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# This we believe...

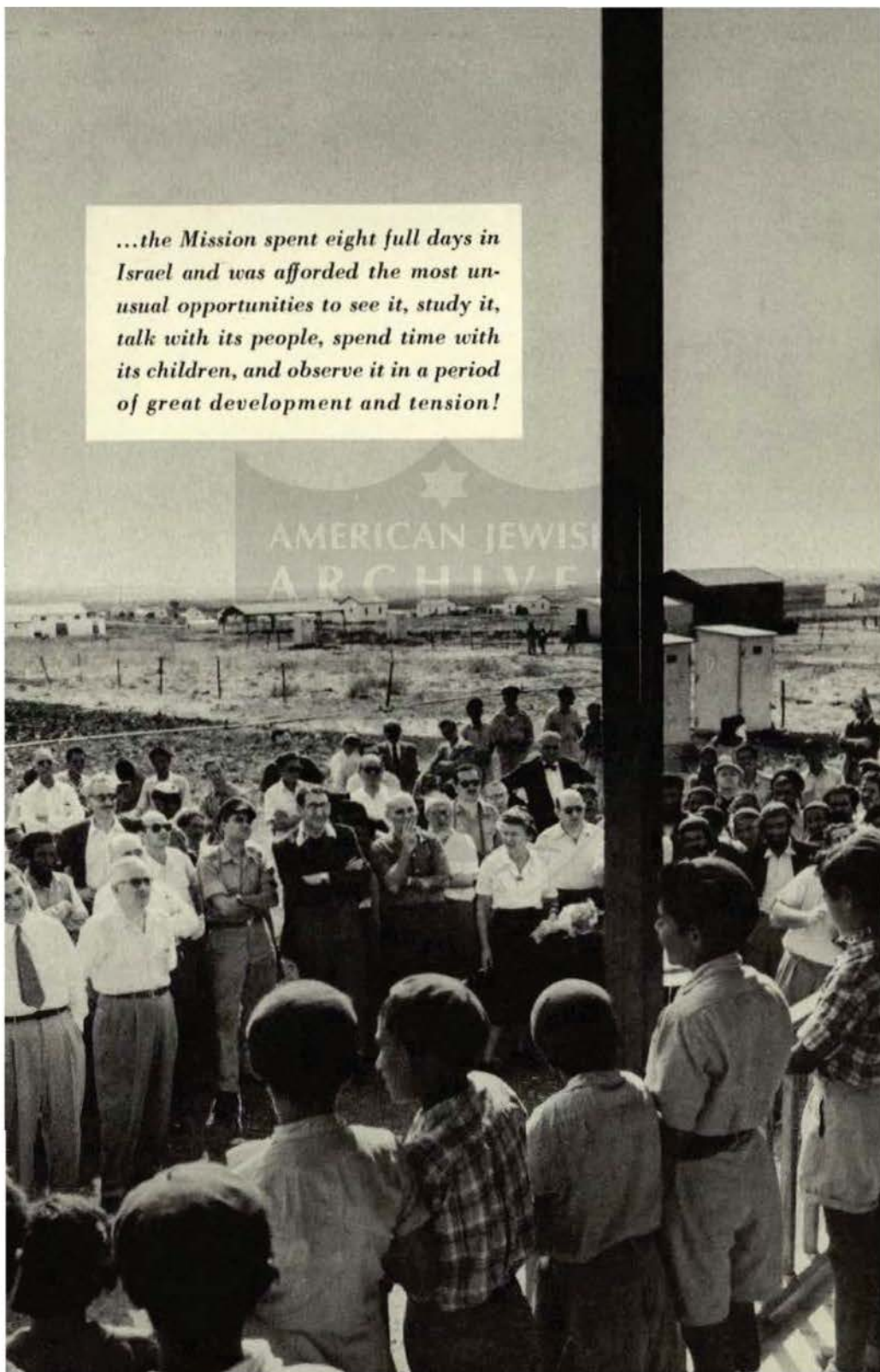
**A REPORT**



BY THE UNITED JEWISH APPEAL  
STUDY MISSION

Europe, Israel, North Africa • October-November, 1954

*...the Mission spent eight full days in Israel and was afforded the most unusual opportunities to see it, study it, talk with its people, spend time with its children, and observe it in a period of great development and tension!*





