

TR-3799 Transcription

Friedman, Herbert A. Conference call to United Jewish Appeal
workers. 14 March 1958.

SHALOM SANTIT:

[00:00] Good afternoon, gentlemen in all parts of the country, wherever you may be. This is [Shalom Santit?] speaking from Mr. Friedman's office in New York.

We have asked you to listen to us this afternoon for several reasons. One is, we would like to inform you of what has occurred in Miami. We think it has importance and significance to the campaign.

Two, we would like to impart to you, if possible, the spirit of Miami. This I believe is of more importance to the campaign than the actual dollars and sense raised there. Three, we would like to tell you our idea of how to implement this spirit of Miami and the occurrence there. Four, we would like to give you a run down -- brief as it may be -- of what [01:00] has occurred in the campaign up to the present minute.

We also have a treat in store for you. Our general chairman has consented to speak to you for a few minutes and the next voice you will hear be that of Morris Bernstein, the General Chairman of the United Jewish Appeal. Mr. Bernstein.

MORRIS BERNSTEIN:

Good afternoon gentlemen, and thank you, Shalom for the brief introduction. I promise you, I have travelled enough to deserve a longer introduction.

I want to talk to you not only as the general chairman of the campaign this year, but also as a businessman, because I think today in most of our minds, wherever we go, those are the things that are talked about. Frankly I am very, very much surprised at the initial success that we have had so far in this campaign. As you [02:00] probably realize, I have done a great deal of travelling. I have talked to a great many of the larger contributors to the campaign. Under the present business conditions, these are the people that I was most afraid of. These are the people who year in and year out have given tremendous gifts and a great many of them are not able to give them just solely out of capital.

I have travelled in many, many cities, and I have spoken and talked to many, many of these people. The success that we have had, I honestly believe is nothing short of phenomenal. Of the gifts in the country of \$50,000 and over, more than half of these gifts are already in, in the year 1958 at either the same level or slightly more. In communities that are supposedly hard hit by [03:00] business conditions, those that are more hard hit than others, a community, for instance, like Pittsburgh in the center of the steel industry, at the first meeting, we raised a half a million dollars and it brought in a little bit more than last year. And every man associated in the steel business either re-announced the same or a little bit more. In textile centers, in cotton good centers, wherever we have gone, we have found exactly the same results.

I can safely say that while there does not seem to be an undue emergency taking place, while we don't have some of the same things to talk about, while business conditions are off, that leadership of the United Jewish Appeal around the country understand the great need that Israel has for money this year. They know that their leadership counts. They know that if they

are to cut, [04:00] they would start a trend. And they are unwilling, for the sake of saving a few dollars, to start this kind of trend.

In translating this thing to you, in your communities and in the work that lies ahead, I can only say this, you are able to say these things in your communities and to the people that you are talking to. The leadership, the great leadership of the Jews in the United States of America are going to put up their money again, regardless of business conditions. They are going to do it because they are not going to take a chance that anything happens to the normal income that Israel has to have in order to do the job that we want them to do.

It is therefore up to you gentlemen in the field, with as much help as we can give you, to translate this same feeling into the middle and the lower giving brackets, because I am convinced that if we can maintain the same giving level and slightly increase levels in these brackets, the year [05:00] 1958 can be an excellent year. If anyone had asked me 60 days what I thought would happen in 1958, I assure you I wouldn't have said what I have just said to you. So all I can finish up saying is this,

that if we put in the effort and if we have the strength to continue to battle the way we have since the beginning of the year, and if we cover the field, I am convinced that we will do an outstanding job in 1958. So God bless you, and work hard, and call on us for anything that we can do to help you, because we are here for that.

And now the next voice that you will hear will be Herb Friedman's.

