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Series D. International Relations Activities. 1961-1992.

Box 55, Folder 8, Austria, 1973, 1979.



MARC H. TANENBAUM

Oct. 5

Dear Pat,

I thought you might be interested in an exclusive story of much importance to our position on the Austrian situation.

The story is:

There has been an outpouring of Christian ~~support~~ reaction against the decision of the Austrian government to close the transit camp facilities to Soviet Jews. Catholic and Protestant leaders in many parts

[start]

Original documents
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Dictated by Mr. Coopersmith
Signed in his absence

cc: Morris Fine
Marc Tanenbaum
David Geller
Hy Bookbinder
Will Katz
Isaiah Terman

MEMORANDUM

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date October 2, 1973
to Gerry Strober
from Brant Coopersmith
subject Interreligious Task Force Meeting with Minister Counselor Dr. Hans Georg Rudofsky

As previously reported, on the way to demonstrate at the Embassy of Austria from the Silent Vigil at 1 p.m., leaders of the Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry decided it would be wiser to seek an appointment at the Embassy prior to any demonstration. Persons who had been on the Vigil were across the street from the Embassy trying to demonstrate. Therefore, on our approach to the Embassy the Executive Protective Service Police gave us a little trouble. However, John Steinbruck did manage to press the doorbell. A doorman came to the door and told us that the Embassy was closed from 1-3 p.m. and would we please return at 3 p.m.

We went to have lunch during which time Sister Ann Gillen called Drinan's office to arrange for him or his office to call the Embassy maximizing the assistance that we would be received at 3 o'clock. There were five persons connected with the Interreligious Task Force who were involved. They were Sister Ann Gillen, The Rev. and Mrs. John Steinbruck, Donald Nelson of Lutheran Social Services and Keith Martin, a layman on the staff of the New York Presbyterian Church.

On our return to the Embassy shortly after 3 p.m., we were advised that the Minister Counselor would see three of us. Sister Ann, John Steinbruck and I met with him and one of his aides for a little more than 30 minutes. The following is a recap of the points made by the representatives of the Interreligious Task Force:

1. Appreciation for what Austria had done.
2. Expression of shock at what had happened and fear of the consequences of giving in to Arab terrorists.
3. The hope that the situation could be rectified.
4. That if interreligious auspices would be helpful that the Christians believed that such auspices could be made available in Europe.

Dr. Rudofsky made several points:

1. The Embassy was always open to us as is the country.
2. That there were never any intentions of impeding transit.
3. There were very severe security problems in Schorrag?
4. That it was really a matter of organization.
5. He expressed the hope that there might be other ports for transit.

[end]

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Page 2
October 2, 1973

There was no direct confrontation with Rudofsky as to what was meant by "it was a matter of organization." Everyone in the room was in agreement with the hope that something could be worked out.

The meeting of the representatives of the Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry with the Minister Counselor leaves open an option for further communication in the event that you may want to consider it.

Just for the record, I sent the following personal telegram to the Austrian Embassy on September 30th:

"Shame. Shame on your Government."

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

Regards,

B





RABBINICAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
UNITED JEWISH APPEAL

1290 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10019
PLAZA 7-1500

October 1, 1973

Chairman:
RABBI JOSEPH H. EHRENKRANZ
Manhasset

Dear Rabbi:

Director
RABBI EARL A. JORDAN

Steering Committee
RABBI ELI A. BOHINEN
Providence
RABBI JUDAH CAHN
New York
RABBI ARTHUR DOV KAHN
Tulsa
RABBI ARTHUR J. IELVELD
Cleveland
RABBI EMANUEL RACKMAN
New York
RABBI SAMUEL SCHAFLER
Flushing
RABBI MAX A. SHAPIRO
Minneapolis
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Brooklyn
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RABBI DUDLEY WEINBERG
Milwaukee

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*RABBI MORRIS ADLER
RABBI DAVID I. COLOVENSKY
RABBI IRVING LEHRMAN
RABBI DUDLEY WEINBERG

*Deceased

THE ACT OF TERRORISM IN AUSTRIA that took place on the second day of Rosh Hashanah shook the Jewish world in a very profound way. Obviously it was more than an attack on individuals; it touched, with one stroke, some of our most sensitive nerves.

