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CONFIDENTIAL

*Personal Letter*

From

RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN  
Executive Vice-Chairman, United Jewish Appeal

165 West 46 Street, New York 36, N. Y.

31 January, 1958

Dear Friends:

Space may be filled with Sputniks, the air may be thick with missiles, and some may say that with the actual fate of the world hanging in suspense they can think of nothing else.

But there is an old Jewish proverb which states that he who saves one life, it may be accounted to him as though he has saved the whole world. This is a word of sanity which can restore a sense of balance. For it places individual conduct in perspective. No one of us can control a push-button war, but every one of us has it in his power to control Jewish destiny.

I want to talk to you about the Jews of Poland. These people were the survivors of a once-great and proud community. We must remember with respect and love the kind of Jewish life which was developed in Poland since the 15th century. It was a self-contained community with schools, courts, hospitals, factories, synagogues. It practiced self-government, lived in its own enclaves, produced literature, theatre, art and music, sent representatives to the Parliament and bred a sense of piety, tradition and love for Judaism which made it one of the strongest bulwarks in the all embracing chain of Jewish life. Polish Jews spread all over the world, carrying with them the legacy of learning and knowledge which gave strength and substance to older communities such as England, and provided roots for newer communities such as United States, Australia and South Africa. Like seeds which are carried by the wind over the planet and proliferate everywhere, Polish Jews fertilized every metropolis on every continent with their richly Jewish point of view, habits, ideals and values. We owe them a tremendous debt.

Hitler was too late. He murdered them, but not before they managed to spread their message. For their death we weep bitter scalding tears, at the memory of the shame and indignity. But in the midst of the unutterable sadness, we are also grateful that they were not cut off while yet in the pod. The seeds exploded and took root in New York and Buenos Aires and Johannesburg and Tel Aviv. And the whole world-wide community of Judaism was made so very much richer by the injection of spirit which Polish Jewry gave everywhere.

I say all this because it is the background motivation for wanting to be especially tender and careful with the few survivors of that historic community.

Their need, as they see it today, is to leave the place which the Nazis turned into a cemetery, to come out from under the shadow of pain-drenched memory; and to start a new life, in a new land of Israel, where the past will hopefully fade away and only the future will beckon. They have felt this need very

keenly and expressed it often. Speaking of the community as a whole, not of specific individuals, they have tried to start life again after Hitler, but psychologically most of them could not. It is hard to grow wheat in soil which has been sowed with salt, and it is hard to nurture Jewish life in an environment which is so reminiscent of mass Jewish death.

The present government of Poland has understood this felt need to emigrate and with wisdom and statesmanship has granted the legal means for the wish to become a reality. Jews are enabled to obtain the necessary papers for Israel, and during the year 1957 about 35,000 Jews left Poland for Israel.

I went to Poland in December 1957 to visit some of the cities and see something at first hand of the life and mood of the people. Accompanying me was Maurice Saltzman, the chairman of the Cleveland Welfare Federation campaign, a fine young leader, representative of the best in our American Jewish community. His own parents had been born in the little village of Nieshelk, about 40 miles from Warsaw. This town was once full of Jews. His father had been an artisan, making leather whips for the farmers. Today, when Mr. Saltzman made the pilgrimage back to the source-place of his own roots, he found not a single Jew in the town. Everything was gone -- and in the emptiness of this experience, he saw the symbol of the sadness which prevails in the total Jewish picture.

We drove more than a thousand kilometers talking to Jews in workers clubs, synagogues, community kitchens, courtyards -- singly and in groups and in crowds. I think we found out how they really felt. Each one told the story, maddeningly similar, of a family wiped out -- of a new marriage, new children, but not a new feeling. The same old bad feeling and bad taste in the mouth -- the only hope for the future being to rejoin the main body of the Jewish people in Israel. It is toward this objective that we must bend every effort in the 1958 campaign.

And what about this Israel toward which we direct immigrants so blithely -- which we take so much for granted already -- as though this safe and desirable harbor has existed for a thousand years? It is not yet ten years old in its present form. It has not yet built its Detroit or Cleveland or Pittsburghs. It does not have an automatic capacity to absorb new people. That capacity will be the result of yet a great deal more labor and money, which must be poured into the land.

Some months soon the one-millionth refugee will arrive in Israel. We know nothing about the person yet -- he or she lies in history's womb. No one can tell from what corner of the globe he will come -- whether he will be young or old -- what burdens he will bear. We know only that whenever he shows up, at Lydda or at Haifa or at Elath, he will be welcome because the Jewish people has willed it so.

This one-millionth immigrant will be the product of only the last ten years. Think of that! If there had been no Israel, where would these people have gone? Could a million have been absorbed in these great and powerful United States, which already has built its industrial plant, its power grid, its Imperial Valleys -- which has discovered its oil and found its uranium and laid down its network of rail and road? Even under these conditions, I submit that the Jewish community of the United States would be staggered if it had to absorb a million Jews in ten years.

Some plain speaking is necessary. Our support of the people of Israel during the first decade has been wonderful, and my heart thrills when I think of the continuous unflagging response year after year. This record is a compliment to the warm-hearted and strongly Jewish consciousness of what is by now largely an American-born generation. This latter fact makes the record even more impressive.

But we are in an endurance contest, and it is not enough simply to be generous. We must also be strong of lung and muscle, to stay in the race. We must conduct ourselves in such a way as to be worthy of a compliment to our maturity and our patience and our determination to remain with this problem until we conquer it.

There are farms in Israel which have as yet no water, and there are farms with water, which have as yet no livestock, and there are farms with livestock, which have as yet no electricity -- and there are people who have as yet no farms of any sort, but still live in huts and shacks.

There are villages which have no schools, and there are schools which have no teachers, and there are teachers who have no pedagogic tools -- and there are children of the Book People who are on the streets instead of in the classroom.

There is so very much to be done, in human terms, which is camouflaged behind the dry money figures.

