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"Notes for Recording for Fall Communities." 7 October 1957.

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October 7, 1957

Dear Friends:

The year 1957 has been filled with tremendously moving events. There is much that could be said about the aftermath of the Sinai campaign of last Fall, about the deepening Soviet penetration of the Middle East, about the continuing burdens which the Israeli public must endure. But of all of the stories of 1957, the most exciting is the story of immigration. *During this past year* ~~For the first time in many years~~ there has been ~~a~~ *great and continuous* stream of Jews coming from all parts of the earth to the *land of haven and freedom.* *Israel, the land of* And for the first time in a decade large numbers of these Jews are coming from Eastern Europe. We witnessed last Fall the tragic events of the expulsion of the Jews from Egypt, and the shattering episode of the flight of refugees from Hungary, but again, I say, the most important story of all is the fact that Jews from Eastern Europe are getting out, are coming out, and are arriving in Israel to begin new lives. This fact is of enormous historic significance for it puts us in touch once again with the Jews of those countries from which so many of our fathers and grandfathers emigrated to these American shores. Tens of thousands of the Jews who went to Israel this year with the help of the United Jewish Appeal are as close to us American Jews in terms of common roots as any Jews could be.

I am sure you all know by now the wonderfully encouraging news that the American Joint Distribution Committee has been welcomed back to work in Poland, to provide help and relief for Jews of Poland and for thousands of Jews who have been repatriated from Russia to Poland, and who are now in need of help. The Premier of Poland himself, Jozef Cyrankiewicz, received Mr. Charles Jordan, the European Director of the Joint, and assured him that the Government of Poland was happy to have this American Jewish organization working again in his country. Mr. Jordan also visited the American Ambassador in Warsaw to inform him that once again we would be spending our money behind the Iron Curtain to bring relief and aid. Food is available in Poland at reasonable prices and we are setting up a feeding program for thousands of Jewish children whom we have not been able to reach up to now.

I think that this is great and exciting news and I think that the Jews of America will welcome the opportunity to provide the funds with which to carry on this program.

You have heard much this year about the rescue of a hundred thousand Jews. Let me say very simply that these are not simply figures drawn from a hat. These figures come true day after day. At the present rate of immigration Israel will have taken in about 85,000 Jews by the end of this year and more than 15,000

will have been resettled in other countries of the globe. As we contemplate this tremendous project, our thoughts naturally turn to the ~~year~~^{future} ahead and we wonder what will be the immigration in the months to come. I would like you to know that every detailed analysis we make leads us inevitably to the conclusion that the immigration of the months and year ahead will be at very least on the same scale as that of 1957, if not larger. During October and November and December we are anticipating a steady and continuous flow as Jews leave from Poland, ~~including repatriates from Russia,~~ as Jews continue to leave from Egypt, North Africa and other countries whose names I would prefer not to mention. Let me say very simply that there is a steady and unabated rescue program involving thousands of people every month.

The human stories of these people from Eastern Europe go straight to the heart. Recently in Israel there was a ceremony of circumcision for three boys -- ages 7, 8 and 13. Chief Rabbi Herzog himself was the sandek, the godfather, at these ceremonies. The boys had been born and brought up in countries where it was difficult, if not impossible, to practice their religion and only when they came to Israel were they able to rejoin their people spiritually as well as geographically.

Almost on the heels of that story, so poignant, was the one that came to my attention, of the father who went to a large bank in Israel to apply for a loan. He was a new immigrant and when asked for the purpose of the loan he said it was to sponsor a barmitzvah party, for his son. The banker was shocked and could not understand why this penniless immigrant would want to borrow money for that apparently frivolous purpose.

The story of the father is typical of the stories which so many thousands of these new immigrants could tell. He said, ~~and I give it to you in his words~~ "I am a survivor of Treblinka. ^{Nazi death camp} On our way from Bialystok we came across a Gentile woman with whom we were acquainted. She asked us to leave our baby son with her so that perhaps his life could be saved. I went on my way to the camp. When I was saved from the Nazi horror my whole purpose in living was to find my son. At the cost of much effort I was successful, having traced him from the peasant woman with whom we left him. When I found him I saw that he had ^{been} turned into a rabid anti-semite. In order to save his life, his Jewishness had been hidden; but I also saw that it had been extinguished in his soul. When any Jew entered my home the boy would chase him out with cries of, "go away, you filthy Jew." When the time came for us to leave for Israel, he asked whether there would be dirty Jews there who might kill him. My suffering was too great to bear.

Now, in Israel, the children here, the schools, the Hebrew language, the Jewish ideals, have all begun to exert an influence upon my boy and have changed him completely. Now he loves me and he is proud of his background.

His teachers are proud of him and he is very popular. Now he is 13 and he has asked us to hold a barmitzvah party for him ^{so that he could be a Jewish boy} like his friends. That is why I want to borrow money to have this party." When the banker finished listening to the recital of this tale his eyes were shining with tears and he instructed the manager to grant the loan.

The point of my telling you these stories is to indicate that we are not just saving lives physically, but we are saving souls and spirits as we enable this great flood of Jews from Eastern Europe to make their way from darkness to freedom.

There are many problems in Israel. I need not tell you of the new shipments of Russian arms to Syria, which Loy Henderson, the State Department emissary himself called "extremely serious". Even Secretary Dulles himself said in a speech ^{this fall} to the United Nations ~~on September 10+~~ "Soviet bloc arms were exultantly received in Syria, ~~and political power has increasingly been taken over by those who depend on Moscow.~~ This may perhaps unwittingly lead the recipients of Soviet arms into acts of direct aggression. That is risky business."

Secretary Dulles is correct. It is risky business to give Russian arms to Arab countries. Every Jew in Israel knows that Syria is now armed to the teeth. And every new immigrant who comes learns this fact quickly.

BUT IF HE can be given a house or a room or a shack, however humble, and if he can be given a job and put to work and made productive, that is what he wants to do above all else. And in the building of houses and in the providing of jobs, the country finds another source of strength, for as the people are absorbed, they themselves make Israel stronger.

On September 5th Ben Gurion opened a great campaign in Israel to get the people there to give a housing loan to the government. *for new immigrants* He said this:

"I must tell you that we cannot rely solely on the power of our army, although without the army there is no security. The mainstay of Israel's security is immigration. Three to four million Eastern European Jews, saved from the holocaust of war and Hitler, will come to Israel, but only if and when we display the necessary ability to absorb them."

And so, we have the picture. There are scores of thousands of Jews all over the world eager and waiting to come to Israel, who want to come, who need to come, if their lives and their souls are to be saved. They are waiting on the continents of Europe and Africa and Asia. Israel is waiting for them. You,

the Jew of America, can be the life giver, the life saver, for you are the one who can provide the funds to make this possible. It costs \$1,000 to rescue a life, to transport to and absorb in Israel one person for one year. We have saved scores of thousands -- spent tens of millions -- much more is needed.

The doors of Israel are always open -- the hearts and pockets of American Jews must also always remain open.

All thoughts and all minds, all energies and all strengths, must be focussed on the challenging task of human rescue. Most of the Jewish communities of America have started and many have already completed their 1957 campaigns.

I call upon every Jew now who has not yet had the opportunity to contribute to the 1957 UJA campaign, to make his gift both to the regular campaign and to the great Rescue Fund campaign in the maximum number of dollars which he can possibly give -- \$1,000, \$2,000, \$5,000 as an extra gift -- for he must never forget that he does not give dollars -- he saves life.