



Ameinu is Hebrew for our people. We are committed to peace, social justice and the centrality of Israel for the Jewish People.

From the President: Kenneth Bob



When I sit down to write my newsletter column, it is sometimes hard to choose a topic. After all, the Ameinu agenda ranges from Israeli politics, Zionist youth work, American causes, our Israel social justice partners.....the list seems to go on and on. However, a World Zionist Congress only takes place every four years and, despite the debate about its relevance or perhaps because of it, I will address the 36th Congress held in June.

Many people justifiably question whether there is a need for the World Zionist Organization, still in existence over 60 years after the establishment of the state. In fact, David Ben-Gurion was known to suggest that it was time to "dismantle the scaffolding" that was used to build the state. In recent years, attempts have been made to revitalize the organization through a financial separation from the Jewish Agency, independent resource development and a sharpening of the organization's mission.

On this background, a 14 person Ameinu-Habonim Dror delegation traveled to Jerusalem to participate in what remains the most inclusive democratic gathering of the international Jewish community. Immediately prior to the Congress, we also had the opportunity to meet with our Ameinu colleagues from Canada, Australia and South Africa as well as other Labor Zionist delegates from Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, France, Belgium, United Kingdom and Israel. As you might imagine, the nature and size of the local Jewish community impacts the role the progressive Zionist grouping plays in the respective country. The local political reality from

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Discover Progressive Israel with Ameinu



One of Ameinu's most anticipated programs this year is our mission to Israel. Ameinu's trip will offer a peek into the very best of Israel, its democratic character and its drive for peace. This mission to Israel will enrich travelers who want to personally connect with progressive Israel.

From December 30th, 2010 to January 4, 2011, Ameinu travelers will explore Israel in all of its richness. We will meet with political figures and grassroots

activists, see those who are working to make Israel a better place, and celebrate 100 years of Kibbutz. Join us as we begin to unravel the forces that make the struggle for peace so complicated, and gain genuine, first-hand understanding of the Israeli social justice system.

In past years, Ameinu mission participants consisted of first-time travelers to Israel looking for a purposeful acquaintance with the Israeli way of life and returning travelers searching for an edifying experience in the country that they had once visited. Through the Ameinu mission, participants will enjoy access to sections of Israeli life that they have never encountered before.

As in past years, the Ameinu mission will visit the Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development (NISPED), where participants will wade through Bedouin culture and learn about the hardships of belonging

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The "True Zionism"

Ameinu Protestors Rise Against Injustice at Sheikh Jarrah

By Brad Rothschild

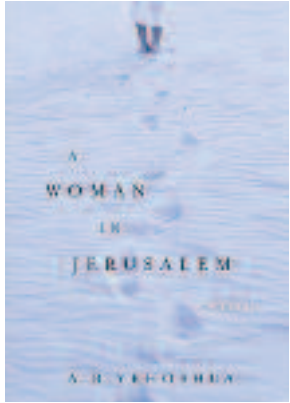


In July 2010, Ameinu initiated an appeal to its members to help support the growing number of Israelis and Palestinians who have joined together to protest the eviction of Palestinian families from their homes in East Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. Protestors have been holding weekly

demonstrations in Sheikh Jarrah since December 2009 and the expenses of bringing people to these rallies from around Israel as well as the associated legal defense costs are threatening the nascent movement. Ameinu's members have responded, and as a result, Ameinu will sponsor several buses to bring demonstrators to Jerusalem.

There is much at stake for Israel's democratic future at Sheikh Jarrah. At issue is the legality of the evictions of twenty-eight Palestinian families from

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Book Review:
A Woman in Jerusalem
by A.B. Yehoshua

Translated by Hillel Halkin
Reviewed by Gadi Cohen

Too often we find ourselves forced to reconcile our humanity with our actions. One might even regard this predicament—the need to atone for our inhumanities—as one of Israel's steepest hurdles in its

path towards peace. In *A Woman in Jerusalem*, humanity is subjective, and its appearance—as a bakery in the middle of a public relations debacle—takes many divergent turns. Thus, over the course of the novel, a variety of conflicting human ideals are revealed. As he describes the progression of the bakery's efforts to restore its integrity, A.B. Yehoshua illustrates the intrinsic, complex craving to be human; and he does it in the most stripped-down, down-to-earth sense of the word—whatever that may be, and for whomever that definition serves.