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Our campaign of 1958 is a rescue campaign, and a life-saving one and a land-building one. Money is the tool through which we express these convictions. Right now, at the start of the campaign, the largest possible gifts are required to engender confidence. I must report that in those communities which have already started fund-raising, a very wonderful thing is happening. The top leaders are repeating and even increasing their 1957 gifts to both the Regular and the Rescue Fund. The early returns from perhaps a dozen communities show very definitely that there is no mood of pessimism or defeatism. Jews are giving money in 1958 out of a sense of mature understanding of the needs, and they are not retreating behind the talks of an economic recession any other reason. When the leadership acts this way, the whole community follows. More than ever before, I am convinced that the old axiom is true -- namely, the leaders set the pace. I think the fate of the 1958 campaign -- and hence the fate of large numbers of human beings -- rests in the hands of a relatively few individuals. The people are ready to follow if the communal leaders will display the confidence and bravery and wisdom necessary to give courage.

The first national fund-raising meeting of the UJA will be at the Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami on March 2. You are invited. I certainly hope we will open this campaign in a resounding way, which will give courage to the Jews of the U.S. to make a grand effort, and which will give courage to the Jews of Poland, Israel, and other places, that our hands are still extended in helpfulness and that our strength still flows to them.

Sincerely yours,

*Herbert A. Friedman*

# Personal Letter

From

RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN  
Executive Vice-Chairman, United Jewish Appeal

PRIVATE -- CONFIDENTIAL  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

165 West 46 Street, New York 36, N. Y.

12 November, 1957

Dear Friend:

We have just returned from Israel. The largest UJA Study Mission ever to go there spent eight very intensive days in travel and seminars. The mood and attitude of the 120 Mission Members was wonderful. They were a representative cross-section of American Jewish leadership, and they really came to grips with the main problems. They asked questions of everyone, including Mr. Ben Gurion, who spoke to the mission three days before the unfortunate bombing episode.

Incidentally, I visited with him in the hospital very briefly, at his wife's invitation, and while he was uncomfortable and in pain, nevertheless he expressed his respect for the earnestness of the UJA leadership and his conviction that we would continue our work vigorously. His morale was marvelous. With several pieces of shrapnel in his arm, this 71-year old man retained control of himself and his country in a great display of strength.

There was also the opportunity to visit with Mrs. Golda Meir. She still carries a bomb fragment in her ankle and is confined to a wheel chair. Her spirit, too, was remarkable, as she described the near-catastrophe.

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The spirit of all Israel is remarkable at this moment. The tremendous immigration of the past year is forcing everyone to work harder, but it is done with a smile. I can never cease being amazed at the Israeli attitude toward immigrants. After all, more refugees means more taxation, more straining of already limited facilities, more sharing of already crowded schools, etc., etc. At some point, one would expect to see and hear signs of griping and grumbling. On the contrary, there is the incredibly selfless attitude of -- "take them in, move over, make room, remember when we came somebody made room for us." There are many thrilling aspects of life in Israel today, but nothing is so absolutely magnificent as the day-to-day display of brotherly love, performed in a modest manner, without heroics, whereby one man literally assumes the burden of another on his shoulders. All of the finest principles of Jewish idealism are being made manifest in this program.

But while idealism is high and the spirit is willing, sometimes the burden is almost too great. Our mission noticed this, and at the caucus held toward the end of the trip, person after person stated his clear conviction that we must continue in 1958 to strive for some extra funds, to handle the expected immigrant load for next year, and also to pick up some of the slack in this past year's budget. After all, while the 1957 Emergency Rescue Fund produced

wonderful results, still 30 or 35 million dollars raised is a long way from the 100 million spent on the more than 100,000 emigrants who were assisted (82,000 to Israel and almost 20,000 to other free countries).

Perhaps more important than the partially unpaid bill for 1957, is the fact that another large emigration is looming for 1958. It is still a bit early to predict any exact breakdown of figures for the 1958 emigration, but the general areas of need and danger are quite clear, and estimates of the total problem indicate that the load may range up to 70,000 persons for Israel plus 10,000 who will need to be assisted to other free countries. At this moment, without being able to know exact figures, we should think in various geographic categories.

North Africa still represents an enormous problem. At the JDC meeting in Paris, we heard intimate briefings on the situation in all three countries. In Morocco there is a continuous desire on the part of Jews to emigrate. They are no longer able to leave in large masses, but thousands apply for individual passports and receive the precious papers, according to an article published in the NEW YORK TIMES, 8 November, 1957:

#### JEWIS DEPARTURE CITED BY MOROCCO

Rabat Says 5,000 Left in 3 Months with Passports --  
Emigration Freeze Denied

RABAT, Morocco, Nov. 6 -- Five thousand Jews left Morocco with regular passports issued by Moroccan authorities from July through September. The figures show that Jewish emigration has not been frozen, as was recently reported abroad, official Moroccan sources said.

Most of the 5,000 Jews who left Morocco went to France, Spain, Portugal or Gibraltar. Moroccan officials acknowledged that there was no doubt that a large percentage of these went on to Israel.

In Algeria, the Jewish community waits in suspense, as the guerrilla war continues to rage. There is pressure on the Jews from both sides. The Arab nationalists "call" on the Jews with acts of terror including murder, to take sides with them, and there are some anti-semitic elements among the Europeans who "remind" Jewish leaders what will happen if they show any predilection toward the Arab cause. It is a most uncomfortable position, and as the waiting game goes on, with the economic situation deteriorating rapidly and with violence and terrorism increasing daily in intensity, the Jews are leaving in a steady trickle for both Israel and France. The future of all Algeria is in the balance, but for the Jews there is a special sense of pressure. Some observers say that we may one day witness a mass flight. I do not know.

As for Tunisia, there is a friendly government which permits free emigration and no discrimination against Jews. Economic conditions are very bad, but the real trouble is a spiritual one, going right to the heart of Jewish existence and survival. The policy word in Tunisia today is "integration", which might eventually mean assimilation of the Jews into the dominant Moslem culture. There are those who fear that the present structure of Jewish community organization might be dissolved, as a step in the direction of integration, and this would be a very serious threat to the continued survival of the Jewish people and religion. With this general background, there is a small but steady emigration.

In addition to the broad problems which lead to the desire for emigration, there is the ever-growing need of providing a program of social care and assistance to the children, aged, sick and handicapped within the North African countries. This cannot be overlooked, and it is already apparent that the JDC will have a bigger job on its hands in 1958.

## AMERICAN JEWISH

I have gone into the North African picture in some detail, because there might be a tendency to forget about it, in the face of the enormous events which shook our people this year in Egypt and Hungary. True, we concentrated on these areas, and as a matter of fact, are not finished.

