
They Came, They Saw, They Organized: The Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel

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From the time of Mordecai Noah through the era of Louis D. Brandeis and continuing to the present day, American Jews have been involved in the resettlement of Palestine/Israel. Imbued with the values of their native country, especially its belief in democracy and pluralism, and accustomed to voluntarism and nonpolitical group activism as means of attaining public goals, they had an Americanized vision, as it were, of what Israel should be. Because most *olim* from the United States retained and tried to implement their American values when they settled in their new country, one may well apply to them what Marie Syrkin said of Golda Meir, “the reality of the American dream emboldened [their] Zionist dream.”¹

The program and accomplishments of the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel (AACI) provide a good means for studying the attempt to realize American ideals in the Israeli environment. Founded in 1950 and as of 1988 representing 60,000 Americans and Canadians living in Israel, AACI is the country’s largest organization of North Americans. Its membership of 16,000 supports a national office, five regional offices, a paid staff of approximately forty, and about 2,000 volunteers.²

From the outset the members of AACI have felt that they have something important to give Israel, for although their first goal was to help themselves as new immigrants, their second was to promote the betterment of the whole country. Translating this into voluntary action, as they had learned to do in the United States and Canada, AACI members worked for a variety of causes, in the process teaching Israelis, by example, how a nonpolitical organization with no religious or secular ties could successfully function.³

The Beginning of AACI

AACI came into being in 1950 at a meeting announced by the following 2 inch by 1¹/₂ inch announcement in the *Jerusalem Post*:

Notice—The meeting of American *olim* to discuss problems of absorption and the possibility of setting up an American office will take place Sunday November 12, 1950 at 4 pm at 40 Yehuda Halevy, Tel Aviv.⁴

To the amazement of the organizers, “there was an overwhelming outpouring of people.”⁵ With 120 men and women in attendance a decision was made to organize.

The founders of AACI were familiar with the *landsmanshaftn* in the Jewish communities of the United States and may initially have had something similar in mind.⁶ Like the *landsmanshaftn*, AACI was an association of immigrants from the same place (in this instance the better part of a continent rather than a single town or region), and, to paraphrase what Michael R. Weisser has said of *landsmanshaftn* associations in America, it provided the “initial point of contact” with the new country and the “initial point of departure” from the old.⁷ Typically the *landsmanshaftn* furnished members with sick and burial benefits, loans, and a familiar social setting.⁸ They “help[ed new immigrants] ease the process of adjusting to their new culture in the context of familiar customs and traditions,”⁹ enabling them to function in a new society without having to give up a framework in which they were comfortable.¹⁰

AACI served its members in many of the same ways, but because it had both a public and a private agenda, it was not simply a member-serving *landsmanshaft*. Indeed, from the beginning, it worked to bring about changes in Israeli policies. Its members, raised in the tradition that “you *can* fight city hall,” have always worked for a reformation of absorption procedures that would make the immigration process more efficient. As Murray Greenfield, AACI’s third director, explained many years later, the individual had little power in Israel, and to bring about changes in the regulations regarding *olim* it was necessary to form a pressure group.¹¹ In addition, AACI sought changes in the laws specifying what goods immigrants could bring into the country, fought for stronger consumer laws, and helped newcomers to obtain affordable housing.¹²

AACI's Predecessors

While there were organizations of American immigrants before AACI, most did not survive statehood. The only one that did, *Kollel America Tiferet Yerushalayim* ("The American Community 'Pride of Jerusalem' ") is still in existence today. It was founded by Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem in 1896.¹³ For many years, *Kollel America* regarded itself as the official representative of the American Jewish community in Palestine.¹⁴

The first secular American organization that can be substantially documented, the American Jewish Citizens Association, was founded in 1938.¹⁵ It began as a nonpolitical body, hosting speakers and providing "an open forum from which, in true democratic spirit, divergent views on a multitude of problems might be heard and where regardless of class and creed opponents might meet opponents not as foes to widen the gulf that divides them, but as friends to bridge their differences."¹⁶

