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Executive Directors Meeting speech [Toronto, Canada]. 15
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REMARKS DELIVERED BY MR. FRIEDMAN AT THE MEETING WITH THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS
IN TORONTO ON NOVEMBER 15, 1956

The mood is a peculiar one and if I sort of talk in a quite informal fashion it will be because I think that is the relationship that ought to exist between us, where we have got to think through a process, not even so much arrive at a conclusion, because I am sure we all share the conclusion, the question of figuring out how to arrive at the conclusion.

I think everybody is perfectly aware of the fact that the mood in the Jewish community in the United States is one of the greatest apprehension, the greatest concern, excitement, curiosity, and responsiveness. From everything we can gather we have arrived at two generalizations. Number one, that people are coming to almost any kind of meeting that is called because they are eager to try to find out what is happening. The second thing we sense is that they want to come together in a collectivity with five other Jews or thirty-five other Jews or threehundred other Jews, to express somehow their sentiment of identification with what is going on, to express collectively their feeling of urgency, or distress, or worry.

This was not the mood of the first three or four days. I was not in the country those first three or four days. Moe Leavitt and I left Israel after the thing started and we had a day in Paris where we had a lot of things to do so we did not get back until three or four days after the thing broke. But I understand in the first three or four days there was a kind of uncertain reaction on the part of the people. They did not know whether to be upset about what Israel did because Eisenhower was criticising the action, but after the first few days the mood gelled and crystalized and the pendulum swung back into one of what I describe as the basic plateau of Jewish interest in Israel and I think in the last few days the pendulum has swung to the other side where there is now

an eager desire to do something. I think in two weeks we have seen the thing go from a negative reaction at the beginning back into the less fearful, and now over to a positive desire to be concerned with this.

That is important for us to try to analyze, the mood of the people in America, because it gives us a guide, a line, on what we can expect in the future.

I want to describe the mood of the people on the Mission in Israel and read you the paragraph which they wrote into their resolution of October 25th, four days before the thing happened. It was one of the concluding days of the Mission and they left Israel with this thought down on paper. The people on the Mission - 100 or more of them - were terribly concerned and disturbed by what they saw and they saw clearly that the days ahead - not knowing what was going to happen four days later - that the days ahead were going to see a maintenance of the terribly difficult military security situation until Israel was and would continue the fight herself, and they also saw clearly that the immigration picture was on the rise and not on the decline. These twin things which were the motivation behind all the extra effort and the Special Fund of 1956 - these twin factors were still most clearly present for the least initiated observer to understand, and I want to describe to you that this resolution which they drew up was a compromise resolution because very simply and bluntly the guys on that Mission - and for whatever this is worth - the collective contributions of the members of the Mission were just under \$2,000,000.00 without Mr. Rosenwald, so we were not talking about just 100 Jews, but a group whose capacity to participate in the campaign and whose understanding was backed up by their money - so this was a fairly good cross section - they wanted to write the strongest kind of resolution in that environment, in that heat, in that excitement they wanted to write a resolution which would definitively call for the establishment of a Special Fund in 1957, and they wanted to go further and name the limits. Without giving you the names of the people who spoke in favor of that position, if I told you who they

were you would recognize them of people who had the right to speak by virtue of their financial share in this, and their working share in the campaign - our job was very honestly and frankly to try to suppress that desire on their part in Jerusalem in October to make something concrete which I had to say to them they had no right to do. The decision of what the American Jewish community should do in 1957 could not be met by 100 people in Jerusalem in October no matter how excited they were or how good people they were. But they were raring to go and several of us were holding them back and saying the most they could do was make their recommendations and express their sentiments. In the spirit of that kind of argument they came out with this effort to describe their mood.

"The fact is that the people of Israel face yet another year of severest trial and utmost danger. The fact is that immigration has not diminished -- but flows on at an even greater pace than last year and may reach 60,000 in the next twelve months.

The fact is that for tens of thousands this will be a "life or death" immigration -- for they are Jews who must come now from lands of terror and persecution, and tomorrow may be too late.

Above all, the fact is that the people of Israel, burdened with the terrible and enormous cost of self preservation, cannot pay for this immigration, ready as they are to welcome the newcomers.

It is clear to us that only greatly increased funds can assure the rescue and survival of all those who call for help in coming.

It is equally clear that American Jews must find the way by which great extra sums can accrue to the United Jewish Appeal for its humanitarian purposes.