- . . . the intimidation of a sovereign, democratic state by two armed thugs and its subsequent capitulation to blackmail.
- . . . the attempt to coerce the Soviet Jew who has already risked everything to emigrate.
- . . . the concerted effort to further isolate Israel and to punish any country or government that is warmly disposed toward her.

At this moment we cannot know what the ultimate results of the "invasion of Vienna" will be. Certain things, however, are obvious:

1. Schoenau was a very efficient, and relatively economical, operation. It enabled the Jewish Agency to assemble groups of emigres in a secure and relatively inexpensive environment until they could be helped to continue their journey to Israel.
2. It reduced significantly the number of flights necessary for the *aliyah* because planes could be sent full rather than partly filled.
3. It enabled the Jewish Agency to begin the processing of Soviet Jews as soon as they set foot in the free world and thus helped to speed the absorption process upon their arrival in Israel.

One thing remains very clear. Any alternative arrangements will be very expensive. The burden of security, additional transportation expenses and the need for multiple and dispersed centers, with resulting increases in the cost of administering them, all point to further dislocations in the Jewish Agency budget for the coming year.

Thank heaven that the Russian emigration continues unabated. 3,065 Jews arrived during the month of September and the prognosis is for continued emigration of at least the same rate. One of the three Russian Jews taken hostage said in a press interview that the terrorist attack would not deter Soviet Jews from seeking to emigrate but rather, would strengthen their resolve to leave and to go to Israel.

It is essential that we make our people aware of the implications of the situation. I trust that you will want to make use of the enclosed statement of the Jewish Agency Executive during Yom Kippur. I would appreciate copies of anything that you say or write on the subject.

715 200
Earl

EAJ:gh
enc.

כ"ט תשרי תשל"ג

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30.9.73

TO IRVING BERNSTEIN UJAPPEAL NEWYORK

THE EXECUTIVE MET TODAY IN AN EMERGENCY MEETING AND ISSUED FOLLOWING STATEMENT. PLEASE MAKE SURE STATEMENT GETS WIDEST PUBLICITY:

QUOTE THE EXECUTIVE OF THE JEWISH AGENCY MET TODAY IN SPECIAL EMERGENCY SESSION TO DISCUSS THE CRIMINAL ACT OF TERRORISM COMMITTED AT THE CZECH-AUSTRIAN BORDER AGAINST IMMIGRANT JEWS FROM THE SOVIET UNION. THIS CRIME, COMMITTED BY TWO ARAB TERRORISTS, HAS LED TO A SHOCKING DECISION OF THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT WHICH IMPOSES GRAVE DIFFICULTIES UPON IMMIGRANTS FROM THE SOVIET UNION BY IMPAIRING THE RIGHT OF TRANSIT THROUGH AUSTRIA. THIS DECISION ENCOURAGES FURTHER TERRORIST CRIMES AND BLACKMAIL, AND THEREBY CREATES A MOST DANGEROUS SITUATION FOR ANY STABLE GOVERNMENT, ITS SOCIETY AND THE LIFE OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

THE EXECUTIVE HEARD A DETAILED REPORT FROM MR. ISAAC PATISH, ISRAEL'S AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRIA, ON ALL THE DEVELOPMENTS FROM THE MOMENT OF THE SEIZURE AND ABDUCTION OF THE HOSTAGES, INCLUDING BEST POSSIBLE STATEMENT BY THE AUSTRIAN AUTHORITIES.

THE EXECUTIVE HAS RECEIVED REPORTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD ON THE SHOCK AND ALARM WHICH HAVE GRIPPED ENLIGHTENED WORLD OPINION. STATEMENT AND SPIRITUAL LEADERS, THE PRESS, AND ALL PUBLIC MEDIA HAVE VOICED THE SHARPEST CRITICISM AGAINST THE DECISION OF THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT.

