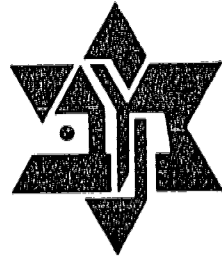


MACCABI WORLD UNION



מוזיאון מכבי ע"ש פייר גילדסגיים

PIERRE GILDESGAME MACCABI SPORTS MUSEUM

פריז 11 נובמבר

פייר גילדסגיים

סימול 4-20-5

שם חטיבה א"ש"ב

תאריך 82-1977

מס. מיכל 177/8

ISRAEL-DIASPORA INSTITUTE

8th March, 1982

The Honourable Yitzhak Navon  
President of the State of Israel  
President's Residence  
Jerusalem.

Dear Mr. President,

Following our meeting on February 21, 1982, regarding the Israel-Diaspora Institute, I should like once again to thank you for the encouragement and support you expressed in response to my report on the progress of the Institute's activities.

Your agreement to host the next meeting of our Governing Council at the President's Residence provides great encouragement to the Institute, while conferring upon it the importance and the broad, national Jewish dimension which befits the subject.

It will be my pleasure to continue updating you during the coming months on developments within the new framework.

Yours faithfully,

Professor Haim Ben-Shahar.

NOTE: The above is a free translation from the Hebrew original

BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY

SUMMARY OF MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

NOVEMBER 26TH, 1981 & MARCH 25TH, 1982

Dr. Z. Warhaftig, Presiding:

AGENDA:                    The Basic Jewish Studies Program

Dr. Z. Warhaftig expressed his pleasure at the large attendance of members of the Executive Council who had come to discuss the Basic Jewish Studies Program. This was the expression of Bar-Ilan's uniqueness. He especially welcomed two members from abroad: Mr. Michel Zimmerman from Canada and Mr. Conrad Morris from England. He congratulated Mr. Morris on his election as Chairman of the British Friends of Bar-Ilan and expressed the thanks of the University to Mr. Henry Knobil who is retiring as Chairman for his leadership.

THE BASIC JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM (LIMUDEI YESOD)

Prof. S. Eckstein, Rector - spoke of the importance of the Executive Council discussing at its meetings central topics and problems which occupy the University's administration on a daily basis. He was pleased that the first such topic was The Basic Jewish Studies Program. He introduced Prof. Benjamin Gross, the head of this program.

Prof. B. Gross: Bar-Ilan expresses the philosophy of Torah and secular knowledge. The results of our teaching efforts should be examined from time to time. Our under-graduate students are obligated to take courses in Jewish studies within the framework of The Basic Jewish Studies Program in addition to their chosen University program - a total of 16 weekly hours: (4 hours Bible, 8 hours Talmud + 4 hours in either Jewish Philosophy

or Jewish History).

In 1981-82 the following courses are being given:

<u>Department</u>	<u>Number of Courses</u>	<u>Number of Lecturers</u>
Bible	54	26
Talmud	86	34
Jewish Philosophy	25	11
Jewish History	12	10
TOTAL	<u>177</u> ===	<u>81</u> =====

Over 8,000 students participate in these courses, including 400 - 500 elderly students in the Brookdale Program.

The students are from all age groups and come from varying educational and religious backgrounds. They are broken up into various groups: graduates of general high schools; religious and Yeshiva high schools; and foreign students. There are a few mixed groups. Twelve courses are given to the general high school graduates; seven to Yeshiva graduates and five to religious high school graduates. There are those who prefer mixed classes which provide an encounter between students from different backgrounds.

Since courses are given on a departmental basis, the lecturers are regular departmental staff. The curriculum is prepared by the appropriate department and undergoes review within the framework of Basic Studies, in order to adapt it to the various classes.

Talmud: We teach selected texts, areas in Halacha, the Oral Law - its principles and development.

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Bible: Students are generally familiar with the subject from high school and prefer general topics. Emphasis is placed on the study of the commentaries; the problem of modern interpretation, and differences in interpretation. This enables the students to study the various methods of Biblical interpretation and commentary.

