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PRESS CONFERENCE WITH RABBI FRIEDMAN



United Jewish Appeal
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January 14, 1957

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The Press Conference with Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman convened at 11:10 A.M. on Monday, January 14, 1957 at the offices of the United Jewish Appeal, 165 West 46th Street, New York, New York.

MR. RAE LEVY: Thanks very much for coming. Rabbi Friedman, whom you all know, has just returned this weekend from a ten day survey of the refugee situation overseas. The Egyptians are coming out of Egypt and also the Hungarian Jews are part of a Hungarian exodus, and others.

Additionally, we have something in the way of a novelty at these press conferences, but a grim sort of novelty. I will let him introduce that to you.

The release will be up in about fifteen or twenty minutes. We do have a full release. I am going to turn the meeting over to Rabbi Friedman to make a statement on the Jewish refugee situation as it exists overseas now, and we will then call on our guest, and we will throw the meeting open to questions.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Gentlemen, let me thank you for coming. I came back the day before yesterday and the total picture as I see it overseas is quite shocking. It is reminiscent to me of ten years ago when it was usual for us

to think in terms of scores of thousands of refugees wandering around on the roads of Europe. We haven't had that kind of feeling or that kind of experience in a decade. I think we've got it again.

Without any rhetoric let me say simply this: my impression on the Egyptian situation is that we are confronted with a total expulsion of all the Jews of Egypt. I think this is a planned program. I think it was planned long before the events of October 29th. I think there are two motives behind it. One is to attempt to expropriate all the wealth of the Jews of Egypt, and the second is to get rid of them.

I have no access to Nasser's mentality but if I look at the picture it seems to me that those are his two basic motivations.

Let me tell you something which is completely unknown. There have already been thrown out of Egypt more than seven thousand Jews of the total population. When I say unknown, nobody has been able to make a calculation and I finally am in possession of one, and I am quite satisfied that these facts are accurate. Almost thirty vessels have left Egypt in the last eight weeks and an uncounted

number of airplanes. Every ship and every plane leaving Egypt has been carrying Jews in large numbers and in small numbers, and the total list of all of the vessels that we have been able to make up plus an estimate on the number of airplanes gives us the figure of something over seven thousand Jews of Egypt who have already been expelled.

A VOICE: How many?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: There are two figures about the total population of Egypt. On the low side you get something between 45 and 50,000. On the high side you get as many as 60,000. If you want the breakdown on that, I can give it to you. The Jews of Egypt are in three categories: those who hold foreign passports, French, Italian, British, Greek. They are called foreign passportholders or foreign nationals. The estimates in that group run from 20,000 on the low side to 25,000 on the high side. The internal breakdown within that is also not important. It runs something like six or seven thousand French, six thousand British, six or seven thousand Italian. It comes to a total of 20,000 on the low side, 25,000 on the high side of foreign passportholders.

The second category of Egyptian Jews are Egyptian

citizens running five thousand on the low side to ten thousand on the high side.

The third category are stateless Jews, no citizenship at all, not foreign and not Egyptian. Stateless runs 20,000 on the low side up to 30,000 on the high side.

I think if you add those three categories, high and low, you will get between 45,000 and 60,000, and when I make the statement that I think we are faced with a total expulsion of the entire Jewish population, I think it embraces every one of all three categories; foreign passport-holders, Egyptian citizens and stateless Jews.

Now, of the seven or more than seven thousand who have already been thrown out, our figures are where they are at the moment and are approximately as follows: approximately four thousand in France, approximately five hundred to a thousand in Italy, 1,500 in Israel and about five hundred scattered in miscellaneous places -- a couple of hundred in England, a couple of hundred in Switzerland, a hundred in Greece, five hundred miscellaneous around Europe, and that gets us to about seven thousand.

These are the most accurate figures of which anyone is in possession and I base my concept of the feeling

that the entire population will be expelled on the basis of the fact that already seven thousand out of fifty thousand are out, and from all the stories that all the refugees tell, by the summer this thing will have probably been concluded if it goes along according to the way Nasser is planning it. I would say even the beginning of the summer, and the reason I would say that is this: the date that seems to be uppermost in everybody's mind -- and these are the stories that I got from the people on the ship which landed in Naples -- the critical date in everybody's mind was the 31st of March, and the reason that was the critical date was because that was the date for the renewal of what is called in French the permis de sejour, the residence, the permission to remain in the country which has to be renewed every year, and on the 31st of March is the date on which the new permis de sejour has to be obtained, and the people feel that that is the critical date, and from the talk on the part of just scores and scores of them, they felt that the end of March, the beginning of April would see a total expulsion.

I don't usually like to say things off the record. The International Red Cross arranged for that ship to come

out, the one ship that has arrived, chartered and with a thousand people on board. All other exoduses were arranged by the people themselves going to individual shipping companies and individual airline companies, getting their own passage, two hundred on a boat, a hundred on a boat, forty on a plane. This boat of a thousand people was arranged by the International Red Cross.