JEWISH COMMUNITIES THE WORLD OVER HAVE ACTED IMMEDIATELY TO EXPRESS THEIR ASTONISHMENT AND INDIGNATION AGAINST THE DECISION. THE WAVE OF PROTEST CONTINUES TO SWELL, EMBRACING THE ENTIRE JEWISH PEOPLE.

THE EXECUTIVE OF THE JEWISH AGENCY REMINDS THE WORLD THAT IMMIGRATION FROM THE SOVIET UNION IS SUCH AN EXTRAORDINARILY PROFOUND HUMAN AND JEWISH PHENOMENON THAT IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT ANYTHING SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO STAND IN THE WAY OF THIS IMMIGRATION. IT MUST BE CLEAR THAT THIS IMMIGRATION WILL CONTINUE, THAT IT WILL GROW, AND THAT EVERYTHING WILL BE DONE SO THAT EVERY JEW WHO LEAVES THE SOVIET UNION WILL BE ABLE TO REACH ISRAEL IN SAFETY AND WELL-BEING.

THE EXECUTIVE OF THE JEWISH AGENCY IS COGNIZANT AND APPRECIATIVE OF THE ARRANGEMENTS MADE BY AUSTRIA WITH RESPECT TO THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF IMMIGRANTS WHO HAVE PASSED THROUGH AUSTRIA SINCE 1948 FROM MANY COUNTRIES ON THEIR WAY TO ISRAEL.

IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT IT SHOULD BE THIS SAME AUSTRIA WHICH WOULD NOW ADOPT A POLICY WHICH WOULD OBSTRUCT THE RESCUE OF JEWS, AND IN SO DOING BLEMISH THE ADMIRABLE HUMANITARIAN RECORD WHICH HAS ALWAYS CHARACTERIZED THE POLICY OF THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT.

THE EXECUTIVE OF THE JEWISH AGENCY URGES THE GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRIA TO RESCIND ITS DECISION AND TO CONTINUE ITS POLICY OF MAKING AVAILABLE FACILITIES AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TRANSIT OF JEWS FROM THE SOVIET UNION TO ISRAEL. UNQUOTE

2. FOR YOUR INFORMATION :

- A. TILL THIS MINUTE WE HAVE NOT BEEN APPROACHED BY THE AUSTRIAN AUTHORITIES RE SCHONAU CAMP OR ANY OTHER ARRANGEMENTS IN AUSTRIA
- B. ARRIVALS FROM RUSSIA FOR SEPTEMBER - 3065, INCLUDING 300 ARRIVED THIS MORNING IN ISRAEL
YESTERDAYS ARRIVALS SCHONAU - 72
TODAY TILL NOW - 150
- C. MOOD OF IMMIGRANTS GOOD SO IS THE MOOD OF THE CREW IN VIENNA AND SCHONAU
- D. WE ARE CONCERNTRATING ALL OUR EFFORTS ON THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT TO RESCIND ITS DECISION WE ARE SURE YOU ARE MAKING EVERY EFFORT IN SAME DIRECTION

SHANA TOVA AND BEST REGARDS

L. DULZIN

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CONFIDENTIAL

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date October 1, 1973
to Bertram Gold
from David Geller 
subject October 1 Presidents Conference Meeting re Austria

Max Fisher reported on the current status of the situation, pointing out that (1) the Austrian Government has as yet not approached the officials of Schonau; (2) that the controversy surrounds the camp itself and not necessarily the concept of transit through Austria; (3) emigrants are still being processed through Schonau, and indeed 180 were processed this morning; and (4) the U.S. is involved in several ways, for example, financial assistance for the transit operation.

Jacob Stein reported that he and several others will be meeting with the Austrian Ambassador and with the "head of the U.S. State Department" some time today. Golda Meir will be meeting with Chancellor Bruno Kreisky tomorrow. Stein then reported on a number of statements made over the weekend, and referred to a telegram which he had sent in the name of the Presidents Conference to Kurt Waldheim (who, of course, is an Austrian.)

The Jewish Labor Committee has been in contact with Bruno Pitterman, the leader of the Austrian Socialist Party, who is also the current President of the Socialist International as well as Chairman of the Committee on Soviet Jewry of the Council of Europe. It was agreed that this avenue could be most effective, bearing in mind that Golda Meir is a Vice-President of the Socialist International.