## A REPORT TO AMERICAN JEWRY

### BY THE UNITED JEWISH APPEAL STUDY MISSION

LATE IN OCTOBER and early in November, 1954, a 35-man Study Mission of the United Jewish Appeal visited Europe, Israel and Morocco. It went abroad with this double purpose—to assess what had been accomplished with the many millions of dollars raised through the UJA, and to estimate, as far as was humanly possible to do so in three weeks, the totality of needs to be met through the United Jewish Appeal in 1955. This is a report on what the Mission heard, saw and felt.

The Mission went first to Paris to attend the ninth annual Country Directors Conference of the Joint Distribution Committee; went next to Israel and following an eight-day series of consultations and field trips in Israel, a sub-committee of the Mission made a four-day visit to Morocco.

The Mission's participation in the JDC Country Directors Conference afforded an unusual opportunity for a study of the vast regenerative work carried on in overseas lands by this great American agency—a work that has given new life to hundreds of thousands of men, women and children, and new status to once shattered Jewish communities.

The Mission was particularly impressed by the testimony of numerous European communal leaders that many of their traditional local institutions and services have been re-established, that their communities are participating more and more in nationwide Jewish fund-

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*\*This report was presented to the Steering Committee of the United Jewish Appeal's Annual National Conference in New York on December 11, 1954, by Max M. Fisher, on behalf of the Mission. Mr. Fisher, who is Treasurer of the Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit, was a member of the Study Mission and served on the sub-committee which drafted the report.*



*Israel Prime Minister Moshe Sharett, center, discusses a problem with UJA President Edward M. M. Warburg, left, and UJA Executive Vice-Chairman Dr. Joseph J. Schwartz.*

raising, and that they no longer require substantial help from the JDC. In France, for example, where Jewish fund-raising was renewed in 1950, the success of the nationwide fund-raising organization is reflected in the 452,000,000 francs collected in 1950, 1951, 1952 and 1953, with sharp increases in the national total for each of these years. In the Netherlands, the come-back of the Jewish community is so complete that not only does it require no outside help but it is actually contributing toward the support of programs in Israel and other lands. In Belgium, the Jewish community has made a start toward providing its own services and its fund-raising campaign is beginning to make rapid strides toward successful self-support of present programs.

But with 30,000 social problem cases in Western Europe alone, and with 90,000 impoverished and oppressed men, women and children in the countries of Islam, plus a minimum of 25,000 sick, aged and physically handicapped immigrants in *Malben* institutions, and 15,000 vocational trainees and religious students, to be aided in Israel, it is the Mission's belief that the Joint Distribution Committee in 1955 will require the strongest possible support to fulfill its life-saving programs.



The most seriously in need, as reported to the Mission at the JDC Conference are the 30,000 hard-core victims of Hitlerism in Europe, and, as a Mission sub-committee was able to see for itself in Morocco, the 90,000 Jews of North Africa and other Moslem areas.

In the case of the concentration camp survivors, great efforts must still be made to bring about their permanent social and economic rehabilitation, with the emphasis here on integration in their present countries of residence.

But the greatest effort of all involves the Jews of the North African countries. And of these countries, it was Morocco that concerned the Mission most — for it is in Morocco that need, tension and danger are most clearly evident, even to the passing observer.

