The Zionist Organization of the Conservative Movement

# חג אורים שמח

## Impressive Achievements at 37th Zionist Congress

## Report by Dr. David Breakstone, Int'l Vice President, MERCAZ Olami

חורף תשע"ו

The worldwide Conservative/Masorti movement, represented by its Zionist arm, MERCAZ Olami, and its umbrella organization, Masorti Olami, succeeded in preserving its key positions and safeguarding its vital interests in Israel's National Institutions at the conclusion of the 37th Zionist Congress. Dr. David Breakstone was re-elected as WZO Vice Chairman, Dr. Stephen Wolnek will continue as Co-Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, Rabbi Tzvi Graetz and Yizhar Hess will continue to serve with David on the WZO Inner Executive, and Gillian Caplin and Alan Silberman will join Steve on the WZO Expanded Executive. MERCAZ and Masorti will also maintain their representation on key Jewish Agency governing bodies and committees, including two of the twelve WZO spots on the 24-member Jewish Agency Executive filled by David and Rabbi Vernon Kurtz, as well as holding the chairmanship of a key committee of Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael (Jewish National Fund) overseeing KKL land policy.

None of this should be taken for granted. The significant drop in the number of MERCAZ delegates from 59 in 2010 to 42 in 2015 coupled with the reality that our new Israeli political partner, Yesh Atid, had only 21 delegates at the Congress compared to our partner's 60 five years ago, means that it was reasonable to expect that we would leave the Congress diminished in strength.

Against this background, we can attribute our impressive and disproportional success to the hard work of our leadership and activists along with the reputation we have managed to generate for MERCAZ and Masorti. Over the past several years, we have been able to position ourselves such that that even those vying for the same portfolios we have been able to secure recognize the positive contribution we have collectively made through our various appointments within the WZO, Jewish Agency, KKL-JNF and Keren Hayesod, and understand that we represent a segment of the Jewish people around the world that is far larger and more significant than the number of our delegates would suggest. The partnership we have developed with Israel's You are cordially invited to attend

Spring-2016

### MERCAZ USA's



#### Biennial General Council Meeting



Date: Sunday, May 15, 2016, 11:00am-3:00pm Location: Congregation Kol Shalom, 9110 Darnestown Road, Rockville, MD, in the greater Washington DC area

Program for the General Council includes the election and installation of new officers and the approval of new by-laws.

Further information about the General Council will be available in the April MERCAZ e-letter and on the MERCAZ website www.mercazusa.org R.S.V.P 212-533-2061 or info@mercazusa.org

political party, Yesh Atid, was also a significant factor throughout the negotiations, and the unwavering support of party chairman MK Yair Lapid and director general Gil Segal were invaluable to our furthering our mutual interests.

With the Congress behind us, we now look forward to getting down to work in order to further the agenda that is, of course, the reason we are involved in all of this in the first place: fashioning Israel as an exemplary, pluralistic society every Jew can feel at home in; strengthening the bonds between the Jewish state and the Jewish people worldwide; advocating on Israel's behalf, especially in these particularly trying times; advancing Zionism as the progressive movement of national liberation that it set out to be; and securing the resources and creating the opportunities for Conservative/Masorti communities around the world to continue growing so that individually and collectively we can contribute to ensuring a future for the Jewish people and the State of Israel we can all rejoice in.

It is, of course, the cooperation of our movement's constituent bodies in Israel and abroad, coupled with the tireless efforts



## REPORT OF THE MERCAZ NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The following slate of officers has been proposed by the Nominating Committee, chaired by Evelyn Seelig, for approval at the MERCAZ USA General Council Meeting, scheduled for Sunday, May 15, 2016.

President: Dr. Marilyn Wind

Vice-Presidents: Rabbi Daniel Dorsch

Rabbi Eytan Hammerman

Martin Werber

Rita Wertlieb

Margo Gold (USCJ)

Allan Gottesman (FJMC)

Rabbi Phil Scheim (RA)

Carol Simon (WLCJ)

Secretary: Gary Rosenthal

Treasurer: Eric Weis

Pursuant to Article VI, Section 3(c)(i) of the current By-laws: Additional nominations may be submitted to the Nominating Committee, care of the MERCAZ USA office, up to 30 days prior to the General Council Meeting by means of a written petition from at least ten members in good standing from each of at least 5 regions of the United Synagogue. The consent of any such nominee shall first have been obtained in writing and attached to the petition. The last day for submitting additional nominations is Friday, April 1, 2016.

## REPORT OF THE MERCAZ BY-LAWS COMMITTEE

A revised set of by-laws for MERCAZ USA will be presented for adoption at the General Council, scheduled for May 15, 2016. These new by-laws, the product of more than a dozen years of discussion and review, come to revise and replace those passed back in 1987, during the infancy of MERCAZ USA. Prepared by Evelyn Seelig and Elliott Brown, the new by-laws were passed by the MERCAZ USA Board of Directors at their Winter meeting on February 25th.

The current and proposed new by-laws are available to be read on the MERCAZ website www.mercazusa.org and may be requested by contacting the MERCAZ office: 212-533-2061 or info@mercazusa.org.

Pursuant to Article XIV, Sections 2 and 3 of the current By-laws: These By-Laws may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the General Council by a two-thirds vote of the delegates present and voting, provided a quorum is present. . . The Board of Directors shall transmit the proposed amendment . . . at least thirty days prior to the date appointed for the convening of the General Council and shall present such proposed amendments with its view thereon.



#### **VISIT ISRAEL TODAY:**

Go to www.mercazusa.org/trips.html for a current list of Conservative Movement Israel trips that are open to all participants.

## Join MERCAZ Today.

#### Please complete this form and return to:

MERCAZ USA 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 820, New York, NY 10115 or enroll online at <a href="https://www.mercazusa.org/membership.html">www.mercazusa.org/membership.html</a>

MERCAL

Full Name	Please enroll me as a member of MERCAZ.
Spouse's Name	I am enclosing my membership dues with this form.
spouses realite	☐ Please charge my membership to my:
Permanent Address	☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex
City State Zip	Account #:
My email is	Expires: Signature
Congregation	<ul><li>□ \$54 Family</li><li>□ \$12 Student</li><li>□ \$250 Donor</li><li>□ \$36 Individual</li><li>□ \$100 Sponsor</li><li>□ \$500 Benefactor</li></ul>