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"The Young Leadership Program of the United Jewish Appeal."
1 May 1964.

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THE YOUNG LEADERSHIP PROGRAM OF THE UNITED JEWISH APPEAL

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THE SINGLE MOST OUTSTANDING factor in the effectiveness of the United Jewish Appeal, its steadiness, its constancy, its ability to keep going year after year, is the dedicated and imaginative leadership of the men who have made this cause their primary concern and have stood at the helm at all levels, national, regional or local. Even the most powerful ideas remain stillborn, unless there are men to implement them.

Strong Emotional Responsibility

As we analyze the background of the leaders of the past quarter century, whether they be men who worked at the apex of national committees or whether they be chairmen of the smallest local units, we find that most of them were either born in Europe or are the children of parents who migrated to America. Their sense of responsibility stemmed from the fact that they themselves understood, from personal experiences, what it meant to be an immigrant, or they had heard stories from their parents which gave them the necessary comprehension. In addition, they usually were close to the roots of traditional Jewish religion, with its thrice daily emphasis on the restoration of Zion. Thus, when they were asked to assume leadership in a movement whose purpose it was to save Jewish lives or help build a Jewish land, no further elucidation was necessary. They were sufficiently motivated by personal experi-

ences or historic memory to plunge themselves into the work of raising huge sums of money and giving very generously themselves. Theirs was a strong emotional responsibility and their sense of identification with world Jewry was an inescapable part of their deepest consciousness.

To Attract a New Generation

It is necessary today to develop a new generation of leadership. This must be done for two reasons. First of all there is a natural attrition among the older generation, and a constant need to replenish the ranks, as death and age take their toll. Second, it is necessary that the older men, who have given two and sometimes three decades of their lives, should be encouraged to continue, even after so many years. The surest way to achieve this is to demonstrate that the next generation can be attracted and mobilized to work for the same noble causes. One need only listen to the sighs of satisfaction on the part of the older men, when they see the younger men coming forward, to realize that there is a double benefit in a leadership development program. The new bring added strength, and the old keep working as well when they see that there is a group just behind them, ready and willing to pick up the torch.

It became apparent that this general theory, with which everyone agreed, would remain only theory unless a concrete plan were evolved to seek

and train new leaders. Several years ago we started to accumulate a list of names. Traveling throughout the communities of America, we began to watch carefully for the younger men who had thrust themselves forward in the work of their own organized communal affairs. The age group sought was between 25 and 40. At first it was a slow process, writing down the name of a man who for some reason made a gift which was exceptional for his age or status; or noting a man who was particularly literate as he addressed a meeting; or observing a man who seemed to have those rare powers of persuading his fellow citizens. These and various other criteria of leadership became the yardstick as we traveled and searched. The list began to grow from individuals to a few score.

Potential Leaders Approached

Then came long sessions with the field staff of the UJA, explaining to them these criteria and urging them to search similarly and to send in names. The older leadership of the UJA were informed that this search was on and they were likewise urged to contribute the names of their sons, sons-in-law, younger business associates. Attendance lists at national conferences were carefully culled, in order to look for the men of the younger age group who were sufficiently interested to have traveled long distances at their own expense, to attend a national meeting. Extensive contact was made with executive directors of the two hundred and thirty-four organized Welfare Funds and Federations of the country, asking them to suggest names of those in their communities whose conduct marked them as potential future leaders.

Must Be Convinced Intellectually

Thus, slowly and carefully, without any public announcement, and without any grandiose statements of intention, a basic list was built. By the time this reached the extent of twelve hundred names, it was felt that the UJA should make its first public move. In the late spring of 1960 we announced that a National Young Leadership Conference would be convened that fall—and we thus committed ourselves. Once announced, it had to be a success. Everyone involved worked very hard, and we were pleased and gratified to find almost three hundred persons from all over the United States attending the three day conference held in November, 1960.

These young leaders came to the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City from near and far. Twenty-five states and ninety-one cities were represented at that first Conference. Young men and women came not only from Los Angeles and New York City, but also from Callais, Maine; Galveston, Texas; and Lafayette, Indiana. For the first time in their lives they listened to a detailed report by the leading executives of the constituent agencies of the United Jewish Appeal. They also had an opportunity to ask questions and gain an insight into the scope of the UJA global rescue operation. Following the Sabbath luncheon the three hundred young leaders enjoyed an Oneg Shabbat in the company of various members of the Israeli United Nations delegation. They also had the opportunity of listening to and meeting Avraham Harman, Israel's Ambassador to the United States. Towards the end of the day, the entire group was welcomed at a reception tendered in their honor by

prominent officials of the United Jewish Appeal.

