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Buffalo, N.Y. speech. 6 January 1965.

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UNITED JEWISH APPEAL

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H.A.F. BUFFALO SPEECH 1/6/65

.....people like yourselves in all the communities like this all over the country. It's been going on now for more than a quarter of a century. We haven't got any idea how long it'll have to go on -- there are no time limits set on this. There are a series of historic projects that we're trying to undertake -- and when we feel that we have beaten the history, which is being made, here, in the 20th century, we'll quit. At that point the community of Buffalo will still be going on. And, that's why I endorse what Bob said, in the sense that this is a joint enterprise, now, where the money is being raised for two purposes -- to be used here locally in Buffalo -- and to be used thousands of miles from here. There'll come a time when the money won't have to be used two places. There'll come a time when the overseas job will be done -- and then we'll go back to just raising what we need here in all the Buffalos -- and that'll be a lot easier -- and we'll do it with a great deal of satisfaction because we'll know what we will have concluded a fantastically productive and creative portion of Jewish history. Right now we're in a joint enterprise and our fate is linked

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together. And, if we can raise more money, you can have more to spend here on the things that are needed to create a viable community here. And, you can afford to give more, to spend far, far way, for people whom you never see and whose names you will never know and who in turn don't even know where Buffalo ~~x~~ is on the map. There are hundreds of thousands of Jews, who are the beneficiaries of your generosity, who never heard of you. And, it's good that it's that way because the highest form of charity is when you do something for somebody and he doesn't know you're doing it -- and you don't know who he is. And this is the collectivity which is the Jewish people, now at a very fragile point where we're trying to shift our whole destiny. If you understand this, you understand the meaning of why we go on fighting so hard year after year after year to raise this money, and to do the fantastic things with it that we're doing. We're trying to change the destiny of the Jewish people from being an ~~and~~ object whom somebody else can kick around to being a subject who is in control of his own fate. For almost two millenia they did to us what they wanted to do - whether it was the Romans or the Greeks or the Spaniards or the Babylonians or the Germans -

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and now we say that's enough. And it's no longer a question of anybody else doing to us what they want to do - it's a question of our taking our fate into our own hands and deciding how we shall live, and in what kind of freedom, and in what kind of dignity. Now, that's the fantastic, historic switch which is going on in the 20th century. And, when we've completed it, we will not only have completed a specific thing now - building Israel - saving Jewish lives -- what we will have done will be to change the course of Jewish history for the next twenty centuries to come. It's really nothing less than that. Every once in a while in the great affairs of men a tide turns -- and the tide of the Jewish people is turning in the 20th century. We took our greatest loss -- not the defeat in Judea - not the Spanish Inquisition -- nothing was as bad as what happened twenty years ago -- Nothing -- Nothing can ever be as bad again - and we came out of the moment of the worst blackness and the worst blood and the worst defeat and the worst misery and the worst shame and the worst degradation to where twenty years later we're now talking with the incredible pride that we have of the creation of Israel - of the rescuing of life - of the rebuilding of Jewish communities all

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over the word. It's as though we had to get into the deepest pit of despair before we could pull ourselves out to the greatest heights of glory. And, this thing has happened in the two decades that all of us have been alive. And, in the course of these two or three decades, we've tried to gather our strength and flex our muscles and mobilize our money - to take with our money and change our - our fate and our history - and we've done it. We turned the business around. And it's on the upgrade - and it's on the upgrade beautifully. We've set for ourselves two supreme tasks. One is that we'll build the country - make it independent - make it free - make it secure politically and militarily and economically, and every one you want - you want to mention. And, the second task that we've set for ourselves is to take every Jew in the world - everyone - all thirteen million of us -- and that's all we are - there are three billion people swarming on the face of this planet and there are only thirteen million Jews -- sometimes it seems like we're a lot more -- we're much more visible than that -- our second task is to take every single one of us and move us from a condition of slavery or fear or persecution or impermanence or spiritual suffocation, or whatever else we're undergoing -

