



## Daniel Jeremy Silver Collection Digitization Project

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Series II: Subject Files, 1956-1993, undated.

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Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Kibbutz Yahel,  
correspondence and brochure, 1977.



# Union of American Hebrew Congregations

838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100



## YOUTH DIVISION

International Education Department

January 26, 1977

Rabbi Daniel Silver  
The Temple  
University Circle at Silver Park  
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Dan:

It was good speaking with you this evening. I am very grateful for your interest and positive response.

Enclosed is a brochure which describes the kibbutz and some of its goals. It is the UAHC's obligation to provide the major portion of the capital funds for the educational center which will be located in the kibbutz. The reform Jewish communities in England, Holland, and South Africa are in the process of raising funds for this project. I believe the total outside the U.S. will not be more than \$100,000. Our goal is one-and-a-quarter million dollars. The sisterhoods have promised to make a commitment of \$250,000.

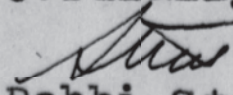
I have contacted about 45 colleagues in the United States and Canada with a positive response from at least three-quarters of the rabbis. We are requesting the rabbis to arrange for Allan Levine to meet with five or ten prospects from the congregation, individuals who can give a minimum of \$1000 and hopefully five figures.

You indicated that you would try to determine who is presently in Cleveland. Also, if there are members of your temple who might be interested but who are away from Cleveland until Spring, I will be pleased to come to Cleveland to meet with them at their and your convenience.

The kibbutz exists, the first garinim are on the land, and the Reform Movement is aware that it is finally becoming a "movement." Perhaps some members of your congregation will play an active role in the continuing expansion of this effort.

With warm personal regards, I am,

Cordially yours,

  
Rabbi Stephen Schafer

SAS:nbs  
Enc.



## Fairmount Temple

23737 FAIRMOUNT BLVD. CLEVELAND, OHIO 44122 464-1330

*Rabbi*  
ARTHUR J. LELYVELD

*Associate Rabbi*  
FREDERICK A. EISENBERG

*Executive Secretary*  
ALBERT J. KOOSSED

*Educational Director*  
ALAN D. BENNETT

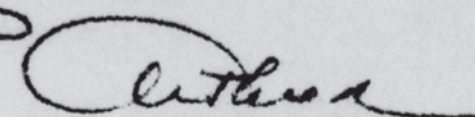
January 27, 1977

Dear Colleague:

Rabbi Allan Levine, our UAHC Youth Director in Israel, will be here from Jerusalem on February 16th seeking to raise some money for our exciting new Reform kibbutz in the Aravah -- Kibbutz Yahel. He would like to arrange a meeting with some potential givers of \$500 to \$1000.

I'd be grateful if you would reveal such "angels" to me without fear that I will divulge the source. Won't you please call me, or my secretary, Mrs. Resnick, at 464-1330, and give me the names and addresses for those members of your congregation who occur to you as fitting into this category.

Warm greetings,

1/30/77 

Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld

8 PM Feb. 16 at apt 1203  
1 Bratenahl Place

(Mrs Ely Cohen)  
name not to be mentioned



February 3, 1977

Mr. Thomas Mann  
80 Quail Hollow Drive  
Chagrin Falls, Ohio 44022

Dear Tom:

You may have read that the liberal Jewish community has helped to establish a kibbutz of young Israelis devoted to the liberal religious perspective. This new kibbutz is called Yahel which means God's light. It is situated on 900 acres in the Negev in an area about 40 miles north of Eilat.

Such projects, of course, require financial support. At this stage the World Union for Progressive Judaism is soliciting support from individuals who might be willing to donate between five hundred and a thousand dollars. Rabbi Alan Levine, the Youth Director in Israel for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, will be here on Wednesday evening, February 16, and will speak to the members of the several reform congregations of Cleveland about Yahel at an 8 P. M. meeting that night in Apartment 1203, 1 Bratenahl Place. I do not know precisely how the evening has been organized, but I am confident that everyone will be informed and no one will be embarrassed.