The sub-committee of the Mission that went into Morocco is unanimous in this description of the situation there: *the Jewish population is desperately poor, its living conditions are primitive, its rights are a matter for constant vigilance and protection, and its future is completely overshadowed by the possibility that a hostile Arab nationalism may come to power.*

*Monroe Goldwater, President of New York UJA, Charles J. Bensley of New York and Morris Batzer of Atlantic City, follow diorama map of Beersheba, capital of Negev and Israel's fastest growing frontier city.*



Were it not for the existence of the State of Israel, and Israel's policy of haven for endangered Jews, it is the Mission's belief that the 250,000 Jews of Morocco would face a dismal future, indeed. Today, despite the fact that the French Administration is friendly, the Jews of Morocco occupy a second-class social, political and economic position — which would be reduced even more were Morocco to become a Moslem State within the framework of the Arab League.

The Mission sub-committee that went into Morocco was moved and heartened at the remarkable and often miraculous achievements of the Joint Distribution Committee and the French and native Jewish organizations that cooperate with it in seeking to mitigate suffering, to eradicate disease, to educate the youth, and to overcome the worst effects bred by poverty and overcrowding. Members of the sub-committee of the Mission saw the dispensaries, clinics, schoolrooms, playgrounds and nurseries that American Jews have enabled the JDC to establish in Casablanca, Marrakech and other cities. They inspected the milk plant which the JDC maintains in Casablanca, which each day produces and distributes some 35,000 bottles of milk for infant children. The Mission sub-committee saw the clean, airy and modern canteens at which the JDC feeds more than 50,000 children each day. They saw the schools that have an enrollment of some 52,000 boys and girls. They saw mothers being instructed in the care of the health

of their children and expectant mothers receiving pre-natal instruction and guidance.

*Mission members hear official of ATA textile works at Haifa tell how plant processes raw cotton into cloth, then into clothing.*



These activities of the JDC have sharply reduced infant mortality; have made trachoma controllable and curable; have brought equally widespread tinea under control, and are giving thousands of Jewish youths the opportunity for both an elementary and secondary school education.



But even in the face of all that is being done and must be done, the Jews of Morocco, and of Tunisia also, feel themselves so threatened by political and social unrest that thousands of them believe they have no other prospect but to quit these countries at the earliest possible moment for resettlement in Israel.

The Mission witnessed this resettlement process with its own eyes — the arrival at Haifa one morning of 284 Moroccan Jews, who were later accompanied to an agricultural settlement in the north of Israel by a five-man sub-committee. Two days later, while the Mission was still in Israel, 500 more arrived at Haifa from the North African emigration camp at Marseille.

The fact is that since August 1, 1954, more than 7,000 of these Jews have left Tunisia and Morocco for Israel, willingly and gladly.

Given no sharp political change for the worse in North Africa, 30,000 to 35,000 Jews from Tunisia and Morocco are expected to come to Israel in the year 1955. Should the political situation deteriorate altogether, with no firm assurances from the Arab nationalists for the safety of the Jewish populations, it is only reasonable to anticipate that the present orderly flow of Jews from these countries will assume the proportions of a tidal wave.

Both the present situation and the grim possibilities inherent in



*The Mission viewed this scene of immigrants from Morocco disembarking at Haifa. Ship-to-settlement transfer of newcomers came that same day.*





*Members of Mission are gathered in front of special display of produce grown by Jews of Yemen at Givat Kouch, a small-holder's settlement.*

it suggest no other course to American Jews than to maintain the highest degree of vigilance and preparedness, in this specific way: to assure that the beneficiary agencies of the United Jewish Appeal are at all times in a position to carry out their gigantic humanitarian responsibilities.

This plainly calls for greater giving on the part of every American Jew, and a greater allocation to the United Jewish Appeal on the part of every single community in the country. *Unless this is the case in 1955, the Joint Distribution Committee and its cooperating agencies—the Alliance Israelite Universelle, the OSE, and ORT—will not be in a position to expand their magnificent programs in a circumstance of unrest and danger, nor will the Jewish Agency be in a position to help tens of thousands registered for migration to Israel and clamoring for this assistance.*

The distance between Morocco and Israel is not a very great one, as distances are measured in this atomic age. But Israel and Morocco are worlds apart by every other social, political, cultural and economic standard.