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from such a condition into a condition of freedom - plain, pure and simple freedom. Our first task is to build Israel. Our second task is to make every Jew in the world free. Neither one of these two things is impossible. Both of these things will be achieved and before very many years have past - because we're three quarters of the way toward victory. It's taken a lot of sweat. It's taken a lot of patience. It's taken a willingness on your part to come back to this dinner year after year after year and expose yourself, and come here and know what you're coming here for, and do it willingly, and do it gladly, and let somebody beat you over the head -- and one year he's the chairman - and one year you're the chairman. Ten chairmen stood up here tonight. This is the most magnificent process of democratic slaughter. Everybody does it to everybody else. (laughter) And, for what? For the greater glory of all of us. So, nobody's mad at anybody else. The whole question comes whether you feel the fire in the belly. The whole question comes whether deep down in your gut you have the feeling that is great and grand, and whether you'll push yourself hard enough to do it. Now, what we've got to do, now - one year at a time - because I have a tendency to

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talk about decades and historic sweeps -- but now boil it down - this is 1965 - we got one specific set of tasks in 1965 - is to keep going on the track on which we have fortunately been going for the last four years. In the last four years we pulled a quarter of a million Jews into Israel, and another forty to fifty thousand into other countries in the world - Canada, Australia, Latin America, United States. Freedom. We're working essentially in two areas where the Jews live without freedom. That's the area of the Moslem bloc of countries, the Arab countries -- and the other is the Communist bloc of countries. In both of those blocs the Jews are not free. And, in terms of the proposition that I made to you before - we're taking them out of the places where they're not free and we're putting them into the places where they can enjoy the freedom that you and I have. These quarter of a million people whom we've moved into Israel in the last four years - ninety percent of them were destitute. And that just doesn't mean no money - that means damn-near no clothes -- and that means no language with which to earn a living - and that means no skill with which to earn a living. That's destitute. That's where you've got nothing and you've got to be given everything

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to put you on your feet and get you started. Of those 250 thousand people, forty percent of them - one hundred thousand - were kids under the age of sixteen. This meant that a hundred thousand more people had to be educated in Israel -- and think of the problem of the schools and the teachers and everything else that had to go on that we didn't spend a dime on. You didn't give any money for that. Taxpayers in Israel put up the money for that. The immigrant of three years ago who's already a big 'knocker' and he's making a hundred dollars a month, maybe; he's paying the taxes to build the schools for the immigrant of this year. Forty percent of those families, that came in, of that quarter of a million people, had between five and sixteen members of the family. Moroccan Jews, the families run 7, 8, 9, 10 kids. We give them two rooms - four hundred and fifty square feet. That's the sleeping and the eating and the toilet and the washing and the kitchen and the 'whole ball of wax' is 450 square feet. You just think of the size of your living room. Your living room is twenty by twenty - that's 400 square feet. In 450 square feet we put 8 people, 7 people, 6 people, 11 people - whatever it is. So they're not living in any luxury. I'm trying to give you a

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kind of a demographic picture of what this immigration has looked like in the last four years. Thousands of those men are on relief, work -- something in Hebrew which is called 'Abah Dak Chak - which is twelve pounds a day, three bucks. It's like the old W.P.A. It's building roads, and it's planting trees, and it's building little bridges and culverts, and all the kinds of things you have to do. It's make-work to give a guy the dignity that you don't hand ~~kk~~ him out a dole - you give him work -- make him work. But he's eating bread and olives and marmelade and tea - he's not eating any meat. Israel is growing more prosperous every day. A lot of you in this room have been there. Within that prosperity there are huge pockets of poverty. Easy to understand. You all heard the President, the other night, talking State of the Union. America's never been richer. Gross National Product, the highest in our history and going up. And yet he's got to ask for a billion or two billion dollars to fight a war on poverty. You have poverty in the United States in the midst of all the prosperity. The same thing in Israel. And so it's on behalf of those people that I'm here talking to you tonight. We sometimes make a mistake in these campaigns when we say let's give

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our money for Israel. You don't give a damn dime for Israel. Israel doesn't need our money. Israel - the State of Israel, the government of Israel, the people of Israel, who are prosperous enough to live on their own, they pay the taxes. Seventy percentx of the housing for these new immigrants have been paid for out of the taxes of the citizens of Israel, not by us. What do we pay for? We pay not for Israel; we pay for Jews who want to go to Israel to live there and to try to build a new life -- that Jew in Morocco is whom we're paying for. If you want to know something, it's like 'The Third Man Business.'" The Jew in Israel who is a free man, and the Jew in America who is a free man - we two free Jews - we are paying for the third Jew who is not free. That's what the deal really is. The Moroccan Jew is not free. The Rumanian Jew in a Communist Rumania, he's not free. The Israel Jew and the American Jew are ransoming out the Rumanian or the Pole or the Hungarian or the Moroccan or the Algerian. Now, all of this is off the record. I understand there are some people from the press here tonight. All of these comments that I am making are off the record - and I would appreciate if anybody from the press is here, if he would speak