The Citizens Association was clearly a precursor of AACI, as is shown by the following statement of its goals:

To promote the physical and cultural welfare of its members; to serve as a link with the United States of America; to afford its members an opportunity to participate fully in the life of the Jewish Community; and to be of aid and guidance to visitors and new arrivals from the United States.¹⁷

As would later be true of AACI, the Citizens Association had both self-help and social aspects, and like AACI, it was not tied to a political or religious party. On the other hand, unlike AACI it saw itself as a link to the United States government.¹⁸

This ultimately caused its downfall, according to Gertrude Hattis, a resident of Haifa and at one time the secretary of the Citizens Association. Hattis and others left the organization when its president tried to use its American ties to have its members evacuated during World War II.¹⁹ In 1940 the Citizens Association, with the help of Judah Magnes, Israel Kligler, and Deborah Kallen, arranged to have beds available in Jerusalem for American evacuees from Haifa and Tel Aviv, if the need arose.²⁰ Unfortunately, dismay at the group's lack of commitment to the nascent Jewish state led Hattis to destroy all of its records.

The Citizens Association scored a major coup in 1942, when it suc-

cessfully lobbied the United States Congress “to pass an amendment extending until after . . . World War II, the date when naturalized American citizens had to set foot on American soil to maintain their citizenship.”²¹ Because of its efforts, nationalized Americans who were unable to leave Palestine because of the war were no longer in danger of losing their citizenship.

Sometime after this the Citizens Association seems to have disappeared, and many of its members probably returned to the United States. From the newspaper ads it is difficult to ascertain the size and structure of the Citizens Association, but in all likelihood there was a national umbrella organization and several local chapters.

In 1950, about the same time that AACI was being planned, a new organization to help immigrants adjust to Israeli life was founded in Haifa by Dr. William E. Lee, a dentist, and his wife, Fanny.²² Frustrated by bureaucratic red tape upon their arrival in Israel in 1949, the Lees decided to start an organization. Ten other American and Canadian *olim* joined them after reading their advertisement in the *Palestine Post*.²³ The little group had two main goals: to lobby the government for changes in the regulations and procedures affecting American immigrants, and to greet new arrivals with offers of friendship and advice. The group also organized Hebrew classes for the newcomers. In 1952, when the Lees learned about AACI, they merged with it, and their organization became part of AACI’s Haifa branch.²⁴

Advantages and Disadvantages of Being Nonpolitical

The Yishuv, the autonomous Jewish community of mandatory Palestine, had been run by a patchwork quilt of voluntary organizations. When statehood was declared in 1948, the government took over many of the activities they had handled.²⁵ It soon became clear, however, that the government, preoccupied with matters of defense and economics, could not adequately deal with the needs of immigrants, and as a result the voluntary organizations returned.²⁶ By 1984, twenty-nine immigrant associations, many of them founded in the 1950s,²⁷ were registered with the Ministry of the Interior as nonprofit organizations.²⁸

The founding members set up AACI to help American and Canadian immigrants through the process of economic and social *klitah* (absorption) into Israeli society. This was, indeed, a significant problem,

for many newcomers from North America felt isolated in Israel and had no idea how to deal with the massive bureaucracy that now controlled many areas of their lives.²⁹ Those who settled in the cities had difficulty with employment, housing, and red tape. Until AACI came on the scene, they had almost no one to turn to for guidance. Frustrated, some of them returned to North America. Observing this, Moshe Goldberg, who became AACI's first director, concluded that there was a great need for a self-help organization.³⁰

Many of the founders belonged to Habonim, a Labor Zionist organization, but as one of them later explained, "it did not matter if we were Revisionist or Hashomer Hatzair or Habonim, we were united much more by our common, immediate problems than we were separated by our ideological past."³¹ This was important, for it allowed AACI to view itself as representing all Americans and Canadians in Israel.

