

# Peace and Progress

BY GREER FAY CASHMAN

NEW YORK -- Leadership by example has always been a keynote of the United Jewish Appeal. The men and women who have translated Israel's needs to U.S. Jewry, delivered their message in terms which transcend the eloquence of words.

They gave large sums of money for both specified and unspecified projects and they led groups of people to Israel, so that they could see and hear and understand what role Israel plays in the program for Jewish continuity and progress.

Prominent among these leaders is a tall, slim, blonde-haired woman whose willowy physique belies the force of her personality.

Sylvia Hassenfeld, National Chairman of the Women's Division of the United Jewish Appeal looks more like a page out of Vogue than a champion of causes. But when she gets up on a platform, the audience is spellbound. Scorning gimmickry, she speaks in a strong clear voice of the great hopes that she cherishes for this tiny country. The controlled passion of her beliefs is contagious, inspiring others to follow her lead.

In October of this year, Sylvia Hassenfeld led a group of 180 Jewish women from all over America on a National UJA Women's Division Study Mission to Israel.

One of the major areas of study was the social gap and how to narrow it. There is no solution which does not cost money. Mrs. Hassenfeld was not content to leave this conclusion on its theoretical plane.

Long before the mission was due to visit Israel, she had made a large gift to the Israel Education Fund of the United Jewish Appeal for the establishment of a pre-kindergarten school in Netanya.

The project was not yet completed when the Women's Division Mission arrived in Israel, but workmen put in additional effort so that it could be dedicated by Mrs. Hassenfeld in the presence of her peers.

Only an hour before the official ceremony, laborers began to put the finishing touches



SYLVIA HASSENFELD

to the building - painting the iron railings of the fence, putting up safety netting, sweeping sand from the floors . . . but it was all ready when Mrs. Hassenfeld and her 180 ladies arrived from Tel Aviv.

They had come in the wake of the U.N. condemnation of Zionism. They were told by Dr. Avraham Bar Menachem, Mayor of Netanya that "we need the feeling that we have the backing of all the Jewish people. You are helping to fulfill the destiny of Zionism."

He spoke of the many problems facing Israel, and stressed the importance of building communities with education in the top priority of any communal planning.

Jewish Agency representative Zelig Chinitz noted the vision of the Israel Education Fund. A decade ago, when Jewish communities the world over were pre-occupied with Israel's survival, the I.E.F. already saw the need to improve the quality of life, because survival alone, was not enough.

Through the generosity and far-sightedness of numerous American Jews, the I.E.F. has

established pre-kindergartens, kindergartens, libraries, community centers, schools and other essential projects all over Israel.

Mrs. Hassenfeld, whose love for Israeli children and her efforts on their behalf, is legendary, was initially too emotionally overcome to speak.

While collecting her thoughts, she read a cable which had been sent to her by Arye Dulzin, Acting Chairman of the Jewish Agency. Dulzin had selected a verse from Proverbs to epitomize the far-reaching aspects of Mrs. Hassenfeld's commitment -- "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Prior to the speeches, primary school children and tiny tots dressed in their best clothes for the occasion, had charmed the American visitors with songs and dances of peace.

Recalling that she had never attended any ceremony in Israel in which children participated, without hearing them sing Heiveinu Shalom Aleichem, Mrs. Hassenfeld said: "I pray that all those who enter these doors will know peace in their time, and will be able to sing Heiveinu Shalom Aleichem to the world."

One of her own favorite quotes is "If you love something, set it free." She explained that to live by this maxim, was the only way to prove one's love for a child. "The only way to set a child free is through education."

As soon as the formal proceedings were completed, Mrs. Hassenfeld and her daughter slipped away from the adults to join the little ones in singing more songs of peace.

Mother and daughter dispensed candy and toys and enjoyed the event as much as any one of the children.

By the time the women headed back to their buses, it was perfectly obvious that Mrs. Hassenfeld had got her point across. Out of the dozens of labels and stickers which the women had brought with them from the U.S., some were wearing two or three varieties, but all of them were proudly displaying the sign that says it all -- WE ARE ONE.

NEW YORK -- A group of 37 Israeli professors, currently on Sabbatical, have volunteered to speak on behalf of Aliyah.

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The B'nai B'rith Women International Executive Board deplored the recent resolution by the United Nations General Assembly classifying Zionism with racism and racial discrimination.

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