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Personal Letter

From

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

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

6 April, 1960

Dear Friend -

My last letter to you was written from Jerusalem more than four months ago. At that time the UJA Study Mission was in Israel, and we were making plans for the 1960 campaign. The campaign has started well. Most communities are raising more money, morale of the leadership is high, and there is a deep understanding of the philosophy behind the UJA. Personally, I have been traveling more than ever, to the many educational conferences and fund-raising meetings, and have fallen behind in my letters to you. Many important events have taken place. Let me bring the record up to date.

I. EARTHQUAKE AT AGADIR

The whole world was shocked at the tragedy in this small Moroccan city, which took more than 10,000 lives. Of these victims, about 1,500 were Jewish residents of the old ghetto area near the center of town. The JDC moved quickly and effectively to help the 700 Jewish survivors. The JDC team of relief workers were the first representatives of any international voluntary agency to reach the shattered city. 12 tons of relief supplies were distributed and long range plans are being made for the survivors, most of whom were moved to Casablanca.

In addition JDC contributed \$5,000 for general assistance to all disaster victims, not only Jewish, which is a quiet demonstration of the traditional Jewish attitude toward helping one's brother in time of trouble. It should make us feel proud.

II. JDC HELP AROUND THE GLOBE

A single striking natural calamity like an earthquake causes a wave of concern for hurt and homeless victims. But it should also remind us of the daily, non-dramatic, constant help being poured out by the JDC -- not just at moments of flood and fire, but in the everyday fight against hunger, disease and illiteracy. The real test of a man's maturity is his reaction, not to a single sharp emergency, but to a steady program of struggle with social and economic ills which must be overcome. And the real test of an organization's skill is not its ability to mobilize swiftly for a particular episode, but its capacity to serve over the long run in all areas of health, welfare and education. The JDC has certainly earned the respect of the American Jewish community for its almost half-century of dedication to the twin principles of short-term emergency aid and long-term rehabilitation of Jews in trouble anywhere.

I have a good letter from Charles Jordan, the overseas Director-General of the JDC, whose headquarters is in Geneva. Here are extracts, indicating some of the latest JDC developments in various countries.

1. Teheran, Iran -- Mother-child Clinic

The squalor and filth of the "mahalleh", the ghetto in Teheran, has no parallel or equal. Thousands of Jews are breaking out of this squalor and moving to other parts of the city.

In the Gorgan-Pole Chubi district, which now has about 8,000 Jews, a new \$50,000 mother-child health clinic is rising rapidly. Here the mothers will receive extra milk and vitamins during pregnancy, fresh layettes for their infants, and will return for medical checkups on themselves and their babies after they have delivered.

In the meantime, however, until the clinic is completed, a temporary dispensary has been set up in the women's gallery of the synagogue, which was the only space available in the teeming area.

This program of trying to guarantee the health of the new-born baby by teaching the rudiments of cleanliness and proper diet to the mother, is the only way to make an onslaught on the ancient curses of intestinal parasites, trachoma, ringworm and malnutrition.

2. Warsaw -- Home for the Aged

Poland today has a population of 35,000 Jews. Many are continuing to emigrate to Israel. But there are hundreds of aged and chronically ill who will never be able to move. In all of Poland there is only one existing home for the aged. This is in Lodz and has room for only 65 residents. I visited this home myself two years ago. It was located in an old building in a poor state of repair. The bedrooms and dormitories were overcrowded and poorly furnished; the sanitary facilities were insufficient and badly maintained. Today it must be even worse and even more crowded.

As of February 1959 the Welfare Committee of the Kulturverband supported about 750 aged and 650 chronically ill persons. The JDC doctor has suggested building an institution with 100 beds. An agreement has been reached with the Ministry of Social Welfare of the Polish government, whereby the Ministry will obtain land and contribute the necessary furnishings and equipment, and the JDC will cover the costs of construction, which are estimated at \$60,000.

At least we may have the feeling that the tiny remnant of the once greatest Jewish community in all Europe will end its days in somewhat more comfort.

