



Program Title: WZO Program

Category: Israel

Author(s): Andy Schachter and Hannah Siegel

Please Note: This program may be used "as-is," however; NFTYites are encouraged to "adapt" programs, combining their own elements of innovation with this preexisting program.

Touchstone Text:

“Zionism has already brought about something remarkable, heretofore regarded as impossible: a close union between the ultra-modern and the ultra-conservative Jews...A union of this kind is possible only on a national basis.” -- Theodor Herzl

Goals:

- To teach PPs about the World Zionist Organization and the current elections
- To inform PPs why they should get their voices heard in speaking out for reform Judaism

Objectives:

- PPs will be faked out to thinking their opinions are unimportant
- PPs will discuss about why they didn't have their voices heard
- PPs will learn about the what the WZO is and what the current elections are all about
- PPs will read about what the Reform Platform is in these elections and why they should vote Reform

Timed Procedure:

- 1) Fake out.....10 mins
- 2) Break into Groups.....3 mins
- 3) Intro.....10 mins
- 4) WZO/Election overview.....12 mins



5) ARZA Information.....	15 mins
6) Regroup.....	3 mins
7) Wrap up.....	5 mins
Total.....	58 mins

Locations:

Normal Group Locations

People:

- 10 groups
- 2 Rovers
- 2 Fake-out Moderators
- Program Leader

Materials:

- Handouts 1 and 2
- Yarn for 18-year-old wristbands

Background Information:

Detailed Procedure:

- 1) Fake out.....10 mins

Moderator: Hey everyone. We're going to open this program with a little debate. I want all the Red Sox fans go to one side of the room and the Yankee fans go to the other side of the room. If you're not a baseball fan, you should berate yourself, and then join any group you want.



[PPs move to respective sides of the room]

Moderator: Awesome. This is going to be an organized debate. Everyone will get an equal chance to convey their respective arguments as to whose team is better. Please don't shout out, raise your hand and wait to be called on. Ready? GO!

[PPs begin debating. Whenever a Red Sox fan is called on, they should be rudely interrupted and made to sit down again. Yankees fans will be able to say their bit.]

Moderator: Wow, both sides have some really good points. However, I think the Yankees conveyed their points much better. I propose that we break into smaller groups to discuss.

[Send PPs off into groups]

2) Break in to Groups.....3 mins

3) Introduction/ How did you feel?.....10 mins

GL: So hey everyone. So, as I don't want to ask some corny question we all know the answer to, we're just going to play a name game. Can everyone go around and say their name, TYG and something they do/have done to make their voice heard in the community.

(Hi my name is Ross and I'm from PEROTY, and I write many letters to my local senator)

GL: Sweet, so who can tell me what just happened in this debate?

(Uhhh, I slept through it, what happened?)



(The Yankee fans and Red Sox fans had a debate, and every time a Red Sox fan tried to speak, they were shut down. Only the Yankees fans could say their piece)

GL: Right, so for you Red Sox fans, how did you guys feel when your group wasn't able to get their voice heard?

(It SUCKED! Everyone should be able to have their say in a discussion)

(It was a one sided debate and anyone who isn't a baseball fan wouldn't get the whole picture just by watching the debate)

GL: Do you think that it was unfair that the moderators told everyone they would get their voice heard when really only Yankees fans could speak and the moderators were clearly biased?

(YESS!!)

GL: Did you know that this isn't the only debate in which only one group is heard. Can anyone name another instance where there is a clear bias towards one group?

(My Mom totally likes my sister than me. This week she got 2 cookies when I only got one, and it was oatmeal raisin while hers was chocolate chip.)

(In the Northeast, there is a blatantly liberal population)

GL: Well, there is also a debate in the Jewish world that needs our input so a situation like this doesn't occur.

(Huh, OMG this could be SO bad, I really am curious as to what this problem is)

4) WZO/Election Overview.....12 mins

GL: So can anyone tell me what WZO stands for?



(Wicked Zebra Opera?)

(World Zionist Organization)

GL: Right, and does anyone know what the WZO is?

(It puts on zebra operas)

(It is the governing body of World Jewry and it makes decisions and enforces policies for all of the worlds' Jews)

GL: Exactly. The World Zionist Organization is the main governing body of Jews throughout the world. It has an election every four years in Jerusalem. It is the only body in which all of World Jewry is represented democratically. It determines policy, designates its course of action, elects its institution and functionaries and supervises. These decisions influence hundreds of millions of dollars in funding and paid portfolios. It also makes decisions which affect the status of Reform Jews in Israel and across the world, and the funding available to Progressive Jews in Israel. I have a handout so we can look a little more in depth into what the WZO is. We're just going to go around and read it. When you get tired, just pass it off to someone else. Who wants to start?

[PPs read handout 1]

GL: Awesome. Thanks a lot guys. So, now that we're all feeling grand about the WZO as a whole, I have some really thrilling news regarding it. This year is an amazing and wonderful year because this is a year in which WZO elections are occurring. Does anyone have any idea as to how the elections work?