I believe this kibbutz to be a significant accomplishment. Its members and graduates will provide a cadre of highly motivated and highly trained Israelis who have explored the possibilities of a liberal Jewish stance and have come to appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp



February 3, 1977

Mr. James Reich  
2619 Courtland Oval  
Cleveland, Ohio 44118

Dear Jim:

You may have read that the liberal Jewish community has helped to establish a kibbutz of young Israelis devoted to the liberal religious perspective. This new kibbutz is called Yahel which means God's light. It is situated on 900 acres in the Negev in an area about 40 miles north of Eilat.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

cc:Sam Givelber, Henry Goodman, Sheldon Guren, Julie Kravitz, Tom Mann, Nelson Stern, Dr. Lawrence White, Max Eisner, Charles Evans, Harry Horvitz, Fred Gevelber



February 3, 1977

Mr. Sam Givelber  
19601 Van Aken Blvd.  
Cleveland, Ohio 44122

Dear Sam:

You may have read that the liberal Jewish community has helped to establish a kibbutz of young Israelis devoted to the liberal religious perspective. This new kibbutz is called Yahel which means God's light. It is situated on 900 acres in the Negev in an area about 40 miles north of Eilat.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp



February 3, 1977

Mr. Henry Goodman  
2952 Glengary Rd.  
Cleveland, Ohio 44120

Dear Henry:

You may have read that the liberal Jewish community has helped to establish a kibbutz of young Israelis devoted to the liberal religious perspective. This new kibbutz is called Yahel which means God's light. It is situated on 900 acres in the Negev in an area about 40 miles north of Eilat.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp



February 3, 1977

Mr. Sheldon Guren  
32810 Creekside Dr.  
Cleveland, Ohio 44124

Dear Shelley:

You may have read that the liberal Jewish community has helped to establish a kibbutz of young Israelis devoted to the liberal religious perspective. This new kibbutz is called Yahel which means God's light. It is situated on 900 acres in the Negev in an area about 40 miles north of Eilat.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp



February 3, 1977

Mr. Julie Kravitz  
20100 Fairmount Blvd.  
Cleveland, Ohio 44118

Dear Julie:

You may have read that the liberal Jewish community has helped to establish a kibbutz of young Israelis devoted to the liberal religious perspective. This new kibbutz is called Yahel which means God's light. It is situated on 900 acres in the Negev in an area about 40 miles north of Eilat.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp



February 3, 1977

Mr. Nelson Stern  
2202 Acacia Park Dr.  
Cleveland, Ohio 44124

Dear Nelson:

You may have read that the liberal Jewish community has helped to establish a kibbutz of young Israelis devoted to the liberal religious perspective. This new kibbutz is called Yahel which means God's light. It is situated on 900 acres in the Negev in an area about 40 miles north of Eilat.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp

*will be out of town*



February 3, 1977

Dr. Lawrence White  
18513 Parkland Dr.  
Cleveland, Ohio 44122

Dear Larry:

You may have read that the liberal Jewish community has helped to establish a kibbutz of young Israelis devoted to the liberal religious perspective. This new kibbutz is called Yahel which means God's light. It is situated on 900 acres in the Negev in an area about 40 miles north of Eilat.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp



February 3, 1977

Mr. Max J. Eisner  
2932 Broxton Road  
Cleveland, Ohio 44120

Dear Bud:

You may have read that the liberal Jewish community has helped to establish a kibbutz of young Israelis devoted to the liberal religious perspective. This new kibbutz is called Yahel which means God's light. It is situated on 900 acres in the Negev in an area about 40 miles north of Eilat.

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp



February 3, 1977

Mr. Charles Evans  
17401 Shaker Blvd.  
Cleveland, Ohio 44120

Dear Chuck:

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp



**February 3, 1977**

**Mr. Fred Gevelber  
24925 Hilltop Dr.  
Cleveland, Ohio 44122**

**Dear Fred:**

**You may have read that the liberal Jewish community has helped to establish a kibbutz of young Israelis devoted to the liberal religious perspective. This new kibbutz is called Yahel which means God's light. It is situated on 900 acres in the Negev in an area about 40 miles north of Eilat.**

