



הארגון הציוני העולמי  
WORLD ZIONIST ORGANIZATION

ZIONIST GENERAL COUNCIL SESSION XXXVII/5

**THE VISION OF  
THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT  
NEXT GENERATION  
CHALLENGES AND ACTIONS**

29 - 31 October 2019

מושב הוועד הציוני הכללי ה-37

**חזון  
התנועה הציונית  
הדור הבא  
אתגרים ומעשים**

ל' תשרי - ב' חשוון תש"ף

# Proceedings of the 37 Zionist General Council

## **Plenary No. 1 - Opening Plenary**

**Hernan Felman** opened the plenum with greeting remarks, emphasizing the role of the Zionist movement in this time of escalating antisemitism, intermarriage, and assimilation in the Diaspora. Mr. Felman noted that the task of the Zionist movement remains relevant and it must stay strong and organized in the face of the many disputes being waged. He wished success to his deputies in the plenum, young people for whom this is their first experience chairing a session and invited the Chairman of the Zionist Executive to make his remarks.

Chairman of the Zionist Executive, **Avraham Duvdevani**, began by describing how Herzl was brought to Jerusalem for burial. One of the first decisions made by the State of Israel's first government was the fulfillment of Herzl's wish to be buried in Jerusalem, and an ornate *parochet* was prepared to wrap the casket. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of Av, 1949, on a high hill in Jerusalem, Herzl's body was brought to the very heartland of the country he envisioned. His coffin was wrapped in the *parochet* prepared in 1935, embroidered with three Bible verses. The first, from the book Ezekiel: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves,; and I will bring you into the land of Israel," illustrates the *Kibbutz Galuyot* vision. The second verse, "Those who sow in tears will reap in joy," expresses the philosophy of the Zionist movement and its history, drenched in blood and tears and sweat and pain: a chronicle of sorrow culminating in joy with the establishment of the State of Israel, but this independence was also hard won and carried its own price of agony, blood, and suffering. The Zionist endeavor is therefore a difficult and painful process, at the end of which complete redemption will be achieved. On the hem of the *parochet* is the inscription: "The world will be freed by our liberty, enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness," exemplifying Herzl's vision, the establishment of a Jewish State, would not only be a blessing to the Jewish people, but a benefit to all mankind.

The WZO, added Mr. Duvdevani, seeks to fulfill the three goals embroidered on the *parochet*. Aliyah and *Kibbutz Galuyot* constitute our greatest challenge. Even today, the majority of Jews still live outside Israel. Herzl's vision was to establish a country where Jews from all over the world would live, but the task of "*And I shall bring you to the land of Israel*" is still a difficult one, more challenging than ever before as the waves of distress migration have ended and now all Aliyah is voluntary. The WZO operates extensively in this area and the Executive has held specific discussions on special actions needed to address Aliyah needs in two countries: France and Argentina. The issue of Aliyah from France has been ongoing as worsening local conditions also provide a window of opportunity to try and bring many Jews from France to Israel. In Argentina, the situation is also grave, with Argentinian Jews facing the complexity of a severe economic crisis in the midst of a presidential election campaign led by anti-Israel factors with an established history of hostility to Israel. The Jews of Argentina, having experienced the traumatic event of the AMIA Building bombing, are fearful of terrorist attacks and of the impact on future relations with the State of Israel. With this in mind, we intend to

make a special, concentrated, comprehensive, and expensive effort to bring as many young people as possible from Argentina to Israel during the coming year.

Additionally, preparatory and educational activities are conducted in welfare states to encourage immigration. Our involvement in Jewish Zionist education is expanding: increasing the number of *morim-shlichim*, developing Hebrew language programs and preparing for Aliyah.

“Those who sow in tears will reap in joy”—and so we continue to sow, despite the many difficulties. We carry on amid waves of antisemitism, knowing these are elements within the painful process of bringing Jews to Israel. We understand there are many more hard years ahead, especially for the State of Israel, and that all Jews face difficult times, both in Israel and abroad. In his book “The Jewish State”, Herzl wrote: “The world will be freed by our liberty, enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness, which we try to do there” meaning here, all that we try to do here and “whatever we accomplish for our own welfare, will act powerfully and beneficially for the good of humanity.” Ben-Gurion said that the establishment of the State of Israel was not a goal, but a means to carrying out other goals, greater and more constant, which continue to build Israel. Israel is still being established, with this “establishment” also entailing determining our issues and conduct, forming an exemplary society, ensuring justice and equality which will, as the prophet said, “be a light unto the nations”, and as Herzl said, “beneficial for the good of all humanity.”

**Helena Glaser** proudly marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Zionist Archives, which preserve a treasure trove of rare texts and photographs documenting the history of the Zionist movement and the State of Israel. She also marked 70 years since the founding of the city of Be’er Sheva, which has undergone accelerated development in recent years, advancing in leaps and bounds and continuing to develop plans for the future.

Ms. Glaser emphasized that all organizations striving to survive face the challenge of enlisting the next generation. The Zionist movement also faces this great mission. The movement has a wonderful legacy: Benyamin Ze'ev Herzl was young man in his late 30s when he began working to establish a national home for the Jewish people. He dreamed, led, and inflamed the hearts of tens of thousands of our people. He had a vision, developed an idea, and brought it to life, and the First Zionist Congress he organized in 1897 was accomplished when he was only 37 years old.

Today, young men and women set up international initiatives, manage mega-companies, are involved in every area of life from concept to implementation, and their enthusiasm is contagious. But the question arises as to why many choose not take part in the Zionist movement. Has the Zionist vision run its course, and is no longer as alluring to young people today as it was in times past? Do we not know how to pose challenges and market the Zionist idea in the frameworks available to us, such as social media? Are there no more challenges in Israeli

society that need to be addressed? Are we satisfied with the relations of Diaspora Jewry and the State of Israel? Are we contented with the number of *olim* to Israel among the younger generation? Is the spiritual condition and personal security of our brothers and sisters not a matter of concern? Can we tolerate living in a country where societal intolerance and polarity are so severe? Do we understand the needs of today's young people, their world, their methods, the tools they use?

Finally, Ms. Glaser called for the establishment of an international forum of young and active leadership, from which the ideas and vision for continued action will emerge. Benyamin Ze'ev Herzl planted a wonderful sapling that has taken root, grown, and spread its branches during the 120 years that have passed, and now we are tasked with planting many more trees that will bear fruit for future generations.

Audit Committee Chairman, **Dr. Baruch Levy**, explained that the committee is intended to serve as an aid to WZO organizations and directors, welcomed the successful cooperation between the audit committee and the Comptroller of the National Institutions, and invited the Comptroller to make his remarks.

Comptroller of the National Institutions, **Mr. Steven Stav**, encouraged attendees to review the Comptroller Office annual report on the WZO website ([www.wzo.org.il](http://www.wzo.org.il), Legislative Institutions—Office of Comptroller / Annual Report for 2018).

Mr. Stav noted that audits were conducted in all departments this year, with four of the seven (Education, Aliyah Promotion, Diaspora Activities, and Settlement) having completed the process, and been reviewed by the WZO Audit Committee chaired by Dr. Baruch Levy. The next departments to be reviewed are the Zionist Enterprises Department, the Department for Activities in Israel and Countering Antisemitism, and the Department for Diaspora Spiritual services.

In the previous year, the WZO conducted a risk assessment, which is commonly completed once every five years. The assessment has two goals: it clarifies key risks that may require special attention from the Executive and enables an effective auditing process that focuses on high risk situations that may require large investments of budgeting and resources.

In a joint discussion with the Executive, it emerged that there are over 50 risks, most of them cross-organizational due to the fact that every five years organizations suffer a shock, and difficulties arise in long-term management and planning.

Finally, Mr. Stav addressed the issue of procedures; despite efforts made to try to consolidate and disseminate standard operating procedures, only one has been successfully passed regarding the approval of WZO collaborations and participation in external events. While this was adopted in April 2018, other, more

fundamental procedures have yet to be formulated independently in the WZO. Thus, the Audit Committee relies on Jewish Agency standard operating procedures, and is at times required to intervene or make recommendations, such as in conflict of interest cases. Attempt to draft a procedure aimed at preventing conflict of interest was not successful, and Mr. Stav expressed hope that it would be completed shortly.

**Prof. Ariel Feldstein – a historian and researcher of the Zionist idea, movement, and leadership. He has published various books and articles, including a book on the relationship between the State of Israel and Diaspora Jewry during the Ben-Gurion era. In recent years, he has also researched how the figure of Theodor Herzl's was shaped in the collective memory.**

**Prof. Feldstein** began with a personal remark as a historian: “For years I sat in the Zionist Archives and read the minutes from this organization's meetings, and now the historian himself is attending the meeting to be documented in the minutes, this creates a difficult dilemma. I wonder what the historian reading this in 50 years will write. Only time will tell.”

He then emphasized Ben-Gurion's leadership in the story of the Negev, explaining how this demonstrates leadership that establishes a process, while tackling all its complexities, and taking steps that shape, influence, and define the country and the future conduct of Jews in Israel and the Diaspora. Incidentally, it is noteworthy that we now mark 70 years since AJC President, Jacob Blaustein, signed an agreement with Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, one worthy of consideration for the WZO in past and present contexts.

As a leader, Ben-Gurion, spent 15 years running in circles. The point relevant to this discussion is his decision to leave the internal system he inhabited in 1935 and move on to a larger system, that of the Zionist movement. On that year, Ben-Gurion was elected chairman of the Jewish Agency, and began a greater endeavor, subsequently also publishing his book “From Class to Nation”, in which he explained why he left his political movement, abandoning internal affairs to focus on national goals. In 1935, Gurion was unaware of how significant this move would prove to be, but within just two years, in 1937, the Peel Commission report was published, the first written proposal to resolve the Land of Israel conflict by dividing it into two states. Ben-Gurion understood the potential of this plan and attended the Zionist Congress expedition; he traveled throughout Europe, met Jabotinsky, and tried to persuade him to join the initiative (a move doomed to failure). The outbreak of World War II just a few years later, posed Ben-Gurion with a great dilemma: how to fight the British and yet concurrently cooperate with them, helping them defend the free world, and ultimately the Jewish people. He was forced to deal with extremely hard decisions, particularly after initial reports began to arrive of the systematic murder of Jews in Europe. As a leader, Ben-Gurion successfully managed to manage this impasse, but it also became a staunch life-lesson for him, as we shall see in the following.

The United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine ostensibly posed another dilemma for Ben-Gurion, but that was not the case. Understanding the forces and processes propelling history, he responded by stating: We will accept the partition plan. Eventually, he also became involved in designing the division map of the UN Commission of Inquiry. When committee members toured Israel, they were taken on excursions to the Negev and Revivim and presented with gladiolus flowers (Sword Lilies) to demonstrate the abundant waters of the Negev. Eventually, though the Negev was originally absent in the 1937 plan, it was included in the 1947 partition, and the future struggle for the establishment of the State of Israel included this region.

One of the questions Ben-Gurion considered, a question of paramount importance to a budding state, was: How do I, as leader, infuse vision and values into the people who realized their dream of establishing a state. Throughout two millennia, and since the First Zionist Congress, the Jewish people has yearned for a country of its own. Ben-Gurion the leader wondered: How do I seek another destiny and mission for this people, who feel they have accomplished their task, entered the Land of Israel, fulfilled the vision, implemented it, and now seek only to be like all other peoples. He believed that this vision should always serve as a beacon for the Jewish people living in Zion: the people must be mobilized and led to follow its light. He began slowly to formulate the notion that another act was required, one that would exemplify this vision. On one of his trips returning from Eilat (then called Um Rash Rash), he suddenly saw something that seemed incredible, the figures of several men on horseback as their hoofs scattered dust around them. Surprised by the sudden spectacle, Ben-Gurion asked to stop the military jeeps escorting him and asked the riders to approach him, astonished to discover they were Jewish cowboys! He asked where they had come from, and they explained they had traveled there from the US during the war to volunteer and help, and later decided to stay in the Negev and establish a settlement. From that moment, when Ben-Gurion met the "Jewish cowboys," the desire, the hunger, to come to the Negev had been ignited.

It is important to remember that at that time, during the establishment of the State, Ben-Gurion was already over the age of 60, an age considered quite old at the time. He began his career as a national leader at an advanced age, and yet was suddenly gripped with the compulsion to go to the Negev. This seemed inconceivable - abandoning his role in government leadership, leaving Jerusalem and his home in Tel Aviv, and going south to the desert. However, Ben-Gurion decides to go, and in December 1953 he settles in the Negev, in the new Kibbutz Sde Boker, becoming a full-fledged kibbutz member.

Throughout my research of Ben-Gurion's Zionist conception, I wondered why Ben-Gurion opted to settle in the Negev, what motivated him to do so. Ben-Gurion began writing a diary at the age of 19, along with correspondence kept in triplicates; he filed one copy of his letters in the archive, knowing that one day historians would read them. Ben-Gurion therefore wrote to history, instilled with a historical consciousness, and when he

did not want to write—he did not write. One issue he ignored was the reasoning behind his move to Sde Boker. So, how can a historian uncover his motives? First, one meets people who were close to or near him. I began my research many years after the fact, so most of the people close to him had already passed, but I did talk to the late Yitzhak Navon, Ben-Gurion's personal assistant at the time of his Negev move. When I asked Navon about Ben-Gurion's motives, he replied: "If only you'd seen the spark and the passion ignited in him when he saw those young American Jews who immigrated to Israel and did something unimaginable in 1948—leaving the homes they grew up in, a life of comfort in America, to come to the Negev. That's the spark that lit within him, and he thought 'I want this too. I, who am now over 60 years old, also want to be in the Negev.'" In Hebrew we say one "descends" (as in, moves south) to the Negev, but Ben-Gurion insisted one "ascends" there. In fact, topographically he is correct, but for him this insistence was far more profound than a technical subtlety: you ascend to the Negev, just as you ascend to Jerusalem.

Many others have addressed this issue; the one clear point is that Ben-Gurion linked his decision to live in the Negev to his first stop in Palestine. Having immigrated in 1906, he disembarked in Jaffa and decided not to stay there, but go north to the Galilee region and work the land. As an idealist of just 19 years, he wanted to be a farmer, reaping the fruits of the land with his own hands. Even after leaving the Galilee and starting his political activities in the center of Israel, this passion for agricultural work remained, and in December 1953 he fulfilled it by making the move to Sde Boker. Bass, having produced a timeless caricature of Ben-Gurion, depicted him as a shepherd. In fact, as a man well-versed in the Bible, he did insist on tending a herd. He knew that "From King David to David Ben-Gurion: There Have Been None Like David." Just as King David started as a shepherd, he also would become one. There was only one difference between the modern David and another Arik, also a shepherd: that Arik managed to swing a sheep over his shoulders, while Ben-Gurion was only photographed standing by its side. This is what distinguished between two historical images, that Ben-Gurion genuinely wanted to become a shepherd. The kibbutz members suffered terribly from this decision, and very politely and pleasantly asked that he erect his hut on the outskirts of the kibbutz grounds. Although they tried to give him the feeling that he was a member of the community, it was not exactly a success story. Bass, having drawn the famous caricature of Ben-Gurion as a shepherd, managed to decipher what had happened to Israeli society in 1953: Ben-Gurion, depicted as a shepherd, gazes in the direction of Sde Boker, while his herd faces Tel Aviv. This is the image, and the one that encapsulates why Ben-Gurion did not document his reason for going there: he did not know if it would succeed. His longing, his desire, was that legions of youth would be mobilized to come to the Negev, but that did not happen. Ben-Gurion made the effort in vain - people did not follow in his wake. The vision, for him, remained an unfulfilled dream, and as time marched on he realized that the center of decision-making and action was not in the Negev, but in Jerusalem. He awaited the moment

when he could return to politics, to doing what he had done and loved for so many years. He finally did return to political leadership in 1955 following a tragic situation, the capture of Egyptian Jewish operatives (*The Lavon Affaire*, or the “Unfortunate Affair”).

In 1953, Ben-Gurion's drive towards the Negev did not succeed, but processes led by statesmen are not measured at a single point in time but rather in the long-term. He had failed to bring masses of young people to the Negev but as prime minister and as defense minister, he did succeed in his insistence on the importance of the Negev and its development. He ensured that the IDF Officer School (*Bahad I*) would be built near Mitzpe Ramon, and three years ago the IDF *Bahadim* City (“Training Base City”) was established in the Negev. All IDF training bases have been moved to the Negev Junction and an impressive base was built there—a true Ben-Gurion achievement. Every statesman that made the yearly pilgrimage to Ben-Gurion's grave on the 6<sup>th</sup> of Kislev remembered his legacy. Every time they returned to their helicopters and the dust swept up by the rotors carried their promises into the air, their conscience nagged, and finally the Israeli government made the decision to transfer IDF training bases to the Negev. Today, thousands of soldiers arrive there, often their first sight of the Negev. The second achievement has been to bring the IDF's technological elite unit to the Negev, on the outskirts of the high-tech park and university campus, and now there is the difficult task ahead of bringing the IDF Intelligence Directorate, after evacuating their bases in Gililot, south to the Be'er Sheva area to complete Ben-Gurion's vision.

Had Ben-Gurion viewed the Negev today, he would see a region amid transformation, just as in Arik Einstein's song, "...and the Negev desert will bloom, making the old man happy.” The Negev is turning to high-tech and emerging technologies, where once it was typified by traditional industries, factories, and labor-intense occupations. Now it is a place of high-level industry, with many startups arriving there in the spirit of Ben-Gurion's vision. He would surely have turned to State leaders demanding that the towns and communities in the Negev should be expanded, and local education improved. He would repudiate the fact that children growing up in the Negev today have lower chances of being admitted to prestigious university departments than those in the center of Israel. According to the admissions committee of the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Medical School, only 10% of accepted students accepted are local residents. This anomaly is not due to any fault of residents but one for which Israel's governments carry full responsibility, without regard for political parties or agendas. The State of Israel has yet to resolve the education gaps, a task of vital national importance. And if the WZO believes in bringing the young generation to fulfill and lead here, the Negev is the place where that leadership and fulfillment can be achieved.

Ben-Gurion served his second, and longer, term as prime minister, until 1963, then returned to Sde Boker. In doing so, he illustrated his most sacred belief—that the Negev was home, that his settling there was not merely

some transient moment in history, and there he would spend the rest of his days. From 1963 until his death, Ben-Gurion lived in Sde Boker, with all the difficulties that entailed. His diary attests to the great pain he felt as he describes, step by step, how the Zionist vision of *hagshama* in the Negev and the citizens' desire to participate in that cause does not materialize. His greatest concern at the time was the youth, so distracted by matters unrelated to the Zionist vision. He was troubled by the fact that the young generation was not working towards *hagshama*, and this led to two fascinating developments. First, he began writing an amazing and fascinating series of articles about his Negev vision, published in the *Davar* newspaper almost weekly. Second, he embarked on a riveting correspondence with Prof. Rotenstreich of the Hebrew University, where Ben-Gurion writes about the generation born in the established State of Israel, unaware of the significance of that independence. The question is how do address a generation born in such a country, what do we say to our children, to our grandchildren. We have a country, one enormously successful in many areas, but is that enough? Is our work complete?

Putting aside politics, Ben-Gurion's vision is still relevant today. The water tank positioned at the entrance to Sde Boker is still inscribed with Ben-Gurion's motto, but we must bring this water tank to Azrieli and also display it there, so that all those living today in that center stretch between Gedera and Hadera will see that the beacon is not lit in Azrieli Towers, but on the fields of Sde Boker.

Finally, two brief anecdotes about Ben-Gurion's years in Sde Boker. When he first decided to live there, the State had yet to establish a PM security unit. No one thought that prime ministers required a personal security detail, but with the fedayeen militants from the Gaza Strip making threats, the decision was made to deploy a weekly rotation of IDF platoons to protect Ben-Gurion in the kibbutz. Each Sunday, soldiers would arrive, and Ben-Gurion would have them stand in three-lined formations, passing between them and asking two questions: why they chose not to adopt Hebrew surnames, and about their family background (where they came from, parents' origins, etc.). On one occasion, as he passed among the rows and heard one soldier state his name, he replied: "You know, in 1906 I worked on your grandfather's farm in the Galilee. You must come for tea at five o'clock." The soldier was bewildered—*What does this man want from me? What exactly am I supposed to do?* His platoon sergeant was there and said he would be exempt from guard duty if he met with Ben-Gurion and so the soldier kept the appointment. Ben-Gurion, as usual, talks on and on, detailing with great longing his work on the Galilee farm and his connection from earliest childhood in Płońsk to the Land of Israel. As he continues his monologue, the boy sits and listens (*Oh, well, at least they let me off guard duty but that doesn't mean I have to sit here all night*), and finally Ben-Gurion ends his long speech and asks the boy if he has something to say. This young native-born Israeli ignorant of the story of Exodus, replied: "I'm very sorry, but according to my grandfather, you didn't do anything but destroy our crops", and that is how the meeting ended.

The second story may illustrate Ben-Gurion's perception of the Negev as a place that exemplified simplicity. When he first decided to move there, the Sde Boker kibbutz members could not afford to build him his own residence as they were barely eking out a living. And so, the government of Israel decided to build Ben-Gurion a hut. There was a precedent for this, as Yitzhak Ben-Zvi's cabin was brought from Sweden, but Ben-Gurion refused this option and asked that his hut be built by *Solel Boneh*. A hut was built for him, a ramshackle version far removed from the Swedish model. One day, his wife Paula passed by the hut while Ben-Gurion was inside and saw that a stone had hit the hut and punched a hole in one of the wooden planks. Paula, who did not particularly enjoy Sde Boker life, peeked through the hole and realized that gravel had been used to fill the gaps between the walls, but that it had only been filled up to Ben-Gurion's height. Being at foot taller than her husband, she realized that if an assassin came, while he might be safe—she was not. The next day, the wall was dismantled, and gravel was added to match the height of the prime minister's wife before being reinstalled.

At the end of the lecture, **Hernan Felman** thanked Prof. Feldstein and concluded the plenum.

### **Plenary No. 2 - Marking the Centenary of the Central Zionist Archives**

**Rabbi Philip Scheim** of Toronto introduced himself, noting the difficulty of marking a century of CZA history in just 45 minutes, and recalling a personal memory of one archive item. Many years ago, he came across a hand-written Siddur written by a young man in the Warsaw Ghetto. Unsure whether any Jews would survive the Holocaust, the man wanted to ensure at least one prayer book remained in the world. Now, marking 100 years of the Zionist Archives, and seeing the multitude of documents and artifacts preserved there documenting the Jewish people's glorious wealth of Jewish texts and sacred writings, one sees proof of success.

**Justice Elyakim Rubinstein** welcomed the decision to dedicate the session to the Zionist Archives. The Jewish people are a people of remembrance, from our Exodus from Egypt and our holidays, such as Rosh Hashanah. Archives are the keepers of memory, a place to understand history. Many wise people have been quoted saying that a people without a past has no future. Janusz Korczak, who perished in the Warsaw Ghetto, also attributed this to individuals: a person without a past has no future. One of the Israel's important leaders, Yigal Allon, wrote that a nation ignorant of its past faces a poor present and a future shrouded in mist. All agreed and were right.

This vision motivated Dr. George Herlitz, in 1919, a century ago, to bring the Zionist Archives to Israel. This was two years after the Balfour Declaration, a seminal event in the history of the Zionist movement, and the onset of the British Mandate, an era in which Zionism began a new phase towards *hagshama*. This was also the beginning of the Third Aliyah, when my own family immigrated here. The Mandate was instituted to

implement the Balfour plan, and after World War I Europe enjoyed a period of peace. No one predicted that within such a short time Hitler would come to power, while the archive would come to Israel.

The term *archiyon* (“archive”) is an interesting one, first appearing in a 9<sup>th</sup> century midrash called *Pesikta Rabbati*; it describes a man looking for information who decided to search the archives of Egypt. The word *ginzach*, the Hebrew name for the State of Israel’s national archive, appears in the Book of Chronicles. King David had a secretary named Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud, who was apparently appointed to preserve the royal records. What is clear is that documentation was already prevalent in ancient times, laying the foundations for future archives.

Simon Dubnow, founder of the Bund, was an important Jewish historian. In his last days, before he perished in 1941, he called out to the Jews: *Yidn, shraybt un farshraybt* (Yiddish: “Jews, write and record”), meaning: preserve memory.

