



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

MS-763: Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman Collection, 1930-2004.

Series H: United Jewish Appeal, 1945-1995.

Subseries 4: Administrative Files, 1945-1994.

Box
56

Folder
16

Young Leadership Cabinet. Conference. 14 September 1968.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the
American Jewish Archives website.

YOUNG LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE - September 14, 1968

When I think of how Moses spent 40 days on the mountain top searching for his destiny; and how Elijah went to a solitary cave in the desert to ponder his fate; and how Jonah fled across the stormy seas to avoid a certain role but then found it while sitting under a tree watching a gourd - I would write the parable of the modern American Jew seeking his identity in these words:

And the man stood amidst the fatness of the land and knew that the Lord was good, for he saw the golden grain and smelled the sweet milk and tasted the rich meat and felt the heavy fruits on the dark green trees. And there were all manner of wool and linen and soft silks to clothe his nakedness, just as there was much water to cleanse his body and wine to uplift his spirits.

He sometimes questioned as he saw again each year wondrous marvels, this abundance which poured from the great plains and valleys of his blessed land, why some men were hungry, and he thought vaguely that perhaps there was some evil, either of man or God, which caused such injustice and unfairness - but then he shrugged, for these mysteries were beyond him to solve.

Sometimes the great cities would burn in the night, and the pain and the agony and the hunger of men, especially black, would howl into his ears, and his soul would burn with shame and fear - and he was then at his most perplexed for all this seemed a denial of what the prophets of his great God Jehovah had thundered - that all men were his children and hence equal.

The man knew not what to do - for he felt lost and rootless. The fruit tasted sour and the bed grew hard and he groaned. There was no ease in his heart. Once he thought - I shall harden and turn my face from man so that I see this evil not - but this brought no peace for he could not live on earth alone.

Then he thought - I shall harden and turn my face from God - for surely he has deserted us, but strangely that brought no peace either. And then he cried bitterly - for he saw no answer to the riddle of his life - I am lost he wept - I know not who I am or why I live.

The angel came, softly and gently, and carried him to the peak of the mountain, so that he could see from afar and all around the beauty of the land, and once soothed and quieted, the man could listen again. The angel said: You were born many thousands of years ago, far across the seas in a holy land and you were part of a great people with a noble soul. Your God taught you to do justice, to cease from evil and to believe in the goodness of man. He gave you a sense of mission to sustain you in the long and awful struggle upward. He promised you that out of all the defeats final victory would come. He pleaded with you to develop courage, faith and a sense of destiny. He gave you an identity, a purpose, a meaning for your life. He warned you that if you wavered in this at any time you would be deserted and destroyed. He would not be your God and you would not be His people. Never forget who you are - the son of a timeless people, linked to a timeless land, bound to a timeless faith.

And when the angel finished, the man rose, soothed and strengthened, knowing once more who he was and what he had to do.

YOUNG LEADERSHIP CABINET
UNITED JEWISH APPEAL
ADDRESS BY

RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN

THE UJA IN THE PERSPECTIVE
OF MODERN JEWISH HISTORY

N.Y. HILTON HOTEL-9/14/68

RABBI FRIEDMAN

Since you've been good enough to postpone lunch for four, five hours, (laughter) I would like to try, in as short a time as possible, to do two things. One: To try to bring us up to date as to where we stand - all of us who are interested in these two questions that Irwin referred to -- The Middle East questions - and our Jewish responsibility which Lee was talking about. Because, since we are here together in these numbers, it's an opportunity that we shouldn't miss to keep ourselves informed and be brought up to date as to exactly what's happening in Israel - and we'll do that for a certain length of time. And then the second thing is to try to find the way of getting across not the immediate but the more transcendental, the more glorious, the more historical, the underlying ideological and philosophical rationale behind this whole work. Now it's tough to try to do two things at the same time, but it would appear to be slightly schizophrenic and yet that characterizes

