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Box
21

Folder
16

"Statement on the United Jewish Appeal Special Fund". 21
January 1956.

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STATEMENT ON THE UNITED JEWISH APPEAL

SPECIAL FUND

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

January 21, 1956

Mr. Chairman, Senator Lehman, Mr. Ambassador, ladies and gentlemen.

I should like to tell you quickly what this Special Fund of the UJA is all about in the year 1956. That Fund was conceived at a time shortly after the ugly rioting in Morocco last summer, when it became apparent that ever larger numbers of Jews would be seeking an exodus. The circumstances of mob violence at that time, political upheaval, economic strangulation which overtook our people, are all well known to you.

There was a surging stream of humanity desirous of leaving North Africa for Israel, and it became obvious at the end of last summer that the proceeds of any campaign conducted at the 1955 level would not in any measure be able to cope with that flood. The regular annual appeal of the UJA must take care of what we can call the bread and butter needs of the agencies, the people, the programs we support. The entire revenue of the regular annual appeal must be devoted to the continuous absorption and colonization of the hundreds of thousands of people who have come to Israel over the past years and who are not yet fully self-sufficient.

The regular campaign could not begin, by the wildest stretch of the imagination, to take care of the new immigration when the regular campaign hardly had the capacity to take care of the old. There are still people in gal'abroth, still people unemployed, still people in need. We Jews in the outside world, no matter how generous we have been, have not provided for the past several years enough to take care of the bread and butter needs. I think we should face the bitter fact that we, as well as we have done, have still imposed upon the people of Israel the obligation to take up the slack, and the

slack last year—hold your breath—was something between \$31 and \$34,000,000 which the people of Israel had to put up to finance completely the programs which we in all our generosity were inadequately supporting.

On the 27th day of September, this last year, Egypt announced its arms deal with Czechoslovakia, and as though the first problem in North Africa were not enough, it was conjoined on that fateful day with this second problem, so large in magnitude as to stagger us, now that we fully understand its deepest implications.

As though the problem of finding extra money for more immigrants were not enough to tax our ingenuity, we learned very quickly on that day that the people of Israel would be unable to participate in picking up the slack any longer. The reason is obvious. They are unable to support the cost of mass immigration at a time when their own existence is challenged. They can no longer contribute to the rescue of endangered Jews without peril to their own survival. Their resources must be devoted to the pressing task of self-preservation.

And so the Special Fund acquired by September or October particular urgency. Since the people of Israel, in view of their own Great peril, must devote every resource and energy to self defense, the Special Fund had to be large enough to pick up the slack and pay for the entire cost of immigration. Everyone knows that all financing begins with what is called an enabling act. The Special Fund is the enabling act whereby the immigration emergency is to be taken care of.

And so on the 18th day of November, just a few short weeks ago, a great and composite body of dignified and authoritative people, the weight of whose names and the presence of whose faces gave them obvious authority to exercise a mandate, issued such a mandate when they resolved that a Special Fund be established. There are two paragraphs in that Woldorf resolution of November 18th of especial concern.

Paragraph Sixth said: "That contributions by individuals to the Special Fund be made and accepted over and above and without reduction of the contribution which that individual makes to the regular fund of 1956."

Paragraph Seventh said: "That the Welfare Funds of America in all the communities agreed that the UJA share from the regular campaign fund be no less than it was last year."

The spirit, the intent of these two statements are both crystal clear. Individual support of the Special Fund and community support of the Special Fund must in no way lessen individual or community backing of the regular fund. That is the story behind it. That is the history of how it gathered its momentum.

All our efforts both as individuals and as communities are literally being watched this evening. I tell you that what we will do here later this evening will demonstrate whether the Jews of America are concerned with the present plight of the people of North Africa and whether they are concerned with the overwhelming problems recently facing Israel. Our fellow Jews throughout the United States are watching what we are doing, and I am confident that if something electric, magical and exciting happens here tonight, they will follow our example.

Not only are our fellow Jews watching us. I am convinced that the enemies of Israel are watching us. They are watching us to see what we are doing, hoping to see a slackening of our support for the causes of freedom and democracy and love.

The men, women and children of North Africa, I think also are watching us tonight in a symbolic way, knowing that their futures are in our hands.

And finally and perhaps most importantly of all, the people of Israel are watching us tonight because they know this meeting is being held. They know the deep pregnant possibilities in this meeting and they are watching it with the same tenseness and anxiety as they watch all affairs which have an effect upon their lives.

I say simply that we must show all who are watching us, the Jews of America, the people of the world, our enemies, our friends—we must show all who are watching us that we are equal to the demands of this almost cataclysmic moment in history. The bread and butter campaign must be sustained. The coffers of the Special Fund at this special hour, which I think you understand, must be filled. The greatest honor can be paid the gallant people of Israel if we match their courage with our courage, their giving with our giving.