David Ben-Gurion, who made Aliyah in 1906 at the age of 20, asked his father in the Diaspora to keep the letters he sent him, explaining that “I would like to know what I thought about the Land of Israel at every stage”. Chronicling all his experiences from the age of 20, Ben-Gurion understood the great importance of historical documentation.

In the 1970s, I served as the aide to the late Moshe Dayan. He had a method, from the days he was the IDF Chief of General Staff, of keeping a journal where his aides would record his meetings and conversations. Dayan used to update them so that they could continue the documentation, and I learned this practice from him, keeping my own journal logging and detailing events, such as at the Camp David Conference (1978). When I read through it, it revives for me this significant period in the history of the State of Israel, led by Menachem Begin.

Historical memory has a practical significance. I have often attended negotiations conducted as if history only began that very day. Negotiations are important, and people do search for information about the past. During the crisis on the eve of the Six-Day War, everyone was dashing around the Eisenhower archive for a 1957 document in which Eisenhower made a promise about US intervention in the event of a crisis. Not sure whether they found the document, but the presidential archive was a beehive of activity at the time.

I am here not only as a member of the CZA Directing Committee, but also as its longtime consumer. I am an almost compulsive consumer of archives. In my youth, in the early 1970s, I happily spent hours and entire days in the Zionist Archives, and as a student completing my degrees in the Hebrew University, I was frequently there to research the history of the Arab-Zionist conflict and Zionist stances on the Arab question. This led to the publication of numerous works examining Zionism and Arabs. I became an avid archive user and over time,

sitting there, I inadvertently came across materials that instigated writing a book on the establishment of the legal system in the State of Israel, our judicial system. That was long time ago, and how could I have imagined that one day I would become part of this system. I discovered fascinating materials—many of which I left unpublished as they pertained to people still living, but they were the basis for a book that was groundbreaking in its field. The CZA was then located in a different building from where it stands today. Its official director was Dr. Alex Bein, following the first director, Dr. Herlitz, who also served as State Archivist. Dr. Michael Heyman was the archive's managing director, an excellent historian and archivist. All three were of German descent and exhibited the distinctive qualities of *Yekke* Jews, meaning they were orderly, punctual, and resolute. Dr. Bein, by the way, was Herzl's biographer. He found all his biographical materials in the archives, and produced a wonderful autobiographical book, *They do not Greet Here*, describing the history of archives.

People who come to browse archive materials receive friendly and welcoming treatment. Motivated by their own interests, there are cases in which researchers and publications censor books or memoirs of public figures, so only in the archives can you find the actual words or statements made and recorded. As a young man spending days there, I familiarized myself with the documents of more and less well-known figures, such as David Ben-Gurion, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, Moshe Sharett, Eliyahu Sasson, Haim Arlosoroff, and Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick Kisch (the grandfather of MK Yoav Kisch, who was chairman of the Zionist Executive in the 1920s and later fought and died in combat as a brigadier general in North Africa during World War II).

As a Supreme Court judge, I had the opportunity to work, together with fellow Judges Meltzer and Handel, in the Vienna community archive. The archive was brought to Israel in the 1950s, but several years ago the community suddenly demanded it back. We decided not to interfere in the State Archives decision to keep them, and in the ruling, I wrote: "Archives constitute keepers of memory. The keepers in this case [the Vienna community archive] must be given their due respect, without impairing the legitimate and required option that complete copies be maintained in the place those memories originated. We have had the privilege of establishing in Israel the center of the Jewish world, it must be strengthened, and not have its assets scattered."

The Central Zionist Archive serves as the cornerstone in the preservation of memory and history. Its 100 years mark a century of Aliyah, of devastation, the spirit of the times, the Gathering of Israel, reviving the Hebrew language, and the transition from the *Yishuv* under British colonial rule to state sovereignty. Its importance cannot be measured. It must be respected, cherished, nurtured, and supported. This is a national imperative. Memory resides in our collective DNA as a people, historians will acknowledge its existence and continuity, but most importantly, even if the entire population doesn't always know—it will be thankful for its existence.

Mr. Rubinstein concluded his remarks by wishing good health to the Chairman of the Zionist Archives, Quito Hasson, unable to attend due to health reasons, and congratulated all the dedicated archive staff.

**Yigal Sitry** thanked Justice Elyakim Rubinstein, the Zionist Executive, and the WZO Zionist Enterprises Department, emphasizing the Department's active contribution to the archives, providing both moral and practical assistance that enables the CZA to carry out its extensive activities, including exhibitions, conferences, events, and more. Mr. Sitry invited participants to visit the Archives, provided a historical review, and presented current data about its activities.

### **A. History of the Archives**

The Zionist Archive was first established in 1919 on the third floor of a residential building in Berlin. Inside a bathroom measuring only 10 square meters, the Zionist Archive began its operations, which consisted of a bookcase of about 50 files. In 1924, it was moved to the basement of the building that housed the headquarters of all Zionist organizations operating in Berlin, at 10 Meinekestraße, and on June 2020, a plaque was placed there to commemorate the site. One of the first visitors to this basement was Dr. Hindos, a Zionist activist from New York, who visited in 1924 and then wrote an article describing his admiration for the place and his profound esteem for the archive founder, George Herlitz, who strived to move the archive materials to Jerusalem. In September 1933 Herlitz finally succeeded as the dire geopolitical circumstances of pre-World War II Europe continued to deteriorate. The archive was moved to the National Institutions building in Jerusalem, in the basement of Keren Hayesod, and in 1938 was moved again to a new wing built for the Jewish Agency. In 1951, the archive was transferred to a division designated for the Jewish National Council, built especially for the Israeli government, and in November 1987 it finally found its permanent home at the entrance to Jerusalem.

George Herlitz, the legendary founder of the archive, also established the archival profession in Israel, and throughout the 1940s served as secretary of the Zionist Congresses. Herlitz was archive director until 1955, and his name is commemorated at the entrance and in the name of the cafe there, "Georg". Its next director, Alex Bein, founded the Hebrew University archival studies program and the Association of Israeli Archivists. Dr. Bein, Israel's first Chief State Archivist, was the historiographer who chronicled the Zionist enterprise and Herzl and is a recipient of the Israel Prize in Zionist Historiography. In 1971, he was replaced by Dr. Michael Heymann, a highly knowledgeable historian and expert on the subject of Herzl. Yoram Mayorek was the first to collect materials from former Soviet countries. Mr. Mayorek, who developed the CZA Education and Training Unit, focused on genealogical information and began work that led to the archive's Family Research

Department. In addition to these directors, it is worth mentioning archive chairmen Moshe Haskell, who was director of the finance division, Matti Drobles, and Zvi (Quito) Hasson.

## **B. The goals and purpose of the Zionist Archives**

In 1934, an academic committee appointed to discuss the archive's future decided to recognize it not only as the central archive for all Zionist organizations but all Jewish institutions and organizations. Following the committee's recommendations, in 1935 the name of the archive was changed to the "Central Zionist Archives".

The archive was established to document Zionist history and preserve memory, but at certain times it also served in additional roles, such as assisting the Zionist Executive in its activities. In the early years, the Executive used it as a propaganda tool, evident in the collection of Jewish Zionist newspapers from around the world. In fact, the Archive's newspaper collection is the largest and most important in the world today.

During the British Mandate, the CZA was used by the *Yishuv* leadership and the Zionist Executive to prepare their arguments before facing the British authorities or inquiry commissions. Many Jewish leaders spent long hours there, combing through materials, listening to advice, and submitting their proposals based on the information they gathered.

From the end of World War II and until current day, the archive has been used primarily for research. In honor of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we have prepared a comprehensive book that includes studies on Zionist history, all based on archival materials. The digital collection was limited to complete books and articles published from 1990 onwards, and yet we still compiled an astonishing 1990 essays in that anthology. This review is ongoing, and we estimate that it will reach about 5,000 essays written since the archive's establishment, a testament to its significant contribution to the study and research of the Zionist enterprise.

## **C. Archive Operations and Collections**

The CZA has undergone significant changes over the years, making great technological strides. Having started with just 10 square meters, it now spreads over 6,000 running meters. Single shelves have been replaced with approximately 12,000 running meters of shelving. In 1925, it was run by one multi-purpose employee (George Herlitz) and an assistant librarian, while today it employs 29 workers and about 25 volunteers. The simple hand-written index cards have made way for a digital database, and the microfiche reproductions started in 1950 are now digitally scanned with sophisticated software as the CZA continues to keep up with high-tech innovations to preserve the materials in its possession.

The CZA presently contains approximately 95 million documents. Archival materials are divided into 500 divisions of the WZO and all Zionist institutions established in the following years, including truly historic

documents, such as the original document of the Basel Program (1897). The archives also contain 1,425 personal collections, including Herzl's personal archive and the estate of Joseph Trumpeldor, and additionally some 250,000 maps and plans, among them the map drawn by engineer Nahum Vilboshevitz during the Uganda expedition's visit, depicting the route they took and the animals they encountered, which he summarized in a report with the line: "Where there is nothing, there will be nothing."

The archive has an impressive collection of photographs, posters, and recordings. The photograph collection includes about 1,400,000 items and is growing at an astonishing rate, having become the largest and most important Zionist collection of photographs in the world. The compilation of posters and leaflets has 40,000 items, and the collection of recordings contains about 2,000 special recordings, including everything that happened on the Shabbat in which Ethiopian Jews were brought here in Operation Solomon. Along with these special collections, the archive also houses an impressive collection of 7,150 different newspapers, as well as the Zionist Library collection of about 85,000 volumes and museum exhibits, many of which are on loan to exhibitions in Israel and abroad.

#### **D. The Future of the CZA**

Mr. Sitry presented a video on the challenges of the archive in the following century, highlighting several key issues. First, the CZA must prepare for the handling and processing of vast amounts of materials (an additional 20,000 running meters of shelving) and make all materials digitally accessible. Second, they must prepare for digitally generated materials: soon, most materials will all be digital in origin, and the means of preservation of such materials are sophisticated and expensive. Also, Zionist archives from the Diaspora must be located, processed, and brought to Israel, and materials documenting Zionist activities that are currently stored in foreign archives of foreign countries must also be located and brought here. These steps are essential for the continued and valuable work of preserving and commemorating the Zionist enterprise around the world.

**Dror Morag**, head of the Department for the Zionist Enterprises, summed up the session by emphasizing the important and special role of the Zionist Archives. Mr. Morag clarified that his department has placed the archive at the core of its activities, investing great efforts in its support, and considers it an enormous privilege to work with the archive staff, who are also worthy of appreciation. The CZA is undergoing a fascinating process, and its extensive activities have always been supported by the Education Department. This combination facilitated the task of increasing visitor numbers to the archive, collaborations, conferences and lectures, and instigated renewal processes, under the professional leadership of archive director Yigal Sitry and chairman Quito Hasson.

Mr. Morag noted that the CZA centennial has also prompted the Zionist Executive to allocate a designated budget to highlight the Zionist enterprise throughout the ages. This budget will be used for ongoing activities throughout the year: large exhibitions in collaboration with Israel's leading museums and a unique exhibition in the archive itself, the inauguration of a plaque in Berlin, where the archive was initially established, issuing a special edition publication marking the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CZA, and more.

Furthermore, the Zionist Archives building has begun an extensive renovation process, and advanced scanning and conservation laboratories have been established.

Mr. Morag expressed the organization's great appreciation for the archive's activities, gathering historical materials on Zionist history, processing them, and making them accessible to the public. This work has great value in Zionist education and in strengthening Zionist traditions. The Executive must continue to support the CZA's activities, providing it the necessary means to carry out and expand its work. In conclusion, he showed a promotional video produced by his department on a century of Zionist Archive achievements, thanking his staff for their dedication.

**Plenary No. 3 - Panel: "My Heart is in the East, But I am in the Far West": Israel's Place in the Lives of Young Jews Today**

Session chair, **Rabbi Alan Silverstein**, opened the discussion by noting the challenges mentioned throughout the day: the challenges of continuing a commitment to Zionism here in Israel, and the vision of Ben-Gurion and trying to keep that alive, and the need to find out how the commitment to Zionism is going to be kept alive in the next generation, both in Israel and elsewhere.

In a study conducted in 2007 by Stephen M. Cohen and Ari Kelman on Diaspora Jewry revealed worrying findings regarding the increasing distancing of young adults from Israel and the Zionist cause. Charles Kadushin at the Brandeis University Cohen Center published articles refuting these figures, arguing that a study of American Jewish communities over the years clearly shows that young people are generally alienated from Israel, but later in life they tend to report more commitment to the Jewish community and Zionism. As they marry and start families, they tend to develop careers but also become affiliated with synagogues, Jewish organizations, and Zionist movements, further increasing their commitment.

As a congregational rabbi, Rabbi Silverstein thinks both positions are correct. Cohen and Kelman's alarming position is correct, as is Kadushin's stance, because once you do the things that Kadushin pointed out, your commitments grow stronger. However, it is noteworthy that in recent years there has been a growing

phenomenon known as the “Odyssey Years,” written about by David Brooks in *The New York Times*, referring to the years between college graduation and starting a family. Today, people tend to marry and have children at a later age, establishing their careers later, and therefore settling in residential neighborhoods and joining synagogues and organizations only in their thirties. The period between college graduation (21 or so) and establishing oneself professionally and in terms of family and community (mid to late 30s) is termed the odyssey years, a time of searching, which poses a great challenge to instilling commitment to Zionism and the Jewish world. When these commitments are realized (through marriage, children, careers, organizations, or affiliation, etc.), we have a much better chance. But large numbers of young people throughout the Diaspora, and certainly in Israel, are in those odyssey years. Projects designed to deepen ties to Zionism and Israel among children, youth, and students have been partially successful. However, in the age-group of 21-39, single adults in their odyssey years, the success rate is extremely low. That is the population that must be addressed, that is the crucial population for the Jewish future, we must see how they can be encouraged to take part in it.

Tonight's panel will focus on this age group, with various experts sharing their thoughts and recommendations, based on their experiences and familiarity with these age groups in Israel and abroad.

The panel moderator, **Ofer Haddad**, presented the practical challenges facing the Zionist movement. First, he clarified that the concept of "Zionism" has changed, a fact that poses real-world challenges to current-day Zionism, especially in certain areas and among certain age groups. The Zionist movement arose out of crisis. Although from inception it was formed as an ideological idea based on choice, it emerged from the extreme plight suffered by the Jewish people. Zionism provided an existential solution, a necessary means of survival, while today our situation differs greatly. Examining the situation of the Jewish people today reveals, fortunately, we are in one of the best periods in our history, for Jews in Israel and for Diaspora Jews. Precisely because of this, the Zionist movement today is tackling a significant challenge in enlisting Diaspora Jews, and the Jews of Israel, to the Zionist idea, and to arouse in them a renewed Zionist fervor.

Second, one must distinguish between varying perceptions of Zionism in different parts of the world. In the United States, donating money to a national institution charity collection box is enough to feel connected to Zionism. The situation in Europe and Israel is different. In Israel, affiliation to Zionism may be measured using different tools, such as tracking motivation levels to enlist to IDF combat units. However, this dimension has also shifted over the years; in the past, IDF recruits disregarded personal motivations in the choices of military service. Today, mindsets have changed, and military service is also considered in terms of personal benefit.

Third, the perception of Zionism has changed significantly across generations. Three generations ago, our grandparents, many of them Holocaust survivors, were connected to their Jewish identity and recognized the

need for the State of Israel to exist, as a place to ensure their survival, along with an ideological aspiration to piece back together a people almost annihilated. The sons and daughters of that generation were already on firmer ground, their connection to Judaism was out of respect for their parents, along with some visionary zeal. The third generation sees the world from an entirely new perspective, different from both previous generations. The third generation in the United States is more pampered, characterized by values completely distinct from those of its parents. They are far more liberal, critical of the State of Israel, and their encounter with Zionism and Israel is more conflictual.

This situation raises fundamental questions. What should we do now, when the State of Israel is no longer an “event” still being established, but a successful and prosperous state? What do we do, no longer in the “statehood for survival” stage, but fortunate to be an independent state—an exemplary state that is a sensation internationally, and is known over the globe thanks to its economic achievements? The State of Israel has demonstrated to the whole world how it coped with the global economic crisis and is an example of an innovative country with glorious high-tech resourcefulness. Today's generation is characterized by a critical view: young people question, expose, and do not automatically accept Israel's policies or Zionist values. Today's young people are not anxious about Israel's fate and fear its demise, but what they see around them are Jews who have become a symbol of success, in Silicon Valley or in Tel Aviv. How can we get the younger generation to embrace Zionist values, revitalizing the concept of Zionism and connect them to the State of Israel?

**Rabbi Yuval Cherlow** began by saying that the establishment of the State of Israel is not complete. While a huge success story, Israel has yet to accomplish the three elements at the core of modern statehood: territory, citizenry, and a constitution. Israel's borders are not conclusively delineated (with Syria or Lebanon). The question of its citizenship is also still open: Arabs residents of East Jerusalem, for example, carry blue IDs and may vote in local municipal elections, but are not allowed to vote for the Knesset. So, we have yet to resolve the question of who “is in” (Israeli citizens) and who “is out.”

Moreover, the State of Israel has no finalized constitution and probably will not draft one, at least not in the near future. Therefore, we must remember that the central role of the Zionist movement—establishing a national homeland—is still incomplete at the most basic and existential level.

Next, Rabbi Cherlow addressed the feelings of the younger generation towards the State of Israel, as described by the panel moderator. This generation indeed cannot regard Israel as a necessity or a requirement. Today's young people did not grow up in the shadow of the horrors of the Holocaust (which hugely impacted the drive propelling the Zionist movement), and are far-moved from the sense that the Jewish people are suffering and should be helped. The question of real and tangible distress is still relevant today; at this very moment, we can

calculate how many missiles are aimed at the State of Israel. But the mindset has indeed changed, and Israel is perceived to be in good form. Nevertheless, one should beware of complacency; it is possible that this positive and optimistic view will turn out to be wrong, and it is important to that we open our eyes and look at the reality around us.

What can the younger generation, aged 20-40, identify with today? The key word is innovation: understanding that the Zionist movement bears true tidings, and the State of Israel is the example of the power of change. Israel has revolutionized many areas: in Torah studies there have been groundbreaking changes, both in *Talmud Torah*, in the place of women in Torah studies, and in the important understanding that Torah studies provide not only a rational and intellectual framework, but also practical answers to existential questions. The State of Israel therefore caused a spiritual revival, and also an innovative revolution in culture. It created a technological revolution in high-tech and entrepreneurship, as well as in high-precision and medical fields, such as the development of genetic experiments. Israel creates and exports initiatives and changes in the field of ethics of genetics, and thus caused a worldwide transformation.

The word “innovation” is relevant to the discussion, because this is one of the younger generation’s main characteristics. Youth aspires to rebel against previous generations, to do something unique, to move in new directions and push for a new world order. We must place the idea of revolution, of *innovation*, as the central challenge to creating change, and through it, link the younger generation to Zionism. Young people believe in the winds of change. Therefore, we must instill in them the faith and understanding that Zionism heralds change— in the economy, Torah, culture, ethics, spirituality, agriculture, etc.

**Stephanie Strauss**, a representative of Yeshiva University (an American university representing 8-10% of young American Jews) was asked to clarify the common challenges among young Jews in North America. Ms. Strauss explained she worked with *yeshiva* or *midrasha* students during their gap year, and college-age students, benefiting from meeting community and Zionist leaders. These students were raised in Zionist environments – grew up in Zionist-oriented homes, educated to Zionist values, attended Jewish and Zionist schools, spent their summers in Jewish camps, and are characterized by profound emotional ties to the State of Israel, seeing it as a natural part of their DNA. These feelings are also felt by thousands of young people with whom the university is in contact, who participate in the various year-long *yeshiva* or *midrasha* programs in Israel. Young students arriving in Israel enjoy learning about Jewish heritage and Israeli culture, a kind of pre-destined path they embark on. From early childhood, they know that after completing high school they will come to Israel for a year of study. The important thing for them is getting to know Israeli society. They want to experience immersion at every opportunity, taking part, being involved, and strengthening their connection to Israel through various activities. This study year deepens their sense of belonging to Israel.

Quite a few students stay longer in Israel to serve in the IDF or do national service, and when looking to their later lives, we see that they become active participants in Jewish community life and involved in Israel. This generation continues their heritage as proud Zionists, becoming community leaders who initiate Israel-oriented activities, but it is important to remember that this is a small group.

At Yeshiva University, involvement in Israel is a no-brainer, it's a lay-up. We fly the Israeli flag 365 days of the year. We close every assembly singing *Hatikva*. We encourage students to pursue opportunities to spend time in Israel. We bring students to summer internship programs and winter break trips to engage with Israeli technology and the startup culture and Israeli innovation, and to enrich their lives that way with as much involvement as possible. We partner with Israeli academic institutions, and of course support Aliyah for the several thousand of YU graduates that have made Aliyah.

So it seems clear, that ongoing education, involvement, continued engagement, and immersion and a deep relationship with Israel strengthens both their Zionism as well as their ideals, making them more confident and prouder of their homeland and identity.

However, we must sadly admit that this is a small minority of young American Jews in the United States. Many studies, both those mentioned by the moderator and current research from the past two years, have found that less than one third of young Jews in America show some interest or commitment to the State of Israel.

In this regard, it is important to emphasize the urgent need to deepen the ties between young Jews in the Diaspora and Israel. We must see this challenge as a national imperative of vital national interest, and Israel's government and the Zionist Executive need to devote resources to it.

For North American youngsters, who are less religiously affiliated and who have not been exposed to the richness of Israel, their Jewish identity might be simplistic and dry approach. For them, Jewish identity boils down to "my grandparents went through the Holocaust," or "I go to temple and observe Yom Kippur," without Jewish practice of any kind, without Israel, to infuse that, to enrich that, their sense of belonging will remain shallow and superficial. Those who do spend time in Israel and are engaged with it, however, have a stronger and more powerful sense of identity. They believe in the State of Israel and we can encourage them to serve Israel, to advocate for it, and to be proud of all kinds of things, like Israeli innovation and things that better the world. And that strengthens their sense of Judaism along with their connection to Israel. In this matter, too, the key is education, integration, and constant engagement.

The Yeshiva University has its base of the Zionistic, perhaps religiously strengthened, youngsters, that for them Zionism is a little more natural. Then you have those that are less affiliated and therefore lacking in a connection to Israel. But the more troubling problem is the antisemitism and BDS on campuses. Even students who identify

as Zionists, educated in Jewish settings and having experienced rich and positive experiences in Israel, encounter this phenomenon. This poses difficult dilemmas, and we must help them make their voices heard and fight antisemitism and anti-Israel boycott trends.

The moderator then turned to Dr. Gadi Taub and asked him to present his perspective on the significance of Zionism today, in view of the struggles described by Ms. Strauss.

**Dr. Gadi Taub** made it clear that he has no practical advice, but stressed that the picture as a whole reveals we are at the end of a long period in which it seemed that nationalism seemed to be losing its relevancy in the world. Recent years have shown the growth of liberal, anti-nationalist trends that emerged to transcend national principles as we became part of a kind of “global village.” However, these trends are problematic as this apparent transcendence beyond nationalism is also an attempt to transcend democracy. For years, nationalism was depicted as anachronistic, and Zionism seemed a symbol of this anachronism. And so, a generation grew up feeling hostile to nationalism, and consequently averse to Zionism. These trends developed mainly in North America, following certain theories and approaches taught in American universities. Over the past 40 years, the works of Edward Said were taught, focusing on postcolonial theories, so hostility to Zionist concepts are to be expected. The academic atmosphere rejects national ideas and shows aversion to the Zionist idea. Most students do not attend Jewish schools, they go to academic institutions where their ability to express Zionist ideas is being increasingly restricted. Jewish students are free to express their Judaism only in the context of *tikkun olam*, and any attempt to express Zionist values is deemed illegitimate. The prevailing atmosphere in American universities is fundamentally anti-particularist. The Zionist view—as seen through the perspectives of Woodrow Wilson, or Herzl, or Giuseppe Mazzini—that maintains that people are members of humankind through their national groupings, that humanity is a family of nations, with each person belonging to a nation. This nationalist approach is inherently pluralistic, tolerant, and diverse, and does not exclude or deny otherness, as claimed by anti-nationalists. The original idea of nationalism recognizes the uniqueness of each people, while the idea of world redemption through *tikkun olam* erases the differences between them.

