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Beilin, Yossi. 1994.

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FAX TRANSMITTAL



551 Madison Ave New York, NY 10022 (212) 355-6115 (212) 751-3739 FAX

Date: 16 October Pg4 TO: Mr. Yossi Beilin - Via Ravit Company: Fax #: 838-6815 Number of Pages (including cover sheet): FROM: Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman Message: Please pass on to Mr. Beilin thank you kavit

551 Madison Avenue New York, New York 10022 212 355 6115 Fax 212 751 3739 Huntington Center Suite 3710 41 South High Street Columbus, Ohio 43215 614 464 2772

16 October 1994

NOTES TO YOSSI BEILIN

- 1. I enjoyed our conversation this morning, and saw that we are both on the same track, with some differences in detail.
- You suggested that the small board of the "Corporation For The Future" should contain not only American billionaires, but also some Israelis. I would agree to this. Would you like to suggest a few names? Shimon Peres should be one, for sure.
- 3. Many Israelis could be members of the national staff (at least 25 persons) required to work in the communities on the number of invitees in each community. Such Israelis should have some former experience in the U.S. either as diplomatic personnel or as Jewish agency community schlichim.
- 4. Simply to distribute vouchers to young people, which could be either utilized or discarded, is unhealthy to the reputation of the party issuing the vouchers-(either the Government of Israel or the American sponsoring organization). If you think distributing vouchers has any value, then they must be given to those who, a priori, have agreed to utilize them. The invitation to participate in an *Israeli Experience* by receiving a full scholarship worth several thousand dollars must be treated as a high-value item something special and precious, not a piece of paper which one can merely discard.
- 5. I would like to underscore most seriously the fact that there are two alternatives: one is a national program agreed upon between Israeli top authorities and American organizations; and the other is individual programs organized by individual communities, which will simply withhold the money from their annual allocation to the UJA in order to fund whatever kind of program they will be able to organize in Israel. Thus there will be two bad effects money will simply be deducted by local fiat, and a process will be started which no one can control; plus the hefkerut in Israel programming will produce very uneven results.

It is clear to me that a carefully planned national (which could become an international) program is mandatory.

I have done as much as one person can do to prepare receptivity for my idea, by contacting selected individuals and by consulting the UJA and CJF at every step.

I think Israel must give its gushpanka and nominate some officials to get into the planning stage. If you agree to this point, you suggest some names, I will do the same, and let's get to work.

Let's remain in contact our fast number is 212-751-3739. Regards to Itain Divon. eab Vivedina

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ITAMAR RABINOWITZ - OCTOBER 7, 1994

- 1. Yossi Beilin will be in New York 18-19 October and wants to see me. Someone will call for an appointment.
- 2. Itamar got the message re Majlis and Kennedy school.
- 3. I asked Itamar to fix an hour with Rabin and explained I wanted to bring Wexner and Bronfman with me, so the sooner I could get an exact time and place, the easier it would be for me. He said Rabin would be in New York over the weekend of 18-19 November and promised to get back to me.



VANTAGE POINT

HOWARD BARBANEL SPECIAL TO THE JEWISH WEEK

Why I Agree With Yossi Beilin

an there be anything more awful for a Likudnik than to be in agreement with the likes of Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin, leader of the left wing of the Labor Party?

Back in my idealistic student years, I was going around the Jewish community like Jeremiah at the gates to the city preaching the woeful message of rampant assimilation, galloping intermarriage and negative population growth. Back then I got myself in heaps of hot water with the local leadership for daring to suggest that Jewish education and student funding were grossly underfunded.

So here comes Yossi Beilin, telling 44 American Jews to keep our \$500 million and put it into Jewish education and Israel experiences. Beilin says Israel isn't some poor Third World country, so stop with the pity and get with the new program. He couldn't be more right.

Overall, intermarriage in the U.S. exceeds 50 percent, which means that in the Reform, Conservative and unaffiliated communities it can range as high as 75 percent. Dating non-Jews? The percentages are even higher. And

Howard Barbanel is chairman of the Likud Young Leadership Organization and anchor of the JNN Evening News. young Jewish couples are probably not making hordes of babies. One to two kids is the fashionable number.