We heard a long and compassionate report on the condition of Egyptian Jews from a Christian lady social worker who spent several weeks in Egypt recently. The community organization in Cairo has apparently broken down completely, although there still seems to be a functioning council of sorts in Alexandria. There is a temporary relaxation of the terror campaign against Jews, but it is felt that any sense of security is false and illusory. One Egyptian refugee, speaking to us in Israel, said, "If Nasser ever again sets up camps for Jews, they will not be far different from Dachau." Children still attack old Jews, throw dirt, shout epithets, with the support of adults who look on these events with approval. During the year ahead, many more thousands of Jews will find their way out, by whatever means possible. They will become our charges, and we will do our best to care for them.

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Probably the largest single group in next year's emigration program will be Polish Jews. During the year just ended, 35,000 Polish Jews came to Israel. This figure included 4,500 repatriates from Russia. Next year's figure might be the same, or only slightly less. The Polish Government, with a real understanding of the problems, continues to grant the necessary exit permits for Israel.

A sub-committee of the Study Mission went to Vienna, where the immigrants arrive from Warsaw by train. The ride takes 16 hours. Late one rainy afternoon we stood in the East Station and watched the train pull in. There were 107 on board, with many children. They leaned out of the carriage windows and we spoke with them while waiting for the baggage to be unloaded. (The

baggage, incidentally, contained many wicker baskets of wurst, crocks of chicken fat, and other homely articles of nourishment).

These were happy people, fully aware of the hardships, yet eagerly awaiting the new life ahead. We saw a man of 70 with a long white beard, who had become a convert to Judaism at the age of 40, and who told us how he had worn the beard in open proof of his religious convictions. He was very proud, and the others drew morale from him.

We saw people dressed modestly and people in tatters -- we spoke with highly educated and naively simple -- we ate a meal with a group which contained doctors and welders and cobblers and babies. They were all handled tenderly and beautifully by the Jewish Agency officials responsible for their welfare.

At the Paris Conference of the JDC, Mr. Charles Jordan summed it up neatly in these words, "The same railroad cars which carried Polish Jews to the Nazi death camps a little more than a decade ago, now carry Polish Jews to life and freedom in Israel."

Well, that is the story. The number of Jewish migrants who will be on the move in 1958 may not be known down to the last decimal point, but the general picture is clear. There will be a very heavy load, running perhaps as high as 70,000 to Israel and 10,000 to other countries.

This fact alone was sufficient to start the Study Mission leaders thinking along the lines of another form of special fund in 1958. But in addition to this, there were the obvious problems left over from last year, which would require extra funds.

The Study Mission leaders were tremendously impressed with the need of forging ahead on two clearly defined tracks -- 1) to take care of the tens of thousands of new refugees and immigrants who will continue next year to pour out of Eastern Europe, North Africa and anywhere else Jews are in trouble, and 2) to take care of the twenties of thousands who came this year but who are woefully un-absorbed as yet, if such a word may be coined.

Israel will be strong if her new citizens are properly taken in, and the honor and dignity of our American Jewish community will be strong if we undertake our duty again in a spirit of high purpose. 1958 calls for the same high level of performance as 1957.

Sincerely yours,

*Herbert A. Friedman*

Encl:



# Personal Letter

From

RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN

Executive Vice-Chairman, United Jewish Appeal

PRIVATE-CONFIDENTIAL  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

165 West 46 Street, New York 36, N. Y.

23 May, 1958

Dear Friend:

It is many weeks since I have written. The campaign this spring of 1958 has been difficult, and has demanded much more travelling and speaking than usual. But the rewards have come in witnessing the good people of every community rise to the challenge of needs and repeat their 1957 gifts to the Regular and Rescue Funds, even in the face of business recession. This campaign has proved to me how dear Israel is to the hearts of most American Jews. It is wonderful knowledge.

Let me try to give you a brief resume of the international Jewish situation, country by country, especially in the troubled areas of the world. From this resume you can see the massive job of rescue and relief which the UJA has on its hands.

## MOROCCO -- 200,000 Jews

1. A new cabinet has just been formed, consisting of right-wing members of the Istiqlal (Arab nationalist) Party. There was one Jew, Dr. Leon Benzaquen, in the previous cabinet. He is now eliminated.
2. The government does not permit Jewish mass migration, and is very suspicious of anyone it believes has any connection with such migration. An American rabbi of the Lubavitcher group which conducts religious schools was expelled from Morocco because of suspected connection with such activities. There have been other instances where personnel of Jewish organizations have been under interrogation. In no case has any such person been involved in any such activity.
3. A group of Jews, numbering some 1,200, left the mountain villages some months ago to try to get to Israel. They were apprehended in Tangiers and Tetuan, and are being held in those towns, and prevented from leaving. The JDC has been permitted to bring them supplies of food, clothing, medicines. They have no homes to which they can return.
4. Negotiations are currently under way to arrive at an agreed-upon figure for emigration to Israel. The desire for emigration on the part of the people is intense. One very competent Jewish observer put it this way: "There is no way of holding these people. If they are not going to be permitted to emigrate legally, they will continue to strive to leave in other ways."

ALGERIA -- 120,000 Jews

1. The Jews are caught in the middle of a civil war. Each side presses them for identification and commitment. Some of the extreme French nationalists threaten them if they do not take the side of the European against the native. Some of the extreme Arab nationalists threaten them if they do not contribute to the FNL (National Liberation Front of the Arab fighters).
2. Alan Stroock, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the American Jewish Committee, in a report on 24 April 1958 emphasized the danger to Algeria's Jews. He said that the increasing crisis of the parliamentary system in France could create a serious threat to the safety of these Jews by placing them "between pincers of extreme fanaticism".
3. He warned further that "no reasonable chance would remain for the safety of the Jewish population for whom only mass flight might offer a way out".

TUNISIA -- 60,000 Jews

1. A small regular emigration of approximately 500 per month is still permitted and continues.
2. There is great sympathy in Tunisia for the Algerian rebels.
3. The French say that their aerial bombing of the Tunisian border village of Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef was conducted in hot pursuit of gun-runners who were providing arms across the border to the Algerians.
4. The position of Bourguiba, a pro-Western moderate, known to be friendly to Jews, is challenged by the extreme nationalists who want him to take a more open position of support of the Algerians. If Bourguiba should be forced to yield power to the more extreme groups, this would obviously presage greater danger for the Jews.