Why Should They Be Involved

At that initial conference a major address was made—more than three hours without interruption—to satisfy the need for a historical, factual, intellectual approach to these men and women. Contrary to their fathers and grandfathers, to whom it was not necessary to explain *why* they should be involved, with this generation it was necessary to begin from the beginning and lay the philosophical basis in order to prove to them that it was their duty to become involved. This is the key to the whole matter. Our third generation American-born potential leader must be approached rationally and intellectually with a set of arguments to prove to him that it is his responsibility to become involved in this work. Once that has been done and he is satisfied intellectually, then the cause will receive his total emotional commitment. First, one must satisfy him as to the basic question—why bother?

This is exactly what was attempted in that basic speech, the title of which was "Jewish History 1880-1980." It was necessary to begin with a full description of Jewish life in the Eastern European heartland, the *shtetl*, and to end twenty years in the future with the hope and dream that all Jews would then be living in freedom. Following the description of the rich and vigorous Jewish life in the Pale of Settlement, came the story of the great migration westward to the New World and the beginnings of the Zionist movement eastward to Palestine. There were portions on the growth of America, the second Aliyah

movement to Eretz, the great shocks of World Wars I and II, a lengthy portion on the rise of Hitlerism and the awful darkness and degradation of the Period of Murder, followed by the fateful three years between the end of the war and the establishment of the State, and finally the crammed-full era of the dozen years to the present date. The concluding section of the speech attempted to make a prognosis of the tasks lying ahead in the next twenty years, for the successful achievement of which we were soliciting the active leadership and participation of this new generation.

Basis for Survival

When one seeks to make an intellectual approach, to convince logically, one must lay out a carefully arranged pattern of thought, explain terms, establish definitions, and then assign a scale of values to the whole diagram. There are several basic universal principles which seem to me to comprise the main skeletal bones of the diagram. These are statements of opinion as well as of fact, so that they serve to give a philosophy of life to anyone who will accept them. In briefest essence the following is my line of argumentation:

1. Judaism is a great civilization and offers a splendid way of life for its adherents, as well as a model from which all freedom-loving men can benefit.

2. Judaism is not an abstraction but is a set of beliefs and ideas which exist in the heads and hearts of people called Jews. The physical survival of Jewish people is indispensable for the spiritual survival of Jewish ideas. There can be no Judaism without Jews. Hitler understood this well, for

one of his purposes in attempting to destroy the latter, root and branch, was a desire to obliterate the former, so that the world could be safe for barbarism.

3. There exists a world-wide unity of the Jewish people. Each segment, wherever it lives geographically, is responsible for the survival of the whole. Each individual is therefore responsible for the survival of every other individual.

4. The tools for this survival are education (knowledge of self and heritage) and migration. When under attack in any century or in any country, the Jew survives by preserving his heritage through knowledge and learning, and through migration to another country or continent should that be necessary. Our entire history is filled with great migrations.

To Build and to Strengthen

5. A radical turning point has occurred in our history with the establishment of the State of Israel, for now the Jewish people possesses a powerful new instrument to guarantee survival. The State is a tool in the hands of the Jewish people, in the sense that it is the final safe home for all the migrations.

6. The transmigration of populations from all areas of present Jewish insecurity, either physical or spiritual, to Israel, must be considered a major task of our generation. The corollary to this is the building of Israel into a condition of total strength and viability. Additional complementary tasks of equal importance are: to assist in the transmigration of Jews to any free country of their choice, to rebuild Jewish life in Western Europe, and to strengthen Jewish communities, even

residual ones, in whatever land they may be left.

7. It is necessary to understand the long-range nature of this program, and neither to be sporadically enthusiastic nor to falter, but to sustain one's effort until the twin goals are reached, of building Israel to maximum strength and security and helping every Jew in need to migrate there or to any other free country.

