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Project Absorption. March 1968.

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News:

From: SENATOR JOSEPH D. TYDINGS

6237 New Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510
202-225-4524



Contact: Mark Furstenberg

RELEASE: For A.M.'s Sunday, March 10, 1968

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 10, 1968 -- Senator Joseph D. Tydings announced today that he will introduce legislation early next week to establish a Commission on the Urban Crisis "to do on a continuing basis what the President's Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders has done for the short run."

The text of the Senator's statement follows:

"Last week the President's Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders issued its report. I hope that it will be widely read and studied. It offers both a profound analysis of the summer riots which swept our cities and a broad plan for civic and governmental action -- social programs, as well as law enforcement -- to remedy these causes.

"The report is not an end. It is a signal call to action. It must, in fact, be followed by action. Unless it is, I believe that it will be viewed by future historians as a mere brief moment of illumination in this country's drift through darkness toward civil strife.

"This need not happen. The Commission tells us how to prevent it from happening. And if we fail to heed its words, history -- and our children -- will judge us harshly.

"The urgent question before us is: How can we as a nation ensure that the Commission report will be acted upon? I suggest that as a first step, we find a way to ensure that the impact of the Commission's report and its recommendations will not disappear into time.

"We must find a way to keep the attention of the country -- and its elected representatives -- focused on the report. We must create a mechanism to force us, in the future, to ask continually, 'Have we

MORE

met the challenge of the Commission? Have we fully implemented its recommendations? Have we made progress in removing the underlying grievances which brought unrest to our cities?'

"I believe that the President was wise in establishing the Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Now the Congress must act. A vital first step is to establish a Commission to do on a continuing basis what the President's Advisory Commission has done for the short run -- to tour the country, to hold hearings, to consult with national and local leaders and with people from all walks of life, and to report its findings on a continuing basis to the American people.

"I will introduce legislation early next week to establish a Commission on the Urban Crisis to perform this task.

"This Commission will serve as a conscience for the country, a voice to remind us again and again of the responsibilities we must face to really solve the crisis of our cities. Its mission is clear cut: To help the American people be constantly aware of the work which must be done to accomplish the great purposes of our Constitution: 'To establish Justice, to insure domestic tranquillity'."

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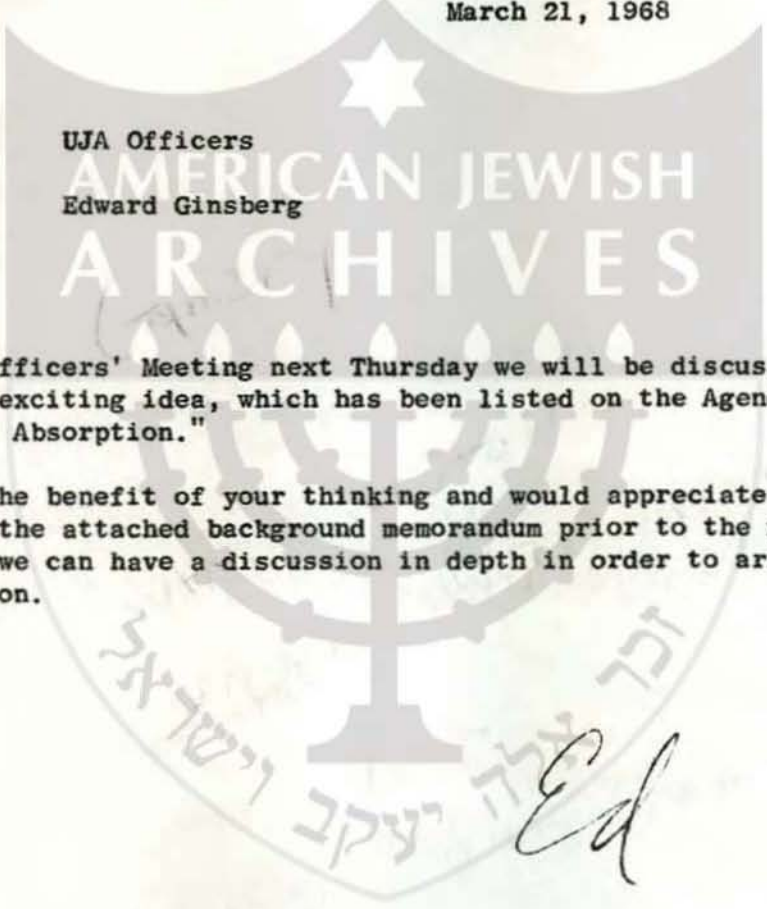
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March 21, 1968

TO: UJA Officers
 FROM: Edward Ginsberg



At the Officers' Meeting next Thursday we will be discussing a new and exciting idea, which has been listed on the Agenda as "Project Absorption."