3. Europe -- Passover supplies

In Poland tens of thousands of pounds of matzoh have been baked in Wroclaw under the strict supervision of the Polish rabbinate. Wine, fat and other supplies have also been distributed, so that every Jew can celebrate Passover

in the traditional manner. Matzoh distribution by the JDC throughout western Europe has been as follows:

<u>Country</u>	<u>lbs. of Matzoth</u>	<u>lbs. of Matzo Meal</u>
Albania	1,520	-
Austria	10,015	3,510
Belgium	11,688	3,690
France	66,014	12,510
Germany	12,040	2,400
Italy	12,010	3,000
Portugal	3,400	390
Spain	2,400	300
Yugoslavia	19,995	9,990
Greece	<u>18,734</u>	-
Total	157,816	35,790

III. HOUSING IN ISRAEL

Early in March, I talked with Mr. David Tanne of the Housing Department of the Ministry of Labor in Israel. He was in New York and called me, as he usually does, to give the latest information. This is his data:

There are 14,000 families living in ma'abarot in Israel today. Some of these people have been resident in the dilapidated huts and shacks for as long as seven or eight years. For these people, there are 4,000 new housing units currently under construction. In the new budget for April 1960 - April 1961 there is provision for 3,000 additional units. This will cover 7,000, or one-half, the total number of families in need.

In the budget for the coming fiscal year there are no new units for new immigrants. There is simply not enough money. New immigrants will have to go into vacant ma'abarot, or into development areas in the Negev and other places, or move in with relatives in the towns. If they don't have relatives, or are old and cannot go to the new development areas, then they will be in trouble.

There is a clear situation here, in which present plans and funds available are enough to care for only half the ma'abara-dwellers and none of the newcomers. This is certainly breeding a problem for the future.

IV. BEN-GURION VISIT

Much has been written of the visit made by Mr. David Ben-Gurion to the United States and England last month. I made up a folder of clippings from various papers which recorded the highlights of his visit, and mailed that to you two weeks ago. The purpose of this was simply for the human interest value of noting where he had been and whom he had seen.

One of the meetings he attended was not reported in the press. This was a private gathering called jointly by the UJA and the Bond Organization for the combined cabinets, officers and leadership. The Israel Embassy in Washington also invited to this meeting, held on the evening of 15 March, presidents of various organizations and other individuals.

On this occasion Mr. Ben-Gurion felt that he was speaking informally and not for publication. His talk ranged over a wide variety of topics, including immigrant absorption, future of the Negev, science, water needs, Jews in Russia, security problems, and many other things.

He stated strongly his own feeling that much had been achieved through the joint efforts of the Jewish people living in the free countries and the Jewish citizens of Israel during the past 11 years of statehood. And he stated equally strongly that there were yet many obstacles to be overcome and problems to be solved before Israel could feel secure and self-sufficient.

V. AUSCHWITZ CAMP REUNION

Fifteen years ago the most notorious of all Nazi death camps was liberated. In this camp the gas chambers and furnaces had taken upwards of 2½ million lives. Some historians say the total was closer to 4 million. Who will ever know?

The few thousand survivors scattered all over the world in a search for relatives, new homes, freedom. Most went to Israel. Many came here to the United States. One now works for the United Jewish Appeal as an executive supervisor. And he works with great enthusiasm, for he knows how UJA funds helped rehabilitate and resettle himself and many of his comrades.

He was the chairman of a reunion dinner held the other evening -- the first reunion in fifteen years -- the first opportunity for many of the survivors of Auschwitz to meet in freedom after the days of their agony. I think the enclosed newspaper account of this meeting speaks for itself.

All that need be added is the reminder that we should not forget. We need not carry burning hatred in our hearts, nor a passion for revenge, but we should not let the memory of this monstrous crime fade away. It should be taught to each new generation of the young.

In a few days we shall all be seated at our Passover tables, closely surrounded by family and friends. The dearest and warmest moods will envelop us. In the softness and sentimentality of the festival season, we must remember the essentially hard truth lying behind this holiday -- freedom is not a gift; it must be won. The struggle can cost both blood and treasure. It always has. Apparently it always will. The Jewish people in Israel today is struggling toward full freedom. The Jewish people outside of Israel can best celebrate Passover by assisting in the struggle. I am convinced we Jews of the free west will continue to remember our brothers in the east, who may not be able to celebrate Pesach -- and will work for the day when full freedom will be Israel's portion.

A happy and healthy holiday to you and your family.

Sincerely yours,

Herbert A. Friedman



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NOT FOR PUBLICATION

September, 1960

Dear Friend -

This letter is coming to you from Geneva, where I am now visiting the Overseas Headquarters of the JDC. Our family has just arrived from Israel, after a very thorough period of study, research and travel. The children came to Israel for the first time and loved it.

Israel is progressing remarkably. It is literally impossible to compare the country of today with the infant state of 1948. Even a visitor as frequent as myself simply does not believe he is in the same land. Everything is jumping ahead so rapidly that last month's or last year's achievement is forgotten as some new stride captures the public imagination.