The idea that it was a unified body rather than a loose confederation of disparate elements helped make AACI an effective pressure group and reflected the structure of self-help organizations back in the United States, where people characteristically joined together to achieve some explicit purpose and not because of a shared ideology. In the early days some members who were not from Habonim doubted that AACI could remain pluralistic and nonpolitical, but it has managed to do so, and this has always been a source of great pride to the founders.

Because it was not affiliated with or ideologically tied to any Israeli political party or to a Zionist organization in the United States or Israel, AACI had great difficulty in obtaining financial support. The organizations of British and South African immigrants in Israel had the moral backing of the Jewish communal organizations in their countries of origin³² and were financed by them, at least in part (the Britishers also got money from the British Zionist Federation).

AACI has no comparable means of support, and its fund-raising efforts were complicated by the fact that in the postwar years Jewish organizations in the United States gave priority to aiding displaced persons in Europe and East European, North African, and Middle Eastern immigrants to Israel.³³ Moreover, they wanted nothing to do with the touchy issue of emigration from the United States, which brought up the question of dual loyalty and contradicted the generally held view that America was the new Zion.³⁴ Because of these factors,

AACI's funding over the years has derived from a combination of sources. The Jewish Agency provides a small amount of financial support, but the main sources are membership dues and AACI's own fund-raising campaigns.

Voluntarism as a Way of Life

Since most Israeli organizations are funded by outside sources, AACI is quite unique in being member-supported. It has a number of other features that make it different from the usual immigrant organization. Whereas other Israeli *landmanshaftn* try to perpetuate the memory of their hometowns³⁵ or to preserve their "group culture,"³⁶ AACI was set up to help its members "become integrated [into Israeli society] and . . . participate in the life of the country as rapidly and fully as possible."³⁷ It also seeks "to help Israelis better understand American and Canadian Jewish life."³⁸

In all of this, AACI emphasizes voluntary and nonpolitical public action. Voluntarism is a way of life in America, and the members of AACI try to maintain the same pattern in Israel, not only helping each other but working together, on a voluntary basis, to exercise influence as a pressure group. This was quite a deviation from the norm in a country which has at least seventeen political parties, and where forming or joining a political party, rather than exerting pressure from the outside, is considered the way to solve problems. The members of AACI believed, however, that if Israel was less politicized, with a stronger voluntary sector, it would be a better place to live and would attract more Americans.

Thus, like so many American Zionists before them, dating all the way back to Louis Brandeis, the founders of AACI sought to recast Zionism in an American image, emphasizing efficiency, pluralism, and American-style voluntarism over ideological concerns—much as Brandeis himself did. Indeed, the Brandeis tradition in American Zionism should be viewed as one of the major influences on the organization.³⁹

Membership in AACI is open to all Americans and Canadians, religious and secular, no matter what their political persuasion. Unlike the *landmanshaftn* from other Western countries, AACI did not begin as an appendage to an Israeli or American Zionist organization,⁴⁰ and

thus its policies are determined by its members and not by its paid staff. It is governed by volunteers, and its elected officers hire professionals who work as counselors in such areas as employment, housing, and personal adjustment, and as fund-raisers. On the voluntary side, committees of members work on various specialized concerns, such as quality-of-life issues and planning the social networking necessary to help immigrants adjust to Israel.

The members believe that volunteers are as important as professionals to AACI's success. By involving the membership at large, voluntarism makes it possible for the organization to accomplish more than would be possible if all the work had to be done by its small staff. In addition, voluntarism fosters a spirit of involvement that helps make new immigrants feel needed.

For some American *olim*, membership in a voluntary organization has become a more important aspect of their lives in Israel than it was in the United States. Like immigrants from other backgrounds, Americans need the support of their landsmen. Associating with other Americans provides a sense of stability. Through AACI they can participate in their new country in their native English. This is important, for in addition to making friends among their fellow members, they are able to join committees, run for office, and try to effect change in Israel even before they have learned Hebrew and Israeli ways.