HERBERT FRIEDMAN

Morris, thank you very much. Fellows, I think you got the feeling from the way Morris talked that we have a general chairman who is really sitting on top of the campaign. I mean, it's quite amazing -- and here I'm just speaking in a personal vein inside the family -- [06:00] the comprehension he has of the details of what goes on in town after town. You fellows would really be surprised if you knew the way in which he follows all of the intricacies. And I must say that it's a very great pleasure to have a general chairman who is that interested in the campaign and who knows that where the money comes from ultimately is through the day-by-day drudgery, if you want to

use that word, of the way we spend our hours. He isn't a man who sits way up on Mount Olympus talking only about so-called general policy matters. He's got his feet and his hands and his heart right down in the depth of the details of the campaign, and you could tell that from the way he just spoke. And I think that that accounts in no small measure for the spirit that's in this year's campaign in the face of the conditions which we all know are so difficult.

Now, Shalom said that there were some things [07:00] specifically that we wanted to try to bring to your attention. First of all, he spoke about the facts of Miami. Those facts we're going to put together in the report to members, which is just about ready to be printed and distributed around the country. And it's pretty fast to have gotten that out because we're only two weeks after Miami. But we've tried to make an analysis of what happened. And on the first page of that RTM, we're writing an editorial, the essence of which we want you to try to transmit around the country, that of the money that came in -- and I'll give you the specific figures in a moment -- the front money that came in, the approximately \$18.5 million dollars that was announced, it's all hold the line or increased

money in that level. And that's an important message to spread in order to get the feeling of confidence and courage. And those are the two words that I want you to keep very much in mind, [08:00] confidence and courage that have to be communicated to every lay leader

Here are the figures specifically. Outside of New York City, which is reporting about \$6,000,000 against about \$6,000,000 last year -- and we don't have a card-for-card breakdown of New York -- but that \$6,000,000 they say is running neck-and-neck. For the rest of the country, they say this is how she's running -- and I give you the exact figures to draw a lesson. For 1957, the audited pledges that were made by the Miami meeting -- and I'm giving you regular and rescue combined; I'm giving you the total gifts -- \$11,891,000, 1957. Same cards, 1958, \$12,294,000. Now that's a \$400,000 increase on the first \$12,000,000. Don't forget, I said New York [09:00] was \$6,000,000, but we don't have audited. That's where the \$18,000,000 comes in, by the way, of the Miami announcement. \$400,000 on the first \$12,000,000. Now you can say that two ways. You can say, what the hell? What's \$400,000 on \$12,000,000? It's nothing. Actually, it's three percent. Or you can put it the other way and you can say

that a three percent increase on the first \$12,000,000 worth of audited cards of top level giving is a hell of an accomplishment.

I think that it's perfectly reasonable, without our being foolishly optimistic, to take the second point of view, the one which Morris stressed, that it really is a great job.

Now those are the facts of Miami. A three percent increase on the first \$12,000,000 of individual gifts. Shalom also said that he'd like us to talk about the spirit of Miami. Well the spirit of [10:00] Miami I think is more important than the facts, because a three percent increase is not very much. But the spirit of Miami is that the leadership of the country is willing to give this money if approached -- and the approach is a hard sell this year. Money just isn't flowing. Look, last year's campaign compared to this was a pushover. The mood was different; the atmosphere was different. But this year, we can feel very much encouraged by knowing that when you go and solicit a man for a gift, if you solicit hard enough, you get the gift. That's what Morris was trying to say when he pointed out that half the gifts, about \$50,000 are in. They were

solicited individually and thoroughly and maybe twice and three times and four times. Now, that's the second thing I want to say about the lesson that we've learned out of Miami.

We've taken plenty of time to try to get these big gifts.

[11:00] Plenty of times means that when a man didn't want to make it right away, or he said he wasn't ready, we said, "All right. Think it over. Think it over." As a result, we have a feeling that we have not pushed this campaign to try to settle for the early dollar. We were perfectly willing to relax, take it in stride, let the man adjust to the idea of the so-called business recession, let him also adjust to the idea that he was going to have to give the same, and if it took another few weeks for him to adjust to those psychological facts, OK, let him take the time.