Mind you, I am speaking almost exclusively of the physical and material accomplishments. There are grave and fundamental problems of a spiritual nature. Serious people in Israel debate the question of whether the old pioneering spirit isn't being lost; whether the youth of today is as idealistic as the previous generation; whether the quest for a higher standard of material conveniences isn't destroying the sense of national purpose which once characterized the old chalutzim.

Since the scope of my letters to you over the years, however, has been confined to the physical and material questions of Jewish life, let me continue along those lines.

I. HOUSING

We have spoken often about the terrible conditions in the ma'abarot -- transit camps of huts, shacks, tin boxes. This problem is slowly but surely coming under control. As far as I can determine, there are now about 11,000 families still living in such sub-standard circumstances. That is large number of human beings -- but still a very small residue of what was once an enormous problem. Everyone is working hard to liquidate the ma'abarot. Jewish Agency, JDC, social workers, housing officials, Ministry of Labor, municipalities and many others are determined to wipe out the remaining shacks. I have a good feeling that this matter is progressing toward a satisfactory final solution. Of course, there are still incidents, such as are described in the attached clipping from the Jerusalem Post, which underscore sharply the need for more money to hasten this program to its end.

II. IMMIGRATION

Since we have not spoken about this subject very openly during the past year, some people have been under the impression that there has been no immigration. This is not so. Immigration continues at the rate of 25,000 yearly. Almost exactly 13,000 persons entered Israel in the first six months of 1960.

They come from all countries and continents -- they come with much baggage and with little -- they come because they have to and because they want to. Families are reunited every day in touching and beautiful scenes. One day I followed a busload of 32 East Europeans from the dock at Haifa to their flats in New Nazareth. The buildings are lovely -- three rooms for each family. It was twilight when the bus

clattered down the rocky road. The hills of Galilee all around were bathed in a purple glow. Growds ran after the bus, luggage was thrown down from the top. There was happy confusion -- a baby crying -- suddenly the shout of recognition which marks every such scene -- and a brother found a brother. They were not long apart -- only two years -- but the awful fear that they might be separated forever had kept them in constant tension. Now all the emotion drained out -- and they cried and hugged and kissed -- and it was all over.

A hasty lottery was arranged, pulling numbers from a hat, to see who got the first, second or third floor, -- then the cots, mattresses, stools, lamps were quickly distributed and hauled up the narrow stairwells -- for it was night already and they were tired.

The Jewish Agency official packed up his papers, piled into the car with us, and was stopped to listen to yet one more story. A young couple speaking only French told of leaving Egypt ten years ago for the Congo, and were now refugees again from that turbulent place. Could he get work, he asked. The Agency man patiently said that not all matters could be settled the first day -- they would meet again tomorrow. We drove away silently in the night -- and I wished every Jew in America could have witnessed the last two hours, which involved not 100,000 people or even 25,000, but only 32. Any witness would have felt and understood the incredible beauty of bringing one person to safety and home.

III. REHOVOT CONFERENCE

In August a remarkable conference took place at the Weizmann Institute, under the chairmanship of Hon. Abba Eban. It was called the "International Conference on Science in the Advancement of New States" and embraced several Nobel Prize winners, together with political leaders, educators and labor leaders of 39 countries, mostly from Africa and Asia. Such men were present as the Prime Minister of Nepal, the President of the (French) Congo Republic, the Health Minister of Cameroon, the Finance Minister of Nigeria, the Vice-premier of Chad, and many, many others. In their colorful costumes and with serious demeanor, these people from proud young states, many of them having achieved their independence only in recent weeks or months, and most of them young men themselves, scattered throughout Israel to look and listen.

At the conference sessions they heard reports from leading scientists of the western world on such questions as irrigation, sleeping sickness, atomic energy, population control, economics and a dozen other matters of vital interest to underdeveloped countries. Unanimously they praised Israel for having arranged such a conference, from which they could learn so much. At the end Mrs. Golda Meier announced that Israel will provide 1000 scholarships next year for study in Israel to African and Asian students.

It was a stimulating sight to witness cooperation on a technical level which can only lead to a deeper understanding on a spiritual level between men of differing religions and races. The conference was a brilliant idea and an extraordinary practical success.

IV. ATOMIC REACTOR

Another "first" was scored this summer, when the atomic reactor at Nahal Sorek became critical on 16 June at 6.45 p.m. This was the culmination of a long period of planning.