Jewish Philosophy: The fundamental viewpoints of Judaism are studied. We try to impart an understanding of specifically Jewish attitudes and values, and the uniqueness of the Jewish way of life and history. Among the areas studied are: The concept of G-d, man and society, and the inter-relation between them; the spiritual trends and central movements in Judaism, as expressed in the Bible, by the Sages, in Medieval Philosophy; the Kabbalah, Hassidism, etc; the problems of Jewish identity in our time; religion and state; exile and redemption; Torah and ethics; Torah and science.

Jewish History: We attempt to provide an overall view of the main periods in Jewish history. Stress is placed mainly on the modern period.

In every course in the Basic Jewish Studies Program emphasis is placed on familiarity with the basic books in Judaism through the study of texts from the Bible, the Mishnah, Tosefta, Midrashim, Talmud, Poskim and Philosophy, together with a bibliography.

At the conclusion of each year tests are held and if a student does not obtain the necessary average, he must repeat the course the following year.

A record is kept on student attendance and this constitutes part of the student's grade. A student who exceeds the limit of absences is not eligible to sit for examination.

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We have been making a special effort in the courses in Talmud to reduce the size of the classes. The number of students in a class is about 60. In other subjects there are courses which are attended by over 100 students. In these circumstances it is almost impossible for the teacher to maintain personal contact. We could attain greater achievements if we would increase the number of teachers and reduce the number of students per course.

The main objectives of the Basic Jewish Studies Program are:

- (a) to strengthen the student's attitude to Judaism;
- (b) to expand the scope of the student's knowledge through the study of the sources;
- (c) to occupy the students with the mitzvah of Torah learning.

The approach must be different for students from a general background than for those having a religious background. The emphasis for the first group is to draw them closer to the Jewish heritage, and for the second group to strengthen their knowledge and commitment.

Programming for 8,000 students in over 100 courses is not an easy task. The department tries to provide courteous individual attention to every student with speed and efficiency, despite the limited personnel.

Lessons that are purely theoretical cannot, generally, change the student's way of life in a significant manner. It is, however, possible to change a general direction and to provide a positive attitude to Jewish tradition. A student from Kibbutz Gan Shmuel, after his studies here, invited the lecturers to give lessons in Judaism in his kibbutz. There are many examples of students who have expressed their gratitude

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for the opportunity afforded them in obtaining an understanding of traditional Jewish knowledge and values. There are students who are not satisfied with the program.

We review the program every two or three years. Our surveys show that most students relate positively to these studies and appreciate the courses.

The department makes every effort to have the teachers of these courses serve as personal examples for the Jewish way of life. Excellent scholars are often not engaged because they are not able to serve as personal examples. There may be a few teachers who err in their educational approach. We have a lecturer in Talmud, in a part-time position, whose task it is to instruct new teachers and advise them in their first year.

The emphasis is not only on a suitable academic level in teaching, but also on the educational aspect. University teachers are, generally, concerned with a scientific approach. Through their own education at Universities they became accustomed to the historical and philosophical method. This demands a certain hesitation in personal involvement. We require that they do not concentrate mainly on this method, since the purpose of the University is to produce at Bar-Ilan generations of Torah and scholarly adherents. A conflict obviously arises between the two approaches. We must make the students aware of these problems so that they can cope with them.

All involved in the program are committed to increase and reinforce the student's knowledge and understanding of our Jewish heritage. With the cooperation of all concerned, it was hoped that our great goals and objectives in this area could be realised.

In the discussion that followed Prof. Gross' presentation, and which was continued at a second meeting, the following questions and issues were raised by members of the Executive Council:

- (1) Should the Basic Jewish Studies Program continue to be part of the Faculty of Jewish Studies, or be an independent unit?
- (2) Should the teaching approach be inspirational, or on an academic level, especially since almost 50% of the students come from a non-religious high school and background. Is it our role and purpose to impart knowledge or to motivate toward religious behaviour?
- (3) Should the choice of teachers be limited to those already teaching at the University, and thus on an academic level, or should other teachers be able to teach in this program?
- (4) Would a non-academic approach detract from the University's academic standards? Would it also, as a result, detract from influencing the students?
- (5) Should there be such a large variety of courses available in this program, or should the subject matter of the courses be limited to a few selected areas?
- (6) Should students be completely free to choose the courses, or should they be guided or even directed in their choice, according to their need and level?