*Max M. Fisher, Detroit (right), greets Israel President Itzhak Ben Zvi as Zalman Shazar, Jewish Agency Acting Chairman, looks on.*

The members of the Mission are proud to report that the 20th Century American can feel at home in this ancient and most holy of lands. Every member of the Mission felt exhilarated in mind and in spirit by Israel's penetrating atmosphere of hopefulness and freedom. Those members of the Mission who had been to Israel before were tremendously encouraged by the changes that have been wrought since 1948, 1949 and 1950. Those members of the Mission visiting Israel for the first time were amazed and thrilled that Israel and its people should have so many similarities to America. There were times when the land and people resembled very much those of Ohio and Indiana. With the removal of Hebrew road-signs, one could truly feel this way in the valley of Esdraelon.

In all, the Mission spent eight full days in Israel and was afforded the most unusual opportunities to see it, study it, talk with its people, spend time with its children, and observe it in a period of great development and tension. For this, the members of the Mission are extremely grateful to the Government of Israel and to the Jewish Agency. In three full days of intensive deliberation and discussion in



Jerusalem with members of the Government and the Agency – meetings marked throughout by the spirit of free inquiry on the part of all the participants – and on a thorough and even gruelling four-day fact-finding tour of Israel's Negev, coastal plain and northern valleys – the Study Mission was enabled to gain a rich insight into the problems that have commanded so much of the energies and resources of both the people of Israel and the Jews of America.

The Mission met with President Itzhak Ben Zvi; Prime Minister Moshe Sharett; Finance Minister Levi Eshkol; Former Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion; Army Chief of Staff General Moshe Dayan; Minister of Communications Joseph Saphir; Speaker of the Knesseth Joseph Sprinzak; Jewish Agency Acting Chairman Zalman Shazar; Jewish Agency Treasurer Dr. Giora Josephthal; with other members of the Cabinet, with members of the Israel Supreme Court, and with the younger generation of experts from offices of both the Government and the Agency.

*Jewish Agency Treasurer Dr. Giora Josephthal explains immigrant processing to Mission on board S.S. Negbah after it docked with 284 newcomers from Morocco.*





*Fred Forman of Rochester gives his heart to this child at Givat Koach, a border settlement of Jews from Yemen.*



All this, combined with what the Mission saw at firsthand on its four-day tour, brought into clear focus Israel's problems of foreign policy and national defense, and its equally important problems of immigrant absorption and settlement, agricultural and industrial development, and the maintenance and care of both the aged and the young.

The record of what has been done by the Government, by the Jewish Agency, and by private capital, is impressive and inspiring. The Study Mission was particularly impressed and gratified that the \$65,000,000 made available through the UJA Consolidation Loan project had helped materially to improve Israel's financial position. Israel's Finance Minister, Levi Eshkol, told the Mission in Jerusalem that the net effect of the \$65,000,000 was that it had made possible "the sensible, planned and orderly financial management of our affairs. It rid us of the nightmare of short-term credit repayments, and it meant the sober, solid saving of millions of dollars each year, which we were having to pay at high interest rates and higher prices on our credit purchasing."

We learned also that some of the greatest forward steps taken by the economy have been recorded in the field of agriculture; that altogether 420 agricultural settlements have been established since 1948; that irrigated land has risen from 60,000 acres in 1947 to 200,000 acres today; that 40 per cent of this irrigated land can be found in the new agricultural settlements; that the more than 50,000 additional acres of land irrigated in 1954 alone almost equalled the total of land irrigated in the entire 60 years of Jewish effort and colonization in pre-Israel Palestine; that the opening of the Yarkon-Negev pipeline in 1955 is expected to add not only an additional 45,000 acres of irrigated land to agriculture but will serve to virtually revolutionize agricultural method and output in the northern part of the water-hungry but potentially fruitful Negev.