The moderator asked Dr. Taub whether his claims against the widespread use of the term *tikkun olam* contradict to some degree Rabbi Cherlow’s views, who proposed emphasizing the innovative and revolutionary aspects of the Zionist vision. Dr. Taub explained that Zionism led to the normalization of the Jewish people, it help us abandon our megalomaniac view that we are accountable for redeeming all nations, it made us understand that we, as Jews, are not responsible for the whole world. The perception of Judaism as “a light unto the nations” generates a lot of antagonism and has led many Jews to adopt leftist positions. Among American Jews, 70% belong to the liberal left, and we are losing the support of the left. Bernie Sanders may differ from Jeremy Corbyn, but we also see Ilhan Omar at the edge of the Democratic Party, and we see how decades of teaching

the works of Edward Said in universities have made American Jews feel they are responsible for others, but unwilling to defend their own identities. Moreover, many collaborate with anti-Israel organizations, and adopt "Breaking the Silence", a group that demonizes the State of Israel, as a Zionist act. In mosques all across North America they preach hatred of Israel and spread antisemitism, but people fear even addressing this matter, lest they be labeled "Islamophobes." Yigal Carmon, a former counter-terrorism advisor to Israeli prime ministers, studied the issue, but members of Jewish organizations in America were afraid to speak to him because they feared they would be accused of Islamophobia. Their apprehension comes at the expense of their concern for the safety of the people they are supposed to represent, and in so doing they act shamefully and betray their own people.

If their instincts and ability to defend their identity have been neutralized this way, then the only possible solution is to try to awaken them. If Judaism only represents cosmopolitanism, it loses its uniqueness and all Zionist logic collapses. We cannot just focus on *tikkun olam*. Dr. Taub noted that in America there are two accepted interpretations of *tikkun olam*. One version states that "let us first repair ourselves, becoming a 'city upon a hill,' an example to the whole world". But there is a fundamental difference between Jews and America: America is a superpower, and therefore can intervene in many places in the world, while the Jews need not maintain the divide between their spirituality and materiality, which originates from their 2000 years in exile. Further, he argued, when Jews take on the task of world repair, they reaffirm the argument negating the power of two millennia to make the Jewish existence concrete. This profound dispute on interpretations of *tikkun olam* has alienated two thirds of Diaspora Jewry, and that is the peril we face. Supporters of particularism will remain loyal to the Jewish people, while those that wish to represent universality and aspire to world redemption only, will continue to move further away, and eventually we will lose them.

Rabbi Cherlow agreed with Dr. Taub's analysis. The people who continue to discuss the Zionist concept and to convene in the Zionis General Council believe in the Jewish particularistic view and its national realization through the State of Israel, and without taking action, more of the general public will abandon these principles. Therefore, the question is how do we prevent this from happening. The many Jews who do not share our Zionist values are our brothers. We do not wish to lose them, and we cannot afford to lose them. Rabbi Cherlow stressed that it is often people from the political right, fighting for every inch of Israel's land, who are shocked by the idea of abandoning the Jews of the world or accepting that they would not play a part in the Zionist vision. And so, what can revive the Zionist idea among the Jewish youth in the Diaspora? How can we cultivate nationalist feelings among the tens of thousands of secular youth who do not attend Yeshiva University, how can we nurture the understanding that Jewish nationalism has a central part in their identity? The main way, as mentioned at the beginning, is to evoke in them a sense of change and revolution in a wide range of issues.

Many people are raising profound questions regarding Zionism's contribution to the world—not in the sense of *tikkun olam* or the fate of the whole world but in the sense of a message, a meaning on both personal and general levels. One that strives to make oneself better while also making the world better. When we do this, we will reconnect young people, now only loosely tied to the Jewish world as they lack meaningful Jewish education, and also as they lack any practical application of Judaism, or due to the intense pressures exerted on Jewish young people on campuses and universities abroad.

The moderator, Ofer Haddad, linking the different ideas already raised, brought the debate back to Stephanie Strauss and asked for her perspective on what carries more power in connecting young Jews in Israel and the Diaspora—Judaism or Zionism? Can Zionism, in her opinion, serve as the connecting thread between a Jewish child in Manhattan and secular children in Tel Aviv or Paris?

**Stephanie Strauss** replied that Zionism has to be the central piece. Providing an example with a story about remarks made at a large conference held at Yeshiva University, with over 1,000 students in attendance. Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Zacks, addressed this *kehilla* of students about to head off to college, and one young man raises his hand and asks: “In these next years of my life, would it not be better for me to go out there and try to effect change and make everyone else stronger in whatever they're doing?” Rabbi Sacks replied with an example from traveling on a plane: If we run into a problem and the oxygen masks descend, we must first put on our mask, before helping someone else. “Are you so sure,” the rabbi asked the young man, “that your oxygen mask is affixed well?”

This example illustrates that while fixing the world is a great and important endeavor, a person must first do his/her own work, and the communities have to work around each other to strengthen themselves. Only then, when they strengthen themselves as individuals and as part of communities, after they awaken and understand that they need to be connected to each other, will they be able to effect change in others. We all share this task—graduates of Yeshiva University, students in secular colleges, people active in AIPAC or YPAC and other organizations. Everyone can be recruited to support Israel through visits here and volunteering activities (such as work with at-risk children) to present a model, strengthen Israel, and demonstrate their faith in the Zionist enterprise.

In this context, the difference between the model of the idea of liberal and libertarianism should be noted, the distinction between freedom and liberty. David Hackett Fischer's book, “Liberty and Freedom,” distinguishes between the two concepts. Liberty is about liberty from independent, not subject to limits and rules. And freedom is more about the freedom to congregate. While the difference is subtle, it is also very important. For today's young Americans, everything is about “me” – it's about what makes me comfortable, about what I feel

today. Nothing pulls them. Everything is about just doing what you want to do, everything is acceptable. Everyone should be embraced.

But here, we've built this amazing country, and the entire Zionist enterprise, is based on the freedom to congregate, the freedom to build, the freedom to come together in unity in a community. And that's what we are trying to impart on the broader community of young American youth today.

**Dr. Gadi Taub** replied that the prevailing identity politics discourse should be protested and rejected, as identity politics ultimately lead to legitimizing antisemitism. It has led to absurd situations such as the fact that Linda Sarsour is currently leading a liberal Women's March. Liberalism has gone mad, devouring itself in the form of postmodernism, identity politics and similar trends, which do not align with the Jewish issue, and this ultimately works against us. "Black Lives Matter" have embraced BDS, the Democratic Party has devolved into identity politics, becoming more accepting of Sharia law. Identity politics goes against nationalism, but on the other hand we are also see strengthening national trends enjoying a serious comeback, and perhaps, according to Dr. Taub, this is encouraging news. Declining nationalism is evident particularly in Europe. As an example, Dr. Taub shared that he was recently approached by a Jewish Swedish journalist, who identifies with conservative center-right positions, she was looking for a summer camp in Israel for her child. He wondered why she would want to drag a 5-year old boy to an Israeli camp, and she replied that he needs to learn Hebrew, as Judaism in Sweden is doomed. In France, antisemitism is even more noticeable, with bar mitzvah celebrations held under heavy security, with armed guards standing outside. We are not used to seeing these things, because we only look to the right of the map, oblivious to similar processes also on the left. The UK Labour Party leader is an antisemite. The entire American left is going in antisemitic directions—turning a blind eye to what is happening in mosques, cooperating with identity politics, not condemning Linda Sarsour when she talks about antisemitism in the New School in New York. We have reached completely absurd situations and producing a countermovement first entails renouncing identity politics. The cure for this is nationalism, and the national renewal trend is good for Zionism and good for Judaism everywhere.

**Stephanie Strauss** stressed that we need to focus on young people from a shared perspective as a group. The members of the ZGC convened for three days to decide on new initiatives and plan practical actions necessary for change and improving the situation for world Jewry. We must therefore act together, emphasizing two things: education and immersion.

The immersion should operate in two directions. First, bringing more young Jews from around the world to Israel, whether it's MASA or Birthright, expanding the horizons that they see and introduce them to Israeli society and culture. Second, in the other direction, bringing Israelis to meet Diaspora Jews—men and women

after their army service or after national service, young Israelis like “Reservists on Duty”, to go to college campuses as an example serving as role models. Jewish kids, even those that identify as Zionists, are afraid to ever speak up. So when they'll see in their colleges proud Israelis, that served in the army and are unafraid to stand up to BDS threats and boycotts, they find a source of identification and pride: “I'm with them. I'm also pro... that's who I am: I'm a Zionist.” We must therefore focus on mediating between young people, encouraging Diaspora Jews to come to Israel, and concurrently bringing young Israelis over there, strengthening their Zionist awareness and their affiliation with Israel.

Rabbi Yuval Cherlow suggested that our compass should be: “The Jewish Zionist people in the State of Israel will bring about a revolution.” When we position ourselves as a people initiating a revolution of entrepreneurship, we can call on young Jews from all over the world to take part in this revolution from their personal fields of expertise—science, philosophy, Judaism, and more.

As the panel concluded, the moderator told the audience that Prof. Yuli Tamir was supposed to participate in the discussion but was unable to attend due to medical reasons and invited the audience to raise additional questions or discussion topics.

**Shoshana Dweck** (New York) asked why the panel did not give representation to youth and to progressive representatives.

**Reeva Forman** (South Africa) asked Dr. Gadi Taub why he associates the concept of political correctness with *tikkun olam*. According to the Torah, the concepts of world redemption and being a light unto the nations express Jewish morality, and she believes there is no connection between political correctness and these concepts, indicative of a true concern for oneself and for others in distress.

Dr. Taub replied that he did overstate the point for the sake of rhetorical emphasis, stressing his critique was directed at trends that grouped Judaism with universalism, only extracting purely universal ideas from Jewish values. His reservation was centered on the loss of particularism, not the moral imperative to care for others. However, the “holier than thou” approach maintained by certain Jews makes him suspicious. For example, in the Bolshevik revolution about 75% of the revolutionaries were Jews. This is due to the fact, according to Dr. Taub, that Jews could not find themselves within the new national order. George Soros sees himself as a “world fixer” even if he has become an enemy of Zionism. The various funds he operates undermine the basic idea of national self-determination, and this is dangerous to us, something we cannot accept. And yet, Dr. Taub did again note that his remarks were exaggerated to make his point.

One of the participants underlined the importance of unity and joint work between Diaspora and Israeli Jews. The moderator agreed with his position, adding that his words expressed a desire for solidarity felt by all Jews in the world, as is the desire of Diaspora Jews to feel accepted and respected in Israel.

Rabbi Cherlow stressed that unity is of great importance, but also carries some risk, as evident in one of the verses in this week's Torah portion: "Now the whole world had one language and a common speech." Thus, the word unity carries dual meanings, it is both extremely important and extremely dangerous. Dangerous because many of those supporting unity strive for everyone to be like them. Rabbi Cherlow underscored that we must adhere to unity— not uniformity. Those in favor of unity must adopt concepts of compromise, concession, consent, and dialogue. A unity that means "us" must also consider who may be left out of that unity, and so we must embrace the word "unity" in its broadest possible meaning, one that is tolerant and open.

**Debbie Isaac**, a mother of three who just finished college in New York, posed a practical question about university studies. As a student at Columbia University, decades ago, she was even then exposed to the writings of Edward Said. She said that back then postcolonial approaches were taught in many courses, and these positions still pervade many lessons. Is it possible to act within the university system to curb these trends? Is it possible to promote professors with different views?

Dr. Taub replied that universities are very conservative institutions, not politically but institutionally, as reflected in tenure and peer reviews. It is therefore impossible to penetrate these bodies and act for change within them. Political conservatives are becoming increasingly less represented in academic circles, and so independent institutes (such as independent colleges and independent libraries) should be established to offer an alternative to the multicultural paradigms so prevalent in academia. Israel imitates what happens in American academic institutions, but it can act on this matter as well: in the '90s, the new American conservatives understood they would not gain a proper foothold in academia and began establishing independent institutes.

The State of Israel must also develop academic alternatives— independent libraries, institutes, and colleges, providing an alternative to the oppressive institution that academia has become. We now see such trends in Israel: we have a conservative publisher (Sella Meir Publishing), we read Jordan Peterson and Mary Douglas, whose writings are an alternative to the incessant monotony of Edward Said and his supporters.

Dr. Taub concluded by calling on those present not to send their children to academic institutions governed by an atmosphere of identity politics. These institutions, he claims, are harmful not only to Judaism—but to Western culture in general, causing self-hatred, so Jews need not support them.

#### **Plenary No. 4—Creative Intelligence for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The fourth plenary session was chaired by Alon Vita, a psychology and computer science student at Bar Ilan University and B'nai B'rith representative. During the plenum, Dr. Eyal Doron gave a lecture entitled “Creative Intelligence for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” but at Dr. Doron request, we have not included the lecture in this publication.

At the end of Dr. Doron's talk, Tal (aged 27), was asked to speak as the spokesperson for the Moishe Houses community, an organization of young people operating around the world. Four years ago, Tal moved to Be'er Sheva and began studying engineering at the Ben-Gurion University. She described the difficulties of finding her bearings in the first year, moving away from her parents and family, along with the fact that students around her were engrossed in studies, making her feel quite alone. She found no agenda or field to pursue, struggled to find partners and friends, until encountering Moishe Houses—an international organization spanning 27 countries, aimed primarily at building a young Jewish community, a far-reaching community of people aged 20-35 to participate in and feel at home.

People do not understand why Moishe House operates in Israel, but Be'er Sheva is a city of students. Students active in the organization in Be'er Sheva hold weekly events for the young community, joint Friday dinners, and many activities in the city. People stay in Be'er Sheva today not because of the university, but because of community and social life. About 1,000 young people from all over Be'er Sheva come to Moishe House during the year, attending parties, hiking trips, and communal study sessions. Moishe House members create community life, such as on Remembrance Day, when an open invitation was sent for people to come together on that sad day, sharing thoughts and experiences, with over 100 young people crammed in a small living room, crying, talking, feeling a sense of home and community.

Tal emphasized that after three years at Moishe House, she feels she has a home, and if students in Israel need a common community space, the need for this in the Diaspora is even more profound. Young Jews, in search of an identity, have a strong desire to find a common language, and create a community that can award them a sense of belonging. Moishe House is a non-profit that provides a home and a space, its sole purpose is to create a community, and everyone is welcome to come to Moishe House in Be'er Sheva or anywhere else in the world.

#### **Plenary No. 5—The Role of the Hagshama Movements in Shaping Zionist Identity and Strengthening the Connection with the State of Israel**

Plenum chair, **Francine Stein**, previously President of AMIT and currently Chair of the AZM National Board. Ms. Stein opened the panel with a general explanation of the *Hagshama* movement, which pre-dated the State

of Israel, and constituted a major force in shaping Zionist ideas. The *Hagshama* movement plays an instrumental role in promoting Jewish ideals, and it continues to have impact on Zionists and future Zionist leaders. Sadly, many young people across the world are not interested in Zionism or in developing ties to Israel. As Zionist leaders, we aspire to making Zionism and Israel relevant to the young generation. The panel assembled here has prepared to debate this issue and is aimed at encountering the young people of today and understanding where they stand.

The panel moderator, **Lital Shemesh**, introduced the panelists and opened with the question: What are the biggest challenges you see today, as activists in the Zionist movements?

**Joel Srebnik**, from Young Judea in the USA, who made Aliyah 5 years ago and is now working with Young Judea graduates on their gap year, claimed that the counselors in the movements explain that they operate a youth movement focusing on Zionism and its values. The standard response to that is: “So, you want to talk about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict”, and the counselors find themselves “stuck” in this situation, as if issues related to the conflict are the sole factor defining them and their actions. The communities expect these issues to be the focus of discussion, and counselors become increasingly involved in this one issue, despite the fact that there are many other worthy topics. The movement invites the *hanichim* and their families to participate in an extensive debate on issues relating to Israel and Diaspora-Israel relations. But the attitude toward the movements, particularly in the United States, focuses on the question of the political nature of the movement, making it difficult to establish an in-depth and open discussion.

Nicole Brown, a new immigrant from Australia, representing the Netzer and TaMaR Progressive movement, explained that the movements she represents are based on three core values—*tikkun olam*, Progressive Judaism and Reform Zionism. Of these three, the value that is the least approachable is Reform Zionism. And Netzer has 16 branches around the world. As a global movement, spread over different locations, most of its activities are devoted to *tikkun olam*. It's really easy and can be done in our own homes and local communities. Zionism is much more complex, because it's not close to home, it's really far away. And, it's really hard to be progressive and Zionist in today's world. The challenge is balancing all these things, stepping out of our comfort zone, and talking about “something which is a little less familiar to us.”

**Harry Saul Markham**, National Director of *Magshimey Herut*, UK, argued that the biggest challenge today is tackling antisemitism. In recent years, antisemitism in the UK has grown to alarming proportions: in 2018, there were 1,652 recorded cases of antisemitism (compared to 535 in 2013), and over the past two years there are reports of one in three Jews considering leaving the country due to escalating antisemitism. The entire

Jewish people is now forced to live with an antisemitic reality, but the main problem, he says, is not antisemitism but the Jewish response to it.

We see various responses to the issue. In response to the malicious Israeli Apartheid Week that took place on UK campuses, the Union of Jewish Students organized a “Peace Week” in which Israeli and Palestinian flags were raised together. Likewise, some of the Jewish leadership responds to antisemitism with appeasement, legitimizing this false narrative in the hopes that if we rise above, others will see us as friends. Conversely, the *Herut* movement tries to give Jewish students and young people a reason to be proud of their Jewish identity and Zionist positions—not apologizing, but to be on the offense. Stop supporting the false approach of a two-state solution, in order to appear reasonable, to stop legitimizing lies and instead insist on the truth, even if this does not go over well. A strong and determined stance, in his view, is preferable to weak conduct that encourages antisemitic hatred. Our greatest challenge is how the Jewish establishment responds to antisemitism.

**Danny Kaplan** from New Jersey, who was active in the *Tzofim*, Israeli Scouts Movement, recently made Aliyah and is waiting for his enlistment. He believes the challenge lies in the tension between the negative connotation of the concept of “Zionism” and its actual realization. Many of the members of the Scout Movement in the US are children of former Israelis who have absorbed love for Israel at home. Most have grown up in Jewish-American neighborhoods, studied Hebrew and went to Hebrew Sunday schools, visited Israel through “Birthright,” but still do not understand Israel. The children and youth who grow up in this atmosphere are not really Zionists, although it could be assumed they would be. Children experience Hebrew Sunday school as a chore and compare the Israeli Scout Movement to American movements (the Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts). So, we must try to teach children that it is acceptable to be a Zionist and love Israel despite the negative connotation of the concept of Zionism, and despite the anti-Zionist messages conveyed in the media.

In response to the moderator's question, Mr. Kaplan stressed that the statement that “Zionism has a negative connotation” is a painful point for someone who comes from a Jewish neighborhood, he empathizes with the expectation of Jews to be Zionists, and sees that reality proves otherwise. Teaching the children about Israel and instill them with love for the land, relies on suitable activities that allow them to encounter Israeli history and culture, so that when these children grow up they will come to Israel on their own, developing their love and appreciation for Israel.

**Avital Ifrah** is a 24-year-old who made Aliyah from the Netherlands, where she was active in the *Habonim Dror* youth movement. Both her parents are Jewish, but she is half-Israeli and half-Dutch, and always hated the Israeli side of her identity. Although she began attending *Habonim Dror* activities at an early age (7-8), but people hated her because of her Israeli identity, and she reacted by hating herself and Israel. The change

occurred about 3 years ago, when she arrived in Israel for a gap-year after graduating from university. When she came to Israel, she was received with love and admiration, accepted as who she was, a dual identity. Such positive reactions made her realize that she should not hate a part of herself, on the contrary, she started wearing the Star of David, no longer cared what others say about her, and stopped lying about her origins. The six months she spent in Israel generated a major change in her, and she recently made Aliyah, because she felt that here, in Israel, she could be herself.

The moderator, Lital Shemesh, expressed admiration for Avital's story, and concluded that the encounter with Israelis made her reconnect with her identity. She then opened the floor to the audience, asking if anyone would like to elaborate a bit about the contribution of their youth movement contributes to forming a Zionist identity among youth.

Danny Kaplan replied that his youth movement (the Scouts) was comprised mainly of Israeli children. As a child of Israelis himself, he learned Hebrew and the culture at home, but the Scouts connected him with Israeli youth of today. In movement activities he learned slang, listened to new Israeli music, and was exposed to new stories. The activities he and his fellow counselors conducted with the kids were intended to connect them to the Israeli teens today. Danny emphasized that no matter how much family you have in Israel, or how many times you visit—the real Israel connection is built when you talk to people your one age and have a shared experience. Therefore, the main goal is to create this connection across worlds.

Harry Saul Markham argued that discussion of Israel must always begin with the basic question: *What is Israel?* Is it a beautiful holiday destination? What do we mean by 'Israel'? He added that many treat Israel solely as a tourist destination, while his youth movement seeks to deepen the connection to Israel. Herut UK *hanichim* traveled across the country, met with Israeli students, and brought them closer to the Zionist movement, reviewing the writings of Jabotinsky and other scholars, such as A.D. Gordon and Ahad Ha'am.

Mr. Markham added that he believed the central challenge was enlisting Jewish student associations abroad to use the word "Israel," afraid this may alienate Jewish students. Jewish student associations have denied him the right to speak, lest he mentions the words "Israel" or "Zionism, a silencing that further alienates students from these student unions. He believes the solution lies in establishing rich dialogue—through discourse, lectures, and workshops that connect Judaism to Zionism. If we do not do this, Zionism and Israel will remain abstract ideas disassociated from Judaism. To bring back Judaism into Zionism, we must ensure that Jewish institutions and organizations are unafraid of the word "Zionism", using it at every opportunity.

**Oscar Sapolinski**, of *Hanoar HaTzioni* in Uruguay, having made Aliyah several months ago, explained that the movements play a vital part in the life of the Jewish community in Uruguay. It numbers 15,000 Jews, and

is a highly Zionist community, as evidenced by the fact that many of them make Aliyah. Youth movements are central to the community, providing Jewish education and preserving traditions. Many Uruguayan Jews prefer their children receive high-level English classes, so they do not send them to Jewish schools. Instead, they send them to a youth movement from a young age, so children acquire their knowledge and affinity for tradition in the movement. The activities for children at the movement start at a very young age and last a lifetime (from 3 and continuing to be active until aged 21). And from the first day they arrive at the youth movement until the last day the *hanichim* are constantly learning things, undergoing a process of reflection, asking questions about what they've learned, exploring, observing, and expanding awareness. As they age, questions are put in a larger context, and resonate outside the movement. The *Hanoar Hatzioni* functions like a school for life, as there are things taught there not taught anywhere else.

The moderator, **Lital Shemesh**, then addressed the challenge of holding activities for students. At these ages, when these young men and women live on campus, far from their parents and a supportive community, and having to deal with these difficulties in their universities (like Israeli Apartheid Week) - the challenges are even greater.

**Joel Srebnik** agreed with her, explaining that nature of the activities in campuses, basically continues their activities in youth movements. Just as we invite children and youth to participate in the movement's activities, on campuses we invite students to take part. We try to get these young people to be involved in events here and around the world. Joel emphasized that when he said "we," he was referring not only his movement or the senior management running these organizations, but the entire Zionist movement in Israel.

These invitations, he added, come in many forms. He described the first time it clicked for him, at 13 years of age, at the *Young Judea* summer camp. The counselors, including a left-wing Israeli from the Jewish Agency and an American counselor who had just come back from the movement's gap year in Israel, were trying to run this conversation with them, while Joel and his friends felt confident about their opinions and wanted to express them, although they really had little comprehension of the complexities involved. When it was his turn to speak, he blanked out, ending up saying, "I don't know. I don't know what I think." Some of his friends giggled, but the counselors stopped the conversation, telling him, "It's fine that you don't know, and we're glad that you said that, but you should figure out what you think about it, because what you think about it is important, because you are a part of this." This statement was particularly significant. As a 13-year-old boy, he hadn't heard similar remarks at home or at Sunday School, and he suddenly felt he was being given a real invitation to be a part of something.

These invitations are critical, and the movements hand them out massively in all different forms, every day, all year round, whether in the weekly activities, summer camps, when the *hanichim* go to Israel for summer programs or gap years; or if it's the *shlichim* that our movements are helping bring to communities around the world, trained to be professional invitation-givers. When these invitations are handed over correctly, they are a game-changer.