More than half of American Jewry is over 45, while the median age for Americans as a whole is something like 26. You don't have to be an actuary to know that declining Jewish marriages and few babies equals self-inflicted genocide.

So what is Beilin advocating? Get our kids



in Jewish schools and get our teenagers to Israel. The Catholic Church has got it right — its parochial schools charge about \$1,500 for annual tuition and it extends scholarships all over the place.

We should guarantee a full-time Jewish education through high school to every Jewish child who wants it. Make the tuition so affordable that money becomes no object. Create a dual-track Jewish school system modeled after Israel's. Religious schools for those who want them and secular Jewish day schools for everyone else — heavy on Hebrew and Yiddish language, Jewish history (including the Bible), Jewish literature and culture with a heavy dose of Zionism thrown in. Graduation present? Send all the high school seniors to Israel, where they'll see their education in action and bridge the widening gap between Israelis and American Jews.

Statistics all bear out that graduates of full-time Jewish schools intermarry far less frequently and are far more likely to be involved in the community. The

best thing my parents ever did for me was send me to Jewish schools and to Israel. I'm living proof.

Beilin is right on the button when it comes to how Israel is presented. Nobody likes a loser, especially Americans. Stop with the suffering, poverty, weakness and all that negative stuff. Show Israel as a success story - and it is. Anyone who has been there lately can tell you about the 2 million cars choking Israel's highways; the American-style shopping malls and cable TV; the improved high-tech and real estate industries; the growing stock market. When you count national health insurance and free tuition at the religious public schools, many Israelis have it better than many American Jewish families in Brooklyn and Oueens.

Beilin is also correct in calling for the abolishment or wholesale restructuring of the World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency, both redundant and, excuse the pun, pork-barrel machines dispensing far more jobs

and patronage than results. Beilin is also right about democra-

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tizing Jewish life, letting the common people share power with the plutocrats. Let the community as a whole decide where the *gelt* should go.

Before this love fest goes any further, let me say that I totally disagree with Beilin's naive notions about peace with the PLO, Syria and every other pseudo-reformed terrorist and tin-horned despot. I subscribe to the Jabotinsky ideals of full-throttle capitalism — he doesn't — and Jewish rights to settlement everywhere and anywhere

in the land of Israel. Also, I vehemently reject Beilin's utopian plans to divide Jerusalem into separate semi-sovereign cantons.

I'm of the view that very few people even left-wing Laborites — are all bad, so on the other stuff I'll hold my nose and go along with Beilin on saving American Jewry because this is an emergency, and emergencies call for radical thinking.

'Jewish Agency may raise funds on its own'

JEWISH Agency treasurer Hanan Ben-Yehuda warned last week that the agency and the government will consider running their own fund-raising campaigns abroad unless officials of the United Jewish Appeal rescind a demand to control the money it forwards to Israel.

UJA fund-raisers want to stop forwarding all their Israel allocations to the Jewish Agency, demanding the right to fund projects directly.

"If the Jewish Agency does not have exclusivity, the fund-raisers will also not have exclusivity for their campaigns," said Ben-Yehuda. "We know from surveys that 70% of American Jewry donates money to the UJA because of the Israel con- until 1997, instead of the previous nection. This has to be a reciprocal five-year commitment.

6/25/19 BATSHEVA TSUR

arrangement. Already only 30% of the money collected is sent to Israel."

Ben-Yehuda described the atmosphere in the talks held by him and acting agency chairman Yehiel Leket abroad as "very tense. There are members of the UJA leadership who do not want us to be the sole and exclusive agent for this 30% of the funds, amounting to \$300 million. But the Law of Status of National Institutions clearly gives us this right."

He added that the United Israel Appeal, which represents the UJA, had recently agreed to fix the agency's allocation for only three years,

Acting Jewish Agency Chairman Yehiel Leket tried to throw cold water on the sparks set alight by Ben-Yehuda.

"There is no intention on the part of the agency to circumvent the UJA and set up its own fund-raising mechanism in the US," Leket stated before boarding a flight to Moscow. "Any attempt to create a crisis atmosphere is artificial."