Therefore this 1956 United Jewish Appeal Study Mission -- profoundly moved by the quiet heroism of Israel's people -- determined to stand by their side in this critical hour -- eager to help maintain the life-line for those who must yet come to Israel -- makes the urgent and pressing recommendation that 1957 see the adoption of an extraordinary campaign to secure the great additional funds needed.

We further recommend that the details of this effort be worked out and submitted to an emergency meeting of American Jewish Communal leaders to be convened on November 30, 1956, the day before the Annual National Conference of the UJA!

One man stood up and said this was mealy-mouthed - you don't simply call for some extraordinary effort. That isn't doing anything. And you had to try, as I said, to explain to these people that theirs was not the prerogative, but come on November 30th and say what they had to say and that would be the meeting to take the decision by the people who have the moral mandate to speak in a formal way. Last year the fourhundred people who gathered November 18th had a moral mandate - informally, we know that. That was the Jerusalem situation. That was five days before the whole business started. If that is the mood five days before the business started, then how much more so is it even now.

Therefore I wanted to have this conversation with you today because I remember very well two conversations last year before the launching of the then Special Fund. One I went to was in Chicago. I think it was at Sam Goldsmith's invitation. He called and I ran out that afternoon. The other was the night before the Special Fund meeting where some of you were good enough to meet with me in New York. This lunch was called and we invited you because this would be the time now when all of you would be gathered here to indicate to you what the thinking is, to tell you quite clearly that there has been absolutely no decision made. We have not decided inside the Cabinet. No formal vote has been taken, and that will have to be taken on the 29th, the day before the 30th, because the Cabinet has to go on record.

We are talking about a problem that exists, which in my judgment, knowing what I do about what is on the horizon, the 1957 campaign has got to be somehow or other the biggest campaign the Jews ever did, and I am including 1958. It is not rhetorical. This year two propositions were presented to you. That Israel was facing a possible Egyptian attack. We told you it might happen in July or August. It came October 29th in reverse, thank goodness, were that attack was prevented. We also said there would come a time when if we did not act as fast as we could we would not be able to take the Jews for Morocco. We have not lost the opportunity completely because they are still coming, but you know what is

happening in terms of the quantity of that flow. The closing down we warned you about occurred. I have the feeling in my heart that whatever I said this year that might have sounded wild, extravagant, extremist, urgent - based on two propositions - the military and emigration - I said to you correctly and did not kid myself because those two things came to pass. And those were the basics on which we tried to interject the sense of urgency into the 1956 campaign by the Special Fund device.

I will say now and I hope that I am contradicted by events, but I am afraid that I shall not be - that in the months ahead concerning which we are talking, Israel will be involved in much greater military adventures than she has been up to now. And again it will be because of no choosing of hers. It will be because the situation with the Arab states is unresolved.

The second thing I would like to say is in the year ahead no curtain will close as we warned you about Morocco, but a curtain may open and it may open wide and we may be able to get our hands into it through any tare in that curtain and pull some Jews out, and some Jews will come out, and if it works at all, and many, many tens of thousands may come out. Many. I do not want to elaborate on these two points any more. They are in my mind as the moving fingers of history. If both those things are foreordained to occur - the military safety of Israel having yet to be resolved, and God given chance to do what we have been dreaming of doing for a decade, to get Jews from Eastern Europe - those two things in combination from point of view of the ultimates of Jewish history are greater than the combination of events that occurred in 1948.

That is why this campaign of 1957 is in my judgment greater in magnitude and in historic scope. I can only tell you how I feel. I could only tell you in 1956 how I felt. I could only tell you how I felt in 1957. I think Jews are ready to follow the people who will issue great calls to them.

Our talk, therefore, about how to handle the 1957 campaign is not an academic talk. The people in Jerusalem felt the way to do it is with another Special Fund. We will talk about it here tomorrow and on November 30th it will

be formalized and put on paper one way or another, and the leadership will have to decide what to do. That leadership is your leadership. We have many reasons that we are convinced that a Special Fund is the way to raise more money. The main other reasons that a Special Fund is not the way to raise more money. The discussion can go on between us and that will be the productive and wholesome part of this meeting.

One other item, and that is a program to try to get a lot of people mobilized in this country for the campaign who have not been mobilized up to now. And I am talking about the Zionist forces of the country. I am talking with Neuman~~xx~~ and Goldman now, and I am thinking there are great fields to be tapped there. I have given them a plan. Let me give you that plan later.