- (7) Should a certain period be set aside (a half day or two a week) when only Basic Jewish Program courses would be offered?
- (8) Should a student who does not have a minimum background in Jewish Studies be required, as a prerequisite for acceptance to the University, to study one or two semesters in a fixed Jewish Studies framework?
- (9) Do we not presently satisfy the needs of those who want a more intensive program through the Institute for Advanced Torah Studies and the Midrasha for Women?
- (10) Would a more exacting and compulsory program drive away a considerable portion of our present and potential student population, and thereby severely limit the University's growth and development?  
Would we not then drive away, particularly those from non-religious backgrounds on whom the University, in a more relaxed atmosphere and program, can have influence?

It was emphasised that the Government of Israel does not share in the cost of this program as it does in all other academic programs in the University. The burden of the program's budget is, therefore, carried solely by the University.

After an in-depth discussion at two meetings of the Executive Council it was decided to appoint a joint committee of the Executive Council and the Senate to review the questions that were raised and to bring recommendations to the respective authorities of the University.

A PROPOSAL  
FOR LONG-TERM  
POLICY-PLANNING  
IN  
JEWISH AFFAIRS:

THE ISRAEL-DIASPORA INSTITUTE

1st edition: June, 1981

2nd edition: January, 1982

A Proposal for Long-Term Policy Planning  
in Jewish Affairs:

THE ISRAEL-DIASPORA INSTITUTE

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1st edition: June, 1981

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## A PROPOSAL FOR AN INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH POLICY PLANNING

### A. The Background

Radical change - social, economic, political, cultural and technological - and the attempt to cope with it characterize our age as they have no previous one. Diaspora Jewish life has been powerfully influenced by general shifts in demographic and occupational patterns, business and industrial trends, attitudes to tradition, community and commitment, and approaches to child-rearing, education and political process. Israeli society is also changing rapidly as a result of the same broad factors, and its own unique pressures. Both Israel and the Diaspora are affected by the transitions in each other.

To ignore or belittle change, or to despair of the ability to adjust to it, is perilous. What follows is a proposal for the creation of an instrument to assist Jewish leadership in coping intelligently and creatively with the forces of change in our world.

One central assumption underlies the proposal: The Jewish people in Israel and in the Diaspora form a single conceptual entity. The real differences in everyday life and outlook which do exist are far outweighed by the profound interdependence of fate and identity uniting us. The threats and advances experienced by one part of our people become transformed quickly into the anxieties and celebrations of the other part.

B. The Need

No uninformed or improvised reactions can be adequate to the challenges facing us. Systematic data collection, critical assessment and strategic planning are tools used by governments and corporations in devising responses to their shifting environments. The Jewish world requires no less serious and sophisticated a response from its leadership. "Crisis management" ("fire fighting") must be augmented by a process of long-term policy formulation, leading to concrete initiatives. Action must be grounded in knowledge and understanding.

It is therefore proposed to establish an international Institute for Jewish Policy Planning as a cooperative Israel-Diaspora venture.\*

The Institute will conduct research not for pure knowledge alone, but for knowledge directly applicable to problem-solving. It will unite the brightest and most creative minds available in a dynamic process aimed at altering people's views, promoting new programs, and providing decision-makers with practical options and solutions.

Over the course of time, the Institute will sponsor policy-oriented research on a broad selection of the many important issues on the contemporary Jewish agenda. The Institute's governing bodies will be responsible for establishing priorities among the numerous research options. For the purposes of clarity and brevity, the issues on which policy planning is required may be grouped within three principal categories:

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\* The Institute will be known as the "Israel-Diaspora Institute", until such time as its Board members adopt an alternative name.

I. The Diaspora

- 1) Demographic, occupational, residential trends;
- 2) Jewish identity, acculturation, assimilation;
- 3) Jewish strength and influence: Jewish involvement in national/international politics;
- 4) Organization and political process in local communities;
- 5) The development of Jewish religious thought and responses of the tradition to modern dilemmas;
- 6) Jewish cultural self-expression and creativity.