Low-grade uranium was first discovered in the Negev in 1948. Heavy water was first produced in 1951. An Atomic Energy Committee was appointed in 1952. At the Atoms for Peace Conference in Geneva in 1955, President Eisenhower offered assistance (up to \$350,000) to any country to build a reactor, plus enriched uranium on loan. Israel signed an agreement with the U.S. in 1957, started to build, spent 6 million pounds of Israeli taxpayers' money, and reached success this summer.

It is a swimming-pool type reactor and is expected to produce neutrons for study in genetics; to produce short-life isotopes and supply them for medical and industrial purposes; and to train scientists and technicians, obviating the need of sending them abroad.

One of the by-products of the reactor is plutonium, which is military in nature, and is returned to the U.S. immediately.

Philip Johnson, the famous American architect, designed the building, which is magnificent and slightly fantastic looking, as can be seen in the 5 September issue of "Time." The entire labor force was Israeli. The International Atomic Energy Commission in Vienna has recommended to other new countries to copy this as a model.

The name of the place intrigued me. I found its source in the Bible, Book of Judges. It was the place where Samson's romance occurred. "And it came to pass afterward that he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah." Thus, the strong man of ancient days, whose legendary strength was the most powerful in the world, is connected with this fabulous new strength of today. Somehow or other, to see the zigurat-like building of the future located on the site of the past, is to epitomize Israel, where time and landscape have a manner of blending so that the mind sometimes reels and prophecy seems to be the most reliable of all arts.

V. FARM VILLAGES

There is so much to write on this subject that I will take the wiser course and say nothing now. But my next letter will be devoted almost entirely to this, for it is one of the most difficult and important things to understand in the Israel of today.

VI. JDC WORLD-WIDE OPERATIONS

I have been spending a few days in Geneva, catching up on the multi-faceted program of the JDC. It is remarkable how much activity there is, even in the summer, of a life-building nature. The daily programs continue in 25 countries, wherein food, medicine, books, clothing and sanitation are provided for hundreds of thousands of Jews in need. It is impossible to try to reduce this far-flung and infinitely detailed program to a few paragraphs. All I can do is select some highlights.

1. Summer Camps

Nearly 22,000 Jewish children attended 102 camps this summer in Europe, North Africa and Iran. This number would have been much greater if more funds were available to expand and improve facilities, much of which at present is makeshift. The children served came largely from underprivileged homes. There were 15,000 from 12 countries in Europe, including 3,000 in Poland alone; 6,400 in Morocco and Tunisia, and 600 in Iran.

Camp represents not only good food, sunshine, a chance to leave the crowded ghettos and cities -- but also a unique opportunity for Jewish education for children from isolated communities, and the strengthening of ties of Jewish association between youth of various countries and cultures.

2. Personnel Training

A major problem for the Jewish communities of Europe and the Moslem lands is the acute shortage of trained personnel to serve as teachers, nurses, social workers, administrators. This is crucial, for the JDC could never hope to bring in enough Western person-

nel to cope with all the problems. What the JDC can do is try to train and develop local personnel in these various skills. This form of aid is even better, in the long run.

A scholarship program has recently been established, for example. Many grants have already been issued. There is a young woman pursuing a course in psychiatric social work in Amsterdam. There is a teacher now studying at Bar-Ilan University in Israel who will return to Antwerp to teach in the Jewish school there. The executive director of the central Jewish organization in Denmark is being enabled to travel to other European Jewish communities, to study various services to the aged and operations of community centers, as well as fund-raising techniques, so they can begin to raise more of their own money in Denmark for their own needs.

An especially noteworthy program is the training of Jewish girls to be nurses in Morocco, Tunisia and Iran. Girls have been sent from these countries to England to study for their R.N. degree at the London Jewish Hospital. Since there are funds available for only a limited number to go abroad, most of the students must be trained in their own countries. There is, for instance, a nurses training school in Iran itself.

The JDC Health Department is constantly sending its experts from Geneva Headquarters to set up streamlined but intensive courses. Miss Helen Cohn, the JDC consultant on public health nursing, said, "It is incredible to see what happens to these student-nurses, who themselves come from the Ghetto. The training transforms them. They become keen, enthusiastic, intelligent and alive to the needs of the people whom they serve."

3. Iran

I am enclosing a remarkable letter written by Mr. Ted Feder, the JDC country director for Iran. Read it, and remember that he is talking about a community of 80,000 Jews for whom a great work still needs to be done.