The reason that it is off the record is that as far as they are concerned, they wanted to do a job to help try to rescue these Jews. They feel that if their name is connected with it, their ability to work inside of Egypt will be interfered with. I want you to know, because you will see it when it breaks, that they are arranging for a second vessel and it must be off the record until that ship is out, and their name must not be connected with it, but the present plans call for another ship of another thousand people to come out on the 20th. This is the now the 14th and when it hits in Naples on the 24th, 25th, -- it's about a four days passage -- another story will break on the thing, and again they hope their name won't be connected with it because if a third ship is ever necessary and a fourth ship, they are prepared to go on with this work. Our

interest is not to do anything that will hurt that process, so that I wanted you to know that because I don't want to hold anything from you, but that fact we can't use.

However, that fact also leads me to the conclusion that the statement that I make is not rash and not over-exaggerated, because a vessel of a thousand on January sixth and another vessel of a thousand on January 25th, if that is the date it reaches Europe, and another vessel early in February and another vessel late in February, and in between every single day every ship and every plane going out carries Jews -- that is the essential element of the story. I think you know the details of what is happening on all other matters.

The economic terror against the Jews of Egypt is fantastic. It is legitimately entitled to be called a cold pogrom because it is designed to destroy Jews and Jewish life, short actually of killing them. I've got a whole rundown of the economic facts of life that I don't want to bore you with, about businesses that have been confiscated and employees who have been thrown out of jobs and bank accounts that have been blocked, and where there are still a few employees left in their positions, they have Egyptians

at their sides whom they are training to replace themselves and they are told, "When you have trained this Egyptian, you will be thrown out."

The cleverness with which it is being done is also a very complicated thing. No employee of the Egyptian government who is a Jew has been fired. He has been suspended, he has been put, as the French call it, en vacance, on holiday, without pay. He hasn't been fired. He's been suspended, he's been put off without pay. He theoretically has no right to complain. He hasn't lost his job. In practical terms it is obvious he has. He is not being taken back and those employees who are still being kept in certain sensitive positions in the Egyptian administration where the administration would be crippled and paralyzed if they were to be let out offhand, they have been told, "You train an Egyptian replacement and then you will go on holiday." This will be a matter of a month or six weeks or two months until his replacement is ready.

The economic measures are designed to literally starve the Jewish population into submission and cause them to ask voluntarily for exodus from the country. Again, in regard to that matter of expulsion there is an interesting

point. It is being done terribly cleverly. Expulsion orders are being given orally -- orally, very few in writing, so that there is no documentary evidence to pin on the Egyptian government. One or two actual documentary expulsion orders have been gotten out of the country by people on whom they have been served. We have photostatic copies of them. There is one here, an actual expulsion order. "You are ordered to leave the country within a week from today, December the fourth," but this is the exception rather than the rule. Most expulsion orders are given verbally and therefore there is no complaint. There is no one to complain to.

The Jews have been placed, for the purpose of my summarizing in my own mind what happened there, in three categories: those whose businesses have been confiscated -- and that amounts to about seven hundred -- those who are on a blacklist -- and that amounts to something over eight hundred and the blacklist is added to every day. You get on the blacklist, by the way, if you have ever received a letter from Israel or if you have been a member of the Jewish Maccabee Athletic Club or for any one of a number of reasons or simply by being denounced, and the third category

are those who have been interned, and the number runs somewhere between five hundred and a thousand.

Those three categories of people, those whose businesses have been confiscated, those who are on the blacklist, those who have been interned -- those three groups of people are in the worst possible condition. They literally have no money with which to eat. They are selling furniture, and not large quantities of furniture either, because when you start to sell a large quantity of furniture then automatically you become suspect, and if you haven't already been thrown on the blacklist you are thrown on and you can't sell anything, so that it is a program of economic terrorization designed to starve and to humiliate and to cause people to ask voluntarily for permission to leave Egypt.

As many, many of the refugees kept putting it, "We were not expelled. We were advised" -- and one man said to me, "Put the 'advised' in quotation marks. We were advised to leave the country." This advice meant that they were running for their lives because they knew there was no way for them to live.

You get a program of expulsion, imprisonment,

economic expropriation, and I think those things add up to a state of affairs which can legitimately be called cold pogrom. I have tried to talk fast and I don't know whether I have covered all the points. I just want to say that I am giving this information to our most responsible leadership around the country because it is clear to me that we are faced with an enormous financial problem involving 45 or 50 or 55,000 people.

Secondly, I want to make this public because I think that the world has to know this, and I think that there has been -- I don't want to say a conspiracy of silence here in the United States, because there have been some newspaper reports published -- but on too many sides I hear the statement, officially and unofficially, "Well, we don't have enough information about this." You hear it from Washington and you hear it from other groups. "We don't have enough information. We are not sure about what is going on. We are seeking more information." Well, I don't know what more information this this has to be shown to anybody.

And what I would like to do is ontroduce to you a person who I think represents all the information that

anybody needs. I want this gentleman on my right to talk to you for a few minutes. Then you can ask him and me questions. I just want to say this: his name is David Menachem. That is the name we have given to him. That is not his real name. We tried to make a name which would not get anybody in trouble. I am not being melodramatic about this but it is very simple and please don't print this, but this is the point: he has still a sister and she has seven children. That sister and her seven children are still in Egypt. They are trying to get out. They will be getting out in a week, ten days, as soon as we can get them out or as soon as they can get themselves out. But the family is still in Egypt.

