



# JDC-Israel Newsletter

Special Edition

April 1998 ■ Nissan 5758

## JDC Celebrates Israel's 50th Anniversary

- "Profoundly gratified at the establishment of the new State of Israel" ■ JDC staff members share the role of the organization in saving their families ■ Stories from the Archives ■ Michael Schneider: Towards the next 50 years ■
- Arnon Mantver: Expanding the partnership with the Government of Israel ■ JDC-Israel mission, 1998 ■



Celebrating at the Fernwald Displaced Persons camp, Germany, 1948: JDC financed youth movements and educational activities in Europe's DP camps.

## Israel and JDC: Ralph Goldman Speaks

In an interview with the editors of JDC-Israel's *Newsletter*, Ralph Goldman speaks about JDC's contribution to the establishment of the State of Israel and its welfare, and about Israel's place in JDC's view of the world. Ralph has been involved in JDC for some thirty years and shares personal insights of the events of the past half century.

### A State is Born

**Q: Where were you when Israel was born?**

**A:** I was working for the Hagana's branch in the USA, which was headed at that time by Teddy Kollek. We had a lot of work to do. We arranged for the broadcast of the declaration from the Tel Aviv Museum on our radio station in a clandestine location in Queens. We were also aware that the Arabs were about to attack.

Teddy Kollek and Moshe Sharett had returned to Israel a week earlier with a

request from George Marshall (US Secretary of State) not to declare the State, but Ben-Gurion decided to go ahead. On May 14, 1948, at 11 am American time, I already knew that Eliyahu Epstein (later Eilat) had been asked by President Truman's office to submit a formal application on behalf of the State for US government recognition. He did so as the Jewish Agency representative in Washington, thus becoming the first official representative of the State of Israel.

**Q: How did a demobilized American soldier end up in the Hagana?**

**A:** I was recruited to the Hagana by Yaakov Dori (who served as Israel's first chief of staff).

Since I knew Hebrew and had experience from my American military service, I was asked to recruit personnel – and later money and political support – and to look for military supplies and ships to take immigrants to pre-State Israel. I worked underground until May 14, 1948.

I was lucky to work with some great men – Ben-Gurion and Teddy Kollek.

Continued on page 4

### The Figures Speak for Themselves

- Airplanes hired by JDC airlifted 50,000 Yemenite Jews to Israel
- The famous ship, *Exodus*, brought Holocaust survivors to Israel with JDC assistance
- 85% of the 240,000 Jews who came to Israel from Europe and the Arab countries during the first year of Israel's independence were assisted by JDC
- Since the nation's establishment, approximately 2.7 million immigrants have come to Israel
- 482,000 came to Israel in the period of 1919-1948