- 2 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

the nature of the Jewish people, doesn't it really? And let's see if the two will go? First of all - and this will take the shorter period - let me try to describe exactly where we stand at this moment almost a year and a half after the war: all of the hopes of all of the months that the war would bring peace have been aborted: we're sitting here, now, fifteen, sixteen months after the war and there isn't the slightest indication that there's any peace. And I think now realism is beginning to set in to replace the glow of euphoria which existed on the 10th of June. I've said to you time and time again, openly and frankly, that people have called me "a warmonger and a hawk" and all sorts of names because I keep reminding you that there is no peace and there is still war. And slowly but surely, as the months go on, people acknowledge that that is the only correct perspective with which to view the situation. You have an arrogant obstinacy on the part of the Arab world to face reality. They are both arrogant and they are obstinate. They absolutely refuse to come to grips with the fact that the war was won and that Israel

- 3 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

is not going to be obliterated. Their thinking is becoming more and more anachronistic. They live with their old ideas that they can destroy - and they do not change these ideas - and they sit obstinately on the principles which they enunciated thirteen months ago, in August of 1967, at Khartoum, in which they said no peace, no peace negotiations, no recognition - and they haven't budged one inch from that. Now anybody who wants to live in the area of wishful thinking and hoping and dreaming has got to say maybe something will happen tomorrow morning that will be a miracle? But that's all you've got to hang your hats on fellows, the miracle. In terms of the realistic possibilities, nobody is going to wake up tomorrow morning and make peace with Israel. They've dug themselves into this position. That's where they sit. That's their whole approach. They have all the backing to confirm and solidify that approach. Their Russian patron, who treats them like clients, affirms that approach. And when they sit there in the rhetoric of their fancy and they talk about the fact that Crusaders were in Israel for only

- 4 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

200 years and we finally got rid of them - 200 years or 300 years don't mean anything in their poetic fancy. To them Israel is a passing phenomenon. ~~Wakk~~ Hell, it's only twenty years! That's nothing! So what! Another twenty years we'll get them out of the area! I am sarcastic and derisive and I scorn, but they really believe it. One, one in the whole Arab world comes to a recognition of reality, Bourghiba. Bourghiba says you've got to deal with Israel, she's here. That's all. Nobody else. And he doesn't even ~~gskts~~ go to the Arab meetings anymore because they don't pay any attention to him and he has nothing further to add. The concomitant of no peace is war, and anybody who fails to recognize that also is being guilty of very wishy-washy weak thinking. There is no in between state. It's not even a question that you ~~hz~~ can have a cold war because what you've got is a hot war. If you don't have peace, you have hot war - killing, murdering, terrorising, bombing in the civilian centers, even crossing the Canal now every ^{single} ~~single~~ day on the patrol roads around the kibbutzim - mines, Fatah, guerrilla raids, fights in the caves around

- 5 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

Nablus or around Lebanon - more casualties in the police - in the civilian population - in the army. You know the Chinese and the Japanese story when ~~they~~ they were fighting - fifty thousand Chinese get killed and two thousand Japanese. And the next days battle a hundred thousand Chinese and four thousand Japanese. This goes on for a while. Pretty soon no more Japanese. We're in a war and I'm not asking you to do anything about it except acknowledge it, understand it. Don't try to make believe it doesn't exist. Don't ~~x~~ try to sweep it under the rug. Don't try to talk as though it's some kind of temporary border shooting. No peace means war - now compounded by this Czechoslovakian ^{analysis} business. And I don't want to make a big ~~analysis~~ of it but all it shows is that the Russians still have an awful lot of moxie left in them. They want to move they move. They want to move a half a million men they can move a half a million men in a couple of days. They're not worried about outraging public opinion. They're not worried even about basically gambling on the nuclear war. ~~They~~'ll go on discussing non-proliferation of