MR. SPIEGEL: Do you even want to use that?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: You use your judgment. I am prepared to say that I have invited him to come to the United States and I will tell you very simply how this happened. In a center in Paris where there about three or four hundred Egyptian Jews, I went over there a week or so ago and I tried to look for somebody who could give me a story and I found this gentleman, and as he talked it occurred to me that I ought to bring him over here, and very
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quickly we got a visa for him from the American Embassy in Paris, and he is here for a few days.

I want him to tell the story to our top leadership and I want him to tell his story to you for public reproduction, but I can't use his real name, and I think you can say why his real name can't be used, because he still has family in Egypt. I wouldn't identify a sister and seven children because they could make a check of who has seven children.

A VOICE: Say relatives.

MR. SPIEGEL: Just one question. For a further dramatic impact, this vivid account you have given we could say has been based on the fact that you have had these almost daily interviews with all these people whom you have met, the Egyptian Jews abroad, is that right?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: It is correct. I met these Egyptian Jews in Paris, I met them on buses where they were being taken down to a large center which we are maintaining in Vichy where there about seven hundred Jews concentrated. There are five hundred almost concentrated in Marseilles. I talked to them before they were shipped out there. I went down to Rome and spoke to them in Rome.

I went to Naples to meet the ship and spoke to them in Naples, hundreds of them. I would say that in the course of five or six days I spoke literally to hundreds of Egyptian Jews.

MR. TOBENKIN: What it comes to -- you returned Saturday. You were in Italy and France and where else?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Austria on the Hungarian story which I will come to after we finish the Egyptian side. I was in Austria for three days, over to the Hungarian border and got shot at and didn't like the feeling.

In Paris in a gymnasium actually of a school -- it is called the gymnase japy, in a large basketball court which had been divided up into cubicles with yellow shower curtains, there were cots put out and there were several hundred people there, and I found this fellow and started talking to him, and then decided to ought to bring him over here, and it all worked in a matter of a few days. We are using the name David Menachem. There will be no pictures of him. If they want him on television, we will say no because he's got two sisters of his family in France and the other one and the children still to come from Egypt.

Let me just make it very clear that Mr. Menachem

is no leader of Egyptian Jewry. He is not a member of the Jewish community, the official Jewish community of Cairo or Alexandria. He is to me the best example to bring here because he is vox populi. He is just an ordinary Jew of Egypt. He is literate and he is verbal and he can speak as well, as you will hear, and he knows how to describe what has happened to him, but I am not presenting him as the head of the Egyptian Jewish community who is going to speak officially for all the Jews.

He is telling his own story, but in telling his own story I am convinced that it is a typical cross-section story, and that is why I invited him to come over here, and I am very happy to present to you Mr. Menachem, and he can tell you his own version of his own personal experiences.

MR. MENACHEM: First let me thank all of you who have come here to hear me, because we Jews of Egypt believe that what we need is a Moses. I am speaking from personal experience, of what happened to me in Egypt.

My family was born in Egypt for three generations. After what we have been through, these latest events, I can say it may be that just before the coming summer all

the Jews will be thrown out of Egypt and our goal, you can say, is Israel.

Speaking not only of sequestration and confiscated property, the way the Egyptians have dealt with us is to ill-treat us. Some of us have been tortured. I know them personally. I won't give names because they have relatives too in Egypt at this time.

You could say I was a commercial agent in a French company, and from October until the tenth of November we feared and --

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Why don't you give them the dates as you gave them to me of what happened to you?

MR. MENACHEM: Well, when the Israeli attack began we were so scared that we fled town for ten days.

A VOICE: From where?

MR. MENACHEM: From Cairo. Then we returned home, lived there for one or two days and then one evening, about ten o'clock --

RABBI FRIEDMAN: You told me the date was the eleventh of November.

MR. MENACHEM: 11th or 12th. I had gone to a movie. When I returned home I found all my family mute,

like statues, not speaking to me, not even greeting me good evening. I asked what had happened. They told me they had received a visit from Egyptian officers in civilian clothes and they had signed papers not to move out of the house until further instructions. By then we knew how the Egyptian officers came and took people to jail. Suppose you were just having your dinner, dressed in pajamas. Well, they took us just like that. If, from the shock, you asked for a cup of water, they wouldn't let you get the cup of water. They went themselves to the kitchen and got it for you because they were afraid you might commit suicide.

By midnight exactly an officer came and the first thing he said was, "You, So-and-So, will sign this paper." Not to make any trouble I signed first and then asked what was the story. He said, "You are not allowed to move and we have given orders to the doorman downstairs not to let you leave. Not a Jew is allowed to leave the house, so you had better stay here." We stayed there for ten days. We counted on our servant to bring us food. Thank God we had a little money but we also had to borrow some from the neighbors and friends who were allowed to

leave -- not Jews.

Then ten days later we received instructions to report to the police station and there I went and was ordered to leave. Because of my shortage of funds, having no official papers to leave, I went to my company to cash my salary check. I borrowed money and I paid for my ticket.

On the fourth of December I was in Paris.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: How did you come out?

