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Personal Letter

From

RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN

Executive Vice-Chairman, United Jewish Appeal

1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N. Y. 10019

6 November 1967

Dear friend,

History moves with unbelievable speed. We find ourselves, only a few months after the war in June, again facing a period of grave danger which will test the measure of our understanding and the depth of our devotion.

Israel won the war, but there is yet no peace. Look at the calendar of major (by no means all) episodes since the cease-fire was proclaimed on June 10:

- 18 June - First violation - Syrians fire on Israelis at Kunetra
- 2 July - Egypt attacks across Suez Canal in company strength
- 8 July - Egyptian tanks and artillery fire on Israelis at Kantara
- 11 July - Egyptian bombers fly over Sinai - one shot down
- 16 July - Air battle over southern end of Canal. Israelis shoot down 5 MIGs and one Sukhoi, lose one
- 3 Aug. - Jordanian troops fire across Jordan River for third day in row
- 26 Aug. - Egyptian Sukhoi shot down over Israel air base in Sinai
- 4 Sept. - Artillery duel across Suez Canal
- 5 Sept. - Mortar duel across Jordan near Damia Bridge
- 10 Sept. - Mines laid by saboteurs explode inside Kibbutz Sa'ad
- 21 Sept. - Artillery duel at Kantara
- 8 Oct. - Bomb placed in Zion cinema in Jerusalem, luckily found, courageously carried away by police officer, exploded seconds after being thrown into vacant lot. Death toll could have been very high.
- 11 Oct. - Egyptian MIG-21 shot down in dog fight over Sinai desert
- 12 Oct. - 24 members of Fatah gang, thought to be responsible for recent outrages in Jerusalem including abortive cinema bomb, arrested. Gang possessed large quantities of arms, explosives, 5 vehicles, radios, etc.

- 13 Oct. - Two Israeli border policemen wounded when their jeep ran across and exploded a mine, near Kfar Ruppin.
- 14 Oct. - (Yom Kippur Day) - Artillery duel with Jordanians who opened fire near town of Beth Shean.
- 21 Oct. - Egyptian missiles sink Israeli destroyer - 47 men lost and 91 wounded
- 22 Oct. - Eleven saboteurs, trained by Syria, captured in cave near Gilboa
- 24 Oct. - Egyptian mortar barrage provoked Israeli artillery response which shelled two refineries in Suez and destroyed an estimated 80% of Egypt's oil refinery capacity.
- 25 Oct. - Two Israeli soldiers killed and two wounded in clash with infiltrators from Jordan.

The largest UJA Study Mission ever to be organized, almost 600 persons, was in Israel during the time in October that several of these episodes occurred - most notably, the sinking of the Israeli destroyer and the shelling of the Egyptian oil refineries in Suez. The members of the mission handled themselves admirably. Morale was high, everyone adhered to schedule, no one cancelled early and left for home. They went on with their work, travelled to the new territories, and set an inspiring example of serious devotion to duty.

The Mission had a most thorough briefing by the leaders of Israel, who spoke frankly, in the mood of brother to brother, in the mood of the unity and solidarity which has existed since June. Perhaps the best way to summarize what was said is to select some relevant quotations from the speeches.

ESHKOL

"The war is over, but the emergency is still with us.

"The war is behind us - but it has not ended.

"I am not at all certain that the war is behind us and not ahead of us too."

EBAN

"Whereas the first six days of creation were mercifully followed by a day of rest, Israel's six days of battle brought us no repose, but rather the immediate opening of a new and no less crucial struggle for security and peace.

"Never never again shall Israel be brought to the situation that it knew on 5 June. This time we shall not be satisfied with anything less than peace; a specific, overt, public and contractual engagement by each Arab state based upon mutual recognition of sovereignty. No ceasefires, truces,

armistices, states of non-belligerency, but the normal peaceful relations that should apply between sovereign States. This is perhaps one of the strangest wars in history: we find the victors suing for peace and the vanquished calling for unconditional surrender.

"The old lines don't exist, there is only the ceasefire map, and there will never be another map, until the peace map is mutually agreed. Therefore, we shall stay where we are and we shall not move an inch until there is peace; and when there is peace, we shall undertake such movements as the agreed peace dispositions will dictate."

SAPIR

"Unfortunately, our victory has not yet brought us peace, as you very well know. We still have to maintain a security alertness, as these are days of neither peace nor war.

"Israel's expenditure on security is a higher percentage of our gross national product even than the 9½% which is the rate in the United States.

"For many years the UJA helped bring, house, educate and socially absorb, one and one quarter million immigrants who landed here during the previous 18 years of existence. In this 19th year we financed a war, while you accepted, through the emergency fund, the burden of these absorption expenses.