**Harry Saul Markham** agreed on the crucial importance of talks and invitations and how they are presented. However, he stressed the main role of the movements in the Diaspora is to support Israel and fend off the lies spread about the country. As an example, he noted the Palestine Solidarity Campaign held recently in London, where they were holding posters saying "End the Apartheid State of Israel", and the London Underground stations were filled with anti-Israel propaganda posters. There are protests like this in the UK every week. In many of them, they burn Israeli flags. They do not care who's in government in Israel - they want to destroy Israel. Mr. Markham stated that Diaspora Jews have no right to criticize the Israeli government from the comforts of their homes in the Diaspora, where they don't have to deal with the realities of their children going to the Israeli army. Consequently, although conversations are of crucial importance, it is more important in his opinion that the Diaspora show support of Israel, safeguarding it from its false and distorted presentation.

**Oscar Sapolinski** wanted to share a personal story he experienced when he was 12, when he first went to Machon Choref (winter seminar) in Argentina (Jewish communities in South America tend to organize many events, called *machonim*, Hebrew for institutes). During the event, he met a boy from Moisés Ville, a small town in Argentina (at that moment there were only six people in all the camp of *HaNoar HaTzioni* in that city), and Oscar asked the boy what they do in the movement. The Moisés Ville boy replied that every Saturday, a counselor from Buenos Aires arrives to conduct activities and teach them about Judaism and Israel. Those counselors travel long hours (from Buenos Aires to Moisés Ville) just to hold these activities, and the Moisés Ville boy told him, "For me, when you feel part of something that great, the distance and the effort don't really matter, because when you know you are participating in something of this scale, and that there are people like you all over the world, the distance, six hours, seven hours, one weekend I'm not with my family and do a *peula* (a session in a youth movement) in another city, I think it's worth it."

The moderator, Lital Shemesh, was impressed with the story and turned to the panel members to ask how they cope with criticism from Jews. The moderator shared that she herself had experienced this: when she gave a speech on campus in Cape Town, South Africa, during Israeli Apartheid Week, there were Jewish students demonstrating with anti-Israel demonstrators, holding signs that read "Zionism is racism." How do you deal with critique from the Jewish community?

Harry Saul Markham agreed that this was a fundamental question. Personally, his activity on campuses gets harsh reactions— both from anti-Semites and from some Jews, who were hostile to him. Still, he fights for his right to express his views, raise awareness to Zionism, and change attitudes towards Israel. For instance, he said that the theme of Israeli Apartheid Week in 2018, was anti-colonialism. They kept saying that "Zionism is Colonialism," and Israelis were colonialists stealing their land. These statements are especially problematic in today's postmodern age, when we are all fighting for social justice. And those who are perceived to be oppressors cannot be "sexy". In this sense, these statements reflect historical antisemitism. Jews were once persecuted for their religious beliefs, because they were perceived to be harmful, with Jews branded "Christ killers," so definitely not sexy. When social Darwinism and the question of race appeared, Jews were branded an inferior race, and "unsexy." Today, Zionism isn't sexy, and this must change. Today, feminism and women's rights are extremely important. Homosexuality was decriminalized in 1968, and in 2015 we were privileged to see recognition of same-sex marriages. Similarly, Zionism is a movement of liberation from oppressive restrictions: Zionism freed Jews from the shackles of antisemitic regimes in the West, the East, and in Islamic countries, and has continued to empower Jews in their struggle for self-determination and control of their own destiny. If we market Zionism by showing its intersectionality, we can show that the Zionist movement liberates Jews, just as feminism liberated women and Stonewall the gay community.

Zionism must be seen as a movement of liberation, and that's how we'll win the hearts and minds. As an example, Mr. Markham described another incident in Manchester where a large Jewish student union was surrounded by PSC activists and a debate arose over how to respond. Many Jewish students wanted to wave Palestinian flags, start talking about the occupation and express anti-IDF positions, but the UK *Herut* movement responded differently: "Let's stay true to ourselves, and see how they react." In the end, everyone ended the incident with hugs, sharing Israeli snacks and *hamantaschen*, and did so out of mutual respect and not self-abasement: "We showed them our ideology and our collective civil rights movement, we stayed true to it, we stayed honest, and it worked".

In response to these remarks, the moderator presented another dilemma: the memory of Diaspora Jews, the memory of the Holocaust, are getting farther away from us as the State of Israel grows stronger year by year. Does this situation cause the younger generation to take the State of Israel for granted?

**Nicole Brown** replied that although it is easy to look at Zionism as a big and grand enterprise, it is important to stay grounded and consider practical aspects of the issue. As representative of youth movement, we must really think about what we can do as people conducting their daily lives while feeling belonging and connection to people our age with whom we share common interests. In terms of intersectionality, for example, it is important to remember that Zionism is not our only link; there also other common areas of interest: sports, art, and more.

So, we must remain realistic when talking about Zionism from the standpoint of young people and their representation, thinking about what is possible, and how we can encourage young people to connect to Zionism in a levelheaded way. With the passing years since the Holocaust, we tend to feel Israel is relatively safe, that Zionism's role is changing. We are no longer searching for a safe space, but rather, we want a place that we can think critically about while appreciating its achievements and examining its challenges. Nowadays, with a changing reality, we are not preoccupied with survival and safety, we're thinking about a range of different things, and how that fits in with the rest of the world. And with growing globalization, and the internet, and technological innovations, we must be aware of how Israel fits with other countries and think about how we can be Zionists and also everything else at the same time.

Joel Srebnik added that we tend to get caught up with the question of the "Jews who are against us." When we think about the history of Zionism and the thinkers who developed the Zionist movement, there's something tempting about thinking of Zionism as an ideological struggle. But the Zionists he looked up to were also thinkers who invite us to participate in the ongoing construction of the State of Israel and Israeli society, while constantly questioning and being aware of changing subtleties and nuances.

Joel then shared that during his gap year he kept a journal, where he described the amazing people he encountered, people who had chosen to make the State of Israel their home and built wonderful things here: whether these were the members of Kibbutz Ketura, the women of Hadassah, and so many others. Today, reading that diary, he is again inspired and empowered with faith from those people. The existential threat, while important, but we must equally discuss what inspires us and makes Zionism "sexier" for us.

Avital Ifrah agreed with the claims that today people tend to take the State of Israel for granted and emphasized that this is precisely why the youth movements are of great importance.

The moderator, Lital Shemesh, extended the debate and noted that while Israel is more secure, we see a reverse trend in Europe and North America, where the situation for Jews is becoming precarious. In recent years, there have been horrific terrorist attacks and severe antisemitic attacks in the US and Europe, and many Jews fear for their future. Does this situation deepen the desire to make Aliyah? What motivated the panelists to make Aliyah?

Joel Srebnik stressed that he did not immigrate to Israel because he felt unsafe in the US, but because of his youth movement. As a Jew in the US, he didn't feel unsafe. Other Jews in the United States, and certainly in other countries, don't feel safe — but fortunately, he did not feel threatened in his country because he was a Jew. His decision to make Aliyah arose from being active in his youth movement. He participated in his movement's gap year program in Israel, then went back to the US to study political science at the University of Maryland, and after graduating, continued to work as a movement counselor who accompanied *hanichim* in

their gap year in Israel. And it was his *hanichim* that urged him to immigrate and set an example. These young men and women were sending him a message: “You are our counselor, so you have to make Aliyah. Just do it.” Their “demand” proved effective. In a staff meeting, five years ago, his coworker, the other American *madricha*, told him she intended to make Aliyah. The entire staff looked to him expectantly—“Are you also going to?” At the time, he was determined not to do it, but a year later he received his Israeli ID and made Aliyah. So it was actually the movement that encouraged him to do it. As did his boss, who said: “You have to be a part of this. You have more work to do here. And it's got to be you.”

Nicole Brown said she identified with Joel's story. As an Australian Jew, she too comes from a place unsafe to live in but felt no danger or threat there. Like Joel, she, too, came to Israel with the movement, and sees it as the key factor impacting her decision. The movement helped her reach Israel, supported her, and made it easier for her to stay. Although she has been in Israel only seven weeks, the movement has done everything to make her feel at home. However, many new *olim* experience a different reality, facing major challenges.

Avital Ifrah mentioned again how since she was a little girl, she would regularly lie about her origins and hide her Judaism. In Europe, the situation is vastly different. There are many Jews in Amsterdam, but where she lived, the city of Rotterdam, she was the only Jewish girl or so she felt. The youth movement was the only place where she could identify as a Jew and feel a sense of belonging.

Danny Kaplan stressed that antisemitic attacks and fear should not be relied on as factors prompting people to make Aliyah. The key factor is love of Israel, learning about it and knowing the facts. One cannot rely on fear. We must rely on people being emotionally connected to Israel and not only searching for a safety net.

Harry Saul Markham, on the other hand, argued that fear does play a certain part. A war is going on today in the streets of London, Paris, and many European cities. Fear exists, and is legitimate, as evidenced by the difficult situation in universities. The question is how we deal with it. One option is to do what our enemies want us to do: adopt a kind of "Stockholm Syndrome" where the oppressed becomes the oppressor, producing anti-Zionism. The second option is to respond with unity and strength. To fight antisemitism, and to act for the appropriate and proper representation of the Jewish public.

The current situation in the UK illustrates this well. Jeremy Corbyn, the PM candidate, has described the Hamas and Hezbollah as his friends, and endorses antisemitic organizations that paint a malicious lie of a Jewish world conspiracy. The Jews in Britain have no organization, except for *Herut* UK, providing resources and skills to fight antisemitism; the establishment is too busy spending its time on inter-faith and building community relations, rather than encouraging Jewish students to fight antisemitism. The Jewish establishment needs to look at itself and needs to recognize that it does not represent young Jews.

Oscar Sapolinski said that in Uruguay, antisemitism is not the main motive for Aliyah. While there was an antisemitic attack two years ago in a city called Paysandu, and a man called David Fremd was attacked in the street, but a week later, 10,000 non-Jewish city residents took to the streets, expressing support for him and his family. Antisemitism is not the reason why Uruguayan Jews make Aliyah, and he himself made Aliyah thanks to the movement and what he learned there about *hagshama atzmit* (self-fulfillment). The way we educate the young people in the movement makes them want to act upon the values instilled in them over the years. Oscar noted that his sister, who is president of the Uruguayan Zionist Organization, was also present in the room, and she is an example of someone who graduated the movement and in her adult life works daily for the community, for the Jewish people, and for the State of Israel. The importance of the movement is that it gives us the tools to decide what to do next.

The meeting concluded with long applause for the moderator and panelists, expressing immense pride in the panelists' journey, their contribution to the discussion, to the State of Israel, and to the entire Zionist movement.

### **Plenary No 6: Think Future - Major trends changing the world**

**Marilyn Post**, chairman of the plenary, opened by addressing all those present, saying that they all have something common: being part of a Zionist organization and being identified as connected and passionate about Israel and the Jewish people. They all have a role in strengthening the Jewish people, as its representatives in all the countries they represent, as leaders and as people who make Zionism and Judaism important. They all share the same task - to passionately showcase Zionist activity, strengthen the eternal connection with the State of Israel and pass it on to future generations. We must make sure that the next generation will develop into the leaders and thinkers of the future of the Jewish people, the ones realizing this future, because we are here not only because we belong to the World Zionist Organization, but also because we love Israel. But most importantly, we are here to convey the importance of Israel, of the Jewish people around the world and of the Jewish people in the future, while ensuring its power and eternal ties to Israel.

**Shmuel Mirsky, I Belong Israel (Masa Israeli)** (26 years old), a student of neuroscience at Bar Ilan University, works as an educator, a tour guide and coordinator for an organization called *Masa Israeli* (I Belong Israel) - an organization that takes Israeli high school students on a cross-country journey. Shmuel said that about a month ago he was sitting in a hostel with a group of high school students near Ashkelon, after a long and hard week, it was a couple of minutes before Shabbat, when out of the blue he received a text message from a guy named Lidor, a young soldier who was in one of Shmuel's groups in *Masa Israeli* three years ago. Lidor texted him that now, when he is in basic training, he understands what are the small and big things that

we do for our country, and he felt that following the Masa they were on together. The word *masa*, journey, or a field trip, Shmuel emphasized, it works in two different ways: it's a field because we go outside, and it's a trip, because it really goes inside - in which we go through a personal process of awareness and identity formation. *Masa Israeli* takes Israeli 11<sup>th</sup> graders, this year 25,000 students are planned to participate. In their *masa*, the participants go on a six-day trip, which includes three days of hiking, one day doing volunteer work, spend a morning on Mount Herzl, in the military cemetery there, but the main purpose of the journey is to raise questions about their own identity. Each day is based on expanding circles of identity, designed to get the students to ask questions. As an organization, we don't have the answers to these questions, because the real message is to help the students ask themselves these questions, so when they get to the point where they need to answer them - they will know they have already asked themselves these questions.

The first day is called 'Me and Myself', and deals with questions about personal identity: Who am I, what am I? What are my goals? What are my strengths? What are my weaknesses? On the second day, we widen the circle to the theme 'Me and the Group', and raises questions about group identity – first as a group of students, as a class that goes on this journey together, but also groups in general: what role do I play in groups, what do I do, and why? Where do I find myself and how do I bring myself, and how do I express myself in these groups? On the third day we widen the circle more -it's called 'Me and the Community' and focuses on questions about community: What are my communities? What does it mean to be part of the community? What do I give to the community and what do I get from it? The fourth day, called 'Me and the nation in the land' - it raises questions about our connection to the people, about our connection to the land. Is it a connection to the ground, or is it something a little bit more immanent and metaphysical? The fifth day, called 'Me and the State', deals with questions about our connection to the state: what does it mean to be a citizen? What rights and what responsibilities do I have as a citizen of this country? The last circle, 'Me and Judaism', is devoted to examining Jewish identity and the personal connection to Judaism.

Raising these questions helps the students later on as well, when they enlist to the military or decide what they want to do with their lives. Thanks to their Israeli journey, they will remember that they have already asked themselves these questions, and therefor they will be able to keep going, and begin to understand where they really are and what their place really is.

**Josh Weinberg** (ARZA, USA) thanked Shmuel Mirsky and expressed his admiration for the *Masa Israeli* project and the way the program is organized. He suggested to add to the Israeli curriculum the issue of diaspora Jewry, to expose the Israeli teenagers to the experience of Judaism outside of Israel and add elements related to the Jewish world abroad. **Shmuel** replied that these issues arise as part of the *masa* in *Masa Israeli*, in the days dedicated to the themes "Me and the people in this country", "Me and the State", and "Me and Judaism". In the

discussions that take place on these days, questions arise about the meaning of the term nation (is that nation just the people in the land or is the nation a bigger nation). Regarding the meaning of the term state (is the state defined only by its borders, or is it a larger concept). And then there are questions about the meaning of the term "being a Jew" - what does it mean to be a Jew and what is the connection between the Jews who aren't in the state. Although it is not possible to delve deeper into the issue of Diaspora Jewry during this six-day journey, since the framework is limited in time, still, the issue is indeed addressed. It should also be noted that this year, *Masa Israeli* started a new program for 12<sup>th</sup> graders in collaboration with the President's House, that deals with broader questions of the different conflicts and factions within the Jewish people, in which a greater emphasis is placed on issues related to Diaspora Jewry.

### **Adi Yoffe, 'How to Think Future'**

**Adi Yoffe teaches at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya School of Business and has been predicting future trends since 2006. During the 13 years she has been doing this, Adi has written dozens of future forecasts, worked with leading organizations in Israel as well as with multinational corporations, and is a prolific speaker. Her talk will be about future trends, *How to Think about the Future* and the impact these issues have on young people and Zionism.**

Since the dawn of humanity, people have always wanted to know what the future holds for us. This forum of the Zionist General Council convenes today thanks to Herzl and to many others who came after him, who saw the future and foresaw many things. As we look to the future, we want to be reassured - we want people to tell us what's in store for us, so that we can be calm, and the best way to look to the future is science. We love science and trust it because it gives us confidence.

When we look at how young people in the US have been using social media between 2015 to 2019, we can see Instagram going up and Facebook going down, but that's not the main story. The important thing is, can we learn from this scientific data how young people will use social media in a few years? And the answer is no: we cannot deduce from the current data how social media networks will be used in the future and the reason for that is that we live in a disruptive world, a world that is disrupted. As an example, Ms. Yoffe talked about how when she was growing up, in a small neighborhood in Haifa, they would go to the grocery store to do their grocery shopping. And then, one day, in the 1980s, a larger and more modern supermarket was opened in her neighborhood, and everyone thought that the future had come to the small neighborhood, but after two years another supermarket was opened, this one even bigger and more modern. If they would have asked us back then what the future of retail will be like, we would have said: "An even bigger supermarket". But today we live in a disrupted reality: if we are asked today what the future of retail, education, health and everything else,

will look like, we will not be able to answer, and even science will not be able to provide us with answers. We live in a disrupted period, and the main characteristic of this era is a very rapid pace of progress and development: every moment something happens, something that was not there before. In the past, we could look back and see some logical continuity, as we saw in the development of supermarkets in the 1980s and 1990s, but today that logic does not exist. Now, every minute, something happens.

When Donald Trump announced that he was running for president in 2015, no one thought he was going to be president of the United States, because he was so different from what we were used to seeing. This is true not only in politics, but also in many other areas - any new startup or idea. The future of television, for example: we cannot know what TV will be and look like in the future, and whether the TV screen will even be needed. Another example is the future of retail: maybe the future of retail is actually small stores and not large ones?

We are constantly surrounded by endless examples of things that were not here before. The perception of the past has changed, we do not have a past that we can look at and learn from - so we can, for example, be exposed to a concept where people will buy tickets to see a performance by a singer who has been dead for many, many years.

Another example of this disruption is the use of robots. According to the forecasts, by 2030, robots will make up 30% of the labor market. Some hotels in Asia are already using robots to provide service in hotels, and when they don't do their job, they decide to fire the robots.

The only thing we can say about the future, or about reality, is that the abnormal is the new normal, and we say this not in the sense of good or bad, but simply because that is the situation. Therefore, perhaps we need to find another method that will help us look to the future or understand where the world is going. We may need to look at things we were not used to looking at, like people and behavior changes. When we talk about a trend, we aim to identify how people change their behavior. One of the most common trends, probably worldwide, is growing a beard. Many men nowadays, for different reasons, have decided to stop shaving and grow a beard, and this trend has all sorts of effects. Because of this behavioral change, for example, Gillette's profits have dropped by a billion dollars in the past five years. In the business world, an incorrect response to a change in the behavior of the target audience leads to high losses. In the public world and in other organizations, it works differently, but an incorrect response to changes in behavior leads to a loss of relevance. If you do not understand that you must react and speak differently, you lose relevance.

Another example of behavior change is the way people photograph their food in restaurants. Today, when we go to a restaurant, the first thing we do is take a picture of the food we ordered and then share the picture, even before we eat. This change in behavior may seem trivial, but it affects how chefs operate: those who look at

this change invent "dishes that look very appealing in pictures" and design "restaurants that photograph well", that is, they talk about the change and try to adapt to it.

In addition to looking at people and their changes, they must also look sideways. This can be demonstrated in the world of banking. In the past, to understand where the future of banking was going, we used to look at banks in different places in the world and try to see what they do, but today this method is no longer enough, we need to look at things from a broader perspective: to see, for example, that Amazon can give loans. In other words, in order to understand where the world of banking is going, it is not enough to just look at what is happening in the field of banking, we need to broaden our perspective and look sideways. Apple Watch, for example, has disrupted the world of health and insurance because it allows for immediate FDA-approved ECGs. The challenge, therefore, is to recognize that we can constantly be affected by many things, and therefore we need to look at different directions.

Megatrends are of immense importance, because things that happen in certain areas also affect other seemingly unrelated areas, so we need to understand what the megatrends are.

We can identify several key megatrends. First, the importance of real time. Today we want real time everywhere, and we want it in all areas of life – we want our bank tellers, doctors, and children's teachers to respond to us in real time. Another super-trend is personalization. We want things to be personalized, tailored especially for us. Facebook has 2.5 billion users, and each user sees something different, and we want whatever we see on Facebook to be personalized, convenient for our use.

In order to understand what's happening and towards where young people are pulling, we need to understand the megatrends. Young people today understand that they live in a world in which at any moment, a platform, such as Airbnb – that sells more rooms a year than any other hotel chain, because its main features are real time, personalization and convenience - might emerge. And because the power of megatrends is so great, people do not hesitate to share, not only in areas like Airbnb, Uber or scooters, but in many other areas as well: Mercedes-Benz, for example, has decided to offer a sharing service for Mercedes. That's the story, that's the new language, these are the new standards.

When we have new standards, coupled with an entire generation that's changing its behavior, we need to talk to this generation in a language it understands. We live in a world that offers immense abundance and allows us to choose whatever we want from that abundance. Israel is famous for being a startup nation, well, startups, for example, are based exactly on these features: they offer us things that are personalized, real time, and convenient. The startup, Zebra Medical, for example, knows how to decode MRIs in seconds. The underlying principle is moving things immediately, and that's why it's innovative. In any field, health, tourism,

transportation, etc., it is important to see how the activities offered correspond with the changing needs of our generation.

Another important megatrend is the pursuit of innovation, alongside the dwindling of emotion. We no longer care about the old things, we constantly adopt innovation, but in fact we do not feel anything. When we buy from Amazon or any other platform, we have no feelings for the company we buy from - we just buy what's good for us, without any brand loyalty - even a big brand like Apple is losing some of its fans' loyalty. This trend has dramatic consequences: when an entire generation begins to feel nothing, we lose its loyalty, and we view this new generation as one that only cares about itself - whatever it is they want to achieve, they want to achieve it in the fastest, cheapest and best way they can, and they know how to do it; And the big tech companies speak to them in the same language. "We will give you the Internet of Things" - it's all about connecting devices. Everything is there to make our lives easier, and we love it because this way we save time, effort and money. Everything that's done in the technological sphere, like Siri and Alexa, is done to save effort, because we are very selfish, and technology wants us to continue to be selfish.

The more selfish we become, the more we rely on technology. Today's young students rely on the technological platform, for example, relying on Tinder to find a boyfriend/girlfriend for them. We trust that technology will work for us, and we don't care who is behind it. Thus, we become not just selfish but also lazy. Technology thinks for us, everything works automatically, and that's how we ended up with fake news – because people just don't want to make the effort and research. We are entering a new decade in which we are selfish, lazy, passive. The only thing we are interested in is technological services that will bring us the right thing at the right moment.

On the other hand, we are also witnessing counter-reactions to these trends. Ostensibly, our lives seem to be incredibly good, and we enjoy this tremendous abundance, and everything works automatically, but emotionally, people are feeling something else. Nearly half of all Americans have reported that they feel lonely. The question we need to ask is how to get these passive, selfish and lazy young people to embrace an ideological movement, and mobilize them to Zionism. How can they be motivated to join the Zionist movement when they don't even correspond with this trend? However, we must also realize the existence of a countertrend. In the world of trends, we have two engines - one is the technological, functional and rational engine, which wants everything fast, and the other is the emotional engine, which feels lonely and passive, and not connected to anything.

Ms. Yoffe said that a year ago she presented her annual report in Tel Aviv and pointed to a future trend of activism. As we live in a world of passivity, people were surprised by this prediction, and she explained that at

this point in time, people actually want to be active. And indeed, in recent months we are witnessing an accelerated global phenomenon of activism. All of a sudden, everyone wants to be an activist, but this is not something that just happened on its own, but rather it stems from what is happening in the second, emotional engine: people are craving something. A simple example of this is the growing increase in the sales of vinyl records. In recent years, in a period of accelerated technological development, people are returning to buy records and tapes. This does not mean that we want to return to the past, but this phenomenon is indicative of the growing desire to know where our roots come from and connect with them. People do DNA tests because they want to know what their historical and genetic origins are, and this is also reflected in politics, as can be seen with Brexit or in Donald Trump's statements: let's make America great again.

Ms. Yoffe calls this trend "the future of caves", as an expression of the emotional desire to return to the roots and develop a sense of loyalty to important things, such as communities. It is now, of all times, in this most technological age, that we begin to ask questions concerning our essential identity (who we really are) and yearn for a sense of loyalty - not to brands but to meaningful things. The whole concept of shared workspaces is linked to this need for community and a sense of being together, and it's not that this is happening for no reason. Today's generation could have chosen to work from home, but they chose not to do so because they want to be with other people, to build a community.