There was further discussion on possible activities. Marie Syrkin and Judah Shapiro pushed for an ad, strictly on the terrorist issue, which would be signed by Jews and non-Jews. After some discussion, it was decided that it would be difficult not to link the issue of terrorism and the issue of Schonau, and that it would also be difficult to word the ad in a non-accusatory way and, furthermore, that this kind of an ad would not be helpful and at least ought to wait for the outcome of the meeting between Golda and Kreisky. There was some feeling that Kreisky

ought to be given an opportunity to develop a "climb-down" position.

Stein suggested to Henry Siegman that he should be contacting Christians. This gave me the opening to report on our activities vis-a-vis the Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, and suggesting the possibility that we might contact Cardinal Koenig in Austria. Stein said, "Very good"... took notes..., but before the close of the meeting turned to Siegman again and said, "Remember we've got to get in touch with the non-Jews."

I was rather surprised that there was little discussion of the reports that the Austrian Government itself had proposed the closing of Schonau. At first Max Fisher said that this was not correct information. Later, however, Naomi Levine showed the October 1 JTA story to Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg who then said, "Yes, it was an issue,... that notwithstanding effective Austrian security, the Government was still worried about the number of suspected Arab terrorists who were in Vienna." In other words, the Austrian Government was indeed probably looking for a way to get out from under what they must consider a burdensome and worrisome chore.

The Presidents Conference will be distributing a statement today, and will probably reconvene on Wednesday to report on the meetings in Washington, as well as the Golda-Kreisky meeting in Vienna. The statement they are distributing will make two points.

- 1) Dismay at the apparent ending, after some two decades, of Austrian hospitality to refugees.
- 2) Shock at the Austrian Government's submission to terrorism.

Additional note: Official figures for September: 3,065.

cc: Morris Fine
Hyman Bookbinder
Morton Yarmon

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date Oct. 2, 1973
to Marc Tanenbaum
from Mort Yarmon
subject

memorandum

If you do anything on the Austrian situation in your WINS broadcast this coming Sunday, you may want to quote from the attached AJC statement.



FROM: Horton Yarmon
Director of Public Relations
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, N.Y. 10022
Phone: (Office) PLs 1-4000
(Home) 755-3487

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK, Sept. 29 ... The executive head of the American Jewish Committee today expressed the hope that Austria's decision to curb the flow of emigrating Soviet Jews was temporary, and that Austria's "customary hospitality" would be resumed "immediately."

"Anything else would be too incredible to contemplate," said Bertram H. Gold, Executive Vice President of the 67-year-old organization dedicated to protecting the rights of Jews and other minorities in the U.S. and elsewhere.

Mr. Gold's full statement follows:

"If the Jews of the Soviet Union have demonstrated anything at all these past few years, it has been their courage to speak out and their determination to make any sacrifice for the right to leave the Soviet Union. No Soviet Jew, hostage or not, would want to see the flow of Jewish immigration through Austria interrupted. One can only hope that Chancellor Kreisky was announcing a momentary decision to curb the immigration of Soviet Jews in order to save the lives of the hostages, and that the customary hospitality shown by Austria to emigrating Soviet Jews will be resumed immediately. Anything else would be too incredible to contemplate."

(Note: Mr. Gold is reached at 876-2088.)

N.Y. Times, A.P., U.P.I., J.T.A., N.Y. Daily News

MEETING WITH CHANCELLOR BRUNO KREISKY OF AUSTRIA

October 26, 1979

M I N U T E S

Attended by: Mr. Maynard Wishner, Head of delegation
Mr. Norman Alexander
Mr. Theodore Ellenoff
Mr. Jerome Greene
Mr. Robert Rifkind
Mr. Jerome Shestack
Judge Theodore Tannenwald, Jr.

Mr. Bertram H. Gold
Mr. Abraham Karlikow
Mr. David Geller

Three subjects were brought up with Chancellor Kreisky: Middle East; what would be the Austrian position at the forthcoming Madrid meeting for Helsinki Pact follow-up; and recognition of the Austrian role as a trans-migrant staging area for refugees from Eastern Europe, and particularly Jews from the U.S.S.R.