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**Sincerely,**

**Daniel Jeremy Silver**

**DJS:mp**



February 3, 1977

Mr. Harry R. Horvitz  
16860 Shaker Blvd.  
Cleveland, Ohio 44120

Dear Harry:

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Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp



February 4, 1977

Rabbi Arthur Lelyveld  
Fairmount Temple  
23737 Fairmount Blvd.  
Cleveland, Ohio 44122

Dear Arthur:

The following have been invited to the meeting with Alan Levine on Wednesday, February 16: Sam Givelber, Henry Goodman, Sheldon Guren, Julie Kravitz, Tom Mann, Nelson Stern, Dr. Lawrence White, Max Eisner, Charles Evans, Harry Horvitz and Fred Gevelber.

I am not sure I am going to be able to make it myself. Unfortunately, the date conflicts with an evening on to which we pushed a number of Temple meetings.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mp  
Encl.



## Reform (Progressive) Judaism Educational Center At Yahel

A unique and integral dimension of Kibbutz *Yahel* will be the Educational Center of Jewish study and learning. Young people and adults the world over will be invited to attend a variety of work-study programs to be offered throughout the year.

The Educational Center will consist of the following religious, educational, recreational, and service facilities:

- The Synagogue
- The Cultural Center, including:
  - Lecture rooms
  - Library
  - Music Room
  - Lounge
  - Audio Visual Center
- Dormitories
- Dining Hall
- Medical-Dental Center
- Sports Center, including:
  - Swimming Pool
  - Basketball & Tennis Courts
  - Soccer Field
- Arts & Crafts Workshops
- Metal & Woodwork Shops
- Maintenance & Service Shops
- Laundry

All the above facilities and the equipment to be used therein are to be provided by individual donors whose imagination is stirred by the vision of creating a new value-oriented community and who want to share in a new adventure of the Jewish spirit.

For further information contact one of the following:

In America: Director, Youth Division, UAHC  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10021  
USA

Elsewhere: Kibbutz Yahel  
World Union for Progressive Judaism  
13 King David Street  
Jerusalem, Israel

# KIBBUTZ

# YAHIEL

## THE FIRST REFORM (PROGRESSIVE) KIBBUTZ





### THE NAME:

Yahel ( יָהֵל ) means: "will shine", "will illuminate", "God's light", or "to pitch tents".

### THE SITE:

Kibbutz *Yahel* is situated at the outlet of Wadi Yaalon, on the Arava Road, 65 km (40 miles) north of Eilat. The settlement is an integral part of a group of regional settlements already in existence: Ktora, Grofit, Yotvata, and Samar. Located west of the main road, the kibbutz is separated from its fields which lie on the east side of the main road, about one to two kilometers from the actual settlement. The total area is approximately 3,500 dunams (about 900 acres) of which some 3,000 dunams are to be cultivated.

### THE PURPOSE:

To found a permanent community integrating Jewish values and social idealism, and rooted in the distinctive pattern of Progressive Judaism, as determined through study of Jewish tradition and the expressed needs of the kibbutz members.

### THE MEMBERS:

**Young Israelis**, drawn from the youth groups of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, as well as those who joined the group from outside the movement. Approximately fifty of these young people are in the "Nahal" (combined agricultural and military training). Their garin (group) is called Telem-Nir. Another group, Garin Regev, is presently entering army service, and a further group is being formed by high school seniors who will enter army service in late 1977. Plans call for the recruitment of an additional garin of the Israel Movement each year.

**Young North Americans** — In October 1975 Garin Arava for the Reform Kibbutz was founded by graduates of the National Federation of Temple Youth (Union of American Hebrew Congregations) and others seeking an alternative form of Jewish Communal commitment in Israel. Some members of Garin Arava have already come on aliyah, and the others plan to arrive within the next two years. All members have already been to Israel and have had some kibbutz experience. Upon making aliyah their training will consist of an intensive ulpan (3–4 months), a period on kibbutz Kfar Hamaccabi, the foster kibbutz of *Yahel*, and a period of time on Kibbutz Yotvata, an established neighboring kibbutz in the Arava.

The World Union for Progressive Judaism is promoting recruitment for Yahel in Europe, South Africa, Australia, Latin America, and elsewhere.