Nazism—and Beyond

The above rubric contains the basic ideas and values which must be elucidated and taught. These are timeless and universal. In addition there is another item of gruesome fascination which must be carefully dissected and explained. That is the story of Hitlerism. The average person in his mid-thirties today really knows very little of this period. He was a child when it occurred. It did not impinge upon him. He must be taught over and over the story of Hitler, the destruction of European Jewry, what happened, how it happened, what lessons are to be learned from it. The whole thing, so horrendous to those who lived through it, or were contemporary with it, is remote and academic to him. One of the questions he frequently asks (just as does his young colleague in Israel today) is how the Jews could have permitted themselves to be slaughtered like sheep. The whole ghastly mechanism must be explained to him so that he understands the evil of totalitarianism, how it paralyzes individual action, and makes revolt almost impossible. He must never be allowed to despise the martyrs or lose a sense of Jewish pride.

That first conference of November, 1960 was a water-shed. From that mo-

ment one can really say that a formal and official young leadership program of the UJA was launched. A decision was made at that conference to organize an overseas mission, which was held in June 1961. The first stop on the itinerary was Vienna where 121 members of the Mission were briefed by the highest officials of the Joint Distribution Committee who covered all aspects of the JDC program in Europe and North Africa. It was a most effective educational experience for these young men and women who flew to Europe from forty-three cities in the United States to see for themselves the problems confronting the survivors of the Hitler holocaust, as well as the Jewish communities of the Moslem world. They became aware, for the first time, of the crisis confronting thousands of Jews in Algeria who would eventually need the assistance of the JDC. They learned, for the first time, of the wonderful achievements of ORT and the nature of some of the activities conducted by the Jewish Agency in Europe. It was quite interesting to watch a young, well-to-do business executive from Alton, Illinois, meet and talk to Jewish immigrants in a transit camp in Central Europe as they queued up for their daily meals. It is this type of encounter which, on more than one occasion, shocked these young men and women into the realization that many of their brethren throughout the world are still in dire need of assistance as they struggle to attain a life of dignity and freedom.

Emotional Impact Through Encounter

The Mission arrived in Israel on the eve of the Sabbath. After a day of

rest and meeting with friends and relatives, the work began. Some of these young people had read about Malben, the JDC program in Israel. Now they came face to face with many aged victims of the World War II concentration camps and other social cases. This left a great impact on the minds and hearts of the members of the Mission. The tour throughout Israel included every phase of life and activity in the Jewish State. The group was taken to various villages located at the Syrian border where they had an opportunity to observe how young Israelis work the soil and stand guard at the same time. They were made fully aware of Israel's water problem and the projected solution with its concomitant military and political implications.

Perhaps the most significant event of the Mission was witnessing an immigrant ship arrive at Haifa Harbor, talking to some of the immigrants, observing the entire absorption process, even to the point of following them in buses to the new development towns to which they were assigned, and watching them move into their new flats.

Transformation in Attitude and Orientation

The trip to the Negev and Elath was a revelation to the Mission members who began to understand the need for colonization of this vast area and the monumental sums involved in this significant project. The tour of Israel was concluded in Jerusalem where the Eichmann trial was in progress. Here, the highest officials of the Israeli government greeted the future leaders of the United Jewish Appeal and expressed their satisfaction with

the formation of a Young Leadership Council in the American Jewish community. As a result of this trip, many of the Mission members confided to us that they had experienced nothing less than a complete transformation in their attitude and orientation towards Israel and world Jewish problems. They were caught up in the zeal and enthusiasm characteristic of so much in the Jewish State.

There was a second conference in New York in November of 1961 and a second overseas mission in July in 1962. Again the attendance at the conference was several hundred and on the mission one hundred-and-eleven persons. An even larger list was accumulated by deeper searching, more contacts, word of mouth and community exploration. The members of the third Mission conducted during the summer of 1963, visited the new city of Arad where they observed how the immigrants adjusted to their new environment. We are now planning the fourth Young Leadership Mission to Europe and Israel, which will be held this July, and hope that again another hundred men and women will be exposed to this exciting program.