- 6 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

nuclear weapons with the United States at the ~~same~~ same time they do something that outrages the United States, and they gamble and they gamble right. And what did Johnson say about the Czechoslovakian thing? He said it's regrettable. We didn't move in Hungary in 1956 and we're not going to move because we try to be sensible about this possibility of a nuclear war and the Russians are willing to gamble a lot more than we are. And if they're willing to do it in - if they're willing to do it in - middle Europe, why aren't they willing to do it in Middle East! This situation is not under our control. We say all the time Russia doesn't want a war. We say she doesn't want to destroy Israel. We say she doesn't want to give the Arabs the opportunity, to unleash them in another foolish adventure. We say all this to ourselves all the time. We - we want to believe this. But, good friends, every thinking, logical man has got to admit this is a possibility which keeps the area still in a state of tinderbox non-settlement. The Israeli reaction to all of this is very clear. It's clear as a bell. Any other policy than the

- 7 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

policy they are pursuing would be suicidal on their part - and more than suicidal it would be stupid. The Israeli population, government and population are forced into the position in as rapid and as massive a redressing of the balance of power as they possibly can achieve with as much speed and with as much skill as they ~~may~~ notoriously possess. If, before the June war, the balance in the area was four to one against Israel and, if today the balance in the area is five to six to one against Israel, I don't care how much more advantageous the borders are today - and I'll ~~go~~ ~~over~~ ~~that~~ in a minute -- and they are more advantageous for Israel today than they were fifteen months ago - that advantage on the border doesn't outweigh the disadvantage of an unfavorable ratio in the area. And I think you have to realize that all this stuff about getting Phantom Jets, this is not child's play and this is not hysterical screaming, and this is not the wishes of a people for its ego to be built up. The ratio is adverse, gentlemen, and there's nothing that tempts the aggressor more than to know that the potential

- 8 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

victim is weaker. It tempts him to go for the throat. So it's not hysteria and it's not screaming -- and it's a matter of a fight for survival and those aircraft have to be obtained and, if they can't be obtained over the table, they have to be obtained under the table. And Israel is going to fight like a tiger. It looks like the Mirages are out and will continue to be out. And this is the only chance we've got and we've got to keep the pressure on to get it, knowing full well that when we get the permission to buy them it costs two hundred million dollars to pay for them. Because nobody gives them to you free. I don't want to go into any more details than that except in this closed room to give you one figure, one figure. And it remains in this closed room and it is not for publication. The budget for the government of Israel for fiscal 1969, beginning March -- April 21, which ^{can} be obtained by tax revenue ~~from~~ from the people of Israel, is estimated to be three billion three hundred million pounds - three point three billion pounds. The total budget will be six billion pounds. But all

- 9 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

that can come in from the backs of the people of Israel is three point three. The balance has got to come in from money that will come in from abroad - like our money or Government Bond money - Israel Bond money - or borrowings. The people of Israel can generate themselves three point three billion dollars. What do you think the military budget is going to be for fiscal '69? Two point nine billion dollars - without the Phantoms -- pounds, two point nine billion pounds, I'm sorry. Almost the entire amount of money which the people of Israel can come up with under the fantastic tax burden they bear goes for the defense. And there are only a couple of hundred million pounds left over, to handle the needs of a population of two and a half million people, for all of the social services, from the garbage collector to the fireman to the postman to the medical services to the immigrant care to the education of the kids - the complete list of civilian services for the entire population of Israel has at its disposal a couple of hundred million pounds. In 1967 we didn't have this situation. In 1968 we don't have this situation. This is what

- 10-

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

'69.

we know we're going to have in/~~xxxx~~ Alternatives are clear - stop buying tanks, half-tracks, helicopters, aircraft, ammunition. Or the other alternatives are clear - the Jews & of the rest of the world pay for everything else and Israel takes her entire money and arms herself. And I told you there's no choice. Any other decision would be suicidal and not only suicidal, stupid. I put a map up there so that you would understand the situation. Way up on the top at Golon it was quiet for a long time. It's not anymore. This Golon Heights area, here, for a long time -- Damascus is about forty miles up here, that's all - a quick run - flat row - no rivers - no mountains - nothing in the way - nothing in the way for us - nothing in the way for them either, if they should decide one fine morning they would like to take back (phonetic - Fenetra). All the months it was quiet. Now there are the beginnings of more boldness - infiltrators are coming across the line - mines are being planted right here along the border - episodes are occurring - several deaths have now taken place. This is a sign of boldness behind the intransigence. Being