II. The State of Israel

- 1) Problems of local and regional security, short- and long-term;
- 2) Potential sources of internal cleavage -
  - : the social gap
  - : Ashkenazim and Sephardim
  - : Religious and non-religious
  - : Jewish and non-Jewish minorities
  - : veteran Israelis and new immigrants;
- 3) The nature of the Jewishness of the State and of its Jewish citizens;
- 4) Problems of economic structure and integration into the world economy ("internationalization" of the Israeli economy);
- 5) The full implications of "peace or the lack of peace".

III. Israel-Diaspora Relations

- 1) Israel as the center of the Jewish world; its role in the preservation of the Diaspora;
- 2) The meaning of Zionism today: ideological and practical;

- 3) Aliyah: future prospects and forms; Israeli absorption;
- 4) "Yordim" and "noshrim";
- 5) Economic cooperation between Israel and the Diaspora - within Israel and abroad;
- 6) Jewish aid to Israel (UJA, Bonds, special projects, volunteering, etc.);
- 7) Israel-Diaspora cooperation in Jewish education;
- 8) Conflicts between Israel and Diaspora and their resolution.

This list is intended to be illustrative rather than comprehensive, and is certainly open to supplementation and amendment. A critical reading of the list soon reveals that several of the issues could justifiably have been grouped under any or all three of the categories. This serves to underline our central assumption about the interdependence of needs and concerns and the conceptual unity of the Jewish people in Israel and the Diaspora.

#### C. Initial Steps and an Ongoing Process

The ideas outlined above have been developing through a cumulative process of consultations among lay leaders, professionals and academics in Israel and the Diaspora over the past three years. Two meetings of note were organized in Caesaria in December, 1978 (see Appendix I for the resolutions passed on that occasion), and in Palm Beach in early 1979.

The process has continued since then in a variety of smaller meetings around the world, and is now reaching its concluding stages.\* A survey of existing Jewish institutions and major non-Jewish policy institutes was undertaken as well (see Appendix 2). Excellent research institutes do

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\* See Section G and Appendix 4.

exist in various Jewish organizations and at universities in Israel and abroad. The former are concerned primarily with day-to-day, short-term issues. The latter concentrate on more academic types of research, in which the search for knowledge takes precedence over the concern for policy implications.

It was discovered that no Jewish research and policy body in the sense under discussion exists at this time. Any new body created for this purpose would clearly have to seek the maximum cooperation with existing research frameworks and to avoid duplication of efforts.

D. The Proposed Institute and its Purposes

In summary, it is proposed to establish an international Jewish policy planning institute, which will focus the best available resources on a methodical, policy-oriented consideration of the great issues facing the Jewish people. The issues are no less than the spiritual, physical and creative survival of the Jewish people. For us, there are no higher stakes.

The proposed Institute shall have four main purposes:

- 1) To study major topics of Jewish concern and provide the Jewish community, through its existing institutions, with appropriate policy options;
- 2) To provide all elements of Jewish leadership with first-rate information which would enhance the quality of their participation in Jewish life;
- 3) To serve as a creative force within the Jewish community; to spark the process of thought and dialogue through which new ideas are gradually incorporated into Israeli and world Jewish agendas;
- 4) To serve as a resource for Jewish institutions seeking the Institute's assistance in areas pertinent to their own activities.



E. Structure, Organization and Budget

- 1) A pilot Committee will be established to take responsibility for the operation of the Institute in its formative stage. Among other things, the pilot committee will propose the formal structure of the Institute, its Board, and its main offices.
- 2) The Institute will eventually have a Board that will nominate the officers, finalize its formal structure, and take charge of its operation. However, this Board will be established at a later stage.
- 3) Parallel to the establishment of the pilot committee, an academic advisory committee will be established, to be made up of leading Jewish academics and other experts.
- 4) Initially, the pilot committee will appoint an administrative secretary to deal with administration and communications. The administrative secretary will work intimately with both the pilot and the academic advisory committees. Eventually, when the Board is established, a Director will be appointed.
- 5) The Institute would initially be based in Israel and would eventually have at least one base in the Diaspora. The Israel base would avail itself of the facilities of Tel Aviv University. The first Diaspora base would be located on the eastern seaboard of the United States. An additional base could also be established in Europe, e.g. in London.
- 6) Initially, the Institute will hire academic and other specialists to perform assigned tasks, e.g. a Project Director would be engaged for a particular study. He, in turn would develop the outline of