*West Coast members of mission, Walter E. Heller, Mendel Silberberg and Sanford Treguboff shown at Youth Aliyah center.*

We learned also that the number of immigrants has declined from a peak of 300,000 in the reception camps to 80,000 in transitional villages, or *maabaroth*, at the present time. We learned in addition that, since 1948, close to a billion dollars has been invested in the economic development of the country and that the Government expects to cover all regular 1954-55 budget expenditures through taxes paid by Israel's citizens. We learned of other encouraging progress in Israel's economic health; namely, that the once seemingly unbridgeable gap between imports and exports is slowly being narrowed.

The things the Mission saw with its own eyes matched the record of statistics given by the various ministers of the Government and officers of the Jewish Agency. We saw Israel's brand-new fields of cotton and its new industrial crops of sugar beets and peanuts, which are becoming the basis for new industries; its new immigrant housing developments in Beersheba and the growing metropolitan region of Tel Aviv; its great new harbor and industrial area at Haifa; its round-the-clock chemical and fertilizer plant in the Haifa Bay region, which uses raw materials brought from the Negev; the modern



and inspiring schools for children that are maintained as part of various agricultural settlements; the wonderful way in which immigrant children are received and prepared for schooling and vocational training, and the splendid new home for the aged, which we helped to dedicate at Nathanya and which is a credit to the work of the Joint Distribution Committee's *Malben* operation in Israel.

The sober judgment that must be rendered is that Israel's progress since its establishment has been not only remarkable, but phenomenal. This is due in part to American Jewry's spectacular help. But—and this must be grasped and taken to heart—Israel has not yet emerged from the shadows; it lives in a state of siege; it is not yet fully self-supporting; it is still faced by potential heavy immigration from lands of danger, and, except for the Jews of the United States and other countries, it stands increasingly alone and exposed.

It would be a tragic mistake for American Jews to believe that Israel's progress of the past means that it no longer requires assistance. The stark, unalterable fact is that American Jews must remain at its side for years to come. Nor is it only a matter of sympathy and

*Max Zivian of Detroit and Robert W. Schiff of Columbus befriend kindergarten children at Kibbutz Ramat Yochanin near Haifa.*





vigilance. It is a matter in every sense of dollars and cents. The refugees coming in from Tunisia and Morocco are as much our humanitarian responsibility as they are Israel's. The refugee put on the land to reconstruct his life is as much our responsibility as Israel's. The child brought to Israel under the Youth Aliyah program so that he can be spared the ravages of disease and the possibility of child labor is as much our responsibility as Israel's. The people and the Government of Israel are sharing these responsibilities, but they have others. Israel's responsibility for a strong national defense is its own — and it has become a crucial one in view of the fact that hostile neighboring states are adding to their military strength from many sources. Thus, American Jews more than ever must assume and fulfill the humanitarian responsibilities of absorption and resettlement of immigrants so that Israel is not overburdened by programs that are far beyond the capacity of its economy to support.

It has been estimated, for example, that it will cost a minimum of \$35,000,000 in the first year to transport and to settle in Israel the 30,000 to 35,000 Jews who have asked to be taken out of Tunisia and Morocco. The overwhelming part of this great sum is intended for the absorption of the new immigrants — to settle 50 per cent

of them in Israel's key areas of national development where they can find gainful employment, and to settle the second 50 per cent on the land as agricultural families. The Mission submits that Israel's safety would be endangered, and that the Jews of North Africa would be jeopardized, if Israel itself had to provide this kind of money. It doesn't have it — and until there is peace, couldn't spare it if it did.

The fact that Israel is completely surrounded by hostile states has its effects not only on the temper of the country and its citizens, but is one of the dominant factors influencing Israel's economy.