Why AACI Was Needed

Economic conditions in Israel and the Israeli attitude toward immigrants from America made self-help necessary. Wrongly stereotyped as wealthy and spoiled, American *olim* had to fight an uphill battle to gain acceptance. Many Israelis took it for granted that the hardships of Israeli life would soon induce the Americans to give up and go home.⁴¹ With so many refugees and destitute newcomers from other countries in need of help, it was said, the government should not waste time and money on people whose standard of living was already good and who would not stay long enough to make the expenditure worthwhile. AACI lobbied the Jewish Agency in an effort to change this attitude, constantly reminding the authorities that even immigrants from America had needs and that it was their organizational representative. The negative view of American immigrants was still preva-

lent in the 1970s, but in the eighties AACI began to develop a better working relationship with the Agency.

Joseph Wernik, an American who emigrated to Israel in the 1970s, feels that membership in voluntary organizations was part of the commitment American *olim* made to Israel. Holding that *aliyah* is only the first step in the evolution of a Zionist,⁴² he says that “if you do not get involved in volunteering and helping to create the type of society you want [in Israel], you’re not really fulfilling the Zionist dream.”⁴³

Wernik’s own experience in Israel illustrates this. He joined AACI as an ordinary member, eventually became its director, and later served as countrywide representative of the Masorti (Conservative) movement. “Israel,” Wernik explains, “is far from what I want Israel to be. I believe I have to give of myself and we all do, and those who don’t give of themselves are not really Zionist in my mind.”⁴⁴

As an immigrant, Wernik felt comfortable about beginning his work as a volunteer in a social and ideological environment which he understood and which could benefit from his time and energy. Twelve years after he settled in Israel, having established strong credentials in voluntary American *olim* organizations, he became the head of the Organization Department of the World Zionist Organization and a member of the board of governors of the Jewish Agency, bringing his American ways to an Israeli agency and thereby influencing its entrenched bureaucracy. Thus, through AACI Wernik had helped himself, and then went on to work for society-at-large. This was what the founders of AACI were hoping for when they founded the organization.

What American Olim Bring to Israel

Analyzing why Americans in Israel were in the forefront of voluntarism, David Breslau, a founder of AACI and a myriad of other organizations, stated that “it’s partly the training we got in America. You just know it. It’s part of your second nature. I remember my mother teaching us to volunteer when we were little children.”⁴⁵

Discussing the same question, Joseph Wernik, who is a generation younger, commented that “it’s very much a part of being an American, I think, giving of yourself to organizational work, for betterment of certain causes. And that’s why I believe we need more Americans here.”⁴⁶ Wernik felt that by encouraging immigration from America he

was working for a healthier Israel; the more Americans there were in Israel, he maintained, the more volunteers there would be, and the better country Israel would become.

With the increase in immigration to Israel after the 1967 war⁴⁷ came Americans whose outlooks had been colored by the ethnic, ecology, and consumer movements of the sixties and seventies. Many were extremely idealistic. They came to a victorious Israel full of hope and spirit.

Reflecting their energetic activism, AACI's 1972 convention report was titled "AACI—Transformer for Current Changes in Israeli Life." Echoing John F. Kennedy, a delegate to the convention stated as part of his presentation, "we ask not what Israel can do for us, but what we can do for Israel."⁴⁸ Other convention delegates asserted that "AACI can, through the application of our experience with the American tradition of volunteerism, set examples; raise issues; criticize and lobby; and through effective social action improve standards."⁴⁹ They wanted the Jewish Agency to consult them on matters concerning new immigrants and in so doing, to cut down on the amount of bureaucracy facing immigrants.⁵⁰

This attitude represented the aggressive and confident post-1967 AACI. Being vocal meant confronting the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency, asking for increased funding and greater control of new immigrant policies, and fighting consumer and public health issues.

Quality-of-Life Issues

Prior to 1972 AACI had worked primarily to help new immigrants; after 1972 it began to work for what members defined as improvements in the "quality of Israeli society."⁵¹ In the past, segments of AACI's leadership had petitioned the government mainly for help in rectifying housing, citizenship, and other problems confronting new immigrants; now the demographics and mood had changed, creating the impetus for AACI to establish a more broad-based, activist organization.