FRANCE

1. There are 12,000 refugees, mainly from Egypt and North Africa (also a few hundred Hungarians) who must be maintained with help and services. This is a greatly increased strain on the JDC as well as the French community.
2. The United Hias Service (drawing money from the UJA Rescue Fund) is trying hard to find resettlement opportunities for these people.
3. The present parliamentary difficulties and the Algerian war, have brought certain ugly manifestations to the surface. In mid-March there were severe disorders among the Paris police. They were demonstrating for higher salaries, but the demonstrations were marked with shouts and slogans of a strong anti-Semitic nature. Mr. Stroock, in the report mentioned above, stated, "an anti-democratic, anti-Semitic group exists within the Paris police force".

4. The monument to the Unknown Jewish Martyr near the City Hall in Paris, (a monument really to the 6,000,000 Hitler murdered), has recently been besmirched with the inscription "Death to the Jews".

SYRIA -- 7,000 Jews

1. In the fanatic mood of nationalist demonstrations in the cities of Syria (since the formation of the United Arab Republic with Egypt) the Jews have been surrounded by greater hostility than ever before. Reports have been received to the effect that not only were Jews compelled to cease all business activity, but also to stay in their homes for fear of atrocities.
2. It is suggested by all competent observers that emigration from Syria has become "an inevitable necessity."
3. Jews, however, are not allowed to leave Syria.

EGYPT -- 20,000 Jews

1. During the year 1957 approximately 25,000 Jews left Egypt.
2. People still keep coming out, although at a slower rate.
3. The International Red Cross maintains a staff of fourteen people in Egypt. This represents a semblance of protection for the Jews who feel that if this international humanitarian organization is physically present, at least there is someone available.

LEBANON -- 11,000

1. Nasser is attempting to swallow Lebanon. Supplies of arms have been sent in from Syria. This is allegedly a civil insurrection, but all can see the hand of the Moscow-Cairo axis. Lebanon has not yet asked for aid from the West, to guarantee its integrity, but its government has stated that serious consideration is being given to such a request. Lebanon has entered an official complaint with the UN against the U.A.R.
2. If Lebanon falls to the U.A.R., it is clear that this will place the Jews in great jeopardy.
3. Jews are not permitted to emigrate from Lebanon to Israel.
4. They are permitted to leave if they have transit visas for other countries.

POLAND -- 30,000 Polish Jews; 12,000 repatriates from Russia

1. Emigration from Poland still continues, in substantial numbers. Most of the Jews want to leave, for Israel, and some for Australia and the United States.
2. The repatriates from Russia are not allowed to leave, but will be free to do so in the future, when the Russian-Polish repatriation agreement comes to an end, probably 31 December, 1958.

3. Jewish repatriates from Russia are arriving in Poland at the rate of 400-500 per month, and this will increase. Our estimate is that by September or October of this year, there will be a "flood" of repatriates leaving Russia. The only reason they are holding back now is that they know they cannot go right on to Israel, and therefore they are holding off, in order to reduce their waiting time in Poland to a minimum.
4. The repatriates continue to be assisted by the JDC and ORT. They are given cash grants for staple needs such as clothing, beds, etc., employment assistance wherever possible; training courses; school lunches for children; and other kinds of help. The JDC report says, "These people are well taken care of, on a minimum standard basis, as would be indicated by the fact that we do not have all the money in the world to do all the things we want to do. However, we are certainly doing what is essential there."
5. Although Gomulka despises anti-Semitism and has done everything possible to stamp it out, nevertheless episodes continue to occur. An Associated Press dispatch of 8 May, 1958, published in the NEW YORK TIMES, reads as follows:

ARCHIVES  
JEWIS' GRAVES VIOLATED

68 Desecrated in Poland in Anti-Semitic Outbreak

LODZ, Poland, May 8 (AP)

Sixty-eight Jewish graves were reported desecrated today in Poland's worst outbreak of anti-Semitism in more than a year.

Vandals upturned memorial stones and chalked slogans on others in the main Jewish cemetery here.

The desecration came just after the ashes of several hundred Jews had been brought to the cemetery for reburial. They had died in Stuttof, a World War II labor camp run by the Germans at Lublin, in Eastern Poland.

Lodz, with 700,000 population, is Poland's second largest city. The police said they had started a full-scale hunt for the vandals.

Once, more than 100,000 Jews lived here. War-time killings and post-war migration have reduced the Jewish community to a few thousand. And more are leaving for Israel every day.

It should be noted that the Polish State Attorney of Lodz has ordered energetic investigations, and the local police have arrested a Polish youth who is accused of having broken part of the cemetery fence.

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Well, that is the round-up. It is clear from all of this that there is still trouble and turmoil in the Jewish world which calls for strong support of the 1958 Rescue Fund. There is still an enormous job to be done in the areas outlined above. Thousands of refugees per month are still entering Israel. Tens of thousands of Jews are still waiting to be helped to a new life in Israel.

The continued loyalty and financial assistance of American Jews is required. The UJA must raise its many millions in spite of the recession if Jewish life is to be saved and if people are not to be sacrificed unwittingly by leaving someone behind due to lack of funds. At this point in the campaign I urge every contributor to examine his gift carefully and critically, with full conscience, and not be tempted by recession psychology to reduce his gift, but to increase it as much as possible.

I have not said anything in this letter about the situation in Israel, because I am flying there in a few days and shall write you a full report from there. I am also going to Iran to make my first personal visit to that country, and to investigate the conditions of the Jewish communities in the three leading cities of Teheran, Shiraz and Isfahan. Perhaps I shall be able to say something in my next letter about these conditions.

Sincerely,

*Herbert A. Friedman*

P.S. In the last few days, two handsome gifts have been made. One of them is from Herman Taubman of Tulsa who repeated his 1957 gift of \$250,000 (\$50,000 Regular and \$200,000 Rescue). This should give us all great encouragement.

UNITED JEWISH APPEAL, INC.

165 WEST 46th STREET

NEW YORK 36, N. Y.

