

Dear Friends:

Hello! I hope this letter finds everyone healthy and going well! Though this letter shall be mostly a summary of the delegation's recent trip to Israel, there are a few other matters of business. First, two address corrections:

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I have not heard from many of you, (and I am the first to admit my own sense of correspondence is lacking): Please feel free to send me your thoughts, opinions, articles, etc. for the next newsletter.

The Hanadari family did wish me to reiterate to you, their desire to offer a service to the community as an alternative to employment in a neighboring village.

I am enclosing two articles which appeared, one in Israel Today 10.25.83, and one in The Jerusalem Post 10.23-29.83 concerning the delegation's "mission" and presence in Israel. It's stimulating to see such publicity.

Page 6 — Tuesday, October 25, 1983 — ISRAEL TODAY

Hoping to hear from you soon!

*HELLEN RHODES*

*10/16/83*

# 'Next Year in Har Halutz'

NEW YORK — "We pledge to support and encourage the establishment in the Galilee of a Jewish pioneering settlement to be located on Har Halutz — a full life-cycle, free enterprise community dedicated to a spiritual and productive life style which will enhance the quality of life for its members and the State of Israel."

With this stirring declaration, 25 Reform Jewish families in a conference at the Union of American Hebrew Congregations' Camp Eisner in Great Barrington, Mass., this month completed plans to build a settlement — and their lives — in the Land of Israel.

Today Har Halutz is a lonely hilltop lookout post in Israel's central Galilee. Two years from now the flag of Garin Gail — the new home for those American families seeking fulfillment in a totally Jewish environment — will be raised atop the aptly named mountain: Halutz is Hebrew for pioneer.

And by the end of the decade, according to Haim Sharett, son of Israel's former Prime Minister Moshe Sharett and chief shaliach to the Reform movement in the U.S., it will be a thriving free enterprise settlement of some 3,500 families.

A desire to enhance the quality of their lives and to raise their children in an atmosphere where Jewish tradition and Reform values are integrated in everyday life is the primary motivation for these families to launch their pioneering venture, according to Mr. Sharett. On assignment at national UAHC headquarters for the past two years, he will return to Israel next spring to prepare for the first group of olim.

Most of them have well-established businesses or professional careers. The group includes Jerry Cohen of Natick, Mass., an industrial engineer, and his wife Andrea Schwab, a computer programmer, Steve Hoffman of St. Louis, a C.P.A., and his wife, Marilyn, a social worker, and Dr.

Joel Miller of Bakersfield, Cal., a periodontist, and his wife, Sarina, a musician.

Reform Jewish settlement in Israel. In 1977 the movement founded Kibbutz Yabel in the Arava. In July ground was broken for Kibbutz Lotan, also in Israel's desert region.

Nearly 100 families have expressed a desire to join Garin Gail, which will be neither a kibbutz nor a moshav, but a settlement of Reform Jews who have agreed to make Aliyah together.

"Their livelihood is the choice and responsibility of each individual family," says Sharett. "They will follow independent, separate careers in business and the professions. But they will live together as families in a friendly neighborhood."

By the time the first families arrive at the absorption centers in Carmiel or Tiberias late in 1984 for five months of intensive Hebrew language courses and indo-

ctrination, the infrastructure and temporary dwelling units for 30 families will have been prepared at Garin Gail. There will be a kindergarten on the site (older children will attend schools in adjacent communities) and a supermarket, laundry and coffee shop staffed by the new immigrants.

Though modest in comparison with American standards — the typical temporary homes will have 300 square feet and contain two bedrooms — they should provide adequately for the needs of the settlers while they are engaged in building their permanent dwellings.

The Jewish Agency, according to Sharett, will provide each family with a plot of land just under a quarter of an acre and will grant mortgages of \$27,800 at favorable interest rates. This would cover the cost of an 850 square foot home. The typical three-bedroom wood home envisioned by the gain, Sharett indicated, occupies 1,300 square

feet and will cost approximately \$43,000 under the "do it yourself" plan projected for most of the residents.

With the aid of some local professionals and the full-time attention of the settlers, such a home can be built in six months, Mr. Sharett says. The same wooden home can be built by local contractors for \$54,000, while models in concrete are in the \$72-\$84,000 price range.

Earning a livelihood, of course, is of prime concern. Thus Mr. Sharett encourages each potential immigrant to undertake at least one pilot trip to Israel to visit the site and investigate employment opportunities.

Persons interested in obtaining more information about Garin Gail or Kibbutz Yabel or Kibbutz Lotan, may contact Haim Sharett at the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 838 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10021 telephone (212) 249-0100.