At the 1972 convention the mood was "a compound of anger, frustration and a strong commitment for change in the quality of life in Israel."⁵² To put their feelings into policy, the delegates passed a "get-involved" resolution. They wanted the organization to deal with such

problems as social and ethnic equality, ecology, health services, and road safety. Consumer-protection issues became important for Americans on both sides of the Atlantic. Influenced by the example of Ralph Nader in the United States, AACI members felt that the same kind of activism was needed in Israel.

Until this time there had been no consumer movement in Israel, but in 1973 a new organization, Consumer Shield, came into being. Sponsored by AACI and growing out of its consumer service committee, Consumer Shield presented consumer issues as important to all Israelis, not simply those from Western countries. Consumer Shield served the Israeli public for nine years until its private grants ran out; its legacy includes the elimination of lead in ceramic tableware, the sale of fresh eggs in markets, and the purification of milk.⁵³

AACI Today

Some Americans joined AACI when they first arrived in Israel, utilized its counseling services, and dropped out after a year or so when they no longer needed it. Others made AACI's activities a major part of their communal and social lives. Just as in the United States, many American immigrants were active members of not just one but many voluntary associations.⁵⁴ According to one American who belonged to four such groups, Americans just naturally form voluntary organizations when they want to work for immigrant rights, religious tolerance, equal rights, high-quality child and health care, or any other cause.⁵⁵

Over the years AACI has accomplished many of its goals. Today, although immigrants still have to fight Israel's bureaucracy, they have an organization that will help them deal with their problems. AACI has brought about changes in some of the regulations that complicated immigration procedures and has provided Israelis with an example of American-style voluntarism and pluralism.

However, questions about the true value of AACI remain. Some feel that by providing a comfortable social life for American immigrants, AACI prevents them from becoming part of Israeli society. Others respond that even if this is true, the next generation will nonetheless be Israelis, not Americans.⁵⁶

Many critics have suggested that AACI would have been more successful if it had joined or become a political party. To the members,

however, that would have spelled failure. Their principles are as important to them as their other goals. Indeed, their principles are part of their vision of what Israel should and could be.

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Notes

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1. Marie Syrkin, "Golda Meir and Other Americans," in *Like All the Nations?*, ed. William M. Brinner and Moses Rischin (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), p. 115.

2. Josef Korazim, "Immigrant Associations in Israel," in *Ethnic Associations and the Welfare State*, ed. Shirley Jenkins (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 171.

3. This is different from the Russian Immigrant Association, which divided due to the different Israeli political affiliations of its members. Korazim, "Immigrant Associations in Israel," p. 167.

4. *Jerusalem Post*, Nov. 10, 1950, p. 8.

5. David Breslau, oral history interview with author, 1983, p. 15. Institute for Contemporary Jewry, Oral History Collection, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel (hereafter cited as ICJ).

6. For a further discussion of landsmanshaftn, see Moses Rischin, *The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870-1914* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962); Arthur A. Goren, *New York Jews and the Question of Community: The Kehillah Experiment, 1908-1922* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970); Irving Howe *World of Our Fathers* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976); Deborah Dash Moore, *At Home in America: Second Generation New York Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981); and Hannah Kliger, "A Home Away from Home: Participation in Jewish Immigrant Associations in America," in *Persistence and Flexibility: Anthropological Perspectives on the American Jewish Experience*, ed. Walter P. Zenner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988).

7. Michael R. Weissler, *A Brotherhood of Memory: Jewish Landsmanshaften in the New World* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), p. 4.

8. Rischin, *Promised City*, p. 105.

9. Kliger, "Home Away from Home," p. 146.

10. *ibid.*, p. 157.