Now however, we're in the middle of March. And so the second thing that I call a lesson of Miami is, now we don't have to hold up any campaigns any longer. As a matter of fact, I think now we ought to push. It doesn't mean anything if somebody tells you that we're four weeks behind, or three weeks behind. That doesn't mean much. What is clear is that we haven't pushed for

early settlement up to now. [12:00] However, that policy has to come to an end. From now on, I don't think there's going to make much difference if we let a guy wait from March to April, or let a guy wait from April to May. None of us is an economist, and nobody knows what the economy of the country's going to be, but one thing is pretty clear, the next 30 days, the next 60 days, the next 90 days aren't going to show any great, fantastic, sudden upturn or upsurge, and pledging can be done now just as well as 30 or 60 or 90 days from now. So look fellows, no more waiting. And if executive directors try to talk to you about, let's wait, let's not -- etcetera -- you say to them that we thought this thing through very carefully here, and our opinion is, let's push ahead.

The third thing that we've learned and that we want to pass on to you as an experience out of the Miami meeting is this, where the top leadership cards were carefully [13:00] worked over and carefully solicited, they produced the results, we think therefore, that dropping down one bracket -- and I'm not sure whether that means in a given town, a \$5,000 gift or a \$35,000 gift, because the second echelon money in many a community may be 20, 30, 40,000, or it may be 5,000. But what I call the

second echelon money has to be worked the same way that the top echelon money is worked. In other words, if we worked hard to prevent a psychology of cutting in the big gifts above 50,000, then I think you've got to work hard to prevent a psychology of cutting in the second level of giving, and maybe down even into the third level of giving.

Now you know what that means. That means that you can't depend upon those cards being picked up in the trade meetings; you can't depend upon the ordinary campaign momentum [14:00] to gather in all the five and eight and three and \$11,000 cards. They've got to be treated as specially and separately and individually this year as we've treated the \$50,000 cards.

Now we haven't done that in the last year or two, let's admit it. Last year when the campaign was a lot easier, we fought hard on an individual basis for the front money, and we let the second and the third echelon money take care of itself. This year, things are different. And I say that I think we can hold the line in the second level money as well as the top-level money if we handle it that way. That means you've got to call on the national office for help where you want individual people

solicited, even if it's a \$10,000 or \$5,000 gift, if it's a key gift in a town. You've got to call on other people in other communities, lay leaders to make cost telephone calls. You've got to get executive directors to realize that maybe somebody from the outside punching for a \$5,000 [15:00] gift will help save \$50,000 worth of hold the line gifts if the key man can be held.

In other words, what I'm saying is, nothing is too small to require individual attention this year. A key \$2,000 gift, if it's key, might require individual attention and stop a whole psychology of cutting down the line.

So we wanted to get that over to you very strongly. It's going to require more careful watching on your personal part of individual names of individual people than you've done before. It's going to mean impressing the executive directors to do it that way. It's going to mean you're pushing us in the national office for help on that kind of individual solicitation.

I'd like to say just a word, just a very short word, about the special importance I feel obtains in the smaller communities

this year. You men know to whom I'm talking, and by smaller communities I mean those where actually, [16:00] even in the face of this business recession, we might be able to make gains, strangely enough, because for years, many of the smaller communities have never been plowed properly or fruitfully. And as you all know, we're putting in a special effort on that this year. I think it's even possible to consider that in some of those places, we might make gains which can offset losses in bigger communities.

You know, you can really reach \$1,000,000 very quickly with a lot of five and eight and seven and \$10,000 communities. And if \$2,000 town can be pushed to five, you can get a lot of money together awfully fast. And this can help take care our offset, an awful lot of the losses in the bigger places.

