

Women's League for Israel

**A pioneer who reached the age
of ninety**

Table of Contents:

Chapter	Content	Pages
Introduction	WLI – Women's League for Israel: Pioneering becomes nineteenth	
Chapter 1	Historical Background – before 1928	
	The situation in the country and of the Jews in the Diaspora	
	The establishment of the Women's League in the USA	
	A letter written from the ladies of Moetset Hapoalot to The Women's League for Palestine, New York, USA on 1933	
	League Structure	
	Rachel Yanait Ben Zevie's Initiative	
Chapter 2	From Settlement to State 1928-1948	
	The Situation in Palestine	
	Establishment of the First Women Pioneer Home in Haifa	
	Establishment of the second Home – in Tel-Aviv	
	'Ulpan Meir'	
	Establishment of the third Home – in Jerusalem	
	WLI activities during the War of Independence (1948)	
Chapter 3	The State's first years 1949-1967	
	The situation in Israel	
	Establishment of the fourth Home – in Netanya	
	'Ora' workshop	
	Cooperation with the Hebrew University in Jerusalem	
Chapter 4	Social and Economic Problems and Supporting Underprivileged Populations 1968-1991	
	The situation in Israel	

	Scholarships	
	Activities in the WLI Home in Jerusalem:	
	Youth rehabilitation center	
	Summer activities by the Jewish Agency	
	Meital	
	Reception Hall	
	Productivity Institute Courses	
	Creative ideas:	
	Cook book	
	Donating wedding gowns	
	Activities in the WLI Compound in Netanya:	
	The Vocational School for Adults	
	The Professional high-school	
	Leases in the WLI compound	
	The dormitories	
	The central kitchen and the dining room	
	Hosting mothers from Kiryat Shmona in the WLI Home in Tel-Aviv	
	Cooperation with the ministry of Labor and Welfare:	
	The beginning of Social Work in Israel	
	'Society and Welfare' quarterly	
	Girls' rehabilitation project	
	Self-Help Groups project	
	Unit for Individual and Family Services	
	Domestic violence prevention program	
	The Center for Parent-Children Connection	
	Cooperation with the IDF	
Chapter 5	The Turbulent Era 1992-2007	
	The situation in Israel	

	Continuation of cooperation Ministry of Labor and Welfare:	
	'Yachdav' project	
	'Dror' program	
	Foster services in the central region	
	Support for immigrant artists	
	Class year-end ceremonial dinner in the WLI high-school in Netanya	
	Additional activities:	
	Community Center in Hazor HaGlilit	
	Nursing course for Ethiopian new immigrants	
	Arts School in Ashqelon	
	Rambam Hospital Taglit and the Israel Experience	
Epilogue	At present and looking into the future	
Appendix No. 1:	The presidents of the League and their major activities	

Introduction

WLI – Women's League for Israel: Pioneering becomes nineteenth

The **WLI – Women's League for Israel** – organization was founded by a group of women volunteers in the United States in 1928. The first goal of the organization was to provide assistance to young solitary women who came to the Land of Israel as immigrants, from Europe, with no knowledge of the language, without partners or family and with no professional training. WLI established homes where these women could stay and acquire the language, some education, a vocation and knowledge of the local culture and society. The homes, named "Pioneer Homes" (Bathey HaHalutzot), provided the women a "home away from home", were they lived with women just like them, faced the hardships of living in the Land of Israel together, worked and supported themselves in a cooperative equalitarian manner and absorbed a new language, knowledge of the land and Jewish culture.

Below is the WLI Certificate of Registration under the British Mandate Law:

Companies Ordinance 1929

Certificate of Registration Of a Foreign Company.

WHEREAS the Companies Ordinance, 1929, provides for the exercise of certain powers and the performance of certain duties by the High Commissioner.

AND WHEREAS section 22 of the Interpretation Ordinance, 1929, empowers the High Commissioner to depute any person to exercise the powers and perform the duties by law vested in him.

AND WHEREAS the High Commissioner has deputed the person lawfully performing the duties of Chief Secretary to the Government of Palestine to exercise the powers and perform the duties vested in him by the Companies Ordinance, 1929,

NOW, I, SYDNNY MOODY
for the time being performing the duties of Chief Secretary to the Government of Palestine, in exercise of the powers vested in the High Commissioner by section 248 of the Companies Ordinance, 1929, hereby authorize the incorporation in Palestine of:

Women's League for Palestine
A company incorporated in U.S.A.

Acting Chief Secretary

Date: September 1933

Over the years, in accordance with circumstances and the changing needs of the Jewish community in the Land of Israel, WLI's goals have changed and evolved, as did the organization's operations. But, the WLI 'creed' was and still is "**Help a person help herself**". This creed is the key-note of the public actions of WLI as a not-for-profit organization. Based on this basic principle, WLI actions during its history were focused on **assimilation, welfare and education**. Several projects have been initiated by WLI, in cooperation with governmental and other bodies in Israel, always in these three areas, with WLI trying every possible way – substantial, organizational and economical – to support and encourage underprivileged populations – first women and later young families and youth of both genders. No matter how diverse the projects WLI had been involved with, it has always kept its operations backbone of providing affordable housing for young women with limited means and no social or economical backing, women who came into the large cities to study and work for their living. Through boarding at Bathey HaHalutzot, a link to the women pioneers of the first days of the Jewish settlement in the country and of WLI was kept.

Immediately following the establishment of WLI, and prior to the establishment of the State of Israel, the "Pioneer Homes" in Haifa (1931), Tel Aviv (1936) and Jerusalem (1943) were established, and the organization supported the young women immigrants, who came to the country alone, in their assimilation. Following the establishment of the State of Israel, WLI has, for decades, been helping the assimilation of Olim (immigrants) – providing a place to stay and helping with language studies and professional training, mainly for women. The WLI home in Tel Aviv helped bring into action the socialist ideals of the leaders of the Zionist movement of that era: the young immigrants worked in cooperative organizations, such as: a weaving workshop, a wickerwork workshop, a laundry and a worker's canteen. Workers were paid for their labor in these organizations, with payment equally distributed between all workers and used, in part, as payment for boarding at the Beth HaChalutzot. In this manner the workshops were sustained and at the same time provided acceptable income for the women. The tenants studied the Hebrew language at the WLI homes, in Tel Aviv through the Meir 'Ulpan' (Hebrew school for Olim). In addition, the tenants participated in classes, lectures and other social activities centered on the situation in the country, general culture, art and other subjects. An emphasis was put in all these activities on the Jewish point of view.

The fourth WLI home was established, in Netanya, in 1950, following the establishment of the State of Israel. The fast transformations in the young state and the rapid development of the country, created an urgent need for trained professionals, especially women. To answer this need, a national center for training and development of manpower was opened, in the WLI home in Netanya in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Welfare. The center was designated for teenagers as well as adults and taught dental professions (Dental Technicians and Dentist Assistants), cooking, fashion, cosmetics, hairdressing, secretarial work and a preparatory class for teenagers. The students had the use of a spacious, pleasant dormitory to provide a warm home.

WLI homes became centers of extensive communal and cultural activity in times of peace, while during hostilities these homes took part in the struggle, through services provided to soldiers, such as: gathering place, laundry, preparing first aid materials, etc.

WLI and the Ministry of Labor and Welfare have established at the of the WLI compound in Netanya the 'Ora' workshop – a protected hand weaving workshop for blind women aimed at the rehabilitation of the women through the performance of productive work and a chance to lead an independent life despite their limitations. Adjoining the weaving workshop, a sawing workshop was established to employ Olim and women with disabilities in the production of colorful tablecloths, women's and children's cloths, praying shawls and other products, all from the weaving workshop's fabrics, at the highest quality and in original Israeli styles. The workshop received the Kaplan award for weavers' persistence at work and for the original quality of the products.

Along its history WLI has leased parts of its properties – halls, classrooms, offices, kitchens and others – to different governmental, quasi-governmental (The Jewish Agency, for example) and private bodies. The principal behind these operations was to charge the highest possible rent, according to existing market conditions. The purpose of this income was to increase the WLI home's contribution to their own operating budgets, thus reducing the dependency on funds from WLI in the US, so that these funds could be directed towards new goals for WLI's activities in Israel.

During the 1980s there was a tendency to reduce, as much as possible, these leases, while increasing the number of projects performed in traditional WLI fields of operation. None the less, to prevent a financial deficit as a result of decreased income from leases, WLI management had set forth strict conditions for the approval of projects:

- The project must be in one of the pre-defined WLI fields of operation (assimilation, welfare and education);
- The project must be such that WLI will be able to perform and promote, financially and professionally, in the best possible way, either independently or through cooperation with other bodies;
- The project will answer an existing need, preferably of large populations, which has limited or no solution through existing services;
- The project will project favorably on WLI's image and contribute to its prestige.

In general the WLI management had encouraged the diversification of project types and partners, so as not to "put all the eggs in one basket".

Over the years cooperation was developed between WLI and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and WLI donated the funds for the building of the first two dormitory buildings, for female students, and a cafeteria, a gymnasium and a students' center in the Givat Ram campus. Following the liberation of Jerusalem, WLI pioneered the building effort at Mount Scopus and built three more dormitories for female students. WLI has also founded the Sociology cathedra named after Mrs. Rose Izaacs, and had donated funds for a

scholarships fund for IDF veteran students. Today, WLI continues donations for the Hebrew University in Jerusalem through a new scholarships fund for needy students, established in early 2000s' in 2008 and in 2018.

WLI has also cooperated extensively, over the years, with the Ministry of Labor and Welfare through its different branches, and extended its fields of operation by providing social services to underprivileged populations – not only women pioneers and immigrants – but also young families from the lower echelons, students from the periphery, children of divorced parents, foster families, artists, self help groups, etc.

Hundreds of individuals and families in Israel are thankful to WLI for the opportunity it provided for them to become independent, sovereign and productive people, ones who are able to provide for themselves and their families, educate and raise their children and fulfill theirs and their children's human potential.

This pamphlet will review the welcome activity of WLI from the day it was established until these days, as it becomes an octogenarian.

Chapter 1: Historical Background – before 1928

The Situation in Palestine and in the Jewish Diaspora

At the end of the 19th century, following the awakening of national perceptions among Jews around the world, the increase in violent incidents directed at Jews and the growing need of Jews to have a Homeland of their own – The Zionist movement appeared and the Zionist Federation was founded, in the first Zionist World Congress that took place in Basel, Switzerland between August 29 and 31, 1897, as a result of the initiative of Dr. Theodore Hertzl. The congress confirmed the 'Basel Plan' which determined the Zionist movement aspired to establish a Homeland for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel under a charter of the world's nations, and ways to implement the plan were set.

The Basle Zionist Program

Zionism seeks to establish a home for the Jewish people in Palestine secured under public law. The Congress contemplates the following means to the attainment of this end:

1. The promotion by appropriate means of the settlement in Palestine of Jewish farmers, artisans, and manufacturers.
2. The organization and uniting of the whole of Jewry by means of appropriate institutions, both local and international, in accordance with the laws of each country.
3. The strengthening and fostering of Jewish national sentiment and national consciousness. Preparatory steps toward obtaining the consent of governments, where necessary, in order to reach the goals of Zionism

Following this decision operative steps for its implementation were enacted.

One of the biggest achievements of the Zionist activity in the beginning of the 20th century, following World War I - which saw the collapse of the Ottoman Empire that ruled the Land of Israel up to that time, and the Land occupied by the British Army – was the declaration of the British government that it recognizes the right of the Jewish people to a national home in the Land of Israel. This recognition was formulated in the 'Balfour Declaration' dated November 2, 1917, and read as follows:

"His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people....,"

This declaration gave a push and encouragement to Jews in the Diaspora to organize into local Zionist organizations (the 'Shivat Zion Movement'), immigrate to the country, then under British Mandate rule, settle there and

work, mainly in agriculture. This had several reasons: first the need to 'flourish the wilderness' since large parts of the country were desolate; second a source of providing livelihood was needed and agriculture is always an instant solution for that and third, and probably most important: the first immigrants to arrive were deeply influenced by the ideas of liberalism, socialism and the equal rights of the working classes that were sweeping the world at that time. The immigrants arriving in Palestine at the time – the 'Pioneers' – aspired to implement these ideals through their immigration and create the new Hebrew Worker together with the reestablishment of the old Homeland.

Following the First Aliya (the first wave of immigrants to Palestine at the end of the 19th century 1882-1903), in the first decades of the 20th century increasing waves of immigrants arrived at the Land of Israel (then called Palestine). These included the Second Aliya (1904-1914) The Third Aliya (1919-1923) and the fourth Aliya (1924-1928).

With each wave new forms of settlement were created and new settlements established. Occupational branches evolved and defence, education, culture, health and government institutions were created.

Arab residents of the country started to feel threatened by the expansion and growth of the Jewish population and in May 1, 1921 started a series of bloody disturbances and acts of terror against the Jewish settlements. The disturbances included looting, robbery, murder and injury to Jews in Palestine. The disturbances lasted five days during which 43 Jews were murdered – among them, in an orchard in Jaffa, the writer Josef Haim Brenner – and 140 were wounded.

Following the disturbances the British convened the Heycraft committee to investigate the causes that led to the disturbances. The committee findings led to the publication of the 'First White Book' – a document in which the British Mandate government detailed its attitude towards the situation in Palestine. This document determined the Britain continues to support the principals of the Balfour Declaration regarding the establishment of a 'National Home' for Jews in the Land of Israel, but the Jewish immigration will be limited to a quota the country can absorb without creating an economical burden on the existing residents.

This was the first official intervention of the government of the British Mandate in the Jewish immigration to Palestine, an intervention that will evolve further in a series of 'White Books' to follow and the creation of 'illegal' waves of immigration during the 1930s and 1940s.

In 1924, with the beginning of the Fourth Aliya, arriving mainly from Poland, the number of immigrants arriving in Palestine grew significantly. Many of these immigrants settled in cities and engaged in commerce and small scale industry. This wave of immigrants brought with it private capital in unparalleled volumes and set the foundations for a middle class in Palestine. For the first time more Jews immigrated to Palestine than to any other part of the world, including the USA.

Some time later a severe economical crisis hit Palestine. The government of Poland restricted the transfer of funds from Poland to Palestine. The number of wealthy immigrants reduced significantly and only poor immigrants continued arriving. Some of previous owners of private capital remained broke due to failed investments and therefore there was no one left to invest in the development and expansion of buildings and industry. A shortage of employment ensued for new immigrants and for existing residents. The situation worsened as land and apartment prices that were on the rise started declining and people had to sell them for a loss.

Between the years 1927 and 1928 the number of immigrants out of Palestine was larger than the number of immigrants coming in. The Jewish settlement in Palestine fell into a deep recession. Recovery from this recession started only in 1927.

This was the situation in Palestine when WLP started its operations.

The establishment of the Women's League in the USA

Rose Isaacs, wife of David Isaacs, an educated American Jew, was a religious Jewish woman, but also an avid believer in socialism and feminism. In 1928 she established with her friends an organization of Jewish Zionist women aspiring to contribute to the development of the reviving Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel and especially to the female population in it. The organization was named Women's League for Palestine (WLP) and was officially registered in the state of New York in 1929.

(41) Mrs. Rose Isaacs, a founding member of the Women's League

Women's League for Palestine (later called: Women's League for Israel – WLI) is a volunteer not-for-profit organization. The main goal of the league was to support Jewish women in the Land of Israel – mainly new immigrants – through the stages of assimilation and adaptation to the land, providing housing and vocational training. Along the years, with the changing needs - arising from Palestine and later from the State of Israel – the goals of the organization were transformed, but have always remained within the boundaries of support in the fields of **Immigrant Assimilation, Welfare and Education**. The league has always funded its activities through donations directed towards activities in Israel and in collaboration with government ministries, municipalities and public institutions. The donations are collected through a wide network of activity in the USA, mainly in New York but lately also in Florida.

Rose Isaacs was a personal friend of Rachel Yanait Ben Zevie, a leader in the Workingwomen's Movement in the Land of Israel and a member of the Workingwomen's Council. Through her tight connections with Rachel Yanait she learned of the necessity to send donation to the Land of Israel to fund the operations on the Workingwomen's Movement.

Rose Isaacs spoke Hebrew, travelled to Palestine frequently and met there Rachel Yanait and the members of the Workingwomen's Council. She initiated, with the chairwomen of the Council, Golda Meyerson (1928 – 1930) and Beba Idelson (from 1930), the establishment of 'Bathey HaChalutzot' (Pioneer Women Homes) in Palestine, homes where the Jewish women and girls could find a bed and a warm welcome, learn a vocation and pave their way to economical independence. She believed that "What is good for socialist Palestine will be good for the Women's League".

Through these relations Rose Isaacs laid the foundations of the long lasting relationship, productive but at times complicated, between the Women's League and the Workingwomen's Council.

The two first presidents of the League served relatively short periods: Emma Gotheil (1928-1929) was succeeded by Rose Blumenthal (1929-1930). During these years Rose Isaacs was the main driving force behind WLP's operations in Palestine. The third president, Jane Prince served the longest term in the history of WLI, 25 years! (1932 – 1957).

Rose Isaacs was also the best friend of Jane Prince who was a very wealthy woman, while Mrs. Isaacs was a woman of little means and extremely modest. In regards to the operations of WLP, Rose Isaacs was in the one hand Jane Prince's mentor, and on the other a dedicated, energetic performer. She realized the organizations objectives through her frequent trips to Palestine, her far reaching connections and her leadership. Her official role with the league was 'Head of the Palestine Committee' (see details below).

(42) Jane Prince, Third President of the Women's League

Like Rose Isaacs, the other founders of WLP were not wealthy women, but came from middle class background in Jewish neighborhoods of New York City. Their husbands provided for the families and worked in factories or shops. They themselves were caring and extremely generous, and saw the needs of new immigrants to Palestine. For them the achievements of the new immigrants were the fulfillment of the Zionist dream, and they empathized with their daily struggles and achievements.

In order to raise money for the supreme cause standing in front of them, these women saved as much as possible out of their family budgets, without compromising their livelihood. Furthermore, they constantly thought up new original and creative ideas regarding ways to collect donations: they run small fairs, traded with neighbors and acquaintances. At one point they wrote a cook book which they sold for charity. All the collected funds were sent to Palestine and later Israel. The League did not use any means of publicity or public relations, not wanting to 'waste' collected funds on any thing but direct donations for operations in Israel. With that they have prevented the possibility of collecting larger amounts, and so the funds remained humble and relatively limited.

A letter written from the ladies of Moetset Hapoalot to The Women's League for Palestine, New York, USA on 1933

Dear Madames,

We wish to inform you on the progress of our work and on some important achievements which we have lately succeeded to accomplish with the active assistance of Mrs. Isaacs.

As you know from our last cable, on our April 30th was laid the cornerstone of the long awaited Beth Halutzoth in Tel Aviv. In connection with this we may mention the pleasant coincidence that our negotiations with the Municipality of Tel Aviv about a municipal lot for the Beth Halutzoth have been concluded just at the time Mrs. Isaacs arrived in Palestine, and furthermore, the lot was officially granted to us exactly on the day on which the reception to Mrs. Isaacs took place in the Beth Halutzoth of Haifa.

The lot embraces 2 1/4 dunams of land, its value is estimated at about 25,000.00 and it is situated in the center of the city, close to the place on which there is to be planted soon the Municipal Park.

The granting of the lot to us has quite a history back of it. As you know, we have been long troubled with the fact that while you were prepared to give us the necessary funds for the erection of a Day Nursery in Tel Aviv, we were unable to meet this opportunity because we could not secure a suitable building lot. The prospects were the same with securing a lot for a Beth Halutzoth, despite the fact that its lack was keenly felt in the city.

Now, for more than years we have been conducting in Tel Aviv, on a municipal plot, a Girls' training farm, established with the funds furnishing by the Pioneer Women's Organization of America, and of late the Tel Aviv Municipality has been demanding of us to vacate the plot because it is part of the area designated for the Municipal Park.

The demand of the city was fraught with great difficulties to us, because the Farm is one of the finest of its kind we have and in the course of its existence it has given practical agricultural training to hundreds of young chalutzoth. We repeatedly stated to the City that we will vacate the plot only if instead we will be granted another one somewhere in the vicinity. Meanwhile, it has become clear to us that we will be unable to secure separate lots for the Day Nursery and for the Beth Halutzoth and for by means of a regular purchase, and as a result compelled to accept the City's demand (we hope to move the Farm to another place), but on condition that we will remove the Farm only if compensated by a suitable lot for a Beth Halutzoth. Our condition was accepted to receive the grant from the city.

It would be hard describe the joy which was aroused by the news that a Beth Halutzoth is at last to be erected in the city. Citizens from various quarters expressed their deep delight, and the joy was so general that although we had very little time for inviting our numerous friends to the occasion of laying the cornerstone and to advertise it in the press, a multitude of people came to

witness the ceremony and the occasion was marked with sincere cordiality and rejoicing.

The children of the Day Nursery presented Mrs. Isaacs and Mrs. Berman with flowers and expressed their appreciation for the new home for their Nursery, which will be built as a special wing of the Beth Halutzoth.

A record of the occasion, written on a parchment, has been deposited in the foundation, and appropriate greetings were delivered by Mesdames Isaacs, Bergman and Syms, ... by Mrs. Rachel Yanaith on behalf of our Council... and by others. Naturally, the absence of your President, Mrs. Prince, was keenly felt at the celebration.

..... A contest will be soon announced to architects for the design of the House, and a competent Committee will be charged with the selection of the best and most beautiful plan.

We have been endeavoring to secure additional funds for the building from other sources. A delegation composed of Mrs. Isaacs and Mrs. Bergman on your behalf, and Rachel Yanaith and Rachel Katzanelson Rubashoff on our behalf, has met representatives of the Central Bureau for the settlement of German Jews of the Jewish Agency – Miss Henrietta Szold and Dr. Landauer, and brought to their attention the fact that in the course of the last two years over fifty immigrant girls from Germany have been sheltered and otherwise cared for by Beth Halutzoth of Haifa, and that the proposed Beth Halutzoth of Tel Aviv will, of necessity, accommodate a far greater number of such girls. By reason of these facts the delegation demanded that the abovementioned Central Bureau a detailed memorandum, copy of which is herewith enclosed.

We have the impression that the above meeting will bear god fruit, as Dr. Landauer assured us that when funds arrive from the new campaign for the settlement of German Jews that have not been designated beforehand for other fixed purposes, he will treat our proposition with full sympathy and will put it on the order of the day together with other propositions.

Before Mrs. Isaacs has left for home we have constituted a Governing Board of the new Beth Halutzoth composed of representatives, in equal numbers, of your League, and of our Council – on the same principle as Beth Halutzoth is governed. Each member of the Board was selected after very careful consideration together with Mrs. Isaacs, who has met everyone of them. We hope that we have succeeded in selecting a fine Board and we may expect it to direct the affairs of the House harmoniously and efficiently...

...The aim of your League, (Mrs. Isaacs) stated, is to build Beth Halutzoth in order to give the immigrating girls not only the necessary first shelter, but also practical training in trades and crafts, and this – not only by sending the girls to school but by organizing them into co-operatives, in which they earn while they learn and remain there as permanent workers...

...Beth Halutzoth of Haifa and Tel Aviv must endeavour to serve as cultural centers not only to their inmates, but to every girl and woman that may wish to take advantage of their various cultural facilities, as reading rooms, libraries; courses, lectures, excursions etc.

The visit of Mrs. Isaacs was of much consequence to the progress of the Haifa House. Her fine ability for quick orientation, coupled with her knowledge of Hebrew, the language of the country, served her well to grasp the aspects and prospects of the situation. She has rapidly won the confidence of the House and has well familiarized herself with the problems of the institution, the condition of the co-operatives, questions connected with increased immigration, plans for future work, etc.

It seems to us that Mrs. Isaacs herself, in spite of her familiarity with the activities of you League, when on the spot, was quite surprised at the importance of your work to Palestine. One of the finest community houses in the country, shelter to 364 cahlutzoth in the course of two years numerous facilities for the cultural needs of the inmates and otherwise – make certainly a creditable record. And the meaning of this record is enhanced by the fact that this is really only the beginning of the line.

On Monday, May 1st, we bade farewell to Mrs. Isaacs and we all felt that during her short stay important ground had been covered with beneficial results to be expected for all concerned...

We hope that the fruitful visit of your representative will considerably strengthen your ties with the Homeland and will stimulate the League to widen and deepen her fine activities for the good of the reborn Homeland...

We beg to remain
With Zion greetings,
Yours faithfully
Rachel Katzenelson Rubashoff
Beba (Idelson)

League Structure

During the years of its existence the League has operated at three levels:

The National,
The Regional; and
The Local (Chapter) levels.

Each league official in the different levels was elected for a three year term. An official could be elected for no more than two terms, i.e. for a total term of six years.

The National Level – Positions included: President, Honorary President, Senior Vice President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Directors and Executive Directors.

The Honorary Presidents were women who had served as League Presidents.

All of these officials constituted the National Board which convened twice a year to decide on organization policy and strategy (approving the annual budget, new operational directions and new projects).

The National Executive Committee consisting half of these officials convened once a month.

The Regional Level – At first, the League operated only in New York, but on a later phase when one of the official moved to Florida, a significant activity commenced there.

