of it and to understand it and, more particularly, especially to ensure that we live here as we ought to, rather than living in circumstance where we set the Middle East aflame. It is so easy to inflame the Middle East – but it will be impossible to extinguish the fire.

**Eli Abbadi:** Thank you for your remarks. I would like to add that when you spoke of the Jewish people's four major challenges in the State of Israel, I did not hear you mention that presented by the liberal left – namely, that of BDS and the like. In my humble opinion, this represents a somewhat greater challenge than the events in Austria, etc.

**Avi Gabbay:** I would not agree on the issue of the greater challenge, but there can be no question that we need to combat BDS continually. One of the positive points, as I see it, is that, with the exception of a very marginal and extremist leftist fraction, everyone else is unanimous on the need to engage against and counter BDS. Even a relatively leftist organization like J-Street is fighting BDS – we therefore know that, as far as Jews are concerned, those who support BDS are truly on the furthest, most extreme margins – and we should definitely not grant such a marginal phenomenon a status of any great significance.

The major phenomena invariably remain those relating to Antisemitism, and it is imperative to contend with them. The fight to counter the needs to be ongoing while, at the same time, we also need to be able to keep a sense of proportion so that we do not elevate their scale and importance through our own publicity and thus provide them a broader platform.

**Eli Cohen:** I wish to thank Avi Gabbay for his lively and interesting address.

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## Plenary Session No. 12

### Closure Session

**Dr. Arieh Azoulay** wound up the Zionist General Council festive session. This festive session marked the 120th anniversary of the First Zionist Congress, the Centenary of the Balfour Declaration, the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel, the Jubilee of the Reunification of Jerusalem.

We learned incidentally from Prof. Shain about the problem of Zionist sovereignty. We also learned about the Balfour Declaration and were able to successfully conclude the Session that discussed the Constitution, the first time that we have discussed so extensively such an important subject as the Constitution of the Zionist Movement, the glue that has held Zionism together until now, despite the existing differences of opinion, finding means to unify this organization with all its diverse parts.

We have preserved the unity of the Jewish people, with its unique and its general aspects and this is the only movement or Zionist framework in the world in which all the Jewish organizations, the ideological unions and the religious streams, sit together. The Jewish people has no other framework and it is our duty also or as part of doing Zionism to maintain this possibility of being together because without this we will not be able to guarantee Zionist sovereignty. We will not guarantee that we will continue to deal with the main missions. The heads of departments spoke to us of their Zionist vision. In the words of the Chairman of the Executive, ultimately we did Zionism. When we address the Constitution we are not dealing with trivialities. We are dealing with a vision and with ideology because the Jerusalem Program is part of the Constitution. We approved it. We simply voted on amendments but not on the existing contents in the framework of the Jerusalem Program. I very much hope that the Departments concerned will deal with the basic part of Zionism, namely learning Hebrew. I would like there to be a Council Session entirely in Hebrew. Without the language there is no nation and the World Zionist Organization took upon itself this mission and, if they say we contacted the Federations, it was to make sure that the heads of the Federations learn and speak Hebrew. It takes time, years. This is our basis and we will not forget the basic missions of Zionism which are education to Zionist awareness for *Aliyah* and encouragement, principally of the young generation.

We have a country, thank God, and it must also deal with these challenges. As a Zionist Movement we must ensure Zionist education. Not Jewish education because this is not necessarily Zionist, but Zionist education towards *Aliyah*. I thank the Chairman of the Zionist Executive and the Chair of the Council, who with her moderation and will continues responsibly and constantly to instill an atmosphere of good humor. Of course, I also thank Eli Cohen and his professional and efficient staff who made it possible

for the Council Session to be conducted calmly and without a hitch. I thank everyone for listening and participating and call the Council Chair, Helena Glaser, to the podium.

**Helena Glaser:** Thank you, Arie. It is always Arie who teaches me what is important in the Zionist Movement. I wish to express my thanks and to summarize a few important points. At this Session there were open discussions that were very important and this was manifest in the panels last night where the members could express themselves. People were afforded the opportunity to express their thoughts and I think this is marvelous and important.

The main topic was the Constitution. In my opinion, these were good discussions. I think we will still need to discuss the Constitution at most of the next Session since some of the motions were transferred to the Constitution Committee, some because of the Regulations, which is important. You may imagine what discussions or debates there will be around the table in order to formulate those regulations but this takes time and will be voted on at the next Council Session. This was a decision of this forum.

We heard lectures that I consider were excellent. We have tried to relate them to our experience, but the contents were oriented to matters that you have been addressing in order to provide you with inspiration.

