

TR-3806 Transcription

United Jewish Appeal message about Israel Emergency Fund.

[Recorded from telephone call].

3 June 1967.

Ginsburg: [00:00] -- general chairman of the United Jewish Appeal. I'm talking to you today to advise you of what has happened in the last week and bring you up to date on the historic action taken by the Jewish community of the United States and the United Jewish Appeal in establishing the Israel Emergency Fund. On May 22nd, for all practical purposes, Israel went to war. No shooting, but full mobilization and to war. The next day, we went to war, we, the American Jewish community. Herb Friedman and Max Fisher went to Israel. When Herb got back a few days later, we called an emergency meeting of the executive committee of the United Jewish Appeal. And at that meeting, we invited all presidents of the leading American Jewish organizations.

They heard the story, and they heartily endorsed [01:01] the idea and the necessity for immediate and prompt action by the total American Jewish community. This means the establishment of the Israel Emergency Fund, fully endorsed by

the Council of Federations and Welfare Funds. They had a meeting recently at which 230 communities were represented, unanimously endorsed, and wholeheartedly pitched in to make this program effective and immediate.

I would ask you to do certain things. One is that each community must act quickly, promptly, and effectively. The second thing I would ask you is please understand the full dimension of the program. We're not talking about an ordinary campaign. We're not talking about ordinary business as usual. We're talking [02:00] about needs in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

This means, therefore, that every single person, every person must have the opportunity to be a part of this effort. This is a effort which can't fail. This effort must succeed. You will hear what is going on from Mr. Sapir, the minister of finance from the state of Israel. He will speak to you shortly. Following him will be Mr. Louis Pincus, who is chairman of the Jewish Agency. And then, from Rabbi Herbert Friedman.

I can only tell you this, that someone said this is the time that tries men's souls. Our souls, our conscience, our hearts are on trial. These people who are you going to hear from will be speaking to you not from script, but from the heart. Our

lives [03:00], and I say this absolutely in firm conviction, our lives are on the line, as well as the lives of the people of Israel. It's our future we're talking about, as well as theirs. We need your help. I'm sure you'll respond. Thank you.

Pinchas Sapir: When you are coming to Israel, you see the people on the street, they are calm, [firm, wired?], confident. You see less people on the street because nearly 200,000 people are in the trenches. They are on guard on the southern border, northern border, and the eastern border. But the other people are walking like ever.

We say the [dissipation?] now is much more danger than in '47, and I and others know what was in '47 [04:00]. Now we are surrounded by all the Arab countries, and they say, day after day, night after night, 10 times a day, they want to put us in the sea, to kill us. We believe that if and when -- we don't want it, but if and when we were to start to shoot or to start to react, we would do it. But we want to squeeze all possibilities for political settling of this subject, not on our account. We or what we do costs a fortune. Oh, what we do costs a fortune. Hundreds of millions of dollars are necessary. Only the mobilization itself cost \$2 million a day. Then where to buy

ammunition, arms, supply for the soldiers, and income is less than before.

We expect that this year and the first four months are excepted this [05:00] expectation \$1 billion export, direct [and invisible?]. Now, of course, no tourism, no transportation on Israeli planes, and everything is bringing in less. We have to keep the economy going because to collapse economically is like to lose on the border, and [both are in UN?]. We are partners for the old 90 years, and even before, on the 90 years of the existence of the state. All what was done Israel was done with your help. We say in this historical hour, go ahead with your help. We know your heart is with us. We know your brain is with us. You know we are ready to help us. Now we have to talk about money, too.

The people here, I saw them. They are enthusiastic. They want to do, grow, and [pick the hour?] [06:00]

Louis Pincus: Since May the 22nd, the people of Israel have been mobilized for war. They've been mobilized for war on a total effort, because at this point in our history, it has become a war for survival. You have heard Finance Minister Mr. Sapir telling you of the economic effects of this mobilization. Let me

first tell you what it means to the people of Israel and to what extent they have identified themselves and know what is awaiting them on the morrow.

They know that Nasser is determined, if he can, to either strangle us or to annihilate us, and we are determined that neither shall happen. And that is why the scores of thousands of civilians of yesterday are in the army of Israel today, and they are manning the borders in the north, [07:00] the west, the east, and more important than all, the south, where Nasser has armed and brought in his soldiers from the Yemen and from all other portions. In my view, the Jewish people are facing a crisis greater and far more fateful than they have even at the time of the War of Independence. We in Israel believe that we can face it. We can face it on the basis that this partnership that we have used so often, the partnership between you and us, really means something.