Positions similar to the ones in the National Level exist in each of the regions, as is the case with the Regional Board and the Regional Executive Committee.

The Local Level – In the New York Region 21 chapters were operating with a similar number in Florida. Each chapter includes a different number of members, from 15 and up, and has an elected President and other officials.

Specific Committees Created:

Along the years several committees have been established in the League including:

The Palestine Committee – This was the committee headed by Rose Isaacs and which dealt with the use of League funds in Palestine and with realizing League objectives.

Growth & Development Committee – Focused on three main issues: Establishment of new chapters, recruiting new members in existing chapters and reviving dormant chapters. During time, two chapters were established in California and one in Washington DC.

Members Retention – Focused on ways to prevent member loss (such as giving out certificates, broaches etc.)

Leadership Development Program – This committee worked to develop new young leadership from within member ranks. The committee organized seminars on effective use of leadership skills, league structure, history and purpose, League financials, League projects, etc. The height of the leadership program was a delegation to Israel.

Convention Committee – Focused on the organization of the election conventions.

Fund Raising – This committee devised ways to raise funds, reward donors (through name plates, memory plaques, Tree of Life pamphlets, etc.). the most significant project to reward donors was the creation of the 'Heritage Wall' at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, naming all the donors of WLI. The project was lead during the 1980s by the Honorary President Mrs. Anna Cahane Neiditz, League President in the years 1957-1963.

New Direction Committee – Was tasked with studying existing league projects in Israel and reviewing their progress and status. It was also in charge of reviewing potential new projects. It was generally accepted by league members that the league should operate independent projects and not concentrate on renting rooms or spaces for other bodies. When a rent project was discussed the intention was to charge rent according to market practice to help Bathey HaChalutzot increase their income.

With the establishment of Bathey HaChalutzot, a manager was appointed for each Home. A general manager was appointed to represent the League in Israel and the Home Managers reported to her. The General Manager would travel from time to time to the USA to meet with League officials there. A letter was sent, once a month, from Israel to the National Executive Board, carrying a detailed report of League activities in Israel. For a period of time letters were sent by each Home management separately. These were later replaced by the General Managers united report. In general substantial correspondence was exchanged between the Israel representative and League management in New York.

Every few years a delegation, usually headed by current League President, and including at times Honorary Presidents and other officials, came to Israel. The delegation would tour the country and collect first hand impressions of the way League objectives were being realized in Israel.

Rachel Yanait Ben Zevie's Initiative

Rachel Yanait immigrated to Israel in 1908 and settled in Jerusalem. The sight of the city, barren of all vegetation, shocked her. She has described her impression in the following words: "The nakedness of the land stood in front of me as a vision of horror... How I longed to see thee, Jerusalem, green yet again...".

In 1911 Rachel Yanait traveled to France where she studied Agronomy, and came back to Israel in the eve of World War I. The idea of foresting Jerusalem started to grow in her heart and she started a group of girls who practiced agriculture in open parcels around the city and sold their produce to the people of Jerusalem. Rachel Yanait believed that the establishment of greeneries and agricultural groups will transform the appearance of the city and revolutionize the cultural and productive character of its population. She searched for a parcel large enough, with a water hole, to establish a nursery for ornamental trees. Loyal to her Zionist and Socialist principals she worked in the midst of Jerusalem, the bourgeois city and the epicenter of the old school Jewish settlement – Rachel Yanait insisted that the parcel of land will be at the heart of the urban area and not in the periphery as suggested by experts. After visiting parcel after parcel in Jerusalem, finally a suitable parcel was found for the prospective nursery in the outskirts of Rehavia, but the lack of water was a significant burden. There was no water hole in the parcel and water was provided, through pipes laid by the municipality, scantily. Digging a water hole was the solution for the water problem and could also provide a 'claim' on the land. Sadly, digging a hole large enough for the needs of the nursery required significant funds, which were not available. At this point it occurred to Rachel Yanait to contact her friend Sofia Yodin, a member of 'Poaley Zion' leaving in the USA, and through her other Jewish women leaving there. She wrote about the young saplings weathering due to water shortage and of her will to sustain the nursery. She then unfolded the water hole affair and asked for a loan.

Rachel Yanait's words reverberated among the Zionist women in the USA. The letter was read in parties and gatherings and became the 'Legend of the Hole' told over and over again. The results came soon, and a sum of five hundred US Dollars, 'A gift from friends to assist in your work', arrived. This was the beginning of a long lasting relationship with the Zionist women of America.

In the mid 1920s, during the fourth wave of immigration (HaAliya HaRevyit), the land of Israel suffered from heavy unemployment rates. The main casualties were the women – new immigrants – who were not skilled in manual labor and many of them came to the verge of starvation. The leaders of the Women Worker's Movement, women with initiatives such as Hana Chizik and Rachel Yanait, devised the idea of the Women Worker's Farm, where the new immigrants will be able to receive training in farm chores, and other forms of manual labor.

The nursery in Rehavia became the first out of nine Women Workers Farms that were later established around the country. Rehavia was planned by Architect Richard Kaufman, in the model of the Garden Cities common in England and Germany at the beginning of the 20th century. The Women Workers Farm spread over a parcel originally designated for several private lots.

The farm workers lived in a meek room in the 'Shaarey Hesed' neighborhood, adjacent to Rehavia until the group grew and Rachel Yanait decided it was time to construct a shed on the nursery grounds to house her friends. She suggested the shed to be built by the unemployed, using the monetary assistance received from the department of labor of the Zionist Agency. A building plan was prepared for the shed and the necessary materials gathered, but the building permit was not granted due to the concern that the shed might damage the stile of the fine houses of Rehavia. The group members took the initiative: they secretly prepared all the parts of the shed and dug the foundations. One night, they all came together and with the assistance of laborers the shed was erected and by dawn was standing tall. Thanks to the Ottoman law, prohibiting the destruction of a completed building, the nursery shed of the workers farm became a lasting fixture of the Bourgeois neighborhood.

In the late 1920s the place could no longer house the worker's farm and the nursery and in 1928 it moved to the Talpiyot neighborhood, close to where, in a few years, the High Commissioner's Residence was to be built. A few years later the farm was converted into a girl's school. Rachel Yanait argued that the operation, started with the training of the pioneering new immigrant and continued with assistance for the working mother should find its new calling in training young girls and contributing to the shaping of their character as a women and pioneer of the future. The nursery in Rehavia continued operating and served the farm in Talpiyot.

The land in Talpiyot was actually purchased using the first sum of money donated by the Women's League for Palestine (WLP), founded the same year in the USA. This donation was an outcome of the acquaintance and friendship between Rachel Yanait Ben Zevie and Mrs. Rose Isaacs. In the letter hereafter, Rachel Yanait describes enthusiastically the history of the group of women farm workers she established, and thanks her friend Rose Isaacs and the WLP for their responsiveness and contribution for the continuance of her operations in Palestine (the opening paragraph of the letter relates to the formation of the idea of establishing the Women Pioneer Home in Haifa, by the three member committee Rachel Yanait was part of):

Jerusalem
January, 8th, 1928

My dear friend Mrs. Isaacs,

When I received the minutes of the meeting of the Palestine Committee, and the resolution of the Executive Board, that a center along the lines outlined by us would be built, I quickly forwarded them to the Moezet Hapoalath in Palestine. Just as soon as I receive an answer from them, I will lose no time in transmitting it to you. For the future, since the League is now in direct communication with the Moezet Hapoalath, you will receive all information directly from them, and it is to them that I would urge you to turn with all your proposals for your contemplated work in Palestine.

And now, without losing more time, I will comply with your request to explain in writing how the \$1250, which your Organization sent us, has been applied.

Those who are familiar with conditions in Palestine realize that agriculture work there is the very basis of the revival of the nation and the nation and the land. Without ownership of the land, and settlement on it, there can be no redemption for us. Moreover, we hope that agriculture will develop in Palestine a new type of Jew, one who will be firmly rooted to the land which he has transformed from barren waste into fertile and productive fields, thus eliminating the possibility of fostering in Palestine another generation of impractical dreamers. Indeed, the spirit of pioneering, the spirit of the work, the work of agriculture as its chief aim, has permeated the pioneer men and women with the desire to reclaim the land.

In order that colonization should succeed, we must prepare the newcomers for the work and equip them with a thorough knowledge of agriculture. The Girls' Groups were organized for this purpose. We have to-day seventeen in farms Erets Yisroel that prepare five hundred of the pioneer girls for general farm work, including poultry raising, truck gardening, the planting of trees and flowers, dairying, and the cultivation of bees.

The pioneer girls work for two years in one of these Farm Schools. After these two years they learn the work thoroughly, and then they are transferred to a permanent farm, to instruct new groups. The group in Jerusalem was organized eight years ago. This was the first group that was created for the purpose. Many were the hardships that the farm underwent. In the first two years we went from house to house until we secured a definite piece of land that we could work... Because the piece of land that we finally secured was small, the group was compelled to limit its activities to the cultivation of saplings (of which over two and one-half million are planted at present all over Palestine). But we always tried to expand, to secure a big stretch of land where we could establish a big farm on which all the branches of agriculture could be undertaken in which the pioneer woman must be an expert, in order to enable her to transmit her knowledge to others; and now, after eight years of hard labor and suffering, the National Fund agreed to

give us fifty dunam of land near Talpioth, with the proviso that part of the money needed for this purpose shall be secured by us.

Land near Jerusalem is very high in price, but in order to insure the safety of the girls on the farms, land must be selected near a city. This is also desirable because of the ready market which the city offers for the disposal of farm products. Another consideration is that we now have plenty of water in Jerusalem, and you must realize how important it is to have water for a farm. These considerations have influenced the National Fund to consent to give us the land under conditions as enumerated above. Accordingly, we applied to a friendly Women's Organization in America, asking them to place this matter before your Organization through your President, Mrs. Gottheil, who is aware of the conditions under which the Chalutzot in Palestine work and live, and is sympathetic to them because of their courage and their fine spirit, and therefore may be inclined to promote their welfare. And now, that you have so promptly and nobly responded, I wish to state that on January 8 the first payment for the land was arranged, and the National Fund will pay the balance during the course of the year. During my travels in America I hope to secure the funds necessary for the equipment of this farm, and immediately upon my return to Palestine, which will be within the next two months, my first consideration will be its development.

For this purpose I have no intention of appealing to the Women's League, for I feel that your decision to build the Communal Centers for housing the pioneer women and girls is paramount to any other undertaking at the present time; and, in conclusion, I can only appeal to you to proceed with the fulfillment of your undertaking at as early a date as possible, so that within a year we may be privileged to celebrate a housewarming in the first of these Centers to be erected by you.

With all friendly greetings, and many blessings upon you all, I am,
Sincerely yours,
Rachel Ben Zevie

Chairman of the Workingwomen's Council at the time, Mrs. Golda Meyerson, who was naturally involved in Rachel Yanait's operations, contributed her own explanations for the use of the initial donation made by the Women's League for Women in the Land of Israel:

"...It (= the money) came at a most crucial moment, when the Workingwomen's Council had almost despaired of ever being able to do more than just raise saplings, whereas it had been our ambition for a long time to establish a Farm School. Because of the limited funds, however, we had never been able to carry out this project. With the fund, we were immediately able to acquire the land, and, amid great rejoicing, we were able to settle fifty girls upon it, who are being trained in all branches of farming. This Farm School most favorably located. Being near Jerusalem, the girls have a fine market for the sale of their

products. Not alone will they become self-supporting within a short time, but they have served as an example to the girls of the Older Settlement, among whom the idea still persists that it is degradation for girls to do any work outside the home. It is the prevailing opinion among them that they must be idle, like their mothers and grandmothers before them, until a suitable husband is found for them. This element must be educated to modern ideas..."

Chapter 2: From Settlement to State 1928-1948

The Situation in Palestine

As previously mentioned, in the mid 1920s, following a period of progress at the beginning of the 'Fourth Aliya' (fourth wave of immigration to Palestine), a hard recession hit the country. The local economy collapsed, currency lost its value and during 1927 alone, more than 5,000 people left the country. At the end of the year, though, as the recession ended thanks mainly to public works organized by the British Mandate government, the Jewish settlement in Palestine prospered again. Among the Arab residents, the feelings of dispossession increased again in the wake of the renewed expansion of the Jewish settlement and the increased presence of Jewish worshippers in the holy places such as the Wailing Wall.

On August 23, 1929, a Jewish demonstration at the Wailing Wall, organized by the Beytar movement, protested for the right of Jews to pray there. In response Arab residents, armed with knives and clubs, attacked the Jewish neighborhoods of Jerusalem. These disturbances spread the following day (Saturday August 24) to Hebron where 67 Jews were murdered and the rest deported from the town, their home looted. The result was the complete annihilation of the old Jewish community living in Hebron for centuries. It is worth to note that several Arab families protected Jews and assisted their escape from the town. The Jews in Tel-Aviv and Haifa managed to repel the Arab attacks thanks to the 'Hagana' operatives. In total, 113 Jews were killed and 339 wounded, in these disturbances.

The Mandate government condemned the Arab riots, and declared a temporary lockout of all Arab newspaper as these were seen responsible for incitement to violence and disturbance of the public order.

The success of the 'Hagana' operations, where the organization was present, increased its influence among the Jewish settlers. In the same time, following the murders and riots, there were views inside the 'Hagana' that a more proactive approach was necessary and that a more aggressive stance should be taken in regards to the Arab side. These differences of opinion culminated in a split in the organization and the creation of the 'Haetzal' (National Militant Organization).

Another result of the disturbances was the publication of the second 'White Book' by Passfield, in October 1930, which limited the sale of land to Jews and the immigration of Jews to Palestine according to the economical ability to receive potential immigrants and the employment situation in the Arab population. It further declared that a 'double obligation' existed – to Arabs and to Jews – and therefore recommended the establishment of a legislative assembly to reflect the interests of each side. Jews who did receive permission to immigrate to Palestine received special visas called 'Certificates'.

The second 'White Book' signified a withdrawal from previously stated British policy in that it mentions a 'double obligation' in contrary to the Balfour declaration and the Mandate, both containing a commitment to the establishment of a Jewish National Home.

The Fifth Aliya started in 1929, following the end of the recession and continued until the start of World War II in 1939. It brought to Palestine immigrants from Europe and Asia. This wave, which started as a modestly sized pioneer immigration, became a mass immigration in 1933-1935, following the rise of the Nazi party in Germany and the racial persecutions that followed. After a period of reduced immigration rates in the years 1936-1937 masses arrived again in 1938-1939. These years saw the arrival of tens of thousands of immigrants, some illegal.

The rise of Adolph Hitler and his Nazi party to power in Germany caused a shock to the lives of Jews in Germany and its neighbors in Eastern Europe, who could no longer hold their leading positions in the economies of these countries. Jews in Nazi Germany suffered a wave of open and aggressive Anti-Semitism and many of them decided to immigrate to Palestine. Immigration to the USA was not an option at the time since in 1924 the US decided to decrease immigration and remained closed to most potential immigrants at the era of the Fifth Aliya although the situation in Europe was well known.

This wave of immigrants consisted mainly of middle class immigrants: liberal professionals, merchants and industrialists. The number of 'pioneers' was smaller than in previous waves and in contrast the number of wealthy and professional immigrants larger. The tendency of these immigrants to prefer urban settlements was understandable and some previously agricultural settlements were transformed into small cities.

Although only 21% of immigrants in the Fifth Aliya came from Germany, their influence was significant and they set the tone of its character. The German immigrants changed accepted patterns in the Jewish settlement in Palestine and created a new type of Bourgeois-Urban class in the country. They transformed urban construction, opened cafes and designer shops and initiated cultural institutions (such as the philharmonic orchestra) that made a significant contribution to the cultural development in the land. Educated immigrants joined the universities and furthered the development of higher education.

Due to its large scope, the contribution of the Fifth Aliya to the development of the Jewish settlement and its economical growth was immense. The 280,000 immigrants brought the Jewish population to more than 475,000, approximately 31% of the total population of Palestine.

Around 5,000 youth immigrated to Palestine in the years 1934-1939 as part of the operation of the 'Aliyat Hanoar' (Youth Immigration) organization – an organization established for the purpose of saving the European Jewish youth

from the Nazi persecutions. This was possible through the issuance of special 'Certificates' by the British Mandate government.

As a result of the dramatic increase in the Jewish population in Palestine, and due to the influence of Anti-Semitic propaganda that reached the region with the rise of Fascists in Italy and the Nazis in Germany, a mutiny erupted in 1936 among the Arab population in Palestine, and continued until 1939. During the years of this mutiny, violent hostilities were conducted aimed at Jews and at the British Mandate authorities – Jews were shot down as they worked, traveled or went on vacation and crops were burned. Arabs also attacked British convoys of food and other supplies.

On the first day of the mutiny, April 19, 1936, nine Jews died in Tel-Aviv and 54 wounded. The following day 7 more were killed. The second day of the mutiny saw a general strike of Arab workers, meant to harm the Jewish economy which depended on this labor. The strike continued for 175 days. Arabs were hoping to achieve, through the strike, the following demands: A complete stop of Jewish immigration, a ban on sale of land to Jews and the establishment of representative government according to relative numbers of residents.

In response to the Arab mutiny, the British mobilized large forces to the region, but on the same time promised to create an investigatory committee to review Arab claims. The Jewish settlement overcame the shortage in manpower by replacing Arab workers with Jewish. The Arabs, not only failed to achieve their goal but the exact opposite happened – the Jewish economy prospered. The Arab residents declared a truce only at the brink of starvation and after losing the support of other Arab countries.

During the mutiny, the Jewish settlement continued to expand through a settling movement called 'Homa u Migdal' (Wall and Tower). The modus operandi of this movement was to establish new settlements in the middle of the night with the erection of pre-fabricated wooden tower and walls. The Ottoman law, still being the law of the land at that time, stated that a structure with a roof had a right of existence and was not to be demolished. Through this method, 44 new settlements were established in the three years from 1936 to 1939, settlements that expanded and redefined the boundaries of the Jewish area in Palestine.

With the start of the Arab strike, the port of Jaffa, which was the entry point for travelers and goods to Palestine, was closed. The Jewish settlement responded with the construction of a new port, the port of Tel-Aviv, which opened in 1936 and replaced the port of Jaffa in the Jewish economy.

The Peel Committee – the committee the British Mandate government created to review Arab claims – published its report on July 7, 1937. The report concluded that the British Mandate had to end and that the land should be divided between the Arabs and the Jews. On the same time, the committee established the Jewish immigration to Palestine should be limited to 75,000 people for the next 5 years – only 15,000 immigrants per year. The Arabs

rejected the committee recommendations since they accepted and affirmed the Jewish rights in Palestine. The Jews were not thrilled with the recommendations of the committee as well, but accepted them in general. The Arab mutiny was renewed in September 1937 but waned slowly until it ended in 1939. The Jewish settlement reacted to the limitations on immigration with an illegal immigration operation known as the 'Haapala'. The Haapala was the organized illegal entry into Palestine managed by the local Jewish settlement from the early 1930s, during the years of World War II and until the establishment of the State of Israel.

The Jewish population was divided as to the right way to respond to the Arab mutiny. The 'Hagana' organization favored a policy of restraint, which was the accepted policy towards Arab aggression towards the Jewish population at the time. The restraint policy called for self-control and self-defense when attacked. This policy was implemented through the fortification of settlements and conducting their defense from behind walls. The policy also prevented any violent reactions and retaliatory actions against innocent Arabs. The left-wing, labor section of the population supported this policy for moral reasons, claiming that retaliations against Arabs would undermine the moral foundations of the Jewish and the general population of Palestine. Another reason for the policy was the political view that it would improve relations with the British government and a positive view of the Zionist movement in the general world opinion which would, in the larger scheme, benefit the Jewish settlement in Palestine.

Some members of the Hagana who were opposed to the policy of restraint, left the organization and formed the 'Etzel', an organization that initiated militant operations against the Arab aggression, in defiance of the decisions of the leadership of the Jewish population. They proclaimed attacks were the best way for self-defense. The Etzel policy led to nondiscriminatory retaliations including aggression towards innocent Arab residents, in reaction to Arab attacks on Jews.

In a last attempt to solve the problem of the Jewish-Arab conflict, the British government convened the 'Round Table' convention between February 7 and 17, 1939. The convention was a failure, and was followed by the publication, on May 17, 1939, of the third 'White book' by McDonald. This paper decreed mainly that: Palestine can not belong to either the Jews or the Arabs; In the area of the British Mandate in Palestine a Bi-National state will be established within 10 years from the publication of the paper which will belong to all residents of the country- Jews and Arabs alike; The Jewish immigration to Palestine in the next 5 years will be limited to 65,000 (and even that only due to the dire conditions of the Jews in Europe). 15,000 Jews may enter the country immediately and for the next 5 years only 10,000 a year will be allowed; any immigration beyond these numbers will depend on Arab consent and finally the sale of land to Jews will be limited by law.

The book, dubbed by the Jews 'The Book of Betrayal' constituted a complete change in British policy, which started with the Balfour declaration, and the completion of the gradual departure from its original pro-Zionist policy. For

these reasons the paper and the decrees that were enacted following its publication caused angry reactions and protests in the Jewish population and the Zionist movement.

World War II which broke with the invasion of Poland by the Nazi Germans on September 1, 1939, found the Jewish population in Palestine exhausted from three years of constant struggle against the Arab mutiny and the 'White Book' policy. Despite the local conflict with the mandate government, the Jewish population in Palestine supported all heartedly the allies, and saw Nazi Germany an enemy of humanity in general and of the Jewish people in particular. The Jewish population considered it self an active ally of Britain in the war and 38,000 of its members volunteered to serve in the British Army during its course – a huge number in relation to the total population of 431,000 Jews in Palestine at the time.

When the war finally ended in 1945, the horrifying scale of the Holocaust of the Jews in Europe was reviled. Many in the Jewish population in Palestine assumed that the limitation on immigration will be canceled, but the British government decided to continue its policy of immigration restrictions, including of Holocaust survivors. The 'Mossad LeHagan B' (defense institution B) was established by the Hagana to assist refugees reach Palestine in an illegal immigration effort. The operation sent tens of thousands of Holocaust survivors from several ports in Europe, in any ship available to Palestine. Each ship was commanded by an operative of the Mossad Lehagana B, which also provided guards and crew if necessary.

The British used varied tactics to try and contain the flow of immigrants: they tried preventing ships from leaving ports in Europe, hunted the ships as they approached the shores of Palestine, and starting in 1945 used was ships to capture the illegal fleet. Up to late 1945 the British used to imprison the illegal immigrants in holding camps in Palestine, where they would be released once immigration permits could be provided. Later, as the camps in Palestine filled with refugees, the British started deporting them to camps in Cyprus. One of the most famous holding camps in Palestine was a previous British military base in Atlit.

Most illegal immigrants' ships which approached the shores of Palestine between 1946 and 1947 were caught by the British, but each brought more pressure on the British government, including protest of the Jewish population. In 14 years of Haapala (illegal immigration) 141 ships sailed and brought 110,000 immigrants to Palestine.

In early 1942, as the Africa corps of Nazi Germany headed by General Romel, advanced east in northern Africa towards the Suez Canal it created a period of anxiety for the Jewish population in Palestine, as occupation of the land by the Nazis was feared. The danger disappeared in November of the same year with the British victory at El-Almein.

The economical condition of the Jewish population in Palestine improved during the war since the country was used as a basis for British troops and

supplies and due to large fortification project managed by local contractors in Palestine and the Middle East region.

Italy joined Germany and declared war on Britain in 1940 and launched attacks at Palestine. Haifa was bombed from the air on 15 and 24 July, 1940 and tens of people were killed in these attacks. On September 9, Tel-Aviv was attacked and almost 100 people were killed, many more wounded and extensive damage caused.

Following the Allies victory and the end of World War II in 1945, the Jewish population restarted its struggle for independence more intensely. The fate of the Jews in Europe helped to increase the conviction that the only solution for the plight of the Jews will be the establishment of a Jewish independent and sovereign state in the Land of Israel. All the factions and organization acting in Palestine at the time united for a joint, armed struggle against the British Mandate. The 'Resistance Movement' was created and operated in 1945-1946 performing 11 large operations. The most famous of these operations were: the release of 200 illegal immigrants from the holding camp in Atlit, blowing up a train station and tracks in 'The Night of Trains', attacks on British police stations, blowing up ten bridges around the country in 'The night of Bridges' and the bombing of the King David hotel housing the British command center in Palestine.

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly voted in favor of the establishment of states for the Jews and for the Arabs in the area of the British Mandate in Palestine and set their boundaries according to The Plan of Division. The vote was carried by a majority of 33 votes in favor, 13 against and 10 absentees. The Jewish state was to comprise 3 parts, not to include Jaffa (to become an Arab enclave) and Jerusalem (to become an International Zone).

Despite the segmented and discontinued nature of the area allocated for the Jewish state in the approved plan, the Jewish leadership embraced the decision and Jews celebrated with dances in the street of cities and towns all around the country. Celebrations were held in Jewish communities around the world. In Rome a thanksgiving prier was held in front of the Titus Gate, a location symbolizing the destruction of the Jewish settlement in ancient Israel by the Romans 2,000 years earlier. The British government announced the Mandate will come to an end on May 15 1948 and the end of British military presence in Palestine by August 1, 1948.