For the bakery's human resource manager who is our nameless protagonist, restoring humanity begins as a trivial job. After a pay stub from the bakery is used to identify the victim of a suicide bomb, a journalist attacks the business in his newspaper for failing to spot the woman's disappearance a week after she's been killed. The worried owner of the bakery is in a frenzy, and he entrusts the manager with the frustrating task of figuring out how the dead woman's absence could have gone unnoticed for so long.

The manager, drawn in by the deceased woman's beauty, begins to unearth key details from her life to help him in his task. A 48-year-old gentile immigrant from a former Soviet satellite, Yulia Ragayev came to Israel as an engineer but worked in the bakery as a cleaner. As the only character in the novel to benefit from a name, Yulia—the powerless

alien—possesses the most power. Even in her death, Yulia's beauty enchants many of those who are working to understand her; in dying, Yulia alone triggers the intricate events that form the novel.

Soon enough, the manager's simple task becomes a mission. From his sojourn in a Jerusalem morgue to an expedition in a bitterly cold, distant country, the manager learns more and more about Yulia and finds himself falling in a strange sort of love with her. Throughout his journey to deliver Yulia's remains to her home country, the conflicted human resources manager is confronted by the variegated definitions of humanity that surround him: those of the journalist, of his boss, and of his mother, among others. In his attempts to examine what humanity truly means to him, he comes to discover that his version of it is not the most important.

Even though *A Woman in Jerusalem* is a deeply personal novel, it is difficult to separate the plot from its underlying political context. In recent years, Israel, not unlike the bakery establishment, has struggled to attain the public image of a humanitarian. (The recent flotilla raid in Gaza exemplifies all too well Israel's constant P.R. troubles.) The parallel between the bakery and the country in which it is set allows us to read the novel through a political lens. Even the namelessness of the characters serves as a critique of Israeli bureaucracy; lost in a sea of unnamed official and workers, Yulia, ironically, is the actual unidentified character.

The novel—a dense, philosophical thriller of sorts—turns optimistic in the end. As the story progresses, the human resources manager begins to seek humanity out of his own intrinsic need rather than as a required chore. Perhaps this cheerful turn of events is what makes *A Woman in Jerusalem* so intriguing; readers can only hope for a future where humanity is an inherently driven value and not only a negotiated necessity to which we must succumb.

Remembering David Twersky



David Twersky, the distinguished political journalist, Labor Zionist activist and peace crusader, died July 16 after a long illness at the age of 60. During his multifaceted career, Twersky worked as a kibbutz member, an Israeli Labor Party leader, a Knesset aide, an international affairs director of the American Jewish Congress and a Washington correspondent for the Forward. He was deeply involved in all sectors of the Zionist Left, from his early work as the national chairman of the North American Jewish Student Network, to his participation in back-channel diplomacy with the governments of Pakistan, Venezuela and Russia.

Although he worked as a political activist and journalist, David was also a soldier, a poet, and a builder. After making aliyah in 1974, he helped restore the abandoned Kibbutz Gezer, near the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway. Later, he served in the 1982 Lebanon war in an artillery unit outside Beirut; he was also a published poet and contributor to literary journals. David was an honoree at the Ameinu Gala in New York in November 2009 where he said that no matter where his life led him, it was his being a chaver in Habonim, a madrich and a member of Workshop that led him there.

Throughout each one of his many careers, David demonstrated an untiring dedication to the true Zionist ideal of peace. We have lost a true chaver in every sense of the word.

Working Partners: BINA and NISPED In Action

Over the past several years, Ameinu has partnered with several organizations that share its mission of a progressive Israel at peace with its neighbors. In so doing, Ameinu hopes to enable and promote visionary initiatives that strengthen efforts to build a more peaceful, more democratic Israel with civil and economic rights insured for all its citizens.

BINA

In their efforts to promote pluralistic Jewish identity through social activism, BINA runs several programs in Israel that carry on Ameinu's mission.

One of BINA's core programs is the Neighborhood project. BINA in the Neighborhood assigns groups of young Israelis to struggling Israeli neighborhoods where they live, volunteer and study together. Tikun Olam in Tel Aviv-Jaffa is part of this project. Participants of the program can choose to work in either the Community Service track, which "immerses its participants in the multi-cultural communities of southern Tel Aviv in which they volunteer and study," or the Coexistence track, which "seeks to build mutual understanding between Jews and Arabs" in Jaffa.