MR. MENACHEM: You had to have a visa to get out. I would say the most decent of all the consuls in Egypt was the Italian Consul. My cousin who was thrown out before me is an Italian Jew. He went to the Italian Consul asking for his visa and he told me these very words: the Italian Consul shut the doors and talked to Italians asking for that visa and told my cousin, "We have among us Christians and Jews, Italian. The Christians can leave afterwards. Let us give the Jews the first chance to get out."

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Let me interrupt, gentlemen. That is a fact and the Italian government has been wonderful about it. I don't think that we ought to use that sentence.

There is no point in putting friends of ours in jeopardy, that the Italian government actually gave preference to Jews over Christians.

MR. LEVY: The use of the name International Red Cross with the ship has been connected up.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: You didn't get it from me, because I haven't been in the country and I don't know. Mr. Menachem left Egypt, by the way, on a Sabina Airlines plane to Belgium -- typical of the way Jews got on all kinds of aircraft going anywhere to Europe, and while he said that the Italian government has been wonderful, I think it should also be noted that the French and the Belgian governments have also admitted for entrance even stateless Jews who have no passports. European governments are simply shocked by this thing and are trying to help and regularities are being waived and Jews are coming into Europe, and they are coming in with transit visas, and for once we don't see them blocked by the red tape, which is why we have a good hope that we can actually rescue them if we can keep enough money going, and if no political conditions occur which will block their exit.

MR. LEVY: May we go ahead now, gentlemen, and

Mr. Menachem will start, and he will conclude shortly and we will throw open the meeting to questions.

MR. MENACHEM: I would also like to mention the way in which the expulsion of the Jews is taking place. They are being expelled by stages. First, those who are holders of foreign passports, then the stateless, and that usually goes by living areas. Just as you say Times Square, Rockefeller Center, Madison Square, every living area is being emptied of its Jews, step by step.

Very few Jews have Egyptian citizenship, and according to the new law issued I suppose there are very few who are more than 57 years of age. Everybody who was not born by 1900 is liable to lose his citizenship. Any false accusation, an anonymous letter accusing you of being a Zionist -- you are immediately expelled and sometimes you go under third degree questioning. My sister has been under third degree questioning, and when I met her in Paris she was crying so much that all the people at the station gathered around, asking what had happened.

I suppose it is up to you gentlemen to let the Americans know what will happen in the immediate future if steps are not taken to help the Jews leave as quickly as

possible.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: All right, fellows, I think that every time Menachem starts to tell his story, I can see what happens to him, so that let's leave it here, and if you've got any questions of me or him, let's try to answer them.

A VOICE: Could we know something about the Chief Rabbi? What is his position now?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I can tell you the story on that. You all read the statement that he made in which he said -- the Chief Rabbi Nachoum, who is almost blind and who is about 85 years old -- I think you all read the statement he made in which he said that the situation of Jews in Egypt was fine and so on. I don't remember the details of it. But that was the general tone of it. I got the story on that. There are two versions of it but the two versions are only with minor variations.

He made that statement under extreme pressure and duress. The two versions are, one: that if he was threatened with the arrest of all the Jews of Egypt if he wouldn't make the statement, and the other version was that he was threatened with the confiscation of the property

of every single Jew in Egypt if he wouldn't make the statement.

Now, those are variations on the theme -- either the total arrest or the total expropriation of property. But with those two variations the story remains the same. Half an hour before that press conference was held, he was told about it and given this choice. The press was invited to his house, the radio people were invited to his house, the microphones were all set up, the interview took place in his house and one half hour before the thing took place he was confronted with this, handed a prepared statement and told, "Either you say this or," and then you get one of the other versions. One group of people says the alternative was total arrest; the other group of people tell me the alternative was total expropriation, so that he made this statement with a gun at his head, not literally but figuratively, and I wouldn't want to pass judgment on whether he should or should not have made that statement. Faced with those alternatives it wasn't easy for him to decide what to do but those are the exact circumstances under which that interview took place.

MR. SPIEGEL: May we get the full name of this

chief rabbi?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Chaim Nahum Effendi. Effendi is a title of honor.

JOSH: The Egyptians were circulating here a letter from a lawyer -- I forget his name -- and they say that they will bring him here as a member of the Egyptian community.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I saw a short paragraph at the end of an article somewhere.

JOSH: I wonder if Mr. Menachem could give us the background of that.

MR. SPIEGEL: There are one or two political things I would like to ask him in reference to his statement. Mr. Menachem says that there are four places where they hold these Jews and I was wondering if perhaps he knew of a prison ship in a harbor there or somewhere that they have been using as a prison to hold the Egyptian Jews.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Do you know anything about a ship in the harbor on which they have been holding Egyptian Jews as prisoners?

MR. MENACHEM: We have been confined to our homes since the very outbreak of hostilities. Our telephones

were cut off. Mine was cut off just before hostilities, 15 days before it happened. It could have been out of order but all the telephones of the Jews were cut off, no communication, house arrest, in jail.

A VOICE: Fifteen days prior to the attack?

MR. MENACHEM: It could have been out of order but all the telephones of the Jews were cut off. I wouldn't be sure of all the Jews.

MR. LEVY: When was your telephone cut off? Before October 29th?

MR. SPIEGEL: When was the Israel attack?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: The 29th of October.

The answer about the ship is that you don't know anything about it?

MR. MENACHEM: I don't know. I know the four places. I have seen one of them.

