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# Personal Letter

From

RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN

Executive Vice-Chairman, United Jewish Appeal

CONFIDENTIAL - NOT FOR PUBLICATION

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

13 March 1963

Dear Friend,

It is many months since I last wrote you. So very much has happened in the Jewish world of our common concern that I can only touch on the most important topics.

## IMMIGRATION

All responsible sources predicted that 1962 would be a high-flow year, and indeed it was. Many tens of thousands of persons were moved, transmigrated, resettled in countries of freedom. As a matter of fact 11,000 more persons were moved than our original estimate. The vast majority were settled in Israel, but there were also many thousands brought to the United States, Canada, Latin America and Australia.

The people came primarily from two main sources, one in Europe and one in North Africa. There were various technical difficulties, switches in procedures, alterations in ports and airports, starts and stops -- but through it all the flow continued month after month and tens of millions of dollars were spent on this life-saving work. In the midst of all the difficulties and improvisations which characterized last year's operations, morale remained high and the truly sacred task of rescue progressed toward a really impressive total number of human beings.

This year of 1963 promises to be another such period of fruitful opportunity. Opportunity is the clue word, for the definitive control over the number of Jews who will be allowed to emigrate is not in our hands. This control rests with the governmental authorities in the lands in question. They decide who shall leave, how many, at what tempo. Our role is to seize whatever opportunity is given. Thus we remain on the alert at seaports and airports to meet those who have gotten out and are waiting to be picked up by the various functioning organizations of the UJA family -- either the Jewish Agency for Israel or the Joint Distribution Committee or the United Hias Service.

People are coming so far in 1963 from the same sources as before, and from new ones as well. Early in March the S.S. Flaminia, formerly used on the Mediterranean run, will make her first trip from Argentina to Israel, carrying almost 1000 persons. Future voyages are planned in

the months ahead, depending on the number of Jews who feel uncertain about their futures in Argentina because of the anti-semitic episodes which have darkened recent history in that country. Most of those leaving Argentina now are Jews who were victims of Nazism in Europe, lived through the D.P. camps, went to Latin America 10 or 15 years ago in search of freedom and a new life, struggled for years to strike roots and some tiny measure of economic security, but now feel unsafe again, and once more are migrating with almost no means, hoping to find the ultimate peace and safety every man deserves.

Already, on the basis of the figures for January and February, it is abundantly clear that 1963 will be another high-flow year.

### FRANCE

By now everyone is aware of the tremendous magnitude of the problem of Algerian refugees in France. Of the original Jewish population of 130,000 in Algeria, 110,000 moved over to France during the big flight last year. According to French decree, all French citizens (and this included the Jews) who moved to the mainland were granted small subsidies to help them become established during the first year in France. When the year was over, these subsidies were to cease. That condition is now beginning to prevail. Most of the refugees came over during the period between March and June, a year ago. Thousands of families will be deprived of the subsidies during the coming months. This fact will substantially increase the burdens of the Joint Distribution Committee and the French-Jewish Welfare organizations. It has been estimated recently that \$5 million will be required during 1963 to assist with the barest minimum needs for these people. Of that sum, the JDC will have to spend \$3 million.

Most of us think in terms of the immediate needs of the refugees - food, clothing, medicine, cash grants, housing, jobs. But there are other problems which are equally pressing. Man does not live by bread alone, we often say. This applies especially to Jewish communities, whose citizens have personal needs, but in addition have communal needs. A modest synagogue, a school for the traditional education of children, a kosher butcher, a small community center, are all necessary to guarantee the corporate existence of the community. This minimal apparatus is simply not available and must slowly, painfully be established, to cope with the increased population in certain cities and the brand new population in others.

The following table gives some indication of what has happened in a few French cities. The population growth makes obvious demands in terms of increasing the basic communal institutions, or providing them where they never existed before.

<u>CITY</u>	<u>JEWISH POPULATION</u>	
	<u>1957</u>	<u>1963</u>
Paris	175,000	300,000
Marseilles	12,000	60,000
Lyon	6,300	25,000
Toulouse	3,500	13,500
Bordeaux	3,500	6,400
Nice	2,100	6,400
Lille	2,200	3,200
Grenoble	1,200	2,800
Aix-en-Provence	265	1,200

In addition there are 23 brand new Jewish communities in France, where there were no Jews previously, and where there are now little groupings of 100 or 200 families. Each needs a teacher, or a cantor, or a religious functionary of some sort to help carry on normal communal life. Imagine the job which lies ahead of finding and training the personnel. We must think of this whole problem in its organic terms -- immediate relief plus long-term rebuilding.