- 11 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

intransigent and making no peace is one thing. Being bold enough now to start to take the aggression again and nibble away in a guerrilla warfare is a sign of another dimension. Up on the Golon - this area from the bottom of the Lake of Galilee down here through what we call the Jordan River Valley and the (phonetic - Bet'Sha'On Valley - they're two valleys that run consecutively - in these valleys here there are twenty-five or thirty kibbutzim and Moshavim. They were not under the Syrian guns of the Golon Heights before. Before the June War this area right here was quiet. After the June War this area has blown up into an enormous fire area where every single day without any exception the shooting takes places. And the members of The Mission -- and there are several guys in the room here - and - and girls who were on The Mission in June - we took them up here into the kibbutzim in the (phonetic - Bet'Sha'On Valley - in July I mean - and they saw what it was like. They saw the whole children population living underground in shelters. They saw the flowers and the grass all cut up with slit trenches. They saw the patrol roads down here,

- 12 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

all of them now getting black-top on it so mines can't be planted. They saw the electronic fence which is being worked here. And by the way the decision now on the electronic fence is maybe try to bring it all the way down here. There's a point right about here called (name) where they keep coming across all the time. You might have to bring that electronic fence down the whole damn line of the Jordan and the (phonetic - Arrarapa Valley. Inside the West Bank here it's quiet. The Dayan policy is a brilliant success, brilliant. Give them their head, Give them their self-control. Give them their autonomy. Let them have their own mayers and their own schools and their own economy. Let the bridges be open across the river so they can take their goods across to Jordan and sell their - make their money. It's been a good policy. Nevertheless, inside this West Bank the Fatah gangs work and the caches of arms are found in caves, and the firefights take place, and the thirty-five year old colonels get killed - colonels not privates -- and the toll goes on -- and the toll goes on. Down here, on the - in the (phonetic - Arrava,

- 13 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

in this section, the fighting goes on, the infiltrators come across. The policy that works, apparently works down here is hot pursuit with helicopters. Because you're tracking across pretty barren desert and, when you see the bands moving, and there are a dozen guys, you track them with the helicopter. And it's the - it's the 1968 Israeli version of the "cowboy chase" - only instead of on horseback, it's with a Bell 205.

And the border is crossed, you have to know that. The Israelis do cross the border in hot pursuit. It's dangerous. There's an alternative. The Canal doesn't show on the map. Three weeks ago I was dipping my feet in the water of the Canal and talking to the colonel who was in charge of the brigade at the base from (phonetic) Bir Gif Gaffa where his headquarters is - and he runs the whole Sinai-Suez operation,---I told the story the other day to a few - to some of you - and I said the Canal's been quiet for months. He said yeah. I said, do you think the Canal's going to be quiet? Yep! We got a quiet area here. It's true they have seven divisions on the other side - I've got

- 14 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

one brigade on my side - but it's quiet and it's going to stay quiet. And four weeks ago it was quiet and we went up and down that Canal from a point opposite Port Said, a place called (phonetic (Felican) all the way down to Port Tufique. We stopped at town after town after town. And I would love to see those places today four weeks later because the artillery duel that took place the other day smashed up both sides pretty well. No such thing as anyplace in Israel being quiet. I think that's enough. I don't think we need anymore. There's a big nation now, here, swinging this week - next week in terms of its posture and its attitude as to what it should do for next year's campaign. The American-Jewish conscience is beginning to jell itself and a ~~consensus~~ consensus is being arrived at by very democratic procedure. I want to tell you now, in the endless meetings that have taken place, there's been almost no voting. It isn't a question of a vote - nine to two or ~~sixty~~ ^{sixty} one to three. Consensus is being arrived at which is much better, much healthier. That for/~~1968~~ ¹⁹⁶⁹ again we have to take over all of the welfare costs