MR. LEVY: You say you saw one?

MR. MENACHEM: I had a chance to see the people who were jailed. Some have relatives there and I went just to have a look.

A VOICE: Do you know anything about what happened to the Jews serving in the Egyptian army? Are they

still there?

MR. MENACHEM: The Egyptian army refuses any Jew born in Egypt or elsewhere. Some have been dismissed. I know a fellow who was a precision fitter. He was forced out.

A VOICE: Outside of cutting off the telephone, were there any other indications of expulsion of Jews prior to October 29th?

MR. MENACHEM: That I just couldn't say.

A VOICE: In this release there are mentioned photostats of the confiscated firms and also the new nationality law of November 23rd. Do we have copies of this?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: We have copies of it. Are we making them available?

MR. LEVY: We can show those. We have those. We will produce those.

MR. TOBENKIN: Is there any evidence that these actions by the Nasser government are inspired by former Nazis?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Did you get the question?

MR. MENACHEM: Yes, I got it. I will answer that.

At the very outbreak of the revolution, there was mentioned in the newspapers 19 names of generals of the Wehrmacht.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: By the outbreak of the revolution, you mean when?

MR. MENACHEM: Before Nasser -- the administration of Naguib.

MR. LEVY: How were they mentioned?

MR. MENACHEM: They were mentioned by a French correspondent, Genevieve Tabuit (?).

MR. LEVY: She said they were assisting in the revolution?

MR. MENACHEM: They were the background, the real revolution-makers, the Nazis. Everything was done at their instructions.

MR. TOBENKIN: Was that 19 or 90?

MR. MENACHEM: 18, in fact.

MR. SPIEGEL: Do you know by any chance whether or not these Nazi generals who were in the Nazi army hold top positions today, and perhaps in a way have been responsible for this so-called brutal efficiency?

MR. MENACHEM: We were rather amazed at the

scheduling and the program of sequestration and the summoning of people to police headquarters, the department of investigation and the expulsion of the Jews. It was time-clocked.

MR. SPIEGEL: Would that make you feel it might be Nazi-inspired, the efficiency of this thing?

MR. MENACHEM: The Nazis at first and recently the Russians.

MR. SPIEGEL: Nazis and Russians involved in this?

MR. MENACHEM: Yes.

MR. TOBENKIN: The ex-Nazis and people with whom the German army have presently employed, or simply with Russia, are the one primarily responsible for this anti-Semitic pogrom, is that what you are saying?

MR. MENACHEM: The efficiency, no. I wouldn't say that.

MR. TOBENKIN: I understand the efficiency. I ask you, is this program inspired by the ex-Nazis and the Russians or is it purely an indigenous thing to Nasser?

MR. MENACHEM: No, this is Nasser's business, not the Nazis. The efficiency comes from the Nazis.

MR. TOBENKIN: It is his idea but they are helping

him with it?

MR. MENACHEM: Yes.

MR. SPIEGEL: Would you say the Nazis and the Communists together jointly?

MR. MENACHEM: Recently the Communists.

MR. SPIEGEL: And not the Nazis?

MR. MENACHEM: No. Both of them are in this business.

MR. SPIEGEL: I sort of want to draw a line of distinction for our story, but the Nazis and the Communists themselves both working in collusion have been responsible in aiding Nasser?

MR. MENACHEM: The administrative part is the Nazis, but with the army and the technical equipment it is the Russians.

MR. TOBENKIN: May I ask you a question off the record for a moment? The fundamental difference between this anti-Semitism and Nazis -- and this is off the record -- is that the Nazis wouldn't let the Jews get out. They said, "You stay here and die." The Nazis didn't want to expel the Jews. They killed them. What I would like to ask you is this: do you fear that if the Jews don't get

out, Nasser may (apparently up to now he hasn't been killing people or doing anything like that) -- but you are in a political position here. Do you want to discuss the possibility that if we don't get them out, something worse is going to happen?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Let's keep it off the record for a minute, as you say, and then we can put it on the record perhaps.

Frankly and personally, I have no evidence to indicate that if we don't get them out they will be killed. I don't have any evidence to that effect as yet. Nobody knows how this thing will develop. It is obvious that Nasser wants to throw them out and it is obvious he wants to get their property. Now, if he fails to do this, if for some reason he can't throw them out and if for some reason he can't get hold of their property, I don't know what he will do, but I don't have any evidence at the moment to indicate that there is another next step.

MR. TOBENKIN: Let's forget the whole business. I don't want to raise the issue.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I think it is better to forget the business because right now the expulsion is going on

and right now they are getting out.

MR. TOBENKIN: You see the point I was making?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I sure do.

MR. LEVY: You are not quite correct. In the beginning of the Hitler regime, he did drive the Jews out.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I wanted to correct that, but if we are going to drop the point, we will drop the whole thing.

MR. TOBENKIN: I thinking of the latter period of the Nazis when they wouldn't let them out.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: The best way to make the comparison at the moment, Paul, is that in the Nazi period between 1933 when he came to power and September 1939 when the war started, Jews couldn't get out. After that it became impossible and they got killed. Therefore, for comparative purposes, and let's keep this off the record because, as I say, I have no evidence, you might say that the situation in Egypt today might be 1936, 1937, 1938. It is not yet 1939 where death orders are ready.