11. Murray Greenfield, oral history interview with author, 1983, p. 4, ICJ.

12. Housing was one area where AACI achieved some success. In Israel most people purchase apartments rather than rent them. To help its members do so, AACI formed a mortgage company. It is the only immigrant organization which provides a housing loan in addition to the government's mortgage. Korazim, "Immigrant Associations in Israel," p. 181. For some members, the housing problem was solved when groups banded together, arranged financing, and built their own housing projects. Since 1952, AACI has built several housing projects, though not enough to solve the housing problem for American immigrants. One of the most noteworthy projects is Nayot in Jerusalem.

13. The Kollel America had 1,000 members by the end of the nineteenth century, most of whom were naturalized American citizens. Its purpose was to distribute funds solicited in the United States for the support of religious Jews in Jerusalem. For more information, see Simcha Fishbane, "The Founding of the Kollel America Tifereth Yerushalayim," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (July 1974): 120-136.

14. Kolel [sic] America Tifereth Yerushalayim to Oscar S. Heizer, Esq., U.S. Consul in Jerusalem, n.d., in National Archives, U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem, General Correspondence, 1920, Record Number 84. The letter, signed A. Marks, S. Jamouski, and L. Lowenstein, addresses Consul Heizer, stating, "the American Jewish Community of this Country venture to volunteer their heartfelt wishes of WELCOME to you."

15. As early as 1924 there was an Organization of American Jews in Palestine, but virtually nothing is known about it. See Nathan M. Kaganoff, ed., *Guide to America-Holy Land Studies*, vol. 1 (New York: Arno Press, 1980), p. 77. The American Citizens was started in Haifa in August of 1938 (*Palestine Post*, Aug. 31, 1938). It held meetings there the following month (ibid., Sept. 6, 1938) and convened a national conference in Tel Aviv at the Young Israel Hall on October 15, 1938 (ibid., Oct. 18, 1938). These dates differ from those given by David Geffen in *Encyclopedia of Zionism and Israel* (new ed.), s.v. "American Jews in Israel," who believes that the organization was founded on April 5, 1939, based on a postcard reminder, found in S86/20 record group of the New York Achooza Aleph. Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, Israel (hereafter cited as CZA).

16. Elias Ginsburg, "Federated Palestine Plan," letter to the editor, *Palestine Post*, Sept. 15, 1938.

17. *Palestine Post*, Aug. 31, 1938.

18. Although their goals were similar, there were no formal connections between the groups. Their leaders were a generation apart in age and had different political orientations.

19. In 1939 the American Jewish Association of Palestine (because of the similar dates of the meetings, I believe this is another name for the American Jewish Citizens' Association) met in Tel Aviv "to bring together more closely the American Jews who have made . . . [Israel] their home and to band them into an efficient organization capable of acting for their protection in all emergencies." Invitation to the meeting of March 26, 1939, as found in S86/20 record group of the New York Achooza Aleph, CZA. Members were advised to bring their passports to the meeting, as the association was worried about evacuating Americans in case of war.

20. Geffen, "American Jews in Israel," p. 9. For more information, see Marianne Sanua "Judah Magnes and the Issue of Dual Loyalty: The Case of U.S. Citizens in Palestine During World War II," unpublished paper, January 1989.

21. Ibid. At time of the amendment, according to Geffen (p. 9), there were 3,500 Jewish naturalized American citizens in Palestine.