Dr. Martin Kramer's lecture was important, not only because of the historic justice that he did, but because it places the Zionist Movement in an important position. The action of the Zionist Movement through the Sokolow as its President - Dr. Kramer presented documents that had not previously been highlighted, unfortunately. If we are commemorating the Centenary of the Balfour Declaration, we need to emphasize the place and the action of the WZO through our representatives. All this was food for thought, inspirational, and I hope it will also give rise to the possibility of future action.

And now it is time to express my gratitude. I feel a personal need to thank the Chairman, Avraham Duvdevani, for his leadership, support, good advice and assistance, for being who you are. Thank you very much.

I thank the Vice Chairman, Yaakov Hagoel. Among the things that characterize Yaakov, while we were waiting to go into the Western Wall Tunnels, it was a little boring and Yaakov began to sing. This is his joyful approach, an expression of his love for Jerusalem, for tradition, for our rich past and I wish to thank you for your personal assistance in bringing Minister Hanegbi, and the Mayor of Jerusalem without fuss. I asked you and you immediately helped. Thank you very much.

Thank you to Eli Cohen, whose title is Director General but he is a director through and through. His charm and his ability in every situation facilitate matters; he carries out several tasks together skillfully and everything is always done quietly, with goodwill, listening to everybody, with an attempt to give everyone

what they want. Thank you to Anna Givati - everything rests on her shoulders - she is also responsible for Human Resources. You do wonderful professional work.

Special thanks to the Executive Secretary, Adv. Reuben Shalom and Adv. Fern Braniss - on their hard work throughout the intensive year. I wish to thank Bracha Cohen and Nava Avissar, and all the other staff members and all the participants for your active participation, for debating with enthusiasm on what you believe in and this is what is so great in our Movement. Thank you very much.

**Eli Cohen** noted several interesting facts: in this Session there were representatives from 16 countries. 241 participants, including 153 members of the Council or their substitutes and 34 participants. There were 70 participants in the nighttime trip to the Western Wall Tunnels. There were 110 participants in the panels this morning.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you with some particular acknowledgments. You know that truly it is impossible to organize such an event without the staff - a few staff members who were everywhere, just 10 of them.

The preparations for this Zionist General Council Session began in fact a year ago with the decision on the subject of the Constitution and the process that occurred here. I personally thank especially the two people who supported me, Reuben Shalom, the Executive Secretary General, who assisted me, and Fern Braniss, the Legal Advisor; without them we would not have been able to accomplish this.

I wish to praise the work of the Presidium Chair, Ms. Helena Glaser. Finally, I thank the members of the joint Executive and Presidium committee, for their personal trust and support throughout this period, the Chairman of the Executive Mr. Avraham Duvdevani, and I thank the session staff: Bracha Cohen, Nava Avissar, Shalom Dotan, Ronit Bash, Meira Azenkot, and the other staff members who contributed to the success of the event. Dubi Barel and the directors of the Departments - Yaniv Nahmias, Mark Dovav, Eran Berkowicz, Yaakov Aharoni, Moshe Preisler, Dubi Bergman, Itzhak Shtiglitz and Uri Zacki. and special thanks to Anna Givati for her work.

I am glad that a decision was taken about the next Council Session. In the coming days a notice will be sent regarding the date. We will do this in an organized way. It is a delight to be a Zionist and more than this, to be a Zionist in the World Zionist Organization. Thank you very much.

**Avraham Duvdevani** sincerely thanked Eli Cohen and asked to draw attention to the three Presidium members who were returned precisely in the closing session - Meir Kahlon, Chairman of the Libyan Immigrants Organization. Active in frameworks relating to the general public of oriental Jewry, he

worked for receipt of their recognition as Holocaust victims in the Holocaust period. The first great campaign that he carried out was to bring the Jews of Libya to Israel.

Patricia from Brazil, with all that she represents and does, and Arie Azoulay who started his Zionist work in the early 1970s when he was a World Zionist Organization emissary in France. Fifty years of outstanding Zionist work. These are people who are entitled to say what they have to say because in all these areas they got up and worked and devoted themselves. My gratitude to Helena, thanks to whom the Council Session was upgraded in relation to the previous one, which was also excellent, and my thanks to all the members for their seriousness and their participation, for caring. Also in the meetings of the groupings. This creates an atmosphere where these people say it was worth making an effort for this and getting these results.

Go in peace. I wish us all success. With the batteries you recharged here, you will all invest in your locations in true Zionist work, until we meet again, God willing, next year, and with this we conclude.

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