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Series I: General Correspondence, 1914-1969, undated.

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Jewish National Fund, 1963.

קרן קיימת לישראל  
KEREN KAYEMETH LEISRAEL  
(JEWISH NATIONAL FUND)

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HEAD OFFICE, JERUSALEM - TEL. 24663 - P. O. Box 283 - CODES: BENTLEY & R. MOSSE

Jerusalem, September 8, 1963

Dear Friend,

For quite a number of years I have not had such decisively important news to give you as those about which I write today; and it is also a long time since the Jewish National Fund has undertaken such a great and vital task as the one to which this letter is devoted.

At the meeting of the Israel Government in September 1, 1963, it was decided to carry out a Galilee Development Plan which included a settlement project of unprecedented scope.

To carry out this plan, the Jewish National Fund was assigned a primary role. This may be gathered from the fact that some hours before official publication of the decision, information about it was telephoned to the Board of Directors of the Jewish National Fund which was just then having its monthly meeting in Jerusalem. The Board of Directors thereupon cancelled its agenda for the day in order to listen to a detailed survey of the background to the plan and to discuss ways of carrying it out. A few hours later it was my privilege to inform the press that, in following the Government's decision, also the Board of Directors has made a clear principled decision of its own to carry out the Galilee development plan.

Such were the highly dramatic circumstances of the momentous decision. And now to the plan itself:

The geographical area affected is Central Galilee. This part of northern Israel is sparsely populated, has poor soil and is generally more backward culturally than any other parts of the country. While Western Galilee on the one hand, and Eastern Galilee on the other, have in recent years attained a fairly high level of settlement and culture, Central Galilee, stretching from the Lebanon border in the north to Nazareth in the south, is practically half-empty. The Jewish National Fund has always considered it important to settle this region, and already ten years ago established ten work villages here. Recently it has made the settlement of Segev and of Yodfat possible. These efforts however, only constituted a modest beginning.

Those who know the conditions of Israel are aware, that an undeveloped region without inhabitants, stretching from the border deeply inland, involves difficult and complex problems that need to be solved in a fundamental manner. In this case the solution means putting this region on its feet by settling it - a solution which we have learnt from past experience and which is being retaught to us all the time by current events. What distinguishes this development plan of Central Galilee from previous settlement projects, is primarily its scope.

The plan calls for the establishment of 35 settlements, both rural and urban, which will basically alter the social and demographic character of this region and will integrate it into the country's life. This ambitious program will take at least 15 years to complete. It has therefore been divided into three stages, the first of which has already been energetically launched immediately upon the Government's announcement.

This first stage, which will take about five years, envisages the establishment of three settlement groups, one in the north, one in the centre, and one in the southeast, each of them with its own regional centre which is to supply administrative, cultural, health services etc., all of them directed by expert workers who will be permanent residents in those centres. Every centre will have three or four villages around it, based on agriculture and on industrial processing of agricultural products such as tobacco, fruits, vegetables, as well as raising certain fur animals. Altogether in addition to the three regional centres and the ten villages, there will be one mountain village serving as summer resort for foreign tourists and Israeli vacationers.

In five years there will be, in addition, two new cities, the first of which, Maaloth, is already developing rapidly and the second, Carmiel, will soon go from blue-print stage to construction. Of the 3,500 families settled (12,000 - 15,000 souls), and added to Central Galilee, half will inhabit the new villages and the regional centres.

As stated, the plan was accepted unanimously by the Government, and the Ministry of Housing will participate in financing a considerable part of the cost involved in the construction of the settlements. But the real pioneering work has been imposed upon the two financial instruments of the Zionist Organisation, Keren Hayesod -United Jewish Appeal and the Jewish National Fund.

The Settlement Department of the Jewish Agency will deal with the agricultural aspects after the settlements have come into being and the settlers have arrived on the spot. The Ministry of Housing will put up the buildings, as soon as conditions are ready for them. But all the extensive ground work

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is the exclusive responsibility of the Jewish National Fund. The JNF has to lay a network of roads throughout a difficult hill region, strewn with rocks; it has to reclaim about 70,000 dunams of land, and to undertake immediately not only the planting of tens of millions of forest trees, but also for the first time in the history of its practical work, the planting of fruit orchards and vineyards, so that the future inhabitants will have a source of livelihood as soon as possible.

