



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 1: Sermons, Speeches and Writings, 1949-1982.

Box
22

Folder
9

Radio appeal [Long Beach, Calif.]. May 1957.

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

RABBI FRIEDMAN'S RADIO ADDRESS FOR LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA, MAY 26, 1957

Thank you Mr. Ledell.

One of the most gratifying experiences I have encountered in traveling around the country on behalf of the United Jewish Appeal has been the manner in which communities have been responding with an extraordinary display of devotion and ingenuity.

What is happening here today in Long Beach is a most spectacular demonstration of what I mean. This method of getting directly into each home in the community with so meaningful a message - and all in a space of a half-hour - is something almost unique in the history of local fund-raising. The splendid cooperation of this situation - KFOX - symbolizes the best tradition of American democracy - with its historic concern for victims of persecution and injustice.

My warmest congratulations to all concerned in this humane and imaginative approach to campaigning. I wish you great success tonight. And now let me tell you what I have on my mind.

My friends, we have a tremendous task of life-saving this year, for which we are soliciting enormous sums of money. Actually we are asking you for a double gift - one to the regular campaign and an extra one to the Emergency Rescue Fund. The monies of the regular campaign are used for the integration and absorption of hundreds of thousands of immigrants who have gone to Israel in the past several years, but who are not yet self-sufficient and who need further help on the road to independence. The regular monies are used also for the thousands who are in want and need in various countries of the world, where we maintain through the Joint Distribution Committee feeding and health programs, hospitals, schools and all sorts of services for people who are underprivileged. For these two purposes, we ask you at least to repeat your regular campaign gift of last year.

What then is the purpose of the extra gift to the ERF? We are confronted this year with the massive problem of rescuing at least 100,000 Jews (and some observers including Mr. Ben-Gurion himself say there will be more) from lands where they are persecuted, in terror, under attack, and from which they are once again running for their lives. I think you should know that there are more Jewish refugees in flight on the roads again in 1957 than at any time in the last ten years.

Our experience has shown that it takes around \$1000 to save a person - to bring him out of a land of darkness somewhere to a new home somewhere in another part of the free world. The arithmetic is inescapable. To rescue 100,000 people at \$1000 per person will cost 100 million dollars. That is the amount we are seeking to raise in the ERF, above and beyond the normal campaign. That is why our people all over America are stretching themselves to give large rescue fund gifts. Everyone realizes that when human life is at stake, money becomes secondary, and really the greatest value of money is that it can actually purchase life.

Where are all these Jews coming from? What are the areas of danger which we say involve 100,000 people. First of all, there is Egypt. You all know by now that many ex-Nazis have found a welcome home in Egypt under the regime of Dictator Nasser. Those Nazis designed brutal plans against the Jews of Egypt, at the request of the Egyptian Government. The plans they drew up are similar to the Nuremberg Laws and other Nazi edicts. Since last November, when the plan was put into effect, thousands of Jews in Egypt have been arrested, thrown into concentration camps, beaten by police, had their businesses taken away, lost their jobs, had their bank accounts frozen, had their money stolen, and were actually deported from the country, many of them in handcuffs.

The International Red Cross has been chartering mercy ships which have carried Jews to European ports, and so far 20,000 people - almost 1/2 of the entire Jewish population of Egypt, has already left that unhappy land. Just the other day another vessel arrived in Athens with 604 on board, of whom 115 were sick and old. I have seen these people arriving in Naples, Rome, Paris - they are shocked, bewildered. This is reminiscent of the way Jews were treated in Nazi Germany fifteen and twenty years ago. I tell you it is like a nightmare. We have met these people and tried to assuage their pain. We have picked up the broken pieces and we try to rebuild the shattered lives. Most have gone on to Israel, but there are thousands in France, Italy and Greece who are absolutely penniless and who need help. These 20,000 who've come out are not the end. There are at least another 20,000 or perhaps more in Egypt, and I would venture to say that at the current rate of exodus, most of them will have left, and will thus become our responsibility, before many more months have gone by.

-more-

In addition to Egypt, there is Hungary. You all remember the saga of human heroism in which the courageous freedom fighters fled from communism after the great revolution in Budapest last fall. Among the refugees who fled from Hungary to Austria were about 10% who were Jews.- 1700 persons. We set up a swift emergency machinery in Vienna to care for them, and we have already spent many millions of dollars. I am happy to say that a large number have already been cared for successfully. About 4000 came to the United States, another 3000 to Canada, 1000 to Australia, several thousand to Israel - all at great expense. On the other hand, I must sadly report to you that there are still 3000 in Austria - and once again we have opened DP camps for them. I never believed that we would ever again see DP camps for Jews on the continent of Europe. I thought that after the sickening inhumanity of the Hitler period we would be finished with those terrible initials. But we must use the phrase DP again today - and we are all working feverishly to close those camps as quickly as possible. This can only be done by taking the people out and giving them new homes for resettlement. Israel is willing to take them all, and we must continue to find the money. That's as far as Egypt and Hungary are concerned.

I wish I could tell you the whole story of what is happening in certain countries of Eastern Europe, behind the Iron Curtain. If I could, I know you would be thrilled to the marrow of your bones by the tale of human rescue which is going on. This part of the story must remain untold, but I want you to ponder seriously the plight of people who are living under communist dictatorship and who are trying to hold on to their religion and their faith against all pressures. Freedom of religion is one of the most important principles of American democracy. For Jews, I would say, freedom of religion is the most important principle. Our brothers behind the Iron Curtain are striving for and yearning to maintain their independence as Jews. This is another great part of the rescue story in which you have a direct role. More than this I cannot say.

And where is Israel in all of this - gallant, embattled, valiant Israel - who must strain every resource to be on guard against an Arab world which is united within itself, true, but which is united on one platform - namely, the destruction of Israel and its obliteration from the map. Struggling with a crushing defense burden, Israel might well take the position that at this moment she cannot be saddled with the extra burden of tens of thousands of penniless immigrants.

But Israel does not say that. Instead she throws wide open her ports, her homes, her schools and welcomes happily with loving arms all who come crowding to her shores. Israel is playing most unselfishly the heroic role for which she was created. If there ever was a time when we could take pride in that little state, this is the hour. She is true to the highest ideals and fondest hopes we had for her as a strong and safe harbor for Jews who are in trouble elsewhere. I wish to God there had been an Israel before. Not all the 6 million would have perished under Hitler.

I know it is hard to grasp the idea of 100,000 people from Egypt, Hungary, Eastern Europe, North Africa. But I think it is easy to conceive of one person or a family of five, or two brothers, or three sisters. Think of a man, a woman, a child, and people like yourselves, who are not tonight in the comfort of towns like Long Beach but on trains or planes or ships, being brought to freedom in Israel or America or Europe. And think of what it means to rescue each person at an average cost of \$1000. Think of how much better you will sleep tonight if you help rescue one or two or ten people. And think of how some weary refugee will rest easier tonight if he knows you are worrying about him.

It is our simple duty as Jews who are our brothers' keepers - and as human beings who want our own children to be proud of us - it is our simple duty to respond to this urgent call. Let each man do his utmost, make his largest possible double gift, and we shall again write a shining chapter in the glorious annals of Jewish self-help.

May I thank you for listening.