- 15 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

(raps table) because there's no money for anything else except military costs on the part of the Israelis. I was asked a question yesterday - what should the goal of the 1969 Emergency Fund be? You know what it should be? If you want to know what the truth is? It should be three hundred million dollars, much more than we raised in 1967. I've no idea what the campaign's going to be like. And I don't want to talk about it anymore because I want to switch you over to the other topic. All I want to say is, if you remember the few guiding principles? - there is no peace - it doesn't look like there's going to be any - certainly not in the near future. There's war. The war gets worse every day. You can call it the "little war." You can worry about when it will blow into the "big war." You can guess on what the Russians will tell the Arabs to do or permit them to do. The toll and the drain and the pressure on the nerves, and the demands financially go on inexorably day after day after day as you and I sit here debating what to do. We'll reach our decision in a week or two. When I saw we, I mean

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

the nation. And there's one thing, when the nation, when the American-Jewish community reaches its decision what to do, it's going to do it just as well as it knows how to do. In this fact, I have confidence. Because - and here's the break point - and now let me go and switch over to really the other things I wanted to talk about - because I believe basically and fundamentally that the American Jewish community, when it poses to itself a question of what its responsibilities are, will always answer that question affirmatively and adequately in dimensions. Because I believe that the American-Jewish community has a sense of identity, has a sense of pride, has a sense of purpose, has a sense of linkage with world Jewish communities and goals and aspirations and ideas. In other words I believe that the American-Jewish community is in a state of moral and psychological and spiritual good health contrary to those who say that the American-Jewish community is riven and broken and split with tendencies toward assimilation and tendencies toward intermarriage and tendencies toward loss of identity and tendencies

- 17 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

of not knowing where it's going or what it's doing. I believe deeply that underneath, and fundamentally in the moral and spiritual health of the American-Jewish community - in spite of the fact that the superficial, I call them - that's a judgmental word - that the superficial signs are all to the contrary - the superficial signs are all to the contrary. If you read the findings of the social scientists and the psychologists at the B'Nai Brith meeting a month or a week ago, their findings are that American-Jewish youth is - considers its number one problem to be its sense of identity. It does not consider, these twelve hundred or so young college people who were interviewed in this questionnaire, they do not consider the problems of Israel to be the major problem. They don't consider the urban problems in the cities to be the major problem. They consider the question of what is our Jewish identity to be the major problem. I can understand that. I can understand it. I wrote for myself one of these little parables that I always try to write for myself when I try to understand a problem. "The Search For Identity."

- 18 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

The meaning of what it is to be a Jew. I think of Moses, he goes forty days up on the mountain. What do you think he was looking for? I mean, if he can get those Ten Commandments quicker than that, he wasn't very good. He wasn't spending forty days up there in the fog looking for two stone tablets. He was looking for his identity. The leader of the people, what would he come down and tell the people to do - to be? This question of the search for identity is something which goes back to the beginnings of our people - Elijah wandering around in the desert alone - sitting in a cave all by himself. What was he doing? ~~And~~ Jonah ran away from his identity. He couldn't avoid it. He found it, sitting under a tree, looking at a gourd. I wrote this - I would write - I put these words down about the modern American Jew seeking his identity - and I would write it in these words --

"And the man stood amidst the fatness of the land America and new that The Lord was good. For he saw the golden grain and smelled the sweet milk and tasted the rich meat and felt the heavy fruits on the dark green trees. And there were all manner

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

of wool and linen and soft silks to clothe his nakedness, just as there was much water to cleanse his body and wine to uplift his spirits. He sometimes questioned, as he saw each year these wonderous marvels, this abundance which poured from the great plains and valleys of his blessed land, why some men were hungry? And he thought vaguely that perhaps there was some evil either of man or of God which caused such injustice and unfairness? But then he shrugged, for these mysteries were beyond him to solve. Sometimes the great cities would burn in the night and the pain and the agony and the hunger of men - especially black - would howl into his ears and his soul would burn with shame and fear. And he was then at his most perplexed for all this seemed a denial of what the prophets of his great God Jehovah had thundered, namely that all men were His children and hence equal. The man knew not what to do for he felt lost and rootless. The fruit tasted sour and the bread grew hard, and he turned and he groaned. There was no ease in his heart. Once he thought I shall harden and turn my face from man so that