22. Haifa was the country's chief port, so it was an extremely likely place for a new immigrant organization to begin.

23. The *Palestine Post* became the *Jerusalem Post* in April 1950.

24. Fanny Lee, "Before the Beginning There Was Willie Lee," *AACI Bulletin*, November 1969, pp. 3-4.
25. Korazim, "Immigrant Associations in Israel," p. 160.
26. According to Korazim, "public interest in ethnic associations developed when it was found that the existing immigrant organizations were more effective in helping their own groups become absorbed into Israeli culture and coping with problems of adjustment than were the general social services of the country." *Ibid.*, p. 156.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 166. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, 9,166 Americans settled in Israel between 1950 and 1967. This figure includes immigrants and potential immigrants.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 165. However, none of the organizations discussed in Hannah Kliger's "Ethnic Voluntary Associations in Israel," *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 31, no. 2 (December 1989), are included in Korazim's study. Kliger studied landsmanshaftn founded by immigrants from Antopol, Lodz, and other Eastern European cities, while Korazim studied organizations like AACI and The Immigrant Association of the USSR and Eastern Europe.
29. For a discussion of this problem, see Kevin Avruch, *American Immigrants in Israel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).
30. Moshe Goldberg, oral history interview with author, 1983, p. 3, ICJ.
31. Olga Weiss, "How AACI Began," *AACI Bulletin*, November 1969, p. 5.
32. Simon Griver, "Helping Hand," *NewsView*, October 24-30, 1984, p. 12.
33. Before World War II, landsmanshaftn in the United States sent funds to their hometowns in Europe; after 1948, they sent funds to their countrymen in Israel. There was no comparable group wanting to send funds to Americans in Israel.
34. Until the 1980s Jewish organizations in the United States were not interested in working with AACI or raising money for it, although individual American donors contributed to its mortgage funds. Every director of AACI made at least one trip to the United States to try to raise funds or stimulate interest; none were successful until Joseph Wernik in the 1980s.
35. Kliger "Ethnic Voluntary Associations in Israel," p. 117.
36. Korazim, "Immigrant Associations in Israel," p. 168.
37. From the 1986 AACI Constitution. Korazim, "Immigrant Associations in Israel," p. 168.
38. *Ibid.*
39. For a discussion of this topic, see the articles by Evyatar Frisel, Ben Halpern, and Melvin I. Urofsky in *American Jewish History*, 69, no. 1.
40. The British and the South African immigrant associations both received funding from their home countries' Zionist organizations. Griver, "Helping Hand," p. 12.
41. "The official estimate for the level of American *yeridah* [emigration] after three years residence in Israel is one-third." Avruch, *American Immigrants in Israel*, p. 59.
42. Wernik interview, July 31, 1988.
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*
45. Breslau interview, July 30, 1988.
46. Wernik interview, July 31, 1988.
47. All told, 45,000 American Jews immigrated to Israel between 1950 and 1975. Avruch, *American Immigrants in Israel*, p. 58. Immigration to Israel from North America increased 13 percent after the 1967 war. Korazim, "Immigrant Associations in Israel," p. 162. According to AACI's Report to Delegates, 25th Annual Convention, March 23-24, 1976, AACI had a membership of 5,200 in 1975; it increased to 10,008 by 1982.
48. Leonard Schroeder, "18th National Convention Report: AACI—Transformer for Current Changes in Israeli Life," *AACI Bulletin*, May 1972, p. 6.
49. *Ibid.*

50. AACI's role in the absorption process was acknowledged in 1987 when a report requested by the social policy center in Israel recommended "the encouragement of voluntary groups among the veteran population to help newcomers; the provision of greater resources to immigrant associations; fostering self-help activities among immigrants." Jewish Agency, Department of Immigration and Absorption, *Options for Change 1987* (Jerusalem: Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel, 1987), p. 21.

51. Schroeder, "18th National Convention Report," loc. cit.

52. Ibid.

53. Through bacteriological testing Consumer Shield determined that much of the milk in Israel contained a higher-than-legal rate of bacteria. The case went to court, and it was decided that the government was not enforcing the 1957 Act for Goods and Services. Consumer Shield also identified an unhealthy level of pesticides in the milk and an absence of antibiotics.

54. Hannah Kliger found that this was also often true in the United States among members and leaders of landmanshaftn. According to Kliger, many landmanshaft members were also members of synagogue associations or women's or men's voluntary associations. "Home Away from Home," p. 156.

55. Sylvia Shapero, oral history interview with author, Jerusalem, 1984. Typescript in William Weiner Oral History Library, American Jewish Committee, New York.

56. One American immigrant stated, "I am no fan of AACI, and withdrew my membership after my first year in Israel. . . [Their children] will be Israelis. So do not criticize the AACI or these people. They are, after all, living in Jerusalem or Savvyon, not Miami Beach." Avruch, *American Immigrants in Israel*, p. 79.