[YES. Each party has a candidate and he's running for president of the WZO]

[THE ZEBRAS RUN AMUCK]

[There are a bunch of parties and we vote on the issues that each party represents]

GL: Beautiful. That's exactly it. In the WZO there are an overwhelmingly large number of parties. The point of the elections is to determine the percentage of vote in Congress each party gets. This is why, in the elections, rather than voting on a candidate, you vote on a slate of issues that each party makes their own. Based on what is important to you, that is how you vote. I.e. if you are most concerned that



there are not enough yeshivot in Israel, you would vote on an Orthodox ticket. Does anyone have any questions about how this works?

(Yes)

(No)

[PPs ask questions]

5) ARZA Information.....15 mins

GL: Just as the Red Sox fans were underrepresented in the debate we had earlier, the Reform Movement is quite underrepresented in Israel's affairs. This is why it is very, very crucial that they gain more votes in Congress making it quite important that we vote on the Reform ticket in the WZO elections. Perhaps you are wondering, what the Reform ticket is and what it represents? I know you're wondering it. Aren't you wondering that?

(Gosh. What is the Reform ticket?)

(What is the Reform movement representing?)

GL: Ha. I knew you were wondering it. It just so happens that I have a grand and glorious handout to give you about this subject matter. Let's do it.

[PPs read handout]

GL: Delicious. Before we go into a discussion, is there any part of the platform or values or such that someone doesn't understand?

[PPs ask questions]

GL: Now, so we as NFTY don't come off as being incredibly biased, I'll let you know that there are other parties existing in the WZO. Groups like Orthodox Union and Mercaz (which is conservative) also are looking to get their voices heard. And while they, too, have issues that are very important to them, for



sake of time, we will only let you know that they exist. If you find that you disagree with the values of the Reform Movement or are looking for something else, you should definitely look into the platform of some of these other parties. However, for our purposes, ARZA is our main focus and that is that.

GL: Ok. Stellar. Does anyone know why it is SO important that we as Reform Jews vote ARZA in the WZO elections?

[Because our values are important to us and how we work as a movement and if we have no representation in Congress, our values will not be heard and not be considered. That is why we need to vote, so we can get our ideas out there]

GL: Right, I mean, how would you all feel if the awesome NFTY in Israel Programs ceased to exist?

(That would be awful; I don't know what I would do during the summer)

GL: If we don't get our voices heard, there someday might not be any awesome opportunities for us as reform Jews.

GL: So just to sum it up, VOTE FOR REFORM JUDAISM. If you are going to be 18 years of age by June 30, 2006, we are eligible to vote in the WZO elections. SO YOU SHOULD DO IT. I know that this was a lot of information, but it is really important that all of you be conscious of the elections, as it is crucial to our existence in Israel. When you go home, be sure to talk to your parents, as they are also able to vote, and every vote counts. If you are interested in taking a more active role, go talk to your rabbi, as I'm sure he/she can help you get more involved. Let's go join the group.

6) Regroup.....3 mins

7) Why voting is important/Wrap up.....5 mins

PL: Did you all learn a lot about the WZO? Great. It is really important that we as the youth of the Reform movement take an active role in this election, as the results will directly affect us as we grow into adulthood. If you are going to be 18 within the voting restrictions, be prepared to come to an



informational meeting during chofesh. We will be going over the details on how to vote, and maybe even registering some of you right then. If you are still interested, but not of age, you should still come to the meeting and ask any questions you would like. You could also find either of us NFTY-Reps and we can answer your questions and send you in the right direction to find more information. If you are 18 or of age to vote, please come see us after the meeting so we can give you a wrist bracelet to make sure we know who you are.

Hannah Siegel and Andy Schachter

WZO Handout 1

In 1897 Theodore Herzl, the father of Zionism, called together 200 Jews committed to Israel. They meet in Basel, Switzerland for the first Zionist Congress. Herzl understood that for the Zionist Movement to succeed he would need to create the institution that would be responsible for building a new state. To those ends, by the end of the Congress the delegates had created the World Zionist Organization (WZO).

The World Zionist Organization (WZO) is the organizational wing of the Zionist movement. Together with the Jewish Agency, the WZO operated as the leadership of the Zionist movement prior to the founding of the State of Israel. Since 1948, the Jewish Agency and WZO have served as the extra-governmental arm of the State of Israel in areas in which the government of Israel as a sovereign state, cannot operate. They work to preserve and enrich Jewish life around the world, strengthening and supporting areas like Jewish and Zionist education; promoting aliyah; and rescuing Jews from distressed countries. In 1902, the Mizrahi movement was founded by Rabbi Isaac Reines as a religious faction within the WZO, allowing religious Jews to participate fully in the organized Zionist movement.

PROGRAM #3

Program Title: Building Israel – Creating A Yeshuv

Category: Israel

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Created for: NFTY-NEL/URJ Sicha 5765, December 26, 2004

Edited by: Zach Newburgh

Edited for: NFTY-NEL Winter Kallah 5766, February 3, 2006