In contrast to the Jewish reaction, the Arabs rejected the Division Plan completely. The day after the UN resolution, Arabs started hostilities against Jews, starting the Israeli War of Independence.

On May 14 1948, David Ben-Gurion announced the establishment of the State of Israel, in the Tel-Aviv Museum at Rothschild Ave. in Tel-Aviv. Ben-Gurion, at that time the chairman of the National Assembly, which functioned as a temporary parliament of the State of Israel, read the announcement known as the 'Declaration of Independent'. This announcement outlined the

character of the state of Israel as a Jewish state to serve as a home for all Jews in the world, where all people shall receive equal rights with no distinction of religion, race or gender. After the declaration was read it was signed by the members of the Nations Council. First to sign was David Ben-Gurion who was later nominated the first Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of the first, interim, government.

After the signing ceremony, the abolition of the 'White Book', restrictions on immigration and other initial decision of the government were announced. Immediately following the declaration, the new state was recognized by the USA, the Soviet Union and other states.

The following day, May 15 1948, the day the British Mandate in Palestine ended; Arab countries joined the Arabs in Palestine in their fight against the new Jewish state. The armies of these countries invaded the new born state. The State of Israel, established during the war, founded an interim government, set judiciary and executive decrees and the fighting elements previously called 'The Defense Units' were declared on May 26 1948 as the new 'Israel Defense Forces' (IDF). The war ended with a victory of IDF who had managed to push back the invading armies and extend the area controlled by Israel beyond the original boundaries set in the UN resolution. The war ended officially on July 20, 1949 (although fighting has actually ended in January of that year), with the signing of cease-fire agreements with Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt.

Establishment of the First Women Pioneer Home in Haifa

Dr. Haim Weitzman, the President of the International Zionist Federation during the years 1920 – 1946 (except between 1931-1935) and later the first President of The State of Israel, learned of the Zionist activities of the ladies of WLP. In 1928 Dr. Weitzman contacted the secretary of WLP in New York, Mrs. Danziger, to inform her of his commitment to the worthy cause of the establishment a home for new women immigrants in the Land of Israel. In his letter, Dr. Weitzman tells that he has approached the Baron Edmond de Rothschild, leaving in Paris, with a request for the allocation of a piece of land in Haifa for the establishment of the League's first Home in the Land. Following is Dr. Weitzman's letter to Mrs. Danziger, Secretary of WLP in New York, dated November 13, 1928:

13th November 1928

Mrs. E. S. Danziger
Secretary, Women's League for Palestine
1274 Fifth Avenue
New York City

Dear Mrs. Danziger,

I was very glad to hear that the Women's League for Palestine has undertaken to provide a home for the immigrant girls to Palestine. This project appeals to me particularly because we are at the present time bringing 100 girls into the country from Siberia and the need for such a centre is greatly felt.

I am, of course, heartily in favour of your project and have today written to Baron Edmond de Rothschild to ask him whether it would be possible for the PICA (= Palestinian Jewish Colonization Association) to place at your disposal a piece of land in Haifa on which your first centre could be erected. I hope that the Baron will accede to this request, and I shall let you know as soon as I hear from him. I am sending t you herewith copy the letter to Baron Edmond.

With best wishes for the continued success of your work,
I am,
Yours very sincerely,
Ch. Weizmann

Following the collaboration formed between WLI and the Workingwomen's Council, for the joint goal of providing support to women pioneers, WLI has consulted Mrs. Golda Meyerson (Meir), who served since 1928 as the Secretary of the Workingwomen's Council in the Histadrut (the General Labor Federation of Hebrew Workers in Israel), regarding the most beneficial use of the donations raised by the League.

When asked by the chairman of WLP about her views as to the type of house that will best meet the requirements of the girls whom the League is trying to provide for, replied Mrs. Meyerson by stating, first, that a centre with dormitories for 100 women (that later could be enlarged to accommodate 200 women), which also offered social facilities, would relieve the workingwomen and girls of their most serious problem – that of finding a home. But, she added, if the League wishes the Centre to become a really important factor in the community; if it is to fulfill the greatest need in Palestine, then its facilities should not be limited only to dormitories and the opportunity for social diversion. The Centre should provide also the opportunity of learning a trade, so that the girls can become self-supporting. Therefore, Mrs. Meyerson recommended that in addition to the dormitories, the kitchen, the library, and social hall, the Centre ought to provide four classes, so that the girls could learn trades, and eventually, become self-supporting. As trade Mrs. Meyerson mentioned in particular needlework, knitting and dressmaking.

The laundry, suggested Mrs. Meyerson, should serve the girls and the Centre, part of time, and in the rest of the time should be put to use for the benefit of the girls, who ought to have the opportunity of earning a little income by laundering the clothing and linens of the community. This would have further advantage in that it would remove a great burden from the shoulders of the workers, who would thus be provided with a place through which they could get service at a minimum expense. The laundry, Mrs. Meyerson pointed out,

could be installed in a shack separated and apart from the main residential building.

The League adopted Mrs. Meyerson's recommendations and forwarded them to the assistant to the Baron de Rothschild, Mr. Anri Frank, in Paris. The request by the League was approved by the Baron and a long and complex process of allocating the parcel of land for the construction of the Women Pioneer Home, was started.

The parcel was in the possession of PICA and contained the Alliance School and other public structures. The establishment of the Women Pioneer Home required the extension of the HaChalutz St.

Architect Benjamin Chaikin who, among others, has planned the King David Hotel in Jerusalem (1929) and later the Haifa Municipality Building (1942), was selected to plan the house. His plan was adapted by the Urban Building Committee to suit the location and climate conditions.

Planning and construction were supervised by Eng. Shmuel Itzkovitch, then the Chairman of the Engineers Association, a leader of the Jewish community in Haifa and an activist for the development of the Hadar HaCarmel Neighborhood.

(28) The Pioneer Women's Home in Haifa during construction

(29) The completed Pioneer Women's Home in Haifa, 1931

The question of ownership of the new building and the land on which it will be built, was charged and created a dispute between WLP, the organization funding the establishment of the building and the Workingwomen's Council, which on its part provided advise, mediation and general assistance in the execution of the project. It was finally agreed that the house will be registered under the ownership of the WLP and PICA.

(3) New immigrants and WLP representatives, Haifa port, in the 1930s

(4) New immigrants and WLP representatives on the gangplank

(5) New immigrant settling into her new life at Beth HaHalutzot in Haifa

(6) Cooking together on the roof of Beth HaChalutzot in Haifa

(7) The new immigrants residing in Beth HaChalutzot studying Hebrew

(9) Pioneers and soldiers gathering on the roof of Beth HaChalutzot in Haifa

Later in time, as the volume of activity in the first Beth HaChalutzot in Haifa increased significantly, a second home was opened in Haifa at Kuri st. No. 20, where a range of activities were held, including Hebrew classes.

(69) Hebrew lesson at the second Haifa Beth HaChalutzot, at Kuri st.

Establishment of the second Home – in Tel-Aviv

Following the establishment of the first Beth HaChalutzot in Haifa and its successful activities for the assimilation of new immigrants and their integration in the country, the Workingwomen's Council suggested WLP will construct a second Home, this time in the central region, in Tel-Aviv. WLP accepted and received a parcel in King Gorge Street for that purpose from the municipality of Tel-Aviv. Architect Elza Gideoni-Mandelshtam, one of the few women architects working in the country in the early 20th century, was selected to design of the second Beth HaChalutzot in a planning competition. Together with two other leading women architects - Genia Averbouch and Lota Cohen – Elza Gideoni planned in the early 1930s the famous 'Galina Café' in the (old) Exhibition Grounds in Tel-Aviv.

These women architects were pioneers in devoting their lives to their profession instead of focusing on family life and rearing children and by integrating and excelling in a world dominated by men alone. Their creations were in the spirit of Modernism and the International Style, which swept the world of architecture as a storm in the 1930s and was characterized with a new dictionary of geometrical and machinelike forms, clean of any ornaments and decorations. They combined in their plans a social and economical ideology based on the principals of socialism, welfare and feminism.

Beth HaChalutzot in Tel-Aviv opened its gates in 1936. It was two stories high and included dormitories, two large halls, a kitchen and other rooms and workshops. When the necessity to provide lodging to more women increased, the house was expanded and a third floor was added.

(25) Construction of Beth HaChalutzot in Tel-Aviv, 1936

(26) Beth HaChalutzot in Tel Aviv, at its opening, 1936

(27) Beth HaChalutzot in Tel Aviv, following the addition of the third floor

To provide income for Beth HaChalutzot and in order to cover daily expenses, the Home's management made the halls available for rent and published the following announcement:

We would like to call you attention to the copious and handsome hall in Beth HaChalutzot, 37 King Gorge St. The hall seats 120 – 150 comfortably and is suitable for lectures, gatherings, etc. Adjacent to said hall, a second hall, serving as a cooperative restaurant, seats a further 120 – 150 and so parties for up to 300 people can be arranged. Rent is very favorable.

(10) Cooks at Beth HaChalutzot

At Beth HaChalutzot in Tel-Aviv new women immigrants were received together with young local girls who needed a roof over their head and a

vocation to provide for themselves and pave their way to independence. In most cases the parents of these young girls could not afford to support them either due to lack of economical means or because they remained abroad and communications could not be maintained. The primary goal was for the women to stay at Beth HaChalutzot no more than three months.

The residents of Beth HaChalutzot paid a token rent and tried to pay back their living expenses, paid for by Beth HaChalutzot and WLP, in any possible way. One of the ways to accomplish that was through the cooperative operations. Starting in Beth HaChalutzot in Haifa, and now in Tel-Aviv as well, cooperative operations in the spirit of socialism and the values of the labor movement, prevailing in the country at the time, were established. The residents of Beth HaChalutzot and other workers, who did not reside there, worked in those operations and sold the services or products to cover, first, the operating expenses and then their living expenses in Beth HaChalutzot. The rest was divided between the workers as their wages.

And so read a pamphlet advertising the cooperative operations of Beth HaChalutzot in Tel-Aviv in the 1930s:

'Gauze' Fabric – A group of workers who acquired the profession to an exquisite level, manufactures fabrics for furniture, blankets, rugs, pillows, etc. The produce is of excellent quality, beauty and colors. It is well suited to the light and weather of the land.

Wickerwork – A group of cooperative workers produces wickerwork furniture: chairs, armchairs, tables, etc. Following all sorts of modern and comfortable designs. Work is of excellent quality and beauty. Orders and repairs accepted.
Branch: A. Strauss, Tel-Aviv, 46 Yona HaNavie St.

(14) Wickerwork furniture making

Sewing Workshop – Seamstresses cooperative, professionals of the highest degree. We accept orders from individuals and stores for Women's and Children's clothing. Designs are according to latest fashion and adjusted to the taste of each individual.

(8) Sewing

(12) At the Sewing Workshop

Laundry – A group of cooperative workers. Performs any laundry job, ironing, repairs and cleaning with full guarantee. By the special arrangement of fixing the laundry the work is modern and perfect.

(13) At the Laundry

The products of the cooperative operations of Beth HaChalutzot is first class both in quality and beauty but is sold for very low and comfortable prices. All jobs carried out with full guarantee.

In a letter to the WLP board in New York, dated January 28, 1938, Lili Zadek, manager of Beth HaChalutzot in Tel-Aviv, writes that " Due to the harsh economic conditions (in order to assist the unemployed girls) we have initiated new cooking classes and now 50 girls, mostly Home residents, receive up to three meals daily here. You can imagine that this increases the levels of interest and activity to the regular pace of life in the Home. In these harsh days we feel more than ever the happiness and joy of our beloved Home..."

Part of the minutes of the Managing Board of Beth HaChalutzot convened February 2, 1938. Present were Mrs. Yavnin, Mr. Pardo (Adv.), comrades Rivka Kityin, Beba Idelson (secretary of the Workingwomen's Council), Genia Felnik, Beba Halperin:

Regarding the acceptance of girls to the Home, there should be a list of applicants and an investigation of the referring organization as to the urgency of the case.

... We must ascertain that residents are members of the 'Sick Workers Fund' (Kupat Holim). Payment for the first month to Kupat Holim should be made by the referring organization.

... Regarding the house itself: there is a feeling that the house can not provide room for a sufficient number of girls. We must start thinking of a third floor or finding another way to increase the number of beds in the existing space. The German Jews Settlement Department (of the Jewish Agency) offered we come to them with plans, and maybe we can receive a loan... it is also proposed that we write to the 'Contractors Office' as well as the municipality regarding our plans to enlarge the house and we might receive suggestions and assistance from them.

In a letter to WLP management in New York, Rivka Kityin, Home manager in Tel-Aviv, writes in March 1938:

During the month I have been working (as manager of Beth HaChalutzot in Tel-Aviv) I have realized that the purpose of Beth HaChalutzot is to enable the new immigrant to adapt to the conditions of the land and to find suitable work. This purpose has changed significantly for two reasons: The restrictions on immigration to the Land of Israel almost to a complete stop and the harsh economic conditions currently prevailing in the country.

Due to the current level of unemployment, girls remain in the Home a further 8-9 months at least, among them women who have been in the country for 12-13 years. The characteristics of the girls are very diverse, both from the training perspective and work experience. We

have taken in teachers, seamstresses and house keepers. The age of tenants ranges between 17 and 32. As mentioned in the letter, social work with the girls is currently the main problem. The first goal in front of us is that no girl leaving in our Home will ever go hungry.

We have elected a committee from within the residents with the main purpose of promoting mutual assistance among the girls. It is important to create a friendly atmosphere among the Home's residents. Inside the committee tasks have been divided into cultural work and health related work. We are devising a modest plan for Purim: Dinner, news flash, music, singing and maybe a Yemenite drama group.

The conditions in the cooperative operations are dire as well, due to the bad general economical conditions. We would like to start an extensive advertising campaign for them. Maybe that will help. There is no doubt that advertising through a movie will further our cause significantly, but this will require a large expense. We assume that if we can arrange for a movie to be sent to you, you could no doubt use it as important publicity material for us.

Out of the minutes of the board of directors of Beth HaChalutzot convened March 27, 1938 at the offices of Beth HaChalutzot. Present were: Mr. Pardo (Adv.), Mrs. Yavnin, Mrs. Beba Idelson, Mrs. Rivka Kityin, Mrs. Beba Halperin.

Mrs. Kityin reports of the present condition of the Home. There is significant unemployment amongst the girls and therefore we believe it is essential to expand the social work. Now, the girls who are not working can receive bread, jam, tea and Herring. We are also planning to receive vegetables through Mishan (a welfare agency of the Histadrut). Starting in March 25 we will arrange for Sabbath eve dinners for Home residents together with unemployed girls from the Ministry of Employment. We have also arranged for hot water to be available once a week, on Friday afternoon. We provide the wood and the girls in their turn prepare the hot water... Out of the girls committee, they have divided the work amongst themselves: cultural activity, health activity, etc. The committee is very active and can reach the girls much easier than the Home workers, for a number of reasons...

To that the WLP board in New York replied:

The League supports the construction of a third floor in Beth HaChalutzot in Tel-Aviv using donation from the Germany Jews and other bodies. The League supports social work in the Homes in Haifa and in Tel-Aviv, to support the unemployed women. The League sets a budget for the construction of a separate entrance to the restaurant in the Home in Haifa and for the construction of two restrooms, to improve sanitary conditions and the privacy of the girls.

The League management asks that samples of small woven artifacts to be sent to them and they will try to sell those in the coming World Fair.

Signed:

Mrs. David L. (Rose) Issacs

Chairman of the council for the Land of Israel

A letter from Beth HaChalutzot in Tel-Aviv to WLP, dated May 25, 1939:

...In the last Sabbath a walk to Borochov neighborhood (later part of Givataim). Along the way a visit to the WIZO school for home economics and agriculture in Nachalat Ytzchak and the 'Girls Training Farm' in Borochov neighborhood, established by the Pioneer Women's Organization together with the Workingwomen's Council. The girls were impressed by the cattle-shed, the henhouse and the gardens and asked many questions.

From there we continued to the commune at Borochov neighborhood, where a dinner was pre-arranged. The girls working in the wickerwork cooperative of Beth HaChalutzot are members of this commune, and were there to greet us. Following rest and dinner we received a tour of the place. The reading room is pleasant and offers newspapers in many languages... we have seen the children's houses defended by tall walls to counter attacks by neighboring Arabs. The commune is located close to a Jewish community and only an electrical fence separates them from the Arabs. Constant watch is required in the place. We have come to realize the level of tension these comrades live under, and how, despite everything, they continue to wake up for their daily chores and activities during the day and for guard duty during the night... We have always had a strong bond created between the city and the rural areas, between the city life and the agricultural life. These walks always bring both aspects to the front, always make the relations between the girls friendlier and more tolerant, and continually show the vital importance of the village in the life in the Land of Israel.

A letter from Beth HaChalutzot in Tel-Aviv to WLP, dated July 3, 1938:

...We are negotiating with the Department of Immigration regarding 30 certificates for Bathey HaChalutzot. Based on these certificates we may receive a subsidy from the Germany Jews Department of Settlement in the Jewish Agency, a sum to be dedicated for maintenance and training of the girls who will arrive under these certificates. This will require us to enlarge the workshops. If we receive a positive response from the Department of Immigration, our plan is to establish the rest of the workshops immediately...

Approximately 20 girls are studying cutting and sewing from one of the girls in our cloths store. These girls come from the most needy families in the city and it will be an important achievement if they succeed in learning a vocation...

Situation in the cooperatives:

The furniture wickerwork cooperative was created following the bloody disturbances of 1936 by a group of refugee women who were unemployed and forced to leave Jaffa. They have acquired the vocation at Beth HaChalutzot. In this cooperative conditions have improved, and profits are seen since January. But the trade is seasonal and in certain days in the future work may not be available at all.

In the mean time we have written to the school for the blind in Jerusalem regarding our girls, asking that they teach them how to weave baskets such as those being used in picking oranges. It is not yet clear if such type of work will create more income but our aspiration is to continue employing the girls during periods where no work is available in waving furniture.

The laundry operation is in a very large deficit and the Workingwomen's Council is trying to get them a loan from the Jewish Agency.

The weaving cooperative: The girls have received orders from most institutions being established these days and one could say their condition is good. They earn approximately 280-300 mills a day. We have written a letter to the manager of the Mount Scopus Hospital asking him to make every effort possible to ensure materials necessary for the hospital for upholstery and drapes will be purchased from us.

In the cloths store 3-4 girls are currently employed. The store's name was recently advertised using pamphlets directed at parents of pupils in the city schools, where it said the school uniforms could be purchased at Beth HaChalutzot cloths store...

We are interested in creating a small garden in our back yard and have asked for an instructor for this purpose. This will provide employment for two of our unemployed girls.

We had some health issues in the Home, and have decide that every girl accepted to Beth HaChalutzot will be required to present a health certificate.

The policy is to not ask the WLP for money to cover the Home's debts but due to the harsh economical condition in the country, it would be possible for the League to come to the assistance of Beth HaChalutzot...

In the summer of 1938 Beth HaChalutzot received a 'Victrola' Gramophone, to delight the girls with music.

A letter from Beth HaChalutzot in Tel Aviv to WLP, August 14, 1938:

Thank you for the Victrola instrument, which will delight us during Sabbath eve dinners and other gatherings we have from time to time.

We wanted to put the Victrols to work immediately, but following the tragedy in Ramat HaKovesh the earlier night, when 8 people were killed by a group of terrorists, we felt it was not an appropriate time to celebrate the arrival of the Victrola. We have found reading an essay on the bloody disturbances of 1936 a more appropriate activity for that evening. We had a lecture, recently, on the political situation in the region. This sort of lectures is required these days, as people are frequently confused regarding their point of view on the current tragic situation we find ourselves in. The issue of self restraint is in all our minds, and therefore it is imperative that problems are discussed and clarified as much as possible. On the memorial day for Herzl and Bialik we held a discussion of both these leaders...

Our plan is for the new girls to train in all our cooperative's vocations: weaving, sawing, ironing, wickerwork and other vocations outside Beth HaChalutzot...

(15) Weaving (1930s)

We believe that every working woman must be proficient in house chores and cooking. Thus, despite the fact that the girl will be trained to further extent in a specific trait, she will also be required to learn cooking and housekeeping. Our main concern is that the girls leaving Beth HaChalutzot will be ready and trained, and we hope that during the year they will spend with us they will learn a vocation that will assist in their adaptation to the country.

In reparation for the arrival of the new girls we have asked the girls who have been leaving at Beth HaChalutzot for more than a year to leave...

In the vocational school we currently have 20 girls studying, working and progressing nicely. We enclose a photograph taken during a sawing class.

We had to mend some cracks in the walls. Houses in Israel tend to crack after a year for an unknown reason...

The weaving operation is in very good condition. In the near future they will complete a job for the 'HaBima' theater... this cooperative is well known around the country thanks to publicity and the quality of its work. We hope that the name of cooperative will reach faraway countries during the Fair in America. The situation in the cloths store is not bad as well. The wickerwork and laundry operations are in a bad situation. We have invited a reporter to write a story about us and this may help our situation.

We are planning to build a wooden hut on the roof of the building to serve as a club for working women. This will allow us to continue activities with more working women in the city and so a larger group of working women will be centered around Beth HaChalutzot.

A letter from Beth HaChalutzot in Tel-Aviv to WLP, November 25, 1938:

...Approximately 15 girls aged 25-27 arrived from Germany and Austria. It is sad to think that they need to be constantly worried regarding the situation of their relatives in Germany and Austria. Almost all of them received telegrams from their families begging them to try any possible way to save them and bring them to the Land of Israel... Our work is to double the efforts to root the memories they carry with them and to strengthen in them the awareness necessary to acclimatize in the country. In general it should be pointed out that they are 'good material'. They have shown a willingness to learn language and vocation and we feel their desire to know everything regarding the happenings in the Land of Israel.

October 25 we opened a cooking and home economy course. The cooking teacher was educated in England... the girls show daily progress, they become more knowledgeable and independent. All 15 girls study in this course. As we told you in a previous letter, we feel it is important that every girl learns cooking as well as other branches of house work...

We are negotiating the training the girls will receive after graduating the cooking course. We have contacted an upholsterer, a shoemaker and a book binder. Some girls have started acquiring a vocation back in Germany or Austria, and when we find them sufficiently proficient in these vocations we will arrange for them to complete their training here.

(11) At the Shoemaking workshop

(17) At the Bookbinding workshop

In regards to cultural work, we are making every effort possible to bring the girls closer to life here in the country. The girls are divided into three groups for the study of Hebrew. Every group studies one hour a day. In the short time they have been learning they have shown good progress and expressed their strong will to study well and hard. We are also conducting a series of lectures: one on the history of the workingwomen movement in the Land of Israel, convenes once a week on Wednesdays and the other on the problems of Palestine which also convenes once a week, on Mondays. A handwork course takes place twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Every Friday after dinner we hold reading nights and community singing which all the girls happily join.

(22) Hebrew class at Beth HaChalutzot

Last week we walked to the Brener House where every Friday evening a lecture is held followed by community singing. This time the lecture was on Carl Cautzki. We have learned two new songs and we sing them all the time since. After the community singing we had a 'Soda and Ice-cream party' and then we came back home. The new girls have also seen the play 'Hard being a Jew' by the HaBima theater. Before leaving for the theater we have discussed with them the problems depicted by Shalom Aleychem in this story... Last Sabbath we were present at the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the Kinneret group, organized by the Department of Workingwomen of the Histadrut. We heard current members of the group talk about the beginning of the communal life and the great difficulties the pioneer experienced in the country...

A letter from Beth HaChalutzot in Tel-Aviv to WLP, March 31, 1939:

Dear friends,

...at the time this letter is written there are 46 girls living in Beth HaChalutzot and as soon as the new building is finished we will be able to accommodate additional 12-15 girls. This means that the day is not far when we will be housing 60 girls in total. The current Home has 28 rooms, out of which 15 are dormitories housing 46 girls. Appart from a large room for four girls there are three girls in each room. The rooms are spacious and simply furnished. In addition we have a special sick room used by the girls while they suffer from simple illnesses such as influenza, and for solitary confinement in cases where an infectious disease is suspected. If a girl needs constant medical care and treatment, she is transferred to a hospital.

We have a communal kitchen for use by the girls and two interconnecting lounges that currently serve as dining room and a reading room with a library. The other rooms are used for the cooperative operations, an office, a room for the manager and one for the custodian. Beth HaChalutzot is equipped with a large lecture hall which is used for lectures in a variety of topics such as economics, politics, music, etc. All these activities make Beth HaChalutzot a cultural center of significant importance, not just for the girls themselves but to all the working community.

The new building will include the following facilities: A kitchen, dinning room and a study. In addition there are three rooms that will eventually be used as workshops, but will function as dormitories until we can build a further floor to cater for necessary accommodations. This further floor is planned to include two rooms that will serve as clubs for 'The Working Mothers Organization' and the 'Workingwomen's Organization'.

Regarding the girls, only those who are without means and support are accepted at Beth HaChalutzot. Furthermore, once a girl finds a job and is able to provide for herself she leaves Beth HaChalutzot and her place is given to another girl who is in greater need of the provided services. In this manner and due to the constant rotation of residents, more than 300 girls have enjoyed the services provided by Beth HaChalutzot during the, relatively, short period of two and a half years since it opened.