#### JDC GLOBAL PROGRAM

In addition to this most pressing matter of Algerians in France, the JDC also has on its agenda the variegated problems existing in 25 other countries where about 300,000 Jews in need are dependent on many types of supplies and services we provide. Just to summarize, the JDC will spend in 1963:

\$6½ million in Europe  
 \$6½ million in Moslem countries  
 \$7½ million in Israel (Malben)  
 \$5½ million in certain countries which cannot be named  
 \$2 million on ORT schools all over the world

This is a steady on-going responsibility which must be maintained. If a boy is trained in an ORT school in a particular country, then leaves and goes to Israel with his family, he becomes a better citizen of Israel for being in possession of a trade. He becomes rooted and interested more quickly -- his adjustment is easier. The entire JDC program of health, nutrition, education, sanitation, vocational training is Jewish social service at its best and at the same time is part and parcel of the world-wide migration and resettlement movement.

In the moral sense, those of us who care passionately about the saving of Jewish lives must admit that it is unfair to place upon Israel any greater burden of immigrant absorption, since she already bears alone the entire burden of her defense. We Jews in the free world should say

that in a period when immigration is high and defense costs are also mounting sharply, almost staggeringly, we should, at the very least, increase our share of the immigration costs. It is well known that for the past few years total immigration costs have been borne 2/3 by Israel as compared to 1/3 by us. It is true that this is a sign of her increasing economic capacity and progress. But at this particular juncture, in 1963, it is our moral duty to attempt to alter this ratio, so that she does not have to carry both crushing loads.

I have found, over the years, that when our leadership is informed, it is alert, and when alert, responsive. There is a deeply rooted sense of responsibility in every reader of this letter. Sometimes complacency obscures the sharp sense of duty. Let every heart be awake. This is a dangerous hour, filled with risk. This is also an opportune hour, filled with many chances to rescue and rehabilitate scores of thousands. Let the hour be dangerous, so long as it is also opportune. We can be watchful, prayerful and active, all at the same time. The building and strengthening of Israel will go forward -- the support and nourishment of many Jewish communities will go forward. All this can be done if each of you is more generous, does more work, solicits more people. High and noble conduct is demanded now of each one. Not to slacken but to increase the tempo of our work is the order of the day.

Very truly yours,

*Herbert A. Friedman*

Herbert A. Friedman

HAF:gb



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מלון המלך דוד  
ירושלים

October 30, 1963

Written on the 9th UJA Study Mission

Dear friend:

Israel is spectacular today. There is a strong sense of high purpose. Planners are bursting with new projects. Immigrants are pouring in by the thousands monthly. The first rains have just come and they have given the land a cool clean feeling. I have made perhaps 30 trips to this country and it has never looked better.

What is happening? There is a new port being built at Ashdod, millions of tons of rock and concrete being poured into the sea to form jetties and breakwaters, to handle millions of tons of shipping as exports grow and Haifa alone will not be able to manage the volume. Behind the port a new city is expanding across the sand dunes. People are moving in faster than the apartment blocks are finished. It is all sound - pile drivers pounding, concrete mixers roaring, trucks whining. It is growth, strong and vigorous.

There is a new town being fashioned at Arad, in an area of a quarter million acres between Beersheba and the Dead Sea, of rock-strewn rolling hills looking something like we imagine the surface of the moon must be. Craggy cliffs, no trees, the vast terrain disappearing off into the hazy distances, an occasional black Beduin tent, a rare raven, and flint rocks cast about like large marbles - these are the distinguishing marks of the region. In the middle of this more than a thousand people now live - and they say they shall be 50,000 in ten years. It is exciting and unbelievable - yet I have no doubt it will happen.

There is a new agricultural plan for the central and western Galilee; a new string of settlements being planned for the long valley between Sdom and Elath, new evaporation plans being fabricated in the Dead Sea as 40 square miles of water are diked off; new roads being flung all over the country; new skyscrapers in Tel Aviv; new eight and nine story dwelling units creeping across the hillsides of Haifa; and another phase of the national water project nearing completion with new pumping stations, reservoirs and miles of underground pipe 9' in diameter to carry the life-giving water from north to south.

There are dozens of new things to be seen and sensed and savored - all of which were born out of creative planning and imagination of the past few years. There will be dozens of new things to be seen in the future which today lie in the brains and dreams of eager hopeful men. Heads of state and heads of banks, generals of armies and director-generals of ministries from scores of countries on all continents have now passed through Israel and passed their judgements. There is no doubt in anyone's mind that a brilliant success has been made and the Jewish nation reascent is launched on the path of a great new historic creativity.

Behind all this surging growth lies one fact - the immigration into this country of tens of thousands of people each year. The people create the demand which makes growth necessary, and the people provide the manpower by which it becomes possible. At one and the same time two tremendous needs are mutually served. Jews need to be saved and rescued; Israel needs these very Jews in order to grow. Without this happy coincidence of historic forces the miracle would have not occurred.