The Austrian stance at Madrid had been brought up in previous conversations with the Austrian Consul General, Mr. Thomas Nowotny, who last August sent AJC a letter (attached) outlining the position that Austria would be active with regard to the Helsinki human rights Principle VII and the Pact Chapter on Humanitarian Considerations; but also expressed the hope that the atmosphere would be less "controversial" than was the case at Belgrade. (This is an indirect reference to the fact that many nations at Belgrade believed the U.S. human rights stance challenging the Soviets by naming cases of specific human rights violations was too provocative.) Mr. Kreisky was asked was this "controversial" reference meant, i.e., would Austria be low profile in its support of human rights issues. He replied that, as his recent Czech experience had shown, human rights issues were by definition controversial.

Regarding movement of Jews from the U.S.S.R., Mr. Kreisky pointed out the Dutch handing out visas for Israel in Moscow had the easy role but that his government was undertaking a responsibility that was quite costly in terms of guards, manpower and police resources, etc. A movement of more than 200,000 Jews had gone through Austria without a single life being lost, he emphasized. (This latter doubtless was an indirect reference to the Schonau camp closing under PLO terrorist threats to shoot three Jewish hostages unless Schonau was shut down.) Also, during the meeting, he made two other references to this subject:

--- He declared that the Russians knew all about the dropouts to the United States and that possibly they might sometimes use this as an excuse to limit or halt emigration--but that such a halt would be virtually certain if Jews from the U.S.S.R. would be used to settle the West Bank, because this would bring too much flak from the Arab countries down on the Soviets for the U.S.S.R. to ignore.

--- That the Vienna movement was for him an indication of the kind of trouble that Arafat doubtless could make but was not making, for it would be virtually impossible for Austria to block a determined PLO attempt to act against the movement of Soviet Jews: hence, of Arafat reasonableness.

Practically all the meeting, lasting well over an hour, was about the Middle East. Meeting Jewish journalists at the AJC offices at the close of the meeting (they had been advised of it by the Austrians, not the AJC), the Chancellor characterized his discussions with the AJC leadership as "controversial." Maynard Wishner, as head of the AJC delegation, summed up to the press the essential difference between Mr. Kreisky's view that Israel would have to recognize the national rights of the Palestinians and that the PLO was their representative and the AJC view: that the AJC believed that one must do all one could to support the Camp David process, which was the one on-going meaningful effort for peace; that this gave the opportunity for Palestinian autonomy and expression; and that, therefore, anything which contradicted the Camp David process or led in other directions was destructive.

This basic thematic difference was played out in the literally dozens of questions to Chancellor Kreisky and his replies, during the meeting. To cite several key examples:

--- The argument was made that Mr. Kreisky's equation before the UN--"The Palestinian side would have to acknowledge as a reality the existence of the state of Israel and Israel would have to recognize the national rights of the Palestinians"--was completely unequal since Israel was already a recognized state whereas the Palestinians were not; and what had to be demanded of any other Arab side would be recognition of the legitimacy of the Israeli reality, and Israel's right to secure borders. Mr. Kreisky declared that the essential missing element was that of a national Palestine identity.

--- Why is it that this question of national Palestine identity never had been raised when the areas in question were under Arab control?, he was challenged. The world changes and develops, he replied; and no one can deny that this sense of Palestinian identity and nationality exist today. He had told his good friend Sadat from the outset that the Camp David accords could not satisfy the Palestinians or the Arab nations and that the latter would not be drawn into a more comprehensive settlement on this basis.

--- Had he not, in effect, then, prejudged the Camp David accords and contributed to the negative Arab reaction by failing to give support to the one on-going peace process that had demonstrated results, hurting his good friend Sadat as well as the Americans and Israelis in their peace effort?