What Everyone Could Read

One feature of the total program consists of mailing selected books and pamphlets to the Young Leadership list. Not everyone could attend a conference or go overseas on a mission, but everyone could read. Over the past two years the following items were sent:

Cultures in Conflict—Raphael Patai

Chaim Weizmann—Isaiah Berlin

Theodore Herzl—Dr. Emanuel Neumann

Israel, The Land and its People—

I Flew Them In—Edward Trueblood Martin

Exodus Revisited—Leon Uris

Establish Young Leadership Cabinet

1963 was the year during which the 25th Anniversary of the UJA was observed. It was natural to utilize the Anniversary year as a milestone point during which to formalize the Young Leadership development program even further. It was felt that we should create some sort of formal organizational structure by means of which we could introduce the developing leaders into the mainstream of the chain of command. This could best be done by organizing a Young Leadership Cabinet, with a professional secretary to staff it. The suggestion met with the approval of the Executive Committee of the UJA which authorized the establishment of this body. The first chairman was Alan Sagner of Newark, N. J., and the second chairman, recently elected, is Joseph Kantor of Cincinnati, Ohio. At the present time there are seventy-six members of this Cabinet, most of them between the ages 30-40. Every area of the country is represented and a broad spectrum of professional and business interests is reflected. All but four of the Cabinet members are graduates of a college or a university.

Cabinet members are expected to take part actively in their own community organizations and campaigns, to set an example by exemplary contributions, to travel to other cities to speak and inspire, and to continue their own self-improvement by constant reading, participation in Cab-

inet Seminars, and attendance at Cabinet Retreats. In the past year Cabinet members have received such books as: *Life Is With People*, by Zborowski and Herzog; *The Saving Remnant*, by Herbert Agar; *The Course of Modern Jewish History*, by Howard Sachar; *This Is Our Strength*, by Golda Meir. In addition, each Cabinet member receives important periodicals, such as the Jewish Agency Israel Digest, The JDC Newsletter, The JTA Weekly Summary, The Near East Report, and regular UJA bulletins and Policy papers which help keep him abreast of the latest developments on the world Jewish scene.

Molding Leadership Power

A Young Leadership Cabinet Retreat was planned and was a thrilling event to behold. Last spring the men came for a three-day weekend Retreat to the Onchiota Conference Center in Sterling Forest, New York. A veteran quarter-century top leader who spent the weekend with them, Mr. Edward M. M. Warburg, was pleased and delighted as he witnessed the homogeneity being developed in the group, the seriousness with which they tackled the agenda, the natural informality of the friendships which developed, and the obvious loyalty to the ideals of the cause which they manifested increasingly as their understanding penetrated deeper and deeper. The rural setting was superb—a group of cabins in a forest on the edge of a lake; the absence of distraction was a blessing; and the quality of the discussion leaders was of the highest. The subjects discussed covered the nature of American Jewish communities; the future of Israel; the condition of Jews

in the Soviet Union; the role of leadership; and other equally significant topics. There was no waste here, on the part of either students or instructors.

The cost of this whole program is minimal. It involves the salary of one full time staff member and his secretary, advertising and promotion for the annual conference and the annual overseas mission, the mailing of books, pamphlets and reading material, telephone and air travel of the staff member. All persons who attend the annual conference do so at their own expense, as do all participants in the overseas mission. Cabinet members pay their own expenses at weekend retreats, including travel from their homes. It is remarkably gratifying to realize how much leadership power is at present being molded for the current campaign and how much future leadership is being generated for the years to come, at such a relatively small investment of money. There are now seven thousand names on the mailing list of the Young Leadership Council. This is the group currently in contact with the national structure of the Young Leadership Cabinet.

Important contributions have already been made by the young leaders to the UJA campaign on a local and national level. Those who participated in the 1961 and 1962 overseas Missions form the nucleus of the Young Leadership Cabinet as it exists today. No less than a dozen members of this Cabinet have served as campaign chairmen in their respective communities. A cadre of speakers was created from among the Cabinet members who convey the story of UJA with conviction and enthusiasm. At the 1963 Conference plans were formulated to bring the Young Leadership

Cabinet members to the Hillel Foundations so that our college youth would be inspired to emulate their concrete achievements in behalf of Israel and UJA. Some thirty to forty men and women who visited Israel on one of the three Missions have assumed a more active role in local UJA campaigns. Such exemplary action resulted in increased giving on the part of their contemporaries. In numerous communities, our young leaders have secured gifts to the UJA from friends and neighbors who never pledged in the past. It is also a matter of record that every young leader who visited Israel has, since then, increased his personal pledge to the UJA. All this has occurred at a time when most American Jews of the younger generation remain apathetic to the serious problems confronting Jews in many lands.