MR. TOBENKIN: Is there a possibility or a probability?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I don't have any indication that

would permit me to make that statement. If I had, believe me, I would make it.

MR. TOBENKIN: Leave it off the record.

DICK: I was going to try to widen this somewhat. Is there any danger to other Jews in North Africa following this situation now both in Egypt and in Israel, in Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: There again, that is a terribly tense and delicate thing where the lives of people are at stake, and the situation is mixed. Bourguiba, for instance, the Prime Minister of Tunis, has actually intervened with Nasser on behalf of Jews who have Tunisian nationality. He has intervened by saying, "You must treat them more moderately." This is a favorable thing.

The Sultan in Morocco has said nothing, but again for political background on this thing, the Sultan of Morocco was pressured six months ago and eight months ago by Nasser not to let the Jews out of Morocco, because they would add to the strength of Israel, and the Sultan gave in to that pressure and the mass emigration of Jews from Morocco was closed off as of June the 11th. Now the Sultan of Morocco can say, "What the hell, Egypt is throwing

her Jews out and they are all going to Israel to strengthen Israel. Why shouldn't we do the same?" So there might be that repercussion. We don't know.

Therefore, if you will permit me to keep that part off the record, all I do want to say about it is that Jews are still coming out of North Africa. This much can go on the record, let's put it that way. There are over three thousand North African Jews in a camp in Marseilles who have come out of North Africa and who are waiting to be brought to Israel, and every ship that goes through takes North African Jews and then stops in an Italian port and picks up Egyptian Jews and takes them over.

MR. TOBENKIN: You pointed out at the beginning of this conference that some Jews are in France and various places, some in Italy. You mentioned Belgium, you mentioned other countries. Can we assume or will you tell us what is the ultimate destination? Where are they going to wind up? In Israel, or don't you know?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Most of them, Paul, by far the largest majority of them are going to wind up in Israel as Mr. Menachem himself said. Our goal is Israel.

MR. TOBENKIN: And you will transport them?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yes.

MR. TOBENKIN: You will have to transport them from France or Italy?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: That is right.

MR. SPIEGEL: That is why we called attention to the acute financial problem involved.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: If you want to get into the financial problem on the thing, it is just going to run to the tens of millions of dollars to handle the Egyptian Jews alone, into the tens of millions. I won't say that every single Jew from Egypt is going to wind up in Israel because there are a few thousand Jews in Egypt who have relatives on the Continent, and if their relatives can manage to take care of them they may stay with their relatives, but I would estimate that of the 45 or 50,000 Jews, ninety percent of them, 85 percent of them --

MR. TOBENKIN: How about those with other citizenship? Mr. Menachem apparently has French citizenship.

MR. SPIEGEL: I'm sorry. 85 percent of these expelled Jews?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I would say ninety.

MR. SPIEGEL: Have this desire to go to Israel?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I can only give you figures on this ship. 976 Jews were on this first ship, the MISR, and of the 976 on the first ship, 885 of them were trans-shipped four days later by their own choice onto another vessel going to Israel. 885 out of 976 gives you the ratio and it is going to be the same on subsequent vessels.

DICK: Do you find that also true of the Hungarian Jews?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Let me not drop this point about the financial responsibility. Our experience has shown us that give a little bit or take a little bit, it costs us about a thousand dollars per person to take a Jew from a land from which he is running away, to take him to Israel, and what we call first year absorption costs. Second, third, fourth year absorption costs later on are an additional burden, but this thousand dollars per head is what we now know to be first year, and if we are talking about 45 or 50,000 Egyptian Jews, that is \$45 or \$50,000,000 right there.

Let's not talk about any other kind of refugees, Hungarian refugees, North African refugees. So we came out with this figure of \$100,000,000 in the Rescue Fund based

upon a concept that in 1957 we would see 100,000 refugees moving out of lands of danger and moving into Israel, and the financial burden of that thing is absolutely staggering. It is bigger than anything we have been faced with.

Let me give you a figure. I don't think it is in the story. The hell with it. Let's put it on the record. The first week in 1957 -- and this is only the second week -- the first week of 1957 two thousand Jews entered Israel, all kinds. Two thousand refugees entered Israel, which gives us the impression that when we drew up this calculation on December the first of 100,000 Jews, that here January first we are already demonstrating that the proportions are correct, because if it goes on at this rate of two thousand in a week, it is 100,000 a year, so we may be off a little bit, but not by a very few thousand, and the thing I want to underline about ^{it} is, we haven't been faced with this kind of an emigration since the first year of Israel's life when she was born.

From May 15, 1948 until a year later, May 1949, in the first year when the DP camps were emptied from Europe, I think a couple of hundred thousand Jews came into Israel. That was the big flood. Since then I don't think we have

had this number, and that is a staggering figure.

MR. SPIEGEL: You call this a record influx?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Absolutely, no exaggeration on that. That is why we really have got to run the kind of a campaign that will be bigger than anything we have done before.

A VOICE: If I may return to the situation within Egypt, the confiscation of Jewish property, was that done pursuant to any particular laws, orders, regulations of the Egyptian government?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yes. The first list that was published had 464 names of businesses on it. I see what they have given you here is the first sheet of it, which goes down to No. 186. These are names and addresses of people whose businesses were confiscated. This is down to 186. There are two or three other sheets carrying up to the total of 464, I think, if I am not mistaken.