Mr. Kreisky replied that he was for the Camp David accords and that he had mentioned in his UN speech it had had a value for Egypt and for Israel but that it was clear that the Palestinians and others would not participate in it. Later, in answer to press questions and the statement of the AJC position by Mr. Wishner, he forcefully affirmed that he too was for the Camp David agreements but in the same way that his friend Sadat was: that the Palestinians had to be given full autonomy.

---It was pointed out to Mr. Kreisky that President Carter had declared that none of the Arab leaders, in private conversations, had declared that they wanted an independent Palestinian state, or one controlled by the PLO. He replied that President Carter was wrong, that his own conversations had convinced him otherwise, that we and the U.S. government were the last ones not to recognize what everybody else already did with regard to Palestinian identity and the PLO. During the course of the questioning, he made reference to the fact that the Western European nations were rapidly moving toward greater PLO recognition; that time was not on Israel's side given the growing Arab oil and financial strength; that the Connally position was an indication of a shift beginning in the U.S.; and that he worried when the U.S. would really begin to feel any oil shortage one risked increased anti-Semitism and anti-Israel hostility.

--- The Chancellor denounced Israeli bombing of Southern Lebanon as a political disaster for Israel losing its friends even among its staunchest European allies such as the Dutch, for Dutch and Irish troops in Southern Lebanon were writing back to their newspapers and families as to the effects of these bombings.

--- The Chancellor was challenged as to whether an independent Palestinian state would not constitute both a danger to its neighbors and act as a Soviet-sponsored trouble-spot. He replied that the conservative Arab states were much more worried about the effects of the Iranian revolution and the growing fundamentalist strength that resulted, that even a nation like Saudi Arabia was worried about the fundamentalists; and that these countries felt more secure with the Palestinians present because they saw them as a check to a possible fundamentalist takeover. In short, these states were worried about fundamentalists and not the PLO. He did not accept the proposition that the PLO would be a Soviet pawn. The PLO was presently taking help from wherever it could get it; but this did not mean that once independent it would act as a Soviet surrogate.

--- The Chancellor was asked why in his UN speech he had given credit for the Camp David peace process only to President Sadat and not to Mr. Begin as well. He replied that that was because only President Sadat, in his opinion, had taken any political risks, in initiating the process. He declared that he was not against Mr. Begin, as witnessed by an interview he had given Mr. Sulzburger, declaring that Mr. Begin was the only one, like De Gaulle with regard to Algeria, who could make the necessary concessions. Were the Camp David accords truly a first step only, he would be in full support of them, but in fact the U.S. and Egypt had not put enough pressure on Israel and thus allowed the Camp David agreement to become a side issue, and Israeli-Egyptian accommodation had made the general problem ore difficult to resolve.

In the course of his conversation, the Chancellor declared that surely we knew that Mr. Begin was ill, and that the Israeli government today gave no sense of leadership; that we ought to consider the implications of the Dayan resignation as pointing, he implied, to the necessity of recognizing the real facts in the Middle East, as he was doing.

He often referred to his own experience in negotiating with the Russians for full Austrian independence in the early 1950s to draw the analogy that just as the Austrians had rejected anything less than full independence and autonomy, even under difficult situations, so too would the Palestinians. He did not seem to have a very high opinion, in his remarks, of Yassir Arafat as a political leader, but declared that he was a realist and a moderate relative to other PLO leaders, and that he was the only one in that complex to have the kind of mass support to hold the movement together; that he was a man of the masses and that the other PLO leaders needed him ore than he needed them. With suitable encouragement, and Israeli recognition, Arafat would be able to overcome the resistance of PLO hardliners.

As he has in various interviews, Mr. Kreisky repeated his impression that at some point the Palestinians would be taking over Jordan to "create a greater Palestinian state; and he made passing reference to the idea that eventually one might see a kind of federalist Palestinian-Israeli state.

As Mr. Kreisky was leaving, he asked Bert Gold and Jerry Shestack: How does it come about that American Jews have so much influence with the U.S. but not with the Israeli government? The answer was given that this was logical inasmuch as we are American citizens and not Israelis. Mr. Kreisky responded politely but the sense of what he said was "kvatch."