Assurance for Older Leaders

Suffice it to conclude this narrative with one historic footnote involving the recently deceased Herbert H. Lehman, Elder Statesman of American Jewry. On 8 December, 1962, during the 25th Anniversary Conference, when the Young Leadership Cabinet was born, Herbert Lehman took lunch with the forty young men who had gathered to launch the new project. He was almost eighty-five. He spoke of how he had participated in the founding of JDC almost fifty years ago. He talked with warmth and humor and passion, telling of the deep inner satisfaction he had received from a life-time of giving service to others. He pleaded for an understanding of the fact that older leaders such as himself required the assurance that a new generation was ready to

follow so that the work of the elders would not have been in vain. His own son was at the meeting and listened attentively.

When he finished he moved around the luncheon table with grace and dignity, taking many photographs which the founding members of the Young Leadership Cabinet will treasure as souvenirs in the decades to come. As he left the room, they applauded him mightily, which was the clearest indication that they were willing to accept the mandate he was thrusting upon them.

Exactly one year later, the opening session of the 1963 annual UJA Conference was interrupted by the announcement that Herbert Lehman was dead. The young founders of the Leadership Cabinet to which he made his stirring appeal a year earlier left the hotel where the conference was being held to pay their respects to his earthly remains. There was deep sentiment in that silent pilgrimage across 52nd Street to the funeral parlor. They were saying "thank you" for his act of inspiration in forming them.

To Make Vision into Reality

There is great indifference on the part of many individual Jews in America today to the staggering problems of contemporary Jewish history. But there is no doubt in my mind that a sense of excitement about and an identification with the solution of these problems can be generated in the hearts and souls of young American Jews. Many good and skilled men have been working for years and are working today to generate that spirit. Many, many communities developed young leadership groups of their own,

in one form or another, before the UJA did. We have sought to work jointly with these groups. We have constantly reiterated our belief that the improvement of the organized community is a basic objective. We have said over and over that the UJA is not some extraneous apparatus but operates through the Welfare Funds and Federations and will always be more successful if a local community is stronger and better organized. Loyalty to the Jewish people begins at the smallest circle of immediacy—one's own community, then broadens

to encompass one's national community, and finally, the world Jewish community.

Our deepest vision is that of a Jewish people, possessed of a common fate and destiny, surviving and expanding, to serve a timeless role in man's search for freedom. To bring this vision to reality we must be prepared to give of our persons and our purses. This concept need not be alien to the talented leadership portion of young American Jewry today, nor will it be, if we all continue to work along the lines so sanguinely started to date.

AMERICAN JEWISH B'NAI B'RITH AND ADULT JEWISH EDUCATION

LILY EDELMAN

THE LATE EDUARD C. LINDEMAN, dean of American adult educators, once observed that "the health of a democratic society may be measured in terms of the quality of services rendered by citizens who act 'in obedience to the unenforceable.'" By any test of unselfish voluntarism in the service of world Jewry and the larger community, B'nai B'rith during its first 120 years has written a record of dignity and honor. One of the most insightful tributes to that history appeared as the lead editorial in this magazine earlier this season (Vol. XXIX, no. 12, October 18, 1963).

B'nai B'rith's very founding was motivated by a strong desire for Jewish unity. At a time when violent religious factionalism rocked the Jewish community, the twelve German immigrants who established the Order, in October 1843, saw as its express mission the "uniting of persons of

the Jewish faith in the work of promoting their highest interests and those of humanity." A network of welfare institutions was set up to meet the needs of the poor, the sick and the desolate. An Americanization program took as its goal to assist "the huddled masses" pouring into the New World. In 1913, when high waves of anti-Semitism broke over American shores, the Anti-Defamation League was formed, shifting the emphasis of the Order from benevolence to service and defense. Ten years later, in a new stress on education, the first Hillel Foundation opened its doors to Jewish students at the University of Illinois, and the following year concern for Jewish youth took further form in the establishment of AZA and eventually B'BYO. Vocational Service and links with Israel and Jews in every corner of the world followed at appropriate times.