I have a brighter feeling, after this summer's experience. Somehow, the progress is more perceptible. Problems are being solved in the Jewish world. Israel is becoming stronger. Poverty and disease are under vigorous attack in various ghettos. Immigration continues. I have the feeling that all the money we American Jews have poured in, with love and affection, is reaping its reward. The happy knowledge that it is possible to help constructively stimulates us to further effort -- and so we go on in this constant battle for Jewish independence, security and dignity.

Please accept my personal good wishes for a Happy New Year for you and your family.

Sincerely yours,

Herbert A. Friedman

Herbert A. Friedman
Executive Vice-Chairman
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August 1st, 1960

No. 344

TO : AJDC Geneva - Attention Mr. Charles H. Jordan

FROM : AJDC Tehran

Dear Mr. Jordan :

I think there is a kernel of a story in a comparison of June 1950 to June 1960 date line, Tehran. It revolves around the number of graduations that I attended in the last month which were amazing and perhaps more than any other single factor points up our accomplishments in Iran.

It could be titled Summer 1950 - Summer 1960.

Graduation time in Tehran 1950 was not a particularly happy event for the boys who were graduating grammar school. There was an air of resignation because actually the children had no jobs except perhaps as runners in the bazaar, workers in the ghetto or to ply the profession of beggars. Many children did not appear for the graduation because they were ashamed of the rags which they wore as clothing. Many did not appear because of the ravages of trachoma and scalp disease. Graduation day should be great but for these Iranian Jewish kids the future was bleak indeed.

Graduation time 1960 showed new schools, new programs, new ideas, and a re-organization of the Jewish community, with the JDC playing a very important role in all facets of Jewish life. The best way to discover this new spirit is to go along to twelve graduation exercises in Tehran.

The first graduation was the kindergarten. There are 1,000 pre-school-age children attending kindergarten, the majority of whom are products of the ghetto. Yet their behaviour and skills at the graduation were no different from kids in any good kindergarten in the world. On the contrary their skill in performing Persian folk dances was amazing. They are the same kids who used to flee with screams when strangers visited them in their ghetto homes. The children are now healthy, robust, alert, a tribute to the feeding and medical programs.

The graduating class of 15 nurses aids came next. The young ladies had finished a year nurses training course carried on by the Tehran local health centre, Ladies Committee and JDC. Nurses and nurses-aids are needed in the many clinics and hospitals in Iran sponsored by JDC.

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The four kindergartens in Iran sponsored by the Ladies Committee and JDC are constantly in need of teachers and the graduation of kindergarten teachers this year had a distinguishing note. One of the teachers, a woman in her thirties, came to work six years before at one of the kindergartens as a charwoman. She had a child whom she brought to school. She was a woman with no skills but a spark which stimulated her through all sorts of menial work to study, and finally after six years she was graduated as a teacher with honors and prepared to take her place as a full-fledged kindergarten teacher at the same school where she had started so humbly only a few years before.

The next graduation was an unforgettable experience. It was that of a group of mothers from the ghetto who had finished a course which included reading, writing and health education. Under the sponsorship of Ladies Committee and the JDC a program of primary education and health education has been running for a few years. Attending these courses is not easy. The mothers of the ghetto make tremendous sacrifices to attend yet do so because of their thirst for knowledge and realization of the importance of raising their standards. Although the women came from very poor families they were neatly dressed and very proud of what they had accomplished.

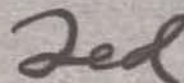
The graduation of the Alliance Israelite assumed unusual proportions because this was the 100th anniversary year and boys and girls who graduated from the grammar and high school seemed to be specially proud because of this extra honor. The Alliance has been working in Iran for over 50 years and had constantly progressed as opportunities were given to them for expansion. Today, they have over 7,000 students. Highly placed Iranian government officials were present including the Minister of Education.

Graduation at the Ozar Hatorah were indeed varying. There had been a seminar for English teachers, a seminar for Hebrew teachers and graduation exercises of the children. All of the schools of the Alliance and Ozar Hatorah are subventioned by the JDC.

The ORT graduation was in many ways the most gratifying. 50 young men and women had finished technical courses and received their diplomas from the Cabinet Minister of Education. The Minister was most impressed by the graduation and the school. The JDC Director was told by the ORT Director that the day after graduation all the newly graduating boys from the technical school were going right to work. Each of the graduating young men received a tool set with which to start earning a living.

The graduation circuit seems the best evidence of the value and far reaching consequences of all the programs sponsored by JDC in Iran.

Sincerely yours,



Theodore D. Feder