

TR-3796 Transcription

Friedman, Herbert A. Conference call to United Jewish Appeal  
workers. 16 May 1957.

SHALOM SANTIT:

[00:00] Good afternoon gentlemen. This is [Shalom Santit?] speaking to you from National Headquarters of the United Jewish Appeal in New York. We have taken you away from your jobs for a brief period. We are spending your valuable time and our valuable time in addition to a substantial amount of money in addition to a substantial amount of money in order to bring to you a matter of paramount importance. I know that you are very busy with the campaign at the present moment. The campaign is at peak. But a matter at hand now is of such importance that it merits priority. Our executive vice chairmen will speak to you on that. The next voice you will hear will be that of Rabbi Herbert Friedman. Mr. Friedman.

HERBERT FRIEDMAN:

Thank you Shalom, very much. Look, fellows, as Shalom said, ordinarily [01:00] we wouldn't have done a thing like this, but

conditions right now are such that I felt it was important for all of us to get together and talk this thing through.

The point of this telephone call is to tell you that we are in one of the most desperate conditions we've ever been in in regard to cash money to do the work which has to be done. I'm not talking about the campaign. This is not going to be a telephone call dealing with the campaign, telling you whether the campaign itself is going well or not well. I'm talking to you now about cash. You're all perfectly aware of the incredible immigration rate. And I'm going to read you a cable in a few moments, which I just received this morning.

But even before you hear that cable, you're aware of the fantastic rate at which the movement is going on at this point. Faster than anything that I told you a month ago when we met [02:00] together. Faster than any of our lay leaders really appreciate. Faster than anybody in Israel anticipated, as a matter of fact. We have simply not been getting in not only enough money, but not anywhere near enough money to handle this thing.

Now, let's not talk in the abstract. Let me talk to you very concretely. On the regular campaign, we're \$1,000,000 behind last year as of the same date. \$1,000,000 isn't a lot on the total campaign, but in terms of our cash needs, when we're \$1,000,000 behind and the work is proceeding so much more rapidly than ever before, that becomes an item. But I wouldn't even be so considered if we were only \$1,000,000 on the regular campaign because our whole hope is that that will straighten itself out within a very few weeks.

On the special fund of 1956, and on the rescue [03:00] fund of 1957, you won't believe your ears when I give you these two figures. On the special fund of 1956, for which you know we had about \$19,000,000 worth of pledges, there still is outstanding \$6,000,000 in cash, which we have not gotten. Now these pledges in the 1956 special fund were made, some of them 15 and 16 and 17 months ago, some of them 12 months ago, some of them 10 months ago. But it's a whole year now, and there's still \$6,000,000 outstanding on a \$19,000,000 special fund of 1956. That's one thing.

And the second thing, on the rescue fund of 1957, that's even more unbelievable. We carry on the books now -- and this is not an audited figure and we're not publishing it, but [04:00] I'm giving you exactly the progress report as of last night, May 15 -- we carry on the books an estimated total of pledges for the rescue fund of \$23,000,000. So it's going pretty well, as you can see. But would you believe it, that of the \$23,000,000 worth of pledge, we have got in cash \$1,714,000, period. Now how the devil do we go along with \$23,000,000 worth of pledges and \$1 million three quarters worth of cash? Now I know your answer can be that this is the 1957 rescue fund and some of these pledges are only a week old, or two weeks old, or a month, or three months, that this isn't money that's a year old, and therefore, don't get excited if it isn't coming in yet. But look at the ratio. Of \$23,000,000 worth of pledges, we don't have \$2,000,000 in [05:00] cash.

Now at that rate, we simply can't keep going. We've come into something here with which our -- I don't think we've ever been faced before. They're aware of this in Israel. They're scared to death of this in Israel. I got a cable this morning from Dov Joseph, the treasure of the Jewish Agency. He didn't know I was

going to talk to you this afternoon, but he's sitting there desperate, and by coincidence, this thing came in this morning and I want to read it to you. It's addressed to Mr. Rosenwald, as follows: "The extreme urgency of our need for additional funds impels me to appeal again to you and your devoted fellow workers in the UJA who have dedicated themselves so selflessly to helping Israel cope with its staggering immigration and absorption problems." -- So he's sort of half apologizing that he's addressing himself to us again. But when you hear his figures, you'll understand that he's got a right to. -- "In April, [06:00] 8600 immigrants reached Israel. 8600 in the month of April. On April 30<sup>th</sup>" -- and he's giving us sort of a progress report -- "2,780 were en route and 6,300 were in European ports awaiting departure for Israel." So he's got there 9,000 people sitting and waiting to be moved as of April 30<sup>th</sup>. "In the first half of May" -- and this is as of today, May 15<sup>th</sup> -- "In the first half of May, 6,000 people reached Israel." -- In the first half of the month -- "The total for the month will be 12,000." -- By the way, let me interrupt to say that we're breaking a story in the press this weekend because a figure of 12,000 is a fantastic figure to come in in one month. "June too will bring a number far [07:00] exceeding the original expectation."