HAF files  
Personal letter

## MEMORANDUM

Date July 23, 1958

↓  
To Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

From Raphael Levy

Subject Personal Letter



I note that the attached Personal Letter nowhere says "Personal Letter," and, in the beginning, does not give any indication that it is coming from you in your capacity as the head of the United Jewish Appeal.

Accordingly, it strikes me that even a seasoned "Personal Letter" recipient might think that this is just another "begging letter" when he first reads it — and throw it away. Thus, I think we should bear this point in mind for the next letter which originates from overseas.

RL/mdo

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PALESTINE HOTELS LTD.  
KING DAVID HOTEL  
JERUSALEM



בתי מלון ארץ ישראלים בע"מ  
מלון המלך דוד  
ירושלים

11th July, 1958.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Dear friend,

There is an Air France flight non-stop from Tel Aviv to Teheran, and I made the trip a few weeks ago. As many American Jews as possible should try to visit Iran. There are about 83,000 Jews in that country, of whom 80% are so poverty-stricken that daily bread is a real problem.

The people need every kind of help - food, clothing, baths, medicine, sanitation, schools, jobs, money, and a whole range of medical care. The ghettos are horrible - hundreds of people living in crowded courtyards. Sanitation and hygiene are the main problems. One toilet for 50 people is a major cause of disease. Public baths must be built. People must be taught to keep their hands clean. All water is infected, and to teach the women to boil water raises the question of the few pennies necessary to buy fuel for a fire. Health and poverty are interconnected.

The Joint Distribution Committee is doing a terrific job. There are only 8 foreign staff members (i.e. American, British, etc.) who must train local personnel, administer a whole network of programs, provide the guidance and inspiration. I really had the feeling that this was a tiny band of heroes working in a far outpost, selflessly.

I saw wonderful progress among children. The Joint has a young American child care expert. She has taught several score local girls to be kindergarten teachers. They receive \$18 per month. Two kindergartens have been organized, which take care of 1,000 children. They are fed at the school, receive new clothing twice yearly, a bath once weekly, a haircut when needed, and have the services of a nurse on hand at all times. This is paradise, compared to the situation a few short years ago.

Thousands of Persian Jews today wish to go to Israel. Since 1948 a total of 33,000 have emigrated. This means that many families have been divided, and there are relatives left behind who now wish to come here. While there are no formal diplomatic relations between Iran and Israel, nevertheless the Iranian government permits free immigration to Israel. While the number of immigrants per month is not tremendous, it is nonetheless steady.

Our duty in Iran is clear. Through hospitals, clinics and personal training, we must help eliminate disease. Through the issuance of supplies, we must help combat hunger and nakedness. Through schools, we must make humans out of ghetto-urchins. Through emigration we must help those who wish to go to Israel. All this can be done, and is being done.

To sum it all up, here is another section of world Jewry, not very large, but terribly in need, towards whom we must stretch our hands in the task we have set ourselves - to relieve the want of every Jew whom we can reach.

over....

As for Israel, there is something so wonderful happening here that it is really beyond description. A generation of Jewish children is growing up free of the memories of brutality and murder which haunted their parents. At the big UJA conference in Jerusalem we minted a special shekel which was given as a souvenir to each tourist. We asked a group of 10-year-old children, born on Independence Day 1948, to distribute these medallions. As I looked at these children, the thought hit me that they, in their conscious lives, never knew anything other than a free and independent Israel. They were as normal and natural in this environment as the sun and sand.

But there is so much yet to be done. The dreadful ma'abarot still exist. Fully 100,000 people are still living in tin huts and shacks - many for 5 and 6 years already. Even with the expansion in housing construction which has marked the last few years, nevertheless the rate of immigration was higher than the rate of building. Israel has not yet caught up - and only for the lack of money.

I could go on to describe in detail other things I have seen:-

- 1) The shortage of schools and teachers. Eighteen thousand children graduated from primary school a few days ago - 54,000 are expected to enter first grade this fall. If there are three times as many entrances as exits, it is clear that after a few years the whole system collapses unless you expand radically;
- 2) The difficulties of farm settlements which are struggling toward self-sufficiency, but which are still short of needed equipment and livestock;
- 3) The need for more water.

But all these things, and many more, can really be summed up in one phrase - consolidating the position of the hundreds of thousands of immigrants who have come in the past few years. The people are here, they are safe, they are not hungry, they have a roof over their heads. All this we have helped to achieve. But they are not yet fully integrated.

With new immigrants coming in all the time, the "old" immigration of 1955-1958 still requires vast sums for its absorption, and this task lies ahead of us.

The country looks lovely. On every side the vision and the dream are coming true. Right now I am looking across a beautiful garden down to the blue Mediterranean. It is a peaceful afternoon. Children are playing, flowers are glowing, the sea is full of bathers. This scene, at this moment, is what we dream of for every soul in Israel to enjoy. It will come. There is no doubt in my mind.

And with it will come also the deeper things - the knowledge that man is good and will help his fellow, because that too is demonstrated here.

I am leaving here in a few days refreshed and re-invigorated for the work ahead.

Sincerely,

*Herbert A. Friedman*

HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN,



FROM LESTER MENDELL, VICE PRESIDENT  
BANKERS TRUST COMPANY

Fc/pte  
2

7/29

Dear Herbert -

May I suggest that  
changing the format of your "letters" from  
time to time as you did in the attached, -  
surely makes for more reading & acceptance  
as you know better than I, -  
people become used to hearing + trouble of too many  
of them (I know) do not read your editorial  
excerpts - printed reports etc. This changes the  
"sameness" + loses more interesting etc. Best to  
you  
Lester (over)

I know it is not  
easy to change format,  
but from time to time  
your fertile mind will  
produce new ideas of  
getting the message  
across, - + this sort  
of thing helps!

PALESTINE HOTELS LTD.  
KING DAVID HOTEL  
JERUSALEM



בתי מלון מלכותיים  
מלון המלך דוד  
ירושלים

HAF Files -  
Personal Letter - This  
Comm.

11th July, 1958.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Dear friend,

There is an Air France flight non-stop from Tel Aviv to Teheran, and I made the trip a few weeks ago. As many American Jews as possible should try to visit Iran. There are about 83,000 Jews in that country, of whom 80% are so poverty-stricken that daily bread is a real problem.