In Beer Sheva's Schuna Daled, BINA works throughout the year towards improving an area known to be a center for drugs and other crimes. This past May, with the help of the community's residents, BINA opened the first library in Schuna Daled. The library serves as Schuna Daled's cultural center, where residents are able to enjoy the Hebrew culture and language in a caring community of learning and action. Author Haim Be'er, keynote speaker at the May 4 inauguration of the library and one of BINA's leading members, spoke about his link to BINA's initiatives: "We are trying to show that the

Jewish world is richly diverse and deep ...it is a world of love towards humankind and mutual solidarity. This ideal, joined with the proverbial love of The Book, are among the most Jewish ideas extant. The establishment of this library embodies these values by bringing Ruach (arts, culture) closer to the diverse, overlooked community of Shchuna Daled."

Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Economic Development (NISPED)

As part of its mission to promote equality, empowerment and cooperation among Israeli and Arab communities, NISPED operates many programs throughout Israel.

Working towards its goals, NISPED founded the Arab-Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Cooperation, or AJECC. AJECC works to foster Arab-Jewish cooperation derived from equality and the empowerment of Israel's Arab minority. A central focus of the organization is the Negev's Arab Bedouin community, one of the most underprivileged segments of Israeli society. AJECC seeks to revitalize and mobilize the traditional Bedouin community by restoring the Bedouin values of self-reliance and mutual aid, which will provide a potent momentum for converting the community's inner resources into a force of self-empowerment.

From the President (continued from page 1)

country to country (consider the difference between France and South Africa) also impacts the agenda of our local affiliate. Gatherings like this with our colleagues from around the world are always eye-opening and enlightening.

As the Congress began, an agreement was reached to form a United Faction between the world unions of the Reform movement, Labor and Meretz, creating the single largest block at the Congress. This facilitated our joint U.S. Hatikva slate of Ameinu, Habonim Dror, Hashomer Hatzair, J Street and Meretz USA to strategize together with our colleagues from around the world, resulting in the passage of an impressive list of resolutions regarding religious pluralism, democracy in Israel and peace. There was significant frustration on the right as our faction united with the Kadima-Conservative centrist block to pass these policy statements.

Foreshadowing the controversy around conversion that rocked Israel-Diaspora relations earlier this year, Shas brought a resolution forward to establish Israeli-sponsored conversion panels around the world. Speaking to the Congress plenum, I assured everyone that the liberal religious streams in the Diaspora have a robust and authentic conversion process in place and the last thing we need is to export the Israeli, ultra orthodox model. The resolution was roundly rejected by the delegates.

Following the passage of a fairly mild resolution in support of a two state solution and the settlement freeze, right-wing delegates rushed to the stage, effectively stopping the Congress in its tracks. This was a continuation of earlier attacks when it was suggested by the same element in a committee meeting that we were part of the "Obama Hamas delegation" to the Congress. Upsetting as it was to see such behavior by fellow Jews, it certainly reinforced the importance of representing our views in such forums.

While for many it will be four years until they engage again with this organization, I was re-elected to the Zionist Executive and the Jewish Agency Board of Governors and hope to be an effective spokesperson for our issues in the years ahead. I will report back soon and let you know what progress is being made.

True Zionism (continued from page 1)

their homes. The Israeli judiciary recognizes the rights of Jews to sue for ownership of properties that were theirs prior to 1948; Palestinians have no such rights. If Palestinians begin filing similar claims on properties that belonged to them prior to Israel's creation, Israel will be hard pressed to explain this inequality before the law.

As Ameinu president Kenneth Bob wrote in an open letter to the leaders of the movement, "Ameinu believes that the evictions of Sheikh Jarrah residents from their homes are illegal and are a harbinger of Israel's true intentions regarding the occupied territories. Through its rulings that have restored property to its pre-1948 (Jewish) ownership, Israel's judiciary is opening up a Pandora's box that will allow Palestinians to make similar claims, which will only complicate efforts to end the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians."

Bob also told the protestors that Ameinu is "encouraged by your actions and your persistence. Yours is the true Zionism and we hope that you will continue to fight the good fight. It is our hope that when the history of this shameful chapter of Israeli-Palestinian relations is written, your efforts and heroism will be recognized for what they are."