We are now in the third year of very high immigration, after a comparative lull of three years. The figures are as follows:

1958	-	26,000
1959	-	23,000
1960	-	24,000
1961	-	47,000
1962	-	61,000
1963 (est.)	-	even higher

It is not that there was less desire in the earlier years on the part of Jews to come here - there was simply less possibility for them to get out of their various countries of residence. Movements depend upon political opportunity. For the past three years the chances have been good, and people have taken advantage. Our expectation is that 1964 will show even larger numbers than 1963, although I have written to you often enough that no one can guarantee when a particular country will open or close its door. I am writing to you now as we see the future now.

This tremendous flood of people is not simply a statistic. Every number is a person, and every person is a warm, flesh and blood man, whose life we have saved by this magical process of immigration. This has been our primary concern and this rescue operation shall remain primary as long as there are any Jews on any continent who want to get out, can get out or must get out. This life-saving work shall long be a source of pride to American Jews, particularly to those whose generosity has helped make it possible.

I shall not go into written details of the prognosis for 1964. You know the countries from which they can now leave; you know the painful difficulties they face in the process; you know the astronomic costs; you know the jeopardies involved. Suffice it to say that there are two operative facts for 1964; one, more people will be rescued, and, two, the cost per person will be more expensive than in any previous year. The reasons for this I cannot spell out in this letter.

And so we have this picture of growth - Jews crowding their way here, coming to freedom and dignity after oppression or persecution, requiring housing and clothing and schools and

food and transportation and furniture and the thousand items of modern civilized life. More workers are needed to build the more houses, and staff the more plants, and grow the more food. Thus almost all who arrive are swallowed up in the growth pattern and gradually find their place.

But behind all this there is another story, a story not so obvious on the surface, a story often not obvious at all until it is searched out by a little scratching below the surface. That is the story of these men, women and children for whom the process of absorption is not quite so happy and so successful. There is today in this prospering Israel a social problem involving perhaps as many as one-fourth of all the immigrants who have come in the 15 years of Israel's independence.

It is a crisis composed of many factors: The 20,000 people still living in the primitive ma'abara dwellings of the transit camps, tin huts or wooden shacks; the 30,000 families living in inadequate space, families of 8 and 10 persons who share 500 sq. ft.; the tens of thousands of teenagers, who are finished with primary school, not old enough for the army, have no secondary or vocational school to which to go, and no recreational facilities particularly in the raw new development towns; the thousands of social cases who are either blind, have TB, or in any other way are incapacitated from earning an ordinary living so they must live on a grossly inadequate relief grant; the untrainable or overaged who cannot get regular employment and must settle for the WPA-type of work which earns them \$40-42 per month.

The vast immigration of the past years has resulted in the establishment of many new towns called "development areas". Not everyone could crowd into the big cities or established townships, nor was it desirable that they should. Empty spots on Israel's map had to be filled, and tens of new development towns were staked out. It is in these towns, which the average tourist never sees that the problems exist. How many, even of Israel's most avid friends and supporters, have ever been to or so much as heard of Sderot, Yerucham, Yavne, Ma'alot. Here in these places, with populations of 4, 5, or 6,000 one meets the social absorption crisis at first hand.

I do not want this portion of the story to develop out of perspective. We must see it in proper balance. I bring it to your attention because it is necessary for you to see the total canvas. We have placed our primary emphasis on the rescue operation - getting people here - and have spent the greatest portion of our UJA funds for that purpose. But rescue does not end when we successfully land a man on Israeli soil. His further absorption into the life here so that he becomes a self-supporting self-respecting full citizen is also part of the rescue operation. Unfortunately, we have never raised enough money to do both jobs fully - the rescue and the absorption. As a matter of fact, the citizens of Israel, hard-pressed with taxes as they are, contribute twice as much to this work as we do. Incredible as it sounds, we only pay \$1 toward immigration and absorption costs and the Israeli pays \$2. I want to bring this to your attention, for it seems to me we have a responsibility



to complete what we start. Once we have brought the man here we cannot simply drop him. If most new immigrants make their own successful integration we can be happy. If a minority percentage require additional assistance for whatever reason, we must raise more funds to help further. Failure to do this will, in the judgment of some people, permit the social crisis to fester and perhaps explode some day into social violence. This we should seek to avoid at any cost.

No description about life in Israel is ever complete without reference to the military or security situation. The Arab nations continue to threaten - openly and violently. Whatever the disunity, rivalry or even hatred which separates them, on one score they all speak with the same voice - namely, their intention to make war on Israel. The blaring of their radios never ceases; a month never passes without some infiltration from Egypt; tractors working in the Galilee draw Syrian fire; and the flow of arms to them from their main supplier appears to be endless. Nasser says he will destroy Israel when he is ready.