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

"....I see this evil not. But this brought no peace for he could not live on earth alone and not look at other men. Then he thought I shall harden and turn my face from God for surely He has deserted us. But strangely that brought no peace either. And then he cried bitterly for he saw no answer to the riddle of his life. I'm lost he wept. I know not who I am or why I live. No identity. The Angel came softly and gently and carried him to the peak of the mountain so that he could see from afar and all around the beauty of the land. And once soothed and quieted the man could listen again. And the Angel said, you were born many thousands of years ago far across the seas in a holy land, and you were part of a great people with a great soul. Your God taught you to do justice and to believe in the goodness of man. He gave you a sense of mission to sustain you in the long and awful struggle upward. He promised you that out of all the defeats final victory would come. He pleaded with you to develop courage, faith and a sense of destiny. He gave you a purpose and a meaning to your life. He

- 21 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

warned that if you wavered in this at any time you would be deserted and destroyed. He would not be your God and you wouldn't be His people. Never forget who you are, the son of a timeless people linked to a timeless land; bound to a timeless faith. And when the Angel finished, the man rose soothed and strengthened knowing once more who he was and what he had to do. And I write this for myself because I think the whole business of this ~~sex~~ search for identity simply is a question of understanding who in the devil the Jewish people are and what we stand for and what our ~~sex~~ roots are and what our goals are and what our values are. And anybody who knows that knows that we are The Chose People. You know I find that everybody's embarrassed by that in the 20th century. I'm not. I'm not confused by it in the theological sense, you know. I'm not very sure about very much about God and so I don't use it in the sense God ~~tx~~ chose this people. And I don't use it in the superior sense either. I use it in a very simple sense to me. I think we are absolutely unique. I think we're absolutely

RABBI FRIEDMAN

different. I think we're absolutely (phonetic) ~~quey~~ generous???) There's nobody else like us in the world. And I think anybody who understand that about himself no longer has any problems of what is his identity or what is his role or what is his purpose in life? or where is he going or what is he supposed to do? It becomes quite clear to him that what he has to do is struggle to guarantee the survival of this special people, struggle to implement the ideas and the ideals in a social sense of this people in the modern world. The ideals of this people are relevant in the modern world. And struggle to protect the land which was the birthplace of this people and its greatest guarantee. That's his task. Now, who needs more than that to do in one lifetime! The man who questions who am I - where am I going - what am I supposed to do - am I just a number and a cog in this great world which alienates me? - that man can ^{achieve} ~~achieve~~ his peace of mind and his comfort and his psychological security so long as he fits down into that niche into which he belongs. And the niche into which he belongs is the membership in that people cut into

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

his flesh, and the task which that people has to undertake and to achieve. Now we're living here in America. In America, when we first came here, we the Jews had no identities, we had no ideals. You know what we were doing? We were running. And I don't care whether you saw that we were running in the 18th century from persecution in England when we came over here in the 1730's and '40's. I don't care if you saw we were running from the revolution in Europe in the middle of the 19th century, 1848 when another few hundred thousand Jews gushed over here, German Jews who wound up in Cincinnati and in St. Louis. I don't care if you saw we were running in the 1880's and 1890's when the Russian Jews came from Kishnev. At the early period of our existence in America we were simply fleeing, and we weren't thinking. The second period of our life here we were building. It was our age of materialism - you know, Marjorie Morningstar, the apartment on Central Park West was the thing, and the moving out of the Lower East Side to get up to the Bronx. And then the Bronx wasn't any good and you finally