In September 1938 the Workingwomen's Council was issued the first series of certificates for girls to come to Palestine and live in Beth HaChalutzot. The importance of this event can not be, exaggerated, since through this instrument we are able to save a few more of the refugees of the inferno in 'Greater Germany'. In the same time Beth HaChalutzot is on the high road towards its real goal, which is to become a training center for immigrant girls...

The girls in Beth HaChalutzot come from several different countries and from varied backgrounds and surroundings. Current residents are from the following countries with the following ratios: 50% from Germany, 33% from Poland the other 17% are from: Latvia, Russia, Romania, and one from Yemen. During 1938 there were between 13 and 15 girls at Beth HaChalutzot who were unemployed. In these cases food and lodgings are provided free of charge by Beth HaChalutzot. In addition they receive full medical attention and may use all the services, cultural and others, provided by Beth HaChalutzot...

Cultural and Educational activities:

Studying Hebrew is mandatory for all girls residing at Beth HaChalutzot. Every Friday, dinner is enjoyed together and is followed by community singing and then a special program usually related to special events such as Jewish Holidays, Zionism related anniversaries, etc. The girls may invite guests for these Friday nights – Relatives or close friends. The girls themselves organize the evening with staff members.

A significant number of girls are particularly interested in the arts and visits are organized in the Tel-Aviv Museum, in art shows, the Theater, concerts and the cinema. (It should be pointed out here that at this time we have one girl who is studying sculpture and one who is studying painting). Special trips in Palestine are also arranged...

In addition to the cooperatives of Beth HaChalutzot, which continue to operate, we have a school for cutting and sewing for girls aged 14-16/ The school is supported by several institutions: the Workingwomen's Council, The unemployment fund of the general federation of the Jewish Labor and the Labor Department of the Jewish Agency. This school teaches 20 students all of them from very poor families. Tuition is free and the girls receive further assistance with funds and meals.

Beth HaChalutzot can claim credit for the success of this activity. The teachers (some of them volunteers) work enthusiastically and the girls, most of them previously analphabetic, gain a lot in addition to the vocation. They visit occasionally the theater with their teacher and during last Lag BaOmer they visited a large school to witness how the holiday is celebrated by children like them.

We hope that the above detailed summary of the activities of Beth HaChalutzot will provide a clear picture of what we are doing here and for what important purposes your help and support is used.

Yours sincerely,
Rivka Kitayin

(46) WLP delegation on the Tel-Aviv Home balcony

'Ulpan Meir'

The Hebrew classes at Beth HaChalutzot in Tel-Aviv continued all along the home's operations as part of a Hebrew school (Ulpan) named Ulpan Meir after first Tel-Aviv mayor, Meir Dizenghoff, who died the same year the Home was constructed – 1936.

The Tel-Aviv Beth HaChalutzot also housed, over the years, courses for retraining of academics in book keeping and computerized accounting, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Welfare.

Establishment of the Third Home – In Jerusalem

At the brink of World War II and during its first stages, the hardship and rate of immigration grew significantly, and with them rose the need to allocate additional boarding for women immigrants who were now refugees. The need to receive youth from burning Europe was felt in the educational farm in Thalpioth as well, and following Rachel Yanait's push, the Workingwomen's Council of The Histadrut decided to build a second house on the farm. In October 1938 a request was made by Beba Idelson, secretary of the Workingwomen's Council since 1930, to the members of the WLP, and offered they will take it upon themselves to build a Women Pioneer Home in Jerusalem, an undertaking, she thought, would strengthen their influence and symbolize the extension of their activities in the country. The WLP rose to the challenge and took under its wings the establishment of the Women Pioneer Home in Rehavia, through a barter deal. A parcel spanning 1/2 an acre was allocated for the construction of the Home out of the area of the nursery in Rehavia. In return for this parcel, WLP offered its support for the construction of the second house in the Educational Farm in Thalpioth.

The donations were made to the 'Habona' association – the executive branch of the Workingwomen's Council, who leased the land from Keren Kayemet Lelsrael. The nursery continued its operations in a limited space of just over a quarter of an acre and was used as an auxiliary farm for the Educational Farm. Several times a year the crops grown there were changed and the produce was sold to the residents of Rehavia through the 'Kiosk' shed standing on the eastern border of the parcel, facing Ib'n Gvirol St. The sale of flowers to the people of Rehavia continued on a few occasions into the Sabbath, which caused the Orthodox Jews in neighboring areas to protest. The shed survives today and is designated for conservation.

In April 4 1939 Rachel Yanait Ben Zevie wrote to her friend Rose Issacs who was active with the Women's League:

Jerusalem 4/14/1939

My dear friend Mrs. Issacs,
It has been ages since I wrote to you. Many reasons caused that, but believe me, my good friend, I have always had kind memories of you, since I know and cherish you as I know and cherish the enterprise of Bathey HaChalutzot in the country. Don't you remember your visit with us in Jerusalem?

Sadly, I fell ill right after you left... and since then the hardships and misery have risen. You are well aware of the situation in the country, but the work continues and that is the most important matter. Despite the bloody days and the dear sacrifices, more and more settlements are built in the Jordan Valley, in Israel Valley and in the mountains of the upper Galilee. This brings great comfort to us all and it is the most significant guarantee of our success. And I am certain, my dear friend, that you are now, as you have always been, in your heart and soul, with us and the uninterrupted fountain of your initiatives still flows with

vigor and we will soon be blessed by Beth HaChalutzot in Jerusalem. Is it not so? Beth HaChalutzot in Jerusalem – I have known the significant value of these Homes in Haifa and Tel-Aviv, what a blessing they are for the immigrant pioneer girls in these cities, but in Jerusalem, so it seems, the need is even bigger and the role of Beth HaChalutzot more important, since the immigration in Jerusalem comes not just from the outside, from the Diaspora, but also from within, from the many different congregations of the varied and unique population of our capital. Approximately 60 congregations the city has, from all ends of the land, from Babylon, Nineveh, Persia and Yemen, from east and from west, who can count the numbers of the tribes of Israel? And Beth HaChalutzot in Jerusalem will assist us, more than any other enterprise to educate the working daughters of Zion, to train them in the different branches of labor, physical and spiritual education, to unite the natives of Jerusalem as well as the immigrants from different parts of the Diaspora.

Bathey HaChalutzot in Haifa and Tel-Aviv are teaming with youth, fertile enterprises, worm activity and new Hebrew creation. Need I tell you of the immense value of Bathey HaChalutzot, now that there is not one in the country who will not be proud of this wonderful undertaking? And I have complete confidence in you, my dear friend, and in all the members of WLP, that you see great blessings in your endeavors and your efforts in establishing Bathey HaChalutzot.

Here we stand at the beginning of the third Beth HaChalutzot, the Home in Jerusalem, **The Third Home**. Is it not a deep and big symbol, a symbol for the whole movement? Following the destruction of The Temple, the second home, is it not that our reestablishment in the land to be considered the establishment of the third home?

Well, it is now time to lay the foundations and we have already cleared the space for you, at the verge of our nursery, the space intended for the construction of Beth HaChalutzot. I can not say we have done so easily. A great sorrow it was clearing each step of the way. Close to twenty years we have been saturating this land with joy and willingness in our work, the first pioneering work in Jerusalem. But we are happy that at this spot, Beth HaChalutzot, of which we have dreamed and to which we have aspired for so many years, will be established.

And so, we have done that and by it we have for ever interconnected the two enterprises and I would hope that this will be a blessing for both enterprises, Beth HaChalutzot and the Nursery. Alongside Beth HaChalutzot the nursery will continue its operation, on a smaller area, but with no less dedication and resolve.

You have been ones of the first to lend us a hand in the establishment of our farm in Jerusalem following the bloody incidents of 1929 and we are rejoiced that your help comes now, in those difficult days, since today, more than ever, we are making efforts in every corner of the

land as in this location in Jerusalem, to receive more and more youth from the Diaspora.

How are you my friend? How are my other old friends? I was happy to learn that the League is evolving and I wish you and all the members all the best.

I am enclosing a small album from the Educational Farm and the nursery in Rehavia and have marked on one of the photographs the location where Beth HaChalutzot will be built soon.

Warm regards,
Rachel Yanait Ben Zevie

In December 1939 a planning competition for architects was announced for the design of Beth HaChalutzot in Jerusalem. The selection committee included two of the leading professionals: Architect Jochanan Retner, who planned a decade earlier the National Institutions Building, and Engineer Joshua Dicker, who possessed extensive experience in management of construction projects of The Histadrut Institutions. Baruch Pedro Adv. Represented WLP and committee members for the Workingwomen's Council were Beba Idelson, Secretary of the Workingwomen's Council, Rachel Yanait Ben Zevie and their friends: Gosta Stromph, Fanya Melnick Gronia Rush and Merry Yatziv.

The committee approached some of the most able architects working in the country at the time. The bid sent to the participants defined the requirements of the client: Beth HaChalutzot will be constructed on the parcel allocated for that purpose in Rehavia and its total built area will not exceed 500 sq meters. The building will have two stories above ground and a basement with the possibility of a third floor, to span not more than 30% of the area of the second floor.

Among the requirements for the building the clients listed a need to divide the space according to the following uses, with an estimate of necessary measurements. The list of requirements shows lessons learned from the experience in the existing Bathy HaChalutzot in Haifa and Tel-Aviv regarding the proper functions of the Home. These included a flat roof, following the Urban Building Regulations of the City of Jerusalem and the use of Jewish origin stone and gravel. The date for submission was set for January 1940.

In January 1940, Beba Idelson sent a letter to the members of WLP in New York telling them that "The best architects in the country" have participated in the competition. Idelson also wrote that the plan selected was the joint work of architect Genia Averbouch-Alperin and her partner, engineer Zalman Baron, and listed the rationale that led the committee to this decision. Their plan, Idelson tells, matched the needs of Beth HaChalutzot and offered solutions for the problems mentioned in the bid in regard to the functioning of the Homes. The plan followed meticulously the directions in the bid and took into consideration the surroundings of the construction site: "Rehavia is the most

aristocratic neighborhood in the city, where all the institutions of the Jewish Agency, The National Committee, Keren Kayemet and Keren HaYesod are located". Idelson added in reference to the building itself: "The style is all Jerusalem and matches the building style of the National Institutes [...] the plan as a whole is graceful, appealing to the eye and logical" (Beba Idelson, in her letter to the members of WLP, January 28, 1940). From Idelson's letter we learn that the building was given significance beyond its purpose as Beth HaChalutzot. Its location in Jerusalem and its proximity to the National Institutes set it up to be part of the institution of the soon to be capital, both in its shape and its content.

In her letter Idelson briefly describes the winning plan: The first floor will include a lecture hall, a club for girls and mothers, an office, apartments for the superintendent and the guard, a kitchen and dining room, laundry room, guest room and workshops. The second floor will consist: 15 dormitories, a reading room, laundry room and showers. The third floor, which according to Urban Regulation in Rehavia could span no more than 30% of the floor area of the second floor, would house further dormitories, a laundry and an ironing room. All in all the house was planned to offer 60 beds.

An interesting detail in this letter, not mentioned again in any other document, is the intended use of the flat roof. Averbouch and Baron suggested it be used as an exercise ground and a gathering place for social events in the summer. Beba Idelson closes her letter with an urgent request for the transfer of funds: The sum required to pay the architects for their plans and a sum for the purchase of wood and iron which prices rose sharply and frequently during war times. She asked for approval to lay the corner stone, even without the presence of the members from America, who most likely would not be able to travel due to the events of the War.

On Sunday, April 7, 1940, the representatives of the Zionist institutions and Labor organizations have convened on the premises of the nursery in Rehavia for the laying of the cornerstone of the Beth Ha'Halutzot. Upon her return from the ceremony Beba Idelson wrote a letter the members of the Executive Board of the League in New-York in which she excitedly described the scene, symbolizing, by its existence during the days of the war, the continuance of the Jewish settlement in the land and its strengthening.

Three days following the cornerstone ceremony the first funds, sent by the women of the League in New-York, have arrived. The planning authorities in the Jerusalem municipality approved and even applauded the building plans. The architects finished the detailing, and during June 1940 the workers of "Solel Bone" started the building. Work during the war entailed significant difficulties. Raising money in the US required significantly increased effort with the attention of Jewish donors diverted from the Zionist undertaking to the overall war efforts. Furthermore, prices of building materials have increased and at times they were not available at all. As a result, a decision was made to complete the two first floors and await further donations, which might permit the completion of the third floor.

The house was inaugurated on February 21 1943, and following a series of speeches the guests toured the house with explanations of its structure and function. Henrietta Szold – then the head of 'Aliyat Ha'Noar' (youth immigration) program – who had worked extensively to rescue children and teenagers from the persecutions of the Nazi regime, have arranged for a group of 'Teheran Children' (Polish Jewish children who have been brought to Palestine during the war via a Jewish Agency camp in Teheran, Iran). They were to become the first tenants of the house.

Another initiative during the first few months of the house's existence was a sawing job for the British Army, which provided livelihood to a hundred women living in Jerusalem.

At inauguration, in 1943, the house included, in the first and middle floors, an assembly hall capable of sitting 250, five workshop rooms (housing a weaving and sawing workshop, a blanket and pillow factory and a toy workshop), a large and airy training kitchen, mess for 60 people and a smaller one for staff, a mothers and workers club, offices, apartments for the house manager and guardian and some service spaces. The second floor housed additional workshops and showers. Since most of the dormitories were not constructed when the house first opened in 1943, the housing shortage was disturbing. Repeated pleas by the house manager and members of the worker's council were directed at the Women's League in New-York in an attempt to raise the funds necessary to complete the third floor, which only became possible when the World War was over.

1946 saw the completion of the dormitories, including an additional floor over the hall in the eastern wing, and an additional two floors in the west wing. Heating was installed in the rooms and workshops. The 25 rooms built by 1946 could house 90 residents.

During the years between 1943 and 1946, classrooms were converted into dormitories according to necessity, while developing the workshops: sawing, weaving, cooking, quilting, toy making, etc. The house also housed Hebrew, Algebra and English evening classes. The resident women took trips in the land to learn its landscapes, history and geography. The house manager, Magda Cohen, was attempting the whole time to balance the urging needs of the tenants with the narrow space in a game of 'Musical Chairs', where dormitories took the place of the workshops, the club frequently changed its location and purpose and classes performed in the kitchen.

From the get go it was clear to the women of the worker's council and the house management that the unique character of Rehaviya and of Jerusalem as a whole, were poised to influence the character of the house: the hall was intended to be a center for city and neighborhood culture and the dormitories were to be used to house not only Pioneer Women, but also local students who would attend Betzalel or The Hebrew University. During the war, the house was used, in the summer months for recreation for the wives and children of soldiers of the Hebrew Brigade, and all had high praise for the serene and tranquil atmosphere the house induced on its inhabitants.

(30) Inauguration of Beth HaChalutzot in Jerusalem, 1943

(40) New immigrants at Beth HaChalutzot in Jerusalem, 1944

(67) The Jerusalem Home – Entry lobby, early 1940s

(68) Products of the toys and dolls factory

(70) The training kitchen at the Jerusalem home

WLI activities during the War of Independence (1948)

Hereby is the letter that the manager of the Women Pioneer Homes sent to The Zionist Executive during the War of Independence:

Women's League for Israel in collaboration with The Women
Worker's Council
Aug 8 1948

Bathey Chalutzot (Women Pioneer Homes)

To: Distinguished members of The Zionist Executive,

We wish, through this brief review, to draw the attention of the members of the Zionist Executive to the important activities conducted by the Women's League for Israel in New York in collaboration with the Federation of Labor's (the Histadrut) Women Worker's Council in the Women Pioneer Homes in the Land of Israel.

Twenty years ago, as the flow of immigration to the Land of Israel increased, not all women immigrants chose to go to the settlements and some wished to assimilate in the city – **arose** the need to create establishments for the housing and training for these immigrants, to guide them through their first steps in the land. At the time, a group of Zionist American women founded the Women's League for The Land of Israel in New York, a league who took upon itself this pioneering role, and started the establishment of the Women Pioneer Homes in the cities in collaboration with the Women Worker's Council.

The first Women Pioneer Home was established in 1931 in Haifa followed by – in 1936 the second Home in Tel-Aviv and in 1942 in Jerusalem. During their years of existence the Homes have been enlarged and refined and are now capable of housing approximately 2000 immigrants a year in cycles.

Approximately 20,000 women immigrants have already gone through these Homes, where all of them received affordable and convenient temporary housing, vocational training, guidance and instruction – until they could stand on their own, assured of their abilities. These Homes served as more than a place to stay the night, they became real homes for the Sabbath as well as for weekdays, a comfortable, pleasant, cultural and Zionist home.

Further to the main, constant, role of assisting in the assimilation of new immigrants, the Women's Pioneer Homes acquired an efficient flexibility enabling adjustments to the changing needs of every period and have shown an abundant ability to fulfill whichever role, communal and public the times might require.

The rich, ample experience the Women's Pioneer Homes have acquired in the days of the last World War in the training of immigrants in military jobs, in the establishment of workshops for the wives of enlisted men, and of cheap kitchens, etc. have been an immense advantage and a blessing for us at the onset of our war.

When the war broke in Israel the Women's Pioneer Homes were filled with young women immigrants, busy with training and cultural activities and ready for their new calling: liberation and national independence in The Land of Israel.

Despite the political tension of the time there was never a more active and intense period of immigrant assimilation in the Women Pioneer Homes as was during those months. Hundreds of girls were received during this short period of time and integrated into the building and defense efforts of The State of Israel. The training activities have grown significantly due to the urgent need to train the new women immigrants in several occupations and roles, such as: 1. Military sewing, 2. Tricoteuse 3. Mechanical works 4. Cooking. The training was provided through courses for groups, and tens of girls have started performing productive work following these courses. We have dedicated a lot of attention recently to individual training as well, such as: Nurses, teachers, etc. The information and language services have also continued through all this period, despite the distractions and the cultural atmosphere of the Homes has not diminished.

Following the declaration of the creation of The State of Israel, as enemies invaded our land and all the children from the rural settlements were brought to the cities, the Women Pioneer Homes provided assistance to the refugees with all resources and tools at their possession, making them feel a part of us, with a single destiny that links the frontier and the rear.

Each Women Pioneer Home has fulfilled its role according to the conditions in its location.

The Haifa Home, bordering the Arab neighborhoods, played a decisive role in the defense of the city, and served as a center for security forces in all their actions. The large, copious hall that used to be the cultural center of the Home, was put at the disposal of the military, first as a dormitory and later as a full fledged military kitchen. From the first days of our war, as we learned that the defense operations are not expected to end quickly, the concern with the welfare of the young warriors brought tens of volunteer mothers who started cooking food for the enlisted. The beginning was modest, but slowly the hall became a central military kitchen in the city serving thousands of soldiers every day their daily meals.

The Women Pioneer Home was well known by all the soldiers since here they came to bathe in a hot shower after combat operations, here they could receive a book to read in their off-time and here they

could find a home for the few free hours they had. Many a soldier will carry the legend of the Women Pioneer Home even when peace comes. It was not easy coordinating our civil roles in assimilation of immigrants with the military roles the Home maintained, but we have found a way to overcome the distractions and the difficulties and carry on patiently with our daily work.

In the great historical day, the day of the liberation of Haifa, the Women Pioneer Home served as a center for all preparations, both as a staging ground for the warriors and as a location for equipment preparation. During this sleepless night all the girls at the Home volunteered for various roles, and after the operations, when victory came, the Home roared with cheers and joy of the victorious warriors as they returned from the different frontlines. The day of the liberation of Haifa is etched deeply into the history of the Women Pioneer Home where we found a well of high spirits for the days to come.

The Women Pioneer Home in Tel-Aviv aimed all its actions to support the war effort. The workshops switched to sawing military equipment and preparation of medical supplies, employing tens of women immigrants and soldier wives.

The information activities we performed among the girls concerning the needs of the time in The State of Israel got deep in their hearts and their spirit of voluntarism and willingness was strong. They did not await the draft and tens of girls volunteered immediately for active duty. Many of them participate in combat. Anyone who knew previously these young girls from the camps in the Diaspora and witnesses today their willingness and courage, will probably tell them: "You have withstood the greatest national test of our people!".

The establishment of the "Chen" (Women's Core) was devised at the Women Pioneer Home in Tel-Aviv and all necessary support for this effort was provided: Here was the first recruitment center and here was organized the first Sergeants Course was formed. We have also made the Club available for the Women's Core to provide cultural activities for the soldiers, hence the friendly attitude the commander of the Women's Core holds towards this Home.

The Home has become a center for many important public activities in the city. When the captives from Kfar Etzion were freed and arrived in Tel-Aviv at night, they were brought immediately to the Women Pioneer Home. Here a heartfelt and festive reception was held. Hundreds of men and women came to welcome them and words fail to describe the happiness and excitement at the Home during that time.

Even during the many disturbing bombing raids we have tried to keep mind of the women immigrants on the daily activities and the continuation of normal life routines. The work did not stop for a

minute, the cultural activity continued and they all withstood even the toughest hours.

A special chapter in itself is the Women Pioneer Home in Jerusalem during the days of the war and the siege, to keep the establishment working during those grave days for the city of Jerusalem, maintaining the pioneering spirit and the spirit of the girls – required courage, immense mental strength and a deep belief in the justice of the hard struggle.

Not a single girl residing in the Home left her work during the most dangerous moments. They were all strengthened by the reality and performed their roles in an extraordinary loyalty.

Back in the days of the British Mandate, when the Jewish radio station stopped broadcasting due to the threats on the lives of its workers, the studios were immediately transferred to the Women Pioneer Home and here it stayed until this very day. During the hard days of the siege while Jerusalem was cut-off from the rest of the Land and the World, the "Voice of Jerusalem" was the only echo of the life of the nation that came to the city and every day, hundreds of people assembled around the Home to listen to the "Voice of Jerusalem" news being played on the loudspeaker that was installed on the roof.

Thanks to the technical arrangements we have made through the preparation of water and food supplies, we have overcome the difficulties of water shortage and so we could provide for the livelihood of the immigrants. The Women Pioneer Home was one of the few places that supplied a warm meal every day.

It was actually during the time of the siege that the Women Pioneer Home had the opportunity to celebrate the "Seder Night" in memorable high spirits. The soldiers stationed in the city were invited to participate in the "Seder" together with the girls residing in the Home. The appearance of Rabbi Hertzog escorted by the city Chief Commander to join the celebration was a deep experience for all present and they will always cherish these moments's memory in their hearts.

Despite all precautions, a painful disaster came upon us as an enemy shell fell on the Home, killing a young immigrant, a very talented girl, a survivor of the death camps in Europe and wounding three others. This disaster shook all the girls in the Home and they all carry her memory as one large family. But their spirit was not broken; it was rather strengthened towards the days to come.

When the appalling news reached the Women's League in New York, we could feel their sorrow and sincere feelings. They have immediately transferred funds so we could rebuild the ruins of the structure.

Only thanks to the true concern and continued support of the Women's League in New York we could carry out all the activities performed in the Women Pioneer Homes. Following a visit of a delegation from the League in the Land of Israel last year (League President – Jane Prince, Vice President and Chairman of the Israel Committee – Mrs. Rose Isacs, Chairman of the Executive of the League – Mrs. Rose Heiman and Member of the Executive – Mrs. Bessi Chinich) and coming face to face with their essential enterprise, the Women Pioneer Homes came to life in the hearts of the members of the League and all their devoted work is dedicated to this existing endeavor and its expansion. It was during their visit that the corner stone for the establishment of a fourth Women Pioneer Home in Netanya was laid. Due to the shortage in construction workers during the war, we could not start the actual construction yet. We hope to do so soon.

All the activities performed in the Women Pioneer Homes were met with understanding and support by the Women's League. Even during the days when postal services with America were severed, our connections with the league did not. The words of support and encouragement we have received by telegraph during all the difficult times, have strengthened our spirits and improved our feelings, knowing that we are not alone in the struggle.

At the rise of the State of Israel, when the immigration grew to new dimensions, the ever increasing value of the Women Pioneer Home as an instrument in the assimilation of women immigrants was reemphasized. The need for the establishment of new Women Pioneer Homes in all the cities and provinces is mounting.

Due to the frequent need in available locations for the housing of new women immigrants the Jewish Agency has requested the Women's League in New York and the Women Worker's Council in Israel, with their years of experience in the assimilation of immigrants, to expand immediately the network of Women Pioneer Homes using, in the mean time, Arab houses that will be converted for this purpose.

The Women's League in New York, in collaboration with the Women Worker's Council in Israel have expressed their willingness to take upon themselves the expansion of this enterprise. In fact, during these days, while the Zionist Executive convenes, a second Women Pioneer Home is opening in Haifa to house 200 women immigrants on the border between Hadar HaCarmel and the city.

May the days of peace come soon and we will receive the immigrants in a free State of Israel, educating them for a life of work and construction and for the reconstruction of the Hebrew Motherland.