On Sukkot, for example, there was this group of neighbors in Hod Hasharon who decided to set up tents under their fancy building, and they slept in these tents with their children. This image tells the story of 2020: today we act not only out of selfish motivations and a desire to live in a beautiful high-rise, but we are also looking for a community and roots.

This idea needs to be translated into contemporary means and experience, thus creating the future of synthesis, that is, connecting our young people - who live in a world of a passive, selfish, harsh and alienated future - to meaningful experiences, and we need to do it right.

Two contemporary examples of this from the Jewish world are "Eva.Stories" and the story of the *Beresheet* space lander. Eva Stories - a project created for the 2019 Holocaust Remembrance Day, in which a diary (story) was uploaded on Instagram and told the story of a Jewish girl during the Holocaust through a review of short videos ostensibly shot by Eva Heyman on her mobile phone - had millions of views worldwide. Eva's diary illustrated well to young people today the Holocaust period and the experiences of the children at that time, and Ms. Yoffe said that her children, who were born in Israel and live here, were constantly waiting for these videos to come up in the story, as they connected them to the holocaust in a way that was relevant to the younger generation, born after 2000. Another example is the story of *Beresheet*, which connected the young to the power

of Israel in an experiential way. The ideas are the same ideas, but the real story today is how we generate the experience.

If we want to connect young people today to the Zionist world, we must think about how to create emotional and meaningful experiences for them. In order to produce such experiences among these passive young men and women, who buy on Amazon and work in WeWork, we need to use technology and achieve an experiential connection through it.

Ms. Yoffe finished her talk by showing a short video, a commercial from the world of tourism, which speaks the language of social media. The Ibis hotel chain discovered that when people come to a hotel they are constantly on their phone and they thought about what can be done to encourage them to enjoy their vacation and not be constantly busy with their phone, so the commercial introduces a new service they offer, where they take people's phones and share for them.

The plenary chair **Marlene Post** said she thought the amusing video was brilliant, and thanked Ms. Yoffe for her inspiring talk, shedding light on what the future has in store for us and the younger generation and the different way young people and older people see things.

**Shirley** from NAMAT thanked Adi Yoffe for her fascinating and relevant talk. Her talk reminds all of us, as volunteers in meaningful organizations, how important it is to really touch people and bring them closer to meaningful action. A human connection obtained exclusively through social media and technology can make people feel depressed, meaningless. Therefore, especially in this day and age, the role of volunteers and activists in organizations is more important than ever.

**Another speaker** discussed the talk's practical implications regarding the activities of the World Zionist Organization. The Zionist Congress will be held next year, and we must consider what's the best way to properly prepare for it, so that it will appeal to young people and the technological world as well. We must examine how creative thinking can be adopted in order to deepen the connection to Zionism, Israel and Judaism, while being aware of the world we live in, and it may be worthwhile to ask Ms. Yoffe to help develop the WZO as a significant organization for the younger generation.

**Another speaker** said she was troubled by the use of the word "future", as this isn't future, it's the present. We have also adopted the passive behaviors described in the talk - in meetings, not just in congresses, for example, we sit passively, receive information, take pictures and behave in the same ways that were presented, and it is worth thinking about other ways we can interact with each other, and in the process, strengthen our own organization internally. It is possible, for example, to arrange round tables where representatives from different factions can talk to each other and feel more involved.

**Debbie Isaac** from Mizrahi asked to hear some practical suggestions regarding what the World Zionist Organization does, which is engage people in a specific kind of movement. How to change this kind of forum when we get together?

**Adi Yoffe** replied that the main thing is to be relevant, and the additional challenge is to try to find the right value, which young people can relate to. Anything can be a value: minimal time, functionality, being part of a community or a good experience - all of these can be values, and to connect young people you need to find the right values. Once we answer these questions, we can find the right technological tools, but the main challenge is to remain relevant. When looking at the contemporary meaning of schools, for example, we must ask ourselves what is their relevant value at this day and age, when we have Wikipedia and Google.

Another speaker noted that Shabbat is an antidote to all the current newfangled trends: stopping technology, forming a community, coming together and experiencing a sense of meaning. Bari Weiss' book on anti-Semitism deals, among other things, with the loneliness created by technology, and we see how even people who do not keep Shabbat tend to make a *stop day* where they refrain from using technology.

**Adi Yoffe** noted that this trend has also been adopted by some people in Tel Aviv, and we see secular people cleansing themselves of technology on Shabbat. Finally, she thanked everyone for the invitation to speak at the conference, and the plenum closed.

### **Plenary No. 7: Zionism as a Story**

The Plenum chair, Joni Kowensky, Vice Chairman of the South African Zionist Federation, opened by presenting the outline of the session. In the first part, the author Eshkol Nevo will describe Zionism as a story, and will present the way in which Israel's periphery, Israeli society and the future of Zionism are reflected in one of his stories. In the second part of the session, journalist Sara Beck will lead a marketing exercise on the different ways to adapt a 71-year-old product to the next generation, and in the third part, Dr. Maya Wiesel, an educational hacker in the field of educational innovation, will give a talk on being a Zionist hacker.

#### **Eshkol Nevo, 'Zionism as a Story'**

The writer Eshkol Nevo read three monologues he wrote following his visit to the Gaza Envelope. He then spoke about his book *Neuland* and his social activities in the field of literature and writing, as part of the project he created with the writer and poet, Orit Gidley.

#### **A. Monologues**

The three monologues were written following an offer Eshkol Nevo received from the newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth to visit the Gaza Strip and then write something following the visit. The writer happily accepted the offer, both because he teaches at the Sapir Academic College and loves this area, and because storytellers like him gravitate toward conflict and fire. During the visit, he met with people in the Gaza Envelope, asked questions, listened to what they said (as well as to what they did not say) and what they told with their eyes. Following the visit Nevo, wrote six monologues which were published in Yedioth Ahronoth, and the author read three of the monologs.

### *First Monolog*

She didn't even howl. She just stood outside our house and trembled. Covered in mud. I had come out to throw out the garbage when I saw her. It was pretty obvious she had come a long way. I couldn't even imagine how long. I washed her off a little and brought her home. She didn't have a collar but it was quite obvious she belonged to somebody. She knew how to behave around people and how to make you love her. Have you ever had a dog? Then you know what I mean. How they go limp with pleasure when you stroke them. Or sit next to you quietly just when you are feeling lonely. My wife said to me: We have to give her back. I said to her: Who exactly do we give her back to? We put it off for a day, two days, three. Since the time our children had left the moshav for Tel Aviv, we had no one to care for. We took her out for walks on the beach. We bought her special dog food at the supermarket. We even made up a name for her: Haile. Naming her after the long-distance running athlete, Haile Gebrselassie. Slowly-slowly Haile calmed down. Her tremors stopped. A squeaky chair in the kitchen would make her get up and bark and walk around in circles. So we got rid of the chair and put it in the backyard. And she stopped doing it. Finally, my wife said: It isn't right, Oshik. Somewhere out there somebody is looking for this dog. Somebody is worried. So I posted on Facebook. I attached a picture of her. With the beautiful white stripe that ran across her forehead. Within two hours there was a call. A couple from Sderot. They almost cried on the phone. They said they were setting out right away. Only a short ride away by car. Fifteen minutes, maybe twenty. A knock on the door. They walked in. Instead of running to them, the dog hid under the table. So they approached her. They stooped down. Stroked her. Kissed her on the stripe. Whispered to her: Tasha, Tasha. And slowly-slowly she came out from under the table, but kept staring at us with the look of somebody on death roll. In the meanwhile, they were telling us that every time the Red Color siren went off, Natasha would take off. But she had never gotten this far. Your moshav is out of range, right? The man asked me. For now, I answered. We don't know what to do with her, the woman said. We even took her to a dog psychologist. It didn't help. He said these were anxiety symptoms. No kidding, we could have figured that out on our own. He also said everything depends on the owners. The example we set for her. Would you like something hot to drink? My wife asked. No, thank you, we are in a bit of a hurry and don't want to

drive when it's dark, said the woman. And the man said, come, Tasha, let's go. And then they put the collar around her neck. And hooked on the leash. And pulled her after them. And then there was one moment when she stopped. Resisting the pull. And turned her head towards us. As if she were still making up her mind.

### ***Second Monolog***

You have fifteen seconds to get out of the car, lie on the road and place your hands on your head. Do you get that? Actually, you wouldn't, not until you've lived here. Coming for a short visit is not enough, with all due respect. How many kids do you have? Three? Nice. So imagine you are driving with all three of them and suddenly the siren goes off. And all three of them are buckled up in their booster seats. And you have to decide whom of the three to unbuckle and take with you and who to leave behind to fend for themselves. At first, I would take turns. So that none of them blamed me one day for screwing him up by letting him feel that his life is worth less than that of siblings. But during the last long round this past summer, I was driving with the kids. And suddenly there was a siren. I stopped and opened the backdoor. I did everything by the book. I was going to carry Irad and Elad in my arms. Because it was their turn on the roulette. And suddenly Elad said to me, Mom, take Eden. I will be fine. Now let's make this very clear, there is no time to think. Everything happens quickly. I took Eden and Irad. And Elad stayed in the car. I was sure he would run after us, but he stayed in the car. Try to imagine it: I look and see him sitting alone in the car. And the missile is flying above us, we can actually see it flying above our heads and then land near Mefalsim. Boom. Afterwards I went back to the car. And I hugged Elad tight, kissing him on his face and on his entire body, and I asked him: What happened? What happened? Why didn't you want me to carry you out? And he was silent at first. He didn't answer. And only when we started driving again, I heard him saying: I have the smallest body, mom. So it would be hardest for the missile to hit me. The very same evening, I told my husband, that's it, enough, we are moving. I can't take it anymore. I don't want to screw up the kids like this anymore. And my husband said, whatever you say, because he saw I wasn't going to budge and it was no use arguing with me when I was on the warpath. How long has it been since? Almost a year. Don't look at me like that. My husband's family. Our livelihood. My close friends. Everything is here. And honestly, it's paradise here, when it isn't hell. And besides, one might think you live in Switzerland. Whoever lives in this country, lives near a volcano that could erupt at any minute. We just feel it a little more acutely.

### ***Third Monolog***

After Maya left, I was completely shattered. I didn't know what hit me. We were supposed to get married. At least I thought we were. Suddenly she says to me that it doesn't feel right. And that some things about me bug her. Like my breath. I will brush more often, I said to her. But she wouldn't hear any of it. One morning she

got up and left our apartment and went back to her parents in Rishon LeZion. She took all her books with her. And the picture of a wintry sea we had bought together. It was just then that the last round began. And no delivery person was willing to go out on a motorcycle and make deliveries. Everyone was scared a missile would hit them while riding. I was actually working in the kitchen at the time. But I approached Zion and said to him: I have no problem making deliveries. And he asked: Do you have a license for a motorcycle? Sure, I answered, although all I had was experience. But no real license. And that is how it all started. I became the pizza's place only delivery boy. And then the sushi place heard that there is this guy willing to make deliveries during sirens and so they asked Zion if they could use me when I wasn't delivering pizza. And then the Yemenite food place heard as well. And so I found myself riding with pizzas and sauces and *jachnun* and sushi and ginger piled up in the delivery box, while Kassam missiles were flying above my head and mortar shells as well, without a single dog out on the streets, actually there was one - Natasha, known to run away from the city whenever the sirens sounded, have you heard the story about her? Her and me tear through the streets alone, while the heavens above light up with explosions, but I couldn't care less, I care for nothing, on the contrary, I wish a missile would lock onto me already, and put an end to the constant pain that Maya has left in my heart. And then, in one of the deliveries, in one of the apartments, this girl opens the door. She was wearing sweatpants, her hair up in a hair clip, and as I was handing her the tray, I saw the picture of the sea in winter behind her on the wall, the same picture Maya and I had. So I had to ask her where she got it from and she started telling me about her ex-boyfriend, Elad, who was killed on the first day of operation *Protective Edge* and that was their picture. And she was talking and we were both standing in the doorway of her apartment, there was another Red Color siren, and she grabbed me by the hand "Come, come in you idiot" and she yanks me inside and pulls me into the *mamad* (the security room) and after it ends she says in this small voice 'Can you stay for just a little bit? I'm scared to stay here all alone. And there was something in that little voice of hers that shot right into me, that penetrated through my entire Iron Dome and I just couldn't say no to her. So I let her draw me after her to the living room sofa and she pulls me to sit next to her and I rest my head on her shoulder, and the two of us sit on the sofa, under that picture of the sea in winter and we say nothing, and the pager continues to beep addresses like crazy.

## **B. Neuland**

Eshkol Nevo presented his book *Neuland* and said it was a book about Zionism as it is perceived by his generation. At the beginning of the book, Meni Peleg, a 65-year-old widower, goes on a late backpacking trip to South America, where he disappears. His son Dori sets out to look for him in South America, collecting clues to find his father and following his father's route, stopping everywhere his father stopped, until he reaches Baron

Hirsch's colonies in Argentina. Why Baron Hirsch's colonies, and what is the connection between *Neuland* and *Altneuland*?

In his book, *The Jewish State*, Herzl does not deliberate between the option of Palestine and the option of Uganda, but between Palestine and Argentina, but the book *Neuland* chooses the road not taken: to walk down the road that Zionism did not take and ask what would have happened if the Jewish state were to be established in Argentina, and the destination of the post-military trip would have been here, in Palestine.

At first, Meni Peleg, the 65-year-old widower, does not establish a state, but he does establish Neuland. Neuland is a community that strives to return to the original values of Herzl and Zionism, which the State of Israel, according to Meni Peleg, is moving away from. What are those values? Every visitor to Neuland, located in Moisés Ville in Argentina, receives an information sheet detailing Neuland's values, the values of a new and renewed Zionism. This guest information sheet, detailed in the book, lists five basic values: 1. Physical, verbal and emotional non-violence. 2. Progressive equality in rights and duties, but not in private property; giving. 3. All Neuland members are obligated to be involved in community activity. 4. Openness to the other, from man we come and to man we shall return, and there is no redemption but the other. 5. Enlightenment. Out of a belief that only by knowing the past and understanding the present it is possible to dream the future, Neuland encourages its members and guests to study and learn.

Following the book, something strange happened, illustrating the connection between fiction and reality. The book describes situations in which young people after the army come to this place, Neuland, which is in Argentina, and sit there in a kind of discussion circle and have conversations about Zionism, and what Zionism means for the new generation. The book was published in Israel in May 2011, and in the first months after its publication, until July 2011, people claimed it was inconceivable. Readers said that the situations described in the book are like science fiction, that people would not, out of the blue, just sit down and talk about Zionism, they said it was a fantasy. But in July 2011, two months after the book was published, the social protest began, the one that was called the Rothschild Boulevard Tent Protest. One of the organizers of the protest, a student of Eshkol Nevo at the time, invited him there, and the author was surprised to see a circle of dozens of young people after the army, just like those he described in the book, sitting on Rothschild Boulevard and talking about Zionism: what is the future of Zionism, and what kind of country do we want to have here. Eshkol Nevo said that he realized that something similar to what he had imagined was indeed happening, and it was a very special and exciting moment for him.

At that point, Eshkol Nevo said, the social protest was a significant stage in his life, which prompted him to take action. As he had already mentioned, one of the organizers of the protest was a student of his, and that

student asked him to come to Rothschild Blvd. and conduct a writing workshop for the protesters. The workshop was posted on Facebook, and was attended by a hundred people, and Eshkol and his partner, the poet, Orit Gidley, gave a session, at the end of which everyone wrote a song together. Women and men, young and old, some very angry people and some very calm people, some drunk and some sober, created a common song. The idea was that everyone would throw a line, and so we would create a song together. It was pretty chaotic there, with people running in and out in the middle of the workshop, but after an hour, a protest song written by a hundred people together was created. That moment was a defining moment in his life. People tend to say that the social protest failed because the cost of living was not curbed, but for me it was a great success in the way it affected people, and me, in particular. When the workshop ended, he and his partner, Orit Gidley, decided that this was what they wanted to do: to start moderating writing workshops to the general public. Well into their 40s, they realized that they were the adults now, and that they want to influence society through the power of art.

It was at this point that the journey that Eshkol Nevo embarked on in recent years, had begun. That moment in the social protest made him feel that with every year that goes by, the society we live in, Israeli society, is becoming more predatory, intolerant and impatient, lacking attention and compassion, and it made him and his partner feel they should try to influence, and establish a nation-wide endeavor that would create spaces of attention and curiosity that are free of any inkling of cynicism. And indeed, six years ago, in 2013, Eshkol Nevo and Orit Gidley founded *Sadnaot Habait* (The Home Workshops) . This past year, 50 full workshops were held, from Rosh Pina to Be'er Sheva, including workshops for special groups: at-risk youth, the blind and visually impaired, lone soldiers, and this week, for the first time, they entered the Israeli school system to help teachers use writing exercises when teaching Bible and literature classes. This, he emphasized, is not the most important part of this enterprise, but rather, the insights that he thought of since he opened this social enterprise. The main insight, relevant to this forum, is that co-creation in a positive atmosphere, unites the different sectors and groups living in Israel. If you put the four tribes living in Israel, referring to president Rivlin's description, and let them do creative work in an atmosphere that fosters empathy and mutual respect - the barriers fall. In the workshops, you can actually feel it happening: in the first meeting, people enter the room and see the people in the group through their labels, as if marking them by their tribes (this person is either from my tribe or not, he's one of us, or not), but in the second session they see the each other a bit differently, and in the third session, they realize that we are all writing about the same wounds and we are all equally vulnerable. Slowly the labels dissolve and disappear, and in the last session you can see people from all sectors and communities – secular Jews and religious Jews, residents of the periphery and people living in the center - sitting together and creating together. The journey across Israel through these writing workshops, the meetings with students and Israelis

from all walks of life, made him a more optimistic person, with a renewed hope about the future of this country and the future of Zionism.

Nevo concluded his talk by urging the people in the room to email him with their comments and questions (at: eshcolnevo@yahoo.com) and read a poem by Emily Dickinson, *Hope*, translated into Hebrew by Leah Naor:

*Hope" is the thing with feathers -  
That perches in the soul -  
And sings the tune without the words -  
And never stops - at all -*

*And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -  
And sore must be the storm -  
That could abash the little Bird  
That kept so many warm -*

*I've heard it in the chilliest land -  
And on the strangest Sea -  
Yet - never - in Extremity,  
It asked a crumb - of me.*

Sarah Beck thanked Eshkol Nevo, who inspired everyone with hope and optimism and demonstrated in his words the power of stories. The subject of the next session is "Zionism as a story," and Eshkol Nevo's work reminded her of a statement by his grandfather, Levi Eshkol (after whom the author is named), who said that the work of the pioneer is in fact a renewal of the act of creation from Genesis every day. When we ask what is the Zionist story today, when we have a fairly stable country, it could very well be that the real work is creating. Creative action means renewing the act of creation from Genesis every day, and especially now - when our house is standing - creation is the next step.

Sarah Beck then proceeded to quote a few sentences she had recently heard from students at pre-military academies (*mechinot*) and young people working in the media, which is where she comes from - which express the challenges we face and evoke some thought as for how we should tackle them. One of the sentences was: "A Jew does not need a state to be a Jew" - a statement that can be developed into an in-depth discussion on the role of *Eretz Yisrael* and the state. Another sentence was about the status of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, and the differences between them: she heard this 19-year-old who said that despite the deep symbolism of Jerusalem "If Jerusalem were to cease to exist it wouldn't change anyone's life, but if Tel Aviv were to cease to exist, our country would collapse" - a comment that could also generate a wide-ranging debate. Another important

sentence that a friend said to her one afternoon, as they were sitting at a café, her friends said that she was shocked by the fact that she defines herself as a Zionist, because for her - being a Zionist today means racism.

Now, we must not treat these sentences as being spiteful, but we should use them to help us understand the story of Zionism, and where we are all heading. In fact, as individuals we all try to figure out what our story is, and Zionism is actually also a story, which we need to know how to tell future generations. As an example, Sarah Beck talked about a short Hasidic story about Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk. As a child, Menachem Mendel used to run away from his parents' house and go to the court of the Seer of Lublin. His father would chase him to the Seer's house and would shout at him: "What are you doing? Why are you abandoning your ancestors' customs and attending this Hassidic nonsense? His little son replied to him by quoting from Exodus: "He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's god and I will exalt him" - a verse that expresses an independent spiritual search (first it says "He is my god" and only then does it say "my father's God", meaning: first, I must find my own god, and only then, the God I received from my forefathers).

The story about Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, which transpired when he was a little boy, teaches us that every person should find his/her own way – their own God or their own Zionism, and not take for granted what they had absorbed from their parents. To put it in today's terms, we can ask: how do we deliver Zionism to the younger generation in their own language, and make Zionism relevant for Generation Y and Generation Z?

Dr. Mia Wizel, who calls herself an Educational Hacker, will talk about these topics in her talk - Zionist Hackers.

### **Dr. Mia Wizel - On being a Zionist hacker**

**Dr. Mia Wizel, an "Educational Hacker", has been involved in pedagogical innovation for many years; she is a public speaker, facilitator and development leader for school principals and various projects.**

Dr. Wizel opened her talk with two questions to the audience: Who defines himself/herself as a Zionist? And who defines himself/herself as a hacker? The first question received widespread agreement – all of them defined themselves as Zionists. The second question, however, received reluctant support: only a small proportion of those present defined themselves as hackers.

Dr. Wizel then invited everyone to participate in the talk and be engaged and told them about herself and her areas of activity. As a native Israeli who when growing up was very involved in the Israeli Scouts, when she was a junior in high school she was sent by the scouts to a Jewish summer camp in the United States, where she was a counselor. It was the first time she visited the United States, encountered Judaism outside of Israel,

was exposed to Reform Judaism and learned how to say *Birkat Hamazon* in an American accent. Then, over twenty years later, after being involved in diverse activities in Israel over the years, she came to Boston to study for her Ph.D. In addition to writing a research paper on educational innovation, she returned to the Scouts and served as the head of the Scouts team in Boston. In this capacity, she worked with teens with hybrid identities – children of Israeli parents, children with one Israeli parent and one American, children of parents who made Aliyah from Russia, and young people who came to Israel in different *Hagshama* programs.

Then, about five years ago, she started teaching at the University of Middlebury in Vermont, USA, in a master's and doctoral program for Hebrew teachers from all over the world. Most of the classes she teaches are online: Dr. Wizel teaches from Israel and her students are in different countries (the US, Canada, Mexico, Hungary, etc.), teaching this way is challenging in all kind of different ways, for example trying to produce a shared learning experience and a community even though the participants are in different time zones.

Dr. Wizel invited the participants to choose a word, term, concept, image or sentence from her talk, which they would later like to share with their community, and proceeded to explain the meaning of the terms "educational hacker" and "Zionist hacker".

In most movies, hackers are portrayed as a guy in a hoodie sitting in his parents' garage or basement, trying to break into websites and steal our identity. What Dr. Wizel does, on the other hand, is completely different from the criminal appearance associated with hackers, she focuses mainly on the multifaceted world of innovation which is rich in colors, as it breaks boundaries and goes beyond borders. In her talk, she seeks to create a bridge, explain how these worlds can be combined and how this perception can serve the participants and contribute to their Zionist work.

Dr. Wizel then talked about the number 2030. What is this number in the context of education? - In 2030 the children who are in first grade today will complete 12 years of schooling. But what do we know about the year 2030? As Adi Yoffe said in the previous talk, we don't have a clue, apart from the fact that we live in a very dynamic, changing world, which is becoming more and more technological. The kids studying in first grade today will probably no longer have to pass a test to get their driver's license, because by then, the cars will be autonomous. Kids today never use the "Save File" button on the computer because they work with the cloud. Their files never get deleted because they store all their materials on the cloud.

We live in a dynamic world, and we ask ourselves about the future of the next generation, but how can we prepare today's children for the future when we have no idea what it will look like? The world of employment is about to change completely: the most conservative estimates predict that by 2030, about 60% of the professions will be new professions. By the way, those who work in the field of education and the field of

value-education, as well as those who work in the nursing professions or work with the elderly, need not worry: in these professions humans will not be replaced by automation.

The whole world is changing, and the way people are learning is also changing. A lot of what children today learn, comes from YouTube, and those who teach in YouTube videos are often their friends - children and teenagers their own age. How, then, does this era we live in, which is constantly changing, affect the fields of education, learning and higher education systems?