Responding to Ben-Yehuda's remarks that the UJA had agreed only to a three-year arrangement, until 1997, Leket said a five-year agreement is in the works. He added that the fund-raisers would apparently also agree to give the agency 50% of the money raised abroad and to continue the exclusivity arrangement.

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DIALOGUE WITH THE PRESIDENT

JUNE 1994

AMERICAN JEWISH A R C H I V E S ISRAEL - DIASPORA RELATIONS

A PROPOSAL FOR A NEW FRAMEWORK

BY: YOSSI BEILIN

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DIALOGUE WITH THE PRESIDENT BEIT HANASSI, JERUSALEM, 22 JUNE 1994 ISRAEL-DIASPORA RELATIONS: PROPOSAL FOR A NEW FRAMEWORK by

Yossi Beilin

Executive Summary

In view of rapid recent changes in Israel and among Diaspora Jews, including accelerating assimilation of Jews in the Diaspora, as well as the prospects for peace and the recently strengthened economic structure of Israel, the time has come to redefine and transform the institutional framework for our relations. This proposal addresses the concerns about Jewish continuity and about the continued centrality of Israel in the life of the Jewish people.

Beit Yisrael (House of Israel) -- The main institutional link between Israel and Diaspora Jewry. A mass membership organization, to begin functioning fully upon the enrollment of at least a million members in Israel and the Diaspora. Its leaders to be democratically elected by its members and its headquarters to be located in Jerusalem.

The Goals of Beit Yisrael -- 1. Key project: to bring most of each cohort of young Jews from the Diaspora to Israel for a month or longer of a specially designed program to be chosen from a variety of options. Each young Jew at the age of 17 would be offered a free, non-transferable and non-postponable voucher, to be used for this purpose. 2. to serve as the main channel of dialogue between Israel and Diaspora Jewry in regard to all issues of concern to the Jewish people.

to make Jewish and Zionist education in the Diaspora its primary responsibility.
to support alignah from all communities and, where necessary, to finance it.

Census -- based on the principle that every Jew counts, our first task should be to conduct a census of Jews in the Diaspora, both as a way of making the unaffiliated and the disaffected count in the planning of the organized Jewish world, and as a way of identifying and reaching out to potential members, who could be drawn into Israelcentered activities.

Financing of Jewish Priorities - 1. Funding of Beit Yisrael -- all funds should be considered as a gift from the Jewish people to its future. The organization will rely on membership fees, as well as partnership donations that it will seek from community federations, the United Jewish Appeal, Keren Hayesod and private foundations, as well as from Israelis. 2.-- Israel Bonds should be converted into a world-wide investment fund in Israel.

Target 1997. For the reconstitution of the Zionist idea into a new framework, Beit Yisrael.

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ISRAEL-DIASPORA RELATIONS: PROPOSAL FOR A NEW FRAMEWORK

The time has come to redefine and transform the institutional bases of Israel-Diaspora relations. After nearly a year of growing recognition, in Israel and among world Jewry, that the mission and the structure of the central bodies linking us require fundamental change, the time has come to propose a new structure and a new mission to meet the needs of today.

We all know that both sides in the Israel-Diaspora relationship have changed dramatically in recent years. The peace process has changed our relationship with the Palestinian people and gives promise of bringing peace agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The mass aliyah of half a million Jews from the former Soviet lands, from Ethiopia and other countries, during the last five years has strengthened the demographic centrality of Israel as the one center of the Jewish people. That mass aliyah, the prospects for peace and the direction of our economic policies has made Israel one of the fastest growing economies in the world and the most productive scientific and technological innovator. These changes have made it impossible to continue to base Israel-Diaspora relations primarily on charity. Neither can we any longer base fundraising appeals by the central communal institutions in the Diaspora on the imminent and perhaps mortal threat to Israel's security or economic or social viability, which have been the primary emotional bases of those appeals in the past.