Let me tell you for a moment what are the economic consequences of this mobilization. We have had the most marvelous agricultural season since the state of Israel was founded. It rains. The country is lush [08:00] with productivity. And yet, because our settlements are bereft of men who have gone into the army, this product lies to decay in the

fields. Our industrial productivity has gone down because so many of our able-bodied men can no longer work in the factories. You will see young children tilling the soil in the kibbutzim, working in the post office, working in city services in order to be able to do those things which was done by the ordinary manpower of the country. That is how we are ready for it. That is how we want to face it, and I believe our courage and spirit, and above all, the ability of our army, will stand us in good stead in the days ahead.

But it seems to me that what has to be brought home to the Jews of the world is that they have to make [08:59] their contribution in a dimension and at a speed that they have never done before. There is no parallel, not to 1948, and not to 1956. If we are to survive, and our survival means your survival, you have to come into this with us. We are mobilized to the full, to give all that we have in order to save the state and the people. It is my belief and confidence that you too will do the same. We have already been mobilized. Go to it and do your share.

Herbert Friedman: You've heard our friends from Israel. Both of them have brought very strong, clear, and direct messages. If Israel is in a state of war, or preparation for war, then so

must the whole Jewish people be. And when they left Israel a few days ago to come to us to bring us this message, they stopped in Europe on the way. Before they came to us, [10:00] they went to other Jews in the world, not as strong, not as well organized, not as long in the business of raising money. The response of the people from the other countries was phenomenal.

There a meeting at a certain point in Europe to which 25 Jews came on very short notice. They promised figures which were phenomenal for them. The Jews of France, which give every year maybe a million dollars to Israel, will come up with ten, and Switzerland five, and Belgium three. And then across the channel to England, and the Jews in England who raise every year two or three million pounds sterling, said they would come with 20 million pounds sterling. When our friends landed on these shores just a few days ago, they expected a response from us commensurate with that which the other Jews in the world were willing to offer. Anything less from us than that of which we are capable would be an ignoble response, ladies and gentlemen.

We've been on the telephone here in the UJA [11:00] office. You can see that I'm sitting here at a cluttered desk, and dozens of men have come from around the country to make telephone calls voluntarily. We've been talking to people in

figures and in dimensions which previously were unheard of. The American Jewish community is ready to be galvanized and is ready to be mobilized. The courage comes from the concept of what is at stake, and the courage comes in asking for large amounts of money; greater courage comes in the response.

You would be amazed at the ease with which men have begun to speak in terms of a million dollars and a half-million, and a quarter-million dollars. People who give respectable sums to the campaign every year, five and ten and fifteen thousand dollars, are coming up with fifty thousand and a hundred thousand because they understand and they recognize that something is at stake here which is absolutely [12:00] so historic that there is no comparison. Ten- and 15-thousand-dollar givers have been coming in with a hundred thousand and fifty thousand, and a quarter of a million.

We must work very fast in America. In every community, campaigns are usually prepared slowly and carefully, and plans are made with great precision and with great foresight. All this expertise and this professionalism must now be compressed into the shortest number of days. We've set ourselves a target of a month. Have no idea whether it will be feasible, but inside of a

month, we want to try to get the American Jewish community to express its solidarity in clear financial terms.

Millions of dollars will come forth at a meeting which is being set in New York a week from Monday, on June the 12th. At that meeting, we'll have the first expression. No one meeting [13:00] will ever succeed in accomplishing the whole thing. Every Jew must be given an opportunity. We cannot talk just about \$1 million. We have to talk about every five-dollar bill and every ten-dollar bill, so that every person has a chance to express the deep sentiment and emotion which is boiling in every Jewish heart. Hundreds of millions of dollars must come forward.

We're setting no goal for this campaign. There are many reasons for that, political reasons and psychological reasons. But the fact that there's no goal should not delude anyone. There are five and a half million of us in this country, and we must produce hundreds of millions of dollars. We have all sorts of examples here that it's possible. People who give \$50 to the campaign are sending in 500 and 2,500. People who give a thousand dollars are sending in \$25,000. At every level, [14:00] the man opens his mind, stretches is brain, understands the dimension of this thing, and takes out of his net worth, out of his capital, out of his assets, and pours into this treasury

that which will be necessary to save the Jewish people and the Jewish state.

The people has suffered very grievous wounds in a quarter of a century. The people has made a historic surge forward to create a state within the same quarter-century. It's too soon for all this to be challenged and for all this to be faced with collapse and destruction. Our Israeli friends have asked us to stand with them. This is not the time for histrionics or oratory or great speeches. This is the time for action. We'll prove to them that we stand with them, and that we and they together are one people [15:00] with one destiny, by the manner in which we conduct this campaign.

We've never been asked to do anything like this before. What kind of a people are we? What kind of a response will we make? Now is the time to find out.

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