Security and emigration which caused us to ask for a Special Fund, those twin factors still prevail except they are intensified. Therefore the reason for which we wanted a Special Fund, because of that twin combination of circumstances, that same reason exists, only the circumstances are worse. If that twin combination of circumstances could ever be broken we would not need a Special Fund. If we were talking about war immigration only and there wasn't a security problem, then maybe we wouldn't have to talk about a Special Fund.

We said we hoped the Special Fund would answer the problem and help solve that combination of immigration and security. That combination is still with us in greater terms. It was not with us for many years and I would venture to say it won't be with us for many years. It happened to be with us in 1956 and holds over for 1957, and if it holds over for 1958 lord alone knows!

The refunding which took place essentially in April and May, basically, the total of the refunding was almost \$41 million. \$40,573,000.00 was the total. It represented about \$29 million of old loans which were paid off and taken out and \$11 million of what we call new loans where more money was borrowed this time than the last time. If there is anywhere between \$60 and \$75 million owed at the time, we think that is a fairly big burden for the communities to carry, and therefore at this moment the farthest thought in our mind is to go in for refunding now or in the immediate months ahead. Six months from now is an eternity to me. But the facts are such that I do not see how there can be any more refunding. Not for the moment.

Reference the amount raised in the campaign for 1956: The 1956 figures are not not because you have not all allocated the amounts to come to the United Jewish Appeal. But, Irving, can you tell me how much was raised? -About the same as in 1955 and the figure is about \$56 million.-

For the Special Fund, we carry on the Special Fund account, pledges of \$19,500,000.00. Of that total amount about \$10,000,000.00 has come in in cash. We think that of that \$19,500,000.00 is not really all solid money, and that is for this reason: We have simulated the figures because it is not always made clear to us what part of an amount raised goes to the Special Fund, and what goes to the regular fund. It may turn out that we will not have \$19,500,000 in the Special Fund but a little less, but I don't know how much less.

Mr. Friedman then spoke on the subject of Cash:

There are two schools of thought. One says if we, the UJA plead with you and fight with you and urge you to get in all the cash you can, that is bad for the UJA because then we have no more accounts receivable on the books. You clean up and pay up everything and then what do we do? There is no money coming in during ~~the~~ January, February, and March. There is one school that says do

not drain your book. This would seem to be a very careful, cautious approach to keeping accounts on the books. I know what Israel needs on the 15th of November. I know what she will need on the 25th of November. Next January is a millenium away, so it is not from the point of view of preparing the ground work for new pledges, but because we need those dollars like we need blood.

Yesterday there came into the United Jewish Appeal \$1,150,000.00 in one day. \$1,070,000.00 of it was bank repayments. There was \$80,000.00 of cash money. All right, you borrow the money in April and you have to start paying it off, and that is also money. The bank gets it because we had it in April. Let's get it paid off. The flow of cash has to keep coming because the JDC needs cash and that is her only share of the campaign. So for all objective reasons, if you guys should break your necks to get cash in in the next three or four or five weeks, that is the immediate service that you can do the Jewish people. It has the secondary affect of cleaning the slate to make another Special Fund a real possibility.

In reply to a question on emigration, Mr. Leavitt said:

The immigration is not clear, and one cannot speak in terms of definite facts and figures. All I can tell you is that movement is going on at the present time from North Africa at a monthly rate of about 2,000. None of the things I am going to say about emigration should be used in publicity because it is too risky and too dangerous. Even today about 300 Polish Jews are coming out every week, flying to Vienna and within twentyfour hours airlifted from Vienna because the Austrians say they have no space to keep them for more than twentyfour hours because of the Hungarians coming in.

We are expecting a tremendous number, about 6,000 for 1956 from Poland. It seems that emigration from Poland is continuing, Jews continue to register at the Israel Consulate in Poland, and there seems to be a great deal of ease in getting out of Poland to Israel. Thousands of Jews have applied, several thousands have gotten exit visas, and are being moved out to Israel. At this moment we do not know what will happen in Hungary, but if there is some compromise in the situation, if there is an opening in the border - and at the moment the border is open - there will be tens of thousands of Jews leaving Hungary. They are not happy in Hungary. Hungary is a traditionally anti-semitic country and Jews feel it more keenly today because the top communists in Hungary were Jews and the Hungarian government will never forgive those Stalinist Jews for what they did to them.