Meanwhile, the Diaspora regards itself as less secure culturally than it did a decade ago. In the larger Jewish communities of the West there has been a divergent, if not contradictory set of developments. On the one hand, with the increasing acceptance of Jews in all walks of life and the decline of most forms of anti-semitic discrimination affecting the life chances of Jewish citizens, there has been accelerating assimilation. This is demonstrated by the U.S. National Jewish Population Study's notorious finding that from 1985 to 1990 some 52 percent of Jews who married did so with Gentiles (compared to 25 percent during the years 1965 to 1974). In other countries the figures are even higher: for instance, in Russia, 75 percent are intermarriages, in Ukraine 70 percent. The growing assimilation and the increasing geographic mobility of the Jewish population are producing a decline in Jewish identification on the part of large sectors of the Jewish population in many countries, as shown by decreasing religious affiliation overall, and a decline in participation in the centralized community fundraising campaigns. On the other hand, the half or so of the Jewish community who do affiliate with religious and communal institutions seem to do so with increasing intensity. Some even point to the crystallization of a stable, cohesive, increasingly creative cultural complex that is able to claim the commitment and involvement of about half of the Jews in the U.S. and in other Western countries.

We need a new institutional structure to link Israel and world Jewry. It must chart a new mission for the relationship between us. Even the leaders of the Jewish Agency, which is the present central institution linking us together, indeed, even the leaders of the World Zionist Organization, have called for such changes, and are now considering what changes they should propose.

The direction proposed here is intended to address both the concerns about Jewish

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continuity and about the continued centrality of Israel in the life of the Jewish people. We hope it will be debated and supported by the Jewish people in Israel and in the Diaspora, and that it will be substantially implemented in three years, by the 100th anniversary of the first Zionist Congress.

Our task must be to give every Jew a way of being connected to the Jewish world. Clearly, the Jewish religious tradition has been and will continue to be a way for part of our people. For most of them, and for many others, Israel has been the way, especially during the past two generations. I believe Israel can be the way of connecting to the Jewish world for even larger segments of the generations now growing to maturity, but the link cannot be through a financial donation only, or even primarily. We must devise a way for every Jew to be counted, for every Jew to count. We must give every Jew an opportunity to identify with the great effort of our people to fashion its own future, in this land and outside it.

I propose an effort to count every Jew. I mean quite literally that we conduct a census of Jews in the Diaspora, similar to the census we conduct in Israel, except that participation would have to be voluntary. The census should ask people to describe their households, their educational and cultural needs, the kinds of social services they want, and so on. I propose that the census be utilized as a way of ensuring that the basic social and cultural needs of Jews can be met by the Jewish community, and that every individual be offered some way of satisfying some Jewish needs or desires in or through Israel.

I see this census as a way of making the disaffected and the unaffiliated count in the planning of the organized Jewish world, and I propose that contact with Israel be the option of first resort as a way of reaching out to them. Let the federations and the communities find ways of connecting every Jew to the center of the Jewish world, so that it will continue to be a focus for generations to come.

I propose that we create a new institutional mechanism to pursue this goal, and I suggest we call it Beit Yisrael, or The House of Israel. Beit Yisrael should set up programs to assure that every Jew identified through the census be linked to peers, colleagues and resource people in Israel. It would replace the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization. It would take over the Jewish education and aliyah activities currently performed by those institutions, and along with them, many of the capable professionals who carry them out, but not the organizational structures that belong more to the past than to the future.

In this regard, I propose to convert the Israel Bonds organization into a world-wide mutual fund for entrepreneurial investment in Israel's economy. Details of this proposal are being worked out at this moment.

Beit Yisrael should be structured as a mass membership organization, with a modest but not trivial annual membership fee, scaled to the economic conditions of each community, which would seek to enroll every Jew. Let us say from the start that we want this organization to become the primary institutional link between the Jews of Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora, and that we want its leaders to be democratically elected by its members. Its headquarters would be in Jerusalem. 5163347334 OSTROW

Further, I propose that we give ourselves up to three years during which to enroll a million Jews in the Diaspora and in Israel. Only when we have met that goal will we conduct an election, and if we have not met it in three years, we should acknowledge that we failed, that we could not persuade a million Jews to join the new instrument.

