MS-763: Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman Collection, 1930-2004.

Series I: Wexner Heritage Foundation, 1947-2004. Subseries 1: General Files, 1949-2004.

Box Folder 65 16

Rabin, Yitzhak. 1988-1995.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the American Jewish Archives website.

ראש הממשלה Prime Minister

January 11, 1995 י' בשבט התשנ"ה

AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Dear Rabbi Friedman,

Thank you for your warm compliments on my address at Ein Arava on the signing of the Peace Treaty with Jordan on October 26, 1994. These words were spoken from the heart with the hope that this peace will bring an end to the era of war in the Middle East.

Your remarks are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Yitzhak Rabin

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman The Wexner Heritage Foundation Huntington Center Suite 3/10 41 South High Street Columbus, Ohio 43215 U.S.A. other points

- 1. Arens is the toughest Likudnik
- 2. Bibi is a big belloom
- 3. Shamir might like to be a bit flexible, but he others would let him.
- 4. I said the labor party vouldn't be back in power for a long time he did not deman. He agreed the party had no women would seed atoms. He is 68
- 5. bater is a good man look like he can make a deal.
- 6. Offered to speck to our group

1. Keep peace with Frank Egypt

- 2. I should be Jewish demente stack living in peace with and neighbors
- 3. Basic mistake for I. to swellow addition 1/2 m. Calestinian.
- 4. In no case to return to

 free-67 lines not on other head

 to bring me Palestinions closer.

 5. Without Polestinian further

 There will be no movement

 toward prece.
- Egypt) should obtain PLO acquiescence.

HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN 500 EAST 77 ST. - APT. 2519 NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10162

November 16, 1988

Mr. Yitzhak Rabin Minister of Defense Ha-Kirya Tel Aviv, Israel

Dear Yitzhak:

In all the decades we have known each other, I have never once presumed to offer you any political advise, or even to express my own political opinions to you.

But now I must, for I fear that the Likud governmentin-formation will establish policies which will utterly change the nature of the State of Israel, and thus alter its future. These policies may even uncouple Israel from the Jewish Diaspora and the United States government.

I am urging you to adopt two basic principles; both 3 () !:

- 1. Stay out of any so-called unity government with Likud and its ultra-right wing partners, nationalist and religious. That is not where Labor belongs. You will have no influence in such a coalition; you will not modify the other points-of-view; and you will slowly wither (as _ & add did when it joined Begin in 1977).
- 2. Do not invite the religious parties to join you, if Labor is offered the opportunity to form the government. The logic which prompted Ben Gurion to form '2/(2) is not applicable today. Three of the religious parties do not even recognize the State as an authority. How shabby that they should demand such an exorbitant price for their seats. Don't cheapen yourself by dealing with them.

Now, as to one positive principal:

Become a fighting opposition, staying "in the political wilderness" as Churchill called it - trying your best to bring the Likud government down. It might not be as hard as you think. Much of the population of Israel regrets the election, and, if given another chance, might

vote differently. Anyhow, whether you succeed in bringing them down, or not, at least your hands will be clean, and historically you will remain true to the ideals of classical Zionism, centrist Judaism, and true democracy. In the long run this will enable you to gain the respect of the young. When they come to your side, you will once again control the political scene.

Last word: American Jews and Americans in general are totally committed to the absolute separation of church and state. There are dozens of Supreme Court cases on this issue. Everyone recognizes that this separation is harder to achieve in Israel, because Judaism possesses both a faith and a polity. But no one has patience with theocratic tendencies in the 20th century.

Further, when Shamir adds fundamentalist religion to almost-fascist super-nationalism, he has created a witch's brew which will explode in his face. It will simply be impossible to live with. At least 50% of Israeli Jewry; 90% of Diaspora Jewry and 100% of the American government and public will become alienated from an Israel acting on the basis of annexation, "transfer", settlements and theocracy. People will simply desert such an Israel.

You must not join it -rather should you stay far away from it - and let it destroy itself, preferably with some help from you. Then Israel can reform its electoral system, and start to rebuild on a better track.

The first 40 years have been very successful, generally speaking, in terms of what has been achieved in many fields. Israel has built a strong and secure base. In the future, there are few limits to the height which Israel can climb - in knowledge, technology, human welfare and a model government, based on justice and mercy. Get past the anachronistic episode of this election, which is a left-over from 19th century out-moded definitions of nationalism and religion. Then go forward to the 21st.

In friendship,

HAF/jf Enc.



MINISTER OF DEFENSE

Tel-Aviv, March 23, 1989

Mr. Herbert A. Friedman 500 East 77 Street, Apt. 2519 New York, N.Y. 10162 USA

AMERICAN JEWISH

Dear Herbert,

I apologize for the delay in replying to you.

As you certainly are aware, the events are numerous and I am very busy dealing with them.

Contrary to your good suggestions, I have considered the National Unity Government to be very important, because of the difficult problems we are facing. I am of the opinion that we should have a national consensus when going to war or to peace, and that is why I believed it of utmost importance to have unity of the whole people vis-a-vis the complex problems.

Thank you for your comments and I hope that although I have not accepted your ideas, nothing will affect our friendship.