In response, Sara Benninga, one of the Sheikh Jarrah leaders, wrote to Ameinu that, "[t]he encouragement we draw from the solidarity of those who truly care about the future of Israel is crucial for regenerating the strength required for carrying on the daily struggle for a democratic Israel...the future of this country depends upon our ability to forge decent relations with our neighbours (sic) and even more on ties and understanding which can only be built through dialogue and joint work."

The struggle for justice at Sheikh Jarrah will continue for the foreseeable future. Likewise, Ameinu will continue its moral and, when possible, financial support of the peaceful demonstrators who are fighting for justice in Jerusalem. We are heartened by the sight of Israelis and Palestinians coming together on behalf of people who are being evicted from their homes on the basis of a selective and biased application of the law. If their efforts are successful, perhaps there's hope for a better future for both Israelis and Palestinians after all.

Discover Israel (continued from page 1)



Amal Elsana Alhjooj and Vivian Silver

to the Bedouin community. On their visit to NISPED, travelers will be inspired by Amal Elsana Alhjooj and Vivian Silver, who work together to empower Israeli women and the disadvantaged Bedouin community.

Participants will meet with political leaders who strive to ensure that Israel's progressive roots are preserved and who seek to perpetuate new progressive ideals that Ameinu supports. The Ameinu mission will visit both a traditional kibbutz and the latest iteration of the kibbutz

today, an urban kibbutz, where members live together in the city within a cooperative framework. Come with us to see and understand how 100 years of kibbutz life is being lived today.

In past years, participants have conversed with the English editor of *Ha'aretz*; toured the Seam Line that serves as a security fence and cuts through several Jerusalem neighborhoods; and spent time in the Kinneret Cemetery, where many Israeli pioneers and notables such as songwriter Naomi Shemer are buried. Even the tour guides and bus drivers admitted that the mission took them to places that they had never seen.

Today's Israel has never been more different. In order to (re)discover it and learn what makes this incredible country tick, prospective participants should register for the Ameinu mission to Israel by calling 212 366-1194 or emailing hiam@ameinu.net. The program costs \$1,200, which covers full room and board and all programming costs.

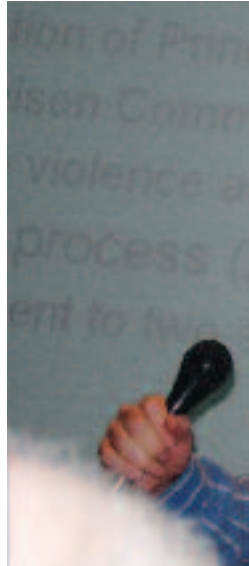
Recent Events

Los Angeles



On March 7, 2010, J.J. Gold, a columnist at the Jewish Post and Opinion, the acclaimed author of the Jewish Establishment program. J.J. Gold will be speaking for the Spring Semester on the topic of Israeli politics and the Peace Process—Can Israel Lead the Jewish Community and the

Detroit



On March 14, 2010, a visiting professor at the University of California at Los Angeles, Conflict Studies in the Peace Experiment. The professor, Handelman founded the program to simulate an Israeli-Palestinian conflict out different solutions. The experiment will be held at the University of California at Los Angeles.

Los Angeles



On May 22, 2010, Ameinu-LA hosted J.J. Goldberg, a senior editor of the Jewish-American newspaper *The Forward* and author of "Jewish Power: Inside the American Jewish Movement", as part of the "Frontiers of Learning" series. Goldberg was invited as the Scholar-In-Residence for the year, in which he presented two lectures on Israel-U.S. relations, "Deadlock in the Peace Process: Can Israel Survive?" and "A House Divided, The Jews."



On May 10, 2010, Ameinu-Detroit hosted Dr. Sapir Handelman, Director of Wayne State University's Center for Peace and Conflict Studies in Detroit, to give a lecture about the Minds of Peace Experiment at the Oak Park Jewish Community Center. Dr. Handelman led the Minds of Peace Experiment in order to explore the role of the 2005-2006 Israeli-Palestinian negotiation conference and draw lessons for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This year's event was held on May 10 at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Chicago



On May 22, 2010, at Temple Beth Israel in Skokie, IL, Ameinu-Chicago co-sponsored the annual Rabbi Ernst M. Lorge Memorial Lecture along with the Lorge Family. Together, they hosted Shuly Natan, the renowned Israeli singer celebrated internationally for her rendition of the now-famous Naomi Shemer song "Yerushalaim Shel Zahav", or "Jerusalem of Gold." Natan's presentation, "Melodies of Zionism: Songs and Reminiscences", included numerous Israeli songs, as well as Hassidic and Yiddish songs, and other folk songs from around the world.