But if we do manage to enroll a million Jews, that would signify the unity of the Jewish people, not because we all believe in the same things, but because we regard all of us as belonging to the same people, as having the same right to decide for the Jewish people. Like any new international body, it would have to take into account the different political traditions and national contexts of American Jews and British Jews, of Russian Jews and Belgian Jews, of Moroccan Jews and Argentinean Jews, and so on. Election procedures may have to be different in each country. But the Jews of each country, including Israel, should have an opportunity to participate in the election of their representatives. Of course, it would have to be carefully planned and prepared. But this is not a reason to delay. On the contrary, it means we should start immediately.

Among its many activities, Beit Yisrael should have one key program that symbolizes the entire new effort we are launching. I propose that Beit Yisrael offer every Jewish teenager in the Diaspora a voucher to be used to travel from his or her home to Israel and back, and to spend at least one month in Israel on one of a variety of programs to be carefully prepared for this purpose. The voucher would be free and non-transferable, and would be usable only during the year between their 17th and 18th birthday. Each person could choose the type of program he or she preferred, according to religious background, interests or ideological preference, language competence, etc. Educators trained in the outlook and interests of each group would have to be selected and adequately prepared for the task of leading and guiding their groups. Participants would have to be prepared as well, during the weeks and perhaps even months before their departure for Israel, and follow-up programs should be developed for the period after their return. While here, each group would have ample opportunity to see those aspects of Israel that they will select. They would meet, for extended periods of time, with Israelis of the same age and similar commitments or interests. They could form their own impressions of this country and its people, its cities and universities, its music and its synagogues, its parks and its newspapers, its treatment of the aged and the poor, its opportunities for entrepreneurship, for scientific research and artistic creativity. They should even be allowed to have a little fun. Let them see how we live, and let them decide if they want to come back here for another visit later, for a year of study or a year of social service, when they are ready to start a family, or just to find themselves whenever they choose. Let them think about aliyah, and let them make their decision based on some experience of their own, rather than what we or their parents tell them.

I think it is essential that such a voucher be free and available to every Jew. Let it be a gift from the Jewish people to its future. If an entire yearly cohort numbers 80,000 youngsters, I would consider it a huge success if even two-thirds of them came. If 50,000 came each year, it would cost the Jewish people \$150 to \$200 million dollars a year. It would surely revolutionize the self-consciousness of the younger generation, their understanding of Israel, the Jewish people, its history, thought and belief.

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How would we, that is, Beit Yisrael, pay for it? A large part would come from the annual membership fees it would receive in the Diaspora and in Israel. A large part would come, we hope, from the UJA, federation campaigns and the Keren Hayesod. That is, we urge that the community fundraising campaigns in the Diaspora continue to support this great national effort and this new set of priorities just as they have done for the different priorities of the past. We call on private Jewish foundations to support this effort as well.

To be consistent, I see no reason why we cannot expect Israelis with the requisite means and commitment to make financial contributions to Beit Yisrael above and beyond their regular membership fee. I call on Israelis who are prepared to contribute financially to such an effort to organize the kind of country-wide fundraising appeal to our fellow citizens that our brothers and sisters abroad have carried on for so many years.

In addition to its key project described above, the mission of Beit Yisrael, then, would have to include the following:

 to be the main channel of dialogue between Israel and Diaspora Jewry in regard to all issues of concern to the Jewish people. Such a dialogue would have to be open in its subject matter, so that Israelis would be able to address issues of policy in the Jewish communities (including allocation priorities) and Jews from abroad would be able to address Israeli issues of a political or social nature.

2. to make Jewish and Zionist education in the Diaspora its primary operational responsibility. This should include efforts to improve the training and the professional standing of Jewish educators at all levels; to assist school systems in the development of curriculum materials and the integration of various new media to disseminate information and to link educators and students in different parts of the world; to share and adapt promising modalities among communities; in all its activities, to utilize experiences and resources available in or referring to Israel so as to intensify the social contact and cultural awareness between this society and the communities of Diaspora Jews.

3. to encourage aliyah from all communities, and to provide financial assistance when necessary.

"YEL