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to me afterwards to see what we can clear for publication. Rumania is willing to let its Jews out. There are political considerations. There are financial considerations. Rumania has a trade delegation in the United States. The United States Government is willing to increase trade with the East. One of the ways that a country shows that it is democratic is that it allows its people freedom of movement. Russia doesn't, and Russia's branded as a dictatorial state. Rumania says we want our image in the eyes of America or France - we want our image to be that we are a friendly and a democratic country, so we will give our Jews freedom of movement -- and if they want to leave they can leave. And they're leaving by the droves. We're handling, out of Rumania alone, almost three thousand human beings every month. We're spending a million bucks a month in cold, hard cash, month after month after month. And, when I have to make those bank drafts overseas in Geneva and other places, I'll tell you something, I don't ask my comptroller if there's money in the till. I don't ask the accountant if there's cash in the bank. You know sometimes when I hear fellows say, before I make my mind up what I want to pledge, I'll have to discuss it with my

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accountant. How many times have you heard that? Well, the devil with that. The accountant doesn't give away your money. You give away your money, whether your accountant thinks it's smart fiscal policy or not. I do a lot of things that are not smart fiscal policy. When I get S.O.S. Calls of whether I'll pay for aircraft - and it's hundreds of thousands of dollars a shot - I don't ask if there's money in the bank. I answer in the telephone and I say go ahead. Commit. Hire it. Buy it. And then I come to Buffalo and I ask you to pay for it. That's the only way to do this. When you're trying to save people's lives, you don't go on the hard, cold, cruel, calculating twenty percent deductible - three percent deductible - five percent deductible. Nonsense. You go with what you feel in your heart. You don't do it with your head. Now we're going to keep this thing going. There ~~xxx~~ were eight hundred thousand Jews in Rumania - Hitler got half of them so that there were four hundred thousand left. Of the four hundred thousand left, we've got three hundred already in Israel - there's another hundred to go. We'll clean it down to the last man so long as the Government of Rumania lets us - and so long as you let us. And, this is what I mean by saying

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our fate is in our own hands. They're willing. Are we willing? There are a quarter of a million Jews in Morocco. They were there from the time of Maimonides, who was in Fez. Some of them were there from the time of the destruction of the First Temple. Morocco's an Arab country. It's a Moslem country. They joined the Arab League. Every time Ben Bella, in Algeria, says that he'll send a hundred thousand soldiers to wipe off Israel, the King of Morocco says me too. From those quarter of a million Jews in Morocco, we're down to the last 75 thousand. Fellows, we haven't got much more to go. If you realize that we've moved already somewhere between a million and a quarter and a million and a half Jews - and if you realize that we've got left to go the whole reservoir -- if you add up all the Jews in the Moslem countries and all the Jews in the Communist countries outside of Russia, how many do you think there are? Four hundred thousand. Well, we've done almost a million and a half already. We got the last four hundred thousand to go. Now, there isn't anybody going to quit on the job at this point? Of, if he does, let him quit. We're in up to our necks. I don't want to go into the details of this thing. We've got tens of and tens of millions

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of dollars worth of debt. We haven't turned down a single one. We've saved every single life. You can go to bed and you can sleep well and solidly every night if you do your job in this thing right, because you can have the knowledge that you have been giving the money which has enabled every human Jew to be saved. We haven't raised anywhere near enough money to do it. We've gone into debt tens of millions in order to do it. We'll keep going into debt. We're closer to the end than we were to the beginning of this job. Israel is building beautifully. Nasser threatens - Israel arms. Nasser's afraid - Israel arms more. Immigrants pour in. Jobs are created. Towns go up. Roads are strung. Brown desert turns to green cultivation. The water line goes down. The reservoir in (name) filled up yesterday - if you know where that is - up in the Galilee - 160 cubic million meters of waterx /~~xxxx~~^{She'll} run in that pipeline, which is eight feet in diameter - nine feet in diameter - all the way down into the Negev. The whole country's going - going - going. Room for more. Room for more. Room for more. And the Jews of the world, who need it, want to go. We have got to come to you and ask you for a lot more money in 1965. And, if you say okay, you've been