Dr. Faniya Melnik
Manager of the Women Pioneer Homes

Tel-Aviv
22 August 1948

(53) Medical production during the War of Independence at Bathey
HaChalutzot

(64) *Attach to (53) with same title!*

Chapter 3: The State's first years 1949-1967

The Situation in Israel

Immediately after the establishment of the state of Israel, in May 14 1948, the country opened its gates for free immigration of Jews. The wave of immigrants that ensued tripled the number of Jews in the country to over 1.8 million in just a few years. Arriving from different countries in Asia, Africa and Europe, including the remnants of the Jewish Holocaust in Europe, these large waves of immigration created huge problems that required ingenious solutions and large scale projects in many varied fields, such as: Adapting the immigrants to the conditions in Israel, housing, health services, employment, education, etc.

This time saw a severe shortage in housing solutions and so camps were set up quickly using tents, sheds and tin structures. These camps were referred to as 'Maabaroth' – namely transit camps. These were erected in proximity to existing towns and agricultural settlements in order to provide employment for the immigrants. During the 1960s most of the 'Maabaroth' were dismantled and many of them became development towns or neighborhoods in large cities.

Receiving the waves of immigration required large expenses. The young states treasury did not have enough funding resources to allow for the necessary import of raw materials and food supplies and the agricultural self production could not meet the demand. To reduce its dependency on imports and to provide the basic necessities of the whole population, the government introduced a policy of rationing of food and basic supplies (cloths, furniture, etc.). This policy was enacted between 1949 and 1952 and was known as the 'Austerity (Tzena, in Hebrew) Policy'. It was not a revolutionary method but one acceptable in times of national emergencies (England acted this way during World War II). The austerity policy worked well for two years but then it became an obstacle to impede economic growth and drew criticism. Following that, the government started to reduce its involvement in the economy. When German compensation funds started pouring into the country and with a new economical policy, the industry flourished again and agriculture was developed. The Jews of the Diaspora provided assistance not just through bonds but also by sending food.

The approach of the government during this era was a state approach which contended government authorities should play a central role in dealing with the problems the country faced. This attitude manifested itself in the transfer of responsibility for all essential social services (education, housing, employment and assurance of income) from non governmental organizations who fulfilled these roles prior to the establishment of the state, into the hands of new governmental agencies and branches. This tendency towards the intensification of state role characterized many western countries in those days and was the basis of the concept of the 'Welfare State', a state that takes upon itself the responsibility for the welfare of its citizens. The state

approach did in fact reduce the level of involvement of volunteer organizations in several aspects, but even its most avid supporters realized that the complex issues surrounding the need to receive hundreds of thousands of immigrants necessitates the involvement of such volunteer organizations who have gained significant experience in dealing with such issues. Indeed, at the beginning, volunteer organization performed a central role in the delivery of a wide variety of social services, including assistance in the assimilation of immigrants, education, teaching Hebrew, vocational training or retraining for immigrants and more.

In addition to the economical and social challenges in faced, the young state had to cope with significant defense issues. The main defense challenges were the struggle with terrorist operations of insurgents from neighboring Arab countries, damaging property and killing innocent citizens (The Feday'in), the war in the Sinai of 1956 and the 6 days war of 1967

WLI, active in the immigration assimilation arena, vocational training and social activities in the days before the establishment of the state, continued its operations in these areas after the establishment of the state and mobilized its resources to accomplish diverse national missions to supply the social necessities created in Israel at the time.

(23) A concert during the War of Independence, at Beth HaChalutzot in Jerusalem

Establishment of the Fourth Home – In Netanya

Two years after the establishment of the State of Israel, in 1950, the fourth WLI House was established, in Netanya (the land and the building belonged to the municipality of Netanya). The house was planned, as was the house in Jerusalem, by Genia Averbouch, who focused on planning education institutions and urban planning and was especially drawn to projects related to women and children. Averbouch advocated functional designs, since it was her view that the construction should serve the man and family living in it and not the other way around.

With rapid social changes occurring in the young state, and with the rapid development of the country, an urgent need of professional was felt, and especially women with vocational training. WLI responded to requests from the Ministries of Welfare and Labor (later the Ministry of Labor and Welfare and then the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment and the Ministry of Welfare), changed the character of the house in Nataniys and turned it into a National Center for Vocational training, with boarding available for young girls from development towns and poor families.

(51) A wedding at Beth HaChalutzot in Netanya

The Vocational Training Center also received students not residing at the Boarding School for all courses: technical Drawing, Administration,

Hairdressing, Cosmetics, Cooking and all fashion vocations (Cutting, Design, Sewing, etc). All vocational courses were taught by professional instructors from the Ministry of Labor. Occasionally other courses were opened according to the needs of the countries economy.

(16) Taking care of children

(55) Computer use for secretaries' course

(59) IBM card punching course, 1978

(60) Cosmetics course

(61) Hairdressing course

(62) Fashion course

(63) Fashion show at completion of the Fashion course, November 1987

At the end of the 1970s a new Boarding School and new sport grounds were added to the WLI compound.

'Ora' Workshop

In 1952, the 'Ora' workshop – a sheltered, weaving little factory for the blind – was set-up in a small building adjacent to the WLI compound, in collaboration with the Division of Rehabilitation in the Ministry of Welfare. The factory was set-up to assist in the rehabilitation of blind people by providing them the opportunity to earn a living doing productive work and leading an independent life despite their limitations. The idea was to achieve improvement in their psychological situation through the feeling that are productive and can pay for their own meals. The Welfare Ministry assembled a large group of blind girls from all over the country at the WLI house in Netanya to provide training and prepare them for productive life. A group of these girls were trained in weaving, and that group became the nucleus of the 'Ora' factory (later they were joined in the factory by blind men). Next to the weaving factory a sewing workshop was established and provided employment for new immigrants with disabilities where tablecloths, women and children clothing, prayer shawls and other Judaic items were manufactured using the fabrics from the weaving factory. All products were of top quality and in original Israeli styling.

(18) Household course for blind women at Beth HaChalutzot in Netanya

The products were sold in a store that was opened for this purpose at the WLI house in Netanya, in elite stores around the country and was even exported abroad. In the 1970s the 'Ora' factory and the sewing workshop employed more than 45 individuals in all manufacturing phases. The factory received the prestigious Kaplan award for the dedication of the workers and the quality of the products.

The 'Ora' factory contained several semi-automatic looms. Each loom was manned by a blind worker who controlled its operation. The workers only did mechanical work. Other employees in the factory were not blind and included: the factory manager, in charge of the business and marketing aspects as well as the design of fabrics; a bookkeeper and a sales person in the store. The factory budget came mostly from the Division for Rehabilitation in the Welfare Ministry and partly from WLI.

The factory was expensive to operate and could not earn enough to keep it running on its own. The products were not cheap, being hand made, proper wages had to be paid to the employees and despite the good reputation the products gained, sales remained low and earning did not grow.

In Meetings held from time to time, with the factory manager, WLI manager in Israel and representative of the Division for Rehabilitation in the Ministry of Welfare, many ideas for improvement have been brought up. Several attempts to market the products have been made, but eventually, the Welfare Ministry decided it could no longer justify the high subsidies the factory required and the factory had to be closed. This was a tough step to take but it was performed in the highest possible sensitivity to the needs of the employees, some worked there from the day the factory started operations. The factory was closed in the mid 1980s, and all its employees received their full rights according to law.

(19) A Blind weaver in the 'Ora' factory

(73) A Blind weaver in the 'Ora' factory, November 10, 1959

(20) 'Ora' products Bazaar, 1964

(21) Fashion show for 'Ora' cloths

(58) 'Ora' products Bazaar

(44) Actress Shelly Winters trying a coat at a WLI Bazaar, 1958

(39) Kaplan Award received by the 'Ora' factory in 1959

Cooperation with the Hebrew University in Jerusalem

The paths of WLI and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (HUJ) met in 1955 and have remained entwined ever since – a partnership reflecting their shared dedication to the welfare and advancement of Israeli youth, particularly young women, preparing for key roles in the nation's professional, cultural, intellectual and scientific life.

For WLI the decision in 1955 to endow two dormitories and a student cafeteria at the HUJ, was a natural outgrowth of its initial focus: building homes for young women. Reflecting WLI's concern for its young women, the first student facilities to rise on Givat Ram were two dormitories and a student cafeteria they donated. Dedicated in 1958, the facilities serve the entire student body and represent the first major contribution towards the physical welfare of the university's students. The WLI was doing what it knows best: creating a home away from home for young women – who make up fully 50% of the student body. That same year the WLI took an imaginative new step in endowing the Rose Isaacs Chair in Sociology – a complete and bold change of direction for the League which now, in addition to providing physical facilities, directly supports teaching and research. The Department of Sociology which developed around the Chair and its incumbent, Prof. S.N. Eisenstadt, has won an international reputation both for penetrating studies of Israel's unique society and for contributing to the understanding of other developing societies.

The Campus that arose on Givat Ram in the 1950s was soon serving a student population of 4,500. Because of Israel's economic circumstances, the majority of them held jobs while studying and could not afford to buy expensive textbooks. Going to a local movie, play or concert was beyond the means of many. They were in need of affordable extra-curricular facilities, the social and recreational life which makes student life complete. Again the WLI was ready with timely, generous aid. WLI built a multi-purpose Student Center comprising three buildings: an activities center for meetings, clubs and snack bar; a fully equipped gymnasium for sports; and the Student Organization building with students welfare and student union offices, employment services, a student store and the HUJ student press, which prints low cost textbooks, bibliographies and authorized lecture notes. Officially opened in 1963, this beautiful center soon became the hub of campus life, and its unique structure, visible from the main road, became the identifying landmark for the Givat ram campus. In tribute to the League, the road leading from the campus entrance to the Student Center was named "The Women's League for Israel Road" by the Jerusalem municipality.

June 1967. Jews throughout the world rallied with aid during the six days when Israel faced the combined onslaught of the Arab World's might. Victory was swift, and even as the country mourned its dead, it rejoiced in the reunification of Jerusalem, its capital city. A new chapter opened for the HUJ, with the 19-year-long exile from the Mount Scopus campus ended at last. Quickly the University Senate reached a decision to rebuild the campus and make it a living, breathing symbol of the city's unity.

Again the WLI was the first to respond, pledging to underwrite the construction of three dormitories to accommodate 180 women students in the new University City rising on the Mount Scopus campus. The League, again creating homes for young women, thus set an example to many other organizations and individuals who followed WLI's lead in announcing aid for the new era in the University's development.

When one walks from the academic campus toward the student residents, the WLI dormitories are among the first to greet the visitor to Mount Scopus. They are part of a complex today housing some 3,000 students with double study-bedrooms, comfortable common rooms and well equipped kitchens – warm homes for the students who, strolling through the surrounding garden paths, can gaze down on what is surely one of the world's most beautiful vistas – the eternal city of Jerusalem.

The enormous project of building Mount Scopus occupied the University fully and strained its resources to the hilt. The graceful old buildings, neglected and in disrepair, were restored and immediately occupied as units of the University begun moving from overcrowded Givat Ram. A massive new building program was underway for a campus to serve 10,000 of the total student body of 16,000 – when history once again struck a tragic note. The Yom Kipur War of 1973 brought not only national tragedy, but heralded a period of unparalleled economic hardship. A building freeze was declared by the government, much of the university construction was temporarily halted, and resources were channeled to national priorities that precluded completion of the Mount Scopus campus on schedule.

Among the hardest hit by the economic crisis were the HUJ students. A call went out to all the supporters of the University to make scholarship funds their number one priority. As ever the WLI gave concrete expression to their commitment to the welfare of the students, and in 1974 created a major scholarship fund from which, every year, 14 students are granted the means to cover their tuition and living expenses. For these young women, many of whom are the children of immigrant families from Asia and North Africa, a WLI scholarship is the key to the door to higher education, the opportunity to realize their potential to the fullest.

In the Jubilee year of the WLI, 1978, at the ceremony for the award of these scholarships, University president Avraham Harman announced that the University would designate a WLI Jubilee Doctoral Fellowship annually for a female Ph.D. student. Thus, it has been since then, with the WLI name now associated with advanced study in Science and the Humanities.

Severely undermined by Israel's runaway inflation has been the University's ability to acquire books for its libraries. WLI's response to this grim reality was the creation, in 1980, of a Book Endowment Fund for the University's Paul Baerwald School of Social Work. The fund uses the annually income to purchase books and periodicals for the school's library, helping to maintain its standard as one of the world's finest social work libraries.

Profound and warm-hearted understanding has always been the WLI's hallmark. By 1981 the Mount Scopus campus was virtually complete, and the Faculties of Social Sciences and of Humanities moved there from Givat Ram. Remaining on Givat Ram was the Faculty of Science with its thousands of students and hundreds of teachers, The Jewish National and University Library, and a number of administrative units. A vital new role was born for the beautiful WLI Student Center complex on Givat Ram. It serves the entire University community of students and staff who come to take part in sports, student activities, social life, creative art and culture. Truly a development in the spirit of WLI!

True to its tradition of tailoring its support to the future needs of Israel and the academic, as well as physical, welfare of the HUJ and its students, the WLI in 1983 decided to endow a Lectureship in Nutritional Sciences at the Faculty of Agriculture.

The Blind Students' Unit at HUJ was established in 1982 out of awareness to the special needs of this population. The HUJ is the only institution of higher education in Israel with such a unit, and one of the few universities around the world that make particular efforts to assist handicapped students. With 80 students, the unit has the largest population of its kind in any one organization in Israel. Coming from all ethnic groups – Jews and Arabs, secular and orthodox Jews, Ashkenazim and Sephardim – they include students studying toward undergraduate and graduate degrees, as well as those enrolled in a special preparatory program for matriculation exams. The unit offers blind, visually impaired and dyslexic students a range of services and special equipment to help them cope successfully within the university framework.

As blind and visually impaired students are exempt from university tuition fees, grants to the unit are used to underwrite its most important activities:

Reading. Access to printed matter is crucial for academic studies. Where books and publications are not available in Braille, personnel are required to read out to the students the scholarly material they require.

Recording studio. The unit's recording studio enables tape recordings to be made of written material.

Rehabilitation. Many of the university's blind students come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and even with tuition exemption, they, like their able-bodied contemporaries, need to work to help support themselves during their studies. Finding employment is especially difficult for these students. The unit employs a councillor to assist blind students in this most crucial area.

Personal Tutors. Blind students are exceptionally motivated and approach their studies with dedication and determination. However, their path is not an easy one and they face many scholastic, social and day-to-day difficulties not encountered by the rest of the student body. The unit has found that personal student tutors can be of great help in addressing these problems.

Scholarships are awarded to the 10 to 15 student tutors taking part in the scheme.

The Charter for the Student Center at the Hebrew University, established with the support of WLI on August 21, 1960:

On the twenty-eight of Av – 21 August 1960 in the thirteenth year of the State of Israel the cornerstone was laid of

THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY STUDENT CENTRE

The Center will perform an essential service in promoting student cultural, social and sports activities, for which adequate facilities have so far been lacking. It will thus contribute in an immeasurable degree to the spiritual and physical welfare of the students of the Hebrew University and to the development of a corporate student life.

The funds for the Centre, which will comprise three buildings, are being generously contributed by the Women's League for Israel New York, which has thus again demonstrated its concern for the well-being of Israel's youth, and its desire to assist the students of the Hebrew University on whom the future of the country so largely depends. The Centre, like the two student hostels, the cafeteria and the Chair of Sociology which the League established at the University some time ago, will bear solid testimony to this organization's devotion to Israel, as well as appreciation of the role of the Hebrew University and its students in the life of the country.

This cornerstone is laid in the firm conviction that the Centre to arise on this site will confer untold benefits on the students for whom it is intended, and thus on the State of Israel as a whole.

- (31) Laying the cornerstone for the student dormitories and cafeteria, The Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Givat Ram, with Rachel Yanait Ben Zevie
- (32) Start of the construction of the Student Center, Givat Ram
- (33) Cafeteria entrance, Givat Ram
- (34) Sports Center model, Givat Ram
- (35) Givat Ram Sports Center during construction
- (68) Student Center, Givat Ram
- (36) A room in the dormitories
- (37) Plaque dedicating the dormitories to Mrs. Rose Isaacs
- (38) Memorial plaque in the student dormitories, Givat Ram

- (47) Paving the WLI road at Givat Ram
- (48) Golda Meyer giving a speech during the Givat Ram Sports Center inauguration ceremony
- (72) Givat Ram Sports Center inauguration ceremony
- (49) Laying the cornerstone for the dormitories and canteen at the Givat Ram campus, July 6, 1955
- (50) League president, Mrs. Ana Naiditz, inaugurating the Sports Center at the Givat Ram campus
- (71) Student Dormitories at Givat Ram

Chapter 4: Social and Economic Problems and Supporting Underprivileged Populations 1968-1991

The Situation in Israel

With the 6 Days War, Israel achieved a huge military victory, but the repercussions of the war were mixed: many countries blamed Israel of aggression and severed all ties, especially in the Soviet block and in Africa. France, an ally and the main source of weapons and technology for Israel up to that point cooled its relations and imposed a weapons embargo even before the brake of hostilities, and was gradually replaced by the USA in the following years. Most western nations expressed great sympathy with the people of Israel and following the great victory.

The Arab states suffered a humiliating defeat, especially the Egyptian regime in general and Nasser in particular, who lost his prestige as leader of the Arab nation. Nasser then initiated the War of Attrition in 1969 but died in 1970, before it ended in 1971.

From a national perspective, the results of the 6 Days War removed the feeling of constant threat to the very existence of Israel and a significant incentive for economical development following several years of recession. Settlements were established, military and air force bases constructed, tourism developed and the produce of the oil fields in the Sinai, all contributed to accelerated growth of the Israeli economy in an unprecedented rate. National moral was sky high. But, the occupation of the territories previously controlled by neighboring Arab states (Judea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights), and the settlement movement in those territories in the years following the war, became and still are the main dividing issue in the State of Israel and the Jewish people as a whole.

In 1969, after significant international pressure on the Soviet Union, Jews started receiving permissions to leave its territory, and many of them immigrated to Israel. In 1973 this wave of immigrants stopped until 1987. In those years approximately 150,000 Jews emigrated from the Soviet Union to Israel and needed – like all other residents – housing, employment, Hebrew lessons and support during the adaptation period.

In October 1973 the Yom Kippur War was initiated by Egypt and Syria in a surprised attack that created serious results for Israel. This war shook the foundations of the nation's trust in its government and created an opening for groups, unheard before, to voice their opinions and concerns.

The early 1970s saw a social unrest in youth of second generation to the large waves of immigration of the 1950s and 60s, leaving mainly in slums and peripheral towns. A large protest movement 'The Black Panthers' rose and brought into public awareness the social problems in the country. In 1977 a historical change in politics culminated as the Likud party, headed by Mr. Menahem Begin, replaced the Labor Party who had held the reins of power in

the country for 29 years, since its establishment. This change in government reflected the public's disappointment with the Labor Party's policy which theoretically endorsed socialism but had actually neglected large sections of Israeli society, sections that were in dire need of support.

At the same time an awakening in the awareness of the Israeli public to women's rights and standing in society occurred, following several international events: The women's convention in Nairobi in 1973 and the UN declaration of 'The International Women Year' in 1975. These events prompted the Israeli governments to establish a committee to check the status of women in Israeli society. The committee report submitted in 1978 reviled the high level of inequality between men and women in Israel.

During the 1970s, following the Yom Kippur War, the oil producing states, lead by Arab countries, initiated a boycott on western states that supported Israel during the war. The boycott included a reduction in oil production in conjunction with a steep increase of oil price which brought the price of an oil barrel to unprecedented heights. This boycott created a global economical crisis that affected all western states and Israel, requiring measures to increase efficiency and save energy and fuel. Many factories ended the working day earlier, as did shopping and cultural centers, in order to save electricity. The enlisting of many men during the many months of the war effort, and the ensuing reduction in production did not help matters, and contributed to the deep depression the economy went into in the mid 1970s.

This crisis was followed by a change in social policy. The essence of the change was the adoption of a liberal policy which brought the development of a 'Welfare State' to a stop, and partial privatization that led the government to purchase social services from non-government organizations, some volunteer organizations and others privately owned businesses.

A hope for peace first appeared in 1977, when the President of the Republic of Egypt, Mr. Anwar a Saadat came to Israel on a historical visit, followed, in 1979 by the signing of a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. As part of the agreement, Israel withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula and returned it to Egypt in a process that was completed in April 1982. In June of that year Israel initiated a war in its northern border to repeal terrorist organizations who have taken control of the southern section of Lebanon and from there waged attacks on innocent Israeli citizens. The war lasted 3 years taking many lives and further diminished the consensus in Israeli society regarding the heads of the IDF, Government Ministers and the Prime minister.

Until the rise of the Likud party to power in 1977, the Israeli economy was managed in a controlled centralistic manner, with economic freedom limited in a number of ways such as prohibition of foreign currency purchases, high tariffs to protect local products, subsidies and economical support for unprofitable operations and a mechanism of salary level linkage between unrelated sectors in the economy. A significant part of economical activity was centralized in the hands of a small number of large corporations owned by the

government, the Jewish Agency, the Workers Union and other similar public institutions.

As the Likud party came to power, Menchem Begin appointed Mr. Simcha Erlich as Secretary of the Treasury in his first administration. Erlich promised the public "liberation from the chains of socialism" and the enactment of a free economy in the spirit of the Israel Liberal Party he belonged to. In what became known as 'the economical revolution' he attempted far reaching reforms in the Israeli economy, significant changes in the structure of the markets and mainly in the salary structure of the public service. These reforms met tough resistance since most of the economy was still in the control of institutions and personalities who identified with the ideals of the opposing Labor party. The reforms failed and inflation rates, high even before, continued rising and reached in the late years of his tenure more than 100% annually.

The inflationary crisis of the 1980s accelerated processes in the Israeli society that have started even earlier. The significant increase in the defense budget required to finance four wars in 15 years, controlling areas four times the size of the state of Israel prior to 1967, the diminishing rate of immigration to Israel and rising immigration out of the country and an inconsistent economical policy of the different governments caused a gradual deterioration of the social and economical systems in the country. A feeling of corruption of the old public systems spread in the public and a crisis in the social support mechanisms ensued. The states expenses for transfer payments (subsidies) reached an unprecedented level due to the natural increase in population, especially the numbers of children and the elderly who were the main populations eligible to receive these payments. Further reasons for the rise in transfer payments were the large number of enlisted reserve troops due to the tense military situation and the increase in unemployment following the collapse of many factories and companies.

The elections for the 11 Kneset were held in July 1984 a few months earlier than the regular date. The election results created a National Union Government headed by chairman of the Labor party Mr. Shimon Peres for two years to be followed by Head of the Likud party Mr. Yitzchak Shamir for a further two years. The defense minister in this government was Mr. Yitzchak Rabin and the secretary of the treasury was Mr. Yitzchak Moday from the liberal party – a part of the Likud party. In 1985 the Prime minister and the Secretary of the Treasury presented a plan to stabilize the economy. This plan managed to stop the raging inflation, and reduce it first to around 30% a year and later to 10-15% per year. The plan included deep cuts in subsidies for essential products, which created some protest but the policy of price freezing received full cooperation from the general public. For a long period prices in the market were stable and at times even went down. The government then started to gradually lift the price control decrees.

The economic policy enacted in 1988 by the government of Yitzchak Shamir, including a gradual liberalization of the economy, opening many sectors to free competition, privatization and guarded economical policy in general, was

later adopted (in general terms) by most governments that followed, including those headed by the Labor party (1992-1996 and 1999-2000).

In October 1987 the first Intifada (violent uprising) started with the uprising of residents of the occupied territories in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip against Israeli rule. The Intifada claimed the lives of many, on both sides and ended only with the break of the first Gulf War in 1991. Israel had paid a heavy political price for its continued occupation of the territories and the IDF's control there.

Following Iraq's invasion of its neighbor Kuwait, in August 1990, US led coalition forces started in January 17, 1991 a massive bombardment of the Iraqi forces in Kuwait and targets in Iraq itself. In retaliation the Iraqis launched ground to ground missiles on targets in Israel and Saudi Arabia. Missile launches on Israel continued throughout the war which ended a month later in February 27 with the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Israelis, who have spent the war in 'secured spaces' donning gas masks in fear of a chemical or biological attack, suffered mainly from anxiety and lack of confidence, but in fact the war caused no lasting economical or social damages.

After the first Gulf War, and following intensive American pressure, an international summit was held in Madrid, Spain in September 1991, to try and solve the conflict in the Middle East. The Likud party which controlled the government in Israel at the time opposed the convention, but eventually Prime Minister Shamir found himself heading the Israeli delegation. The main achievement of the summit was in the actual presence of an Israeli and Syrian, Lebanese and Jordanian delegations in the same hall at the same time. No significant progress was made, but the continuation of talks was agreed.

The early 1980s intensive activity was initiated to bring to Israel Ethiopian Jews, suffering persecutions and hunger in their country. This activity culminated in the 'Moses Operation' and the 'Shlomo Operation' during which almost 15,000 Ethiopian Jews were flown in only 36 hours from Adis Abeba airport to Israel using 36 planes.

The early 1990s saw a massive immigration wave from the former Soviet Union following the collapse of the 'Iron Curtain' and the opening of eastern Europe to the west.