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

wound up on Central Park West, or Riverside Drive. That was the epitome of everything. I don't think there was much idealism then either. I think it was a materialistic question of getting roots in - getting dug in. I think we're now in the third stage of our life in America. We're in the stage now not of fleeing or not of building our material existence - we're in the stage now of dreaming how to fulfill our destiny. What is this whole question of a search for identity? What do you mean you say I'm looking for my identity? What you mean is how do I live my life out as a Jew? Does that have any meaning for me or not? That's already a question beyond the material. It's a question of dreaming how you can fulfill your destiny. Now look, all of America is in a search for national goals. Do you remember when Life Magazine had a contest a few years ago for ~~something~~ somebody to write an essay "What Is the National Goal of America?" Today I would say the nation's confused about its goals. The confusion is shown in the nature of the candidates we're offered for President. The national goals of America are - are in trouble at

- 25 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

this moment. But the goals of Jews aren't in trouble because those goals don't vary from one election to the next. Those goals are timeless - that's the word I use. I would say that in this third period of our life here where we're seeing to define ourselves we had better succeed or we will enter the fourth period of our existence in America and the fourth period will be that we will die here. We fled here first. We built here second. Those are behind us. We're searching now how to live nobly and productively and creatively as Jews. That's what we're in now. If we do it right, then the future is (makes sound - psht,) limitless. If we do it wrong, we'll go into the fourth period, we'll die here. And then we'll be an item in the history books like Spain or like Babylonia and somebody will read about a few hundred years of "the golden age" in the United States and then, ~~simak~~ "basta." That's the situation in America. I believe, I believe it every minute of my life that we are ~~find~~ finding the creative answers and the meaningful answers day by day. And we're implementing it and we're acting it out the way

- 26 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

we build our communities in America and the way we support and get behind the Jewish people and the land of Israel as a permanent obligation, a responsibility that is as much our daily life as our own children. So I'm a great believe, in spite of all the surface signs to the contrary, that the Jewish people in the United States will work its way out of all of the negativism and any of the doubt and the despair which the intellectuals think might exist. I might be - you know, because I'm not an intellectual in their sense of the word - I'm too practical - I'm too pragmatic - I might be pollyannaish about this thing? I might be going along in my beautiful, naive, blissful, happy optimism about what kind of people you are and what you believe in and what you're doing, and I may wind up one fine day waking up and saying, my God, what happened? How did it all crash? I don't think so. I think I'm reading you better than the intellectuals and the rabbis and all of the Cassandras are reading you. At any rate, it doesn't matter who's right or wrong. You, by the way you live out organized Jewish life in

- 27 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

America, you're going to decide what - what it is - you're going to decide either that it has meaning or it doesn't. It's up to you. As far as Europe is concerned, Europe's dead except for three large communities. And when I say dead, again you know my smile - I talk quick, shorthand - yes, I know there are a few thousand Jews in Switzerland - and there are a few thousand Jews in Holland - and there are a few thousand Jews in Belgium - and there are a few thousand Jews in Scandinavia -- but in the great cosmic economy of history that's not earth-moving, that's not definitive, determinative, decisive. You got three communities in Europe. You got a community of Jews in England - a half million. They're the closest to us in nature and in complexion. They're a little bit less schizoprenic. They're a little bit more orthodox in their religion. They're a little bit closer to 19th century roots than we are. But they're emancipating themselves quickly (laughter) and - a - and a - they're - they're - they're quite close to us - and they're the kind we can understand the easiest. And I would like the same analysis for

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

them as I made for us. You have a second community there which refuses to call itself a community and that's France. They absolutely refuse to apply the word community to themselves. They say we are individual Jews. We're Frenchmen. And I "bust a gut" every time I go there. I have these long fantastic arguments with them in which I saw "but in 1967 you acted as a community with all of the homogeneity, solidarity, response to leadership, reaction to a call, unanimity of opinion, you acted like a community. Well, yes, we did. We did. We did. It was C'est La Guerre, La Guerre. And after the "guerre," you know, well, we're just all individualistic Frenchmen. Now, I don't know. They're going to have to decide for themselves. They may go back to the anarchy of individualism which marks France, the 4th Republic and the 5th Republic and the 6th Republic - and it's going to mark the Jewish community probably just as well. Or - or, the Six Day War may have awakened them and they may develop a sense of community solidarity? I kind of doubt it - although I would hope to be proven wrong. At any rate, it's