"We still have the burden of long-term absorption. In these trying days this is not a job we can do alone - certainly not in view of the security expenditures awaiting us. We continue to require your help. We cannot carry the burden of the normal economic growth together with the more-than-normal urgent need to replenish our arsenal."

ALLON

"Although we won a tremendous war of survival, we are still at war, from every point of view - exchanges of fire, naval battles, rearmament, casualties, and tremendous investment in new weapons.

"Our policy remains as it was in the past; not to seek a military victory but to avert the war altogether. This can be achieved only if our military strength is obvious not only to us but also to the other side.

"We don't want a fourth war - we are determined to turn the third war into the last one if we can. But sometimes, to avert a war is more costly than even to win it."

PINCUS

"We know that the Arab world and the Arab leadership believe that they can succeed in the fourth round if they time it correctly. Their re-arming has been at a pace that beggars description. 80% of the Egyptian material has already been replaced.

"The harsh reality is that we are faced in Israel with the enormous relief of knowing that there is no knife any longer at our jugular vein, as there was on June 5. But we know, too, that maybe we are on the verge of our greatest struggle, because it may be the decisive struggle.

"All of you know that prior to the war we were in the throes of an economic crisis, which has enormous social consequences. Our unemployment problem isn't over. There are hundreds of thousands of people who are illiterate. There are three hundred thousand people described by a prominent social worker as living below the poverty line.

"You will see gradually - I've already felt it - a running down in the development towns at the kindergarten level, at the feeding level, at the secondary education level. You will see more and more where the weakest members of the community - the hundreds of thousands of new immigrants - are going to be hurt most.

"There is a job for the government to do; defense, arms, all the things that a government is obliged to do. Bringing Jews here, destitute Jews, giving them the right to live, the opportunity to live a dignified life; that's the job of the free Jewish world.

"And the free Jewish world accepted it on paper. After 20 years of statehood, the Israeli taxpayer has taken on a greater share of that work which should have been done by the Jews outside.

"They were at our throats, and we answered. They are readying themselves again. I hope and pray that you will understand that the dimensions of the emergency today are no smaller than they were in June; in a very real sense they are greater."

SUMMARY OF POSITION TODAY

1. No peace - Arabs show not slightest willingness to talk.
2. Arabs rearming rapidly - faster than anyone believed possible. Egyptians already re-supplied by Russia up to 80% of June losses. Syria also. Only Jordan not yet replaced aircraft.
3. El-Fatah gangs of saboteurs constantly infiltrating, planting mines and explosives. Many Israeli casualties. Police continue to round them up. So far 300 captured - but many more may be loose.
4. Boldness of attack on destroyer "Elath," using Russian missiles, is dangerous sign. Ship was in international waters.
5. Cairo has announced evacuation of civilians from towns of Ismailia and Suez - already over 200,000 have been moved - and is preparing to evacuate Port Said. This is another dangerous sign.
6. United States government has reiterated its statement of last 19 June. Eban met with Johnson on 24 October and said it was the best talk he has ever had with Mr. Johnson.
7. Israeli policy is to remain where she is, holding all territory, until Arabs are ready to talk peace. This may mean a long wait.
8. Israel must replace the losses of June war - and even more than that, in order to deter Arabs from attempting fourth round. She must do it quickly in face of Arab rearming.
9. U. S. State Department announced on 24 October that Israel will get Skyhawk fighter planes. These must be paid for. The announcement included Morocco, Libya, Lebanon, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia as being also eligible to receive planes. Jordan omitted.
10. Total cost of Israel military security needs will be a higher percentage of her gross national product even than the 9½% of the United States which includes the tremendous expenditures in Vietnam.
11. Social problems in Israel continue: high unemployment, illiteracy, economic weakness in development towns among new immigrants, poverty.
12. Immigration into Israel continues; many Jews in North African Moslem countries whose lives were affected, even endangered during June, have left those countries and gone to France and Italy, from whence they come to Israel - and many come directly. Estimated that at least 20,000 will be coming in the year ahead.
13. Israel cannot maintain double burden of fantastic security costs and sizeable social welfare costs. Latter job is really responsibility of free world Jewry.

In addition to the overwhelming magnitude of the military-political situation, there are two other aspects of contemporary life which we must not overlook. One is the condition of Jews outside Israel, particularly, in the Moslem countries and the other is the cluster of social problems inside Israel involving a large underprivileged portion of the population.