The people need every kind of help - food, clothing, baths, medicine, sanitation, schools, jobs, money, and a whole range of medical care. The ghettos are horrible - hundreds of people living in crowded courtyards. Sanitation and hygiene are the main problems. One toilet for 50 people is a major cause of disease. Public baths must be built. People must be taught to keep their hands clean. All water is infected, and to teach the women to boil water raises the question of the few pennies necessary to buy fuel for a fire. Health and poverty are interconnected.

The Joint Distribution Committee is doing a terrific job. There are only 8 foreign staff members (i.e. American, British, etc.) who must train local personnel, administer a whole network of programs, provide the guidance and inspiration. I really had the feeling that this was a tiny band of heroes working in a far outpost, selflessly.

I saw wonderful progress among children. The Joint has a young American child care expert. She has taught several score local girls to be kindergarten teachers. They receive \$18 per month. Two kindergartens have been organized, which take care of 1,000 children. They are fed at the school, receive new clothing twice yearly, a bath once weekly, a haircut when needed, and have the services of a nurse on hand at all times. This is paradise, compared to the situation a few short years ago.

Thousands of Persian Jews today wish to go to Israel. Since 1948 a total of 33,000 have emigrated. This means that many families have been divided, and there are relatives left behind who now wish to come here. While there are no formal diplomatic relations between Iran and Israel, nevertheless the Iranian government permits free immigration to Israel. While the number of immigrants per month is not tremendous, it is nonetheless steady.

Our duty in Iran is clear. Through hospitals, clinics and personal training, we must help eliminate disease. Through the issuance of supplies, we must help combat hunger and nakedness. Through schools, we must make humans out of ghetto-urchins. Through emigration we must help those who wish to go to Israel. All this can be done, and is being done.

To sum it all up, here is another section of world Jewry, not very large, but terribly in need, towards whom we must stretch our hands in the task we have set ourselves - to relieve the want of every Jew whom we can reach.

over....

As for Israel, there is something so wonderful happening here that it is really beyond description. A generation of Jewish children is growing up free of the memories of brutality and murder which haunted their parents. At the big UJA conference in Jerusalem we minted a special shekel which was given as a souvenir to each tourist. We asked a group of 10-year-old children, born on Independence Day 1948, to distribute these medallions. As I looked at these children, the thought hit me that they, in their conscious lives, never knew anything other than a free and independent Israel. They were as normal and natural in this environment as the sun and sand.

But there is so much yet to be done. The dreadful ma'abarot still exist. Fully 100,000 people are still living in tin huts and shacks - many for 5 and 6 years already. Even with the expansion in housing construction which has marked the last few years, nevertheless the rate of immigration was higher than the rate of building. Israel has not yet caught up - and only for the lack of money.

I could go on to describe in detail other things I have seen:-

- 1) The shortage of schools and teachers. Eighteen thousand children graduated from primary school a few days ago - 54,000 are expected to enter first grade this fall. If there are three times as many entrances as exits, it is clear that after a few years the whole system collapses unless you expand radically;
- 2) The difficulties of farm settlements which are struggling toward self-sufficiency, but which are still short of needed equipment and livestock;
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I am leaving here in a few days refreshed and re-invigorated for the work ahead.

Sincerely,

*Herbert A. Friedman*

HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN,

# Personal Letter

From

RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN  
Executive Vice-Chairman, United Jewish Appeal

PRIVATE—CONFIDENTIAL  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

165 West 46 Street, New York 36, N. Y.

17th October, 1958

Dear Friend:

A new situation has developed which you should know about. Six weeks ago Jews began to leave Rumania for Israel.

I have delayed in writing this letter because I wanted to accumulate as much information as I could on this startling new development. Here is what I can piece together.

Nine years ago Jews went from Rumania to Israel freely -- and 100,000 people moved, until one day the migration ceased overnight without warning. Thousands of families were unexpectedly split asunder. Parents were in Israel and children in Rumania, or vice versa. During these long years there were many petitions and pleas and mass meetings in Israel, asking for some remedial action to reunite families. Nothing happened.

Six weeks ago Jews of Rumania began to appear on trains coming into Vienna. It was as sudden and unexpected a renewal of immigration, as the stoppage had been previously. Quick action was required to provide assistance, at the railroad stations, to help these people on the way. A system has now been set up, and their further movement to Israel, by ship and some few by planes, has been arranged.

They are of all ages, of all walks of life, and come from all over Rumania, not just the capital of Bucharest, but from the provinces as well. They come with almost no baggage, and no money. They are the responsibility of the Jewish people. And they are coming by the thousands.

No one knows the reason for the movement, or how long it will continue, or how many people are involved. It may be a flash-in-the-pan sort of thing, or it may be a sustained program that will go on. We literally await developments on a day-to-day basis, to see what will happen.

So far, there appears to be no clear pattern. Someone who registered years ago has not yet been granted a passport to leave, while someone who registered only six months ago has received his papers and departed. The cost of obtaining documents is very high (in some cases as much as two months salary of a white collar worker) and must be paid by the people themselves. Very often the papers cost the last little bit of

money the people have, and they arrive in Vienna penniless. Passports are handed over to the people only a few days before the expiration date and so the emigrant has no chance to sell any of his belongings or wind up his affairs.

I have a letter from Mr. Charles Jordan, European Director of the JDC, which speaks very eloquently:

"I have met and talked with many of the migrants. They are still somewhat numbed because it all happened so quickly. They aren't given any time at all to settle their affairs, but if they want to leave, must do so on very short notice. Consequently they come with very little in the way of belongings -- and they will have to start from the beginning in Israel. I can't begin to tell you how deeply moved they are, on arrival in Vienna, to find the helping hand of their fellow Jews. They are well received and cared for and put on the way in a dignified though efficient manner. There are many touching incidents. We must keep up their hope and their faith. We must not let up, never lose patience, and maintain the strength of organizations like the UJA, JDC, and Jewish Agency at their highest level."

Noble sentiments require money, and a report from Mr. Eran Laor, head of the European Office of the Jewish Agency, which must bear the greatest burden of cost, reads in part:

"As to finances, the position is not yet quite clear, but one thing is evident, that this immigration, as far as transportation costs are concerned, will cost us substantially more than the Polish Aliyah, probably even twice as much."