One of the concepts that helps us think about these things in an organized way, is the term "wicked problem" - a complicated problem. In the old world, problems tended to have one solution. Sometimes the road to the solution was difficult, but each problem had one solution. Wicked problems, on the other hand, are complex social problems, related to major, wide-ranging questions, such as the "future of education" or "how to educate for Zionism". Complex problems of this nature have several characteristics. First, there is no consensus about the problem itself. When people are asked to discuss a specific problem, they disagree about the nature of the problem. Second, there is no consensus regarding the solution to the problem - people do not agree on the best solution. And third, there is no one way to reach a solution or answer. When we think about complicated social challenges, which are quite common in the new world, the realization that there is no one right way, helps us think about ways to deal with these changes.

Dr. Wizel said that with this insight in mind she set out to do her research on the future education system. She thought about 2030 and she thought about what schools look like today, and realized she wanted to learn from those who are already succeeding in making significant changes in schools. During her research, she met with a lot of teachers, school principals and social leaders, and tried to understand what they were doing.

A good example of this is a high school math teacher, named Melissa, who was a teacher for 15 years, and defined herself as a good teacher, and was also perceived as a good teacher by her students, their parents and the school. So, one day, out of the blue, Melissa decided to change her teaching method and switched to the flipped classroom method, where most of the learning is done independently, and the classroom is used only for practice and questions. So Melissa decided to teach in this method: she videotaped herself teaching the lesson and emailed the recording to the students; the students were asked to watch the lesson at home and then, in class, she did not teach anything, but just practiced with the students and solved mathematical problems with them. The change did not go over easily - the parents complained, the students did not open the emails and complained as well, but Melissa considered the change to be a success.

Dr. Wizel emphasized that this story interested her not because of the pedagogy of the flipped classroom, but because of the change initiated by the teacher. What provoked a successful and esteemed teacher, who has been

in the system for quite a few years to step out of her comfort zone and radically change her teaching method? Melissa felt awkward when she recorded herself, and the change was accompanied by numerous problems, but she considered it to be a success, it was like magic. Dr. Wizel wanted to understand what this magic was and how much more of it could be achieved.

It was at this time that Dr. Wizel first encountered the term "hacker" outside the world of computers, when she came across a blog called "IKEA Hackers". These 'IKEA hackers' (IKEA - the Swedish furniture company), took the famous brand's conventional furniture and turned it into something unique, through a very creative and playful process. Uniform-looking bookcases made for the masses became an extraordinary bookcase. Two simple stools connected together, turned into a bicycle. These "IKEA hackers" took existing products and changed their shape and essence, celebrating creativity. This creativity is quite different from the prevailing image of hackers, as guys sitting in their garage and plotting how to hack into sites, so now the word "hacker" can be perceived in a new and interesting way.

Approximately at the same time, Dr. Wizel was also invited to a hackathon at her daughter's high school. At the time she did not know what a hackathon was and was surprised to discover a very powerful energy-filled event. Parents, teachers, and students from the community, convened in a hall and solved problems together. Albeit some of the problems did deal with minor issues like the line at the cafeteria, but the process of thinking together created a special atmosphere - vigorous and energetic activity aimed at solving problems together.

So she started researching the subject, and discovered that leaders who were trying to change things were usually defined as "change agents" or "innovators", but this definition didn't necessarily fit all the cases. Melissa, the math teacher, for example, did not invent anything new: the flipped classroom existed even before she started using it, but her decision to use this method, had a significant impact on her students.

Teachers like Melissa, who are changing the school system from within, are actually hackers of sorts. The term hacker In Hebrew can be translated into two words: *patzhan*, which means a *white hacker*, and *partzan*, which is the kind of hacker who breaks into systems. By the way, cyber experts, do not steer away from the "breaking" hackers, because they help them find the loopholes in their systems, so actually both terms have a positive sense. After an in-depth study, in which she interviewed and observed dozens of teachers, principals and leaders who were changing the systems from within, Dr. Wizel realized that the term "hackers" fits them in a number of characteristics and habits, chief among them: they are passionate about what they do. When they get out of bed in the morning they're not just going to work, but they go out into to the world to fulfill their life's dream.

Dr. Wizel added that she feels that many of the people in the room today are such "hackers", who act out of a desire to change reality and out of a strong social desire, and they can achieve such change through their work.

People who feel extremely uncomfortable with the current situation and who get up in the morning and act to change reality. Idealists, with a spark in their eyes, whose social activities and desire for change are reflected in everything they do - in their daily activities, their social circles, even the magazines they read.

Before she finished, Dr. Wizel gave them an exercise: she asked the participants to fold their arms across their chest, and then reverse the direction so that they would fold their arms in a way they were not used to. It felt strange, different and uncomfortable, but this exercise illustrated the real challenge that lies ahead: to be open to change. Leaders who are hackers understand that they have no real control over what the future has in store for us, and they embrace uncertainty. It used to be the case in the business world that they would make ten-year plans. Then they started making five-year plans, today quarterly plans seem long-term. The human mind is used to planning, because we want to feel we have control, but we cannot plan everything. Teachers and leaders who are hackers, not only understand that they do not know exactly what will happen, but rather, they are willing to celebrate the fact that they don't know, they are willing to put themselves in a place where they do not know exactly what will happen. Even this session can demonstrate this: before the session, the speakers were in contact with each other and planned its outline – they said that Sarah Beck would open and then Rabbi Mishael would speak, and then Dr. Wizel herself would comment on his remarks, and a Q&A session would ensue. But Rabbi Mishael is sick today so he was unable to come. Ms. Beck and Dr. Wizel asked themselves: "What will we do now?" And Dr. Wiesel wrote to her: "It will be okay; it will be fun. This is an unfamiliar situation, but we are bringing ourselves into the situation, and we'll soon see what happens and turn it into something fun." We understand that at one point or another we will be confronted with uncertainty; we just don't know when and under what circumstances. This realization is true for many situations and contexts: when teachers plan an annual curriculum they need to remember that they cannot know what will happen at the end, and when organizing an important conference with many participants, it is important to also leave enough space for improvisation and flow. We must embrace the understanding that uncertainty also brings with it many opportunities, and instead of getting upset when something goes wrong – we must accept the new situations that were created and channel them into something positive.

### **Discussion**

**Sarah Beck** mentioned a *Hassidic* story about what we can learn from thieves. The Maggid of Mezritch told Rabbi Zosha that there are seven things we need to learn from thieves: to work at night, a dedicated perseverance (if a thief does not get what he wants on the first night, he will try again on the second night, that is, they give their lives to get what they want, even if it is a small thing). In addition, thieves think their craft is beautiful and they would not replace it with any other craft, which can also be said about today's hackers.

Maya Wizel said she liked the story and responded to it by addressing the issue of dealing with failures. When you take a chance and do something you're not too familiar with, you might fail, but the question is how to deal with these failures. As an example, she presented a picture she took in a makerspace - a place where all sorts of things are made and is quite common today in many systems and communities. The picture she projected presented a kind of "museum of mistakes": in the company where the photo was taken, they projected in the makerspace all the things that did not come out of the 3D printer as planned, that is, they celebrated their failures, and we should learn from that.

It's hard for us to talk about our failures and it's hard for us to admit that we failed. No one likes to fail, and whenever Dr. Wizel talks about failures in her lectures, people start to shift uncomfortably in their seats, because it makes them feel very uneasy, especially when it has to do with saving lives. But the biggest systems that deal with saving lives, have particularly good practices for learning from failures. Hospitals, for example, have a debriefing procedure for anything that happens on the operating table, and the IDF has a tradition of debriefing and they have clear procedures for learning from mistakes. Actually, it is educators who find it very difficult to talk about failures and the social processes that led to them, and we need to change our perception. Once a failure is perceived as the end – then it means we've reached a dead end, and we have to go back and look for another way (like the road not taken, mentioned earlier by Eshkol Nevo). Today, however, we understand that failure is yet another sign that shows us the way to the right road. It is a change in our mindset, which also involves personal change, and moreover - this change should be reflected in the way organizations work. Organizations need to understand that if I tried something and it failed, then now it helps me understand better how to try "the new thing".

The message here is important and complex, and it also has implications for how states conduct themselves. For example, when countries want to encourage innovation in teaching mathematics, they ask the Minister of Education to be innovative in teaching mathematics, while sending a threatening message: "you better succeed or else." This kind of atmosphere makes it extremely difficult to foster innovation, and therefore the general perception has to change. If we want to encourage innovation, we need to walk the talk, and encourage people to share with each other and talk about past experiences, including failures. To illustrate what she was saying, Dr. Wizel told them about a talk she once gave, similar to this one, at a large psychological center. During the talk, the center's director told the participants - dozens of psychologists, all of whom were her subordinates - about a something she did in her first year on the job that was a failure. The director took responsibility for this and admitted to all her employees that it was a failure. It was a very powerful moment, because at that moment she was actually giving all her employees permission not to succeed. We all want to succeed and are afraid of failing, but the director showed them that they are also allowed to fail, and to talk about their failures.

In addition, we should also remember that there's a risk in inaction as well. While taking a risk necessarily entails the possibility of failure, but what happens if we do nothing, and don't change? When we do something new, we have no proof that it will work. We have no research on the subject, we have no proof that it will work. The only evidence is that what currently exists, the current situation, is not working and should be changed. And that's a good enough reason to take action and try to change.

Sarah Beck quoted from Israel's third Prime Minister, Levi Eshkol, who said: "Perhaps we'll manage to avoid old mistakes, but I can guarantee there will be new ones. The only way not to make new mistakes is to do nothing."

Maya Wizel added that there was something else that hacker leaders do well: they know how to work with what they have and they know how to effectively use the resources at their disposal. Dr. Wizel said that in her research she met with a wide range of teachers and school principals, some of them worked in private and prestigious schools, with a pool, tennis courts and computer labs, and others worked in disenfranchised neighborhoods, in schools with very poor resources. The hacker leaders, she found out, did not necessarily have greater resources, but rather they were the ones who worked better with whatever means they had. Not the ones who had more time, money, and technology, but those who made better use of their resources - not only money but also the forces and spaces found in the community. One of the teachers in inner city neighborhoods, for example, saw a neglected yard at the school and turned it into a garden together with the special-ed kids, using the existing spaces in a creative and intelligent way.

At one of the academic conferences Dr. Wizel had attended, she happened to meet some professors from South Africa and was surprised to learn that many people there did not have a regular Internet network at home. A large proportion of the students were unable to access the university's computer systems from home, so the professors began to conduct some of the class discussions on WhatsApp, i.e. they dealt with the problem using the most available resource, and this created a different learning experience.

Another example she gave was a group of school principals from Jerusalem, whose goal is to influence the educational policy in Jerusalem. Dr. Wizel is the group's facilitator, and the opening day of the conference was held in Tel Aviv. During the day there was not enough time to talk about everything, so Dr. Wiesel and her co-facilitator recorded a podcast for the participants so they could listen to it while traveling back from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The decision to create the podcast was born out of constraint, but the limited time of the conference became an opportunity: the facilitators used the resources available to them to develop the discussion and discuss topics that due to lack of time, could not be discussed.

Another thing that is important to mention is that educational leaders often feel very lonely in this capacity. Educational leaders must deal with dilemmas and questions that do not have one simple answer, all on their own, so networking and forming ties with other educators is of paramount importance. It is precisely this understanding, that it is almost impossible to do it alone that is the key to taking innovative and hacking action. It is possible, and it is important, to learn from each other: if there is a practice that worked well in a community in Argentina, you should examine and see what can be applied in South Africa as well, and if something works in the United States, it is worth checking if it can be done in Mexico. Anyone who wants to be a hacker, to take risks and try new things no one has done before, needs to feel that s/he are a part of something, to know that they have thinking partners and someone to be with.

In conclusion, Dr. Wizel said that the main meaning of the collection of habits she presented was to ask questions - to come from a point of humility and say: "I do not know". To ask questions that undermine the existing order, such as: "Why do we do what we do", and "Can we do something else." This conference, which is being held in Be'er Sheva for the first time, gave us an opportunity to ask such questions, and it is recommended that we continue to ask questions.

If we summarize the hacker worldview, it can be characterized by a few things. First, it means that we are very dedicated and committed to our mission. Second, we create an organizational culture that encourages dynamism and risk-taking, making it committed to community building. Third, we celebrate our successes, while allowing for failures. It is important to stop for a moment to celebrate small and big successes, while at the same time we should also learn from our failures, seeing what we have and how we can leverage the forces that are in the community.

Sarah Beck asked Dr. Wizel what organizations need in order to be a hacking entity. Many of the participants in the audience hold leadership positions in their communities, movements, and organizations. What does it take for different organizations to act as hackers?

**Maya Wizel** replied that this was an excellent question and made two suggestions. First, to give the creative leaders in an organization or a community a platform and a voice. These hackers, who act with devotion and commitment and are willing to take risks to bring about change, often feel lonely, and should therefore be given a place to express their ideas and tell people about them. Sometimes some people feel threatened by them, and that is precisely why it is so important to give them a platform and encourage a dialogue about their innovative activities. Second, it is important to set a personal example, which is true for any leadership position. If I, as a principal or a leader, tell my entire community to take risks and try to do things differently, but I myself do not do so, then the message goes awry.

Sara Beck raised another question, about what is currently lacking in Zionist education in the world. Dr. Wizel, who specializes in pedagogy and educational innovation and has extensive experience working with communities in the Diaspora, must have come across situations where there was a lack of "hackerism" in Zionist education in the Diaspora. On what occasions did she see old paradigms being used and thought it would be best to break them? Can she share a story or an encounter in which she thought the course of action was wrong, and it would be best to think differently?

**One of the participants in the audience** addressed this question and said that it had to do with Generation Y, the young men and women who are currently working in organizations. Young people today don't really know what they want; they want to change jobs every two years, and the question is how to deal with this. As a manager who has Gen Y employees, he thinks their occupational frenzy is hurting the system. Should we swim with the current and accept our children's and employees' fads, or is there a way to stop this and "domesticate" them, get them to be more establishment oriented?

**Maya Wizel** replied that this was a challenge, and that she would choose the middle ground. If we swim with the current, we don't know where we might end up, so it is important to manage things wisely. Anyone who is involved in Zionism and education tends to be an optimist and should look at the opportunities inherent in this new and rapid pace. We come from a culture that understands the value of experience, seniority, and long learning processes, and have a hard time accepting today's "bouncy" pace, but we need to know how to manage it. We don't necessarily have to flow with it, but we must understand where the wind is blowing and know how to navigate it, we must realize the opportunities that it entails.

**Sara Beck** said that it was, in fact, about managing situations that arise out of entrepreneurship. When Eshkol Nevo spoke, we heard a story, and everyone wanted to listen to him. Generation Y, similarly, is a generation of stories: creating a story with selfies, uploading personal stories to social media networks. If we can somehow connect this generation, each with their own personal story, to the general story of Zionism, we could draw them into the general story. Stories always work, but a hundred years ago the stories were much more national and were all about the collective. Nowadays, it's about the personal story, the kind that has to do with "Where do I connect" to the story, because if we continue to talk about the collective, we might miss our audience.

**Maya Wizel** emphasized that the younger generation is a generation that places a great emphasis on values. Young people today, if we want to generalize, want to belong, they want to feel they are a part of something big, but they are also lonely. Generation Y, in her opinion, wants exactly the same things we want, and the important thing is to learn to communicate with them in their own language. If the Zionist movement wants to get closer to the younger generation, and think, for example, about what the next congress will look like, it is

worth learning from organizations that have succeeded in making a change. When looking at such organizations, you can see that they questioned everything and took nothing they do for granted: they were not afraid to ask annoying, difficult, and unanswerable questions. For example, Dr. Wizel told them that when she helps organizations plan conferences, she first asks them to convince her why the conference is needed. Only after the physical encounter is justified, can they start organizing it. Doubting things, even things that have been done in a certain way for a hundred years, is the key to the future.

Sara Beck concluded with a Hassidic story about searching for one's path. During the month of Elul, Rabbi Chaim of Sanz used to tell his followers a story about a man who got lost in the forest. The man had walked for days and days and did not find his way out, so he started to get worried, stressed, and depressed. Then, suddenly, he saw a man at a distance, and was filled with hope that he had found someone who could help him out of the forest. He started calling him and yelling for help, but as the other man got closer to him, he told him that he also did not know how to get out of the forest. Yet, he could tell him where he had been to, where he had tried to look for an exit and failed, offering him to join him and look for a new way together.

The story teaches us that we can learn from mistakes and emphasizes the importance of cooperation. To face obstacles and embark on a new path you must walk together, and that is indeed the challenge we all face.

Ms. Beck thanked Dr. Wizel and addressed the Speaker of the Plenum, **Joni Kowensky**, who invited **Melissa Enoch**, a new *ola* from Argentina, to talk about her path to Zionism and Israel.

25 years old **Melissa Enoch** was born and raised in Argentina, where she attended ORT High School. Melissa came to Zionism in her activities in the Hejalutz Lamerhav youth movement in Argentina, and in 2014 she came to Israel with the Masa Israel Journey program and spent five months in Ramla where she taught English in schools. After the program, she decided to stay in Israel for a few more months, to feel the country and learn more about it. She later returned to Argentina and planned to make Aliyah. During her stay in Argentina, she studied Hebrew at an *ulpan*, and participated in a three-day conference in Rosario, on behalf of the World Zionist Organization. The meeting was attended by two Israeli *shlichim* who previously lived in Argentina, and who gave the participants all the information related to Aliyah - IDF recruitment, *ulpanim*, academic studies, HMOs, etc. That meeting, held especially for people who want to make Aliyah, was a very powerful and significant factor: in the seminar, which was held a few weeks before her Aliyah, she met people with whom she is still in contact now, and most of them made Aliyah as well.

Melissa made Aliyah in 2016 and joined the IDF. During part of her military service she was a volunteer, and part was mandatory service. During her service she participated in the Birthright program, met with people

from Argentina and told them about Israel and the army. As a lone soldier, she could fly home during her military service to visit her parents in Argentina. Her mother started learning Hebrew in an *ulpan* in Argentina, and during the visits Melissa was able to help her a little with her Hebrew and contribute to community activities. She finished off by saying how much she loves Israel and how happy she was to share the story of her Aliyah.

### **Plenary No. 8: Recognition**

#### **Chaya Cohen: Opening Remarks**

We respect the past, uphold the future, and expect what lies ahead. Today, we do not just remember, we also honor our friends who have worked their whole lives and were part of the Zionist cause. I come from a family of *Olim* from Morocco, and like many of the Jews there, they were merchants. They had a factory where they sewed uniforms for the American army, but they and their friends from the city of Meknes organized into a group of 13 families and decided to build their future in a moshav, to dedicate themselves to agricultural work and fulfill the Zionist idea in all its glory. When I was eight years old, my uncle, a rich doctor from France, came to visit us. He parked his Chevrolet by our house and all the children ran to our house to see the car. He walked into my parents' farm, it was wintertime - mud, boots, a pitchfork. I was playing in the mud and the hay in the barn and I heard him talking to my father in an angry tone, I did not understand what he was saying, he spoke French. When he left, I said to my father: "Dad, why is he so angry with you? He was angry with you and you answered him angrily." My father told me that he had told him, "'You've waited for a daughter for so many years, and finally she was born, and look where she's playing.'" The uncle was, as mentioned, very rich, but my father picked up a handful of straw with cow dung and soil, kissed it and said to him: "Everything you have there, in France, is not yours. This land with mud and straw is mine, it is ours." And I think that message left a strong impression on me.

Today, my son lives in Kibbutz Karniya, and I went to his house for Shabat dinner, and I saw that he had adopted three lone soldiers from Mexico, who served in a combat unit. I asked them: "How do you feel with the accent? With the way you speak. Don't the others mock you?" And they immediately replied, "It doesn't matter what they say, we feel that they and us is ours." To me, this expresses the continuation of Zionism in the most natural way.

### **Rabbi Yehiel Wasserman: Presentation of Certificates to Honorary Fellows**

Rabbi Wasserman was invited to the stage for the ceremony, to award certificates to honorary fellows - active members of the Zionist movement, who have contributed significantly to its design and activities. Rabbi Wasserman described the honorary fellows as highly motivated people, who have devoted many years of their lives to the Zionist movement and can serve as a model for the next generation. He said that they are gems who have illuminated, influenced, bestowed and projected onto the Zionist movement and its activities, while also looking out to examine the space and based on what they saw they recommended the desired tactics and the way the movement should operate. The session before us is intended to express our appreciation and gratitude for their dedicated activity in the Zionist movement, over many years.

Rabbi Wasserman also thanked the committee members who selected the honorary fellows: Barbara Goldstein, Silvio Joskowicz, Dalia Levy, Karma Cohen, Hernan Felman and Jacques Kupfer, as well as the committee's coordinator, Nava Avissar.

### **Honorary Fellows**

**Mr. Leon Reich** of South Africa. One of the leaders of the Betar and Likud movements in South Africa, who contributed greatly to Zionist activity in South Africa, a leader in the Jewish community in Johannesburg, where he had served in many positions, including: Deputy Chairman of the Zionist Federation, Chairman of the Likud, and a delegate to the Zionist Congress in many congresses. In February 2017, he fulfilled the Zionist dream and made Aliyah with his wife. Here, too, he is active within the World Likud, and continues to be a significant figure among Likud members in South Africa.

**Ms. Annabel Yuval** from Israel. Ms. Yuval, who grew up in a Zionist home in the United States (her father was president of the Zionist Organization of America), was a member of Junior Hadassah and one of the founders of the Zionist Students' Union on campuses in the United States. In 1948 she made Aliyah, started a family here, and was one of the founders of Hadassah Israel. Ms. Yuval, who represents the Hadassah Women's Zionist Organization, is a role model for hundreds of people who have joined the circle of Zionist women, a true *Eshet Chayil*, a woman of action always pleasant and modest. She has been representing the Hadassah Women's Organization in the World Zionist Organization for 20 years and has participated in 10 Zionist congresses.

**Ms. Reeva Forman** from South Africa. A graduate of the Jewish community in Johannesburg, who has always dedicated so much of her life and resources to volunteer activities in the Jewish community, the Zionist

Federation, and the local Zionist movement. Ms. Forman is highly esteemed in South Africa and gives all her resources to the love of the Jewish people, the State of Israel, and the Zionist movement. Ms. Forman organizes tours for important businesspeople and public figures so that they will get to know the State of Israel through her own loving and appreciative eyes.

**Ms. Dalia Hibner** from Israel. Ms. Hibner made Aliya from Romania, studied Hebrew at an *ulpan*, and in 1966 began her studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. In March 1967, she was enlisted to the IDF and continued her studies after she finished her military service. In 1973, she left for Bolivia, where she taught Hebrew and Jewish history at the Jewish school at La Paz. In addition to her job as a teacher, she was a group leader at Maccabi and, together with the community leaders, she organized cultural activities that brought people closer to Israel; later on, was appointed as the principal of the Jewish school. She started out as an activist in the Labor movement 25 years ago and continued her activity in various positions.

**Mr. Nehemiah Gang** from Austria, was born in 1948, and serves as President of Mizrachi Olami in Austria and as Chairman of the Local Zionist Federation. He participated in five Zionist congresses and organizes cultural and Zionist events on behalf of the Zionist Federation as well as Mizrachi Olami.

**Ms. Marlene Post** from the United States. Ms. Post's enormous contribution to the Jewish people in Israel and the Diaspora extends over many years and many areas. Ms. Post served as President of Hadassah International and was one of the founders of the Birthright program and served as its chairman for many years. In addition, she served as Vice President of the American Zionist Movement and is on the board of Hillel, she founded Yad LaBanim, an organization supporting bereaved families and was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Hebrew College. Ms. Post headed numerous Hadassah delegations to Zionist congresses and continues to organize groups of women leaders to visit Israel.

**Marlene Post (on behalf of the honorary fellows):**

Ms. Post spoke on behalf of honorary fellows and noted that she is proud to receive this award in a hall filled with Zionists, true lovers of Israel. The people sitting in the hall have come from all over the world, and all have a common love - their love for Israel and the Jewish people. They all want to help Israel and the Jews wherever they are, and to help make Aliyah. Israel is the home of every Jew, and Israel is her home. She is proud to be part of the Zionist movement that represents everyone - a wonderful group of Zionists who strive to strengthen the State of Israel.