In the face of all this, Israel must continue to maintain a defense posture which is an ever-increasing drain on money and manpower. A staggering proportion of the national budget goes for defense. The difference in costs between the weapons of 15 years ago and those needed today is almost beyond imagination. This entire burden is on the shoulders of the Israeli citizen and taxpayer. There is no relief for him from any quarter. No one else can help with this, and no one else does. The amount grows every year.

Before coming to Israel the UJA Mission had a three day meeting in Italy, under the auspices of the Joint Distribution Committee. The purpose was to receive a thorough briefing on the problems of Jews in other countries. We were given a full analysis of the condition of Algerian Jews now living in France; of Moroccan Jews; of conditions in various eastern European countries; of Iran, by our own General Chairman, Mr. Joseph Meyerhoff, who together with his wife went there personally and toured the whole country to see for himself and report to us what was happening. We heard from the representatives of ORT about the vocational training program which embraces 40,000 students in schools in 20 different countries. We learned from the United HIAS Service Director about the 9,000 Jews they are successfully resettling in various free lands beside Israel. The total picture that emerged was one of constant and hopeful progress, but yet many problems to be solved.

With regard to the Algerians in France, there is a growing urgency for increased support, since the time has run out when special grants were made by the French Government. The arrangement was that the subsidies would stop or be cut down one year after the repatriate had arrived in France. That year is now over - and we find, as an example, that an older married couple, over 65 years of age who used to receive \$75 per month will now receive only \$50 and perhaps even less. They could hardly live on the \$75. Obviously, they will need supplementary cash grants, and a large share of this burden will ultimately fall back on the JDC. The number of people applying for additional help is mounting in every city in France. It is estimated that 35,000 families came across from Algeria to France, and that 5,500 need help - or roughly one family out of seven. That is a tremendous caseload and will require more funds.

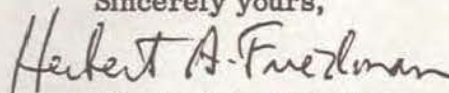
The story of Iran, as told by Mr. Meyerhoff and the JDC director for that country, was a chilling tale of poverty, misery and ghettos. This picture is gradually being brightened as the work of education and rehabilitation goes on year after year. Fifteen years ago the Jewish infant mortality rate was 400 per 1,000 - 40% of the babies died in their first year of life. Today it is 30 per 1,000. The killing diseases are being cured; all children are now in schools; there are day care centers, clinics, cash relief; and a multitude of other ameliorating services.

I cannot give you in this letter all the details of all the country reports that we received in Rome. The general observation is that the JDC is working with skill and compassion to carry out the broad policy which American Jews have entrusted to it; to help in every way possible to improve the physical and spiritual condition of Jewish people and communities everywhere that they are in need. These last words, as I write them, seem so impersonal. Under this broad umbrella policy you must draw all the mental images. Think of a kindergarten, set up under North African palm trees with the children eating well; think of a hospital in Asia where for the first time mothers are taught to use pasteurized milk; think of a canteen in a European country where an old widow eats her only hot meal of the day. These are the things we heard about -- the old stories which are always new and refresh the soul with the knowledge that our dollars generously given are transmuted by skilled social workers into a little happier life for scores of thousands of our brothers.

One last thing - a request. I would urge you to plan to attend the UJA National Conference in New York at the new Hilton Hotel at Rockefeller Center on December 5th - 8th. Here you will have the opportunity to listen to the whole exciting story. Mr. Moshe Sharett, Chairman of the Jewish Agency, is coming from Israel to tell about immigration. Mr. Charles Jordan, Overseas Director of the JDC, is coming from Geneva to tell about the global problems of Jews. Ambassador Harman, Dr. Abram Sachar, and many other important personalities will be present to speak. Above all, at the Saturday night banquet, we will have Golda Meir and Chief Justice Earl Warren. A brilliant panoply of experienced and qualified people will interpret American Jewry's role for the year ahead as the UJA continues its life-saving work. I can assure you it will be a wonderful conference. Please come. Write to the UJA at 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York 19, for reservations.

A wonderful thing happened down in the Negev where we went to see Mr. Ben Gurion. There was a real sense of excitement in the room. The 77 year old patriarch, dressed in khaki sweater and slacks, spoke of his vision of the development of the desert in the future. One of the Mission members asked if B. G. expected to live down there and work for the next 25 years. With a twinkle in his eye, the old man said - "why only 25?" This is how we view the future - rich with challenge, and filled with promise. This is the unconquerable spirit of the new Jewish determination.

Sincerely yours,



Herbert A. Friedman  
Executive Vice Chairman  
United Jewish Appeal