DG/ASK:ac

ADDENDUM TO KREISKY MINUTES

During the course of the conversation, Chancellor Kreisky was asked if he could be of assistance on two points:

With regard to prisoners of conscience and refuseniks in the Soviet Union; with regard to Jews in Syria.

Concerning Jews in the U.S.S.R. and human rights activists, Mr. Kreisky made clear that there were constant conversations between the Soviets and himself on various individual cases and that the Austrian government had had some success with individual cases. One difficulty was that the Russians were loathe to release people for whom public campaigns were being carried on, because, they said, any release then would seem as a result of outside pressure rather than on the basis of behind-the-scenes Austrian requests. This was a permanent dilemma, but Austria would continue.

With regard to Mr. Shcharansky, Chancellor Kreisky felt there was no hope at all for the Russians had told him flatly that he was a spy, no matter what anybody else said. He alluded to a case of an Austrian being held in the U.S. concerning whom the U.S. government had given him the same kind of flat answer.

Concerning the Syrians, Chancellor Kreisky obviously felt he had no particular influence that would allow him to intercede. In his view, he pointed out at another occasion in the conversation, Mr. Assad is not anxious to see the peace process proceed because external tension vis a vis Israel could be the only means he has for uniting behind him what is now a badly split country.

ECUMEDIA--

Rabbi Marc H. Taenbaum
American Jewish Committee

decision

Capitulate

to the

anguish,

many members of

The ~~first reaction~~ of the Austrian government to the demands of the Arab terrorists ~~which has led to a decision~~ *by* to close ^{ing} down the transit center in Vienna for Soviet Jews has filled the Jewish community here and abroad ^{Over this Yom Kippur weekend,} with dismay ~~and~~ *and*. In fact, ~~anguish~~ would be a more accurate description. To Jews who lived through the Nazi holocaust, Austria ^{recalls} symbolizes so much ~~brutality~~ *brutality* and bloodshed that to be compelled to reenact a new experience of Arab terror in that setting of Jewish nightmares is almost psychologically unendurable.

In 1938, Adolf Hitler pressured and threatened Austria, and Austria succumbed. Chancellor Kurt von Schussnig determined to make concessions to Hitler, believing that in this way he could save Austrian independence. Without firing a shot, and without the slightest interference from other powers, Hitler annexed and its 7 million subjects Austria to the German Reich and gained a strategic position of immense value. He possessed not only the gateway to southwest Europe, but the certainty that neither France nor Great Britain would stop his next aggression. For Germany, this was the beginning of the blumenkriege, the flower war. Not bullets but flowers greeted our soldiers, Goebbels declared as the German armies moved into Vienna and later Prague and the rest of Europe.

Is the Austrian government repeating that tragic history of supine capitulation to intimidation and blackmail, this time from Arab terrorists instead of Nazi terrorists? Such surrender can only encourage international terrorism and violence against not only Jews but against all innocent people. If public policies

[Handwritten scribbles]

of great sovereign nations are to be determined by a handful
of guerrillas, there is no hope for world peace and order. The
Austrian government has a moral obligation to the world community
to reconsider its surrender ^{its} sovereign prerogatives, and to
reinstate transit facilities for Russian Jews and others who
deserve to have their elementary human rights honored and
protected.



WHILE ~~THE~~ APPRECIATIVE OF HUMANITARIAN CONTRIBUTION OF THE
AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT SINCE WORLD WAR II IN ASSISTING REFUGEES AND
EMIGRES, BOTH JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN, WE ARE DEEPLY DISTRESSED AT
YOUR GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO ACCEDE TO BLACKMAIL DEMANDS OF
SURRENDER
ARAB TERRORISTS. SUCH ~~DETERMINATION~~ CAN ONLY ENCOURAGE INTERNATIONAL
TERRORISM AND VIOLENCE AGAINST THE INNOCENT. IF PUBLIC POLICIES OF
GREAT SOVEREIGN NATIONS ARE TO BE DETERMINED BY A HANDFUL OF
GUERILLAS, THERE IS NO HOPE FOR WORLD PEACE AND ORDER. URGE
AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT TO RECONSIDER SURRENDER OF SOVEREIGN
PEROGATIVES.