Shalom said that you would be interested in having a campaign rundown so far. I'm not going to give you the long list of cities that I have in front of me in the telephone. I can just give you a few overall statistics. [17:00] For the spring campaigns of 1958, the total number of campaigns that we have, organized campaigns, are 680. Of that number, 338, about half --

just about exactly half -- are in what we call a state of organization. That means they've got a chairman; they've got officers; a campaign calendar has been set up; dates have been picked; speakers have been booked; maybe a few gifts have been solicited. That means half of the communities are organized. Half, not organized. Fundraising is going on actually in 91 cities. Now, I said before, we weren't pushing. You might say we were late in getting many campaigns started. I don't want to editorialize; the figures are as I've just given them to you.

[18:00]

Half of the communities are not even organized. It means don't have a chairman; don't have dates; don't have anything. And of the half which are, 91 of the 338 are in fundraising. I'm not going to say that's bad; I'm just going to say I think the time has come for us now to put all 680 spring communities into the works.

Now, let me read you a few -- Morris mentioned Pittsburgh, a hard hit steel center. The figures at the moment are -- and I'm giving you again, combined figures, regular and special together. 1958, \$592,000 against \$578,000 last year, not

spectacular. \$14,000 on almost \$600,000, but just enough of that little bit of inching forward so we know we're not losing ground. Another [19:00] in the hard hit industrial centers, Buffalo, \$345,000 against \$324,000 last year. Same deal, a couple of percentage points ahead.

Let me give you a couple of the big cities. Detroit, let's see here, has \$2,561,000 against \$2,458,000, about \$100,000, a little less, ahead. Miami, a \$1,156,000 against \$1,090,000. San Francisco, \$774,000 against \$770,000 -- these figures, by the way, may not be correct. Yesterday they were. Today -- the figures change everyday, but this gives you the idea.

Intermediate cities, let's see; I was in Nashville a couple of weeks ago, \$142,000 against \$140,000. Nothing spectacular, but not backwards. Syracuse, Morris's [20:00] hometown, \$156,000 against \$139,000. Columbus last night, \$337,000 against \$322,000. El Paso, night before last, \$54,000 against \$52,000. Washington, DC, \$450,000 against \$439,000.

Look there are a couple of decreases here. Dallas is a few dollars off and Baltimore's a few dollars off. And I really mean

just a few dollars. By and large, this list that I could read you of 91 communities that are in fundraising show the pattern; the pattern is clear.

Now I say, where do we go from here? We can turn this campaign into a really spectacular job, almost one in which we would have a right to say that it was a campaign of glory. Because if we can wind up 1958 with the same results as 1957, every [21:00] man in the organization ought to get a medal. Now, it's going to be hard, tough fighting. It's not an easy campaign. Every reason present for us to have courage and confidence, but no reason at all to sit back on our hindquarters and say, OK we can slide home. Because on the first \$12,000,000, we're safe. All right, we can slide. We're not going to take too bad a beating. This, gentlemen, would be fatal if we took this point of view. It would be -- it would really be unforgiveable. And therefore, if you want to coin a phrase, you can coin a phrase of cautious optimism. Reason to be optimistic to hopeful, every reason to be cautious. Go after those middle bracket gifts the way we went after the top ones. Call for help wherever you can. We'll push lay leaders; you push us. [22:00] This is a joint venture in

which we are now entering the very critical next 60 days. That's going to make us or break us.

By the way, there's' just one thing I want to tell you about these next 60 days; there is a meeting being called in New York -- and I'm off the subject of the campaign, but I just want you to be informed about this -- on the matter of the loan. We're calling a meeting in New York on April 14th, which is the first practicable day after the Passover holiday. Monday, April 14th, Eshkol, the finance minister's coming over for the meeting and the purpose of the meeting is to refloat the loan which was started in 1954, which was renewed in 1956, and which is going to have to be renewed again in 1958. I don't want to bother you with the details of the thing. We'll put out some kind of a memo to the field on how much we're trying to borrow and in which communities. Roughly there were 125 communities that borrowed.