I have another cable from a man in Geneva which gives me the clue that the figure for June will not be as high as 12,000 but will probably be somewhere between nine or 10. Joseph doesn't say it in his cable, but I have it from another source.

"We must find funds to pay for their transportation and provide them with a roof over their heads immediately that they arrive. Minimum cost, including buildings for public services such as school, etcetera, averages 6,000 Israel pounds per family." -- That's about \$3,000 per family, but he's talking there about the total cost of getting a village set up. -- "We must furnish their primary absorption needs and help them find means of obtaining employment through various methods devised by our absorption department. Stop. Craftsmen must be helped find premises, tools, and raw materials. [08:00] Others must be kept for five months in ul-panim. That's professional people that have to learn Hebrew: doctors, lawyers, accountants, journalists. They've got to spend the five months in the ul-pan learning Hebrew and their families meantime be supported. Youth Aliyah youngsters must be cared for. Other must be taught trades

and be given work until they find permanent employment. All this, you know, we include under the word absorption."

Now he goes on to say, "All this entails expenditures far beyond the anticipated income from the year on the basis of what you say the regular and rescue fund pledges will be." Now he makes an interesting plea. He says, "The immigrants are excellent human material, with a large proportion having technical and professional skills ensuring that they will be able to contribute to the economic development of Israel." [09:00] So he's telling us they're good people, as if we didn't know that.

"I feel confident," he says, "that friends of Israel in the UJA who have previously been so generous with their help would gladly provide the extra money to keep the gates of Israel open to the many thousands eager to reach our shores if they realize the gravity of the situation and knew how vital it was for them to augment their giving to the rescue fund." You see, he sends this cable asking us to keep the campaign going. He's talking about pledges. I'm talking to you about cash. It's the same thing. He's pleading for people to augment their giving to the rescue fund. I'm pleading with you to continue the campaign to

get pledges, of course, but I'm pleading with you for cash to keep this work going.

Stop. "Plead with you all to make super human effort, help us obtain the additional funds we so urgently require. Stop. Know I can count on you." [10:00] And then he ends with a Biblical quotation in which he says, "You will all find your reward in the fulfillment in your own time of the prophecy in the Bible, quote, 'In those days shall Judah be saved and Jerusalem shall dwell safely,' unquote."

Now look, if Judah is going to be saved and if Jerusalem is going to dwell safely, we've got to get more than a million and three quarters in on a \$23,000,000 pledge figure. It's obvious. The rate of immigration going on, 12,000 in May, nine or 10,000 in June. I'll tell you -- and I know a lot about the inside affairs of the government of Israel and the Jewish Agency -- I don't see how they're going to keep going at the rate at which we're providing cash for them. And that's the whole background which led us to the conclusion that we better make this call to you this afternoon because this coming conference can't be just an ordinary vokh dika, regular, semi-annual conference, [11:00]



you know, where for years and years, all right, we run a cash conference in June, so what? No.

Now look fellows, this has got to be something quite extraordinary. And you as individuals, the closest individuals to this picture, you are our best shock troops. You are our professionals. You have a role in the gathering in of this cash which goes far beyond the role of lay leaders who are working in this thing. Now Abe Heiman and Shalom and others here, Irving in the office, they've all assigned out duties to the lay leaders. And the lay leaders, by the way, have been damn good about this. One of the cash co-chairman, Max Bloch from Seattle actually was in the sick bed when he accepted Abe Heiman's request to serve as a co-chairman, and he'll make phone calls from his sickbed. But while that's very good and very dramatic, and it shows that the lay leaders are with us, those whom we can get to, when all is said and done boys, you know and I know perfectly well, you are the [12:00] fellows who are going to produce the cash. You're going to produce it by going to the executive directors and the chairmen and the presidents and the lay leaders and every single human being you've got any kind of contact with. And you're going to push and press and you'll get it.

And I'm not deprecating the work of the lay leaders. You know I've said this to you many times, they're wonderful and they're indispensable. But you are the core and the guts of this thing, and if you've got your heart in it, we'll get more cash. And if you haven't, we won't. And I'm just sounding the alarm.

Now at the same time that I'm talking about this cash, it's obvious that it's tied up with this conference. And so this conference we don't want to be just an ordinary thing, and therefore I want you to do a second thing while you're pushing for cash, I want you to push for attendance.

Now attendance which, again, can be quite simple and ordinary and mundane and pedestrian, or the right kind of attendance in quality and quantity [13:00] can make a conference a terrifically exciting thing. I don't have to tell you that. We've run some conferences which were wonderful. Everybody walked out feeling, ah, something happened. We've run other conferences, which were just good, workman like, unimaginative, uninteresting things. This conference has got to be something special. We've got to build up a public mood and sentiment. We

need a large crowd to do that with. Excitement is contagious. We've got to have a crowd; we've got to have a quality crowd. And we've gotten together, we think, a good program to attract a crowd.