Concerning the first point, the Joint Distribution Committee has issued a report of the status in various countries:

- Morocco Tension is widespread among Jews, in spite of the friendly attitude of the King. Many are leaving. There are no exact figures -- but approximately 10,000 middle-class people departed as soon as they could. There was a boycott against Jewish-owned business. Trade unions were pressing for the exclusion of Jews from employment in government and private industry. Loss of income has resulted in an increase of relief help required.
- Tunisia There was widespread mob violence on June 5. The chief synagogue was burned and gutted. Over 100 Jewish establishments were destroyed or damaged. Only the intervention of President Bourguiba prevented greater damage. There was an attempt to set the JDC office ablaze.
- Libya Almost the entire Jewish population has fled the country, mostly to Italy, from whence they are moving to Israel and seeking resettlement elsewhere, through the United Hias Service. Most of the Jewish businesses were destroyed by fire.
- Egypt Factual information is scarce - but apparently hundreds of Jews are still in prison, being held under appalling conditions.

There is one new situation in the JDC picture. For the first time in eighteen years, the JDC is now enabled to bring assistance in a systematic fashion to the Jews in Rumania. A basic relief program will aid the most needy through the Federation of Jewish Communities, headed by Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen. The program will assist those unable to work, due to sickness or age; those whose income is below a very minimum standard; and those who have no children to help them, either in Rumania or abroad. Within these very stringent criteria, over 2000 cases received cash assistance in August. Other forms of help consist of meals served in Kosher canteens, winter clothing, wood for heating, religious supplies (for there is complete religious freedom in Rumania) and housekeeping services for the bedridden. The main interest of the Jews of Rumania is to emigrate and reunite with their families, but it is good to know that as a result of the understanding attitude of the Rumanian government, we are also now able to offer these welfare aids.

Regarding the social problems inside Israel, there is a volume to be written. Suffice it to say that there are hundreds of millions of dollars required in the areas of immigrant transportation, housing, occupational training (ORT is doing a wonderful job), education at all levels, health services, welfare needs and agricultural settlements. These areas of work, so broadly categorized, do not describe the human problems at all. An unemployed, illiterate immigrant, with a large family, living in overcrowded quarters, is a statistic, when you describe him as one of the 300,000 people living below the poverty line. But he is a human being, when you describe him as a father, bewildered at his inability to control his children, worried because he cannot feed them well, frightened because they may become school dropouts, anguished at how drab their lives are in the barren town in which they live.

Israel was united in war. Enemy fire killed Ashkenazi and Sephardi boys with equal impartiality. In death there was no barrier or discrimination. They lie peacefully side by side in the National Military Cemetery. But in order for this to be so in life, as well as in sacrificial death, even greater exertions must be made in favor of the underprivileged. There must be one Israel in peace as well as in war.

I think the Mission members understood what they saw and heard. Edward Ginsberg, of Cleveland, Associate General Chairman of the UJA, speaking at the opening session said: "There is a new challenge and a new task to be met. We are coming face to face with the realization that victory has not yet been followed by peace and that until there is real peace there is no victory." Night after night in small groups, he led the discussions, as the mission members sought to understand the realities and grappled with their consciences and their personal responsibilities.

In a magnificent speech at the final dinner, which was interrupted often by heavy applause, Max Fisher, the General Chairman, summed up in stirring words, the feelings of the Mission. Responding to the speech of the Prime Minister, calling for increased help, Mr. Fisher, who made us all very proud by the forceful manner in which he represented American Jewry, said:

"Standing together with you on the great heights Israel reached in June, we not only can look back, but we can also look ahead. The vistas ahead are exciting and inspiring.

"We see a day when Jews will come here from the free world and from places that are now cut off. We see an Israel that is economically strong and independent, and we will work with you to make it so. There was just one Israel in war, and we shall help you build one Israel in peace. We see an Israel of superb achievement in all the accomplishments of man. And finally, we see an Israel at peace at last. We believe that goal can be won.

"Our answer, Mr. Eshkol, is simply this: we who have travelled with you this far, will travel with you to final victory. Everything we can do, we will do. You have said the emergency continues, our answer is the Emergency Fund will also continue. I say this, not only for myself but also for this great audience and the communities they represent, from coast to coast. These communities through the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, have already voted to support UJA by conducting another great Emergency Fund.

"And I pledge you, then, that each one of us here will make it his personal responsibility to see that the Emergency Fund measures up in every way to the great days of June.

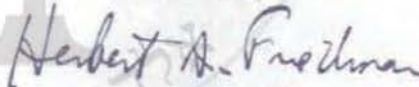
"Mr. Prime Minister, we come here because we are very proud of Israel. We will leave happy in the knowledge that you are also a little proud of us."

One hundred and sixty six gifts were made, with the approach of giving more to the regular campaign as well as more to the emergency fund, and the results of these gifts are as follows:

	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>
Regular	\$2,502,000	\$2,840,000
Emergency	5,260,000	6,160,000

In the face of this response, dear friend, I can only say that if you do not believe in miracles, you are not a realist.

Very truly yours,



Herbert A. Friedman