On May 2, 2010, Ameinu-Chicago co-sponsored a lecture by Fradle Pomerantz Freidenreich, along with the Chicago Jewish Historical Society and the Chicago YIVO Society. At the program, Freidenreich, who was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America for her work as a former Chicago educator, discussed her new book, *Passionate Pioneers: Their Story of Secular Yiddish Education in North America 1910-1960*.

Throughout the year, Ameinu-Chicago has hosted a series of programs called "Mondays with Ameinu", in which well-known community leaders, authors and professors lead informal meetings at the private homes of Ameinu members. The speakers have included Rabbi Allan Kensky of Ben Hillel Congregation Bnai Emanuah; Dr. Rachel Bronson of Chicago Council on Global Affairs; Michael Perry, Chairman of the Jewish Labor Committee of Chicago and Education Director; and Dr. Jeffrey Mallow, Professor of Physics at Loyola University.

New York



On November 14, 2009, Ameinu-New York kicked off the 75th year of Habonim with a gala event in the Flatiron district of NYC. The gala gathered over 300 people to celebrate and honor 3 generations of Habonim graduates, Leonard Fein, David Twersky and Rabbi Esther Lederman, all three of whom received the Dreamers and Builders Award from Ameinu for their remarkable achievements within and for the Jewish community.

Habonim Dror: Still Building Jewish Society

By Itamar Landau

Ameinu and Habonim Dror enjoy a particularly unique and edifying relationship. Both Ameinu and Habonim Dror are descendants of Poale Zion born in the shadowy days before the Holocaust. Habonim Dror remains an independent progressive Zionist youth movement that exemplifies many of the same Zionist ideals that Ameinu abides by. Through our ongoing support of Habonim Dror, Ameinu hopes to help secure the growth of a freer, more aware people, both in Israel and America.

In the good old days, participants on Habonim Dror's Workshop, the very first gap-year program in Israel, spent their hardest working hours on Kibbutz toiling in the fields or tending to the chickens and cows. Throughout the 1950s and 60s, members of Habonim Dror had the opportunity to contribute to the transformative work of early Zionism by building up the land, labor, and agricultural infrastructure of the young State of Israel. But since the 1990s it has become clear that this same work no longer carries with it the same meaning. Kibbutzim have industrialized and privatized; foreign workers work the fields as kibbutz members seek higher pay and status outside. Meanwhile Israeli society itself has lost its Zionist cohesiveness as the economic gaps have grown and democracy has been increasingly challenged by the ultra-Orthodox and the settlers.

So how is it that today, as Habonim Dror North America prepares to send its 60th group on Workshop this September, the program is not only still relevant but is in fact as vibrant and meaningful as ever? The answer lies in the evolving nature of the Zionist youth movements and of Zionism itself. True Zionism today seeks to create a just and cohesive base in Israel for the Jewish people worldwide, and that means renewing Israel as a thriving democracy with economic justice for all, and with the courage to seek peace with its neighbors. The Zionist youth movements today, led by HaNoar ha'Oved ve haLomed (NOAL), are rising to that challenge by taking up the mantle of education and social justice. Rather than following the old path of establishing agricultural Kibbutzim on the outskirts of society, these youth movements today are building collectives in the cities, in development towns, and in the periphery, seeking to educate all Israeli youth toward the most authentic Jewish values: justice, equality, peace, and a



commitment to the Jewish people. And Workshop today, organized and led by a dedicated group of recent Habonim Dror Olim, is a real part of this movement. Year-after-year Workshopers have been returning to educational projects in partnership with NOAL, from Kenim to boarding schools, from after-school programs to co-existence projects. Our North American young leaders work with the broadest range of Israeli youth: Sephardi and Ashkenazi, secular and religious, Russian, Ethiopian, and Arab—all with the basic goal of providing a Jewish value-based participatory education.

The impact Workshopers have on Israeli society inspires them like in the old days to return to North America as Jewish leaders and educators. Upon their return to the US, they've spearheaded new projects and initiatives to share the same Jewish values. Chief among these new projects are Project Kadima in Philadelphia and Anaf Hanafa in the DC area. Founded by returning Workshopers, both projects engage a group of post-Bar Mitzvah youth through ongoing volunteer work in parallel with an educational curriculum that gives their work context by exploring the Jewish value of Justice.