Senator Lyndon Johnson, the majority leader in the Senate, is making his first appearance on a Jewish public platform. It's true, during the fighting a few months ago when he came out and he made the statement that he was against imposing sanctions on Israel, he attracted a great deal of attention and people said he was making a very good pro-Israel statement, and that was all fine. [14:00] But he has never appeared before a Jewish group before, and he's coming to the UJA.

Now I think we've got to get a hell of a crowd out, and I think we've got to get people out to show him that we are not behind him; not everybody votes in Texas. We want people from all over the country, but we've got show him that we support this position and that the Jews are as solidly behind Israel as he was when the chips were down.

And furthermore, I think it's good for us to show him a big front so that he has the feeling that the Jews of America are behind Israel 100%.

Ambassador Heideman called up and said that he would like to make a statement on this program of our conference about American-Israeli relations. Now that's an important policy statement that's going to be made, because America-Israeli relations have been, during the course of the past five or six months, subject to lots of ups and downs. I think -- just talking privately between [15:00] you and me -- Heideman wants to come and make a major diplomatic statement in regard to sort of pouring a little oil on the troubled waters. It's important for the Jews to be there to hear that.

Nahum Goldmann arrived in the United States yesterday from Europe, Israel, and South America where he's just been. Goldmann is the president of the Jewish Agency, whose funds we raise. That's a very sold program. Lincoln Hale, the point foreman in Israel, who spent three years there, a non-Jew, he's got an interesting report to give. We've got a full program for Saturday night and Sunday. We have a very special reason for

wanting the good people. You understand that this has got to be something out of the ordinary.

The campaigns will be kept going much better from June eighth and ninth on if there's a good conference. [16:00] If there's a deadly conference, the campaigns will dwindle off. People work by contagion. Now what I want is for you not just to rely upon other people. Sure, we contact the executive directors; we contact the presidents and the chairmen; we do everything from this headquarters. But again, as I said to you in regard to cash, so I say to you in regard to attendance: if you make it your personal business to get attendance, you'll get attendance.

You know whom to shoot for. You shoot for individual, special people. You make personal solicitations. You call the guy you know and say, look, it's important for him to be in New York that weekend. Attendance is a staff problem. Now, you go get it. That isn't to say that we're not going to work from this national office, but you're going to work in the field; we're going to work here, and we'll get this thing done.

A big conference, solid, [17:00] good mood, lots of excitement, will keep the campaign going. A big cash flow will give everybody heart and will encourage everybody. And most importantly of all -- to put it just as simply as I know how -- we'll prevent the whole damn thing from going bankrupt and breaking up. You cannot take in 12,000 people in one month and 10,000 the month before and 10,000 a month after. You can't go at that rate, which is 100,000 a year, annual rate, and pull in a couple of million dollars a month. You just can't do it.

Now they're not going to stop the people. And you know all the reasons why. We have practically stopped the flow of cash. And frankly, I'm not interested in the reasons why. All I can tell you is that I'm sounding an urgent and desperate alarm, and I want you all really to work [18:00] like the very dickens, because I know you can and I know we'll put this thing over.

Now, Shalom has got a word or two that he wants to say, and I want to thank you very much for listening.

**SHALOM SANTIT:**

Gentlemen, a form has been mailed to you -- I believe you have received it by this time. The form is to let us know the contacts you have made and the reservations you have obtained and the cash expectation that you have obtained from authoritative sources in your community.

On this form, there is the name and address, the response, and the reservation required. I know what it means to call up a man and he will say, "Well, I'll see." Or, "I may be there." And you put that down as a tentative reservation. That is not good enough. You have to talk to all of the men that you know personally, and you have enough contacts in the community to fill the conference twice over. You have to talk to them. [19:00] You have to visit your communities everyday. You want to be in touch with as many people as possible everyday of your activity between now and June the eighth.

I want a memorandum from you on this form every day. The administration in the field department will keep close tab. It will be checked against your name the memoranda or the forms received from you. And if one day is missing, or if one name of

a fieldman is missing, we will know actually who has done the work and who has not.

Now I'm not trying to threaten you, to say anything derogatory at all. I know that you're all working very hard. But I want you to take this very seriously in terms of reporting to us what is occurring in the communities. Above all, we want the reservation that is entirely buttoned up, the man tell you that he's [20:00] going to be there, how many seats he wants, etcetera, who he's going to bring with him, and so on and so forth. Now I would like to receive on Monday from every one of you, the first forms of the contacts that you have made. And from Monday on, day-by-day, a want to see a form from each one of you, or more than one form if you've contacted more than the 10 names, or more than one community. Please do that.

There's nothing more to add, gentlemen, except this, and the Rabbi Friedman has said that, and I want to repeat that: We all know that what we don't do in the field is not done. It is up to us. And there is no excuse for not doing it. There is every reason in the world for doing it. On this note, gentlemen, goodbye and good hunting.



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