I want the benefit of your thinking and would appreciate your reading the attached background memorandum prior to the meeting, so that we can have a discussion in depth in order to arrive at a decision.

Ed

EG: bas

PROJECT ABSORPTION

"Our recommendations embrace three basic principles:

To mount programs on a scale equal to the dimensions of the problems:

To aim these programs for high impact in the immediate future in order to close the gap between promise and performance;

To undertake new initiatives and experiments that can change the system of failure and frustration that now dominates the ghetto and weakens our society."

--from the report of the
National Advisory Commission
on Civil Disorders.

UJA responds to the current crisis in American cities in terms of its own function as a private philanthropic agency with a specific view and a particularized experience.

It is our obligation as citizens to place at the disposal of the American community two decades of experience with the social dynamics of a developing Israeli society. UJA has observed and assisted in Israeli experimentation designed to solve problems similar to those currently in the forefront of American consciousness. We therefore propose PROJECT ABSORPTION in the hope that the experience of both countries may provide new points of departure for effective attack on problems common to both societies.

"Absorption" is a word and a process. While there are widely varying social forces at work in Israel and the United States both countries are in crises of absorption. Disparate

social elements must be welded into unified entity if the American system is to be preserved. In Israel the entire national thrust is aimed at the absorption of immigrants from alien strands of culture rooted in a multiplicity of ethnic and geographic backgrounds. There have been successes and failures in the attempt to make Israel a single society. But all of the energies of the new state have been focussed on the objective. That experience must be carefully evaluated in order to find ways to strengthen the American social fabric. PROJECT ABSORPTION is a means to that end.

UJA invites a panel of distinguished Americans to join in a Study Mission to Israel. First hand observation of Israeli experience and attitudes will be supplemented by discussion and examination of twenty years of project and result in areas relevant to the American dilemma.

The UJA proposal is keyed to the organization's role as a prestigious and dynamic American entity. UJA's role is two-fold:

1. We ask American Jews to contribute to the welfare of Jewish communities outside the United States.
2. We create a positive atmosphere for that function within American society.

The image of the United Jewish Appeal is a reflection of American generosity. This project provides us with an opportunity to dramatically link this organization with the highest aspirations of the American community. PROJECT ABSORPTION is designed to place the United Jewish Appeal in the forefront of

the public mind as a major American institution dedicated to the improvement of quality of life in the United States.

PROJECT ABSORPTION offers an opportunity to make an authentic contribution to Israeli society, as well as to the American community. The intellectual resources of the world's most advanced society is placed at the disposal of the Israeli Government, the Jewish Agency and other social organs dedicated to the improvement of life in Israel. The leading American figures who will participate in this mission have wide and varying social backgrounds. But there is a commonalty between them of broad involvement in building American society. As this group looks for ways to improve the American scene in terms of the Israeli experience, it might offer new techniques and fresh insight into the problems faced by the people of Israel.

There is genuine need for a dialogue between Israeli and American society on ways and means of preserving the system of values common to each. The people of Israel have lived in a state of crisis for twenty years. American society today is in the throes of upheaval, uncertainty and dissension. The riots in American cities underline the obligation of the American people to approach its problems with an increasing sense of responsibility to those of its citizens long bearing a burden of prejudice, lack of opportunity and alienation from the mainstream of life in this country. There is no room for "apartheid" in the United States of America. There is no room for "Two Israels." The problems faced in both countries are uniquely similar. This project is an effort, at least, to make a significant contri-

bution to the solution of those problems. At the center of the Jewish tradition is the impulse to maintain and improve a social structure in which equality is a reality and not a word. Through two millennia, Jewish idealism has been inextricably tied to a liberalism expressive of freedom and, most important, the opportunity to effectively use that freedom as a tool for a full and complete life.

This proposed response to the report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders offers an opportunity to translate Jewish idealism into active participation in the solution of the American dilemma. The Commissioners wrote,

"We have provided an honest beginning. We have learned much. But we have uncovered no startling truths, no unique insights, no simple solutions. The destruction and the bitterness of racial disorder, the harsh polemics of black revolt and white repression have been seen and heard before in this country.

It is time now to end the destruction and the violence, not only in the streets of the ghetto but in the lives of people."

Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion said, in a different context,

"The culture of a people is the totality of the human and social experience of the entire community, an experience deriving from nature, tradition, the economic, legal, and social systems, and from free public controversy."

It is up to us to make that totality of experience a positive force for human progress, both here in the United States and in Israel. It is up to us to move from "free public con-

troversy" to a far ranging attempt to find lasting solutions to those problems that have been with us far too long.

This program, to be proposed by General Chairman Edward Ginsberg is multifaceted in approach and sequence.