*Barney Rapaport of Hartford takes keen interest in teenage newcomers from Morocco.*



*Walter E. Heller of San Francisco talks with an elderly woman at the Pardess Hanna old age center, a ramshackle camp housing 2,400 old folks, which must be replaced.*

The grim fact is that Israel today is what the economists term "a garrison state"—that is, a state that lives in an atmosphere of war without actually being at war; and even this definition does not quite apply to Israel, because day and night there are hostile raids and forays and skirmishes and battles that convulse the 600 mile frontier with the Arab States. The existence of a garrison state brings with it garrison economics — and those of us with any memory of the United States in World War II know that this means an upheaval in all normal conditions. With national survival dominating every consideration, there can be no free, normal interplay of economic forces.

Israel — as a garrison state, operating within the framework of garrison economics — must cope desperately with each of the following situations, among many others.

I. Although it has only a small reserve of foreign exchange it must seek urgently-needed military supplies to offset the growing military strength of its Arab neighbors — and these supplies must be paid for in hard currency. It is in this way that Israel's small reserve of foreign



exchange is constantly being eaten away to worsen its financial position on the world market.

2. Israel is forced by military necessity to duplicate some public installations, plants and utilities — for the simple reason that at any moment a road near the border, a plant near the frontier, a pumping station within reach of a hostile force, may be knocked out by destruction or capture.

3. Israel's precious manpower cannot be used in its entirety for purposes of normal production, because a part of this manpower must be used for unproductive military security.



*Herbert R. Abeles of Newark (foreground), and Max Zivian and Max M. Fisher both of Detroit, at Talpith Maabara, Jerusalem.*

4. The small surpluses that somehow manage to be accumulated must be diverted to programs of national defense — so that there is today a minimum of private saving and, therefore, no substantial accumulation of private capital. It is always difficult in the early development of a country to bring together the economic surpluses that are necessary for the capitalization of great enterprises. Israel's difficulties in this regard are exaggerated to the near-breaking point in view of the negligible economic power it had to begin with, and the impoverished state from which its immigrant population seeks to raise itself.

Israel is constantly petitioning its neighbors for peace. Its greatest



objective is the achievement of peace. Until there is such a settlement, Israel will continue to live in a No-Man's Land between peace and war. Until there is such a settlement, Israel will continue to be a garrison state—with all that this means to its people and to its future growth and development.

Given all these conditions, the wonder of it is that Israel has been able to do so much, nevertheless.

But if help from the outside should weaken and continue to decline, there is the danger that the general population would have to suffer a new reversal in its standard of living.



*Mission members leave train at Hartuv at start of four-day survey tour that took them to Negev, coastal plain and northern valleys.*

The Mission is convinced that a complete cessation of aid would mean the collapse of the State of Israel.

*In the light of this situation, American Jews must do what is plainly indicated—they must make Israel a prime objective of their giving, while every welfare fund and community campaign must assure that the United Jewish Appeal receives an even higher share of allocations in 1955.*

*The Mission is convinced that Israel's future, and the future of the Jews of North Africa, cannot be viewed or dealt with in terms of routine campaign giving, or in terms of normal campaign budgeting.*

*We believe that the daily threat of attack and the constant dangers that face both the people of Israel and the Jews of North Africa warrant extra and extraordinary efforts by all American Jews.*

We heard David Ben-Gurion say that the Jews of Biblical times had made Israel to live and to flourish. Shall it be said that 2,000 years later American Jews could not help to do the same?

We heard a Minister of the Israel Government say to us in the holy city of Jerusalem that if we do not assure a bright future for Israel now, who knows when we shall get another chance.

We who saw the misery of the Jews in Morocco, and for a few days shared their sense of oppression and terror, will never again be at rest until we know that these Jews have been made secure and safe.

This, then, is the Mission's appeal to American Jewry: let us make the most of our chances, now — while there is still time. We urge, therefore, that every American Jew raise his standard of giving—immediately and substantially—and call upon every welfare fund and combined campaign to give the United Jewish Appeal the markedly increased allocation that needs and events sharply dictate is necessary, vital and urgent.

There is no other way, the Mission believes—if lives are to be saved, if Israel is to be helped to survive.