I am leaving for Vienna this week-end, to meet with Mr. Laor and others, to see the picture for myself. A week later some of the leaders of the UJA are flying over to see for themselves as well. Then we will go to the JDC meetings in Geneva, and on to Israel with the big Study Mission.

For the meanwhile, let me stress the urgency of no newspaper publicity on this matter. Undue publicity may actually cause the movement to stop. This information must be disseminated by Jewish leaders in private communications. I will report to you again, as new developments occur.

Sincerely yours,

*Herbert A. Friedman*

# Personal Letter

From

RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN

Executive Vice-Chairman, United Jewish Appeal

PRIVATE -- CONFIDENTIAL  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

165 West 46 Street, New York 36, N. Y.

12 November, 1957

Dear Friend:

We have just returned from Israel. The largest UJA Study Mission ever to go there spent eight very intensive days in travel and seminars. The mood and attitude of the 120 Mission Members was wonderful. They were a representative cross-section of American Jewish leadership, and they really came to grips with the main problems. They asked questions of everyone, including Mr. Ben Gurion, who spoke to the mission three days before the unfortunate bombing episode.

Incidentally, I visited with him in the hospital very briefly, at his wife's invitation, and while he was uncomfortable and in pain, nevertheless he expressed his respect for the earnestness of the UJA leadership and his conviction that we would continue our work vigorously. His morale was marvelous. With several pieces of shrapnel in his arm, this 71-year old man retained control of himself and his country in a great display of strength.

There was also the opportunity to visit with Mrs. Golda Meir. She still carries a bomb fragment in her ankle and is confined to a wheel chair. Her spirit, too, was remarkable, as she described the near-catastrophe.

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The spirit of all Israel is remarkable at this moment. The tremendous immigration of the past year is forcing everyone to work harder, but it is done with a smile. I can never cease being amazed at the Israeli attitude toward immigrants. After all, more refugees means more taxation, more straining of already limited facilities, more sharing of already crowded schools, etc., etc. At some point, one would expect to see and hear signs of griping and grumbling. On the contrary, there is the incredibly selfless attitude of -- "take them in, move over, make room, remember when we came somebody made room for us." There are many thrilling aspects of life in Israel today, but nothing is so absolutely magnificent as the day-to-day display of brotherly love, performed in a modest manner, without heroics, whereby one man literally assumes the burden of another on his shoulders. All of the finest principles of Jewish idealism are being made manifest in this program.

But while idealism is high and the spirit is willing, sometimes the burden is almost too great. Our mission noticed this, and at the caucus held toward the end of the trip, person after person stated his clear conviction that we must continue in 1958 to strive for some extra funds, to handle the expected immigrant load for next year, and also to pick up some of the slack in this past year's budget. After all, while the 1957 Emergency Rescue Fund produced

wonderful results, still 30 or 35 million dollars raised is a long way from the 100 million spent on the more than 100,000 emigrants who were assisted (82,000 to Israel and almost 20,000 to other free countries).

Perhaps more important than the partially unpaid bill for 1957, is the fact that another large emigration is looming for 1958. It is still a bit early to predict any exact breakdown of figures for the 1958 emigration, but the general areas of need and danger are quite clear, and estimates of the total problem indicate that the load may range up to 70,000 persons for Israel plus 10,000 who will need to be assisted to other free countries. At this moment, without being able to know exact figures, we should think in various geographic categories.

North Africa still represents an enormous problem. At the JDC meeting in Paris, we heard intimate briefings on the situation in all three countries. In Morocco there is a continuous desire on the part of Jews to emigrate. They are no longer able to leave in large masses, but thousands apply for individual passports and receive the precious papers, according to an article published in the NEW YORK TIMES, 8 November, 1957:

#### JEWIS<sup>H</sup> DEPARTURE CITED BY MOROCCO

Rabat Says 5,000 Left in 3 Months with Passports --  
Emigration Freeze Denied

RABAT, Morocco, Nov. 6 -- Five thousand Jews left Morocco with regular passports issued by Moroccan authorities from July through September. The figures show that Jewish emigration has not been frozen, as was recently reported abroad, official Moroccan sources said.

Most of the 5,000 Jews who left Morocco went to France, Spain, Portugal or Gibraltar. Moroccan officials acknowledged that there was no doubt that a large percentage of these went on to Israel.

In Algeria, the Jewish community waits in suspense, as the guerrilla war continues to rage. There is pressure on the Jews from both sides. The Arab nationalists "call" on the Jews with acts of terror including murder, to take sides with them, and there are some anti-semitic elements among the Europeans who "remind" Jewish leaders what will happen if they show any predilection toward the Arab cause. It is a most uncomfortable position, and as the waiting game goes on, with the economic situation deteriorating rapidly and with violence and terrorism increasing daily in intensity, the Jews are leaving in a steady trickle for both Israel and France. The future of all Algeria is in the balance, but for the Jews there is a special sense of pressure. Some observers say that we may one day witness a mass flight. I do not know.



As for Tunisia, there is a friendly government which permits free emigration and no discrimination against Jews. Economic conditions are very bad, but the real trouble is a spiritual one, going right to the heart of Jewish existence and survival. The policy word in Tunisia today is "integration", which might eventually mean assimilation of the Jews into the dominant Moslem culture. There are those who fear that the present structure of Jewish community organization might be dissolved, as a step in the direction of integration, and this would be a very serious threat to the continued survival of the Jewish people and religion. With this general background, there is a small but steady emigration.

In addition to the broad problems which lead to the desire for emigration, there is the ever-growing need of providing a program of social care and assistance to the children, aged, sick and handicapped within the North African countries. This cannot be overlooked, and it is already apparent that the JDC will have a bigger job on its hands in 1958.

## AMERICAN JEWISH

I have gone into the North African picture in some detail, because there might be a tendency to forget about it, in the face of the enormous events which shook our people this year in Egypt and Hungary. True, we concentrated on these areas, and as a matter of fact, are not finished.

We heard a long and compassionate report on the condition of Egyptian Jews from a Christian lady social worker who spent several weeks in Egypt recently. The community organization in Cairo has apparently broken down completely, although there still seems to be a functioning council of sorts in Alexandria. There is a temporary relaxation of the terror campaign against Jews, but it is felt that any sense of security is false and illusory. One Egyptian refugee, speaking to us in Israel, said, "If Nasser ever again sets up camps for Jews, they will not be far different from Dachau." Children still attack old Jews, throw dirt, shout epithets, with the support of adults who look on these acts with approval. During the year ahead, many more thousands of Jews will find their way out, by whatever means possible. They will become our charges, and we will do our best to care for them.