Eventually Kibbutz Yahel will have a population of 400-500 individuals, half of whom will be adult members.

### **ECONOMY:**

The major products of *Yahel* are agricultural and include winter vegetables grown for export, melons (cantaloupes), onions, tomatoes, peppers, peaches, grapes, and dates. Poultry (turkeys) will also be raised.

In addition, the kibbutz is now searching for industrial projects to provide a viable economic base and to engage the members during the summer months when agricultural work is at a minimum.

### **Geographic and Climatic Conditions:**

The kibbutz is situated approximately 200 meters above sea level, with ordinary summer temperatures ranging between 28 and 40 degrees Centigrade. On an average, there are thirteen days of rain in the winter. The humidity is relatively low averaging under some 20% in the summer and 30% in the winter. A constant north-easterly wind can reach up to 50-60 km per hour.

### **Electricity and Water:**

In its initial stage, the electricity is provided by a generator and will later be connected to the national electricity grid. This will demand the placement of a high-voltage line for a distance of some 12 kilometers. Water is provided by a local well supplying 150 cubic feet of water per hour, which is sufficient for the first stage of development.

### **ISRAEL'S LEADERS ON YAHEL**

#### **Yitzchak Rabin, Prime Minister, State of Israel**

Above all, your conference marks the establishment of the first kibbutz of your movement in Israel—*Kibbutz Yahel*.

The scenery of the Aravah has not changed much since I was a boy. It is still classic pioneer territory.

As a youngster I studied farming in an agricultural school in the Galilee. I became very interested in water. In fact, I even decided to become a water engineer. I saw the future development of the country dependent upon water and upon the pioneers who would use it.

My personal ambitions were overtaken by events that changed the course of my plans. Instead of farming and water engineering, conditions compelled me to spend much of my life as a soldier.



However, I have never forgotten those early years. As Prime Minister, I still enjoy most visiting the far-away places—the new settlements—where modern pioneers are creating— *יש מאין* —something out of nothing. It is there, most of all, that I hear the powerful heartbeat of the authentic Israel. The pioneers of *Yahel* have added strength to that magnificent pulse of our nation.

You and all Israel can be proud of these new desert pioneers. They are, as the name "Yahel" implies, a "shining" example to Jewish youth everywhere. Modern *Yahel* is a significant living interpretation of Job's ancient words:

*בהילו נרו עלי ראשו לאורו אלך חושך*  
"When the candle shined upon my head, and when, by His light, I walked through darkness."

Yes, indeed, this new kibbutz in the Aravah is like a candle of the spirit in an area still to be redeemed from its desert emptiness.

Where Nelson Glueck once uncovered our ancient roots, the pioneer youth of the movement he loved are building their homes. The desert paths discovered by that outstanding scholar and leader all seem to point tonight to *Yahel* in the Aravah.

Which is why, tonight, I pay tribute to your whole movement for the vision and dedication that gave birth to the idea of *Yahel*. I consider it a crowning achievement. It is as if its young pioneers were the living consummation of the song of *Hatikvah* first introduced into that book of hymns 46 years ago.

With the establishment of this kibbutz, the pluralistic and spiritual life of Israel is enriched. It marks a new and perhaps historic threshold of Reform Judaism's involvement in the actual life of the Jewish state.

What that life shall actually be, shall, in the end, be shaped by those who live here. *Aliya* is the key to so very much. I pray that the many programs you have initiated will, indeed, lead to an ever expanding flow of olim from your movement. I hope, too, that *Yahel* will become a beacon of light for Reform youth everywhere.

For upon our internal strength, of which *Aliya* is such an important factor, depends our capacity to wage our struggle for peace.

*Yahel* is a part of that struggle. It has been established in a region that is crying out for people and development. For it is there, along the almost empty



Jordan Rift Valley and the Aravah, that the eastern line of Israel's development and defense must run. It is there that the real challenge exists in our quest for peace and security with Jordan. It is there that the real chalutzim go to build their real homes. And it is there that the government, in keeping with its policies will lend every support it can to the new pioneers and to their older-established neighbors. For they are the ones who are making a genuine contribution to a policy designed to advance the peace with security.