Israel again prepared itself to receive a huge number of immigrants. This together with the hope for peace following the Madrid summit, the election of a new government headed by Yizchak Rabin in 1992 and new economical winds blowing in the world brought renewed economical prosperity to Israel.

Scholarships

Following the Six Day War, WLI began providing scholarships to veteran soldiers, and over the years have provided existence scholarships and tuition

scholarships to WLI Homes residents and other students based on socio-economical criteria. The scholarships were provided through several funds, including: The Habshman Fund, The Rothschild Fund, The Moly Wolf Fund, The South African Zionist Federation Fund, etc.

Activities in the WLI Home in Jerusalem

Youth rehabilitation center

In 1975 a 'Center for Rehabilitation of Teenagers' was opened at the WLI Home in Jerusalem to provide an educational, therapeutic, rehabilitation setting for teenagers with learning impairments, behavioral problems or emotional difficulties, in need of escort, training and professional help as they go into adulthood.

During the first years of the center's existence, very few teenagers were referred to it. Acceptance criteria were clearly defined but probably unrealistic. The center was meant to accept pupils with Minimal Cerebral Dysfunction symptoms, but it was soon apparent that this syndrome was usually accompanied, especially in teenagers, with symptoms of Mental Disturbance and behavioral problems, usually a result of prolonged emotional neglect. Following this realization, the center began accepting pupils who have developed, from the basic dysfunction, a much more complex and problematic set of difficulties.

The work at the 'Center for Rehabilitation of Teenagers' was performed on three arenas: The Work Arena - educating for a productive life, professional diagnosis and guidance and job placement, where possible; The Education Arena – Preserving existing knowledge, development of skills and using these in daily life; and The Social Arena – Providing tools for appropriate and full function as part of the society.

The center included an occupational therapy clinic, a musical therapy clinic, a teacher giving private and group classes, a social instructor, a professional instructor (mainly for physical labor), a guide for field trips, a psychologist to support the staff, a medical doctor, a social worker, an instructor for the club house, a sports instructor and a swimming instructor.

The center had 20 pupils every year.

In order to promote the center's activities, seminars were held for nurses and social workers at special education schools and for municipal welfare staff. These seminars included lectures on the nature of the neurological, organic defect and on its outcomes as manifested during adolescence in the emotional, social and environmental aspects. Visits to the center were also arranged and included an opportunity to meet the center staff. These seminars heightened the awareness in the professional circles of the center's existence and purpose and the number of applications grew significantly. Applications were received from the following bodies: the municipal placement committee, Kibutzim in the Jerusalem area, Micha (an organization promoting

education for deaf children), social workers in the welfare offices in Jerusalem, special education schools, etc.

According to the work plan, a new pupil first arrives at a welcoming party with all other pupils in the center. In the coming days, a limited activity (up to 2-3 hours a day) would start to facilitate the new pupil's entry and adaptation. These activities also provided an opportunity to perform an initial diagnosis. Through a gradual increase of the activity load, a flexible, individual work plan could be designed and maintained and a focal subject for the pupil established. Each pupil would be designated a personal caretaker from the center's staff to provide a focal point for questions and problems. The personal caretaker collected all the information regarding the pupil's activities in all sections of the center and would meet the pupil for a talk at least once a week.

Summer activities by the Jewish Agency

Starting in the 1970s, the 'Youth and Pioneer' division of the Jewish Agency, housed at the WLI Home in Jerusalem, groups of Jewish teenagers from the USA, visiting Israel for three weeks in two cycles each summer. The US youth stayed at the WLI Home in Jerusalem, studied Zionism, Judaism and Israel's geography in the Home's classrooms, had their meals at the Home's dining room and enjoyed a variety of social and cultural activities. The income from the summer program provided the funds necessary to maintain the Home for the whole year.

Meital

In the mid 1990s, the Israeli Center for Treatment of Child Victims of Sexual Abuse – Meital (its Hebrew acronym) – started operations from the WLI Home in Jerusalem. The center is managed by Dr. Tamar Cohen and provides individual and group therapy for sexual abuse victims, support and rehabilitation and a support group for parents of abused children. The manager of the WLI Home in Jerusalem was a member of the center's steering committee. After a few years of operations from the WLI Home, the center moved to a new location in Jerusalem.

Reception Hall

The hall at the WLI Home, where a grand piano stood, served as a community cultural center. Open concerts, plays, conventions and other events were held in it, free of charge. The purpose of these activities was, on one hand, to support artists, mainly new immigrants and on the other hand to promote WLI's image in the general public. The hall also housed activities for Home residents: classes, birthday celebrations and lectures on varied topics (female hygiene, drugs, cosmetics, etc.).

Productivity Institute Courses

During the 1990s, with the increasing numbers of new immigrants coming from the former Soviet Union, a need arose to re-train many of them holding academic degrees in professions that had no demand in Israel. For that purpose, the WLI Home in Jerusalem housed courses to re-train the new immigrants in clerical professions, office management, computer, etc.

Creative ideas

The leagues members in the US were constantly coming up with new, creative ideas to increase the available funds for donations towards the activities and the support of underprivileged women in Israel. These ideas included:

Cook Book

This is a letter written by a WLI manager to the managers of WLI Homes, dated December 28, 1975:

"One of the League members in the US had published a book containing recipes collected from League members. This book has sold successfully and provided a significant amount of money.

Following this success she intends to publish an additional book, this time based on recipes we will collect for this purpose from our employees, residents and friends in Israel. The book will be titled "From the Israeli Kitchen, With Love".

For this purpose, I ask that, during the coming month, you would collect recipes from your employees and friends and that each employee will collect recipes from their friends. Each recipe should bear the name its source and her connection with the league (employee, resident, friend or kitchen) and the origin of the recipe (if available).

Please aim at receiving at least five recipes from each. The Home providing the largest number of recipes will receive a nice surprise.

Regards,
Ora Schwitzer"

Donating wedding gowns

This is a letter written by a WLI manager dated April 6, 1977:

"To WLI Homes Managers,

Hello,

I would like to bring to your attention the fact that we have in our possession three wedding gowns (two white and one light blue in color) and a veil, received as donations from the USA. In case you have in your WLI Homes girls who are about to get married, they could have the use of one of these gowns...

Happy holydays,
Ora Schwitzer"

(52) Weddings of residents at the Bathey HaChalutzot

(75) Brith at Beth HaChalutzot

Activities in the WLI Compound in Netanya

The Vocational School for Adults

Vocational training courses for adults were held at the WLI house in Netanya from the day it opened its gates. Later the place became known as "The Vocational Training School for Adults" and it offered, in addition to the traditional courses, vocational training in the following disciplines: Cooking, Confectionery, Dental Health Technicians and Dental Assistants. Courses were conducted under the name of The Department for Vocational Training in The Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment (MICE), and were directed at the unemployed. In regards to the funding for the courses, each course had an element of funding by MICE and an element of tuition paid by the students. In the hospitality (cooking and confectionery) courses, sale of course products was held through meals that were offered in the dining room for staff and students.

Every course included theory, practical work and an apprenticeship period. The curriculum was approved by MICE and in the Dental Assistants course by the Ministry of Health as well. Participants in all courses were unemployed youth, discharged soldiers or people going through a career change. Courses were marketed to the target population mainly through the Employment Offices who referred eligible candidates for enrollment at the school. Courses were also advertised in national and local newspapers. The cooking course was first given in 1978, the confectionery in 1990 and the dental courses in 1982.

The initiation of the courses required preparation of necessary infrastructure such as: An instructional kitchen, laboratories for Dental Technicians with sophisticated equipment, recruitment of training staff, receiving the certification of the supervisory body (MICE), ensuring course budgeting through a governmental bidding process, enrollment of students, selection process and finally launching the courses. Following each course the staff would test the students internally as preparation for the Certificate Exams run by MICE.

The cooking course lasted 10 months, 5 days a week for 8 hours per day. It started with theory but also included practice in the kitchen workshop. The confectionery course lasted 8 months in a similar manner. The Dental Technician course lasted 2 years and the Dental Assistants course 10 months. The practical work in the Dental Technicians course was performed in laboratories established for that purpose. The Dental Assistants received their practical training at the dental clinics of Kupat Holim Klalit (Israel's largest HMO).

Each course had 20 students.

The cooking and confectionery courses staff were all certified chefs who also held vocational teaching certificates.

The Dental assistant's course was held in collaboration with Kupat Holim Klalit. The head of the course was a Dental Doctor and the course coordinator was the chief dental assistant of the dental clinics of Kupat Holim Klalit and a member of the Committee on Dental Assistants in the Ministry of Health. She brought to the course the curriculum and the professional staff. The teachers were Dental Assistants with vast training experience. Following an internship in the dental clinics of Kupat Holim Klalit the graduates took the national theoretical and practical exams and received MICE and Ministry of Health certification.

The Dental Technicians course was held in collaboration with the Dental Technicians Association. The chairman of the association was also the professional manager of the Dental Technicians School at WLI. He also taught there and recruited the appropriate professionals as teachers. He advised on the construction of the laboratories and what instrumentation should be bought. Here to, the graduates took theoretical and practical exams and received their certificates from the Ministries. The funding for the course came mainly from MICE while the professional supervision was by the Ministry of Health.

(56) + (57) Dental technician's lab at the WLI Home in Netanya

WLI's dormitories were a huge advantage for all the courses. The school was centrally located in a convenient part of town. The hospitality courses the sophisticated demonstration room and the well equipped workshops allowed for a varied teaching experience.

All the courses had very high enrollment, very close to 100% of openings. The WLI school certificate was highly regarded in professional circles and a long list of applicants was prepared for each course. The supervisory feedback (by MICE) was excellent and the staff members were regarded the top of their professions. The main difficulties facing the school were: Very heterogenic group construction which required a high level of teaching expertise and a lack of scholarships for students, despite the significant funding by MICE.

As for competition, in the hospitality disciplines, the only competition was from the 'Tadmor' school in Herzeliya. The Dental Technicians school was second only to the dental school at the Hadasa Hospital in Jerusalem. Dental Assistants courses were also held at Beit Berl.

The rational behind the opening of the Dental courses in the early 1980s was to enhance the level and prestige of WLI's Vocational School, while entering new disciplines that were in higher demand. And indeed these courses have succeeded and became renowned for their high level of teaching, uniqueness and the demand for their graduates in the labor market.

The professional High-School

In 1978 the WLI Professional High School started operations under supervision of MICE. The school trained its graduates in the three years they studied there in several disciplines to a Professional Certificate level. The

curriculum was defined by MICE. The school also held yearly programs for students who dropped out of other educational institutions and needed professional training in a single year. Students were referred for matriculation exams according to their abilities and progress in class. Several disciplines were taught at the school: Cooking, Confectionery, Book Keeping and Office Administration and Medical Secretaries. The professional certificate from MICE gave school graduates an advantage over competitors in the Israeli labor market.

The bulk of funding for the school was received from MICE – The Vocational Training and Manpower Development Division. Additional funds were received through: student parents, WLI (who covered the difference between the cost of running the school and outside funding, using earning from other projects in the compound) and the Netanya municipality.

The potential students for the school were students who did not adapt to other educational institutions and had dropped out. The WLI high school was their last chance to gain higher education. The municipality of Netanya helped find the students. The school was also advertised in education and welfare departments of other municipalities in the area and in national and local newspapers.

The 10th grade students were taught six days a week, 31 hours of which were in classrooms and two days in jobs in there area of studies. At its peak the school numbered more than 200 students.

The main achievements of the school were: The school received students who dropped out of other educational institutions after failing in class or due to disciplinary problems. The school offered each student personal attention and supervision. The school enacted a special project to develop learning skills which brought a significant increase in the numbers of students who were eligible to receive matriculation certificates. The school housed the only confectionary department for teenagers in the country and one of the only departments for Medical Secretaries. The school worked in cooperation with the IDF to place its graduates in appropriate positions. The WLI School was, for many years, the only professional high school under supervision of MICE between Haifa and Kfar Saba.

The main challenges the school faces were: difficulty locating potential students, lack of cooperation from the municipality, shortage of resources for matriculation supplemental studies, lack of new departments and a necessity to renovate the main building.

Leases in the WLI compound

Parts of the WLI compound in Netanya were leased to several institutions: The Management College leased in a long-term contract class rooms and offices starting in 1992; The Natan-Yah Congregation – the Reform movement chapter in Netanya, rented the 'Ora' hall, class rooms and offices starting in 1998; The foster services worked for several years from the compound as part of WLI operations and now continue operations there under

a lease agreement. Several private companies rented halls and class rooms and so do private workshops in the hospitality business. WLI has allowed the 'Hila' program of the Youth Advancement Division of the Netanya Municipality to operate at the dormitory library free of charge. All renters have shown interest to continue their operations in the WLI compound.

The Dormitories

From the day it opened the WLI house in Netanya had dormitories spanning 3 floors. In addition to those, a basement was built to house a shelter and a dressing room. The entry level included a hall, a library, three offices and three bedrooms with shared bathrooms and showers. The first floor included a kitchen and dining room and 16 bedrooms with every two bedrooms sharing a bathroom and shower. The second floor was identical to the first floor.

Dormitory occupants included, over the years, WLI High School students, girls from the Rehabilitation Project, students from colleges in the Netanya area, Nursing students from the Nursing School at the Laniado Hospital and IDF female soldiers.

The dormitories could house 60 students and were open year round, including Saturdays and Holydays. For years the WLI dormitories were the only dormitories available in the region and resident satisfaction was apparent as they stayed at the place through the length of their studies. The dormitories allowed students from all over the country to stay close to their schools in the Netanya area and live in a central location in the city. The residents could take their meals at the dining room for a fraction of the actual cost.

The central kitchen and the dining room

The WLI house in Netanya contained a central kitchen and dining room which operated for many years. All students and staff in the compound as well as all residents of the dormitories dined in the dining room over the years, including 'Ora' blind employees and the girls from the Rehabilitation Project. High School classes would come into the dining room en-mass with a on-duty teacher. Kitchen staff – the head cook and his assistants – were WLI employees. The sounds of plates rattling and boys and girls laughing became a central part of the WLI compound atmosphere.

The central kitchen also prepared 'Meals on Wheels': Low cost hot meals paid for by the Netanya Municipality and delivered to the homes of needy city residents – elderly, sick, disabled, etc. Volunteers would come to the WLI house in their private cars, load the pre-packed meals and speed away to deliver them around the city.

The kitchen and dining room activity was gradually reduced

Hosting mothers from Kiryat Shmona in the WLI Home in Tel-Aviv

In August 1970 the WLI Home in Tel-Aviv welcomed under its roof women and mothers from Kiryat Shmona, a border town, which has been under rocket attacks since 1969, and was – and still is today – under threats from Lebanon the northern border state.

(54) Hosting mothers from Kiryat Shmona at the WLI Home in Tel-Aviv, August 1970

(76) Lighting the Shabat candles during the stay of the mothers from Kiryat Shmona

(77) A group photo with the mayor of Kiryat Shmona

(78) A Thank-You letter from the mayor of Kiryat Shmona

Cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Welfare:

The beginning of Social Work in Israel

In 1931 the 'National Committee' (a Jewish self government institution under the British Mandate Government) established a department for Social Work, headed by then president of the 'Hadassa' women's organization in the USA, Henrietta Szold. The first professional Social Workers came from Germany following the rise of the Nazis and their first goal was treating the refugees of the Nazi prosecutions who came to Palestine and later the holocaust survivors following the end of World War II. In 1934 Mrs. Sidi Veronski, a professor from the Social Work school in Berlin, came to the land at the invitation of Henrietta Szold, and established a Social Work school (the first of its kind). Mrs. Veronski brought with her, from Berlin, her extensive professional library, which included literature, mainly German, in Sociology, Psychology, Psychiatry and others, as well as initial writings in the developing field of Social Work. The school she headed and the library were set up in Jerusalem, in a two story apartment building at 4 Abarbanel St. The school provided a two year, non academic, program. School graduates were later employed by the department of Social Work at the 'National Committee'.

Employees of the department were required to be knowledgeable and proficient in Social Work and to commit to three professional principles that form the basis of the social system in Israel to this day:

1. The unit for assistance and intervention is the family.
2. The local community is in charge of setting up the welfare services, the committee provides funds and professional oversight.
3. The services are provided by trained social workers and volunteers.

With the establishment of the state (in 1948) the social services faced the challenge of the outcomes of the War of Independence and the mass immigration of Jews from all over the world to the young state. These facts

created a significant load on the social services and the Ministry of Welfare, which took over from the National Committee, were struggling to provide the funds and personnel necessary to perform the tasks at hand. This led to a decision to continue the training of non academic social workers in the existing school. The name of Sidi Veronki's school was changed to 'The Social Worker's Training Institution' and the two year training program continued. Since the needy population was dispersed, it was suggested that social work teachers should be sent to all parts of the country and school extensions were established in Tel Aviv, Haifa, Beer Sheva and other locations. Students were accepted based on personal traits and received non academic diplomas as 'Qualified Social Workers'. These Social Workers laid the foundations of today's Social Services in Israel.

In 1958, a decade after the establishment of The State of Israel, the first academic school for Social Workers opened in The Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The teachers at this school were graduates of the Sidi Veronski school. Since the needs of the population could not have been answered with only the graduates of the Hebrew University, the non academic school and extensions continued to train Social Workers.

Since, at that time, boarding school type high schools – agricultural, youth villages, 'Aliyat HaNoar' institutions, Yeshivot, etc. – were growing in numbers, the demand for social-educational instructors for after hours grew as well. These instructors required appropriate, professional training. To meet this need, the 'Seminary for Educational Social Workers' was established in Jerusalem in 1962. The seminary operated in boarding school conditions. The students could experience the boarding school conditions for them selves, working with personal coaches. Seminary graduates were later acknowledged by the Ministry of Education and received professional grades as part of Ministry workforce which entailed improved working conditions and appropriate rewards. In the mid 1970s an accelerated academization process of the Social Work profession has begun. The goal was set to have only academic Social Workers in the country. Following the Social Work School in The Hebrew University in Jerusalem, other academic schools were established in all the Universities in Israel, at first with funding by the Ministry of Welfare. The next phase was to provide retraining courses for Social Sciences graduates to Social Work, retraining for academic new immigrants (especially from the Soviet Union) and Masters Degree programs in Social Work. With time, the need and demand for non academic Social Worker training diminished.

In the early 1980s, after a relationship between the Ministry of Labor and WLI started in the Vocational Training School in Natanya, the relationship was extended to include the Ministry of Welfare, then a part of the Ministry of Labor and Welfare. The WLI compound in Natanya had low demand and did not reach full occupancy. It was suggested that the 'Seminary for Educational Social Workers', then housed at the 'Greem Beach' Hotel in Natanya, would move into the WLI compound that could provide classrooms and a boarding house to match Seminary's requirements.

This marked the beginning of the relationship between the division of research, planning and training in the Ministry of Labor and Welfare, headed (then) by Yehoshafat Harel, and WLI headed (then) by Nili Porat. This relationship was productive and continuous and was based on the fulfillment of goals of both sides: WLI, for its part, continued operations in the Aliya assimilation, education and welfare it was committed to thus providing for an existing need in the population, within budget, while the Ministry improved its services to the population and extend these to new areas based on needs in the community.

The condition of the Sidi Veronski Social Work Library, still located at the old apartment that used to house the Social Work School, was deteriorating fast and required an appropriate home. The WLI house in Jerusalem had, at that time, a space in the first floor that was not in use and so it was suggested that WLI will renovate and furnish that space and the library would be moved there. And so, the first Social Work Library in Israel was moved to the WLI house in Jerusalem where it served all Social Workers in the country for many years, including through mail orders. Later, the library was moved to the Social Work School at The Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

(45) The Home in Jerusalem – Setting a Mezuzah at the inauguration of the Central Social Work Library, attended by Mrs. Violet Wiles WLI president

Following the reduction in the activities of the 'Seminary for Educational Social Workers' during the 1980s, it was suggested that the Seminary would be merged with the 'Social Worker's Training Institution' into a new 'Central School for the Training of Workers in the Social Services'. This school was dedicated to the training and advanced studies of welfare services employees in specific fields such as: probation officers, youth and children, rehabilitation, senior citizens and social work instructors. The central school operated through several extensions around the country, including ones in the WLI houses in Natanya, Haifa and Jerusalem.

The faculty of the central school consisted of a core of tenured teachers and some freelancers. The payment method by the government to the freelance teachers was slow and inefficient and tariffs were varied. Furthermore, when freelance teachers retired and demanded pensions from the government, these were not provided for although employer-employee relations did exist. To overcome these problems it was suggested that WLI will take upon itself the administration of employment and finance in the school. WLI became the employer of all school personnel, paid their salaries regularly and provided a severance and pension fund. A monthly bill was sent to the Ministry and the overloaded employees there were relieved of the administrative load of paying these salaries.

'Society and Welfare' quarterly

The division of research, planning and training in the Ministry of Welfare published, starting in 1958, the 'Saad' (Welfare) periodical which was renamed, following the Ministry's merger with the Ministry of Labor in 1979, 'Society and Welfare'. This publication served as the university graduate

social worker as a source for professional, up to date, knowledge. In its early days, the publication was non academic, but following the academization of the profession, needed to go in the same direction. An editorial board was established consisting of representatives of all universities as well as representatives of the Ministry of Labor and Welfare. The chief editor was a rotating position held by a representative of a different university for each meeting, who also served as the host for that meeting. Articles published in the periodical went through an accepted academic selection process and writers were credited. The budget for the publication was provided by the Ministry of Labor and Welfare as well as from proceeds from subscribers and readers – but ill management was every where. Again, it was suggested that WLI will take upon itself the administration of the publication. WLI had condensed into a single budget all the proceeds of the publication and the Ministry's budget and used this to pay all necessary expenses for the publication of the periodical. In later days, the association of social workers joined the arrangement as another source of income and had a representative in the editorial board.

Girls' Rehabilitation Project

At the beginning of the 1980s the need to help girls in personal hardship, economical and social, who were bound to deteriorate without proper structure, came to the surface. The Division for Rehabilitation in the Ministry of Welfare and WLI mobilized to assist these girls and in collaboration enacted the Girl Rehabilitation Project. Approximately 20 girls were singled out by social workers in welfare offices around the country and were referred to the project. The girls were housed in a boarding school at the WLI home in Netanya. They went to school at the WLI Professional High School, each in a discipline of her choice. Simultaneously, a therapy group of three social workers, headed by a senior social worker, worked with the girls. The social workers treated the girls in personal and group sessions. At the WLI home the girls also had a matron and a social advisor who was supervised by the social workers and advised the girls on daily matters. The boarding school and the therapy team were supervised by the Ministry of Welfare and the vocational training by MICE. Hence the project spanned both the educational and vocational training sphere and the therapeutic sphere and gave the girls a complete and stable framework which prevented their deterioration into lives of poverty and neglect.

The cost of the project was very high since a group of 20 girls required the work of four social workers, a matron, an advisor, the school and more. Nonetheless the project was thorough: the girls arrived in very bad condition and came out as young women, with vocational training who have experienced a positive turn of events during the years of the project, got a second chance and 'saw the light a the end of the tunnel'.

At a certain point the Rehabilitation Division could no longer finance the costly project and started cutting back on its funding until the program was completely shut down.

The WLI house in Netanya also housed the Central School for Social Services Workers under agreement with the ministry of Welfare.

Self-Help Groups project

In the 1980s Jehoshafat Harel identified the need to encourage Self Help Groups (SHGs) in Israel. He detected the need to create such groups to answer the needs of people who suffered different types of hardship, and were not able to receive assistance from existing institutions. Since a professional answer was not always available for every person in need, a way to provide assistance to a larger number of people, using less resources (such as therapists, budgets and tools), was required.

In July 1984 a think tank was established jointly by WLI and the Department for Planning and Training in the Ministry of Labor and Welfare, and recommended the development of the concept of groups for self help in Israel, and the creation of a national center to coordinate their activities.

SHGs were meant to provide assistance to their members in their struggles to cope with their problems and in their efforts to improve their daily performance. These groups consisted members with similar problems and experiences that stemmed of those problems. The source of help in the groups was the members themselves, their efforts, skills, knowledge and involvement with the group and its activities. Relationships among equals (peers) are the main vehicle for help provided to the members. The structure of the group and the way it performed were therefore entirely in the hands of the members, although they could, from time to time, reach for help from the outside. Hence, it is possible to state that the origin of these groups and their existence stems from the members themselves and not from any agency or outside authority.

SHGs aspire to achieve common goals. These are group goals, and the groups are intentionally based on the achievement of goals relating to the common difficulty. The goals arise from within the group and are not "imposed" on the group or "given" it by an outside body. With out relation to the origin of the group's goals, their acceptance by the group is a basic condition for it to become a true SHG. The group's identification with the goals is also paramount to its existence.

The contribution of the groups to self help and mixed welfare economy, should be construed as a way to perform, more economically, part of the roles of the state by non-governmental bodies.

The SHG is a unique tool. It is a significantly different method from the traditional treatment by professional. The professional treatment is, in its nature, an asymmetrical relationship between the caretaker and the client/patient with the second dependant upon the first. In this sense, the SHG does not provide treatment. It is built on a foundation of relationships, support and help based on an experience common to all members.