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keeping it going every year - why do you need more money in '65 than you did in '64? Are you expecting more immigrants? And, I say, not many. Maybe there may be five thousand differential by the time the year's over? You say to me, are the costs higher in '65 than in '64? I say, a little bit. Four, five percent. A couple of million dollars. So then you can say to me, well, what's the big sweat? Why are you putting the pressure on us so that we must have so much more money? Well, there's one last fact I'd like to tell you about. We're in a sweat because we are -- for twelve years now we have been "enjoying" an income from the Germans. They've been throwing seven million dollars a year into this pot. They don't contribute seven million dollars to the United Jewish Appeal just straight out like that. It's all part of the complicated German reparation's thing, which has been going on for twelve years, in which they ~~xxxx~~ paid money to Israel - they've paid money to the Claims Conference - to the Joint Distribution Committee. But, by the time we work the finances out, we get the benefit of seven million dollars a year of German money - and we have for the last twelve years. Well, like you say, we've had that drink, and that drink is over and we've

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not going to have that drink anymore. That ended six days ago on the 31st of December. We're starting out 1965 seven million dollars short. Somebody said to me that I should take and exploit that fact, and make a major advertising campaign out of that fact, and do it as follows: The Germans were paying the money out of a sense of guilt and conscience of the blood which they spilled - so that really it was the six million dead Jews who were chipping this seven million dollars a year into the pot, and that I ought to make a big advertising campaign that none of the six million dead Jews can't pay anymore - so the six million living Jews in the United States have got to pick up the tab. That's too raw for me. I can't put in an advertisement in the New York Times to say that. But fellows, if you look at the historical truth of the matter, there is some truth in it. One third of our people went down the drain. We're trying to save the balance. They even helped us save the balance. That's over. From within ourselves we have to find the strength and the resources to make up this money. You got to raise here in Buffalo another hundred, a hundred and twenty thousand dollars - whatever it is. I'm not exactly familiar with the campaign goal. There's only one way

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to do it. First of all, I say you've got to do it. It's your moral duty to do it, barring one thing. Nobody should hurt his family. You don't have a right to take something away from your wife or your child or your mother to give to somebody else's child. That's the one restriction I put on the thing. But, I don't think there's anybody who's doing that. Therefore, I say it's your moral duty and your moral responsibility to respond to this challenge of need. And, when I say it's yours, I mean specifically yours, not the whole community of Buffalo. Because the whole community of Buffalo can't do it. You're the leadership. You're the cream. You're the big money. You're the pace-setters. You're the leaders in giving as well as the leaders in doing. You've been all the chairmen. And, if a hundred thousand dollars more is going to be raised in this community for the combined local and overseas thing, which Bob and I both have been talking about, half of that's got to come from you. I can only say right at the outset, I think that's unfair. I'm the first one to admit it. On the other hand, the only answer to this is ~~no~~oblesse oblige. You are the nobility by virtue of your financial means. Nobility is obligated - obligated to lead and show the rest the

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way. So it isn't fair to saddle half of everything that a community has to increase on a hundred men, but the hundred men are the ones with the capacity. And, if the hundred men take half the load, the other twenty-one thousand or twenty-three thousand people ought to take the other half the load. And I'm sorry about it but that's just the way it is. It's just the way it is. You had Mr. Myerhoff, here, speaking last year, the General Chairman of the Campaign. And when the big national campaign has to kick off, and I have to go to him and I have to say Joe, we need some fifty thousand dollar increases in the country - you're giving eighty thousand dollars now - I want you to kick in another fifty - and if you do it a guy in Boston will do it -- and if he does it a guy in Chicago will do it. And, Mr. Myerhoff says, yes. Okay. I'll do it. Because he knows that his fifty thousand will drag in hundreds of thousands and maybe a million behind it, so he does it. That's the way these campaigns are built. Your community has faith in you. If you attest to that faith by giving the money in the measure in which you do, they'll give the money in the measure in which they should. And that's why even though I - it may be onerous and it may be difficult

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and it may be hard to bear psychologically, you must agree that logically it's correct. Psychologically it may be difficult for you. It's like pulling a tooth. It hurts. It doesn't hurt for long. It's over with. So, if you're giving two thousand dollars and you think of giving twenty-five hundred, give three thousand & - give thirty-five hundred. Everybody's going to give more money, the only question is how much. And, the only question is whether instead of raising twenty thousand more, forty thousand more, whether you can raise a hundred thousand more? I say the needs are there - and I say your capacity is there - and it's just a question of your will. Do you want to? Thank you very much. (applause)

THE END!