## ***In Memoriam***

Eulogies in memory of members of the Zionist movement who have passed away.

**Meir Kahlon Z"L** was born in Tripoli, Libya. In 1949, he and his family set sail for Israel on the ship *Komemiyut*, and settled in Ahisamakh (a *moshav*), where he remained throughout his life.

Even as a teenager, Kahlon made social and community action his first priority. In his twenties he studied Business Administration and Economics at the Ruppin College, and went on to dedicate his public life to the advancement of agriculture and the *moshavim* in his region; he did so by founding and managing factories and companies that brought prosperity and job opportunities to the local residents.

The last 15 years of Kahlon's life were dedicated to promoting the welfare of his beloved Libyan Jewish community and he was elected Chairman of the World Organization of Libyan Jews and member of the World Sephardi Federation. Kahlon will be remembered above all for his successful campaign for the recognition of Jews from Arab countries as Holocaust survivors.

**Mr. Mauricio Oberlander Z"L**. From a very young age, Mr. Oberlander was an active member in the Betar youth movement and in the Likud movement in Uruguay. He contributed greatly to Zionist activity and served in many capacities in the Jewish world: head of the Jewish community in Uruguay, Chairman of the Zionist Federation, member of the Jewish Agency's Board of Governors, Chairman of the Likud in Uruguay, Vice Chairman of the World Likud, a delegate to the World Zionist Congress and as a member of the Zionist General Council for many years. He always strove to advance Zionist activity and played an active role in the Zionist institutions, advocating for the state of Israel and the Jews.

Two years ago, he made Aliyah, but shortly afterwards he passed away and is buried in the cemetery in Netanya.

**Jack Kahn Z"L**. Kahn was born in Scotland and supported Israel and Zionism with distinction, including in roles as Vice Chairman of World Mizrahi, Chairman of Mizrahi Canada, Vice Chairman of the Canadian Zionist Federation, founding board member of the Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov of Toronto, member of the Board of Governors of the Jewish Agency for Israel, and member of the Extended Executive of the World Zionist Organization and the Zionist General Council.

Mr. Kahn, was also involved in the conception of the 70 Torah Books project, celebrating Israel's 70th anniversary, he was an incredibly talented leader and devoted most of his life to the State of Israel and the Jewish people.

**Mati Drobless Z"L**. Drobless was born in Warsaw in 1931 and managed to escape the Nazis. After the war he moved to Argentina where he joined the *Betar* youth movement. In 1950 Drobless made Aliyah with a *Garin* that founded Mevo Beitar. He started out his Zionist activities as an officer of *Shilton Betar* and was part of the *Herut*

Movement's Settlement Division. He served as chairman of *Mishkei Herut Betar* and was involved in the establishment of seven new communities in Judea and Samaria. After serving as a Member of Knesset in the 7th and 8th Knesset, he was appointed Head of the Settlement Division of the World Zionist Organization. He served as the Governor of the Jewish Colonial Trust, a board member of JNF, a member of the Yad Vashem Directorate, and Chairman of the Central Zionist Archives. In 2011 he was honored with the lighting of a torch at the Israel Independence Day torch-lighting ceremony. About three days before his passing, a ceremony was held recognizing his activities and immense contribution to the Betar movement and World Likud.

**Rivka Rabinowitz Z"L.** Born in Tel Aviv, Ms. Rabinowitz held numerous public positions. She was a member of Maccabi Tzair & and an athlete in Maccabi Jaffa who participated in the parade & gymnastics display at the Opening Ceremony of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Maccabiah in 1935. She was a member of the organizing committee, active in all 17 Maccabiah games from 1950 through 2013. For nearly seven decades, Rivka Rabinowitz organized numerous public events, relentlessly raised funds, and founded numerous educational & cultural enterprises. She was the founder and chairperson of the Council of Maccabi World Union, as well as its historian, an honorary Life Vice-President, and an active delegate to Zionist Congresses and a member of the Zionist General Council. She was an avid Zionist and one of the 13 founders of Kfar Hamaccabiah.

**Haim Cohen Z"L.** Mr. Cohen was born in 1956 in Casablanca, Morocco, his family made Aliyah when he was five years old and lived in Beit Shemesh. He joined the Betar youth movement, served in the Nahal Brigade, as part of a Betar *Garin* and later became part of Betar's national leadership as well as World Betar leadership. He was a *shaliach* in France on behalf of Betar and the Jewish Agency, served as Vice Chairman of the JNF on behalf of the World Likud and held important positions in the national institutions, including the head of the Department for Diaspora Activities. Mr. Cohen was an enthusiastic Zionist; he loved people and loved his country. He died in December 2018, while serving as a JNF *shaliach* in Paris, and was laid to rest in his hometown of Beit Shemesh.

**Shai Pinto Z"L.** Pinto was a graduate of the Scouts movement. He had a bachelor's degree in economics and management and a master's degree in international marketing and management, and worked as a senior educator at the Jewish Agency and served as the head of the Department of Education's delegation in England for five years. Between the years 2007-2016 Pinto, who was an inspiring leader, served as the World Union of Progressive Judaism's Director of Operations and for many years he represented the Union in the WZO with great dedication. He saw his position in the WUPJ as a quasi-ambassador of Israel-Diaspora relations and Zionism and he sought to strengthen liberal Judaism in the world. Mr. Pinto passed away on February 1, 2019, leaving behind his wife Orly and their two children, Ella and Ido.

The meeting adjourned with a moment of silence in their memory.

### **Plenary No. 9—Adoption of Resolutions**

Plenary chair, **Lea Muehlstein** opened by saying that the French philosopher, Emmanuel Levinas, once characterized traditional Western philosophy as an “allergy to the other”, depicting a hypothetical situation in which an individual from an island experiences his first face-to-face encounter with another person. Levinas argued that Jewish and non-Jewish philosophers provide vastly different descriptions of this encounter with otherness. For non-Jewish philosophers, it is portrayed as a moment of competition, fear, and suspicion, leaving them with no other option than a tendency to erase the other, either by assimilation (making others the same as you), or by alienation (getting rid of the other). Jewish thinkers, such as Buber, Rosenzweig, and Levinas himself, interpreted the same scenario differently: instead of viewing the encounter with the other negatively, they saw a unique opportunity to uncover the divine in the world, as we read in Genesis: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him."

We must remember this during today's voting sessions. As Jews, we are not allergic to the other, but instead are encouraged to see the divine in the other. Maybe this is why Eshkol Nevo included openness to the other as one of his basic values in his book “Neuland.”

### **Discussion and voting on resolution proposals**

#### **Proposed Resolution No. - Constitutional Amendment - Subsidizing Young Delegates Worldwide at Meetings of the Zionist General Council**

**Yaron Shavit** emphasized that the entire committee agreed with the resolution, believing it necessary so that the Zionist federations abroad could hold internal democratic election processes. The committee agreed unanimously regarding subsidies for young people, supporting not only their airfare, but also the costs of their stay.

**The resolution passed.**

#### **Proposed Resolution No. 8—Amendment of Section F (f)**

**One of the speakers**, a member of the Constitution Committee, asked to limit the resolution's wording, as in its current version permits anyone who opposes the actions of the WZO or the Zionist movement to petition against it.

The speaker proposed a more focused statement, but chairwoman **Lea Muehlstein** clarified that at this stage the constitutional amendment wording could not be amended, and that those unsatisfied with the current phrasing wording are welcome to vote against the decision.

**The resolution passed.**

### **Proposed Resolution No. 1 - Increasing the Number of Delegates to the Zionist Congress XXXVIII**

The resolution was put to a referendum by e-mail and received overwhelming support but must be voted on it again as it did not meet the legal quorum.

**Yaron Shavit**, chairman of the Mandates Committee, raised a general argument unrelated to factional issues, explaining that if the number of congressional delegates will not be increased to 525, it would be impossible to give each federation the number of seats guaranteed and reserved for it (approximately 75% of the last three congresses). Mr. Shavit demonstrated this was simple mathematics with a brief presentation; at present the committee has 165 delegates, meaning there is a shortage of 17 required for preserving the situation of the 37<sup>th</sup> Congress. Therefore, the actual number of delegates in the next Congress will be identical to the number that the rest of the world had in the previous Congress, plus seats reserved for Germany and the Netherlands, which did not have delegates in the last Congress. Considering this, if we do not increase the delegate number by 5%, we will be unable to grant the entire number of delegates, not even those that have a reserved number.

Mr. Shavit also addressed a suggestion for another amendment, and said that if we were to add additional delegates to one of the federations according to the calculations made following the previous constitutional amendments, we must think from where those delegates can be drawn. Delegate numbers is ultimately a zero-sum game: anyone who wishes to increase the number of delegates of one federation, beyond the calculations already made based on statistics and guidelines, must also be able to say that their federation is willing to donate some seats in order to restore justice, which is very nice.

The solution, in his opinion, could be accomplished by the Zionist Supreme Court, as it has the authority to grant five additional seats. Mr. Shavit said he believed that if there is a broad appeal to the Zionist Supreme Court, calling for Argentina to be granted more delegates for reasons of justice, the Court would respond

positively, but he cannot guarantee this. The 25 seats will be divided in the following manner—nine to Israel, eight to the US, and eight divided between the rest of the world, meaning 165 in total.

**The resolution passed.**

### **Proposed Resolution No. 6 - Determination of the Number of Delegates for Argentina**

**Silvio Joskowitz** claimed that in the previous Zionist General Council several flawed resolutions were passed that harmed Argentina's representation. Among the constitutional amendments passed in the last Council was the decision that delegate numbers will be calculated according to the average of three past congresses, then reduced by 25%, earmarked for future review after a decision is made regarding the federations—whether to add, subtract, or keep delegate numbers unchanged. This is the prerogative of the Mandates Committee, but these resolutions, apparently mistakenly passed, only allow Argentina in the next Congress a maximum of 12 delegates. The current constitutional provisions are therefore harmful to Argentina's representation, the seventh largest Jewish community in the world, and for the sake of justice this provision should be changed.

To illustrate the injustice done to Argentina, Mr. Joskowitz cited the Netherlands, stressing that he very much wanted the Netherlands to receive appropriate representation, but the Zionist Court decreed that the Netherlands would not receive representation in the current Congress. In view of this, when calculating the average of the last three congresses to determine its delegate number, it was decided not to include the last congress, and instead the average included the three congresses that preceded it. Thus, despite the court's decision, the Netherlands received three representatives. A similar thing happened with Germany: the average calculation was determined according to three congresses prior to the last, and Germany received five representatives.

Mr. Joskowitz's proposal, he claimed, is intended to correct the mistake made in the constitutional amendment, providing Argentina, the seventh largest Jewish community, to be represented by 18 seats. This harms no faction or organization present, but it is an opportunity to redress the injustice done to the Zionist Federation of Argentina. Mr. Joskowitz concluded with a request to support the resolution, thus restoring justice to the Argentine Federation.

**Alex Selsky** sought to correct Silvio's claim. According to him, no mistake was made regarding Argentina; these were simply amendments made by a Court decision. If we give back to Argentina the seats removed by the Court, it will hurt our ability to give more mandates (delegates) to underrepresented communities, such as Canada, Germany, and former Soviet Union communities. Argentina was punished by the Court, and Mr. Selsky sees no logical or justifiable reason to give them back the seats that were taken away. True justice, he

believes, means giving more representation to the communities of the former Soviet Union, where there are many more Jews, Zionist activity, and Aliyah, but far fewer seats. Mr. Selsky added that Silvio has only his seats in Argentina, and if the motive for his proposal is political then that would entail a different amendment.

Mr. Selsky further stated that he and his faction also have political interests, because they represent communities in Canada, Germany, Australia, Russia, the Ukraine and the US, but the huge communities in these countries have been underrepresented, so they would ask to vote against the correction for Argentina, because they don't deserve it and those who deserve it will be hurt by this correction. More than that, as argued by Yaron Shavit, Mandate Committee chair, passing this amendment will hurt our ability to give to all these communities more seats, which is why we just increased the overall number of seats. In summary, he asks to vote against for the sake of justice.

Secretary of the World Union of Meretz, **Dario Teitelbaum**, argued that the court's decision to remove reduce the number of delegates Argentina has at the last congress was justified because they did not behave as expected of a Zionist federation. Nevertheless, the calculation of average number of delegates did create a problem, as Argentina was in fact punished twice, once (justifiably) when its number of delegates was reduced, and then again due to the final number taken into account.

Mr. Teitelbaum shared that he himself was of Belarusian descent, his family came from Grodno, but had been in Argentina for three generations before coming to Israel, and he believes that the proposed amendment for Argentina does not harm anyone else, and certainly does not undermine the purity of elections in certain countries. Therefore, he asked those voting to vote in favor of the amendment. While there may still be arguments about the number of added delegates provided, but in principle the matter should be amended. Voting in favor means having another tool at our disposal, one that is not binding and may not even be used, if the it is proven impossible that these mandates can be taken from somewhere else, but this amendment still constitutes a corrective measure for a matter of technicality—not an issue of justice.

**Mauricio Balter**, *Masorti Olami* Executive Director, affirmed that the current situation is indeed problematic. While Argentina is facing a painful problem, it cannot be remedied by punishing others. The movement supports returning seats to Argentina, but not by means of drawing them from federations around the world, many of which deserve to increase their delegate number. Therefore, *Masorti Olami* members will vote against the proposal, and concurrently support Mr. Joskowitz's proposed appeal to the Court, seeking to increase the total number of seats.

**Yehiel Wasserman** said that whether Argentina was wronged or not, or the Court's decision just or not, the Jewish community in Argentina is the seventh largest in the world and is currently undergoing difficult

economic and political times. The Argentine community is now reorganizing, and the federation is initiating actions on the matter. As Dario Teitelbaum said, the Argentine federation did act unfairly, not holding elections and not preparing, but punishing them by reducing eight of the 18 seats they deserve is unjustified and wrongs them. If we give them back 8 seats, it will not harm the Netherlands or Germany, so he believes the matter should be considered on its own merits, and in this case the seats should be returned to Argentina.

**The resolution passed.**

### **Proposed Resolution No. 5 - Israel's Declaration of Independence and the Nation-State Law**

**Yaron Shavit** opened by saying that we are aware that proposed resolutions regarding the Declaration of Independence and the Nation-State Law have provoked intense controversy among members of the Zionist General Council. To our great regret, we have reached a point of arguing about some matters that should be taken for granted. The nationality of the Jewish people was very clearly defined in Israel's Declaration of Independence, but 70 years after the establishment of the State of Israel, we found it necessary to strengthen and renew the status of the Declaration of Independence in the Zionist movement, and as part of its educational framework and activities, and that is the reason why a resolution on this matter was submitted.

Last year's Zionist General Council was held at a time when the Nation-State Law provoked heated debates in Israel, with some of its detractors specifically citing the Declaration of Independence. This situation prompted Constitution Committee members to ask Mr. Shavit to delay the discussion on the Declaration. The timing was inappropriate, as raising the Declaration for discussion seemed an attempt to oppose the Nation-State Law. The issue was postponed in the hope that the relevant proposal would be raised in the following General Council, i.e. this one. This is the time to debate the matter. Mr. Shavit concluded that, to his delight, there is currently a proposal to reach an agreement, whereby proposed Constitutional Amendment No. 5 is withdrawn, with current voting focused only on Resolution No. 3, and concurrently request to withdraw other proposals submitted by *Likud*.

**Yaakov Hagoel** agreed with Yaron Shavit's statement. These difficult times, and the unfortunate state of affairs of an ongoing election campaign with the possibility of third elections, make the need for unity an imperative, as well as the desire to further strengthen the Zionist leadership's position, working to bring together as many diverse people under the fold of the Zionist movement. Therefore, the *Likud* withdraws Resolutions No. 2 and No. 4 regarding the Nation-State Law. However, *Likud* members reserve the right to raise the issue in the upcoming Zionist Congress, the true venue for such weighty matters. The *Likud* movement unquestionably supports a proposal to ratify the all-important Declaration of Independence, also adopted 71 years ago by the

WZO. Personally, Mr. Hagoel does not think it is necessary to approve the Declaration, but if the issue is discussed, *Likud* members will support it.

**The proposal was withdrawn and removed from the agenda.**

**Additionally, proposed Resolutions No. 2 and No. 4 were withdrawn and removed from the agenda.**

### **Proposed Resolution 3 - Declaration of Independence and the Nation-State Law**

**Gael Greenwald** began by saying that it is obvious that everyone in attendance supports the proposed resolution, since we are all in favor of the Declaration of Independence. However, this proposal was brought up now for a very specific reason: as a countermeasure to those proposing that the Nation-State Law is unnecessary since “a decision on the Declaration of Independence has already been made.” While this makes sense, the debate remains as to whether we are in favor of the Nation-State Law, or whether we are of the opinion that this law is unneeded and the Declaration suffices. When voting now in favor of the Declaration, agreed on by all, we are in fact saying that we are aware that the proposal in support of it has been raised at this specific time due to the Nation-State Law. Accordingly, Mr. Greenwald suggested removing the issue from the agenda, despite being aware this may be risky. Since it is clear that we are in favor of the Declaration of Independence, the issue can be removed from the agenda as it is self-evident. Supporting the proposed resolution for the Declaration of Independence means we may not support the Nation-State Law. Therefore, for the sake of unity, he believes the Declaration of Independence resolution proposal should be removed, as was decided regarding the Nation-State Law.

In response, **Yaron Shavit** claimed that **Mr. Greenwald** did not read the specific section. Mr. Greenwald argued that what was being done now was illogical and did not produce a compromise, adding that he did not want to support a statement saying: “We support the Declaration of Independence and oppose the Nation-State Law”. In response to one of the speakers, who commented that this sentiment was not reflected in the written statement, Mr. Greenwald replied that although things are not explicitly written, it is implied. An argument on voting for the Declaration of Independence can be avoided as everyone supports it. But one should keep in mind that the Declaration debate arose following the Nation-State Law. Therefore, he suggested that the Nation-State Law not be discussed, and that the Declaration of Independence also not be discussed, but rather treat the support for it as taken for granted.

**Alex Selsky** agreed with Gael Greenwald's remarks. According to him, both the Declaration of Independence and the Nation-State Law should either be supported, or alternatively both removed from the agenda. The

current situation has become absurd, in which there may not be a vote supporting the Declaration of Independence due to the withdrawn proposal supporting the Nation-State Law. The State of Israel is Jewish and democratic; these two elements stand at the core of Israel's identity. According to Yigal Bibi, the Declaration does not explicitly include the term "democratic," even though its stated principles are inherently democratic. The Nation-State Law, in Mr. Selsky's opinion, reinforces the Declaration and strengthens Israel's status as the nation state of the Jewish people, and therefore the vote should address both or alternatively both should be removed from the agenda.

**Yizhar Hess** argued that while compromise is never easy, the current General Council can be concluded in a tone of unity as the two main factions decided to cooperate, each withdrawing proposals equally unacceptable to the other and coming together to put forward a proposal everyone could accept. No one thinks that one side does not believe in democracy, and that the other side does not believe that Israel is the nation state of the Jewish people. In his opinion, the proposed resolutions, as they are currently worded, are acceptable to the majority and can be a peaceful and appropriate end to the meeting.

**Alex Selsky** commented that he now understands this proposal was submitted by the Constitution Committee. As a committee member, he can raise the issue and request a vote on the Nation-State Law.

**Yaron Shavit** explained this was not the case; the proposal was submitted as a joint faction proposal.

**Alex Selsky** made an ironic remark about the unity in the plenum, as neither the right nor the left allowed him to raise the issue for a vote.

**The resolution passed.**

**Neria Meir** commented that he was pleased they had reached a decision that reaffirms the Land of Israel as the historical right of the Jewish people. It marks a sweeping recognition that the Land of Israel belongs only to the Jewish people, as this is the intent of the Declaration of Independence.

**Chairwoman Lea Muehlstein** then moved on to discuss general proposals submitted through the committees.

#### Committee No. 4: Education Committee

#### Proposed Resolution No. 4.1 - Education towards the Values Enshrined in the Declaration of Independence

**Dror Morag** explained that the proposal addresses the teaching of materials related to the Declaration of Independence in the education system; the Department of Education and the Department of Diaspora Affairs

will be responsible for development of educational materials. Currently, the only WZO department actively promoting this matter was his own, the Department of Zionist Enterprises, designing study content on the Declaration for use in schools. Therefore, the proposal is problematic, opening the door for other departments to fill a role his department is already executing. Mr. Morag stated that he would be happy for as many departments as possible to deal with this issue, but for the record it should be noted that the matter is already being addressed. Also, should the resolution pass, matters of daily management must also be discussed, as the resolution will not lead to a cessation of the activities on that matter, on the contrary, it will increase activities to promote the subject with more departments working together.

**The resolution passed.**

**Proposed Resolution 4.2 - Initiating and Funding of Project Initiatives to Foster Education for Tolerance and Equality**

**The resolution passed.**

**Proposed Resolution 4.3 - Ethiopian Jewish community**

**Dror Morag** expressed his hope that this resolution be supported and stressed the importance of the issue. These past three years, the department he heads has been involved in several activities among the Ethiopian community—leadership courses, delegations of opinion leaders and youth to Ethiopia, and more. The Ethiopian community currently receives insufficient support and needs to be significantly bolstered, and it is vital to increase activities not only promoting Aliyah of Ethiopian Jews but especially for Israel's Ethiopian community. Therefore, in addition to current activities, it is important to formally declare our involvement on this undeniably important subject. This is a public proclamation, and therefore, in Mr. Morag's opinion, one of the most important decisions that can be conveyed to the public in Israel today.

**Neria Meir** agreed that this is an important proposal. We all support strengthening the Ethiopian community, but the current wording of the resolution is problematic: the first sentence includes a definition of Ethiopians as "possible victims of personal and institutional racism in Israeli society." Mr. Meir argued that there is no institutional racism in Israel, and as the General Council we must be careful not to slander the State of Israel and Israeli society. In response to one of the speakers, who argued that one should face reality, Mr. Meir reiterated that there is no institutional racism. Anarchist voices argue that Israeli society is racist, but we must be wary of such statements. Hence, he asks that the term "institutional racism" be stricken so that everyone could support this important decision.

**Dror Morag** claimed in response that Neriya Meir missed a few key points: first, the wording cannot be changed at this time. Second, the vote is on the resolution itself, not its articles (opening with “whereas”). Therefore, one can vote for the resolution itself, even if one does not agree with all resolution articles. In response, **Neria Meir** proposed voting separately on the resolution statement and on its specific articles (opening with “whereas”). **Dror Morag** suggested omitting the words “personal” and “institutional”, leaving “racism” without modifiers, but one speaker commented this was not possible, and chairwoman **Lea Muehlstein** suggested suspending the proposal for the time being until the matter could be resolved.

**Yizhar Hess** commented that while they debated whether or not there was racism towards Ethiopian Jews in Israeli society, it is noteworthy that in this hall, at that moment, there was not a single Ethiopian Jew present representing any faction or party, and one speaker responded that there were also no Georgian Jews .

**Danny Lamm**, chairman of the committee that discussed the resolution, stressed its importance, and noted the word “institutional” also provoked heated debate in the committee discussion. Therefore, should the session chair allow altering the wording at this stage, the current discussion could focus on what final wording should be applied. If corrections are not possible, he proposes returning the matter for committee review of the final draft. **Chairwoman Lea Muehlstein** announced that the committee already had an opportunity to amend the proposed resolution, so we will vote on it in its current draft. However, she would allow separate voting on the first article (beginning with “whereas”).

**The vote on the first paragraph was tied (59 for, 59 against, two abstentions), so the paragraph was not passed.**

**The vote on the rest of the resolution passed.**

#### **Proposed Resolution 4.4 - The Gay Community**

**Yaakov Hagoel** asked to vote against the proposal. He remarked that WZO departments are not divided into sectors or ethnic groups. We are all Jews and must continue to respect all Zionists in their chosen path. As the WZO, we must work for Zionism together.

**Yizhar Hess** claimed that his friends from the right were making a severe mistake. One of the known tactics to further weaken an already vulnerable population is to tell them that establishing a unit, department or authority dedicated to their aid signified segregation. By that logic, the Authority for the Advancement of the

Status of Women is redundant because it segregates women, and in fact any unit in a local authority that deals with a weakened population, like the Ethiopian community, creates segregation. He argued that weakened populations need special professionals to deal with their needs, and when the WZO engages in activities for underprivileged populations, it must enlist the help of experienced professionals with knowledge of that population. The argument that this is a segregation, in his opinion, is a demagogical claim, and he emphasized that this is an extremely important, serious, and significant decision.

