



## History 101

### Hadassah

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, is a volunteer women's organization of 300,000, founded in 1912 by Henrietta Szold, American Jewish scholar and activist to support practical Zionism at a meeting of a women's study group in New York City. The meeting took place around the time of the Purim holiday, so the group adopted the name Hadassah, which is the Hebrew name of the Biblical Esther.

Hadassah is went on to become the largest Jewish women's organization in the United States. It supports The Hadassah Medical Organization (HMO), consisting of two hospital complexes at Ein Kerem and Mount Scopus in Jerusalem. It has initiated and contributed to numerous medical aid projects in Israel and around the world, and built several hospitals and other facilities in Israel that were eventually turned over to state and municipal authorities.

Hadassah also founded and supports the Hebrew University Hadassah medical School, the Henrietta Szold nursing school and the Hadassah College Jerusalem; It took over management of Young Judaea, a Zionist youth program, merging it with Junior Hadassah and it runs the WUJS Arad Institute, in Arad, Israel. Hadassah took over the Youth Aliyah program in 1934, which became identified with its founder Henrietta Szold, rescuing tens of thousands of children from the Holocaust and subsequently becoming involved in rescue of Jewish youth around the world and their integration in Israeli society; today this organization is known as Youth Aliyah/Children at Risk and is part of the Jewish agency, run with Hadassah support. Hadassah is a major supporter and partner of the Jewish National Fund, which plants trees and implements other land reclamation programs in Israel. Hadassah also advocates for progressive issues of importance to women and to the American Jewish community, including civil rights, anti-discrimination legislation, pro-choice legislation and other causes. In the United States, Hadassah promotes health education, social action and advocacy, volunteerism, Jewish education and research, and connections with Israel.

In 2005, the two Jerusalem hospitals of the Hadassah Medical Organization were nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, citing three areas in which HMO promoted peace in the Middle East:

- Maintaining equal treatment for all despite treating more terror victims than any other medical center.
- The model of cooperation and coexistence set by the mixed staff of people of all faiths.
- Ongoing initiatives in creating bridges for peace even throughout the Intifada.

In 1950, members of the Minneapolis chapter of Hadassah asked the Northland Aluminum company to produce the first Bundt pans in order to recreate the porcelain pans used in Europe.

[<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadassah>]