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Probably the largest single group in next year's emigration program will be Polish Jews. During the year just ended, 35,000 Polish Jews came to Israel. This figure included 4,500 repatriates from Russia. Next year's figure might be the same, or only slightly less. The Polish Government, with a real understanding of the problems, continues to grant the necessary exit permits for Israel.

A sub-committee of the Study Mission went to Vienna, where the immigrants arrive from Warsaw by train. The ride takes 16 hours. Late one rainy afternoon we stood in the East Station and watched the train pull in. There were 107 on board, with many children. They leaned out of the carriage windows and we spoke with them while waiting for the baggage to be unloaded. (The

baggage, incidentally, contained many wicker baskets of wurst, crocks of chicken fat, and other homely articles of nourishment).

These were happy people, fully aware of the hardships, yet eagerly awaiting the new life ahead. We saw a man of 70 with a long white beard, who had become a convert to Judaism at the age of 40, and who told us how he had worn the beard in open proof of his religious convictions. He was very proud, and the others drew morale from him.

We saw people dressed modestly and people in tatters -- we spoke with highly educated and naively simple -- we ate a meal with a group which contained doctors and welders and cobblers and babies. They were all handled tenderly and beautifully by the Jewish Agency officials responsible for their welfare.

At the Paris Conference of the JDC, Mr. Charles Jordan summed it up neatly in these words, "The same railroad cars which carried Polish Jews to the Nazi death camps a little more than a decade ago, now carry Polish Jews to life and freedom in Israel."

Well, that is the story. The number of Jewish migrants who will be on the move in 1958 may not be known down to the last decimal point, but the general picture is clear. There will be a very heavy load, running perhaps as high as 70,000 to Israel and 10,000 to other countries.

This fact alone was sufficient to start the Study Mission leaders thinking along the lines of another form of special fund in 1958. But in addition to this, there were the obvious problems left over from last year, which would require extra funds.

The Study Mission leaders were tremendously impressed with the need of forging ahead on two clearly defined tracks -- 1) to take care of the tens of thousands of new refugees and immigrants who will continue next year to pour out of Eastern Europe, North Africa and anywhere else Jews are in trouble, and 2) to take care of the twenties of thousands who came this year but who are woefully un-absorbed as yet, if such a word may be coined.

Israel will be strong if her new citizens are properly taken in, and the honor and dignity of our American Jewish community will be strong if we undertake our duty again in a spirit of high purpose. 1958 calls for the same high level of performance as 1957.

Sincerely yours,

*Herbert A. Friedman*

Encl:

# Personal Letter

From

RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN  
Executive Vice-Chairman, United Jewish Appeal

HAF file  
Personal Letter

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

165 West 46 Street, New York 36, N. Y.

30 December, 1958

Dear Friend:

The immigration from Rumania is mounting. The figures are running more than a thousand per week, at the present moment. It is clear that a big push is on.

This is obviously posing a great strain on the Jewish Agency -- both its Immigration Department in Europe and its Absorption Department in Israel.

New routes have had to be opened, so that the people are now coming out not only through Vienna, but also through Athens via Belgrade. The housing and absorption in Israel also require "new routes" if they are to keep pace. The budgetary estimates are rapidly becoming obsolete.

The enclosed memorandum giving November data shows the fine calibre of the people, in terms of professional and technical skills.

I am leaving for Rumania in a few days, and will write again upon return.

Sincerely,

*Herbert A. Friedman*

Encl:

RE: Passports issued in November for Immigration from Rumania

In November, 2150 passports were issued covering 3053 individuals.

Classification according to age:

1 - 19	.....	894 immigrants
20 - 49	.....	1599 immigrants
50 and over	.....	560 immigrants

Classification according to occupation:

Physicians	.....	66
Nurses, pharmacists, X-ray technicians, chemists	.....	35
Dental Technicians	.....	11
Professor of philosophy	.....	1
Architects	.....	45
Artists	.....	9
Lawyers	.....	15
Accountants	.....	77
Teachers	.....	5
Students	.....	9
Librarian	.....	1
Motion Picture Cameraman	.....	1
Journalist	.....	1
Agronomist	.....	1
Technicians, electrical machinists, radio technicians	.....	70
Locksmith, blacksmiths	.....	21
Glaziers	.....	9
Carpenters	.....	32
Construction workers, painters	.....	7
Textile workers	.....	11
Needle workers	.....	81
Shoemakers	.....	29
Barbers	.....	24
Watchmakers	.....	22
Photographers	.....	7
Telephone repairman	.....	1
Cleaner	.....	1
Stovemaker	.....	1
Bakers	.....	10
Waiters	.....	3
Butchers and slaughterers	.....	9
Farmers	.....	9
Laborers	.....	141
Drivers	.....	25
Wagoner	.....	1

HAF files  
Personal letter

## MEMORANDUM

Date May 22, 1958

To Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

From Raphael Levy

Subject ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ <sup>PERSONAL</sup> Letter

I have read the ~~Confidential~~ letter. I think it is a good one but I am inclined to think that it is weakened by too much quotation from Mr. Alan Strook. After all, this makes him the authority — not you and the UJA.

Surely there is no advantage in quoting Strook on the situation in France or Syria (Page 5, Item 3; Page 5, Items 1, 2, 3). We can and should be able to produce equivalent reports.

On page 6, Item 4, I wonder if it is wise to indicate that the JDC actually has a representative in Egypt. On Page 7, Item 3, do you mean "Jewish" repatriates? I assume so. If you do, it should be spelled out.

Also, Page 7, Item 5, I think nothing is gained by indicating that Gomulka's wife is Jewish.

I have made some other marginal notes.

Additionally, it should be noted that there is some question about the correctness of the population figures you use for various North African countries. Marc Tabatchnik points out that the figure for Morocco should be 200,000 and that the same conclusion is expressed by the American Jewish Yearbook for 1958. Similarly, the population for Tunisia should be 70,000 instead of 60,000.

I am still for the idea that it be sent out from New York for reasons of speed and because conditions in Paris are so upset.

RL/mdo

Monday

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