The role of the SGH Center is to encourage, advise, guide and assist SGHs focusing on common member problems, and to direct and train those wishing to organize and create such groups. The need to promote these groups stems from the assumption that they should be treated as a tool that improves the effectiveness of means the members have to deal with their difficulties in varied welfare spheres.

The SGHs add to the myriad of available services, but are in no way a substitute to the institutional treatment. The depth and duration of assistance for each group will be determined based on the specific needs of the group, but it should be noted that such assistance will never include massive support (such as budgetary, organizational or professional). If the group is unable to operate with minimal levels of support, its members should be encouraged to seek other treatment options.

Some of the main fields of operation of SHGs in Israel are: health, mental health, addictions, parenting, grief, new immigrants and more.

It is possible that the activities of SHGs became a necessity to compensate for the loss of the extended family in our times. When families were large and contained several generations leaving close together, the individual did not feel an urge to join others, outside the family, for mutual support. But, today's nucleus family, the prevailing sort of family in the western world, under pressure from process of industrialization, urbanization and increasing mobility of the population – needs an addition since it can no longer provide the support and fellowship it used to provide in the past.

Following the recommendations of the think tank, the 'Israeli Center for Self Help' was established in 1986 at the WLI house in Jerusalem and was later moved to the WLI house in Tel-Aviv where it operated until ????. The center was established in collaboration between WLI, the Ministry of Labor and Welfare and the Joint – where Mrs. Martha Ramon lead the issue. In later days the Joint was replaced in this endeavor by the Ministry of health (the motive behind this was the fact that a large number of SHGs dealt with different illnesses).

Martha Ramon was nominated to head the center. The center helped people suffering from difficulties or hardships in establishing a group, or to join an existing group where members shared the same problem.

The center has served since its inception thousands of applicants in Israel and in other countries. The team in the center consisted of seasoned professionals in the fields of sociology, psychology, education, social work and information. The center offered seminars and workshops for professionals interested in acquiring knowledge and skills to support and encourage SHGs.

Groups in the initial phases of forming could, for a limited specific period, receive basic office services in the center such as: a mailing address; an office with phone services for 'open lines'; message services; gathering place

for the group; a lecture hall for seminars and conventions; translation services; etc.

Unit for Individual and Family Services

The Unit for Individual and Family Services was established at the WLI Home in Haifa. The unit employed a group of social workers specializing in that field and headed by a managing senior social worker. The social workers treated couples jointly and separately, children and families and all sorts of personal problems. Clients came to the unit from all over the Northern District. The North Wing of the WLI house in Haifa was dedicated to the Unit and contained the manager's office and several rooms where the social workers received their clients. The hallway served as a waiting room for the clients. This project involved three parties: The Service for the Individual and Family in the Ministry of Labor and Welfare, The Welfare Department of the municipality of Haifa and WLI. As mentioned above, the budget and professional content came from the government and the municipality while WLI provided the facilities and the employees.

The steering committee for the project included representatives of the involved organizations: the Manager of the WLI Home in Haifa, WLI Manager in Israel, Unit Manager, a Ministry of Labor and Welfare Supervisor, a representative of the municipality and one of the social workers. The steering committee discussed the potential population for the unit to treat, payment arrangements and other general matters relating to the ongoing operation of the unit.

Domestic violence prevention program

In the early 1980s the first unit in Israel aimed at the Prevention of Violence in the Family was set-up. This unit operated from the WLI house in Haifa as well, and employed social workers. They treated families where signs of violence between the couple or between parents and children were apparent. They also trained Police officers in the early detection of such cases, understanding them and treating them in a proper way. Families from the Haifa and Northern Districts, in risk of violence within the family, were referred to the unit by social workers in their hometowns.

The unit involved four different organizations: The Service for the Individual and Family in the Ministry of Labor and Welfare, The Welfare Department of the municipality of Haifa, WLI and The School of Social Work in the University of Haifa. The employees in the unit wrote research papers on the subject of violence in the family under supervision of a Professor from The School of Social Work in the University of Haifa who was a renowned expert on the subject. This project too was headed by a steering committee with representatives from all the involved organizations.

The unit was considered a big success and was well renowned in the public.

The Center for Parent-Children Connection

During a meeting in the 1980s, the manager of The Service for the Child and Family told the WLI Manager in Israel of a tour she made in England where

she first saw an arrangement where separated or divorced parents could meet with their children as part of meeting arrangements, in a special location dedicated to that purpose, under professional supervision. The idea to establish such a center in Israel came up on the spot and thus was created the Center for Parent-Children Connection, in collaboration between The Service for the Individual and Family and WLI. The idea behind the center operations is as follows: The separated parents are, at times, not fit to meet with their children alone due to misbehaviors and at times just don't have the means to take the child to where they live. The center provides a meeting place, in a warm, cozy environment with toys and games available. The parent can spend time with the child in a room under supervision of a social worker, sitting behind a one-way mirror. The first Center for Parent-Children Connection was established at the WLI house in Haifa and following its success the ministry of Labor and Welfare asked WLI to open a second one in Tel-Aviv. Since the centers met an apparent need in the population, and since the same need existed in other locations, the Ministry asked WLI to administer other centers, budgeted by the Ministry and the local municipalities.

Cooperation with the IDF

As demand for boarding at the WLI dwindled, a necessity to find new residents arose. Since the IDF needed, from time to time, to provide sleeping arrangements for soldiers within the cities, so that they could take part in courses or as more permanent arrangements for those who served in the cities – cooperation between the IDF and WLI began. WLI Homes, especially the one in Tel-Aviv, provided accommodation for women IDF soldiers at a very low rent, paid by the IDF, for long terms. The Homes also provided short term solutions for soldiers staying only one or two nights. The WLI Home in Tel-Aviv was usually housed by 50% civilian residents and 50% soldiers.

(74) Chief Women's Core Officer, Colonel Dvora Tomer (below, on the left) accompanied by Wmoen's Core officers, receiving information regarding WLI Homes' purposes, February 25, 1971.

Chapter 5: The Turbulent Era 1992-2007

The Situation in Israel

The last two decades, the one that closed the 20th century and the one that opened the 21st (as well as the third millennium), are characterized by dizzying changes in the world in general and in Israel in particular, in all aspects of life: society, economics, personal and national security, science and technology, culture and religion, politics, etc.

Following the first Intifada in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and the first Gulf War in 1991, Israel entered, under pressure from the US, an intensive peace process. In 1991 the Madrid Summit marked the beginning of the process with historical meeting between Israeli and Arab delegates. In 1992 a new, left wing government headed by Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, was elected in Israel. This government accelerated the process. In 1993 the Oslo Agreement was signed between Israel and the PLO. This agreement brought the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In 1994 a peace agreement between Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan was signed. And the rest of the Oslo agreement later in the decade.

The years under the Labor Party government (1992-1996) brought new hope to Israel not only for the peace process but also for the economy. A significant economical growth engulfed the country, lead by the High-Tech industry. New business mushroomed in impressive numbers and the demand for employees rose sharply. Infrastructure was developing rapidly as well, with new roads, railways and housing projects for the last wave of immigrants from the former Soviet Union, being built. The 1990s also marked the arrival of giant multinationals to Israel, first through development centers of High-Tech global companies and later with Fast Moving Consumer Goods for the local market. Following these businesses a flow of foreign investments and venture capital arrived. Israel's share of the global high-Tech industry reached 4% by the end of the 1990s (it now stands at approximately 6%).

These were the signs of 'The New Economy' with stocks floated in global financial markets and 'on-paper' value of companies reaching for the stars. Employees joined companies and left for a better offer at a dizzying rate.

At the height of all this progress and huge hope, on November 4, 1995, a young man from the extreme right wing of Israel's society, named Ygal Amir, murdered with three pistol bullets, the Prime Minister, Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, at the end of a rally to celebrate peace and denounce violence. The actions of this murderer expressed the views and feelings of the religious extreme right in Israel, and in particular the feelings of the Jewish settlers in the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip who felt the support they received from previous Israeli governments evaporating and that the current government was turning its back to them through the negotiations with the Palestinians and promises for return of territories and the establishment of a Palestinian State.

The Rabin government of 1992 was the first in a chain of Israeli government which did not complete the full, regular four year term. Since 1996, in average an election took place in Israeli every two years. The main reason for this turmoil is that since the beginning of the peace process most of the Israeli public has moved closer to the center of the political map, diluting the differences between the two large blocks – Labor (left wing) and Likud (right wing). The same process occurred in regards to views on the economy and so, the public tends to shift from one block to the other rapidly with opportunist politicians taking advantage of the situation.

In 1996, following the Rabin murder, terrorist actions intensified, with a series of deadly suicide bombings in the heart of Jewish cities. In the 1996 elections, the first personal elections held in the state, Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu of the Likud party was elected Prime Minister, in the promise to bring 'Peace and Security' to Israel. This choice of the Israeli public was also seen as a reaction of the public to what was construed as "going too far" in the peace talks headed by Mr. Rabin.

Mr. Netanyahu continued the peace process, signing to major agreements with the Palestinians in 1997 and 1998. Israel left most of the occupied territories leaving only a small part (mainly containing Israeli settlements) under IDF control.

Mr. Netanyahu's government where he acted both as Prime Minister and Secretary of the Treasury, and then later governments where he was secretary of the treasury under other Prime Ministers, were characterized by a liberal economic and social policy stemming from a neo-liberal ideology preaching for privatization of large parts of the public sector including social services. Many voluntary organizations, WLI among them, started feeling an increasing competition for funds and resources. In these years, following the economical prosperity of the 'New Economy' and the withdrawal by the government of support to the lower echelons, the social divide in the Israeli society grew significantly. The income gaps between the upper percentiles and the lower once became extreme. This was emphasized by a growing presence of foreign workers, who started arriving in Israel in 1993 following a government decision to replace Palestinian workers who became a security concern with overseas workers (mainly from Thailand and China).

In 1999 another election took place and Mr. Ehud Barak of the Labor Party was elected, again in personal elections, as Prime Minister. A new hope for the peace process was ignited, but the peace talks Mr. Barak held with Chirman Arrafat at Camp David in July 2000 failed. At the end of September 2000 the second Intifada (dubbed the El-Aqtza Intifada) started following Mr. Ariel Sharon's visit to Temple Mount, a visit that was considered an insult to the whole Arab world. To show their support of the Palestinian cause, Israeli Arabs protested in the Galilee and in Jaffa and as these protests escalated into violence, 12 Israeli Arabs were killed by Police forces trying to restore order.

These events were a grim background to a shift in the economy, following the 'burst of the High-Tech bubble' as stock markets around the world fell and companies previously worth billions of dollars remained worthless. This left thousands of young professionals unemployed and a recession in the economy ensued.

In November 2000 elections took place again, and Mr. Ariel Sharon was elected Prime Minister. His government tried to reduce the influence and power of the Palestinian authorities in different measures, to unveil its connection to terror organizations and acts and de-legitimize it in world public opinion. During that time a wave of terrorist attacks swept Israel culminating in Passover 2002 with a terrorist suicide bombing in a hotel in Netanya, killing tens of guests who were sitting down for the traditional Seder dinner. At that month, March 2002 alone, more than 120 Israelis lost their lives in terrorist attacks. This led the government to initiate a military operation in the West Bank to reoccupy territories previously turned to Palestinian Authority control. This operation managed to hit the infrastructure of terrorist organizations in the area and reduced the number of attacks and casualties among Israeli citizens dramatically.

These events led to the re-election of Mr. Sharon in 2003 for a second term as Prime Minister. In his new government Sharon appointed Mr. Netanyahu to be his Secretary of the Treasury to try and turn around the failing economy. Due to Mr. Sharon's support and to the recovery of the world markets, the new economical policy started to show results and the economy improved significantly.

In a speech in the 'Hertzeiya Convention' Mr. Sharon announced for the first time his intention to withdraw unilaterally, all Israeli presence from the Gaza Strip, unless a 'Partner in Peace' was to be found in the Palestinian camp. This plan was named 'The Disengagement' and was meant to reduce friction between the IDF and Israeli citizens and a bulk of the Palestinian population. The plan was also a stark contrast to the ideology Mr. Sharon enthusiastically represented for most of his political career and so took many by complete surprise. Despite huge resistance from the right wing of the Israeli political map, the plan received the approval of the Knesset.

As the date of the execution of the plan approached a wave of protest colored the country orange, as this was the color the opponents to the program selected for their campaign. Despite many massive protests, including marches, a human link chain from Jerusalem to the Gaza Strip and other well televised actions, the majority of Israeli public continued supporting the plan.

The Disengagement started on August 15 2005 with the citizens evacuated from all settlements within eight days. The IDF completed its withdrawal from the Gaza Strip by September 11 2005, followed by popular Palestinian celebrations in all parts of the now free Strip. At Northern Samaria the withdrawal was completed by September 22. A long process of rehabilitation of the evacuees started and continues to this day.

Following tension between Sharon and large factions of his party, the Likud, opposing his new way, he left the party in November 2005 and established a new party "Kadima". Mr. Sharon was joined in this new party by several prominent members of the Likud party and several important politicians from the opposing Labor party. This symbolized the creation of a true Center party. Mr. Sharon did not offer a clear political plan but made it clear that he had no intention of leading another unilateral disengagement.

On the night of January 4 2006 Mr. Sharon suffered a massive stroke which left him unconscious. His authority was transferred to his deputy Mr, Ehud Olmert who was later reelected Prime Minister in the elections of March 2006. Mr. Sharon remains unconscious today and is still hospitalized at the Tel-Hashomer hospital.

January 2006 also saw the Hamas party rise to power in the Palastinian Authority making any negotiations with the Palestinians seems even less probable.

In the summer of 2006 three Israeli soldiers were kidnapped in two separate terrorist attacks. One, corporal Gilad Shalit was kidnapped by Hamas operatives to the Gaza Strip and two others, Ehud Goldwaser and Eldad Regev were kidnapped by Hizbulla operatives to Southern Lebanon. The second kidnapping led to an Israeli military operation aimed to release the kidnapped soldiers in Southern Lebanon. This deteriorated into a war that lasted over a month with Hizbula firing rockets on Israeli towns, cities and settlements. The war ended in a cease-fire arrangement and a UN resolution, but with the kidnapped soldiers still in captivity. Several investigational committees were established following the events of the war and the Chief of The Joint Staff of the IDF resigned from his post.

In the same time a myriad of alleged corruption affairs came to light and both the President of Israel and a prominent Minister were accused of sexual harassment. This left the public in Israel feeling that the heads of the state are all corrupt and no potential alternative leadership is available.

Continuation of cooperation with Ministry of Labor and Welfare:

'Yachdav' Project

In 1987 a group and individual therapy program for hardship families called 'Yachdav' (Hebrew for together) was initiated by WLI in collaboration with The Service for The Individual and Family Welfare in the Ministry of Welfare and the 'Home for Each Child' Fellowship.

The 'Yachdav' program, developed by The Service for The Individual and Family Welfare in the Ministry of Welfare and the 'Home for Each Child' Fellowship was meant to serve the needs of hardship families who put their young children at risk. These families have lost the confidence in their own ability and the ability of social workers and other support systems professionals to improve their conditions. The purpose of the program was to create opportunities for these families to further their parental skills, avoid hazards to their children and advance their development towards their basic aspirations regarding their lifestyle.

In order to find a way to assist the parents in providing better life for their children than the lives they had, 'Yachdav' set out to provide support through patience, tolerance, respect and mutual trust. The idea for the 'Yachdav' program came from a program presented in Israel in 1985 by Mrs. Arlin Kutchman from New York called PACT (Parents and Children Together). 'Yachdav' in the Israeli version was developed by the 'Home for Each Child' Fellowship and The Service for The Individual and Family Welfare in the Ministry of Welfare.

The uniqueness of the intervention system in the 'Yachdav' program lies in the assumption that parenthood is a phase in the personal development of an individual, a phase dependant on proper previous developmental phases. A parent who did not receive appropriate supportive attitude from his/her parents will find it difficult to perform parenthood tasks. Therefore it is essential that the needs of the parents be met first, to enable them to better relate to their children's needs and to their education. In order to deal with flawed parenthood a slow, patient and prolonged growth process must be enabled; To provide the trust and support necessary for the mother, who needs to feel a confidence in her parental skills and her ability to be a good mother for her children. Therefore the lifecycle of a 'Yachdav' group is long - approximately 3 years.

The program also addresses the expectation from social workers to devise efficient and clever ways to support hardship families who are entitled to receive dignified, efficient and quality services. In its essence, the 'Yachdav' program differs from other programs in the significant weight given to working "with" the families instead of "for" them.

The work is performed with mothers in small support groups, combined with individual work. The choice to start working with mothers came out of the realities of our lives: mothers are the primary caretakers in charge of rising

and educating the children. It was also found that in many cases the father was absent for various reasons including: break-ups, divorces, addiction and delinquency. Some families were single parent families to start with. This difficulty, and others, has prevented, so far, the creation of similar frameworks for fathers. Despite all that, since 'Yachdav' sets its goal on improving parental skills in the family, it does see a need and importance in the participation of the fathers in the process of family treatment and in the future in group settings.

What characterizes candidates for the 'Yachdav' program is the effect their own negative childhood experiences such as neglect, rejection, humiliation, inconsistency or instability and at times even sexual harassment have on their parental function. These mothers have tried many times, during their childhood, to escape their destiny and find a warm giving environment. Most thought they found just that in early marriage, but reality soon slapped them in the face. Again they find themselves rejected, neglected both physically and mentally only this time they have their own children to whom they are expected to give love and warmth.

Childhood experiences and deficiencies have significant effects on their performance as mothers and fathers. The difficulties created in these circumstances are enhanced by additional factors such as: limited resources the families possess, complexity of life roles the father/mother have and a lack of training and preparation for these roles. One possible way to change all that would be to create the opportunity to go through an Improving Experience.

In the 'Yachdav' program each individual is perceived to have the skill and willingness to become a good parent for his/her children. Life does not always present the possibilities to realize these skills. The assumption of the program is the individuals do not become better parents through training in parental skills, but rather through a renewed definition of what they expect from themselves as human beings and as parents.

The reason for working in groups is that a small group is somewhat like a family. The group functions as a family in that it supports and nurtures, allowing the women to grow through strengthening their self esteem and not asking for anything in return. The group provides a platform for interactions and experiences with significant others, the same experiences which enable the individual to change her self perception in the course of life. Cultural isolation and inability to reach out for help are some of the characteristics of negligent families. The group works to reduce the situations of loneliness and encourage reaching out to ask for help.

The families the 'Yachdav' program is aimed at are families that have been under supervision of the welfare departments around the country, Families where children are considered to be at risk due to parents difficulties in fulfilling their roles properly. The families go through a selection process with the focus on families with young children under the age of 10, who are at

physical, developmental or psychological risk. The assumption is that the younger the families the bigger the opportunity for change.

For three years the mother's groups convene once a week for an hour and a half. Each group has two guides. The structure of the meetings is similar during all phases but the contents change. The meeting includes the following parts: gathering, experiencing, processing and closure.

The work with the groups consists of three phases: Social bonding and nurturing, parenting and self help. The phases build on one another. Only after a phase is concluded, can work on the next phase begin. From pampering and nurturing the women, to relating to the children and finally back to themselves as mothers, with an emphasis on autonomy, responsibility and action.

The requirement is that each participant in the group program be treated by a social worker, since the therapy is not just group therapy but includes individual work. There is no limitation on group guides being the individual social workers simultaneously.

Since its initiation the program has become a beam of light shining in the lives of hardship families in 21 locations around the country. The program strengthened the understanding and belief among social workers that the situation of these families can be transformed and have returned the hope and belief of parents that they too can change.

'Dror' Program – Breaking the Intergenerational Hardship Chain

A nestling sparrow wandered into a henhouse and was raised with the chicks. He lived with them and adopted their ways of life. The chicks grew up to become chickens and the nestling - a sparrow. One day a fox broke into the henhouse and started devouring the chickens. The chickens started running around and the sparrow run with them. A voice came out of heaven and said: "spread your wings, flap them and fly, you are a sparrow, fly, save your soul!". The sparrow started flapping its wings, first with comprehension and then with more confidence until, finally, it rose, flew and saved its soul.

Some people live their lives in the henhouse of hardship, feeling like helpless chickens, hardship intertwined in their daily routine. The hardship is their culture and they do not seek to solve it or to get away from it. These people need a voice from heaven that will instill in them the knowledge that they are actually sparrows and the belief and self assurance that they can fly and get away from the life of hardship. The voice has to show the people the skills of flying and of independency. The process these people go through as they take the road from the life of hardship to a life of welfare is the purpose of the 'Dror' (Hebrew for sparrow) Program.

One of the phenomenon of our society is children from problematic families, being treated by the social services, becoming, as they grow up, dependant on the same services as a second generation of hardship. The children born to these second generation hardship families are likely to become the third

generation in hardship, and so on. The social services become an important factor in the lives of these problematic families.

The basis for the characteristics of these problematic families is the lack of self esteem and a sense of helplessness, and these manifest themselves as a myriad of problems in all aspects of their lives. These families experience a chain of failures, feel a loss of control over their lives, as if their destiny is decreed from above and there is no hope of improvement. Care takers tend to also doubt the ability of this population to break away from the hardship. This fact has a negative effect on the treatment these families receive and nurtures lower expectation by and from members of these families.

The members of these families have been beaten twice: Once by the lack of means, preventing them the opportunity to escape the life of hardship and a second time by the inability of the social systems to cope with their defeat.

Another prominent characteristic of these families is their inability to plan and organize their lives.

Usually, most of the resources of the social departments are directed at solving urgent problems (such as: rapid deterioration in economic conditions, addictions, violence, delinquency, unemployment, etc.) while focusing on a single family member and his/her unique issues. Interventions are short-term, provide support and relief but do not provide a solution to the roots of the problem/s. In most cases, once improvement is apparent, the social workers move on to take care of another urgent problem. As a result of this attitude, family members keep deteriorate once and again into crises situations and do not fulfill their potential for development.

The 'Dror' program was created to answer one of the toughest problems in the world in general and particularly in Israel. Generation after generation the chain of hardship continues and the poverty of one generation is passed on to the next. The goal of the program is to prevent the formation of third/fourth generations of hardship. The intent is to change the strategy from dealing with the symptoms – putting out fires – to an in-depth treatment of the root causes to prevent the 'fires' from starting.

The target population of the program consists of young families with children no more than 3 years old, families with problems in all aspects of life, where the parents are both descendants of multi-problematic families known to social services for years.

Helping the couples in the first years of their marriages, up to three years into the marriage, may help change negative life patterns more easily, before these start striking roots in the lives of the couple, mainly in the inter-personal relationships domain, but also with relation to their original families. It is hoped that changing the behavioral patterns of the parents will entail a change in their attitudes and behaviors relating to the education of their children. The first years in the life of a child are the most significant for his development and

therefore preventative interventions and parental guidance can assist the child's development better.

It is important that the early intervention in the family life continues and does not stop abruptly. The first phase of the program is extremely intense and lasts up to 6 months. Hardship families tend to fall into serious crises more easily and the care takers must remain attentive to secure the proper development of the children.

Program objectives are:

Assisting families with problem solving in the different domains of their lives and **Equipping the parents with problem solving skills** and the ability to face future problems and work them out by themselves – creating a transformation from dependency to independent live.

The guiding principals of the program are: **Reaching out** –going out to the natural environment of the families; **Treating the participants as equals**; **A believe in their potential and abilities**; **Continuance of treatment and/or communication**; **The family as a system**; **Planning, organizing and control**; **Two social workers** – in the 'Dror' program two social workers are assigned to take care of each family simultaneously. Ideally the social worker team will be male and female, so that each one can create a close relationship based on trust and empathy with the subject of same gender. Studies show the advantages of interventions carried out by two social workers, in problematic families, simultaneously; **Providing resources for personal development and limited material assistance**.

The 'Dror' program was developed in the Kiryat Shmona municipal department of Welfare and was launched in 1991. Starting in December 1996 the program was operated by WLI in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Welfare – The Individual and Family, Children and Youth Welfare and Community Services, through the Municipal Welfare departments. The first implementation was with the Welfare Department in Kiryat Shmona. The program is part of the 'Service Basket' of the operative master plan for 'High Risk Children and Violence in the Family' 1998 – the Ministry of Labor and Welfare. The 'Ashalim' fellowship joined the partnership to expand and develop the plan in 1999.

The program has been implemented in 12 municipalities through the local Welfare Departments: Kiryat Shmona, Merom HaGalil, Mevoot Hermon, Hazor HaGlilit, Rosh HaAin, Herzeliya, Ramat Gan, Tira, Kfar Saba, Tel Mond, Rishon LeZion, Pardes Hana – Karkur, and Or Aquiva.

During the operation of the plan 120 social workers have worked with 120 families with 170 children.

Out of the experience gained through plan operations comes the conclusion that intensive intervention in young families is extremely effective, creates change in the parents and of course in the young children as well. This

intervention, compared to other programs for the early years, holds a potential for normal growth and development of the children for years.

Welfare departments wishing to implement the program were provided with training for their personnel. The training was carried out by WLI and the central school for social workers in the social services. Each department joining the program nominated a social worker to lead the implementation and control program operations.

Despite difficulties and crises during program implementation, feedback sessions carried out with the families show that the interventions brought immediate improvement in all aspects.