Yours sincerely,

Minister of Defense

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PERSONAL - NOT FOR PUBLICATION

August 1, 1994

Dear Yitzhak,

Congratulations on the way you have been handling yourself during the past difficult months! Your conduct has been masterful, your relationship with Shimon absolutely statesmanlike, your patience with Arafat unbelievable, and history will reward you. As I know you, you don't care about that as much as you want to do the very best for the people of Israel, and I'm sure that the next generation will bless you for putting Israel on the path to peace and prosperity.

You have also kept an eye on the Jewish Diaspora, which is a tribute to your breadth of vision. It is amazing that you have found the time and the focus to remind the Jews, especially in the United States, that they must concentrate on educating their young people to place great value on the peoplehood of Israel and the land of Israel, in order to stem the tide of assimilation and intermarriage.

In an interview which you gave recently to the Jerusalem Report, you said: "I don't want Israel to appear to the Jewish community as a miserable, poor cousin." That comment is exactly on target, and we in the U.S. must come up with an idea as to how to achieve the double goal of creating a great pride in Israel, a positive and knowledgeable pride, which will, in turn, give these young American Jews a solid base for being proud of themselves and their Jewish heritage. I think I have a plan for accomplishing this, but I need your support. Let me outline the plan very briefly:

- The UJA transfers about \$300 million annually to the Jewish Agency, mostly for immigrant handling.
- 2. I suggest forming a new American body (in cooperation with the UJA and the CJF) called <u>THE CORPORATION FOR THE FUTURE</u>, with a very small board in control, to take that sum of money and use it for creating and funding a variety of programs in Israel for young people in the age range of 10-25 years. There are hundreds of thousands of souls in this age group, which is the most impressionable time to influence them in a positive direction.
 - 3. The programs to be created would include:
 - a. for 10-15 years, summer camps for eight weeks
 - b. for 15-18 years, high school, for one semester
 - c. for 15-18 years, field school, for one semester
 - d. for 22-25 years, graduate school, for one or two years.
- 4. Infrastructure would have to be found and created to handle the number of kids involved. Today, for example, all the universities in Israel can handle only 2000-2500 students from abroad. Imagine what an expansion will be required, which will have to be done outside the present university system, but obviously in cooperation with them. As for younger kids, there are some summer camps in Israel, but nowhere near enough; and there are some kibbutzim offering high school curriculum, but again a large expansion of facilities would be needed.
- 5. A mechanism would have to be developed in all the communities across the U.S. to select the youngsters; and another mechanism developed in Israel to find the teachers, guides, counselors, and administrative personnel. Both of these are big organizational jobs, but certainly achievable.

- 6. As for the finances, I think we should phase the withdrawal of funds from the Jewish Agency to the CORPORATION over a 3-4 year period. The Government of Israel would have to pay the expenses for handling immigration inflow, but the beauty of this plan is that the dollars would all return to Israel because we would be spending all the money in Israel for EL Al tickets, teachers' salaries, building infrastructure, buying vehicles, etc., etc. In other words, double usage would be obtained from the money: the Israeli Government would pay for the immigrants, but it would gets its money back from the CORPORATION expenditures in Israel; and at the same time scores of thousands of American Jewish kids would be getting a huge injection from their experiences in Israel. In addition, the economy of Israel would benefit from the increased traffic to Israel of parents and relatives. And, very importantly, there would undoubtedly be an increase in the aliyah of some percentage of these kids over the years, as a result of the months they will spend in Israel at an impressionable time in their lives.
- 7. If there is a "loser" in this plan it is the Jewish Agency, for the scope of its work would diminish, as UJA funds would be diverted to the CORPORATION, and as the Government began to pay for the immigration. But, on balance, there is so much to be gained by bringing masses of American kids into close contact with Israeli life and the Hebrew language, that a decision must be made.
- 8. And that is what I meant when I said, way back at the beginning of this letter, that we would need your support in order to make this plan a reality. You will have to decide whether to give the government's approval, and you will have to convince the Agency that the larger goal of providing an Israel Experience is a desirable objective. I know how many problems you have on your head, and I know that your pursuit of the peace process is the highest priority, but I also know that only the topmost authority, which you alone possess, can solve the internal Israeli political and financial questions which I have raised.

9. In conclusion, I have discussed this plan with more than 40 top leaders in the American Jewish establishment, and most have said they see great merit in it. Mr. Leslie Wexner is firmly behind it, as are several others of his stature. I'm sure you have many questions which I will be happy to answer, either to you personally, or to Itamar, or to anyone else whom you designate.

With respect and affection,

AMERICAN IEWISH

(Rabbi) Herbert A. Friedman
President, Wexner Heritage Foundation

P.S. There is a large additional program which must be undertaken in the U.S., including the construction of boarding schools, on the level of the old Reali School in Haifa, Eton and Harrow in England, Andover and Exeter in the U.S.; increasing substantially the Hillel Foundations on College campuses; building more summer camps; establishing adult education seminars in synagogues, and many more projects. The Jews of America must be awakened to the fact that unprecedented action is required if we are to protect our future. Details on all the above ideas can also be provided. We must act as though we really believed that a state of emergency exists.