A VOICE: Is that an official document?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yes, this is proclaimed under Military Bulletin No. Four dated the 8th of November 1956.

A VOICE: What reason do they give?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: No reason at all. This is an

expropriation of the property of the following people who are persons who are interned and it gives the names and addresses. It doesn't say that they are Jews or that they are rich Jews. By a military proclamation, they have decided to expropriate the property.

A VOICE: What is an internee there, what is his status, how does he become an internee?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: He has been put in jail, arrested and put in jail.

A VOICE: For what reason?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Because he is a Jew.

A VOICE: Why aren't all Jews in prison?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: From what I can gather, they attempted to arrest the richest ones they could put their hands on. They didn't get all of them and they also got poor ones in among the rich ones, but the intent was -- and this is the story that people give me -- the intent was to get the richest ones, get them in jail and while they are in jail expropriate their property, block the bank account, put in an Egyptian manager of the business, take it away from the man.

A VOICE: Is he and his family put in jail?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: In some cases, just he. In some cases more than one member of a family, so that when we talk about five hundred to a thousand people who have been put in jail, this is mostly single members of the family, the head of the business, but in some cases includes additional members of the family. So that it is not a thousand business-owners, heads of families. It might be six hundred, it might be seven hundred with some extra people who were jailed with them.

A VOICE: Do they charge them with anything?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: No, not charged with anything.

A VOICE: They don't go to court or anything like that?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: No.

A VOICE: Do they confiscate businesses from Jews who are not in jail?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Has every Jewish businessman whose business --

A VOICE: I am presuming that when they put a man in jail, they have the right while he is in jail, let's assume, that they can take his property away. This of course is just their thinking. Do they confiscate property

from men who are not in jail?

Could I add to that question? Are there businesses of Jews now operating in Israel at the present time -- I mean in Egypt at the present time?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yes. I will answer the last half first. As far as I can determine, there are still small shops. In Egypt there is a distinction between what is called big business and small business. There are still some small Jewish shopkeepers who are still in command of their own businesses, and small business means a small novelty store, a small clothing store, a hole in the wall which the man runs himself. Where there is a large number of employees that is called a big business. There are no big businesses left in the hands of Jews any more. There are still some small businesses left in the hands of individual entrepreneurs.

Mr. Menachem reminds me that no professional men are allowed to practice. That is a fact. No lawyers, no doctors, no dentists. He wants me to remind you about the Jewish hospital in Cairo which was taken over. I talked to Dr. Cohen. Please don't use his name. He is the chief pathologist of the hospital. He was on that ship. You can

say one of the doctors of the Jewish hospital, let's put it that way, who told me that the hospital, which has 250 beds, was taken over by the Egyptian government and is used by them now.

The doctors who tried to take their medical equipment, their bags, were not permitted to. Dr. Cohen wanted to take his stethoscope. He couldn't even take that out. He was a refugee on this ship.

MR. LEVY: In this connection I think Mr. Menachem has an interesting point to make about that. You saw that taking over of the hospital, didn't you?

MR. MENACHEM: My sister said it.

MR. LEVY: What happened there?

MR. MENACHEM: The patients were just put on the sidewalks. Even the critically ill patients, those who had to undergo an extremely urgent operation were thrown out, just lying on the sidewalks.

A VOICE: There was Jewish staff there, Jewish patients?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Owned by the Jewish community.

MR. LEVY: When did this happen?

MR. MENACHEM: Very early in November.

A VOICE: Was this fact known?

MR. MENACHEM: Before coming here, on the very day I took the plane to come here I had seen the director of this hospital. He had not one penny in his pocket. I gave him two pounds from the money I had.

A VOICE: Is this fact known, for instance, to the American diplomatic representatives in Egypt who claim they have no evidence?

MR. MENACHEM: He was jailed for 42 days. I had seen his wife and son on the plane.

A VOICE: Is this Dr. Cohen?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: The director.

A VOICE: These men who are in jail, do they get out?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yes. Off the record, gentlemen. The basis on which the Red Cross makes up the composition of the passenger list on its first ship and will make up the composition of the passenger list on the second ship is to take the people out of jail.

A VOICE: Is that permitted?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yes, it is permitted for the Red Cross to take these people out of jail, on trains from

Cairo up to Alexandria; in handcuffs on the trains, off the train in Alexandria, into the prison at Alexandria for one night and onto the ship, and on the ship they sign that they are leaving the country of their own free will and the handcuffs are taken back on the ship. This I get from the Red Cross guy, but what the Red Cross has done has worked out a deal whereby it is getting the people out of jail, and those are the people the Red Cross is putting on those ships, and I have a hope that if the thing continues to work, that all of the people in jail will be able to be gotten out that way, which is why I don't want to disturb it. When there are no more people in jail and the Red Cross has finished that part of the operation, I wouldn't hesitate to use their name.

A VOICE: You mentioned before that American representatives are still for further evidence.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I was very careful. Don't misquote me on that. I deliberately want to be vague. You know what I mean and I know what I mean.