— delivered at the Knesset,  
November 21, 1976

**Professor Efraim Katzir, President, State of Israel**

....Last Thursday was the day your kibbutz, *Yahel* in the Aravah wilderness, was added to the map of Israel's settlements. It was a good day for you; for the gallant young settlers; for all Israel; for the Jewish future. *Yahel*, as you know, means in its one Biblical appearance: "it will bring light". And *Yahel*, the kibbutz, will—I am sure—not only bring light and life to its uncultivated and almost unpopulated area. It will, we trust, bring light and life—a glowing new challenge—to many other American young Jews, and link your great movement and Israel even more closely. And the Arava itself is a region that will become close to you, as it is to me who spent months there as an officer of the then "illegal" Haganah.













— delivered November 21, 1976, at  
the Presidential residence to the  
leaders of the World Movement for  
Progressive Judaism

**Abba Eban, Member of Knesset (formerly Foreign Minister, State of Israel)**

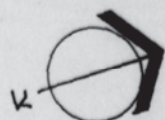
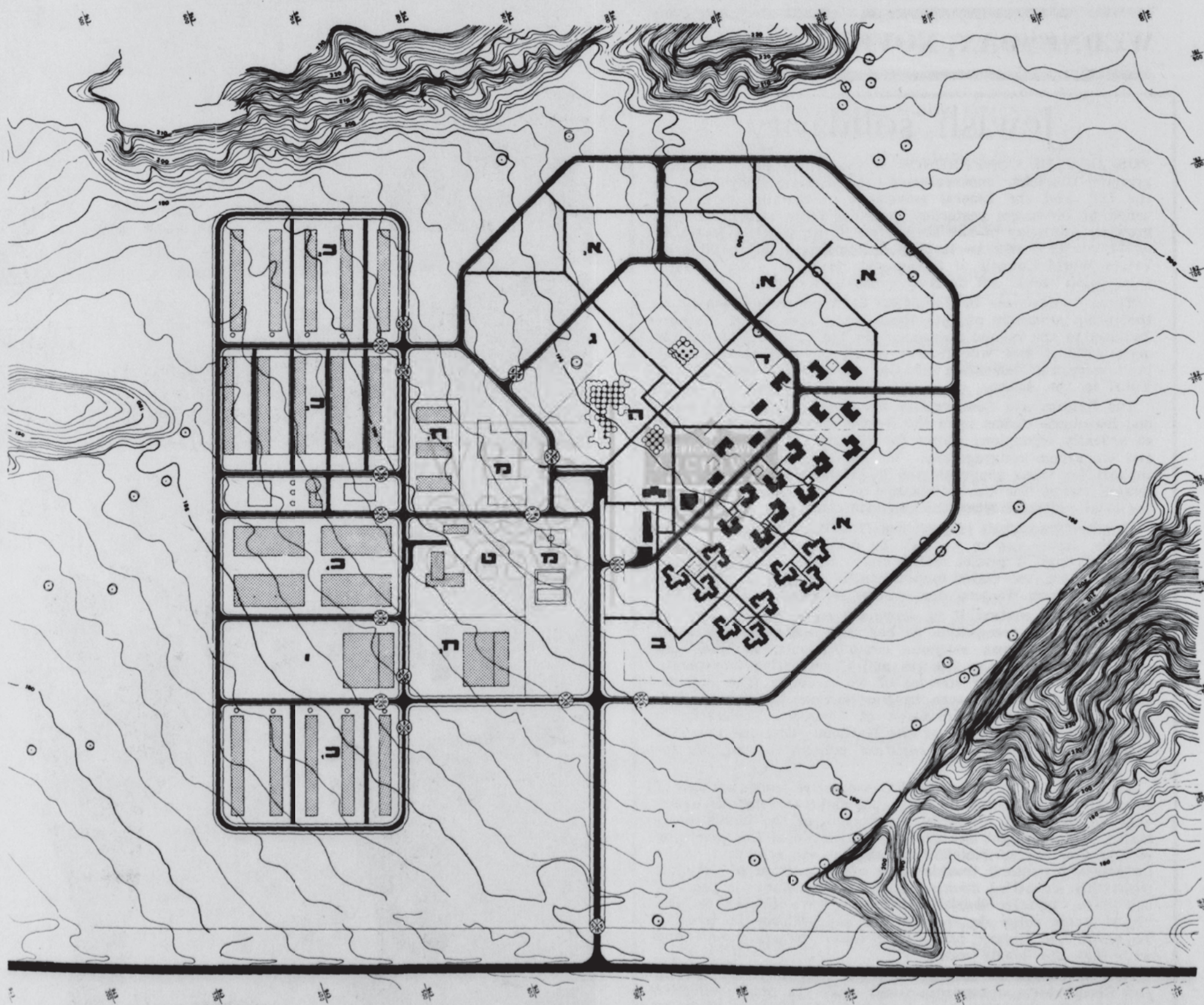
....My tribute of gratitude goes out to all of you for converging here in such numbers today. By this you bear witness to the constructive disquiet with which Jews everywhere follow Israel's fortunes in this turbulent and critical hour. The very presence of your assembly on this soil represents a momentous transition from the early history of American Reform Judaism until the point of culmination in which you established your kibbutz on our pioneering soil less than 24 hours ago.