FOR THE STUDY MISSION:

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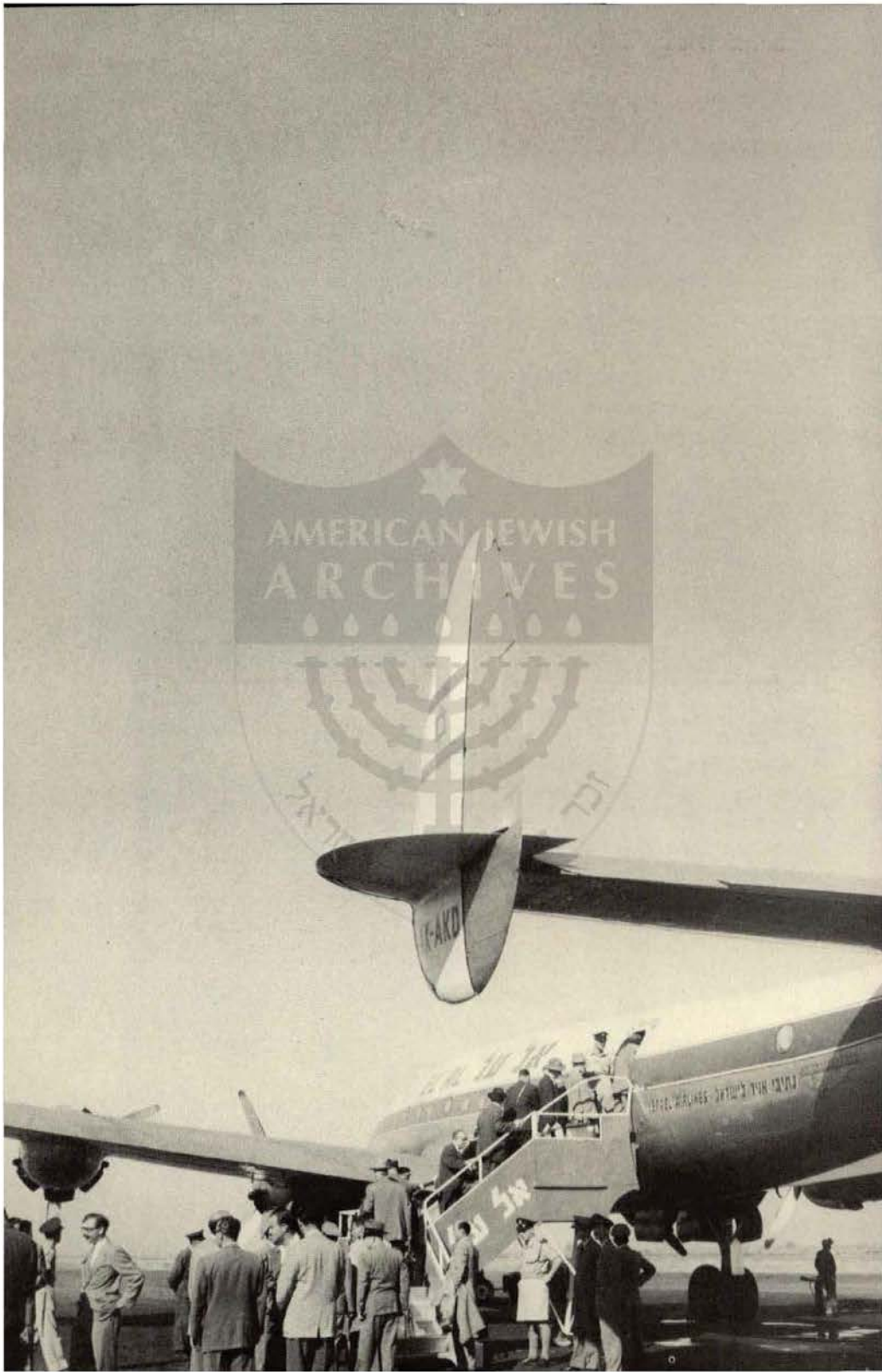
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