1. "WE RESPOND ---" -- a meeting of private philanthropic agencies is called by Chairman Ginsberg. The invitation is geared to the Riot Commission report and its wider implications. The agenda includes discussion of all of the possibilities open to private organizations in support of the commission's demand for immediate action. The General Chairman's address, touching on the responsibility of all, is the vehicle for his invitation to a "Dialogue on Absorption" by UJA (with the approval and cooperation of the Israeli authorities.)
2. Telegrams of invitation from Mr. Ginsberg are sent to four or six citizens selected from a representation similar to the following:
(Daniel Moynihan, John Galbraith, Andrew Heiskell, Max Ways, William Benton, Newton Minow, George Shuster, Theodore Hessburg, Kenneth Clark, Whitney Young, John Gardner, Arthur Schlesinger, Kermit Gordon, McGeorge Bundy, Mitchell Sviridoff, James Tobin, Richard Lee, Irvin Miller, James Reston, Herbert Gans, Walter Reuther.)
3. The Program's executive director prepares a specific pilot project list in conjunction with appropriate

Israeli governmental and academic authorities.
The projects embrace all elements within the
overall pattern of the absorption program.

- a. Education (survey unique elements in
Israeli schema)
 - b. Employment (agricultural, service, industrial)
 - c. Youth programming
 - d. Housing patterns and methodology
 - e. Adult education (Operation Bootstrap)
 - f. Social motivations (analysis of positive ie.
unifying forces vis a vis factors leading
to alienation)
4. A comparative analysis of problems common to both
cultures is prepared as background material for study
by the panel's members.
- a. Changing structure of Israeli immigration: Data
on communities of origin, educational background,
occupational status, family size, literacy --
recent American immigration pattern (with re-
ference to changes in national origins quota
systems).
 - b. African-Asian family structure in Israel --
minority family structure in the United States
of America.
 - c. African-Asian skills -- American minority group
skills.
 - d. African-Asian attitudes toward educational
process -- American Negro attitude to learning
processes.

5. Announcement of acceptances of UJA invitations
6. Two-three week Survey of Israel (To include seminars and field trips.)

(This pattern may be altered to fit the panel's convenience. A series of shorter study visits may be arranged.)

7. Deliberations and draft of general report and conclusions.
8. A convocation of the original group of philanthropic organizations at which the invitation was extended. This meeting is to be broadened to include representation from the Mayors Conference of the United States, the National Human Resources Conference, the US Chamber of Commerce, State Boards of Trade, US Social Welfare Councils, American Society of Newspaper Publishers, National Education Association and similar groups embracing the spectrum of American social and economic interest.

The General Chairman addresses the "We Respond --- group with a broad survey of the panel's findings. (He is an ex officio member as well as the "host" figure.)

9. Panel Press Conference - (discussion of recommendations as to approaches and projects rising from the dialogue program.)
10. Publication and distribution of the report to government and private agencies with interests germane to the report's specific recommendations.

11. Subsequent release to Jewish Agency of recommendations made to Israeli organs for improvement of their programs.

TIME TABLE

Invitation to "We Respond --"	-	April	1 - 8
Ginsberg Address and Meeting		May	15
Study Mission --		June	15 - July 15
Report Draft #1 --		Aug.	15
Report Draft #2 --		Oct.	15
Convocation --		Nov.	22 (Approx.)
Report Publication --		Dec.	15 - 20

STAFF ELEMENTS

1. Executive Director
2. Research Assistant

1. Legally AJA is primarily a
fund-raising org. (Weiser)

2. might open Pandora's box -
afraid of Rep Brown -
boomerang (Dubinsky)

3. Opposite view (Adelman)

4. We may be kidding ourselves
Our function is fund-raising, not
the social work (Zinman)

Our better bet would be to enlist
the other groups (AJC, etc.)

5. Watch the tax situation (Bensley)

1. Jewish ethic.
2. Satisfy the idealism of our leadership.
3. We as UJA are in business of solving social problems - This is how our contributors view us.
4. CJFwF involves itself in this problem.
- 5.
6. Just a fund-raising organization.



6. Idea has enormous potential advantages. I question whether VJA as such is organ to it. (WR)

Create a separate org. to do it. Then study how USA can get the advantage of it.

7. Purpose of this is to improve the image of the VJA. Instead we should improve the image of the VIA + JDC (Preston)

8. Concept is good. Vehicle is wrong - almost smacks of arrogance. (Zukerman)

I see no relationship between
Israel problems & American problems.

I see a relationship between
American Jewish local community
contributions - general problems.

9. 20 cent fund lost tax-
deductibility because it
issued a report construed (Hammer)
as influencing pending
legislation.

Could have reparations
if people said Jews were
doing too much for Israel.

10. Heads we lose, tails
we can't win (Zinman)