The conclusion from the implementation of the 'Dror' program and from professional research is that it is worth while to invest in young families. The difficulties are significant, but the results show great promise.

Foster care in the Central Region

"Foster Care in the center" provides foster care to children in need in central Israel. The project's aim is to provide a warm supportive and stable home for children who cannot live with their biological parents. Foster care service was previously government run. Until the privatization on 2001, only 15% of the needy children were placed in foster care, while the remaining 85% were sent to boarding schools and other such institutions. The project's goal is to reverse these statistics and to be in line with the trends in the western world where a large majority of children are raised in foster families.

"Foster Care in the center" was founded in 2001. The project operates in 3 locations: Tel Aviv, Netanya and Bnei Brak, offering services to Jewish secular, religious, ultra orthodox children and families as well as to the Arab population.

The project employs 21 social workers and 3 secretaries. In the past 6 months we have placed 550 children in foster families and 25 additional families are presently available for foster care.

"An exciting and rare 2 day convention entitled 'A Child's Dream' brought together foster parents, foster children and foster care workers on the shore of the Kinneret at Kibbutz Genosar. The conference portrayed the foster care experience from a child's perspective. The highlight of the convention was a panel, which I hosted as head of 'Foster Care in the Center'. In the panel, 5 children, raised in foster families relayed their experience, hardships and achievements.

"Zion, now studying theatre, was raised in foster care since age 9. 'Before my foster family, I roamed the streets; I had no rules, and did whatever I wanted. When I first arrived at my new home, I didn't understand their rules; I refused to eat and was scared they would poison my food. Over the years, the love

and affection I received from the family helped me to overcome my fears. I feel like I belong in the family, just like their own kids. I owe them my life!" Zion's life story left everyone teary eyed.

"As the conference peeked to a close, 3 of WLI's employees received awards of merit as did 3 of 'our' families who are caring for children with terminal illnesses and a family who extended their care to the biological mother of a disabled child they are caring for. WLI was acknowledged publicly at the conference for operating 'Foster Care in the Center, as well as by letters of award and recognition form the Ministry of Social Welfare and other participants at the conference.

Anat Duovitch, Head of the project

Leah – A Foster Care Success Story

By Tali Halaf, Social Worker

Anat Dunovitch, Head of Foster Care Project

Leah was born prematurely and weighted a mere 960 grams. She was born in the 28th week of pregnancy to Ricki, her 16 year old mother and Boaz, her 19 year old father. During her 2 months of hospitalization, her young parents visited her regularly and learned to care for the young baby. Ricki and Boaz both come from troubled homes. They were childhood victims of drugs, alcohol, violence and abuse. They both spent part of their childhood away from their homes.

Despite their wish to raise Leah themselves, they lacked permanent housing, had no financial stability and were both extremely young and still in the process of growing up themselves. Their relationship was characterized by verbal and physical violence. With court intervention, Leah was placed in a foster family.

Sara and Yosef became Lea's foster family. They are a religious couple in their 30s, who cannot have their own children. They received Leah at 10 months of age. Sara and Yosef tried to keep in touch with the biological parents. Although their identity and place of residence was kept secret, they attended scheduled meetings at the family reunion center and exchanged letters and photographs regularly.

Leah grew to be a smiley and cheerful child but suffered from many physical ailments and was non able to attend preschool. Ricki and Boaz's situation did not improve and they began to contemplate adoption. Sara and Yosef were eager to adopt Leah and the process for adoption began. As a final step, Ricki and Boaz were asked to join the Dror projects.

With the assistance of two very committed social workers, the young couple worked at establishing a secure framework for their family. They attained employment, found housing and worked on their relationship. Gradually, Sara

and Yosef assisted Ricki and Boaz take responsibility for the care of Leah. After 14 months of foster care, Leah was returned to the custody of her biological parents. The foster parents kept in touch with the young family and continued to visit Leah at home. 6 months later, Sara and Yosef adopted a baby while simultaneously enlisting for another foster child.

This is one of the most exciting and heartwarming stories of the joint success of Foster Care in the Center and Dror projects, both run under auspices of WLI.

Many remarkable individuals were part of this success story – the young parents who worked at reestablishing their lives, the foster family who devoted themselves to caring for the sick infant while respecting the rights of the biological parents, the Dror social workers who helped Ricki and Boaz in their change process, and the Foster Care social workers who helped in the rehabilitation process and accompanied the families throughout the time. Tales such this one, inspires and motivate all the workers at Foster Care in the Center. Their hard work is redeemed by such beautiful story.

Support for Immigrant Artists

In the 1990s a joint committee for WLI, the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption, the Ministry of Science and the Arts and the Jewish Agency – **The Committee for the Absorption of Outstanding Artist Immigrants**. The activities of the committee were a direct continuation of WLI's activities for the welfare of new immigrants taking their first steps in Israel – personal, social, professional and economical welfare.

The objective of the committee was to provide assistance to outstanding artist immigrants in their assimilation in the country, in their profession, in addition to the assistance provided for these artists through various governmental ministries and other institutions. The financial aid provided for the artists was a grant.

The committee provided group assistance – participation in financing and organizing first exposure opportunities for the artist through a show, concert, exhibition, fair, festival, productions, publications, etc. It also assisted artists through participation in unique, sort-term professional training and participation in funding of experimental projects in all art types.

It also provided individual assistance – participation in the purchase of new instruments or fixing existing ones, voice and diction lessons, purchase of professional equipment and materials, financing translations and printing of manuscripts, employment and for the most outstanding artist, solo concerts, shows or exhibitions.

The committee had at its disposal a computerized national data base with the artists' names, addresses, phone numbers and professional classification. This information was used by different institutions in locating suitable candidates for employment. The personal file of each artist included a recommendation written by professional committees.

Those eligible for support were artists who have been recognized by a professional committee specializing in their field as outstanding and extremely outstanding, and also artists who have been accepted, following appropriate exams, into jobs in their professions by leading cultural institutes. The period of eligibility was three years from the day the artist immigrated to Israel except for writers and poets where the period was five years.

The funds for the artist support program came from the budgets of the Ministry of Immigration Absorption, the Ministry of Science and the Arts and the Jewish Agency in equal parts. WLI contributed to the funding of committee operations through the employment of bookkeepers, accountants and taking care of all financial arrangements.

The numbers of potential artists to appear in front of the committee were 1,147 in 1992 and 985 in 1993.

In 1993 the committee submitted the following report:

Music:

Participation in the cost of employment of 6 unemployed singers in the Israeli Philharmonic Choir. The Philharmonic Choir paid the rest of the salaries and assisted in the preparation of a repertoire, voice development, etc.

Finding employment for immigrant composers in community work.

Immigrant composers concert played at the Israel Museum and recorded for broadcast at 'Kol Israel'

Participation in the New Israeli Opera workshop. This workshop is held once a year with leading teachers from the 'Metropolitan Opera' in New York. Workshop participant practiced the preparation of repertoire, voice development, acting, etc.

Plastic Arts:

Assistance for a fair and auction of works of tens of artists at the Jerusalem Theater including covering the cost of framing the works.

Participation in a workshop at Betzalel, where 35 artists trained for 6 months in environmental design. Artists learned adapting architectural plans to the environment, unique materials typical to Israeli construction, translating techniques and implementing works into a work plan, color and material theory, economics, budgeting, pricing and presenting works for application as well as English and Hebrew. The workshop graduates, painters, sculptures and graphic artists started integrating into work groups around the country.

A seminar in the 'Popular University' where 37 artists from around the country heard lectures on 20th century art and Israeli art (in Hebrew, with translation to Russian). Tours of museums and art halls and practical workshops were conducted.

Participation in the cost of a new group exhibition called 'New House – New Light' where 38 artists participated from the disciplines of: painting, sculpturing, art photography and artwork. The exhibition traveled for three month and was held at 'Binyaney Hauma', the Jerusalem Theater, the Haifa Theater and Hemlin House in Tel-Aviv. The committee helped arrange and sort the works with the exhibition curator Jan Rauchberger. Following the exhibition 4 artists were invited to hold solo exhibitions.

The committee managed to attain a 50% discount for participation in an arts fair in Jerusalem. The committee is working to enter artists into a Judaic arts fair to be held in Jerusalem.

(65) An exhibition by Irena Kalich, new immigrant from Russia, supported by WLI

Theater and the Stage:

The unveiling of the 'Men and Puppets' Theater in the Acco Festival in 1993. A grant was provided to cover travel expenses, transportation, labor and equipment rental. The committee is working to find employment for stage designers.

Writers and Poets:

Participation in the cost of a bookstand at the 'Hebrew Books fair' in collaboration with the Writers association. Grants for printing of a book and translation of a script for a movie.

Dance:

Assistance in purchase of clothing and sound equipment.

Arts Fair in Raanana:

Publicity for a 'Lag BaOmer' arts fair in Raanana, in local papers.

The fair, organized by the Raanana municipality and the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption, contributed to the exposure of musicians and stage artists and helped in the sale of artworks by painters, sculptures and other artwork.

The committee decided to grant 150 NIS for each of the 27 artists who participated in the fair, traveling from place including: Hadera, Netanya, Peth-Tiqva, Ramla, Lod, Kfar Saba and Hertzeliya. To cover costs of transporting musical instruments, paintings, sculptures and other works.

Class year-end ceremonial dinner in the WLI high-school in Netanya

During all its years, at the end of every school year, the WLI High-School in Netanya held a unique event, to conclude the annual projects of the culinary and confectionary courses. Honoring the event with their presence were the heads of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Employment, municipality dignitaries, leading hotel chefs and representatives of the IDF.

In 2003, the annual project was named 'Cooking Peace'. The first part of the evening was dedicated to the Nobel Peace Prize, and its laureates over the years, including: Yizchak Rabin, Menahem Begin, Anwar Saadat, Jimmy Carter and others. In the second part, the meal served during the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony of 2002, was reconstructed. The meal was prepared according to original recipes, sent by the Nobel organization, especially for the occasion. The chefs overseeing the preparation of the meal were: Mika Sharon ('Mika' restaurant in Tel-Aviv), Ezra Kedem ('Arkadya' restaurant in Jerusalem) and Nir Tzuk ('Cordeliya' restaurant in Jaffa and the 'Tzukariya' TV show).

Among the dignitaries present were the Cultural Attaché on the Norwegian Embassy in Israel, Ms. Otry Reyden. The head of the confectionary program in the WLI High-School, who was about to retire for his role, asked all present to follow the National Anthem with a moment of silence in memory of the casualties of the terror attack on the nearby Park Hotel during the Passover Seder the previous year. Among the casualties of the attack on the Park Hotel was its chef Arkady Vizelman, a graduate of the WLI High-School.

In 2005 the annual project was dedicated to the famous dishes of the Jewish congregations of Jerusalem. The project gave the students an opportunity to get acquainted with the origins of Jerusalem dishes coming from the different neighborhoods and communities in this diverse city, through visits to the city and its kitchens.

Additional Activities:

Community Center in Hazor HaGlilit

WLI has participated in the establishment of a community center in Hazor HaGlilit, providing culture, arts and sports activities

Nursing course for Ethiopian new immigrants

WLI initiated a nursing course for new immigrants from Ethiopia, conducted at the Nursing School adjoining the Nahariya Governmental Hospital. Course graduates were placed in jobs in the Israeli health system.

Arts School in Ashqelon

The School, with pupils in the first through seventh grades, received WLI's support in the form of a professional library.

Epilogue: At present and looking into the future

WLI has started its activities at the beginning of the 20th century with support for the Jewish settlement – mainly by women – in the Land of Israel, in preparation for the establishment of a sovereign state. In those days, when humanitarian and educational support was extremely lacking, WLI focused on unique and ground breaking projects in the fields of immigrant assimilation, welfare and education in the Land of Israel. The WLI activities fulfilled a void and answered true needs and significant deficiencies in the population. With real drive, initiative and voluntarism, WLI has succeeded to recruit significant resources both in mind and in matter to answer those needs and support the fulfillment of the Zionist dream.

Nowadays, in the beginning of the 21st century, as the State of Israel celebrates its 60th year, many organizations – governmental, private and voluntary – exist, to provide the population with a variety of solutions in the traditional WLI fields of operations. Some of these solutions are a result of WLI initiatives and of close and productive cooperation between WLI and government institutions (mainly the Ministry of Labor and Welfare) and other social organizations, which continue to operate today independently.

Therefore, WLI has seen fit its return to its roots, its "stepping stone" in its history – providing boarding solutions for needy populations, on one hand, and funding higher education and vocational training for these populations on the other hand. WLI continues to view its goal to be to provide young men and women, lacking means and hope, the chance to participate in higher education and to learn a profession that will provide them with future income and a possibility to enter the world of science and learning.

WLI homes (formerly Bathey HaHalutzot) in Tel Aviv and Netanya continue operations. The WLI compound in Netanya houses student dormitories for various local educational institutions, including the dental technicians school operating from within the WLI compound. In addition the compound houses the "Shuvu" school, educating its students (mainly Olim from the former Soviet Union and from Ethiopia) in the love of the land and its people, mutual reliance and excellence.

The Tel Aviv home provides dormitories for students and houses Jewish youth who arrive in Israel as part of the "Taglit", "the Israel experience" and "Massa" programs of the Jewish Agency, aimed at bringing Jewish youth from around the world closer to the State of Israel and the experience of living there.

WLI also provides, annually, 40 full scholarships for first degree studies for students from underprivileged classes, studying at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

WLI activities in the remaining two houses, in Jerusalem and in Haifa, were terminated. The house in Haifa was sold and the house in Jerusalem turned

over to "Yad Ben-Zvi", an organization dedicated to the study of the history of the Land of Israel and passing this knowledge to the public.

At this time, WLI is organizing its historical documents in the "Central Archive of the Jewish People History", a part of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and will soon launch a new web site where the WLI story will be available for the public to read. Graduates of WLI dormitories, courses and schools as well as scholarships grantees will be able to add their personal stories to this site.

"When looking at the strengths of the Israeli society and its typical weaknesses," says Etti Pilpel Adv. WLI Israel CEO (starting in 2004) and Legal Counsel, "It always comes back to education. WLI management believes that investing in education and in scholarships, creates knowledgeable, educated adults with the values required to contribute to the whole society, creates a true opportunity for equality, nourishes the aspiration to excel, deepens the love of the land and the people and enriches knowledge and Zionist values. From its first day, WLI has (and still does) believed in tolerance, pluralism and democracy. WLI supports providing equal opportunities to anyone interested in higher education and providing as many students as possible the chance to fulfill their promise and their abilities and achieve higher achievements."

"Through my work at WLI I have come to know and respect the women of the League in the USA," says Adv. Pilpel. "The women in the WLI management have, through all generations, expressed their faith in the State of Israel and its future. They have persevered in their activities, kept their beliefs and never despaired for the 80 years WLI has been operating. The women of the league have always been motivated by a sense of public commitment. The desire to contribute to the welfare of the population in Israel is the thread that goes through all WLI activities over the years. During operations, the league management had meticulously kept an efficient administration and control system, to ensure to best possible level of services. The league management in Israel has developed and maintained a close relationship with the different institutions it had cooperated with, or had agreements with. The WLI team in Israel was up, along the years, to any task required, with professionalism and a commitment to quality. I am proud to be part of this organization, aimed at providing a significant contribution to an underprivileged population".

Appendix No. 1:

The presidents of the League and their major activities:

Name	Years	Main activities
Emma Gotheil	1928 – 29	Establishment of Women League for Palestine, contribution to the Women Workers Farms of Rachel Yanait Ben Zevie, sending a delegation to Palestine to start the activities of the League there (Rose Issacs)
Rose Blumenthal	1929 – 31	Erection of the House in Haifa
Jane Prince	1932 – 57	Opening of the House in Haifa, erection of the Houses in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Netanya, 'Ulpan Meir' assimilation of women immigrants – refugees of the Nazi regim, 'Ora' weaving workshop and מתפרה The Vocational School for Adults (Netanya), starting the connection with the Hebrew University – building 2 student dormitories and cafeteria, endowing Rose Isaacs Chair in Sociology (Givat Ram)
Anna Cahane Neiditz	1957 – 63	Cooperation with the Hebrew University, building and opening a multi-purpose Student Center in Givat Ram, opening 'The Women's League for Israel Road'
Anne Starr	1963 – 69	Continuation of activities in Haifa, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Netanya Houses, building 3 dormitories for women students in On Mount Scopus
Roslyn Shipper	1969 – 75	Continuation of activities in Haifa, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Netanya Houses,

		creating a scholarship fund for students in Hebrew University to cover their tuition and living expenses
Violet B. Wiles	1975 – 81	Book Endowment Fund for the University's Paul Baerwald School of Social Work, Youth Rehabilitation Center, The professional High School (Netanya), The central kitchen and the dining room (Netanya), endowing a Lectureship in Nutritional Sciences at the Faculty of Agriculture in Rehovot, opening the Blind Students' Unit in Hebrew University
Marilyn Schwartzman	1981 – 86	Self-Help groups, Girls Rehabilitation project, Unit for Individual and Family Care, Unit for Prevention of Violence in the Family, the Center for Parent-Children Connection, Establishment of the Central School for the Training of Workers in the Social Services, The Central Social Work Library, 'Society and Welfare' Quarterly
Muriel Lunden	1986 – 89	Continuation of activities in Haifa, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Netanya Houses, Ychdav project
Trudy Miner	1989 – 95	Continuation of activities in Haifa, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Netanya Houses, Meital
Harriet Lainer	1995 – 2001	Dror project, A hot line for battered women in Jerusalem, Battered women's shelter in Beersheva, continuing the Center for Parent-Children Connection
Trudi Miner	2000 - 2016	Cooperation with Birthright Israel and the Israeli experience in bringing Jewish youth from around the world to the WLI home

Marlene Post	2016 - 2017	Continuation of activities in Tel Aviv, Establishing a new scholarship fund for postgraduate students at the Hebrew University
Jan Schechter	2018 -	Continued cooperation with Birthright Israel and the Israeli experience. The beginning of the renovation of rooms at WLI

THE HISTORY OF WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR ISRAEL ("LENI) IN ESSENCE

Women's League for Israel (WLI) grew out of the conviction that young women coming to a new land, ready to make sacrifices to build a Jewish state must have a home, a grasp of Hebrew and an ability to earn a living. In 1928, WLI was chartered as a not-for-profit organization to address these needs.

The league has been funding its activities through donations directed towards activities in Israel , and in collaboration with governmental ministries. The donations have been collected through a wide network of activities in the USA, mainly in the New York metropolitan area and in south Florida.

The port city of Haifa was selected for WLI's first Home (that was named "Beyt Chalutsot" – meaning: "house of female-pioneers"). When a young woman arrived, she was surrounded by an atmosphere of warmth and friendship which encouraged her growth and independence.

The Haifa Home opened in 1932 and was filled immediately. One year later, Hitler came to power and shortly thereafter, WLI could not meet the demands of all the young refugees streaming into Palestine. Even though WLI was still in its infancy, plans were made immediately to enlarge the Haifa Home by adding a third story and to build a similar Home in Tel Aviv. Soon after its completion (1936), the Tel Aviv Home was enlarged (1938) and WLI undertook to build a similar shelter in Jerusalem (1943).

The first inhabitants in the Jerusalem Center were young orphans, brought out of war-torn Europe through Teheran into Israel. Next to be sheltered were destitute and broken survivors of the Holocaust. Thanks to the warm care of WLI's directresses and staff, these tortured young women were nursed back to health and given back the dignity each human being deserves. Due to desperate need for space, and in spite of the expansion of the three existing buildings, arose the necessity of erection of a fourth Center in Netanya.

The story of WLI parallels the development and goals of Israel. WLI started by building Homes. During the War of Liberation in 1948, the Homes served as headquarters for CHEN, the Women's Army Corps., and The broadcasts of Kol Yisrael in Jerusalem were relocated to WLI's Home when the original station site was lost in the battle.

A generation of trained minds had been murdered in the Holocaust, and the new State was desperate for academicians. Then Women's League pioneered a partnership with The Hebrew University on projects to improve the welfare of students. WLI endowed a Chair in Sociology and built the first dormitories for female students on the Givat Ram campus. WLI also built a student cafeteria. As enrollment increased, so did the need for a student center, to serve as a focal point for extra-curricular activities. WLI met this need with a three building complex, including a gymnasium.

Rehabilitation and vocational training continued to be a necessity. Many young female refugees from the USSR needed re-training. A second generation was growing up in Israel, underprivileged socially and economically. The Israeli Government asked WLI to expand facilities in Netanya and initiate a National Rehabilitation and Vocational Training Center coupled with an Evaluation Center. WLI added a third story and made room for new dormitories and classrooms.

Also in Netanya compound, WLI and the Ministry of Labor and Welfare have established in 1950 the 'Ora' workshop – a protected hand weaving workshop for blind women, aimed at the rehabilitation of the women through the performance of productive work and a chance to lead an independent life despite their limitations.

June 1967 witnessed six days that changed the State. As a result of the war, Jerusalem was reunited. Jews could once again pray at the Western Wall, and Mt. Scopus – the original site of The Hebrew University – was again accessible. WLI immediately responded to the call that Mt. Scopus be rebuilt, by building a three-winged dormitory on this campus. Following the tragic Yom Kippur War in 1973, WLI established the WLI Scholarship Fund at The Hebrew University for qualified and needy students. Priority went to those whose studies were interrupted by the Yom Kippur War, with an extra priority for those disabled in battle. On the fourth of July, 1976, Israel startled the world with the daring rescue at Entebbe. Lt. Colonel Yehonatan Netanyahu lost his life saving the hostages. WLI promptly established a memorial scholarship in his name. In 1985 The Hebrew University told of the "brain drain" periling the future excellence of HU's faculty and asked WLI to help combat the problem. WLI answered by funding a Lectureship in Nutritional Science at Rehovot.

In Haifa, WLI established the Family Therapy Center in cooperation with the Ministry of Social welfare in Haifa University. This has been a very successful program, helping hundreds of problem families over the years. This gave rise to the Domestic Abuse Intervention Center, with social workers in Haifa, Holon, and Tira counseling abused women and children. WLI pioneered The Meeting Place for Troubled Families, originally set up in Haifa and expanded to Tel Aviv and Netanya. Children of divorced parents met with the non-custodial parent under the supervision of a social worker. WLI's Meeting Place in Haifa was the prototype for all such programs in Israel Haifa University. This has been a very successful program, helping hundreds of problem families over the years. This gave rise to the Domestic Abuse Intervention Center, with social workers in Haifa, Holon, and Tira counseling abused women and children. WLI pioneered The Meeting Place for Troubled Families, originally set up in Haifa and expanded to Tel Aviv and Netanya. Children of divorced parents met with the non-custodial parent under the supervision of a social worker. WLI's Meeting Place in Haifa was the prototype for all such programs in Israel. Haifa housed the Central School for Social Work, offering computer training courses and preparation classes for pre-college tests.

In the Jerusalem Center, WLI maintained the National Library of Social Work, a vital research facility for students and experts in the field from all over the country. Along with a section of the Institute for Productivity, WLI offered many of the same courses available in Haifa. WLI was also involved with Meital, a group counseling sexually abused women and children.

Tel Aviv, the largest of WLI's buildings, had the largest dormitory, and was home to the Committee for Outstanding Immigrant Artists, the National Self-Help Clearing House, and Rom Pratt, a group working with learning disabled adults. Tel Aviv had a satellite Family Therapy Center to counsel troubled families, and a new Meeting Place for divorced parents and children.

The Netanya Center offered the most varied schedule of courses, ranging from a four-year vocation high school, a school for dental technicians and assistants, and another one for cooking and culinary arts. Also in Netanya, WLI offered after-school programs for elementary school children and volunteers for Meals on Wheels. There were also branches of the Central School for Social Work and The Meeting Place.

The story of Women's League for Israel is ever changing. Each Center has functioned during the years as a place for community group meetings, instruction courses, concerts, lectures and Ulpan classes for new immigrants. WLI is accessible and its administration is flexible. WLI is a small organization and is able to respond promptly and efficiently as need arises. WLI is known in Israel as "Ligat Nashim" or "LENI", and well known because it is in the mainstream of social services and is involved with the education and social well-being of many Israelis, newcomers and Sabras alike.

After the second Libanon war WLI has collaborating with Haifa Rambam Medical Center in establishing a Trauma ER Centre for Children and donated 1.5 million dollars for this purpose.

Due to WLI's board resolution, the Jerusalem, Netanya and the Haifa activities have been halted. The Tel Aviv compound is fully operational.

In recent years, WLI collaborates with The Israel Experience to house in WLI's Tel Aviv compound, young Jewish men and women from the Diaspora who come to Israel for several months to attend educational programs that are organized by the Israel Experience to promote immigration to Israel and to strengthen its ties with the Jews in the Diaspora

The devoted volunteers in America make all these achievements possible. WLI's members are enthusiastic and committed.

Mrs. Etti Pilpel Paz, a well known attorney in Israel, is the Director General of Women's League in Israel.

For sixteen years she served as the attorney of Naamat, the largest women organization in Israel For several years she served as the attorney general of the organization. She has been serving as a legal consultant in various governmental committees, among which she was nominated by Israeli Prime minister to serve as the legal adviser of the Governmental Surrogate committee.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR ISRAEL

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