A VOICE: But do they have this evidence that Mr. Menachem told us and you told us, about the handcuffs, about the treatment of Jewish hospital patients and so on?

If they were put on the sidewalk, most likely everybody would know about it.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I would appreciate it very much if you would ask the State Department that question.

A VOICE: What I mean to say is, if you know if they were informed of these things.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I know they were informed.

A VOICE: How about the people on the sidewalk?

MR. LEVY: Their relatives were supposed to come and pick them up.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I would like to take a few minutes on the Hungarian business which I know, next to this Egyptian story, doesn't have the punch, but while you are here let me take a few minutes to report on the thing.

Fifteen percent of the Jewish population of Hungary has left that country. In numbers, 16,500 Jews have left as of three days ago. Now, you have to keep adding to that the number who come over every night. It is a couple of hundred Jews every night. Out of an influx now that is around 790, the total influx has dropped to about seven hundred a night, of which about two hundred are Jews.

A VOICE: 17,000 Jews?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: 17,000, because I am giving you my figure when I left.

MR. SPIEGEL: Out of how many?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: 110,000. Of the 17,000, 4,500 Jews have left Austria, about 2,100 have come to the United States, 1,100 have gone to Israel, 850 to Canada, about 350 to Australia. It ought to add up to about 4,500. What does it add up to?

A VOICE: 4,500.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: That's about it. Which means that there are between 12,000 and 12,500 Jews, Hungarian Jews blocked up in Austria right now.

I was misquoted, I think it was in an IN story, about the fact that I said that Europe is finished for the Jews. I didn't say it and that isn't what I meant. Hungarian Jews do not want resettlement in Europe. That is the point I was trying to make. Hungarian Jews want resettlement overseas. That means to them those four countries: Canada, the United States, Australia, Israel, and that is the reason why there are so many clogged up in Austria, because they are waiting for resettlement over-

seas.

If you take the total figures you see that there is quite a disparity. Total figures are 165,000 Hungarian Jews into Austria, 95,000 Hungarians out. There are 70,000 Hungarian refugees in Austria. 95,000 out of 165,000 is way more than half. 4,500 out of 17,000 is a quarter, and the Jewish outgo is nowhere near in ratio to the total because other Hungarians are willing to be resettled in Western Europe. Jews are not. Hungarian Jews want to get off the Continent of Europe.

The reason for that is -- maybe this is a phrase I have coined or maybe somebody else has used it -- I call these people the twice-persecuted, to try to understand their psychology. They have been through Hitler once and they have been through the Communists a second time; and for that reason, that they are twice-persecuted, they want off the Continent of Europe and we've got an enormous backlog of them there, and while they are there it is a question of care and maintenance and support on our part.

If I can get the financial thing in, it is going to cost us millions -- I won't say tens of millions -- it is going to cost us millions for those Jews in Austria for

care and maintenance until resettlement opportunities can be worked out, and that whole cost is being borne right now by the JDC, Joint Distribution Committee, again which draws its funds from us.

MR. SPIEGEL: Would you tell me again what was the figure of the Jewish refugee population in Austria? I ~~missed~~ that.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Current? 17,000 have come into Austria, 4,500 have gone out.

DICK: What are they running from? Is there anti-Semitism in Hungary?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: It's a good question and I marked down in this notebook of mine, which is the way I always work overseas -- let me read to you a half page here.

In the camp at Treiskirchen, the big camp Nixon went to, I ran into a woman -- a family of eleven people. They are all skilled tailors. They came out as a group, eleven of them. They made the last thirty kilometres on foot. They crossed the border on the tenth of December. Two of the children of the family of eleven, ages eight and two, caught the flu and had frostbitten toes, and so they are in the hospital, which is why the whole family unit

is still there, till the kids come out of the hospital.

Of these eleven people, one family unit, between them there are four uncles in the United States, so they will be able to come here. I asked them why they had left Hungary. Here are the reasons I got from them. Three. Number One: fear of Hungarian fascists which in their minds means anti-Semites. They are afraid of anti-Semitism in Hungary. I don't see it exists. As a matter of fact, you can put this on the record. I found no evidence that there were anti-Semitic episodes inside Hungary during the revolution. I asked everybody that question. I found no evidence of it. But there is a psychological fear in their minds that this might come.

Number Two: under the Nazis they lost eighty member of their family. Of their brothers, two were in Motthausen, one had been deported to Siberia and one of the wives was in Auschwitz, and she showed me the number of her arm. They were afraid that the Russians might some day do the same thing to them, so Number One was the fear of anti-Semitism, Number Two was the fear that the Russians might repeat what the Nazis had done, and Number Three was the economic factor.

All three brothers of the unit were skilled tailors. They had always had a business or a shop. In the past fifteen years they had been ruined four times and they had had enough. I said, what were the four times so they gave it to me. Number One, 1940 under the Nazis; 1945 after reassembling from the concentration camps and from Siberia they tried to get started again and they couldn't; 1948 when the Hungarians nationalized all businesses, even the small tailor shops, and 1956 in the present revolution they got ruined -- four times they got ruined. They've had it. They want out.

As far as I could gather, that little story summarizes everybody. It is those three items. That is why they want to leave Hungary.

DICK: Thank you.

(The press conference adjourned at 12:20 p.m.)

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