Israel has changed dramatically since the early days of Workshop. Today it sometimes appears as if the Zionist work of building a Jewish society has devolved into ultra-Orthodox power struggles and military short-sightedness. Yet we who are inspired by the prophets and the chalutzim know that the authentic Jewish society is centered on justice and peace. Through the ongoing transformation of Workshop and the work of returning participants, Habonim Dror in 2010 is committed to building that authentic Jewish society in Israel and throughout the world, swiftly and in our days.

The Kibbutz Program Center

by Liat Ron



The Kibbutz Program Center once operated as a project of the Jewish Agency. Today, this exciting opportunity to experience Kibbutz is a project of Ameinu. The strength of Ameinu and its network of activists will help market and introduce our unique programs to an even wider audience.

As part of the mission to provide programs that highlight the very best of progressive Zionist ideals, the KPC offers a variety of experiences in Israel to young people in Canada and the United States. Some of our programs are sponsored by the kibbutz movement as a whole; some are run by individual kibbutzim, and some by non-kibbutz organizations. Our programs focus on Hebrew language education, environmentally-conscious living, and experiencing the unique society that is kibbutz. We also have opportunities for volunteers and interested participants to take part in peace and co-existence projects and in social activism within Israel. We have also used the KPC framework to work more closely with some of our strategic partners—there is for example a new program where American young adults get to work and live with Bedouins via our partner NISPED.

Our programs are considered the most affordable Israel programs for young adults. In addition, most of our programs also offer a MASA grant, which reduces costs considerably. At the Kibbutz Program Center, you are guaranteed to find a program for any area of interest and any budget.

We currently offer new not-to-be-missed volunteering opportunities in **Organic Farms** at two locations: Rishpon Farm (near Tel Aviv) and Rehan Farm (Galilee). Volunteers work in exchange for room and board.

Also, we take great pride in exciting recent changes we have made for the best custom made Israel program—**iTrack!**

iTrack is custom made to create the program of your dreams. We offer many personalized programs, as well as mix and match options. You may also create your own program “from scratch”. All programs include Ulpan. Monthly excursions and cultural events are offered as well for each program in order to get to know Israel. Housing is mainly in Tel Aviv, unless specifically arranged.

Please make sure to visit our website, where you can learn more about our life changing programs, view pictures and videos, and join our mailing list for the latest news: www.kibbutzprogramcenter.org.



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Olameinu Summer 2010



Ameinu welcomes you!

The American Jewish community is changing and Ameinu is here to meet this challenge, providing a variety of programs and advocacy activities. We are proud to have college students, baby boomers, and veteran activists as members and supporters. Whether you are reaching out to the American Jewish community for the first time, or you are already engaged but searching for a new voice, Ameinu welcomes you!

Ameinu provides community. We have a national infrastructure where like-minded people gather. We offer a place—in person and online—for our members to discuss issues, hear speakers, celebrate life, and actively engage in American and Israeli causes. If you want to join the community, Ameinu welcomes you!

Ameinu provides liberal Jews with a voice in the American Jewish community. Ameinu works for a more democratic and inclusive Jewish community. Ameinu guarantees that a liberal voice and progressive values have a seat at the table within the organized Jewish community. If that voice echoes yours, Ameinu welcomes you!

Ameinu connects liberal American Jews with a progressive Israel. Our relationship with Israeli grassroots activists allows our members in the United States to impact Israeli issues. We have had a significant effect on poverty, women's rights, labor struggles, religious pluralism, Israeli Arab rights, and new forms of cooperative living. Ameinu links the American Jewish community with Israel through missions to Israel, speaking tours by Israelis, and national and international conference calls. If this sounds like something you are interested in, then Ameinu welcomes you!

Ameinu's Mission

Ameinu, Hebrew for "Our People", is a national, multi-generational community of progressive American Jews. Recognizing the unbreakable bond between the Jewish people and Israel, as well as the commitment to make our own country better, we mobilize American Jews who seek opportunities to foster social and economic justice both in Israel and the United States. As Zionists, we understand that a secure peace between Israel and its neighbors is essential to the survival of a democratic Jewish state. With this in mind, we build support within the American Jewish community for a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.