Our director in Vienna went searching when the first Jews started coming into Vienna and went into the camps which the Austrians had set up very hurriedly overnight, and he saw lists of names, some of which sounded Jewish, but nobody came forward. He knew there were Jews among the people at the camp, but not one Jew came forward to say that he was a Jew, even though they knew that our man was there looking for them. They did not come forward because they were with Hungarians, because they did not know what the Hungarians they were with might do. As soon as a Jewish collecting center was set up, the Jews came forward. These are Jews who came in from little towns with sixty or seventy Jews in the population in those little towns, and from these western Hungarian towns over 800 Jews have already congregated in the camps in Austria. They are moving today, the only ones moving out are those opting for Israel ~~from~~ at the present time, and it is a surprising number of Jews who are going to Israel out of this group in spite of the fact that they all know about the Eisenhower promise that 5,000 visas will be available for the United States.

The Agency is counting on an immigration of 50 to 55,000 Jews. It could

be much more. It could be substantially less if there is a sudden stoppage of emigration out of the Iron curtain countries. And if the curtain goes down on North Africa more tightly than it has gone down at the present time that would also cut into the rate of emigration. Right now there is legal emigration out of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria, and those numbers are continuing to the rate of 1500 to 2,000 a month. With that as a basic group of people you can figure on 50,000 as being a reasonable number for the year, and 80,000 or 100,000 as a possibility.

Re: ZOA: Dr. Goldmann came back from many months abroad and for the first time in my experience began to get very distressed that everybody was breaking his neck trying to raise more money and he did not feel that the official ZOA apparatus in the United States was pulling its weight, doing anything, helping in the grass roots in the communities. When he gave me that opening, reflecting his feelings, I banged in on him really hard and told him just what I thought.

He was shocked, for instance, to realize that there are 93,000 registered members of the ZOA, people who are interested enough in Israel to pay \$10.00 to join the Zionist organization and that is a constituency. And he found out that of all the Bond holders in the country, there are about 60,000 purchasers of Bonds in the United States, the total number of Bonds sold was 72,000 bonds - and of the 72,000 it is understood that there are about 60,000 families that are Bond purchasing families in the United States. Then he said, supposing half of the Bond purchasers are members of the ZOA - which of course is not so. This would mean that there are 30,000 members of the ZOA who bought bonds, and there are 93,000 people who are registered official Zionists in the country and are members of the ZOA. So from the bond analysis of the figures he said that he supposed the same thing must be true with regard to the UJA. That gave me my opening.

Here is the proposition I made to him. I said, you have in the United States 600 Zionish districts comprising 93,000 members. 188 are active districts. Supposing you have an active district in Omaha of 200 members of the Zionish organization. District 7 in Manhattan has 1500 members. My proposition was, if you can get yourself a committee organized in Omaha and take your 150 registered members in Omaha and go to the welfare fund and ask them to write down what these 150 people give, you may find out that of these 150 people 75 of them do not give anything or give \$10 or \$20 to the campaign. Can you find the strength within the Zionist organization, I said, to work out a method by which as Zionists, if you have not got any other approach to them, somebody will go to them and show them that \$10 or \$20 or \$30 is ridiculous and that the 100% to Israel Appeal, which the Special Fund represents, is their way of giving \$10,000 if they wanted to give that much, and they no longer have any excuse for not giving to the campaign. I put in a proviso. In Philadelphia, Mr. Mann, who gives \$200,000 is a member of the ZOA, ~~Samuel Karmelitz~~ and Philadelphia is not going to give Freddy Mann's card to be solicited by a Zionist team.

Goldmann said he would talk to Neumann and we had a meeting yesterday with Neumann and I went through the whole thing with him.

I don't know what strength exists within that apparatus, but I do know there is a very bad conscience there and that there is the beginning of a desire and inclination to try this time and in these circumstances to be helpful. They are having a meeting of the Regional Presidents and Executive Board in New York this weekend and will take it up as a first order of business for themselves. They will try to see what strength they can mobilize for the welfare fund in the local community and actually solicit some cards.

Mr. Henry Zucker: If the idea has any merit, I think it has more merit in New York because the leadership is there and for a lot of other reasons. In Cleveland, I know them and I just do not think it is worth the waste of time.