

Three Arab R's

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For the past six decades the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee has been committed to a simple proposition -- to make help available in the largest measure possible to endangered Jews and Jewish communities overseas. The help given is viewed in terms of the three R's -- Relief, Rescue, Rehabilitation.

Since the end of World War II, about two million Jews have been transplanted. Our generation - yours and mine - must truly be considered as a generation of Flight and Rescue. It is within this context that the American Jewish community through the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) has played an important role in the survival and the future of the Jewish communities overseas.

In the Moslem - Arab countries, and contrary to Arab propaganda, Jews have never been accorded full rights, and were always considered as second class citizens. In consequence, most were desperately poor and suffered abject poverty of a degree which a person in a western society would find difficult to comprehend. Nonetheless, Jews in these countries had well organized Jewish communities and communal services, although much different than those we know in this country.

At the end of World War II, there were about one million Jews living in thirteen different Moslem/Arab countries. JDC initiated massive Relief, Rescue and Rehabilitation programs in



A PIPING HOT, SWEET, DARK CUP OF COFFEE PREPARED IN THE TRADITIONAL MIDDLE-EASTERN COFFEE POT "THE FINJAN" AWAITS THE DRUZE VILLAGERS LINED UP TO DONATE BLOOD TO MAGEN DAVID ADOM, ISRAEL'S NATIONAL BLOOD SERVICES.

several Moslem/Arab countries - Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Iran. Through the existing local communal organizations, JDC developed medical care services, sanitation programs, secular and religious education services, day care center for young children, milk centers for infants and feeding programs for children, youth activities, support of vocational education, care of the disabled and elderly, and many other types of human services. The purpose was to ensure the survival of Jews and Jewish communities in the countries where they were, and to enable them to reach other havens. Some, or all of these social programs especially in Morocco and Iran are still being carried on.

From the one million Jews in 13 different countries, in 1945, thirty years later, there are about 115,000 mainly in three countries: Morocco, Tunisia and Iran. The others were transplanted principally in Israel, substantial numbers to France and Canada, and smaller numbers to the USA and other areas. In 1949, in two unforgettable human dramas, known as Operation Open Sesame or Ali Baba almost the entire Jewish population of Iraq was airlifted to Israel; and in the fabulous operation Magic Carpet, again almost the entire Jewish population of the Yemen was evacuated to Israel. This ancient Jewish community was reassured on their

flight from the Yemen to Israel by the biblical prophecy that they would return to the Promised Land "on the wings of eagles." At the same time, nearly the entire Jewish population of Libya fled to Israel.

In 1954, Morocco had about 250,000 Jews. Today there are about 18,000. Most went to Israel. In the early 1960's Tunisia had 100,000 which have dwindled to about 7,000 today; Algeria from 125,000 in 1962 to less than 1,000 today.

Thus, vast demographic change took place in an area where Jews have lived for centuries -- moved from subjugation, misery, and hopelessness, to hope and freedom - for the vast majority in Israel, and for some in other free lands.

We have been steadfastly committed to the survival of Jews and the future of the Jewish people and communities overseas. During certain periods of time and in certain countries, the emphasis was on survival. In other times and places, on rescue, and at other times on reconstruction and rehabilitation. Wherever we were, and wherever we are, and may be in the future, we work through existing Jewish communal organizations, and if none exist, we are instrumental in establishing them.

TEL AVIV (WNS) -- The government has obtained the voluntary evacuation of Sebastia today by agreeing to permit a token number of would-be settlers to remain in the Samaria region under military authority and to re-open the issue of unrestricted Jewish settlement on the West Bank by the Cabinet in two or three months.

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- A re-evaluation of Zionist and Jewish aspirations and a return to the moral and spiritual values of Judaism has been urged by Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits in an open letter to Premier Yitzhak Rabin. Jakobovits deplored "our spiritual starvation" which leaves most Jewish children complete strangers to Jewish thought, values and observance at a time when deep faith, idealism, self-discipline and pride in being Jewish "are absolutely vital in the armory of Jewish self-preservation."

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