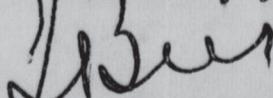
In accordance with the Government announcement, the first stage of the plan will cost about 27 million dollars, of which the JNF has to raise, in the nearest future, the sum of 11 million dollars to carry through those tasks which it has already begun. The Keren Hayesod, through the Department of Agricultural Settlement of the Jewish Agency, will invest, at the first stage, 5 million dollars, and the Ministry of Housing will invest 11 million dollars.

We have been honoured by statements from the Prime Minister of Israel and the leaders of the World Zionist Organization to the effect that they put their utmost faith in the capacity of the JNF to carry out this enormous task, and promising their fullest cooperation in explaining and publicizing the great project.

Finally it may be important to point out that fulfilment of the plan will not only bring a numerical balancing of the Jewish and Arab population of this region (today Jews constitute only 8% of the entire rural population here), it will also contribute to the economic and cultural advancement of the Arab population. The regional centres will serve Jews and Arabs alike, the industrial plants will provide work for everyone, and the Arabs of the Galilee will be able to become integrated into the life of Israel and raise themselves out of their present lag behind the rest of the country.

At the beginning of the new Jewish Year, the Jewish National Fund stands on the threshold of a great cultural, economic and human task. It is a vast enterprise and will be a challenge to all those who participate in it. Together with my greetings for the New Year, permit me therefore to call upon you to take up this challenge and bring it to the attention of all the Jewish communities in your country.

Sincerely yours,



Jacob Tsur

CHAIRMAN,

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

J.N.F.

October 22, 1963

My dear Mr. Nahmani:

I am sorry that I am unable to attend your important conference. I shall be out of the country. I had looked forward to attending it, together with the many friends of the Jewish National Fund.

Throughout its long history, this very beloved Fund of the Jewish people has rendered indispensable service to our great cause. That, I am sure, is well-known to you. It now faces an equally great challenge and opportunity to assist in the development of the State of Israel.

The Government of Israel has decided to launch a vital Development Project in Central Galilee. The development of this region, still sparsely populated by our people, is long over-due. Both for strategic and economic reasons, it is essential that this area receive, as rapidly as possible, rural and urban development on a large scale. I am quite sure that this project will be explained to you fully at the sessions of your assembly.

The Jewish National Fund has been called on to do the ground work which is necessary for the carrying out of this project -- such as the building of roads, the reclamation of tens of thousands of dunams of land, the planting of millions of trees, fruit orchards, vineyards, etc.

October 22, 1963

There is no doubt in my mind that the Jewish National Fund will rise to this great national challenge and will cooperate in the work of developing an area in Israel which holds great promise for the future of the country, where tens of thousands of additional Jewish immigrants can be settled in the next few years.

With all good wishes, I remain

Very cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:bfm

Mr. Joseph Nahmani  
Jewish National Fund  
42 East 69th Street  
New York 21, New York





# JEWISH NATIONAL FUND

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National Director

November 21, 1963

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver  
The Temple  
Ansel Road at East 106th Street  
Cleveland, 18, Ohio

My dear Dr. Silver:

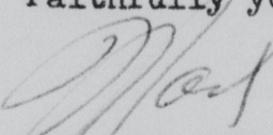
It is my happy privilege, as the newly elected President, to extend to you my good wishes upon your reelection as Honorary Chairman of the Jewish National Fund.

I also wish to take this opportunity to thank you for the message you sent to our dear friend, Mr. Nahmani, in connection with our National Assembly. We had a tremendous turnout.

I am looking forward confidently to the cooperation that, I am sure, I will receive from you and others to enable the JNF to achieve larger goals.

Believe me, I am, with warmest and affectionate greetings,

Faithfully yours,

  
MAX BRESSLER  
President

MB:egl