**The resolution passed.**

#### **Proposed resolution 4.5 - Visits to Jewish Heritage Sites**

**The resolution passed.**

#### **Proposed Resolution 4.6 - Implementation of an Educational Program on the Subject of Jerusalem**

**Gael Greenwald** requested permission to address the resolution as it focuses on the centrality of Jerusalem, although he was not involved in debating or drafting it. Mr. Greenwald opened by stating he doubted there were any Jews who do not see Jerusalem as the center of Jewish life, the embodiment of our dreams and prayers, the city symbolizing all our hopes, the place we prayed for and dreamed of in the years of exile. The proposal before us calls on the Education Ministry to formulate programs dealing with the importance of Jerusalem and teaching about the city. Mr. Greenwald expressed his support for the proposal and called on all members to vote in favor. Despite various disagreements, he hopes there is no dispute about the centrality of Jerusalem, and that all will vote in favor.

**Dario Teitelbaum** pointed out the prevalence of a certain attitude in the organization, whereby “if you are unlike me, you do not belong.” This approach is completely contrary to the essence of the Zionist movement, designed to serve as a Zionist home for all Zionist perspectives. The position of “those unlike me do not belong, and perhaps should go away entirely” contradicts the spirit of a collective movement. This is a trend we should be wary of, one that may rear its head in future debates on other proposed resolutions.

Regarding Jerusalem, Mr. Teitelbaum affirmed the view that all consider it the beating heart of the Jewish people, but the current proposed resolution relates specifically to the controversial issue of Jerusalem’s unification. He argued that Jerusalem, in practice, was not unified, and therefore sought to remove the word “unification” from the proposal so that he could support it without reservation.

**Yaron Shavit** noted he was aware that proposals could not be amended, and therefore his faction had decided to allow its members to vote freely, as each felt differently about the matter. Mr. Shavit reminded everyone that the goal was to remain united in the Zionist movement, and therefore all should avoid provocative statements. Cynical, aggressive, or provocative statements would be unhelpful, and may cause some to change their vote as a countermeasure. We must think carefully about how we speak to one another even when there are disagreements, aware of our responsibility to remain united.

Furthermore, he remarked that none of those sitting in the hall were imbued with the authority to determine someone else's level of Zionism, and he suggested that no one should take that liberty. If they do, they will find themselves in a very small and limited group, which is a shame, because we want to remain a large and unified movement.

**Yechiel Wasserman** shared that 50 years ago he had the privilege of returning to the Old City with a small group of young men to establish a *yeshivat hesder* (Yeshivat Hakotel). He studied there for six years, including IDF service where he and his fellow yeshiva members fought in all of Israel's wars. Since that time, Jerusalem, in practice, was unified. Rabbi Wasserman stated that while he understood the differing opinions on the subject, it is noteworthy that the Zionist General Council adopted the Jerusalem Plan 50 years after the liberation and unification of the city. Not incidentally, the plan was named for the city, rather than the "Independence Plan" or the "State of Israel Plan," and so forth. It was named for the city because Jerusalem serves as a symbol, and everyone is expected to agree on and support the plan as written, as Jerusalem is both de facto and de jure unified. Rabbi Wasserman expressed his hopes and prayers that the situation will endure and suggested that the decision on the issue be made unanimously. The call for support of the Jerusalem Plan should, in his opinion, be heard from the Zionist assembly held in Be'er Sheva.

**The resolution passed.**

**Proposed Resolution 4.7 - Implementation of an Educational Program on the Subject of the San Remo Conference**

**The resolution passed.**

**Committee No. 2 - Aliyah Promotion**

**Proposed Resolution 2.1 - Encouraging Aliyah from France**

Plenary chair **Lea Muehlstein** explained that the proposed resolution was passed in the committee, so the current vote will focus on the resolution itself and not address the votum separatum raised in the matter. Her remarks were met with puzzlement and required clarification.

**Salomon Vas Dias**, who chaired the committee that discussed the proposal, explained that under normal circumstances resolutions are not amended in a way that changes the author's intent. In this case, the author chose not to withdraw the resolution. Thus, the current vote is on the amended version, one vastly different from the original. The proposal was therefore not erased from the agenda, and a votum separatum situation applies.

Chairwoman **Lea Muehlstein** clarified that the proposal was properly amended and passed in the committee, but **Fern Bernice**, legal counsel to the WZO, commented that it was in fact a new resolution that contradicts the original proposal's intention. Although the current draft was passed in committee, the question of legality has been raised: Is it possible to legally change substance and intent of proposed resolutions and allow committees to introduce what are, in essence, new proposals despite the requirement that all proposals must be submitted at least 60 days prior to voting. In the current vote, the committee completely altered the proposed resolution and has brought forth a new resolution that does not meet the 60-day requirement. Attorney Bernice argued that this may be a violation of the rules, and the legality of the matter should be reviewed.

**The submitted votum separatum was dropped, and the original resolution passed.**

### **Proposed Resolution 2.2 - Concessions for Olim Finding Themselves at a Disadvantage in the Israeli Labor Market**

**The resolution passed unanimously.**

### **Proposed Resolution 2.3 - Resolution to Prioritize Aliyah Promotion from Endangered Jewish Communities**

**The resolution passed.**

### **Committee No. 5 - Settlement Committee**

#### **Proposed Resolution 5.1 - The Settlement Division**

**The resolution passed.**

### **Proposed Resolution 5.2 - Aliyah and Settlement**

**Dario Teitelbaum** said he was pleased that the resolution had been passed in the committee. The committee managed to put aside its disputes, and aided by the wisdom of Gael Greenwald, managed to reach an agreement whereby everyone would collectively receive orderly reports on activities. Mr. Teitelbaum also expressed his regret that the other institutions do not adhere to regular reporting and are disorderly in their conduct. Also, he congratulated the Settlement Division on its activities in the Gaza envelope communities. As a resident of the area, whose home is only seven kilometers from Gvulot, he wanted to personally thank the Division for its great contribution to the lives of the local residents.

**The resolution passed.**

### **Proposed Resolution 5.3 - Israeli Sovereignty in the Jordan Valley**

**Neria Meir** expressed his support for the proposal, but noted that Resolution 5.2, which had just been adopted, already declared support for strengthening settlement throughout the State of Israel, so that a separate decision on strengthening settlements in Judea, Samaria, and the Jordan Valley is unnecessary and should be withdrawn.

**Gael Greenwald** said that in the title of the proposal there was a mistake as it should only refer to the Jordan Valley, and not to Judea and Samaria. Mr. Greenwald explained that the proposal deals with Israeli sovereignty in the Jordan Valley (Israel's eastern border), an area within Israeli consensus and where most localities were established by the Labor Party (as we remember from the "Allon Plan"). Another proposal was brought before the committee, but the committee members agreed to deal solely with the Jordan Valley. General Council members, he remarked, like many Knesset members and ministers from various political parties in the Knesset have agreed that Israeli sovereignty should be applied to the Jordan Valley. Therefore, this resolution should be passed, constituting a positive step for the State of Israel, and helping the pioneering settlers of the Jordan Valley, one of the most challenging places in the country in terms of both climate and employment.

Chairwoman **Lea Muehlstein** announced that the title of the resolution would change: the reference to Judea and Samaria was a mistake, and therefore "Judea and Samaria" should be deleted from the Hebrew title.

**The resolution passed.**

### **Proposed Resolution 5.4 - Encouraging Construction Throughout the Land of Israel**

**The resolution was not passed.**

### **Committee 3 - Israel and the Diaspora**

#### **Proposed Resolution 3.1 - Civil Society organizations**

**The resolution passed.**

#### **Proposed Resolution 3.2 - Solidarity of the Zionist Movement with Diaspora Jewry**

**The resolution passed unanimously.**

#### **Proposed Resolution 3.3 - Israel and the Diaspora**

**The resolution passed.**

#### **Proposed Resolution 3.4 - Use of the Proper Name "Judea and Samaria"**

**Gael Greenwald** began by saying this was a very interesting proposal, requesting that National Institutions and the WZO organizations henceforth designate the territories of Judea and Samaria by that name, and not as the "West Bank." He added that there is no dispute that the name "Judea and Samaria" is the real name of those territories. There is disagreement about the future of these territories, but we can all agree on their names, Judea, and Samaria, as they are called in the Bible. Mr. Greenwald stressed that the proposal does not address the future of Judea and Samaria but only the terminology describing these areas, so he believes it would be easy to agree on this resolution. The late Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, for example, ruled that in certain circumstances some of the territories could be returned, but called them Judea and Samaria.

**The resolution passed.**

#### **Proposed Resolution 3.6 - "Buy Israel" Diaspora Programs**

**The resolution passed.**

#### **Proposed Resolution 3.7 - Condemnation of UNESCO**

**The resolution passed.**

Another discussion took place on **Proposed Resolution 2.1 - Encouragement of Aliyah from France**

Prior to discussing the proposal, it was first clarified that voting on it would not be straightforward. After consulting with legal counsel and with the consent of the *Likud* faction, it was decided that the vote would be held as a vote of one resolution against the other. Meaning, instead of voting for or against each resolution in turn, members would first vote on the proposal passed in committee or for a *votum separatum*, and only then vote which of the two options was accepted (the original resolution or the *votum separatum*).

**Nili Naouri** described the current difficulties of the Jews of France. In recent years, 14 Jews have been targeted and murdered in France, and the situation continues to deteriorate. Antisemitism in France is on the rise, with an increase of 94% in number of ant-Semitic incidents. In response, France retains its traditional stance, refusing to protect its Jewish citizens. The Jews of France are very aware of the situation, understanding there is no future for them in France, which explains why in 2015 over 8,000 French Jews made Aliyah. However, the last two years show a decrease in the number of *olim* from France. In 2018, only 2,500 French Jews made Aliyah, and this year the number is even smaller. Why? Ms. Naouri explained that this is caused by negative feedback from those who made Aliyah, with 10% of new *olim* in recent years returning to France due to absorption and integration difficulties, and their reports to community members in France that they should not opt for Aliyah. Those returning to France emphasize the various factors that make it so difficult to get settled in Israel. Israel does not recognize diplomas of French *olim*, they struggle to earn a living and find employment, and consequently struggle to settle their children, who feel lost in the new reality. Older *olim* also have difficulties becoming situated, so Jews returning to France encourage others not to make Aliyah. This long list of obstacles requires that we adopt an emergency plan to help French Jews in their absorption in Israel and improve the process. This plan, Ms. Naouri stressed, must be specifically tailored to this target population. Failing to establish this plan would mean missing a historic opportunity, because French Jews now want to leave France. The question is where they choose to go, and the Zionist movement must make the decision to encourage them to come to Israel.

Ms. Naouri then addressed the proposal itself, explaining that during committee discussions the Reform Movement sought to amend the proposal, in essence altering its substance, and focusing on removing barriers related to the recognition of Reform conversions. This issue is not at all relevant to French Jews, and an absurd situation has arisen whereby the title: “Encouragement of Aliyah from France” bears no relevance to the substance of the proposal as passed in the committee. Ms. Naouri added that there are disparities and disagreements between the various factions, but we must strive to find common ground. We all share a Zionist ideal of encouraging Aliyah of Jews to Israel, and Ms. Naouri asked those present to support the original resolution wording, stating that: “The Zionist General Council asks the Israeli Government, the World Zionist

Organization, Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael (JNF) and all the national institutions to adopt an emergency plan for the Aliyah of the Jews of France to Israel”.

**Yaron Shavit** noted that Resolution 2.2, passed earlier, addressed the difficulties related to the recognition of diplomas of new *olim* and called for the removal of these barriers and the recognition of their professional credentials. Resolution 2.3, which recognizes the need to encourage endangered Jewish communities to make Aliyah, was also passed. In this context, Mr. Shavit shared that his family was currently hosting a young woman attending her first General Council, she was a French "MASA" participant and enlisted to military service as a lone soldier, and his family had “adopted” her to their household. Her father is a Jew, a member of the Orthodox community, and her mother underwent Reform conversion. When she arrived in Israel, she had to cope with the difficulties of recognizing Reform conversion; the fact that she is the daughter of a mother who converted in this way causes her many difficulties in the army and with official institutions. Mr. Shavit therefore argued that the WZO should call for removing all barriers, including those associated with non-Orthodox conversions. In response to his remarks, **Nili Naouri** claimed that this was one case out of a community of 500,000 people.

**Neria Meir** stated that while the issue of conversion is important and worthy of discussion, it is unfair in the context of the current proposed resolution. The proposal addresses the need to establish an emergency plan for the Jews of France; attempts to include Reform conversion in this complex issue may provoke controversy, and the issue of conversion deserves a separate discussion.

In contrast, **Yizhar Hess** argued that the proposal should address all elements that create obstacles to Aliyah and absorption, and it is unfair to address some points while ignoring others. He added that among the young people at the conference there are those who were not born to a Jewish mother but converted to Judaism in one of the Reform communities, which may make Aliyah difficult as they may find their Judaism unrecognized and even be forbidden to marry. Mr. Hess added that he is acquainted with the Reform communities in France and knows that the issue of conversion raises many questions regarding Aliyah, and therefore it is important to address the matter. Recognition of conversion is as important as recognition of diplomas and professional accreditation. Therefore, the amended resolution should be supported, including the range of obstacles facing *olim*, and Mr. Hess called on the factions to at least allow freedom of vote.

In response, **Nili Naouri** called for adopting a general proposal, one focused on providing an emergency plan for all French Jews. If some of the factions are troubled by the Reform conversion issue, they can argue the case but not as part of the current proposal. A general plan for the whole French Jewish community, in her opinion, is more important than any specific problem, so she believes people should vote in favor of the original wording, which unites them all.

**Danny Lamm**, chairman of the Jewish Agency's Aliyah Committee, announced that he had checked with his office on policy regarding *olim* who converted in non-Orthodox conversions, and was told that this did not prevent them from making Aliyah. Chair **Lea Muehlstein** stated that Mr. Lamm's remark could not be considered a point of order, as determined by the legal counsel, and therefore asked members to vote either for the resolution passed in committee or for the votum separatum.

**The proposed resolution passed in the committee was adopted by a majority of 66 votes, against 44 votes in favor of the votum separatum.**

At the end of the proposal vote, as the votum separatum was not passed, **Nili Naouri** remarked that the voters were probably afraid of the Aliyah of French Jews, but they would nevertheless make Aliyah and strengthen Judaism in Israel.

#### Committee 1 - Antisemitism and Delegitimization

##### Proposed Resolution 1.1 - Condemnation of Declarations and Accusations against Jews

The resolution passed.

##### Proposed Resolution 1.2 - Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions and the Jerusalem Program

The resolution passed.

Proposals No. 1.3, 1.4, and 1.6 were removed from the agenda and will be submitted to Congress.

Proposals No. 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, and 1.11 were also removed and will be submitted next time.

##### Proposed Resolution 1.5 - Condemnation of Palestinian Authority/PLO Payments to Terrorists to Murder Jews ,and Urging Urgent Remedial Action

The resolution passed.

##### Proposed Resolution 1.7 - Urging Universities to Combat BDS and Demonization of the State of Israel

**The resolution passed.**

**One of the speakers** raised a motion for the agenda and asked that all participants be allowed to speak during the session. He claimed that participants, many having traveled a great distance, were disappointed to find that the right to speak was reserved for Executive members, and asked that next time everyone attending would be given the floor and not just listen and vote.

**Plenum No. 10 - Closing Plenum**

**Dmitry Shiglik** opened by stating that he represents the American Forum for Israel, which includes people from various groups and sectors— both secular and Orthodox, left and right, supporters and opposers of Donald Trump. But they all stand united in their support of the State of Israel and work to strengthen Israel. Mr. Shiglik said that people have contacted him in view of the dispute over Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria, claiming they could not understand how people who define themselves as Zionists essentially act against Israel. And so, he felt it necessary to convey an important message: unite together for Israel. Antisemitism is on the rise across the world, and Mr. Shiglik calls on everyone to be united for Israel and to forget about human rights, because that is not our current problem. The main issue for us is to strengthen the State of Israel.

**Helena Glaser** summarized the three days in session as interesting and challenging, requiring all to consider the fascinating lectures, process the information, and think about how change can really be brought about, and how young people can be brought closer to the Zionist movement. Ms. Glaser said that she feels that now, following these three days, we have means at our disposal, we have something to give, and we have a wonderful story that needs to be passed on. The tour, in the Gaza envelope which ended with a meeting in the Gaza Division, was riveting, and gave another boost to our love for the people of Israel, the Land of Israel, and especially the residents living in the Gaza envelope and the IDF.

Ms. Glaser concluded by thanking everyone who took part in the organization of the General Council session, whether in providing ideas, assisting various external parties, or organizationally and logistically. Ms. Glaser thanked the head of the Settlement Division, Gael Greenwald and his hard-working staff, to Executive member Marina Koritny who helped coordinate with the Be'er Sheva Municipality, to Reuven Shalom in the Constitution Committee, all committee members, and legal counsel, Adv. Fern Bernice. She thanked all the session's staff for their dedicated work, despite the difficulties and challenges we faced. Special thanks were extended to Anna Givati, who showed remarkable determination and leadership. Finally, Ms. Glaser thanked

WZO Executive Chairman, Avraham Duvdevani, for his ideas, support, for the confidence and freedom he encourages, and wished for a wonderful Congress next year.

Chairman of the Executive, **Avraham Duvdevani**, added his gratitude and congratulations, adding that next time we will still meet as the General Council, but only in the next Congress, so in fact this was their last working meeting as the General Council. This meeting will always be particularly memorable as it was held in Be'er Sheva, a venue that was originally a constraint but led to something special: marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Be'er Sheva, and the subsequent meetings and tours in the Negev and Gaza envelope. Finally, he said that in the coming year special efforts will be made to promote all our areas of activities and truly improve them, reaching the next Congress knowing we have all done our best and will go on to initiate positive changes. Mr. Duvdevani expressed his hope that the General Council conference has charged participants with the energy they need to represent communities and movements, rekindling their spirit as they continue to create change wherever they operate. In conclusion, he sincerely thanked Chairwoman Helena Glaser, who organized the session and led the presidency, the joint committee, the Constitution Committee, and the General Council.

**After singing the national anthem, the session of the Zionist General Council was concluded.**

## Zionist General Council Participants 2019

### Zionist Executive

Avraham Duvdevani, Chairman

Alex Selsky	David Ben Naeh	David Teietelbaum
Debbie Ben Ami	Dror Morag	Ellen Hershkin
Esther Mor	Eyal Ronder	Gael Greenwald
Gilad Kariv	Gusti Yehoshua Braverman	Jacques Kupfer
Jesse Sultanik	Marina Rozenberg Koritny	Masha Lubelsky
Mauricio Balter	Nerya Meir	Sergio Edelstein
Shimon Ohayon	Silvio Joskowicz	Yaakov Hagoel
Yaron Shavit	Yehiel Wasserman	Yizhar Hess

### Honorary Fellows

Dalya Levy	Joseph Rosenfield	Yigal Tzahor
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## Zionist General Council Members with Voting Rights

### Arzenu

Bennett Miller	<b>Cassandra Barrett</b>	<b>Daniel Weiss Vilhordo</b>
Deborah Blausten	<b>Dekel Houmash</b>	Erika Siegfried-Tompson
<b>Jack Luxemburg</b>	<b>Joshua Weinberg</b>	Lea Anna Muehlstein
Marla Gamoran	<b>Miriam Pearlman</b>	Reeva Forman
<b>Sandra Moreira</b>	<b>Shoshana Dweck</b>	Stephen Steve Denenberg
Zoe Dressner		

**B'nai B'rith**

Alan Schneider

Alon Vita

Baruch Levy

Batsheva Schwartz

Hadas Hacoheh

Ira Bartfield

Iris Hacoheh

Sani Salcum

**Confederation**

Friedrich Thul

Gabriel Schnitman

Jim Schiller

Salomon Louis Vas Dias

**Hadassh**

Elizabeth Alpert

Esther Serok

Marlene Edith Post

Rhoda Smolow

Judy Shereck

**Hanoar Hatzioni**

Gavin Rosehill

Henry Akerman Roterman

**Herut**

Avraham Lobaton

Gaston Binyamin Sayada

**Kadima-Over the Rainbow**

Absent from the meetings

**Lavi Olami**

Ilan Roth

Nachi Eyal

**Maccabi Olami**

Carlos Alberto Tapiero

**Marcelo Burcatovsky****Rodney Sanders**

Stella Syrkin

**Masorti Olami****Adam Schonberger**

Alan Silberman

**Magali Desse**

Mary H. Sanders

**Mercaz Olami**

Alan Silverstein

**Alex Senderowitsch**

Elias Garzon

Janet Tobin

Marilyn Gail Lishnoff Wind

**Nola Lazar**

Phil Scheim

**Sandy Renee Starkman**

Vernon Howard Kurtz

**Na'amat****Sandi Siegel**

Hagit Pe'er

**Shirli Shavit****Ohavey Zion****Absent from the meetings****The Student Delegation**

Avigayil Benshtein

**Yoni Mann****The Zionist Council in Israel**

Yigal Bibi

Yossi Tzadok

**Wizo**

Helena Glaser

**World Emunah**

Carole Golding Tammy Klausner

**World Israel Beytenu Movement**

Dmitry Shiglik Ksenia Dobron **Michael Yadov**

**Olga Fort** Mikhail Yudanin

**World Likud**

Danny Lew **Dor Harlap** **Elizabeth Berney**

**Felicia** Moualem Hernan Felman **Jonathan Kowensky**

**Kevin Ross** **Lior Haimovitch** Mati Itzhak

Nili Nehorai **Pinchas Feinberg** **Yair Davidy**

**Yehezkel Yagane** Yishai Merling **Yves Hazout**

**Juliet Laskar**

**World Mizrachi**

**Aaron Livovsky** **Asher Averjil** **Deborah Isaac**

Doron Peretz Francine Stein Harvey Blitz

Judy Livovsky Karma Feinstein Cohen **Maxine Piczenik**

Solly Sacks Sondra Sokal Yifa Segal

Ohad Tal

**World Organization of Orthodox Communities and Synagogues**

Adi Samson Ben Zion Shefer Itzhak Dahan

Shmuel Slutky Chen Gutterman

**World Sephardi Federation**

Albert Levy

Andre Derhy

Avraham Elarar

**Veronica Maya****World Union for Progressive Judaism****Andrew Keene****Anna Elise Marianne Pouillet** Carole Sterling**Nicole Juliet Braun****Sonja Guentner****World Union of Meretz**

Alain Grabarz

**Anastasiia Khodyrieva****Ariela Wolkovich**

Ehud Bandel

**Yesh Atid****Absent from the meetings****Zionist Union****Avi Koriat**

Dalia Hibner

Dan Tel Nir

**Dor Zuriel**

Efrat Katash

**Hanah Peretz**

Haya Cohen

Jerry Lewis

**Meir Abergel**

Michael Dahan

**Yair Elyashiv****Michel Wohlmuth****Federations Heads**

Alberto Bierman Levy

Danny Lamm

Karina Sapolinsky

Leslie Rothschild

Richard Heideman

\*\*\*\*\*

**Names appearing in bold are the Deputy Members who replaced absent members**

during a session

## **Participants in an Advisory Capacity**

**Secretary of the Zionist Executive**

Reuben Shalom

**Comptroller of the World Zionist Organization**

Steven Stav

**Legal Advisor**

Adv. Fern Braniss

## **Professional Leadership**

Dor Zvikelsky

Dov Barel

Elad Mayer

Eran Berkowitz

Haim Bennazeraf

Herzl Makov

Liron Yehezkel

Mark Dovev

Moshe Cohen

Moshe Preizler

Noa Dotan-Man

Ori Leizer

Shraga Wilk

Tzofia Dimant-Yossef

Yaakov Aharoni

Yaniv Nachmias

David Breakstone

Hanan Mor

Josh Schwarcz

## **Zionist General Council Bureau**

**Director of the ZGC**

Anna Givati

**Staff**

Bracha Cohen

Nava Avisar

Adi Dotan

Gila Ansell Brauner

Itzik Yaacov

Malka Festinger

Meira Azenkot

Naftali Levi

Rachel Amsalem

Ronit Bash

Shalom Dotan

**LL"N**

Ariel Weisel

Mattan Lifshitz

Shlomit Atun