First [23:00] steps first, the meeting on the 14th is a top leadership meeting. Right now, I don't think you have to do anything about it. We sent out the invitations a couple of days ago. It's the list of people maybe who are important in the campaign plus other key individuals who just might be important

with the banks. It all depends. It's a very unusual kind of a list. We'll try to solicit the attendants here from the national office with the national lay leadership. It might be that we'll have to call on you for help in specific matters in getting a specific individual or two to that meeting. If we do, we'll let you know. Right now there's nothing you have to do about it, but I just wanted you to be informed so if anybody asked you what was going on on the 14th of April in New York, you'd know that it was a meeting to discuss the renewal of getting bank borrowings.

All right boys, that's it. I'll turn the telephone back to Shalom in a minute. I want to thank you for what you've put into the thing so far [24:00] and I want to tell you that all of us make or break this thing in the next 60 days. Shalom, the phone is yours.

SHALOM SANTIT"

Gentlemen, I think Mr. Friedman has said all that could be said at this point. I just wanted to make a couple of announcements and bring a few matters to your attention. In the first place, we have a group of Israeli speakers now touring the country. There are more coming in. Some of these is really our

experience, that had campaign experience, know how to handle themselves. Some of them have no experience. Some of them have to be briefed and briefed carefully. No matter how much they are briefed at the national office here, it is essentially -- it is absolutely necessary that when one of those speakers comes to your community that you sit with them for as long a time as you possibly can and give them [25:00] in detail what you want them to do. Whether it is a large meeting or a small meeting, give them approach, and at times even, the content of the speech as much as possible.

In addition to this, we do not know what effect the speaker has on the community at all. We do not know how to handle ourselves in relation to the speaker afraid of booking unless we hear from you. And we get the telegrams from you and you mention the name of this speaker. You do not tell us as to how he was. True, in the memorandum, you will probably tell us in detail what effect the speaker had, but that's quite a time to wait. Your memorandum sometimes takes four or five days or six days before it reaches anybody's desk. Therefore I would ask you first to do the necessary as far as the speaker is concerned when he reaches your community. Above all, the Israeli that comes into the

community is not only a speaker, he is a small part of Israel coming into a community. [26:00] It is therefore necessary for you to arrange for him to meet as many people as possible, to talk to people. That I think is very helpful. And in the second place, we want a report as fast as possible as to how this speaker handles himself as to what he could do and we will take an orientation from your reports as to what we can do with the speaker further.

There will be a staff meeting for the men coming in to New York on Passover. Those who come into New York on Passover and vicinity will meet with us, with Mr. Friedman, on Friday at 9:30 in the morning, April fourth. You will get a memorandum in detail as to the place and as to when you can leave your area.

One other thing I want to ask you, you are now approaching the critical stage of the [27:00] campaign where each day the picture changes. We have on record now 342 unorganized communities. I am certain that in the two weeks in which the time lag occurred between the time, the time the report was made, submitted, and the time that we are talking to you now, the picture has changed considerably. It is therefore essential

now that you begin to send in your status report, instead of every month, every two weeks. In other words, on every first and on every 15th. The next status report is due on April first, and the next one after that will be due on April the 15th. And I would like to have your reports on my desk on April the 15th and on April the first, and that includes everybody, even Mr. Mentz.

There isn't much more that I want to say to you at the moment. I would like to close with a brief story. You know that we have a -- [28:00] Mr. Friedman has mentioned to you that we are doing very much, or as much as we can in the smaller communities. And we have a community development department which is emphasizing the small community, and it so happens that one of the very first dinners arranged by this department in a small community occurred last week. And it was one of the very first dinners and there was great hopes of a tremendous breakthrough in that community. That community happened to be Florence, South Carolina, just when the dinner was [set?], the atom bomb fell on it. (laughter) I don't know why I told you this story, except perhaps to change the subject little and to make you feel that short of an atom bomb, nothing will happen to bomb.

Gentlemen, good day to you. Gut Shabbos. Those of you that go home, go home. And those of you that go to your hotels, don't be too lonesome. There are other lonesome souls. Bye, bye, gentlemen.

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