- 29 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

another community of a half million - a - which is - about which we're uncertain. And the third great group, the third great group in Russia, in Europe is a community in Russia which is a community under attack. Its government is trying to destroy it. So, you know, we can say the Jewish spirit ~~xxx~~ is surviving. We can say the Jewish will is surviving. We can say the Jews will not give in. We can say they will refuse to be broken and shattered. All of this is true. All the evidences are there. Hebrew poetry being written in slave labor camps in the 1950's - big demonstrations every time an Israeli delegation showed up anywhere in the '50's or '60's - constant listening to the ~~xxx~~ Voice of Israel Radio - all the demonstrations are there that they're ~~xxxx~~ trying to keep their Jewish identity and survival alive. But, (knocks on something) they're under the "crunch" of a government that's out to kill them. And I don't know what great hopes you can have of their..? The only one is the hope of immigration out - and then they can come out into the "free world." And we always believe, well, all right, maybe

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

there'll be some large numbers able to come out to us? And that's a prayer and that's a hope. We can keep working at it. But, if you look at it - if you look at it, the future of the Jewish people is not going to be determined by anything that happens in Europe - England the best, and France B doubtful and Russia brutalized,-- the rest of it all small and scattered. So then you go to the rest of it. What's left is Israel. I know I haven't said anything about Latin America. Latin America is an offshoot of Europe. The Jews who live in Latin America, almost a million of them, are in the same condition as the fragmented Jewish communities of Europe - they stem from there. You go to Argentina. There are two Yiddish gr newspapers in Buenos Aires, I think, with a population of - with a circulation larger than the Yiddish press in New York City. So it's Europe oriented, derived, and therefore in the sense of creative contributions to the world Jewish people nothing to be expected there in my judgment. And so I say what's left is Israel. And what you've got in Israel is a perfectly magnificent thing in

- 31 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

terms of this question of identity. What you got there is an integrated sense of Jewishness, an integrated sense of Jewishness. You have a national identity, national identity. You know, we're a nation, citizenship, flag, army, Ambassador. And you have a religious identity. So what you have is only a question to it - does one call one's self a Jewish-Israeli or an Israeli-Jew? But there's no inner problem. This is very exhilarating. This is very - this is a great guarantee for the future. This wholeness provides the drive and the courage and the amazing capacity that they show that ~~ask~~ constantly is a miracle to all of us - in every field - agriculture, art, industry, military, science - it comes out of the wholeness of them. You have no identity problem in Israel. Europe doesn't count or ^{Latin} ~~Latin~~ America. If you have your identity problem solved here in the United States, then what you'll have is the two strongest Jewish communities in the world polarized in two geographic locations, but united symbolically, ideologically, philosophically with the same sense of purpose and the same goal and the same direction. In all of

RABBI FRIEDMAN

this analysis, UJA and The Council of Federations fit in like hand in glove. Because what - what have you got here? What you got is an instrument, which American Jews have created, whose purpose it is to help find that sense of identity in America and build it, and then link it with Israel so that it's an unbreakable chain. And it's almost as though somewhere in the great mystery of the cosmos of how things get arranged, thirty, forty years ago The Council and the UJA were born, almost as though they - somebody knew when they would have to be sharp instruments to do their task as they must now be in the '60's and '70's of this century. We were born out of weakness. We were born out of death. We were born out of Hitler. We were born out of destruction. We have matured and are at our flowering at a time not of death but we're creating life, creating life in the building of the country and in the gathering of the people, suffering death again while we're building life. Because that's what war means, but building life. If you want to know what the title of this lecture was "The UJA In The Perspective

- 33 -

R. #1

RABBI FRIEDMAN

of History." I've got one sentence - the UJA is a tool which we invented which helps us to find our identity and this tool preserves us because it builds our communities at the same time as it helps to achieve millennial Jewish objectives. So you can say well, if I said it all in one sentence, why did I take almost an hour? But that's the way it is. Thank you very much.
(applause)

END OF SPEECH