— delivered November 19, 1976, in  
Jerusalem to the Conference of the  
World Union for Progressive Judaism



;primary school  ;pre school  ;educational center  ;residential area   
 ;poultry  ;industry  ;workshops  ;stores  ;community center   
 ;sport  ;school farm  ;dairy 

LAYOUT



meters  
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MINISTRY OF HOUSING

STATE OF ISRAEL

RURAL BUILDING AUTHORITY AND NEW SETTLEMENTS



# THE JERUSALEM POST

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1976

## Jewish solidarity

THE JUBILEE CONFERENCE of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, incorporating the Reform movement in the U.S. and the Liberal movement in Britain, which convened in Jerusalem yesterday, provides fresh evidence of the growing solidarity of the Jewish people around the centrality of Israel. This will be further demonstrated by the Conservative World Council of Synagogues when it meets in Jerusalem next week. All deserve a hearty welcome.

These conferences in Jerusalem lend concrete meaning to the recent affiliation of both these major streams of Diaspora Judaism to the Zionist movement. In the case of Reform, the organizational ties will receive added physical corroboration in tomorrow's dedication of the movement's first kibbutz, Yabel in the Arava.

The Reform and Conservative movements both have serious and legitimate claims upon the Jewish state whose cause they so ardently champion: claims for recognition for their rabbis and embryonic congregations in Israel; claims for equal support for these congregations in establishing synagogues in Israel; claims for the acceptance of conversions abroad by the local rabbinate when the converts come on aliya to Israel.

Despite fraudulent allegations to the contrary by its enemies, Israel can in no way be described as a theocratic state, although it grants official status to the religious groups within which its varied population is organized, as is the case with most Western democracies — excepting the U.S.

Within this context it is, however, anomalous, to say the least, that such recognition as has been accorded to Moslem, Christian and Druse religious establishments, is being adamantly denied to the Reform and Conservative movements, which represent major streams of world Jewry. The explanation lies in large measure in the partisan narrow mindedness of the current generation of Orthodox leadership in Israel, and in the ability of the National Religious Party to exploit Israel's system of coalition politics to the hilt for its purposes.

Yet the denial to Reform and Conservative Jewry, not only of equal status, but often of the equal right to religious observance in Israel, is primarily a reflection of the highly pragmatic — some might say cynical — attitude of the governing secular majority in Israel. Why, so runs the argument, invite unnecessary political trouble on a mere question of principle when this embattled country needs all the domestic peace it can have. Israel's secular politicians have tended to ask, "How many votes do the Reform people have in Israel?" To which the answer has always been, "Nearly none." And with that the debate ended.

Now it should be revived. But the only way the Reform and Conservative movements could make the debate effective is by eventually being here in sufficiently large numbers to have the required political impact.

Perhaps the establishment of Kibbutz Yabel will prove the harbinger of such a trend.

